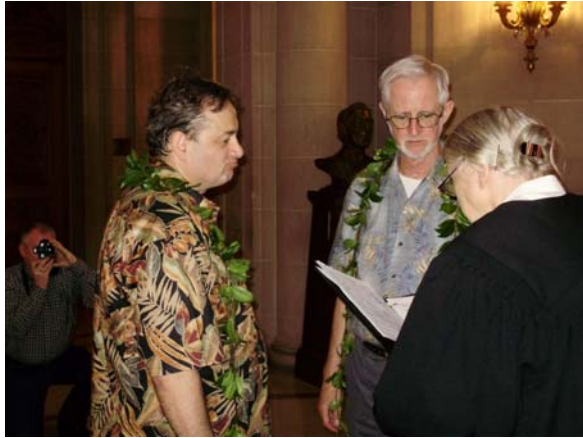


Archival InQueeries

Society of American Archivists
Lesbian and Gay Archivists Roundtable Newsletter
Number 34, Fall 2008



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[Our very own Jim C and his (then) soon-to-be husband Wally marry in San Francisco at SAA.]

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## From the Co-chairs:

The annual meeting has been well documented in the annual report, which appears elsewhere in this newsletter. We had a good time at the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco socializing as well as touring the facilities.

During October, the Steering Committee and we co-chairs discussed the two proposals which came to us for our endorsement: "Sleeping with the Enemy: Hate Collections in Catholic, Masonic, and LGBTQ Repositories," and "Survey Says . . . : Motivations, Methodologies and Findings from Four Archival Repository Surveys." Both proposals actively involve archivists from LGBTQ repositories, and we endorsed both of them; whether they will be accepted or not, time will show. Austin is a mere nine months away. Of note, SAA web site is now encouraging us to make our reservations at the hotel.

What will perhaps surprise you more is our announcement now that it is time to begin putting together a proposal for Washington, D.C. for 2010. What?! If we begin now, we can have the proposals ready to wrap up by the annual meeting in Austin, rather than just beginning work on them. So, please start considering ideas now, write down potential topics and outlines. If you need help improving an idea or simply want feed back from others, the general LAGAR membership and the Steering Committee will gladly help you. Keep in mind that including archivists from other roundtables that focus on diversity issues will certainly make for stronger proposals.

The 2010 Joint Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists and the Council of State

Archivists (CoSA) will be held on August 10-15 at the Marriott Wardman Park. While the theme of the conference may not be set/announced for some time yet, some all-time themes suit us well: diversity, privacy/access, mentoring, outreach.

On the topic of mentoring, are any of you involved in teaching/training the next generation of archival workers? What activities help get them interested in LGBT archives? Some of us work in archives where there may not be library schools or history programs training new archivists. Have any of you found interested workers to assist in the archives? How did you find them? Could this become a presentation for Washington, DC?

As for outreach, what successful experiences have you had? Have recent exhibits brought in new materials to the archives? Have recent meetings with community people produced results or affected your archives? Have you trained any community groups in the care of records? What successes as well as “unsuccesses” have you had? Think about making a presentation out of these experiences.

In addition to thinking about Washington DC in 2010, we could use some of your talents on the Archives Manual or community guide. If you would like to volunteer, contact Paula Jabloner at [jabloner@computerhistory.org](mailto:jabloner@computerhistory.org). The goal established at the annual meeting was to finish by 1 January 2009, but we can add new sections and revise existing ones as need dictates.

Jim Cartwright and Bonnie Weddle, co-chairs

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Editor's notes:

I'm sending this newsletter out for publication 2 days before the Winter solstice, so, officially, it is still fall, though the weather in many parts of the country have skipped fall altogether or had a much shortened version of it and have gone straight to the snow and ice stuff. Yuck. Sorry for the delay.

It's been a long year, 2008 has. We've made some gains in the political front with several LGBT folk winning elections across the country; those in California have been granted full marriage rights, only to have them taken away again; those in Connecticut have had marriage rights given and have not had them taken away as yet [and hopefully won't].

We've had a glimmer of hope be voted into the Presidential offices with Obama – I'm hoping he has a much deeper and loving regard for our country's history and the histories of all Americans and that within his administration we will see greater funding made available to archives and historical societies everywhere. Also several gay and lesbian folk have been recognized and appointed to the new administration as well – may there be more of this kind of change in the future.

Without getting too mushy, I would like to wish all of my colleagues and friends in LAGAR a very happy and joyous holiday season, whether you celebrate Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, or Winter Solstice; and, of course, a very happy, safe and healthy 2009.

Take care,
Maggi Gonsalves
Your friendly LAGAR Newsletter Editor

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## LAGAR Announcements:

### **Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable 2007-08 Annual Report**

**Date:** Sept. 15, 2008

**Name of Section/Roundtable:** Lesbian & Gay Archives Roundtable

#### **Officers:**

Co-chair: James Cartwright, Co-Chair, University of Hawaii

Co-chair: Bonita Weddle New York State Archives

#### **Steering Committee:**

Maggi Gonsalves, Newsletter Editor, New York State Archives

Steven Mandeville-Gamble, Webmaster, George Washington University

Steven Novak, Past Co-chair

#### **Members-at-Large:**

Paula Jabloner, Computer Museum

Michael Kelly, University of New Mexico

#### **Report from annual meeting:**

- Number of attendees:
- Election results: James Cartwright elected as male co-chair
- Summary of meeting activities: see attached

#### **Completed projects/activities:**

Two newsletters issued

Much of Community Archives Manual completed and added to web site.

#### **Ongoing projects/activities:**

Community Archives Manual still needs chapters on certain topics; we will pursue this over the coming year.

**New projects/activities:** None at this time

**Diversity initiatives:** None at this time

**Questions/concerns for Council attention:** None at this time

**Society of American Archivists Lesbian & Gay Archives Roundtable (LAGAR),  
Annual Meeting, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, San Francisco, CA, August 27,  
2008, 3:15-5:15 PM.**

#### **MINUTES**

After a reception at the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, the meeting was convened by co-chairs Stephen Novak and Bonnie Weddle at 5:35.

#### **General Announcements:**

The Co-Chairs thanked the GLBT Historical Society for its generosity in allowing us to meet there and especially for the delicious food and drink they provided for the pre-meeting reception.

Greg Williams of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives reported on the progress of their two-year NHPRC processing grant. Several collections have been processed and finding aids for them can be found on the On-Line Archives of California (OLAC).

Susan von Salis spoke as a member of the 2009 Program Committee asking for program proposals.

Ben Primer, LAGAR's outgoing Council liaison, updated us on current Council business and introduced his successor, Tom Hyry.

### **Election of Male Co-Chair**

James "Jim" Cartwright of the University of Hawaii was nominated for election as male co-chair to replace Stephen Novak, who had served as co-chair for the past two years. His nomination was seconded and he was elected by acclamation.

### **Steering Committee Reports**

Maggi Gonsalves, Newsletter Editor, was not able to attend this meeting, but reported via Bonnie Weddle that she is still interested in serving as Newsletter Editor but is willing to step aside if a newer LAGAR member is interested in the position. She is also seeking submissions for the Fall 2008 issue of the newsletter.

Paula Jabloner reported on the Community Archives Manual, which is meant for people working in community-based archives that may lack professionally trained staff. The bulk of the Manual is available online, but she is recruiting people interested in writing sections.

### **New Business:**

The Co-Chairs thanked the members of the Steering Committee for their efforts over the past year.

The co-chairs outlined two proposals for amending the LAGAR bylaws, both of which were submitted to the membership in advance of the meeting per SAA requirements:

- The first amendment, which is designed to bring LAGAR's bylaws into alignment with SAA's new rules for roundtable leadership, reduces each co-chair's term of office to two years, prohibits election to consecutive terms of office, mandates that the male and the female co-chairs serve staggered terms.
- The second amendment corrects a minor grammatical error in the bylaws.

Both amendments were seconded and passed by acclamation.

### **Program**

Three representatives of California LGBT archives took part in an informal panel discussion of the current status of LGBT archives and archival documentation.

Ron Grantz, the archivist of the Lavender Library, Archives and Cultural Exchange of Sacramento, cares for newsletters, documents, and ephemera created by Sacramento LGBT organizations; the papers of activist Jerry Sloan, who used the proceeds of a successful lawsuit against the Rev. Jerry Falwell to establish Sacramento's

first LGBT community center; and the business records of the Open Book, Sacramento's LGBT bookstore. He works with one intern.

Karen Sundheim, the program manager of the San Francisco Public Library's James C. Hormel Lesbian and Gay Center, is responsible for soliciting donations of archival collections and managing program operations. The Hormel Center's holdings include multiple series of personal papers documenting the life of Harvey Milk, the first openly gay person to be elected to public office; personal papers of Mattachine Society founder Harry Hay; personal papers of author Randy Shilts; personal papers and business records of Naiad Press founder Barbara Grier; and organizational records of numerous Bay Area gay, lesbian, and feminist organizations. Sundheim supervises one processing archivist.

Greg Williams, who is a member of the Board of Directors of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles. The archives, which is housed at but independent of the University of Southern California, is an outgrowth of ONE, Inc., a gay rights group established in 1951. Its holdings consist of ONE's organizational records, materials collected by a founding member who helped to pioneer the study of gay and lesbian history, and other records documenting LGBT history throughout the world. Williams is the director of ONE's NHPRC-funded project and oversees two processing archivists.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM.

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SAA Announcements:

The first SAA web seminar in 2009 will address the conundrum SAA members and others are facing as they try to decide on the Content Management System their institution should implement.

You may have heard about the soon to be published report "Archival Description and Management Tools" commissioned by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). Lisa Spiro's report looks at a broad spectrum of software tools, and she has agreed to develop a web seminar that compares archival content management systems – both open-source and proprietary/vendor CMS software (e.g. Archivists' Toolkit, Archon, Cuadra STAR, Eloquent Archives, etc).

To inform our decision on the proprietary CMS software/vendors that should be included in the 90-minute seminar, I am asking that you share with us the systems you and your colleagues talk about most often.

Your feedback is very much appreciated, and I look forward to hearing from you.

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Check out the 2008/2009 Education Calendar at www.archivists.org for details ...and to register for the topic of your choice!

Archive news & announcements:

The Matthew Shepard Web Archive: An Online Resource from the American Heritage Center

By Laura Uglean Jackson, University Archivist, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

The American Heritage Center (AHC) at the University of Wyoming (UW) is pleased to announce the completion of the Matthew Shepard Web Archive, made possible by a grant from the University of Wyoming's President's Advisory Council on Minorities' and Women's Affairs.

Matthew Shepard was a gay student at the University of Wyoming. He was brutally beaten on the night of October 7, 1998 by two men, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson. He died four days later in a hospital in Ft. Collins, CO. Since Shepard's murder ten years ago, the AHC has been collecting material such as photos, news clippings, UW President's correspondence, memorial banners, pamphlets, and ephemera to document the murder and events that followed. At the same time, people throughout the world were affected by his murder and used the World Wide Web as a place to document, reach out, create, organize, and share. Websites are thus an important part of the societal memory of Matthew Shepard, his murder, and related events and issues.

With a one month subscription to Archive-It (a service from the Internet Archive that assists archives in preserving websites) the AHC captured seventy websites that broadly document the ten year mark since the murder of Matthew Shepard and related lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. Included in the archive are blogs, wikis, videos, memorial web pages, a MySpace page, and Flickr photos. It also includes the websites of organizations, films, books, music, and events related to Matthew Shepard.

The Matthew Shepard Web Archive can be accessed through the [University of Wyoming's online library catalog](#), and through a finding aid in the [Rocky Mountain Online Archive](#). Archive-It provides access to the collection with keyword searching and browse capabilities through their [website](#). Preservation of the websites will be managed by Archive-It. It is hoped that the archive will not only enhance the AHC's existing material on Matthew Shepard, but will be valuable to the general public as a unique resource.

OutHistory.org, Innovative LGBT History Website Launched October 21st

OutHistory.org, the new website on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and, yes, heterosexual history, made its official debut on Tuesday, October 21. The public was invited to celebrate OutHistory's launch that evening, from 6 to 8 pm, in the second-floor Cyber Center of the LGBT Community Center, 208 W. 13th Street, New York City.

Historian Katz describes OutHistory.org as "a dynamic, developing website that makes the history of sexuality newly accessible to a diverse audience. It has the potential to reach a wide group who never before had access to reliable work on LGBTQ history." In its early stages the site will focus on the United States, but OutHistory is working to expand its geographic scope.

Currently OutHistory features several historical "exhibits," among them a colorful collection of postcards from the early-twentieth century depicting "masculine women and feminine men." In the words of a popular song from the turn of the century these postcards ask: "which is the rooster which is the hen?" (Users can hear the song on the site.) The postcards were provided to OutHistory by an avid collector, Marshall Weeks, and the website expects other collectors of LGBT artifacts to contribute to future exhibits.

OutHistory contains two types of articles. Entries by named authors are marked as "Protected" and may not be edited by the public. "Protected entries provide the credibility associated with the naming of a particular author," said Lauren Gutterman, the website's Coordinator.

OutHistory also contains articles marked as "Open" to additions and edits by any logged-on users with data, documents, and citations. "These collaboratively created entries," says Katz, "are an innovative experiment in history by the community."

In addition to the postcard exhibit, protected entries include Ron Schlittler's original photographic exhibit: "Out and Elected in the USA:1974-2004," several Blogs on History by Joan Nestle, cofounder of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, and C. Todd White's exhibit on some of the first homosexual rights organizations in the US.

Several protected exhibits were jointly created by professors and their students. "Queer Youth: On Campus, in the Media, 1947-2007," was written by students at Bryn Mawr and Haverford colleges, under the guidance of Professor of History Sharon Ullman.

"OutHistory is an ideal forum for teachers to get students involved with and excited about history," says Gutterman. Anthropologist Esther Newton also worked with her students at the University of Michigan to produce an exhibit on "Lesbians in the Twentieth Century."

A fascinating group of documents on transgender American history are republished from Jonathan Ned Katz's out-of-print books *Gay American History* and *Gay/Lesbian Almanac*. "OutHistory hopes to republish lots of authors' out-of-print but still valuable historical works," says Gutterman. Documents from Martin Duberman's out of print *About Time: Exploring the Gay Past*, will also be added to the site.

OutHistory is collaborating with ChicagoGayHistory.org, a website founded by Tracy Baim, editor of the *Windy City Times*, and both sites are presenting original essays on Chicago LGBT history by Professor John D'Emilio. "We are also discussing a partnership between OutHistory and The National Archive of Lesbian and Gay History, founded by Richard Wandel," said Lauren Gutterman. "And we've met with the Coordinator of LGBT Collections at The New York Public Library to discuss future collaborations."

OutHistory is produced by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS), a research institute at the City University of New York Graduate Center. The creation of the site was funded by the Arcus Foundation under a two-year grant that ends December 31, 2008. CLAGS is seeking funds to continue the site. "To fund the site in 2009 we're turning to individuals with a special interest in LGBT history and the ability to foster its development," says Katz.

"In an election year and in the midst of an economic meltdown," Katz explains, foundations tell us they are focused on human and civil rights issues, not history. But knowing the history of present

struggles makes today's activists more effective." OutHistory is, in fact, seeking funding for several illustrated "Histories of the Present," on the movement for LGBT marriage and domestic partner rights, on AIDS activism, on the law reform movement, and on the issue of homosexuals in the U.S. military. "Publicizing the history of LGBT activism is a form of activism," Katz stresses, "so keeping OutHistory alive and kicking is important."

Contact:
Lauren Gutterman,
OutHistory Project Coordinator
Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies
e-mail: outhistory@gc.cuny.edu
cell: (718) 974-3436

[Editor's note: Yes, this is the same OutHistory.org which Jonathan Katz referred to in his posting to the LAGAR list on Nov. 26. Donations can be made on line at OutHistory.org:
http://www.outhistory.org/wiki/Donate#DONATE_ONLINE]

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## Making History:

An announcement from the Presidential Inaugural Committee 2009

### **For First Time, Presidential Inaugural Committee Invites LGBT Group to Perform in 56<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Parade**

#### **Talent From Across America To March In Parade From Capitol To White House**

WASHINGTON - Today, in keeping with its commitment to hold inaugural events that celebrate our common values and reflects the diversity and history of our great nation, President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden's Inaugural Committee officially extended an offer to the Lesbian and Gay Band Association to march in the 56<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Parade. Members of that group will join representatives from across the country and our Armed Forces in the historic parade down Pennsylvania Avenue following President-elect Obama's swearing-in ceremony on the steps of the Capitol.

This marks the first time that an openly LGBT group has been invited to participate in an Inaugural Parade.

"I am honored to invite these talented groups and individuals to participate in the Inaugural Parade," said President-elect Obama. "These organizations embody the best of our nation's history, diversity and commitment to service. Vice President-elect Biden and I are proud to have them join us in the parade."

Organizations wishing to participate in the parade submitted an application to the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee (AFIC), which then assisted the Presidential Inaugural Committee in reviewing all of the groups' applications. All told, 1,382 organizations applied to participate, setting a new standard for interest in marching in the parade.



The Lesbian and Gay Band Association is a musical organization comprised of concert and marching bands from cities across America that provides a network of lesbian and gay bands.

The Presidential Inaugural Committee was assisted in its selection process by a group of experienced military musicians, who utilized their expertise to help assess the presentation skills of marching bands, musical acts and drill teams.

All participants in the Inaugural Parade are responsible for paying for their own lodging and transportation to and from Washington, D.C. The Committee has been working closely with area governments and civic organizations to facilitate access to affordable accommodations and would like to encourage citizens from across the country to reach out and help the Lesbian and Gay Band Association raise the necessary resources to participate in this historic event.

If you are interested in finding out more about supporting the Lesbian and Gay Band Association and their participation in the 56<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Parade, please visit [www.gaybands.org](http://www.gaybands.org).

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## **Gay orgs cut staff to cope with recession:**

### **Many nonprofits struggling to weather economic crisis**

By AMY CAVANAUGH

Dec. 05, 2008 <http://washblade.com/2008/12-5/news/national/13705.cfm>

Many gay advocacy organizations are scaling back services and cutting staff, as the nation's recession takes a toll on nonprofits.

At Lambda Legal, 10 positions were cut last month. The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation laid off several staff members Nov. 21. The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force has left open unfilled positions, and the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association recently reduced its national staff from seven to two.

GLAAD President Neil Giuliano said the cuts at his organization "touched all departments," but did not reach "double digits."

"We looked at the work we're doing and the mission we have and we had to make a strategic plan to make reductions," he said. "Fundraising has slowed dramatically and the non-profit sector is not immune to what's going on, and sometimes we're impacted more."

He said a reduction in donations coupled with the nation's ongoing financial crisis meant that GLAAD had to make job cuts to stay within budget and prepare for 2009.

"The way I look at it is that it is the responsible thing to do to protect the long-term health of the organization, and be good stewards of the revenue that donors have provided," Giuliano said.

Kevin Cathcart, Lambda Legal's executive director, said the 10 job cuts at his organization came from each of its four departments: legal, education, administration and development.

The jobs, which were all full-time positions, represented 10 percent of the organization's staff.

"Like many non-profits, we've been hit hard over the last several months by the decline in the stock market, the decline in the real estate market, and the decline in consumer confidence," Cathcart said.

"We started a new fiscal year at the beginning of November and as we closed last year, it was clear that it would have been unrealistic to assume that we were going to grow in the year ahead and that we needed to be certain that we were going to be able to protect our core mission. Therefore in this economy and this giving climate, we needed to reign in expenses early."

Cathcart said Lambda Legal's financial plight was "not unique" among national groups.

"It's happening in the broader non-profit world and with LGBT organizations," he said. "Like other organizations, we don't have an endowment, and we have to raise our income every year."

Cathcart said he started noticing donations slowing during the summer months.

"With the economic news over the fall, things kept getting worse and worse," he said. "In our case, there were funders like law firms that supported us that went out of business, and corporate sponsors who were sold during the last couple months of the economic decline."

The economic downturn has curtailed the operations of other gay groups in different ways.

David Steinberg, president of the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association, said in an e-mail to members Dec. 3 that "financial support from corporations and foundations in and outside of the media industry has decreased," and the organization's national staff had been reduced from seven to two.

Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese said in a statement that the organization "has been monitoring the economic climate closely for the past few months and has managed expenses accordingly. Contributions have slowed in the last quarter and we will continue to proactively manage our budget and expenses. HRC has no (current) plans to lay off employees."

The Task Force also is tightening its belt, according to Rea Carey, the organization's executive director.

"Like many other organizations, whether LGBT or not, we are looking at ways to act responsibly and make responsible actions given the economy," she said. "For us, that means that in some areas where we can, we are spending less. We're cutting back on travel and things we had planned."

Carey also noted that the organization has decided to leave open unfilled positions.

"We are already a lean and mean organization, and for a long time the Task Force has accomplished a lot on relatively few resources," she said.

### **Regional groups also challenged**

Regional groups aren't immune to troubles stemming from the nation's worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Dan Furmansky, executive director of Equality Maryland, said his organization “definitely noticed a bit of a downturn in the last two quarters of 2008.”

“We’re financially sound, but we certainly had difficulty in achieving the attendance numbers we’ve had at previous events,” he said. “This is a tough economic climate to be fundraising in.”

He said that the organization remains “on track” and that they have “not had to cut back in any material way.”

But Carl Siciliano, the executive director of the Ali Forney Center in New York City, which provides housing for homeless LGBT youth, said that since September, their “corporate donations and foundation grants have completely dried up.”

“We’re already in a place where our bank account is depleted, our line of credit is depleted and we’re struggling from payroll to payroll,” Siciliano said. “We’re struggling with how to pay December rent.”

Siciliano said that the organization received fewer grant and donation dollars than expected.

“We budgeted that we were going to receive about a million dollars this year in non-government money, which comes from foundation grants, corporate donations, individual donations and revenue from special events,” he said. But he noted that a more realistic expectation now is \$700,000.

Siciliano said Ali Forney Center has cut or made plans to cut eight positions, which represents 10 percent of the organization’s staff.

“We rent apartments and we had to shut some down during the day and only open them at night,” he said. “We work hard to help kids get into schools and jobs, but in the winter having to tell kids to leave? I don’t like it. When there are hundreds of kids on the waiting list, the last thing I want to do is think about scaling back, but people can’t give what they don’t have. We have to think of ways to be creative.”

Siciliano said one approach the organization has tried is raising awareness through gay bloggers. Joe Jervis, who writes *Joe My God*, reached out to Siciliano to write a post for his site.

“Within 36 hours, we received 50 donations online,” Siciliano said. “I think that what we’re going to have to do is think about different strategies to generate non-government money. Those of us who are creative and make a compelling case are going to scrape by.”

“I have a feeling that a lot of people will go under, but as far as I’m concerned, we’re going under over my dead body. The kids need us too badly.”

On Dec. 3, the Ali Forney Center announced that the funds needed to operate its drop-in center were reinstated.

According to the organization, the New York City Ryan White Planning Council offered the needed funds after the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene told the Ali Forney Center that the grant it was receiving would end in July 2009.

### **‘Everyone is concerned’**

Michael Adams, executive director of Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) in New York City, said his organization is in "healthy shape" overall, but had seen a reduction in government funding, the largest source of funding for senior services.

"We were just notified two weeks ago that our largest city contract has been cut by 37 percent, which is a very significant cut," he said. The cut of \$250,000 comes from money that SAGE uses to buy groceries, pay for prescriptions and cover utility bills.

"We're scrambling to find ways to cover those things, since we have to do that stuff," Adams said. "We've got to transfer funds that were assigned to other work, because people need these things to survive."

Adams said a smaller contract also was eliminated, and SAGE is looking at a loss of \$310,000 in city funding for 2009, which he described as "a lot of money for an organization of our size."

SAGE provides services to 2,000 elders in New York each month, and employs 32 staff members, including about six part-time employees.

Adams said SAGE is trying to fight the cutbacks in funding, but has made a number of non-personnel cuts to the budget.

"We've had to cut back on communications and the public-education activities we engage in," he said. "We're trying hard not to cut back on core services, and we've been able to avoid those cuts. Our plans to expand programs have been cut or pushed off to next year in the hopes that things will be better next year. I feel fortunate that we'll be able to absorb those cuts without having to eliminate any staff positions."

Roey Thorpe, director of state services at the Equality Federation, a national alliance of state-based gay advocacy groups, said, "everyone is concerned" about the health of their organization amidst the economic downturn.

"In some regions where the economic crisis has caused people to leave their jobs, we've seen some organizations really concerned that major donors may no longer be able to give as much as they wish they could," she said. "We've seen this in the Northeast, where people work on Wall Street or are affected by the financial industry, and then in other areas where manufacturing jobs have been affected."

Thorpe said many state advocacy groups are evaluating whether or not to change their plans for next year.

"Many of our organizations are used to doing an incredible amount of work with very little resources, so resourcefulness is second nature to these organizations," she said. "I have not heard about any organizations who have had to lay off staff yet as a result of the economic crisis, but I think everyone is treading carefully and thinking about their priorities very seriously."

Some organizations told the Blade they were awaiting year-end donations — which is when many people make their charitable donations in an effort to offset taxes — before finalizing their 2009 plans.

Siciliano said Ali Forney Center receives 40 percent of donation money between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, and he was consequently hopeful that more donations would yet arrive. But many activists noted that year-end donations could be curtailed for reasons other than the economic downturn.

"We just finished an election year that was interesting and challenging and enormous amounts of money were donated by the LGBT community and friends of the LGBT community," Cathcart said.

"Money went to the presidential election and a range of national and statewide elections and to referendum battles, particularly in California. It was a perfect storm of significant amounts of money going to politics in an important political year and the U.S. economy declining significantly over the last several months."

Cathcart said the outcome of the elections means "there is a lot of potential and possibilities out there for the community," but noted that, "it's ironic and sad to have both potential and cut backs at the same time."

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## ***Gay and Lesbian Atlanta: Out on film***

New book offers 'photo album' of Atlanta's gay history

Published 08.13.08,

[http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/gay\\_and\\_lesbian\\_atlanta\\_out\\_on\\_film/Content?oid=536835](http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/gay_and_lesbian_atlanta_out_on_film/Content?oid=536835)

By [Curt Holman](#)



Courtesy Arcadia Publishing

LOCAL PRIDE: The authors chose a photo of Dorothy Vogel and Grace Thomas from 1931 for the book's cover. Both had same-sex relationships, according to Chenault, but not necessarily with each other.

### ***Gay and Lesbian Atlanta***

People seldom think of their old photo albums as historical documents. Those scrapbooks in the attic, full of grainy, sepia-toned images of awkwardly posed family or friends, can nevertheless express more about how people dressed and lived than dozens of pages of historical text.

*Gay and Lesbian Atlanta*, a book of photography encompassing a century of gay life in Atlanta, could be the equivalent of a family album for the gay community. Atlanta History Center archivist Wesley Chenault, who co-authored the book with writer/editor Stacy Braukman, likes to think of it that way.

"I'm interested in the idea of generational memory, and how community memory is handed down. In minority groups based on race or ethnicity, stories get passed down through families. But what do you do with the

LGBT community? What steps can we take to make sure that we're passing down things to have a greater continuity, a shared past?"

The photos in *Gay and Lesbian Atlanta* convey that shared past and offer a microcosm of the 20th-century gay experience, which begins with virtual invisibility at the end of the 19th century and culminates with out-and-proud public gay weddings 100 years later. One of the first images finds the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* of 1913 all atwitter about female impersonator Anthony Auriemma: "Is It Lady-Like to Look Like A Lady on Atlanta's Streets?" It's hard to imagine what those pundits would make of the Atlanta Pride floats or "Digging Dykes of Decatur" on parade.

Chenault explains that the book originated with the Atlanta History Center's 2005 exhibition *The Unspoken Past: Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History, 1940-1970*. "We have a strong collection that documents LGBT history from the 1970s forward," he says. The exhibit filled in the middle of the century, and when Braukman and Chenault had the idea for the book, they gathered new material from 1900-1940 to span the century.

Research for *The Unspoken Past* relied heavily on interviews for oral histories and old photos and letters material. "We had to identify men and women who'd spent most of their lives in Atlanta and were willing to be recorded talking about their past," Chenault says. Their detective work became easier when *Southern Voice* wrote an article about the exhibit. "We started getting calls and contacts immediately from people who wanted to see if they fit the criteria. We'd speak to one person, and then have access to their circle," he explains.

Not everyone they reached was eager to participate. "It was more difficult to identify [gay] white women, and even more difficult to identify men and women of color," Chenault says.

Braukman and Chenault needed to reach further back to chronicle the first third of the century, and frequently turned to newspapers, city directories and defunct magazines such as *Gaybriel* and *PULSE*. One of their valuable resources was a 1930s nightlife guide publication called, with retrospective irony, *Gay Atlanta*.

The devastation of AIDS in the gay community not only took a toll on human life, but on the historical record as well. "There's so much that's been lost," Chenault says. "So many men involved with old publications are gone, and they most likely had material in their personal collections that documented the city."

*Gay and Lesbian Atlanta's* images, and even the captions, offer a glimpse at relatively recent decades that can sometimes seem impossibly remote. The book offers details such as, "During a two-year stint in the Army, Buddy Clark, a champion baton twirler, won the Army's Best Entertainer award," or "Billy Jones worked for 30 years at the Franklin Simon department store, where he would become known for traffic-stopping window designs."

Chenault says that "openly gay" images from the 1970s and later could have consumed the book. Photos from the first half of the century show gay people with their families and even their straight spouses, underscoring how their public faces didn't always match their private lives. Chenault hopes that the book can convey the different climate of the times, especially for young people who've grown up out. "If someone had come out in the 1950s, they would probably lose their job, be shunned by their family, kicked out of their church - there was nothing to come out *to*," Chenault says.

The book recounts stories that contradict Atlanta's motto as "The city too busy to hate," such as the 1954 arrest of 20 men on felony charges of sodomy in 1953; white supremacist J.B. Stoner holding leaflets that read "God bless AIDS" in 1987; and the 1993 anti-gay resolution in Cobb County, which led to the "Olympics out of



Cobb" movement in 1996. The book captures a breadth of gay experience, from politics to religion, as well as glossies from entertainers such as Diamond Lil, Ru Paul and earlier female impersonators who didn't have the same homosexual connotations as more recent drag queens.

Despite flare-ups of bigotry, Atlanta's vibrant social scene of supper clubs and other nightspots served as a regional beacon. The city became a gay mecca in the 1970s, but Chenault feels that gay people relocated to the city for primarily for the same reason that straight ones did. "Atlanta became a place where people came because there were so many opportunities for education and white collar jobs. And it was a very livable city."

At the very least, *Gay and Lesbian Atlanta* offers a kind of template for the photo albums and scrap books of the future. They'll probably involve digital photos on discs and hard drives, and not faded photos in plastic, but such images will retain the community memory for the generations yet to come.

*Gay and Lesbian Atlanta. By Stacey Braukman and Wesley Chenault. Arcadia Publishing. 128 pp. \$17.99.*

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-- Prop 8 articles [this section will contain several articles in their entirety from various sources regarding this historical bit of politics]

### **Our Mutual Joy: Opponents of gay marriage often cite Scripture. But what the Bible teaches about love argues for the other side.**

Lisa Miller

NEWSWEEK, From the magazine issue dated Dec 15, 2008, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/172653>

Let's try for a minute to take the religious conservatives at their word and define marriage as the Bible does. Shall we look to Abraham, the great patriarch, who slept with his servant when he discovered his beloved wife Sarah was infertile? Or to Jacob, who fathered children with four different women (two sisters and their servants)? Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon and the kings of Judah and Israel—all these fathers and heroes were polygamists. The New Testament model of marriage is hardly better. Jesus himself was single and preached an indifference to earthly attachments—especially family. The apostle Paul (also single) regarded marriage as an act of last resort for those unable to contain their animal lust. "It is better to marry than to burn with passion," says the apostle, in one of the most lukewarm endorsements of a treasured institution ever uttered. Would any contemporary heterosexual married couple—who likely woke up on their wedding day harboring some optimistic and newfangled ideas about gender equality and romantic love—turn to the Bible as a how-to script?

Of course not, yet the religious opponents of gay marriage would have it be so.

The battle over gay marriage has been waged for more than a decade, but within the last six months—since California legalized gay marriage and then, with a ballot initiative in November, amended its Constitution to prohibit it—the debate has grown into a full-scale war, with religious-rhetoric slinging to match. Not since 1860, when the country's pulpits were full of preachers pronouncing on slavery, pro and con, has one of our basic social (and economic) institutions been so subject to biblical scrutiny. But whereas in the Civil War the traditionalists had their James Henley Thornwell—and the advocates for change, their Henry Ward Beecher—this time the sides are unevenly matched. All the religious rhetoric, it seems, has been on the side of the gay-marriage opponents, who use Scripture as the foundation for their objections.

The argument goes something like this statement, which the Rev. Richard A. Hunter, a United Methodist minister, gave to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution in June: "The Bible and Jesus define marriage as between one man and one woman. The church cannot condone or bless same-sex marriages because this stands in opposition to Scripture and our tradition."

To which there are two obvious responses: First, while the Bible and Jesus say many important things about love and family, neither explicitly defines marriage as between one man and one woman. And second, as the examples above illustrate, no sensible modern person wants marriage—theirs or anyone else's—to look in its particulars anything like what the Bible describes. "Marriage" in America refers to two separate things, a religious institution and a civil one, though it is most often enacted as a messy conflation of the two. As a civil institution, marriage offers practical benefits to both partners: contractual rights having to do with taxes; insurance; the care and custody of children; visitation rights; and inheritance. As a religious institution, marriage offers something else: a commitment of both partners before God to love, honor and cherish each other—in sickness and in health, for richer and poorer—in accordance with God's will. In a religious marriage, two people promise to take care of each other, profoundly, the way they believe God cares for them. Biblical literalists will disagree, but the Bible is a living document, powerful for more than 2,000 years because its truths speak to us even as we change through history. In that light, Scripture gives us no good reason why gays and lesbians should not be (civilly and religiously) married—and a number of excellent reasons why they should.

In the Old Testament, the concept of family is fundamental, but examples of what social conservatives would call "the traditional family" are scarcely to be found. Marriage was critical to the passing along of tradition and history, as well as to maintaining the Jews' precious and fragile monotheism. But as the Barnard University Bible scholar Alan Segal puts it, the arrangement was between "one man and as many women as he could pay for." Social conservatives point to Adam and Eve as evidence for their one man, one woman argument—in particular, this verse from Genesis: "Therefore shall a man leave his mother and father, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." But as Segal says, if you believe that the Bible was written by men and not handed down in its leather bindings by God, then that verse was written by people for whom polygamy was the way of the world. (The fact that homosexual couples cannot procreate has also been raised as a biblical objection, for didn't God say, "Be fruitful and multiply"? But the Bible authors could never have imagined the brave new world of international adoption and assisted reproductive technology—and besides, heterosexuals who are infertile or past the age of reproducing get married all the time.)

Ozzie and Harriet are nowhere in the New Testament either. The biblical Jesus was—in spite of recent efforts of novelists to paint him otherwise—emphatically unmarried. He preached a radical kind of family, a caring community of believers, whose bond in God superseded all blood ties. Leave your families and follow me, Jesus says in the gospels. There will be no marriage in heaven, he says in Matthew. Jesus never mentions homosexuality, but he roundly condemns divorce (leaving a loophole in some cases for the husbands of unfaithful women).

The apostle Paul echoed the Christian Lord's lack of interest in matters of the flesh. For him, celibacy was the Christian ideal, but family stability was the best alternative. Marry if you must, he told his audiences, but do not get divorced. "To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): a wife must not separate from her husband." It probably goes without saying that the phrase "gay marriage" does not appear in the Bible at all.

If the bible doesn't give abundant examples of traditional marriage, then what are the gay-marriage opponents really exercised about? Well, homosexuality, of course—specifically sex between men. Sex between women has never, even in biblical times, raised as much ire. In its entry on "Homosexual Practices," the Anchor Bible Dictionary notes that nowhere in the Bible do its authors refer to sex between women, "possibly because it did not result in true physical 'union' (by male entry)." The Bible does condemn gay male sex in a handful of passages. Twice Leviticus refers to sex between men as "an abomination" (King James version), but these are

throwaway lines in a peculiar text given over to codes for living in the ancient Jewish world, a text that devotes verse after verse to treatments for leprosy, cleanliness rituals for menstruating women and the correct way to sacrifice a goat—or a lamb or a turtle dove. Most of us no longer heed Leviticus on haircuts or blood sacrifices; our modern understanding of the world has surpassed its prescriptions. Why would we regard its condemnation of homosexuality with more seriousness than we regard its advice, which is far lengthier, on the best price to pay for a slave?

Paul was tough on homosexuality, though recently progressive scholars have argued that his condemnation of men who "were inflamed with lust for one another" (which he calls "a perversion") is really a critique of the worst kind of wickedness: self-delusion, violence, promiscuity and debauchery. In his book "The Arrogance of Nations," the scholar Neil Elliott argues that Paul is referring in this famous passage to the depravity of the Roman emperors, the craven habits of Nero and Caligula, a reference his audience would have grasped instantly. "Paul is not talking about what we call homosexuality at all," Elliott says. "He's talking about a certain group of people who have done everything in this list. We're not dealing with anything like gay love or gay marriage. We're talking about really, really violent people who meet their end and are judged by God." In any case, one might add, Paul argued more strenuously against divorce—and at least half of the Christians in America disregard that teaching.

Religious objections to gay marriage are rooted not in the Bible at all, then, but in custom and tradition (and, to talk turkey for a minute, a personal discomfort with gay sex that transcends theological argument). Common prayers and rituals reflect our common practice: the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer describes the participants in a marriage as "the man and the woman." But common practice changes—and for the better, as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice." The Bible endorses slavery, a practice that Americans now universally consider shameful and barbaric. It recommends the death penalty for adulterers (and in Leviticus, for men who have sex with men, for that matter). It provides conceptual shelter for anti-Semites. A mature view of scriptural authority requires us, as we have in the past, to move beyond literalism. The Bible was written for a world so unlike our own, it's impossible to apply its rules, at face value, to ours.

Marriage, specifically, has evolved so as to be unrecognizable to the wives of Abraham and Jacob. Monogamy became the norm in the Christian world in the sixth century; husbands' frequent enjoyment of mistresses and prostitutes became taboo by the beginning of the 20th. (In the NEWSWEEK POLL, 55 percent of respondents said that married heterosexuals who have sex with someone other than their spouses are more morally objectionable than a gay couple in a committed sexual relationship.) By the mid-19th century, U.S. courts were siding with wives who were the victims of domestic violence, and by the 1970s most states had gotten rid of their "head and master" laws, which gave husbands the right to decide where a family would live and whether a wife would be able to take a job. Today's vision of marriage as a union of equal partners, joined in a relationship both romantic and pragmatic, is, by very recent standards, radical, says Stephanie Coontz, author of "Marriage, a History."

Religious wedding ceremonies have already changed to reflect new conceptions of marriage. Remember when we used to say "man and wife" instead of "husband and wife"? Remember when we stopped using the word "obey"? Even Miss Manners, the voice of tradition and reason, approved in 1997 of that change. "It seems," she wrote, "that dropping 'obey' was a sensible editing of a service that made assumptions about marriage that the society no longer holds."

We cannot look to the Bible as a marriage manual, but we can read it for universal truths as we struggle toward a more just future. The Bible offers inspiration and warning on the subjects of love, marriage, family and community. It speaks eloquently of the crucial role of families in a fair society and the risks we incur to ourselves and our children should we cease trying to bind ourselves together in loving pairs. Gay men like to

point to the story of passionate King David and his friend Jonathan, with whom he was "one spirit" and whom he "loved as he loved himself." Conservatives say this is a story about a platonic friendship, but it is also a story about two men who stand up for each other in turbulent times, through violent war and the disapproval of a powerful parent. David rends his clothes at Jonathan's death and, in grieving, writes a song:

I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;  
You were very dear to me.  
Your love for me was wonderful,  
More wonderful than that of women.

Here, the Bible praises enduring love between men. What Jonathan and David did or did not do in privacy is perhaps best left to history and our own imaginations.

In addition to its praise of friendship and its condemnation of divorce, the Bible gives many examples of marriages that defy convention yet benefit the greater community. The Torah discouraged the ancient Hebrews from marrying outside the tribe, yet Moses himself is married to a foreigner, Zipporah. Queen Esther is married to a non-Jew and, according to legend, saves the Jewish people. Rabbi Arthur Waskow, of the Shalom Center in Philadelphia, believes that Judaism thrives through diversity and inclusion. "I don't think Judaism should or ought to want to leave any portion of the human population outside the religious process," he says. "We should not want to leave [homosexuals] outside the sacred tent." The marriage of Joseph and Mary is also unorthodox (to say the least), a case of an unconventional arrangement accepted by society for the common good. The boy needed two human parents, after all.

In the Christian story, the message of acceptance for all is codified. Jesus reaches out to everyone, especially those on the margins, and brings the whole Christian community into his embrace. The Rev. James Martin, a Jesuit priest and author, cites the story of Jesus revealing himself to the woman at the well—no matter that she had five former husbands and a current boyfriend—as evidence of Christ's all-encompassing love. The great Bible scholar Walter Brueggemann, emeritus professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, quotes the apostle Paul when he looks for biblical support of gay marriage: "There is neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ." The religious argument for gay marriage, he adds, "is not generally made with reference to particular texts, but with the general conviction that the Bible is bent toward inclusiveness."

The practice of inclusion, even in defiance of social convention, the reaching out to outcasts, the emphasis on togetherness and community over and against chaos, depravity, indifference—all these biblical values argue for gay marriage. If one is for racial equality and the common nature of humanity, then the values of stability, monogamy and family necessarily follow. Terry Davis is the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Hartford, Conn., and has been presiding over "holy unions" since 1992. "I'm against promiscuity—love ought to be expressed in committed relationships, not through casual sex, and I think the church should recognize the validity of committed same-sex relationships," he says.

Still, very few Jewish or Christian denominations do officially endorse gay marriage, even in the states where it is legal. The practice varies by region, by church or synagogue, even by cleric. More progressive denominations—the United Church of Christ, for example—have agreed to support gay marriage. Other denominations and dioceses will do "holy union" or "blessing" ceremonies, but shy away from the word "marriage" because it is politically explosive. So the frustrating, semantic question remains: should gay people be married in the same, sacramental sense that straight people are? I would argue that they should. If we are all God's children, made in his likeness and image, then to deny access to any sacrament based on sexuality is exactly the same thing as denying it based on skin color—and no serious (or even semiserious) person would argue that. People get married "for their mutual joy," explains the Rev. Chloe Breyer, executive director

of the Interfaith Center in New York, quoting the Episcopal marriage ceremony. That's what religious people do: care for each other in spite of difficulty, she adds. In marriage, couples grow closer to God: "Being with one another in community is how you love God. That's what marriage is about."

More basic than theology, though, is human need. We want, as Abraham did, to grow old surrounded by friends and family and to be buried at last peacefully among them. We want, as Jesus taught, to love one another for our own good—and, not to be too grandiose about it, for the good of the world. We want our children to grow up in stable homes. What happens in the bedroom, really, has nothing to do with any of this. My friend the priest James Martin says his favorite Scripture relating to the question of homosexuality is Psalm 139, a song that praises the beauty and imperfection in all of us and that glorifies God's knowledge of our most secret selves: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." And then he adds that in his heart he believes that if Jesus were alive today, he would reach out especially to the gays and lesbians among us, for "Jesus does not want people to be lonely and sad." Let the priest's prayer be our own.

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## **Proposition 8 and 'the will of the people'—an historical perspective**

From: *The Jewish Journal*, November 26, 2008

[\[www.jewishjournal.com/opinion/article/proposition\\_8\\_and\\_the\\_will\\_of\\_the\\_people\\_an\\_historical\\_perspective\\_20081126/\]](http://www.jewishjournal.com/opinion/article/proposition_8_and_the_will_of_the_people_an_historical_perspective_20081126/)

**By Zev Yaroslavsky**

Californians are acutely aware that to many political observers, our initiative and referendum process remains a mystery at best and a menace to democracy at worst.

Take the hard-fought battle over a proposed discriminatory amendment to our state Constitution. It has been called the most bitterly fought issue in the nation's most populous state, generating more intense public interest than the presidential election on the same ballot.

It posed the question, "Can the people override a previous action intended to end unequal treatment between citizens and amend the state Constitution expressly to permit such discrimination to continue?"

Even some minority communities, despite their own bitter experience, split on the issue. After intense internal debate, the Mexican Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles ultimately endorsed the amendment as a matter of individual rights and personal choice.

Further complicating matters, the amendment itself was confusing, with a counterintuitive "yes is no/no is yes" construction that led some people to vote against their intentions, codifying discrimination instead of eradicating it.

A costly advertising campaign helped ensure the measure's approval, touching off a new round of anger and recriminations when it was immediately challenged in court. After all, the people had spoken. Time for us all to move on.

Astute readers may have guessed that I refer not to Proposition 8, the same-sex marriage prohibition that voters narrowly approved on Nov. 4. I'm recalling instead a similar controversy from another era, one of the seminal anti-discrimination battles waged in California 44 years before.

In November 1964 -- the same presidential election when liberal Lyndon Johnson handily defeated conservative Barry Goldwater -- California voters reversed field and passed Proposition 14, a constitutional amendment intended to counter the Rumford Fair Housing Act enacted the year before. Strongly supported by then-Gov. Pat Brown and carried by Assemblyman W. Byron Rumford, Northern California's first black legislator, Rumford prohibited most racial discrimination in housing.

A well-funded coalition of realtors and landlords, intent on protecting white neighborhoods and their attendant property values from feared black incursions, immediately mounted a campaign to amend the state Constitution and guarantee property owners' continued ability to deny minorities equal access to housing.

After a heated battle, and editorial support from some leading newspapers, the measure passed with 65 percent of the vote. As the head of the archconservative California Republican Assembly explained, in that Cold War era, "the essence of freedom is the right to discriminate.... In socialist countries, they always take away this right in order to complete their takeover."

But Proposition 14's passage was only the beginning, not the end. The measure's opponents were bloodied but unbowed, and quickly filed suit. As the issue ground through the courts into 1965, the Watts Riots soon engulfed South Central Los Angeles, further shaking the city's racial complacency to its very core. By the spring of 1966, the California Supreme Court in a 5-2 decision rejected Proposition 14 as a violation of the state Constitution's equal protection and due process provisions.

The Rumford Act and Proposition 14 became a central issue in Gov. Brown's re-election campaign that year. One would-be Republican challenger, William Penn Patrick, thundered that Brown's "hand-picked Supreme Court" had overturned the will of 4.5 million Californians, declaring that the real issue was not race relations, but the abolition of property rights, "the cornerstone of freedom." Patrick's opponent in the Republican primary, Ronald Reagan, ultimately prevailed and went on to victory in the fall by dodging the issue, taking no stand on the fate of Proposition 14 but supporting modification or repeal of the original Rumford legislation.

Proposition 14's days, however, were numbered. In June 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court again struck down the measure, this time as a violation of federal equal protection and due process guarantees, among the most fundamental of our constitutional rights. Its most fervent supporters vowed to fight on, but by then -- with urban unrest sweeping the nation's major cities -- the more pragmatic conservative politicians increasingly realized it was a lost cause.

Gov. Reagan himself plainly recognized that the times were a-changing. In a spring 1968 press conference, he vowed to veto any legislative attempt to repeal Rumford, and would also oppose any fresh ballot initiatives to eliminate it. The law had taken on symbolic importance with minorities in California, he explained, conceding that "they have got some just grievances."

For all the white-hot political heat generated at the time by the Rumford Fair Housing Act, the efforts to override it and the epic court battles that followed, the matter now seems little more than a curious relic of a bygone age. And so it will be, I believe, with Proposition 8's attempt to similarly deny equal protection and due process to another persecuted minority in California today.

It is barely 40 years since the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the kind of state anti-miscegenation laws that once barred the type of union that produced our current president-elect. Long after the courts have similarly struck down Proposition 8, and same-sex marriage



prohibitions have rightly joined Jim Crow laws on the ash heap of history, our children will look back with wonder at how it could ever have been otherwise. May that day come soon.

*Zev Yaroslavsky is a member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and represents the western portion of the county. He was an opponent of Proposition 8.*

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## News bits and bites:

### **Richard Burns Announces Departure as Executive Director of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center in New York City**

Monday, December 8, 2008

NEW YORK - Richard Burns, Executive Director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center in New York City, has announced his departure from the Center. The longest serving leader of an LGBT organization in the United States, Mr. Burns has served as Executive Director since December 1, 1986. Mr. Burns has accepted the position of Chief Operating Officer at The Arcus Foundation, and will leave the Center in early February, 2009.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2008, the Center has grown to become the largest LGBT multi-service organization on the East Coast and second largest LGBT community center in the world. Every week, 6,000 people visit the Center, and more than 300 groups meet here. The Center has four programmatic departments: Adult Mental Health and Social Services (including Center CARE and Center CARE Recovery); Youth Enrichment Services (YES); Cultural Programs; and Advocacy. The Center offers programs and activities that provide adult and youth counseling, social services and referrals, educational forums, advocacy, community organizing opportunities, coalition building projects, leadership development workshops, and cultural programs.

Mr. Burns currently serves as the Center's chief executive officer with overall responsibility for the Center and its more than 40 programs and services. He developed the organization from a staff of three into the nation's leading and most comprehensive LGBT community center of with a staff of 80 and a budget over eight million dollars. Mr. Burns acts as the spokesperson for the Center and the LGBT community with media, the press and the public. Mr. Burns is a leader and a mentor in the LGBT liberation movement.

The Center's Board and Senior Managers recently completed an in-depth community Needs Assessment and also concluded a comprehensive Strategic Planning Process. This process has further strengthened the focus of the Center in meeting the ever-changing needs of our diverse community. The Center's Board and Senior Managers will provide continuity for the Center during this leadership transition. This is an opportunity for the Center to bring new vision to an

experienced and passionate team that will carry the Center into the next 25 years and beyond.

The mission of The Arcus Foundation is to achieve social justice that is inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity and race, and to ensure conservation and respect of the great apes.

"Richard Burns has been the driving force of the Center for the past 22 years," said Center Board President Bruce Anderson. "His vision, perseverance and dedication to the LGBT Liberation Movement secures his position as one of the more important social justice leaders in the country today. Although we are sad to hear of Richard's leaving the Center, we are excited for him in his new role at The Arcus Foundation. The Center's Board of Directors and senior management have assembled a team to steer the Center through this transition with grace and strength."

The search for Mr. Burns' successor is currently underway and any inquiries about this position should be directed to Rob Wheeler, the Center's Director of Human Resources and Administration at (212) 620-7310, [rob@gaycenter.org](mailto:rob@gaycenter.org).

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## International news:

### Berlin Gay Memorial Vandalized

16.12.2008  
Deutsche Welle  
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,3880574,00.html>

For the second time in four months, vandals have broken a window on Berlin's memorial to gay victims of the Nazis. The window allows viewers to watch a video of a same-sex couple kissing.

Berlin police say the window on the outside of the memorial was broken, most likely with a stone, Associated Press reports.

The window allows visitors to look inside the concrete memorial at a video installation that shows a same-sex couple locked in a perpetual kiss.

The simple grey rectangular stone across the street from Germany's national memorial to Jewish victims of the Holocaust was inaugurated in May after years of controversy.

More than 50,000 homosexuals are thought to have been convicted under the Nazis "because of their sexual orientation," with thousands of them sent to concentration camps and murdered.

Current research suggests 54,000 men and women were convicted of homosexual acts and about 7,000 killed in the camps.

### Monument's window targeted

The monument, designed by Danish-Norwegian artists Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset, contains a window that invites the visitor to look inside and see a film of a homosexual couple kissing. The film changes every two years.

In August, vandals broke the window in a similar manner to the recent vandalism. That round of vandalism led to protests denouncing homophobia attended by more than 100 people, including Berlin's openly gay mayor, Klaus Wowereit.

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## US balks at backing condemnation of anti-gay laws

By DAVID CRARY, AP National Writer David Crary, Ap National Writer – Fri Dec 19, 12:08 am ET

UNITED NATIONS – Alone among major Western nations, the United States has refused to sign a declaration presented Thursday at the United Nations calling for worldwide decriminalization of homosexuality.

In all, 66 of the U.N.'s 192 member countries signed the nonbinding declaration — which backers called a historic step to push the General Assembly to deal more forthrightly with any-gay discrimination. More than 70 U.N. members outlaw homosexuality, and in several of them homosexual acts can be punished by execution.

Co-sponsored by France and the Netherlands, the declaration was signed by all 27 European Union members, as well as Japan, Australia, Mexico and three dozen other countries. There was broad opposition from Muslim nations, and the United States refused to sign, indicating that some parts of the declaration raised legal questions that needed further review.

"It's disappointing," said Rama Yade, France's human rights minister, of the U.S. position — which she described as in contradiction with America's long tradition as a defender of human rights.

According to some of the declaration's backers, U.S. officials expressed concern in private talks that some parts of the declaration might be problematic in committing the federal government on matters that fall under state jurisdiction. In numerous states, landlords and private employers are allowed to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation; on the federal level, gays are not allowed to serve openly in the military.

Carolyn Vadino, a spokeswoman for the U.S. mission to the U.N., stressed that the United States — despite its unwillingness to sign — condemned any human rights violations related to sexual orientation.

Gay rights activists nonetheless were angered by the U.S. position.

"It's an appalling stance — to not join with other countries that are standing up and calling for decriminalization of homosexuality," said Paula Ettelbrick, executive director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

She expressed hope that the U.S. position might change after President-elect Barack Obama takes office in January.

Also denouncing the U.S. stance was Richard Grenell, who until two months ago had been the chief spokesman for the U.S. mission to the U.N.

"It is ridiculous to suggest that there are legal reasons why we can't support this resolution — common sense says we should be the leader in making sure other governments are granting more freedoms for their people, not less," said Grenell, who described himself as a gay Republican. "The U.S. lack of support on this issue only dims our once bright beacon of hope and freedom for those who are persecuted and oppressed."

More than 50 countries opposed to the declaration, including members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, issued a joint statement Thursday criticizing the initiative as an unwarranted attempt to give special prominence to gays and lesbians. The statement

suggested that protecting sexual orientation could lead to "the social normalization and possibly the legalization of deplorable acts" such as pedophilia and incest.

The declaration also has been opposed by the Vatican, a stance which prompted a protest in Rome earlier this month.

A Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, said the Roman Catholic Church opposed the death penalty and other harsh repression of gays and lesbians, but he expressed concern that the declaration would be used as pressure against those who believe marriage rights should not be extended to gays.

A new Vatican statement, issued Thursday, endorsed the call to end criminal penalties against gays, but said that overall the declaration "gives rise to uncertainty in the law and challenges existing human norms."

The European nations backing the declaration waged their campaign in conjunction with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Dutch foreign affairs minister, Maxime Verhagen, said countries that endorsed that 1948 document had no right to carve out exceptions based on religion or culture that allowed discrimination against gays.

"Human rights apply to all people in all places at all times," he said. "I will not accept any excuse."

He acknowledged that the new declaration had only symbolic import, but said it marked the first time such a large number of nations had raised the cause of gay rights in the context of General Assembly proceedings.

"This statement aims to make debate commonplace," he said. "It is not meant to be a source of division, but to eliminate the taboo that surrounds the issue."

Although the declaration's backers were pleased that nations on six continents had signed it, there were only two from Asia and four from Africa.

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### Call for papers / proposals:

The University of Chicago's Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture, and the Lesbian/Gay Studies Project of the Center for Gender Studies invite paper proposals for a symposium to be held on March 7, 2009, and which will become a special issue of *Amerasia Journal*, the core journal in the field of Asian American Studies for the last 40 years. This initiative expands upon the journal's first collection "Dimensions of Desire: Asian American Sexualities" and takes us into the new century. David Eng and Amy Sueyoshi will be our symposium keynote speakers.

We welcome paper proposals on any aspect of sexuality among Asian American subjects or communities, both historically and in the present, from any disciplinary or interdisciplinary perspective. Asian American sexuality has long been analyzed as a residual category constituted in relationship to class, race, ethnicity, and gender, or some intersection of these forms of differentiation. > Clearly stratification principles operate in the definition of all societies and social groups, but we are especially interested in papers that look at sexuality in and of itself. Potential topics might include the study of transexuality as lived experience, personal identity, or industry, the emergence of lesbian, gay, and queer identities, bisexuality as a symbol and reality, the representation of heterosexuality among Asian Americans, genitals as cultural symbols in the fetishization of Asian Americans, promiscuity and its perils, sex work and the commercialization of sexual tourism, sexuality and migration, sexual pedagogies, the relationship between sex and religious faith, and any other topics where Asian American sexualities is the primary focus of the work.

Proposals can be sent electronically to the following email addresses by January 7, 2009:

[rgutierrez@uchicago.edu](mailto:rgutierrez@uchicago.edu) and [rleong@ucla.edu](mailto:rleong@ucla.edu).

Paper proposals sent U.S. mail must reach us by the same date, with one copy each should be sent to:

Ramón A. Gutiérrez, Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture  
5733 South University Ave, Chicago, Illinois, and Russell Leong, Editor, Amerasia Journal, UCLA  
Department of Asian American Studies, 3336 Rolfe Hall, Box 957225, Los Angeles, CA 90095-7225.

Paper proposals should not be more than two single-spaced pages and should be accompanied by a short two-page résumé.

All travel and accommodation expenses will be paid by the University of Chicago for those presenters selected for the symposium.

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Research opportunity:

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) Caucus of the American Political Science Association (APSA) would like to commission a history of the Caucus and the roles played by LGBT people in the APSA.

We anticipate that the history will be either in the form of a publishable article or a master's thesis or both. We anticipate that someone in either history or one of the social sciences would undertake this commission. We will consider a graduate student who selects this as a thesis topic provided that his or her thesis advisor agrees to provide the necessary supervision. We have \$1,500 to offer for this project, payable in two parts - \$500 upon selection and \$1,000 upon completion. The leadership of the current LGBT Caucus will help facilitate introductions and contact with key actors who are still available whenever possible.

Persons interested in this research opportunity should submit (electronically) a letter of interest outlining their qualifications for this project and a c.v. Scholars should also provide an electronic copy of one previous work published, preferably in the area of LGBT studies. Graduate students should submit a writing sample and a letter (or e-mail) of support from their thesis adviser.

We will accept applications until an award is made, however, we would like to receive all applications from interested parties by March 1, 2009, when we will do our first screening.

Applications and questions about the project should be e-mailed to Charles Gossett at cwgossett@csupomona.edu

Charles W. Gossett
Chair, Political Science Department
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
3801 W. Temple Ave.
Pomona, CA

cwgossett@csupomona.edu
909-869-3883

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### Scholarships:

The Point Foundation is the nation's largest scholarship granting organization for LGBT students of merit. Point provides support through multi-year scholarships, leadership training, mentoring and hope to LGBT students who are marginalized because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Applications for the 2009-2010 school year become available at [www.pointfoundation.org](http://www.pointfoundation.org) December 12th, 2008 with a February 9th, 2009 deadline.

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Upcoming conferences:

**2009 Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference
Convenes Hundreds of LGBT Students and Allies**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 12, 2008

BLOOMINGTON, Ind.—The Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference (MBLGTACC) will hold its 17th annual conference Feb. 13-15, 2009 at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. MBLGTACC promotes leadership, activism, networking, diversity, health, and empowerment among gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, allied, and queer students, staff, and faculty around the Midwest. This year's theme is "Living Out Loud: Examining the Past to Enhance Our Future."

The Advocate recently ranked Bloomington as the nation's No. 1 gay-friendly small town vacation destination while Indiana University was included in The Advocate's top 20 list of schools for LGBT students. The Campus Climate Index also rated Indiana University 3.5 out of 5 in a recent survey.

OUTmedia's Queer Riot! with Julie Goldman will perform on the first night of the conference, Friday, Feb. 13. Queer Riot! includes nationally recognized comedians Marga Gomez, Vidur Kapur, and Jason Stuart. The Kinsey Sicks, world-renowned dragapella beautyshop quartet will perform Saturday, Feb. 14, followed by a dance party to round out the night's events. More entertainment acts are scheduled to play during registration and with the main acts.

Conference keynote speakers are out ESPN sports columnist LZ Granderson and ISU Professor Kand McQueen. Granderson is a senior writer and columnist for *ESPN the Magazine* and ESPN.com, as well as a regular contributor for ESPN's *Sports Center*, *Outside the Lines* and *First Take*. Perhaps the most visible openly gay sports journalist in the nation, Granderson broke the Sheryl Swoopes coming out story in 2005 and has been at the forefront of discussion surrounding gays in sports for much of his 13-year career, ruffling the feathers of liberals and conservatives alike with his matter-of-fact approach. McQueen holds a Ph.D. from Indiana University and currently teaches at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana. McQueen's research interests include assessing attitudes toward the atypically gendered and deconstructing the two gender paradigm. A third speaker will be announced shortly.

MBLGTACC hosts workshops led by students, faculty, and professionals to educate and motivate students to action. Participants will attend five sessions from a list of over 50 workshops concerning topics such as safe sex, activism basics, creating change on your campus, and ally community building.

The registration fee is \$60 for all. Registration can be completed online via the conference website. Scholarships are available for the first 100 IU Bloomington undergrad and graduate students who apply. See [website](#) for details on free registration.

This conference will be wheelchair accessible and will have ASL interpreters at main events.

Learn more about the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference at <http://www.mblgtacc.org>. Contact: Solomon Hursey or Julia Napolitano, MBLGTACC Executive Co-Chairs, at mblgta09@indiana.edu or call 812-855-4252.

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**Something completely different:**

[Editor's note: If you're all still with me – here's this on a lighter note.]

## **New star-studded Web video protests Proposition 8**

By JAKE COYLE, AP Entertainment Writer Jake Coyle, Ap Entertainment Writer – Thu Dec 4, 7:46 am ET

NEW YORK – Since Proposition 8 passed in California, much of Hollywood has been up in arms. Now, they are singing and dancing, too, in a new Web video called "Prop 8: The Musical."

The video was posted Wednesday on [FunnyOrDie.com](http://FunnyOrDie.com), the video site co-founded by Will Ferrell and Adam McKay. The site has found a niche in getting professional talent to quickly create topical comedy videos.

"Prop 8: The Musical" may be a 3-minute Internet video, but it has a blockbuster cast — including Jack Black (who plays Jesus), Neil Patrick Harris, John C. Reilly, Andy Richter, Maya Rudolph, Margaret Cho, Rashida Jones and others.

Though Jesus doesn't bring the two sides together, Harris has better luck. He argues gay marriage could save the economy: "Every time a gay or lesbian finds love at the parade, there's money to be made."

The video was conceived and written by Marc Shaiman, the Tony Award-winning composer of "Hairspray" and "South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut." McKay, who had previously collaborated with Shaiman on the song-and-dance routine Ferrell, Black and Reilly did at the Oscars earlier this year, sent him an e-mail floating the idea of a video.

Shaiman had been involved in a more serious debate over Proposition 8.

After voters approved Proposition 8, which changed the state's constitution to ban same-sex marriage, it was revealed that Scott Eckern, the artistic director of the California Musical Theater in Sacramento (the state's largest nonprofit musical theater company) had donated \$1,000 to the "Yes on 8" campaign.

Shaiman's "Hairspray" had played at the theater and he said he would never allow anything he wrote to play there because of Eckern's donation. Others protested and Eckern resigned in November.

In an interview Wednesday, Shaiman regretted that it came to Eckern losing his job and said: "It's a tragedy for everyone involved. You'll certainly see that no one called for him to resign."

The video for Funny or Die was a lighter-hearted protest.

Shaiman wrote the piece in a day, recorded it the next and shot it in a single day last week.

"It was like, 'Eureka! That's right, that's what I do!' said Shaiman of the mini-musical. "If I'm going to stand on the soap box, at least let me sing and dance."

[Here's a link to the video: <http://www.gaytvblog.com/2008/12/prop-8-the-musi.html>]

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# Happy Holidays Everyone!

