

MCC pastor murdered in Stockton

by Rev. Frodo Okulam

Rev. Virgil Scott, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of Stockton, California, on Feb. 17, 1986, was brutally and viciously murdered. His body was found in the back of his car, nude and wrapped in a blanket. He had been beaten and stabbed repeatedly. The circumstances of the murder strongly suggest that he was kidnapped before he was killed.

Rev. Scott was a very gentle man who had served the Stockton gay/lesbian community for a little over 5 years. About a year ago, the Stockton police raided a gay bar in Stockton. Rev. Scott and other community leaders met with police to protest the raid. An internal police investigation was begun, but never finished. Rev. Scott was also active in the fight against AIDS. Shortly before his murder, Rev. Scott received a number of death threats on his answering machine.

After the murder, the Coroner's office sealed the contents of Rev. Scott's home, including the records of the Stockton MCC, locking the church out of its records. Two MCC pastors, Rev. Freda Smith and Rev. Patricia Litka, arriving in Stockton for the memorial service, spoke to the police about this from their motel room. Shortly afterwards, they began to get "heavy breathing" phone calls.

The night that Rev. Scott was murdered, two other gay men were killed, one in Merced, California, and one in Atwater, California. Another MCC pastor, in Richmond, California, received a death-threat phone call, and a gay community leader in Merced was threatened and told that four more gay men would be murdered.

On Nov. 2, 1985, Timothy Lee, a black gay man, was murdered in Concord, California. That same night there was a Ku Klux Klan activity in the city. The FBI is investigating this case, since the Concord Police labeled it a "suicide" and the Coroner's office destroyed the strap used in Lee's murder.

Eight gay men have been murdered or reported missing in Stockton during the last two years. All of these cases are unsolved. Stockton police deny that there is any connection between the murders. The police told MCC investigators, "This may be another unsolved homicide. Stockton is just a violent town."

MCC is calling for an FBI investigation of Rev. Virgil Scott's murder and the intimidation and death threats received by other community leaders. As Rev. David Pelletier, the MCC Northwest District Coordinator, says, "The safety and security of the gay/lesbian/bisexual community throughout the state and even our nation is at stake."

Contributions to the Rev. Virgil Scott investigation fund may be made out to the Northwest District, UFMCC, 564 Fell St., San Francisco, CA 94102.

ACLU reports on gay rights bill

by W.C. McRae

On March 12, members of the ACLU's Gay and Lesbian Rights Commission reported back to gay community representatives and told them the background of the commission and broadly sketched the ACLU's proposed agenda and time line for passage of an omnibus gay rights bill in the 1987 legislative session.

Commission Chair Burton White stated that he made the motion to establish the commission at last September's general meeting. He cited the potential for civil liberty infractions regarding AIDS, the lack of movement of the gay rights bill in the last session, and the ACLU's own interest in "proselytizing the value of civil liberties" as reasons for the formation of the commission. Members of the commission presently are Burton White, Kathi Bogan, Rick Haselton, Rex Armstrong, and Tom Morris.

A part of the commission's undertakings to date have been to gain input from the gay community regarding perceived civil liberty violations, and to research the success of the Wisconsin gay rights bill. Commission member Rick Haselton visited Madison in January and spoke to gay activists there. He found that the Wisconsin bill was endorsed and backed by a wide coalition of labor, religious, and corporate interests.

In upcoming meetings with members of the gay community the commission hopes to begin the process of building a broad-based coalition by asking interested individuals to volunteer information on personal contacts in unions, churches, and business. The commission wants to build its own central record of who is willing to work and what contacts people have.

According to ACLU Executive Director, Stevie Remington, the time line advocated by the commission will be to get a bill introduced and printed by mid-February, 1987. An early hearing would enable the bill to get through both houses this session. Another

important consideration in advocating a strong initiative for gay rights at the present time is that during the next session Oregon will have a governor that won't veto the bill.

According to White, the "greatest potential for a gay and lesbian rights bill has never been reached because of internal differences in the gay community." By offering to be the "umbrella" under which a coalition can form, White and the commission hope that all aspects of the gay community can contribute. A grass roots coalition for gay rights has never been attempted in Oregon, says White, adding further that the organization necessary to form the coalition would contribute to the education needed to beat back a referendum.

The next step for the commission is to hold public meetings with the gay community and begin coalition building. The dates of the meetings have not been announced. For more information, call the ACLU at 227-3186.

According to Keeton Lowery, the ACLU commission's initiative forms "one of the most credible attempts in the US" for passage of a gay and lesbian rights bill. Lowery, chair of the Right to Privacy PAC, has met privately with the commission and says the PAC will be supportive of the commission's attempt. The role of the PAC, however, would probably be limited to backing candidates, providing information from surveys, and providing information on legislators. Lowery, however, claims he would personally be involved at the legislature.

Lowery says that Burton White "is making concerted efforts to try and find a way not to alienate anyone." Not since "the heyday of the Portland Town Council" has there been such a movement for gay rights in Oregon.

Lowery has, on his own initiative, asked the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission to establish a central office to receive and coordinate evidence of discrimination against gays and lesbians, both from individuals and from attorneys. A central registry of civil liberty infractions would help the ACLU in their lobbying efforts.

Lowery says he hopes that the ACLU commission can provide the organization to which everyone can contribute, and that old animosities will be set aside in order to build the coalition necessary to the passage, and retention, of an omnibus gay rights bill.

Being a volunteer is no rose garden,

but there is a reward in hearing the growing calm in the voice on the other end of the telephone line. The AIDS crisis is a frightening situation for all of us, but being able to ease someone's fears and help them to understand something they were confused about provides the fertile soil in which trust and hope can bloom.

call us at 223-5907 for details.

Cascade AIDS Project is looking for a cadre of telephone volunteers who can give a half-day a week, Monday through Friday, helping people overcome their fears and regain their perspective through understanding. If you want to be a regular half-day a week CAP volunteer, call us at 223-5907 for details.

When you're ready for The Wild Style!

The City Nightclub

An all-age gay nightclub. Before-hours & After-hours.

624 S.W. 13th Portland 224-CITY

VETERAN DRIVER OWNED

RADIO CAB

"COURTEOUS PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS"

PASSENGER SERVICES DELIVERY SERVICE

PORTLAND - BEAVERTON - GRESHAM - MILWAUKIE - TIGARD
OVER 100 CABS AS CLOSE AS YOUR PHONE
LICENSED FOR TRIPS ANYWHERE - SIGHTSEEING TOURS
STATION WAGONS UPON REQUEST

PACKAGES - PARCELS - ENVELOPES - GENERAL COMMODITIES
* 24 HOURS - 7 DAYS BONDED COURIERS
9 PASSENGER BUSES AVAILABLE

NO WEIGHT LIMIT • JUMPER CABLE SERVICE

FAST COURTEOUS SERVICE
CALL

227-1212

1613 N.W. KEARNEY

LAUGHING HORSE BOOKS & COFFEE

- LATIN AMERICA • SOUTH AFRICA
- WOMEN'S ISSUES • NATIVE AMERICAN
- BLACK STUDIES • ART & POLITICS
- FICTION • POETRY • LABOR
- ENVIRONMENT • PEACE
- GAY AND LESBIAN ISSUES

1322 N.W. 23rd, Portland, Oregon
227-5440

- OPEN EVENINGS •
- Collectively run
- We buy books.

Tues-Sat 11am-9pm Sun 12noon-5