

Briefs

by W.C. McRae

Why is this man president?

Ronald Reagan, Secretary of State George Schultz, and top national advisors made flippancy, off the cuff remarks regarding AIDS and San Francisco during a meeting regarding Libya, *The Washington Post* reported last month.

During discussion of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, who is known for his flamboyant clothing, Reagan reportedly quipped, "Why not invite Gadhafi to San Francisco, he likes to dress up so much."

To the general merriment, Schultz added, "Why don't we give him AIDS?" Others at the table laughed.

While AIDS — and Libyan "disinformation" (read: lies) — may be a laughing matter in the White House, not all found the exchange humorous. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force spokesperson Urvashi Vaid found the remarks "appalling" and ignorant. She suggested an AIDS education program be initiated for the White House and the Cabinet.

Gay \$ shows Gay sense

After the July defeat of a gay rights bill in Chicago, gay activists and businesspeople are stamping paper currency in the city with the words "Gay \$" to show the breadth of the gay community and its economic clout, according to *The Chicago Tribune*.

Over 70 of the "Gay \$" stamps were distributed to area businesses who are stamping currency in red before giving it out or depositing it.

Stamping money is not illegal as long as it does not render the money unfit for reissue.

Margaret Summit, one of the gay organizers, says, "If there are enough 'Gay \$' in everyone's wallets, they're going to start thinking about it [and] understand that all we're asking for is what they already have — the right to work and the right to live."

Shepherds receive Lucille Hart Award

On October 11, the Right to Privacy PAC's annual fundraiser, the Lucille Hart Dinner, was held at Portland's Westin Benson. In attendance were a record 509 supporters.

The Lucille Hart Award for outstanding service to the gay community went this year to Bill and Ann Shepherd, long-time activists and founders of the Portland chapter of Parents/FLAG. The Shepherds have been engaged in gay rights issues and with gay service organizations since the mid-70s.

Ann Shepherd was a member of then-Governor Robert Straub's Task Force on Sexual Preference, which was assembled early in 1976. Mrs. Shepherd is presently co-chair of Portland Parents/FLAG, and contact person for Windfire and Bridge Club, which are support and social groups for young gays and lesbians.

Right to Privacy Chair Keeston Lowery says attendance "far surpassed the goal," and estimates that the dinner grossed about \$35,000 and will probably clear \$22,000. Of this, about \$20,000 will be donated to electoral campaigns. Lowery estimates that the Right to Privacy PAC this year raised a total of over \$40,000. According to figures available, only 10 Oregon Political Action Committees raise more than \$40,000 annually.

Adopt-a-Dyke

In the past, the Right to Privacy PAC has been criticized for not selling tickets to the

Lucille Hart Dinner based on a sliding scale related to income, since the \$60-a-plate ticket allegedly limits the participation of women. This year, however, board member L.C. Hansen, with help from the Lesbian Community Project, instigated an "Adopt-a-Dyke" program. Men or women who were themselves unable to attend, or who wished to sponsor a woman, were encouraged to provide funding to pay all or part of the ticket price, in order to increase women's attendance at the fundraiser.

Hansen says she knows of 44 women who attended (most of whom had never attended before) directly due to sponsorship and to renewed interest in the dinner by women. Hansen's goal is that "when the politicians who sponsor gay rights look out at the audience, that they see women also attending."

"Most women said they'd come back," she said. "They were impressed with an organization that could bring that many politicians together."

The "Adopt-a-Dyke" program succeeded, according to Hansen, if it makes "the PAC more aware of the value of women's participation," and makes "women aware of the PAC that is fighting for their rights."

Which Republican Party?

The Democratic National Committee, in a position piece entitled "New Choices in a Changing America," is continuing its retreat from active support of gay rights, according to the *Advocate*. The 71-page document promises a "future-oriented agenda" that makes no mention of gays, blacks, or civil rights in general.

Democratic National Committee Chair Paul Kirk states that "Commissioners did not proceed by trying to satisfy the litmus tests or wish lists of separate groups." The document states, "We believe that basic moral values are the bedrock of individual responsibility, and that we must build a society and develop public policies that promote and honor these values." The committee did go as far as to espouse making "equal opportunity for all a reality."

To the displeasure of some "Congressional Democrats," the document does include a "sidebar" calling for greater federal commitment to AIDS research, education, and service organizations.

In a related story from Chicago, the Democratic Party of Cook County has printed flyers attacking two Democratic aldermen, Luis Gutierrez and Jesus Garcia, who voted for the recently defeated gay rights bill in Chicago, according to the *Windy City Times*. The Democratic Party in Chicago is locked in internecine warfare between supporters of Mayor Harold Washington and supporters of Alderman Ed Vrdolyak, heir to former Mayor Richard Daley's "Machine" of the '50s and '60s.

Washington's faction supported the gay rights bill; Vrdolyak's did not. The Vrdolyak-sponsored flyers in part read: "Last month [he] voted in favor of a homosexual rights bill. It would allow homosexuals to teach our children... He has vowed to try again... The alderman does not represent this community."

While the Democratic Party is listing to the right, trying to out-butcher the Republicans, the Republican Party is attempting to infiltrate and woo away traditional Democratic voter strongholds, such as the Southern black community.

According to Robert Morris Smith, treasurer of the Democratic Central Committee of Multnomah County, and former regional vice-chairperson of the Gay and Lesbian Caucus of the Democratic Party, these moves rightward on the part of the national party aren't reflected in Oregon. "Frankly, we're pretty liberal," Smith says of the Oregon Democratic Party.

Smith confesses to be disappointed by the mood of the national party, and claims that Southern Democrats "want to ape the Re-

publicans." But in Oregon, Smith argues, "the more liberal we are, the more likely we are to win. If there's no differences between candidates, the Republicans win."

He added that Oregon State Democratic Party Chair Judy Carnahan was the only State Chair in the nation to vote to support openly gay candidates at the National Democratic Committee mid-term meeting.

Gay foster-parenting policy to be argued in court

The Massachusetts Supreme Court has refused to dismiss a lawsuit seeking to overturn state policy which excludes gays and lesbians from being foster parents.

The decision was the latest in a series of events that have stemmed from Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis' May 1985 order to remove two children placed by the state in the home of two gay men.

The state went on to institute regulations effectively prohibiting gay couples from becoming foster parents. According to the state's lawyer, "the department's regulation serves the best interest of children who are in foster care."

Massachusetts Chief Justice Thomas Morse disagrees, and has ordered the case to trial. In his opinion, he describes as "blatantly irrational" the state policy of excluding gays from being foster parents. He claimed that the courts had already determined that "sexual preference *per se* is irrelevant to a consideration of parenting skills." He went on to conclude that "prospective foster parents should be selected on the basis of their ability to provide temporary care and support for children, not on the basis of an arbitrary factor such as marital status."

Gov. Dukakis, considered by some to be a likely candidate for the '88 Democratic presidential nomination, garnered the ire of the Massachusetts gay community since his controversial decision.

Oregon has no regulations which deny gay men or lesbians from becoming foster parents. According to Teletha Benjamin, man-

ager of Special Services of Children's Services for Multnomah County, "The issue is whether the couple has something to offer, whether they're able to offer the child a stable nurturing environment." Benjamin stated that "a person's lifestyle is not something we are concerned with as long as they're fit," saying that in Oregon, Children's Services places children in homes of unmarried and single people.

Even though "there are no rules that require discrimination against lifestyles," if a child is placed in a gay household, the court must be made aware; the parents of the child have to know of the placement and okay it, and the regional director must approve. Such elaborate safeguards are not deemed necessary in placing children in traditional straight households.

House subcommittee hears of anti-gay violence

On October 9, violence against gay men and lesbians was the subject of a hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Criminal Justice. The subcommittee heard from three panels. The first was made up of gay activists and workers in anti-gay violence projects from New York, San Francisco, and Washington; a second consisted of police, social science, and legal witnesses concerned about development of an appropriate law enforcement response to anti-gay violence; the third panel was made up of victims of anti-gay violence.

Kevin Berrill, Director of the Violence Project of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, testified, "The gay community is not only battling AIDS, but is also confronting a second epidemic, one that has received far less attention from our public officials. That epidemic is anti-gay violence."

NGLTF's recommendations to Congress include a call for government at all levels to study anti-gay violence; enactment of gay rights legislation; educational outreach; tougher laws; and establishment of community programs to support victims.

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