

national news

Murderer confesses

A "natural-born killer" of gay men is in jail, and communities all along the East Coast are breathing easier. Gary Ray Bowles, a 32-year-old drifter and small-time hustler, was arrested Nov. 21 in Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

"Tim Whitfield" had been brought in for questioning about the slaying of his roommate a week earlier. According to police reports, after about an hour he said, "Look, I'm tired of this. Do you really want to know who I am? I'm Gary Ray Bowles."

For the next few days, as police investigators flew in from Maryland, Georgia, and other parts of Florida, Bowles gave detailed accounts of the six murders he had committed over the last eight months.

His victims ranged in age from 37 to 72. Some were tricks he had known only a few hours. But it was more common for Bowles to befriend an older man and move in with him for a few weeks. Then something inside Bowles would snap and he would beat, strangle, stab or shoot his benefactor to death. Each murder was savagely brutal.

In a signature ritual, he would stuff something—a towel, dildo, leaves—down the victim's throat, reportedly to keep them from breathing should they have somehow survived their ordeal.

Bowles would then take off with the victim's cash, car and credit cards.

"Whitfield" had been arrested earlier in November in the Jacksonville area on drunk and disorderly charges. The police routinely check fingerprints against local files, not against the national register. Had they done so, Bowles' last victim would still be alive.

"It's time," Bowles told the police. "I want the killing to stop.... I'm either getting six life sentences or the electric chair."

Birch to head HRCF

Elizabeth Birch will become the next executive director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund. She was chosen by the board of directors at its meeting in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 19 and 20. She will take over for Tim McFeeley in early January. McFeeley is stepping down after more than five years as head of the nation's largest gay and lesbian political organization.

Birch, a 38-year-old attorney, will be leaving Apple Computer Inc., where she has served as the company's chief litigator. She was influential in getting Apple to adopt domestic partner benefits and other nondiscriminatory policies for lesbians and gay men.

Her principle work within the lesbian and gay community has been the six years she served on the board of directors for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the last two years as co-chair.

Newt in the House

"I think our position should be toleration [of gays]," said Georgia Republican Newt Gingrich, the next speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.



Newt Gingrich

"It should not be promotion and it should not be condemnation. I don't want to see police in the men's room, which we had when I was a child, and I don't want to see trying to educate kindergartners in understanding gay couples. I think both approaches are fundamentally wrong."

"I think where we're moving towards as a society and in our party's position is that consenting adults can have private relations without—in any way—the political system being involved."

The remarks came during an extended interview by freelance writer Chandler Burr, which took place in April of this year as part of an article Burr was writing on semi-openly gay Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Wis.). They were published in the Nov. 25 edition of *The Washington Blade*.

Gingrich's views, which could perhaps be described as "benign neglect," do not please activists, who seek to enlist government as an agent

for pro-gay and -lesbian policies. But they do, at least philosophically, leave the door open to remove vestiges of government discrimination such as sodomy laws at the state level, and at the national level, the ban on gay men and lesbians serving in the military.

Gingrich believes there may be a genetic component to homosexuality but sees that as a predisposition not an absolute factor. "I believe it's an orientation in the way that alcoholism is an orientation," he said. "I think that on most things, most days, the vast majority of practicing homosexuals are good citizens." He bases this view on his positive experience with a number of people, including a respected teacher growing up; Gunderson and his partner, Rob Morris; and his own lesbian half-sister, 28-year-old Candace Gingrich.

The congressman strongly supports a "bias in favor of heterosexual marriage and heterosexual couples raising children." He said, "It is madness to pretend that families are anything other than heterosexual couples. I think it goes to the core of how civilization functions."

Turning to partisan politics, he speculated, "[T]he numbers of those whose primary motivation is their gayness is a very small percentage of gays, and it's all Democrat."

"But I absolutely think we can be a comfortable party for folks who share a lot of other beliefs with us but happen to be homosexual."

Gingrich called "the people who really are morally offended by gay people...the [Pat] Buchanans and the [Robert] Dornans [R-Calif.]...not representative of the future, they're just noisy."

Digital Queers combines technology and activism

When you need computer savvy, on-line contacts, and lesbian and gay sensibilities, who do you call? If you're a national nonprofit organization, you call Digital Queers. DQ has been promoting its grass-roots, electronic activism since its inception in 1992, reports *The Washington Blade*.

Digital Queers was conceived by Tom Rielly, then a marketing executive working in the Silicon Valley, the heart of the computer industry. He cites his involvement with Queer Nation-San Francisco as part of the inspiration for the group. With the help of Karen Wickre, who worked for a software company, and core members employed at some of the largest computer-related firms in the country, Digital Queers began to move to-

wards its goal—to bring the latest technology to the gay and lesbian civil rights movement.

"We wanted to have some benefit come from our many friends and contacts in the computer industry that might help gay and lesbian nonprofits with their computer needs," said Wickre. "We in the technology business take our tools for granted; nonprofits tend to fight for crumbs and accept hand-me-downs."



Digital Queers has given computers, modems and printers to groups around the country, such as the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum in Los Angeles and the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization in Washington, D.C. But it is because of DQ's "computer makeovers" that it is becoming well known.

When an organization which fits its criteria (gay, nonprofit and national) approaches Digital Queers needing new equipment, the group holds a fund-raising event and calls on its major donors to match funds collected. It then works closely with the staff at the organization to assess its computer and network needs, its workload, etc.

Another of DQ's goals is to change the demographics of gay network users. Currently, there are no studies relating sexual orientation and network use—but Wickre feels the average queer on-liner is male, white and "undoubtedly between 25 and 40."

She says, "We are very interested in deviating from that norm by training and supporting lesbian and people of color organizations. We at DQ hope we can help educate and train more and more people on the value of electronic activism so that the work will spread even further."

Compiled by Bob Roehr and Jann Gilbert

cathartic comics I featuring The Brown Bomber and Diva Touché Flambé by Prof. I.B. Gittendowne

Season's Greetings from the Baby Bomber

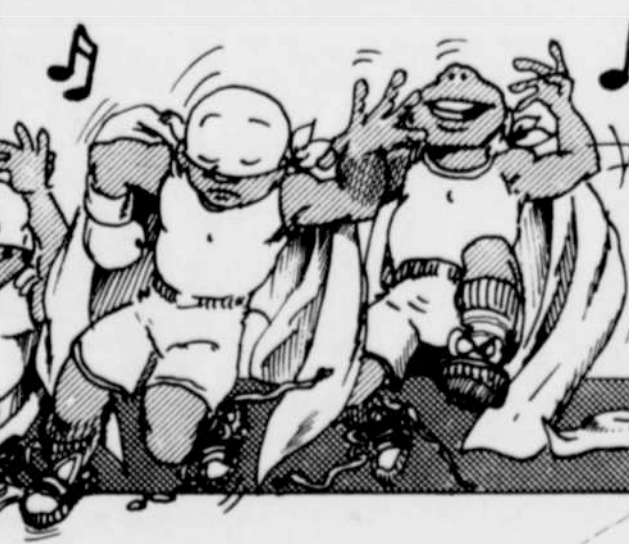
Regular readers of Cathartic Comics
Can't understand it? Well get Hooked on Phonics!
Good games of Scrabble, the joy that friends bring
These are a few of the year's coolest things



Ollie North's defeat—a fall oh so rapid
Bashing Rush Limbaugh, a madman so vapid
The movie "Priscilla," it made my heart sing
These are a few of the year's coolest things



Gail Shibley, Charles Moose and jolly George Eighmey
Whitney in concert and Queer Night still slays me
No Denny Smith, nor Measure 13
These are a few of the year's coolest things



If this season, without reason
I should feel real sad
Please send me a few of my favorite things
and then I won't feel so bad

