

Gay gene can be altered

Chandler Burr, author of the forthcoming book *The Gay Gene*, will speak at the General Conference of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches to be held in Atlanta, July 23-30. Burr will discuss the search for the "gay gene" and experiments currently being conducted to alter that gene. Burr is a journalist who specializes in reporting on neurobiological research. He has been following recent efforts to devise a means of genetic alteration that would allow prospective parents to change the sexual orientation of their children in utero.

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is a worldwide Christian denomination that primarily serves the sexual minority community. This year's general conference is will draw some 2,000 delegates.

Latino/a organization revamps board, awards grants

To keep pace with its rapid growth, the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization voted during its national conference to change the structure of its governing board, according to a press release. The new structure should facilitate strategic planning and allow the organization to establish more secure and stable funding.

Meanwhile, Letitia Gomez, LLEGO executive director for the past two years, has withdrawn her resignation and has agreed to continue in that position.

LLEGO has also selected 10 recipients for its Technical Assistance Training on AIDS Project grants. This year's grantees are AGUILAS of San Francisco; ALLGO of Austin, Texas; ALMA of Chicago; Bienestar of Los Angeles; Entre Amigos of Anaheim, Calif.; Entre Hermanos of Seattle; Fundación SIDA of San Juan, Puerto Rico; Puerto Rico CONCRE of San Juan; Las Salamandras de Ambiente of Miami; and Lesbianas Latinas de Dallas (Texas).

The training project works to strengthen the organizational capacity and infrastructure of Latina/o lesbian and gay social, cultural and community-based organizations. The program provides technical assistance and training to develop and implement effective and culturally relevant HIV/STD prevention programs directed to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people.

Gay and lesbian religious groups active

Integrity, the Episcopal gay and lesbian group, held its National Convention in Atlanta in June. The convention motto was "Go Forth for God." In addition to worship services and a business meeting, Integrity hosted a black tie banquet at which the Louie Crew Award for outstanding contributions to Integrity was awarded to Mark Graham of Atlanta.

In related news, the Episcopal Diocese of New York elected a sexual-minority-positive woman, the Rev. Catherine S. Roskam, as bishop suffragan. Bishop-elect Roskam is a longtime Integrity member. Her election is expected to be confirmed in December. The diocese also approved three pro-gay and -lesbian measures, according to a press release. The first was in support of blessing same-sex unions and allowing gay men and lesbians—whether celibate or not—to become Episcopal

priests. The second resolution directs the trustees of the diocese to formally request that each company in its investment portfolio prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or marital status. The final resolution urged the New York state Legislature to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Finally, a coalition of 10 lesbian and gay religious groups filed a joint friend of the court brief in *Romer vs. Evans*, the Colorado Amendment 2 case now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. The groups are Affirmation (Methodist), Axios USA Inc. (Orthodox and Eastern), The Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, Dignity/USA (Roman Catholic), Evangelicals Concerned Inc. (ecumenical), Integrity Inc. (Episcopal), Lutherans Concerned/North America, Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, The United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns (United Church of Christ), and the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations.

Transsexuals disrupt health symposium panel

Citing the lack of inclusiveness on a transgender health panel at the National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference, activists seized control of the podium and opened participation to all transsexuals and transgendered people who wished to join them, according to a press release. Several audience members accepted the invitation, and the revamped panel proceeded with its presentation.

Spearheading the takeover were Portlanders Rachel Koteles and Margaret Deirdre O'Hartigan, and Christine Tayleur of Transgender Nation San Francisco. Speaking in an interview, Koteles said, "The reception to our protest by those health professionals in attendance was gratifying. It leads us to hope similar action will not be necessary at next year's conference in Seattle—but that presumes conference organizers will recognize that responsibility for formulating and articulating trans people's health needs rests primarily with ourselves and is not the prerogative of non-trans people."

Lesbian Naval Reserve officer gets to stay

Navy Lt. Zoe Dunning can remain in the Naval Reserve, despite her public declaration two years ago that she is a lesbian. The Reuter news service reports that Navy Secretary John Dalton upheld the decision of the three-member Navy board of inquiry which recommended that Dunning not be discharged after investigating her case last December.

The board of inquiry's decision marks the first time a U.S. military tribunal has decided in favor of an openly gay or lesbian servicemember facing discharge for homosexuality.

Believing President Clinton's promise to lift the ban on lesbians and gay men in the military, Dunning announced her lesbianism at a rally in January 1993. A military tribunal recommended her discharge that same year.

Facing strong opposition to lifting the ban, Clinton devised the infamous "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Under this policy personnel cannot be asked about their sexual orientation. They can, however, be dismissed for openly acknowledging that they are gay or lesbian unless they can prove that does not mean they will engage in homosexual conduct.

The Navy agreed to reconsider Dunning's case in light of the new policy. The board agreed with Dunning's contention that simply stating that she was a lesbian did not violate the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

Compiled by Kristine Chatwood



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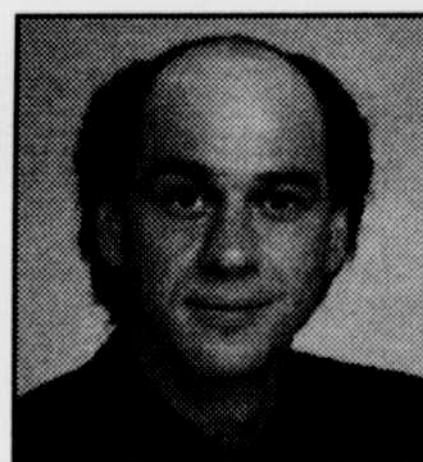
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