

national briefs

CALIFORNIA

Fans of the television show *Friends* will soon see a Gingrich in the cast. Candace Gingrich, sister of House Speaker Newt Gingrich and lesbian poster girl, will play the part of the lesbian minister who officiates at the wedding of Susan and Carol, the two lesbian characters. The episode will air in January.

Gingrich was recruited for the role by David Crane, the show's executive producer. The two met at a Los Angeles benefit for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.



Protesters from ACT UP-San Francisco disrupted a Nov. 27 fund-raiser for the University of California at San Francisco's AIDS Health Project. In addition to the usual chanting, whistling and blocked entrances, ACT UP set off stink bombs at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero, where the fund-raiser was held.



Protesters were angry that the event was scheduled on the 17th anniversary of the assassination of Harvey Milk. They were also upset that AHP chose to honor Pat Christen, executive director of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, at the gala. Earlier this year ACT UP-San Francisco publicly called for Christen's ouster.



The dream of a lesbian and gay community center in San Francisco may be a little closer to becoming reality. Project organizers told the *Bay Area Reporter* on Nov. 23 that they have located a site in the Market Street corridor and are presently negotiating with the owner.

When completed, the center will house an information and referral service for tourists and newcomers to San Francisco; it will provide meeting and office space for community groups and projects; and it will be a safe space for people of all abilities, ages and ethnic and cultural backgrounds to come together for the betterment of the community.



West Hollywood, the gay mecca of Southern California, is the newest site of the never-ending battle over gun control in this country. City Council members are considering a proposal to ban the sale of "Saturday night specials," the cheap, unreliable, low-caliber handguns favored by those criminals who have not yet moved on to semi-automatic and assault weapons. Passage of the prohibition would make West Hollywood the first city in the United States to ban these guns.

Thanks to the lobbying efforts of the National Rifle Association, every attempt by the federal government to ban the weapons domestically has failed.

In October, all five members of the West Hollywood City Council unanimously endorsed the ban. The attorney drafting the ordinance is studying state bans on the weapons passed by Maryland, Minnesota, South Carolina, Hawaii and Illinois.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Detroit Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton was honored in November for his support of lesbians and gay men within the Roman Catholic Church.

New Ways Ministry, a national Catholic group that promotes openness to lesbians and gay men in the Church, presented Gumbleton with its Bridge Building Award.

At Gumbleton's suggestion, the award was presented in the same hotel in which the National Conference of Catholic Bishops was taking place. Only a few of the 250 bishops at the conference came to the awards ceremony.

MICHIGAN

A gay high school music director was the topic of discussion at a Nov. 20 Byron Center school board meeting, according to the *Detroit Free Press*. At issue was his sexual orientation, which has aroused the anger of some parents.

Gerry Crane has vowed to remain on the job despite the opposition directed at him. Crane denies that he told students about his private life. Apparently, the trouble began when someone made public the fact that Crane and his partner had participated in a commitment ceremony.



In a move reminiscent of Dan White's "Twinkie defense," lawyers for John Schmitz, the man charged with killing a gay man after the two appeared on the *Jenny Jones* show, may try to convince the jury that his thyroid made him do it.

Schmitz is charged with first-degree murder in the shooting of Scott Amedure. Amedure was killed three days after he revealed during the taping of Jones' show that he had a crush on Schmitz. Schmitz told police he felt humiliated by Amedure's disclosure.

On Nov. 6, doctors at Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital diagnosed Schmitz with Graves' disease, a thyroid disorder. His attorneys are reviewing his medical records to see if a claim of mood swings brought on by the disorder has a chance of standing up in court.

MISSOURI

A new history book, one that tells the history of lesbians and gay men, has been rejected by the libraries in nearly every high school in St. Louis and St. Louis County.

Copies of *Becoming Visible*, a collection of articles discussing gay people in premodern societies, the emergence in the 18th and 19th centuries of the modern gay movement, and the struggles of lesbians and gay men at the end of the 20th century, were sent to 83 high schools in the St. Louis area. They were donated to the schools in October by the St. Louis chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network as part of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual History Month.



A random check of high schools failed to find a single high school that had put the book on the shelves. A librarian at Normandy High School, however, said she is keeping a copy of the book behind the counter, but it is listed in the card catalog.

NEW MEXICO

Four people accused of plotting to bomb entities with liberal affiliations included gay bars among their proposed targets.

Authorities said Larry Wayne Crow; Willie Ray Lampley; Lampley's wife, Cecilia; and John Dare Baird conspired to blow up gay bars, offices of civil rights groups, abortion clinics and welfare offices, according to the Associated Press.

Crow, who lives in New Mexico, surrendered to authorities after the other three were arrested at Lampley's Vernon, Okla., home. Materials used to build bombs were seized at the Lampley home.

All four are being held without bail by federal marshals.

Compiled by Kristine Chatwood

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