

Sean Cox, executive director of For Us Northwest, a nonprofit organization to support children and those affected by AIDS, is asking Kroeker to step forward to promote HIV prevention. He said it is dangerous to lead the public to think the disease is about a certain population.

Cox said the only universal thing about people with HIV is they "didn't think it would happen to them." Given Kroeker's high-profile position, he said the chief would be a welcome spokesman.

### PAST IMPERFECT

Kroeker did not say he had experienced a change of heart since making the comments. He did say he would not make similar statements in the future and insisted no more tapes or evidence of similar speeches are left to be found by anyone exploring his past.

In fact, Kroeker said he would welcome people looking into his past. He said absolutely no evidence indicates his private views on homosexuality have affected his job performance.

But mounting evidence indicates the LAPD, including Kroeker, isn't and wasn't as gay-friendly and inclusive as he suggests.

One Los Angeles attorney, Stephen Yagman, told *Willamette Week* that the chief was intolerant of gays and lesbians. He claimed that he tried to warn Katz before she hired Kroeker but that she didn't return his call.

Even a former LAPD co-worker, Virginia Acevedo, said that once she came out as a lesbian, she was the subject of an unfair internal investigation. She later sued the LAPD for sexual harassment and settled out of court for \$750,000, according to *WW*.

According to the Los Angeles publication *Frontiers*, critics consider a recent study about the LAPD's effort to combat discrimination of gays since 1994—the Hartman Report—"laughable" and inconclusive. Kroeker served the LAPD from 1965 to 1997.

Most troubling to some about Kroeker's past is his former mentor, Robert Vernon, who was forced to retire as LAPD assistant chief because of his controversial views on homosexuality. The two men, along with other Christian cops, belonged to the conservative Grace Community Church; some called them the "God Squad."

### CURRENT POLICIES

Kroeker said if one of his officers was a known racist, anti-Semite, sexist or homophobe, it would be a cause for concern. In fact, if potential recruits are found to be bigoted, they might be eliminated from the process, although he said he isn't certain about the bureau's policies regarding the issue.

If Portland police officers make speeches to groups espousing racism, sexism, anti-Semitism or homophobia, Kroeker said that the action would be called into question and that they likely would be disciplined. Later, though, he said that if his officers did stand for these things it would be a cause for concern but that taking action would be a difficult decision.

"Religion is religion," Kroeker said. But when hate is involved, he added, that is a differ-

ent story.

Kroeker doesn't see his comments on the tape as hateful. "[It] was pinned on Scripture," he said.

But some do see his comments as hate speech—no different from the rhetoric of any number of anti-gay hate groups.

Jordana Sardo of Radical Women said she equates the excerpts she read with the rhetoric of the Ku Klux Klan. "I'd characterize (them) as fascist," she said.

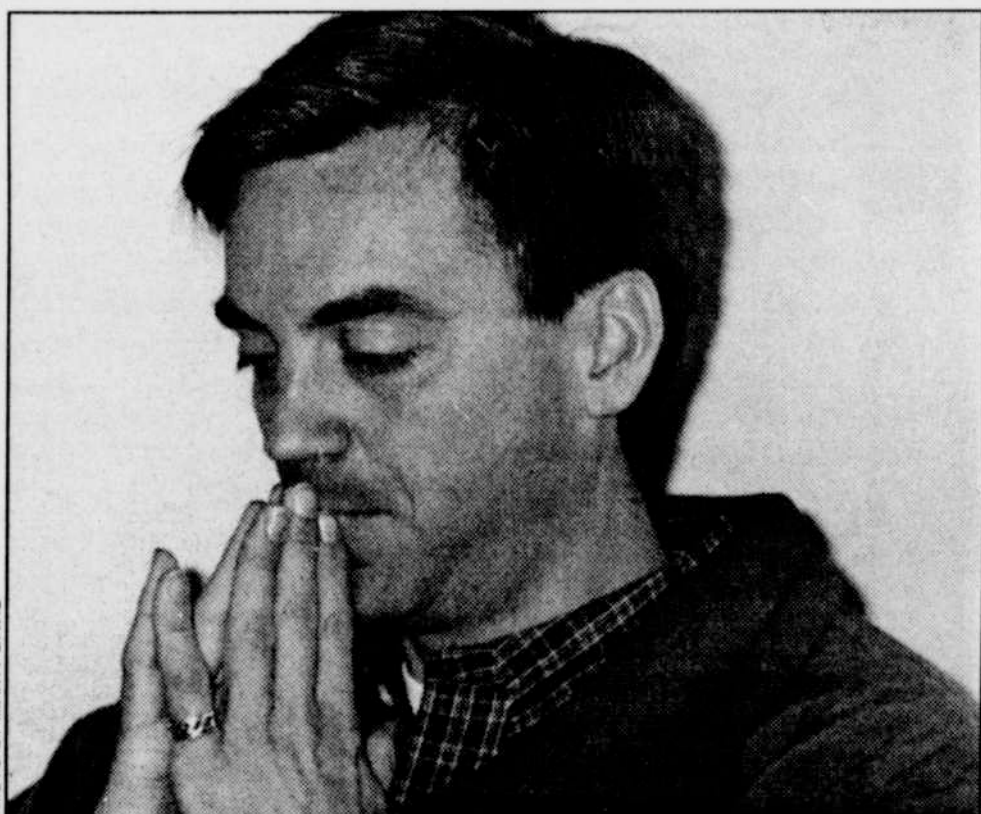
Jeff Montgomery, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs co-chairman, thinks the community and Katz should be consistent when reviewing Kroeker's tapes. His group is a national network advocating for the rights and the safety of the gay community.

If Kroeker had attended a KKK demonstration or a Holocaust denial rally, "there wouldn't even be a discussion," Montgomery said. "For some reason when it comes to slamming gays...everyone says, 'Well you know...'"

After looking at the Kroeker transcripts, Montgomery told *Just Out*, "This is horrifying to read this." The Detroit, Mich., resident said it was chilling to read the statements but even more disturbing given that the speaker is the police chief of a major city.

However, Montgomery stopped short of suggesting Kroeker should resign or be fired. He suggested the chief be asked whether he has the ability to do his job after he's alienated the gay and lesbian community. If the response isn't satisfactory, people should complain to Katz, Montgomery advised.

An officer making remarks to a police organization is not the same thing as talking to your church or your neighborhood association, Montgomery said. "I consider it semiprofession-



Bob Ball, a Portland Police Bureau reserve captain, thinks Kroeker's anti-gay opinions have changed through the years.

al," he said about the speech. But Kroeker thinks the tapes were made in a religious setting that should be considered his own business despite the professional nature of the group.

### A GAY OFFICER SPEAKS

Bob Ball, a successful businessman, is a reserve captain in the bureau who volunteers his service to the city. But being a policeman means the world to him. He has invested thousands of hours and can't imagine his life without serving the community.

Ball is one of only two out gay male cops in the bureau. When he heard about Kroeker's comments on the tapes, he was devastated. He was angry. In fact, he sat down and composed a long letter to Kroeker about his lost trust in the head of the bureau he respects, admires and serves without any paycheck.

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