


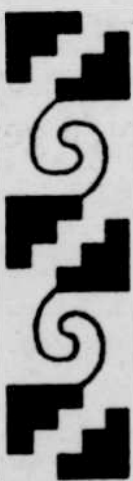
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 Be sure to visit the **Just Out** booth at the **Portland Pride festival**  
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**NORTHWEST news**

**CHURCH RECEIVES BOMB, DEATH THREATS**

A 44-year-old man was arrested May 21 after threatening to bomb the predominantly gay Metropolitan Community Church of the Gentle Shepherd in Vancouver, Wash., and kill the senior pastor.

According to the Rev. Dianne Shaw, Casey Gene Peirsol called seven times during the past year. "The early calls were rambling and disoriented, but last week the calls turned overtly hostile and threatening," she said in a statement May 31.

Two of the messages threatened to bomb the church, and one contained a death threat against Shaw. She saved three of the messages and turned them over to police, including one in which the caller said, "I'm going to burn your [expletive deleted] church to the ground because you're gay and lesbian homosexuals."

Police traced the calls to Peirsol, who has

complaint, charging him with "practices declared by the United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teaching." The nine-member Annual Conference Committee on Investigation, which acts similarly to a grand jury, met for only two hours before rendering its unanimous finding.

Williams' congregation has supported him throughout this yearlong process. Maggie Brown, Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations chairwoman, said his ministry has been both deeply spiritual and truly uniting.

"We are deeply pleased and relieved that we will be able to continue as the beneficiaries of his effective ministry here at Woodland Park Church," she said. "I wish every church could have a pastor as fine as ours."

Amory Peck of Bellingham, coordinator of the Pacific Northwest Reconciling United Methodists, added: "Today we are rejoicing as Mark Williams is freed to continue his calling. Now we look forward to working within this invigorated spirit of justice and reconciliation in



Lou Beres (right), Oregon Christian Coalition executive director, scolds Salem Mayor Mike Swaim after the *Who Cares* program May 20

been charged with malicious harassment and making a bomb threat. Vancouver police say they believe he was plotting to blow up the church to kill Shaw.

It is not known if Peirsol intended to carry out his plan during a service when the building would've been filled with parishioners. He is being held on \$50,000 bond and is scheduled to appear June 11 in Superior Court.

Shaw said her church is coping well in the face of the threats. It has remained open, and no services have been canceled.

The Rev. Troy D. Perry, who founded the denomination in 1968, said that 21 of the predominantly gay MCC congregations have been targets of arson and fire bombing and that more than half have been victims of threats, physical attacks, hate calls, hate mail, vandalism, graffiti or desecration. "Acts such as these are reminders that our work on behalf of social and spiritual justice is still far from finished."

**CHURCH DROPS CHARGES AGAINST GAY PASTOR**

After hearing the case of the Rev. Mark Edward Williams, pastor of Seattle's Woodland Park United Methodist Church, a committee found insufficient evidence May 31 to sustain the complaint of homosexual practice filed against him. He is now free to continue his career as an ordained minister.

After Williams publicly came out as a gay man following a report to his annual regional conference last June in Tacoma, Bishop Elias Galvan of Seattle said he felt compelled to file an official

the United Methodist Church."

**MAYOR, MABON DEBATE**

Salem Mayor Mike Swaim debated Lon Mabon, Oregon Citizens Alliance chairman, during his *Who Cares* cable access program May 20.

Dozens of people came to City Hall to listen in on the war of words and to ask questions. The crowd seemed to be split evenly between the pro- and anti-gay sides.

Swaim suggested the face-off in the wake of the City Council's recent vote to extend civil rights protection based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Mabon believes this will give queer people "special rights."

**COURT REJECTS GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP IN LIBRARIES**

In yet another blow to the government's repeated attempts to censor the Internet, a court May 31 decisively rejected a law that forces libraries to deny adults as well as minors access to constitutionally protected speech online in order to receive federal funding.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia agreed with arguments made by the American Civil Liberties Union and others that blocking programs cannot effectively screen out only material deemed "harmful to minors." The court called the software a "blunt instrument," adding that "the problems faced by manufacturers and vendors of filtering software are legion."

"The court today barred the government from

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