

NATIONAL news



Providence, R.I., Mayor-elect David N. Cicilline meets with senior citizens on the campaign trail

In fact, Phelps even touted his support of the amendment during a series of news conferences in his downstate district east of St. Louis.

In both cases their Republican opponents were more moderate. Log Cabin worked with Illinois Rep. John Shimkus and endorsed him. Defeat of the two anti-gay representatives leaves the Democratic Party even more strongly in support of gay rights.

House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt has decided not to seek re-election to that post, perhaps to prepare a run for the White House. San Francisco Rep. Nancy Pelosi, who earlier this year became minority whip, will replace him.

The one seeming bright spot for Democrats was in races for governor, where term limits opened up a large number of seats held by Republicans. They made gains, particularly in the larger states of the Midwest, but also suffered surprising losses in what should be their strongholds.

Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maryland are states where Democrats hold overwhelming dominance in voter registration and in the state legislatures. Their candidates, all women, were favored to win the governor's mansion in each but failed to do so.

Maryland last elected a Republican as governor in 1966, but Bob Ehrlich solidly beat Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, daughter of the late Robert F. Kennedy, in part by reaching out to and increasing the GOP vote among African Americans.

"We wake up today in an extremely challenging environment that will require bold, strategic thinking on a range of issues," Stachelberg said. That might include refocusing efforts away from their lead activities to pass hate crimes and employment protection legislation. Stachelberg is

confident that queer issues move forward for a variety of reasons, including changes in society, and that progress will not be halted.

All three openly gay members of Congress breezed to re-election. Barney Frank, D-Mass., had no opponent on the ballot, while Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz., and Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., won with margins of about two-to-one.

Openly gay candidates did well lower down the ballot, with incumbents winning re-election in virtually all instances. "We held steady in an election

when the country was shifting to the right," said Jason Young of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, which supports queer candidates.

One major pickup was in Providence, R.I., where David N. Cicilline crushed a field of lesser names on the ballot to win 82 percent of the vote for mayor in the heavily Democratic city. Providence is the largest city and the first state capital to be led by an openly gay or lesbian elected official.

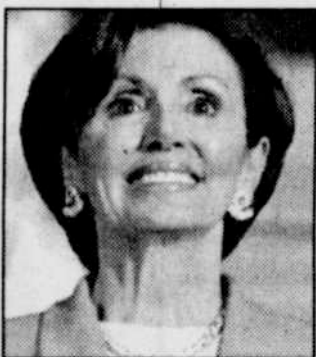
In California, Mark Leno and John Laird move from local office into the state Legislature. It is the first time openly gay men have served in that body.

They join three lesbians already serving there, while Carole Midgen is forced out by term limits. She won election to the State Board of Equalization, which deals with property tax assessments for 8 million people in the northern part of California.

Vermont remains a focus of interest because of fears that attempts might be made to roll back civil unions for gays. While the Republican candidate for governor ran ahead of polls, surprising people by coming in first, he still failed to win a majority of votes in the multicandidate race, and the state Legislature will choose the governor. Democrats retained their majority in the state Senate and gained seats, perhaps a majority, in the state House, so it is unlikely that changes on civil unions will move through the Legislature.

Anti-gay ballot initiatives generally did not do well. The major exception was in Nevada, where a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage passed by a two-to-one margin. This was the second time around for the measure, which passed by a slightly greater margin in 2000. [E]

BOB ROEHR is a free-lance reporter based in Washington, D.C.



Nancy Pelosi

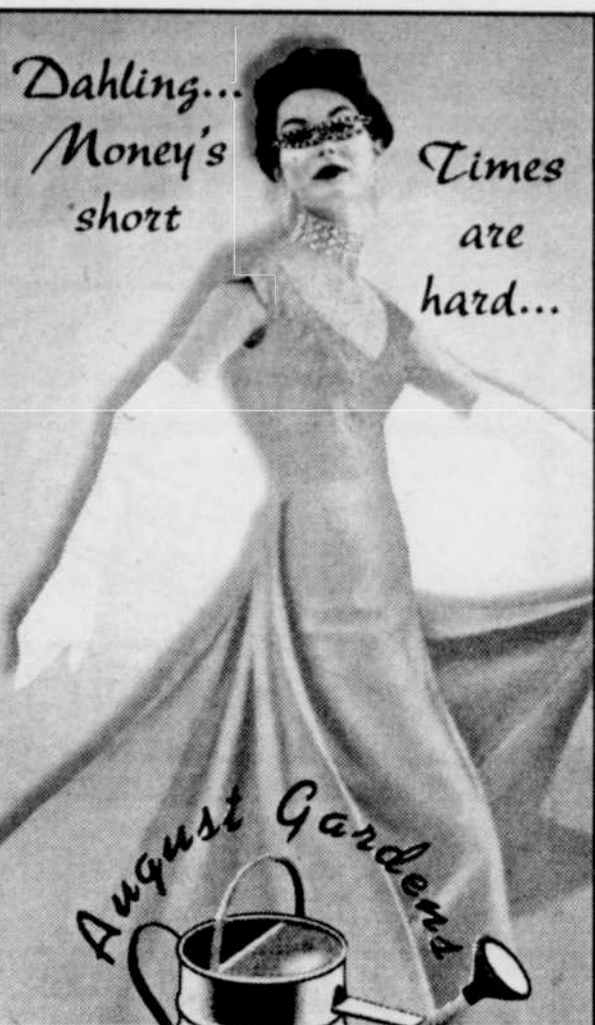


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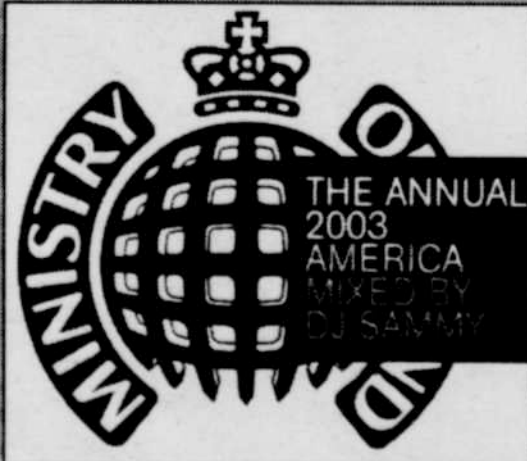
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