



PHOTO BY BOB ROEHR

Elizabeth Birch (with Mayor Anthony Williamson at the dedication of the Human Rights Campaign's new home in Washington, D.C.) announced she was stepping down after eight years at the helm of one of the world's largest queer organizations

Bush, affirm their belief in marriage as being between a man and a woman. However, they all oppose the amendment.

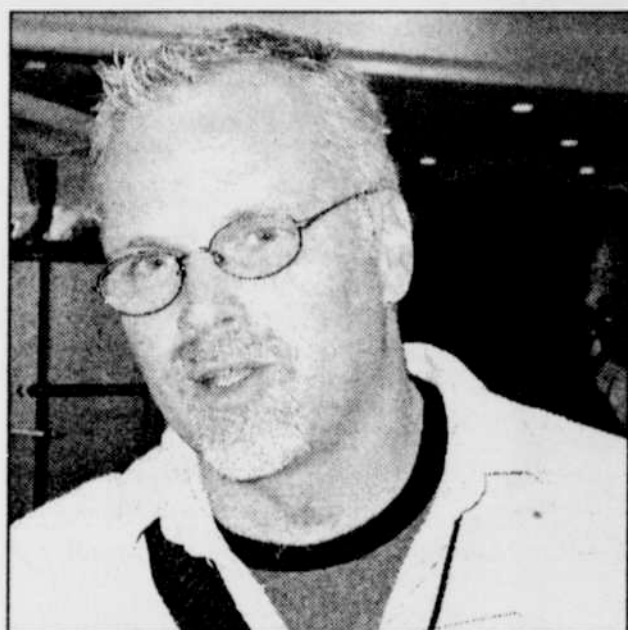


PHOTO BY BOB ROEHR

Terje Anderson, National Association of People with AIDS executive director, praises political leaders for their international initiative but questions the White House's commitment to abstinence-only prevention programs and its willingness to devote more dollars to care

The international story dominated media coverage of the AIDS pandemic, thanks in part to a surprise announcement by Bush in his State of the Union address Jan. 28. He proposed the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a combination of prevention and therapy that will "treat at least 2 million people." Bush asked Congress "to commit \$15 billion over the next five years, including nearly \$10 billion in new money, to turn the tide against AIDS in the most affected nations in Africa and the Caribbean."

Domestic advocates are growing increasingly frustrated that not enough attention or resources are being given to problems here at home, and prevention activities continue to be a flash point of contention. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced a program shift that many interpreted as away from a community-based approach to more of a medical model focusing on those already infected.

Another source of frustration has been the assault that social and congressional conservatives have made on community prevention activities and research. Agencies from coast to coast have been audited in detail, programs have been told to exclude sexual content, and some researchers have complained of "a McCarthy-like atmosphere" surrounding any studies that deal with sex.

Neither the administration nor Congress seems inclined to appropriate the money necessary for services for the growing caseload as more people learn their serostatus and therapy is keeping more of them alive. The problem is most visible with the AIDS Drug Assistance

Program, where 10 states already have waiting lists to join and California is likely to cap entry to its program in January.

The big news on the drug development front was federal approval of Fuzon (T-20) in March, the first in a new class of drugs known as entry inhibitors.

Another symbol of changing attitudes toward gays and lesbians was the election of V. Gene Robinson as Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire in June, his confirmation by that church's convention in August and his installation in November. Arch-conservatives within the church, both domestically and especially internationally, were apoplectic about the development and continue to threaten schism.



V. Gene Robinson

Queer Eye for the Straight Guy became the surprise hit of the summer tube and made waves far beyond its limited cable distribution, even morphing over into an edited version on NBC. Reichen Lehmkuhl and Chip Arndt showed that gays could be buff, cooperative hunks and win *The Amazing Race*. All of that was reinforced by news coverage, demonstrating that gays and lesbians are everywhere and increasingly are becoming part of the mainstream of American life. [E]

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



PHOTO BY CHRIS HASTON

The Fab Five from Bravo's *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, which led TV's fixation with all things gay by teaching hets a little style

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