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EVENINGS OUT

**• TOP STORIES THIS WEEK •****December 3, 1999****Pride parade returns to the Queen City**

by Michelle Tomko

**Cincinnati**--After a five-year hiatus, on Sunday, June 11, 2000, the Queen City will have a Pride parade.

"I went to Pride in Columbus and said hey, we can do this in Cincinnati," said Chris Good.

Good, a pharmacist, went home and organized the 2000 GLBT Pride Parade Committee, which began monthly meetings in July at the Crazy Ladies lesbian bookstore.

The committee is comprised of Good, Tim Stringer, Greg Kipp, Tom Beckman, Michael X. Chanak, and Kerri and Jason Dru. The Dru, whom Good described as former skinheads, are making the posters for the event.

The committee has been working with the Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Center, the Imperial Sovereign Queen City Court, AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati, the Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Coalition and Stonewall Cincinnati.

"There's nothing like a good visibility campaign. There's nothing like a parade," said Doreen Cudnik executive director of Stonewall Cincinnati. "Stonewall looks forward to getting on board. It's time. Let's have a party. Let's have a celebration."

The Sunday celebration will kick off at 11:00 am at the gazebo in Cincinnati's Burnet Woods Park. The 1.8 mile parade route will end at Hoffner Park with a community picnic and information fair.

The group has already secured the permits, insurance, police escorts and park fees. They estimate that the event will cost \$1,500.

The committee has already raised \$1,300 through donations. Good said he was surprised at what little money he really needed. He originally thought the cost would be over \$3,000.

A press release sent out by the committee listed 20 contributors totaling just over \$1,000, plus fees collected for four floats in the parade. It also said that any money left from the 2000 event will be used for future parades.

Good said he had also been spending a lot of time talking to people in the community who were around for former Cincinnati Pride parades.

The city had its last Pride parade on June 17, 1995. In the following years, the event was marked by festivals, picnics, cruises, and a "Gay Day" at Kings Island amusement park. Gay Day was replaced in 1997 by a September event with the park closed to the general public.

Good said passage of the Issue 3 anti-gay city charter amendment in 1993 contributed to the parade's demise.

"This really seemed to take the wind out of a lot of people's sails," Good said. "But we can't keep worrying about the past. I just want to have a celebration of who we are, not all this gloom and doom. I'm out of the closet. That [the closet] is the weapon of the conservatives. I'm going to try something different."

The committee meets on the second Sunday on the month at 2 pm at Crazy Ladies Bookstore. Good can be contacted at 513-389-9182 or [billyg@concentric.net](mailto:billyg@concentric.net).



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## Bush: Meeting Log Cabin 'creates a huge nightmare'

by Eric Resnick

Republican presidential frontrunner George W. Bush angered the Log Cabin Republicans when he said he would probably not meet with them during his first major network television interview November 21.

Bush, who has carefully cultivated his image as a "compassionate conservative" told NBC *Meet the Press* host Tim Russert that a meeting with the gay Republican group "creates a huge political scene."

Bush added, "I am someone who is a uniter, not a divider. I don't believe in group thought, pitting one group of people against another. All that does is create kind of a huge political, you know, nightmare for people. I mean, it's as if an individual doesn't count, but the group that the individual belongs in is more important."



### DISCUSSION

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Log Cabin director Rich Tafel took issue with Bush's statement about groups.

"He meets with scores of groups, including the Christian Coalition, and lectures the Republican Party on the importance of reaching out to minority groups like Latinos and African Americans, and now says he won't meet with gays because we are a group," said Tafel.

The Log Cabin club had been optimistic about a meeting with Bush in statements made on their web page and to the media for months. But when asked if the campaign was backing out of an earlier commitment to meet, Bush spokesperson Scott McClelland said, "That's not accurate."

"I think the Log Cabin club got that idea from political strategist Carl Rose, but the campaign was never planning a meeting with them," said McClelland.

McClelland admits that Bush meets with many other groups, but defends the decision not to meet with gays because, "he isn't interested in politicizing this issue and their agenda." McClelland said Bush would accept the group's endorsement and money. "Bush is running a positive, inclusive campaign that reaches out to people from all walks of life," he added.

McClelland shrugged at the gay Republicans' anger saying, "They have already said they're supporting John McCain."

The Bush campaign ran into disfavor with gay Republicans in October, when it refused to deny that Bush told members of the Christian conservative Madison Project that he "would not knowingly appoint a practicing homosexual as an ambassador or department head" if elected president. Earlier statements Bush had made to the *New York Times* suggested otherwise.

When the *Dallas Morning News* asked whether being openly gay would eliminate a person's chances for an appointment in a Bush administration, Bush spokesperson Mindy Tucker replied, "I think so."

"There is a lot of anger about the Bush campaign among our members," said Kevin Ivers, Log Cabin's director of public affairs, "and that's putting it mildly."

Ivers would not speak for individual Log Cabin members, some of them who are elected officials and have already endorsed Bush, but said, "this has seriously dampened enthusiasm."

"I'd like to think the governor understands how wrong this is, both politically and morally," said Ivers. "The grassroots Log Cabin membership will be stepping up its support for the McCain campaign. Increased fundraising is already planned."

GOP presidential candidate John McCain met with the Log Cabin Club November 8 and defended his decision by saying "the Log Cabin Republicans are part of our party." Candidate Steve Forbes has also said he would meet the gay Republicans.

Ivers would not rule out endorsement of Bush if he became the Republican nominee.

"We wouldn't if he became the nominee tomorrow, but the election is a long way off," said Ivers.

Ivers was not concerned with Bush's positions on legislation such as the gay and lesbian Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which Bush opposes.

"We have never made legislation a litmus test for endorsement," he said.



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## Transgender activist murdered in crime

# spree

by Dawn E. Leach with wire reports  
Gay People's Chronicle  
December 3, 1999

**Baltimore-**Transgender activist Tacy Ranta was shot to death November 22 as she was walking home from a restaurant. Three people have been charged in the killing, which police said was part of a 5½-hour crime spree that included more than a dozen armed robberies.

Ranta was co-founder of TranQuility, a Baltimore transgender support group, served on the board of Metropolitan Community Church of Baltimore, and was spokesperson for It's Time, Maryland, a chapter of the transgender advocacy group It's Time America. She lobbied for hate crime bills in Annapolis and fought for the legal right of people to change their names and gender designation on driver's licenses.

"All of us in ITA understand the risks we take by just living our lives, let alone doing the political grassroots work that simply must be done," said former It's Time America director Jessica Xavier. "Tacy gladly accepted those risks and courageously stepped forward to right the wrongs so many of us encounter on a daily basis."

Police said Ranta was shot once in the chest near her Baltimore home. Police believe that the sole motive in the shooting was attempted robbery.

Natalie Davis, associate editor of Baltimore's *City Paper* and a friend of Ranta, said that while many of Ranta's friends feared that the killing was a hate crime, the available evidence seems to indicate that it was not.

"Police have found that the crime spree got progressively worse as it went on, and Tacy's murder seems to have been motivated purely by robbery and whatever violent urges led the suspects to create such a menacing and bloody crime spree," Davis said.

Davis said that police believe that the perpetrators did not even realize that Ranta was transgendered.

"When police were called, they were asked to report to the scene of a murdered woman," Davis said. "It was only after police arrived that they discovered that she was transgendered."

Police took six suspects into custody in a hotel room after a Baltimore County police officer found two stolen cars parked outside. Detectives said they found two 9mm handguns in the room. Cory Tutt, 18, Renyse Jones, 18 and 16-year-old Davon Alston were charged on November 24 with first-degree murder and handgun violations, said police spokeswoman Ragina Cooper. Alston was charged as an adult.

The attacks occurred between 6:45 pm and midnight on November 22, and were scattered throughout north and northeast Baltimore, police said.

Police said that the robberies had a cascading effect. An Oldsmobile stolen at 8:45 pm was used in a carjacking of a Chrysler at 9:30 pm. That Chrysler was used in two robberies and another carjacking, according to the police.

Most of the victims were held up at gunpoint, but one man was reportedly beaten in the head with a baseball bat before suspects stole

\$35 from his pants pocket.

Investigators said the suspects knew each other, but police were not sure how or why the alleged spree was carried out.

Over 200 people attended a November 29 memorial service for Ranta.

"The loss hits us hard--Tacy was a vital part of our church and ministry," said MCC Baltimore's pastor, Rev. David Smith. "Her work with TranQuility, ITM, and Free State Justice, the time she took serving as a lifeline to struggling trans people, and her faith, care, concern, and belief in justice touched many lives and hearts. She will be deeply missed, but her legacy will live on forever."



## DISCUSSION

Share your thoughts on this story in our forum area.

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## In twenty years, the face of AIDS has changed

by Denny Sampson  
December 3, 1999

A common complaint among directors of AIDS service organizations these days is that it is becoming more difficult to obtain funding for their agencies. Rocky Morrison, former executive director of the AIDS Service Connection in Columbus, said, "When the Columbus Health Department told us they were cutting our funding, they just kept saying, 'The AIDS field has changed'."

In fact, as HIV has evolved over the years, its impact on society has also changed, and society's response to the threat of AIDS has changed accordingly. This three-part series will explore how AIDS and society have co-evolved over the last twenty years-the changing face of AIDS.

### Part 1: Coming out of denial, 1980-85

The cover of an *Advocate* from 1983 featured three towel-clad men in a bathhouse posing as "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." This image reflected the way that the gay community, and the public in general, dealt with the threat of AIDS in the early years of the epidemic.

The general public was first notified of the "gay cancer" on July 3, 1981. The *New York Times* published an article, which took up a single column on page 20, with the headline, "Rare cancer seen in 41 homosexuals."

The article told of a number of young gay men from Los Angeles and New York City who were experiencing a puzzling combination of symptoms, including fevers, weight loss, and swollen lymph nodes.

These patients had also contracted two unusual, and often fatal, diseases: *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, or PCP, a particularly deadly form of pneumonia, and Kaposi's sarcoma, a serious form of skin cancer. Neither condition is normally found in young, previously healthy men. Several of the patients had died, and none had showed any real signs of recovery.

Gay newspapers speculated that this "gay plague" was either invented by homophobic physicians, or, if real, was caused by some environmental

factor that had no connection to gay sex.

The medical community was eager to find an explanation. Some physicians suggested that "gay cancer" was caused by poppers. Others attributed it to the overuse of hemorrhoid creams. Some suggested that semen itself, when injected into someone's rectum, would naturally suppresses the recipient's immune system.

Many reporters began calling the epidemic GRID, for gay-related immune deficiency. However, when the illness was diagnosed in heterosexual men and a woman, that acronym was abandoned.

## "Patient Zero"

By end of 1981, the Centers for Disease Control had concluded that the epidemic was contagious and was spread by sexual contact. As CDC investigators reconstructed the history of sexual relations within networks of gay men in Southern California and New York, they found that a young man nicknamed "Patient Zero" played a central role in spreading the infectious agent, according to Randy Shilts in his book, *And the Band Played On*.

"Patient Zero" was a young French-Canadian flight attendant, Gaetan Dugas. He was reportedly a handsome, charming, sexually versatile gay man who reported that he had at least 250 different sexual partners every year. The CDC determined that Dugas had infected at least 40 of the 248 American patients diagnosed before April 1982.

After Dugas was diagnosed with AIDS, he continued to have sex with no protection. After sex he reportedly told his partners, "I've got gay cancer; I'm going to die, and so are you." Dugas died on March 30, 1984, at age 34.

## Collective hysteria

In 1982, the epidemic was given an official name: AIDS, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. After 1982, AIDS spread dramatically as the cumulative number of cases doubled every six months. Then, the human immunodeficiency virus, the pathogen that causes AIDS, was isolated in 1983.

As AIDS became more widespread, a collective hysteria took over many Americans that HIV could be spread by casual contact-a simple kiss, sharing dishes, or using public bathrooms. Medical experts insisted that the virus was spread by sexual intercourse, not simple daily social contact. However, the public only half-believed them.

Gays were the first target of the terrified public. Jackie Figlar, executive director of the Lavender Cupboard in Akron, said, "In the early days, the most difficult thing we had to face was the discrimination."

Media coverage of AIDS emphasized that all victims were members of marginal groups, the "4-H club": homosexuals, Haitians, heroin addicts, and hemophiliacs. Religious fundamentalists cried that AIDS was divine retribution on the sinners and criminals of society. Honest individuals were apparently not in danger.

Paul Cameron, an anti-gay researcher, called for the execution of homosexuals and the quarantine of everyone with AIDS.

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## The need to change

For gay men, the 1970s had been a time of increased sexual freedom and political power. Richard Starn, a volunteer at David's House in Toledo, said, "When I first came out, all I had to worry about was a gonorrhea or a case of the crabs."

But toward the end of the early 1980s, it became clear to the gay community that there was no escaping the reality that high-risk sexual behavior could lead to a life-threatening illness. Major changes in sexual behavior were necessary.

The closing of 14 San Francisco bathhouses and sex clubs reflected the changes being imposed on the lives of gay men. A San Francisco judge ruled that closing the bathhouses and sex clubs "puts some kind of brake on the spread of the disease."

In other cities, gay activists met with owners of bathhouses and other sex establishments to urge them to make changes that would promote "safe sex": hanging of safe sex posters in prominent places; making safe sex brochures always available; and providing condoms to customers.

## Government negligence

Mary Jay, director of education at David's House in Toledo said that she began AIDS work because she "became angry at the government's disinterest in AIDS. It was several years before Reagan even said the word *AIDS* publicly."

Jay was not the first to accuse Reagan of negligence. In *And the Band Played On*, Shilts wrote, "Some said that Ronald Reagan would be remembered in history books for one thing beyond all else: He was the man who let AIDS rage through America, the leader of the government that when challenged to action had placed politics above the health of the American people."

In 1985, with no cure or vaccine in sight, two events opened a new chapter in AIDS history: the availability of a blood test for HIV antibodies and the death of Rock Hudson.

In the summer of 1985, the HIV-antibody blood screening test became routinely available. Although the test was not completely reliable, individuals were able to find if they had been exposed to the virus. This test also became an important tool in studying the spread of the disease.

The second important event that year was that, before his death in July, actor Rock Hudson's publicly said that he had AIDS. Hudson was the first household name the American public knew had AIDS. The publicity of his death brought new attention to the epidemic.

When Reagan heard of Hudson's death, he asked the presidential physician, Brig. Gen. John Hutton, to tell him about the disease. According to Haynes Johnson in his book *Sleepwalking Through History*, Hutton said Reagan had not realized



the seriousness of AIDS until that day.

After listening to a long explanation, Reagan reportedly said, "I have always thought the world might end in a flash, but this sounds like it's worse."

*Next week: Activism in a time of crisis.*



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