

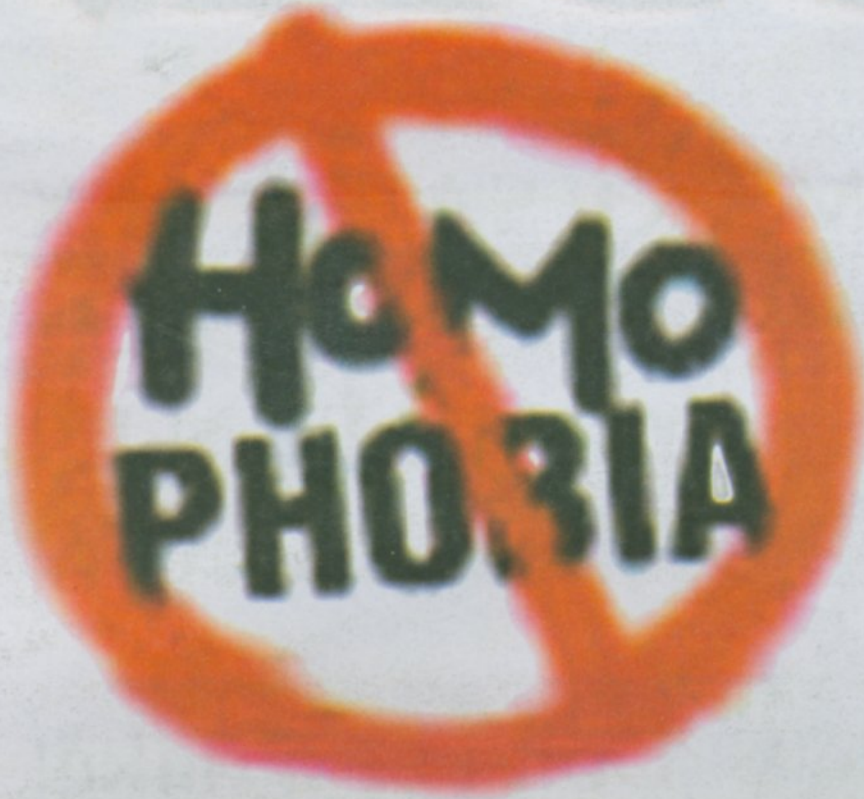
OUTBOUND NEWS

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WHAT ARE THEY SCARED OF?

Written By Josh Aterovis

Homophobia seems to be sweeping the nation like a plague of Biblical proportions—an apt analogy since the basis for most of the antigay sentiments is the Bible. The outbreak has been building for years now. I think it all started when Bush took office in 2000 and it's gotten steadily worse ever since. The latest wave of "moral values" that ensured four more years of fundamentalist conservatism brought the threat level to epidemic proportions. Don't believe me? Just check out the latest news. Antigay sentiments abound.

On Wednesday, December 1, Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm announced that the state would be removing domestic-partner benefits from contracts negotiated with state workers, citing a voter-approved amendment to the state constitution that bans same-sex marriage "and similar unions." Michigan voters approved the amendment November 2.

Alabama state representative Gerald Allen recently proposed a law that would ban all books in public libraries and schools with any gay content, no

matter how small. The proposed law would prohibit all books with gay characters and any school textbooks that suggest homosexuality is normal. In the past, Allen was an outspoken advocate for the ban on same-sex marriage. He suggests destroying the books that contain positive gay material. This would include works by authors such as Herman Melville, Tennessee Williams, Willa Cather, Carson McCullers, John Cheever, Alice Walker, James Baldwin, Truman Capote, and Gore Vidal, to name just a few.

In Webb City, Missouri, Brad Mathewson, a 16-year-old openly gay high school student, was sent home for wearing a T-shirt bearing the insignia of the gay/straight alliance from his old school. In support of their friend, a group of fellow students made homemade T-shirts reading "If this shirt offends you, look the other way." The back, among other messages, stated, "We have the right to be who we want to be" and "We support gay rights." Other students donned shirts with messages such as "I'm gay and I'm proud" and "I have a gay friend and I'm proud of him." The group was given the choice of either changing their shirts or going home. Seven chose to go home.

A Methodist minister was defrocked on Friday, December 3, after being convicted of violating church laws against actively gay clergy. It is the first such decision in over 17 years. The Reverend Irene Elizabeth Stroud, 34, an associate pastor at Philadelphia's First United Methodist Church of Germantown, set the case in motion last year when she announced to her bishop and congregation that she was living in a committed relationship with her partner, Chris Paige.

CBS and NBC rejected an ad from the United Church of Christ. The 30-second ad highlights the Cleveland-based UCC's welcoming stance toward gays and anyone else who might feel shunned elsewhere. The ad shows a muscular bouncer working a rope line outside a handsome but nameless church, deciding who is eligible to enter and worship. "No, step aside, please," he says to two men holding hands. Across the screen comes the message, "Jesus didn't turn people away. Neither do we." The final

scene shows a woman with her arm around another woman. The networks said the ad was too controversial to broadcast because it implied exclusion of gay and lesbian couples by other groups. ABC Family, AMC, BET, Discovery, and TBS, among others, accepted the ad the UCC said.

ABC's 20/20 recently aired a deeply flawed segment about the murder of Matthew Shepard. The news magazine claimed to have found previously unexamined layers in the story. Instead, they presented rumors and unproven claims by the murderers who now assert the killing had nothing to do with Matthew's sexuality—contrary to their court testimony. In a shameful bid for ratings during November sweeps, the network gave up journalistic integrity in order to play off the nation's homophobic mania.

These are only just a few highlights of the stories that have surfaced in the last week. Taken as a whole, they paint a stunningly depressing picture of the state of the US. If anyone had any hope that things might possibly improve during Bush's second term, it's not looking good. If anything, we seem to be slipping back into a hysterical state of McCarthyism—book burnings, open discrimination, and panicked finger-pointing.

It's not all bad news though. The chances of Allen's proposed book ban passing are extremely slim. In the Webb City, Missouri case, the ACLU has filed a lawsuit on behalf of Mathewson. Rev. Stroud has said that while she is disappointed, she never expected to win the case, and hopes to use it as a learning opportunity. Her supportive congregation has said it wants her to remain with them, serving in many of the same positions she did as assistant pastor, but now as a lay minister.

How do we counteract the rising tide of homophobia? Since the elections many people have written me asking that question. They all want to know: What do we do now? The answer? The same things you were doing before, only take it up a notch.

Gay TV Gives Birth to Slew of New Gay Programming

Written By Ross von Metzke



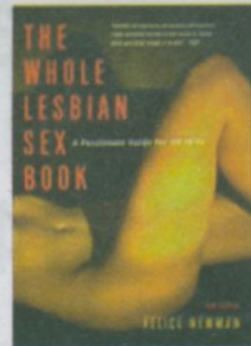
On the forthcoming Logo channel, conceived by figureheads at MTV and VH-1, programs will range from a series on

coming out experiences produced by Cher and Chastity Bono to reality series on gay cops and gay dream weddings.

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The Whole Lesbian Sex Book

A Passionate Guide For All Of Us, Second Edition



Now, Felice Newman has come out with a fresh, second edition of her now famous lesbian sex guide: The Whole Lesbian Sex Book: A Passionate Guide for All of Us.

Lesbian Sex Book - page 6

How to Survive in 2005

By Jasmyne Cannick



So now we know that we have at most, four more years with President Bush as America's leader. We also know that the issue of gay marriage played a pivotal role in his

re-election. Okay, let's get over it, re-group and get back out there.

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