



# Tradewinds

Aug/Sept 2009

Newsletter

## Gay News At Home And Abroad *by Roy Liebman, Publications Chair*

### CHURCHES

By a vote of 152 to 64 leaders of the Episcopal Church have voted to consider marriage liturgy for same-sex couples and to give bishops greater latitude in meeting their spiritual needs. Just prior to this the de facto ban on ordaining gay bishops was eliminated.

The High Court of the United Methodists has prohibited its clergy from performing gay marriages or civil unions, even if one of its regional bodies supports it.

The Presbyterian Church has once again defeated efforts to allow openly gay members to serve as clergy, but the vote is closer than in previous years.

### GOVERNMENT

The 2010 Census will count same-sex married couples and list them as such, reversing a Bush-era decision. The Defense of Marriage Act was originally interpreted as prohibiting this but the Obama administration states it does not.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that gay American diplomats with partners would receive the same rights as their straight colleagues. This includes granting of diplomatic passports to partners, government-paid travel and access to medical facilities abroad. The State Department had previously denied such benefits citing the Defense of Marriage Act (which was signed into law by her husband Bill Clinton).

### CALIFORNIA

The newly-elected Vice Chair of the California Democratic Party is openly gay Eric Bauman. A Democratic politician who has long been rumored to be gay, Councilman and State Senator Art Torres, was said to have quietly come out at a dinner in his honor.

The new President of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California is the lesbian rabbi of Kol Ami, one of the two predominantly gay synagogues in Los Angeles.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire became the sixth state to legalize gay marriage after Massachusetts, Iowa, Connecticut, Vermont and Maine. A provision in the law states that churches will not be forced to officiate at such marriages if they did not wish to.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

Cleve Jones, AIDS activist and one-time associate of Harvey Milk, announced plans for a march on Washington to demand that Congress establish full equality for the GLBT community. It would coincide with National Coming Out Day on October 11th.

The Obama administration is not only postponing its look at the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" military policy but has including funding for enforcement of the policy in its proposed 2010 budget. Obama has chosen to ask Congress to change the policy rather than issuing an executive order himself. An estimated 65,000 gays and lesbians are serving currently in the military.

## GREECE

A Greek court has annulled both of Greece's same-sex marriages which had been performed by the mayor of a small Greek island. A bishop of the Orthodox Church described the two couples as "humanoids."

## INDIA

The High Court in Delhi has decriminalized gay sex, amending a statute that dated back to the British Raj of the 1860s. The ruling stated that treating consenting sex between gay adults as a crime was a violation of the Indian constitution. Conviction on this "offense" could have resulted in a prison term of up to ten years. Although the ruling applies only to Delhi it is expected to influence courts throughout India. The anti-gay laws have led to numerous cases of blackmail, often by the police themselves.

## RUSSIA

Authorities in Moscow have broken up by force an attempt to hold a gay rights march in the capitol. The rabidly anti-gay mayor of Moscow has described gay rights marches as "satanic" and an aide avows that "no gay parades have been or will be held in Moscow."

## SWEDEN

By a convincing parliamentary vote of 261 to 22, same-sex couples will be now allowed to marry in Sweden, but churches will not be obligated to perform the ceremonies. Civil unions have been permitted since the mid-1990s. It joins South Africa, Belgium, Spain, the Netherland, Canada and Norway in permitting gay marriage.

## SWITZERLAND

Zurich, Switzerland's largest city, has elected a Lesbian mayor. She is the city's first female mayor as well and joins gay mayors in such cities as Berlin and Paris.

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## Calendar of Events

Check our Event Calendar on our website [www.apgf.org](http://www.apgf.org) for complete details on any of our events

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