

# Gay Republican Appointed

BY BARBARA DOZETOS

Above the Fold News Service

A pro-life Roman Catholic Republican has become the first openly gay member of the George W. Bush administration, serving as the director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy.

Scott Evertz, a native of the District of Columbia, was one of the gay Republicans – now known as the “Austin 12” – who met with Bush in April 2000. David Greer, another of the 12 and spokesperson for the Republican Unity Coalition, said it was a press release Evertz wrote as president of the Wisconsin Log Cabin Republicans (LCR) in March of 2000 that got him invited to the meeting. In the statement, Evertz blasted the

national LCR for running ads attacking Bush when the organization as a whole did not agree on which candidate to support for the Republican nomination. “Gov. Bush knew it was a brave thing for Scott to do,” Greer said. The Wisconsin group nearly lost its charter with the national organization over the incident.

Greer said loyalty may have played a part in Evertz’s appointment, but he is a good fit for many other reasons. “He’s pro-life; he’s worked in faith-based organizations,” he said. He is also, according to Greer, amicable and someone determined to build bridges rather than burn them, as evidenced by the now-mended relationship between Evertz and national LCR director Rich Tafel. “He’s great on gay

issues, too,” Greer said.

Evertz has been a vocal and active proponent of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. He worked against anti-gay-marriage legislation in Wisconsin, and spoke out against the Boy Scouts discrimination against gays.

Ronald Johnson, of the Gay Men’s Health Crisis in New York City, said through his limited contact with Evertz, he believes he has “a keen understanding of the AIDS issues.” Johnson is a member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and will, if the Bush administration decides to maintain the panel and his presence on it, would be working with Evertz.

“I think it’s a positive sign in terms of Evertz himself, and that they’re keeping the office at all,” said Johnson. He also praised the position Evertz will hold within the framework of the Bush administration – reporting directly to Margaret La Montagne, Bush’s domestic policy advisor.

Johnson said he was “surprised and pleased by the appointment of an openly gay person to the position.” He praised Evertz’ early comments to the press about the attention needed to the international and minority communities.

Evertz told the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel he would dedicate his work as AIDS czar to the friends he has lost to the disease. He said his first priorities are dealing with the complacency that has set in where HIV and AIDS is concerned, addressing the stigma of homosexuality within communities of color that has led to inadequate education and higher infection rates and encouraging the administration to approach the epidemic on an international level.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is pleased with the announcement, as well. “We applaud the decision as a positive sign from the Bush Administration,” said HRC spokesperson David Smith. He noted Evertz’s close ties to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, who will join Evertz, Secretary of State Colin Powell, national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, and Montagne on a task force to address the international AIDS crisis. “This is a clear sign that Thompson wants to be directly and personally involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS.”

# Queer Youth Take on Nation

BY CHUCK FRANKLIN

Benjie Nycum & Mike Glatze of Young Gay America found a unique way to travel across the United States and included Burlington on their journey. Young Gay America is a web site ([www.younggayamerica.com](http://www.younggayamerica.com)) that provides a fun, informative forum for gay youth to share their experiences.

Assisted by Andy Brown (volunteer webmaster, Kansas high school student) and Teddee McGuire (graphic designer), Nycum and Glatze charted a three-week journey in late March and early April from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to San Francisco in search of the stories and experiences of gay youth.

Every day, they drove to a new location, writing journals and editing photographs on a laptop in the car. They e-mailed the content to Brown, who posted the stories, photos, articles, book and music reviews to the website.

“I dunno how this happened, really,” exclaimed Nycum on April 6 from a crackling cell phone while on the road near Beckley, West Virginia. “We were sitting around trying to figure out which way to drive home to San Francisco from Halifax. Mike joked, ‘Maybe we should make a website!’”

“Before I knew it, Andy and Teddee were brainstorming ideas and we had a site designed. We launched it the night before we left. That was a week ago and already we’ve typed over 25,000 words and taken a couple hundred pictures. We’ve done radio interviews, photo shoots ... even Ricki Lake’s people have called to ask us questions!”

The two landed in Burlington on the evening of March 26 and spent the next day talking to young people and visiting a few places. They talked to two small groups of young gays and lesbians at Outright Vermont. The conversations were informal and personal, covering a wide variety of topics – piercings, the local gay community, gay stereotypes, life’s struggles and how to deal with them, living in Burlington, relationships, and school violence. To read a transcript of the two group sessions, go to the Young Gay America web site ([www.younggayamerica.com](http://www.younggayamerica.com)).

Nycum and Glatze also chatted with two young men named Ricky and Chris on Church Street.

What did they think about Burlington? It’s a SAAB city.

“Dude, there are so many SAABs in Burlington. We tried to take a picture, but they wouldn’t all fit into our lens,” they wrote on March 28.

“There are lots of hot boyz and very cute girls all over the place in Vermont,” they continued. “Lots of young activity going on. Lots of skateboarding. Lots of kewl punks, or at least they look kewl.”

The truly satisfying part of their adventure was the dozens of e-mails pouring in from queer kids asking for advice, according to the two. One anonymous interview done via e-mail with a teen explaining his life in the closet “makes me cry every time I read it,” said Glatze. “It feels like we might be able to make a difference out here.”

The three-week journey came to a close April 12, when Nycum and Glatze arrived in San Francisco for a reading of the Lambda Literary Award-Nominated *The XY Survival Guide*, a resource book for gay teens written by Nycum while the duo served as editors of the leading gay teen magazine, *XY*.

“We hope to be able to do a Young Gay America 2 if we can raise the money,” said Nycum. “We’d like to take YGA to the northwest, places like Idaho, Alberta, Montana, and maybe make a major stop in Laramie, Wyoming. Kids out there really benefit from hearing about the experiences of others who are in similar situations. The more chances we get to do this, the better.”

According to the Hetrick-Martin institute, 80 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth report severe isolation problems. They experience social isolation (having no one to talk to), emotional isolation (feeling distanced from family and peers because of sexual identity), and cognitive isolation (lack of access to good information about homosexuality).

Young Gay America seeks to break down the social, geographical and cultural barriers that frequently drive gay teens to depression and suicide.

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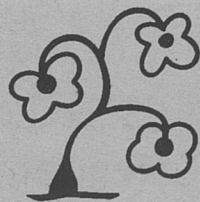


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