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CINCINNATI, OH Fraudulent Signatures Cancel Anti-Gay Measure

Ultra-conservative Cincinnati activists withdrew a petition to place an anti-gay initiative on the ballot in November after acknowledging that some of the signatures they submitted were fraudulent and they did not have the required number of valid signatures, Rev. Steven Baines of People For the American Way reported last month.

The initiative, if adopted by the voters, would have nullified an addition to the city's Human Rights Ordinance passed by the City Council prohibiting discrimination in employment and housing on the basis of sexual orientation and gender expression.

Just two years ago, Cincinnati voters went to the ballot box to remove an anti-gay provision from the city charter. People For the American Way worked hard to support the successful fairness campaign in 2004, and PFAW Foundation produced an award-winning documentary, *A Blinding Flash of the Obvious*, about the effort.

CHICAGO, IL Gay Charity Donates to Hurricane Victims

America's Second Harvest, the Nation's Food Bank Network, has received \$360,000 in donations from the Rainbow World Fund, *U.S. Newswire* reported in August. The funds were donated to the America's Second Harvest hurricane relief fund to help provide emergency food and grocery products to the thousands of Americans still impacted by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma.

"Rainbow World Fund may be based in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community," said Jeff Cotter, founder and executive director of Rainbow World Fund, "but our work involves helping everyone, everywhere we can. By partnering with America's Second Harvest, we know we've helped make a difference."

WASHINGTON, D.C. Pension Law Includes Protections for Same-Sex Couples

The Federal Pension Protection Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush contains two key provisions that will extend important financial protections to same-sex couples and other Americans who leave their retirement savings to non-spouse beneficiaries, the Human Rights Campaign announced last month. The bipartisan provisions in the bill are a step forward in equality and stem from a continuous effort led by the HRC.

"There is a large group of Americans that are left behind in traditional pension benefit models. We need to do better to keep these groups from falling through the cracks," said Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR). "I am pleased that the pension reform legislation takes an important step to fill this gap by equalizing treatment in retirement savings vehicles for non-spouse beneficiaries."

LIMA, PERU Police Abuse Gay Bar Patrons

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission is deeply concerned about recent arrests of LGBT community by the Peruvian law enforcement agents, the IGLHRC website reported in August. The organization has already worked with Peruvian activists to denounce abuses against gay bars and trans sex workers perpetrated by serenazgo officers in December 2005 and March 2006. The serenazgo is a security body active in Lima city, whose legal attributions are not yet clearly specified by law.

On July 14, serenazgo officers broke into three discos patronized by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people, the report said. The intervention began like a routine inspection, but intrusion by serenazgo troops resulted in violence. Officers blocked the exit and beat and insulted the disco owners, workers, and patrons, while also videotaping the violence. The intervention didn't have the obligatory presence of Peru National Police or Prosecutor Office representatives, the IGLHRC said.

Lima City officers explained that the operative was carried out because "the establishments did not have a license to operate, nor a security certificate." Mario Vargas, director of Lima City Auditing and Control Department, stated that "the fight against illegal (activities) and clandestine prostitution will continue, without stop."

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POLITICS

Martha Abbott, Thomas Salmon Take on Republican Incumbent

Auditor Randy Brock Vies for Second Term

BY LYNN MCNICOL & TINA GIANGRANDE

An Underhill Progressive and a Rockingham Democrat are challenging state auditor of accounts Randy Brock, a Republican, on fronts including healthcare payments, corporate tax credits, and connections to Vermont towns and cities.

In her July announcement speech at Burlington's City Hall, Progressive Martha Abbott brought up payment for non-existent health services in the Department of Corrections, saying

there has been a lack of follow-up to make sure this has been corrected.

Brock told *OITM* "there was some repayment" regarding contractual health care services for the Department of Corrections, and that his office will be taking a further look at vendors providing medical care this year.

Abbott also criticized the timing of Brock's recently announced review of Medicare and Medicaid.

"What took so long? Where has the state auditor been for the past two years?" she asked.

Brock said the state audits Medicaid annually, because the state provides about 40 percent of its funds; the federal government supplies the other 60 percent. Medicare is a federal program, he said, so the state auditor has no authority over it.

Abbott also noted that the state has offered millions of dollars in tax credits to companies to encourage them to create more jobs. However, she charged, when the jobs don't materialize, the companies have not been required to pay back the credits.

"Why is this not being investi-

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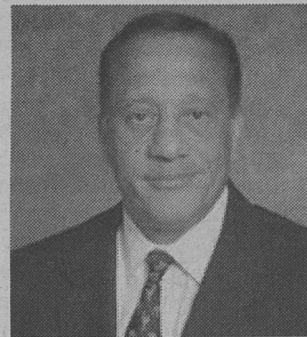
Martha Abbott
Progressive

Abbott served on Burlington's city council from 1994 to 1998, represented Burlington at the U.N. Conference on Climate Change and Global Warming in Kyoto, Japan, and has chaired the state Progressive Party for the past five years. She was involved in starting Women Helping Battered Women in the 1970s.

A native Vermonter and graduate of Burlington High School and the University of Vermont, Abbott co-founded Independent Tax Service in Burlington. She lives in Underhill with Barbara Brody, her partner of 20 years.

Barbara Nolfi served with Abbott on the Burlington council.

"Her talents fit really well with the auditor role," Nolfi said. "She always speaks up for what she thinks is right."



Randy Brock
Republican (incumbent)

Originally from Philadelphia, Auditor of Accounts Randy Brock has lived in Swanton for the past 20 years, according to the Vermont Republican Party website. A graduate of Middlebury College and Yale University, Brock is now retired from Fidelity Investments, where he served as executive vice president and general auditor. He spent more than 10 years as chair of the State Board of Private Investigative and Security Services.

Brock received medals of honor for his service in the U.S. Army's Military Police Corps. He is a member of the board for the Alzheimer's Association and is vice chair of the board of the International College Foundation.

Brock and his wife Andrea have one child.



Thomas Salmon
Democrat

A native Vermonter living in Bellows Falls, Salmon is serving his first term on the Rockingham selectboard. Salmon formerly worked as a CPA for Joe Pieciak & Co. in Brattleboro. He has taught disadvantaged students and served in the U.S. Navy Reserves.

Last year, Salmon volunteered with victims of Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi where he was impressed by the people who had lost so much but didn't lose heart. "It was a flashpoint for me," said Salmon, whose experience led in part to his decision to run for office in March.

Photos (l. to r.) by Lynn McNicol, courtesy of Office of State Auditor, courtesy of Thomas Salmon.