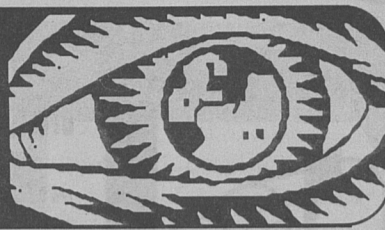


the rest of our world...



Pastor killed

MATHER, Calif. — Police believe a Metropolitan Community Church pastor who helped dozens of homeless gays and lesbians may have been killed by one of the many people he helped.

Rev. Edward R. Sherriff, 68, known as a “champion of the underdog,” was found stabbed to death in what police believe was a robbery.

“He was always taking in strays, people who had been thrown out of their home because of their sexuality,” said longtime friend Jim McGuirk, of Spokane, Wash., where Sherriff founded the city’s first crisis hot line for gays and lesbians.

“This is a guy who would give you the shirt off his back, without question,” McGuirk said.

No arrests have been made in the killing. Neighbors called police after seeing two men driving Sherriff’s two vehicles away. Police found one of them in south Sacramento.

Boeing Steps Forward

SEATTLE — The nation’s largest airplane manufacturer is catching up on basic civil rights.

Boeing Co. has decided to begin offering domestic partnership benefits to same-sex partners of its employees. Citing the need to maintain a quality work force and the benefits of diversity, Boeing announced plans to offer the benefits next year to the domestic partners of salaried nonunion employees.

The decision, announced to company managers by e-mail, was praised by gay rights advocates. But it was criticized by union leaders for leaving out their members and unmarried heterosexual partners.

Mi casa...

LONDON — England’s highest court has decided that a gay man is entitled to remain in the state-subsidized apartment leased by his dead partner. That right was previously restricted by law to spouses or “family” members.

In a 3-2 ruling, a House of Lords judicial panel said that Martin Fitzpatrick, who lived with John Thompson for more than 20 years in a monogamous relationship, was entitled to take over the lease of an apartment in Thompson’s name.

Giving the majority judg-

ment, Lord Justice Donald Nicholls said a man and woman living together in a stable and permanent sexual relationship, but not married, can be regarded as a “family” under Britain’s Rent Act.

“There can be no rational or other basis on which the like conclusion can be withheld from a similarly stable and permanent sexual relationship between two men or between two women,” the judge said.

Scout camp gets new meaning

TORONTO — A Scout troop devoted to gay and lesbian young adults — apparently the first of its kind in North America — has been set up in Toronto.

The 129th Toronto Scouting Group is the same as any other troop except for the sexual orientation of its members, said troop co-founder Bonte Minnema.

Open to people aged 18-26 — a level of scouts called Rovers, the oldest group in the Canadian program — it describes itself as a gay and lesbian troop.

“There isn’t one in Canada and they’re not allowed in the (United) States,” Minnema said. “There are other lesbians and gays involved with scouting, but not a specific lesbian and gay scouting group that we know about.”

Missed by that much

SAN FRANCISCO — Tom Ammiano, president of the city Board of Supervisors, decided at the last minute to mount a write-in campaign for mayor. And he ended up taking second place, forcing powerful Mayor Willie Brown into a runoff.

Ammiano, a gay leader, former schoolteacher and standup comic, has been the activists’ champion in City Hall as president of the Board of Supervisors. He jumped into the mayoral race 20 days before the election.

Ammiano apparently struck a chord with the protest campaign his supporters ran out of a juice bar in the Castro District. His campaign spent about \$20,000 — a pittance compared to former Mayor Frank Jordan’s \$300,000 and Brown’s \$2.3 million. Another candidate, Clint Reilly, spent millions.

Bible made him do it

REDDING, Calif. — One of

two brothers accused of shooting a gay couple is blaming the Bible.

“I’m not guilty of murder. I’m guilty of obeying the laws of the Creator,” Benjamin Matthew Williams, 31, told the *Sacramento Bee* in a jailhouse interview.

Williams said he didn’t belong to any organized hate groups but hoped his violence would incite more killings, the newspaper said. He also insisted his brother James Tyler Williams had nothing to do with the deaths of Winfield Mowder and Gary Matson.

James Williams, 29, declined to be interviewed but told the *Redding Record Searchlight* in July that he did not participate in the killings.

Still partners in NYC

NEW YORK — New York City’s domestic partnership law has survived a court challenge.

The five-member Appellate Division of the state Supreme Court unanimously ruled the city did not overstep the jurisdiction of the state, which does not permit same-sex marriages.

“This ruling will aid many lesbian and gay families who need the protection and security most non-gay families take for granted,” said Marvin Peguese, an attorney for the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

In its challenge of the 1998 law, the American Center for Law and Justice argued that the state — not the city — had responsibility to set laws regarding marriage and domestic partnership.

Ask, tell, but don't meet

SALT LAKE CITY — A federal judge has ruled Utah school officials were justified in refusing to allow a gay student club to be formed and did not violate the students’ First Amendment rights.

But he also said that the students should be free to express their views about sexuality in the established student clubs in the school.

The district’s policy barred a group of East High School students from forming a school-approved club, the judge said, not from expressing their point of view in one of the school’s existing clubs.

The dispute began in 1995, when students sought permission to form the East High Gay-Straight Alliance, a sup-

port group. The effort caused an uproar among parents, and the district reacted in February 1996 by banning all clubs deemed unrelated to school curriculum.

The decision wiped out the alliance and dozens more, including those focused on racial awareness, pep clubs, Young Republicans and Democrats, and Students Against Drunk Driving.

College fees

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court is considering whether universities can use mandatory student fees to support groups that might have a political point of view.

“The decision will affect, literally, every college and university in this country,” said Brady Williamson, who teaches constitutional law at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The suit was filed in 1996 by then-law student Scott Southworth. A federal trial judge and the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in his favor that the subsidies unlawfully force some students to subsidize views they find objectionable.

If the high court upholds those rulings, it could bar schools from using student fees to pay for politically active groups, or it could issue a less sweeping remedy allowing students to opt out of giving money to groups they find objectionable.

Groups for gays and lesbians were among those targeted.

Supremes silent on visitation rights

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to wade into a dispute about the rights of gays and lesbians raising families.

The court let stand a lower court ruling in which a lesbian won visitation rights to her ex-partner’s child. Acting without comment, it refused to review a groundbreaking decision in which Massachusetts’ highest court said a lesbian who helped her partner raise a son had become a “de facto” — or “in fact” — parent and was entitled to visitation rights when the two women split up.

The action set no legal precedent and does not preclude the possibility that the nation’s highest court someday might agree to decide the issue in some other case.

May v. Army

PHOENIX — A gay lawmaker who also happens to be an Army reservist is being hauled before military authorities.

The Army has sent AZ State Rep. Steve May a letter saying that evidence, including May’s admissions in a floor speech in January, creates a presumption that he engages in, attempts to engage in or intends to engage in homosexual acts.

A lawyer for May, who was honorably discharged from the Army before that speech but was later recalled to active duty, said Monday that the Army is violating his free speech rights and the military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. That policy states the military is not supposed to seek out information about soldiers’ sexuality.

Not in this church

MACON, Ga. — Two churches have been expelled by Georgia’s Southern Baptist Convention because they let homosexuals serve as leaders and allowed a gay wedding.

The ouster of Oakhurst Baptist of Decatur and Virginia Highland Baptist of Atlanta marked the first time in the 177-year history of the Georgia Baptist Convention that it has taken such action. The convention changed its constitution last year to exclude congregations that “affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior.”

“It’s a heartbreaking thing to be put in a situation where you have to make a decision like this,” said the Rev. Gerald Harris, president of the Georgia Baptist Convention. “We just decided to draw the line.”

State Southern Baptist conventions in Texas and North Carolina have also expelled churches over the issue of homosexuality. The North Carolina churches were also ousted by the national convention in the early ‘90s.

Or in this one, either

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. — The United Methodist Church has defrocked a pastor for performing gay weddings.

The case against the Rev. Jimmy Creech was the second test of a United Methodist ban on homosexual marriage.

A jury of 13 Nebraska ministers imposed the penalty after