

## the rest of



## our world

= news =

**Celebrating**

SAN FRANCISCO — Gay pride was celebrated in major American cities throughout July.

Officials estimated a half-million people made the trek from San Francisco's waterfront to City Hall.

In New York, hundreds of thousands marched down Fifth Avenue to commemorate the 1969 uprising at the Stonewall Inn, credited with sparking the modern gay rights movement.

New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and U.S. Senate candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton were among the marchers, but Clinton's new Republican rival, Rep. Rick Lazio, chose to spend the day campaigning upstate instead. Chicago and Atlanta also staged parades and festivals that attracted thousands to celebrate their gay pride.

**Scout ruling**

WASHINGTON — If you're going to be a Boy Scout, you're going to have to be "morally straight."

And the U.S. Supreme Court says the Boy Scouts of America can define that to mean you can't be gay.

The court ruled 5-4 that the Scouts can bar homosexuals from serving as troop leaders.

James Dale sued the scouts after the Monmouth Council revoked Dale's registration after he was quoted in a Newark newspaper about his experiences coming out.

He sued under a 1992 New Jersey law protecting the civil rights of gay people.

He lost round one in 1995, but last year the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled unanimously in Dale's favor. The court called the Boy Scouts a public accommodation to which anti-discrimination laws apply. Dale, 29, said he believed the ruling and the scouts' stance hurt the organization.

"Dinosaurs became extinct because they didn't evolve," he said. "The Boy Scouts are making themselves extinct, and that's a very sad thing."

**Bombing conviction**

LONDON — A white supremacist has been convicted of three bombings, including one at a gay pub, in which three people were killed and more than 100 were injured.

David Copeland, 24, was sentenced to six life sentences. He showed no emotion as the jury's verdict was read, but people in the public gallery—including victims injured in the bomb attacks—clapped and cheered. Copeland had admit-

ted planting the bombs, but argued that because of mental illness he should only be found guilty of manslaughter.

The first nail bomb exploded in Brixton, a south London neighborhood with a large black population, on April 17, 1999. The second detonated a week later in east London's Brick Lane, a center of the Bangladeshi community. The third tore through a popular gay bar in central London's Soho entertainment district on April 30, 1999. A pregnant 27-year-old woman and two male friends were killed and 70 people were injured when the bomb—packed with 1,500 nails—exploded in the crowded Admiral Duncan pub.

**HIV resurgence**

SAN FRANCISCO — Alarming statistics show that the rate of new HIV infections among gay and bisexual men is climbing.

Health experts said that powerful AIDS drugs are making people complacent and that the safe-sex message is no longer getting through.

"We think this needs to be a wake-up call for the rest of the nation," Dr. Ronald Valdiserri of the Centers of Disease Control said, referring to the tripling in two years of the infection rate in San Francisco.

In 1997, 1.3 percent of all gay and bisexual men who were anonymously tested at San Francisco clinics that year were diagnosed as HIV positive. That rose to 2.6 percent in 1998 and 3.7 percent last year, according to the San Francisco Department of Public Health. In 1996, it was 2.0 percent.

"I think there's a sense that the drugs have taken care of the problem," said Dr. Tom Coates, director of the AIDS Research Institute at the University of California at San Francisco. "Second, I think people believe he disease is slowing. I used to go to a memorial service every week. I've only been to two in the last year." And I think within the community itself there has been an erosion of the safe-sex norm. I think all of that has eroded the community's resolve for prevention."

**Presbyterians-gay marriage**

LONG BEACH, Calif. — The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) isn't going to get into the business of blessing gay marriages.

The chief policy-making body of the denomination voted by a narrow margin to recommend barring its minis-

ters from officiating at blessings for gay couples even if the ceremonies stop short of marriage.

The measure still must be ratified by most of the church's presbyteries nationwide before it can become part of the Book of Order, the constitution for the 2.6 million-member denomination.

Proponents of the ban argued that the Presbyterian Church must stop blessing same-sex unions because the ceremonies implicitly condone homosexual behavior, which the church views as a sin.

The proposed ban passed the church's General Assembly by a vote of 268-251, with four abstentions. If the ministers and elders in the church's 171 presbyteries approve, the ban would be put into effect at next year's meeting of the General Assembly.

In 1995, a similar ban on gay commitment ceremonies recommended by the General Assembly failed to win ratification. Seventy-three presbyteries voted in favor of the ban, 62 voted against and 27 voted "no action," which is considered an opposition vote.

**Defiant pastor**

CHICAGO — The Rev. Gregory Dell isn't going to let church politics determine his ministry.

After a year's suspension for officiating at a gay wedding, he's back in charge of a church. And he's ready to perform more ceremonies.

He's been assigned to Broadway United Methodist Church, where about one-third of the members are gay or lesbian.

Dell was suspended last year after a church trial found that he had violated United Methodist law by presiding over the "holy union" of two Chicago men in 1998.

The minister said he is not going to change his ways and he may have to leave the ministry in the United Methodist Church if the national church tries to discipline him again.

"I will continue to provide a full range of ministry for all people," he said. "As long as I'm doing heterosexual weddings, I will do gay and lesbian holy unions."

**Gumbel's comment**

NEW YORK — Television personality Bryant Gumbel apparently doesn't think much of a spokesman for an anti-gay group.

Conservative groups have demanded that the host of CBS' *The Early Show* be dismissed.

It started with an unexpected camera shift—and some amateur lipreading—caught Bryant Gumbel in what appeared to be a profane comment about a guest on the show.

Gumbel had finished a tense interview last Thursday with Robert Knight, a spokesman for the Family Research Council who supported the Supreme Court decision allowing the Boy Scouts of America to exclude gays as leaders.

After he ended the interview and introduced a weather report, the camera inexplicably switched to Gumbel getting up from his chair. Gumbel was heard to say "What a ..." and his microphone abruptly switched off. Knight believes Gumbel completed the sentence with a profanity and the word "idiot." The words can't be heard, but a videotape appears to support their contention.

It led the conservative American Family Association to issue a statement calling for Gumbel's ouster. Knight said he didn't think that was necessary, but he'd appreciate an apology.

**Louisiana sodomy**

NEW ORLEANS — It's still illegal to have certain kinds of sex in Louisiana.

The state Supreme Court has upheld Louisiana's 195-year-old sodomy law, under which consenting adults could receive up to five years in prison for engaging in oral or anal sex.

"Simply put, commission of what the Legislature determines as an immoral act, even if consensual and private, is an injury against society itself," Justice Chet Traylor wrote in Thursday's 5-2 decision.

In their dissent, Chief Justice Pascal Calogero Jr. and Justice Harry Lemmon said the law represents an intrusion of government into citizens' homes.

"The only apparent purpose of the prohibition is to dictate the type of sex that is acceptable to legislators," Lemmon wrote. "Two married persons should be able to choose how they conduct their nonpublic, voluntary sexual relations in the security of their own home; a law that takes that choice away from them is an intrusion by the legislative branch that is

constitutionally intolerable."

**Chinese sweep**

BEIJING — Chinese authorities are cracking down on gays.

Police arrested 37 gay men in southern China at the start of a nationwide anti-vice campaign.

The arrests took place at a gym in Guangzhou city and represented the largest detention sweep against homosexuality yet in China, said an official from the city, a thriving provincial capital near Hong Kong.

Homosexuality is illegal in China, although a relaxation of social rules over the past 20 years has created a more tolerant atmosphere. Gay bars are common and some cities have gay information telephone hotlines.

The owner and manager of the Heroes' Gym will face criminal charges, but the other men might be released, said the police official, who would not give his name. The official said a similar crackdown had taken place in the past in the southwestern province of Sichuan, but with fewer arrests.

**Children's agency**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — There's been controversy in Kentucky over a church-run agency that cares for children.

The agency has decided to continue caring for abused and neglected children who are wards of the state despite a conflict over the agency's firing of an openly gay employee.

The contract agreement means the 300 children placed by the state at Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children will not have to be moved.

The dispute arose after the American Civil Liberties Union sued Baptist Homes over the lesbian social worker it fired in 1998.

The state offered the agency a new two-year, \$12 million contract this year but said the agency had to assume liability for litigation arising from its policy not to employ openly gay workers. The contract also said the state could stop referring children there at any time.

The agency was reluctant to accept the contract but decided to go along after Gov. Paul Patton had intervened and assured the agency that individual social workers, not high level administrators, decide where to place children, and