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Former MAP treasurer sentenced

by David Prybylo
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—Nearly 10 months after being charged with embezzlement, Stephen O'Shields, former treasurer of Metrolina AIDS Project, was sentenced in September to six months in jail and ordered to repay the nearly \$118,000 he was convicted of stealing.

O'Shields was also ordered to repay \$39,000 to the Hackberry Court Homeowners Association, where he was also treasurer and from which he admitted embezzling.

O'Shields, who has been free on bond since turning himself in last December, was ordered by Superior Court Judge Zoro Guice Jr. to report to the Mecklenburg satellite jail's work-release program on September 2 to begin serving his sentence. Judge Guice also ordered him to begin monthly payments to the court which will be divided between MAP and Hackberry Court.

Officials at MAP say they are pleased with the resolution. "Under the circumstances, it's the best for MAP and the best for Stephen,"

"Stephen O'Shields stole thousands of dollars from people dying of AIDS..."

MAP board member and attorney Jim Gronquist told the *Charlotte Observer*.

In court, Barbara Rein, who began as MAP's executive director shortly before auditors discovered money missing from the agency, painted O'Shields as a callous spend-thrift who stole money to support his lavish lifestyle. "Stephen O'Shields stole thousands of dollars from people dying of AIDS so he could have parties and travel," she told Judge Guice. "That money should have been used to buy medicine for children who are sick. That money should have been used to keep the lights on for people who are poor and alone."

O'Shields, however, denied that he used the money in this way, though he did not say how he spent it. He appeared apologetic in court, saying he regretted "the terrible pain and hardship" he had caused. "I took both positions with honorable intent," he told the court. "I admitted I was guilty from day one."

O'Shields had planned to use proceeds from the sale of his mother's beach property to begin repayment, according to his defense attorney, Gary Murphy. The sale, however, fell through.

According to a police fraud investigator, O'Shields embezzled money from MAP by forging checks and depositing them into the Hackberry Court account. Since his was the only signature needed on Hackberry checks, he then withdrew the funds and used them for personal expenses. At the time the embezzlement was discovered, MAP officials said that their accounting procedures were appropriate for the size of the agency, though they admitted to placing too much trust in O'Shields, a volunteer. "I think this is an important lesson for all non-profits," said then-board president Hal Chapple in January. "I think every non-profit agency needs to look into their financial [matters]. We're all run by volunteers, and we have to trust them. Sometimes, I think we end up trusting them a little too much."

Carrboro approves domestic partnerships

by Darryl R. Williams
Q-Notes Staff

CARRBORO, NC—The Carrboro Board of Aldermen took a monumental step toward equality on September 13 by unanimously passing an ordinance to allow registration of gay, lesbian, and heterosexual domestic partners. The passage makes Carrboro the first municipality in North Carolina to grant legal recognition of lesbian and gay relationships. The measure will take effect on October 11, 1994, to coincide with National Coming Out Day.

In introducing the ordinance, sponsor Mike Nelson beseeched other aldermen to vote with him. "This is fundamentally a civil rights issue," Nelson said. "It's an issue of fairness, and it's the right thing to do."

Alderman Jacquelyn Gist seconded the motion to approve the measure, adding that the reason for her support was simple: "I think it's right and it's fair."

At the request of town manager Bob Morgan, the vote on a measure to offer health

insurance to domestic partners of town employees was postponed until Carrboro learned

whether Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) would provide coverage. Nelson said that BCBS was expected to cover domestic partners and that the board of aldermen would likely approve the measure when it comes up for a vote in the spring. Kaiser Permanente, the town's other insurer, has already informed the board that it will cover domestic partners.

Another proposal requiring elected officials to disclose financial information of domestic partners was also passed unanimously; a similar local ordinance is already in effect for

spouses of elected officials.

Although Nelson considers all three proposals important, the legal recognition of domestic partners through registration is paramount.

"In the eyes of the law, domestic partners are strangers — total strangers — and that simply ain't right," Nelson said, adding that issue was not about money and benefits, but about respect. "There isn't a lesbian or gay family in this town that wouldn't trade all the money in the world to get the same respect as married couples."

Nelson expects several couples to pay the \$40 fee and register on the day the ordinance takes effect.



Mike Nelson

International gay group barred from U.N.

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

NEW YORK—On September 16 the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) was removed from its consultative position with the United Nations because of a U.S.-led effort to ban groups which support pedophilia.

Sparked by Senator Jesse Helms' amendment to a Foreign Appropriations bill last fall, calling for the U.S. to cut funds to the United Nations unless all member organizations which support pedophilia be expelled, the U.N. Economic and Social Council voted unanimously to disassociate itself from the worldwide gay group.

The ouster was the culmination of almost a year of controversy surrounding the North-American Man-Boy Love Association's (NAMBLA) membership in ILGA.

Helms' challenge, which was expressly mounted in opposition to ILGA, fueled intense debate in the gay and lesbian community where NAMBLA has been a bane to many for years. Although ILGA's status with the United Nations was only that of a consultant, with no voting privileges, it was an his-

toric step for a human-rights organization focused on sexual minority issues to be allowed into the U.N. under any circumstance. As a result, many gays felt that it was imperative that ILGA oust NAMBLA to circumvent Helms' ploy.

The passionate opposition to NAMBLA was evident at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's *Creating Change* conference last November where several gay/lesbian activists, including former Task Force executive director Urvashi Vaid, expressed outrage that the Board had not issued an official statement condemning NAMBLA's membership in ILGA. Earlier this year, the Board did issue such a statement which stated in part, "[NGLTF] condemns all abuse of minors, both sexual and any other kind, perpetrated by adults and supports the expulsion of NAMBLA... from ILGA."

While the great majority of the community seemed to be in agreement that NAMBLA should be removed, some high-profile activists, including *Steam* magazine publisher Scott O'Hara and former *Advocate* sex advice columnist Pat Califia, condemned the movement to blackball NAMBLA, casting the action as

a politically expedient sacrifice.

These and other NAMBLA supporters made their feelings clear in June when they separated themselves from Stonewall 25, the "official" march to recognize the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall Inn riot, and organized their own march. The group dubbed itself Spirit of Stonewall and stated that it was honoring the memory of the marginalized drag queens and racial minorities who frequented the Stonewall Inn by supporting NAMBLA.

Nevertheless, this past summer ILGA members voted to revoke the Man-Boy Love Association's membership with a whopping 80% marking their ballots in favor of the ouster.

The Economic and Social Council's action caught community leaders off-guard since the vote on NAMBLA had presumably brought ILGA in line with the Helms amendment.

Peri Jude Radecic, the out-going executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, called the removal "...an unspeakable injustice against lesbians, gays and bisexuals around the world."

Status of HIV testing in North Carolina still in question

by Dan Van Mourik
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—After the state Commission for Health Services decided to end anonymous HIV testing in the State of North Carolina, ACT UP/Triangle filed a motion in Wake County Superior Court, alleging that the state withheld critical information when ACT UP requested documents under the state's public information statute. The motion asked the court to order the commission to rehear the issue and consider the new evidence. ACT UP also requested that anonymous testing be continued while the court assessed the merits of their case.



Sec. Johnathan Howes

On August 29, Judge Gordon Batt

down a three-part ruling. Of immediate significance is the granting of an indefinite injunction against the State Health Department which will keep anonymous HIV testing available until a final decision is reached by the court.

Included in the ruling is the stipulation that the state Commission for Health Services must reconsider all evidence presented on the issue, including the suppressed report obtained by ACT UP. The report, from state epidemiologist Teresa Klimko, states that there is a significant and permanent drop in the numbers of gay men being tested for HIV when anonymous testing is not available. The State Health Department withheld this report from both the commission and ACT UP; ACT UP threat-

ened the state with a law suit to get the report released.

The third segment of Judge Battle's ruling states that the commission must return to superior court after re-evaluating all information and present their findings. At that time, Judge Battle will make a final determination regarding anonymous HIV testing.

Judge Battle felt compelled to make his ruling based on the state's violation of the Public Records Act, but it is undetermined if the court actually has the authority to decide this issue.

Several AIDS activists recently met with Jonathan Howes, Secretary of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, to discuss this situation. Howes assured those present that the Commission for Health Services would devote their next meeting to this issue. Their next scheduled meeting is November 3 where regular agenda items will be discussed. The commission has established a special, all-day meeting for November 4 to address only the testing issue.