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Which of the following cartoon characters was the most obviously gay?

Snagglepuss	Peppermint Patty	Race Bannon
17%	62%	21%

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New PSAs feature Judy Shepard

by Anabel Evora
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—The Human Rights Campaign Foundation has released two new public service announcements (PSAs) aimed at curbing anti-gay violence and promoting a greater understanding of gay issues. The 30-second spots which feature Judy Shepard, the mother of slain Wyoming college student Matthew Shepard, were unveiled in Los Angeles at a September 9 luncheon in her honor.

Last October, Matthew Shepard was savagely attacked and left to die, tied to a wooden fence in sub-zero temperatures. Law enforcement officials have said that the two men subsequently arrested and charged with the murder acknowledged that they targeted the 5' 2" student because they knew he was gay.

In the new ads, Judy Shepard speaks about the love she and others felt for her son and urges viewers to "choose to understand."

In the spot entitled "Parenthood," Shepard says, "In a perfect world, because your child is gay, you don't worry about their safety. You just worry about them being happy. I loved Matt just the way he was."

Produced in cooperation with the Matthew Shepard Foundation, the ads will be distributed to every network affiliate and cable operator in the United States that uses public service announcements. The spots will begin air-

ing at stations the week of September 20 and should begin airing in October on those outlets that choose to promote the campaign.

"Judy Shepard's message of unconditional love and support for her son is something that the entire country should hear," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign. "Her strength and courage in the face of unimaginable personal tragedy serves as an inspiration to all of us. She has emerged as a powerful voice for fairness in this country."

"The theme 'choose to understand' was designed to inspire genuine reflection about what motivates animus toward gay people and suggest that it is time to dismantle it," said David M. Smith, HRC's communications director and senior strategist, who oversaw the project at HRC. "It is our sincere hope that this campaign will encourage greater understanding and healing."

A team of advertising professionals assembled by ad executive Josh Kilmer-Purcell of New York produced the spots. The team included award-winning directors Chris Reiss and Amy Hill who most recently directed a public service announcement for the Academy of Dermatology highlighting the dangers of skin cancer. Other team members included Laura Fegley who, along with Purcell, served as creative director. Dominic Ferro and Kelley Fagan served as co-executive producers. ▼

AIDS death decline wanes; new infections continue unabated

by Wanda Pico
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—New data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showing a 50 percent drop in the rate of decline of AIDS deaths confirms the weaknesses of current AIDS treatments as well as the need for better health care access. According to the CDC, from 1997 to 1998, AIDS deaths dropped by 20 percent, half of the 42 percent drop from 1996 to 1997. This represents the lowest decline in AIDS deaths of the protease drug era.

"Our worst fears have become a tragic reality," said Steven Fisher, director of communications at AIDS Action, the nation's leading community-based AIDS organization. "For the first time, our concerns about current AIDS treatments are confirmed by a leading epidemic indicator. AIDS drugs don't work for everyone

and aren't a cure for anyone."

Winnie Stachelberg, political director for the Human Rights Campaign, added, "The statistics underscore the reality that the HIV/AIDS epidemic remains a public health emergency and they highlight the importance of putting public health interest ahead of short-term political goals."

To ensure reversal of this new trend, AIDS Action is urging better access to treatment from the under- and uninsured as well as a stronger commitment to research and fair pricing from the pharmaceutical industry. The slowing death decline also underscores the need for stopping new HIV infections in the first place.

While AIDS deaths dropped 42 percent in 1997 and 20 percent in 1998, the numbers for people of color are even more troublesome. AIDS deaths dropped from 35 percent in 1997

See *INFECTIONS* on page 10

GLBTs of color join for Unity Fest

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

DURHAM, NC—According to organizers, final plans are in place for the second annual Unity Fest '99, North Carolina's GLBT Pride weekend for people of color "in the life."

The event is scheduled for the weekend of September 24-26 in Durham and sponsored by *Out in Black* magazine, a Raleigh-based publication produced by and serving GLBTs of color. The goal of the festival is to "celebrate the existence of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender People of Color."

John D. Hardy, publisher of *Out in Black* and the leading force behind Unity Fest '99, added, "Unity Fest '99 will provide an excellent opportunity for other communities to experience the full richness and diversity of our communities and build bridges of understanding. We are going to have lots of fun, talk about some issues concerning our community, solve some problems, learn some new stuff, do some networking, show mad love and support for each other, show off our talents, eat, party and pray together...like family."

Scheduled offerings (many of them to be hosted by J & L's Restaurant & Bar, 2627 Hillsborough Rd.) begin Friday, September 24 at 6:00pm with a Greet and Meet Reception and continue with a Community Organization

Resource Fair; A Celebration of Life I featuring national recording artist Dani; and the Unity Fest '99 Kick Off Dance Party.

Saturday's events start at noon with Empowerment Sessions; workshops follow at 2:00pm. A Celebration of Life II reception with a community service awards presentation, guest speaker and entertainment begins at 6:00pm. A Poetry Slam open to all GLBTs of color and a party called Until Unity Fest '99 with guest DJs and exotic male entertainment round out the night.

Sunday is "Family Day" and should include a Church Service at Imani MCC in Durham; a Community Picnic with vendor marketplace; and close with a non-drinking party at a private residence.

While the educational aspects of the gathering are important, organizers want participants to enjoy themselves, too. "It is our hope to build bridges between our people and to gain an understanding and appreciation of our differences. [But] as you can see, we are planning for this to be a fun experience with something for everyone," explained Hardy.

For more information on Unity Fest '99 including a complete list of events, their locations and admission costs, contact John D. Hardy at (919) 873-3025 or email OutNBlack@aol.com. ▼

Second investigative hearing held in murder of gay soldier

by Dan Van Mourik
Q-Notes Staff

FORT CAMPBELL, KY—A second hearing into the circumstances surrounding the death of Pfc. Barry L. Winchell, 21, recently concluded in Fort Campbell. The Article 32 hearing, similar to a civilian grand jury, was convened to hear testimony regarding the involvement of Spec. Justin R. Fisher, 25, who is charged as an accomplice in the assault on Winchell, his roommate at Fort Campbell. Fisher is also accused of acting as an accessory after the fact, making false statements to Army investigators and obstructing the investigation.

Winchell was bludgeoned with a baseball bat in his barracks early on July 5 and died the next day at a hospital in Nashville, TN.

Spec. Carlos Rodriguez testified during the first day of the hearing that Pvt. Calvin N. Glover, charged with premeditated murder, told Rodriguez soon after the killing that the idea for the attack came from Fisher.

During testimony, Fisher and Winchell were said to often be at odds; Fisher having once had a physical altercation with Winchell that sent Winchell to the hospital. Fisher is both the person who told others in the unit that Winchell was gay and the person who introduced him to a Nashville gay bar. According to testimony, Fisher also taunted Glover for having lost a fistfight to Winchell, a gay man, on July 3.

Staff Sgt. Bradley Hardin, the last of eight witnesses, described how Winchell was so badly beaten that he gurgled on his own blood, struggling to breathe while unconscious. "He had raccoon eyes, and both eyes were black."

Hardin said he was on duty the morning of July 5 and rushed to the scene outside Winchell's barracks to find him near death after being struck several times with a wooden bat. Blood coated the cot where Winchell was sleeping, as well as his comforter and the walls.

Hardin said he first realized something was wrong when he heard Fisher yelling, "Oh, God, help me, I think he's dying."

Hardin said he rushed to Winchell's barracks and saw Fisher covered in blood, holding Winchell under his arms and trying to drag him down a flight of stairs to get help. Hardin said Winchell was bleeding from his left ear.

Hardin and another soldier tried to stop the bleeding by applying pressure and placing a field dressing on the wound.

In Fisher's defense, other soldiers testified he was running around the barracks, screaming for help and asking people to hope that Winchell would pull through.

Military trial counselors, similar to prosecutors, say the killing occurred two days after a drunken Glover, 18, picked a fight with Winchell at a July 3 party at Fort Campbell.

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Members of Glover's defense counsel say much of the Army's case against their client rests on Fisher's accusatory testimony against Glover.

The presiding officer at Fisher's hearing, Major Lee Miller, will make a written report to 2nd Brigade commander Colonel Robert Caslen, who in conjunction with Fort Campbell commander Major General Robert Clark will determine the next step for both Fisher and Glover. They can decide to dismiss the charges, recommend administrative action or convene a court martial, either on the charges as presented or as modified by the commanders.

Neither the Army nor Winchell's family have commented on the dead soldier's sexuality. Witnesses at Glover's hearing testified that Winchell was ridiculed about being gay. ▼