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queer sports and more
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meet cartoonist Alison Bechdel
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QNotes

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Celebrating 70 years

A look at the ACLU's history with
LGBT Rights and HIV/AIDS

by Kara Gotsch

Since coming to the defense of "The Children's Hour," a play that was banned in 1936 for a suggested lesbian relationship, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has been protecting the rights of LGBT Americans. The ACLU's work has and continues to challenge discrimination in the courts and legislatures — case-by-case, law-by-law — to change anti-gay policies.

As the efforts to win full civil rights and equality for LGBT people continue, the ACLU marks 70 years of important legal victories. The ACLU began a full LGBT rights docket 50 years ago. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender & AIDS Project was founded 20 years ago.

The following is a timeline of major events and legal cases in our civil rights struggle, a measure of how far we've come and where we need to go.

- 1936**
- Defense of "The Children's Hour" against censorship for lesbian content
- 1956**
- Defense of San Francisco Bay Area gay bar (Hazel's Inn) raided by police
- 1957**
- Defense of Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" against obscenity charges for gay content
- 1963**

- **1966**
- Challenge to Florida law outlawing gay bars (*Inman v. Miami*)
- 1967**
- Challenge to Los Angeles ordinance making it illegal for performers to "im-personate a person of the opposite sex"
- Challenge to deportation of gay man (*Boutilier v. INS*)
- Sodomy law challenge (*Delaney v. Florida*)
- 1969**
- Demonstrations against a police crack-down at the Stonewall gay bar in New York City sparked the LGBT rights movement
- 1970**
- First challenge to policy on gays in the military (*Schlegel v. U.S.*)
- 1971**
- Challenge to anti-gay security clearance rules (*Gayer v. Laird*)
- 1972**
- First challenge to law restricting marriage to persons of the opposite sex (*Baker v. Nelson*)
- 1973**
- Defense of Washington teacher fired for being gay (*Gaylord v. Tacoma*)
- Defense of gay man denied a security clearance (*Rock v. Department of Defense*)
- 1975**
- Defense of gay federal employee fired for being "Flamboyant" (*Singer v. U.S.*)
- 1976**
- Defense of gay father denied visitation with



In 1937 the ACLU took their first stand in support of the LGBT community when they fought against a ban on the play 'The Children's Hour,' by Lillian Hellman.

his children (*Voeller v. Voeller*)

- 1977**
- Challenge to university's refusal to recognize lesbian/gay student group (*Mississippi Gay Alliance v. Mississippi State University*)
- 1978**
- Lawsuit against the Briggs Initiative, a measure to ban gay people from teaching in California's public schools (*California Federation of Teachers v. Eu*)

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A soldier's story

More from Iraq

Editor's Note: These are the thoughts of a gay soldier — a North Carolina native — who has been deployed to Iraq. Because of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, he must remain anonymous.

My reaction to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's death was a mixture of shock and excitement. It's a great win for the Coalition Forces and the Iraqi Army. It was disappointing to hear some of the locals portray the coalition forces as villains — I heard some of them say that Zarqawi wasn't dead and American soldiers beat him to death. In my opinion this was a bad man — he was responsible for the deaths of so many — he didn't deserve to live. The overriding opinion of the Iraqi military, civilians and Coalition Forces soldiers I have spo-



ken with indicates that most people feel justice was done.

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The ACLU Fight for LGBT Rights

- 1936
First Case
- 1956
LGBT Program
- 1986
LGBT Project
- 2006
ANNIVERSARY
- ACLU

Defense of gay man fired by U.S. Government (*Scott v. Macy*)

1963

- Sodomy law challenge (*Enslin v. Walford*)

1965

- Challenge to police raid on San Francisco event sponsored by the Council on Religion and the Homosexual
- One of the first gay rights rallies held at Independence Hall in Philadelphia to demand changes in policies that listed homosexuality as an illness and national security threat

Out, young and proud: Matt Hill Comer

UNCG student forms new LGBT political organization

by Jim Baxter . Q-Notes staff

Matt Hill Comer, a 20-year-old native of Winston-Salem, is an LGBT rights and youth advocate with some bright and exciting ideas. Currently a sophomore at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNC-G), Comer is harnessing the power of the internet not only to connect but to organize.

Coming out to himself as a gay man was remarkably brief, although dealing with his religious upbringing and family proved difficult. While his family was apprehensive about his sexuality six years ago, Comer says they are growing more accepting and embracing with each passing day.

"I think I always knew I was different. I remember feeling a lot closer to guys than girls my whole life. In fact, I actually had a crush on the two guys who played in 'The Never-Ending Story,'" he told Q-Notes.

"I don't think I was ever actually aware that my feelings were 'gay' or 'homosexual' until I was about 11 or 12, though. I got a lot of support and information on my own, at the public library or



the school library and such. When I came out at 14, in eighth grade, I got a lot of support from my teachers and a few friends."

Today, Comer serves on the executive board of UNC-G's LGBTQ student organization and he has just started a

'Politics is how I think and what I think, and a political group was something I have always wanted to do.'

— Matt Hill Comer

new project called the North Carolina Advocacy Coalition (NCAC). But his activism started much earlier.

"During the summer between my

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Baptist Convention surprises
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More lies from Focus on the Family
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