

# The FRONT PAGE

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The Out Against the War Coalition marches in San Francisco against the war in Iraq. Photo by Bruce Thomas

## Reyes Pleads Guilty

**Mecklenberg County Democrats' ex-chairman admits bank, tax charges**

CHARLOTTE (AP) — Andrew Reyes, an accountant and former head of the Mecklenburg County Democratic Party, pleaded guilty Tuesday to bank fraud and tax evasion.

Reyes was accused of diverting \$3.6 million from an accounting client to himself between 1998 and 2000. He initially faced 15 counts of bank fraud. At a brief hearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge Carl Horn, Reyes pleaded guilty to those charges, three of income tax evasion and one of conspiracy to commit income tax evasion.

Reyes made a rapid rise in Charlotte in the late 1990s, progressing from gay activist to major party donor to local Democratic leader before disappearing mysteriously in May 2001.

He was arrested last fall in California by federal authorities.

As part of a plea agreement, Reyes agreed to assist prosecutors in a continuing government investigation of his former associates, Assistant U.S. Attorney Josh Howard told Horn.

"He is fully cooperating with the government in an ongoing criminal investi-



Andrew Reyes AP Photo Chuck Burton

gation," defense attorney James Wyatt told reporters following the hearing.

Reyes declined to make a statement after his plea, limiting his remarks to brief answers to Horn's questions.

"Andrew has confronted this case and he is dealing with it. He is looking forward to the next chapter in his life," Wyatt said.

No sentencing date was immediately set. Under federal sentencing guidelines, Reyes could be sentenced to a maximum of just over eight years in prison, U.S. Attorney Bob Conrad said.

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## Gay Goes Mainstream

**A mature gay movement returns to its origins in a politics of broad social change**

Commentary by Michael Bronski  
Contributing Writer

If there was any doubt left that a potential war with Iraq is what's on everyone's mind, it was erased with the opening joke of a recent episode of *Will and Grace*. After Karen flirts outrageously with the handsome owner of the restaurant in which they are eating, Grace asks, "Are you trying to get a date with that man?" Karen answers with her best baby-doll voice: "Oh, honey. I haven't had a date since Bush was president and we were about to invade Iraq."

The line captured perfectly the intersection of foreign policy and camp sensibility (bet you didn't know about that intersection). That such a joke could be made on television's only queer sit-com is part of an interesting phenomenon: many pockets of the organized queer community are taking policy stands on the potential war. This didn't happen in 1991 during Gulf War I, and it's happened only rarely since. (Two years ago, for instance, a number of gay groups took stances against the death penalty.) Ironically, it marks not only the maturation of the gay movement, but also a return to its origins in a poli-

tics of broad social change.

Consider how the community responded to the first president Bush's war against Iraq. Back then, the board of directors of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) issued a strong statement against the war. It declared the war an international social-justice issue that demanded NGLTF's attention, given the organization's mandate to deal with gay-and-lesbian issues. From NGLTF's point of view, the Persian Gulf War would adversely affect not just the lives of those lesbians and gay men in the armed forces, but also vital domestic-spending programs on health care and research for AIDS.

NGLTF was the only national gay group to take such a stand, and it was excoriated by the gay press and public for having strayed beyond the narrowly drawn definition of a "gay issue." It's true that there were a few local grassroots groups, such as independently organized chapters of ACT UP, that did the same. But for the most part, NGLTF stood alone in its stance against the war. The group took substantial hits in its fundraising for having involved itself in issues that were not "gay."

Fast-forward to the second president Bush and, presumably, the second war in the Persian Gulf. NGLTF has again taken a stance on the war. But so, too, have the Log Cabin Republicans, the Metropolitan Community Church, the

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## NC AIDS Cases Surge

**New HIV cases up Sixteen Percent in 2002**

RALEIGH (Jan 22) — The number of AIDS cases in North Carolina increased dramatically in 2002, with 1,014 new cases reported last year, state health officials said Wednesday.

The cases represent a 16 percent increase over the 871 new cases reported in 2001. And it was the first year since 1994 that more than 1,000 new cases have been reported in a single year.

"This epidemic is not under control," said Dr. Leah Devlin, state health director. "We're moving in the wrong direction with respect to new reports. The South has more persons living with AIDS than other geographic areas of the nation. North Carolina is part of this trend."

One possible reason to the increase is that more people lack access to care, so HIV infection may go undetected or untreated. That increases the chances that a person will develop and/or transmit AIDS, Devlin said.

The closing of the AIDS Drug Assistance Program also may be part of the reason, she said. ADAP provides HIV and AIDS drugs to people who can't afford them.

But the program was closed to new enrollees because of budget constraints and a waiting list was established in December 2001. Some 665 people were moved from the waiting list into the program in November 2002, but more than 175 people remain on the list.

The increase also may be related to some treatment failures or to the natural progress of HIV infection, says the report by the state HIV/STD prevention and care branch.