

The Jamaica OutPost

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Kingston, Jamaica **OCTOBER 2004**

Global Headlines

- Lesbian activist savagely murdered in Sierra Leone in a suspected hate crime.
- Nigerian Government orders football players to stop wearing dreadlocks, earrings and braids for fear of 'promoting' homosexuality.
- Ugandan radio station fined for broadcasting pro-gay interview.

The Jamaica OutPost

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COMMUNITY BOARD

October is Gay and Lesbian History Month

22 Oct - Halloween Costume Party
 St. Ann's Area
 Info: 430-7632

Join The Jamaica OutPoll Yahoo! Group & make your voice heard.
 Website:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jamaicaoutpoll>

A NEW CHAPTER IN JAMAICA'S GAY HISTORY

A new day has dawned on the shores of Jamaica. For the first time in history, the plight of the lesbian, all-sexual and gay (LAG) community seems to be getting some well-deserved support. This comes with the announcement in a press release by several corporate groups to re-examine their sponsorship of dancehall artists who incite and promote violence through their musical expressions. The companies concerned include Red Stripe, Wray and Nephew, Cable and Wireless Ja. Ltd., Courts Ja. Ltd., Digicel Jamaica and Pepsi-Cola Jamaica Ltd., all major sponsors of the local entertainment industry.

Even though there was no specific reference to the exact nature of the violence or who influenced this historic position, this is surely a day for the LAG community of Jamaica to reflect as we celebrate Gay and Lesbian History Month. In fact, the struggle for equality for gays and lesbians in Jamaica has been going on longer than most people do realize. Let us take a moment to stroll down Jamaica's gay history



Flyer used by No More Murder Music! in their New York City Campaign (Aug 2004)

lane. The first documented gay rights advocacy in Jamaica was in 1977, with the establishing of the Gay Freedom Movement (GFM) in Kingston. Meetings were weekly with an average attendance of 40 gay men and lesbians. The movement published a bi-monthly newsletter (The Jamaica Gaily News), which circulated for about two and

half years. The GFM self-dissolved a few years later. Over a period of about seven years, however, the GFM made several historical marks. Here is a timeline of some other major highlights in Jamaica's gay history:

1978 – Jamaica's first gay and lesbian play "Mix it out" was staged.

THE LIBERATION OF HOMOSEXUALS

The Jamaica OutPost wishes to commemorate Gay and Lesbian History Month by reminding our readers that history is cre-

ated by each and every one of us. Our actions today will create the future we experience tomorrow. While we remember those from the

past who have sacrificed to make our lives better, let us commit our present efforts to the improvement of life for those to come.

"The liberation of homosexuals can only be the work of homosexuals themselves." - Kurt Hiller, 1921

NO MORE MURDER MUSIC!

1978 – GFM established Jamaica's first ever gay and lesbian telephone switchboard.

1978 – The dorm room of an allegedly gay student from the social sciences faculty at UMI was blazed with a homemade bomb on February 21.

1978 – Coronation of Miss Jamaica (Gay), during Independence celebrations by the GLBT community on August 6.

1978 – Jamaica's first gay and lesbian hotel, Lighthouse Park, opened on April 27.

1978 – Gay activist Larry Chang participated in the first public discussion ever in Jamaica about homosexuality on December 23 at the College of Arts, Science and

Technology (CAST), now the University of Technology (Utech).

1979 – The Gay Community Health Clinic opened on March 10, offering medical services on Saturdays between 11 Am and 1 Pm.

1980 – A record 7 private gay parties in the Kingston were bombed within one month. The bombs were all homemade and there were no reports of any major injuries.

1984 – The Ministry of Education explored homosexuality in the personal development slot on their Education Broadcasting Service (EBS). The moderator was psychologist Dr Frank Knight of the University Hospital; guests were students of Kingston College and St Hughes High.

1984 - GFM assisted Winston Rowe

of UMI with a documentary on the stonewall riot for the advance media programme at the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication (CARIMAC).

1993 - Rumours of a planned gay march had the "heavy-hats" in frenzy. Scores lined the streets, armed and ready to chop, stab, shot, lynch among others, waiting for any 'body' that dared to march for gay rights in Jamaica.

1997 - Sixteen allegedly gay prison inmates were slaughtered and 40 others injured in a riot following an attempt by prison authorities to distribute condoms to warders and inmates to help stem the spread

of the HIV/AIDS within the penal system.

1998 - Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG) was established.

1999 - J-FLAG made a submission to parliament to include sexual orientation in the discrimination clause of the proposed Charter of Rights and Freedoms Bill.

2002 – The United Kingdom offered asylum to three Jamaican gay men on the basis that their lives could be fatally compromised if they returned to Jamaica.

2004 – Amnesty international released an urgent appeal on June 1 to the global community to write to the Prime Minister of Jamaica asking him to take urgent steps to protect gay people from violence, and to repeal legislation that criminalizes same sex relations.

2004 – A dark day in Jamaica's gay history was upon us all. Gay rights activist Brian Williamson was found murdered at his home in New Kingston on June 9.

Health & Wellness

CREATING A BALANCED HEALTH REGIME Part 2 of 3

In the last issue we talked about the four health spheres: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. In this issue, we will explore the concept of the spiritual sphere. The majority of GLBT Jamaicans are raised within religious traditions and may feel conflict between this indoctrination and their personal experience of reality - their innate knowing that same-gender attraction need not preclude a rich and rewarding spiritual life. This internal conflict

can lead to serious emotional and physical consequences so we all need to assess our own spiritual yearnings and pursue a path that satisfies them. Some find that they are able to overlook this conflict and remain within their familial faith. Others seek new beliefs or spiritual paths while still others reject a spiritual path altogether. Regardless of the choice made, it is important to find a path that affirms our value as unique expressions of Divine creativity while at

the same time allows for compatibility with our sexual orientation so that we do not feel pressured into living a life of deceptions and denials. There are many spiritual paths that satisfy these criteria. Some are structured and revolve around a community of believers; others are more individualized and can be practiced in the privacy of your home. Either way, your spiritual health will benefit from making a carefully considered decision. In the next issue we will examine a simple technique that helps to simultaneously improve all your health spheres.

International News

GAY MARRIAGE BILL APPROVED IN SPAIN

In an unprecedented decision to remove the influence of the Catholic Church on the Spanish society, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero has approved a bill to permit gay marriage in Spain. Once the bill passes the cabinet and Spain's parliament, couples could start taking up this freedom in the early part of next year. The decision has not come, however, without harsh criticism and condemnation by the Catholic Church and conservative oppositions. According to a press release by the Spanish Bishops Conference, this decision is like

releasing a virus into the society that will eventually produce very negative effects. Public opinion polls have also suggested significant support for the viewpoint of the church and opposition. On the other hand, representatives of the Spanish gay and lesbian community are citing an end to the church's long-standing discriminatory position and assert that this move will improve the normalisation of homosexuality in the Spanish society. Under the new bill, gay couples will also have adoption rights, which will

be limited to only Spanish children to prevent any cross-border legal challenge. Other countries where gay marriage is legal include Belgium, The Netherlands, Massachusetts in the U.S., British Columbia, Vancouver, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec in Canada. Many other countries also offer domestic partnership or similar benefits. Recently the US House of Senate voted against a constitutional ban on gay marriage in the United States of America, an issue currently under heavy debate there.

Last Month's OUTPoll Results

Do you think conditions will ever improve for gays & lesbians in Jamaica?
 YES - 100%
 NO - 0%

Monthly OUTPoll

Question:
 Should all gay people boycott a company that sponsors anti-gay dancehall artists?
 Agree/Disagree/Not Sure

Text answer to 8641856 Or send SMS to 8641856@digitextjm.com

Any comments?

Please send to jamaicaoutpost@hotmail.com