

DNC DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT PRESS CLIPS 1/2/08 thru 1/18/08

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High-ranking DNC officials compelled to give statements in gay former employee's discrimination suit

http://pageoneq.com/news/2008/dnclawsuit_010208.html

by Nick Langewis, PageOneQ

According to documents obtained by **PageOneQ** <http://www.pageoneq.com/>, a series of senior Democratic National Committee officials has been subpoenaed in an ongoing discrimination lawsuit by former LGBT outreach director Donald Hitchcock. Those ordered to provide sworn testimony include chairman Howard Dean, openly gay treasurer Andy Tobias, and Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council executive Director Brian Bond .



Donald Hitchcock (l.) and Paul Yandura

The suit charges that a campaign of infighting, discrimination and retaliation led to the illegal firing of Hitchcock after his partner, former Clinton appointee Paul Yandura, criticized the Party for what he claimed was a lack of support for LGBT causes, especially on the issue of defeating anti-gay ballot measures.

Hitchcock was fired less than a week after Yandura's criticisms became public. According to Hitchcock, the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council, of which he became the director in June of 2005, was created specifically to raise funds from LGBT supporters. The Party, he says, had no interest in being politically involved in LGBT issues otherwise.

The lawsuit charges that Hitchcock was paid less than his counterparts in comparable positions, while never receiving staff support or a budget. According to FEC records, his bi-weekly pay was \$2,156, while the other directors were paid \$2,508. The suit also says that Hitchcock, before his firing, was held personally responsible by Ms. Tegen for, and threatened over, Mr. Yandura's statements about the Democratic Party. Dean, Tobias and Tegen, Hitchcock charges, began spreading rumors within the Party in an attempt to discredit him.

"The DNC does not comment on pending litigation," DNC General Counsel Joe Sandler said this morning.

Hitchcock's suit called for monetary damages, leaving the amount to be determined by a jury, along with the retraction of public statements made by Dean and Tobias directly related to his firing over supposedly poor job performance.

"I look forward shining light on the facts and discussing under oath the circumstances of my employment and unfair termination from the DNC," Hitchcock told **PageOneQ** "The community has already seen and felt the prioritizing of raising money from our community by the DNC, and now they will be exposed to the hard undeniable facts about the party's disservice to the LGBT community via the discovery process."

Those subpoenaed will give testimony between January 7 and February 28.

The case's *Discovery Plan* and a complete list of those subpoenaed to give statements follows.

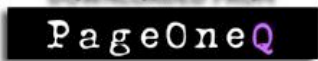
PageOneQ will be obtaining additional documents related to this suit...

Discovery Plan

Defendants will produce documents subject to protective order	Upon entry of protective order
Defendants will respond to: Plaintiff's Second Set of Interrogatories to Defendant DNC Services Corporation; Plaintiff's Second Request for Document Production to Defendant DNC Services Corporation; Plaintiff's Second Set of Interrogatories to Defendant Julie Tegen; Plaintiff's First Request for Document Production to Defendant Julie Tegen; Plaintiff's Second Set of Interrogatories to Defendant Andrew Tobias; Plaintiff's First Request for Document Production to Defendant Andrew Tobias; and Plaintiff's First Request for Document Production to Defendant Governor Howard Dean.	December 19, 2007
Defendant will produce all remaining documents not subject to the protective order, except documents obtained through a search of all email backup tapes regarding the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender ("LGBT") community; the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council ("GLLC"); and Paul Yandura.	December 21, 2007
Defendant will produce all supplemental responses to Plaintiff's interrogatories.	January 4, 2007
Deposition of Brian Bond	January 7, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)
Deposition of Claire Lucas	January 8, 2008 9:30 am
Deposition of Leah Daughtry	January 18, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)
Deposition of Damien LaVera	January 22, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)
Deposition of Jewel Hazel	January 22, 2008 1:00 pm
Deposition of Latoya Jones	January 22, 2008 3:00 pm
Deposition of Parag Mehta	January 23, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)
Deposition of Tom McMahon	January 23, 2008 1:00 pm (confirmed)
Deposition of Pam Womack	January 24, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)
Deposition of Simone Ward	January 24, 2008 1:00 pm
Deposition of Chris Owens	January 25, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)
Defendant will produce all documents obtained through a search of all email backup tapes regarding the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender ("LGBT") community; the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council ("GLLC"); and Paul Yandura.	January 31, 2007

Deposition of Donald Hitchcock	February 4, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)
Deposition of Andrew Tobias	February 5, 2008 10:00 am (confirmed)
Deposition of Paul Yandura	February 22, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)
Deposition of Governor Howard Dean	February 27, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)
Deposition of Julie Tegen	February 28, 2008 9:30 am (confirmed)

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DNC honchos subpoenaed in anti-gay discrimination lawsuit

www.pamshouseblend.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=4054

PAMS HOUSE BLEND BLOG:

by: Pam Spaulding

Wed Jan 02, 2008 at 15:30:00 PM EST

The heat is clearly on as the lawsuit filed against the Democratic National Committee by former LGBT outreach director Donald Hitchcock has resulted in high-ranking officials are being forced to testify under oath about how and why the organization fired Hitchcock, who was terminated not long after his partner, Paul Yandura, wrote an open letter criticizing the party's overall handling of LGBT representation and tactics in fighting marriage amendments around the country.

Subpoenaed were Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council executive Director Brian Bond, Claire Lucas, and Leah Daughtry, with Howard Dean and openly gay DNC treasurer Andy Tobias also to be deposed under oath. (PageOneQ):

The lawsuit charges that Hitchcock was paid less than his counterparts in comparable positions, while never receiving staff support or a budget. According to FEC records, his bi-weekly pay was \$2,156, while the other directors were paid \$2,508. The suit also says that Hitchcock, before his firing, was held personally responsible by Ms. Tagen for, and threatened over, Mr. Yandura's statements about the Democratic Party. Dean, Tobias and Tagen, Hitchcock charges, began spreading rumors within the Party in an attempt to discredit him.

"The DNC does not comment on pending litigation," DNC General Counsel Joe Sandler, said this morning.

Hitchcock's suit called for monetary damages, leaving the amount to be determined by a jury, along with the retraction of public statements made by Dean and Tobias directly related to his firing over supposedly poor job performance.

I surely hope that the DNC has its paperwork in order regarding Donald Hitchcock's annual evaluations, as well as those of his colleagues, because those if they don't have documentation, or have clearly outlined goals and expectations for all job descriptions and their review periods, the DNC is going to down in flames on this one.

You'd be surprised at how many organizations, even ones the size of the DNC, have messy and incomplete personnel records that come back to bite them in the posterior when 1) an org wants to legitimately terminate someone for poor performance, or 2) they attempt wrongful or political axings. It certainly sounds like the DNC may be caught with its pants down because Hitchcock sounds confident:

"I look forward shining light on the facts and discussing under oath the circumstances of my employment and unfair termination from the DNC," Hitchcock told PageOneQ. "The community has already seen and felt the prioritizing of raising money from our community by the DNC, and now they will be exposed to the hard undeniable facts about the party's disservice to the LGBT community via the discovery process."

DNC Officials to Supply Depositions in Gay Ex-Employee Suit

www.edgeboston.com/index.php?ch=news&sc=glbt&sc3=&id=54416&pf=1

EDGE BOSTON

by Kilian Melloy

Thursday Jan 3, 2008

DNC Chairman Howard Dean and other party officials will provide depositions



A number of officials from the Democratic National Committee will offer their testimony in a lawsuit leveled at the DNC by a gay former employee.

DNC Chairman and former Governor of Vermont Howard Dean, treasurer Andy Tobias, and Brian Bond, who serves as the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council executive director, will all contribute depositions, reported PageOneQ on Jan. 2.

www.pageoneq.com/news/2008/dnclawsuit_010208.html

The lawsuit was filed by Donald Hitchcock, who says he was fired from his position as Bond's predecessor as executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council, because his life partner, Paul Yandura, a Clinton appointee, expressed criticism of the Democratic Party for not backing gay and lesbian causes--particularly the issue of fending off ballot initiatives designed to deprive GLBT citizens of equality.

Hitchcock claims that the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council was set up to reap financial backing from gays and lesbians, but that other than the monetary backing of GLBT Americans, the DNC was not inclined to interact with or to stand up for the gay community.

Page One Q reported that Hitchcock's May, 2006 firing came about within a week after his partner Yandura addressed gay Democrats in an open letter, saying that the DNC had failed to stand up for GLBT Americans and suggesting that gay Democrats refuse the party further contributions.

Hitchcock told The Washington Blade in 2006, "This is retaliation, plain and simple."

Hitchcock's suit alleges that DNC officials held him responsible for Yandura's critique, retaliating against him through the firing, and that Dean, Tegen, and Tobias circulated rumors about him.

The suit further alleges that, compared to other officials in similar positions, Hitchcock was underpaid, receiving only \$2,156 every two weeks in wages, whereas others who worked in directorial capacities were paid \$2,508.

The suit seeks compensation for damages, as well as retractions of comments made by Dean and Tobias to the effect that Hitchcock was being fired for poor job performance.

PageOneQ reported that Hitchcock told the publication, "I look forward shining light on the facts and discussing under oath the circumstances of my employment and unfair termination from the DNC."

Continued Hitchcock, "The community has already seen and felt the prioritizing of raising money from our community by the DNC, and now they will be exposed to the hard undeniable facts about the party's disservice to the LGBT community via the discovery process."

The Washington Blade reported last October (www.washblade.com/2007/10-12/news/national/11386.cfm) that the lawsuit was ordered into mediation by D.C. Superior Court judge Robert Morin in September.

Last February, AmericaBlog.com published a rebuttal from Andy Tobias, the DNC's openly gay treasurer, in response to a letter to the Washington Blade that Hitchcock had submitted a week earlier (www.americablog.com/2007/02/dnc-responds-to-gay-critics.html).

Tobias' letter said that "there's a lot in Donald's letter that's off the mark and, unintentionally, counterproductive," going on to rebut several points.

Addressing what Hitchcock called DNC Chairman Howard Dean's "reluctance to treating our community with dignity and respect," Tobias wrote, "Donald is of course entitled to his view, but having spent a lot of time observing the Governor ever since he signed-- and then spent months stumping his state in a bulletproof vest promoting--the nation's first civil unions bill, I have seen him consistently demonstrate nothing but a respect for and commitment to our community."

Continued Tobias' letter, "Donald and Paul have both criticized the level of financial support the DNC put into fighting the anti-marriage amendments," going on to say, "The DNC has worked hard ever since I've been soliciting funds to elect candidates who in almost every instance were FAR better on LGBT issues than their opponents," and noting that, "Of the 107 Senators and Congressfolk with perfect 100% ratings from HRC in this past Congress, 103 were Democrats and only four Republicans. Of the 156 who rated ZERO, 152 were Republicans. The difference could hardly be more stark."

Tobias further explained, "In 2006, our principal focus was on the effort to win back the House and Senate. That's where the bulk of the LGBT money went."

Added Tobias, "I, for one, am pleased with the results. Not only are our newly-empowered leaders like Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Barney Frank far more fair-minded than their predecessors; our victory in the Senate may also have an impact on judicial appointments that last for decades."

Wrote Tobias, "The Senate victory was so close that I think it can be fairly said it might not have happened without support from the DNC that was made possible by LGBT dollars."

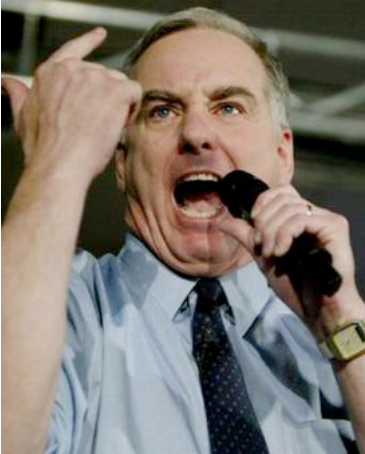
Kilian Melloy reviews media, conducts interviews, and writes commentary for EDGEBoston, where he also serves as Assistant Arts Editor.

Dean, DNC Subpoenaed In Gay Disc. Suit

A Battle For The Books!

www.queerty.com/dean-dnc-subpoenaed-in-gay-disc-suit-20080102/

QUEERTY.com



Things are about to get sticky for the Democratic National Committee.

According to documents obtained by PageOneQ, a series of senior Democratic National Committee officials has been subpoenaed in an ongoing discrimination lawsuit by former LGBT outreach director Donald Hitchcock. Those ordered to provide sworn testimony include chairman Howard Dean, openly gay treasurer Andy Tobias, and Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council executive Director Brian Bond.

Hitchcock alleges that the DNC fired him after his boyfriend, political consultant Paul Yandura, wrote a scathing letter about the Democratic party's governing organization.

Hitchcock also alleges that the DNC paid him less than his peers and that Dean, Tobias and others attempted to smear his name. The DNC won't comment on the case, but Hitchcock says "I look forward shining light on the facts and discussing under oath the circumstances of my employment and unfair termination from the DNC."

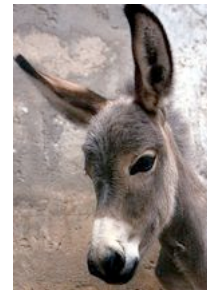
DNC Gay Board Chair Refuses To Testify

www.queerty.com/dnc-gay-board-chair-refuses-to-testify-20080108/

QUEERTY.com

Claire Lucas To Be Found In Contempt?

Donald Hitchcock's discrimination lawsuit <http://www.queerty.com/dean-dnc-subpoenaed-in-gay-disc-suit-20080102/> against the Democratic National Committee takes a new turn today. A predetermined schedule ordered Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council board chair **Claire Lucas** to testify, but the investor refused to comply. Lawyers explained to Lucas that if she does not take the stand, she'll be found in contempt of court. The former National Stonewall Democrat director, however, continues to stand her ground. She is not being represented by DNC lawyers.



Testimony began yesterday <http://www.queerty.com/dnc-gay-discrimination-case-begins-20080107/> with current homo honcho Brian Bond, who took over as executive director of the GLLC after **Howard Dean** and company sacked Hitchcock. Hitchcock alleges the firing came in retaliation for boyfriend **Paul Yandura's** criticism of the party. He also claims the DNC paid him less than his peers and has since blasted them for using gay people as an "ATM".

DNC CEO Reverend Leah Daughtry will testify on January 18.

Depositions in anti-gay discrimination case against DNC begin

www.pageoneq.com/news/2008/Depositions_in_antigay_discrimination_case_agains_0109.html

by PageOneQ

Depositions are underway in the case of Donald Hitchcock who is suing the Democratic National Committee (Details below). PageOneQ has obtained photographs of those appearing at the law office of Hitchcock's attorney, Lynne Bernabei, of Bernabei & Wachtel, PLLC.

Photos provided by D.C. Hughes/Andriano & Hughes Photographers.



(Left) Former Democratic National Committee staffer and plaintiff Donald Hitchcock arrives at the deposition.

(Right) Democratic National Committee counsel Joe Sandler, right, and Amanda LaForge, left, arrive for the deposition of DNC Lesbian and Gay Leadership council executive director Brian Bond, rear right.



A PageOneQ report last week (Depositions in anti-gay discrimination case against DNC begin) gave details of the suit:

The suit charges that a campaign of infighting, discrimination and retaliation led to the illegal firing of Hitchcock after his partner, former Clinton appointee Paul Yandura, criticized the Party for what he claimed was a lack of support for LGBT causes, especially on the issue of defeating anti-gay ballot measures. ...

The lawsuit charges that Hitchcock was paid less than his counterparts in comparable positions, while never receiving staff support or a budget. According to FEC records, his bi-weekly pay was \$2,156, while the other directors were paid \$2,508. The suit also says that Hitchcock, before his firing, was held personally responsible by Ms. Tegen for, and threatened over, Mr. Yandura's statements about the Democratic Party. Dean, Tobias and Tegen, Hitchcock charges, began spreading rumors within the Party in an attempt to discredit him, he claimed.

Asked to comment on the start of the depositions, Hitchcock told PageOneQ that "My life partner Paul and I want to thank everyone for their outpouring of support during this long process. Now that the case is underway, with every turn an even sadder state of affairs of how the Democratic Party treats LGBT struggles is being exposed."

DNC Plays Politics With Gay Press Exclusive: The Revealing Internal Memos

www.queerty.com/dnc-plays-politics-with-gay-press-20080110/

QUEERTY.com
1/10/08

The Democratic Party's certainly the more friendly of our two major political camps, but internal Democratic National Committee emails show how they play the gay game.

We've attached PDFs of two emails, both of which were turned over to the courts for the ongoing anti-gay discrimination case.



In the first communications director Karen Finney and press secretary Stacie Paxton discuss whether or not to give Deb Price access to Chairman Howard Dean. They agree Price is too risky, so they opt to give her current gay leader Brian Bond, who replaced ousted Donald Hitchcock.

The second email records an exchange between Finney, spokesman Damien LaVera and deputy finance director Julie Tagen. They're discussing how Washington Blade shot down a feature on the DNC's gay outreach. The staffers then debate how to get their story out.

After suggesting The Advocate and HRC's glossy for their wide circulation, Tagen leaves it to Bond, writing: "You probably have a better sense since I tend to use The Blade and other gay papers in the bottom of the birdcage." Nice...

(10/18/2007) Karen Finney - Re: LGBT columnist interview request Page

From: Karen Finney
To: Miranda, Luis, LaVera, Damien, Paxton, Stacie
Date: 2/13/2007 7:06 AM
Subject: Re: LGBT columnist interview request

Try pitching brian - but it will piss her off not to get dean so be careful.

-----Original Message-----
From: Stacie Paxton
To: Finney, Karen <FinneyK@dnc.org>
LaVera, Damien <LaVeraD@dnc.org>
Miranda, Luis <MirandaL@dnc.org>
Creation Date: 2/12 6:27 pm
Subject: Re: LGBT columnist interview request

agree

>>> Luis Miranda 2/12/2007 6:05 pm >>>
I'd be all for Brian and others. Not sure putting HD out there does anything other than opening us up for hits.

>>> Damien LaVera 2/12/2007 5:48:27 pm >>>
Deb Price from the Detroit News would like to interview Gov. Dean sometime in the next couple of weeks for a column about where the party is going with respect to the LGBT community, lingering concerns in the community about Dean's commitment (renewed by Donald's letter), and what he thinks about LGBT issues.

I'm not completely sure one way or the other, but my sense is this carries too much risk to do at this point. Too many of her columns (see attached) tend toward the X party or X state needs to do more variety, and it'll probably just result in more pushback from the other side.

I'm not sure if she'd go for it, but maybe I can try to pitch her on an interview with Brian and suggest she talk to Tammy Baldwin (or his chief of staff) and speaker pelosi's office about what's to come.

Any thoughts?

(10/15/2007) Brian Bond - Re: so much for a new direction at the Blade Page 1

From: Brian Bond
To: Paxton, Stacie, Miranda, Luis, LaVera, Damien, Finney, Karen, Tagen, Julie
Date: 3/15/2007 5:53 PM
Subject: Re: so much for a new direction at the Blade

I think we wait and bring this up with the new editor. Tagen is right as always they have a lock on some of the key clicks including dc.

-----Original Message-----
From: Julie Tagen
To: Bond, Brian <BondB@dnc.org>
Finney, Karen <FinneyK@dnc.org>
LaVera, Damien <LaVeraD@dnc.org>
Miranda, Luis <MirandaL@dnc.org>
Paxton, Stacie <PaxtonS@dnc.org>
Creation Date: 3/15 4:48 pm
Subject: Re: so much for a new direction at the Blade

They kinda have the monopoly since they own the Southern Voice and the big one in TX. I think the SF paper would be good. Obviously the advocate will get us widespread coverage. The largest distribution of all is the Human Rights Campaign magazine. Brian, What do you think? You probably have a better sense since I tend to use the blade and the other gay papers in the bottom of the birdcage.

-----Original Message-----
From: Karen Finney
To: Bond, Brian <BondB@dnc.org>
LaVera, Damien <LaVeraD@dnc.org>
Miranda, Luis <MirandaL@dnc.org>
Paxton, Stacie <PaxtonS@dnc.org>
Tagen, Julie <TagenJ@dnc.org>
Creation Date: 3/15 4:38 pm
Subject: Re: so much for a new direction at the Blade

who is their largest competitor?

Karen Finney
Director of Communications
DNC
202-863-7149
finneyk@dnc.org

>>> Damien LaVera 3/15/2007 3:37 pm >>>
This is something we might want to bring up with the Blade editor when he's here next week. I pitched their reporter (Josh Lyndon, not Lou Chibarro) on an interview with Brian on the Stonewall Training. Josh was excited about it, agreed with me that it would be a natural followup to their story from the Winter Meeting, and said he would take it to their editorial meeting today and call me back to schedule an interview. He says he was rejected.

After all their stories with blind quotes and empty assertions from people like Donald claiming we're not doing anything, they had a chance to write about an important effort to politically empower the community and make good on a promise and they refuse to cover it. Its outrageous.

DNC4221

DNC DISCOVERY DOC-AREA: PRESS MANIPULATION

DNC3166

DNC disparages gay press

www.washblade.com/blog/index.cfm?blog_id=15963



THE WASHINGTON BLADE

BladeBlog

By Kevin Naff

Queerty created a buzz today with news out of Donald Hitchcock's lawsuit against the DNC. The first in what is likely to be a blizzard of leaks from the suit included a series of e-mails among senior DNC communications staff.

In the e-mails, the staff debates whether to give lesbian columnist Deb Price access to Howard Dean for an interview. They decide it would be too risky and expose the DNC to too many "hits."

In another exchange, they complain about the Blade's coverage of the DNC. Spokesperson Damien LaVera writes it is "outrageous" that the Blade didn't adequately cover the DNC's gay delegate training program. To get back at the Blade for this slight, DNC Communications Director Karen Finney suggests handing an exclusive story to the Advocate or another Blade competitor. Julie Tagen then adds that she uses gay newspapers for "the bottom of the birdcage."

I'll take the high road — someone has to — and ignore the personal attacks. It's astounding, though, that the DNC's communications director has time in her day to plot revenge against the Blade.

The reality is that the Blade has covered the DNC and its delegate training program. In addition to two news stories on the subject in the past year, I personally extended an invitation to the DNC to draft an op-ed on its program, which I later published.

We will continue to cover the news in an objective and non-partisan way.

'Washington Blade' Editor Bites Back At DNC

www.queerty.com/washington-blade-editor-bites-back-at-dnc-20080110/

QUEERTY.COM

Washington Blade editor Kevin Naff ain't happy with the Democratic National Committee. Nor should he be. As we reported this morning, DNC staffers griped about the Blade snubbing a story on their delegate training program. In retaliation, communications director Karen Finney inquires, "Who is their largest competitor?" Deputy Finance Director Julie Tagen lobs that question to gay leadership leader Brian Bond. Writes Tagen: "You probably have a better sense since I tend to use The Blade and other gay papers in the bottom of the birdcage." Those politicos can be vicious!



Naff, however, insists he's above such shenanigans:

I'll take the high road — someone has to — and ignore the personal attacks. It's astounding, though, that the DNC's communications director has time in her day to plot revenge against the Blade.

The reality is that the Blade has covered the DNC and its delegate training program. In addition to two news stories on the subject in the past year, I personally extended an invitation to the DNC to draft an op-ed on its program, which I later published.

We will continue to cover the news in an objective and non-partisan way.

And there you have it...

DNC says gay press is for birds (cage)

<http://citizenchris.typepad.com/citizenchris/2008/01/dnc-thinks-gay.html>

"I tend to use the blade and the other gay papers in the bottom of the birdcage." -- Julie Tagen, DNC Deputy Finance Director



CitizenCrain.com
January 10, 2008

If there were ever any doubts about what Democratic Party chieftains think of the gay press, they should be settled now. An internal email exchange was released by the Democratic National Committee as part of a lawsuit filed against Howard Dean and the DNC by Donald Hitchcock, who was fired by Dean as the party's gay outreach coordinator.

In the exchange, the DNC's communication staff is venting about a decision by my successor at the Washington Blade, editor Kevin Naff, not to do a story about efforts by the DNC to do some sort of training work with Stonewall Democrats, the gay partisan group. Upset by the decision, the staffers weigh whether to pitch it to the Blade's D.C. competitors, the Advocate, or some other publication. All fair enough, so far.

Then Julie Tagen, the DNC's deputy finance director, figuratively throws up her hands and at the same time throws open the curtain -- so we can see the contempt for the gay media that surely lies within, including Dean himself.

Tagen, it should be noted, is singled out by Hitchcock as particularly upset that he did not somehow silence his (domestic) partner, Democratic consultant Paul Yandura, after the latter publicly criticized Dean and the DNC for not doing more to stop states from adopting constitutional amendments banning gay marriage.

Of course, such an attitude would be unthinkable toward a straight couple -- James Carville and Mary Matalin, anyone? But the DNC has always had a different set of rules for its gays, who are only to be seen at fundraisers, not heard from in criticism.

This sort of arrogant contempt of uppity gays is typical of DNC powerbrokers, easily irritated by criticism from the party's "kept" minorities even as they genuflect whenever possible toward evangelical "people of faith." That's why Howard Dean was eager to appear on Pat Robertson's "700 Club," where by the way he misrepresented the Democratic Party as having adopted a platform plank opposing gay marriage.

And yet the Washington Blade? Dean said in an interview just months after the "700 Club" appearance, "[The Blade is] not credible and they have somebody there who has an agenda which is clearly not favorable to the Democratic Party so we simply don't give them any credence." That's your's truly he's referring to, by the way, the one who has written favorably about Democratic candidates for local, state and national office for more than a decade. And yet unlike Pat Robertson and the "700 Club," the Blade has an anti-Democrat agenda?

Another email exchange released by the DNC to Hitchcock is also illustrative, as party staffers decide not to agree to an interview request with Dean by Deb Price, the well respected lesbian syndicated columnist from the Detroit News. They decline the request because it would be "opening us up for hits." Unlike that teddy bear, Pat Robertson, of course.

The sad thing is that many of these party hacks are actually out and proud gays, and ought to be ashamed of themselves -- if not voted off the island entirely. Of course they should act in the best interest of their employer, but this is not a corporation manufacturing widgets. This is a political party upon which the movement for gay civil rights depends.

It is in the nature of politics for interest groups to scrutinize, lobby and cajole, and for the press to do the same. That isn't an agenda; it's the process.

These DNC staffers know that, of course. And yet they are so contemptuous of Hitchcock, Yandura and the gay press because the gay movement, and especially its largest national organization, have for too long completely sublimated their own interest for the interests of the party. When Howard Dean says, "jump!" the movement asks only, "how far?!" -- or, more accurately, "how much?"

This is the establishment wing of the party, populated with Ellen Malcolm-esque establishment gays, who form a central core of Hillary Clinton's presidential candidacy. At least until the movement can remake its national groups into something other than Democratic Party lapdogs, perhaps charting a new course for the DNC itself is the best available course of action.

An inside look at party politics and the gay press

<http://www.pamshouseblend.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=4133>

by: Pam Spaulding
Fri Jan 11, 2008 at 06:00:00 AM EST



There is an interesting series of developments tied to the anti-discrimination suit against the DNC filed by former LGBT outreach director Donald Hitchcock, which charges that Hitchcock was unlawfully terminated because of an open letter criticizing the party on LGBT issues by his partner, Paul Yandura.

The first interesting tidbit is that this week, Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council board chair Claire Lucas was scheduled to testify, but she refused to comply. That move could land her in the pokey -- she may be found in contempt of court.

Then we have the infamous "birdcage" email, a document that was part of the documents turned over to the court as part of the discovery process, which provide a peek at how the DNC tried to shape coverage of the situation with Hitchcock. In this one, folks in the DNC tried to decide what to do after the Washington Blade didn't want to do a puff piece on the organization's LGBT outreach. They discuss schmoozing up The Advocate and HRC's Equality. Deputy finance director Julie Tegen writes in the email that she uses the Blade to line her birdcage.

From: Brian Bond
To: Paxton, Stacie, Miranda, Luis, LaVera, Damien, Finney, Karen, Tegen, Julie
Date: 3/15/2007 5:53 PM
Subject: Re: so much for a new direction at the Blade

I think we wait and bring this up with the new editor. Tegen is right as always they have a look on some of the key cities including dc.

-----Original Message-----
From: Julie Tegen
To: Bond, Brian <BondB@dnc.org>
Finney, Karen <FinneyK@dnc.org>
LaVera, Damien <LaVeraD@dnc.org>
Miranda, Luis <MirandaL@dnc.org>
Paxton, Stacie <PaxtonS@dnc.org>
Creation Date: 3/15 4:48 pm
Subject: Re: so much for a new direction at the Blade

They kinda have the monopoly since they own the Southern Voice and the big one in TX. I think the SF paper would be good. Obviously the advocate will get us widespread coverage. The largest distribution of all is the Human Rights Campaign magazine. Brian, What do you think? You probably have a better sense since I tend to use the blade and the other gay papers in the bottom of the birdcage.

From: Karen Finney
To: Miranda, Luis, LaVera, Damien, Paxton, Stacie
Date: 2/13/2007 7:06 AM
Subject: Re: LGBT columnist interview request

Try pitching brian - but it will piss her off not to get dean so be careful.

-----Original Message-----
From: Stacie Paxton
To: Finney, Karen <FinneyK@dnc.org>
LaVera, Damien <LaVeraD@dnc.org>
Miranda, Luis <MirandaL@dnc.org>
Creation Date: 2/12 6:27 pm
Subject: Re: LGBT columnist interview request

agree

>>> Luis Miranda 2/12/2007 6:05 pm >>>
I'd be all for Brian and others. Not sure putting HD out there does anything other than opening us up for hits.

>>> Damien LaVera 2/12/2007 5:48:27 pm >>>
Deb Price from the Detroit News would like to interview Gov. Dean sometime in the next couple of weeks for a column about where the party is going with respect to the LGBT community, lingering concerns in the community about Dean's commitment (renewed by Donald's letter), and what he thinks about LGBT issues.

I'm not completely sure one way or the other, but my sense is this carries too much risk to do at this point. Too many of her columns (see attached) tend toward the X party or X state needs to do more variety, and it'll probably just result in more pushback from the other side.

I'm not sure if she'd go for it, but maybe I can try to pitch her on an interview with Brian and suggest she talk to Tammy Baldwin (or his chief of staff) and speaker Pelosi's office about what's to come.

Any thoughts?

In the following email, there is a debate over whether to grant Deb Price an interview with DNC chair Howard Dean. They come to the conclusion that she's "risky" and instead decide to let her speak with Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council Executive Director Brian Bond, who replaced Donald Hitchcock after the flap.

What I don't get about this case is why the DNC, who have Bond, Claire Lucas, Leah Daughtry, Howard Dean and treasurer Andy Tobias slated to give testimony, simply doesn't settle to make this embarrassment go away. As I said in my last post,

I surely hope that the DNC has its paperwork in order regarding Donald Hitchcock's annual evaluations, as well as those of his colleagues, because those if they don't have documentation, or have clearly outlined goals and expectations for all job descriptions and their review periods, the DNC is going to down in flames on this one.

GAYS STICKING IT TO DEMS

January 13, 2008 -- THE

Page Six
Richard Johnson
richard.johnson@nypost.com
With Paula Froelich
Bill Hoffmann
Corynne Steindler
and Marianne Garvey



Democratic Party is having problems with one bloc of voters it shouldn't have to worry about – gays. The Democratic National Committee is being sued by Donald Hitchcock, who claims he was fired from the DNC because his boyfriend, Paul Yandura, criticized the Dems for their lack of enthusiasm for gay marriage. Now DNC e-mails have been submitted in court in Washington, DC, showing that party officials are dismissive of the gay press. Queerty.com reports that after complaints over coverage in the weekly Washington Blade, which caters to homosexuals, DNC deputy finance director Julie Tagen wrote to Hitchcock's replacement, Brian Bond: "You probably have a better sense [of what to do] since I tend to use the Blade and the other gay papers in the bottom of the birdcage." Blade editor Kevin Naff said, "I'll take the high road – someone has to – and

ignore the personal attacks."

DNC Counsel Speaks Out Against Leaked Emails

Also, Gay Activist Calls For Julie Tagen's Head

queerty.com/dnc-counsel-speaks-out-against-leaked-emails-20080111/

QUEERTY.com 1/11/08

The fur continues to fly in the DNC gay discrimination case. Yesterday we published some less-than-flattering internal emails

<http://www.queerty.com/dnc-plays-politics-with-gay-press-20080110/> in which DNC staffers discuss the gay press, including the *Washington Blade*. Blade editor **Kevin Naff** promptly issued a biting response

<http://www.queerty.com/washington-blade-editor-bites-back-at-dnc-20080110/> .

Today we hear that gay activist and former National Stonewall Democrats executive committee member **Lee Bolin** wants to see deputy finance director **Julie Fagen** fired.



Tagen, of course, derided the *Blade* and other gay publications thus, "I tend to use the *Blade* and other gay papers in the bottom of the birdcage." Tagen's candid response led Bolin to write to some pink peers, "If a DNC staffer disparaged black, Latino, or Jewish media the way Deputy Finance Director Julie Tagen did LGBT media, that person would already be out of a job." We're not convinced that Tagen deserves to be fired, for she didn't really insult gay people, just gay press. We do that all the time!

We called the DNC for a statement regarding Bolin's burning desire. Though staffers can't comment, DNC Chief Counsel **Joe Sandler** sent over this statement:

The DNC has consistently refrained from commenting about ongoing litigation out of respect for the legal process and to protect the interests of everyone involved. It is therefore unfortunate that Donald Hitchcock has chosen to abuse the discovery process by selectively leaking documents.

We can't say where we got the documents, but we *can* say we don't find anything "unfortunate" about it...

Change? What Change?

www.bilerico.com/2008/01/change_what_change.php

BILERICO.com

Filed by: Karen Ocamb

January 11, 2008 5:47 PM



Change? Bah, humbug.

When I watched John Kerry endorse Barack Obama, I couldn't help but think: "Here we go, again."

Kerry, in case you forgot, was the Vietnam war hero turned anti-war hero who didn't have the courage to stand up to Karl Rove and the Swiftboaters and threw gays under the bus to get elected in 2004.

And we relented, not wanting to upset Democratic Party big-whigs like Bill Clinton who made it sound like WE were the ones who brought on the antigay marriage initiatives in eleven states that year. They passed, Kerry lost, and we were blamed. By the way, has either Bill or Hillary Clinton ever confirmed that Bill Clinton advised Kerry to support the antigay ballot initiatives as a way of defusing the gay issue?

So here's Barack Obama, so fresh and new – getting his national jump-start at the 2004 Democratic National Convention where he talked about red and blue states and having gay friends. Yes – he actually used the word "gay." But no more. Both in his New Hampshire concession speech and in his thank you to Kerry, Obama reverted to the code word "equality."

Here we go again.

After reading Laura Kiritsy's excellent article in Bay Windows about LGBT influence during the New Hampshire campaign, we must thank Human Rights Campaign field organizer Heather Gibson as well as local LGBT folks who asked the candidates questions at open forums – at least they got Obama to use the code word. Apparently the HRC "Equality" tee shirts and stickers were ubiquitous.

But what struck me was how Kiritsy described Obama volunteers who apparently tried to shoo Gibson away as she passed out pro-equality stickers outside an event. It was only after a congresswoman hugged Gibson that they stopped eyeing her so suspiciously.

To me this is emblematic of the kind of Rovian Stockholm Syndrome that has gripped Washington and apparently continues to grip Democratic political campaigns. Once again, inherent in the unscripted soul of this "change" campaign, gays were initially perceived as a threat.

The other political take-away from Kiritsy's piece is that the LOCAL crowds were genuinely pro-gay as if the inclusion of the LGBT community is also symbolic of "change" in the movement to elect the first African American president.

But without Kiritsy or syndicated lesbian journalist Lisa Keen, or commentary on our blogs, websites, and listservs, I would not know about LGBT participation. They have helped flesh out my own analytical election pieces for gaywired.com (on Hillary's emotional moment and here on a recap New Hampshire and looking forward).

As Kerry Eleveld pointed out in The Advocate, the only time the presidential candidates has mustered for the LGBT press was the Logo/HRC forum last summer, and Clinton's 15 minute post-Logo sit-down and Obama's 15 minute phoner with The Advocate after "ex-gay" gospel singer Donnie McClurkin's tour through South Carolina. Edwards never agreed to an interview with the national LGBT publication.

I have been pitching for interviews with both Clinton and Obama since the start of the campaigns, and with Edwards since last September. I interviewed Bill Richardson after his official announcement in Los Angeles – he wanted me to know how good he was on LGBT issues. After Chris Crain and I wrote about his "maricon" [Spanish for "faggot"] moment, however, I got nowhere.

Now comes the story in Queerty called "DNC Plays Politics with Gay Press." The story revolves around email exchanges among the Democratic National Committee communications staff that came to light as a result of a lawsuit filed against the DNC and chair Howard Dean by onetime DNC LGBT Outreach Coordinator Donald Hitchcock (read about the lawsuit on the Out For Democracy blog www.outfordemocracy.org/dnc.htm).

The money quote from the emails comes from Julie Tagen, DNC Deputy Finance Director who says that Hitchcock's replacement, Brian Bond should handle all gay press inquiries to interview Dean because, she

wrote, "I tend to use the blade [referring to the Washington Blade] and the other gay papers in the bottom of the birdcage."

(Read Chris Crain's blog for more: citizenchris.typepad.com/citizenchris/2008/01/dnc-thinks-gay.html)

Ouch. The DNC, the suspicious Obama volunteers, the inaccessible Clinton, and John Edwards – I forgot to mention that one of the conditions that Edwards made when he visited the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center – the same center he said everyone should know about during his turn on Logo – was NO PRESS! I was in the Logo audience, boiling over. They WOULD have known about it if you had allowed me to cover it – just as I covered visits by Al Gore and Bill Bradley!

Actually, I knew how the DNC felt about the Washington Blade because I did get an interview with Dean and I asked him about the paper's reporting on Hitchcock's firing. It's important to note that at the time, the Blade's editor Chris Crain was a gay Republican. Dean said:

"First of all, we consider the Washington Blade to be the New York Post of the gay and lesbian press corp. They're not credible and they have somebody who has an agenda which is certainly not favorable to the Democratic Party so we simply don't give them any credence. Secondly, I'm not going to comment on anybody's firing except to say that it had nothing to do with retribution or anything like that. It was simply a job performance matter. Thirdly – we have – for the first time in DNC history – put money into Illinois to make sure that the marriage amendment didn't go forward and we won that one."

I'm sure I secured the interview because I was specifically interested in the DNC's 50-state strategy and the then-new Inclusion Rule written by openly gay DNC super-delegate Garry Shay, of the Los Angeles Stonewall Democratic Club.

I also wanted to ask Dean about marriage equality:

"What we support is equal rights under the law for every single American. We don't take a position on the "M" word. Even in the gay community, there are differences on this one. We believe everybody in American deserves the same rights under the law.... We oppose marriage amendments, whether they're federal or state. We do not believe in enshrining discrimination in any constitution and we've put our money where our mouth is. The Democratic Party believes that 'equal rights under the law' has to be for everybody and they have to be for everybody in every state. You can argue about whether that means marriage or civil unions but there's a huge difference between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party."

During that interview in August 2006, I also asked Dean about the prevailing attitude espoused by California Sen. Dianne Feinstein and others that gays cost Kerry the election in 2004. Dean said:

"We don't, first of all, believe that we lost because of gay issues. We think we weren't sufficiently vigorous in supporting our turnout efforts in rural communities and we weren't sufficiently vigorous in defending a Democratic point of view. Unlike some other folks in the Party, my view is if you want to win, you've got to behave like Democrats, and not Republican-light."

These were important points since during an appearance at Access Now for Lesbian and Gay Equality (ANGLE) and later at the California Democratic Convention that April in 2006, Dean was backtracking on quotes saying the DNC did not support same-sex marriage. Meanwhile, the California Party and all those seeking LGBT political and financial endorsements supported full marriage equality.

And yet – other than stickers indicating support for California Assemblymember Mark Leno's marriage bill and appearances by candidates before the LGBT Caucus, there was little LGBT visibility at the convention.

Eric Stern, then-head of National Stonewall Democrats (who now supports Edwards), told me:

"Its going to be incumbent on our community, especially our donors when they have the opportunity, to put a little more pressure on our candidates on our issues. Donors are the individuals who have the most access to candidates, who have the most persuasion. Our donors need to be smarter and be more aggressive. You see the effect it's having in California where the bar is marriage and nothing lower."

But it's not JUST about gay donors, ANGLE honcho Jeremy Bernard, who now supports Obama, told me at the time:

"I've gotten a sense from my friends – and I feel this way too – that we're tired of being ATM machines. They come and take our money and leave California and they don't really pay attention to what we think or believe. In Boston [during the Democratic Convention in 2004], we were good soldiers because Bush is so bad. But it's the last time. We're not going to swallow our pride like that ever again. In 1992 [during Clinton's

inauguration], we were part of a new, exciting world. To think that 12 years later we have moved backwards – it’s horrifying. And the fact that most people didn’t think about it [gay visibility] and no one noticed at the Democratic convention – that’s the saddest part.”

The saddest part today is that LGBT people are still shooed away, still eyed with suspicion, still addressed through code words like “equality” and their representatives – the LGBT press – is still shunned --- while the candidates talk about change and inclusively.

Perhaps the most painful part is knowing that the candidates are aware that the LGBT vote is the second largest and most loyal group in the Democratic Party – roughly 75% – second only to African Americans. So while the candidates court the Black vote in South Carolina as a “core constituency” – they are once again rendering us indivisible.

Some change.

So what do we do about it?

We must show up, vote, participate in both the Democratic and Republican primaries and demand to be counted in the exit polls.

LGBT activists and organizations must launch email and letter-writing campaigns to the national and local media and pollsters demanding that the gay question be asked and included in the final tallies.

And we must also demand to be included as a demographic, a distinct minority – not as an issue. No more should we be sandwiched in between Does someone in your household own a gun? And Does someone in your household belong to a union?

We should be counted and included alongside African Americans, Hispanics and Asians.

And we should conduct our own polling – from HRC to unscientific polls on blogs and websites such as at GayNewsWatch.com and DavidMixner.com. LGBT reporters can then extrapolate how we voted.

This is a critical election and in the long run, we will vote for the candidate we think will best run the country and eventually help us achieve full equality.

But for now, it is only in the voting booth where LGBT people are full – not second class – American citizens.

Time for Tagen to go?

<http://citizenchris.typepad.com/citizenchris/2008/01/time-for-tagen.html>

CITIZENCRAIN.com

January 13, 2008



Pressure is growing on Julie Tagen, the Democratic National Committee official who said in an internal email that she uses "the Blade and the other gay papers for the bottom of the bird cage." Now Lee Bolin, a former member of the National Stonewall Democrats executive committee, is calling for Tagen, the deputy finance director, to be canned:

If a DNC staffer disparaged black, Latino, or Jewish media the way Deputy Finance Director Julie Tagen did LGBT media, that person would already be out of a job."

The DNC continues to decline comment, citing the lawsuit filed by Donald Hitchcock, who alleges gay and gender bias in his dismissal as the DNC's gay outreach director. Hitchcock was let go after his domestic partner, political consultant Paul Yandura, penned an open letter blasting DNC Chair Howard Dean for abandoning the fight against statewide constitutional amendments banning gays from marrying.

The Tagen email exchange was released in the Hitchcock lawsuit, but the DNC should stop hiding behind that as an excuse to avoid the subject. Donald is tangential to the subject of the emails, which do not touch on the issues at stake in the suit. But once public, the DNC's contemptuous attitude toward gay activists and the gay press must be addressed.

Perhaps most depressingly, Tagen (pictured) is openly gay herself -- but like too many in politics (and even the gay rights movement) she appears to be a partisan first and a lesbian second. As a lesbian, Tagen is certainly entitled to her views about the Blade and the gay press generally. As the editor of the Washington Blade during the time period leading up to the email exchange, I would like to know exactly what factual errors were made by the Blade and "the other gay papers" that would justify such a broadside.

More likely, Tagen is merely complaining that the Blade and the gay press generally had "an agenda" -- an accusation familiar to gay activists, but not usually from our own. In fact, every story the Blade did about the DNC was the result of a gay Democrat coming to us with the information. Do Tagen and Dean believe we should have ignored these prominent gay Dems because their party is so better than the Republicans on gay issues?

Every story published confirmed facts, aired the DNC's critics and gave the DNC every opportunity to respond. I would hope that Tagen and other gays with influence at the DNC would defend the role of our media, not join in shooting the messenger.

It may not be time (yet) for Tagen to go, but she's got some 'splainin to do.

What the flip is up with the DNC?

<http://www.pamshouseblend.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=4153>

by: Pam Spaulding
Mon Jan 14, 2008 at 06:00:00 AM EST



It's pretty sad that the Democratic National Committee, already embroiled in an anti-gay discrimination lawsuit against it filed by former LGBT outreach director Donald Hitchcock, has even more questions facing it as facts tumble out.

Earlier this week, the infamous "birdcage memo" was released, in which in the DNC tried to decide what to do after the Washington Blade refused to do a puff piece on the organization's LGBT outreach. Deputy finance director Julie Tagen wrote in the email that she uses the Blade to line her birdcage. The Blade's editor, Kevin Naff, responded:

To get back at the Blade for this slight, DNC Communications Director Karen Finney suggests handing an exclusive story to the Advocate or another Blade competitor. Julie Tagen then adds that she uses gay newspapers for "the bottom of the birdcage."

I'll take the high road - someone has to - and ignore the personal attacks. It's astounding, though, that the DNC's communications director has time in her day to plot revenge against the Blade.

The reality is that the Blade has covered the DNC and its delegate training program. In addition to two news stories on the subject in the past year, I personally extended an invitation to the DNC to draft an op-ed on its program, which I later published.

Lee Bolin, an alumnus of the National Stonewall Democrats board of directors and executive committee, has called for Tagen to resign over the email. The release of the emails documenting the DNC's inside dope about how it manipulates the gay press, has apparently sent folks at the DNC into a tizzy. Queerty took a look:

DNC Chief Counsel Joe Sandler sent over this statement:

The DNC has consistently refrained from commenting about ongoing litigation out of respect for the legal process and to protect the interests of everyone involved. It is therefore unfortunate that Donald Hitchcock has chosen to abuse the discovery process by selectively leaking documents.

We can't say where we got the documents, but we can say we don't find anything "unfortunate" about it...

As I said in a prior post on the lawsuit, if there is anyone at the DNC has had any HR 101 training/personnel management, surely they know that if they cannot substantiate poor job performance on Donald Hitchcock's part (through documented annual reviews, clearly outlined goals and expectations for all job descriptions, etc.), the DNC is better off settling rather than leaving the organization wide open for future issues of this sort. Messy and incomplete records are always the undoing. But clearly somebody wanted to move forward and let it all get to this point.

In other news about the trial, DNC Chief of Staff Rev. Leah Daughtry will be deposed this Friday. Daughtry is a Pentacostal minister who oversees the DNC Faith Outreach department.

Sigh. If that hoo-hah isn't embarrassing enough, there's more -- the latest nonsense is a case of completely unnecessary DNC prevarication over something that happened back in May 2006 over whether Howard Dean did or didn't give an interview to the 700 Club (!).

Howard Dean was interviewed for the 700 Club, attempting to court the evangelical vote and made an epic misstatement about marriage. I received an email from Paul Yandura (Donald Hitchcock's partner, who said I could repost it here), that details how the DNC is apparently trying to deny that Dean's interview wasn't for the 700 Club or Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network.

Yesterday on a listserve for LGBT Democratic donors the DNC Treasurer continued the lie that Howard Dean did not interview on The 700 Club, but instead interviewed for the ABC Family Network. (This was the interview where Dean "misspoke" about the party platform and prompted NGLTF to return a \$5K donation from the party.

I am certain that one of the EIGHT religious outreach staff that have been hired by the DNC know and understand the difference between ABC Family and CBN and that is exactly why it was chosen.

To find the truth I contacted David Brody who was the Christian Broadcast Network (yes, the one founded by Pat Robertson) reporter who conducted the interview and he had this to say: "When I interviewed Gov. Dean in 2006 he and his staff knew it was for The 700 Club. That was made very clear." (My original email and his response are below.)

Even after being confronted with the truth the DNC Treasurer still repeated his false claim that it was not made clear to the DNC staff that the interview was for The 700 Club. Finally, after being confronted by a blogger on the same listserve he parsed his response by claiming that he might have been "misinformed" by a DNC staffer. (So, now we have a "misinformed" Party Treasurer, a "missspeaking" Party Chair and I am sure the next response will be that the DNC staffer "misunderstood.")

The facts are that Howard Dean's interview was an "exclusive" on the Christian Broadcast Network (CBN) and was intended for use on The 700 Club. CBN "exists as a production company for The 700 Club" even though it was bought by FOX and then later sold it to Disney/ABC Family according to Wikipedia.

One only has to Google to get a snapshot of what happened, and what Dean said about his interview. He wanted to go on the 700 Club again (can't do it again if you haven't done it the first time). From the Albany Democrat Herald, emphasis added:

The former presidential candidate, who will speak at this weekend's Oregon Democratic Convention in Eugene, says his party must do a better job of winning the support of evangelical Christians, who have voted Republican in recent elections.

To that end, Dean recently appeared on Pat Robertson's "700 Club." The appearance wasn't without its bumps. Dean had to later apologize to gay-rights leaders for incorrectly stating during the program that the party's platform said "marriage is between a man and a woman."

Still, Dean, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said in an interview with the Register-Guard newspaper that he hopes to eventually make another appearance on the Christian Broadcasting Network – and that he's encouraging rank-and-file party members to discuss faith and morality.

You can also read his direct quote here on the CBN web site.

Remember, this was during a time when the DNC was figuring out how to spin or avoid the gay press about its LGBT outreach, but it was happy to extend availability of Chairman Dean to the 700 Club. Help me out here folks -- what is the point of trying to cover up/rewrite history about this appearance on Crazy Pat's network at this point, after Dean's apology and all the press about it? I just don't get it.

Quite frankly, Howard Dean and the DNC were courting the evangelical vote and were quite proud of the results, so why deny the whole 700 Club matter now? I was there in Houston at the International Gay and Lesbian Leadership Conference in November 2006, when Chairman Dean spoke, ecstatic that the Democrats received a larger chunk of the evangelical vote. What I blogged at the time:

I hate to say it, but the room was also full of too much backslapping during Dean's speech over the Dem takeover of the House and Senate; I couldn't believe it when Chairman Dean positively glowed over the fact that a third of evangelicals crossed over to vote Dem in this election. I hate to break it to him, but in the states with amendments on the ballot, those evangelicals, even as they crossed over because they were disgusted with the GOP, still chose to vote for a marriage amendment. Is he ok with that? While that crossover might bring on cheers in another venue and encourage the party to further court The Base, for LGBT folks that's not exactly comforting.

We all know the party has had to figure out how to placate the LGBT constituency and keep the gay press at bay while trying to tap the religious vote; you'd think they'd want to put more effort into getting non-voters to show up at the polls. Way too much energy is being spent on the wrong things -- revisionist history, posterior-covering maneuvers, bickering -- there's so much to be done in 2008 and folks need to keep their eyes on the ball.

The Gays, The Dems, Some Serious Trouble, and Dough

www.huffingtonpost.com/andrew-belonsky/the-gays-the-dems-some-_b_81444.html

HUFFINGTON POST

By Andrew Belonsky

January 14, 2008 | 04:21 PM (EST)

There's a war brewing in the Democratic National Committee -- and, no, it's not about race. This battle, however, does involve another so-called minority group: the gays. And the results may cost the party some serious trouble -- and dough.

For those of you not paying attention, the drama started back in 2006, when former DNC staffer Paul Yandura wrote an open letter questioning the party's so-called queer commitment. The April 20, 2006 letter read, in part: "All progressives need to be asking how much has the DNC budgeted to counter the anti-gay ballot initiatives in the states... We also need to know why the DNC and our Democratic leaders continue to allow the Republicans to use our families and friends as pawns to win elections." Yandura's letter probably would have been ignored had it not been for one tiny detail: his domestic partner, Donald Hitchcock, headed the DNC's gay branch, the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council. The proverbial pooh soon hit the democratic fan.

Hitchcock found himself in a tough position on April 27th, 2006, when gay weekly newspaper The Washington Blade published Yandura's letter. Less than a week later, on May 2nd, DNC chief of staff Leah Daughtry allegedly asked Hitchcock to step down. The long-time activist refused, but soon had no choice after Dean and company gave him the boot, which certainly makes one question the DNC's motivations. Were they getting political revenge a la Valerie Plame, or did they fire Hitchcock for his poor performance, as was later insinuated: "It was decided we needed a change. We decided to hire a proven leader." Hitchcock calls their explanation hog wash and has since filed a discrimination suit against the DNC.

In addition to the wrongful termination, Hitchcock alleges that the DNC paid him less than his straight counterparts. Hitchcock also claims that the DNC "punted" gay outreach to the finance department, which used gay voters for their cash, yet failed to make real legislative headway. The activist wrote in a February, 2007 letter: "...Lately we seem to be treated solely as an ATM for the party, with our civil rights seeming an afterthought or burden. After Gov. Dean became Chair of the DNC, two LGBT political positions were abolished, and two finance positions were added, for a total now of four positions in Finance and zero in Political. Given the meeting, it's obvious that we continue to be invited to the table, pay for the meal, but we are not allowed to eat."

Howard Dean's gay politics will certainly come under fire. The failed presidential candidate and doctor has long been criticized for dismantling the gay and lesbian outreach program, as well as for his contested comments on the Christian Broadcasting Network's 700 Club. A mere two weeks after Hitchcock's firing, Dean told the 700 Club and its pious audience that the Democratic party defined marriage as between "one man and one woman." The gays went wild. Not only did Dean's comments misrepresent the official party platform, which calls for gay inclusion and state-regulated marriage laws, but how could Dean appear on a program with such flagrant homophobic leanings? In an awkward attempt at damage control, DNC treasurer Andy Tobias, who also happens to be a homo, claimed that the DNC had been misled: Dean thought he was talking to ABC Family, not CBN. Tobias held this position until this weekend, when mounting evidence forced him to concede that he had been "misinformed." It's worth mentioning that Dean later apologized for his gaffe, saying the party does "take a firm stand on equality." He refused to say whether or not he supports same-sex "marriage." The current accusations, however, make one wonder if the former Vermont governor is simply pandering for the gay vote and, more importantly, the gay dollar.

I can't say whether Hitchcock's allegations are true, but recent evidence indicates a flippancy toward, if not flagrant disrespect of, the DNC's gay adherents. Queerty.com, which I also happen to edit, posted internal DNC emails last week in which lesbian deputy finance director Julie Tagen, Finney and new gay leader Brian Bond discuss working with the gay press. The exchange concerns The Washington Blade, which apparently rejected a story on the DNC's gay delegate training program. Hoping to get their story out -- and some journalistic revenge -- the aforementioned DNC staffers plotted to take the story elsewhere, particularly to one of the Blade's competitors. Utterly clueless about the gay publishing world, Tagen lobs the question to Bond, writing, "You probably have a better sense since I tend to use The Blade and other gay papers in the bottom of the birdcage." Not the kind of message one wants to hear from a DNC staffer, particularly because the DNC so readily touts its gay-friendly policies.

Gay voters, myself included, are torn: do we support the party that offers us at least nominal inclusion, or do we strike off and find a more independent-minded politico? More astute voters will realize, however, that we don't have much of a choice. The United States' plurality voting system tends toward a two-party structure. There are simply no viable third party candidates who have the gays' backs. Sure, the Democrats may not be entirely evolved when it comes to gay rights, but they're really all we've got. I can only hope that the next few weeks of testimony and public scrutiny will set the party straight. If not, well, I may have to stop voting all together -- and nobody wants that. Except for the Republicans, of course...

DNC lawsuit ensnares lesbian activist

Lucas accused of perjury, defamation; described gay plaintiff as 'complete loser'
www.washblade.com/thelatest/thelatest.cfm?blog_id=16066#

The Washington Blade

By JOSHUA LYNSEN & LOU CHIBBARO JR. | Jan 17, 11:21 AM

A prominent lesbian activist and Democratic donor faces accusations of perjury and defamation stemming from an ongoing civil lawsuit against the party.

Legal documents filed in D.C. Superior Court this week and obtained by the Blade allege that Claire Lucas, a longtime Democratic National Committee volunteer and National Stonewall Democrats board member, committed perjury when she filed an affidavit asserting that she does not live in Washington.

The affidavit, filed Jan. 4, was part of efforts to quash a subpoena ordering Lucas to sit for a deposition in a lawsuit that alleges the DNC discriminated against a former gay employee.

Attorneys for Donald Hitchcock, the plaintiff in the case, say in their filing that Lucas "is a legal resident of the District of Columbia" because she owned two homes in Washington and claimed a "homestead deduction" for one of them that is only available to those legally residing within the city.

The homestead deduction is part of a D.C. government program aimed at helping home owners who live in their homes reduce their property tax burden, which mushroomed over the past decade due to rising property values. D.C. property records show that Lucas last month sold her home at 3504 Rodman St., N.W., on which she claimed the Homestead deduction.

"As a matter of law, submitting a false statement to this Court under oath, including through a declaration or affidavit, constitutes perjury," Hitchcock's attorney states in the court filing, which was submitted on Jan. 15.

Lucas, reached by phone Wednesday, said she could not comment on the case.

The perjury allegation comes at a time when Lucas has played a prominent role in lining up support for the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign within the gay community.

Earlier this year, the Clinton campaign announced that Lucas had been appointed to the campaign's national GLBT Steering Committee. In November, local backers of the Clinton campaign announced Lucas had been tapped to serve on the Washington, D.C. for Hillary Steering Committee.

A spokesperson for the Clinton campaign could not immediately be reached for comment.

The DNC listed Lucas as being from California in an announcement this week naming her as one of six prominent members of the gay community appointed by DNC Chair Howard Dean to serve on standing committees at the Democratic National Convention in July.

But D.C. property tax records contradict her assertion in the affidavit seeking to quash Hitchcock's subpoena that she has been a California resident since 2005. Those records show she claimed the Homestead deduction for the tax years of 2005 through 2007, as well as in prior years, according to Hitchcock's court filings.

The D.C. law creating the Homestead deduction requires, upon possible penalty of perjury, that homeowners affirm that they live in their home as a condition for obtaining the deduction. The deduction often results in savings of thousands of dollars in property tax payments each year.

Meanwhile, separate information from the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics raises further questions about Lucas' claim to have been a California resident since 2005. Election board spokesperson Bill O'Field said Wednesday that Lucas was still a registered D.C. voter as of this week. He said board records show that she voted in the Sept. 12, 2006 D.C. primary election, in which Adrian Fenty won the Democratic Party nomination for mayor.

The city's election law strictly forbids anyone from voting in D.C. elections if they are not a legal resident of the city.

A warning on the application form for the Homestead deduction says persons who take the deduction but do not qualify for it could be subjected to criminal prosecution as well as a payment of a penalty of 10 percent of the delinquent tax and 1.5 percent interest on the delinquent tax for each month that the property "wrongfully received the benefit(s)."

The court filing also includes as evidence brief excerpts from the Jan. 7 deposition of Brian Bond, executive

director of the DNC's Gay & Lesbian Leadership Council, who said Lucas has "legal residence" in Washington and that he knows "where her real house is."

Further evidence includes records of \$52,900 in political donations Lucas made using a Washington address.

The court filing says records of the political donations came from the Federal Election Commission, which state the contributions were made from Lucas' Rodman Street address in the District's Cleveland Park section and that she listed the address as her residence.

'Claire did not lie'

Barry Reingold, an attorney for Lucas, told the Blade this week that he had no comment on the Homestead deduction allegation or other evidence included in the filing.

"Claire did not lie, far from it," he said. "And we will abide by the court's rulings."

Reingold says in documents dated as recently as Jan. 7 that Lucas "lives and works in California" and "the subpoena itself is defective." The documents also note that Lucas was not available for her scheduled deposition Jan. 8 because she was not in Washington. No explanation was provided.

But an e-mail sent by Lucas on Dec. 17 says she was in New Hampshire from Jan. 1 through Jan. 9 to stump for Clinton's presidential campaign. The e-mail, sent to other campaign supporters, notes that "lots of fun will be had!"

In a letter to Lucas' attorney, a Hitchcock attorney took issue with those plans.

"While I appreciate that Ms. Lucas does not want to be inconvenienced by making a trip back to D.C. during which she will be having 'lots of fun,' I would expect that you will impress on her the legal obligation that a subpoena carries, and the fact that she could be held in contempt if she does not appear," wrote Lynne Bernabei.

Judge Jeanette Clark is expected to resolve the dispute and could impose sanctions against Lucas. Although it's unlikely that Lucas would face perjury charges, the maximum penalty for such a conviction in D.C. is 10 years in prison and \$5,000 in fines.

Hitchcock's lawsuit, filed in April 2007, says he was the target of discrimination, retaliation and defamation during and after his tenure as director of the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council.

Hitchcock, who joined the DNC in June 2005, was fired in May 2006. The termination came days after Hitchcock's domestic partner, Paul Yandura, a longtime party activist, sent an open letter to gay Democrats saying DNC Chair Howard Dean failed to adequately defend gay rights.

Yandura's letter criticized Dean and the party for not sufficiently countering state ballot measures that sought to ban gay marriage. It also suggested that gays should temporarily withhold donations to the Democratic Party. "This is retaliation, plain and simple," Yandura told the Blade last year. He and Hitchcock have declined to discuss the lawsuit.

Joe Sandler, the DNC's general counsel, has said the charges "have no merit" and that the DNC is "committed to defending its position vigorously in court."

Sandler, who is not representing Lucas, did not comment on the documents filed this week.

"The DNC has consistently refrained from commenting about ongoing litigation out of respect for the legal process and to protect the interests of everyone involved," he said.

'What a complete loser'

But the filing could further complicate the case. In it, Hitchcock's attorneys say Lucas could become a defendant in the case because she helped "to draft the public statements that Mr. Hitchcock claims are defamatory."

Offered as relevant exhibits are e-mails sent by Lucas that show how she and other DNC figures responded to a letter that Hitchcock wrote criticizing the DNC. The letter was published in the Blade on Feb. 9, 2007.

"Ugh," Lucas wrote to Finney and others. "What a complete loser (and I am happy to put that in writing)."

Karen Finney, the DNC's communications director, agreed in her response.

"Ugh," she wrote. "Yes I just saw it. We'll regroup this morning and figure out a response."

In an e-mail to Finney and Bond dated Feb. 12, Lucas said D.C. gay Democratic activist Kurt Vorndran, one of her "political mentors," advised her that it would be best to publish a direct response "and then come back over a couple of weeks with some pro-DNC editorials."

"One response to Donald and that is it," she wrote. "We do not want to give him too many legs. As Kurt said, 'Donald is self-destructing.' Again, I am open to anything. Let me know."

After a response was crafted, Carl Chidlow, the DNC's finance director, thanked Lucas for her assistance.

"I saw the letter and it is great," he wrote Feb. 14. "Thanks for your leadership on this. Donald is going to grind this axe till it is an axe no more."

Hitchcock's attorneys say in the filing that the e-mails show Lucas "was a key participant" in the DNC's alleged defamation of Hitchcock, and she therefore could be named a defendant in the case.

"Based on the discovery evidence obtained to date," the filing says, "she is a potential defendant, not merely a third party witness."

Reingold said he had no comment on the development.

Discrimination alleged

Hitchcock's lawsuit alleges he was discriminated against and treated differently at the DNC because he is gay.

It also alleges the DNC "threatened, interfered with and retaliated against" Hitchcock because he advocated for gay issues within the DNC.

Hitchcock's lawsuit names as defendants the DNC; Dean; Julie Tagen, the DNC's deputy's finance director; and Andy Tobias, DNC treasurer. Tobias is the Democratic Party's highest-ranking openly gay official.

The lawsuit alleges that Dean, Tagen and Tobias separately defamed Hitchcock and that defamation "had the intended effect of seriously damaging his professional reputation, which was otherwise outstanding."

In responses filed May 2007, the DNC, Dean, Tagen and Tobias collectively deny the allegations.

The responses say the defendants "did not discriminate" against Hitchcock and "did not threaten, interfere with or retaliate against" him. The responses also say Hitchcock's lawsuit lacks "a claim upon which relief can be granted," and the allegations of discrimination, retaliation and defamation "are barred by the statute of limitations."

No trial date has been scheduled.

John Marble, spokesperson for National Stonewall Democrats, said Lucas is a member of the board of directors of the gay Democratic group. But Marble said the group would have no comment on any aspect of the Hitchcock lawsuit, including the allegations against Lucas. "We never comment on litigation," he said.

In the court filing this week, Hitchcock's attorneys cite a March 2007 announcement by National Stonewall Democrats as further evidence that Lucas is a resident of D.C. The court filing says the announcement lists Lucas as one of the group's new "Regional Directors" and "specifically identified her as being from Region 3, which encompassed Washington, D.C. and nearby states."

The court filing reiterates the main allegation of Hitchcock's lawsuit, which charges the DNC with engaging in discrimination against Hitchcock by "treating him differently than other non-gay employees."

It alleges that his job requirements "were more heavily focused on fundraising and less focused on outreach than the job requirements of non-gay employees in similar positions," and that non-gay employees in comparable jobs received more support.

"Hitchcock has alleged that discrimination against him was part of a pattern and practice of discrimination against gays and lesbians by relegating them to second class status within the DNC, and refusing to provide them with political roles at the DNC," the court filing states.

Although the DNC has declined to comment on the allegations, other gay Democrats supportive of the DNC dismiss the allegations as exaggerations or misperceptions.

EDITORIAL

Democrats' gay problem

Embarrassing e-mails reveal what DNC really thinks of gay media — and voters

The Washington Blade

KEVIN NAFF

Friday, January 18, 2008

LAST WEEK BROUGHT another example of the consequences of gay rights advocates aligning themselves too closely with one political party.

E-mails written by senior staff members of the Democratic National Committee were leaked to the Queerty blog that exposed what they really think of the gay media, notably the Blade.

In the e-mails, the staff debates whether to give lesbian columnist Deb Price access to Howard Dean for an interview. They decide it would be too risky and expose the DNC to too many "hits."

In another exchange, they complain about the Blade's coverage of the DNC. Spokesperson Damien LaVera writes it is "outrageous" that the Blade didn't adequately cover the DNC's gay delegate training program. To get back at the Blade for this slight, DNC communications director Karen Finney suggests handing an exclusive story to the Advocate or another Blade competitor. Deputy finance director Julie Tegen then adds that she uses the Blade and other gay newspapers for "the bottom of the birdcage."

The reality is that the Blade has covered the DNC and its delegate training program. In addition to two news stories on the subject in the past year, I personally extended an invitation to the DNC to draft an op-ed on its program, which I later published.

The "birdcage" e-mail was leaked from a batch of documents subpoenaed in a lawsuit filed by former DNC gay outreach director Donald Hitchcock. In the lawsuit, Hitchcock says he was the target of discrimination, retaliation and defamation during and after his tenure as director of the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Council. Hitchcock was fired in May 2006, just days after his domestic partner, Paul Yandura, a longtime party activist, criticized DNC Chair Howard Dean in an open letter to gay Democrats.

"For many months, a number of us have made appeals to Howard Dean and party officials to care about and defend the dignity of gay and lesbian families and friends, in the same way they defend the dignity of other key constituencies," Yandura said in his letter.

"All progressives need to be asking how much has the DNC budgeted to counter the anti-gay ballot initiatives in the states," he said. "We also need to know why the DNC and our Democratic leaders continue to allow the Republicans to use our families and friends as pawns to win elections."

But the line that certainly doomed Hitchcock was: "My advice is don't give any more money to the Dems."

Less than a week later, Hitchcock was gone. Don't mess with the Democrats' lock on gay money.

In a less-than-convincing statement released after Hitchcock's dismissal, Finney said, "It was not retaliation. It was decided we needed a change. We decided to hire a proven leader."

Yandura, of course, saw it differently.

"This is retaliation, plain and simple," he said. "This shows what they think about domestic partners."

IT PROBABLY SHOWS what the DNC thinks of gay money, more than what it thinks of domestic partners. In any case, we now know what DNC officials think of the gay media. LaVera, in particular, is perturbed that the Blade publishes statements from anonymous sources. The party's treatment of Hitchcock and this e-mail exchange demonstrate why we allow certain trusted sources to speak anonymously: whistleblowers at the DNC clearly are justified in fearing for their jobs if they dare to criticize Dean or the party.

As for Tegen, who penned the very clever and original "birdcage" line, I won't go so far as to demand her resignation, as at least one gay activist did.

"If a DNC staffer disparaged black, Latino, or Jewish media the way Deputy Finance Director Julie Tegen did LGBT media, that person would already be out of a job," wrote Lee Bolin, a former member of the National Stonewall Democrats executive committee.

My skin is a tad thicker; I'm not losing sleep over Tegen's assessment of the Blade. Her remark, however, was

unfortunate in that it cavalierly dismisses the hard work of a dedicated group of journalists working for a newspaper that is hardly hostile to the Democratic Party. We strive to cover the news in a fair way, but certainly Democratic voices are more than fairly represented in our pages.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE DNC, this flap over the gay media is just the beginning of the embarrassment. Not only are DNC employees' e-mails being made public, but there are the gleeful New York Post headlines to endure ("Gays sticking it to Dems"). It's unfathomable that the DNC hasn't settled this lawsuit.

And it serves as a reminder of what happens when one party knows it can count on the support of a constituency group, no matter what. We have seen this problem manifest before. When Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, a Democrat who once publicly supported gay marriage, changed his position and invoked the Catholic sacraments following that state's high court ruling upholding a gay ban, our national advocacy groups were silent. It's a safe bet that if O'Malley were a Republican, the indignant press releases would have been flying and rallies would have been scheduled for Annapolis.

When Democrats like John Kerry and 2004 running mate John Edwards announce support for anti-gay state marriage amendments and gays line up dutifully behind them anyway, we teach the party that there are no repercussions for betraying us.

This doesn't mean gay voters should pull the lever for any of the Republicans now in the running. Rather, gay voters, donors and campaign staffers need to learn the art of the barter system: you give something, you get something. No one knows that concept better than the evangelical Christians. When they stay home in November and a Democrat wins the White House, you better believe the GOP will take them more seriously in 2012. It's time for gays to demand more for their contributions to the Democratic Party.

Gay Hillary backer caught in DNC mess

<http://citizenchris.typepad.com/citizenchris/2008/01/gay-hillary-bac.html>

January 18, 2008
CITIZENCRAIN.com

The ongoing legal battle between the Democratic National Committee and ousted gay outreach liaison Donald Hitchcock just got a whole lot messier. Claire Lucas, a longtime DNC volunteer and a member of Hillary Clinton's national LGBT steering committee, stands accused of perjury in her attempt to avoid testifying in Hitchcock's DNC suit, which accuses the party of defamation as well as bias based on sexual orientation and gender.

When Hitchcock subpoenaed Lucas, she responded that she lived in California, not D.C., and appearing for a deposition would be a hardship for her. Now the Blade's Lou Chibbaro reports that legal filings by Hitchcock show Lucas is a registered D.C. voter, receives a "homestead" tax exemption from the District, and is listed by the Clinton campaign on its local Washington steering committee. Ironically, a Clinton campaign email sent by Lucas talked up her trip to New Hampshire for Hillary and how "lots of fun will be had." Apparently a side-trip to D.C. would be more hardship than "fun" for Lucas...

Internal email exchanges disgorged by the DNC as part of the lawsuit identify Lucas as among the small coterie of DNC staff and leading gay volunteers who trashed Hitchcock, first internally and then publicly, after his domestic partner, Democratic political consultant Paul Yandura, publicly criticized Howard Dean and the Democratic Party for standing by doing nothing while dozens of states enacted constitutional amendments banning gay marriage during the 2002 and 2004 election cycles. Eventually Hitchcock was ousted after he failed to fix the problem, i.e., shut Yandura up.

I bring up the Hillary connection not simply to "slime" her campaign with the Hitchcock accusations against Lucas and the DNC but because there is a very natural connection between the "establishment gays" central to Hillary's LGBT effort and those gay folk at the heart of the Hitchcock litigation who are Democrats first, and gay second.

Either their own political and career future trump even the civil rights of their own people, or they long ago drank the party Kool-Aid and buy into the simplistic notion that because Democrats are better on gay issues than Republicans, what is good/bad for Dems is good/bad for gays. Of course they are correct that Democrats are better on gay issues and anyone who suggests otherwise ought to have their head examined. But it does not follow that the gay rights movement should do the DNC's bidding, even at the expense of its own.

Real change comes from unrelenting pressure, even more on friends than on foes. For far too long now, the gay movement and its leading organizations have been co-opted by Dem-first gays who are unwilling or unable to apply that pressure and therefore progress proceeds achingly slow -- and only when it is in the political interest of Democrats to achieve it. That's why even the most basic civil rights legislation -- employment non-discrimination and hate crimes -- have not passed the Democratic-controlled Congress.

Imagine what would happen if they did pass -- and President Bush actually signed them! Then where would the DNC and Hillary be? If elected, she would face more difficult gay rights issues -- mainly undoing the damage from her husband's administration in the form of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the Defense of Marriage Act.

The Dem-first and Hillary-first crowd actively dreads that outcome because they know she will not expend anymore political capital than her husband did on gay issues, especially on the same gay issues he ran so scared from in the '90s. So instead they lollygag on ENDA and hate crimes, to the silence of the Human Rights Campaign and the trans-marginalized Task Force.

And anyone who dares to criticize or ask tough questions, be it the gay press or even longtime Democratic party activists, gets the Tegen treatment -- dismissed as having some sort of evil anti-Dem agenda.

Expect more revelations to come on these matters, including on this blog.

All The Chairman's Men

Who's Who In The DNC's Gay Discrimination Drama

<http://www.queerty.com/all-the-chairmans-men-20080118/>

It's a big day for Howard Dean and the Democratic National Committee! Chief of Staff Leah Daughtry takes the stand today in the ongoing discrimination discovery hearings. Daughtry allegedly asked former staffer Donald Hitchcock to resign after Hitchcock's boyfriend, Paul Yandura wrote an open letter criticizing the DNC.



Confused? Yeah, we are, too. That's why we've compiled a list of all the witnesses testifying during the case's discovery period. Get to know the DNC players, because you may be hearing a whole lot more from them.

Brian Bond: Donald Hitchcock's successor at the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council, Brian Bond works to build queer support for the party, particularly with regard to fundraising. This isn't Bond's first time working within the Democratic National Conference - he previously worked for the now defunct gay and lesbian outreach, during which time he organized "financial contributions to targeted LGBT clubs."

Bond's appointment seemed like a perfect fit. The politico worked as the Victory Fund's executive director from 1997 to 2003, during which time the number of openly gay politicians rocketed from 127 to 228. He and his staff raised over \$300,000 for 60 candidates during the 2002 campaign. Bond also worked on Bill Clinton's 1992 and 1996 presidential elections. No doubt Howard Dean hoped Bond would set the GLCC straight: Brian's proven and effective leadership will be crucial to our effort to confront the issues facing the Party and the LGBT community. The Democratic Party has a long history of standing against discrimination and standing up for equal rights for every American... Brian will help lead our fight to end the Republican politics of fear and division. Brian wasn't so sure - he reportedly reached out to Hitchcock and Yandura for guidance on how to keep the DNC's gay politics from going sour.

Claire Lucas: A central character in the unfolding drama, Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council board Chair Claire Lucas has been grabbing more than her fair of headlines around here. The self-described "investor" raised eyebrows for refusing to testify in the discovery. She also came under fire for murky tax and property records. The Pomona graduate and former National Stonewall Director also sent a series of emails to communications director Karen Finney in which she derides Hitchcock as a "loser" and strategizes on how to best handle the scandal: direct response and "pro-DNC editorials".

Rumor has it Lucas has a reputation for being difficult. In fact, people have been known to say, "Oh, you've been Claired". We're not exactly sure what that means, but it sounds painful. Apparently Lucas can afford to be curt: her grandfather invented the overhead projector, or something crazy like that.

Leah Daughtry: Leah Daughtry wears many hats - or is it robes? The DNC Chief of Staff also leads services at Brooklyn's Pentecostal House of the Lord Church, which struggles "against all forms of oppression and exploitation which often is manifested as racism, sexism and classism."

The Church has always been central to Dartmouth educated Daughtry's life, especially because her father presides over the congregation. Dartmouth educated Daughtry feels the spirit so much, she says, that she's been known to speak in tongues. She also positions herself closer to the Evangelicals than the Baptists: "As a Pentecostal African-American, I have more in common theologically with white evangelicals than with black Baptists".



Daughtry's testimony will prove crucial to Hitchcock's case, for she allegedly told him the decision to fire him came in the days following Yandura's letter. Washington Blade's Lou wrote on May 4, 2006:

[Hitchcock] said DNC officials Tom McMahon and Leah Daughtry said at the time they informed him of his dismissal on May 2 that the decision to let him go "was not in the works for several weeks" but had been made within the past few days.

Hitchcock said the firing came after McMahon and Daughtry asked him to resign and he refused.

In addition to her role as Chief of Staff and minister, Daughtry also serves as the CEO for this summer's national convention. Chairman Howard Dean celebrated her appointment thus:

We are thrilled to have [Daughtry] leading our 2008 Democratic Convention team. Her strong guidance, skilled leadership and counsel have been invaluable to me during my tenure as DNC Chair and to the Democratic Party as a whole.

Not from what Donald Hitchcock says...

Damien LaVera: DNC Spokesperson Damien LaVera has a long history with Howard Dean: he donated \$550 to the politician's failed presidential campaign.

Jewel Hazel: DNC's human resources director Jewel Hazel will help shed light on the Committee's hiring - and firing - practices. Side note: "Jewel Hazel" is an awesome name.

LaToia Jones: Chicago native LaToia Jones currently heads up the College Democrats of America. Jones became increasingly political active during her years at Georgia State University, where she studied political science and African American Studies. The young activist travels around the United States spreading the party's 50-state strategy and registering college kids to vote. When she's not shuttling back and forth, Jones also advocates for AIDS, social security and affirmative action. We're not sure what role Jones plays in the discrimination suit, but our sources say she plays a "specific" role, whatever that means.

Parag Mehta: Openly gay Parag Mehta works as director of training for the DNC. The Texas native cut his teeth working for the late Governor Ann Richards. Mehta's also a Virgo and has twelve DNC Party Builder friends.

Tom McMahon: DNC Executive Director Tom McMahon's testimony will also prove invaluable to the discovery process. As mentioned before, Hitchcock claims McMahon (pictured with communications director Karen Finney) joined Daughtry in asking for his resignation, which they had allegedly been discussing since the Washington Blade published Paul Yandura's letter.

A former Al Gore staffer, McMahon also led Howard Dean's Democracy for America and served as Dean's deputy campaign manager during the 2004 presidential campaign. Bill Clinton appointed McMahon as public affairs officer in the Department of Defense. Hopefully that experience gave McMahon the armor he needs for this nasty discrimination suit.

Pam Womack: Former DNC political director Pam Womack directed the organization's internal policy. She was particularly crucial to the implementation of Chairman Dean's 50-state strategy, which hoped to spread Democratic influence to all crevices of the United States. During her time at the DNC, Womack reportedly favored gay finances more than gay people. Though she's current head of the Democratic Governor's Association, Womack remains a DNC consultant.

Simone Ward: Simone Ward certainly has quite the political resume! The American University and Oklahoma City University graduate worked as deputy director and finance assistant for the DNC Service Corporation. She moved on to head the Young Democrats of America at Oklahoma City University before hopping to the White House, where she worked as in the finance department. The Young Democrats soon came calling, however, and Ward went on to lead national YDA. She's currently deputy director of American Majority Partnership: the DNC's coalition-based outreach network. The AMP took over after the disintegration of the gay and lesbian outreach desk.

Chris Owens: Former AMP director Chris Owens has a long history of civil rights work, particularly with regard to employment discrimination. She also worked at the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, as well as a five year stint directing AFL-CIO's public policy. And she certainly labored while at the AMP, where she worked with then-GLCC director Donald Hitchcock.

Owens proved to be a pivotal figure in the DNC's unfolding gay drama. It was she who had to answer for the dissolved gay outreach program:

[Owens] insisted that Hitchcock works with her on gay constituent outreach efforts in addition to his fundraising work.

According to Owens, the revamped constituent outreach program developed by Dean will be more effective than the previous system because it will "bring in a lot more resources" from all of the DNC's departments and offices.

"I would argue that we have more than one full-time person in place," Owens said. "One of the goals of the American Majority Partnership ... is to make sure we are working across constituencies so we can use issues in a way to unify constituencies."

Gay Democratic activist Jeff Soref left his chair of the gay caucus and resigned from the DNC after the outreach debacle.

Owens currently heads the National Employment Law Project here in New York.

Donald Hitchcock: Ah, the man at the center of it all. Or one of them, at least. Hitchcock once directed the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council, which works to incorporate gay issues and perspectives into the party's platform and budget.

The Florida native started riding the political train while at Stetson University. That train took him to the National Lesbian and Gay Health Coalition, as well as to the Human Rights Campaign. His connections and experience helped him land at the DNC, where he organized the burgeoning GLCC. Hitchcock alleges that he only made \$2,156 biweekly, while his straight counterparts earned \$2,508. Despite the disparity, Hitchcock headed the GLCC until May 2, 2006 - four days after the Washington Blade published Paul Yandura's open letter.

Hitchcock soon took aim at the DNC's queer gay politics and wrote an August, 2006 op-ed questioning the party's commitment to gay issues:

"The LGBT groups fighting the anti-gay state marriage ballot measures in states such as Alabama, Tennessee, South Dakota, and South Carolina receive no help, or outright hostility, from the Democratic Party in their states. Over the years, progressive and inclusive states such as California, New York, and Massachusetts have moved forward in LGBT civil rights, and simultaneously given the national party a safety blanket and a crutch..."

"In 2004, 37 of the 50 states had no plans to include the LGBT community in their delegation, leading the LGBT community to represent only 5% of those attending the convention and disproportionately represented by the above coastal states. This lack of respect and dignity given at the state level has placed the DNC in the position to put out many fires, often times unsuccessfully, regarding how the Democrat state party is treating the LGBT democrats and electorate."

The war of words heated up in February of 2007, after Hitchcock attended the LGBT caucus meeting. He was not impressed:

..LGBT finance staff and key fundraisers did sit at the Caucus table, as before, but what is different is that lately we seem to be treated solely as an ATM for the party, with our civil rights seeming an afterthought or burden. After Gov. Dean became Chair of the DNC, two LGBT political positions were abolished, and two finance positions were added, for a total now of four positions in Finance and zero in Political. Given the meeting, it's obvious that we continue to be invited to the table, pay for the meal, but we are not allowed to eat.

Claire Lucas and her pals quickly whipped off a letter questioning Hitchcock's recollection of certain events, such as whether Dean allowed questions.

Hitchcock - who started at the DNC in June of 2005 - claims staffers have attempted to smear his name since he left the party. The truth will (hopefully) come out during the discovery period.

Andrew Tobias: Arguably one of the most well respected living homos, Andrew Tobias studied Slavic languages and literatures at Harvard before getting his Masters in business administration. In 1973, one year after graduating, the future politico anonymously published his coming of age autobiography, *The Best Little Boy In The World*. He later came out as the classic memoir's author.

Tobias has written for a number of publications - *Playboy*, *Esquire* - and penned a handful of financial advice books. The DNC recruited Tobias as treasurer way back in 1999 and he's helped grow the party's estimated \$200 million, including the GLCC's budget. His testimony will likely concern the party's monetary commitment to gay programs.

He lives with his boyfriend, designer Charles Nolan.



Paul Yandura: The Joe Wilson to Hitchcock's Valerie Plame, Yandura ruffled Democratic feathers when he wrote an open letter denouncing the DNC.

Wrote Yandura:

For many months a number of us have made appeals to Howard Dean and party officials to care about and defend the dignity of gay and lesbian families and friends, in the same way they defend the dignity of other key constituencies.

As the enclosed article shows, the DNC is fighting the vicious attacks being waged upon immigrants by the Republican party. Its the right thing to do and I applaud their action. Why then is it so difficult for them to do the same for us?

Why are gays and lesbians continually left to fight these battles alone? Where are our allies?

All progressives need to be asking how much has the DNC budgeted to counter the anti-gay ballot initiatives in the states. We also all need to know why the DNC and our Democratic leaders continue to allow the Republicans to use our families and friends as pawns to win elections.

Yandura definitely knew what he was talking about.

A longtime democratic activist, George Washington University graduate Yandura directed LGBT outreach for the Clinton/Gore presidential campaigns. He also gained gay ground as director of the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Council, which Hitchcock would later helm. Yandura currently presides over Scott and Yandura, the DC-based consulting firm he founded with Marsha Scott.

Howard Dean: Who doesn't know DNC Chairman Howard Dean? The former Vermont Governor caused a ruckus as a 2004 presidential candidate, but lost it all after that infamous "Dean Scream".

Raised in East Hampton, Dean enjoyed the trappings of a wealthy white man, but made sure to dialogue with people of all walks. In fact, he requested to room with black people while studying at Yale, from which he received a political science degree in 1971. Dean then went to Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx before moving to Vermont, where he practiced medicine and set up shop with his wife, Dr. Judith Steinberg.

Dean entered the political fray in 1982, when he joined Vermont's House of Representatives. He later became Lt. Governor and took over after Richard Snelling died in office. Dean held the post until 2003 and signed civil unions into law in 2000. The politician framed his decision in religious terms: The hallmark of Christianity is to reach out to people who have been left behind. So there was a religious aspect to my support of civil unions."

After failing to win the Democratic presidential nomination, Dean went on to found the political action group, Democracy For America. He later left to Chair the DNC, where he's caused a lot of gay drama for abolishing the gay outreach program and misrepresenting the party's stance on marriage. In case you don't remember, Dean told the 700 Club that the Democratic Party defined marriage as being between a man and a woman. He later clarified that statement.

Julie Tagen: Lesbian Julie Tagen works as the DNC's deputy finance director. She raised eyebrows last week when we published internal DNC emails chronicling her and others' plotting against the Washington Blade. Donald Hitchcock claims that Tagen, who donated to Howard Dean in 2003, asked him to keep Yandura silent. She also allegedly asked Hitchcock to quit after the letter's publication. Hitchcock alleges that DNC brass put Tagen up to the challenge. If Tagen's testimony concurs with Hitchcock, well, the DNC's going to come out looking more manipulative than it would like us to believe.



Perjury For DNC's Claire Lucas?

More Internal Emails Show Backstage Bitchery, Schemes

www.queerty.com/perjury-for-dncs-claire-lucas-20080117/

1/17/08

QUEERTY.com

The DNC's gay discrimination case got stickier this week. Washington Blade reports that gay DNC's gay board chair Claire Lucas could potentially face perjury charges for lying about her place of residence.

Legal documents filed in D.C. Superior Court this week and obtained by the Blade allege that Claire Lucas, a longtime Democratic National Committee volunteer and National Stonewall Democrats board member, committed perjury when she filed an affidavit asserting that she does not live in Washington.

The affidavit, filed Jan. 4, was part of efforts to quash a subpoena ordering Lucas to sit for a deposition in a lawsuit that alleges the DNC discriminated against a former gay employee.

...
D.C. property tax records contradict her assertion in the affidavit seeking to quash Hitchcock's subpoena that she has been a California resident since 2005. Those records show she claimed the Homestead deduction for the tax years of 2005 through 2007, as well as in prior years, according to Hitchcock's court filings.

The D.C. law creating the Homestead deduction requires, upon possible penalty of perjury, that homeowners affirm that they live in their home as a condition for obtaining the deduction

Just yesterday the DNC released a statement declaring the contemptuous Lucas a Californian.

Lucas has been a key player in the unfolding drama – the wealthy investor reportedly helped draft the DNC's public statements following Donald Hitchcock's 2006 firing. She also had private correspondences with other DNC staffers which have now been made public:

Offered as relevant exhibits are e-mails sent by Lucas that show how she and other DNC figures responded to a letter that Hitchcock wrote criticizing the DNC. The letter was published in the Blade on Feb. 9, 2007.

"Ugh," Lucas wrote to Finney and others. "What a complete loser (and I am happy to put that in writing)."

Karen Finney, the DNC's communications director, agreed in her response.

"Ugh," she wrote. "Yes I just saw it. We'll regroup this morning and figure out a response."

In an e-mail to Finney and Bond dated Feb. 12, Lucas said D.C. gay Democratic activist Kurt Vorndran, one of her "political mentors," advised her that it would be best to publish a direct response "and then come back over a couple of weeks with some pro-DNC editorials."

"One response to Donald and that is it," she wrote. "We do not want to give him too many legs. As Kurt said, 'Donald is self-destructing.' Again, I am open to anything. Let me know."

And the mask comes off...

Claire Lucas' Lawyer Releases Statement

DNC Gay Chair Feeling The Pressure?

www.queerty.com/claire-lucas-lawyer-releases-statement-20080118/

QUEERTY.com
1/18/08

Claire Lucas has grabbed more than her fair share of headlines in recent weeks.

The Democratic National Committee's gay board chair caught our attention when she refused to testify in the ongoing discrimination discovery hearings. Then Lucas popped up in a story about her potential perjury and backstage scheming against former DNC-staffer Donald Hitchcock.

In an effort to preserve his client's image, lawyer Barry Reingold sent our editor the following missive:

Ms. Lucas is a witness, not a defendant, in this matter. She has not been sued. The issues of this case, including Ms. Lucas's motion to quash the subpoena, are pending before the Superior Court of the District of Columbia by a Judge appointed by the President of the United States. Ms. Lucas has told and will continue to tell the truth to the Court. All of the issues in Hitchcock v. DNC will be litigated in this Court and decided by this fair and impartial tribunal.

We never said that Lucas was being sued, nor did we call her a "defendant". It appears to us that Reingold's attempting to distance his client from this ugly matter. And we can't blame him: she looks really, really bad, especially when she refers to Hitchcock as a "complete loser".



Can you people do anything right?

www.pamshouseblend.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=4191

PAMSHOUSEBLEND.com

by: miss wild thing

Wed Jan 16, 2008 at 22:54:11 PM EST



Here is the latest drivel from the DNC. It trumpets the inclusion of a whopping eight members of the LGBT communities to the upcoming convention this summer. I have highlighted the more hilarious parts.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 16, 2008 DNC ELECTS RECORD NUMBER OF LGBT MEMBERS TO 2008 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION STANDING COMMITTEES

Appointments Reflect Strength, Diversity and Energy of Democratic Party

DENVER – The Executive Committee of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) unanimously elected DNC Chairman Howard Dean's nominations for the Chairs and members of the 2008 Democratic National Convention Standing Committees, including a record number of openly LGBT members.

Dean's LGBT appointments include Dr. Marjorie Hill of the Gay Men's Health Crisis organization in New York, Diego Sanchez from AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, State Representative Patricia Todd of Alabama, and Ingrid Duran of Virginia to serve on the Platform Committee, along with Claire Lucas and Evan Low of California to the Rules Committee and Bob Rogan of Vermont to the Credentials Committee. In addition to appointing a record number of LGBT standing committee members, Dean was also the first DNC chair to appoint a member of the transgender community to a Convention committee.

The Standing Committees of the Convention are responsible for reviewing Convention business and formulating recommendations for consideration by Convention delegates. The Executive Committee's vote took place during the panel's recent meeting in Denver, site of the four-day Convention in August. "The record turnout and enthusiasm we've seen for our Democratic candidates is a clear sign that Americans trust Democrats to bring much needed change to our country," said Governor Dean. "These outstanding leaders reflect the great strength, diversity and energy of the Democratic Party, and I'm confident **their efforts will ensure our Convention in Denver is reflective of our shared values and our nominee's vision for America.**"

The elections included the Chairs and 25 Party Leader and Elected Official (PLEO) members of the three Convention Standing Committees: Credentials, Platform and Rules. Each committee has a total of 186 members.

An additional 161 members elected by each of the states' and territories' Convention delegations will join Governor Dean's appointments to the committees later this spring.

So let us do the math. 186 member of committees times three makes 558 members of committees. Out of that 8 people will be either LGB or T. That is less than 10% so this is supposed to be reflective of the Democratic party? Wow, I am in awe.

And if I recall the latest news reports, one of those appointees, Claire Lucas, is about an inch away from contempt of court in the Donald Hitchcock suit against the DNC. Also I would like to point out that identifying people's non-profit place of employment with a political party jeopardizes the non-profit's status.

Makes me proud to be a Democrat.
miss wild thing