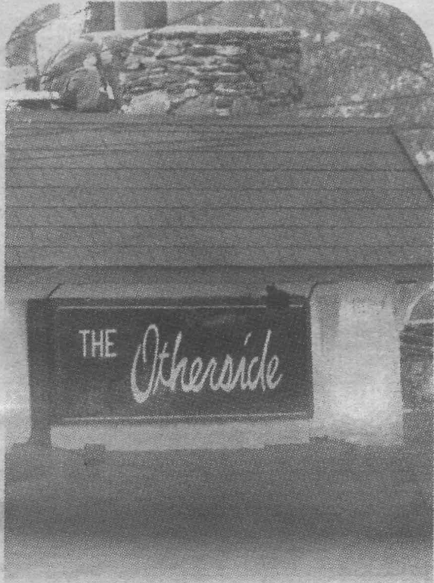


in newsweekly

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Bomb targets lesbians

Fear grips Atlanta's diverse communities, but it won't stop patrons from going out

by **Scott R. Akin, Laura Brown and David Goldman**

The Southern Voice

ATLANTA — The possibility of a serial bomber who's turned to attacking gays and lesbians sent terror through the Atlanta community after last Friday's bombing of The Otherside Lounge, prompting Mayor Bill Campbell to order increased police presence in areas of gay and lesbian establishments.

"We have already ordered additional police protection for gay and lesbian bars and establishments," Campbell said Feb. 23 after meeting with the Mayor's Senior Advisors to the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered Community. However, Campbell failed to outline specific measures.

The bomb detonated in Centennial Park killed two and injured 111. On Jan. 16, a bomb ripped through a Sandy Springs abortion clinic and a second bomb exploded a short while later, injuring seven.

Five people were reported injured at The Otherside, one serious enough to require surgery.

After the bomb exploded at The Otherside about 9:50 p.m. Feb. 21, a second bomb was discovered a short while later outside

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Chanelle Pickett murder trial postponed

by **Ed Boyce**

CAMBRIDGE — A late arriving result from a crime lab forced a six week postponement of the trial of William Palmer, 35, accused of murdering transsexual Chanelle (Roman) Pickett in Palmer's Watertown apartment on November 20, 1995.

The Middlesex District Attorney's office provided results of serology study of semen and saliva trace evidence

to Walter Prince, Palmer's defense attorney, only one day before the trial had been scheduled to begin last Thursday.

The results of the serology test indicated that Palmer was a potential source of some of the sperm and saliva found on Pickett's bloody trousers and that sperm from two different people was found.

"This is information that needs to be addressed, and can be addressed and will be addressed but we need time" Prince told Superior Court Judge William Barton.

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Boston Pride Committee's Guiding Light: Sabrina Taylor

by **Laura Migliori**

When Boston's Pride celebration rolls around this June and you find yourself and 200,000 friends having the time of your lives, you'll have Sabrina Taylor to thank.

As the guiding light of this year's Boston Pride Committee, Taylor has assumed the role of savior by bringing her wounded committee back to life. New events, new blood, and a fresh start has given Taylor and Boston Pride the chance to give the community what it really wants in this year's celebration. The first step: changing the name from Boston Gay Pride Parade to the Boston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies March.

The Pride Committee is planning to make this year's week-long celebration more political and more

diversified. Increasing the number of events, inviting political speakers, and switching the post-march festival back to the Boston Common are just a few of the changes.

"I'm looking for the committee to be...a microcosm of the community, so we're giving the community what it wants. When I joined the committee two years ago, I was shocked to see the lack of women on the committee and shocked at the percentage of women to men on Pride Day; it's glaringly different," she said.

In meeting with several members of the community, Taylor and company learned that many

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Boyce, Ed. "Chanelle Pickett Murder Trial Postponed." In *Newsweekly*, vol. 6, no. 28, 9 Mar. 1997, pp. [1]+. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/KHBGLQ304026579/AHSI?u=mlin_b_bpublic&sid=bookmark-AHSI. Accessed 5 Apr. 2023.

Murder trial, continues from cover

Middlesex Assistant District Attorney Adrienne Lynch told Barton that delays in an overwhelmed serology lab were responsible for the late delivery of the results. The evidence was submitted to the lab last September, said Lynch.

"I feel hard pressed to dispute the request for a continuance," Lynch told Barton.

Barton was visibly upset with the delay of this trial, but told the attorneys that he felt compelled to delay the trial under the circumstances. "This is a very serious matter and everyone is entitled to justice," said Barton.

Barton rescheduled the trial to begin with motion hearings on April 11 and jury impanelment to begin on April 15.

TRANSEXUALS ARE NOT DISPOSABLE PEOPLE

About thirty transsexuals and supporters held an informational picket during the hour before last Thursday's court hearing.

"Transsexuals are not disposable people," was the title of a leaflet about transsexuals and Pickett's murder that was handed

out by the activists who circled the sidewalk in front of the Courthouse in East Cambridge and carrying signs with messages such as, "We're not dressed to be killed."

"Basically, we're sick and tired of getting killed for no good reason," said transsexual Bobbi Mandell who attended the vigil.

Transsexual activist say there has been a series of murders of transsexual people in the Boston area in recent years.

The vigil, which was co-sponsored by the Remember Chanelle Committee, the Transsexual Menace and the Fenway Community Health Center Victim Recovery Program (VRP).

Vigil organizer Nancy Nangeroni told *in newsweekly* after the court hearing that transsexual activists do not necessarily consider the delay as a setback.

"It gives us more time to increase our visibility," said Nangeroni. "I'm thinking we'll do another when the trial gets underway."

The vigil was a topic during the 20 minute hearing. Prince objected to Barton about the pres-

ence of protesters outside the courthouse before the hearing and Barton articulated concern that future protests might contaminate the jury pool if, for instance, literature were to be handed out to prospective jurors entering the building.

But Nangeroni told *in newsweekly* that the vigil was scheduled for the day when motions were to be heard specifically so that no potential jurors at all

"BASICALLY, WE'RE SICK AND TIRED OF GETTING KILLED FOR NO GOOD REASON" — BOBBI MANDELL

would be around.

"We will cooperate with the court in every way to prevent our actions in any way biasing prospective jurors," said Nangeroni.

VRP victim advocate Robb Johnson told *in newsweekly* that the delay in the trial might actually be a positive development for the prosecution in this case.

"The continuance, on balance, is a positive; it only happened because the defense is a little bit on the run," said Johnson.

"The presence of sperm from two different people alone is very indicting of Palmer's contention that he was surprised."

Palmer is expected to use some form of self-defense or homosexual panic-defense during the trial, although Prince has not yet committed publicly to any single explanation of why Pickett's body was found in butchered his client's apartment.

"If the prosecution can show that his sperm and his saliva is connected, the deception theory goes out the window."

"The only thing we have to lose in waiting six weeks is we have to follow up on witnesses and make sure we don't lose track of anyone," said Johnson.

"It's six weeks that's going to afford the prosecution six more weeks to build its case."

Before adjourning the hearing, Barton granted a defense

motion asking for the criminal records of all potential prosecution witnesses. The prosecution is expected to call several transsexuals and transvestites who say they knew Palmer to be patron on several occasions of Jacques and Playland, two well-known gay/trans bars in Boston. Palmer reportedly picked Pickett up at Playland on the night of her murder.

Some of these witnesses may have records including minor prostitution and drug related charges, something which activists expect Prince to use as ammunition to contrast his clients "boy-next-door" image with loaded stereotypes about the lives of transsexual people.

"Given that the defense posture has been to attack the legitimacy of the victim and the victim's friends, it is not surprising that they would continue that tactic and attack the witnesses," said Nangeroni.

The judge told prosecuting and defense attorneys that he would not tolerate any further delays in the case.

"The next time, this trial is going to go," said Barton.

Sabrina Taylor, continues from cover

people felt excluded from past celebrations. The committee then ordered up a new recipe for the series of events, particularly reaching out to youth and women.

Since Fenway Community Health Center will not be sponsoring its women's dance on Saturday, the committee has planned a big bash for women Thursday night on the Esplanade. Taylor says it may focus on a "drag king theme," and the committee is on the hunt for comedienne Lea DeLaria to host. And don't forget about the women's boat cruise; last year's sold out in days.

As well, gay and lesbian youth have noticed the lack of outreach to their age group. This year, they'll have a celebration of their own: a youth dance. And Taylor says the committee won't spare

any expenses.

Taylor, 26, came out as a lesbian the year before she joined the committee. At the time of her coming out, she never knew Boston had a gay pride celebration. "My first Pride I was all aglow. It was one of the best days of my life," she said. "I was so excited, because I never realized there were that many gay and lesbian people in the area. But, then I realized that the events didn't draw women."

This year, not only is the committee focusing on more events, it is also reaching out to new sponsors, including Sojourner, Boston's monthly feminist newspaper, and for the first time since the committee's creation, bar owners. "All we had to do was ask," says Taylor.

As she spoke about her com-

mitment and plans for the committee, it sounded as if she were as enthused as she was on her first Pride Day. But, her enthusiasm is even greater and even surprising after years of frustration and turmoil with the committee.

Since 1995, the committee has struggled through resignations, changes in leadership, and allegations of exclusiveness. In 1995, the committee demanded the resignation of chair Jim Kratoville, stating his prejudice toward lesbians and women and his mishandling of money. After 10 years of Kratoville's leadership, Taylor and Gregg Fraker took over the reigns in 1996, only to later face the controversy surrounding the Lesbian Avengers' provocative performance in the Parade, which garnered regional

media attention. Fraker has since resigned, because of family illness, so now Taylor has assumed the role of chair—a volunteer position.

"We have a long way to go. I'm either insane or over-enthused."

As Taylor flies solo this year, she faces the challenge of regaining the community's trust. The incident with the Lesbian Avengers divided parts of the community, and, thus, forced the Pride Committee to take a stand. "It was very frustrating because I wanted to protect 'pride' and what it stood for, but at the same time, we [the committee] had to remain neutral and all-inclusive," Taylor said.

To regain the trust, Taylor is getting her message out to all the people and organizations that

doubted her commitment. "There's nothing we're going to do to make sure it'll never happen again. I'm not trying to condemn or censor anyone," she says.

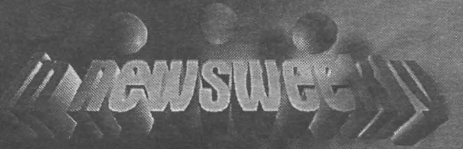
It is her commitment, she says, that will make this year successful. Not to mention her faith in the committee. "No matter what I go through, that day is worth it. My life began when I came out, and to see that many people celebrating, it's exhilarating."

Laura Migliori is a freelance writer based in Hopkinton, Mass.

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