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Rev. Elder Nori Rost, Senior Pastor

CHURCH

PIKES PEAK METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY



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## Our Core Values and Vision Statement

### CORE VALUES

- ♦ Celebrating an inclusive Christian Spirituality which respects the diversity of all.
- ♦ Experiencing God's presence through authentic worship and meaningful relationships.
- ♦ Experiencing compassionate, challenging preaching and teaching that encourages spiritual growth.
- ♦ Fostering a culture that encourages deliberate outreach by our community of faith while positively impacting the greater community.
- ♦ Embodying the example of Christ by participating in justice work for all the oppressed.

### VISION

10 years from now, Pikes Peak MCC will be a leading Christian congregation in the communities of faith that: reaches out to a wide variety of people and communities with the love and grace of God as expressed in Jesus Christ; is an active agent against all forms of oppression; empowers people to grow spiritually through dynamic worship, healthy relationships and life-changing service.

*(Accepted unanimously by the Congregation in October 2003)*



# A Letter Home From Tom J.

*continued from page 12...*

I've been told I'm to be ready to head to the airport at 3 A.M. Saturday morning to head for Grenada. I'll move in with another host family for at least 8 weeks (4 weeks of training and the initial 4 weeks of service) before I can get an apartment of my own - and host visitors from the States!

Time is flying, life is good, the people are awesome, sights are spectacular, and opportunities seem boundless. I hope you are all well.

I miss you all.

Take care, love - Tom J

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# Namaste

*Here is the poem that Mark used in a sermon a while back that many of you have asked him for. ~Ed.*

"I honor the place in you where  
Spirit lives  
I honor the place in you which is  
of Love, of Truth, of Light,  
of Peace,  
when you are in that place in you,  
and I am in that place in me,  
then we are One."

✕

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## . . . and finally

*I received this from an E-mail friend in Canada and even if you have read this before, it is good to read it again.*

*~Frank*

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHARLES SCHULTZ

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schultz, the creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip. You don't have to actually answer the questions. Just read straight through, and you'll get the point.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winner for best actor and actress.

6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier?

The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care.

*"Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia."*

*~Charles Schultz*

## Until next month . . .

## Quips and Quotes

*"I think there's such a strong archetype there for gay people -- that secret self. It's that hidden self that's not about being defined by secrets or by sexuality, but being defined by your heart. So many of us have to hide our lives in order to make other people comfortable. And when you stop hiding your life to make other people comfortable, you begin to love yourself."*

*~Actress Lynda Carter discussing her Wonder Woman character with D.C.'s MetroWeekly, Aug. 25.*

*"This country has a respect for all of its citizens and allows them to all be equal under the law. It's very, very inspiring for those of us in the United States who have just been nationally shamed by a president who tried to introduce bigotry into the U.S. constitution. So, Canada, this is an amazing place."*

*~Rosie O'Donnell speaking July 12 in Halifax, Nova Scotia.*

*"I want our government, which has presided over many positive changes for gay people here in the U.K. -- an equal age of consent, partnership rights, the abolition of the rightly reviled Clause 28 -- to ensure that ending violations of gay people's fundamental human rights around the world becomes an explicit issue in its diplomatic relations with other countries. I strongly believe that when thousands of us refuse to look away and stay silent we make a difference to what politicians do and say."*

*~ Elton John writing in England's The Observer, July 3, 2005.*

*"In Spain, where 90 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, the*

## A Reminder that WE are not YET Free!

*continued from page 10...*

father who has never hugged his son because I grew up afraid to show affection to other men.

I am the home-economics teacher who always wanted to teach gym until someone told me that only lesbians do that.

I am the man who died when the paramedics stopped treating me as soon as they realized I was transsexual.

I am the person who feels guilty because I think I could be a much better person if I didn't have to always deal with society hating me. I am the man who stopped attending church, not because I don't believe, but because they closed their doors to my kind.

I am the person who has to hide what this world needs most, love.

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*church came out swinging against [marriage] rights for gays, using the familiar line that gay marriage imperils the traditional institution of marriage. This has always been a difficult argument to follow logically. Assuming that marriage is the binding of two people in a committed relationship, possibly to create a family, gay marriage adds to the institution. Even granting most religions' insistence that the two people must be of different genders, gay marriage does nothing to discourage or belittle heterosexual unions."*

*~ Los Angeles Times editorial, July 6.*

## A Letter Home From Tom J.

Hello all,

Exciting news!

Yesterday afternoon were the placement announcements where Peace Corps staff finally tell the 50 trainees where we'll be spending the next two years of our lives. I received an assignment on the island nation of Grenada working with the Special Education Task Force. I really didn't know what that meant, so consulted my country director (CD).

She informed me that the Task Force is responsible of developing and implementing Special Education programs at every level, from developing national policies in cooperation with legislators to training teachers in cooperation with school districts. I was very excited - it was everything I had asked to do. Then I asked what would be my role with the Task Force. My CD replied, "You'll be it's head."

At this point my jaw dropped & is still dragging.

So as I understand the situation, for the next two years, I'll be the Head of the Special Education Task Force for the Island Nation of Grenada. How did this happen?

This week we'll be wrapping up phase I of training occurring in St. Lucia.

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# Mother of Gay son in Vermont

*continued from page 9...*

He never professed to be gay or had any association with anything gay, but he had the misfortune not to walk or have gestures like the other boys. He was called "fag" incessantly, starting when he was 6.

In high school, while your children were doing what kids that age should be doing, mine labored over a suicide note, drafting and redrafting it to be sure his family knew how much he loved them. My sobbing 17-year-old tore the heart out of me as he choked out that he just couldn't bear to continue living any longer, that he didn't want to be gay and that he couldn't face a life without dignity.

You have the audacity to talk about protecting families and children from the homosexual menace, while you yourselves tear apart families and drive children to despair. I don't know why my son is gay, but I do know that God didn't put him, and millions like him, on this Earth to give you someone to abuse. God gave you brains so that you could think, and it's about time you started doing that.

At the core of all your misguided beliefs is the belief that this could never happen to you, that there is some kind of subculture out there that people have chosen to join. The fact is that if it can happen to my family, it can happen to yours, and you won't get to choose. Whether it is genetic or whether something occurs during a critical time of fetal development, I don't know. I can only tell you with an absolute certainty that it is inborn.

If you want to tout your own morality, you'd best come up with something more substantive than your heterosexuality. You did nothing to earn it; it was given to you. If you disagree, I would be interested in hearing your story, because my own heterosexuality was a blessing I received with no effort whatsoever on my part. It is so woven into the very soul of me that nothing could ever change it. For those of you who reduce sexual orientation to a simple choice, a character issue, a bad habit or something that can be changed by a 10-step program, I'm puzzled. Are you saying that your own sexual orientation is nothing more than something you have chosen, that you could change it at will? If that's not the case, then why would you suggest that someone else can?

A popular theme in your letters is that Vermont has been infiltrated by outsiders. Both sides of my family have lived in Vermont for generations. I am heart and soul a Vermonter, so I'll thank you to stop saying that you are speaking for "true Vermonters."

You invoke the memory of the brave people who have fought on the battlefield for this great country, saying that they didn't give their lives so that the "homosexual agenda" could tear down the principles they died defending. My 83-year-old father fought in some of the most horrific battles of World War II, was wounded and awarded the Purple Heart.

He shakes his head in sadness at the life his grandson has had to live. He says he fought alongside homosexuals in those battles, that they did their part and bothered no one. One of his best friends in the service was gay, and he never knew it until the end, and when he did find out, it mattered not at all. That wasn't the measure of the man.

You religious folk just can't bear the thought that as my son emerges from the hell that was his childhood he might like to find a lifelong companion and have a measure of happiness. It offends your sensibilities that he should request the right to visit that companion in the hospital, to make medical decisions for him or to benefit from tax laws governing inheritance.

How dare he? You say. These outrageous requests would threaten the very existence of your family, would undermine the sanctity of marriage. You use religion to abdicate your responsibility to be thinking human beings. There are vast numbers of religious people who find your attitudes repugnant. God is not for the privileged majority, and God knows my son has committed no sin.

The deep-thinking author of a letter to the April 12 Valley News who lectures about homosexual sin and tells us about "those of us who have been blessed with the benefits of a religious upbringing" asks: "What ever happened to the idea of striving . . . to be better human beings than we are?" Indeed, sir, what ever happened to that?"

# For the First Time

*continued from page 9*

You say,  
"Wait!"  
In the past  
when I've heard  
"wait",  
I am overcome with impatience.  
I see it as a burden,  
I'm not prepared to carry.  
I fret away the time,  
hour after hour,  
week after week.  
Yet, every time  
You've asked me to wait,  
You've come,  
eventually,  
and given me  
what I most needed  
...in my deepest heart,  
most wanted,  
whether I was aware  
or not, at the time of asking.

Now,  
again,  
You say, "Wait!"  
This time, I feel a new thing.  
For the first time,  
I'm overwhelmed with joy  
at the very prospect of waiting.  
In anticipation...  
So like a child waiting  
for the traveling Aunt or Uncle  
to return from their adventures  
abroad,  
I wait for Your immanent return.  
For I know,  
Gifts You will bring.  
Clarity You will give.  
Peace, overriding any fears, will  
descend upon my heart.  
  
For the first time,  
I can feel You are present with me  
in this time of waiting.  
I can feel You are working  
on my behalf,

and I know You've not forgotten  
me.  
I know I'm at the center of  
Your heart and mind.  
Is there any greater joy  
than knowing that one is present  
in the heart and mind of God?

For the first time,  
I'm thrilled  
to hear You say,  
"Wait."  
And oh so thankful  
to be "waiting on God."  
Hallelu  
Hallelu  
Hallelujah!

*by Mark McKenzie  
2005*

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## A Reminder that WE are not YET Free!

*I picked this up from a recent issue of  
the PPGLCC's Lunchbreak. ~Ed.*

I am the girl kicked out of her  
home because I confided in my  
mother that I am a lesbian.

I am the prostitute working the  
streets because nobody will hire a  
transsexual woman.

I am the sister who holds her gay  
brother tight through the painful,  
tear-filled nights.

We are the parents who buried our  
daughter long before her time.

I am the man who died alone in the  
hospital because they would not let  
my partner of twenty-seven years  
into the room.

I am the foster child who wakes up  
with nightmares of being taken  
away from the two fathers who are  
the only loving family I have ever  
had. I wish they could adopt me.

I am one of the lucky ones, I guess.  
I survived the attack that left me in  
a coma for three weeks, and in  
another year I will probably be able  
to walk again.

I am not one of the lucky ones. I  
killed myself just weeks before  
graduating high school. It was  
simply too much to bear.

We are the couple who had the  
realtor hang up on us when she  
found out we wanted to rent a one-  
bedroom for two men.

I am the person who never knows  
which bathroom I should use if I  
want to avoid getting the  
management called on me.

I am the mother who is not allowed  
to even visit the children I bore,  
nursed, and raised. The court says  
I am an unfit mother because I now  
live with another woman.

I am the domestic-violence  
survivor who found the support  
system grow suddenly cold and  
distant when they found out my  
abusive partner is also a woman.

I am the domestic-violence  
survivor who has no support  
system to turn to because I am  
male.

I am the  
*...continued on page 12*

# Ministry Corner

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animals we transport so that we can look at them and remember and also to send them to the other drivers and the new families to help with their "baby book". We sometimes get pictures of our temporary charges from their new families and it is always a thrill. Whether we ever see them again or not, each one is a permanent resident in our hearts.

If you'd like to become an animal transporter, please contact me for more information.

Sharon Shott: [sshott@yahoo.com](mailto:sshott@yahoo.com)

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## Religious Right Boycotts

*continued from page 5...*

and other texts can be found on evangelical Web sites like *Thegreatcommission.com*, *Transferableconcepts.com* and *Gospelcom.net*. They have incredible motivating power for the religious right, and help explain the vehemence of the Christian right's intolerance of the freedom of others to think or act differently.

Says Berlet, "The re-election of Bush was a sort of tipping point for these people, who take it as a mandate from God -- they see that the leadership of America is within their grasp, and when you get closer to your goal, it's very energizing. It reaches a critical mass, in which the evangelicals feel

they have permission to push their way into public and cultural policy in every walk and expression of life." All that, says Berlet, is what is motivating the skein of conservative Christian boycotts, protest campaigns and censorship drives bubbling from the bottom up -- which get added emotional and pressure power from the fund-raising-driven crusades launched by political Christian right organizations like *AFA* at the national level. The confluence of from-above and from-below is a powerful mix.

There's one big problem: Nobody at the national level is tracking these censorship and pressure campaigns in a systematic way, to quantify them or assess their impact, so that strategies to defeat them can be developed.

"*People for the American Way* used to track this stuff, but they stopped doing so systematically in 1996. We at *Political Research Associates* would love to do it," says Berlet, "but we don't have the resources. Groups like the *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute* or *Americans United for Separation of Church and State* could easily do this sort of work. But none of us has the money to do it, because nobody wants to give it. There used to be three major journalists writing about this stuff -- Sara Diamond, Russ Belant and Fred Clarkson. But none of them could make a living doing it, and they've all dropped out of the game."

Unless Hollywood, and the entertainment and broadcast industries, all want to live through an epoch of increasing content

blackmail and blacklists, the wealthy folks who make a lot of money from those industries better wake up and start funding intensive and systematic research on the Christian right and its censorship crusades against sexual subversion and sin in the creative arts -- or soon it will be too late, and the "theocratic oligopoly" of which Martin Kaplan speaks will be so firmly established it cannot be dislodged.

*Doug Ireland writes the blog, Direland.*

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## Mother of Gay son in Vermont

*Thank you Mary Brady for sharing this letter.* ~Ed.

"Many letters have been sent to the Valley News concerning the homosexual menace in Vermont. I am the mother of a gay son and I've taken enough from you good people. I'm tired of your foolish rhetoric about the "homosexual agenda" and your allegations that accepting homosexuality is the same thing as advocating sex with children. You are cruel and ignorant. You have been robbing me of the joys of motherhood ever since my children were tiny.

My firstborn son started suffering at the hands of the moral little thugs from your moral, upright families from the time he was in the first grade. He was physically and verbally abused from first grade straight through high school because he was perceived to be gay.

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## Ministry Corner

three legs to prevent the transport being rescheduled and, because we had also made arrangements to do a pre-adoption home visit in Cripple Creek for a Denver rescue organization, we took the pups to their final destination, Mariah's Promise Animal Sanctuary in Divide since it was on the way. That trip took the entire day.

Handsome, an 8 month-old deaf Great Dane was a memorable traveling companion. He was going from a kill-shelter in TX to Deaf Dane Rescue in OR. Because it was such a long trip, it was broken into 2 runs, one from TX to CO where Handsome would spend a week at Mariah's Promise in Divide before the next run took him to OR. We picked him up in Trinidad and took him to Divide. He was quite a handful because he hadn't had any training but he was so lovable. He kept us on our toes the whole trip because he could just reach over the gate between the front seat and the back to help himself to our water bottles (a great toy, he thought) and our snacks.

One of our most memorable transports was announced as a puppy breath transport because Nike, a Chihuahua, was only 9 weeks old. Nike was traveling from El Paso, TX to Casper, WY where he would be joining his new family who had already adopted a Chihuahua mix from the same rescue a couple years ago. This time we signed up to do the Colorado Springs to Denver leg of the run but we also quickly volunteered to keep Nike overnight

at our house so we could relish the puppy breath just a little longer. What a wonderful pup he was. We took lots of pictures, as we usually do, and forwarded them to Nike's new family. We have since received many pictures of him with his brother and new parents.

We've done other transports, home visits and even fostered some dogs and we do it for the same reasons as everyone else who is out there on the highways - to save as many critters as we can, one critter at a time.

Although there are dogs in shelters waiting to be adopted in every city across the country, due to the Internet and web sites like [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com), it is possible for people seeking to adopt a pet to search the entire country to find the pet of their dreams. Many rescue organizations scour the online adoption lists of kill-shelters around the country for adoptable animals, arrange to have the animal pulled from the shelter and then transported to their rescue or a foster home. The vast online network of rescues, fosters, and transporters makes long-distance adoptions possible because most of us also do home visits in our areas to screen adoption applicants for suitability and commitment so that no animal is adopted into a family that cannot properly care for it. We even have a secret online group where the names and locations of known animal abusers are listed so rescues can avoid them as potential adopters. One result of the cross-country adoptions is that many

organizations have made it their mission to transport as many pets as is possible.

Some of the organizations, like Trucknpaws, with over 2000 members, Critter Convoys and Weekday Transports are strictly in the "transport" business. Other organizations like IMOM and many rescue groups staff transports as one of their services. Each transporter must be signed up with at least one transport group and provide a veterinarian reference, personal references, as well as their contact information and the make, model and license plate number of their vehicle. Jean and I are signed up with about six transport groups but we've done transports for other groups because their requests have been cross-posted to one of the lists we're on.

We try to participate in as many transports as possible, partly because we love it and partly because Colorado happens to be one of the states where it is difficult to get enough drivers. Because we work on Saturdays, we can only drive Saturday evening or Sundays. Sometimes we take our own dogs along and sometimes we just stop at home with the dogs we're transporting to give them a chance to stretch their legs in our fenced yard before resuming their trip. All of the animals we've transported seem to know that we are trying our best to help them have a good life with someone who deserves them. You can see it in their eyes. We take pictures of all of the

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*continued from page 6...*

## Ministry Corner

go smoothly, we should all sign up as transporters with *In Memory of Magic, Inc.*, (IMOM) an organization established to aid owners of sick pets and the animals themselves. IMOM provides many services, among them a transport group. We all signed up but, as it happened, Miles was able to hitch a ride on an airplane with someone who was traveling on business and willing to take him along.

Transports (runs) are actually relays, well-planned trips that can cover short distances or hundreds of miles. Each driver takes an animal some number of miles, turns the animal over to the next drive and so on for hours, days and sometimes weeks. Coordinators plan things down to the mile and the minute, including potty breaks for both humans and animals, taking into consideration highway construction and time zone changes. Once a coordinator has a tentative run put together, an E-mail goes out to all the transport groups they work with and a request that their message be cross-posted to as many other lists as possible. The routes and legs (usually 50 - 80 miles each) often flex to make it easier to get enough drivers but, even so, it is not unusual for a transport to be canceled and rescheduled 2, 3, or more times before getting filled. This is especially true if a route is through less populated areas. The vast majority of transports take place up and down the East Coast and in the Mid-West with many of them moving animals from the South where there are many animals in need of homes to the

Northeast where there are fewer puppies and kittens due to strict spay/neuter laws and vigorous owner education in animal population control. As the run sheet fills up with drivers, the coordinators plot handoff locations and pass on details like driver contact information and the color and plate number of vehicles. While all of this is going on, the animals receive all necessary vaccinations and medical treatment in order to receive their health certificate, a requirement for transport. During a transport, coordinators are in contact with relinquishing drivers at each handoff to get updates on the animals and monitor the progress of the run in order to alert the subsequent drivers to any gains or losses in time that will impact their legs of the run.

I stayed on the transport list and it wasn't long before I got an E-mail with a subject line of "Transport 8/14-8/15 Lincoln, NE to Phoenix, AZ". Nick, an 18 month old English Setter, was going from a rescue, Another Chance for English Setters (ACES), to a new foster home in Phoenix and Skittles, a four month old English Setter was going from ACES to her new forever home in Belmont, CA. We signed up to drive the leg between Colorado Springs and Walsenburg.

Skittles had begun her journey in Durham, NC on Aug 8, 2004. Along the way, she spent the night in Columbus, OH at the home of a transporter before she was put on a transport on Aug 9th that was headed for St. Louis, MO. In St.

Louis she hung out for a week with the family who had adopted her brother. Her brother's family took her to Lincoln, NE on the 13th for the next leg of her trip which began on the 14th with a traveling companion, Nick. Skittles stayed in Phoenix with Nick long enough to catch her breath and to give her transport coordinator enough time to put together the last run of her trip before continuing on her way to CA and her new life with her new family.

After Skittles and Nick, there was Foggy, a two-month old Boxer mix pup who was going from a rescue in El Paso, TX to his new forever home in Dillon CO. We picked him up in Trinidad, CO and brought him to our house where he spent the night before we took him up to Denver the next day and handed him off to another transport volunteer who hooked him up with his new family. Foggy was the cutest thing and so well-behaved. Our big dogs had no idea what to make of such a little guy with so much energy and no fear. Foggy entertained us endlessly by trying to do all the things our big dogs did from eating and drinking out of their raised (12 inches off the floor) dishes to peering out the front door standing on his tip-toes.

Our next transport was a long one. We went to Lamar to pick up five puppies (Lab mixes, Cattle Dog mixes and a Rottie mix). We had originally signed on to drive the Pueblo to Colorado Springs leg but nobody signed up to do either the Lamar to LaJunta or the LaJunta to Pueblo legs  
...continued on page 8  
so we did all

# Pastor's ponderings

*continued from page 1...*

Sunday, September 25 and will be facilitating a forum following the 10:30 service to hear your concerns and gain your input for this transition. I hope you will attend.

I cannot begin to tell you how blessed and honored I have been to serve as your pastor and how much my relationship with this amazing community of faith has deepened and stretched and enriched my life and ministry.

I am excited for this new direction my own ministry is taking as well as being excited for the future of Pikes Peak MCC. Since I am feeling so powerfully called out of pastoral ministry in Pikes Peak MCC, I know God has also called someone to be pastor who can take this church to the next level.

I ask you to join with me in prayer for both ministries that we may each fulfill God's calling on our lives and that the Holy Spirit would guide and protect us as we begin this important transition. It is with deep gratitude to each of you and to Pikes Peak MCC that I take this next step.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at this email or on my cell phone.

Many Blessings and Much Love,

(the) Rev. Nori J. Rost  
Pastor  
719-963-0242

# Ministry Corner

*This may not be a specific ministry of Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church, but never the less it is an important ministry of compassion for our four-legged friends. Sharon and Jean give a lot of their time and personal finances helping these homeless animals to find a good and loving home. I hope you enjoy this article.*

*Sharon sent several photos of her rescues and you can find them online at our church homepage: [www.ppmcc.org](http://www.ppmcc.org)*

*~Frank*

## Have Dog, Cat or Critter, Will Travel!

*Sharon Shott*

There are thousands of us on the road every weekend, and some weekdays, crisscrossing the nation. We aren't going sightseeing or to visit friends and family. We are animal transporters. We haul dogs and cats, primarily, but also the occasional lizard, goat, pot-belly pig, etc. from kill shelters, foster homes, or owners who must give them up to rescues, foster homes, or new forever homes. We take the animals and all their worldly possessions, food, beds, crates, toys, bowls, blankies, collars, leashes, and medical records on our own time, at our own expense, in our own vehicles (and the increased gas prices hasn't slowed anyone down). In fact, Hurricane Katrina has increased



*Foggy on Jean's lap.*

the numbers of transports considerably as rescues and shelters try to make room for the abandoned pets. If you ever wonder what Jean and I are doing on the Sundays we don't make it to church, this is usually what we're doing.

For us it all started in the summer of 2004. It started because we have a 20 year-old cat, Murphy, who, for a while, was an insulin-dependent diabetic and the responsibility for his continued quality of life rested squarely on our shoulders. Consequently, I spent most of my free time on the message board of a web site, [www.felinediabetes.com](http://www.felinediabetes.com) where I learned tips and tricks, got advice, cheered the good times, prayed during the bad-times and consoled others when a beloved sugarcat crossed the Rainbow Bridge. It was on the message board where I heard of a diabetic cat, Miles, whose disabled owner needed to move back East to live with her family but because her family had dogs that would not tolerate cats, she was desperate to find a new home for Miles with someone who would take proper care of a sugarcat. Patricia, who lived in Texas with seven other sugarcats, volunteered to adopt Miles. The problem then became how to get Miles to Texas while keeping to his insulin schedule. Many of us on the message board volunteered to drive a portion of the trip since we all had experience with testing blood glucose levels with a glucometer and administering insulin shots. We were told that in order for the transport to

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# Religious Right Boycotts

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drumbeat of religious fascism has never been as troubling as it is now in this country," adding that "e-mails to the FCC are more worrisome to me than boycotts" in terms of their chilling effect.

Even *The New York Times* is feeling the chill. At the beginning of May, an internal committee of 19 Times editors and reporters, who'd been asked how to improve the paper's "credibility" with a wider swath of America, came up with a key recommendation: Deliberalize the paper's news columns, especially through more coverage on religion from a sympathetic point of view.

The committee's report, "Preserving Our Readers' Trust," added that "the overall tone of our coverage of gay marriage, as one example, approaches cheerleading. By consistently framing the issue as a civil rights matter -- gays fighting for the right to be treated like everyone else -- we failed to convey how disturbing the issue is in many corners of American social, cultural, and religious life." Oh, "disturbing" to whom? Why, to the Christian right, of course -- whose email complaint campaigns against the Times are legion: It's the paper the fundamentalists love to hate. So why is the Times -- one of the few newspapers in the latest available study of circulation released earlier this year to significantly increase circulation rather than lose it -- feeling the need to kowtow to the religious opponents of gay marriage? The paper's willingness to do so is about as frightening a testimony to

creeping theocracy as one could imagine.

Is the new conservative Christian anti-gay and anti-sex crusade a back-to-the-future nightmare? Remember your history: In the 1950s, the anti-Communist owners of a small chain of supermarkets in upstate New York started threatening the TV and radio networks with boycotts of sponsors' products if they employed any persons listed as supposed Communists or lefties, in a sloppily researched little pamphlet called "Red Channels."

It didn't take long for this small protest to instill fear throughout the broadcast industry, and the result was the Blacklist, a witch-hunt that lasted for years -- even after John Henry Faulk, the blacklisted star CBS-radio host and actor, won his landmark \$3.5 million libel suit in 1962 against the blackmailers of *AWARE Inc.*, which -- for a suitable fee -- offered "clearance" services to major media advertisers and radio and television networks, investigating the backgrounds of entertainers for signs of Communist sympathy or affiliation. But Faulk didn't work in national broadcasting for another 13 years, until he landed a spot on the TV series *Hee-Haw* in 1975. It took that long to end a quarter-century reign of terror in the entertainment industry, 18 years after Senator Joe McCarthy was dead and buried.

Today's Christian right protests are targeting a different kind of subversion. Chip Berlet, senior

analyst at the labor-funded *Political Research Associates*, has spent over 25 years studying the far right and theocratic fundamentalism. He is co-author of "Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort."

Berlet -- who was one of the speakers at a conference last month co-sponsored by the N.Y. Open Center and the City University of New York Graduate Center on "Examining the Real Agenda of the Christian Right" -- says that "What's motivating these people is two things. First, an incredible dread, completely irrational, of a hodgepodge of sexual subversion and social chaos. The response to that fear is genuinely a grassroots response, and it's motivated by fundamentalist Christian doctrines like Triumphalism and Dominionism, which order Christians to take over the secular state and secular institutions. The Christian right frames itself as an oppressed minority battling the secular-humanist liberal homofeminist hordes."

The key to those doctrines is what fundamentalist religious primitives call the Great Commission, which is basically an injunction to convert everyone to Christianity. In the Bible (Matthew 28:19-20), it says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ." The fundamentalist interpretations of these

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# Religious Right Boycotts

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after *AFA* complaints. Sonic Drive-In pulled its ad support from "The Shield" after a single email request from *AFA's* Rev. Wildmon. S.C. Johnson and Hasbro ordered their ads taken off "He's a Lady" when it got the *AFA* treatment. And the list goes on .... Call it a new, 11th Commandment: "Thou shalt not advertise" if the religious primitives smell sin. Just two weeks ago, the *AFA* undertook a new letter-writing campaign aimed at Kraft Foods (makers of Oreo cookies, Maxwell House coffee, Ritz Crackers and the like) for supporting the "radical homosexual agenda."

Kraft's crime? It's a corporate sponsor of the *2006 Gay Games* in Chicago. Founded in 1980 by Dr. Tom Waddell -- a 1968 Olympic decathlete -- these Gay Games VII will bring gay athletes from all over the world to the Windy City for a complete catalog of Olympic-style competitions. The honorary chairman of the Chicago Gay Games? The city's mayor, Richard Daley, who declared that he is "committed to the success of the *2006 Gay Games* because it is an expression of international goodwill and a celebration of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, which are important to Chicago."

But, following the *AFA's* lead, another conservative Christian group -- the *Illinois Family Institute (IFI)* -- has asked its members to take on Kraft and five other Illinois companies that are sponsoring what it calls the "Homosexuality Games." Proclaimed the *IFI*: "By

allowing their corporate logos to be used to promote the 'Gay Games,' Kraft, Harris Bank and other sponsoring companies are celebrating wrong and destructive behaviors, and showing their disdain for the majority of Americans who favor traditional morality and marriage."

Here's a nice touch: The *IFI's* Web site features a statue of Abraham Lincoln, who some historians now credibly say was gay or bisexual. Will Kraft stand up to the pressure? The company's answer to this protest campaign is, for the moment, yes -- but for how long? All across the country, the Christian right and its allies in the culture wars are mobilizing -- sometimes spurred on from the top by the *AFA*, *Focus on the Family*, the *Family Research Council* and similar national groups, but with increasing frequency local pressure campaigns and boycott threats are self-starters. They target everything from local broadcast outlets and local cable operators to libraries, bookstores, playhouses, cinemas and magazine outlets.

"The Christian right is incredibly mobilized," says Joan Bertin, executive director of the *National Coalition Against Censorship*, a 30-year-old alliance of 50 nonprofit groups. Bertin says, "There's been an explosion of local book and arts censorship -- a lot of activity by an emboldened grassroots, who think they won the last election on moral grounds. They barely need to threaten a boycott to get those they target to back down -- hey, nobody had to threaten to boycott

*PBS* to get them to back off Postcards From Buster." Bertin affirms that "This new threat from below as well as above has already achieved a widespread chill" on creative and entertainment arts throughout the country.

A good example of successful up-from-below pressure in making corporate America bend the knee to the Christian right: the Microsoft Corp. Earlier this year, under pressure from a local protest led by Ken Hutcherson -- a conservative National Football League linebacker turned preacher -- Microsoft made a decision to stay neutral in the fight over legislation in Washington's state Legislature banning discrimination in employment against same-sexers, although many other companies headquartered in the state took positions in favor of the bill. But after an avalanche of counterprotests to Microsoft about their cave-in to Hutcherson, from their own employees (many of whom are gay), gay groups and the blogosphere, Microsoft reversed itself and supported the anti-discrimination bill. Too late: Two weeks earlier, the bill had been defeated by just one vote in the state Senate. Now, Microsoft is being targeted by a new, national conservative Christian protest campaign for having flip-flopped again.

Martin Kaplan, director of the *Norman Lear Center* at the Annenberg School of Communication at USC, calls the new offensive a drive toward "theocratic oligopoly. The

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# Religious Right Boycotts

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announced its support for civil unions in the state of Oregon.

According to an email alert from *AFA* to its members, "many corporations are already donating large sums to homosexual organisations to support their agenda. Sending a message to Nike will send a message to those corporations poised to support homosexual unions."

Following Nike's announcement of its support, the Civil Unions Bill passed in Senate. Nike is believed to be the first major corporation in America to publicly support civil unions, which the *AFA* calls "a back door move to legalise homosexual marriage."

Boycotts by the *AFA* have previously been large-scale, high-profile and often had their desired effect. In May the group launched a nationwide boycott of Ford over its support for LGBT issues. Other companies targeted recently have been Kraft foods for its support of the 2006 Gay Games, as well as Disney and Proctor & Gamble. Microsoft withdrew its public support of a LGBT civil rights bill in Washington last month after it was threatened with boycott.

In addition to the boycott of Nike products, the *AFA* has also urged its members to write, email and phone Nike telling them to pull their endorsement of the legislation.

## The New Blacklist

*By Doug Ireland, LA Weekly  
Posted on June 13, 2005*

Spurred on by a biblical injunction evangelicals call "The Great Commission," and emboldened by George W. Bush's re-election, which is perceived as a "mandate from God," the Christian right has launched a series of boycotts and pressure campaigns aimed at corporate America -- and at its sponsorship of entertainment, programs and activities they don't like.

And it's working. Just three weeks ago, the Rev. Donald Wildmon's *American Family Association (AFA)* announced it was ending its boycott of corporate giant Procter & Gamble -- maker of household staples like Tide and Crest -- for being pro-gay. Why? Because the *AFA's* boycott (which the organization says enlisted 400,000 families) had succeeded in getting P&G to pull its millions of dollars in advertising from TV shows like "Will & Grace" and "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy."

P&G also ended its advertising in gay magazines and on gay Web sites. And a P&G executive who had been given a leave of absence to work on a successful Cincinnati, Ohio, referendum that repealed a ban on any measures protecting gays from discrimination was shown the door.

"We cannot say they are 100 percent clean, and we ask our supporters to let us know if they discover P&G again being involved in pushing the homosexual lifestyle," growls the *AFA's* statement of victory over the corporate behemoth, "but judging by all that we found in our

research, it appears that our concerns have been addressed." The *Wall Street Journal* reported on May 11 that "P&G officials won't talk publicly about the boycott. But privately, they acknowledge the [Christer] groups turned out to be larger, better funded, better organized, and more sophisticated than the company had imagined."

But the P&G cave-in to the Christian right is only the tip of the iceberg.

In just the past year and a half, *AFA* protests and boycotts -- or even the simple threat of boycotts -- have been enough to make a host of American companies pull their ads from TV shows the Christian right considers pro-gay or salacious. "Desperate Housewives" has lost ads from Safeway, Tyson Foods, Liberty Mutual, Kohl's, Alberto Culver, Leapfrog and Lowe's after the *AFA's* One Million Dads campaign targeted the show's sponsors. "Life as We Know It" got the same *AFA* treatment -- and lost ads from McCormick, Lenscrafters, Radio Shack, Papa John's International, Chattem and Sharpie.

And it's not just programs on the broadcast networks and their local affiliates that are feeling the heat from the Christian right. When the *AFA* targeted Comedy Central's "South Park," the popular cartoon satire saw ads on the show pulled by Foot Locker, Geico, Finish Line and Best Buy.

Nissan, Goodyear and Castrol stopped running ads on "The Shield" ...*continued on page 4*

# Religious Right Boycotts

In June, Doug Ireland wrote a compelling article in the *LA Weekly* titled "The New Blacklist" (see below) describing how, "the Christian right has launched a series of boycotts and pressure campaigns aimed at corporate America." These increasingly effective boycotts target corporations that organizers feel are "pro-gay" as a result of their sponsorship of various entertainment programs. As a result of boycotts sponsored by the *American Family Association (AFA)*, Procter & Gamble recently withdrew its advertising from "Will & Grace" and "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy."

Kraft Foods is now the target of a letter-writing campaign attacking its corporate sponsorship of the *2006 Gay Games* in Chicago.

The *AFA* also recently called for a boycott of Nike for its public support of civil unions in the state of Oregon.

And in July, *Focus on the Family* published an online article criticizing a Johnson & Johnson for an ad scheduled to appear in an upcoming issue of *The Advocate*. According to both *Focus* (and the *AFA*), advertising to the GLBT community helps "normalize" homosexuality. *Focus'* readers have been encouraged to contact Johnson & Johnson and let them know what they think.

Here's an opportunity to take action:

PLEASE CONTACT Kraft, Nike,

and Johnson & Johnson.

THANK THEM for their support of the GLBT community.

Tell them how much you appreciate that they've TAKEN A STAND in support of inclusivity, freedom, opportunity, and fairness for sexual and gender minorities.

Johnson & Johnson / Tylenol: <http://www.tylenol.com/vcrc/email/tyemailform.jhtml?id=email>

N i k e : <http://swoosh.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/swoosh.cfg/php/enduser/ask.php>

K r a f t : [http://www.kraftfoods.com/main.aspx?m=contact\\_us/cu\\_form1](http://www.kraftfoods.com/main.aspx?m=contact_us/cu_form1)

Sincerely, Christopher Hubble  
Local Group Leader, Soulforce  
D e n v e r  
SoulforceDenver@yahoo.com 303-641-0824

*"Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**July 12, 2005**

Johnson & Johnson Ad Appears in *Gay Magazine* by Josh Montez, correspondent Ad for Tylenol PM features two men in bed.

Johnson & Johnson will be advertising its brand, Tylenol PM, in the July 19 issue of *The Advocate*, a leading gay magazine. The ad shows two shirtless men in bed side by side. The text over one reads: "His backache is keeping him up." Over the other: "His

boyfriend's backache is keeping him up."

Johnson & Johnson has been advertising in gay media since 1996. Robert Knight, director of the *Culture and Family Institute*, said people need to take notice.

"A lot of corporate America has bought into the idea that they can secretly promote homosexuality without their consumers noticing out there," he said.

Mike Haley, director of the gender issues department at *Focus on the Family*, said the gay and lesbian community has a lot of expendable income, so they are targeting big corporations who are caving to their pressure.

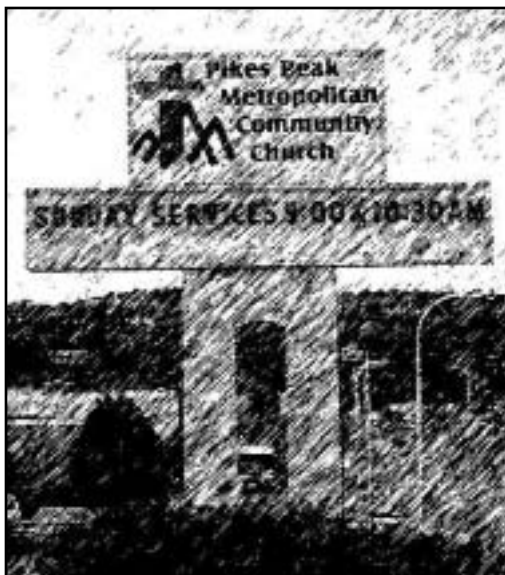
"I think it's a critical issue," he said, "because it's one more way that the issue of homosexuality is being normalized and sent out as though it's not harmful-as though it's not against what God originally intended."

## TAKE ACTION

If you'd like to let Johnson & J o h n s o n <http://www.tylenol.com/vcrc/email/tyemailform.jhtml?id=email> know what you think, send a comment to the company.

## Nike's "Homosexual Agenda"

Conservative Christian political action group *American Family Association* have called for their members to boycott Nike after it publicly ...continued on page 3



# Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church Monthly Newsletter

Rev. Elder Nori Rost, Senior Pastor  
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September 2005



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## pastor's ponderings

*Rev. Elder Nori Rost*

September 11, 2005

Dear Members and Friends of  
Pikes Peak MCC,

I am writing to inform you of a decision I have made regarding my ministry. After months of prayer, discernment and seeking advice and input from mentors and colleagues, I have decided to resign as pastor of Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church in order to devote more time to the social justice ministry to which God is calling me.

I plan on starting up a non-profit organization called Just Spirit headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO that will provide training for progressive political leaders on how to take back spiritual language in the public arena and to train spiritual leaders on how to do social justice actions in their own communities.

Too often we have abdicated "religious" language to the

religious right to the detriment of millions of marginalized people in our nation. Additionally, many times, spiritual and religious leaders have often lacked the tools to be prophetic voices of social justice in their faith communities. By providing training for these two groups I hope that not only will the light of justice dispel the shadows of oppression but that also these two groups-politicians and spiritual communities might join hands and voices in a unity of purpose and action that will strengthen both groups and their constituencies.

My last Sunday as pastor of Pikes Peak MCC will be January 8, 2006 - my 12th anniversary. Our Regional Elder, Rev. Lillie Brock and the Director of Leadership Development for the denomination, Rev. Jim Mitulski have already begun working with the Board of Directors on next steps, including interim leadership, and creating a Pastoral Search Committee. Additionally, Rev. Elder Brock will be preaching on

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## From the Editor...

I love this time of year. The cooler days and evenings and the changing colors on the trees. It is a season of change of transition and we all go through them.

Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church is getting ready for a season of change as well, with the leaving of our pastor, the Rev. Elder Nori Rost. God has called her out of congregational work into a whole new ministry. It's my prayer that her ministry will be a transforming one, and one that will help to transform the lives of the LGBT community and its allies.

My prayers are for our church and for Rev. Nori as well as we step into our own transition . . . season of change.  
~Frank