

Church Takes on Broward County's Human Rights Ordinance

By Michael James

On Monday, March 26th, the "Equal Rights - Not Special Rights" political action committee formed by Coral Ridge Ministries in February announced that they had launched their petition drive to repeal Broward County's Human Rights Ordinance. The petition is being promoted under the guise of restoring funding to the Boy Scouts in Broward County.

The church petition drive came after the cities of Fort Lauderdale and Wilton Manors decided to cease funding of local Boy Scout troops, due to the Scouts' discriminatory policy towards homosexuals. The local troops have already lost more than \$90,000 in city aid. The troops were also informed by Broward County that they no would longer be able to utilize any county building.

When the church formed their PAC in early February, gay leaders quickly formed a PAC of their own called "Americans For Equality - Empower Broward," who held a town meeting at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center (GLCC) on Wednesday, March 28th.

Although it was decided by those in attendance that some type of campaign must be launched in an effort to preserve the law, there was some disagreement as to exactly what it should be called. Up until that point it has been their plan to initiate a "Decline to Sign" campaign, modeled after the campaign in Miami/Dade of the same name.

Terry DeCarlo, Vice Chair and Communications Director of Americans For Equality stated, "Equal Rights - Not Special Rights" is using the Boy Scouts as a smokescreen for their real issue, which is to have the words 'sexual orientation' removed from the Broward County Human Rights Ordinance."

Karen Wolman set the mood of the meeting by stating, "The first shot was fired by the other side." She went on to say that Americans for Equality have "officially started our Decline to Sign campaign."

Local attorney and Vice-Chair of Americans for Equality, Robin Bodiford said, "They're putting into people's faces



Robin Bodiford

that if they sign the petition they'll be giving funding back to the Boy Scouts. However, The petition says nothing at all about the Scouts."

Lorna Bryan, the spokesperson for the church's PAC said, "We cannot sit idly by and let the Scouts and the at-risk children they help be punished for holding firm to values that the majority of county residents share."

If the church's petition is successful a referendum can be placed on the ballot of the next election to alter the wording of the Ordinance. Karen Wolman said, "If this actually goes onto the ballot there is going to be a really bloody war in terms of money, time and energy."

In order for the petition to be successful the church will be required to collect 62,400 signatures within the next six months.

Americans for Equality expressed their belief that the best way to prevent the petition

from becoming successful was by raising awareness and educating all of the community about the issue. Wolman said, "Tell your friends, your family and your co-workers about this."

The Church's Lorna Bryan said, "We believe in equal rights for everyone, including the Boy Scouts. They should not be discriminated against or be denied equal access for

The church's PAC conducted an what they called an "independent survey" through Cherry Communications, the results of which have been posted on their website at www.DefendOurScouts.org. There were 303 surveys completed in mid-December of last year that make it appear that most residents side with the church. However, the wording of the survey never mentioned the Human Rights Ordinance.

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exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and association."

In regards to the mainstream media covering the situation, she stated that the community should be aware of the fact that "CNN gave a lot of money to the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church during the last election."

Even though the church is promoting their agenda utilizing the name of the Boy Scouts, Mark LaFontaine, of Scouting for All stated that he has been communicating with Jeffrey Burman, Scout Executive for the South Florida Council of the Boys Scouts of America and the he stated in a letter that the Scouts do "not endorse what they are doing and that they do not represent scouting." LaFontaine went on to point out that, in the past, Burman did accept an award from the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church.

In an effort to raise the funds necessary to prevent the repeal of the Ordinance, Americans for Equality has planned a fundraiser at Georgie's Alibi on the Saturday, April 14th.

Question number twelve in the survey stated, "The Broward County School Board recently voted to deny the Boy Scouts access to schools for meetings and activities. Do you support or oppose the decision of the School Board to deny the Scouts school access?" Nearly 68% opposed the decision, over 24% supported the decision and 8% were undecided.

Cherry Communications Company was established in 1990 to promote Republican principles by providing voter contact and fundraising services to the Republican community. Since then, Cherry Communications has served the direct contact needs of hundreds of Republican candidates, party organizations, and conservative groups throughout the country.

"We are outraged that at a time when children are killing children, as we just saw in the San Diego area, we in Broward County have attacked the very programs that could help prevent this kind of violence," said Lorna Bryan, Equal Rights Not Special Rights spokesperson.

New Development Promises Luxurious Gay Living



Proposed rendering of Club Regent Fort Lauderdale Beach

By Robin Richards

Fort Lauderdale will soon be home to Club Regent Fort Lauderdale Beach, an exclusive members only residence. Club Regent hopes to be Broward County's first example of pure luxurious living.

Residents will get use of a private yacht, limousine, and a membership to a Ft. Lauderdale golf and country club. Club Regent will also add in a concierge and bell staff. Club Regent will also have a spectacular view of the Atlantic Ocean.

Fort Lauderdale has a reputation for having a large stake in the active second residence market. Club Regent brings with it a new concept in resident sharing, called

fractional ownership. Under fractional ownership, members receive a deed to the property and share the cost among other club residents, thereby reducing the purchase price from over \$1 million to a pre-construction price starting at \$200,000.

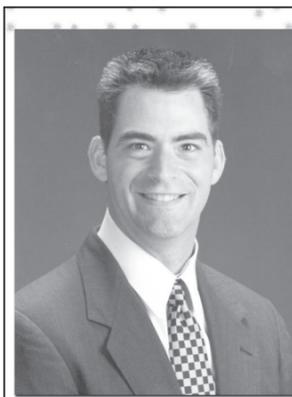
Club Regent tapped the creativity of interior designer Steven G. for this \$60 million oceanfront project. Steven G. plans to bring the opulence of style and combine it with absolute comfort, capitalizing on the Fort Lauderdale coast as a backdrop.

In the past year Fort Lauderdale has received the distinction of becoming the #1 gay destination in the United States, topping the likes of San Francisco and New York City.

Whether people come here for the beaches or the never-ending nightlife, Ft. Lauderdale has embraced the gay and lesbian community with open arms

"Of the variety of planned beach front property, Club Regent makes the most sense in terms of a practical and affordable way to own a five-star vacation residence on the ocean" said William Govel, President of MJQ development.

Construction slated for summer of 2001 and gay and lesbian real estate brokers are welcome to visit the newly open sales center and model. For information contact Jennifer Bailey at Jbailey@Clubregentfl.com or by calling 954.463.1008.



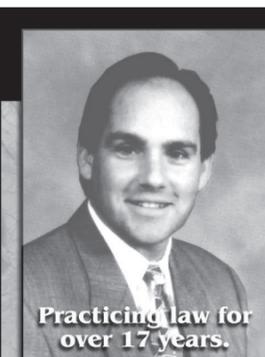
The sales force team of Steve Schwartz

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