

Christian Coalition of Washington

April 2008

Beware gay-zillionaires

Pastor-Advisory Board

Rev. Earl Bradley
Christian Life Church, Lacey

Rev. Randy Burtis
Luis Palau Crusades

Rev. Jon Hagebusch
Word of Life, Lynden

Dr. Stephen Hammond
Cornerstone Bible Church,
Enumclaw

Rev. Ted Hanson
Abundant Life Fellowship,
Bellingham

Dr. Jim Modish
Faith Baptist, Chehalis

Rev. Scott Montagne
Bayside Community Church,
Kingston

Rev. Rex Niblack
Rainier Chapel, Rainier

Rev. Jon Oletske
Stone Church, Yakima

Rev. Ken Parsley
Church on the Move, Yakima

Rev. Jim Ripley
Neighborhood Christian Center, Tumwater

Rev. Reuben Sapien
The Sanctuary Church, Lynnwood

Rev. Dan Secrist
Faith Assembly of Lacey

Dr. Ken Squires
Marysville First Assembly

Rev. Dwain Wolfe
New Horizons Christian Center, Fife

Board of Directors

Rick Forcier
Executive Director, Olympia

Paul Middleton
Chairman, Olympia

Dennis DeFries
Secretary, Olympia

Jim Winterstein
Treasurer, Olympia

Scott Blanton
Vancouver

Dorsey Holt
Tacoma

Jere Irwin
Yakima

Peggy Kirk
Ocean Shores

Dick Raport
Camano Island

Jim Robinson
Spokane

Fred Weiss
Bellevue

Staff

Rick Forcier
Executive Director

Kathryn De Fries
Administrative Assistant

Beth Davis
Accounting

Julie Gallagher
Prayer Coordinator

Rusty Howell
Field Director

I'm thrilled to join the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce team and ready to get to work.

--Richard Ellis, VP, Communications, McDonald's (Hamburgers) USA

Dear Friends:

The *Seattle SuperSonics* emptied their lockers last week—an iconic gesture perhaps signaling the end of 41 years of basketball tradition in the Pacific Northwest. The controversy surrounding the team's inglorious departure from the Emerald City seems to have been centered on the irrepressible will, temperament and determination of one individual. One for whom millions of dollars is but chump change.

Clay Bennett is a wealthy Oklahoma City businessman who is about to deconstruct a portion of the major league sports landscape in Seattle. Bennett, derisively dubbed "The Big Uneasy," purchased the Sonics franchise in July 2006, but denied at the time, any plans to move the struggling basketball team to another venue. Recently, however, emails have surfaced suggesting that from the outset, Bennett "was like a man possessed" in his determination to bring the "SoonerSonics," to his hometown boys.

Bennett is pitted against a large city mayor, a governor, two U.S. Senators, the media, numerous business and trade associations, and tens-of-thousands of frenzied sports fans. But the outcome is uncertain at best, if he who owns the gold makes the rules.

Another outsider with potentially enough financial clout to change the local landscape is Tim Gill, a Colorado-based billionaire who has committed an enormous amount of cash to defeat legislators who openly resist the gay agenda. He calls his political opponents "the forces of darkness," and has said he is determined to use his money to "punish the wicked."

Gill, himself homosexual, was described in the *Atlantic Monthly* some time ago as "the country's biggest gay donor...and the nexus of an aggressive new force in national politics."¹ In 2006, he gave some \$15 million to influence state politics—determined to take out rising political stars known for their "anti-gay" policies lest they come to national prominence. No more Rick Santorums or Marilyn Musgraves.

Gill, who made his fortune creating *Quark*, and then selling the software giant, has formed a powerful coalition of extremely wealthy gay businessmen who share his vision for America.

Beginning locally in Colorado in 2004, Gill secretly trained his sights on three conservative incumbents whom he considered to be "anti-gay." Two were defeated. He also invested in open races, gaining enough seats in the heavily Republican state to turn both chambers of the legislature over to the Democrats for the first time since the 1960s.

Among Gill's 70 key targets in the 2006 mid-term elections, were gubernatorial, judicial, and legislative candidates in 13 states. Only 20 were left standing in November. In four of the thirteen states, Iowa, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Washington, enough incumbents were defeated to switch control of at least one legislative chamber to Democrats.

High on Tim Gill's hit list was Iowa State Rep. Danny Carroll, the conservative Republican speaker pro tempore who sponsored a bill that placed an initiative banning same-sex marriage on the ballot. Following his unanticipated Election Day defeat, Carroll had no idea what went wrong. He was especially skeptical of reports that outside money led to his political demise. But after viewing a list of his opponent's contributors, he was shocked to see so many \$1,000 donations coming from outside his legislative district and even outside his state—places like New York, Miami, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and where else but the *City-by-the-Bay*?

That Danny Carroll hadn't known who or what hit him, pleases Tim Gill. It is the stealth component of the overarching strategy that he aims for. "Revealing targets only after an election," reports the *Atlantic Monthly*, "makes it impossible for them to fight back and sends a message to other politicians that attacking gays could put them in the crosshairs."²

Those crosshairs are political advocacy groups, a/k/a federal 527s. According to Kerry Eleveld, writing for Salon.com, of the top 20 donors to 527s, five were either partially or entirely motivated by a desire to defeat "anti-gay" legislation or legislators. She says that the object lesson in recent targeted giving could fundamentally change the way politicians think about the consequences of taking anti-gay stances.

Indeed, it could.

For decades, legislators in Washington, Oregon, California, Massachusetts and Vermont, have endured withering attacks from radical homosexual groups now formidable in virtually every state with the possible exception of Utah. But only recently have conservative Republicans begun to suspect that taking a stand against the radical homosexual agenda can hasten early retirement from politics. Former State Senator Brad Benson (R-Spokane), a soft-spoken but articulate defender of moral principles is possibly only one of several recent casualties. In 2006, Benson served as the clean-up batter during the Senate debate and final vote on ESHB 2661, the landmark "gay civil rights bill." It is arguably the state's most controversial bill ever.

But whether Sen. Benson was or was not a target of Tim Gill and company, the fact remains that only three of the six senators selected to speak against 2661 are currently in office. All three, Senators Dan Swecker (R-Rochester), Val Stevens (R-Arlington) and Joe Zarelli (R-Ridgefield) are now considered to be on the endangered incumbents list—facing perhaps their toughest election races to date.

Also high on the watch list are Senators Don Benton (R-Vancouver), Mike Carrell (R-Lakewood), Bob McCaslin (R-Spokane Valley), and Cheryl Pflug (R-Maple Valley), all staunch defenders of traditional moral values, including traditional marriage.

For an out-of-state millionaire to skip town with his millionaire hoopsters, though irritating and unfair, is but a blow to civic pride. For an out-of-state billionaire to deceive and supplant the will of local voters is akin to grand theft of our entire elections process. It must not go unchecked.

Can one extravagantly rich man possibly wield such power and influence you ask? He sure can. But we have a much better opportunity to do something about it now that we are watching him watch us. Besides, where does it say we're supposed to cower before uncircumcised Philistines?

Sincerely,

Rick Forcier
Executive Director

¹ Ed Vitagliano, [Gay power play](#), *American Family Association Journal*, May 2007, www.afa.net

² Joshua Green, [They won't know what hit them](#), *Atlantic Monthly*, March 2007