

Fight over award to gay Republican (6:45 p.m., May 24)

Contributed by Jo Mannies in St. Louis

Pride St. Louis, the group that sponsors the region's annual parade supporting gays, has sparked controversy with its decision to award a scholarship to the president of the Greater St. Louis Log Cabin Republicans, a gay political group.

Pride's board met Monday to reaffirm its selection of Charles Stadtlander after questions were raised by Jeff Balk, publisher of EXP magazine and a major sponsor of Pride St. Louis and the parade.

Balk said he objects to Pride's written explanation that it was honoring Stadtlander, in part, because of his political work last fall to help elect President George W. Bush and Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt. Both officials "are clearly anti-gay," Balk said in an interview Tuesday.

Balk emphasized that he wasn't seeking to overturn Pride's choice of Stadtlander for the John Van Voris scholarship, a \$1,000 award. But the award might affect his magazine's support of the group in the future, Balk added.

Stadtlander said that the flap underscores his contention that his chief critics are fellow gays who object to his political views, and his work to energize the local Log Cabin group.