

## **LOCAL GROUPS TO CELEBRATE COMING OUT DAY -- GAY POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS SHUN EVENT**

by Nancy Larson

Differences among several gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) groups are emerging from the closet as Show Me Equality (SME) plans its Oct. 11 Coming Out Day event.

SME is holding a celebration in Tower Grove Park that includes a candlelight coming out ceremony and a speech by Julie Brueggeman, executive director of the state's GLBT equality group, PROMO. SME's Coming Out Day slogan is "RU12?," a question that asks GLBT persons and allies to stand up and be counted.

The Log Cabin Republicans (LCR) and the Gateway Stonewall Democrats (GSD) turned down a request to co-sponsor SME's event. SME co-founder Barbara Woodruff said GSD Communications Director A.J. Pupillo told her group that they declined because the MO/KS Communist Party is a co-sponsor. Pupillo did not return our phone calls or e-mails, and neither GSD President Gail Elbel nor Vice-President Perry Nelson would confirm or deny that statement.

"I don't have anything to say about that," Elbel said. "As a new organization, we need to sit down and talk about who we are. We are a political party and we have to think, 'does this advance Democratic causes?'"

Both Elbel and Nelson did say the decision had nothing to do with the fact that SME declined to be part of a GSD proclamation against "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." As an anti-war group, Woodruff said SME could not support the proclamation that was recently presented to the St. Louis Board of Aldermen.

LCR President Charles Stadtlander did not mince words about the Communist party's involvement: "There is no way LCR will be part of an event co-sponsored by the Communist party," he emphasized. Stadtlander also said SME's focus on broad equality, not just GLBT issues, was a factor, adding, "They do a great job of getting the message out about equal rights."

"This isn't about politics, this is about celebrating our community," Woodruff said.

**Show Me Equality's Tues., Oct. 11  
Coming Out Day Event**

**6 p.m.**  
Tower Grove Park  
at Arsenal and Grand

Candlelight coming out celebration