

# The Courier-Journal

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1992 • 35 CENTS

A GANNETT NEWSPAPER

COPYRIGHT © 1992, THE COURIER-JOURNAL, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

★

54 PAGES

METRO EDITION

## 'GAY-FRIENDLY' INN

# Men cite damage, threats to lives

By CYNTHIA CROSSLEY, Staff Writer

RUSSELLVILLE, Ky. — J. Hughes "Jim" Turner and Jimmy Cates say they have contemplated for some time turning their home, in a quiet plot of woods a mile north of Russellville, into an inn.

But when they began disclosing two weeks ago in a brochure that their planned hilltop retreat would be "gay-friendly" and offer "clothing-optional" sunbathing, they touched off a storm of controversy in conservative Russellville.

Turner and Cates say that anonymous callers have threatened them with death and with property damage, and that someone has spray-painted obscenities on their driveway and on some of their property signs. All over Russellville, Turner said, people "gave their opinion of what this property is ... and completely misrepresented our intentions." Now, he said, "We are afraid for our lives."

While Turner and Cates have complained that the community has overreacted, some people in Russellville — including Logan County Sheriff Dannie Blick, several ministers and some of the men's neighbors — say the men have fueled some of the fire against them by seeking publicity, a claim Turner denies.

"A lot of this is being blown way out of proportion," Blick

See INN  
Page 6, col. 1, this section

# INN

Continued from Page One

said recently, as he listed a number of television stations that had contacted him about the issue. "We've had more calls (for help) in domestic situations" than they've had from Turner and Cates reporting trouble.

Ronnie Crafton, who lives in a subdivision at the foot of the hill where the men live, said he thought they just wanted "free advertisement for their gay resort. . . . They've been up there for three years, and they've never been threatened before."

However, Blick acknowledged that the kind of threats the men say they are receiving can be "very scary and very upsetting," and he said he has told dispatchers to notify him as well as the on-duty deputies of any problems they report.

Sgt. Tommy Loving of the Kentucky State Police post in Bowling Green said troopers assigned to Logan County also are aware of the threats and have on occasion made extra patrols around the men's neighborhood.

Logan County Judge-Executive John Guion III said some of the people who have called him about the proposed resort spoke vaguely of harming the couple. He said he sometimes had to "plead with them to obey the law."

To try to calm things down, pastors in the Logan County Ministerial Association have started decrying the vandalism and threats in sermons, on radio talk shows and in prayer meetings.

"We want the community to be level-headed, to act with dignity and respect, no matter what you may feel about the issue," said Don Zuberer, pastor of First Baptist Church, one of Russellville's largest. "And we pray for the men involved — that they will not get hurt."

The ministerial association is also urging people to begin working to seek the re-establishment of Kentucky's sodomy law, which the state Supreme Court struck down three weeks ago. The group planned to start circulating a petition in Russellville today that calls for a state constitutional amendment, said the Rev. Joe Carrico, pastor of Post Oak Baptist Church.

The men's problems began within a week of the decision — after Turner said he showed a copy of the resort's brochure to some local business owners to ask if they would have any problems doing business with guests from the retreat. But Turner said he and Cates were not aware of the high court's decision at that time. "We've never been politically minded, and until all this happened, we weren't watching television. I don't even take a local paper."

Someone made copies of the business brochure and stuck them un-

der windshield wipers all around town. The person added inserts to the brochures that warned of homosexual orgies and classes in sodomy in the public schools if the inn opened, Turner said. He said a local youth minister was responsible.

The youth minister, Steve Tyree, of Russellville's Crittenden Drive Church of Christ, wouldn't talk about whether he had distributed the brochures. He said only that homosexual behavior was "scripturally immoral . . . a degradation to our community. . . . The Bible has condemned it . . . (and) this is our comment" before hanging up.

The threats began after the doctored brochures were distributed, Turner said. Frightened, the men built a security fence, hired 24-hour security guards, arranged to have their calls traced and alerted various organizations, including The Courier-Journal and other news media, the state attorney general's office and some civil-rights groups.

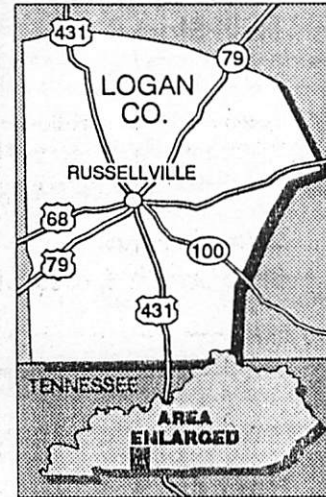
Security guard Bryan Thomas Logsdon said last Saturday was one of the worst nights yet. At 11 p.m., he said, he discovered that someone had spray-painted anti-gay graffiti on the driveway and hung "little bags with nooses all around, with 'fag' written on them."

At 12:30 a.m., Logsdon said, a red car came through the barricade the couple have placed at the entrance to their property and "sped up the driveway and made a circle around the flower bed. When I told them to stop and shone my light in the car, the driver gunned it and missed me by a couple of feet."



PHOTO BY CHRIS MCKENNEY / STAFF MAP BY WES KENDALL

J. Hughes "Jim" Turner, left, and Jimmy Cates sat in the living room of their home in a wooded area north of Russellville. They plan to open the house as a "gay-friendly" inn.



Logsdon reported the incident to the sheriff's office and four people were arrested. Logsdon filed first-degree wanton endangerment and second-degree criminal trespassing charges against the driver, Brian L. Harris of Russellville, and charges of complicity and criminal trespassing against the three passengers. All are teen-agers, Blick said.

Tuesday night, Turner and Logsdon said, a caller said the security guards would be no match for "60 people with deer rifles and hand grenades."

Thursday night, Turner and Cates told their troubles to about 35 peo-

ple at a gathering in Lexington organized by the American Civil Liberties Union, and they also appeared on a Lexington television station's current issues program. Turner said gay-rights groups have offered the men legal advice and moral support to keep fighting to open their inn, which they plan to do Friday.

But they may face a long haul. Guion said he is getting calls from people asking that Logan Fiscal Court consider passing planning and zoning regulations. And County Attorney Tom Noe, who, like Guion, has received dozens of complaints

about the proposed inn, said he is still researching the issue. Because the Supreme Court decriminalized sodomy, Noe said they lost the ability to declare the inn a nuisance and close it. He suspects there is little else the county can do to stop the resort from opening, other than to question whether Turner's oft-stated plans to keep the resort exclusively male amounts to sexual discrimination.

"If there is nothing we can do to keep it from opening," Noe said, "we will do everything we legally can to regulate it and protect the community."