

From The Note at ABC News:

On Sunday, the Washington Post's Marc Fisher profiled Maya Keyes, the daughter of former Senate and presidential candidate Alan Keyes, writing that she will make her debut as a gay political activist today, as we Noted above. She told Fisher she plans to talk about what it was like to grow up gay in a very conservative household, and that her parents have kicked her out of the house, cut off her college funding, let her go from a job with her father's political organization, and have stopped speaking to her.

The race is on to succeed Sen. Mark Dayton, (D-Minn.), and the Republicans already have their first contestant announced, US Rep. Mark Kennedy.

<http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/10881270.htm>

Of course folks are already lining up to take Kennedy's soon to be empty seat:

<http://www.startribune.com/stories/587/5236127.html>

Here is what my friend Dick from Stillwater, Minnesota had to say about Dayton's decision not to run again:

Yeah I was bummed to see him announce that, of course much to the delight of the Republicans here. I'm surprised after he worked so hard and spent so much money to get there that he decided to bow out so quickly. Not sure what the real reasons are for his withdrawal... there are PLENTY of candidates lined up already slobbering at the mouth for the seat - Rod Grams (ick) already announced. I like Al Franken but I am not sure he's electable. Same with Bill Luther, my old REP from Stillwater. Alan Page would be an intriguing choice of he decided to run. Its winnable but it will be another close race no matter who runs. Minn is really struggling right now with its traditional identity as a progressive state (bummer)... Here's hoping that our old progressive neighbor to the west will find its soul and stay blue.

Fueling further rumors about his intentions, Russ Feingold is holding a fund raiser for Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash) coming up soon. Meanwhile the press stays interested in what he's up to:

http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/news/archive/local_19773935.shtml

Seeing as how the conservatives have decided that current Gov. Pawlenty (R-Minn.) just might be their man for 2008,

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/story?id=484788&page=1>

maybe we could be facing an Upper Midwest face-off a couple years from now. That is, if Russ did well on his recent golf outing...

<http://www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2004/12/21/alabama/index.html>

But that's just me...

Also, the most recent Scientific American had an article about the most recent US Census and the somewhat counter intuitive findings that shows that the highest concentrations of gay couples is in rural areas, and the lightest are in the upper Midwest.

http://www.sciamdigital.com/browse.cfm?ITEMIDCHAR=F9334FD1-2B35-221B-617C9516F54759A4&methodnameCHAR=&interfacenameCHAR=browse.cfm&ISSUEID_CHAR=F9214CAB-2B35-221B-641728E52ACE63F4&ArticleTypeSubInclude_BIT=0&sequenceNameCHAR=itemP

I wonder how this contrasts/compares with the story from yesterday's NY Times about the distribution of suicides, which heavily favors red states?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/13/health/13rural.html>

I am glad to see that Dr./Gov. Dean is settling in to his new digs at the DNC. I think that all of the hand wringing over this by the "New Democrat" wing of the party (Al From et al) is really just a little too much. I like this tongue-in-cheek comment from The Note:
Rumors that all the doors were going to be removed and replaced with beaded curtains have proved false — possibly because the shag carpet installation is taking longer than expected.

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Maybe its time for Democrats to start to throw some red meat around in answer to the congressional Republicans. I am a little tired of hearing the right wing radicals accuse the Democrats of "hating America." I want to hear the Dems ask why the Republicans hate Americans? The newest budget outlined by the White House is so pro-business and anti-people that this seems like an easy tack to me. Let's define them, and frame the debate, before they do.

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Speaking of framing debates, I would love to see Milwaukee progressives run ads in out-state media markets encouraging people to support Scott Walker in his bid for the Republican nod for Governor. I envision an ad like this: A mother and daughter are in a kitchen, they address the camera, "Scott Walker has been nothing but trouble for the people of Milwaukee County, proposing to privatize our parks, cutting important programs, giving sweetheart deals to his fund-raising buddies. He even wanted to borrow a hundred million dollars to gamble with to pay for pensions. Please vote for Scott Walker for Governor, Milwaukee County just can't afford him any more."
Just an idea...