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MEDIA CELEBS THROW DOWN IN FIERCE CROQUET FACE-OFF

**“MAD HATTER’S TEA PARTY” SEPT 9th
TO BENEFIT NATIONAL AIDS MEMORIAL GROVE**

SAN FRANCISCO, AUGUST 15, 2006 -- What better way to celebrate the slightly crazed and fiercely dedicated supporters of the National AIDS Memorial Grove than by throwing a Mad Hatter’s Tea Party in the forest? The 15th anniversary event, which will take place on Saturday, September 9 from 1PM to 4PM in the Grove (directions at <http://www.aidsmemorial.org>), honors the volunteers who have given their time and money to support the Grove, and will also raise funds for the Grove’s operations and endowment. Over 200 guests are expected. Tickets are \$125 each (benefiting the Grove, a 501(c)3 charitable organization) and are available now at 415-750-8340.

The central feature of this slightly surreal Tea Party is a fiercely competitive game of “The Red Queen’s Croquet” which will pit local media celebrities against each other. Personalities already known to be polishing their mallets include columnist Leah Garchik of the San Francisco Chronicle,

Jan Wahl from KRON-TV and KCBS-Radio, Cammie Blackstone from KFRC radio, Stan Bunger and Kim Wonderley from KCBS, Tim Gaskin from Outspoken TV, and Eric Jansen of Public Radio International KALW's "Out in the Bay". Tea Party guests and celebrities alike can be counted on to display a truly unlikely array of hats and headwear, so bring your camera. A photo booth with fabulous Lewis Sykes hats will be available for chapeau posing. In keeping with the theme, further unusual entertainment will be provided by the Acrosports City Circus Troupe and the multifaceted *Exeter Quartet*. The party will feature sweet and savory delights, as well as champagne and cocktails for the refreshment of the athletes and audience.

"We have survived 25 years of losing friends, family members and lovers to AIDS. And the Grove has been there for the past 15, serving both to commemorate those we have lost as well as to honor the survivors. For me it has truly been a place of healing." Said Ken Ruebush, Event Co-Chair and former Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of the National AIDS Memorial Grove. "But the Grove is more than just a place for reflection. It's a place for celebration, too. That's what will make The Mad Hatter's Tea Party one of San Francisco's most beloved traditions."

Volunteer support, particularly at the monthly "Workdays in the Grove", has been essential to the Grove's continued maintenance and success as a national memorial over the past fifteen years. Without these countless hours of volunteer work, the Grove would never have been transformed from a weedy, neglected plot in Golden Gate Park to the inspiring tribute it is today to those battling HIV.

Lauded San Francisco philanthropist and Grove Board of Directors member Ayse Kenmore adds, "Please come to our Tea Party on September 9th! Your continued support will ensure that the

National AIDS Memorial will remain a reminder to the world of the lessons learned, battles fought, and the distance we have yet to go to cure the disease that's still killing millions around the world.”

The National AIDS Memorial is a seven-acre dell of redwoods in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California, a living tribute to all whose lives have been touched by AIDS, where people gather to heal, hope and remember. Passage by Congress in 1996 of the National AIDS Memorial Grove Act bestowed international recognition and significance upon the memorial, which began as a grassroots effort by local residents searching for a positive way to express grief in a community devastated by AIDS. Today, “The Grove” is still the only federally-designated AIDS Memorial in the United States of America.

To buy tickets, volunteer, or request press passes for the event, please contact Wendi Deetz at (415) 750-8340 or email her at wdeetz@aidsmemorial.org.

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