

# NEWS

## Education campaign success spreads

by Jay Brown

"People helping instead of hating" reads the first in a series of newspaper ads devised by the Alexandria (VA) Gay Community Association and placed in Alexandria's most widely read weekly newspaper, *The Port Packet*. The ad campaign will run for thirteen weeks and has been paid for by contributions from residents in this Northern Virginia suburb of Washington, D.C.

The series of ads resulted from Association members meeting with "a lot of straight leaders like clergy to solicit their support for a proposed anti-discrimination ordinance and realizing their woeful lack of understanding about homosexuality," says Association president Jay Clark. The ads which have appeared have drawn no "hate mail" but have solicited enough money to pay for all the ads before the halfway mark was reached.

Several of the ads were challenged by the publisher of the newspaper; one ad asked the question, "Would Walt Whitman be allowed to teach English in Alexandria?" Clark explained that Whitman is a local hero; "Whitman was a big name here because he lived here for a while and many schools, bridges, etc. are named for him."

"Some research at Lambda Rising enabled me to convince him. I was surprised that the traditional easy research sources, *Encyclopedia Britannica* for example, are

**Are You Abusing Your Child Without Knowing It?**

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**People Helping Instead of Hating**  
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less than forthright. It is no wonder that straight people are often flabbergasted at the suggestion that anybody of substance could have been gay."

Clark says he would like to do another series of ads on homosexuals in history because such information is ignored by the education establishment.

Another of the ads which gave the newspaper publisher pause played to the advantage of Association forces. "The publisher also had some problems with offending readers with the ad addressing emotional child abuse," Clark said; "But after talking to us he'd decided to publish an essay to amp-

lify our view."

Clark's essay, *Homosexuality and Child Abuse*, excerpts of which follow, was published in the *Port Packet* in mid-October.

Parents cannot prevent homosexuality in their children by talking it down or conveying negative attitudes toward Gay people. Those who attempt to do so may be unwittingly emotionally abusing their children.

According to experts on child development, emotional child abuse consists of the systematic destruction of a child's self-esteem. The pain from physical abuse may last only a relatively short time, but the psychological damage from emotional abuse can last a lifetime.

Most parents would never knowingly emotionally abuse or humiliate their child

because of some aspect of the child's makeup — being left-handed or curly haired for example — that is beyond the control of the child. Yet, teaching a Gay child to hate Gay people or that Gay people are not entitled to the same respect as other minorities can be just as damaging to the child's self-esteem.

Clark says that the Association has received inquiries about the ad campaign from all over the country. He says the Association is more than happy to share the ads with all comers.

In fact, some Portlanders are so taken with the ads that a similar effort is already in the works. Helen Lottridge, Executive Director of Phoenix Rising, will be handling the local effort; she asked that contributions and/or questions be directed to her at 223-8299.

## State prepares policy on AIDS testing

by W.C. McRae

Within the next few months, the Oregon Insurance Commissioner, Josephine Driscoll, will announce the state's position regarding blood testing for AIDS antibodies by the insurance industry. Currently, two different groups are preparing recommendations on which Driscoll will base her decision. One group, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, is drafting model regulations on AIDS testing.

A second group, the State HTLV-3/AIDS Policy Committee, is a task force that provides input into state policy decisions regarding AIDS. The committee, chaired by State Health Director Kristine Gebbie, contains county and state health officials, members of CAP, church leaders, and legal activists.

Gebbie says the committee "reviews change in law or policies to make sure the state makes the right decision." Although the

committee studies all aspects of AIDS and AIDS policy, Gebbie stressed that the committee is presently addressing the insurance question in anticipation of an appeal to the insurance commissioner.

The panel will almost certainly recommend restricting the insurance industry's ability to require AIDS antibody tests as a condition of insurability of an individual, claimed committee member Cascade AIDS Director, Tom Koberstein.

Gebbie expects Driscoll will announce a policy "fairly close to California's."

California, the District of Columbia, Wisconsin, and Washington have barred insurance companies from using the test for the AIDS antibody to screen applicants for health and life insurance policies. At the urging of gay activists, Governor Mario Cuomo has introduced such legislation in the New York Assembly.

A recent survey indicates that the cost of AIDS-related medical claims to insurance carriers is significantly lower than the government had initially warned. The American Council of Life Insurance and the Health Insurance Association of America have released information that indicate that medical expenses average \$36,159 per patient. The Center for Disease Control had estimated that typical hospital expenses for an AIDS patient would be \$147,000.

Claims Jeff Levi of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, "I think [the survey] shows that perhaps companies are crying wolf, that their financial burden may not have been as great as claimed."

The survey also indicated that all insurance companies consider PWAs uninsurable for new coverage; 99% rate PWARCs uninsurable; 91% consider those with a positive blood test uninsurable.

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