

## Let's resolve to fight for gay rights

Gay rights did not have a banner year in 1988. Anti-gay violence increased in almost every sector of the population. Oregonians passed Ballot Measure 8, which revoked Governor Goldschmidt's executive order protecting gay state employees. The federal government continued to drag its heels in funding AIDS education and research. The Food and Drug Administration failed to show sympathy for AIDS victims by releasing few experimental drugs that show promise of treating the dread disease.

## ... Between the Lines ...

BY JACK RILEY

So, we have to roll up our sleeves in 1989 and keep pressure on the electorate, the state and federal governments and the politicians who make the system work. Let's all resolve to:

— Question all candidates for political office about their stand on gay civil rights.

— Contribute to those candidates who hold our best interests at heart.

— Support gay organizations that are taking care of our sick, communicating with political leaders, fighting for our civil rights.

One year from now, when we enter the "Gay 90s," let's all pray that we have made more progress toward a society that cares, loves and protects all of us.

## Poverty and bias major factors in AIDS epidemic

U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop says discrimination, language problems and poverty are as much at the heart of the AIDS epidemic as drug abuse and promiscuity.

At a recent address before the Association of American Medical Colleges in Chicago, Koop said the fight against the disease has failed to convey AIDS information to blacks and Hispanics, who have been stricken with AIDS in numbers disproportionate to their populations.

"If you look at just the numbers in AIDS, the numbers that have died, you're missing the whole story," he said.

Of the 77,994 AIDS cases reported since June 1981 in the United States, 26 percent were among blacks and 15 percent among Hispanics. Blacks make up about 14 percent of the overall population and Hispanics make up 7 percent.

Koop said higher rates of illiteracy in both minority communities contribute to the problem of conveying information.

In addition, he urged the medical profession to improve access to health care for blacks and Hispanics, as well as for groups at high risk for contracting AIDS, such as prostitutes and intravenous drug users.

## Hey Bubba, you forgot your rubber!

Getting the AIDS message to others than gay white males is now the emphasis in most major US communities this new year. The traditional gay community has pretty well gotten the message about safe sex and clean needles. Now the focus must be aimed at men who have sex with other men, blacks and Hispanics.

The disease rate for blacks is three times higher than that for whites (and 12 times as common when white homosexual and bisexual

males are excluded). And until 1985, there was no AIDS literature available in Spanish. Cultural differences render traditional AIDS messages in newspapers and television virtually useless to many minority groups. There are many minority men who are married, have children and have sex with other men. Because they are the active partner, they do not consider themselves gay.

Reaching this segment of the population needs a non-traditional approach. For instance, in San Francisco health authorities invented a comic book character "Mr. Bleachman" to reach the city's junkies with the message that bleach should be used to clean needles and kill the AIDS virus. By all accounts, the addicts are listening.

Finally the federal government is facing the reality that there are disproportionate numbers of minority health care providers in the general population. That gap is one reason why communicating with minorities at risk has been difficult.

Neighborhood clinics, often working on shoestring budgets, are beginning to reach into many urban areas where traditional advertising does not penetrate. With more federal dollars committed to programs like that, the rest of the nation's people at risk will begin to get the messages once aimed at a very narrow segment of the population.

## And you thought justice was blind

The Dallas, Texas gay community is in a justifiable uproar over remarks a state district judge made after sentencing a young killer who murdered two gay men earlier this year.

Judge Jack Hampton told a Dallas newspaper that he gave the killer a lighter sentence because the victims were "queers."

The judge later apologized for a "poor choice of words," but that didn't dampen calls for his resignation by gay and civil rights organizations. Perhaps the judge should have used "faggot," instead.

Hampton told the *Dallas Times Herald* that he sentenced 18-year-old Richard Lee Bednarski to 30 years in prison instead of the maximum life sentence on November 28 in part because Bednarski's two victims were homosexuals.

"These two guys that got killed wouldn't have been killed if they hadn't been cruising the streets picking up teenage boys," Hampton said in an interview. "I don't much care for queers cruising the streets picking up teenage boys. I've got a teenage boy."

The Dallas gay community has filed a complaint with the state Commission on Judicial Conduct that could lead to the judge's removal.

If you would like to tell Judge Hampton how you feel about his conduct, call (214) 653-6445.

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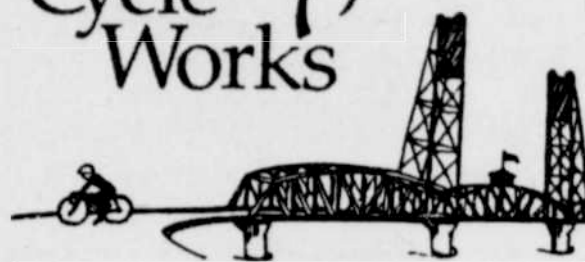
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