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Voices in the wilderness

TODAY'S HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

1. Teach Tolerance.
 2. End Discrimination.
- DUE: IMMEDIATELY!**

For help with this assignment, contact: Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators (BANGLE)
(415) 285-5078

—A flyer distributed at the Gay Freedom Day Parade in San Francisco. More than 275,000 people lined both sides of Market Street — from Castro to the Civic Center — to watch 150 contingents, which included scores of floats and thousand of marchers, none of whom wore paper bags.

To have private freedoms, we must fight public battles."
—Jean O'Leary, Executive Director of National Gay Rights Advocates, in an address to the City Club of Portland. O'Leary also reminded us that "those closet doors are locked from the inside." (July 21, 1989)

Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."
—Samuel Johnson 1709-1784.
Dr. Johnson's aphorism fits well the contemporary politicians' outcries against the U.S. Supreme Court's reversal of a Texas law prohibiting flag burning.

AfrAIDS epidemic in southern Oregon

The ballot title on the initiative reads: "A Measure to establish Josephine County, Oregon as an AIDS FREE ZONE and to provide enlightened measures for dealing with AIDS victims while protecting our families."

The initiative instigated by George Heimos of Grants Pass is anything but enlightened. Heimos's proposed charter amendment includes the following:

"Section One. JOSEPHINE COUNTY is hereby designated as an AIDS FREE ZONE within the State of Oregon and the United States of America and it is declared as the policy of this County to use all possible means to protect its citizens from AIDS, HIV infection, ARC and any and all other contagious and infectious diseases, viruses or threats, and to have compassion and concern for the healthy and uninfected persons, to prevent the residents and school children of this County from medical experimentation upon them by unscientific and untested theories of federal and state bureaucrats, to provide wide and public dissemination of the establishment of this AIDS FREE ZONE and the enlightened and safe preventive medical policies practiced herein by County public health officials, and to take effective action to implement this plan, and provide sanctions for evasion or violation of the same.

Section Two. The County public health officials are directed to: (a) Provide large billboard signs, sufficient for all motorists to see at the rate of speed they customarily travel, proclaiming JOSEPHINE COUNTY as an AIDS FREE ZONE in the vicinity of all state and federally funded highways going through the county sufficient to put all on notice while travelling, and to advise them to call the public health office, with telephone number in prominent display, for all details;

(b) collect epidemiological data on the Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection, widely believed to be the cause of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (often called AIDS), and any related or similar HIV or



What's
going on
here?

B Y J A Y B R O W N

AIDS Related Conditions (often called ARC), so as to determine the identity, location and number of infected persons (carriers) in Josephine County, through mandatory serological testing for the presence thereof of (1) all persons diagnosed with any sexually transmitted disease, (2) all persons, upon their arrest and/or incarceration for any alleged offense involving alcohol, drugs, moving traffic offenses, misdemeanors or felonies, (3) all public employees, (4) all public school children, (5) all persons applying for any license or permit issued by the County, (6) any persons receiving any funds or services through the County, (7) any person related to or living with a person found to be infected, (8) any person working in any licensed establishment within the County serving two or more members of the public, (9) any person voluntarily requesting testing, (10) any persons dealing with or participating in any phase of food preparation, (11) any person engaging in conduct known to be high risk for the spread of the infection or having sexual relations with such person within the last three years of the time of entering the County, or the adoption of this measure, whichever is earlier, and (12) any person dealing with children, in the health care field, in funeral matters, or having sexual relations outside of marriage; testing must be done at intervals of no less than every six months, and a valid certified test result from a licensed facility within six (6) months may be basis of excusing a current test;

(c) charge a fee to all persons who can afford to pay \$15 for a test if paid in advance, or \$35 if paid after the fact; failure to pay within thirty (30) days allows the imposition of a lien upon any property within the County and attorney fees for collection of a minimum of \$500 plus all costs and expenses for suit; persons who are able to execute a form certifying they do not have funds or property sufficient to pay said fee of \$15 are excused from payment;

(d) publish no less than once a month statistics and make the same available to voters and interested persons, for those identified in the County, State and Country of all persons (1) identified as infected with HIV, (2) identified as infected or suffering from ARC, (3) identified as dead from AIDS, HIV or ARC and (4) meeting the federal AIDS definition; and,

(e) establish a basis of quarantine and regulated behavior of all persons found to be infected, which may include leaving the AIDS FREE ZONE in lieu of quarantine, to travel to a location identified to the public health officials upon written agreement not to return while infected unless submitting to quarantine; and

(f) cooperate with other governmental units that wish to establish an AIDS FREE ZONE."

And that's just the beginning — Heimos's initiative rambles on for more than four single-spaced pages. Persons wishing to tell George Heimos what he can do with his petitions may call 479-6658.

George Heimos, unfortunately, is not the only person in Josephine County to be afflicted with AfrAIDS. On July 11, more than 400 people jammed an "AIDS awareness conference" held at the county fairgrounds and cheered a discredited "nationally recognized expert on AIDS" when he said, "If you can't discriminate against people with this infection, then you're going to have to allow them to teach your schoolchildren, to expose your day-care children, to do everything other people do."

Dr. William O'Connor, whose Human Immunodeficiency Virus Eradication (HIVE) Foundation sponsored the "conference," spoke for almost four hours, according to the Grants Pass Daily Courier, lambasting the media, U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, the Centers For Disease Control, and the "gay ACLU lobby" for what he called "a conspiracy of silence" on the true nature of the AIDS epidemic.

O'Connor also discussed quarantining, praising Cuba's quarantine programs, and asked people to support Heimos's ballot measure.

WASPs still in charge

The U.S. Supreme Court seems to be overstepping its mandate if recent decisions regarding religion are any indication. In separate decisions this session, the Court said that a Christmas nativity scene on public property is in violation of constitutionally required separation of church and state because it appears to promote Christian principles, and that a Hanukkah menorah displayed with a Christmas tree and a sign saluting liberty is not in violation of the same constitutional requirement because it does not "in its particular physical setting" appear to endorse Judaism.



The tradition continues

President Bush finally appointed a PWA to the National Commission of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome — Belinda Ann Mason, 30, was infected with the virus from a blood transfusion during her second childbirth two years ago. Mason is president of the National Association of People with AIDS.

Bush also appointed David Rogers, a professor at Cornell University Medical College and former president of the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation, to complete the 15-member panel created by legislation last year. Under the law, Senate and House leaderships each selected five members. The secretaries of defense, veteran affairs, and health and human services will serve as ex-officio members.