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Voices in the wilderness

Stand with the gay and lesbian freedom movement. If you are our allies, let us move beyond the static '80s policy of coalition into a dynamic '90s politic of being true partners for social change."

— Urvashi Vaid, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, called on the 200,000 people assembled at the Lincoln Memorial for reproductive rights on November 12 to join the struggle for lesbian and gay civil rights. (*San Francisco Sentinel*, November 16, 1989)

Short of human or animal sacrifices, preachers should be allowed to do any damn thing they want to do in the line of religion — and let their followers beware. Surely the fraud that [Jim] Bakker committed is no worse than the fraud that is committed every Sunday from every pulpit in America — in the world for that matter. Promising a few days in a non-existent hotel for \$1,000, as Bakker's PTL ministry did, is surely no more of a gyp than promising a couch in Heaven for a lifetime of tithes. If fraud is a penal offense in the religion business, every Catholic priest should be in Atlanta penitentiary.

— From an unsigned editorial.
(*The Nation*, November 27, 1989)

It has been estimated that the fuel consumed by the Department of Defense in a single year would run the entire United States public-transit system for 22 years."

— Martin Calhoun reports in the Center for Defense Information's current Defense Monitor on how the Pentagon has ravaged the environment. (*In These Times*, November 22 - December 5, 1989)

Caveat emptor

An irate Beaverton resident called to let us know that the Valley Times which publishes a variety of weekly newspapers in Washington County inserted the right-wing OCA's homophobic Oregon Alliance in some editions in November. The caller, who is not gay, said she especially resented paying for the "disgustingly homophobic" insert.

She also said that she was offended by a local radio station's billboard on Canyon Road which asks "Should gays have children?" (The same station's ads also ask, "Should drugs be legal?" and "Should sex be taught in school?" Stupid questions, but just the sort of thing to titillate most of the people in this country.)

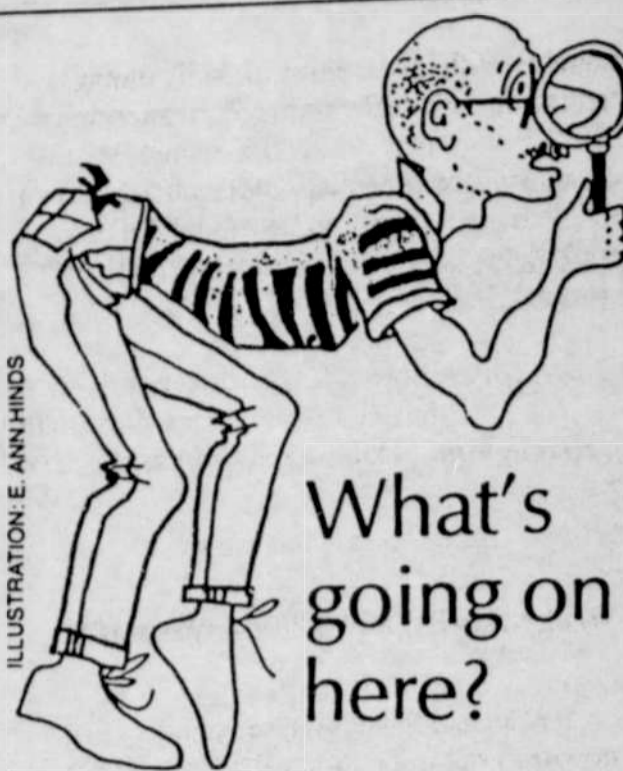
Old Glory Condoms on the way

With cries of "Sex is fun! Let's enjoy it!" founder and president Jay Critchley introduced his Old Glory Condom Corporation at the List Visual Art Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) according to Bay Windows.

The condoms, which have yet to go into production, "will form a convenient marriage between two protective and heralded items," Critchley told Bay Windows. The condom will feature a full color United States flag along its length and will be marketed under the logo "Worn With Pride Country-Wide."

Positive, "normal" gays prompt hate campaign

Television shows which depict gay and lesbian characters in a positive manner have been targeted by the American Family Association which urges its followers to send complaints to sponsors and networks about such depictions. What upsets the AFA is that



B Y J A Y B R O W N

viewers are "treated to positive, 'normal,' homosexual characters," according to the American Family Association Journal as reported in a recent GLAAD Bulletin. Since August Wendy's hamburger chain, NBC, Eastman Kodak, and ABC have been deluged with mail prompted by AFA's campaign against any representation of gays on television.

For example, the AFA was outraged that Wendy's advertised on a rerun of *L.A. Law* in which a gay Olympic athlete sued a cereal company for cancelling his contract when he came out of the closet. The episode also featured a closeted gay judge.

While ignoring GLAAD's letter asking the company to continue supporting Americans in all their diversity, Wendy's answered all complaints from AFA Journal readers with a form letter which said, in part: "As an advertiser, we give our television sponsorship serious thought and consideration. Obviously, the particular episode of this show was not consistent with the kind of programming we wish to be associated with. Moreover, Wendy's tries to sponsor programs we feel have a wide appeal to the family viewing audience."

What is "obvious" is that Wendy's needs to learn that gays and lesbians are not "anti-family," and shows which realistically portray characters who happen to be gay or lesbian (like 25 million other Americans) or which deal with homophobia are not "promoting homosexuality."

GLAAD (and this editor) suggest that readers remind Wendy's gays and lesbians also form warm, loving families, and that family dining is not just for heterosexuals. You might also suggest that they are at risk of alienating a huge, hamburger-eating market.

Write James W. Near, President, Wendy's International Inc., PO Box 256, Dublin, OH 43017, or call him at (614) 764-3100. Other corporate addresses to have on hand are, Colby H. Chandler, Chief Executive Officer, Eastman Kodak Co., 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14560; and Robert Inger, President, ABC Entertainment, ABC Entertainment Center, 4151 Prospect Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

AIDS-related health insurance abuses being investigated

ACT UP/LA (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power/Los Angeles) is participating in a nation-wide effort to demand that the insurance industry end discriminatory practices and provide full health care coverage for the insured. They would like to hear from individuals who have experienced any AIDS- or HIV-related problems with insurance companies and are particularly interested in hearing from Prudential Insurance Company policyholders.

Difficulties that have been reported already include: exorbitant premium increases; refusal to pay for prescribed

treatments; declaring all HIV-related claims as ineligible for coverage, claiming that it is a "pre-existing condition."

All replies will be held in strictest confidence, although individuals may be asked to speak out publicly against the abuses of the insurance industry. Please contact or write to ACT UP/LA Insurance Committee, Post Office Box 26601, Los Angeles, California 90026 or call Richard (213-838-3260), Jake (213-851-2492) or Neil (213-650-7590).

RFD calendar delightful

One of the finest calendars to come our way this season was lovingly done by the folks at RFD. "The Dear Love of Comrades" is a collection of wonderful photographs of gay men together by prominent photographers Rink, Lee Steehuis, Mark I. Chester and others. The calendar also contains a wealth of gay and lesbian history and biography.

RFD: A country journal for gay men everywhere is published by a collective now situated near Liberty, Tennessee. RFD was published in Oregon during the '70s, at what is now known as Magdalen Farm near Wolf Creek. It was during the Wolf Creek time that I helped out with a couple of issues of RFD and got my first taste of the gay press. RFD's gentle dialogues between loving men has always been at the top of my list of favorite things.

The "Dear Love of Comrades" calendars are \$10 each (postage included) and may be ordered from RFD, PO Box 68, Liberty, TN 37095.

Fairness a loser in gay rights war

Once again, the concept of fairness in the struggle to overcome religious bigotry against gays and lesbians has led to failure. The highly touted domestic partners ordinance — passed 11-10 by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors last June — was repealed by a narrow margin on November 7. The ordinance was successfully repealed by a coalition of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish fundamentalists who used their pulpits to campaign against the ordinance. According to reports from the campaign, the Catholic church distributed 25,000 flyers urging voters to reject the ordinance. A lawsuit has been filed to invalidate the election results due to fraud by the Catholic Church which did not register as a political organization.

The Yes on S people tried to block repeal of the domestic partners ordinance with a campaign based on the slogan "Sometimes being fair doesn't cost you anything." The Yes on S people seem to have fallen into the trap that lost the election for the No on 8 campaign in Oregon last year — the expectation that the majority of voters will give a damn about being fair when exposed to the lies, deception and fraud perpetrated by churches against gays and lesbians.

In all, five measures to repeal gay-related legislation in the country were successful: San Francisco's domestic partners ordinance, legislation to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in Irvine, California; Athens, Ohio; and Tacoma, Washington; and an ordinance banning AIDS-related discrimination in Concord, California. In the Concord election battle, the chief proponent of the ordinance repeal, fundamentalist preacher Lloyd Mashore, was elected to the City Council because of his anti-gay campaign. As in all other election campaigns against gays and lesbian which are spearheaded by (tax-exempt) religious organizations, fairness — being fair — is the least of their considerations.

Isn't it time to tax religious organizations that use their facilities for political purposes? Let's be fair and tax the churches!