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Just be aware . . .

Supporting a boycott or buycott can be a powerful weapon

B Y C Y D A T H E N S

One Sunday morning, yours truly and your editor spent some time engaging in the age-old practice of "preaching to the choir." As a result of that session, what was originally meant to be strictly an ongoing boycott list evolved into this column. Based on my beliefs that 1) While we can't all do the same thing, we can all do something, and 2) Racists, sexists, anti-Semites, religionists, and other bigots don't like gays or lesbians either, I plan to advocate awareness and action in our community. If you know of anything (additions, deletions, updates, corrections) which should be included here, please write to: Just be Aware . . . , c/o Just Out, PO Box 15117, Portland, OR 97215.

Let's start out this month with the good news—the BUYcott list.

"Whereas boycotts ask that people refrain from buying the products and services of offending businesses, industries, and governments, BUYcotts encourage people to go out of their way to purchase the products and services of parties which have shown themselves to be particularly ethical, responsible, and courageous." (BUYcott definition courtesy of *National Boycott News*).

It is only fitting that the first service endorsed is the *National Boycott News (NBN)*. This is "an independent national magazine for socially concerned consumers." The NBN is run by volunteers and is put out almost entirely with income from subscriptions and reader donations. Suggested subscription rates are: \$10 individual, \$15 organization, \$20 corporations, low-income negotiable. For your money and a little patience, you get substantial information on boycotts and buycotts. NBN can be contacted at 6506 28th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98115, (206)523-0421.

Next—the bad news—the boycott list.
In a move which will cost Western Union an

estimated \$350,000 this year (which they really can't afford since they're trying to stave off bankruptcy), the Human Rights Campaign Fund has stopped using the telegraph company to deliver its "Speak Out" messages to Capitol Hill. Western Union challenged a San Francisco ordinance which prohibits discrimination against gays and lesbians. In April of this year, California Superior Court Judge Ira Brown rejected their challenge. This company had the audacity to claim that it does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation while maintaining that the law was unconstitutional, and insisting that only state government could enact anti-discrimination legislation. Let Western Union know you got their message by contacting: Robert J. Amman, President and CEO, Western Union Corp, One Lake St., Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458, (201) 825-5000.

What do you give the man who has everything? If the man in question is Senator Jesse Helms, a \$200,000 donation to help build a memorial is about right. At least that's what Philip Morris Inc. thinks. This donation is in addition to regular campaign contributions of the maximum amount allowed under federal law.

In April, ACT UP/DC called for a boycott of Marlboro cigarettes in response to Philip Morris' support of this homophobe. You may contact the Marlboro Boycott Committee, ACT UP/DC, PO Box 9318, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 546-9282.

It is of note that Miller Brewing Company and Kraft Inc. are subsidiaries of Philip Morris. Some other names associated with the largest tobacco company in the United States are: Entenmann's Inc., Ronzoni Food Corporation, Oscar Meyer Foods Corporation, Louis Kemp Seafood Company, Claussen Pickle Company, Louis Rich Co., Churny Company Inc., the All American Gourmet Company, Lender's Bagel Bakery, Tombstone Pizza corporation, Mission

Viejo Realty Group Inc., Maxwell House, Kool-Aid, Jello, Post Cereals, and Birds-eye Frozen Foods.

Let Hamish Maxwell, Chairman and CEO of Philip Morris know we don't support companies which support homophobia, by contacting him at: 120 Park Ave., New York, NY 10017, (212) 880-5000. Also, contact Michael A. Miles, President and CEO, Kraft Inc., Kraft Court, Glenview, IL 60025, (708) 998-2000, and Leonard J. Goldstein, President and CEO, Miller Brewing Company, 3939 W. Highland Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53201, (414) 931-2000, with the same message.

Now for something a little different—the b'ycott, which is an undetermined entity. Your help is needed to determine whether these should be boycotts or buycotts.

In recent history, we were boycotting Visa. They made donations to US Olympic teams although the US Olympic Committee successfully sued organizers of the "Gay Olympics," forcing them to change the name to the "Gay Games." This month, the Gay Games are taking place in Vancouver, British Columbia, and some banks are offering Visa cards which are being touted as gay-supportive. If anyone knows what is going on with Visa, please contact me.

Speaking of the Gay Games, those of you heading up to Canada need to know that the Vancouver community is boycotting White Spot, Ltd. (known down here as Kentucky Fried Chicken). They are being boycotted in response to their homophobic firing of a PWA. Pick up a copy of *Angles: A Monthly Magazine for Vancouver's Lesbian and Gay Community* while you're visiting, for more information.

On a more personal note, a while back I was having dinner with two lesbian friends of mine and the pre-teen daughter and son of one of them. Somehow, the dinner conversation took a turn that engaged these three educated, aware adults in teasing the children about their future opposite-sexed partners. The scary thing about this story is that I didn't realize our ribbing had been homophobia in action until about a week later. Talk about insidious.

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