

national news

CALIFORNIA: The Rev. Jerry Falwell, televangelist and founder of the now-defunct Moral Majority, reports in a fundraising letter that an angry mob of 2,000 Los Angeles "homosexuals" recently planned to kill him. Falwell claims he was forced to hide behind a partition when members of Queer Nation and Fighting Fairies stormed the restaurant where he was eating. He said a waiter stood by his side and prayed for his safety.

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An attempt by the Seventh Day Adventist Church to bar use of its name by a group of gay and lesbian church members has been halted by a U.S. District Court decision. The church had filed suit to stop Seventh Day Adventist Kinship International, Inc., from using the term Seventh Day Adventists. However, a judge ruled that the term is generic and is therefore not entitled to trademark protection. Kinship, a Los Angeles-based group for gay and lesbian Seventh Day Adventists in the U.S. and abroad, praised the decision and challenged the church to better educate its members about gay and lesbian issues.

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The obscenity indictments against Los Angeles director James Wasson and video distribution Vivid Video Inc. (VVI) are the latest in a growing number of prosecutions that are part of a federal crackdown on sexually explicit videos, civil libertarians say.

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GEORGIA: Statistics released by the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta indicate that less than one percent of persons with AIDS in the U.S. have been infected with HIV the way Magic Johnson says he was infected, from intercourse with a woman. These statistics have fueled widespread speculation that Johnson may have had gay sex, which the former L.A. Lakers superstar vehemently denies.

ILLINOIS: The U. S. Supreme Court has declined to review the case of a Chicago lesbian fighting for custody of her five-year-old son. The action let stand two Illinois appellate court decisions that included Sharon Brown's openness about being lesbian in a list of reasons why she should not have custody of her son, who was conceived in a rape.

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Members of Queer Nation distributed leaflets to about 1,000 Chicago school children outside a Bill of Rights 200th anniversary exhibit. The leaflets proposed a 27th amendment to the U.S. Constitution protecting "queer rights." Most of the children, age 8-15, readily took the flyers, while teachers expressed a variety of emotions, from anger to full support.

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The Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force has reversed its decision to destroy \$3,000 worth of its new anti-hate crime posters because a note in the corner acknowledges that the Playboy Foundation paid for them. Task force members had earlier voted to destroy the posters, contending that *Playboy* magazine exploits women and is therefore anti-lesbian. It reversed its decision after an editorial in the *Windy City Times* accused them of "kowtowing to misdirected and misunderstood feminist theory."

MASSACHUSETTS: The city of Cambridge has amended its bereavement provisions to make it clear that an employee can take paid leave for the death of a same-sex domestic partner, as well as for the death of an immediate family member of a same-sex domestic partner. The issue surfaced when a city employee was denied paid leave when the mother of her same-sex partner of seven years died in April.

NEW YORK: Over 70 design professionals gathered in New York City for the first meeting of the Organization of Lesbian and Gay Architects

and Designers. Organizers said the group was needed to provide members with potential professional and social contacts and to "raise consciousness within a conservative and repressive profession."

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Gay activists are decrying a statement by President Bush that he opposes the new condom distribution program in New York City public schools. The president said the matter is "best handled by family, by consultation about values." The program is designed to slow the spread of AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases among teenagers.

OHIO: Marc Conte, president of the Ohio State University Lesbian and Bisexual Alliance, was elected to the 1991 homecoming court, as was the group's vice president, Mike Scarce. The other three male members of the court were two African-Americans and one Asian-American. The reality of no WASP male on the court and the possibility that a gay man might be chosen homecoming king caused quite a stir on the O.S.U. campus and in the city of Columbus. Unfortunately, neither Conte nor Scarce was elected king.

VIRGINIA: More than 1,100 gay rights activists from 41 states and several foreign countries gathered Nov. 7-11 for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Forces's Fourth annual Creating Change Conference in Alexandria. Attendance was the largest ever for the networking and skills-building weekend designed for leaders in the gay rights movement. Foreign delegates were from the Soviet Union, England, Mexico, and Nicaragua.

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Gays and lesbians won a long-sought victory when a federal judge in Alexandria overturned part of a 1934 liquor law prohibiting sale of alcohol to "homosexuals." While the state's Alcoholic Beverage Control Board had not enforced the anti-gay provision for more than a decade, gay activists regarded it as a form of legalized homophobia.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: The Interim Coordinating Committee for the National March on Washington announced a 17-region structure for organizing the event, which is expected to draw more than one million gays, lesbians, and supporters to Washington D.C. on April 25, 1993. Oregon is included in Region 1, along with Washington, Montana, Hawaii, Alaska, Idaho, Guam and Samoa. More information can be obtained by writing to the National March on Washington, PO Box 34607, Washington, D.C. 20043, or by calling (401) 831-5522.

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Openly gay Congressman Gerry E. Studds (D.-Mass.) has joined other members of Congress in sponsoring a resolution to end the Pentagon's discriminatory policy against gay men and lesbians. The resolution would direct President Bush to rescind the Department of Defense directive which currently prevents gay men and lesbians from service in any branch of the military.

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Mariposa Gallery, Inc., believed to be the first commercial art gallery dedicated exclusively to gay and lesbian artists, has opened in Washington, D.C. For more information write to the gallery at 2116 18th Street NW, Washington, D.D., 20009, or by telephoning (202) 332-9629.

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The U.S. Senate stunned Sen. Jesse Helms with a 73-25 vote to table a motion he sponsored that would have prevented the use of National Endowment for the Arts funds for gay film festivals, gay and lesbian artists, and sexually-oriented material in general. It was the ninth time in two years that Helms has tried to restrict the use of NEA funding for homoerotic works.

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