

national briefs

NATIONAL

In a recent column, Ann Landers has asked for information from the gay and lesbian community. She wants us to send her a postcard saying either: "Yes, I'm glad I'm gay or lesbian," or "No, I'm not glad I'm lesbian or gay." Please send your vote to: Ann Landers, PO Box 11562, Chicago, IL 60611-0562. Let's flood her with our responses.

CALIFORNIA

Giovano, Inc., an African-American-owned company that distributes Caution Condoms, placed its first advertisement on the back cover of *BLK's* December issue, marking the first time an American condom distributor has run such a high-profile ad in a gay publication. *BLK* is the world's largest publication targeting the African-American lesbian and gay community. Its address is Box 83912, Los Angeles, CA 90083-0912.

The National Task Force on AIDS Prevention (a San Francisco-based, national advocacy organization for gay and bisexual men of color) announced the awards of two grants from Burroughs Wellcome Co. The two awards, totaling \$85,000, are designed to augment the National Task Force's primary focus of prevention information and education services.

Republican presidential candidate Pat Buchanan has once again angered the gay community, this time regarding his unauthorized use of footage from "Tongues Untied," filmmaker Marlon Riggs's award-winning and controversial documentary about gay African-American men. Buchanan used scenes from the film in a televised advertisement to illustrate what he called the Bush administration's funding and support of "blasphemous art." Through his San Francisco attorney, Riggs sent a certified letter to Buchanan demanding that he immediately stop copying, colorizing, editing, and broadcasting any part of "Tongues Untied" or face further legal action. Buchanan has yet to respond.

ILLINOIS

U.S. Rep. Sidney Yates, D-Ill., is the 48th cosponsor of a House of Representatives resolution calling on President Bush to rescind the military's ban on gays and lesbians. Sixty-five percent of Americans believe gays should be allowed to serve in the military, and 81 percent think gays should not be kicked out if their homosexuality is discovered after they enlist, according to a Penn & Schoen Associates poll.

The first inpatient mental health program in the Midwest designed to diagnose and treat issues facing lesbians and gay men has opened in Chicago. Positive Lifestyles is a safe place where lesbians, gay men and bisexuals receive individualized mental health and substance abuse treatment. A specially selected and trained staff helps to assure the program is free from heterosexism and homophobia. More information can be obtained by calling toll-free (800) 877-6848.

Unlike their Boston and New York counterparts, gays and lesbians in Chicago marched without incident in the huge St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 14. In fact, the 50-person Queer Nation contingent was headed by Joan Jett Blakk, an African-American drag queen who has captured gay Chicago's heart in the past year. Although Queer Nation was not an official parade entrant, its participation was made possible when state Rep. John Cullerton of Chicago gave the group his permit.

INDIANA

A prison inmate has sued the Indiana Department of Corrections for access to condoms. Albert Squires, 27, filed suit in LaPorte Circuit Court last month. He wrote: "Several inmates who have tested positive for exposure to HIV or AIDS are ... confined in the general population. [Westville

Correctional Center] has a high rate of homosexual activity, both consensual and non-consensual, which occurs on a daily basis. The threat ... of being exposed to HIV is great."

MICHIGAN

Republican presidential candidate Pat Buchanan managed to bash both gays and Jews in a March 13 interview with *The Detroit News*. Although the daily did not include Buchanan's bigoted remarks, a gay reporter who helped interview Buchanan shared his notes with the gay press. During an exchange about gay rights, Buchanan said he regarded homosexuality as a "violation of morality," and as "physically ruinous." He also said American landlords should have the right to refuse to rent to gays, lesbians, and Jews.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Filmstar-turned-Republican-activist Arnold Schwarzenegger has been campaigning with President Bush in Derry. Referring to a recent televised debate among Democratic presidential candidates, Schwarzenegger said: "Of course, we don't talk about those Democrats. I watched that debate, and they all looked like a bunch of girly-men."

NEW JERSEY

The first annual New Jersey Gay Pride Parade is set for Saturday, June 6, in Asbury Park. Among other accomplishments, the New Jersey Lesbian and Gay Coalition will be celebrating its success at getting an amendment passed to New Jersey's antidiscrimination law to protect gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. The gay and lesbian community in New Jersey is estimated at over 750,000.

NEW YORK

Delta Airlines is facing over 100 employment discrimination complaints resulting from procedures followed during its takeover of Pan Am. The complaints, filed by the New York City Commission on Human Rights on behalf of former Pan Am employees who were refused employment by Delta, include alleged violations in almost every class protected under the city's human rights laws—including gays and lesbians.

PENNSYLVANIA

"Political correctness is going to destroy gays," says Andrew Sullivan. "It will marginalize us and further weaken us," said the editor of the influential opinion journal *The New Republic*, in an interview with *Philadelphia Gay News*. "My view is we don't want to be another special-interest group," Sullivan said. "We should talk about sheer equality." Sullivan also disapproves of the increasing use of the word "queer."

WASHINGTON, D.C.

A Feb. 13 meeting between national gay activists and the chairman of President Bush's re-election campaign has sparked an angry backlash from the conservative right. The White House so far has distanced itself from the meeting, saying only that it was a "personal decision" by Mosbacher.

WASHINGTON

Following the recommendation of one of its standing committees, the state Senate likely will reject a proposal that would have included gays and lesbians in a list of groups protected by state law against malicious harassment. The House earlier approved the proposal to add sexual orientation to a list that includes race, religion, nationality, and disability. In a surprise move, the Senate committee suggested that "gender" be added to the list, a move that drew mixed reactions from a lobbyist for the National Organization for Women. "We certainly don't want to be part of any trade-off—women in, gays and lesbians out," said the lobbyist, Lonnie John-Brown.

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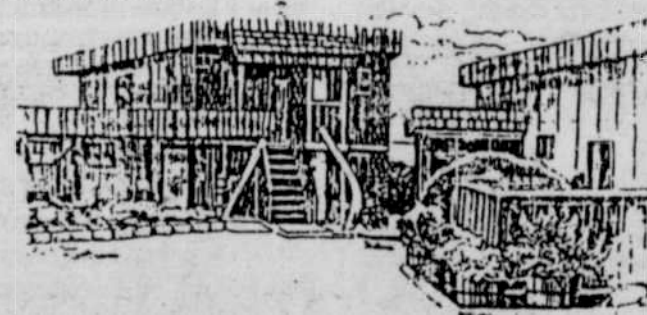
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