

national briefs

ARIZONA

A federal district judge has settled a land dispute between the Navajo and Hopi tribes, giving almost all of the land to the Navajos. The dispute began thousands of years ago between the tribes, but culminated in 1974 when the Hopi sued for half of 7.1 million acres that Congress had made part of the Navajo Indian Reservation in 1934. In April, Judge Earl Carroll reduced the claim to 152,843 acres, of which he finally granted 60,518 acres to the Hopi. While only Navajos live on the land Carroll turned over to them, the Hopi have a precedence of thousands of years in the area and use the land for religious purposes.

CALIFORNIA

Religious judgmentalist Pat Robertson is buying MTM Entertainment for \$68.5 million. In acquiring MTM, Robertson will gain control of numerous television shows considered to be his ideological opposite, including *Evening Shade* and *The New WKRP*, and reruns of *Lou Grant*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *The Bob Newhart Show*.

The Bush administration has accused the University of California at Berkeley of "reverse discrimination" for setting minority enrollment goals of 23 to 27 percent. The university denied using quotas but agreed to modify its policy with next year's entering class. The complaint issued by the U.S. Education Department echoed the 1978 U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of Allan Bakke, a white man who accused the University of California at Davis medical school of "reverse discrimination."

The fifth annual Creating Change Conference of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force will be held Nov. 13-15 in Los Angeles. Creating Change, the largest skills-building conference for lesbian and gay activists, will feature over 80 workshops addressing critical issues facing the gay and lesbian community. For more information, contact Catherine Cater, Conference Coordinator, NGLTF, 1734 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009-4309; phone: (202) 332-6483.

Los Angeles radio station KFI cancelled an appearance by best-selling author and "sexpert" Susie Bright on a two-hour interview and listener

call-in show out of fear that "station guidelines" against indecency would be breached. Touring to promote her book, *Susie Bright's Sexual Reality* (Cleis Press), Bright said, "I've done extensive radio touring throughout the U.S., many times at stations more conservative than KFI, but I haven't been yanked before." Bright also authored *Susie Sexpert's Lesbian Sex World* (Cleis Press), *Herotica I* (Down There Press) and *Herotica II* (Down There Press/Plume).

Mobilization Against AIDS is attempting to organize meetings with as many as 200 U.S. congressional candidates before the November election in order to establish a dialogue on AIDS with the nation's future leaders at a time when they most need the support of residents in their districts. "Once a candidate is elected, their attention shifts and their time becomes closely guarded," said MAA Executive Director Paul Boneberg. "Now's the time to get their attention." Anyone interested in joining the grassroots AIDS lobbying program should call MAA at (800) 24-LOBBY for information and expertise on arranging meeting and networking with other constituents who wish to participate.

This year for the first time, the city of Palm Springs has published a *Gay Guide to Palm Springs* in addition to its regular *Visitor's Guide*. The glossy format magazine, which states, "In Palm Springs, gay people—both visitors and the large local contingent—lead a relaxed life knowing they are accepted and welcomed, not merely tolerated," contains extensive information on local offerings, thoughtfully including a lambda symbol for lodging accommodations that cater to a gay clientele. For a free copy, call (800) 347-7746 and ask for *The Gay Guide*.

FLORIDA

A special domestic court and safe house for battered women have been opened in Dade County to deal with a wave of increasingly violent cases. Emergency injunctions to protect women and children have doubled following the devastation of Hurricane Andrew on Aug. 24, while the availability of police officers has radically diminished. Usually cases involve men with a history of violence and problem drinking. Many people traumatized by the loss of shelter, property and

employment are further stressed by crowding in shelters and confusion about their futures. "Now the women are more dependent on their husbands," said Leonel Mesa, a domestic violence counselor. "The house is devastated, the defenses are low, they feel that, regardless of the past, they have to rebuild."

MASSACHUSETTS

Cambridge became the first municipality in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to extend benefits to partners of lesbian and gay employees following a narrow vote of approval by the City Council. Provisions of the ordinance, which apply to unmarried heterosexual, gay and lesbian couples, include health insurance for partners of city workers, visitation rights in city jails and hospitals and access to school records of children of the domestic partnership.

TEXAS

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Church has asked the U.S. Defense Department to recognize them as a religious body and allow UFMCC ministers to serve as military chaplains. "We're here to serve notice to the military that we're entering a new phase of our fight," said Rev. Elder Troy Perry, UFMCC founder, at a press conference in Dallas. "We're prepared to take it to the Supreme Court if necessary." Rev. Dusty Pruitt, MCC pastor of Long Beach, Calif., who was discharged from the Army in 1986 for acknowledging that she is lesbian, will be UFMCC's first candidate, for a chaplaincy with the Army Reserves.

A jury in Austin awarded a lesbian mother custody of her two-and-a-half-year-old son in spite of attempts by a man once thought to be the child's biological father to inflame homophobic sentiments in order to win the lawsuit. Defense attorneys were able to limit homophobic bias during questioning of prospective jurors through the use of an informal public opinion poll of current issues. The man was granted visitation rights because of his longstanding relationship with the child and will be required to pay the mother's legal fees.

VIRGINIA

In a federal discrimination suit, operators of two Chuck Norris Karate clubs have agreed to pay settlements to a group of black youths they tried

to discourage from joining, and their parents. The operators deny any discrimination but agreed to pay each youth \$2,863 and the parents of each \$1,000, as well as include African-Americans in promotional material and advertise in publications targeted to African-American readers.

WASHINGTON

Radioman Robert E. Matt has been discharged from the Navy following the revelation of his homosexual orientation in a letter to Rear Admiral Richard A. Riddell in which he criticized the Navy's hypocritical ban on gays. Subsequently Matt lost his security clearance and was demoted from submarine communications to parking lot attendant while waiting for his discharge to be processed.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

President Bush has filled the National Commission on AIDS position left vacant by Magic Johnson's resignation with Mary D. Fisher, the HIV-positive daughter of a prominent Republican fund-raiser. Best known for her speech at the Republican National Convention urging tolerance, Fisher recently founded the Family AIDS Network to provide information and support to the families of people with AIDS.

The House approved and sent to President Bush legislation that sharply increases penalties on companies convicted of fixing prices on infant formula sold to the government for distributing to the poor. The legislation followed Federal Trade Commission charges that the three largest producers of infant formula violated anti-trust regulations to drive up prices.

A national movement to urge lesbian and gay young adults to register and vote was inaugurated on Sept. 23 with the airing of "Coming Out Voting," a 30-second television spot, on cable network broadcasts reaching millions of viewers. The ad is part of a multiprogram effort that includes grassroots distribution of the ad, a "Come Out Voting" poster and an action kit for registering and delivering lesbian and gay votes. "The ad has been accepted by over 50 stations around the country," said Tim McCarthy, national coordinator of the Come Out Voting Coalition.

Compiled by Jim Hunger

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