

national briefs

CALIFORNIA

Stanford University's faculty senate voted overwhelmingly to extend the same medical, dental, insurance and other benefits to unmarried heterosexual and gay and lesbian domestic partners as those received by the spouses and family members of married employees. If the university's board of trustees agrees to the proposal at their next meeting, in December, Stanford will become one of the first universities in the nation to include all unmarried domestic partners in their benefits plan.

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Budget Director David Nelson of the Jesuit-run University of San Francisco has been reprimanded for appearing in the gay porno film, *Hot Pursuit*. Nelson, who refers to himself as a "gay non-Christian," apologized "for whatever embarrassment or harm may come" from his performance, but he also noted that "my off-duty conduct is a matter of personal privacy unrelated to my professional employment at the university." Although Nelson received a letter of discipline threatening job termination for any further, similar activities, student newspaper editor Kimberly Kauer criticized the university for giving him only "a slap on the wrist."

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In a counterattack against the Republican strategy of trumpeting family values, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation has unveiled the first of a series of billboards, featuring a lesbian couple, one of whom is pregnant, and the slogan, "Another traditional family." Karen and Pat Norman's son Zachary was born five days after the picture was taken. At a rally celebrating the unveiling, San Francisco Supervisor Carole Migden said, "We will not be scapegoated and allow the Patrick Buchanans of the world to ridicule us."

COLORADO

Following the passage of the anti-gay rights measure in Colorado, the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights has canceled plans made a year ago to hold its annual convention in Denver next August. "We cannot in good conscience bring our members and our dollars to a state that would so willingly deny basic civil rights to gay and lesbian people," said Dr. Larry Prater, who is AAPHR's president. The convention for the San Francisco-based gay and lesbian professional organization draws members from across the United States and Canada.

ILLINOIS

The National Lesbian and Gay Law Association's third biennial "Lavender Law" Conference in Chicago was attended by more than 500 gay and lesbian lawyers, judges, law students, educators and legal professionals. NLGLA was founded in 1988 and officially affiliated with the American Bar Association. Conference attendees condemned anti-gay ballot measures in Oregon and Colorado and voted to hold the 1994 Lavender Law Conference in Portland, Ore., following the failure of Measure 9. A new board of directors was also elected, including Vice Co-chair Ben Merrill of Portland.

MARYLAND

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University report that the suicide rate among people with AIDS has declined from its high rate during the late 1980s. In 1987, the suicide rate for people with AIDS was 10 times greater than that for the population as a whole, dropping to six times the overall rate by 1989.

MASSACHUSETTS

A spokesman for R.R. Donnelley, publishers of Madonna's controversial book *Sex*, was quoted in the *Boston Globe* as saying, "We [R.R. Donnelley] can't reject work just because people might find it controversial." However, the publisher has a history of rejecting books with gay themes, including the widely respected *Gay Ideas: Outing and Other Controversies*, by University

of Illinois Professor Richard Mohr. Sasha Alyson of Alyson Publications, the country's largest gay publisher, noted that R.R. Donnelley had refused several of their books merely because of their gay theme. "Even by election-year standards, this is a startling level of hypocrisy."

TEXAS

The second annual Night of Pride, the North American gay and lesbian bodybuilding competition, took place in Dallas, with \$3,500 donated to the AIDS programs of Oak Lawn Community Services and the Allen G. Caulkin Fund of the lesbian and gay rights lobby. Men's middle-weight winner James-Michael Lavigne of Montreal, Quebec, was also declared men's open division winner. Danney D'Alexandris of Dallas, Texas, won first place in the open women's division. An officially sanctioned event, Night of Pride winners may go on to compete in the Mr./Ms. America and the Mr./Ms. USA competitions.

VIRGINIA

A Fairfax County judge has awarded custody to a lesbian of her three children but required that her lover not reside in the same house with them. Rose Valentino requested custody following her former husband's hostile reaction to the knowledge of her lesbian relationship. Both parents requested custody, but the father was granted visitation rights only, and those on the condition that he undergo counseling and the court is satisfied that "progress in parenting skills and related issues sufficient to justify such visitation is occurring."

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The conservatively stacked Supreme Court has voted to support the Bush administration's health-care policy allowing companies to withdraw previously promised levels of health-care insurance to seriously ill employees. The ruling was in response to a lawsuit against a company that reduced its lifetime maximum payment for AIDS treatment from \$1 million to \$5,000 when it learned that an employee had contracted the disease.

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Roman Catholic bishops in the United States have come out firmly against spousal abuse, rejecting the notion that the Bible requires women to submit to abusive husbands. In a joint statement issued by the bishops' Committees on Marriage and Family and Women in Society and in the Church entitled "When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women," the bishops say, "Violence in any form—physical, sexual, psychological, verbal—is sinful." The bishops went on to say that the parish must be a place where both abused women and men who batter can come for help.

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The Bush administration's modified gag rule restricting all medical staff except for doctors from providing abortion information has been thrown out by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Initially the gag rule had applied to doctors as well but was changed for political expedience. Since Bush lost his bid for re-election, the gag rule in any form is effectively dead since there is not enough time in his lame-duck tenure to implement a new one.

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Torie Osborn has been named as the new executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and NGLTF Policy Institute. Osborn will succeed Urvasi Vaid to the position in March, 1993, leaving her current position as executive director of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center, which is the nation's largest gay organization. During her tenure at LAGLCS, the staff and budget grew to more than two and a half times their levels at her inception. She has been active in numerous gay and lesbian political causes in California.

Compiled by Jim Hunger

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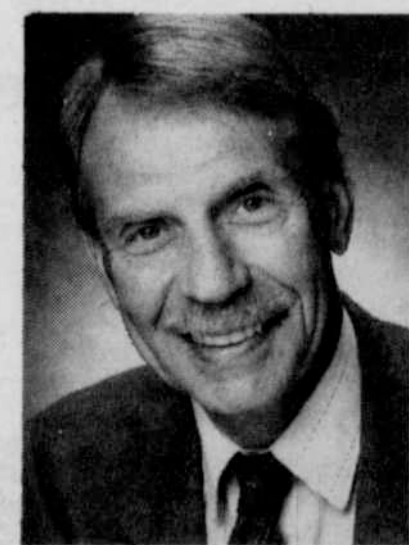
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