

Reports of murders proliferate

Some would say that being gay can be hazardous to your health, but lately it's been downright deadly. In recent months the number of murders of gays and lesbians across the nation has increased dramatically. In Michigan a man was convicted in December of the shotgun slayings of a lesbian couple who lived next door to him. "I had to do it," James Brooks, 67, said repeatedly in his taped confession. He blamed lack of police response to his complaints about the two women's open lesbian relationship as his motivation for killing them. In Denver six gays have been slain in the past year, with four of the murders still unsolved. Police note similarities but are not prepared to say they are related. All of the unsolved murders were stabbings, usually in the victim's home.

In Baltimore a transvestite in drag was stabbed 15 times and thrown from the second floor of an apartment building to the first. Police have arrested Allen Eric Horton, a resident of the building who claims he invited Marvin Johnson back to his apartment before realizing that Johnson was not a woman. However, a friend of the victim's family has said that Johnson had been giving Horton reading lessons for over a year. In Washington, D.C., police are seeking help from the gay community in solving the murder of Kenneth Love, who was found brutally beaten to death after leaving a local gay bar called the Fraternity House Dec. 19. Love's car was also stolen and later found a couple of blocks from two other gay bars. Over the past 15 years, D.C. police have reported a number of murders of gay men in which the victim appeared to have invited the murderer into his home, as was the case in Love's death. Investigators have found no evidence to link all the murders to one serial killer, however.

U.S. Navy Petty Officer Allen Schindler was beaten beyond recognition in a bathroom of a public park just outside of Sasebo Naval Base in Japan last Oct. 27. The gruesome murder followed months of harassment by shipmates for his sexual orientation, which had compelled Schindler to request a discharge from the Navy. Proponents and opponents of the military ban on gays have been using the Schindler murder to support their positions regarding the ban. Human Rights Campaign Fund Executive Director Tim McFeeley has formally demanded that the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice investigate the slaying since response by the Naval Investigative Service has been unacceptable. Two of Schindler's shipmates have been arrested in connection with the murder. One has been charged with "suspicion of committing murder." The other has been convicted of not reporting a serious crime and resisting apprehension, for which he was sentenced to a year in confinement, stripped of his military benefits, demoted and given a bad conduct discharge.

Leatherfest V set for San Diego

The National Leather Association has scheduled its next annual gathering, Leatherfest V, for San Diego, March 12-14. The three-day event will include workshops, demonstrations, vendors selling items of interest to adherents of the leather-SM-fetish lifestyles, contests and parties, bar gatherings and events, a motorcycle run and an awards banquet. Proceeds from this year's event will be contributed to Special Delivery San Diego, an all-volunteer organization that delivers free meals to persons with AIDS.

Registration fees for Leatherfest V, which is to be held at the Holiday Inn Mission Valley, are \$55 for NLA members and \$65 for non-members until Feb. 1, increasing by \$10 afterward. Registrants

must be over 21. For more information, contact: NLA-SD, PO Box 3092, San Diego, CA; (800) 958-1859.

March in D.C. planned

On Sunday, April 25, 1993, an estimated one million people will be in the nation's capital for the March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equal Rights and Liberation. Organizers are also planning meetings, conferences, festivals, parties, exhibits, receptions, concerts, religious services and protests in connection with what is estimated to be the largest civil-rights march in history. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign Fund will jointly sponsor visits with legislators. On-site lobbying, with training and debriefing sessions, will be held on April 21, 22, 23, 26 and 27. A targeted "contact day" is also scheduled on Thursday, April 22, for activists unable to come to D.C. and will feature calls, faxes and visits to home district offices.

For information about the March on Washington lobby days, or to become a state or congressional district lobbying coordinator, contact Marla Stevens, acting director of public policy, NGLTF, 1734 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009-4309; (202) 332-6483.

The Lesbian Avengers strike again!

When Denver Mayor Wellington Webb visited New York to promote tourism and investments in Colorado, he was in for a rude surprise. Following him everywhere he went was a newly formed group called the Lesbian Avengers noisily demonstrating and chanting, "We're here! We're queer! And we're not going skiing!" and "Boycott Colorado!" The Lesbian Avengers have orchestrated other guerrilla actions, including protests against the campaign to erase lesbians and gay men from New York City's multicultural curriculum and a five-day around-the-clock encampment in the West Village before a shrine dedicated to Hattie Mae Cohens and Brian Mock, who were burned to death in Salem, Ore., on Sept. 26.

FBI's first hate-crime report incomplete

The FBI has released its first official report on hate crimes, but the data does not include statistics from 18 states and the District of Columbia who failed to provide the information in time. Mandated by the federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990, the document reports that 421, or 8.9 percent, of 4,755 hate crimes in 1991 were directed against gays and lesbians. Critics insist that anti-gay hate crimes are grossly underreported. Martin Hiraga, coordinator of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's hate-crimes project, noted that NGLTF had compiled information on over 1,000 anti-gay hate crimes in 1991 in just five cities: New York, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and Minneapolis.

Emanuel Ross, supervisor of the D.C. Police Department's Criminal Analysis Section, blamed a work overload for their failure to submit their data to the FBI on time, but he stated that his office had received only eight or nine reports of hate crime during 1991, with only one of them having to do with anti-gay bias. The D.C. group Gay Men and Lesbians Opposing Violence said that it received at least 31 reports of anti-gay violence. GLOV co-chair Tracey Conaty has stalled in completion of providing officers with special hate-crimes reporting forms as mandated by D.C.'s own Bias-Related Crimes Act.

Compiled by Jim Hunger

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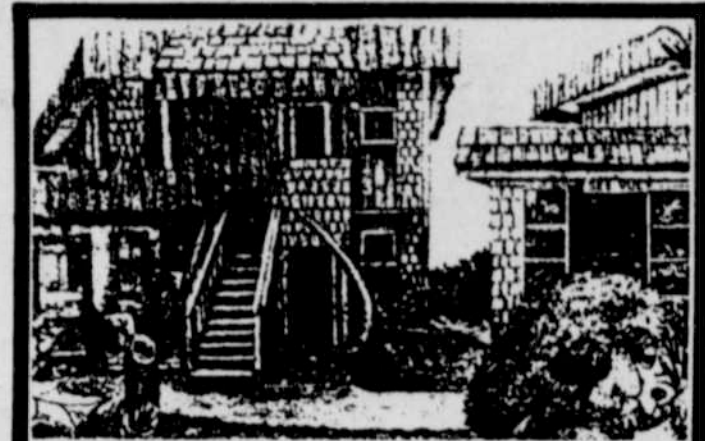


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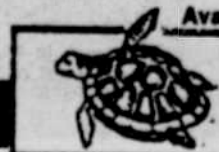
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