

national briefs

CALIFORNIA

Over the past several weeks, randomly selected books have been vandalized in the Los Angeles area at various bookstores and libraries targeted by the local white supremacist group White Aryan Resistance. Unidentified members of the racist organization have apparently been defacing shelved books by putting stamped stickers inside them. The stickers—which bear the name and phone number of WAR and the message: “Earth’s Most Endangered Species: The White Race. Help Preserve It”—have been spotted in bookstores such as Crown Books, Waldenbooks, and stores operated by Barnes and Noble, in towns around the Pasadena/Glendale area. One public library, in La Crescenta, has been targeted by the group.

The nation’s first gay headhunting firm has been founded in Los Angeles. McCormack and Associates was founded by Joseph A. McCormack in May, and is the first executive search firm specializing in serving gay and lesbian organizations. McCormack is a veteran headhunter, with 16 years experience conducting searches for major U.S. corporations and non-profits. His current clients include the American Foundation for AIDS Research, AIDS Project Los Angeles, the Howard Brown Memorial Health Center in Chicago, and the National Leadership Coalition on AIDS in Washington, D.C.

Speaking to a gay and lesbian rights rally of 2,000 on the steps of Pasadena City Hall, Mayor Rick Cole emphasized that the stereotype of his town as a conservative suburb is out of date. The mayor’s speech was interrupted by applause and cheers as he attacked homophobia. “We will not be silent as long as homosexuality is branded as a crime, condemned as a sin and treated as a disease,” he said. Pasadena’s affirmative action ordinance prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and it was the third city in the county, after L.A. and West Hollywood, to ban discrimination against people with AIDS.

COLORADO

Colorado state Senator Bob Schaffer raided a state Department of Health AIDS display at the state capitol last week and confiscated pamphlets containing “explicit sexual information,” saying they could fall into children’s hands. Governor Roy Romer defended the display, but assigned a health department employee to tend it. Schaffer claimed that his actions were not censorship, defining censorship as “when we decide that something . . . is not fit for public consumption.” Senator Jana Mendez, who is of German Jewish heritage, called the confiscation a “Nazi tactic,” and was in turn admonished by the Senate president.

FLORIDA

More than 175 lesbian and gay rights activists

from across Florida gathered in South Orlando to found a new statewide organization. Participants listened to arguments favoring inclusion of groups of transsexuals, leather enthusiasts and SM practitioners, but were unwilling to give majority support to any of the groups. They will oppose efforts by right-wing groups to place anti-gay measures on the November 1994 ballot. The Tampa-based American Family Association succeeded recently in persuading voters to repeal a local lesbian and gay rights ordinance.

ILLINOIS

The Illinois House of Representatives passed a bill April 22 that would add sexual orientation to the state’s current civil rights code. The bill passed by 60 to 49, and now moves to the Senate, where it will be voted on by the end of May. Passage is not guaranteed in the Republican-dominated Senate, but Illinois Governor Jim Edgar has said he would not veto the bill if it stays in its present House-approved form.

MARYLAND

Sexual orientation will no longer be a factor in hiring or promoting members of the Maryland State Police. The policy change, announced April 27, was instigated by a lawsuit filed against the Maryland State Police last November by a 26-year-old lesbian candidate who charged that she was rejected solely due to her sexual orientation. The woman, who is identified as Jane Doe, acknowledged her lesbianism in an application interview. When she was later rejected, she was told that it was a policy of the state police not to hire homosexuals. Doe is being represented by the ACLU; the executive director of the Baltimore ACLU said that he expects Doe to be admitted to the police academy.

NEW YORK

A man who donated his sperm so a lesbian couple could have a child has no right to paternity or visitation rights, a New York Family Court judge has ruled. The donor, Thomas Steel, had signed an agreement giving up parental rights, and never supported the girl, now 11. In 1991, he sued, wanting to be declared the father. The case involved Sandra Russo and Robin Young, a couple who have been together 14 years, and their daughter, Ry. Steel’s attorney says he will appeal the ruling.

The city of Rochester, New York will appeal a state Supreme Court ruling that it discriminated against a gay group by denying it tax-exempt status, city officials said. State Supreme Court Justice Andrew Siracuse last week ordered Rochester to give the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley property tax-exempt status. The city had contended that the group was ineligible for that status because it is a political organization. The Gay Alliance’s attorney, Ellen Tacknin, said the

city was wasting taxpayer money with the appeal. “Judge Siracuse said in the strongest of words that what the city was doing is wrong,” she said. “The city should take his words to heart.”

Business Week magazine has evidenced sensitive handling of issues relating to lesbians and gay men recently. In a February 1993 cover story, “Managing AIDS,” the subject company had a positive AIDS policy, and was shown facing issues “not in the book.” In a more recent issue of the magazine, articles on Martina Navratilova’s anti-Amendment 2 efforts and the Marky Mark bias convictions were treated fairly. Comments may be addressed to the magazine’s new editor: Mark Morrison, Managing Editor, *Business Week*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

The March issue of *Mademoiselle* magazine features a five-page article called “Women in Love,” which addresses “baby dykes,” “lesbian yuppies,” and “womyn, woman and wimmin.” The reader is taken into the world of young lesbians coming out. The story challenges many myths that both gay and straight people have about lesbianism. Responses may be sent to: Julie Lewit-Nirenberg, Publisher, *Mademoiselle*, 350 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017.

Nine lesbian and gay scuba clubs from around the country will meet at the island of Bonaire from November 6-13 for the second Life Scuba Jamboree. Started last year as a fundraiser for AIDS service organizations, Diving for Life ‘92 raised \$4,000 for the Manhattan and Los Angeles Centers for Living. This year’s event promises to raise significantly more, since Bonaire is considered the world’s best diving location. The stakes will be higher, and greater participation is expected. For more information, contact Patrick Kelly at (212) 366-9079.

The Gay Men’s Health Crisis has announced a grant of \$25,000 to the Campaign for Military Service for the fight to end the ban on gay men and lesbians serving in the military. CMS is a Washington-based organization that was formed in January to fight the ban. “The ban on gays and lesbians keeps people from coming forward to get the care they need and spreads an epidemic of fear and ignorance,” said GMHC Executive Director Timothy J. Sweeney. “The Joint Chiefs of Staff don’t see their own homophobia as high-risk behavior, but we need to.” The New York-based GMHC is the nation’s oldest and largest AIDS service, education, and advocacy organization, providing free services to more than 13,500 people with HIV illness since 1981.

OKLAHOMA

A Norman, Oklahoma bar posted a “No Dykes” sign and threw out several lesbian couples when

bar owner Nicole Rankin became offended by lesbians dancing together. Rankin, owner of The Lower Deck, told the *Norman Transcript* that she was offended by the behavior of the women in the bar, and was banning them on grounds of misconduct, not sexual orientation. In early April, Rankin threw out 12 lesbians after one couple did the two-step on the dance floor. Rankin then closed the bar and called police, who said Rankin was within her rights in ousting the women. Norman gay rights group Simply Equal is pursuing a complaint with the Norman Human Rights Commission over the incident.

TEXAS

American Educational Excellence reports that “over \$6.6 billion of private-sector financial aid went unused because parents and students do not know where to apply.” Not all awards are based on high academic performance, low family income, or athletic prowess, either. AEE has a list of over 400 different scholarships available, including ones for left-handed students, disabled students, members of various church denominations, children of veterans, minority students, and David Letterman’s Scholarship for ‘C’ students. For information on obtaining this scholarship list, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the U.S. Channel of Commerce for Higher Education, PO Box 127, Rule, TX 79547.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

A new documentary highlighting the 1993 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Equal Rights and Liberation will air in June on PBS stations around the country. Girard Video, Inc. of Washington, D.C. is the producer of the program, called “Lives in the Balance.” A commemorative video on the march is also being offered for sale. For more information, call (800) 346-5746.

WASHINGTON STATE

This year’s Gay and Lesbian National Bodybuilding Championships will be held in Seattle over the Fourth of July weekend. On Saturday, July 3, the Seattle Hilton will host the Independence Day Grand Prix in the Pacific Ballroom. The Gay/Lesbian Northwest Summer Sports Festival, which is held every year that the Gay Games are not held, will also take place in various locations around Seattle from July 2-5.

The North American Bodybuilding Judges Guild, sponsor of the championships in conjunction with Team Seattle, is offering scholarships of \$50 for clubs, gyms, or organizations with 4-7 entrants, and \$100 scholarships for groups with eight or more participants. Contact the North American Bodybuilding Judges Guild at 4414 Fitz Dr., Bremerton, WA, 98312. For accommodations at the Hilton, call 1-800-542-7700.

Compiled by Beth Hyams and Jim Hunger

cathartic comics I featuring The Brown Bomber and Diva Touché Flambé by Prof. I.B. Gittendowne

