

national briefs

CALIFORNIA

AT&T has placed its first advertisement in a queer publication, *The Advocate*. The ad is seen as a major policy change. According to Al Parso, spokesman for the company's gay and lesbian employee group, "AT&T has included sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policy for nearly 20 years but has never advertised in [queer] media."

The San Francisco Board of Education has released a report on the school district's controversial Junior Reserve Officer Training Program. The report is the result of the city attorney's investigation into the program, after several cadets were severely beaten by the rest of their drill team in February. Despite overwhelming evidence that JROTC programs systematically teach hatred and violence, most education board members asserted that the beatings were an isolated incident.

"The JROTC brings the homophobia of the military right into our children's schools," said Al Kielwasser, spokesperson for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. "It is outrageous that the San Francisco School District continues to support a program that teaches today's schoolchildren to be tomorrow's gay bashers."

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

In late May, Montgomery County Council members voted 6-1, with two abstentions, to repeal a provision in the human rights law that legalized job discrimination against gay men, lesbians and their supporters who work with children. Besides targeting sexual minorities, the Hanna Amendment has been criticized for being unconstitutionally vague. It said that employers could discriminate against anyone who "advocates" homosexuality or bisexuality and works with children. The repeal came in time to be celebrated during Montgomery County's LesBiGay Pride Day, June 11.

Bonnie J. Berger, co-chairwoman of the Gay and Lesbian Interests Consortium said, "People have been asking us, 'Well, what's next?' I say let us bask in the glow of this, you know, even for 24 or 48 hours, and then we'll tackle the next thing. Victory is so sweet, and sometimes so elusive, that I'd rather linger in it for just a moment."

Cryptosporidium has killed numbers of AIDS patients who acquired the parasite through drinking tap water. Eighty-eight people with AIDS died in Milwaukee, Wis., and 19 in Las Vegas, Nev., after outbreaks of the organism in the cities' water system. Dr. Jon Kaiser, a San Francisco physician, recently told Gay Games athletes who are HIV positive not to drink New York City tap water. Kaiser's warning was included in a health advisory that was distributed to 10,000 participants. Other health professionals disagree that tap water is dangerous to people with AIDS and state that before they will recommend bottled or filtered water a major study must show a major danger.

An amendment aimed at restricting federal funds for universities that ban military recruiters or Reserve Officer Training Corps was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in early May. The amendment, sponsored by Rep. Gerald Solomon (R-N.Y.) seeks to stop the National Science Foundation from giving grants and contracts to recipients that have such bans in place. Some universities have used this measure as a means of speaking out against the military's ban on gay men and lesbians.

Attempts were made to have the amendment declared non-germane to the bill it rides. However, Solomon changed the wording so that this was no longer an option, and the bill passed its first test. Gregory King, a spokesman for the

Human Rights Campaign Fund, said he and others will be watching movement in the Senate on this legislation and will be working to prevent this amendment from being passed.

In a speech given at the National Minority AIDS Council's "Our Place at the Table" conference, U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders stated that the AIDS epidemic is devastating communities of color. Listing statistics that show AIDS disproportionately affects people of color in the U.S., she asked, "What does being at the table mean? In the world of AIDS, it means knowing how to write a grant, how to put together a comprehensive plan, how to present yourself to the decision-makers."



Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders

NMAC was founded in 1987 and represents some 450 groups, primarily community-based AIDS service organizations which serve people of color.

American Airlines has decided to join the International Gay Travel Association, which represents more than 800 gay and lesbian companies in the travel industry. American is the first major U.S. airline to participate in the 11-year-old association. The airline recently came under fire for dragging a person with AIDS off one of its flights. As a result, the company is working aggressively to increase its employees' awareness of AIDS and has become the first major carrier to adopt an employment policy that bars discrimination based on sexual orientation.

MASSACHUSETTS

Results of a major study have shown that African Americans diagnosed with HIV infection are far less likely to be prescribed medication to fight the infection than European Americans. The study, published in the March 17 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, asserts that while 82 percent of infected European American patients are prescribed drugs that fight off the onset of pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, a common AIDS-related ailment, only 58 percent of HIV-positive African American patients were prescribed those same pneumonia-fighting drugs. And while 68 percent of white HIV-positive patients are prescribed AZT, an anti-viral medicine, less than 48 percent of black HIV-positive patients receive the drug. Dr. J. Jarrett Clinton, of the federal agency that sponsored the study, concluded, "The racial differences in use of drug therapy suggest a need to ensure uniform access to care for those who are HIV positive."

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My pledge for 1994: To donate/invest at least 10% of my commissions back into the lesbian and gay community.