

# national news

## Still waiting for an AIDS czar

During the process of choosing a Pope, Vatican officials burn the used paper ballots in a small furnace. Functionaries mix in wet straw if no consensus has been reached, sending out dark smoke from the chimney. The final ballot burns alone and cleanly, sending out white smoke. The faithful outside watch for these signals to gauge the process and know when an announcement is imminent.

The White House has no similar signal to measure progress in selecting a new AIDS czar. In July, when Kristine Gebbie abruptly but not unexpectedly announced she was stepping down, senior White House domestic policy advisor Carol Rasco said she hoped a permanent replacement would be named by mid-September. That time came and went, and the date was pushed to early to mid-October. Now there is silence.

Candidates reportedly have been interviewed, some as early as August. "The position is [Los Angeles activist] Phill Wilson's for the taking," according to one source. That possibility evokes decidedly mixed reactions.

As yet there is no word on a decision that most AIDS activists consider an even more important first step—redefining the office and its responsibilities.

Bob Roehr

## Feds let Meinhold's appeal deadline pass

Keith Meinhold has knocked another chink from the wall barring gay men and lesbians from openly serving in the military. The government let time lapse without filing an appeal for en banc review by the 9th Circuit Court of an Aug. 31 decision which allows Meinhold to stay in the Navy.

John Maguire, Meinhold's attorney, declared victory, calling it "an acknowledgment that the court's decision is correct and that the gay ban is headed toward its ultimate and deserved demise."

Maguire had predicted that the government likely would not appeal at that level for both technical and political reasons. He was less clear about predicting appeal to the Supreme Court, the government's one remaining route. That window of opportunity is open until Nov. 30.

Two factors may have influenced the Clinton administration's lack of action. Politics is one. The case has been heard in California. Filing a seemingly futile appeal might have alienated gay and lesbian voters and affected the close races for

governor and senator.

Another factor could be Joe Steffan's case, where a decision is expected soon from the Circuit Court in Washington, D.C. Newly installed presidential legal counsel Abner Mikva was chief judge on that court and could have offered insight to the likely decision.



PHOTO BY BLAKE SELL/REUTER

The *New York Times* reported that Drew Days, solicitor general at the Justice Department, is disinclined to petition the Meinhold case for review by the Supreme Court. The rationale is that the Meinhold decision affects only the "old" regulation. They seem willing to concede these few old cases to concentrate their energies on defending the "new," but similar, regulations barring open gay men and lesbians from serving in the military.

Those reports are nothing new. The Justice Department has always been more willing to concede the futility of these cases. Policy has in fact been driven by the Pentagon, and there is no indication they have had a change of heart.

The Clinton administration is "being about as aggressive as they possibly can be in litigation in the Able case," the lead challenge to the "new" regulations, said Beatrice Dohrn, legal director with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Bob Roehr

## Political attack on lesbian fizzles in New York

Democrat Karen Burstein should not be elected New York attorney general because she is "an admitted lesbian," Guy Molinari told a police group on Columbus Day. The former representative is the political boss of Staten Island and heads up the New York City campaign for Republican gubernatorial candidate George Pataki.

But, in a sign that lesbian and gay bashing is

becoming less acceptable among New York Republicans, Pataki distanced himself from the remark. He called upon Molinari to "say that it was a mistake for him to inject this into the campaign."

Dennis Vacco, Burstein's Republican opponent, had taken that position immediately after her primary victory. He went back on camera to say: "My opponent's sexual orientation—the fact that she has stated openly that she is a lesbian—is not an issue for me in this race."

Seventy-two percent of New York state voters said a candidate's sexual orientation would not change their vote, according to a poll conducted by *The New York Times* and 2News.

"I'm sorry that he takes that position, but I can't do anything about it," said Molinari's gay brother, Robert, to *The New York Daily News*. "It doesn't matter what orientation a person has if a person is qualified to do the job."

Bob Roehr

## KFRC: more air pollution

Bay Area radio station KFRC is at it again. This time, morning disc jockey Gary Bryan has been airing a racist song that "pokes fun" at Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Lance Ito. In Bryan's "parody," Ito is depicted eating sushi in his chambers, mixing his R's and L's, and speaking of the Simpson trial in pidgin English. According to Bryan, "It wasn't intended to be racist, and if anybody's feelings were hurt I do regret that."

In March of this year, KFRC's morning DJ was busy shouting that lesbians and gay men are "sick and pathetic." Then, as now, the station and staff offered nothing but "regret." Once again, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission is investigating the station, which is licensed by the federal government to use the public airwaves in service to the community.

Al Kielwasser

## Driving over bigotry

Should lesbians and gay men be allowed to drive? Not according to pseudo-psychologist Paul Cameron. In "The Psychology of Homosexuality," a pamphlet that attempts to demonstrate that lesbians and gay men are prone to criminal behavior, Cameron reports that homosexuals are "about a third more apt [than heterosexuals] to report a traffic ticket or traffic accidents." When lesbians and gays aren't busy fighting for special rights, it seems, we're running people down on the country's highways.

Two recent national advertising ventures should send chills down Cameron's spine. A recent issue of *Urban Fitness*—a new magazine "aimed primarily but not exclusively at gay men

and women"—contains advertisements for Mercedes-Benz and Mazda cars. The Mercedes ad includes an apparently gay couple. The two-page Mazda ad features a lesbian couple embracing alongside a gay couple, accompanied by the familiar slogan: "Mazda... It Just Feels Right."

The November 1994 issue of *Out* magazine contains another advertising milestone. With this issue, *Out* becomes the first queer publication to receive advertising support from the Saab automobile company.

According to *Out*'s account manager, Matt Lancellotti, the Saab ad "is a major breakthrough, as car companies tend to be amongst the most conservative of advertisers." He added, "Saab is 50 percent owned by General Motors, a company that pays great attention to, and has deep concerns about, right-wing media campaigns such as those waged by Donald Wildmon's American Family Association."

Al Kielwasser

## Obscene charges

On Oct. 3 a judge refused to dismiss charges against a gay and lesbian bookstore in the case of *State of Ohio vs. Pink Pyramid*. A trial date has been scheduled for Jan. 9. The bookstore and three of its clerks are charged with "pandering obscenity" because they rented a videotape of Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini's film *Salò or The 120 Days of Sodom*. If found guilty, the defendants could be sentenced to 180 days in prison and a \$1,000 fine. The bookstore could also be fined an additional \$5,000.

In a court brief filed by dozens of individuals and anti-censorship organizations, *Salò* is described as a "serious work by a major film artist" that "cannot possibly be obscene under prevailing constitutional standards." A 1973 Supreme Court case, *Miller vs. California*, established that materials cannot be declared legally obscene unless they lack "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value."

The American Civil Liberties Union and the National Coalition Against Censorship are dismayed by the lack of press coverage given to this important case.

Al Kielwasser



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

