

# national news

## Real World cast member dies

Pedro Zamora, AIDS Action Council board member, dedicated HIV/AIDS peer educator, and cast member of MTV's *The Real World*, died on Nov. 11 of complications of AIDS. He was 22.

Zamora, who fled Cuba at the age of eight with his family during the Mariel boat lift in 1980, became infected with HIV while in high school. He began speaking to groups of young people about AIDS soon after learning of his HIV infection—at 17—as his way of coping. Zamora went on to become one of the nation's leading AIDS educators: appearing on television, nationally and internationally, telling his story to the National Commission on AIDS, to members of Congress, and to thousands of young people around the country.

"In his abbreviated lifetime, Pedro did more for HIV prevention than anyone or any organization I know. His honest, nonjudgmental presentations made him an invaluable advocate for young people with HIV/AIDS or [those] at risk of HIV infection," said Jay Coburn, AIDS Action legislative representative and longtime friend of Zamora.

"Pedro dedicated his too-short life and work to educating and enlightening those around him," said Daniel T. Bross, AIDS Action Council executive director. "The simplicity, clarity and immediacy with which Pedro shared his experiences and ideas with AIDS Action's staff and board of directors set an example for how we as a nation should be fighting this epidemic."

Zamora spent the first half of this year in San Francisco filming MTV's *The Real World*, a program that captures the adventures of and relationships between six young adults living under one roof. MTV invited Pedro to the cast to portray exactly who he was: a young man living with HIV.

"His character added a new dimension and depth to the program and allowed Pedro and his important message to reach young people around the country," Bross said.

As a result of his MTV involvement, Zamora developed a large following of fans who corresponded with him regularly and contributed to a fund established to help with his medical bills.

Zamora had no health insurance and accrued thousands of dollars in medical expenses over the last months of his life.

In cooperation with AIDS Action Council, Zamora testified repeatedly before congressional committees on HIV prevention and the need for health care reform. In July he told one committee, "I am frustrated with programs that are more concerned with offending people in the general

public than with saving lives. If you want to reach me as a young gay man, especially a young gay man of color, then you need to give me information in a language and vocabulary I can understand and relate to. I will be much more likely to hear the message if it comes from someone to whom I can relate," he said.

Zamora added, "I needed positive messages about my sexuality. I needed to know about condoms, how to use them correctly, and where to buy

them. I needed to know that you can be sexual without having intercourse. I needed skills to negotiate relationships. I needed to know how to say 'I don't want to have intercourse, I just want to be held.'"

The Zamora family has established the Pedro Zamora Memorial Fund at the AIDS Action Foundation to help continue his HIV prevention and education work. Contributions should be sent to the Pedro Zamora Memorial Fund, AIDS Action Foundation, 1875 Connecticut Ave., Suite 700, Washington, DC 20009. For more information, contact Shannon Snead at (202) 986-1300, ext. 29.

AIDS Action Council, founded in 1984, is the only national organization devoted solely to advocating at the federal level for more effective AIDS policy, legislation and funding. The council represents more than 1,000 community-based AIDS service organizations throughout the United States.

Rex Wockner

## Gay hams win court case

The Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund announced the settlement of a discrimination complaint lodged by the Lambda Amateur Radio Club, a national gay and lesbian ham radio associa-

tion, against the American Radio Relay League. The amateur club lodged the complaint when its classified ad was rejected by *QST*, a monthly radio-issues magazine published by the Radio Relay League.

In February of this year, the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities ruled that it had "reasonable cause" to hold that the league's refusal to print the classified ad was motivated by bias against club members' sexual orientation.

The settlement requires that the league adopt a policy of nondiscrimination, print a statement to that effect in each subsequent edition of the magazine, and run four one-eighth page ads and six classified ads at no charge to the Lambda Amateur Radio Club. The American Radio Relay League has also agreed to pay \$25,000 in attorney fees.

Jann Gilbert

## ROTC ousted from another campus

Army officials have announced that they will pull out of California State University-Sacramento by the end of 1996. According to the California newspaper *The Modesto Bee*, CSUS President Donald Gerth ordered the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps to phase out in four years due to the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

Many ROTC programs have closed at campuses around the nation as part of military efforts to save money. However, the CSU Sacramento unit was highly valued and would have stayed open if not for Gerth's order, Army officials said.

Students in the program will be allowed to finish their ROTC training at the University of California-Davis campus. No new students will be allowed to enroll.

Jann Gilbert

## New software tracks HIV lab results

Ground Zero Software Inc., a gay-owned and operated business, has announced a new software program, Lab Tracker, designed to help HIV patients and their doctors track laboratory results. The program is aimed at improving decision-making about treatment options by educating caregivers and patients about medical terminology.

Lab Tracker condenses pages of lab results into easier-to-read spreadsheets and graphs. Patients can have a complete record of their HIV health history at home. The software's visual aids indicate quickly how well patients are responding to medications. Extensive help menus explain and demystify unfamiliar medical terms.

According to John Armor, CEO and program

designer, "Until today, people with HIV have lacked a convenient tool to make sense of their laboratory results. Most rely completely on their doctors for advice, and let their doctor's office keep all their records.... Most patients have trouble figuring out whether increasing their dosage of AZT, for example, has improved their level of p24 antigen. Or whether seeing an acupuncturist has had an impact on their T-cell count. Lab Tracker solves all those problems."

Armor said, "Experts in HIV education believe that patients who involve themselves in their own care and treatment are much more likely to feel empowered, have a more optimistic outlook, and ultimately live longer, more fulfilled lives."

For more information, contact Dann Davis of Ground Zero Software at (415) 558-9861.

Jann Gilbert

## DMV reverses license decision

The California Department of Motor Vehicles recently reversed its original decision to deny a license plate reading "AIDS RN" to a registered nurse who specializes in AIDS care. Steve Lee, of Palm Springs, may now have the plate for his 1994 black Thunderbird, on the condition that he prove he's a registered nurse at a hospital.

Lee and others were outraged by the DMV's initial response, which came in an Oct. 18 letter of rejection. The DMV said it "may refuse any license plate configuration which carries connotations offensive to good taste and decency, or which may be misleading."

"What [the DMV] is kind of saying is the way the general society wants to deal with AIDS—they don't want to deal with it," said Lee.

Jann Gilbert

## Milk and Moscone remembered

Sunday, Nov. 27, marks the 16th anniversary of the murder of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and Harvey Milk, the city's first openly gay supervisor. Both men were shot to death at City Hall by Supervisor Dan White in 1979.

The assassinations prompted a candlelight procession down San Francisco's Market Street, and the tradition has continued every year since then. This year's march will begin in the Castro District and proceed to City Hall.

Shortly after his election, Milk sent a message to his constituents: "If bullets should ever enter my brain, let those bullets blow open every closet in this country."

Jann Gilbert

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

