



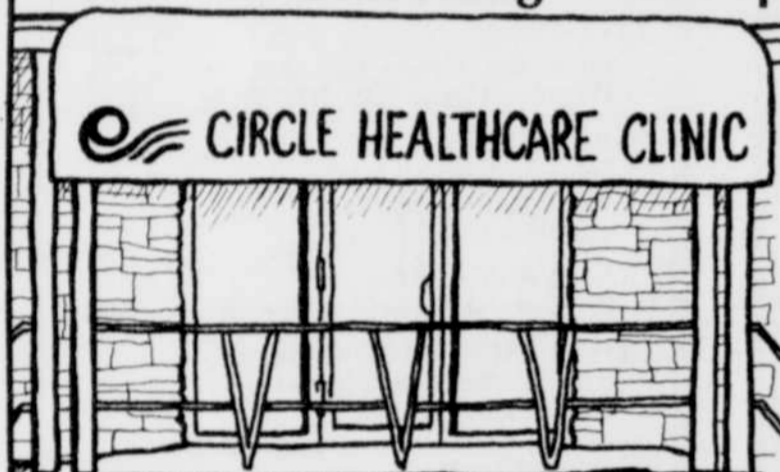
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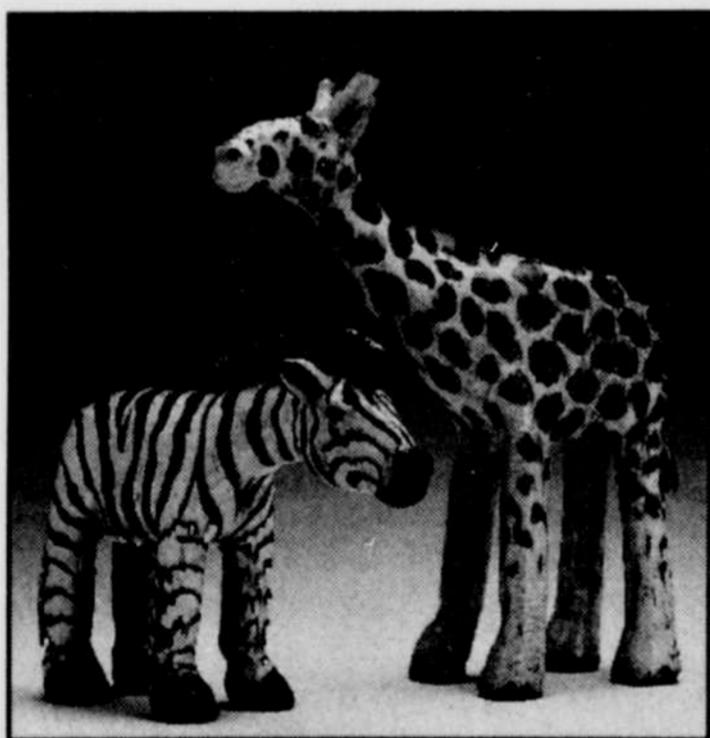
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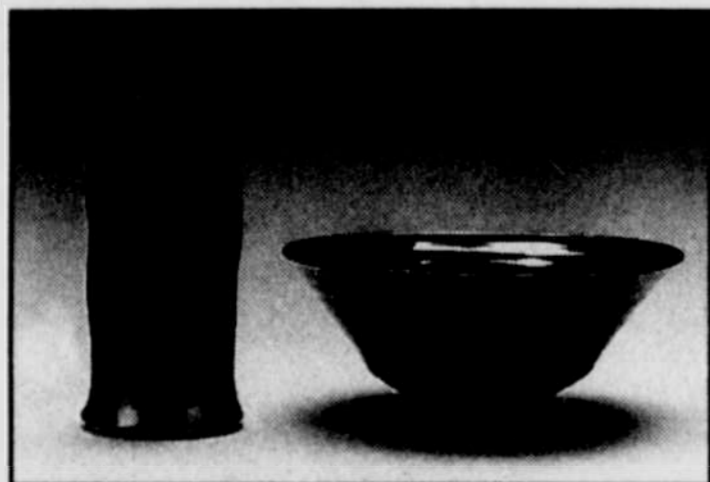
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national news

Organizing in Alaska

Alaska is facing a flurry of sexual minority-related political organizing on both sides of the issue. The state legislature is considering two bills discriminatory to gay men and lesbians. One would bar domestic partnership policies, while another would ban same-sex marriages.

Meanwhile, students at the University of Alaska-Anchorage have initiated a student referendum vote to assess support for adding sexual orientation to the school's nondiscrimination policy.



Scot Nakagawa

At the same time, the gay and lesbian community is under attack by the Rev. Jerry Prevo of the Anchorage Baptist Temple. Prevo produced a TV commercial focused on the "gay death style" that he places on the air whenever a positive gay or lesbian image appears on television. To counter those efforts, gay and lesbian groups placed visibility posters on Anchorage public buses, despite attempts by some city officials to bar such a campaign.

In light of the increasing controversy, Alaskan activists invited the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to lead a weekend strategy session for the gay and lesbian community April 1 and 2. NGLTF field organizers Curt Shepard and Scot Nakagawa met with leaders of Equality Under Alaska Law, The Family (a student group at the University of Alaska-Anchorage), Alaskans for Civil Rights and others, to prepare for the upcoming battles.

About 50 people turned out for the two-day workshop, which featured discussions on the radical right and on organizing techniques for supporting gay and lesbian civil rights. A special emphasis was placed on increasing communication between the college and community organizations.

A vote on the student referendum is expected soon; voting is not yet scheduled on the state legislative bills.

From wire reports

Hotel markets to gay men and lesbians

The Hyatt Regency La Jolla hotel in San Diego has targeted gay men and lesbians with a direct-mailing and an ad in *Out* magazine.

The *Out* ad and the direct-mailer are similar to other Hyatt ads, except the models are two bronzed, blow-dried, thirtysomething yuppie men smiling at each other.

The ad states: "Two people. One special place. Countless possibilities. Explore those possibilities together at the Hyatt Regency La Jolla."

Judy Cronkhite, director of sales for the La Jolla Hyatt explained, "We look at this market as no different from any other target market."

"We felt that [the campaign] just made good business sense and have really wanted to stay away from any publicity about it."

An inside "source" was quoted in the gay travel newsletter *Out & About* as saying that the campaign "ruffled a few feathers at Hyatt headquarters" but other California Hyatts may nonetheless follow suit.

Cronkhite had no comment on *Out & About's* report.

Rex Wockner

Take a memo

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation is asking supporters of people with AIDS to fax or mail a memo to the world's largest pharmaceutical company, Merck and Company Inc. The memo calls on Merck to provide MK-639, its promising new protease inhibitor drug, to at least 3,000 seriously ill people with AIDS who have no other treatment options.

Merck has told AIDS community representatives that it has only enough MK-639 to supply a "compassionate use" program for 300 people by June 1995 and for 1,400 by the end of 1995.

Ronald Baker, editor of *Bulletin of Experimental Treatments for AIDS*, published by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, said, "Given the promising data on MK-639, Merck has a responsibility to do everything possible to make this potentially life-prolonging treatment immediately available to people with AIDS who have exhausted the limited benefits from other AIDS drugs."

The "Memo to Merck" also demands that the company apply to the Food and Drug Administration for accelerated approval of MK-639 before the end of 1995. To receive a copy of the memo, call the San Francisco AIDS Foundation at (415) 863-AIDS.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported Feb. 23 that "Merck executives have stated publicly that MK-639 is the best AIDS drug yet tested."

Jann Gilbert

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