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# national news

## Lambda Rising on-line

The swirling triangle of America Online is about to get a little pinker. *Lambda Rising Online* will offer the first lesbian and gay publication available through one of the big commercial computer services.

It is not surprising that the move should come from AOL. The firm's large, active Gay and Lesbian Community Forum has earned it the reputation of being the most queer-friendly of the major services.

*Lambda* will have a coveted separate icon on the opening screen of the Forum. Click on it and your options will include *Lambda Book Report*—must reading for those following the burgeoning world of queer-themed books and the men and women who create them.

"There will be message boards. There will be live conferences with well-known gay and lesbian authors going on-line with in some cases 48 people and in some cases up to 2,000 people at one time," said Deacon Maccubbin, the man behind it all. "They will be 'virtual' book signing parties" with the authors.



*Lambda* will also feature a full catalog and on-line ordering capacity tied in with Maccubbin's flagship operation, the *Lambda Rising* bookstore in Washington, D.C. He started selling books 21 years ago—more as a community service than a profit-making venture—and his operation has grown to be what publisher Sasha Alyson has called "the largest-volume gay bookstore in the world."

"It took us two years to negotiate the deal [with AOL]; it was like pulling eyeteeth," Maccubbin said.

"It is not that they were hesitant to do it, it is just that AOL has been growing so fast, it has been like riding a bucking bronco over there, and they haven't been able to get everything done in a timely fashion like they were supposed to." AOL's subscriber base passed the 2-million mark earlier in the year, doubling in about 10 months.

Maccubbin had hoped to begin *Lambda Rising Online* in April but now looks to a start-up date of June 5.

Bob Roehr

## Mothers march against AIDS

The First National Mothers March Against AIDS took to the streets of Washington, D.C., on May 7, a glorious spring Sunday. Marchers met near the Washington Monument and marched to Lafayette Park across from the White House carrying photos of the children they have lost to the pandemic.

"Look! Look America! AIDS has a face. AIDS is our sons. AIDS is our daughters. AIDS is our children," pleaded Katherine Miller of Santa Rosa, Calif.

"Hold up your pictures," exhorted Beverly Rotter, founder and national chair of the march. "They are not statistics, they are our children, they

will never write another play, paint another picture, design another dress, or heal another patient." She lost her daughter Iris to the disease in 1991.

"We are here because we want to remind the world of the tragedy that has befallen our children," she continued. "We are here because we are not willing to lose another generation to this plague. We are here to move mountains and you had better believe we will. We have come out fighting, with love in our hearts and fire in our eyes."

Richard Ashworth, a founding member of Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, praised the steps the gay community took "not only to protect themselves but also to help nurture and care for those who were sick and dying. They were heroes in that battle."

Among the gut-wrenching personal testimonials of loss and survival, perhaps the most inspiring came from Brett Lykins of Duluth, Ga.

He became infected through a blood transfusion shortly after his premature birth in 1980 and was diagnosed in 1987. He recently turned 15, and the audience greeted the news with a spontaneous singing of "Happy Birthday." The thin, undersized youth seemed several years younger, one of the tolls that AIDS has taken. But his spirit was magnificent.

"My mom and I have traveled to [the National Institutes of Health] 68 times since 1987. I am now in my fourth clinical drug trial and as long as the researchers keep coming up with new drugs while we wait for a cure I'll keep traveling to NIH and keep trying new drugs."

The march drew perhaps 500 people, the largest part from New York City. It also drew some quiet criticism from both local and national AIDS activists, who understandably wanted to remain off the record. "Typical New York arrogance," is the way one described preparations for the march. "A go-it-alone attitude," said another.

The marchers had little contact or coordination with other AIDS organizations and had rebuffed an early suggestion to make the march part of AIDS Watch '95, the traditional joint lobbying activity held in late May.

Bob Roehr

## FBI spies on AIDS groups; spurs protest

Although insisting, in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, that its hands are tied when it comes to seeking information on right-wing paramilitary groups and militias, the FBI does not seem to face the same problems when it comes to AIDS groups.

According to documents secured under the Freedom of Information Act by the Center for Constitutional Rights, the FBI used paid informants as part of its program to gather information on the activities of ACT UP. In addition to spying on ACT UP, the FBI also reportedly spied on the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights, Senior Action in a Gay Environment and Gay Men's Health Crisis.

The FBI claims it was investigating "fears that demonstrators would throw infected blood and used condoms" at government officials.

The National People's Campaign, a coalition of 600 groups and individuals fighting the "Contract with America," condemned the spying in a press release and urged people to oppose passage of the "omnibus terrorism bill" supported by President Bill Clinton because it would strengthen the FBI's power to spy on and disrupt progressive movements.

The National People's Campaign organized a national day of protest against the "Contract with America" on May 6. The organization is currently planning a national organizer's conference to be held in New York on June 3 and 4. The purpose of the conference is to form strategies for a summer and fall of resistance to the Contract. For information, call (212) 633-6646.

Kristine Chatwood