

Lesbianism: the safer-sex option

A recent presentation at the Western Region Conference of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality concluded what many already knew: Sex between women is a viable safer-sex option and should not be ignored by sex educators.

Although woman-to-woman HIV transmission is theoretically possible, research has shown it to be extremely rare. Sexual activities between women tend to transfer much less body fluid than either anal or vaginal intercourse. Sex educator Marcia Munson presented the results of eight different studies, involving nearly a million women, published between 1990 and 1994. These studies found no evidence of woman-to-woman HIV transmission.

There have been over 250,000 AIDS-related deaths in the United States since 1978. Worldwide, only five cases of possible woman-to-woman HIV transmission have been reported in scientific literature.

Sportscaster slams lesbians on pro golf tour

In an interview published in *The* (Wilmington, Del.) *News Journal*, CBS sports commentator Ben Wright claimed that lesbians were damaging the Ladies Professional Golf Association.

Wright was quoted as saying that "lesbians in the sport hurt women's golf," and that the presence of lesbians in women's golf made it difficult for the sport to win sponsorship and television coverage. He was also quoted as saying, "women are handicapped by having boobs...it's not easy for them to keep their left arm straight, and that's one of the tenets of the game."



In a Reuter news story, LPGA Commissioner Charles Mechem said, "The suggestion of a problem [with lesbianism] is totally at odds with the facts and our experience. In my four and a half years as commissioner I have never had one letter nor one phone call from a sponsor, media representative or fan to suggest that this issue is a problem."

Wright insisted he was misquoted in the interview.

Kansas town now safe for Dorothy and friends

The City Commission of Lawrence, Kan., added the words "sexual orientation" to the city's Human Rights Ordinance on May 4. In so doing, Lawrence became the only city in Kansas to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. The ordinance covers discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations.

The victory may be short-lived, as opponents, including Lawrence Mayor Bob Moody, support repeal of the legislation. Simply Equal, a community coalition that led the campaign to add "sexual orientation" to the ordinance, plans to continue the fight for equal rights in Lawrence.

ACT UP acts up

Overtaking dinner tables, chanting, blowing whistles and throwing fliers, ACT UP-San Francisco invaded and disrupted a pricey (\$125 a plate) fund-raising dinner for Project Inform held at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero. Claiming that mainstream AIDS organizations are puppets of the pharmaceuticals industry, ACT UP-San Francisco stated that this was just the first of many planned disruptions.

Particularly galling to the demonstrators was Project Inform's invitation to Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, to speak at the dinner. Ironically, the other featured guest speaker was Larry Kramer, founder of ACT UP.

Hite's new book published in U.S., finally

Fifteen months after its publication in Europe, Shere Hite's new book, *The Hite Report on the Family*, finally arrived at book stores in the United States. The book's U.S. release had been scheduled for Spring 1994. The original U.S. publisher, Dutton, refused to publish shortly after receiving the manuscript, citing "editorial reasons." Grove Atlantic eventually published the U.S. edition.

According to a Reuter report, the book, based on answers to some 3,000 questionnaires, states that men raised by single mothers have better relationships with women and that the children of single mothers have a higher respect for their mothers. The book concludes that the traditional two-parent family is repressive. In the book Hite writes, "The current slogan 'preservation of family values' really means not preservation of love in the family but preservation of the hierarchical family."

D.C. court rules lesbian lover next of kin

In what is considered to be the first ruling of its kind, a Washington, D.C., Superior Court judge ruled in April that the lesbian lover of a woman killed in an accident on city property, qualifies as legal "next of kin" and, as such, has the right to sue the city under D.C.'s Wrongful Death Act.

According to a story in *The Washington Blade*, Victoria Lane died in August 1993, two weeks after a tree branch crashed through the windshield of the car in which she was riding. Laura Solomon, Lane's lover, and the couple's two children, filed suit against the District of Columbia. The city challenged the claims of the children and Solomon. In January, a ruling was issued allowing the children's claim to proceed.

In issuing the order allowing Solomon's claim to proceed, Judge Frederick Dorsey said, "The relationship between Ms. Solomon and Ms. Lane contained all the attributes of a married couple but for the fact that it is a same-sex union that cannot be recognized with a marriage license. Although they were barred from being considered legal spouses, this close relationship, coupled with the fact that they were both legally recognized parents of the same two children, leads the Court to conclude that Ms. Solomon is the next of kin of Ms. Lane."

Dorsey's decision is not binding on any other court, but sexual minority legal activists hope that Dorsey's reasoning may influence judges ruling in future cases.

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