

Presidential HIV/AIDS council created

The Clinton administration announced a Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS on June 15, and nobody cared. Not the White House, which did not schedule a meet-and-greet photo opportunity—standard for such bodies. Not the president, who was on his way to an international summit. Not AIDS activists, who, more than two years ago, greeted the suggestion of such a group with everything from a yawn to outright hostility.

The chairman is R. Scott Hitt, a gay Los Angeles physician with one of the largest HIV practices in the nation. He is also on the boards of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund and AIDS Project Los Angeles.

Other members include Bob Hattoy, openly gay member of the Clinton administration, and Alexander Robinson, longtime lobbyist on AIDS issues with the American Civil Liberties Union. Seven members of the 30-member panel have yet to be named.

In May of last year John Gurrola, spokesman for then AIDS czar Kristine Gebbie, said that 17 people had been cleared by the White House for the commission and that he expected the full compliment "soon."

That was before Gebbie was fired and the office on AIDS policy was reduced from about 25 to only 4 employees.

Mark Barnes, executive director of the AIDS Action Council, cautioned, "Our community is looking to the president for leadership and action, not for more open-ended study."

"It's worse than useless," said Steve Michael of ACT UP-Washington, "because it gives some people the sense that Clinton is doing something on AIDS when, in fact, he is not."

"The question for us now is not only does the president have the courage, but does he have the relevance? Or, is he on the fringe?" said Bill Freeman, executive director of the National Association of People With AIDS. "The question right now is whether or not this administration can deliver on anything."

Robinson held little optimism that the council would have a significant impact. But for him the options were "to say no, or say yes and hope you will make a difference."

Cynics note the pattern of the Clinton White House on AIDS issues: Some sort of "activity" is stage-managed around the time of lesbian and gay pride activities at the start of summer and again for World AIDS Day in December. The rest of the year it's silence, as the plague continues its killing ways.

Bob Roehr

Gay series premieres on PBS

Denver Public Broadcasting System station KBDI made broadcast history last month when it premiered *Network Q: Out Across America*, the first weekly gay and lesbian television series. Thirteen one-hour episodes of the show are being distributed via satellite to PBS stations nationwide.

A handful of stations have confirmed they will carry the series. Those stations include WNET in New York; WLRN in Miami; WYBE in Philadelphia; and KBDI in Denver. The program is distributed by Continental Program Marketing, a service of the Central Educational Network. Oregon Public Broadcasting currently has no plans to air the series.

COLORADO

Out Across America has a format similar to the *On the Road* series. The show travels to different regions, profiling the people, issues and events in the gay and lesbian community. Locations visited by the series include New York; Los Angeles; Seattle; Denver; Atlanta; Overt, Miss.; Boston; Raleigh-Durham, N.C.; New Orleans; Salt Lake City; Austin, Texas; and Sydney, Australia.

The series is an independent production of the Southeastern Arts, Media and Education Project, a 501(c3) organization in Atlanta, Ga. *Out Across America* is funded entirely through private donations. It is not underwritten by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and is provided to PBS member stations at no cost.

Kristine Chatwood

Ithaca mayor supports same-sex marriage

The *Ithaca* (N.Y.) *Journal* reports that Mayor Benjamin Nichols wants to issue a marriage license to a gay male couple who recently applied for one. "It is my belief that it is appropriate for same-sex marriages to take place," Nichols told the Ithaca Common Council.

City Attorney Charles Guttman also favors issuing the marriage license to Toshav Greene and Phillip Storrs. Others, including some gay- and lesbian-rights activists, are concerned the timing may not be right.

A similar case is currently before the Hawaii Supreme Court. Some advocates are concerned that if Ithaca issues a license to Greene and Storrs which is then challenged in New York's courts the outcome could adversely affect the Hawaii decision. If New York courts did not uphold same-sex marriages, that could establish a precedent that Hawaii's court would follow.

Kristine Chatwood

Jury awards \$10.5 million to family of victim

One of 10 youths convicted in the 1991 gay-bashing murder of Houston banker Paul Broussard was ordered by a jury to pay Broussard's family \$10.5 million in civil damages. The jury found that Brian Spake, 21, committed gross negligence in contributing to Broussard's death. Spake kicked Broussard, who was stabbed to death by another youth.

According to a story in Colorado's *Out* front newspaper, Larry S. Lee, the attorney for Broussard's mother, doubts the damages will be collected. "It is not really about the money, it is the message. This community is not going to condone these types of vicious hate crimes. Those who commit them will be pursued in both criminal and civil courts," Lee said.

Six more young men are scheduled to go to trial in the civil lawsuit. Among them is Jon Christopher Buice, 20, who received a 45-year prison sentence for stabbing Broussard.

Kristine Chatwood



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Study director: Dr. David Rosenstein, Oregon Health Sciences University

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