

national briefs

CALIFORNIA

Fifteen years ago, two young men were removed from Disneyland's Tomorrowland Terrace for dancing together, in violation of what was then The Magic Kingdom's ban on same-sex dancing. On Sept. 9, lesbians and gay men will gather at the Tomorrowland Terrace to commemorate that expulsion and the subsequent court ruling that overturned Disney's 27-year ban.



Live "pop 40" bands will provide the entertainment. The dance begins at 7:30 pm. Admission to Disneyland is \$33 for adults. Those attending the dance are urged to wear clothing and buttons that celebrate lesbian and gay pride, such as those with a Lambda, pink triangle or rainbow flag.

This is not a Disneyland-sanctioned event; it is an informal gathering. For further information, call (619) 778-3869.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Last month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs became the latest cabinet-level government department to include sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policy. The new policy, entitled "Reaffirmation of Equal Employment Opportunity Policy," was issued Aug. 16.

Lesbian- and gay-rights groups have pushed the Clinton administration to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in federal employment. In response, the administration instructed the various departments and independent government agencies to issue nondiscrimination policies.

Oral arguments in Colorado's Amendment 2 court case are scheduled to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 10. Arguments are set to begin at 10 am.



Amendment 2, an anti-sexual-minority initiative passed by Colorado voters in November 1992, has been overturned by courts at every step of its journey up the judicial ladder. Most recently, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled the measure unconstitutional.

Although arguments will be heard in October, a decision is not expected before next spring.

In what some perceive as an attempt to rescue his floundering campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas), is supporting an effort by a far-right political group to oust an openly gay member of the Des Moines, Iowa, School Board. The Iowa Christian Coalition, a chapter of Pat Robertson's political group, has targeted Jonathan C. Wilson for defeat in the upcoming school board elections. Wilson publicly acknowledged that he is gay during a

battle earlier this year by right-wing activists to defend sexual-orientation discrimination in a proposed change to the school district's curriculum.

In a letter seeking support from members of the militant anti-gay group The Report, Gramm condemned the "radical homosexual community" for mounting an "attack on our children." He accused lesbians and gay men of threatening "the very essence of our nuclear families."

Dr. Robert H. Eichberg, co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign Fund's National Coming Out Project, died Aug. 11 from complications of AIDS. He was 50 years old.

In 1988, Eichberg, a psychologist, co-founded National Coming Out Day, an organization that encouraged lesbians and gay men to fight discrimination by being open and honest about their sexual orientation. National Coming Out Day is celebrated each year on Oct. 11. In 1993, the National Coming Out Day organization became a program of the Human Rights Campaign Fund. Its name was changed earlier this year to HRCF's National Coming Out Project. The program focuses year-round on supporting organizations that help people to come out.

OHIO

A federal judge here ruled Aug. 4 that HIV may be considered an "extraordinary physical impairment" under the federal sentencing guidelines used to determine reduced prison terms.

In considering the case of Carlo Streat, who was sentenced to 63 months in prison for robbing a Cleveland bank, federal Judge Ann Aldrich of the Northern District Court of Ohio, Eastern Division, ruled that while HIV status alone does not warrant a sentence reduction, "once a defendant has developed infections...related to his or her compromised immune system, those impairments may be sufficient to warrant a [reduced sentence]."

This ruling is the first in the country to hold that a prisoner's becoming HIV symptomatic, without his or her having developed AIDS, may justify a reduction in a jail sentence. It does not provide for a reduced sentence for every prisoner with HIV. An "individualized determination" of each prisoner's condition must be made by the courts.

VERMONT

Stating that the only criterion for adoption should be "what's in the best interest of the child," Vermont Gov. Howard Dean said he will not sign a bill reforming the state adoption process if it includes an anti-sexual-minority amendment.



Speaking with the Vermont gay newspaper *Out in the Mountains*, Dean discussed his impressions of the effectiveness of Vermont's gay and lesbian civil rights law. The law, which Dean signed in 1992, bans discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment and public accommodations. "I think it has [been effective]," he said. "In general, there is more of an atmosphere of tolerance in Vermont than there is in a lot of other states, which doesn't mean we don't have a long way to go."

Compiled by Kristine Chatwood

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