

books. Subsequently, the principal told her the school board did not want her use the books in the classroom because they contained gay characters.

Culliton then wrote to both the principal and a new superintendent asking if she was being ordered not to use the books. Neither the principal nor the superintendent answered her letters. As she had already received approval through the normal procedures and her letters had gone unanswered, Culliton distributed the books to her students. Shortly after learning that Culliton was using the books in class, the principal recommended she be fired. Insisting that the issue was insubordination, not homophobia, the school board voted last month to fire her. Culliton plans to fight her firing.

The day after Culliton's dismissal became public knowledge, about 40 students from Mascenic High School walked out of classes in protest. Students who refused to return to class were suspended.

Kristine Chatwood

Martina touts new VISA card

Martina Navratilova is teaming up with Subaru of America, Travelers Bank and VISA USA to market a new affinity card aimed at gay men and lesbians. Navratilova will serve as the unpaid spokesperson for the card.

The Rainbow Card is one of the newest affinity cards, which are credit cards targeting a specific market. Money raised from consumer use of the Rainbow Card will raise funds for charities. The money will be distributed by the Rainbow Card Foundation of Philadelphia. Subaru of America is the founding sponsor of the Rainbow Foundation.

In the first year, money from the Rainbow Foundation will be channeled to six nonprofit organizations, including the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Community Research Initiative on AIDS.



According to the *New York Times* News Service, Subaru learned through focus-group interviews with Subaru owners that the company carried some equity with gay consumers, particularly lesbians. This discovery led to a decision to target some of its marketing to the lesbian and gay consumer.

Kristine Chatwood

Conservative Christians condemn Coors

Coors Brewing Co. finds itself between the proverbial rock and hard place these days. Long considered a stalwart supporter of right-wing antigay causes, Coors has shaken its conservative allies with its recent decision to extend health benefits to the same-sex partners of employees. And gay and lesbian activists, while supportive of the extension of benefits, remain wary of the company's history of right-wing activity.

The Rev. Fred Phelps, a right-wing activist from Topeka, Kan., is planning a protest in November at the Coors Brewery in Golden, Col., according to the Associated Press.

"I'm kind of glad that they [the gay community] are hassling Coors, because they deserve it trying to straddle that moral fence," Phelps said.



"This is not a matter that can be compromised in our view of things."

Although the Coors Brewing Co. may be softening its stand in regard to homosexuals, Coors family members are still involved with conservative groups. The Coors Foundation has given money to the Heritage Foundation and the Mountain States Foundation, both of which support antigay agendas.

Kristine Chatwood

White House HIV summit planned

"President Clinton plans to host a one-day White House conference on HIV and AIDS in December featuring about 175 experts in research, prevention, treatment and discrimination."

It wasn't exactly a banner headline, but instead a one-paragraph article "Inside the Loop" in the Oct. 9 edition of *The Washington Post*.

Members of the Presidential HIV/AIDS Advisory Council which called for the summit know little more about it, except that they now report the summit will be held on Dec. 6.

"Part of what you get is a higher level of visibility for the issue," said council member Alexander Robinson, co-chair of the coalition National Organizations Responding to AIDS.

He hopes it will also "shake up the bureaucracy." He sees the administration claiming "to have accomplished all of these things, yet at the agency level we often meet some of the same old barriers we met before."

Ben Schatz, another council member and executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, "hopes the president is exposed to ideas and thinking that normally doesn't get expressed to presidents."

Schatz has another objective: "When the president responds off the cuff to things, as he tends to do, we are able to get him saying the right things in front of some of the boys in suits, who tend to be somewhat more indifferent than he is. My hope is that a strong message is sent by his presence and by his comments."

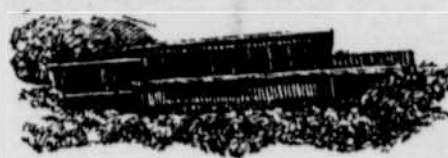
Schatz would speak to the president about "homophobia and racism, two co-factors which have absolutely crippled our efforts to fight the spread of HIV, to do meaningful prevention and to care for people with HIV."

"The issues of social prejudice and bias as manifested by Jesse Helms and his ilk have to be squarely on the table.... Many of us tend to gloss that over," he said. The administration needs to be pushed "to act in a more courageous fashion."

"It will be just schmooze, schmooze, schmooze," criticized Steve Michael of ACT UP Washington. "The only way it would be acceptable for anyone to participate in the meeting is if they publicly hold him accountable to his 1992 promises."

"Anybody who writes it off beforehand is simply being a rejectionist," countered Schatz. "I don't think talk is meaningless. A movement that says 'Silence equals death' cannot also say that talk is meaningless."

Bob Roehr



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