

# national news

## A most passionate kiss

The creators of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* included a story about same-gender love in a ground-breaking step for the series. On Nov. 1, an episode entitled "Rejoined" revolved around the female Trill Jadzia Dax (played by Terry Farrell) who reunited with a woman with whom she was married during what 20th-century earthlings would call a past life as a man.

Although the episode is not specifically a story about lesbians, it does show how love has no boundaries and also features one of the most passionate kisses between two women ever on network television.

## Teacher suspended for showing *Philadelphia*

A Union County, S.C., teacher has been suspended and placed on probation for showing a feature film criticized by some parents and a local pastor for its supposed vulgarity and promotion of homosexuality.

School Superintendent Buddy Broome says a Sims Junior High School health teacher was wrong in showing *Philadelphia* to a class of seventh- and eighth-graders because of the adult language.

The movie features actor Tom Hanks in an Oscar-winning performance as a gay attorney living with AIDS.

Broome criticized the teacher, who was not identified, for failing to get permission from the principal or other school officials before presenting the movie. He says the teacher has been kept from school with pay while the incident is being investigated.

## Jail time may await transgendered Coloradan

Sean O'Neill, a 20-year-old transgendered person in Colorado, has been charged with the sexual assault of four young women who say they engaged in consensual sex with O'Neill on numerous occasions without knowing that O'Neill was born female.

O'Neill, who does not use the words "transsexual" or "transgendered," reportedly has a fluid approach to gender and lives primarily as a man, preferring male pronouns. The events in question occurred years ago, when both O'Neill and the women were teenagers.

If convicted, O'Neill—born Sharon Clark—faces up to 32 years in prison. If prosecutors are successful, some believe the case would effectively equate the failure to disclose one's genital status as a "criminal deception" with any resulting sex—consensual or not—being deemed "sexual assault" or rape.

## Courts back adoption

A New Jersey appeals court ruled Oct. 27 that a 47-year-old woman could legally adopt the 3-year-old twins of her partner. The ruling is a significant victory for sexual-minority-rights advocates.

In the 2-1 ruling, the majority said the two women have lived together for 14 years and have shared in raising the twins, who were conceived through donor insemination.

The majority ruled that it was in the "best interests" of the twins to approve the adoption and provide them with the "full range of legal and financial" benefits that stem from legally recog-

nized parental relationships.

A few days later, the New York Court of Appeals—that state's highest court—ruled that couples need not be married in order to adopt.

The decision, which affects both unmarried heterosexual and same-sex couples, stemmed from a case involving a lesbian couple who were seeking a second-parent adoption.

## Elderly man contracts HIV through bite

A 91-year-old Florida man was infected with HIV by a prostitute who bit him during a robbery, in what is the first confirmed report of the disease being transmitted through a human bite, says the Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel*.

Federal health officials used DNA testing during the past few months to determine that the strain of virus infecting the prostitute matched the strain found in the elderly man that she bit while robbing him last year in West Palm Beach.

A charge of attempted murder was dropped against her after she pleaded guilty to other charges. She is now serving a 10-year sentence for robbery and burglary charges. The man, meanwhile, has moved in with his daughter near West Palm Beach; family members report that he is weak and in pain.

## Bankruptcy judge says no to joint petition

A federal bankruptcy judge has denied two men in a long-term relationship the right to file a joint bankruptcy petition in the first reported case of its kind. The ruling was issued in Atlanta in mid-October.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge A. David Kahn said the couple could not file jointly because they are not legally married.

The two men had filed for a Chapter 13 consumer reorganization petition in March. According to court papers, they exchanged vows in a 1993 religious ceremony in Las Vegas and consider themselves to be married. They also share income and debts.

Chapter 13 provides individual debtors and their "spouse" protection from creditors while they reorganize their debts. The bankruptcy code does not define "spouse," but the couple unsuccessfully proposed that it should apply to individuals who cohabit, have an agreement that is permanent and exclusive of all other relationships, and share debts and income.

## A Day Without Graphics set for Dec. 1

AIDS and HIV awareness will extend to the Internet's World Wide Web for World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, when A Day Without Graphics will take place. Participating Internet sites will disable online graphics, darken their text screens, or link to a special page on the Web to demonstrate AIDS awareness.

The idea for A Day Without Graphics came from other World AIDS Day activities such as A Day Without Art, a project where museums remove or drape works of art, and A Day Without Light, in which city lights are lowered for candle-light marches.

Both projects are held in cities worldwide. Likewise, A Day Without Graphics will take place at Internet sites around the globe.

Those Internet Web sites that will be participating are requested to send electronic mail to wad@cyberzine.org. Individuals are encouraged to visit the A Day Without Graphics site at <http://www.cyberzine.org/html/WAD/wadpage.html> on World AIDS Day.

Compiled by Inga Sorensen

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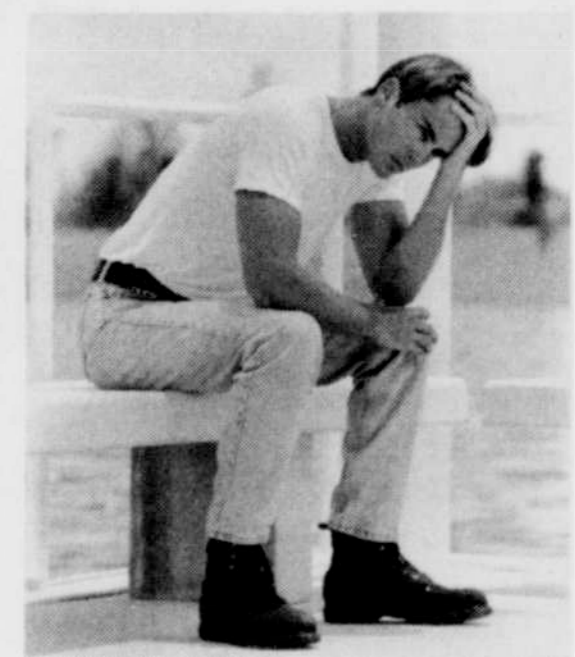
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