

Stars come out for gay and lesbian youth

The second Academy Awards Celebration for Youth was held March 25 at Club Zei in Washington, D.C. Sponsored by Gays and Lesbians for Individual Liberty, the event raises money for the Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League. SMYAL provides programs for gay, lesbian and transgendered youth in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia.

The event's biggest fund-raiser is a silent auction at which partygoers can bid on items donated by dozens of celebrities. Among this year's donated items were autographed photos of Ellen Burstyn, James Earl Jones, Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara, Carl Reiner, Debbie Reynolds, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Oliver Stone. Playwrights Terrence McNally, Edward Albee and Beth Henley donated autographed copies of their recent plays. Other items were contributed by Julie Andrews, Julia Child, Doris Day, Phil Donahue, Charlton Heston, Jack Lemmon, Greg Louganis, Mary Tyler Moore, Elizabeth Taylor, Marlo Thomas, Garry Trudeau and Ted Turner.

Senate repeals HIV discharge measure

The U.S. Senate has voted to repeal a provision of the Department of Defense authorization bill that required the military to discharge all HIV-positive service members.

The Senate unanimously agreed to put forth the repeal as an amendment to HR 3019, the Omnibus Rescissions and Appropriations Act. Sens. William Cohen (R-Maine) and Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) led the move to repeal the discriminatory measure. They were joined by 56 co-sponsoring senators, including Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), Alphonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) and Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.).

The original measure, which was sponsored by Rep. Robert Dornan (R-Calif.), would force the discharge of 1,049 HIV-positive service members and cut off all health benefits to their families. A similar measure in the House of Representatives to repeal the measure has more than 145 co-sponsors.

The repeal effort is supported by Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. John Shalikashvili, Secretary of Defense William Perry, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans and the Air Force Association.

President Clinton called the discharge provision unconstitutional. His administration is strongly supporting the repeal effort.

In a statement commenting on the provision, the VFW said that "to forcibly separate HIV-positive personnel while other service members with equally serious medical conditions are allowed to remain on duty seems unfair, punitive and unjust."

Atlanta progressives grab name from anti-gay group

When Nancy Schaefer, an anti-gay activist in Atlanta, allowed the incorporation of her organization, Family Concerns, to expire, local progressives and gay activists lost no time in claiming the name for themselves.

Schaefer has been ordered to "cease and desist" from using the name Family Concerns in mailings or from identifying herself as an officer or spokesperson for the organization, the *Southern Voice* reports.

A statement issued by the new board of Family Concerns Inc. said, "For some time it has been quite frustrating to have extremist groups claim exclusive rights to the use and definition of the

family and family concerns. So, as the corporate name became available, it was only natural for those opposed to the radical right agenda to take advantage of the opportunity."

Hate flourishes on the Internet

Hatred has found a home on the World Wide Web. The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation reports a proliferation of Web sites spouting anti-gay and hate rhetoric. Among the groups that post anti-gay material on their Web sites include the American Family Association, Skinheads USA, the Christian Coalition, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, American Life League, Aryan Nations, the Creators Rights party, Eagle Forum, the Constitution Action Party, Promise Keepers, Stormfront White Nationalists, the Family Research Council, National Alliance and Christian Leadership Ministries, the Constitution Action Party, the 700 Club, Exodus International and the Rutherford Institute.



"Such obvious hatred being transmitted via a public forum like the Internet is a blatant example of how easy it is to marginalize a group of people to make them appear inferior," Loren Javier, GLAAD's director of information systems said in a story in Nebraska's *The New Voice*. "One Web site entitled 'Intolerance of, discrimination against, and the death penalty for homosexuals is prescribed in the Bible' is a venomous attack on the gay community. It is distressing when 'pro-family' quasi-religious groups like the American Family Association post articles and pamphlets in the form of educational material that in fact threaten the existence of lesbians and gay men. Both produce the same results—fear, hatred and intolerance."

Kaposi's sarcoma virus grown in lab

A microbiologist at the University of California at San Francisco has grown in the laboratory the virus that causes Kaposi's sarcoma. Dr. Don Ganem said the discovery was a key step toward identifying the virus and could one day help AIDS researchers develop a vaccination to prevent the spread of KS.

Ganem's findings were published in *Nature Medicine* in February.

Kaposi's sarcoma, a disfiguring tumorous condition afflicting many people with AIDS, causes oval-shaped, red-purple skin lesions. It is not usually fatal, but it can be, especially when it attacks the lungs. Before the rise of AIDS, KS was a rare condition that affected only elderly men of Jewish or Mediterranean descent.

The suspect virus, KSHV, is herpes-related and shows similarities to Epstein-Barr and a monkey tumor virus known as herpes virus saimiri.

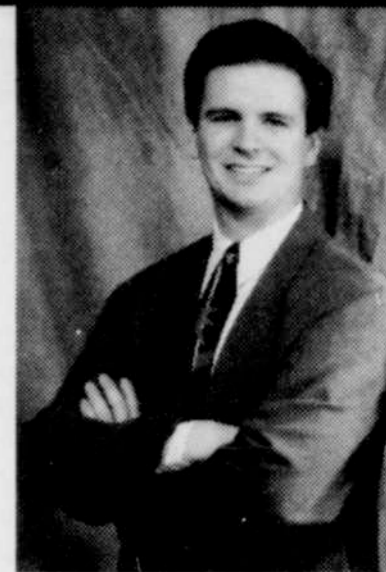
A group of researchers at the University of Michigan announced that they also had grown the virus. Their results have not yet been published.

Compiled by Kristine Chatwood

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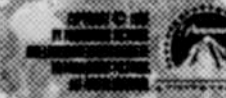
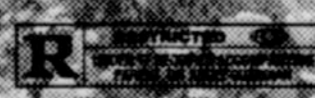


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