

national briefs

CALIFORNIA

Chris Brownlie Hospice, the first licensed AIDS hospice in California, has closed after eight years of operation, according to a United Press International report. At times during its operation the hospice had long waiting lists, but powerful new drug therapies have reduced the need for its services.

Patients have been sent home or transferred to other hospices run by the foundation, and most of the employees have found jobs at those facilities.

CYBERSPACE

Hangin'OUT, the first worldwide interactive talk show for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people, debuted on Sunday, Oct. 6. Shows are broadcast live on the Internet with RealAudio technology every Sunday evening between 4 and 6 pm (PST), and an archive of previously aired shows is available at the Web site <http://www.hanginout.com>.

Co-hosts John McMullen and Lucia Regan open the show with a brief newscast, then open the floor for callers and e-mailers to express their views.

FLORIDA

Following the theft and distribution of a county health department list of people with AIDS in the St. Petersburg area, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been called in to review Florida's procedures for protecting such lists, reports United Press International. State law requires doctors to report the names of patients diagnosed with AIDS for the purpose of tracking the spread of the disease. Twenty-five other states have similar laws. While states are responsible for designing and implementing their own security systems, the CDC oversees the reporting program and requires certain confidentiality measures.

A Pinellas County Health Department employee, identified as William Calvert III, is on leave with pay pending the outcome of the state's criminal investigation. Calvert stands accused of a second-degree misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of 60 days in jail and a \$500 fine. One of the people named on the list has filed a federal lawsuit against the county and the state seeking an injunction barring further release of the list, and punitive damages.

MASSACHUSETTS

The Bisexual Resource Center in Cambridge, Mass., has published a second edition of its *Bisexual Resource Guide*. The book contains listings of bisexual, lesbian and gay groups in more than 22 countries, safer-sex information, Internet resources, conference dates and calls for papers, bi-friendly merchandise, an annotated film guide and an annotated bibliography of recommended reading.

The guide costs \$11.95, postage paid. To order a copy, send a check or money order to BRC, PO Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

MONTANA

The Metropolitan Community Church in Great Falls was vandalized during the night of Sept. 23 or morning of Sept. 24, according to an Associated Press report. Graffiti, including swastikas



and upside-down crosses, were spray-painted on the front door and north wall of the building. A similar incident occurred last year at the Mount Olive Christian Fellowship church, where most of the congregation is black.

No arrests have been made, and law enforce-

ment officials are not yet committed to investigating the incident as a hate crime, according to Ray St. Onge of the county sheriff's office.

"I think this is a statement against gay and lesbian people," said MCC's the Rev. Gina Hartung, who has been highly visible in recent local news for her outspoken opposition to the Defense of Marriage Act.

NEW YORK

Beginning in January, computer and software manufacturer IBM will provide benefits for the domestic partners of its U.S. employees, according to a *New York Times* story. With 110,000 employees in the United States, IBM is the largest employer yet to extend health coverage to same-sex couples. The company, based in Armonk, N.Y., has barred discrimination based on sexual orientation since 1974. Unmarried heterosexual couples are not covered under the new policy, which requires the worker and partner to sign a notarized affidavit stating that they live together, have a "committed relationship," and are "financially interdependent."



The Gay and Lesbian National Hotline, an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, opened its toll-free telephone lines on Oct. 1. The hot line provides free and anonymous information; peer counseling and referrals for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, queer youth and all people concerned about sexual minority issues; and maintains a database of more than 13,000 community groups and organizations, businesses and professionals.



The hot line accepts calls weeknights between 6 and 11 pm EDT, with hope that additional fund-raising will allow increased hours of operation in the future. The hot line number is 1-888-THE-GLNH; for more information visit <http://www.glnh.org> on the World Wide Web, for volunteer opportunities call (212) 633-7492.

RHODE ISLAND

Reuters new service, citing a recent article in *Sex Weekly Plus*, reported data Sept. 23 attributed to the Rhode Island Department of Health indicating that the number of diagnosed cases of AIDS among heterosexuals in the state is now equal to the number of cases among homosexuals.

The highest rate of new diagnoses is among Latina women who contract HIV through heterosexual contact.

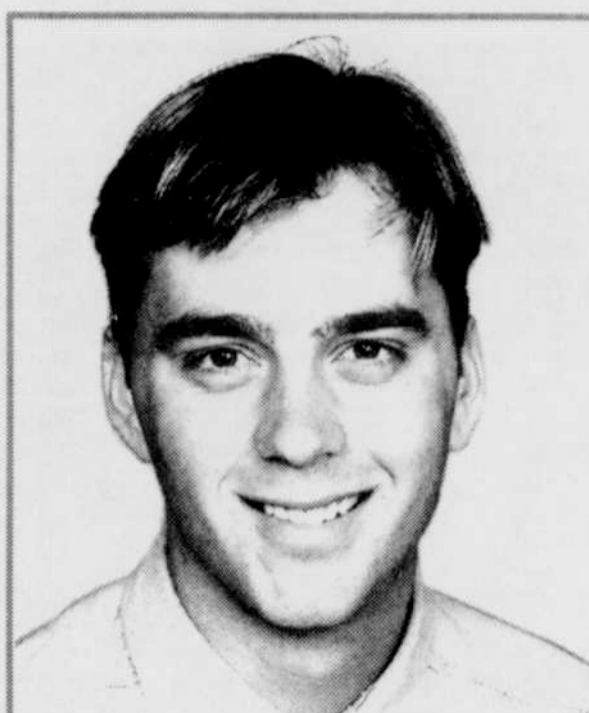
Despite a slight increase in the total number of AIDS cases in Rhode Island, the state has cut funds for prevention and education programs. Health department officials maintain that the apparent increase may simply be due to better reporting.

TEXAS

Kay Longcope, editor and publisher of *The Texas Triangle*, announced on Sept. 26 that the weekly gay and lesbian newspaper serving Houston and Austin will cease publication with its Oct. 10 issue. After surviving attacks from Christian radio host Wyatt Roberts and the Texas branch of the American Family Association, the paper has been unable to meet the rising cost of newsprint.

During Roberts' and the AFA's campaign against the *Triangle*, many businesses chose to advertise to show solidarity against bigotry, but the increase in revenue was simply not enough. One of *Triangle's* strongest supporters, First Texas Honda, will receive an award for corporate courage from the Human Rights Campaign at the annual Austin Black Tie Affair fund-raiser.

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttone



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