

Emily Simon

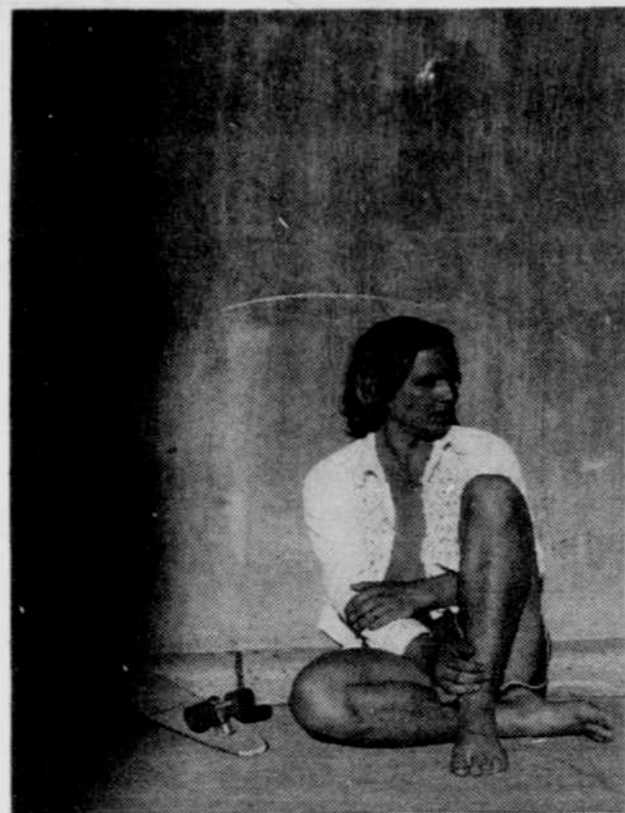
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national news

Internet addiction concern

A University of Pittsburgh researcher has released a study indicating that surfing the Internet can be as addictive as drugs, alcohol or gambling. Nearly 400 men and women participated in the study, the results of which were presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association held in Toronto, reports United Press International.

The study found that 76 percent of the participants spend an average of 40 hours a week on the Internet. The average age for men meeting the addiction criteria was 29; women were somewhat older, averaging 43 years of age. Those most likely to be addicted to the Internet were people not working outside the home. This group included students, the disabled, retirees, homemakers and the unemployed.

Unlike previous research, which indicated that men are most likely to be affected by technology-based addictions, Kimberly Young, assistant professor of psychology, said, "Our present results show that the largest number of respondents who met the adapted criteria and were most likely to develop an addiction to the Internet were middle-aged females and those—both men and women—who were currently unemployed."

Those meeting the criteria for Internet addiction were most likely to spend their on-line time involved in role-playing games or participating in chat room discussions.

Kristine Chatwood

Perot gets queer support

Former AMFAR fund-raising chairman and Reform Party candidate Ross Perot has stated his opposition to DOMA and earned endorsements from some gay and lesbian activists.

In an "Open letter to gay America," published in mid-September in the *Dallas Morning News*, Perot endorses including José Sarria, Jaye Bell and H.L. Perry called for reform of "the excesses of a bipartisan Big Government that has regularly abused the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, abuses like the Defense of Marriage Act, which represent a serious danger to gay people and to all Americans."

Jim Mangia, Perot's liaison to the gay and lesbian community and Reform Party of California secretary, organized the group of endorsers in response to Clinton's backsliding on sexual minority civil rights. Mangia was recently honored for outstanding national leadership by VOICES '96, a coalition of lesbian and gay organizations working on election issues.

Christopher D. Cuttone

A faux charitable image

Look out for the November issue of *POZ*, the national monthly magazine for people affected by HIV and AIDS, which will include an excerpt from the forthcoming book *Tarnished Sequins: A Decade of AIDS Fundraising in Hollywood and the Fashion Industry*, by veteran activist Michael Anketell and Barbara Austin.

The excerpt tells the behind-the-scenes story of fashion designer Calvin Klein's extravagant fund-raising benefit for AIDS Project Los Angeles, the nation's second largest AIDS service organization, and how thousands of dollars that were intended to provide services for people with AIDS were spent to maintain Klein's corporate image.

Also in the November issue, an investigative

feature discloses a Clinton administration plan to lift the ban on federal funds for needle exchange programs that was scrapped after the Republicans won a congressional majority in 1994. The report is based on information provided by AIDS prevention expert Allan Clear and confirmed by former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders.

According to Clear, when the two met in October 1994, Elders told him that she had been authorized to lift the ban: "A press release announcing it has been written and is in place," she said. "We're just waiting until after the election to release it."

With the Republican sweep and the later firing of Elders, the ban persisted despite, writes Arrendell, "the fact that every scientific group that has studied these programs [has] reached the same conclusion: Needle exchange reduces the spread of HIV and does not lead to an increase in drug abuse."

Christopher D. Cuttone

Paras to leave NGLTF

Among announcements made at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Board meeting held Sept. 27-29 in Washington, D.C., was the news that executive director Melinda Paras will step down at the conclusion of her term in December. Paras, 43, plans to return to her home in San Francisco to start a family and to pursue other personal and professional goals. Paras will be succeeded by current deputy director Kerry Lobel.

Board co-chairs Joe Hall and Sue Anderson credit Paras with stabilizing and setting a new vision for the Task Force.

Lobel, 43, was lead organizer of the Women's Project in Little Rock, Ark., from 1985 to 1994 and was executive director of the Southern California Coalition on Battered Women from 1979 to 1984. She has served as a consultant to some 200 groups around the country.

NGLTF and the NGLTF Policy Institute, meanwhile, received almost \$425,000 in grants and bequests since the last board meeting in April. Major donations included a \$330,000 bequest from the Messenger estate for gay and lesbian journalism scholarships. The organization says it will end the year with a balanced budget of \$2.3 million.

Christopher D. Cuttone

Kaposi's sarcoma linked to virus

A recent University of Washington study linked the high occurrence of Kaposi's sarcoma in gay and bisexual men with AIDS to a virus that may be spread through saliva, reports the *Phoenix Gazette*.



The virus, called KSHV, was first identified in 1994. It does not cause AIDS, but researchers now believe it must be present for the ordinarily rare skin cancer to occur.

The study found KSHV in the saliva of 17 out of 23 men who had both Kaposi's sarcoma and HIV. Nearly one-third of HIV-positive gay and bisexual men will develop KS before death. They may carry the virus for some time before the HIV infection weakens their immune system sufficiently to make them susceptible to the cancer.

Outside of HIV patients, Kaposi's sarcoma is rare, but it does occur, primarily in elderly men in southern Europe and in adults and infants in Africa. The cancer is not found in patients who were infected with HIV exclusively through blood injection or intravenous drug use.

Christopher D. Cuttone

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