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national briefs

CALIFORNIA

On Dec. 2, Democrat Cruz Bustamante of Fresno was elected speaker of the California Assembly.

He is the first Latino to hold this position, and he has broken another barrier by choosing Sheila Kuehl, a Democrat representing Santa Monica, to be the first woman and first out gay man or lesbian to serve as the speaker pro tem, who presides over the Assembly in the speaker's absence.



Dr. Evelyn Hooker, whose landmark studies of gay men in the 1950s were the precursor of the decision two decades later by the American Psychological Association to remove homosexuality from its list of disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, died on Nov. 18 at age 89 in her home in Santa Monica.

Hooker taught at the University of California-Los Angeles for 30 years. In 1967 she was appointed to head a National Institute of Mental Health study of homosexuality which concluded with recommendations to repeal sodomy laws and provide better public education about homosexuality. She was also the subject of the documentary film *Changing Our Minds: The Story of Dr. Evelyn Hooker*.



A federal judge in San Francisco has ruled that insurance coverage decisions must meet the anti-discrimination provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The case, which will likely go to trial next year, involves an unidentified couple suing the Chubb company for denial of the wife's application for life insurance because her spouse is HIV positive.

Chubb argued in federal court that the ADA only requires insurers to make sure that people with disabilities have physical access to their offices, but Judge Vaughn Walker agreed with the couple's attorneys that the law is also intended to prevent discrimination in coverage for the disabled.

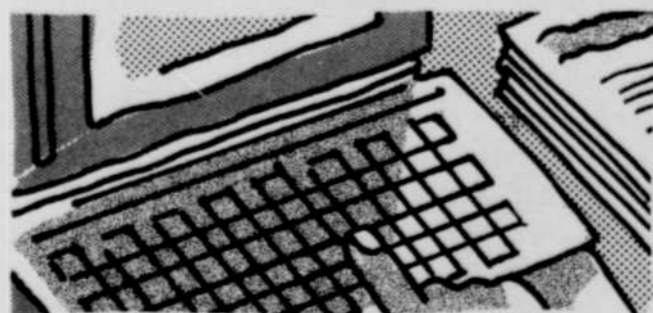


Activists in Long Beach, including triathlete Andra-Nina Davis, want their city to host Gay Games VI in 2002. Community members are preparing a formal proposal for submission to the Federation of Gay Games, which will name the host city in November 1997.

Davis says that Long Beach is home to the third-largest lesbian and gay community in the state and is an ideal venue for the event because of its weather, tourism resources and previous success hosting similar events. Other cities competing to host the nine-day games are Dallas, Minneapolis, Toronto, Montréal, and Melbourne and Sydney, Australia.

CYBERSPACE

Controversial AIDS researcher Peter Duesberg has launched a Web site to promote his theory that long-term recreational drug use and treatment with AZT induce the symptoms associated with



AIDS. Duesberg's disagreement with the medical establishment's hypothesis that HIV causes AIDS has all but eliminated the possibility of funding and publication of his work.

Those who access the site will be able to join an e-mail discussion list, peruse archived scientific papers and make a tax-deductible donation to support further research. The site's URL is www.duesberg.com.

FLORIDA

A survey of the gay male population of South Beach in Miami has turned up alarming results. According to The Associated Press, of the 87 survey respondents between the ages of 18 and 29, one in six is infected with HIV, and of 70 respondents age 30 and over, two of every five have the virus. Additionally, three of every four men surveyed had unprotected sex in the past year, as compared to one in four gay men having unsafe sex according to a 1994 study in San Francisco.

Results of the survey were released at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association in New York on Nov. 20.

William Darrow, the Florida International University professor who conducted the study, said recent reports of medical developments in the fight against HIV/AIDS may have led men to believe there is a cure for the disease and that caution is no longer necessary.



The religious right's attempt to organize a boycott of Walt Disney Co. after the company granted domestic partnership benefits to same-



sex couples appears to have fallen short of the mark. The company's profits actually rose 27 percent during the fourth quarter.

Alan Klein, national communications director for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, said, "Apparently the American public is not buying the bigoted boycott rhetoric of religious radicals."

MASSACHUSETTS

Gov. William F. Weld said Dec. 4 that if the Hawaii Supreme Court upholds the recent ruling to allow same-gender marriages, his state will be forced to acknowledge the validity of such unions, reports *The Boston Globe*. Although he did not specifically endorse a new state law to recognize such marriages, Weld said he views the federal Defense of Marriage Act as unconstitutional, and that his highest obligation as governor is to the U.S. Constitution rather than the will of Congress.

MICHIGAN

Jonathan Schmitz, the man who was convicted of murdering Scott Amedure in 1995 after Amedure revealed he had a crush on Schmitz on the *Jenny Jones* show, was sentenced on Dec. 4 to a minimum of 25 years in prison for the crime, according to a Reuter report. Last month jurors found Schmitz guilty of second-degree murder, taking into account the effects of mental illness and Graves disease put forth as a defense by his attorneys.

Schmitz will probably become eligible for parole after 20 years.



A jury in Wayne County ordered Pinkerton's Security and Investigation Inc. to pay \$10 million to Sean McBride, the victim of an anti-gay crime in 1994. McBride, now a paraplegic, was harassed by three loiterers in the lobby of his apartment building over a period of half an hour, after which he was shot six times. A Pinkerton guard in the lobby stood by and did not intervene.

McBride's attorney, Carol McNeilage, told