

examine a profusely bleeding cut on his leg and attempted to discourage him from waiting for an ambulance. Lavoie and his partner, Ken Ludden, then walked to a nearby hospital. Lavoie noted that neither of the rescue workers, later identified as firefighters, were wearing latex gloves, and speculated that they may have been reluctant to treat him for fear of contracting HIV.

Responding to activists' requests, Mayor Marion Barry ordered the Fire Department in September to strengthen its sensitivity training on issues related to minorities, including lesbians and gay men.

Information sought on S/M-related laws

The National Leather Association International has launched a new project aimed at gathering information related to S/M and the law. NLA International's Law Information Project will compile data on cases and statutes in force around the country in order to provide a resource to attorneys and to members of the sexual minority and leather communities who may face legal problems due to their participation in S/M activities.

Project volunteers are seeking detailed information about cases in which someone engaging in consensual S/M was charged with, convicted or acquitted of a crime such as assault, or lost his or her children during a custody dispute, divorce or state agency action; or cases in which "professional dominants" have been arrested for prostitution. To facilitate follow-up research, volunteers need the names of anyone involved, the date and location of the court case, the case number where available and a brief description of the case.

NLA International activists are also asking for information about state, county or city laws governing S/M activity, such as wearing uniforms, carrying handcuffs or knives, nudity in public or in bars, flagellation in bars and the selling of S/M paraphernalia. Send to Spencer Bergstedt, Attorney at Law, 1202 E Pike St., Suite 1070, Seattle, WA 98122.

Same-sex marriage brouhaha continues

While many members of the sexual minority community are guardedly optimistic about the future of same-sex marriage, state lawmakers nationwide are scurrying to enact legislation to preempt the expected outcome of the famous Hawaii court case. Already, 16 states have outlawed same-sex marriages, and two states have executive orders in place that ban such unions. Similar legislation is under consideration in a number of states.

In New Jersey, state Sen. John Scott has co-sponsored an anti-gay-marriage bill, saying the issue is an economic as well as moral one and citing increased costs if employers were forced to provide benefits for partners of homosexual employees.

In Florida, legislation sponsored by Sen. John Grant of Tampa is expected to pass with little or no opposition. Grant says the state has a compelling interest in restricting the legal definition of marriage to one man and one woman because of insurance, pension and inheritance issues.

The outcome is less predictable in Wisconsin, where that state's only openly lesbian legislator, Rep. Tammy Baldwin, has vowed to sponsor a bill that would legalize same-sex marriages. Two anti-gay-marriage bills will also be considered. Baldwin says it is unlikely that a bill legalizing same-sex unions would pass, but said that simply introducing it will help educate citizens about discrimination against sexual minorities in tax law, health insurance, and hospital visitation and property rights.

Meanwhile, in Virginia, members of the Alexandria City Council voted to urge state lawmakers

to grant a variety of legal protections to gay men and lesbians. The action followed testimony at a public hearing on a proposal to seek legalization of same-sex marriages, however, the council chose to approve a substitute motion that didn't deal with marriage but instead asked state representatives to: amend hate-crime statutes to include anti-gay crimes, prohibit discrimination against sexual minorities in employment and housing, allow domestic partner benefits and insurance coverage, and repeal Virginia's law against sodomy. Activists and lawmakers alike foresee failure for the measure in the state's conservative-ruled legislature.

Queer images unwelcome in SimWorld

Computer programmer Jacques Sevrin, 33, of San Francisco was fired from his job at Maxis Inc., producer of the popular SimCity 2000 computer game, for inserting male hunks and kissing boys into the background of the company's new action game, SimCopter. The game was released on Nov. 20 and some 50,000 to 80,000 copies were shipped before the company discovered the additions. Sevrin was fired soon after, but Maxis spokesman Patrick Buechner denied that his dismissal was due to the homosexual nature of the unauthorized material.

According to Sevrin, the game's complex 3-D background already included plenty of "standard female computer-game bimbos," while all the male figures were "really dumpy, little squat middle-aged types." So he inserted a few surprises into the program—what insiders call "Easter eggs"—which cause unexpected background effects like boys



kissing, Elvis impersonators and a greater number of bimbos to appear.

Maxis executives were unamused and are providing a corrected software "patch" to customers free of charge.

Boy's family declines to pursue Scondras

Former Boston City Councilor David Scondras will not be prosecuted for allegedly groping a 16-year-old boy because the teenager will not be available to give testimony, according to a *Boston Globe* report. Legal representatives of the boy's family, which lives in Washington, recently informed the district attorney's office that they will not return to Massachusetts and do not wish to cooperate with or participate in the prosecution of Scondras.

The Aug. 24 incident was reported to the police by the teenager, who alleged that Scondras had met him in a hotel lobby, offered him a free movie ticket and touched his thigh in the dark theater. For his part, Scondras denied any wrongdoing and alleged that the boy attacked him, giving him a broken nose and jaw and causing him to lose three teeth that police later found on the floor of the movie theater. Scondras suggested that the police investigation was politically motivated because of his sexual orientation.

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttone

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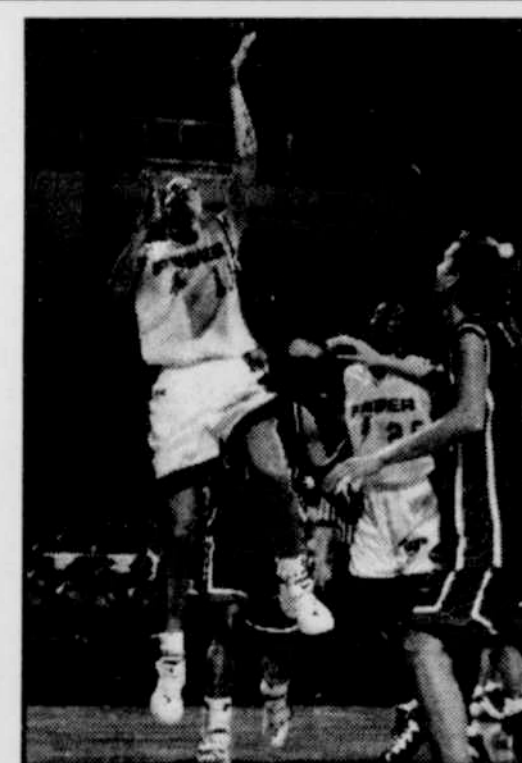
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