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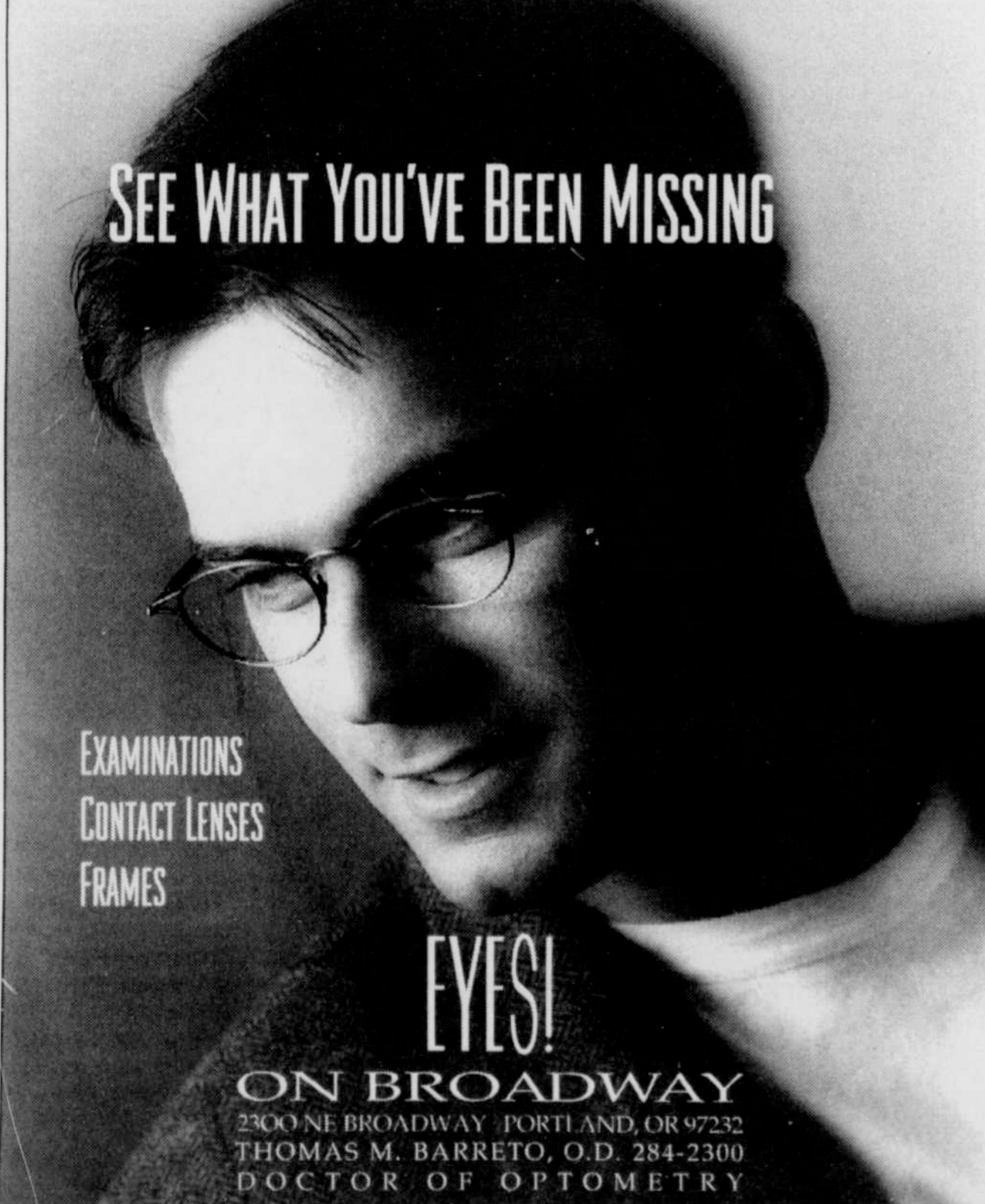
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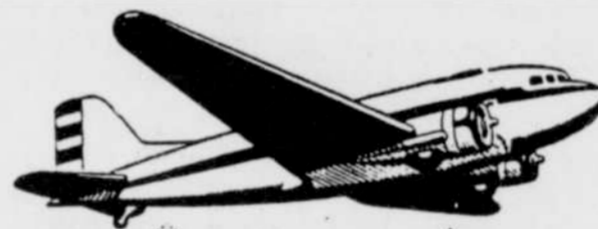
CALIFORNIA

The San Francisco-based group Americans for Medical Rights that backed California's Proposition 215 has filed suit in federal court to prevent federal officials from punishing doctors who recommend the use of marijuana to their patients. Attorneys for the group plan to argue that discussions between a physician and patient constitute protected speech under the First Amendment, according to a United Press International report.



Proposition 215 created an exemption in California law for seriously ill patients who are using marijuana on the recommendation or approval of a physician. The lawsuit was prompted by the Clinton administration's announcement in December that it will fight implementation of the voter-approved measure. Federal officials named in the suit include drug czar retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey and Attorney General Janet Reno.

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A \$13.4 million 25-year lease between United Airlines and the San Francisco Airports Commission must be renegotiated to include domestic partner wording, the city Board of Supervisors said Jan. 14. According to a story in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the decision was reached



by members of the board's Government Efficiency and Labor Committee and reflects recent legislation stipulating that all city contractors must provide benefits for domestic partners equal to those given to married couples. Although that law will not take effect until June, another law calls for all leases of more than two years contracted in the interim to comply with the city's domestic partner requirements.

United spokeswoman Connie Huff said the airline is considering a domestic partners policy but is not ready to announce any decision.

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The school board of Fremont unanimously approved a resolution to reinforce existing policies which protect all students from bullying and hate crimes. Unlike earlier drafts, the resolution does not specifically mention sexual minorities or any other group and no longer encourages schools to implement staff development programs and curricula to meet the needs of gay students. Board members say the approved version was designed to create consensus and avoid controversy.

According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, more than 200 parents, teachers and students attended and offered testimony at the board's meeting. Despite the support of other board members and complaints made by lesbian and gay students that enforcement of current district policies is shoddy, critics of the earlier drafts—who feared the board would be “endorsing the gay lifestyle” and offending their religious sensibilities—held sway.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The November appointment of Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) as chair of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government is the first time an openly gay Republican member of Congress has been given a chairman's post for either a

committee or subcommittee, reports the *Washington Blade*. Kolbe will oversee review of White House office and residence budgets and budgets for over a dozen other government agencies, including the Treasury Department, U.S. Postal Service, Federal Elections Commission and National Security Council.

FLORIDA

Only the third Floridian ever sentenced to a quarantine, Bartow resident Joann Moorehouse Guzman, 35, has begun serving her two-year punishment for criminal transmission of HIV. She will be confined to her home, forced to wear an electronic monitoring device, and supervised closely by probation and parole officials.

Guzman was arrested last August after positioning an undercover officer and later admitted to police that she had tested positive for HIV in 1993. A four-year-old Florida law makes it a third-degree felony for anyone knowing he or she is carrying HIV to participate in a crime or attempted crime that involves the transmission of bodily fluids. According to a United Press International report, after contemplating a challenge to the HIV transmission law Guzman pleaded no contest to the charges because she was afraid she might die in jail.

ILLINOIS

Miguel Ayala, an openly gay 17-year-old senior at Whitney Young High School, was elected in January as a nonvoting student member of the Chicago School Board. He won 39.7 percent of the vote. Ayala told the *Chicago Sun-Times* that his sexual orientation was not an issue in the election and that, although it was not mentioned in his campaign literature, about half of the 181 students who cast votes knew he is gay.

NATIONAL

A new U.S. law, sneaked through at the end of the 1996 congressional session attached to a finance bill, has forced an established erotic magazine to alter its name and prompted distributors of the periodical to destroy several thousand copies bearing the old title, reports the NewsPlanet news service.

The British publishers of *EuroBoy* announced Jan. 15 that the nine-year-old gay erotic magazine will now be called *EuroGuy* in order to comply with the Child Pornography Protection Act of 1996, which criminalizes depiction of people engaged in sexual activity—regardless of the models' actual ages—in such a way that the consumer is led to believe they are younger than age 18.



Possible punishments under the new law include five to 30 years imprisonment and fines with no upper limit. The American Media Coalition and producers of a new film version of *Lolita* are among those organizing a challenge to the law as a violation of First Amendment freedom of speech.

NEW YORK

In January, Charles K. Ortleb, publisher of *Theater Week* and the *New York Native*, an award-winning weekly serving the sexual minority community, announced he would terminate publication of both titles due to lack of funds.

According to a NewsPlanet story, the *Native* was heralded for its controversial coverage of AIDS in the early stages of the pandemic, and was home to Stephen Miller, an outspoken conservative political analyst known for attacking the politically correct along with homophobes. With more than 700 issues published since 1980, the *Native* was New York City's oldest continuing queer periodical.

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttone