

national briefs

ARIZONA

Gov. Fife Symington announced on April 12 that he would veto a hate crimes bill that had passed the state House by nearly a 2-1 margin two days earlier. The *Arizona Daily Star* reports that Symington prefers a previous version of the bill, which was rejected by House members as being meaningless and unenforceable.

The current version, sponsored by Rep. Robin Shaw (R-Scottsdale), would allow judges to impose lengthier sentences when a felon's crime is linked to the victim's race, religion, sex or sexual preference. Symington's version grants the same judicial prerogative if the victim is a member of some identifiable group—language meant to be more inclusive than an enumeration of classes.

CALIFORNIA

The *Los Angeles Times* reported on April 6 that not much has come of former Rep. Bob Dornan's claims of rampant voter fraud in the stand-off election he lost last year to newcomer Loretta Sanchez. Out of the 77 cases Dornan cited as proof of fraud, only five may have involved illegally cast ballots.

The *Times* learned that most of those accused of fraud were Republican and had voted for Dornan.



Antony L. Stately, a doctoral student at the California School of Professional Psychology, is seeking volunteers to participate in a national research study of HIV-negative men in sero-different gay couples.

The study will examine the effects of HIV-related factors, AIDS-related loss and relationship characteristics on the psychological adjustment of HIV-negative men in committed relationships with HIV-positive men.

Participants must be gay men at least 18 years old, HIV-negative, who have been in a committed relationship with an HIV-positive gay man for a minimum of six months. The survey takes 15 to 30 minutes to complete; participants cannot be compensated. To complete the survey on-line, visit <http://www.thinklink.net/hivstudy/>. To request a paper version of the questionnaire, send your name and address to Antony Stately, 5042 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 306, Los Angeles, CA 90036, Attn.: Study Request; e-mail to Astately@worldnet.att.net; or call (213) 223-5870.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Ralph Reed announced April 23 that he will vacate his post as executive director of the Christian Coalition in September to launch a political consulting firm under the moniker Century Strategies, reports The Associated Press. At a news conference Reed denied rumors that he plans to run for public office and said he hopes also to assist nonprofit organizations with fund-raising and membership activities.

During his tenure, Reed helped build the coalition, an 8-year-old religious conservative group, into a major force in the Republican Party.



Ralph Reed



Lesbian activists Alice Deighan and Scout believe "dyke" is a self-affirming, positive word—that's why their personalized license plate reads 2 DYKES. Although the couple says the plate hasn't attracted any ill will, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles decided to cancel it, one year and seven months after approving it, according to an account in the *Washington Blade*.

DMV spokeswoman Jeanne Chenault said the decision to revoke the plate was made by a 12-member committee which ruled that, by singling

out a group of people for contempt or ridicule, the phrase is "socially insensitive." The action was prompted by a written complaint from an unidentified citizen, Chenault said.

Scout, an activist who was involved in organizing the 1993 March on Washington, told the *Blade* it's ironic that the DMV would think she and Deighan hold themselves in contempt.

GEORGIA

On April 26, members of the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus met to return their recently purchased stage outfits to J.C. Penney in response to the company's withdrawal of advertising from the coming out episode of *Ellen*, which aired April 30 on ABC.



In a press release, the chorus reported that despite the arduous process of finding suitable attire and the general satisfaction with the garments, its members agreed it was time to make a stand against companies that evade important social issues or give in to small-minded bigots.

ILLINOIS

One hundred fifty participants came together April 12 at the University of Illinois for the third Chicago Black LesBiGayTrans Unity Conference, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. The event took on tough issues like homophobia, AIDS, the sense of invisibility among African American sexual minorities and the need to build a sense of community.

Speakers pointed out that although new AIDS cases are declining for much of the population, they are still on the rise among African American men, and that while white gay men and lesbians have made advances in the political arena, gay and lesbian people of color have not, and are often left out of policy decisions.

MONTANA

Disregarding more than 200 protesting phone calls, Bozeman city commissioners on March 31 unanimously approved a permit for a queer pride parade. According to the *Bozeman Chronicle*, city attorney Paul Luwe had warned the commission that banning the parade would be discrimination and would mean canceling all other parades.

Opposition was stirred up in nearby Belgrade by a Christian radio station that urged listeners to call Bozeman City Hall to protest.

Pride festivities have been held during the past three years in other Montana cities.

WASHINGTON

Journalist Sandy Nelson has asked the Washington Supreme Court to reconsider its Feb. 20 ruling that upheld the state's Fair Campaign Practices Act but exempted journalists from the law, which prohibits employment discrimination linked to political activity on personal time. Nelson was demoted from her reporting job at Tacoma's *News Tribune* in 1991 for off-duty activism in support of a queer rights initiative.

A five-member majority of the high court wrote that free press considerations shield publishers from the law, but a strong dissent filed by two justices maintained that the First Amendment does not protect newspaper owners from state laws unless their ability to control editorial content is perceptibly undermined.

While the *Tribune* claimed to be merely upholding a standard newsroom ethics code requiring political abstinence, Nelson's attorneys note in the motion for reconsideration that no such code exists at other papers.

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttone

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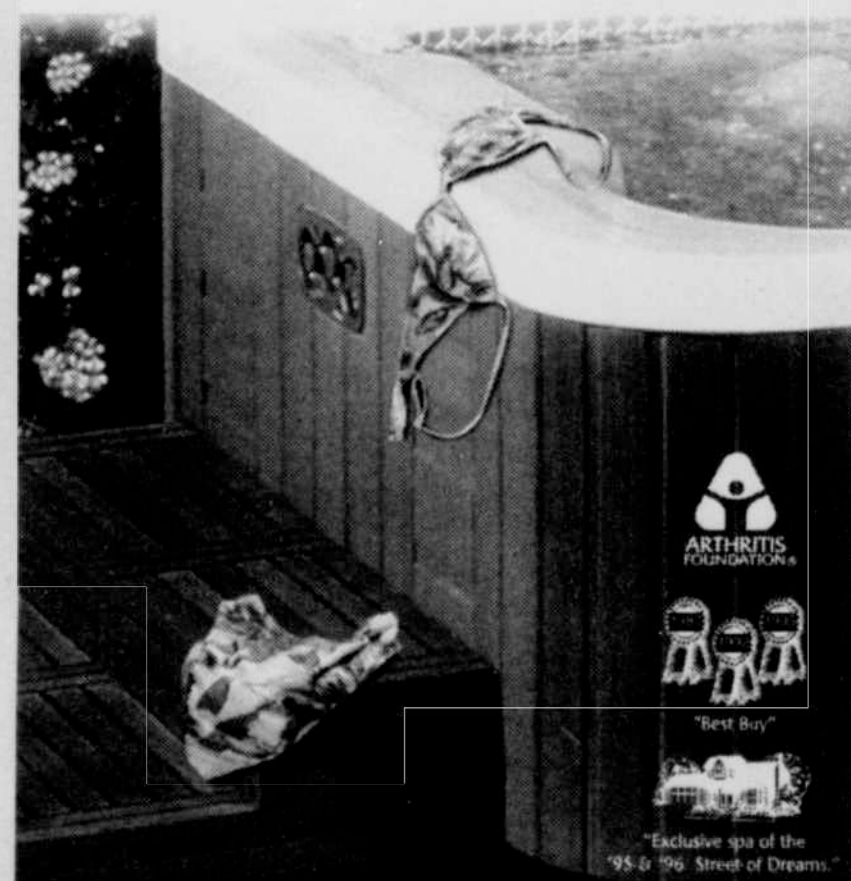
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