

Coalition International; It's Time, America!; and the National Youth Advocacy Coalition.

American Express Financial Advisors is the primary corporate sponsor of the event, which began as a grassroots educational campaign in part commemorating the first two lesbian and gay marches in Washington, D.C., in October 1979 and 1987.

A calendar of history month events, a list of affiliated organizations and other information can be found at GLAAD's homepage, www.glaad.org.

Long-term cancer risk for those living with HIV

Researchers at the University of California at San Francisco are predicting a rise in the incidence of anal cancer among gay and bisexual men, particularly those who are HIV-positive, reports the *HIV Positive Newslines* (www.hivpositive.com).

At the National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference held in Atlanta in late July, Dr. Joel Palefsky linked the anticipated rise to the fact that HIV-positive men are living longer and that anal cancer commonly takes five to 10 years to develop.

Those at highest risk for anal cancer are persons who engage in anal intercourse and are thereby exposed to infection with a carcinogenic strain of human papillomavirus.

The incidence of anal cancer among all men in the U.S. is less than one in 100,000 but is 35 times higher among men who practice anal intercourse, Palefsky said.



As a person becomes immunosuppressed, the risk of anal cancer increases, according to one UCSF study, which found that only 20 percent of HIV-negative men had pre-cancerous anal dysplasia, while 75 percent of immunosuppressed men had the same condition.

Related studies have found that HIV-positive women are more likely to have both cervical and anal HPV infections, and that antiviral drug therapy has little or no effect on pre-cancerous lesions. The researchers are recommending anal pap smear screenings and coloscopic examinations for those at risk.

ABA debate gets lively

A heavily pro-gay audience cheered San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown and booed his opponents—including the Rev. Lou Sheldon and representatives of other conservative policy groups—at an Aug. 2 American Bar Association debate on the issue of same-sex marriage. The *San Francisco Examiner* reports that Brown, who in March 1996 presided over a mass wedding of gay and lesbian domestic partners at City Hall, advocated state and federal recognition of same-gender unions, calling it a matter of equal human and civil rights.

Conservative members of the debate panel argued that, in the words of Sheldon, "behavior-based lifestyles should not be given the same status that other minorities are."

Mike Gabbard, president of the national group Stop Promoting Homosexuality America and chair of Hawaii's Alliance for Traditional Marriage, also pushed the controversial view that sexual minorities choose their status and compared legalization of same-sex marriage to sanctioning polygamy.

Audience members responded harshly to state-

ments made by American Center for Law and Justice representative Bob Whalen, who claimed that more gays than straights molest children, that gay people use molestation as a recruitment tool and that lesbians have more sexually transmitted diseases than heterosexual women.

Additional support for same-gender marriage was provided by attorney Matthew Coles, national director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, and Kate Kendall, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights in San Francisco.

Seattle lesbian battles for custody in Texas court

A family court judge in Travis County, Texas, (where Austin is located) granted temporary custody to the father of 5-year-old twins based on the sexual orientation of their mother, Heidi Ray of Seattle.

According to the *Seattle Gay News*, Ray's ex-husband's parents are seeking joint custody of the boys with their son, which would eliminate Ray as a legal parent.

The children were sent to Austin in April to visit their father and have since been staying with their grandparents, who allegedly have told them their mother is unwilling to take them back.

With the assistance of Lavender Families Resource Network, a lesbian mothers' national defense fund, Ray is seeking moral and financial support from the gay and lesbian community for what may prove to be a protracted court battle.

According to Jenny Sayward, executive director of the Lavender Families Resource Network, roughly 1,000 gay, lesbian and bisexual parents are presently struggling with this sort of court action.

It is easy, she says, for homophobic relatives to win emergency temporary custody in a conservative court during visitation, thereby forcing the absent parent to spend thousands of dollars to obtain legal counsel in another state and to travel to hearings. Many of these parents are defeated by bankruptcy, she says.

For more information, contact Lavender Families Resource Network at (206) 325-2643.

IRS eats its words

The Internal Revenue Service has reversed its position and granted tax-exempt status to a support group for young queers.

In July, after the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund stepped in with a letter to the IRS, the IRS admitted it was wrong to demand that the Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Support System of Greensboro, N.C., show that it discouraged "homosexual attitudes and propensities."

On Aug. 20, the IRS followed up and notified the youth group it would receive tax-exempt status as an education and social welfare group, says Lambda lawyer David Buckel.

Buckel told Reuters news service, "evidently the IRS happened to have a renegade agent" who was responsible for a controversial letter the agency sent GLASS last autumn.

In its letter, the IRS asked the group to "detail the procedures and safeguards in place to assure counselors and participants do not encourage or facilitate homosexual practices or encourage the development of homosexual attitudes and propensities by minor individuals attending your program."

Lambda argued the IRS had no business inquiring about "homosexual attitudes" since it never inquired about "heterosexual attitudes."

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttone

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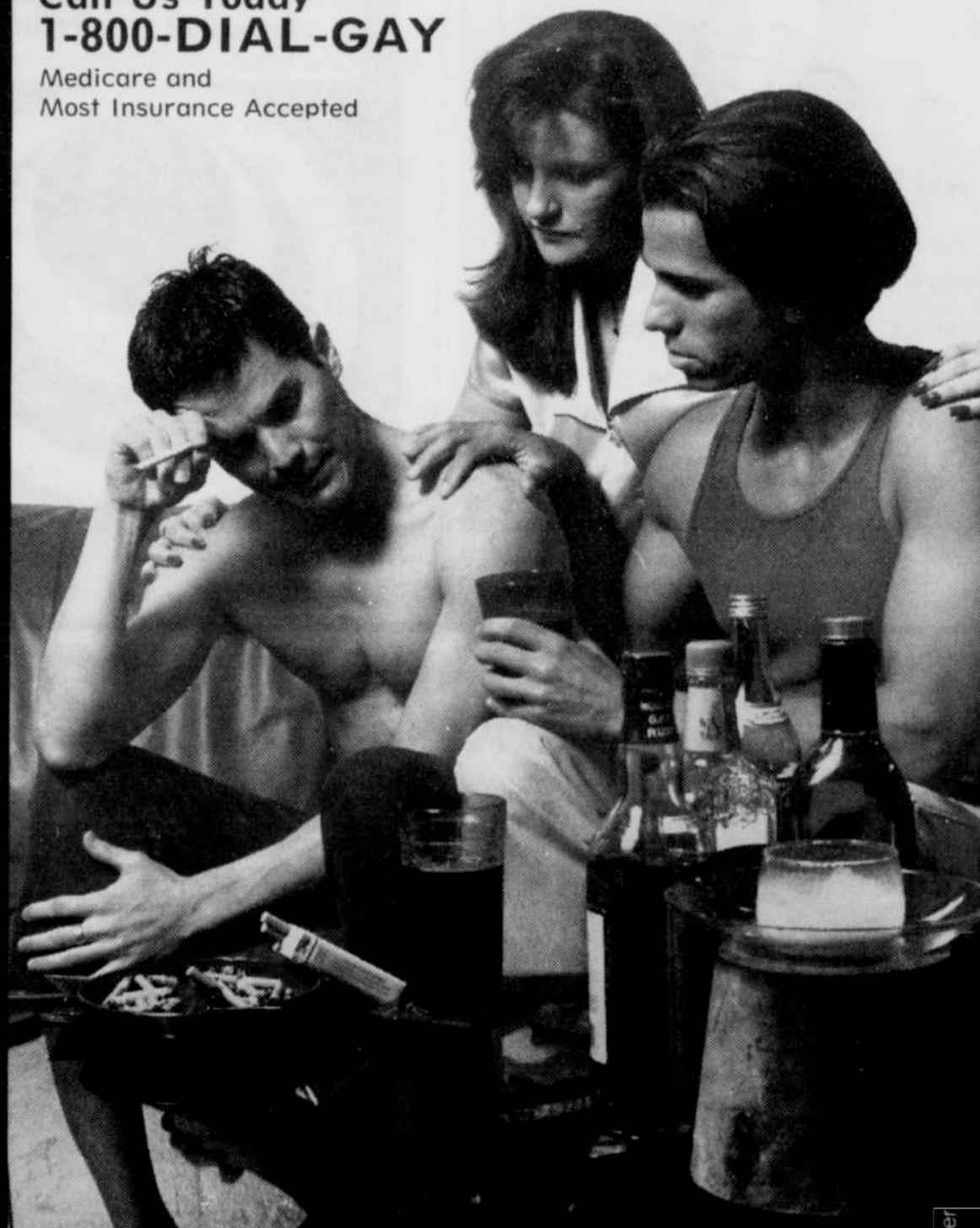


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