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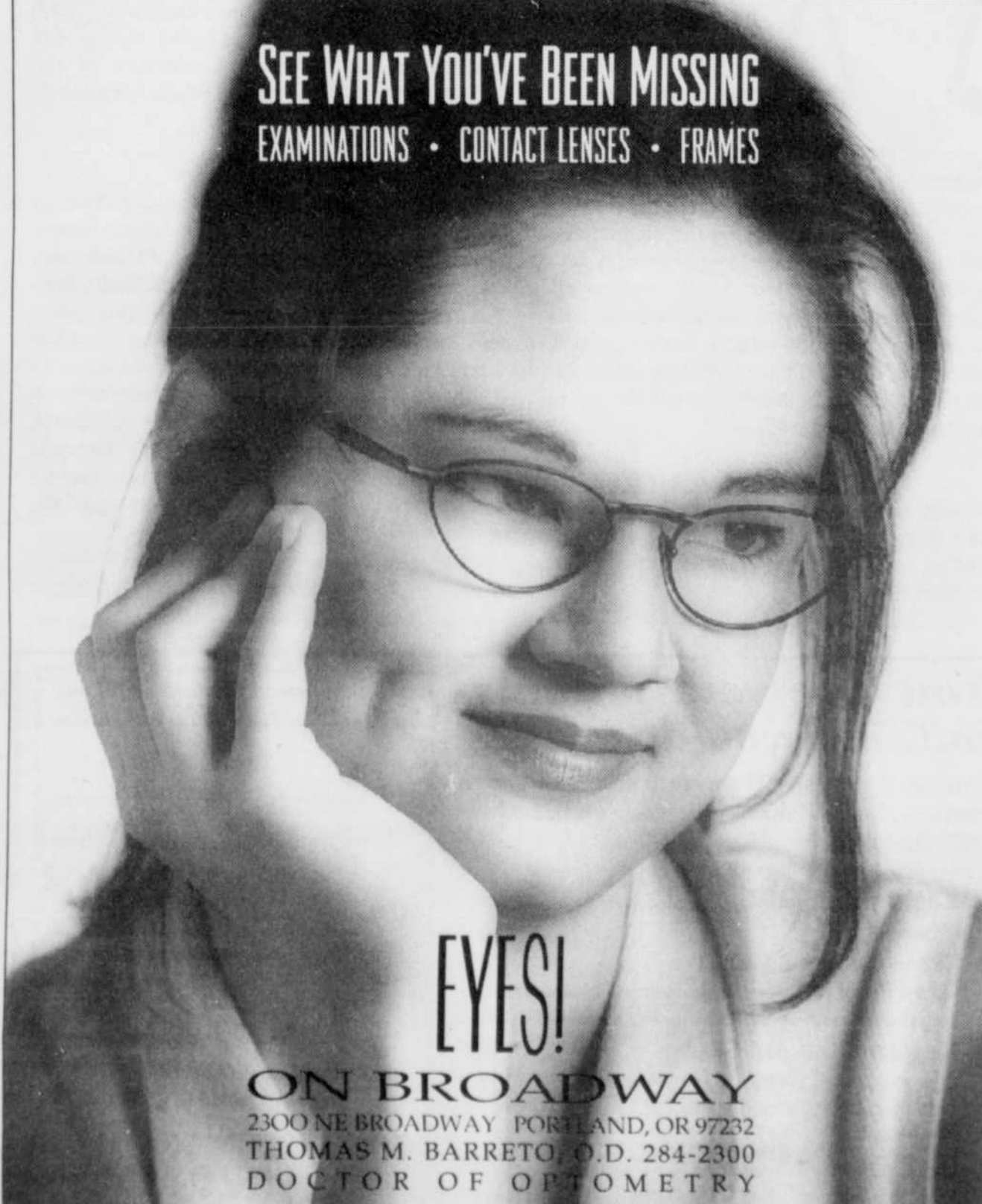


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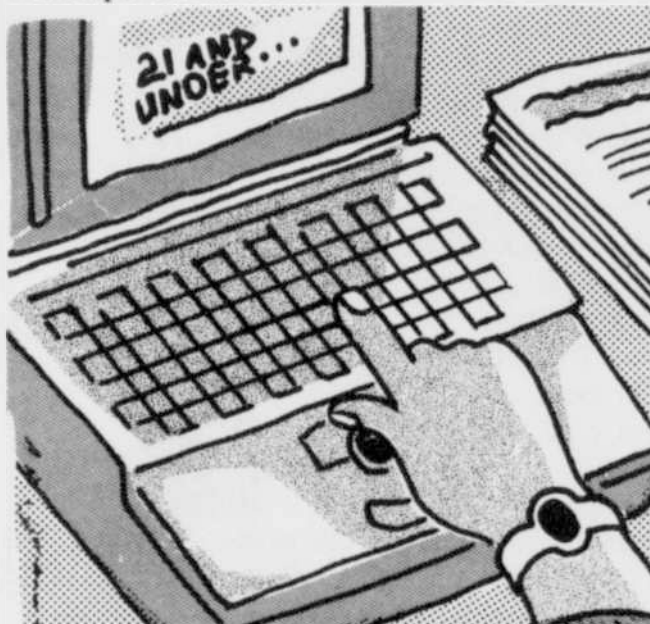
## national news

### Internet survey tallies queer youth

The National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth—also known as !OutProud!—and *Oasis* magazine have announced the first on-line survey of queer and questioning youth.

The survey, which can be found on the Web ([www.oasismag.com/survey/](http://www.oasismag.com/survey/)) through October, consists of 150 questions designed to expand understanding of the myriad issues faced by queer youth today.

"Queer youth have found the on-line world to be a supportive environment," says Christopher Kryzan, executive director of !OutProud!. "The Internet and America Online have played a crucial role in helping this generation of queer youth to acknowledge and accept their sexual orientation. With this survey, we hope to provide them with a powerful voice."



The effort is cosponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network and XY magazine.

The electronic questionnaire was created with the assistance of experts from the University of San Francisco, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. A report based on the data gathered will be published in January 1998.

### Cemetery must allow 'life partner' on headstone

Three years after her partner's death, Sherry Barone will at last be allowed to erect a headstone bearing the words "life partner" in an epitaph for Cynthia Friedman, whose grave site has been unmarked since the Har Jehuda Cemetery in Upper Darby, Pa., refused to honor its contract with Barone.

According to a news release from Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, an out-of-court settlement was reached after Lambda brought suit April 15 in federal court in Philadelphia. In addition to allowing the memorial, the cemetery will pay \$15,000 to Barone for emotional distress.

Following her 1989 cancer diagnosis, Friedman signed extensive documents in an effort to ensure that her 13-year relationship with Barone would be given legal force.

Prior to her death, Friedman explicitly rejected any relatives' authority to challenge actions by Barone on her behalf.

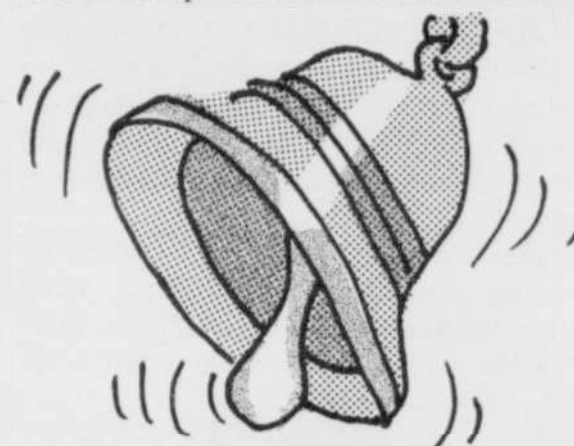
After her death, however, the cemetery argued that because Friedman's parents disagreed about her wishes, a court would have to decide who had a right to determine the epitaph.



PHOTO BY D.M. REZNIK

### Private school catering to queers opens doors

The nation's first private school for gay and lesbian students is ringing in the new school year in Dallas, reports The Associated Press.



Walt Whitman Community School is the brainchild of Becky Thompson, a lesbian, and Pamala Stone, a non-lesbian, both veteran educators who were moved by studies which have concluded that lesbian and gay youth are at higher risk for destructive behaviors. The duo were also frustrated by their own observations of student harassment at the suburban preparatory school where they taught last year.

Though its beginnings are humble—three teachers, three classrooms and seven students in one building—the school may eventually serve up to 30 students.

Thompson and Stone had anticipated attracting dropouts a few credits shy of graduation, but only two students are seniors this term. In fact, three of this year's students are at Whitman not because they are gay themselves but because a parent is.

Tuition at Whitman is \$7,000 annually. According to Thompson, all of the students are receiving financial assistance from donors who want the school to succeed. The school is also seeking grants from private foundations.

### Anti-gay sheriff slapped on wrist

After three days of a hearing initiated by the Mitchell County, N.C., district attorney to remove Sheriff Vernon Bishop from office for



abuse of power, Bishop apologized for ordering deputies in 1995 to record the telephone conversations of a high school football coach he thought was gay.

The apology, forfeiture of two weeks' pay—roughly \$1,600—and a stern lecture from the judge were all part of a deal that allows the sheriff to keep his job, reports The Associated Press.

"While I have strong personal feelings that persons who follow certain lifestyles should not be employed in particular areas of the public school system, I realize that every citizen is entitled to recognition of his privacy," Bishop told the court.

Bishop maintains the conversations, which were intercepted via police scanner, were taped for an investigation into whether the coach was conspiring to commit sodomy.

According to the *Raleigh News and Observer*, school officials testified that Bishop approached them with the recordings and threatened to go