

Say what?!

By way of introducing legislation to remove protections for same-sex couples under Kentucky's domestic violence laws, Republican state Sen. Tim Philpot claims that gay men and lesbians enjoy violent sex and other "aberrant forms of violent behavior," reports the *Washington Blade*.

Philpot's bill seeks to define unmarried couples as only opposite-sex couples under state law, which currently does not provide a definition for unmarried couples. If approved, it would prevent gay men and lesbians from obtaining emergency court-ordered protection from an abusive partner.

According to the *Letter*, a Kentucky gay newspaper, Philpot said earlier this year gays don't



need domestic violence protections because "somasochism seem[s] to be more accepted in the homosexual subculture."

Considered an arch foe of civil rights for sexual minorities, Philpot has in recent years sponsored other anti-gay legislation, including a ban on same-sex sodomy (the state Supreme Court struck down Kentucky's sodomy law in 1992), a prohibition of the practice or promotion of same-sex sexual relations, and a bill to prevent HIV-positive people from practicing cosmetology. All three proposals failed.

Queer civil rights activists and anti-violence workers were given a chance to express their outrage over the measure at a hearing held by the Kentucky General Assembly's joint Judiciary Committee on Aug. 19. The committee is not expected to vote on the matter until the Legislature convenes in January.

Memorial fund commemorates gay youth leader

Seventeen-year-old Jacob Orozco, slated to serve as the next president of a highly controversial Gay-Straight Alliance group in a Salt Lake City high school, took his own life Sept. 4 after a two-year battle with school officials.

The plight of gay and lesbian youth in deeply conservative Salt Lake City was thrust into the media spotlight in 1996, when students at East High School attempted to form a Gay-Straight Alliance. The Utah State Legislature retaliated by banning all extra-curricular clubs. Several hundred high school students marched on the capital in protest.

The Gay-Straight Alliance survived the Legislature's attack and became a symbol of a new gay and lesbian generation notable for its up-front activism.

Jeff Dupre, who coproduced the documentary *Out of the Past* about the Gay-Straight Alliance's struggle, characterized Orozco as "a dynamic, funny and seemingly confident young man.... He was an accomplished athlete, a talented gymnast and an inspiration to the fellow members of the Alliance."

A memorial for Orozco was held Sept. 12.

Concerned organizations such as Tzabaco Catalog's Safe School Initiative, on-line community PlanetOut, and *XY Magazine*, the nation's leading publication for young gay men, have banded together to create a memorial fund in honor of Orozco. To donate, call 1-800-856-1667 and ask for reference "Jacob." The proceeds will

be distributed to gay-straight student alliance groups nationwide.

Groundbreaking admission of lesbian-baiting in Army

A report released Sept. 11 by the Army's Senior Review Panel on Sexual Harassment acknowledges the phenomenon of lesbian-baiting in the ranks.

In what the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network is calling a historic development, the report describes the threatening use of accusations of homosexuality: "One particular form of sexual harassment not addressed in the survey but commented on in a few focus groups and by other female soldiers in informal discussions, was the fear of being accused of being a homosexual. Female soldiers who refuse the sexual advances of male soldiers may be accused of being lesbians and subjected to investigation for homosexual conduct."

In a press release, SLDN explains further that, in this environment of fear and accusation, the "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy is an obstacle to women's safety which arms perpetrators with a tool of sexual extortion and forces silence on women who have been victimized.

SLDN has been working since its inception to raise awareness about this type of harassment.

The panel was appointed by Army Secretary Togo West to review the force's policies and procedures for dealing with sexual harassment, as well as the underlying reasons for harassment.

Internet filters sabotage youth access to queer resources

Young people trying to access gay and lesbian Web sites are running into more and more obstacles, says the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

GLAAD, through monitoring the development of Internet filtering software such as Cyber



Patrol and Net Nanny, has determined that filtering programs are blocking more gay-related sites by labeling them "adult."

InterGO's products KinderGuard and the SafeSearch search engine rate several youth gay and lesbian sites as appropriate for "mature" users only.

Other sites are labeled "adult only." PC Data Power's NetRated also deliberately blocks gay and lesbian resource sites, including GLAAD's, one for a gay-friendly Jewish congregation, and even the Web site of the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs.

NetRated is endorsed by Enough is Enough, an anti-pornography group allied with anti-gay ministries. Ultra right wing groups such as Focus on the Family and the American Family Association have also been involved in marketing Internet filtering software.

GLAAD, which has previously challenged Cyber Patrol, SurfWatch, Net Nanny, PlanetView and CYBERSitter for anti-gay censorship, says the censorship has only gotten worse following the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling earlier this year striking down the Communications Decency Act.

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttone and The Rainbow Writers Group

They Were the Best of Friends It Was the Worst of Times

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