

herself a lesbian and the mother of a 6-month-old daughter, says the realization that gay men can have children to whom they are biologically related still comes as a pleasant shock to many of her clients.

"They really come to it with gratitude and enthusiasm and excitement that this could possibly happen to them," she says, adding she has received hundreds of inquiries nationwide since starting her service a little over a year ago.

California does not regulate surrogate agencies. Taylor says her basic fee is \$47,000, including medical screenings, legal costs of terminating the surrogate's parental rights, adoption by the nonbiological parent and compensation of \$15,000 that is paid to the surrogate over the course of the pregnancy.

### FROM THE STRANGE-BUT-TRUE FILE

Denver's Lutheran High School seriously pondered expelling a student who came to class dressed like a gay boy, the *Denver Post* reports.

"Our dress code states that students can't wear clothes in such a way to be in opposition to the Bible.... He wasn't asked to leave because he is gay. He was asked because of the gay clothing, the gay jewelry," said the school's director, Kenneth Palmreuter.

An admitted fan of the men's fashion magazine *GQ*, 18-year-old Jeremy Garza had a 3.3 grade-point average, did well on the college entrance exam, and was only one semester shy of graduation.

Garza occasionally wore black leather pants or went retro in polyester, but his so-called gay clothes did not include shirts emblazoned with queer-positive messages. He did, however, sport a rainbow-hued bracelet and necklace that earned him a few extra Bible quotes from his theology teacher.

School officials prayed for Garza and repeatedly asked him to change clothes.

"We don't want to remove a student just

because he's sinful. If we did that, we'd all be gone," says Palmreuter. "But we do have a dress code."

Ultimately, Garza opted to change schools.

### HIGH SCHOOL BAND DROPS DISNEY WORLD TRIP

A Missouri high school band has dropped plans to perform at Walt Disney World after months of wrangling with school officials over whether the amusement park's corporate parent promotes homosexuality, *The Associated Press* reported Feb. 20.

The dispute, which had divided the small fishing resort of Stockton, was resolved when



the school band leader Marvin Manning canceled the trip, saying it was time to put the issue to rest.

"It's no secret what a black spot this has been on our community,"

Manning said at a Feb. 18 school board meeting, which was picketed by religious protesters from neighboring Kansas.

Board vice president Tom Landers said he disapproved of Disney-owned ABC's sitcom *Ellen*, whose star and title character are openly lesbian, and of Disney's policy of providing benefits to same-sex partners of employees.

According to AP, since the Disney World trip was proposed in November the board had repeatedly delayed approval, asking for more justification. When board members declined to take a vote after Manning presented a 10-page report Feb. 18, he withdrew the request.

Members of the anti-gay Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., gathered outside the meeting. Several held signs condemning gay men and lesbians, including one with a drawing of Mickey Mouse and the words "Rat Fag."

■ Compiled by CHRISTOPHER D. CUTTONE

### PROTEASE PAUNCH? MAYBE...

Humps and lumps and things that go paunch at the waist. Some people living with HIV and AIDS are noticing a redistribution of fat, and perhaps a lessening of lean body mass, that is changing the shape of their body.

"Crix belly," "protease paunch" and "buffalo hump" are nicknames bestowed on these metamorphoses. And nobody knows what to make of them.

Even the extent of the condition is in dispute. A Cornell University study found that 7 percent of people on protease inhibitors exhibited the syndrome, while an Australian study concluded it was 64 percent. Other limited research has fallen somewhere in between.

"I live in Pittsburgh. I won't speak for more cosmetically sensitive areas, but in Pittsburgh there is not a lot of quiche," said Dr. John Mellors at the 5th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, held in February in Chicago. "If your viral load is undetectable, that is pretty good."

Reporters challenged that attitude as an example of physicians perhaps not taking their patients' comments seriously and viewing this as a vanity issue.

Mellors apologized for his "attempt at humor" and said, "As patients go from wrestling with having a fatal disease to having a future,

then other issues become more prominent."

He added, "We are in a period of ignorance about the prevalence of this and the mechanisms underlying it. I suspect that subtle abnormalities of metabolism may be identified in a larger percentage of patients than we currently believe. But these may have no long-term clinical consequence."

Some speculate the condition is tied to fat metabolism by the liver, and believe the abnormalities may be caused by protease inhibitors. However, some researchers say they have seen the syndrome in patients who are not taking those drugs. Preliminary research has been inconclusive.

According to Dr. Scott Hammer, a Harvard researcher, theories currently being tossed about focus on a possible genetic predisposition to the condition, as well as the possibility that virus-encoded proteins can alter fat metabolism within an individual.

Researchers say these types of metabolic disorders are likely to grow in number as patients with HIV on powerful combination therapies live longer. Additionally, because they are slower-emerging conditions, it will likely take longer to fully understand their implications.

For now at least, Crix belly and its friends do not appear to be life-threatening.

■ Reported by BOB ROEHR

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