

Francisco. The jaunt, reports the *San Francisco Examiner*, will coincide with the first anniversary of the city's domestic partners law, which Phelps opposes.

"Don't get mad, but you guys need to be preached to, my dear. You're not only letting the homosexuals take over the Bay area, but the rest of the country," Phelps told the paper.

For his planned June 1 protest in front of San Francisco City Hall, Phelps, who hails from Kansas, has asked Mayor Willie Brown to provide police protection for him and about 20 other protesters. The request, says Phelps, was prompted by death threats from San Francisco residents.

Brown responded that adequate police protection will ensure the protest is peaceful, but warned "this demonstration will be in an extreme hostile environment."

## REACH OUT AND TOUCH...

### A CONDOM

Before people reach out and touch someone, they may get a friendly reminder to play safe. According to United Press International, a California anti-AIDS campaign is underway that employs 50,000 free, 10-minute long-distance phone cards.

When cardholders make a call, they will first hear the message: "You have the power to stop HIV and AIDS. Use a condom every time you have sex. For more information on safer sex or HIV testing, call the California AIDS Hotline at 1-800-367-AIDS."



The cards' intended recipients are gay men, bisexuals, drug users and other groups at high risk for HIV infection. Especially targeted are those aged 18 to 24 who frequent sex clubs, cruising areas, bars and nightclubs.

Kim Belshe, California's state health director, says the cards will initially be promoted with a statewide radio campaign.

Belshe estimates the number of HIV-positive Californians to be 37,000, with 8,000 more expected to contract HIV in 1998.

## VOTE MAINTAINS BAN ON GAY CLERGY

In a series of votes over the past six months, the nearly 200 presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (USA) decided to retain a 10-month-old church law prohibiting the ordination of anyone having sex outside of marriage. Effectively, the law excludes all practicing homosexuals.

A March 19 Associated Press report says the vote was against new language that would have eliminated the marriage clause in favor of broader language that asked church clergy to "demonstrate fidelity and integrity in marriage or singleness and in all relationships of life."

The Presbytery of the Cascades, which covers Oregon and Southwest Washington, backed the new language with a 177-159 vote on March 14.

There are an estimated 2.6 million Presbyterians in the U.S.

## STUCK IN THE NOMINATION MUCK

James Hormel, President Clinton's choice for ambassador to Luxembourg, may be the most notable gay nominee being held up by the U.S. Senate—but he isn't the only one.

Fred Hochberg, an openly gay Clinton supporter and former president of the highly successful Lillian Vernon Corp., was nominated in October 1997 to be a Small Business Administration deputy administrator. According to a March 19 *San Francisco Chronicle* report, Hochberg's nomination has not moved forward since.

GOP senators maintain the delay has nothing to do with Hochberg's sexuality or his public support of gay and lesbian causes, but rather is an issue of political influence and campaign donations. Senate Republicans are investigating Hochberg's contributions to the Democratic Party, the implication being that Hochberg expected his financial donations to secure a nomination.

Administration officials contend these objections are a ruse and the real reason for conservative resistance to the appointment is Hochberg's orientation and history of activism.

## BOY SCOUTS SCORE IN GOLDEN STATE

On March 23, California's Supreme Court ruled Boy Scouts organizations can bar gay people and atheists. According to Reuters, in a pair of unanimous rulings that could cause a national legal battle over the scouting movement, the court said scout groups are not businesses and therefore are free to exclude whomever they please.

The two cases involved Timothy Curran, a gay man barred from the post of assistant scoutmaster 16 years ago, and William and Michael Randall, a pair of twins who as 9-year-old Cub Scouts said they were agnostics.

The state high court decided the Boy Scouts is not a business but a private group with its own moral charter and therefore is not covered by California's Unruh Civil Rights Act, which forbids businesses from discriminating on a number of grounds, including race, religion and sexual orientation.

"Could the NAACP be compelled to accept as a member a Ku Klux Klansman? Could B'nai B'rith be required to admit an anti-Semite?" Justice Joyce Kennard wrote in one concurring opinion.



The justices contend their ruling was not intended to permit "invidious discrimination," but said the Unruh law as written did not support action against the Boy Scouts on these two issues.

The lawsuits spotlighted the 5.8-million-member Boy Scouts organization, which has not changed its vow to promote "morally straight" young men since it was founded in 1910.

The court's decision was a victory for the Scouts, which lost a similar case in New Jersey earlier this month when a state appeals court found the group there had discriminated against an assistant scoutmaster when it ousted him for being gay.

Compiled by WILL O'BRYAN

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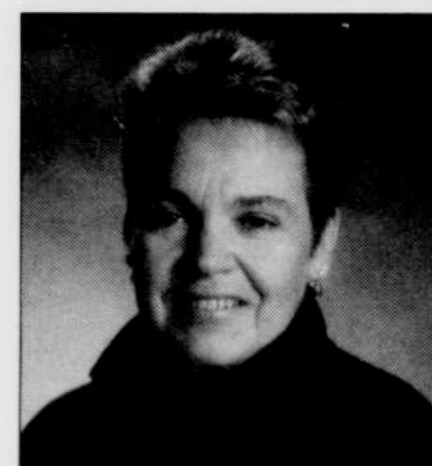


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