

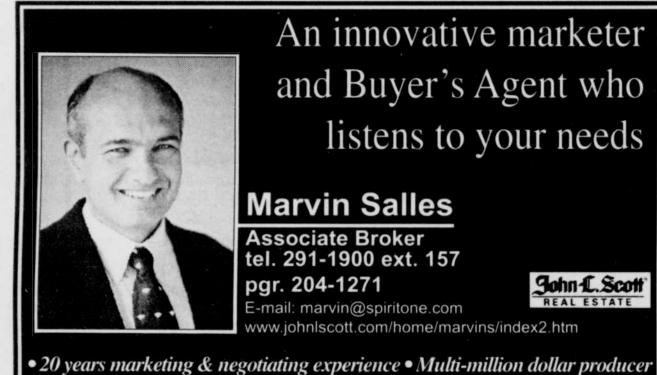
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John C. Scott







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## **ALABAMA**

he state Supreme Court recently voted 7-0 L to remove a girl from her lesbian mother's custody. According to a June 26 Associated Press report, the decision was based on the fact that homosexuality is an illegal lifestyle in Alabama.

The court said the father, who was suing for custody, didn't need to prove his daughter suffered in any way by living with her mother.

"While the evidence shows that the mother loves the child and has provided her with good care, it also shows that she has chosen to expose the child continuously to a lifestyle that is 'neither legal in this state, nor moral in the eyes of most of its citizens," wrote Justice Champ Lyons, quoting a previous court decision.

## **ARKANSAS**

ollowing a family's claim that their son was harassed for being gay while school staff did nothing to protect him, the U.S. Education Department's Office of Civil Rights has reached an agreement with Fayetteville Public Schools.



The agreement says the school district is responsible for curbing student harassment, including "sexual harassment directed at gay and lesbian students," according to a June 23 press release from Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

PFLAG reports that this is the first time the new Title IX guidelines issued last year have been applied to sexual harassment directed at sexual minority students.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal statute that prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual harassment. Schools must be in compliance with Title IX in order to qualify for federal funding.

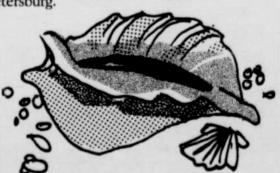
## **CALIFORNIA**

ompared to the same period in 1996, the first half of 1997 saw a 60 percent drop in AIDS-related deaths, California health officials

A June 26 United Press International story quotes health authorities who point to increased financing of the AIDS Drug Assistance Program as the largest factor in the decline. The program supplies 53 different drugs to people with HIV who couldn't otherwise afford the treatments.

# **FLORIDA**

It bills itself as the largest U.S. resort that Laters specifically to a queer clientele and, following a \$1 million makeover, it's open for business. Welcome to the Suncoast Resort in St. Petersburg.



According to Reuters news service, the resort is aiming for an upscale clientele-including some heterosexual guests—to occupy the

120 rooms and suites and enjoy the health club, pool, disco, tennis courts, restaurants, bars and

"Nothing lewd is going to be happening here," insists co-owner Lester Wolff.

## KENTUCKY

Ichael Carneal, the 15-year-old West Paducah resident accused of killing three fellow students and wounding five more last December, told a psychologist that his actions were sparked by a 1996 gossip column in his middle school's newspaper that implied he is gay, United Press International reports.

According to Carneal's psychologist, Diane Schetky, the column, called "Rumor Has It," made Carneal feel as if everyone were laughing at him. Her report also noted Carneal's allegations of "extensive harassment at school in recent years, in which he was called gay, faggot, nerd, geek .... He stated that he was also spat upon, hit, put in headlocks and threatened with violence."

### **NEBRASKA**

Thile the queer spotlight more commonly casts its glow on the coasts, gay and lesbian Midwesterners celebrated their communities in a way only they can-with a rodeo. The Heartland Regional Rodeo, which benefited the AIDS Project of Iowa and Nebraska, was a ripping success in its second year, reports the Des Moines Register.



Roughly 60 gay men and lesbians competed in 13 events at the Sarpy County Fairgrounds near Springfield, Neb.

Among the participants was Ken Boge, an Iowa City leathersmith who made his own rainbow chaps. "I only wear them when I ride the broncs," says Boge. "They're too cumbersome to wear for other events."

# **NEW YORK**

n June 24, it became official: Married couples and unmarried couples enjoy equal status in New York City, thanks to one of the broadest domestic partner policies in the country.

According to a Reuters report, the new law includes bereavement leave for city employees, visitation rights in city-run facilities, and tenancy succession rights. It also allows registered partners to be buried together in a city-owned cemetery as married couples have been.

The new law was promised by Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani during his 1997 campaign and was passed 39-7, with one abstention, by the City Council.

Compiled by WILL O'BRYAN