

Snipstead headed the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations from 1978 until his confession in 1992. The association, which says homosexuality is a sin, was formed as an alternative to perceived liberal trends within the Lutheran Church.

Snipstead's wife, Leone, died of an AIDS-related illness a short time after her husband's announcement.

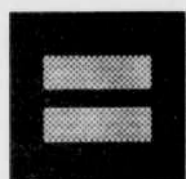
NATIONAL

Paula Ettelbrick has been hired as the national coordinator of Equality Begins at Home, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force officials say.

The July 16 announcement came on the heels of the mid-year meeting of the Federation of State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Political Organizations, which further cemented plans for Equality Begins at Home, a campaign of pro-queer actions planned nationwide for March 1999.

"The Equality Begins at Home events will be a watershed moment for our movement. Never before have state organizations come together to organize a coordinated series of actions to advance [queer] equal rights," says Ettelbrick.

The Human Rights Campaign has solicited and received an apology from Green Bay Packers president Robert E. Harlan following a full-page anti-gay ad in the July 15 *Washington Times* showing Reggie White in his Green Bay Packer uniform, in violation of NFL policy.



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"As an organization, we regret the use of our uniform in the advertisement," wrote Harlan. "Please accept our apology."

According to The Associated Press, a coalition of 15 Christian groups paid for the ad, which carried the headline "Toward an open debate on homosexual behavior."

On July 17, Amnesty International USA announced two goals it hopes to achieve following a pledge from the Mertz-Gilmore Foundation to match an Amnesty investment of \$100,000 during the next two years.

With the new funds, Amnesty aims to "strengthen or create legal protections in the United States and abroad for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered rights," and to "promote grass-roots activism around the world that would protect people who are targets of abuse because of their sexual orientation or identity."

NORTH CAROLINA

An anonymous complainant challenging Chapel Hill's policy of extending health benefits to domestic partners of city employees may have to drop the lawsuit.

According to a July 22 report in Durham's *Herald Sun*, Superior Court Judge Catherine Eagles ruled the actual identity of the complainant, who is using the pseudonym Publius Heterodoxus, must be revealed for the suit to continue. Eagles said her decision was based upon weighing the public interest against the plaintiff's fear of queer retaliation.

SOUTH DAKOTA

When Karen Lee wrote the winning essay that brought the Disney-sponsored Mickey's Hometown Parade to her home of Vermillion, population 10,000, she probably didn't expect to win a visit from the American Family Association as well.



Traipsing behind the July 18 parade, which garnered an estimated 24,000 spectators, were three anti-Disney activists carrying a banner reading "Disney has betrayed the American family," reports the *Sioux City Journal*.

Apparently, Vermillionaires weren't swayed. "This is fun for kids," said resident Debi Rollison. "If they have problem, I don't think this is the place."

VIRGINIA

Christian broadcaster Pat Robertson, who is politically associated with efforts to dismantle the National Endowment for the Arts, has egg on his face following news his Regent University received NEA grant money, according to the *Virginian-Pilot*.

The mid-July report reveals the university was awarded a \$1,000 grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, which counted \$523,000 of NEA money among its \$3.4 million grant pool for fiscal year 1997-98. The student-produced film that benefitted from the grant noted funding from both the state group and the NEA in its credits.

Regent's public relations director says Robertson was unaware the university had taken money from the NEA and has asked university officials to return it.

On July 15, Randy Tate, executive director of the Robertson-funded Christian Coalition, stated the NEA had "lost its moorings" during a speech to Congress requesting it privatize the arts.

"True artistic expression flourishes throughout the United States, funded privately, and on display in theaters, museums, art galleries and other public places," said Tate, adding, "Let's fully privatize the arts and end welfare for the artistic left."

WISCONSIN

Madison, with a reputation as a progressive queer haven, got a unique peek at intolerance during the city's July 19 Gay and Lesbian Visibility rally.



Circling high above the 2,500-person crowd, a small plane dragged a banner that read, "Homosexuality is sin," reports the *Capital Times*.

The airborne banner follows a billboard campaign by Wisconsin Christians United, which purchased space on five billboards to carry messages defaming gay men and lesbians. The group—whose director Ralph Ovadal had indeed promised to deliver a surprise to the July 19 rally—aims to recriminalize homosexual sex in Wisconsin.

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