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**NATIONAL news**

**CALIFORNIA**

The Boy Scouts of America strike again. The Sept. 12 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle* reports that Dave Rice, an assistant scoutmaster of a Petaluma troop, was dismissed by the national organization for what Gregg Shields, national scout spokesman, called an "inappropriate use of his leadership position."

Specifically, Rice, a scouting veteran of nearly 60 years, was accused of involving a 13-year-old scout, Steven Cozza, in "a campaign to further [Rice's] own personal and social agenda," said Shields.

Earlier this year Cozza, reacting to a March ruling by the California Supreme Court that said the Boy Scouts have the right to exclude gay people and atheists, started a nationwide petition drive to encourage the Boy Scouts to end discrimination against gay people.

According to Rice, Cozza and his father, also a scoutmaster, asked Rice for help in running the petition campaign. Rice also stated he "absolutely did not" encourage Cozza to join Scouting for All, an organization he started in 1993 to combat the gay ban.

According to Scouts leaders, neither the local troop nor the local Boy Scouts Council had requested Rice's ouster.



**FLORIDA**

Paul Facchina Jr., 27, a former model who claims he was made to be a "poster boy" for gay men living with AIDS, has a right to sue over the use of his photograph, an appeals court ruled Sept. 23.

According to an Associated Press report, Facchina said he signed an agreement in November 1994 with Mutual Benefits Corp. to use his image for advertisements related "solely to the purchasing of life insurance policies."

A year later, Facchina filed suit, claiming his photograph was published in magazines across the country directed to "sexually active homosexuals" and that the text of the ad implied he was a gay man with AIDS.



The AP reports that three different versions of the lawsuit have been thrown out by a Broward County circuit judge. The 4th District Court of Appeals, however, maintained Facchina should be able to sue over use of his photo without authorization, invasion of privacy and defamation.

Named in the lawsuit are Viatical Benefits Foundation, which buys life insurance policies on discount from terminally ill patients, and its affiliate, Mutual Benefits, which matches people interested in buying policies with those wanting to sell them.

Facchina's attorney, J. Davis Connor, told the AP Facchina had no idea his image would be used to advertise a company that buys insurance policies from gay men with AIDS.

Attorney Kerry Wilson added, "This young man, his family is Italian, he is intensely heterosexual. It embarrassed the hell out of him."

**GEORGIA**

The state of Georgia is nothing if not consistent in its refusal to recognize same-sex relationships as valid in any arena.

The state, through its insurance commissioner's office, has ruled that the Hartford Company, a national insurance company, cannot offer same-sex couples rates and discounts on auto insurance that match the rates and discounts it offers married couples in Georgia.

In a Sept. 3 story, *Southern Voice* reports the insurance commissioner also refused to allow health insurers to write policies providing domestic partner coverage.

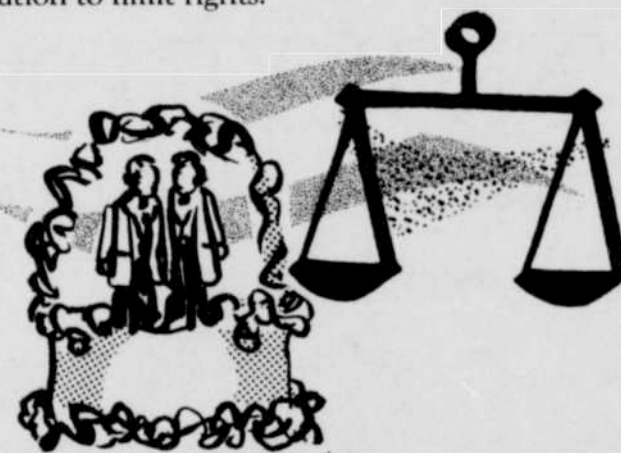
Currently, the Hartford Company offers its "diverse household" program in 34 states.

**HAWAII**

A recent poll conducted by the *Honolulu Advertiser* and Channel 2 News shows that, while voters in the Aloha State oppose same-sex marriage, they don't necessarily want to change the state constitution to give legislators the power to ban such marriages.

Poll results, released in the Sept. 18 issue of the *Advertiser*, show that same-sex marriage is opposed by 72 percent of the voters. Only 52 percent want the state constitution changed, however.

Jackie Young, campaign director for Protect Our Constitution, believes the numbers show that people are getting the message that a "dangerous precedent" would be set by using the constitution to limit rights.



Janice Pechauer, president of Save Traditional Marriage '98, said the poll results mean that people just don't understand the constitutional amendment question.

One thing both sides do agree on is that a lot of work remains to be done between now and the Nov. 3 general election to educate the voting public about the constitutional amendment.

The proposed amendment was placed on the ballot by state legislators in an effort to head off a possible state Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriage.

**ILLINOIS**

Cook County, which includes the city of Chicago, is Illinois' only county that provides workplace discrimination protection to gay men and lesbians. The 1993 ordinance extending workplace protection is enforced by the Cook County Commission on Human Rights.

The commission recently made it very clear that such discrimination will not be tolerated when it ordered a Red Lobster restaurant to reinstate a gay man who had been fired because of his sexual orientation.

