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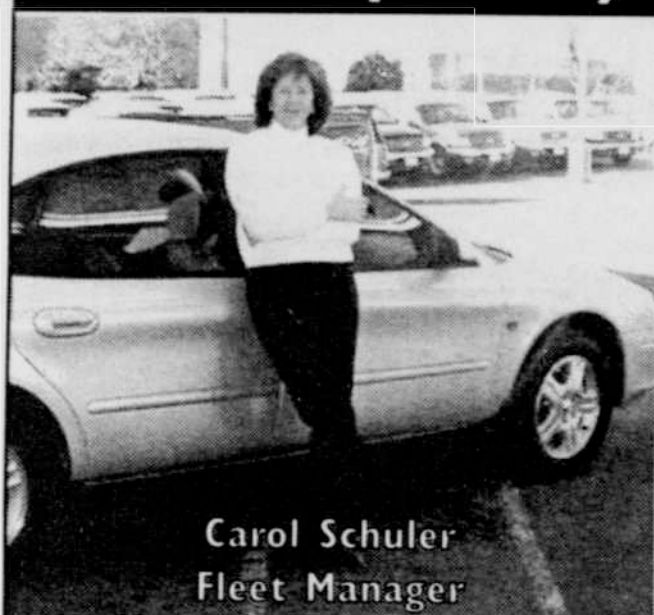
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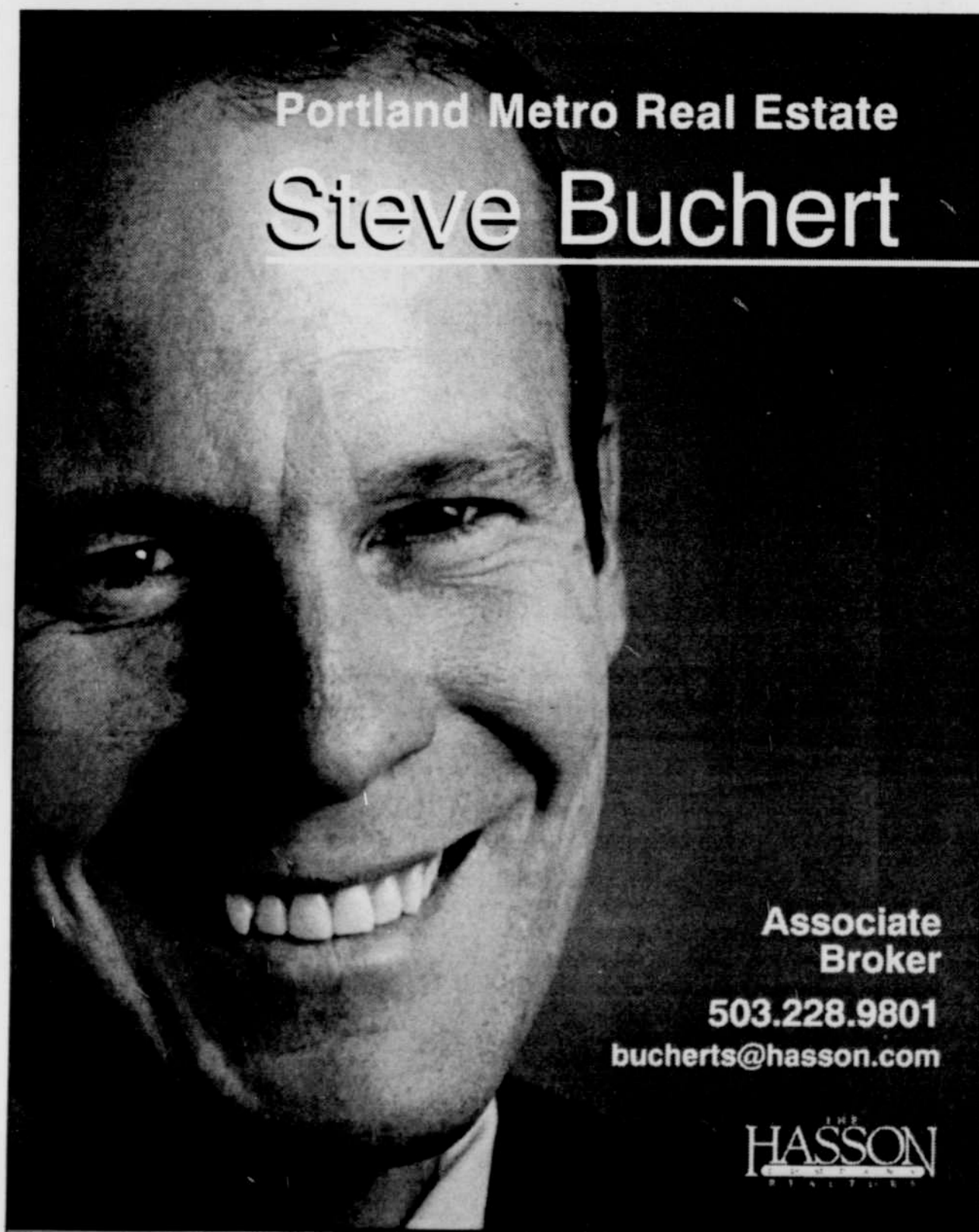


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NATIONAL news**ARIZONA**

Approximately 5,000 people turned out for a Feb. 13 march in response to the stabbing of a gay man.

The 20-year-old University of Arizona student was stabbed at a coffeehouse a few days before.

According to a Feb. 14 Arizona Daily Star report, police have described the stabbing as a hate crime.

The alleged assailant, 37-year-old Gary Grayson, has been charged with aggravated assault. He is being held in the Pima County Jail on a \$10,000 bond.

The Arizona Legislature passed a hate crimes statute in 1997. It permits judges to impose more severe penalties if a crime victim is targeted because of race, color, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, gender or disability.

Rally organizers requested that reporters not identify the man who was stabbed.

"He's already been targeted once. He doesn't need to be a target again," said organizer Dace Park.

During an open microphone session at the rally, 15 people told of their personal experiences with homophobic violence.

Said Park: "This is a symptom, a symptom of hate, a symptom that our society has started to accept as normal."

Speaking at the rally, the injured student said: "Fear will not victimize me, discrimination will not discourage me and hate will not stop me. I hope that people everywhere will add their voices to my own."

CALIFORNIA

Last month, senior management at the *Atascadero Gazette* dropped a calendar listing for a gay support group. That action, and the explanation for it, prompted the resignations of nearly a dozen employees, including the publisher and the editor, reports the *San Luis Obispo Tribune*.

The controversy has also led to the cancellation of roughly 200 subscriptions and sparked a protest on the local courthouse steps.

"They said we don't carry advertising, articles or letters which advocate homosexuality or abortion. But we do carry materials which are against those things."

—Steve Martin, former publisher of the *Atascadero Gazette*

According to the Feb. 18 *Tribune*, Steve Martin, the publisher who resigned, said management explained the decision at a meeting with publishers of the five San Luis Obispo County weekly gazettes owned by David Weyrich.

"They said we don't carry advertising, articles or letters which advocate homosexuality or abortion. But we do carry materials which are against those things," he said.

Following Martin's resignation, editor Ron Bast quit, and reporter Anne Quinn gave notice.

According to Todd Hansen, the gazettes' chief executive officer, the newspapers' policy concerning gays and abortion should not have come as a surprise to staff members.

"We do not hesitate on our philosophy. We

stand by it," Hansen said. "This isn't anything new. That's why we started the gazettes, to offer family-values newspapers. If people didn't know that, it's been a misunderstanding or not clearly spoken."

Hansen insisted Weyrich's publications are not trying to single out the gay and lesbian community.

"We don't have anything against the people; it's the act they do," said Hansen. "We just want our paper to go into everyone's household and be able to have 5-year-olds to grandparents read it."

Marie Moore, a board member of the Central Coast Gay and Lesbian Alliance, said the decision came as a surprise to her.

"It's a blow to the community. It tries to force us to stay invisible. It's like chopping off an arm," she said. "There are entities involved in advertising that are very conservative, very right wing, so maybe they're getting pressure from them."

The 68 ministers who blessed a lesbian wedding to protest the Methodist Church's ban on gay and lesbian marriages received a reprieve in February from any disciplinary action.

According to a Feb. 12 Associated Press account, church investigators decided the charges were not serious enough to merit a trial under United Methodist law. Had the pastors been convicted of violating church law, they could have faced dismissal.

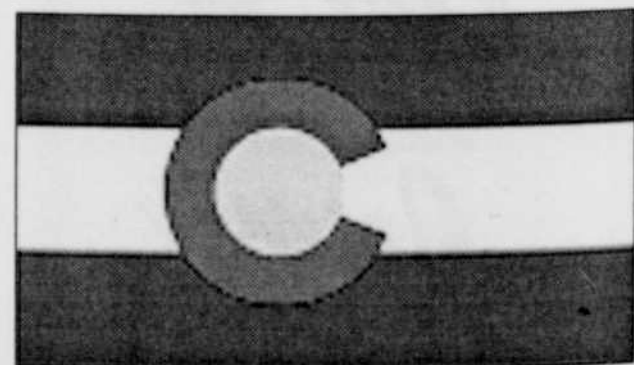
"No further steps or actions will be pursued," said Bishop Melvin Talbert of the California-Northern Nevada Conference. "This decision will not resolve the tension within the community."

The January 1999 ceremony that united Ellie Charlton, 64, and Jeanne Barnett, 69, was attended by 1,500 guests and 92 ministers. The formal complaint named only the 68 ministers who are within the jurisdiction of the California-Northern Nevada Conference.

The lead defendant, the Rev. Don Fado of St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Sacramento, compared the ceremony to an act of civil disobedience. Fado said he sought a church trial to force the Methodist Church to confront the needs of gay and lesbian members.

COLORADO

With a close Feb. 21 vote in the House of Representatives, the state Legislature approved a ban on same-sex marriages, *The Denver Post* reported Feb. 22.



According to the newspaper, Gov. Bill Owens has said he will sign the measure into law—a marked contrast to the position of Owens' predecessor, Democrat Roy Romer, who vetoed two such bills.