

NATIONAL news

that the state has no compelling or rational interest that would justify criminalizing non-commercial, private, consensual sexual activity between adults, regardless of sexual orientation.

Smith's case has been consolidated by the high court with the cases of several accused prostitutes. The sex workers claim the sodomy law punishes prostitutes who solicit oral sex more severely than those who solicit intercourse.

Under the current sodomy law, oral sex for money is punishable by five years in prison. Offering vaginal intercourse for money or trade is a misdemeanor that carries a maximum sentence of six months.

MISSISSIPPI

Just when supporters of gay adoptions thought they had dodged a bullet in the state Legislature, another shot was fired. Vigorous lobbying by the American Family Association and the Mississippi Baptist Convention revived the proposed adoption ban.



An unprecedented anti-adoption law that would have banned gay and lesbian couples from adopting—and would have forbidden Mississippi from recognizing

gay and lesbian adoptions granted by courts in other states—died last month in the Mississippi Statehouse. It was thought that the bill could not be revived this year.

Just hours after the measure's defeat, various media sources report, the House Public Health Committee amended an unrelated bill—which had already been passed by the Senate—to include the gay and lesbian adoption ban. The amendment does not include the refusal to recognize adoptions executed in other states.

In the face of this new threat, the "Phone Home for Families" campaign has been relaunched. It's urging people who now live in Mississippi, or who once lived in the state, to call House members and encourage them to block the bill.

The telephone campaign was used to help defeat the original bill.

NATIONAL

Hoping to overtake American Airlines—considered by many to be the carrier of choice among gay men and lesbians—United Airlines has launched a major marketing effort to become the "official airline" of the queer community.

"Without a doubt, that's definitely the goal," said Mario Baldessari, co-director of United's

marketing effort to reach gay men and lesbians, in a March 16 Associated Press story.

United, trying to recover from a two-year boycott that ended last summer, established a gay and lesbian marketing team the same year the boycott started. Its efforts include an ad campaign launched in gay publications late last year.

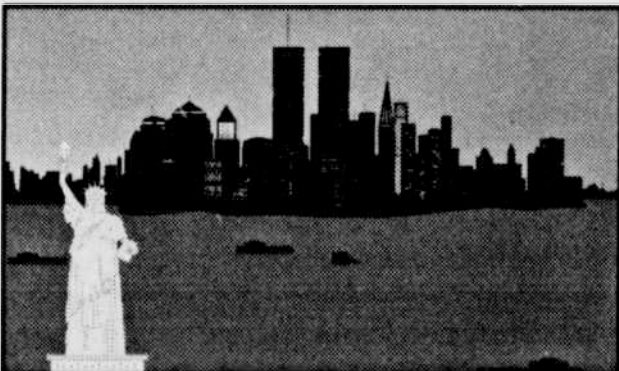
The gay and lesbian travel market is considered a lucrative one. A study conducted by San Francisco-based Community Marketing found 85 percent of the gay men and lesbians surveyed took vacations in 1999, compared with a national average of 64 percent. Overseas trips were taken by 45 percent of gay men and lesbians, while the national average is 9 percent.

According to Tom Longman, an industry analyst, major airlines appear willing to risk the potential backlash from the religious right wing in order to secure a piece of the gay and lesbian travel market.

To date, United's list of "official airline" sponsorships include AIDS Project Los Angeles and Gay Games VII in Chicago in 2006.

NEW YORK

The Stonewall Inn, the New York City bar where many believe the modern gay rights movement began, has been named a national historic landmark by the Department of the Interior.



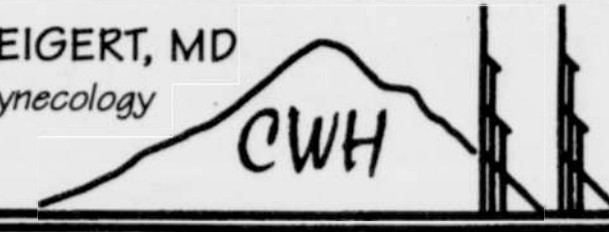
A March 16 story in *The Record*, a newspaper in Hackensack, N.J., reports that this is the first time a gay site has received such a designation. Landmark designation is given to places considered meaningful to the history and culture of the United States.

"I think it's a really key site of the 20th century history of America. It's where the gay and lesbian rights movement began its activist phase," said Andrew S. Dolkart, a Columbia University historian and one of the main proponents of the designation.

John Berry, an assistant Interior secretary said, "I think that no one would argue that Stonewall is an integral part of the story of modern American history."

■ Compiled by KRISTINE CHATWOOD, a Portland resident and longtime Just Out contributor.

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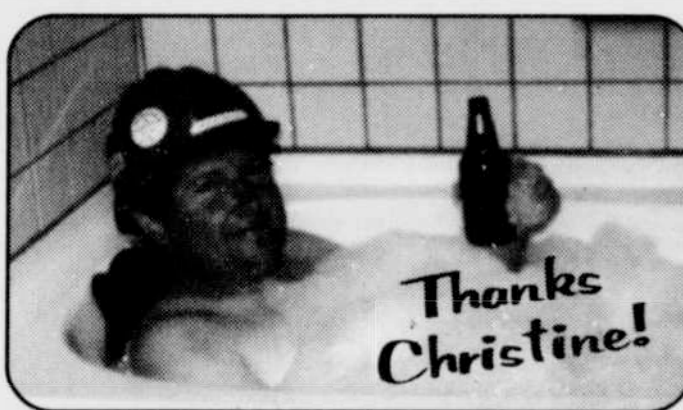
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