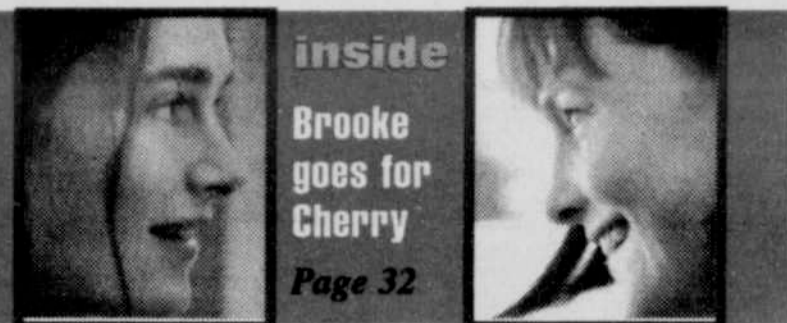


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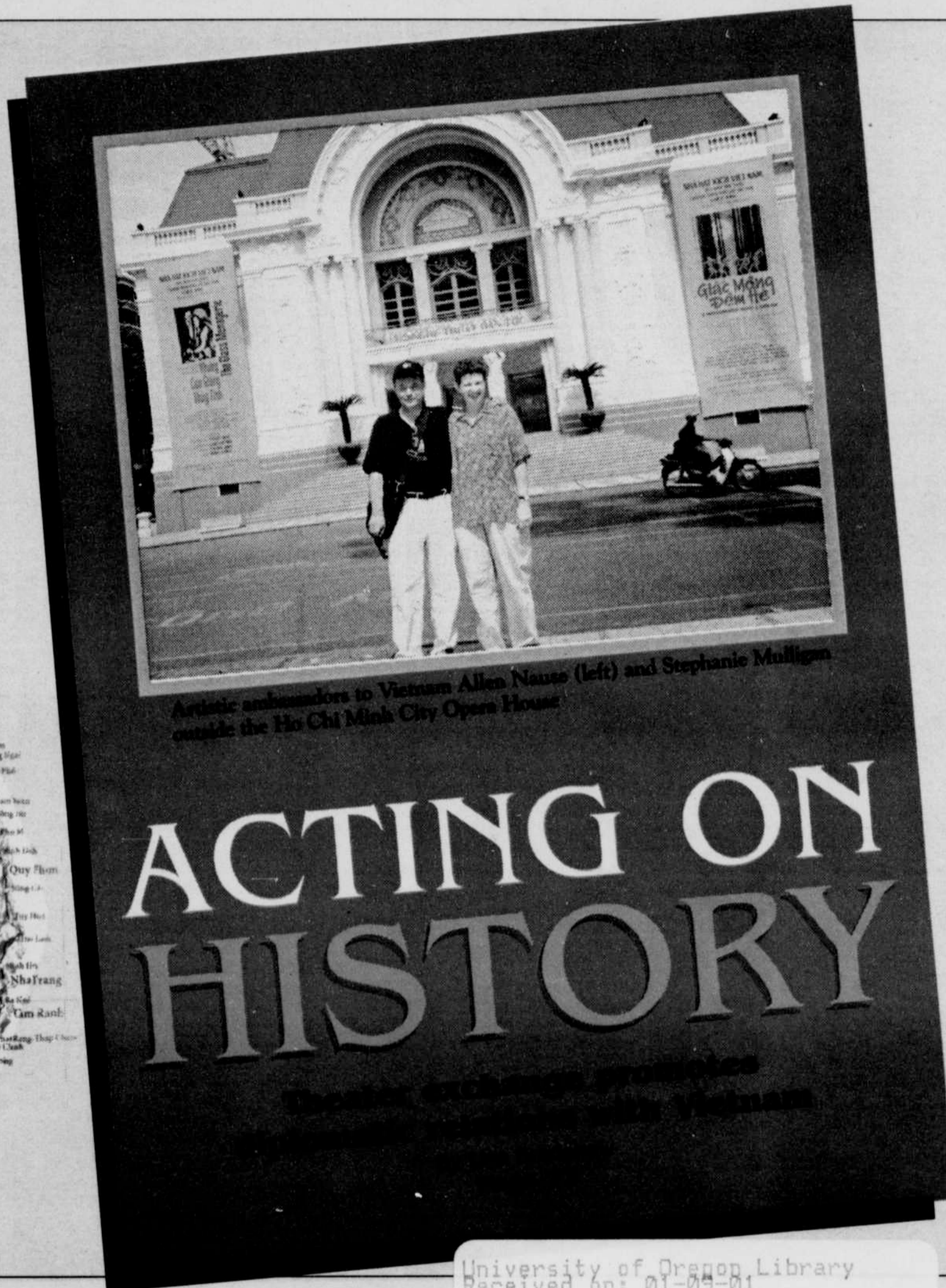
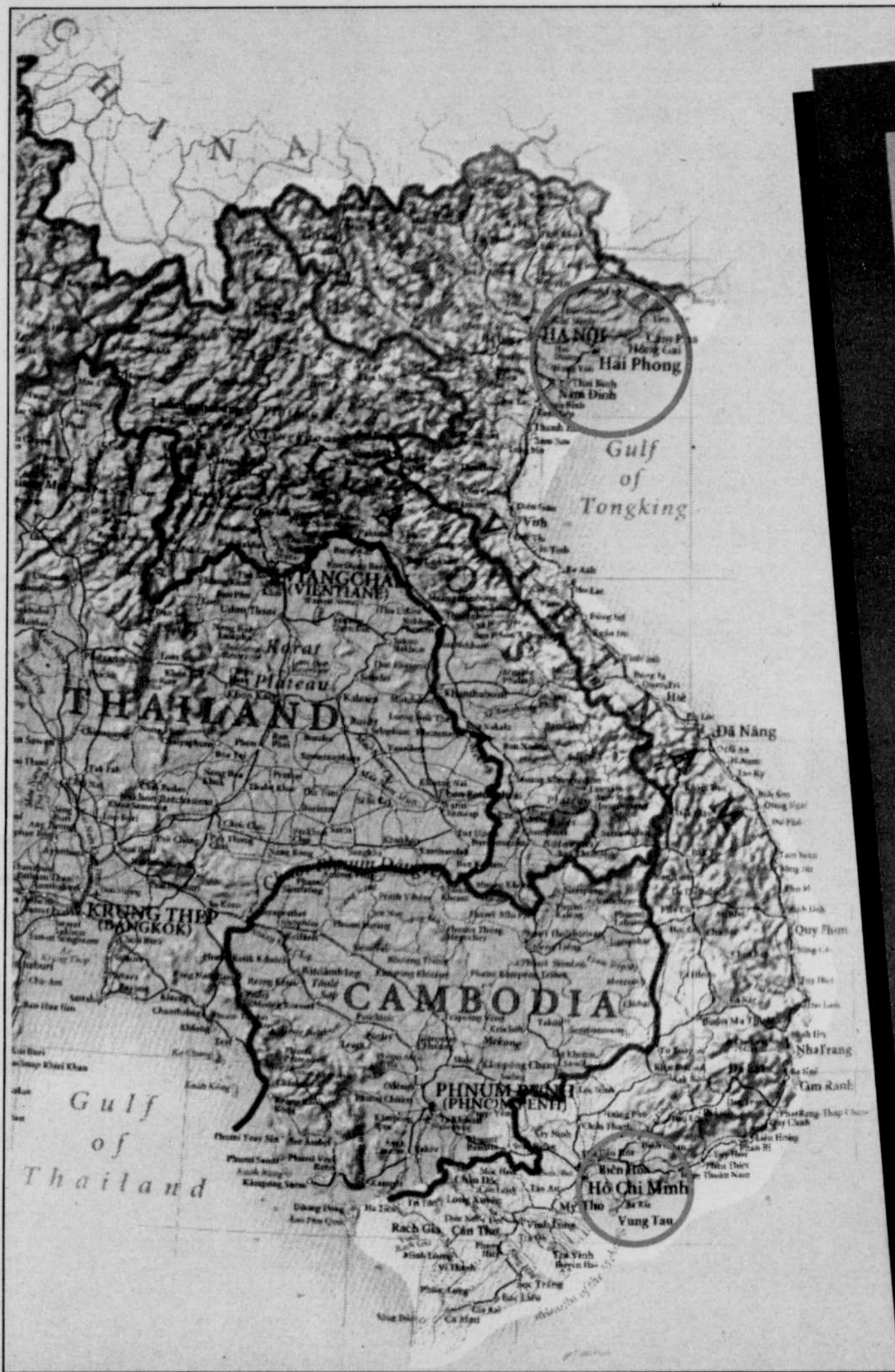
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Artistic ambassadors to Vietnam Allen Nause (left) and Stephanie Mulligan outside the Ho Chi Minh City Opera House

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The name game

HIV policy will take effect July 1

BY JONATHAN KIPP

After months of controversy, Dr. Martin Wasserman, the Oregon Health Division's new administrator, went public Dec. 21 with his decision to expand HIV surveillance around the state.

Starting July 1, the names of people testing positive for HIV will be reported to the public health system. The information will remain in the state's computer database for 90 days before the name is transcribed into a code called a unique identifier.

Anonymous and confidential testing will continue to be available throughout Oregon. "I personally believe that name-to-code reporting is the best compromise within the options open to us," Wasserman said.

He made the announcement at Cascade AIDS Project, the leading HIV/AIDS social service and education agency in

Oregon and southwest Washington. It was the culminating event after months of public hearings, research, task forces, advisory boards—and even peaceful demonstrations.

Although many HIV/AIDS groups and civil rights organizations—including American Civil Liberties Union Oregon and Basic Rights Oregon—opposed the proposal, others supported the state's quest to execute an HIV reporting system that would help epidemiologists track the ever-changing disease.

The benefits to public health and individual health, they said, would outweigh any consequences the policy might bring. In addition, the health division repeatedly said no evidence in 32 other states indicated that names reporting resulted in decreased testing, as the opposition claimed.

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