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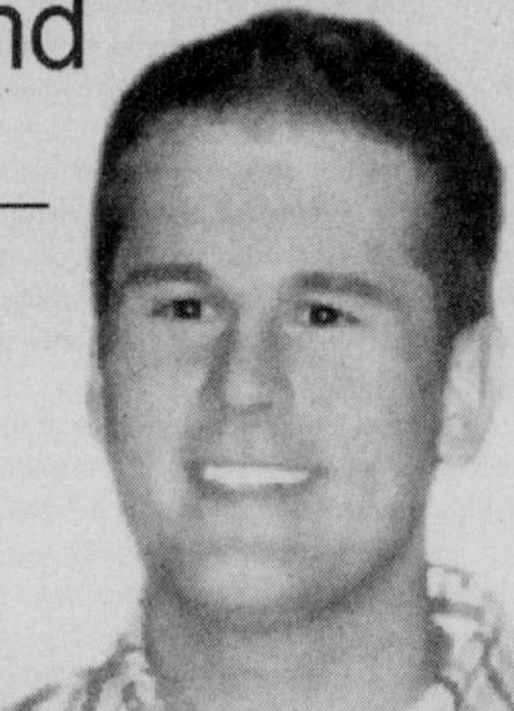
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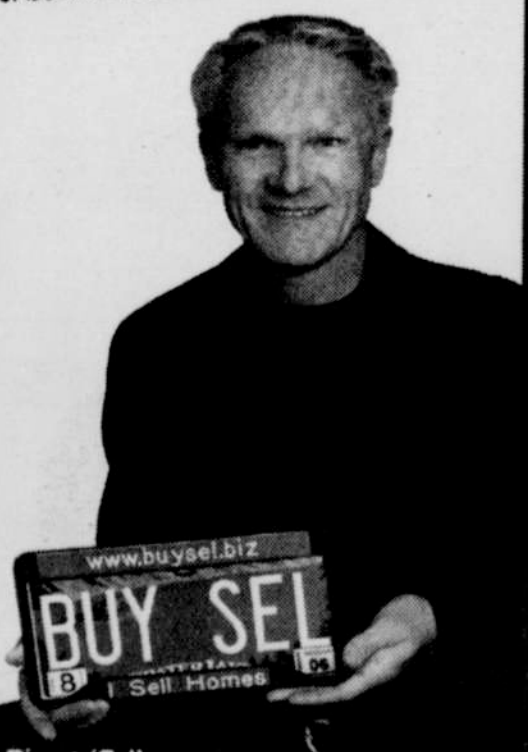
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NATIONAL

Rare Chlamydia Strain Infecting Gay Men

A particularly bad strain of chlamydia not usually seen in the United States appears to be spreading among men who have sex with men. It is an infection that can increase their chances of getting or spreading the AIDS virus, Florida's *Sun-Sentinel* newspaper reported Feb. 6.

Called LGV chlamydia, this sexually transmitted disease has caused an outbreak in Europe. Diagnoses confirmed by U.S. health officials still are low—just 27 since they warned a year ago that the strain was headed here.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention already was counting an 8 percent increase in HIV among gay and bisexual men between 2003 and 2004 before LGV's arrival was recognized. Its symptoms are difficult to detect, and diagnosis often requires expensive testing.

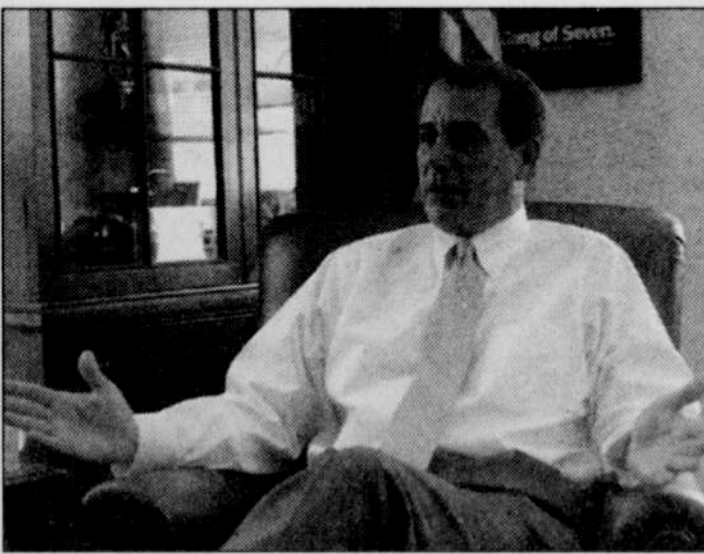
Symptoms differ from regular chlamydia: swollen lymph nodes in the groin, genital or rectal ulcers, and painful bowel movements and other gastrointestinal symptoms that might mimic inflammatory bowel disease. Such symptoms leave patients particularly susceptible to HIV infection if they also encounter that virus.

Because testing is difficult, no one knows how prevalent LGV truly is. The CDC is encouraging doctors who spot LGV symptoms to contact their local health department for help in finding a nearby testing lab or in shipping samples to the CDC for testing there.

Anti-Gay Congressman Wins Majority Leader Post

U.S. Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, was elected majority leader Feb. 2 in the House of Representatives. Queer advocacy groups say he's no friend of theirs; the Human Rights Campaign recently gave him a score of 0 on gay issues that came before Congress.

Boehner has voted across the board against gay rights bills and for anti-gay bills and amendments, according to a compilation of his voting record by HRC. He has repeatedly declined to sign a pledge not to engage in discrimination based on sexual orientation in his congressional office, according to *The Washington Blade*.



John Boehner, R-Ohio, Tom DeLay's replacement as majority leader in the House of Representatives, has voted across the board against queer rights.

Frank Blasts U.S. Vote at United Nations

Openly gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., asked Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Feb. 3 to explain a U.S. vote in the United Nations to block two gay rights group from admission to the

U.N. Economic and Social Council.

"I was deeply troubled to learn that the U.S. government, presumably at your direction, sided with some of the most undemocratic, anti-human rights regimes in the world in voting against consultative status for two international organizations, solely on the grounds that they represent gay and lesbian people," Frank said in a letter to Rice.

MASSACHUSETTS

Hatchet-Wielding Murderer Turns Gun on Self

Jacob Robida, 18, of New Bedford, Mass., who was accused of going on a rampage at a gay bar and later killing two people, fatally shot himself in the head in a gunfight with Arkansas police Feb. 4 after killing a West Virginia woman who was in his car, said Bristol County, Mass., District Attorney Paul Walsh Jr.



Jacob Robida, 18, killed himself after attacking three others at a gay bar in New Bedford, Mass.

Police had searched for Robida since Feb. 2, when they say he used a hatchet and handgun to wound three men at the Puzzles Lounge in New Bedford. Walsh said the suicide confirms his early suspicion that Robida remained dangerous.

Police in Massachusetts, who are investigating whether Robida had an accomplice in the bar attack, searched his room and discovered a handwritten note in which he bid his mother goodbye and suggested he would again resort to violence.

The contents of the note were not released. It was unclear whether Robida left the note before or after the nightclub attack.

NORTH CAROLINA

Gay Tax Resisters Practice Civil Disobedience

Charles Merrill, a 71-year-old artist, and his partner, Kevin Boyle, announced Jan. 30 they will not pay federal or North Carolina income tax on more than \$2 million worth of stock sales and income for 2004 because of unfair discrimination in the federal and state income tax codes.

"I have no intention of paying federal and state income taxes because my same-sex partner and I cannot be legally married and receive the same tax benefits as other married couples," Merrill said. "By not paying taxes, this is a deliberate act of civil disobedience towards a president that wants to make an amendment to the Constitution to only allow marriage between a man and woman, rather than two people who love each other, and that discriminates against us as full citizens of the United States."

Merrill and Boyle are founders of a group called Citizens Against Discrimination. In 1996 they