

# the rest of our world

## Kramer Undergoes Liver Transplant

PITTSBURGH – Larry Kramer's got a new liver. The AIDS activist, playwright, and author underwent a liver transplant and was released from the hospital.

Kramer, 66, spent seven months on the organ transplant waiting list. He moved to Pittsburgh in early November to wait for an organ to become available and underwent transplant surgery Friday.

While many transplant centers oppose the surgery for HIV-positive patients, UPMC's Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute has performed 10 liver transplants on HIV-positive patients since 1997. Eight of the patients have survived.

Kramer's HIV has been relatively well controlled, but he suffered from end-stage liver failure caused by hepatitis B.

Kramer is the author of the plays "The Normal Heart" and "The Destiny of Me," and books about the front line of AIDS and gay activism. His screenplay for the 1969 film "Women in Love" was nominated for an Academy Award. He also helped found Gay Men's Health Crisis which provides services to people with AIDS, and later helped create ACT UP, an AIDS advocacy group.

## Lance Loud Dies

LOS ANGELES – A man whose revelation on television that he was gay was a breakthrough in the 1970s has died. Lance Loud, who was a freelance journalist, died of complications from hepatitis C. He was 50.

He was part of *An American Family*, the PBS series that was one of the first unscripted programs on mainstream television. The show focused on the family, who allowed filming of their daily lives for seven months in 1971. The 12-part series aired in 1973 and was considered a hit.

When he was 20 years old, Loud announced he was gay on the show, a public avowal that was unusual dur-

ing the early 1970s. His decision drew widespread support from many gays.

After the series aired, Loud lived in New York for several years and performed in a rock band called the Mumps.

In 1981, he moved back to California, where he studied journalism. He often wrote articles for *The Advocate*, *Details* and *Interview*. He also had a few small television and film roles.

## Elton John: AIDS Activist

LONDON – Elton John says he's lucky not to have AIDS. John has become active in helping those living with AIDS and HIV.

"As a gay man I'm very lucky not to be infected," he told ITV News. "My concern nowadays is that young people think they are invulnerable, but they're not."

John was interviewed after the U.K. Coalition of People Living with HIV and AIDS gave him its Hero Award Wednesday night. The honor acknowledged his contributions to the fight against HIV and AIDS through the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

"I accept the Hero Award with gratitude, but more importantly in the acknowledgment of the 30,000 positive people here in the U.K. today," he said at the London ceremony.

## High-ranking Minister Marries

OSLO, Norway – A high-ranking member of the Norwegian government has gotten married.

Finance Minister Per-Kristian Foss' marriage to his same-sex partner made him the first member of a Norwegian government to enter a binding same-sex partnership.

Under a 1993 law, gays and lesbians can enter legal partnerships with all the rights and obligations of marriage, except adoption and church weddings.

Foss, a Conservative, married long-term partner Jan Erik Knarbakk in a ceremony at the Norwegian Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden.

The Norwegian Finance Ministry confirmed the wedding but said Foss was giving no interviews or comment because it is a personal matter.

"Yes, we entered a partnership at the embassy in Stockholm on Friday, Jan. 4," Foss told the Norwegian business newspaper *Dagens Naeringsliv*. "But beyond that, it is a private matter."

Knarbakk is a top manager in the Schibsted publishing concern and the two have been described in the news media as being among Norway's most powerful couples.

## School District Settles with Student

ERIE, Pa. – A local school district has agreed to pay a former student to settle claims that he was harassed by other students because he was gay. The Titusville school district will award \$312,000 to Timothy Dahle, now 19.

He said he was pushed down a set of stairs and subjected to other physical assaults as well as name-calling and obscene jokes.

Dahle said he was harassed beginning in sixth grade in 1994 and was so depressed over school that he attempted suicide in 1998. The Titusville school district said Dahle was belligerent to other students and brought the problems on himself.

## 9-11 Victim Compensations

WASHINGTON – Family members of gays and lesbians are among those who are seeking changes to the rules over compensating survivors of the Sept. 11 attacks.

People who accept payment from the compensation fund give up their right to sue.

Interim regulations introduced last month by Kenneth Feinberg, the fund's special master, have drawn sharp criticism from victims who say the government is being stingy.

Feinberg has estimated that the awards to cover lost wages, pain and suffering would average \$1.6 million.

But he said he will have discretion to increase awards and those unhappy with their award may appeal to him. The government accepted comments on how the fund might be changed and received a slew of suggestions.

Among the concerns are that some gay partners could be excluded by state laws or shortchanged because they would be treated as singles.

## Concern Over New AIDS Advisor

WASHINGTON – A new adviser to President Bush on AIDS has stirred concern because of his conservative background.

Former Rep. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., will head the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS along with Louis Sullivan, who served as secretary of health and human services under former President Bush, administration officials confirmed Tuesday. During six years in Congress Coburn frequently questioned the central role condoms play in the fight against AIDS.

"We have a prevention strategy that's failed," Coburn said in an interview Tuesday. Coburn, an obstetrician who has returned to his family practice in Muskogee, Okla., was a leader on health issues while in Congress. He was the primary sponsor of legislation renewing the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides more than \$1 billion a year for AIDS prevention and treatment.

He made common cause with many Democrats as an early Republican supporter of a patients' bill of rights. He was also a fierce abortion opponent and supporter of teaching sexual abstinence that excludes discussion of birth control.

Coburn said Tuesday his personal views would not dictate the work of the panel, but he promised to challenge the national focus on condom use to prevent the spread of HIV.

"Condoms are fairly effective against HIV if people will use them," he said. "We have to ask a question: Are

people going to use them? ... We have had a strategy that says that's the answer. We've spent hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars and HIV infection is going up."

Government statistics show that HIV infection overall has been stable in recent years, though studies suggest rates may rise among certain groups, including poor black women and young gay men.

## Nigel Hawthorne Dies

LONDON – British actor Sir Nigel Hawthorne has died at the age of 72.

Hawthorne was a versatile actor known around the world as the scheming civil servant Sir Humphrey in the British television series *Yes, Minister*.

Hawthorne died of a heart attack at his home in Hertfordshire, north of London, his agent Ken McReddie said. Hawthorne had undergone chemotherapy for cancer recently.

"He was a brilliant actor and a wonderful friend. I feel very sad and extremely cut up," McReddie said. Hawthorne was nominated for a best actor Oscar for his title role in the 1994 film *The Madness of King George*.

Born in Coventry, England in 1929 and raised in South Africa, Hawthorne struggled to forge a theater career in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s. He made his West End debut in *Talking to You* in 1962, more than a decade after moving to England to seek his fortune. Hawthorne later said his shyness and diffidence had held him back, though he hadn't realized it until he played a ditherer in Christopher Hampton's *The Philanthropist*. Movie stardom brought unwanted attention. In the wake of his Oscar nomination, Hawthorne acknowledged publicly for the first time that he was gay. Previously he had been reluctant to talk about his private life; his attitude, he said, had been "don't scare the horses and we'll all get along fine."

Hawthorne is survived by his long-term companion, Trevor Bentham. ■