

free spirit commit to forever? I've never committed completely to anything or anyone. I think this is where my doubts come from.

The uncertainty of my certainty persists. I'm not uncertain of who I am as a man. Quite the opposite. I'm actually very certain, and that scares the hell out of me. I've never been more certain of anything in my life. So how do I let go and surrender to commitment?

I hold you, boy who was never allowed to grow, and comfort you with Spirit. For God is here, and you are God, and so am I, and so is everyone else. Let this God-feeling hold you still and close whenever the uncertainty of your certainty overwhelms you. If you stay with this

God-feeling, the journey cannot disappoint. I promise. Yes, I know, so many promises broken; but you are about to become unbroken, for real this time. Your dreams can and will come true. Surrender to the power of love, of God-feeling, and prepare to begin the ride. If you are scared, hold on tighter, because I am always here. See? I'm right here, with you, always and forever. You say you don't do forever? Try this one. It won't disappoint. I promise. ▼

➔ Tobias Novak lives in Burlington. He was a co-organizer of the Transcending Boundaries conference held in late October.

## Passings

### Gerry Studds Dies at 69

BOSTON - Gerry Studds, the first openly gay member of Congress, died in Boston in October at the age of 69. Studds was first elected in 1972 and served 12 terms, representing Cape Cod and the Islands, New Bedford, and the South Shore. He retired from Congress in 1997.

Studds was outed in 1983 when he was discovered to have had a sexual relationship with a teenaged page years before. Studds was censured by the House of Representatives, but won re-election.

"As the first openly gay member of Congress, Gerry Studds was a pioneer. And one of the many lessons he left is that one can lead an open and authentic life and do good," said Joe Solmonese, President of the Human Rights Campaign. "Gerry was one of the first to understand the fear and inequity faced by gay and lesbian service members and he worked tirelessly on their behalf. Equally important, he was beloved by the constituents of his coastal district for his advocacy on behalf of the fishing industry and the ocean environment. Gerry Studds understood that the greatest contribution he could make to his community was to do an extraordinary job, and that his why he was resoundingly reelected time after time until he chose to retire."

"Gerry and his longtime partner, Dean T. Hara, married in 2004; shortly after same-sex marriage became legal in Massachusetts."

In *Newsweekly* reported that Hara is being denied Con-

gressional pension and death benefits "because the federal Defense of Marriage Act blocks the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, which dispenses the benefits, from recognizing Studds' marriage, according to a spokesman."

➔ Information from the Associated Press, in *Newsweekly*, and the Human Rights Campaign.

### Nigerian Activist Shot to Death Omololu Falobi Died in October

LAGOS, NIGERIA - The world lost one of its most talented and caring voices in the struggle against HIV/AIDS, the Black AIDS Institute reported last month. Nigerian journalist and AIDS activist Omololu Falobi was shot to death in Lagos, Nigeria, on Oct. 5. He was 35 years old.

Details of Falobi's death are still unclear, but what we know is that he was returning home when he encountered a shoot-out involving armed robbers. He had just addressed a group of young entrepreneurs about the importance of social responsibility in their careers.

Falobi, a Black AIDS Institute board member, had himself been a model of social responsibility throughout his life. "Omololu was instrumental in helping to lay the early strategic foundation for the Black AIDS Institute," said Phill Wilson, the Institute's executive director. "He was a quiet but clear voice on our board."

Falobi accomplished much

in his too-short life. He finished high school at 14, had a Masters degree by 26 and at 29 was named features editor of Nigeria's leading weekly paper, *The Sunday Punch*. In 2000 Falobi left that position to take a leadership role in educating his country and continent about HIV/AIDS. He became executive director of the Nigerian group Journalists Against AIDS (JAAIDS), which coordinates the efforts of African journalists to disseminate information about the epidemic. From that post, he traveled the continent and the world spreading his message: that people in all walks of life must contribute if we are to win the fight against AIDS, especially in impoverished regions such as sub-Saharan Africa.

➔ Press release from the Black AIDS Institute.

### Aleta Fenceroy Dies in September

OMAHA, NE - Aleta Fenceroy, who for eight years ran the Fenceberry LGBT news service with her partner, Jean Mayberry, died in September of cancer, *Gay.com* reported.

The couple provided the email news service daily to subscribers worldwide on matters of interest to the LGBT community. Fenceberry was discontinued in 2004, partly because AOL no longer allowed them to send out mass emails, "but mostly because the project had taken over their lives," *Gay.com* said.

Donations in Fenceroy's memory may be made to the American Civil Liberties Union. ▼

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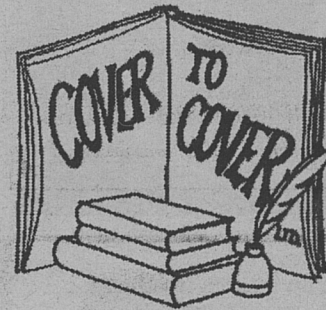
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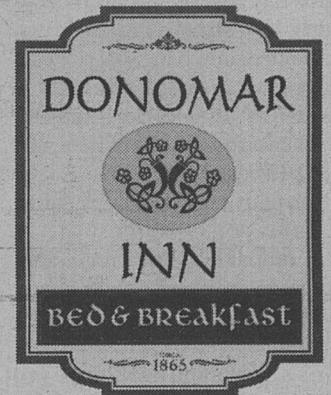


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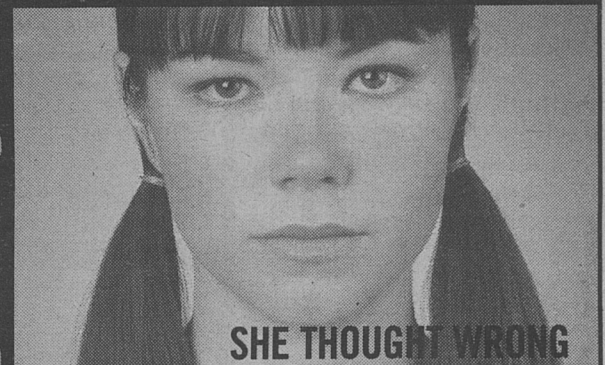
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