

custody will be awarded to the nearest non-gay relative. If no such person exists, children will be taken from their parents and put in foster care or up for adoption. The initiative, filed by the Citizens Alliance of Washington, also bars "minority status based on homosexuality", prohibits schools from presenting homosexuality as positive behavior, and bans same-gender marriage. (*GLPCI, AOL, The Washington Blade*)

Joycelyn Elders: Anti-Gay Attitude is Caused by Fear of Sexuality

Washington D.C. - . An irrational fear of sexuality is behind anti-gay behavior in this country, Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders says in this month's issue of *The Advocate*. "We need to speak out to tell people that sex is good, sex is wonderful," she said in an interview. "It's a normal part and healthy part of our being, whether it is homosexual or heterosexual." Elders endorsed gay and lesbian adoptions, called the Boy Scouts' ban on gays unfair and denounced certain sexual attitudes of conservative religious groups. "I think the religious right at times thinks that the only reason for sex is procreation," she said. "Well, I feel that God meant sex for more than procreation. Sex is about pleasure as well as about responsibility." She added that anti-gay attitudes will persist until Americans "learn that gay people are not just out there wanting to have sex with anybody who walks down the street and that gay people have real loving, lasting relationships and families." (*The Advocate*)

Supreme Court Upholds Gay Marchers

Washington, D.C. - Supreme Court Justice David Souter turned down an emergency request aimed at excluding gay groups from the St. Patrick's Day parade in Boston. Justice Souter made no comment in denying a request by the veterans' group

that sponsors the parade. The South Boston Allied War Veterans Council had said it would cancel the parade scheduled for Sunday if Souter refused to let it exclude the gay marchers. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court had ruled that parades are public events covered by a state law barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Souter handles emergency matters from Massachusetts for the high court. (*AOL, Washington Blade*)

California Court Lets Scouts Bar Gay Leaders

Los Angeles, CA - A state appeals court ruling gives the Boy Scouts and numerous charitable organizations "free rein . . . to exclude blacks and women and Jews," according to an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union. The court decided the scouts are not covered by California civil rights law and can bar gays as scout leaders. "The imposition of a leader who is an improper role model is a severe intrusion upon the First Amendment activities of an expressive association" like the Boy Scouts, said the 2nd District Court of Appeal in a 2-1 ruling. The court said disapproval of homosexuality was part of the scouts' moral code. The court also said the Boy Scouts were a private membership organization, not a "business," and were therefore exempt from the state's Unruh Civil Rights Act, which forbids discrimination by businesses. That part of the ruling apparently allows the scouts to exclude gays or any other group as members. Even if the scouts were a business, the court said, their constitutional right of freedom of association would override the state's interest in outlawing discrimination based on sexual orientation. The ruling did not mention a decision last month by the 4th District Court of Appeal in Santa Ana that the Boy Scouts were a business and could not bar atheists as

members. The case originated in 1981, when Timothy Curran, an 18-year-old former Eagle Scout, applied to be an assistant scoutmaster in the 13,500-member Mount Diablo Council in Contra Costa County. Curran had recently taken a male date to his high school prom and had described himself as a gay-rights advocate in a newspaper interview. The council rejected him for the volunteer job, and Curran sued after moving to Los Angeles. The Appeals Court, in a majority opinion, ruled that the Boy Scouts and many other charitable organizations are exempt from California's anti-discrimination laws and are free to exclude whomever they want, on any basis, the ACLU said. "This overturns decades of state law to the contrary," Davidson said. "I cannot believe that the court would have reached this result if Tim had been excluded by the Boy Scouts because of his race or religious beliefs." The ACLU said it would seek a re-hearing of the case before the Court of Appeal, and, if necessary, appeal the decision to the California Supreme Court. (*Reuters, The New York Times*)

IKEA Includes Gays in Marketing

Plymouth Commons, PA - The IKEA chain of stores has created a TV advertisement that shows an average gay male couple shopping for furniture. In response to the ads, IKEA's phone lines have been flooded with comments, mostly negative. A special IKEA Marketing Comment Line has been established to receive comments. Lesbian and gay groups are asking people to call or write in support of the ads. (*AOL*)

To contact IKEA about the "Lifestages" marketing campaign, write to: IKEA USA Inc. Plymouth Commons Plymouth Meeting PA 19462 or call (215) 834-0180 Fax: (215) 834-0872. Make sure to mention that you shop at IKEA. ▼

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