

## OITM Roundup:

### State, National and World News Briefs

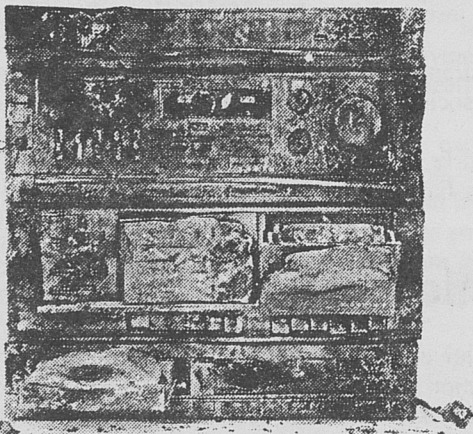
compiled by Kip M. Roberson

#### Vermont HIV/AIDS Care Consortium Meets

**RANDOLPH** -- If you are a person living with HIV/AIDS and would like to have a say on how Vermont will provide care for people living with the virus, the Vermont HIV/AIDS Care Consortium wants you. That was one of the messages from the group's September membership meeting at Vermont Technical College in Randolph. Consortium coordinator Joy Livingston said that volunteers are sought to help draft a "blueprint to give us direction on how Vermont will provide care." Besides the statewide planning effort, volunteers are sought to work on a range of issues including housing needs, education of service providers, and care quality assurance.

Livingston estimated that forty people, among them representatives of the PWA Coalition, housing groups, education services, and the Department of Health attended the day-long meeting. The group's work is funded by money from the federal Ryan White legislation.

People interested in participating are encouraged to contact Livingston at (802) 482-3115 or write her at RR1 Box 997, Hinesburg, VT. --Carrie Coy



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#### Virginia Custody Battle Still on Hold

**VIRGINIA** -- After winning a year-long, headline-making custody battle to keep her son, Virginia lesbian Sharon Bottoms has yet to be permanently reunited with the boy, prompting her lawyers to ask the Virginia Supreme Court to expedite a decision on whether to hear her mother's appeal. Kay Bottoms won custody of her grandson last year, based on her argument that her daughter, a lesbian, was not fit to be a parent. The Virginia Court of Appeals in June ruled the boy should be returned to his mother. However, 3-year-old Tyler Doustou continues to live with Kay Bottoms while the case is in appeal. In the meantime, Kay Bottoms has introduced a new argument in her appeal: that her daughter's lover, April Wade, would be an unfit parent because she "had an illegitimate child which was adopted" in 1987. In its response, the ACLU said Wade's child was "conceived as the result of a rape, and April's courage in carrying the child to term, then giving it up for adoption, is to be admired, not excoriated." Wade said she is offended by the attack on her character. (Frontiers)

#### Pet Shop Boy Comes Out

**LONDON** -- Singer-musician Neil Tennant of the group Pet Shop Boys came out of the closet in the August issue of the British gay magazine *Attitude*. "In the '80s I realized that I probably was gay," Tennant said. "I mean, by then I knew what I was attracted to. But I didn't really have a proper affair with anyone until three or four years ago, really. For most of the '80s I was, well, not exactly celibate but not far from it." Tennant said the latest Pet Shop Boys album, *Very*, was written from "the point of view of me being in love." He added, however, that he does not want his sexual orientation to become his identity. Tennant said nothing about the sexuality of Chris Lowe, the other Pet Shop Boy. (Frontiers)

#### Crime Bill Includes Stiffer Punishment for Hate Crimes

**WASHINGTON, DC** -- The federal crime bill passed by the U.S. Senate contains increased penalties for hate crimes, the definition of which now includes lesbians and gay men, making it the first time Congress has acted to punish hate crimes against homosexuals, according to the Human Rights Campaign Fund. The law increases sentences by at least three offense levels for crimes motivated by the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation. The amendment was originally sponsored in the Senate by Dianne Feinstein, D-CA, and in the House by Charles Schumer, D-NY. "The inclusion of disability and gender, along with sexual orientation, sends a message to local law enforcement agencies that the federal government is serious about gay-bashing, as well as hate crimes against women, people with AIDS and people of color," said Daniel Zingale, public policy director at HRCF. Past attempts to pass similar protections for gay men and lesbians failed due to attacks by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-NC, according to HRCF. (Frontiers)

#### Japanese Hold First Gay Parade

**TOKYO** -- Tokyo gays and lesbians celebrated their first pride parade August 28 when 1,500 marchers took to the streets in