

# OITM Roundup: State, National and World News Briefs

compiled by Kip M. Roberson

## Men's Health Project welcomes new staff

**BURLINGTON** -- With the new year comes new blood at the Men's Health Project. Chris Tebbetts of Burlington replaces Tom Aloisi as Coordinator for the project, which was created in 1993 by Vermont CARES with a grant from the Vermont Department of Health. Recently arrived from New York City, Tebbetts' past work has included projects with Gay Men's Health Crisis, Empire State Pride Agenda, Pineapple Alliance and the 1993 March on Washington.

The Men's Health Project seeks to promote continued healthy practices by providing outreach, education, and social events aimed at Men who have Sex with Men, or MSM. This includes men who consider themselves gay, bisexual or otherwise, as well as those who are HIV positive, negative or unknown. Past events for the group have included "Talking Sex" workshops, presentations to students, tea dances, movie nights, and frequent "bar blitzes" at 135 Pearl. "The point is to bring people together," says Tebbetts. "By uniting a community, you strengthen it. The hard part is getting to everyone we would like to reach." Outreach to rural communities is an ongoing concern for the organization, he

says. "Most of the attention in the past fourteen years has been paid to safer sex education and behaviour change in urban areas, where the statistical concentrations are greatest. Community participation here will create social and cultural networks that are unique to the needs of a rural state like Vermont."

The organization, while headed by Tebbetts, succeeds with the input and creativity of its volunteers. For further information on the Men's Health Project, to find out about volunteering, or to hear about upcoming events, call (802)863-2437.

## Clinton taps new AIDS czar

**WASHINGTON, DC** -- President Clinton has named Patricia Fleming, a widely respected legislative specialist with 21 years of government experience, as his new director of AIDS policy.

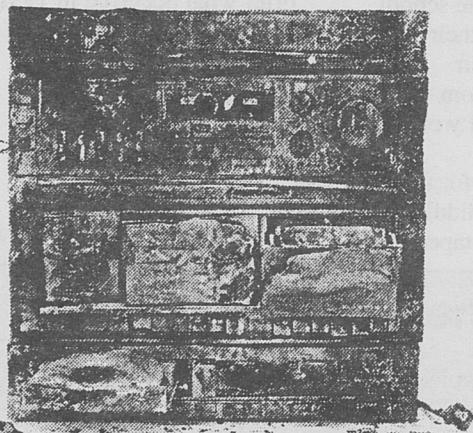
Clinton, who promised to make AIDS a priority in his administration, has been attacked by AIDS activists who say he has not done enough.

Clinton, introducing Fleming in a White House ceremony, reaffirmed his commitment to battling the disease, saying: "The face of AIDS is no longer the face of a stranger. It is the face of a friend. ... It is a disease with a human face."

The president apparently hopes Fleming can succeed where her predecessor, Kristine Gebbie, failed -- particularly in communicating what the administration views as its achievements in AIDS policy. After a year on the job, Gebbie left amid criticism that she lacked access to the President and support from within the federal agencies, and had neglected to consult with AIDS experts and activists on the outside. Fleming had been serving as interim AIDS policy director since August.

However, Clinton and Fleming -- and the AIDS community -- almost certainly will face a far worse problem than communication. With the new Republican and distinctively conservative Congress, it will be a formidable challenge to secure funding for AIDS programs.

"Like many Americans, AIDS has changed my life," she said. "The utter horror of the AIDS epidemic has reinforced my need to be an activist. For that, I am grateful. But AIDS has also forced me to attend too many funerals; to hold the hands of too many grieving friends and family members; and to participate in too many candlelight vigils. For that, I am angry. I am angry because as an African-American, as a woman, and as a mother of three sons, I



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