

National & International News

Rescue Workers Refuse Assistance to PWA's

Arvada, CO - The Arvada, Colorado, fire district's new policy on handling medical emergencies prohibits responding to calls from people known to have infectious diseases, including people with AIDS. The policy was issued after an incident in which a volunteer firefighter was vomited on by a person thought to have the AIDS virus. Following outraged response from AIDS activists and others, district manager Joe Schumacher said Fire Chief Bob White made a mistake in issuing the memo. (*Burlington Free Press*)

Newspaper Resists Threats

Tacoma, WA - The Tacoma *Morning News-Tribune* ran a series of anti-homophobia ads produced by the Los Angeles Lesbian and Gay Public Awareness Project, despite subscription cancellations and threats of boycotts.

The first ad, published in February, resulted in a barrage of calls and letters, including some parents pulling their children off carrier routes. Local and national advertisers reported receiving calls urging them to boycott the paper. Officials at the paper responded by saying the series, which it published as a public service, would continue because the negative reaction is proof that it is needed. (*L.A. Lesbian & Gay Awareness Project*)

Frat Members Permanently Suspended

Syracuse, NY - Fifty-four members of Alpha Chi Rho fraternity at Syracuse University were permanently suspended by officials from the national office after distributing t-shirts showing anti-gay slogans. The front of the shirt said "Homophobic and proud of it!" and the back "Club Faggots, Not Seals!" with a picture of a crow (symbol of the fraternity) holding a club over the prone figure of a human.

Alpha Chi Rho executive director, Jim Spencer, said "We hope that by taking decisive action, we, in the national fraternity, can put this issue behind us, but not forget the lessons that can be learned." (*Washington Blade*)

DOD Urged to Drop Ban

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, the leader of Reform Judaism, has written President Bush, urging him to drop the Pentagon's policy of banning lesbians and gay men from serving in the armed forces. In the letter, disclosed in a press release on July 2nd, Schindler called on Bush to issue an executive order barring anti-gay discrimination in the military. Comparing discrimination against lesbians and gays to that used to bar blacks from equal participation and opportunity in the military before 1948, Schindler asked Bush to "Bring justice to our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters, our friends and ourselves, who have been denied it for so long."

Rabbi Schindler, president of the 1.3 million member Union of American Hebrew Congregations, has been a strong advocate for the civil rights of lesbians and gays and appeared in June on the public television program *Out in America*. (*Washington Blade*)

ACT-UP Wins Settlement for Fired Employee

Kansas City, MO - The threat of a boycott and demonstrations by ACT-UP of Kansas City forced a national firm to settle with an employee fired because the company assumed he had AIDS. In April, Bill Hornburg was fired from Payless Shoesource because of his presumed HIV status. While pursuing legal recourse, Hornburg also contacted ACT-

UP, which demanded a settlement and an end to discriminatory practices from the parent company (May Department Stores). Three days before a planned demonstration at one of Payless's busiest stores, Hornburg was contacted and a settlement was negotiated. Payless also sent ACT-UP a letter outlining an addition to their employment policy specifically prohibiting discrimination based on HIV status. (*ACT-UP Kansas City*)

Fourth of July Float Wins Trophy

Takoma Park, MD - Takoma Park Lesbian and Gays, a local gay organization, won second place with their entry in a Fourth of July parade sponsored by the city. The float, featuring a closet and signs reading "Closets Are for Clothes," drew an overwhelmingly positive response from most spectators. (*Washington Blade*)

Gay Minister to Head Unitarian Congregation

Hollywood, FL - The Unitarian Universalist Church installed The Reverend Scott Alexander as senior minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship in Boston. Naming Alexander to head the largest congregation in the Association highlights Unitarian affirmation of lesbians and gays at a time when many denominations are questioning their right to be full members. (*Equal Time*) ▼

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