

OITM Roundup:

State, National and World News Briefs

compiled by Kip M. Roberson

The Quilt comes to St. Mike's

COLCHESTER -- The NAMES Project Quilt is coming to St. Michael's College this fall. Opening ceremonies will be on November 29, 1995, at the Tarrant Sports Center. Approximately two hundred quilts of eight panels each (representing 1600 people who have died of AIDS) will be on display from November 30th through December 2nd.

Anyone who wants to request a specific panel to be included in the display should write to Don Duell at 26 Berkeley Street, South Burlington, VT 05403. Please let him know the name(s) of the person(s) memorialized, and he will request them for the November display. Although he will try his best in obtaining the asked-for panels, some may be unavailable since parts of the Quilt are being shown all around the country. However, the sooner you can write to him with the names, the more likely that the panels can be included in the St. Michael's display. Don Duell also has information on making panel(s) for the display of the Quilt. (*Vermont CARES Voice*)

Vermont AIDS Update - 1994 in Review

BURLINGTON -- The Center for Disease Control received a total of 80,691 AIDS case reports from state, local, and territorial health departments in 1994, accounting for one fifth of all U.S. AIDS cases reported since 1981. The 1994 total is lower than the 1993 year-end total of 106,618 cases, but larger than the 1992 total of 47,572. This decrease in the number of reported cases was expected following the expansion of the AIDS surveillance definition on January 1, 1993. When this new definition went into place, a large number of AIDS cases were reported. Persons who had not previously been diagnosed with AIDS now met the new definition and received an AIDS diagnosis.

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After this initial, one-time increase, the number of reported cases has been relatively stable.

In Vermont, reported cases show similar patterns to the national numbers. A total of 35 Vermont AIDS cases were reported in 1994, a figure lower than the 74 cases reported in 1993, but higher than the 26 cases reported in 1992. The annual rate per 100,000 for the state of Vermont fell from 12.7 in 1993 to 6.5 in 1994.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that HIV infection is now the leading cause of death among people 25 to 44 years old, surpassing accidents as the number one cause of death.

Over 270,000 or 61% of the cumulative total of U.S. AIDS cases have died. It is estimated that someone in the U.S. dies of AIDS once every 3 minutes. (*VT Dept. of Health*)

Reading material may cost teacher her job in NH

NEW IPSWICH, NH -- Penny Culliton's desire to teach her students tolerance for homosexuals and the gay lifestyle may have jeopardized her job. The Mascenic Regional High School teacher who distributed books with homosexual characters said that Superintendent Francine Fullam sent her a letter saying she intended to recommend the school board dismiss her.

Culliton distributed *Maurice* by E.M. Forster, *The Drowning of Stephen Jones* by Bette Green, and *The Education of Harriet Hatfield* by May Sarton. The books, which featured gay or lesbian characters, were not required reading. Principal Dana McKenney ordered the books removed from Culliton's classes, saying the books had not been approved.

Several students and parents have called the move censorship and asked the school board about the selection process and the grant that was used to buy the books. Culliton told *The Telegraph* of Nashua she has heard from several civil rights groups and other groups against censorship. "People in general have been very supportive," she said. Superintendent Fullam would not return telephone calls to the Associated Press.

Culliton cannot be dismissed without a school board hearing because she has been at Mascenic for five years. The hearing date has not yet been scheduled, Board Chairman Steve Lizotte said. "I can't really say a whole lot," Lizotte said. "We don't have all the information yet, so we can't discuss it. We haven't had any real discussion about it." Culliton said she did not know if the hearing would be public.

She said *Maurice* was to be used in her 12th grade British literature and critical writing class. *The Education of Harriet Hatfield* was to be used in her 11th grade American literature and interpretive writing class. *The Drowning of Stephen Jones* was to be used in her 10th grade modern world literature course.

Lizotte said the situation was "getting convoluted by people accusing other people of being against this or that . . . We are responsible to the people who elect us, not necessarily those who are the loudest. We have to follow the direction the people want us to follow, and we have to do it legally." Culliton said she would be meeting with the teachers' association lawyer. "It is a labor contract case," she said. (*Boston Globe*)

Rhode Island 9th state to approve civil rights legislation

PROVIDENCE -- The Rhode Island state senate voted by a margin of 26-21 in favor of a bill protecting individuals against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, credit and public accommodations. The bill had already passed in the Rhode Island house. The law became effective immediately.

This was the 11th year that some form of sexual orientation civil rights legislation had come before the Rhode Island general assembly. Mary Fogue, president of Rhode Island Pride at Work, a lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered labor organization called the bill, "an advancement for all working people regardless of sexual orientation." The new law defines sexual orientation as, "having an orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality." An amendment which would have excluded the Boy Scouts of America from the law was defeated by a vote of 20-19. (Rhode Island Pride at Work)

FBI spies on AIDS activists

NEW YORK -- The FBI is spying on AIDS activists and gay rights groups, apparently out of fear they might resort to violence or throw infected blood during demonstrations, according to FBI documents and a civil rights group. The documents, made public under the Freedom of Information Act, indicate that informants gave the FBI information and that the bureau has had its own people at some meetings. The documents were obtained by the Center for Constitutional Rights, based in New York City.

The records involve surveillance of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, or ACT UP, in 1990 and 1991. The FBI refused to release 177 pages of the 199-page file. The Justice Department told the center in releasing the file

that the FBI also has files on the Gay Men's Health Crisis, the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights and Senior Action in a Gay Environment, said Michael E. Deutsch, legal director for the constitutional rights group. The FBI said it had no comment on its surveillance practices.

ACT UP said that it announces at the start of every meeting that undercover officers probably are present. "It's just a given they're there, and it's a waste of their time," said Ann Northrop, an AIDS educator and a spokeswoman for ACT UP. "I think the Oklahoma bombing proves that they're looking in the wrong place for trouble." (*Burlington Free Press*)

He can always say it stands for "Superman"

SAN FRANCISCO -- The self-proclaimed world's leading authority on penile surgery is having a hard time of it himself these days. A doctor in California, who has performed over 4,000 penis enlargement operations, is facing lawsuits from at least six San Francisco men who claim the procedure left their organs numb, infected and deformed, according to an article in the San Francisco Chronicle. There have been similar lawsuits filed in Los Angeles against the same doctor.

Once complaint was filed against Dr. Melvyn Rosenstein of Culver City by a man because the skin on his penis suffered a "spontaneous rupture" after the shaft was overinflated with fat. Another man claims that his penis became seriously infected two weeks after the operation. He claims the incision made during the operation leaked, causing a "large blister" to form. The blister inflicted "intense pain." As a result, the complainant says he can no longer "receive sexual . . . pleasure."

In other lawsuits filed against Rosenstein, men contend that the surgery did not make their penises longer, but caused the appendages to jut from their bodies at peculiar angles.

Additionally, one expert says that even in the best cases, the lengthening process does not work. "The penis comes out a little bit, but that doesn't change the length during erection," said Dr. Tom Lue, a professor of urology at the University of California at San Francisco. In the worst cases though, the results can be disastrous and traumatizing. Lue describes one patient who came to him in tears. "His penis is now in an 'S' shape," the doctor said. "It's really very ugly looking . . . This is a very smart man. He just made a wrong decision." (*Update*)

Arresting Language

CHICAGO -- Mike Royko, a long-time Chicago Tribune columnist (Royko also appears in *The Burlington Free Press*), was arrested for drunk driving and a related traffic accident in December of last year. Recently, a copy of the police report of that incident was made public. In this report, a litany of homophobic and racist slurs are attributed to Royko. Among other things, Royko is quoted as saying "jag off queer" and "fuck you fag" to the arresting officer. To the ambulance crew, he reportedly said: "What are you, fags? Why are you wearing those fag gloves . . .?" And while being processed, Royko is said to have asked: "You fucking loser, what's your ethnicity, you fag?"

Meanwhile, in his newspaper columns, Royko stands up for "traditional family values" and "Christian ethics." He regularly attacks homosexuality as that "lifestyle" which is crude and degraded. Of course, police reports are hardly exemplars of truth or accuracy. But the comments attributed to Royko are consistent with his own writings. Actually, those comments are the logical extensions of the more "refined" homophobia found in Royko's columns. But it should come as no surprise that the "articulate" columnists and "well mannered" politicians who publicly say they are "simply opposed" to "special rights for gays" or "quotas for lesbians" are, in fact, the same people who say "fuck you fag" behind closed doors.

Questions and comments concerning journalistic hypocrisy, heterosexual excesses, or other issues can be sent to Mike Royko, Columnist, and Howard Tyner, Editor, Chicago Tribune, 435 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611, tel. (312) 222-3232, fax (312) 222-3143. (*GLADD Media Watch*) ▼


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