

relationship to their ability to perform their work," he wrote.

Sens. Kennedy and Jeffords had introduced the bill earlier, but until now the president hadn't explicitly endorsed it. George Stephanopoulos, a senior adviser to Clinton, said the president has always "been behind the concept" but asked for some changes, such as an explicit exemption for religious organizations.

The bill would prohibit both public and private employers with more than 15 workers from discriminating against homosexual or bisexual people in hiring or in other workplace policies. In his letter of endorsement, Clinton also noted that the legislation "specifically prohibits preferential treatment on the basis of sexual orientation, including quotas. It also does not require employers to provide special benefits." (*The Wall Street Journal*)

## Hawaii marriage update

**HONOLULU, HI** -- A state Circuit Court judge has postponed the Hawaii same-sex marriage trial until after the 1996 legislative session. The delay will give legislators time to review recommendations from a commission charged with studying the issue.

However, a lawyer for the three couples who applied for marriage licenses says the delay will not help because the state legislators won't act on the recommendations anyway. The case is being watched around the country because each of the 50 states legally recognizes marriages performed in other states.

In a response to the Hawaii case, Alaska, South Dakota and Utah all have recently moved bills in their state legislatures that would bar legal recognition of same-sex marriages. Alaska's measure is stalled in committee. Utah's bill was passed and signed by the governor. The South Dakota legislature surprised national gay activists by narrowly defeating the bill. No new trial date has been set in the Hawaii case. (*Prism Newsletter*)

## Leather museum opens in Chicago

**CHICAGO** -- The nationally based Leather Archives & Museum, Inc. has opened its first public gallery in Chicago, Illinois. The non-profit corporation created in 1992 as the historical receptacle for the leather-S/M communities, has been privately housed and only available for scheduled private use. With the opening of its new public gallery, the LA&M features regular public hours. In addition to providing easier access for researchers, the new storefront location will allow space for museum displays. The collection includes many pieces of original art and scores of memorabilia. The collection presently includes many items, among which are:

- Complete sets of several publications including *Drummer Magazine*, *Mars Magazine*, *Rawhide*, *Package*, and *Der Kreis LeCercle*. In many cases these are the only complete sets known to exist, having been donated from the personal collections of their publishers.
- Minutes, memorabilia, photographs and 8mm films documenting many motorcycle clubs, including the largest collection of run pins and club insignias.
- Original works of art by many noted leather artists including: Etienne, The Hun, Pierie, Steve Masters, Cliff Raven, Phil Andros, Dennis Walsh, Luger, John T., and Tom of Finland.
- Formerly private collections from several individuals and businesses; trophies and sashes from various title holders; posters from bars, runs and events; and T-shirts from bars and clubs.

## What a few of the million had to say about gays

**WASHINGTON, DC** -- Participants' reaction to an openly gay presence in the Million Man March on Washington was as diverse as the players themselves. For the most part, the marchers interviewed granted acceptance to the inclusion of African American gays as black men.

Though none of the major speakers addressed the issue of homosexuality at the gathering of several hundred thousand African American males, people

who represented the diaspora of black men, from California to New York, from poor man to millionaire, agreed that heterosexual and homosexual black males share common pains.

"Whenever there is a need for black men to mobilize and address certain issues, we don't go around asking if this black man is gay or straight," said a man who identified himself only as John from New York City. "We just answer the call." Another man, also from New York, said that black males have never had "the opportunity to be men in America, straight or gay."

Not every marcher shared these views. Gay organizations have criticized Nation of Islam leader, Minister Louis Farrakhan, the keynote speaker of the march, for past anti-gay remarks. During a press conference presented by the National Black Gay and Lesbian Forum, a clip was shown of Farrakhan using the word "sissy" to describe gay men.

Washington resident Max Maurice said he believes that some gay people are trying to force heterosexuals into accepting them, and according to Maurice, "their choice to be gay." "Well, I don't have to accept you or anything that you believe as it pertains to sexuality," said Maurice. "But if you are coming to this march as a man who has experienced the same discrimination and heartache which all black men have experienced, then I will accept you as my brother."

March participant Robert Kellum of Martinsville, VA, carried a sign which expressed an opinion shared by a great number of marchers. The sign read, "I am my brother's keeper." Does this include gay men? "Yes," said Kellum. "And not just black gay men, but whites as well. When I say 'brother,' I'm referring to my gay brothers, my Jewish brothers, my German brothers, and my Greek brothers. To me, that's what brotherhood is all about." (*The Washington Blade*)

## Clinton to host AIDS conference

**WASHINGTON, DC** -- The White House has announced that President Clinton will host a White House conference on AIDS on December 6 in an effort to focus national attention on the status of the epidemic.

Marsha Scott, deputy assistant to the president and the White House liaison to the gay community, said Clinton will attend at least part of the one-day conference. "The president is hosting it," Scott said, who added that Clinton agreed to hold the conference at the request of his recently appointed Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

According to a statement released by the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, the White House will invite approximately 175 people to attend the conference. Attendees will include people living with HIV; experts in research, prevention, and care; representatives of national and local organizations; and authorities on legal and ethical issues pertaining to AIDS.

"First, the president wants to receive the most up-to-date information possible on the status of this epidemic and its impact on American society," the statement said. "Second," the statement continued, "an important element of disease prevention is public awareness. This conference will serve to remind the nation that AIDS remains an urgent public health priority."

The protest group ACT UP called the conference a "re-election stunt" for the president. "This meeting is nothing more than a farce, a sham, a charade," said ACT UP official Steve Michael. "One month into his presidency, this might have been a good idea. After three years of inaction, lip service, and lies, we're not going to fall for another Clinton stall tactic." The White House AIDS office, anticipating criticism from groups such as ACT UP, included in its statement announcing the conference a list of actions Clinton has taken to combat AIDS.

According to H. Alexander Robinson, director of the ACLU's AIDS and Lesbian and Gay Rights Project and an openly gay member of Clinton's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, the council members have made it clear that they will not serve as public relations "cheer leaders" for Clinton and will publicly criticize the president if they feel he is ignoring their recommendations. "We have expectations that Clinton will implement all of our recommendations," said Robinson. (*The Washington Blade*) ▼

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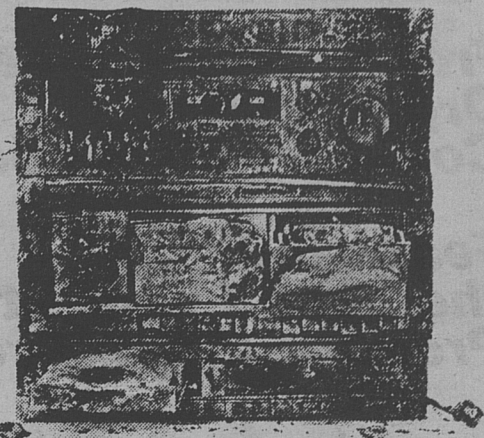
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