

in the news...

Gay Sailor

WASHINGTON — The US Navy has been warned by a federal judge that it had better follow his orders regarding a chief petty officer who won his job back despite allegations that he is gay.

US District Judge Stanley Sporkin told the Navy it must justify its decision to assign Timothy R. McVeigh to clerical work rather than returning him to his supervisory post.

McVeigh's lawyer accused the Navy of acting in bad faith. "You refused to provide the reasons ... as to why Mr. McVeigh was not reinstated other than vaguely to refer to the 'notoriety of the case' and the 'confined conditions aboard a submarine,'" attorney Christopher Wolf wrote in a letter to the government lawyer in the case.

"The Navy's refusal to reinstate him to the chief of boat (top enlisted man) position ... is a further indication of the Navy's bad faith," he added. Wolf accused the Navy of dragging its feet and keeping the decorated 17-year veteran from returning to his former duties that would let him advance his career and retire with full benefits after 20 years.

Justice Department attorney David Glass, representing the government, told the judge one chief-of-boat position had opened up, but McVeigh was not deemed the best candidate. He did not provide details.

Sporkin set a June 1 hearing, giving the Navy two months to comply with his January order in which he said the Navy wrongly enforced the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy on gays in the military.

Sporkin said the Navy went too far in investigating McVeigh, who was linked to an anonymous America On-line Inc. computer profile page that suggested he had a sexual interest in young men.

Homophobe for president

HOUSTON — Here's a campaign slogan: Homophobe for president.

That could be what faces Republicans in 2000. Washing-

ton conservative activist told Texas conservatives recently that he's leaning toward running for president.

He said abortion must be the cornerstone of the party's platform, and challenged the GOP establishment to "stand against the agenda of the gay rights movement."

Loss of a friend

NEW YORK — The gay and lesbian community lost one of its early and most steadfast supporters last month.

Former Rep. Bella Abzug, who became one of the most influential and recognizable leaders of the women's liberation movement in the 1970s, died at the age of 77. She died of complications from heart surgery.

Along with activists such as Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan, Ms. Abzug was in the vanguard of the emerging feminist movement. She was a vocal opponent of the Vietnam War and a bitter foe of President Nixon.

In 1975, she introduced the first gay rights bill in Congress.

Canadian rights

TORONTO — If you're thinking of moving, try Canada. We've got protections there.

Canada's Supreme Court says that Alberta's provincial human rights code must offer specific protection to gays and lesbians.

The ruling was a triumph for Delwin Vriend, 32, who was fired as a lab instructor by a Christian college in Edmonton in 1991 because he was gay, then told by Alberta's Human Rights Commission that he had no grounds for a complaint.

Alberta is one of three Canadian provinces that have not included homosexuals in their human rights codes. The others, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, have pledged to make the change.

The Alberta government's lawyers argued before the Supreme Court in November that it should be up to elected officials, not the courts, to decide whether special protection for homosexu-

als should be included in the human rights code.

The high court rejected this argument and said Alberta should immediately amend its code to cover sexual orientation.

Excluding homosexuals from the code "sends a message to all Albertans that it is permissible, and perhaps even acceptable, to discriminate against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation," the high court said.

Perot-benefits

DALLAS — Ross Perot won't give domestic partners benefits to newly hired employees at his computer company.

He says he won't withdraw health insurance for the same-sex partners of gay employees already on the payroll. But no one else gets them.

Gay rights organizations have criticized the decision at Perot Systems Inc., but Perot says it's not discrimination.

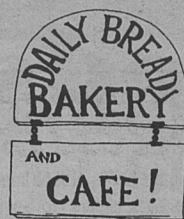
"Do we discriminate against people who are homosexual? No we do not," he said. "These organizations are very aggressive in trying to embarrass anybody that doesn't do what they want to do. It has nothing to do with homosexuality. If we made this benefit available to everyone living together in the same apartment the cost would be through the roof."

London mayor

LONDON — Britain's capital is moving toward electing its own mayor for the first time in history.

And a gay man is in the running.

The ruling Labor Party has a favorite for the job, but leftists in the party are promoting someone else. So, as a diversion, the Labor Party is floating other names about, including Chris Smith, the openly gay National Heritage secretary.



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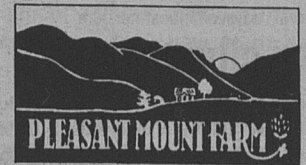
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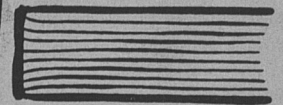
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