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DoD News Briefing
Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen
Friday, March 24, 2000
Christian Science Monitor breakfast, Washington, DC
Secretary Cohen: Once again after facing this group I'll say who am I and why am I here? (Laughter)
Q: It's about 8:00 o'clock. I think we'll get started. It sounds like we're already started. We're on the record.
It was nice of you to come in, Mr. Secretary. We were saying you've been here before, I don't know how many breakfasts, but in other roles, at least a dozen times.
I was hoping you'd have a few words about your old friend John McCain, but Ken tells me you don't talk politics these days. (Laughter) But he's probably caught your interest a little bit, hasn't he?
Secretary Cohen: I think he caught everybody's interest quite a bit. I can't say any more in terms of what his future will be. He appears to have gotten a fairly warm reception and has returned to Capitol Hill. I think he will go out and campaign for the various candidates as he said he would and try to keep his reform efforts very much in the news and alive. I can't comment in terms of...
Q: Do you think he'll stay within the party, or is that something...
Secretary Cohen: He has said he is staying in the party.
After that news clip... (Laughter)
Q: Aside from the anniversary related to aspects of your recent trip, talk a bit about what you feel were the accomplishments. And as you do so, would you talk a bit about the relationship now the U.S. has with Vietnam. As I try to think it through myself, it kind of eludes me. I can't quite figure out what it is. So over to you.
Secretary Cohen: Thanks very much, and I do appreciate having a chance to periodically come to your breakfast meetings. As a young congressman it was a great opportunity for me to get a wider audience. As the Secretary of Defense I'm looking for a narrower one now. (Laughter)
Let me talk about Vietnam. Paul Richter was on that trip and he can

perhaps give you a better insight in terms of, from a journalist's perspective.

I was there in 1994 when I was a member of the Senate, stopped and visited in Hanoi. At that time I saw at least the signs of great dynamism on the part of the economy, looking at the people, their work ethics, their openness, their friendliness to the United States which struck me as really quite remarkable. But I didn't see much in the way of real positive economic development yet, but I could see the seeds of it.

This time back in Hanoi I have not seen a dramatic change in the economic conditions of the people, but then again I was only there in Vietnam for basically two days, so here I am, an expert on Vietnam. So it's hard for anyone to make any kind of a judgment based on two days being in the country.

Q: Did you feel any awkwardness in your relationship with any of the leaders? What about attitudes you ran into?

Secretary Cohen: The answer is there was no awkwardness at all. As a matter of fact all of the people I met with talked only about the future. Not one of them raised anything about the past. In fact I raised something about the past and that was the accounting for our missing in action. I wanted to go out and visit one of the excavation sites to say how important this was to America, and that that was going to remain key in terms of the cooperation so that we could build upon that level of cooperation and then start to establish a much wider bilateral relationship with them including trade, economic, diplomatic, and ultimately military to military.

My job in going there was to see if we couldn't take an incremental approach to building better military cooperation between our two countries. From that perspective they were quite open, and I think we'll see some significant progress made over a period of time.

We want to take it slowly, they want to take it slowly, so I suggested areas of military types of contact which would built some confidence. So we talked about demining and flood control and military medicine, other types of research into dioxin. They were quite willing to do that. In fact I offered to send teams over to pursue that and they accepted it, so I think we'll see a gradual warming of those relations at the military-to-military level.

If you move from the North down to the South you see two very different countries. There has been, I would say only modest economic development up north. Down in the south in Ho Chi Minh City it was quite dramatic. And they have a mayor, I hope I don't get in trouble by saying this, but I said to him at the time that you know, a student of Ho Chi Minh, you appear to be a student of Milton Friedman, University of Chicago, because he is a true free enterprise.

We got him to talking, me as a former mayor. I was at least empathizing with his lament that the more he does to deal with homeless, the hungry, the more people are attracted to his city. I said that is true be it Bangor, Maine or be it over there, the more successful you are, then more people are going to want to take advantage of all the social infrastructure that you build.

His problem is that about 35 to 40 percent of all the revenues of the country are generated in his city. For that reason he has great latitude in terms of what he can say and do.

But I think in a period of about five years, maybe a little bit longer, that you will see those changes really come at us very quickly.

What struck me was the work ethic of the people. Their determination to get up at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning and take their goods and ride their bicycles over very poor roads to get into the city to start marketing those goods, then come all the way back and get there by night time, and then feed the family, and start all over again. That work ethic is going to stand them very well. You see that in the South more certainly than in the North. I think they're going to be great competitors for the other countries in the region when that is finally turned loose.

Q: We'll probably have more questions on Vietnam. I'd like to open up a couple of other areas for questioning.

Let's look at Taiwan, at least for a moment. I think all of us here have seen more in recent days the, not the likelihood, but the possibility of hostilities there, and my question here is one that I'd ask, maybe it's a question from the lay community, but it certainly comes from me. That is, are we prepared to defend Taiwan should the occasion arise? Should there be some kind of an attack from the mainland. Would there be, and what's possible? Missiles? I don't know.

Secretary Cohen: Let me tell you this, my role while I was in the region, in Hong Kong and Vietnam, Japan and Korea was the same. That was to urge the Chinese to lower their rhetoric and threats of military action, indicating that we have the one China policy that we continue to support, but we also are committed with the Taiwan Relations Act to provide for the defensive needs and equipment of Taiwan, and to leave it at that. To encourage both sides to back away, to have some positive signs coming out of the Taiwanese President, whoever that might be, and we're seeing that for the time being.

Now whether that will hold remains to be seen, but we are undertaking a number of diplomatic efforts. This is by Lee Hamilton and others who are in Taiwan. We've had very significant contact with Chinese leaders. I plan to go to China sometime either late spring or early summer, and we'll carry the same message. There has to be a way to work this out peacefully and not through military means.

Q: I of course saw that apparently pulling back. But I still, the question is there. Are we prepared, if need be, to fulfill our commitment there?

Secretary Cohen: We leave it exactly as it is. We support the Taiwan Relations Act, we support the one China policy. We do not support military action on the part of China to try to resolve it militarily. We'll leave it at that.

Q: Another area, then we can come back. I want to open up so that we don't spend the whole morning on one. Let's look at Kosovo a little bit. I think we had some kind of an anniversary there. I think the question that you hear a lot and I think you've addressed a lot too, but I'll put it as I hear it so often myself, have we fallen into a quagmire in Kosovo?

Secretary Cohen: It's not a quagmire. It certainly is going to remain a challenge for some time to come.

I think that anyone who believed or thought this was going to be easy was clearly not dealing with the history of the region, of the reality of the situation on the ground.

There is a lot of hatred between the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs. That's not going to abate in the near term. But if you look at what we were able to achieve in this past year, it's quite significant. I won't take the time to catalog it, you've all read it, it's in the papers today, again on this anniversary. But if you look at 810,000 people who have returned to Kosovo, some 550,000 displaced people, some 300,000 school

children are back in schools, the housing that we've been able to reconstruct. All of those are very positive signs. Compared to a year ago, the murder rate, 50 a week last year. Five a week this year. It's still too many, but a dramatic difference.

There are several key flashpoints, Mitrovica being one of them and the Presevo valley being another. Overall we have been able to stabilize the situation to at least allow for the implementation of self-government.

We have not been successful in getting the civilian side (inaudible). We have talked about this. We have called upon the UN, we've called upon OSCE and others to fulfill the requirement to start building the infrastructure, judicial system, policemen, judges, prosecutors, elections, and that's going to take some time.

Q: Are we learning in all this perhaps, that these people really can't live together and in the end we're going to have to work out some kind of -- I know it's difficult, but work out some kind of partition?

Secretary Cohen: That's not our policy or our goal.

Q: I know.

Secretary Cohen: We're going to try to achieve our goal. We've been relatively successful in Bosnia, and we hope to be successful in Kosovo.

Q: Senator, there are rumors on the Hill that...

(Laughter)

Secretary Cohen: I'll give you a different answer depending on how you...

Q: There are rumors on the Hill that your name is on the list with those names for vice presidential nomination for Gore. Have you changed your party affiliation, number one; and would you consider it?

Secretary Cohen: The answer is I have not changed my party affiliation. I think that the speculation has been, as I thought, idle. I'm flattered by it, but my plans are to be a private citizen.

I think anyone, if a President comes to anyone and says would you be my Secretary of Defense or my Secretary of State or Vice President, anyone has to give that very serious consideration. But my goal is to be a private citizen by January of next year. I am anxious to start a new life. I thought I was going to do that four years ago. I'm anxious to get back there.

Q: Are you going to write a book?

Secretary Cohen: I am going to write a book. I will finish a novel that I started some time ago, and that will be hopefully one of the things I can do when I leave office.

But no, I'm staying in the Republican party and...

Q: Can I talk about China? Would you talk a little bit about whether you see China as a threat or an opportunity, and how that view impacts on the (inaudible).

Secretary Cohen: China's going to be a growing power. Its economy is going to continue to grow. It's influence will as well. The real question is what kind of a power is it going to be and what will be its role in the international community. That's precisely the reason why President Clinton has tried to engage China in a constructive [way]. We I think were well along the road to building better relations with China when we had the unfortunate incident that occurred last spring in accidentally bombing their embassy, which of course caused some serious disruptions in our relationship. But I believe it's back on track now.

We have had a number of contacts with them and I have been meeting with high level military officials who have come to me to say we want to get back on track, we want you to come to China.

So I think that how we engage them is very important, and frankly, when we do engage China in a positive way, which is not to say that we're going to agree with them on each and every issue. There may be areas that we have to challenge them on from time to time. But if we engage them in a constructive fashion, that makes it also easier for us to deal with all of our allies in the Asia Pacific region. To the extent they see either conflict or any kind of disruption of the relationship that makes them much more nervous about what their role is going to be.

So it works that when we have a better relationship with China we also have a one with our allies. We have more interest with our allies, we have a better opportunity to have a cooperative relationship with China. So it's kind of a mutually reinforcing relationship if we balance that.

I have indicated to the ASEAN countries, by way of example, that it's important for them to try to act as collectively as they can in dealing with China in terms of economics and diplomatic issues. It gives them more leverage in terms of a collective organization, which is not to say they have to challenge China, but there are competing interests in the South China Sea. And to the extent they can speak with one voice about the need to resolve competing interests either peacefully, diplomatically, through some kind of judicial, quasi-judicial system, that gives them more leverage in dealing with China.

But I think that our position ought to be that we are a super power. We will engage China in a constructive way. There are areas we're going to disagree with them in the future and we have to have a mature approach to that. Neither vaulting to any kind of a euphoric state of expectation with China or at the other end of the extreme simply saying they are a threat or a real threat to peace. I think that's not a wise policy and that's one we certainly need to steer clear of.

Q: But at the same time they're (inaudible) military power...

Secretary Cohen: They are going to...

Q: ...certain degree of investment...

Secretary Cohen: They are going to grow as a military power.

The last time I traveled to China I gave a lecture at the Academy of Sciences and I tried to point out to them, I was seeing some at least preliminary papers being released, let Asia take care of Asia. And I went to them and spoke to about 300 or 400 of their senior military academic people, and I said that they were perhaps the beneficiary of our presence in Asia. That as a result of our being present as neutral power -- not seeking territory, not seeking to conquer anything -- they have been able to modernize under Deng Xiaoping's four modernizations.They have been able to grow economically with some stability, and their

prospects were much greater as a result of U.S. presence. That we were going to keep our 100,000 troops in the region. We were going to update our guidelines with Japan. We were going to visit with our aircraft carriers into Singapore. That we were going to strengthen these relationships and that was not against their interest, that was in their interest as well. Because if we were not there in those numbers with that kind of power projection, someone would have to fill the vacuum.

Would it be China filling the vacuum or Japan filling the vacuum or India or Pakistan? Someone would move to fill it. There might be an arms race unleashed on the part of the ASEAN countries who were then fearful that they had to do more to defend themselves against claims in the region.

That is the message I gave to them and I continue to repeat to them, that we are there for the long haul.

Q: Mr. Secretary, staying on China from a different angle. Is the war talk exaggerated in your view? What if China invades, what if the missiles fly. Is this all being exaggerated?

Secretary Cohen: I don't think we can afford the luxury of just speculating about it. I think the Chinese have made it clear they feel passionately about the issue of reunification with Taiwan. Understanding that, we have taken the position that you must do so through dialogue and not through intimidation or military assault.

So I don't think we can afford to either dismiss it or say it's exaggerated. We have to assume that the statements reflect a strong passion on the part of the Chinese government and people.

Q: Stay on China... China's at the heart of export control act arguments on the Hill. The Administration and many members of Congress want to expand our trade, but there are members of both parties, particularly Republican, who see China as a threat, and any trade we have with them particularly in high technology products is a threat, increases that threat.

What's your view on whether we should set China aside as a pariah and cut them off on exports?

Secretary Cohen: Just as time may not be stuffed in a -- Time Magazine may be able to, but time... (Laughter) ...stuffed in a bottle -- technology can't either.

We're living in a world in which we're seeing such a rapid dissemination of technology that the notion somehow that we can isolate China from the rest of the world is unrealistic. So I think that for those who have been to China in the last 20 years -- I first went back in 1978, and I have seen dramatic changes in China. Certainly economically, but also in terms of their attitudes.

I think the more contact we have with them the better. The more exchanges we have, the more people who travel there and they travel here the better off the world is going to be. That's the best way, in my judgment, to have them become fully integrated into the institutional regimes of being a good neighbor.

Q: The Pentagon IG came back to you with its findings on harassment of gays in the military. I'm wondering what the findings are and what the most egregious facilities are.

Secretary Cohen: The report's going to be released this afternoon so I'll just speak in general terms right now until the report is out.

It reveals to me that we still have a ways to go in terms of an effective implementation of the program. There were some positive aspects to it in the sense that many, I think as many as 78 percent of so of the people who were surveyed felt that they were completely free to raise the issue, complain about what they saw as abuse of alleged homosexuals. But it was clear to me also from the report that we've got a ways to go. We've got a lot of work to do to make sure that the program works. There has not been effective communication of the policy. There has not been sufficient education in the policy itself.

So I'm going to be setting up an oversight committee to make sure that it goes from top to bottom, that the education materials are in fact not only received but communicated and the policies effectively implemented. But you'll hear more about that this afternoon when I release the report. I just don't want to preempt it at this point. We have more to do.

Q: How about our military preparedness overall? Our recruitment. Are we solving those problems? We were woefully unrecruited.

Secretary Cohen: Recruitment is still a challenge to us but we're seeing a change on the retention. Retention is going up, and I'm hoping that we can do the same on the recruitment side.
I think retention is going up for a couple of key reasons. Number one, Bud asked me initially what have you accomplished. Well, we've accomplished, we've increased pay significantly. It's the biggest turnaround...
Q: Is it enough? Is it meeting the economic pressures of civilian...
Secretary Cohen: The pay raise, it was the retirement benefits. Those were the two biggest complaints that I would get in going out to the field. We dealt with those last year. And I must tell you whenever I go out in the field they say thanks, you've been listening to us, and we appreciate it, and they will be signing up again for another four years in the Navy, etc. So the pay, the retirement, the pay table reform. Those were key elements of saying that this is something that they needed and wanted.
The other two challenges for me have been housing and healthcare. On the housing I thought we took a big step forward this year as far as the off-base housing costs. The people in our military were being required to pay as much as 19 percent out of pocket. That's not exactly a way to build morale. So what I did is I said we're going to go down to 15 percent, which is by law mandated, and then we're going to change the law.
So we allocated some $3.1 I think billion in the budget to eliminate any out of pocket costs as far as housing is concerned.
We're also really trying to intensify the privatization program we have by leveraging private dollars, and we're seeing a pretty good return. For every one dollar we put in we're getting about an eight to one ratio of benefit on that.
The other biggest problem is the healthcare issue, and that's one in which we've got a lot of work to do as far as making TriCare more effective. What I've found is as far as the business practice of running TriCare is that we are not up to date with what's in the private sector. We'll have a doctor who deals one on one with a patient, while three or four are stacked up and waiting, so you have a lack of access. Whereas if you go into a private facility, a doctor can deal with three or four people, he's got nurses and other subordinates as such who are carrying out the more administrative, less technical kind of work. So that's one aspect of it. Taking some of the cost bite out of it, TriCare Prime, TriCare Remote, so that there are no co-pay, payments that have to be made.
Then I've got the issue... We're also trying to simplify the system because if you go from one region to another you've got to reenroll. Then you have different benefits and it's very confusing to them.
So healthcare issues this year was a focal point for me, as well as dealing with the retirees. That's an issue which also has an impact in terms of them being influencers. Retired veterans who can go out and say hey, don't join because they won't take care of you or your family when you retire. That can have a major impact on recruitment.
So we're stepping up recruitment efforts. We're doing much more advertising, more effective advertising, we're looking for ways in which we can in fact get into the communities and understand what it's going to take to compete effectively against the private sector which can offer a good deal more initially perhaps, as well as the universities and colleges, we're offering educational opportunities that one can only get through the military.
Q: We used to encourage 20 and out. Are we doing that now? Or are we trying to retain those people?

Secretary Cohen: No, we're not encouraging people to step out.
Q: Mr. Secretary, yesterday a pretty substantial group of Republican leaders on the Hill and former Reagan and Bush Administration defense and national security officials issued a kind of manifesto on missile defense urging Governor Bush to make it a focal point of the fall campaign. They had about three major criticisms of your policy on missile defense.
Secretary Cohen: Not my policy.
Q: Well, the Administration's policy. (Laughter) Kind of yours.
I'd ask you to respond to each of them. One was that the threat is much more immediate than you have portrayed it. That there is a clear and present danger now, not four or five years off.
Second, that a sea-based system based on existing technologies with some add-ons would provide a kind of interim defense.
And third, that the Clinton Administration is willing to negotiate limits on future sea and space-based systems in order to get an agreement with the Russians to allow your current plan for a land-based system.
Q: How long do I have to answer these questions? (Laughter)
Q: Half an hour.
Secretary Cohen: Okay.
Q: Last question of the day. (Laughter)
Secretary Cohen: Let me go to the first one. I can't speak for others, but I have made it very clear I think the threat is here. I don't put the threat off into the future. I have said there have been four criteria the President has spoken of frequently that he would base his judgment on whether to deploy a system or not, number one, the threat.
I maintain the threat is here today. If it's not here right now it will be here tomorrow. So I don't look for it in terms of off into the future. So I see it quite more immediate than perhaps others do.
Number two, the issue of getting an interim system. I was one of those who helped negotiate the compromise up on the Hill when I was in the Senate on the 3+3. The reason that 3+3 was negotiated was to try to get a system in place as quickly as possible. That is the reason the land-based system was in fact chosen, and that's the reason we put so much into NMD as opposed to even our theater missile defense system because we saw this threat as emerging quite near term and this was the best way to have the technology we think we can develop to get it deployed as quickly as possible.
Now there have been suggestions...
Q: Excuse me, Sir. 3+3?
Secretary Cohen: Okay, it was three years of research and development and then a decision would be made to try to deploy them in three years. When I took over I extended that to five years so it's three years of R&D and then over a five year period to deploy because I became convinced that this system was being rushed to the point where it would not be effective in the sense that we needed more time for testing and to make sure we're doing the right thing from a technological point of view.
So the notion that you can have an interim system that is sea-based, I have not seen support for that in the sense it would be an effective system. The information that has been brought to me is that you would have to have a new missile with new radars, and those would take longer to develop than the actual land-based system that we have in mind right now.
Now is it conceivable you could have some kind of a short-term system where you base it off the coast of one of the countries in question using a system of systems? It depends, you'd have to be really lucky in that case.

I think we're on the right track as far as a land-based proposal, and that the CNO has said when you're looking at future systems don't discount sea-based, and we've said we won't. That's still open.
As far as the third point, the Administration has made it clear that the current proposal that we have is a limited system against a limited type of an attack. It will be land-based. It will be in roughly two phases. The first phase being in Alaska; the second to be determined, but would come fairly quickly in terms of negotiations.
So that's the posture that we're in, and frankly, when I was on the Hill and negotiated, that's the reason we went with the land-based system.
Q: Mr. Secretary, on missile defense. It's understandable perhaps why the Russians and the Chinese are sort of skittish on this. But you were in Munich last month talking with our European allies and there seems to be a fair level of anxiety there. Can you tell us, number one, why you think they're so anxious? And number two, how you're going -- What do you want from them? Do you just want them to stay out of the way? Do you want them actually to participate? What's the situation there?
Secretary Cohen: Can I go back and finish on the...
Q: Sure.
Secretary Cohen: Tie this in. We talked about threat, technology, cost, and the fourth factor was arms control. That's something the President has to take into account, namely, do you get more security or less? Do you cause an arms race to be rekindled? Do you undercut the whole movement on START II and III and IV? That's something that has to be factored into this and will be factored in. The President made it very clear, it's not just the first three, it's the fourth as well.
With respect to the European allies, there are a number of concerns that they raise. Number one, they see the ABM Treaty as being the stabilizing factor in the overall relation for the United States and Russia. They do not want to see that destabilized.
Number two, they're concerned whether there's any "decoupling". The British and the French say what will this do to our systems? So they want to make sure they still have an effective retaliatory system should the Russians ever decide to attack them.
The third is whether or not there would be any kind of disconnect between the trans-Atlantic relationship.
So we have tried at least to address those. That this would not diminish, number one, would not diminish their retaliatory capability. It would not decouple the United States from them. And that potentially they too can evolve into a defensive type of arrangement.
They are concerned about TMD, for example. The Germans, the Italians are joining the United States in a theater missile defense system called MEADS. So they see an emerging threat as well.
When I spoke to the NATO allies at the meeting in Brussels, once we laid out what our program was, number one, we are trying to negotiate changes to the ABM Treaty. This is not an Administration that says the treaty is irrelevant, it wants to modify it to allow for a limited type of system against a limited type of an attack. This is not the former Star Wars redux.
I think that once we laid out the threat, and we did that in a classified briefing, and then showed what we had in mind for that, a lot of minds were changed. They at least were opened. Did you change everybody? The answer is no. Did it open minds? The answer is yes. I had some who came in and said before this meeting we were totally opposed. Now I can see your

point and we support it.So it's going to take some time, but what basically the Russians would seek to do is to find if they can divide the alliance by saying that we don't have unanimity or solidarity of the alliance, that's the most effective way to try to terminate any NMD on the part of the United States. I've also tried to convey that message to the alliance. The more solid we are the better off we're going to be as far as negotiating with the Russians.

The Russians are unlikely to agree to anything as long as they feel they can split the alliance on this, because we will need the cooperation of several key allies as far as forward deployed radars. Not only do you need to upgrade existing radar capability, but to actually build new radars called X-Band radars. So their cooperation is going to be important.

So we have undertaken to meet with them regularly. I was with the Italian Minister of Defense yesterday. He received a briefing before I met with him and we discussed it during the meeting as well. So I think there's a lot more equanimity about what we have in mind and the fact that we're seeking to work within the ABM context of modifying it for a limited purpose.

The fact remains that we, you cannot defend against an all-out assault by the Russians. This is designed to deal with the rogue nations, to prevent a Saddam Hussein or Iran or Libya or another rogue nation, North Korea, to try and intimidate the United States saying don't think about responding. Or don't deploy Desert Storm because I might put one in downtown LA or New York City or Washington, D.C. Then you have a different calculation. Would the allies be as willing to join up to Desert Storm in those circums tances?

Q: But have you gotten agreement from England and from Denmark to upgrade those two first radars for the initial...

Secretary Cohen: We're still, we haven't even sought agreement at this point. We're going through the educational process and I think we're having some pretty substantial, positive signs.

Q: Mr. Secretary, a big flaw was found in the Patriot system the other day, and that system's been around for quite awhile. Does that suggest that maybe the whole technology is a lot more fragile than has been known at this point?

Secretary Cohen: I can't give you a good answer on that, Paul. Right now there's, the situation -- I think our security situation has been corrected so there's adequate protection for our forces and for our allies. We're still going through a very detailed examination in terms of what was the specific cause of failure so I think it's too early to tell how to correct those.

Q: But in terms of the broader sort of whole missile defense concept, does it raise questions about that as well?

Secretary Cohen: Not in my mind, no. I think any time you have high technology instruments there's always a potential for a defect or failure. How long have we been building cars? Because we have recalls that take place from time to time doesn't mean we haven't been successful in building cars.

I don't want to minimize the situation, but whenever you're dealing with high technology, you've got to check it, constantly test it to make sure that all the components are fully capable of carrying out the particular mission.

Q: Nuclear missile defense. What do you think of this idea of putting over the decision to the next President?

Secretary Cohen: I think it's too early to make that decision right now. As far as I'm concerned what we should do is complete the tests, allow for an examination of the tests. It's going to come now later than we anticipated, now sometime in June. It takes about a month to evaluate that. Then I have to look at it and make a recommendation. I think there's, at this point we should just press ahead and complete the tests and resolve that question later, but it's too early to say that it should be postponed.

Q: The argument is made that if this President makes the decision it is more likely we could get a limited nuclear system plus limited modifications of the ABM Treaty which is held in high esteem all around the world.

Secretary Cohen: As opposed to...

Q: If the Republicans should win, that we just go for broke on the whole thing, you know? (Laughter) ...bigger than your budget.

Q: ...go to hell.

Secretary Cohen: Please note that Bud said we were going to hell. (Laughter)

Q: Could you just focus on that question a little bit?

Secretary Cohen: Right now there is bipartisan support for deploying a limited missile defense system. Both the House and Senate, Republicans and Democrats have spoken on this issue.

To say that if a Republican is elected that he is going to simply disband any consideration of the ABM would imply that he doesn't care what our allies have to say, or that we can deploy a system without the support of our allies, which I don't think is realistic.

As I tried to point out, there are some who argue, Henry Kissinger and others may argue that the treaty is no longer relevant today. But it's relevant in the sense that certainly diplomatically it's relevant to our allies, and from a technical point of view we still need their support because we have to have forward deployed radars in order to make a national missile defense system effective.

So I think anyone who is elected -- Democrat or Republican -- has to take that into account. You cannot simply devise a system, not in the short term at least, to say that we don't care what our allies have to say about this and we're just going forward, because you do need their support.

So I don't think... I think it's too easy to say if the Republicans get in they're just going to abandon everything, abandon, "all ye who enter here in the Republican booth abandon all hope". I don't think anyone can say that. I think that you'd say that once, if a Republican takes office, if George Bush is elected, he will have the same considerations that President Clinton has. How do I hold this system together, how do I hold the support of the allies, what kind of a system do I deploy that is persuasive to them that also engenders their support?

Now conceivably, you can come up with a project to say that we can do it all on our own, but that's further away, and that's not likely to build a real nexus of consensus for our relationship with our allies.

Q: I just have one other thing. I read Mr. Perry's report on North Korea. He does not recommend the building of a missile defense.

Secretary Cohen: It was under Bill Perry that the 3+3 was negotiated. As a matter of fact...

Q: But he doesn't in the report. At least in the unclassified one. (Laughter)

Secretary Cohen: You'd have to ask him on that. I think Bill Perry does in

fact support a limited type of system, but I can't speak for him.
Q: It's a lot of trouble for one little country, don't you think?
Secretary Cohen: It's not just North Korea. North Korea is also exporting its technology. You also have Iran developing long range missiles. You have the potential should Iraq get back in the business, they certainly were very close to having long range missile capability. So it's not just North Korea.
Q: It's got to be a quarter to 9:00 and I promised myself, I want to ask a question now, if you don't mind.
The year is almost over. You'll be out, the President will be out. It's a time already when we can look back a little bit. It's been a little interesting having a Republican Secretary of Defense under a Democratic President. I'd just like to, just for a few minutes if you don't mind, if you could reflect a bit on how this relationship has been. Has it all been smooth as can be?
Mary, in a way, reminds me too that there are sometimes differences between Republican and Democratic views on defense matters. (Laughter)
Secretary Cohen: I would say there have been no differences of views between myself and the President, or the Vice President, or his entire national...
Q: On defense.
Secretary Cohen: That's all I deal with. Fortunately, I do not engage in politics any longer. But only on defense issues we've had a very, very good relationship, and I must say it has been an experiment which has been, from my perspective, and you can judge that, but has been remarkably successful.
If you look when I came into office where we were in terms of the problems associated with the military, the procurement, the level was down around $43 billion, it's now up to the $60 mark that Bill Perry and General Shalikashvili were trying to get to, and it was always sort of an illusion, kind of an illusory goal that kept getting further and further extended. We're now there.
We have in fact changed... When I came in I was looking at a fixed budget, and within 18 months I was able to persuade the Administration that we needed more. The President responded with a substantial increase in defense spending to deal with the problems of readiness and pay for our people.
So I think it's been, from my perspective, remarkably successful because I've kept it strictly on defense issues and I have never been called upon and never had to engage in any kind of political considerations.
The only time the political issue even surfaced was during the time of Desert Fox when the House was prepared at that point to bring out an impeachment resolution. We had in fact conducted a lightning strike over in Iraq. I went up to the House, and I had a call from Newt Gingrich and Bob Livingston at that time, and they said the House members were steaming, furious. And they thought it was political.
I went up that evening, it was the first time I'd been back to the House of Representatives in 20 years, stood in the well of the House of Representatives. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was there as well. I spoke for about three hours that evening, laying out exactly the process whereby we had decided that Saddam Hussein had violated his agreement, that Butler had been totally frustrated and we had given Saddam his last warning.
Once we finished, there was quite a round of support -- Republican as well

as Democrat. But that's the only time that the question of politics came into those...
Q: During the...
Secretary Cohen: I just want to say, and I think I was in a unique position to be able to go up there and say here's what we did, why we did it, and I'm here to put my entire career on the line to tell you there was not ever a single political consideration by the President of the United States on this. And there wasn't.
Q: I think here's a question that the historians may focus on at some time. That is during that scandal period which lasted well over a year, certainly the President was preoccupied. But in his dealings with you on important matters, did you find any diversion, any preoccupation in any way that curbed his ability to address the question of the day?
Secretary Cohen: As a matter of fact perhaps the most remarkable thing about this is, and you can check with anyone in the military, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, any military official who was part of the deliberations during that entire period of time, it was absolutely astonishing to see his ability to focus specifically on the issue before him.
Q: Remarkable ability to compartmentalize.
Secretary Cohen: He would look with absolutely laser intensity on an issue, raise the questions that needed to be raised, and show that he had done his homework and understood the issues with remarkable clarity. So we walked away from those meetings saying this is truly a remarkable individual in terms of his ability to focus on the national security issues before him.
Q: Mr. Secretary, two questions. One, President Eisenhower warned in his farewell address of a military industrial complex that would have undue influence on American foreign policy. Based on your experience at the Pentagon and as a member of Congress from a state that has relied quite heavily on defense spending, do you share any of those concerns?
And two, if your successor were to ask you what are the two or three major problems that he has to worry about at the outset, what would you tell him? (Laughter)
Secretary Cohen: The last question of the morning once again.
As far as the military industrial complex, what we have seen is a remarkable shakeup in the military industrial complex, so to speak. We have far fewer contractors today. Because of the end of the Cold War there was a reduction in demand forcing a number of consolidations within the industry. They in turn have had to compete on Wall Street for equity investment, and that has been a great challenge to them. Major companies, be it Lockheed or Raytheon or General Dynamics or any of them, can find themselves with a record of their production and accomplishment over the years not being valued as much as a new IPO of a new computer firm. So I don't see that kind of influence that Eisenhower talked about at that time. Do they still perform a vital role as part of the economy? The answer is yes. But what we're seeing take place today is a further integration that we're concerned about a fortress Europe being erected against a fortress America, and we don't want to see that take place. That's the reason why we have spent a good deal of time number one looking at how we can revise our Export Control Act to deal more effectively with integrating our industrial relationship with our European allies, Australia and others, Canada. We have very good, strong bilateral relations with them in terms of military cooperation. But we want to make sure that we don't see this

kind of competition because of the reduction in demand. So I don't see that undue influence that President Eisenhower was concerned about at that time.

What we're seeing, as a matter of fact through the globalization we're seeing economics play a much greater role in terms of influencing behavior at the diplomatic level than in the past.

As far as to my successor, what kind of problems. The problems will be, as Mary raised it, continuing to deal with the issue of arms control reduction. We have START II we've ratified. The Russians hopefully will ratify that soon and then move on to START III. So those will continue into the next Administration.

Secondly, this issue again of rationalizing the kind of cooperation we're going to have with our counterparts in Europe and elsewhere.

Number three, how to manage the relationship with both China and Russia.

Then at the separate level, dealing with recruitment and retention to make sure that we still are able to get the very best and brightest people we can in the military.

So those are just four of the challenges that will be faced.

Q: Mr. Secretary, the Congress is beginning to deal with the question of supplementals for Colombia, and now there's the discussion of is this another Vietnam.

Can you talk precisely where the line is that these troops in Colombia, American troops in Colombia, must heed to between combat and training?

Secretary Cohen: I think the best source for information on this would be the testimony given by Charles Wilhelm, General Wilhelm who is SOUTHCOM Commander. I think one of the best military people that we have. He is a brilliant military strategist and warrior. He gave testimony a few weeks ago up on the Hill and I just give you that in terms of looking at how that's laid out.But essentially it's a line that has to be drawn, that we assist in the training of counternarcotics but not counterinsurgency. And we have to be very careful on that that we don't get drawn into supporting the counterinsurgency activities on the part of Colombia.

The biggest problem we have is about 80 percent of all the cocaine is coming out of Colombia right now. So we have a problem, we've got great demand and we need to have a balanced program. We're trying to curb demand and at the same time trying to hopefully cause some interdiction and depreciation in the amount of supply that's available.

But we have to insist upon very strict lines and I think those who have fought in Vietnam, and Wilhelm and others who are very much aware of the line that has to be drawn, have been able to do so.

Q: Can you give me some example as to what would be a counterinsurgency tactic and what would be a counternarcotics tactic? What's the difference?

Secretary Cohen: The difference has to do with the activities. If you're training people how to interdict drug activity as opposed to trying to counter the rebel insurgency as such, one is drug making production and export into the United States, to help them, the Colombians, deal with that. And shutting down some of the drug operations, the cultivation, eliminating some of the fields and so forth.

Q: Why would our military be at all qualified to work on counterdrug? Why wouldn't we send some other department?

Secretary Cohen: We have various departments that are involved at different levels. But in terms of training people for surveillance, operation of helicopters, that all involves military. The DEA is not trained to deal in that particular field.

So you have military people in the counterdrug component of Colombia's military that focus specifically on drugs. Other elements have focused on dealing with the rebels. We only deal with the drug aspect.
Q: The rebels are now taking over the drug trade and are protecting them, so you can't fight one without the other.
Secretary Cohen: But the fighting is being done by the Colombians and not by the United States.
Q: This is a question about the Army's efforts to reinvent itself. This has received rhetorical support from you from the DepSecDef and other people, but no real money. And some people interpret this as tacit disapproval or perhaps even more significantly an actual shift in emphasis of air power over land power.
I wonder if you could...
Secretary Cohen: Some could say that, but they would be wrong. As a matter of fact the reason I recommended General Shinseki and General Cain was because I saw in them the opportunity to have the Army transform itself. Now in terms of budgetary matters, I think if you ask General Shinseki he would say that this is a good start. What we haven't done is to say that you can keep everything you have in your budget and then we'll just fund everything above that line for the transformation. That's not how you would achieve transformation. You've got to eliminate some of the things you're doing today. You've got to get lighter, faster, more agile, etc., but you can't have the same budget for all the things you've got and then say but I want a total increase in the top line in order to get the transformation.
What I've said is this is a start. You've got to start eliminating some of the things you're currently doing with your heavy equipment. You've got a good beginning here. You'll need more in the future, but you've got to start it now. But the notion that somehow we're going to pay for all of the transformation over and above what they've got today means we carry everything today and you basically just increase the budget but not do much in the way of forcing the Army to internally examine what things it has to give up in order to be this lighter, more deployable...
Q: We're near the end here.
Q: ...what the Army is doing so far?
Secretary Cohen: Yes, I think they're making a good beginning. They're going to need more in the future, but this is a good step.
Q: Mr. Secretary, we have about 5,000 troops in Kosovo right now, if I'm correct. What is the exit strategy? How long can we expect to stay there? When will it become a European force?
Secretary Cohen: We actually have more than 5,000 there now in Kosovo. But there is no end date. We've done that before, and said after one year we'll be out. Well, that proved unrealistic. What we did see in Bosnia was a substantial reduction in our forces there from 20,000 down to about 4,300 today.
Where we are as far as Kosovo is concerned, we'll try to do the same thing as the situation allows. You don't want to have a reduction when the security environment is still tense.
So what we will try to do is to put pressure upon the UN, the NGOs, OSCE, the European nations to fulfill their pledges. As far as getting more police, we're only at the halfway level, 50 percent roughly, of the police that have been, that are required, that are there now. We need judges, we need prosecutors, we need elections. All of that is going to take some time, but we have to keep pressure on those countries to produce what they

said they were going to produce. When that happens you can see a reduction in the military commitment.

Q: Mr. Secretary, you've said in the past that you think the promise of healthcare for life for retired military personnel hasn't been kept, and a moment ago you said they're important to [troops]. Yet two weeks ago the Department was in the U.S. Court of Appeals here arguing against a lawsuit to require that healthcare.

How do you reconcile your personal opinions with your Department's position?

Secretary Cohen: It is an issue as to whether it's a legal requirement. I'm not skilled enough to resolve that issue, whether it's legal or not. What I said, it's a moral obligation. We intend to meet that moral obligation.

It's going to be very expensive. I continue to sit down with the Chairman to see what kind of proposal we can make in working with the Congress to fashion relief for the retirees. We're going to come up with a program. We'll have to go back to the Hill to fund it, but that's something.

If we're talking about how do I influence the people coming in to say that if they make a commitment to you we're going to keep it, and if we don't keep it we're going to have a real impact upon that recruitment.

So from my personal point of view, the Chairman's point of view, this is an obligation. I know in talking with people on the Hill that they are committed to this. So we will come up with a proposal. Whether it's a legal obligation under the law or not, it's a moral one, and we're going to...

Q: Mr. Secretary, we've covered a great deal of ground today. It's been a very valuable session and I want to thank you for coming in.

Secretary Cohen: My pleasure. Thank you.

-END-

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4. LONDON EVENING STANDARD Downing Street defiant over gay sex clause
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Newsday, March 24, 2000
235 Pinelawn, Melville, NY, 11747-4250
(Fax 516-843-2986) (E-MAIL: letters@newsday.com)
(http://www.newsday.com/)
Family Dissonance
Suspect and stepson argued before slaying, cops believe

Dental X-rays have positively identified human remains found in a Queens park as those of Steen K. Fenrich, the missing man whose stepfather committed suicide Wednesday after a seven-hour armed standoff with police in Dix Hills, a spokeswoman for the New York City medical examiner said yesterday.

Although the 19-year-old Army veteran's death has not been officially labeled a homicide, investigators are treating it as such, and they consider the stepfather, John Fenrich, to be the chief suspect, said Deputy Police Chief Patrick Timlin, the Queens detective commander.

Fenrich killed himself Wednesday afternoon after the standoff during which he paced the roof of his home on Oakfield Avenue asking police to shoot him.

Investigators believe Fenrich killed Steen on Sept. 9 in Bayside during an argument. City police sources said Fenrich disapproved of his stepson's homosexuality and was angry that he wanted to move back to the family's home in Dix Hills after an argument with his male lover.

In a rambling rant from the rooftop, a drunken Fenrich implicated himself in the death of Steen, whose body parts were found in a plastic tub in Queens

with racial and anti-gay slurs written on the skull, city police sources said. John Fenrich was white. Steen Fenrich was black.

Suffolk police officials said they had no knowledge of such statements. And Timlin said city police also were not aware of any incriminating statements Fenrich allegedly made during the standoff.

But a police source citing city detectives who were on the scene said Fenrich claimed that he and Steen had argued and that the youth's death was an accident.

While Fenrich and his stepson had argued over the man's gay lifestyle, anti-gay bias did not appear to be the sole motive for the homicide.

"We know there was a history there" of problems between Fenrich and his stepson, Timlin said. He would not elaborate on those problems.

But Rabbi David Kent, a childhood friend of John Fenrich, said the family was plagued by feelings that John showed more affection to his biological son than he did to Steen.

"He said his wife was upset with him because he did not treat the stepson with the natural love that a parent has for a biological son," said Kent, who said he last spoke to John Fenrich in Bayside seven years ago. "He was very proud of his natural son."

And neighbors said Steen often teased his younger brother, John David, because their father preferred him.

Yesterday, as police searched for more remains, Wanda Gray Fenrich tried to sort out the deaths of her oldest son and her husband.

"There's a lot of inconsistencies right now," the 52-year-old woman said from behind dark glasses as she drove up to her home in a white pickup truck.

"I have to collect my thoughts in a coherent manner right now."

One question that remained unanswered yesterday was why no one reported Steen Fenrich missing even though he had not been seen for seven months.

Asked if Wanda Fenrich was a suspect, Timlin said: "She is being interviewed. We haven't cleared anybody at this time. But we're not prepared to call her a suspect, either."

The investigation began Tuesday night when a skull, foot and some loose teeth were found inside a plastic tub by a passerby in Alley Pond Park. Also written on the side of the skull was Steen Fenrich's Social Security number.

City police approached John Fenrich, who hours later took to his roof after calling News12 and discussing the case.

City police sources said an opportunity to take Fenrich into custody may have been lost Wednesday morning when Suffolk police refused to let a city detective hand the gunman a cell phone.

According to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, Fenrich told the detective that he would end the standoff if he were allowed to speak on the phone to his brother, a Queens homicide sergeant.

"I don't want to talk to these guys, I want to talk to you," he told the city detective, one of two city police sources said.

But giving Fenrich a cell phone would have been a breach of police protocol, and Suffolk police threatened to arrest the city detective if he gave Fenrich the phone, the sources said.

Suffolk County police officials emphatically denied knowledge of the telephone incident and said there was no clash of investigators at the scene.

"It was total cooperation," said Suffolk Police Chief of Patrol Edwin Michel. "They were there to help, to offer any assistance they could, as we were to them."

But Timlin acknowledged some tension. He did not elaborate but said, "I don't think it was that bad."

Of the reported threat to arrest the city detective, Timlin said, "If that was said, it might have been in the heat of the moment, but what I'm getting from both sides is that there were good relations out there."

The conflicting accounts of the first 90 minutes of Fenrich's standoff came as new details emerged about Steen's death and the man investigators believe killed him:

Steen Fenrich's former lover told investigators that he received a call from John Fenrich shortly after Steen disappeared. "He said 'Steen's going away for a couple of weeks, and he told me to tell you that he loves you,'" a city police source said. The lover said the elder Fenrich had in the past always treated him with contempt.

City police sources said the plastic tub in which Steen Fenrich's remains were found had been used by 14-year-old John David Fenrich as a toy chest.

Activists from the Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project called for police to label the killing a bias crime.

Police divers searched for more of Steen's remains in Oakland Lake in Alley Pond Park, while cadaver dogs sniffed the Fenrich property in Dix Hills, with inconclusive results, Timlin said.

? By Dan Morrison, Michael Luo, Sean Gardiner and Oscar Corral.

Associated Press, March 24, 2000
Homophobia Said Common In Military

[***Fenceberry Note: The Associated Press keeps appending text to their article by the minute. This text is added onto the previous item we sent in Articles 3.24.00.9.]

In a recent critique of the inspector general's survey methods, Benecke's group called some of the survey questions "flawed and meaningless." One question, for example, asked service members how well they understand the policy.

"A service member could think he or she understands the policy, but in reality he or she may be uninformed or misinformed," the critique said. "If the intent was to test actual knowledge of the policy, this question will

not
reach that goal."

Whatever progress Cohen makes in improving the implementation of the "don't ask, don't tell" approach, the whole controversy may take a new direction after the November election. Vice President Al Gore, the presumed Democratic presidential nominee, has said he would eliminate the restrictions on gay service. Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the presumed Republican nominee, favors keeping the current policy.

Sacramento Bee, March 24, 2000
P. O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA, 95813
(Fax 916-321-1109) (E-MAIL: opinion@sacbee.com)
(http://www.sacbee.com)
Capitol Alert: Gay marriages not dead issue
Dan Walters

For months, polls of potential California voters showed virtually no change in their division over a ballot measure aimed at barring same-sex marriages.

The polls consistently showed that slightly over 50 percent of voters backed the measure, Proposition 22, and slightly less than 40 percent opposed it, with the remainder undecided.

When votes were actually counted on March 7, however, Proposition 22 had passed with more than 60 percent, and the opposition got exactly what the polls had indicated, less than 40 percent. Thus, what could have been a narrow outcome became a 3-2 rout with all but a handful of Bay Area counties registering pro-Proposition 22 majorities.

In the aftermath, gay rights advocates are trying to persuade themselves that all was not lost. Some even are talking about placing a pro-gay marriage measure on the ballot. From a purely political standpoint, however, it was a blowout, and one that will affect the ongoing struggle over gay rights for years to come.

The most immediate question is whether the drive to expand gay rights in the Legislature will now be stalled.

When Democrat Gray Davis became governor, gay rights groups, like many other liberal constituencies, intensified their legislative efforts. Davis, however, proved to be as cautious on this issue as he is on most others. While running for governor, he carefully refused to endorse gay marriage ? in contrast with two Democratic rivals ? and once he became governor he imposed tight limits on what he'd sign.

The major gay rights measure to emerge last year was a relatively mild version of the "domestic partnership" concept. The Davis-approved final

version allows any couple to register with the state as domestic partners and
same-sex couples to claim hospital visitation rights. But Davis refused to require private employers to provide fringe benefits, such as health insurance, to domestic partners, restricting that right to state workers.

Gay rights advocates would like to incrementally expand the privileges and benefits accorded domestic partners. Upward of 20 gay rights bills have
been introduced this year, with one by Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl, D-Los Angeles, the Legislature's pioneer gay member and a leading advocate of gay rights, being the most important.

Although it contains a number of specific provisions, the most controversial aspect of Kuehl's new bill would require California to recognize any domestic partnership arrangement created in any other state.

What makes it a touchy issue is what's happening in Vermont. Under direction from the Vermont Supreme Court to equalize the legal standing of heterosexual marriages and same-sex relationships, the Vermont Legislature is
creating a new category called "civil unions" that are virtually identical to
marriages.

Kuehl's bill, if enacted, apparently would require California to recognize such unions and grant the same benefits and privileges that Vermont
does ? a prospect that's raising the ire of the anti-gay marriage forces that
successfully pushed Proposition 22.

"It's trying to bring homosexual marriage to California," says anti-gay marriage activist Randy Thomasson. Thomasson raises the specter of California
couples flying to Vermont, registering their "civil unions" and then returning to California to claim similar status here.

Would Kuehl's fellow Democrats vote for such a law in the aftermath of Proposition 22's landslide passage? And would Davis sign such a law? The chances are less than 50-50 on either ? but the introduction of the bill indicates that fights over gay rights and gay marriage are far from over.

? DAN WALTERS' column appears daily except Saturday. Mail: P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852; phone: (916) 321-1195; fax: (781) 846-8350; e-mail: dwalters@sacbee.com

London Evening Standard, March 24, 2000
This Is London, 60 Charlotte Street, London W1P 2AX U.K.
(E-Mail: letters@standard.co.uk) (http://www.thisislondon.co.uk)
Downing St defiant over gay sex clause
by David Shaw, Parliamentary Correspondent

Downing Street today sent a defiant message to opponents of the Government's plans to scrap the controversial clause which bars councils from
promoting lessons on gay sex.

After suffering another defeat in the Lords last night a spokesman said that ministers remain committed to ending Section 28 and would be "looking at
tactics".

Peers supported by 190 votes to 175 moves tabled by Tory Baroness Young stressing the importance of heterosexual marriage and opposing any change to the law. They remain confident of preventing any change in the legislation at least until after the General Election.

Immediately after the defeat, Education Minister Baroness Blackstone declared that the amendments would be "deleted" when the Learning and Skills Bill returns to the Commons.

Angela Mason, executive director of Stonewall, accused the peers of "a shameful thing". She said: "They had no mandate to dictate how people should live."

Denver Post, March 24, 2000
650 15th Street, Denver, CO, 80202
(Fax 303-820-1369) (E-MAIL: Letters@denverpost.com)
(http://www.denverpost.com)

'Domestic partner' issue complicates gay-marriage ban

By Mike Soraghan, Denver Post Capitol Bureau

In their drive to ban gay marriage, legislators have gotten tangled up in whether to protect "domestic partnerships." That's one of the names of the legal options often offered as a substitute for marriage for gay couples.

The city of Denver recognizes such unions. And some companies offer health benefits to the partners of gay employees.

In Vermont, state legislators under court order to consider gay marriage are looking at creating "civil unions" for gays and lesbians, a status that falls short of marriage.

Sen. Ed Perlmutter, D-Golden, tried on Thursday to change the same-sex marriage ban to ensure it would not interfere with that recognition.

"We may not put our stamp of approval on a marriage between a man and a man or a woman and a woman," Perlmutter said. "But if a corporation or a local government wants to recognize a relationship, we have to respect that."

Perlmutter said he thought such recognition could come under attack once the bill becomes law.

Supporters of the gay-marriage ban objected, saying protecting such relationships would "neuter" the law.

"The rights of domestic partnership represent a fundamental change in how we view marriage," said Sen. John Andrews, R-Englewood, the bill's Senate sponsor.

But the debate stalled after Senate President Ray Powers, R-Colorado Springs, offered a change that would preserve existing contracts, but not put the words "domestic partnership" into law.

The debate on House Bill 1249 and the domestic partnership amendment is expected to resume today. Passage of the gay-marriage ban is a virtual certainty, because the Senate already passed identical language in a different bill. The House has passed it, and Gov. Bill Owens has said he will sign it.

Providence Journal Bulletin, March 24, 2000
75 Fountain St., Providence, RI, 02902
(Fax 401-277-7346) (E-MAIL: letters@projo.com)
(http://www.projo.com)

Scouts dragging feet on gay policy review

Scott Pusillo, a spokesman for Scouting for All, says a Rhode Island resolution asking the national Scouts to review its policy on homosexuals, was likely done to pacify major donors.

By JENNIFER LEVITZ, Journal Staff Writer

SOUTH KINGSTOWN ? It looked good on paper.

Facing the threat of losing contributions from major donors, the Narragansett Council, Boy Scouts of America, in November sent its national parent organization a two-page resolution asking it to review a 90-year-old policy that bans homosexuals.

But several months later, the resolution ? which followed a similar one sent by a Minnesota Boy Scouts council ? appears to be stagnant, not the forceful call for change that community leaders had hoped.

State Boy Scout officials say that since they sent the resolution, the national organization has not contacted them once. They admit that they haven't followed up on the resolution either.

And David Anderson, the new executive director for the Narragansett Council, has said that the general feeling is that national Boy Scout executives won't take any action until a ruling this summer by the U.S. Supreme Court on the Boy Scouts' appeal of the James Dale case ? in which the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the Scouts' barring of a gay troop leader violated the state's antidiscrimination laws. The ruling could decide whether the Boy Scouts are a private organization that can let in whomever it wants.

The Boy Scouts have contended that their decision to ban homosexuals is rooted in a 1910 oath, stated on page 46 of the Boy Scout handbook. Scouts vow to "keep myself morally straight."

Yesterday, a representative from Scouting For All, a national group dedicated to changing the Boy Scout policy with a petition drive that has so far collected a half-million signatures, said the vaguely worded Rhode Island resolution was likely a way to smooth ties with the United Way and other supporters who were upset over an incident at Camp Yawgoog in August.

National attention focused on the pristine Hopkinton camp when a camp director told a 17-year-old Eagle Scout that he couldn't return to a full-time job on the same day that the director asked him if he was gay. The Scout had answered yes.

After the youth filed a complaint with the state Human Rights Commission, and staff members staged a sit-in in his support, the scouting organization offered him his job back.

Scott Pusillo, a spokesman for Scouting for All, came to the University of Rhode Island as part of a four-day symposium to explore spirituality and

sexuality. He loves scouting, he said, except "this one thing."

He said in an interview that "in my heart," he wants to believe that Rhode Island Scouts feel that the policy against gays is wrong, but that in reality, he thinks the resolution was done "in pacification."

"They never said: 'We think this is wrong,'" said Pusillo, an openly gay troop leader who says he hasn't been kicked out of his New Jersey troop because of the James Dale case. "They could have done more than write one simple little letter. They could have tried to have open communication. They could have taken a stand."

In November, as the United Way was threatening to cut off support if Scout policy didn't change, and the Rhode Island Council of Churches, which sponsors more than 100 troops, applied pressure, the 40-member executive board of the Narragansett Council unanimously passed a resolution that seconded one sent to the national organization last year by the Indian Head Council, of St. Paul, Minn.

The Minnesota resolution called for the Boy Scouts of America to form a committee to study the ban on gays, and to report back this year. The resolution passed one committee, and now sits in the relationship committee, which reviews membership standards. The committee will not speak publicly about its actions, national Boy Scout spokesman Gregg Shields said yesterday.

Pusillo said he believes that the policy on gays has not yet been studied.

"This formation of a committee, in my view, it's just a public relations ploy," he said. "They're thinking, 'we'll just satisfy the United Way and these two councils . . ."

The Rhode Island resolution called for the national organization to conduct the review in a "timely and forthright manner."

Yesterday, Peter Reid, spokesman for the executive board of the Narragansett Council, said he believes the resolution is "headed for discussion" at the Boy Scouts of America national meeting in Nashville, Tenn., in May. But the board has not talked to national executives since it sent the resolution, Reid said. Reid was not sure who at the national Boy Scout headquarters had the document now.

"We have not heard anything from them, or contacted them about it, but we didn't expect to," he said. "That's normal."

He expects that it went to the national policymaking executive board, though he is not sure.

"That's where it was aimed certainly," he said.

The forum for such debate, he said, is at the national meeting.

"To try to push or cajole something prior to that would be premature," he said.

He said that anyone who thinks the Narragansett Council isn't moving fast enough to coax national Scouts doesn't understand the dynamics of an organizaton with a volunteer policymaking board. Pushing them, he said, "is not the way to work the business."

The Minnesota council also has not heard about the status of its resolution, Indian Head executive director John Andrew said yesterday.

"I've heard that it has not been shelved, but they tend to keep a lid on the discussion process," he said.

Andrew said it would be "fairly common sense" for national Scouts to wait until the Supreme Court ruling on the James Dale case.

"If we were to implement a policy change at this time, and then the Supreme Court sends us off in a different direction, it would be a waste of time," he said.

In the New Jersey Supreme Court's ruling last summer, justices said that Scout organizations are a public accommodation because they form partnerships with fire departments, police departments, and other public entities. Therefore, the court said, they cannot discriminate.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed on Jan. 14 to hear the Boy Scouts appeal next month.

Anderson, of the Narragansett Council, told Providence Journal columnist M. Charles Bakst recently that the state Scouts figure that the national organization is waiting for the courts to tell it what to do.

Mormon and Methodist churches together are the largest sponsor of Boy Scout troops. But the United Way is the largest financial contributor to the organization. The United Way of Southeastern New England annually donates $200,000 to the Narragansett Council, and allows thousands of people to direct donations to the Scouts through United Way fundraising programs.

Because of the Boy Scout policy, the United Way has pulled its financing in San Francisco, New Haven, Conn., and Portland, Maine.

In November, the Southeastern United Way commended the Rhode Island Scouts for sending the resolution, but warned that it might cut financing if the national group doesn't follow up on its pledge to study the policy.

The United Way wouldn't say yesterday how it viewed the state Scouts' progress so far, but it is, along with the council on churches, inviting the Boy Scouts to a forum on diversity and gay issues in the late spring, according to Steve Conners, a United Way spokesman.

In the meantime, Anderson is focusing on expanding Rhode Islanders' participation in a quasi-scouting program called "Learning for Life." The classroom curriculum is offered to schools by Scouts and is designed to teach ethics and self-esteem. Participants aren't required to be Scouts or follow Scout policies. National Scout leaders have described the program as a way to increase participation in scouting, while protecting traditional scouting programs from legal challenges.

Several troops nationwide, including a couple in Rhode Island, are adopting their own antidiscrimination policies, Pusillo said.

Barrington Cub Scout leader Cindy Capra wrote a letter in protest of the policy against gays, and asked as many people as she could to send it to the

national Scouts in Texas.

Deseret News, March 24, 2000
Box 1257, Salt Lake City, UT, 84110
(Fax 801-237-2121) (E-MAIL: letters@desnews.com)
(http://www.desnews.com)

Letter: Gay promotion mocks God

The sexual behaviors of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender, etc., are nothing new. They have been around for several thousand years. During these several millennia, these immoral behaviors have generally been responded to by the masses with great disgust and abhorrence. Why have the last few decades been any different?

The answer is that a great deal of money is being spent behind the scenes by the promoters of these behaviors in an attempt to sway public opinion, to change the laws of the land, to brainwash the younger generation so as to gain more participants and to distract us from the truth of what the scriptures say about it. They have encouraged same-sex marriages and made sure that there was plenty of publicity about it.

(The so-called religious leaders who perform same-sex marriages are themselves performing a worse abomination because they are mocking the Lord, attempting to condone what he absolutely condemns and mocking him further by pretending to do it with his blessing.) These promoters have also cunningly portrayed these behaviors in clever terms and phrases in an attempt to justify and dignify them.

Are these promoters attempting to say that an unchanging God has recently changed his mind? That groups can bend God's will to fit theirs? That God is dead, so it doesn't matter? That mortal death is the end of our existence, so we don't have to account for our behaviors or choices?

Any promoter of immorality will have a heavy price to pay.

? Richard L. Wilde, Ogden

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Fenceberry@aol.com (Fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:24-MAR-2000 00:06:35.00

SUBJECT: Articles 3.23.00.7

TO: "undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov ("undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
1. ARIZONA DAILY STAR Turning gloom into glory: Lavina Tomer alerted community to same-sex domestic violence
2. BOSTON HERALD Judy Shepard tells University of Massachusetts that attitudes toward gays must change; Fliers for her speech are defaced with threats to gays
3. SALT LAKE TRIBUNE Editorial: Civil Union In Vermont
4. DENVER POST Letter from another athlete named Reggie urges Colorado Governor to veto bill that would forbid recognition of same-sex marriages
5. DAYTONA BEACH NEWS-JOURNAL Editorial: Praise for gay-rights forum
6. PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE Gore wouldn't rush into lifting ban on openly gay troops

Arizona Daily Star, March 23, 2000
P. O. Box 26887, Tucson, AZ, 85726
(Fax 602-573-4141) (E-MAIL: letters@azstarnet.com)
(http://www.azstarnet.com/)
Turning gloom into glory
She alerted community to same-sex domestic violence
By Jill Jorden Spitz, The Arizona Daily Star

Logic would tell you she shouldn?t have been able to do it.

An ordinary person can?t just set out to educate an entire community about a practically unknown issue ? an issue she?s never even studied.

She can?t just publish a book about something rarely talked about, much less written about.

She can?t just form an organization and secure funding without really knowing what she?s doing.

But Lavina Tomer did it.

She started giving speeches about the until-then-hidden issue of domestic violence in same-sex relationships.

She learned which local agencies were open to dealing with same-sex couples and set out to change the mind-set of those that weren?t.

She brought together a coalition of domestic violence experts to help her write and edit a guide for local professionals and victims.

From the tiny office that started in a corner of her bedroom and eventually took over her entire life, she planted the seeds of the Wingspan Domestic Violence Project that now has full funding, an executive director and two advocates. It provides emergency shelter, offers an extensive system of referrals and operates weekly support groups for men and women.

Clearly, Tomer knows all about domestic violence in same-sex relationships. But she didn?t learn it in school or at seminars, she learned it from life, during the three years she was verbally and physically abused by the woman who shared her life.

She eventually escaped the relationship and rebuilt her life. But she found herself continually frustrated by the lack of help offered to her as a lesbian and she turned that frustration into action.

?She?s a regular citizen who said, ?Wait a minute, here?s a problem,?? says Josefina Ahumada of the National Association of Social Workers? Arizona chapter. ?She?s living proof that you don?t have to be a professional social worker to address a social problem.?

For her efforts on behalf of gay, lesbian, transsexual and transgender victims of domestic violence, Tomer has been named Citizen of the Year by the local social workers? association. She will receive her award at a luncheon next week.

Even now, as the accolades roll in and the list of admirers grows longer, Tomer refuses to bask in the glory many say is due.

The way she sees it, it was her misfortune to stumble across something that was just plain wrong. And it was her duty to make it right.

?It?s a human right that I don?t live in fear,? she says. ?That I get social services when I need them without fear of prejudice or scorn. That I am not made to feel like I don?t belong in the world.?

Never expected abuse

A decade ago, Tomer wasn?t much different from the woman she is now: a confident feminist devoted to her career in massage therapy.

She knew about domestic violence. She had friends who worked in domestic violence shelters. She even helped start a massage program for formerly battered women.

She had never made the vow many women make to themselves ? that they would never tolerate abuse ? not because she didn?t feel that way, but because she believed that, as a lesbian, domestic violence simply didn?t apply to her.

So she didn?t even know what to call the yelling, the berating, the clenched fist coming at her from this woman she knew as warm, vulnerable, creative, intelligent and deeply spiritual.

?In my mind I knew things were wrong,? she says now. ?But, emotionally, I felt paralyzed.?

Her self-esteem plunged and her depression soared.

?What?s really hard for me to remember is my lack of anger, my meekness,? she says. ?It?s painful to even think of myself that way.?

Instead of fleeing, Tomer sought counseling. As she spoke of being hit and intimidated, counselors asked if she understood her role in their spats,

said she should be more assertive and encouraged better communication skills.

?I was reaching out for help,? she says, ?and no one was listening.?

Police called to the house during a particularly violent episode tried to be helpful. But Arizona law says domestic violence occurs between a husband and wife, boyfriend and girlfriend or parent and child.

In those cases, authorities can arrest the alleged abuser, require counseling and order jail time for repeat offenses. Victims can get restraining orders to keep their abusers away.

With violence in same-sex homes, victims must press assault-and-battery charges something many are too frightened to do. They can apply for injunctions against harassment, but first must prove a history of abuse.

When Tomer finally found the strength to leave, she was too frightened to go to a shelter or call a hotline.

?I didn?t know how they would respond to me and I was too vulnerable to take that chance,? she says.

That?s a common reaction, says Claudia Reynoso, executive director of the Wingspan Domestic Violence Project for same-sex victims of domestic violence.

Women know that seeking help means explaining the nature of their relationship coming out to a stranger who may respond with open arms or abject hostility.

Men have even fewer options. Most shelters serve only women. And admitting to abuse is unfathomable to many men, whom society expects to be strong and powerful.

Efforts were criticized

As she healed, Tomer read every book she could find on domestic violence and was distressed to find little information that applied to her.

She was also distressed at two equally upsetting reactions: from straight men and women who doubted same-sex violence was any big deal, and from gay men and lesbians who said she was doing further damage to a community with a bad enough reputation as it was.

She plowed ahead. She got stronger. And she got mad.

?I felt many things,? she says, ?and one of them was indignation.?

Fueled by a growing fire within her, she wrote articles for a local lesbian journal. She wrote letters to local agencies defining the problem.

She showed up at a public forum, filled out a form requesting time to speak, and told her story for the first time.

She went to a meeting of the Southern Arizona Task Force Against Domestic Violence and asked for money to create the book she kept searching for but hadn?t been able to find.

Before long, she was chairwoman of an editing committee organized through the domestic violence task force. The first resource guide, aimed primarily at professionals, was published in 1995. Another, for victims, came out the following year. Both versions are now combined into a 56-page volume,

available at local agencies.

The book led to speeches. The speeches led to her appointment to the first sexual minority seat on the local domestic violence commission. Her experience there convinced her and a growing stable of volunteers that a formal program was needed and so the Wingspan Domestic Violence Project began.

Tomer speaks often of the many people who worked to make the project what it is today. But even those who were there at the beginning say she deserves far more credit that she accepts.

?I absolutely do not think this would have happened without Lavina,? project chairwoman Laura Alexander says.

Tomer?s secret weapon, allies say, is that she pushes softly enough that she?s not threatening, but hard enough to spur people into action.

?She has an ability to translate a vision in a way that is easily embracable,? project director Reynosa says. ?You think about it and go, ?Yeah, that can be done and it should be done.??

?She never said, ?The mayor is too busy to care about this,?? Alexander says. ?She said, ?Hell, yes, he should care, and I?m going to call and tell him so.??

Tomer admits she has grown because of what she went through and what she chose to do with it. She is stronger and more self-assured and far better known throughout the community. But that doesn?t begin to make up for the abuse, the terror, the heartache that consumed three years of her life.

?That experience changed me,? she says. ?It had a positive impact on me. But I would gladly have skipped it all even the glory of getting an award.

?I made something good out of it, but it is not good. There is nothing about it that is good.?

? For help from the Wingspan Domestic Violence Project, call 624-0348.

? The annual luncheon of the National Association of Social Workers? local chapter will be at 11:30 a.m. March 31 at the Viscount Suite Hotel, 4855 E. Broadway. For tickets, call 884-5507, Ext. 19, or 480-968-4595.

Boston Herald, March 23, 2000
1 Herald Square, Boston, MA, 02106-2096
(Fax 617-542-1315) (E-MAIL: letterstoeditor@bostonherald.com)
(http://www.bostonherald.com)

Shepard's mom: Attitudes toward gays must change

by Eric Convey

Legislative efforts to punish criminals who target homosexuals are helpful but won't solve the problem of gay-bashing, the mother of slain gay college student Matthew Shepard said yesterday.

"Laws are being passed, but we're not doing a lot to change people's attitudes," Judy Shepard told several hundred students at the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

Her son, Matthew, was beaten and left to die on the Wyoming prairie by two men who targeted him in August 1998 because he was gay. Both killers

are
serving life sentences.

Judy Shepard called on people to combat anti-gay violence by fighting anti-gay humor.

If you laugh at gay jokes, she said, "you're also establishing an atmosphere that allows hate crimes to flourish . . . humor doesn't have to be
(about) the pope or the rabbi or the fag or the dyke. It can be just funny."

She called on the media to pay less attention to gay extremists and to focus more on gay men and lesbians who lead "perfectly boring lives."

Speaking haltingly and softly, Shepard seemed an unlikely candidate for the speakers' circuit. But the social studies teacher said, "I can't help Matthew any more. I'm a mom with an opinion and a story, and I'll be telling
it as long as people are willing to listen."

Asked how she deals with her feelings about the two men who killed her son, she said, "I choose not to go there. I choose not to let them kill me,
too. They just don't exist any more."

No protesters appeared at the lecture hall where Shepard spoke, but someone defaced fliers posted on campus advertising the event ? writing threats to gay students.

Christopher Sterling, student coordinator of the school's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Center, said there are no indications of a widespread campaign against homosexual students on the campus. "It's probably just a couple of individuals doing something stupid," he said.

The incident has not yet been reported, so no investigation has been launched, said Annette Fernie, the school's assistant director of public information. "Defacing those fliers would fall under at least two categories
of misconduct," she said.

Salt Lake Tribune, March 23, 2000
P. O. Box 867, Salt Lake City, UT, 84110
(Fax 801-257-8950) (E-MAIL: letters@sltrib.com)
(http://www.sltrib.com)

Editorial: Civil Union in Vermont

By moving toward an acceptance of same-sex unions, Vermont's legislature
will offend many. Critics will argue that tampering with the prevailing view
of marriage may weaken an institution that promotes social stability. Our view, though, is that Vermont is moving in the right direction, one that in the long run will promote stability, and common decency as well.

The question of gay unions ? Vermont stops short of the word marriage ? is first and foremost one of tolerance and basic rights. At present, gay partners may share love and life for years but suffer officially imposed indignities that heterosexual couples would find intolerable. They face obstacles in bequeathing one another property. Their claims to decide on their loved one's medical treatment and burial procedures are not respected.
They may even be denied hospital visits.

There is a social-policy argument, too, for sanctioning gay unions. Government has an interest in fostering social stability. People in caring lifelong partnerships have a psychological and economic safety net: If they fall ill, grow depressed or lose a job there is someone there to help them.

Opponents of gay marriage argue that it devalues an ancient tradition and subverts a contemporary consensus on what marriage means. But traditions evolve ? witness the eclipse in this country of arranged marriages and wives' dependent status ? and in truth no consensus exists. Some say marriage is about children; but plenty of couples have no kids, and plenty of singles do have them. Some say marriage is a union before God; but many regard it as secular. To Catholics, divorce is sinful; yet one in two marriages ends in dissolution, sanctioned by the state.

Vermont's Senate and governor still have to act; even if they do, Vermont is only one state; and many advocates will say that endorsing "civil unions" but not marriage codifies gays' second-class status. We are still in the early stages of a long debate, as society gradually comes to terms with an open acceptance of gays, and history may judge last week's vote in the Vermont House to have been a relatively small step. But it will be judged, we think, to have been a healthy one.

Denver Post, March 22, 2000
650 15th Street, Denver, CO, 80202
(Fax 303-820-1369) (E-MAIL: Letters@denverpost.com)
(http://www.denverpost.com)
"DEAR GOVERNOR OWENS'
REGGIE RIVERS

Dear Gov. Bill Owens:

I'm writing to you because you're the only one who can stop this.

You're undoubtedly aware that the Colorado House of Representatives has approved a bill that will make sure homosexual marriages are never recognized. The Colorado Senate is days away from passing the measure as well. You've said in the past that you would sign a same-sex marriage ban if it made it to your desk, but I'm asking you to reconsider. You seem to be a fair and conscientious man. You seem to be willing to try to do what's best for Colorado, even if it means upsetting your Republican constituents. You've taken a stand on schools and on guns. Now I'm asking you to take a stand on fairness.

Signing this into law would be easy for you. You'll get plenty of pats on the back, because a lot of Coloradans feel that homosexuality is a sin; they don't want to sanction same-sex unions and the very thought of two homosexuals together disgusts them.

You may share some or all of those feelings, governor, but it doesn't matter.

We don't need to argue about whether homosexuals are disgusting sinners seeking sanction because that's not the issue.

In writing today, I'm asking you to think beyond your personal

religious
beliefs, beyond your discomfort and beyond your disgust to see this issue for
what it really is. I met you at an economics luncheon last year, so I know
that you're a practical man who likes practical answers.

Gov. Owens, simply put, the state has no compelling interest in stopping
two gay people from marrying. In fact, the opposite is true; the state has a
affirmative responsibility to either allow gay people to marry or to create a
similar type of union that would confer to them the same rights, privileges
and responsibilities of married people.

The reason: Everyone has a right to equal access to the law.

Here's the situation, governor: We've created a category of law that
heterosexual people can access quickly and easily. There are automatic
inheritance rights for a surviving spouse, the right to add a spouse to
corporate medical coverage, visitation rights in hospitals, decision-making
authority in medical emergencies, provisions for the division of property in
a divorce, alimony, etc.

Whether they got married in a chapel, a synagogue, someone's backyard, in
Las Vegas or on a television show, any heterosexual couple can tap into this
body of law by simply buying a $30 marriage license.

A homosexual couple may spend $1,000 or more drafting a will, a living
trust, a durable medical power of attorney, and a partnership contract just
to access the very same laws. Gov. Owens, this is simple, obvious
discrimination. If someone proposed similar pricing on the basis of race,
religion, weight or age, you'd never stand for it. You'd veto the law in a
heartbeat, because you know it would be unfair and unconstitutional.

But because it involves a group that makes many people uneasy, we're
willing to maintain this type of discrimination against gay people.

Governor, this isn't an issue of legalizing homosexuality; it's already
legal. It's not even an issue of sanctioning homosexuality; gay people
already can access most of these laws. This is about providing equal access
to everyone at the same price and with the same ease.

Right now, it's already illegal for homosexuals to get married in this
state, but if you sign this bill into law, you're affirming that Colorado
will continue this discrimination even if another state decides to end it.

Gov. Owens, I'm asking you to do the right thing, the fair thing, the
courageous thing. Veto this bill.

? Former Denver Broncos player Reggie Rivers (rrivers@denverlink.com)
writes Wednesdays on The Post op-ed page and is a talk host on KHOW Radio
(630 AM, weekdays from 3 to 7 p.m.).

Daytona Beach News-Journal, March 21, 2000
901 6th St., Daytona Beach, FL, 32015
(Fax 904-258-8465) (E-MAIL: letters@news-jrnl.com)

Editorial: Praise for gay-rights forum

Churches that step forward to support gays and lesbians possess great

courage.

Hope Metropolitan Church showed that courage Saturday as host for a forum on same-sex partnerships.

As a litany of surveys show, most Americans oppose same-sex marriages. And too many of their churches openly promote their anti- gay sentiment.

Those regressive views are unfortunate because same-sex marriages pose no threat to more traditional heterosexual unions. Gays and lesbians can have relationships that are just as committed and functional as straight ones.

Robbing same-sex couples of legal marital status deprives each partner of essential rights, such as health and tax benefits and inheritances, afforded partners in other unions.

The forum, sponsored by a support group for friends and families of gays and lesbians, came amid a whirlwind of legal action on same-sex marriage. A bill is moving through the Vermont Legislature that would legitimize "civil marriages." California voters last week passed a referendum banning same-sex marriages.

Events like the one at Hope Metropolitan Church can help change public opinion and the law so that gay and lesbian couples are treated equally.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, March 23, 2000
Box 947, Pittsburgh, PA, 15230
(Fax 412-263-2014) (E-MAIL: letters@post-gazette.com)
(http://www.post-gazette.com/)

Gore wouldn't rush into banning openly gay troops

BY ERIC ROSENBERG, HEARST NEWSPAPERS

Although Al Gore pledged that if elected president he would end the ban on gays serving openly in the military, he would not issue an immediate, sweeping order to achieve that goal, a key aide said yesterday.

Instead, Gore would move more deliberately, opening talks with senior military officers and members of Congress who have resisted such a change, said Leon Fuerth, the vice president's national security adviser. "We are not really talking about an executive order," Fuerth told reporters, referring to a far-reaching rule that a president can impose unilaterally. "We are talking about a presidential action to enter into a dialogue with people who are concerned about this."

Fuerth said Gore understands the military's arguments for not allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly, namely that such a practice could erode morale and disrupt so-called "unit cohesion," or how troops interact on a daily basis. Gore "grasps how complicated this thing is for the military," Fuerth said.

"But he also believes that the military has the leadership capable of handling this issue in a better way. He's made a commitment to change the policy."

The current Pentagon policy on homosexuals, dubbed "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue," was put into effect after a bruising battle among President Clinton, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Congress in 1993. Under

the
policy, homosexual activity is banned in the military, but gays and lesbians
may serve as long as they keep quiet about their sexual orientation and aren't caught engaged in homosexual acts.

Commanders may not inquire about a service member's sexual orientation unless they have "credible information" that the member engages in homosexual
conduct. Recently the Pentagon issued new guidelines to try to stem continuing harassment of gay troops.

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: LGBT Activists List <Doug.Case@sdsu.edu> (LGBT Activists List <Doug.Case@sdsu.edu> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:24-MAR-2000 01:41:37.00

SUBJECT: [lgbt-politics] Gore wouldn't rush into banning openly gay troops

TO: queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu (queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: lgbt-politics@egroups.com (lgbt-politics@egroups.com [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, March 23, 2000
(http://www.post-gazette.com/)

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To Submit a Newsclipping or Press Release, send it to the moderator at:
lgbt-politics@eGroups.com

To Unsubscribe, send a blank message to:
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THE ROAD NOT TAKEN (THANK GOD!)
Listings, turn ons & guides to gay friendly hotels, resorts, etc.
Gay/Lesbian/Bi - click to connect to Planet Out.
http://click.egroups.com/1/2331/5/_/332436/_/953879881/

eGroups.com home: http://www.egroups.com/group/lgbt-politics
http://www.egroups.com - Simplifying group communications

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: LGBT Activists List <Doug.Case@sdsu.edu> (LGBT Activists List <Doug.Case@sdsu.edu> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-MAR-2000 14:52:22.00

SUBJECT: [lgbt-politics] Text of Cohen's Statement and DOD Report Summary

TO: queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu (queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: lgbt-politics@egroups.com (lgbt-politics@egroups.com [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

CC: editor@gaywire.net (editor@gaywire.net [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

CC: GLB-PRESS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM (GLB-PRESS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
Department of Defense, March 24, 2000
http://www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/00report.htm
SECRETARY COHEN CALLS FOR ACTION PLAN TO REDUCE HARASSMENT
Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen announced today that he is setting up a working group of senior leaders from the services to draft an action plan focusing on the measures necessary to address the problem of harassment based on perceived sexual orientation. Following is the complete text of the memorandum he sent today to the services:
"On March 16, the Office of the Inspector General, DoD, provided me with the 'Report on the Military Environment With Respect to the Homosexual Conduct Policy.' I had asked that this assessment be conducted in order to evaluate the climate at representative military installations in each Service with regard to our policy on homosexual conduct. I asked that the Inspector General include in the review an assessment of the extent to which harassment of servicemembers based on perceived or alleged homosexuality may occur or be tolerated, as well as the extent to which disparaging speech concerning sexual orientation may occur or be tolerated. The report is based on a survey of more than 70,000 service members worldwide. A copy of the report is attached for your review.
"The Inspector General's report convinces me that additional actions are necessary to address the problem of harassment of service members who are alleged or perceived to be homosexual. Over one-third of respondents

participating in the survey reported that over the past year they had either
witnessed or experienced some form of harassment based on perceived homosexuality. Although the most frequent type of harassment identified was
offensive speech, a small but significant percentage of respondents reported
that more serious matters were involved. In most cases, the harassment was not reported to the chain of command.

"We have no way of knowing the extent to which the results of this survey
reflect a larger societal issue. Nonetheless, we simply cannot tolerate harassment in the Armed Forces. I know that you share my view that harassment of our service members for any reason seriously undermines the good order and discipline that is critical to an effective fighting force. The leadership of each Service must continue to work to ensure that everyone
in the Armed Forces understands that harassment, whether based on race, religion, gender, perceived sexual orientation, or any other basis, is unacceptable.

"We have taken a number of steps in the past year designed to improve implementation of the homosexual conduct policy. In August 1999, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness reissued guidelines reiterating our policy regarding investigations of threats against or harassment of service members based on alleged homosexuality. That guidance,
widely disseminated, is intended to ensure that service members feel free to
report crimes and harassment free from fear of harm, reprisal, or inappropriate response, and that commanders take appropriate action to hold those who engage in threatening or harassing conduct accountable. The leadership of each of the Services also issued a strong statement to the field in December 1999 that harassment for any reason, including harassment based on perceived sexual orientation, will not be tolerated and that commanders are expected to take prompt, appropriate action in cases of harassment. The report shows that military leaders must do more to make it clear that harassment based on sexual orientation violates military values.

"Also in August 1999, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness asked that the Inspectors General of each of the Services include,
as an item of specific interest in their inspections, review of the training
provided commanders, attorneys, and investigators concerning how homosexual conduct cases should be handled. More broadly, each of the Services undertook a comprehensive review and revision of the training materials used
to educate all service members about the homosexual conduct policy. I approved those training materials on February 1 and directed that they be incorporated promptly into Service training programs. The Army has undertaken a special effort to ensure that every member of the Army receives
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"The Inspector General's report makes clear, however, that there is still

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"I request that the Under Secretary of the Air Force, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower & Reserve Affairs) and the General Counsel of
the Navy be made available to serve on this working group, and that the Under
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"I appreciate your assistance in this important endeavor."

? The IG's review, entitled "Report on the Military Environment with Respect to the Homosexual Conduct Policy," No. D-2000-101, is available on line at http://www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/00report.htm

Department of Defense, March 16, 2000
http://www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/00101sum.htm
SUMMARY
Department of Defense, Office of the Inspector General
Audit Report on the Military Environment With Respect to the Homosexual Conduct
Policy, Report No. D-2000-101

On December 13, 1999, the Secretary of Defense tasked the Office of the Inspector General, DoD, to assess the environment at representative installations with respect to the application of the homosexual conduct policy that has been in place since 1993 and is commonly referred to as the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. The Secretary requested that the evaluation
include:

? a review of the extent to which the harassment of Service members based
on
perceived or alleged homosexuality may occur;

? an assessment of the extent to which disparaging speech or expression with
respect to sexual orientation may occur; and

? an assessment of the extent to which disparaging speech or expression with
respect to sexual orientation is tolerated.

Representatives from the Office of the Inspector General, DoD, surveyed

Service members from January 24 through February 11, 2000. We randomly selected 38 installations worldwide. At each location, we surveyed active duty Service members from randomly selected units, and also surveyed active duty Service members assigned to selected Navy ships and submarines homeported in the United States. The survey questionnaires were designed and processed with emphasis on ensuring the anonymity of all respondents. We collected 71,570 usable surveys.

The primary objective was to assess the environment within DoD with respect to the application of the homosexual conduct policy. We assessed the extent to which disparaging speech or expression with respect to homosexuality occurred and was tolerated. We also assessed the extent to which harassment of Service members based on perceived or alleged homosexuality occurred and was tolerated. Additionally, we assessed whether Service members had been trained on the homosexual conduct policy and whether they understood the policy.

Regarding the environment at the surveyed locations, 80 percent of the respondents stated they had heard offensive speech, derogatory names, jokes, or remarks about homosexuals in the last 12 months. Eighty-five percent believed such comments were tolerated to some extent. Thirty-seven percent of the Service members responded that they had witnessed or experienced an event or behavior toward a Service member that they considered to be harassment based on perceived homosexuality. About 5 percent believed that harassment based on perceived homosexuality was tolerated by someone in their installation or ship chain of command, and 10 percent believed it was tolerated by other unit members. About 78 percent of the respondents indicated they would feel free to report harassment of perceived homosexuals.

Overall, 97 percent of the respondents believed they had at least some understanding of the homosexual conduct policy. Approximately 57 percent of the respondents stated they had not had training on the policy. Finally, 50 percent of the respondents stated the policy was moderately or very effective at preventing or reducing harassment; 46 percent stated it was slightly or not effective; and 4 percent did not provide a response.

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RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Fenceberry@aol.com (Fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-MAR-2000 02:02:10.00

SUBJECT: Articles 3.24.00.11

TO: "undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov ("undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
1. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE Text of Defense Secretary Cohen's statement about
his action plan to reduce harassment in the military
2. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE Summary section of Defense Dept.'s report
3. LAWRENCE (KS) JOURNAL-WORLD Film about gay life in Kansas makes it into
Toronto film festival
4. SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY NEW TIMES Letter from Articles reader Richard
Kinz: Prop. 22 Result Isn't Surprising

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Department of Defense, March 16, 2000
http://www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/00101sum.htm
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Lawrence Journal World, March 23, 2000
Box 888, Lawrence, KS, 66044-0888
(Fax 785-843-4512) (E-Mail letters@ljworld.com)
Film about gay life makes it into Toronto film festival
A Lawrence filmmaker uses a hometown controversy and personal interviews to examine discrimination against homosexuals.

By Jan Biles, Journal-World Arts Editor

After having received rejection letters from Sundance and South by Southwest, Lawrence filmmaker Tim DePaepe learned recently that his documentary "Shades of Gray" has been tapped for Toronto's Inside Out Film Festival in May.

The film is about gay life in Kansas, and includes efforts by a group of Lawrence residents in the mid-1990s to get the words "sexual orientation" added to the city's human rights ordinance.

Before it goes to Toronto, "Shades of Gray" will be screened at 7 p.m. April 1 at the Kansas City Filmmakers Jubilee 2000 at the Tivoli Manor Square Theatre, 4050 Pa., Kansas City, Mo.

"It was 1992, and I was standing in my girlfriend's kitchen and was listening to an NPR show about gays in the military," DePaepe said, recalling what jolted him into doing a film about the subject. "I thought if they realized there were gay people in Kansas, they'd have to deal with it."

Two years had past since DePaepe had made his last film, "Quiet Passages," a documentary on Japanese-American war brides that was shown on 22 PBS stations and was a finalist for the Cine International and American Film and Video Assn. film festivals.

He started filming "Shades of Gray" in March 1994 using "short ends," or film left over from other projects. He was able to shoot one roll of film, but didn't have enough money to get it processed.

Three months later, though, his financial woes were pretty much over. DePaepe received a $3,500 National Endowment for the Arts grant, a film grant from Fuji and a $5,000 grant from the Kansas Arts Commission. Then a year later, acclaimed independent filmmaker Michael Moore gave DePaepe $2,000 to help finance the film.

Additionally, producer Edward Stencel of Tilingo Productions and co-producer David-Michael Allen kicked in some money and members of the Kansas City-based Independent Filmmakers' Coalition provided some services.

The Phelps question

"Shades of Gray" examines the lives of five homosexuals ? three men and two women ? living in Kansas. Also interviewed is the Rev. Fred Phelps, the state's leading gay rights opponent.

"I struggled for a long time with the Phelps question because he's gotten so much exposure in the media. I didn't want to pay him any lip service at all," he said.

"I had to ask myself if I was making a film for Kansas or for the rest of the world to see. I believe there is discrimination in this part of life, and Fred Phelps is a part of this discrimination."

In addition to being shot at Phelps' home in Topeka, other locations included Hoyt, Wichita, Scammon, Haysville, Topeka and Lawrence, including scenes in city hall and The Granada. The film uses footage of city commission meetings supplied by Channel 6 and aerial shots of Lawrence and

the countryside.

The film's action is set against the music of The Rainmakers, a Kansas City-based rock band.

On to the next project

DaPaepe said he wasn't surprised "Shades of Gray" wasn't chosen by Sundance, Slam Dance, Rotterdam, Berlin, Los Angeles Independent or South by Southwest film festivals. The number of independent films has skyrocketed in the past decade.

"In 1981, there were 20 films festivals in the United States. Now, there's 2,000," he said. "In 1981, there were 70 or 80 independent films made a year. Now, at Sundance alone, there are 3,000 submissions and they only take 18 films."

But those numbers don't keep DePaepe from following his muse. He is working now on "A.B.," a documentary about artist Albert Bloch, who taught at KU and was the only American member of The Blue Rider, Germany's most important group of artists in the 20th-century.

DePaepe is working on the film with Scott Bloch, Albert's grandson.

"It's about one-third through," he said. "We're looking for the rest of the money."

SCREENING IN KC
What: "Shades of Gray," a film directed by Lawrence filmmaker Tim DePaepe.
When: 7 p.m. April 1.
Where: Kansas City Filmmakers Jubilee 2000, Tivoli Manor Square Theatre, 4050 Pa., Kansas City, Mo.

San Luis Obispo County New Times, March 23 - March 30, 2000
197 Santa Rosa Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405
(Fax: 805-546-8641) (E-Mail: mail@newtimes-slo.com)
(http://www.newtimesslo.com)

Letter: Prop. 22 Result Isn't Surprising

Am I surprised by the overwhelming passage of Prop. 22? No, not at all. As the proponents constantly reminded voters, opposite-gender marriage is a centuries-old tradition and needs to be protected; much like the ages-old traditions of slavery, demeaning women and discrimination (and worse) against anyone considered "different."

Am I disappointed? No, not really when I realize the many positives which resulted from this issue: making folks aware that gays and lesbians really exist and are everywhere and constitute families; gaining the support of the major media in the state and nation and that of political figures and of many churches. That support and awareness is very gratifying.

What is disappointing, though, is the tremendous amount of money spent by both sides on what was really a non-issue: $8 million by the supporters of Prop. 22, including a check for $440,000 ? a quarter of its annual budget ?

from Helping Hands, a rural Georgia Christian charity; and $5.5 million by the opponents. It hurts when I see the dire needs all over the nation, and the world for that matter, which could have been well served by that money.

The proposition's author, Sen. Pete Knight, promised that the initiative was not to discriminate against gays or to deny us any civil rights. We look forward to his support in our quest for the rights and protections enjoyed by all other segments of society. Bills are now before the Legislature and more will come. It all takes time, but it is only just to include all citizens in our country as equals.

? Richard Kinz, Atascadero, CA [losrobles@tcsn.net]

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: LGBT Activists List <Doug.Case@sdsu.edu> (LGBT Activists List <Doug.Case@sdsu.edu> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-MAR-2000 14:56:29.00

SUBJECT: [lgbt-politics] Pentagon says anti-gay bias rife in ranks

TO: queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu (queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: lgbt-politics@egroups.com (lgbt-politics@egroups.com [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

CC: fenceberry@aol.com (fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
The Houston Chronicle appearing Saturday, March 25, 2000

By John C. Henry-Houston Chronicle Washington Bureau

Pentagon says anti-gay bias rife in ranks: Beating death lead to survey

WASHINGTON - The nation's military harbors widespread anti gay behavior - including offensive language and threats and assaults - and some fear retaliation if they speak up about offenses against homosexuals in uniform, according to a Pentagon survey released Friday.

Saying he was surprised by the survey findings, Secretary of Defense William Cohen immediately launched a four-month emergency effort to plan how to combat anti-gay harassment in the armed forces.

The survey weas conducted by the Defense Department's Inspector General in the wake of the July 1999 bludgeoning death of a gay army recruit. Of the 71,570 military personnel surveyed, almost half said they believe the Clinton administration "don't ask, don't tell" policy towards gays in the military is not working.

Although 37 percent acknowledged witnessing or being the target of anti-gay activity, a Pentagon spokesman said the survey is not a sign that the department is having difficulty with the controversial policy of tolerance toward gays who keep their sexual orientation private.

"I wouldn't agree that the department has had a great deal of difficulty with this program," said Frank Rush, a deputy undersecretary who oversees planning and personnel. "I think (the survey) indicates that more work needs to be done in this area."

Rush said the issue is not the policy, but leadership. "It's basically a matter of good order and dicipline that has to be maintained in the military services," he said.

While most military personnel said they would feel free to report harassment against gays, 22 percent of those surveyed expressed reluctance, saying their supervisors or other unit members probably would retaliate against the complaintant or the person being harassed.

Eighty-five percent of those curveyed said they beleive anti-gay comments are tolerated by military leaders. Fewer than 50 percent said they had received training on the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

Forty-six percent of those surveyed said the Defense Department policy towards gays is not effective at curbing harassment. About 50 percent said the policy was at least moderately effective. The rest had no opinion.

The most common anti-gay activity, especially among younger enlisted troops, is "offensive speech, derogatory names, jokes or remarks about homosexuals," the inspector general reported.

The survey - which represented a cross section of the nation's 1.4 million military personnel - included interviews with Army units at Fort Hood near Killeen and Air Force personnel at Lackland and Randolph Air Force bases in San Antonio.

Several hours before the survey was made public, Cohen announced creation of a committee of military and civilian officials to draft a plan to ensure compliance "from top to bottom" with the policy pushed by President Clinton in 1993. The committee's reccomendations are due July 31.

"We've got a lot of work to do to make sure the program works," Cohen said at a breakfast meeting with reporters. "There has not been an effective communication of the policy, and there's been insufficient education about the policy itself."

Cohen said he was "surprised at the numbers" of military personnel who said they had seen some form of anti-gay harassment. "The incidents and use of abusive language are more widespread than I anticipated," he said.

In a letter to military chiefs and secretaries of the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines, Cohen said the survey "shows that military leaders must do more to make it clear that harassment based on sexual orientation violates military values."

Cohen ordered the survey in December after Army Pvt. Calvin Glover, 19 was sentenced to life in prison for the bludgeoning death of Pvt. Barry Winchell,21, at Fort Cambell, KY. Testimony at Glover's trial indicated that Winchell had been taunted regularly with anti-gay slurs and that his complaints were ignored by superiors.

Immediately after the conviction, Clinton raised questions about how the policy was being implemented.

Dubbed "don't ask, don't tell," the administration's policy says gays and lesbians may serve in the military if they keep their sexual orientation to themselves. The policy, which was approved after a heated congressional

fight in 1993, still prohibits homosexuals from serving. The uniformed services in recent years have increased the number of discharges based on sexual orientation.

"For six years the uniformed leaders have been missin in action when it comes to stopping anti-gay harassment and why it is such a large problem," said Michelle Benecke, executive director of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, an advocacy group for gays in the military.

"Ultimately, the key to stopping harassment and other violations of 'don't ask, don't tell' violence against gays in the military is leadership and accountability," she said. "Unless they take immediate steps, someone else is going to get hurt."

Also Appearing Saturday, March 25, 2000 Houston Chronicle
By Robert Dibrell / Chronicle
Anti-Gay Harassment
a Defense Department Survey found widespread anti-gay speech and harassment in the nation's armed forces. The survey indicates armed forces personnel have witnessed or been subject to the following behavior or events as the result of perceived homosexuality. Some repondents witnessed more than one form of harassment:
88.9% Offensive speech
34.7% Offensive or hostile gestures
19.8% Threats or intimidation
15.2% Graffiti
9.5% Disciplinary action or punishment when others were not
9.0% Physical assault
8.9% Limiting training of career opportunities
7.6% Vandalism of service members' property
Source: Interviews with 23,603 military personnel at 38 military installations or aboard naval vessels worldwide by the Office of Inspector General, Department of Defense.

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You have a voice mail message waiting for you at iHello.com:
http://click.egroups.com/1/2377/5/_/332436/_/954014096/

eGroups.com home: http://www.egroups.com/group/lgbt-politics
http://www.egroups.com - Simplifying group communications

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> (Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-MAR-2000 15:46:39.00

SUBJECT: NC12275: (original documents) Military to reduce anti-gay harassment

TO: Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> (Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
Department of Defense, March 24, 2000
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"We have no way of knowing the extent to which the results of this survey reflect a larger societal issue. Nonetheless, we simply cannot tolerate harassment in the Armed Forces. I know that you share my view that harassment of our service members for any reason seriously undermines the good order and discipline that is critical to an effective fighting force. The leadership of each Service must continue to work to ensure that everyone in the Armed Forces understands that harassment, whether based on race, religion, gender, perceived sexual orientation, or any other basis, is unacceptable.

"We have taken a number of steps in the past year designed to improve implementation of the homosexual conduct policy. In August 1999, the

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness reissued guidelines reiterating our policy regarding investigations of threats against or harassment of service members based on alleged homosexuality. That guidance, widely disseminated, is intended to ensure that service members feel free to report crimes and harassment free from fear of harm, reprisal, or inappropriate response, and that commanders take appropriate action to hold those who engage in threatening or harassing conduct accountable. The leadership of each of the Services also issued a strong statement to the field in December 1999 that harassment for any reason, including harassment based on perceived sexual orientation, will not be tolerated and that commanders are expected to take prompt, appropriate action in cases of harassment. The report shows that military leaders must do more to make it clear that harassment based on sexual orientation violates military values.

"Also in August 1999, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness asked that the Inspectors General of each of the Services include, as an item of specific interest in their inspections, review of the training provided commanders, attorneys, and investigators concerning how homosexual conduct cases should be handled. More broadly, each of the Services undertook a comprehensive review and revision of the training materials used to educate all service members about the homosexual conduct policy. I approved those training materials on February 1 and directed that they be incorporated promptly into Service training programs. The Army has undertaken a special effort to ensure that every member of the Army receives training on this policy by April 2000.

"The Inspector General's report makes clear, however, that there is still more to do to fully address these issues. In that regard, I am establishing a working group, composed of senior military and civilian representatives from each of the Services, [to review the Inspector General's report and to draft action plan that can be provided to each of the Services. This draft action plan should focus on the measures necessary to address the problem of harassment based on perceived sexual orientation, and the other issues raised by the results of the Inspector General's survey. The draft plan should concentrate on Department-wide measures, although it may contain Service-specific items as well.

"I request that the Under Secretary of the Air Force, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower & Reserve Affairs) and the General Counsel of the Navy be made available to serve on this working group, and that the Under Secretary of the Air Force serve as chair. I also request that each Service designate a General/Flag officer from their respective services to join this group. The group should report to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness by July 31, 2000.

"I appreciate your assistance in this important endeavor."

? The IG's review, entitled "Report on the Military Environment with Respect to the Homosexual Conduct Policy," No. D-2000-101, is available on line at http://www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/00report.htm

Department of Defense, March 16, 2000
http://www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/00101sum.htm
SUMMARY
Department of Defense, Office of the Inspector General
Audit Report on the Military Environment With Respect to the Homosexual Conduct
Policy, Report No. D-2000-101

On December 13, 1999, the Secretary of Defense tasked the Office of the Inspector General, DoD, to assess the environment at representative installations with respect to the application of the homosexual conduct policy that has been in place since 1993 and is commonly referred to as the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. The Secretary requested that the evaluation include:

? a review of the extent to which the harassment of Service members based on perceived or alleged homosexuality may occur;

? an assessment of the extent to which disparaging speech or expression with respect to sexual orientation may occur; and

? an assessment of the extent to which disparaging speech or expression with respect to sexual orientation is tolerated.

Representatives from the Office of the Inspector General, DoD, surveyed Service members from January 24 through February 11, 2000. We randomly selected 38 installations worldwide. At each location, we surveyed active duty Service members from randomly selected units, and also surveyed active duty Service members assigned to selected Navy ships and submarines homeported in the United States. The survey questionnaires were designed and processed with emphasis on ensuring the anonymity of all respondents. We collected 71,570 usable surveys.

The primary objective was to assess the environment within DoD with respect to the application of the homosexual conduct policy. We assessed the extent to which disparaging speech or expression with respect to homosexuality occurred and was tolerated. We also assessed the extent to which harassment of Service members based on perceived or alleged homosexuality occurred and was tolerated. Additionally, we assessed whether Service members had been trained on the homosexual conduct policy and whether they understood the policy.

Regarding the environment at the surveyed locations, 80 percent of the respondents stated they had heard offensive speech, derogatory names, jokes, or remarks about homosexuals in the last 12 months. Eighty-five percent believed such comments were tolerated to some extent. Thirty-seven percent of the Service members responded that they had witnessed or experienced an event or behavior toward a Service member that they considered to be harassment based on perceived homosexuality. About 5 percent believed that harassment based on perceived homosexuality was tolerated by someone in their installation or ship chain of command, and 10 percent believed it was tolerated by other unit members. About 78 percent of the respondents indicated they would feel free to report harassment of perceived homosexuals. Overall, 97 percent of the respondents believed they had at least some understanding of the homosexual conduct policy. Approximately 57 percent of the respondents stated they had not had training on the policy. Finally, 50 percent of the respondents stated the policy was moderately or very effective at preventing or reducing harassment; 46 percent stated it was slightly or not effective; and 4 percent did not provide a response.

? To obtain copies of Office of the Assistant Inspector General for Auditing Reports, contact the Secondary Reports Distribution Unit of the Analysis, Planning and Technical Support Directorate at (703) 604-8937 or FAX (703) 604-8932.

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Fenceberry@aol.com (Fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-MAR-2000 19:19:35.00

SUBJECT: Articles 3.25.00.3

TO: "undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov ("undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
1. LOS ANGELES TIMES Four Dr. Laura letters
2. PASADENA STAR-NEWS Letter: Don't show your face if you're gay or lesbian ? at least not on the cover of TV Guide!
3. DES MOINES REGISTER Letter: Vermont got it right
4. CHICAGO TRIBUNE Editorial: Put some force behind 'Don't Ask'
5. THE GUARDIAN (England) TV: Lesbians from beyond the grave (Xena & Gabrielle)
6. ASSOCIATED PRESS Reform Rabbis Mull Same-sex Unions
7. BEACHWOOD (OH) SUN PRESS Columnist who said "Don't pee in my face" about
partner ordinance gives Fenceberry readers an unwitting tip of the hat

Los Angeles Times, March 25, 2000
Times Mirror Square, Los Angeles, CA, 90053
(Fax 213-237-7679 or 213-237-5319) (E-MAIL: letters@latimes.com)
(http://www.latimes.com)
Letters: The 'Natural Mad Uproar' Over Laura Schlessinger

As a proud and gay physician, I attended the rally held against Laura Schlessinger ("Plans for Dr. Laura Protested at Studio," by Brian Lowry, March 22). And what kept swirling through my mind as I heard about this physiologist (one who most likely missed the units on the heart and the brain) was the veritably incomprehensible audacity of someone who calls herself a Jew continually ranting about "biological errors" and implying that
some of God's creations are inferior to others.

The God I worship does not make errors. Even you, Laura, are an example
of perfection: Your existence teaches me not to hate but to shout back and be strong.

Doesn't this strangely smack of Berlin around 70 years ago? Where are you, Hollywood stars and elected officials? Won't you help us?
? MARK KATZ, Pacific Palisades

Dr. Laura already reaches millions of people each day through her radio show. Her comments on gays and lesbians make up only a fraction of the show's general dialogue. Assuming that the television show will focus on the
same broad range of issues as the radio show, how big is the threat really, assuming the show even succeeds at all?

If you don't like the show, don't watch it. And let the ratings

decide.
? MARY NELSON, Santa Ana

The protests shouldn't have come as a surprise. Rearrange the letters in
"Dr. Laura" and "Paramount" and you'll get "Natural Mad Uproar." Paramount execs must have done their own rearranging of letters, though. They saw "Laura Schlessinger" as "Cash Releasing Slur."
? ERIC FRASE, Los Feliz

In our politically correct culture, tolerance is only a one-way street. Bashing Christian conservatives and Catholic beliefs is a 1st Amendment right. Laura Schlessinger and any conservative expressing their views about
homosexuality are considered "bigots" with hateful speech.
? WILHELMINA LeBOFF, Glendale

Pasadena Star-News, March 24, 2000
525 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, CA, 91109
(Fax 818-578-6460)
(Online Mailer: http://www.newschoice.com/newspapers/LosAngeles/Pasadena/)
Letter: Objectionable cover

The cover on your March 5-11 TV guide showed a picture of two women advertising a movie debuting on Sunday, "If these walls could talk 2."

Homosexuality in any form is a crime against society, it's debasing and against the growth of the human race! When such things fill our airwaves, first we tolerate, then endure, then embrace. I for one am saying, no more!

Our children pick up and use the TV guide. There were many other choices
to use on its cover.

Shame on the people who made the decision to air that type of program and
shame on your cover choice!
? SALLY ELLIS, SAN GABRIEL

DES MOINES REGISTER, March 25, 2000
Box 957, Des Moines, Ia., 50304
(Fax 515-286-2511) (E-MAIL: letters@news.dmreg.com)
Letter: VERMONT GOT IT RIGHT

The Vermont House is to be congratulated for its forward-thinking and revolutionary action. The House passed a remarkable bill allowing "civil unions" for homosexuals, allowing, among other things, joint tax returns, medical decision-making powers, and inheritance rights for life partners.

There is no reason two people who have chosen to spend their lives together, whatever sex they might be, should not have these basic rights. Let us all hope that the Vermont Senate is as reasonable and that other states, including Iowa, follow in Vermont's footsteps soon. Doing so would help to create the truly just and equal society that nearly everyone wants, and that everyone certainly deserves.
? Sean Courtney, 8103 Warren Dr., Des Moines, Iowa 50320-6864

Chicago Tribune, March 25, 2000
435 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL, 60611
(Fax 312-222-2598) (E-MAIL: ctc-tribletter@tribune.com)
(http://www.chicagotribune.com)

Editorial: Put some force behind 'Don't Ask'

Six years after it was put into effect, the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy with regard to gays in uniform has proven to be more than ineffectual. It has made things worse.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network recently released its sixth annual report on the implementation of the policy, and it documented 968 incidents of anti-gay harassment in 1999, including one murder in addition to assaults, death threats and verbal taunts. That's nearly 150 percent more cases than in 1998, itself a record year for such incidents.

In August, a month after Pfc. Barry Winchell, who was gay, was murdered at a Kentucky army base, the Pentagon announced that anti-gay harassment would not be tolerated and launched some training programs. Last month, Defense Secretary William Cohen announced still more training programs.

Enough with the training. It's time for the Pentagon to put some teeth in its own policy, and punish violators as firmly as it disciplines anyone who willfully disobeys a military directive.

Nearly 500 of the incidents reported in 1999 took place after the Pentagon's announcement in August. More shocking still, reports of harassment at Ft. Campbell continued even after Winchell's murder attracted nationwide media attention. Either the message of 'don't ask' is not getting through to the rank-and-file or it's being ignored.

The two soldiers who killed Winchell were sent to prison, but during the six years 'don't ask' has been in effect no one has been held to account for the policy's manifest failure.

If anything, the evidence points to the policy's being widely ? and willfully ? undermined. Psychologists, chaplains, and inspectors general often berate or turn in gay service members seeking their help. In several instances, especially in the Air Force, witch hunts against suspected gays and lesbians even led to the questioning of parents, siblings and close friends.

Women are especially affected. About 31 percent of all gay-related discharges last year were women, although they make up only 14 percent of the force. In some cases, all that was needed to initiate charges of lesbianism was a rebuff of a male colleague's sexual advance.

In January, Britain joined most other European countries in lifting its ban on gays in the military, but it is unlikely Congress would allow such a change in the United States.

So we are left with 'don't ask, don't tell' as the only option ?one that could be far more effective in protecting the rights of gay personnel if the Pentagon stopped treating it like a guideline and more like an order.

The Guardian, March 25, 2000
119 Farringdon Rd., London EC1 3ER England
(Fax: +44/171/837-2114) (E-Mail: letters@guardian.co.uk)
(http://www.guardian.co.uk)
Channel surfing
Lesbians from beyond the grave
Stuart Jeffries

There was bad news for female viewers who enjoy watching strong women on screen this week, and also for male viewers who like to see scantily clad women get medieval on each other's asses in a non-threatening proto-lesbian context. Disturbingly, you see, Xena the Warrior Princess died. She and her assistant Gabrielle were crucified by the Romans at the end of the last series and left dangling until the start of the new one, which must have been a trial. Might this spell the end for our dalliance with stout-thighed female fighters? Like, is the Xena demographic going to have to feign an interest in Hercules now? Trust me, it'll never work.

When their friend Joxer found the pair, they were frozen to death. Meanwhile, the souls of Xena and Gabrielle were ascending to heaven. For the heavenly sequences, they exchanged metal breastplates, swords, leathery ra-ra skirts and thigh boots for flowing nighties, which, nonetheless, were both amply supported at the bust. The show's costume designers know their viewers well.

As they rose, Xena and Gabrielle were assailed by demons determined to drag them down to hell. The cosmology and ontology in this episode of Xena (Sky 1) bore not an instant's investigation. Eternity, for instance, was referred to as a place - as though one might pass it on the way to Godalming.

One of the demons, Calisto, waylaid Xena in mid-air fisticuffs, though it proved hard for either of them to get much purchase. Calisto was cross because Xena had burned her family to death, ruined her life and forced her to take succour by embracing the dark lord's frankly diabolical masterplan. "You know what I think?" said contrary Xena, pummelling Calisto with an unforgivable disregard for the feelings of the bereaved. "You wanted them to die so that you had a reason to be a bitch." In this series, women do call each other bitch a great deal, which is no way to carry on.

Later, and you mustn't trouble yourself by wondering why, Xena became a devil. She had walked through the divine fire of purification, the imposing lake of what can only be described as water, two commercial breaks and a long plummet straight to hell. She then tried to lure Gabrielle into her sick world. "The love we have," she told Gabrielle in a lovely speech as they floated mid-air poised to smack seven bells out of each other, "is bigger than heaven or hell." As they embraced martially, Xena was a red devil

with
horns and Gabrielle was a blonde in an ivory outfit. Which is about as gay as TV gets.

Down on earth, Joxer had rigged up some soul-sucking contraption that yanked Xena and Gabrielle's spirits back into their bodies. I had some technical and metaphysical issues with this, but it does mean that the rest of the series will revert to type and thus various hirsute men from the horse-drawn era will get filled in by brawny Xena as they so richly deserve.

If all that wasn't enough drama, on The Simpsons (BBC1) Xena was abducted
by a man in green tights. The man, or The Collector as he called himself, turned on a huge magnet, used it to attract Xena's metallic breastplate and flew off in his helicopter to his secret lair with magnet and superhero in tow. At his lair, he put her in a glass-fronted cell between Dr Who and some
other seething superhero whose name eludes me.

This was too much for Xena. She gave tongue to her awful war cry, punched a hole in her prison, hit the Collector repeatedly about the head and
said some very unpleasant things about his masculinity, before running off, hair and skirt flapping angrily in the cartoon breeze. It's good to have her
back!

Associated Press, March 25, 2000
Reform Rabbis Mull Same-sex Unions
By GARY D. ROBERTSON

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) ? Reform Judaism is poised for a vote that could make
it the most influential U.S. religious group to support clergy who perform same-sex unions.

A resolution sanctioning commitment ceremonies is expected to come up at
the Central Conference of American Rabbis convention starting Sunday in Greensboro.

In an unusual step, discussions will be held privately, a sign of the issue's volatility. A similar vote at the group's 1998 convention was dropped to head off potentially divisive debate.

The group's 1,800 members serve at least 1.5 million Reform Jews, the largest and most liberal of Judaism's three major branches in North America.

The resolution, introduced by some female rabbis and endorsed by the conference's resolution committee, reads: "The relationship of a Jewish, same gender couple is worthy of affirmation through appropriate Jewish ritual. In accordance with the principles of Reform Judaism, each rabbi should decide about officiation according to his/her own rabbinic conscience."

Supporters believe rabbis should affirm committed relationships between Jewish gays and lesbians as sacred, just like Jewish marriage. While the conference supports civil same-sex unions and approved openly gay rabbis a decade ago, some homosexuals say they still feel like second-class citizens at temple. The resolution would give religious legitimacy to same-sex

unions.

"For a major religious group to pass a resolution that same-sex unions are worthy of affirmation through appropriate Jewish rituals, it would send a message to them that they are not abnormal," said Rabbi Paul Menitoff, the conference's executive vice president in New York.

Menitoff expects a majority of the 500 rabbis coming to Greensboro will approve the resolution.

"This is not a women's issue or a gay or lesbian issue. This is a human rights issue," said Rabbi Shira Stern, a co-leader of the 275-member Women's Rabbinic Network, which introduced the resolution in January. Stern said the resolution gives rabbis leeway in deciding whether to declare a same-sex union to be a marriage.

"For Jews who have no choice in the matter of sexual identity, we as leaders of the movement must provide them with the religious framework in which to celebrate their union," Stern said.

Opponents of the resolution believe it would disparage rabbis who believe same-sex relationships do not meet criteria for the Jewish concept of "kiddushin," or a sanctified relationship between a Jewish husband and wife.

Moreover, they warn it would alienate Reform Judaism from Israel, where it seeks stronger recognition, and create sharp divisions among rabbis.

Opponents are "not homophobes, we're not gay-bashing. We're not opposed to the dignity and Jewish integrity of gays and lesbians in our midst," said Rabbi Clifford Librach of Temple Sinai in Sharon, Mass.

A possible compromise recognizing the diversity of opinion on the subject within the rabbinate is in the works, members of the Central Conference say.

An alternate resolution backed by Librach and others urges the Reform rabbinate to "strengthen its efforts to seek justice for gays and lesbians in American society" by pushing for civil and political rights for partners, but stops short of sanctioning same-sex unions.

The Torah condemns male homosexual intercourse, but Reform Judaism has been liberal on gay rights, taking into account contemporary understanding of homosexuality and the Jewish values of human dignity and justice.

Many Reform rabbis already have officiated at same-sex ceremonies at synagogues. Librach said he would not, but "would perhaps arrange a celebration of the Jewish integrity of their home."

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, a coalition of 895 Reform congregations, has taken no stand on same-sex religious unions, but has approved resolutions supporting civil unions and nondiscrimination against gays, said UAHC spokeswoman Emily Grotta.

Among other religious groups, the Unitarian Universalist Association, a denomination with about 150,000 members, has officially endorsed decisions by

its clergy to perform same-sex unions. Presbyterian, United Methodist and Episcopal church leaders are expected to take up the issue this year.

Beachwood Sun Press, March 23, 2000
3355 Richmond Road, Beachwood, Ohio 44122-4171
(Fax: 216-464-8816) (E-Mail: sun@sunnews.com)
(http://www.sunnews.com)
The hard-knock life of a politically incorrect columnist (excerpts)
Reflections, by Powell Caesar

In less than three months I will have graced this space in your local Sun newspaper for two years.

I've said on a couple of occasions on this page that there is no such thing as "white truth" or "black truth." There is only "THE" truth.

This has been a harsh reality to some of my readers and a breath of fresh air for others. I guess it depends on which perspective you have. That's why at the end of each column you'll find my e-mail address. It's an opportunity for readers to share their thoughts with me. Each e-mail is personally answered.

Over the nearly 24 months I've had to crank out these columns, e-mails have come fast and furious. This is good for a couple of reasons.

One: Those who sign my paycheck know that readers are reading.

Two: I have been enlightened beyond belief.

With number one out of the way, as yet another public service to you, let's skip to number two. . . . [Recalls two earlier column on other topics]

The issue of same-sex unions remains a hot-button topic.

The e-mail box was flooded on this one, folks.

A while back, Lakewood City Council introduced legislation to extend health and other benefits to unmarried couples if one party was a city employee. This was a prime target of opportunity, so I weighed in on the subject.

I received countless e-mails from across the country from gay-rights activists who went ballistic that a columnist would dare say that same-sex unions aren't the same as heterosexual unions. It seems that some clever devil put the column on the Internet.

On the other side of the street, the vast majority of readers who took the time to write agreed wholeheartedly with the column. .

It goes to show that this issue will be on the radar screen for years to come. . . .

So as I move toward my second year in this space, I'm tickled pink. So many topics, so little space . . .

? Powell Caesar's address is pwc3@ncew.net for-e-mail.

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: John Aravosis <john@wiredstrategies.com> (John Aravosis <john@wiredstrategies.com> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-MAR-2000 13:38:55.00

SUBJECT: THE LIST: Horrific gay murder, CBS Skittish on Laura...

TO: Subscribers <subscribers@wiredstrategies.com> (Subscribers <subscribers@wiredstrategies.com> [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
THE LIST
Gay Politics: Online & With an Edge
March 25, 2000

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1. Horrific anti-gay killing in NYC.
2. NYC CBS affiliate skittish on Laura.
3. GLAAD goes off on Paramount.
4. Military breaks laws on gays.
5. Updates on VT and CA marriage.
6. Quick Web update.

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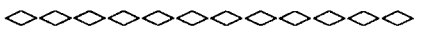
HORRIFIC ANTI-GAY KILLING IN NYC
I simply cannot believe that this story is not buzzing around the Net. I read this, and have to say, I haven't been this angry about an anti-gay hate crime since the first time I read the AP story that Matt Shepard had been found tied to a fence. Last Tuesday, a passerby in a NYC park, found a skull, portion of a pelvis, and two plastic food containers containing one foot cut in two. They belonged to Steen Fenrich, 19, a young gay black man who had been missing for months. The words "Gay nigger number one" were carved into his skull, which had been burned with acid. The New York Times reported that his social security number had also been etched into his skull. The Police believe that John Fenrich, Steen's stepfather, was enraged by his stepson's homosexuality, so he killed him. The elder Fenrich, who was white, committed suicide once the remains were found.

Folks, this is the reason we are calling Paramount to put a stop to the Dr. Laura show.

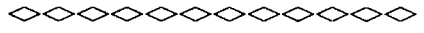
There is a culture of hate in this country against gays and lesbians (check out the next story about the military), and if we are to ever change things we have to stand up and do something about it. PLEASE CALL VIACOM CHAIRMAN SUMNER REDSTONE (Viacom owns Paramount) at 212-258-6310, and say "Why is Viacom supporting prejudice? Cancel the Dr. Laura TV show." And please visit our site again - we not only have lots more news on the "news update" page, but we need to keep those calls coming into Paramount, Viacom and KPIX in San Francisco - the radical right yesterday sent out an action alert urging their intolerant members to call and write in support of Schlessinger, please don't let them overwhelm us!

Good New York Daily News story on the killing:
www.nydailynews.com/2000-03-23/News_and_Views/Crime_File/a-61006.asp



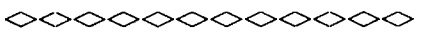
NYC CBS AFFILIATE BACKTRACKING ON LAURA?
LGNY newspaper in NY reported that the CBS New York affiliate, in response to concerns about the current "atmosphere of hate" against gays - specifically referring to the Fenrich murder (above), has decided to hold off, at least for a few weeks, on signing the final deal to air the Dr. Laura TV show. This is great news, so long as CBS-NY is not simply waiting for anger about the murder to subside. This story comes in the wake of reports in the Detroit press that their local TV is quite skittish about running the Dr. Laura show, and they've said publicly that Dr. Laura needs to reach some kind of accommodation with the gay community before the show airs! A station in Texas has made similar comments regarding their concern about the controversy. We are having an effect, and soon will be providing

LGNY story on CBS skittishness:
www.stopdrlaura.com/news/fromus/march/000323.htm



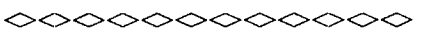
GLAAD GOES OFF ON PARAMOUNT
GLAAD's executive director Joan Garry gave a great speech at the protest at Paramount this week, making it clear that there is simply no deal that can ever work to make the Dr. Laura show acceptable - the only choice for Paramount is to drop the show. (You can read more about

the protest, and see lots of pictures from it, on the StopDrLaura.com news page at www.stopdrlaura.com/news/index.htm
Garry, who has had the unfortunate pleasure of actually meeting Ms. Schlessinger, made the following key points during her speech:
* Laura Schlessinger is in total control and cannot be held accountable for what she says publicly.
* Paramount will have no better luck controlling her than her internal "handlers" or her crisis management pr firm.
* If she can't be controlled, she must be stopped.



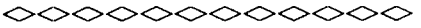
US MILITARY BREAKS LAW VIS-·-VIS GAYS
I know this one will come as quite a shock, but a new Dept. of Defense study concludes that far too many of the military commanders and troops not only tolerate bigotry, but that they also have completely ignored Don't Ask, Don't Tell. This isn't just a simple issue of discrimination anymore, folks, Don't Ask Don't Tell is both a law and an order issued by the Commander in Chief. This report means that senior military brass broke the law and disobeyed a direct order from the Commander in Chief. Are the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, willing to overlook a little crime and rank insubordination simply because the victims are gay?

Just to really make your blood boil, I watched a military training video on CNBC last night that included a mock scene in which a male soldier approached a sleeping soldier in bed and tried to molest him - the sleeping soldier of course awoke screaming for help. As much as I've always supported the Defense Department as an institution (meaning, I support our troops risking their lives for our freedom), I fear it's finally time to say that the institution is rank with bigotry, insubordination, and law-breaking. If this kind of attitude is not only tolerated, but promoted through hatefully bigoted training videos, then what are our troops really fighting for?



UPDATES ON VT AND CA MARRIAGE
I've written an update on the VT and CA same-

sex marriage issues that is posted at
http://uspolitics.about.com/library/blgay1.htm



QUICK WEB UPDATE
Just a quick update on Web hits - we've had over 14m hits on the StopDrLaura.com in 3 weeks, and we got over 1.2 million hits last Wednesday alone! As the media keeps reporting on the issue - CNN did an hour on Thursday - please keep checking back to the site's news section for the latest. A series of grassroots actions are being planned around the country to target Paramount, local TV stations intending to air her show, and advertisers (actually, I'm on a conference call with grassroots activists in several cities as I write!). So stay tuned.

****

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To subscribe to the free Wired Strategies email update list for the latest on gay civil rights issues, send a blank email to:
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http://www.wiredstrategies.com/profile.html
* Nazi Anti-Jewish Speech vs. Religious Right Anti-Gay Speech -
http://www.wiredstrategies.com/hitler.html
* Mugged by AOL - A Gay Man Loses His Good Name to the World's Largest Internet Provider -
http://www.wiredstrategies.com/mugged.html
* AOL Punishes Gay Man Seeking Safe Sex Info -
http://www.wiredstrategies.com/aids.html
* Timothy McVeigh AOL Privacy Case -
http://www.wiredstrategies.com/mcveigh.htm
* Merriam-Webster/AOL Anti-gay Thesaurus -
http://www.wiredstrategies.com/thesaurus.html

* Ex-Gays Implode -
http://www.wiredstrategies.com/exgay.htm
* Gay Pride Rome 1999 -
http://www.wiredstrategies.com/pride.htm
* Sandals Resorts & Anti-gay Sweepstakes -
http://www.wiredstrategies.com/resort.html

"In Germany, the Nazis first came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, but I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak up for me."

- Martin Niemoeller, Berlin Lutheran pastor arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Dachau concentration camp in 1938; the Allied forces freed him seven years later.

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Fenceberry@aol.com (Fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-MAR-2000 10:37:33.00

SUBJECT: Articles 3.25.00

TO: "undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov ("undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
1. ASSOCIATED PRESS Homophobia Said Common in Military
2. NEW YORK TIMES Survey of Troops Finds Antigay Bias Common in Service
3. BOSTON GLOBE Judy Shepard: Mission Found After Son Is Lost
4. WASHINGTON POST Letter: Consensus against gay marriage is clear
5. THE GUARDIAN (England) Novel of gay crucifixion is bestseller at Anglican HQ
6. STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE More letters about the anti-gay billboards

Associated Press, March 25, 2000
Homophobia Said Common in Military
By PAULINE JELINEK

WASHINGTON (AP) ? Activists are welcoming efforts to stop harassment of homosexuals in the military, saying it's about time officials "finally acknowledged" the longstanding problem.

Defense Secretary William Cohen announced Friday he's creating a special committee to look into the problem after a Pentagon inspector general's survey found that anti-gay speech and harassment is commonplace in the American military, especially among young enlisted troops.

Eighty-five percent of those surveyed said they believed anti-gay comments are tolerated on their base or aboard their ship, and 37 percent said they had personally witnessed or been the target of harassment ? such as hostile gestures, graffiti or physical assault ? based on perceived homosexuality.

Michelle Benecke, co-executive director of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network ? an advocacy group for gays in the military ? said the results of the survey expose a problem her organization has sought to draw attention to for years.

"I'm glad that Pentagon leaders finally acknowledged that problem today," Benecke said. "I welcome all serious efforts to address anti-gay harassment," including Cohen's establishment of a committee to seek new solutions.

Sen. Olympia Snowe, a Maine Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said she was still reviewing the report but applauded Cohen's decision to set up the working group "to assure fairness in the military ... ranks."

The survey also found a widespread belief among troops that the current "don't ask, don't tell" policy on gays in the military ? which Vice President Al Gore says he would eliminate if he were elected president ? is

not working. President Clinton himself has said the policy, forged by his administration in 1993, is now "out of whack."

Cohen said the new military and civilian panel he's creating will draft a plan for measures to improve the policy's implementation. And he put military chiefs on notice as well.

"The report shows that military leaders must do more to make it clear that harassment based on sexual orientation violates military values," Cohen said in a memorandum to the services' civilian and uniformed leaders.

The administration's policy, set in law by Congress after a heated political battle, says gays and lesbians may serve in the military so long as they keep their sexual orientation to themselves and military commanders may not inquire about it. Pentagon policy still bars open homosexuals from serving in uniform. Although the policy was designed to make it easier for gays to serve, an increasing number have been discharged in recent years.

Among the survey's key findings:

? Eighty percent of the 71,500 members of the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps surveyed said they had heard offensive speech or jokes or derogatory names or remarks about gays in the past year.

? Thirty-three percent said they heard it often. It was reported most common among junior enlisted troops and most frequently in the Marine Corps and least in the Air Force.

? Of the offensive behaviors or actions reported as directed against gays, offensive speech was the most common. It was mentioned by 89 percent of those who reported witnessing or experiencing some form of harassment. Hostile gestures were reported by 35 percent; threats or intimidation by 20 percent; graffiti by 15 percent, vandalism of personal property by 7 percent and physical assault by 9 percent.

? Less than 50 percent said they had received training on the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. About 50 percent of all service members surveyed said they believed the policy was at least moderately effective at reducing harassment of gays.

Cohen ordered the survey last December. It was done on 38 U.S. military bases and aboard 10 Navy surface ships and one submarine from Jan. 24 to Feb. 11.

The Pentagon was forced to take a closer look at how the gay policy is being implemented after the bludgeoning death last July of a gay Army private, Barry Winchell, at Fort Campbell, Ky. His killer, a fellow private, was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

? On the Net: The IG's report:
http://www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/00report.htm

New York Times, March 25, 2000
229 W. 43rd Street, New York, NY, 10036

(Fax 212-556-3622) (E-MAIL: letters@nytimes.com)
(http://www.nytimes.com)

Survey of Troops Finds Antigay Bias Common in Service

By STEVEN LEE MYERS

WASHINGTON ? Antigay remarks and harassment are commonplace in the American military, especially in the form of offensive speech and gestures, and an overwhelming majority of service members believe their superiors and colleagues tolerate it "to some extent," according to a Pentagon survey released today.

The survey, ordered after a gay soldier was beaten to death last July at Fort Campbell, Ky., suggested that despite repeated efforts to prohibit such behavior, including new directives by the four armed services late last year, disparaging and even hostile attitudes toward gay men and women remain a pervasive part of military culture.

Eighty percent of service members questioned by the Pentagon's inspector general reported hearing antigay remarks during the last year and 33 percent said they heard them often or very often.

Even more troubling to Pentagon officials, 37 percent said they had witnessed or experienced some form of harassment based on sexual orientation in the last year. Often the harassment involved offensive remarks or gestures, but in more than half of those cases, service members said they had witnessed or experienced that harassment in the form of graffiti, vandalism, threats, unfair discipline, discrimination in training or career opportunities or even physical assaults.

"The report shows that military leaders must do more to make it clear that harassment based on sexual orientation violates military values," Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen wrote in a memorandum sent to the civilian and military leaders of the services today.

Investigators surveyed a random sampling of 71,570 officers and enlisted personnel at 38 military bases and aboard 11 warships and submarines in the United States and overseas. The survey did not question people at Fort Campbell, where Pfc. Barry Winchell was bludgeoned to death last July with a baseball bat. The Army's inspector general is conducting a separate investigation into why commanders there ignored reports that soldiers had openly taunted Private Winchell about his sexual orientation for months.

The survey's findings surprised many senior officials at the Pentagon, who had publicly played down the extent of harassment only a few months ago. Scrambling to respond, Mr. Cohen appointed a committee of civilian and military officials to review the findings.

Mr. Cohen ordered the committee, which will be headed by the under secretary of the Air Force, Carol DiBattiste, to report back to him by the end of July with plans for dealing with what the Pentagon's spokesman, Kenneth H. Bacon, acknowledged was "a disturbing amount" of harassment in

the
ranks.

The survey's findings have focused new attention on the Clinton administration's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which Congress put into law in 1993 after a fierce political battle. The policy allows gay men and women to serve in the military as long as they keep their sexual orientation to themselves and do not engage in homosexual acts, but it still bars openly gay people from serving in uniform. Although meant to make it easier for gays to serve, thousands have been discharged in recent years.

The findings are also sure to intensify the political debate over homosexuality and the military, which Vice President Al Gore has already made an issue in this year's presidential campaign by vowing to allow gay men and women to serve openly. Gov. George W. Bush, his Republican opponent, has expressed support for the existing policy.

Mr. Gore's national security adviser, Leon S. Fuerth, said this week that society's views had evolved.

"We're in a posture that makes it impossible for very good people to serve without living in fear that something private about themselves will be divulged and held against them," Mr. Fuerth said in an interview with reporters. "In our society that is changing, and our military has always been a reflection of the society as a whole."

Mr. Cohen, in his memo today, said it was impossible to say whether the survey's findings reflected larger social attitudes.

Frank Rush, the deputy under secretary of defense for planning, who announced the survey at the Pentagon today, cited the finding that 80 percent of service members reported hearing antigay remarks in the last year and added, "There is nothing out there that we have seen that says how often would you hear such jokes or names, or other types of offensive speech, in the broader civilian society."

Nevertheless, Mr. Cohen said harassment "seriously undermines the good order and discipline that is critical to an effective fighting force."

While 80 percent reported hearing "offensive comments" about gays, even more ? 85 percent ? believed that the comments were tolerated within their units.

Even in more serious incidents, the survey's findings suggested that antigay behavior appeared to be widely accepted, despite the Pentagon's most recent directives, which explicitly prohibited harassment based on sexual orientation, just as policy now prohibits harassment based on race or gender.

Of all respondents, 5 percent believed that harassment based on sexual orientation was tolerated by superiors in the chain of command and 10 percent said it was tolerated by colleagues in their unit.

When asked to describe in detail one incident of harassment, 22 percent

said that a more senior person had also witnessed the behavior, and in 73 percent of those cases, they said that person did nothing immediately to stop it.

The findings varied by service. In the Marine Corps, for example, more than 45 percent of those questioned reported hearing offensive comments often or very often, compared to only 23 percent in the Air Force.

Mr. Rush attributed the variance to differences in age, education and training within the services. Marines, generally, tend to be younger and less educated than personnel in the Air Force, which requires greater technical expertise. Also, lower-ranking enlisted personnel were far more likely to hear or witness anti-gay attitudes than officers.

While Pentagon officials said more work needed to be done, a spokesman for the Marine Corps, Maj. David A. Lapan, played down the results. He cited the finding that only 5 percent of those questioned believed that harassment was tolerated by superiors and said the Marine Corps had not experienced an increase in complaints of harassment.

"We're not necessarily concerned with the results," Major Lapan said, "because we're not seeing indicators like increased complaints of threats or mistreatment that would indicate the policy is not working."

Officials pointed to one positive finding: About 78 percent of those questioned said they felt free to report antigay harassment to their superiors without fear of retribution.

At the same time, however, the survey found that of those who reported seeing or experiencing harassment within the last year, only 16 percent actually did report it.

Advocates for gay men and women in the military seized on the findings as validation of what they had been saying for years.

David M. Smith, a spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign, the largest gay political organization in Washington, said the findings showed that repeated directives issued by the Pentagon had failed to stop harassment.

"Nothing is going to change until the uniformed military leadership, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff on down, send clear and unambiguous signals that this type of harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances," he said. "To date, we have not heard those messages from the uniformed military leadership."

Earlier this month, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a legal-aid organization based in Washington, reported that antigay harassment had more than doubled last year. The group reported 968 incidents of verbal abuse or physical assaults. The group also reported that 1,034 gay men and women were discharged because of their sexual orientation.

C. Dixon Osborne, one of the group's executive directors, said the findings released today were a direct result of the inherent inequities in the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

"When you have a law that treats an entire class of people as second-class citizens," he said, "it suggests that you can treat them that way."

Boston Globe, March 25, 2000
Box 2378, Boston, MA, 02107
(Fax 617-929-2098) (E-MAIL: letter@globe.com)
(http://www.boston.com/globe)
Mission found after son is lost
By Adrian Walker, Globe Staff

Judy Shepard never intended to become radicalized, never thought it fit her reserved, almost shy demeanor. She was never one to call attention to herself.

But Shepard also never expected to receive a phone call from halfway across the world telling her that her son was fighting for his life in a Wyoming hospital and quickly losing his battle.

Her son was Matthew Shepard, the 20-year-old college student who was beaten to death in 1998 by two losers who thought it was a good idea to kill someone for the offense of being gay. They left him to die tied to a fence; he was on life support for five days, giving his parents time to arrive fromtheir home in Saudi Arabia to say goodbye.

Settling into a conference room at the University of Massachusetts at Boston earlier this week, Shepard ? a plain-spoken, blue-eyed woman whose soft voice belies her firm will ? reflected on the changes that have overtaken her life since then.

She was passing through Boston on a tour that will visit 10 college campuses in little more than a month. This is her life now, attempting to educate the world on the high cost of hate. This is how she keeps her son's memory alive.

"I don't live at home anymore," she said ruefully. "I live out of a suitcase now. That is a choice we made as a family. We have this platform, and we have to use it."

Her companion on the road is a video, "Journey to a Hate-Free Millennium." It argues, perhaps optimistically, that hate is a choice people make, that there are alternatives, if only people will embrace them.

Two men are in prison for making radically wrong choices in October, 1998. Russell A. Henderson pleaded guilty, while his accomplice, Aaron J. McKinney was convicted after a seven-day trial. Both are serving life sentences.

So, in a way, is Judy Shepard. But her preference is to dwell on the way she has been able to convert tragedy into something positive rather than on the attack itself.

The crowds she draws are substantial. She has become a heroine, especially to young gays wrestling with issues of identity. The most common questions they ask her, she says, are about coming out, about dealing with families in denial, about how to find a safe place to be themselves. They ask what she thinks of the religious right, and whether their views

contribute to homophobia.

In their predictability, those exchanges are both good and bad, as she knows; good in that a dialogue once suppressed can freely take place, disappointing in the sense that she sometimes wonders if she is reaching the people who need to hear her message.

"I'm often preaching to the choir," she sighed. "I realize that."

Like all good teachers, she understands that her tour is as much about receiving an education as imparting one. She knew her son was gay long before he came out to her, she says ? "I think I knew before he knew." But she has also learned a lot, she says, about the ordeals so many suffer for their sexuality. Like a lot of people, she had considered herself accepting of different orientations but concedes she hadn't really ever given the differences a lot of thought. She thinks about them a lot more now.

"I've been better educated in the broad sense of civil rights," she said. "I didn't realize how ignorant I was."

Much was made at the time of the crime of its location, of the perils of being gay in the stereotypically macho culture of the West. But Wyoming has almost nothing to do with it. Part of her effort is to convince people that hate has no ZIP code.

Shepard also gets asked a lot about the film "Boys Don't Cry." The cinematic retelling of the beating death of Brandon Teena in Nebraska by two men who discovered Teena was a woman passing as a man has drawn many comparisons with the Shepard case.

The film's stars, Hilary Swank and Chloe Sevigny, are both up for Academy Awards tomorrow night.

Shepard hasn't seen it. "I just don't want to see it," she says. "I'm just not sure I could take it."

Washington Post, March 25, 2000
1150 15th Street NW, Washington, DC, 20071
(Online Mailer:
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/edit/letters/letterform.htm)
Letter: Gay-Marriage Minority

Your editorial on the Vermont legislature's decision to accept same-sex unions said that "no consensus exists" nationwide on the issue of gay marriage [March 18].

Actually the consensus is clear, but your paper inexplicably didn't acknowledge it. Polls consistently show that a vast majority of Americans do not support gay marriage. The Democratic and Republican candidates for president, Al Gore and George W. Bush, do not support gay marriage. And earlier this month, more than 60 percent of voters in California voted to not recognize gay marriage.

Oddly, your paper placed the article about the California vote results

deep inside the paper ["Californians Vote to Ban Recognition of Gay Marriages," news story, March 8] but chose to run a story about the Vermont decision on the front page [March 17]. Why did your paper consider a decision by a legislature in Vermont, a state with the nation's third-smallest population, more important than one by voters in California, a bellwether state with the country's largest population?

Could it be that the only consensus on gay marriage exists on your paper's staff?

? David Nielsen

The Guardian, March 25, 2000
119 Farringdon Rd., London EC1 3ER England
(Fax: +44/171/837-2114) (E-Mail: letters@guardian.co.uk)
(http://www.guardian.co.uk)

Novel of gay crucifixion is bestseller at Anglican HQ

Stephen Bates, Religious affairs correspondent

A novel with scenes of gay sex and a priest obtaining sexual arousal by being crucified is about to revive controversy about homosexual clergy in the Church of England.

Easter, by Michael Arditti, is selling like hot cakes in the bookshop at Anglican headquarters, Church House in central London, even though its official publication date is not for a fortnight.

Fifty copies have gone, and the book is on its third re-ordering. The novel has won praise from Muriel Spark for its satirical frankness and awful actualities, and from Richard Holloway, the liberal Bishop of Edinburgh, for uncovering the truth about the church. It ought to be essential reading, the bishop has said.

Yesterday the novelist described his aim: "I wanted to give an accurate picture of the church. I am very aware that a large element of the London clergy are gay, and it would have been inaccurate to leave that out."

The novel is not only about gays, but two of its four clergymen characters are gay ? one of them HIV-positive, and the other a reactionary, misogynistic bachelor archdeacon who ends up getting stuck after getting a black male prostitute to tie him to the cross above the altar in his private chapel on Good Friday.

Mr Arditti, who is himself gay and serves on his parochial council in north London, appears calmly reconciled to the fact that the scene is likely to make his otherwise witty novel notorious. Nor is he too worried that his picture of the church might be unduly fictional.

"In researching the book I spoke with many lonely priests. It is hard enough if you are married: if you are single and gay, you naturally tend to gravitate to places where there is a network of people like yourself. I

just
hope people will accept it as truthful and honest," he said.

In a further move that is likely to embarrass the church hierarchy, the Lesbian and Gay Christian movement has announced that it is to survey members
in order to produce a report detailing homophobia and discrimination.

It has been whispered for years that an unusually large percentage of the
Anglican clergy in London and in some other dioceses ? notably Edmonton and Chichester ? are homosexual, perhaps as many as one in five of priests in parts of the capital.

In the context of certain sections of the church's vociferous opposition
to the repeal of Clause 28 (the legislation banning promotion of homosexuality in schools), such an embarrassing statistic ? if it could ever
be verified, and if it were found to be accurate ? underlines the discomfort
in debating matters of sexuality.

Such issues rarely surface except in the form of scandal, as at an inquest in 1992 which found that a priest, Paul De Fortis, had died of autoerotic asphyxiation; he had been discovered hanging naked from a chain at
his vicarage in Hampstead on Christmas Eve.

More recently a scandal involving one of the Church of England's most senior civil servants was only narrowly kept out of the media.

The lid may not stay on the pot much longer, however. The evangelicals form the most vibrant part of the Anglican church, and it is they who have led the charge against repeal of Clause 28, having previously opposed the lowering the age of gay consent. And George Carey is much harder on the gay
issue than his predecessor as archbishop of Canterbury, although he admits to
employing gays on his staff at Lambeth Palace.

One young vicar, newly appointed to an inner-city parish, told the Guardian this week that he had no intention of giving up his boyfriend or sex
life in favour of celibacy, and that his diocesan bishop was aware of his orientation.

He did not want his identity revealed, having lost a living at one parish
elsewhere after confiding his orientation to a colleague, and having spent 18
months on the dole as a consequence. He believed he was very far from being
alone in either the Anglican, Catholic or non-conformist churches.

"Bishops may say they don't know their priests are gay but they certainly, knowingly, ordain them. When I was ordained the bishop came up afterwards and embraced my boyfriend, saying how pleased he was for us both.

"I am reconciled to the hypocrisy of my position.

"If the church is rude enough to ask the question whether you are gay, they are not really expecting you to answer truthfully."

Staten Island Advance, March 24, 2000
950 Fingerboard Road, Staten Island, NY, 10305
(Fax 718-981-5679) (E-Mail: editor@siadvance.com)
(http://www.silive.com/advance)

Letter: Billboards just quoted God's word, so accuse God of 'hate speech'

I write regarding the scripture-quoting billboards condemning homosexuality. It is amazing how quickly God's words are covered up when His message is not "love, love, love."

Rev. Kristopher Okwedy was right when he said that the message on the billboards was "the word of God." It was not simply Rev. Okwedy's opinion. So, if anyone could be accused of so-called "hate-speech," it would be God.

Yes, God is love, but because He loves us, He never compromises the truth. Because He made us, He knows that certain lifestyles ultimately lead to our destruction. It is not un-loving for God to say it so plainly that it disturbs us. The truth is what sets us free, not covering it up.

The call for tolerance is at the price of truth. A continual pursuit of personal rights to the denial of any standard of behavior, will be the downfall of our society. God in love sets boundaries on our lives for our eternal good. It truly is time we uncover the treasures of wisdom in "God's word," the Bible.

? Joan Mohlenhoff, West Brighton

Letter: Bible is clear on homosexuality despite efforts to re-interpret it

Charles Keeler, president of Integrity, a gay group within the Episcopal Church, said, "Jesus Christ said nothing whatsoever in the scriptures about homosexuality. If it was so important, hew would have mentioned something about it. Jesus said 'Love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourself.' "

This is not unconditional love. This is an often used [to support] an erroneous view for the subject.

The Bible is the very words and thoughts of Jesus himself. That will include passages on homosexuality in Leviticus, Timothy, and Romans. Absolutely nothing in the word can be separated out for one's own convenience.

In the Book of Acts, the apostle, Peter, had one word for the homosexual and all other sinners. He said, "Repent."

? Bill Rock, Port Richmond

Letter: Rev Okwedy is to be commended for standing up for his beliefs

I have been a subscriber to the Advance for years. I have enjoyed reading about the goings-on of our beautiful Island. But recently I was so discouraged to see how one-sided your staff writers could be regarding the billboards quoting Leviticus 18:22 from the Holy Bible.

Not once has Rev. Kristopher Okwedy said anything to even resemble hatred toward the homosexual community. I read that he was led by God regarding the

content and location of the billboards. Some of the people who were interviewed suggested that Rev. Okwedy was judging homosexual people. But haven't you staff writers and some of the people that were interviewed already judged Rev. Okwedy?

I also thought it was unfortunate that you would allow your writers to publish the reverend's address. That was the most irresponsible act of journalism I have ever seen. I remember an article I read about a man in my neighborhood who was arrested for purchasing child pornography and all you printed was his street name and general block number as has been customary. Why is it that a man of God who was only trying to be obedient and was only quoting God's word gets less respect from you that someone arrested for possessing child pornography? Something is very wrong with this picture. And where was the ACLU when Rev. Okwedy's right to free speech was violated?

I admire Rev. Okwedy for having the courage to stand up and obey God's word even though he knew it would be the unpopular thing to do. Anyone who has read the Bible has seen that it is filled with reports of people who have had the courage to be obedient at all cost and they were ultimately vindicated.

I can't say I have much, if any, respect for the politicians who have decided to go whichever way the wind blows because it suits their own agenda.

? Marie E. Serpico, Great Kills

Letter: How can the use of Bible verses be blasted as 'offensive,' 'cowardly'?

When the words of the Bible can be construed as "offensive" and the displaying of them "cowardly," society is in serious trouble, spiritually.

When the rights to free speech and freedom of religion are denied, our civil rights are also in serious trouble.

Why isn't the American Civil Liberties Union taking offense and defending the rights of those who put up billboards in Staten Island?

? Edwina E. and Gene Cosgriff, Pleasant Plains

Letter: Bible contains many admonitions modern-day people wouldn't heed

It saddens me that a minister decides to pay for billboard advertising to single out a particular group which may provoke violence against them. Such a lack of Christian charity and common sense.

Rev. Kristopher Okwedy is a minister of what, a follower of whom? It certainly can't be Jesus who always preached tolerance and love.

Since Rev. Okwedy is such a strong believer in the Bible being the word of God (totally disregarding the human nature of its writers, the possibilities of additions and deletions of verbal interpretations prior to the printed word and negating humanity's growth through grace, reason and education), what does he think of the Bible's admonition ? "Slaves, be attentive to your masters..."?

? Maureen Lenihan, Dongan Hills

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: LGBT Activists List <Doug.Case@sdsu.edu> (LGBT Activists List <Doug.Case@sdsu.edu> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-MAR-2000 14:52:24.00

SUBJECT: [lgbt-politics] Survey of Troops Finds Antigay Bias Common in Service

TO: queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu (queerpolitics@abacus.oxy.edu [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: lgbt-politics@egroups.com (lgbt-politics@egroups.com [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
New York Times, March 25, 2000
(http://www.nytimes.com)

Survey of Troops Finds Antigay Bias Common in Service
By STEVEN LEE MYERS

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"The report shows that military leaders must do more to make it clear that harassment based on sexual orientation violates military values," Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen wrote in a memorandum sent to the civilian and military leaders of the services today.

Investigators surveyed a random sampling of 71,570 officers and enlisted personnel at 38 military bases and aboard 11 warships and submarines in the United States and overseas. The survey did not question people at Fort Campbell, where Pfc. Barry Winchell was bludgeoned to death last July with a baseball bat. The Army's inspector general is conducting a separate investigation into why commanders there ignored reports that soldiers had openly taunted Private Winchell about his sexual orientation for months.

The survey's findings surprised many senior officials at the Pentagon, who had publicly played down the extent of harassment only a few months ago.

Scrambling to respond, Mr. Cohen appointed a committee of civilian and military officials to review the findings.

Mr. Cohen ordered the committee, which will be headed by the under secretary of the Air Force, Carol DiBattiste, to report back to him by the end of July with plans for dealing with what the Pentagon's spokesman, Kenneth H. Bacon, acknowledged was "a disturbing amount" of harassment in the ranks.

The survey's findings have focused new attention on the Clinton administration's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which Congress put into law in 1993 after a fierce political battle. The policy allows gay men and women to serve in the military as long as they keep their sexual orientation to themselves and do not engage in homosexual acts, but it still bars openly gay people from serving in uniform. Although meant to make it easier for gays to serve, thousands have been discharged in recent years.

The findings are also sure to intensify the political debate over homosexuality and the military, which Vice President Al Gore has already made an issue in this year's presidential campaign by vowing to allow gay men and women to serve openly. Gov. George W. Bush, his Republican opponent, has expressed support for the existing policy.

Mr. Gore's national security adviser, Leon S. Fuerth, said this week that society's views had evolved.

"We're in a posture that makes it impossible for very good people to serve without living in fear that something private about themselves will be divulged and held against them," Mr. Fuerth said in an interview with reporters. "In our society that is changing, and our military has always been a reflection of the society as a whole."

Mr. Cohen, in his memo today, said it was impossible to say whether the survey's findings reflected larger social attitudes.

Frank Rush, the deputy under secretary of defense for planning, who announced the survey at the Pentagon today, cited the finding that 80 percent of service members reported hearing antigay remarks in the last year and added, "There is nothing out there that we have seen that says how often

would you hear such jokes or names, or other types of offensive speech, in the broader civilian society."

Nevertheless, Mr. Cohen said harassment "seriously undermines the good order and discipline that is critical to an effective fighting force."

While 80 percent reported hearing "offensive comments" about gays, even more ? 85 percent ? believed that the comments were tolerated within their units.

Even in more serious incidents, the survey's findings suggested that antigay behavior appeared to be widely accepted, despite the Pentagon's most recent directives, which explicitly prohibited harassment based on sexual orientation, just as policy now prohibits harassment based on race or gender.

Of all respondents, 5 percent believed that harassment based on sexual orientation was tolerated by superiors in the chain of command and 10 percent said it was tolerated by colleagues in their unit.

When asked to describe in detail one incident of harassment, 22 percent said that a more senior person had also witnessed the behavior, and in 73 percent of those cases, they said that person did nothing immediately to stop it.

The findings varied by service. In the Marine Corps, for example, more than 45 percent of those questioned reported hearing offensive comments often or very often, compared to only 23 percent in the Air Force.

Mr. Rush attributed the variance to differences in age, education and training within the services. Marines, generally, tend to be younger and less educated than personnel in the Air Force, which requires greater technical expertise. Also, lower-ranking enlisted personnel were far more likely to hear or witness anti-gay attitudes than officers.

While Pentagon officials said more work needed to be done, a spokesman for the Marine Corps, Maj. David A. Lapan, played down the results. He cited the finding that only 5 percent of those questioned believed that harassment was tolerated by superiors and said the Marine Corps had not experienced an increase in complaints of harassment.

"We're not necessarily concerned with the results," Major Lapan said, "because we're not seeing indicators like increased complaints of threats or mistreatment that would indicate the policy is not working."

Officials pointed to one positive finding: About 78 percent of those questioned said they felt free to report antigay harassment to their superiors without fear of retribution.

At the same time, however, the survey found that of those who reported seeing or experiencing harassment within the last year, only 16 percent actually did report it.

Advocates for gay men and women in the military seized on the findings as validation of what they had been saying for years.

David M. Smith, a spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign, the largest gay political organization in Washington, said the findings showed that repeated directives issued by the Pentagon had failed to stop harassment.

"Nothing is going to change until the uniformed military leadership, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff on down, send clear and unambiguous signals that this type of harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances," he said. "To date, we have not heard those messages from the uniformed military leadership."

Earlier this month, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a legal-aid organization based in Washington, reported that antigay harassment had more than doubled last year. The group reported 968 incidents of verbal abuse or physical assaults. The group also reported that 1,034 gay men and women were discharged because of their sexual orientation.

C. Dixon Osborne, one of the group's executive directors, said the findings released today were a direct result of the inherent inequities in the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

"When you have a law that treats an entire class of people as second-class citizens," he said, "it suggests that you can treat them that way."

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RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Fenceberry@aol.com (Fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:26-MAR-2000 11:47:06.00

SUBJECT: Articles 3.26.00.3

TO: "undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov ("undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
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TEXT:
1. LOS ANGELES TIMES El Modena Gay-Straight Club Among 18 Human Relations Commission Honorees
2. LOS ANGELES TIMES Three letters about pastor who quit after his church squawked about his support of Gay-Straight Alliance
3. ASSOCIATED PRESS Major Berlin exhibit turns spotlight on gay victims of Nazi era
4. HERTS-ESSEX OBSERVER (England) Gay man stunned to find that his medical records put his homosexuality under the heading 'Diseases or operations'
5. MIAMI HERALD Gay plaintiffs fight for parenthood; Adoption suit vs. state puts quiet lives in spotlight

Los Angeles Times, March 26, 2000
Times Mirror Square, Los Angeles, CA, 90053
(Fax 213-237-7679 or 213-237-5319) (E-MAIL: letters@latimes.com)
(http://www.latimes.com)
El Modena Gay-Straight Club Among 18 Honorees
Human Relations Commission is recognizing individuals and groups that further the causes of human rights.
By CHRIS CEBALLOS, Special to The Times

Some are being honored for their efforts to improve the lives of the poor, the homeless, teen parents or minorities. Others are being recognized for their contributions to schools, education, community centers, churches or spiritual tolerance. All will receive awards from the Orange County Human Relations Commission for their efforts in the advancement of human rights at the local level.

But among the 18 groups and individuals being recognized at tonight's ceremony in Garden Grove, none have been more controversial than the organizers of the Gay-Straight Alliance at El Modena High School in Orange.

It's been five months since students decided to form the club designed to "raise public awareness and promote tolerance . . . of issues related to sexual orientation and homophobia." They did that, making national headlines when the district's school board voted unanimously in December to prevent the

students from meeting on campus. A federal judge overruled that decision while the students' suit is litigated.

Club founder Anthony Colin said the experience has been draining, but creating a place where kids can feel safe, supported and "not exiled by one's peers" inspires him to continue his fight.

"Once I saw how affected people were around the world, with people calling to tell me that gay youth were taking initiative to do the same thing . . . it's become a much bigger picture," Colin said.

Also being honored tonight is the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, for members' efforts to promote understanding among teachers, students and parents.

Los Angeles Times, March 26, 2000

Letters: Clergyman, Parish at Odds Over Gays

Re "Orange Pastor Quits After Gay Club Flap," March 18:

So the Methodist Church is still in the Dark Ages.

The mere fact that it was strongly suggested by the officers of the church that Tom Reinhart-Marean resign from the church shows the hypocrisy of the church itself.

We are talking about a man of the cloth who has a view to bring the Methodist Church out of the Dark Ages and into a world where sexual preference is not judged by those who fear the unknown.

Unfortunately, the moral majority does not yet know they are a minority. So the loudness of their voices has to make up for their lack of wisdom.

? BILL BANGERT Jr., Orange

It was wrong for Pastor Tom Reinhart-Marean to use his title and wear clerical clothes while expressing his own opinion in public and from the pulpit, because the statements were in opposition to the church and Bible he made a commitment to honor.

If the top supervisor of a company deliberately ignored the instructions of the owner and replaced them with what he thought should be done instead, how long would he last in that position?

Consider then the importance of a man representing God to accurately relate God's word instead of expressing his own viewpoint on biblical issues.

Fortunately, his behavior represents an extremely small percentage of the clergy.

? ANN KRONE, Anaheim

I have been a member of First United Methodist Church of Orange for almost 50 years and feel compelled to voice my feelings.

While I felt it was inappropriate for the children's sermon to be involved in this volatile issue, I have recognized since the first day he served our church that Pastor Tom Reinhart-Marean was committed to causes that speak against bigotry and hatred.

I have nothing but admiration for one who is not afraid to speak out

for
what he so strongly believes in. Our world needs more with such courage.
? JANIS LOPES, Orange

Associated Press, March 26, 2000
Major exhibit turns spotlight on gay victims of Nazi era

BERLIN (AP) ? Focusing attention on a long-neglected group of Nazi victims, a two-part exhibition about gays persecuted under the Nazis opened Sunday at museums in Berlin and in a former concentration camp where many of
the victims were killed.

The exhibits of documents, photos, drawings and other objects collected during 10 years of research is the largest on the subject ever mounted in Germany, project organizers said. It documents the fate of 700 individuals who suffered under the Nazis' draconian anti-gay laws and tells the personal
stories of 60.

"We want to return to the gay victims of the Nazis their names and to show their lives, as far as possible, so as to at least symbolically liberate
them from the dehumanizing barbarity of the Nazis," said Andreas Sternweiler,
project director at the Gay Museum in Berlin, where part of the exhibit is being shown.

The other half opened at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where many
gay victims ? labeled with a pink triangle ? ended up because of the camp's proximity to the capital. Some 600 homosexuals were killed there between 1939 and mid-1943 alone, according to the researchers.

Few surviving victims ever came forward after World War II because of continuing stigma associated with homosexuality, which remained illegal in West Germany under the same Nazi law, known as "Paragraph 175," until 1969. Tens of thousands of men were prosecuted in those postwar years.

Historians also generally ignored the Nazi persecution of homosexuals until the 1980s, meaning many survivors had already passed away, organizers said. Only a handful are known to still be alive; their stories are told in
a U.S.-made documentary, "Paragraph 175," that won awards at film festivals in Berlin and at Sundance this year.

Germany's center-left government introduced a bill last week ? 55 years after the end of the war ? that would require parliament to officially recognize and apologize to gay victims.

It also calls on the government to study whether a blanket annulment should be issued for convictions under the Nazi anti-gay law, under which even a glance between men could be cause for prosecution. Lesbians were generally ignored, since the Nazis were mainly concerned with perceived threats to their ideal of Aryan manhood.

Guenter Morsch, director of the Sachsenhausen memorial, noted that protests erupted after the first plaque dedicated to gay victims of the Nazis
was hung at the Dachau concentration camp outside Munich in the 1980s.

Last year, Germany's national Holocaust memorial day commemorated gay victims for the first time with a ceremony at Sachsenhausen.

Events like that and the new exhibit are important, he said, because all groups ? not just those that are "politically correct" ? must be remembered if tolerance is to be promoted.

About 200,000 people were interred at Sachsenhausen between 1936 and 1945, including Jews, Roma, communists and other political prisoners. More than 1,400 Jews were killed there, thousands more sent off to be killed in Auschwitz. Others were forced to work in adjacent factories.

Herts-Essex Observer, March 26, 2000
http://www.herts-essex-news.co.uk/henpages/obspages/onews/onews1.html
Gay's outrage at medical notes

A gay hairdresser was stunned this week to find that his medical records put his homosexuality under the heading 'Diseases or operations'.

Disgusted Greg Rattey (43) also discovered that he had been tested for HIV without his consent.

The result was negative, but that was little consolation to an appalled Mr Rattey who has complained to patients' watchdog East Herts Community Health Council.

"I have never given permission," said the Sawbridgeworth trader.

The shock disclosures came when he asked to see a copy of his medical records after applying for life insurance so he could buy the freehold of his salon, Toplines in Bell Street.

Mr Rattey, a fearless fighter against gay prejudice, was disgusted to see the fact that he is homosexual listed under the heading 'Diseases or operations' in his patient summary from Bishop's Stortford's South Street Surgery.

But the biggest bombshell for Mr Rattey was the way Dr Paresh Dawda had filled in a form for his insurers.

In response to the question: "Is there any history of sexually transmitted disease of hepatitis B, or are there any factors which place the patient at risk of infection from the AIDS virus?", the GP replied: "Homosexuality. HIV negative 1991. Denies promiscuity." An indignant Mr Rattey, who has served on both Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth town councils, is adamant that he has neither given his permission for such a test or had the necessary counselling required to assess the implications of the result.

He also denies discussing his sexual history with the doctor. "I have never been asked ? it's outrageous," he stormed.

Mr Rattey told the Observer his concerns were threefold. On a personal level, he fears that his existing life and critical illness insurance will be null and void because he unwittingly denied ever having an HIV test.

He also fears that other patients may have been subjected to procedures without giving consent and their medical notes may contain offensive or inaccurate information.

But his greatest concern is for other young gay people who may now fear going to their GP to talk in confidence about their sexuality in case they

are tested without their permission.

He has complained to the surgery and alerted the community health council, which has taken up his case.

Mr Rattey met Dr Dawda to discuss his comments on Tuesday and said the doctor had apologised, but was not yet able to offer him an explanation.

Patricia Gray, surgery practice manager, pledged to investigate the complaint fully and discuss the issue with Mr Rattey.

CHC deputy chief officer Pauline Dye said confidentiality prevented her from talking about this particular case, but speaking generally, the CHC would "fully support" anyone making a complaint about homosexuality being listed as a disease. "It's obviously a serious issue."

Nor could HIV testing be carried out without the person's consent or knowledge, she said.

In the past year, complaints from Mr Rattey about incidents of homophobic abuse led to a police prosecution. The allegation was later dismissed by magistrates.

Miami Herald, March 26, 2000
1 Herald Plaza, Miami, FL, 33132
(Fax 305-527-8955 or 305-376-8950) (E-Mail: HeraldEd@herald.com)
(http://www.herald.com)

Gay plaintiffs fight for parenthood

Adoption suit vs. state puts quiet lives in spotlight

BY AMY DRISCOLL, adriscoll@herald.com

There's no doubt in Douglas Houghton's mind when he looks at the 8-year-old boy he calls "Son."

"I'm his dad and he's my son, and that's it," he says quietly.

But in the state of Florida, that's not it.

Houghton, who has housed, fed and cared for the special-needs boy for the past four years, isn't allowed to make their father-son relationship official for one reason: Houghton is gay.

Florida is the only state in the nation that prohibits gay people from adopting children. New Hampshire repealed a similar law last year, while Mississippi's lawmakers are considering imposing a ban on adoptions by gay people.

The Florida law is hardly a "don't ask, don't tell" policy. The state adoption application spells it out: "No person . . . may adopt if that person is a homosexual." Prospective parents must answer, yes or no, whether they are homosexual or bisexual.

Yet the state does not ban gay men or lesbians from serving as foster parents. The state Department of Children and Families doesn't ask the sexual orientation of foster parents, and many openly gay singles and same-sex couples serve as foster parents in Florida.

The adoption law, enacted during Anita Bryant's anti-gay crusade of the 1970s, is under attack by the American Civil Liberties Union in a federal lawsuit before U.S. District Judge James Lawrence King in Miami. A ruling is expected within weeks.

Houghton, 37, and the boy, "John Roe," are among 11 plaintiffs in the suit. Others include a Nova Southeastern University law professor who

cannot
adopt because she is a lesbian, and a heterosexual couple who want a gay relative in Key West to adopt their daughter should something happen to them.

To Houghton, a law passed more than two decades ago seems far removed from the daily realities of his life as parent to a special-needs child. He asked that the exact nature of the boy's medical condition be kept private to avoid identifying the child.

Houghton has been a surrogate father to John Roe since the day, more than four years ago, when the boy's biological father dropped him off at a medical clinic where Houghton worked as a nurse practitioner. The boy's father explained that the family had been evicted from their home and he had no place to take his son. He asked Houghton, who had helped with medical care for the boy since he was 1 1/2 years old, to take him.

Houghton, a single man with no children, didn't hesitate. The child, 3 at the time, went home with Houghton that night.

It was an unlikely scenario. There were race differences ? Houghton is white, the boy is black ? a socioeconomic gap, the demands of the boy's medical needs and a deficit in his basic skills.

"Wow ? instant dad," Houghton said, laughing. "It was quite an adjustment."

If the first six months were a trial run, the second six were "freakout time," Houghton says, with both sides unsure if the arrangement would work.

But after that rocky first year, they settled in. And over the following months ? at the breakfast table, with each parent-teacher conference, during all the soccer practices and homework sessions ? the family bond between Houghton and the boy strengthened. The boy's biological father signed over guardianship rights.

Houghton, who even moved to Coconut Grove so the boy could attend a good school, says adoption felt like a natural step.

"I was prepared to sue the state myself if that's what it took," Houghton said. "This boy has brought so much joy into my life." The boy, shy in front of strangers, whispers to Houghton asking if he can have a snack. Houghton nods and the boy bolts to the refrigerator, taking out a tray of prepared shrimp cocktail.

"He loves shrimp," Houghton said, laughing. "It's his favorite." The boy nods happily, silently grinning at the ground, aware of the attention focused on him.

Later, they sit at the grand piano in the living room, the boy plunking away on the polished keys, Houghton encouraging him.

"It's better than I ever imagined," Houghton said, reflecting on his life with the boy. "I just want the legal solidification. Right now, it still feels tenuous to both of us."

Activism is not something Houghton would have chosen. He lives a quiet

life, now in a committed relationship, with a supportive family. He has never sought the spotlight and probably never would have. But this was too important.

"I've never been on a march or participated in a protest. I'm more in the 'one person at a time' kind of mode," Houghton said. "But once I decide to do something, I do it. And this law is wrong."

In May 1999, the ACLU and Children First Project filed suit on behalf of the 11 plaintiffs challenging the law on constitutional grounds, saying it violates due process and privacy rights. The suit names the state attorney general and the Department of Children and Families.

The department argues that it is merely carrying out the wishes of the Legislature, which enacted the law in 1977. "We are upholding the law. The Legislature decided that this is what should happen, or not happen. And they are the ones that would have to change the law if it were to be changed," said DCF spokeswoman Page Jolly.

John Dowless, executive director of the Christian Coalition of Florida, says his organization backs the Florida law.

"The state should be going after the ideal ? and that's a home with a mother and a father," he said.

Those who are fighting the law, he said, "are more concerned with pursuing rights and what they care about than what's best for the child."

What about a special-needs child, long past infancy? Should he wait ? possibly forever ? for a home with a mother and a father?

"I can't comment on specific cases," Dowless said. "We just believe that the state should strive for the ideal home."

The law affects more than Florida's gay and lesbian population. In some cases, it reaches across state lines and over the borders of sexual politics.

When Brenda and Gregory Bradley of Reno, Nev., were making out their wills, they discussed long and hard which family member they would ask to adopt their child, 2-year-old Kristina, if they were to die unexpectedly.

They chose Brenda's brother in Key West, Wayne Smith, and his partner, Dan Skahen ? only to be told it would be illegal in Florida for the couple to adopt Kristina.

"I had to tell them there was a law against it," said Smith, 44. "Here they were offering us this sacred trust and the state of Florida is saying no."

The Bradleys were taken aback.

"We took a lot of time making the decision, and we didn't want there to be any possibility that Kristina would end up with someone not of our choosing," Gregory Bradley said. "A law is preventing us from doing what we think is best for our child."

About a year later, when the ACLU was ready to file its lawsuit, the Bradleys, Smith and Skahen were ready to challenge the law.

"We're in this together," Gregory Bradley said.

Smith and Skahen already care for a 90-year-old woman, the mother of a

friend who died of AIDS, and they have recently become foster parents to a 15-year-old boy. They have schedules that can accommodate children ? Smith is a lawyer and Skahen is a real estate broker ? and they live in a plush Key West home built around a sparkling pool.

Going public with their fight took courage. "I still feel some reluctance," Smith said. "I feel intruded upon. This is not something I would seek out. Being so public does not come naturally."

They could move, of course, to another state. "That crossed our minds," he said. "And we would do it if necessary for Kristina. But we want to stay here, we have established good careers here and roots, and so there just weren't any options left. We could give up ? or challenge the law."

They are asking, they say, for the same rules as any other person in the state.

"We want to be considered, that's all," Skahen said. "We just don't want to be eliminated for being gay."

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Fenceberry@aol.com (Fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:26-MAR-2000 10:20:05.00

SUBJECT: Articles 3.26.00

TO: "undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov ("undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
1. ASSOCIATED PRESS Greek Church Criticizes European Union on Gays
2. NEW YORK TIMES Survey on Gays Rings True to Some in Military
3. THE RECORD (NJ) Good letter: On Christians and homosexuality
4. WASHINGTON POST Some GIs Puzzled By Rules on Gays
5. WASHINGTON POST George Will column about the gay libertarian group (GLIL) that's fighting to let the Boy Scouts continue to exclude gays
6. WASHINGTON POST Column by law professor: Looking For a Way To Expand Rights? Try State Courts (Vermont marriage decision)

Associated Press, March 25, 2000
Greek Church Criticizes EU on Gays

ATHENS, Greece (AP) ? The leader of Greece's Orthodox Church Saturday criticized calls by the European Union's parliament this month to grant same-sex couples equal rights with heterosexual couples.

During a religious service, Archbishop Christodoulos said granting gay partners marriage status would be "legalizing a sin" but urged compassion for all human "weaknesses."

Greece's official state Orthodox Church has recently reaffirmed its conservative views on sex while appealing to young people to follow the church's teachings. Last year, the church publicly reiterated its opposition to premarital sex.

Christodoulos' remarks Saturday were in response to the European Parliament's non-binding resolution which urged the 15 EU nations to extend rights enjoyed by traditional couples to one-parent families, unmarried couples and same-sex couples.

Greek homosexual organizations expressed disappointment with the church leader's reaction.

"I am a Greek citizen and I expect that my government to protect my rights and not to have them interfered with by any church," said Evangelos Yanellos, leader of Greece's largest gay association.

New York Times, March 26, 2000
229 W. 43rd Street, New York, NY, 10036
(Fax 212-556-3622) (E-MAIL: letters@nytimes.com)
(http://www.nytimes.com)
Survey on Gays Rings True to Some in Military
By ROSS E. MILLOY

CORPUS CHRISTI, Tex. ? Although senior Pentagon officials in Washington

expressed surprise at an inspector general's survey that found widespread harassment of gays in the armed forces, halfway across the country the results were viewed today as nothing new by some current and former servicemen living near this city's many military installations.

Eighty percent of the 71,570 military personnel surveyed in the Pentagon's report, which was released on Friday, said they had heard derogatory remarks made about gays and 37 percent said they had witnessed or experienced an incident of harassment.

"They call it 'barracks justice,'" Dennis Dunn, 40, who retired last fall after 19 years in the Army, said on Friday at a restaurant here.

"If people found out somebody was gay, they were gone. If they weren't kicked out for just being gay, then some other reason would be found to get rid of them. Either way, they were going."

Sometimes, said Mr. Dunn, who was a staff sergeant, the penalty for being identified as homosexual took an uglier turn.

"If someone was gay and got left in the unit for a while there would be a 'blanket party,'" he said, "where they'd grab the guy during the middle of the night, wrap him in a blanket, and pound on him with socks stuffed with bars of soap."

Mr. Dunn said there were rules associated with such attacks, established by platoon or unit leaders who organized them, such as no hitting in the head, face or groin. "But that was mostly so there wouldn't be any evidence that could be reported," he said.

From the time he joined the service in 1980 until he retired with a medical discharge, Mr. Dunn said, he heard of dozens of such "blanket parties," although he would not say whether he had participated.

And, Mr. Dunn said, little changed after the Clinton administration instituted the "don't ask, don't tell" policy in 1993.

"That was all just a show for the media," he said of the policy. "It didn't change anything. It just made the unit commanders more cautious about how they kicked people out."

But some of the servicemen interviewed here about the Pentagon report said they thought that attitudes had changed over the years, not so much because of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, but because of a broader acceptance of gays in society.

"President Clinton just opened up the closet door and let all the skeletons out," said Carlos B. Palos III, 44, who served in the Army three years, from 1975-78.

Interviewed while having dinner with his son, Carlos Jr., who recently enlisted in the Air Force, Mr. Palos said that during his military career, homosexuality was rarely discussed but punished whenever discovered.

"We had two guys caught in my unit in Germany in 1977 that were court-martialed and dishonorably discharged," he said, "but it was all kept pretty quiet. These days, they put it on the front page of the newspaper."

Mr. Palos's 19-year-old son said that during his four months at an air base near Del Rio, Tex., he had seen no signs of discrimination. "Sure, you

know some people are probably gay, but that's their business as long as they leave you alone," he said. "The younger guys just don't care that much about it."

Allen Decker, 24, a Navy information specialist who in four years served on six posts before arriving at the air station here, said of gays: "In today's military it's just not that big of a deal. People are just more used to the idea of gays in the service."

But, still, Mr. Decker said, if someone is openly gay, "The commanding officer will always just get rid of them."

A Navy intelligence specialist on leave from a Seventh Fleet assignment in Japan, who spoke on the condition of not being identified, said that while his superiors would tolerate no discrimination or harassment by fellow servicemen, anyone who was openly gay disappeared from the unit.

"We're the first line of defense, the tip of the spear, and discipline out there is pretty tight," said the 24-year-old Navy specialist.

To Mr. Dunn, the inspector general's report offered only confirmation of what most people in the service, he said, already knew.

"They have to do these things to placate the media and the higher-ups, the politicians," he said. "But nothing will change. It's the Army. Nothing ever changes the Army."

The Record, March 26, 2000

Letter: On Christians and homosexuality

Recently, a billboard bearing a homophobic message ripped out of context from the Old Testament was displayed on Staten Island. The message attacks the validity of same-sex love. It doesn't indicate that the biblical message it quotes (Leviticus 18:22) was written about 700 B.C. to help the Hebrew people maintain their identity while surrounded by tribes that practiced temple prostitution. This is not an issue in the 21st century. Neither is mixing different fabrics in your clothes, which is also in the same list of prohibited acts.

Fortunately, gay rights are becoming a non-issue in the secular world. Without the burden of religiosity to warp their perspective, non-churchgoers have shown a growing willingness to exercise their sense of justice and fair play and accept gays and lesbians just as they are. Secular Americans are increasingly arriving at the conclusion that gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons are entitled to the same civil rights and privileges that we straights take for granted.

Not so among the religious. The Record's Charles Austin recently reported that Christians are still tied up in knots over homosexuality ("Same-sex marriages dividing some sects," Page A-1, March 5; "Christians grappling with sin's shifting face," Page A-1, March 8). From the old men

in
the Vatican to the board of trustees of Bob Jones University and members of mainstream Protestant churches, Christians tiresomely and predictably denounce what they call "the homosexual lifestyle."

A few bright spots in Christendom ? among them the United Church of Christ, the Metropolitan Church, and the Newark diocese of the Episcopal Church ? honor the position of their leader Jesus, for whom homosexuality was
a non-issue, and accept persons of other sexual orientations as equals.

Many members of the Bergen County chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) sadly acknowledge that organized religion is the major obstacle to the acceptance of our gay sons and daughters. From the
Crusades through the post-Reformation wars, the Inquisition, and the antisemitism that produced the Holocaust, religion has been a leading cause of bloodshed, suffering, and death.

Many PFLAG parents are deeply religious and torn by this realization. Other parents are buoyed by the hope that Christendom in this country may eventually grow as irrelevant and impotent as it is in Europe and that its virulent hatred of homosexual persons will no longer have the power to harm.

God loves Christians. It's Christianity that he hates.
? Gunnar Mengers, River Edge

Washington Post, March 26, 2000
1150 15th Street NW, Washington, DC, 20071
(Online Mailer:
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Some GIs Puzzled By Rules on Gays
By Steve Vogel, Washington Post Staff Writer

Eighty soldiers in battle fatigues shifted uncomfortably in the seats of
the movie theater at Fort Meade. Using slides projected on the screen, their
company commander, Capt. Kevin Reszka, had just presented an unexpected scenario as he opened a training session on the Army's policy toward homosexuals.

That policy is popularly known as "don't ask, don't tell": The military
cannot ask about sexual orientation, and homosexuals in the ranks cannot advertise their presence. But there's more to it than that, Reszka suggested.

"You're in the chow hall, you're a lower enlisted soldier, and you overhear the soldier next to you at a nearby table mention that he's being harassed because he's come out of the closet, and that he's homosexual," Reszka said.

What to do? Report the open admission? The harassment? Answer: Both,
so superiors can investigate the entire situation.

After an allegedly gay soldier was slain in Kentucky last year, training
sessions like the one at Fort Meade were revamped to combat harassment of homosexuals. But the refresher course at the movie theater Wednesday

turned
out to be especially well-timed, because on Friday, the Pentagon inspector general released the results of a survey in which 40 percent of those in the
ranks said they had witnessed or been the victim of harassment for perceived
homosexuality.

"The Army has some areas we need to focus on and improve," Lt. Col. Steven Eldridge, commander of the headquarters battalion at Fort Meade, said
after the report's release. "You're dealing with human beings, and we have to hold people accountable for their actions. It's an issue of discipline. It's called creating the proper command climate."

But navigating the new policies might not be easy. If the session at Fort Meade is any illustration, at least some soldiers remain confused about
"don't ask, don't tell," a policy that Reszka told his troops should include
"don't harass" and "don't pursue," meaning soldiers should leave any investigation of homosexuals to superiors.

Sgt. Belinda Lowe, one of the 9,000 soldiers based at Fort Meade, wondered what she should do if she learned that a soldier is living in a homosexual "marriage." Has the soldier "told" of his orientation in violation of policy, even if he's never spoken a word? "People are going to
know," Lowe noted.

Reszka pondered the example, and then turned to the representative of the
base's staff judge advocate office, Capt. Julie Downey, who was sitting in the front row.

"SJ, you want to handle that one?" Reszka said, to the loud amusement of
his troops.

Downey explained the policy, but Lowe seemed dissatisfied. "What I'm trying to say is, we're going to know," she said.

"The 'don't ask' only applies if there is no credible information," Reszka added, suggesting that in this instance there was such information and
Lowe would have to inform superiors.

"Soldiers have a restriction on what they can tell," he said. "Soldiers
are expected to keep their sexual orientation private."

Another slide was titled "Zero Tolerance for Harassment."

"Now we'll talk about 'don't harass,'" Reszka said. "That's really why we're conducting this training today. . . . Does everybody know what reprisal
means?"

Everybody said they did.

The slide show concluded. After tossing out several scenarios to see how
well the soldiers had mastered the material, Reszka asked, "Any questions?" There were none. "That concludes today's training," he said.

But as they filed out of the theater, some soldiers acknowledged they still were not sure about some things.

"You're always going to have questions," said Sgt. Keith Jones. "Because each situation that comes up is different. Basically, you take what they give you here, and you work from it."

Lowe said: "There's a lot more to it, the more questions you ask. We see a lot of things all the time, but we don't say anything. People watching same-sex movies with their doors open. Then what do you do?

"We're talking about harassment of a person who is a homosexual," Lowe continued. "What about a homosexual harassing you? We in the military are a team, and your peers have a lot of influence, you know what I mean? Everybody knows this person is coming on to you, and you don't want to be stuck with that stigma. If I'm in the shower and somebody comes up and starts groping me, my first instinct is not to go the the commander, my first instinct is, 'You better get off of me.'"

Lowe turned to Eldridge, who was standing nearby. "Did you hear me, sir?" she asked. "Like, if somebody just touches you?"

Eldridge nodded. "From the commander's perspective, the two issues we're dealing with here, are one . . . homosexuality is against Army policy," he said. "The second part of that is, we do not tolerate harassment on any stage. What I have to ensure is soldiers who have admitted themselves as homosexuals are not being harassed for it. The military will take appropriate action to remove them, after they have been given due process."

More work is needed, he added. "We need to make sure soldiers understand it," Eldridge said. "And a lot of it's common sense."

Washington Post, March 26, 2000
The Boy Scouts' Unlikely Friends
By George F. Will

In this litigious republic, litigation often is politics carried on by other means, and like politics, litigation sometimes makes strange bedfellows, as in a case to be argued before the Supreme Court next month and decided by early summer. The question at issue is: Should New Jersey Boy Scout organizations be permitted to exclude gay men from being Scoutmasters?

New Jersey says this violates the state's anti-discrimination law. But the Scouts have acquired an unlikely ally, an organization of gays and lesbians which says the Scouts' policy is not right but the Scouts have a right to it.

Gays and Lesbians for Individual Liberty has filed a friend-of-the-court brief prepared by the Institute for Justice, a merry band of libertarian lawyers in Washington. GLIL argues that defeating the New Jersey Scouts would be a Pyrrhic victory for gays and lesbians, who have, historically and still, a large stake in society respecting what the Scouts are asserting, the First Amendment right of freedom of association.

Last year New Jersey's Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the Scouts' policy is "bigotry" and that the Scouts are, like a restaurant that is open to the general public, a "public accommodation" and therefore covered by the state's statute that forbids discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The court argued that the Scouts, with 5.8 million members nationwide, are not selective enough to be considered "distinctively private."

The Scouts appealed to the Supreme Court, citing their right of "expressive association," which the court has defined as "freedom to engage in association for the advancement of beliefs and ideas." In its brief GLIL vigorously deplores the Scouts' creed, which is that homosexuality is incompatible with the Scout obligation to be "morally straight" and "clean." But GLIL agrees that the Scouts are a creedal organization with an explicitly moral mission. And citing much history ? for example, until the late 1970s the IRS denied tax-exempt status to organizations that "promoted" homosexuality ? the GLIL brief argues that gays have suffered "when freedom of association has not been respected and governments have been allowed to trample on the rights of citizens to freely gather together."

The GLIL brief says the New Jersey decision is pernicious because "it places the government in the intolerable position of second-guessing a private organization's interpretation of its own rules and articulation of its own message." Furthermore, the New Jersey ruling is perverse because it says the right of expressive association belongs only to organizations that have messages more forcefully stated than is the Scouts' disapproval of homosexuality. The New Jersey court parsed the Scout oath about being "straight" and "clean" and said the oath does not forbid homosexual conduct. Furthermore, the court said the Scouts did not produce sufficient evidence that the organization wants to communicate disapproval of homosexuality. This is an incentive for the Scouts to increase their anti-gay emphasis.

The law has recently taken an interesting carom regarding gays and the First Amendment. In 1995 the Supreme Court held that the University of Virginia had impermissibly practiced viewpoint discrimination when it refused to give funds from the student activities fees to a newspaper expressing religious (and anti-gay) views. Two years later, in the first federal appellate case applying to a gay organization the principle affirmed in the University of Virginia case, a circuit court held that the University of South Alabama violated freedom of speech and association when it denied student fee funding to a gay student group.

GLIL argues that the inclusion of gays in all facets of life is profoundly desirable because it sends "a message of tolerance and acceptance." But when a private association is involved, the First Amendment requires that "this message must be sent through private choice and must not be communicated due to government coercion." As the Supreme Court has said, freedom of association "plainly presupposes a freedom not to associate."

When the court affirmed the right of Minnesota to require the Jaycees to admit women, it stressed that the Jaycees were not a creedal organization using the exclusion to convey a specific message about females.

The GLIL, warning against "creeping infringement" of freedom of association, notes that gay organizations often seek and administer "gay environments," including clubs, retreats, vacations and professional and alumni organizations. America needs a livelier understanding of the arithmetic of rights that GLIL understands: Multiplying rights, such as the right of a gay to be a Scoutmaster, can mean a net subtraction from freedom.

Washington Post, March 26, 2000
Looking For a Way To Expand Rights? Try State Courts
By Robert A. Schapiro

The decision 10 days ago by the Vermont House of Representatives to recognize same-sex "civil unions" was a milestone in a three-year crusade by a lesbian couple in Vermont ? and marked a step forward for gay activists in their drive for social recognition. The case also sheds light on what will probably be the future direction of judicial efforts to ensure civil rights in America.

Lois Farnham and Holly Puterbaugh have been a couple for almost 30 years. Together, they own a house and a Christmas tree farm in Milton, Vt. Together, they have raised their adopted daughter. And together, they sought a marriage license. When they appeared at the town clerk's office in Milton three years, they were turned away. Vermont law would not recognize their union.

Feeling that they were being discriminated against, Farnham and Puterbaugh did what victims of discrimination have traditionally done in the United States. They filed suit, asserting along with two other same-sex couples that state law violated their constitutional rights. But unlike most figures in our pantheon of civil rights, Farnham and Puterbaugh chose to file not in federal but in state court. In keeping with a growing trend in civil rights cases, the constitution whose protection they invoked was the state constitution, not the United States Constitution.

At a time when federal courts generally take a narrow view of individual rights ? a far cry from the expansive vision of the 1960s and '70s ? state courts have provided a significant alternative avenue for relief. In a variety of settings, they have interpreted their states' constitutions to protect rights beyond those guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. But don't look to state courts to make the sweeping rulings associated with the era of Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren. Because of the cautious,

cooperative nature of state courts, plaintiffs often fail to receive full satisfaction there ? as the Vermont case amply illustrates.

In December, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled in favor of Farnham and Puterbaugh, arguing that the state could not deny them the benefits that it accorded to couples of different sexes. That decision, however, does not mean that Farnham and Puterbaugh will soon be wed. In a ruling typical of state courts' approaches to sensitive issues, the Vermont Supreme Court left it up the state legislature to implement its decision. The bill approved by the Vermont House allows same-sex couples to form civil unions that carry many of the benefits and responsibilities of traditional marriages, but stopped short of legalizing gay marriage. Members of the Vermont Senate have raised numerous questions but are expected to approve the bill, and the governor says he'll sign it if it hasn't changed significantly.

The final say in state constitutional law cases, as Farnham and Puterbaugh discovered, often rests with state legislatures, and elected representatives are often reluctant to risk supporting unpopular causes. This need for legislative acquiescence may seem paradoxical, even unjust. Constitutional rights are supposed to be protected from the shifting whims of majorities. On the other hand, as the Vermont experience also suggests, this democratic character of state constitutional law does not prevent it from bringing about legal change.

In recognizing significant new protections for individuals, the Vermont Supreme Court was not alone. The Georgia Supreme Court struck down the state's ban on sodomy. The California Supreme Court found a right to protest in a private mall. Perhaps most dramatically, courts in dozens of states have required greater equalization of funding for public schools throughout the state. In each instance, the U.S. Supreme Court had rejected the same claim when asserted under the federal Constitution.

That is not to suggest that state constitutions have rendered the federal Bill of Rights obsolete. Not all plaintiffs fare well in state court. Truly unpopular groups, such as prisoners and fringe religious sects, have found little success there.

Further, even when courts recognize state constitutional rights, effective remedies may prove elusive. The distinguishing features of federal courts in the 1960s and '70s were not simply their broad aspirations for recognizing rights, but also their deep commitment to providing remedies. Federal courts assumed day-to-day control of schools, prisons and mental hospitals, even ordering tax increases to fund reform efforts. State courts have been far more reluctant to intrude on traditional legislative terrain.

That stems in part from the differing natures of the federal and state constitutions. The cumbersome amendment process written into the U.S. Constitution makes that document relatively impervious to change. In more than 200 years, the Constitution has been amended only 27 times. State constitutions, in contrast, are much more subject to revision. They have,

on
average, been amended more than 100 times each ? some far more than that.

If citizens disagree with the Supreme Court's interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, their likely response might be to organize massive demonstrations. If people are outraged by a decision granting a right under a state constitution, their response might be to try to change the constitution. When the Hawaii Supreme Court indicated that it might recognize a right to same-sex marriage, for example, the voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing the legislature to ban such unions.

But perhaps most significant of all is the fact that state judges enjoy less insulation from politics than their federal counterparts. Unlike federal judges, who are appointed for life, most state judges are subject to regular electoral review. State judges associated with controversial rulings have found themselves the victims of retribution. A particularly spectacular purge came in California in 1986 when voters removed three state supreme court justices, largely because of their decisions overturning death sentences.

It is hard for a state judge to miss the message: Unpopular rulings may cost you your job. In the words of Otto Kaus, a former justice on the California Supreme Court, for a state judge to try to ignore the political consequences of a decision is like trying to ignore "a crocodile in your bathtub."

Sensitive to popular sentiments, then, state courts tend toward cooperation rather than confrontation in their dealings with other branches of state government. State judges seek to engage the legislature in a joint effort at reform.

This cooperative spirit both limits the scope of any legal right and allows substantial delays in its implementation. Take, for example, what happened in Texas involving school finance. In 1989, the Texas Supreme Court held that the state constitution required greater equality in the funding of public schools. It took five years for the legislature to enact a funding plan that the court deemed acceptable.

The court's incremental approach and cooperative attitude led to a more modest ruling than the plaintiffs probably hoped for. At the end of the process, significant funding disparities remained: Schools in the wealthiest districts still have a tax base that is 28 times greater than that of the poorest districts, based on the property value per student. On the other hand, the situation is significantly improved: The old ratio was 700 to 1.

The Vermont story is similar. Domestic partnership as approved by the Vermont House does not have the symbolic significance of legally sanctioned marriage. As plaintiff Lois Farnham put it, "Have you ever seen a romantic song written about your registered partner?"

These cases illustrate that the vision of the state courts is much more modest than the broad, egalitarian ideal that guided the Warren court. In

this way, state constitutional law reflects a theme that permeates law, and perhaps society more generally, at the beginning of the 21st century ? a sense of chastened aspirations. Instead of grand quests to ensure absolute justice, we have incremental reform efforts.

The era of "big justice" ? like the era of big government ? appears to have ended.

But perhaps it is misleading to compare the broad aspirations of the old activist federal courts to the more modest results achieved in state constitutional litigation. Some scholars, such as University of Chicago political scientist Gerald Rosenberg, have questioned whether the apparently dramatic federal court decisions of the Warren era were the true cause of meaningful social change. The reforms that did occur, Rosenberg argues, required an underlying political consensus. When the federal courts moved too far away from popular sentiment, as in the area of criminal defendants' rights, their rulings had little practical import.

So it may be that the practical results of federal litigation depend just as much on popular opinion as do state constitutional rulings.

Whether in the long run state constitutional litigation will produce enduring change remains unclear. What is clear is that, for the foreseeable future, schoolchildren in Texas, gay and lesbian couples in Vermont, and many other civil rights plaintiffs must turn to state constitutions for vindication. They may well win their suits, but the successes they achieve will reflect the modest justice of the post-Reagan era.

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TEXT:
1. SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS Communities at odds over Weyrich-owned newspapers'
ban on gay coverage; Edict elicits praise and protest
2. SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER Gay rights activists say Pentagon survey on harassment in the military contains reasons to be hopeful ? and deeply discouraged
3. OTTAWA CITIZEN Stop whining,' clergy tells gays; Churches defend definition of marriage in same-sex bill
4. LOS ANGELES TIMES A heterosexual freshman member of Gay-Straight Club reports a decline in fear, a rise in mutual respect ? and no change in her sexual orientation

San Jose Mercury News, March 26, 2000
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(http://www.mercurycenter.com/)
Communities at odds over ban on gay coverage
Newspapers: Edict elicits praise and protest
By Patrick May Mercury News Staff Writer

PASO ROBLES ? It all started with Monica Lewinsky.

Back when the presidential scandal was in full bloom, 12-year-old Molly Weyrich was given a current-events assignment. Check the newspaper, said her parents, millionaire developer David Weyrich and his wife, Mary. But in the eyes of this conservative Christian family, all Molly found was front-page smut.

So the Weyrichs decided to start their own newspaper chain. They filled their five giveaway Gazettes with good news, upbeat news, the kind of news that nurtures hometown spirit. "We wanted nothing that would promote the things we don't believe in," said Mary. "We wanted to make a difference."

Now they have. With an edict banning stories or ads promoting the gay lifestyle or abortion, they have turned this Tuscan stretch along Highway 101 into a moral combat zone: on one side, the rural conservative north county around Paso Robles; and over the Cuesta Grade to the south, the more liberal college town of San Luis Obispo.

The actual battle began when Mary Weyrich saw an announcement recently

for a gay support group in one of the papers. She hit the roof. When she learned its leader was also pro-choice, she hit it even harder. San Luis Obispo County has been shaking ever since.

Supporters are thrilled, boosting advertising budgets and showering the Weyrichs with letters of support. "Even 'Dr. Laura' (Schlessinger) sent flowers," said Mary.

Opponents are outraged. A dozen staff members have quit. Hundreds of residents called to demand the paper not be stuffed in their mailboxes. Informal boycotts were launched. Businesses and the San Luis Obispo City Council pulled ads.

The controversy has left both sides re-evaluating the community they thought they once had. By banning a 68-word calendar item, the Weyrichs had, depending on the vantage point, strengthened the moral fiber of the county or polarized the region, opening the door wider to bias and beyond.

Standing in the lobby of the San Luis Obispo Gazette, ad sales representative Jennifer Myers offered a spirited defense of her paper. "We're like PR for the town ? we don't do murders, we don't do car wrecks, we don't do bank robberies. We're here to show what's going good, and we certainly don't want to know about the private sex lives of the people who live here."

In a twist last week, her paper hired Marc Brazil, an openly gay man and former city council candidate to cover city politics. But editor Steve Owens said the hire of Brazil, who did not return phone calls from the Mercury News for comment, is not news. "Our policy hasn't changed. We just don't cover homosexuality as news. Deaths, shootings, the gay and lesbian area, we just don't go there. We cover local sports and keep things upbeat. And Marc will join that effort with us."

[Articles reader] Becky Jorgeson [Beckyrjorgeson@aol.com] sees a darker side to all the happy news. She works in the admissions office at California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo, is a single mother of two boys and heads the gay support group whose announcement was yanked by the Weyrichs. She's not even gay. But her brother is, so Jorgeson has taken up the gay-rights gauntlet by osmosis. And she's not amused.

"The Weyrichs have dehumanized part of our community," she said. "Their policy treats gays and lesbians as if they don't exist. This was a nice place to live, but because of what the Weyrichs did everyone is angry at everyone else."

David Weyrich didn't return phone calls, though in a published interview with the Tribune in San Luis Obispo he said he knows and has hired gays, but just doesn't want the Gazettes to promote what he called "the act."

And no one is saying he didn't have the right to do what he did. The danger lies in the nuance of his actions, said Harold Higgins, publisher of the Tribune in San Luis Obispo, owned by Knight Ridder, parent company of the Mercury News. "It's a free country, and they can define family values whatever way they want," said Higgins, whose daily competes with the weeklies for advertising dollars. "But does 'family' only mean middle-class Caucasian with 2.5 kids?"

For the Weyrichs, who married in 1974, attended a Catholic college in Montana, and then began raising their eight children, their newspapers are all about nurturing what they consider a wholesome lifestyle. A recent Paso Robles Gazette included a religion piece headlined "Standing firm in times of moral relativism" and a feature on "Rustlin' up grub the old-fashioned way."

The fact that not a word about sexual orientation appeared in the 52 pages, said Pastor Dale German of the local Church of the Nazarene, counter-balances the other local media, which he feels condone the homosexual lifestyle by writing about it. In the end, he said, it's all a wash.

"We all share this little town together," he said, "and we all need to respect each other's opinions. But we're not going to give up our position, because it's God's position and we can't change that."

The Weyrichs' publishing philosophy should come as no surprise to those who know them. David Weyrich is an investor in Catholic Family Radio, a new for-profit and politically conservative network of stations around the country that trumpets an anti-abortion message.

Though the network appears to heed Pope John Paul II's call for Catholics to expand the use of media to spread their faith, it also has proven controversial. Some Catholics feel its moralist rap is too hard-line. The archbishop of Milwaukee went so far as to say Catholic Family Radio was a network non grata in his archdiocese.

The Weyrichs, who originally made their money from the billboard business, are also longtime contributors to an anti-abortion "pregnancy support center" in Atascadero, home of one of their Gazettes.

These bits of Weyrich biography have been widely disseminated about town, fueling the angst among those who suspect something more sinister lurks behind the editorial policy. The Gazette masthead promises "Hometown Journalism at Its Best" and vows to "inform, entertain, teach, improve thought, and inspire achievement."

But to exclude any mention of whole quarters of that community smacks of hypocrisy to Ron Bast. The former editor of the Atascadero Gazette was the columnist behind "Blast from the Bast" before he quit over the ban, claiming the Weyrichs had misled him and others.

"They dress themselves up with all this nice fluffy family-value stuff, but their real message is exclusion," said Bast. "If they want to call it

the Christian Gazette, fine. They can put a little fish on the cover and stop sticking it in people's mailboxes against their will."

The worry, say Weyrichs' detractors, is that one bias will simply beget a larger one. "Who's next?" said Bast. "It's anybody's guess. How about people 'living in sin'?"

To avoid the subject of abortion strikes Heather Mendel of the local Planned Parenthood chapter as a troubling disservice to area residents. "In fairness to readers, you should cover all issues of importance and keep your opinions on the opinion page," she said. "Hopefully, in a mature community, people can decide what they want to think without someone censoring or filtering the news for them."

But for every critic in the county there is a voice of gratitude. Advertisers, especially in Paso Robles, rushed to the Weyrichs' defense. Shawn Varner, owner of a local bike shop where the Weyrichs have bought wheels for their kids, wore a "Got Christ?" baseball cap the other day as he attended to customers.

"It's David's paper, and he can do what he likes," said Varner. "I don't want to sound homophobic ? I support the AIDS Ride, and my college roommate was gay and he was the best roommate I've ever had, except for my wife. I feel that writing about the homosexual lifestyle is like promoting it, and that's wrong, just like murder's wrong."

Some argue that, in fact, a sense of community has been invigorated by the Weyrichs taking a stand. After first polarizing people, the edict has "united us all by creating dialogue, on our buses, in our offices, and around our breakfast tables," said Susan Stewart, who quit in protest as managing editor of San Luis Obispo Magazine, another Weyrich property hit by the ban. "And no matter whose side you're on, it's the dialogue that's important."

Rose Monroe is waiting for her dialogue with the Weyrichs to begin. After 80 years, many of them spent as a journalist, Monroe settled in at the Paso Robles Gazette last year as a consumer writer who would alert her readers to shopping bargains. She loved her job. So she thought long and hard before she walked away from her readers. "After 80 years of life," she said, "I've learned you don't do things in a hurry."

Monroe sat in her small golf-course condo the other day, visibly saddened by the whole affair. "I'll miss the writing," she said. "It's tough at my age to find ego gratification like that. But a newspaper has to include all voices in a community, or else it's just not a newspaper."

A veteran reporter, Monroe said she can see both sides of this story. She knows many of her neighbors, along with many Americans, feel the world is going downhill fast. She knows people are threatened by things they don't understand. She knows they desperately want to hold on to a sense of

community. And she knows firsthand how a newspaper can serve as the glue to hold that spirit together.

But just as German could never back off his position that homosexuality and abortion are sins against God, neither could Monroe keep writing for the Gazette.

"If the Weyrichs changed their policy and admitted they'd made a mistake, I'd go back," she said. "Because you know, forgiveness is a very important part of life."

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Activists say military gay report a mixed bag

By Michael Dougan and Ryan Kim of the Examiner staff

Gay rights activists say a major Pentagon survey on harassment in the military contains reasons to be hopeful ? and, at the same time, deeply discouraged.

Most disturbing, noted San Francisco resident Keith Meinhold, whose 15-year Navy career ended after he revealed his homosexuality, are the numbers reported by the survey.

The study released Friday in Washington revealed that 80 percent of some 70,000 military personnel surveyed have heard some type of anti-gay remark in the past year, while 37 percent have witnessed or experienced harassment.

"We're talking about 26,000 people" who saw or suffered from harassment, said Meinhold. "If you apply that across the Department of Defense as a whole, it's a huge figure."

Tom Paniccia, a former Air Force staff sergeant who was discharged because he was gay, said he was surprised the rate of people who said they had heard anti-gay remarks wasn't higher.

"There is a tremendous amount of derogatory, uninformed remarks," said Paniccia, who now lives and works in San Jose. "These are epithets being said about people like myself."

Meinhold also said the Pentagon's decision to release the information on a Friday afternoon made him doubt how serious the military was about fixing the situation.

"That's one of the ways to bury a story," he said.

Defense Secretary William Cohen said Friday he planned to appoint a special military oversight council to combat anti-gay harassment in the ranks. Cohen said he was surprised by the results of the survey, taken at military installations worldwide.

The figures didn't shock the Washington-based Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a 6-year-old legal defense and watchdog organization that has helped 2,200 service men and women who suffered after being perceived

as
gay.

The Pentagon survey "simply corroborates what we have been telling them for the last six years," said Dixon Osburn, co-executive director. "This is the first time that the Pentagon is recognizing that it has a very serious problem on its hands."

"Dont ask, don't tell' blamed

He said Cohen's action plan "sends an appropriate message that it's going to be taken very seriously by the Pentagon."

Eventually, said Osburn, "the privates in the field ..... need to know that they are going to be held accountable (for anti-gay behavior) and that it's OK to report harassment."

Current policy forbids the military from asking the sexual orientation of its members, but allows the involuntary discharge of those who publicly proclaim their homosexuality.

That, said Osburn, makes the military a unique environment, even though anti-gay bigotry exists in the civilian world as well. "There's no other law outside of the military that says you can be fired if you're gay," he claimed.

That so-called "don't ask-don't tell" practice lies at the heart of the harassment found in the survey, said Meinhold.

"I think the systemic problem is not just harassment," he said. "It's the policy itself."

Efforts over racism lauded

Paniccia, who sued the Air Force over his dismissal and won, said the "don't ask-don't tell" policy was too ambiguous and allowed commanders great leeway in how they administer it. In some cases, it allows some officials to conduct witch-hunts in search of gays, he said.

"There is a tremendous disparity between the original intent of the policy and the reality," said Paniccia. "The reality is a particularly homophobic commander can interpret the policy any they want."

Meinhold believes a change in attitude at the top can make a real difference among the rank-and-file.

"I look at the military's effort to combat racism," he said. "While it still exists in the ranks, they have not only made people aware that they cannot make racist comments, they've also educated service members that racism is counter to good order and discipline."

Paniccia, while optimistic, said he would wait to see what progress, if any, occurred.

"Actions speak louder than words," he said. "A lot of rhetoric has occurred for a long time, but there have been a lot of empty promises."

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'Stop whining,' clergy tells gays

Churches defend definition of marriage in same-sex bill

Juliet O'Neill, The Ottawa Citizen

A leading Canadian Roman Catholic churchman says gays and lesbians should not feel slighted by the last-minute addition of a heterosexual definition of marriage to proposed legislation extending rights and benefits to same-sex couples.

Msgr. Peter Schonenbach, secretary general of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in an interview that society was prepared to extend marital rights to common-law couples "out of compassion," but that Parliament had not intended to pave the way for gay and lesbian marriage.

Responding to gay rights champions who say the "one man, one woman" marriage amendment was prompted by religious and other bigotry and had relegated gays and lesbians to second-class status, Msgr. Schonenbach noted that as a churchman, he is celibate and "I don't feel in any way that I have a second-class status." Nor should gays and lesbians feel second-class because they are excluded from legal marriage, he added.

"It does not demean them," echoed Brian Stiller, a leader of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. He said gays and lesbian lobbyists should "stop whining" about the affirmation of long-held views of marriage and appreciate their success in winning the battle for equal rights with common-law couples. "We're tired of their whining," he said.

Mr. Stiller described the state of marriage in Canada as a "battered," though not endangered, institution. He insisted the government had inserted the marriage amendment into the new law for reasons of clarity and not out of fear. "It simply affirms a social category as being important and useful. Marriage has always been about men and women living together."

Their comments were made in interviews after the Commons justice committee sent the legislation back to the Commons on Friday for final approval.

The bill, giving the same income tax, pension and other rights to gay and heterosexual common-law couples, was amended to include a government definition of marriage to placate some backbench Liberals, some of whom oppose the law in principle.

Msgr. Schonenbach said the Catholic Church would have liked a stronger amendment that carried more legal weight than a statement clarifying that the legislation does not change the traditional definition of marriage.

"On the other hand, we sympathize with the lawmakers who are trying to respond and hopefully this will move the envelope in the right way," he said.

Msgr. Schonenbach said the Church opposes same-sex marriage because it sends the wrong signal to society. "We're just saying that society should keep the notion of marriage because families are the cells that produce citizens."

Brent Hawkes, pastor at Metropolitan Community Church, an ecumenical church in Toronto, who presides over at least 20 gay and lesbian wedding

ceremonies annually, said marriage was originally intended for procreation "but we've moved far past that, long, long ago."

He accused Catholic Church leaders of "hiding their bigotry" about homosexuality behind a call to extend common-law marital benefits to all needy interdependent couples, whether or not they have a conjugal relationship. Parliament, he said, "had knuckled under [to] the religious right."

Mr. Hawkes said the bill was better before the marriage definition was added. "Now, it's an anti-marriage bill for gays and lesbians as opposed to an equal rights bill for same-sex benefits," he said. "I think that's sad."

John Fisher, a lawyer and head of EGALE, an organization that campaigns for same-sex rights, noted that all religions are not monolithic in opposition to same-sex marriage. The United Church, he said, had provided covenanting services ? in which vows of commitment are exchanged before friends and family ? to gays and lesbians. Some Anglican churches also sought to provide such services, he said.

"Marriage has, over time, adapted to meet the needs of equality and it will do so for gays and lesbians as well," Mr. Fisher said.

He predicted the courts will rule the legal definition of marriage as heterosexual-only unconstitutional within five to seven years.

Los Angeles Times, March 26, 2000
Times Mirror Square, Los Angeles, CA, 90053
(Fax 213-237-7679 or 213-237-5319) (E-MAIL: letters@latimes.com)
(http://www.latimes.com)

Gay-Straight Club That Breeds . . . Success

Schools: A heterosexual freshman member in New England reports a decline in fear, a rise in mutual respect--and no change in her sexual orientation.

By ALEXANDRA EARLY

I'm 15, female and a freshman in high school. If the posters of male models, movie stars and rock singers plastered on the walls of my room are any indication, I'm definitely heterosexual. Nevertheless, when we all had to choose an after-school club to join last fall, I picked the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at Arlington High School near Boston.

I knew that this might lead some of my classmates to think that I was a lesbian. But I joined the GSA anyway because I wanted to be with other kids who thought it was important to have a more tolerant atmosphere at our high school. Since I joined, and for the five years that the club has existed, that's exactly what it has done: promote tolerance. Which is why I'm amazed and disturbed by the controversy over a similar club at El Modena High School in Orange County.

One of the things that our GSA does not do is provide a public forum for people, either straight or gay, to talk about their private sex lives or practices. No one has the kind of discussions that many parents wouldn't approve of. Compared to what you hear on the radio every day or see on TV or at the movies, it's all pretty tame.

The atmosphere of our meetings is free of pressure. Yes, the club does give support to kids who feel they're gay but are too afraid to say anything about it yet to their parents or other relatives. But there's no preaching that you should be a lesbian because men are evil and women make better partners. I haven't gotten, nor do I expect to get, a single call from a lesbian asking me out on a date. Nor do gay guys try to seduce straight members of the group. I have no more or less interest in being gay now than I did before I joined.

Influenced by the GSA, however, our high school athletic department sponsored an evening meeting for everyone on school teams ? both boys and girls, plus their parents ? to discuss the problem of homophobic language and attitudes in sports. More than 500 people attended. Among the speakers was a varsity football captain from another school who is gay and the mother of a boy who committed suicide after being hazed and harassed.

This educational event did a lot to challenge stereotypes about homosexuality and make anti-gay remarks and behavior a lot more unacceptable.

I don't want my gay friends walking the school corridors in fear or worrying about getting beat up on the way home because they're being harassed by some bully. I don't want them or anyone else my age to feel so helpless and alone that they are driven to suicide. That's why I hope that the Gay-Straight Alliance at El Modena High School survives the current controversy and is able to do what our club has done. We haven't changed everybody's minds and don't expect to because what people think about homosexuality is their own business. But we do now have a school where peer pressure affects ? in a positive way ? what more people say and do. This means that our school is a better place for everyone to learn and grow.

? Alexandra Early Is a Ninth-grader in Arlington, Mass.

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<li><a href="http://cnn.com/SPECIALS/2000/cnn20/">CNN at 20: Daily Memories of
CNN's first 20 years</a>
<li><a href="http://cnn.com/ELECTION/2000/">For the latest on Election 2000</a>


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<B>Moscow goe
s to polls as Russia chooses a president</B>

Moscow went to the polls early Sunday as voters turned out to pick a president

in an election expected to give former KGB spy Vladimir Putin victory over 10
rivals.

Election officials said early indications were that the
turnout was high. That would be good news for Putin -- enabling him to win
without the need for a second ballot.

Border guards on the Far
Eastern peninsula of Chukotka, across the Bering Strait from Alaska, were among

the first to vote when polls opened.

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<B>Clinton in
Geneva for Mideast peace talks with Syria's Assad</B>

U.S. President Bill Clinton arrived before dawn Sunday fresh from a tour of
South Asia for a summit with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad aimed at
restarting stalled Israeli-Syrian peace talks.

The ailing 69-year-old

Syrian leader, who rarely travels abroad, arrived in Geneva on Saturday evening

amid optimism among some Arab diplomats that he was ready for a breakthrough in

negotiations with Israel.

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• Clinton in Geneva for Mideast peace talks with Syria's
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• Constitutional amendment offers Pinochet further immun
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• Iraq decides to boost exports ahead of key OPEC meetin
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<B>Clinton in
Geneva for Mideast peace talks with Syria's Assad</B>

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South Asia for a summit with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad aimed at
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The ailing 69-year-old

Syrian leader, who rarely travels abroad, arrived in Geneva on Saturday evening

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<B>Constituti
onal amendment offers Pinochet further immunity</B>

Chile's congress passed a constitutional amendment Saturday that could protect

former dictator Augusto Pinochet from prosecution -- even if he is stripped of

the immunity he now enjoys as a senator-for-life.

Pinochet faces 77
criminal complaints in Chile stemming from human rights abuses during his
reign, and a judge probing the complaints, Juan Guzman, has requested that the

Santiago Court of Appeals lift that immunity so Pinochet can stand trial.

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<A NAME="world4"></A>
<B>Iraq decid
es to boost exports ahead of key OPEC meeting</B>

In an apparent attempt to grab the initiative from OPEC, senior Oil Ministry
officials said Saturday that Iraq will boost exports by about 700,000 barrels a

day in the coming few weeks.

Word of the plan to increase exports from

1.6 million barrels a day to at least 2.3 million barrels a day comes as major

oil producers are gathering in Vienna to review output levels.

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• Thousands crowd Mystic Seaport to watch launch of Amistad
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• Inmates paid for filling out census forms
• Same-sex unions at issue during meeting of Reform rabbis<
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<A NAME="us1"></A>
<B>Report: We
lsh hackers knew Bill Gates' credit details</B>

A teenager arrested in Wales for allegedly hacking into e-commerce Web sites
had obtained the credit card details of Bill Gates, head of Microsoft and the
world's richest man, newspapers said on Sunday.

Raphael Gray, 18, was

arrested on Saturday for Internet fraud after a joint operation between the
Federal Bureau of investigation and Welsh Police.

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<A NAME="us2"></A>
<B>Thousands
crowd Mystic Seaport to watch launch of Amistad replica</B>

More than a century ago, Sengbe Pieh led slaves aboard the Amistad in a revolt

in which they overthrew their captors in an effort to return to their
homeland.

On Saturday, the launching of a full-size replica of the
129-foot schooner gave Pieh's great-grandson hope for the future and optimism
that his ancestor's fight for freedom would soon be heard around the world.

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<A NAME="us3"></A>
<B>Inmates pa
id for filling out census forms</B>

To get its prison inmates to fill out their federal census questionnaires,
Minnesota is offering a small incentive -- $1 per form.

That's good
money for an inmate, and even with a price tag that could reach $5,600,
Minnesota officials say its a worthwhile way to reach the Census Bureau's goal

of 90 percent participation in the country's prisons.

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<A NAME="us4"></A>
<B>Same-sex u
nions at issue during meeting of Reform rabbis</B>

Reform Judaism is poised for a vote that could make it the most influential
U.S. religious group to support clergy who perform same-sex unions.

A

resolution sanctioning commitment ceremonies is expected to come up at the
Central Conference of American Rabbis convention starting Sunday in Greensboro.

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• Idaho governor seeks funds for drug clean-up costs<
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• Pentagon report reveals widespread anti-gay sentime
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• Gore looks to close education gap with Bush

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<A NAME="politics1"></A>
<B>Clinton sa
ys ruling leaves smoking curbs in Congress' court</B>

President Clinton paused during a week's trip to South Asia Saturday to note a

disappointment at home. The Supreme Court ruling that the Clinton
administration lacked authority to assign tobacco regulation to the Food and
Drug Administration leaves hopes for smoking curbs "in Congress' court,"
Clinton said.

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<A NAME="politics2"></A>
<B>Idaho gove
rnor seeks funds for drug clean-up costs</B>

Republican governors on Saturday urged Congress to reinstate funding for
cleaning up labs used to concoct dangerous methamphetamine drugs.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/ALLPOLITICS/stories/03/25/gop.radio.reut/index.htm
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<A NAME="politics3"></A>
<B>Pentagon r
eport reveals widespread anti-gay sentiment in the military</B>

A comprehensive Pentagon survey of 75,000 service members on U.S. military
bases and ships at home and abroad revealed widespread instances of anti-gay
speech and harassment, prompting Secretary of Defense William Cohen to order
military leaders to "come up with a better action plan" to implement the
Clinton Adminstration's "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/ALLPOLITICS/stories/03/24/pentagon.policy/index.ht
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<A NAME="politics4"></A>
<B>Gore looks
 to close education gap with Bush</B>

Vice President Al Gore spent a day at school on Friday, teaching civics, eating

the same cafeteria pizza fed to the students, and engaging in a bizarre drama
class exercise that campaign spokesman Chris Lehane quipped might prepare Gore

for upcoming presidential debates with Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the
presumptive GOP nominee.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/ALLPOLITICS/stories/03/24/campaign.wrap/index.html
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• Sources: Microsoft seeks to settle antitrust case</
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• USAir shutdown looms
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• CompUSA exec steps down
• Comcast opens cable lines

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<A NAME="business1"></A>
<B>Sources: M
icrosoft seeks to settle antitrust case</B>

Microsoft on Friday made an offer to settle its historic antitrust case with
the government, according to sources familiar with the
negotiations.

Three sources close to the matter on Friday said
that Microsoft -- which in November was ruled a monopoly by the judge presiding

over the landmark antitrust case brought against it by the U.S. Justice
Department and 19 states -- had offered to settle the case. Government official

are currently reviewing the details of the offer. Executives at Microsoft had
no immediate comment.

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<HR SIZE=2 WIDTH=80%>
<A NAME="business2"></A>
<B>USAir shut down looms</B>

Talks between US Airways and its flight attendants continued late in the day Friday with just hours to go before a midnight strike deadline.

"A lot of little issues had been taken care of last week and overnight, but the three major issues, wages, job security and retirement...those are still on the

table," said Scott Treibitz, a spokesman for the Association of Flight Attendants union said.

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<A NAME="business3"></A>
<B>CompUSA exec steps down</B>

CompUSA Inc. Chief Executive James F. Halpin stepped down Friday, nearly five months after saying he should be fired if a company restructuring didn't improve financial results.

Halpin, 48, was replaced by Harold F. Compton, 52, who had been chief operating officer, the nation's largest computer store chain said. Dallas-based CompUSA, which operates 218 U.S. stores, also said it was realigning several senior management positions to focus on service to customers and vendors.

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<A NAME="business4"></A>
<B>Comcast op
ens cable lines</B>

Comcast Corp., the No. 3 U.S. cable television operator, said on Friday it
plans to open its high-speed cable lines to competing Internet service
providers in a move to appease complaints from rivals and to provide more
choice to customers.

Once its exclusive contract with ExciteAtHome
Corp. expires in two years, Comcast said it would allow rival Internet
companies to gain access to its cable networks.

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• China bans online sales of audiovisual products<
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• NASA releases first 'flyover movie' of asteroid<
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• Doctor reports three pregnancies in infertile women
after using Viagra
• Free domain registration, but hurry

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<A NAME="scitech1"></A>
<B>China bans
online sales of audiovisual products</B>

In its latest effort to impose control over freewheeling electronic commerce,
China has announced rules banning online sales of imported music and videos and

excluding internationally invested Internet companies from selling any
audiovisual products.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/TECH/computing/03/25/china.internet.ap/index.html"
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<A NAME="scitech2"></A>
<B>NASA relea
ses first 'flyover movie' of asteroid</B>

A NASA robot ship has become a film director of sorts, lensing a thriller while

closely orbiting an asteroid millions of miles from Earth.

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<A NAME="scitech3"></A>
<B>Doctor rep
orts three pregnancies in infertile women after using Viagra</B>

In a small study, three of four previously infertile women who used the drug
Viagra became pregnant.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/HEALTH/women/03/23/viagra.pregnancies.02/index.htm
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<A NAME="scitech4"></A>
<B>Free domai
n registration, but hurry</B>

Want to register a domain name but cringe at the fees? One company will offer
registration for an entire year, no cost, no strings. But Web address wannabes

better hurry. RegisterFree.com is waiving its fee for only one hour Thursday
evening.

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the high-tech world?
See the CNN/IBM <A HREF="http://cnn.com/TECH/index.html
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• Carruth's defense team adds high-profile domestic exp
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• Lawyer of Lewis' co-defendant wants to keep evidence
secret
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• No. 1 seeded Tennessee defeats Virginia 77-56
• Sutton, Uresti, Lehman have big days at TPC

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<A NAME="sports1"></A>
<B>Carruth's
defense team adds high-profile domestic expert </B>

A high-profile domestic lawyer has agreed to help defend former NFL player Rae

Carruth in the custody and child support case filed against him.

David Rudolf, who is defending Carruth on a first-degree murder
charge in connection with the shooting death of Cherica Adams, asked Charlotte

lawyer Bill Diehl to help with the civil case.

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<A NAME="sports2"></A>
<B>Lawyer of
Lewis' co-defendant wants to keep evidence secret</B>

A lawyer for one of Ray Lewis' co-defendants has moved to keep secret evidence

that prosecutors turned over to attorneys for the three.

Prosecutors

turned over boxes of evidence compiled against the three men on Friday. They
wanted to file it with the court, which would likely make it public, The
Baltimore Sun reported Saturday. Attorneys representing Joseph Sweeting of
Miami, a co-defendant, asked that it be kept secret.

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<A NAME="sports3"></A>
<B>No. 1 seed
ed Tennessee defeats Virginia 77-56 </B>

A year of waiting for a chance at redemption finally is over for the Tennessee

Lady Vols.

Tamika Catchings scored 28 points as top-seeded Tennessee

beat Virginia 77-56 Saturday in the Mideast Regional semifinals of the NCAA
women's tournament. Now the Lady Vols hope to erase the disappointment of last

year's East championship loss to Duke, which cost them a chance at a fourth
straight national title.

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<a href="http://cnnsi.com/basketball/college/women/2000/ncaa_tourney/south/news
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<A NAME="sports4"></A>
<B>Sutton, Ur
esti, Lehman have big days at TPC </B>

The TPC at Sawgrass was just a pup in 1983. So was Hal Sutton.

He was

a rising star, regarded as the next Jack Nicklaus when he won The Players
Championship and added his first major int he PGA Championship. Seventeen years

later, teh course and the player seem to be getting better with age.

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• All eyes on Hollywood as Oscars ceremony nears<b
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• Salvage man gets $50,000, awards tix for finding sto
len Oscars
</td><td valign="top" bgcolor="#CCCCFF" width="50%">

• WSJ poll: Oscar goes to 'American Beauty'
• 'N Sync: All that glitters

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<A NAME="showbiz1"></A>
<B>All eyes o
n Hollywood as Oscars ceremony nears</B>

"American Beauty" is widely expected to become the next film to join this
distinguished group. It's poised to sweep the awards this weekend, ushering its

director, lead actor and actress and screenwriter into the Academy's lists of
superlatives. But the film does not have a lock on the awards, and some bettors

are still ready to wager on a few dark-horse darlings.

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<A NAME="showbiz2"></A>
<B>Salvage ma
n gets $50,000, awards tix for finding stolen Oscars</B>

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ts $50,000, awards tix for finding stolen Oscars">
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The 61-year-old junk man who rescued 52 stolen Oscars from a trash heap was
given a $50,000 reward Thursday from the shipping company that lost the
statuettes. "If anybody says honesty don't pay, send them to me," Willie

Fulgear said during a presentation outside police headquarters. "I'm a poor man

and I stumbled across, I guess, gold. And I gave it back."

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<A NAME="showbiz3"></A>
<B>WSJ poll:
Oscar goes to 'American Beauty'</B>

In defiance of Oscar organizers, The
Wall Street Journal Friday published
the results of its poll
that showed "American Beauty" was likely to win best

picture
at the Academy Awards on Sunday. The Journal says it non-scientific

poll surveyed more than 6 percent of the Academy's voting members and
determined that the closest race will be between Denzel Washington and Kevin
Spacey for best actor.

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<A NAME="showbiz4"></A>
<B>'N Sync: A
ll that glitters</B>

'N Sync is gathering no moss this week. The boy band is featured on the cover
of the latest issue of Rolling Stone. Sunday night, it plans to perform with
Gloria Estefan on the Oscar telecast. And its single "Bye Bye Bye" is
propelling "No Strings Attached," the band's latest release.

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CREATION DATE/TIME:26-MAR-2000 11:33:11.00

SUBJECT: NC12277: GIs puzzled

TO: Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> (Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
^^^
Do not publish this item in any form without permission from the originating media operation. Do not post this item in any online forum. This is a small, free mailing list open only to my friends.
^^^

Washington Post
March 26, 2000

Some GIs Puzzled By Rules on Gays
By Steve Vogel, Washington Post Staff Writer

Eighty soldiers in battle fatigues shifted uncomfortably in the seats of the movie theater at Fort Meade. Using slides projected on the screen, their company commander, Capt. Kevin Reszka, had just presented an unexpected scenario as he opened a training session on the Army's policy toward homosexuals.

That policy is popularly known as "don't ask, don't tell": The military cannot ask about sexual orientation, and homosexuals in the ranks cannot advertise their presence. But there's more to it than that, Reszka suggested.

"You're in the chow hall, you're a lower enlisted soldier, and you overhear the soldier next to you at a nearby table mention that he's being harassed because he's come out of the closet, and that he's homosexual," Reszka said.

What to do? Report the open admission? The harassment? Answer: Both, so superiors can investigate the entire situation.

After an allegedly gay soldier was slain in Kentucky last year, training sessions like the one at Fort Meade were revamped to combat harassment of homosexuals. But the refresher course at the movie theater Wednesday turned out to be especially well-timed, because on Friday, the Pentagon inspector general released the results of a survey in which 40 percent of those in the ranks said they had witnessed or been the victim of harassment for perceived homosexuality.

"The Army has some areas we need to focus on and improve," Lt. Col. Steven Eldridge, commander of the headquarters battalion at Fort Meade, said after the report's release. "You're dealing with human beings, and we have to hold people accountable for their actions. It's an issue of discipline. It's called creating the proper command climate."

But navigating the new policies might not be easy. If the session at Fort Meade is any illustration, at least some soldiers remain confused

about "don't ask, don't tell," a policy that Reszka told his troops should include "don't harass" and "don't pursue," meaning soldiers should leave any investigation of homosexuals to superiors.

Sgt. Belinda Lowe, one of the 9,000 soldiers based at Fort Meade, wondered what she should do if she learned that a soldier is living in a homosexual "marriage." Has the soldier "told" of his orientation in violation of policy, even if he's never spoken a word? "People are going to know," Lowe noted.

Reszka pondered the example, and then turned to the representative of the base's staff judge advocate office, Capt. Julie Downey, who was sitting in the front row.

"SJ, you want to handle that one?" Reszka said, to the loud amusement of his troops.

Downey explained the policy, but Lowe seemed dissatisfied. "What I'm trying to say is, we're going to know," she said.

"The 'don't ask' only applies if there is no credible information," Reszka added, suggesting that in this instance there was such information and Lowe would have to inform superiors.

"Soldiers have a restriction on what they can tell," he said. "Soldiers are expected to keep their sexual orientation private."

Another slide was titled "Zero Tolerance for Harassment."

"Now we'll talk about 'don't harass,'" Reszka said. "That's really why we're conducting this training today. . . . Does everybody know what reprisal means?"

Everybody said they did.

The slide show concluded. After tossing out several scenarios to see how well the soldiers had mastered the material, Reszka asked, "Any questions?" There were none. "That concludes today's training," he said.

But as they filed out of the theater, some soldiers acknowledged they still were not sure about some things.

"You're always going to have questions," said Sgt. Keith Jones. "Because each situation that comes up is different. Basically, you take what they give you here, and you work from it."

Lowe said: "There's a lot more to it, the more questions you ask. We see a lot of things all the time, but we don't say anything. People watching same-sex movies with their doors open. Then what do you do?

"We're talking about harassment of a person who is a homosexual," Lowe continued. "What about a homosexual harassing you? We in the military are a team, and your peers have a lot of influence, you know what I mean? Everybody knows this person is coming on to you, and you don't want to be stuck with that stigma. If I'm in the shower and somebody comes up and starts groping me, my first instinct is not to go the the commander, my first instinct is, 'You better get off of me.'"

Lowe turned to Eldridge, who was standing nearby. "Did you hear me, sir?" she asked. "Like, if somebody just touches you?"

Eldridge nodded. "From the commander's perspective, the two issues we're dealing with here, are one . . . homosexuality is against Army policy," he said. "The second part of that is, we do not tolerate harassment on any stage. What I have to ensure is soldiers who have admitted themselves as homosexuals are not being harassed for it. The military will take appropriate action to remove them, after they have been given due process."

More work is needed, he added. "We need to make sure soldiers understand it," Eldridge said. "And a lot of it's common sense."

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<li><a href="http://cnn.com/SPECIALS/2000/aids/">AIDS: Africa in Peril</a>
<li><a href="http://cnn.com/SPECIALS/2000/cnn20/">CNN at 20: Daily Memories of
CNN's first 20 years</a>
<li><a href="http://cnn.com/ELECTION/2000/">For the latest on Election 2000</a>


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<B>Moscow goe
s to polls as Russia chooses a president</B>

Moscow went to the polls early Sunday as voters turned out to pick a president

in an election expected to give former KGB spy Vladimir Putin victory over 10
rivals.

Election officials said early indications were that the
turnout was high. That would be good news for Putin -- enabling him to win
without the need for a second ballot.

Border guards on the Far
Eastern peninsula of Chukotka, across the Bering Strait from Alaska, were among

the first to vote when polls opened.

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<B>Clinton in
Geneva for Mideast peace talks with Syria's Assad</B>

U.S. President Bill Clinton arrived before dawn Sunday fresh from a tour of
South Asia for a summit with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad aimed at
restarting stalled Israeli-Syrian peace talks.

The ailing 69-year-old

Syrian leader, who rarely travels abroad, arrived in Geneva on Saturday evening

amid optimism among some Arab diplomats that he was ready for a breakthrough in

negotiations with Israel.


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<B>Constituti
onal amendment offers Pinochet further immunity</B>

Chile's congress passed a constitutional amendment Saturday that could protect

former dictator Augusto Pinochet from prosecution -- even if he is stripped of

the immunity he now enjoys as a senator-for-life.

Pinochet faces 77
criminal complaints in Chile stemming from human rights abuses during his
reign, and a judge probing the complaints, Juan Guzman, has requested that the

Santiago Court of Appeals lift that immunity so Pinochet can stand trial.

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<A NAME="world4"></A>
<B>Iraq decid
es to boost exports ahead of key OPEC meeting</B>

In an apparent attempt to grab the initiative from OPEC, senior Oil Ministry
officials said Saturday that Iraq will boost exports by about 700,000 barrels a

day in the coming few weeks.

Word of the plan to increase exports from

1.6 million barrels a day to at least 2.3 million barrels a day comes as major

oil producers are gathering in Vienna to review output levels.

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• Thousands crowd Mystic Seaport to watch launch of Amistad
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• Inmates paid for filling out census forms
• Same-sex unions at issue during meeting of Reform rabbis<
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<A NAME="us1"></A>
<B>Report: We
lsh hackers knew Bill Gates' credit details</B>

A teenager arrested in Wales for allegedly hacking into e-commerce Web sites
had obtained the credit card details of Bill Gates, head of Microsoft and the
world's richest man, newspapers said on Sunday.

Raphael Gray, 18, was

arrested on Saturday for Internet fraud after a joint operation between the

Federal Bureau of investigation and Welsh Police.

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<A NAME="us2"></A>
<B>Thousands
crowd Mystic Seaport to watch launch of Amistad replica</B>

More than a century ago, Sengbe Pieh led slaves aboard the Amistad in a revolt

in which they overthrew their captors in an effort to return to their
homeland.

On Saturday, the launching of a full-size replica of the
129-foot schooner gave Pieh's great-grandson hope for the future and optimism
that his ancestor's fight for freedom would soon be heard around the world.

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<A NAME="us3"></A>
<B>Inmates pa
id for filling out census forms</B>

To get its prison inmates to fill out their federal census questionnaires,
Minnesota is offering a small incentive -- $1 per form.

That's good
money for an inmate, and even with a price tag that could reach $5,600,
Minnesota officials say its a worthwhile way to reach the Census Bureau's goal

of 90 percent participation in the country's prisons.

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<A NAME="us4"></A>
<B>Same-sex u
nions at issue during meeting of Reform rabbis</B>

Reform Judaism is poised for a vote that could make it the most influential
U.S. religious group to support clergy who perform same-sex unions.

A

resolution sanctioning commitment ceremonies is expected to come up at the
Central Conference of American Rabbis convention starting Sunday in Greensboro.

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• Clinton says ruling leaves smoking curbs in Congres
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• Idaho governor seeks funds for drug clean-up costs<
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• Pentagon report reveals widespread anti-gay sentime
nt in the military
• Gore looks to close education gap with Bush

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<A NAME="politics1"></A>
<B>Clinton sa
ys ruling leaves smoking curbs in Congress' court</B>

President Clinton paused during a week's trip to South Asia Saturday to note a

disappointment at home. The Supreme Court ruling that the Clinton
administration lacked authority to assign tobacco regulation to the Food and
Drug Administration leaves hopes for smoking curbs "in Congress' court,"
Clinton said.

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<A NAME="politics2"></A>
<B>Idaho gove
rnor seeks funds for drug clean-up costs</B>

Republican governors on Saturday urged Congress to reinstate funding for
cleaning up labs used to concoct dangerous methamphetamine drugs.

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<A NAME="politics3"></A>
<B>Pentagon r
eport reveals widespread anti-gay sentiment in the military</B>

A comprehensive Pentagon survey of 75,000 service members on U.S. military
bases and ships at home and abroad revealed widespread instances of anti-gay
speech and harassment, prompting Secretary of Defense William Cohen to order
military leaders to "come up with a better action plan" to implement the
Clinton Adminstration's "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/ALLPOLITICS/stories/03/24/pentagon.policy/index.ht
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<A NAME="politics4"></A>
<B>Gore looks
 to close education gap with Bush</B>

Vice President Al Gore spent a day at school on Friday, teaching civics, eating

the same cafeteria pizza fed to the students, and engaging in a bizarre drama
class exercise that campaign spokesman Chris Lehane quipped might prepare Gore

for upcoming presidential debates with Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the
presumptive GOP nominee.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/ALLPOLITICS/stories/03/24/campaign.wrap/index.html
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• USAir shutdown looms
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• CompUSA exec steps down
• Comcast opens cable lines

-Next category- <a href="#top"
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<A NAME="business1"></A>
<B>Sources: M
icrosoft seeks to settle antitrust case</B>

Microsoft on Friday made an offer to settle its historic antitrust case with
the government, according to sources familiar with the
negotiations.

Three sources close to the matter on Friday said
that Microsoft -- which in November was ruled a monopoly by the judge presiding

over the landmark antitrust case brought against it by the U.S. Justice
Department and 19 states -- had offered to settle the case. Government official

are currently reviewing the details of the offer. Executives at Microsoft had
no immediate comment.

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<A NAME="business2"></A>
<B>USAir shut
down looms</B>

Talks between US Airways and its flight attendants continued late in the day
Friday with just hours to go before a midnight strike deadline.

"A
lot of little issues had been taken care of last week and overnight, but the
three major issues, wages, job security and retirement...those are still on the

table," said Scott Treibitz, a spokesman for the Association of Flight
Attendants union said.

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<A NAME="business3"></A>
<B>CompUSA ex
ec steps down</B>

CompUSA Inc. Chief Executive James F. Halpin stepped down Friday, nearly five
months after saying he should be fired if a company restructuring didn't
improve financial results.

Halpin, 48, was replaced by Harold F.
Compton, 52, who had been chief operating officer, the nation's largest
computer store chain said. Dallas-based CompUSA, which operates 218 U.S.
stores, also said it was realigning several senior management positions to
focus on service to customers and vendors.

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<A NAME="business4"></A>
<B>Comcast op
ens cable lines</B>

Comcast Corp., the No. 3 U.S. cable television operator, said on Friday it
plans to open its high-speed cable lines to competing Internet service
providers in a move to appease complaints from rivals and to provide more
choice to customers.

Once its exclusive contract with ExciteAtHome
Corp. expires in two years, Comcast said it would allow rival Internet
companies to gain access to its cable networks.

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• NASA releases first 'flyover movie' of asteroid<
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• <a href="#scitech3">Doctor reports three pregnancies in infertile women
after using Viagra</a><br>
• <a href="#scitech4">Free domain registration, but hurry</a><br>
<br>
<a href="#Sports">-Next category-</a>      <a href="#top">
- Back to top -</a><br>
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<A NAME="scitech1"></A>
<B><font face="Helvetica, Arial, sans-serif" size="5" color="000000">China bans
 online sales of audiovisual products</font></B><br><br>
In its latest effort to impose control over freewheeling electronic commerce,
China has announced rules banning online sales of imported music and videos and

excluding internationally invested Internet companies from selling any
audiovisual products.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/TECH/computing/03/25/china.internet.ap/index.html"
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<A NAME="scitech2"></A>
<B><font face="Helvetica, Arial, sans-serif" size="5" color="000000">NASA relea
ses first 'flyover movie' of asteroid</font></B><br><br>
A NASA robot ship has become a film director of sorts, lensing a thriller while

closely orbiting an asteroid millions of miles from Earth.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/TECH/space/03/24/near.update/index.html">- FULL ST
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<A NAME="scitech3"></A>
<B>Doctor rep
orts three pregnancies in infertile women after using Viagra</B>

In a small study, three of four previously infertile women who used the drug
Viagra became pregnant.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/HEALTH/women/03/23/viagra.pregnancies.02/index.htm
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<A NAME="scitech4"></A>
<B>Free domai
n registration, but hurry</B>

Want to register a domain name but cringe at the fees? One company will offer
registration for an entire year, no cost, no strings. But Web address wannabes

better hurry. RegisterFree.com is waiving its fee for only one hour Thursday
evening.

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the high-tech world?<br>See the CNN/IBM <A HREF="http://cnn.com/TECH/index.html
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• <a href="#sports1">Carruth's defense team adds high-profile domestic exp
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• <a href="#sports2">Lawyer of Lewis' co-defendant wants to keep evidence
secret</a><br>
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<font face="Helvetica, Arial, sans-serif" size="2">
• <a href="#sports3">No. 1 seeded Tennessee defeats Virginia 77-56 </a><br
>
• <a href="#sports4">Sutton, Uresti, Lehman have big days at TPC </a><br>

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<a href="#showbiz">-Next category-</a>      <a href="#top"
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<A NAME="sports1"></A>
<B><font face="Helvetica, Arial, sans-serif" size="5" color="000000">Carruth's
defense team adds high-profile domestic expert </font></B><br><br>
A high-profile domestic lawyer has agreed to help defend former NFL player Rae

Carruth in the custody and child support case filed against him.
 <BR> <BR>David Rudolf, who is defending Carruth on a first-degree murder
charge in connection with the shooting death of Cherica Adams, asked Charlotte

lawyer Bill Diehl to help with the civil case.  <BR> <BR>

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<a href="http://cnnsi.com/football/nfl/news/2000/03/25/carruth_defense_ap/">- F
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<A NAME="sports2"></A>
<B>Lawyer of Lewis' co-defendant wants to keep evidence secret</B>

A lawyer for one of Ray Lewis' co-defendants has moved to keep secret evidence

that prosecutors turned over to attorneys for the three.

Prosecutors

turned over boxes of evidence compiled against the three men on Friday. They wanted to file it with the court, which would likely make it public, The Baltimore Sun reported Saturday. Attorneys representing Joseph Sweeting of Miami, a co-defendant, asked that it be kept secret.

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<A NAME="sports3"></A>
<B>No. 1 seed
ed Tennessee defeats Virginia 77-56 </B>

A year of waiting for a chance at redemption finally is over for the Tennessee

Lady Vols.

Tamika Catchings scored 28 points as top-seeded Tennessee

beat Virginia 77-56 Saturday in the Mideast Regional semifinals of the NCAA women's tournament. Now the Lady Vols hope to erase the disappointment of last

year's East championship loss to Duke, which cost them a chance at a fourth straight national title.

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<a href="http://cnnsi.com/basketball/college/women/2000/ncaa_tourney/south/news
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<A NAME="sports4"></A>
<B>Sutton, Ur
esti, Lehman have big days at TPC </B>

The TPC at Sawgrass was just a pup in 1983. So was Hal Sutton.

He was

a rising star, regarded as the next Jack Nicklaus when he won The Players
Championship and added his first major int he PGA Championship. Seventeen years

later, teh course and the player seem to be getting better with age.

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• All eyes on Hollywood as Oscars ceremony nears<b
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• Salvage man gets $50,000, awards tix for finding sto
len Oscars
</td><td valign="top" bgcolor="#CCCCFF" width="50%">

• WSJ poll: Oscar goes to 'American Beauty'
• 'N Sync: All that glitters

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<A NAME="showbiz1"></A>
<B><font face="Helvetica, Arial, sans-serif" size="5" color="000000">All eyes o
n Hollywood as Oscars ceremony nears</font></B><br><br>
"American Beauty" is widely expected to become the next film to join this
distinguished group. It's poised to sweep the awards this weekend, ushering its

director, lead actor and actress and screenwriter into the Academy's lists of
superlatives. But the film does not have a lock on the awards, and some bettors

are still ready to wager on a few dark-horse darlings.

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<a href="http://CNN.com/2000/SHOWBIZ/Movies/03/24/oscars.advancer/index.html">-
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<B><font face="Helvetica, Arial, sans-serif" size="5" color="000000">Salvage ma
n gets $50,000, awards tix for finding stolen Oscars</font></B><br><br>
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ts $50,000, awards tix for finding stolen Oscars">
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The 61-year-old junk man who rescued 52 stolen Oscars from a trash heap was
given a $50,000 reward Thursday from the shipping company that lost the
statuettes. "If anybody says honesty don't pay, send them to me," Willie
Fulgear said during a presentation outside police headquarters. "I'm a poor man
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and I stumbled across, I guess, gold. And I gave it back."

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<HR SIZE=2 WIDTH=80%>
<A NAME="showbiz3"></A>
<B>WSJ poll:
Oscar goes to 'American Beauty'</B>

In defiance of Oscar organizers, The
Wall Street Journal Friday published
the results of its poll
that showed "American Beauty" was likely to win best

picture
at the Academy Awards on Sunday. The Journal says it non-scientific

poll surveyed more than 6 percent of the Academy's voting members and
determined that the closest race will be between Denzel Washington and Kevin
Spacey for best actor.

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<A NAME="showbiz4"></A>
<B>'N Sync: A
ll that glitters</B>

'N Sync is gathering no moss this week. The boy band is featured on the cover
of the latest issue of Rolling Stone. Sunday night, it plans to perform with
Gloria Estefan on the Oscar telecast. And its single "Bye Bye Bye" is
propelling "No Strings Attached," the band's latest release.

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CREATION DATE/TIME:28-MAR-2000 19:48:37.00

SUBJECT: Articles 3.28.00.3

TO: "undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov ("undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
1. CONTRA COSTA TIMES Editorial: The military's "don't change a thing, and
if you see harassment, don't do anything about it" policy
2. DAILY NEBRASKAN Professor recognized for contributions to GLBT community
3. DAILY NEBRASKAN Letter: Stress, tension and hatred (that's what gays in
the military would cause)
4. LINCOLN JOURNAL-STAR Brandon Teena's mother is bitter about Hillary Swank's Oscar acceptance speech
5. LINCOLN JOURNAL-STAR Falls City awards mixed reviews to "Boys Don't Cry"
6. CONSERVATIVE NEWS "Focus on the Family" Holds Vermont Accountable for "Attack on Marriage"

Contra Costa Times, March 28, 2000
Box 5088, Walnut Creek, CA, 94596
(Fax 925-933-0239)
(Online mailer: http://www.hotcoco.com/contact_us/letters.htm)
(http://www.hotcoco.com)
Editorial: A 'Don't Look' Policy

The American military appears to have misunderstood its "don't ask, don't tell" policy toward gays in uniform. According to a new report, the military, including some of its officers and the majority of its soldiers, thinks it is working under a "don't change a thing, and if you see harassment, don't do anything about it" policy.

The Pentagon inspector general's report, released Friday, is a devastating indictment of the military's inaction regarding mistreatment of gays who serve the nation in uniform. Since 1993, the military has been ostensibly under a policy known as "don't ask, don't tell," which allows gays to serve in the military so long as they don't reveal their sexual orientation. Prior to "don't ask, don't tell," the military had sought to uncover gays and block them from serving.

Last December, President Clinton acknowledged that the new policy was "out of whack." The inspector general's report confirmed that view. The worldwide survey of 71,500 service personnel found 80 percent of respondents saying that they had heard offensive comments toward gays in the past year.

Thirty-seven percent witnessed harassment, which includes everything

from
insults to physical assaults to career discrimination. These incidents can,
and have escalated to murder: Last summer in Kentucky, a soldier who shouted
anti-gay epithets beat to death with a baseball bat a fellow soldier he
believed to be gay.

The most disturbing aspect of the report is the belief among some in the
military that officers are looking the other way when harassment occurs.
Officers set the tone.

Defense Secretary William Cohen, who ordered the survey, is vague on what
to do about it. He has ordered a "working group" of civilian and military
officials to create an action plan to fight such harassment. The plan is due
July 31.

Cohen may have hit on the depth of the problem when he said, "We have no
way of knowing the extent to which the results of this survey reflect a
larger societal issue." In other words, what is going on in the military
vis-?-vis gays reflects the attitudes of the at-large culture.

If Cohen is right about that, and we suspect he is, the military has its
work cut out. Dislike of and antipathy to homosexual behavior is still
bedrock in sizable segments of the mainstream American culture.

The culture of the armed services is even more deeply rooted in old
notions of machismo and has fought against women and homosexuals in the
military. There have been moves afoot for 20 years to change that, but it is
going to take even more time, perhaps a generation.

Nothing will change, however, unless the leadership works to change it.
"We simply cannot tolerate harassment in the armed forces," Cohen wrote the
Pentagon brass. "Harassment of our service members for any reason seriously
undermines the good order and discipline that is critical to an effective
fighting force."

With this inspector general's report, Cohen has knocked the ball into the
Pentagon's court. It is now up to our military leaders to show that they
mean business about tolerance in the military. We call on them to do so,
swiftly and forcefully.

Daily Nebraskan, March 28, 2000
University of Nebraska-Lincoln,
1400 R Street - Room 34,Lincoln,NE,68588-0448
(Fax: 402-472-1761) (E-MAIL: dn@unl.edu)
(http://www.dailyneb.com)

Professor recognized for contributions to GLBT community

By Margaret Behm, Staff writer

For the first time, people who have stood up for the gay community were
officially recognized by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Vernon Williams, an educational psychology professor and career

counselor
at UNL, was presented with the Outstanding Contributions to the Gay, Lesbian,
Bisexual and Transgendered Community Award by the chancellor on Monday in the
Nebraska Union.

"I was overwhelmed," said Williams, a member of the UNL committee for GLBT concerns. "I really wasn't expecting it, and I was very honored by it."

Williams, who is also president of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, received a plaque and $1,000 will be given to the department or program
on campus of his choice. He said he is undecided on who the money will be given to. His name will also be on a plaque in Chancellor James Moeser's office.

Nick Wolff, a member of the Sexual Orientation Advisory Council, said he
was pleased that Williams valued the award.

"The award is important because it gives recognition to people who make contributions to the gay and lesbian community," said Wolff, a senior mechanical engineering major. "It also gives importance to the (gay) movement."

Williams' nomination was one of four received by the UNL Committee for GLBT Concerns. The three other nominees received a certificate of recognition.

Pat Tetreault, co-chairwoman of the committee, applauded the efforts of everyone who stands up for the gay community.

"It takes courage and leadership to work towards a more inclusive and safe environment for GLBT people," said Tetreault, sexuality education coordinator for the University Health Center.

The gay community is not treated equally on this campus, Williams said.

"The GLBT community is a group of students, faculty and staff who are not
recognized or given equal rights," he said. "To have some recognition of their needs is crucial."

People sometimes face uncomfortable situations because of words spoken on
this campus, Williams said.

"The words that people use still are not welcoming," he said. "Words like fag and queer make it clear that GLBT people are not welcome."

People aren't careful about what they say because either they don't know
a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered person, or they don't realize they
know one, Williams said.

On the other hand, sometimes those people don't want others to know about
their sexual orientation because of negative words and actions, he said.

"People are afraid of what others will say if they find out, so they don't let people know they're gay," he said.

Kristin Grosskopf, chairwoman of the selection committee, said there are
still many obstacles to overcome.

"There's a lot of hate and ignorance out there," said Grosskopf, a

graduate student at UNL. "Institutions are set up to exclude gay people."

Denial of domestic partner benefits is an example of how members of the gay community don't have equal rights, Grosskopf said.

"That's something that other people take for granted, that their spouses can have medical benefits at a reasonable cost," she said.

Williams said there have been many changes for him and the university since he came here 35 years ago. He said he didn't even understand what issues surrounded being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered when he came to UNL.

Williams said he plans to continue working for the rights of others.

"People whose sexual orientation isn't the same as mine, don't enjoy the same rights as I do," he said. "I'm going to keep working to see that they do."

Daily Nebraskan, March 28, 2000
Letter: Stress, tension and hatred

Being in the military and accepting other's sexual identity, I can understand when people say that homosexuals should have the right to serve openly in our armed forces. Although I wish it could be true, I don't agree.

Unfortunately, in today's society not everybody accepts or even tolerates the fact that some people are homosexual. Although being homosexual doesn't effect someone's ability to "blow shit up or kill people," it does have an effect on the people around him or her. This is evident in the homosexual-related killings that have occurred in the military.

The military is about teamwork, and if something compromises that, the mission may not be accomplished. Because gay soldiers generally aren't tolerated by the other soldiers with whom they work, a lot of stress, tension and hatred is created. These things break down team cohesiveness and the ability to complete the mission. Ultimately the effectiveness of the military would break down if homosexuals had the right to serve. For now we must stick with the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy.

? Sharity Czolgos, senior, secondary education

Lincoln Journal Star, March 28, 2000
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P. O. Box 81609, Lincoln, NE, 68501
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Mom outraged over Oscar
BY JOE DUGGAN Lincoln Journal Star

As Hollywood honored Hilary Swank with an Oscar for best actress Sunday, JoAnn Brandon watched from her Lincoln apartment and felt the fury coming back.

For months, she's been angry about "Boys Don't Cry," saying the film gives a "fictional" account of events leading to the Dec. 31, 1993, murder of her daughter, Teena Brandon, and two others. She's irritated by those who profit from her daughter's life and death while a Teena Brandon funeral fund receives meager contributions.

And Swank's Oscar acceptance was too much.

"That set me off," Brandon said Monday. "She should not stand up there and thank my child. I get tired of people taking credit for what they don't know." Teena Brandon, 21, of Lincoln, spent time in Falls City, where she posed as a man and dated women. She was beaten and raped by two drinking buddies, John Lotter and Marvin Thomas Nissen, on Christmas Eve 1993. A week later, the men shot and stabbed her, Phillip DeVine, 22, of Fairfield, Iowa, and Lisa Lambert, 24, of Humboldt, inside Lambert's rented farmhouse.

Four years ago, JoAnn Brandon stood tearfully before television cameras at the sentencing of her daughter's killers. Since then, she's largely maintained privacy, denying most interview requests as interest intensified with the 1998 documentary film "The Brandon Teena Story" and last year's dramatic feature, "Boys Don't Cry." Brandon ended her silence Monday. While she called the documentary "good," she considered "Boys Don't Cry" a hurried, low-budget film that should have never claimed to be true.

"I am very angry," she said. "I don't understand how you can put three weeks of somebody's life up on film and win an award for it." She criticized Kimberly Peirce, the director of "Boys Don't Cry," for giving filmgoers a small slice of Teena Brandon's life: Viewers only meet the gender-confused person, with no context of her past.

Brandon said her daughter, as a young girl, was sexually molested by a man over several years. Teena Brandon began dressing in men's clothing and dating women in Lincoln as a defense strategy. Mother and daughter saw counselors together starting in about 1991, Brandon said.

"She pretended she was a man so no other man could touch her," she said.

In past interviews, Peirce said she based key portions of the script on an interview with Lana Tisdel, a Falls City woman who dated Brandon in the weeks before the murders. JoAnn Brandon resented Tisdel being a source and said neither she, nor any of Teena Brandon's friends or family in Lincoln, were interviewed. In effect, she said, "Boys Don't Cry" is based on about a three-week period of Brandon's life.

"They don't know anything about her," JoAnn Brandon said. "They don't know she was raised in a loving home." When Brandon watched the film in a Lincoln theater in February, she was particularly angered by intimate scenes between the characters of Lana and Teena that occurred after the rape. In fact, she said, her daughter was not with Lana and was staying at Lambert's farmhouse near Humboldt after the rape, Brandon said.

Even though the film changed some facts, she said it was emotionally

devastating to view the depiction of her daughter's rape and murder.

"They don't care about her family," she said. "They just wanted a sensational story and that's what they did." Brandon watched Sunday as Swank accepted the Oscar, thanking Brandon Teena and saying: "His legacy lives on through our movie to remind us to always be ourselves, to follow our hearts, to not conform." But Brandon took the actress to task for referring to Teena Brandon as a man. She last spoke with her daughter Dec. 30, and she was clearly speaking to a woman.

"I knew who she was," she said. "She said she had to get her head back together. She wanted to come back to her old life and her old life was Teena Brandon." Now, more than six years after the murders, JoAnn Brandon continues to wage a civil court battle against Richardson County law enforcement for not arresting the rapists before the killings. Brandon, who suffers from debilitating asthma and can't work, still owes money for her daughter's funeral.

"I'm really sick and tired of people making money off my child."

? Joe Duggan can be reached at jduggan@journalstar.com or 473-7239.

? The Teena Brandon Memorial Fund is kept at West Gate Bank, 1204 W. O St., Lincoln, NE 68528-1695.

Lincoln Journal Star, March 28, 2000

Falls City awards mixed reviews to "Boys Don't Cry"

BY LARRY PEIRCE Lincoln Journal Star

FALLS CITY ? "I don't know many actresses who could have done what [Hilary Swank] did. You felt like you were right there when it was happening." ? Theater owner Virginia Ernst

"There should be a foundation for the victims' families. Their families have been shattered." ? Telemarketing worker Melissa Meyer.

"I went for curiosity's sake. This is a completely forgettable movie." ? Respiratory therapist Pat Brennan.

So went a sampling Monday of reviews for "Boys Don't Cry," a movie version of the events leading up to the Dec. 31, 1993, slaying of Teena Brandon and two others. Swank won an Academy Award Sunday night for her portrayal of Brandon.

No one, locals said, could blame Swank for taking on Brandon's troubled yet compelling tale. Meyer said the actress probably wanted to shed light on the case.

"I don't think it was to boost her career," Meyer said.

Forgotten amid the film's hoopla, she said, were the victims and their families. "They're not getting anything," Meyer said.

Since opening March 17 at River Twin Cinema in Falls City, audiences have steadily plunked down $5 for tickets, but only once did the crowd approach the 200-seat capacity. The film's run at the theater has been extended to

April 6.

Ernst said initial angst about outside protests or unwelcome crowds evaporated as she pondered whether to run the film in the area where events grew to their tragic conclusion.

Ernst said the depictions of Brandon's rape and the murders of Brandon and a friend spurred some viewers to the lobby. Some wondered why the film omitted a third murder victim.

"I've had people come out in tears," Ernst said.

Ernst, who remembered Brandon attending movies with Lana Tisdel, said Swank was a hit with many viewers. Crystal Feighner, who was picking up her child Monday from Ernst's adjoining child-care center, agreed.

"She deserved it. She really did a good job. But a lot of things could have been more accurate," Feighner said.

Still, some were oblivious to the mix of violent reality and Hollywood glamour. Along Stone Street, people visited their bankers, looked at appliances and picked up prescriptions.

Carol Jones and Freda Johannes of Hiawatha, Kan., window shopping for shoes, said they'd heard about the film on the radio but weren't inclined to see it.

"I think it gives too much information," Jones said. "It will give other people ideas."

? Larry Peirce can be reached at lpeirce@journalstar.com or (402) 228-1245.

Conservative News, 28 March, 2000
(E-Mail: shogenson@cnsnews.com)
(http://www.cnsnews.com)

Family Group Holds Vermont Accountable for "Attack on Marriage"

By Susan Jones, CNS Morning Editor

(CNSNews.com) ? A group dedicated to American families warns that "lawsuits would become Vermont's largest export ? overtaking Ben & Jerry's ice cream and maple syrup" ? if Vermont's "civil union" bill becomes law.

The Colorado-based Focus on the Family is urging listeners of its radio broadcast to call Vermont lawmakers and hold them "accountable" for their "attack on marriage."

The Vermont House recently passed a so-called "civil union" bill, giving homosexuals the same legal benefits and privileges of traditional marriage. The bill now goes to the Vermont Senate, which is expected to pass it next month. Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, a Democrat, has promised to sign the bill, and if that happens, the law could take effect as early as September.

"What happens in Vermont is going to influence the institution of marriage in every state across the nation," said Tom Minnery, Focus on the Family vice president of public policy. "Legislators are trying to have it both ways ? to say they don't support the unpopular notion of gay marriage, but then they vote for creating a quasi-marriage system that equates homosexual partners with married couples."

Minnery accuses Vermont lawmakers of "thumbing their nose" at Vermont

citizens, who ? according to polls ? oppose homosexual marriage. Voters at recent Vermont town meetings, in non-binding referendums, overwhelmingly rejected civil unions.

"This 'civil union' bill could devastate marriage laws in the rest of this country. Homosexual couples in other states will be able to go to Vermont, be legally registered as a 'civil union,' then return to their home states to challenge their state's marriage laws," Minnery warned.

"We cannot allow Vermont to decide the fate of marriage for the rest of this country," he said.

Under Vermont's civil union bill, a homosexual couple would be able to obtain a license from their town clerk, after which they would be "united" at a "certification ceremony."

Should the relationship end, issues such as custody and the division of property would be handled by a family court judge, as is now done in heterosexual divorce cases.

The matter came to the legislature after a December ruling by the Vermont Supreme Court that homosexual couples were unconstitutionally being denied the rights and benefits available to married heterosexual couples.

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Fenceberry@aol.com (Fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:29-MAR-2000 09:29:59.00

SUBJECT: Articles 3.29.00

TO: "undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov ("undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
1. OMAHA WORLD-HERALD Three good letters, one from Articles reader Michael
Gordon, about Millard School Board's refusal to add "sexual orientation" to
their non-discrimination policy
2. FEEDBACK A&E special about Brandon Teena tonight on "American Justice"
3. SCRIPPS MCCLATCHY WESTERN SERVICE Trio of bills to expand legal benefits
to domestic partners clears its first crucial hurdle in California
4. GLASGOW RECORD & MAIL Millionaire claims "gay lobby" undermined his
efforts for a privately-financed referendum on Section 28 (no promo homo)
5. WASHINGTON POST Phuong Ly: Millenium March Shows Gays Taking Different
Roads

Omaha World-Herald, March 28, 2000
World Herald Square, Omaha, NE, 68102
(Fax 402-345-4547) (E-MAIL: pulse@owh.com)
(http://www.omaha.com/OWH)
Letter: Protect All Students

The Millard School Board, administrators and teachers have the
responsibility to create a safe school conducive to learning for all students
regardless of sexual orientation. Written words do have meaning, and stating
that current policy language "protects the rights of all students" is false
security and doesn't measure up. Stating that "the policy complies with all
federal and state laws" is an institutional cover-up for not wanting to
address an often difficult but very serious problem.

A written policy provides some visible evidence that the school district
is attempting to make its classrooms safe and provides a measure for
acceptable standards of conduct. Sometimes we humans do not treat one
another with the respect we deserve, so we do need written rules and laws
that remind us to do so.

Comparing use of the words "faggot," "queer" and "homo" to other
adolescent taunts minimizes the seriousness of what is being done. Political
and religious leaders at national and local levels condemn gays, lesbians and
bisexuals and work to deny them basic human and civil rights. People have

been beaten and murdered because of their sexual orientation.

Kudos to the real student leaders in Millard, members of the Gay Straight Alliance and others who had the courage to confront this problem, even at their own risk, and bring it before the board. The responsibility for action now clearly rests with the board and administrators.

School officials and teachers are often taken to task and asked to explain "why Johnny can't read." The response should never ever have to be that Johnny is afraid to come to school.

? Michael Gordon, Omaha [migor1@juno.com]

Letter: ACLU Wrong Here

Although the ACLU is a highly respected organization, its position on the current issue in the Millard Public Schools is flawed. First, with every right comes a reciprocal responsibility to use that right appropriately. In this case, the Millard public schools should take a stance insisting that their students and faculty do not use their freedom of speech to harm the learning environment of others.

Second, numerous Supreme Court cases show that schools are exceptions where speech is limited in the interest of the learning process. In Millard, the need for students to have a safe, productive learning environment outweighs the ability of their classmates to discriminate. Finally, Millard's policy already limits speech against race, religion, gender, etc. An addition is no more a limitation of speech than the policies that already exist.

? Nick Turner, Omaha

Letter: Students Won't Forget

It was disheartening to read over the last couple of days several letters to the editor that have put an interesting spin on the Millard debate over sexual orientation. To say that this issue is simply concerning use of the term "faggot" or "gay" is as narrow-minded as the bigotry that student leaders such as Melanie Gillis and Brett Johnson are trying to combat.

While the use of this language is the most evident example of bigotry, the students are attempting to effect an overall mind-set. By not mentioning "sexual orientation" by name in the Millard school handbook, a silent message is sent to the student body saying that harassment and discrimination are permissible. If both Omaha Public Schools and District 66 include sexual orientation in their anti-discrimination statement, why can't Millard?

It is evident that students support this measure; all one must do is look at the attendance and testimonies at last week's school board meeting. It is time for the Millard School Board to put its personal prejudices aside and listen to the students. I do not think these students will soon forget the

board's annoying evasiveness.
? Matt Whipkey, Omaha

FEEDBACK:
A&E is doing a special about Brandon Teena tonight (8 p.m. mtn). Check local listings. It's their "American Justice" feature.

Scripps McClatchy Western Service, March 28, 2000
Bills aimed at rights for domestic partners
By EMILY BAZAR, Scripps-McClatchy Western Service
SACRAMENTO, Calif. ? A trio of bills intended to expand legal benefits to domestic partners in cases of death, injury or illness cleared its first crucial hurdle Tuesday, but not without outcry from opponents who say the legislation undermines the definition of marriage between a man and a woman.
The package of bills, authored by Democratic Assembly members Sheila Kuehl, Darrell Steinberg and Gloria Romero, would offer domestic partners who are registered with the California Secretary of State's office certain legal rights currently afforded married couples.
For instance, the bills would allow registered domestic partners to make funeral arrangements for their partners; define domestic partners as "family members" so they can be consulted in the event that their partners are unable to make health care decisions; and include domestic partners among the relatives in line to inherit property if their partners die without a will.
The bills are "about life and death and our understanding of the important people surrounding the individual who should be included in decision-making about life and death matters," Romero said before the afternoon hearing of the Assembly Judiciary Committee.
The votes for all three bills passed by a 9-3 vote, with Republican Assembly members Robert Pacheco of Walnut, George House of Hughson and Dick Ackerman of Fullerton casting the "No" votes.
"No, these bills aren't marriage. I can even agree with some of the intent of fairness," House said. "But it does move in the direction of (domestic partnerships) as equals, if not the actuality, of marriage."
New legislation introduced in January opened the door for domestic partners to register with the Secretary of State, giving them hospital visitation rights. The law also offers health benefits eligibility to partners of government workers covered by the California Public Employees' Retirement System.
The authors say the bills can address hundreds of other rights now afforded to married couples:
? AB 1990 by Romero of Los Angeles would allow registered domestic partners to be included in the definition of "family member" for the purposes of making medical decisions when their partners are incapacitated.
? AB 2047 by Steinberg of Sacramento would place domestic partners in

line to inherit property if one partner dies without a will, and entitles domestic partners to be appointed as administrator of his or her deceased partner's estate.

? AB 2211 by Kuehl of Santa Monica would allow domestic partners to participate fully in conservatorship proceedings; revise the statutory will form to include domestic partners among the list of beneficiaries; allow domestic partners to decide whether partners who have died should undergo an autopsy; allow domestic partners to make funeral arrangements for their partners; allow domestic partners to have standing in wrongful-death claims; and allow them to recover damages for negligent infliction of emotional distress.

Opponents argued that the bills aren't necessary because homosexual couples already have legal remedies for these situations. For example, they can invoke durable power of attorney to make medical decisions for their partners, said Sacramento attorney Steven Burlingham, and can prepare a will to ensure their belongings go to their partners.

Kuehl's bill proved the most contentious, particularly a provision that would recognize domestic partnerships from outside the state.

Advocates of Proposition 22, the initiative on the March 7 ballot that banned recognition of same-sex marriages in California, said Kuehl's bill would essentially equate domestic partnership with marriage, subverting the will of the voters who overwhelmingly passed Proposition 22.

They argued that the legislation would allow domestic partners in California to travel to Vermont ? where the legislature may soon approve "civil unions" for homosexual couples ? and then allow them to come back to California to demand additional benefits.

"It is very arguable this will bring homosexual marriage to California," said Randy Thomasson, executive director of the Campaign for California Families. He said California couples would go to Vermont and return "and wage war in the courts to pressure for full benefits as far as they can go."

But Kuehl said her legislation merely would let visiting domestic partners from out of state have the same benefits afforded domestic partners who live here.

"It doesn't allow any benefits over and above what we would be creating here in California for any domestic partners from out of state," she said.

One person whose life would be directly affected by the bills is Gaynell Johnson, 41. About nine years ago, the Sacramento resident said she was suffering from pneumonia at home, unconscious with a temperature of 104 degrees. She said her partner at the time attempted to call her doctor, but the doctor refused to speak with her.

"My partner should not have had to be put in that situation," said Johnson, adding that she recovered after her partner treated her with herbal remedies. "These are basic human rights. It's not a matter of my

sexuality.
It's a matter of being a human being."
? Contact Emily Bazar of the Sacramento Bee in California at http:/www.sacbee.com.

Glasgow Daily Record & Sunday Mail, March 29, 2000
Anderston Quay, Glasgow, Scotland, G3 8DA
(Daily Record: editors@dailyrecord.co.uk)
(Sunday Mail: editor@features.sundaymail.co.uk)
(http://www.record-mail.co.uk/rm/)
POLL AXED
Fury over threat to Keep The Clause referendum.

Fury erupted last night as the Scots referendum on Section 28 was thrown into doubt.

Pollsters staged a last-minute rethink on whether to proceed with the historic ballot ? prompting outrage from Keep the Clause campaigners.

Tycoon Brian Souter accused the Government and the gay lobby of sabotaging the plan to stage the referendum, funded by himself and 22 high-profile backers.

The Electoral Reform Society had been lined up to carry out the referendum.

But, despite weeks of negotiation, the society's balloting arm decided to discuss the project as an emergency matter at a meeting last night.

Souter said he was "stunned" at the decision which follows mounting Government alarm over the prospect of a referendum. He accused the society's balloting wing of an "enormous breach of trust" and produced documents to prove they had agreed.

The letters showed deputy chief executive Sian Roberts had quoted a price of pounds 951,325 excluding VAT for a Scotland-wide postal ballot.

Souter also revealed he personally met ERS officials in London.

He said: "I asked them if there would be any problems with this. They said absolutely not. I am stunned they would even consider pulling out now.

"It would be an enormous breach of trust."

The Stagecoach boss said he had been told the society had crumbled to Government pressure and he added: "That is intolerable in a democracy."

He also claimed the gay lobby had managed to influence the U-turn.

Souter added: "You need to look at make-up of the society's council to work out where some of the pressure is coming from." It was a clear reference to the claimed role of gay MP and society council member Stephen Twigg.

Twigg last night denied spiking the referendum, claiming he was in favour of having a debate "as wide as possible" but did not think a referendum was the way to do it.

The ERS takes commission from privately-funded organisations and building societies as well as groups like trade unions to carry out polls.

A spokesman said normally a decision on whether to become involved in a

poll would have been taken by the Ballot Services arm. But he said because of the sensitivity of the subject and the political implications, it had been decided to discuss the issue at one of the regular meetings held between the officials.

The referendum disaster got Dewar off the hook over the major backlash he is facing from within his own party.

A number of Government figures ? right up to Cabinet level ? made it clear yesterday that they would respect the outcome of a referendum.

One Government member said: "We are not capable of dealing with a debate on that level. All the evidence shows we can't cope.

"So the result is probably a foregone conclusion. We would get beaten two or three to one."

Last night, Alex Folkes, campaigns officer for the Electoral Reform Society, claimed no agreement had ever been reached.

He said: "The balloting company have never made a decision. They were talking to Mr Souter, but they have never firmed it up."

Washington Post, March 30, 2000
1150 15th Street NW, Washington, DC, 20071
(Online Mailer:
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/edit/letters/letterform.htm)
March Shows Gays Taking Different Roads
By Phuong Ly, Washington Post Staff Writer

When hundreds of thousands of gay men and lesbians marched on Washington seven years ago, they worried that conservative, anti-gay groups would disrupt the gathering. This time around, the most bitter fighting is among gay rights leaders.

In a time of unprecedented progress for gay men and lesbians, the Millennium March for Equality scheduled for April 30 was expected to be the movement's fourth and biggest national rally ever, with organizers originally predicting it would attract 1 million people.

But now, several gay political organizations, among them the Empire State Pride Agenda in New York and Equality Illinois, say they would rather spend their time focusing on local concerns. A group of activists is calling for a boycott, accusing organizers of planning the event without enough community input, especially from people of color.

"Why are we marching?" said Diana Onley-Campbell, a District native who helped organize the march in 1987 but now is part of the boycott coalition. "This time, folks sitting in an office somewhere decided what was important for them would be important for everybody else."

Plans for the march were announced two years ago by the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political organization, and gay-friendly Metropolitan Community Church. Those groups have since apologized for not holding open forums.

But the Human Rights Campaign's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, called march opponents "obsessive and single-minded."

"It's like they've had their experience and they want to withhold it from this generation," she said. "There's a long history of marches on Washington. Anybody can call a march, and either people will come or they won't."

Gay rights activists have disagreed over strategy and issues since the movement began in 1969 with a riot between police and patrons at the Stonewall Inn, a New York City bar. But this time, the debate has been very public, playing out in the gay-oriented media. The march's staff and board have been battered by several resignations; the current director has been on the job only since November.

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Knox, who grew up in the self-proclaimed watermelon capital of the world, Cordele, Ga., hopes that this march will inspire young Georgians as he was inspired in 1987. "There were gay people on the Metro, gay people on the streets," said Knox, 39. "Walking into Lambda [Rising] bookstore was revolutionary."

While the movement has made strides, Knox said there's still much to be done, particularly in the South.

"We don't have time not to participate to bring a lot of gay folks together," he said. "We need all the help we can get."

March officials, responding to criticism that the national rally diverts attention from local issues, have promised to share lists of participants with state groups to help increase membership and get out the vote. And they've vowed to donate proceeds to help local causes. They've also said the march will give attention to gay groups serving ethnic minorities.

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But Dorena Kearney, of Philadelphia, will be far from the Mall that weekend, helping to stage Philly's first black gay-pride event.

More than 5,000 are expected for four days of workshops and parties. Kearney said she didn't know about the Millennium March until someone she invited to speak at Philadelphia's event told her.

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Will the sparring between gay rights leaders have any long-term impact?

Gay history scholars say a small showing on the Mall won't matter. "The issue of visibility has long been settled," D'Emilio said. "You would have to have been living in a cave to not realize that gay men and lesbians exist in America in significant numbers."

Whatever happens April 30, both sides agree that a post-march discussion needs to take place. But even in that, they can't resist taking potshots. Onley-Campbell, of the boycott coalition, said a small crowd would mean that people want new leadership and direction in the movement. Birch, of the Human Rights Campaign, countered that marchers might question why certain groups don't show up.

They might not have to worry about post-march discussions; many gays aren't paying attention to the controversy.

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RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> (Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:29-MAR-2000 12:39:47.00

SUBJECT: NC12296: Washington Post on MMOW mess

TO: Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> (Rex Wockner <rwockner@netcom.com> [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
^^
Do not publish this item in any form without permission from the originating media operation. Do not post this item in any online forum. This is a small, free mailing list open only to my friends.
^^

Washington Post
Washington, D.C.
March 29, 2000

March Shows Gays Taking Different Roads
By Phuong Ly, Washington Post Staff Writer

When hundreds of thousands of gay men and lesbians marched on Washington seven years ago, they worried that conservative, anti-gay groups would disrupt the gathering. This time around, the most bitter fighting is among gay rights leaders.

In a time of unprecedented progress for gay men and lesbians, the Millennium March for Equality scheduled for April 30 was expected to be the movement's fourth and biggest national rally ever, with organizers originally predicting it would attract 1 million people.

But now, several gay political organizations, among them the Empire State Pride Agenda in New York and Equality Illinois, say they would rather spend their time focusing on local concerns. A group of activists is calling for a boycott, accusing organizers of planning the event without enough community input, especially from people of color.

"Why are we marching?" said Diana Onley-Campbell, a District native who helped organize the march in 1987 but now is part of the boycott coalition. "This time, folks sitting in an office somewhere decided what was important for them would be important for everybody else."

Plans for the march were announced two years ago by the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political organization, and gay-friendly Metropolitan Community Church. Those groups have since apologized for not holding open forums.

But the Human Rights Campaign's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, called march opponents "obsessive and single-minded."

"It's like they've had their experience and they want to withhold it from this generation," she said. "There's a long history of marches on Washington. Anybody can call a march, and either people will come or they won't."

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RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Fenceberry@aol.com (Fenceberry@aol.com [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:30-MAR-2000 01:46:59.00

SUBJECT: Articles 3.29.00.8

TO: "undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov ("undisclosed-recipients:;"@eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
1. DENVER POST Editorial: Reason enters gay debate
2. HARTFORD COURANT Column: Stand against gays mars scout's honor
3. CONTRA COSTA TIMES Editorial: A "Don't Look" policy
4. BUFFALO NEWS The straight and narrow; The road to acceptance is a long one for Niagara County's gays and lesbians
5. AKRON BEACON JOURNAL Opinion: Vermont throws a curve ball on gay marriages

DENVER POST, March 29, 2000
650 15th Street, Denver, CO, 80202
(Fax 303-820-1369) (E-MAIL: Letters@denverpost.com)
(http://www.denverpost.com)
Editorial
Reason enters gay debate

As an increasingly conservative Colorado Legislature prepares to ban gay marriage, a voice of reason has offered a logical amendment that will leave the ban intact while allowing cities and companies to continue their own policies regarding gay and lesbian couples.

In essence, the amendment says simply that the gay marriage ban won't affect city or county laws or agreements between companies and their employees.

The change, offered by Sen. Ed Perlmutter, D-Golden, initially caused a stir and stalled progress on HB 1249. That's because his language had referred to "domestic partnership" agreements, a reference that evidently horrified Perlmutter's Republican counterparts.

But with deletion of that phrase, as proposed by Senate President Ray Powers, R-Colorado Springs, the amendment won Senate approval.

The amendment is important, as it will protect cities, counties and companies from legal attacks over their recognition of same-sex unions.

The City of Denver recognizes gay unions. The city council approved a domestic-partnership law last November, and 82 same-sex couples showed up last month to register under that law. Elsewhere, though, the very idea of same-sex marriages evokes strong sentiments, from homophobia to a desire to protect the traditional form of marriage.

California voters overwhelmingly approved an initiative this month to ban recognition of same-sex marriages.

The Hawaii Supreme Court did an about-face in December, after ruling in 1993 that a ban on gay marriages amounted to gender discrimination. The court

now says such unions cannot be allowed.

Indeed, at least 30 states have banned gay marriage, and Congress has passed the Defense of Marriage Act, denying federal recognition of same-sex marriages and allowing states to ignore such unions that were licensed elsewhere.

So far, only Vermont has shown a truly progressive attitude toward gay partnerships. The Vermont Supreme Court ruled in December that gay and lesbian couples should enjoy all benefits and privileges accorded to heterosexual couples.

The court is correct, in our view. But if Colorado is intent on banning gay marriages, the very least it can do is assure that cities, counties and companies won't be bombarded by lawsuits over their own progressive policies.

We urge the House also to approve this constructive amendment when it reconsiders HB 1249.

HARTFORD COURANT, March 29, 2000
285 Broad St., Hartford, CT, 06115
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(http://www.courant.com/)

STAND AGAINST GAYS MARS SCOUTS' HONOR

Susan Campbell can be reached at campbell@courant.com or at 860-241-6454.
SUSAN CAMPBELL

On Monday night, we roasted Fred, the outgoing leader of my son's Boy Scout troop. Current members of the troop were not allowed, so we were pretty rank in our teasing, and Fred took it with aplomb.

He was so due for the ribbing, and I mean that in a nice way.

Fred started as a Scout leader seven years ago. Since then, his family vacations have been spent at Scout camp. When Scout leaders ask adults to join the troop, they insist it will only take an hour a week. That's a gentle lie they assume you know is a lie. The weekly meeting alone is 1 1/2 hours, never mind the planning, the phone calls, the campouts and weekend trips. An hour a week becomes laughable.

What I didn't say Monday -- because it would have been too corny -- is that Fred and the other men of Troop 28 have helped raise my son. Through Scouts, Fred and other regular everyday guys change the world of young men. I get downright choked up about it.

But within Fred's troop, I am a second- tier volunteer. I've served on the finance committee and helped with merit badges; I can't bring myself to wear the official brown shirt, not until we're all welcome into the Scouting fold.

A few months ago, I heard from a different Scout leader from another town. He is gay. If his superiors within the Scout organization knew that, he would most likely meet the same fate as James Dale, a New Jersey Eagle Scout and Scout leader who was dismissed after he was quoted in his local newspaper

defending homosexual relationships. Dale's 11-year Scouting record was, from
all accounts, exemplary, but the Texas-based national organization does not
want homosexuals as leaders, the fear being that homosexual men cannot serve
as role models for young men.

Last August, the New Jersey Supreme Court said state anti-discrimination
laws prevented the Boy Scouts from excluding gays.

Sadly, the Boy Scouts are fighting back. They say the state court's
ruling interferes with their First Amendment right of ``expressive
association." Dale's case should be argued in front of the U.S. Supreme
Court in the next few weeks.

The Scout leader who called me did so because he was bothered by the
hypocrisy of his group. Me, too. The Scout leader says he is a master of
pronouns, no ``he's" enter his speech, and he deflects questions about his
personal life, on the few occasions they arise. Other leaders know he's gay,
and to them it's no big deal, but they don't discuss or even allude to it in
meetings with council leaders.

If word gets around, the Scout leader is out -- and there aren't many
parents in his town willing to let that hour a week eat up their free time.
Not only would the troop suffer, the Scout leader would most likely make the
news, and people he's never met would get to chew over his personal life.
There are valid reasons to do the pronoun dance.

I talk to my son about the Boy Scout ban, which is not a topic that comes
up naturally. I force the issue. A man is a man is a man.

Roughly 65 percent of the country's Scout units meet in churches; the
Catholic Church is the largest religious sponsor of scouting in New Jersey.
Nevertheless, certain churches have been strangely reticent in addressing
this human-rights issue, although there are a few brave souls in the Central
Conference of American Rabbis, meeting this week in North Carolina, who are
willing to wade into the fray. Give credit, too, to the Metropolitan
Community Churches, like the one in Hartford, where same-sex marriages are
performed, even though the state does not sanction the unions. A gay man
started the first Metro church in 1968 in Los Angeles. He wanted to openly
worship God. Meanwhile, among mainstream churches, months of meetings can go
by before the members agree to be ``open and affirming." Not long ago, a
friend of mine said that his church -- a big Protestant one -- decided they
were open but not affirming. Or perhaps it was affirming but not open.
Please.

It's all part of the same picture. Can a gay or lesbian form legal
unions? The Vermont House says yes. Can they worship openly? Certain
God-fearing people believe so. Can they give back to their community and work
with youth? One day, we'll look back at that particular discussion and be
ashamed of ourselves. I hope it's soon.

CONTRA COSTA TIMES, March 28, 2000
Box 5088, Walnut Creek, CA, 94596
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(Online mailer: http://www.hotcoco.com/contact_us/letters.htm)
(http://www.hotcoco.com)

A "DON'T LOOK" POLICY

THE AMERICAN MILITARY appears to have misunderstood its "don't ask, don't tell" policy toward gays in uniform. According to a new report, the military, including some of its officers and the majority of its soldiers, thinks it is working under a "don't change a thing, and if you see harassment, don't do anything about it" policy.

The Pentagon inspector general's report, released Friday, is a devastating indictment of the military's inaction regarding mistreatment of gays who serve the nation in uniform. Since 1993, the military has been ostensibly under a policy known as "don't ask, don't tell," which allows gays to serve in the military so long as they don't reveal their sexual orientation. Prior to "don't ask, don't tell," the military had sought to uncover gays and block them from serving.

Last December, President Clinton acknowledged that the new policy was "out of whack." The inspector general's report confirmed that view. The worldwide survey of 71,500 service personnel found 80 percent of respondents saying that they had heard offensive comments toward gays in the past year. Thirty-seven percent witnessed harassment, which includes everything from insults to physical assaults to career discrimination. These incidents can, and have escalated to murder: Last summer in Kentucky, a soldier who shouted anti-gay epithets beat to death with a baseball bat a fellow soldier he believed to be gay.

The most disturbing aspect of the report is the belief among some in the military that officers are looking the other way when harassment occurs. Officers set the tone.

Defense Secretary William Cohen, who ordered the survey, is vague on what to do about it. He has ordered a "working group" of civilian and military officials to create an action plan to fight such harassment. The plan is due July 31.

Cohen may have hit on the depth of the problem when he said, "We have no way of knowing the extent to which the results of this survey reflect a larger societal issue." In other words, what is going on in the military vis-a-vis gays reflects the attitudes of the at-large culture.

If Cohen is right about that, and we suspect he is, the military has its work cut out. Dislike of and antipathy to homosexual behavior is still bedrock in sizable segments of the mainstream American culture.

The culture of the armed services is even more deeply rooted in old notions of machismo and has fought against women and homosexuals in the

military. There have been moves afoot for 20 years to change that, but it is going to take even more time, perhaps a generation.

Nothing will change, however, unless the leadership works to change it. "We simply cannot tolerate harassment in the armed forces," Cohen wrote the Pentagon brass. "Harassment of our service members for any reason seriously undermines the good order and discipline that is critical to an effective fighting force."

With this inspector general's report, Cohen has knocked the ball into the Pentagon's court. It is now up to our military leaders to show that they mean business about tolerance in the military. We call on them to do so, swiftly and forcefully.

Buffalo News, March 26, 2000
One News Plaza, P.O. Box 100, Buffalo, NY 14240
(Fax 716-856-5150) (E-Mail: LettertoEditor@buffnews.com)
(http://www.buffnews.com)

The straight and narrow

The road to acceptance is a long one for Niagara County's gays and lesbians

By JANE KWIATKOWSKI - News Staff Reporter

Coming out gay in Niagara County is a lot like going over the falls in a barrel. It's one bumpy ride, and once you're out you wonder how you mustered the courage to do it in the first place.

"I was 41 years old when I wrote the letter, and I lived in fear," said Marvin L. Henchbarger, a Town of Niagara woman, describing how she told her mother she was gay. "I didn't know if I would have to come home and pick up my stuff, and where would I go for the holidays?"

Like many gay men and women, Henchbarger moved away from home to deal with her sexuality.

"I was an adult," Henchbarger said. "Why did I have to move? Because there was nothing here that said there are other gays and lesbians in this county. Today, there is still nothing here to say to young kids: 'You're not the only one.' "

It took Henchbarger a decade to return, and when she did -- a little more than one year ago -- the former biology teacher with two master's degrees launched a campaign in her community to foster gay awareness.

"That's why I came back," said Henchbarger, who slapped a rainbow "GAY" decal on her white Saturn. "To make people aware there are gay people in this county."

It's difficult to ignore Henchbarger, or her sexual orientation. She wears it around her neck, in her speech, on her clothes.

"I look like this stereotypical lesbian," said the 52-year-old woman, who is named after her uncle. "But most lesbians don't look like me. We come in all kinds of shapes, sizes, looks."

Niagara County is home to 220,000 people with about half that number

split between the cities of Niagara Falls, Lockport and North Tonawanda. And
if the mostly blue-collar, agrarian county mirrors the rest of the country, one could assume that from 1 to 3 percent of its population is gay.

The issue of gay rights is considered by many around the country to be the last frontier of social intolerance.

"There are people who are gay and lesbian, but they keep to themselves because they are sensitive," said Lindsey, an 18-year-old lesbian from Lewiston. "So you don't come out because you don't know if you are going to get any support from anybody."

Family issues prevent Lindsey from allowing the publication of her last name, even though she is public with her sexual preference. Last year, for example, Lindsey took her girlfriend to the senior prom at her high school.

And the reaction?

"The teachers just kind of ignored it, except for one who told me that all sins were equal in the eyes of the Lord," she said. "So being gay is the
same as lying, but then again that would include murdering someone, too."

In high school, the track team member topped the honors list. And while her younger sister played with Barbie, Lindsey assembled Lincoln Log houses.

Lindsey was in the 10th grade when she wrote her mother to tell her she was gay. The letter was sparked, she explained, by her mother ripping a newspaper article with the headline, "Hawaii OKs Gay Marriages" off her bedroom wall

"She told me it had nothing to do with us, and for some reason that ticked me off," recalled Lindsey. "So I left the letter on her pillow. I don't think I would have been able to get it out verbally. The letter separated us, and I wanted her to have a little bit of time to think it through."

More than 10 years ago, when Chris Benfante of Niagara Falls discovered his parents knew of his sexual orientation, he said it was like "the world had been lifted from his shoulders," according to his mother, Jane Benfante.

"I kind of suspected he might be gay when he was away in college, but I never thought of it when he was in high school because he had so many girlfriends," Benfante said.

"When I heard phone conversations, I was reading a lot between the lines,
and of course he had stopped talking about girls. It seemed like he was always doing things with guys, and I kept asking myself: 'Is he gay? Is he gay?' And if he is, I can not tell another soul about this until I accept it
myself."

To learn a loved one is lesbian or gay launches a journey that few people
are prepared to take. Yet Jane and her husband, Tony Benfante, have opted to
help others through their efforts with Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG).

"A lot of times when children come out of the closet, their parents go in," Jane Benfante said. "And parents are staying in the closet. There are too many questions to answer. They are afraid what everyone will say about them as a parent because they feel in some way they are to blame."

Gay issues -- putting sexual orientation on the line -- are being played out across the country, as well as on the home front:

In Buffalo, the Board of Education earlier this year unanimously voted to amend two existing policies to include sexual orientation as a protected category in hiring, promotions and access to services and benefits. Another resolution directs the district to develop age-appropriate programs to teach respect for diversity through curricula, codes of behavior and staff training.

In Vermont, the state Supreme Court has mandated domestic partnership rights to gay couples.

In Illinois, legislators are considering a law that would offer special status to gay victims of violence.

"Coming out has become an adolescent rather than adult manifestation," maintains Jim Anderson, spokesperson for Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLYSEN). Anderson estimates that more people are coming out younger, around ages 13 to 16. What's more, his New York-based organization -- the largest working to end homophobia in grades kindergarten through 12 -- estimates between 6 and 10 million children in this country are being raised by same-sex partners.

"It used to be, the common response in schools was: 'We don't have a problem here. We don't have gay kids,' " Anderson said. "Today, there is a tremendous change in understanding that gay and lesbian students exist."

When Henchbarger first returned to Niagara County, she blanketed its high schools with 153 letters -- sent to school board members, superintendents, principals -- offering to present informational programs, training, awareness sessions, anything to promote a safe environment for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth.

The response was near-unanimous silence. Only one school administrator took the time to answer.

"I am keenly aware of this issue," said Kathleen Fuller, assistant superintendent of the Royalton-Hartland School District. "But this is a much different environment in Niagara County. It's very rural. We don't have the same issues you have when you live next to a big city."

Royalton-Hartland -- in northern Niagara County at the Orleans County line -- is representative of the other school districts contacted for this report:

Niagara-Wheatfield High School Principal Laura Palka -- "I think it's a great idea, but we actually declined the invitation. It's one of those things that oftentimes exists on a personal level, and you don't need to make a huge team approach of it. We try to listen to the kids and what they tell us, and if we saw there was a need, we would do something about it."

Newfane Central School District Director of Curriculum Instruction

Christine Tibbetts -- "I think we would have a broader approach, like our Peer Diversity Training and Violence Prevention Program, and not target that particular population. As Title IX hearing officer, I've never had any instances of sexual harassment, never had an instance of a gay or lesbian student who has been harassed."

At least three organizations in Niagara County -- The Dale Association, Planned Parenthood, and the Niagara County Coalition for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Wellness & Health -- are addressing gay and lesbian issues.

"We know that baby boomers are getting older," said Linda VanBuskirk, president of the Dale Association, a group dedicated to helping people over age 50 thrive in the community. "We have made a commitment to serving a diversified clientele. We know people will be different, the difference being that some will be gay and some will be lesbian, and they may need specialized health care."

Planned Parenthood, meanwhile, is targeting the other end of the age spectrum.

"In smaller communities, there is the issue of your family being right there," said Laurie Dean Hogan, president of Planned Parenthood of Niagara County. "It exerts an enormous pressure on young people. Attitudes are not always as progressive.

"It became apparent to us at Planned Parenthood in the past five years that there was so little available. For me, the issue was lack of role models for people who are struggling with their sexual identity. If you step off the traditional heterosexual road, you are immediately going to face a whole lot of pressure both internally and externally. I had this fear that there would be a young person who could be contemplating suicide."

Henchbarger's group, the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered "rainbow coalition," had 10 people attend the first meeting last June. Now, she said, there are 35 to 40 active members, not to mention a mailing list of 150 names.

"There are people who think we made a choice to be gay, and in fact that is not the case. We were born this way. One day, you do not get up in the morning and decide to be gay. It's not a choice," said Henchbarger.

"The choice is: Are you going to be honest with yourself? In this particular county, there is not a climate to come out."

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VERMONT THROWS A CURVE BALL ON GAY UNIONS

Commentary / Young is opinion page editor of the Waco (Texas) Tribune-Herald.

John Young

Social conservatives across the country stand at the plate, hands tightly around the bat, waiting to knock a big fat pitch from Vermont out of the park.

Then, Vermont throws a butterfly knuckler. Holy hernia, batman.

Several months ago, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that homosexuals were unconstitutionally denied the rights and benefits of marriage. The court suggested strongly that the state broaden marriage statutes.

Instantly, the faxes and e-mails of the right were cranking across the country plying the great political wedge issue of modern times: homosexuality.

Vermont, the messages warned, was about to put every state in the nation in the position of having to recognize gay and lesbian marriage. The wedge drivers weren't afraid. They were drowning in their own saliva. They pictured the prospect of making same-sex marriage an issue in campaign after campaign for statehouses. What better way to "out" liberal agents of moral decay?

But Vermont lawmakers may have left the mad faxers with a case of cotton mouth. Instead of passing a bill legalizing gay and lesbian marriage, Vermont's legislature sent to the governor a bill to create "civil unions" -- not marriages but arrangements that give same-sex couples some of the same rights and obligations that marriage does.

That includes joint title to property, the right to sue over the loss of a partner, the right to be joint beneficiaries in insurance policies and to be treated similarly to a spouse in probate matters. A civil union also would have to be dissolved in divorce court.

A marriage by another name? A duck called a goose? Vermont has artfully dodged the name game.

Reacting to a 1993 ruling by Hawaii's Supreme Court that would have cleared the way for same-sex marriages (later the voters changed the state constitution to ban it), 30 states passed pre-emptive laws saying they wouldn't recognize same-sex marriages if legalized in any other state.

In the Super Tuesday primary, California voters did the same. (However, California does recognize domestic partnerships, as do a host of municipalities and corporations.)

Now, has Vermont laid all those pre-emptive laws to waste?

It's a travesty that loving, committed lifelong couples cannot be recognized as that in the eyes of the law. At its root is nothing more than religion masquerading as law. "In God's eyes" is how marriage is commonly framed, end of argument. But government is not a divine institution. Unfortunately, this barrier of illogic will survive until the U.S. Supreme Court tears it down. A civil union has nothing to do with religion. It has to do with contracts and commitments. Seemingly, everyone who values social responsibility would encourage what a civil union represents.

Heterosexuals who have no other stake in the matter, who have no

friends
or relatives being discriminated against because of their sexual orientation,
should at least look at the civil-union option in public-health terms.

In the age of AIDS, sexual monogamy is a life-or-death matter. The irony
of AIDS, with its prevalence among gay men, is that while urging faithfulness
to one partner as the best way to prevent it, we make it illegal for the most
at-risk population to "make it legal."

Vermont has given other states a vehicle to end this argument in the best
possible way, leaving "holy matrimony" intact, or at least extracting
holiness from the debate in making civil law.

Same-sex marriage is an unnecessary distinction. It's the union that matters.