In Your FACE!

political activism against gender oppression

The complete listing of all subversive actions against gender oppression around the US, along with occasional instructions on how to roll your own.

Issue 5, Early 1998

MISSION: Cover all actions related to overthrowing gender oppression, transphobia, genderphobia, homophobia and related oppressive political structures.
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NOW Passes Transinclusion Resolution

(Memphis, TN: 6 Jul 97) After years of debate and dialog, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has finally passed a resolution on transinclusion. The successful vote followed personal support by NOW President Patricia Ireland, and concentrated efforts by NOW-NJ President Bear Atwood and NOW Lesbian Rights Coordinator Kim Ward.

The measure was originally introduced and unanimously passed at NOW-NJ's State Conference in 1994, and then introduced at the 1995 National Conference in Columbus, OH.

A dozen gender activists in Menace T-shirts showed up to get signatures on petitions supporting the measure. But, in spite of signatures by over half the attendees and apparently overwhelming support, the measure was tabled to the National Board, where it languished for the next 2 conventions.

The breakthrough was prompted by an invitation Ms. Atwood extended to activists from GenderPAC and other groups to address the State Coordinators' Conference in San Francisco several months ago. As more State Presidents got behind the measure, Ms. Ireland asked activists to address the NOW National Board at the current conference.

Conservative Conference labels Homosexuality a "Tragic Affliction"

(San Francisco: 20 Jun 97) Gays and lesbians suffer from "gender disturbances" and an "infantile refusal to accept reality" maintains the American Public Philosophy Institute, a group of conservative 'intellectuals' who held a 3-day conference at Georgetown University. The San Francisco Chronicle reports that 350 people from around the country attended, including William Kristol, editor of the Weekly Standard, who addressed the conference.

Organizers said their purpose is to understand homosexuality "as a tragic affliction, with harmful consequences for both individuals and society...." George Rekers, a professor at South Carolina Medical School, opened the conference with a discussion of gender roles in children.

He said that lesbians tend to be tomboys in childhood, preferring "masculine" toys and demonstrating, "a distinct dislike for doll play and other female activities." Male homosexuals show the opposite pattern, "preferring the company of girls and wanting to wear lipstick and dresses." He maintains that "gender disturbance" can be corrected by therapy during childhood.

Funded by Taxpayers

Rekers' work, which is heavily funded by the federal government through research grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, features "aversion therapy," a technique that punishes nonconforming behavior (limp wrists in boys or swaggering in girls) and rewards conforming behavior (girls playing dolls, boys playing baseball).

Said another panelist, Joseph Nicolosi, "There is no such thing as a gay person," because homosexuality is "a fictitious identity that is seized on to resolve painful emotional challenges." Homosexuals engage in "a narcissistic refusal to accept a gendered world and the human biological reality on which that world is based."

Register NOW for National Gender Lobby Day & Activists Conference

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone: E-mail:

☐ Yes, I'll attend the First Activist Conference Sunday April 19th

My senator(2) and

My representative

I can donate $_____to help someone else attend Lobby Day.

I can help out by putting (#) people up in my room.

Questions??? (212)645-1753 or Riki@Pipeline.Com

2nd Activists Conference

April 19, 1998

Lobby Day

April 20-21, 1998

Both in **Washington, DC**

Conference at same Inn where lobbyists stay.

Make a Little History

please mail this form to: GenderPAC, 274 W. 11th St. #4R NYC 10014 or GPac@GPac.Org

Herms Invade Dateline NBC

(San Francisco: 21 Jun 97) For the first time a major network news show has focused on Intersex Genital Mutilation. On June 17, Dateline NBC, a top-ten news show seen by 25-30 million viewers, featured an interview with Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) founder Cheryl Chase. Included in the segment was footage from the August '96 demonstration by Hermaphrodites With Attitude outside the annual conference of the American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP).

A surgeon representing the AAP declared that surgery is now so improved that operating on intersex genitals has virtually no adverse consequences. He compared the surgery to facial surgery to remove a deformity.

But ISNA members, now numbering over 200, state flatly that the surgery has harmed them terribly. Many have been left with little or no erotic sensation. Some have ongoing urinary complications, and almost all of them are outraged and angry that their bodies were cut up without their consent.

Following the Dateline report, the San Francisco Chronicle also ran a piece highlighting IGM. A segment on ABC's Prime Time Live is reportedly in the works for the fall. This media attention follows a half-page story in the New York Times Science section, and a 3-page spread in Newsweek magazine.

Noting that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as practiced in African or Muslim countries has drawn wide condemnation in the US, Ms. Chase said, "Genital mutilation is a phrase that's easy for us to apply to somebody who belongs to a third-world culture. Yet any mutilating practice that's delivered by licensed medical practitioners in our world has an aura of scientific credibility."

Psychologists Condemn `Reparative' Therapy

[Washington, DC: 14 Aug 97] The American Psychologist Association (APA) has affirmed its 1973 resolution that homosexuality is not a mental disorder, and that the APA opposes all portrayals of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people as mentally ill or in need of treatment due to their sexual orientation. The resolution was a response to the recent growth of 'reparative' therapies intended to 'cure' homosexuals of their homosexuality.

Said Doug Haldeman, President of APA's society for the study of lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues, "In the past 10 years, Christian fundamentalists have enlisted a coalition of old-style psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers who have... a mission to cure homosexuals. Our aim is not to try to stop them per se or interfere with anyone's right to practice [therapy], but we want to expose the social context that creates this market."

NGLTF: Resolution Doesn't Go Far Enough

The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) criticized the new resolution for not going far enough, condemning reparative therapy but not calling for a complete end to such therapies.

Declared Kerry Lobel, Executive Director of NGLTF, "Attempts to change an individual's sexual orientation through conversion therapy is morally and ethically wrong. Such practices are a therapeutic perpetration of the homophobia that exists in society today."

Socarides: Homosexuality as Purple People Eater

Charles Socarides, a NYC psychiatrist and President of the National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARYH), is a proponent and practitioner of reparative therapy. He states, "Homosexuality is a psychological and psychiatric disorder, there is no question about it. It's a purple menace that is threatening the proper design of gender distinction in society."

There are no official figures on the number of people who have tried reparative therapy. A Seattle-based Christian organization reports that more than 500 people a month call for information about the therapy and that more than 6,000 people are in therapy at its 90 ministries across the country.

GenderQueer Children and Adults Still at Risk

In the meantime, the diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder (GID) is still very much on the books. GID is routinely used as an accepted backdoor to inflict reparative therapies on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender teens and children as young as three, as well as gender-variant adults seeking hormones or surgery.

In the past, gender-variant children have not only been subjected to involuntary behavioral therapy, but some have been confined on locked wards or given psyhcoactive drugs as part of their "treatment."

Notes GenderPAC Executive Director Riki Anne Wilchins, "Queer activists had better wake up: we are still at risk. By ignoring gender, this resolution means gender-variant kids are still totally unprotected. And since getting hormones or surgery means presenting yourself as `sick' and needing a `cure,' gender-variant adults are still going to be diagnosed as mentally disordered with GID -- effectively ending their chances of ever getting private medical, life, or disability insurance."

NYC Police Allegedly Sodomize Haitian Man

(New York, NY: 11 Aug 97) Abner Louima, a 30-year-old Haitian immigrant, was arrested by NYC police on 9 August outside a Brooklyn nightclub. According to Louima, he was beaten repeatedly, taken to the 70th Precinct house, beaten again, and anally raped by the arresting officer and several others. The story has quickly ballooned from a simple arrest into national news.

Mr. Louima, a security officer and married father of two, alleges that he was sodomized with the handle of a toilet plunger while being subjected to racial epithets. His front teeth were knocked out when the plunger was then jammed into his mouth. Mr. Louima made the allegations from his Long Island hospital bed, where he lay in critical condition from a torn rectum and ruptures in his bladder and intestines.

Menace, GenderPAC, TOPS Join Outcry Over Police Racism & Brutality

(Brooklyn, NY: 16 Aug 97) THOUSANDS OF ANGRY MEMBERS of the Haitian community and black civil rights leaders were joined today by groups including the Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, Jews for Peace and Reconciliation, and the Transexual Menace to protest police brutality against minority citizens. The demonstration was sparked by the alleged police assault last weekend on Haitian immigrant Abner Louima.

This marks the second time gender activists have publicly protested the troubling issue of prisoner sexual abuse, an issue Menace spokestrans have long accused gay and feminist organizations of ignoring. Said one, "We were asked why we're here; I have no trouble at all connecting the beating and anal rape of a black man with gender-based oppression."

Carrying banners, toilet plungers, and chanting, "No Justice--No Peace," approximately 150 protesters gathered outside the 70th Precinct stationhouse to voice their outrage, as more than 2,000 protesters marched from the nightclub to join them. Despite the sweltering heat, angry marchers, and scores of police officers on the scene, no arrests were made during the afternoon-long demonstration.

Last week both GenderPAC and Transgender Officers Protect & Serve (TOPS) signed a letter drafted by the Lesbian & Gay Anti-Violence Project and addressed to NY Mayor Rudy Guiliani, deploring the brutality and racism of the Louima beating.

A second protest, a march all the way across the Brooklyn Bridge to the Mayor's office in Manhattan, has been called for August 29. Menace activists are expected to attend.

Men Convicted in Gay/Trans Murder

(Fayetteville, AR: 12 Jul 97) TWO MEN HAVE BEEN CONVICTED for murdering Alan Walker and sentenced to life in prison.

Walker, dressed as a woman, picked up Yitzak Marta and Adam Blackford outside a gay nightclub last November and took them home with him. The men beat and strangled Walker to death after Walker revealed to them that he was a man.

Judge William Storey declared, "This is nothing more than a hate

crime. This person was killed because he was gay."

The Associated Press reports that Walker's body was discovered three days after the murder when neighbors became suspicious because of his absence and slashed tires on his vehicle. "KKK" in large letters was scrawled in blood on a closet door of the black man's home.

NYC SM Community Member Murdered

(New York, NY: 25 July 97) Nadia Frey, who also worked as a dominant under the name of "Mistress Hilda," was found murdered in her New York City apartment over the weekend.

As in other trans and gay murders, the police and media immediately began speculating that her lifestyle was the cause. Both TV and print media led with gaudy stories which effectively blamed the victim for her own murder, and highlighted alternative sexual practice as "deviant" and "bizarre." The Daily News headlined its coverage "Whipper Gets Whacked" while the New York Post's lead began, "Her business was violence."

In response, the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom immediately sent letters to each of the media outlets, complaining about their biased coverage.

Said Executive Director Susan Wright, "Your coverage of the murder of Nadia Frey was both trivializing and derogatory toward those involved in alternative sexual practice. By blaming the victim and holding her up as an object of mockery, you make likely that such murders will happen again [and] less likely that police and courts will vigorously prosecute these types of crimes. Your coverage of alternative sexuality [contributes] to the perception that we are disposable people."

Florida US Rep: "Transpeople Immoral"

(Ocala, FL: 26 July 97) Cliff Stearns (R-Fl) is asking state officials to set dress standards for government work places after a transexual woman, Sabrina Robb, began transitioning on the job.

Formerly Dale Robb, Sabrina began wearing dresses to work after gradually feminizing her appearance in her workplace over several months. Some employees in Ms. Robb's office complained that her attire distracted and offended them.

Said Rep. Stearns, "It sends the wrong signals to our children and people in this county... I think the public would have a high level of discomfort with his work activities... It's antithetical to our morals in Ocala."

The following day, representatives from GenderPAC, the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom, and TOPS called on Rep. Stearns' office, spending an hour discussing the case and explaining that Sabrina is following a medically prescribed program of cross-living preparatory to surgery.

They also highlighted GenderPAC's recent national survey on violence against transpeople--which found that 60% of respondents had been assaulted because of being transgendered--pointing out that stigmatizing Ms. Robb as a moral deviant dramatically increases the likelihood of her being the subject of some kind of assault.

Robb's supervisor, Dotti Pohleven, said Robb's change of dress has not affected her work. "He's [sic] an excellent employee and a great asset... He's very dependable. He's thorough."

Evanston IL: Trans-Rights Protection Unanimous

(Evanston, IL: 29 July 97) LAST NIGHT THE Evanston City Council became the first city in Illinois to extend human rights protection to transgendered residents.

The Council voted unanimously in favor of Ordinance 61-O-97, which adds transgendered individuals as a protected class to their Human Rights Ordinance.

The vote was the result of extensive lobbying by representatives of It's Time, Illinois! (ITI), a transgendered political advocacy organization. The effort was spearheaded by Miranda Stevens, vice-chair of ITI, and began with a series of meetings with Paula Haynes, Director of the Human Relations Commission.

ITI's strategy was the same used to pass trans-protection in Minnesota, which re-defines "sexual orientation" to include both affectional relationships and gender identity. That strategy was eventually unanimously adopted by the Commission, and then introduced into the Evanston City Council.

At the July 28 meeting, Ms. Stevens spoke in support of the measure, explaining, "For most of you, this is the first time you've encountered a transgendered person, outside of stereotypical caricatures on television or movies. We hope that by the end of the evening, we will have put a more human face on our community."

Activists Rally for Trans-Prisoner

(Walla Walla, WA: 14 July 97) Local transgender activists gathered at the County Superior Courthouse here to protest alleged abuse of transgender prisoners in the Washington state prison system. The case that sparked the protest was the sexual assault of transexual woman Crystal Schwenk by a corrections officer. Protesters expressed outrage that the guard who committed the alleged assault of Ms. Schwenk has not been disciplined.

Protesters also highlighted accusations of medical neglect, a common form of abuse. Diana Courvant of It's Time, Oregon! stated, "Prison officials will often discontinue a transexual's hormone treatment, even though it has been prescribed by a doctor and even though it can be life-threatening to discontinue it." Public response to the protesters was largely positive.

Turkish Transactivist Assaulted, Re-Arrested After Receiving US Award

(Istanbul, Turkey: 22 July 97) DEMET DEMIR, THE TURKISH TRANSEXUAL and human rights advocate, returned home to Turkey from the U.S. after receiving an award from the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) for her human rights work, was re-arrested within hours when she intervened to stop police from beating a young girl.

The girl was selling handkerchiefs made in a workshop designed to help transgender people earn their livelihoods outside of prostitution, into which many Turkish transexuals are driven.

"When I tried to save the girl from them," said Ms. Demir, "they started to hit me and I was bruised on several parts of my body." She was taken to the police station and charged with insulting the police.

Ms. Demir has endured more than fifteen years of harassment, violence, and time in prison because of her activism to gain basic rights for gay, lesbian, and transgender people.

Despite the obstacles she faces, Ms. Demir stated, "I will keep on struggling for every right. Yesterday I started as a child and I am going on as a mother today. And tomorrow I will go on as a grandmother. I do not care if they kill me or put me in prison again."

New Group on Capitol Hill

[Washington, DC : 24 July 97] REPRESENTATIVES OF the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF) made the rounds of Capitol Hill today and met informally with a number of congressional office and progressive organizations, taking the first steps towards building a national consensus that violence and discrimination against those involved in alternative sexual or affectional practice must stop. The mission of the newly-formed NCSF is to combat violence and discrimination due to "sexual orientation, identity, or desire."

Declared NCSF founder Susan Wright, "People involved in alternative practice have been stigmatized for too long. The bottom line is, we are people who lose our jobs, our children, and sometimes our lives because of sexual or affectional preference. All we are seeking is equal rights."

To document bias-related crimes, NCSF has announced a series of community-based research projects, beginning with a "National Survey on Sexual & Affectional Violence" this fall.

GenderPAC Board Endorses GID Reform

[New York, NY: 9 Sept 97] The board of the Gender Public Advocacy Coaltion ("GenderPAC") has overwhelmingly endorsed a resolution calling for the reform of Gender Identity Disorder (GID). GID is listed as a mental illness in the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) manual of disorders, also known as the DSM.

In children, GID is used to diagnose and "treat" gender-variant children in the belief that otherwise they will grow up to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. In, adults, GID is the diagnosis applied when a person requests hormonal treatment or sex-reassignment surgery, although there is no medical evidence that transexuality itself constitutes a mental illness.

The GenderPAC resolution was drawn directly from a policy statement on GID reform sent by NGLTF's Exec. Dir. Kerry Lobel to the APA's President, Dr. Harold Eist, earlier this year. It, in turn, was based on a policy position developed by the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and the Transgender Law Project (ICTLEP).

An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Stated GenderPAC's Exec. Dir. Riki Anne Wilchins, "The near-unanimous support this resolution received shows that GID Reform is an idea whose time has come and there is now a solid consensus among national gender groups. National organizations now understand that it is impossible to wage a struggle for their political survival as long as their very identities are considered a mental illness."

Wilchins also expressed her conviction that so-called "Fetishistic Crossdressing" -- a diagnosis used to stigmatize and "treat" crossdressers who enjoy wearing women's clothing -- must also be removed. "When psychiatry starts policing private adult gender or erotic practice, it is no longer practicing medicine but enforcing social conformity."

King Family Member Equates Gays to Pedophiles

[Sacramento, CA: 29 Aug 97] Adding to the recent controversies surrounding the King family, Alveda Celeste King, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., today said that her uncle would not support legislation benefiting gay men and lesbians.

"People can legally do what they want in their bedrooms," she said, "but don't expect us and our children to approve of, promote, or elevate sexual preference to civil rights status. What's next, civil rights on the basis of prostitution and pedophilia?" She went on to compare gay and lesbian civil rights to equal rights for "liars, thieves, and murderers."

Fundamentalist Inroads into Black Community on the Upswing

The Washington Blade reports that Ms. King's comments were made at a rally sponsored by an African American alliance that is working to oppose gay civil rights legislation. Fundamentalist groups such as the Christian Coalition and the Promise Keepers have been building ties to the black community, and heavily promoting their anti-gay agendas.

Leaders Denounce Remarks, King Family Silent

Civil rights leaders from the NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) were quick to denounce the remarks. Members of Martin Luther King's immediate family declined to comment on the controversy. However, in 1994, Coretta Scott King spoke in favor of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

Prime Time Live Angers Intersex Community

[New York, NY: 3 Sep 97] ABC's Prime Time Live aired a long-awaited segment on Intersex Genital Mutilation (IGM) this evening. The piece focused on the contrast of a frightened mother and her child (shown happily playing), a doctor dedicated to IGM, and "John Joan," a boy whose penis was accidentally amputated and underwent IGM to be raised as a girl. Years later John decided he was really male, and underwent extensive surgery and hormonal therapy to correct his earlier assignment as female. John appeared only after ABC agreed to mask his face and voice.

Angry Reaction from Herm-Activists

The national advocacy group Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) expressed disappointment and anger over the segment, which had originally included footage of the activist group "Hermaphrodites With Attitude" demonstrating against IGM at New York's' Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. Said ISNA Exec. Dir. Cheryl Chase, "We are outraged that ABC showed no `out' adult intersexuals, only one ashamed person with his face and voice erased. And no information at all was provided about support groups or the growing intersexed activist movement."

Continued Chase, "The segment heavily promoted the idea that we are all `one or the other,' and the only problem doctors have is cutting us up the right way. It doesn't occur to them that cutting any child for cosmetic and social reasons is barbaric and has no place in a civilized society."

Queer groups have begun to look more closely at IGM of late. Many children diagnosed as intersexed due to clitorises deemed to be "too large" are genitally cut in the belief that otherwise they will grow up to be masculinized, lesbian women.

Queer Groups Demo Again Over NYPD Alleged Torture of Haitian Immigrant

[New York, NY : 29 Aug 97] As they did a week ago, members of the Transexual Menace participated in a rally against the alleged police torture of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima.

Last week's demonstration was held in Brooklyn, outside the 70th precinct where police officers allegedly beat Mr. Louima, raping him with a toilet plunger and then shoving the handle into his mouth, breaking several of his teeth. Mr. Louima was allowed to lay bleeding and unconscious for hours in a holding cell, before being taken to a nearby hospital. He has been in guarded condition since, after undergoing a number of surgeries to repair a ruptured intestine and other internal injuries sustained in the beating.

The demonstration was organized by the Haitian Enforcement Against Racism (HEAR), and drew a crowd estimated at over 10,000, many of whom marched in a procession from Brooklyn, across the Brooklyn Bridge, to gather in front of Mayor Rudy Guiliani's City Hall. Included among the marchers were other queer groups, including members of the Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project (AVP) of NYC. One AVP staffer, activist Maura Barley, was among those asked to address the crowd from a stage erected for the occasion.

Said one Menace member, "In a gay movement which so often says, `we're about sexual orientation, not race,' it's great some groups continue to make those connections. Racism is a gay issue. And gay rights is part of any civil rights struggle."

Herm-Protest Jocelyn Elders at Lesbian Event

[Washington, DC: 20 Sep 97] The activist groups Hermaphrodites With Attitude (HWA) and Transexual Menace today protested Dr. Jocelyn Elders' keynote address to a Mautner Lesbians With Cancer Project fund-raiser, held in the Washington Hilton. Dr. Elders, a former US Surgeon General, is an outspoken advocate of Intersex Genital Mutilation (IGM), a cosmetic surgery performed on the genitals of intersexed infants so they will look like "normal" males and females.

Eight demonstrators carried banners saying "Dr. Elders: Keep Your Scalpels OFF Our Bodies" and "Intersex Kids Need Counseling NOT Cutting", and distributed IGM leaflets to attendees as they arrived for the $100-a-plate dinner.

Several attendees expressed shock and dismay upon learning of Dr. Elders' position, noting that she is generally considered a supporter of lesbian and feminist causes, and enlightened on most matters of adolescent sexuality. However, the flier noted that on "correcting" queer genitals, Dr. Elders has written: "...just take out everything and make a good vaginal pouch and the child can function very well as a female," and "I always told my students, I can make a good female, but it's very hard to make a male."

"We're not protesting the Mautner Project," explained HWA founder, Cheryl Chase, "we're calling attention to Dr. Elders' support of

IGM and her continued refusal to meet with us on an issue that affects our lives. One reason IGM is performed is the fear that girls born with clitorises considered 'too large' will grow up to be masculine or lesbian. We want to bring awareness to the Lesbian and Gay community that IGM is a queer issue."

Although intersexuality was once considered rare, according to noted Brown University medical researcher Dr. Anne Fausto-Sterling, about 8 intersex children are genitally cut in US hospitals every working day for cosmetic reasons. Stated Chase, "We will continue to seek a meeting with Dr. Elders, and anticipate that once she takes IGM seriously, she will support out position."

Following the demonstration, HWA and the Menace donated a $100 to the Mautner Project in the name of intersexed infants.

Trans-Activists Decry Gay Games Policy

[New York, NY: 10 Nov 97] Transgender activists have derided Gay Games 97 policy regarding transexuals. Said one, "The standards we must meet to participate are intrusive and stigmatizing. They are blatantly discriminatory."

Transexuals who wish to compete in the Amsterdam games this summer must provide proof of a court-ordered name change, letters from a physician and a therapist, and proof of employment for at least two years.

"These strictures mirror the dominant culture's persecution of the Gay community," said another spokestrans. "How would an olympic gay athlete respond to a demand that she provide a letter from her doctor stating why it would be impossible or severely detrimental for her to participate as heterosexual?"

Sex Harassment of TS Covered by Title IX

[New York, NY: 20 Nov 97] A U.S. district judge has ruled valid a sexual harassment complaint against an NYU professor by a transexual woman. Jennifer Miles, an NYU graduate student, alleged that one of her professors "Began making wholly unwelcome sexual advances... [including] the fondling of breasts, buttocks... forcible attempts to kiss, and repeated propositioning for a sexual relationship." The professor had several similar complaints on file against him from other female students. He was reprimanded, but later awarded tenure.

NYU countered the complaint arguing that Miles had no cause of action under Title IX because her transexual status relieved the university of liability. The judge responded, "There is no conceivable reason why such conduct should be rewarded with legal pardon just because, unbeknownst to [the] Professor and everyone else at the university, plaintiff was not a biological female...[any] jury that accepted as true all facts claimed by [Ms. Miles] would surely find in her favor on this issue."

Man Sentenced for Killing Female Impersonator

[Cape May Courthouse, NJ: 5 Nov 97] Brian Halter, 25, a former life guard, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for aggravated manslaughter in the 1992 death of Rene Ouellet, 31, who worked as a female impersonator. The AP reports that Halter, who will be eligible for parole in less than 2 years, beat and strangled Ouellet when he awoke on the beach from an alcohol-induced sleep to find Ouellet performing oral sex on him.

According to prosecutor Barbara Marino, Halter bludgeoned Ouellet with a board and left him for dead. Returning later to check on the body, Halter found that Ouellet had moved to a different spot. He then choked Ouellet and buried him under the boardwalk. Two weeks later, someone saw an arm sticking out of the sand and called police.

Said prosecutor Marino, "We believe Mr. Halter is not likely to reoffend, but he needs to be punished for taking a life."

S/M Controversy Erupts at SUNY

[New York, NY: 11 Nov 97] A conference at the state University of New York (SUNY-New Paltz) has ignited a controversy over Sadomasochism (S/M). Titled "Revolting Behavior: The Challenges of Women's Sexual Freedom," the conference included sessions like "Sex Toys for Women" and "Safe, Sane and Consensual," among other sessions on lesbianism, birth control, and HIV education. Conservatives, including NY's Governor Pataki, condemned the conference. A SUNY trustee, Candace de Russy, called for the resignation of SUNY President, Roger Bowen.

Bowen defended the conference. "This boils down to a simple principle of the First Amendment," he said. "Public or private, a university should provide a forum to present, discuss and debate things. If you can't have groups on the margins, where can you have them?"

The National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF) issued a strong statement of support for Bowen. Said Susan Wright, Ex. Dir. of NCSF, "This is history repeating itself. Fifteen years ago, Barnard College was criticized by anti-porn feminists for holding a conference on women's sexuality... [This] conference adhered to the high standards of SUNY-New Paltz's mission statement to 'celebrate the diversity of our society'".

Another defender of the conference was the NY Times. In an editorial (11/11), it said, "Reasonable people might disagree on the worthiness of the topic...But given that such a subculture exists, an academic conference on sexuality seems a suitable forum to discuss it."

The Village Voice, in a cover story (11/11) entitled "Whip Me Home, Honey: S/M Goes Mainstream," focused attention on the growing visibility of S/M as a legitimate form of sexual expression. It detailed how S/M support groups have proliferated since the 1980s when traditionally isolated erotic minorities (gay and straight) began to form political alliances.

Intersex Woman in UK Denied Job

[London, UK: 1 Nov 97] An intersex woman was denied a job at the Watford Women's Center because, "When I turned up they would not let me in because they said I looked too much like a man," said Sarah-Jane Brooks.

Ms. Brooks has worked in women's centers in London and Manchester. She intends to take legal action against the Watford local council for discrimination. She said, "The point is that I am both a man and a woman. They have no right to choose which sex to judge me on."

A Watford Council spokesman, referring to Ms. Brooks as a man, said, "The planning group...considered this request fully... He cannot be admitted to the center which is a focal point for women in this town."

GenderPAC's Hate Crimes Report: Dana Priesing

"The White House Conference on Hate Crimes was held 10 November 1997. To my knowledge, no openly gender-different or postgendered person attended the conference itself. So I made an effort to ensure that the NGLTF reps. attending (Kerry Lobel & Helen Gonzales) had (sanitized -- no names) copies of the recent hate crimes report [The First National Survey on TransViolence] as well as GenderPAC's fact sheet on incidents known to us in the last five years.

"I did attend the evening reception which was held at the Holocaust Memorial, pressed the flesh a bit, and chatted with a number of folk about what occurred at the conference -- providing the basis for [what follows].

"The problem of hate violence against TG folk was mentioned twice by speakers at the conference. I suspect that this is partly due to greater awareness of the issue, and partly due to the growing habit folk have of inclusively saying "GLBT" instead of G&L.

"I've reported a lot recently about the work being done to expand the Dept. of Justice's investigatory & prosecutorial jurisdiction to include gender, disability & sexual orientation. I've also reported how GenderPAC & others have worked to help DOJ understand how it could use gender-based jurisdiction to investigate & prosecute hate crimes against gender-different folk, based on the theory that such violence results from gender-based stereotypes.

"At the conference, President Clinton announced that he supports such expanded jurisdiction (i.e., to cover gender, disability & sexual orientation). I understand that Sen. Kennedy and Sen. Specter are

poised to introduce a bill in the Senate (likely to be attached to a larger bill concerning administration of justice issues) that would accomplish this if enacted. I'll pass along the bill number once I have it.

"Judging from the crowd at the reception, there was a substantial focus on school/youth violence issues. Lotsa grade school and high school kids present. To the extent that any of you do further advocacy work in this area, you may want to consider using the same focus."

Major U.S. Corp Protects TG Workers

Contact: Dawn Leach, Gay People's Chronicle, chronicle@chronohio.com, (216) 631-8646

[Cleveland, OH: 21 Nov 97] Lucent Technologies, a maker of telephone systems, has adopted a new employer anti-discrimination policy that protects gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees against discrimination. "As far as we know, it's the first time a major corporation has used specific transgender-inclusive language in an employee anti-discrimination policy," said Cathy Palatine, chair of the transgender advocacy group It's Time Ohio.

The new policy states, "Lucent's policy is to prohibit unlawful discrimination or harassment... because of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity characteristics or expression, in any employee decision or in the administration of any personnel policy."

Rolling Stone Addresses Intersex Controversy

contact: ISNA News, news@isna.org

[San Francisco, CA: 12 Dec 97] The 12/11/97 issue of Rolling Stone contains an extensive article on "John/Joan" and its implications for the treatment of intersexuals. In 1967, doctors turned the infant John, the victim of a circumcision accident into Joan. For 25 years, the case has been cited as proof that gender identity can be determined by social conditioning, a theory that has been used as justification for assigning sex in infants born with ambiguous genitals.

In fact, the experiment was a dismal failure, with John reclaiming his manhood through much turmoil and suffering. Today medical specialists find themselves embroiled in controversy, with their theoretical foundations undermined and under pressure from intersex activists demanding an end to a model of treatment which views intersexuality as shameful.

The article "has already garnered from subscribers... the best, and most gratifyingly outraged, email of any story the magazine has ever published," said the author of the article, John Colapinto.

"John/Joan" Sex Researchers Publish Recommendations

contact: ISNA News news@isna.org

[San Francisco, CA: 8 Sep 97] THE SEX RESEARCHERS WHO revealed the "John/Joan" case to be a failure have published an article that calls for a new model in the medical management of intersexuality.

In the October issue of Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, Milton Diamond and Keith Sigmundson write, "Some of these suggestions are contrary to today's common management procedures... Underlying our guidelines is the key belief that patients themselves must be involved in any decisions [about] something so crucial in their lives."

The article emphasizes openness, honesty, peer support and professional counseling, and avoidance of early cosmetic surgery. Breaking with tradition, APAM closed the article with nearly a full page of listings for a variety of peer support groups.

2nd Sex Censorship Protest at SUNY Board Mtg

Albany, New York -- December 16, 1997 -- At the SUNY Board of Trustee's meeting today, Board Members were faced with a street demonstration organized by the Student Association of the State University of NY (SASU) and the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Issues Office. Students gathered in the midst of finals week to protest the call for President Bowen's resignation over the SUNY New Paltz Women's Studies Conference which included S/M and sex toys.

The protest was the second surrounding the heated issue of academic freedom at SUNY, as earlier in the month activists from the queer, leather, and feminist communities demonstrated outside the Board's previous meeting in midtown Manhattan. Adding to the pressure, SUNY has just been given a public donation of $350,000 in support of free speech. In accepting the donation, the president read a statement from the donors praising the conference organizer while specifically condemning censorship and conservative legislators who have threatened the school.

Chancellor John Ryan told reporters that the Bowen investigation had been discussed in executive session by the Trustees and was "under continuing review." After the meeting, Dan O'Sullivan, Executive Organizer of SASU, asked, "Is the Board going to censure future conferences at SUNY?" Chancellor Ryan responded, "I don't think they will do anything like that."

"I'm still calling for the resignation of President Bowen," stated Candace deRussy, Board of Trustees Member and Chairman of the Academic Standards Committee, as she left the meeting.

"How much do we want government to interfere in academic conferences or medical conferences or even prison conferences just because they receive state funding?" asked Robb Goldstein, a representative of the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF) who attended the Board of Trustees meeting. "That's the real issue here." NCSF is a a national organization seeking to change public policy and laws that prejudice society against those engaged in alternative sexual or affectional practice.

The next State University of NY Board of Trustees meeting will take place on January 27th. The location has not been officially released, but SUNY administrators say it will likely be in Albany again, at the State University Plaza.