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National Notes

By David Prybylo
Q-Notes Staff

FBI investigates situation in Mississippi

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The FBI launched an investigation in January into the volatile situation in Overt, Mississippi. Two lesbians in Overt have been harassed and threatened and opponents have organized town meetings to condemn the women and their feminist retreat and plot ways to force them from town. The FBI initiated the investigation after Brenda and Wanda Henson of Camp Sister Spirit received a threat through the U.S. mail, which is a federal offense.

On Jan. 11, the Hensons received through the mail a defaced news article about themselves and Camp Sister Spirit with a threatening message hand-written beneath the original headline. The letter was handed over to the FBI.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) forwarded a copy of the letter to the U.S. Department of Justice Jan. 12, following a meeting NGLTF attended that same day with the Justice Department to discuss federal involvement in the situation. Justice officials said at the meeting that because sexual orientation is not included in federal civil rights laws, the agency could only launch an investigation if there are violations of other generally applicable federal statutes, such as mail or phone threats.

NGLTF agreed to forward to the Justice Department details of violent and threatening incidents aimed at the Hensons so that the agency could determine whether any of the incidents violate federal criminal code and could be cause for an investigation. Following the meeting, NGLTF contacted the Hensons and received a chronological list of incidents targeting them and Camp Sister Spirit, as well as a copy of the mail threat. NGLTF forwarded the information immediately to the Justice Department. The Hensons also contacted the FBI in Mississippi.

NGLTF has called on the Department of Justice to intervene by monitoring and mediating the situation. In a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno in December, NGLTF Executive Director Peri Jude Radevic requested that the Department of Justice intervene in the following ways: the Community Relations Service perform mediation in the community to alleviate the potential for violence; the FBI monitor the situation for any possible hate crimes; and the Civil Rights

Division investigate any attempt to violate the Hensons' civil rights.

"The FBI investigation is an important step towards insuring the safety and rights of the Hensons," said Robin Kane, NGLTF Public Information Manager. "NGLTF continues to stress the need for the Attorney General to direct the Community Relations Service to mediate. This situation highlights how the absence of federal civil rights laws that include sexual orientation prevent federal agencies from protecting the rights of gay, lesbian and bisexual citizens."

PCP prevention approved by FDA

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC—Septra brand trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX) has received an indication from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the prevention of *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP) in AIDS and other immunocompromised patients. The drug is indicated for use in immunosuppressed patients who are considered at risk of developing PCP.

Many patients with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease are being treated with Septra to help prevent cases of PCP, an opportunistic infection which often develops as a patient's immune system gradually weakens. PCP is the most common and often the first opportunistic infection to develop in people with advanced HIV infection, and is one of the major causes of death in patients with AIDS. Burroughs Wellcome worked to obtain a formal indication for this use as part of its ongoing commitment to HIV disease. "This indication will, in most cases, serve to validate disease management strategies already in clinical practice," said Sandra Nusinoff Lehrman, M.D., vice president of infectious diseases, immunology and biotechnology at Burroughs Wellcome. "Wellcome's fundamental commitment to AIDS research is underscored by our efforts in assembling formal documentation of the drug's action in preventing PCP. We felt it was in the best interests of patients and the medical community to pull together the information to support official labeling for this use." The submission for this new indication was the result of a collaborative effort between Burroughs Wellcome Co. and Hoffmann-La Roche, Inc., manufacturer of Bactrim brand TMP-SMX.

Septra is a synthetic antibacterial combination product which has been available

since 1973 for the treatment of ear, pulmonary, gastrointestinal and urinary tract infections. Although TMP-SMX has become best known in the past few years as the first line treatment for PCP, its side effects in treatment doses often cause patients to discontinue therapy. In November of 1992, Burroughs Wellcome received FDA clearance to market Mepron brand atovaquone as a treatment for patients with mild to moderate cases of PCP who can't tolerate TMP-SMX.

Gay Games to be largest ever

NEW YORK—With the final deadline still over two months away, the organizers of Gay Games IV & Cultural Festival announced they have already received 7,776 registrations from around the world for this June's historical event.

Those numbers exceed Gay Games III, which was the largest athletic event held anywhere in 1990. Gay Games III, held in Vancouver, British Columbia, featured 7,250 people in 29 different sporting events at Gay Games III. Participation numbers have doubled each time the Games have been held. Gay Games I in San Francisco in 1982 included 1,300 athletes. Gay Games II in 1986, also in San Francisco, had 3,500 athletes.

Gay Games IV & Cultural Festival, to be held June 18-25, 1994, is an Olympic-style sporting and cultural event open to all. More than 15,000 athletes are expected to participate in 31 team and individual sports in venues located throughout the New York City Metro area.

Early registration for athletic events closed December 31, but applications will be accepted through March 31 in sports with available space. "We're enthusiastic about these numbers" said Jay Hill, Executive Director of Gay Games IV. "We're on target to be the largest athletic event ever held." The 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona had 10,568 athletes.

"Having participated [in the triathlon] at Gay Games III, I am especially excited to have exceeded the numbers from 1990," Hill added. "It was in incredibly exhilarating experience to be among 7,250 athletes in Vancouver, and I'm sure New York will be even more sensational."

Gay Games IV will also feature a Cultural Festival, the largest assemblage of lesbian and gay culture ever. The Festival will include world-renowned artists and lesser-known performers in a variety of artistic disciplines, including music, theater, film, sculpture, history, architecture, literature, performance art and photography. The deadline for project proposals is March 1.

For more information on registering for Gay Games IV & Cultural Festival call (212) 633-9494.

Openly gay man beats incumbent in Florida

FORT LAUDERDALE—Openly gay challenger Ken Wolf beat incumbent City Commissioner Cary Keno with 40 percent of the vote in the February 8 election for Fort Lauderdale City Commission. The first place finish leaves Wolf in good position to win the March 8 runoff and complete the upset vic-

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