

## news notes

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### Carolinas High AIDS rate

COLUMBIA, SC—According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Columbia metropolitan area had a higher AIDS infection rate in 1999 than San Francisco and Los Angeles. There were 282 reported AIDS cases in Greater Columbia. With 54.6 cases per 100,000 population, the area ranked fourth among US cities. The state's AIDS infection rate ranked sixth in the country.

### National Suits filed against military

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—John Hensala, 35, told the Air Force that he was gay and they swiftly gave him an honorable discharge. Now the Air Force is pursuing \$71,000 in tuition money it says Hensala owes the government for putting him through medical school. Hensala is suing the Air Force in federal district court because it was the military's decision to end his service, he said. He does not believe he owes them a dime. In a similar situation, Tommie Watkins Jr. left the Navy due to gay harassment. Watkins, 25, has also sued, this time the Navy, claiming Pentagon officials have abused their discretion by now demanding that he pay \$67,000 in tuition for his years at the US Naval Academy. Both suits are civil suits and neither intends to repay the military for their tuition.

### Court upholds sodomy law

NEW ORLEANS, LA—Louisiana's Supreme Court has upheld the state's 195-year-old sodomy law, under which consenting adults (gay or straight) could receive up to five years in prison for engaging in oral or anal sex. The decision was 5-2. The ruling did not affect a pending civil lawsuit, filed by gay-rights advocates, challenging the sodomy law on different issues. A state judge had thrown out the law in March, saying it unconstitutionally criminalizes private sexual behavior by adults. A month earlier, the state 4th Circuit Court of Appeal reversed the conviction of a man who had oral sex with a woman. The appeals court said the law violated privacy rights. The Supreme Court reinstated the man's conviction for a crime against nature and his suspended three-year jail sentence.

### Presbys nix gay unions

LONG BEACH, CA—The chief policy-making body of the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted by a narrow margin to recommend barring its ministers from officiating at commitment ceremonies for gay couples. The measure still must be ratified by ministers and elders at congregations nationwide before it can become part of the *Book of Order*, the constitution for the 2.6 million-member denomination.

### Minister may face trial

OMAHA, NE—Another Nebraska United Methodist minister may be facing a church trial for performing a same-sex covenant ceremony. A complaint has been filed against the Rev. Mark Kemling for presiding at a June 3 ceremony for two men in Omaha. The United Methodist Church forbids its ministers to perform such ceremonies and the Rev. Jimmy Creech was defrocked for performing a similar ceremony in November 1999. The complaint now goes to Nebraska Bishop Joel Martinez, the same bishop who ordered the Creech trial.

### 20th Century Fox sued

LOS ANGELES, CA—The state labor commissioner sued 20th Century Fox for allegedly ignoring an order to post a public apology letter to an ex-employee discriminated against because he is gay, court records show. Commissioner Arthur Lujan contends Fox did not post the apology and has not stopped discriminating against gay employees. According to the lawsuit, the labor board found during an investigation that Fox executives discriminated against Randy Stone, a former senior vice president for the studio's Talent and Casting

Network Television division. Stone alleges that, beginning in 1997, Fox President Sandy Grushow humiliated him and made remarks about his homosexuality, Lujan said. The Department of Industrial Relations substantiated Stone's claims and ordered Fox to issue an apology letter and post it for 30 consecutive days. Fox was also ordered to stop all discriminatory remarks and actions toward employees because of their sexual orientation, the lawsuit states.

### Signature goal reached

LINCOLN, NE—Two days before deadline, backers of a petition drive for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex unions in Nebraska had surpassed the minimum 104,000 signatures needed to get the proposed "defense of marriage" amendment on the November ballot. Signatures will need to be verified before the amendment is added to the ballot.

### Another petition

CARSON CITY, NV—A proposed constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriages in Nevada has qualified for the ballot in November, the secretary of state's office said. The raw count of signers was 120,558 while only 44,009 signatures were needed. It also had to gather signatures from 10 percent of the voters in 13 of the state's 17 counties.

### Geico pulls Laura ads

WASHINGTON, DC—In a statement released July 6, Geico Insurance announced it will no longer advertise on the "Dr. Laura" radio show. The statement noted that Geico advertises in a wide range of media and does not endorse the views expressed in those media, but does value consumer feedback. Geico assistant vice president Walter Smith said Geico does not condone discrimination against anyone. The move came after several weeks of efforts by stopdrlaura.com urging gay and lesbian surfers to email Geico.

### Murderer pleads guilty

ALBANY, NY—A former Cohoes football star has avoided a possible lengthy prison term for murder involving a sexual encounter with another man by pleading guilty to manslaughter. David R. Linen, 21, opted for the guilty plea before the start of his trial on two counts of second-degree murder. Under terms of the plea-bargain agreement, Linen will be sentenced to 12 years behind bars on the reduced count of first-degree manslaughter. Linen is accused of beating to death Robert T. Carpenter, 43, with his fists and a plank on May 10, 1999. The two acquaintances had been drinking in a bar after which Carpenter performed oral sex on Linen. Realizing what had happened, Linen flew into a rage and crushed the victim's throat with the board, prosecutors said.

### Gay Survivor sues

NEW YORK, NY—Richard Hatch, the *Survivor* contestant from Rhode Island who was charged with child abuse, is suing state officials claiming his notoriety triggered the arrest. Hatch, 39, was arrested last April, shortly after he returned from spending time on an island in the South China Sea with 15 other contestants as part of the CBS show. Hatch filed two separate federal suits against the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families and Middletown, RI police, charging they violated his civil rights. Hatch — who has told fellow contestants that he is gay — said he had been persecuted because of his celebrity status even though the show had not aired at the time of his arrest. Officials charged that Hatch had forced his 9-year-old adopted son to run six miles in the early morning and then hit the boy when he faltered. Police based their charge on an interview with the child and reports of red welts and bruises seen by administrators at the Aquidneck School in Middletown that the boy attends. Hatch claimed his arrest came two hours before officials interviewed the boy.

### Governor signs law

PURCHASE, NY—Gov. George Pataki recently signed New York state's new hate-crimes law, 10 years after a version first passed the Assembly. Senate Republicans had blocked the bill in the past, arguing that singling out some crimes for higher penalties was unfair to victims of non-bias crimes. However, pressure grew over the years and, when Majority Leader Jo-

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### Calendar

#### MONDAYS

Female

Impersonation

Show at Midnight!

Featuring: Leslie Lain,

Angel Austin &

Special Guests

#### FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS

Sat., July 22

Southern Comfort - Male Stippers

Fri., July 28

Studz - Male Strippers

Fri., August 4

Strictly Enforced - Male Strippers

Fri., August 11

Amateur Strip Contest and Show

Saturday, July 29 - AIDS Walk 2000 Benefit Show

Karaoke - Sundays & Tuesdays

\$25 Bar Tab Drawing!

Patio Bar open on Weekends!

Black Out Underwear Party - Every Wednesday!

### Every

Saturday  
Super Saturday  
Shows

Sunday  
Karaoke  
at 11:30

Tuesday  
Karaoke  
at 11:30

Thursday  
Disco Divas  
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