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## news notes

from around the nation & globe

### National >

#### Mob: If you're gay, you die



John D'Amato

TRENTON, N.J. — A Mafia turncoat testified that he ordered the killing of a mob soldier because he heard the man had performed a sex act on another man. "What's the rule in [the Mafia] about this?" federal prosecutor John Hillebrecht asked snitch Vincent (Vinnie Ocean) Palermo. "You die," Palermo replied. Palermo, a former DeCavalcante crime family boss, offered up his killer credentials as he testified at the racketeering trial of aging reputed Genovese mobster Federico (Fritzy) Giovanelli in Manhattan Federal Court. The gay slay rule came up as Palermo recounted ordering the 1992 killing of DeCavalcante underboss John D'Amato, to which he pleaded guilty when he agreed to cooperate with the feds in 2000. Using a slang term for oral sex, Palermo said he ordered the hit after another mobster told him that D'Amato's girlfriend said he once performed the sex act on a man at a "swingers club."

#### Methodist court rules

PITTSBURGH — United Methodist law clearly teaches that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, the highest court in the denomination has ruled. The Judicial Council, which met during the denomination's General Conference, said violating that church law could be cause for removal from church office. A delegate from Arkansas had asked for the council to rule after a lesbian minister was found innocent at a church trial in March. The Rev. Karen Dammann of Washington state told her bishop that she was in a committed relationship with a woman and was subsequently charged with practices declared "incompatible with Christian teaching" under Methodist law. The jury of 13 pastors effectively ruled that church law did not make it a chargeable offense for homo-

sexual clergy to be sexually active. Traditionalists said the jury knowingly ignored church law out of sympathy for homosexual pastors. Conservatives came to the national meeting intent on finding a way to enforce the gay ordination ban.

#### Hundreds rally to oppose amendment

OSHKOSH, Wis. — Hundreds of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and others gathered for a rally to oppose a state constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriages and civil unions. The rally was sponsored by Queers on the Water, a local support group for gays and lesbians. State Sen. Carol Roessler (R-Oshkosh) and state Rep. Carol Owens (R-Nekimi) drew criticism for their co-sponsorship of a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a union of a man and a woman only. The bill has received approval during one legislative session and must be approved during a second session before it goes to a statewide referendum. If it's approved, it would become a part of the state constitution.

#### Bork criticizes court's interpretation

STAMFORD, Conn. — One-time Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork told a religious gathering that legal justification for gay marriage is a "judicial sin" that exists beyond the U.S. Constitution. Speaking to about 300 Catholic clergy, judges and lawyers at a breakfast, Bork criticized the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's ruling in November legalizing gay marriage. "Many of our courts are guilty of that judicial sin, that is willingness, even eagerness, to reach results announcing principles that have no plausible relation to any constitution," Bork said. "If each person defines meaning for themselves, that means there are no allowable moral truths," said Bork, a former U.S. Appeals Court judge. "If decisions like those I've been discussing are the waves of the future, our culture will slide into chaos and self-government will be a shrunken remnant of what we once aspired to." Bork, whose nomination by President Ronald Reagan to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1987 was rejected by the U.S. Senate, spoke following a Red Mass for members of the legal profession at St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church.

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