

News Brief

by Amanda Reeder

DETROIT— The man convicted of second-degree murder for shooting a gay admirer after he appeared on Jenny Jones to reveal his crush had his 25-50 year sentence overturned on a technicality September 14. The Michigan Court of Appeals was forced to overturn the 1996 conviction because the defense was not allowed to remove a juror the day before the trial began. Under the law, the defense is allowed to remove a juror at any time during the jury selection. Scott Amedure was shot after he appeared on the show in 1995 to tell Jonathan Schmitz that he had a crush on him. Afterward, Schmitz told police that he was humiliated by the on-air surprise, delivered as the audience laughed and hollered. Schmitz will remain in prison until the prosecution exhausts its appeals.

Source—The News and Observer Tuesday, September 15

WASHINGTON, DC— In early August, the House rejected a proposal by Rep. Joel Hefley (R-Co), to void an executive order forbidding discrimination against homosexuals in federal hiring procedures. The vote, mainly along party lines, was 252-176, with 40 Republicans voting against the measure. The order, issued May 28, added sexual orientation to the list of classifications that federal employers cannot discriminate against for hiring practices. This is an addition to gender, race, handicaps, age and color.

However, Hefley insisted that the bill was not aimed at

homosexuals or discrimination, but rather, at his perception of Clinton's abuse of power in circumventing Congress. However, this may not be so easily believed by the homosexual community and the general public alike, as this year seems to be a declared open season on homosexuals. Senate Majority Leader, Trent Lott has aligned himself with Exodus International and compared homosexuality to kleptomania. Earlier in August, the House voted to block federal payments to cities such as San Francisco that require companies they contract for work to provide benefits to same sex partners.

Rep. Nita Lowery (D-NY), who voted against the measure, said, "Republican leadership has decided that it's in their political interest to side with the ignorance and bigotry of the radical right."

In an interesting side note, Hefley had planned to offer his amendment in July by tacking it onto a bill written by fellow Republican Jim Kolbe of Arizona, but decided against it because Kolbe is gay.

Source—The News and Observer online, August 6, 1998

WASHINGTON DC— There is still no word as to whether or not

the vote to appoint James Hormel as ambassador to Luxembourg will occur before the Senate adjourns on October 9.

Hormel, the heir to a meat fortune, well known AIDS activist and civic leader, has had his appointment blocked because some senators feel that he would use the post to promote a gay lifestyle.

Vice President Al Gore and Secretary of State Madeline Albright, among others, have urged the Senate to vote on the matter. In an address to the Human Rights Campaign in early September, Gore told the Senate to give Hormel "the up-or-down vote he deserves." As of yet, the Senate has not responded.

"Will & Grace," NBC's new comedy premiering September 21 at 9:30 p.m. will be the first sitcom to feature a gay man as the lead role. Actor Eric McCormack will be playing Will Truman, an attractive Manhattan lawyer who just so happens to be gay. Grace Adder (Debra Messing) is his straight best friend, and Jack McFarland (Sean Hayes) is the overtly gay friend.

Unlike "Ellen," the men in this show are openly gay and have been for years, so there will

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