

# NATIONAL NEWS

## Forward Strides

by Cynthia Janes

*Documenting our progress towards freedom and justice  
Summarized from press reports across the Nation*

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) fined a Chicago radio station \$6,000 for broadcasting offensive jokes involving gays. The action was triggered by two broadcasters. The FCC called the material "patently offensive," "explicit and vulgar."--*Washington Blade*, 2/8/91 ▼

General Motors, the USA's largest auto manufacturer, has issued a company-wide memo barring discrimination based on sexual orientation. It also forbids "slurs and other derogatory or objectional conduct" against gay men and lesbians. GM's action was an apparent effort to appease officials of San Francisco, whose one-half million dollar a year business they were in danger of losing. San Francisco has a gay rights ordinance.--*San Francisco Chronicle*, 12/29/90 ▼

A DC Federal Appeals Court ruled that insurance companies have an obligation to inform beneficiaries of their options when companies cancel policies. The case involved a man with AIDS who incurred large medical bills when his group health insurance plan expired because it had been taken over by a larger agency.--*Washington Blade*, 12/7/90 ▼

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), the country's oldest and preeminent gay and lesbian civil rights organization, has moved to new offices almost double the size of the old one. New address: 1734 14th St., NW, DC 20009-4309. ▼

For the first time, an openly gay journalist has been selected to serve as a nominating juror for the 1991 Pulitzer Prize. Leroy Aarons, retired Senior V-P for news for the *Oakland Tribune*, was selected by Columbia University.--*Windy City Times*, 2/7/91 ▼

DC gay activist Leonard Green has become the first openly gay person to have a regular column on issues affecting the gay community in a newspaper serving the African-American community. The newspaper, the *Capitol Spotlight*, is a weekly with a circulation of 50,000. Green hopes to "build a bridge between the heterosexual and homosexual communities and set an atmosphere for the exchange of ideas."--*Washington Blade*, 1/25/91 ▼

For the first time in the history of the United Methodist Church, an openly gay minister has demanded that he be placed in a ministry, and that the church lift its 1984 ban on lesbians and gay ministers. The Western Pennsylvania Conference

Board of Ordained Ministers has agreed to respond to his letter in April.--*Gay Community News*, 1/21/91 ▼

Yet another openly gay elected official has surfaced without an election. Gail Shibley, a new member of the Oregon State House, came out January 16, just hours after being sworn in. She said, "To my sisters and brothers in Oregon's lesbian and gay community, I, as a lesbian, would like to say it's nice to be here."--*Washington Blade*, 2/1/91, and *Gay Community News*, 2/4/91 ▼

The University of Virginia's president signed a policy January 28 prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation against students, faculty, and other employees. However, the policy does not apply if compliance "conflicts with law or otherwise jeopardizes the university's receipt of governmental funds."--*Washington Blade*, 2/1/91 ▼

The Smithsonian Institution has begun formally accepting artifacts from "the cause of gay rights and political activism," documenting the struggles of gay men, lesbians and feminists "working together to gain equality." For now, items will be stored in a non-public area, but eventually the museum plans to display them.--*GCN*, 11/25/90 ▼

A gay man, Kenneth Crandall, has announced that he will run for Philadelphia City Council this year. This will be the first time an openly gay candidate has run for the Council.--*Washington Blade*, 1/18/91 ▼

The government of Ontario, Canada, has extended life, medical and dental insurance to lovers of lesbian and gay employees.--*Gay Community News*, 2/4/91. ▼

According to Firemen's Insurance Company of Washington, DC, it has become the first insurance company in the nation to recognize domestic partnerships in the same way it currently recognizes legal spouses on homeowners' policies.--*Washington Blade*, 11/30/90 ▼

## National Lesbian Conference Coming!

Make plans now to attend the first National Lesbian Conference, April 24-28, Atlanta. An estimated 5,000 lesbians will attend.

Conference leaders are still seeking proposals for workshops and panels. If you're interested in serving as a workshop leader or panel member, contact NLC. (Suggested topics are: visibility, legal rights spirituality, health, racism, AIDS, heterophobia). Send one-page description of your workshop and a short autobiography to NLC, PO Box 1999, Decatur, GA 30031, or call (404)373-0000--adapted from *Virago*, 2/91.

## Aspirin for HIV?

Early reports indicate that aspirin may increase T-cell counts in people with HIV. Informal trials in non-controlled situations suggest that one aspirin every other day may lead to an increase in T-cell count. Howard Armistead, Executive Director of the Gay and Lesbian Political Action Committee (GALAPAC), read about aspirin as a possible help to T-cell counts in the 8/17/90 issue of *AIDS Treatment News*, and decided to try it. After two months of taking one aspirin every other day, Armistead said his T-cell count rose from 556 to 895. GALAPAC is trying to get public support for further study of aspirin and HIV.

Some AIDS activists say that aspirin research will not receive attention because there is no money in it for drug companies.

AIDS researchers warn against people with HIV incorporating aspirin into their treatments. Indiscriminate use of aspirin could have negative side effects, they say, especially for people with low blood platelet counts (this would include many of those taking AZT), since aspirin has a thinning effect on blood. Persons with HIV infection might become ill from use of aspirin.

Aspirin trials will be carried out very soon in Los Angeles with the cooperation of local doctors who have offered to help.--summarized from *Gay Community News*, 2/4/91

## LETTER - from page 16

class security and of not wanting to spin my life any more out of balance than it already was. I could tell of the love I saw in your eyes and of my desperate need to never have revulsion replace it, as I was sure it would if you knew about my feelings toward our mutual friend. I could tell of losing her completely due to her need for emotional distance, and of my stubborn refusal to name my pain...the name that made me feel pinned and mounted for display like those bugs in biology class. I could tell of reading over letters from her all these years later and wondering if I had just confronted her with the truth about what I thought the nature of our "very special friendship" was, would it have helped at all.

I could tell you now why I feared you then. You never suspected because I had practiced my act and my secrecy for too long. I could laugh at the cruelest of jokes and we, of course, knew that lesbians were disgusting and ugly women. I could tell more aptly and correctly than you could ever tell me about fear and dislike of lesbians. Nobody likes a mirror that tells the whole truth. Truth. A funny word. My truths are very different from yours and always have been. But I could tell you that the truths we believed about homosexuality were once very similar. I could tell of my second forbidden love and how I wished and thought I would die from the pain or the joy. It had to be one of these, I knew.

I could tell you of watching my mother weep when I finally told her the truth about myself, and of her telling me that her fervent prayer had been that homosexuality had finished its visit to our family. I could tell of my father's ashamed and embarrassed eyes that still will not meet mine. I could tell of my first Gay Pride march and of my mother's new-found pride in me. I could tell of the good straight people who stood beside me long after the Pride march, still trying to convince me that "lesbian" is not a dirty word. I could tell you that now I tend to think that gay is synonymous with strength. And, I am gay.

I could tell you these things and many more. When I chose the road less traveled, I found out that it wasn't the quickest way. It isn't the straight path. It will, however, take me home. I could tell you this. Could you listen? Could you hear? ▼

## SNAPSHOT - from page 18

of themselves.

"To a great extent, we create our own oppression. We can't begin to be free until we free ourselves." Charlotte believes that she will see discrimination toward gay men and lesbians end in her lifetime.

It has taken over four decades for Charlotte to put academic successes and emotional freedom and happiness together, but finally, in these old mountains, she has arrived. ▼

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