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A GAY & LESBIAN NEWSLETTER ON COUPLING

COUPLES

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In the News...

Settlement reached—A settlement has been reached in the 5.5 million dollar lawsuit against Rock Hudson's estate. Hudson's lover, Marc Christian, accused the actor of concealing the fact that he had AIDS prior to his death in 1985. Although a settlement has been reached, the parties declined to divulge the actual amount.

Christian filed suit in 1985, seeking damages for the emotional distress he suffered from the fear he had contracted the deadly disease. Christian testified he lived with Hudson and the two engaged in sex for eight months after Hudson was diagnosed as having AIDS, and Hudson had never told him about the disease. A Superior Court jury found in 1989 that Hudson had been responsible for "outrageous conduct" and awarded \$21.75 million to Christian. The amount was later deemed excessive and reduced to 5.5 million.

Since filing suit, Christian has taken numerous tests that indicated he had not contracted AIDS. Hudson's attorneys argued the amount was excessive because Christian has tested negative. Christian's attorneys argued he suffered extraordinary emotional distress from the fear that he would eventually develop AIDS. ▼

My life as Barney Frank's...boyfriend? Lover? Friend? Spouse?

by Herb Moses

I am the only member of the congressional gay spouse caucus. While this makes meetings a breeze, it presents its own set of definitional and etiquette problems for which I have not yet found a solution.

Straight and gay friends know us as Barney and Herb, but introductions to strangers require a fast read on the audience. The accepted gay term is "lover," but to me that sounds like we are always hopping in and out of bed. For two years of our four-year relationship I was in business school in New Hampshire and Barney was in either Washington or Boston. Now, I work a lot, he works a lot, and we both travel, so that is certainly not an accurate description. I also think the term conveys a lack of permanence and seriousness. Equally, "boyfriend" sounds to jaunty and too transient.

There is "significant other." This sounds like a census term, and, in dissection, there are several other significant people in my life. Washington's gay newspaper has used "partner-in-life," which sounds like Jim Baker sold me a lifetime share in Barney for \$1,000. There is "companion," which sounds like one of us is either elderly or a dog.

Most of the time, I say "friend." But I try to say it with a capital F. Until we decide on a term and define it for the would, no phrase will feel comfortable. Gay men and lesbians been a term that would do for us what "Ms." did for women.

Having started a new job several months ago, I have had to wrestle with the proper response to the question: "Are you married?"

Possibilities: "No, I am gay." "Yes, I am gay." "No, I am not married, but I am in a relationship."

I have solved the problem this way: If gay people ask me if I am married, I say, "Yes," because it means settled down, not dating; if straight people ask me, I sway, "More or less." (We do not have a license, but we do have a mortgage.)

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Information...

Atlanta court case—As reported in the *Southern Voice*, two former lesbian lovers are asking the Georgia Supreme Court to decide on the validity of a joint ownership agreement the two signed when they were lovers. A lower court previously ruled that the agreement is invalid because the pair entered into that agreement to “facilitate a relationship which in Georgia is considered illegal and immoral.”

With a lack of domestic partnership legislation and no legal right to marry, many lesbians and gay couples turn to written agreements to spell out each other's rights and responsibilities in a relationship. The ramifications of this case could mean that such agreements are unenforceable, especially in a jurisdiction with outdated sodomy laws, such as in Georgia. (*Excerpts from an article by KC Wildmoon*) ▼

Delaware Valley Couples—The singles scene can't fit all couples social needs. Networking with people who are committed to their own relationships can be good for couples. In DVC, gays and lesbians build close friendships. Their newsletter keeps you abreast of social and educational events. They are a solid band of friends and neighbors who get together for enrichment, mutual support and fun! Call to find out more about this non-profit group and to join, (215) 336-7652 or (908) 364-8431. (Send us information on a Couples group near you and we'll gladly mention them here.) ▼

Germany—The Germany Gay Association presented a proposal in Bonn in July for the legalization of same-sex marriage. And meanwhile, TV talk hostess Hella Von Sinnen and Carnelia Schell, daughter of former German President Walter Scheel, filed suit in civil court after they were denied a marriage license according to DIE ANDERE WELT as reported in *Outlines*. ▼

“My friend and I; Barney and I; we...” Since it is difficult to swallow pronouns and I will not lie, I really have to tell people that I am gay. (No one has been surprised.) I would like it, though, if people would gossip just a little more. I do not like to have to “come out” so often on the job. I have not shared a special secret with all my co-workers. I wish they would all talk to each other so I did not have to explain to each person about my relationship. People respect my privacy, which I do appreciate, but I feel like I am having to reveal so much in a little work conversation. It feels so different from “Yes, my wife, Belinda, is a lawyer and we have been married for four years.”

Barney and I see each other's families fairly often. I have tried, for ease of conversation, to refer to Barney's brothers and sisters as brother-in-law and sister-in-law, but I always end up explaining more than saying less. I will say I visited my sister-in-law wherein follows a discussion “I didn't know you had a brother,” and a conversational shortcut has become a rather lengthy detour. It is, however, quite natural for my 3-year-old niece to call Barney “uncle,” and fun for Barney's three adult nieces to refer to me as “Uncle Herb.”

Until recently, I was usually referenced but not named in the press. I have occasionally said to photographers taking our pictures, “Please don't refer to me as ‘and friend.’ I have a name and will tell you if you ask.” However, I ascribe little malice to the anonymity I am usually accorded. I think this is often done out of respect for my privacy, with editors somehow assuming that a respectable person would not want his name associated with something less than respectable, like a gay relationship. Most papers respect the old rules of the closet and are probably following the wishes of a majority of well-known-but-I don't-want-to-be-that-well-known gay people. The occasional column mention was designed to repeal people by making something in the relationship sound bad, like “live-in heart throb” or “studly boyfriend” (about which it is tough to complain.)

We are making progress. This year I acquired a name. While Barney was recovering from his heart attack, he was interviewed in our Washington home and what appeared in *The Boston Herald* was a very nice account. “The congressman, who appeared relaxed and rested, sat on the white cloth couch in the renovated split-level Washington town-house he shares with his companion, Herb Moses...” It was normal, and I really appreciated that. Similarly, a Boston magazine article on the politically correct had on its guest list for the politically correct dinner party, “Barney Frank and Herb Moses.”

There is an entire category of situations where I find that I am telling people I do not know a lot more of my personal business than perhaps they want to know. This is a subset of “I don't care what they do in private, as long as they don't flaunt it.” Barney and I at times meet up at hotels in other cities. I have never been comfortable trying to explain who I am to the hotel clerk when I check in first. (A note to travel agents: Both names on the reservation, please.) I admit to being pleased, though, when an Atlanta hotel clerk at the 1988 Democratic convention thought that “lover” was my disguise and that really I was Barney's Secret Service agent.

The longer we are together, the less inclined I am to fudge a response to guard the feeling of the inquirer. Shopping for cloths, I was steered to a different size by a clerk. I informed him it was not for me, it was for my boyfriend. OK, I could have lied and said it was a gift for my brother, right? And the longer we are together, the less inclined I am to mute my behavior for the benefit of others. We recently attended a charity ball in Washington. After dinner, everyone danced. Barney looked at me and asked, “Should we?”

“Yeah,” I said. “It's a ball. You're supposed to dance.”

I am most reserved at work functions. On Capitol Hill, Barney always introduces me as his lover. I have been on the job about a year. When people I work with who do not know me well see us together, they might assume Barney and I are friends, or that I once worked for him. I am still not quite ready—and perhaps a little too junior to feel

secure enough—to introduce Barney to every co-worker and superior as my lover.

It is interesting that the kinds of questions I raised are those that seem the most unliberated. I seek not to mark my independence, which I have, but to find gracious ways of defining our interdependence. I occasionally campaign with Barney, despite a suggestion that this is something “with which people might not be comfortable.” In doing so, I try to define a role for myself that will someday serve as a model for other gay spouses.

I hope that eventually I will achieve the recognition that other spouses of US representatives have. Instead of my mere existence being a topic of discussion, perhaps someday we can move on to the important things, like my hair and my clothes. ▼

Herb Moses is a financial analyst for the Federal National Mortgage Association and the “lover” of Congressman Barney Frank.

IRS RULING

Taxability of Domestic Partners

by Kevin Notre

Vanguard Los Angeles

GayNet News Service

The IRS has recently issued a ruling concerning the taxability of medical benefits extended to the domestic partners of employees of the City of Seattle. The ruling, applicable only to Seattle, was the result of the city's request for information about the tax consequences of amending its self-insured medical plan to cover its employees' domestic partners. Presently in Seattle, domestic partners are not recognized under either state or local law.

The IRS determined that if the domestic partner qualified as either a dependent or spouse under the IRS Code, the health benefits would be tax free, that is, the value of the benefits would not be included in the employee's gross income and exempt from all withholdings.

If, on the other hand, the domestic partner could not qualify as either a dependent or spouse, the fair market value of the coverage over the amount of the employee's contribution would be deemed compensation and subject to all the withholding taxes applicable to nor-

mal compensation. This would result in the city employee being taxed for the health benefits received by their domestic partner. However, the IRS reiterated its position that “spouse,” is determined under each individual state's own law. They further cited established precedent that “Congress undertook no determination of the legality of any kind of interpersonal relationship ... [and] taxpayers will be treated in their intimate and personal relationships as the state in which they reside treats them.”

Unclear from the ruling was how a “family” registration under local domestic partner laws, like those of West Hollywood or San Francisco, would effect the outcome when there is no state domestic partner law.

On a more positive note, however, what seems clear from the ruling is that if same-sex spouses are recognized on a state level, as in California Assembly Bill 167, the federal government would, in deferring to the states on such determinations, recognize such relationships. ▼

Cohousing...

Contributed by the Rose Tree Cohousing Group

Are you looking for more community in your life? Gay and lesbian couples often have to make an extra effort to avoid isolation. Cohousing communities have attracted many gay and lesbian couples because of their open and accepting environments. Residents consciously work together to create living situations that make them feel good about themselves and their community.

Cohousing is a new housing option that combines the autonomy of private dwellings with the advantages of community living. Residents own their own homes, which are centered around a common house, and share in common facilities.

Friends and neighbors are just a short walk away. The sense of community is increased through shared facilities, optional nightly dinners, gardens, play and work spaces; whatever the residents decide together. There is a blend of privacy as well as voluntary participation in a friendly “intentional” community.

In cohousing, the residents make all the decisions. The development is not only managed, but actually designed by its members. The commitment to community develops long before the residents move in.

There are two quarterly newsletters available. N.E. Cohousing Quarterly, 155 Pine Street, Amherst, MA 01002 or Innovative Housing, 2169 Francisco Blvd. EK#E, San Rafael, CA 94901.

Over 100 groups nationwide are exploring cohousing. Rose Tree Cohousing Group is planning to build a rural housing community within an hours drive of Boston. The development will consist of 25-30 households with private residences and shared indoor and outdoor areas. No intentional focus will be given to any specific ideology, except cooperation. For more information contact Katy Petersen 617-876-5330 or Paul Spielman 617-395-8616. ▼

Anniversaries...

Belated Wishes — Steven Davidson and Jim Aldredge of Nashville have celebrated their 7th year together this past September 13th. Congratulations...way to go!

Also Belated — On September 14th Anne Toupouzis and Maureen McCabe celebrated their love for each other by having a commitment ceremony at the Arlington Street Church in Boston a reception followed at Bobby's in the North End. Congratulations...hope the event went well!

Remember to send us your anniversary notices as early as possible. The cut off is the 15th of the month.

[ED]

Cat talk...

Many of our readers have cats, "the family," some say. We noticed an ad for what looks to be an interesting book written by a self-acclaimed "cat therapist" who has 'listened' to over 10,000 cats.

Cats express themselves primarily through body language, such as a wag of a tail or the ripple of a back. Some cats are very vocal, and although you can't always figure out what they're saying, you know that they are trying to tell you something. If you are able to decipher your cats' expressions, then you will be "in touch" with what your cat is feeling.

You may be surprised to discover the warmth and strength of the bonds of affection between you and your cat once you understand a cat's unique language of communication.

To order this important work, send your name and address to Publishers Choice, Box 4171, Dept. FM95-PA, Huntington Station, NY 11746. Tell them to rush you #FM95, *Cat Talk*, \$8.95 CA, MI and NY add sales tax. ▼ Good Luck!

POP QUIZ

How Married Are You?

by Dan Pearlman

A condo of your own, a fence of iron bar, hibachi on the fire escape, washer hooked up to the sink. A gay male couple is not a new idea, it's not a fluke, and it's not a standard to which all need aspire. The rules are more moldable, more pliable, maybe even more breakable.

The couple of yesteryear often aspire to a life-style modeled on their ostensibly heterosexual partners. For some, this was the be-all and end-all of what a relationship could become. For others, the marriage model looked like a maze that a well-trained lab rat wouldn't venture into.

Today, relationship styling has become as big as food styling and promises to expand through the 90's. Perhaps it's time to find out just how married you are.

- When he's not there, you refer to your beloved as:
 - your "husband"
 - your friend
 - Bill
 - Your "future ex-lover"
- The best thing about having a long-term relationship is:
 - someone to pick up after
 - your mother is happy
 - getting it regularly
 - showing up your friends
- In bed, you are most likely to fall asleep:
 - watching the *Tonight Show*
 - reading each other bedtime stories
 - after sex
 - who can sleep the way he snores
- You know:
 - the names of all his nieces and nephews
 - the names of his last two lovers
 - the name of the company he works for
 - his first name is Bill
- My pet name for him is:
 - honey
 - light of my life
- When he's not there, you refer to your beloved as:
 - your "husband"
 - your friend
 - Bill
 - Your "future ex-lover"
- Your friends:
 - we're each other's best friend
 - have all been couples for at least five years
 - say we're a cute couple
 - hey, he's got his friends, I've got mine
- Your favorite entertainment is:
 - Parents for the weekend
 - friends for dinner
 - the Portuguese navy
 - I've got a career you know
- Your sweetheart is going on a business trip, you:
 - catch up on your reading
 - send flowers to his hotel every morning
 - check out the new clubs in town
 - host the summers first Mazola party
- I would never cheat on him because:
 - after cleaning and cooking there's no time
 - he's funny, smart, and good in bed
 - he ties me to the bed when he leaves
 - the hell I wouldn't

10. We would never break up because:
- (0) the house is jointly owned
 - (1) the emotional trauma to the Shih-tzu
 - (2) sex
 - (3) the hell I wouldn't

Total up the numbers next to your answers. If you scored...

▼ **Perfect 10**

You're right, you're Matrimony Incarnate and we all stand humbled before you.

▼ **1-15**

Just remember, a little excitement never

hurt anyone; store that little black book for a rainy day.

▼ **16-29**

You may as well hit the bars now while the pickins is good; don't count on wedding bells with this one.

▼ **Perfect 30**

His name probably isn't Bill, anyway.

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VIEW POINT

Rabbi Speaks Out

by Rabbi Denise Egar

Vanguard Los Angeles

GayNet News Service

Recently, Rabbi Denise Egar, of Temple Beth Chayim Chadashim in Los Angeles, was invited to deliver testimony before the State Assembly's Judiciary Committee in Sacramento, California. The following is an excerpt from the Rabbi's testimony.

Judaism is by nature, family oriented. We at our synagogue believe that we help in giving spiritual values and moral guidance to the many varied family structures in our community. We recognize at our synagogue the truth; that our culture has wonderful and diverse family structures; a tapestry of modern America.

As a rabbi serving this community, it is an honor and privilege to help loving couples affirm their commitments and relationships before God and their families, friends and communities. The values inherent in this commitment of love, fidelity, and respect and mutual obligation mirror our Jewish concepts of our relationship with the divine. Thus they are not limited to only a few select individuals. But rather we believe these values can be shared in by all people: gay, lesbian and heterosexuals alike. However, the glaring discrimination by the state denies gay and

lesbian couples their right to have their committed, long-term relationship legally recognized. This is a sin of omission of the highest level.

As a rabbi, I work regularly with lesbian and gay couples to create ceremonies of affirmation. Gay and lesbian couples, despite the glaring discrimination by the state, are exchanging vows. No mere imitation of heterosexuality. Rather, it is the affirmation and celebration of love shared, and celebrated, commitment and relationship affirmed as good and necessary.

Ceremonies like I recently performed for David and Brian who met in synagogue and two years later were married before family and friends at the Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays National Convention in Anaheim, in October 1990. Or like Tara and Lori who exchanged vows before 50 family members and friends in an aunt's backyard, or Gabe and Michael who this past Sunday, stood underneath the Jewish wedding canopy in our temple before their parents, 150 of their family and friends and God.

Thus, lesbian and gay couples are
continued on next page

Corporate world...

In what seems to be the first move by a major American company, the software giant, Lotus Development Corporation has agreed to offer a broad range of family benefits to so-called "spousal equivalents" of gay and lesbian employees.

Gay and lesbian advocates praised the ground-breaking move which extends the same benefit rights to homosexual couples living together as to married couples in the corporate workplace.

Some municipalities on the west coast have extended similar benefits, but few companies have done the same. Under the new plan, lesbian and gay employees and their co-habiting partners, who are willing to sign a marriage-like contract with Lotus attesting to their commitment to each other, shared economic status and intention of long term relationships, will receive family benefit coverage equal to that offered spouses of married employees. Included in the benefits are full medical and bereavement leave. Qualified dependents are also covered.

Although some small companies offer benefits, apparently no other major publicly traded company grants benefits to lesbian and gays. Such benefits have generally been confined to municipalities, such as Berkeley and Santa Cruz, CA, Seattle, and Madison WI.

In most municipalities, however, benefits are extended to unmarried heterosexual and homosexual couples. But at Lotus, the plan covers only partners and dependents of lesbians and gays. Company officials said the plan was formulated that way because heterosexual couples have the legal right to be married, but gays & lesbians do not. ▼

News notes...

Research Questionnaire—A psychology doctoral student is researching male couples who have chosen to raise a child from birth—not by previous marriage. More than 10 couples have agreed to participate, but he'd like more to complete his confidential questionnaire. Contact Dan McPherson, MFCC, 1301 Seventeenth Ave., San Francisco, CA 94122, (415) 826-4942. ▼

Couples Support Group—The Couples Support Group (CSG) of the Washington Metropolitan Area was founded in 1983 and is primarily a social organization. We hold monthly discussion meetings centering on a particular topic or issue. In addition, we organize a number of workshops and purely social events throughout the year. A monthly newsletter keeps our members up to date and informed of our activities. To contact the group write: CSG, P.O. Box 1010, Alexandria, VA 22313. ▼

Italian Survey—A study by Italy's Institute of Health and an Italian gay organization found in a survey of 3,000 Italian gay men that 51 percent are in relationships. The survey also found that 38 percent of the men always used condoms for anal sex with their partner. ▼

10 Million Dollar Suit—Judy Nelson, who until recently was the companion of tennis champion Martina Navratilova, has petitioned a Texas court for a settlement of up to 10 million dollars. The suit is based upon their "non-marital cohabitation agreement."

Nelsons' attorney states that the 1984 agreement promised her half the assets accumulated during the relationship.

The case has gotten tremendous exposure after Navratilova told her *see News Notes... facing page*

having ceremonies, exchanging rings, signing documents of commitment despite the fact the state discriminates against them; denying them the right to a formal, legal marriage and family recognition...gay and lesbian families must go to extraordinary means to be with their loved ones in need.

It is time for the State of California to recognize the injustice of institutionalized discrimination against gay and lesbian couples. The passage of Assembly Bill 167, which would have changed the marriage laws in California making it legal for gay and lesbian persons to marry, would be one step in making marriage a more equitable situation for all Californians. Already countries like Denmark and Sweden have recognized this injustice and changed their laws. California must lead the way in serving all of her citizens.

Those that oppose gay supportive bills would have you believe that gay and lesbian equals promiscuity. That is simply not true. Gays and lesbians not only are capable of long-lasting committed relationships, but even when the state discriminates by not recognizing our marriages, lesbian and gay couples remain together, creating loving permanent relationships. Each month we celebrate and bless at our worship services those whose anniversaries occur in that month. We give blessing and support to these couples.

The Judaism of today recognizes that all people can and should enter into loving

and committed relationships, regardless of sexual orientation. Certainly it is time for the state to catch up.

Those that oppose our Bills would try and proclaim that they have the true interpretation of scripture and that the Old Testament is clear on homosexuality. As a rabbi, they do not speak for me. As I read the sections in Leviticus they do not address the issues of sexual orientation. But rather, it addresses the issue of inappropriate worship.

One way the ancients practiced their pagan religions was through sexual activities. Leviticus clearly addresses that the Israelites were not to practice pagan worship. Today reform Judaism recognizes that issues of sexual orientation and identity are complex and that our scripture certainly does not address these complex issues. Thus Reform Judaism welcomes gay and lesbian Jews, and ordains openly gay and lesbian candidates as rabbis.

The rite of marriage in our society is a civil issue. Yes, religion and religious bodies also hold marriage to be a spiritual state and there are rites and ceremonies associated with this life passage. However, the state is clear that one does not need a clergy person or the endorsement of a religious body to enter into marriage. However, if the real issue is the civil and legal benefits and rights of the state in marriage, the state should not discriminate against its citizens; heterosexual, gay or lesbian. ▼

DIFFERENCES

Nothing In Common

by Barry Martin

Arne is almost 40. Chuck is 74. Arne is tall, looks about 30, has a full head of beautifully brown unruly hair, a terrific body and an interesting Norwegian accent. Chuck is American, short, a little overweight, fair skinned, has beautiful white hair, looks about 60, is distinguished and probably had "killer" good looks at 25.

In a society were some gay men who

are of the same age with similar cultural backgrounds can't stay together for two weeks, how did these two men who are so totally dissimilar manage to stay together for fifteen years—and live together for ten of those years?

"I had a few relationships prior to meeting Arne," says Chuck. "I was always drawn to much younger men and had been around, but just prior to meeting

Arne, a relationship had ended badly. I had no desire to put myself in a vulnerable situation and I wanted to travel—not settle down. I had led several travel groups and when I met Arne, I was working as cultural director of a Norwegian cruise ship.

Arne's background could not have been more different. He had spent most of this life in a small town in Northern Norway, North of the Arctic Circle, and had his one and only gay experience with an older married man while studying engineering in a large Norwegian city. He took a job on a Norwegian cruise ship to earn money for school and that's where he met Chuck.

"A co-worker on the ship introduced me to Chuck," remembers Arne. "The friend was straight and this was not a matchmaker situation. I had only that one experience with a man and didn't know what to say or do. But Chuck had physical qualities that attracted me. He was older, distinguished, a little overweight, accomplished and classy. The friend had to go elsewhere and left us alone. I just followed through with my impulses and put my hands on him and felt this smooth skin. I'll always remember what he said—'there's not enough touching in this world.'"

Arne resumed school and then went to work as an engineer on an oil rig in the North Sea. His work schedule allowed him several long vacations which he spent in Los Angeles with Chuck. But Chuck shunned a heavy involvement for the next five years until Arne became attracted to another older man.

"That did it for me," continues Chuck. "I did not want to lose this beautiful young man. By then he was 29 and I was 64. He moved to Los Angeles and soon we bought a house together."

Like the end of "Snow White," you'd think the story would end happily here with the two lovers advancing on a castle against the setting sun but with the problems of distance and commitment conquered, the lovers faced other problems.

"Chuck's friends were a big problem for me," remembers Arne. "I was considered a gold digger and Chuck was my sugar daddy. That's how they saw it because they saw the age difference—nothing else. They saw me as a 'kept' person but I had been earning \$50,000 a year working on the oil rig in the North Sea. After I got my degree in the states, I went back to earning good money again but it was hard for other people to really absorb this. It was difficult for them to fathom that I was sincerely and honestly sexually attracted to this man."

Chuck, too, recalls this period sadly. "If people came to dinner, they would remark on the beauty of the house to me and compliment me—not Arne—even though he had paid for half the house. Even though he is not the cook in the relationship, he forced himself to cook part of the meal so people would acknowledge him as they were leaving.

"Notes of appreciation or invitations would come to me—not to him. Other gays regarded him as kind of an adjunct to me. It was very difficult for him."

Ten years have now passed since the two men began living together and they have a very smooth relationship in which they say there are no fights, no upheavals and no disagreements.

"We fit together very well," says Chuck. "There's a lot of respect and we try to put any friction into perspective. When you do that, most things don't seem worth getting upset about. We talk a lot and enjoy one another's company.

Arne is a thinker, a very introspective and quiet person. I'm much more outgo-

News Notes...

side of the story on ABC's news-show 20/20. The program showed a videotape of Nelson and Navratilova signing their partnership agreement in front of witnesses. In an in-depth interview with Barbara Walters, Navratilova said she never read the agreement and felt the lawsuit was unjust. ▼

Mediation—Can't seem to work out your differences? Help is on the way! Opening soon in the San Francisco area is a new low-cost community mediation arbitration service. The Gay and Lesbian Alternative Dispute Resolution Service will provide mediators who are skilled at facilitating conciliatory agreements. These mediators are particularly sensitive to issues affecting the gay community. For further information contact Amy Oppenheimer at (415) 652-6201. Also reported in *Couples* July 1991, a Boston based mediation service called Alternatives is available. Contact Pat Reeve at (617) 524-4066. ▼

Gay Mail Order Catalogue—A new direct mail catalogue showcasing a wide range of quality merchandise is available to attract the spending power of a long ignored segment of American consumers—the 25 million gays and lesbians living throughout the country. The Shocking Gray catalogue provides gay and lesbian owned businesses a national venue to display their products. A small percentage of all revenues generated by catalogue sales will go to gay and lesbian causes. More than 60 products are featured in the catalogue. To receive your free copy of the premier issue (and don't forget to mention you saw it in *Couples*) write to Shocking Gray, Mailing List Manager, 4901 Broadway #152, San Antonio, Texas 78029. ▼



MOVING???

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ing and socially inclined..."

"I'm retired and would like to resume traveling but Arne doesn't want me to do this. This possessive attitude is kind of flattering so I'm not going to fight it. He has a full time job with structured vacations, so I live with those.

The couple has an extended family in that both are "out" to their families and are often involved with their mutual relatives. When Arne's family visits from Norway, it is Chuck who entertains them when Arne is at work.

Infidelity is not issue for the couple. Chuck realized that he had years of experimentation and experience that Arne did not have. He urged his young partner to get out there and "experiment"—but safely. Arne has certainly done that, but it's not that simple:

I work a stressful full-time job. It is difficult to fit outside sex in my life when I enjoy spending time with Chuck. I also find that outside partners want more than just physical contact. They often want

something of me emotionally, too, and I can't give that to them. Outside sex brings outside pressure that I do not have room for in my life."

What advice would the couple pass on to two gay men just embarking on a relationship? What have they gleaned from their own experience?

"I would choose my 'mate' very carefully," says Chuck. "You must know them very well. You have to be able to give unconditionally. You have to know the needs of the other person. If they make a special effort to do something nice for you, you must be sure they know you are appreciative."

Arne adds, "When you love someone, don't throw in the towel because of differences in age or because you live on different continents. If there's enough love there, you'd be surprised at what you can triumph over." ▼

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[ED]

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