1995 POZ Honors: Politics

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You win some, you lose some

HIV positive political candidates are becoming more common, with mixed results. They include Tom Doyle, who unsuccessfully ran for a Colorado congressional seat; New York City Council member Tom Duane [above], who failed in his attempt to depose New York City friend of PWAs Jerrold Nadler for a U.S. House seat; and Robert Massie, who won the Democratic nomination for Massachusetts lieutenant governor but lost the 1994 general election.

Editors at Merriam-Webster are already hard at work on the revised definition of “glowworm”

“I believe in the indelible, unwashable, AIDS tattoo. It would be placed in the private area, maybe even with glow-in-the-dark ink. It would save lives,” said Louisiana gubernatorial candidate David Duke.

"Billy, use your right hand—no, your other right hand"

Surgeon general Jocelyn Elders was dismissed by the Clinton administration last December for saying masturbation is “part of human sexuality and perhaps should be taught” during a Q&A at a U.N. conference on AIDS.

Perhaps putting a condom on his house only made him madder

The Republican landslide of 1994 gave Sen. Jesse Helms the chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee and cleared out many gay-friendly legislators who traditionally blocked his assaults on AIDS funding and prevention.

- Demanding a reduction in federal AIDS spending in July, Helms justified himself by saying that it is the “deliberate, disgusting, revolting conduct” of people with AIDS that is responsible for the disease. Even Newt backed away from that one.

- Helms laced his usual vitriol with a dose of distortion when he claimed that around $400 million

more federal tax dollars were being spent on AIDS yearly than on cancer and heart disease, which both cause more deaths. But the Senator didn't factor in Medicaid and Medicare spending. The actual Public Health Service figures are $36.3 billion on heart disease, $16.9 billion on cancer, and $6 billion on AIDS.

- The Senator added this amendment to the Ryan White CARE act when the five-year federal direct-care funding program came up for renewal this year: "No funds authorized under [the] Act may be used to promote or encourage, directly or indirectly, homosexuality." Although this will have little effect on how the money is spent, few can deny the amendment's symbolic violence.

Peace dividend

In a surprise move, the CDC cut funding for the anonymous testing of pregnant women throughout the nation. Some speculated the move was intended to defuse Republican efforts to have the names of those testing positive made public.

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