# HERLAND VOICE January, 1994

# COMMITTEE FOR AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE DECLARES VICTORY

The Committee for an Inclusive Future, the principal opposition to Oklahoma City's MAPS sales tax proposal, declared their campaign a success in spite of the passage of the sales tax proposal. "We have shown that when those of us who are traditionally shut out of power work together we can make a significant impact in the political process. With very little money but lots of grassroots work, we have brought our issues to the forefront of public discussion. The City Council never expected we could have so much impact on this election," commented Pat Reaves, spokesperson for Simply Equal-OKC. Paul Thompson, co-chair of the Oklahoma Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, said "The coalition building we have done is impressive and ongoing. Those who have been working together will continue to do so and to include others in our fight until we are all heard and respected."

African American leaders in the Committee for an Inclusive Future were criticized throughout the campaign for their alliance with gay and lesbian advocacy organizations. A Daily Oklahoman editorial (12/3/93) entitled "No Blackmail" said they had "unwisely allied themselves with radical homosexual and lesbian activists seeking special privileges." and said "it is curious, indeed, to see pastors equating sexual immorality with the moral objective of equal protection for all, regardless of race." The Black Chronicle (11/11/93) editorialized, "The league [Urban League] is ...trekking down such a primrose path as it is now while aligned with radical homosexual groups such as Queer Nation; weirdo groups bent upon expanding the law of the land to grasp illegitimate so-called rights."

In a letter to the editor published in the Daily Oklahoman (12/14/93), Leonard Benton, Executive Director of the Urban League, and Roosevelt Milton, President of the Oklahoma City Branch of the NAACP reiterated the positions of their respective organizations. "Human rights is an issue of concern in the African American Community ...The NAACP and the Urban League have called for the passage of a stronger human rights ordinance recommended by the OKC Human Rights Commissions which will include protection and penalty for employment discrimination in the private sector. Benton and Milton continued, "The NAACP and the Urban League are proud to offer leadership and support to the gay community in their struggle to secure basic human rights and protection.

Speaking at the final "Victory Rally" held by the Committee for an Inclusive Future at Fairview Baptist Church, Leonard Benton, Executive Director of the Urban League said, "For me the person who has given me the clearest insight on this issue in terms of how this issue as we struggle for the human rights of all people -- how it is related to the civil rights movement is Coretta Scott King." (continued on page 2)

### COLORADO AMENDMENT TWO RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

by Peggy Johnson

On December 14, 1993, the Colorado district court for the city and county of Denver ruled as unconstitutional Amendment 2, the state initiative banning any laws protecting gays, lesbians and bisexuals from discrimination. Colorado's attorney general has said the state will appeal the decision to the Colorado Supreme Court. The plaintiffs in the action, styled Evans v. Romer, No. 92 CV 7223, included, among others, Richard G. Evans, Martina Navratilova, the Boulder Valley School District, the city and county of Denver, the cities of Boulder and Aspen, and the Aspen city council. With legal support from the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and the American Civil Liberties Union, the plaintiffs challenged the law passed by a 53.4% majority of the voters on November 3, 1992. The defendants included Roy Romer, Colorado governor; Gale Norton, Colorado attorney general; and the state of Colorado.

Judge Jeffrey Bayless of the district court granted a preliminary injunction sought by the plaintiffs soon after the initiative passed in November 1992. The Colorado Supreme Court upheld that injunction in July in Evans v. Romer, 854 P.2d 1270 (Colo. 1993). In that case, the Colorado Supreme Court stated that "the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution protects the fundamental right to participate equally in the political process, and ... any legislation or state constitutional amendment which infringes on this right by 'fencing out' an independently identifiable class of persons must be subject to strict judicial scrutiny." Evans, 854 P.2d at 1282. Under strict scrutiny, a state must show that it has a compelling state interest in passing the law in question. As such, the burden in this case was on the defendants to prove its compelling interest in keeping the law. Since the Colorado Supreme Court set forth the standard for review at trial, there is strong speculation that the district court decision will be upheld on appeal.

In order to meet their burden, the defendants offered six alleged "compelling state interests." These included (1) deterring factionalism; (2) preserving the integrity of the state's political functions; (3) preserving the ability of the state to remedy discrimination against suspect classes; (4) preventing the government from interfering with personal, familial and religious privacy; (5) preventing government from subsidizing the political objectives of a special interest group; and (6) promoting the physical and psychological well-being of our children. (continued on page 4)

# ST. Sybil

St. Sybil, who normally appears in this space has taken a brief holiday break. Look for her wit and wisdon to reappear in the February issue of *The Voice*.

#### LESBIAN HERSTORY

What was the life of a lesbian like for our great-aunts and grandmothers? The Lesbian Herstory Archives is one of the best places to find out about the lives of the lesbians who have gone before us. For the past 19 years, the Archives have collected and cataloged photographs, diaries, books, and a myriad of artifacts of lesbian lives.

Located in New York City, the Lesbian Herstory Archives houses the world's largest collection of materials by and about lesbians and our communities. The collection, international in scope, includes books, unpublished papers, conference proceedings, newsletters, photographs, slides, periodicals, tapes, videos, films, artwork, calendars, manuscripts, music, and clothing that deal with lesbians and lesbian lives.

The Lesbian Herstory Archives opened in 1974 in the pantry of an Upper West Side Manhattan apartment. The founders were concerned about the failure of mainstream institutions to value lesbian culture. They recognized that an independent archive governed by lesbians would best protect, preserve, and share lesbian history. Today the Lesbian Herstory Archives is the largest and longest lived lesbian archive anywhere.

Herland will celebrate Women's History Month in March with a special visit from the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Coordinator Amy Beth will bring a special audiovisual presentation to share the images of lesbian herstory preserved by the Archives. Watch future issues of the *Voice* for details of the Lesbian Herstory Archives visit to Oklahoma City.

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#### COALTION VICTORY (continued from page 1)

"This is what Coretta Scott King had to say in June of this year at the gravesite of Dr. Martin Luther King in Georgia. She says, 'I strongly believe that freedom and justice can not be parceled out in pieces to suit political convenience. Dr. King said 'injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' I don't believe you can stand up for freedom for one group of people and deny it to others. Many lesbian and gay people have supported the African American freedom struggle and I'm not going to turn my back on their movement for freedom and dignity.' We have a responsibility in the civil rights movement to stand up for what is right, to stand up against discrimination whatever its form may be. So we have called upon this city to pass a human rights ordinance. They did not pass that human rights ordinance and they had the opportunity to do that....so we are standing in opposition....The day is gone when we will not demand for fair inclusive participation. "

The Committee mounted an intensive two-week grassroots campaign to defeat the MAPS sales tax proposal following the City Council's refusal to address concerns about minority participation in city contracts, transportation links to Northeast OKC, funding for economic development in Northeast OKC, and passage of a strong human rights ordinance including remedies for discrimination in employment and protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. The low-budget campaign spent less than \$2,000 compared to over \$400,000 expenses reported by supporters of the MAPS proposal.

The Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) passed by a 54% to 46% margin with the largest margin of victory in far northwest and southwest Oklahoma City. Voters in northeast Oklahoma City and near northwest OKC (below N.W. 50th) voted against the proposal demonstrating success of the campaign against the proposal by the Committee for an Inclusive Future. Voter turnout was higher than any OKC sales tax election in four years.

In a statement on behalf of the Committee for an Inclusive Future following the announcement of the election results, Roosevelt Milton, President of the OKC NAACP said, "We knew this fight would be challenging but we had little to lose in our struggle for justice. We will continue to broaden our base of community support and work towards a future that includes and involves everyone. Our four objectives, i.e. guaranteed minority participation, improving transportation in northeast OKC, funding economic development in the northeast quadrant and passing an enforceable human rights ordinance will continue to be central in all of our actions."

Membership in the Committee for an Inclusive Future encompassed civil rights organizations, African American ministerial groups and gay and lesbian advocacy organizations. The OKC NAACP, the Urban League, Simply Equal-OKC, the Oklahoma Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, the Baptist Ministers Association, The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, The Peace House, The Social Justice Committee of the First Unitarian Church, the Coalition of Concerned Businessmen, and the Concerned Clergy for Spiritual Renewal are among the active participants in the committee.

### LESBIAN FANTASIA

by Vivien Ng

Some of you may have guessed it already: I am a closeted writer. I don't know if my condition is congenital or cultural, but I've known since I was in first grade that translating my thought into words gives me great joy. My classmates thought I was queer, of course, for taking such perverted pleasure in reading my essays aloud in class. Peer pressure drove me into the closet, but I never abandoned this forbidden love.

It's time for me to come clean: I am going to write THE great lesbian novel, one that will not only make me famous but also buy me a coveted apartment in New York City and a summer cottage on Orcas Island in Puget Sound. When I make it big time, I have to thank the constraints of historical scholarship for making my success as a fiction writer possible.

About three summers ago, I picked up a copy of Paula Martinac's *Out of Time* and read it from cover to cover in one sitting. In this delightful lesbian ghost story (of sorts), strange things began to happen to Susan Van Dine, a perennial graduate student, after she ''stole'' an old photo album from an antique store in New York City. I was especially taken by the way Van Dine was able to gradually reconstruct the lives of the four women whose photographs made up the album. At the time, I had just started my research on early Chinese feminists, a task made particularly daunting by the layers of neglect and distortion that had shrouded their lives for so long. I could not help but fantasize, ''If only 'my' women would communicate with me the way Harriet and Lucy did with Susan!''

"My" women were an unconventional lot. Not only did they eschew marriage but they lived far away from home, in Tokyo, Japan. Some of them founded a radical magazine called NEW CHINESE WOMEN. A few of them, I am convinced, were lesbians. But I have no proof! If only they would appear in my dreams and reveal their secret to me! (Harriet did more than that to Susan Van Dine, but since this is a "family" publication, I can't tell you more. You just have to read the book yourself!)

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The Voice is printed on recycled paper.

Of course, even if they had done so, I still would not be able to call them lesbians in the history book that I am writing. Look how much trouble Blanche Wiesen Cook got into with her biography of Eleanor Roosevelt, and she had more "proof" than I would ever have. I probably would not have to defend myself against irate admirers of "my" women, as Cook has had to do, because no university press would publish such "unsubstantiated drivel" in the first place. I have only one choice: if I want to reclaim their story, I need to write a romantic novel in addition to the history book.

As a novelist, I am Clio unbound. I can give my women flesh and blood (and temper). I can make them sensual as well as cerebral. Like *Out of Time*, my novel will be unabashedly erotic, because only in such a vehicle will I be able to do justice to them. I will weave an intricate tapestry of love, desire, conviction, self-sacrifice, even martyrdom. I will claim victory for them against convention, against tradition, against compulsory heterosexuality. I will make them succeed where history would/could not. I will write lesbians into Chinese history.

Sooner or later, of course, I will have to come down to earth from this lesbian fantasy. I don't normally give in to self doubts, but I have been an historian for maybe too long--long enough perhaps to have cost me my ability to render fiction. But until I come crashing down, I am going to relish these fanciful thoughts as robustly as I can.

#### **NEW AT HERLAND**

Before Our Eyes Joan Alden
Tell Me What You Like Kate Allen
Lesbian Love Signs Aurora

Rest in Pieces Rita Mae Brown
That's Ms. Bulldyke to You, Charlie Jane Caminos
Claire of the Moon Nicole Conn
Forty-three Septembers Jewelle Gomez

Running Fiercely Toward A High Thin Sound Judith Katz
Undersong Audre Lorde
Out of Time Paula Martinac
Home Movies Paula Martinac

Profiles in Gay & Lesbian Courage Perry

Crime Against Nature

k.d. lang: Carrying the Torch
Cecile

Minnie Bruce Pratt
William Robertson
Ruthann Robson

May Sarton: Among the Usual Days May Sarton Empathy Sarah Schulman

Lesbian Quotations Silva

Possessing the Secret of Joy Alice Walker
Temple of My Familiar Alice Walker
In Search of Our Mothers' GardensAlice Walker
Vampires & Violets: Lesbians in Film Alison Weiss

Diamonds are a Dyke's Best Friend Zipter

A new shipment of CD's and tapes with recordings by Cris Williamson and Tret Fure and others has just arrived. Drop by Herland to see the latest arrivals.

#### AMENDMENT TWO UNCONSTITUTIONAL

(continued from page 1)

The district court found only the fourth and sixth claims to be compelling state interests — the promotion of religious freedom and the promotion of family privacy. But the court went on to rule that Amendment 2 was not narrowly drawn in the least restrictive manner possible to achieve the claimed state interests. Therefore, the defendants failed to meet their burden and the initiative had to be struck down. The law violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment by interfering with "the fundamental right of an identifiable group to participate in the political process." The U.S.Supreme Court has recognized a few other fundamental rights under the equal protection analysis including the right to vote, the right to travel and the right to have offspring.

The plaintiffs also sought a ruling that gays, lesbians and bisexuals should be considered a "suspect class" or "quasisuspect class." Suspect class status is desirable because whenever a law is passed discriminating against a "suspect class," the law is subjected to strict scrutiny review. Few laws can pass such review. Only race, alienage and national origin have been recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court as "suspect classes." Gender and illegitimacy have been recognized as "quasi-suspect." To laws addressed toward these groups, the courts must apply "middle-tier scrutiny." The law must be substantially related to an important governmental interest under this heightened scrutiny but the standard is not as insurmountable as the "strict scrutiny" standard. This test is also difficult for most laws to pass.

The court, however, refused to apply "suspect class" or quasisuspect class" status to gays, lesbians and bisexuals. There is no precedent for such a determination and the court said the group failed to pass the three-prong test used by courts in bestowing such status. First, the group must have suffered a history of discrimination. Second, the individuals of the group must show 'obvious, immutable, or distinguishing characteristics." Third, the group must be politically powerless. The district court determined that lesbians, gays and bisexuals have suffered a history of discrimination as a group. However, the court said the question of whether homosexuality or bisexuality is immutable is inconclusive and not one to be determined by the court. Finally, the court would not conclude that the group is politically powerless. Relying on trial testimony, the court determined that "the percentage of homosexuals in our society" is not over four per cent. Since 46% of the Colorado electorate voted against the initiative, the court concluded that four per cent of the population garnered the support of an additional 42% and thus lesbians, gays and bisexuals are not particularly politically powerless.

The district court also refused to apply the rational basis test to the initiative. Since the Colorado Supreme Court had determined there was a fundamental right involved and therefore strict scrutiny should apply, the court "declined to apply a legally inappropriate test to this case." Under the rational basis test, a state must show that a law has a rational relationship to a legitimate governmental interest. This is the lowest level of scrutiny and almost all laws pass this test when applied. However, two recent cases striking down the ban on gays and lesbians in the military have used a heightened rational basis test.

There is some good language in the district court's decision which at times almost ridicule the state's attempt to justify Amendment 2 and Colorado's attempt to stigmatize and shut out lesbians, gays and bisexuals from the political process. There is still some order left in the courts even though this decision affects only Colorado. Perhaps it indicates a renewed accessibility to the judicial system to which the U.S. Supreme Court in Bowers v. Hardwick,478 U.S. 186 (1986) dealt a crushing blow. For further legal research and reading, see the cases cited above and also High Tech Gays v. Defense Industrial Security Clearance Office, 895 F.2d 563 (9th Cir. 1990); Ben-Shalom v. March, 881 F.2d 454 (7th Cir. 1989); and Steffan v. Aspin, 1993 W.L., 465530 (D.C. Cir.).

#### HATE CRIMES SENTENCING ACT

The U.S. House and Senate passed the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act last month by overwhelming margins in both chambers. This piece of legislation advances the federal response to crimes in which the perpetrator intentionally selects a victim because of his or her "actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation."

The legislation increases penalties for hate crimes under the federal law; enhances federal sentences not less than three offense levels and demands proof beyond a reasonable doubt that a hate crime occurred.

The House passed a stand-alone measure while the Senate passed an Omnibus Crime Bill package that included the hate crimes issue. This legislation will be going to conference committee in January to resolve differences between the chambers.

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# Kitchen Table Women of Color Press

# Help keep Kitchen Table alive for the next generation of feminists of color

#### Dear Book Lover.

When Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press was started by Audre Lorde and Barbara Smith in 1980, its founders pledged that it would become an institution. Thirteen years later Kitchen Table is still alive and continues to be the only U. S. publisher for women of color. But in these hard economic times, there is no guarantee that Kitchen Table will be always be here, unless the women's community nationwide takes an active part in securing its future.

As you know, the Press has published award winning classics like *This Bridge Called My Back*, *Home Girls*, and *Cuentos*, but you may not know that it has always functioned as a service organization and political support network for feminists and lesbians of color as well.

Recently the Press' first full four-color cover for Seventeen Syllables was awarded First Place in the highly competitive New York Book Show. Most of the other winners were multinational corporations with unlimited budgets, art departments, and state of the art equipment. Kitchen Table won with two people on staff and without even an office copying machine or laser printer.

If it were not for publisher Barbara Smith's years of leadership and unsalaried work the Press would not have survived. Because we are women who cherish Kitchen Table we believe it is time for the Press' existence not to be dependent upon individual sacrifice. We want the Press to grow and to gain access to the material and technological resources that would make it possible to sustain the quality work that has made its reputation. That means that we have made a commitment to raising the necessary funds to accomplish these goals.

We the undersigned take responsibility for preserving Kitchen Table and the work that has given so many of us the strength, the vision, and the hope to fight for our lives and the lives of those we love. We urge you to join us. For just as we are responsible for our own liberation, we understand that Kitchen Table Press' survival depends on us.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

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# MISSISSIPPI LESBIANS UNDER SIEGE

Two hundred fifty people attended a meeting on December 6 at the Community Center in Ovett, Mississippi to denounce Brenda and Wanda Henson, who bought property in July to create Camp Sister Spirit, a feminist educational center. At the meeting, residents discussed ways to force the women to leave the area. Private citizens and public officials (including the attorney for the Board of Supervisors in neighboring Perry County) vowed to research state and county laws, including the state anti-sodomy law, to discover a means to force the women to leave. The women did not attend the meeting because they fear for their safety. A second community meeting is scheduled for January 4, 1994.

The December 6 meeting followed nearly two months of harassment, intimidation and violence directed at the women. The women receive harassing and threatening phone calls. A dead dog was hung from their mailbox The mailbox has also been shot at and stuffed with sanitary napkins; and several unknown men (some of them armed) have been found wandering on the 120 acres of Camp Sister Spirit.

"Even local government officials are involved in the attempt to force us from this land," Henson said. "I view this as an open conspiracy to deny us our civil rights."

In response to the request of the NGLTF, the Community Relations Service (CRS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, has agreed to monitor the situation. Sue Brown, of the Atlanta office of the CRS, spoke with Brenda Henson and assured Henson that she would contact the local sheriff and local FBI to let them know a federal agency was monitoring the situation. However, CRS is mandated to mediate disputes related only to race, color and ethnicity, not sexual orientation.and with the current mandate, CRS cannot directly mediate the dispute unless Attorney General Janet Reno directs CRS to do so.

National attention has been focused on the women's situation by an appearance on Oprah Winfrey's television talk show and a Newsweek article, "Mississippi Burning." ABC's 20/20 has also indicated interest in covering the events surrounding Camp Sister Spirit.

Sister Spirit is a community based, IRS recognized 501(c) (3) organization committed to providing people counseling, information, education, referral, advocacy and meeting space to address social issues. To date, Sister Spirit reports they have received over \$1200 dollars from supporters around the nation. They still need around \$6000 to install 3 cameras, a monitor, and a road sensor to cover some of the potential access points onto the land and would also appreciate any videocamera shells that could be put up as decoys. Craftswomen, particularly skilled carpenters, electricians, masonry workers, and plumbers, are also needed. Brenda and Wanda Henson can be contacted at Camp Sister Spirit, PO Box 12, Ovett, MS 39464.

#### WILD HAIRED KATE

By Deborah Fox wild haired Kate was a rancher woman she pulled calves, branded stock made steers and rode a spirited horse.

ever' morn she was up by six with a cup of joe in hand she made to feed the cows.

she doctored the sick stock, mended the fences broke the colts to ride and every now and again she liked to go a-two-steppin'.

Kate could do most anything a man could do and alot of times she did it better.

but most folks never heard much about her or any others like her 'cause its the men who made the West -so we was toldand the men who wrote it!

but Kate didn't mind all the millions of lies and omissions 'cause she had the life she loved.

I can't blame her or any of the others like her an' begrudge the niche they made 'cause they was better than equal to the men who stole all the credit from the.

so now you know 'bout wild haired Kate and I hope you won't forget any of the others like her 'cause they gave us something real important, a self-reliance we can emulate.

#### FEMINIST TEACHER: CALL FOR PAPERS

How do you teach about sexism, racism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression? Have you developed lesson plans or courses dealing with AIDS, human rights, anti-Semitism, peace and justice, violence against women, world politics, imperialism, or the environment from a feminist perspective?

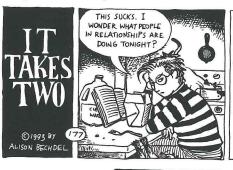
Feminist Teacher seeks essays, articles, course descriptions, bibliographies, and letters-to-the collective describing how educators address these and other issues in the classroom. The magazine also seeks reviews of books, periodicals, and videos that address pedagogical issues from a feminist perspective.

Feminist Teacher reaches educators in a variety of disciplines and in all grade levels -- preschool through graduate school, in traditional as well as nontraditional classroom settings. Authors are asked to keep the diversity of this audience in mind and to avoid technical or abstract language.

For a copy the Manuscript Guidelines, please write: Feminist Teacher, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts 02766.

Subscription rates for U.S. addresses are \$18 individuals, \$32.50 institutions (please write for international, including Canadian, rates).

### Dykes to Watch Out For





















## MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

The annual Martin Luther King Day activities will be held on January 17. They will begin with a rally at Calvary Baptist Church, 300 N. Walnut at noon followed by a parade to the Civic Center. A program will be held at the Civic Center from 2 - 4 P.M.

This year Herland will be marching with the Simply Equal contingent. Come join us as we honor Martin Luther King and celebrate the on-going struggle for civil rights for all.

#### BULLETIN BOARD

Susan reports that the lesbian and gay teachers/librarians meeting in December was a great success, and that the group will meet again on Thursday, January 13, 1994, at 7 o'clock p.m. at Herland.

NURSES NEEDED: NGLTF, in conjunction with other groups, is waging a battle with the Harvard researchers responsible for the 18-year-old Nurses Health Study. This is an on-going study of more than one hundred thousand female nurses to obtain general health information in all areas of women's health. Nurses (lesbian, bisexual or straight) are needed to write the researchers and encourage them to add questions about sexual orientation and sexual activity. Call Marj Plumb, NGLTF Health Policy Director, at (202) 332-6483, ext. 3310 or fax her at (202) 332-0207 and leave your name, address, phone number and fax (if you have one), for important information about this study and whom to write.

People For the American Way, a 300,000-member nonpartisoan constitutional liberties organization, has published its annual report which documents anti-gay measures taking place in this country between November 3, 1992 and September 30, 1993. The report, titled HOSTILE CLIMATE, focuses on activity at the state and local level. To obtain a copy send \$6.95 to Communications Department, People for the American Way, 2000 M St NW, Suite 400, Washington DC 20036. Or call 202-467-4999.

HEALTH CARE REFORM & YOU: NGLTF is preparing an analysis of the President's Health Security Act and its impacts on the health concerns of gay, lesbian and bisexual people. NGLTF is also establishing a nationwide network of lesbian, gay and bisexual health reform activists. For a copy of the Health Security Act analysis, write to NGLTF Publications Dept., 1734 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009. (202) 332-6483, ext. 3327. To join the nationwide network of lesbian, gay and bisexual health reform activists, contact Marj Plumb, NGLTF Health Policy Director, at (202) 332-6483, ext. 3310.



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