

**FOLLOW-UP** *from page 10*

# Death of a drag queen

**Date:** July 19

**The story:** Malcolm Michaels, a/k/a Marsha P. Johnson, renowned transvestite, gay rights pioneer and Hoboken resident, is found floating in the Hudson River just off the Christopher Street pier. Police quickly rule the death a suicide, despite the insistence of friends that Marsha was "incapable of intentionally destroying himself."

**Subsequent developments:** Several weeks later, a witness came forward who claimed to have seen Marsha being harassed by young thugs (the West Village has been plagued by incidents of gay-bashing) on the last night he was seen alive. Since then, Marsha's former housemate, activist Randy Wicker, Marsha's siblings and the Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project have been fighting to have the investigation into Marsha's death reopened. Last week, with some lobbying help from New York City Councilman Tom Duane, Marsha's friends and family got the medical examiner to agree to accept their depositions. This week or next, the ME may reclassify Marsha's death as Cause Unknown, which would lift a little of the stigma attached to the suicide finding.