

the rest of our world

Kiltish Kids

Glasgow – The largest survey of its kind ever commissioned in Scotland has discovered that one in five gay people in Scotland is a parent, and a further 17 percent would like to have children in the future, according to a report from the predominantly lgbtq Universal Fellowship of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC).

One-third of all gay parents said their children were living permanently with them. Ruth Henry, manager of Beyond Barriers, said the high number of gay parents had taken them by surprise. “We will have to look at the issue of parenting and the issues facing the children of lesbian and gay parents,” she told the Scottish Herald.

The statistics were part of a national GLBT survey conducted across Scotland. The biggest issue facing GLBT people was equal partnership rights, according to the survey. Discrimination and prejudice were seen as the next most important issues.

Dutch Assassin Sentenced

Amsterdam – An item on Gay.com reports that the killer of Dutch gay populist politician Pim Fortuyn has been sentenced to 18 years in jail.

Volkert van der Graaf, an animal rights activist, confessed to shooting Fortuyn at point-blank range, only days before elections in May last year swept the politician's party to power.

Prosecutors had called for a life sentence for van der Graaf, with head prosecutor Koos Ploy saying that the full term must be evoked in order to deter any further attempts at unsettling democracy.

Britta Bohler, his defense counsel, pleaded for a lesser sentence as her client had cooperated by confessing and deserved a chance to be rehabilitated within society.

“He did commit the crime, but not with a morally reprehensible intention. He did not view the murder as an attack on democracy but rather saw Fortuyn as a danger to democracy,” she argued.

Van der Graaf has refused to apologize to Fortuyn's family, saying that he “wrestles” with the question of whether he acted justly.

Japan OKs First Trans Politician's Run

Tokyo – In a landmark decision, a transgender woman will be allowed to run for office as a female, even though under Japanese law she is still considered a male, reports 365Gay.com.

She will be listed on the ballot for Tokyo's municipal government under her chosen name of Aya Kamikawa.

When Kamikawa, 35, presented her candidacy documents last month to an election administration committee, she left blank the box for sex. Local officials referred the question to the federal government, which ruled she could run as a female, but all official reports and records of the poll will refer to her as a man.

Kamikawa is waiting to undergo sex reassignment surgery later this year. But even after the surgery is complete, she will continue to be officially recognized as male on

her family register, the official document the government uses for all identification.

Japan is one of the few major industrialized nations that does not have transgender rights. The term “transgender” is not used. Rather, transgender people are referred to as “suffering gender identity disorder.”

Sirius Launched GLBT Radio Channel

New York City – OutQ, the first 24-hour U.S. satellite radio channel for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender listeners, started broadcasting on Monday, Sirius Satellite Radio announced.

The offering, which features several talk shows, news and music programs, is the latest addition to Sirius' 104-channel network. The network allows subscribers, who pay \$12.95 per month, nationwide access to its digital radio channels. Subscribers must also purchase special equipment, which can be used in cars or homes.

“I am thrilled that something like OutQ has finally arrived,” gay playwright and actor Harvey Fierstein said. “To me, adding OutQ to the broadcasting world is like upgrading from black-and-white to living color.”

OutQ's lineup of talk show hosts includes columnist and author Michelangelo Signorile, former GAYBC Web radio founder John McMullen, nationally syndicated radio personality Angeliqe Perrin and Derek Hartley, who also writes a column for PlanetOut.

According to the *New York Times*, Sirius had nearly 30,000 subscribers at the end of 2002. Its main competitor, XM Satellite Radio, reportedly has 500,000 subscribers. XM does not currently have a GLBT-specific channel.

Sauce for the Gander?

According to a quote from the president of the anti-gay Family Research Council, published in the *Washington Blade*, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has cut domestic partner benefits to its own employees.

“After badgering businesses into providing benefits to homosexual and lesbian partners of employees, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force has cut domestic partner benefits to its own employees. ... The homosexual advocacy group says providing such benefits is ‘prohibitively expensive,’ even as it continues to dismiss similar complaints from private business as unfounded. It seems that sauce for the goose isn't necessarily sauce for the gander.”

The mention of domestic partner benefit cuts came in a March 7 review of Jean's tenure at the NGLTF following the announcement of her resignation. NGLTF pays for 50 percent of domestic partner health benefits, a decrease from 100 percent. Jean said the cut was required because the organization was a half million dollars in debt and the benefit was unsustainable under those conditions.

Gay Man Is Spouse in Wrongful Death

New York – A gay man in New York is a legal spouse and able to sue St. Vincent's Hospital for medical negli-

gence leading to his longtime partner's death, a New York court ruled last month.

“This decision is a tremendous victory that says gay couples who have a civil union from Vermont are spouses and should be recognized as spouses whether they're in Vermont or elsewhere,” said Adam Aronson, the Lambda Legal staff attorney handling the case.

In the decision, Nassau County Supreme Court Justice John P. Dunne noted that “common-law” spouses from other states are regularly recognized as spouses in New York and said, “[I]t is impossible to justify, under equal protection principles, withholding the same recognition from a union which meets all the requirements of a marriage in New York but for the sexual orientation of its partners.” New York law, he noted, does not define “spouses” as people of different sexes.

St. Vincent's Hospital had asked the state court to block John Langan from suing for wrongful death and medical malpractice. Langan and Conrad Spicehandler were joined in a civil union in Vermont in November 2000 and had several other legal documents reflecting their relationship. The hospital had treated Langan as Spicehandler's spouse throughout the medical ordeal.

Last February, Spicehandler was struck by a car driven by a New Jersey man who was on a days-long hit-and-run spree. When he was taken to St. Vincent's, Spicehandler asked the staff to call Langan, who in turn called Spicehandler's other family members. By the time Langan arrived at the hospital, Spicehandler was being taken into surgery to repair a broken leg, and had given his brother a note for Langan that said: “John: I'm going under. I haven't had the chance to see you. I love you. I've made my life in your heart. – Conrad”

Following a second leg operation, Spicehandler unexpectedly died.

When St. Vincent's was unable to satisfactorily explain how the routine surgery turned fatal, Langan and Spicehandler's mother, Ruth, sued the hospital for wrongful death and medical malpractice.

Family Pride Coalition Holds Summer Events

Washington, DC – The Family Pride Coalition has announced the dates for its 2003 Family Weeks. The fourth annual Family Week in Saugatuck, Mich. will take place July 12 through 19. The eighth annual gathering in Provincetown, Mass. will be August 2 through 9.

The Family Pride Coalition is a national non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the well being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their families through mutual support, community collaboration and public understanding.

“Gathering families through our Family Week events serves a critical need for LGBT parents and their children by allowing them to meet and connect with other families like theirs,” said Aimee Gelnaw, executive director of the Family Pride Coalition.

Activities include workshops for parents, and social and edu-

cational programming coordinated by COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere) for children nine years old and up. Some of the adventures include whale-watching tours, sand dune hikes, barbecues, beach and pool parties, a family parade and family dances and picnics.

Advance registration for Family Week is \$100. Registration forms are available online at www.familypride.org or by calling the Family Pride Coalition at (202) 331-5015.

Among the sponsors of Family Week 2003 are Capital One, IBM, Walt Disney World @ Resort, and the Straight Spouse Network.

Greeks Demand Change

Athens – According to a press release from a coalition of Greek gay and lesbian organizations, conditions for gays have recently deteriorated.

The immediate incident was a bar raid by police in Athens in February, resulting in charges such as “pandering, solicitation, facilitation of promiscuity of others – juvenile pornography, indecent behavior, possession of narcotics for personal use and provision of space for the use of narcotic substances, unnatural licentiousness for profit,” and the discovery of “indecent printed matter.”

One patron arrested committed suicide while in police custody, the press release said.

The coalition charged the police with breaking the country's personal data laws by releasing the full names, ages and occupations of those detained. The coalition also demanded “the immediate repeal of the racist/homophobic article 347 of the Criminal Law, which describes homosexuality in offensive terms.”

The collection of a dozen Greek and international gay, lesbian and human rights organizations listed several other demands, and declared in closing: “The system that generates oppression and war, like the one in Iraq, is what is sick and abnormal. Not us! We will not tolerate discrimination from the society in which we live, and we condemn such discrimination whenever and wherever we encounter it. We are part of the Greece to come.”

Ark. Student Wins Right to Be Out

Little Rock – In a court conference held this afternoon, the Pulaski County Special School District agreed with the American Civil Liberties Union and a federal judge that students have a Constitutional right to be openly gay in school.

In talks with ACLU attorneys representing 14-year-old Thomas McLaughlin and counsel for the school district, U.S. District Judge G. Thomas Eisele said that under the First Amendment schools cannot silence or restrict students' speech unless it is disruptive.

The school had required McLaughlin to not speak about his sexual orientation or the reasons he was being disciplined.

“Thomas McLaughlin has been muzzled by his teachers and administrators for far too long, and in America schools can't do that,” said Rita Sklar, Executive Director of the ACLU of Arkansas.

McLaughlin's lawsuit

against the school is continuing. The ACLU contends that school officials violated Thomas McLaughlin's rights to free speech, equal protection, and privacy, and that they violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment by preaching to him and forcing him to read the Bible as punishment (see the Letters page for more details).

El Paso Includes Transgenders

Houston – The El Paso City Council voted unanimously on April 9 to expand its anti-discrimination ordinance to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The city council set out to amend the ordinance to add “sexual orientation” when a grant the city was seeking required certain language protecting gay and lesbian citizens. A number of companies require a prohibition against sexual-orientation-based discrimination before they will provide grants or donations.

Lisa Turner, a transgender city council candidate, then asked the council to include “gender identity.” The council agreed, and the gender identity amendment faced no opposition.

The newly passed ordinance declares it unlawful to “refuse, deny or withhold from any person, for any reason directly or indirectly relating to the race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, color, religion, ethnic background or national origin of such person, any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities or services offered” to the general public.

Protecting GLBTQ Students

San Francisco – In a case brought by the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the Federal Court of Appeals for the western states held school officials liable for failing to protect students from anti-gay harassment. The court said that a school must take steps to eliminate harassment when it learns that lesbian, gay and bisexual students are abused at school.

A spokesman for the ACLU added, “The court made it very clear that going through the motions is not enough.”

The decision comes in a lawsuit brought on behalf of five high school students in Santa Clara's Morgan Hill Unified School District who charged that school officials refused to protect the students from ongoing anti-gay harassment. The students, four girls and one boy, were repeatedly abused both physically and verbally. One student was hospitalized after a group of male students shouted “faggot” while hitting and kicking him at a school bus stop.

When a female student found a pornographic picture along with a note attached reading, “Die, Die, Dyke bitch, Fuck off. We'll kill you,” taped to her locker, she sought help and asked for a new locker. The principal said, “Yes, sure, sure, later. Don't bring me this trash anymore. This is disgusting.”

The case, *Flores v. Morgan Hill Unified School District*, will now return to the federal district court for trial. ▼