

# the rest of our world

## Defense Blames Trans Victim

Hayward, CA – In the trial of the accused murderers of transgender teen Gwen Araujo, the defense claimed that the humiliation, shock, and revulsion of discovering he'd had sex with a man drove the defendant to commit the crime. This "trans panic" argument could make the charge against Michael Magidson, 23, manslaughter rather than murder. As reported by the Associated Press last month, the killing drew national attention to the issue of violence against people whose sexual identity conflicts with their biology. Araujo, 17, lived as a woman and was beaten, strangled and buried in 2002 after it was discovered that she was biologically male.

On the first day of the trial, Araujo's family, in conjunction with Horizons Foundation, a San Francisco area LGBT social justice philanthropic organization, announced the Gwen Araujo Memorial Fund for Transgender Education. The fund will make small grants to school programs that promote understanding of transgender people and issues among youth. Gwen's mother, Sylvia Guerrero, said, "I am committed to ensuring that what happened to my daughter does not happen to anyone else."

## Equality Foes Try Long Shot

Boston – According to Boston.com, diehard opponents of equal marriage rights turned to a radical, long-shot strategy just 28 days before the ruling would take effect: a bill to remove the four justices who penned the historic ruling. As reported in the *Boston Globe*, the measure's sole sponsor, Representative Emile J. Goguen (D), said he sees the "bill of address" as a tool to pressure members of the Court to reconsider their landmark 4-3 decision or risk losing their judgeships.

## RI House Leader Comes Out

Providence, RI – House Majority Leader Gordon Fox told a crowd of 150 supporters of same-sex marriage that he is gay. "I've been in a committed relationship with a man for six years and I am gay," Fox told the cheering crowd at the Capitol.

Although he had not planned to make the announcement, Fox felt the time was right, according to a 365gay.com report, since it was the day the Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee began hearings on four bills dealing with same-sex marriage and benefits for domestic partners – including an outright ban.

Gay activists delivered miniature wedding cakes to each member of the House and Senate com-

mittees considering the bills this year. Labels on the boxes read: "Wedding Cake ... 500-dollars, Marriage License... 24-dollars, Civil Rights... Priceless."

## Terry's Son in "Out"

New York – Anti-abortion shock trooper Randall Terry, a member of the intimidating "God Squad" opposing civil unions at the State House, declared last month that he is in a state of shock since his son, Jamiel, announced he was gay in the May issue of *Out*. Terry, leader of Operation Rescue and outspoken opponent of "special civil rights" for homosexuals, wrote for WorldNetDaily.com:

"My son, Jamiel Terry, was paid \$5,000 by *Out* magazine to write a story about being Randall Terry's homosexual son. I pray my following words ... serve as a warning to moms and dads of small children ... Please, parents, learn from this tragedy."

The Terrys began raising Jamiel as a foster child at age 5 and adopted him when he was 14. Randall Terry asserts that Jamiel's homosexuality is behavioral, caused by the tragic events of his first 4 years.

In the *Out* article, Jamiel writes, "from a very early age I knew I was different ... However, when you grow up in a house where to be the thing you are is an abominable sin, you tend to try to shed those behaviors. I would try to be more masculine in every way I could."

## Queer Maps

Washington, DC – Guess what? Albuquerque and Jersey City are among the country's "gayest" cities! North Dakota and Alabama are among states with the highest concentrations of senior gay and lesbian couples! Go figure.

*The Gay and Lesbian Atlas* is the first detailed geographic account of America's gay and lesbian households, according to U.S. Newswire. Written by Urban Institute demographer Gary Gates and researcher Jason Ost, the atlas mines Census 2000 data on more than half a million same-sex "unmarried partner" couples.

The 242-page publication reveals such gems as: Vermont leads all states in the concentration of gay and lesbian couples. Among smaller metropolitan areas ranking highest in the same category are Portland, Maine; Asheville, North Carolina; Bloomington, Indiana; and Iowa City, Iowa.

Same-sex couples with children often live in states not known for large gay and lesbian communities:

Mississippi, South Dakota, Alaska, South Carolina, and Louisiana.

## Clean Relationships

Swansey, NH – In response to the growing controversy over whether to "recognize" same-sex relationships, and in keeping with its corporate philosophy, "People who bathe together stay together," last month soap importer Baudelaire, Inc. announced a two-for-one discount to any same-sex couple who faxes it a valid (or invalid) marriage or civil union license.

"We don't care whether you call it marriage, civil union or simply 'joined at the hip,' everyone should be able to do it," explains founder Joe Marks "We believe we have a moral (not to mention commercial) interest in supporting these relationships – regardless of race, color, creed, or human anatomy."

The company is offering a 20 percent discount to anyone who writes "I support committed relationships" in the comments box on the Baudelaire website shopping cart. Discounts are good at www.baudelairesoaps.com through wedding season 2004.

## JPs Against Equal Marriage

Boston – Some Massachusetts justices of the peace are threatening to quit rather than perform same-sex marriages. 365gay.com reported late last month that the Massachusetts Justices of the Peace Association asked Governor Mitt Romney whether JPs will be required to marry gay couples.

Jonathan Zittrain, a Harvard Law School professor and a justice of the peace, says that refusing to perform same-sex weddings violates the central tenet of the court decision: to witness and record the participants' solemn oaths under the law.

While some justices of the peace balk at gay weddings, others are embracing them, even advertising their services. Massachusetts justices of the peace are appointed by the governor.

## Toddler Gets Three Gay Parents

Auckland, NZ – A two-year-old boy will have three legal parents: the gay dad who donated his sperm, the lesbian mom who bore him, and her same-sex partner. The court decision ends a tug-of-war between two sets of same-sex couples, according to 365gay.com.

The two-year-old boy was conceived after a joint custody contract was drawn up between the lesbian couple and a gay couple.

After the birth, the women

moved from Sydney to Auckland, refusing the men access. The birth mother's partner applied in court to be named the boy's legal co-parent.

The men sued, citing the signed contract. Finally, the Auckland Family Court awarded joint custody to the lesbians, but also awarded the biological father shared guardianship. Going beyond the initial agreement she awarded the men access to the child seven days a month.

## Hotel Ousts Straight Couple

Key West – Three straight couples say they were told to leave a Key West hotel because they are not gay. The couples, all from the San Diego area, had checked in at Big Ruby's and were in their rooms when the manager knocked on their doors and said they would have to leave.

Jim Pirih and his partner Jason Williams had stayed at the hotel a year ago, and decided to return this year with their straight friends. "The manager literally said, 'We don't want you here,'" said Pirih.

If the charges are substantiated, they might violate a Key West ordinance prohibiting discrimination by sexual orientation in housing and lodging.

## LLEGO Gets \$5 Million

Washington, DC – LLEGÓ, the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization, last month was awarded \$5.75 million in grants from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support the organization's HIV prevention programs.

The money will largely fund two unique programs: Avanzando, strengthening the cultural and language competency of community organizations providing HIV prevention services for Latinos; and Horizontes, increasing access to prevention and testing services and reducing homophobia and the stigma of having HIV/AIDS.

The \$5.75 million in CDC grants will be made available to LLEGÓ in annual amounts of \$1.15 million over the next five years. Latinos make up 13 percent of the U.S. population but 19 percent of Americans living with AIDS, according to the CDC.

## 600 Colleges Silenced

Washington, DC – On April 21, the United States Student Association and students at over 600 colleges and universities participated in the Day of Silence to oppose discrimination and harassment against LGBT students in higher education.

Many campuses used the Day of Silence as an opportunity to register students to vote and educate them on LGBT and higher education issues. At Miami University in Ohio, students sought domestic partner benefits and a transgender-inclusive anti-discrimination policy. At UMass Amherst, efforts focused on marriage equality. Students at Spelman pushed for health services sensitive to same-gender-loving students. At Arizona State, students demanded an LGBT studies program. In California, University of Redlands students presented a proposal to create an LGBT resource center.

FBI data show that 37 percent of hate crimes reported by colleges and universities in 2002 were based on sexual orientation, more than any other category.

## Gay OK for Cannon Fodder

Washington, DC – As the US military continues its war in Iraq and its "presence" in Afghanistan, lesbian and gay military discharges plummeted 17 percent in FY2003, according to a report from Servicemembers Legal Defense Network and reported by U.S. Newswire.

"Conduct Unbecoming," the group's annual review of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law, finds that gay-related discharges fell to 787 last year, down from 906 in 2002. This marks a 39 percent decrease in discharges since 2001, before current conflicts in the Middle East.

"Gay discharge numbers have dropped every time America has entered a war," the report says, "from Korea to Vietnam to the Persian Gulf to present conflicts." The report states that "this irrational policy of exclusion has cost our nation, and our security, almost 10,000 dedicated and trained Americans over the past ten years. That's more than two full brigades."

## Gay Outsiders May Not Wed

Boston – Outsiders will not be able to marry in Massachusetts when gay marriage becomes legal here on May 17, Gov. Mitt Romney said late last month.

A 1913 law says that the state cannot marry nonresidents if their marriage would be "void" in their home state. Romney will rewrite license application requiring evidence of residence.

Romney indicated that he interpreted the law to extend even to states that do not have statutes explicitly banning same-sex marriage. ▼

Compiled by Susan McMillan.