

# the rest of our world

## Trans Woman Plays USGA

Fair Hills, NJ – To very little fanfare, the United States Golf Association last month adopted a policy to allow post-op transgender male-to-female golfers to participate in women's tournaments, according to Outsports.com.

The USGA is the same organization that outwardly seems to try to quiet the lesbian talk surrounding its tours and still hasn't seen a male pro come out.

Significant changes in the past two years allow trans athletes to compete in professional sports. Last year, a trans woman was allowed to compete in the Women's Australia Open, and the International Olympic Committee ruled that trans athletes who have had sex-reassignment surgery are now allowed to compete in their chosen gender.

And until last month, the U.S. Ladies Professional Golf Association specified that participants must be born female, and denied Danielle Swope's request to play in a women's event, according to Planetout.com. Raised as Daniel, Swope has lived as a woman since 1997.

## Battered Women Lose Protection

Cleveland – Domestic violence charges cannot be filed against unmarried people because of Ohio's recently enacted definition of marriage, a judge ruled in late March, according to Associated Press reports.

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Stuart Friedman changed a felony domestic violence charge against Frederick Burk to a misdemeanor assault charge because of the state's constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

Before the amendment, courts applied the domestic violence law by defining a family as including an unmarried couple living together as would a husband and wife. Now courts can't do that because of the gay marriage amendment, Friedman wrote.

Opponents of the amendment have said they hope the conflict over the domestic violence law would result in the gay marriage ban being repealed.

## GA Teen Lesbian Lovers Kill

Fayetteville, GA – A suburban Atlanta teen described as a cold-blooded killer and her ex-lover pleaded guilty last month to killing the teen's elderly grandparents, as reported at 365gay.com.

In pleading guilty to two counts of malice murder Holly Harvey told the judge that she planned the killing because her grandparents did not want the girls to spend time together.

Harvey was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences, and her former girlfriend, Sandy Ketchum, 16, was sentenced to three concurrent life terms. When police arrested Harvey they found she had jotted a to-do list on her forearm: "Kill, keys, money, jewelry."

Harvey laughed at arresting officers. "She was callous and cocky," Lt. Col. Bruce Jordan of the Fayette County Sheriff's Department said at the time. "She is the coldest and most heartless individual I've ever interviewed."

## Still Uphill In Massachusetts

Boston – The Massachusetts legislature is considering the repeal of a 1913 law that bars issuing wedding licenses to people whose marriages would be illegal in the states where they reside. The legislature will also look at three bills to block all same-sex marriages in the state, according to 365gay.com.

Last year, Gov. Mitt Romney declared that the 1913 law prevented town clerks from issuing licenses to same-sex couples who do not reside in Massachusetts. The old law is being challenged in court as lawyers for eight out-of-state same-sex couples argued their case in the Supreme Judicial Court last month.

The bill before the legislature has broad support but will likely face a veto from Romney.

The Judiciary Committee is also considering three bills put forward by Rep. Emile J. Goguen (D-Fitchburg), one of the state's most ardent opponents of same-sex marriages.

A constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriage without providing a civil union option has been proposed. Another bill would declare all gay marriages already performed in Massachusetts to be without statutory basis. The third would remove the Chief Justice and the three justices who authored the majority opinion legalizing same sex marriage.

## Silence Outshines 'Truth'

Washington, DC – An estimated 450,000 students across the United States took a vow of silence on Wednesday, April 13, to bring attention to the discrimination that many glbt students face in schools today, according to the *Washington Blade*.

This was the tenth Day of Silence coordinated by GLSEN.

Just 1,150 students participated in the inaugural 'Day of Truth' to protest the Day of Silence. The 'Day of Truth' was organized by the Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal group, according to the Associated Press.

Participants in the Day of Silence do not speak during the course of the school day to highlight the isolation and harassment experienced by many gay students.

Participants in the 'Day of Truth' wore T-shirts with the slogan "The Truth Cannot be Silenced" and passed out cards declaring their unwillingness to condone "detrimental personal and social behavior."

This year's Day of Silence coincided with the launch of a new "Teach Respect" campaign from the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network. The campaign was created to help dismantle violence, harassment and bullying brought on due to a student's sexual orientation, by using public service announcements to "raise awareness of the harmful effects of bullying and harassment in American schools."

## Outgames '06: Register Now

Montreal – The 1st World Outgames Montréal 2006 invites you to register during USA Registration Week, April 29 to May 8, 2005. During this week, US residents will get 10 percent off the regular registration fee for sport, culture and the International Conference. There are no minimum athletic standards to qualify for the Outgames. People with specific needs or disabilities are integrated as full-fledged participants, volunteers, officials and spectators. Visit the Outgames website, [www.montreal2006.org](http://www.montreal2006.org). The games are to be held July 29 to August 5, 2006.

## Open & Shut in Maine

Augusta, ME – A landmark anti-discrimination law received final House and Senate passage last month, amending the Maine Human Rights Act by making discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender illegal.

As Gov. John Baldacci signed the bill, he said, "This act not only offers essential civil rights, but serves as a welcome. ... Our doors are open to all people. This is a proud day for Maine."

The Christian Civic League of Maine acted quickly to repeal the gay rights legislation by referendum, according to the Associated Press reports.

If referendum organizers gather 51,000 petition signatures by June 28, statewide voters would be asked, at the November election: "Do you want to reject the new law that would protect people from discrimination in employment, housing, education, public accommodations and credit based on their sexual orientation?"

The Christian Civic League has vowed to put \$2 million into this campaign.

An organization known as Maine Won't Discriminate announced it will defend the gay rights measure. According to HRC, Maine is the sixteenth state to outlaw anti-gay bias.

## African Bishop Spurns 'Tainted' AIDS Cash

London – An African bishop has announced that he will not accept funding to help AIDS victims because it comes from an American diocese that supported the election of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire, according to the London newspaper, *The Guardian*.

Jackson Nzerebende Tembo, the Bishop of South Rwenzori in Uganda, rejected more than \$350,000 from the US diocese of Central Pennsylvania, saying its clergy and bishop endorsed the election of Robinson, an openly gay priest.

On an American conservative Episcopalian website, Bishop Nzerebende announced: "Of course this will affect some of our programmes. We pray and believe that our God who created and controls silver and gold in the world will provide for the needs of His people. Halleluia! Amen."

The church in Uganda, where homosexuality remains a crime punishable by life imprisonment, has taken one of the hardest lines against the gay issue.

Although several African primates have declared themselves out of communion with the North Americans, they have mostly continued quietly to accept cash for church projects.

## Coming Out All Over

Lawrence, KS; Twin Cities, MN; and Edinburgh, Scotland – Last month, the outgoing mayor of Lawrence, Kansas announced he was gay, according to the Associated Press. Mike Rundel said he made the announcement partly because of a statewide vote in favor of an amendment to the Kansas Constitution banning gay marriage.

Within days, State Sen. Paul Koering, a first-term Minnesota

Republican, revealed to the *Star Tribune* that he is gay. He is believed to be the first openly gay Republican elected official in Minnesota, and his announcement could affect the debate over a constitutional ballot question banning same-sex marriage.

In a similarly optimistic vein, *The Scotsman* reported in March that Tony Blair has suggested that Britain could one day have an openly gay Prime Minister. The topic was mentioned in an interview in March for the gay magazine *Attitude*. In addition, Mr. Blair, who noted that there are "plenty" of gay ministers just below Cabinet level, urged the Church of England to resolve its differences over homosexual bishops.

## More Sex = \$50K of Happiness

Atlanta – Increasing sex frequency from once a month to at least once a week provides as much happiness as a \$50,000-a-year raise, as reported by the Cox News Service in March. The paper titled "Money, Sex and Happiness: An Empirical Study" was submitted to the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Written by two economists, David Blanchflower of England's Dartmouth College and Andrew Oswald of the University of Warwick in England, the paper is the latest contribution in a growing field known as "happiness economics."

In their 2004 study, Blanchflower and Oswald analyzed self-reported sexual activity and levels of happiness of more than 16,000 American adults who participated in surveys since the early 1990s.

The study found that a lasting marriage offers about \$100,000 worth of happiness a year. The researchers found no difference in the amount of happiness from being in a gay relationship. Regardless of sexual orientation, the most happiness came from having just one partner.

## FMA: It's Baaaaaack

Washington, DC – Despite a resounding defeat of the measure in Congress last year, lawmakers reintroduced the discriminatory Federal Marriage Amendment last month. In a joint press release, The American Civil Liberties Union and the Human Rights Campaign called on lawmakers to defeat the measure once again.

HRC's Deputy Political Director Chris Labonte stated, "Any way you put it, these measures are bad for the country." ▼

Compiled this month by Assistant Editor Susan McMillan.