

## ➔ the rest of our world

### WASHINGTON, DC A Banner Year for LGB Ts in Office

The New Year got off to a great start for openly gay lawmakers across America. In January, in addition to seeing New Jersey's first openly gay mayor sworn in, the first openly gay Speaker of the New York City Council took office, an openly gay state legislator took her seat in the Arizona State Senate, the first openly gay man to win an election in Oklahoma was re-elected, and the nation's first openly gay and black mayor was returned to office in Cambridge, Mass.

In Long Hill Township, NJ, Democratic candidate Gina Genovese won a close election to the town council by narrowly defeating a twelve-year incumbent Republican in a predominantly Republican town in predominantly Republican Morris County. Following the election, Genovese was unanimously elected by the town council to serve as the first openly gay mayor in New Jersey history. New York City Democratic Councilwoman Christine Quinn was elected the first openly gay City Council speaker, largely considered the second most influential public official in New York City after the mayor.

In Arizona, Democrat Paula Aboud was sworn in this week following her appointment to the State Senate. Plus, two trailblazing lawmakers were returned to office this week. Former Democratic Mayor Ken Reeves from Cambridge, Mass. — who had served as the first openly gay and black mayor in the country from 1992-1995 — was returned to office, and Oklahoma County Commissioner Jim Roth, who became the first openly gay man to win an Oklahoma election in 2002, was re-elected as Chair.

### SAN FRANCISCO Groups Say 'I Do' to Marriage

In eight amicus briefs filed with the California Court of Appeal, more than 250 religious and civil rights organizations urged the court to put an end to state laws that deny same-sex couples the protections of marriage. The Court is hearing the state's appeal of the March 2005 decision by San Francisco Superior Court Judge Richard Kramer, which held that California's current statutory ban on marriage of same-sex couples violates the California Constitution.

"I am proud to join with other civil rights leaders in standing up for fairness and dignity for all," said Alice Huffman, President of the California Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "Never before has such a diverse

array of groups stepped forward to call for an end to the unfair treatment faced by same-sex couples and their families when they are denied the ability to marry." The group filed an amicus brief asking the Court of Appeal to apply the holding in *Perez v. Sharp*, the 1948 California Supreme Court decision striking down laws banning interracial marriage, to the current case.

### GUATEMALA TransWomen Shot

One transgender woman in Guatemala was killed and another remains in serious condition after both were shot in the head by men whom witnesses believe were police, Amnesty International said today.

"This is, sadly, only the latest in a string of murders of transgender people in Guatemala," said Dr. William F. Schulz, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA. "Once again, not only have police and government authorities failed to protect transgender people, but they also may be directly complicit in their deaths."

According to a local organization, there have been seven homicides of transgender sex workers in Guatemala City this year.

### ANDERSON COUNTY, TN No Pumping for Girls

Boys will be boys and if that means they just can't be trusted around girls, then girls will have to give way. That seems to be the message Tennessee administrators are sending to a star athlete who was involuntarily removed from a weight-training class because "there weren't any other girls in the class ... a situation that's really not good."

On the second day of classes, Anderson County High School senior Ambrea Phillips, a straight-A student and member of the track and field team, was told by school officials that she had to drop the course because of a safety issue.

According to the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, Ambrea was told to work in the school office instead.

"Pencil pushing is a far cry from a substitute for weightlifting," said Sam Sewell, Gender-PAC's Youth Program Director.

Ambrea and her family are now planning to file a formal Title IX complaint with the state. Title IX of The Education Amendments of 1972 mandates that schools not deny any student participation in any educational program or activity on the basis of sex.

# vermont news

## POLITICS

### Burlington Mayoral Candidates Speak

**BURLINGTON** — The three candidates for Mayor of Vermont's largest city were interviewed briefly, primarily on their attitudes toward the city's hosting of LGBT Pride and retaining a diverse workforce among the city's employees.

#### Ms Mayor?

OITM contributor Peggy Luhrs spoke with Democratic mayoral candidate Hinda Miller, a state Senator from Chittenden County, who if elected would make history as Burlington's first woman mayor. Miller co-founded Jogbra (later bought by Champion Sportswear).

#### PL: What's the theme of your campaign or the main issues?

HM: Well some of the issues are financial challenges in city government, in the schools with a shrinking number of students. I think its time to renew the plan for the Waterfront. The revitalization plan is ten years old and we need a better process that gets stakeholders to the table early. I'm waiting to see what people have to say about the Moran plant. Education is very important to me.

#### PL: Would you issue a proclamation in support of LGBT Pride?

HM: Absolutely! Is that an annual event?

#### PL: Yes. Would you continue city policy of support for domestic partners?

HM: Yes of course.

#### PL: How do you feel about plans to close Barnes and Wheeler schools?

HM: I support neighborhood schools, they provide a lot of things in addition to education, like cultural gatherings, and we don't really have the public transportation for schools. Walking to school is good. We have to support the family. There are 450 single mothers in this town and it's a hard life. We need every kid to have an education, every kid needs to go to college in this world. ... People need leadership skills and emotional intelligence. The federal guidelines don't address these things.

#### PL: Did you support increasing the minimum wage as a Vermont Senator?

HM: Yes I did. I voted yes in the conference committee and helped get it out and I voted for it. I felt the COLA [cost of living adjustment] should be linked to a national matrix so businesses would know what their costs were and calculate them. I certainly did support it.

#### PL: In the past the Community Economic and Development Office has done a lot to assist low income homeowners and has focused on affordable housing. Would you?

HM: I absolutely applaud the Burlington Community Land Trust and nonprofits have made significant progress in this area. I would continue work with the Land Trust.

#### PL: Are you looking to more people living downtown, higher buildings?

HM: Well everything in moderation. I do support more density downtown. We need to keep Burlington strong. It needs to be livable, inclusive and economically strong.

The best social policy is a good job. Burlington is poised to be a great hub for entrepreneurship and small business. People want to live here. We have the resources, the combination of education and support at UVM for new telecommunications. I'd like to see the Burlington Business Association mentor new businesses on North St. and with different groups. That can be a really vital part of the City. Bosnians have told me that no one has leveraged their connections overseas. This could be done. This stuff really excites me.

#### PL: A good job as the best policy is a great idea but tough for women with children.

HM: The City can't solve all of this but I would like to sit down with single moms and those working with them to brainstorm what more can be done. Burlington's current policy subsidizes 3-5 year olds in childcare through the education fund. that's good but it doesn't solve everything. It is tough to be a parent working with children even with a partner.

#### PL: Do you think that being a woman mayor will make a difference?

HM: Women get the need for support. It is women who are starting

a lot of small businesses. Women see the value in things, see where we can make things better. I think maybe we're more willing to negotiate. You know in politics you can't just bull ahead you have to deal with everyone's position.

### Purposeful Progressive?

Editor Euan Bear spoke with Progressive Party mayoral candidate and three-term state Representative Bob Kiss about his vision for the city. The 58-year-old Kenosha, Wisconsin native moved to Burlington in 1972. He is currently self-employed as a consultant with Germane Solutions, Inc. He began our interview by relating what the Progressives stand for and how he became the party's candidate.

BK: The first important thing to know about my candidacy is that Burlington voters have chosen Progressive candidates for the last 20 years. I was the chair of the city Progressive Party committee with the idea of finding a good progressive candidate who would run, and no idea that it would be me. ... Burlington voters deserve to have a Progressive choice, to be represented by Progressive values.

We put people first. Burlington needs an efficient and effective government that meets the needs of working people, and part of that is accessible healthcare as one of the common benefits of good government, just as clean air and water are.

We need to build economic development in a way that is sustainable, that includes a living wage and affordable housing, because it's the right thing to do. We stand for economic and social justice. We don't leave people behind.

As for the other candidates, I'm with [mathematician and philosopher] Alfred North Whitehead, who said, 'There are no true conservatives; there is only going forward or backward.' I want to move the city forward.

#### EB: If you win, would you sign a proclamation for Gay Pride?

BK: Of course! I was actually one of the [peacekeeping] marshals for the first parade. We all wore