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WASHINGTON, DC Men Take the Lead in Prominent Gay Groups

A gradual shift has taken place in leadership positions at most prominent LGBT organizations over the past several years, Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg wrote in the Washington Blade in March. In 2002, lesbians held the top posts at most of the nation's largest gay groups, she said. Now that's changing, and men are leading more of these organizations, including the Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. The trend doesn't necessarily reflect membership of organizations that remain very much mixed, Weill-Greenberg said. Also, many women still lead a number of smaller organizations, such as Immigration Equality, Family Pride, and the Mautner Project for Lesbian Health (where Weill-Greenberg's article can be found.)

However, some rights advocates express concern that predominately male, and white, leaders means that black lesbians are not fairly represented. A spokesperson from Lambda Legal said that leadership "looks a lot like the mainstream mythologies about the GLBT rights movement."

NEW YORK High Court to Hear Marriage Rights Cases

The American Civil Liberties Union last month asked the state's high court to strike down a New York law banning same-sex marriage. According to the ACLU, New York's law banning gay people from marriage violates the equal protection, due process, and free expression provisions of New York's constitution.

The ACLU's case, *Samuels and Gallagher v. New York Department of Health*, is expected to be heard at the same time as a similar case New York case brought by Lambda Legal.

No date had been set for the hearings as of press time.

LOS ANGELES LGBT Training for Spanish Language Media

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation has begun working with Univision Radio and Entravision Communications

Corp. to educate media professionals about LGBT terminology, issues and local contacts. Training sessions will be held in the largest Spanish-language media markets, including Miami, Dallas, Los Angeles and Chicago.

"While Spanish-language radio has historically portrayed the LGBT community in a sensationalistic manner, it is time for our media to be more responsible and sensitive about issues that pertain to this community," said Monica Taher, GLAAD's people of color media director.

CANADA Transwoman Plans to Compete in Olympics

Cyclist Kristin Worley may be the first transgender person to be publicly open about her gender status while competing in the Olympics if she goes to the Beijing Games in 2008. According to an MSNBC online report, Worley, a Canadian, had sex-change surgery to transition from male to female several years ago.

The International Olympics Committee changed its rules in 2004 to allow transsexual people to compete. Under the new rules, transgender athletes must wait to compete for two years after sex-reassignment surgery.

MSNBC said that there have been rumors of transgender athletes competing in the Olympics, but none have spoken publicly about their status.

WASHINGTON, DC Secular and Religious LGBT Groups Unite

The Institute for Welcoming Resources, an umbrella organization for LGBT-friendly Protestant church groups, is joining the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in order to strengthen the base of gay rights on the religious front.

"The more than 1 million individuals in the 1,300 congregations supported by IWR are some of our movement's most valuable allies in the fight to reclaim 'moral values' from those who try to justify anti-gay bigotry as 'deeply held religious beliefs,'" said Matt Foreman, NGLTF's executive director.

The Human Rights Campaign, another national LGBT rights organization, has also created a Religion Council to help counter attacks from conservative clergy. The Council will be made up of 10 spokespersons nationwide who will advocate for GLBT rights from their own religious perspectives. ▼

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POLITICS

Newcomer Nearly Upsets Council Incumbent

BURLINGTON – Joanna Cole, a Democrat running for a seat in Ward 7, nearly upset the incumbent in her first run for political office.

Democracy for Vermont endorsed Cole for her City Council run, noting fiscal responsibility and open communication among reasons to vote for the newcomer.

Cole has been active in local politics, as a member of the Neighborhood Planning Assembly's steering committee and vice-chair of Burlington's Democratic Committee for Ward 7. She noted property tax concerns that needed to be dealt with, supporting a 1 percent sales tax, and support for the school budget, affordable housing and a new Multigenerational Community Center for the New North End.

Cole surprised many when she won 503 votes in the four-way race in the March 7 election. The incumbent, Independent Ellie Blais, took 534 votes, and Republican Paul Decelles came in first with 713 votes. Libertarian Jeremy Ryan came in last with 68 votes.

Decelles did not win the first round, having failed to capture 40 percent of the vote. In a runoff last month, Decelles won the City Council seat with 451 votes to Blais' 382 votes.

"I believe my experience would have been helpful on the City Council, but Paul gets to be the new blood this time around," Cole said upon hearing the results of the run-off.

"I wish him well."



Joanna Cole

Cole, a retired chemistry professor and biology teacher, relocated to Burlington with partner Sarah Flynn in 2003. She is a member of R.U.1.2? Queer Community Center. ▼

POLITICS

Voters Choose LGBT-Friendly Mayor

BURLINGTON – In a first-time run-off election, Progressive Bob Kiss landed the mayoral seat in the March election. Kiss, a state legislator slated to resign in order to take the city post, has long supported LGBT-related issues, such as the Gender Identity and Expression bill, H.865.

Kiss was progressive long before he joined the Progressives in Burlington. He served in the Peace Corps and later performed alternative service in a Boston hospital when he was granted conscientious objector status by the U.S. military.

Kiss moved to Burlington in 1971, where he has worked in the human services field for

years, including the position as director of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity. He has been credited with helping to expand domestic violence programs and working to support low-income residents, many of whom are women.

Bob Kiss has been "extremely kind and fair to the queer community," said a local activist who asked not to be named. Kiss was a marshal in a Pride parade, the activist said. Also, the Progressive party buys a table at the annual R.U.1.2? Dinner in support of the LGBT community. Kiss was also a cosponsor of H.865, the Gender Identity bill.

Kiss has served in the Vermont



Burlington Mayor-Elect, Bob Kiss

House since 2000. Subsequent to his win as mayor, he decided to resign his seat in the legislature last month and will be sworn in as mayor on April 3.

Kiss lives in Burlington with partner Jackie Majoros. ▼

OUT in the mountains

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