

National/International News

Gay Soldiers, Good Soldiers

New York, NY - The *New York Times*, in its leading editorial on Sunday September 1, endorsed the presence of gay and lesbian personnel in the armed forces. The *Times* pointed out that the Defense Department is "two-faced" on the issue, allowing gays and lesbians to serve in civilian jobs at the most sensitive levels, but discharging more than 13,000 people from military service since 1982, many of whom have had outstanding careers. Describing polls showing most Americans think gays and lesbians should be allowed in the military, the *Times* concluded, "there's no evident justification for discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation." (*The New York Times*)

Army Recommends Discharge for Highly Decorated Colonel

Seattle, WA - An Army board has recommended the discharge of Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer, a 26 year veteran under consideration for Chief Nurse of all U.S. National Guard units, because she acknowledged she is a lesbian during a security clearance investigation in 1989. "I had a good military record," said Cammermeyer, "This was me telling a security clearance investigator the truth, and how could that possibly be used against me by the people I had served for so many years?" The board recommended she be given an honorable discharge, despite a statement by the president of the board that she considered Colonel Cammermeyer, "one of the great Americans." Cammermeyer plans to appeal the decision. (*Washington Blade*)

Progress in Israel

Israel - The Israeli parliament recently banned employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and is considering more comprehensive civil rights legislation. The decision followed a 1988 decision to legalize gay sex and a 1990 court ruling banning discrimination against lesbians and gays in business transactions. (*Washington Blade*)

Wilson Vetoes California Civil Rights Bill

Los Angeles, CA - In response to political pressure from the conservative wing of the state Republican party California Governor Pete Wilson backed off from his April support of a bill which would have protected lesbians and gays from job discrimination. The veto came only hours before the release of an independent poll, reporting heavy support among Californians, including Republicans, for the measure. Lesbian and gay activists feel the Wilson veto was designed to bolster the chances of California Senator John Seymour in his primary fight next year against anti-gay Congressman John Dannemeyer. "Seymour and Wilson think the bigots will be satisfied by this veto," stated Tim McFeeley of the Human Rights Campaign Fund. (*The New York Times, Burlington Free Press, Human Rights Campaign Fund*)

Black Lesbian Wins Primary

Seattle, WA - Sherry Harris, an open lesbian, defeated a 25 year incumbent and two other challengers in the primary race for a seat on Seattle's City Council. If she wins the runoff election in November, Harris would be the first openly black lesbian in political office in the United States. Harris, who received key endorsements from such groups as the

King County Women's Political Caucus, is likely to win the run-off according to the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*. The incumbent, Sam Smith, who faces Harris again in the run-off opposed domestic partnership benefits for city employees and invoked anti-gay sentiment during the primary race. (*Washington Blade*)

Bowers Strikes Again

Atlanta, GA - Georgia Attorney General, Michael Bowers, infamous for his prosecution in the landmark case *Bowers v Hardwick*, has once again struck a blow at the civil rights of gay and lesbians. Bowers withdrew a job offer he had made to lawyer Robin Sharar, after learning she planned to participate in a Jewish marriage ceremony with her partner. Sharar was originally told to report to work on September 23, but on July 9th received a letter from Bowers, withdrawing the offer and citing "a purported marriage between you and another woman." Sharar has filed suit in Federal District Court, saying Bowers violated her rights to religious freedom, freedom of association, and equal protection under the Constitution. (*New York Times*)

Amnesty International Changes Policy

Washington, D.C. - After a 12 year campaign, success was finally achieved in the campaign to get Amnesty International to include people imprisoned for their homosexuality among the groups it considers prisoners of conscience. Until now Amnesty International has assisted some imprisoned gay activists, but not those arrested simply for being gay or on the basis of sexual conduct. (*Washington Blade, Equal Times, NGLTF*) ▼

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Vermont News

Colors bar in Brattleboro has closed, leaving Cahoots (five doors away) as sole gay bar in the southern part of the state.

SAM (Social Alternative for Gay Men) Group is planning a New Year's Eve party at the Sheraton Inn in West Lebanon, New Hampshire. At a recent meeting, it was announced that Sheraton management contacted SAM about arranging the event! Look for more details in the upcoming calendars.