

National/International News

Cracker Barrel Protests Continue

Atlanta, GA - The latest round in the fight against the Cracker Barrel chain of restaurants was a unanimous call by the Atlanta City Council for the repeal of anti-gay policies. The chain, located through out the south, has been the focus of protests by Queer Nation and other groups since early this year when it instituted a policy of firing gay employees. About a dozen employees are thought to have lost their jobs because of the policy. (Outlines)

Wellesley Waffles on Hiring Decision

Wellesley, MA - Administrators at Wellesley College hired a lesbian to run a dormitory with her partner, but at the last minute assigned her to a upperclass dorm rather than the freshman dorm she was originally chosen for. Some students opposed the hiring; "We don't want to see the college celebrate this", one said. "We prefer a situation of mutual respect and tolerance but not going beyond that." Other students complained the move was a "cop-out" in response to fears that exposing freshmen to lesbians might be "catching". (Burlington Free Press)

Gay Rights Suit in Japan

Tokyo, Japan - In Japan's first gay rights case, the Association for Gay and Lesbian Rights has sued the city of Tokyo for refusing to rent space in a city you activity center for a retreat. President of the Association Hiroshi Niimi said they decided to file the suit because bigotry toward Japanese homosexuals is "widespread". "It has been said that Japanese homosexuals are relatively free because there is no law banning homosexuality and every major city has gay bars. But elementary school students, not to mention adults, daily utter words such as 'fag' and 'queer'. We came out (about this) so that we would never have to lie about who we are." (Outlines)

Canadian Armed Forces to End Anti-Gay Policies

Toronto, Canada - Senior Canadian military officials said that the policy barring lesbians and gays from serving in the armed forces is about to end. While no formal announcement has been made, the change is in the works. The admission of women into all roles in the armed forces (except submarines) and pressure from court cases going back to 1982 both lead to the impending change. The move was hailed as long overdue by gay advocates and human rights supporters. "It's a simple employment-equity issue," said Christine Donald, of the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario. (New York Times)

New York City School Board May Bar Scouts' in Schools

New York, NY - Lawyers for the New York City Board of Education are reviewing whether the Boy Scouts' ban on gays violates anti-discrimination policies. Board president H. Carl McCall made the announcement the day before a September 19th demonstration by Queer Nation outside the offices of the Greater New York Council of the Scouts. Joe Dalton, a former Eagle Scout said the purpose of the demonstration was to encourage the Scouts to change their policy. "Gay people are parents and teachers...they serve as elected officials and are leaders in business. The Boy Scouts must recognize that Gay adults can be good role models."

The Boy Scouts of America has no plans to reverse its ban. "Our standards of membership are the same today as they were 81 years ago, and we will not change them based on pressure from any activist group", said spokesperson Blake Lewis. The New York City action is only the latest in the challenge of the Scouts' discriminatory policies. In September the San Francisco Board of Education voted

to bar a new Scout program from its schools and earlier this summer United Way of the Greater San Francisco Area refused to fund a \$9,000 grant request by the Scouts. (Washington Blade)

MGM Fights Pink Panther Patrol

New York, NY - The Pink Panther Patrol, a New York City group which patrols the streets to help deter violence against lesbians and gays, is being sued by MGM studios for using the name "Pink Panther". While waiting for the case to come to trial, MGM asked for an preliminary injunction to bar the group from using the name and a pink paw print on its shirts. A New York judge agreed that the use of the name might "seriously impair the value and continued usefulness of the trademark" the group's "decidedly serious image could amend the character's carefree, comedic, nonpolitical fun", and perhaps suggest that MGM is a sponsor of the street patrol. The patrol pointed out that there is a bar and liquor store in New York also using the name and that, rather than "harm", MGM had experienced an increase in merchandising revenue in the past year. The judge did allow the patrol to continue using the pink pawprint and suggested it might have a stronger case if it simply changed its name to the plural form - the Pink Panthers. (Washington Blade) ▼



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