

OITM Roundup:

Continued from page 7

government plans to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation. "Our intention remains ... to introduce legislation in that regard," Rock told Parliament when questioned by Real Menard, one of two openly gay members of the House of Commons. The exchange came during debate on amending Canada's criminal code to increase penalties for hate crimes against gays.

Canadian courts have already ruled that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom -- the country's Bill of Rights -- covers gays. Increasingly, the courts are also interpreting the Human Rights Act as barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. But activists want the Human Rights Act to be amended to specifically include sexual orientation, partly for symbolic reasons and partly to avoid the necessity of repeatedly going to court.

Gays in seven provinces -- including the two largest, Quebec and Ontario -- and one territory are already protected against discrimination under provincial laws. (Outlines)

Captain Sawyer: Super-Mom, Super-Hero, Super-Lesbian!

NEW YORK -- DC Comics, a leading comic book publisher, has just completed a four-book mini-series, **Metropolis S.C.U.** (S.C.U. stands for Special Crimes Unit). What's really special about the series is that the main character, Captain Maggie Sawyer, is a lesbian super-hero. And she's even got a lover!

Sawyer has appeared previously, in the "Superman" series, though only as a supporting character. **Metropolis S.C.U.** marks her first starring role. And that certainly shines. In the new series, readers can see Sawyer protecting the planet as she fights off a variety of super-villains. **Metropolis S.C.U.** also depicts Sawyer's home life, as she deals with the less-fanciful (though no less-formidable!) difficulties of career, relationship, and motherhood.

Significantly, **Metropolis S.C.U.** has earned the Seal of Approval from the Comics Code Authority, a self-regulating industry agency that imposes rather restrictive content guidelines. The Seal of Approval essentially certifies the comic book as appropriate reading for all age groups. Hopefully, then, **Metropolis S.C.U.** will crop up in every newsstand and shopping outlet, right alongside such heterosexual icons as "Archie" and "Veronica."

Wherever it is sold or read, the comic book's appearance is certainly ground-breaking. **Metropolis S.C.U.** offers a fair and honest image of lesbianism, presented in a medium that is uniquely capable of appealing to young hearts and minds. In combating homophobia, this fictional series has struck an admirable blow against one of reality's deadlier super-villains. (GLAAD Media Watch)

Israeli high court grants same-sex couple benefits

JERUSALEM -- Israel's Supreme Court has ruled that the nation's El Al airlines has to offer the same benefits to the same-sex partners of employees. El Al officials have pursued appeals of the case for 6 years since Jonathan Danilovitch, an El Al steward, first sued for the airline to provide his lover with the same free flying pass that it gives the spouses of married workers. Both lower courts that heard the case had ruled against El Al.

"Is parting from a same-sex partner in any way easier than parting from a partner of the opposite sex?" Justice Aharon Barak wrote. "The purpose of this benefit is not the strengthening of the legal institution of marriage, and its denial is clear and blunt

discrimination, and a violation of the principle of equality." The broad Supreme Court ruling could affect two similar cases - one against Tel Aviv University and the other against the Israeli armed forces - currently before lower courts in the country. Religious party legislators said the ruling sanctioned homosexuality and may encourage young people to be gay. (Outlines)

Iceland heads toward gay marriage

REYKJAVIK -- A gay-issues commission created by the Icelandic Parliament, the Altinget, in December recommended that Iceland legalize gay and lesbian marriages, criminalize discrimination against gays, and substantially increase education about gays in schools. The government is discussing the report and has forwarded it to all concerned departments for consideration, said the Swedish gay newspaper Kom Ut. Sweden, Denmark and Norway let gays marry, but married gay and lesbian couples are not granted access to adoption, artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, or church weddings. In all three nations, one partner must be a citizen living in their home country. (Frontiers)

Pro-gay bishop fired

EVREUX, FRANCE -- The Vatican fired Bishop Jacques Gaillot on Jan. 13 over his views on homosexuality, abortion, and other social issues, reported the Associated Press. Gaillot, 59, has been bishop for 12 years of Evreux, a northern French city in Normandy of about 50,000.

In 1988, he shocked the church hierarchy when he announced he would offer blessings to gay couples who requested it. A few weeks later, Gaillot wrote to a gay weekly newspaper that gays "will precede us into the kingdom of God."

Gaillot also advocates the use of condoms and the French-made abortion pill, supports the ordination of married priests, and protests on behalf of immigrants and the homeless. He has also refused to join other clergy protesting on behalf of parochial schools. Gaillot also claimed the French Catholic hierarchy was suffering several crises including a shortage of new priests.

Gaillot refused the Vatican's request to resign. Under a Vatican directive, Gaillot will remain a bishop but without churches or parishioners under his jurisdiction. The Vatican said Gaillot refused to carry out his duties and was warned personally by Pope John Paul II to "stop acting outside" the communion of the church. "The prelate has not revealed himself suitable to carry out the ministry of unity," said a

Vatican statement, "which is the first task of a bishop." (The Washington Blade)

Community should be reaching out to GOP

WASHINGTON, DC -- Gays have a small beachhead in the Republican Party -- the goal now should be to expand it, say one openly gay political scientist. Michael Jogerst, an openly gay professor at the University of Iowa, says that despite the difficulties, greater efforts must be made to cultivate ties with the GOP.

"What you're going to see in the Republican Party is a split between the white suburban Republicans and the Moral Majority types," says Jogerst. The suburbanites, he suggests, are the kinds of voters who support Republican pro-gay Govs. Christine Whitman of New Jersey and William Weld of Massachusetts -- and these voters have little truck with an anti-gay "moral agenda."

"They live in the suburbs and have nice comfortable lives," says Jogerst. "They support things like domestic partnership, like the rights of gays and lesbians. They aren't the moralistic Republicans. I think the suburban Republicans give us our best chance and our best opportunity to make inroads into the party, and we sure as hell should exploit that." But he cautions, "It's going to be an uphill trudge. Moderate Republicans are not going to go out on a limb ... in their own party to defend gays and lesbians."

Jogerst understands why national gay groups focused on the Democrats over the years. "There was only one party that gave us any opportunity at all, and it was the Democratic Party," he says. "When you have limited time and limited resources, why use those to hit a brick wall in the Republican Party."

Another openly gay political scientist, Steven Haeberle, associate professor at the University of Alabama, believes a lobbying group "has to cast its lot predominantly with one party or the other ... I think any interest group is going to go with the party where they're going to be absorbed easiest as part of the coalition. For gays, it's clearly been the Democratic Party."

Haeberle thinks that while gay groups should "continue to focus on friendly Democrats," they shouldn't leave out "the friendly Republicans. They should try to make as many friends as possible in both parties." (The Washington Blade) ▼

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3 FIRST FRIDAY WOMEN'S DANCE ITALIAN MENU BY CHEF MARARITTE 5PM-9PM \$6	4 NOCOVER SATURDAY AN OPEN HOUSE PARTY 21+ THANKS FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT	17 SAINT PATRICK'S DAY JAM W/ GREEN BEER AND dee jay cRAIG MITCHELL
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