



the rest of our world.....

Canadian mayor

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — A gay man has been elected mayor of one of Canada's largest cities.

"It was a history-making night," said Glen Murray, who easily defeating six other candidates.

Winnipeg is Manitoba's capital and, with 667,000 residents, is the largest Canadian city between Toronto and Calgary, Alberta.

Murray, 41, became one of Canada's better-known gay politicians six years ago when, with his troubled foster son, he was featured in a film documentary called "A Kind of Family."

There are only a couple dozen openly gay politicians in Canada, including two members of the federal Parliament.

Gay marriage defeats

GAY MARRIAGE EFFORTS were dealt serious setbacks in Alaska and Hawaii on Election Day.

Struggling to satisfy both social conservatives and the law of the land, Hawaii took another step toward banning same-sex marriage, giving its Legislature the go-ahead to write a new law.

In Alaska, voters wrote a gay-marriage ban into their constitution.

The Hawaii initiative was lawmakers' latest try to sidestep the state Supreme Court's 1993 ruling that the state had no constitutional right to ban homosexual marriages because that would deny some citizens the rights provided to others.

The two sides in Hawaii spent millions of dollars in a relentless media campaign.

Alaska's constitutional amendment defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The Legislature put the question on the ballot after a Superior Court judge ruled in favor of two gay men who challenged the state ban on same-sex marriage. The judge said choosing a life partner was a fundamental right and the state had to prove a compelling reason to regulate it.

Gay rights

GAY RIGHTS QUESTIONS were on the ballots of several local communities around the country on Election Day.

Voters in Fort Collins, Colo., defeated a measure to protect gays and lesbians from discrimination.

In Maine, individual communities tried to write anti-discrimination bills to circumvent this year's statewide vote that overturned protections on the basis of sexual orientation.

South Portland approved a gay rights initiative; Ogunquit's vote on a similar proposal was closely defeated.

First lesbian Congresswoman

WASHINGTON — The first openly gay candidate for Congress has been elected.

Tammy Baldwin, a Democratic state representative from Wisconsin, defeated Republican Josephine Musser, the former state insurance commissioner, to replace retiring GOP Rep. Scott Klug.

"She has broken down a very large door," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Washington, D.C. based Human Rights Campaign. "She has created an arch of hope that future gay and lesbian candidates will be able to walk through."

Two other openly lesbian Democrats sought House seats. Grethe Cammermeyer, a former Army colonel, was defeated by GOP Rep. Jack Metcalf in Washington state and Christine Kehoe lost to Republican Rep. Brian Bilbray in a San Diego race.

Gay GOP Rep. Jim Kolbe of Arizona won re-election over Democrat Tom Volgy. It will be Kolbe's eighth term.

In an Oklahoma rematch, Republican Rep. Frank Lucas easily won a fourth term against Democrat Paul Barby, an openly gay Oklahoma City businessman.

Another openly gay member of Congress, Democratic Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts, was unopposed for a 10th term.

French couples

PARIS — Conservative lawmakers in France have failed to quash a bill in France's Parliament to give legal status to homosexuals and other unmarried couples.

After a marathon debate that included a five-hour speech by one of the bill's most outspoken opponents, the National Assembly's leftist lawmakers were able to save the bill in a 299-233 vote.

Members of parliament nearly came to blows over the controversial measure. The uproar arose as Christine Boutin, a member of the Union for French Democracy, denounced the proposal in a five-hour speech.

Boutin and other critics have equated the bill with gay marriage and say they fear it could open the door to adoptions by homosexual couples.

Sodomy charges

HOUSTON — A false report of a crime might bring an end to anti-sodomy laws in Texas.

Sheriff's deputies responded to a report of an armed intruder inside an apartment. They caught two men having sex and arrested them.

Now, the 119-year-old law, modified by the 1993

Legislature, makes homosexual oral and anal sex a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$500.

"There is a zone of privacy that's been recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court," insists David Jones, attorney for the two arrested men, now out on bond pending a court appearance. "It's in their interest that we fight the sodomy law."

No more outing

LONDON — The top-selling *Sun* tabloid, which earlier this week ran a front-page headline asking if Britain was being run by "a gay mafia," has changed its policy on homosexuals.

"The *Sun* is no longer in the business of destroying closet gays' lives by 'exposing' them as homosexuals," editor David Yelland said in a statement.

The move followed word that Agriculture Minister Nick Brown was gay. Culture Secretary Chris Smith is openly gay, and Ron Davies resigned as Welsh Secretary last month after being mugged in an area known for homosexual activity.

The *Sun* is Britain's biggest-selling daily newspaper and the sister paper to *The News of The*

World, a sensational Sunday tabloid that forced Brown to reveal his homosexuality.

Hate crimes

PITTSBURGH — The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is making enacting hate crimes statutes its top priority.

The organization is launching a campaign called Equality Begins at Home to build support for homosexuals and hate crimes laws by meeting with townspeople, holding rallies and prayer breakfasts and displaying the AIDS quilt.

Executive director Kerry Lobel said members want to make sure gays do not feel they have to move to communities where homosexuality is more accepted.

"So many of us fled our homes for those places because we wanted a different kind of life," she said. "But people are not fleeing any longer."

Matthew Shepard

LARAMIE, WY. — Details of the horrible crime committed against Matthew Shepard are starting to come out.

He was beaten and tied to a fence by his attackers as they grilled him for information so they could burglarize his apartment, a prosecutor said.

"As he lay there bleeding and begging for his life, he was then bound to the buck fence," prosecutor Cal Rerucha told a packed courtroom as a preliminary hearing for Aaron James McKinney got under way.

McKinney and Russell Arthur Henderson, both 21, are accused of killing Shepard, a University of Wyoming student, after luring him out of a campus bar to an isolated area outside town.

Judge Robert B. Denhardt ordered McKinney to stand trial on charges of first-degree murder, aggravated robbery and kidnapping with intent to inflict bodily injury or to terrorize the victim.

The slightly built Shepard, who had been pummeled with the butt of a .357-caliber Magnum, suffered 18 blows to the head, and his hands were bound so tightly that a sheriff's deputy had difficulty cutting him free, Rerucha said.

Shepard's blood-caked face had been partially washed clean by tears; he died five days later. ▼

Equality Begins in Vermont

BY DONALD R. EGGERT

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, along with the Federation of Statewide LGBT Political Organizations, has launched an ambitious national campaign to co-ordinate regional efforts at creating community and achieving equality.

Announced at NGLTF's eleventh annual political conference in early November, the "Equality Begins At Home" campaign is scheduled for March 21-27, 1999. During that week, statewide groups such as Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights (VCLGR) will host lobby days, cultural events, visibility actions, and political gatherings in state capitals and other regions.

The goal of the campaign is threefold. First, organizers seek to "strengthen and unite lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities and promote equality at the state level." Second, by planning events during the same week in all 50 states and territories, Equality Begins at Home will draw national attention to the efforts of state organizers to pass pro-gay legislation at home. Third, organizers will synchronize efforts among state organizers to develop actions and strategies unique to their regions.

To help fund this first-ever coordinated effort among statewide LGBT political organizations, NGLTF will award member organizations in the Federation \$5,000 grants to plan and implement Equality Begins at Home events in their states or territories.



Kerry Lobel, Executive Director of NGLTF, officiated the Equality Begins At Home kick-off rally at Creating Change in Pittsburgh.

The Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights was invited to become a member of the Federation of LGBT Statewide Political Organizations last year. Virginia Renfrew, Co-Liaison to VCLGR, plans to host a meeting of representatives from major LGBT Vermont organizations in early December. Community leaders will discuss how the \$5,000 grant should be spent. "We're still in the planning stages right now, but I envision that the week will include a series of events both in Montpelier and around the state," said Renfrew. "We want to try and bring everyone in our community together including youth, the elderly and transgendered Vermonters."

Paula Eitelbrick, the Legislative Director for the Empire State Pride Agenda in New York, was named National Coordinator of Equality Begins at Home. She believes that when the

national focus shifts to Vermont's fight for same-gender civil marriage this winter and spring, Equality Begins at Home could "help build support systems across state lines" for groups such as VCLGR and the Vermont Freedom To Marry Task Force.

NGLTF and other national gay rights groups assisted local same-gender marriage advocates with additional funding and on-the-ground field organizers in response to a flood of resources from right-wing anti-gay extremist groups during the recent Defense of Marriage Act referendum in Alaska and Hawaii.

The date of the first Equality Begins at Home planning meeting was undetermined at press time. Those interested in attending or helping to organize Vermont's contribution to the campaign should contact Virginia Renfrew at (802) 496-4333 or renfrew@sover.net. ▼