

# LESBIAN MOTHERS ASSOCIATION

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VOLUME III No. III

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2002

Rachel Rose

On July 6, 1999 I gave birth to a son at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal. He was born by C-section after a long labour, and I was so tired all I could do was smile weakly as my partner Isabelle cradled him in her arms. "Our son," she whispered. "Our beautiful son is here at last."

And so it was that Benjamin came into our lives. Conceived via anonymous donor sperm, he was the culmination of years of dreaming for both of us, and the first child of what we hoped would be a large family. Isabelle, we both agreed, would carry the next one.

Most people who knew us in Montreal were supportive, and our friends and family cheered us on every step of the way. But one thing bothered me. Even though I had made Isabelle Ben's legal guardian if I were to die, as long as I was alive, she had no legal rights as a parent in Quebec. Of course, in our day-to-day lives this had little impact, or so I thought. We were both equally exhausted, equally in love, and equally overwhelmed by our son's arrival. But when he was two weeks old and ended up in the hospital due to breathing problems, Isabelle became invisible as his parent. All decisions were referred to me. I introduced us both to the nurses as his mothers, but they interrupted. "Which one of you is his legal mother?" they demanded, and that was that. I signed the forms, I was the one who was allowed to stay overnight, I was the "real" mother.

And every time we crossed borders or traveled abroad, Isabelle stopped being a parent and became just a "friend." Ben suddenly had one nervous single mother: me. I was too afraid of prejudiced border officials giving us a hard time or refusing us entry to tell the guards that Ben had two mothers. "Besides, what's the point," said Isabelle, "when legally I'm nothing to him?"

If Isabelle and I had broken up while living in Montreal and I had felt like being vengeful, I could have kept her

from ever seeing her son again. And that's just not right. Biology gave me the upper hand in a way I never wanted.

Last summer we left Montreal for Vancouver. One of the first things we did upon settling here was to find a lawyer who did second-parent adoptions. I thought it would be little more than a formality. We were both his mothers. How could a piece of paper change anything?

But it mattered more to both of us than I ever thought it would.

First there were the statements that the lawyer wrote up for us. Some of them still bring tears to my eyes. Clausell, for example: "Benjamin's non-biological mother is able to support, maintain and educate her son, and it is her greatest delight to be able to do so."

Our lawyer carefully explained to me that once I gave the consent for this adoption, I could not revoke it.

Together we signed page after page of documents, which were then sent before the adoption clerk for approval.

When the lawyer called to let us know our adoption had been approved, I felt a weight lift from my shoulders that I hadn't even known I'd been carrying. At last: recognition of the truth of our lives. Protection for our son, should anything happen to me. Irrevocable protection for Isabelle as Ben's legal and equal mother. No one can take that away from us now, no matter where we live. Next time we cross the border to visit friends in Seattle, we will proudly hand the customs officer Ben's new birth certificate, which lists us both, side by side, as his parents.

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We would like to hear from you! Interested in writing for our newsletter?

Send your articles at any time to [monicole@citenet.net](mailto:monicole@citenet.net) or by post to AML, 2401 Coursol, Montreal, Quebec, H3J 1C8

## **News Briefs- December 2001 - February 2002**

### **MONTREAL**

In December the **Lesbian Mothers Association** sent out copies of our brief on **access to fertility clinics** to 12 different clinics in **Montreal, Sherbrooke and Quebec City**, asking to meet with their **ethics committees**. Lesbians are currently denied access. This paper had been presented to the Standing Committee on Health in the House of Commons a month before, during hearings regarding the slated legislation on New Reproductive Technologies.

**Procrea Montreal**, the largest clinic in Quebec asked to meet with us. Two members of the association, a representative from the Quebec Women's Federation and Professor Danielle Julien of UQAM all presented on the legal, social and medical reasons for providing access to lesbians. The committee will meet again in March to decide upon the question.

On **February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002** a **red-wine/spaghetti benefit-dinner** was held supporting **SAME-SEX marriage** in Canada. Sky Pub owner Peter Sergakis paid for the dinner, and 100 % of the funds raised went to help pay for Michael Hendricks and René LeBoeuf's ongoing Quebec Superior Court lawsuit against Quebec and the Federal government for the right to get married. The Dinner was served by Quebec Liberal MNA Nathalie Rochefort and Bloc MP Réal Ménard. Michael and René have mortgaged their home to pay for this case and are just about out of money. Private citizen couples, like Michael and René, across the country have been shouldering the burden of a community struggle. The case is one of the biggest -perhaps the most important - gay-rights cases in the history of Canada. It will likely be appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. **Close to \$8000** were raised for the cause, a strong showing of community support. The **Lesbian Mothers Association** contributed **\$700** from ticket sales and donations.

### **QUEBEC**

**December 7th, 2001-** On the second day in court for Michael Hendricks and René Leboeuf, who are challenging federal and provincial governments for the right to marry, a news story

was leaked to *Le Devoir* indicating that Quebec was about to table **legislation to create a Registered Domestic Partnership**. The proposed **civil union partnership** immediately ran into **resistance** from a large portion of the province's gay and lesbian community. If enacted, the legislation would make Quebec the second province, after Nova Scotia, to recognize civil unions for gay and lesbian couples, although the federal government and most provinces recognize same-sex partner rights.

**Justice Minister Paul Bégin** hailed it as the most gay-positive legislation in North America. It would give gay couples some of the benefits of married couples, including health and insurance benefits, a new tax status, and the right to benefits after divorce or death. It was a proposition to modify 56 laws in the civil code. But what had many in the community angry is the project's failure to accept gay marriage and the **glaring omission of gay and lesbian parental rights**. Currently there is only one legal parent in families with two mothers or two fathers. Michael Hendricks stated that the bill "does nothing for gay families and certainly does nothing for the children of gays and lesbians."

While generally welcoming the bill, **Irène Demczuk**, coordinator of the Montreal-based **Coalition for the Recognition of Same-Sex Spouses**, said the omission of parenting and adoption rights is a flaw. "The children of same-sex families should have the same rights as other Quebec children," she said.

Bégin said the law would not grant full marriage rights because matrimony falls under federal jurisdiction. But Bégin hinted that a sovereign Quebec would have drafted more progressive legislation. "We would be proposing marriage," Bégin said. "We could wait maybe 10 years for the Supreme Court to declare that marriage laws are discriminatory. Or we could have it right away with sovereignty."

The minister stated that parental rights could be included in the slated legislation next spring, "if a social consensus emerges in the **parliamentary commission** and 80% of those presenting recommend to the government that this be included in the law." The parliamentary hearings took place at the beginning of February and over 50 briefs were presented. **Eleven members of the Lesbian Mothers**

**Association** presented briefs in the national assembly during the parliamentary commissions. Some of these briefs were personal testimonials while others were based on professional expertise with members presenting as expert witnesses. The brief of the Lesbian Mothers Association that outlines the recommendations that we have made to the government regarding our families is available upon request. Minister Bégin and the deputies showed an incredible openness and interest in our families. They were especially impressed with the testimonies of a number of adolescents and young adults who spoke about growing up with gay and lesbian parents. The minister himself said that he learned a lot during the hearings, especially about the lives of our children.

On the day before the hearings began, the **American Association for Pediatrics** came out with an announcement that couldn't have been better timed. Proclaiming that the children of gays and lesbians are no worse off than their peers, this influential association of pediatricians gave **public support to laws** that allow members of same-sex couples to adopt each other's kids. In its journal *Pediatrics*, the **55,000-member** American Academy of Pediatrics contends that children of same-sex parents deserve the same protections as any others. "There's not a single study that shows a disadvantage to being raised in a family where parents are of the same sex," said Dr. Ellen Perrin, a professor of pediatrics at Tufts New England Medical Center.

Bégin says that the law will be adopted before the national assembly adjourns **this coming June (perhaps as soon as March)**. We are quite optimistic and anxiously awaiting the results.

**Slightly technical (but interesting) COMMENT from John Fisher, director of EGALE CANADA:** In Nova Scotia, for example, **Registered Domestic Partnerships** (RDPs) were generally welcomed by the community. It was recognized, I think, that RDPs were no substitute for marriage, but they were not objected to as an additional regime that could supplement marriage. Some saw them as conferring a package of provincial rights and responsibilities through an 'opt-in' mechanism, as opposed to common-law status, which is generally imposed. RDPs also provided an alternative for members of the community who might not wish to marry, because of personal concerns about the history of the

institution of marriage, but who would still like their relationship to be subject to a defined regime of rights and responsibilities. Others favoured RDPs as a means of avoiding the waiting-period usually required before common law status is achieved. None of this was seen to detract from ongoing efforts to change federal law to obtain equal marriage rights.

Most of the negative response I have seen is premised on the principle that RDPs as a substitute for marriage would create second-class status, and I agree with this 100%. On the other hand, I think many in our communities would not object to RDPs as a supplement to marriage, i.e. an additional option which increases the range of relationship choices for members of our communities, particularly those who don't wish to marry. Of course, whether any particular RDP scheme is objectionable would depend upon the provincial context and what specifically is being proposed.

**December 2001 - La Presse** printed the results of a poll they commissioned on "The Climate at Holiday Time 2001" - a telephone poll on a population of 500 done from 13 to 17 December. Three of the **questions dealt with homosexual conjugality** and *La Presse* ran two articles on these results in the Dec 27<sup>th</sup> paper.

Question #16 asked how favorable the respondent was to the Government of Quebec's "civil union" proposal. The results were: Total in favour: 61% Total against: 30% with 9% having no opinion. This is well below the positives for equal marriage in the Léger Marketing poll of June 2001 (76%) and the last *La Presse* poll in Sept 2000 (67%). Question #17 asked whether they agreed that "gay couples" should be able to adopt children like het couples can. Results: Total in favour: 43% Total against: 51% with 6% having no opinion.

Perhaps it would have helped if the question asked about "lesbian couples" rather than "gay couples"? And explained that many of us are asking for the right to adopt children that are already living with us and have only one legal parent.

We do not know what to make of this poll since it does not follow the curve established over the last 4 years; in fact it is the **first drop in support** in the polls during that period. (Maybe all the nice people were out Christmas

shopping when they called and all we have here is the grinch(es?)). *La Presse* reporters interpreted the results to mean that the PQ was bang on public sentiment with their "civil union" and that the population is "divided" over parenting rights. They let Hendricks say that "human rights are not a question of popularity or a beauty contest and we will continue to seek our rights through the courts". (They also quoted his favorite line: **"We are more popular than independence!"**) It would be interesting to see if public opinion has changed since the parliamentary commission which afforded us a good deal of **positive media coverage**.

**January 19 (365Gay.com), Montreal.** A precedent-setting decision by a Quebec quasi-judicial board could have far reaching implications for gay and lesbian couples. The **Tribunal Administratif du Québec** has ruled that a **couple does not need to live together to be considered in a common law relationship**. The case involved a man whose female partner had died in a car crash. Because they were not legally married, did not live together, or share a bank account, he was turned down for survivor benefits. The Tribunal ruled that the Société de l'Assurance Automobile du Québec must pay full benefits. In striking down the understanding that full-time cohabitation is a prerequisite for recognizing spousal rights, the path has been opened for same-sex couples seeking access to pensions, insurance claims and survivor benefits, said gay activists in Quebec. The man's lawyer, Andre Mongrain, said: "In my opinion, this enlarges or adjusts the law. This is important because for the first time, an administrative tribunal has recognized that **people can be spouses even if they don't live together.**" Irène Demczuk of the Coalition for the Recognition of Same-Sex Spouses said the decision could affect some gay and lesbian partnerships: "In small towns and villages all across Quebec there are gay and lesbian couples who are spouses, but cannot live together or do not go out together publicly because they are afraid of negative criticism." It is not yet clear if the decision will have any impact on binational same-sex couples. Although foreign partners of Canadians are entitled to landed immigrant status, the couple must have cohabitated prior to the application for Canadian immigration. Nor is it clear if the decision will affect federal law.

## **CANADA**

**November 27, 2001 TORONTO (CP)** - Bereaved gay and lesbian spouses have launched a pair of **class-action lawsuits in a bid to coax \$400 million** in what they consider outstanding **survivor benefits** out of the **Canada Pension Plan**. The suits, filed in Toronto and Vancouver, allege Ottawa is discriminating against same-sex couples by **denying benefits to gays and lesbians whose partners died before Jan. 1, 1998**. That's the cut-off date the federal government imposed on an estimated 10,000 gays and lesbians last year when it amended laws granting various rights and benefits to same-sex couples. "The Jan. 1, 1998 cut-off date was imposed on same-sex couples on a purely arbitrary basis and without any legal justification," said lawyer Douglas Elliott.

The suit seeks benefits for all applicable gay and lesbian survivors **retroactive to April 17, 1985**; the day equality guarantees were enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. The issue of retroactive benefits is a critical one for the gay community: lesbians typically earn less than couples with a male wage-earner, while gay men have spent the last 15 years battling the AIDS epidemic.

The government's refusal to fully pay benefits is most galling in light of the fact that gays and lesbians pay into the pension plan the same way all working Canadians do. The Toronto suit includes plaintiffs from every province except British Columbia and Quebec, which has its own separate pension plan. A separate suit is being filed on behalf of B.C. plaintiffs, which has its own class-action law.

**EGALE Update-** On **Saturday, November 17, 2001**, gay **Vancouver resident Aaron Webster was viciously beaten to death in Stanley Park**. Responding to national outrage following this brutal murder, **Justice Minister Anne McLellan** (now replaced by Martin Cauchon) acknowledged on November 28, 2001 that there is "unanimous agreement" among federal, provincial and territorial Justice Ministers to **add sexual orientation to federal hate propaganda laws**.

Even Canadian **Alliance** House leader **John Reynolds** has said he would support the change, although he did not indicate whether that would be the position of the party as a whole. In 1994-1995, the Reform Party vigorously opposed amendments to the Criminal Code to increase sentences for gay-bashing and other hate crimes.

Minister McLellan has said that the proposed amendment is "not on the current legislative agenda", but could be introduced **next spring**. EGALE is planning a lobbying campaign to ensure government action on this important issue.

**November 29, Ottawa. British Columbia Senator Mobina Jaffer** has lashed out at a bill that would define marriage as exclusively "between a man and a woman." The Senate was debating **Bill S-9** "An Act To Remove Certain Doubts Regarding The Meaning of Marriage". It was put forward by liberal Senator Anne Cools. Cools bill would enshrine the heterosexual definition of marriage in Canadian law.

During the debate, **Alberta Senator Tommy Banks** proclaimed gay and lesbian relationships **could never be called a marriage**. "In many respects, they are similar," Banks told the Red Chamber, "and there are certainly many examples of such unions that are, to my direct personal knowledge, unassailable examples of constancy, of responsibility and of true lasting love; but they are not the same thing."

Marriage, Banks said, "is laden with such weight of history, of practice, of application, of common usage and of universal understanding in its various translations as to make it impossible to apply in any way other than the one that is known and understood in every society on every continent, and which transcends virtually all races, languages, religions and geography."

Jaffer, also appointed by the Liberals, said Banks' remarks left her "dumbfounded" - especially following the recent murder of Aaron Webster, a gay man who was viciously beaten to death in Vancouver's Stanley Park. Jaffer spoke out eloquently, warning Senators that those who speak in favour of Bill S-9 are only helping to ensure such crimes keep recurring. "They are telling more generations of young Canadians that we should not treat homosexuals equally: Homosexuals must not use the word 'marriage' to describe their relationships," she said. "They are also teaching that intolerance of homosexuals is both proper and righteous."

**January 31<sup>st</sup>**- The **Law Commission of Canada** has called on the **federal government to legalize gay and lesbian marriage**. In a study released in Ottawa, the commission said: "There

is no justification for maintaining the current distinctions between same-sex and heterosexual conjugal unions in the light of current understandings of the state's interests in marriage." The Law Commission is an independent, government-funded group that advises Parliament on law reform.

**December 12, Winnipeg**-The **Manitoba government** will introduce **legislation granting gay and lesbian adoption in the spring**. Justice Minister Gord Mackintosh made the announcement, at the legislature in Winnipeg. Earlier this year the province enacted limited partner rights laws for same-sex couples. At the time the government came under fire for ignoring adoption and property rights. **Four lesbian couples** immediately began a legal battle with the province arguing the refusal to grant gays and lesbians the right to adopt is a **violation of the constitution**. But the legal opinions, from the two members of the Gay Rights Review Panel appointed by Mackintosh in June, differed on how the current law should be altered.

**The Standing Committee on Health** submitted **recommendations** to the federal **Minister of Health** regarding the slated legislation on **New Reproductive Technologies**. Although the final Bill still has to be voted upon there is nothing either for or against lesbian access to fertility clinics.

A worrying thing that we have noted however, is that one of the recommended **requirements for licensing** is that a clinic (or doctor) will have to **provide counseling** to any recipient of assisted reproductive technologies. What this means is that if a family doctor would try to get a license he / she would have to prove that counseling facilities are available at the clinic. There might be ways around this but it will make it quite complicated for family doctors to continue doing inseminations. Our work in the clinics in the upcoming months will be critical.

**December 19, 2001 -OTTAWA** - The most recent **candidate seeking the Canadian Alliance leadership** defended his controversial views yesterday that the homosexual lifestyle can be harmful, saying medical science backs him up. **Grant Hill** characterized himself as the candidate best able to bring his party together after a difficult year and one who would work hard to develop a co-operative electoral arrangement with the federal Progressive Conservatives before the next election.

Dr. Hill, in opposing amendments to the federal Human Rights Act banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, stated during debate in the House of Commons in 1996: "My specific problem with this bill is that it will produce and allow a **promotion of an unhealthy lifestyle.**" Dr. Hill argued that extending rights under the Canadian Human Rights Act to gays would encourage a lifestyle that spreads disease.

Grant Hill said in an interview that, as a **medical doctor**, he remains convinced that homosexual activity can be unhealthy in the same way smoking is. As a physician and scientist, he can't help himself from pointing out the hazards of HIV, parasitic infection, hepatitis and, a personal favourite, gay bowel syndrome. He insists that these views are neither political nor religious, just the plain medical facts.

On May 10, 1996, the **Canadian Medical Association** said it was "concerned that remarks made by Reform MP Dr. Grant Hill erroneously suggest that homosexuality is an unhealthy lifestyle. In our view, there is no scientific evidence to back such a claim." On May 22, 1996, the College of Family Physicians of Canada concurred with the CMA's position and further stated: "There is no scientific evidence to support these remarks, which only serve to **encourage prejudice against homosexual Canadians.**"

Perhaps the election of Dr. Hill as Alliance leader would be a good thing. It would expose the bigotry that still characterizes his party.

**EGALE-December, 2001-** Michelle Josef has been living as a woman for several years, and was half-way through the process of obtaining a series of medical interventions to legally change her sex to female, when, without explanation or warning, the **Ontario government withdrew funding for sex reassignment surgery.** Unable to complete the process, Michelle has started legal action against the Ontario government, seeking to have funding for sex reassignment surgery reinstated for all transsexuals.

She is arguing that the decision to cut the funding is contrary to the Canada Health Act, and that the government has violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by discriminating against transsexuals on the basis of their

gender identity. More information can be obtained at [www.LilithItsNotFair.com](http://www.LilithItsNotFair.com).

**EGALE** has recently created a **national e-mail list to facilitate national networking on education and youth issues**. It is important to share resources, and exchange information about the successes and failures experienced in the classroom, in counseling and in extra-curricular activities. They believe that it is important to reduce the isolation in which teachers work and students learn. Discussion of the experiences of LGBT teachers and students will help others who are struggling to make their school environment safe and welcoming. Those interested in joining the Network can contact Egale at [edunetwork@egale.ca](mailto:edunetwork@egale.ca).

**January 11, 2002 -EDMONTON, Alberta** -The Alberta government will bring in **legislation this spring to recognize same-sex relationships**. The province is the latest to comply with a Supreme Court ruling that found by not recognizing gay relationships Canada's constitution was being violated. Since the high court case, brought by an Ontario woman, provinces have been scrambling to rewrite their laws.

Alberta's gay and lesbian community reacted to the government proposal with both **hope and skepticism**. It is not known yet whether or not adoption will be included. Although a legal precedent was set in Alberta for co-parent adoption the laws of the province do not allow gays and lesbians to adopt as a couple.

A **conservative religious coalition** has vowed to fight the province. Hermina Dykxhoorn (note the name!), spokeswoman for the Alberta Federation of Women United for Families, told a news conference: "Marriage needs to be protected for the benefit of children and the stability of the community, something that no other relationship does." Dykxhoorn said the province can avoid complying with the Supreme Court of Canada ruling on same-sex relationships by invoking the constitution's notwithstanding clause.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

**November 24, Vatican City- 365Gay.com-** Pope John Paul has declared that laws permitting gay marriage, divorce and abortion constitute a **violent assault on family life**. Speaking to a congress on family issues, the pontiff said

that gay and lesbian unions threaten the "natural institution" of the family. He went on to urge the church's one billion Catholics around the world to prevent laws which are not consistent "with the true well-being of the family".

**December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001** - **The Coalition for the Liberation of the 52 condemned** organized a **march in front of the Egyptian consulate** to protest against the arrest of 52 Egyptians because of their sexual orientation, real or presumed. Last May, 23 of these men were convicted. The coalition is reacting against the growing discrimination against sexual minorities. The accused were allowed neither family visits nor the right to a lawyer and the convictions were based on admissions that were made apparently under torture. The Coalition is made up of organizations like **Amnesty International** and the **Quebec Human Rights League**.

**December 12, 2001, AMSTERDAM, Netherlands** (AP) - Dutch civil servants wed **nearly 2,000 same-sex couples in the first six months after gay marriage was legalized this year**, a government agency said. The gay marriage law that took effect on April 1 made the Netherlands the first country to grant gay couples the same rights as heterosexual couples, including the right to adopt children. The Central Bureau of Statistics said 2,100 men and 1,700 women had married someone of the same sex by Sept. 30.

**February 1<sup>st</sup>** - **Planet Out news**: A court in **Sweden** has ordered that a man who **donated sperm** to a lesbian couple should **pay child support**.

Story:

<http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2002/02/01/4>

**January 16, 2002, Norway** - In a breakthrough for gay rights and a show of tolerance by Norway's political right, the country's **Conservative finance minister Per-Kristian Foss, married his long-time companion Jan Erik Knarbakk**, in a ceremony at the Norwegian embassy in Stockholm Sweden on January 4<sup>th</sup>. Later on in the month he was installed as **Norway's acting prime minister** because both the prime minister and foreign minister were traveling abroad.

**January 16, 2002** (Planet Out) - **California** gays and lesbians were dealt a brief setback on Monday when state Assemblyman Paul Koretz announced he would **temporarily**

**shelve Assembly Bill 1338 - the California Family Protection Act** - extending gay couples' wait to legally form **civil unions** in the state. The California Family Protection Act is closely modeled after Vermont's same-sex "civil unions" bill that was voted into law in April of 2000. Koretz hopes to follow in the footsteps of Vermont's legislature in providing gay and lesbian couples many of the same rights married heterosexual couples currently enjoy.

While groups like Focus on the Family claimed a victory with the temporary shelving of AB 1338, Koretz isn't giving up so easily. "AB 1338 may have stalled, but the issue of civil union is still very much alive in California," he said. "The battle may be over, but the war has only just begun."

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

**November 16, Rome** - 365Gay.com - Despite the objections of the Roman Catholic Church, visitors to the **ancient Roman city of Pompeii** will soon be able to see a series of **erotic lesbian frescoes** that were buried under volcanic ash 2,000 years ago. The art was discovered in the 1950s and has been undergoing restoration ever since. Archaeologists discovered it when they stumbled onto an **underground "Pleasure Spa"**. The frescoes show scenes of explicit sex. The church had attempted to convince Pompeii officials to keep the art under wraps. A local priest condemned it as a temptation that could "corrupt the morals of the chastest" (wow!). It is the latest dispute between church and art. The ancient women's bathhouse will be opened to the public next month. Pompeii was buried in ash by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. The archaeological site is now one of Italy's most popular tourist destinations.

**Friday, January 4, 2002** - **Fort Lauderdale** has one of the fastest growing gay and lesbian **senior populations** in North America -- the warm weather and the welcoming gay community has been a magnet for many years. Now, the city is to get what could be the **first comprehensive gay and lesbian senior citizens center in the world**. It will be created at the Sunshine Cathedral -- the Metropolitan Community Church branch in Ft. Lauderdale -- and partially funded by the Area Agency on Aging. The agency has already pledged \$200,000 in federal money to start the project.

**LOS ANGELES** - After four years of publishing a national magazine for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) parents and their families, **Proud Parenting magazine (formerly Alternative Family) is ceasing print publication.** Founder and publisher **Kelly Taylor** said that the company's policy to not accept any sexually explicit, tobacco or alcohol-related advertising made the "coffee-table publication" one that could be shared by all family members, but may also have contributed to its financial demise. The glossy magazine featured real-life stories of GLBT-headed families, legal and financial advice, and columns by a therapist, a grandparent and the teen son of lesbian parents. Also included in each issue were a story for younger children and a coloring page reflecting the lives of GLBT families.

The publisher will continue her work with GLBT parenting issues by producing an **online edition of Proud Parenting.** Proud Parenting Online will be a membership community site for GLBT parents worldwide and will include content very similar to the print publication. Proud Parenting Online expects to **launch in the early part of 2002.**

**JANUARY 13, 2002** (*Sunday-Times-UK*) - For centuries, the turbulent private life of **Mary Wollstonecraft, the radical 18th-century writer who inspired modern feminism,** has been the subject of conjecture among historians. Now her biographer is to publish new evidence that the married writer and mother of Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*, enjoyed **a series of erotic relationships with women.**

Janet Todd, professor of English literature at Glasgow University, believes that, "In modern terms, Wollstonecraft was a bisexual, a highly sexed woman who lived with a feeling of intense repression because she was also puritanical and pious."

Wollstonecraft, a forerunner of 20th-century suffragettes such as Emmeline Pankhurst, is best known for her 1792 treatise, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman". A classic feminist text, it urged an egalitarian social philosophy, arguing for the creation and preservation of equal rights and opportunities for women.

Todd has established that, before her marriage, Wollstonecraft enjoyed love affairs with women. The

evidence comes from more than 500 letters from Wollstonecraft that will be published this year by Penguin.

**January 18, 2002** (Planet Out): A second gay television venture was announced just days after MTV and Showtime went public with their own plans.

Story:

<http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2002/01/18/1>

Check out new **Quebec Lesbian Web-Site:**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/QuebecDykes/>

**Planet Out news: Charges dropped in lesbian baths raid:** A Toronto judge spent two hours on **January 31<sup>st</sup>** criticizing Toronto police for violating the rights of women during a raid on a lesbian bathhouse.

Story:

<http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2002/02/01/3>

## **News from the Lesbian Mothers Association**

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

#### **MARCH:**

**For adults and kids:** On **SATURDAY MARCH 16** the **Lesbian Mothers Association** will have a **SUGARING-OFF PARTY** at **CAP-ST-JACQUES (Pierrefonds)**. This is a wonderful small farm, in a beautiful location, on the Island of Montreal. The event will begin at **11 a.m.** A full lunch will be served between 11:00 and 12:30 p.m. Following this, there will be a guided tour, horse-drawn sleigh rides of the property, as well as sugar-candy ("tire") preparation and tasting in a giant tee-pee. Our space must be reserved, so we are asking people to pay in advance. If you are interested in participating **please fill out the form that you've already received by post and send it to us before March 1st.**

**For adults only:** Saturday March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 8 pm. Discussion Group: **Confronting Homophobia in the schools.** Lead by: Diane Labelle. 2401 Coursol (metro Lionel Groulx)

#### **APRIL:**

**For adults only:** Saturday April 13 at 8 pm. Discussion group: **Raising Sons. Raising Daughters.** Lead by: Heather Mullin. 2401 Coursol (metro Lionel Groulx).

**For adults and kids: On Sunday April 14<sup>th</sup> we will meet for a Dim Sum brunch in China Town. Let us know if you are interested in attending so your place can be reserved. 514-846-1543.**

**MAY**

**For adults and kids: Sunday May 26 at 10:30 a.m. Walk on Mount Royal. Meeting place: The Chalet at Beaver Lake**

**For adults only: TBA**

**Bulletin Board**

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

**THANK-YOU:** The **Lesbian Mothers Association** would like to thank **Reverend Raymond Drennan and the congregation of the Unitarian Church of Montreal** for a generous grant from the **John Cordner Fund**. For the past three decades Unitarian and Universalists Churches have spoken out in favour of the rights of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons and against homophobia and all forms of discrimination against such persons on the basis of their sexual orientation. Reverend Drennan recently presented a memoir to the provincial government supporting parenting rights for gays and lesbians, as well as our right to marry.

**THANK-YOU:** Dear Members of the LMA, We would like to thank you for your support for our "**Souper-Spaghetti**" benefit on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002 at SKY. Without your help we could not have made it this far nor could we continue our court fight. At the "**Souper-Spaghetti**" we raised **close to \$ 8,000** to help pay the legal fees for our appeal, which will start sometime this spring. All this demonstrates that when our community makes up its mind to resolve a problem, it can be done. Again, thanks a million for everything - it was appreciated! Sincerely, **Michael Hendricks and René Leboeuf**.

We are **2 mamas each with a son (7 and 11 years old)**. We live on the south shore of Montreal (St-Bruno). We do downhill skiing, badminton, tennis and rollerblading... we are **looking for friends** for us and for our boys, to share our experiences, break the isolation and do some activities together. Call or write us: **Pascale and Nathalie (450) 441-4675**.

**pascale\_19@hotmail.com**

Have you been **trying to get pregnant with no success**? Would you like to talk, share books on infertility, adoption and other options? If you are single, in a couple, lesbian or bisexual, or just single and inseminating with no success, I would like to talk/meet with you! Possibly form a group, or just individually. Contact **Leanne**:  
[inkspots@videotron.ca](mailto:inkspots@videotron.ca) or tel: (514)526-4236.

Hi, my name is **Nathalie Ricard** and I work as a nurse in a Montreal CLSC. I have published a book on lesbian maternity. I myself am a lesbian mother and I'm currently starting up a **research project** that is supported by my employer. As **health care services** are not adapted to meet the needs of lesbian mothers and their children, a change is needed. There is not so much information on lesbian family life and much less on lesbian couples who are thinking of beginning their families via **artificial insemination**. So, I am looking for **5 couples that do not yet have children** but who would like to have children either with a known or unknown donor.

The results of my research will be presented in my work milieu and in other contexts so that health care providers can modify their approach. Research participants will remain **anonymous**. Also, research results will be shared with participants so that they can be discussed before they are diffused.

Thank you for your collaboration. If you are interested in participating, please contact me: **Nathalie Ricard, tel: 514-486-6415 or e-mail: nricard@colba.net.**

**OTHER EVENTS:**

**Edgy Women / Femmes au-dela IX- experimental dance performance** -opening **March 16th (12 - 5 pm)**. Members of the LMA will be attending. Studio 303, 372 Sainte Catherine West. (514) 393-3771.  
[www.studio303.net](http://www.studio303.net)

The **Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPJ)** are holding a **forum on "Droits et Libertés: Jeunes - Éducation - Homosexualité"** on **Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>** from **9:30-17:30** at the **Sheraton Center, Montreal.**

Registration for community group members costs \$25. For more info and to register please call 514-873-5146.

The documentary "Coming-Out" by Jean-Francois Monette, will be shown on Tuesday March 12 at 7:30, at the Unitarian Church at 5035 de Maisonneuve west (metro Vendome). Party afterwards, bring along a little food to share and a bottle of wine if you like.

The bulletin board is a free forum for members to communicate amongst each other. If you want to post an announcement in the next issue please send it to us at any time to [monicole@citenet.net](mailto:monicole@citenet.net) or by post to AML, 2401 Coursol, Montreal, Quebec, H3J 1C8.

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IF you have something to advertise, sell, rent or buy...anything where money must change hands, you can place an ad in the newsletter. Ads cost 20 cents per word.

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**Heather Mullin, M.S.W. Individual, Couple, Family & Group Counseling.**

Special Interests: Mental Health, Addictions, & Sexual Orientation / Identity Issues. Queen Elizabeth Health Complex (Vendome Metro) (514) 769-7312.