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## NEWSLETTER - VOLUME VI - No. II - December 2004

### **Multi-Parent Families Go to Court**

By Mona Greenbaum, LMA coordinator

Well, now the fun begins! Just when we thought things had finally settled down for us as lesbian moms here in Quebec, two new cases are coming to the courts regarding same-sex parents, to shake everyone up a little. For those of you who have been members for a while you are well aware of the positive impacts that Bill 84 has had for our families. Because of this law the civil code now contains certain rules pertaining to assisted procreation and has established for lesbian couples with children issuing from a common parental project, a legal filiation (link) that confers the same rights and responsibilities to the non-biological parent as to the biological parent. Filiation is proven by the birth certificate on which the parents' names are entered. In the case of lesbian couples, the birth certificate indicates the names of both parents, followed by the title "mother". We do not have to go through co-parent adoptions here, which I think is rather swell.

When we as an association fought for family rights in Quebec we made a conscious decision to try to obtain equality (e.g. the bi-parental model, two legal parents) rather than take it one step further and ask for multi-parent recognition, which was amongst our goals. Multi-parent families are common in the heterosexual world (e.g. after a divorce one (or both) of the parents remarries and the new partner assumes a parental role as a step-parent). In our community they are also quite present. A common example is a heterosexual couple with kids where the mother comes out later in life and meets a woman who acts as a parent toward her biological children. Although the kids still have two biological and legal parents (the mom and dad) they also have a *social parent* (the mom's partner), who in legal terms is sometimes referred to as a *de facto* parent.

Always on the cutting edge, the LGBT community has also taken this one step further. Some of us actively choose to parent in trios and even quads! Here we have multi-parent families too, not by default, as in the case of divorce, but *by choice*. The common example is a lesbian couple that wants to have their donor involved as a parental figure in the child's life. I am forever impressed with these people who have so carefully and conscientiously thought through all the details of multi-parenting. The way I see it is often hard enough for two parents to agree on something, so 3 or 4???

I used to think that was like parenting by committee. But it can work! There are a number of creative examples in our group of people who are really challenging the norm of what a family "should" look like. It's a lot of work, but imagine how enriching it can be for a child. In Canadian culture, which is so based on the nuclear family unit, this is a step closer to the extended families that are so prevalent in many other cultures.

But even with all these ideals at heart, in 2002 when we were pushing for our rights in the National Assembly of Quebec City we thought it was more strategic not to complicate things for the MNAs. If you had heard some of the questions that those MNAs asked regarding the lesbian birds and bees, you would understand that they weren't ready for multi-parent families. But we were expecting to see cases that challenged the bi-parental model ever since Bill 84 was adopted in 2002. Well now these cases have come up. No big surprise! They could have far-reaching impact.

In the first case, which is going into appeal in London, Ontario, a lesbian couple has a child with the help of their known donor and both biological parents put their names on the child's birth certificate. They now want the non-biological mother to be recognized as a parent as well.

At the first level, In April 2003, Justice David Aston denied the request. In his decision he stated, "If this application is granted, it seems to me the door is wide open to step-parents, extended family and others to claim parental status in less harmonious circumstances. If a child can have three parents, why not four or six or a dozen?"

Although American and Canadian jurists in academic circles are currently reflecting on the myth of the bi-parental model, Justice Aston's remarks reflect the psychological taboo and naturalistic vision that dominate legal discourse where parents can only be conceived of if they are the child's "genitors" (biological parents). Jurists fear problems and complications in terms of extended family, naming, inheritances, identities, etc. Some even go so far as to claim that multi-parent families jeopardize child development.

But, like it or not, these families already exist and the current legal status does not sufficiently reflect the reality of their lives. Because of this obstinacy over the number two these children do not have an adequate legal framework to be protected within.

The other case, in Montreal, was also inevitable. A lesbian couple asks their gay friend to help them start their family. In their minds they simply want a sperm donation. In his mind he wants a greater involvement with his future biological child. They never sit down to work this out in any detail, put nothing on paper and assume that everything will fall into place. The woman becomes pregnant and he immediately announces it to his mother, he is there at the delivery and visits regularly. The couple begins to find that he is too present and he finds he is not present enough. He takes them to court.

In this case the legal link between the lesbian parents and their child have been established, but the donor/biological dad is showing a strong interest in being a part of the child's life. It looks like the judge in the Montreal case will probably see it as being in the child's interest to know her father.

This case will scare a lot of lesbians who are thinking of using known donors but don't want donor involvement or merely want a "friendly uncle" figure. But on the bright side cases like these may also open doors to those who are thinking of, or who are already part of *intentional* multi-parent families. Who knows, the decisions may even have an impact for heterosexual stepparents who at this point have little legal recognition.

Two interesting cases to follow....

**Interested in writing for our newsletter? Send your articles at any time to [info@aml-lma.org](mailto:info@aml-lma.org) or by post to AML, 2401 Coursol, Montreal, Quebec, H3J 1C8**

## News Briefs – September to December 2004

### Montreal and Quebec News

**September 22, 2004** - A press conference was held in Montreal by CRARR (*Centre for Research and Action on Race Relations*) on the subject of homophobic lyrics in dance-hall reggae. CRARR tried to get a *Sizzla* concert cancelled in Montreal last August, by pointing out that *Sizzla's* anti-gay songs incite listeners to burn and shoot gays and lesbians, which violates the criminal code provisions that prohibit hate propaganda based on sexual orientation. Their attempts were unsuccessful because *Sizzla* has no criminal record in Canada.

Michael Stephens, a private citizen living in Montreal, is trying to press criminal charges against *Sizzla* under the hate crimes provisions but so far both police and the courts have ignored him.

*Egale-Canada* will sponsor a community consultation process in the Black and Caribbean communities of Montreal. The consultation will seek to engage LGBT members of the community as well as non-LGBT Black and Caribbean community organizations in a discussion as to how best to address the problem of hate music and the more general issues of homophobia in Black and Caribbean communities. The consultation will also address the systemic racism in LGBT communities that makes dialogue between mainstream LGBT activists and Black and Caribbean communities challenging in the first place.

**October 7, 2004 (Montreal)** – The *1st World Outgames Montréal 2006* has signed two major sponsorship agreements. The first is with *H.I.M. (Hyperion Interactive Media)*, an Internet media company that services primarily the North American GLBT community. *H.I.M.* is the foremost GLBT Internet network in North America. The *H.I.M.* web network receives over 1.2 million visitors per month.

The *Outgames* have also signed on Brazil's leading GLBT web site, *Mix Brasil* as an associate sponsor. The sponsorship is valued at \$250,000 USD. The agreement with *Mix Brasil* represents a huge step forward in penetrating the rapidly growing Brazilian market. *Mix Brasil* (<http://mixbrasil.uol.com.br>) is a Portuguese-language Internet portal that offers the GLBT community in Brazil information on and links to a vast range of subjects and sites. It receives 1.4 million visitors per month and will also act as a representative for *Montréal 2006* in the region by disseminating information on the *1st World Outgames* until 2006. In collaboration with *Mix Brasil*, *Montréal 2006* plans to work closely with existing Brazilian sports teams as well as those currently in development, of which over thirty have already been identified. The Brazilian web site will also be the flagship site for promoting, in Latin America, the International Conference on GLBT Rights. The Conference will be held two days before the opening of the *Outgames* in July 2006.

**October 28 2004 (Montreal)** *La Presse* – For the first time in Quebec history a midwife assisted the delivery of a child in a Quebec hospital. The healthy baby girl, named Alicia, was born at LaSalle hospital weighing 7.6 pounds. It's a third child for the mother, Céline Riley, from Laval.

The delivery, which went smoothly, was preceded by a long labor period. The midwife from the CLSC Lac-Saint-Louis de Pointe-Claire, Marie-Paule Lanthier, accompanied the mother from the beginning of the process at home until the baby was born at the hospital.

“ It was different adapting myself to the new work environment of the hospital, but in the end it went very well. Two midwives in training, assisted me and we never needed help from the nurses or doctors of the hospital,” explained Mme Lanthier. This midwife-assisted hospital birth was made possible due to a protocol signed last February between LaSalle Hospital, the *Collège des médecins* and a number of other practitioners and associations from the world of medicine and obstetrics. It took two years of negotiations to make it to this point.

## Canadian News

**August 11, 2004 (Fredericton, New Brunswick)** A person in a same-sex relationship can adopt their partner's child and be legally named as one of its parents, a New Brunswick human rights board has ruled. The decision follows a complaint by a same-sex partner who claimed that the provincial government discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation and marital status when it refused to allow her to adopt her partner's child and register the child with her surname.

The 29-page decision, ruled the province violated the *Human Rights Act* in the delivery of birth registration and adoption services and awarded compensation of \$13,500.

"It gives a great deal more security and protection to children who would otherwise have only one legal parent," said Alanna Palmer, head of the *Human Rights Commission*. "Until now, gays and lesbians in the province could adopt individually but not as a couple," said Palmer.

**August 31, 2004 (Ottawa)** Two of Canada's most gay positive judges were formally appointed to the Supreme Court, weeks before the high court is to hear arguments over the government's proposed legislation on same-sex marriage. The appointments of Louise Charron and Rosalie Abella were the first to go through parliamentary committee hearings. Appointing justices to the Supreme Court is the sole prerogative of the Prime Minister but under a new system introduced by Paul Martin hearings were held on the appointments.

Abella, 58, born in a displaced persons camp in Germany, graduated from University of Toronto law school in 1970. She practiced civil and criminal litigation before being appointed to Ontario Family Court in 1976, then to the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1992. She wrote a landmark 1998 ruling allowing gays and lesbians to receive survivor benefits from pension plans. The decision was hailed at the time as the first judgment recognizing same-sex partners as spouses.

Charron, 53, earned her law degree at the University of Ottawa in 1975. She was assistant Crown attorney for the Judicial District of Ottawa-Carleton from 1980 to 1985, was appointed to the District Court of Ontario in 1988 and named to the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1995. She wrote the majority judgment in 1996 that struck down a law barring gays and lesbians from suing their former partners for support. That ruling was later upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada, forcing provinces to rewrite family law to include same-sex rights.

**October 5, 2004** - *Seven Oaks Magazine* - Amnesty International has released a damning report, exposing the rampant indifference to violence against women in Canada. Clearly the world's most well known human rights watchdog found the case of women, and the flagrant neglect of the safety of Native women in particular, too galling to ignore. The results deserve serious attention, as they point to the ongoing impact of colonialism and racism in "the best place on Earth," as the B.C. Liberals' nauseating ad campaign likes to describe the province.

Of course, it is right in B.C. that one of the worst cases of serial killings in North American history took place and was ignored for years, because the victims were poor Native women. So the Amnesty report may prove shocking to many Canadians, who naïvely believe that our country is devoid of these types of human rights atrocities, especially in terms of violence against women -- over and above the culturally acceptable level of domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, and economic exploitation that is currently tolerated.

The report is entitled "Stolen Sisters - Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada." The document details how First Nations women experience a horrific level of violence on an everyday level, and how state institutions have a disinterest or indifference towards the safety of Indigenous women.

## GAY MARRIAGE- A TIME LINE

(Skip over this section if you've had enough on marriage)

Please note: In the United States the marriage debate has gone completely out of control!!! There are initiatives for and against marriage in almost every state. Because of this it would be impossible to cover it all in the context of a newsletter. An excellent coverage of the news in the States, however, is available on the web site of the Human Rights campaign in their marriage center: [www.hrc.org/marriage/](http://www.hrc.org/marriage/)

A well-organized table of the state-by-state progress can be found if you click on "States with Anti-Gay marriage laws" within this site.

We will still continue to cover general American stories related to the debate.

**August 9** Three same-sex couples file an application in the **Nova Scotia** Supreme Court seeking to have same-sex marriage recognized in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP), a political action group working toward equality for all Nova Scotians supports the case.

**August 12** The **California** Supreme Court rules that San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom exceeded his authority when he allowed same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses earlier this year. The court, in a 5 - 2 decision, declares that the more than 4,000 marriages of gays and lesbians that resulted are void.

**August 13 Australia's** Senate votes in favour of outlawing same-sex marriage, in a victory for the country's Prime Minister John Howard.

**August 17 (Ottawa)** Following an embarrassing court ruling in the Yukon, the Canadian government decides not to oppose same-sex marriage in any future court cases. Justice Minister Irwin Cotler tells the Canadian Bar Association that Ottawa will no longer resist attempts by same-sex couples who go to court in those areas where gay marriage is not yet legal.

**September 4 (Vatican City)** Pope John Paul II keeps up his campaign against gay marriage, telling the ambassador from Canada that such unions create a "false understanding" of marriage. Canadian officials respond with a gentle reminder that Parliament has the authority over the matter.

**September 8** At least two same-sex couples prepare to go to the European Court to have gay marriage declared legal throughout the **European Union**. One case is being planned by a French couple, the other an Austrian couple. Both France and Austria provide some limited rights to gay and lesbian couples, but have refused to pass legislation legalizing same-sex marriage.

**September 12** Uzi Even, the first openly gay man elected to the Knesset, marries his longtime partner in Toronto. Even, who served one term in the Knesset, **Israel's** parliament, in 2002, weds Amit Kama in a brief ceremony at Toronto City Hall.

**September 13 (Toronto)** Ontario, the first area in North America to grant same-sex marriage becomes the first to grant gay divorce. The Superior Court case involved a lesbian couple who married on June 18, 2003, a week after the Ontario Court of Appeal legalized same-sex marriage. They had been together for five years but the marriage did not work and they separated just five days after their wedding.

**September 16** Mr. Justice Douglas D. Yard of the **Manitoba** Court of Queen's Bench orders that the definition of marriage in Manitoba include same-sex couples. Both the province of Manitoba and the federal government had agreed to an expedited hearing.

One of the plaintiff couples, **Chris Vogel and Rich North**, were the first couple in Canada to bring a legal challenge to the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage. They tied the knot on February 11, 1974 in the Unitarian Church. Later that year, a Manitoba court declared their marriage invalid.

**September 21 (Ottawa)** The government of Quebec files an intervener brief with the Supreme Court of Canada over the federal government's proposed legislation to legalize same-sex marriage across the country. Only two provinces, Quebec and Alberta have sought status at the court.

Alberta objects to the legislation because it opposes LGBT rights in general. For Quebec, the argument has less to do with gays than the province's ongoing power struggle with Ottawa.

**September 23** - Justice Heather Robertson of the Supreme Court of **Nova Scotia** orders that the definition of marriage in Nova Scotia include same-sex couples. Neither the province of Nova Scotia nor the federal government opposes the order. With Nova Scotia, 82% of Canadians now live in jurisdictions with equal marriage.

**September 30 (Washington)** The US House of Representatives fails to get enough votes to pass a proposed amendment to the Constitution to bar same-sex marriage. 227 members vote for the amendment, while 186 vote against it, falling short of the two-thirds needed for passage.

**October 1 - Spain's** leaders introduce legislation that would give the country's same-sex couples the same rights to marry and adopt children as heterosexual couples.

**October 6** - The Supreme Court of **Canada** begins historic hearings on same-sex marriage, the final lap in what one supporter called "a very long marathon". The court is to hear 28 briefs on both sides of the issue over three days.

The pro side includes the Attorney General of Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, various gay rights groups, the United Church of Canada and a coalition of liberal rabbis. Opponents include the Attorney General of Alberta, REAL women and the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops.

The government wants the court to decide if the draft bill is within Parliament's authority, whether it is consistent with the Charter of Rights, whether the charter protects unwilling clergy from having to perform same-sex marriages and if the present law on opposite-sex marriages is consistent with the charter.

**October 8 (Ottawa)** Supreme Court hearings wrap up. The Justice Minister confirms that the legislation will be introduced in Parliament without delay following release of the Supreme Court's opinion. Justices are expected to rule later in the year, if not next year.

**October 13 - New York** State's retirement program, the second largest in America, will treat Canadian marriages of same-sex couples the same as other marriages for retirement benefits. It is the first time that married gay and lesbian couples in New York have been recognized by a state agency.

**October 18 (Washington)** Gay marriage emerges as a big enough issue in several states to influence races both for Congress and the presidency. Ballot initiatives on banning same-sex marriages are expected to propel social conservatives to the polls in 11 states, including four presidential battlegrounds: Arkansas, Ohio, Michigan and Oregon.

President Bush, in the final presidential debate, reiterates his support for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, saying he is concerned that, otherwise, "activist judges" would rewrite the definition of marriage.

Kerry says he supports the right of gays and lesbians to form civil unions. He opposes same-sex marriage, but also is against a constitutional amendment that would ban it. States should determine marriage laws, he says.

**October 26** - In a televised interview, **American** President Bush says the Republican Party is wrong to oppose civil unions for gay and lesbian couples, but sticks to his opposition of same-sex marriage.

**November 3 (Washington)** In a major setback in the eleven **American** states where it was on the ballot, constitutional amendments barring legal recognition of same sex marriage are overwhelmingly approved. The proposed amendments pass easily in Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Ohio and Utah. Only in Oregon is there a contest, but in the end, the measure wins there too. The amendments in three states, Oregon, Mississippi and Montana only bar same-sex marriage. In the eight other states, the amendments are broader and bar *any* legal recognition of same-sex relationships, period. This calls into question civil unions, domestic partner benefits, and potentially other legal bonds between same-sex couples. The Ohio amendment is considered the most draconian preventing any benefits to be granted to same-sex partners. That could prevent companies from giving benefits to the same-sex partners of their gay and lesbian employees.

**November 3** - As the **American** presidential election aftermath settles, many pundits point to gay marriage as a reason why President George W. Bush has won a second term in office. The issue has electrified the party's conservative base, with political action groups mounting large campaigns to urge followers to call their congressmen and demand they vote for the ban.

**November 4** - Conservative group REAL women of **Canada** calls for a national referendum on same-sex marriage.

**November 5**- Two gay couples file a lawsuit against the **Newfoundland** and federal governments, making the province the latest battleground for same-sex marriage in Canada.

**November 5** - Madam Justice Donna Wilson of the Family Law Division, of the **Saskatchewan** Court of Queen's Bench orders that the definition of marriage in Saskatchewan include same-sex couples. The order is not opposed by either the province of Saskatchewan or the federal government.

**November 9** - Two lesbians who married in Canada are given the chance to challenge the **Irish** government over its stance on same-sex marriage.

## International News

**September 3, 2004** - *365Gay.com* (**New Delhi**) A motion to have India's laws against gay sex declared invalid has been dismissed by the Supreme Court in New Delhi. The laws dating back to the time of English colonial rule describe homosexual acts as "unnatural criminal behavior". Anyone convicted under the law is subject to prison.

The legal challenge was brought by several LGBT civil rights in India, but the court said that the law could only be challenged by someone charged under it. The petitioners said that police use the law to harass gays. Lawyers for the government argued that homosexuality cannot be legalized in India because society strongly disapproves of it.

**September 22 2004** - *Le Monde* – (**France**) Two women have received a legal judgment giving them joint parental authority over their three daughters that were born as a result of artificial insemination, which is not accessible to single women in France. This judicial breach has not yet made jurisprudence but gives hope to

thousands of same-sex parents. Since July 2nd, Carla, Marie-Laure and their children, aged 5, 7 and 10 years old, form the first officially recognized family with same-sex parents.

The decision of the *tribunal de grande instance* (TGI) of Paris, puts an end to a four year legal battle and allows for a legal link between both parents and their children as well as the exercise of a common parental authority, "just like a natural or married couple," said Caroline Mécary, their lawyer.

The case of Carla and Marie-Laure "opens a breach" in the jurisprudence without being really "revolutionary", explained Daniel Borrillo, jurist at the *Université de Paris-X-Nanterre*. According to him, the decision does not constitute a real recognition of a lesbian-headed family. "The delegation of parental authority gives certain rights like access, the housing of the child, the ability to represent him at school or in a hospital, but does not mean a true filiation", stated Borrillo. "Because of this, families with same-sex parents will still be at the mercy of a patchwork of legal decisions."

**October 4, 2004** *365Gay.com* (**Kampala**) Uganda's broadcast regulatory body has fined a radio station more than \$30, 000 US and ordered it to air a public apology over an interview with gays seeking civil rights in the African country. *Radio Simba* aired the interview during a program on minority rights.

The Ugandan Broadcasting Council accused the station of defying the country's *Electronic Media Act*, which prohibits any broadcasting that is contrary to public morality. It also said that *Radio Simba* contravened Uganda's *Penal Code Act*, which stipulates that homosexuality is illegal in the country.

**October 5, 2004** - *365Gay.com* - (**Sierra Leone**) FannyAnn Eddy, the founder of the *Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Association* and a lesbian rights activist known across Africa has been brutally murdered in the Association's office in the capital city of Freetown. Eddy, 30, was working alone in the office at the time. It is believed that her assailant or assailants broke into the premises. She was raped repeatedly, stabbed and her neck was broken.

Eddy founded the *Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Association* in 2002. While LGBT citizens of Sierra Leone live closeted lives in constant fear, Eddy was a visible and courageous figure, lobbying government ministers to address the health and human rights needs of men who have sex with men and women who have sex with women.

In April, she was part of a delegation of sexual-rights activists whom *Human Rights Watch* and the *International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC)* helped attend the annual session of the *United Nations Commission on Human Rights* in Geneva

Eddy leaves a 10-year-old son.

**October 8, 2004** – **American** House Republican negotiators rejected a Senate-approved proposal to expand federal hate crimes laws to include crimes that specifically target gay men and lesbians.

**Story:** <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2004/10/08/1>

**October 13, 2004** - Margaret Sloan-Hunter, an early editor at *Ms.Magazine*, a poet and an activist fighting for feminist, lesbian and African-American causes died Sept. 23.

**Story:** <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2004/10/13/3>

**October 19, 2004** - *PlanetOut* - In what is being described as the first publicity offensive of its kind in the Arab world, a gay rights group in **Lebanon** is trying to overturn the country's ban on homosexuality. The group, *Hurriyyat Khassa* or *Private Liberties*, wants to end Article 534 of Lebanon's penal code, which punishes those guilty of "sexual intercourse against nature" with a one-year jail sentence.

*Hurriyyat Khassa* started its campaign with a screening at the American University in Beirut of the movie 'Victim'. "We chose 'Victim' because this 1961 movie helped change the law in Britain (on homosexuality)," said a member of *Hurriyyat Khassa*. The film tells the story of a married lawyer who is being blackmailed after having an affair with another man. The movie ends with the attorney and his wife coming to terms with his homosexuality, and an indictment on England's sodomy law, which the film portrays as nothing but a device for blackmail.

According to *Helem*, another group lobbying for LGBT rights in Lebanon, what was true in Britain in the '60s is true in Lebanon today. But *Helem* noted the problems in Lebanon are minor compared to other countries in the Arab world.

**October 29, 2004 Associated Press (Berlin)** German lawmakers have expanded the rights of same-sex couples, allowing registered domestic partners to adopt each other's children and making rules on splitting up and alimony similar to those for heterosexual marriages.

The new law stops short of giving gays, who are legally recognized as couples under Germany's domestic partnership law, full rights to adopt children. But if one partner has children or brings them into the partnership, the other partner can now legally adopt them if neither biological parent objects.

Laws on separation, divorce, alimony and division of assets also are being extended to gay couples.

Many in Germany's main opposition Christian Democratic bloc remain bitterly opposed to granting gay couples the same rights as married heterosexuals. The opposition's main reason for voting against the changes was a fear that they opened the door to giving gay couples full adoption rights.

**October 31, 2004 The Associated Press (Rome)** Italian conservative and papal confidant Rocco Buttiglione, under attack for calling homosexuality sinful, said he was abandoning efforts to become European Union justice commissioner, a bid that has prevented the new EU executive from taking office.

Premier Silvio Berlusconi said that Buttiglione would remain as European affairs minister in his conservative government.

During a confirmation hearing earlier in the month, Buttiglione told the justice and home affairs committee that he considered homosexuality "a sin" and that marriage existed "to allow women to have children and to have the protection of a male."

**November 2, 2004 365Gay.com (Hamilton, Bermuda)** The Bermuda government has announced legislation to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. Community Affairs Minister Dale Butler said the bill will be presented to the House of Assembly during its summer term.

"The changes will take us out of the dark ages and create an awareness about living openly rather than hiding these things in the closet," said Butler.

The announcement came as a surprise to *Bermuda Rainbow Alliance* the gay rights organization on the island. "Just being included in that way under the human rights act adds value to people's lives as well as having the power to change how gay people in this community live," said Nicky Bowers a spokesperson for the Alliance.

## Miscellaneous and Research News

**August 4, 2004** – *Human Rights Campaign* - **WASHINGTON** - The Human Rights Campaign Foundation *FamilyNet Project* has added a major new religion section to its array of online resources at [www.hrc.org/religion](http://www.hrc.org/religion). The section provides overviews of organizational positions toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, quotes and profiles of supportive clergy, a discussion of the Bible and homosexuality, and highlights of polling on the topic.

**August 9, 2004** - Despite a ban on gay sex, 6,000 people showed up for a three-day gay and lesbian festival in **Singapore**, making it Asia's largest gay event.

**Story:** <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2004/08/09/6>

**August 23, 2004** - Amelie Mauresmo, an openly gay athlete from **France**, won a silver medal in the women's singles tennis tournament at the Olympics, and two gay U.S. horsemen won bronze.

**Story:** <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2004/08/23/1>

**September 28, 2004**- *Human Rights Campaign* - **WASHINGTON** - The *Human Rights Campaign Foundation* unveiled its third annual report card on corporate America's treatment of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees, which includes 28 companies with first-ever perfect records and eight companies with the worst records. The number of companies that scored 100 percent doubled in one year to 56, the report found. HRC also unveiled a more powerful online database that displays more information about company policies and practices and allows users to search across all companies on a variety of criteria. The new database is available at [www.hrc.org/worknet](http://www.hrc.org/worknet).

**October 6, 2004** - *365Gay.com* (**Washington**) Gay African American families are doubly targeted for discrimination a new study shows. The study, using statistics from the *2000 Census*, show that nearly half of black same-sex couples have lived in the same residence for at least five years - a figure almost as high as for married black couples - and that a majority of those households included children. But, the survey also shows that gay and lesbian African American couples have lower median incomes than either white same-sex couples or black married opposite-sex couples.

The study was prepared by the *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute* and the *National Black Justice Coalition*.

"This report underscores the powerful negative impact of both racism and homophobia," said Matt Foreman, NGLTF executive director.

The survey found that black same-sex couples were raising children at nearly twice the rate of their white counterparts: 61 percent to 31 percent for females and 46 percent to 24 percent for males. But, while black male same-sex couples reported a median income of \$49,000 a year, and black lesbian couples earned \$42,000 a year, by comparison, African American married opposite-sex couples earned \$51,000 a year and white same-sex couples averaged \$69,000 a year. The report concluded that "removing discriminatory legislation and allowing black same-sex couples to access benefits available to married people will hurt no one, and will allow more Americans to better support and protect their families."

For more info: <http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/blackcensus/BCRNationalReport.pdf>

**October 8, 2004** *365Gay.com* (**Los Angeles, California**) Melissa Etheridge abruptly cancelled her concert tour after being diagnosed with breast cancer. In a media statement, the singer's publicist said that the 43-year-old singer will begin immediate treatment.

"A speedy and complete recovery" is expected by her doctor, publicist Marcel Pariseau said in a statement. The cancer was detected early and Etheridge has been receiving treatment, Pariseau said.

**October 20, 2004** - Alan Hollinghurst's *The Line of Beauty* has won the *Man Booker Prize*. It's the first time the award has been given to a novel dealing predominantly with gay issues.

**Story:** <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2004/10/20/2>

**October 26, 2004** - **France** launched its first gay TV channel, with programming as varied as "Wonder Woman" reruns to late-night gay porn.

**Story:** <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2004/10/26/5>

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

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

#### **DECEMBER:**

- ♦ **For adults and kids: Saturday December 4<sup>th</sup>, from 11 a.m.- 3 p.m.**  
**Holiday activity - 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Potluck Lunch**

We will be having our holiday party as usual at the **Unitarian Church which is located at 5035 de Maisonneuve O., corner Claremont- (metro Vendôme)**. If you're planning on attending please **contact us before December 1st** to let us know what you plan to bring. We suggest bringing enough for approximately 8 people. You can bring something in the categories of either **salad, main dish, dessert or beverage (e.g. juice or soft-drinks)**. Please do not to bring anything with peanuts onto the premises because of allergies. We are suggesting a donation of **\$5 per family (if possible)** in order to cover the expenses which include the rental of the space, the gate-keeper's salary, paper plates, napkins, etc as well as entertainment provided for the kids. Please call to let us know if you are planning on attending and what you would like to bring at **514-846-1543 before December 1st**.

#### **JANUARY 2005:**

- ♦ **For Future Parents: Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. Discussion Group and Snacks.**

**The Fertility Roller Coaster Revisited** – Get us up to date on where you are at in the process! Support and information regarding becoming pregnant. Hélène Zylberszac, family therapist will moderate this discussion on the psychological and emotional aspects of this stressful period.

**Place: CCGLM, located at 2075 rue Plessis (metro Papineau)**

#### **FEBRUARY 2005:**

- ♦ **For parents and future parents: Saturday, February 19th, 7.p.m. Valentine's Special- Keeping Romance Alive!**

**Sex and Parenting:** Psychotherapist Alison Carpenter will give a talk and lead a discussion about creating a space for pleasure in our lives. How to prioritize intimacy and awaken our bodies while dealing with the stress, fatigue and competing priorities of parenting.

**Place: 6642A Christophe Colomb (metro Beaubien)**

**BULLETIN BOARD:**

♦ **PFLAG** (formerly known as Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) will be holding regular meetings this fall in Montreal. These meetings are open to everyone, regardless of how you identify. The common thread is a desire for a better understanding of LGBTT2IQ issues in a safe and supportive environment.

Meetings will be held the last Tuesday of every month, starting September 28 at 7:30 p.m. at 5035 de Maisonneuve O. (corner Claremont - across from Vendôme metro). The format will vary - some months we'll have guest speakers while others will feature open discussions. Members will largely shape the format. So spread the word to your loved ones and join us!

Please call Rita at (514) 481-8065 or Jane at (514) 938-1583 for more info, or email [pflagmtl@gmail.com](mailto:pflagmtl@gmail.com). All communication will be kept strictly confidential.

♦ Mère et fille de 9 ans cherche mère et enfant du même âge (fille de préférence) pour faire des sorties, activités, etc. Écrire à: [milegault@arobas.net](mailto:milegault@arobas.net)

♦ **Toronto's LGBT parenting network - A Queer Parenting Info Brochure Series** is now available for download in text-only version or in full-colour pdf version. Brochure topics include: LGB Parenting for Family and Friends; Transsexual/Transgender Parenting: Basic Information for our Friends and Families; Co-parenting; Parenting Options for Gay Men; Choosing a Sperm Donor: Known or Unknown; Information for New Lesbian Parents in Ontario. Link to Brochure Series: [http://www.fsatoronto.com/programs/fsaprograms/davekelley/res\\_LGBTbrochures.html](http://www.fsatoronto.com/programs/fsaprograms/davekelley/res_LGBTbrochures.html)

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

♦ **Traductrices, redactrices, etc:** We are looking for volunteers to help translate this newsletter from English to French. Any contribution (even 1-2 pages a month) would be appreciated. If you are available and willing, **please contact us at:** [info@ami-lma.org](mailto:info@ami-lma.org)

♦ **Batshaw Youth and Family Centres** is encouraging English speaking and bilingual lesbian couples, and singles, to consider becoming **foster parents**. There are babies, pre-schoolers and older children who are waiting for a foster home. For some the plan will be to help them return to their families. For other children, the plan will be to work toward **adoption**. What a remarkable feeling it is to know you have made a difference in the life of a child by providing a stable, safe and loving environment. For more information, please call, **Rena Rubin, Foster Care Recruiter, at 932-7161, local 416, or send an e-mail to [rena\\_rubin@ssss.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:rena_rubin@ssss.gouv.qc.ca)**.

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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 [info@ami-lma.org](mailto:info@ami-lma.org) or by post to AML, 2401 Coursol, Montreal, Quebec, H3J 1C8. 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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