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NEWSLETTER - VOLUME VI - No. IV - June 2005

PRIDE 2005 PRIDE 2005 PRIDE 2005 PRIDE 2005

By Alicen Willis, LMA board member

My first experience of the queer community was at Pride 2001 in Boston, Massachusetts. We set off from Portsmouth, NH and had to park about a half mile away. As we walked closer to the site I saw masses of people flowing towards or coming from the direction we were headed. My eyes were drawn to their hands to see if they were clasped, to the multi-colored rainbows. If couples were holding hands I felt pride and strength to see other people like me. I watched them smile and celebrate who they were. If there was a group of friends I imagined their solidarity and connectedness.

Now, remember, this was when I first came out so I still had on the rose-colored glasses. But at that point in my process I felt nurtured by seeing and feeling that there were so many other people who loved like I did. They came in all shapes, sizes, genders and costume; the common denominator was that we were all joined in our Pride. As we drew closer I could hear music and a deep throbbing disco beat. I could hear the crowd screaming and laughing, there were banners waving, rainbows emblazoned on clothes and bodies. I felt like laughing, crying, dancing and my heart opened to see so many people celebrating the thing I had thought was to be kept out of sight and apologized for.

I truly felt like I was coming home as we walked up to the park for community day. I saw pass in front of me groups of elderly people, people of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups. I saw men, women, couples and families. All my life I believed the myth that if I was a lesbian then I couldn't have a family. I, an educated, mostly thoughtful, curious, questioning person had bought the myth without much consideration. But here before me were families of two dads and two moms and two dads and a mom and two moms and a dad...so many possibilities...I couldn't believe it, I tried to wrap my brain around it...tried to figure out how they did it...as I said I am mostly a smart person but my brain was having a hard time with this one.

I considered for the first time the possibility that simply because I was a lesbian it didn't mean that I couldn't create a family with a partner...maybe it was partly a function that I had not known many people who identified as lesbian. I had not previously considered the possibility.

What would have happened if I had not seen families represented? What different message would I have walked away with? Maybe I would have eventually come to the realization of what is possible anyway...but the strength and positive affirmation that I received from witnessing families show their pride could not have been duplicated in any other way.

As a future mom I am so grateful that I can live in a place where our family will have rights and protections that will not be possible for many years in the United States. In fact this is why we moved to Quebec and Canada, we also have that privilege because my partner is Quebecoise...but primarily because of the rights available. I teased my friends as we left the United States; I said that I was moving to the "Land of the Free". However, this is in fact a truth. I want my children to celebrate the family they are raised in and see and feel a sense of community and pride in who they and we are.

Usually at this time of the year, the Lesbian Mothers Association, of which I am a board member, begins to send out information regarding the pride parade. Well this year, for the first time in 7 years, we are not marching. The organizers of our Pride week, Divers-Cité, have switched the parade on us. It will now be taking place on Monday July 25th starting at 8 o'clock in the evening!!

Our initial reaction was wow! A night parade!!! Cool. Ever since the parade moved off St-Denis and onto René Levesque the whole ambiance of the event has changed. What used to be a warm and welcoming crowd now seems cold and business like. In terms of our own group the affect has been felt. Although our group keeps growing in numbers, the parade gets less and less popular with each year. Last year we were barely able to fill the choo-choo train that Divers-Cité rented for us. No one wants to attend and the excuses are many: It's too hot, it's boring, too long for the kids, parades are not our kind of thing, what if my boss sees me, the parade doesn't reflect who I am, what if I get filmed, we don't get to watch the parade when we're in it, etc.

The bottom line: It's been a while since anyone was in the mood for this parade.

When Mona, our coordinator, spoke to Divers-Cité, she told them that a night parade would not be feasible for the kids. Most of our kids are young. Most would be sleepy or cranky by 8 p.m. Divers-Cité responded with many reasons for changing the parade – all good. But the bottom line is that nighttime does not work for many in the association (unless we get babysitters and come without the kids).

On the other hand, community day has always been really well liked. It's a fantastic event for everyone. This year Divers-Cité has promised us a community *weekend*. It will take place on Saturday July 30th and Sunday July 31st. Once again we will have the giant trampoline, which the kids love. AND, for those kids who would miss being part of the parade, we will have our own choo-choo on both days to carry out mini-parades through the community day site. It seems like a happy compromise for everyone!

Come to Community Day to get involved! If you're not already convinced, it is a great time to visit the kiosks and get to know the community groups and projects that are going on in Montreal and across Quebec. At our own kiosk there will be face painting, arts and crafts, a bake sale, chair massage and gorgeous hand-painted t-shirts for sale. It is important for everyone to get involved to make Pride 2005 a successful event for our families and future families. Complacency and invisibility will not get politicians to listen to and uphold our rights. If we want our politicians to hear our voices, and more people to understand that our families are a cause for pride and celebration, we have to show up.

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

News Briefs – February- June 2005

Montreal and Quebec News

Montreal, April 11, 2005 - Drawing on this year's theme **Presumed Heterosexual**, *Fondation Émergence* has launched, its annual campaign to combat homophobia. On **Wednesday June 1, 2005**, this campaign will culminate in the third edition of the *National Day Against Homophobia*, an event whose designated slogan is "A Family Reality."

This special day, which has been sanctioned by the Quebec National Assembly as an annual event, was first celebrated on June 4th, 2003. The Family has been chosen as the theme for the 2005 Edition of the *National Day Against Homophobia* campaign. Its goal is to draw attention to homophobia within the family environment and to the realities of sexual orientation issues within families. When a child enters the world, society presumes that he or she will grow up to be heterosexual. However, this will not be the case for one person out of ten.

Laurent McCutcheon, President of *Fondation Émergence*, explains "the purpose of choosing the family for the campaign theme is to highlight gay and lesbian realities within the family and to make parents aware of the need to show unconditional love towards their children." If the family is the primary setting for a child's socialization, then it will, all too often, also be the first place in which a child will have to deal with displays of homophobia. Mr. McCutcheon also points out that "A family that has accepted gay and lesbian realities can only come out on top, whether it's for the sake of gay and lesbian parents, the parents of gay and lesbian children, families with same-sex parents and, first and foremost, children. All family members will feel they've grown."

For more information on the day's events you can consult: www.homophobie.org

Canadian News

February 20 - *365 Gay.com/ Hour Magazine* (Vancouver) A gay bookstore has lost its bid for legal costs in the latest round of a two-decade fight involving Canada Customs' seizure of books it classified as obscene.

With the support of such celebrated authors as Jane Rule, Nino Ricci and Pierre Berton, Vancouver's *Little Sisters Bookstore* has spent \$750,000 over 20 years fighting seizures by Canada Customs. The B.C. Court of Appeal reversed a July 2004 ruling that would have given *Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium* an unspecified sum to take Customs to the Supreme Court of Canada. Now *Little Sisters* lawyer Joe Arvay says a seven-week trial would cost his clients \$1.1-million.

"No one is watching over Canada Customs in the decisions they make," says *Little Sisters* co-owner Jim Deva. "And if indeed we are not watching then there is no one watching."

March 24 - *365 Gay.com* (Ottawa) Prime Minister Paul Martin appointed Nancy Ruth to the Senate. She becomes the second out-of-the closet member of the Senate. The other is Liberal Laurier LaPierre. She was among nine new Senators named to the Upper Chamber.

Senators in Canada are appointed by the Prime Minister in power and serve until they are 75. The Senate, known as 'the chamber of sober second thought' has little power but can send non-monetary bills back to the Commons with suggested revisions.

Ruth, 63, is a longtime supporter of Egale, Canada's national LGBT civil rights organization and has won a series of prestigious awards, both on the national and international scene.

April 8 - *365Gay.com/ Egale news* (Vancouver) British Columbia's highest court has overturned a lower court ruling that said a student could not sue a school board for homophobic bullying and harassment because he is heterosexual.

The B.C. Supreme Court said that Azmi Jubran had been the victim of anti-gay bullying for five years and that Handsworth secondary school in North Vancouver failed to stop the homophobic taunts of other students. It also reinstated a \$4,500 award set by a human rights tribunal and later quashed by a lower court.

The lower court had dismissed Jubran's allegations that he had been subjected to harassment on the basis of sexuality despite testimony he was routinely called "faggot," "homo" and "gay" while attending Handsworth Secondary from 1993 to 1998.

He had a variety of objects thrown at him and was kicked and spat upon. Students threatened to drop him in acid and to rape him with a broom. During a school camping trip his tent was urinated on.

In its decision the lower court said that because Jubran was not gay he could not claim he had been harmed by homophobia. The ruling outraged LGBT activists.

In overturning the decision the provincial Supreme Court said the lower court had erred and there was no question that Jubran was discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation. In its decision, the court confirmed that it's not good enough for school boards to wait for bullying to occur and then discipline the bullies afterward. The ruling was also a warning to school boards throughout the country that they are liable for the conduct of their students.

The Court noted that the North Vancouver School Board's Code of Conduct policy had failed to specifically prohibit discrimination based upon a student's real or perceived sexual orientation.

"The North Vancouver School Board failed miserably in not providing age-appropriate anti-homophobia education to all students. Sadly, in most school districts, far too many students are the targets of homophobic slurs like those hurled at Azmi Jubran. Homophobic school cultures change through education, not solely via reactive and punitive measures," stated James Chamberlain, teacher and Egale Education Committee Co-chair.

In summary, the school board was held liable for costs because it failed to intervene and actively work to prevent homophobic harassment. The court judgment sends a message across Canada that if school boards do not make sufficient attempts to provide preventative anti-homophobia education for students, teachers, and support staff, they could face costly lawsuits.

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/

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.

February 16 (Ottawa) The debate on Bill C-38, the Civil Marriage Act, which proposes to legalize same-sex marriage across Canada, is launched in the House of Commons. Bill C-38 essentially says only two things: that civil marriage “is the lawful union of two persons” (regardless of gender) and that “officials of religious groups are free to refuse to perform marriages that are not in accordance with their religious beliefs.”

Prime Minister Paul Martin underlines that the bill is all about the Charter. “If the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is not there today to protect the rights of one minority, then how can we, as a nation of minorities, ever hope, ever believe, ever trust that it will be there to protect us tomorrow?”

Conservative leader Stephen Harper falsely suggests that churches, mosques and synagogues face the future threat of being “forced to solemnize same-sex marriages.” He also tries to dump blame on the Liberal party for Canada’s shameful past behaviour with respect to Jews seeking refuge from Hitler and the internment of Japanese Canadians in camps on Canada’s West Coast.

Nearly 200 MPs register to speak on the bill, so debate will continue for some time. Once debate is completed, a second-reading vote will be held. This is the vote that approves the bill in principle. If it passes, it goes to a legislative committee of 13 members.

February 20 (United States) Millions of viewers tune into the broadcast of *The Simpsons* “same-sex wedding” episode. The *Simpsons* spoof same-sex marriage opponents but also, serve up a satirical view of gays and lesbians.

February 22 (Washington) Well-organized U.S. lobby groups like the Moral Majority Coalition, Focus on the Family and the Christian Coalition push their social agenda harder than ever in order to help defeat the Canadian same-sex marriage bill. Focus on the Family's B.C. chapter is backed by a massive organization based in Colorado led by James Dobson, who broadcasts his opposition to gay marriage on 130 Canadian radio stations.

February 22 (Vatican City) Pope John Paul, in a new book, "Memory and Identity," calls same-sex marriage part of "a new ideology of evil" that is threatening society. He also writes that lawmakers must resist the "pressures" put on them to legalize same-sex unions.

February 25 (Toronto) Ontario's Liberal government passes a bill changing the definition of marriage to accommodate same-sex marriage. Quebec and British Columbia already have similar legislation.

February 27 (New Delhi) Three lesbian couples make headlines by publicly declaring their relationships and calling themselves married. Indian law is silent on gay marriages, and same-sex couples are taking advantage of this loophole to perform marriage ceremonies and live together. However, they are vulnerable to arrest because homosexual sex is a crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

February 28 (Ottawa) A newly released document obtained by *The Canadian Press* under the *Access to Information Act*, shows that the Canadian government had ordered urgent research on polygamy in January 2005, partly to allay concerns about any potential adverse impact of federal same-sex legislation.

March 6 (Ottawa) The Liberal Party of Canada overwhelmingly endorses same-sex marriage at its national convention in keeping with the minority Liberal government's bid to legalize gay weddings.

March 11 (Israel) Four gay Israeli couples take their wedding vows in Canada, saying they hope to break down marriage barriers in their orthodox nation.

March 14 – The **Quebec** statistics bureau releases the number of same-sex marriages that have occurred in Quebec since last year's positive legal judgment. 147 male couples and 101 female couples have tied the knot since April 1st 2004. Court judgments in seven provinces and the Yukon have already allowed more than 3,000 gay couples to wed across Canada.

March 14 - San Francisco Superior Court Judge Richard Kramer rules that California's ban on same-sex marriage, as well as its five-year-old Defense of Marriage Act, are unconstitutional. The eagerly awaited opinion is likely to be appealed to the state's highest court.

March 16 (Washington) In the wake of the California court ruling that declared that state's ban on same-sex marriage unconstitutional, President Bush renews his call for an amendment to the US constitution to prevent gays from marrying. At a White House news conference the president says that only with an amendment could judges be blocked from allowing gay marriage.

March 17 (Montreal) Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) members gather to kick off their first policy convention since the merging of the Progressive Conservative and the Canadian Alliance parties. One of the policy resolutions up for debate reads: "A Conservative government will support legislation defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman."

Although a majority of the CPC Caucus will vote against the bill, a few Members of Parliament (MPs) have resolutely declared themselves in favour. These progressive MPs include leading luminaries such as former leadership contenders Belinda Stronach and Jim Prentice. Most speakers however denounce gays and same-sex marriage and the party adopts a "pro family" platform.

March 18 - According to press reports, police in **Saudi Arabia** have arrested a group of presumably gay men, claiming they were celebrating a gay wedding in the city of Jeddah.

March 21 (Washington) LGBT advocates have denounced a new constitutional amendment that would deny same-sex couples marriage rights, and possibly civil unions and domestic partnership rights.

March 24 (New York City) As millions of married couples are signing and sending off their tax returns prior to the April 15 tax day deadline, a new study shows that same-sex couples face widespread economic disparities and hardships because they are denied equal marriage rights.

The study, prepared by a New York City law firm, titled *Economic Benefits of Marriage under Federal and Connecticut Law* is the first comprehensive analysis of the disparities same-sex couples in Connecticut face in federal and state income tax, Social Security benefits, gift tax, estate tax, worker's compensation, and line of duty death benefits.

March 30 (Tegucigalpa) Honduran lawmakers unanimously approve a constitutional amendment prohibiting gay marriage and adoptions by same-sex couples. The vote by Honduras' National Assembly comes just months after the government formally recognized several gay civil rights groups - a move that outraged church leaders in this overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country.

April 4 - Gay and lesbian couples who marry in the **Netherlands**, where same-sex marriage is legal, divorce at the same rate as married heterosexual couples, say statistics.

April 8 (New York City) To deflect anger over his appeal of a gay marriage ruling, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has ordered the city to recognize gay marriages from other states and countries.

April 9 (Ottawa) Equal-marriage opponents stage a massive Parliament Hill rally to try to intimidate Parliamentarians as the bill moves closer to a vote. Some 15,000 evangelical Christians, Catholics and Muslims rally on Parliament Hill. Many of the demonstrators carry placards bearing the image of the late Pope John Paul, while others tote signs with slogans including 'Defend Marriage' and 'God Defined Marriage, The Government Defies God'. Nearby, a smaller counter demonstration rallies supporters of same-sex marriage.

Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper tells the crowd that his party will use the second reading of the bill on April 12th to introduce a series of motions that would proclaim marriage to be "the union of one man and one woman."

He also vows that if his party is elected to govern he would abolish the same-sex marriage law. Canada's ruling Liberals lead a minority government, which could fall at any time. The sponsorship scandal involving payoffs and kickbacks worth millions of dollars to the Liberal party has engrossed the country. As more details emerge the shaky position of the government becomes more precarious.

April 11 (Ottawa) Two Constitutional law experts hold a news conference to weigh in on the possibility of Stephen Harper's obstructing the same sex marriage bill. They argue that the only way Harper's approach would work is if he uses the Constitution's "notwithstanding" clause.

The clause allows a government to opt out of sections of the Constitution with which it disagrees and must be renewed every five years. Although it has been used by some provincial governments on various issues the federal government has never invoked it.

The constitutional experts declare that Harper is being "deceitful and disingenuous " when he claims Parliament can keep same-sex couples from marrying through other means.

April 12 (Ottawa) The Canadian Liberal government's same-sex marriage bill survives a move by the opposition Conservatives to derail the measure. Conservative leader Stephen Harper proposes amending the bill to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman but allow for civil unions. All but four members of his party support the move. It is also supported by a large number of Liberals - opposed to their own government's legislation. Almost all of the members of the two smaller parties - the New Democrats and the Bloc Quebecois - voted against the amendment.

The final vote is 164 -132 to defeat the Tory motion.

April 18 (Ottawa) Statistics Canada revamps its questionnaire for the 2006 census to include same-sex marriages, reflecting the country's controversial legal shift in recognizing gay and lesbian weddings. The agency adds "same-sex married spouse" to the list of suggested answers to a question about relationships on the new census form, which was approved by cabinet last month.

April 18 (Dublin) The Irish government announces it will fight a suit brought by a lesbian couple married in Canada who want to have their marriage recognized. Ann Louise Gilligan and Katherine Zappone were married in British Columbia in September 2003 within months of the legalization of same-sex marriage there. The couple is demanding that Ireland's tax collection agency, the Revenue Commissioners, allow them to file as a married couple rather than as two single people, which involves paying more tax. The case is expected to be heard by the court later this year.

April 20 - The first gay marriage in **France** is ruled illegal by a Bordeaux appeals court, although the couple vows to take their fight to the European courts.

April 21 (Madrid) The lower house of the Spanish Parliament approves a gay marriage bill, a major step toward making the country the third one in Europe to legalize same-sex marriage.

April 22 (Vatican City) Less than a week after becoming Pope Benedict XVI firmly denounces legislation in Spain to allow same-sex couples to marry.

April 23 (Ottawa) In a desperate bid to save his minority government Prime Minister Paul Martin apologizes to Canadians for a scandal that has riveted the country with new revelations of graft and corruption almost daily.

A motion of non-confidence in the government is filed April 22nd. The first possible date it could come to a vote in the Commons is May 18th. The motion is an amendment to a routine finance committee paper. If it passes, the government will fall. If that occurs the same-sex marriage legislation will die, and Canadians will go to the polls - likely in mid to late June.

A final vote in the Commons for bill C-38 may be moved up ahead of the confidence motion but the measure still needs the approval of the Senate which, under ideal conditions, could be done in about a week after the Commons acts. But, most observers believe it would be impossible to get the legislation through in time.

April 25 - Four same-sex couples file suit in **New Brunswick** mirroring cases in seven other provinces and one territory that resulted in the federal definition of marriage being declared unconstitutional.

April 26 - The tribal council of the **Navajo Nation** outlaws same-sex marriages in a unanimous vote. The Dine Marriage Act also prevents plural marriages and marriages between close relatives.

May 17 (Ottawa) Canada's same-sex marriage bill comes a little closer to reality with the surprise defection of Conservative MP Belinda Stronach to the beleaguered Liberals.

May 19 (Ottawa) In a vote that has gays and lesbians along with members of Parliament on the edges of their chairs, the government of Liberal leader Paul Martin survives a confidence vote. The vote, on a budget bill, is won when the Speaker casts a tie breaking vote. Many believe that Stronach's defection saved the government of Prime Minister Paul Martin from defeat and will allow time to pass the marriage bill.

International News

March 2 – *365 Gay.com* - A controversial lesbian couple has been chosen to lead the weekend's **Sydney** Mardi Gras, considered one of the world's biggest celebrations of LGBT people. Vicki Harding and her partner, Jackie Braw, will open the parade and lead it in an open-top car. The couple caused controversy in Australia after appearing earlier this year in an episode of the popular children's program "Play School" with their daughter, Brenna.

Conservatives and religious campaigners claimed that the inclusion of a same-sex couple in a preschool program was "inappropriate." Communications Minister Daryl Williams denounced the episode. "The government understands that parents would expect a program like 'Play School' to deal with issues which are appropriate for the age of its audience," he said.

Creators of the show dismissed the complaints, maintaining that it was important for children to be aware of cultural diversity, while the couple involved said the uproar was ridiculous.

The controversy in Australia resembles a similar uproar in the United States earlier this year, when conservatives objected to the inclusion of two lesbian couples and their children in an episode of "Postcards from Buster" on PBS.

Harding and Braw are also the authors of two children's books, "The Rainbow Cubby House" and "Koalas on Parade," which deal with gay families.

March 4 – *PlanetOut News* - **Hungary** could have a civil partnership system for lesbian and gay couples in place by 2007, according to press reports.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2005/03/04/5>

March 15 – *PlanetOut News* - **Sweden** plans to change its fertilization treatment laws in a bid to legalize treatment for lesbian couples. If passed, the new bill will come into effect later this year.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2005/03/15/4>

March 31 - *365Gay.com* (**Jerusalem**) Jewish, Christian and Islamic religious groups are working together to demand that the Israeli government step in and block World Pride celebrations from being held in Jerusalem this summer. At a Jerusalem news conference leaders from the three faiths denounced gays and the Pride event.

"They are creating a deep and terrible sorrow that is unbearable," Shlomo Amar, Israel's Sephardic chief rabbi said of Jerusalem's Open House, the LGBT center which is organizing the celebration.

"We can't permit anybody to come and make the Holy City dirty. This is very ugly and very nasty to have these people come to Jerusalem," Abdel Aziz Bukhari, a Sufi sheik, said.

"God destroyed those cities and everyone in them," said Muslim cleric Abdel-Salem Menasra. "I'm warning everybody, God will destroy Jerusalem together with the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims."

Such cooperation among these three major religions, particularly in the Middle East, is highly unusual. The statements come from extremist ends of the religious groups that usually save such invective for each other.

World Pride, themed "Love without Borders", to be held between August 18 and 28 is expected to draw more than 100,000 gays and lesbians from around the world to the Holy City. The last World Pride was held in 2000 in Rome.

Jerusalem Open House said that the offensive tone of the remarks by the religious leaders made it more determined to go ahead with the event.

"The first WorldPride, Rome 2000, brought to the heart of Europe, and indeed to the pope's doorstep, the message that gays and lesbians are and always have been a vital part of humanity," the organization said in a statement.

"It is time to demonstrate to our community, to our neighbors and peers and indeed to the world, not only that we belong, but that our love and our pride can cross the harshest borders that divide people."

May 2 - The WorldPride celebration scheduled to be held in **Jerusalem** this summer has been postponed organizers say, because of timing around Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2005/05/05/2>

April 2 - *365Gay.com* (**Vatican City**) Pope John Paul II has died ending what is regarded as the most homophobic pontificate in history. The Pope has been a constant voice of opposition to gay civil rights, same-sex marriage, and the use of condoms to prevent AIDS.

As Catholics around the world began to mourn John Paul II, The Rainbow Sash, an international organization of LGBT Catholics, remembered a pope of contradictions.

On the one hand, John Paul was a man of personal integrity, single-minded dedication to what he perceived to be his duty, and had a commitment to an almost mystical holiness of life.

On the other, "what cannot be said of this Pope is that he reached out to the Gay and Lesbian Community," Rainbow Sash said in a statement.

In a pre-Christmas message the Pope accused gays of an "aggressive attempt to legally undermine the family." "Attacks on marriage and the family, from an ideological and legal aspect, are becoming stronger and more radical every day," he said in a statement to be read in churches worldwide.

Cardinals will gather in Rome to choose a successor. That person likely will continue the Church's assault on gays. The leading candidates were all appointed by John Paul and are all theological conservatives.

April 19 – *PlanetOut News* - Ongoing civil unrest in **Nepal** is hitting the country's minority communities hardest, with LGBT people subjected to beatings and police brutality, says the Human Rights Watch.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2005/04/19/4>

April 19 - *365Gay.com/ Associated Press* (**Vatican City**) Joseph Ratzinger one of the most conservative Cardinals in the Catholic Church was elected Pope. Ratzinger was John Paul's deputy for theology as head of the powerful Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Congregation was the same organization responsible for the Spanish Inquisition.

Cardinal Ratzinger was the author of the 2003 Vatican directive to priests around the world calling for a proactive stand to stop governments from legalizing same-sex marriage and for a repeal of those already on the books that give rights, including adoption, to gay couples.

Ratzinger opposes contraception and the use of condoms to combat HIV/AIDS. He advocates a diminished role for women in the Church and has called for mandatory celibacy for priests. A nun who was ordered by Ratzinger to stop ministering to gays and lesbians called his election to pope "devastating" for those who believe the Catholic Church needs to be more tolerant on social issues such as homosexuality.

"Today, the princes of the Roman Catholic Church elected as Pope a man whose record has been one of unrelenting, venomous hatred for gay people," said National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director Matt Foreman.

"As a long-time Catholic from a staunchly Catholic family, I know that the history of the church is full of shameful, centuries-long chapters involving vilification, persecution, and violence against others. Someday, the church will apologize to gay people as it has to others it has oppressed in the past. I very much doubt that this day

will come during this Pope's reign. In fact, it seems inevitable that this Pope will cause even more pain and give his successors even more for which to seek atonement."

Chiming bells and white smoke from a chimney atop the Sistine Chapel announced Ratzinger's election. Tens of thousands of people on St. Peter's Square erupted in cheers and applause. Ratzinger will take the name Pope Benedict XVI.

Miscellaneous and Research News

March 16 - *HRC news* - WASHINGTON - Toys "R" Us has agreed to add language to its equal opportunity employment policy prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity. It appears likely that the company, ranked 171 in the Fortune 500, will also begin offering domestic partner benefits and including sexual orientation and gender identity issues in their diversity training. If implemented, the company would earn an 86 on HRC's Corporate Equality Index -- a tool measuring how equitably companies are treating their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees, consumers and investors.

"Equal treatment is sound business," said Vice President of HRC's Foundation Winnie Stachelberg. "Toys 'R' Us becomes the 52nd company in the Fortune 500 with a non-discrimination policy that includes gender identity. With this announcement, 113,000 employees will learn that the company's promise of fair treatment and equal benefits extends to GLBT employees as well."

April 2005 - Survey of Lesbian Health Issues *Harris Interactive and Mautner Project.*

An American nationwide survey found that three-quarters of lesbians, compared with half of heterosexual men and women, have delayed obtaining health care even when sick — most often because of high health care costs and lack of adequate health insurance. The survey also found that: (1) lesbians under 35 are more likely than lesbians over 50 to have delayed obtaining health care, (2) 16 percent of lesbians report that they have delayed obtaining health care because they were concerned they would be discriminated against and (3) lesbians are more than twice as likely as heterosexuals to say that bad experiences with health care providers in the past caused them to delay obtaining health care.

http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Get_Involved1&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=25953

Un message de Michel Dorais (Professeur et chercheur Université Laval):

Bonjour, J'ai pensé vous signaler la parution de «**SAINS ET SAUFS - Petit manuel de lutte contre l'homophobie à l'usage des jeunes**» (French only), que mon collègue français Éric Verdier (co-auteur de «Homosexualités et suicides») et moi venons de publier chez VLB éditeur au Québec (et simultanément chez H&O en France, sous un titre un peu différent).

Destiné aux jeunes gays, lesbiennes, bisexuels, queer et transgenres, à leurs proches et aussi à ceux ou celles qui entendent les aider, SAINS ET SAUFS est un guide pratique non seulement de survie mais d'épanouissement personnel et social, rempli de trucs, conseils, astuces et activités pratiques. Le but? Faire en sorte que les jeunes de la diversité sexuelle s'en sortent gagnants et gagnantes. Après le constat dressé dans mon précédent ouvrage «Mort ou fif», co-écrit avec Simon L. Lajeunesse, s'imposait une suite qui sache donner aux jeunes (et aux moins jeunes) des outils pour combattre l'hétérosexisme, l'intolérance, et l'homo-bi-trans-phobie au quotidien.

Solidairement, Michel Dorais

Sain et Sauf est en librairie depuis la semaine 11 avril 2005 – 176 p. – 17,95 \$

Pour information : Marie-Pierre Barathon, promotion et relations de presse

Tél.: (514) 523-7993, poste 4214 ; téléc. : (514) 282-7530

News from the Lesbian Mothers Association

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

June:

- ◆ **For All: Saturday, June 18th, 11 a.m.**

Picnic and visit to the mini-farm at Angrignon Park (metro Angrignon). Angrignon Park remains one of the largest and most beautiful green spaces in all of Montreal – a great place for a picnic. We'll meet up at the mini-farm (with more than one hundred animals), which is just a few steps from the Angrignon metro station. There is also a good play area for those who come with kids. Bring your own food, drinks, picnic blankets, music, sunscreen, etc.

July:

For All: Saturday July 9th – Sunday July 10th

Sylvie and Sylvia from our association are excited to offer you the 3rd annual **Day out in the country** on their property at **Val Morin** on **Saturday July 9th**. You can swim, kayak, picnic, windsurf, walk, cycle, play volleyball etc., etc. Singing and a campfire are planned for later in the evening.

Bring your bathing suits, picnic blankets and everything you'd need for a beautiful day in the country. The BBQ will be available for grilling your hot-dogs and hamburgers, etc. The chalet will be open to you for using the washroom, kitchen etc. and parking is easy.

You are also welcome to bring your tents, sleeping gear, food, etc for an overnight – bring all you need to keep the party going!

For directions please see the enclosed sheet.

Divers-Cité/ Pride Celebrations:

Saturday July 30th and Sunday July 31st from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Community Days/ Journées Communautaires

Along with many other community organizations, we will have our own **information kiosk especially for lesbian mamas and future-mamas**. We encourage you to join us there both to support our group and to find out about other community groups that may be of interest to you. Kiosks will be grouped on **Berri between Ste. Catherine and René-Levesque** and on **Ste-Catherine between St-Denis and St-Hubert**. Food will be available on the site.

Divers-Cité has graciously donated a **Tiger Belly Bouncer Trampoline** for our kids to enjoy on this day. There will also be an **electric choo-choo train**, like we've had in the parade on previous years to do mini-tours (our own parade) around the site. We will also have a number of great activities, like **face painting, crafts, balloons and games for your kids to participate in**. Hand-painted **T-shirts** will be for sale at our kiosk.

BULLETIN BOARD:

- ◆ Single Moms everywhere: Come out, come out wherever you are. Let's get together and just discuss baby issues, single mom issues, and anything and everything else. Something light and informal. Of course, with our babies... If interested, please email shariann@sympatico.ca or call Shari Ann at (514) 482-6533. Perhaps a few of us can get together at my house or anyone else's home... Hoping to hear from at least one mom.
- ◆ Mère et fille de 9 ans cherche mère et enfant du même âge (fille de préférence) pour faire des sorties, activités, etc. Écrire à: mjlegault@arobas.net

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@aml-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.**

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@aml-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.

- ◆ THERE IS NO FREEDOM WITHOUT FINANCIAL FREEDOM - LA LIBERTÉ PERSONNELLE PASSE PAR LA LIBERTÉ FINANCIÈRE. Financial services for individuals and small businesses: budgeting, debt management, investments, future planning, personal taxes, wealth enhancement strategies. No charge for initial consultations, 20% of all subsequent fees will be donated to the LMA. J. Freed, 514-483-5130, www.jfreed.ca