



2401, rue Coursol
Montreal, Quebec, H3J 1C8
Tel.: 514-846-1543
Email: info@aml-lma.org
Website: www.aml-lma.org

NEWSLETTER - VOLUME VIII - No. II - December 2006

Mama, you're a Daddy! (Part 2)

By Karine Igartua, LMA member

My daughter is a stereotypical 4-year-old girl. She loves princesses and anything pink. Books, puzzles, games and clothes must bear some princessly identification.

One cold night in early December, my daughter greeted me when I got home from work, wearing an old cocktail dress of mine. Pink plastic heels with 4-inch diamonds and a tiara complemented her accoutrement. She announced, rather excitedly, that she was going to run around the house, lose a shoe, that I was to find it, try it on everyone, that it wouldn't fit, until I found her, that it would fit her and that I would become her prince and we would live happily ever after. Taken by surprise, I did not know how to respond so I simply complied. As I slipped the shoe on her foot, a beam of joy and pride emanated from her little face. We paraded around the house, arm in arm, while she introduced me as her prince charming to her Mommy (who was cooking dinner) and her brother (who barely lifted his head up from his assortment of trucks to notice). We repeated this scenario, at her request, half a dozen times. I then ended the make-believe, having to get ready for my departmental holiday party. I needed to change out of my work clothes (slacks and shirt) to something more festive. She waited while I showered, then watched intently as I styled my hair and applied make-up. As I put on my cocktail dress, my daughter looked at me, with a somewhat perplexed look on her face and asked: "Mama, can princesses dance with other princesses?" "Of course they can, sweetie". She paused, watched me a moment more, then asked: "Mama, will you dance with me?" "Of course I will". So we went down stairs, danced and paraded around arm in arm again: only this time as 2 princesses.

I love this story because it is proof that Freud was right. It also proves that Freud was wrong. The Oedipus complex is alive and well but not in the way Freud had described it. Because of the enormity of his imprint on our society, it is important to us as lesbian moms that we understand something of Freud's writings. Many of us will have heard objections to our families on the grounds that 'children need both a mother and a father'. This is, often unbeknownst to the objector, a direct reference to Freud's Oedipus complex.

According to his theory, little boys fall in love with their mother. Fearing that father will castrate him for loving 'his' woman (a.k.a. castration anxiety), the little boy distances himself from mother and identifies with father ("if you can't beat'em, join'em"). Later, he will learn to love a woman just like mommy. He will thus become a man by identification with Dad, and become heterosexual through transferring his love for mom toward another woman.

Again according to Freud, little girls will become women through identification with Mom, and heterosexual through transferring love for Dad to another man. However, the little girl starts out in love with Mommy. She then grows angry with Mom for neither having a penis nor giving her one (a.k.a. penis envy). She therefore is required to identify with a 'deficient' parent (both are lacking a penis). Through this supposed internalized misogyny, the little girl moves away from Mom and falls in love with Dad (who is superior because he has a penis). Acknowledging that she will never have a penis of her own, the little girl makes up for it by having (with the help of a man/penis) a baby. Thus Freud said it was crucial for the psychosexual development of both boys and girls to have both a mother and a father. His theory is obviously a tad phallogocentric, misogynistic and heterosexist.

As off as it sounds today, Freud actually based his theory on his observations of parent-child interactions. He observed an initial very close bond with mother, to the exclusion of other adults. Later around the age of 3-5, the child moved towards the father. His observations were made in traditional Victorian families in Vienna in the early 1900s. The only family unit he had to study was the nuclear heterosexual family. Had he been around today, he would have observed the same pattern of relating in non-traditional families as well; an initial symbiotic bond with the primary care-giver and a later shift toward another adult.

This has led modern psychoanalytic thinkers to hypothesize that the Oedipus is less about sex and more about identification, love & individuation. It is not the gender of the parents that is important but rather their function for the child. Initially the child is too self-centred to take notice of the relationships that the people in his life have with each other. Later the child realises that the object of his primary love (lets say Mommy) also loves another (lets call her Mama) and there are parts of that relationship that the child is not privy to. The natural reactions are jealousy and competition (how many of you have had your child insert herself right between you and your partner as you try to kiss?). At some point the child must accept that Mommy loves Mama too. In realising this, though they have identified with Mommy, (in the case of a girl) or fallen in love with her in the case of a boy) they come to see Mommy as separate from them, and them as separate from Mommy. This allows them to individuate, become more independent and forge relationships of their own. Initially they will move towards Mama and woo her (or another safe adult). Later, they will also bond with siblings and friends. Through these many relationships, the child will identify with many other adults. Rather than simplistically thinking that the child will love one parent and identify with the other, we can understand that the child will forge its own identity (gender and otherwise) by an amalgam of identifications that fit him/her best.

My daughter's play with my gender roles in the modern version of the Cinderella romance proves that it is not my being male or female that is important but rather, my role as her "other" parent. The romance with Mama was a way to help individuate from Mommy. During this process, she will have identified with some parts of me and loved others. Likewise, she will have identified with some parts of Mommy, while loving others. When she is older, she will have a sense of her own self which will allow her to choose her own (real) prince or princess charming.

In our family, Mama & Mommy have fairly traditional roles, with Mama working outside the home full-time and Mommy being more often at home. There are families where the division of labour is different, with parents sharing maternity leave, either sequentially or by both working part-time. As I alluded to in part 1, the very notion of primary caregiver is changing in western culture as heterosexual fathers are becoming more involved in raising children. In other cultures, the notion of primary caregiver is less obvious, as extended families and even villages care for children. Perhaps one day the importance of the single primary caregiver will be dismissed, and emphasis will be placed rather on having sufficient safe adult caregivers to fulfill the child's needs.

In the mean time, though it may be too laborious an undertaking to educate each person who ignorantly objects to our families on the basis of the supposed "need for a mother and a father", we can be reassured for ourselves that the argument does not stand. The Oedipus may truly exist but it can be understood in a way that does not pathologize us; a way that, in deed, is more in keeping with the empirical research that shows that our kids grow-up just fine.

(This article is the second of two by Karine. If you have not already seen the first and are interested in reading part 1 please contact the association at info@aml-lma.org and we will send it to you)

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: August - November 2006

Montreal and Quebec News

October 3, 2006 (Montreal) A priest has been acclaimed as the Bloc Quebecois candidate in a by-election next month. Rev. Raymond Gravel needed permission from the Vatican to be allowed to run in the November 27 by-election in the Montreal riding of Repentigny.

Gravel, who was a male prostitute and worked in a gay leather bar in his youth, is a maverick who has sparred with the Roman Catholic Church over issues such as same-sex marriage.

He is the parish priest in St-Joachim-de-la-Plaine Church in the separatist Bloc stronghold riding, which is vacant because MP Benoit Sauvageau died in a traffic accident in August.

Gravel has said he wants to run for Parliament to fight for justice. He says he has great admiration for Sauvageau and wants to continue his work.

Canadian News

August 13 (Toronto) A coalition that includes UN special envoy Stephen Lewis has issued a challenge to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government to show the world that Canada is committed to helping lead the global fight against HIV/AIDS. The coalition, which also includes the Global Treatment Access Group and the Make Poverty History Campaign, issued a four-point plan for halting the spread of HIV/AIDS around the world and to improve quality of life for people living with the disease.

The Global AIDS Crisis: Four Steps for Canada plan was sent to Harper's office just before the International AIDS Conference in Toronto began. HIV/AIDS scientists, activists and journalists - numbering roughly 27,000 in total - descended upon Toronto for the once-every-two-years conference. A whirlwind intersect of the latest AIDS science, current HIV-related political concerns and from-the-battlefield reports on efforts to beat back AIDS in developing countries, the conference drew from an international celebrity A List. The Bills - Clinton and Gates - were there. Actor Richard Gere and songstress Alicia Keys also took part.

But for the opening ceremonies, a mix of speeches and musical performances, a fair amount of attention was focused on someone who didn't attend - Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The four-step plan, endorsed by more than 80 organizations across Canada, calls on Ottawa to set a timetable to boost Canada's development assistance to 0.7 per cent of gross national income; invest in health-care systems of developing countries; cancel these countries' debts to free up money to fight HIV/AIDS; and follow through on commitments to make drugs to control the disease more affordable.

These issues ``constitute collectively a direct challenge to Canada to move to taking a stand rather than lapsing into the amorphous banalities and the irrelevance to which the Canadian government seems so severely addicted," Lewis said.

A spokesman said the prime minister's office would not be commenting on the group's call to action.

September 25 (Ottawa) Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government tightened federal purse strings by \$2-billion - slashing spending hated by many Conservatives, such as medicinal marijuana research -- even as Ottawa disclosed that its coffers are bulging with another near-record budget surplus.

"To do these announcements of huge cuts to the least privileged Canadians at the same day you announce

of \$13-billion surplus, it tells you a lot about the Conservatives' frame of mind," Liberal finance critic John McCallum said.

The Tories used the excuse of spending cuts to put their own stamp on the federal government, slashing programs loathed by rock-ribbed Conservatives but cherished by previous Liberal regimes.

To the great glee of conservative groups like REAL Women of Canada the "new government" will cut the budget of women's programs at the Status of Women Canada. These programs fund groups such as LEAF (Legal Education Action Fund), NAWL (National Association of Women and the Law), NAC (National Association on the Status of Women), the Canadian Childcare Federation and the Childcare Advocacy Association of Canada, which REAL Women describe as anti-family and anti-life.

Spending on the chopping block also includes funding of the Court Challenges Program, a small program that provided modest contributions to the cost of important test cases dealing with language and equality rights. The Court Challenges Program, which funded litigation in the name of equal rights, was an initiative that partisan Conservatives have always derided. Without this Program, Canada's constitutional rights are really only for the wealthy. EGALE, Canada's leading LGBT rights advocacy group relies on the CCP to challenge the government on laws that discriminate against our communities. An example of the use of this funding is *Egan v. Canada*, [1995] in which a gay couple from British Columbia challenged the definition of spouse in the Old Age Security Act, which until then denied a spousal benefit to gay and lesbian couples that was available to opposite sex partners. Without this funding Egale will be hard-pressed to carry out future legal advocacy work.

September 27 (Toronto) In the first case of its kind in Canada, possibly the world, a court is being asked to designate a lesbian couple and their son's biological father all the boy's legal parents. One partner, the biological mother, and the father already officially are the legal parents. The other partner is seeking to be named the third legal guardian.

Both biological parents support the application by the mother's partner. Since the case involves a minor, the names of all involved are protected by the court. The final submissions were made to the Ontario Court of Appeal - the highest court in Ontario.

"The family has evolved over the years in a way that the law should recognize the reality of this little boy," the father's lawyer, Alfred Mamo, told the *Globe and Mail*, "his reality being that he's got two mothers and a father with whom he thrives. They all want this for their son."

The lawyer for the partner seeking to be the third parent argues that Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms would be violated if she were rejected.

"It's discriminatory, because one of them gets legally recognized -- the biological mother -- but the non-biological mother, who is equally part of the process except for the biological bits, can't be legally recognized even though they both decided to have a child, planned for the child, arranged for the procreation and the birth, and they both jointly parent the child," attorney Peter Jervis said.

The case has allowed the offensive views of some of the interveners to be aired. Conservative social action groups, including the Catholic Civil Rights League, REAL Women of Canada, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Christian Legal Fellowship and Focus on the Family have filed a so-called "friend of the court" brief opposing the appeal. They say that the groups have a "common cause" to protect the "traditional family unit in Canadian society and law."

In 2003 a lower court rejected the partner's attempt to be listed as a co-parent. In his ruling, Mr. Justice David Aston said the woman plays the role of parent to the child in every sense imaginable, and suggested that allowing the trio to share equal rights as parents would be in the boy's best interests.

"The child is a bright, healthy, happy individual who is obviously thriving in a loving family that meets his every need," he said. "The applicant has been a daily and consistent presence in his life. She is fully committed to a parental role."

But Ontario law, he ruled, binds his hands. Provincial family law allows two parents of the opposite sex, or two parents of the same sex, but not three parents.

Among the Court of Appeal justices hearing the case is Chief Justice Roy McMurtry. The court under McMurtry was the first in Canada to strike down the ban on same-sex marriage leading to similar rulings in most other provinces and resulting in the federal government rewriting marriage law to provide for gay marriage.

October 4 (Ottawa) EGALE NEWS The Conservative government is planning legislation (the Defense of Religions Act) to expand the scope of permitted hate speech against lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people, to allow persons to refuse to do business with LGBT people, and to permit marriage commissioners to refuse to perform wedding ceremonies for same-sex couples, and this legislation may further delay a vote on the government's motion to re-open the equal marriage debate.

"This planned legislation serves no purpose but to divide Canadians and to justify a further delay in holding a vote on re-opening equal marriage," said Laurie Arron, National Coordinator of Canadians for Equal Marriage. "This is smoke and mirrors legislation. It prays on people's fears and is constitutionally flawed. When is Mr. Harper going to leave us alone and move on?"

"Two-thirds of Canadians consider equal marriage to be settled and want to move on," Mr. Arron continued. "It's unfair to leave this uncertainty hanging. It's time for Mr. Harper to get on with it, rather than delaying to please the religious right."

Just a few weeks ago Mr. Harper had planned to move forward with the vote in early October but, as Parliament resumed, he announced to his caucus that his government's motion to re-open the equal marriage debate would be delayed until just before Christmas. Equality opponents want a delay because they know Parliament is poised to defeat this motion.

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.

August 13 (Sydney, Australia) Thousands of same-sex couples demonstrate in towns and cities across Australia demanding the federal government repeal the ban on gay marriage.

August 17 - Saudi police are reported to have arrested 20 men at what officials say was a "gay wedding" in the town of **Jizan**.

August 24 (Cape Town) South Africa's cabinet gives its approval to a bill granting full marriage to same-sex couples. The Civil Unions bill is the government's response to the Constitutional Court's ruling last December that it is unconstitutional to deny gay and lesbian couples the right to marry.

August 24 (Brattleboro, Vermont) The country's first same-sex civil union is formally dissolved.

August 25 - A parliamentary committee recommends replacing the same-sex civil partnerships legal since 1995 with the right to marry in churches, as backed by 46 percent of **Swedes**.

August 25 (Quebec) The Bloc Quebecois opts to present a united front against the reopening of the same-sex marriage debate by Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

August 28 - Scores of guests cheer as two gay men in **Katmandu** exchange garlands of marigolds in what is apparently **Nepal's** first public same-sex wedding.

August 29 (Edmonton, Alberta) A private member's bill that would have allowed people to speak and act out against same-sex marriage effectively dies a second time in the Alberta legislature. But not before Speaker Ken Kowalski chastises opposition members for eating up the time allotted for debate with procedural matters to keep backbencher Ted Morton's controversial Bill 208 from even reaching the floor for debate.

Bill 208 would forbid anyone from being punished legally for refusing to solemnize a same-sex marriage or for speaking out on or acting on his or her beliefs against gay marriage. It would also put limits on the discussion of same-sex marriage in schools. Opponents say the bill would enshrine in law the dehumanization of gays. If passed, they say, employers could fire gay employees and landlords could evict gay tenants with impunity.

September 14 (Montevideo) Uruguay is set to become the latest country to recognize the legal rights of gay couples. Congress is expected to pass legislation creating a civil union registry for same and unmarried opposite-sex couples. The measure already has passed the Senate. The author of the legislation says the bill would give couples entering civil unions the same rights as marriage.

Same-sex marriage will remain illegal in Uruguay, something LGBT rights groups say they will continue to fight. But, they say the civil union bill is a major step in the right direction in a region where the Catholic Church dominates much of everyday life. In neighboring Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul state which lies along the border, passed civil union legislation in 2004, two years after Buenos Aires passed a similar law. Chile could soon follow.

September 15 - In **Spain's** first military same-sex nuptials, two grooms named Alberto are married by **Seville's** mayor in the venerable city's town hall.

September 16 (Johannesburg, South Africa) Protests against legislation to permit same-sex marriage are staged across South Africa. The demonstrations are organized by conservative Protestant churches and the rightwing African Christian Democratic Party

September 27 (Ottawa) Before Parliament resumed for the fall session, it was widely reported that a vote on Mr. Harper's motion to re-open the divisive equal marriage debate would take place in early October. A majority in Parliament oppose such a move and the law is unlikely to be repealed it now appears. However, as Parliament resumes, Mr. Harper privately tells his caucus that the vote will be delayed until just before Christmas. New Democrats and the Bloc Quebecois Parties announce they will vote against it.

October 6 (Lithuania) Angry at biased rules that made their day seem "more like a car registration" than a wedding, the Ljubljana brides will follow up with a lawsuit. The current law, passed in July, allows gay men and lesbians the right to register their unions and covers property issues along with inheritance rights. The law does not, however, grant any other rights associated with marriage including social security or adoption rights. It also excludes guests from being present at the signing of the documents.

October 8 (Boston, Massachusetts) The Rhode Island lesbian couple that won a court battle to get married in Massachusetts exchange vows in Attleboro, Massachusetts, becoming the first out-of-state same-sex couple to legally wed in the state. Gay and lesbian couples that wed will not however have their marriages recognized at home, R.I. Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch says.

October 9 - A vote in favor of equality by **South Africa's** ruling African National Congress all but assures that a civil-union bill will become law.

October 10 (Washington) The US Supreme Court turns down an appeal by a gay California gay couple who want to marry. It is the first time the issue of same-sex marriage has been offered to the high court.

October 11 (London) A lesbian couple that were married in Canada say they are dropping their lawsuit to have their marriage recognized in the UK because they have run out of money.

October 16 (Dublin) Ireland's High Court reserves judgment in a case that could open the door to same-sex marriage. The court concludes hearing arguments in the case involving a lesbian couple that were married in Canada. If the couple loses the women say they will appeal to the European Court. A win would mean that same-sex couples could marry in any of the countries where it is legal and have those marriages recognized at home.

October 20 (Sydney, Australia) Australian Prime Minister John Howard reportedly agrees to look at ways of granting limited recognition to same-sex couples but is adamant he will not consider either same-sex marriage or civil partnerships.

October 24 (Ottawa) Leaders from Canada's two largest denominations tread the hallways on Parliament Hill, presenting two differing views on a government plan to revisit the legalization of same-sex marriage. On the one side are the Roman Catholic Church and a dozen socially conservative evangelical groups urging members of Parliament to vote to re-open the marriage debate and support repeal of the law enacted last year by the former Liberal government. Opposing them is Canada's largest Protestant denomination, the United Church of Canada, which supports same-sex marriage.

October 25 - New Jersey's Supreme Court gives the Legislature 180 days to "enact an appropriate statutory structure" giving same-sex couples equal rights.

November 14 (Cape Town) South Africa on becomes the fifth country in the world (and the first on the African continent) to legalize same-sex marriage. Legal experts predict the historic bill will be challenged over an "opt-out" clause that lets religious and civil authorities refuse to marry gays.

November 17 (Mexico City) Legislation recognizing gay civil unions in the Mexican capital is published in the official gazette making it the first such law in the history of the conservative, predominantly Roman Catholic country.

November 17 (Montreal, Quebec) Quebec Gay and lesbian activists of the group "*les familles d'aujourd'hui*" call on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to immediately hold a promised vote in the Commons on same-sex marriage.

November 21 (Jerusalem) In an unprecedented ruling, **Israel's** Supreme Court orders the government to recognize same-sex marriages performed abroad. In a vote of 6-1, the court decrees that homosexual couples who marry abroad will enjoy the same status in the Interior Ministry as heterosexual couples who marry in civil ceremonies outside of Israel.

November 21 (Ottawa) Justice Minister Vic Toews says the government will honour a promise to allow a vote on whether to reconsider the 2005 legislation to legalize gay marriage, before Parliament breaks for Christmas on December 15.

International News

September 17- 365 Gay.com (Taipei) For the very first time the Rainbow Flag was raised in an official ceremony in Taiwan, an indication that the island off Mainland China is growing more tolerant of gays. The flag went up in front of Taipei City Hall, marking the start of "Queer Friendly Taipei" and in another first the city's Department of Civil Affairs is a major sponsor of the event.

LGBT groups have been holding the celebration for the past seven years, and each year until now the city has rebuffed efforts to hoist the flag at city hall.

Yeh Jie-sheng, the department's Deputy Chief said the city was sponsoring the event to stress its respect for minority groups and cultural diversity. "Conservative and religious groups have been criticizing the event, and we welcome different opinions. We will invite these groups this year to discuss issues of gay rights together," he said during a press conference this week at Taipei City Hall. The festival will include human rights forums and cultural events.

"The recognition of the rights of gays and lesbians by all people requires making a long-term effort step by step ... This festival will establish a bridge and allow the public to better understand the gay community," said Wang Ping of the Gender/Sexuality Rights Association, one of the organizers of the festival.

Wang said there is still much to be done in attaining full rights for gays pointing to the issue of recognizing same-sex relationships. To bring that point home to the government, the gay pride parade that will wrap up the festival will feature a collective mock gay wedding ceremony.

October 11, 2006 - 365 Gay.com (New York City) International pressure is mounting on the government of **Cameroon** to release nearly a dozen men sentenced to prison earlier this year on charges of being gay. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared that the detentions on the basis of their presumed sexual orientation constitutes an arbitrary deprivation of liberty contrary to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The UN human rights body further called on the government of Cameroon to adopt necessary measures to remedy the situation, including the possible repeal of the offending law.

The men were detained for more than one year on anti-homosexuality offenses rising from Cameroon's Penal Code. Eleven men were arrested during a June 2005 raid on a gay bar. This year two of the men were later convicted and two others released. In June the remaining seven were sentenced to prison for ten months.

While in prison, the detainees faced harsh conditions and homophobic attacks from fellow prisoners. At their trial in June 2006, nine of the men were found guilty of "sodomy" and sentenced to ten-month jail terms. One of the men, Alim Mongoche, died of AIDS-related complications shortly after his conviction, exacerbated by the harsh conditions of detention.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention took up the issue following a complaint brought by the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) on behalf of the men.

On June 7, 2006, four women were also convicted of sodomy and sentenced to 3 years probation and threatened with 6 months imprisonment "if they continue their lesbianism." At least four other men are still being detained in Kondengui Central Prison because of their homosexuality, some without formal charge or trial.

October 16, 2006 - 365 Gay.com (Hong Kong) The government of Hong Kong has decided not to appeal a landmark ruling that struck down the former British colony's sodomy law.

The South China Post reports that the government has decided to allow the ruling to stand, a move that officially allows the old law to die. Under the legislation gay men caught engaging in sodomy when either was under 21 faced life imprisonment, heterosexual couples could legally have sex at age 16.

The law was challenged in 2005 by William Roy Leung, a then 20-year-old gay man who argued he should be able to have a loving relationship without the fear of imprisonment. That August a court ruled the law invalid. The government appealed and in September a panel of three Court of Appeal judges upheld the original decision.

In the written judgment the court said the laws against sodomy infringed on the rights of privacy and equality for gay men. "At one stage, societal values dictated that buggery was some form of unnatural act, somehow to be condemned and certainly not condoned. These values have changed in Hong Kong," Chief Judge Geoffrey Ma said in the judgment.

Hong Kong has been under increasing criticism from human rights groups for not providing civil rights protections for gays.

Last year the semi-autonomous city-state saw its first LGBT rights march. About 100 people from 16 LGBT and gay-positive organizations carried rainbow flags but many hid their faces behind masks, fearful of reprisals. It is estimated there are about a million gays among Hong Kong's 6.9 million residents.

October 25, 2006 HRC News (New York City) The American Family Association is telling its members to avoid shopping at Wal-Mart over what the conservative Christian group calls an alignment by the retailer with "a pro-homosexual lobby group."

Wal-Mart earlier this year expanded its LGBT diversity program in a deal with the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. In an email alert to its members this week the AFA says that the company is retailing hundreds of products with "pro-homosexual leanings". Randy Sharp, AFA's director of special projects said he did an online search of Walmart.com using such terms as "gay," "lesbian," "transgender," "bisexual," and "gay marriage".

"They'll come up with hundreds, sometimes even thousands of products relating to homosexuality [and promotion of] the agenda of the homosexual community," Sharp told Christian publication *Agape*.

AFA is calling "on Christian consumers to spend their dollars elsewhere as a sign of their displeasure with Wal-Mart's pro-homosexual leanings."

The AFA already is involved in a boycott of Ford Motor Company over the automaker's support for LGBT

causes. The AFA said it has collected 500,000 Internet pledges to boycott Ford vehicles.

Miscellaneous News

August 11, 2006 *365 Gay.com (New Orleans, Louisiana)* The American Psychological Association issued a stinging rebuke of the so-called ex-gay movement following a demonstration by members of several organizations that claim homosexuality is a choice that can be cured. A small group representing the National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) and Exodus International demonstrated in front of the APA convention in New Orleans.

"While the APA continues to play politics with social issues unrelated to its mission, thousands of current and potential patients are being harmed," said Alan Chambers, president of Exodus International, a national 'ex-gay' organization. "We represent those across the country who struggle with unwanted same-sex attraction, desire the help of skilled professionals and are instead, being discriminated against because their personal beliefs do not align with that of the APA."

In 1974, the American Psychological Association ceased listing homosexuality as a mental disorder. The protestors demanded that the APA change its current position.

Immediately after the protest the APA issued a statement reaffirming its stand. "For over three decades the consensus of the mental health community has been that homosexuality is not an illness and therefore not in need of a cure," the statement said.

"The APA's concern about the positions espoused by NARTH and so-called conversion therapy is that they are not supported by the science. There is simply no sufficiently scientifically sound evidence that sexual orientation can be changed. Our further concern is that the positions espoused by NARTH and Focus on the Family create an environment in which prejudice and discrimination can flourish."

November 2, 2006 - The National Association of Evangelicals' president Ted Haggard, one of the leaders of a proposed amendment to ban same-sex marriage in Colorado, stepped down from the ministry of his 14,000-member New Life Church in Colorado Springs after a male escort alleged he had a three-year pay-for-sex affair with Haggard.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2006/11/02/5>

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News from the Lesbian Mothers Association UPCOMING MEETINGS

DECEMBER 2006 :

- Saturday December 16th from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

HOLIDAY PARTY : 9th ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY/ POTLUCK + PUPPET SHOW BY LE THEATRE LA SIMAGRÉE) + CONCERT BY ANNIE MORIN

The Lesbian Mothers Association and the Papadaddy Group are proud to invite you to our 9th ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY / POTLUCK on Saturday December 16th from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

What's planned? A PUPPET SHOW AT 2:00 p.m. Théâtre la Simagrée is the group that performed at the 2005 Jazz Fest. They are also well known as the puppeteers of many children's TV shows. They will be performing their new show called "BLANC". (check out their site <http://www.lasimagree.com>).

And A MUSICAL PERFORMANCE BY ANNIE MORIN AT 3:30 p.m. from her hip children's CD "Annie-Mots, Le Projet Bête" (listen to her at: <http://www.bluetracks.com>.)

And also: A HOLIDAY ARTS AND CRAFTS ACTIVITY, A VISIT FROM SANTA, GAMES IN THE BIG GYM, SNACKS FOR ALL.

Although the LMA will be providing snacks it would be great if you can help us out by bringing a snack to share (remember: no peanut products because of allergies). **Teenagers interested in making a bit of spending money are invited to help us organize the event (please call Mona for this at 514-846-1543).**

Location: Centre Greene, 1090 Greene Ave (Metro Atwater, Greene Avenue is a few blocks west of Atwater. The centre is south of René Levesque)

JANUARY 2007:

- Saturday January 27 at 7:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION GROUP : Envisioning Our Families

Adults only: Are we better, worse, the same or different? Do others see us the way we see ourselves or are there still barriers to break down? What are our own doubts and worries and are they justified? A discussion lead by Karine Igartua on how we and our children perceive our families, as well as how they are perceived by the outside world.

Location: 2401 Coursol (metro Georges-Vanier or Lionel Groulx). Coursol crosses the east side of Atwater and is one street south of St-Antoine.

FEBRUARY 2007:

- Wednesday February 28 at 7:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION GROUP: Getting Pregnant

Adults only: Two of our members, Susie Minzberg and Marie-France Dubois (M.Sc. in nursing) will share their experiences of fertility clinics and at-home inseminations. An informed discussion on the nuts and bolts of conception.

Location : CCGLM (2075 rue Plessis, between Ontario and Sherbrooke) (Metro Papineau)

BULLETIN BOARD:

♦ Hi, my name is **Zoyla Batres-Garcia** and I am a 29-year-old single Guatemalan mom with 2 kids: a 6-year-old daughter and a 1-year-old son. I'm looking for friendship and love and someone to share the pleasures of life. If you are interested please give me a call at **514-252-9605**.

♦ **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.

♦ **Café-Causerie Aux Fémin'Elles**: L'Association lesbienne vous invite à ses cafés causeries le deuxième et le quatrième lundis du mois, de 19h à 21h30 à la salle d'atelier (au deuxième étage) de chez Loblaw's situé au **1155 Boul. Talbot à Chicoutimi**. Ces rencontres ont comme but de briser l'isolement et s'adressent aux femmes lesbiennes qui désiraient socialiser en compagnie d'autres femmes lesbiennes, afin de permettre un échange positif. Au plaisir de vous rencontrer ! Informations: **418-550-2259**

♦ Recherchons femmes en couple avec enfant(s), ou désirant devenir mères, habitant **Joliette** ou ses environs, pour échanger sur nos expériences de parents. Nous venons d'aménager dans la région et cherchons à créer un réseau d'amies, bien précieux que nous n'avons pu transporter avec nous de Montréal... Nous sommes un couple lesbien début trentaine avec 3 enfants. Communiquez avec nous à: neige-vive@hotmail.com

♦ **L'Écho des femmes de la Petite Patrie** est un centre de femmes qui offre des rencontres pour lesbiennes. Ces rencontres ont lieu les lundis soirs aux deux semaines de 19h00 à 21h30, et sont animées par une personne ressource. Ces rencontres, qui se veulent un lieu d'échange, de ressourcement et d'information, s'intéressent aux réalités et aux conditions de vie des lesbiennes. Les rencontres sont en français. Un service de halte-garderie est disponible avec réservation faite une semaine à l'avance. Le centre est situé au **6032 St-Hubert (métro Beaubien)**. Téléphone **(514)277-7445**, télécopieur **(514)277-1689**

♦ Moi, **Nancy** 31 ans, ma conjointe **Chantal-Cindy**, 26 ans aimerions développer amitié avec des femmes lesbiennes ou couples dans les mêmes âges environs pour activités- discussions- partages d'expériences... Nous avons pas d'ordinateur et habitons loin de Montréal (**Terrebonne**), une 40aine de minutes. C'est difficile pour nous de se faire des amis où d'aller en ville souvent, nous aimerions communiquer par la poste ou par téléphone avec des gens qui sont dans la même situation que nous. **450-477-4505**.

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.qouv.qc.ca**.

◆ The **Open Book Library's** collection includes over 5500 books written by glbt authors or by authors who write about our communities. Some of these books are for children and adolescents. We are very proud that approximately half of our collection is in French. Much more information as well as online consultation of the book collection is available at our Web site www.ccglm.org/en-b. We are located at **2075 Plessis** (CCGLM) in the Village. Come visit us! Open Wednesdays and Fridays from 1-8 p.m. (514) 528-8424.

◆ Would you like to spend Sunday mornings with the **Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Congregation**? We're a warm, liberal, socially-active congregation in the West Island with a progressive program for children and teens, plus weddings, naming and dedication ceremonies etc. Services are mainly in English, but this is very flexible. We're at **202 Woodside Road in Beaconsfield** (rear entrance of Beaconsfield United Church). Web Site: www.luuc.org (site has map)

Tel: 514-695-3031; E-mail: lakeshoreuu@gc.aibn.com; Service Time: 10:30 a.m. See you there!

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. 20% of all subsequent fees will be donated to the LMA. **J. Freed**, (514) 489-8633, www.jfreed.ca

◆ **Furniture Restoration - Lise Kuhn Studio**

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