



NEWSLETTER - VOLUME XVII - No. II – December 2015

Sink or Swim?

By Gary Sutherland and Émilie Jouvin, co-presidents, LGBT Family Coalition

The LGBT Family Coalition has been serving our community for 17 years now but our financial situation has been slowly deteriorating in the past couple of years. We're to the point now where new solutions have to be found or certain activities curtailed.

To maintain our activities at current levels, the LGBT Family Coalition needs approximately \$150,000 a year. This sum covers salaries and honoraria, office expenses, group social activities and the public education and trainings that we carry out across the province. The sum of \$150,000 year is the amount we need to survive – not to grow, not to expand, not to innovate. Just to keep our head above water.

So here's what our budget looks like in a good year:

Memberships and donations from the LGBT community	\$20,000
Basic recurrent funding from the Québec government	\$70,000
Specific project funding (obtained from the Québec government through grant requests)	\$60,000

Austerity measures have hit our group and of the numerous grants that we applied for, only one single grant was accepted (by the *Bureau de lutte contre l'homophobie*, for a sum of \$32,000). The other grant proposals that we submitted all came back with the same letter: "The quality of your project is excellent, but due to budget cuts we cannot fund your project this year."

The math is pretty easy... By February 2016, we will already be \$16,000 in debt. For the 2015-2016 financial year, we're missing about \$28,000 to maintain our current activities.

The provincial ministries have promised to improve our recurrent funding since 2007. It hasn't happened yet and doesn't look like it's coming any time soon. What we dream of is to find 20 to 40 donors from our group of 1,400 families who could guarantee us a minimum of \$500 a year in donations.

A network of dedicated allies is what the LGBT Family Coalition needs to meet our needs and continue our important work.

And our accomplishments over the last 17 years have truly been phenomenal:

- Defending LGBT family interests at dozens of parliamentary commissions
- Providing information and workshops for future parents since 1998
- Training over 13,000 professionals located in 15 of the 18 administrative regions of Quebec on family diversity and ways to fight homophobia and gender based harassment

Québec society has evolved so much over the last years and legal and social acceptance for our families has expanded so much. The LGBT Family Coalition has spearheaded defense of our families and programs to promote family diversity and make sure our schools and other institutions are positive places for our children.

Reducing our activity level means saying no to the 40-50 workshops that we normally would carry out in Québec universities and Cégeps during the winter session.

Reducing our activities means that far fewer teachers and future teachers will learn about family diversity, homophobia and gender-based harassment this year.

Reducing our activities means that we might not be able to take on a new fight and intervene effectively with the government to support our members.

We've come too far to let that happen now.

We're contacting a number of provincial ministries, asking for meetings to present our case and hoping for some help in the short term to pay our bills. But unless we have a guaranteed source of recurrent funding we will have to greatly decrease our impact.

So who will be the first to throw us a life preserver and become a dedicated ally of the LGBT Family Coalition? Finding those 20 to 40 donors willing to provide a minimum of \$500 a year in donations will allow us to stay alive.

We've all needed the Coalition's work in the past, either to be able to legally form our families, to have access to the same services as anyone else in Québec, or to empower us to find our rightful place in Québec society. Now the Coalition needs you.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon,

Signed by the co-presidents, Gary Sutherland and Émilie Jouvin

Interested in writing for our newsletter? Send your articles at any time to info@famillesLGBT.org or by post to CF-LGBT, 110, rue Sainte-Thérèse, bureau 405, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1E6

News Briefs

Quebec News

September 20 - A gay Quebec man took to social media to share an image of his bruised and swollen face after he was beaten in the head with a beer bottle at a rodeo by a man who called him a homophobic slur.

Mathieu Grégoire, 21, was taken to the hospital following the attack, which left him with a black eye and a cut and swollen lip. Grégoire was attending the Festival Western de St-Tite in Quebec's Mauricie region. Grégoire was walking with his sister when a man whistled at her and made unflattering remarks, Grégoire said he wanted to defuse the situation so he told the man, in French, he thought he was good looking. "I looked at him and said 'you're super hot', said Grégoire, but in French, the language of Quebec, the word "chaud" is used to interchangeably to mean either "hot" or "drunk."

"The guy thought I was saying he was drunk, and that I was insulting him," Grégoire said. Grégoire's sister reportedly tried explaining to the man that her brother was complimenting him, but that was when they said the man started attacking. Grégoire said the man hit him in the face six times with an empty beer bottle and the last thing he remembered was hearing the man use a homophobic slur.

The Sûreté du Québec would not confirm whether it is investigating the attack.

September 28 - The Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP) has announced that it will modify its internal regulations so that all kinds of families can now benefit equally from the program. Sophie Beauchemin, spokesperson of QPIP's *Conseil de gestion* that administers the plan, declared that the organization will make their rules more flexible. This will help families where the child was born in another province or country.

In the case of gay men that start their families through surrogacy in a jurisdiction outside of Quebec where the laws are clear on surrogacy, this modification will allow both parents, that are registered as the legal parents on their child's birth certificate, to choose who will take parental leave, as in any other family, Beauchemin said.

QPIP will thus join other governmental agencies like RAMQ or Passport Canada in providing non-discriminatory services. The LGBT Family Coalition and the *Conseil québécois LGBT* congratulate QPIP for changing their rules to include all types of families. "It's important that all types of families are treated equally and that a couple can choose who stays at home during the first months of the baby's life", said Gary Sutherland, president of the LGBT Family Coalition.

October 1 - Trans activist Michelle Blanc reported on Facebook that she experienced transphobia at the hands of an *Accès Montréal* employee, in their Gay Village office. "The municipal employee called me 'Monsieur' six times. The first three times I corrected her with 'Madame'. The fourth time, I reacted and started swearing", Blanc said.

The city employee claims that "She wasn't doing it on purpose", but didn't apologize to Madame Blanc either. "I told her that this merits being reported to the Quebec Human Rights Commission, and she answered 'Sue me,' and then, 'I can't serve you, you should go see someone else' ", Blanc wrote.

Blanc subsequently filed a complaint with *Accès Montréal*. She said that she's used to this kind of reaction because of her deep voice, but that the employee lacked respect.

On top of a private phone call to Blanc, Montreal mayor Denis Coderre publicly shared his indignation on Twitter. "What you went through is unacceptable, Michelle. Transphobia should not be tolerated in any form."

October 1- In a historic step for Quebec, it is now much easier for trans people in the province to change their gender on official documents. In the past, one could only change their gender if they had sex reassignment surgery, but that is no longer the case. The new regulations mean medical requirements and doctors' notes are no longer necessary.

The Quebec government is proud of the change. "It's in effect today, it's really good news," said Quebec Justice Minister Stephanie Vallée.

The new rules are a big step forward, said McGill law professor Robert Leckey. "Instead of having a medical approach, all you need to do is a solemn declaration, and that has to be supported by someone who's known you for 12 months, who confirms you understand the seriousness of what you're doing," said Leckey.

Issues remain, said Leckey, for example the new regulations only apply to Canadian citizens. "You could be a refugee, recognized that you've been persecuted for being trans and the rules wouldn't allow you to get the change of sex designation you need to go about your life," he said.

Nonetheless the changes are being applauded by many other groups, like Gender Creative Kids Canada, a group that supports transgender youth and their families. "We're thrilled that this change has finally come about. It comes as a result of many, many years of work by transgender activists in Montreal and other parts of the province," said Kimberley Manning, a board member of the organization.

Still, the group said transgender minors should also be allowed to change their documents, something that the new law does not allow for. "This puts young people at incredible risk – who have on their passport, on their school identification papers – the wrong sex marker, and basically exposes them to the possibility of both discrimination and violence".

October 27 - The impending end of the government coverage for assisted procreation in Quebec has led to a dramatic increase in the number of *in vitro* fertilisations (IVFs) in the past year. In 2014-2015 alone, there was a record number of 10,150 IVFs reported.

November 10 - Bill 20, *An act to promote access to family medicine and specialized medicine services and to amend various legislative provisions relating to assisted procreation* has been adopted by the National Assembly. Although not all regulations are in place it appears that the adoption of Bill 20 will have the following consequences on the coverage of assisted-procreation services by the health insurance plan :

The program is now abolished except for simple inseminations. It is not clear whether or not anonymous sperm samples will continue to be covered by the plan. Sperm from identity-release donors must be paid for. A first reading would suggest that ovarian stimulation in the context of inseminations will also continue to be covered.

Also RAMQ will cover fertility preservation services, rendered to a person who is proven fertile, before any medical treatment involving a serious risk of genetic mutation to the gametes or of permanent infertility, or before the complete removal of a person's testicles or ovaries. This includes sperm and egg retrieval as well as storage of these gametes for a period of 5 years. These acts should apply for trans people who are medically transitioning and those who are undergoing chemotherapy.

IVF (*in vitro fertilization*) treatments will not be covered by RAMQ but those who are having a first child and who are under 42 years of age can benefit from tax credits according to their salaries: http://www.finances.gouv.qc.ca/documents/bulletins/en/BULEN_2015-6-a-b.pdf

Those who already began *in vitro fertilization* treatments before November 11th will be covered until the end of their cycle (when all harvested embryos are used or a pregnancy results – whichever comes first).

Also, embryo cryopreservation services and services required to freeze and store sperm, as part of the

services required for assisted procreation, continue to be insured services until November 11, 2018, provided they began before November 11, 2015.

There will be no psychosocial evaluations for people who receive gamete donations although the 1 hour visit with a psychologist will probably still be required.

There are still several questions remaining to clarify certain notions provided for in the law and in the regulations.

Canada News

September 2 - Parents can remove their kids from sex-education classes for religious reasons, but any requests for students to opt-out of learning about gay families or diverse gender identities won't be tolerated, says the director of Ontario's second largest school board — one that expects to be hard hit by protests over the new health curriculum.

The same day as anti-sex-ed rallies were planned outside Liberal MPP offices across the province, Tony Pontes was telling teachers and superintendents about the Peel board's tough stand, saying if parents have a problem with such strong support for equity and inclusion, the public system may not be right for them.

"We cannot — we will not — by action or inaction endorse discrimination," said Pontes, who cited Ontario's Human Rights Code as applying to people of all sexual orientation and gender identity. "Supported by legal opinion, bolstered by our core values, I would no more say yes to someone wanting a child excluded because of a discussion about LGBTQ than I would a discussion about race or gender."

Since the new curriculum was announced, opponents, made up mainly of different faith groups, have tried to derail it, labeling it age-inappropriate, radical and even immoral — arguing parents should be the ones providing such information, and at a time when they feel their children are ready. Thousands have taken part in several protests, and kept their children home from school for a week last May. Some even refused to allow their kids to participate in the anti-bullying "Day of Pink," believing it promoted homosexuality.

Parents are free to keep their children home from school at any time, but because equity is woven into all subject areas and may also spontaneously arise during classroom discussion, it is near-impossible for kids to avoid it. The government, meanwhile, has stepped up its promotion of the new curriculum, with YouTube videos airing on television over the month of September, as the school year starts up.

Sexual health and education experts said that the new curriculum is comparable to most other Canadian provinces. Ontario will join Alberta, Manitoba, B.C. and Newfoundland and Labrador in teaching the changes associated with puberty in Grade 4, for example. Ontario students will learn about sexually transmitted infections in Grades 7-8, similarly to students in P.E.I. (Grade 8), Newfoundland and Labrador (Grade 7) and Saskatchewan (Grade 6). Quebec is carrying out pilot tests on a potential sex education curriculum this fall.

September 17 - Allegations that the River East Transcona School Division discriminated against transgender elementary school student Bella Burgos will go to a Manitoba Human Rights Commission public hearing, her father says. The commission sent Dale Burgos an email saying staff believe there is enough evidence of discrimination to bring the case before an adjudicator and a public hearing, he said.

Dale Burgos says in 2014, Bella, then 8, was bullied by a parent at the school who told the transgender girl that she could not use the girls' washroom. Burgos said the school division didn't do enough to help his daughter. At the time, River East Transcona told his daughter to use a gender-neutral bathroom, which he said is unacceptable. The family took its case to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission after going back and forth with the school division over a draft policy.

The fact the Human Rights Commission is taking this next step is vindication, Burgos said "Most importantly ... it definitely justifies it and it almost feels like we've got somebody on our side, and it's a good feeling."

The date for the public hearing has yet to be set.

September 24 - Ontario lawmakers have approved a motion to remove the words 'mother' and 'father' from all government forms to "reflect the diverse nature" of families in the province.

Glenn Thibeault, the Liberal member of the Ontario legislature for Sudbury, asked that 'gendered' terminology be replaced with gender-neutral and inclusive language on 10,000 different provincial government forms. Birth certificates already allow two same-sex adults to be listed as parents, and all government forms should use inclusive language, said Thibeault.

His motion, which was approved in a voice vote, said gender specific words "including -- but not limited to -- mother and father" could be replaced with "parent or guardian" to better recognize the rights of LGBTQ parents.

October 2 – Just as Quebec is about to lose its government funded IVF program, Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins announced that Ontario will expand access to fertility services. Providing funding for in vitro fertilization (IVF) will make fertility care more accessible to LGBTQ prospective parents in the province.

Currently, Ontario funds fertility diagnosis and some treatments. The decision to expand access to IVF is informed by evidence which shows that funded IVF leads to better outcomes for children born through assisted human reproduction by reducing the number of multiple births.

This funding will help prospective parents make choices that support their health and their children's health. Funding for single embryo transfers will allow prospective parents to focus on making health care decisions, above financial decisions.

October 4 – Same-sex couples in Ontario say they shouldn't have to adopt their own children or get a legal declaration of parentage, and hope an NDP bill will modernize some out-dated regulations. New Democrat Cheri DiNovo will introduce a private member's bill to make birth registration services available to all LGBTQ families.

"Let's get rid of the red tape and give queer and trans parents the recognition they need to care for their children," said DiNovo. "It's not right that parents should have to adopt their own children, that's the simple reality."

Ontario's Children's Law Reform Act presumes a man and woman will be parents, which led to some troubling times for Kristi Mathers McHenry of Toronto when her wife developed serious heart problems while in labour. If her wife had passed away, Mathers McHenry realized she would not have automatically been considered the parent of her newborn daughter. "As I held her hand in the hospital, I faced not only the possibility that something could happen to my wife, but also the possibility that I might not be able to leave the hospital with our baby," she said.

In the end, mother and daughter were fine, and after leaving hospital, the family went to court to obtain a declaration of parentage. "Having to go to court and ask a judge to find that it was in my child's best interests for me to be her mother offended my principles, made me feel lesser," said Mathers McHenry. "The legal process was really stressful."

Joanna Radbord, a family lawyer who is preparing a Constitutional challenge of Ontario's birth law, also worked on the case that led to the province's recognition of same-sex marriage 12 years ago. She married her same-sex partner and had a baby, but still had to go to court to be recognized as a family.

Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia have updated their parental recognition laws, but "Ontario has not kept pace with changing times," added Radbord.

October 7 - The Conservatives have dumped Jagdish Grewal, a candidate in suburban Toronto who defended therapies that attempt to turn gays straight and who penned an editorial that referred to homosexuality as "unnatural behaviour" and heterosexuals as "normal."

"These comments do not reflect the views of the Conservative Party of Canada. We believe that all Canadians — regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation — deserve to be treated with respect and dignity," the Conservative Party said in a statement. "Mr. Grewal is no longer an official candidate for the Conservative Party."

Grewal, running in Mississauga-Malton, wrote an editorial in the Punjabi Post earlier this year entitled "Is it wrong for a homosexual to become a normal person?" He describes an NDP private member's bill passed unanimously in the Ontario legislature in June that removed public funding for services designed to "change or direct the sexual orientation or gender identity of a patient."

At a rally in the riding on Sept. 8, Conservative Leader Stephen Harper appeared on stage with Grewal and praised his work. "I can tell you this: through his newspaper and radio show, he urges all those who come to this country to embrace the values of freedom, democracy, of tolerance, and respect, the things that make our country such a great place to live," Harper told the audience.

October 21 - Even if no openly LGBT candidates were elected in Quebec in the federal elections, Canadian voters elected 6 openly LGBT candidates in other provinces. Liberal MP Scott Brison kept his seat in King - Hants, Nova Scotia and might even become a minister. Liberal Rob Oliphant also got his seat back in Don Valley-West, in Toronto, after a four-year absence, by beating the conservative incumbent. And New Democrat Randall Garrison kept his seat as well in Esquimalt- Saanich - Sooke, in British Columbia. Other LGBT winners: Randy Boissonnault (a rare liberal win in Alberta in Edmonton Centre); Seamus O'Regan (another liberal, in John's-Mount Pearl, Newfoundland); and Sheri Benson (elected under the NDP banner in Saskatoon West, Saskatchewan).

They replace defeated gay MPs Philip Toone and Dany Morin, who lost their seats for the NDP in Québec, and Craig Scott, who lost his NDP seat in Toronto.

October 22 - There is hope that a change in government in Ottawa will help eliminate barriers for gay men to donate blood. Men who have sex with men must be celibate for five years before giving blood in Canada, but some advocates, including the federal Liberal party, say that period is too long.

Current tests can detect most strains of HIV as long as the donor hasn't contracted the virus within 16 days of donation. But Dr. Mindy Goldman, the medical director of the Canadian Blood Services said there are some rare strains of HIV that take longer to show up. The blood service is asking for incremental change in the waiting period, decreasing the wait to one year starting in 2016.

During the election the Liberals said they would work with Health Canada and the blood agencies to reduce the wait time.

November 10 - The Facebook photo of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau posing with openly gay MP Scott Brison and his family has gone viral. Brison is a Nova Scotia MP who holds the position of the president of the Treasury Board. In the picture, he smiles with his partner, Maxime St-Pierre, and their twin daughters, Claire and Rose, one of which is held by the PM. The photo, uploaded by LGBT activist Laurent McCutcheon on Facebook, has gathered a significant number of likes on the social networking website and has been shared thousands of times since it was posted.

"Few countries in the world display such openness," McCutcheon wrote in the caption. He congratulated Brison and his husband with the twin girls.

LGBT Marriage News

September 3 – The left wing opposition party is elected in the **Faroe Islands** allowing for the possibility that same-sex civil unions be recognized in this territory of **Denmark**. The majority of Faroe Islanders are in favour of same-sex civil unions. Denmark was the first country in the world to legally recognize same-sex couples in 1989.

September 26 - A citizen of **Chile** and one of **Britain** become the first couple to marry in Chile after Great Britain authorized its embassies last year to celebrate same-sex marriage when one of the parties of the union is English.

October 15 - Members of the **Italian** Parliament begin heatedly debating a bill to legalize same-sex civil unions. The legislation, supported by Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, has already met with push back from conservative parties in the country, including the New Center Right, Renzi's coalition partner.

"It is not exactly equal to other marriages, which I would have preferred, but it is a bill that recognizes all social rights," said Sen. Monica Cirinna, the author of the bill.

Italy is one of the last nations in Europe to legalize some form of same-sex union. France, most of the U.K. and Ireland, to name a few, have all passed legislation legalizing some form of same-sex union. Italy has a large Catholic population and Vatican City, the seat of the Roman Catholic papacy, is located less than 10 miles from Rome.

The prime minister, for his part, continues to support gay rights, saying he hopes to have legislation on same-sex unions pass before the end of 2015. With that deadline fast approaching, however, and a lack of consensus in parliament, Renzi's goal may prove difficult to achieve.

October 22 -Slovenia's Constitutional Court gives the go-ahead for a referendum on whether to implement legislation allowing gay marriage, an issue that has divided the central European nation. The court's decision comes after parliament in March adopted a bill giving same-sex couples the same marriage rights as heterosexual couples.

A conservative group close to the centre-right opposition Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) and backed by the Catholic Church had contested the law. The group gathered enough signatures to trigger a referendum. Should more than 20 percent of the electorate take part in the referendum, and a majority of them vote against the law, it will eventually be scrapped.

October 22 - A law that allows same-sex couples to enter into civil unions in **Chile** takes effect. Vicente Medel Salazar and Esteban Guzmán Rioseco, a spokesperson for the Movement for Homosexual Integration and Liberation, a Chilean LGBT advocacy group, become the first couple to enter into a civil union in the South American country with their ceremony that took place in the city of Concepción. Roxana Ortíz and Virginia Gómez less than an hour later enter into their civil union at the Chilean Civil Registry and Identification Service office in Santiago, the country's capital.

The law grants cohabitation rights to both homosexual and heterosexual couples. The new bill will also allow couples – among other things – to inherit each other's property, join their partner's health plan and receive pension benefits. While the LGBT community in Chile still has to fight for the right to marry, many see this as the first step to gaining full equal rights for same-sex couples in the country.

The country maintains a ban on same-sex marriage and adoption, and has an unequal age of consent – but activists have pledged to push for full equal rights in the Catholic majority country.

October 27 - Italy's highest administrative court, The Council of State, rules that all cities in Italy must destroy any registries of same-sex couples married abroad. The fight against these registries was led by Interior Minister Angelino Alfano.

"Last year my circular banning the transcription of gay marriages contracted abroad drew controversy, sometimes even violent aggression and a hail of appeals. Now the Council of State has borne me out entirely: marriage between two people of the same sex is not contemplated under Italian law, therefore the transcriptions made by local mayors are illegal," Alfano says.

Meanwhile, a civil union bill has been introduced in Italy's parliament and could become law by 2016 if it overcomes opposition.

October 29 - Same-sex marriage is officially signed into law in **Ireland**, five months after the historic referendum took place. The Republic of Ireland overwhelmingly voted in favour of equality in May this year, in a public referendum on same-sex marriage. The government had pledged to legislate to permit weddings as soon as possible – but the plans were hit by delays due to a legal challenge to the ruling, and Parliamentary recess.

Senator Katherine Zappone called the signing "a defining moment" in Irish history. "It is a deeply emotional moment for those of us who have campaigned for so long," she said in a statement. This victory truly belongs to the nation, it is a moment for us all."

November 1 - Israel's High Court is petitioned by an NGO to legalise same-sex marriage. The High Court of Justice is petitioned by the Aguda, an NGO also referred to as the National LGBT Task Force. The documents claim that current laws discriminate against gay couples by stopping them from marrying, and in doing so are unconstitutional. According to the Aguda's petition, if the rabbinical court will not recognise same-sex marriages, they should be recognised by civil law. Lawyers for the Aguda argue that in accordance with previous rulings, the High Court has the authority to approve marriages in civil court.

November 17 - Ireland celebrates its first same-sex marriage after the country's new marriage equality legislation goes into effect. Cormac Gollogly and Richard Dowling, both 35, have been together for 12 years and the first same-sex couple to tie the knot in Ireland.

International News

September 2 (The Advocate) Pope Francis arrives in the United States in September for the World Meeting of Families. It's his first visit to the United States since becoming pope, and he'll be welcomed by U.S. Catholics with much different ideas than the **Vatican** about families. In a new study released by the Pew Research Center, American Catholics express openness to non-traditional families. In many cases, Catholics say families led by same-sex couples are just as good as the long-held Catholic ideal of a married man and woman.

The majority of American Catholics are open to children being raised by same-sex couples, with 43 percent saying same-sex couples as parents would be just as good as any other arrangement for raising children. Another 23 percent say the arrangement is acceptable but not ideal, while 27 percent find it unacceptable. In total, that's 66 percent of American Catholics supporting LGBT families.

September 3 (Reuters) A county clerk in **Kentucky** who refuses to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples on religious grounds was found in contempt by a U.S. federal judge for defying his order to do so and taken into custody. Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis was led away by U.S. marshals.

"The court doesn't do this lightly," District Court Judge David Bunning said in ordering she be taken into custody.

September 10 (Gay Star News) When it comes to LGBT rights and acceptance, **Thailand** is a leading force in Asia and the rest of the world. Right on the heels of news that the country's top university has introduced a mandatory class on transgender issues, a sweeping non-discrimination law has come into effect.

The 2015 Gender Equality Act, which was passed in parliament in March, makes discrimination against people based on gender identity or sexual orientation punishable by up to six months in prison and a fine of 20,000 baht (roughly \$550). An early draft included exemptions in education and religion, but they were removed before the bill's approval, making way for all-encompassing law that has now taken effect.

September 21 (Huffington Post) Argentina lifted its ban on blood donations from gay and bisexual men earlier this week, following a more than decade-long campaign by LGBT advocacy groups pushing for blood donation equality in the country. At a signing ceremony, Health Minister Daniel Gollán said the policy change was “scientifically and technically accurate,” and based on “a medical approach that replaces that old concept of ‘risk groups.’” Argentina can now “move toward a national blood system that is safe, caring and inclusive,” he said.

The country joins a growing minority of nations that has abolished similar blood bans. In countries such as Chile, Mexico, Spain and Italy, blood donors are assessed on individual risk rather than sexual orientation.

September 30 (Huffington Post) Kim Davis, a **Kentucky** county clerk, spent 6 days in jail after being found in contempt of court for refusing to issue marriage licenses citing a religious objection to gay marriage. Republican hopefuls Ted Cruz and Mike Huckabee stood by Davis on the day of her release: “Kim Davis should not be in jail. We are a country founded on Judeo-Christian values, founded by those fleeing religious oppression and seeking a land where we could worship God and live according to our faith, without being imprisoned for doing so,” Cruz said in a statement.

Critics say that Davis is breaking the law and violating her oath of office, but she has sworn to “faithfully execute” the laws as part of her elected office, which basically means she agreed not to intervene when her co-workers give a marriage license to homosexual couples but she is still sticking to her beliefs and won't give one herself.

Davis' lawyer, Mathew D. Stever, revealed his client had a 10-to-15-minute session with Pope Francis during his visit to the U.S. The meeting happened on at the Vatican Embassy in Washington.

October 6 (The Local ES) A **Spanish** court has ruled in favour of a lesbian couple who sued local authorities and a hospital that refused them the right to artificial insemination because of their sexual orientation. The court ruled that the hospital had “infringed” on their “fundamental right not to be discriminated (against) for their sexual orientation” and ordered it to pay the couple nearly €5,000 (\$5,600) in damages.

One of the two women began treatment in 2014 but the Madrid hospital where she was receiving it told her that she was excluded from the public program under a recent order from the health ministry. Under the ministry directive the treatment should only be granted to couples who had spent 12 months unsuccessfully trying to have a child through sexual intercourse, de facto excluding lesbian couples.

The court ruled that since the woman was “in a romantic relationship with another woman this criteria is impossible to fulfill and she is therefore a victim of discrimination.” It also argued that the Spanish law on assisted reproduction, which prohibits all discrimination, prevails over the health ministry directive.

October 11 (Huffington Post) Well, that was fast. Days after Campbell's Soup unveiled a new commercial featuring gay dads, a right-wing group notorious for getting worked up over everything from Toys 'R' Us to Chobani yogurt slammed the ad for “normalizing sin.”

“Obviously, Campbell's is sending the message that homosexual men are raising children, whom they wouldn't have if a woman wasn't involved, and they are OK with it,” One Million Moms wrote. Calling the commercial “a marketing decision [the company] will regret,” they urge readers to stop buying Campbell's products if the ad is kept on the air.

One Million Moms, which is a division of the **American** Family Association, has been particularly busy in 2015. Last month, the group slammed ABC's "The Muppets" for "weighing in on abortion and promiscuity" and featuring "sexually charged jokes." In June, they argued that Greek yogurt giant Chobani was "attempting to normalize sin" with a recent commercial that featured a same-sex couple.

Still, it's unlikely that Campbell's Soup will take One Million Moms' words as a legitimate threat anytime soon. The group's best-known boycotts, including one of JC Penney after the retailer hired Ellen DeGeneres as its spokeswoman, have had a zero percent success rate.

October 16 (The Advocate) The Obama administration helped bring attention to the petition in order to stop parents from subjecting their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children to conversion therapy practice. According to the **White House**, the controversial conversion therapy is dangerous and needs to be permanently stopped.

"We believe that conversion therapy for young people is not in their best interest, and the facts and the evidence supports that," said White House senior adviser Valeria Jarrett. "We would support, and have supported, making it illegal for young people."

The petition to ban conversion therapy in the country was spurred by the death of young transgender youth, Leelah Alcorn. The 17-year-old committed suicide after her parents made her go through the controversial therapy. The petition to stop the practice was named after the youth. It is called Leelah's Law.

October 23 (The Advocate) Two years after **Russian** president Vladimir Putin signed into law a nationwide ban on so-called gay propaganda, conservative lawmakers are considering making that law even more punitive for LGBT people, calling for additional fines and jail time for those who dare to come out in public.

The new bill is being drafted as an amendment to Russia's infamous ban on "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations," which currently imposes fines and censure for any person or agency making pro-LGBT statements in any venue that could be accessible to minors.

If the proposed amendment is signed into law, anyone who publicly declares a "'non-traditional sexual orientation' could be fined \$5,000 roubles (\$80) for 'demonstrating [their] own expressed sexual preferences in public places.'" Making such a declaration in a school, "cultural establishment," or government building could land the offender in jail for 15 days.

Since Putin signed the sweeping nationwide ban on so-called propaganda in July 2013, LGBT people in Russia and its territories have faced increasingly violent repression. Openly LGBT people have been arrested, social networking groups for LGBT youth have been shuttered, media outlets that report on LGBT people and issues have been fined, and the country's few remaining gay and lesbian bars have been raided, as the owners of those establishments and other LGBT people have fled the country.

October 27 (ELPAIS.com) A businesswoman, a female dentist and a female administrative manager have managed to turn the idea of a traditional **Brazilian** family on its head, after recently making their relationship official before a notary in Rio de Janeiro. "We are a family and our union is the product of our love for one another," said the businesswoman in an interview with the *O Globo* daily.

"I am going to get pregnant and we are preparing for this, including looking at it in financial terms. This legalization [of the union] is a way to prevent the baby, and us, from being left unprotected by the law," one of the three brides told the press.

The union marked the second time that a trio has tied the knot under Brazil's 2003 civil unions law, which has paved the way for legal recognition of same-sex partnerships. In 2012, two females – a cashier and an administrative assistant – decided to formalize their union with a male architect in São Paulo.

The three women, who have lived together for the past three years, signed a document that recognizes them as a family, establishes a prenuptial agreement, and gives them rights to make medical decisions for one another should any of them get sick.

According to the notary filing, they have agreed to allow the businesswoman to become pregnant through artificial insemination. The baby will take their three surnames. The brides also signed three wills that divide up their personal holdings in case of death.

Brazil's top courts have not ruled on the legality of these types of plural unions, so each case is based on decisions made by local authorities.

"The foundation of any family relationship is affection," said Fernanda de Freitas Leitão, the notary who presided over the "wedding ceremony. And these three women have everything to form a family – they have love, a strong relationship and they plan on having children".

There is a strong chance that public controversy will erupt over whether a child can have three legally recognized mothers at the same time.

November 4 (Global News) An ordinance that would have established nondiscrimination protections for gay and transgender people in **Houston** failed to win approval from voters. The Houston Equal Rights Ordinance was rejected after a nearly 18-month battle that spawned rallies, legal fights and accusations of both religious intolerance and demonization of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Supporters of the ordinance had said it would have offered increased protections for gay and transgender people, as well as protections against discrimination based on sex, race, age, religion and other categories. Opponents of the ordinance, including a coalition of conservative pastors, said it infringed on their religious beliefs regarding homosexuality. But in the months leading up to Tuesday's vote, opponents focused their campaign on highlighting one part of the ordinance related to the use of public bathrooms by transgender men and women that opponents alleged would open the door for sexual predators to go into women's restrooms.

Democratic Houston Mayor Annise Parker, who is gay, and other supporters of the ordinance had called this "bathroom ordinance" strategy highly misleading and a scare tactic.

The ordinance was initially approved by the Houston City Council in May 2014 but a lawsuit to have residents vote on the measure eventually made it to the Texas Supreme Court, which in July ordered the city to either repeal the ordinance or put it on the ballot.

News from the LGBT Family Coalition

UPCOMING MEETINGS

DECEMBER 2015

◆ SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6TH FROM 2 – 5 PM

MONTREAL: FOR ALL ADULTS AND KIDS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY: ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

THE LGBT Family Coalition, Gender Creative Kids and PFLAG-Montreal invite you to our annual holiday party! There will be activities and crafts for kids and adults alike, a fabulous magic show and, of course, a visit from Santa. For our buffet please bring along something good to share with others. You can bring anything you like in the categories of either **salad, main dish, dessert or beverage (e.g. juice or soft-drinks)**. Please do not bring anything with peanuts onto the premises because of allergies.

Location: Centre communautaire de loisirs Sainte Catherine d'Alexendrie, 1700 rue Amherst (Metro Beaudry), in the gay village.

◆ TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8TH at 5:30 P.M.

QUEBEC CITY: HOLIDAY PARTY

GRIS-Quebec, Alliance arc-en-ciel-Quebec. ATQ-Quebec and the Quebec-City Branch of the LGBT Family Coalition invite you to a Community Christmas Party! Snacks, music and fun for all !!

Location: 363, de la Couronne - bureau 202, Quebec (Quebec)

Please confirm your presence by e-mail: info@grisquebec.org

January 2016:

◆ WEDNESDAY JANUARY 13TH AT 7P.M.

MONTREAL: CONFERENCE RÉFORME DU DROIT FAMILIAL QUÉBÉCOIS : IMPACT SUR LA COMMUNAUTÉ LGBT

Location: UQAM, N-7050 du pavillon Paul Gérin-Lajoie, 1205 rue Saint-Denis

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED FLIER FOR MORE DETAILS

◆ SATURDAY, JANUARY 23RD AT 6 PM

QUEBEC CITY : AQUARIUM FESTI-LUMIÈRES

<http://www.sepaq.com/ct/paq/>

Activité extérieure hivernale

\$: 0-2 ans : gratuit, 3-17 ans: 5\$, adulte : 10\$, prix famille : 25\$ +tx

For more info please contact Mona Belleau : monabelleau@gmail.com

◆ SUNDAY JANUARY 24TH AT 9:30 A.M. – 11 A.M.

MONTREAL: GET-TOGETHER FOR YOUNG PARENTS

Discussion group for parents with young children (up to about 2 years old)

Discussion group for parents on the topic chosen by parents who are present

Espresso for the parents and snacks for all.

Location: L'espace café at the boutique La Culotte à l'Envers, 3162 Masson, Montréal, H1Y 1Y1

Please RSVP with Emilie ejouvin@hotmail.com or on the Facebook page of the Coalition

◆ WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27TH AT 7:30 P.M.

QUEBEC CITY: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS – PART 1: HOW TO FORM A FAMILY / LEGAL QUESTIONS

Location: Université Laval

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED FLIER FOR IMPORTANT DETAILS. ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

◆ SUNDAY JANUARY 31ST AT 11:00 A.M.

MONTREAL: BOWLING PARTY FOR LGBT FAMILIES AT BOWLING DARLING

Details to follow...

FEBRUARY 2016:

◆ **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH AT 7:00 P.M.**

MONTREAL: DISCUSSION GROUP ON HOW TO COME OUT KIDS ABOUT YOUR TRANSITION

Details to follow...

◆ **SATURDAY FEBRUARY 20th AT 10 A.M.**

MONTREAL: FAMILY SLEDDING ACTIVITY

Location: Pélican Park

Meeting place on the corner of boulevard Saint-Joseph and rue Molson in Rosemont

Bring your sleds and your energy !

◆ **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST AT 10 A.M.**

QUEBEC CITY: SLEDDING AND SLIDING AT MONT TOURBILLON

Details to follow...

◆ **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH AT 7:30 P.M.**

QUEBEC CITY: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS – PART 2: ADOPTING CHILDREN

Location: Université Laval

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED FLIER FOR IMPORTANT DETAILS. ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

BULLETIN BOARD:

◆ **La Marg'Elle** est un groupe pour femmes homosexuelles et bisexuelles affilié à la Maison des Femmes des Bois-Francis. Briser l'isolement, favoriser l'échange, l'identification et l'affirmation de soi.

Info: margelleboisfrancis@hotmail.com

www.lamargelle.spaces.live.com

819-758-3384

◆ **Dorshei Emet B'nei Mitzvah Program:** Do you have children entering grade 6? We offer a meaningful program in which children discover the relevance of their Jewish heritage. Dorshei Emet is a welcoming Synagogue to individuals and families of all backgrounds, and to interfaith and LGBTQ families. **514-486-9400 (Alys Geiger)**, www.dorsheiemet.com, or drop in anytime to Saturday morning Shabbat services, 10h00 to 12h15, and stay for a light lunch and meet some of the members!

◆ **Le Centre des femmes de Rivière-des-Prairies! 514-648-1030** - Nous sommes ouvertes aux lesbiennes! Si vous avez besoin de plus d'informations vous pouvez consulter notre site web : www.cdfrdp.qc.ca ainsi que le site de notre regroupement : www.rcentres.qc.ca/propos.html

◆ **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**

MISCELLANEOUS

◆ **Traducteurs, rédacteurs, etc.:** Nous sommes à la recherche de bénévoles pour la traduction française de ce bulletin. Toute contribution (même à raison d'une page ou deux par mois) est la bienvenue. Si vous êtes disponible, veuillez nous contacter : info@famillesLGBT.org

◆ **Batshaw Youth and Family Centres** is encouraging English speaking and bilingual gay and 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 **Open Book Library's** collection includes over 5500 books written by LGBT 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.

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@famillesLGBT.org or by post to CF-LGBT, 110, rue Ste-Thérèse, bureau 405, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1E6. 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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