



## **NEWSLETTER - VOLUME XVII - No. 1 – September 2015**

### **Coming up for 2015-2016**

*By Mona Greenbaum, executive director, LGBT Family Coalition*

Once again, at the beginning of the school year, I like to give our old and new members an overview of the LGBT Family Coalition, as well as a heads-up about important family-related issues in the year to come. After all, the well being of our community and of our families is at the centre of our mission.

The Coalition means different things to different people. For some, the LGBT Family Coalition is like an old family friend. Someone who has always been there for LGBT families. For you, our long time members, when you think of the group we are:

- the group that obtained legal rights for families with same-sex parents through our coordinated work in the national assembly;
- the group that pushed on the legislative, judicial and institutional levels to get access to fertility clinics and adoption through the mixed bank;
- the group that, every year, brings together a few hundred people for our mega sugar shack parties and giant picnics;
- the group that has brought visibility to our families through the hundreds of media interviews we've carried out over the years.

For those of you who are newer to the group we are:

- the group that organizes workshops and intensive weekends for future LGBT parents;
- the group that provides legal and social information as well as a platform for exchange about the uniqueness of our families through conferences, discussion groups and on-line resources;
- the group that participates in pride activities in the summer time;
- the group that carries out activities specifically for trans-parent families;
- the group that organizes fun, smaller-scale activities (roller derby, baby massage workshops, bowling at the Darling alley, cycling, camping trips, hockey games, etc.).

What many of you may not know is that:

Every year we carry out workshops with thousands of professionals, especially those working in schools, to help them to fight against homophobia, transphobia and gender-based harassment and to promote the inclusion of family diversity.

We are currently doing workshops in all 12 Faculties of Education across the province. Our new web-based resources ([www.famillesLGBT.org/tools](http://www.famillesLGBT.org/tools)) are of great value to a whole new generation of teachers who will be better equipped to deal with homophobia, transphobia and gender-based harassment and will better understand the reality of our families. This work will obviously have an impact on the school experience of our youth.

And because we are the only advocacy group for LGBT families in the whole province (and one of only 2 in Canada) here are some of the important dossiers that we will be working on this year:

*Assisted procreation, surrogacy and adoption:* A committee within the Ministry of Justice has just published a 616-page report recommending the reform of family law. Surrogacy, assisted procreation, and adoption are some of the important issues that are covered in this document. The recommendations of this report may eventually become draft legislation and we will definitely need to follow these issues to ensure that any new laws reflect the diversity of our family structures and the specific needs of our children.

*Government Action plan against homophobia:* Since 2003 the LGBT Family Coalition has worked directly with government representatives to develop and implement concrete measures to address the needs of our community. The first government action plan 2011-2016, the fruit of this work, is coming to an end and although there have been a number of achievements, there are still many areas where work needs to be done. This year, the Coalition will be directly involved in the creation of the next 5-year plan.

*Trans Rights:* Trans families are currently confronting problems in terms of access to parenthood (for example, discrimination in fertility clinics) as well as obtaining legal documents that reflect trans family realities. Aside from working to advance laws and educate health and social service workers, we will be involved in a legal motion to change the way trans parents are designated on their children's birth certificates.

As always we will be keeping a close watch on all of these issues and will participate in media interventions, consultations and lobbying to have our voices heard.

And last but not least...

*Funding:* For the immediate future, our focus needs to be the funding of our own organization. With each passing year, as our organization grows, our financial needs are greater and greater. Although we continue to meet up with a variety of government officials and agencies to impress upon them the need for an increase in our funding, we are unfortunately being squashed by "austerity measures". So we desperately need your help. Paying your membership promptly through our site <http://www.familleslgbt.org/membership.php?lang=en> and (even better!) adding on a donation, are ways to really help us to continue carrying out our important work. Your help, as always, lets us continue the important work for our families and especially for our kids.

Hope to see you this year!

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**Interested in writing for our newsletter? Send your articles at any time to [info@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.org) or by post to CF-LGBT, 110, rue Sainte-Thérèse, bureau 405, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1E6**  
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## **News Briefs Quebec News**

**June 8** - Quebec's family law regime should be reformed to better reflect new social realities, a government-mandated committee composed of 10 experts has reported. The group has released a 600-page report with 82 recommendations that call for sweeping reforms to family law.

Among them is a mandatory parental regime, which would set out obligations between spouses with children born outside of marriage, following a split. Currently only married spouses have mutual obligations upon the break-up of a relationship. The report suggests that a parent at an economic disadvantage due to the end of a relationship would have the right to claim compensation for time spent taking care of children instead of pursuing a career. Compensation would be a fixed amount and not alimony paid out by the former partner.

"The child is a common responsibility of the two parents," said Alain Roy, a notary who served as chair of the expert panel. "The economic disadvantages that come from being a parent should not be taken on by only one parent, regardless of what happens during a common-law relationship or a marriage."

The panel of experts was convened following the high-profile split of a woman and her common-law partner, a prominent Quebec businessman who argued he should not have to pay alimony because they were never legally married. It was widely known as the *Eric vs. Lola* case, because the pair was not identified under a court order to protect the identities of their three children. The case went before the Supreme Court of Canada where, in January 2013, the top court ruled by a slim majority that Quebec does not have to give common-law spouses the same rights as married couples.

A committee of experts was established in April 2013 and the final report looks at family law as a whole — including the rights and obligations of spouses and parenthood.

The report suggests that couples without children be left to define the contractual arrangement they would like to live under, whether in a common-law relationship or a regular marriage. The experts also recommended repealing the concept of a civil union, which has been around since 2002.

Additionally, the committee recommends repealing the confidentiality of adoption files and recognizing the right of children to know their origins — whether by adoption or medically assisted procreation.

The report also recommends officially recognizing contracts drawn up between surrogate mothers and couples looking to conceive. Currently, contracts drawn up between couples and surrogates have no legal value. Nothing prevents either of the parties from changing their minds at any point in the process, without suffering any consequences. Article 541 of the Quebec Civil Code reads: "Any agreement whereby a woman undertakes to procreate or carry a child for another person is absolutely null." That can leave serious questions hanging in the balance: What happens to the child? Who is responsible?

The report suggests guidelines for putting legal contracts in place between surrogates and the intended parents. Quebec Justice Minister Stephanie Vallée said in a statement that the report will help guide the government as it reflects on changes to be announced in the coming months to modernize the laws.

**June 10** - The Quebec government has tabled two long-awaited bills to the National Assembly and announced an action plan to fight violent extremism in the province.

Bill 62, on religious neutrality, proposes a number of measures that must be taken into account when considering whether to grant an accommodation on religious grounds and, provides that public services must be both delivered and received by persons with their faces uncovered.

Bill 59, proposes the prohibition of hate speech and speech inciting violence that are engaged in or disseminated publicly that targets people sharing a common characteristic identified as prohibited grounds for discrimination in the Quebec Charter of human rights and freedoms.

Public Security Minister Lise Theriault and Immigration Minister Kathleen Weil have also detailed a 59-point plan aimed at preventing, detecting and acting against those either considering or on the verge of committing acts of ideological violence. The so-called "action plan" to fight violent extremism includes a police squad to monitor social media platforms and an anti-radicalization centre based in Montreal.

Bill 59 could potentially impact the LGBT community in that it would give Quebec's human rights commission the ability to launch its own investigations against people it suspects of committing hate speech and inciting violence. The bill seeks to create Quebec-specific hate speech laws outside the Criminal Code, with anyone found guilty facing a hearing before the human rights tribunal and a fine of up to \$10,000. The commission enforces Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

The bill would also allow the government to remove all or part of public funding from schools if employees "tolerate" hate speech inciting violence. The LGBT family Coalition presented a brief regarding Bill 59 on August 18th, 2015 at the National Assembly.

**August 24** – A Montreal woman is the first trans person to win joint custody of her child in a battle that took place before the courts. Quebec’s Superior Court determined that the woman - a health care professional who began her transition 8 years ago – can assume custody of her nine-year-old even if the latter is somewhat uncomfortable with her parent’s transition and the other biological parent doesn’t accept the situation.

In his decision, Judge Pierre Nolet of the Superior Court said that, according to expert reports, each parent had the same parental capacities. His decision was based on the best interest of the child and the importance of her maintaining a relationship with both of her parents. The decision is an important jurisprudence for the trans community that should reassure parents who are considering transitioning.

## Canada News

**June 25** - Along highways and atop buildings in Port Louis, Mauritius, billboards featuring lesbian and gay couples and a trans woman ask passers-by to end discrimination and hate. On the metro in Kiev, Ukraine, ads with a rainbow-coloured telephone beckon LGBT people who need help and support to call into a free hotline. In San Jose, Costa Rica, police receive sensitivity training for dealing with the LGBT community.

The common thread in these LGBT rights initiatives? All of them received funding from the Canadian government through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), a \$14-million pot of money distributed through Canadian embassies to non-governmental organizations to promote human rights in areas of particular concern to the Canadian government. In the 2014-15 fiscal year, the government chose to include LGBT human rights and inclusion as a priority area for funding.

In all, 44 organizations in at least 34 countries around the world received \$886,000 from the Canadian government to promote local projects. At present, it is unclear if the Canadian government intends to continue funding LGBT rights programs through the CFLI. Its inclusion in the 2014–2015 program came under the tenure of former foreign affairs minister John Baird, who resigned from politics earlier this year.

**July 7** - The Senate has permitted Bill C-279, on transgender rights, to die on the order paper. Debate on passage was deliberately delayed by government Senate leader Claude Carignan, effectively killing it.

NDP MP Randall Garrison's private member’s bill would have added gender identity provisions to both the Criminal Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act, extending protection against hate crimes to transgender individuals.

The tortuous trajectory of C-279 says much about the dark side of our society. A similar bill (C-389) was introduced to the House of Commons by former MP Bill Siksay in 2009, and managed to pass third reading in 2010, but Parliament was dissolved before it could reach the Senate. It was reintroduced in September 2011 by Garrison, and was passed in 2013 with 18 Conservatives supporting it, including the late Jim Flaherty and then-minister John Baird. But Stephen Harper strongly opposed it, as did the vast majority of the Conservative caucus. The bill then went to the Senate, where it sat gathering dust for 20 months. Then it was effectively gutted by Conservative senators earlier this year. With Senator Don Plett leading the charge, the Senate amended the bill to exempt such venues as prisons, crisis centres and public washrooms from its protection, based upon the outmoded notion that trans women are really just males in drag.

In short, after six years of hard work to enshrine rights and protections for transgender people in the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code, the Senate quashed the bill. Thanks to unelected legislators, trans people remain vulnerable to open discrimination and even violent physical assault in Canada just because of who they are, unprotected by rights legislation and Criminal Code hate crime provisions.

**July 23** - Nova Scotia's Department of Community Services has launched a social media campaign in an effort to encourage members of the LGBT community to consider becoming foster parents. The campaign, called Foster Parents: It Takes All Kinds, kicked off during Halifax Pride week.

"We've noticed over the past number of years that there seems to be some sort of misunderstanding by folks in the community — specifically the gay and lesbian, bisexual and transgender community — that they may not be appropriate or they may not be able to apply to be a foster parent," said Joanne Bernard, minister of community services. We really wanted to correct that misinformation and put it to rest."

Bernard says Nova Scotia's foster parents are aging and the need is for "responsible adults" to come forward. She says all ethnicities, backgrounds — regardless of relationship status — should consider applying.

## LGBT Marriage News

**May 26 - Canada's** celebrates the 10-year anniversary of same-sex marriage legislation.

**June 4** - A federal court strikes down **Guam's** (U.S. island territory in Micronesia, in the Western Pacific) ban on marriages between partners of the same sex.

**June 12** - Some court officials will be allowed to refuse to perform gay marriage duties in **North Carolina** now if they cite a "sincerely held religious objection. Senate Bill Two becomes law, with the state House voting to override the governor's veto of the bill. The law says court officials who disclose a "sincerely held religious objection" and recuse themselves for marriage responsibilities must stop performing all marriage duties for both gay and heterosexual couples for at least six months. The chief District Court judge or the county register of deeds — both elected officials — would fill in on marriages if needed.

**June 13** - In a non-binding ruling, the **Mexican** Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation decides that it is unconstitutional to deny same-sex couples the right to wed. The justices do not decide whether to overturn bans in individual states but offer a "jurisprudential thesis" to Mexico's states. The thesis states that any state law which considers the purpose of marriage to be "procreation, and or defines (marriage) as celebrated between a man and a woman, is unconstitutional."

Judges and courts in individual states can now consider the thesis if a marriage case is tried in their jurisdiction. A handful of Mexico's 31 states have already legalized marriage equality, as well as the nation's capital and largest metropolis, Mexico City,

**June 20** - Hundreds of thousands of **Italians** gather in Rome to demonstrate against gay unions and the teaching of gender theories in schools. The protest comes as the Italian senate examines a civil union bill, which Prime Minister Matteo Renzi wants to see go to a vote in the coming weeks. The call for Italy to keep pace with its western European neighbours on the issue has grown stronger since Ireland voted overwhelmingly in favour of gay marriage in May.

**June 22** - The **Pitcairn Island**, which is home to 48 people, has passed a same-sex marriage law, despite there being no same-sex couples there waiting to wed. The Pitcairn Island, which is sometimes considered the world's smallest country by population, actually passes the law which came into effect on 15 May, but due to technical difficulties with its official website, was not publicized online.

**June 24** - Gay couples in **Northern Ireland**, sick of their politicians refusing to pass marriage equality, are now going to challenge the ban legally. Grainne Close and Shannon Sickles as well as Chris and Henry Flanagan-Kane are seeking a judicial review of the ban, hoping to equalize marriage laws across the UK.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK and Ireland that does not currently recognize same-sex marriage. Northern Ireland has rejected the proposal of same-sex marriage four times.

Gavin Boyd, the policy manager of LGBTI rights group the Rainbow Project, says the LGBTI community in Northern Ireland has been left with no other route than pursuing equality by legal means. Boyd says: 'The Northern Ireland Assembly don't seem to be capable of passing same-sex marriage by themselves, so we have to bring it to the courts. We know courts tend to be the most effective way of harmonizing laws across the UK.'

**June 26** - History is made at the **U.S.** Supreme Court as the highest court in the land rules that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to legally marry, in **all 50 states and Puerto Rico**. Outside the high court, pro-marriage equality advocates cheer the decision, and the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington sing the National Anthem.

Word of the 5-to-4 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* spreads like lightning across all forms of social media, as the news travels around the world in seconds. The announcement of the decision sends dozens of couples to courthouses, clerks and local government offices in hopes of tying the knot.

In its ruling, the Court determines that the U.S. Constitution does indeed require states to allow same-sex marriages, effectively striking down existing bans in the 13 states and Puerto Rico, and requires every state in the nation to recognize marriage equality.

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the opinion, holding that the 14th Amendment requires a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex: "The nature of injustice is that we may not always see it in our own times. The generations that wrote and ratified the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment did not presume to know the extent of freedom in all of its dimensions, and so they entrusted to future generations a character protecting the right of all persons to enjoy liberty as we learn its meaning."

Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Antonin Scalia dissent, joined by Justice Clarence Thomas and Justice Samuel Alito.

President Obama makes the following announcement in the White House Rose Garden: "Our nation was founded on a bedrock principle, that we are all created equal. The project of each generation is to bridge the meaning of those founding words with the realities of changing times. Never-ending quest to ensure those words ring true for every single American. Progress on this journey often comes in small increments, sometimes it's two steps forward, one step back, propelled by the persistent effort of dedicated citizens. And then sometimes there are days like this when that slow steady effort is rewarded with justice that arrives like a thunderbolt. This morning the Supreme Court recognized that the Constitution guarantees marriage equality. In doing so they have reaffirmed that all Americans are entitled the equal protection of the law."

Jim Obergefell, the named plaintiff in the case, tells reporters outside the court: "Now at long last Ohio will recognize our marriage, and most important, marriage equality will come to every state across our country. It's my hope that the term 'gay marriage' will soon be a thing of the past, that from this day forward it will simply be, marriage, and our nation will be better off because of it. "The state of Ohio, the state in which I've lived worked and paid taxes for most of my life, continued to fight my right to list my name on John's death certificate. No American should have to suffer that indignity. That's why John and I, and the 30 plaintiffs who are a part of this lawsuit decided to fight. "The four words etched onto the front of the Supreme Court — Equal Justice Under Law — apply to us, too."

"Today I could not be prouder of my country, more grateful for the memory of my late husband John, and more indebted to the incredible lawyers, advocates and fellow plaintiffs who made this landmark day possible. The fact that the state I have long called home will finally recognize my marriage to the man I honoured and cherished for more than 20 years is a profound vindication—a victory I'm proud to share with countless more couples across the country. Thanks to the Supreme Court, a period of deep injustice in this nation is coming to a close, but it's also clear today that there is still so much work to do. As long as discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people is tolerated—whether in the seeking of a marriage license, the pursuit of fairness on the job, or the fight for equal treatment at a restaurant or business—we haven't truly guaranteed

equal justice under the law. But today's victory proves that anything is possible, and I could not be more hopeful about the capacity of this country to change for the better."

The landmark decision reverses a November 2014 ruling by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, OH, which upheld marriage bans in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee.

**July 8** - In an attempt to legalize same-sex marriage, 455 LGBT **Japanese** people and their allies file a request with the Japan Federation of Bar Associations asserting that their nation's refusal to recognize gay marriage is a violation of their human rights.

**July 9** - Gay couples flock to civil registry offices in **Chile** to schedule the first same-sex civil unions since they were approved in the country back in April. The first same-sex civil ceremonies will take place in October, and while the LGBT community in Chile still fights for the right to marry, many see this as the first step toward gaining full equal rights for same-sex couples.

**July 21** - The **European Court of Human Rights** condemns **Italy** for failing to provide legal recognition to same-sex couples and said the country should introduce some form of civil union for homosexual couples. Italy is the only major western European country that does not recognize either civil partnerships or gay marriage.

## International News

**June 1 (The Advocate) U.S.** magazine Vanity Fair has scooped the world with an exclusive sneak peek of Caitlyn Jenner, formerly known as Bruce, posing for the legendary out photographer Annie Leibovitz. The magazine referred to Jenner with she/her pronouns, Jenner herself shared a tweet confirming that she prefers the use of female pronouns.

Buzz Kissinger, the Pulitzer Prize-winning contributing editor of Vanity Fair, was given unfettered access to Jenner and her family to chronicle what the magazine calls "the tensions, traumas, and courage that shaped Caitlyn into the woman you see today."

Leibovitz's portraits of Jenner were taken in her Malibu home. Jenner spoke movingly about her journey: "If I was lying on my deathbed and I had kept this secret and never ever did anything about it, I would be lying there saying, 'You just blew your entire life.'" In a video featured on Vanity Fair's website, Jenner explains to those who recall her Olympic triumph what she has endured since the 1976 Games: "I was probably at the Games because I was running away from a lot of things... very, very proud of the accomplishment, I don't want to diminish that accomplishment. The last few days of doing this shoot was about my life, and who I am as a person. It's not about the fanfare. It's not about people cheering in the stadium. It's not about going down the street, and everybody giving you, 'Thattaboy, Bruce!' pat on the back. This is about your life. Bruce always had to tell a lie. He was always living that lie. Everyday, he always had a secret. From morning 'til night. Caitlyn doesn't have any secrets."

**June 25 (LGBT Weekly)** The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation of the **U.S.** has highlighted a new study that found "the literature on outcomes for children of same-sex parents is marked by scientific consensus that they experience 'no differences' compared to children from other parental configurations." Co-authored by professors from the University of Oregon and the University of Colorado at Denver, the study reviewed 19,000 studies and articles from between 1977 to 2013.

"This new research is yet another nail in the coffin of the outrageous arguments used to deny our LGBT families the legal equality, fairness, and respect we deserve," said Ellen Kahn, HRC Director of the Children, Youth & Families Program. "The perception or attitude that same-sex parents and families are not good enough, or 'less than,' is what truly hurts children, not the fact that they have two moms or two dads. When same-sex parents are faced with the scorn of homophobic opponents who repeatedly claim that children need a 'married mother

and father,' let us remind them that it is precisely their behaviour – their false claims about our families and their anti-LGBT rhetoric that are hurting children.”

**June 4 (ILGA News)** The government of **Colombia** has simplified the procedure for correction of sex on official documents. From now on a simple notarized document will be enough, much like what you would do when any person wants to change their name. This eliminates the necessity of going through a judicial proceeding in which what the magistrates could ask for varied from physical examinations to determine if applicants had undergone the process of reassignment to psychiatric evaluations.

In the words of the Minister of Justice, Yesid Reyes: “Either of these tests were profoundly invasive for the right to intimacy and started from an inadmissible prejudice. The construction of sexual and gender identity is a matter that does not depend on biology: it’s much more than that and that is what we are recognizing with this law.

**July 3 (Time Magazine)** **France’s** highest court has granted legal recognition to children born of surrogacy, in a major turnaround that will make their daily lives easier and could lead to greater acceptance of new forms of families. The *Cour de cassation* ruled that, while surrogacy will remain banned in France, children born abroad through this practice will now be legally recognized and will be granted birth certificates and immediate means to prove their French citizenship.

Until now, surrogate children were deprived of any legal connection to their parents, or any civil status in France. The *Cour de cassation* had repeatedly refused to give surrogate children any legal recognition, saying they were born abroad from a “fraudulent process.” They were considered as children born from unknown legal parents, since their foreign birth certificates weren’t recognized. Unlike other children born abroad to a French parent, these children couldn’t get automatic ID cards or passports, or register for state health care or other services.

Many hope that this ruling will increase the options for infertile and same-sex couples in France. Europe’s top human rights court last year ordered the country to change the law on surrogate children, saying France’s refusal to recognize them was “an attack on the child’s identity, for which descent is an essential component.” The top judges had to take into account the European decision. They found that their previous case law was contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights, and so decided to allow the transcription of the foreign birth certificates into the French civil status.

Two separate cases leading to the new ruling involved a gay couple and a single man who had gone to Russia to have babies through surrogate mothers. The *Cour de cassation* said that the French birth certificates will mention the biological fathers in these two cases. The mothers listed on the birth certificate will be the surrogate women who gave birth to the children. There is still no legal recognition of non-biological fathers.

**July 11 (Washington Blade)** The head of a **Paraguayan** LGBT advocacy group attended a meeting with Pope Francis in the capital of his South American country. Somosgay Executive Director Simón Casal was among the representatives of 1,600 Paraguayan civil society organizations who met with the pontiff in Asunción.

Casal said that Francis did not “directly” refer to LGBT-specific issues, but “he did mention others in which they are included.” Media reports indicate the pontiff was sharply critical of Paraguayan Catholic officials. “There are no people of first, of second or third class,” said Francis, according to a tweet that Casal posted to his Twitter account after the meeting. “Dignity is for everyone.”

The Paraguayan Episcopal Conference invited Casal and other LGBT rights advocates to attend the meeting. The activist was the only LGBT advocate who accepted the invitation.

**July 13 (Huffington Post)** In a 5-2 win over Japan that blew up TV ratings, the **USA** women’s soccer team had won the World Cup trophy in a dominating fashion. Having the women’s World Cup get so much attention

brought female athletes to the forefront of conversation. They saw an amazing performance from a team of women who not only found common ground, but also embraced their differences.

At the end of an incredible game, forward Abby Wambach rushed to the stands to kiss her wife in front of over 50,000 people. It was the visibility of a champion. The message clearly sent: You can be gay, and still compete at an elite level.

**July 14 (Globe and Mail)** The executive committee of the Boy Scouts of **America** has unanimously approved a resolution that would end the organization's blanket ban on gay adult leaders and let individual Scout units set their own policy on the long-divisive issue. Units sponsored by churches opposed to the change could maintain the ban if they choose.

In 2013, after bitter internal debate, the BSA decided to allow openly gay youth as scouts, but not gay adults as leaders. Under the new resolution, local scout units would be able to select adult leaders without regard to sexual orientation — a stance that several scout councils have already adopted in defiance of the official national policy.

For a variety of reasons, the Boy Scouts — like several other major youth organizations — have experienced a membership decline in recent decades. Current membership, according to the BSA, is about 2.4 million boys and about 1 million adults.

**July 14 (UN News Centre)** The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) expressed deep concern over attacks and incitement to violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in **Turkey** and has called on the authorities to take active measures to combat homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination.

“In the past two weeks alone, reported incidents include the appearance of posters in Ankara encouraging the murder of LGBT people; a violent homophobic attack against a group of young gay men in Istanbul; as well as rape, assault and robbery against Kemal Ördek, a human rights defender and founder of the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association,” OHCHR spokesperson Rupert Colville told reporters in Geneva, Switzerland.

He went on to say that the Office is “further concerned about allegations that in the last case, police officers trivialized the attack, used discriminatory language, tried to dissuade the victim from filing a complaint, and did not provide protection from additional threats by the alleged perpetrators.”

In addition, Mr. Colville said, these incidents follow reports that the police used unwarranted force against individuals who were peacefully assembling and participating in the 13th Istanbul LGBT Pride Parade.

**July 17 (Huffington Post)** Just two months after **Ireland** legalized same-sex marriage, the country is now the fifth country (Argentina, Denmark, Malta and Colombia are the 4 others) to recognize a person's self-identified gender. This newly approved gender recognition bill allows transgender people over the age of 18 to change their gender without state or medical intervention.

**July 23 (Huffington Post)** **U.S.** Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.) introduced the Equality Act, marking the next major fight for the LGBT community after the Supreme Court legalized marriage equality in the U.S. The legislation would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to add sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected classes, which currently consists of race, color, sex, religion and national origin. In other words, the bill would protect LGBT people nationwide from discrimination in credit, education, employment, housing, federal financial assistance, jury service and public accommodations.

As its authors have acknowledged, the bill has little chance of passing in the current GOP-controlled Congress, but they hope its introduction will start a dialogue that will eventually lead to passage.

The Equality Act also fills some other longstanding gaps in the Civil Rights Act. Title II of the 1964 law, for example, bars discrimination in public accommodations - businesses like restaurants and movie theaters - on the basis of race, color, religion and national origin. So, for instance, a restaurant can't turn a diner away just because she happens to be black. But the law doesn't prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex - even though sex discrimination is barred in many other sections of the law. The Equality Act would add sex, along with sexual orientation and gender identity, to all areas of the Civil Rights Act. The bill would also widen the definition of a public accommodation. Currently, the list reflects what was popular in 1964, specifying that places like a "lunch counter" or a "soda fountain" can't discriminate. The Equality Act would broaden the category to reflect modern times by covering nearly every entity that provides goods, services or programs.

**July 23 (Reuters)** A gay couple from the United States said their lives were being "destroyed" after a Thai surrogate mother refused to sign papers allowing them to take their baby out of Thailand. The controversy is the latest over surrogacy in **Thailand** after several cases last year including accusations that an Australian couple abandoned their Down Syndrome baby with his birth mother, taking only his healthy twin sister back to Australia.

In the latest case, Gordon Allan Lake and his Spanish husband, Manuel Valero, say Thai surrogate Patidta Kusolsang, who is not the baby's biological mother, decided she wanted to keep their baby, Carmen, as the couple was preparing to leave Thailand. Patidta "had issues" with the couple's sexual orientation, said Lake, and did not show up at the U.S. embassy in Bangkok in January to sign Carmen's passport application and give them the papers needed to leave Thailand.

"We have been here six months and our lives are being destroyed," Lake told Reuters. "Our families have missed out on the first six months of Carmen's beautiful life."

Thailand has been a popular destination for foreign couples seeking surrogacy services, partly because of loose regulations and low costs compared with some other countries. But following last year's surrogacy scandals, Thailand passed a law in February that bans foreigners from seeking surrogacy services. The law does not come into effect until July 30 and Lake and Valero are not in violation of Thai law for commissioning surrogacy last year.

**July 23 (The Local)** After two decades as the best-selling publication for homosexuals in **France**, the debt-ridden magazine *Têtu* has been liquidated. "Everybody has been laid off. That's a dozen people, including five journalists," said editor-in-chief, Yannick Barbe.

*Têtu* (the title translates as 'stubborn') was founded by business tycoon Pierre Berge, the long-time lover of fashion guru Yves Saint Laurent. It operated in the red from the beginning. Barbe had said the magazine suffered from a divisive debate in French society over gay marriage and adoption. The issues made advertisers and potential investors "nervous".

**July 25 (Time) U.S.** President Barack Obama nudged African nations to treat gays and lesbians equally under the law, a position that remains unpopular through much of the continent. Obama's **Kenyan** counterpart responded by calling the matter a "non-issue" for his country. Obama tackled the sensitive issue on his first full day in Kenya, the country of his father's birth. He drew on his own background as an African-American, noting the slavery and segregation of the U.S. past and saying he is "painfully aware of the history when people are treated differently under the law."

"That's the path whereby freedoms begin to erode and bad things happen," Obama added during a joint news conference with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta. "When a government gets in the habit of treating people differently, those habits can spread."

Kenyatta was unmoved, saying gay rights "is not really an issue on the foremost mind of Kenyans. And that is a fact." A number of Kenyan politicians and religious leaders had warned Obama in outspoken terms that any

overtures on gay rights would not be welcomed in Kenya, where gay sex is punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

Obama's visit to Kenya — the first by a sitting U.S. president — has been long sought by this East African nation where he is widely considered a local son.

**July 30 (Reuters)** An ultra-Orthodox Jewish man stabbed and wounded six participants, two of them seriously, in the annual Gay Pride parade in Jerusalem with police saying the suspect was jailed for a similar attack 10 years ago.

About 5,000 people celebrating the event were marching along an avenue when a man jumped into the crowd, apparently from a supermarket, and plunged a knife into some of the participants, witnesses said. "We heard people screaming, everyone ran for cover, and there were bloodied people on the ground," Shai Aviyor, a witness interviewed on Israel's Channel 2, said.

It was the worst attack in years on the event in Jerusalem, a divided city where the religious population is more prominent than in other parts of **Israel** and highlighted the tension nationwide among disparate social groups.

Police said they arrested the suspected perpetrator, an ultra-Orthodox man. Spokeswoman Luba Samri said he was the same assailant jailed for the stabbing of three marchers at a similar Jerusalem event in 2005. Israeli media said the suspect had been released from prison several weeks ago.

Police and medics said the attacker wounded six people. Two were taken to hospital in serious condition, including a young woman.

**August 2 (Huffington Post)** An **Israeli** hospital spokeswoman says a teenage girl stabbed by an anti-gay extremist in an attack on Jerusalem's gay pride parade has died. Hadar Elboim of Hadassah hospital said the 16-year-old succumbed to her wounds and that her organs will be donated.

**August 4 (AP) Jamaica's** LGBT community held its first gay pride celebration, a weeklong observance that was previously almost unthinkable in a Caribbean country long described as the one of the globe's most hostile places to homosexuality. Events in the capital of Kingston included a flash mob gathering in a park, a dance party, an art exhibit and performances featuring songs and poems by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Jamaicans.

Gay rights activists said the peaceful events are a clear sign that tolerance for LGBT people is expanding on the island even though stigma is common and longstanding laws criminalizing gay sex between men remain on the books.

**August 8 (Time)** A year after a law punishing homosexual acts with life in prison was annulled after strong international pressure, hundreds of **Ugandans** gathered for a gay-rights march along the shores of Lake Victoria. About 400 people, some trying to mask their identities by covering their faces, turned up for the march in Entebbe, southwest of the Ugandan capital Kampala.

Homosexuality remains illegal in Uganda. Social attitudes toward the LGBT community have also grown increasingly negative in recent years. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has even encouraged individuals to report any "suspicious" homosexual activity.

**August 12 (El Pais) Mexico** continues to make progress on equal rights for homosexuals. The National Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation has extended adoption rights to gay couples, having acknowledged the intention to do so in June's historic ruling in favour of same-sex marriage. The latest decision by the country's highest court declares an article in Campeche state law that bars common-law partners – whether heterosexual or homosexual – from adopting minors to be unconstitutional.

The nine-to-one vote in favour paves the way for Mexico to enshrine this right at the federal level. From now on, any appeal on the grounds of unconstitutionality regarding the issue will be met with this official recognition of the legal right to adopt. The Court said the revoked article unleashed “discriminatory effects against people” in domestic partnerships and that the core of the article violated the fundamental right to start a family.

**August 27 (ABC News)** Gay and lesbian groups have said the New South Wales Government is sending a message of intolerance by stopping a documentary on same-sex parenting from being shown in public schools. The film, *Gayby Baby*, chronicles four children who have gay parents and how they navigate their way through life. It was to be the centrepiece of a campaign to educate schoolchildren about same-sex families as part of Wear it Purple Day, and has prompted backlash among conservative groups and some sections of the media. Dozens of schools across **Australia** were set to show the film simultaneously, including about 20 in New South Wales.

But an article in Sydney's Daily Telegraph newspaper stirred up controversy about the film and the New South Wales Government intervened and called off the screening. The ban was said to have been prompted by complaints from parents but reports have emerged that none were actually made to the schools.

## **News from the LGBT Family Coalition**

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

#### **SEPTEMBER 2015:**

##### **◆ TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 1ST FROM 12:15 – 3 :00PM**

##### **MONTREAL: CONFERENCE ON SURROGACY AT THE INRS: LES RELATIONS ENTRE LES PARENTS D'INTENTION, LEUR ENFANT ET LEUR SURROGATE: LA GESTATION POUR AUTRUI À LA LUMIÈRE DES ENJEUX LÉGAUX, ÉCONOMIQUES ET CULTURELS (EN FRANÇAIS)**

This conference will be presented by Jérôme Courdurières (Université de Toulouse) and followed by a workshop animated by Michelle Giroux (Université d'Ottawa) entitled : À la lumière des enjeux entourant la gestation pour autrui : quel encadrement juridique pour l'avenir?

**Location:** Centre – UCS de l'INRS, Montréal // salle 1106 // 385 rue Sherbrooke est, H2X 1E3 // Métro Sherbrooke, sortie rue de Rigaud En visioconférence à l'INRS-Québec sur réservation uniquement // salle 2324 // 490 rue de la Couronne, Québec, G1K 9A9  
Entrée libre.

##### **◆ SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5 STARTING AT 12 P.M.**

##### **QUEBEC CITY: PRIDE COMMUNITY DAY**

Come visit our kiosque on the rue St-Jean!

##### **◆ SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 6 AT 11H30 A.M.**

##### **QUEBEC CITY: FAMILY PICNIC AT THE PLACE D'YOUVILLE**

For LGBT families and our allies. Picnic lunches available for sale on the site! Organized in collaboration with the Alliance arc-en-ciel.

<http://www.arcencielquebec.ca/activites/fete-arc-en-ciel/programmation/>

##### **◆ SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 19 FROM 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.**

##### **LAURENTIANS: JUNGLE MAGIQUE/ INDOOR PLAYGROUND FOR KIDS**

<http://www.junglemagique.com/french/jungle.php>

**For more info and to reserve please contact Claudy Harvey: 819-430-3955 or [claudyharvey@hotmail.com](mailto:claudyharvey@hotmail.com)**

##### **◆ SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 19 FROM 10 A.M.**

##### **QUEBEC CITY: APPLE-PICKING AT THE GENEST FARM**

<http://www.fermegenest.com>

418-831-9967

2091, Marie-Victorin, Saint-Nicolas

\$: very affordable, you pay only for the products you consume

**For more info please contact Mona Belleau: [monabelleau@gmail.com](mailto:monabelleau@gmail.com)**

◆ **SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26 FROM 11 A.M. TO 3 P.M. (RAIN DATE: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27)**

**MONTREAL: FAMILY PICNIC AT PARC LAFONTAINE**

The meeting place is the northeast corner of the park, near **Rachel and Avenue Emilie-Duployé**. The picnic area is right near the children's playground. Our get-together will start at 11 a.m.

*N.B. Snacks and drinks will be available but please bring your own lunch. If you'd like you can bring food to share with others, music, games and/or a picnic blanket.*

**OCTOBER 2015:**

◆ **SATURDAY OCTOBER 17 AT 9 A.M.**

**QUÉBEC CITY: FAMILY ACTIVITY – RECRÉOFUN – AMUSEMENT CENTRE**

<http://www.recreofun.com/fr>

**Lieu: 1289, avenue Jules-Verne, L'Ancienne-Lorette**

**For more info please contact Mona Belleau: [monabelleau@gmail.com](mailto:monabelleau@gmail.com)**

◆ **SATURDAY OCTOBER 17 AT 11 A.M.**

**HALLOWEEN ACTIVITY: PUMPKIN PICKING AT THE LABONTÉ ORCHARDS**

**(See attached flier for directions and details)**

**NOVEMBER 2015:**

◆ **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> 9:30 A.M. – 11 A.M.**

**GET-TOGETHER FOR YOUNG PARENTS**

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

Songs and stories for kids with a 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](mailto:ejouvin@hotmail.com) or on the Facebook page of the Coalition**

◆ **TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10 AT 7 P.M.**

**MONTREAL: CONFERENCE ON BILL 35 AND TRANS RIGHTS**

**See attached flier for more details**

◆ **SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14 AT 9:30 A.M.**

**QUEBEC CITY: FREE PLAY AT AN INDOOR GYM**

**Details to follow**

**For more info please contact Mona Belleau: [monabelleau@gmail.com](mailto:monabelleau@gmail.com)**

◆ **SATURDAY NOVEMBER 21 AND/OR SUNDAY NOVEMBER 22**

**INTENSIVE WEEKEND IN MONTREAL FOR FUTURE LGBT PARENTS (IN FRENCH)**

**Advanced registration is necessary: (514) 878-7600 or [info@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.org)**

**Please note: the number of places is limited (see attached flier for more details).**

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**BULLETIN BOARD:**

◆ **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.dorshei-emet.com](http://www.dorshei-emet.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](http://www.cdfrdp.qc.ca) ainsi que le site de notre regroupement : [www.rcentres.qc.ca/propos.html](http://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**

♦ **\*\*\*Couple and family therapy - ON MEDICARE\*\*\*** The McGill University Sexual Identity Center (MUSIC) will be hosting graduate level trainees in Social Work and Marital and Family Therapy for the upcoming academic year. These junior professionals will take on families and couples while being supervised by the specialists at MUSIC. Services will be free of charge and available weekdays and some evenings. Anyone interested should call 514-934-1934 ext. 43585 and leave a message. The Intake nurse will get back to you in a few days.

♦ **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](http://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.

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**The bulletin board is a free forum for members to communicate amongst each other. If you want to post an announcement in the next issue please send it to us at any time to [info@famillesLGBT.org](mailto: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.**

