

The Rainbow Times

Year 1, Vol. 3 • March 1-15 2007

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Your LGBT News Connection in Western Mass., parts of Connecticut and Vermont

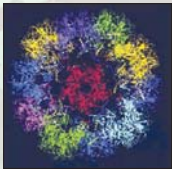


TRT Queer Justice's Atty. Jennifer Dexter discusses adoption issues faced by same-sex couples and how to cope with the law, asked from TRT readers. Send her your questions!

See Page 5

Queen Latifah: As she plays a challenging role of an HIV positive wife and mother as she does in HBO's 'Life Support.'

See Page 8



TRT's LGBT Health Doctor Renee Lang talks about HPV and the risk that it presents for both men and women. It is more risky than what you think!

See Page 4

Don't miss any shows, any LGBT events, or even meetings of your favorite groups. Submit your free listings to be published online and in print.

See Page 10

TRT Calendar
Out & About!



That's a Music Player? TRT Just Tech Column this time on the amazingly Small iPod Shuffle. So small you can clip it on your clothes, and still listen to an incredible sound!

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Rep. Coakley-Rivera uncovers "Racial Slurs" Page 5

Hartford bill prohibits gender discrimination Page 5

"The uncountable:" An epidemic of homeless LGBT youth, part 3

By: GRICEL M. OCASIO
TRT Publisher

Jose knew at 9 years of age that he was gay. For this specific youth, referred to as Jose to protect his identity, the knowledge of being gay developed into a series of events that eventually left him homeless, without a family and with very little help. This part III story of TRT's LGBT Homeless Youth: An Uncountable Epidemic focuses on this specific youth, his short life and the vast number of experiences that he

endured along the way. Help came in the form of compassion from strangers, friends, the system, etc.

Jose managed to survive at his grandmother's house, but when she passed away, the 13-year-old went to live with his aunt in Holyoke, Mass. His stay at his aunt's house was short-lived, according to Jose. The "news" heard at breakfast time about the disclosure of his sexual orientation threw Jose into what he says was an uncontrollable fear.



"She heard I was gay from another community member," Jose said. "She said I was an abomination to this earth and that I was going

to burn in hell. Because she had been so vocal with her feelings about gay people I didn't tell her. I thought, I don't have my grandmother, I don't have my mom, all I have is this

See Epidemic Page 6

Wal-Mart Supercenters to open in Western Mass.

By: NICOLE LASHOMB & LINDSAY HURTEAU
TRT Editor & Writer Respectively

CHICOPEE, MA—Due to what seems to be an increase in customer demand; a new Wal-Mart Supercenter will open in Chicopee Mass. during the fall of 2007, according to a Wal-Mart senior management member.

"Our company's customers in the Western Mass. area have certainly told us loud

and clear that they want the one stop shopping convenience at the Wal-Mart price," said Christopher N. Buchanan, Senior Manager, Public Affairs, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

The expansion of Wal-Mart stores into Supercenters is not merely confined to the Chicopee borders, but will incorporate other cities/towns in Western, Mass as well.

See Wal-Mart Page 3



From left to right: Karen Johnston, Mark Carmien, and Heidi Norton-Smith.

Photo courtesy of J.M. Sorrell

Status of marriage rights in MA: A town meeting

By: J.M. SORRELL
TRT Correspondent

NORTHAMPTON, MA—Nearly 40 people met at the Unitarian Society in Northampton on Sunday, February 11, 2007 to express feelings about the possibility that same-sex marriage may cease to be a legal right in

Massachusetts. In the adjacent room were many of the children of those gathered for the event.

Organizers included Karen Johnston, Jennifer Bryan, Mark Carmien, and Heidi Norton-Smith.

See Marriage Page 3

Street Sense: What are your opinions of President Bush's new plan for reform in Iraq?

"It'll never work. I'm a veteran of World War II, and I've never seen anything like this. Iraq is in total chaos! I would do what Senator Murtha said: 'Bring the troops back at once!' How can it [Iraq] be solved? I know how to stop it—deploy the troops! It'll be stopped overnight."

Frank Tobin, Holyoke



"I think the people that are in Iraq need relief. I think that if middle class people see their children getting drafted they'll do something to end the war, and I don't think that it's fair that the same people are going back over, being called up over and over again."

Margaret Bergman, Nantucket



"I think we don't need to be in Iraq reforming anything. I think we already did what Bush said we were supposed to do. I look at it as another ploy to push democracy on another country and to finish what his father, Bush senior, started—an economic land bridge between the countries."

Nathan Brown, Northampton



EDITORIALS

Romney undermines and insults same-sex marriage once again

By: NICOLE LASHOMB
TRT Editor

The 2008 presidential hopefuls on each side of the fence have hit the campaign trail in the hopes of achieving what each is seeking so desperately for: the inauguration for the presidency.

Most recently, Massachusetts' own Mitt Romney was in South Carolina addressing a considerably small crowd of 175 people at a private club. According to the Associated Press, he stated: "Every child in America deserves a mom and a dad. We've got to have marriage before we

have babies if we're going to have parental involvement in our schools."

Interestingly enough, according to Romney, because a child has a married mother and a father, it is to be assumed that each of the parents will be taking an active role in the child's education or life for that matter. The reality is that not all biological parents do! Just because a child has a mother and a father, does not mean that they will responsible and active parents. Look at the states' foster care system!

There are over 11,000 kids in the Massachusetts system that need to look to other non-biological parents for the support, com-

mitment and love that their birth parents were not able to provide for a variety of reasons.

And, how does having marriage before babies ensure that there will be parental involvement in school? Other than in Massachusetts, same-sex marriage is not recognized in the U.S. However, I know that same-sex parents are incredibly involved in their children's lives and in education too. Romney's theory doesn't take that into consideration, does it? Where does divorce come into the equation here? After all, the fact is that 50% of marriages in the United States end in divorce. So,

according to Romney, does that mean that those parents will not be involved in their children's education after their divorce takes place? It is absurd!

Time and time again, studies upon studies indicate that single parents,

same-sex parents, and heterosexual parents each rear successful children given that the parents provide a safe, enriched and loving home for their children. Yet, we still come back to the political games revolving around our marriages, our lives, and our

commitment to our families, and the divisive abhorrence from the far right conservative wing. The political undermining is insolent, but what is even worse is the ignorance that corroborates it all.

Letter to the Editor: Define what makes a person gay?

I just picked up a copy of your newsletter at a local Laundromat. *Having a forum not only allows constituents to share their ideas, but, as well, it provides an organ of communication for social movement. Congratulations!*

I do have a question that, perhaps, one of your columnists may be willing to address, nevertheless. It

is: Regarding one's "sexual" orientation, what difference does the gender, so-called "race," income level or any other orientation make, if, once you are with the type of person to whom you claim to be "oriented," you wish that you weren't there? In other words, can the complexities of creating mature personal relationships be trivialized so easily (which really brings about issues of so-called LGBT youth)?

Moreover, in a society

where greed is the main virtue, why power and sexual greed aren't considered an origin of the homosexual movement? After all, prisons are certainly "homosexual" communities. Don't you agree?

Finally, perhaps, it may be instructive for TRT columnists and others to come up with criteria that define just what makes a person "gay." Dig? Peace.

Sincerely,

G. Djata Bumpas
Northampton, MA

Love, rights and ... the rest of it

By: J.M. THE JP
TRT Columnist

On Monday, February 19, 2007 at midnight, New Jersey made history in the continuing struggle for LGBT civil rights. All rights afforded to opposite sex married couples in New Jersey will now apply to civil-unionized same-sex couples who reside in the state (with the notable exception of those nasty federal laws).

Same-sex couples (who reside in New Jersey) who were married in Massachusetts, Spain, Canada and Holland and those who had civil unions in Vermont or Connecticut are automatically recognized in New Jersey.

Despite the language,



J.M. the JP

this state's new law has more in common with the Massachusetts same-sex marriage law than any other state. For one thing, it came about as a Supreme Judicial Court decision with a directive to the legislature to enact the law within 180 days—just as it did here.

This decision was unanimous (unlike the 4-3 vote here) with the only dissent and oral argument around the issue of allowing the legislature to

choose the language. The two judges who spoke to the meaning of full equality in language and intention were both Republican appointees (wow!). In interpreting fair and equal treatment, they wanted nothing less than the term "marriage."

New Jersey may have learned from the heinous and puzzling backlash that we have experienced here. While applying "marriage" remains a debate, using "civil union" in New Jersey (while providing same-sex couples with the full rights of marriage) has met with the approval of at least 63% of the public, according to most polls.

Is it possible that they will not experience the interminable and excruciating pain that we have suffered at the hands of the

bigoted people who think of themselves as the arbiters of morality in Massachusetts?

Using different language is akin to riding in equally comfortable (but separate) buses. The stigma of such second-class status allows the mainstream to continue to marginalize us—albeit in a kinder way. Knowing what we know, would we trade-in our use of the term "marriage" for the feeling of relief that this right will not be taken away?

**J.M. Sorrell is a lesbian, an elder advocate and a Justice of the Peace. She wants to hear from readers (or is that just asking for a lot of trouble?), and the opinions expressed here are solely hers although she deludes herself into thinking they should be everyone's.*

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COVER STORIES

Wal-Mart from Page 1

"A relocation [of Wal-Mart] is planned for Hadley, MA which would relocate the existing Discount Store to a Supercenter at the Hampshire Mall," said

Marriage from Page 1

Johnston stated that the goal of the meeting was for people to be able to speak on both a personal and political level about the impact on the community and the detriment that would ensue if the rights were lost.

Also in attendance were Joe McCoy, Western Massachusetts Coordinator and Amy Bello, Field Director for MassEquality.

Several themes reverberated as people rose one by one to address the group. The need for "straight allies" to engage in the ongoing battle to preserve same-sex marriage was mentioned by several speakers, including JoAnne Brown, a native of South Hadley, who said through tears, "We must mobilize our straight friends. I email them to remind them that they stood up at my wedding 10 years ago, and I need them now."

One such ally, Phyllis Marx of Amherst, was present. She noted that she has been happily married to a man for 35 years, and that this civil rights issue is important to her. She wants to "channel her anger into activism."

Others expressed a similar sentiment as they spoke to the group.

Coupled with that was an incredulity that complacency is too alive and well in the Northampton area.

Mark Carmien, the owner of Pride & Joy

Buchanan. "The Planning Board in this area will be taking up this matter in the upcoming months."

With the Wal-Mart momentum propelling forward and with no intention of slowing down, the residents of Western Mass. are

Book Store, reminded the group about a campaign to save the domestic partnership ordinance in Northampton eleven years ago. The vote was lost by a mere 87 votes. Carmien wondered, "Was apathy responsible..." when so few LGBT voters showed up to cast a vote in that decision? He said that only when it was too late did friends and acquaintances express surprise and then remorse for not being a part of the voting process.

Many in attendance were parents who voiced great passion for the personal affect the end of same-sex marriage rights would have on their children. One speaker stated that this would not "protect children in any way but would actively harm them to have our rights revoked." Heidi Norton-Smith spoke about her personal experience with her son, Avery. He had been watching the news coverage, and asked his mom, "Are we still going to be married?" [if there are no longer same-sex marriage rights in Massachusetts] "As a parent," noted Heidi, "I need to speak out."

Several educators were amongst those who attended the event. Heather Ellis described her huge appreciation for living in Massachusetts after she and her partner experienced difficulties as teachers in Connecticut. She now teaches 10th and 11th grad English in South Hadley, and she stated, "Conversations with young people are impor-

mixed in their opinions of the Wal-Mart renegade.

In a random poll conducted by TRT, approximately 80% of those interviewed voiced their opposition to Wal-Mart's expansions while 20% were in favor of such an addition to the

tant. They are often more accepting than their adult counterparts." Her spouse, Lisa Krieger, then spoke to her awe of how open-minded people are in this area, but cautioned that it may be accompanied by complacency. She said, "The supporters' voices need to stronger than the haters' voices."

The youngest speaker was a first year UMass student who said she came to listen but also felt the need to speak. She spoke to "knowing what it's like to be different." Although she had never met an LGBT person who identified as such prior to going to college, the speaker conveyed that she was teased in middle school and always vowed to stand up for people who are mistreated. "Today is my first time being with same-sex couples, and I just see human beings, not differences."

After the testimonies, Amy Bello and Joe McCoy addressed the group to update everyone about the current initiatives for MassEquality. With 142 current legislators supporting same-sex marriage, the organization is seeking to win the support of 12-15 additional legislators in order to successfully defeat the measure at a Constitutional Convention which will most likely take place in the spring or summer of 2007. For more information about what you can do to support the efforts locally, visit www.massequality.org or call (617) 878-2300.

communities in Western Mass.

"I just like it because it's cheap," said Colleen McManus, Needham, Mass.

However, Mark Primeaux of Northampton shares a considerably different opinion.

"I hate Wal-Mart. I used to live in a small town in Texas as a kid—about 12,000 people," said Primeaux. "They built a Super Wal-Mart that literally put half the town out of business. All of the small businesses went out of town."

Contradictory to TRT's findings, Buchanan says that Wal-Mart has been well received in Western Mass. and that opposition to its coming is sparse.

"Typically, our opposition is mostly comprised of a vocal minority, many of who wind-up shopping at our stores seeking always low prices, quality merchandise and convenience which our stores consistently provide," said Buchanan.

"No matter where Wal-Mart goes, people will drive to it," said Judy Johnson, Charlemont, Mass. "There is no Wal-Mart in Greenfield, but just because there's not a Wal-Mart in Greenfield does not mean people will shop downtown. They'll drive to a Wal-Mart ...



Northampton, New Hampshire, or Vermont."

"More than 127 million customers shop at Wal-Mart in the U.S. each week," said Buchanan. "We certainly appreciate our loyal and always growing Massachusetts customer base."

Despite the fact that Wal-Mart has received a below par score of 65% according to the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index, Buchanan claims that Wal-Mart stores in Massachusetts and elsewhere reach and respect the LGBT community at large.

"At Wal-Mart, one of our core beliefs is respect for the individual," said Buchanan. "As a company, we are reaching out to the GLBT community as part of our ongoing commitment to nondiscrimination and diversity, just as we are reaching out to multiple other groups. This naturally helps us better connect with the customers we serve and also broadens the pool of talent we need to run our business. It is simply the right thing to do

at many levels. Wal-Mart is committed to serving communities and its employees no matter what race, gender, or sexual orientation."

In addition to Western Mass. residents, Buchanan's statements apparently do not reflect what Wal-Mart represents to other New England residents as well.

"Wal-Mart is a corporation that doesn't pay their workers well at all," said Rachel Chasse, Vernon, CT. "They abuse their cleaning people, they hire illegal immigrants and don't pay them well, they're evil and they close small businesses."

The expansion of the Chicopee Supercenter is expected to reach completion in the Fall of 2007.

"The expansion project will add a full-service grocery store to the existing general merchandise store," said Buchanan. "Wal-Mart would certainly like to better serve Western Mass. by providing the convenience and savings of Wal-Mart Supercenters."

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LGBT HEALTH

HPV: The Silent Invader: A Risk for Women and Men

By: Dr. RENEE LANG, ND
TRT Medical Writer

What is HPV?

HPV, a group of viruses containing over 100 different strains, causes warts on the body. HPV strains cause both genital and anal warts, and general body warts, usually on the hands and feet. The strains causing general body warts do not cause genital and anal warts, and vice versa. Because over 30 of the 100 strains spread via sexual contact, HPV is considered an STI (sexually transmitted infection).

HPV may lie dormant in an individual for years before any symptoms arise. Alternately, symptoms may never show up. This irregular pattern makes it difficult to accurately assess infection rates. Additionally, no cure for HPV exists. The virus may remain in a person's system for months to years. Some people spontaneously get rid of it, while others keep it dormant. Stress and immune health play a role in the life cycle of HPV.

Cervical Cancer and HPV

HPV may cause abnormal changes to the cervix which may lead to cervical cancer. In most cases, the cervical changes resolve without medical treatment. However, two strains, HPV16 and HPV18, cause

60% and 10% of cervical cancers respectively. Other HPV strains account for the majority of the remaining cases. Basically, all cervical cancer results from HPV infection. That being said, only rarely does HPV-induced cervical changes actually result in cancer.

Cervical HPV infection rarely causes symptoms. Women often find out they're infected after getting a routine pap smear. The pap smear is the best tool for preventing cervical cancer. Cervical cancer rates dropped by 40%, since 1973, due to the introduction of accessible pap smears for women. Cervical cancer rates continue to drop by about 4% each year.

The recent release of the HPV vaccine may prevent even more cases of cervical cancer. However, vaccinated women still need to get a Pap smear at least every three years because the vaccine is not 100% effective.

Anal Cancer and HPV

HPV also causes anal warts and cellular changes to the anal mucosa which may result in anal cancer. The incidence of anal cancer is higher in gay men than in the general population. Anal cancer risks include HPV infection, HIV infection, being older than 50, multiple sexual partners, having receptive



Dr. Renee Lang, ND
anal intercourse, cigarette smoking, redness, swelling, and soreness of the anal area, and anal fistulas.

Though most individuals with HPV infection are asymptomatic, anal cancer often presents with significant symptoms. Symptoms include bleeding from the anus or rectum, pain, pressure, or itching in the area, discharge from the anus, presence of a lump, and a change in bowel habits. Anyone with these symptoms should see their physician for a complete work-up.

Although anal pap smears exist, routine administration has not yet been implemented. Clear evidence that anal pap smears prevent cancer and improve outcomes does not yet exist. Research continues to investigate the utility of routine anal pap smears for high risk individuals. That being said, I highly recommend that individuals with mul-

tipl risk factors (see above) get tested.

Can two women spread HPV between them?

HPV spreads via skin-to-skin contact including skin-to-toy-to-skin contact. This means that lesbians can spread HPV to each other via genital to genital contact, touching the genitals of a partner and then your own, and sharing sex toys without disinfection or condom use.

About 20 million people have an HPV infection at any given time and over 6 million new cases occur each year. 50% of men and women contract an HPV infection at some point in their life. Male rates, artificially low due to inadequate testing, probably equal rates for women.

In the past, many health care providers understressed HPV risk for lesbians. New research indicates that cases of HPV in lesbians exceed previous

calculations. Even women without a history of intercourse with men are at risk. The pervasiveness and silent nature of HPV necessitates awareness on everyone's part.

All women should get a pap smear at least every three years, preferably with a reflexive test for HPV strains if abnormal results appeared. The recommendation for pap smear testing in women includes beginning to test age 21 or within three years of initiating sexual activity.

My brother is gay and he said that men can also contract HPV; is that accurate?

As stated above, HPV spreads via skin-to-skin contact. Men spread the virus via genital contact, genital-anal contact, non-disinfected toys, and touching the genitals/anus of a partner and then your own. HPV infects the anus, penis, and scrotum of men.

Many men with HPV infection are asymptomatic. HPV silently resides in the body and transmits to others. HPV can no longer just be considered a concern for women. HPV exists in the anal canal of up to 95% of HIV infected gay men and 65% of gay men without HIV. Though still relatively rare, anal cancer incidence continues to grow and affect the lives of both men and women.

Prevention

The only 100% HPV prevention occurs with abstinence from all sexual activities. Few members of our society would entertain this option. Though we can't completely prevent HPV, transmission can be reduced with condom use, wearing gloves if touching genitals, limiting the number of sexual partners, hygienic use of toys, and staying in a monogamous relationship.

CDH announces grants to support community projects

NORTHAMPTON, MA—Cooley Dickinson Hospital, CDH, is pleased to offer a chance to help area residents put their ideas on community health into action.

Through Cooley Dickinson's Healthy Communities Committee, a subcommittee of the hospital's board of trustees, CDH is offering 30 mini-

grants of up to \$5,000 each to support community projects aimed at making the community healthier.

Philip A. Heywood, vice president of planning and business development, invites businesses, community, civic organizations and neighborhood groups to apply online at www.cooley-dickinson.org (See Healthy Community

Grant Application Quick Link to view the application.)

Examples of accepted uses include creating a community health program, growing an organic garden for a food pantry, forming a neighborhood health group or a tenant association, or offering caregiving education.

Grant applications are being accepted through mid-March, and awards will be made in early spring. Email proposals to: Rebecca_schneider@cooley-dickinson.org, fax (413) 582-2942, or mail to the Public Relations Office, 30 Locust Street, Northampton, MA 01060.

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QUEER JUSTICE

After Divorce: Are there any parental rights for same-sex couples?

By: ATTORNEY JENNIFER L. DEXTER*

TRT COLUMNIST

Q. My partner of fourteen years and I are getting a divorce. During the marriage I gave birth to our daughter, what rights, if any, does she have to our child?

A. Presumptively, your partner has the right to co-parent your daughter with you, even after the dissolution of the relationship.

The possibility of her gaining custody is real although probably slim. During the divorce process, one of the issues that will be addressed is custody, visitation and support of any minor chil-

dren of the relationship. In *E.N.O. v. L.M.M.* 429 Mass. 824, 711 N.E.2d 886 (1999), a case involving visitation and custody of a minor child upon the dissolution of a same-sex relationship, the Court of Appeals found that the non-biological parent has a right to continue to co-parent the child even though she did not have any biological ties to the child. Massachusetts General Laws chapter 208 section 28 allows Massachusetts courts to grant custody in a judgment of divorce to "some third party" if it seems expedient and for the benefit of the children. Massachusetts General



Attorney Jennifer Dexter

Laws chapter 209C section 5 allows persons "standing in a parental relation to the 'child' or the child to maintain complaints to establish visitation or custody of a child. One thing to remember is that there are many factors

taken into consideration when determining custody and visitation of a minor child. Some of the factors the court will consider include: a joint decision to have the child, the existence of a parenting agreement, and the de facto parent having resided with the child for a significant period of time, having participated in raising the child, having been held out to others as a parent to the child, and having contributed to the financial support of the family. If you are getting a divorce, I will assume that you and your partner thought long and hard about whether to have a child; whether it was by adoption or by

using infertility procedures; all of the factors which come into play when deciding whether or not to have a baby. You can not erase the fact that these decisions were made between you and your partner and no matter how angry you are at this moment; you cannot erase the fact that this other parent has been a significant part of your daughter's life. Consider what is best for her.

Divorce is hard on all involved. When there are children, just remember to be kind, understanding and maintain a wall between adult issues and child issues.

*Attorney Jennifer L.

Dexter earned a B.A. in Psychology from The University of Central Florida. She moved to Massachusetts to attend law school at The Western New England College of Law in Springfield, Mass. She is a member of the Massachusetts Bar and has a Solo General Practice in the Pioneer Valley Area.

The information contained herein is intended for educational purposes only and does not represent legal advice. Should you need legal advice, please contact an attorney.

If you have legal questions that are unanswered, or if you would like to know more about a specific topic, then send your questions to: queerjustice@comcast.net

Chief of staff resigns after accusations of insensitive comments

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP)—The mayor's chief of staff has resigned three weeks after a state legislator alleged she made disparaging comments about Muslims, blacks and Hispanics.

"I emphatically deny that I made racially insensitive remarks," Michele Webber wrote in her resignation letter submitted to Mayor Charles Ryan on Wednesday. "However, to the extent that anyone may have been offended by words that I have spoken or by actions that I have taken, I apologize for that."

"I have decided, however, that it would be best for my family, and perhaps your administration as well, for me to return to my private life at this time," Webber's letter said.

Webber, who made more than \$55,000 annually, began as Ryan's secretary in January 2004 and was promoted to chief of staff in April.



State Representative Cheryl Coakley-Rivera

Webber's alleged comments came to light in an affidavit filed Feb. 2 in federal court in connection with a lawsuit pending against the city regarding ward representation. In the affidavit, state Rep. Cheryl

Coakley-Rivera, D-Springfield, said she telephoned the mayor's office in 2004 and Webber said Ryan was meeting with a Muslim man, whom Webber made a disparaging remark about.

Coakley-Rivera also alleged other city employees told her Webber had disparaged blacks and Hispanics.

Ryan did not say whether he thought the allegations against Webber were true, but told The Republican of Springfield the issue prompted him to begin cultural sensitivity training for all municipal employees.

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Hartford on bill that would prohibit discrimination on gender identity

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—State lawmakers are again considering a bill that would prohibit discrimination based on gender identity.

One transgendered woman from Hartford, Jerimarie Liesegang, told the legislature's Judiciary Committee Friday of how she struggled to find a job, despite having a Ph.D. in chemistry. Liesegang said she would repeatedly apply for jobs, only to be turned down after the interview.

"Simply because I am a transsexual woman, I was



not hearing back from anyone," she said.

The bill under consideration adds gender identity or expression to the law that prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, religion, age and other characteristics.

Although the same legislation passed in the Judiciary Committee last year, it died later in the

legislative process. Advocates hope this will be the year that the bill finally passes.

"We feel everyone has the right in the state of Connecticut to be employed," said Liesegang, president of the Trans Advocacy Coalition.

Three years ago, the state's hate crime law was expanded to protect transgendered people, who identify and express themselves as the opposite sex.

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JUST TECH

The tiny iPod Shuffle: Now, that's a music player?!

BY: JASON TURCOTTE
TRT Tech Columnist

By now we have all heard of the iPod, Apple's revolutionary digital music player first released in October of 2001. The iPod was the first hard drive based portable music player, equipped with a 5GB (giga-byte) hard drive and an innovative click wheel for navigating through the thousands of songs it was able to hold.

Recently Apple was kind enough to provide me with their newest iPod for review, the amazingly small iPod Shuffle. Now I have seen pictures of the Shuffle before and all I can say is that pictures do not do justice to the incredibly small size of the unit.

The box that the Shuffle came in was small enough to fit in the palm of my hand! Even more impres-

sive when you take into account that the box contained the Shuffle, docking station, earbuds, user manual and two Apple logo stickers.

The second generation Shuffle measures up small in the size department; being only 1.62" wide, 1.07" tall, 0.41" deep and weighing in at just over half an ounce it goes almost unnoticed in your pockets.

They say big things come in small packages and that saying couldn't be more accurate when talking about the Shuffle. This little device delivers big where it matters, being able to offer storage for 240 songs, according to Apple, and 12 hours of battery life between charges.

I am someone who is around technology everyday and with that kind of exposure you tend to get jaded in regards to the size things have become. I have



Jason Turcotte

to be honest to say I had a smile come across my face like a child when I first listened to the Shuffle. It was hard to wrap my brain around the fact that such big sound was coming out of such a small device.

With previous iPods I have owned or used, you had to have a pocket or armband for them to be truly hands-free. With this latest Shuffle you simply clip the music player to your shirt pocket, backpack strap, or lapel with the

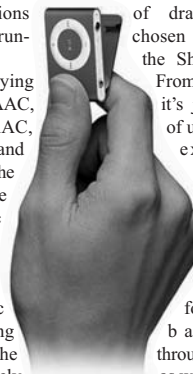
built-in clip. One of my friends even said I could use it as a high-tech "geek" tie pin. This thing is small.

Apple was able to keep the size down by using a flash RAM chip rather than the small hard drive they use in the larger full size iPods and with no moving parts there is never the chance that the player could skip, even under the roughest conditions like jogging or running.

Capable of playing MP3, MP3 VBR, AAC, Protected AAC, Audible, WAV, and AIFF sound files, the Shuffle should be able to play music and audio books from just about everyone's personal digital music library. Getting music onto the Shuffle is extremely simple with Apple's free

iTunes software (www.apple.com/itunes). The Shuffle comes with a docking station that plugs into your Mac or PC's USB port. The Shuffle then connects with the docking station using the same jack the iconic white earbuds plug into. When you dock the Shuffle, iTunes opens automatically on your computer and it's simply a matter of dragging your chosen songs onto the Shuffle's icon.

From there on out, it's just a matter of using the self-explanatory controls on the face of the Shuffle to play/pause and move forward and backward through the tracks as well as turn the volume up or down.



Rounding out the controls on the Shuffle are an off/on switch and a switch that toggles the ability to listen to the tracks in the order you put them in when using iTunes or an alternate 'shuffle mode' where the songs are played in random order.

The only thing I would like to see improved in the next generation Shuffle would be the storage capacity. As flash memory technology improves and becomes less expensive, I'm sure we'll see 2GB and larger Shuffles.

With a retail price of only \$79, this is the most affordable iPod on the market and a great starting point for someone wanting their first digital music player. With the Shuffle, Apple continues to show why they are the dominating force in the portable digital music player market.

Epidemic from Page 1

one lady and if I tell her who I am then I won't have her anymore."

According to Jose, and like many of the youth who leave their households due to confrontations of this sort, the fear confirmed what he knew would happen.

"She kicked me out," he said. "She was physically abusive anyway. She would kick me on the ground and tell me that I was a piece of %\$&* just like my mother."

Left homeless, Jose turned to his friend's moms, a lesbian couple who took him in for a while and offered him shelter and stability.

"I lived there for two months," Jose stated. "It didn't work out because I was used to being the only child with my own issues

and they had four other kids with their issues, so it just didn't work out."

Back on the streets, now 15, Jose approached DSS hoping to find a place to live. DSS placed him with various foster parents, but the situation did not work for him either. At some homes he was welcome, at others he felt abused and mistreated, according to Jose.

"DSS put me to live in a conservative Republican man's house," he said. "He expressed to me many times how he was against my sexuality. He tried to convince me that I wasn't gay."

According to Jose, his social worker helped him "a lot" throughout the different houses he went through and throughout the entire process. Jose said that he "only wanted her to place him with LGBT

friendly foster parents," but he thought that at first his social worker did not understand the situation.

Jose directly approached his social worker and told her that he "needed her to find him the right and understanding family."

"I told her that when she talked to the families that my being gay needed to be said to the foster parents," Jose explained, in the hopes that she could find him a suitable home to stay.

According to Denise Monteiro, Spokesperson for DSS, Boston, Mass., about two years ago the department was "beginning to understand the LGBT youth area and the complications that arose with it."

"As a result, 2,400 social workers and supervisors were trained in this area [LGBT] to educate and make others aware of LGBT issues," said

Monteiro.

Monteiro said that "some of the improvements include the training of the staff and the foster parents, although the department cannot make the foster parents take the training."

In addition to the improvements through the Home for Little Wanderers, DSS funds and donations, DSS has opened a house in Waltham, Mass. for LGBT adolescents.

"This place is a group home specifically for the LGBT teen population," Monteiro said. "This home has been one huge success. We want to reach that concept across the state."

But Jose could not take advantage of the programs because they were programs in the making. At 16, the opportunities were closing around him. As a result, his social worker turned him to the Center for

Human Development Office, CHD, in Springfield, Mass. After a 90-day wait, and with his social worker's help, Jose was put into the Transitional Independent Living Program, TILP.

TILP, in place since 1981, provides homeless youth with housing, groceries, utilities, and other necessities of life. There are approximately 30 youth in apartments throughout Massachusetts. In order to be eligible, the youth have to be between the ages of 16 and 22 years old.

"We teach them how to live independently," said Jim Williams, Program Director of the Children's Program, CHD, Springfield, Mass. "By the end of the program, the goal is to have them living independently and assuming responsibility for themselves."

The TILP program fosters payment of college education through tuition reimbursement, and help with the buying of college books. Students are also eligible to receive Pell Grants and other forms of financial aid.

"We have kids of all backgrounds, sexual orientations, races, and wealth in our programs," said Williams. "™"

TILP offered Jose what he wanted.

"Now I have my own apartment," said Jose with happiness. "All my LGBT fiends live around me too."

Although Jose's story is a successful story, not all homeless LGBT youth stories have the same end result. The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force report says that of the "estimated 1.6 million homeless

PRIDENVIRONMENT: EARTH TALK

Electricity from ocean waves?

Dear EarthTalk: Alternative energy sources like wind power, hydrogen and biofuels are getting a lot of headlines these days, but what about efforts to generate electricity from the ocean's waves?

—Tina Cook, Naples, FL

As any board or body surfer will tell you, the ocean's tidal currents pack considerable wallop. So why wouldn't it make sense to harness all that formidable power, which is not too unlike that of the rivers that drive hydropower dams or the wind that drives wind turbines, to make energy?

The concept is simple, says John Lienhard, a University of Houston mechanical engineering professor: "Every day the moon's gravitational pull lifts countless tons of water up into, say, the East River or the Bay of Fundy. When that water flows back out to sea, its energy dissipates and, if we don't use it, it's simply spent." According to Energy Quest, an educational website of the California Energy Commission, the sea can be harnessed for energy in three basic ways: using wave power, using tidal power, and using ocean water temperature variations in a process called "ocean thermal energy conversion" (OTEC).

In harnessing wave power, the back-and-forth or up-and-down movement of waves can be harnessed, for example, to force air in and out of a chamber to drive a piston or spin a turbine that can power a generator. Some systems in operation now power small lighthouses and warning buoys. Harnessing tidal energy, on the other hand,



Proponents say ocean energy is preferable to wind energy because tides are constant and predictable and that water's natural density requires fewer turbines than are needed to produce the same amount of wind power.

Photo by Getty Images

involves trapping water at high tide and then harnesses its energy as it rushes out and drops in its change to low tide. This is similar to the way water makes hydroelectric dams work. Already some large installations in Canada and France generate enough electricity to power thousands of homes.

An OTEC system uses temperature differences between deep and surface waters to extract energy from the flow of heat between the two. An experimental station in Hawaii hopes to develop the technology and someday produce large amounts of electricity on par with the cost of conventional power technologies.

Proponents say that ocean energy is preferable to wind because tides are constant and predictable and that water's natural density requires fewer turbines than are needed to produce the same amount of wind power. Given the difficulty and cost of building tidal arrays at sea and getting the energy back to land, however, ocean technologies are still young and mostly experimental. But as the industry matures, costs will drop and some analysts think the ocean could power nearly two percent of U.S. energy

needs.

Several companies now work at the cutting edge of ocean power technology. Scotland's Ocean Power Delivery Ltd. has a wave system called Pelamis that it hopes to install in waters off of California's wave-battered central coast. And Seattle, Washington's Aqua Energy has installations off the coasts of Oregon, Washington and British Columbia and is in talks with utilities about providing the Pacific Northwest with hundreds of megawatts of ocean energy within the next decade.

Tidal energy pioneers are also hard at work on the U.S. Atlantic coast. The New Hampshire Tidal Energy Company is developing tidal power in the Piscataqua River between New Hampshire and Maine. And a company called Verdant Power is providing Long Island City, New York with electricity through tidal river turbines and has begun installation of tidal power systems in New York City's East River.

Got an environmental question? Send it to: EarthTalk, c/o E/The Environmental Magazine, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; or e-mail: earthtalk@emagazine.com

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Q ENTERTAINMENT

Keeping it real: Queen Latifah brings heart and humanity to 'Life Support'

BY JANICE RHOSHALL
LITTLEJOHN/Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Queen Latifah never does the expected. So when asked about the challenges of playing an *HIV-positive wife and mother*, as she does in HBO's "Life Support," her answer was, indeed, surprising.

"The only challenge was trying to stay in character when you've got people driving past you on the street going, 'Queen!' 'Do it Latifah!' 'That's LATIFAH!' she says of the on-location shoot in Brooklyn last year for HBO's "Life Support" (March 10, 8 p.m. EST, with an HBO On Demand preview available Feb. 26-March 8).

"Most people try to be respectful, but they're excited to see you and they're hitting you with the name or some record that you did, so that was the greatest challenge," she says. "Playing this character wasn't."

To play Ana, a peer counselor at an AIDS facility in Brooklyn whose past drug addiction has put a strain on her family relationships, Latifah (nee Dana Owens) channeled the muse of the New York streets where the New Jersey girl hung out as a teenager.

"I grew up around these women and around these streets, so it was probably one of the more relatable backdrops that I've been able to sort of step into," says Latifah, fabulously coiffed in long blonde and auburn curls and a form fitting black dress for a late afternoon press conference here.

"I really felt like I really could relate to the characters, to the situations, a family disrupted by drug addiction. I could relate to that just in my own family," she continues. "So I could relate to Ana's sense of wanting to get out there and see what life had to offer, although we took



QUEEN LATIFAH
Plays an HIV-positive wife and mother at HBO's "Life Support." dramatically different turns. And redemption as well, having the second chance of really trying to repair those relationships after you feel like, OK, I messed up, but I'm back on track and I really want to get things back to where they were."

Such street-wise sensitivity was exactly what director Nelson George wanted.

"One of the nicest things about working on the movie was watching through the monitor—her face—there's so much

going on in it and so much thought," says George, who co-wrote the film with the writing team Jim McKay and Hannah Weyer, based on his own HIV-positive sister.

Until now, Latifah has gone mostly the laugh route, with a string of comedies ("Bringing Down the House," "Taxi," "Barbershop 2: Back in Business" and "Last Holiday"), but it was time to shed a tear or two.

"I've always enjoyed dramatic roles," says Latifah, who turns 37 in March. "I mean, that's what actually made me really want to get into acting, was me playing this role in high school in 'Godspell.'"

The good times will roll later this year when the Academy Award-nominee will be seen starring as Motormouth Maybelle in New Line's cinematic rendering of "Hairspray."

"That was a blast," she says. "I mean just getting to

do a musical again, a really big fun musical, and (producers) Neil Meron, Craig Zadan and (director) Adam Shankman promising me—because there was no script initially when I agreed to do the movie—that they would really, really do a great job with it and that I would get to wear a blonde wig."

The multi-hyphenate (who shares executive producer credits with several others on "Life Support" including Jamie Foxx) is set to executive produce "Wifey," a hip-hop drama for BET and VH1, and she is in talks to star opposite Katie Holmes in the indie heist film, "Mad Money."

"I never want to put myself in a box—I like to be challenged in different ways," she says. "I've got a short attention span, so if I can't do different things then I get bored after a while."

Epidemic from Page 6

American youth, between 20 and 40 percent identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)." And the question remains: What are we going to do to educate parents and the community in general to deal with sexual orientation issues in a healthy way?

For homeless LGBT youth under the age of 18, who are in trouble or are abused DSS' Hotline, 1-800-792-5200, is a resource. According to Monteiro, when a child calls in with no family, the DSS takes them under their care and protection.

"We have been educated and we are serving all children with different types of needs" said Monteiro. "Check us out. Call the hotline and ask a question; there are options."

Teens can always call Denise too at 617-748-2000, or visit the department's website at www.dsskids.org or mass.gov.



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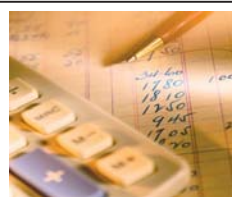
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PARENTING, CEREMONIES & CALENDAR

TRT Calendar

MASSEQUALITY Organizing Meeting to Plan for St. Patrick's Day parade action Thursday, March 8, 6-8 p.m.; Holyoke Community College - Frost 309.

SENIOR CITIZEN'S BOWLING LEAGUE; Mondays at 12:30 p.m. - Canal Lanes, Route 5, Southampton.

CAFE & CONVERSATION; Every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m.; at the Northampton Council on Aging, NCOA; 240 Main St., Suite 1 Northampton Phone: 587-1228

TAP DANCE; March 8; 1:30 p.m.; taught by Carol Butler Watelet in the community room at the Walter Salvo House on Conz St.; \$15/month. Call 587-1228 for more information, or the NCOA at 587-1228.

GLBTQ HOLYOKE TASKFORCE MEETING; Thursday, March 8; at the Holyoke Teen Center, 6 Open Square Way, 5:00 p.m. For information: 413-537-3005.

HRC MEET AND GREET
The Human Rights Campaign Boston Steering Committee will be hosting a meet and greet on Thursday March 8th 2007 at 6:30 p.m. Come meet the local steering committee members, other volunteers, enjoy some hors d'oeuvres and learn about local upcoming HRC events and volunteer opportunities. If you want to learn more or get involved please join us for this casual social hour. Date: 03/08/2007 Time: 6:30 p.m.; Place: Club Café/Club 209 - Back Room Address: 209 Columbus Avenue at Berkeley Street, Boston, MA; Info: Contact Pam Azar at pah267@yahoo.com.

WALK ON WATER; Saturday, March 10; A spy thriller, in which a homophobic Mossad agent hunts down an aging Nazi by developing a friendship with the Nazi's charismatic, gay grandson. A film by Eytan Fox, an openly Gay Israeli director. Saturday, March 10, 7:30 pm, University of Massachusetts, School of Management, Room 137 | Free | Screened

as part of the Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival. Info.: www.ValleyJewishFilm.com

TWENTY-SECOND(22) ANNUAL NORTHAMPTON WHOLE HEALTH EXPO; March 10-11, 2007. Sat. 9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.; Sun. 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., at The Clarion Hotel & Conference Center. Tickets \$12, \$2.00 OFF Admission with copy of ad in page 16. Giveaways, Workshops, Exhibitor's Showcase; FREE Parking; Free for Children under 12; Over 100 Exhibits, Talks & Workshops. Information at: Sales@WholeHealthExpo.com or by calling 1-877-943-3976.

THE RAINBOW TIMES INAUGURATION WINE & CHEESE PARTY; Friday, March 23 @ 8 p.m. at 20 Crafts Ave. (Pride & Joy Store); Come and join us with some wine, cheese, grapes and some other goodies. Meet the staff of The Rainbow Times and have a good time meeting others! Everyone invited! For more information call: 413-204-8959.

YOUNG JEWISH & LEFT; Monday, March 12; A celebration of diversity, Young Jewish and Left gives much needed attention to the leftist voice of today's Jewish young adults. Their voices weave together queer culture, Jewish Arab history, secular Yiddishkeit, and religious tradition. Film Talk! With co-director Konnie Chameides. Monday, March 12, 8:00 pm, Hampshire College, Adele Simmons Hall | Free | Screened as part of the Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival. Information: www.ValleyJewishFilm.com

PAPER DOLLS; Tuesday, March 13; Part diary and part human-interest story, it examines the lives of a group of transsexual Philippine immigrants who came to Israel in the wake of the second Intifada to work as home attendants for elderly Israelis. Tuesday, March 13, 7:00 pm, Smith College, Hillyer-Graham | \$8 | Screened as part of the Pioneer Valley

Jewish Film Festival. Info.: www.ValleyJewishFilm.com

A LOVE TO HIDE; Thursday, March 15, March 21, March 23; It is 1942, Paris. The Nazis are persecuting the "third sex" by rounding up homosexuals and deporting them to concentration camps. Against this backdrop, two young gay lovers choose to risk their lives to hide a childhood Jewish friend. Then, an act of betrayal threatens them all. Thursday, March 15, 7:00 p.m. & Friday, March 23, 10:00 p.m. at the Pleasant Street Theatre; \$8. On Wednesday, March 21, 7:00 p.m., at the Basketball Hall of Fame; \$8. Screened as part of the Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival. Information: www.ValleyJewishFilm.com

LOVER OTHER; Thursday, March 29; Living in exile from France on the Jersey Isle during World War II, lesbians Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore make art, love and commit imaginative acts of resistance against the Nazi occupation. This unique documentary memorializes their daring heroism by revisiting how the sisters' pursuit of art challenged the politics and gender conventions of the time. Film Talk! w/producer Barbara Hammer. Thursday, March 29, 8:00 pm, Smith College, Stoddard Hall; Free; Screened as part of the Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival. Information: www.ValleyJewishFilm.com

Mature Lesbian Support Group; Group for women 55+ meets monthly at the Northampton Council on Aging at 240 Main St., at 6 p.m., the second Monday of each month. For more information contact Jennifer Higgins at 413-587-1226.

DISCUSSION GROUP FOR LESBIANS 40+; meets every Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Stonewall Center at UMass. Topics chosen by group consensus the previous week. This is a warm and welcoming group of intelligent women. Come join us. For further information email to: JBGreenize@aol.com

TV Shows not to MISS!

The OUT 100 (Logo)

Presented with OUT Magazine, this show celebrates the top 100 gay and lesbian success stories of 2006. Join the party to find out who made the list from the worlds of entertainment, sports, business and politics and learn about the accomplishments that landed them on the list. Watch times: 3/02 @ 8 a.m.; 3/3 @ 5 a.m. & 3/3 @ 6 p.m.

MARRIAGE/ANNIVERSARY(Logo)

Are you about to tie the knot? Or celebrate a big anniversary? About to hit a major milestone in your life? We want to hear about your big event and toast your success! ...Logo would like to hear from you! For more information visit: <http://www.logoonline.com/about/casting.jhtml>

Can't Get a Date (Logo)

This original series follows a group of people who have trouble with dating and attracting potential partners. The host guides these people in their journey to find romantic and emotional fulfillment through a dramatic transformation of their people skills as well as their physical appearance. Through interactions with the host and the helping hands they encounter along the way, each of the people is offered genuine insight into both their flaws and strengths and gains the chance to use what they learn on their dates. Time TBA, see Logo for details.

Victor/Victoria (Logo)

Surprising observations about gender perception come to light when Victoria, a female, must impersonate a male, impersonating a female in order to reinvigorate her slumping singing career. Times and dates, TBA. Tune to Logo for more info.

Daddy & Papa (Logo)

Follow four stories of adoption and family building in the lives of gay men as they confront legal issues, personal adjustment and fulfillment. Part of Logo's Real Momentum documentary series.

The L Word (Showtime)

The provocative Showtime series follows the lives, loves, losses and longings of a tight-knit group of friends, most of whom are lesbians. Think: Same Sex, Different City. These West LA hipsters do much of their socializing at The Planet, a café-come-nightclub where the women frequently meet to connect, compare notes or just kvetch.

Latino Beginnings (Logo)

Find out what it's like to be a minority within a minority. This documentary takes an in-depth look into the lives of gay Hispanics, a culture engrained in religion and machismo. Part of Logo's Real Momentum documen-

UNITY for the transgender community, families and allies

If you are a transgender person, a member of the GLBT community, a significant other or if you are

simply seeking more clarity in your life, there is a place for you to turn to.

UNITY is a social and support group that serves F-M (female to male) and M-F (male to female), GLBT spouses, partners and significant others. All are welcome to attend their weekly social and support groups.

The goals of UNITY are to help, to be a friend, to educate, to be supportive, to socialize, to work as a team, and to make life better for transgender people and their families in this society.

To help accomplish these goals, there will be professional speakers in attendance and a variety of

topics will be discussed that are geared toward the transgender community.

All meetings are free and strictly confidential. However, if you like, donations are accepted.

Learn about yourself and others in a safe and supportive environment designated for people just like you. Help is around the corner.

Unity meets the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month from 6:30-9:00 at Baystate Medical Center and in Northampton during the 1st and 3rd week of the month. For more information about UNITY and their meetings, contact Keri at 413-782-2581.



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"FAMILY" NEWS FROM AROUND

Judge tosses lawsuit

By DENISE LAVOIE/AP

BOSTON (AP)—A U.S. judge threw out a lawsuit filed by parents who wanted to keep their children from learning about gay marriage in school.

U.S. District Judge Mark Wolf said federal courts have decided in other cases that parents' rights to exercise their religious beliefs are not violated when their children are exposed to contrary ideas.

"In essence under the Constitution public schools are entitled to teach anything that is reasonably related to the goals of preparing students to become engaged and productive citizens in our democracy," Wolf said in his ruling.

Toni and David Parker of Lexington sued after their 5-year-old son brought home a book from kindergarten that depicted a gay family.

They said they did not want to dictate curriculum but wanted to be notified before gay couples were discussed so they could remove their children from classrooms.

Jeffrey Denner, an attorney for the parents, said they would appeal the ruling to the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and refile the claims in state court.

John Davis, an attorney

for the school officials, said the books did not focus on sex education, but merely depicted various families, including same-sex families.

"This is not a case about teaching about homosexuality. This is a case where Lexington sought to teach about diversity and about having respect," said Sarah Wunsch, staff attorney.

RI attorney general backs gay marriage, sister weds

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island (AP)—Rhode Island's attorney general said his opinion this week advising his state to recognize same-sex marriages performed in Massachusetts had nothing to do with his sister's wedding to her partner there days earlier.

Attorney General Patrick Lynch said the advisory opinion, which is not binding, was issued in response to a question from a state agency and was based on legal research.

"No disrespect to my sister, who I love very much, but it has zero impact on it," he said.

In the latest opinion, Lynch said there was no strong reason for Rhode Island to deny recognition to gay marriages performed in Massachusetts because Rhode Island does not have a law banning

such unions.

The opinion answered a question from the Board of Governors for Higher Education over a request by gay employees in the state college system to have their files changed to reflect their marriages in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts is the only state where gay marriage is legal. New Jersey, Vermont and Connecticut offer civil unions, which offer the protections and benefits of marriage without the title, and California offers domestic partnerships with similar benefits.

New Jersey Gay couples exchange vows, join in civil unions

By GEOFF MULVIHILL/AP

ASBURY PARK, N.J. (AP)—The ceremonies could hardly have been more different: Two were in a bar where televisions with Jay Leno blared in the background; another was a wedding-like affair, replete with a flower girl.

There were at least four exchanges of vows recently in the wee-hours of the morning as gay-couples ushered in the era of civil unions in New Jersey, allowing them to formalize their relationships and claim rights to the legal benefits—but not the title—of marriage.

The state law establishing civil unions for same-

sex couples took effect later. There is a 72-hour waiting period after applying for a license, most couples had to wait until February 22, to hold civil union ceremonies.

The state Supreme Court in October ordered New Jersey legislators to offer gay couples all the benefits of marriage, but left it up to the Legislature what to call it. They opted for civil unions, in part because of opposition from legislators who objected on religious grounds to calling it marriage.

The civil unions law grants same-sex couples hundreds of benefits, including the right to file state taxes jointly and inheritance and child-custody rights. Also, people in civil unions cannot be forced to testify against their partners in criminal court.

The benefits, however, are not recognized by the federal government or in most other states.

Couple wants state to recognize their union

By BRANTLEY HARGROVE GILLETTE, Wyo. (AP)—Lynn Huskinson and Leah Vader are about as "Ozzie and Harriet" as any married couple.

Huskinson brings home the bread, and Vader makes the home. Their relationship is founded on

trust and love.

But there are a few glaring differences: Vader and Huskinson are both women, and if a same-sex marriage bill—Senate File 13—is ratified in Wyoming, their legal marriage obtained in Canada would not be recognized by the state.

The couple has been legally married for two years now, but has been together for 10.

If passed, the bill would bar Wyoming from recognizing a legal marriage from another state or country between two people of the same sex.

Even though they were legally married in Canada, Vader doesn't receive the benefits provided by Huskinson's insurance plan from her job as an equipment operator at the Eagle Butte mine that a married, heterosexual spouse would be entitled to. Huskinson has worked there for 27 years.

Bullying Gay group's school workshop assailed in Vermont

SWANTON, Vt. (AP)—Plans for a high school workshop by a gay advocacy group are getting a lot of scrutiny in the northwestern corner of the state.

A conservative radio talk show host has criticized Mississquoi Valley Union High School officials for

allowing the two-day series of panel discussions with a group dedicated to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth. It's scheduled for next month.

Paul Beaudry, host of radio shows on WRSA in St. Albans and WDEV in Waterbury, has called for the invitation to the group Outright Vermont to be revoked.

"I don't think this should be in the schools. If you go to their website, they're all about recruiting children into the homosexual lifestyle," said Beaudry, whose child attends the school.

Outright Vermont was invited to the school in January by the Gay Straight Alliance, said Outright executive director Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak.

MVU senior Josh Mashtare, president of the school's Gay Straight Alliance, said the goal was to broaden students' education.

"We want to have a different view of bullying, to open up the school and make it more diverse. Having Outright Vermont here is going to make the school so much better," Mashtare, 18, said.

The school sent letters to students' families in preparation for the workshops offering to let students stay home.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE RESEARCH

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

HCC to host seminar on foreclosures

H O L Y O K E — Homeowners and prospective homeowners who are concerned about the recent jump in foreclosures in Massachusetts are invited to a free seminar at Holyoke Community College on May 2, from 6 to 9 p.m.

“Preventing Foreclosure/Recapturing Foreclosed Primary Residence Property” will be conducted in the HCC Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development by mortgage expert Anthony Thomas and real estate lawyer Julie Dialessi-Lafley. The deadline for registration is April



27. People may register at any time by calling HCC's 24-hour registration line: (413) 538-5815 or (413) 538-5817.

According to a February 7 story in the Boston Globe, there were 19,487 foreclosure filings in Massachusetts last year, up 70 percent, from 2005, when there were just 11,493. While the reasons for this jump are fodder for much debate among economists, the effect it has on homeowners is clear.

Attendees at the May 2 seminar will learn how to prevent foreclosure and how to retrieve their primary residence from the process once foreclosure has begun. There will be plenty of time put aside for questions.

Anthony Thomas has been involved in the real estate field for 29 years and is currently the branch manager for The Mortgage SuperCenter. Julie Dialessi-Lafley is a real estate attorney with the Springfield firm of Bacon and Wilson, P.C. This symposium is sponsored by the HCC Business and Community Services Division.

Caregivers education group offered at CDH

N O R T H A M P T O N — Cooley Dickinson Hospital offers a weekly caregivers support group on Thursday from 4 to 5 p.m.

The support group is designed to offer basic

education on topics such as coping with the loss of function, depression, the grief process, coping with changing life roles and support through listening to the ways others cope with similar situations.

This support group is held weekly on Thursday in Conference Room B at Cooley Dickinson Hospital. For more information, call (413) 582-2503.

CDH Childbirth Center announces breastfeeding clinic schedule

N O R T H A M P T O N — The Cooley Dickinson Hospital Childbirth Center announces weekly breastfeeding clinics on Tuesday from 6 to 8 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon.

No appointment is needed and the clinics, staffed by Cooley Dickinson Lactation Consultants Paula Mattson and Beth

Maurer, are free.

Attendees can receive breastfeeding information, support and a review of breastfeeding basics including tips on nursing and positioning the baby. In addition, baby weight checks are provided and a Medela breast pump rental and sales station is available.

Referrals for outpatient

breastfeeding consultations will be facilitated through the breastfeeding clinic.

For more information about the services offered through the hospital's Childbirth Center — including Beyond Birth, a free, weekly support group for families and babies up to 4 months old, visit www.cooley-dickinson.org.

AIDS Care volunteer training planned

Court Cline, Volunteer Coordinator for AIDS CARE/ Hampshire County, will hold a volunteer training on Saturday, March 10th from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at the AIDS CARE offices, 10 Main St. in Florence.

Volunteers are especially needed for the “Bridge” program that helps people living with HIV/AIDS with transportation to medical appointments & short errands, or “Gardeners” to assist in the HN

Community Garden Project located in Northampton. It only takes a few hours a week to make a real difference in the life of someone living with HIV.

Despite much of the good news about AIDS treatment these days, people living with HN disease continue to need compassion & support in facing this stigmatized & misunderstood illness. You can help by driving someone to a doctor's



appointment, helping out in our organic garden, or listening to someone talk about the frustrations of living with this chronic illness.

Studies have shown that volunteering is actually good for you by helping to reduce stress. Interested in being an AIDS CARE volunteer? Contact Court Cline at 586-8288, x2 to begin the application process. Pre-screening is required.

Funding Available for Women and Girls

E A S T H A M P T O N, Mass.—The Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts is pleased to announce the availability of funding for organizations and programs that influence long-term, positive change in the lives of women and girls in the four counties of Western Massachusetts. **The fund will award \$100,000 in grant funding this year.**

This year we are announcing two new funding categories: Capacity Building Grants are aimed at developing an organization's leadership capacity or its ability to serve its participants; Seed Grants are intended to fund projects for new or emerging community-based organizations. The new grant awards will range from \$500 to \$3,500 each. Seed Grants are also supported by technical assistance from the Women's Fund. Other funding categories are Operating

Support Grants and Program Grants, both of which will range from \$1,000 to \$10,000. All programs funded must serve women and/or girls exclusively, and must benefit women or girls within the four counties of western Massachusetts. Applications and guidelines are available at www.womensfund.net or by calling 413-529-0087 ext. 12.

Those interested in applying for a grant are strongly recommended to attend a pre-proposal meeting. At the pre-proposal meetings, Women's Fund staff will explain the application and guidelines in detail, and answer any questions. The meetings are open to anyone, however the Fund requests that people bring a copy of the grant application and guidelines to the meetings. All meetings begin promptly on time. Locations, dates and times are as follows:

Hampshire County

Date: Wednesday, February 28th; Time: 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Location: Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts, 116 Pleasant Street (Eastworks Building), Suite 358 Easthampton, MA 01027 (Parking available in lot in front of building)
In case of inclement weather, call for cancellation message: (413) 529-0087 x 12
Snow date: Thursday, March

1st, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. Same location.

Franklin County

Date: Monday, March 5th
Time: 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Location: In Greenfield Community College Downtown Community Room; 270 Main Street Greenfield, MA 01301 (Parking lot behind Wilson's Department Store lot). In case of inclement weather, call for cancellation message: (413) 775-1010
Snow date: Friday, March 9th, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. Same location.

Hampden County

Date: Wednesday, March 7th
Time: 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Location: Banknorth Conference Center; 1441 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103 (Parking available in lot behind building). In case of inclement weather, call for cancellation message: (413) 529-0087 x 12
Snow date: Tuesday, March 13th, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. Same location.

Berkshire County

Date: Thursday, March 8th
Time: 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Location: Berkshire State Department of Mental Retardation, 5th Floor, 333 East Street Pittsfield, MA 01201 (Parking available in lot to the side of the building). In case of inclement weather, call for cancellation message: (413) 445-4574 or 529-0087 x 12
Snow date: Monday, March 12th, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. Same location.



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LGBT POLITICS

Historic breakthroughs expected for gay-rights bills in Congress

By DAVID CRARY
AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—Anti-gay bias has flared up in Hollywood and pro basketball recently, and soon the topic will be thrust dramatically into a new forum—a reshaped Congress likely to pass the first major federal gay-rights bill.

Wary conservative leaders, as well as gay-rights advocates, share a belief that at least two measures will win approval this year: a hate-crimes bill that would cover offenses motivated by anti-gay bias, and a measure that would outlaw workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Also on the table—although with more doubtful prospects—will be a measure to be introduced Wednesday seeking repeal of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy that bans openly gay and lesbian Americans from serving in the military.

All three measures surfaced in previous sessions of Congress, at times winning significant bipartisan backing but always falling short of final passage. This year, with Democrats now in control and many Republicans likely to join in support, the hate-crimes and workplace bills are widely expected to prevail.

“With liberals in control, there’s a good possibility they’ll both pass,” said

Matt Barber, a policy director with the conservative group Concerned Women for America. “They’re both dangerous to freedom of conscience, to religious liberties, to free speech.”

If approved by Congress, the bills would head to the White House. Activists on both the left and right are unsure whether President Bush would sign or veto them.

For gay-rights leaders—whose efforts to legalize same-sex marriage have been rebuffed by many states—the congressional votes are keenly anticipated after years of lobbying.

“This is a major step in our struggle,” said Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign. “I know there’s a lot of despair on the other side.”

The workplace bill—titled the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, or ENDA—is the subject of behind-the-scenes negotiations. The bill that emerges is expected to expand on earlier versions to cover not only sexual orientation but also gender identity, thus extending protections to transgender employees. Churches and small businesses would be exempt.

For many Americans, ENDA’s provisions would be familiar. More than 85 percent of the Fortune 500 companies include sexual orientation in their non-

discrimination policies, as do 17 states and many local governments.

And publicly, there is increasingly little tolerance for overt anti-gay bias. The National Basketball Association swiftly repudiated retired all-star Tim Hardaway after he spoke this month of hating gays, while TV actor Isaiah Washington apologized and sought

employees, said Shannon Minter, legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

In past years, some congressional supporters of gay rights warned that ENDA’s prospects would be crippled by including protections for gender identity. This year may be different.

Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., said the version he

The bill that emerges is expected to expand on earlier versions to cover not only sexual orientation but also gender identity, thus extending protections to transgender employees. Churches and small businesses would be exempt.

counseling after using a gay slur in reference to a fellow actor on “Grey’s Anatomy.”

Advocacy groups also say there have been huge strides in regard to protections for transgender people—with nine states, scores of major corporations and more than 70 colleges and universities now banning discrimination based on gender identity.

California’s ban, in effect since 2003, has not triggered a flood of litigation, but it has prompted employers to proactively improve their policies for dealing with transgender

is helping draft will indeed cover transgender employees, while offering some allowances to employers so they can enforce dress codes and minimize controversies over bathroom use.

“With the proper amendments, I think we can get it,” said Frank, one of two openly gay members of Congress.

Tony Perkins, president of the conservative Family Research Council, con-

tended that gay-rights groups exaggerated the extent of anti-gay bias as part of a broader push to achieve their political goals.

“I’m sure there’s probably a case here and there,” Perkins said. “But I’ve seen more discrimination of people of religious faith than I’ve seen of gay people in the work force.”

ENDA was first introduced in the 1994, and came within one vote of Senate passage in 1996, while the hate-crimes bill has passed in the House and Senate in separate years only to falter before final passage at the behest of GOP conservatives.

The hate-crimes measure would expand existing federal provisions to include acts of violence against gays and lesbians. Opponents contend it would be an ominous first step toward criminalizing criticism of homosexuality.

“It’s taking us to the point where anyone who opposes the sexual behavior of homosexuals will be silenced,” Perkins said.

According to the FBI, about 14 percent of the 7,163 hate crimes reported in 2005 targeted gays or lesbians—a slightly lower percentage than the two

prior years. Some activists, such as Riki Wilchins of the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, say there has been an increase of workplace complaints filed by male employees, gay and straight, contending they were harassed by fellow male workers who perceived them as effeminate.

Assuming ENDA and the hate-crimes bill win approval, but not by veto-proof margins, Bush would face a politically sensitive decision of how to respond.

“Does he want to use one of his first vetoes to deny basic job protection to people?” asked Dave Noble, public policy director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Mat Staver of the conservative legal group Liberty Counsel worried that Bush would not veto the bills, perhaps as a gesture of respect for Mary Cheney, the lesbian daughter of Vice President Cheney.

However, Matt Barber of Concerned Women for America held out hope that Bush would block the measures. “Hopefully,” Barber said, “the president will show that the veto pen is mightier than the politically correct sword.”

1,138 Rights & Benefits of Civil Marriage, not one given to same-sex couples citizens. Fight!

In 1997, the General Accounting Office of the Federal Government compiled a list of 1,049 rights and benefits which were related to civil marriage. In 2004 they did an update and found there were 1,138 rights. The list includes thirteen categories of rights and benefits, including: Social Security and Related Programs, Housing, and Food Stamps • Veterans' Benefits • Taxation • Federal Civilian and Military Service Benefits • Employment Benefits and Related Laws • Immigration, Naturalization, and Aliens • Trade, Commerce, and Intellectual Property • Financial Disclosure and Conflict of Interest.

For information: www.marriageequality.org/meusa/facts.shtml?1049-federal

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Att. Zadworny is an active member of the Massachusetts Bar Association, the Hampshire County Bar Association, and the Massachusetts Women's Bar Association. She is also a member of the Hampshire County Probate Court Committee and the Pioneer Valley Estate Planning Council.

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LOCAL NEWS & AUTO

northamptonpride

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Join an energetic group of volunteers who organize Northampton's Annual Pride Parade and Rally to celebrate the diversity and vitality of the area's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. There are a variety of different volunteer opportunities which encompass as little or as much as you have time to offer. Please fill out the information below as accurately as possible so that we may place you in the most appropriate volunteer capacity. We hope that your experience with Northampton Pride will be enjoyable and fulfilling! Thank you.

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☐ Editing
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Time available:

☐ As Needed
☐ One time
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Please Circle:

Best Days: S Su M T W Th F

General

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☐ Peace Keeping/Parade Coordinator
☐ Soliciting Donations/Fundraising
☐ Staffing Beverage Area
☐ Selling Merchandise
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Buying VS. Leasing of an Automobile

By: STEPHEN M. LEWIS
TRT Auto Specialist

Leasing is basically "No Equity" financing.

Normally when you purchase a vehicle you put down some amount of money or have a trade-in that lowers your monthly payment to what is affordable. This gives you equity!

When leasing, you generally put only the fees and 1st month's payment (basically a security deposit) as a down payment, hence "No Equity."

Many people that are against leasing say "I have nothing at the end of a lease." That is correct, but under the circumstances, you put no money down or no trade-in (in either case, an investment by you—equity) to give you anything at the end. You are essentially renting a car, albeit, at a much lesser rate than a rental car, and, turning it back to the leasing



Stephen M. Lewis
President, Steve Lewis Subaru

company. Leasing is a method of making the use of a vehicle more affordable on a monthly basis. You pay in, the leasing company gains the equity.

Be aware that if you put money down towards reducing the payment of the lease, this money does reduce the payment, but the equity goes back to the leasing company, not you! It is not a prudent idea to put money into a lease to reduce your monthly payment.

Lastly, most leases are for 10,000, 12,000, or 15,000 miles per year. These mileages are perfect for a lease. If you exceed the

mileage, you owe the leasing company \$.15 cents per mile. Don't get lulled to sleep by an affordable low mileage lease when you know you will exceed the given mileage. If for instance you exceed a 10,000 mile - 3 year lease by 5,000 miles per year, you will be billed \$2250. Now a lease doesn't look that good! Generally if you drive more than 15,000 miles a year, leasing is not the way to go.

Also with a lease you are required to maintain the servicing of the vehicle according to the factory recommended maintenance schedule. If there is a problem due to lack of maintenance, the leasing company will come back to you. Keep all of your maintenance records and receipts.

If you have any further questions pertaining to leasing, please call me at (413) 584-5355 or email me at stevelewis@subarumail.com

NCOA: Helping Mature Lesbians ages 45+

By: MARIA LEÓN
TRT Writer

NORTHAMPTON, MA—Getting older brings surprising experiences. When you are a lesbian, other issues enter into the equation. This is where the Northampton Council on Aging helps to solve the problems.

"Issues such as financial security and health insurance are among the top concerns," said Jennifer Higgins, a social worker who coordinates the monthly meeting of "Mature Lesbians" at the COA.

The potluck meetings are for lesbians from age 45+ and are held on the second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. at the council's office in Memorial Hall next to Pulaski Park.

Higgins said the meetings frequently feature a guest speaker.

It may very well be the only such group in the

commonwealth that is sponsored by a Council on Aging.

"I would like to see it replicated," she said.

In a time when debates over equality are unresolved, the COA provides space for lesbians to meet, eat, have fun and get information. And maybe even push for innovative housing solutions.

"Housing is a huge issue," said Higgins. "This particular lesbian group wants their own lesbian senior housing."

To become more informed about the housing situation, Joanne Campbell, Executive Director of the Valley Community Development Corp., explored the issue with meeting members.

The group was formed in 2005 and has grown to about 30 women. More are welcome. Just call the COA office at (413) 587-1228.

Lesbians in this age group, said Higgins, face the double stigma of a still controversial sexuality and advancing age. Questions and concerns about which physicians provide great health care, for example, are not limited to physical care but also respect for one's lifestyle.

The program also educates workers in other fields who come into contact with seniors who are lesbians. A person's lifestyle shouldn't hinder quality service.

"At the very least, we're raising consciousness," said Higgins.

The women who attend the monthly meetings mostly live in Northampton, but many are also from outside the city.

"Rural people need services," said Higgins, and find help in the heart of Hampshire County's largest city.

SPORTS

The Gutter Boys Bowling League: Where gay men are every Tuesday night

BY: MARK CARMEN

TRT Special Sports Report

If you're wondering where the gay men are in the Valley these days, look no further than the Tuesday night bowling League at Spare Times Bowling Center on Pleasant Street in Northampton. Every Tuesday evening, from mid September until mid April, over 60 guys gather to bowl against each other, try to improve their averages, but mostly to meet and socialize with one another.

The league, officially known as the Gutter Boys Bowling League, was started in September, 2004, by lead organizer Al Cennerazzo who was look-

ing for a way to connect gay men to each other in a social atmosphere. "I wanted to start something that got guys together that was fun and not in a bar setting," Cennerazzo said. "There are many gay bowling leagues around the country and I had a good sense that we could be successful starting one here." The idea of starting a gay men's league was formed and with the help of several friends, and the original six teams of four guys started in the inaugural season in September, 2004. Those six teams became 12 teams in the 2005-06 season, and this year (the 3rd season), the league has grown to 16 teams of four.



With team names like "Easy Pick Ups," "Big Balls of Fire," and "Big Pins," the tone of the league is decidedly non-competitive and focused primarily on having fun. Official league rules are followed, and team standings are tracked, along with averages and handi-

caps, but there is a noticeable lack of hard-core competition in the atmosphere at the lanes on Tuesday evenings. All bowlers are given a handicap based on 200, which evens out the competition between different ability levels. Each week, members bowl three "strings"

against an opposing team. While the teams of four stay together from week to week, the opposing team changes weekly. This way, each team will eventually play against all the other teams in the league at some point during the season. There are actually two parts of the season, a "fall season" from mid-Sept. to mid-Dec. and a "spring season" from mid-Jan. to mid-April.

While the teams are set at the beginning of each season, new bowlers are always needed to fill in as 'subs' when the 'regular bowlers' are not able to make it at any given week. Occasionally openings occur on teams when a

member has to drop out of the league mid-season; those openings are then filled by the substitute bowlers. There are always a handful of gay men who choose just to come and watch the action. "We call those guys Cheerleaders," said Cennerazzo. "They're very important too, and many times we can convince the cheerleaders to become subs and that way we can bowl with a full docket of bowlers."

The Gutter Boys Bowling League meets every Tuesday evening at 6:15 p.m. at Spare Times Bowling Center, 525 Pleasant Street (Rt.5) in Northampton. For information, call 413-586-3894.

HRC commends NBA for action against homophobic remarks

WASHINGTON — The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, quickly praised the National Basketball Association for its condemnation of vicious, anti-gay remarks made last night by former Miami Heat player Tim Hardaway.

"We commend the National Basketball Association for sending a very clear and decisive message that homophobia does not belong on, or off, the basketball court," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "Mr. Hardaway was sorely mistaken if his intent was to spew homophobic, hate-filled remarks without any consequences. We are thankful for the NBA's swift action and believe these remarks are being seen for the un-American, un-sportsmanlike conduct they are."

"These comments reinforce the need to continue

to have a dialogue on this topic, something I have been saying all along," said the Human Rights Campaign's National Coming Out Spokesman and author John Amaechi. "The more this issue is discussed, the less likely homophobia will be able to hide and that is a positive development not just for the NBA, but for the entire country as a whole."

Recently, in an interview with 790 The Ticket's host Dan Le Batard, former Miami Heat player Tim Hardaway was asked about the recent groundbreaking coming out of former NBA star John Amaechi as openly gay. Hardaway commented, "Well, you know, I hate gay people. I let it be known, I don't like gay people. I don't like to be around gay people. Yeah, I'm homophobic. I don't like it. It shouldn't be in the world, or in the United States. So, yeah, I don't like it."

The National Basketball



Former Miami Heat player Tim Hardaway's anti-gay comments are condemned by the National Basketball Association and keep him from representing the NBA.

Association took quick action and immediately removed Hardaway from any further appearances representing the NBA. NBA Commissioner David Stern issued the following statement: "It is inappropriate for him to be representing us given the disparity between his views and ours."

Hardaway apologized for his comments later saying, "Yes, I regret it. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said I hate gay people or anything like that. That was my mistake."

"Quite frankly, Mr. Hardaway's apology seems rather transparent and self-centered," continued Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "However, this story is less about Tim Hardaway and more about the need for continuing to expose the homophobia that has too often been present in professional sports."

Earlier in the week, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban commented about the positive affects of having an openly gay NBA player. Cuban encouraged gay players to come out, saying, "You would be an absolute hero to more Americans than you can ever possibly be as an athlete, and that'll put money in your pocket."

Only a day before Hardaway's homophobic comments, Cuban responded to a generic question regarding homophobia by saying, "On the flip side, if you're the idiot who con-

demns somebody because they're gay, then you're going to be ostracized, you're going to be picketed and you're going to ruin whatever marketing endorsements you have."

The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against GLBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all.

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Keynote Address Saturday 6:30-7:45pm

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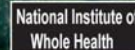
Dinabandhu (Garrett Sarley), CEO

Kripalu | center for yoga & health

Just \$8 (\$6 if purchased with expo gen. admission). Tix on sale at 9:30am March 10 at Whole Health Expo, till sold out.



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