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NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2004

A New Law on Assisted Human Reproduction – Bill C-6

By Mona Greenbaum, LMA coordinator

On March 29th, 2004, after an extended debate that began with the recommendations of the *Baird Commission* back in 1992, Bill C-6, an *Act respecting assisted human reproduction and related research* (AHR act) received Royal Assent. This federal law affects a broad range of items including cloning, research on embryonic stem cells, genetic engineering, surrogacy, sperm banks, fertility clinics, donor consent and the many things we do to start our families. The bill also provides provisions for the creation of an AHR agency whose role will be to regulate and enforce the provisions of the law.

For those of us who are starting families the bill is both good and bad news....much of it is bad. First the good: Canada will now have a much more closely regulated and uniform system for couples or individuals who are planning to start families with the help of a fertility clinic. For lesbians who choose a donor through a sperm bank, we can be assured through the regulations of the AHR agency, to have access to information regarding the donor's identity and whereabouts should your child one-day experience health problems where the release of the donor's identity becomes necessary. The agency will also maintain a record of information regarding any recipient of AHR techniques as well as any offspring that results. For some, this is an invasion of privacy and another instance of the state meddling in our lives. One has to weigh the pros and cons ...

The AHR agency will also store data on any AHR procedure that is carried out and thereby will be able to effectively monitor what is and isn't working, as well as any problem that may arise regarding any AHR procedure.

Finally, all Canadian donors will have to consent to the use of their gametes (sperm or ova) and choose whether or not to release their identity should any eventual offspring result. Although this was already the case in some places in Canada prior to the bill, these options were not always offered.

The bill prohibits a number of acts which probably should not all have been lumped together in one law, but that's the way it happened. It prohibits cloning for example, which the majority of Canadians (aside from the Quebec-based *Raelians*) would see as morally reprehensible. It prohibits things like forming morphs between animals and humans. Again most Canadians would agree.

Where it becomes slippery is around the concept of commodification. In an unlikely alliance between right wing politics and the feminist left, a strong guiding principle underlying the formation of the bill became the prohibition of any kind of commercialization of human body parts or products. Women are seen as vulnerable to exploitation. Because of this, the section on surrogacy, for example, criminalizes the act of paying a surrogate mother. Anyone who pays a surrogate or an intermediary to a surrogate can be fined up to \$500,000 and receive up to 10 years in prison. Compare this to the 12 years that Karla Homolka got!

Sperm donors as well cannot be compensated for donating sperm. Interestingly, although men had been donating their gametes for over 60 years in Canada without much fuss, as soon as it became possible to donate ova in the early 1990's, the government started to talk about regulating!

In the new system, which is supposedly a move toward more altruistic systems that are found in countries like Sweden, donors will only be compensated for "receiptable expenses". What this means precisely will be determined during the regulation phase of this bill. This section of the bill will not come into effect for at least 1-2 years. For the time being, clinics are free to determine what can be considered a receiptable expense and can compensate as they wish. Also we can continue to use any stored sperm.

One of the tasks of the AHR agency will be to determine whether or not we will have access to U.S. sperm. If the Canadian government is consistent in its philosophy, then probably it will not allow sperm from compensated donors to be used in Canada, even if the compensation occurs outside of Canada. Many experts believe that in the next 1-2 years Canadian sperm stocks could become severely depleted. If stocks go down, the number of non-white donors will go down proportionately as well. The numbers are already low so the regulations can have a disastrous effect. The clinical director of *Repromed*, Kathy Roberto, however feels that most of their donors will continue even if they are not financially remunerated.

The *Lesbian Mothers Association of Quebec*, succeeded in getting a clause in the bill's principles section which states that: "Persons who seek to undergo assisted reproduction must not be discriminated against, including on the basis of their sexual orientation or marital status". This line was included as a result of a brief we presented in October 2001 and our meeting with Réal Ménard, a gay MP who was also a member of the Standing Committee on Health who penned the bill. Réal proposed the motion and it squeaked through at 4-3. It may be handy to have access to as many clinics and banks as possible if the stocks are truly drying up. If the altruistic system does work in the end, it will be nice to be able to have access everywhere.

Clause 10.3 states that "no person shall, except in accordance with the regulations and a license, obtain, store, transfer, destroy, import or export a sperm or ova...for the purpose of creating an embryo." This would imply that for those of us who choose to do at-home inseminations, often with a gay friend as donor, we would be acting illegally. It is highly unlikely that the agency will be granting us licenses. This is yet another restriction on the way we choose to form our families. In theory under the new regulations we *could* bring our donor to the clinic where his sperm could be banked and tested and available in 6 months in what is called a "directed donation". There are 2 problems with this however: 1) This would be prohibitively expensive for many and 2) The government prohibits gay men from donating sperm. Apparently, however, when we have a specific donor in mind there are ways to "apply" to the government to use his sperm, even if he is gay. It is not a given however that he would be accepted. A legal case which is looking at exactly this type of problem is currently going on in Ontario.

All this is supposedly being carried out with our best interests at heart, after all, fresh sperm can carry all kinds of diseases, right? Here again the bill is heterosexist in that heterosexual couples certainly do not need a license to have sex and yet we lesbians are not considered to be able to choose what we put in our bodies and what constitutes a reasonable risk. I can accept that a doctor refuses to do inseminations with fresh sperm, but that it is criminalized when carried out in privacy between consenting individuals is just too 1984 for me....

It is tempting to easily dismiss this clause as unenforceable. In Quebec law however, we are actually encouraged to make a contract with our known donor in order to protect ourselves from the donor claiming paternity later on. The civil code clearly states that a donor can only claim paternity (for up to one year after the baby is born) if a sexual relationship has taken place. If there was no sexual relationship he cannot claim paternity. Family law specialists in Quebec therefore advise us to write up contracts with our donors which state that our donor was not a sexual partner, but simply a donor.

With the new law, writing up such a contract will actually constitute an admission that we have committed a criminal act. In some other provinces where parents must go to court for co-parent adoptions, we will not be able to explain how we started our families without admitting to committing a crime in our own home.

With this new federal law our need to protect ourselves from claims of paternity that were not originally intended, as well as our ability to establish the legal links between same-sex parents and children, will be severely compromised if at-home inseminations are illegal. During the public consultation process that the AHR agency will be holding, we will need to explain how this part of the law not only conflicts with our desire to form our families as we like (and thereby may be an infringement of the charter), but also how it conflicts with the provincial laws of Quebec. It also conflicts with years of legal precedents relating to co-parenting, as well as the fact that the federal government will probably soon legislate in favour of same-sex marriages...

Rather than encouraging healthful practices it will lead to a secrecy that will compromise our health (e.g. women will be afraid to go with their donors for STD tests) and also make vulnerable the legal protection of our families.

We are at the point now where we must think about where and how we can intervene as different opportunities arise within the AHR regulations phase. At the same time we should also be thinking about whether or not any of this constitutes enough to put together a charter challenge. Section 15 (1) of the charter states that: " Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." Bill C-6 certainly seems to contravene this section of the charter. We will be working together with the legal and political action committees of *Egale Canada* to see if interventions at this point can make a difference.

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

News Briefs - March - June 2004

Montreal and Quebec News

February 18, 2004 – *Egale news*- The Montreal archdiocese has backed down on its plans to require HIV tests for applicants to the priesthood. In a news release, the archdiocese said there was never a written directive demanding such tests as part of efforts to update its screening of potential candidates.

"Our reflection continues with regards to the eventual revision of admissions criteria to *Le Grand Séminaire de Montréal* for candidates to priesthood," the statement said. "However, we can affirm even now, that this revision will not impose an HIV test."

March 2004 – A new fertility clinic with open and non-discriminatory practices has opened in Montreal. *La clinique OVO* has been visited by some of our members and so far feedback has been positive. To find out more about the clinic check: <http://www.cliniqueovo.com/>

March 12, 2004 - *Montreal 2006 / 365Gay.com* - (Montreal) The war between two groups hosting LGBT major sporting events in 2006 has escalated with the withdrawal of the European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation from the Federation of Gay Games.

The FGG will hold the Gay Games in Chicago in 2006. Last November, Montreal, which was to have hosted the games, quit the FGG in a dispute over control of the event and money. The Montreal group, calling itself *Rendez-Vous Montréal 2006* is holding its own games the same summer.

The European group represents more than 100 sports teams and 10,000 athletes in Europe. The decision means that many of those LGBT athletes will be headed to Montreal.

March 18, 2004 - Montreal - Quebec's largest school board has voted to cancel *Hema Québec's* annual blood drive at its Montreal offices and will remain in effect until the blood agency changes its policy of excluding gay male donors.

The proposition was put forward by the vice-president of the Montreal school commission, Paul Trottier, who is barred from donating blood because he's gay. Trottier said the introduction of advanced screening methods makes the policy outdated, discriminatory, and perpetuates a false impression among youth that it is sexual orientation rather than sexual behaviour that's risky.

The vote to cancel the event at the Montreal school commission was unanimous.

April 2, 2004 *365Gay.com News* (Montreal) *Rendez-vous 2006* the international LGBT games to be held in Montreal has signed on to become the first *OutGames*.

Over the winter *Rendez-Vous 2006* held a "think tank" with sports groups from around the world leading to the formation of a new umbrella organization for LGBT sports, the Gay & Lesbian International Sport Association. Its aim is to foster gay sports on a 12-month-a-year basis and every four years mount its own world games to be called the *OutGames*.

Montreal has signed on to be the first *OutGames*.

"Most importantly, through this partnership with GLISA, Montreal 2006 will be able to leave an important legacy to the international sporting community." said Olympian Mark Tewksbury, Co-President of *Rendez-Vous Montreal 2006*.

Canadian News

February 16, 2004 – *Globe and Mail* – Nunavit - In a good turn of events, Paul Okalik has been reelected as premier of Nunavit, the eastern arctic territory. Okalik supported the territory's new Human Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination against homosexuals. His only opponent, Tagak Curley an evangelical Christian, was so incensed by this that he decided to re-enter politics to work against it.

March 4, 2004 - *Xtra!* - A horrific gay-bashing, already identified by police as a hate crime, has set off a wave of unease and activism in Hamilton. The slashing of Ronn Mattai, 38, owner of the popular restaurant and jazz club *The Junction Café*, has the police, politicians, faith leaders, business leaders and especially the queer community calling for education, action and statements of outrage.

The attack occurred in the early hours of Sat, Feb 21 at *Absinthe*, a downtown Hamilton bar. More than 200 stitches were needed to fix Mattai's facial wounds from the attack after he was slashed repeatedly with a broken glass.

Michael Codeiro, 19, is charged with aggravated assault. Hamilton Police Chief Brian Mullan says that clear and convincing evidence has come forward very quickly to indicate that this was a hate crime.

March 16, 2004 - *CanWest News Service* - Ottawa - In a court case pitting aboriginal culture against gay rights, a judge has awarded a lesbian mother custody of her children despite her estranged husband's insistence they will face discrimination because their Mohawk community shuns homosexuality.

The decision saw the judge draw heavily on court rulings that emphasize same-sex relationships deserve recognition and respect. The court ruling gives Devona Sharrow, a Mohawk from the Akwesasne reserve near Cornwall, Ont., custody of her four children, despite her live-in relationship with a non-aboriginal woman from the U.S. Their father, Stacey Boots, secured visitation rights.

In a trial last fall, two of three Mohawk "clan mothers," including the children's paternal grandmother, testified that homosexuals are ostracized in the Mohawk culture, in which the children have been raised in the traditional way. They speak the language, participate in traditional ceremonies and attend a Mohawk school.

But the community also believes in the principle of "the best interests of the children" and the judge concluded the four children were better off with their primary caregiver, rather than their father, who has a drinking problem.

March 29, 2004 - *CBC news online* - A bill banning human cloning, surrogacy payments and the sale of human sperm and eggs, Bill C-6, has received Royal Assent. Canada is one of the last countries in the world to adopt regulations governing reproductive technologies. (See front article for more details).

April 15, 2004 - *365Gay.com* - (Ottawa) - Svend Robinson, the first gay to be elected to Canada's Parliament announced he will not seek re-election. Robinson is under police investigation over a piece of jewelry he took from an auction house in Vancouver.

Breaking down in tears several times Robinson said he has been under "severe stress and emotional pain" and called the incident something "totally foreign to him." He said when he realized what he had done he attempted to contact the owners of the store but could not reach them because of the Easter holiday weekend. Robinson said he then went to police, told them what he had done and gave them a full accounting.

No charges have been laid to date.

With an election expected to be called this spring, Robinson said that he felt in the best interest of his constituents not to run, but left the door open to seek a return to Parliament down the road.

The New Democrat was first elected to the House of Commons in 1979 representing Burnaby, British Columbia. Since then he has won re-election seven times, making him B.C.'s most senior Parliamentarian. When he publicly came out in 1988, Robinson, 52, became the first open gay to serve in federal politics. He was a pioneer in championing LGBT issues in Parliament and has been an outspoken advocate of same-sex marriage. He introduced legislation last year to add sexuality to the list of categories protected under hate speech laws.

Robinson said that for the remainder of the current session of Parliament he will take medical leave.

April 28, 2004 - *365 Gay.com* - (Ottawa) - The Canadian government has passed legislation to include sexuality in the country's hate-crimes law.

Physical attacks based on sexuality are already illegal in Canada, but until now gays were not included in a separate act that protects minorities against "promotion of hate" speech.

That the bill ever made it to the floor of the House of Commons was something of a miracle. The legislation was not proposed by the government, but came as a Private Members Bill by New Democrat Svend Robinson. That the Commons passed it was considered nothing short of a miracle.

The Senate gave final approval to the measure. Throughout its march toward passage the legislation was the subject of heated debate in Parliament and the focus of intense criticism and lobbying by conservative religious groups that maintained it would prevent them from preaching homosexuality is wrong.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Canadian Professional Police Association supported the bill. Under the new law people who incite violence against gays and lesbians would be subject to fines or imprisonment.

May 4, 2004 - *365Gay.com* - (Ottawa) - A gay Mexican man who says he would be persecuted if he returned to his own country has been refused asylum in Canada because he is too masculine. The Immigration and Refugee Board rejected Fernando Enrique Rivera ruling that because he is not "visibly effeminate" he would not be vulnerable to persecution in Mexico, the *Globe and Mail* newspaper reports.

"I know some gay refugees who put on lipstick and dressed effeminately for their hearings because they thought it would help their case. But that is not who I am," Rivera told the paper.

Rivera, who worked with the Puerto Vallarta police department as a statistician, fled to Canada four years ago after he was blackmailed by several officers who threatened to out him. Rivera said he would likely lose his job if his sexuality became widely known in the force adding that a lesbian co-worker was dismissed after her sexuality was discovered.

The Board said that it believed Rivera would be fired by the Puerto Vallarta police, but decided that he could have relocated to the more liberal Mexico City.

Despite human rights laws to protect gays in Mexico a report by the Washington-based *World Policy Institute* in 2003 said gays often suffer abuse by local officials.

Rivera was turned down in an appeal to the federal court of Canada and if the government rejects an additional appeal on humanitarian and compassionate grounds he would be subject to deportation.

"The basic promise of asylum is in question when an immigration judge recognizes that a man is being persecuted and sends him back to the country telling him to disguise the very characteristic that leads to persecution and makes him eligible for asylum," said Jon Davidson, Senior Counsel for Lambda Legal and an American legal group which deals with similar cases.

May 11, 2004 – *PlanetOut.com* -SUMMARY: David Reimer, a Canadian man who was raised as a girl in a controversial case that drew international attention to issues of gender and biology, took his own life.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2004/05/11/3>

GAY MARRIAGE- A TIME LINE

(Skip over this section if you've had enough on marriage)

Please note: In the United States the marriage debate has gone completely out of control!!! There are initiatives for and against marriage in almost every state. Because of this it would be impossible to cover it all in the context of a newsletter. An excellent coverage of the news in the States, however, is available on the web site of the Human Rights campaign in their marriage center: www.hrc.org/marriage/

A well-organized table of the state-by-state progress can be found if you click on "States with Anti-Gay marriage laws" within this site.

We will still continue to cover general American stories related to the debate.

February 24 – (U.S.) American Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. John Kerry says he would support a Massachusetts constitutional amendment to prohibit same-sex marriage if it allowed for civil unions.

March 3 - (Stockholm, Sweden) Sweden is about to become the third European country to permit same-sex marriage. Parliament's Justice Committee considers three motions that would replace the current law on same-sex civil unions with full marriage rights.

March 11– (U.S.) Polls show that President Bush's "vast majority" of Americans opposed to gay marriage is in fact only about 59%. There is actually a small majority favoring civil unions (54%). This number is extremely striking - last July only 40% of American's supported letting us have civil unions, so a lot of minds have been changed in the past six months! The majority of Americans are opposed to amending the constitutions (53%).

March 11– (U.S.) - California Supreme Court decides to temporarily halt the issuance of marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

March 15 - (Rio De Janeiro, Brazil) A judge in southern Brazil has ruled that the state government must recognize same-sex unions. It is the first ruling of its kind in the country.

March 18 - Data released on the 4,000 same-sex couples who were married in **San Francisco** reveals that a majority of couples were female, college-educated and between 36 and 50 years old.

March 19 – (Quebec) - The Quebec Court of Appeal rules that denying marriage licenses to same-sex couples is unconstitutional and immediately begins issuing licenses to same-sex couples. With Quebec as the third province to allow same-sex couples to marry, over 70% of Canadians now have equal marriage.

March 24 - Civil rights leader Coretta Scott King denounces the proposed constitutional ban on same-sex marriage during a speech.

March 29 - Massachusetts's lawmakers convene their third constitutional convention and quickly approve a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage while mandating civil unions.

April 1 - Michael Hendricks and René Leboeuf the couple who's protracted legal case eventually earned us the right to marry in Quebec, get married in the **Montreal Palais de justice**.

April 1 - (Ottawa) Prohibiting same-sex marriage can no longer be justified the Canadian government tells the Supreme Court in a brief asking for direction in writing legislation to fully recognize gay unions. It is the strongest endorsement to date by the new government of Prime Minister Paul Martin on same-sex

marriage. The brief states that no evidence exists to show that equal access to marriage for same-sex couples would do anything to harm the enjoyment opposite-sex couples derive from marriage, nor would it deter them from getting married.

The court has yet to hear from 18 interveners approved to make arguments in the case, many of them from conservative religious groups opposed to same-sex marriage. The Supreme Court is expected to release its opinion sometime in 2005. After that, legislation would be presented in Parliament.

April 8 - *Forbes Magazine* says legalized same-sex marriage would be "a windfall for the wedding industry." The business journal has estimated that if the laws were changed, gay couples currently living together would collectively spend \$16.8 billion to get hitched.

April 15 - (**Madrid**) - Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero tells Parliament that he intends to move forward with plans to legalize gay marriage and grant equal rights to gay couples.

April 23 - **France** is set to have its first same-sex wedding this summer because a small-town mayor took exception to the lack of access to marriage for lesbian and gay couples.

April 26 - **Australian** supporters of marriage equality speak out against Prime Minister John Howard's intent to prevent foreign gay marriages from being recognized in Australia.

April 28 - (**Toronto**) - Canadian gay activists announce a campaign to promote same-sex marriage during the upcoming federal election. In simultaneous news conferences in Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver, *Canadians for Equal Marriage* launch "Vote Equality 04".

"*Canadians for Equal Marriage* is researching the voting record and public statements of candidates from all major parties across Canada," says Alex Munter, Co-Chair, CEM.

But the group is facing a massive \$1.5 million ad campaign by the conservative *Focus on the Family Canada*. CEM says it believes much of the money for the campaign is coming from FOF in the US.

May 3 - A rally against same-sex marriage draws about 20,000 people in **Seattle**.

May 9 - "*Focus on the Family*" organization launches full-page ads in newspapers across **Canada** against same-sex marriage and families. The ad has a photo of a white man and white woman holding a child; in the background there are white men and women smiling as happy as can be at the family. There is possibly one person of color in the image.

The text: " We believe in Mom and Dad. We believe in Marriage. The family is a schoolroom for life, and lasting lessons come from a man and a woman - a father and a mother. We believe in mom and dad. Their marital commitment to each other and their parental commitment to their children is the foundation of our society. Traditional marriage - if you believe it, protect it".

A full page Saturday *Globe and Mail* ad costs approximately \$35,000.

May 11 - The federal government should avoid the term "marriage" as it tries to sell the divided **Canadian** public on plans to allow gays and lesbians to wed, advises a report commissioned by the Justice Department. Instead, the government should use the phrase "civil marriage" to minimize offending and confusing people who view the word "marriage" as a religious institution, the study says.

May 13 - (Paris) - Both France's Green and Socialist parties vie for the gay vote with both promising legislation to legalize same-sex marriage. The move pits the left of center against the governing conservative UMP party that opposes gay marriage. A recent survey by *Elle magazine* showed 64 percent of the French were in favor of same-sex marriages, while 49 percent said they would also approve of gay couples adopting children.

May 17 – (Boston, Massachusetts) The city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Monday became the first community in America to issue marriage license forms to same-sex couples. Marcia Hams, 56, and her partner, Susan Shepherd, 52, enter the history books as the first same-sex couple in America to legally apply for a marriage licence. The couple arrive at city hall 24 hours early just to be able to claim the honor.

International

February 17, 2004 - *Egale listserv* - Spain's Navarre Region became the first region in the country to allow same-sex couples to adopt. Most political parties were supportive. Catalonia is currently considering a similar law (allowing same-sex couples to raise children but not adopt them).

March 2, 2004 - The Federation of Gay Games (FGG) announced that Chicago defeated Los Angeles in the competition to host the Gay Games VII in 2006.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2004/03/02/3>

March 11, 2004 - 365Gay.com / PlanetOut.com - The European Parliament has widened the definition of "family," simplifying how lesbian and gay Europeans and their families can move and live within the European Union. While intended to cut down on the bureaucracy same-sex couples face, it only applies to countries that honor same-sex relationships.

That means that in 2006, a non-E.U. citizen with a gay partner in Denmark could move to Belgium and have automatic residence rights, but it would be a different story if the couple moved to Spain or Greece. Despite the inconsistencies, Justice and Home Affairs commissioner Antonio Vitorino said the directive was a move in the right direction.

March 15, 2004 - 365Gay.com - UNITED NATIONS – U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan faced a gay rights uproar from Islamic countries at the United Nations over his decision to extend benefits to the same-sex partners of UN staff.

The 56-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) lambasted Annan's order, which came into effect in February, saying only member states had the right to make such a move. "No decision has been taken by the General Assembly to change the long-established scope of the (definition of the) family for the purposes of entitlements," the Muslim bloc said.

Annan's limited order allows domestic partners to receive benefits as long as the UN employee's country of origin legally recognizes the relationship. A UN spokesman said only a handful of staff have applied so far. The new policy took effect Feb. 1.

March 30, 2004 - *Familia listserv* – (Chili) – A lesbian mother has won custody of her three daughters after a legal battle that provoked a national debate. The Temuco court of appeal stated "there was no reason to doubt the capacity of the woman to care for her children." Human Rights groups applauded the decision while a strong criticism was issued from the Catholic Church, which holds a strong influence in this conservative country. Only a month earlier Chili adopted a divorce law after 120 years of legal prohibition.

April 15th, 2004 -*News from ILGA* - (London) - A move to add sexuality to the list of categories protected by the United Nations has been postponed in the midst of intense pressure from the Vatican and Muslim nations. It is the second year in a row that the motion has been withdrawn at the Geneva-based UN Commission on Human Rights. The proposal had been put forward by Brazil and supported by Canada and most of the European Union states.

"Millions of people across the globe face imprisonment, torture, violence, and discrimination because of their sexual orientation," said European Parliament member Michael Cashman, who is gay. "For the second year running the UN has failed to condemn this discrimination and the continuing abuses of human rights on the basis of a person's sexuality.

Concerns were high at one point that the resolution could have been defeated or completely withdrawn from the UN agenda.

For the first time at the UN a large coalition of LGBT activists from all over the world, representing many organizations from countries as diverse as Fiji, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Sierra Leone, Chile, India and Nepal have been working in Geneva. This postponement gives LGBT activists another year to thoroughly prepare and fight the formidable forces massed against the resolution.

April 15, 2004: Despite facing international condemnation after introducing the proposal, Zanzibar's parliament has passed a bill that will make homosexuality illegal.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2004/04/15/5>

April 16, 2004 - *365Gay.com* - (Singapore) - The Singapore government is trying to shed its image as one of the most conservative areas in Asia and reinvent itself as a world center for media and the arts, but that new image does not extend to gays. The government has ordered Singapore's only gay rights organization to disband. The government requires all organizations to be registered. But, when *People Like Us*, a gay support group, attempted to register itself as an official society or organization, it was rejected.

People Like Us, which says it has a membership of more than 1,000, has been pushing for gay rights, mainly over the Internet.

Singapore law bans gay sex putting it in the category of an "act of gross indecency," although there have been few gay prosecutions. Singapore isn't ready to accept gay rights groups said Vivian Balakrishnan the government minister of state for national development.

April 18, 2004 - *365Gay.com* - (Auckland, New Zealand) In what is believed to be a world first, a two year old boy will have three gay parents: a gay dad who donated his sperm, a lesbian mom who bore him, and her same-sex partner, following a court ruling in Auckland, New Zealand. The decision ends a tug of war between two sets of same-sex couples that began before the baby was born.

The two-year-old boy was conceived after a contract was drawn up for joint custody between the lesbian couple and their friends, a Sydney gay couple. The women, originally from Auckland, were living in Sydney, Australia at the time. But after the baby was born, the couples had a falling out and the women moved back to Auckland, refusing the men access. The birth mother's partner then made an application in the court to be named the boy's legal co-parent.

The men sued citing the contract the two couples signed which stated that, although the child would live with the women, the sperm donor would be named as father on the birth certificate, that the men would be consulted on parenting decisions and have at least 14 days' access to the boy every year.

Auckland Family Court judge Sarah Fleming awarded joint custody to the lesbians, but also the biological father shared guardianship. Going beyond the initial agreement that the men have 14 days' access a year, she awarded monthly access, increasing to seven days a month.

Miscellaneous

May 2004 - COMING OUT AGAIN: LESBIANS AND CANCER "Telling other people that you have cancer is like coming out, again. People sit there and go, 'Oh my God you have cancer,' like you have cooties. People back away." A community-based Ontario study interviewed 26 lesbians diagnosed with a "women's cancer." They shared their experiences of treatment and support, their journeys through changes to identity, body, sexuality and relationships.

<http://www.oneworld.ca/link/gotoarticle/addhit/83020/983/1703>

News from the Lesbian Mothers Association

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

JUNE:

♦ **Mercredi, le 2 juin 2004:** *Journée nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie.* Un initiative de la Fondation Emergence, la journée inclura: une campagne de sensibilisation, la remise du Prix Lutte contre l'homophobie, un sondage, le dévoilement d'un plan d'action pour les cinq prochaines années et une invitation à la mise sur pied d'initiatives des milieux locaux et régionaux, ainsi qu'une table ronde sur la place des personnes homosexuelles dans la société. Vous pouvez réserver vos places en composant le 514-866-6788. Pour plus d'info: www.homophobie.org

♦ **Saturday, June 12th From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** - The Lesbian Mothers Association is proud to announce our first ever ALLEY SALE fundraiser, in the plateau alley between St-André and St-Hubert, between Gilford and De Bienville. Bring your goods to sell: clothes, toys, books, jewelry, kitchen supplies, baby equipment, CD's...Come on down and enjoy the famous Children of Lesbians Lemonade Stand, kiddie pool, DJ, great deals, AML/LMA collectors items and more!

Merchandise may be dropped off from June 7th to the day of the sale at 4734 St-André. Items for sale should be clean and working properly. Unsold items will be donated to a charity. All proceeds go to AML/LMA. For more information contact: **Sylvia or Sylvie at (514) 521-9783.**

JULY:

♦ **Saturday July 3, 2004 from 11 a.m. to 3p.m. - For kids ages 10-18:** Come join us in a craft activity to help raise funds for the Association. Come out and help make some crafts to be sold at the Journée communautaire at this year's pride festivities. **Place: CCGLM (Centre communautaire gai et lesbienne de Montréal) 2075, rue Plessis (metro Papineau)**

♦ **Saturday July 10th : For adults and kids:** Sylvie and Sylvia from our association are excited to offer you a **Day out in the country** on their property at **Val Morin**. You can swim, kayak, picnic, windsurf, walk, cycle, play volleyball etc., etc. Singing and a camp-fire are planned for later in the evening.

Bring your bathing suits, picnic blankets and everything you'd need for a beautiful day in the country. The BBQ will be available for grilling your hot-dogs and hamburgers, etc. Bring your tent and sleeping bags as

well if you would like to stay overnight. The chalet will be open to you for using the washroom, etc. and parking is easy. **If the weather is bad the activity will take place on July 17th instead. It is not necessary to RSVP. For directions please see the enclosed sheet.**

♦ **Saturday July 31, 2004, from 11:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.** : Along with other community organizations, we will have an information kiosk for the “**Journée communautaire**” as part of the **Pride festivities**. We encourage you to join us there both to support our group and to find out about other community groups that may be of interest to you. Kiosks will be grouped on **Berri between Ste. Catherine and René-Levesque as well as on Ste-Catherine between St-Denis and St-Hubert**. Food will be available on the site. Special activities are planned for the kids! Come and buy one of our amazing new t-shirts! Pride clothes for kids and babies as well! For pre-purchase call Mona at 514-846-1543.

AUGUST:

♦ **Sunday August 1st, 2004, beginning at 12:00 p.m.**: Join us for the **Gay Pride Parade**. This year again, the route will begin at **René- Lévesque (Dorchester) corner Guy** and finish at St-Denis. The minute of silence will be at 13:30. We will be contacting you with more information concerning our spot in the parade, a few weeks before the event.

BULLETIN BOARD:

Mère et fille de 9 ans cherche mère et enfant du même âge (fille de préférence) pour faire des sorties, activités, etc. Écrire à : mjlegault@arobas.net

De Stephane Gaudet, pour le conseil de paroisse de l'Église unie de St-Jean: Bonjour à toutes et à tous! J'ai le plaisir de vous informer que l'Église Unie St-Jean, une communauté protestante francophone inclusive, a complètement refondu et mis à jour son site Internet. Parmi les ajouts, on trouve la page "INCLUSIVITÉ" qui présente l'attitude d'ouverture et d'accueil de notre paroisse envers les personnes gaies, lesbiennes, bisexuelles et transgenres. Je vous invite donc à venir faire une petite visite à: http://www.cam.org/~st_jean/index.html

BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS:

Catherine Derry and Karen Clendinneng announce the birth of their son **Robert David Derry** on **April 23rd, 2004 at 12:40 p.m.** He was born at the Jewish General hospital weighing 6lbs 14oz and 18.5 inches long. Robert happily completes our family, although, he was a bit of party crasher as he was two weeks early and came on the day we were to legally wed. Wedding has been postponed to June 5; guess he did not want a wedding without him. We can't wait to show him off, he is spectacular.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Traductrices , redactrices, etc: We are looking for volunteers to help translate this newsletter from English to French. Any contribution (even 1-2 pages a month) would be appreciated. If you are available and willing, **please contact us at:** info@aml-lma.org

Are there any new moms out there who want to get together for coffee and conversation? If interested, call Suzie at 514-842-6884.

Bonjour à toutes ! Nous venons tout récemment d'amménager dans la ville de Québec et nous trouverions enrichissant de rencontrer d'autres mères et futurs mères lesbiennes comme nous.

Alors si ça vous intéresse, écrivez-nous ! À bientôt! Marie-Christyne Élie & Mélanie Lambert
Mariechristyne@hotmail.com

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Batshaw Youth and Family Centres is encouraging English speaking and bilingual lesbian couples, and singles, to consider becoming **foster parents**. There are babies, pre-schoolers and older children who are waiting for a foster home. For some the plan will be to help them return to their families. For other children, the plan will be to work toward **adoption**. What a remarkable feeling it is to know you have made a difference in the life of a child by providing a stable, safe and loving environment. For more information, please call, **Rena Rubin, Foster Care Recruiter, at 932-7161, local 416, or send an e-mail to rena_rubin@ssss.gouv.qc.ca.**

The bulletin board is a free forum for members to communicate amongst each other. If you want to post an announcement in the next issue please send it to us at any time to info@aml-lma.org or by post to AML, 2401 Coursol, Montreal, Quebec, H3J 1C8. If you have something to advertise, sell, rent or buy...anything where money must change hands, you can place an ad in the newsletter. Ads cost 20 cents per word.

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