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NEWSLETTER - VOLUME VIII - No. I - September 2006

Back to School: GRIS is Looking for Moms!

By Mikaëlle Monfort, LMA member

“So if you’re a lesbian, how did you get pregnant? And how did you and your girlfriend decide who would be the one to carry the baby? And your girlfriend, didn’t she get jealous when you were pregnant? Don’t you think you’re child will miss having a father? Aren’t you afraid that he’ll get teased at school?”

Last fall as a volunteer for GRIS-Montréal (The Montreal Group for Research and Social Intervention), I went to more than a dozen high schools and CEGEPS in the Montreal region to answer questions that young adults were asking about homosexuality. Let me tell you, the sight of a pregnant lesbian will elicit a lot of questions from curious teenagers. Okay, it’s not everyday that they get a chance to meet one at school. And so when they are actually encouraged to ask questions without the threat of a teacher telling them to behave, they certainly take advantage!

The questions that they asked me in these 1 hour workshops were often personal and I’m not sure that I would have answered if a stranger outside of the classroom setting had asked them...but there, before these young people it was different, at least for two reasons.

For one I had consciously chosen to let these teenagers share my experiences as a lesbian. Instead of leading to verbal abuse, my openness and sincerity actually allowed them to be curious and to really want to know what life is like for a lesbian. They knew that I was not there to give them a course on homosexuality nor to tell them what to think. I was simply present to share with them my life experiences and to respect their capacity for individual reflection. The respect that I showed to them was clearly given back to me, regardless of their own opinions on homosexuality and families with lesbian mothers!

Also, when I would leave the class and read the commentaries that the students would give us after these sessions, I really felt like I was doing useful work. Often the students that I met would become more open to gays and lesbians by concluding – even if this is not necessarily the way that I see things – that homosexuality is a *life choice* as respectable as any other...By contrast, when it comes to parenting, young people are still quite reticent to the idea that gays and lesbians can raise children just like anyone else. Often they would imagine themselves with two parents of the same-sex and see this atypical situation as being difficult to live with at school and thus not very desirable... In fact, thinking about a family with two parents of the same gender was often very troubling for them given that youth are sometimes very fixed in their ideas of gender differences in terms of roles and tasks. They often say that a boy becomes a man by imitating his father and a girl imitates her mother to become a woman...and so the recurring question of male role models and my son...

These reservations by youth, are not really any different from what I’ve experienced with many adults and so it seems to me that acceptance, in our society, of families with same-sex parents is the next frontier for gays and lesbians.

Well, if seeing a pregnant lesbian doesn’t radically change the opinions of these youth on parenting it still has its merits. It at least shows them that gays and lesbians can and do have families. It also reminds them that Quebec’s laws recognize gay and lesbian-headed families in the same way as they do heterosexual parents. It also helps them to realise that they may one day encounter the children of gays and lesbians. As for young

gays and lesbians, by seeing us they know that if they eventually do want to start a family, that their desire is legitimate and possible.

For me the accumulation of these positive points makes it really worthwhile to reach out to youth! That's why this fall I will be returning to the schools so that other curious teenagers can find out how me and my partner are enjoying being the new parents of our little Thomas!

But GRIS-Montreal needs more than 2 moms!

In fact, more than 700 visits to schools take place each year in the high schools and CEGEPs of Montreal. These visits are mostly done in French, although sometimes anglophone or allophone volunteers are needed. Each encounter requires two volunteers because each GRIS session is done with a gay and a lesbian. That's a lot of work for the 130 members – of the 200 on this non-profit organisation's list – that have been trained to do demystification workshops.

Even if the main idea behind these encounters is to share the personal story of each member (there are no pre-requisites other than speaking and understanding French, and being "out"), being able to tell about your life experiences in an interesting way is something that is learned! That's why all the members of GRIS that want to go out and do workshops with youth in the schools must do an intensive week-end long training session, during which they learn how to respond to the questions most-often asked by youth. Of course a whole weekend seems a lot to ask, but as you soon learn, it is also necessary in order to be able to do the job. In fact the weekend training is not only an intense training session, it's also an intense personal experience! I'm convinced that the week-end that I spent learning to become a GRIS presenter helped me enormously in terms of my own self-confidence and self-assurance, and also helped me to root out and eliminate any vestiges of internalized homophobia I had left in me! Really if I could do this training session again I wouldn't hesitate!

Before becoming an independent speaker, you must also attend two workshops as an observer, and then do one "assisted-workshop" with an experienced presenter, who can evaluate your ability to carry out the workshop and jump in if any difficulties arise.

In addition to this GRIS asks its volunteers to attend two of the continuing-education workshops that take place throughout the year. These sessions take place once a month and are dedicated to learning new, relevant information on topics that are not necessarily familiar to every gay and lesbian, but might nonetheless elicit questions in class. For example, the question of same-sex parenting, the links between sports and sexual orientation, the life of gays and lesbians in other countries, or questions around transsexuality and transvestitism... These training sessions are sometimes followed up with practice sessions where the questions most likely to be encountered in a classroom setting are shared between the volunteers. It also gives GRIS members a chance to strengthen the links between each other. By the end of the training session the organisation to demystify homosexuality changes into a social club when it comes time for a beer.

Of course the commitment required by GRIS may seem a lot. With children, especially when they're young, our own free time may be limited. Nevertheless I'm convinced that if young people meet some lesbian mothers, these kids might also be more open to our own children. Because GRIS shares this point of view and is working toward fighting the homophobia that children of gays and lesbians also face, they would like you to join their ranks! GRIS is looking for moms, so don't hesitate, join in!

For information regarding GRIS:

www.gris.ca / info@gris.ca or 514-590-0016

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: June - August 2006

Montreal and Quebec News

July 26 - August 5th 2006 - 1st World OutGames, Montreal -The United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour opened the international conference on LGBT human rights with a simple message: Gays have a fundamental right to privacy and the right to live free of violence. Arbour was speaking at the opening of the first International Conference on LGBT Human Rights, a three-day event associated with the first Outgames in Montreal.

The conference brought together over 1500 people from around the world to discuss LGBT human rights - from essential rights to global issues. Conference organizers extended special invitations to 315-people involved in LGBT rights in world hotspots. Their expenses were covered by a Canadian government grant. But delays in obtaining visas almost curtailed their participation. Final wrinkles were ironed out at the last minute. The government blamed the delays on the crush of people from abroad seeking to enter Canada during the peak tourist season. Opposition Liberals in the Canadian Parliament suggested that the government purposely dragged its feet. Many of the 315 have criminal records - the result of laws in their home countries against homosexuality and social protest.

Arbour also told the conference that there is "a direct link between the denial of the essential right to privacy and the prevalence of violence against LGBT people throughout the world." She said that neither the existence of national law nor the prevalence of a country's customs justifies the "abuse, attacks, torture and indeed killings that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons are subjected to because of who they are or are perceived to be."

Arbour told the delegates that LGBT activists throughout the world must continue to fight for their rights and to work with the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to further their goals. In January the United States joined with four of the world's most repressive regimes to reject applications by two LGBT groups to join the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), a think tank made up of non-governmental agencies from around the world. ECOSOC status allows non-governmental agencies to attend UN meetings and speak in their own name. The Council already has participation from labor and social rights groups.

Other participants at the conference include Alice Nkom, a lawyer who is defending 11 men imprisoned for being gay in Cameroon; Ashok Row Kavi, HIV activist and founder of Bombay Dost, India's first registered gay publication; and Georgina Beyer, the world's first transsexual Member of Parliament from New Zealand.

The final product of the conference, the *Declaration of Montreal* on LGBT international rights was unveiled at the games' Opening Ceremony. It will now be sent to the United Nations with a promise from Arbour to promote it. The declaration can be viewed at:

http://www.montreal2006.org/Doc/FINAL_Declaration%20of%20Montreal_EN.pdf

Despite its difficult beginnings, organizers of the inaugural World Outgames were calling the gathering of gay athletes a success as the event wrapped up after more than a week of competition.

"It was a gigantic effort," said Outgames co-president Mark Tewksbury. "The feedback we're receiving from our participants, which is really our first concern, has been overwhelmingly positive."

Tewksbury said the event had exceeded expectations. "We are very proud to announce that we have reached our participation and attendance targets, with more than half a million people at the sporting competitions and cultural activities (as well as) 18,599 participants from 111 countries as conference delegates, athletes, volunteers, or participants in the cultural program," he said in a written statement. The 35 sporting categories drew 10,248 athletes, while 835 people came together for the cultural component of the program. Some 5,200

volunteers worked tirelessly at all the events.

The games featured such traditional Olympic sports as rowing and figure skating, but also more unconventional competitions such as square dance. But sporting feats had to share the spotlight with politics, as the Outgames lived up to its billing of being as much about culture and human rights as about athletics.

Before the games even started, singer k.d. lang, who performed at the opening ceremonies, blasted Prime Minister Stephen Harper for passing up an invitation to attend the event. His public works minister, Quebec Senator Michael Fortier, was subsequently roundly booed when he tried to address the crowd at the kickoff ceremony.

Several other prominent politicians dropped by through the week, including openly-gay Liberal leadership candidate Scott Brison, Treasury Board President John Baird and Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe. In fact, one of Duceppe's troops, Montreal-area MP Real Menard, even managed to win a silver medal in wrestling.

The next edition of the Outgames is slated to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2009.

Canadian News

June 1st (Vancouver) A negotiated settlement of a long-standing human rights complaint, brought against the Ministry of Education by Murray and Peter Corren has been reached. The couple were seeking, through the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal, the addition of sexual orientation and gender identity topics to the B.C. schools curriculum.

Part of the settlement includes the development of an elective course for Grade 12 students that will explore the nature of a just and equitable society by focusing on social justice issues. The new course, Social Justice 12, will offer students opportunities to study the legal, political, ethical, and economic perspectives that inform Canadian concepts of justice, equality, and equity. Content will include topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, family structure, and sexual orientation. The course will be piloted in the 2007-08 school year, with full implementation in September 2008.

The province will also establish a process and a schedule to review the entire B.C. curriculum to ensure that it reflects inclusion, respect, and social justice for the diverse groups that today make up BC's population. Reviews will be conducted as each course or area of study comes up for regular revision by the Ministry of Education.

"We are delighted with this agreement, and we shall make every effort to work cooperatively with the Ministry in implementing the terms of this settlement," says Coquitlam teacher, Murray Corren. "British Columbia will be leading the way for the rest of Canada in ensuring its curriculum makes room for the diversity of *all* students."

June 7 (Toronto) A Toronto judge has rapped the Ontario government, accusing it of discriminating against same-sex parents. Justice Paul Rivard of the Superior Court of Justice has given the province one year to amend its process for registering births.

The case involved four lesbian couples where one of the women in each relationship gave birth through artificial insemination. The government refused to register the spouses as a parents. Co-parenting is legal in Ontario but only when the non birth parent adopts the child. In their lawsuit the women said the practice was "repugnant".

In his written ruling Justice Rivard said that the province is violating Canada's Constitution. Rivard said there was some evidence the provincial government had been "targeting" lesbian co-parents for discrimination. Rivard said that evidence in the case showed lesbian parents suffered pain when they were not able to register and that for the children the government was perpetuating the idea there is something wrong with their families

He also noted that when parents are not registered they may encounter difficulty obtaining medical treatment or a passport for their child.

June 20 (Ottawa) Legislation has been introduced in Canada's House of Commons to include the transgendered in the country's Human Rights Act. Although some provinces, including Ontario and Quebec already provide protections, federal legislation does not. Gays were added to the Canadian Human Rights Act in 1994.

The bill to include trans people was introduced by New Democratic MP Bill Siksay (BC). It is identical to a measure he proposed last year but which died on the order paper when an election was called. The bill would add "gender identity or expression" to the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination in the Act.

"This Bill is essential as it addresses the lack of explicit protection for transsexual and transgender people in the Canadian Human Rights Act," said the openly gay Siksay. "Transgender and transsexual people are often victims of violence and face discrimination on a daily basis, this is unacceptable and the inequity in protections for trans people must be immediately addressed by Canadian laws."

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.

June 4 (Ottawa) When Canada's Conservative government reopens the gay marriage debate this fall Members of Parliament will not be asked immediately to repeal the law that allows same-sex couples to marry Prime Minister Stephen Harper's office says. The question of reopening the debate will be presented first. Then if a majority of MPs vote yes a repeal bill will be prepared and put to a vote. It is a move that likely will result in MPs voting not to reopen the issue, but one in which Harper can use to tell gay marriage opponents he did his best while appealing to moderates that the issue is finally resolved.

June 6 (London, England) A landmark same-sex marriage case opens with two women taking the British government to court to have their Canadian marriage recognized in the UK. British heterosexual couples who marry abroad are automatically considered to be married in the UK.

June 6 (Washington) Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urges respect and sensitivity in the debate over gay marriage, but ducks a question about her own views on the question.

June 7 (Washington) The Senate votes 49 to 48 to defeat the Federal Marriage Amendment, a measure that would have denied marriage to same-sex couples and seriously threatened civil unions and domestic partnerships. Seven Republicans join 41 Democrats in voting down the measure, which opponents say was a politically motivated distraction from real challenges facing the country.

June 9 (Toronto) Dozens of same-sex couples celebrate in front of Toronto City Hall, marking the third anniversary of the landmark court ruling that struck down Canada's ban on gay marriage. On June 10, 2003 the Ontario Court of Appeals - the highest court in the province - ruled that prohibiting gay marriage was a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of the Canadian Constitution. The ruling allowed same-sex couples to immediately receive marriage licenses and wed.

June 15 (Canberra, Australia) A 32-30 Senate vote cements Australia's defeat of the Capital Territory's efforts to let same-sex couples wed. Territorial officials vow to try again.

June 19 (Toronto) A new poll shows that an overwhelming majority of Canadians are comfortable with same-sex marriage. The Environics survey commissioned by Canadians for Equal Marriage found that across the country of those with an opinion on gay marriage 64 percent said same-sex couples should have the same right to civil marriage as opposite-sex couples. Only 36 percent disagreed. Support was highest in Quebec where 67 percent supported gay marriage.

June 19 (Toronto) Gay-rights activists and others protest as renowned ethicist Margaret Somerville receives an honorary degree from Ryerson University. In her acceptance speech, Somerville acknowledges her views against same-sex marriage have caused unhappiness. She apologizes for causing distress, but not for her views.

June 20 (Paris) The leading contender for the Socialist Party nomination to run for President in 2007, Segolene Royal, comes out in favor of same-sex marriage. She says that if her party forms the next government she will introduce a gay marriage bill.

June 29 (Vatican City) The Vatican worries that its opposition to same sex marriage, abortion and embryonic stem cell research could one day land it before an international court of justice, a senior Vatican official says. "The church is at risk of being brought before some international court if the debate becomes any tenser, if the more radical requests get heard," says cardinal Lopez Trujillo, speaking ahead of the Roman Catholic church's World Meeting of Families in Valencia, Spain from July 1-9.

June 30 (Yarmouth, Nova Scotia) The first same-sex marriage between male Mounties occurs. Constables Jason Tree, 27, and David Connors, 28, recite their own vows before a justice of the peace, about 100 guests, and a line of other RCMP officers dressed in their red serge and Stetson hats.

July 3 (Santiago) Legislation will be introduced in the **Chile** Congress to allow same-sex couples to enter into civil unions. Chile already offers some limited rights for gay and lesbian couples.

July 6 -The **American** Academy of Pediatrics says children of same-sex couples benefit in many ways when their parents are able to marry or form unions.

July 6 (Kiev) A Ukrainian LGBT rights group and human rights organizations issue a public letter calling on the government to legalize same-sex relationships. The letter suggests that if full marriage is not attainable there should be civil partnerships and legislation providing same-sex couples with the same social and economic rights as married couples.

July 7 - New York state same-sex couples are delivered a double blow by the Court of Appeal ruling that nixes gay marriage in the Empire State. The ruling states that the "Constitution does not compel the recognition of marriages between members of the same sex."

The ruling also means an end to a challenge by New York couples to a Massachusetts law barring clerks from issuing marriage licenses to people whose weddings would be illegal in their home states.

July 10 - Pope Benedict XVI lives up to his nickname of "God's Rottweiler" on a trip to **Spain** by chewing out gay marriage, while Spain's prime minister eschews papal mass.

July 16 (Ottawa) Thousands of Christians from across Canada demonstrate at Parliament Hill and pray for a reconsideration of gay marriage, abortion laws, and Conservative efforts to raise the age of sexual consent to 16

from 14.

July 18 (Washington) The US House of Representatives rebuffs a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage by a 236-187 vote, a stronger defeat than last year's vote.

July 24 - The Baltic republic of **Slovenia** legalizes same-sex unions but puts restrictions on the ceremony, which no friends or family of the betrothed may attend.

July 31 - A **British** court refuses to recognize the Canadian same-sex marriage of two university professors -- and slaps them with \$46,590 in legal costs.

August 1 (Cape Town, South Africa) The South African government will have a bill on gay marriage ready for Parliament before the end of the year says the Deputy Justice Minister.

International News

Pride parades in Eastern Europe (May, June and July 2006) About 2,000 gays and their supporters marched through central **Warsaw** on **June 10th** in the first legally sanctioned Pride parade in the **Polish** capital. The marchers were guarded by almost as many police with more than a thousand skinheads and ultra-nationalists lining the route throwing eggs and bottles. The heavy police cordon prevented the mob from rushing the marchers and police reported few arrests.

Earlier in June, the city gave its official approval for the parade. In 2003 and 2004 then Warsaw mayor Lech Kaczynski refused to grant permission for a gay pride parade in the capital. Nevertheless, more than 2,500 people ignored the order and marched anyway. Kaczynski is now president of Poland. Gay rights groups say they've suffered even more of a setback since the election victory last fall of his conservative *Law and Justice Party* which regularly denounces homosexuality.

Gays are under attack in most former Soviet states. In **May** police broke up a Pride march in **Moscow**. **Russian** gays say they will not be cowed into retreating to the closet despite the violence they endured at the gay pride march. The organizers of the march say they already are planning for a similar march next year.

"The 27th of May has been for us so far an anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1993 in Russia. But the gay parade in 2006 in Moscow and the situation in which it was held has given much more weight to this date," Nikolay Alexeyev told the *Interfax news agency*.

Alexeyev, one of the organizers of the pride march, was one of the gays detained by police when they attempted to hold a pride parade after Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov refused to issue them a parade permit. Police said that 200 people were detained, and about 120 of those arrested were members of the gay community, the others were part of a counter demonstration.

"Some individual protestors were surrounded, abused and attacked by gangs of fascists," said Alexeyev, "Groups of roaming neo-Nazis stormed around the square looks for gays and lesbians to attack. We had to look inconspicuous to avoid being beaten. Then, some of the fascists threw tear gas canisters and formed a line with the police to block our exit from Manezhnaya Square. "

Moscow is the only major world capital not to have a pride parade. In denying the parade permit Luzhkov said he was concerned about potential violence. But on Russian Radio he cited moral reasons for the ban. "I believe that such a parade is inadmissible in our country above all for moral considerations. People should not make public their deviations," he said.

Alexeyev told *Interfax* that Russian gays and lesbians want to challenge the city in court and are prepared to go all the way to the **European Court in Strasbourg**.

While Russian gays struggle to gain recognition, the LGBT community in another former Soviet state were given permission to hold pride celebrations. The city government of **Bucharest** approved a permit for a rally to be held. About a thousand people from throughout **Romania** attended. The approval from the city came despite stiff opposition by the Orthodox Church and a Romanian nationalist group.

On **July 22nd** in **Riga** dozens of gays, barred from holding a pride parade, were attacked by a right wing mob at a church in the **Latvian** capital. Hundreds of skinheads, members of the extreme nationalist group ANSS and members of the Orthodox Church surrounded the small Anglican church in central Riga as about 50 gay rights activists and their supporters held a prayer service for LGBT rights.

When the service ended some of the congregants managed to get out a back door unscathed but subjected to verbal abuse. Others, including the pastor who led the service, opted to remain in the sanctuary hoping the crowd outside would disperse. Instead, they found themselves bottled in as the protest crowd swelled. Finally they were allowed to leave by the front but were forced to run a gauntlet where they were pelted with bags of excrement and verbal abuse.

"Homosexuals are dirty sinners, ANSS leader Viktors Biese told the *Agence France Presse*. "They are immoral people and they don't have a place in normal society. We have to stop them now. We can't wait until they start demanding the right to get married and adopt children."

People who had been in the church said that police stood by and did nothing to stop the attack.

July 20th (Harare) Zimbabwe strongman Robert Mugabe's government has made it a criminal offense for two people of the same sex to hold hands, hug, or kiss. The "sexual deviancy" law is one of 15 additions to Zimbabwe's criminal code quietly passed in Parliament last week.

The sections involving gays and lesbians are part of an overhaul of the sodomy laws. Until now laws against sodomy were limited to sexual activity. The revised law now states that sodomy is any "act involving contact between two males that would be regarded by a reasonable person as an indecent act".

Mugabe has a long history of homophobia. He regularly refers to gays and people he suspects to be gay as "less than pigs and dogs". Earlier this year the 82 year old went on a tirade calling homosexuality "a white disease". "Leave whites to do that," he declared.

Mugabe told the cheering throng that same-sex marriage is a threat to mankind and condemned churches that bless gay unions. He said his government would jail any clergy who performed a blessing ceremony for gay couples in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is not the only African country where gays are in danger. Botswana, Kenya, Cameroon, and Mozambique punish sodomy with imprisonment. Nigerian law has a 14-year prison sentence for homosexuals, but in Muslim northern Nigeria, where Islamic Sharia law is in force, it is punishable by death.

July 20 Reuters (Santiago, Chile) Two years ago, Karen Atala, a young Chilean judge had an unwavering faith in justice and the rule of law. But that was all before Chile's Supreme Court stripped her of custody of her three daughters because she had publicly identified herself as a lesbian. Now Atala, 42, has become a symbol of what she and homosexual groups that have emerged here in recent years, at first tentatively but now with growing assertiveness, describe as a different kind of human rights violation. Rather than accept the ruling and the

beliefs underlying it, she is fighting to have the decision overturned and for the rights of homosexuals to be recognized in what is often described as Latin America's most socially conservative country.

The Atala case, has thrust homosexuality, considered a marginal issue just a few years ago, onto the national political agenda.

Divorce did not exist in Chile until 2004, and even now, there is no provision for joint custody of children. In a manifestation of traditional roles that normally works in favour of women, custody is almost automatically awarded to the mother - unless she is proved to be a prostitute, drug addict, alcoholic or, in Atala's case, lesbian. The children now live with their father. Two appellate courts ruled in Atala's favor, finding that her sexual orientation did not affect her ability to be a good mother. But the Supreme Court intervened in the case, improperly according to some legal analysts, and ruled in May 2004 that by living with their mother, the girls were in "a situation of risk" whose "pernicious consequences" would "damage their psychic development" and make them "objects of social discrimination."

Ordinarily, that would have been the end of the matter, but late in 2004, Atala and her supporters decided to take the case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The proceeding at the commission, is being closely watched throughout Latin America. Several countries in the region have constitutions that place a ruling by the Inter-American system above those of their own courts, meaning that a ruling in Atala's favour would benefit homosexual couples throughout the hemisphere.

Recent changes here have led Atala's supporters to believe those objectives are now achievable. The new president, Michelle Bachelet, is a single mother, feminist and physician who as health minister in the previous government was in charge of AIDS programs. But Bachelet's governing coalition includes both her Socialist Party and the more socially conservative Christian Democrats.

"Everyone expects Michelle to have a more progressive social agenda," said Maria Antonieta Saa, a congressional deputy and ally of Bachelet's who was one of the sponsors of the divorce law. "But the pressure from the other side is just as intense."

July 20 PlanetOut News: The **Gates Foundation** has provided five years' funding for HIV vaccine research with an eye toward transforming how this critical field of inquiry is done.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2006/07/20/1>

July 21 PlanetOut News: **India's** leading AIDS nonprofit has filed court papers to scrap the penal code section that prohibits "carnal intercourse against the order of nature."

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2006/07/21/4>

News from the Lesbian Mothers Association

UPCOMING MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 2006 :

◆ **Sunday September 10th from 2 :00 - 4 :00 p.m.**

ETHNOCULTURAL FAMILIES GROUP: GET-TOGETHER /DROP IN FOR PARENTS OF COLOUR, IMMIGRANTS AND FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR CHILDREN.

Kids and Adults: Many of the concerns that affect women-who-love-women from various ethnocultural communities are amplified when they become parents. This get-together will be another opportunity to share our experiences as parents of colour, immigrants and first nations people living between different worlds: our culture, our extended families and the gay community. Please bring your kids along to this event. We'll be meeting at the park!

Location: Staynor Park (across from Greene Centre – 1090 Greene Ave.), (Metro Atwater, Greene Avenue is a few blocks west of Atwater. The park is south of Dorchester (René Levesque)

◆ **Saturday September 16th at 7:00 p.m.**

WELCOMING PARTY FOR OLD AND NEW MEMBERS

Adults only: A chance for old and new members of the group to get to know each other and catch up after summer holidays. We will meet on the 3rd floor of Drugstore at 1366 Ste-Catherine Est (metro Beaudry) in the gay village. Bring some pizza, nachos or drinks on your way up!

◆ **Wednesday September 27th at 7:30 p.m.**

ADOPTION ISSUES GROUP : GUEST SPEAKER

Adults only: A get-together (organized jointly by the Lesbian Mothers Association and the Papa-Daddy Group), to discuss issues, let off some steam and exchange news concerning adoption (both international and domestic). This month's theme is : Adoption of Quebec Children. A guest speaker from the Centre de jeunesse de Montréal (DPJ) has been invited to speak about the mixed bank programme and changing attitudes towards members of our community within the centres jeunesses.

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

OCTOBER 2006:

◆ **Sunday October 29th from 2-5 p.m.**

HALLOWEEN PARTY : MAGIC AND MYSTERY

Kids and Adults: What to wear: A Halloween costume! The theme is Magic and Mystery!

Activities: Montreal's BEST magician MEHDI will do an amazing performance to dazzle both kids and adults. There will also be Halloween crafts, pumpkin decorating, snacks and lots of free space to run around in, play basketball or hang out at the toddler's corner in the gym . Please bring a snack if you can (remember: no peanut products because of allergies).

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

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NOVEMBER 2006:

◆ **Saturday November 25th at 7:30 p.m.**
DISCUSSION GROUP: "WHO'S MY DAD?"

Adults only: If your child hasn't already asked this question, it won't be long before one of his or her friends do. Some of us have used fertility clinics or adoption to start our families, others have known-donors. How, and with what words do we explain our children's origins to them and to others? What is the best way of approaching this? Is there a best way? How do our own feelings around family affect our choices?

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

BULLETIN BOARD:

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

◆ **Single Moms** everywhere: Come out, come out wherever you are. Let's get together and just discuss baby issues, single mom issues, and anything and everything else. Something light and informal. Of course, with our babies... If interested, please email shariann@sympatico.ca or call **Shari Ann at (514) 482-6533**. Perhaps a few of us can get together at my house or anyone else's home... Hoping to hear from at least one mom.

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

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

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

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

ADOPTIONS AND BIRTHS

◆ **Elizabeth Biron** was born on **May 4, 2006**, she weighed 9.1 pounds and measured 21 inches. The mamans are **Patricia Benoit** and **Hélène Biron**.

♦ **Heidi Shapiro and Marleigh Greaney** are thrilled to announce the birth of their first daughter, **Kaelyn Emma**, born on **May 23, 2006**, weighing 5 lbs. 12 oz. She is welcomed by lots of loving family and friends.

MISCELLANEOUS

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

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

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

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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♦ **THERE IS NO FREEDOM WITHOUT FINANCIAL FREEDOM - LA LIBERTÉ PERSONNELLE PASSE PAR LA LIBERTÉ FINANCIÈRE.** Financial services for individuals and small businesses: budgeting, debt management, investments, future planning, personal taxes, wealth enhancement strategies. 20% of all subsequent fees will be donated to the LMA. **J. Freed, (514) 489-8633, www.jfreed.ca**

♦ **Furniture Restoration - Lise Kuhn Studio**
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