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national news

ARIZONA

The state's Supreme Court has refused to hear an appeal of a lower court's ruling that allows employers to fire gay men and lesbians solely because of their sexual orientation.

The case involved Jeffrey L. Blain, who worked for Golden State Container in Phoenix. Blain sued the company after he was fired, claiming he was dismissed because he is gay and has AIDS.

The jury was instructed to find in Blain's favor if it were determined he was fired for having AIDS—a violation of the law—but to rule in favor of the company if it were determined Blain was fired solely for being gay. There are no legal protections based on sexual orientation in Arizona, and the jury found in favor of the company.



CALIFORNIA

Findings of a new study show that white women living in San Francisco have the highest rate of breast cancer in the world.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer says the rate for those women is 50 percent higher than that of most European women.

Researchers speculate that better health care and more toxins in richer food may be to blame. They also speculate the rate may be higher because women in that area tend to delay childbirth or don't give birth at all. Researchers also noted the San Francisco population may have more cases of obesity and increased alcohol use, which could lead to higher breast cancer rates.



Tom diMaria, executive director of the San Francisco chapter of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, which monitors gay and lesbian bias in the mainstream media, stepped down from the post Feb. 1. DiMaria, who had headed up the local chapter since July 1993, cited personal reasons for the change.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

An appeals court recently ruled the District of Columbia did not unlawfully discriminate against a gay male couple in refusing them a marriage license.

The court rejected claims by the couple brought under the D.C. Human Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution. In a 2-1 decision, the D.C. Court of Appeals held that the city's "different gender" marriage requirement did not violate the constitutional rights of the men, Craig Robert Dean and Patrick Gerard Gill, who sought to get married after years together as a couple.

The ruling upholds a D.C. Superior Court decision in 1992 which quoted Bible verses and a law dictionary's definition of marriage as part of the basis for its ruling.

FLORIDA



A judge in St. Petersburg has decided to take a 3-year-old girl from the adoptive parents who raised her from infancy. Circuit Judge Horace Andrews made the decision after learning the parents are both living with HIV.

Andrews says he did not know about the couple's health status when he approved the adoption last March. He says he will nullify the adoption later this month as a "fraud of mistake" unless the couple—a man and a woman—gives up their parental rights first.

Though the judge was unaware of the couple's HIV status, state social workers knew and recommended the adoption, saying the parents were loving and had cared for the child as foster parents since June 1992.

ILLINOIS

The American Civil Liberties Union says it will appeal a state court decision which denied a lesbian's request to adopt her partner's two children. One child was adopted by the partner and the other was conceived through alternative insemination.

The ACLU became involved in the case after the court-appointed guardian challenged an interim adoption order that was granted to the partner who was seeking to adopt. Associate Cook County Circuit Court Judge Marjan Staniec then ruled this past November that though married couples and single people can legally adopt children, that privilege did not apply to two unmarried people.

MARYLAND

New governor Parris Glendening has appointed at least five open gay men and lesbians to his transition team.

Activists Brian Scott and Ann Gordon are serving on the Human Services and Neighborhood Revitalization Committee; Ed Marks and Steve Glassman serve on the Economic Development group, and Kurt Kugelberg is on the Environmental Committee.

MISSOURI

The Lesbian Community Project of Mid-Missouri, a group dedicated to lesbian visibility, will be participating in the Missouri Adopt-a-Highway Program.



The group will provide clean-up along a very visible stretch of Highway 163 in Columbia. The project will begin in the near future.

NEW YORK

The Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation has set a March 8 submission deadline for its 1995 Lesbian Writers Fund, which will issue five awards of \$11,000 each to emerging lesbian writers of fiction and poetry. Three fiction and two poetry prizes will be awarded this year.

To apply, write or call the Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation, Attn: Lesbian Writers Fund, 666 Broadway, Suite 520, New York, NY 10012, (212) 529-8021.

WASHINGTON

The Grant County Washington Citizens for Fairness/Hands Off Washington coalition is continuing its outreach work to small towns and rural communities in eastern Washington.

The Grant County coalition is working to develop other small-town coalitions and is currently working with people in Brewster, Omak, Okanogan, Winthrop, Hartline and Wilson Creek. The coalition is encouraging residents in those locations to call (509) 754-4776 if they wish to help with networking.

Compiled by Inga Sorensen