

national news

CALIFORNIA

The *San Francisco Bay Times* is now the first gay and lesbian newspaper in the United States to gain union recognition. The staff of the newspaper has affiliated with the Northern California Newspaper Guild Local 52.



A U.S. federal court judge in Los Angeles has ruled that California Federal Bank may discriminate against a gay employee by refusing to grant him and his partner a discounted home loan that is offered to other employees. Currently the discounted loan is offered to employees purchasing a home with a spouse or other family member.



The bank denied the loan to Jeffrey Bagley, one of its vice presidents, because his partner, Peter Lavin, is neither Bagley's spouse nor a member of Bagley's immediate family.



A new California Department of Social Services policy not to deny adoption applications based solely on the applicants' marital status has been reversed by Gov. Pete Wilson. Wilson ordered the reinstatement of the old policy favoring adoption by married couples. The new policy had made it easier for gay and lesbian couples to adopt.

Wilson is considering a run for the 1996 Republican presidential nomination.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Sexual orientation has finally been added to the nondiscrimination statement of the U.S. Department of Education. This now brings to 23 the number of federal agencies that include sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination statements.

FLORIDA

A referendum in Tampa that could have legalized job and housing discrimination based on sexual orientation has been struck from the ballot. Circuit Court Judge Manuel Menendez ruled that the wording of the referendum was illegally changed from the language that appeared on petitions. The petitions were circulated by the American Family Association of Florida.

A broad coalition of civic, religious, business and political groups had joined together to form Citizens for a Fair Tampa to fight passage of the referendum.

ILLINOIS

A ninth-grader in the city of Normal was sent home from school for wearing a floral-pattern sun dress to class. According to the Associated Press, Chiddix High School principal Ed Heineman sent student Josh McElwee home when he refused to change clothes.

McElwee said he got the idea from a class exercise in which students dressed like natives of other countries. The purpose of the exercise was to experience what it would be like to be treated differently. He said his friends dared him to wear the dress. According to McElwee, he is neither gay nor a cross-dresser.



An executive order signed by Cook County Treasurer Ed Rosewell forbids financial institutions that have county government funds on deposit from discriminating against gay men and lesbians in lending decisions. In signing the ex-

ecutive order, Rosewell was making good on a campaign promise. It is estimated that Cook County deposits more than \$7.5 billion in more than 120 Cook County financial institutions each year.



The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers has taken the position that child custody should not be denied someone simply because that person is gay or lesbian. The policy position appeared in a friend-of-the-court brief filed by the AAML in the Sharon Bottoms custody case now before the Virginia Supreme Court.

In 1993, a Virginia trial court denied Bottoms custody of her son because she is a lesbian. Pamela Kay Bottoms, the boy's grandmother, was awarded custody. A subsequent ruling by an intermediate appeals court ordered the boy returned to his mother. The grandmother appealed that ruling to the Virginia Supreme Court.

INDIANA

The National Women's Music Festival, the oldest women's music festival in the country, will be held June 1 to 4, on the Indiana University campus in Bloomington. Author Rita Mae Brown will give the keynote address at the festival. Music performers will include Janis Ian, Mar-gie Adam, Ubaka Hill, the Laura Love Band, and disappear fear.



Look for registration information at women's bookstores or write to PO Box 1427-PR, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1427, or call (317) 927-9355 and leave your name and address.

MARYLAND

A circuit court judge ruled Feb. 15 that an HIV-positive gay man may have overnight visits with his three daughters, reported the *Baltimore Gay Paper*. The judge also ruled that David North may take his daughters to a church where most of the parishioners are gay or lesbian.

During the proceedings, North's former wife argued that the girls would be at a higher risk of exposure to HIV if allowed to visit overnight with their father and his lover.

MONTANA

Although Montana has not yet been hit with any ballot initiatives discriminatory to gay men and lesbians, activists are already organizing to prevent or defeat any such measures. To that end, PRIDE! Inc., a statewide gay, lesbian and bisexual advocacy organization, and Montana P-FLAG are developing a speakers bureau. The groups invited Northwest Speak Out of Portland to present skills-building workshops in Missoula, Billings and Bozeman, according to a report in *Stonewall News Northwest*.

NEW YORK

A lesbian from Putnam County has filed an appeal with the state Appellate Court, arguing that she should be allowed to legally adopt the child that she and her partner have been co-parenting for four years. The biological mother conceived the child through anonymous donor insemination. The couple now seeks legal parental status for the nonbiological mother.

In 1993 a family court judge ruled that the nonbiological mother could not adopt because state law only allows adoption by single individuals or married couples. The court held that the petitioning woman is not married, and, because she is in a long-term relationship, she is not "single."

Compiled by Kristine Chatwood

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