

Metcalf, who is campaigning for a third term in Washington's 2nd District.

"The Victory Fund's No. 1 goal for 1998 is to make history by electing the first open lesbian to the U.S. Congress," Bond said in the news statement. "We believe that fair-minded voters will judge these exceptional women on their qualifications—not their sexual orientation. All we ask is that the Democratic Party do the same."

We are family

A Minnesota Family Strength Project survey released Oct. 20 found that gay and lesbian families are the healthiest and strongest family structures in the state and families headed by unmarried heterosexual couples are the weakest, reports the *Washington Blade*.

The survey relied on an admittedly unscientific sample of 400 self-identified families, nearly 15 percent of which involved same-sex couples.

Researcher Dr. Judy Tiesel found that gay people and their children are more likely than heterosexual parents to report having "exceptionally" or "very" strong families, while at the same time gay men and lesbians are more likely to report having grown up in "weak" family situations.

Tiesel postulates that sexual minorities "have developed certain strengths—such as better communications skills or support systems" as a result



of their "struggle to adapt in a relatively hostile culture."

The survey data is not considered scientific because each person interviewed was asked to provide her or his own definition of the term "family," but the results are still useful, says Terrance Steeno of the state's Family and Children's Services agency, which cosponsored the research.

"We hope this is a catalyst for more research," he says. "This information begs for someone to go further with it, to find out what makes a family unit strong."

Texas stands by lesbian and gay foster and adoptive parents

Texas child welfare officials are defending their policy of allowing gay men and lesbians to be foster and adoptive parents after a former worker who opposed the policy threatened a lawsuit.

The *Dallas Morning News* reported Nov. 11 that Child Protective Services spokeswoman Linda Edwards said the primary criteria for qualifying foster and adoptive parents is their ability to "nurture and parent a child."

Edwards' defense came after former CPS supervisor Rebecca Bledsoe filed a grievance with the state agency, claiming that she was demoted Nov. 1 for removing a foster child from the house of a lesbian couple.

Bledsoe said she told caseworkers to remove the infant boy because "homosexual conduct is against the law in Texas." She also questioned placing a black infant boy with two white lesbian caretakers.

Supervisors say they demoted Bledsoe because she did not follow the rules in moving the infant to another foster home. They deny the

action was taken because of a difference over the policy regarding gay or lesbian families.

Edwards says the boy was returned to the home of the lesbian couple after the action was taken against Bledsoe.

Bledsoe is threatening a lawsuit unless the policy is changed.

Filling the lesbian health care void

Doctors held a health fair Oct. 19 to inaugurate the Gay Women's Focus at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City.

GWF, a collection of doctors dedicated to lesbian health care issues, offers affordable pri-



mary and gynecological care and mental health services.

According to the *New York Blade*, Dr. Robert Newman, now president of Greater Manhattan Healthcare Systems, got the project moving in 1995. The idea was timely, filling a void left earlier that year when St. Mark's Women's Health Collective, a community health project for lesbians, closed due to lack of funding.

"Our goal is to make Beth Israel and every other medical center a gay-friendly place," says Dr. Joan Waitkevicz, who was associated with the collective from its inception in 1973 and is on staff at GWF. "Not just to get them to accept gay people, but to have a knowledge about their health care issues."

She and other GWF doctors have already made presentations around the city to teach practitioners "how to unlearn homophobia, so that if a lesbian comes through their doors, she leaves feeling her voice has been heard and her needs have been met."

She's still got it

The personal and professional life of everyone's favorite lesbian, Ellen DeGeneres, is still a hot topic—at least *Variety* thinks so. Army Archerd,



Ellen DeGeneres

a senior columnist at the quasi-tabloid, recently dished up an *Ellen* update and dug up details on Ellen's date.

Archerd reported that the Nov. 19 segment of *Ellen* featured guest star Emma Thompson as a lesbian from Dayton, Ohio, who picked up an English accent from watching too many Julie Andrew movies; and that Sean Penn, no stranger to coattails, got in on the act by "coming out" on the show.

On a more personal note, Archerd revealed that DeGeneres has been asked by Ron Howard and Brian Grazer to play opposite Matthew McConaughey in *Ed TV*, a film he said Howard described to him as "Capra-esque."

Word is DeGeneres had yet to read the script.

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttone

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