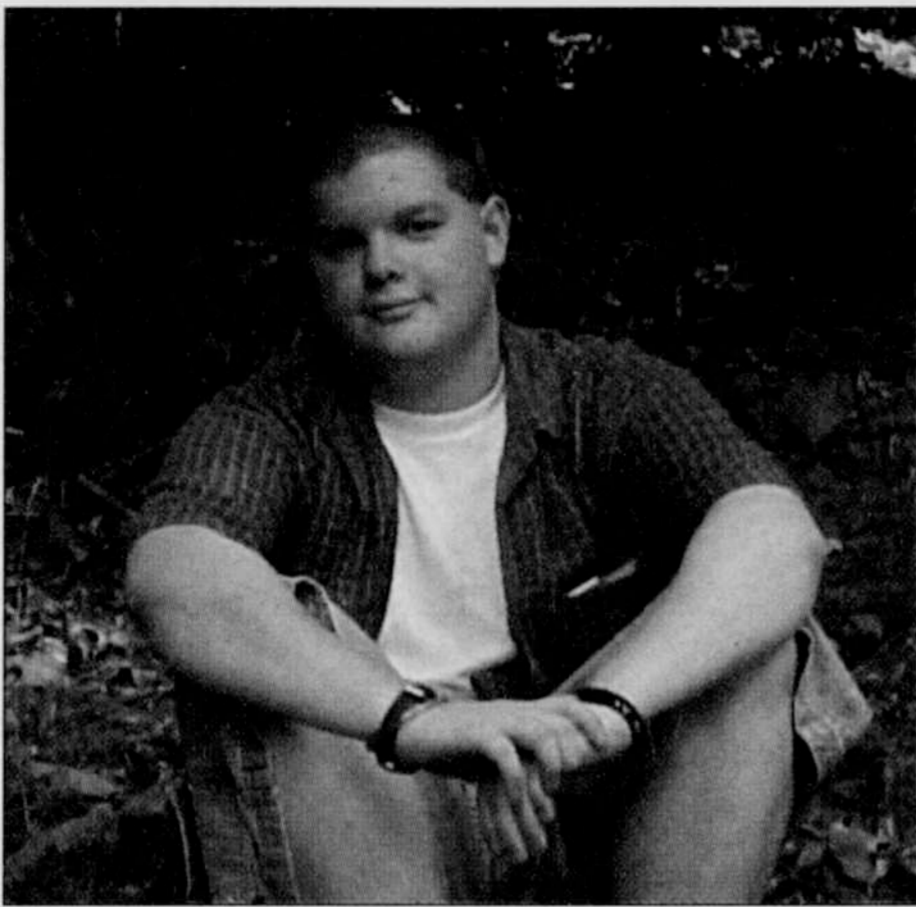


NATIONAL news

PENNSYLVANIA

A U.S. District Court in Pennsylvania last month awarded \$312,000 to 19-year-old Timothy Dahle as compensation for the pervasive anti-gay abuse he faced in the Titusville Area School District.

Kevin Jennings of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network called the settlement "breathtaking" and said the judges delivered "a message that should be heard by administrators nationwide: Protect all your students equally, or pay the price.... It may be the second-largest cash settlement ever imposed by the courts upon schools that have chosen to ignore, rather than address, student-on-student abuse based on sexual orientation."



Gay teen Timothy Dahle has settled his lawsuit with a school district in Titusville, Pa.

CALIFORNIA

Assemblyman Paul Koretz, D-West Hollywood, said Jan. 16 his civil union bill will not advance this year. The California Family Protection Act would have established a Vermont-style system in the state, granting same-sex couples all of the rights, benefits, protections and responsibilities that straight couples receive with marriage.

"I knew when I introduced this historic legislation that it would be a challenging, multiyear process for it to pass," Koretz said. "We scored a huge victory this year. We put civil union on the map in California and began the dialogue. We opened many eyes to the need for full legal recognition of committed same-sex couples."

Meanwhile, right-wing homophobes also were claiming victory. Ken Connor, Family Research Council president, noted 61 percent of the state's voters in March 2000 approved Proposition 22, which defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

"As goes California, so goes the nation," he said. "For the sake of marriage as we know it, it's imperative that Californians remain vigilant to see to it that the will of their vote is not overturned by homosexual activists."

Jean Harris, California Alliance for Pride and Equality executive director, lashed out at all the rhetoric, saying civil union opponents "are continuing to unravel the misrepresentation they perpetuated in passing Proposition 22." That campaign, she noted, clearly stated it was not intended to deny gay and lesbian families basic protections under the law.

"Yet...Sen. Pete Knight [Proposition 22's sponsor] is using the same initiative to attack measures, including the civil union bill, that would provide basic rights to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Californians," Harris said. "The truth of the matter is that these opponents just want to treat gay Californians as second-class citizens."

The criminal trial involving the owners of the dogs who killed a San Francisco lesbian began Jan. 24, the *New York Times* reported. It was moved to Los Angeles in an effort to find an impartial jury.

Popular college lacrosse coach Diane Whipple, 33, was carrying groceries into her apartment

Jan. 26, 2001, when she was attacked by two presa canarios, a breed known as "war dogs" and "fuzzy guns." The mauling was so horrific, officers on the scene received trauma counseling.

Marjorie Knoller, 46, and Robert Noel, 60, face 15 and three years in prison, respectively. The married lawyers have been in jail for almost a year, unable to post bail.

They took in Bane and Hera as a favor to Paul Schneider, a 39-year-old imprisoned murderer whom they legally adopted. The couple are linked to the Aryan Brotherhood, vicious dog rings and lurid allegations of bestiality.

Whipple's partner, Sharon Smith, also is proceeding with a civil case against Knoller, Noel and her landlord. She previously won a court ruling declaring it unconstitutional to exclude same-sex couples from wrongful death lawsuits.

"Having dogs of this type is like having custom-made 357s with fangs," attorney Michael Cardoza said. "Keeping these hyperaggressive, massive animals inside a small apartment in an urban setting defies reason."

MINNESOTA

A Minneapolis public school met its legal obligation by giving alternate restroom options to a teacher who did not want to share facilities with a male-to-female trans library employee, the American Civil Liberties Union said in papers filed Jan. 17.

Unsatisfied with Southwest High's accommodation, Carla Cruzan filed suit, complaining the situation violated her religious freedom and created a hostile workplace based on sex. She lost and is appealing to a federal appeals court in St. Louis, which will hear the case later this year.



Debra Davis

The ACLU says Cruzan, not the school, was unreasonable in demanding her personal beliefs dictate Debra Davis' restroom access. It notes Southwest High's handling of the transition received widespread approval.

"From students who plastered the walls with signs supporting Debra to the Out4Good office in the Minneapolis district itself, this community is a model for every school in the country," says J.J. Kahle of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's Minnesota chapter. "While it's too bad that Carla Cruzan is intolerant, her

Continued on Page 22

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