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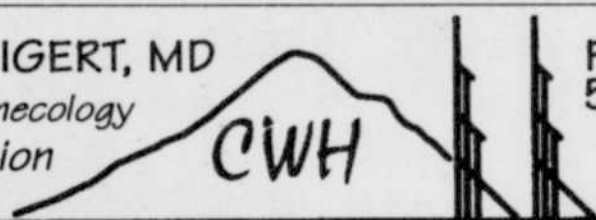
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where everyone is welcome,
including straight, lesbian, gay,
bisexual and transgender people.

NATIONAL news

LOUISIANA

After a 7-year-old boy was scolded in front of his classmates and sent to a behavioral clinic for answering another child's questions about his lesbian mothers, the American Civil Liberties Union demanded Dec. 1 that the school expunge his disciplinary records and stop restricting him from talking about his family with other students.

"I was concerned when the assistant principal called and told me my son had said a word so bad that he didn't want to repeat it over the phone," said Sharon Huff, the second-grader's mother. "But that was nothing compared to the shock I felt when my little boy came home and told me that his teacher had told him his family is a dirty word. No child should ever hear that, especially not from a teacher he trusted and respected."

Marcus McLaurin was waiting in line to go to recess Nov. 11 at Ernest Gallet Elementary School when a classmate asked him about his mother and father. He responded that he didn't have a mother and father; instead he has two mothers.

When the other child asked why, McLaurin said it was because his mother is gay. The other child then asked what that meant, and he explained, "Gay is when a girl likes another girl."

Upon hearing this, McLaurin's teacher scolded him in front of his classmates, telling him that "gay" is a bad word and that he should never say it at school, then sent him to the principal's office instead of letting him go to recess. The following week the school required him to attend a special behavioral clinic at 6:45 a.m., where he was forced to repeatedly write "I will never use the word 'gay' in school again."

WYOMING

After two girls were marched out of a homecoming dance by police, the American Civil Liberties Union sent a letter to school officials Nov. 20 demanding that they allow same-sex couples to attend the functions.

"I couldn't believe that our school was so threatened by the idea of two girls going to the homecoming together that they had police officers waiting for us," said Amanda Blair, a senior at Big Piney High in rural western Wyoming. "It's really sad that this is the kind of attitude that lesbian and gay students at my school will face when they want to bring a date to a school dance."

Blair, an honor student who participates in swimming, band, basketball, track and choir, had listed a female friend as her homecoming date when she signed up for the Sept. 12 dance. School officials told her that same-sex dates aren't allowed at dances.

Blair is heterosexual, but she and her friend decided to attend together in order to help gay and lesbian students in her district who might want to bring dates to school dances in the future. When she and her date arrived the next evening they were met by police officers, who then escorted them off the premises without any explanation.

The ACLU is demanding that the illegal policy be lifted, citing a 1980 Rhode Island case in which a federal judge ruled that students who want to bring same-sex dates to dances are not only protected under the free expression provisions of the First Amendment but that schools must take steps to ensure their safety. In the 23 years since Fricke vs. Lynch was decided, students throughout the United States have brought same-sex dates to school dances without incident.

He explained to another child that you are gay and what being gay means.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR CONTRACT

DATE 11-11-03

Dear MOM

Today I had a problem in school:

What I did: I said bad words.

What happened because I did what I did: Lineing up for riyces.

What I should have done: Sep my mouth shut.

What would have happened if I had done what I should have done: I wud be at riyces.

I need to talk to you about my plan for how to handle a similar problem next time.
Please sign this. I need to bring it back to school immediately.

Parent Signature: [Signature] 11/11/03

Student Signature: [Signature]
Teacher Signature: [Signature]

Parent Comments:

A 7-year-old boy had to fill out this student behavior contract form for talking about his lesbian moms

ARIZONA

The Undergraduate Student Government Senate at Arizona State University passed two bills Nov. 18 in support of queer issues on campus. The resolutions call for a certificate to be issued for gay and lesbian studies and for "gender identity and expression" to be included in the school's nondiscrimination policy.

Senators argued that the certificate program, which was proposed by a faculty group, "would enrich the ASU community by increasing student knowledge about gay and lesbian issues." In addition, it would "teach students to...be understanding of the gay and lesbian community" and "help inform other students and members of the community in order to spread this understanding."

The bills come after a recent increase in harassment, graffiti and verbal abuse expressed to the queer community at ASU. The next step is for the resolutions to be presented to administrators for approval.

"We appreciate that the USG Senate has taken these steps to help make this campus more inclusive," said Sam Holdren, facilitator for the LGBTQ Coalition at ASU. "Now that we have the support of the undergraduate student body, the administration must follow through and address the needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community on campus."



Sam Holdren

CALIFORNIA

An eighth-grader in Banning has resolved a lawsuit filed after she was forced to sit in the principal's office during physical education class because her gym teacher heard she was a lesbian, the National Center for Lesbian Rights announced Nov. 20.

Ashly Massey registered the complaint against the Banning Unified School District and four of its employees Dec. 20, 2002, in federal court in Riverside. Attorneys alleged that the school's actions violated her constitutional right to equal protection and her rights under the Student Safety and