

**NATIONAL news**

tender with a distinct 5 o'clock shadow and the husky baritone of talk show host Larry King; a pivotal rescue in which Pinocchio's nose grows after he denies wearing women's underwear; and a (presumably male) wolf comfortably dressed in Grandma's clothing and dancing.

The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition—a national advocacy organization working to end discrimination and violence caused by gender stereotypes—called the criticism “petty and foolish.”

“In entertainment, as in real life, there are all kinds of people who make up our neighborhoods and communities,” executive director Riki Wilchins said. “It is great that children and their parents can enjoy a wide variety of characters, including those who don't fit into rigid sex-role stereotypes.”

A computer-generated movie, *Shrek 2* has become the highest-grossing animated hit in domestic box office history, bringing in more than \$364 million in just its first four weeks.



Right-wingers are pissed at *Shrek 2* for “promoting cross-dressing and transgenderism”

Defense attorneys claimed that Araujo “deceived” her attackers and that learning her biological sex caused one defendant to become enraged “beyond reason.” One attorney claimed that no hate crime had been committed.

“We are relieved that the prosecutor is committed to retrying these defendants,” said Tina D’Elia of Community United Against Violence. “This is the first prosecution of a hate crime against a transgender person under California’s hate crime statute. This case confirms the need for such a law. I am sure that the jury’s refusal to buy into the so-called ‘transgender panic’ defense will offer some comfort to Gwen’s family because the jury recognized Gwen’s humanity and stayed focused on the facts.”

The Assembly Judiciary Committee, by an 8-3 vote, passed a resolution June 15 opposing an amendment to the U.S. Constitution limiting the rights of same-sex couples to marry or obtain benefits through civil unions or domestic partnerships.

This makes California the first state to have a legislative committee take a stand against the President Bush-backed Federal Marriage Amendment. A competing resolution that would have put California on record in support of the proposal now before Congress was not considered at the request of the author.

“I come from a religious tradition that does not perform same-sex marriages,” the Rev. Amos Brown of the Third Baptist Church told the committee. “However, I would never seek to impose my religious traditions on civil society. Civil society has a duty to treat all people, including gays and lesbians, with equal protection under the law.”

**NEW YORK**

The New York City Council voted 41-4 June 28 to override Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s veto of the Equal Benefits Bill.

The legislation requires employers with contracts of \$100,000 or more from the city to provide the same benefits to employees with domestic partners that they provide to employees with spouses. Enacting such a law has been a priority of the city’s large sexual minorities community since San Francisco passed the nation’s first measure of this kind in 1997.

“This one action will have a more tangible impact on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families than any measure ever passed by the City Council,” said Alan Van Capelle, Empire State Pride Agenda executive director. “This is one of the best days ever for LGBT families!”

A still unanswered question is whether Bloomberg will follow through on his threat to block implementation of the bill by challenging its provisions in court. Absent any legal action, the law takes effect in 120 days and affects only new and renewed city contracts.

Similar to the San Francisco statute, the bill is written to accommodate rather than penalize

contractors who make reasonable efforts to comply with it. A key element of the law is a streamlined waiver process, an approach used by San Francisco because it minimized implementation problems and achieved a high rate of compliance.

The bill is also similar to the San Francisco law in that it acknowledges there will be instances where a few contractors may have differences with the law based on religious principles. In these cases, the bill allows religion-based contractors the option of offering their employees coverage for a dependent household member instead of a domestic partner. This solution kept almost all such contractors in place in San Francisco.

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit June 29 against Foot Locker in state court in Columbia on behalf of a former employee who was subjected to severe anti-gay harassment by co-workers and supervisors, at two different store locations and in front of customers, and ultimately fired.

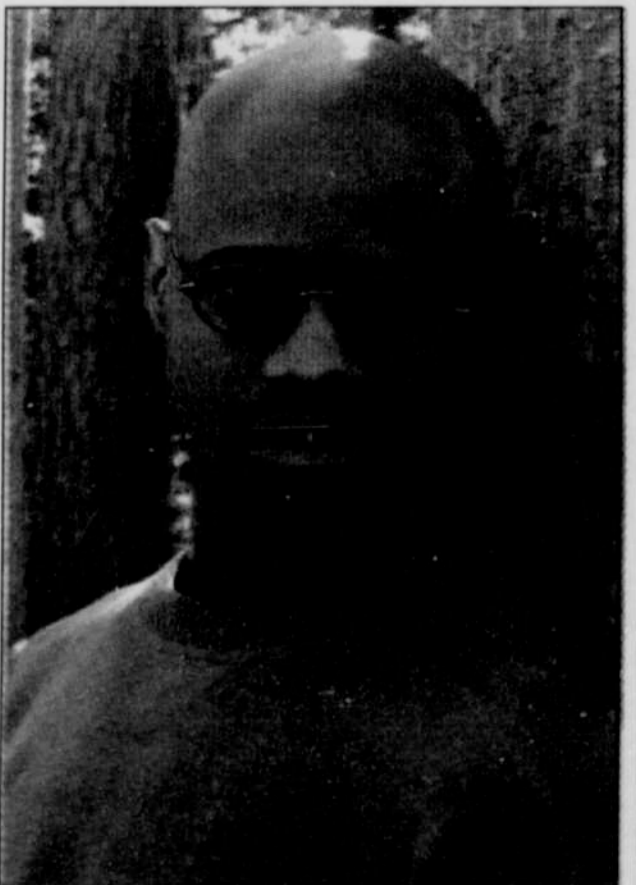
“Kevin Dunbar was subjected to a nightmarish workplace and then fired because he is gay,” attorney Greg Nevins said. “Foot Locker could have addressed this problem, as it clearly promises employees in its policies, but instead chose to ignore it and make it worse. Our client followed the rules to address the discrimination, and all it got him was a pink slip.”

Kevin Dunbar, 26, suffered anti-gay harassment and discrimination at the hands of his co-workers, supervisors and customers. Foot Locker promises a harassment-free workplace and includes sexual orientation in its policies.

When Dunbar formally complained, the promised confidentiality was broken and the discrimination grew worse. He was transferred from one store location to another, where his new manager refused to shake his hand and said, “I heard about your shit; I don’t want your fag-got ass in my store.”

Dunbar said: “Once I became a target, every morning when I woke up and I was scheduled for work, I knew that my supervisors and co-workers would verbally insult and degrade me, probably in front of customers. At best, they’d talk behind my back and make my every task twice as difficult—just because I’m gay. When I took a job at Foot Locker, I looked at the policies and took comfort in knowing that the company was fair to gay employees. Since the policies were so clear, I never thought this would happen.”

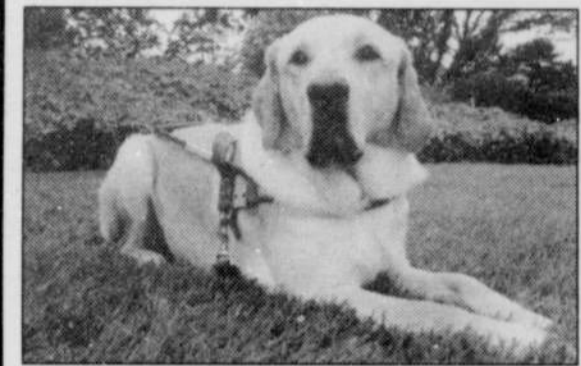
Compiled by News Editor JIM RADOSTA, who can be reached at jim@justout.com.



Kevin Dunbar was harassed at two Foot Locker stores and then fired because he is gay, despite the company’s anti-discrimination policy

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Jurors didn't buy into defense attorneys' claim that Gwen Araujo “deceived” her attackers

**CALIFORNIA**

Jurors declared a mistrial June 22 in the trial of three men accused of killing Gwen Araujo, a 17-year-old trans woman who was viciously attacked Oct. 3, 2002, in Newark. According to press reports, the jury couldn't concur on the most serious charge possible: first-degree murder with hate crime enhancements.

Araujo was beaten severely—using fists, canned goods and a metal skillet—then strangled to death. Her attackers then wrapped her in blankets and hit her in the head with a shovel before placing her body in a pickup. She was driven to a remote location and buried in a shallow grave near South Lake Tahoe, where her body was found two weeks later after one of her attackers, 20-year-old Jaron Nabors, confessed to police.

Three men—Michael Magidson, 23, and Jose Merel and Jason Cazares, both 24—were on trial for her murder and could have faced 25 years to life in prison. Nabors was also charged but pleaded guilty to manslaughter and, in exchange for testifying against the others, was promised an 11-year sentence.



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