

NATIONAL news

Maine Won't Discriminate is working to defeat Proposition 1, a ballot initiative that would strip Maine of employment protections recently signed into law by Democratic Gov. John Baldacci. Two groups opposed to Maine's new gay rights law are finding it difficult to raise funds for their campaign to reverse it. Maine Won't Discriminate has raised more than twice as much money.

No Nonsense in November is fighting a constitutional amendment that would bar marriage equality and civil unions in Texas. The measure has been placed on the November ballot. With turnout in off-year elections traditionally low, progressive activists are hoping to drive large numbers of voters to the polls specifically to vote against the amendment.

The Vote Against the Amendment Campaign, a project of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, announced Oct. 12 the release of seven broadcast commercials in opposition to the proposal. The seven television spots, which begin airing Oct. 13, feature several Houston gay and lesbian families talking about their love and the need for, and importance of, marriage equality. While many television ads have aired in opposition to state anti-marriage constitutional amendments during the past few years, this new series marks the first time same-sex couples have spoken directly about why marriage matters.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 9,784 same-sex couples live in the Houston metropolitan area and 42,912 same-sex couples live in the state of Texas. Houston ranks 44th out of the 331 metropolitan areas nationwide as having the greatest number of same-sex couples.

The Vote Against the Amendment Campaign and NGLTF are working in partnership with the coalition of state and local groups in Texas that are part of the No Nonsense in November campaign.

"Our opponents have vastly greater resources at their disposal and are relying on myths and fear-mongering to hurt Texas families. We appreciate the work of the task force to show the truth about who we are," said Glen Maxey, No Nonsense in November campaign manager.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

COMMISSION ENDORSES MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

A New Hampshire commission recommended Oct. 5 that the state adopt a constitutional amendment defining marriage as being between one man and one woman. State Sen. Jack Barnes, R-Raymond, proposed the motion and has likely added fodder to next year's election cycle in the state, where the amendment is expected to be a major topic of debate.

GOVERNOR HAS NO TIME FOR ANTI-GAY AMENDMENT

New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch, a Democrat, announced Oct. 6 that he opposes a proposed state constitutional amendment to preclude legal marriage for gays and lesbians. He said, "Our time is better spent focusing on the real challenges facing New Hampshire and working to unite people, not divide them."



FLORIDA

COUNTY COMMISSION VOTES AGAINST GAY WORKER PROTECTIONS

Florida's Hillsborough County Commission did little to shed its reputation for hostility

toward gays Oct. 8 when it voted against legislation prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation for private and public employees. Not only did County Commissioner Kathy Castor fail to garner support for her proposal, but future votes concerning workplace protection of gays will require votes from five of the seven commissioners to be placed on a referendum ballot.

MASSACHUSETTS

OUT-OF-STATERS GET THEIR DAY IN COURT

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defender argued Oct. 6 before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court that the liberty and equality provisions of the constitution protect everyone within the state's borders—including same-sex couples from other states who go there to marry.

In Cote-Whitacre vs. Department of Public Health, attorney Michele Granda represents eight couples from Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut and Vermont who came to Massachusetts to marry in 2004 but were told by Republican Gov. Mitt Romney's administration that their marriages would not be valid—in violation of the spirit and the letter of the 2003 Goodridge decision.

NEW YORK

JUDGE: PARTNER CAN'T SUE FOR MALPRACTICE

A New York court has ruled that the partner of a gay man who died in a hospital cannot sue for malpractice even though the couple had entered into a civil union in Vermont. "Any contrary decision, no matter how circumscribed, will be taken as judicial imprimatur of same-sex marriages," the court said in a 3-2 decision.

PENNSYLVANIA


PENN STATE WOMEN'S HOOPS COACH ACCUSED OF BIAS

Pennsylvania State University said Oct. 12 it will investigate allegations that its longtime women's basketball coach, Rene Portland, discriminated against players she thought to be lesbians. Jennifer Harris, a player who has since transferred to another school, accused Portland of repeatedly threatening to kick her off the team if she found out she was a lesbian.

WASHINGTON

JUDGE WEIGHS RELEASING MAYOR'S GAY.COM FILES

Embattled Spokane, Wash., Mayor Jim West is fighting media requests for access to possibly thousands of photo files found on his city-owned computer, many of which are Internet cache files depicting men he chatted with on Gay.com.

His lawyer described the data as "information on your computer you didn't put there.... There are hundreds of people's identities at stake here." 



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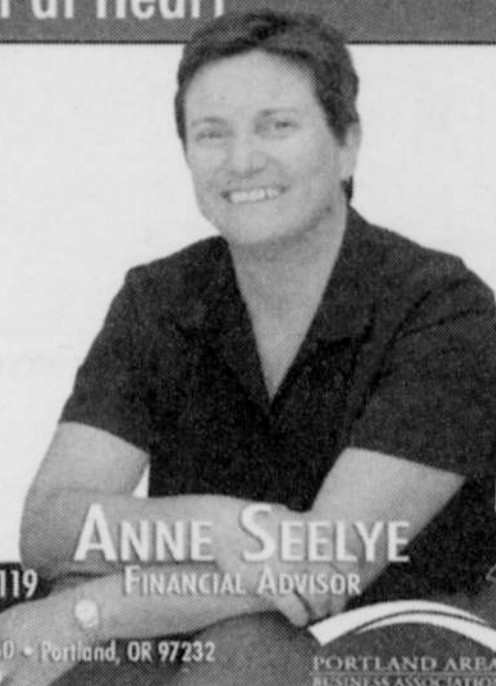


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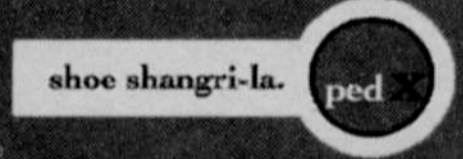


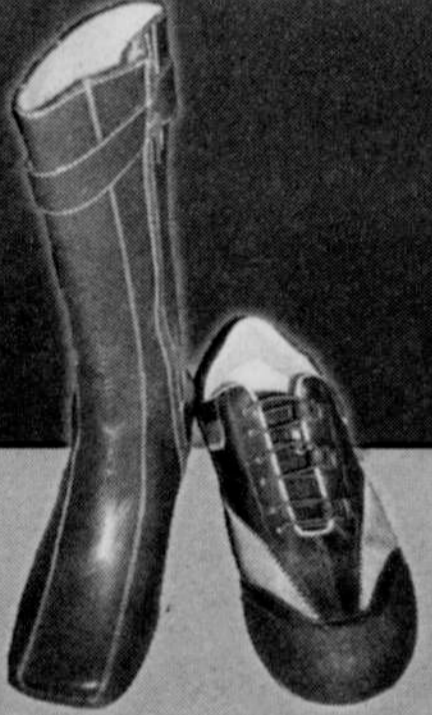
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