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participation of Oscar winner Whoopi Goldberg, Grammy winner Cyndi Lauper, T.R. Knight of *Grey's Anatomy*, Lance Bass and others, with a musical performances by the cast of *A Chorus Line* and Stephanie J. Block, who sang "You'll Never Walk Alone," the AIDS Walk theme song.

AIDS Walk New York benefits Gay Men's Health Crisis and more than 50 other local AIDS organizations.



**Lynne and Dick Cheney welcome their newborn grandson, Samuel.**

**VERMONT**  
**Vermont Enacts Nondiscrimination Law**

Republican Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas signed into law a bill extending existing nondiscrimination laws to prohibit bias on the basis of gender identity in employment, public accommodations, housing, insurance and credit services May 22.

The measure had strong and bipartisan support in both chambers of the Legislature. The Senate voted 27-1, and the House of Representatives voted 118-28 to pass the bill.

When the law becomes effective July 1, Vermont will be the ninth U.S. state to ban workplace discrimination on the basis of gender identity. Workplace protection laws exist in California, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Washington, as well as Washington, D.C. Iowa and Colorado have also passed legislation banning discrimination based on gender identity. In 1991, Vermont amended its nondiscrimination laws to prohibit bias based on sexual orientation.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a bipartisan piece of federal legislation, was introduced April 24 in the U.S. House of Representatives. This legislation would prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

**NATIONAL**  
**Cheneys Welcome Baby Boy**

Mary Cheney, the lesbian daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney, gave birth to an 8-pound, 6-ounce baby boy at 9:46 a.m. May 23 at Sibley Hospital in Washington, D.C.

She and her partner of 16 years, Heather Poe, named their son Samuel David Cheney. Samuel is the sixth grandchild of Lynne and Dick Cheney.

Cheney and Poe live in Virginia, where a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage does not allow gay second-parent adoptions.

According to Jennifer Chrisler, executive director of Family Pride, those laws leave the new parents without the safety net that heterosexual couples have. "There's a question of whether they could even replicate through legal contract the rights and protections that they might have if they could get legally married," said Chrisler in a statement.

The organization will host a virtual baby show via its Web site, [www.familypride.org/baby](http://www.familypride.org/baby).

**Judge Finds Discrimination by Fire Department**

The Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance celebrated an opinion April 3 by Washington, D.C., Superior Court Judge Geoffrey M. Alprin finding probable cause against D.C. Fire & Emergency Medical Services personnel, including top management.

Alprin's ruling reversed an Office of Human Rights decision and remanded the case. The case

was brought by former Fire & Emergency Medical Services expert/training specialist Kenda Kirby and raised issues of a hostile work environment and discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, personal appearance and physical characteristics.

Kirby had been hired to implement the Tyra Hunter Human Diversity Training Series, which was created as part of a 2000 settlement concerning the wrongful death in 1995 of Tyra Hunter, a transgender woman who died from injuries sustained in an auto-pedestrian accident.

"FEMS management willfully blocked the Tyra Hunter Training that they had pledged to conduct," said Barrett Brick, president of Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance. "This culture of bias and corruption is absolutely unacceptable. We urge Mayor [Adrian] Fenty to order a just and speedy settlement with Kenda Kirby so that the case does not drag on any further."

On May 15, 2003, Kirby found printouts in her work mailbox of Web postings containing numerous gender-based derogatory references. The postings were later found to have been posted from government computers and on agency time. Kirby reported the incident to her chain of command as well as Fire & Emergency Services diversity management officer Fredreika Smith, General Counsel Theresa Cusick and Fire Chief Adrian H. Thompson. Although Kirby's immediate supervisor, Deputy Fire Chief Michael L. Smith, initiated an investigation into the incident, he was ordered to stop. Judge Alprin found substantial evidence to support Kirby's claims against Fredreika Smith, Cusick and Thompson.

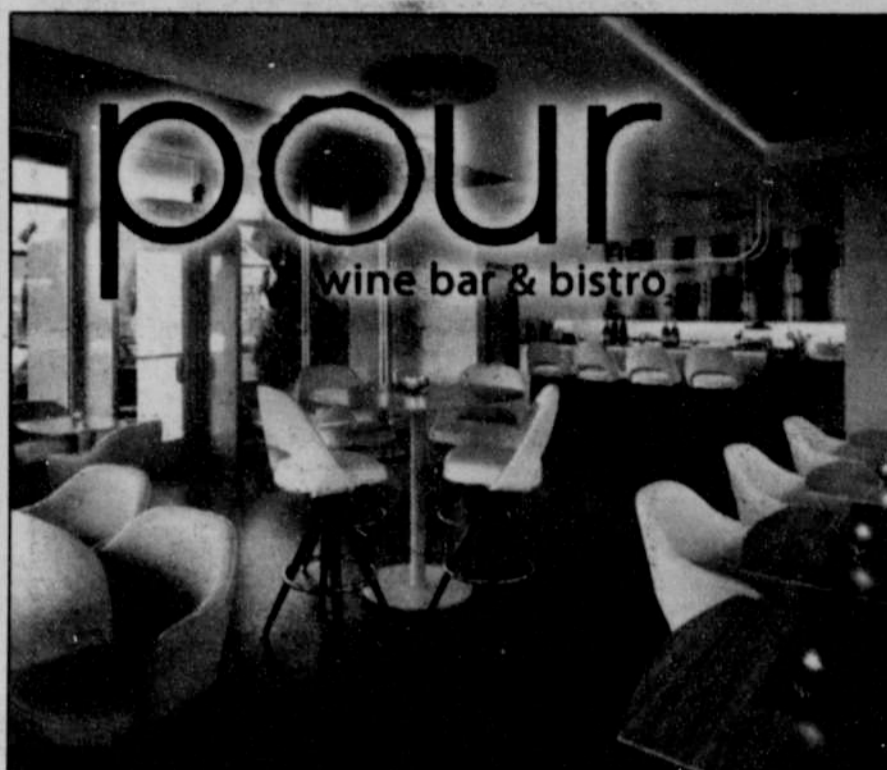
The opinion states, "Apart from 'the Watch Desk Forums' incident and its aftermath, petitioner cites several other events that demonstrate a hostile work environment." Among them, Kirby cites blockage by Smith of resources and procurements necessary for delivery of the Tyra Hunter Training. The court also found that Smith retaliated against Kirby.

Moreover, the court found: "The sum total of this evidence supports findings of a history and culture of homophobia and sexism in [the D.C. fire department]. This ethos, which characterized petitioner's work environment, created impediments to her responsibilities and cover for her colleagues to belittle her."

The district had 30 days to appeal the decision, and no appeal was reported.

Kirby expressed appreciation for the support of her family, community and colleagues. "I hope the judge's ruling helps others, and I hope the fire department can change from the top down," she said. **10**

Compiled by JAYMEE R. CUTI



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