



# BGLAD Newsletter

April, 2001

Bisexuals, Gays, Lesbians, Transgendereds and Allies At DuPont

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## Carol Lowrie -- Network Liaison

We recently interviewed Carol Lowrie, BGLAD's leader ("Network Liaison").



News: Carol, you're a second generation DuPonter?

Carol: Yes. My dad was an E&I Mechanic and eventually a maintenance supervisor at Memphis for 30+ years. I've been with DuPont for almost 20 years. My first job was also at Memphis, as an engineer. In 1982 (in the beginning of my second year with the company), the plant offered me a first-line supervisor job, in maintenance. Most of my crew had worked for my Dad 5 years earlier – doesn't happen every day, eh? (and did I mention  
(continued on p. 2)

<b>FEATURES</b>	
Carol Lowrie -- Network Liaison.....	1, 2-3
Domestic Partner Benefits and Gay Marriage .....	1, 4-5
<b>BGLAD MEMBER NEWS</b>	
Performance Coatings (DPC) Business Staff Working on BGL Workplace Issues .....	5-6
Transsexual Employee Seminar .....	6
Gay Education Game Invented .....	7
RE: We're All Created Female - Letter to The Editor ..	7-8
Network Statistics .....	13
<b>GAY WORLD NEWS</b>	
Frank Files Bill to Carry out Cheney Policy .....	8
Comprehensive Hate Crimes Legislation Called For: FBI Study .....	9
China Changes Guidelines for Gay Psychiatry .....	10
Be A Man .....	10
Permanent Partners Immigration Act Introduced .....	11-12

## Domestic Partner Benefits and Gay Marriage

**Stereotypes, Tolerance and Acceptance: Gay Rights in Courts of Law and Public Opinion**  
(Excerpt) By Marc Wolinsky

The most controversial idea that the gay rights movement has raised is gay marriage. The traditional view of marriage is reflected in a 1912 decision of the Delaware Superior Court: "It is, however, now firmly established, that 'marriage . . .  
(continued on p. 4)

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## Carol Lowrie -- Network Liaison (from p. 1)

that I went to school with most of their kids?) I thought there would be concern about me being a woman in that job, and the first one in maintenance! The guys did have some trouble dealing with me as a young professional woman – their image of me playing with their kids in the front yard must have been difficult to juxtapose against the 20-something woman engineer.

News: DuPont runs deep in your blood.

Carol: I've had eleven positions including Elvanol Technical Representative, corporate recruiting, but mostly engineering positions at Chambers Works (three different times), Niagara Falls startup, Corpus Christi, Louisville, Wilmington, and Memphis. I was supposed to move to England (then Spain when the final plant site was chosen) in 1991 for the startup of the Asturias THF plant, but when I asked about taking my partner, my management suggested I find someone else for the assignment. I really resented being put in the position of having to choose between my partner and my career. I'm a DuPont, but I'm also me!...sometimes being both is hard.

News: You're an "out" lesbian at a southern plant – how's it going?

Carol: I'm trying to be Carol and forget the labels. I work my #@ \$ off like everyone else. I have many of the same issues and challenges. The plant generally respects me and treats me as well as anyone else. I'm not single, although DuPont treats me that way. Sharon and I have been together for five years – we even "survived" the move from Delaware to Kentucky! DuPont and most DuPonters act like Sharon doesn't exist and of course their families are often the center of their lives, just like mine. It's like being a half-person. I do not experience the outright discrimination often and most of the folks here accept me as me.

News: When did you come out in DuPont?

Carol: I've known I am a lesbian since I was 18. By the time I started working at DuPont, I was feeling more secure about my sexual orientation and beginning to lose my temper with discrimination. I came out to a few Memphis plant people in the early 1980s. As I met and got to know more people, I was out to more and more. And like other BGLs, the Multi-cultural Awareness (MCAW) sessions that DuPont sent us to in the early 90s were a watershed for me: I was pretty out in those sessions. When I come out to people, it is a really emotional event for them and decreasingly for me. Some were confused; others said things like "I really appreciated that you were able to come out and able to tell me how my actions impacted you." My first supervisor at DuPont couldn't understand that I was a single lesbian woman and didn't have all the support systems that he had at home – if something went wrong at home, it was up to me to deal with it – I didn't have the spouse he assumed everyone had.

News: Have you always been liberal?

Carol: Heck no! My entire family was very rooted in bigotry particularly toward blacks. Things have gotten better over the years but I think my head is in a different place than the rest of my family. Courses like the MCAW helped me. Living as a Lesbian woman (both in society and DuPont) has **really** helped me! MCAW really got to me about how I had bought into the media-perpetuated discriminatory stereotypes against African Americans and how native Americans were sterilized and prohibited from speaking their native tongue...right up to the 1950s! It was a real eye opener for me. I still think about the experience and learn from it, even today.

My orientation hit me when I was a first-year college student. I was engaged to a guy and

although the relationship was mentally abusive, I was trying desperately to make it work or face the fact that I was somehow going to fail in life. One of my male friends came out about being gay to me and in talking with him over the weeks and months, the possibility gradually surfaced in my consciousness that maybe I was a lesbian. Looking back, I can see now the patterns and early tip-offs, but being gay was a startling revelation to me at age 18.

News: How did your family react?

Carol: My family tried to talk me out of being gay, you know the common response – “it’s just a phase”. I *tried* to be “straight”, but it just didn’t work. My strongest bonds were always with women – the breakup of a female friendship would send me crying and sulking for days. My mother took my orientation badly and for a time wouldn’t come into my house because I was living with a woman. My mom can say the word “lesbian” like it’s the dirtiest word you ever heard in your life. My dad is pretty quiet and doesn’t express his feelings much. Blood is thicker than water, and my family has always loved me, but for around five years there they sure were hard pressed to love my behavior. That’s what acceptance is, I guess, when people realize that my behavior and my self are in tune and together: I didn’t learn to be a lesbian, I just am. Happily, time again has worked its wonders and my family and I share a warm, loving relationship. They accept, and yes, love Sharon. We are a couple in their eyes. It is really a wonderful feeling.

News: How did you get involved with BGLAD?

Carol: I heard about BGLAD in the early 90s and went to a few meetings in the basements of local churches in Wilmington. At Corpus Christi, it was harder to participate because there were so few activities locally. I volunteered to help with BGLAD activities where I could reasonably contribute. Back in Wilmington, I applied when an

opening came up on the BGLAD Steering Committee and then volunteered to be the Network Liaison (leader) when Tim Arnold’s term was over. When I do something, I put everything into it, so being the leader seemed a natural progression.

News: What are your hopes and goals for BGLAD?

Carol: We need domestic partner benefits, NOW! It’s been ten years and we are not making progress providing medical care for our BGLT families. For me, this is an issue of inequity in compensation and lack of leadership. It’s easy to lead when everyone wants to follow; the true sign of a leader is helping people see that the destination is worth getting to! We need to overcome the doubts, resistance, concerns and issues by strong leadership from DuPont!

Allies play a very important role when it comes to leading. Allies have the ability to influence people without threatening them because they are “one of them”. You can go up to someone you’ve been friends with for thirty years and say “you know, we are not doing the right thing about our gay employees medical care.” You can recognize an injustice, call attention to it, and not rest until it’s put to rest. Allies are indispensable!

**My advice to all the B,G,L’s out there - COME ON OUT!**

The weather outside of that closet is pretty nice! We need your presence. We need your voice. We need your HELP!!!!!! Could there be trouble? Maybe. Might you be a little frightened? Likely. Would it be risky? Could be. Would you be happier? I certainly am and most of the people I know are. Make a difference in someone’s life (yours and likely someone you love). Be out, Be proud, BGLAD!!

(Deborah Yates interviewed Carol; Michael Leach edited the interview)

## **Domestic Partner Benefits and Gay Marriage (from p. 1)**

is the civil status of one man and one woman legally united for life, with the rights and duties, which, for the establishment of families and the multiplication and education of the species, are, and from time to time may thereafter be, assigned by the law to matrimony.” Over 50 years later in the *Aumiller* case, the idea that gay people could marry was so radical that Judge Schwartz distinguished a Ninth Circuit case upholding the dismissal of a gay employee on the ground that the individual in that case had applied for a marriage license.

In 1993, the Hawaii Supreme Court held that the state’s restriction of marriage to opposite-sex couples presumptively violated the Hawaiian constitution’s equal protection clause. And in 1999, the Vermont Supreme Court held in *Baker v. Vermont* that while the state did not have to permit same-sex couples to marry, it could not deprive them of the benefits that the State provided to married couples. In response, the Vermont Legislature, like the Hawaii legislature, adopted a statute granting same-sex couples all of the same benefits and obligations of marriage.

As the *Baker* Court noted, the benefits and protections that the state grants to married couples are significant. They include the intestacy rights, the right to bring a wrongful death action, rights to health benefits, presumption of joint ownership, the spousal communication privilege, hospital visitation rights, and on, and on. Delaware law provides similar, extensive benefits to married couples. The Court concluded that the “legal benefits and protections flowing from a marriage license are of such significance that any statutory exclusion must necessarily be grounded on public concerns of sufficient weight, cogency, and authority that the justice of deprivation cannot seriously be questioned.”

And in weighing the justifications offered by the State of Vermont — which, essentially, are the same considerations cited by the Delaware Superior Court in 1912 — the Vermont Supreme Court found them wanting. The state has an interest in promoting procreation and in protecting children. But, as noted, the reality is that same-sex couples do have and raise children. Are their children entitled to less protection than the children of opposite-sex couples? The Vermont Supreme Court said “no.” And it is hard to come up with an argument as to why the answer should be “yes.” The only claim can be that gay people are not fit to be parents, and that depriving gay people of the benefits of marriage is justified by some generalized desire to discourage gay people from raising children. That claim is inconsistent with both the social science literature that shows that gay people do make good parents, and the fact that most states, including New York, Vermont and Delaware, permit gay people to adopt and be foster parents.

The decisions of the Hawaii and Vermont Supreme Courts generated a legislative response in Congress, which passed the Defense of Marriage Act. Similar statutes were adopted in 32 states, including Delaware, where the Legislature amended the provision of the Domestic Relations Law prohibiting relatives, the insane and drug addicts from marrying to prohibit marriages between persons of the same

gender. While a majority of the public supports the idea that gay spouses should be entitled to Social Security benefits and equal inheritance rights, two-thirds oppose “gay marriage.”

Is this likely to change? In the long run, the answer has to be “yes.” While public acceptance of gay people using the word “marriage” seems far off, public resistance to providing legal protections to their committed relationships through domestic partnership laws is sure to fall. Major religious groups like the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, the Unitarian Church and the Society of Friends have decided to sanction committed gay relationships. The decisions by these religious organizations refute the legitimacy of the notion that gay people can be labeled morally inferior.

At least 100 of the Fortune 500 provide domestic partnership benefits, including AT&T, Bank of America, IBM, Microsoft, the “Big Three” auto makers and all five major airlines. *A committed group is working to add DuPont to the list — one wonders why it has not already happened.* Any number of cities provide domestic partnership benefits, including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, Los Angeles, Denver and San Francisco, as do scores of leading law firms. As religious organizations, local governments and private companies increasingly recognize committed gay relationships, broader recognition of domestic partnerships by government organizations is sure to follow.

Over time, non-gay America will see more and more same-sex couples in their neighborhoods and will become more and more comfortable with the fact that their gay co-workers have relationships that are as worthy of respect as their own. The children of non-gay couples will go to school with the children of same-sex couples, and will see more and more positive portrayals of gay couples in movies and on television. Inevitably, the result will be that these experiences will break down stereotypes, which will lead to tolerance and, ultimately, acceptance of gay people and their families.

Marc Wolinsky is a lawyer and author of “Gays and the Military: Joseph Steffan versus the United States”. The full text of Marc's article, which deals with the history of changing opinion about gays and lesbians, is on the BGLAD website.

## **BGLAD Member News**

### **Performance Coatings (DPC) Business Staff Working on BGL Workplace Issues** (by Steve)

*Aim: To create a safe and supportive environment for BGL's in DuPont's Performance Coatings SBU*

DPC's leadership team meets periodically to continue their journey of understanding of sexual orientation. At the February meeting:

- Pam shared her story with the team around her recent Work/Life nomination and the reaction she received around coming out at the event. For those who don't believe progress is being made...it is!. Pam did not receive any slanderous emails or property damage after coming out, which has happened to other BGL employees after they have come out. The team discussed this and felt that the immediate work environment was at least safe for Pam to come out to her work group, but also part of it comes from Pam's work on herself and being able to accept herself for who she is. If you accept yourself for who you are and can be happy with that, then the power of other people's opinions over you is diminished greatly.
- Part of the solution is to have the courage to come out; the second is to have an environment that is safe to do so. Although Pam's immediate work environment is relatively safe, the overall environment she did not feel was safe. Additionally, the environment did not feel supportive which is the other part of our team's goal. What is the difference between being supportive and safe? Safe means you are tolerated. A BGL person doesn't get killed, or physically or emotionally hurt when he/she comes out. Supportive means that you are validated not just tolerated.
- The team is looking for ways to reach its goal of having not ONLY a safe environment for BGL's but also a nurturing one. What are ways that BGL's can be supported? Ask BGLs about their relationships --their spouses, children, pets, parents, etc -- the same way you ask your other co-workers about their relationships. You can also display the safe space magnet and use it as a conversation starter. You might be surprised at how many BGL's you have in your circle of friends.

## **Transsexual Employee Seminar Led by BGLAD Member**

BUFFALO – (Feb. 8). A seminar for members of the EAP (Employee Assistance Program) on 'Understanding the Transsexual Employee' was conducted by Joy Schroeder today at the United Auto Workers Local 774 assembly hall in Tonawanda, New York. Speaking to EAP members from Bethlehem Steel, DuPont, and General Motors -- whose role it is to help workers and their employers deal with personal issues that may effect job performance -- Ms. Schroeder gave her personal account of what it is like to be a transsexual and the many issues facing both the transitioning employee and the employer. Joy stated that education is the most important element in dealing with workplace issues and that management must take the lead in fostering a spirit of understanding, cooperation and tolerance. Miss Schroeder stated that "Education about gender issues can help eliminate fear of the unknown, and everyone benefits in an enlightened environment."

*Joy Schroeder has been an employee of DuPont for the past 25 years and transitioned in the workplace four years ago.*

## Gay Education Game Invented

DuPont Performance Coatings invented a Gay Cultural Jeopardy game about the role of gay and lesbians in the areas of theatre, "famous firsts", local black connections, and cultural symbols. You can get a copy from the BGLAD web site [www.dupontbglad.com](http://www.dupontbglad.com).

### **RE: We're All Created Female - Letter to The BGLAD Editor**

While I agree with Ms. Grace that we all start out as female, her article contains a few errors and misconceptions. The statistical data currently available today points to a much higher frequency rate than previously thought. The incidence of Gender Identity Dysphoria (GID) is 1 out of 300-500 births (0,2-0.3% U.S. population)! It's also interesting to note that 20-30% of the male population will engage in some form of cross dressing some time in their life.

Whether a Transsexual (Ts) is pre-operation, post-op, or non-op is of no consequence when considering them to be truly transsexual/transitioned. Sexual identity is between the ears, NOT between the legs! It is entirely based on how one feels about their inner-being, their core feelings. Regardless of how much or how little "cosmetic" surgery is done... it is these core instincts that is the determining factor. "To argue that someone with a penis can't be a woman is definitely an old-school notion -- it goes back to 'Biology is destiny,' which the feminists said was bunk," says Penni Ashe Matz of the advocacy group It's Time, America.

The risk, the pain, and the expense are all very important factors to be considered when deciding upon sexual reassignment surgery. Another very important factor, especially for the female-to-male Ts to consider is the quality of surgery available. Penile construction, while improvements have been made, is thought by many not to be worth the expense, pain or risk.

Another misconception is that a non-surgical Transsexual is a Cross Dresser. A Cross Dresser is a person who IS NOT at odds with his/her biological gender but nevertheless has a need to express/portray themselves on occasion in their opposite biological gender, for fun or sexual buzz. Fear of exposure is always present in the life of a Transgendered person, whether surgery has been done or not!

The issue of legal recognition is tenuous at best, as not many cases have come forward to test the legal system. A major problem is that each state has and interprets it's own statutes in regards to how sex (male/female) is defined. In some states it's not even an issue of genital appearance, but chromosomes, which opens up a whole new area of confusion. What if your genitalia appear one way, but upon chromosome testing you test the opposite? Actually this occurs in 1 out every 13,000 births! All states will, upon surgery, amend the Transgendered Birth Certificate to reflect their "new" gender, but the old one still remains on file. Some states will not recognize the amended Birth Certificate even after surgery. Some states will allow you to legally change the gender on your Driver's license and most other forms of identification without surgery. Still other states will not allow you to change any gender notation without surgery. Then we have federal guidelines: one

can change their gender for Social Security with the proper documentation from their doctor, and there are specific guidelines in place for you to be issued a Passport without surgery.

I hope this brings a better understanding of the issues facing the Transgendered in society today. It is nevertheless an exciting time: many positive changes are occurring. - Joy Schroeder.

## **GAY WORLD NEWS**

### **Frank Files Bill to Carry out Cheney Policy**

by Cynthia Laird

Congressman Barney Frank (D-Massachusetts) filed legislation in February to comply with the policy on the definition of marriage expressed by Vice President Dick Cheney in his debate last year with Senator Joseph Lieberman.

In that debate, when asked by moderator Bernard Shaw whether "a male who loves a male or a female who loves a female have all – all – the constitutional rights enjoyed by every American citizen?" Cheney, a former defense secretary whose daughter, Mary, is an open lesbian, replied in part, "... and I think that means that people should be free to enter into any kind of relationship they want to enter into ... the next step, then, of course, is the question you ask of whether or not there ought to be some kind of official sanction, if you will, of the relationship, or if those relationships should be treated the same way a conventional marriage is. That's a tougher problem ... I think the fact of the matter, of course, is that matter is regulated by the states. I think different states are likely to come to different conclusions, and that's appropriate. I don't think there should necessarily be a federal policy in this area."

"I was pleased when Secretary Cheney made those comments during the campaign," Frank said, "and I said so at the time. Unfortunately, as I also noted at the time, the law misnamed the 'Defense of Marriage Act,' which Congress adopted in 1996 and President Clinton signed into law, contradicts Vice President Cheney's position on this issue."

Frank stated that Section 3 of DOMA is "directly contrary to Vice President Cheney's position that this matter should be regulated by the states, and establishes a national definition of marriage, stating that 'in determining the meaning of any act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States, the word marriage means only a legal union between one man and one woman.'"

Frank said he has filed legislation to repeal the section of DOMA that contradicts Cheney's position.

"I should note that I offered an amendment to strike this provision in 1996 when the House considered the bill," Frank added, "and while it was heavily defeated, it did receive 35 more votes than were cast in opposition to the overall DOMA."

The congressman said that enacting his legislation would not affect the other section of DOMA that purports to allow one state to refuse to recognize any other state's decision on same-sex marriage. "That is a separate legal and constitutional question," he said.

"Indeed, the purpose of this bill is not to impose any state's decision on another state, but rather, in the spirit of Vice President Cheney's statement, to allow each state to make its own decision in this matter without fearing that its decision will be disregarded by the federal government.

"I will be looking for other areas of agreement between myself and high-ranking members of the Bush administration on which we can work together," Frank concluded.

## **HRC CALLS ON CONGRESS TO PASS COMPREHENSIVE HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION AS FBI RELEASES FINAL REPORT DETAILING PROBLEM**

**Sexual Orientation follows Race and Religion in Number of Hate Crimes, Yet Sexual Orientation not included in Federal Law, Says HRC  
Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2001**

WASHINGTON — The Human Rights Campaign renewed calls for Congress to pass comprehensive hate crimes legislation following the FBI's release today of a detailed hate crimes statistics report. The statistics show a rise in hate crimes against lesbian and gay Americans, reiterating the need for including sexual orientation in federal hate crimes law, according to HRC.

"These alarming statistics underscore the need to expand existing hate crime law to allow federal resources to be made available to local law enforcement," said HRC Political Director Winnie Stachelberg. "Congress and the administration can help local law enforcement battle hate crimes by passing comprehensive hate crime legislation that protects all Americans."

This report is a more detailed version of the FBI's "Crime in the United States" report released in October 2000. While no new hate crime statistics are in this report, it does break down the October data jurisdiction by jurisdiction, showing which police departments, cities, universities and counties actually reported hate crimes and what type.

"HRC applauds the steps the FBI has taken to make this year's report more user-friendly," said Stachelberg. "The way the FBI broke down the statistics makes it easier for everyone to get a better, more comprehensive snapshot of hate crimes occurring in their community or state and allows for a more thorough analysis of data." The report shows that as overall serious crime continued to decrease for the eighth consecutive year, hate crimes based on sexual orientation have continued to rise, increasing 4.5 percent from 1998 to 1999. Reported hate crime incidents based on sexual orientation have more than tripled since the FBI began collecting such statistics in 1991 — comprising 16.7 percent, or 1,317, of all hate crimes for 1999. Hate crimes based on sexual orientation continue to make up the third-highest category after race and religion, which make up 54.5 percent and 17.9 percent, respectively, of the total, 7,876.

Experts agree that crimes based on sexual orientation are generally underreported, and evidence indicates that FBI data fails to include statistics on all such bias incidents. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs,

a private organization that tracks bias incidents against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, reported 1,965 incidents in 1999 in only 25 cities/jurisdictions across the country while the FBI collected statistics from 12,122 reporting agencies for the year.

The Human Rights Campaign is the largest national lesbian and gay political organization, with members throughout the country. It effectively lobbies Congress, provides campaign support and educates the public to ensure that lesbian and gay Americans can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.

## **China Changes Guidelines for Gay Psychiatry**

By Will O'Bryan The Washington Blade-On Line March 9, 2001

CHINA - The standing committee of the Chinese Psychiatric Association unanimously agreed last month to stop classifying homosexuality as a pathological condition, the *Los Angeles Times* reported Monday. The change will take effect officially next month, when the CPA publishes its new guidelines. "This is progress — a leap forward for the Gay community," said Roger Meng, operator of a Gay-oriented Web site in the industrial city of Guangzhou in southeastern China near Hong Kong, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. "Historically, we've never had anything on the books that we could turn to."

Although the new guidelines state that homosexuality is not a disorder, they, like the U.S. American Psychiatric Association's guidelines, retain a label of mental disorder for instances when same-sex desires are unwanted by the person who is feeling them. Sexual relations between members of the same sex are not illegal in China, although the government has employed a broad anti-"hooliganism" law to harass Gays in the past. The charge of hooliganism no longer exists in China. Chinese law made its first mention of homosexuality only two years ago in a libel case ruling.

One aspect of the review process of the old guidelines involved consulting with the APA, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. The APA declassified homosexuality as a disorder in 1973.

## **Be A Man**

Kevin Jennings *The Advocate* September 29, 1998 (Recently republished in light of recent school shootings)

When I was 8, my dad died unexpectedly of a heart attack. As the youngest of five siblings (four of us, boys), I looked to my brothers for guidance on how to act in this unsettling and unfamiliar territory. At dad's funeral I got the message. When I started crying, my brother Mike looked down and barked, "Stop crying. Be a man. Don't be a faggot."

While astoundingly insensitive in his timing, my brother was simply passing down the code of masculinity he'd been taught. "Real men" don't show their feelings, and those men who do are faggots—which is the last thing any real man would want to be. It's a lesson I have spent nearly three decades trying to unlearn. Many important lessons—the kind that shape our lives—are learned long before college or grad school. Sadly, today's boys seem to be learning the same lesson—with far deadlier results. Consider these examples:

- On February 2, 1996, Barry Loukaitis, a sophomore at a Moses Lake, Wash., junior high school, gunned down fellow student Manuel Vela Jr. in retaliation for months of being called "faggot." Even though a

teacher and another student also died in the assault, Loukaitis was convicted of only one count of first-degree murder—because the jury saw clearly that it was only Vela that Loukaitis had planned to kill.

- On December 1, 1997, 15-year-old Michael Carneal killed three students and wounded five more at a West Paducah, Ky., high school after months of harassment following the publication of a student newspaper column in which it was rumored that Carneal was gay.
- On May 22, 1998, 15-year-old Matthew Santoni stabbed 16-year-old Jeffrey LaMothe to death in downtown Northampton, Mass., after months of being called "faggot" by a group of fellow students of whom LaMothe was the ringleader.

Why haven't you heard more about these incidents? Well, sadly, homophobic harassment in our schools is so commonplace that it is no longer news. But surely this seemingly novel phenomenon of youth taking up firearms in response should have made headlines. And here's the real kicker: ***None of the boys who perpetrated these attacks identifies as gay.***

What's going on here? As we begin another school year close on the heels of one in which schoolyard shootings became a dreary staple of the nightly news, it's time to analyze why some young people are driven to kill. Obviously, we could prevent some killings if we restricted the ease with which anyone can get a firearm, but that would not get at the root cause of the problem. We need to own up to the fact that our culture teaches boys that being "a man" is the most important thing in life, even if you have to kill someone to prove it. Killing someone who calls you a faggot is not aberrant behavior but merely the most extreme expression of a belief that is beaten (sometimes literally) into boys at an early age in this country: Be a man—don't be a faggot.

As Suzanne Pharr so eloquently explained in her landmark work *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*, antigay bigotry is inextricably intertwined with the maintenance of "proper" gender roles by which little girls are supposed to be "sugar and spice and everything nice" and boys are supposed to be, well, quite the opposite. When boys take up guns to kill those who torment them with words like "faggot," we shouldn't be surprised. They're just doing what we have taught them to do. At Barry Loukaitis's sentencing, Manual Vela Sr. had the chance to confront his son's killer and said, "You thought being called a faggot was bad; maybe 'sweetie' will sound better to you now." Like father, like son.

The cycle of violence starts early—in the nursery rhymes kids learn to recite; in the classrooms, where students hear antigay comments 26 times a day on average and where teachers do nothing an astounding 97% of the time; and on the football fields, where coaches still use the drill "smear the queer" to teach tackling skills. In this culture boys learn early: Be a man—or else.

*Jennings is executive director of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network and is the author of Telling Tales Out of School: Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals Remember Their School Years.*

## **INTRODUCTION OF PERMANENT PARTNERS IMMIGRATION ACT**

**Bill Would Give Bi-national, Same-Sex Couples a Fair Shake, Says HRC  
Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2001**

WASHINGTON — The Human Rights Campaign joined a coalition of organizations at a news conference today to praise the introduction by Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., of legislation that would provide same-sex partners of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents the same immigration rights legal spouses of U.S. residents enjoy. “This bill will help end the unjust and cruel separation of families,” said HRC Political Director Winnie Stachelberg. “We applaud Congressman Nadler for taking this initiative and recognizing that immigration law is supposed to be based on protecting families and not tearing them apart based on sexual orientation.”

The Permanent Partners Immigration Act, sponsored by Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., would modify the federal Immigration and Nationality Act. Currently, U.S. immigration law does not allow lesbian and gay citizens or permanent residents to petition for their same-sex partners to immigrate. About 75 percent of the one million green cards, or immigrant visas, issued yearly go to family members of U.S. citizens and permanent residents. However, those excluded from the INA’s current definition of family include same-sex partners, unmarried heterosexual couples and other family members.

Each year, current law forces thousands of lesbian and gay couples to break up or live in constant fear of deportation. In some cases, partners of lesbians and gays face prosecution by the Immigration and Naturalization Services, hefty fines and deportation, and U.S. citizens are sometimes left with no other choice but to migrate with their partner to a nation whose immigration laws recognize their relationship. Fourteen countries recognize lesbian and gay couples for the purposes of immigration: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

[The Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force](#), a New York-based organization addressing the widespread discriminatory impact of immigration laws on lesbians and gays, anticipates same-sex bi-national couples will have to meet the same requirements as married couples do. Last year, the Permanent Partners Immigration Act quickly garnered the support of nearly 60 congressional cosponsors.

## BGLAD Member Statistics

Current total	318	04/17/2001
Previous total	303	12/12/2000

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Want information on BGL events in the Delaware Valley area? You should be on the Mid-Atlantic Chapter's mailing list. The contact is [Elizabeth.A.Oneal@usa.dupont.com](mailto:Elizabeth.A.Oneal@usa.dupont.com)