

# News Muse

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Like rabbits in the springtime, this week is all about the quickies. Here are some of the gems for your perusal.

## Providence is Finally On The Map

*(from Wikipedia.com)*

After a mere year in existence, the weekly local LGBT publication The Divine Providence has its own entry in the famed online Wikipedia encyclopedia. The entry briefly describes the paper, lists its owner and writers. Hey Kim, get cracking on this; I want my name in an encyclopedia!

## Courting the Gays... Our Vote That Is

*(from 365gay.com, theedge.com, aol.com)*

Unlike most recent elections, the primaries actually meant something this year. In fact we still don't know who the democratic nominee for president will be. Both candidates have now spoken to the gay press, but one more often and comfortably than the other. Hillary Clinton has made herself available to the gay press for several months now. She even granted an interview on the LGBT cable channel LOGO. Most recently she was interviewed in the main Philadelphia LGBT newspaper. Clinton promises to be the "defender of the gays" (my words, not hers). She claims she will work to eliminate disparity in tax and immigration laws; work to award federal benefits akin to heterosexually married couples; overturn Don't Ask, Don't Tell, emphasize human rights issues and the treatment of the LGBT community in her dealings with foreign nations; support federal domestic partnership legislation; and support aid to gay youth and programs that help gay youth in schools.

In contrast, some say Barak Obama was finally bullied into giving an interview to the gay press when he sat down with the Advocate this month. The interview followed on the heels of a large blank space on the front page of the Philadelphia gay news under Obama's picture. This blank was placed beside Clinton's interview in order to emphasize which candidate gave her time. The two main issues Obama addressed were that he supported the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and that he would work to eliminate Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

## The State of Divorce

*(from 365gay.com)*

Rhode Island has declined to allow gay couples married in other states to divorce here. As an attorney, I know that it is possible in reality to have one state apply the divorce law/property law of another to get something accomplished. Apparently RI doesn't want to just make this particular couple's life any easier. Perhaps setting up a P.O. Box in Boston, setting up a bank account in MA and getting a MA driver's license might be enough to get a divorce going without moving. I mean if the state isn't going to be nice, then why should we play fair? Anyway, I've been wondering why Massachusetts simply doesn't pass a law to allow MA courts to grant a divorce to couples married there no matter what their current residencies? Just as I pondered this, Oregon actually does it. So, get a move on MA. One little bill could clear up this whole mess.

## The Pope Reads A Dictionary

*(from Bay Windows)*

Pope Benedict in his recent visit to Washington D.C. made the historic clarification that homosexuality and pedophilia are two different things. Thank you so much for the vocab lesson. I'm amazed. I always thought the Catholic Church equated the two at least implicitly. This is the first time I can recall ever hearing a clear distinction made. This is progress. Who gave Benedict a dictionary?

## GED Program for LGBT Youth

*(from gayblog.com)*

In Boston, the Justice Resources Institute (JRI) has now started a program for LGBT youth to work on their GEDs. The program is funded in part by Verizon and IBM and is spearheaded by software donated by Verizon that helps prepare students for the test and provides extensive study materials over the internet. JRI is the largest education, psychological, health and social services provider in Massachusetts for the LGBT community.

## "Don't Ask Don't Tell" Victims Receive Help

*(from Bay Windows)*

The Massachusetts legislature is currently considering a bill that would give benefits to veterans who were removed from duty under the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. The bill is pending review.

## Finally We Are An Asset

*(from the New England Blade)*

MOTT has read my mind. I always wondered why there was no gay advertising for Provincetown and Northampton. I thought was a brilliant idea and finally the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism has agreed with my genius. There are new television ads that feature gay and lesbian couples, and highlight these two popular gay tourist towns. The Provincetown spot shows two men, one white and one African-American, holding hands as they shop along Commercial Street, visit the Provincetown Art Museum and the Pilgrim Monument, and dine at the Lobster Pot. Similarly, the Northampton spot shows two women shopping in the downtown area, looking in the window of Northampton Pride and Joy, and dining at a sidewalk cafe. This is the first time, according to MOTT Executive Director Betsy Wall, that the state-funded agency has used LGBT elements in its primary advertising campaign.

## H&R Block Sued in CT

*(from the New England Blade)*

H&R Block is being sued after telling a gay couple that they couldn't properly process their taxes because the HR Block online system did not accommodate Connecticut's same-sex civil unions. The couple was asked to come into an office for tax prep which would cost significantly more. In a letter to H&R Block, ACLU attorney Rebecca Shore said the company's failure to support online filing for taxpayers in civil unions and the imposition of a higher fee "constitutes clear discrimination" based on Connecticut's civil union statute. Shore said it appears that married same-sex couples in neighboring Massachusetts can use the online tax filing program. ACLU is demanding that H&R Block immediately provide free online support for self-filing of state tax returns by taxpayers in civil unions. Also, the organization wants H&R Block to reimburse all customers in civil unions who've already paid the extra charges imposed on them for filing their state tax returns. ▼