

twice disciplined for violating the policy.

LaStaysha Myers, 15, was sent home from Webb City High School on consecutive days last November for wearing homemade T-shirts that supported gays. The first shirt bore several handwritten slogans including "I support gay rights!" and "Who are we to judge?" while the second featured a rainbow and the definition of "gay": "Melrry, happy."

Myers, who is heterosexual, was acting in support of Brad Mathewson, an openly gay student who was sent home the month before for wearing a gay-positive T-shirt. Mathewson sued the school district, but the lawsuit was dropped when he quit school in December.

The district's new policy becomes effective in the next school year.

Falwell U. targeted by activists

LYNCHBURG, Va. — Approximately 55 members of Soulforce, an LGBT advocacy group that works for change using the principles of nonviolent resistance, conducted an educational outreach July 25 at the gates of Liberty University, the school founded and led by arch-conservative Rev. Jerry Falwell.

Soulforce members — calling themselves "Equality Riders" after the activists who journeyed to the deep south in the '60s to further the civil rights movement — discussed sexuality, the Bible, and gay rights with scores of Liberty students through mid-afternoon. Participants represented several Virginia colleges, including Virginia Tech, James Madison University and the University of Virginia.

Afterward representatives hoped to

present Falwell with letters written by closeted students calling for a more open campus, but he refused to meet with them.

Soulforce founder Mel White estimates there are 300-to-400 gays and lesbians among Liberty's 8,000 students. University officials declined to comment on the presence or plight of gays on campus.

International >

Marriage: 1 step forward, 2 back

MONCTON, Canada — Four same-sex couples have filed suit in New Brunswick province seeking the right to wed. The move follows on the heels of cases in seven other provinces and one territory that have resulted in the legalization of same-sex marriage in those areas.

If the plaintiffs win their proceeding only two provinces, Prince Edward Island and Alberta, and two territories, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, would be without gay marriage. But there's a fly in the ointment. A proposed federal law to extend same-sex marriage rights to the entire country is on the brink of failing because the minority Liberal government is teetering.

Polls indicate that the Conservative Party will take power if another election is held, and they've promised to pass legislation banning gay marriage — effectively unwedding the thousands of same-sex couples who have already married. Tory leaders say their proposed measure would allow civil unions.

India faces condom conundrum

NEW DELHI, India — International observers say India has a condom crisis on

its hands. The problem isn't the number of prophylactics, but the fact that they seem to be used for everything but intercourse. This is especially significant in a nation believed by some to have the highest number of AIDS cases in the world.

The government distributes billions of free condoms annually, but most are sold by black marketeers for a mind-boggling range of uses. Sari weavers put condoms on their thread spools — the lubricant allows the thread to move faster through their machines. Contractors use shredded condoms mixed with concrete and tar to pave roads. Builders place condoms under roofs to make them watertight.

In addition to this abuse, the Indian government is doing little to reach out to gay men. Sodomy is illegal and the government is reluctant to launch an AIDS awareness campaign that might be construed as condoning homosexuality.

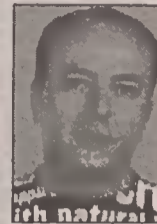
Arson swells World Pride dispute

JERUSALEM, Israel — An unidentified man tossed a burning rag into the city's only LGBT bar the evening of April 25 damaging the building and forcing patrons to flee. No one was injured but the incident raises the stakes in the effort by conservative Jews, Christians and Muslims to stop World Pride, slated for August 18-28.

Sa'ar Netanel (pictured), an openly gay member of Jerusalem's city council and the owner of the Shushan nightclub, told English-language newspaper *Ynet*: "I certainly don't blame anyone, and certainly no community. The police will investigate and we'll see. This is the first time the club

is attacked, but I already received threats on my life."

Opposition to World Pride, which organizers expect to attract more than 100,000 participants, has led to a rare show of solidarity among clerics of the various faiths. Shlomo Amar, Israel's Sephardic chief rabbi, says the event is "creating a deep and terrible sorrow that is unbearable."



Gov. airs anti-homophobia ads

MEXICO CITY, Mexico — Against the wishes of the influential Roman Catholic Church the government has launched a radio campaign to fight homophobia. In the initial phase, ads are running in seven cities; there are plans to extend the effort to 12 others and eventually nationwide.

In one of the radio spots, a mother questions her son about the date he is bringing home for the first time. She asks about the person's likes and dislikes and then for their name. "Oscar," the son replies. A voice-over encourages listeners to accept those who are different.

Catholic groups say the campaign promotes homosexuality. They created a series of alternative radio spots, but government officials rejected them. In one replacement ad, a girl tells her mother that she is attracted to women. The mother thanks her daughter for confiding in her, then says the family will help her so she doesn't "act out tendencies that could affect her gravely."

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