

Soulforce is visionary in that it has become clear we cannot win this battle with legislative actions alone.”

White, the former ghostwriter for evangelists Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, will embark on a fall speaking tour for his forthcoming book, tentatively titled “Religion Gone Bad: A Call to Resist Fundamentalism.”

Gay families and egg rolls

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The White House Easter Egg Roll is held every year on the White House lawn. It’s open to the public and always a major media event. This year Family Pride Coalition, the only national non-profit organization exclusively dedicated to securing equality for LGBT parents and their families, is planning to be a visible part of the celebration.

On Easter Monday, April 17, when the White House lawn is opened for the Easter Egg Roll, Family Pride wants the first 1000 families onto the grounds to be LGBT families. In a press release they note, “This is not a protest, but rather a way to let our fellow citizens across the country see who we really are. If you’re an LGBT family with at least one child 7 or younger — we need you to attend!”

The assistance of volunteers is critical. “We need people to stand in line on the Friday night before the Egg Roll to get tickets for families who want to attend but can’t stand in line. We need people to provide support to those standing in line. We need people to help dispense tickets and t-shirts to families.”

For more information or to sign-up to help, visit www.familypride.org/eggroll.

International >

Gay moms recognized in court

JERUSALEM, Israel — In a precedent-setting ruling handed down Feb. 13, Israel’s Family Court recognized a same-sex couple as the joint parents of their children. The decision followed a High Court of Justice finding last year that same-sex parents have the same rights as opposite-sex parents.

The court held that Tal and Avital Yarous-Hakak must receive adoption papers listing them as the mothers of their three children, who were conceived through in vitro fertilization over the past 15 years. The decision is a vindication for the couple. They were turned down by the Family Court in 1997 when they initially sought to adopt each other’s children.

Although the court did grant the couple guardianship of each other’s children, they argued to the High Court that the finding did not go far enough. The High Court’s decisive ruling left the Family Court with little wiggle room, setting up the landmark decision. In separate legal news, a lawsuit seeking full marriage rights for same-sex couples is currently working its way toward the High Court.

China issues HIV/AIDS guidelines

BEIJING, China — More than two decades into the AIDS epidemic and after years of mounting international criticism, the Chinese government has issued its first official guidelines for stemming the spread of the disease. The new regulations also detail the rights, protections and requirements for those who are living with HIV/AIDS.

According to the official Xinhua News Agency the law goes into effect March 1. It mandates free HIV testing and treatment for the poor and pregnant women, protects HIV-positive and AIDS-affected Chinese from employment and medical care discrimination and requires them to disclose their status to spouses, sex partners and doctors.

In January the government estimated there were 650,000 HIV-positive people in China, including 75,000 with full-blown AIDS. The numbers have been challenged by some international health agencies that say Chinese leaders have under-reported the actual figures for years.

Film board okays gay cowboys

SINGAPORE — Bucking the trend among Muslim nations, Singapore’s film censorship board approved “Brokeback Mountain” (pictured from film) for broadcast in its entirety. The decision surprised even the film’s distributor. In a statement, the board said it approved the movie because it did not “promote or glamorize the [gay] lifestyle.” The movie will be restricted to viewers over the age of 21.

Because homosexuality is illegal in Singapore, punishable by caning and up to two years in prison, the decision to show “Brokeback Mountain” indicates that the film board may be moving away from hard-line censorship of all gay themes. (For example, a scene in 2002’s “The Hours” was cut because it showed two women kissing.)

The shift in Singapore stands in contrast to countries like Malaysia, where the nation’s largest film distributor didn’t even bother to ask for approval to release

“Brokeback Mountain,” China and the



United Arab Emirates, both of which banned the movie outright.

Gay Arabs sentenced to prison

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — Five-year prison sentences have been handed down for 11 of the 26 men arrested last year at what police called a “gay wedding.” The men were charged with homosexuality, a crime under Sharia law, although police acknowledged that none of them were engaged in a sexual act when the event was raided.

Acting on a tip, police descended on a hotel in Ghandout, a desert region on the Dubai-Abu Dhabi highway, in November 2005 and found what they described as about a dozen men dressed as brides and a similar number in male Arab dress. The case attracted worldwide attention when an Interior Ministry official stated that the accused could be forced to receive male hormone shots.

Lawyers familiar with the case say the prison sentences are likely to be appealed. The 15 men who were acquitted are still being held until the government decides whether to have them retried.

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Charlotte
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March 24th-26th



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