

National News Notes

by David Stout . Q-Notes staff

High court legalizes gay adoption

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Adoptions by same-sex couples became legal last month when the Indiana Supreme Court refused to hear a challenge to an appellate court ruling permitting joint and second-parent adoptions.

The case centered around longtime partners Becki Hamilton and Kim Brennan who were fighting the Morgan County Juvenile Court for custody of their infant foster daughter, identified as W.



By a vote of 4-1, the high court decided to let stand a ruling by the Indiana Court of Appeals that found it lawful for two unmarried persons of the same or opposite sex to seek a joint adoption. Indiana Attorney General Steve Carter appealed the decision. Gay rights law firm Lambda Legal represented Hamilton and Brennan.

The decision was condemned by state Sen. Jeff Drozda (R-Westfield, pictured), who opposes gay adoptions. He said the courts were not representing the views of Hoosiers, adding that he will introduce legislation in 2007 to bar same-sex couples from adopting.

Rev. charged for marrying couple

PITTSBURGH, Pa. — An investigating committee of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

charged Rev. Janet Edwards, a minister in the Pittsburgh Presbytery, of violating the Church's constitution by performing a marriage for two women in June 2005. Rev. Edwards faces penalties that could include rebuke or loss of her ministry. The Presbyterian Church is sharply divided over allowing marriage ceremonies for same-sex couples.

When Rev. Edwards married Nancy McConn and Brenda Cole last year, she said it was one of the spiritual high points of her ministerial life. She defended her decision throughout the inquiry. "Nancy and Brenda demonstrated a strong commitment to each other and to God. I saw no reason not to publicly recognize their commitment because they happen to be two women."

Last March, a minister who married two same-sex couples in the Redwoods Presbytery of Northern California was found not guilty of violating church law when the Presbytery ruled that the marriage of same-sex couples is not "outside of, or contrary to the essentials of the Reformed faith."

Celebrity citing, part one

NEW YORK, N.Y. — There will be no wedding bells for celebrity supercouple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie until gays and lesbians are granted the right to marry, Pitt revealed in "Esquire" magazine's October issue, on newsstands now. "Angie and I will consider tying the knot when everyone else in the country who wants to be married is legally able," the 42-year-old actor said.

Neil Giuliano, president of the Gay and

Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, hailed the announcement. "Brad's comments will absolutely help open people's eyes to the fact that committed gay and lesbian couples are still denied the right to marry and that there are really ugly efforts underway across this country to keep us from having any legal protections whatsoever."

Pitt and Jolie are actually the second Hollywood couple who are forestalling marriage until it's available to same-sex couples. Last November, Oscar-winning actress Charlize Theron told TV's "Extra" that she and longtime boyfriend Stuart Townsend will get married the day gay marriage becomes legal.

DVD supports LGBT foster youth

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — A new DVD/CD resource has been released to educate service providers who work with LGBT youth in the foster care system. The DVD, "Breaking the Silence: LGBTQ Foster Youth Tell Their Stories," features the heartfelt, self-made videos of 10 former foster youth who identify as LGBT. Through their words and images they share their experiences in state care, as well as their recommendations for improving the system.

In each three-minute story the youth detail what it was like coming out in foster care; how important it was to find supportive allies; the effects of rejection by family and foster parents; the challenges of transitioning gender while in state custody; and what providers need to know about LGBT youth.

The accompanying CD contains more than 25 training tools for social workers, probation

officers, group home workers, foster parents, system administrators, lawyers, youth advocates and others who work with queer foster youth. "Breaking the Silence" is available free from the National Center for Lesbian Rights, www.nclrights.org.

Celebrity citing, part two

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Openly gay talk show host Ellen DeGeneres (pictured) will host the 79th Annual Academy Awards, slated for February 25, 2007. This will be the comedian's first time hosting or even attending the Oscars, but she has successfully hosted the Grammys and the Emmys. In fact, her graceful handling of the Emmy telecast in the wake of 9/11 reportedly earned her the Oscar job from producer Laura Ziskin.



In a statement Ziskin said, "Ellen DeGeneres was born to host the Academy Awards. I can already tell she is going to set the bar very high for herself and therefore for all of us involved in putting on the show.

Now all we need is a lot of great movies."

If DeGeneres is anxious about following in the footsteps of Billy Crystal or Whoopi Goldberg — the show's only other female host — she's not letting it show. "There are two things I've always wanted to do in my life," she joked during the announcement. "One is to host the Oscars. The second is to get a call from Laura Ziskin. You can imagine that day's diary entry." ▀

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