

## **GAY STRAIGHT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE SCHOOLS (GSAFE) FEBRUARY E-NEWSLETTER**

1. Special Note: Remember Lawrence King in your hearts and thoughts.
2. Tune into NBC (channel 15) 10:00 p.m. news on Tuesday, February 26th to see Brian and three GSAFE students interviewed!
3. A Note from the ED: What are they saying about the birthplace of the first LGBT movement?
4. Celebration of Leadership!
5. Do you need training on LGBT issues and school safety in you area?
6. Thank you to our sponsors!
7. Ways to donate!

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1. Special Note: Remember Lawrence King in your hearts and thoughts.

Larry King was a 15 year-old student at E.O. Green Junior High in Oxnard, California. On Tuesday, February 12th, Larry was shot by a classmate at school and suffered critical injuries; he was taken off of life support three days later and passed away.

While the motivation of the act is unknown, Larry did identify as gay and his murder is being prosecuted as a hate crime. Friends have reported to the authorities that Larry was often bullied for his orientation and gender expression. Candlelight vigils were held for Lawrence King in many California cities on Wednesday.

GSAFE is part of a national network called the National GSA Network, which has its organizing office in California. Our California friends in the network are paying close attention to this tragedy.

For more information see

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-oxnard15feb15,0,7663055.story>

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### **2. TUNE IN**

Program Director Brian Juchems will be interviewed live for two to three minutes, and a three minute taped interview of two GSAFE students, Isabel Medina and Seb Harris, will be shown on NBC (channel 15) 10:00 p.m. news on Tuesday, February 26th!!

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3. What are they saying about the birthplace of the first LGBT movement?  
By Executive Director Cindy Crane

Is it true that Germany was the very first country to have an LGBT rights movement, or perhaps better known as a homosexual emancipation movement? And did that movement begin way back in the late 19th century? I ask instead of tell because I don't have expertise in the area of history, and I know that as soon as a non-historian states a fact about history it is easy for a history scholar to gasp and say, "No, that's a common belief, but that's all wrong! Just stick to your day job." Please e-mail me with any corrected facts.

As a non-historian I feel inspired these days to engage with history because of an exhibit GSAFE and the University of Wisconsin will bring to Madison from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. We will soon advertise the Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals traveling exhibit coming to Wisconsin for the first time in the fall. The exhibit displays a part of history that is no big secret, but one I never learned about in high school.

In Germany the demands for sexual and gender emancipation that began in late 19th century lasted until the emergence of Nazi rule. Before Nazi occupation, what was the emancipation from? It was still of course from discrimination. Discrimination against LGBT Germans was largely embodied in Paragraph 175, imposed in the year 1871. This provision of the German criminal code made homosexual acts between men illegal. Activists who sought homosexual emancipation tried to overturn Paragraph 175, but it only faded into the background as LGBT people began to enjoy finding circles of acceptance.

According to materials from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "As part of the greater emphasis on individual rights and freedoms that arose in the years before and after WWI, homosexual subcultures formed in several major German cities. By the 1920s, the increasing visibility and acceptance of homosexuals challenged traditional norms. By the 1930s, some 350,000 homosexual men and women lived among Berlin's four million inhabitants." Several same sex "friendship leagues" had openly emerged in Berlin.

The first wave of an LGBT movement in Germany had its impact internationally. In the wonderful movie, "Out of the Past," one of the first U.S. gay rights activists, Henry Gerber, is quoted praising the openness of the Germans toward gay people in the 1920s. However, in the 1930s, the Nazis took an unjust law, Paragraph 175, which had never disappeared from the criminal code despite the LGBT movement, and expanded upon it to add to the immense tragedy of Nazi persecutions of innocent people.

We can say we have more tolerance in the world toward LGBT people today than during certain periods in the past, though tolerance is even an exaggeration of what many LGBT people experience. At GSAFE we say tolerance is not enough. We remind youth and adults that by law, in K-12 schools there need be at least acceptance of LGBT students. What we really want is celebration, and sometimes we witness it. However, we still have a long way to go before each student is celebrated regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation, and we have a lot to learn from history.

Be well and celebrate one another,

Cindy

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#### 4. Celebration of Leadership

Celebrate the activism and courage of student and adult leaders at our 12th annual Celebration of Leadership Awards Banquet! This year's keynote speakers are Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin and Executive Director Steven Goldberg of CUNA Mutual Group

Place: Monona Terrace

Date: May 17, 2008

Time: 5:00 p.m. Silent Auction and Reception; 6:00 p.m. Program and Dinner

Cost: \$65 per individual tickets; \$55 per person at a table of eight to ten; \$25 per middle school and high school student

Also consider being a sponsor to support our ongoing and new programming!

Go to our website at [www.gsaforsafeschools.org](http://www.gsaforsafeschools.org) for more information.

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#### 5. Do you need training on LGBT issues and school safety in you area?

Contact your Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA) and ask them to request one from Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools: 608-661-4141

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6. The GSAFE board and staff want to thank you for your support. Who are we?

GSAFE Board:

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GSAFE Staff:

Cindy Crane, Executive Director  
Brian Juchems, Program Director;  
Timothy Michael, Program Assistant

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR INDIVIDUAL DONORS! Every donation makes a difference.

We also thank the Madison Metropolitan School District for supporting our Bystanders to Allies (B2A) program to address bullying in middle schools. And we thank the agencies and founding partners that make our work possible: The Brico Fund; The New Harvest Foundation; the Philantropfund, the Evjue Foundation; Diverse and Resilient; The Milwaukee Foundation (Wisconsin AIDS Fund); By Youth for Youth, Dane County Youth Commission; and Community Shares.

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7. WAYS TO DONATE

Mail a donation to  
GSA for Safe Schools  
301 S. Bedford St., Ste. 1  
Madison, WI 53703