



ETC. global news briefs

Canada

One of the few aboriginal judges in the country has been appointed lieutenant governor of British Columbia. Steven Point, who was appointed to the provincial bench in 1999, is also chief commissioner of the BC Treaty Commission and elected chief of the Skowdale First Nation.

Eight years after it filed a discrimination complaint with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, a group of women has reached an agreement with the University of Saskatchewan. The women claimed that the university women's hockey team was treated unfairly compared to the men's squad. The university has agreed to hire a fulltime, high performance women's hockey coach and equalize the recruitment budgets for both teams.

The Hamilton Community News has apologized to provincial Liberal candidate Nerene Virgin for a column that referred to her as a "tar baby". In its apology, the newspaper stated, "The phrase is deeply offensive...and it should never have been used" and explained that the columnist "did not understand the racist implications of this historical term." Virgin's great uncle was the Reverend John C. Holland in whose name annual awards honoring excellence in the black community are handed out.

A new hospital in Brampton, Ontario has denied a woman an interview because she doesn't speak Hindi or Punjabi. The woman who applied as a registered nurse said that the job posting on Workopolis.com didn't mention a language requirement. When she was contacted by the William Osler Health Centre, she was told that the hospital was only hiring staff that could speak the language of the population it was serving. Brampton's population is now 19% South Asian. The hospital claims its hiring policy does not favour one specific ethnic group.

Women in Film and Television—Toronto (WIFT-T) has awarded its 2007 Kodak New Vision Fellowship to Audrey Cummings. The fellowship is presented annually to one emerging female filmmaker. WIFT-T is also in the process of gathering applications for its 2007 Alliance Atlantis Diversity in Broadcasting Internship. The winning applicant will intern three months at Alliance Atlantis and receive career search assistance from a senior mentor. Guidelines and application forms are available at www.wift.com.

China

A sculptor from Hunan Province has been awarded a commission to carve a three-storey monument to Martin Luther King to be unveiled in Washington DC in 2008. The selection of Lei Yixin has ignited opposition from critics who say a black, or at least an American, should have been chosen for the Stone of Hope memorial. Lei said that to him King "symbolized courage in pursuit of equality."

Europe

According to an article in the Christian Science Monitor, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has been slow to add women executives to its board. Of the IOC's 115 members, only 16 are women, while on the board, there is only one woman: Gunilla Lindberg of Sweden. In its 113-year history, there has never been a female president, although American Anita Frantz, a former bronze rowing medalist, sought that position in 2001.

Finland is considering recruiting skilled labour from China to alleviate its labour shortage. A delegate recently visited adult education organizations in the Chinese cities of Shenheng and Dalian. The plan is to have Chinese workers take Finnish language courses before leaving China and start arriving in Finland in 2008. Labour shortages in Finland are due to an estimated 25,000 people retiring from the workforce every year.

A new women's political party in Poland has launched its campaign for this month's parliamentary election with nude posters of the candidates and the electoral slogan, Everything for the future...and nothing to hide. Founded at the beginning of the year, Partia Kobiet (PK) has attracted 1500 members, including actress Krystyna Janda and boxing champion Agnieszka Rylik. According to the latest poll by TNS OBOP Institute, the PK has received 3% of the voters' support, less than the 5% needed to hold a seat in parliament.



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Europe (cont'd)

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) in Luxembourg has ruled that refusal to pay a survivor's pension constitutes indirect discrimination based on sexual orientation. The ruling arose from a landmark case in which Tadao Maruko sued Versorgungsanstalt der deutschen Bühnen (Vddb), the pension provider to German theatres, for denying him survivor benefits after his partner died. Vddb claimed pensions are only provided to married partners. The ruling could affect same-sex partners across Europe.

United Kingdom

An industrial tribunal has found in favour of a Belfast woman who claimed she suffered from gender bias in a job interview for a Northern Ireland charity. Catherine Megahey who was awarded £31,000 also claimed that she had been unfairly dismissed by Action Cancer where she had worked for three years. The charity accused the tribunal of ignoring the fact that over the past three years the number of women working there had increased by 52%.

United States

For the first time during his administration, President George W. Bush has assigned a woman as White House press secretary. Dana Perino is replacing Tony Snow who is battling cancer. Prior to taking this position, Perino was principal duty press secretary.

According to a recent report from the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPac) the number of major corporations that have added gender-based protection to their non-discrimination policies now tops 200. "This is an important milestone," said GenderPac board officer Cynthia Neff. "Diversity leaders like IBM, Citigroup and JP Morgan Chase realize that gender identity and expression is the new front line of workplace fairness and diversity."

A study of nearly 1,000 workers has found that almost 25% have been discriminated at work with 55% describing the discrimination as "moderate." 21% say they have witnessed unfair treatment against a diverse colleague. The survey which focused on 7 categories—American, Hispanic, Asian, GLBT, disabled and mature workers—found the highest feeling of discrimination was among those with disabilities and the lowest among mature and Asian workers. Half of those who experienced discrimination didn't report the incident because they felt it wouldn't make a difference. The study was conducted by Kelly Services Inc. and Careerbuilder.com.

According to a survey conducted by Robert Half Management Resources, only 34% of office workers plan on quitting work entirely once they reach retirement age. 24% said they'd try their hand at something new, 14% said they'd work as a consultant and another 14% said they'd continue to work for the same company, only fewer hours. Only 6% were unsure what the future held. The study polled 492 full- and part-time workers.

In an attempt to attract the Latino vote, the Democratic Party held its first Spanish-language presidential debate. Because only 2 of the candidates speak Spanish, the rest wore earpieces to listen to translations during the telecast on the Univision network. A similar platform was offered the Republican presidential candidates but only one of the 9 contenders—Arizona Sen. John McCain—agreed to appear. **D!**

