

Going backwards into the year 2000?

In May this year, the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe upheld a magistrate's court ruling which disinherited a woman in favour of her younger half-brother. The Supreme Court ruled that, under customary law, only men can inherit and all family members are subordinate to the male head of the family; that the Legal Age of Majority Act, drafted in 1982 to ensure equality, does not apply to customary law; and that Section 23 of the Zimbabwe Constitution allows discrimination against women as "the nature of African society".

The ruling has opened doors for customary law to erode legal gains made by Zimbabwean women over the years. In protest against the ruling, women activists marched through Harare bearing placards

with messages such as: "We will not accept customary legalised tyranny"; "Discrimination is not compulsory in African society", and "Are we going backwards into the year 2000?"

In June the Supreme Court lashed back at women's groups and individuals critical of the ruling and threatened protesters with legal action for contempt of court. "The patriarchal arrogance of these men is outrageous," says gender activist Dr Patricia McFadden. "They must find it very dangerous to let women become persons with equal rights."

Zimbabwe is revising its Constitution. Unless the new one has a strong equality clause, customary laws will keep sneaking in.

Source: Mail & Guardian, May 21 to 27 and June 25 to July 1, '99

Anti-perspirant is leading cause of breast cancer

Most of the products out there are an anti-perspirant/deodorant combination so go home and check your labels. Deodorant is fine, anti-perspirant is not. Here's why: The human body has a few areas that it uses to purge toxins; behind the knees, behind the ears, groin area, and armpits. The toxins are purged in the form of perspiration. Anti-perspirant, as the name clearly indicates, prevents you from perspiring, thereby inhibiting the body from purging toxins from below the armpits. These toxins do not just magically disappear. Instead, the body deposits them in the lymph nodes below the arms since it cannot sweat them out. This causes a high concentration of toxins and leads to cell mutations: a.k.a. CANCER.

Nearly all breast cancer tumours occur in the upper outside quadrant of the breast area. This is precisely

where the lymph nodes are located. Additionally, men are less likely (but not completely exempt) to develop breast cancer prompted by anti-perspirant usage because most of the antiperspirant product is caught in their hair and is not directly applied to the skin. Women who apply anti-perspirant right after shaving increase the risk further because shaving causes tiny cuts in the skin which give the chemicals entrance into the body from the armpit area.

PLEASE pass this along to anyone you care about. Breast cancer is becoming frighteningly common. This awareness may save lives. If you are skeptical about these findings, I urge you to do some research for yourself or contact Cynthia Harris. The e-mail address is charris@ssd.com

Source: internet

Lesbian victory

History was made in the High Court of Namibia in June when Judge Harold Levy ruled that gay and lesbian couples have exactly the same rights as heterosexuals and can live like a family and raise children as a man and woman would do.

The court action was brought by Liz Fránk and her long-term partner Elizabeth Khaxas, who argued that the Immigration Selection Board refused to grant Frank permanent residence status because she was in a lesbian relationship.

The judge said that common law parties can put their property together and use it as one, an agreement known as "universal partnership".

Basing his judgement on the Namibian Constitution, Judge Levy said: "If therefore a man and a woman can tacitly conclude such a partnership because of the aforesaid equality clause in the Constitution and the provision against discrimination on the grounds of sex, I have no hesitation in saying that the long-term relationship between the applicants in so far as it is a universal partnership, is recognised by law."

Judge Levy went on to argue that the Immigration Selection Board should have taken Frank's relationship with Khaxas into account when considering her application for permanent residence. He ordered the Ministry of Home Affairs to grant Frank permanent residence status within 30 days.

(The Namibian, 7 July, '99)

[As this issue of Sister goes to print we hear that the Namibian government has decided to oppose this ruling in the Supreme Court but the grounds for this decision are not yet known. We will follow this up in our next issue. In the meantime we congratulate our two Sister members Liz Frank and Elizabeth Khaxas for their victory and wish them strength and success in the next round of their legal battle for recognition of their right to live together as a family in Namibia.]