

Defying the Reigning Orthodoxy:

The Price of Activism

A retired Massachusetts lawyer recently became disillusioned with the one-sided news in his home state of Massachusetts. Not content to relax and enjoy his retirement years in peace, he took on a daunting and very stressful task: at his own expense, he founded an independent print and internet newspaper dedicated to breaking up the reigning media orthodoxy. His stories on gay activism—just one of the many politically incorrect topics he has tackled—have engulfed him in a firestorm of controversy.

Here, NARTH's Executive Director interviews Edward Pawlick.

JN: How did you become interested in publishing an independent newspaper?

EP: The truth is not being told by the establishment in Massachusetts. There is a biased, dishonest type of reporting that puts a spin on everything written. We have a monopoly of smug, satisfied, elite journalists who decide what we will know, and what we won't know. We see blatant distortion—even knowing, outright lies—used in the service of certain activist causes. I wanted to balance that with the *Massachusetts News*.

JN: Was there any recent incident involving the issue of homosexuality?

EP: Another paper in Massachusetts, the *New Bedford Standard Times*, wrote a terrible article blaming Christians for creating the climate of anti-gay bigotry that led to the death of Matthew Shepard. The headline referred to the "long, sorry history of Christian bigotry." A couple of Catholic priests and I wrote letters to the editors—but in response, they came out with an article that was even worse than the original. This newspaper is owned by the Dow Jones Company, which puts out the *Wall Street Journal*.

JN: So at age 72, and retired, you became a publishing activist?

EP: I was an activist before that; I wrote a book in 1998 about the Civil Rights Act. And I had an internet newspaper that I started last October. But then things started heating up—the *New Bedford* paper came out with that article that said, "There is no bigot like a Christian bigot." In response, I started a direct-mail campaign with pamphlets.

But when the establishment of the town of Newton called a rally against what I was doing, I decided we could not possibly have a fair debate unless our internet newspaper also came out in print version.

JN: So what did you intend to accomplish by publishing the *Massachusetts News*?

EP: The *News* debuted in June, and it has brought up many hot-button issues.

We've talked about pornography being available to children through library computers, and the A.P.A.'s latest journal article which says fathers aren't necessary in the upbringing of children. We have talked about the intellectual repression on college campuses, and how moral relativism is conveyed—virtually unchallenged—as the reigning philosophy. How the idealism of the 1960's has degenerated into intolerance for anyone who departs from this orthodoxy. Also, about the facts being unimportant, as long as they serve someone's activist agenda.

JN: Can you give me an example?

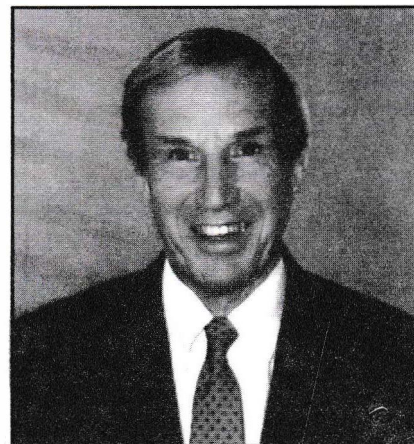
EP: In 1995, my wife was reading her Wellesley College alumnae magazine, and the lead story said, "In 1899, the president of Harvard called colleges for women 'superfluties.'" The author of the article was trying to show that even the most progressive educators in America at that time were fighting against higher education for women. When my wife went through the Wellesley archives, she discovered the truth was just the opposite: the president of Harvard had actually *defended* the value of women's higher education during the speech in which he was quoted. The entire article was actually one long display of feminist deceit.

My wife then wrote to the entire Wellesley faculty, administration, and trustees, citing the facts, but no one responded, and in fact that same falsehood was repeated in a later issue of that magazine.

JN: Incredible. And what have you been doing on the gay issue?

EP: On the homosexual front, I've reprinted some of NARTH's literature and challenged schools about their gay-affirming sex-ed programs. When I started speaking out in this newspaper on the homosexuality issue, I started to take an enormous amount of flack as a supposedly "angry" person, a bigot. I never planned to talk about homosexuality, but it just reared its head. You can't avoid it.

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Attorney and publisher, J. Edward Pawlick

JN: What happened?

EP: The establishment came after me. It was unbelievable. One night we had every television station in Boston waiting to talk to me, and I think they thought they were going to see somebody with guns and holsters just arriving from Montana.

JN: Some raving maniac who'd been holed up for years in a mountain cabin.

EP: Right. None of the Massachusetts establishment would actually discuss the important issues I wanted to open up to debate. They just wanted to go after me, personally, and that's what they did. So that is when I decided that we were going to have to rush in with a print newspaper, not just an Internet publication, because we couldn't get our message out to the general public any other way.

It's odd, actually, that I should have ended up in this position. I have a lot of friends who are homosexual, even though I have always thought it was a very foolish and unhealthy lifestyle. I also have friends who smoke cigarettes and I think that's foolish, too. But for gay men or people who smoke, it's their life and their body, and they are in charge of it. However, there's an important qualification--I would not want any of my friends who smoke cigarettes going into schools and telling children that smoking is a wonderful lifestyle choice. And by the same token, I don't want my homosexual friends going into schools and telling children that homosexuality is a wonderful lifestyle. But of course, that is exactly what gay activists are doing. Our former governor, Bill Weld, made Massachusetts the leader in the whole country in this type of one-sided sex education.

JN: Bill Weld was the national pacesetter?

EP: No question about it; he is the leader. Gay activists look to him and the state of Massachusetts as the trendsetters for the country. Half of the country's Gay-Straight Alliance high school groups are located in Massachusetts.

JN: What are these groups trying to accomplish?

EP: They are gay-affirming high school clubs that are going by the old, discredited theory that there is a gay gene, and that every child with a homosexual problem has been born with this orientation. Therefore it is the duty of the schools to find out whether each child is heterosexual or homosexual, and they go about doing this without the parents' knowledge. As a matter of fact, they even try to hide what they're doing from the parents while the sexual-

ly confused child decides—under the influence of gay student clubs, which incidentally encourage students in their literature to "try" bisexuality—what that student's orientation is.

JN: And probably, they're still working on the other discredited theory—that homosexuals make up 10% of the population. If they believe that 10% of the population of students have a gay gene, then it's their job to go out and find that ten percent.

EP: Right. And since most parents are considered to be bigots, the schools need to help the child identify his sexuality without his parents' knowledge. So that is the agenda in Massachusetts.

JN: What's the solution to handle sex education responsibly?

EP: All I try to do is say, if we are really going to take this responsibility away from the parents, and the schools are going to teach about homosexuality, then schools must teach children the whole truth. They shouldn't idealize this lifestyle and say it is a wonderful thing. What we tell these children should be truthful and balanced.

JN: The schools cannot refuse to tell them about the sickness and unhappiness that so often goes along with that lifestyle.

EP: Right. But what really got me, when I delved into the homosexuality issue, was that whenever I talk to homosexual people I know, we have no problems--we respect each other, and they respect my right to do what I'm doing. There are, of course, militant homosexual activists who do not; but with most of my gay acquaintances and colleagues, I got along fine. But I've discovered that the people who are really, really hateful are the liberal activists, particularly those in the Christian churches. I can't believe how hostile and angry and nasty they are.

Liberal ministers who are Unitarian, United Church of Christ, and others, are actually comparing me to Hitler. They are saying I'm evil. And all I'm trying to say is, we must look at what we are teaching the children in the schools. I'm not trying to say adult homosexuals must change their lives--what they do is their business.

JN: Do you regret getting into this fight? It's an emotional drain.

EP: Not at all.

JN: How can our readers get your newspaper?

"For gay men, it's *their* life
and *their* body. But I don't
want them going into
schools and distorting the
realities about the lifestyle."

EP: We have an Internet publication, www.mass-news.com. It comes out daily, and we welcome anyone to visit our website. Our niche is to focus on Massachusetts news, in particular. We also have a print version, which they can order by calling 888-313-5525.

JN: The Internet has been a good way of getting the alternative news to the people.

EP: It is, but most people are still not on the Internet. In the meanwhile, they're reading a lot of one-sided news through the mass media.

JN: What is your business background?

EP: I practiced law for twelve years and then, when I became the sole parent for four little kids, I had to give up practicing from an office. So in 1972, I started a newspaper for lawyers out of my house. When I sold it last year, we had eight newspapers across the country, reaching a third of the lawyers across the country. We did very well. I had all this newspaper experience, so I decided to try to do something good with that experience.

JN: It's amazing how many well-intentioned people, in their gut, are bothered by the changes they see in our culture, they don't want to get involved. They disagree with the gay agenda, but it's just easier to avoid it.

EP: I was somewhat that way, too. I didn't know anything about the gay issue until I read that article about Christian bigotry in the New Bedford paper, and that's why NARTH is so wonderful--to find you as a source of information is really great.

JN: We're glad to be a resource. Tell me about some of your recent successes.

EP: The biggest success is what happened with the *Boston Globe*. They have a columnist, Jeff Jacoby, who is pretty well known nationwide. He's an excellent, sharp, great guy--very intelligent. He had written in the *Globe* about a conference at Harvard Law School, at which a student group had invited some ex-gay Christians to speak about change. The speakers were harassed by other students, the conference signs were torn down, and all that type of thing. Jeff Jacoby criticized that incident. *The Boston Globe* responded that publishing Jacoby's "homophobic" column was a terrible price for the *Globe* to have to pay to permit freedom of speech. They basically put him on notice, promised to watch him very carefully in the

future, and said this type of column should not be written again.

Later, the *Globe* ran an article about me which was, considering their point of view on the gay issue, quite fair and empathetic to our position. Then on February 7th of this year, in their Sunday paper, they had two other surprising stories. One said there is no gay gene; and the second was a feature story in the Sunday magazine about two Christian homosexuals who had changed.

JN: Very important topics.

EP: That was a new direction for them. Only a year before they were saying their own columnist, Jeff Jacoby, was homophobic for suggesting that change was possible, but now they've actually written a feature story about change.

Of course, the *Globe* didn't admit it represented a shift in their reporting--but it *was* a huge change and how much we had to do with it, we'll never know for sure, but it happened within less than a month after we wrote our article.

JN: I remember those *Globe* articles. Surprisingly, they presented no opposition to counter those first-person stories from the ex-gays. Usually, the media neutralizes the person's testimony

with a skeptic who says, "If only they could have accepted themselves for who they really are... If society were more accepting, none of this would be necessary."

I did an interview on ABC 20/20 a few years ago, and after the men had told the stories of their struggles and what they believed was true about the complementarity of manhood and womanhood, Barbara Walters in effect dismissed those men's beliefs by saying they were a lamentable reaction to society's intolerance. So the *Globe* articles were a step forward.

EP: And there's another success. Our libraries have a network with about 35 suburban communities around Boston, and they have an Internet site. I told one of my people we should put that library site up as a link to our own because it would help people find information quickly. He came back in less than three minutes and told me that a pedophilia site was linked to the library site and was recommended for teenagers.

So we called up the library and told them about it. Incredibly, instead of thanking us, they started giving us all kinds of grief. They finally got rid of that link after four months because the people called them.

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**“Gay-affirming
high school clubs
are doing a great
deal of damage.”**

In its defense, the library told a reporter for another paper that there were also pro-abstinence sites on the web site; so we went to look and sure enough, they had added abstinence sites. They added those very quietly and tried to pretend that they had always had them.

JN: Are you the only people shaking things up in Massachusetts?

EP: There seems to be a fair amount of outrage out there, but so far, it is simmering below the surface. I don't know when it is going to break through, but I think it will at some point.

JN: This is what we have learned through the recent pedophilia issue that we broke in November 1998, which Laura Schlessinger carried out into the mass media. We must network with sympathetic major-media journalists and columnists who can get the word out. If Jeff Jacoby had done a column on your library's link to the pedophilia site, that situation might well have been taken care of in 24 hours. The media has the power to produce miracles.

EP: Yes... but I would rather *be* the media than beg

them to tell the truth.

JN: Where do you see the battle going from here?

EP: I think eventually, we are going to be able to have public discussions about these things much more easily than we do now. We're on the right side, and we have the facts. We're not trying to hurt anybody. We're just trying to stop other people from being hurt.

JN: And both of our organizations—NARTH, and the *Massachusetts News*--have a big job ahead in terms of public education. NARTH's biggest problem, too, is the monopoly on the news by the major media. I believe that public opinion will shift when people have a chance to educate themselves. At some point, they're going to get disgusted at being force-fed somebody else's orthodoxy. They're going to insist on the right to hear another side.

Anything else you'd like to add?

EP: The other thing I want to say is that you guys at NARTH are incredible. If not for you, I don't know what would be happening.