City School District will give equal benefits to partners
Policy goes into effect Jan. ’06

BY SUSAN JORDAN
On Oct 26, the City School District approved by a vote of 6-0 the new policy providing equal benefits to domestic partners of light and heterosexual employees. Dr. James Bowers, a commissioner on the board, said that the vote was 6-0, with Darryl Porter absent. He said that this vote indicates that the district is willing to embrace diversity.

The new policy, which will go into effect in January 2006, will allow the district about $91,000 a year, and partners must meet eight requirements to be included. The benefits will include health and dental insurance, family illness days and bereavement leave.

The policy resulted from a proposal earlier this year by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trangender Task Force, an ad hoc group whichinclude Empire State Pride Agenda, the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Rochester Teachers Association and a church administrator.

Empire State Pride Agenda Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs Russ Loehr led the Board of Education’s decision saying, “This act by the Rochester Board of Education recognizes that all employees deserve equal benefits for equal work. We praise the Board for listing it to its Task Force and voting to extend these much needed benefits to school employees and their families.”

School board continued on page 3

GAGV Board retracts statements by former Executive Director Bowen

To The Honorable Sheldon Silver,

It has come to the attention of the Board of Directors and staff of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley (GAGV) that several inaccurate and misleading statements were made by former Executive Director Chuck Bowen in the November issue of The Empty Closet.

It is of critical importance that Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver’s office know that the opinions expressed in the article, “Delay in State Funding Causes 20 Percent Cut in Services for Gay Alliance,” are most certainly not those of the Gay Alliance, its staff or board of directors, nor that of the Rochester lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (lgbt) community, all of whom deeply appreciate the generous funding granted by the New York State Department of Health, the Speaker’s Office, Senate Rochester and others who have advocated in our behalf.

The funds provided through the TASS and DVP grants allow the GAGV to provide essential services to light youth and adults. Even as the Gay Alliance, like many non-profit agencies, has had to deal with the reality of budgetary constraints in these difficult fiscal times, it has upheld its commitment to delivering the same level of quality services to light youth and individuals victimized by violence.

Contrary to Mr. Bowen’s claims, 100 percent of the services delineated in our grant are still being delivered, although a staff member has been laid off and staff have taken a 20 percent pay cut. The GAGV has in recent months expanded its youth programming and extended the hours of operation at its new youth learning center. Youth Services Director Toby Greenfield recently hired a part-time intern to help her launch new outreach initiatives.

Retraction continued on page 3

DUPC honors Spahr; Calif. Presbytery files charges

The Downtown United Presbyterian Church celebrated Reverend Dr. Janie Spahr’s 30 years of ordained ministry with a reception of friendship, worship, and recognition on Nov. 14 at the church, located at 121 North Fitzhugh St. in downtown Rochester.

Meanwhile, due to the interference of an anti-gay minister in Washington state, Spahr’s Presbytery in California was reluctantly forced to file charges against her for taking part in the legal marriage of a Rochester couple in Canada. (See Newsfronts, page A5, for full story.)

Spahr refused to accept a rebuke for her involvement in the event, Feb. 28 weekend of Dr. Douglas Potter and Greg Parridge. The church’s seven-member Permanent Judicial Committee conducted a trial. Spahr faces any of four degrees of possible censure, ranging from rebuke to removal. The process could take many months.

Since her ordination in 1974, Rev. Spahr has served in churches and organizations throughout the United States, including the Hazelwood Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pa., and the First Presbyterian Church in San Rafael, Calif. For a number of years, her ministry went beyond the Presbyterian Church (USA), as she was Minister of Personal Care for the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in San Francisco and as Executive Director of Spectrum Center, also located in San Francisco.

In 1991 Rev. Spahr was called to serve as one of four co-pastors at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church in Rochester. She was denied that call by the denominational’s highest court in November 1992 because she is a lesbian.

To fight this injustice, The Downtown Church, together with a group of lay church leaders, formed That All May Freely Serve (TAMS) in 1992, calling Rev. Spahr as its Minister/Director.

As the Minister/Director of That All May Freely Serve, Rev. Spahr promotes its mission of working for the ordination of qualified gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender candidates for the Presbyterian Church (USA) as Elders, Deacons and Ministers. Since its inception, Rev. Spahr has led TAMS as a catalyst for constructive change in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She has also inspired and guided Spahr continued on page 13
Marriage Equality Q & A

Margaret Cho has a good point: "Gay marriage would be a boon to the economy because the ice sculptures alone would pay off the national deficit."

By the Gay Alliance Board of Directors

Margaret Cho has a good point: "Gay marriage would be a boon to the economy because the ice sculptures alone would pay off the national deficit." One notable difference is that, although Margaret Cho speaks in terms of "ice sculptures," the Gay Alliance Board of Directors speaks in terms of "carbon credits."

We need to focus on the most important issue: ending homophobia. The most important question we can ask about marriage equality is: will an end to heterosexism bring more social justice and greater equality for all?

The answer would have to be yes. Marriage equality will make it easier for us to stand up for our rights and our freedoms. It will also make it easier for us to be respected by our neighbors and our friends. We must be respected in order to be respected.

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Eddie Calhoun, Kodak's Chief Diversity Officer, accepts the Courageous Leadership Award for Kodak at the Luncheon on Nov. 6. More coverage on page 18. Calhoun said, "Transgender guidelines are an important part of Kodak's anti-discrimination policies."

School board continued from page one

Dally Palmer, a Rochester city resident, a teacher in the Batavia City School District, co-chair of the Pride Agenda board and member of the Task Force said, "This policy change is an important step forward in treating all employees equally in the area of benefits. It is a win-win decision for everyone concerned. The Rochester City School District will be competitive with other school districts offering similar benefits and school employees in domestic partnership relationships will be happier, more secure and better able to concentrate on being good educators, knowing that their employer is doing everything it can to help them take care of their families."

Kitty Moran, a member of GLSEN, is also a member of the Task Force. Moran told the Empty Closet, "It's just a wonderful statement of support. I'm very aware of a lot of teacher friends who have been afraid to come out at school. This is a statement that says, 'It's safe for you to come out and be honest.'"

Moran feels that, given the financial difficulties of the city, the board vote is a strong statement of its commitment to diversity. "Both Dr. Spencer and Charlie Mattie thanked the board for their consideration," Moran said. "Everyone on the Task Force was very impressed by this willingness to move ahead. The next step is the professional training piece, which is very, very important. (The need for diversity training for School Board employees will be considered.)"

The decision to approve DP benefits is the second Task Force recommendation the Board of Education has adopted. In December 2005, it unanimously approved the Task Force's recommendation to add protections for transgender students to the school district's Code of Conduct. III

Retraction continued from page 1

directed to high school and college age students.

As word of our nationally recognized youth program continues to spread, we find ourselves regularly receiving requests for information and referrals.

Members of the GAGV's professionally trained speakers' bureau continue to educate students, teachers and other human service workers about the damaging effects of homophobia in the classroom and the workplace.

In the past year the Gay Alliance partnered with the Rochester Gay and Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) chapter to better meet the growing demand for sensitivity training in grades K-12.

Members of the GAGV staff and GLSEN proudly served on the Rochester City School's Task Force on Gay, Lesbian and Transgendered Bias and assisted in the development of a plan to provide necessary training to administrators and teachers in city schools to insure that LGBT students, along with other minorities, are provided with a safe, respectful learning environment.

Domestic Violence Project Coordinator Alexandra Cobus has been busy educating other service providers in the Rochester area on the often unrecognized fears, hardships and obstacles faced by LGBT victims of violence and harassment. Call volumes by individuals seeking assistance and relief continue to grow monthly and a support group has been recently formed for LGBT survivors of violence. Volunteers have been trained to respond to crisis calls received after hours. The GAGV is exploring ways to collaborate with other agencies, such as Planned Parenthood and Alternatives for Battered Women, as a means of expanding its reach into the community.

Another inaccurate statement made by Mr. Bowen pertained to the supposed discontinuation of programs for Seniors. In fact, the GAGV does not and has not yet offered programs for LGBT Seniors. The Gay Alliance has provided support and advocated for LGBT local organization of LGBT seniors called the Rainbow Seniors of Western New York. GAGV Community Education and Outreach Coordinator Todd Plank is a member of LGBT senior's Cultural Competence Committee and has educated Senior service providers on the special needs and concerns of LGBT elders.

Mr. Plank is currently involved in a collaborative project to survey the local impact of homophobia among senior health care service providers, so that the GAGV can better advocate for the growing number of LGBT seniors and their families.

Other outreach initiatives include a newly formed social and support group for same-sex parents, Rochester Pride and Joy Families, and a library and archives project to preserve and promote the positive history of the Rochester LGBT community.

The Gay Alliance, its Board of Directors and key staff believe that the strong, positive relationship assembled with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver's Office, Senator Tobias and our many other allies in Albany.

The Gay Alliance wishes to express its deep regret for any damage that may have resulted from the article, and reiterates its continued support of and appreciation for the New York State Health and Human Services Network.

Post election workshop Dec. 6 teaches ways to support each other

A workshop, "Post Election 2004: Skills for Advocacy and Planning,' will be held on Dec. 6, sponsored by the National Coalition Building Institute (Herman and Steve Jarose) with support from Downtown Community Forum (Kara Neeland), Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul (Sr. Beth LeValley), and the Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation (Christine Whison)

The workshop runs from 7 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., at The Dugan Center at St. Mary's Church. For directions see http://www.dfcrochester.org/map.asp

"Electing 2004 has left our country deeply divided, resented and rancorous," organizers say. "Yet our desire for a just and thriving democracy compels us to have the skills this season has been teaching. Now more than ever, we need to find new ways to support each other and to communicate even when we can't stand what they're saying." Join other participants in this series who have been pleasantly surprised and increasingly hopeful about the skills they have learned.

Join the GAGV

Please fill out the form below and send it to: The Empty Closet, 14605 N. Main Street, Rochester, New York 14607.

Your confidential GAGV Membership includes an Empty Closet subscription mailed to your home eleven times a year in a plain manila envelope. If you would rather not receive The Empty Closet, please check this box: ☐

☐ Enclosed is a check payable to GAGV
☐ Please charge my VISA or Mastercard account
☐ Account No: ________________________ Exp. Date: __________
☐ Signature of cardholder: ________________________________

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
City and State: ____________________________ Zip: __________
Phone Home: ________________________________ Business: ________________________________
E-mail: ________________________________

For information on joining the GAGV as an organization, business or corporate member call 244-8640.

GAGV, 14605 N. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester New York 14605.

Please send your contribution to: The Empty Closet, 14605 N. Main Street, Rochester, New York 14607.

Transgender Day of Remembrance 2004 will be celebrated on Nov. 20, Transgender Day of Remembrance Day. The Empty Closet is working with the GLBT Center of Rochester to present a remembrance and support event. The event will feature a group reading and will end with a community gathering, refreshments and an open mic. Please come out to show your support and respect for the transgender community.

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Texas Board of Ed censors textbooks' marriage definition

The Texas Board of Education has proposed a rule that would put "marriage" in quotes in textbooks. The proposal was based on a legal challenge against the board for censorship. The board is considering the rule after a federal court last year ordered the board to reconsider its censored textbooks. The court ruled that the board's actions were unconstitutional. The proposal has been met with criticism from some educators and civil rights groups.

Jamaican police oppress people with HIV/AIDS

Widespread violence and discrimination are reported in Jamaica. The report by UnAIDS highlights the need for increased awareness and action to combat these issues. The report calls for increased investment in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services, as well as greater protection for people living with HIV/AIDS. The report also calls for an end to discrimination and stigma, and for increased access to justice for people living with HIV/AIDS.
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saturday, may 21, 2005
Rochester Riverside Convention Center
Reception: Gallery at 6:30 pm
Dinner and Program: Grand Lila Ballroom at 8 pm
For more information or to become a Committee Member, Sponsor, or Volunteer, please call Duffy Palmer at 585.242.9924 or通过的参与，请联系Duffy Palmer (585.242.9924) or to 621.677.0306.
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T 212.627.0305
F 212.627.4130
www.prideagenda.org

sixth annual
EMPIRE STATE PRIDE AGENDA
spring dinner

from around the country have come together and developed a national online forum.
The new online forum is a member-oriented only e-mail and bulletin board discussion
forum for members of the Black SGL/LGBT community as well as progressive persons
of all ethnicities. Designed to focus on topics of interest to Black SGL/LGBT
persons, information to be shared includes political news, entertainment news, job
listings, community events, on-going discussions and more. For more information or to
join, please visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/blacksglrogen/ or visit Yahoo! Groups keyowrd "National Black SGL Listers."
The forum moderators hope to register
1,000 SGL/LGBT persons of African
descent before Jan. 1. Currently, the forum
has 387 members from around the country
including the U.S., Jamaica, Africa and
England.
"This forum was designed to be able to
get information out quickly to the com-
community that's relevant," explains the forum's founder, activist Jasmyne Cannick. "If we
don't all have access to each other's it's that much
close to the amount of money needed
to ban same-sex marriage passed in all 11
states where the question was on the ballot.
(In eight of the 11 contests, the measure as
an anti-marriage amendment. When the Oregon
campaign started, polls said the amendment
would carry by 27 points, meaning that the
effort to defeat the amendment moved the
electorate by 19 points in less than three
months. It was the only campaign to show
a significant movement in the electorate
during the course of the campaign.
The nine closest contest was Michigan, where the amendment was adopted 59 per-
cent to 41 percent. Because eight of the 11 amendments go bey-
ond marriage and seek to forbid the rec-
ognition of other forms of relationships
recognition such as civil unions and domestic partnerships, thousands of gay and non-gy
families may lose benefits and suffer other
hardships. According to the 2000 U.S.
Census, in these eight states there are at
least 2.1 million people living in households
headed by unmarried partnered couples.
(Most of these households are headed by
opposite sex couples.)"
City Council member Bill Pritchard

BY SUSAN JORDAN

With the country polarized and divided, one local politician feels that partisan politics is the cause of many of the problems we face.

"I predicted in August that the election would be close and that Bush would win," said Rochester City Council member Bill Pritchard. "It was worse than I imagined. That's one reason why we'll have some serious talking and planning to do for 2006 and beyond. We need, in my opinion, to have serious discussions about what it is we want for our country.

Pritchard said that conservatives have spoken, especially in the 11 states that passed anti-same sex marriage amendments. "Now we need to speak," he said. "The voice of reason, tolerance and diversity needs to be heard."

He deplored the bitter polarization between Republicans and Democrats, or the Right and the Left, as they are often identified by the media. However, "the left" is a concept that has changed since the nation moved far to the right in the Reagan years. Now moderate liberal Democrats are "the left," and the real left is almost invisible in the media, while moderate Republicans long lost control of their party to the right.

Pritchard sees the split as harmful to the country. "I believe we need to start looking at people as people, and not simply as Republicans or Democrats," he said. "I think it's important that both parties continue to represent their core beliefs - which may evolve over time - but avoid compromising core beliefs in order to get elected. It's important for our country as a whole. If you're Republican, in some circles you're evil, and the same is true in other circles if you're a Democrat. It's rabid partisanship that I believe is weakening our political system, because it turns people off who are average middle of the road voters and aren't caught up in a partisan situation. Both parties have done this to the country and ourselves - demonizing the opposition. Republicans are better at it, but Democrats have done it too."

He cited Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks, a Republican who seems more willing to listen to liberals and to the disfranchised than her abrasive, inflexible predecessor Jack Doyle.

"Time will tell if (Brooks) will sustain a liberal position," Pritchard said. "She appears to be more accommodating in discussions with the city and Mayor Johnson than Doyle ever was. The Brooks administration is working with the city - there are many things we disagree on - but there have been improvements. Maggie has put in many of her own people and has a more conciliatory approach to working with the city. That honesty doesn't exist with Maggie. But there are Democrats who won't acknowledge in any way that there are changes. That's wrong and has to change."

Pritchard said that Republicans do this too. He commented that William Stattner, Susan John's unsuccessful Republican opponent in the race for the state Assembly, was "vicious" - he misinformed John's record. It was retail politics at its worst. Misusing opponents' records, calling names, etc. We have to stop this.

"I refuse to dislike someone simply because they're Republicans. Democrats demote Republicans by focusing on the element that unfortunately is extremely conservative, and ignoring moderate Republicans.

"Our role as glbt people is that we can't blindly follow one party or the other. Pritchard said. "I was at a reception recently for the Log Cabin Republicans, and here all their eggs in one political basket. We must hold individuals accountable. We were effectively used in the last election to re-elect George Bush. It came out in the media just before the election that Bill Clinton (who I still admire) said something extremely disturbing. He called Kerry at least once and urged him to take a stronger position against gay marriage - Bush would use the issue against Kerry and Kerry needed to take a stronger position. Kerry refused to do this, to his credit. 'Get elected at all costs' - all the more reason why the glbt community must not blindly follow partisan politics."

The Bush campaign's use of homophobic bigotry, Pritchard said, is another reason why both political parties must be held accountable.

"Don't automatically dismiss someone because of their political party," he said. "GLBT people can help change the tone in this country."

Pritchard acknowledged that there is a need for pragmatism like Clinton's, but feels that this can be carried too far. "You can be pragmatic, but still hold to the framework of your ideas... Sometimes you don't have to compromise your principles, but sometimes you do have to delay action."

He gave as example the pressure on Bill Clinton to end discrimination against gays in the military. "There was a segment of the glbt community that used the issue as a litmus test to see if Clinton would support it. Others, including myself, said 'We're not ready to push the issue and haven't done the groundwork yet. So what did we get? Don't Ask, Don't Tell' - which has resulted in even more discharges of gay people than before." Looking toward the future, Pritchard said that the glbt community needs more openly gay candidates in both parties. "2005 will be a great year for glbt people to become involved in local politics," he said. "There are five seats on City Council, including myself and Tim Mains, and all 29 seats in the county legislature, and a number of incumbents can't run again. People have to get involved at the grassroot level."

"It takes time. I was politically active for 12 years before being appointed to City Council. I worked on campaigns, got involved with the Democratic Party as a member committee. That's what people, Democrat or Republican, have to do - start at the grassroots level and get involved. We need to increase the size of the list of potential glbt candidates, not just for City Council but in all areas. Right now, we don't have a lot of people who are experienced and have worked within their particular party."
PLAY FOR KEEPS
Rainbow Sash challenges Catholic church on homophobia

Rainbow Sash Movement: Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Catholics Call on the National Council of Catholic Bishops To Remove the Blinders of Homophobia.

It was ironic that members of the Rainbow Sash Movement were denied Communion at the Bishops Plenary Liturgy in November in the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. because of a public witness of their faith. While simultaneously the Bishops were patting themselves on the back about overcoming racism, intolerance, and the blindness of ignorance that cannot see Jesus Christ in our neighbor.

It is ironic because at the end of the day, hate motivated by good intentions is still hate and a sin. The Bishops just bury their heads deeper in the sand.

Our parishes and schools are closing in mass across the nation, Arch/rights are going into bankruptcy with more to come, the needs of victims of clergy sexual abuse are being glossed over with money, there are a chronic priest shortage and chronic problems with AIDS in the Priesthood and the role of women, and a hierarchy that appears to be clueless about its gay clergy: one could compare this to Nero playing the fiddle while Rome burns.

Homophobia promotes blindness. Denying Rainbow Sash Members Holy communion, for publicly witnessing their faith, was grounded in homophobia. It only highlights the words of Bishop Gregory, outgoing president of the National Council of Catholic Bishops. “Hate: It is a blinding shadow so dark and damaging that it keeps us from seeing Jesus in others.”

Joe Murray, the US Convener of the Rainbow Sash Movement said, “We in the Rainbow Sash Movement have come to a place of faithfulness, our walk with Jesus Christ, requires telling the whole truth and paying whatever price truthfulness requires.”

The gay policy adopted by the Bishops is “don’t ask don’t tell.” This policy must be challenged by Catholics across the board. Not to challenge this policy is to passively allow homophobia to flourish in the Church. How else can “they” know us and put a face on their prejudice if we are never visible?

Murray further said, “We will continue to come back to the National Council of Catholic Bishops Plenary liturgy each year to receive the body and blood of Christ, will continue speak out on behalf of Justice for glbt people, and will continue to speak out from the pews of our parishes to challenge homophobia. While the events of this past week were deeply painful, we care for our bishops, and pray the Lord will give them renewed sight to see glbt as human beings, with dignity and rights.”

To join and/or find out more about the Rainbow Sash Movement please visit our web page at www.rainbowsashmovement.com.

Harry B. Bronson, Esq.
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Holiday Supplement
Fabulous menus from two local chefs

New Year’s Eve Buffet
Created by Susan Plunkett, Executive Chef, Plunkett’s Fabulous Foods

On next pages: Christmas dinner menu & recipes from Jason Herbert of Edibles; Holiday Traditions in the Rochester lgbt community...

Menu

Appetizers:
- Champagne Martini
- Spanish Almond Dip with Baguette Bread
- Pan-Seared Scallops with Raspberry Purée
- Baked Goat Cheese with Figs, Almonds, and Grilled Bread
- Chicken Roulade with Pesto

Salad:
- Arugula with Saga Bleu, Crushed Hazelnuts, and Blackberries with Lime Vinaigrette

Entrée:
- Lamb Shanks with Orzo Pilaf with Italian Pilaf and Pine Nuts
- Swiss Chard with Mushroom and Balsamic Vinegar

Dessert:
- Apple Tart with Custard and Pecans

*Recipes

**Spanish Almond Dip Revisited**

2 c. cherry tomatoes, blackened on skewers
2 red peppers roasted on a gas stove
1/2 T. garlic
30 almonds
1/4 c. Italian parsley, chopped slightly
1 tsp. Balsamic vinegar
1/2 tsp. salt to taste

Put the tomatoes on metal skewers and blacken on the gas stove. If you do not have a gas stove you can broil the tomatoes and blacken on both sides. Blacken the red peppers on top of a gas burner, turning frequently until the skin is charred. Remove the skin from the peppers under cold water, and remove the seeds and stem. Put the almonds in a food processor and chop off the tip of the dip.

Served on baguette bread or gourmet crackers. Yummy.

Susan Plunkett, Executive Chef of Plunkett’s Fabulous Foods (hotstove@frontiernet.net; 585-427-2740). She tied for second in the recent City Newspaper poll for Rochester’s Best Caterer.

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Advance sale: $15
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Holidays Continues

Christmas Dinner

Created by Jason Herbert of Edibles

Menu

Appetizers
Tapas Platter, Consisting of Marinaded Boconcini Shrimp with green chili pesto Parmesan Aoli toast Provincial marinated olives

Salad
Dried cherry, candied walnut, pear and Goat cheese salad

Entrée
Portobello Beef Wellington, with red wine demi glace and Parmesan encrusted Asparagus

Dessert
Nana's baked fruit pudding, soaked in cherry brandy and served with warm custard

White Christmas chocolate gift. White chocolate mixed with raisins, red and green cherries and coconut served in mini dark chocolate.

*Recipes*

**Shrimp with green chili and pesto**
- 4 ounces of freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 6 mid green chilies
- 1/2 cup of pine nuts
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro
- 3 tbsp olive oil

In a food processor process the cheese garlic chilies pine nuts parsley cilantro and olive oil. Toast the shrimp in the pesto mixture refrigerate for one hour. Pre heat oven to 375. Place the shrimp on a baking pan. For 15 to 20 min. Serve warm.

**Portobello Beef Wellington**
To serve four
- 4 pieces of 10 oz. beef tenderloin
- 1 packet of puff pastry
- A good quality paste of your choice about 3 tablespoons per serve
- 4 portobello mushrooms
- One dove fresh garlic
- One tablespoon of fresh sage

In a fry pan saute portobello mushroom whole with chopped garlic and sage. Let cool and put to side. Unroll puff pastry sheets and leave to the side. Prepare meat and slightly flatten so it's not too hot as it has to be wrapped quickly bear and seal meat portions in a very hot pan and just below you're desired temperature then let cool.

This variation on the original style, which usually calls for you to wrap whole tenderloin this recipe and style, is better suited for a more intimate party. Turn mushroom so underside is showing, spoon paste into the center place seared tenderloin on top. Place these ingredients on a strip of puff pastry as wide as your mushroom and moist brush the end of the pastry with water and put to cover the meat gently pinch with your fingertips. Then brush all pastry with beaten egg. Place on baking sheet and bake on 375 till pastry is golden brown. Serve with a rich red wine Demi Glace.

**Roast Beef Wellington**

**Roasted Beef Wellington**
To serve four
- 4 pieces of 10 oz. beef tilton
- 1 pound butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup almonds
- 1 cup of cherries green and red
- 3 cups of plan flour
- 1 teaspoon carb soda
- 1 teaspoon of baking powder
- 1 cup of pine nuts

In a saucepan with one cup of sherry add beef stock and carrot add beef stock. Bring to boil for 10 minutes to infuse all ingredients then let simmer and add tomato juice, strain sauce into another saucepan leaving vegetables behind. Slowly mix in one teaspoon of corn starch to thicken your sauce if desired. Pour sauce on pulses and place your Wellington on top.

**Nana's baked Christmas cake**
- 3 cups mixed dried fruit
- 1 pound butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup of almonds (cut in half)
- 1 cup of cherries green and red
- 3 cups of plan flour
- 1 teaspoon carb soda
- 1 teaspoon of baking powder
- 1 cup of cherry brandy or sherry

Place the dried fruit almonds and cherries in a saucepan with one cup of sherry bring to the boil and let cool. Beat in three eggs one at a time (to make cake darker add two tablespoons of cocoa). Mix in the three cups of flour. Dissolve one teaspoon carb soda and one teaspoon of baking powder in one tablespoon of boiling water and add to mixture. Add a little more wine if mixture too stiff. Bake in moderate oven about 375 degrees oven till cooked about 60 minutes poke with skewers; if there is no cake on skewer then it is done, While still hot drizzle over cherry brandy to give it a bang. Slice with hot cake knife.

Nana says “Good luck and don't drink too much of the brandy or your cake might end up a little more mixed up than you planned.”

Community Traditions

BASICALLY TREBEmakers

What is more traditional than the sounds of the Holiday Carol’s? You will find the BASICALLY TREBEmakers playing all of your favorite carols at the Park Avenue Merchants Association Caroling Event on Thursday, Dec. 2 and at the Community Business Forum Holiday Party on Thursday, Dec. 9, and performing at SEVA Theater during the Christmas Carol concert on Friday, Dec. 11.

ROCHESTER RAMS TOY DRIVE

For many years the Rochester Rams have hosted a November toy drive, the Rich Richards Memorial Toy Drive, at the Bachelors’ Forum. The toys go to Rochester Children’s Center in New York, N.Y. It is very fulfilling to know that your donations help families locally as well as to see the pictures of the happy children usually posted at the Rams case at the Forum.

Rich Richards was president of the Rams and worked with disabled children at Roosevelt. The Rams changed the name of their toy drive from the Rams Toy drive to the Rich Richards Memorial Toy Drive when Rich passed away in December of 2002. The toy drive has been a huge success; in the past the Rams would usually get enough toys to cover the pool table at the Forum. Last year they not only covered the pool table but also all of the entire pool table area and into the offices of the Forum. The Rams also received cash donations in the hundreds of dollars to help the families purchase food for their holiday dinner.

The Rochester Rams usually work behind the scenes with most of the charity work that they do, they decided to be more public with this event, so that they would be able to help more families with the help of the city's community; this is a community event and all of us should be proud of the work being done with this event. For more information on the Rochester Rams you can look at their web page: www.rochesterrams.com.

EMPIRE BEARS TEDDY DRIVE

The Empire Bears also organize a holiday toy drive. At the next Bearnight at the Forum, on Dec. 11, the theme is “teddy bears.” Donate a teddy to be given to children in need. It’s part of the Empire Bears’ annual Steven Chadlock Memorial Teddy Bear Drive. Bears are donated to hospitals and groups dealing with childhood diseases. You can wear a little teddy, too.

ROCHESTER GAY MEN’S CHORUS

The Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus has always enjoyed blending the beauty of a traditional holiday concert with a little creative flare. Holiday music has a certain magical quality about it that helps usher in the warm feelings generated at this festive time of year.

With this knowledge, we add some fun and throw an imaginative spin on the conventional recital. Instead of just dreaming of sugarplums dancing in our heads, we make these sugarplums come alive and occasionally dance across the stage. The holidays are a time of joy and we make sure to do our part to bring this joy into the hearts of all who attend our performances. The Chorus’ holiday concert this year, “Queer Eye for the Holidays,” is being held at 8 p.m. at Hochstein Music School on Friday, Dec. 10, and Saturday, Dec. 11. All music at this year’s concert was composed or arranged by gay men. Benjamin Bennett and Samuel Barber will be showcased along with many others as the RGMC sings the Music of Our Lives, the theme of our concert season this year. Advance general admission tickets are $15, $12 for seniors and students, and $8 for children.

ROCHESTER WOMEN’S COMMUNITY CHORUS

“Happy Holidays One and All,” says RWCC, “Come join us as the Rochester Women’s Community Chorus “Celebrates the World,” in a musical celebration of International holiday traditions and peace. At 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 4 at Hochstein Music School, 50 North Plymouth Ave.”

A silent auction of holiday gifts will precede the concert at 7 p.m.

Door ticket prices are $12-15 students and seniors; $7 children 12 and younger. To save $2 per ticket, call the RWCC office at (585) 234-4441.
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Jesus Christ is to cause trouble for systems

Alliance of the Genesee Valley. In support of the Genesee Valley, Sleeve Autographs LLC of Buffalo and Rochester's Autographs has donated more than $5,000 in direct support of the Genesee Valley Program.

The Empire Bears have a long history of giving, remarked Ron Weekes, a member of the group. We were pleased to become involved by donating three autograph display pieces of the late Rudolph Wendelin, the US Forest Service illustrator who was credited with creating the much-beloved 'Smoky the Bear' character.

Empire Bears members also auctioned teddy bear theme gift baskets as part of the fundraiser. "We are committed to giving back to our community," continued Weekes, a dealer in historical documents and autographs for over 40 years. Since 1999 Weekes Autographs has donated more than $5,000 to AIDS, youth, fraternal and cultural organizations covering a dozen states. "We are extremely grateful to the Empire Bears for this thoughtful donation," remarked Ron Weekes, a supporter of the group. For more information about Rev. Dr. Janie Spahr, please log on to www.turnerplumbingheating.com.

S.O.U.L. is SUNY Brockport LGBT group

Last month the LGBT group at RIT was highlighted in the Empty Closet. This month we look at S.O.U.L. SUNY Brockport Student organization S.O.U.L. (Sexual Orientation United For Liberation) meets Monday mornings at 9:30 a.m. at the college’s Women’s Center, which is in the basement of Seymour Union.

Individuals can call Student Services at (585) 395-2252 or email notaprettygirl@mindless.com, soul@ycbo. com or dync0913@brockport.edu for more information about S.O.U.L. Their Website is www.greecities.com/brockport soul. S.O.U.L. is an organization funded by the students of SUNY Brockport through the mandatory fee paid to Brockport Student Government (BSCG). The group welcomes GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered) students and any straight allies. All communication is strictly confidential, and sexual orientation is never assumed of anyone who attends.

The purpose of S.O.U.L. is to make SUNY Brockport a safe and welcoming place for LGBT students and their allies. All information is strictly confidential, and sexual orientation is never assumed of anyone who attends. The group sponsors activities for Coming Out Day, World AIDS Day, Day of Silence, Day of Silence, World AIDS Day, Drag Show, and lots of programs throughout the fall/spring semesters, such as sleepover nights, movie nights, rainbow patch night, scavenger hunts, a car bash (currently in planning stage), information tables, and more.

S.O.U.L. continued on page 15
NYC Mayor Bloomberg takes step toward equality with pension funds

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has announced that his appointees to the city’s pension funds will be proposing resolutions to treat marriages and civil unions of same-sex couples performed outside New York State as equivalent to marriages of same-sex couples the same as all other marriages for purposes of pension fund benefits.

The Mayor’s move was spurred by a similar action New York State Comptroller Alan G. Hevesi took in October to have the New York City Employees’ Retirement System, New York State’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) civil rights advocacy organization, applaud Mayor Bloomberg’s action and asked him to go further and do what five other municipalities in the state have done to provide equal treatment to married same-sex couples in all areas of city law where marriage is a factor.

We applaud the Mayor’s proposal and his decision to have New York City take another step towards full equality for same-sex couples and their families,” said Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan Van Capelle. “Thousands of current and retired city employees who are in same-sex relationships will benefit when city pension funds treat all marriages the same. We urge the trustees of all five funds to adopt the Mayor’s proposal when they next meet. It’s our time for New York City to follow the US lead in embracing this issue.

We urge the Mayor to go further, however, and do what Buffalo, Rochester, Ithaca, Nyack and Brighton have already done and extend equal treatment to married same-sex partners in all areas of city law covering both city employees and residents.

The liquid assets included tax benefits, spousal inheritance of vendor licenses, and the ability of spouses to represent one another in various actions before city agencies and to be recognized as “next-of-kin” in certain situations. According to information released by the Mayor when making his pension fund announcement yesterday, the immediate benefit to current and retired city employees who are in married same-sex relationships will be eligibility of surviving spouses for an accidental death benefit.

The Mayor’s decision covers same-sex marriages from Canada and other countries, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont civil unions.

The five NYC pension funds are the New York City Employees’ Retirement System, Teachers’ Retirement System of the City of New York, New York City Police Pension Fund, New York City Fire Department Pension Fund, and New York City Board of Education Retirement System. They have 600,000 plus members comprising both current and retired city employees.

2004 in review

(continued from page 3)

On another subject, the Outreach volunteers are currently collaborating with the Rainbow Seniors to identify addressing the needs of the ever-growing, and vibrant segment of our community.

In June, the Inclusive Culture project was started, it was co-developed with Donna Red Wing to address the issue of how to foster supportive workplaces for LGBT employees. Donna recently trained 15 Eastman Kodak employees as facilitators to deliver this training as part of their Winning and Inclusive Culture program at Kodak Park.

Through the efforts of two very passionate volunteers, Ove Overmeyer and Gerry Szyminskas, the GAGV Library and Archives Project is well underway. This effort has recently been further aided by the University of Rochester Eastman Library and the Library & Archives Project, under the leadership of James Leach. Their vision is to have an accessible library with online access to and placement of our archives, this includes 300 cubic feet of articles, photos, and one-of-a-kind library pieces now at the University of Rochester library along with those decades of the Gay City News.

In July, we joined with Pride organizers to celebrate the onset of summer and all we have accomplished. Pride Week began with the GAGV Pride Picnic and ended with a fabulous Pride Parade and celebration in collaboration with the Community Business Forum. Of course, there were more diverse this year as we added more family- and kid-oriented activities, along with those sponsored by lgbt community groups and supportive community organizations.

In August, we turned our attention to planning our first Equality Leadership Forum. Elliot Spitzer, NYS Attorney General, accepted our invitation to be the keynote speaker for this November event. In addition the Board ended the summer with a weekend-long retreat. Four task forces were established and charged with investigating the feasibility of making major decisions for the long-term health and sustainability of the agency.

During September, the Board began to address a key issue identified in the retreat: a development plan and related activities to alleviate the cash flow problems facing the agency. The Woolbright Group, a valued LGBT community ally, was asked to provide training and consulting services to the agency to help us establish the stable cash flow position we need to sustain future growth.

Early in October, our Executive Director of 18 months, Chuck Brown tendered his resignation. Lynn Tavernese was named Interim ED. The Equality Leadership Forum in November helped us win our largest number of corporate sponsors ever and developed workshops led by proven corporate leaders in the community.

The GAGV received 38 completed surveys from local Rochester businesses for our first Rochester Corporate Equality Index. This is our first effort to understand the local business commitment to LGBT issues in the workplace. Additionally the GAGV Video History was showcased, enabling the GAGV to celebrate in its 39 years.

We also heartily thank Susan Jordan, Paul Betaney, Jeannen Waddell, Cindi Ekeleigh, Jim Anderson, volunteers, community collaborators, elected officials and GAGV Board members for their dedication and time and their passion for creating a community with equitable treatment for all people.

In closing, these are very demanding and challenging times for the Rochester LGBT community. As we look ahead, we can see that we must remain focused on both the political and the social issues that affect civil rights for all people. As your board, we are committed to:

- Delivering and sustaining services to the LGBT community
- Educating our community and allies on legislative changes affecting our civil rights
- Creating a process to initiate and spin out new programs that the community identifies as new needs
- Establishing a sound financial basis for long-term sustainability of the agency.

We thank you for your ongoing support — wishing you all the best for a peaceful holiday season and looking forward to the strides we'll continue to make together in the new year.

S.O.U.L. continued from page 13

Programs are usually free, but sometimes there is a small fee to cover food or other expenses. Meetings usually consist of light business discussion, followed by either a program or just hanging out for a while (and sometimes music and/or food).

Anyone is welcome to attend. S.O.U.L. will not release information about anyone outside of the group. Contact S.O.U.L. at brockport_soul@yahoo.com.
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A Special Thank You
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Friday, December 3 - Kabbalat Shabbat Service ............................................ 7:00 pm
- Erev Shabbat Service ................................................................................. 8:00 pm
Friday, December 10 - Erev Shabbat Family Chanukah Service .................. 7:30 pm
Friday, December 17 - Young Family Service .............................................. 9:30 pm
- Erev Shabbat Service ................................................................................. 8:00 pm
Friday, December 24 - Erev Shabbat Service ................................................ 9:00 pm
Friday, December 31 - Erev Shabbat Service ................................................ 8:00 pm

January 2005 Bulletin
Friday, January 7 - Erev Shabbat Family Service ............................................ 7:30 pm
Friday, January 14 - Erev Shabbat Service ...................................................... 8:00 pm
Friday, January 21 - Young Family Service .................................................... 9:30 pm
- Erev Shabbat Service ................................................................................. 8:00 pm
Friday, January 28 - Erev Shabbat Service .................................................... 8:00 pm

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EQUALITY FORUM/ LUNCHEON: Gay Alliance volunteer Jeanne Gainsburg, her son and husband attended the GAGV Equality Leadership Forum and Luncheon on Nov. 6 at the Burgundy Basin Inn. Jeanne gave an inspiring talk about the need for educating the straight community about LGBT lives and rights, and combating the homophobia that LGBT students face every day in schools. Gainsburg said, “Until equal really means equal, we all need the GAGV.”

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Youth Services Director Toby Greenfield (second from right) with some of the youth who attended the GAGV luncheon.

Dr. James Bowers, commissioner on the Rochester City School District board, accepts the Gay Alliance’s Community Leadership Award, which he shared with Marie Y. Lippe of Excellus BlueCross/Blue Shield. The OutShine Media Award went to WOKR’s NewsSource 13, and was accepted by Gavin Reynolds, general investigative reporter.

Dr. Bowers has backed several gay rights initiatives, including the recently accepted proposal that the district give equal benefits to same sex partners of employees. The next proposal for the board, which they will consider in 2005, is to initiate diversity training for City school district teachers, administrators and staff.

The two morning workshops, on employee resource groups and the effect of diversity on the bottom line, were well-attended, with over 60 people in each workshop. Elected officials present included Monroe County Democratic Commissioner of Elections Tom Ferrara, Brighton Town Supervisor Sandra Frankel, NYS Assemblymember David Koon, Rochester City Council members Tim O. Mains and Bill Pritchard, and City Court Judge Ellen Yacknin. Sponsors for the event were Eastman Kodak Co., Nixon Peabody LLP, Bausch & Lomb, Citibank, Excellus BC/BS, HSBC, MedAmerica Insurance Co., West Group (a Thomson Business), Xerox Corp. and Preferred Care.

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The evening begins with cocktails and passed hot and cold hors d’oeuvres in the Riverside Court from 6pm to 7pm. The doors will then open to the Ballroom where BASSically TREBLEmakers will perform Big Band sounds until dinner is served. Following dinner DJ Chuck Argento will spin a variety of your favorite hits while “cigarette girls” visit your table with special offerings as you dance ‘til midnight.

Pink Arrow Package

A Pink Arrow is a sure way to strike the heart (and attention) of that special someone at this year’s Sweetheart Ball while at the same time making a valuable contribution to the Gay Alliance.

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An ASL interpreter will be provided.
Suzanne Westenhoefer to perform Jan. 21

Irresistible lesbian comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer will perform on Jan. 21 at 7:30 p.m. at The Montage Grill.

Tickets are available at Aaron’s Alley, Ticketmaster and Montage. Suzanne performs over 100 live comedy concerts a year. Her HBO comedy special, the first by an openly gay comic, was nominated for a Cable ACE award. Suzanne’s CD, Needing In My Closet But My Clothes is a best-seller and won the GLAMA award for best comedy CD in 1999. Her latest CD, I’m Not Cindy Brady, has also won acclaim as best comedy CD of the year from GLAMA (Gay and Lesbian American Music Award).

Off the road Suzanne lives in Los Angeles with her girlfriend who loves her as much as do her audiences without the sex.

Suzanne Westenhoefer

Dray show set for Dec. 10 at FLCC

Come join the STAR group at the Finger Lakes Community College Gymnasium on Dec. 10 at 8 p.m. for a Drag Show!

Several fabulous Queens (and King) will be there to perform: Dee Dee Dubois; Samantha Vega, Delca Sonic, Dazane, windr and Chyna Vagina.

There is plenty of good parking and there will be plenty of prizes also, so be sure to be there, you never know what you could win,” STAR says.

FLCC is located at 4355 Lakeshore Drive in Canandaigua. Admission will be $5/ticket for a student, $5/ticket for non-student. “Don’t miss out,” organizers say, “this fabulous affair is sure to be the highlight of the year!”

Gay-themed Crumple Zone is at Shipping Dock

Shipping Dock Theatre presents The Crumple Zone by Buddy Thomas, directed by Maureen Mines, at Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St., at University Ave. on Dec. 2-19 and 31. On Dec. 31 the evening will include a New Year’s Eve champagne reception.

Three gay Staten Island roommates come to crisis during one frantic holiday weekend in Buddy Thomas’ The Crumple Zone. This hilarious heart-warming comedy explores love, loneliness, fidelity, friendship and new beginnings under the somewhat harsh light of the Christmas rush.

Terry, cynical and perpetually single, and his two roommates, lovers Matt and Alex, are all aspiring actors. Terry works in a gassy spoon, Alex plays Santa Claus at the Staten Island Mall, and Matt has been on tour for months.

In his absence, Alex has started seeing Buck, and they are falling in love. Buck wants Alex to make a commitment, Alex is torn between two lovers, and Terry wants to be the main character in his own soap opera for a change.

Reduced to picking up Mr. Wrong through staying together, breaking up, and door prizes! Playgoers can mix and match alliances and 2005 Miss Gay Rochester runs Dec. 2-19 and 31, Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. and 31 at 3 p.m.

The intrepid contestant continued to amaze the audience with her talent and presence, and 2005 Miss Gay Rochester was crowned by her predecessor.

There are plenty of opportunities for all contestants to express themselves on stage.

The contestants were judged in four categories of personal interview, swim suit, evening gown and talent competition. For head judge and reigning Miss Universe Latina, Gi Gi Gittings, it’s a chance to see how the girls can not only perform but also present themselves on stage. “I look for some one with great personality and someone that the people can communicate with,” said the elegant Gi Gi, who also performed a knockout number on stage.

In addition to performances by the contestants, a special tribute was paid to Torre Adore, Miss Gay Rochester 1985. Other previous winners also showed that they are still going strong. Despite the talent and elegance of the contestants, it was well-known performer such as Aggy Dune, Ambrosia Salad, Noisy Knee and Dextine Lake that many say they came to see.

“Our performance is always exceptional because they put a lot of work into it, they lip-sync so well that you do not know they are lip-syncing,” said Nancy Howes.

In the end, the second time was the charm for Lauren Kyle; the Rochester resident took home the crown and admits she was very nervous. “When you are in competition anything can happen,” said Kyle. Especially during the talent portion of the show.

BY BRENDAN MCDONOUGH

Lauren Kyle wins Miss Gay Rochester title for 2005

Lauren Kyle won the title of Miss Gay Rochester 2005 on Nov. 14. Left; she is crowned by Samantha Bulley, Miss Gay Rochester 2004, assisted by The Legendary Torre Adore, who was celebrating the 20th anniversary of winning the title.

Lauren Kyle continued on page 3

Have you got the scoop?

Share it with the rest of the gay community! The Empty Closet is always looking for information regarding events, and social activities. If you know something, send it to us! Submissions are due by the 15th of each month at The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main St., Suite 500, Rochester, New York 14605, or call 244-9030. Email emptycloset@gagv.us.
In the Life: Marriage segment re-airs Dec. 19, 11 pm on WXXI

Josh Zuckerman rocks on violin
BY SHERRILL FULGHUM

This rockin' teacher is not only cut and proud, he shows it in his music as well. By day Josh Zuckerman teaches second graders in New Jersey and rocks the bars and clubs at night with his music.

Josh Zuckerman's music interests began at about the same age as the students he teaches with the violin. Today Josh Zuckerman plays rock 'n roll on his violin and an acoustic guitar. Josh tries his new music out on his students who have become his hardest critics. Mr. Z. - as they call him - teaches the children more than just the basics of the three Rs in his class.

Josh Zuckerman's music is rock 'n roll but it is much more. On his new album "A Totally New Sensation" Josh's gravelly sounding voice is mixed with the driving rock beat of drums and guitars. Mixed in among the rock sounds the songs on the new album include a hint of folk, country, jazz, and world music sounds. His song lyrics reflect Josh's two mottos of Be who you are and it's all about love.

On various songs throughout the album Josh tunes us with a taste of his violin playing until the very end and when Josh cuts loose on the only cover tune on the album - his version of Charlie Daniel's "Devil Went Down to Georgia".

The rocking sounds of "A Totally New Sensation" is an album that leaves you singing parts of the tunes for hours if not days later. An album that grows on you to the point that you can't get enough of it. "A Totally New Sensation" is available as a download from Apple iTunes or can be purchased from Amazon (www.amazon.com), or CDBaby (www.cdbaby.com).

Josh Zuckerman educates the children by day and teaches the adults about love and tolerance by night with his music.
Lauren Kyle
continued from page 1

was the only performer to sing and not lip-sync.

Not winning last year did not stop her from strutting her stuff on stage again this year. "I entered last year and never quit if you want something go for it," said Kyle.

It was also an emotional night for Samantha Sulay, Miss Gay Rochester 2004, as she said farewell and passed the crown to Kyle. "It was a very emotional night for me, but I am happy she won because she is one of my best friends," said Sulay.

Minutes after being crowned Miss Gay Rochester 2005, Kyle was already thinking about how she can serve the gay community. "I am going to be doing whatever I need to do, I know I am going to promote more of the gay community and what we can offer everyone," said Kyle.

Minutes after being crowned...
Lauren Kyle said, "I know I am going to promote more of the gay community and what we can offer everybody."

Frankie Star does "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy". ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY JIM HANSELMAN

Ambrosia Salad and Co. "Let the Sun Shine In".

Samantha Vega and dancers. Samantha was first runner up.

Jsa Jsa, from Buffalo, was 2nd runner up.

GiGi Couture, from Washington DC, performed and also served as head judge.

Right: The Legendary Torre Adore. Right: F’ya Valentino won Miss Congeniality.
Queer Ramblings is a new lit/art magazine for all of the community.

Queer Ramblings Magazine, a saucy literary and art magazine for queer women and trans folks, made its nationwide launch last month. There are already some magazines that cater to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBT) community. Why another one?

Most of those magazines specifically target gay men. The few magazines that do reach out to queer women and transgendered folks tend to focus on celebrities and gossip. Queer Ramblings says they like gossip and celebrities just as much as the next person, but realize that there is a demand for literary and artistic work. Queer Ramblings delivers just that by featuring work by GLBT writers, artists, photographers and musicians.

Queer Ramblings is not a lesbian-only magazine. We live in an era where it is finally being recognized that there are more categories than gay/straight and man/woman. Queer Ramblings is inclusive of the whole spectrum of gender, sexuality and race.

Although new to the magazine scene, Queer Ramblings has been around for four years as a monthly zine available in independent bookstores. Demand has grown and now the publication has been launched as a quarterly, full-color, glossy magazine that hit nationwide newsstands and mailboxes in November, 2004.

Queer Ramblings is the brainchild of Sandra R. Garcia. She is a queer, bisexual writer who found that there were a lack of publications that consider queer-themed work. So, what did she do? She started her own publication.

The first issue was created in her bedroom on a freezing Minnesota night. Four years and over 40 issues later, Queer Ramblings is living and thriving in the Big Apple.

For more information about see the website at http://www.QueerRamblings.com, email sandy@QueerRamblings.com or write to Queer Ramblings Magazine, 392 14th St. #1A, Brooklyn, NY 11215.
**PLEASE TAKE NOTE**

The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and other contributing writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or The Empty Closet.

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**Angst**

Balance. I was once told, is that thing you pass when you are careening from one extreme to another. I am feeling very out-of-body, floating, disoriented and I know it is just my way of coping, a kind of anti-coming to grips with reality. I told my therapist and nearly everyone else I encountered in the weeks preceding the recent election that I was terrified. I woke every two hours. What would the morning bring? Then, almost giddily, it occurred to me that considering the Florida precedent four years ago, I could not even careen; the election quite probably might take weeks, months even, to resolve.

But that was not the case, of course. In fact I woke every two hours and clicked on the TV to see what was happening. And worse, what was not. I was curious if they had actually and I do love my country and I hate...
December, ya gotta love it!

December is one crazy month, don't you think?

Take gift giving for example. On the one hand, we get assigned little turtoskeys without a head trying to figure out how much we can spend on gifts and still pay next month's bills. While on the other hand, we get to wrap up what can be the most vexing of gifts - the one that can both crack and damage someone to their credit card for us. But then there's a way to minimize the pain of giving.

First -- take a good look at your "gifts to buy for" list. If someone is on the list because you haven't talked to them in a year and you're feeling guilty, heck, what's one more year? Cross em off.

And that 97-year-old "Great Aunt Minnie" living in Heck and Back Wisconsin your mom said to send something to, well damn, unless you think you're in her will, chuck her.

And how about those work supervisors you suck up to? Let me tell you, if the gift that gets wrapped up and delivered at Christmas is a positive cash flow in your paycheck, nix that idea. OK, we're on a roll.

Now that we've cut the list, let's take a little break and think about giving. Perception is everything. A big box, lots of ribbon and colorful tissue paper can go a long way to convincing many people that the gift inside seems like something. And don't forget to wrap that Blue Light Special K Mart, just a tiny rip in the sleeve no one will notice, item in a Kaufman's or Lord and Taylor box. Works for me.

For those down to their last cent, here is a sure winner. Just send a card with the inscription, "Dear Friend, Knowing what a caring and giving person you are, I donated the cost of your gift to the 500 homeless people of Painekeithey, Greenland. Happy Holidays!" Wow! Who could argue with that? Gift will cover all bases.

As we head into the month of contrasts.

The month that the extreme line between the have and the have-nots is crystal clear. And yet, in spite of the extreme surplus that many of us enjoy, I know of many people of Painekeithey, Greenland. Happy Holidays! Wow! Who could argue with that? Gift will cover all bases.

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I have a vision. Upon a time, at the vernal equinox, a scientist looks into a microscope to study another twist of the DNA code. The scientist might be a Scientist Barbie. She will discover that we humans have more than the X chromosome and the Y chromosome. "Look, Ken, Look," she whispers. Barbie was smirking. I have discovered the Q chromosome. It could happen. Just in case, better choose your family tree. Some of its fruits are purple. But it doesn't matter.

There are two Acting on Faith columns this month!

**Acting on Faith**

**BY DARRELL LANCE**

**Baptist differences**

This regular column is organized by Interfaith Advocates for LGBT People. IA was formed in 1981 to seek increased awareness, understanding and inclusion of interfaith perspectives in LGBT congregations and by the larger community. Newcomers are welcome to attend. Details on upcoming meetings, usually on the 4th Monday at 7:30 p.m., Temple Sinai, 365 Penfield Road, Rochester. For more information, call 585-271-7649, or visit the IA website at www.interfaith.org. Let’s find resources, events, welcoming congregations, and to sign the Interfaith Statement in Support of Equal Marriage for All. Guest columnists for this month is Darrell Lance, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Interpretation at Colgate Rochester Divinity School and active member of Lake Avenue Baptist Church, 57 Ambrine St, www.lakeavenue.org.

The world of Baptists is hard to figure out for those who come from a different faith tradition. This is particularly true when it comes to liturgical practices and church structure. The Baptist community is among the most independent and cantankerous of Christian traditions. Any group of people may come together and call their congregation a Baptist church, and no one will say them nay. Traditionally, every Baptist congregation is independent, every congregation searches out its faith and practice without supervision, using only the Bible as its guide.

Baptists come together in larger groups, many of whom do not have a single denominational structure. They only have to carry out certain tasks that no single church can support alone, as for example, in setting up hospitals, homes for the aged, mission projects, etc. It works fine until some congregation or group decides that they are more orthodox than another, and a schism is in the making. Either the Baptist church is going to affiliate with another Baptist group and will no longer associate with them. This leads to schisms, and Baptist history is replete with splits over issues from everything to biblical authority to slavery to whether musical instruments should be used in worship.

This explains why a Falwell can be a Baptist and an unrepentant homophobe, while a church like Lake Avenue can be rainbow friendly with LGBT people and not be recognized by some from presiding at worship to worker to deacon to trustee to reader to deacon to trustee. Happily, the local Baptist association to which Lake Avenue belongs, the Rochester Baptist Churches of the Rochester Genesee Region, adheres to the principle that individual congregations have the right to determine their own theologies. Consequently, the association has not only maintained relations with all groups, but has also invited a new group into membership some congregations which have been excluded from their own associations over LGBT issues, and it now has a formal presence in California, Ohio and even in California.

Lake Avenue belongs to a second association called the Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptist Churches (AWAB). This association is composed of congregations continuing on page 12
Women's RESOURCES

HEALTH:
Monroe County Women's Health Partnership

Elizabeth Wonde Breast Clinic, 170 Baggs Ave. 442-8432. Dr. Wonde Logan-Young and an all-woman staff provide mammograms.

AIDS Rochester Women's Health Outreach
1350 University Ave. ARI has services for HIV positive women and others in the lesbian community. 442-2250.

Community Health Network
87 N. Clinton Ave. 244-9000; TT (585)461-9020. HIV and Primary care medical services for HIV positive women, their negative partners and family members. OB/GYN, pre-test and post-test counseling. Confidential or free HIV testing.

Alternatives for Battered Women.
232-7353; TTY 232-1741. Shelters (women only), counseling. Lesbians, gay men welcome.

Victim Resource Center of Wayne County, Newark N.Y. Hot Line 900-455-1172; office (315)531-1171; fax (315)531-1159.

Mary Magdalene House.
Women's Outreach center for HIV positive women and women at risk. 231 Lyell Ave. Open Mon-Fri. 8:30-9:30 pm 456-5728.

POLITICAL:
National Organization for Women (Greater Rochester NOW)
PO Box 90195; (585)461-1310. E-mail: info@rochesternow.org Web page: http://www.rochesternow.org.

CULTURAL:
Rochester Women's Community Chorus.
234-4441. (See Ongoing Calendar).

SPORTS:
Rochester Renegades Women's Rugby.
New players always welcome, any skill level. We will teach you the game. Hotline (585)254-3066; online at www.renegades-rugby.com

Rochester Raptors.

ONLINE:
Rochester Dykes.
e-mail a31rubnabeach@yahoo.com

Rochester Ny Lesbians.
http://groups.aol.com/rochesterlesbian/mmmch=0

GENERAL:
Pride & Joy Families
See Ongoing Calendar

Rochester Gay Mass' Group.
Support group for lesbian, gay and bi/nabes in Rochester and surrounding areas. Website: RochesterGayMoms-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Women's Resource Center.
YWCA, 175 N. Clinton Ave. 546-7740.

Butch-Femme Connection.
Contact Kerry at 855-4619, or e-mail DressyFemme@aol.com.

Color Outside the Line Club.
Contact Jackie Williams, 462-4845. Check our monthly and ongoing Calendars and the Gay Groups section for more woman-centered groups and events, and call the GaySource Inforline for referrals, at 845-4840.

And send us your information!

Free testing for HIV
Outreach is made from New York State Department of Health: call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at (585)423-8081, or 1-800-962-5563 for pay phones or calls Rochester. Deaf or hearing impaired people should call (585)423-8120 (TDD). New Rapid HIV Testing now available --test results in 30-40 minutes! Statewide information can be obtained by calling 1-800-541-AIDS. Other organizations which provide AIDS-related services are as follows:

AIDS Rochester, Inc., 1350 University Ave., Rochester NY 14607. Provide support services for people with HIV/AIDS and their families; presents educational programs related to HIV/AIDS to community groups; offers free, confidential testing every Monday and Thursday, 5-8 pm (no appointment necessary). Also testing on Outreach Van throughout city. Contact information: business line (585)442-2250 VTTY; www.aidsrchost.org; Rural counties served by ARN in office in Geneva (1-800-422-0282) and Bath (1-800-954-2437).

Gay Alliance of the Greater Valley.
Provides referrals to physicians and service agencies. Person on duty Mon./Fri. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; message machine other times. (585)244-8640.

Center for Health and Behavioral Training of Monroe County.
691 St. Paul Bl., 4th floor. Collaboration of Monroe County Health Department and UPR. Provides year-round training in prevention and management of STDs, HIV, TB and related issues, such as domestic violence and case management. (585)530-4382.

AIDS Community Health Center (a3c).
87 N. Clinton Ave. (6th floor). Comprahensive HIV care and primary medical care for HIV positive individuals, their negative partners, and adult family members. ACHC provides nutritional evaluation, nutritional screenings, gynecological care, medical case management/counselling, and substance abuse counselling. The Center also offers out-patient treatments and intubations crafts, liaison nurses to coordinate home care needs, educational resources and support groups, an active Patient Advisory Committee (PAC), access to clinical trials, lab on-site, and referrals to psychotherapy and other specialized health services. (585)244-9000. TTY (585)461-9202.

Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS (BATFA).
A collection of agencies providing a multiplicity of resources and services to the upstate New York community. Their offices are located through the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, which also provides medical literature and newspaper clippings, as well as demographic and statistical data for use in developing health care services. (585)461-3020.

Men of Color Health Awareness Project (MOCHA).
HIV prevention focus for men who have sex with men (MSM) in the minority community. Support groups, one on one peer education, safer sex workshops, referral services, buddy testing. Silver Bay Building, 25 Franklin St., Suite 1080. 400-1400.

Monroe County Health Department.
at 555 W. Main Bl., offers testing and counseling for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. (585)464-9258.

Strong Memorial Hospital.
Provides a complete range of HIV medical care, including access to experimental treatment protocols, and HIV testing. Also provides individual and group psychotherapy. Training of health care professionals also available. Infectious Disease Clinic, (585) 275-0536. Department of...
Threshold Youth Center
provides confidential testing for young people ages 12-25. Fees on sliding scale, no one denied service. Threshold Center for Alternative Youth Services, 80 St. Paul St. 404-7530. Free oral HIV testing Thursday 2-4 pm, ages 12-25.

Rural HIV testing
anonymous and confidential, in Albany, Livingston, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne or Yates Counties, call 1-800-902-5063.

Action Front Center
(Action for a Better Community.) Provides HIV prevention education and case management services. Training and technical assistance to service providers. Resource library open to public. All services free and confidential. Multicultural and bilingual staff. Jeanied Noble, program manager 31 Chestnut St., second floor. Hours 8:30-5 pm, Monday-Friday. 262-4330; fax 262-4572. Free anonymous HIV testing on walk-in basis, Thursdays 9 am-4 pm, provided through NYSDOH at Action Front Center, 242 Andrews St. Carmen Hau, 262-4330.

Anthony Jordan Health Center
Prevention Counseling and Testing Program. Part of national initiative to increase testing among communities of color, targeting the GLBT population. Provides prevention case management, educational presentations, and access to other Jordan services. Prevention Counseling & Testing is a walk-in program; no appointments necessary. Office hours Mon.-Fri., 8:30 am-5 pm; extended hours on Mondays until 8 pm. (585)423-2822, fax 423-2893. Website: www.anthonyjordanhealth.org. For more information call Program Manager Pearlie Bredlove-Luttrell, (505)423-2874.

Evergreen Health Services, Buffalo. Primary care, HIV and family care, HIV testing and counseling: (716)847-0328.

CDC National STD and AIDS Hotline
1-800-342-2437; 1-800-227-9922. English service 24 hours a day; seven days a week; Spanish service 1-800-344-7432, 8 am-2 am, seven days a week. TTY service: 1-800-243-7889, 10 am-10 pm, Monday-Friday.

Public Interest Law Office of Rochester (PILOR), 80 St. Paul St, Suite 701. Free legal services to HIV positive persons, families. Spanish bilingual advocates available. All civil cases except divorce; no criminal cases. Also speak to someone in PILOR, 454-4090.

Health Association HART (HIV AIDS Resources and Treatment) Program. 250 East Ave, (585)222-5932. Provides housing assistance, assistance, and family counseling. 555 Genesee St, (585)3043. HIV/AIDS services, support, more.

McCree McCuller Wellness Center at Unity Health’s Connection Clinic. (585)584-3200, 89 Genesee St, Bishop Migeon Institute, second floor. Full range of services, regardless of ability to pay. Caring, confidential and convenient.

Catholic Charities AIDS Services. A multicultural and bi-lingual staff providing services to a diversity of people infected and affected with HIV, independent, home-based case management for all ages; a clinical crisis manager; a child/adolescent case worker; transitional care management for children and family members going through bereavement; recreational and support groups for children and teens, and camping experiences including Camp SOAR. We coordinate HOPEW (Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS) short term emergency assistance with rent/mortgage/utility payments and limited subsidized housing. 1945 E. Ridge Rd, Suite 24, Rochester NY, 14622, (505)538-9800.

Huther Doyle, 390 East Ave, Rochester 14604. Offers drug, alcohol prevention, education, treatment. Risk Reduction Plus Team offers services to HIV positive and those at risk through substance use. Programs include outreach, transitional case management, free confidential testing (OneQuick Rapid Testing), NYSDOH approved. Offers free on-site confidential and anonymous testing. (585)825-5100, M-F 8 am-9 pm, www.hutherdoyle.com.

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WEB: http://www.gayalliance.org
A handful of wine: on the Finger Lakes wine trail

BY MERLE EXIT

Scan the U.S. portion of a wine list of most restaurants and you'll find the state of California pretty prominent. However, many states have their own wine country, as do two areas of New York that stand out with their winning grapes: Long Island and the upstate Finger Lakes region (607-568-4363). You may not find many of these on a list, due to the small and sometimes excellent fermented fruits of the vine that may only be purchased at the wineries themselves.

In 1976 New York State enacted the Farm Winery Act, making it legal for grape growers to produce and sell their wines. Today there are close to 80 wineries in the Finger Lakes region. My suggestion is to make this getaway a scenic and sensual experience, rather than a traveling "drink-a-thon". Be aware that a typical wine tasting pour consists of one or two ounces of wine, and sampling several wines at each winery and visiting several wineries in succession will most likely impair your ability to drive.

Not quite tolerant of alcohol, I always choose to do the regimental tastings with the wines (to allow it to "breathe"), stick my nose into the glass (to sense the "nose"), sip a small amount and swirl it around my mouth, and then spit it into a "spittoon". With this a residual of it will be felt around my taste buds and I will have swallowed just enough for a taste.

Back to the trip. Of the 11 lakes in the Finger Lakes region, Cayuga, Seneca, Keuka and Canandaigua Lakes are the four that are dominant in the wine industry. The Finger Lakes region is located less than an hour's drive from Rochester. Thus, on my recent journey to Rochester, I visited three of the lakes in less than 24 hours.

Wagner Vineyards (607-542-6450), located in the town of Lodi, along Seneca Lake, not only sports a large winery but brews their own beers as well. The tasting menu listed over 37 wines and six handcrafted beers. Not all were available for tasting. ND: hey, there are at least 20 wineries surrounding Seneca Lake, alone. Directly across from the gift shop is Ginny Lee, a restaurant with a view of the lake. Simple delicious food!

Riesling wine, a mainstay in Germany, has found its way to North America and a major producer in the Finger Lakes region is Dr. Konstantin Frank Vineyards. Dr. Frank's Finger Lakes Wine Cellars in Hammondsport (800-320-0735) is located along Keuka Lake. It was Dr. Konstantin Frank who ignited the "Vinifera Revolution", elevating the New York wine industry. The award winning winery earned its reputation for Rieslings and expanded with planting Pinot Noir, Gewurztraminer, Cabernet Sauvignon and other European varieties.

The extensive wine list purports two labels, the second of which is called Salmon Run. Considered the "value line", and some Gold Medal winners, the wines utilize a combination of the estate grown grapes and high quality grapes from other local vineyards. A representative from Dr. Frank's said that there are many gay clients and they "welcome all".

It was along Canandaigua Lake that I rested my grape-ridden body. Serenity home at Bristol Harbor Resort (585-396-2290). Although the resort may be a golfer's four-season dream, it was the lodge and dining experience that I was more interested in. The 31-room Adirondack-style inn has balconies overlooking Canandaigua Lake and it wouldn't surprise me if people go there just to dine. During dinner I spotted "family" and was told that they did have a commitment ceremony between two men.

If you can't make up your mind as to which wineries to tour, or you just want to experience floral scenery and a Victorian home, Sonnenberg Mansion and Gardens (585-394-4922) is the site to see. Located in the town of Canandaigua, it was formerly the summer home of Frederick Ferris and Mary Clark Thompson. Today the mansion is surrounded by some of the most beautiful landscape. The self-guided tour of the landscape will take you through Japanese Gardens, an enclosed structure known as the Roman Bath, and 10 other points of beauty. After visiting the mansion, it's at the Finger Lakes Wine Cellar that you will be able to sample several wines from the local vineyards and head to the gift shop for a one-stop wine shopping. Sonnenberg Mansion and Gardens says that they absolutely welcome all gay events, particularly those couples who may want to unite with a ceremony. There are several gorgeous backdrops.

The town of Bristol is a short drive from Canandaigua Lake and home to the Wizard of Clay Pottery (716-229-2980). With more than 90,000 pounds of clay each year, Jim and Jamie Kowalowski create all of the pottery here. In fact, you can peer into the pottery room and almost visualize "Ghast". But it's not just the quality of the soft clay, it's the fact that the pottery is lead-free, microwave, oven-proof and dishwasher safe that Wizard of Clay is noted for. The signature of this enterprise is the fresh green leaves from native trees and plants that are picked daily and pressed onto the door. Burnt off, the imprints are striking reminders of the Finger Lakes' landscapes and wine country. As for being gay friendly, consider what's being produced and who are the customers are. Need I say more?

If you are not into wineries, take advantage of just driving around one of the lakes. You may want to take a short hop to Seneca Falls during the first weekend of December, for the "It's A Wonderful Life" festival, as Seneca Falls turns into Bedford Falls. Hm...

I hear a bell.

Be sure to take a gaze at my new website to view some of my articles. It's www.yoyomere.com.
While the Fast Ferry tries to decide what the heck it is doing, I thought I would give you some travel tips on another travel destination of mine that is easily accessible from Rochester and a guaranteed fun time. That destination is New York City.

Getting there is cheap, thanks to JetBlue (on sale one way tickets can be had for $39) and now there is a new Airtrain at JFK which makes getting into the city much, much easier. No more waiting (trains run every three minutes) for shuttles, taxis, or buses.

This automated train carries passengers around to each of the airport terminals for free and to Jamaica Station (also known as Sulphur Bld./Acher Ave. Station — don’t confuse this with Jamaica Center) — trust me, you don’t want to go there) and Howard Beach Subway stations for a fee of $5.

From these two stations you can hook into the New York City subway system using the same fare card you purchased to pay for the Airtrain. The fare for the ride to these stations is bought while you EXIT the Airtrain terminal, before you enter the subway terminal. My first hint for you is to buy at least a $20 subway Metrocard (just a precaution: always say yes when the machine asks if you want a receipt, I have had cards not work right after being issued) and a $1.50 ticket (you must join their hotel club and register for this Mastercard special — all of which is free).

Over the past few months I’d go to the Buffalo Hyatt, a very inexpensive $69 to $89 a night, and cheaply earn my free nights for my stays at more expensive cities throughout the country. If you do not currently belong to a hotel points club or don’t want to have to wait for a free night, I’ll give you a faster hint for staying cheaply in NYC and that is PATH.

The PATH train runs between New York and New Jersey run 24 hours a day on weekends (they didn’t always) and they go to Newark, Hoboken, Journal Square from WTC station (World Trade Center) and other stops like Christopher Street Station (the Village) on the New York side, so you can select a hotel anywhere along those subway lines on the NJ side (at a cheaper rate than NYC hotels) and take the PATH train into the city to play, shop, or gawk. PATH trains run every half hour on the weekends.

To keep it simple I would stay only on the Newark line, which is a straight shot to WTC where you can hop onto NYC subway system and avoid half hour waits, or you can transfer in NJ at Grove Street Station to the train that drops you off right on the Christopher Street station (all PATH trains transfer at Grove Street station on weekends, that means you must pay attention, because the trains use many stations for transferring during the day).

The half hour wait time between trains usually occurs at Grove St. station when you are transferring to another train, lines where you are not transferring (are running at quicker intervals). A simple solution is to stay at a hotel that is in one of the PATH lines that includes a direct train to Christopher Street Station (Hoboken or Journal Square stations), then you know you have a 24 hour for sure ride every time you get to your hotel (smart, if partying is your goal).

Rides on the PATH train are $1.50, but from NYC going to NJ you can use your Metrocard; however when coming from NJ to NYC you have to purchase a PATH card (for a one time ride fare). Keep in mind these cards also expire and since you are probably only using the PATH to access NYC, I would go with the one time $1.50 fare ticket, although you do receive discounts for multi-ride tickets. PATH train maps and info can be found at http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/path/maps/subwayhtml.htm. Again you will want to print this (in color) and take it with you so you are prepared.

This is one time I am pretty sure I don’t have to talk about things to do in NYC, even just walking around you’ll have fun, but I do want to mention that I might not want to overlook the NJ side. Jersey City along the Hudson shore is beautiful (and clean). Clubs and restaurants are just as plentiful and fun on the Jersey side, so check it out on at least one of your days while you are in the area.

My NJ hotel pick for you is the Ramada Limited Jersey City at 65 Tonnell Avenue. This hotel is just one block from Journal Square station and rates run from $89 to $124 a night, which for NYC would get you a small tourist class room. This NJ Ramada gives you a beautiful building with a rooftop restaurant, decent size rooms, a fitness center and a complimentary continental breakfast. Join the Ramada Rewards program and stay another time at a Ramada and get a $25 gift card (check out TripRewards on the Ramada website: www.ramada.com).

I hope anyone who is thinking of visiting or re-visited the Big Apple finds this article informative and helpful. Once again I would like to thank The Empty Closet for the chance to share this information with you.
Fortunate Families! Can Change the World! (Acting on Faith II)

BY MARY ELLEN AND CASEY LOWE

What's a mom or dad to do when some parents do not need to feel isolated. Most women have never heard anything like this about their gay children. We understand the faith and fears of our LGBT daughters and gay sons. We can be the bridge that connects our faith community with our beloved children.

people, who are often among the religious communities - seeking to educate others about issues of sex orientation and gender identity. For example, check our website at www. InterfaithAdvocatesLGBT.org, or call Ralph Carter at 585-271-7649.

What You Need to Know About HPV and Cervical Cancer

Planned Parenthood offers annual exams to all women regardless of their income, which is all the more reason to get your annual exam - your life may depend upon it!

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cases, LGV can even lead to death... and this risk may be more serious in patients already infected with HIV or diagnosed with AIDS.

LGV is passed from person to person generally through unprotected sexual contact. Some cases are contracted according to much of the data from outbreaks in Europe is unprotected and sex. Symptoms of LGV will generally appear anywhere from three to 30 days after first infection. However, because one of the first symptoms is a genital ulcer and that ulcer may occur inside the urethra or inside the rectum and therefore be unseen, it is possible that some patients will be infected with LGV for longer periods of time before detecting the problem. Someone who suspects they may have been infected with LGV can be tested for the disease. There are a few lab tests that can accurately diagnose it. Once diagnosed, treatment generally consists of a three-week course of oral antibiotics and symptoms will clear up completely.

Health experts in the United States, including those of us here in the Rochester area, have some concern about the recent LGV outbreaks for two main reasons. First of all, as more and more outbreaks pop up in major European cities it is not impossible that LGV will make its way to the United States. It is a fact that LGV is passed from person to person through sexual contact. Therefore, to keep the disease outside the United States, health officials are recommending that gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) be tested for LGV. The report focuses on a wide range of topics including transportation, health care, nutrition, legal services, and caregiving. One of the briefs included in the report is entitled "LGBT And Gay Issues" (to review the brief online, go to http://aging.state.ny.us/explore/project2015/5Brief/lesb.pdf). Based on the 1990 census, a conservative estimate of between 150,000 and 200,000 LGBT seniors live alone as compared to 25 percent of the general senior population. However, this number is probably even lower than these numbers would suggest. The report states that LGBT seniors are more at risk than their heterosexual counterparts: 66 percent of LGBT seniors live alone as compared to 25 percent of the general senior population.
Senior Moment  
continued from previous page

more formalized caregiving structures such as home care agencies, assisted living facilities and nursing homes, the persistence of negative societal attitudes and uninformed aging service providers would continue to deprive LGBT elderly of safe, meaningful and respectful care.  

To encourage a more inclusive climate and better meet the needs of LGBT elders, the following recommendations made in the above mentioned brief, “Training Lesbian and Gay issues” need to be a required part of training for any state supported programs providing services and oversight for the elderly.  

Curriculums should include: (1) An awareness of homophobia and its devastating consequences; (2) Factors that have shaped the lives of gay seniors, their needs, their unique family configurations; (3) How to create and welcoming service environments for gay clients; (4) Legal, financial and sociological barriers in accessing appropriate services and (5) Information on accessing resources offered by the lesbian and gay community.”

**Fund LGBT Specific Programs and Services**

“Considering that there will be a portion of seniors who, still out of fear of disclosing their sexual orientation, will access only gay services and will not be served otherwise, make adequate funds available for the creation and support of programs tailored accordingly.”

**Encourage Research**

“Establish research initiatives able to reach and track a more representative sample of older gays, their caregivers and their needs.”

**Support Legislation to End Discrimination**

(1) “Include sexual orientation in all anti-discrimination policies protecting employment, public housing and the access and delivery of services. The vulnerable gay senior population must be assured protection against ridicule, neglect or harassment in health care facilities, public housing, senior centers, etc., and LGBT staff working in the aging services system should be free to come out on the job and offer their special experience in helping LGBT clients.”

(2) Include sexual orientation in hate crime bills to send a clear message that violence against any individual or group will not be tolerated.

(3) Provide the same legal and financial safety nets for all New Yorkers by giving legal recognition to gay and lesbian families. This will help assure equality in retirement benefits, insurance coverage, inheritance rights, nursing home regulations, health care decisions and hospital visitation rights to name a few.”

The encouraging news in all of this is that New York State has been more proactive than most other states in looking ahead and preparing for the inevitable changes that will accompany the advent of the Elder Boomers and the growing number of foreign immigrants, which will be needed to offset shortages in labor resulting from the mass retirements of aging workers.

Now is the time to contact your legislators and NYS policy makers to make sure that they represent all of their constituency, including the growing numbers of LGBT older adults along with their support networks of “family” and friends. We need to educate them on our issues and extend our support and encouragement to them when they express a willingness to dialog with and advocate on behalf of our community.

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**Gerald Adamson**  
**Scott Thomas**

for their thoughtful and significant contribution to the **Youth Services Program** of the **Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley**

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Youth update:
Youth to see play, enjoy bowling party

BY TOBY GREENFIELD

The Youth Program is looking forward to an eventful December and January. This month we are planning a Sunday group to see “The Cramplike Zone,” a new play put on by the Shipping Dock Theatre. We are excited about this especially because our own multi-talented facilitator, Erik Libey, is featured in the play!

We are also very keyed up for Dec. 12 as GLSEN is generously sponsoring a Winter Bowling Party for the Youth Group. A big thank you to GLSEN from all of us ... And while we’re thanking people, we would also like to send out a thank you to DJ Chuck Argento, who did a fabulous job DJ-ing our Halloween Party and helped make it a great success.

We are also continuing to work hard on our monthly Empty Closet Youth Page. We hope you continue reading our wonderful youth columnists and contributors. Check out this month’s offering on pages C6-7.

Our new evening specialty groups are continuing to do well and we are adding several new ones in the next couple of months. Please check our Youth Website at http://youth.gayalliance.org for more information.

Attention college students – a College Group meeting (with pizza) will take place Jan. 27 at 6 p.m. at the Youth Center.

On one last note, since this is the giving season, our Youth Program is in need of an oak bookshelf! Our Youth Library is growing and if anyone out there has a bookshelf that needs a new home, please give me a call at 244-8640. Thank you and have a great holiday!!

GAGV Information

GAGV Community Center
179 Atlantic Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607-1255
Library open 6-9pm
Wednesdays;
10am - 2pm Saturdays
Meeting space is wheelchair accessible.
Youth Center, Empty Closet
& Administrative Offices
Suite 500, 875 E. Main Street
Rochester, NY 14605
(585) 244-8640
Empty Closet phone:
(585) 244-9030
GAGVEC fax:
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Coordinator
Todd Pfank
Graphic Designer
Jim Anderson
Anti-Violence Coordinator
Alexandra Cobus

YOUTH GROUPS:
The GAGV Youth Group (13-23) meets Sundays 2-4pm at Youth Center, 875 E. Main, 585-244-8640
The Youth Group of Color meets Tuesdays from 3-5pm at The MOCHA Project office, 25 Franklin Street, Suite 1060, 585-420-1400

Anti-Violence Project: surviving violent crime

BY ALEX COBUS

Last month, I harped about the importance of reporting anti-lgbt hate activity to the AVP, and/or the police ... and it worked. The reports of hate incidents and crimes are up this month.

But please don’t be discouraged by this. It is not necessarily a sign that hate activity is increasing. We know it’s happening, and on a regular basis. The difference is that now there is one, central place that is documenting it, so there are numbers where there weren’t before.

This is a real success for the lgbt community of Rochester. Now there’s a record, documentation that lgbt Americans need to fight for civil rights.

I thought this month I would follow up with some general information on what to do if you, or someone you know, is the victim of a hate crime.

First, it’s important to realize that different people respond to victimization in different ways. There are many normal physical or psychological reactions to the trauma of victimization. Emotional reactions such as denial - trying to forget or pretend that the crime never happened - anger, isolation, fear, depression and problems with concentration are common.

Survivors of violent crime may also experience physical problems that seem unrelated to an assault, such as head or stomach aches. Insomnia, change in appetite, sexual difficulties and general irritability are also common physical changes suffered by crime victims. Ignoring these symptoms may lead to further complications.

Get medical attention. Consult a physician or hospital emergency room, even if you do not believe that you have been seriously injured. Do this as soon after an assault as possible. If you would like an AVP advocate to meet you at the hospital for support, call 585-244-8640. If it was a sexual assault, you can also call Rape.

AVP continued on next page

Gay Al-Anon

Are you troubled by someone’s drinking?

You don’t have to drink to be affected by alcohol. Maybe Al-Anon can help. If you are interested in forming a local lgbt 12 step/Al-Anon support group, please call Todd at (585) 244-8640 ext. 24

Family Matters

BY CLAUDIA STALLMAN

Claudia Stallman here. I am Todd’s guest columnist for this installment of “Family Matters.” I am also Director of the Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project in Binghamton.

We are funded by a grant from the New York State Health Department to provide educational programs, support groups, and information and referrals to lgbt parents and parents-to-be. We co-sponsor with the GAGV the lgbt parenting/families group in Rochester: Pride and Joy Families. Please come to one of our gatherings! The group offers a sense of community to parents, their kids (of all ages) and prospective parents. New folks are always welcome.

Family continued on page 12

The Buffalo Roam

BY ALEX COBUS

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AVP continued on next page
Anti-Violence
continued from previous page

Victim outside of places where lesbians and gay men may have trouble. Avoid these areas especially if you are alone.

2. If you feel threatened or unsafe, try to move away from the situation as quickly as possible. Run. Bang garage cars. Make noise. Yell "FIRE!" Call 911 for police assistance as soon as possible.

3. Letting someone do not know into your home or apartment may make young people to robbery and assault. If you leave a bar with someone you have just met, introduce him or her to a friend or bartender. Let other people know that you are leaving together. Exchange names and telephone numbers.

4. Try to leave bars, community centers, and other light identified places and events with people you know or trust. Assailants sometimes wait for potential victims inside of places where lesbians and gay men meet and gather.

5. Carry a whistle. Consider taking a self-defense class. The AVP is currently offering self-defense classes specifically for the gay community. Call 585-244-8640 for details.

What We Can Do As a Community

Violence against gay folks affects everyone in our communities. Every attack is in fact an assault against us all. The most effective way to deal with this violence is through community education and involvement.

Learn about anti-violence and Anti-Violence continued on page 12

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Worsdsmith: Alex Sanchez, author of young adult fiction

BY OVE OVERMYER

Enter Alex Sanchez, and please don't confuse him with the big league baseball player. He moved against societys expectations of what people often who consider being a writer. Never mind groups like PAGGLS (Parents Against Gay Books In Schools). So people may not consider reading these books, but when they are ready to consider the book. Never mind groups like PAGGLS (Parents Against Gay Books In Schools), no one object to it. Indeed, the film Gender Shaped is now being released to decide if a book is inappropriate for young adults. This problem, the young adult novel, has no problem with parents not wanting their children to read certain books. “The problem of parents doesn’t want their children having access to these particular books.”

What defines young, what defines adult and what defines appropriate in a world where one teenage has never seen a PG rated movie, and what is the story is exactly from the film Gender Shaped is totally beyond my comprehension. Young adult used to mean books aimed at readers from 16 to 21, says Sharyn November, a senior editor in children’s publishing. However, times have changed and middle school aged children are targeted for novels that thoroughly address same-sex relationships between teenagers. No longer do gay young adults novels simply ask the question, “Are I gay? ” Now they enter the real world and real lives of young people trying to navigate the difficult waters of love and identity.

Alex Sanchez is one of those authors. His first book, Rainbow Boys (Simon Schuster, 2001) introduces the reader to three gay boys coming to terms with these life-altering issues. In 2003, he released the sequel, titled Rainbow High, which follows the same protagonists through the high school senior year in high school. Although the setting is not as Graphic, it’s an adult novel, with sex on their path to self-discovery.

Rainbow Boy was selected as a 2002 “Best Book for Young Adults” by the American Library Association; a “Blue Ribbon Winner” by the Bulletin for the Center for Children’s Books; a 2002 “Book for Teenagers” by the New York Public Library; a 2003 “Young Adults Choice” by the International Reading Association; and a Book-of-the-Month Club InsightsOutBooks.com selection. Additionally, both Rainbow Boys and Rainbow High were finalists for the Lambda Literary Award.

Sanchez has also published a short story titled, “If You Kiss A Boy” that appears in the anthology, Storied Lives: Stories about the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen. As a result of this extraordinary reception, Mr. Sanchez was honored with the “Flying Start” award sponsored by Publishers Weekly’s Magazine.

Sanchez is in Mexico in 1957 to German and Cuban parents. Alex came to the United States at the tender age of five. His family settled in Arlington, Va. He sold his house there about a year and a half ago, and has been living on the road ever since, promoting his new book and doing research for his next effort, titled Rainbow Road. Yes, you guessed it – the same characters graduate from high school and take a road trip across America.

Sanchez earned his bachelor’s degree in liberal arts and sciences from Virginia Tech, and a master’s in guidance and counseling from New Dominion University. Although the author wrote a picture book for children while in college, he says he didn’t have an audience in mind when he started to work on Rainbow Boys. “It came about when I was dealing with some of my coming-out issues, and writing. I kept coming across, either in the news or in my work as a counselor, young people who were coming out. I was just so inspired by their courage and their stories that as I was writing this book, it sort of took form in terms of teenagers. And then the more I worked on it, my vision or goal, I guess I could say I was writing the book I wanted to read when I was growing up.”

I caught up with Alex by cell phone as he was driving through the hills of North Carolina. He was headed north up the coast after visiting Miami. “A funny thing happened while I was waiting to vote. The guy in front of me was Billy Beav! I wasn’t sure, I didn’t know what to say to him.” Alex seemed ready to chat about everyone and everything. “I guess traveling by your self can be a bore, until that phone rings.”

Sanchez says there is a huge void to fill with regard to stories about gay youth. He cites a study by the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) that found 80 percent of those respondents noted positive images of homosexual people in their lives. “There are so many fascinating stories to be told,” Alex exhails. “The edges of the mainstream are often where the most compelling stories are, because of the struggles that more marginalized groups have to go through.”

Michael Cart, author of the Gay coming-of-age novel, My Father’s Scar (Simon & Schuster, 1996), and a well-respected authority on young adult fiction, says there is a “crying need for good stuff” like the work of Alex Sanchez. “If more straight teens read gay-themed young adult fiction, they might think twice about casually uttering slurs, spreading gossip, hazing, and physically abusing other teens.”

Alex told one interviewer that he has always had a passion to become an author. “Like many writers, I loved to create since I was a child. But as I grew up, I learned it wasn’t safe to share my sexual orientation. Not until graduate school did I finally summon enough courage to write a story with a gay character. My instructor’s homophobia caused him to lash out at me. After that experience, I didn’t write for years. But the dream of writing stayed with me. After some time, I finally got the courage to try again, and surrounded myself with friends doing creative projects and attending workshops. During one of those workshops in Provincetown, an instructor who liked my work put me on the map.”

Worsdsmith continued on page 12
The Buffalo Roam

a column on the Buffalo scene

BY JIM VER STEEG

Not long after relocating to Buffalo from Rochester, I realized how alive and vibrant the local gay scene had become. Long under the misconception that life in the Niagara Frontier came grinding to a halt soon after the leaves were off the trees, I assumed everyone hibernated until June brought the Pride March down Elmwood Avenue.

But to operate under that assumption only made me miss out on how much this city had to offer during its rather renowned winter months. Leading the way through the sometimes dark and snowy cold is Buffalo's thriving arts and theater scene, not the least of which is its very own gay theater, Buffalo United Artists, better known as BUA to its fans in town. Offering everything from musical theater to its current run of the play *Southern Baptist Sissies,* the theater remains dedicated to provocative and innovative programming. Besides, with no one under 18 admitted to *Sissies,* you know it has to be good.

There is also no shortage of nightlife. With the Allentown Alternative Association, comprised of local gay bars and watering holes, promoting activities right here in our very own gayborhood, you can almost always find a weekend event or promotion that draws even the fairest of the fair (I include myself in that category) out on the town for some fun. Natives, residents and regular visitors all enjoy the city's gay party circuit that almost invariably ends up at Cobalt or Marcella's for a night of dancing and hanging out with friends.

Of course, with so much of Buffalo's gay life centered in Allentown, there is no shortage of restaurants, shops and coffee stops that cater to, and are very friendly toward the LGBT community. Café 59, Rust Belt Books and Eminent Design all offer their unique flavor to Buffalo's cultural scene.

For more information, and let's face it, for my own shameless plug, you can call the Pride Center of Western New York at (716)852-7743 or visit our website at www.pridecenterwny.org. All of this information and much more is there at your fingertips.

So before those fingertips get too icy cold, come on over and warm up. Hey, we might be inside for a few months, but we're still having a whole lot of fun.

Gay Men's Retreat

Saturday, January 15, 2005
8:45 AM to 4:30 PM

Want to make connections in the New Year?
Looking to Find and Maintain Intimacy?
The Saturday Retreat will focus on developing intimacy and connections with other gay men.
Cost is $60 for the day (lunch not included)

Contact: William A. Kelly, LCSW
AASECT Certified Sex Therapist and Diplomat in Sex Therapy
496 White Spruce Blvd. Rochester, New York
585-327-2121 Email WAKELLYMSW@AOL.COM
Workshop limited to 15 participants
Artsy Fartsy Film Group
It's snowing for the umpteenth day in a row, you're climbing the walls with cabin fever, and there's about six more months of this to look forward to... Why not join the Artsy Fartsy Film Group, an outreach of Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, on the afternoons of Saturday, Dec. 18, and Saturday, Jan. 15, to view a new film at the Little Theatre, 240 East Ave.?

To learn the film selection and the time to meet at the theater, please do one of the following on or after the Thursday before each film: call the church at 271-8478 to hear a recording, check the church webpage at www.frontier.net/~oamcc1, or email oamcc@frontier.net.

After the film, we'll walk to a nearby coffee place to shoot the breeze and forget about the snow. We look forward to meeting you!
relationships with our partners, family, the coming out process and legal issues. The web site was also discussed and we are moving ahead quite well. The web site address will be announced soon. Every one participated and all the conversations are confidential. Attendance has usually been around 12, which gives everyone an opportunity to participate. We also had our first of the season social gathering at Spot Coffee.

In general: The group consists of men and in some cases their same sex partners. We are all at different stages in our lives. Some are married, some are going through separation/divorce, some have custody of their children and some don't, and all are at different points in the coming out process. This is a support group (not therapy) intended to discuss all these issues and more. Everyone here is offered the opportunity to seek support and to give it.

A social night is sometimes planned for the fourth or fifth Tuesday of the month. A holiday potluck gathering is planned at a member's home in December. All current members and former group members are welcome to come. Call John Stout at 426-9695 for date, time and place and what dish to bring.

Please call GAVG at 244-8640 if you are interested in finding out more about us. There are also brochures available about our group at GAVG.

Gay Men's Cooking Group

The men's cooking group meets on the third or fourth Sunday of the month at a member's house on a rotating basis to socialize and share a meal. The host may set up for group cooking, have a potluck or cook it himself or herself. If the host is furnishing food, the members attending chip in to share the cost.

While there is a small fee for members to cover mailings of a monthly newsletter, the group is always open to new members at no charge for two months. Any one is welcome at a meeting. If you are interested in joining us and perhaps becoming involved with the Men's Cooking Group, or if you have questions about the group, please contact Dick Connet at 461-2273.

Our annual Christmas party will be on the fourth Sunday in December (Dec. 20) at Lou Vallone's "Christmas Palace." To reserve a spot, call Lou Vallone at 260-4582 by Dec. 20.

GLSEN

GLSEN Rochester's winter GSA event will be a Bowling Party for youth on Dec. 12, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Free Terrace Garden Lanes, 1151 Ridgeway Ave. Contact GLSEN Rochester@aol.com if you and your friends plan to attend or if you're available to supervise the event.

GLSEN Rochester has joined forces with more than 40 education, mental health, youth advocacy and social justice organizations across the U.S. to address the problem of name-calling and verbal bullying in schools.

During the week of Jan. 24-28, 2005, schools serving grades five through eight will take part in educational activities aimed at stopping name-calling and creating safe and more affirming schools for all students.

The goal is to provide educators, parents and students with the tools and inspiration to launch an on-going dialog about ways to eliminate bullying in our community. Targeted at middle school where the problem of name-calling is particularly acute, the concept can easily be adapted to other grade levels. Visit www.nonamecallingweek.org to find out more about this exciting project, receive educational materials and register your school.

Local NCCW efforts will include a creative expression contest for students. This is an opportunity for students to submit essays and posters that convey their experiences and feelings about name-calling, and their ideas for putting a stop to bullying in their school and community. For prizes, deadlines and entry details, contact GLSEN Rochester@aol.com.

If your school or organization is interested in making schools safe for all students, consider the resources GLSEN Rochester has to offer. In addition to loaner videos, we offer programs that provide teachers, administrators and students with the knowledge and age-appropriate tools they need to successfully create a culture where all people are respected, free to express themselves and reach their fullest potential.

To schedule a program for your school, organization or event, contact us at (585) 244-1509 or GLSEN Rochester@aol.com.

GLSEN Rochester is the leading local organization dedicated to ending anti-gay bias and harassment in our schools. We strive to ensure that each member of every school community is valued and respected, regardless of real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

To join us or make a tax-deductible contribution, contact us at GLSEN Rochester@aol.com or (585) 244-1509.

Rainbow Seniors

Long Term Care by CHARLES P. PALMATIER

Have you ever thought about long term care for your partner or yourself if it were ever needed? Have you given any thoughts about how you or they would be treated, as a person or a couple? My Spouse (Significant Other/ Domestic Partner) of 15 years was in long term care until he passed this past year. He was there because of Alzheimer's and "self-care deficit" (a Nursing diagnosis, meaning he was unable to care for himself), and I couldn't be there 24-7.

My biggest concern during his stay was his safety and being treated fairly; there were times when I visited that I had to change/toilet him, because he had not been taken to the bathroom. During a "Care Plan Meeting" I asked if this was because of his ..."underlying diagnosis." (because he was FULL-BLOWN AIDS).

The response I was given: "Initially, there were some concerns among staff, but now he is just... (.Spouse's name)." This is a direct quote that has been burned into my memory, I was almost too shocked to respond when I heard this. But afterwards, I thought that there SHOULD NEVER have been an "INITIALLY" in this statement or in Health Care at all. I, myself, work in Health Care as well.

In being a gay man, but a health care provider, as well as a person who HAD someone in long term care setting, I have had a unique view of the health care system. It was not a pretty picture, although there were many caring people...
Anyway, to pick up where I left off in S’up to all my peeps out there? Anyway, to pick up where I left off in S’up to all my peeps out there? I wore form stilettos with huge gelled up hair and emotional constipation of dealing with day passed. I never failed to realize how actually a girl trapped in a boy’s body as you and if you do not treat us with interrupted by the fact that I talk too much and try to make me come to the real-Ebola virus or better yet, injected with inform people and they usually ended that should caress my cheek are the totally horrific, since the only panties I didn’t know what in the seven layers the demons that have spawned you. In the actual laws and how the government finds loopholes in order to rule through the legal rights that every other citizen of our country has, we could get it with a snap of a finger. There are millions upon millions of queer people in this country all of whom have a legal right to be treated just like any other individual.

The key to acceptance and open minority rights is education, and publicly make it clear to everyone in the USA that it is illegal and morally wrong to deny us any legal right that any other “regular” citizen has, then the public will understand and start slowly accepting and agreeing with us. This all will force the government to change things, but the way to do that, however, is not to be quiet anymore.

Personally I feel the re-election and the Marriage Amendment campaign in our country is the last straw. For far too long we have been fighting for what we want and what we deserve, and to be quiet and accept things that will not make dramatic influence is utterly a terrible waste of time. We don’t realize the power that we really have - our power is the exposure of the way this country is being governed against the actual laws and how the government finds loopholes in order to rule through our own “moral” beliefs and through what is best for them not for us.

We have the power to expose and to educate. These are the two things that will ultimately get us to the place we want to go. Soooo... I’m ready to change into my pinupette mini micro and executive jacket, get out the Louis Vuitton briefcase and slip on a pair of five inch black Manolo pumps and strut my self right down to Washington and demand - not ask, but DEMAND - our rights, are you? Luv, Mia

PS As a little ChristaHannuKwanza present to all of my readers, here is a little bit of the joy in the world of eBay: the skin secrets of adult film beings THEN YOU’RE GONNA GET SUED! Although I still vote for the Ebola infection, what about you?

Cat Chat

BY CIRCA (AS TOLD TO JESSICA COHEN)

Oh 'tis the season to be jolly that this kitten does not have to trek outdoors to “take care of business.” Bless thee kitty litter and my (cowardly) feline friends.

Condolences to pups who must brave the backyard snow this winter.

What wonder this time of year brings to cars everywhere. With dark strings of lights hanging from branch to branch, felines everywhere are rising from their nap corners to bat at those bright ornament balls. The winter holidays are truly a time of great blessings.

In this cat’s world, each gift to another is a gift to me. Package after package of wondrous ribbons and paper for me to play with. And ohh the lovely boxes for me to claim as new napping space.

I particularly enjoy the ones with a bit of tissue still left inside – or better yet, a brand new cashmere sweater! I drool (Miss Tulip-esque) in anticipation.

Speaking of Tulip, I must express my sorrow at the physical absence of the special doggie. While the air smells a little fresher around the GAVG offices, things just aren’t the same without her. I feel a loss of purpose, a loss of direction, verbal banter. (My feeder and her partner are good for a bit of fun, but during the holidays, don’t bite the hand that gives the glibets.) Despite Tulip’s insulting remarks last month at my expense, I appreciate that the puppy just doesn’t understand my status. Tulip may be a Queen, but I am a true Princess and threaten her position as Pet Diva. (It had to happen, Miss T.)

On that note, with Tulip’s recent move to Georgia, I am forward to a new bark in Pet Talk. A new voice for the New Year. While so many of us light pets and feeders were disappointed (crushed, disgusted, horrified) at the results of the recent presidential election, I offer a soothing purr that the new four years will quickly pass.

And in the meantime, we kittens (and pups) offer our families comfort and joy. This season, there are blessings everywhere. From the miracle of Hanukkah, to the celebrations of Christmas and Kwanzaa, we all have something to be celebrating. Even for non-obsessive light pets, we still have a New Year to practice peace (while still ruffling the feathers of those birds in Albany and D.C.)

Worry will only change your face. Whether you are a little ChristaHannuKwanza or not, we are here and we are as special as you and if you do not treat us with the respect that we deserve as human beings THEN YOU’RE GONNA GET SUED! Although I still vote for the Ebola infection, what about you?
Confessions of a former closet case

BY JESSICA COHEN

There are no skeletons in the closets of our lives. Secrets behind doors are elephants, fed by the fearlessness to which we try to hide them. It is the body left outside the door that becomes the bones, the skeleton of a former Self. Nourishment comes with honesty and courage to consider the possibility that even a little mouse entered my closet and scared the secret right out.

In the sixth grade, I was in last with Michelle. She was tall, dark and incredibly beautiful. And she was in the 9th grade—an older “woman” (sigh). Underneath my self-esteem, I fully understood the concept of sexuality, let alone “lesbianism.” So instead, I taunted after her little brother (who happened to be my age), scribbling his name half-cursively in notebooks and on the foggy shower door. In the summer of 1989, I was a freshman for Sweet Valley High.

I had forgotten about her and her Little Brother. But I had not forgotten the case with my teenybopper friends on the sofa. Little Brother was uninvited, and I only remember obsessing throughout the night as to whether I should ask him to dance, simply to introduce him to Michelle’s Little Brother.

Michelle moved to the high school, I had forgotten about her and her Little Brother. But I had not forgotten the case with my teenybopper friends on the sofa. Little Brother was uninvited, and I only remember obsessing throughout the night as to whether I should ask him to dance, simply to introduce him to Michelle’s Little Brother.

There is something wondrous in the unearthing of bundens in the emptying of mind and belly. With the coming of menstruation, I have a deep urge to ask to sail, or a partner to journey with (two by two). There is strength gained from the simplicity of sunlight, from the walking of ridges and willingness to move forward without an established guide. In reflection of my own coming, I now understand the deep and burning paralysis of fear, there is the power of feeling. In the quiet of closet doors yet unopened, there is always the steadiness of breath.

Standing in line

BY DENISE FINNERTY

We’re all guilty. Every single last one of us, right now, is a guilty party. We’re guilty because we have all been caught standing in line.

We’ve been paying our dues at the ticket counter up ahead over and over again like every other citizen in our supposed democratic society. You have to hand your D’s you talked to last night while kicking stones. Others of us have just been cancelled from the ticket counter up ahead over and over again like every other citizen in our supposed democratic society. You have to hand your D’s you talked to last night while kicking stones. Others of us have just been cancelled.

We were all guilty because we have all been caught standing in line.

As for Stonewall activists and other gay activists from years prior: THANK YOU! Without you, I couldn’t be here and tymb about my experiences, dreams, and truths. If it wasn’t for you, I’d probably still be sitting in the corner waiting for someone to figure me out or worse yet, standing in line.

One person can make all the difference in the world. One person can fight for justice and set the captive free. One of us is all it’s going to take to lead a group, a group to lead a community, a community that bonds, strengthens, and succeeds barrier, thus creating a stronghold across a state. It will take a state to initiate a ripple that spans a country; a ripple that will be remembered throughout history. I am a United States Citizen and I contribute to the economy every single day of my life and I refuse to stand in line any longer. As always, I am a fighter.

Denise Finnerty (dfinns5@yahoo.com)
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**FYI:**
We will accept only ads accompanied by name and phone number. Neither will be published, but we must be able to confirm placement. The Empty Closet is not responsible for financial loss or physical injury that may result from any contact with an advertiser. Advertisers must use their own box number, voice mail or personal address/phone number.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**
Volunteer for the Empty Closet! Can you give two hours a month? Would you like to report, review, take photos, stuff envelopes or deliver bundles of the EC to your favorite hangouts? The next issue is February 2005; deadline Jan. 15, 2005. Call Susan at 244-9030.

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**SERVICES**
Rochester's best fall body/muscle rub! Let me wish you all. To you men who have not yet taken photos, stuff envelopes or deliver bundles of the EC to your favorite hangouts! The next issue is February 2005; deadline Jan. 15, 2005. Call Susan at 244-9030.

Subscribe to off our backs, feminist newsmagazine for, by and about women. Published continuously since 1970. World and national news, interviews, op/ed, reviews, more. $25 individual subscription. To subscribe or for more info, write to off our backs, 2337B 18th St. NW. Washington DC 20009.

**Photographer.** Let me shoot your holiday parties and events! Reasonable rates: great memories in print. Photojournalistic style. Dorothy Drake, Photographic Intime. 585-797-4930.

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Attention college students!

**LGBT College Group Meeting! Thursday, Jan. 27 at 6pm, at the GAGV Youth Center - 875 E. Main St. (entrance on Prince St.).**

The meeting offers a chance to network, and spread the word about your group! Pizza will be served! Call Toby at 244-8640 x13 for more information.

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Winter Festival and Indian Art

What makes
after our meetings, we
sobriety.
for coffee, dinner, movies, whatever;
not be shouted down for speaking words
not
$10.
Chorus concert:
Gifts. 7-9 pm, GAGV Community
Girls, HIV
comedy by Buddy Thomas. Shipping
on the Ridge from 7-9 p.m. Free tickets
and coming to terms with
alcoholics
and addicts as
trauma­contribute to addicts. We ask that partners, friends, steps meeting depending on what seems
evenings. Take the #1 Park Ave bus to the


Sundaes


SUNDAY 11


SATURDAY 14


THURSDAY 16


TUESDAY 7


FRIDAY 17


MONDAY 20


THURSDAY 10


WEDNESDAY 12


FRIDAY 14


FRIDAY 21


SUNDAY 23


SATURDAY 15


MONDAY 24


THURSDAY 27


WEDNESDAY 26


We Week BLGTI AA Meetings in Rochester

There are five regularly scheduled BLGTI AA meetings in Rochester every week.

What makes BLGTI recovery a bit different is that we recognize: issues surrounding our sexuality can contribute to our alcoholism and addiction; coming out and coming to terms with ourselves as alcoholics or addicts can be as traumatic as coming out and coming to terms with our sexuality; other drugs of abuse run rampant in our community and we do not exclude those so addicted (you will not be shouted down for speaking words like pot, cocaine, crack, heroin, ecstasy, K, speed, meth, pills, etc.); the bars play a major role in alcoholics and addicts within our community which can present challenges even when we are fully committed to our sobriety.

After our meetings, we frequently go out for dinner, movies, whatever; while it’s tempting to stay in the fold of BLGTI recovery, we live and work in a predominately straight society, so we encourage our members to include “straight” meetings in their program.

Open meetings are open to alcoholics and addicts as well as to our partners, friends, family and anyone else interested

in the AA program of recovery. Closed meetings are limited to alcoholics and addicts. We ask that partners, friends, family and curiosity seekers respect our privacy.

Wednesdays
New Freedom/New Happiness Group: 7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 180 Winton Rd. Bus riders: Take the #18 University bus to 12 Corners. Use the stop just past the top of the hill at Highland Ave and before Humboldt Park. Or take the #1 Park Ave to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton.

This is an open discussion meeting. All issues — as they relate to our alcoholism/ addiction and recovery — are fair game.

FRIDAYS (2 meetings)
Free to Be: 7:30 p.m. At The Yellow House, 1501 Jackson Rd, Penfield. Not accessible by bus.

Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Mixed men and women

Handicapped accessible

This can be a speaker, discussion or steps meeting depending on what seems best at the time.

Gay Men’s: 7:30 p.m. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. At Elton St. Bus riders: Take the #18 University Ave bus, use the stop between Parsons Memorial and Elton St. Walk one block north on 1st St. to the GAGV Community Center.

Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Men’s meeting

Handicapped accessible

This is a round-robin discussion meeting. If you are shy about meeting people or speaking up in a group, you will find this meeting particularly warm and inviting because everyone gets their turn to speak (or pass). As a result, this meeting often runs long, so plan on more than the usual hour.

Saturdays
Night Special: 7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S Winton Rd.

Butch Sheep Connection Discussion Night. “New Year’s Resolutions” 7-9 p.m. GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave, 865-4619.

Socially Deviant. Philadelphia, Pa. Art exhibit presenting “ideas outside the standard model...the art of the socially deviant.” For info contact Zara at bughedubug3@comcast.net; 215-742-4899.

Empire Bears potluck. Theme: “50’s comfort foods. GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave, 865-4619.

Butch Sheep Connection Dinner Night, Macaroni Grill, Jefferson Rd., 7-9:30 p.m.

Empty Closet deadline for February issue. 844-9030.

In The Life. National lgbt news magazine. WWW.11-1 p.m.

Empire Bears potluck, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Theme: red, white and green. 5:30-7 p.m.

179 Atlantic Ave, 865-4619.

Men’s Cooking Group Christmas Party. For time, location, call 266-4852 by Dec 20.

Butch Sheep Connection Dinner Night at House of Pain, Monroe Ave. 7 p.m. 865-4613.

WEDNESDAY 29
Butch Sheep Connection Social Night. Gift exchange. 7 p.m. GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave, 865-4619.

FRIDAY 31
The Crumple Zone, Shipping Dock Theatre, Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St. Special New Year’s Eve Gayla. 9 p.m. 25. Champagne cast reception. Empire Bears New Year’s Eve party. See www.empirebears.org

JANUARY 5
Mission Latino/Latino Mission Party. Dia de los Reyes Magos. Call Alex Camacho, 442-2220; LatinoMission@yahoo.com

SATURDAY 7
Butch Sheep Connection Discussion Night. “New Year’s Resolutions” 7-9 p.m. GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave, 865-4619.

SUNDAY 8
Socially Deviant. Philadelphia, Pa. Art exhibit presenting “ideas outside the standard model...the art of the socially deviant.” For info contact Zara at bughedubug3@comcast.net; 215-742-4899.

Empire Bears potluck. Theme: “50’s comfort foods. GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave, 865-4619.

Butch Sheep Connection Dinner Night, Macaroni Grill, Jefferson Rd., 7-9:30 p.m.

Empty Closet deadline for February issue. 844-9030.

In The Life. National lgbt news magazine. WWW.11-1 p.m.

Empire Bears potluck, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Theme: red, white and green. 5:30-7 p.m.

179 Atlantic Ave, 865-4619.

Men’s Cooking Group Christmas Party. For time, location, call 266-4852 by Dec 20.

Butch Sheep Connection Dinner Night at House of Pain, Monroe Ave. 7 p.m. 865-4613.

WEDNESDAY 29
Butch Sheep Connection Social Night. Gift exchange. 7 p.m. GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave, 865-4619.

FRIDAY 31
The Crumple Zone, Shipping Dock Theatre, Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St. Special New Year’s Eve Gayla. 9 p.m. 25. Champagne cast reception. Empire Bears New Year’s Eve party. See www.empirebears.org

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**Monday**

**Gay and Lesbian Support Group:** Third Presbyterian Church, 94 St. Margins St.

First and third Mondays, 7:30-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Tom M., 454-3659.

**American Baptists Concerned:**

Third Mondays, 7:30 pm, Webster House, 57 Atmo Sloe St. 544-5976.

**HI V Positive Gay Men Support Group**

Every Monday, 5 pm, AIDS Rochester, 1250 University Ave. 442-2220 x 3051.

**Green Party (political)**

Second Mondays, 7-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 234-6470.

**Basically Treblemakers Band**

Rehearsals 4:30-6:30 pm, every Monday. Call Tim, 242-0237.

**Transgender Group**

Second Mondays, Open Arms MCC, 175 North Drive, 7-9 pm.

**Rochester Frontrunners/Frontwalkers**

Run/walk every Monday, 6 pm, meet George Eastman House parking lot.

**Tuesday**

**Atlantic Five 0**

Gay men 20 and over. Second Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 481-9021.

**Orlando Rainbow Fellowship**

Support social group, meets second Tuesdays, 7 pm. For location call Dale, 589-9107, or e-mail GLabac@cs.com

**Gay Fathers’ Support Group**

First and third Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Meetings resume Sept. 21.

**MOCHA coffee chat**

Open discussion for men of color who have sex with men. Coffee, refreshments. First and third Tuesdays, 6:30 pm, MOCHA Project, 25 Franklin St., Suite 1050, 420-1400.

**Youths of Color Group**

3-5 pm, MOCHA Project, 25 Franklin St., Sibley Center, Suite 1060, 420-1400, 244-8640.

**Wednesday**

**Women’s Community Chorus**

Rehearsals each Wednesday, 6:30-9 pm, Call for location. 234-4441.

**Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley Board of Directors Meeting**

Second Wednesdays, 7 pm, 875 E. Main St., fourth floor Blue Room, 244-8640.

**New Freedon New Happinss A Gay meeting**

7 pm, Ontario Church, 220 Winton Rd. Men and women. Open meeting.

**Support Group for Parents Who Have Lost Children**

First, third Wednesdays, 11 am-12:30 pm, Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. Sponsored by Genesee Region Home Care. Free. 355-1500.

**Frontrunners/Frontwalkers**

6 pm run/walk; meet George Eastman House parking lot, 271-2709.

**Empire Bears**

First Wednesdays, 7:30 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. info@empirebears.org

**Transgender Group**

Third Wednesdays, 8:30-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**Multicom-4 Coffee Talk**

7 pm, Spine Cafe (979 Park Ave.) Social for former Multicom-4 (888) members; other gbtq cyber geeks welcome, every fourth Wednesday, 8 pm.

**Gay Area**

Social/support group for bisexual women. First Wednesdays, 5:30-7 pm. For location, call 411-1330, 532-9738.

**GAGV Library & Archives**

6-8 pm, every Wednesday, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 244-8640. Books can be returned to GAGV offices, 876 E. Main St., Suite 500, from 9 am–6 pm.

**Batch Fronseca Connection**

Fourth Wednesday, 7-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**Thursday**

**Presbyterians for Lesbians and Gay Concerns**

Rehearsal every Monday, 10:30-12:30, for third Thursday, 6-8 pm, GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**Greater Rochester Gay and Lesbian Business Forum Professional social group.**

Second Thursdays, 5-7 pm, 234-7806.

**GLOBE**

(Gays and Lesbians of Bausch & Lomb). Meets every third Thursday in Area 67 conference room at the Optic Center. Voice mail 358-8977.

**Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus**

Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 7-9:30 pm. 423-0650.

**Free confidential walk-in HIV testing**

Every Thursday night, 5-8 pm, AAGS Rochester, 1393 University Ave. 442-2220.

**MOCHA movie night**

Second Thursdays, 6:30 pm, MOCHA Project, 25 Franklin St., Suite 1000. 420-1400.

**GLSEN board meeting**

7-9 pm, second Thursday, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**Friday**

**Gay Men’s AA meeting**

Each Friday, 7:30-8:30 pm, Closed meeting GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**Butch-Femme Connection**

First Friday, 7-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**Rochester Rams Bar Night**

Third Saturdays, 6:30 pm, GKAGV, 470 University Ave. 271-8800.

**Frontrunners/Frontwalkers**

9 am run/walk; Meet George Eastman House parking lot. 461-4266.

**Empire Bears Bar Night**

Second Saturdays, Bachelor Forum, 470 University Ave., Bedr. 234-5391.

**Cross Dresser Support Group**

First Saturdays, 5-20-9:30 pm, GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave. Info: 251-2132. RCDNET@hot.com.

**Transgender Group**

Last Saturdays, 2-5 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**Saturday Night Special Gay AA**

7 pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. S. Men and woman. Open meeting.

**Lilac Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf (LRAD)**

Fourth Saturdays, 6-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**Something for da Sistas**

Women’s group, every third Saturday, MOCHA Project, Suite 1050, 25 Franklin St. 420-1400.

**Pride and Joy Families**

Third Saturdays, 3-5 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**GAGV Library & Archives**

GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 234-2220 x 2-5.

**Sunday**

**More Light Presbyterians**

for gay and lesbian people and friends, 12:15 pm, last Sundays. Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 325-4000.

**Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**

2-30 pm. Last Sunday. Call for location: 234-0156.

**Dignity/Integrity**

5 pm, St. Luke’s/SJ Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Every Sunday. 234-5092.

**Open Arts Metropolitan Community Church**

179 Norris Drive, Cobbs Hill. 11 am. Contemporary worship service, 7 pm. 271-8478.

**Gay Men’s Alchoholics Anonymous**

St. Luke’s/SJ Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 8:30 pm, 232-6720. Weekly. Closed meeting.

**Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Friends Association (GLBFA)**

U. of Rochester: Sundays, 5 pm, Morey Hall 401. 275-6379. E-mail: gfla@rochester.edu

**GAGV Youth Group**

Ages 13-23. Every Sunday, 4-2 pm, GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St. 244-8640.

**Rainbow Amateur Radio Aces**


**Food Not Bombs free food**

2 pm, every Sunday, Friends Meeting House, 84 Boio St. 234-0884.

**Rainbow Thursdays**

Third Thursdays, Potluck at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 156 S. Clinton Ave., corner Court St. 4 pm. Handicapped parking behind church. Others please park in lot accessed from Court St.

**Community Christians Fellowship**

Every Sunday, 7 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

**Men’s Cooking Group**

Third or fourth Sundays, 461-2273.

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Repairs to full replacement

Free estimates

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288-0032
in touch with her agent. She really advocated for me. She was a suburban mom who liked my manuscript because of its theme of acceptance and personal integrity. I got a deal with a publisher, and the rest is history."

Sanchez freely admitted "I like the time with myself to write, but sometimes it can be very lonely." To complement this lifestyle, Alex travels the country to visit high schools and colleges to lecture about tolerance or creative writing. His latest book was just released, and is called Hand In Hand (Simon & Schuster, 2004). School Library Journal said this about the book: "It can open eyes and change lives. It will help the younger generation to understand what it means to be gay, and accept people who are different from them."

Alex will be traveling to Thailand soon, where there are plans to make Rainbow Days into a feature film. Mr. Sanchez says he expects to be overseas at some point in the future, where there are plans to make Rainbow Days into a feature film. Mr. Sanchez says he expects to be overseas at some point in the future.

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The Annual Christmas Party is Sunday December 12 from 4:00 to 8:00
Bob Dietch will be having the Christmas Sing Along
There will be our Holiday Buffet and Door Prizes

TARA WISHES YOU HAPPY HOLIDAYS

153 Liberty Pole Way (585) 232-4719 Rochester, NY
Rainbow Seniors
continued from page 5
whose lives we may have touched. I find it hard to believe we were the first gay couple that people had come across in this situation, but if that made us uneasy more than us (as is usually the case), that’s well, so be it. My only hope is that my speaking now will encourage others to do the same; I do not want to see anyone else go through what we did.

I am sharing my experience and asking that our community share theirs as well with RAINBOW SENIORS OF WESTERN NEW YORK. We hope to work with another advocacy group to help guide and evaluate Long Term Care facilities for their treatment of the LGBTI community. This is where community support and stories, good and bad, will help us to determine which are safe havens and which need help in education in dealing with the LGBTI community. Feel free to let us know your stories by using our website at www.rainbowseniorsway.org.

Rainbow Seniors of Western New York meet every third Sunday for a potluck dinner/social and events at the 1st Unitarian Church, 150 S. Clinton Ave., corner Court St. See the website for more information and possible updates. Although “Seniors” is in the name of the group, there are several younger members in their 30s-40s who are involved because of advocacy issues, which we address as well, so come join us.

**Rochester Rams**

Join us for Long John’s Night on Saturday Dec. 18 at the Bachelor Forum. Put your union suit and check out the hot men ready to cuddle up on a cold winter’s night.

**RGMC**
The Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus (RGMC) is currently gearing up for our 22nd concert season, Music of Our Lives. This concert season promises to be a truly memorable year.

At this year’s concert, the 20th anniversary of several significant events in the fight against AIDS, the RGMC has chosen to dedicate a portion of our programs to celebrating the music of those composers, lyricists, arrangers, and performers who have forever been silenced by AIDS.

Our holiday concert, Queer Eye for the Holidays, is coming up on Friday, Dec. 10, and Saturday, Dec. 11. Don’t miss this wonderful concert of music composed or arranged by gay men. The music of Benjamin Britten and Samuel Barber will be showcased along with many others as the RGMC sings the Music of Our Lives.

In addition, we will be holding a silent auction during intermission to benefit the RGMC, so don’t forget your checkoutbook! Advanced general admission tickets are $15, $12 for seniors and students, and $10 for children. A potluck dinner may be purchased at The Creator’s Hands, Parkleigh, Outlandish, The Pride Connection, or choose members, or by calling The Chorus Line at 585-432-0650. You can also visit our website at www.thergmc.org or email us at info@thergmc.org. Both beautifully lyrical evening will begin at 8 p.m. at Hochstein.

To purchase season tickets to all three of our concerts this season, please visit our website at www.thergmc.org, email us at info@thergmc.org, or contact The Chorus Line at 585-432-0650. The season ticket price of $40 ($36 for students/seniors) includes preferred row-front seating at all of our concerts and advance notice of special events. In addition, you will take advantage of a savings of over 25 percent off the regular ticket price of $16 at the door.

Are you interested in being a part of a family of friends that is now in its 22nd consecutive season of singing the songs of their lives to the Greater Rochester community? Voice placements for our upcoming March concert, “Tinseltown Tunes,” are at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 6, followed by our first rehearsal at 7 p.m. We are always welcoming new members, so please give our office a call at 585-432-0650, or email us at info@thergmc.org.

Watch for upcoming details about a wine tasting the RGMC will be holding in February, as well as a Seneca Lake wine tour in April.

**Bassically Treblemakers**

Wow, what an amazing year for BT as we finished up our 22nd season with a pop band performance for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in Rochester. We had the pleasure of attending the International Organization of Lesbian and Gay Band Associations conference held in Ft. Lauderdale.

It was quite an experience to be able to rehearse and perform under the direction of Dr. Alfred Reed and Dr. Robert Longfield, both very accomplished composers and band leaders, and 140 gay musicians from around the world.

More than a dozen of us traveled to Ft. Lauderdale for the conference and besides meeting our musical goals, we also excelled in the Fun factor, which is very important being a BASSICALLY TREBELmaker.

The members of band have excelled in this objective this year with our trips to Toronto, Washington DC, and Ft. Lauderdale (Syracuse and Buffalo too). We also celebrated our 10th year with a dinner at Capers, a gay-owned restaurant that we sponsored, “Eating Out” (notice the band guys ended up together at the end of movie! Yeah!) and a cake following.

Starting on Nov. 21, BT began rehearsing at our new location at the GAGV 875 E. Main St. (Auditorium Center) at 6 p.m. The GAGV has come through for our band again this year, since the City School District decided to start charging for the use of the schools to rehearse in we needed a lower cost meeting place. This is not easy to find when you have horns, drums, and razzflatts. Last year there was an insurance requirement that GAGV helped us with. BT has been financially successful mainly by keeping our cost down so any money raised can go towards music, band equipment, uniforms, etc.

Look for us at our favorite holiday events around town including Park Avenue Holiday Caroling, Community Business Forum Holiday Party, and Community performance night at GAGV. Information about our season may be found on www.btrochester.org or call 507-3289.

PLAGAL

PLAGAL prides itself on the diversity of its membership. It is one of the few pro-life organizations that accepts all those who are pro-life. PLAGAL members come from different social and economic backgrounds, different political parties, some have religious affiliations while others do not. We have members who are drag queens, parents, bisexuals, single, those in long term relationships and we even have heterosexual individuals in our group.

Contact us for more information. PO Box 3322 Washington DC 20033; 202-223-6697; Fax: 202-265-9737; plagal@plagal.org; http://www.plagal.org. Rochester liaison: Donna Marie Kearney, 585-442-6399.
BY GOOSE (AS TOLD TO TODD PLANK)

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! However, there are some things you should keep in mind when selecting stocking stuffers for your pet.

Other potentially dangerous food items for pets include moldy or spoiled foods, coffee grounds, onions, alcoholic beverages (yes, even alcohol!), and avocado (birds). Birds are also extremely sensitive to any strong odor or smoke, so be careful when cooking. On a merrier note, here are some holiday gift ideas for that special pet in your life:

- **Food**: rawhide, bones, natural treats
- **Fashionable collars or leashes**
- **Fitness toys**
- **Interactive toys**

I hope you have a wonderful holiday season with your furry friend!
Please let me introduce myself. My name is Ronald Padilla—sales and leasing professional for Bob Johnson Chevrolet. As an automotive veteran, I am proud to be working at the #1 Chevy dealership in Rochester—Bob Johnson Chevrolet.

Bob Johnson Chevrolet sells more Chevy vehicles than any other dealership for many reasons, particularly:

- We have more Chevy inventory—all colors—all options.
- We provide the best prices upfront—you’ll receive low, low financing, the highest rebates possible, our exclusive Platinum Plus Program, and special incentives provided exclusively by Bob Johnson Chevrolet.

For ADDITIONAL SAVINGS, call me and mention this ad!

At Bob Johnson Chevrolet, You’ll get more for your money... You’ll get much greater value... It’s a better place to buy a car!