Get on the bus: Philly’s Equality Forum may be a “defining moment” for gay rights

By Susan Jordan

The Equality Forum to be held in Philadelphia April 25-29 is the 40th anniversary of gay rights movement. The Gay Alliance hopes to take on activism and defining our work in the civil rights movement. We think this is more special than just an anniversary, said Lazin, the equality forum’s director and executive director of the Gay Alliance.

Lazin told the Daily Cloister: “The national celebration revolves around the 40th anniversary of the start of our movement, which began in Philadelphia at the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. We think this is more special than just an anniversary, although it is a milestone.”

In some ways, Lazin equates the upcoming event with the 1963 March on Washington for African American civil rights. “This is our 1963 Lincoln Memorial opportunity,” he said. “Like in ’63, we’ll be in the right place at the right time. After 40 years of effort, our fellow Americans are beginning to listen. Independence Hall will be filled. We want to achieve what Bayard Rustin did in ’63.”

The Equality Forum is organizing a bus trip on Friday, April 29, leaving from the Auditorium Center parking lot, 875 E. Main St. (at E. Main and Prince), at 9 a.m. Space will be limited to 40 people, and payment (one night deposit and bus fare) must be received by April 13. Twenty-five rooms have been reserved at the historic Philadelphia Downtown Courtyard by Marriott. Single or double occupancy rooms will go for a reduced rate of $109 ($125 after taxes). If 40 people sign up, transportation costs will average out to $800 round trip. Total costs for a couple should be $450, and $350 for an individual if rooming alone.

To make reservations, call Todd Plank, GAGV Community Relations Director, at 244-8460, ext. 24, or email todd@doublegloves.org. When emailing, please use the heading, “GAGV Freedom Ride Package.”

The buses will arrive in Philadelphia around 5 p.m. on April 29 and travelers will check in at the Downtown Courtyard by Marriott, 21 Juniper St. (across from City Hall with its welcoming figure of William Penn standing high above the city). The hotel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Highlights of the next two days will include film screenings and discussions afterwards with participants and directors of a free BBQ in the “gayborhood,” regional, national and international programs; a series of Conversations with Gay Leaders including some of the original Gay Pioneers and leaders such as Rep. Barney Frank, Rep. Tammy Baldwin and Bishop Gene Robinson; a Gay Events Pavilion at the Independence Visitors’ Center, site of a reception where the 40 Heroes will mix and mingle; the interfaith service at Christ Church, written at Yale University especially for the 40th Anniversary Celebrations; free concerts and entertainment throughout the weekend; and of course the National 40th Anniversary Celebration on Independence Mall with a closing concert, on Sunday, May 1.

In addition, Philadelphia offers numerous historic sites, fabulous stores, restaurants, galleries, theatres and clubs.

On May 1, the buses will depart at 7 p.m., following the concert, and should arrive back in Rochester between midnight and 1 a.m. See www.equalityforum.com.

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A March column by Reality TV critic Kathleen Sheridan typifies the heteronormous mindset that takes its privileges for granted and shows an irresponsible attitude toward the institution of man-and-woman-only matrimony, supposedly "endangered" by gay people's campaign for marriage rights.

I don't know if Sheridan should profess same-sex marriage equality or not. That's not the point. It was her comments on the reality show The Bachelor that stunned me with their shallow attitude toward the "sacrament" that straightists insist we queue don't qualify for, even in the form of civil marriage before a judge.

Sheridan writes of Jen Schefft's values, and Jen's values seem to be "seemed" for Jen, and what's more, they were hot and both her TV suitors on Feb. 28, and shows an irresponsible attitude toward the marriage, and if there are kids too -- bad.

Wake up, Kathleen. Look at the privilege you straights are playing with your exclusively heterosexual sacrament in the most idiotic, trivializing way. Meanwhile, loving same sex couples who have been super cute for years, but they are kicked successfully, and want to marry legally, are unable to do so, unless they are Massachusetts residents, and even then their family is defined as unmarriage by our federal government.

What's wrong with this picture? What's wrong with Kathleen Sheridan and why can't they find some compassion and generosity to replace their dog-in-the-manger attitude toward those gay and lesbian couples who really do love each other, and really are behaving responsibly? (Not that women are suddenly going to don't give expensive rocks to our femininity fairy tale in a vacuous vacuum. To this reporter, Jen Schefft showed an unexpected common sense by declining to commit herself for life (theoretically) to somebody she doesn't love or even know well, for the sake of the ratings and ad sales. To critics Sheridan, though, Schefft's refusal to marry for the entertainment of airheads means she'd rather be a celebrity than a wife. Presumably, Sheridan would have preferred that Schefft choose one of the two hot guys and before long get a quickie divorce. Then the "reality" pandit wouldn't feel she had wasted her time watching Jen declaim to commit herself "forever" on the basis of getting a big rock from a hot guy who "seemed" to care about her. And Jen would have proved that she has those wholesome, moral, all-American values of "why" -- if only temporarily. Apparently Sheridan isn't concerned about what happens after the sacrament has taken place, the carrots are turned off, and the two realize they are not compatible. The fairy tale ends and so does the marriage, and if there are kids -- too bad.

As the next four years of a conservative legislative agenda in the U.S. Congress, it will be difficult if not impossible to get bills such as ENDA, equitable tax treatment of domestic partner benefits, Family Leave and Medical-Insurance Act and the Permanent Partners Immigration Act signed into law.

In the mission of the GAVC to affect positive change for the GLBT community in their every day lives. So how will we do this in the face of overwhelming conservative constraints on legislative change for equitable treatment under the law?

The GAVC has established a strategy that is working on four fronts. First, we provide direct service to our highest risk populations, our youth and members of our community who are victims of hate crimes or domestic violence.

Secondly, we provide educational outreach to our schools, universities, businesses and for ourselves on all issues that will enable us to secure equality under the law. We must continue to create a safe environment for all of us in communities that have brought our coming out processes, we create straight allies in our work, our schools, our neighborhoods and our families.

Thirdly, we work closely with the business community to affect change in the workplace. Business leaders will and have taken a stand for treating all employees equitably as a business imperative. We dialog with that the faith community can open the hearts and minds of some of our most ardent critics.

Building on community strengths, the GAVC supports the Empire State Pride Agenda and the Human Rights Campaign. We are not a political lobbying organization: ESPA and HRC work for full civil rights for all GLBT people.

Furthermore, we are not a healthcare providers, as other agencies are fully qualified and more qualified to do this work; they have our support.

As the GAVC continues to grow as an agency and partner with other community agencies, we are building the composition of the Board with members from organizations that will directly affect the day-to-day lives of our community. We currently have members from MOCHA, GLEN, the transgender, the human services, and the business communities.

The April board member call will have candidates from the Business Forum, the faith community, and the services community, as well as allies from other boards where we have significant overlap in interest. Additionally, the Board Co-Chair of the newly formed Rochester Business Alliance will be liaison to the Board. The Alliance is comprised of Employee Resource Group leaders and HR professionals from twelve leading companies in the greater Rochester area. In the next four years, some of the largest strides for equality under the law will be led by the private business sector.

Currently, 62 Fortune 500 businesses have attained a 100 percent rating on the HRC Corporate Equality Index, CEI, with an additional 70-plus companies scoring 86 percent. This adds up to 4.6 million employees who are being treated equitably in the business sector, up from 650,000 when the CEI was introduced in 2002.

We are extremely excited about the people who have agreed to become a Member of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley! The Gay Alliance membership includes subscription to The Empty Closet mailed in a plain manila envelope.

Membership levels begin at $30.

It's easy! (585) 244-8640

Join with us! Become a Member of The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley! Download a membership application at www.emptycloset.org or return the completed application included subscription to The Empty Closet mailed in a plain manila envelope.

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Transgender minister to speak here on April 10

The Reverend Dr. Erin K. Swenson will be in Rochester this April for two special events as part of the semi-annual community series, “Christian Faith and LGBT Experience.”

On Sunday evening, April 10, at 7:30 p.m. she will be at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St., and will lead a “Community Forum on Christian Faith and Transgender Experience.”

Several transgender members of the Rochester community will participate in the forum. (Those wishing to hear her morning sermon at the church are invited to attend the 11 a.m. worship service. Parking is free and available across the street, and also in the Sister Cities Garage one block away on Fitzhugh St.)

The following morning, Monday, April 11, she will bring her message to Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, 1100 South Goodman St. Beginning at 10:30 a.m. in the Stewart Lounge, the lecture title is “Gender Terrorism and the Death of the Patriarchy.” All programs are free to the public.

Reverend Swenson was ordained Eric Karl Swenson in 1973 by the Presbytery of Atlanta. In 1996 she became the first mainstream Presbyterian minister to make an open gender transition while remaining active in her ministry. After completing a gender transition from male to female, her ordination was upheld by the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, PCUSA. As a licensed marriage and family therapist, she currently provides counseling for individuals with gender identity issues and for their families at the Morningstar Presbyterian Church in midtown Atlanta. She lectures nationally on issues of gender and faith, and continues to practice active ministry as parish associate at Ormewood Park Presbyterian Church in southeast Atlanta.

Reverend Swenson serves on the board of More Light Presbyterians, an organization devoted to the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals in the PCUSA, and as a chair of the Health Ministries Committee of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta. She is the co-founder of the Southern Association for Gender Education, Inc., a non-profit organization devoted to educating institutions of higher learning, medical associations and practices, and faith groups about diversity in gender expression and the place of gender in modern life.

She continues to maintain warm, supportive relationships with her ex-spouse and their two grown daughters, as well as the rest of her family, in the wake of her 1995/96 gender transition.

Day of Silence rally is April 13 at Youth Center

Rally with hundreds of students on the Day of Silence, April 13, at the GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., in the Auditorium Theatre building (first floor).

The Clothesline Project, an annual event which offers a symbolic display of t-shirts and education about our society’s discrimination.

Rev. Dr. Erin K. Swenson of Rochester, who is slated to participate in the panel.

Panelists will come from a variety of life experiences, ethnic backgrounds, and faith perspectives. Among the panelists will be the Reverend Swenson, a group of individuals who have a life-long commitment to serving the LGBT community. The panel will address the history, the current situation, and the future of the LGBT community and how that community affects our society.

Court rejects Equal Benefits Law for NYC

Alan Van Capelle, Empire State Pride Agenda Executive Director, issued the following statement on March 15 regarding the New York State Appellate Court’s Decision on the Equal Benefits Law (Local Law 27).

“The fact that the court has put out a three-and-a-half page decision saying the New York City Council does not have the right to legislate in this area shows it was not even serious about reviewing the legislation and providing a thoroughly reasoned response.”

“The federal issues raised in this decision have already been settled in regards to identical legislation in the state of California where the law was upheld. If the court’s thinking were accurate, no state and certainly not the city could ever question a vendor’s decision to discriminate. Under this rationale, the city would be forced to contract with the Koi Klaw Klen if they were the lowest bidder on a contract.

“The sad fact is that New York City taxpayer dollars are being used to undermine discrimination. We believe the Equal Benefits Law is the solution to that problem.”

“We applaud Speaker Gifford Miller, Councilmember Christine Quinn and our allies in the Council for their decision to fight this outrageous ruling.”

“We again call upon the Mayor to find a solution to this discriminatory practice.”

Bronson enters race for County Legislature

Attorney Harry Bronson has announced his candidacy for County Legislature.

Bronson is considered the NYS Labor Council’s top candidate, as well as former Assemblyman. He was also president of the Gay Alliance board.

To volunteer for Bronson’s campaign, or for more information, call Tracie Moore, volunteer coordinator, at 585-271-7082, or email ripleydog2004@aol.com.

Area Democrats organize for equality

By John Noble

Say NO to a marriage constitutional amendment. Say YES to equality!

Where has our HIV educational funding gone? Where is our LGBTQ youth funding? Where is our fair share of tax dollars for our Community Center?

If these and other questions matter to you, come to the start up meeting and demand action!

The time for nonpartisan leadership has ended! It has failed and we are angry.

The organizational meeting of the Stonewall Rochester Democratic Club will be held April 27 at the GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave., at 7:30 p.m.

Call 603-8053 for more information.

Clothesline Project educates about violence against women

The Clothesline Project is an annual event which offers a symbolic display of t-shirts and education about our society’s discrimination.

“This month AIDS Rochester, the Gay Alliance Youth Program, and the Rainbow Seniors of Western New York will join together in hosting a panel to discuss the issues of aging among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. The panel hopes to build on a dialogue that was started by a similar panel at that community last year.

“As LGBT people, many of us have similar experiences with heterosexism and homophobia... but many of us have very different experiences as well. This panel will give voice to such a diverse pool of experiences that we hope to bridge some of the gaps created by age and generation in our community,” said Erik Levy of AIDS

We are excited to celebrate the 11th annual Day of Silence rally with hundreds of students on the Day of Silence, April 13, at the GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., in the Auditorium Theatre building (first floor).

The annual national event marks the loss of LGBT voices due to violence, discrimination and oppression.

Participants are asked to arrive in silence at 4 p.m. At 4:15 the Silence will be broken. A performance by the Bread & Water atreatre will follow at 4:30, and a Youth Dance will run between 5 and 8 p.m., with live music, a DJ and pizza.

Everyone is welcome to come and bring a friend. What are you doing to end the silence?

Youth-Seniors panel to consider issues of aging

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California judge rules in favor of same-sex marriage; state appeals

A California state trial court ruled on March 14 that same-sex couples must be allowed to marry, in a decision that Lambda Legal called "a historic breakthrough for couples who need the protections and security marriage provides."

In a 27-page decision issued in San Francisco, California Superior Court Judge Richard Kramer said that lesbian and gay people's basic rights are violated if they are not allowed to marry. The decision said the California Constitution requires same-sex couples to have equal access to marriage, and that the couples represented by Lambda Legal, NCLR and the ACLU must be given marriage licenses.

"We're still a little stunned, but we're overjoyed," said Lancy Woon, a 38-year-old San Francisco resident who is the lead plaintiff in the case with her partner, Cristy Chung. "Our six-year-old daughter, Olivia, is just beginning to understand how the world works, and we family shouldn't be treated any differently under the law unless we marry."

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A breakdown of the single-bias incidents by were motivated by racial bigotry and 16.6 percent were the result of sexual orientation bias. Among the 14 bias-motivated murders reported by law enforcement, six homicides were committed because of a sexual orientation bias and five were the result of racial prejudice.

Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia have laws against hate crimes. Of those, 29 states and the District of Columbia have hate crimes statutes that specifically cover crimes based on the real or perceived sexual orientation of the victim. Seven of those states and the District of Columbia also cover gender identity.

About The National Black Justice Coalition

The National Black Justice Coalition, based in Washington D.C., is a civil rights organization of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and our allies dedicated to fostering equality by fighting racism and homophobia. The Coalition advocates for social justice by educating and mobilizing opinion leaders, including elected officials, clergy, and media, with a focus on Black communities. Website: http://www.nbjcoalition.org

West Point professor calls for end to “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell”

An op-ed published in the January issue of Army Times calls for the elimination of “don’t ask, don’t tell.” The op-ed, titled “Gays in the Military: It’s a Question of Liberty,” was written by Allen S. Bishop, an active-duty Colonel in the U.S. Army and a professor at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

According to Nathaniel Frank, senior research fellow at the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, a research institute at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Col. Bishop’s op-ed is consistent with a growing tide of military opinion. “My interviews of service members in Iraq show that just don’t care if one of their comrades is gay,” said Frank.

An October, 2004 Annenberg National Election Survey found that a majority of junior enlisted service members now believe that gays and lesbians should serve openly. General Wesley Clark noted in 2003 that “the temperature of the issue has changed over the decade. People were much more in awe about this issue in the early ’90s than I found in the late ’90s.” In 1993, surveys indicated that 18 percent of service members believed gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly. Frank added that Col. Bishop may be the highest-ranking active-duty officer ever to criticize “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” publicly.

The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military is an official research unit of the University of California, Santa Barbara. The Center is governed by a distinguished board of advisors including the Honorable Lawrence J. Korb of the Council on Foreign Relations, Honorable Colette Blacker of Stanford University and Professor Janet Halley of Harvard Law School. Its mission is to promote the study of gays, lesbians, and other sexual minorities in the armed forces. More information is available at www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu

Activist Wanda Alston found slain in D.C.

Wanda Alston, an appointee of Washington, D.C. Mayor Anthony A. Williams who headed the city’s office of gay and lesbian issues, was found slain late March 16 in her Northeast Washington home. Alston, 45, was found by her partner. Police said her silver 2000 Nissan Sentra, with D.C. tags AZP7977, was missing.

The Board and staff of the National Black Justice Coalition, the nation’s only Black gay civil rights organization, joined on March 17 with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities in Washington, D.C. and across the nation in mourning the loss.

“Wanda was a true friend and advocate for all of us,” said H. Alexander Robinson, NBJC’s Strategic Director. “She will be sorely missed. On behalf of all of us at the NBJC, I extend my deepest sympathy to her partner Stacey Long.”

“Wanda was the activist, the fighter, the strong black woman, the vocal lesbian, and so many other things. And yet she was still Wanda, my friend,” said NBJC President Keith Boykin in a tribute to Wanda’s life posted on his web site, “Wanda was one of the toughest, most determined people I have ever met in my life.”

Alston’s death comes on the heels of the murder of 19-year-old Rashawn Brazell in Brooklyn. Over the past two years, there have been several murders of Black gay, lesbian and transgender persons, including the murder of 15-year-old Black lesbian Sakiia Gunn-Shani Baraka, daughter of famed poet Amiri Baraka and her partner Rayshon Holmes, and D.C. transgender teenagers Ukeia Davis and Stephanie Thomas.

Jeff Sorel, Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender (GLBT) Caucus Chair for the Democratic National Committee, issued the following statement: "Wanda R. Alston was known as a dedicated and vibrant party activist. She was active in local Democratic politics throughout her time in Washington. The District of Columbia lost a true friend yesterday.

"Wanda was also known for her tireless advocacy for Washington’s GLBT community, which led to her appointment to the Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs in 2001 by Mayor Anthony Williams. She was instrumental in helping establish that office as a cabinet level post this past September," Sorel said.

"Ms. Alston will be remembered by her many friends for her activism on behalf of the Democratic Party and the strong voice she gave to the GLBT community. Our condolences go out to her partner, her family, her friends and the District of Columbia.”

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force also issued a statement and has offered a reward for information.

“Wanda reached many hearts during her life both inside and outside of our community, and she will be sorely missed,” said Matt Foreman, Executive Director of the Task Force. “We are simply in shock about suddenly having her ripped from our community and we send our deepest sympathy to her partner Stacey Long, her entire family, and all those who knew and loved her.”

The Task Force is pledging an additional $10,000 to the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department’s reward of up to $25,000 for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for Wanda Alston’s death.

Wanda’s extensive organizing and leadership included working as staff at the National Organization for Women and the Human Rights Campaign, as a founding member and a board member of National Stonewall Democrats, and as an organizer of four national marches. Her latest initiative, the District’s first LGBT Citizen Summit, scheduled for late April, was focused on gathering input from LGBT citizens on the priorities of the D.C. Government.

Wanda worked with the Task Force in many ways, most passionately through participation in Power Summits and National Actions. She eventually became a volunteer Power Summit trainer for the Task Force.

“Wanda Alston was an amazing activist, organizer, and sister in the struggle for equal rights for all people. She taught me the courage to fight for full equality, not... (Continued on page 8)
Interview

City Council member Tim Mains

By Susan Jarden

Tim Mains has served on City Council for 20 years. Not long ago he fought back against an attempt to expel him from Council due to a supposed conflict of interest with his position as principal of a city school. But Tim showed he was tough and resilient enough to win that battle in the courts – as well as to have won a City Council seat in 1985, when openly gay elected officials were not exactly common. He will need all that strength and resilience to carry him through a very demanding primary campaign against two powerful and capable opponents for the Democratic nomination in the mayoral race – City Council member Wade Nordwood and former Chief of Police Bob Duffy.

Mains recently spoke with the Empty Closet about why he decided to run, and why he feels he is the candidate who can best get the job done.

Empty Closet: Have you been thinking about a mayoral run for several years now?

Tim Mains: No. It really became an option after I won the lawsuit to remain on City Council. Otherwise I had been headed toward retirement from political life. I wasn’t expecting to run again, but the whole crazy brouhaha about the conflict of interest really energized me. I felt personally responsible, not just to defend myself, but to defend what I considered to be the principles of democracy. I viewed the law (forbidding a school district employee to serve on Council) as akin to turning City Council into a private club. It smashed of something totally undemocratic.

In fighting that law, the last thing I wanted was to be pushed off Council and have my legacy be that henceforth anybody who works for schools is prohibited from public service. Now, my legacy is quite different—now it’s “You can fight City Hall and win.”

David (Gardner, Tim’s partner) said to me, “If you win the lawsuit, you will have

have to run for re-election.” This was on the basis of, if you have a victory in court, use it. Now we have that law overturned by a federal court, and the door is open. David encouraged me very strongly to walk through it. Others approached me and said, “No, you should be running for mayor.”

People have often said that to me over the years, and it was very flattering and very nice. About 10 years ago I did explore that briefly, but I only went through the designation phase. I really felt like what I was doing in Council was a good contribution, and I enjoyed my work in school. So I didn’t see myself wanting or needing to jump into anything else. But people were calling for me to run for mayor, and it intensified in September and October, so I agreed to consider it.

EC: If you win, will you resign from your position at School 50?

Tim Mains: It’s interesting — obviously the easy path would have been to run for Council. I could do it with my eyes closed. I could help everybody else, and it wouldn’t cost a lot of money or take a lot of my time. If I win (the mayoral race), I wouldn’t legally have to resign my school job, but the city deserves a mayor who is focused on the city only, so I would resign, retire or take a leave from the school district.

EC: Your focus for many years has been on finance — how would you deal with running a city which has such severe financial problems?

Tim Mains: I don’t think there’s anybody in the race who has a former grasp of the intricacies of city finances and the challenges that the city faces financially than I do. I care deeply about this city and this community. I have always been very committed. This is my home. Part of the same values and forces that drove me to come from the Greece school district and take over a city school are the same values and forces that drive me now to sit in the mayor’s seat and oversee and run the city. I took a big risk when I left Greece. I left 30 years of seniority and tenure, and 110 days sick leave and a very positive professional reputation — I traded all that for an “act of impeachment, starting from scratch” with tenure, seniority and sick days! I did it because I care about the city and feel the City of Canandaigua has had a history with strong principles, and I felt I had the skill set to do the job.

I’m innovative for being mayor. I have very specific ideas about what the city needs, and I believe I have the skill set to deal with that. I concluded it’s my responsibility to run for Mayor. I have to do this.

EC: Have you put together a campaign team yet?

Tim Mains: The irony about all this is that Wade’s been actively campaigning for four years, and Bob for four months. Although he hadn’t announced, he’s been asking for support, looking for people to give money, etc. I’m starting after both of them – at this point I’ve been running for four weeks.

EC: It’s ironic then, that your announcement come before both of theirs.

Tim Mains: When I came to that decision, I announced it (on Feb. 10) and then the work started of organizing the campaign. I put together a team. Within a week of announcing, we had a campaign headquarters (in the Academy building next to St. Luke’s). Simon the Cyrene Church on Fitzhugh St.) Within two weeks, over 50 people had stepped forward to volunteer, and within three weeks we had a website. That’s why there’s a great number of people who were looking for an alternative to Wade and Bob.

EC: How do you see the split between city and county?

Tim Mains: I will talk in the campaign about government operation and co-operation. A mayor needs a clear understanding of how government works and how politics influences government.

Specifically, with the county, I have already reached out to (County Executive) Rob Astorino and (Commissioner of elections) John Masiello. I want to see what they can do in terms of things we can do together. I want to see what we can do in terms of benefits and rights from the courts.

County executive Anthony Delorenzo encouraged me very strongly to walk through it. He really felt like what I was doing in Council was a good contribution, and I enjoyed my work in school. At the 2014 budget discussions, I talked about a continuum of relationships that needs to exist between different levels of government — Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, Consolidation.

EC: What will talking about metropolitan government tend to only see the consolidation point, not the steps that preceded it. I’ll be focusing on those first levels in my relations with the county. For example, I’m not just interested in having conversations with Maggie (although that is very important), but also I’m interested in identifying people in our organizations who need to talk to each other — data processing people should talk to their data processing people, and the same goes for law enforcement, economic planning, finance people – there ought to be several links at staff level between city and county, and to have a flow of information.

Because you’re talking on a regular basis, you get knowledge and opportunities to move ahead on collaboration. We now have a collaboration around new enforcement training facility – the sheriff’s department, the fire department, and towns use it. There will be many opportunities we can discover if we get communication and collaboration going in a more expanded way.

EC: You do seem to be always the one becoming owner of the ferry? It seems there are very few ferries that don’t have to be subsidized by a municipality, but the ferry hired to manage the ferry (Bass Ferries) seems to have achieved that.

Tim Mains: Certainly the business plan ferry calls for no subsidies. It calls for it for a supporting ferry. The company was hired by the city to manage ferry services without subsidies elsewhere.

Personally, I think the ferry is a unique amenity, and it calls for a value to the community, especially in the area of economic development and tourism. The ferry is a success, and it’s bringing in money.

The board has the option to sell at any time, so if it doesn’t meet expectations they can sell.

My dream is that it becomes a money maker, and if we are successful in enough other areas, that’s possible.

EC: The N.Y.C. marriage license ruling is being appealed, and if that decision is upheld, what effect will that have on our municipalities throughout the state?

Tim Mains: I believe it was a state supreme court decision and then was appealed to the appellate court in N.Y.C. So it wouldn’t change the law overnight, but I believe our fight for equal treatment in how our families are recognized will take many years. This is the new frontier. It won’t happen quickly, but I do believe it will happen.

However, if a case in N.Y.C. is appealed to the state Court of Appeals, our high court appeals court, then the ruling could be applicable to the whole state — if the Court of Appeals chooses to make it so.

EC: Right now, politicians like N.Y.C. Mayor Bloomberg are saying it’s a matter for the courts, a judge in Texas says it’s a matter for the legislature.

Tim Mains: We’re a hot potato. We have a huge challenge — that is, to really help our neighbors, friends, families and co-workers understand what marriage is and that our families deserve the same rights as any other families. That’s our job, despite what we win in terms of benefits and rights from the judicial or legislative branches; that doesn’t remove our responsibility.

We have a tremendous amount of educating to do. We have to make sure our elected officials have the knowledge and opportunity to educate the rest of society. We can’t sit back and cross our fingers and hope something will happen.

Massachusetts is an example of how steady and persistent public education — people being out, talking about their lives — can win. Not one Massachusetts legislator who voted for marriage rights has lost his seat — not once. It’s logical step next, and people have done their work. Right now we’re dealing with the backlash, and we have to figure out how to be firmly planted when the wave comes back at us.

EC: Anything you’d like to add?

Tim Mains: I do hope that people in our community (some of my strongest supporters are in the GLBT community) will step up and join me in this challenge. Mine is a bootstrap campaign. The heavy hitters (like Molly Clifford, former head of the county Democratic Party, who has just announced she will run Bob Duffy’s campaign) have joined Duffy. They think he’s a slam-dunk winner, he can beat Wade, etc. That’s not the way to make decisions – it’s not who’s more appealing, but who’s able and competent to do the job that needs to be done right now.

I think we need a wave of volunteers, people giving time and money, but there’s no question this is a winnable race. I have 30 years of seniority and tenure, and I have a skill set that can do the job. If you’re willing to take a risk in 1985, and I think they’ll be willing, having seen me run, I think you have a unique opportunity to bring to the table skills and energy that no other candidate does.
Michigan denies benefits to same sex couples

The state and local governments in Michigan are no longer allowed to give benefits to employees’ same-sex partners now that voters have approved Proposal 2, a constitutional ban on marriage of same-sex couples, according to the opinion issued March 16 by the state Attorney General Michigan Mike Cox.

“The people pushing these amendments have shown their true colors,” said David M. Smith, Human Rights Campaign president for policy. “This has nothing to do with protecting marriage, and everything to do with denying rights — even rights as basic as health insurance — to same-sex couples.”

“Michigan voters are not getting what they believed they voted for,” said Jeff Montgomery, executive director of Michigan’s Holland Foundation. “Citizen across the state will be saddened as the realization sinks in that families will be losing health care benefits if Mr. Cox’s opinion pencil. It’s shameful that Cox has aided and abetted this mean-spirited assault on gay and lesbian people.”

According to Michigan’s office of civil service, there are roughly 55,522 employees of the state government in Michigan. The 2000 Census showed that there are more than 15,000 same-sex couples living in the state of Michigan.

Literally, thousands of families in Michigan may be denied health care because of this amendment. This should be a wake up call to the nation about the Marriage Protection Act in the Senate — it is not good for families,” said Smith.

Eleven state constitutional amendments were passed by voters on Election Day last year that ban marriage rights and other protections for same-sex couples in those states. A similar measure was introduced on the federal level last year and was soundly defeated in the Senate, though it has been reintroduced again this year as the Marriage Protection Act, which would define marriage as being solely between a man and a woman, and could deny any of the rights, benefits or protections of marriage to same-sex couples.

“Time and again, we have heard that people behind these ballot measures are not trying to deny rights and protections. Once again, their actions have betrayed their promises. Same-sex couples are hurt in very real ways by these measures,” said Smith.

International news round up

New Zealand

Thousands of members of a conservative church rallied against proposed legal changes that would give unmarried couples many rights similar to heterosexual couples.

The law, which will go into effect in May, will affect rights to child custody, property rights, tax, welfare and retirement benefits. The anti-gay demonstration was briefly halted by about 100 pro-gay rights demonstrators, who blocked the street before they were moved by police.

India

Two women who want to marry were returned to the custody of their families in the city of Khurda, near Bhubaneswar in the state of Oriana.

The women, both in their 20s, have been in love for four years. They asked Khurda police to help them marry and stay together. Khurda SP Amit Pratap Singh told the Times that although marriage of persons of the same sex is prohibited, he had been surprised by the women’s love for each other and said that “if two women decide to stay together,” there is nothing wrong with that.

Police told the women there was nothing they could do, and handed them back to their parents. They are the second Indian lesbian couple to apply for marriage rights in recent months.

Hungary

The Hungarian government is considering offering a civil partnership for same-sex couples by 2007, according to Gay.com. UK. The system would resemble the British Civil Partnerships Law, which will go into effect in December. Same-sex couples would receive some of the same rights as heterosexual couples, but would not be allowed to adopt or have traditional wedding ceremonies, according to the Budapest Sun.

- The Washington Blade
The page contains text that appears to be discussing legal issues and actions taken by the Anglican Communion. It mentions the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' gathering. The text also references the FDA, and there are sections dealing with healthcare and insurance. The overall content seems to be about making decisions and addressing concerns in a community setting.
Artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude on Feb. 12 at the Gates opening. All photos on this page by Scott McCarney.

Christo & Jeanne-Claude
Central Park, NYC
1979-2005
12’02’05
Crisp Azure Wintery Skies
Speculative Buzz, Creative Forces
Curious New York Drawn
Into The Park & Under The Gates,
Serpentine Cocoons, Trailing Tangerine Swirling Ribbons
Keeper’s Unleashed, Unfurled, Revealing
16 Footed, Steel Booted, Firmly Grounded
Saffron Shafted, Draped Gates
13’02’05
Blackened Breezy Darkened Eye
Shimmering, Windswept, Saffron Panels
Passerby’s Eyes Sensually Teased
A Nightwalker’s Voyeuristic Feast

14’02’05
Reflective Golden Rivers Flow
Curb Contained, Streaked, Soaked, Dripping
Undaunted, Dazzled, Lookers Linger
Freedom, Form, Less, More

23 Miles
7500 Gates
15,000 Bases
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Genesee Valley Park

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Contact Chuck Argento
Pridepicnic05@rochester.rr.com
or phone the GAGV at
244-8640, ext 20.
Local media ignore clergy support for gay rights: Pride in the Pulpit draws over 60 religious leaders

By Wendee Jacobson

The civil rights movement in America would not have had success without spirituality, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s spiritual leadership at the forefront of the movement. His tactics of peaceful, non-violent protests, coupled with bus boycotts and civil disobedience, were the key elements to the success of the movement. It was that spiritual component that allowed African Americans to turn the corner and win the hearts and minds of America, and has since inspired many social justice movements.

The Empire Pride Agenda in N.Y.C. has organized a statewide coalition of religious and lay people who hope in changing the hearts and minds of New Yorkers when it comes to discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered individuals. Over the past few months, the Pride Agenda has sponsored "Pride in the Pulpit," events across New York State, in Albany, Syracuse, New York City, and Rochester.

The dry-long Rochester event on Feb. 20 was held at the Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Interestingly, local press coverage was limited to the event, yet none showed to cover it, although a Democratic Senator from Rochester, with the press release from the local media: "The media is almost always chooses a religious perspective" on gay rights from the fundamentalist and on gay rights from the fundamentalist perspective. The Rev. Jen Crowe of First Unitarian Church in Rochester was described by pastors and members of the clergy as a welcoming faith community to gay, lesbian and transgendered people, and clergy and lay leaders from all faiths were represented at the event.

Panel discussions and break-out sessions included such topics as "Advocating and Working With Elected Officials" (presented by Carmen Vargas, Deputy Director Pride Agenda), "Working With the Media to Advance the LGBT Rights Movement," presented by Rev. Jen Crowe, (Minister, First Unitarian Church), Maricorta Gregory (Religion reporter from the Democrat and Chronicle) and Joseph Hill (former reporter for the Rochester News and Courier), and "Our God Is Inclusive: Advocating from the Pulpit and in the Community."

At an afternoon plenary session, break-out groups came together and reported group outcomes. Future goals for the Rochester group included forming a Speaker's Bureau to outreach to other congregations throughout the region, finding ways to encourage the press to show churches as welcoming, and meeting the need to use scissor responses to public statements on the issues.

One group member emphasized that gay rights and the gay marriage issue should be part of all clergy's justice work. For more information about future Pride in the Pulpit events, contact empireagenda.org.

REX, WILLIE SEALS OF CROCS

Lambda Legal to file suit for gay L.I. couple denied benefits

In legal papers filed on March 16, Lambda Legal has taken the first step toward filing a lawsuit on behalf of a gay couple who were legally married last year in Canada but were denied spousal health benefits from Unioinerside Free School Dist. on Long Island.

The lawsuit will argue that state law clearly requires government entities to respect marriages performed out of state, including same-sex couples' marriages that were performed legally elsewhere.

Lambda Legal represents Duke Fundenburke, 72, who worked as a teacher at the Uniondale Union Free School District in Nassau County for over 20 years before retiring in 1986. He married his partner of 29 years, Brad Davis, 67, in October 2004 in a ceremony in Ontario, Canada. When Fundenburke requested that his retirement health benefits be extended to his spouse, just as benefits are extended to other married retirees, the school district refused.

"New York law is clear that when couples get legally married somewhere else, their marriages are recognized in New York. It doesn't matter whether same-sex couples can get married in New York right now — if they were married legally somewhere else, the law says they're legally married," said Alphonso David, Staff Attorney at Lambda Legal who is handling the case.

The papers served March 16 say that the school district violated its contractual, statutory and regulatory obligations, as well as common law and the state constitution, in refusing spousal coverage to Fundenburke and Davis (the papers are a notice of claim that will allow a lawsuit to be filed in 30 days). Lambda Legal also cites opinions in recent months that were issued by New York's Attorney General and State Comptroller, both clearly stating that out-of-state marriages of same-sex couples must be recognized in New York.

"The law is clear in this area, but we keep hearing from couples like Duke and Brad who are being denied critical health coverage even though they're legally married," David said. "These couples are constantly having to prove that they're married and are entitled to the same benefits as other married couples."

"We have been together for 42 years and there are many situations in which we are entitled to the same benefits as other married couples..." said Brad Davis.

Lambda Legal filed the lawsuit in the Supreme Court of the State of New York.

Lambda Legal seeks a declaratory judgment and judgment directing the Rochester religious community; clergy and lay leaders from all faiths were represented at the event. A favorable ruling would not represent the first time a state court in New York recognized a same-sex couple as spouses. In a ruling in April 2003 from Nassau County Supreme Court, Lambda Legal won the first case in the nation that appropriately recognized a couple who entered into a Vermont civil union as spouses outside that state. The decision in Langan v. St. Vincent's Hospital is currently on appeal.

Lambda Legal and the New York Civil Liberties Union have filed a lawsuit on behalf of several same-sex couples in New York who have been denied spousal health benefits by their employers.

Lambda Legal is seeking a declaratory judgment and a court order compelling the Rochester/Syracuse Region 2 to cover it, although a Democratic Senator from Rochester, with the press release from the local media: "The media is almost always chooses a religious perspective" on gay rights from the fundamentalist perspective. The Rev. Jen Crowe of First Unitarian Church in Rochester was described by pastors and members of the clergy as a welcoming faith community to gay, lesbian and transgendered people, and clergy and lay leaders from all faiths were represented at the event.

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One group member emphasized that gay rights and the gay marriage issue should be part of all clergy's justice work. For more information about future Pride in the Pulpit events, contact empireagenda.org.

Why get married in the new millennium? Forum in Avon to feature Rev. Dr. Janie Spahr

The Rev. Dr. Jane Adams Spahr will moderate a community conversation about civil marriage for same-sex couples on Saturday, April 20, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The forum will take place at Central Presbyterian Church, 333 Genesee St., Avon.

Why the interest in civil marriage by gay and lesbian couples? Is this new? Why is this important for them? Can the community benefit from encouraging healthy, enduring relationships?

Everyone is cordially invited to hear Rev. Dr. Spahr, Evangelist for Downtown United Presbyterian Church and That All May Freely Serve, moderate this forum featuring several local religious leaders and clergy.

The forum is sponsored by Welcoming Presbyterians of Genesee Valley. For more information, contact the Rev. Mark Carter, 585-271-7649; racnt2@rochester.rr.com.

Directions: Take I-390 to ex. 10, head west on Route 58 to Avon. Go left on Park Place, right on Genesee St.

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In the U.S., Massachusetts is the only state where same-sex couples can legally marry. Lambda Legal won a groundbreaking ruling last month, when a New York City judge ruled that same-sex couples must be allowed to marry. The city has asked New York State’s highest court to hear an appeal.

Lambda Legal is also suing for marriage equality in New Jersey, where a ruling is pending at a mid-level state appeals court. On March 14, a California trial court judge ruled in favor of Lambda Legal, NCLR and the ACLU, saying same-sex couples must be allowed to marry. Earlier this month, the Washington Supreme Court heard oral arguments in a case brought by Lambda Legal and Northwest Justice Project, seeking marriage for same-sex couples statewide.

David is Lambda Legal’s lead attorney on the case, Funderburke v. Unioneidale Union Free School District et al. Jeffrey S. Tuchman and Norman C. Simon of the New York City law firm, Kramer Levin are co-counsel on the case.

Group plans conference on HIV for May 18

Liberty Research Group will present the 2005 HIV/AIDS Upstate Regional Conference on May 18 at the Diplomat Banquet Hall in Gates.

The conference is for community based organizations, staff, consumers, and workers which have interest in HIV/AIDS and policies for consumers and employees to be aware of in their daily struggle to live with HIV disease.

Discussion will include advocacy and leadership on organizational board, the issues in the community and public speaking. Speakers will also address special population issues within the general community.

The conference will run from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Individual tickets are $35, and group rates are available. Checks should be made payable to Liberty Research Group, PO Box 41183, Rochester NY 14604.

For more information, call 585-244-9177 or email twig0m@666@yahoo.com.

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Space is limited and the deadline for reservations is April 22 by 5 p.m.

Lesbian couple barred from Utica health club; arthritic woman needs aquatic therapy

The American Civil Liberties Union and the New York Civil Liberties Union filed a discrimination lawsuit Feb. 24 on behalf of a Utica couple kicked out of the wellness program at the Charles T. Sitrin Health Care Center, Inc., because they are lesbian. One of the plaintiffs suffers from severe osteoarthritis and other medical conditions that need to use the facility’s pool to avoid losing her leg.

"It is shameful that a business that is supposedly committed to improving people’s health would deny this couple access solely because they are lesbians," said Shaw McGowan, a staff attorney for the ACLU’s Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, who is representing the couple. "This kind of discrimination will no longer fly now that sexual orientation discrimination is illegal in New York State."

The New York State anti-discrimination law (SODNA) became effective in 2003. The ACLU believes this is the first time the law has been tested. Under SODNA, any business, regardless of its accessible parking.

The lawsuit was filed by Utica resident Louise Bizzari and her partner Barbara Hackert. Bizzari has another diagnosis of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. She suffers from severe pain in her back, hips, knees, ankles and feet. In 2003, after getting her health back, she found a job at a gym to pay for the surgery.

After investigating other pools in Utica, Utica, MS. was chosen by her partner because of its accessible parking. She applied to the Director of Clinical Rehabilitation Services to participate in an aquatic therapy program offered by the facility. When the Director learned that Bizzari intended to use the pool to facilitate gravely needed physical therapy and exercise. Bizzari's arthritis condition has been in remission for more than 20 years, Barbara Hackert, learned of another program at the Sitrin Center that doesn't discriminate, but allowed only participants to use the rehabilitation pool in the evenings and on Saturday mornings.

The Director confronted Bizzari when she entered the facility. When Bizzari accused the Director of sexual orientation discrimination, the supervisor referred to Bizzari and Hackert as "faggots" and turned her away, saying that she was going to call the police.

The police arrived soon thereafter and confronted Bizzari outside of the building asking them what Bizzari was doing in the pool. On Jan. 3, 2005, Hackert received a call from the Director telling her that she and Bizzari had been dismissed from the pool. Bizzari was devastated and pleaded with the supervisor to let her use the pool. Thinking that the supervisor was swayed, Bizzari returned to use the pool the following day. The Director confronted Bizzari when she entered the facility. When Bizzari accused the Director of sexual orientation discrimination, the supervisor referred to Bizzari and Hackert as "faggots" and turned her away, saying that she was going to call the police.

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What a refreshing change of pace

Omega hosts May retreat for gay men

Omega Institute is hosting a celebratory retreat for gay men of all ages and walks of life. Titled "Now is the Time: A Celebration of Community for Gay Men," the retreat is scheduled for May 6 – 8 on Omega’s Rhinebeck, N.Y. campus.

The retreat includes keynote events and presentations, as well as workshops on topics such as yoga, relationships, legal and social issues pertaining to gay rights, and spirituality.

"Omega is hosting this event during a time of continual and polarization concerning the rights of gay individuals in our country," said Skip Backus, Omega’s executive director. "We believe it is important to support all the members of our society as they struggle for equality and inclusion. This event brings gay men together in community to share stories, gather information, meet new friends, and become inspired to live in the world with dignity, courage, and hope."

Keynote events

Keynote events include readings by Michael Cunningham and Mark Doty. Cunningham is the author of The Hours, A Home at the End of the World, both of which have been made into movies. He received the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the PEN/Faulkner Award, both for The Hours. His next novel, Speak, Sweet Nothings, is forthcoming.

Doty is noted for writing successfully as an openly gay man. He is the author of six books of poems, including Source, Sex, Machine, Atlantic, which received the Ambassador Book Award, the Bing-Forte Literary Award, and My Alcestria, which won the National Book Critics Circle Award and Britain’s T.S. Eliot Prize. He has also published Heaven’s Coast: A Memoir, Sacred Rites, Equal Rights - Why You Should Give a Damn, and the PEN/Martha Albrand Award for First Book, Sweet Ruins.

Upcoming summer events

Also being offered on Omega’s Rhinebeck, New York campus: Soul-Making for Gay Men led by Paul Chirumbolo, June 3 – 5; Sacred Sexualities: A Retreat for Lesbians led by Reverend Irene Monroe, July 1 – 5; and Gay Marriage: Civil Rights, Sacred Rites, Equal Rights – Why You Should Give a Damn, led by Davina Koral斯基, Aug. 19 – 21.

For more information or to register for this retreat, contact Omega at 800-944-1001 or onemag.org.

About Omega

Omega Institute is the nation’s largest holistic education center, offering learning vacations at its 185-acre Rhinebeck, New York campus, as well as Omega at The Crossings in Austin, Texas, sites in the Caribbean and Costa Rica, and at conferences nationwide. Founded in 1977, Omega is devoted to the rejuvenation and transformation of mind, body, and spirit.

Now is the time

By Jeffery Young

Are you looking for something completely different? Tired of the same old bar scene? Empty weekends? Well, Omega’s got an answer for those Winter doldrums. Get Springy and pack it off to Rhinebeck to socialize and bond with other men from around the country. An all-male event without the drugs, dedicated music and attitude—what a refreshing change of pace to meet men who are ready to change their lives and the world they live in.

Omega Institute is offering a Gay Men’s retreat the first weekend of May. Stay at their campus in Rhinebeck. Nothing quite like this has ever been offered to the gay community previously. The faculty for this weekend event was thoughtfully constructed to provide a forum for men of all walks of life to come together and share ideas, common interests and camaraderie. What a fantastic way to meet men that are interested in literature, poetry, dance, yoga, politics, spiritual action and art. It’s your time to Shine!

This all began as a little idea that was hatched last summer while I was teaching yoga classes at Omega. I noticed the declining offerings of gay programming over the years and suggested something revolutionary. A gay men’s weekend!

Before I knew it I was presenting the concept to Skip Backus, the Executive Director of Omega. He and I put our heads together and came up with an alternate event with great vision and an open heart. Skip sensed the importance of embracing such an opportunity and he immediately said yes. As we were sketching out a template for the weekend, I thought about how important it is to speak up when an idea presents itself. It’s all about taking risks after all. That is how we change the world, one friendship at a time.

The dining hall is a great location to socialize over the epicurean creations of Omega’s Master Chef John Burelak, who serves up a menu of wonderfully whole-some and nourishing vegetarian delights. If you have never experienced natural and organic cooking, you are most certainly in for a treat to eat healthy and rejuvenate your body.

Some of the other interesting elements of an Omega experience are the summer camp accommodations, a beautiful library and bookstore, a café, a wellness center (which offers many styles of bodywork), a fabulous sauna and lots of private spaces. In true camp fashion, there is also a false causeway in which to take short excursions. Get some exercise and maybe we’ll inaugurate a mini-olympics next year.

I will be instructing two yoga workshops during the weekend and look forward to sharing some of my own ideas to increase your flexibility and endurance, enhance your sex life and, most importantly, find that quiet space within.

Providing this men’s event is successful, we can look for this offering each and every spring. Also in the works is an all-lesbian event that should be offered in 2006. Hope to see you at the Omega Institute in May. From the bottom of my heart I wish you much growth and increase in your centers and slowly spirals outward. Take our message of oneness to our friends, neighbors and coworkers and widen our sphere of acceptance and influence. Community, education and action create the new paradigm. The future is in our hands.*

*Does not include Land or Site Work.
Busting myths about HIV/AIDS: a personal perspective from Patrick Fisher

By Susan Jordan

Patrick Fisher works at the HIV Vaccine Trials Unit at the University of Rochester Medical Center, but in this issue he speaks as an individual – a gay man living in the U.S.A. at the turn of the 21st century. Organizer of last month's East End Bets AIDS events, Fisher has a personal perspective on the epidemic and especially on the problems faced by long term survivors.

Empty Closet: Can you dispel some of the myths about HIV that seem to be around now – i.e. that "It's no big deal now, you can just take some pills," or "Long term survivors don't face any problems?"

Patrick Fisher: I am HIV negative, but I work in the field, and was a partner of someone who survived with AIDS for 18 years; we traveled that road together. I can only talk about what I know.

Long term survival to me has several components, two primary components being long term survival for the person infected, and long term survival as a 'sane/discordant' couple. My partner Jimmy Turri survived during years prior to treatment, and then progressed to survive including treatment. He rejected AZT in the early days AZT was administered as monotherapy. Though it worked for some, Jimmy wouldn't have anything to do with that, because his perception was that AZT was too toxic.

Today the concern is that not all people on the HAART treatment program (Highly Active Anti Retroviral Therapy) respond the same way. About 20 HAART medications exist and are prescribed in different combinations. Reactions to HAART medications vary among individuals. Many have side effects, which are very real and do complicate life. A number of people on HAART have had massive bouts of diarrhea, that come on very quickly, and you may not have time to get to the toilet. One of the very real outcomes is humiliation.

Another side effect of some treatments for Jimmy was severe cramping, which some people just can’t tolerate. One of the main issues with HAART medications is that it is critical to adhere to the schedule and be compliant with the regimen. Not complying can result in resistance to the medications, meaning the medicine may not work as prescribed.

Two other factors are the psychological impact of having to endure such side effects, and the emotional impact of being on medication for some time, you know that if you don’t take the pills, the end result will be more disease, and death.

What I witnessed with Jimmy was that with his treatments, his disease became somewhat manageable for stages at a time. At some stages he was healthy enough to want to return to work. Similarly, many people are faced with a desire to return to work but have been out of work through much of the Information Age. Some find themselves feeling unskilled and untrained for today's work force. Although Medicare and SSD allow a person to have some earnings every month – up to $700-$800 – without implications for their funding, some long term survivors feel ill-equipped to be competitive in the marketplace.

Prior to Jimmy's passing, he was making every attempt through VEMID (Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities) and the Rochester Rehab Center to seek part time work. Though he had made many attempts, he never found a job. Many others have tried for jobs in the Rochester area. Long term survivors don't face any unemployment issues. In spite of his own determination and self-empowerment he was soon realizing it was not going to be an easy task. And everywhere he turned, yet another barrier and obstacle seemed to exist.

So, one challenge that remains is that we still don't have a society that makes low-cost or FREE training available to those who contemplate re-entry into the work force. Not only is this necessary for people with HIV, but it should be made more easily attainable and accessible to people with disabilities in general. I've always thought places such as Wegmans, Kodak, Frontier and local schools or colleges could and would be available to buffer that training gap, if approached.

Another matter that I believe may concern long term survivors of HIV is that no one ever bargained on being sexually celibate for life (unless you're bargained with yourself to become a priest or friar). However, we seem to expect people with HIV to be celibate. It's an unfair expectation; you don't seem to appreciate they continue to be sexual beings. Why say to them, 'You're HIV positive and you shouldn't be concerned about having sex?' Why not say: 'You're HIV positive – what can we do to help you maintain good sexual health in ways that protect you and your partner(s)'

There are many positive/negative couples who have worked this out, but there are also many positive individuals who are still seeking a partner to share life with. The stigma and discrimination factor tend...
to keep a person living with HIV feeling cloistered or needing to be on the down low. As a result of that, some are making choices which maybe aren’t as healthy as they could be.

Further, just because you’re HIV positive doesn’t mean you’re not presented with the same temptations and responsibilities everybody else has to deal with. Cell phones, e-mail, chat rooms – today it’s so easy to communicate quickly and easily, anytime, anywhere. While these tools on the one hand make life convenient, they also lead to the increase in anonymous sexual encounters. Such encounters among men who have sex with men may occur in Rochester’s bath house, in private homes and at public meeting places. Much of the time, such encounters are not planned with “safe sex” in mind. Such encounters may put individuals at greater risk for exposure to HIV. And, for those who may already be HIV positive, unsafe encounters may contribute to developing resistance to existing HIV medications. Of course, it must be added such choices are not limited to men who have sex with men, nor to long-term survivors of HIV or AIDS. Choices toward unsafe sexual encounters are being made every day by society in general.

EC: Choices like bare backin', crystal meth, etc.

PF: I can only say I’m surprised that, with what we went through in the ‘80s with our gay men dying from AIDS, it doesn’t have us thinking more about our own safety. Given that there’s now a mutant form of HIV that’s almost totally resistant to every medication that’s on the market today, as a gay man, I fail to understand why men would willingly have unprotected sex with other men under any circumstance—let alone in anonymous situations – regardless of either party’s known or unknown HIV status.

The other thing I don’t understand is why some people who know they are HIV positive would willingly engage it high risk sexual behavior, without identifying that status to their partner and without using protection. Yet, that behavior I know is going on, because I’ve had this conversation with some men in my own living room.

This risky behavior is not limited to gay men nor to men who have sex with men – that’s important to know. But as a gay man, I’m informed that this activity isn’t limited to Rochester’s bath house either. It extends into private homes by way of sex parties, and in public places – and the sexual appetite of the so inclined. I tend to believe that there is a need for some of us to begin to question our own behaviors and perhaps consider modifying some of our behaviors toward being more sexually safe and more responsible to our sexual partners. Until we do, the very sad truth is that this otherwise very human behavior puts us at greater risk and may result in becoming infected with HIV for the first time or in developing cross-resistance to known HIV treatments – thereby shortening our own life expectancy or spreading another’s.

As mysterious as HIV is, preventing it is no longer a mystery. It is totally preventable.

Unfortunately, some of us are burned out with “Be Safe” messages and aren’t listening to them any more. Shame on us.

I am told that approximately 20 percent of new HIV infections in Rochester are with mutant forms of the virus that are resistant to one or more of existing medical treatments. This fact alone should be a wake-up call for everyone to be safe and to give a damn about your sexual partner and our sexual choices.

HIV never was a “gay” disease. It is and always has been a human disease worldwide. But, given that the first wave of HIV was so devastating to so many gay men in the 1980s, one would think we’d all be smarter by now and would be advisors and role models to the next generation.

EC: The attitude of the Bush administration and the far right toward education seems to be to speak only about “abstinence” – which is so sexist, because billions of women and young girls here and in the Third World don’t have a choice of whether to obtain or not. Rape, violation and forced marriage are daily realities for them.

PF: Worldwide, women aren’t as easily able to negotiate safe sex as men might be. Women and girls account for a very high percentage of new HIV infections. And it’s true, heterosexual transmission in Rochester, as in the rest of the world, is alarming. Yet in spite of the AIDS legacy, HIV is still strongly influencing gay America, men who have sex with men, and people over 50.

People need to know: resistance or cross-resistance to existing treatments for HIV can be transmitted from one person to the next in unsafe behaviors. In terms of the myth, for a long time some people living with HIV thought if their sexual partner was also HIV positive, they didn’t need to be concerned about using condoms or practicing safe sex. What is now known is that level of resistance or cross-resistance to existing treatments for HIV can be transmitted from one person to the next in unsafe behaviors. In terms of the myth, for a long time some people living with HIV thought if their sexual partner was also HIV positive, they didn’t need to be concerned about using condoms or practicing safe sex.
"safe" when having sex with each other, even if both parties are already HIV-positive. They need to know that it is possible to transmit their own resistance to meds, to others. Unless human behaviors can end up transmitting mutant forms of the virus resulting in decreased available options for treatment.

I'd ask, what's happened to our sense of personal moral (or "responsible") behavior? I'm not a religious person, but I can't understand how someone who knows they are HIV positive could knowingly risk infecting someone else without advising them, just to get their rocks off. Yet I'm afraid that is what's happening among some of us, some of the time.

Denial is a long term result of AIDS as well, or can be for some. While it is true that some of our behaviors are totally reprehensible. I shake my head when I hear some say, "Well, well, what if I'm HIV positive?" If someone wants to have anonymous and unprotected sex with me in the bath house, I'm going to oblige them. It's their choice to be safe and they don't need to know my HIV status. After all, AIDS is their business, not mine.

Of course, given continuing levels of stigma and discrimination, it's easy to understand why people wouldn't want to identify their status to the general public. There's little reward to it. It's almost more rewarding not to know. But we have to keep working at creating an atmosphere that embraces the "I" in HIV and AIDS.

For whatever reason, it's been my experience that many gay and lesbian people often don't have families that truly support us. Often, even our friends and neighbors run the other way. But it doesn't remove us from the obligation to help in whatever ways we can to generate a safer, more compassionate society.

As mysterious as HIV is, preventing it is no longer a mystery. It is totally preventable. Unfortunately, some of us are burned out with 'Be Safe' messages and aren't listening to them any more. Shame on us.

The ABC approach — Abstain, Be faithful, wear Condoms — is a message that is beginning to spread within some church-related organizations and denominations — if they're not too far right.

EC: In which case the message would be, Abstain, Be faithful, and We're Not Giving You Any More Information.

PF: I know this may sound work-related, but I believe in my heart, having a vaccine which may prevent infection, combined with known methods of prevention, is still the best hope to stop AIDS.

And that always comes down to us, the people most influenced by the disease. If we continue to not take part in HIV vaccine research, if we don't begin to demand more active vaccine and microbicide studies, a vaccine may never happen. Without more vaccine volunteers in local studies, there will NEVER be one.

I beg readers to consider taking part in this important work or to call the Vaccine Trials Unit (585) 756-2329 for more information about local vaccine study opportunities. It's one way to help.

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<td>Fri., April 1</td>
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Serving the Park Avenue Community for 5 years
Mayoral candidates Tim Mains (above) and Bob Duffy took part.

NYC-based lesbian singer-songwriter Athena Reich performs at the Spot on March 20.

EAST END BEATS AIDS, organized by Patrick Fisher (above with Athena Reich) and James D. Young, drew crowds to four East End clubs in February and March. Michael Lee, Phyl Contestable, Alan Jones, a.k.a. the Blues, Joe Shiel and many other musicians contributed to the series, dedicated to the memory of Jimmy V. Turri.

LGBT EQUALITY & JUSTICE DAY
MAY 24, 2005 • ALBANY, NY

SIGN UP TODAY!
Join 500 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) New Yorkers and our allies in Albany on Tuesday, May 24, 2005 to fight for equality and justice!

Empire State Pride Agenda is mobilizing advocates, clergy, community leaders and constituents to share with legislators our lives, our stories and the issues that impact LGBT New Yorkers and our families.

With decisions looming in New York State on marriage and other key issues, it is critical that we show our strength this year. From Buffalo to Montauk, we will gather for a day of advocacy in Albany.

Get on a Pride Agenda bus and be part of this moment!
To register or learn more about this important day, visit our website at www.prideagenda.org or call Julie Guerrero, Community Organizer, at 212.627.0305.

“It is time to be visible and let legislators know we want our rights and we’re not going away.” — ALAN VAN CAPELLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

• Winning Legal Protections for LGBT Families, including Marriage!
• Keeping New York DOMA-Free!
• Fighting for Transgender Rights!
• Making Schools Safe from Bias-Based Bullying and Harassment!
• Securing Funding for LGBT Community Organizations!

BAREBACKING CONTROVERSY: Treasure Island Media, specializing in bare backing films, held a video giveaway and DVD release party for the film “Meat Rack” at Eagle on March 4. A casting call was also held for a new video that will be filmed over Black Party weekend where models will have unprotected sex. Pictured is Jon Winkleman of the Stonewall Democratic Club, passing out safer sex information to educate patrons. Many gays were angry at the bare-backing message, saying it will increase infections.


WEDDING BELLE: The wedding of Langcorya Coco Lucas and Louis Angel Rodriguez took place March 13 at the Metropolitan Community Church. The couple are from Jersey City, New Jersey. Louis Angel Rodriguez (groom), is shown with Langcorya Coco Lucas (transgender bride).

L WORD: A bus shelter poster features “The L Word” TV show on 77th St. and 3rd Ave. in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn on March 4. State Senator Marty Golden (R-C-I, 22nd district) is trying to remove the ad because of its sexual nature, as stated in letter he wrote to the NYC Dept. of Transportation.

RU ON RADIO: RuPaul, on March 10, the day after his contract was not renewed with Mix 102.7 FM Radio Station, appeared at the Museum of Television and Radio. A panel discussion entitled, “Breaking the Radio Wall” was held which RuPaul moderated.
How Can You Help to Support The Mains for Mayor Campaign?
Help Restore Greatness to the Rochester Community!

- Attend the Gala Fundraiser on May 23 at Grana's
  On-line reservations available at www.mainsformayor.com
  Donate Auction Items for the Gala.
- Sponsor a “House Party” Fundraiser for Tim.
- Make a Donation by Purchasing ‘Enjoy the City Coupon Books’
  (Published by Haines Enterprises). 2 for $25 with $10 Per Book Supporting the Campaign.
  Available at:
  Outlandish Video, Village Gate, Things for Sales, Eastview Mall,
  Randy Raetz DDS, 2257 S. Clinton Ave., and Gateway & Company, East Ave.

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- Focus on School Reform Through Partnerships, Not Punishment
- Continue Creative Interventions to Improve Public Safety
- Revitalize Neighborhoods with a Focus on Home Ownership
- Forge Cooperative Relationships with All Levels of Government

- Dedicated and Proven Leadership for the Rochester Community
- 30+ Years in Public Education as Teacher, Counselor, Director, and Principal
- 20 Years on Rochester City Council
- Chaired Finance Committee and Helped Save Local Tax Payers Millions of Dollars
- Chairs Rochester City Council’s Public Services, Health & the Arts Committee
- Supports and Continues to Advocate for Gay & HIV-AIDS Organizations
- First Openly Gay Elected Official in New York State
- Introduced and secured passage of Domestic Partnership Benefits for City Employees and a Domestic Partner Registry

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Geva’s Comedy Improv Troupe makes it look so easy

By Brendan McDonough

They work in finance and arts, and one is even an education coordinator, but once a week a month they put smiles on the faces of people both young and old.

At Geva Theater, the Comedy Improv Troupe was a number of different ages and the audiences are living every minute of it. The small cast and crew do everything from putting on skits to playing games. The Improv Troupe was formed with the help of Brian Daniels, who was the artistic director at Dad’s Garage Theater.

“We’ve tried to do and the type of improv that we’ve taught to Geva kids here, is kind of a narrative improv, in that whatever they are doing, they are trying to tell a story,” said moderator Matt Horgan.

For the cast, telling those stories can sometimes be a challenge; the men are sometimes required to kiss other men; other times they will take over the role of a professor and give a lecture on rocks, all the while trying to keep the audience interested and laughing.

“The possibilities are endless, and while some of the games have rules, if you are just doing an open scene anything can happen, so there are no boundaries and you don’t feel confined,” Horgan said.

But most cast members agree the most challenging skill to perform is the three-way dub. It involves cast members lip-syncing to another person’s voice.

“The most difficult thing is to not think, but to just react and say the first thing that comes to the top of our heads,” said cast member Adam Litz.

Sometimes it goes well and other times it doesn’t. The Comedy Troupe says about 50 percent of the time, things will not go well. “If you are going to fail it’s OK, and we tell the performers that if you are going to fail, embrace it and embrace taking risks, sometimes it’s going to work out and sometimes it’s not,” said Horgan.

To help make sure things do go well, the cast gets together twice a week to rehearse and try out new things. Also, when they are on stage and other cast members notice that a skirt is not going well, they jump in and help out. They know each other well and have worked together as a troupe for almost two years.

“We really know each other on stage and are familiar with what other people are doing to do,” said cast member Shavonita Ulric.

On the night I saw the Troupe, they performed “Micete-n.” It involves each of the cast members doing skits and scoring points, based on applause from the audience.

Adam Litz came out on top and admits it was a bit of a tough night. “There are little things you can do to put in scenes that you know that the audience is going to laugh and you can try and win them over; you just have to do your best and hope that they like it,” said Litz. He says good improv doesn’t always get rewarded the way it should.

People like the big, outrageous stuff, they will clap harder for scenes that have someone getting shot in the face or two guys kissing, rather than a simple grounded scene,” said Litz.

Improv isn’t easy, but these cast members make it look flawless. The Troupe will be performing again at Geva Theater on April 22 and 23.

The Comedy Improv Troupe drew attention at last July’s Pride Parade when they marched “without pants”. Top row: Adam Litz, Tim Goodwin, Chris Holder, Middletown; Barthum No, Joanna Schmitt, Brian Daniels. Front: Tim Schmitt and Shavonita Ulric. The Improv Troupe will be helping GAGU Youth Group members to learn dramatic and improv skills in order to perform skits for the Alliance’s Anti Violence Project in the Rochester community. Their next performance date at Geva is April 22 and 23.
(Continued from page 1)

the entire cast and crew of Portraits: “If I feel that this production has a unique voice that should be heard, a unique heart that should be felt, and a unique spirit that should be experienced.” Dennis is commuting from Binghamton to do this show.

Erin Koch of Rochester says she is so happy to be performing with the amazing cast of Portraits again. Being back together with Mark and this cast, and having the opportunity to sing such beautiful, emotional music has been like coming home.

Since the last production of Portraits several years ago, Erin has done several productions at Blackfriars Theater, including Reg (Bella Bella Chaper), A Voice of Love (Julietta Trapp), and an original musical revue, After Shadrack. By day she works as a Speech Pathologist for the Arc of Monroe County. She would like to dedicate these performances to her Portraits family, as well as her own loving family and friends, who continue to support and love her.

Timothy J. Kehl is thrilled to be doing Portraits again and working with “this wonderful group of people.” Tim has been singing, dancing, acting, and directing for many years with several area theater groups. Some of his more recent shows were Ring, Side Show, Jekyll and Hyde, Blood Brothers, and Cabaret. Tim was one of the first people to sing the original drafts of Mark’s music. He lives in the city and is a nurse manager in the intensive care unit at Strong Memorial Hospital.

This event is funded by a grant from the New York State Legislature, New York State Council on the Arts, and Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester.

ARTWalk seeks summer musicians on the block

ARTWalk announces an invitation to musicians to submit entries for performance at various sites along ARTWalk during weekend of June 11. Any individual player, band, vocal group, or other musical ensemble that resides in the Greater Rochester eight-county region may submit entries. This is the second summer that ARTWalk is presenting regularly scheduled outdoor performances, inviting the music community to showcase its work.

A public informational meeting will be held Wednesday, April 25 at 7 p.m. at Writers Books, 740 University Ave.

For more information, contact the Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester at (585) 327-2121 or write to admin@artsroc.org.

In the Life explores real people, real lives

Behind every issue are real people living real lives. Hosted by NYPL Blue’s Bill Brochtrup with P&Os by Rosie O’Donnell and veteran actress Barbara Cordin, this month’s In the Life goes beyond the red carpet blue power struggle to explore who is at the center of the equal rights debate in “Tax Paying Citizens.”

In the Life will air here on April 17 at 11 p.m. on WXXI.

SEHAKIA: Four women discuss the complicated act between gender, sexuality, and faith while living as Jewish Muslims in a post-September 11, world. AGING WITH AIDS: Many seniors struggle to afford retirement, particularly when unexpected circumstances arise. Too often, these circumstances are health-related. With health care costs rising and coverage shrinking, one catastrophic moment may jeopardize the retirement plan of almost anyone. This story highlights what can happen when the golden years don’t play out exactly as planned.

PROJECT YES: What sometimes gets lost in the conversation about family values is the reality facing LGBT kids and our responsibility as a nation to improve the situation. One Miami group is transcending conservative versus liberal politics and pointing our youth past.

REAL TO REEL: “90 MILES” is a true story of open ocean separate Cuba from the United States and yet the two often feel worlds apart. Director Juan Carlos Zaldivar crosses the cultural divide, taking us through his own journey of reconciling his Cuban and American identities, his sexuality, and the generational gap between father and son.

MAKING HISTORY IN HAWAII: Nearly seven years ago, In the Life went to Hawaii to document the beginning of the push for equal marriage rights and discovered that tradition is not a universally defined word.

OUT TAKES: Finally, In the Life’s regular commentator, Harvey Fierstein (ktm), takes on privacy issues in our hi-tech, convenient world.

Siriou OutStarts gay performer awards

To recognize underappreciated gay media pioneers — openly gay, primarily gay — who opened the doors for Bravo’s Fab Five and Fox Moon Boys and NBC’s Will & Grace — SIRUS Satellite Radio host Frank DeCaro has established The Frank Media Awards.

The Frank DeCaro Show, the comedy talk fest which just celebrated its first anniversary, is heard from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. ET on SIRUS OutRquest, the nation’s first and only full-time radio service created for the gay/bisexual/bisexual/transgender community.

Sponsored by his foundation, Frank (Fags Recognizing Artists Actually Needing) Kudo, the Frank Media Awards will pay tribute to media figures that other gay performers have been glad to overlook in the past.

Nominees include such undervalued gay media personalities as Food Network host Bobby Flay, Entertainment Tonight style guru Robert Verdi, Village Voice columnist Michael Musto and Lady Bunny, founder of the annual drag event Wigstock.

In addition, SpongeBob SquarePants star
Squatter Tentacles will be given the first Golden Catz Lifetime Achievement Award for his heretofore overlooked contri-

butions to flaunboyant TV comedy. The late stand-up comic Frank Maya, one of the first openly gay comedians, will also be

honored posthumously for his ground-

breaking work.

If I don't give these queens a media award, who will? Hell, I may even give myself one," said DeCaro, formerly the

moronic critic on Comedy Central's The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. "I've created these awards because dyed-in-the-salon celebr-

ation of the late great Canadian liter-

ary lion, Timothy Findley, with

Hayley and was imprisoned in the Tower of Lon-

don with his supposed accomplice, Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's wealthy patron. Essex was to be beheaded in the

early morning hours of Ash Wednesday, 1601, and it is known that on the eve of this event, Elizabeth called Shakespeare and the

Lord Chamberlain's Men to a command performance.

Bringing this moment in time to life, Findley creates the character of Ned Low-

horcey, a brilliant actor of women's roles, and was bestowed during the

inaugural frank Media Awards are actual commemorative mugs designed to hold

and was bestowed during an-on-site ceremony March 28 during The Frank DeCaro Show on SIRIUS OutQ channel 149 (aired at 1 p.m.

For more information about SIRIUS OutQ, visit www.siriusoutq.com.

Shipping Dock Theatre presents Elizabeth Rex

Shipping Dock Theatre continues its celebration of the late great Canadian literary lion, Timothy Findley, with Elizabeth Rex. The production runs April 15 through May 8 at Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St.

Patrons who present their ticket stubs from The Trials of Ezra Pound (on stage in February and March) will receive 25% off their admission to this brilliant play, winner of the Governor General's Award for Drama.

In Elizabeth Rex, Findley exercises his poetic license on an actual historical moment. Toward the end of her life, the Virgina Queen's favorite, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, raised a rebellion against her and was imprisoned in the Tower of Lon-

don with his supposed accomplice, Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's wealthy patron. Essex was to be beheaded in the

2 p.m. The fee for walk-in participants is $45. Participants must be at least 18 years old and bring valid identification. No expe-

rience is necessary.

The Roar has been approved for a four-

game 2005 season, as an exhibition team in the Women's Professional Football League. Starting league play by mid-season, the Roar will be hosting two home games in Rochester, and will play two away games against WPFL member teams.

Other games may be added to the schedule against league or other teams. The WPFL was the parent league of the former Sting team.

Former Rapters' coach Shawn Stucker has been named head coach of the Roar. No home field has been located yet, but "we are definitely keeping it in Rochester," says Alana Graziano, organizer. Contact Rochester Roar on the web at www.theroar.com.

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Brother to Brother to come out on DVD, air on PBS

Rodney Evans’ acclaimed film Brother to Brother will be airing on the PBS series INDEPENDENT LENS on June 14 (check local listings); the DVD will be released that day as well.

The film explores the spiritual link between a contemporary black gay New Yorker and the trailblazers of the Harlem Renaissance and it stars Anthony Mackie, Daniel Sunjata and Aunjanue Ellis.

The film won the Special Jury Prize at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival last fall. It was screened at Rochester’s Goumet Pizza Café & Fine Wine.

What’s So Great About Hugs?

There’s no such thing as a bad hug—only good ones & great ones. They’re not fattening & they don’t cause disease or cavities. They’re all natural with no preservatives, artificial ingredients, or pesticide residue. They’re cholesterol-free, naturally sweet, 100 percent wholesome. And they’re a completely renewable natural resource.

They don’t require batteries, tune-ups, or X-rays. They’re non-taxable, fully returnable & energy efficient.

They’re safe in all kinds of weather; in fact, they’re especially good for cold or rainy days. And they’re exceptionally effective in taking care of times when you are feeling blue or you have the Monday blues.

Never wait until tomorrow to hug someone you could hug today!

Author Unknown
And he's given up? job relocation, perhaps minor indiscretions, where and they are adorable, inspirational. job offers. Never one to fume in silence, winner to publicly berate the hierarchy worked on himself. He's done therapy - he is a therapist - he's done men's groups, recovery groups, AA-anon, drumming circles, plus he's put his hours at the gym. A MAN

Growing Up

By Eric Ballmann

Bette Davis, toward the end of her long career, grew irritated over the absence of job offers. Never one to silence in failure, she posted a positions wanted ad in a Hollywood trade publication, much to the film community's astonishment. It was a bold move for a two-time Oscar winner to publicly berate the hierarchy of her own community, while simultaneously pleading for employment. Her strategy worked. That part she landed was lovely, a co-starring role opposite Ernest Borgnine in a motorcycle caper about garish bank robbers, beside the point. Davis, ever gutsy, went after what she wanted. Her working career continued for another decade and included a couple of better parts.

Ed, a former student and long time friend who has relocated to Chicago, passed through town to catch Christmas to visit his folks. When we sat down to catch up on recent news and views, he cheerfully burbled out that he has given up on looking for a boyfriend. I was agast. Ed is in his mid-forties, trim, attractive, engagingly bright, and for as long as I've known him he has worked on himself. He's done therapy - he is a therapist - he's done men's groups, recovery groups, AA-anon, drumming circles, plus he's put his hours at the gym. A MAN

Ed says, "I'm not marketable anymore." He explains he means he's no longer young. He is mature, wise and has lots of accomplishments to his credit and the bottom line, the fact that nudges him off the dating map, is his age. Dear me.

His comments seem to me rather like the point made by a study a few years back which reported that single women over 40 of German heritage, his love of literature, and his German heritage, his love of literature, may well be the last times of winter? Email:ELICABRITEDU
I guess everybody really does love a winner.

But in all the hoopla, it's critical that we, particularly gay and lesbian people, note one extremely important and often mis-represented fact, especially since there will undoubtedly be other less joyous moments ahead in the long and strenuous road ahead for same-sex marriage rights.

The fact is that, despite the media frenzy and the second rash of celebrating in San Francisco's city hall, the California ruling is not groundbreaking or exceptional.

It's very good news. It's an important step. It's a reason to cheer.

But in many ways, it's old hat.

The fight for recognizing the legal marriage rights of gay and lesbian couples goes at least as far back as 1973, when Hawaii's Supreme Court similarly ruled that discrimination against same-sex couples was more than likely unconstitutional. A trial judge removed the restrictions prohibiting gays and lesbians from marrying, but voters then amended their constitution to limit marriage to one man and one woman.

But since then, an additional half dozen state's courts have ruled in favor of allowing same-sex couples to marry: Alaska, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Washington and now, California.

Conservatives will protest loudly that California's Judge Kramer is just another outlandish example of "judicial activism" that has veered out of control.

But the truth is that, for years, not only the courts, but politicians and legislatures have been debating — and granting — marriage rights to same-sex couples. The notion can no longer be reasonably called controversial.

Judge Kramer's ruling will, without a doubt, kick off another extremely important and often outlandish example of "judicial activism".

Even in California, the court ruling doesn't really break much new ground when it comes to the artifice of same-sex couples: In the past few years, the state legislature has passed a collection of laws that give gay and lesbian couples nearly all the same rights and protections as straight married couples, without calling it by that sacred name.

The notion can no longer be reasonably called controversial.

California is not even cutting edge.

When it comes to same-sex marriage, Vermont offers a nearly carbon copy of Massachusetts, New York and Oregon, and now, California.

Canada, too, has come quite a bit closer to the same conclusion on same-sex marriage.

Furthermore, there are court cases pending in Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland and Indiana.

And of course, Canada, too, has come to the same conclusion on same-sex marriage rights.

Interestingly, the California legislature looks poised to pass a civil unions law soon, too — even without a court order to do so.

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Misadventures in Boyland

SAY 'UNCLE' PART II

By Troy Robinson

When we last left off, our semi-young hero, Troy, was babysitting his two nieces—five-year-old Lena and three-year-old Laurel—as their parents went shopping for a new car. Only four hours into the ordeal, and Troy had already been exposed to three housecats forced into attending Laurel's tea party, a meal where all the food had to start with the letter "P," and the various-induced television show "Fear Factor." At this point, Troy is trying to determine why there are six empty toilet paper rolls on the bathroom floor.

Within minutes of finding the empty toilet paper rolls, I heard a mailman knock outside the bathroom door. I opened the door and looked down.

There at my feet was the missing toilet paper pipe.

Poor Gertie, the fattest (and thus the slowest) of the cats, had been mummified!--inducing television show "Fear Factor." As she tried to pull herself along, wrapped in the cats (or at least the one she could get her little hands on). "Uncle Troy is going to marry a dog.

Laurel—"
The day my sister decided to take the children to a friend's recent wedding as I was standing with my roommate Trish. In Lena's five-year-old universe, Trish and I were married, and I was hiding her from the family.

I quickly explained that I wasn't married, and that Trish and I are close friends who love each other. Then of course Lena asked when Trish and I were going to get married. I blurted out "Never!" a little too fast.

At the end of the scene, our semi-young hero, Troy, was hiding his naughty actions from his sister Laurel, the only person in the house who knew about his actions. When we last left off, our semi-young hero, Troy, was babysitting his two nieces—five-year-old Lena and three-year-old Laurel—as their parents went shopping for a new car. Only four hours into the ordeal, and Troy had already been exposed to three housecats forced into attending Laurel's tea party, a meal where all the food had to start with the letter "P," and the various-induced television show "Fear Factor." At this point, Troy is trying to determine why there are six empty toilet paper rolls on the bathroom floor.

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Laurel—"
assault is any type of unwanted sexual advances and can be between a man and a woman, a man and another man – sexual assault knows no boundaries. It doesn’t matter what you were wearing or if you were drinking – sexual assault is a crime punishable by law and is never your fault. The following drugs are commonly used in cases of sexual assault.

Rohipnol (flunitrazepam), a.k.a. “roaches,” “roach,” “wet,” is the most commonly used date rape drug in the 1990s, although trance hallucinations, loss of control and amnesia. Ten times more potent than Valium, Rohipnol is not approved by the FDA, and is banned for sale in the U.S. In 1999, pharmaceutical companies reformulated Rohipnol tablets to turn a beverage blue (the old pills were blue and dried-out) and useful in rape setups.

If someone offers to buy you a drink, go directly to the bar and order your drink with you even to the bathroom.

In smaller doses, GHB acts as a relaxant, slowing the heart rate and respiration and reducing inhibitions. In slightly larger doses, speech begins to slur and there can be a loss of motor skills. Frequently, people who have been drugged with GHB are assumed to be drunk by their friends or even by themselves, in reality, they may have been drugged. In large doses, especially in conjunction with alcohol, a coma-like sleep may be induced including unconsciousness, coma and even death. Side effects of GHB are nausea, vomiting, hallucinations, seizures and loss of consciousness.

Some drinks are made more widely used than Rohipnol ever was. GHB is used in all areas of the country, including Rochester. Its use has exploded exponentially in the past five years. It is a favorite amongst perpetrators since it is virtually undetectable with no taste or color. GHB can cause an extreme feeling of detachment, amnesia and paralysis. Prescription drugs such as Xanex and Ambien have also been used to facilitate assault. Drug-related assault victims may have vague recollections of their perpetrator, or felt paralyzed.

A happy hour with Dale W-F 6-PM $2 Domestic Wells & DRINKS EVERY WEDNESDAY- WHITE TRASH WEDNESDAY $1 BUD LIGHT CANS & FREE POOL, Starting at 8PM EVERY THURSDAY- COUNTRY NIGHT $2 MICH BOTTLES —DJ Billy Bob Argento— EVERY LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH-MEET DANCE PARTY Starting at 5pm-7pm $5.50 BLOODY MARY

The term’s allure might have been political, as this is a common method of transporting drugs such as Xanex and Ambien have also been used to facilitate assault. Drug-related assault victims may have vague recollections of their perpetrator, or felt paralyzed.

If all of a sudden you feel sick or overly tired, go to a trusted friend. A common setup is that the perpetrator may offer to take you home. If you suspect that you or a friend may have been drugged, go to the emergency room for urine screening, urinating or changing your clothes – these actions may destroy evidence of the assault. If the emergency room may turn a woman over very scary at the time, but it is the only secure place you can be. Ten times more potent than Valium, Rohipnol is not approved by the FDA, and is banned for sale in the U.S. In 1999, pharmaceutical companies reformulated Rohipnol tablets to turn a beverage blue (the old pills were blue and dried-out) and useful in rape setups.

Conundrums

The Queer Word Redux

By Erik Libby

Over the last several years, the word “queer” has become so entwined with the queer identity, it’s hard to separate the two. This is especially true when the word has been placed in the context of song lyrics, television programs like Queer As Folk and Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.

Many people use “queer” as a euphemism to describe their sexual orientation. When the word was first introduced in the late mid-1980s (along with activist and writer Michelangelo Signorile), it wasn’t that popular. It was so overexposed the word was rejected in many circles. This is especially true when the word has been placed in the context of song lyrics, television programs like Queer As Folk and Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.

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I am from the old school. Wounds have a way of healing themselves. I have yet to completely understand if you used this term, you were basically throwing a dagger. Understood, I have overexposed the term to the point where I can see the overexposure the term has received in recent years. This is especially true when the term has been placed in the context of song lyrics, television programs like Queer As Folk and Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.

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most about people like Folsom is that he indeed was an elected official at the time.

The word “homosexual” has also gotten a lot of criticism lately, too. The term “homosexual” and its etymological partner “heterosexual” were first coined in the mid 19th century by a Hungarian writer, Károly Maria Kertheny. He used the terms in personal correspondence in 1866. “Homosexual” was then seized upon by the medical fraternity as a conveniently sanitized marker in which to discuss what they observed as mental pathology. How attractive is that?

Personally, I dislike the term “homosexual” because it is reductionist at best, dismissive, and way too clinical. I see the image of a skinny mincing waif stuffed inside a pyrex test tube. Conversely, I like to think of people as more complex, evolved individuals, not solely defined by sexual orientation as society suggests. Quentin Crisp was historically the quintessential homosexual. Jack McFarland is not. He is perhaps those who identify with this term think of themselves as some sort of sexual outliers. I really don’t know. They can explain away the dismissive, and way too clinical. I see the image of a skinny mincing waif stuffed inside a pyrex test tube. Conversely, I like to think of people as more complex, evolved individuals, not solely defined by sexual orientation as society suggests. Quentin Crisp was historically the quintessential homosexual. Jack McFarland is not. He is a contemporary idea of what a gay male might be. For that matter, Veronica’s killer, Andrew Cunanan, was just plain queer — and creepy too. Not everyone is happy with the word “gay” either. In their book, Speaking Freely: A guided tour of American English (1997), Fie Lancaster and Smith give the following succinct history: (Gay) had been used to describe someone who was addicted to social pleasures and dissipation (1637) and was later applied to prostitutes or women who led an immoral life (1625). By 1837, it was widely acknowledged as an American euphemism for homosexual.

In the mid 1980s, J. Anthony Lemon, a writer for the Washington Post and self described homosexual, wrote, “It’s time for homosexuals to give the word (gay) back to the language. Let it be — just an adjectival meaning joyous and lively. To me, it is a foolish cover word, a cutesy way to avoid reality. There are some times in my life when I’m gay, and some times when I’m not. But I am always — every single moment of my life — homosexual.”

Many women among the lesbian community also have a hard time with the word “gay”. Our language sensitivity is so screwed up that the original meaning of man in Anglo-Saxon times — “human being” — has been lost. For most people, the word “gay” references only male identified human beings, to the exclusion of same-sex oriented women. To whomsoever this applies, ask yourself if you are more comfortable with being called a gay woman or a lesbian. I would really like to know what most same-sex oriented women prefer to call themselves. It’s a real life verbal conundrum.

In reclaiming “queer,” perhaps those who identify with this term think of themselves as some sort of sexual outliers. I really don’t know. They can explain away the dismissive, and way too clinical. I see the image of a skinny mincing waif stuffed inside a pyrex test tube. Conversely, I like to think of people as more complex, evolved individuals, not solely defined by sexual orientation as society suggests. Quentin Crisp was historically the quintessential homosexual. Jack McFarland is not. He is just a contemporary idea of what a gay male might be. For that matter, Veronica’s killer, Andrew Cunanan, was just plain queer — and creepy too. Not everyone is happy with the word “gay” either. In their book, Speaking Freely: A guided tour of American English (1997), Fie Lancaster and Smith give the following succinct history: (Gay) had been used to describe someone who was addicted to social pleasures and dissipation (1637) and was later applied to prostitutes or women who led an immoral life (1625). By 1837, it was widely acknowledged as an American euphemism for homosexual.

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"Gay" has truly undergone a friendlier semantic shift in recent years that is to say that it is an internationally accepted, inclusive, and vibrantly positive identification for a whole community. Whether you like the term or not, "gay" has established itself as the term of choice. Most people I know are proud to own it, as in both its original and acquired sense, a joyous respect of community affiliation.

The words we choose to convey to each other, and to the world at large, as how we see ourselves, will greatly impact the future course of the next generation. And more importantly, how you may be individually treated in the future as well. Words have power. I suggest you choose your carefully. Peace.

The Day of Silence is Wed., April 13.

Pride GLBT Al-Anon
Meets every Tuesday
7-9pm at the GAGV Community Center
179 Atlantic Avenue
For information, call Todd Plank
244-8640 ext. 24

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Resources

WOMEN'S RESOURCES
HEALTH:
Highland Hospital Breast Care Center
1000 South Ave., Rochester, NY 14620.
585-341-6069. Specializing in breast health, diagnostic breast imaging and treatment and mammography outreach and education.

Monroe County Women's Health Partnership

Elizabeth Wende Breast Clinic
170 Sawgrass Drive, 442-8432, Dr. Wende of all-woman staff provide mammograms.

AIDS Rochester Women's Health Outreach
130 South Ave. AFF has services for HIV positive women and offers in the lesbian community.

Alternatives for Battered Women
230-385-5129. Shelter (women only), counseling, Lesbians, gay men welcome.

Victor Resource Center of Wayne County
Wayne Ave, Hotline 600-456-4712, office (315)333-1171, for (315)333-1199.

Mary Magdalene House
Women's outreach center for HIV positive women and women at risk. 2317 Lee Ave. Open Mon-Fri 1:30-5 pm, Sat 9-12

Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/ Syracuse Region
127 Monroe Ave, Rochester, NY 14620; Toll-free Helpline: 1-866-800-9886. Provides confidential HIV testing and counseling.

St. Empire Star
330 W. Broad St., Rochester, NY 14614; www.stempirestar.org

Rochester Magnetizes
566 Clinton Ave; 331-5550. New players always welcome, so we will teach you the game. Hotline 234-3036, online: www.rochestermagnetics.com

ONLINE:
RochesterDykes: www.dykes.com; e-mail sabinesbeach@yahoo.com
WOWLin: e-mail WOWLin@rcn.com
Rochester NY Lesbians: groups.rcn.com/rochesterlesbians/mrrch_ceo

GENERAL:
Women's Resource Center
WNYC, 175 N. Clinton Ave. 546-7740.

Butch-Femme Connection.
Contact Keny at 666-4670, or e-mail Unseep@rochester.com.

Color Outside the Line Crew
Contact Jackie Williams, 482-9495.

Check our monthly and ongoing Calendars and the Gay Groups section for more woman-centered events and calls, and the Gay-Sights Calendar online for fun events at (585) 264-8964.

And send us your information!

AIDS DIRECTORY

Free testing for HIV exposure is available at New York State Department of Health: call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at (585) 423-0031, or 1-800-562-5063 for phone or tests at Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region.

Dial or calling impaired people should call (585)423-9120 (TDD) New HIV Testing—updated results—fast results in 30-40 mins.

Statewide information can be obtained by calling 1-800-547-AIDS. Other organizations which provide AIDS-related services are as follows:

AIDS Rochester, Inc.
1050 University Ave, Rochester, NY 14620, Provides support and services for people with HIV/AIDS and their families; presents educational programs related to HIV/AIDS to community groups; offers confidential testing every Monday and Tuesday, 5-6 pm (no appointment necessary). Also testing on Outreach Van Thursday and Friday.

Contact Line: 585-442-2202, WTTY: (585)442-2202, Website: www.ridersochester.org/Rural counties served by AFF in Rochester (1-800-422-2020) and Bath (1-800-954-2437).

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley offersreferrals to physicians and service agencies. Persons on duty Mon- Fri 9 am-6 pm; message machine other times. (585)244-9640.

Center for Health and Behavioral Training of Monroe County
661 S. Paul St., 4th floor. Collaboration of Monroe County Health Department and U.R. Provides year-round training in prevention and management of STDs, HIV, TB and related issues, such as domestic violence and case management.

Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/ Syracuse Region
127 Monroe Ave, Rochester, NY 14620; Toll-free Helpline: 1-866-980-9886. Planned Parenthood has the last word in providing high quality, affordable reproductive health care since 1916. We are committed to making all medically appropriate medical care accessible to your concerns.

We provide confidential counseling and treatment planning to women and men. We are staffed by nurses, social workers, doctors, and case managers. We offer a variety of services to enhance your quality of life.

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Health Department
130 South Ave. AFF has services for HIV positive women and provides comprehensive breast cancer care.

Senecarmstrong Communities Inc.
1220-2222. Provides confidential care for women and men. Services include counseling, testing, and referral.

AIDS Rochester Community Action Council (ARC)
Provides confidential counseling, vision screenings, genetic counseling, medical management/ counseling, and substance abuse counseling. Also offers six-month treatment and referrals to the Center also offers out-patient treatments and referrals.

We coordinate home care, educational resources and support groups, an active patient advisory committee, PAG, access to clinical trials, lab oversight, and referrals to psychotherapy and other specialized health services.

TIG (585)461-9590.

AIDS Rochester Task force on AIDS (ARTA) an agency of collections providing a multi-provider of resources and services to the upstate New York community.

Our offices are located in the Finger Lakes Health System Agencies, which also provides financial literature and newspaper clipping, as well as demographic and statistical data for use in developing health care services.

The Rochester Area Health Plan (RAPA) a collection of agencies providing multiple types of resources and services to the upstate New York community. Their offices are located in the Finger Lakes Health System Agencies.

244-8640.

Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/ Syracuse Region
127 Monroe Ave, Rochester, NY 14620; Toll-free Helpline: 1-866-800-9886. Offers confidential HIV testing and counseling.

When you make your appointment, be sure to ask about our sliding scale fees. No one is turned away for lack of ability to pay.

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Political National Organization for Women (Greater Rochester Area)
PO Box 63193 (585)456-1310. E-mail: info@rochesternow.org Web page: http://www.rochesternow.org

CULTURAL:
Rochester Women's Community Church
234-4441. (Ongoing calendar).

Gay Health
Monroe County Department of Health STD Clinic
P.O. Box 1543, Rochester, New York 14603.
(585)244-5809.

Monroe Community College Student Health Services
Phone: (585) 292-3186 (MCC Students only)

Highland Hospital Nursing Staff
P.O. Box 8925, William Smith College Health Services
Phone: (585) 910-8900

Rochester Institute of Technology Student Health Services
Phone: (585) 442-2201 (RIT Students only)

Threshold Center for Alternative Youth Services
Phone: (585) 442-2201

Anthony-Jordan Health Center Counseling and Testing Program.
Part of national initiative to increase testing through community agencies targeting high risk GLBT population. Provides confidential risk management, educational presentations, and other related services.

Prevention Counseling & Testing is a walk-in program: no appointments necessary.

Office hours are Monday 9 am-4 pm, Wednesday 9 am-4 pm, Thursday 9 am-4 pm, and Friday 9 am-4 pm. Reservations can be made by calling 716-442-9180.

The Center also offers out-patient treatments and referrals.

We coordinate home care, educational resources and support groups, an active patient advisory committee, PAG, access to clinical trials, lab oversight, and referrals to psychotherapy and other specialized health services.

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Public Interests Committee of Rochester
500 St. George St., Rochester NY 14607. To HIV positive persons, legal advocates available. All diaries are kept confidential.

Health Association H/V (AIDS Resources and Treatment) Program. 245-2213. Offers counseling and testing assistance, acupuncture, massage, referral, support groups, referrals. Positively Alive (HIV + women's support network).

Westside Health Services.
Brown Square Health Center, 175 Lyell Ave. (254-6449); Woodhead Health Center, 480 Highland Ave, Rochester, NY 14604-3040. HIV/AIDS services, support, support.

McCree Moody Wellness Center at Unity Health's Connection Clinic
201 St. Binghamton Bldg., 3rd 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 affected by HIV/AIDS. Offers emergency housing, case management for all ages, a clinical case manager; a client/advisement case manager; traditional case management for children and family members going through bereavement; recreational and support groups for children and teens; and counseling experiences in the CAPS Graduate Program.

IQMS, which also provides financial literature and newspaper clipping, as well as demographic and statistical data for use in developing health care services.

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I recently attended the GLBT Expo here in the Pink Apple. Of course the usual GLBT groups, publications, banks and insurance companies, free housing and entertainment were present.

I enjoyed checking out the new stuff, travel destinations and what companies profess to be gay friendly for our bucks, especially occur in the “wedding” area. Hotels and restaurants get in on that deal and most likely get their gay employees to show up and “sell.”

Tourism from the Finger Lakes region was on hand to talk about the attractions and accommodations. I intend to go back to the Marriott in New York City got wind of great wines in New England Butter Poached Lobster with a fresh pea flan, minted vegetable salad and lobster emulsion. Drooling yet?

To The View, I placed a call to a public relations person in the Finger Lakes for a wine recommendation, due to the list being longer than I would have expected and with it, a new wine menu featuring a variety from the Finger Lakes region. It’s about time that a fancy restaurant here in New York City got wind of great wines in New York.

I must confess that prior to dining at The View, I placed a call to a public relations person in the Finger Lakes for a wine recommendation, due to the list being longer than I would have expected and with it, a new wine menu featuring a variety from the Finger Lakes region. It’s about time that a fancy restaurant here in New York City got wind of great wines in New York.

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Women’s Writing co-op welcomes all women

The Rochester Women’s Writing Co-op is a cooperative effort by women in the Rochester area who are writers, or who want to write and also want support in writing. The group will meet on a regular basis at convenient locations — and also give online support through a mail list.

The group is for all genres and levels of expertise, and is NOT a critique group, but serves as a sounding board and support in finding the delicate balance between creating something and taking care of our souls.

The group is for any women—all ages, backgrounds, stages of life and development, mothers and non-mothers, working or not, different abilities, etc. Information is available at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rochestervswritingcoop.

To subscribe, please send an email to rochestervswritingco-op@yahoogroups.com.

Safe Sex Suffragettes educate about “supervirus” at White Party

Twenty-one years after he created Los Angeles County’s first AIDS awareness campaign followed by the first national AIDS memorial, former media pundit turned writer/producer, Tyler St. Mark, has been coined-out of retirement to launch a grassroots campaign to promote “safe sex.”

In the face of what some medical experts believe may be a super drug-resistant strain of HIV/AIDS, people all over the country were becoming infected and dying. Millions of young people at risk today weren’t even born when AIDS was untreatable and people who were exposed usually died within a few years. They were called “victims” then, not “patients,” and I don’t want to see that happen all over again.

Accordingly, the new campaign’s sponsors, as well as those underneath the grannie makeup, have requested to remain anonymous. “We simply want to get the word out that, if you contract a supervirus, living with it may not be an option,” St. Mark declares.

“White Party Next Generation” organizers expected an estimated 15,000 partiers in attendance when the “Safe Sex Suffragettes” made their first official appearance March 26 at the Palm Springs Convention Center, riding chair scooters and sporting vintage-style suffragette sashes specially made for the occasion.

Each LACE ‘Suffragette’ has her own hilarious personality and sense of humor,” St. Mark explains, “but don’t let that fool you. They are quite serious about saying lives, which means getting out there and standing up for Your Right To Be Responsible!”

Holly Near will perform at Hochstein on May 7

Legendaary feminist singer-songwriter Holly Near will perform on May 7 at the Hochstein School of Music, 50 N. Plymouth Ave., at 8 p.m.

The concert is co-sponsored by Heartland Concerns, Rochester’s Raging Grannies, and the Rochester Women’s Community Chorus.

For tickets and information, call 585-328-3103 or visit HeartlandMusic.org.

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**Rally with hundreds of students!**

**Wednesday, April 13**

4:00pm .................................................. Arrive in Silence
4:15 pm .................................................. Break the Silence
4:30 pm .................................................. Performance by Bread & Water Theatre Co.
5:00–8:00 pm ........................................ Youth Dance! with Live Music, DJ & Pizza

**HAGV Youth Center**
Auditorium Theater – first floor
875 E. Main Street
(use the Prince St. door)

Everyone Welcome! Bring a Friend!

Contact Toby at tobyg@gagv.us or 244-8640, x13 for more info.
TINSELTOWN TUNES: The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus presented their spring concert on March 19 and 20 at the School of the Arts. For the first time, it included a cultural fair. Above: six original panels from the AIDS Quilt were on display at the fair. Two of the panels were for composers whose work was performed at the concert. Top left: The Cosmopolitans. Left: a number from Nunsense. Below: The Rochettes do “Beauty School Dropout” from Grease.
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Youth Update: DAY OF SILENCE
By Toby Greenfield

Greetings from Youth Group Land… Is Spring actually here? Is there really a spring in Rochester? OK, I digress. I’d like to start off with a couple of thank yous… A big one to Meg Gehman and her band “This Other Life” for their fabulous benefit concert on March 19 at our Youth Center. We had a wonderful turnout and an excellent time was had by all…Secondly, I’d like to thank J.C. Rex for her donation of a new bookshelf for the Youth Center in memory of Rachel Fears. Rachel was a member of the Youth Group several years ago and was an avid reader. It will definitely come in handy as our Youth Library continues to grow.

This month finds us preparing for the Day of Silence on April 13. The Day of Silence is a national youth movement protest the silence faced by LGBT people and their allies. On this day, people who support creating safe schools for LGBT people take a nine-hour vow of silence to recognize and protest the harassment, prejudice, and discrimination—in effect, the silencing—that LGBT people face. Instead of speaking, high school and university participants hang out cards or wear stickers or t-shirts explaining what the Day of Silence is all about. This is a day of raising awareness around LGBT issues.

(Continued on page 2)

Family Matters: THE L WORD
By Todd Flood

Pride and Joy Families will "do the pool" on April 16. Families are invited to gather at my house, 134 Collingwood Drive (14621), between 12:30 and 1 p.m. Weather permitting, we will walk to Seneca Park Zoo at 1. While attending a conference organized by the Empire State Pride Agenda in N.Y.C. in early March, I was reminded of the importance of using the "L word" in our conversations about marriage.

Notice I said MARRIAGE, not same-sex or gay marriage, just marriage. Same-sex couples are not asking for special rights, and they will not be adequately served by a facsimile/approximation of the heterosexual institution. I could go on to list the over 1,800 rights and responsibilities, privileges and protections attached to the legally sanctioned contract of marriage to demonstrate that the fundamental right of "gay Americans" to pursue life, liberty and happiness is, and will continue to be, compromised as long as they are barred from access to civil marriage.

So basic is the right that one of the first freedoms granted to Blacks following their emancipation from slavery (1865) was to formalize their unions through marriage. Following a brief period of Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws would re-establish white supremacy in the South and the freedoms of Blacks would be severely curtailed. Blacks were denied the right to vote, burned from white institutions of learning, and segregated in most aspects of daily life. In reality, the dynamic of slavery was recreated in the South and would endure for close to another century.

This march begins at 9:30 a.m. at the Crime Victims Resource Center at 24 South Plymouth Ave. (at Cornwall). The route ends at Highland Park, with guest speakers, music and activities.

(Continued on page 2)

Meet People!

Wanted: for the Empty Closet. We are looking for reporters, photographers, mail and distribution volunteers who can give two hours per month to the cause. Please call Sharon at 667-6500. Thank you.
making a visible personal commitment to justice and equality, and promoting safety and respect in your schools and community. We encourage everyone out there to participate!

On April 13, at 4 p.m., there will be a HUGE rally to break the silence! The rally will take place at the GAGV Youth Center. This year we’re again thrilled to have Bread & Water Theatre Company perform at the rally, and then we’re having a Youth Dance from 5-8 p.m. with live music and a DJ! This is an event not to be missed! For more info on the rally, please visit our Youth Website at http://youth.gayalliance.org and click on the Day of Silence link. For info on how you can organize the Day of Silence at your school, please go to www.dayofsilence.org.

*(Youth Update continued from page 1)*

**Individual & Relationship Counseling**

Elaine Elkins, M.S.  
Psychotherapist  
244-4837

Anxiety & Depression  
Loneliness & Separation  
Resolving Conflicts  
Communication Skills  
Sexual Abuse Recovery  
Drug & Alcoholism  
Grief & Loss

The GAGV Youth Center was the site for This Other Life’s March 10 benefit. Photo by Amanda Capuano.

*(Sexual Matters continued from page 1)*

word, there was love.

Too often, in our discourse on equal marriage rights, we focus on the social justice aspect, and refrain from using the L word. Why might this be? In reflecting on this question, I’m reminded of Oscar Wilde’s reference to the “law that dare not speak its name.” Could there be some residual homophobia clinging to our love, causing us to experience unconscious twinges of shame and guilt when expressing our love for our partner? Or perhaps some of us are afraid that if we talk about our love for our same-sex partners, that heterosexuals will immediately envision us doing the “mastic.” Whatever our reasons for reticence about speaking of our love, now is the time to work through our issues and start sharing it with the world. People need to understand that our love for our partners and families is no different than theirs.

As long as we limit the debate for equal marriage rights to legally accrued rights and responsibilities, we will leave an opening for our detractors to suggest a legal equivalent to marriage as a viable alternative for same-sex couples; however, when we use the L word. In discussions about our relationships, this adds a new dimension to the argument that exposes the ignorance of those who beg for the preservation of the “traditional” definition of marriage because they feel and express it. My love for my partner is just as genuine, valid, and enduring as that of my heterosexual counterparts. I know this firsthand after having been married to a woman for almost 10 years prior to meeting my (male) partner of seven years. My ability to marry my partner poses no threat to the institution of marriage. Limiting marriage to “a man and a woman” hasn’t prevented the divorce rate in this country from surpassing 50 percent. My love may not be perfect, but I would dare to say that the odds are above average that this will be a lifetime relationship.

When the conversation turns to the L word, a whole new debate ensues. What right does anyone have to label my love as inferior to theirs? Does my sexual orientation disqualify me from the (so far) constitutionally protected right to pursue life, liberty and happiness with the person of my choosing? Why should I be penalized for the narrow mindedness of others who are either unable or unwilling to accept that love knows no (gender) bounds? Wasn’t the U.S. Constitution framed to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority? The reality is that my relationship is recognized and respected by my friends, in-laws, my employer and co-workers, my doctor, veterinarian, lawyer, and the vast majority of people who I interact with on a daily basis. The State and Federal governments need to catch up, as Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Doris Ling-Cohan recognized in her ruling in early February on the case brought on behalf of five lesbian and gay couples by the Lambda Legal Defense, in which she compared the denial of marriage to gay people to the miscegenation laws that forbade interracial marriage in many states until the United States Supreme Court struck them down in 1967. We need to take a stand on the side of love and share our love with our neighbors, co-workers, family members, friends, faith communities, and legislators (see page A1 article on Equality and Justice Day, May 24) so they can understand that equal marriage rights are not just about legal protections, important as they are; it is also about extenuating our relationships, our love, equally. Until we achieve equal status with our heterosexual counterparts, it will be permissible for society to dismiss our love and our families as an aberration. The need to feel and express love is universal. When we talk about our love for our partners, it resonates in a deeper way than work through our issues and start sharing it with the world. People need to understand that our love for our partners and families is no different than theirs.

The next time someone asks you why marriage matters, show them a photo of your partner (and children if you have them) and tell them it’s about love.

**Join Calendar Club and get dates “straight”**

* barrisplank *

Tired of opening the latest Empty Closet to discover that another organization is hosting an event on the same evening as yours? Frustrated having to choose between two or more great LGBT-themed events on a given weekend? Let’s do something about it!

Representatives from the various LGBT and allied organizations in and around the Rochester area are invited to join the first meeting of the Rochester LGBT Community Calendar Club, to be held on Tuesday, April 26 at the GAGV Youth Center, located off the Prince St. entrance of the Auditorium Center (875 East Main St.).

The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. and pizza, wings, and refreshments will be served. A calendar will be required to gain admittance to the “club” and a $5 donation is requested to help defray the costs for the food and beverages.

The intent of the meeting is to identify efficient ways of exchanging dates and events and do some long range planning that as a community we can support each other’s events instead of competing for the same audiences. There will also be discussion about creating an online community calendar that would have the flexibility of being updated regularly by members of the club.

Feel free to bring flyers and other materials advertising your agency and any upcoming events you may have that we can pass them around. Call me at (585) 244-8640 ext. 24 to RSVP or email to todd@gagv.org. If you cannot attend our first meeting, but are interested in joining the club, please call and express your interest.

**Third Presbyterian Church a More Light Church**

Where gbt persons are welcomed as partners in ministry

Sunday Worship  
10:30 a.m.  
(Child care available, wheelchair accessible looped for hearing impaired)

Monday (1st and 3rd)  
GLBT Support Group  
7:30 p.m.

at East Ave and Meigs St.  
Rochester, NY 14607  
271-6513  
www.thirdpresbyterian.org

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**SPECIALIZING IN DANCE FLOORS**
The Pride Center of Western New York and the Empire State Pride Agenda are sponsoring Town Meeting #2, “Busting equality myths.”

The meeting will take place on Thursday, April 14, from 7 – 9 p.m. at Buffalo State College’s Budge North Lecture Hall.

The event is co-sponsored by Buffalo State’s Pride Alliance. The Empire State Pride Agenda (ESPA) has organized many town meetings and other gatherings across the state in relation to marriage equality issues. Carmen Vasquez, Deputy Executive Director, will be present on April 14.

Pride Center Director Jim VerSteeg says, “Come find out what you can do for equal rights in New York!”

For more information, email jversteeg@pridecenterwny.org.

Plattsburgh for Peace organizes to fight Phelps

Plattsburgh for Peace (PFP) is a nonprofit, nondenominational committee of volunteer members in the Plattsburgh, NY community. Its current mission is to discourage Fred Phelps and other WBC (Westboro Baptist Church, Topeka, Kansas) followers from picketing and broadcasting hateful messages at the 2005 Mayor’s Cup in Plattsburgh N.Y. and at local churches in July 2005. (The mayor of Plattsburgh is openly gay.)

The group says, “We are proud of our community and of its diversity. We intend to do everything in our power to maintain the spirit of family and richness of our diverse community.”

Plattsburgh for Peace (PFP) is announcing a positive and constructive fundraising scheme to discourage Phelps from picketing in Plattsburgh. It’s a pledge drive for people to pledge money to a charity for every minute Phelps and any other WBC followers spend in Plattsburgh.

For more information, contact director Becky Bly at (315)568-9364.

Seneca Community Players to stage Lizzie Borden drama

Seneca Community Players announces the cast of its upcoming show, Blood Relations, to be staged Friday, April 22 and Saturday, April 23 at 8 p.m; Sunday, April 24 at 2 p.m. and Friday, April 29 and Saturday, April 30 at 8 p.m. in the Delavan Theater on the campus of the New York Chiropractic College, 2350 State Route 89, Seneca Falls.

Blood Relations revisits the 1892 murders of Andrew Borden and wife Abby, along with the homicide charges brought against Mr. Borden’s spinster daughter, Lizzie. Lizzie was later acquitted of the charges, but interest in the infamous crime continues to this day, in part because of the brutality of the crime and the possibility that it could have been committed by someone regarded as a pillar of her community.

The play, by Canadian playwright Sharon Pollock, takes place 10 years after Lizzie Borden is acquitted of the charges. Her actress girlfriend questions whether or not Lizzie killed her father and stepmother. Hence commences a play-within-a-play that sheds additional light and insight on the crime.

Liz Thurston of Seneca Falls will take on the dual roles of The Actress and Lizzie. Making their debuts are Andrew Borden, Voice-over is done by Ceiling John King of Waterloo and Susan Sinicropi of Seneca Falls assume the roles of Andrew Borden and his wife, Abigail. Rounding out the cast are Seneca Falls residents Paul Wenderlich as Mrs. Borden, a brother, Harry Wingate.

For more information, contact director Becky Bly at (315) 568-9364.

An amazing, 7 day, 560 mile, fundraising bike ride across New York State

RIDE WITH:

AIDS ROCHESTER’S BIKE TEAM

A week that will change you forever...

For more information, call Marty at AIDS Rochester 442-2220

Learn more about this incredible event at: www.empirestateaidsride.org
Groups

WOMYN’S FISHING

Spring is FINALLY here and that means one thing -- It’s Fishing Season! We will go out and try our luck over the next few months, so be on the lookout in the region for the next group meeting.

BUTCH-FEMME

The topic for Discussion Night on April 1 will be "Joke’s lit. 7:00 p.m. at the GAGV Community Center, 137 Atlantic Ave., corner Elm/Atlantic (bring a few of your favorites to share)."

The Social Event for this month will be on Wednesday, April 27, Movie Night Out (please meet at the GAGV at 7 p.m. and we’ll head out to a movie of the group’s choosing).

Our Dinner Nights Out for April will be as follows: Monday, April 1: Panera Bread Company, 935 Holt Road (across the street from the Wegman’s Plaza, in the new Kohl’s complex), Webster, 7 p.m.; Monday, April 22: Al’s Noodle Company, 2052 Elmwood Ave., Webster, 7 p.m. (please show up promptly as the restaurant closes at 9 p.m.).

For further info, contact Kerry, Facilitator, at (585) 885-4669, email DarrylFemme@aol.com, or write P.O. Box 387534, Rochester, NY 14608.

GAY FATHERS

The Gay Fathers’ Group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley Community Center, located at 179 Atlantic Ave.

Guest speakers are scheduled occasionally. We recently had two speakers from AIDS Rochester. A potluck dinner is sometimes planned for one of these bi-monthly meetings also. One of them has taken place already this cycle.

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 support. We discuss issues of a personal nature and keep personal information confidential.

Our web site is a work in progress and we hope to have it up and running soon. Please call GAGV at 244-8000 if you need additional information.

One thing that is denied any veteran benefits, just because they were both very glad to have found this group, because, as Vickie said, there was no one to talk about what the two of them were going through. It felt very lonely, like we were all at sea and each other’s homes.

Our two February meetings were very different from each other. At Wednesday’s meeting we had proof that you don’t need to have a lot of people to have a lively and provocative meeting. Even though we only had five people (and one had to leave early), many new ideas and perspectives were brought up and we had a very enjoyable time. Two guests were married to each other.

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The Rochester Transgender Support Group’s website (http://rnytg.org) was featured in the March edition of the Empty Closet. Thanks to the efforts of our web mistress Diana, and various members who contributed the information, the site now contains a list of Transgendered Person. You can register and even friends to come to our meetings.

Spouses, family members and friends are out and so are the elders. This was because of two things: (1) the elders used the wisdom of the previous vs. and (2) the elders had more experience than the young. After trial Revolution began, technologies to change more and more rapidly, knowledge was being set on its experience counted for less and matters especially, youth is prized as a fresh look at things and being ing to do things in a new way, and is not thought of as being as beau-

RAINBOW SENIORS

CONQUERING AGESM IN THE LGBT COMMUNITY

By David Bar-Tour

Until the onset of the Industrial Revolu-
tion, all societies presented the elderly as some sort of relic. The change to a "senior" role was not a quiet one, but one that was thrust upon the elders. They were the ones to whom society turned when assistance was needed, and were often reduced to a state of being not respected or valued.

The Rochester Transgender Support Group is happy to announce an email address for persons who have questions about the group (rnytg@rochester.rr.com). Anyone, whether transgendered or a fam-
ily member or friend of a transgendered or interested person, can use this address to send questions to the group’s facilitators for a response.

In the March group column, I wrote about some important concerns. Vickie at one point stated that she wasn’t a lesbian. Then what was she? She was the only one dealing with this kind of thing.

This couple brought out several very important points. Vickie at one point stated that she wasn’t a lesbian. Then what was she? She was the only one dealing with this kind of thing.

This conversation also showed how very important it is to for spouses, family members and friends to come to our meetings. Spouses, family members and friends are also in a very difficult situation, wanting to be supportive only not sure how and not having anyone to talk to about their feelings. I’ll take this opportunity to again mention the rnytg.org website and the availability of the chat room exclusively for the spouses and significant others of a transgendered person. You can register and have private, secured email discussions with other people experiencing the same concerns and needs you may have.

And, as was mentioned in Ally Howell’s column in the March edition of The Empty Closet, there is also a couples group. It consists of five couples who meet each other’s homes.

The Social Event for this month will be: Jokes! It’s Shakespeare, one thing more must be done. Two guests were married to each other.

One subject that came up was the unfortunate experience that most of us had when we turned for desperately needed help to the counseling of various therapists. This was a definite "border". The complaints were about the lack of training or knowledge of psychologists, psychiatrists and even some therapy counselors on TG issues and people who are TG, etc. It was.

In March’s group column, I wrote about some important issues that all of us had growing up and at this meeting we found yet another community. During our lives, we all felt such hopelessness despairing of everything, and were we going to end our lives (some of us many times) and in just about every way possible. Fortunately, for all of us was something in our lives. We found out how important it is for spouses, family members and friends to come to our meetings.

Spouses, family members and friends are out and so are the elders. This was because of two things: (1) the elders used the wisdom of the previous vs. and (2) the elders had more experience than the young. After trial Revolution began, technologies to change more and more rapidly, knowledge was being set on its experience counted for less and matters especially, youth is prized as a fresh look at things and being ing to do things in a new way, and is not thought of as being as beau-

CULTURES have traditions and values that do get modified over time. Trying to build a community without keeping or modify-
ing some traditions is much harder and a bit lame. Of course you can start new traditions, but wouldn’t you also want those to have a life beyond your generation? We have old traditions like lesbian and gay bars, drag shows, Stonewall/Pride celebrations, and gender-busting. We have newer traditions like Gay TV parties (Ellen, the L Word, Gay as Folk), drag kings, Gay arts festivals (poetry, movies, painting, and so on). Becoming more involved in these can enhance your self-actualization as an LGBT person, and knowing senior members and what their experiences have been with these traditions can build a more secure foundation.

Cultural diversity recognizes that different communities have their own unique history, traditions, values, and perhaps even an independent language. The perspectives of these different communities are seen to be equally valid. Ideally, a person would...
seek to become more aware of these different cultures, especially if the person interacts with members who identify with these communities. There can be diversities within one community; with the LGBT community, there are Black Lesbians, Jewish Transsexuals, Christian Bisexuals, and Asian Gay men. Another element of diversity is seniors. Seniors bring a fresh perspective also, with their awareness of what society was like in the old days as well as a special interest in visitation rights (for medical emergencies), estate rights, and other survivor rights.

In closing, we all should broaden our contacts within the LGBT community. One upcoming opportunity is to hear and interact with an intergenerational panel with Youth Group members at AIDS Rochester on April 17 at 4 p.m. This is one of the monthly panels of the Rainbow Seniors of Western New York. We meet at 4 p.m. the third Sunday of every month. Normally we meet at the First Universalist Church of Rochester, 150 South Clinton, but April will be special. For more information about RSWNY, see our Web site at www.rainbowseniorswy.org.

ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus (RGMC) would like to extend our gratitude to all who attended our spring concert, “Tinseltown Tunes”, on Saturday, March 19, and Sunday, March 20 at the School of the Arts.

In addition to a truly phenomenal concert which highlighted the very best music Hollywood has to offer, the RGMC held our first Cultural Fair. Various arts groups and several vendors were present alongside such organizations as AIDS Rochester, the MOCHA Project, and the University of Rochester AIDS Vaccine Research Unit. A special highlight of the RGMC’s Cultural Fair was its original panel of the AIDS Memorial Quilt which were on display on both Saturday and Sunday.

The panels came to Rochester from the Names Project Foundation which is located in Atlanta, Ga. Two of the panels bear the names of Howard Ashman and Peter Allen, two of the composers whose music was featured during the concert. The other four panels have the names of various Hollywood personalities. The exhibit of these panels was made possible through a very generous contribution by one of our supporters.

After such a large and amazing event, you would think we should take a break and relax for a few weeks. Oh, no, not us! The cause of creating social change through excellence in the choral arts is one that requires perpetual diligence! As such, we are already busy working towards our summer concert, “Songs of the ‘80s”. Complete with big hair and polyester leisure suits, this is going to be a FUN concert! Voice placements will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 7. Come, join us, and be a part of a family of friends that is now in our 22nd consecutive season of singing the songs of our lives to the Greater Rochester community.
Generation of Trannies

MOVIE REVIEWS

By Miss Current

I just saw — even though it came out like 750 years ago — a very lovely movie called "Different For Girls", starring some British people. I must say it was an excellent movie concerning the life of a transgender woman and the dude that used to stick up for her in school.

I could relate to her tremendously... there was the occasional man meat usually in a higher grade than I was... but just occasionally and unfortunately very rarely, would a piece of meat in my grade defend me against the taunting children that would beleaguer and tease me mercilessly... which was totally unfair, because they had their harsh picturing words “before” the age I learned to use knives... so it was totally an unfair fight.

But back to the story of my gallant savages... whenever a boy would stick up for me I would literally fall in love. I still thank goodness that I didn’t have a vagina back then because I would most likely be riddled with disease by now, but still it was an emotional, heart-crushing experience. Especially when there was this really really really nasty mean cruel devilishly disturb-

ing I swore to god he was Sarah himself aka Britopia Speers dude that just so happened to be this dark athletic gorgeous gorgeous gorgeous spiky hair prep who was really popular and one day some day I was making fun of me because I liked the backstreet boys (what girl didn’t until that stupid "NSYNC" came along)

Anyway, this gorgeous dude told this d*ckhead to leave me alone. At that point I had the most ethereal... experience. I was in love until he called me a fag the very next day, but it was all good, because soon after that he was sitting down and he spread his legs and a tease popped on one side and only I got to see it... so I was exhilarated and felt special for the time being...

Asana always back to this movie... it was excellent because it dealt with and also portrayed real human emotion and an authentic presence to what a real life transgender lives and feels. Movies like these are very rare... especially transgender oriented ones.

There are a large variety of GLB movies out there... most of which are filled with realistic and emotional scenarios that people actually can relate to.

Finding A movie that isn’t intended for the laughter and entertainment general of the straight community as a majority is kind of rare. Only three come to mind, although I am a little “tired” right now so I might be missing one. El the movies are: "Different For Girls", "The Crying Game", and the illustrous true life story of the courageous Miss Calpernia Addams in "A Soldier’s Girl". All depict the solitude, the abandonment, and genuine lifestyle of real trans gender women all in quite different situations and each living completely different styles.

They are each connected by the fact that they are trying to live their lives as the women that they were meant to be, and all face the consequences and live the rewards of doing so. I find that these movies capture this essence of reality in a sensitive, although blunt and realistic, way. If there were more of these movies depicting real scenarios or real events and there were more television programs catering to the education of transgenderism (although the Discovery Channel has been doing a good job lately popping out the programs) I believe the world would definitely be more educated and open minded.

Oh wait there’s four more movies that now come to mind: Once again I’m a little “tired”, but for my trans brothers out there, “Boys Don’t Cry”, sparked a few tears in my eyes, along with the three other movies I precisely mentioned. Although nobody died in “Different For Girls”, it’s quite emotional when they finally did it.

Well, to conclude my first public movie review, I must state that the key to transgender education through cinema is — mainstream exposure. If there are realistic yet attention grabbing transgender-based or partly based movies, or even transgender movie stars themselves bowing through mainstream cinema, then our purposes for education and acceptance (not that we care what they think because we’re strong powerful individuals) are getting there.

Hmmm... although I don’t believe there ever has been a real movie star who is transgender. Hmmmm well... I’m just going to have to fix that.

Luv,

Miss Current

P.S. If anybody gets an idea from this article of moving in on my space of becoming the first mainstream transgender and “movies” artist just to be a b*tch or actually I don’t really care what the reason is... I will get down with my inner Show Girl and pull on Elizabeth Berkley by pushing you down the stairs and smile and light up a ciggy to celebrate the anniversary of your death as you discover your hip is broken in 27 different places.

The Empty Closet • The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley • Number 378 • April 2005

Bashed

By Alex Rochenko

Before it happened, I had always wondered if I would feel like a police report. I doubted it. I wondered about people I would sleep with after it happened. I wondered if I would trigger when they touched me. I wondered if I would die like Matthew or Gwenn. I wondered where it would happen. If I were in a box and brought the wrong person home. If I were hiking in the woods, and someone would come upon me and rape me. If I looked at someone too long in the eyes...

I never thought it would happen at school, never thought it would happen in a bathroom. I never thought they would talk about my bastards being silent — or that bastards even exist (crying in the rain maybe).

"Sometimes it feels like I learn about you through omission.

I roll over, still foggy. She’s just this side of sleep. I make a face.

"I can see your scars." She traces her finger down the white one that runs the length of my ribcage. "You never tell me about it."

Her face looks worried, maybe, panicked almost. "Three years and you never tell me about it?"

"There isn’t anything to tell." Her face contorts at the anger in my voice. "Just got into a stupid fight a long time ago." I try to sound gentle, but I fail. She traces another, across my stomach, turning over. "What is this one?"

I cringe, I’ve broken up with girls over sex. I pull away, get up, bind and pull on a Florence andyleave. "I’m gonna make coffee. You want some?" It comes out more like a statement, a demand, than a question.

Her face is buried when I left her, and I know it takes a lot of control to keep her shoulders from shaking.

Before it happened, I had always wondered what my life would look like after I got bashed. I never thought it would look like this.

Bashed

By Miacripts

I learned to use knives... so it was totally an exercise by spending such a leisurely day and still getting this on in time. So I think I will stare at this on my computer for a bit longer; at this point it won’t get in until tomorrow anyway.

The The Train of Life

Some folks ride the train of life
Looking out the rear,
Watching miles of life roll by,
And making every year.

They sit in sad remembrance,
Of wasted days gone by,
And curse their life for what it was,
And hang their head and cry.

But I don’t concern myself with that,
I took a different vent,
I look forward to what life holds,
And not what has been spent.

So strap me to the engine,
As squarely as I can be,
I want to be out in the front,
To see what you can see.

I want to feel the winds of change,
I want to see what life unfolds,
As I move from place to place.

I want to see what’s coming up,
Not looking at the past,
Life’s too short for yesterday,
The train moves along too fast.

So if the ride gets bumpy,
While you are looking back,
Go up front, and you may find,
Your life has jumped the track.

It’s all right to remember,
That part of history,
But up front what’s happening,
There’s so much mystery.

The enjoyment of living,
Is not where we have been,
It’s looking ever forward,
To another year and ten.

It’s searching all the byways,
Never should you refrain,
For if you want to live your life,
You’ve gotta drive the train.

Anonymous

Submitted by Denise Finettty
Created by a family friend
**Fisher Pride Union**

Fisher Pride Union is a student organization whose mission is to promote and celebrate the various forms of diversity by fostering understanding and tolerance with particular regard and sensitivity to issues of sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, and concerns of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queré (LGBTQ) community in the world, specifically as it pertains to student life at St. John Fisher College.

We will strive to provide a safe environment for all those who identify as LGBTQ and their allies, while maintaining educational programs geared towards homophobia, heterosexism, sexual health issues, and respect for minority populations on the St. John Fisher College campus. In doing so, we will provide a safe haven for open and honest (albeit respectful) discussion about the aforementioned issues. We will also facilitate the development of the identity and recognition of these concerns as they relate to academics, personal/social growth, politics, and student wellbeing. We hope to achieve this through both the students and the faculty/staff of St. John Fisher College.

If you are interested in attending please join us on Facebook – https://www.facebook.com/groups/FisherPride/. About the group, www.fisherpride.com. as well as fighting we will be performing theatrical and musical pieces in efforts to raise money for AIDS awareness, education, and treatment. Aids Awareness Week will be held from April 17-20. For more information, contact Dean Dubois at 9 a.m. in the Dining Hall in Haffey Hall.

On April 15, we are hosting an exhibit that will be in the College Union. This nationally known exhibit highlights gay and lesbian families and stories of their experiences. It will be posted in the library books and online at: http://www.lovemakesafamily.org/lovemakesafamily.php. On April 18, Officers of Pride and professors are going to hold a lecture about the exhibit.

**Cat Chat with Circa**

By Circe (as told to Jessica Cohen)!

Where are my furry campers?! Where is my funny camping mouse? And where, in Tam’s name, is my black Gucci collar?! My Feeders have gone mad. The palace in my kingdom has gone awry with boxes that aren’t for litter. Newspapers that aren’t for recycling. Bubble wrap that bursts under my kitty claws. I demand an explanation. An end to this chaos. This is my monarchy, Feeders, and I’ll have your toes for this!

In the name of all that is good and salman-flavored, I cannot understand what is happening. And the turmoil extends beyond my living space. I can’t eat. I can’t sleep. I need my beauty sleep. I need my yumm-yums.

And if that is not enough, I was attacked in my own home this past weekend. I went searching for solace – for peace, a bit of play. And curiosity nearly killed me. While I was searching the contents of a bag for potential material claim, it nearly swallowed me up. It was tight. It was dark. And while I was stuck, my Feeders joked fun. Mewonmmmow! Laugh your little kitty hearts out. Feeders. You think they may be drama in your yerkland, but wait until you pin off a cat. Revenge is mine. Sleep with your socks on.

While much of my life is in upheaval this month, there is good that must be noted. Including an end to March and the madness that goes along with it. The jolly green holiday is over. If like an Irish pass myself, but they drink a bit too much. I can have water for my liking.) The Easter bunny, that horrid creature, has hopped on by. I myself, don’t trust that creature any more than I trust a dog to pass by an unattended hydrant. Take my word for it – never eat chocolate milked balls from the Easter bunny, mew.

On a positive note to all you cats and femmes out there, Spring has officially arrived. The days are longer, the weather warmer. And I can finally wear my white leather collar without worry of a fashion faux pas. While my naturally fluffy coat keeps me warm all year, I am looking forward to the sunbathing, painting my claws, and flaunting my fur. My new pal, Linus, may be pretty (or so say my Feeders), but he holds no candle to my stunning good looks and witty charm.

I encourage all you cats to get out there and enjoy the new season. There are flower boxes to be picked, streets to run across (with great care, of course) and mice to bring back for my Feeders. While mew.

With many mewmows (and kisses to my Feeders),

Circe
The Empty Closet • The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley • Volume 38, Issue 7 • April 2006

Check it out!

EMPTY CLOSET ONLINE EDITION’s PHOTO FEATURES COLOR

SLIDESHOWS

GO TO WWW.GAYALLIANCE.ORG AND CLICK ON “EMPTY CLOSET.” THEN CLICK ON PHOTO FEATURES.”

Come sing with the

Rochester Rainbow Gospel Choir!

- Rochester’s inclusive gospel choir

Rehearsing on Sundays from 5:00-6:30 pm at the IAGV Community Room,
179 Atlantic Avenue, Rochester
For more information, call 288-4508 or e-mail Rainbowchoir@hotmail.com
Weekly GLBTI AA Meetings in Rochester

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

What makes GLBTI 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 traumatizing 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 large role in socialization within our community which can present challenges even when we are fully committed to our sobriety.

At our meetings, we frequently go out for coffee, dinner, movies, whatever; while it’s tempting to stay in the fold of GLBTI recovery, we live and work in a predominantly 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.

When you’re out and about...


Volunteer for the Empty Closet.

Clean-shaven with a GQ look. The rate is $75 and I come to you.

Electrical work, telephone jacks, cable TV, 244-9030.

 Classified ads are $5 for the first 30 words; each additional word is another $1. We do not bill for classifieds, so please send or bring ad and payment to The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main St. Rochester, NY 14605. The deadline is the 15th of the month before the following month’s issue. We cannot accept ads over the phone. We publish free ads for prisoners 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. Seeking reporters, photographers, mailing, and distribution volunteers. If you can give two hours per month, please call Susan at 244-9030.

SERVICES

Rochester’s best full-body muscle rub. To all you men who have not yet let my skilled, strong hands work their magic on you – call me! I’m a fit, friendly, healthy Italian GM. My 10-years-plus experience ensures your relaxation and satisfaction. Hand out or central location for in calls. Reasonable rates. Discounted are $25. I don’t delay, call today at 585-235-6688, or email me at musclelovers-phg@peoplepc.com.

Receive a Hot Body Rub by a very attractive Italian bi-male, age 30! I have an athletic build, muscular arms and am clean-shaven with a CSQ look. The rate is $75 and I come to you. Page Shawn at 521-0455.

Martin Ippolito, Master Electrician. Electrical work, telephone jacks, cable TV, burglar alarm systems, paddle fans. Call 585-266-6377.

Hire husky hunks in need of a stress-relieving body rub by talented masculine hands. Call 442-9677 or paullyso@rochester.rr.com.

Hot Oil Rub, Full-Body. Treat yourself to a relaxing and sensual rub. Very friendly male with eight-plus years’ experience. Students $15/hour, others $25/hour, best at the time. Leave message at 377-2581.

ROOMMATES / HOUSEMATES

Roommate wanted. Perfect for older person tired of maintenance. Easy access to public transportation. $350 covers all. Three in one cable. Call Jon or Betty, 585-654-7897.

Active older male seeks clean, neat, responsible male friend to share small furnished house on west side. Non-smoker. No pets. $250 plus utilities. Other perks. Call for details. 225-6368.

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For more information call (585) 704-2299
E-mail CCFRochester@hotmail.com
www.CommunityChristianFellowshipRochester.com

Community Christian Fellowship

When are we starting...
April

Saturday 2
Pride Buffalo's Ambassador of Pride Competition. See www.pridebuffalo.org. Call 716-559-3800.
info@ithacacommonground.com.
Ithaca. 7 pm.

Sunday 3
COAP Tax workshop. 1 pm. Mike O., 415-0833.

Monday 4
Kate Clinton at Common Ground, Ithaca. 7 pm. 1230 Danby Rd. (968) 607-273-7055. Tickets $8; space limited; info@ithacacommonground.com.

Tuesday 5
Lesbian/Bisexual Women's Health portraits, Stages 3. 875 E. Main St. 7:30 pm. matinee 3 pm. Also on April 9, 15 and 23. 865-4619.

Saturday 9
SUNY Geneseo Drag Ball. Proistorical drag queens and kings; theme "Hollywood Red Carpet," $5 cover charge. $4 if you dress in drag or bring canned good donation. 9 pm, Sturges Auditorium.

Sunday 10
Rev. Dr. Erin K. Swenson, transgen-dered theologian, leads Communion and worship at St. Luke, 1151 Main St., Genesee Office Park, 577-3960. Call for directions.
Rev. Dr. Erin K. Swenson, member of the senior staff of GAGV Community Center, leads a Discussion Night, 7-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Ave., between 10-10:30 am, or be a2 arrival by 11 am.

Monday 11
Butch Femme Connection Dinner Night. Panera Bread Co., 935 Holt Rd, Webster, 7 pm. 865-4619.
Rev. Dr. Erin K. Swenson lectures at Colgate Rochester Center Divinity School, 1100 S. Goodman St., on Gender Terror-ism and the Death of the Patriarchy. 10:30 am, Stewart Lounge.

Tuesday 12
Multi-faith Healing Service responding to hate crimes. Lake Avenue Baptist Church, 70 Ambrose St., 7 pm. Sponsored by GAGV (284-8640) and MOCHA (620-3600).

Wednesday 13
COAP Little Movie Night. 7 pm. Woody, 704-9236.
Day of Silence, arrive in silence, 4 pm. GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St. (Prince St. entrance). Break the silence at 4:55, performance by Bread & Water Theatre. 244-8640 ext. 13. Youth Dance fol-lows from 5-8 pm with live music and DJ.

Thursday 14
The Laramie Project. St. John Fisher College. Also April 30.
LambdA Kodak 11th Annual Educa-tional Event. 5-8:30 pm, Riverside Conven-tion Center. "Debunking Myths and Misconceptions". 722-4717: 588-3155.
Kodak employees, retirees and guests.

Saturday 16
Rainbow Seniors event: Yoga for Every-one. Laurie Brewer, facilitator. 10:41-30 am. First Unitarian Church, 150 S. Cliff-ton Ave. Members no charge. visitors $3.
Artzy Farsty film group. Little The-a3re. For time and film, see www.frontier-net.net/outsie or call 271-8478.
Pride & Joy Families at Seneca Pow Meet between 12:30-1 pm at Todd House, 134 Collingwood Drive. 244-8640 ext. 24.

Saturday 17
Inter-generational panel on aging and the gay community, with Rainbow Seniors and members of GAGV Youth Group. 4 pm-6 pm, AIDS Rochester, 1359 University Ave. Pizza/Potluck. Free admission. For info call Erik, 442-2220.
In The Life, 11 pm, WXXI. "Real people living real lives."
Love Makes a Family photo exhibit, SUNY Geneseo. Through April 30.

Friday 22
COAP Game Night. 7 pm, Martin, 281 6999.
Blood Relations. Seneca Community Players present play about Lizzie Borden. 8 pm. Delavan Theatre, campus of NY Chiropractic College, 2560 State Rd. 89, Seneca Falls. Also April 23, 8 pm; April 24, 2 pm; April 29 and 30, 8 pm. 315-588-9364.

Saturday 23
Empire Roar women's football tryouts. Rochester Sports Garden, Henrietta, 9:30 am-2 pm.

Sunday 24
Women's Fishing. Charlotte Pier at end of Lake Ave. in Charlotte. Meet at GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave., between 10-10:15 am or come to location by 11 am. 288-7208; FishingFolksNY@aol.com.

Monday 25
COAP Business meeting, 7 pm. Tom 454-5609.
Butch Femme Connection Dinner Night. Aji Noodle Co., 2650 Elmwood Ave. 7 pm. 865-4619.

Tuesday 26
Community Calendar meeting. 6:30 pm, GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main, First Floor (Prince St. entrance). Pizza, wings, etc. Bring calendar; $5 donation requested. Develop community calendar to coordinate events. Call Todd Plank, 244-8640 ext. 24.

Wednesday 27
Rochester Stonewall Democratic Club informational meeting. LGB registered voters and friends welcome to attend. Voter registration forms available. Bring your ideas and enthusiasm to help form agenda. Contact John Noble at (505) 602-8053.
Butch Femme Connection Movie Night Out. Meet at GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave., 7 pm. head out to movies. 865-4619.

Friday 29
Empty Closet mailing party. Staff envelope-5 2-4 pm bulk mailing and distribution. 7-8 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave., second floor, 244-8030.
Equality Forum bus trip to Phila-delphia. Love Audition Theatre, 875 E. Main St., parking lot 9 am. Return May 1. For info see page A1, or call Todd Plank 244-8640, ext. 24.

Saturday 30
Belfair, Walburgiscnacht, May Eve. Ancient Celtic festival of spring, sexuality and renewed life.

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Outlandish is Proud to Underwrite In The Life broadcast on WXXI TV at 11 PM, Sunday, April 17th.
MONDAY
Gay and Lesbian Support Group
Third Presbyterian Church, 34 Meigs St.,
1st, 3rd Mondays 7-9pm, 732-2354

Rochester Historical Bowling Society
7pm Mondays, GAGV Community Center,
2750 Monroe Ave. Group is full.

COAM
Came Out and Play, Business meeting
1st Mondays, 7pm, GAGV Community Center,
179 Atlantic Ave. Tom M. 454-3609

American Baptists Concerned
Third Mondays, 7-9pm, Webster House,
57 Ambrose St. 442-5466

HIV Positive Gay Men Support group
Every Monday 3pm, ACS Rochester
1330 University Ave. 442-3025, x3851

Green Party (political)
Second Mondays, 7-9pm, GAGV Community Center,
179 Atlantic Ave. 244-6470

Wednesday
Atlantic Five
Support group for men of color.
GAGV Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

TUESDAY
Atlantic Five 0
Gay men 50 and over.
Second Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30pm, GAGV Community Center,
179 Atlantic Ave. 481-0261

Pride GLBT Al-Anon
Every Tuesday, 7-9pm.
GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.
Call Tod Plank, 244-6470, ext 24

Gay Fathers’ Support Group
First and third Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30pm,
GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.
The MOCHA Youth Group
3-5 pm, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way,
420-1400

MOCHA Hepatitis Clinic
Free Hepatitis A & B vaccinations, 3rd
Tuesdays, 5:30-7pm, 107 Liberty Pole Way,
420-1400

WEDNESDAY
Women’s Community Chorus
Rehearsals each Wednesday, 6:30-8pm,
Call for location, 244-4400

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
Board of Directors Meeting, second
Wednesdays, 7pm, 875 E. Main St. fourth
Floor Blue Room, 244-8460

New Freedom N meeting
7pm, Union Church
Men and women.
Support Group L &
Children
First, 3rd Wednesdays,
Third Presbyterian Church
Sponsored by Genesee Region Home Care.
Free, 325-1880

Frontrunners/Runwalkers
Run/walk every Monday, 6pm,
meet George Eastman House parking lot, 271-2706

Empire Bears
First Wednesdays, 7-9pm, GAGV Community Center,
179 Atlantic Ave. info@empirebears.org

Transgender Support Group
Third Wednesdays, 8-10pm.
GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.
Multicom & Coffee Talk
7pm, Spin Cafe, 759 Park Ave. Social for
former Multicom-4 BBS members; other
gay, other perks welcome, every fourth
Wednesday, 7pm

Gray Area
Support/social group for bisexual women.
First Wednesdays, 5-7pm. For location,
call 461-1338; 330-9738

GAGV Library & Archives
4-6pm every Wednesday, GAGV Community
Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 244-8460.
Books can be returned to GAGV offices,
875 E. Main St., Suite 500, from 9am-6pm

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

Brothers Keeper Support group for men over 30.
Second Wednesdays, 6-8pm.
GAGV Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

AGA Support group for transgender of color.
Third Wednesday, 6-8pm, MOCHA Project,
107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

THURSDAY
Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns
6:30pm, third Thursday.
For location call Ralph, 271-7649

Greater Rochester Gay and Lesbian
Business Forum
Professional social group. Second Thursdays,
5-9pm Thursday, 234-8700

GLOBAL
(Gays and Lesbians of Bausch & Lomb),
Meets every third Thursday in City Area G7
conference room at the Optic Center.
Voice mail: 338-8977

50th Year Celebration of GAGV Project
Second, fourth Thursdays, 6pm.
MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way.
420-1400

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

FRIDAY
Gay Men’s AA meeting
Each Friday, 7-9pm, closed meeting.
GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Butch-Femme Connection
First Friday, 6-8pm, GAGV Community Center,
179 Atlantic Ave.

SATURDAY
Rochester Rams Bar Night
Third Saturday, 8pm-2am.
Bachor Forum, 670 University Ave.
734-6930

Frontrunners/Runwalkers
Run walk every Monday, 6pm,
meet George Eastman House parking lot, 461-4216

Empire Bears Bar Night
Second Saturdays, Bachor Forum,
470 University Ave. Bearline: 234-33816

Cross Dresser Support Group
First Saturday, 6:30-9pm
GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave. Info: 251-2132
RDCNDE1@hotmail.com

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

Saturday Night Special Gay AA
7pm, United Church, 220 Winton Rd. S.
Men and women. Open meeting.

Litac Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf
(LRAD) Fourth Saturdays, 6-9pm.
GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

something for da Sistah
Women’s group, second Saturday,
GAGV Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way.
420-1400

Pride and Joy Families
Third Saturdays, GAGV Community Center,
179 Atlantic Ave. 244-8460 x 24.

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

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Now offering Hunter-Douglas
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17 S. Fitzhugh St. Every Sunday, 234-5092

Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church
175 North Drive, Cobbs Hill. 11am.
Contemporary worship service. 7pm.
271-6478

Gay Men’s Alcoholics Anonymous
315 North Drive, Simon Meyer Church,
17 S. Fitzhugh St. 8:30pm, closed.
Weekly, Closed meeting.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Friends
Association (GLBFA)
235 Rochester, Saturdays. 5pm.
Money Hall 421-279-8739. Email: glbfa@hurrala.com

GAGV Youth Group
Ages 15-23. Every Sunday, 2-4pm.
GAGV Youth Center, 675 E. Main St, 244-8460.

Rainbow Amateur Radio Assoc.
Finger Lakes chapter, business meeting/launch.
Call Box, 462-7185

Sacred Spaces Meditation
Second Sundays, 7pm.
MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way.
420-1400

Rainbow Seniors
Third Sundays. Politics at First Universalist
Church, 150 S. Clinton Ave., 4pm.
Handicapped parking behind church; others
please park in lot accessed from Court St.

Community Christian Fellowship
Every Sunday, 4pm.
GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Men’s Cooking Group
Third or fourth Sundays, 461-2273

C 11
Please let me introduce myself. My name is Ralph 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:

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