NY transgender rights bill is re-introduced in legislature

Transgender people—whose gender identity differs from their genetic sex at birth—are facing discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, and many other areas of life.

On April 16, New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane and Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried re-introduced the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA), which would protect transgender people against discrimination throughout New York State.

The recent Commission on Human Rights decision, which found that two transgender women were discriminated against by Advantage Security under New York City’s Human Rights Law, underscores the need for statewide legislation.

“The support this bill has already received is a crucial step in our efforts to reject transgender discrimination. The experience of transgender individuals, and the discrimination they face, is unique, and should be specifically identified and unambiguously rejected in our State’s civil rights laws; just like discrimination based on age, sex, sexual orientation, religion, race, disability, or ethnicity,” said Assembly Member Gottfried.

Many people who supported the SONDA Legislation (Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act) when it was enacted in 2002 believed it covered transgender discrimination. However, being transgender is not the same as having a particular sexual orientation. At that time, Senator Duane introduced an amendment to add transgender discrimination to the legislation, but it failed to get enough votes in the Senate.

“I have long advocated that all New Yorkers should have equal rights and be free from discrimination. Those of transgender experience deserve nothing less than equal protection under the law,” said Senator Duane.

The Assembly bill (A.7438) has gained broad statewide support and now boasts 51 sponsors, including both Democratic and Republican legislators. The Senate bill (S.4794) has eight sponsors.

Six states and 71 cities and counties in the United States—including the cities of Albany, Buffalo, and New York—have enacted transgender nondiscrimination protections.

“Through this legislation, I believe we can create a fairer and more supportive environment for all New Yorkers,” said Senator Duane.

(Continued on page 3)
You're Not in Kansas, Anymore

The "Wizard of Oz" holds special meaning and connection for many of us as we relate to the story, the music or the life of the leading character, Judy Garland. Last week Kansas became the 12th state where voters approved a state constitutional amendment that denies marriage, custody and possibly civil unions and domestic partnerships — to same-sex couples.

Many of you are saying, "I am glad we don't live in Kansas or in one of the other 11 states," but the truth of the matter is that we need to be very mindful of what is happening in these states as it affects our ability to educate those for personal and professional reasons. The broader implications of these poorly written amendments are that they not only deny marriage, they deny domestic partnership benefits, health care and other benefits to both same-sex and different-sex couples. These amendments also attack the rights of children already in place, and argue that domestic violence laws do not apply to same-sex married couples.

Now more than ever we must come out, educate, and advocate for who we are as people and citizens of the United States deserved to be treated fairly and equally.

As we shared in last month's report from the board, the GAGV will continue to focus on the services and support that the GLBT community and allies need to improve their day-to-day lives. Last month, we asked you to vote for seven new board members. The board members you elected have agreed to deliver the strategy and commit to help us succeed and exceed our development goals.

If you would like to allocate these resources, we allocate 37 percent to the Youth Program, 24 percent to the Anti-Violence Program, 20 percent Education and Outreach, 20 percent to the Empty Closet newspaper and nine percent to fundraising. The demand for our services continues to challenge our capacity. Our capacity will remain constrained until we are capable of developing the needed resources to grow the organization. We are looking forward to soon hiring a new Executive Director that will help us in the process of setting direction and developing new sources of financial resources for our critical services and program needs.

Sex, Pleasure & Connection

What do gay men, lesbians and bisexuals have in common? We come in all sizes and ages, and from all class and ethnic backgrounds; we vary in our political and religious beliefs, and in our interests, tastes and values. We can be found throughout global society, from palaces and corporate boardrooms to subways, small towns, farms and inner city neighborhoods. Our diversity is both an advantage and a challenge.

What about transgendered and intersexed people? Until the last decade or so, they were very much unnoticed as such — they were taken for granted as the transvestite queens and dykes who have always been part of the queer community (often looked down on by "straight" appearing" gays full of horizontal hostility). Now we know that there was always a hidden, unknown- knowledge of complexity — that sex, gender and sexuality are their own and do not have to be what they are supposed to be if the name is on a birth certificate.

Transgendered and intersexed people have internalized that confused, deafening silence (and shame, fear and guilt and the fear of being out as a sexual outlaws — us. If we are labeled as sexual beings, we can't also be capable of love, and if we can't love we aren't really human, and if we aren't human we don't deserve rights. Too many of us have internalized that confusion, deafening silence out as a sexual outlaws — us. If we are labeled as sexual beings, we can't also be capable of love, and if we can't love we aren't really human, and if we aren't human we don't deserve rights. Too many of us have internalized that confusion, deafening silence.

The first step a lot of us take, in connecting with each other as queer and accepting our sexual needs and feelings as usual and normal; we have always been part of humanity. To accept sexual pleasure as our right is not necessarily to abuse our sexuality; to abuse others. To be healthy adults, we should be able to love ourselves, and that includes loving and accepting our sexual needs and feelings as natural and normal. We have always been part of humanity. To accept sexual pleasure as our right is not necessarily to abuse our sexuality; to abuse others. To be healthy adults, we should be able to love ourselves, and that includes loving and accepting our sexual needs and feelings as natural and normal. We have always been part of humanity. To accept sexual pleasure as our right is not necessarily to abuse our sexuality; to abuse others. To be healthy adults, we should be able to love ourselves, and that includes loving and accepting our sexual needs and feelings as natural and normal. We have always been part of humanity. To accept sexual pleasure as our right is not necessarily to abuse our sexuality; to abuse others. To be healthy adults, we should be able to love ourselves, and that includes loving and accepting our sexual needs and feelings as natural and normal.
Transgender (continued from page 1)

A new statewide group, the New York State GENDA Coalition, has formed representing a growing list of individuals and organizations that include Housing Works, Empire State Pride Agenda, The LGBT Center, New York Transgender Coalition, New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy, Transgender Law and Policy Institute, Audre Lorde Project, Sylvia Rivera Law Project, New York AIDS Coalition, NYC Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center, Ali Forney Center, Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center (Westchester), Senior Action in a GLBT Environment, Long Island Lesbian and Gay Youth, Long Island Trans Expression, Lambda Rights Organization, and a member of the New York State GENDA Coalition.

In 2001, former New York Mayor Ed Koch asked the mayors of jurisdictions that protect gender variant people to report on their city’s experience with these types of laws — and none of the mayors reported back that implementing the law had caused any major problems or a rush of lawsuits.


Lambda Kodak presents two awards
By Donna Teifelsthal

The Lambda Network At Kodak held their 11th Annual Educational Event on April 14 at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center.

Lisa Vitale and Ramey Spang co-chaired the event attended by nearly 600 employees and their guests. Many senior leaders were in attendance including Daniel Carp, Kodak chairman and CEO.

The program started with a slideshow of famous and not-so-famous GLBT people from the present and past. Many were surprised by some of the people pictured!

Following the slideshow, six network members performed their interpretation of “One of Us,” which was inspired by a performance of the legendary gay music group The Hetrick-Martin Institute.

After dinner, Board Chair Margie Meyer presented this year’s OUTspoken & Visible Awards to Teri Edom and Amy Friend. This award was established in 1996 to recognize Kodak employees who speak out for GLBT people.

Edom was recognized for her work with the Lambda HR Partnership team. Under her leadership, Lambda has strengthened their relationship with Human Resources to address workplace needs of GLBT employees. Teri and her team collaborated with the Global Diversity office to enhance Kodak policies, including the implementation of Worldwide Guidelines for Employees Changing Their Gender.

Friend, current Lambda president, was recognized for her dedication to the network mission of education. Her most recent initiatives as the Marketing Strategy team leader have reached out beyond Rochester and continue to increase visibility for the network and Kodak. In 2004, this team helped to reach approximately 1.6 million in the community.

Todd Plunk from the GAGV and Laura Brooks from Lambda’s Board moderated an interactive exercise, called “Debunking Myths and Misconceptions.” While answering the questions posed by the moderators, audience members engaged in lively discussions and saw their answers displayed on a large projection screen. Questions ranged from the need for marriage equality to health issues to the role of allies. Preliminary feedback indicated that Lambda, once again, proved their talent at providing education in a fun and entertaining environment.

Pride Agenda hosts Dinner May 21; Plans Albany lobbying May 24

The Empire State Pride Agenda will present two events this month. The annual Spring Dinner in Rochester is on May 21, and May 24 is LGBT Equality and Justice Day in Albany.

The dinner begins with a reception in the Galeria of the Riverside Convention Center at 6:30 p.m. Dinner and the program will follow at 8 p.m. in the Grand Lilac Ballroom. New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, a supporter of marriage equality, will be the keynote speaker, and actor Alan Cumming will mc. The Empty Cloak and editor Susan Jordan will receive an award from the Pride Agenda. For information call Daffy Palmer at 585-242-9924. Timothy S. Stahl at the New York office, 212-627-0905, or visit www.prideagenda.org.

On May 24, LGBT people from across the state will head to Albany to show their elected representatives that they do have gay constituents, and that those constituents deserve equal rights. In addition to office visits to legislators, there will be a Pride in the Pulpit prayer breakfast with officials, a session in justice issues with novel politicians, and more. The Pride Agenda hopes for at least 500 LGBT people and allies to be present and visible.

ESPA Executive Director Alan Van Capelle says, “All of us need to go to Alba­ny this year.”

For more information, and to regis­ter for Equality and Justice Day, call Julie Guerinet at 212-627-0095.

HIV Consumer conference is May 18

Liberty Research Group is presenting the 2005 HIV/AIDS Update Regional Consumer Leadership Conference on May 18 at the Diplomat Banquet Hall, Gates, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

This conference will be for community-based organizations, staff, consum­ers, businesses that have an interest in HIV/AIDS issues and policies for consumers and employees to be aware of their Newfronts (continue on page 7)
New Pope has been shown "unrelenting, venemous hatred" for gays

Mark Farmer, executive director of the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force, issued a statement on April 19: "Today, the princes of the Roman Catholic Church elected Pope as a man whose record has been one of unrelenting, venomous hatred for gay people. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

"In fact, during the reign of John Paul II, Cardinal Ratzinger was the driving force behind a long string of pronouncements using the term 'evil' to describe gay people, homosexuality, and marriage equality. As a long-time Catholic from a staunchly Catholi- cal family, I know that the history of the church is full of shameful, centuries-long chapters involving vilification, persecution, violence and against others. Someday, the church will apologize to gay people as it has to Jews. Ratzinger has promised that. I very much doubt that this day will come during this Pope's reign. In fact, it seems inevitable that Ratzinger will find ways to picking and giving his successors even more for which to seek accountability."

"The Rainbow Sash Movement, Campaign pointed to years of statements by Cardinal Ratzinger, in expressing concern about the Catholic Church's future treatment of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people."

We hope that Pope Benedict XVI will fully accept and affirm this position that has been put forward in the past. In every public address and in his major statements and opinions relayed by Pope Benedict XVI that fall wholly outside modern western norms."

In 1986, as Cardinal Ratzinger delivered a Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons. He said: "Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic immoral evil."

The Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, the highest legal body in its decision regarding the ordination of gay priests in 1986, stated: "Those who would move from tolerance to the legalization of specific rights for contracting sexual persons" need to be reminded that the approval or legalization of evil is something far different than right or evil."

The Reverend Terry Perry, Moderator of the Metropolitan Community Churches, issued the following statement: "In 1987, Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, then Vice-Moderator of Metropolitan Community Churches, wrote a letter to Pope John Paul II at the Bilateral Dialogue held during Pope John Paul II’s visit to Columbia, South Carolina."

"At that time, we were filled with hope that the relatively new Pope John Paul II would usher in a new era of openness of God's in gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans­gender children. That did not happen.

"In recent days, we held our hope that this new pope would bring greater openness and acceptance to the Roman Catholic Church. With today's election of Pope Benedict XVI -- we remain deeply disappointed with the new pope."

"In fact, over the past three decades, Cardinal Ratzinger has served as the author of many of the Roman Catholic Church's policies that embody overt hostility to LGBT people and preclude women from full participation in the life of the Church. We share a deep sadness that one of the world's most homophobic religious leaders has been demoted to the papacy, and urges that his policies will continue to demean the rich spiritual gifts of LGBT people and women of faith."

"My faith teaches that all people can change, so my prayers today are that the eyes of Cardinal Ratzinger -- now Pope Benedict XVI -- will be opened to the unique giftedness and blessing that LGBT people can be to the Church. And my prayers today are with my brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic Church, and with those who are harmed by the church's policies that treat LGBT people with less than unconditional acceptance and care."

"The Rainbow Sash Movement said: "We were deeply disappointed with the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as pope, who had hoped for a pastor and shepherd, instead we get a doctrinal enforcer."

"Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger will continue with the world wide anti-gay agenda. Joe Murray, the U.S. Convenor, has said that regardless of the outcome of the conclave, we in the Rainbow Sash Movement will continue to stand against homophobia within our Catholic Church."

"The call for dialogue will continue, as will our prayers. We remind our fellow citizens of all faith to call for openness, tolerance, and inclusion in the Church. We will also seek common ground where we can, and continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in the gay community in that just struggle for human rights."

"Many might be feeling despair that it is only natural. But despair must give way to hope if we are true followers of Jesus Christ. Let us continue our journey for justice and dialogue. Now is the time to focus on Christ, not a failed human being."

"We call gay, lesbian, and straight Catholi- cism to join us on May 15, 2005 as we enter cathedrals and parishes across the nation, and to be a visible sign of hope. Our response to religious homophobia is spiritual strength. The journey of hope continues."

"Cardinals for Free Choice said: "We are deeply concerned that the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as pope is a strong indication of continued internal doctrinal policies, not just within the Catholic Church."

"As we move into a new era for the church, we look to the election of a new pope as a time to stand up for the right of the church's."

"As such, we hereby declare that the new pope should establish the Papal Academy for Women's Rights in the Church. As a new step, the Academy would serve as a registry for qualified women candidates for positions that are already open to women. All Vatican officials and lay representatives will submit their resignation from office to the new pope. At least 50 percent of those resi­gnations should be women, and the posts filled with qualified women.

"During the first one hundred days, the Vatican should open a dialogue on opening the priesthood to married men. Under Pope John Paul II, married priests who forsook to be both priests and women to the message that their desires for human rela­tionships and love were not only unrespon­sive to the priesthood's need for an unbroken line of merit and a separate power, but also unworkable if not inimical to any attempt even dispensation from the priesthood, rendering them to an ecclesiastical limbo — neither fully priest nor fully husband."

The future pope should commission a group to discuss the future and role of mar­ried priests with an eye toward returning them to ministry. Pension rights should be immediately restored to married priests.

"These acts of justice for the church should be matched by an expansion of Pope John Paul II's commitment to peace and his clarification of the bloody suffering, which is time for a complete renunciation of capital punishment and a clear and binding oppo­sition to the war in Iraq. Let us go one step further than the former pope and be clear that there is no possibility of a just war by a superpower."

"None of these steps would change church teaching; all of them are consistent with current theology."

The first one hundred days should culminate with a special mass in St. Peter's Square. After undertaking the above activities, the new pope should warmly welcome gay people back into the church, with special recognition of and specific invitations to other women, the gays and lesbians, the theologians and bishops punished and marginalized, the sexually abused and others who have felt excluded."

"At the end of the first one hundred days, this pope should articulate a vision for the 21st century church that is inclusive, understanding, compassionate and just."

The Pentagons may decriminalize consensual sodomy

The Pentagon is considering a proposal to decriminalize consensual sodomy in the military, according to an article in April 21's New York Times. The act of same-sex and opposite-sex couples are prohibited from engaging in "innu­mental" legal cooperation with another person's consent, as prescribed by the Uniform Code of Military Justice."

"The nation's troops should be pro­tected from the illegal activity by giving them their lives to defend," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "This marks a real recognition by the mili­tary that our country's promise of freedom should extend to our service members. We are committed to working with Service­members Legal Defense Network to ensure that Congress approve this change in poli­

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icy and understands its implications on the Don't Ask, Don't Tell ban. “Repeal of Article 125 would remove a significant obstacle in the fight to end the military's gay ban,” said Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) Director of Law & Policy Sharrar E. Green in a statement April 21. "Pentagon leaders can no longer justify banning gays because of private, consensual conduct if the military sodomy statute is repealed. Commanders should be concerned about winning the war on terror, not about prying into service members' private lives. However, service members must understand that Don't Ask, Don't Tell remains law, and those known to be lesbian, gay or bisexual will continue to be discharged.”

A measure in the House, the Military Readiness Enhancement Act, would repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell, the ban on gay, lesbian and bisexual troops, and allow them to serve openly in the military. – The Washington Blade

Pediatrician testifies at Senate hearing on Federal Marriage Amendment

Dr. Kathleen Moltz, a pediatric endocrinologist, told a Senate panel on April 13 that the anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment would only harm gay and lesbian families and called for its rejection. That proposal faced a resounding defeat last year, but has been reintroduced this year when neither chamber came close to the required two-thirds majority needed to pass the constitutional amendment. The ACLU said it is clear that if enacted, anti-gay supporters of the amendment will try to use its broad language to attack the recognition of same-sex relationships through civil unions or domestic partnerships. The ACLU noted that the Michigan example demonstrates that attempts to "sanctify marriage" are just thinly veiled attempts to attack gay and lesbian Americans by eroding the legal protections for them and their families.

The amendment stalled in Congress last year when neither chamber came close to the required two-thirds majority needed to pass a constitutional amendment. Opposition to the amendment came from unusual sources: former Congressman Bob Barr (R-GA), the author of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, was joined by Vice President Dick Cheney, Representative Christopher Cox (R-CA), Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and others in speaking out against the amendment.

"Congress must reject this bait and switch tactic of hiding the full harm caused by the anti-gay amendment," said Christopher E. Anders, an ACLU Legislative Counsel. “The proposal doesn't protect marriage, but it hurts hard-working gay and lesbian families by taking away things like health care. Dr. Moltz, her family and all Americans deserve the full protection and support of the government. Congress must reject this anti-family proposal.

To read Dr. Moltz's testimony, go to: http://www.aclu.org/LesbianGayRights/LesbianGayRights.cfm?ID=17992&c=100

The Human Rights Campaign released a new report on April 13, highlighting the harm that several state level constitutional amendments denying same-sex couples the rights and protections of marriage have caused to families.

"If Sen. Brownback (who called the FMA hearing) were really concerned about families, today's hearing would focus on families who have lost healthcare and domestic violence protections because of these measures," said HRC President Joe Solmonese. "This hearing is an attack on same-sex couples and is further evidence that the far right is controlling the Senate, and keeping our leaders from focusing on issues that strengthen the whole country."

The report highlights four states that enacted constitutional amendments last year – Missouri, Utah, Ohio and Michigan – where governmental entities and/or individuals have interpreted the constitutional amendments to:

- Deny domestic partner benefits, such as health insurance, to unmarried couples – same and different sexes;
- Argue that domestic violence laws do not apply to opposite-sex unmarried couples;
- Attempt to void a custody agreement between a same-sex couple;
- The language of the amendments in the four states is very similar to the proposed Marriage Protection Amendment (S.J. Res 1), which said it has been renumbered at the request of the Senate Judiciary Subcommitte to the Constitutional, Civil Rights and Property Rights. The amendment always try to frame it around so-called "judicial activism" so they can gloss over the fact that millions of fair-minded Americans – a majority, in fact – oppose discrimination against same-sex couples and their children," said Solmonese. For the full text of the new HRC report, visit www.hrc.org.

Save the date! Saturday May 21, 2005

Rochester Riverside Convention Center
Reception: Galleria at 6:30pm
Dinner and Program: Grand Illus Ballroom at 7:30pm
For more information or to become a Committee Member, Table Captain or Sponsor, please call Dutty Palmer at 585.242.9924 or Timothy E. Stahl at 212.627.0305 or visit our website at www.prideagenda.org

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sixth annual EMPIRE STATE PRIDE AGENDA SPRING DINNER Empty Closet/Susan Jordan

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honoree: Empty Closet/Susan Jordan

The sixth annual Empire State Pride Agenda Spring Dinner is saving the date! Saturday, May 21, 2005.
Interview

Bob Duffy, candidate for the Democratic nomination in the Rochester mayoral race, attended an East End Beats AIDS event at The Spot on March 20.

By Susan Jorden

Bob Duffy is no longer Chief of Police, after seven years in that role. He is now a candidate for the Democratic nomination for Mayor. Duffy sees himself as a leader, not a politician.

"Going into politics was never a career goal of mine," he said. He had been asked to run for different positions twice before, and had turned down the suggestions. However, one night last year he went to dinner at the home of two close, longtime friends, and halfway through dinner the host asked people around the table to sit in turn why they felt Duffy should run for mayor.

"My first response was to say no," he said, "but I had so much respect for them that I said I would consider it. Afterwards I was in a state of disbelief -- and my wife's response was 'No way'!"

"I then went to see Mayor Johnson," Duffy said. "If he had advised me not to continue this, I'd probably have said no (to the idea of running). I've worked with him for seven years, and have great respect for him. He said he was not endorsing anyone at that time, but he encouraged me to go out and talk to people and make my own decision. So I started this whole process. I began to talk to a variety of people. I was on a college trip to Cleveland with my oldest daughter, and while there I got a call from Carlos Garcia, who handles public relations for the police department. He said there was a call from the Democrat & Chronicle inquiring about whether I was going to run for mayor."

Duffy said that he hoped to avoid making the decision in public. "I felt a little betrayed by an elected official who I'd talked to -- it was meant to seek input and advice. It was not a decision that I wanted to go into the public domain. It's a huge decision. I guess this was a strategy on someone's behalf to force me to make a decision."

Duffy went ahead. Before Christmas he sent out a letter asking for thoughts about the race and for ideas on what the next mayor of Rochester should accomplish. "This was done on my own time, with my own money," he said. "I got some heartfelt responses and great information. I was told that this was something that hadn't been done before -- asking for ideas rather than money. I was not trying to determine level of interest or raise money, just to get feedback from citizens, especially those in the areas of politics."

In his seven years as Chief of Police, Duffy had never been able to be politically active. "I'd never asked Democratic party committee meetings," he said. "The most important reason for seeking advice was to see if I could make a difference. In the end, I made the decision on my own. It was a very difficult and very personal decision for me and caused sleepless nights and angst for several weeks. Once I made the decision, I never looked back."

Duffy took a leave of absence and went to a small town near Asheville, N.C., where he met with former Rochester Police Chief Robert Wardlaw. "By the second day," he said, "I had decided to come back and retire from the Police Department and pursue the position of mayor. The reason I (retired) was because I'm well aware that I can expect to be attacked on several fronts over the next few months, during the political process, and I thought those attacks should be addressed to me, not to the Police Department."

Some critics have already said precisely why Duffy is not a suitable candidate. "They say, 'Bob Duffy lacks political experience,'" he said. "I'm not sure how to respond to that. Politics is a way to serve. I spent nine years in the RPD, working with people and serving them, listening to problems and trying to provide the highest level of service that I could. I've had contacts with sheriff's deputies, the county drug task force, Project Cadet, and many other local and state social service agencies and organizations. And I have put aside political and organizational differences and worked as a team. This is no different from sitting down and working at what we believe is best for our community. I have no political aspirations. I am focused on a single issue improving the city, and am focused on the people who live in it. That's the only reason I'm here."

Duffy's entrance into electoral politics has been based more into the city's structural aspects of political life. "I've learned that people I've worked with in government for many years and thought I had developed strong relationships with -- those relationships became strained when I announced I was going to run for mayor. One local elected official emailed me and said that if I chose to run for mayor, any future career path I might choose would be "negatively impacted."

Duffy believes that being a political outsider can be an advantage, "in so many ways, it's political differences and divisions that have added fuel to the fire."

"He said, "I believe we can do things differently in future. We can bring a sense of professionalism and statesmanship in politics. It's my intention to stay on the high road throughout the campaign. I have a very thick skin and will withstand any attacks that will come at me. I believe I made the right decision and I am not one to back down. I've been in the police office for 20 years and have been in life-threatening situations. This is different."

Duffy's three priorities are economic development, education and public safety. He says that one thing he has learned as chief of police is he is not to take "excessive priorities." He wants to focus time and attention on the three basics, which he sees as inextricably linked. "I will make sure that all systems inside city government are focused on those three goals." Duffy said that he knows he will have to work two jobs. "I have a chance to see from the inside many things that Mayor Johnson has been through. I know for sure that the way he has handled his administration won't be visible for years to come."

Duffy restricted himself to only one campaign promise: "If elected, I will put together the best team humanly possible to lead city government. I want the team to look like Rochester and reflect Rochester, and provide a seat at the table for every- one to know exactly how I want to lead the city."

"I'm an old­ Shop near East Main and Clinton. It was an exciting, bustling space. I remember as a police officer being assigned for many years to work downtown. I have wonderful memories of it growing up.

"Rochester is a jewel that only needs to be cleaned off," he said. "We all need to focus people's attention on the positives in our community, and our energies on the problems we have. I think we have a moral problem in Rochester. I'm a positive person -- I see our glass as more than half full."

"If we do our jobs, the glass can overflow in a few years. We have the ingredients to restore greatness to the city. We've had tough economic times, with displacement of so many jobs and people."

Duffy stressed his view that economic development, education and public safety are linked, and that improvements in one will have a knock-on effect in another. "We need a link with public safety and the drug problem. Contrary to some views, Rochester did not have a drug problem in the 1980s. The drug problem is fueled more by economics than by addiction. Young men and women choose to run for the drug money."

"I would take the quick money on the streets. If we could keep them in school, they could go into jobs that would let them have apartments, nice clothes, etc., and live in a manner that provides a sense of comfort and security. That would contribute to public safety.""

"Economic good times seem far away, especially in the cities of the northeast. Duffy feels that as mayor his highest priority would be to bring businesses into the city, and keep the ones that are already here. "As successful coaches recruit talent for their teams," he said, "my goal will be to recruit businesses. There have been some great success stories with businesses, but the fact remains we are not on the radar screen of national corporations, partly because of the cost of running a business in New York State, and partly because we need to have a level of self confidence that lets us welcome people here. No candidate for mayor can promise to reverse every problem in the first six weeks. But we can create a process to put ourselves back on track. I have confidence we can do that.""

Duffy added that downstate is one percent of Rochester's landmass, and 40 percent of its tax base. "The development will come from within the region, and we need to have major subsidies from the Canadian government (see From Our Readers)," he said. "I believe that he is very, very difficult to go by these projections. It is important for all of us to get on board and support it." He added that he would himself plan to literally get on board once the ferry service starts up again.

"We should link the ferry with the attractions of this area, not just the city. We have great cultural opportunities and businesses, but also in the area we have the Finger Lakes wine country, which brings a lot of tourism. The entire region should have a vested interest in the ferry and should provide financial support. We should think big and think bold and look at ways to market this region. It's a great link with the metro area of Toronto and provides us with a world class opportunity that could bring great benefits."

He equates the ferry with the Convention Center and Renaissance Square, in that big investments which drain taxpayer money may be necessary in order to bring future profits.

"Plan correctly," Duffy said, "then no doubt that we'll be successful. My hope is that in four or five years down the road, people will think we did a good job with economic benefit, and a great legacy of Mayor Johnson's tenure."

"They can get on the ferry, they can get off the ferry, they can get off the Ferry and do the quick money on the streets. If we could keep them in school, they could go into jobs that would let them have apartments, nice clothes, etc., and live in a manner that provides a sense of comfort and security. That would contribute to public safety.""
On the question of equal marriage rights for same-sex couples, Duffy said he believes that the law is discriminatory and discrimination, and thinks the decision will ultimately be made by the courts, and possibly the legislature. "I think it's imperative that we protect rights of all citizens. I don't believe the general public understands the importance of this," he said. "We have to come together with light by light families. I have listened to so many discussions among friends, and I know it's a hot topic and causes splits with faith communities. It's an issue of law, whether the decision comes from the courts or legislature or both. Most distressing to me is that basic civil rights are being denied. I have learned so much from friends of mine who have been denied, and who have helped educate me. The (hospital) visitation issue has been resolved (in New York State), but so much remains.

"As a Police Chief of seven years, I have ridden in the Pride Parade, been honored at the Pride Agenda dinner. I was criticized for that, but I felt as Police Chief I was the Police Chief for the entire community, and as Mayor I would be Mayor of the whole community, and would send a message of tolerance, as well as protecting the civil rights of all citizens. No one should be denied basic rights." When asked if those basic rights include the right to get legal marriage licenses, Duffy responded, "I honestly believe that as mayor I'd have no choice about supporting the law. I have a strong faith, and have seen conflict, but there's an opportunity to bridge that gap. I believe there has to be a coming together of the faith community and the light community. It creates a sense of mutual understanding and respect. I read an op-ed piece by a local pastor on gay marriage, totally contradicting his previous positions on civil rights. It's coming down to a decision made (by the courts) on civil rights, and I expect it will happen at some point in the future." When asked if he was uncertain, "I think I have a history of standing up for people's rights. As police chief I followed the law. There was a statewide and national protest a few years ago, and I had officers who believed for and against, but one thing we're trained to do is stand by the law and protect everyone's rights. I do think a lot of misinformation is put out. The one thing missing from the discussion is civil rights... I'm a fanatic about civil rights." Duffy says he has strong views on his religious faith and also on people's needs, and he sees those two areas as coming into conflict. "As a child, in my family," he said, "you could never say a word against your group. You never made fun of someone or showed disrespect. I have such a heart for people who are pushed aside or discriminated against. I've seen discrimination at first hand. We're so weak when we're divided on this. We're so weak when we're divided on this. We have to come together with light by light families. I have listened to so many discussions among friends, and I know it's a hot topic and causes splits with faith communities. It's an issue of law, whether the decision comes from the courts or legislature or both. Most distressing to me is that basic civil rights are being denied. I have learned so much from friends of mine who have been denied, and who have helped educate me. The (hospital) visitation issue has been resolved (in New York State), but so much remains.

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Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act: Answers to Common Questions

What is the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA)?
GENDA is a bill that adds the category of gender identity and expression to the already existing New York State human rights laws. The current law makes it illegal in New York State to discriminate on the basis of age, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, sex, marital status and other categories in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, education, and credit. The GENDA act would extend current law to ban discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression as well.

What is gender identity and expression and how does it differ from sex and sexual orientation?
Gender identity and expression refer to the way people self-identify and present their masculinity and/or femininity to the world. Often, but not always, this corresponds to the person's sex as assigned at birth, so that a person born biologically male or female often dresses, adopts a hair style, and uses a name and pronoun in ways that reflect the culturally accepted roles associated with their birth sex.

Gender variance is a term that describes anyone who differs from conventional gender norms on a regular basis, such as tomboys and feminine men.

Transgender is an umbrella term used to designate a community of people who regularly present in a gender different from the one assigned to them at birth and who live a significant part of their lives in that gender. This includes people who have undergone medical procedures to change their sex and those who have not.

Sexual orientation refers to one's romantic and sexual attraction. Gender variance is not in itself any indicator of sexual orientation. Just like everyone else, gender variant and transgender people may be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual or sexual.

Why is this legislation necessary?
Through its Human Rights Law, New York State prohibits discrimination against groups of citizens who face widespread social hostility and unequal treatment. Unfortunately, people who present their masculinity and/or femininity in a way that differs from the stereotypical gender roles traditionally associated with their birth sex are not explicitly covered in statutes, though there is a need for them. There are many documented cases where social antagonism against gender variant (including transgender) individuals and their families, has led to many being denied and fired from a job, harassed in the workplace, faced with "glass ceiling" harassed and faced with eviction by their landlords, steered away from certain areas when looking for a home, denied service in a restaurant, given inadequate medical care and otherwise treated as second-class citizens solely because of their gender identity and expression.

Isn't discrimination based on gender variance already prohibited by the law?
No. Neither federal nor state statutes specifically ban discrimination based on gender identity and expression in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit or education. While at least two New York State courts have found local or state prohibitions on "sex," "gender," or "disability" discrimination to apply to transgender people, those precedents do not necessarily apply to the full range of gender variance and are not binding on the entire state. Because sexual orientation and gender identity and expression are different, courts generally have not interpreted sexual orientation discrimination laws to include discrimination against transgender people.

Is there precedent for prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity and expression?
Yes, in both the public and private sector. Four states have enacted similar comprehensive non-discrimination laws: California, Illinois, Minnesota, New Mexico and Rhode Island. Two other states (Connecticut and New Jersey) have interpreted their human rights laws as prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity and expression. Over seventy localities across the United States have also passed local gender identity and expression non-discrimination laws, including New York localities like the City of Albany, City of Buffalo, City of Ithaca, New York City, City of Rochester, Rochester School District, Suffolk County, and Tompkins County.

A growing number of private employers have adopted their own policies of gender identity and expression non-discrimination. New York companies with such a policy include American Express, Bausch & Lomb, CIGNA, Deutche Bank, Eastman Kodak, Goldman Sachs, IBM, JPMorgan Chase, Keyspan, Lehman Brothers, MetLife, The New York Times, PepsiCo and Pfizer. The Office of the New York State Comptroller is an example of a public employer that also has a policy prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity and expression.

Who would the law apply to?
Although the law would apply to both the public and private sectors, the major provisions of the law would apply to private sector employers. The public sector would be covered to the extent the state is a party to an collective bargaining agreement.

Would the law require that all public bathrooms be unisex?
No. Since gender identity and expression non-discrimination laws have been interpreted as requiring only reasonable accommodation for gender variant employees, employers have already successfully dealt with the issue of restroom usage on an individual basis. There has never been a reported problem regarding the use of facilities in those jurisdictions in which similar laws have been adopted.

Would the law force owners of small family-owned businesses to hire transgender people?
No. Nothing in the law would alter the exception that already exists in the human rights law for small businesses with fewer than four employees.

Would the law apply to religious groups?
No. Nothing in the law would alter the religious exemptions that already exist in the human rights law, nor would the law supersede a religious institution's First Amendment right to hire and fire according to the tenets of its religion.

Wouldn't the law give transgender people special rights or create a slippery slope towards banning discrimination based upon eye color, etc.?
No. As with the rest of the human rights law, all this law would do is mandate equal treatment and create an equal playing field. Identifying categories within human rights laws has been how state legislatures for decades have provided for equal treatment of many groups of citizens who are treated unequally.

The historical experience of gender variant and transgender individuals in New York State include social ostracism and legal marginalization. In fact, some transgender people have been victims of harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, and class, as well as gender identity and expression.
New Catholic leader is notoriously anti-gay

By Sebastian White

With the departure of a eucharistic paff of white smoke that rapidly cascaded at sunset, the highly ritualized papal conclave came to a close in Rome last week. At St. Peter's Square ushered in a new era for the faith, but the selection of the ultra-conservative Ratzinger, known for a quater-century as a Vatican insider with a sternly doctrinaire view of the church's teachings and staunchly anti-gay beliefs, is a worry to many in the LGBTQ community.

The vote for Ratzinger ended weeks - and years, really - of speculation over who would lead the church in the wake of Pope John Paul II's death, and in just what direction that person would lead the church as it propels itself further into the new century.

While pundits say it is too soon to conjecture fully about the tenor of this new papacy, the well-documented religious leanings of Pope Benedict XVI - which he revealed in his official papal name - suggest that the incoming pontiff will follow closely in his predecessor's footsteps by advocating a tightly-controlled interpretation of Scripture and a renewed focus on returning the church to its orthodox conservative roots.

Ratzinger opposed efforts to increase the standing of women in the church, and in a firm believer in celibacy for the clergy. He has called homosexuality an "intrinsic moral evil," and has opposed efforts to allow married members of the clergy to adopt children, be foster parents, coach sports, or be school teachers.

The 77-year-old defender of traditional teachings, Ratzinger was the chief architect and public face of a Vatican statement against the legalization of marriage for same-sex couples, calling such unions "immoral, unnatural, and harmful."
The then-Cardinal said his belief was that "Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law."

Like Pope John Paul II, the 77-year-old Ratzinger opposes the use of contraception and condones to combat the spread of AIDS, despite the dramatic growth of the Catholic Church in Africa and Latin America, two areas plagued by soaring rates of HIV infection.

And then there is the priest sex scandal.

In recent years, as allegations of abuse rolled in the U.S. Catholic Church, Cardinal Ratzinger has repeatedly insisted that American reporters were deliberately distorting the scope of the problem in an effort to discredit the church. He concluded that "the constant presence in the press of the sins of Catholic priests, especially the United States, is an onslaught against what is traditional and what is historical."

Through his unyielding opposition to any move toward ordination of women in the Catholic Church, his disdain for policies shaped by public opinion, and his commitment to traditional thinking, Ratzinger helped build an alliance against those who "pick and choose" their religious beliefs. Ratzinger earned himself the nickname of "Rock of the Enforcers" at the Vatican, as well as "God's Rottweiler" and "Cardinal No" in the European press.

Matt Foreman, who leads the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force, quickly took the selection of Ratzinger to task. "Some-day, the church will apologize to gay people as it has to others it has oppressed in the past," he said in a statement to the media. "I very much doubt that this day will come during this pope's reign. In fact, it seems inevitable that this pope will cause even more pain and give license to others even more for which to seek atonement."

So, although no one can be certain at this juncture just how the new pontiff will shape the Catholic Church as it moves forward, those watching the papal selection proceedings are thinking of a leader with more progressive and gay-affirming views will have to wait at least for the next convocation to get their wish.


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ACLU challenges Tennessee anti-marriage amendment

The American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee filed a lawsuit April 22, challenging a proposed amendment to the Tennessee Constitution that would ban same-sex couples from being able to marry in the state. The lawsuit charges that the measure failed to meet notification requirements as outlined in the state constitution.

"The drafting of our state constitution put in place very specific safeguards to protect the constitution from being amended at the whim of politicians. Unfortunately, in their haste to write discrimination into the law, the sponsors of this amendment are attempting to undermine the democratic principles guaranteed by the Constitution," said Hedy Weinberg, Executive Director of the ACLU of Tennessee. "It is shameful that the politicians who are so eager to prevent gay people from securing the protections of marriage have so little respect for our state constitution that they are willing to ignore these procedural safeguards."

The ACLU filed the lawsuit on behalf of ACLU members, the Tennessee Equality Project (TEP) - a statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lobbying organization, State Representatives Larry Turner, Beverly Robinson Marrero and Tami­"the municipal vote, that we no longer follow the rules, democracy is sacrificed. We are joining in this legal suit because it's our duty to make sure that when we consider proposals to amend the state constitution, we follow the rules. That didn't happen here."

The lawsuit charges that the text of the amendment was not published six months prior to the General Assembly election as required by the State Constitution under Article XII, Section 3. Before an amend­ment can be placed on the ballot for a general election, it must first be agreed upon by a majority of both the Senate and House of Representatives. Then the text of the amendment must be published in Tennessee newspapers at least six months before the next election of the General Assembly. When the next General Assem­bly convenes, a vote is taken to approve the amendment and the amendment must be approved by two-thirds of the members of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The amendment is put to the citizens for a vote only if it meets all of these requirements.

According to the complaint filed by the ACLU, the proposed amendment received the necessary votes to pass the first vote in the House on May 6, 2004, and in the Sen­ate on May 19, 2004. However, the Secre­tary of State failed to publish the text of the amendment until June 20, 2004 - only four months and 12 days prior to the General Assembly elections that took place on

HRC depletes Washington State defeat of anti-gay protections

The Human Rights Campaign decried the April 21 Washington Senate vote defeating a non-discrimination bill that would have protected state's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender citizens.

The measure was defeated mostly along party lines, by one vote. In a show of bipartisanship, the House overwhelmingly passed a similar version in February. Democrat Gov. Christine Gregoire had pledged to sign the bill.

"Some senators struck a blow against fairness today," said HRC Pres­ident Joe Solmonese. "Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people have a right to equal protection under the law. The work of many legislators, the Governor and espe­cially Senator Rupe is a disappointment in today's vote since Washin­ton voters overwhelmingly favor ensuring equal rights for gay people."

"We are disappointed to see the Human Rights Campaign's unprecedented efforts, we now have a lasting statewide organiza­tion that will make the difference in years to come," said George Cheung, execu­tive director of Equal Rights Washington, the state's GLBT advocacy group. "We worked closely with Equal Rights Wash­ington and key legislators developing and ensuring the measure's success. HRC has had staff on the ground for the last two months helping with grassroots organizing, coalition building and collaboration with the business community to secure sup­port for passage. HRC also provided fund­ing for television ads, phone calls and a lobbyist. Through statewide action alerts and significant volunteer time, HRC worked with our local members in support of the bill."

"We're committed to standing by Equal Rights Washington and seeing this mea­sure will one day become law," added Sol­monese. First introduced 30 years ago by Washington's first openly gay legislator, the measure will be spearheaded by openly gay Rep. Gary Miyasaki. State's citizens have non-discrimination laws covering sexual orientation and gender identity and the 30-covering sexual orienta­tion. For a map of states with laws enacted, each year, the ACLU of Tennessee. "It is shameful that the politicians who are so eager to prevent gay people from securing the protections of marriage have so little respect for our state constitution that they are willing to ignore these procedural safeguards."

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REMEMBERING RASHAWN BRAZELL: Bishop Zachary Jones of Unity Fellowship Church, above, during the moment of silence at the April 4 Brooklyn Borough Hall meeting on the brutal murder of Rashawn Brazell, 19. Brazell was slain in February; his limbs were found in the A line subway tunnel at Nostrand Ave., and his torso at a recycling center. The killer is still at large.

NIGHT OF 1000 GOWNS: The 19th Night of 1000 Gowns Ball took place April 2 at the N.Y. Marriott Marquis. Emperor XIV Tony Mon-teleone and Empress XIX Robin Kradles, above, were crowned at midnight. The Ball, produced by the Imperial Court of NYC, benefits LifeBeat: The Music Industry Fights AIDS.

PLAY BALL: Joseph Justin at the Gay and Lesbian Big Apple Softball League tryouts at Chelsea Park on March 26.
"I'm fighting to stop a killer."

HIV is a killer. I'm a witness. I have buried babies. I have buried old people and young people. People like me, people like you. HIV is serious, so my life's work is helping others learn about it and prevent it.

Today, thousands of researchers, medical professionals and volunteers are committed to discovering a vaccine that prevents HIV and stopping this epidemic. To them, I say, 'Thank you, I'm with you.'

Mark Del Monte
Community Worker

Join me on Wednesday, May 18th for HIV Vaccine Awareness Day. Wear your red AIDS ribbon upside down to form a "V" — as a sign you share my vision for an HIV preventive vaccine. Show your support for HIV vaccine research and all the people working to make progress to stop this killer, HIV.

Learn more about HIV vaccines and help educate others. Visit www.aidsinfo.nih.gov or call 1-800-448-0440.
Long Term Care insurance protection helps the GLBT community plan for the worst

By William R. Monte, CLTC, LTCPC, CPA

Because same-sex couples aren’t afforded the same protections and benefits as a traditional married couple, their long-term care insurance needs can be an even more essential element of their overall financial planning.

Couples have been married legally for the last 74 years. About 74 million Americans married for the first time who will turn 55 in the years ahead. Unfortunately, much less has been said about the five to seven million Americans who are part of the aging gay-kibosio-bisexual-transgender (GLBT) community.

Gay couples have the same financial planning needs as any other couple in many ways. They have the same need for basic security, to be loved and be loved, and to make meaning of their lives. The glaring difference is that the current American legal environment treats same-sex partners and married couples differently in far too many respects. I would like to cover some of the current issues that affect the GLBT community.

In essence, the GLBT insurance community is in the process of forming. The GLBT community has created a domestic partner relationship and this domestic relationship can provide them with a great deal of protection against themselves.

People who believe that they can rely on Medicaid for long-term care — especially gay and lesbian households who often get married and understand the restrictions and requirements for qualification, Medicaid will pay for long term care as a result of being “bounced” out of a nursing home. Medicaid looks at the monthly income of a nursing home resident and determines whether he or she qualifies for Medicaid. If Medicare qualifies the nursing home resident, Medicaid kicks in and pays the remainder of the nursing home bill.

Obviously, the best time to consider long term care insurance is yesterday. The cost of this coverage does rise the longer that a person waits. It is a coverage that a person pays a fixed annual premium for, depending on the policy, and does not increase over time to keep pace with growing costs. The cost of full coverage is extremely high by age 70 and older.

The GLBT community should thoroughly educate themselves on the many benefits of long term care insurance to determine if it is an appropriate plan for them to consider. Doing so will help them avoid the enormous financial and emotional crisis that a need for long term care can create. It will also provide the insurance of a domestic partner that a long-term care policy can provide for the individual to avoid the spend-down requirement of Medicaid. But perhaps the most important reason for individuals with long-term care insurance is to avoid the financial liability to the people they care for.

Gay and lesbian households have children, 80 percent of gay parents are men, and 50 percent of gay parents are currently living together. Gay couples have the same financial planning needs as any other couple in many ways.

The affordability discount also extends out to the member's family (parents, grandparents, siblings and all respective "in-laws"). Depending on the company, the discount can be as high as 20 percent or even 25 percent (depending on the company). This discount, in addition to a 15 percent discount for a company that is part of the group, has made coverage more affordable for the GLBT community to obtain.

The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley (GAGV) will also be instituting an additional 10 percent "affiliation discount" for all GAGV members and their partners. This affiliation discount also extends out in a ceremony in Ontario, Canada. When Funderburke requested that his retirement benefits be extended to his partner, he was told that he was not covered under the plan because he was not within the 30-day grace period. David said that the school district has not responded in any way to this request.

The lawsuit argues that the school district violated its contractual, statutory and regulatory obligations as well as constituting a violation of New York Education Law and the state constitution, in refusing spousal coverage to Funderburke and David. Lambda Legal, the city’s oldest gay rights organization, filed in recent months that were issued by New York’s Attorney General and State Comptroller. Lambda Legal also cited that out-of-state marriages of same-sex couples must be recognized in New York.

This is a law 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.

A favorable ruling would not be the first time a court in New York recognized a same-sex couple as spouses. In a ruling last year in a lawsuit filed by Lambda Legal and Northwest Executive Group in favor of St. Vincent’s Hospital, Lambda Legal won the first case in New York where same-sex couples were recognized as “spouses” for purposes of Medicaid. Lambda Legal also cites opinions in other states, including New Jersey and California, where same-sex couples have been allowed to marry, the school district refused.

William Monte is a certified long term care planning specialist and is a long term care planning firm in Rochester. He can be reached at 585-721-2258 or by email at bmonte@rochester.rr.com.

Lamb Legal files lawsuit on behalf of L.I. gay male couple

In court papers filed April 20 in state court in Nassau County, Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit on behalf of a gay couple who were legally married last year in Canada but were denied spousal health benefits from UnitedHealthcare Union Free School District on Long Island.

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

Lambda Legal represents Duke Funderburke, 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 42 years, Brad Davis, 6/7, in October 2004 in a ceremony in Ontario, Canada. When Funderburke requested that his retirement benefits be extended to his partner, he was told that he was not covered under the plan because he was not within the 30-day grace period. David said that the school district has not responded in any way to this request.

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People For the American Way resurfaces 25-year-old TV ad to combat “Justice Sunday”

People For the American Way Foundation (PFAWF) has updated a 25-year-old ad in the face of increasing attempts to manipulate religion for political gain by Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, including his appearance as part of “Justice Sunday” and his looming threat to deploy the “nuclear option” to eliminate the filibuster.

“The ad is a reminder that Americans value religious tolerance and diversity, and a rebuke to those radical right leaders who suggest that you can’t be a good Christian unless you share their political views,” said Ralph G. Neas, PFAWF President. “That message was important 25 years ago, and even more important today, when we see some of our nation’s most powerful elected officials crossing the line. We need to seek bipartisan cooperation, not inflame political divisions with religious rhetoric. As the ad says, that’s not the American Way.”

The original ad was written and produced in 1980 by TV producer Norman Lear as a response to rising voices of intolerance from the radical religious right. Calls poured in, and the overwhelming response led to the formation of People For the American Way, an organization working in a hard hat next to a forefront.

“Here come some preachers on the radio, and they’re talking about the attack on a bunch of political issues that there’s just one Christian position, and implying if we don’t support what they’re saying, we’re running the ad. “Maybe there’s something wrong when people, even preachers, suggest other people aren’t good Christians, depending on their political views.”

Neas said the old ad has taken on new resonance as the radical right, joined by senior elected officials, attempts to intimidate federal judges.

On April 24, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist appeared with the Family Research Council’s Tony Perkins and Focus on the Family’s James Dobson in “Justice Sunday” an anti-Gayforces simulcast to churches, called “The Fillibuster Against People Of Faith.”

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay has threatened retribution against judges who make decisions based on the specter of impeachment for Supreme Court justices (presumably not of “people of faith”) for upholding the law.

Senator John Cornyn suggested on the Senate floor that near violent attacks against judges could be the result of frustration with their rulings.

These are direct attacks on the wisdom of the founders, who put a system of checks and balances into our government more than 200 years ago. And establishment of an independent judiciary as the ultimate check on government power. We must not abandon the basic principles that protect our freedoms — no matter which political party holds power,” Neas said.

He noted that hundreds of religious leaders have rebuked Frist for his support of the “Justice Sunday” simulcast, which was promoted with inflammatory materials charging that the filibuster is being used to keep “people of faith,” particularly Christians, off the federal courts.

New Veterans policy may save lives

Lambda Legal said on April 21 that a new policy in the Department of Veterans Affairs, to be implemented throughout the VA, will make it easier for homeless veterans nationwide to evaluate on a case-by-case basis veterans who have HIV and need organ transplants may save hundreds of lives over the coming years.

“After working closely with officials in the department, we’re pleased that the VA has made this move—the policy is backed by solid scientific data and could save hundreds of lives,” said Jon Greene, Director of Lambda Legal’s HIV Project.

According to the policy, veterans who have HIV and are in need of an organ transplant will be evaluated locally by a medical professional experienced in HIV care, and Veterans who are HIV-infected undergo the same pre-transplant examination for solid organ and bone marrow transplantation as non-HIV infected transplant candidates.

Lambda Legal first urged the VA to change its policy last year in an appeal, representing Gay men, by solid scientific data and could save hundreds of lives,” said Jon Greene, Director of Lambda Legal’s HIV Project.

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Freedom To Marry producers thank Todd Plank for column

To The Editor,

I am a director/producer of the award-winning documentary, Freedom To Marry, and we want to thank Todd Plank for his excellent article, "Family Matters: The L Word," which we have forwarded to our email list of friends.

Tod's brought up the complex point that by withholding our expressions of love we are feeding into the homophobic system of hatred that is crying desperately to push us back into the closet. In the making of our film we kept our audience in mind as we edited our material. We felt no need to "preach to the choir" of gays and lesbians and viewed our goal audience as our straight neighbors, co-workers, family and friends. We wanted to try to deconstruct the hatred and fear projected onto our relationships by creating an intimate, non-threatening film that allows the viewer to come to know and love the seven long-term same-sex couples we interviewed.

The core of our film is a commitment ceremony of two women who had been together for 20 years and were asked to film this ceremony only one week after having filmed a young white heterosexual marriage ceremony. As we traveled to these ceremonies back to back we were struck by the injustice that one service was sanctioned with $1,138 federal subsidy while the other was never even allowed to be called a "marriage ceremony".

The young straight couple was obvious­ly comfortable with the pageantry of their extravagant wedding and many months and dollars had gone into creating the "look" of a beautiful wedding — and that they did. It all "looked" right, but the guests were not necessarily "moved," family and friends. It was "beautiful" the ceremony was — but with no emphasis on the love and devotion of the couple in question.

The lesbian couple had consciously chosen to do without the formality and chose to invite 100 of their "best friends" to a botanical garden setting in front of an old potting shed. The couple also chose to read their vows, which they had each care­fully written beforehand and heard aloud for the first time in the presence of their loved ones.

As we listened to their passionate words to one another and filmed these two women, our hearts hurt open in the obvious pres­ence of their love. As they held hands the camera zoomed in to capture the beauty of those two older hands together with a tenderness and caring that was touching. I think that many audiences will relate to the contrast between the two services.

Bay Ferries competitor says BF ferries needed major subsidies

To the Editor:

Re: assertion in April Empty Closet interview with Todd Plank about Bay Ferries having a "track record of running ferry services without subsidies elsewhere." I would like the BF ferry service every success and as such want you to be aware of the facts. The fact is Bay Ferries has received subsidies in excess of $10.9 million from the Canadian government, including at least the following: Transport Canada (TC) Direct Operating and Capital sub­sidies, $4,500,000; TC Capital Subsidy to rebuild Yarmouth wharf $1,300,000; Dept. Public Works Capital Subsidy to deal with wharf structural problems, $400,000; Proceeds of sale of Biosense in 1999 to Euroferry, $4,538,000 [1]; TC Direct Capital Subsidy for Passenger Bridge rebuild, $169,800 [2]; $10,903,800.

Bay Ferries' sister company NFI Ferries is at least public about its government subsi­dies. PEI's Premier Bragg states the subsidy used to be $10 million per year and has dropped to only $5 million per year. One wonders if Bay Ferries could prove it doesn't need these NFI subsidies, i.e. this is not an cross-subsidization.

Especially grieved to us, however, and not an insignificant number, is that we have a loose­ly sweetheat lease Transport Canada gave monopoly control of the Yarmouth Termi­nal to BF. We compete with BF as we both operate from Maine to Yarmouth. As land­lord the BF pays the federal government $500 per year for the terminal, yet, as a simple user of the facility, have to pay our competitor CAD $450,000 per year.

Regardless, BF has pocketed their $40,000 and into their pocket for a net subsidy, to BF from us, of $200k.

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Let's base marriage rights on commitment to fairness, not on gender

To the Editor:

Now that the Oregon Supreme Court declared marriage in my state is essentially a discriminatory hierarchy, we can use this decision to our advantage.

There are millions of both same-sex and different-sex couples who want a union based on equality. For decades, women leaders have said that traditional (i.e., hier­archically) marriage is a trap for women. The night of the November election, a straight couple stopped by the "No on 30" table to tell us they married in their church but will not legally marry as long as it means dis­crimination.

I looked at the cover of the book, Clues­less at the Top (www.cluelessatthetop.com) that shows the stress and joy of walking away from a hierarchy instead of staying and supporting it. This picture led me to realize how we can create a more attractive alternative while exposing the truth.

Now's the perfect time to create a new kind of union — NOT ONLY for same-sex couples but for everyone who supports equality. This union will have all the rights and privileges of "marriage," but will be based on one's commitment to fairness, not one's gender. I like the idea of choosing a name for our new union from our Oregon roots -- the Chinook Trade Language which was widely used in the 1800s by both native and non-native people.

Implementing this plan will be fun – joining many diverse groups together in our common language, our common val­ues. Decades from now, the few people who use "marry" will be choosing a hierarchical union. Will this person still be committing to "cheb" the other?

Want to discuss this concept? I will.

Charlotte Behm
chub@freedomtomarry.tv

Alan Carter waits for appeal, hearing

To the Editor:

It has been 50 days as of today that my stay of sentencing was granted (for 120 days). The extraordinary granting of this motion has given me hope and encourage­ment for relief in my seeking justice.

What most people rate for granted, i.e., freedom and fresh air, I now view in a different light. It wasn’t long after my release that the troubles of the world and my personal life had to be dealt with.

Because my home was sold, I have relocated to Florida and have been barely dig­ging out from eight months of untended personal affairs. I have been very busy dur­ing these 50 days opening boxes of mail and paying all unpaid bills. Neither Brother John, nor anyone else, could have handled this. Even after 50 days I am still not caught up.

My credit rating has, of course, suffered badly but still salvageable. It has been painful to cash in my retirement savings to keep this going. The 20 percent penalty and tax liability are devastating. My commitment and integrity proped me to do the right thing with all creditors.

My loss seems unending. Unfortunat­ely very few of my numerous possessions made it to Florida. No clothes and no antiques except one Oriental rug. Somehow empty suitcases were brought, instead of filling them with even some of my vast collection.

To all personal friends who are personal friends and had to endure the touch of this un­suitable or personal events made it. I often miss my favorite rug or letter opener, but all is gone -- even my birds of Carmen's ink and Little Liver Pills!

Be that as it may, I am well into start­ing anew. I feel I must work twice as hard as before. Not only do I have eight months to make up for, but I have the biggest fight of my life ongoing. I face my last penn­y or breath of air, I will clear my name and expose those who have taken advantage of me.

I attend church each Sunday and my faith, rediscovered in prison, continues to give me strength and encouragement.

Much healing is needed regarding my perception. Not only do I need healing, but also all who were bound by the treachery and deceit of The Liar, Truly, God is already intervening. I will soon begin a course of study on the popular book The Purpose Driven Life.

My appeal, I am told, was to have been completed in March. A draft was to have been sent to me for my final review. Now, I am told it will be coming soon. Once the appeal is perfected and submitted, it will go on a court docket and wait its time. Perhaps not until the fall will this appeal be heard.

Therefore, my 120 days of sentenc­ing will require a request for an extension. As you can see, there is much uncertainty and unpredictability in my life and future.

I work each day to the best of my abil­ity, trying to accomplish positive changes -- with an almost disregard for the idea that my world could collapse. Easier was a won­derful time to rejoice and remember Jesus' death and resurrection after his crucifica­tion and death. What a great model of love and compassion for me.

Teaching licensed/recon­viction hearing.

The hearing officer, appointed by Gov. Patoki, has so far refused to postpone this hearing until after the result of my appeal. This is considered hard and mean because the appeal could easily reverse all charges against me.

The hearing is set for May 10 in Albany. Because I have a conviction that has not been overturned by a appeal, the state will probably revoke all my licenses. Yet, when I am eventually cleared of all charges, they will have to restore them all. Patoki and his conservative right wingers prefer clout to reason. All are Republican right wingers.

I understand that this publicity and these allegations are hateful and unaccep­table and I agree. Only a sick, unstable indi­vidual could come up with such lies.

I was always closeted and never an active gay person. I am who I am and am not an active gay person. I am who I am and never was an active gay person. I am who I am and will remain who I am.

I am now out of the closet as they say, but not by my choice.

Alan R. Carter
Pride Agenda poll indicates growing support in NYS for same-sex couples

Support in the state of New York for marriage for same-sex couples increased over the past year according to a poll conducted by Global Strategy Group for Empire State Pride Agenda, the state’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization. The poll found that 51 percent of New Yorkers support marriage for same-sex couples, while 42 percent do not. A similar Global Strategy Group poll conducted for the Pride Agenda last year in March 2004 found 47 percent in support of marriage and 46 percent opposed.

The poll also showed that New Yorkers overwhelmingly believe that same-sex couples should have the same rights and protections government currently grants opposite-sex couples through marriage. Favorable response rates on questions about specific rights ranged from 72 percent in support of providing legal authority to make decisions about a deceased partner’s burial. Seventy-two percent (72 percent) of New Yorkers also favored civil unions and domestic partner arrangements as avenues to provide legal rights to same-sex couples.

Empire State Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan Van Capelle added, “The other good news in this year’s poll numbers is that the national attack campaign being conducted against our families by the conservative and religious right does not appear to be fooling anyone here in New York. Despite a year of persistent national-wide attack, New Yorkers are not withdrawing their support for our families. With same-sex marriage right next door in Massachusetts and hundreds of same-sex couples from towns and cities all across our state going to Canada and coming back married, New Yorkers are seeing firsthand that life does not change when same-sex couples are allowed to marry. The only lives that are changed are those of same-sex couples who got married and now have more of the rights and protections they need to take care of their families. The downside scenarios about same-sex marriage being spun by the conservative and religious right are simply not true and New Yorkers are not falling for them.”

On poll questions about various rights and protections that government gives to those who marry and whether same-sex couples should have access to them, Van Capelle said, “The poll clearly shows there is overwhelming support for our families having access to these rights and protections. When 72 percent to 83 percent of New Yorkers give a resounding “yes” to our families having access to child custody rights, medical decision-making authority, burial authority, health, pension and inheritance rights, there is no longer anything left to debate in New York. Family equality is a non-partisan issue and it is time for elected officials in Albany to hear what their constituents are saying and take action so that our families can have the same rights and protections other New Yorkers have.”

On the overarching question of marriage for same-sex couples, Van Capelle said, “New York continues to move in the right direction on marriage. The increase in support this year over last year for the right of same-sex couples to marry tells us that New Yorkers are listening and thinking about this issue and are recognizing more and more that access to marriage is about equality and protections for real families.”

On amending the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriage, the poll found that New Yorkers remain firmly against an amendment with 54 percent opposed and 40 percent in favor. The poll also showed that candidates running for office in New York State will not suffer at the ballot box if they favor marriage for same-sex couples. Only 37 percent of New Yorkers said they would be less likely to support a candidate favoring same-sex marriage while 59 percent said a candidate’s support for marriage would make their support more likely or would not be a factor in determining support.

Poll results were drawn from 600 random digit dialed telephone interviews in March of registered voters across New York State. The margin of error for the overall sample is +/-4.0 percent.

**Poll Highlights**

- **Marriage:** 51% support marriage for same-sex couples; 42% oppose.
- **Civil unions and domestic partnerships:** 72% support allowing same-sex couples to form civil unions or domestic partnerships; 28% oppose.
- **Burial decision-making:** 83% support rights for same-sex couples; 20% oppose.
- **Medical decision-making:** 82% support; 18% oppose
- **Health insurance:** 80% support; 17% oppose
- **Inheritance rights:** 78% support; 23% oppose
- **Pension benefits:** 75% support; 22% oppose
- **Tax benefits:** 79% support; 24% oppose
- **Child custody rights:** 72% support; 18% oppose

Amending the U.S. Constitution to bar marriage between same-sex couples: 65% support; 33% oppose.

New York Legislature passing a Defense of Marriage Act to bar marriage between same-sex couples: 85% support; 15% oppose.

New York State recognizing marriages between same-sex couples legally conducted in other states: 72% support; 23% oppose.

Questions about same-sex marriage decided best by courts or legislature: 70% say courts; 28% say legislature

**Should judges have the right to legalize same-sex marriage:** 68% support; 41% oppose.

**Support for candidate for public office favoring same-sex marriage:** 59% more likely to support or would make no difference; 37% less likely to support.

**Support for candidate for public office favoring civil unions/domestic partnerships:** 79% more likely to support or would make no difference; 28% less likely to support.

Poll findings along with demographic data as responders can be viewed on the Pride Agenda’s homepage at www.prideagenda.org and downloaded in PDF format. Last year’s results can be viewed at https://www.prideagenda.org/prvce-data/004-01-06.html.

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One Teacher in 10 is back with new LGBT educator stories, including Fairport teacher’s journal

By Susan Jorden

One Teacher in 10, the classic collection of stories by LGBT educators, edited by GLSEN executive director Kevin Jennings, has just come out in a second edition (Al­ison Books, Los Angeles, $14.95 paper). The new edition includes a contribution by Rich Ognibene, who teaches in Fairport.

Ognibene said that the first edition, which was published in 1983, was impor­tant in his own coming out process. “I’m excited because I read the book 10 years ago,” he said. “It would be great if a teacher today read my story and it helped him or her come out.”

Ognibene said that Kevin Jennings put out a call for new submis­sions for this edition. “He got over 100 and chose 40,” Ognibene said, “including my journal as a gay teacher in Fairport and the work I’ve done for gay youth.”

Ognibene is a co-advis­or of the Gay­Straight Alliance (GSA) at Fairport, which, along with Brockport, was one of the first two Monroe County high schools to permit GSAs.

“What I wrote about in my journal,” Ognibene said, “is that critical moment in 1995 when I came out to the administra­tion and students.” He said that they have been very supportive of him, but there was some inevitable discomfort along the way. “As I read the stories,” he said, “I think the common theme is the only way to make people more tolerant is having openly gay teachers. In the big picture, it makes life easier, but at the moment it can cause a bumpy road and some discomfort. Too many of us live in fear of that discomfort, and perpetuate the lack of gay role models for students.”

When Ognibene talks to students or teachers, he doesn’t start by saying, “I’m gay.” Instead, he talks about his family, how his parents were both teach­ers, and his partner Matt is a doctor. “Every teacher, at some time,” talks about his/her fam­ily,” he said. “We wear wed­ding rings. We have photos of our spouses or kids. We bring our families to school events. I should have the same rights. Matt is the person I bring to the football game or the school play. He’s the person who helps me chaperone the dances. He puts up with me grading papers until late in the evening. They ought to know our spouses or kids. We bring our families to school events. I should have the same rights.”

Some of Ognibene’s students attended the Day of Silence at the GAGV Youth Center on April 13. Their discussion of it afterward included “the beauty of the metaphor of silence.” Traditionally, the most urgent truths about LGBT lives could not be said out loud—Oscar Wilde called homosexuality “the love that dare not speak its name.” Even now, when censorship of LGBT voices is not so often or so violently en­forced as it used to be, most public schools have of adverse publicity. These kids are present in every school in America, and they are screaming for help. Somebody has to step up to the plate and offer it.

A copy of the new edition of One Teach­er in 10 is available at the GAGV Library, at the Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. (open Weds. nights from 6 to 8 and other times by appointment; call 244-8640, ext. 24).

Rich Ognibene

[Image: Real Wood, Real Good]

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Newsfronts (continued from page 13)

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Founded by Wilke in 2001, Commercial Closet has become a sought-after authority on gay images in advertising. Along with appearances on CNN, CNBC, and Fox, Wilke lectures around the world with a highly acclaimed presentation on the history of GLBT portrayals in mainstream ads.

Commercial Closet is supported by annual grants from the David Bohnett Foundation, as well as corporate sponsorships from Absolut, American Airlines, Arbitron/Scarborough Research, Bridgestone Tires, IBM, Kirshenbaum Bond & Partners, Merrill Lynch, Orbitz, Sirius Satellite Radio, Subaru of America, Tylenol PM, Wyndham International, and individual donations.

Commercial Closet Association

Commercial Closet Association works to improve public opinion of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community by improving GLBT portrayals in mainstream advertising.

The 501c3 project educates the business world through advertising tracking and analysis, advertising sensitivity training, Mainstream/B2B Advertising Best Practices, original journalistic coverage, media outreach, and an interactive virtual museum collection of 2,000+ ads spanning the world as far back as 1917 at www.commercialcloset.org.

Commercial Closet Association launched in May 2001 and is lead by a board of advertising-marketing-media experts and founder Michael Wilke, a veteran advertising journalist. He has written for Advertising Age, Brandweek and The New York Times, and has provided news commentary to ABC, BBC, CNN, CNBC, CBS, Fox, NBC and other networks since 1992.

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Friday, May 20 ...... 8:00pm........ Erev Shabbat Service
Friday, May 27 ...... 6:00pm........ Early Erev Shabbat Service

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A fundraiser for Tim Mains

Top left: GAGV Board President Emily Jones is flanked by Jamie and Sally Whitbeck. Above: Tim Mains is running for the Democratic nomination for the mayoral race. Lower left: Paula Silvestrone with Mary Ann Gaglio.

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A section of the AIDS Quilt Display at the Men's Chorus concert in March. This and the Chorus members photo above are by Gerry Szymanski.
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Kate Clinton gives the gift of laughter in un-funny times

By Jennie Bowker

Thinking back to the TV transistor radio-only days of my youth, we ‘Nam-era grade school kids watched the tube with the same devotion today’s kids feel toward the net. Garry Moore would host the game show “Tell the Truth,” in which three guests claimed to be the same person, until one of them would step out from their shadow, backlit seat.

In today’s media-oversaturated world, Kate Clinton’s comedic persona is out of the shadows and out of the closet, and we can imagine Garry Moore asking the ritual question at show’s end: Will the real First Lady/Lesbian Comedy please stand up?

Clinton would be first to stand completely, only after the other two would start to rise, but then sink back into their respective shadowy seats. Comedian Kate has been standing up since 1981, and running ever since.

So far, in fact, that she does her stand-up work on weekends, writes for The Advocate and The Progressive magazine, has produced several CDs of her gus-busting, no holds barred comedy, and has appeared on such media outlets as Good Morning America, Nightline, Entertainment Tonight, Gnu Media Central, Lifetime, Oxygen, MSNBC and more. She’s hosted The Life, and there’s her cameo appearances in The Sarge Lives of Dentists, the role in Radical Harmonies, and her major role in comedic documentary Laughing Matters.

It’s clear Kate has busted her ass for years, and all along has contributed countless hours to raise funds for gay and lesbian organizations. Clinton is releasing a second compilation of her essays in June, entitled What the L!? She will probably appear in more comedy festivals, having done just for Laughs in Montreal and the Toyota Comedy Festival in New York.

And what a busy Bush-basher she is! Kate is the self-proclaimed monitor of Bush-related (as in political) events, all papal infal­libilities and fallacies, and has blasted away at those less-than-Supreme Court justices, Viagra, and radical masculinism in general. She has studied the Karl Rove book of magic tricks ever since Texas Governor Ann Rich­ardson got gay-bashed and lost her re-election bid to you, guessed it, Dubya. The magic book is tough enough: it changes itself into the Bible every time she tries to pick it up.

But it’s been a fodder feast for Clinton, gathering gobs of political material from which to assemble an hour-something one­woman verbal counterattack on the nation’s assault on our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Clinton spoke to me on the phone, before her Rochester show in March, and noted that “we are definitely under siege.” There was no funny stuff in this phone conver­sation, no joking. How are her audiences reacting to her routine and material, in the current political climate of the “un-thinker,” known by Clinton fans as Curio­sus George?

“We’ve got a kind of post­traumatic­stress thing going, she says, then clarifies that fans are having a good, healthy reaction to what we’ve been fed by the outside world. They overreact (in a good way) to things I say... they’re so shut down that the show turns into a wild celebration.”

The Rochester show on March 31 was no exception to the we-love-ourselves-and-Kate parties to which she is referring. While the German House’s balcony babied shrieked, ducked and did some impressive bullfighting moves to try to extract Billy the bat. Leah Zakari opened the show while she sang, “We all scream for ice cream.” sudden but related out­bursts still resonated from the balcony. After a couple of num­bers, the upstairs screams quieted down, and Clinton eventually took the crowd to its own rap­tures. (Continued on next page)

MOCHA hosts open house, silent art auction May 17

The MOCHA Project will be holding an open house and silent art auction fundraiser May 17 in their offices at 107 Liberty Pole Way. The auction art items are paintings by Thomas Somerville of ArtworksWORX. Tom Somerville explains, “I wanted to get involved with MOCHA because they have been doing some great work with a population that has been very hard hit by the HIV epidemic, those with the AIDS epidemic. I will be including a series of paintings that have been donated especially for MOCHA and this event, entitled Status Unknown.”

The MOCHA Project encourages testing and safe behavior for both positive and negative men. Status Unknown is a series of portraits loosely based on local MSM (Men who have Sex with Men). The series is six panels that together compose a poly­glot. The idea of doing several panels to compose a whole is based on the idea of a holistic community being composed of many indi­viduals.

The auction will also include other recent works focusing on men of color as the subject. “I will be focusing on small sized works to keep the prices affordable in order to raise as much money as possible for this very worthy organ­ization,” Somerville said. “Most pieces will be uninsured, starting bids beginning below $200. Many will begin at the $50 mark.”

Last year Thomas Somerville raised over $5,000 for various charitable organizations through art. “Art is such a good way to raise consciousness as well as raise money,” he said.

The mission of the MOCHA Project, Inc. is to strengthen communities of color that are, as they define them, by providing supportive environments. MOCHA recognizes that social environments impact healthy behaviors, and seeks to promote health and wellness through advocacy, education, prevention, service and community development, specializing in LGBTQ program­ming. The Project can be contact­ed at 585-420-1400.
nurse, with nothing but the sound of roaring laughter to accompany her through her final bow.

But the serious side of Kate Clinton is the former English teacher, the reflective feminist who remembers where she came from: she's proud of being an upstate native, and did a driving tour this time around to visit Sacrame[n]t relatives. Clinton is an educated professional who came out in the heyday of the feminist movement, after having taught high school English for eight years, four of them in Sacramento. The powers that be beat around the school's strong and creative feminist years preceding her tenure.

As Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the University of California, Berkeley, Clinton won't get to laugh today, and she's more than a little bit pissed at getting us to do so. What a gift to share.
When was the last time you fought for your rights?

LGBT Equality & Justice Day
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Albany, New York

Get on a Pride Agenda bus and join hundreds of New Yorkers from across the state to talk to legislators about the issues that impact LGBT people and our families.

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Hochstein Performance Hall

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of Nature!

10% ticket sales will be donated to Sojourner House.

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For more information, visit www.thewomenofnote.com and www.thewrwc.org or leave a message at 585.234.4441.

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The Empty Closet • The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley • Number 379 • May 2005

I Asked

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey...

I asked for health, that I might do greater things.
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.

I asked for riches, that I might be happy.
I was given poverty, that I might be wise...

I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men,
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God...

I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am among all men, most richly blessed.

Author Unknown

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For Your Real Estate Needs
Growing Up

TITS

By Eric Bellman

South Beach is the ideal location to understand a loving parent, a controlling vacation, it's also not the worst. But muscles do surrender over time, and sweating men's tits are a scary indicator of what a future holds without vigilant exercise. Scary too is the increase in the number of women with implants. They are a riot to behold. Solid as rocks. Torpedoes aimed right at you. As you wear through the throng on Lincoln Road Mall and you face a set of man-made knockers coming at you, you feel sufficiently unsecure. I think they could do serious damage. I never feel a comparable anxiety about man's tits. However, when one's man's hand slams down on the beach and their boobs point skyward like sand castles, they are more benign, kind, cute.

Many hours can be passed parked on a bench in Lumus Park. You might read. You might chew gum. You might snooze. Or you could just wait for joggers. Boots on the move. Roller-blading are challenging because they pass so quickly. Joggers are more fun. You can see them from a distance as they progress, their paws bouncing or swaying or just expanding with panting breath. Just delightful.

I once leaned over to a marvelous man and asked him to look at me. “You have to wear a bra?” He pointed to his own. “Who? Oh, you just wait.” He lobbed off. I know this is a story of Sparrow Hawks (that I should be Pas- sion of Sparrow Flaws) that I should be able to teach Spanish to elementary students. (“Today students we will learn the phrase for hot pants – pantalones calientes.”) Those men are constantly finding a reason to take off their shirts, and I ain’t complaining.

I wish that the cashier at my friendly neighborhood gay adult bookstore wouldn’t announce so loudly when I’ve earned a free movie rental. I feel so proud. Sorry, Al. He always announces my five free movie status when the store is filled with other customers. “I know who you are,” he says. “I’ve earned so much porn, he now gets it for free.”

I, M.T. Comeback! The world is crying out for a hero, and his name is M.T. With his “I prey the foil” outlook on life, constant need to open up a can of Whoop-Ass, I think we can all agree (regardless of your Red State or Blue State affiliation) we need a little M.T. And maybe if I’m extra good he’ll sign my A-Team lunchbox.

I wish I would stop running into young lesbians that look like hot young guys. I hate it when I catch myself exclaiming a cute Justin Timberlake look alike only to realize that he’s a she. And she’s a dyke. That’s a square peg trying to fit into a round hole. (Even if this were my own strap-on.) That is not muy caliente!

I need an easy way to eliminate neck lines. I wish I would stop running into young lesbians that look like hot young guys. I hate it when I catch myself exclaiming a cute Justin Timberlake look alike only to realize that he’s a she. And she’s a dyke. That’s a square peg trying to fit into a round hole. (Even if this were my own strap-on.) That is not muy caliente!

I need a perfect pair of fag glasses. You know that set of glasses that make that one take notice of your face. I’m constantly on the hunt for a pair of those. They’re a great way to meet men. Especially if you’re a hot guy comes up to you and says, “Nice frames.” (That’s “Macros agradables” in the land of Telemundo.) And I know the perfect pair of glasses is out there because I keep running into hip, young lesbians wanting them.

No more ring tones! I know I’m around that cranky old man, but there is absolutely no need to hear Kelly Clarkson wail out “Since U Been Gone” to announce your incoming call on your cell phone. Show a little class, and choose a simple ring. Or I’ll take a sledghammer to your Nokia.

10. A Bucket of Skins? KFC (the artist formerly known as Kentucky Fried Chick- en) is the perfect bucket of skins. Let’s not fool ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­ pling of fried chicken skins, let’s not lie to ourselves. No one goes to KFC for the actual chicken. But if they want to come by and see a sam­plin...
Queer & Healthy

PEP RALLIES

By Erik Libby

The AIDS epidemic has continued for over 20 years and yet gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men continue to get infected with HIV, and in some communities infections are steeply increasing. There is much debate about what is fueling this increase — particularly if they know their partner is a high risk HIV exposure.

In January of this year the CDC released a new set of guidelines that may offer a new option to prevent HIV infection. These guidelines are based on a protocol called post-exposure prophylaxis ("PEP"), which involves starting a regimen of antiretroviral drugs immediately after a sexual or nonsexual exposure to become infected with HIV. The use of PEP should be carefully considered and can only be used under the usual care settings by those who know how to use it correctly. If you are considering whether something like PEP might benefit you, keep in mind:

- PEP must be started immediately. You cannot wait more than 72 hours to start treatment or it loses its effectiveness.
- You must continue to the full four weeks of treatment. Stopping treatment early will not make it effective as well; so carefully consider if you can handle the regimen, side effects, etc. before starting PEP.
- You have to know your partner's HIV status. It is highly recommended only when the person you had sex with is known to be HIV-positive.
- PEP is not a replacement for staying safe. It should not replace abstinence or mutual monogamy with a partner, condom use and other behaviors that can reduce your exposure to HIV.

Entering the third decade of AIDS it is clear that we still need to focus attention on HIV risk in our community. Knowing how to protect yourself and those you partner with — and fully understanding the pros and cons of all the options available to you — is a great first step. You can be queer, be proud, and be healthy!

Four pink-shirted volunteers have surrounded him now. One of them has two fingers on an armory in the musician's neck, as if she is checking whether or not he has a pulse.

A band of volunteers leaves the chair to union and together they carry the unconscious man away. As they push through the crowd, the woman wets her two fingers on the man's neck, and his pulse.

The crowd hardly pauses, barely seeming to notice that someone has been carried past them.

The three best cars, and the bodies continue to gyrate. It's no secret that crystal meth is rampant at circuit parties all around the country.

When I mention the pool party episode to my gay friends, and comment I may want to write about it, the response is almost universal: Big surprise, stop the presses. And the crystal problem is hardly limited to circuit parties. It's all around us, on a daily basis, and it is wrecking gay men's lives every day — financially, physically, and emotionally.

But what strikes me most, perhaps, is the nonchalance surrounding the issue. It's become so routine, many gay men don't even seem to notice it, or perhaps they just don't want to think about it any more.

Obviously, the drug use and crystal problem involves a serious issue of personal responsibility.

But I can't help but think that there must also be a collective consciousness to the problem. I see a group of people who have staked the claim that we are connected to one another in some form of bond that forms a community — hope to be it.

In the early years of AIDS, gay activists combed the streets and the bars and the bathhouses, armed with condoms and safer sex flyers, gently reminding other gay men that all our lives were at stake.

In our newspapers and our magazines, at our offices and in private homes, people were talking to each other about the risks.
and perils of unsafe sex, and the need we all had to help each other stay as safe as we could. It didn't save everyone from HIV, or replace the personal decision-making at the moment of truth. But there was, at least, a recognition that we were all in this together, and that we needed to hold each other's hands, literally and figuratively, because even with the best intentions, we are all human, and we all slip up sometimes.

To some degree, aren't we all supposed to watch out for each other? Particularly in places like Miami and Fort Lauderdale, or the Castro or Głebe or Provincetown, or any of the other gay ghettos where we've congregated by the droves to create our own little gay Mecas, our insulated, protected, safe spaces where we can fashion the kind of world we think is better than the places we came from.

Aren't these places, at least — the places where we've worked so hard to make being gay so easy — supposed to come with something more than crowded bars and naked pool parties?

Or have we created places where we are so callous to each other that we no longer notice, or care, if our community is partying away in the chair. The enormous swarm of muscled men dwarfs even the crowd at the previous day's pool party. It's another bright, hot Florida afternoon, and everyone seems to be hanging out shirtless and in sunglasses.

I am wearing jeans and a leather vest. I am told that on lollipops - one sign of people using drugs. The enormous swarm of muscled men dwarfs even the crowd at the previous day's pool party.

I am told that on lollipops - one sign of people using drugs. Then one car speeds by, and there is a commotion in the crowd. To my disbelief, I look down to find I've just been pummelled by a barrage of raw eggs.

After cleaning off his jeans, we continue to the bar. There, men seem to walk around wild-eyed. Everyone's drinking water and sucking on lollipops — one sign of people using crystal.

We decide to stay only an hour at the Loading Zone. As we leave, we see four guys, acquaintances from Fort Lauderdale, huddled in the shadows behind the bar. There's no doubt in my mind what they are doing.

The next day, Sunday, March 6, I am at Winter Party's beach party, right on the gay beach at 12th Street.

The enormous swarm of muscled men dwarfs even the crowd at the previous day's pool party. It's another bright, hot Florida afternoon, and everyone seems to be hanging out shirtless and in sunglasses.

I have my camera in my hand, and I'm taking pictures to publish in the gay newspaper that I edit in Fort Lauderdale. It's something I do frequently at such events, and I understand that different people have various comfort levels with their face being shown in a gay publication.

Initially, I assume that is why so many people decline to remove their sunglasses when they agree to have their picture taken.

Then I ask a smooth young Latin man wearing white pants and a sailor's hat to pose, and everyone seems to be hanging out shirtless and in sunglasses.

He in Castile; I in Gates. But you know what? I left robbed of the joy of giving to my mother. "Giving" felt more like the task of obeying my father. Then, such a time, he died.

After my father passed away, my mother drove by Ball Hall, circling the campus to show her beloved in Castile; I in Gates. But you know what? I left robbed of the joy of giving to my mother.

"Giving" felt more like the task of obeying my father. Then, such a time, he died.

He died. He emphatically shakes his head no.

"I can't show my mess." He says this to me on the first of May for all 31 years of our shared lifetime. "You better..."

I did: I gave her things. Handmade cards for many years because I was brought up with the belief that hand-and-heart-made was more sincere, more loving than store-bought. I know she kept every card, including the first grade tulips and the second grade robins. They all read "I love you, Mommy" in those big, three-to-a-line teapot cards she bought for her from Sibley's downtown. Liberae earrings, a piano with candelabra because she loved him, fancy teapots and little silver teapot earrings. Yes, it was the best of times... Mother's Day in every store in the country, in every mother's kitchen...

...and the worst of times. For 31 years. He in Castile; I in Gates. But you know what? I left robbed of the joy of giving to my mother. "Giving" felt more like the task of obeying my father. Then, such a time, he died.

After my father passed away, my mother drove by Ball Hall, circling the campus to show her beloved in Castile; I in Gates. But you know what? I left robbed of the joy of giving to my mother.

"Giving" felt more like the task of obeying my father. Then, such a time, he died.

He emphatically shakes his head no.

"I can't show my mess," he tells me. "They're a mess."

Soon after, I come across the muscular man in the red ball cap from the pool party the day before, the one who had been car-raying in the chair.

He, too, is wearing sunglasses.

Cleaning My Closet

MOTHER'S DAY AND MY BELLY BUTTON

By Meredith Elizabeth Reiniger

For Mother's Day, my father would buy a basket of pansies and drive to Castile to give them to Olive Nelse's Cogswell Horning, his mother.

His parting words to me were, "Berry is not my mother. She is yours. And you better pay attention to her because you never know how long she'll be around." He said this to me on the first of May for all 31 years of our shared lifetime. "You better..."

I did: I gave her things. Handmade cards for many years because I was brought up with the belief that hand-and-heart-made was more sincere, more loving than store-bought. I know she kept every card, including the first grade tulips and the second grade robins. They all read "I love you, Mommy" in those big, three-to-a-line teapot cards that slanted down the page.

Frequently when my part time job provided spending money, I bought her special things to celebrate that socially defined day — bone China teacups from Sibley's downtown. Liberae earrings, a piano with candelabra... because she loved him, fancy teapots and little silver teapot earrings. Yes, it was the best of times... Mother's Day in every store in the country, in every mother's kitchen...

...and the worst of times. For 31 years. He in Castile; I in Gates. But you know what? I left robbed of the joy of giving to my mother. "Giving" felt more like the task of obeying my father. Then, such a time, he died.

After my father passed away, my mother and I found our own words. Her words "I don't want you to get me anything for Mother's Day. It's all hypocritical, and I don't like it. Some kids think they can send flowers and a card. Only that one day a year. It's fake. So that's it. No Mother's Day. Do you hear me?"

My words: "Okay, Mommy." I certainly understood that she was not rejecting attention. Consequently, some Sunday or any Saturday in May, I would give her gifts and dinner out (fancy) and flowers (floral). Any day except that commercialized day.

Basically, we celebrated Happy Mommy/Berry day.

I am not sure why she so adamantly rejected the day. Maybe both of us heard the echoes of Daddy/Cecil's admonition. Maybe it was the test — prove that you love me more than Hallmark does... make me different and better than other mothers.

Give me Mommy/Berry day.

I did. Every year I gave her my most valuable possession, my time. Day trips. Mommy/Berry Day meant a ride. I would drive her all around the country side. Together we traipsed through our spring-gorgeous state. We gallivanted down country roads to see the apple orchards along Lake Ontario's shore. We meandered around the Finger Lakes, through the hills of Naples, up and down the twisty roads of New York's wine country. Eventually, fifteen years of my truck. I climbed the seasonal road to the top of the Bluff, blue, Keuka Lake. We watched the currents of the "Y" shaped lake meet and spin and blend.

Finally down to the lake road until the water tower came in view. Driving sight-seeing-slow, I drove toward the House on the Hill. "There used to be a pony tied up there all the time," I told her as I recalled my childhood jaunts. "Oh, really? I don't remember."

Soon the massive water tower stood above us. We were at Keuka College. I drove by Ball Hall, circling the campus to the waterfront. Point Neumo jutted into the lake waters, crystallized by sunrays. We stopped to listen to the waves lap the college sailboats.

Since 1996
I stared into that sound... and remembered the traditional welcoming ceremony for freshmen. 1962. We beginners and our Junior class "buds" had walked down the shale beach. We gathered around the campfire to sing our alma mater. We beginners and our fire to sing our alma mater. As our voices faded, there was only the gentle song of night ripples. We all walked to the water’s edge. Celebrating a new adventure ahead of us. In the fall, the same route would reveal acres of budging green heads in those saucer-shaped fields.

Now the month of May is here again. I stand in the present. My mother rests in the past... still gone, still dead. But some Sunday or any Saturday this May, I will walk down that shale beach. I will pull aside my waisted band and my shirt, and stare at my belly button and say: Happy Mother’s Day.

Confessions of a Serial Blonde
DAUGHING, I’M YOUR AUNTIE... WHAT?

By Robby Morris

Once upon a time in a land not so very far away, there was a young man who thought he was the center of his queer universe. He knew all the right people, went to all the right places, and stood out in a crowd with his "tights," as he called them, and enough spandex to Mold a life, as if it was covered in leopard print or sparkles, he found some way to wear it. He was infamous for his naughty but fun ways. Girls adored his bubbly and campy personality, and boys envied his sexual freedom and his ability to be secure in who he was, without having to resort to the same old macho bullshit every other man around had to. Yes, he was the quintessential gay boy in a big city... and everyone loved him.

Well, I’m not quite sure if it happened, but somewhere between the ages of 22 and 26, I went from being that crazy gay kid having all the fabulous adventures and becoming the wise elder gay all the other young crazy gays came to for advice and guidance. Yes kids, yours truly had become a new gay Auntie Mame.

As I’m sure you can imagine, this new-found role did not go over so well initially. I tried to handle the change with dignity and grace... OK, now I’m blatantly lying. I reacted like Joan Crawford in a dirty bathroom. I completely flipped my shit.

Inner Monologue: This isn’t happening to me! I’m young and fabulous! How can I be washed up? I’m not even close to 30! I’ll show them all! I’ll get back to you, Don’t I, the old me? So no bother! I’ll use those tape things, the ones that pull your eyelids back to your asshole No, I can’t do that either. I’d probably end up looking less like Janet Jackson and more like Janet Reno, and how does that solve my problem?

Eventually, after several more conversations with myself, marathon viewings of Bette Midler’s films, and Terms Of Endearment (a trilogy of terror if there ever was one), and a good old fashioned pity party, I picked myself up, dusted myself off, and decided, in spite of my new position in the gay hierarchy, to go out and reclaim my life in no matter what version of my life I found myself in.

Things took an interesting turn a few weeks later. One evening after strolling with my friends, indulging in Cosmos, I noticed a young man sitting all by himself in the corner of the bar. His name was Jacob. Through other people, Jacob and I had become good acquaintances about a year prior. We used to hanging out and be so close, but once, Jacob had told me that he was interested in me. I was excited, making a beeline for his corner table.

"Hello Jacob," I exclaimed, making a beeline for his corner table.

"Hey, hey Robin," he shot up upon seeing me. "You’re in a suit, in a bar. Where’ve ya been?"

Well, I’ve been dealing with a bit of a nervous breakdown the last three months, because every year it gets a bit harder to compete with you Abercrombie boys with your toothy grins, your perfect hair, and your little things. I mean... you know... attracted to guys. I just don’t think that makes me completely gay. I mean, I do love my girlfriend...

"I know you do," I reaffirmed. "First of all, being attracted to a member of the opposite sex does not mean you are gay. Trust me, I’m attracted to chocolate. That doesn’t make me a candy bar. And secondly, it’s perfectly natural for someone your age to be curious or even to experiment a little."

"But if it’s more than a little" he inquired.

"Well, that can mean a few different things... no, I explained. "For some people, yes, that’s a pretty good indication that they’re not entirely straight. For others... well... you’re a 20-something and horny. Girl, boy, pillow, watermelon. It never seems to matter if your hormones are out of control."

"I just wish I were as confident as you," he said. "You seem so together and so sure of yourself. Not me. I know how to be like you. Everybody loves you. And you’re so much more brave than I am. You’ve got the gay right down pat and I can’t even make up my freaking mind! It’s
The Vagina Dialogues
WOMEN AND HIV – THE SILENT KILLER

By Alicia Fraser, Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region

Women are the fastest growing population infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), with the number steadily rising. Women under age 30 make up more than 22 percent of AIDS cases among women in the U.S. Women of color are disproportionately affected by HIV. African American women are 17 times more likely and Hispanic women are six times more likely to contract HIV than Caucasian women. HIV is the third leading cause of death among women ages 25-44. Despite these statistics, HIV management to fall off the radar of many people. Currently, over 19 million women are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide.

New York State has the highest rate of HIV infection as well as people living with AIDS in the entire U.S. Do I have your attention now?

HIV can be transmitted through blood, vaginal fluid, semen and breast milk. HIV can be passed through unprotected vaginal, oral and anal sex, as well as from mother to child during pregnancy or through breastfeeding. The best way to protect yourself is to play safely.

Always use condoms – condoms should be used with all sex toys. A new condom must be used when transferring an insert from partner to partner. More “forceful” activities, such as fisting and anal sex, are considered high risk for HIV transmission since there is risk of tearing the tissue exposed surface area in the vagina. Regardless, they are looking for volunteers who may prevent HIV transmission due to tearing and improper usage.

The transmission of HIV is easier in women than in men because of the greater exposed surface area in the vagina. Despite the myth that HIV is transmitted by drug users, only a small number of transmissions actually occur this way, and more commonly, drug use is strongly linked to unprotected sex, an open door for STDs and STIs.

Through modern medicine, people with HIV are living longer healthier lives with the help of anti-viral therapies. With proper anti-viral preventative medicine, HIV transmission from mother to child is significantly lower than without medication. This is NOT to say that HIV should be dismissed, an attitude among many young people. If diagnosed with HIV, your life WILL change forever with the introduction of daily medication and possible discrimination in the workforce and insurance realm, and AIDS will most likely play a part in your final cause of death. HIV is a serious viral infection we must prevent at all costs.

On the horizon of medical prevention, an HIV vaccine has been in the works for the past twenty years. Vaginal/anal microbicides, in the form of a gel, cream or suppository that may prevent HIV and STD transmission are in the works with a possible release date in five years. In a global sense, this will be a lifesaver for women in sub-Saharan Africa who are most likely to become infected by their husbands. Other than prevention through safer sex, an HIV vaccine is our best hope at controlling this global crisis.

Rochester has been at the forefront of HIV vaccine research, which has been conducted at the University of Rochester since 1988. Multiple HIV vaccines are tested every year over a period of 12-18 months. Rochester and non-residents have participated in the vaccine studies over the past two decades. New vaccines are tested. Many people have questions about the HIV Vaccine trials, how they work, and who is eligible. Healthy adults ages 18-50 who are HIV NEGATIVE may be eligible. Participants are paid, and the trials require only a year to a year and a half commitment. Despite common misconceptions, they are looking for volunteers who are at LOW RISK of contracting HIV. You CANNOT get HIV from the vaccine.

What can you do? Protect yourself – practice safer sex EVERY time. Get yourself tested, know your HIV status. Take your partner or a friend with you to get tested. AIDS Rochester offers FREE and confidential HIV testing with a simple mouth swab every Monday and Thursday, 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. and results are given in 20 minutes! Consider partnering in the HIV Vaccine Trials at the U of R, AIDS Rochester's Walk June 5 at Cobbs Hill Park or the Empire State AIDS Ride this August.

In the meantime, play safe! For more information: HIV Vaccine Trials at the U of R: Contact by phone: (585) 756-2329; info@urmc.rochester.edu; www.shakenANDstirred.org; AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave., (585) 442-2200. Alicia Fraser is the VP of Barbershop NOW and Lesbian Rights Taskforce Chair.

Conundrums
RELIGIOUS TARTAN IS TEARING AMERICA APART

By One Observer

Nowadays, we have to sort of anesthetize ourselves to the radical rights' poisonous propaganda, specifically when it comes to vilifying gay America. Some media events border on the ridiculous, and should not merit any undue attention. However, I can't help the dicacy of Alabama State Rep. Gerald Allen's (R-Cottonfield) legislative proposal to "dig a hole" and "bury books" that promote the so-called homosexual agenda. Rep. Allen was quoted as saying, "Traditional values are under attack. They have been for 40 years. The enemy this time is not Al-Qaida. The axis of evil is Hollywood and the music industry. We have an obligation to save society from moral destruction. We have to prevent liberal librarians and trendy teachers from re-engineering society's fabric in the minds of our children. We have to protect Alabamians." (Source: The Guardian, Dec. 9, 2004.)

Some people may think that this news is over and done with. I don't. Rep. Allen's

(Continued on page 15)
**Residences**

**Family Resources**
- Rochester Gay Moms’ Group
  - Support group for lesbian mothers and wannabes
  - Contact information: bridget@lykes.com

**Women’s Resources**

**HEALTH:**
- Rochester Family Planning (585) 442-2220, V/TTY; www.aidsrochester.org; AIDS Hotline 1-800-456-1172; office hours 8:30-5 pm, Monday-Friday, 262-7045.
- AIDS Resource Center (ARC) provides services to people with HIV/AIDS and their families; offers individual and group psychotherapy, family counseling, support groups for people with HIV/AIDS and their families; provides educational programs related to STDs to community groups; provides peer counseling; offers pre-test and post-test counseling. Confidential or free HIV testing.
- Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region
  - 114 University Ave, Rochester NY 14605; Toll-Free Hotline: 1-866-800-8988. Offers confidential HIV testing and information. 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.
- Rochester Regional Health System’s Rugby: New players always welcome, gay, straight. We will test you the game. Hotline: 234-3000; e-mail: rugby@rochesterregional.com.

**SPORES:**
- Empire State Fair Women’s Football (www.spores.org)
- Rochester Renegades Women’s Rugby (www.rchwerp.com)
- Women’s Outreach Center (WOC)
  - 87 N. Clinton Ave, Rochester, NY 14607; (585) 491-8070.
  - The WOC is a peer center providing confidential testing every 30-40 minute intervals. Statewide information can be obtained by calling 1-800-541-AIDS. Other organizations which provide high-risk services are as follows:

**Directory Free Testing for HIV exposure**

- available in New York State Department of Health: call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at (585) 423-0031, or 1-800-962-5063 for gay men only, including trans/gender men, and for women only, counseling. Lesbians, gay men welcome.
- Victim Resource Center of Wayne County Inc.
  - 365 N. Main St., Rochester, NY 14604; (585) 442-0760.
  - Provides support services for people with HIV/AIDS and their families; provides educational programs related to STDs to community groups; provides peer counseling; offers pre-test and post-test counseling. Confidential or free HIV testing.

**Alternatives for Gotten Women**
- 230 University Ave, Rochester, NY 14607; (585) 442-0760.
- Staff, facilities, programs all-woman.

**Psychology**
- Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region
  - 114 University Ave, Rochester, NY 14605; Toll-Free Hotline: 1-866-800-8988. Planned Parenthood has led the way in providing high quality, affordable reproductive health care since 1916. Our experienced and compassionate medical staff will listen to your concerns and answer your questions in a warm, welcoming atmosphere. We are confidential. We accept all insurances; including Medicaid. You may even qualify for low-to-no-cost family planning services. 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.

**Political**
- National Organization for Women (Gansevoort Park)
  - PO Box 63169; (585)461-1030. E-mail: info@rochesternow.org Web page: http://www.rochesternow.org

**Cultural**
- Rochester Women’s Community Chorus
  - 234-4441. (See Ongoing calendar.)
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Playing musical chairs with Canada

By Mervi Eetti

The Canadian Tourism Commission held “Canada Media Marketplace” here in New York City. There were media relations representatives from Canadian destinations, festivals, museums, eco-tourism products, accommodations and transportation companies. With Canada being a friendly country, I decided to check it out.

In New York City. There were media relations representatives from Canadian destinations, festivals, museums, eco-tourism products, accommodations and transportation companies. With Canada being a friendly country, I decided to check it out.

Upon our arrival we were given breakfast fast, our appointment list and a bag (compliments of VIA Rail Canada), which was used to pile in each press kit and two sor and paper cards. It was point to point, and tables were set up and numbered going to the Stratford Festival of Canada, in Ontario. Hey, anything with the arts interests me, so I decided to check it out.

If it has a strong odor, it has been stale. To mask the taste, Rocky recommends that if you were to consume sake, it should be served in a sake cup, not a wine glass. Most people have never had sake before, so it is important to let them know what they are drinking.

Some sake called koshu, is aged 3 to 5 years. Other sakes are aged for 8 to 10 years, and are called Tokubetsu. The oldest sakes are called Jisake.

Rocky’s story and how sake is made, but also includes a section on the characteristics of the sake. More often than not, sake is served cold, and in a small glass, which is typically used in Japanese restaurants. Sake can also be used in cocktails, of which Benihana’s has a variety of sakes that are served with their meals.

In platinum, 18 karat, 14 karat, and two-tone.

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Water from Heaven

By Mervi Eetti

Like many New Yorkers, the first Japanese restaurant that I remember going to was Benihana’s in Manhattan. It is not named after anyone that bears that name, but after a saffron flower that Yunosuki Aoki discovered growing in a nearby empy lot in Japan.

While Benihana’s is the first Benihana’s in the United States and has operated in many countries, including Canada, it is not the only one. There are Benihana’s restaurants in Canada, such as the one in Toronto, which is located near the Queen Street West and College Street intersection.

Sake requires four ingredients: rice, water, koji (an enzyme) and yeast. With so many varieties of white rice alone, of which about 50 are suitable, the taste can vary from light to dark. Rocky recommends that if you were to consume sake, it should be served in a sake cup, not a wine glass. Most people have never had sake before, so it is important to let them know what they are drinking.

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Natasha Doty and Jeanne Newland

“The Diane Miller Team made buying our home a joy. Everything was great!”

Lynde Baudanza and Deb Coffey

“When I first considered buying a house, my first reaction was, “I don’t know how to do that,” followed very quickly by, “I need a realtor!” How glad I am that you were that realtor. From the very beginning, your expertise, your professionalism, and your patience with me exceeded every expectation I had. I would, and have, highly recommended you, especially to anyone who wants to remove the anxiety from searching for a house.”

Thank you. I am truly at home.”

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Rabbi Menachem Fruman, Muslim cleric Abdel Salem Menasra, Archbishop Aristarchos, of the Greek Orthodox Holy Land Patriarchate, Archbishop Aris of the Armenian Orthodox Church and Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah attend a joint press conference, at a hotel in Jerusalem, Wednesday, March 30, 2005. Israel's chief rabbis, the heads of three Christian faiths in the Holy Land and a senior Islamic cleric made an unprecedented joint stand against plans to hold an international gay festival in Jerusalem this summer. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley) (Collage by John Randall)

Holy Land religious leaders tip hats to gays for bringing them together

By Fashion Editor Melvin Merkin

This spring and summer, hats are back in, as religious leaders unite to condemn an International Gay Festival in the Holy City of Jerusalem slated for this summer. "Gays are lower than animals," they declared, in an unprecedented moment of agreement.

The Muslim gentleman with the white sailor hat will never make the finals in the Village People look-alike contest without adding some sequins to the rather austere Mao jacket, which is sooo '60s. Standing behind him is a circumspect Jewish leader wearing a yarmulke, which is worn to show devotion to God while concealing a bald spot. Ditch the beanie, bring the beard up behind your ears, and knot it securely on the top of your head. Add superglue or at least a tie of some sort, if needed, but be sure it matches the outfit. The Greek is sleek in all black, which is sooo yesterday (but better than sooo '60s). Note that he is between two other men, a position that Alexander the Great was historically reported to favor. The hat, done up with a small birdcage wrapped in black, completes the ensemble. Note that he appears to be cruising the Muslim's buns.

The Catholic priest, who is probably into S&M since he is wearing a model of an ancient instrument of torture around his neck, also wears a beanie. This is to protect his bald spot from the glaring sun as he bicycles around Jerusalem with his altar boys in a group of riders he formed, known as the PedalPhelics. The gentleman dressed in the medieval pointed hood wears the biggest Amyl Nitrate sniffer this reporter has seen. Missing from this photo are the Shephardic rabbi Sholomo Amar who, in another photo, sports a turban, and the Ashkenazic rabbi Yehuda Metzger with the traditional (ho hum) black fedora.

It is clear from these photos that religious leaders could consult with any drag queen off the street to improve their outfits. Even better would be a complete make-over on Queer Eye For The Straight Religious Guy. Certainly, massive consideration needs to be given to the headgear. In the meanwhile they need to address this significant religious question: Have you ever seen God or Jesus wearing a hat?
Mr. Leather (continued from page 3)

There is an annual tradition for the leather community drawing contestants and attendees from around the globe. Once an event for "hardcore" leathermen, IML has grown to be an annual event with a more diverse crowd – from the experienced to the curious. Last year’s event drew more than 6000 leathermen from around the globe.

The International Mr. Leather 2005 will include the following events:

27th Annual International Mr. Leather Competition – Miller Beer, Sunday, May 29 at 5 p.m. (doors open at 4 p.m.) Navy Pier, Grand Ballroom, Hyatt Regency Chicago. Please note new time and venue.

13th Annual International Mr. Bootblack Competition – Monday, May 27 through Sunday, May 29, Leather Market, Hyatt Regency Chicago. The International Mr. Bootblack Competition is one of the most exciting events of the weekend. The competition is open to all leathermen, leatherwomen, and leather friends. There will be a talent competition held by the Leather Bootblack Beauties and a Mr. Bootblack Contest for the bootblack of the holder's choice. The winner will be announced at the International Mr. Leather Competition on Sunday. Tickets to individual IML 2005 weekend events are available online at www.bonesticketclothing.com. The International Mr. Bootblack Competition will be judged and hosted by the Bootblack Beauties. Please note new time and venue.

IML Weekend Packages can be purchased online at www.bonesticketclothing.com or by calling (800) 494-3TIX (Illinois) (603) 245-2040 or fax at (800) FAX-3TIX (Illinois) (603) 245-2040. Weekend Packages should be picked up at the Hyatt Regency Chicago beginning Thursday, May 26, 3 p.m. – 11 p.m. and Monday, May 30 from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Hyatt Regency Chicago, Lower Level.

IML Opening Ceremonies presented by Recon.com International Mr. Leather will be drawing for contestant numbers. Thursday, May 26 at 9 p.m. (doors open at 8 p.m.) Hyatt Regency Chicago, Lower Level.

Peec & Personality (Physique Competition) presented by Interactive Male IML Physique Competition is the first Major Physique Competition of the weekend with a unique appearance and stage presence. Saturday, May 28 at 9 p.m. (doors open at 8 p.m.) Hyatt Regency Chicago.

Salute – IML Closing Ceremonies presented by Leatherwerks. IML Weekend will conclude with a closing ceremony to create a Closing Ceremonies that should not be missed! The event will include a celebration of leather heritage around the world, plus the beginning of a new IML tradition. Sunday, May 29 at 11 a.m. (doors open after Salute) Hyatt Regency Grand Ballroom.

IML Victory Celebration Party, Manhattan Bar & Grill, 141 West 22nd Street. May 29 after the IML Contest until 4 a.m. House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn, Chicago.

Black and Blue Ball. The traditional IML Black & Blue Ball will be held at the Bill Bennett Manhattan World Tour. Sunday, May 29 after the IML Contest until 4 a.m. House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn, Chicago.

International Mr. Leather contestants are judged on a variety of criteria including contest behavior, sartorial appearance and overall presence. The winner will be announced at the International Mr. Leather Competition on Sunday. Tickets to individual IML 2005 weekend events are available online at www.bonesticketclothing.com. The International Mr. Leather Competition will be judged and hosted by the Bootblack Beauties. Please note new time and venue.

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Myth or Fact? Under anesthestic Are there really rocks out there just waiting for pik people to tumble over and make their libe­ ralism look good? Shown is a fine example – an image of a ‘rock’ that could not be shown or theatrically produced in the state of Alabama. Librar­ ians could not purchase Melissa Ethridge’s latest recording for their patrons’ enjoyment. Frän Lebowitz was once quoted as saying, “If you’re not friends with them, it’s their, and their illumia­ ral and homosexual influence from what is generally regarded as American culture, you have no idea what would be left. Is ‘Let’s Make a Deal’? Ken Baker, a board member of Equal­ ity, said last week that he would like to become the George Wallace of homosexuality, “This type of behavior from an elect­ oral standpoint is going to make it more and more difficult to determine what more than 2.4 million peo­ ple should and should not read.” In politics, cannabis is a lose–win situation. For those who believe that the fundamental truths of religious freedom and the moral law. America’s populations are too rocky or too shallow to offer firmer ground that can support the weight of anyone’s truth. If the soil is exhausted where they live, no matter how forceful and certain their message. Just in case he has trouble deci­ ding what more than 2.4 million people should and should not read. It’s not a fact, it’s not a myth. It’s just a lie."

Salute – IML Closing Ceremonies presented by Leatherwerks. IML Weekend will conclude with a closing ceremony to create a Closing Ceremonies that should not be missed! The event will include a celebration of leather heritage around the world, plus the beginning of a new IML tradition. Sunday, May 29 at 11 a.m. (doors open after Salute) Hyatt Regency Grand Ballroom.

IML Opening Ceremonies presented by Recon.com International Mr. Leather will be drawing for contestant numbers. Thursday, May 26 at 9 p.m. (doors open at 8 p.m.) Hyatt Regency Chicago, Lower Level.

Peec & Personality (Physique Competition) presented by Interactive Male IML Physique Competition is the first Major Physique Competition of the weekend with a unique appearance and stage presence. Saturday, May 28 at 9 p.m. (doors open at 8 p.m.) Hyatt Regency Chicago.

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ACT NOW. GET A REBATE.
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Day of Silence was amazing!

By Toby Greenfield

April was a busy and great month and included an amazing Day of Silence rally on April 13 at the Youth rally. We had a huge turnout of over 150 youth! The youth were treated to a wonderful performance by the Bread & Water Theater Company, and finished off the afternoon with a Youth Dance.

A couple of thank yous are needed — to Bread & Water Theater Company, to Chuck Argento for being our absolute favorite DJ, and to OutWest and GLSEN for all their help and donations.

And lastly, a big thank you to not only all the youth who showed up in great numbers this year, but also to the few who worked very hard pulling it all together. You all continue to inspire and amaze me every day....

April also featured our second annual Intergenerational Panel with the Rainbow Seniors, which was fabulous (see next page), as well as a visit and reading from Alison Smith, the author of Name All the Animals.

Alison was funny and gracious and I want to thank her so much for taking time out of her schedule to come visit our Youth Group. And the special guests continued! This month we’re thrilled to have musicians Jason & deMarco come play for the Youth Group on May 15. How cool is that? We’re also looking forward to a trip to Albany on May 24, for LGBT Equality and Justice Day.

Our specialty groups continue too — we added a new transgender group last month — and, as always, please check our Youth Website at http://youth.gayalliance.org for all groups and events.

FAMILY MATTERS
A CALL TO ACTION

By Todd Plank

May 24 provides families with a unique opportunity to raise the awareness of legislators in Albany about the issues of greatest concern to the LGBT community in Upstate New York. I say this because May 24 is LGBT Equality and Justice Day in Albany and LGBT New Yorkers, along with their affirming family members, friends and faith leaders from around the State, are being urged to make their presence felt on what will be an important day of advocacy for LGBT people.

With new, exciting and questionable developments arising on the marriage equality front almost daily, it’s critical that gay and lesbian families be visible and make their voices heard in Albany. This is the first time that the Pride Agenda has set out to mobilize hundreds (the target goal is 500) of LGBT advocates on what has been commonly been called Lobby Day. This event this year will be different in that the emphasis is being shifted from one-on-one meetings with legislators to a full day’s program, to which lawmakers are being invited to attend. (See next page for the Program Schedule.)

This will expose our representatives in Albany to the broad range of issues and concerns affecting LGBT youth (and their parents and siblings), seniors (and their primary caregivers/support networks), and same-sex partners, as well as LGBT people, single or coupled, who want the same rights and protections as those granted to their heterosexual counterparts.

Locally, plans are to have 50-plus representatives from the Rochester area travel to Albany for LGBT Equality & Justice Day. So what do you need to do to “get on the bus”? First, you need to register, which you can do by going online to www.prideagenda.org, or by calling Julie Guerrero at 244-627-0605. The Pride Agenda will be tracking how many people are registering for each city and arranging transportation as needed based on the number of registrants; therefore, IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU REGISTER ASAP!

Espa is requesting a $40 donation to help cover the cost of transportation, meals and materials for participants; however, scholarships are available for individuals and groups who need financial assistance to make the trip. As LGBT Equality & Justice Day draws closer, registrants will be contacted by Pride Agenda with a travel itinerary for the day.

It is the presence of ordinary people who can give two hours of their time and make a difference that will make this year’s Day of Silence so special.

(Continued on next page)

Meet People!

Volunteer 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 Susan at 244-9300. Thank you.
Family (continued from page 1)

people (like you) that will send the loudest
message to Albany. Please join your voice
with New Yorkers from across the State on
May 24 and demonstrate to lawmakers that we
are serious about our fight for equality
and justice. We cannot afford to be com-
placent and take the progress that we have
made in recent years for granted. Now is
the time to make our demands known and
hold our decision makers accountable for
their record on LGBT issues. It is our col-
lective chorus of voices that will ultimately
move our New York representatives to act
in our behalf.

I’ll be singing loud and proud in Albany
on May 24. I hope to hear you singing next
to me. Please feel free to call me if you need
any help registering for the trip, at 244-
8640 ext 24."}

Program Schedule

8:30 am Multi-Faith Prayer Breakfast

Join clergy and people of faith from a panoply of faith
traditions in a prayer service with elected officials

9:00 am Registration

10:00 am Morning Program

• Welcomes by legislative leaders and elected officials
• Overview of pending LGBT legislation and issues of importance
• Testimonials from people affected by issues involving
sexual orientation and gender identity and expression,
including youth, seniors, families, health and human ser-
vice providers, and transgender New Yorkers

11:30 am Action Sessions

• Issue briefings for participants, legisla-
tors, legislative staff and agency heads
• Caucusing by affinity groups like people of color and youth
• Meetings with key legislators
• Displays and community information

12:30 pm Legislators Lunch

Participants will meet with their legislators over lunch for relaxed
conversations about issues of importance for the LGBT community

2:30 pm Action Sessions continue

3:30 pm Afternoon Program + Rally

• Testimonials by allies including labor, people of faith,
and parents and family members of LGBT people
• Musical and spoken word performances
• Inspirational speeches

5:00 pm Buses Depart

Anti-Violence (continued from page 1)

"We do it by standing up for justice.
"Are we not Jesus' hands and voices in
this world?"

Emily Jones, GAGV Board President:

"Last night was very special and has
continued to become more and more
real as I think of the sharing, the lyrics in the
music, what I wrote on the wall and reflect
upon my dear friend who was killed in
the grace of God so go..."

Elder, Third Presbyterian Church:

"The service on Tuesday evening was very
moving to me. The prayers, stories,
dance, music, opportunities for personal
expression, the artwork display, the food
and hospitality following the service: all
came together for a very meaningful ser-
vice. I was amazed and proud that so many
different aspects of the Rochester com-

Youth and seniors join
for discussion, lunch

By Misty Angevine-Walling

April 17 was the second annual inter-
generational lunch and panel discus-
sion. Close to 80 people, ages ranging
from 17 to 85, gathered in the main confer-
ence room at AIDS Rochester Inc. (ARI)
for an afternoon of open discussion, as well
as a Q&A with a panel of members of the
Rainbow Seniors and the GAGV Youth
Group.

The topics of discussion covered every-
thing from the days of raids in gay bars to
the current fight for marriage equality. The
emotions ran high, as one member of the
Rainbow Seniors addressed a youth, telling
him he needs to realize how lucky the new
generations are to have resources and
opportunities like the Youth Group and
the internet.

The youth responded by thanking the
younger members for coming before him, for they
are the pioneers that made current lib-
erations and advancements in gay equality
possible.

The diverse group of attendees shared
more similarities than differences, as they
told stories of coming out and shared hopes
and fears of the future. The lunch was
co-hosted by ARI and GAGV, and with
such an enthusiastic turnout, the mem-
bers of both the Youth Group and Rain-
bow Seniors hope to hold an event like this
again next year.

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

WANTED: RIDERS
FOR THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME!

RIDE WITH:
AIDS ROCHESTER'S
BIKE TEAM

A week that will change you forever...
For more information, call Marty at AIDS Rochester 442-2220

An incredible event at:
www.empirestateaidsride.org

WE CAN'T WAIT TO TAKE THE ROAD!

AIDS/Rochester INC.
BIKE TEAM

ARIDERS
AIDS ROCHESTER INC.
BIKE TEAM

Learn more about this
Pride Buffalo is first weekend in June

Alison Pipitone will perform on June 5 on the side stage.

By Donald Cialone Jr.

I have watched over the last five years as Pride Buffalo’s annual Pride celebration has grown threefold. This year, they continue to outdo themselves, entertaining and informing us all.

Pride weekend kicks off Friday, June 3, with “Fabulous: The Party,” a high-energy dance party held at The Tralf with DJ Paul Grace, musical consultant for “Queer as Folk.”

Saturday evening will host the Dyke March, followed by a performance by Toronto singer/songwriter Ember Swift. DJ dancing and a cash bar will follow.

On Sunday, June 5, The Parade on Elwood steps off at 1 p.m. Starting at Kleinhans Music Hall, more than 70 organizations will proceed up Elwood, ending at Bidwell Park where they will be judged in the float competition.

The Marketplace located in the park will offer information and vendors. Also at the park will be The Pride Buffalo tent. There you can get your Buffalo Pride tee shirts as well as information about volunteering. A Children’s tent, sponsored by COLAGE, will offer family friendly activities.

The Pride Celebration Stage is where the real fun begins. Hosting the events will be Maryalice Denler of Channel 2 News, assisted by local actor/comedian Jimmy Janowski. The main stage will see the Buffalo Gay Men’s Chorus perform, followed by the Universal Grille Band. Comedian Suzanne Westenhofer will entertain us with her quick-witted personality. Suzanne recently headlined with Eric McCormack from Will & Grace at the famous Improv in Hollywood.

Local drag queen “V” will also perform (she made a lasting impression at the Miss Gay Rochester 2003 pageant), as well as Dianne Dior Stevens, and there will be entertainment by the African American Cultural Center. Returning to rounding up the main stage is Toronto’s Ember Swift.

This year’s side stage, hosted by heavy-handed bartender Jimmy Hill, will include a who’s who of local drag, such as KeKe, Fanta-se, and drag legend Vicki Vogue, among many others. Rounding up the evening’s activities on the side stage will be local artists Tina Crapsi, comedian Kristen Becker, and Alison Pipitone.

While the weekend will see the end of the entertainment, Pride Buffalo, in conjunction with the Pride Center of Western NY, will offer up an entire month of workshops and activities.

For the first time the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center in Niagara Falls will present “Visible”. This free art exhibition will showcase the works of GLBT artists from around the Buffalo-Niagara region. The exhibit will have an opening reception on June 18 and will run through July 19. Workshops will include everything from “Have a Fabulous Dinner Party” to “Why You Need a Will”.

Check Pride Buffalo’s web site at www.pridebuffalo.org for march kick-off times and locations, and more information on all of the activities occurring during the month of June.
ARTSY-FARTSY FILM GROUP

Don't miss the last screening of the Artsy-Farty Film Group, an outreach of Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, before the summer hiatus.

If you haven't attended yet, it's your last chance until September. We will meet at the (walking distance from East Ave., Rochester) on the afternoon of Saturday, May 21, to see a film together and discuss it over coffee and refreshments.

To learn the film selection and the time to meet at the theater, please do one of the following or on the Thursday before the film: call 785-8478 to hear a recording, check www.frontiernet.net/~oamcc, or e-mail oamcc@frontiernet.net.

We look forward to seeing you whether you're a regular or it's your first time with us.

COMMUNITY BUSINESS FORUM

If you have ever wondered who funds and organizes the annual Gay Pride Parade and Festival, consider dropping in to a monthly gathering of the Rochester Community Business Forum.

CBF is an organization that assists in maintaining a supportive environment for all individuals regardless of their sexual orientation or employment status. The Community Business Forum, in conjunction with like organizations, contributes to Rochester's business success. Members are a diverse group of business owners, employees, retirees, and people seeking to find support, education, and networking to enhance their personal and professional lives.

The group meets in an informal setting the second Thursday of every month at the Rochester Community and Science Center, 665 East Ave, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Annual CBF membership dues and a monthly gathering fee cover a wide variety of ongoing programs, events, and special activities. Membership is open to all who are interested in supporting CBF.

COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Community Christian Fellowship moved to a new location on Easter Sunday. This welcoming and affirming, non-denominational church fellowship now meets on Sunday evenings at 7 p.m. at the East Avenue Inn, 384 East Ave.

May 15, CCP may welcome "spirit pop" duo, Jason and deMarco. The Rochester Rainbow Gospel Choir will provide an opening set and deMarco will feature on the front page of The Advocate, and are discussed in the most recent issue. This concert is free and open to the public. A freewill offering will be taken to support their ministry.

CCF is inclusive of all believers, regardless of sexual orientation and at the same time is evangelical in doctrine. For more information call (585)208-4508 or e-mail CCFrochester@hotmail.com. All are invited to come join us for worship and fellowship.

DIGNITY INTEGRITY

The Easter season ends with Pentecost on May 15. Please join us at D-1 that day as we celebrate our new Community Counsel for 2005-2006, and stay for our post-lock dinner, which features Mom's Home Cooking (in honor of Mother's Day the preceding Sunday). We are welcoming St. Luke/St. Simon the Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

Also, please note that our schedule of services will change effective Aug. 7. Watch this space for details during the upcoming months.

Join us at 5 p.m. any and every Sunday as we claim our rightful place in the Church. See our display for more information and how to contact us. Thanks.

EMPIRE BEARS

May will start out with a lot of find BEARS coming home. Members will be out for the weekend: some in Ithaca at Common Ground, some in London, Ont., and some at a Bear Run in Connecticut.

We'll hold our monthly meeting at the GAYV on Wednesday night, May 4. Our traditional second Saturday potluck is always thumbed. "Mom's favorite dishes" is for May, so bring out the goodies on the 14th, Meet at the GAYV at 6 p.m. for best food in town. Later that night, we'll roll over to the Forum for Bonfire. The theme is "Show Us Your Belly," a deal we can all participate in.

We also have a brunch on our schedule for May 29 at River's Edge. We went there on a blustery cold afternoon this winter, and it was a great time.

As always, you can find us at Ma's every Monday, filling up on good, old fashioned diner food. Afterwards, some of us hit a movie at Movies 10. Camping season is open. Members are line dancing on Saturday mornings. There's a wedding, a birthday party, impromptu movie nights and diners. We get together to play cards and more.

If you'd like to learn more about us, go to empirebear.org. We'd be glad to meet you. WOOH!

GAY FATHERS GROUP

The Gay Fathers’ Group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 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, and Pastor Felker from the U.of Rochester FIV Vaccine Trials Unit, talking about the vaccine trials now going on and the need for volunteers. A couple of days prior to this we had two families, one of these bi-monthly meetings also. One of them has taken place already this cycle.

This group consists of men and in some cases their same sex partners. We are all at different stages in our lives. Some are single, some are married, some are going through separation/divorce. However, many of these men are fathers and some don't, and all are at different points in the coming out process. This is a support group (not therapy) intended to help all these men and women feel comfortable enough to participate since we are not a very large group (usually about 12 men) and all the conversations are confidential.

Our web site is a work in progress and we hope to have it up and running soon. If you call GAGY you can leave your name and phone number or ask to be called back. You are interested in finding out more about us. This call is necessary before any new member is allowed to attend because we want to make sure that you meet our needs and assure the confidentiality of the current members. There are some places available for our group at GAGV.

GLSEN

April 13 marked the 10th annual Day of Silence (DOS). An estimated 450,000 students participated, from nearly 4000 schools, colleges and universities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

GLSEN is the leading local organization dedicated to ending anti-gay bias and harassment in our schools. We do this through education, organizing, and fighting for a school community that is valued and respected, regardless of real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

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

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

LAMBDA NETWORK AT KODAK

By Deanna Traflesh

Lambdas at Kodak is a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender employee network at Eastman Kodak Company.

On Thursday, April 14, we held our 11th Annual Educational Event. OUT-Spoken and Visible Awards were presented to Tori Edom and Amy Friend. (See page A19)

A big welcome to our colleagues from Kodak EasyShare Gallery (formerly Ofono)! We're glad to add you to our Lambda Friends and Allies.

Charles S. Brown, Kodak's chief administrative officer and senior vice president, is our Leadership Team. A big thanks to Eric Rodde, president of Entertainment Imaging and a Kodak senior executive, for his support for a number of years and who really helped drive the progress and understanding of our activities, marketing to the GLTB community. Bob Berman will continue to serve as our Management Sponsor.

Kodak is coordinating a Lambda Bicycle Team with the ultimate goal of riding in the Outriders Annual Boston to Portland ride. Our focus is on fun and riding this bicycle, this a great opportunity to ride, have fun, and meet new people. For more information, contact Paul H. Smith at 508-495-9352.

Kodak has been named Image Sponsor for OUT-Equal and Univeris for 2005.
workplace equality. This year's conference is Sept. 22-26 in Denver. Check out our national.org.

We're seeking writers for the new kodak/gaypride website. If you are interested in being on the development team for this new site, contact Lori Marta at 724-3187. For information about becoming a Kodak Lambda member or upcoming activities, please email us at lambda@kodak.com or leave a message on the Lambda voice mail (858) 244-4888. Lambda's intranet site for Kodak employees is http://lambda. kodak.com. More details on Kodak's global diversity activities are located at www. kodak.com/gold/diversity.

MEN'S COOKING GROUP

The men's cooking group meets on the third or fourth Sunday of the month at a member's house on a rotating basis and we share a meal.

The host may elect to have the group cook, have a potluck, or cook it himself with a co-host. If the host is furnishing food, the people chip in to share the cost. While there is a small fee for members to cover mailings of a monthly newsletter, the group is always open to new members at no charge for two months.

Anyone is welcome at a meeting. If you are interested in joining us, and perhaps becoming involved with the Men's Cooking Group, or if you have questions about the group, please contact Dick Connert at 461-2273.

PLAGAL

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

Contact us for more information. PO Box 3392 Washington DC 20033; 202-233-6697; Fax: 202-265-9737; plagal@plagal.org; http://www.plagal.org. Rochester liaison: Donna Marie Kearsney, 585-442-399.

PRIDE & JOY FAMILIES

On May 21, Rochester Pride & Joy Families will be visiting Highland Park to enjoy the Lilac Festival, and to take in some of the children's entertainment at the Lilac Pavilion in the Lilac N Kids Zone. Families will meet at the GAGV Community Center at noon and leave for Highland Park promptly at 1:15 PM.

The schedule for kids' entertainment is as follows:

1 p.m., Chris Wilkinson, The Magic Guy; 2 p.m., The Dinner Dogs; 3 p.m., Tiger Tom, Singer & Storyteller; 4 p.m., Ted Baumann, Ousta Hand Juggling; 5 p.m., The Dinner Dogs, and 6 p.m., Wild Wings, Birds of Prey.

If families would like to meet up with the group later, they can catch up with Todd and Rochester P&J Families at the Lilac Pavilion for the 5 p.m. performance by Tiger Tom. Call 244-8640, ext. 24.

RAINBOW SENIORS

A MESSAGE TO THE LGBT SENIORS COMMUNITY

By Marilyn Mitchell

Happy Spring! It feels like this winter has been longer than some from the past. I wonder if that is because I am aging and not enjoying shoveling snow or driving in winter weather like I did in the past. Dental is a great tool you know! (smile)

I am so grateful that spring is here at last. I wonder if there are other seniors in our family who are grateful spring is here too. Perhaps many of them (or you) have been feeling “stuck inside” for the past several months. If you are interested in joining us, please email us at rainbowbridgegroup.org; http://www.plagal.org. More details on Kodak’s global diversity activities are located at www. kodak.com/gold/diversity.

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Social Hour following Liturgy

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17 South Fitzhugh Street (Corner of Broad and S. Fitzhugh)
...(the church with the pink steeple)

D-1 Info-Line: (585) 234-5092
(Recorded information and voice mail)

E-mail: info@di-rochester.org

Web Site: http://www.di-rochester.org/

Pastoral care is available.

All are welcome regardless of worship tradition, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Join us as we claim our rightful place in the Church!
Dark love
It is a night of dark desire, a song of death, which I understand.

Death deserved
What have you wrought?
A mislaim of betrayal as affections write.
One was forced to shave my legs, hand in hand and untamed, but your heart shrank.
A veiled monster - emotions follow hate, follow darkness, love left to die.

College News
SUNY Geneseo community says It's Fine to Be Gay

The Geneseo Pride Alliance, with the support of other organizations on campus, organized a T-shirt campaign that would change the look of the SUNY Geneseo campus. We ordered 500 bright green T-shirts with the phrase "Gay Fine!" and created an additional 100 for students and faculty members who wished to wear them.

Respect on the Radio
By Cynthia Stallard
I'm most aware of things in the last couple of months than I was before. Perhaps I'm just more sensitive to it now that I know and in a relationship that is out there for all to see.

My girlfriend and I never hide, more because of the danger than fear. She'd like to grab my hand on numerous occasions to give me the strength to be out all the time for the world to see, not just occasionally with a few select friends. Because of her I can really say I'm proud. It's because of her that I'm willing to stand up for myself and others when I feel offended. Which brings me to my point...

I was listening to the radio just a couple of minutes before I sat down to write. I tend to listen to popular music stations. This time it was 97.9 WFXF-FM, Rochester's Top 40 radio station. The song "Lone­ly" by Aloning was as appropriate. It is the DJ's job to mix the songs that go with the clip. And he simply said "gay." There was no joke about it. It was a serious sounding clip. My girlfriend and I looked at each other and we realized just how it got to us. It just had no place and there was no explanation, good or bad, after it was over. We decided to call the station.

We went to our school's library and looked up the number for the station. My girlfriend dialed it while I sat there web surfing. She was much louder than I am; our friends call her Fog Horn) so she dialed the number and asked the man at the end of the line what exactly he was doing. It was like someone flipped a switch in my head and I had to stop listening.

One day for fun, a friend and I decided to make up pictures of each other. I had a cute pose at the time but when I saw the pictures I just cried. I can't explain how disturbing it was to see myself as a boy. Before, my pictures I had of myself were of me as a girl, so right then and there I realized that I was not a real boy. I don't know why I didn't know before. It was like someone flipped a switch in my head and I had to stop wanting to kill myself.

First, I stopped smoking. Then I had to stop doing the drugs and started taking care of my diabetes, and at the same time I went on a diet. My mom says I have good willpower but I think I just started to care about myself. I hate cigarettes and I was always against drugs. I think I was just in denial about being transgender. I just wanted to be myself and have people accept me the way I was.

But I realized that I didn't accept me. I wasn't one of those transmen who were completely grossed out by their bodies. I knew what a guy was supposed to look like. I just didn't realize how much I didn't want to be one. I'm still not that comfortable looking like a drag queen, so I started wearing my own beard and pinned my jewelry to pay for electrolysis. I scared to get a job for obvious reasons. But I am trying to get over it.

Though generally I have a very positive mother, sometimes she is not. She said that I have to pay for everything on my own, but that was just the inspiration I needed to get over my fear of getting a job. Now I spend my time thinking of ways to better myself and change the things that I can. It's only been two months, but I feel a lot better about myself and feel like I'm headed in the right direction. I don't know that I'll see anything different to Mariah Carey, but I will be satisfied just looking like her and just being me.

Rock: Dead or alive
By E. O'Brien
It seems to me that people have been saying rock is dead as long as rock has been around. That's right, the rock is on its outs obsession in the early '70s ... the mid '70s...The late '70s... Then '80s... Rock teenybopper boom, which of course marked the death of rock. So is rock dead? But I'm not sure, I know and love about the universe gone.

Maybe, I'm not sure, I like to think that Rock is out there, in hidden corners, flourishing colonies waiting to make their glorious resurgence. The optimistic within me doesn't see the death of the glimmer of rock's glory sparkling within a chosen few in today's music.

So I always trust myself to come back, but it will never be classic rock, or '90s rock. Pete Townshend got old, Kurt Cobain died, but it will never be dead. Let's get philosophical for a moment: as long as we listen to Rock, it can never be dead. You don't have to tune in to Teenage, Never Mind, Dark Side of the Moon, Young, Revolver, Marvin, Hotel, Whiskey a Go-Go, Breed, Houses of the Holy. Led Zeppelin will rock until the turn tables stop turning and music is silenced.

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Discovering Myself
By Banessa Maric
My name is Banessa Marie, I'm a 19 year-old diabetic and a transsexual. I don't know all the facts, but I know what I want out of life. Ever since I was in third grade I knew I wanted to be just like Mariah Carey in every way and nothing different from her. Growing up I was like most gay boys - wearing my mother's dresses and looking at porn for the occasional penis. At 10 I older and started having sex, the boys always told me that they couldn't be with me because I was too feminine. I told myself that some­ day I would find a guy that loved me for the way I am. As the years went by, I got into "drag" (who said that coming "LGBT")

One night after the Gay Pride rally at the campus, a few select friends asked me if I wanted to join the Gay Pride Alliance. I added in a sound bite. He played it twice and I knew I wanted to be just like Mariah Carey in every way and nothing different from her.

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NO RESPECT

(As told to Jessica Cohen)

I get no respect. My Feeders decide to move (without my consent, without my approval, without my input on the new neighborhood, new furniture, new palace for my furry queerdom) and what do they do? They leave me behind. Yes, they did.

First came the sneaky, slimy men leaving with my material claim. Then my Feeders, leaving bit by bit with boxes, with the rest of my broken home’s belongings. And before long, it was just me, a wood floor, and my litter box. Well, thank goodness I don’t like to get my fur dirty because after that fiasco, I was tempted to show my Feeders exactly how I felt about them. Meow. (Haussee).

While my respect is still in question, I must admit that my new living space is quite the envy of my fluffy friends. With beautiful berber covering the slippery floors, I am in kitty heaven. Ahh, what is there to not love about rubbing against scratch-scritchy carpet while window-sunbathing in warm Spring days?

In attempt to make peace with my mothers (and perhaps prove to them that this princess can get her paws dirty), I decided to bring them a little present. The result may not have been respect, but the entertainment value was more than enough for me. While exploring my new surroundings (and finding my box in the basement, darn you), I came across the perfect opportunity to bring my Feeders something special. With two fashion-conscious moomies, it is often difficult to bring gifts that are useful and appreciated. So when I saw Mouse running across my litter trail, I knew my Feeders would just love him.

Now I must say, it’s been a while since I last played cat-and-mouse. I am no Tom and I was simply unwilling to ruffle my fur over this long-tailed Jerry. However, to my delight, I have more talent than I gave myself credit for. Within a few minutes, I had nabbed the little guy. Knowing that my Feeders were still sleeping and trips to the basement were few and far between, I brought him upstairs and put him on the floor.

Unfortunately, I got a little hungry after all that exertion. So, I went back downstairs to see if I could find another. And I did. But this one was a bit quicker and a bit less tasty. Thankfully, a groomed scream from upstairs froze the mouse long enough for me to grab him and run upstairs to hear my praises sung.

While my first feeder was bent over Jerry, my second mummy was walking right towards me. Attempting to extend my idle friendship, I dropped the second mouse at her feet. And she screamed. Again. Bloody furball hell!

Perhaps mice were not the new trophy case objects they were looking for. Or maybe it was the wiggling tail of the still-alive mouse at her feet (I was still full from the first rodent, and I could not bear to bulge my belly for another). Whatever the case, my first mummy took my gifts outside, patted my head, and went back to bed. My second Feeder said “Good girl, Circa” in a semi-scream, rubbed her temples, and closed the door on me. Hrrumph. No respect. Not even a Pounce yum-yum for my efforts.

While my kitty instincts may have been under-appreciated over the past few weeks, I am not insulted for my hard work. But now, as I prepare myself to enter the basement for my cat-and-mouse battles, my mothers have taken to poking fun at me; to being downright doggish in their demeanor. While I have not once commented on my Feeders’ shortcomings (at least not without just cause), they have taken to name-calling. Instead of referring to me as my given Feeder name (Circa), or my birthright title (Circa, Queen of Queer Cats), they now call me “Twinkletoes Hunchback Squirrel Tale.” Really. I am insulted. And if that wasn’t enough, they share this name with the feeders of my friends. And now, Linus, the pretty-boy-scaredy-cat, has taken to calling me Hunchback (he dares not call me Squirrel Tale, as his fluffy but bears more resemblance to the tree rats than mine). All I have to say is that everyone, specifically my Feeders, should be careful or it will be their twinkletoes that are sacrificed for my squirrelly revenge.

With that said, I bid a May Day farewell to my fluffy readers and urge you all to find friendship with your Feeders (even if they find amusement at your expense). Remember, don’t bite the hand that feeds you. Just nibble their toes at night.

Chicken liver wishes and tuna fish dreams,

Circa

Subject To
CHANGE

Writer: Mark McCracken
Artist: Ashley Claypool

GREAT MEETING VOL.OVERS. LET’S HANG OUT SOMEWHERE...

THAT’S COOL, IN MY CAREER IT’S BEEN DIFFICULT MEETING ANYONE...

I'M JULIE TURNER, AND I'M NOT A LESBIAN. KELLY IS ONE OF MY SPIT PERSONALITIES I CHANGE INTO. SHE'S NOT ME, SHE'S MORE LIKE A SISTER...

OH CRAP IT LOOKS LIKE I BLEW MY SECRET IDENTITY AGAIN!

DUDU, DON’T YOU READ THE PAPER? IT’S THE EVER ENDNATTIC 450U
CARLA, I DIDN’T KNOW YOUR GIRLFRIEND WAS A SUPERHERO!

KELLY, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

SHE’S NOT. THIS ISN’T KELLY, NOT QUITE. I ONLY JUST FOUND OUT MYSELF RECENTLY.

DEAD? MAYBE. YOUR LITTLE FRIEND’S GAYNESS HAS BEEN COMPLETELY PURGED FROM HIS BODY. NOW HE WILL BE A MODEL CITIZEN. IF HE EVEN WAKES UP THAT IS.

ERGO ON MY GOD

IS HE OKAY? IS HE...

NEXT: HOMO-CIDE
Groups (continued from page 5) of early months. Perhaps there haven't been the laments for phone calls and visits or opportunities to go out to events or join in activities with friends and families during those months; but we certainly are "alive and hearty," but there are many of our seniors who are loath of driving in snow or dare not venture out in cold weather. They don't have access to many events and activities that I take advantage of. Here is what I would like to write about this month. I feel so fortunate to have an organization like Rainbow Seniors of Western New York (RSWNY) in Rochester. It has given me the opportunity to make many new friends, attend interesting and fun activities, and meet other like-minded seniors of the senior community. It would be wonderful if those of you reading this article would contact RSWNY and ask for a ride to an event or ask for friends to contact you.

If you are already a busy person, already an active participant and maybe even a member of RSWNY, share with others who might like to learn more or have a need for friendship and activities. RSWNY has monthly potlucks with fun activities after eating with friends, like Bingo, Brown Bag Auctions, picnics in the summer, card games, etc. We meet monthly at the First Unitarian Church, 801 University Ave. in Rochester. Please come and join us, from 4 until about 7 the third Sunday of each month. Last month, on April 17, we had the GAGV Youth Group for an Intergenerational panel and luncheon at AIDS Rochester, 33 Union Avenue, Rochester.

Imagine Western NY with a variety of events, activities, and workshops to meet the needs of every senior in our community! Imagine eventually having an office, and executive director, and dream of senior citizen homes welcoming GLBTI community! Wouldn't that be fabulous? Some of these things are happening and more will happen if we are willing to work together and advocate for what we want and need.

As we progress toward more and better organizations for senior GLBTI persons, we can be proud of what we have accomplished. Some of these things are happening and more will happen if we are willing to work together and advocate for what we want and need.

ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus (RGMC) would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who attended our Seneca Lake Wine Tour. This was the first of what we hope will be many future tours.

Since the group arrived slightly early to its first stop, Anthony Road, the 31 wine tourists had a chance to wander through Anthony Road's garden and then hear a literature talk of Anthony Road. While enjoying many samplings, much was learned about what goes into producing each bottle of their fine wines. The next stop was Glenora, and after a scrumptious buffet lunch, followed by the multiple-tasting tour, the tour headed to Arcadian. Here came more tastings and an impromptu rendition of "99 Bottles Of Beer On The Wall," for which the tour group was awarded Mardi Gras beads.

Casted Grisch, with its incredibly delicious wines and breathtaking view of Seneca Lake, was supposed to be the final stop. However, since the tour was running ahead of schedule, the group had time to add on a fifth winery and stop at Fox Run on the way home. Happy from the good company and great wine, coupled with the perfect weather and many beautiful "door" prides that were awarded, everyone was excited about taking another trip to the next tour! Stay tuned for more information about our next event!

Warm weather brings not only flowers and green grass, but also shopping! Specifically garage sales! The first weekend in June is bringing the return of the ever popular Gayrage Sale! Help support the RGMC and find some treasures for your home. This year the Gayrage Sale will be held on Saturday, June 6, and Sunday, June 5, at 58 Riverside St. in Rochester. We will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for all of your shopping needs.

From furniture to light fixtures, garden items to glassware, antiques to athletic equipment, and even an upright piano, last year's Gayrage Sale had it all! You never know what you will find in our collection of donated items. Items to fulfill your every household need can be purchased for bargain prices at the Gayrage Sale!

The Gayage Sale serves as a major fundraiser for the RGMC and over the years has grown by leaps and bounds. We now offer literally thousands of items for sale. However, it is only through the generous donations of supporters like you that the Gayrage Sale can be so successful. We are now actively seeking donations and will come to your spring cleaning if you come across anything you wish to part with. Please call us in advance at 585-423-0505. The Gayrage Sale is a full-service event.

The Gayrage Sale is a social organization of gay naturists who is a social organization of gay naturists who always pay their way at the Bachelor Forum, 585-423-0505. Our gayrage Sale is celebrated with a gayrage Sale event that is a total of the year's ongoing work and is a great place to meet new friends or find romance.

ROCHESTER RAMS M.C.

Join us for Northern Exposure weekend, May 20-22, at the bachelor Forum. The Rams and hot leather men from Canada will be partying at the Forum from Friday night through Sunday night.

Saturday, May 21 is our Northern Exposure Barnight; this is a special barnight that is hosted by one of our Canadian clubs, and check it out! Remember, this is barnight; leather, denim, and brawny men will be out of it. All of our regular barnight festivities like beer boot, boot shine, cost check, raffle and wall of death will be available at this full-service event.

Our June Barnight will be Daddy's Night on Saturday, June 18. Come out and show your Daddy how much you appreciate him on Daddy's Night. If you don't have a Daddy, then maybe you will find one. If you are a Daddy then this night is for you. Bring your boy or pick one up at the Bachelor Forum on Daddy's Night.

The Rochester Rams M.C. is Rochester New York's foremost gay motorcycle and leather club as well as one of the oldest clubs of its type in the country.

Our 30th Anniversary Run is Aug. 26-28. Applications and more information on our website. This is a big event for us so come out and play for the weekend with about 150 other leather men.

Our home bar is the Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave., where we hold Bar Night on the third Saturday of each month. We hold general meetings (open to the public) on the last Thursday of each month. For more information, visit our website or call 585-423-0505.

ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS (RGMC) is a social organization of gay naturists who enjoy camaraderie in the nude. Our affiliations include Gay Naturists International (GNI) and International Men Enjoying Naturism (IMEN). If you have thought about social nudity, but were apprehensive about being nude the first time, there are severalclothing, such as guitars, and concerts and movies, and you can meet other members of our group in a clothing area.

Our main events are the first Saturday of the month, beforehand our group meets for dinner and sometimes dancing.

Membership is open to men over 21 years of age who have an interest in social nudity. Most members come from the greater Rochester area, though Buffalo, Syracuse, Utica and the southern tier are also represented.

Visit the Rochester Ram's website for an application and membership information about the RGMC. http://www.rochestergmc.org or email info@thergmc.org

Stay tuned for more information about our next events! Don't forget to visit us at www.thergmc.org

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," CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE ALBUM AND CLICK ON "SLIDESHOW!"

When you're out and about...

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, for the following month’s issue. We cannot accept ads over the phone. We publish free ads for prisoners on a space-available basis. Pay when you place your ad.
We will accept only ads accompanied by name and phone number. Neither will be published, but we must be able to confirm placement. The Empty Closet is not responsible for financial loss or physical injury that may result from any contact with an advertiser. Advertisers must use their own box number, voice mail or personal address/phone number.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Volunteer for The Empty Closet. Interested in reporting, reviewing, taking photos, de-stocking and distribution? Please call Susan at 244-9503.

SERVICES
Rochester’s best full-body muscle rub.
To all you men who have not yet let my skills work, phone jacks, cable TV, musclelovermen@peoplepc.com.
Define your locale for in calls. Reasonable rates. Discretion assured. Don’t delay, others in town. To schedule an appointment please call Susan at 244-9030. or e-mail: Rainbowchoir@hotmail.com

Electrical work, phone jacks, cable TV, burglar alarm systems, paddle fans. Call 30.

Attractive, masculine Italian bi-male, age 30.

Rochester’s best full-body muscle rub.

—I have an athletic build, muscular arms and legs. No smoking, no pets. Lovely.

I have an athletic build, muscular arms and legs. No smoking, no pets. Lovely.

—My 10 years-plus experience ensures the best at the time.

—You’ll love it! I offer a stress-relieving body rub by talented women.

Receive a hot body rub by a very talented woman.

—Nature lover? Have a pet?

—Hirsute husky men in need of

—Home for sale. Are you looking for a

—Cleaning the exterior of a house is one thing, but getting to the inside and handling storage is another job. Call and ask for free estimates.


Fridays
(2 meetings)
Free to Be: 7:30 p.m. at The Yellow House, 1601 Jackson Rd, Penfield. NOT accessible by bus.
Mixed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

—Mixing men and women

—Handicapped accessible

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

Gay Men’s: 7:30 p.m. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave at Elton St. Bus riders: Take the #18 University Ave bus to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes north (uphill) on Winton.

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—Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

—Men’s meeting

—Handicapped accessible

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

Saturdays
Saturday Night Special: 7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S Winton Rd. Bus riders: The #18 University Ave bus does not go by the church on weekend evenings. Take the #1 Park Ave bus to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton.

—The #1 Park Ave bus to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton.

—On the West side, about

—Bus riders use the Fitzhugh St stop just past the top of the hill at Hillside Ave and before Highland Ave. Or take the #1 Park Ave to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton.

—Open meeting, all are welcome, "straight-friendly"

—Mixed men and women

—Handicapped accessible, take the elevator to the basement.

—This meeting begins with a speaker who is followed by an open discussion.

Sundays
Rochester Gay Men: 9:30 a.m. at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 17 S Plymouth St. Bus riders use the Plymouth St stop on Main St at the County Office Building.

—Rochester Gay Men: 9:30 a.m.

—May meeting

—NOT handicapped accessible

This meeting begins with a speaker who is followed by an open discussion.
SUNDAY 1  
Amit DiFranco concert. 7 pm. She's Per­
forming Arts Center, 646 Main St., Buf­
ticketmaster.com.

WEDNESDAY 4  
Connecting the Dots. Free public talk by 
Attorney Melissa Goodman, ACLU. 7:30 
pm, First Unitarian Church, 220 Winn­
erton Rd. Topic: eroding personal freedoms 
through Patriot Act.

FRIDAY 6  
Omega retreat for gay men. May 6-8, 
Rhinebeck, NY. 800-944-1001; omega.org.

SATURDAY 7  
COAP Movie Night hosted by Jay Murphy & 
Markis Newman, starting at 7 pm. 
The Tale of the Allergist’s Wife. DancEncounters, Hungerford Complex, 
115 E. Main at Goodman St.

SATURDAY 14  
Free mammogram, 8 am-1 pm High­
land Hospital Breast Care Center, 1000 
South Ave. Parking free; refreshments pro­
vided. Call 341-6869 for appointment.

SUNDAY 15  
Jason & deMarco at GAGV Youth Group. 
244-8640 ext. 13. 
Rainbow Seniors potluck, Mexican 
theme. First Unitarian Church, 150 S. 
Chleon. 4 pm.

SATURDAY 21  
Empire State Pride Agenda Spring Dine­
ner. Riverside Convention Center. Recep­ 
tion: Gallery, 6:30 pm. Dinner/program: 
Grand Lilac Ballroom, 8 pm. NYS At­
torney General Elliot Spitzer, keynote speak­
er. 244-9924.

MONDAY 16  
Empty Closet deadline for June issue. 
244-9593, emptycloset@gagv.org.

TUESDAY 17  
MOCHA Project open house, silent auc­ 
tion. 107 Liberty Pole Way. Art works by 
Thomas Somervell. 420-1400.

WEDNESDAY 18  
HIV Vaccine Awareness Day. To volun­ 
teer for study at U.R., call Vaccine Trials 
Unit at 756-2566.

WEDNESDAY 18  
HIV/AIDS Upstate Regional Consumer 
Leadership Conference. Diplomats Ban­ 
quett, Gates. 8 am-4:30 pm. $15. 585- 
244-9177. wrightmm@msn.com.

THURSDAY 19  
Wine tasting and silent auction benefit­
ing Alternatives for Barred Women. 6-8 
pm. Robach Community Center. Ontario 
Beach Park. 305-232-5200, ext 223 or 
225.

COAP Dinner. The Pakistani House, 
hosted by Craig Woodward, 7 pm.

FRIDAY 20  
Rochester Rams Northern Exposure 
weekend. Party at the Forum, 6:30 
rhochesterrams.com.

GenderDC conference, Washington DC 

SATURDAY 25  
Empire State Pride Agenda Spring Dine­
ner. Riverside Convention Center. Recep­ 
tion: Gallery, 6:30 pm. Dinner/program: 
Grand Lilac Ballroom, 8 pm. NYS At­
torney General Elliott Spitzer, keynote speak­
er. 244-9924.

MONDAY 23  
Monthly COAP Meeting at GAGV Com­ 
munity Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 7 pm. 
Self Defense for Survivors of domes­
tic violence — women only. Learn about 
personal safety, your rights, verbal judo 
and physical self defense from black belt 
instructors. 10-11:30 am. Eastern Monroe 
County location: call 425-1850. Safe Jour­ 
ney domestic violence transition program. 
Tuesdays: also on May 30, June 14. Child 
Care provided.

TUESDAY 24  
Equality & Justice Day, sponsored by 
Empire State Pride Agenda. Albany. Lobby 
your representatives for your civil rights. 
www.prideagenda.org; 212-622-0395 (Julie 
Guerrero).

WEDNESDAY 25  
COAP Dinner at Hooters hosted by Tom 
Myers. 7 pm.

Community Labyrinth Walk. Free Reiki 
and Chair Massage and Labyrinth Quest. 
Free Will Offering, 7 pm: Orientation: 
7:15 until 9:30; Labyrinth Walk (8:45- 
9:30 pm silent walk). FREE. Reiki and 
Chair Massage sessions from 7-8:30 pm. 
Music featuring special guest Sonam Targ­ 
ey playing sacred music from around the 
world. Handicapped Accessible. Strong 
Hall Auditorium, Colgate Rochester Crot­ 
erid Divinity School, 1100 South Goodman 
St. Contact: Henriette Ruyer (585) 436- 
9714. Email: labquest@frontiernet.net.

FRIDAY 26  
Empty Closet mailing of June issue. Stuff 
envelopes 2-4 pm, bulk mailing 6:30-7:30 
pm. Second floor, GAGV Community 
Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Distribution vol­
utteers needed! Call 244-9080 by May 25.

SUNDAY 29  
empirebears.org.
Ongoing Calendar

MONDAY
Gay and Lesbian Support Group
Third Presbyterian Church, 34 Meigs St., First, third Mondays, 7:30-8pm, 338-3466

Rochester Historical Bowling Society
7:15pm, Mondays, Oswego Lanes
3750 Monroe Ave. (Group is full)

CODAP
Come Out and Play. Business meeting last Mondays, 7pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Tom M. 645-3693. MAY ONLY. Meeting Mar 28

American Baptists Concerned
Third Mondays, 7:30pm, Webster House, 57 Ambrose St. 442-5686

HR Positive Gay Men Support group
Every Monday, 9am, AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave, 442-2220, x3051

Green Party (political)
Second Mondays, 7-9pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 234-8470

Rochester Frontrunners/Frontwalkers
Run/Walk every Monday, 6pm, meet George Eastman House parking lot, 271-2709

MOCHA Chemical Dependency Group
Support group for men of color. MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

TUESDAY
Atlantic Five 0
Gay men 16 and over. Second Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave, 461-0281

Pride ELBT 4-Jon
Every Tuesday, 7pm. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave, Call Bob Todd, 244-8640, 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. 344-8640

MOCHA Hepatitis Clinic
Free Hepatitis A & B vaccinations, third Tuesdays, 5:30-7pm, 101 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

WEDNESDAY
Women’s Community Chorus
Rehearsals each Wednesday, 6:30-8pm, Call for location, 254-4441

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
Board of Directors Meeting, second Wednesdays, 7pm, 275 E., Main St., fourth floor Blue Room. 244-8640

New Freedom N. E. Happiness GA Gay meeting
7pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd.
Men and women. Open meeting

Support Group for Parents Who Have Lost Children
First, third Wednesdays, 11 am-12:30pm, Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. Sponsored by Genesee Region Home Care. Free. 325-1880

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers
9am run/work, meet George Eastman House parking lot, 271-2709

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

Transgender Group
Third Wednesdays, 6-8:30pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Butch-Femme Talk
7pm, Spin Cafe, 759 Park Ave. Social for former Male-to-Femmes. 8pm every fourth Wednesday, 8pm

MOCHA Library & Archives
6-8pm every Wednesday, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave, 244-8640. Books can be returned to GAGV offices, 875 E. Main St., Suite 550, from 9am-8pm

Butch/Femme Connection
Fourth Wednesday, 7:30pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Brothers Keeper Support group for men over 50. Second Wednesdays, 6-8pm, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

AQA
Support group for transgender children. Third Wednesdays, 6-8pm, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

THURSDAY
Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns
6:30pm, first Thursday. For location call Ralph, 271-7697

Greater Rochester Gay and Lesbian Business Forum
Professionally social group. Second Thursdays, 5:30pm, GAGV, 254-6786

GGL (Gay and Lesbians of Batavia & Letch.) Meets every third Thursday in Area 67 conference room at the Optic Center. Voice mail: 338-9971

Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus
Downtown United Presbyterian Church. 711 N. Fitzhugh St. 8:30 pm, 423-0550

Free confidential walk-in HIV testing
Every Thursday night, 5-8pm, AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave. 442-2220

MOCHA Chat
Second, fourth Thursdays, 6pm, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

GLSEN board meeting
7pm, second Thursday, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.


FRIDAY
Gay Men’s AA meeting
Each Friday, 7:30-8:30pm, Closed meeting, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Free to Be AA Meeting
7:30 pm, The Yellow Horse, 1601 Jackson Rd., Penfield, Men and women, closed meeting.

Butch/Femme Connection
First Friday, 7-8pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

SATURDAY
Rochester Rams Bar Night
Third Saturday, 8pm-2am, Bachelor’s Room, 610 University Ave. 271-9933

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers
9am run/work, meet George Eastman House parking lot, 461-4249

Empire Bears Bar Night
Second Saturdays, Bachelor’s Room, 470 University Ave. 254-3986

Cross Dresser Support Group
First Saturdays, 6:30-9:30pm, GAGV, 173 Atlantic Ave. Info: 251-2132 RCMEN79@hotmail.com

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

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

Lilac Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf
Fourth Saturdays, 6-8pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Something for da Sintas
Women’s group, every second Saturday, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

Pride and Joy Families
Third Saturdays. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave, 244-8640 x 24

SUNDAY
More Light Presbyterians
9am-10am, downtown, Unitarian Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 345-8000

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
2:30-5pm, Last Sunday. Call for location: 234-0168

Dignity/Integrity
Every Sunday, 9am-12pm, Simon Cyanne Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Every Sunday, 234-5092

Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church
175 Morris Dr, Cobbs Hill, Contemporary worship service: 7pm. 271-6478

Gay Men’s Alcoholic Anonymous
St. Luke’s/St. Simon Cyanne Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St, 6:30pm, 232-6720. Weekly, Closed

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Friends Association (GLBPA)
Lilac Rainbow, Saturdays, 5pm. Morey Hall 401, 275-9379. E-mail: glbpaofrochesterхиагеоскет

GAGV Youth Group
Ages 13-20 every Sunday. 2-4pm, GAGV Youth Center, 875 S. Main St, 244-8640

Rainbow Amateur Radio Assoc.
Finger Lakes ham station, business meeting/luanch. Call Bob, 442-7185

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

Rainbow Seniors
Third Sundays. Potluck 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, 5pm. The East Avenue Inn, 364 East Ave. 288-4508.

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

Bassically Troublemakers Band
Rehearsals, 7-9:30pm, every Sunday. Call Tim, 242-0287

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