A Record 10,000 Fill Streets of Pride

By Susan Jordan

The Pride Parade on July 8 broke all past records; police estimated that 10,000 people took part or in some way watched the parade as it wound its way from Park Ave. and Brunswick St. to Village Gate on N. Goodman St., stopping briefly to memorialize the recent Park Avenue gay-bashing incident.

According to the Democrat & Chronicle, the hugely increased turnout (3,000 has been typical in the past) was an expression of support for the LGBT community after the verdict by the State Appeals Court against marriage equality, which came only two days before the Parade.

The Parade was lead by Rochester GLETOQ Bikers and Grand Marshall Aggy Dune, who presided over the Festival held after the Parade at Village Gate.

Candidates for office and elected officials present included Willa Powell (candidate for State Senate 56th District); Dan Maffei (for Congress); Green Party Lt. Governor candidate Allison Duncan; Rochester City Council members Lois Gibbs, Carollee Conklin, Bill Pritchard (Parade continues on page 3).

The Gay Alliance appreciates the continuing partnership of businesses within our community who support our mission and vision.

Pride Parade/ Picnic
See Pages A10-A11

By Carmen Ciparick

Appeals Court Throws Marriage Equality Back to Legislature; Chief Judge Dissents

By Susan Jordan

New York State's highest court on July 6, in a four to two vote, ruled that the New York State Constitution does not provide same-sex couples with the right to legal marriage.

The decision, which the Empire State Pride Agenda said comes after over two years of litigation, community education and organizing, denies same-sex couples and their families the access to the protections that the government gives to all other families through marriage. Appeals Court Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye wrote in her dissenting opinion that the decision goes against New York’s tradition of equal rights for all citizens, and will be seen in future as “an unfortunate misstep.”

The court threw the hot potato back to the NYS Legislature.

Judge Robert Smith wrote for the court: “We hold that the New York Constitution does not compel recognition of marriages between members of the same sex. Whether such marriages should be recognized is a question to be addressed by the Legislature.”

Judge Smith added, “We express our hope that the participants in the controversy over same-sex marriage will address their arguments to the Legislature.”

Smith was joined in his decision by Susan Read and George Bundy Smith. Judge Graffeo issued a concurring opinion.

Chief Judge Judith Kaye and Judge Carmen Cinacriq dissenting from the majority. Writing for the dissenters, Kaye said, “This State has a proud tradition of affording equal rights to all New Yorkers. Sadly, the court today retreats from that proud tradition.”

Chief Judge Kaye also wrote, “I am confident that future generations will look back on today’s decision as an unfortunate misstep.”

Against children’s interests

Kaye rejected the majority’s argument that it is rational for the state to penalize same-sex parent families on the grounds that opposite-sex parent families provide better quality of life for children: “The State plainly has a legitimate interest in the welfare of children,” she wrote, “but excluding same-sex couples from marriage in no way furthers this interest. In fact, it undermines it.”

Noting that “hundreds of thousands of children are currently being raised by same-sex couples in New York,” Judge Kaye concluded that depriving these children of the protections of marriage “is an unfortunate misstep.”

(Appeals Court Throws Marriage Equality Back to Legislature; Chief Judge Dissents continues on page 7)

July 6, 2006

LOCAL & STATE NEWS

Arrest made in Park Ave. assault; second attacker sought

By Susan Jordan

Two lesbians were assaulted on Park Ave. around 6pm on June 17. One woman has been arrested; police are seeking a second suspect.

The two lesbians, after leaving a bar, were attacked by two other women hurling anti-gay slurs, and were treated for injuries at a local hospital. One victim had been thrown to the ground and kicked in the head, while the other was bitten.

Police charged Yalida Ortega, 26, of Bronx Manor Drive, with third degree criminal assault. Officer Jim Hall, Rochester Police department liaison with the LGBT community, interviewed the first victim and learned that a second woman had also been attacked. He added the hate crime designations to the original charges. Ortega may also be charged with assault on the second victim.

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley (GAGV) Anti-Violence Project Coordinator Alexandra Cubis told the Empty Closet, “It is not surprising that there was a hate crime on Park Avenue last month. It can happen anywhere and it does. The Unitarian Church was most recently the victim of a hate crime, and there was another attack reported in the 19th ward. Any time the LGBT community is in the spotlight, there are reports of increased hate activity. It is not coincidental that there was a spike in hate activity surrounding Rochester Gay Pride Parade and also the N.Y. State Court of Appeals decision on Equal Marriage. It’s a backlash of victims that is intended to send a message of fear, hate and shame to the LGBT community and its allies.”

(Call Page C1)
Pride & Prejudice

July was a difficult month for New York's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender citizens. It is always hard to see injustice done, even when one is not directly involved. It is unbearable when it involves us and the people we love and who live nearby our children. Once again we are second class citizens, and our families are still "not real".

If the U.S. Supreme Court had thrown Brown vs. Board of Education to the legislative branch (politicians dependent on the votes of a race of majority), how long might it have taken for American schools to be desegregated? Of course, de facto segregation is still the mainstream today, but that's another column. As attorney and legislator Harry Bronson pointed out July 6, the Appeals Court failed to do what the courts are supposed to do - defend the dignity from the tyranny of the majority.

You don't have to be an attorney to see that there is nothing just or rational or "appropriate" (as the Democrat & Chronicle editorial page called it) about the Court of Appeals decision. It all comes down to prejudice, ignorance and conservative paradigmatics in the end.

The odd thing about the ruling is that it is assumes that since so many heterosexual relationships are "casual or temporary", opening up legal marriage to gays would remove straight people's incentive to marry.

Most homophobic, politically-correct responses to the idea of marriage equality are based on the idea that children are always better off with one male parent and one female parent than "unstable" same-sex parents (not true), so therefore it is right to punish and penalize families headed by same-sex parents (upset, senseless and cruel).

New ways to confront this with the same punishment and penalties, only the reasoning is different: you can call it that! The ruling implies that same-sex marriage is more stable and that our children are not "a result of accident or impulse" - so our marriages must be legal like heterosexual marriages, or when gay walk because they don't have those special benefits and privileges any more: "...in other words, we discriminate against same-sex parents and their kids.

So what happened to the old conservative paradigm? Maybe it doesn't matter. In either case, the result is the same - light families are screwed, and conservatives "justify" their homophobia.

With such an irrational rationale, the Court of Appeals ruling was clearly based on prejudice and willful ignorance, possibly also on a bias toward the right wing agenda, and possibly on the fear of being called "activist judges". That label only applies to liberals, of course. Judges who toe the Radical Right party line aren't conservative activists - they're just "strict interpreters of the Constitution".

Sure. Here in Rochester, the positive side of July 2006 was PRIDE. Police estimated that around 10,000 people took part in the July 8 Parade - a record number, and indicating increasing support for our community.

It was inspiring to see how queer and straight both rallied round the Rainbow Flag. It was inspiring to see pride and self-esteem where the begin want us to be ashamed and self-hating.

And more than one person told this reporter how deeply moved they were to see the GAY youth contingent pass by. The courageous spirit shown by our young leaders, young and old, especially due from clergy to drag queens, was unforgettable.

In reality, parenthood, like marriage, isn't a gay thing or a straight thing - it's a human thing. The more society supports all families, the more stable they will be all.

What a Pride Week we had this year. On Thursday we woke up the Court of Appeals in a decision that it would not get involved in our right to marry. Then we rallied alongside each other to say to the world and each other that we will not give up our rights so easily.

Then we marched in support of each other, taunted by the hate-filled words of wacko protesters. Then we relaxed and enjoyed a day in the park at the Pride at the Picnic.

The Pride Picnic was more successful this year than in past years, possibly because the parade and picnic were moved back to one weekend. We estimate that 2,400 people joined in the fun. The ticket price was raised slightly, and costs increases that have occurred over the past several years.

Our staff and volunteers are often asked at the gate while working accepting payment for tickets why the event has an admission fee. Your ticket price pays for the event planning, advertising, and other costs necessary to produce an event like this.

We are working hard to keep the price affordable for the majority of people to attend, and yet still keep the event going.

We have increased our ticket price because our event costs have increased.

We are also working on creative ways to help keep the price down.

As we move into the fall season, the Gay Alliance will be working on a strategic planning process and community needs assessment.

Your voice will help to determine the future direction of the Gay Alliance, so look for the survey due out in the fall on our website gayalliance.org.

This is an opportunity to speak your mind and tell us what you would like to see happen in the Gay Alliance.

Be a Member. Support the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

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☐ I would like to volunteer on a committee or project.
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☐ $100: Champion
☐ $150: Stonewall
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☐ Check if you do not want to receive the Closed.
☐ $25/yr.
☐ $40/yr. Subscription to the Closed only.

Enclose your check and send to: GAGV, 875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, New York 14605.

Thank you!
Vandals slash Unitarian Church's marriage equality banner

The First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. N., put up a banner supporting marriage equality for same-sex couples on June 17. The banner read, “Vandals slash welcome.” Donations toward the expense are

riage equality for same-sex couples on Diocese, and many other faith

Side of Love: Equal Marriage for Same Sex

and pride in the community, was present-

Original unit expressing pride, went to

The church issued a statement on July 9. "We are putting together a fact sheet about Unitarian Universalism and this church in particular, putting into context our support for gay and lesbian couples," he said. "We want to strongly convey that we don't see this kind of violence as the answer to anything. Unitarians value free speech and open discussion, and we see this issue as one which is important to discuss publicly." The church issued a statement on July 5 saying, "We hope you share our sense of shock and outrage that our congregation's expression of a religious belief would be the object of a hate crime. Unitarian Universalists have supported GLBT rights for decades. We were one of the first faith groups to call for marriage equality over 10 years ago, and our ministers have been performing religious ceremonies of union for same-sex couples for over 35 years. Our support for mar-
riage equality is in no way diminished because she was always making me late for work, and I hate being late for work. And she just started yelling at me and it was my fault for being late and then she hit me in the stomach. And then it got worse.

The church asked, "Why did you do this?" J: She was always very jealous of everybody and inse.

BR: After she hit you the first time, how long was it before the violence escalated?

J: Almost a year, then it got worse. She came at me with a knife and cut my throat... I had to get stitches. I have scars.

BR: How did you explain these injuries to the doctors?

J: I don't know. I don't know. It was one time I was helping her out in the garage because we used to rebuild motors and stuff and she got mad at me and she was in a rage and hit me with it. I went to the hospital with a broken leg.

BR: How did you explain that to the doctor?

J: I didn't have to say anything. They didn't ask.

BR: What were you thinking as this person you loved came at you with a knife?

J: I don't know. I don't know. It was such a terrible time I was helping her out in the garage because we used to rebuild motors and stuff and she got mad at me and she was in a rage and hit me with it. I went to the hospital with a broken leg.

BR: What do you think about the decision that was reached in this case?

J: I wish that the high court had been more liberal in their interpretation of the constitution, but... I'm a bit hard by the denial of equal rights to LGBT families.

It upset me because of my classmates; I am 48 and just got on her husband's policy. So here I am sitting next to someone and I feel so very different, our situations are so different and it is so unfair," said Nicci.

For others, the decision is being met with mixed emotions. "I don't know what to say, I just have so many mixed feelings about it, I think the courts should just let things be and just let people be together," said Todd LeBeouf of Ontario.

While some are confused and unsure about what will happen next, others are angry and determined to do something to make sure they get the same rights as everyone else. "It's just ridiculous, it's just one way for people to hate and separate, even for political gain," said Peter Roberts of Rochester.

"I am not surprised: as far as we have come as a society... as good people stand by and do nothing, evil will win, so to speak," said Spike MacDavies of Rochester.

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Rochester's Emily Jones Is Nominated for Award at Out & Equal Summit

An estimated 2,000 participants are expected to convene at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago Sept. 14-16 for the 15th annual Out & Equal Summit, an all-time attendance record. Former GAGW Board President Emily Jones, retired from Kodak, has been nominated for an award.

GlaxoSmithKline is the exclusive Presenting Sponsor for this premier lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender conference that provides a unique opportunity to build alliances that foster safe and equitable work environments for everyone.

The Summit brings LGBTQ employees, straight allies and human resources and diversity professionals together to share best practices on workplace equality and essential skills to tackle the challenges and issues to address current workplace shifts that affect the LGBTQ community.

The three-day Summit offers strategic workshops categories that include general education, employee resource group effectiveness, leadership development, organizational culture, religious expression and many more. The Summit offers international keynote speakers, pre-Summit Seminars, and featured speakers and panels that collectively address the most relevant LGBTQ topics and issues in the workplace today.

This year's lineup of Summit keynote speakers in Chicago includes George Takei, best known for his portrayal of Mr. Sulu in the acclaimed television and film series Star Trek. Takei, an advocate for LGBTQ rights, was one of the driving forces behind Southern California's Arts in Transit program in which every metro rail subway station has been given its own distinctive look, thereby fostering neighborhood pride.

Nina Jacobson, president of Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group, develops, scripts and oversees film production for Walt Disney, Touchstone and Hollywood workshop categories that include general series scripts and oversees film production for an award.

For Wednesday, Sept. 13:

- Roma Downey, star of the acclaimed television and film version of the Bible. Downey will discuss Media, Morality and Magic: Biblical Themes in the Modern Age.

- John Hope Franklin is a professor of public policy at George Mason University and a nonresident fellow at the Brookings Institution. In *The Color of Creativity*, Florida asserts a theory that the presence of a so-called creative class, including LGBTQ people, is a factor in urban economic development.

- The interactive panel will address the need to question the so-called scientific argument that same-sex marriage was affirmed when a ruling overturned a judge’s decision in Nebraska and Tennessee in July. The Massachusetts Judicial Supreme Court ruled July 3 that a proposed constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage could move forward, but the state legislature ended debate on July 12 without considering the amendment. A race ensued between the legislature and the people to put the issue back on the ballot for 2008. Amendment supporters also need to win the votes of 50 lawmakers, or 25 percent of the legislature, in both sessions.

- Yolanda King, the first-born daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, is an anti-violence communicator committed to using her talents to effect social and personal change. It is her passion for peace and positive change that prompted her to found Higher Ground Productions, an organization committed to celebrating diversity and embracing unity.

- Richard Florida is a professor of public policy at George Mason University and a nonresident fellow at the Brookings Institution. In *The Color of Creativity*, Florida asserts a theory that the presence of a so-called creative class, including LGBTQ people, is a factor in urban economic development. The featured-speaker sessions will be offered Thursday and Friday, Sept. 14-15: "LGBT People of Color: Managing Multicultural Identities at Work" with Lapele Velez, an out lesbian sheriff from Dallas County, Texas, and "Transmedia: Adventures in Hollywood (and the Real World, Too)," moderated by Deep Stealth Productions founders Andrea James and Calpinia Addams.


The 2006 Summit presents many powerful opportunities to network, including受国家的 Reception on Sept. 13, and a Welcome Reception and entertainment event Thursday night. Out & Equal is pleased to announce two new Summit events: a Reception for People of Color and Friends, hosted by Out & Equal’s People of Color Advisory Committee; and a Reception for Transgender People and Friends, hosted by Out & Equal’s Transgender Advisory Committee.

Out & Equal Workplace Awards ceremony is also honored to the popular Out & Equal Workplace Awards ceremony that recognizes and celebrates individual champions in the workplace. As well as those workplaces that demonstrate leadership in creating workplace equality. Five specific award recipients (two awards recognize individual contributions; and three recognize organizational distinctions) will be honored with an "Outie Award" on Friday, Sept. 15, at the Out & Equal Gala Awards Dinner, hosted by political humorist Kate Clinton.

Here are the 2006 Out & Equal Workplace Awards Finalists:

- TrailBlazer Award: Emily Jones, Kodak; Kevin Jones, Citigroup; Ken Hagenback, Hallmark; Daniel Forrest, Nike; and Terry Johnson, Hewlett Packard. This award is given in recognition of an LGBTQ person who has made a significant contribution to advancing workplace equality. This individual’s activities will have made a marked improvement in the workplace and/or have contributed to equality nationally.

- Champion Award: Hayward Bell, Raytheon; Maria Campbell, SC Johnson; Debbie Dugan, Merid; and John Perrette, Ernst & Young. This award is given in recognition of an LGBTQ person who has played a pivotal role in championing and facilitating treatment of LGBTQ employees on the job.

- Employee Resource Group of the Year: Disney; Leather, LGBTQ Alliance from Day 1 (GLADI); KP Pride at Kaiser Permanente; Microsoft GLEAM; and Nike’s Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Network. This award is given in recognition of a particular employee resource group that has been a key player in the development of an affinity group or network, that has a proven track record of success in advocating for LGBTQ rights in its own workplace.

- Significant Achievement: Deutsche Bank; Kodak; PricewaterhouseCoopers and Raytheon. This award is given in recognition of any employer that has made significant strides recently in advancing a fair and equitable workplace for its LGBTQ employees.

- Workplace Excellence: JPMorganChase; SC Johnson; Wells Fargo. This award is given in recognition of any employer that has an historic and ongoing commitment to pursuing and executing workplace policies and practices for LGBTQ employees in their own workplace.

- For additional information regarding the 2006 Out & Equal Workplace Summit, including how to register online, please visit www.outandequal.org/summit/2006.

Gay Africans Join Sexuality Conference

Africans affirming a gay or lesbian identity joined 400 other participants in the Washington, DC, conference on Sexual Health and Rights in late June.

The conference took place in Nairobi, Kenya.

"We are here in Africa. We live in the mainstream, we pay taxes like everybody else, we relate with people in the mainstream," gay activist Donna Smith told South Africa’s Independent Online (IOL) on June 26.

Smith represented the Forum for the Empowerment of Women, a black lesbian community organization based in Johannesburg.

Homosexuality is illegal in Kenya. "A number of rape and assault cases have been filed against police stations," said Fikile Vilakazi of the Coalition of African Lesbians in IOL. "When one reports, the police respond by asking why one is a lesbian."

"The Washington Blade"

Massachusetts Court Gives Go-ahead to Anti-Marriage Amendment; Tabled Until Nov. 17

The Massachusetts Judicial Supreme Court ruled July 3 that a proposed constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage could move forward, but the state legislature ended debate on July 12 without considering the amendment. A race ensued between the legislature and the people to put the issue back on the ballot for 2008. Amendment supporters also need to win the votes of 50 lawmakers, or 25 percent of the legislature, in both sessions.

The court ruling came after supporters of marriage equality filed a lawsuit claiming that Massachusetts Attorney General Tom Reilly should not have certified the question, since the state constitution bars new citizen-initiated amendments that would reverse a judicial ruling. The court rejected that argument.

San Francisco To Fund Economic Aid For Transgender Community

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors has approved a $290,000 commitment to turning around high rates of poverty in San Francisco’s transgender communities.

Thirteen years after San Francisco outlawed discrimination against transgender employees, the Committee has earmarked funds to improve employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to overcome high rates of unemployment and underemployment among transgender people in the city.

"The Comprehensive Transgender"
Employment Initiative is a great investment for San Francisco," said San Francisco Supervisor Bevan Dufty. "Too many well qualified transgender people who want to work or start businesses are frozen out of the market. The Initiative is a vital first step in making sure that this community can fully participate and contribute to the wellbeing of our great city."

Receiving unanimous support from the Budget Committee, the initiative is important and timely. Joining Supervisor Dufty in voting for the Initiative were Committee Chair Chris Daly, Board President Aaron Peskin, and Supervisors Ross Mirkarimi and Sean Elsbernd. "This commitment is overdue," said Daly, "for too long, transgender people in my district and throughout the city have been isolated from living wage jobs and career opportunities. This initial investment signals an end to that reality and a strong step forward in full inclusion."

Community members had the vote and the support of elected officials. "It's a great time to be living and working in San Francisco," said Cecilia Chang, Deputy Director of the Transgender Law Center. "This historic vote reinforces the city's role as a national leader in the transgender equality movement. HSA Director Trent Rhorer added, "We are excited to be part of a public collaboration that believes in the full embrace of our community." Funding for the Initiative will be managed by the City's Human Services Agency (HSA) which oversees workforce development. HSA Director Trent Rohrer added, "We are excited to be part of a public collaboration developing this much needed effort." San Francisco's Airport and the Public Utilities Commission collaboratively contributed $100,000 to the Initiative so somehow we remain in the Presbyterian church law. Although this did not happen, the Presbyterian Church continue to be a church for heterosexuals only? People tell me that they don't like it when I say that. When it's no longer true, I'll stop saying it. I kept thinking that being in Birmingham would challenge and inspire our Church to do justice now. And in the midst of the Assembly's decisions today, the words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. give me hope: 'The arc of history bends toward justice.'"

LOCAL NOTE: Three of Rochester's Presbyterian churches formally opposed by participating in More Light Sunday in some way (most lobbied through mail-in post cards and some with formal services). The churches are Downtown Presbyterian Church, Third Presbyterian Church, and New Life Presbyterian Church.

Pa. Senate Won't Act on Anti-Gay Amendment Yet

A proposed constitutional amendment that would duplicate a Pennsylvania state law banning same sex marriage will probably not be acted on this year.

Conservatives had wanted a state amendment to ban same-sex marriage to be on the ballot in 2007. It now seems unlikely that this will take place, since it would require legislators to return for a special session in August.

The Senate and House had approved conflicting versions of the amendment and did not reach an agreement before the summer recess. The House version, pushed by conservatives, included a ban on civil unions as well.

The earliest any amendment could come before Pennsylvania voters would be 2009.

Presbyterians Fail To Remove Discriminatory Ban on Ordination

On June 21, after a spirited three-hour debate, the 217th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted by a margin of 57 percent to 43 percent to approve the Theological Task Force's Peace, Unity and Purity Report and its recommendations.

The convention, meeting in Birmingham, Ala., hotly debated the removal of existing language from church law. Although this did not happen, gay supporters felt a little progress had been made.

Bear Rico, Co-Moderator, said of this decision: "This is not where we hoped to be, but this is where we are – nor an altogether unfamiliar place for those of us who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. And yet, somehow we remain in the Presbyterian Church (USA)."

The approval of the Task Force Report and its recommendation to not send a constitutional amendment from this year's General Assembly that would have removed the discriminatory ban against faithful gay Presbyterians seeking ordination inevitably led to the defeat of the Heartland Ordination Overture.

"We are grateful for the 22 presbyteries that believed in the full embrace of our LGBT sisters and brothers who came to Birmingham to work for justice. MLP is committed to bringing ordination overtures every General Assembly until our Church gets it right," responded Kim Smith King, Co-Moderator.

Michael J. Adeo, National Field Organizer, said, "How long will the Presbyterian Church continue to be a church for heterosexuals only? People tell me that they don't like it when I say that. When it's no longer true, I'll stop saying it. I kept thinking that being in Birmingham would challenge and inspire our Church to do justice now. And in the midst of the Assembly's decisions today, the words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. give me hope: 'The arc of history bends toward justice.'"

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Willa Powell runs for NYS Senate; would vote for marriage equality

By Susan Jordan

Willa Powell, a longtime Rochester School Board member, is campaigning against Joe Robach for the 56th Senate District seat. She spoke recently with the Empty Closet about her reasons for running, which include concerns about state funding for “high risk” upstate school districts, and the July 6 verdict against marriage equality.

Powell, a Democrat, said, “I see my running as an extension of my service as a School Board member. The Republican-dominated Senate collectively has taken the position that they can ignore the CFE (Campaign for Fiscal Equity) ruling. This has to do with the state education funding system. In the course of the CFE case, the judge ordered a statewide cost analysis of how many other districts outside New York City are ‘high need’—meaning what is the tax base, the area poverty level, how much money does it take to educate each child, etc. The court ordered the Senate to allow money equally to all districts in need, including those upstate.

“The Senate is opposed to even acknowledging that this court order exists. Pataki took it to the next level of appeal. The Senate position is that Long Island gets 12 cents out of every new dollar. Any reasonable person’s eyebrows should go up at this, since Long Island doesn’t need 12 cents. But that’s where the Republican Senate is strong, and they’ve linked arms around that issue.”

Powell explained that local school systems like Greece and the city are receiving much less than they would if the CFE case decision were accepted. “Joe Robach has turned his back on his own district,” Powell said. “By ignoring the CFE ruling, he’s denying the Greece school system $10 million a year, and denying Rochester city schools a down payment of $50,000 a year.”

The down payment represents 25 percent of the first year’s funding. Powell said that the Assembly passed several versions of the new education funding format, which mirror recommendations from the auditing firm that reported that districts with large middle needs should get funding based in part on need, not per pupil.

“Robach took credit for getting Rochester $35 million—but the down payment should have been $50,000. ‘This doesn’t come close to filling the gap,’” Powell said. “The media has simply not covered this story. ‘What launched me down this path (the campaign) was the news blackout. This issue hasn’t ignited the community because they haven’t heard about it.’”

She said that the statewide Alliance for Quality Education has been trying to get the word out. “There are only so many ways you can package a news release,” she said. “They recently shared a study claiming a correlation between how much is spent on education and the rate of graduation—and that gets some coverage. Districts spending $18,000 per pupil will graduate at 80 percent or higher. The common denominator for districts that graduate in the 50 percent range, including Rochester, is that they only have about $13,500 to spend per student.”

Districts like Greece are looking at very real financial consequences, Powell said. “We can’t do the intervention that makes the difference between graduating and not graduating.”

She said that Democrats & Chroniclerealtime editorials have tended to “take up the classic drumbeat of ‘The District needs to tighten its belt,’ etc. Joe Lawrence (Editorial Page editor) doesn’t live in the city or Greece and doesn’t emphasize the journalistic ethic of writing about the parties who are affected.”

Powell was interviewed about the CFE ruling in City newspaper, which then asked Robach for a response. His reply was, “We’ve given record amounts to the Senate District.”

Powell said, “That’s NOT a response to the CFE case.

“My approach is, ‘Ask Joe Robach whether he thinks the current funding system for education is fair.’ All of our Assembly members disagree with him. Two different bills came out of the Assembly this year to create new funding; the Senate failed to act. They’re just not interested in equitable funding.”

Powell said that there are other critical issues that motivated her to run for state office. In 2004, she was concerned about the possibility of the Supreme Court of Appeals’ decision of July 6, denying same sex couples a constitutional right to marry legally and routing that issue back to the legislature. “July 6 added another very important plank to my platform and my reason for running,” she said. “My reading of the New York Constitution is that there’s nothing gender-related to the definition of marriage.”

She said that she had been excited about the marriage in New Paltz last year, performed by the mayor, Jason West, until he was stopped by a court ruling.

Powell said that her father, a Baptist minister, reminded her that the history of marriage goes back to the Middle Ages when a newly emergent middle class began to hope assets to pass on to heirs. “Marriage has always been a legal contract to protect the most vulnerable—women and children. It’s interesting that it has transitioned to being seen as a sacrament. The function of the state is still to defend contract law, not church law. My father described all of this to defend his position against gay marriage, but he’s 73 and has lost much of his vision. If you have two same sex couples are having children, and that means that these are vulnerable parties that need protection.”

Powell finds it ironic that the judges ruling against marriage equality used the justification of protecting children, yet their ruling endangers the wellbeing of the many children of same-sex couples.

“I think the judges who articulated that ruling are living in the same world with my father,” Powell said. “They don’t realize children are involved here.”

Asked how the judges could remain in ignorance of that fact when pro-equality lawyers presented so much evidence that gay couples are successfully raising children, Powell said, “They would have to go against their old ethics to accept that. There’s a power in paradigms to trap you—if you can’t make new evidence fit the paradigm, you don’t see it.

Interesting thing about paradigms: they allow you to package things in nice quick sound bytes, because you’re tapping into commonly accepted beliefs.

In some ways the school funding issue parallels that. If you don’t want to see poverty, you can couch your resistance to funding schools in high risk districts on the basis that those schools are incompe­tent, can’t manage the funds, hire good teachers, etc. All the cultural beliefs of conservatives are pre-packaged and you just use a few key words to kick off the assumptions. It’s convenient to think that the system always works and isn’t corrupt. The challenge is to present people with new information in a way that shocks them into seeing differently—or else ease the paradigm.”

“A winnable race”

Powell feels that the 56th District contains a significant number of likely voters.

“This is a winnable race,” she said. She feels that since her profile includes 21 years of service as a School Board member, people are responding to her resume “feeds into the vast array of conservative paradigms and makes me attractive to the Kennebunk and Parma portion of the district, which tend to be the more conservative areas of the 56th Dis­trict.” There are swingable portions in every subset of the District. At the same time, the educational agenda is a critical
element in the city. This is really a campaign
taking about care of this district."

"It's a total dodge," Powell said.
"He can't win on this issue and that's why
we're4going to articulate a position contrary to the
interests of his district. He has to craft it
as an old-fashioned campaign so I'm
making steady progress. It may be a little
Pollyanna or tough for us to get there in this
old-fashioned campaign can make a
difference — but that's the only kind of
campaign we can launch.

The Powell campaign is developing a
website; it can be accessed right now at
www.paulpowell2006.com. In the mean-
time, however, the backlash-sexue2005 part
will be deleted from the address. "It's still
under development, but we hope very soon to
do things like answer your questions online, have a
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It appears that the new Paul Powell
campaign has approached Sen. Robach about set-
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Judge Denies Name Change To Transgender Man For Second Time

A transgender Rochester man must provide medical evidence to justify his request to change his first name from Sarah to Evan, State Supreme Court Justice William P. Polito ruled on July 7.

Polito ruled that allowing Sarah Rockefeller, 26, to change his name without evidence "would be fraught with danger of deception and confusion and would open the public to public interest." He cited a 1976 law journal article as justifying his decision.

The ruling was Rockefeller's second against Rockefeller's request for the name change. The American Civil Liberties Union has challenged Polito, stating that the ruling places an unnecessary burden of proof on transgender individuals that is not required of non-transgender people.

Sarah Rockefeller filed paperwork on Nov. 17 to have his name changed to Evan Rockefeller, "which he believes better reflects his male gender identity," according to court records quoted by Greg Livadis in the Democrat & Chronicle.

"I've been using it a year and a half," Rockefeller told Livadis. "Generally, people call me 'in' when they see me."

But Polito denied the name change, saying the application "lacks any medical, psychiatric or psychological corroborative support concerning the petitioner's alleged psychological/anatomical sexual conflict."

Rockefeller's ACLU lawyers say, "If a man wanted to change his name to Sue under New York state law, it's perfectly fine for him to do so with no requirement that his name correspond to his gender."

"Not having any name change puts him in considerable danger in some cases, opens him up to ridicule and embarrassment," said Pamela Barnes of Perinton, director of the Rochester chapter of the New York Transgender Rights Orgaization (NYTRO). "This is just one judge's opinion who is out of touch with what's going on."

An appeal is likely.

-Greg Livadis, Democrat & Chronicle

Court Grants New Trial To Alan Carter

By John Randall

In a 10-page decision, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York reversed the conviction of former teacher and antique shop owner Alan Carter on five of six counts based on complaints by a 17-year-old employee who told police that Carter had served him alcohol, then held him down, removed his pants, and forced him to have oral and anal sex.

On the remaining count of sodomy, a class E nonviolent felony, the Appellate court held that the conviction was supported by legally sufficient evidence.

Reversable Errors

The court noted that the prosecution's numerous inflammatory references to the defendant as a dangerous sexual predator... which had a decided tendency to prejudice the jury."

Overbroad Warrant

The Appellate Division ruled that the warrant should have supposed all of the evidence obtained by the police from their search of Carter's home, because the warrant was overbroad.

Alan Carter plans to be home from Attica for his 60th birthday. He is working on a book about his ordeal.

(What GAGV Does From page 3)

best friend. Call a family member, somebody you can trust. Sit and talk to them.

The Anti-Violence Project

In response to the need of hundreds of battered domestic abuse victims like "Julie" and also of hate crime victims in our community, the Anti-Violence Project (AVP) of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley was founded in April of 2004.

AVP's mission is to work exclusively for those of same-gender orientation, their loved ones, and the community. As a referral agency, we are focused on the provision of support services to victims and survivors of domestic violence, hate crimes, and sexual assault.

AVP's main thrust is to work exclusively for those of same-gender orientation and also of hate crime victims in our community.

Many victims/survivors have found a friend, a voice, and a support network used by one partner to coerce, dominate or isolate another person, or the exertion of any form of power that maintains control.

Cubos said she first realized how few resources were available for LGBT domestic violence victims when she received a call for help from a gay man while she was working at Alternatives for Battered Women here in Rochester. "I was working the overnight shift, and I got a phone call from a gay man who disclosed that he was being abused by his partner and he didn't...

(What GAGV Does continues page 15)

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Opinion

Appeals Court Majority Should Be Embarrassed
By Matt Farnace, Executive Director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

I never expected New York’s high court to rule for us on marriage. For a lot of solid legal reasons, New York was never in the first tier for marriage test case litigation and I distinctly remember having the unpleasant task 10 years ago of disuading couples from going to court to press the issue.

So when I read the summary on July 7 — that the state constitution doesn’t require the recognition of same-sex marriage — I expected the body of the decision to be scholarly and well-reasoned. I also expected that it would express sympathy for the real discrimination and hardships gay and lesbian couples face and that it would very likely urge the Legislature to act to address these injustices.

Boy, was I wrong. The opinion was more than poorly written, illegal and insulting to any legal mind, it was plainly homophobic and a prime example of the failure of too many allegedly thinking straight people — in this case judges — to grasp that we are fully and equally human. Sentences like:

"Intuition and experience suggest that a child benefits from having before his or her eyes, every day, living models of what both a man and a woman are like." (When a judge has to resort to "intuition and experience" rather than legal precedent and fact, you know you’re in deep trouble.)

"When a judge has to resort to "intuition and experience" rather than legal precedent and fact, you know you’re in deep trouble.)"

"The Legislature could find that unstable relationships between people of the opposite sex present a greater danger that children will be born into or grow up in unstable homes than is the case with same-sex couples, and thus that promoting stability in opposite-sex relationships will help children more." (In other words, straight people need marriage more than we do because they can "become parents as a result of accident or impulse." Score one for the gag.)

I could go on, but you get the point.

Relying on stereotyping (always a bad thing to do), one would be tempted to think this kind of crap could only be written by some upstate, right-wing political hack with no experience with gay people.

Wrong again. The author grew up in Manhattan and attended Stanford and Columbia. He clerked for Constance Baker Motley, a colleague of Thurgood Marshall at the NAACP and a solidly progressive judge. And get this: He teaches Sunday school at a church that is one of the nation’s most "welcoming and affirming" of gay people, where gay people are part and parcel of everything that happens, including the Sunday school program.

So how did this happen? The same way our parents, brothers and sisters, co-workers and friends can breathlessly vote for homophobic candidates and even anti-marriage constitutional amendments. The same way so many "decent" people feel no compunction about loudly guffawing at a joke about gay people. (Remember the joke industry Brokeback Mountain created?)

The same way an elected official who’s been married for 30 years will look you in the eye, year after year, and say, "I’m behind you 100 percent but I need to be educated about this whole marriage issue."

Bottom line: So many people who should know better, don’t. They do not get us, our lives or our love. In sum, they do not view us as fully or equally human. It’s not all their fault, either. So many of us assume that because people know we’re gay, invite us over to dinner, thought Will & Grace was hysterical on our lawns or welcome our partners home for the holidays, that they are on our side and know what to do.

Wrong, yet again. The reality is that most of us have never had a serious conversation about our lives with straight people close to us. (Care in point: I’ve been out to my parents for 25 years but I didn’t ask them to actually do something — like write a legislator — until three years ago.) People are astonished to find that anti-gay discrimination is still legal in 33 states. They don’t believe you can be denied hospital visitation or control over the remains of someone you’ve been with for 50 years.

And equally important, they’re not going to stand up for us — at the polls, when they hear an ugly joke, or even when writing a legal opinion — unless we tell them why it’s essential and ask them to. Person to person, heart to heart. That needs to be our challenge and mission every day of the year.

As for the New York marriage opinion, the only good news is that the decision is so pathetic we won’t need to worry about thoughtful judges in other states relying on it — they’d be too embarrassed.

And that’s exactly the way the majority of the New York Court of Appeals should feel the rest of their lives.
The Rochester Pride Parade on July 8 was titled "Flower Power in the Flower City." Photo: Doug Meszler

The Tilt float. Photo: Ove Overmyer

Open Arms MCC won the Stonewall Award for most original unit expressing pride. Photo: Doug Meszler

Thomas Warfield was Grand Marshal in 2005. Photo: Doug Meszler

Pam Barres marched with Rainbow Seniors, who won the Show Stopper Award for best in parade. Photo: Susan Jordan

Jazelle, left, and Skitz are Miss and Mr. Youth Pride. They won their titles at the Youth Pageant on July 3, and rode in the Pride Parade. Photo: Susan Jordan
CELEBRATE: Michael Nicosia, Dignity-Integrity chaplain, hugs a friend at the Interfaith service before the GAGV Picnic in Genesee Valley Park on July 9. The service raised $278 for the GAGV Youth Group. The Picnic raised $20,000 in all for Gay Alliance programs and services. Around 2,400 people attended. The GAGV Youth Group sold temporary tattoos, and the Lambda Car Club displayed classic vehicles. Lambda Network from Kodak took digital portraits of picnic-goers (above right).

All photos this page: Doug Meszler.
July 6, 2006: A Turning Point for the LGBT Rights Movement

By Susan Jordan

On a scorching summer evening in Washington Square Park, people of all sexual orientations, genders, ethnicities and ages - ranging from the GAGV Youth Group's Radical Cheerleaders to the Raging Grannies - gathered to express feelings of anger and sadness at the denial of marriage rights to same sex couples by the New York State Court of Appeals.

Meanwhile, though, a sense of hope and resolution continually surfaced, as well as a new, fierce determination to pressure elected representatives in the New York State Legislature by withholding votes and support from those politicians, Republican or Democrat, who do not stand by the LGBT community on this issue.

Around 300 people attended the July 6 rally protesting the New York State Court of Appeals decision, which denies gay New Yorkers and their families any protection from injustice through the U.S. justice system; the case will not be able to be taken to the U.S. Supreme Court. The rally was organized by the Empire State Pride Agenda and the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, and emceed by Todd Plank, WNY Marriage Equality Organizer.

Many present felt a sense of being in a historic moment - July 6, 2006 - a negative moment, but a landmark and turning point for the LGBT rights movement in New York State. The statements which received the strongest, loudest audience responses still something about the mood of the crowd and of the LGBT community at that historic moment. These included:

"We may tear down the signs on our churches but they will never tear down our spirit." - Rev. Willie J. Seals Jr., Pride in the Pulpit

"They may conclude the rally to loud applause, a tape recorder switched on, and Aretha had the last word of the evening: "R.E.S.P.E.C.T.: Find out what it means to me!" - Margaret Saunders, GAGV Challenge Director

Sampling opinion at the July 6 Rally

By Wendy Jacobson

"It was a bad decision," said Assemblywoman Susan John in regard to the New York Court of Appeals decision that denied gays the right to marry in New York. She stated further, "Any time you exclude a group of people from the constitution, it's a bad choice.

Sarah Berger and Jenny Tucker "The decision was filled with talk about protecting children and families - the idea that our relationships are a threat to our children is highly offensive to me." - Suzanne Morgan, elementary school teacher, mother of Katie

"Tomorrow we will start a fierce battle in Albany, as the right would have done if the ruling had gone the other way. Go back to your elected officials on all levels who you have supported in the past... and tell them "Stand with us on this issue or we will not support you." - Bill Petitche, Rochester City Councilman

"The court turned the case back to the state legislature instead of doing what they're required to do: defend the minority against the tyranny of the majority." - Harry Bronson, Monroe County Legislature

"It's Take Your Daughter To Work Day. It would be nice for my daughter to have two legally-married parents... The Gay Alliance will go on working for you, in partnership with the Pride Agenda. We will use this decision to strengthen our resolve and move forward." - GAGV Executive Director Kris Hinesley, standing with his baby daughter Mia.

"Our loves and lives are like anybody else's and no court can take that away... I went outside and put up my Pride flag... I just became a single-issue voter. You (legislators) vote to protect my family and I will vote to give you a job." - Jennifer Gravitz, attorney, rabbi and Marriage Ambassador

"At first I was really sad...I wanted to just experience the sadness, and then I got angry at how unfairly we are treated in this country." - Sarah Berger

"I am pretty angry. I was saddened that the government doesn't want to recognize us. We are the future voters. Many of us are turning 18 this year. We're the ones who need to be persuaded to vote for them." - Jackie Balsamo, GAGV Youth Group Organizer

"I think marriage in general will help the kids who are being bullied (those who have same sex parents). They won't be considered a second-class family. They won't have the same rights as anyone else. They won't have to explain." - Desire Finnerty, GAGV Youth Group Organizer

"I think I would just like to remind people that even though a lot of people in the youth community are too young to think about marriage, we still think about it as an important social justice issue and more and more of our generation are more accepting. Most of my friends are accepting." - Courtney Michie, GAGV Youth Group Organizer

"I think the right to have a family is a basic human right. It's one that we must have here to protect our families. It's a really horrible feeling, that you're seen as a second-class citizen, when denied such a basic human right." - Margery Saunders, mother of 16-month-old Max and partner to Kris Hinesley, GAGV Director.
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**Men's Chorus Calls New Chorines To Join Family**

By John Owen

The month of August seems the least likely time to think of a musical concert to be performed in cold, snowy December. Yet that is precisely what choruses and choirs are doing this month, all across North America. We live six months in the future and the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus is no different.

The Voice of Pride in Rochester, the Gay Men's Chorus will begin rehearsals for its 26th season on Thursday, Sept. 7, at 6:30 p.m. at Downtown United Presby­terian Church, 121 North Fitzhugh St. Voice placements will be at 6:30 p.m. and singing begins at 7 p.m.

Just what does it mean to join the Voice of Pride? Obviously it means singing, and lots of it. We rehearse once a week for two hours plus, we will have an overnight rehearsal retreat, likely at the Zen Retreat Center outside of Batavia, N.Y. But it also means listening to rehearsal tapes to first learn and then commit to memory your particular part. And as the concert cycle moves forward, individual sections sched­ule a sectional rehearsal to work smooth­en out rough spots. So yes, there is a lot of singing!

Somewhat less obvious but of at least equal importance is the strong sense of making a real difference as a gay, bisexual, transgendered or interested person. Every time the Chorus performs in front of an audience, we give a human face and strong, powerful voice to all people in our community. And for each member of RGC, the sense of personal fulfillment, of being a whole, accepted, loved human being, is the best and cheapest therapy around.

Finally, by joining the Chorus you will discover a family of men who genuinely care about one another. They will know your name and you will know theirs. They will want to share with you your triumphs and yes, also those moments of sadness. You will not be solely looked upon in a patronizing beat manner but you will be accepted just as you are, for who and what you are. That is what a family does.

The Men of RGC are a wonderful family. Maybe you haven't sung since high school choir or you sing "only in the shower". Either way, give joining RGC some thought. Music Director Rick Will­iams will make you a better singer. The men of RGC will add to our family and help make you a better person. You will feel better about yourself and you will be a stronger member of the GLBT community. Hope to see you on Sept. 7.

**Judge Holds Decision On MCC Benefits Suit**

State Supreme Court Justice Harold L. Galloway has reserved judgement on a lawsuit brought by a Monroe Community College employee over extension of her health care benefits to her lesbian part­ner, whom she married legally in Canada in 2004.

Galloway said on July 13 that he would issue a written decision. Mat­ri­monial attorney Jeffrey Wicks asks that Gallow­ay affirm that New York recognizes the validity of marriages legally performed out of state.

Patricia Martinez, an MCC word­processing supervisor, sought to have her partner Lisa Ann Golden covered by her insurance in 2004. MCC refused the request because Martinez was a non-fac­ulty employee, and MCC's contract with the Civil Service Employees Association, which covers Martinez, did not call for domestic partners of employees to receive benefits — unlike the contract for teachers at MCC.

After Martinez sued MCC in Janu­ary of 2005, a new contract was drawn up extending benefits to same-sex employees' partners. The new contract took effect Jan. 1, 2006. Wicks claims that the July 6 Court of Appeals ver­dict saying that people have the right to marry in New York should not affect the state's obligation to provide same-sex valid marriages performed else­where.

**Lambda Network to Pilot KODAK Gallery Affiliates Program With GAGV**

The Gay Alliance and Lambda Net­work together will pilot the using the KODAK Gallery Affiliates program.

Images will be loaded onto a KODAK Gallery site. The GAGV will link to this site. Any traffic that comes from the GAGV will result in GAGV to earn commissions from Kodak.

This includes signing up as a new KODAK Gallery Affiliates buying something, sequentially and ultimately. If you are interested in details for your organization, contact Amy Friend, at amy.friend@kodak.com or at 585-724-6988.

**Court continued from page 1**

Solmonese continued, "This case raised the issue of fairness and equality perfectly. New York State has drawn a line in the sand for the real people fighting for their families. Thanks in large part to these couples and the hard work of the New York State Gay Agenda, now a majority of New Yorkers support marriage equality and we will continue to work with our allies in the state to make sure that the Legislature hears their voices loud and clear. As we move forward, we will continue to work with the State Gay Agenda and allies in the state to engage elected officials about why all Americans deserve the protections and responsibili­ties that only marriage provides.

"Every couple in a loving and commit­ted relationship should be able to obtain the same protections that only come with marriage," added Solmonese. "We know that the struggle for equality is never quick or easy but the history of America as that will continue to emerge. We hold to the right of marriage and that the struggle for equality is never clear. As we move forward, we will continue to work with the State Gay Agenda and allies in the state to engage elected officials about why all Americans deserve the protections and responsibili­ties that only marriage provides.

"Every couple in a loving and commit­ted relationship should be able to obtain the same protections that only come with marriage," added Solmonese. "We know that the struggle for equality is never quick or easy but the history of America as that will continue to emerge. We hold to the right of marriage and that the struggle for equality is never clear. As we move forward, we will continue to work with the State Gay Agenda and allies in the state to engage elected officials about why all Americans deserve the protections and responsibili­ties that only marriage provides.

Matt Foreman, Executive Director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said on July 6, "Today's historic and long­overdue landmark decision is a victory for gay and lesbian people and our families. It is an egregious departure from the New York Court of Appeals' long and proud tradi­tion of upholding liberty and eliminating discrimination. It is a victory to the constitu­tion and the people of New York."

The majority opinion offers utter­ly absurd reasons why legislation could choose to limit marriage to opposite sex couples. For example, it says the legisla­ture could find that unstable relationships between people of the opposite sex present a greater danger than relationships between people of the same sex. If this were true, the Supreme Court said in a previous case that "the interest in child­hood relationships will help children more." If the results of this decision were not so profoundly heart­ening, this kind of reach­ing — which permeates the entire opinion — would render it laughable.

"We bring the following arguments over the express interests of the children of lesbians and gay men. The governor vetted the law, but the legisla­ture did not remove the last remain­ing obstacle to full equality for lesbians and gay men."

California courts are unlikely to be swayed by the reasoning in today's deci­sion. New York's state Supreme Court is a long history of interpreting our constitutional law when the Legislature comes back into session in January, 2007. We will do everything we can to support our community's outstanding and leading advoca­te in Albany, the Empire State Pride Agenda, in this effort.

"Nothing in this result, however, takes away from the progress that has been made in New York and all the cases for their determination and courage in seeking this result on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of gay and lesbian New Yorkers. And we are equally and even more grateful to Lambda Legal and the many other groups with a decades-long, dedicated commitment to the cause of being an amicus curiae in the Court of Appeals proceedings."
**Housing Discrimination? Call Fair Housing Enforcement Project**

Have you experienced housing discrimination? When a landlord saw that you are gay, lesbian, bi or transgendered (and/or African American, Asian, disabled, etc.) did you hear, “The apartment was just rented?” Feel like you don’t have any options? You may be eligible for fair housing enforcement under local, state or federal laws. Call for an appointment or written information.

**For all issues connected with fair housing, call the Fair Housing Enforcement Project at 325-2500; TTY 325-2547; toll free: 1-866-671-FAIR.**

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Laurie Schulman
Associate Broker
Couples in Love
To the Editor:
Isn’t it funny that when I see a man and woman together it’s fine. I don’t feel the need to look away, beat them up, or even think about how unfair it is that they get all those tax breaks simply because their love is about a penis and a vagina (or at least that is what lawmakers would have us believe). I personally would hope their love is about a whole lot more.
Really though, I simply don’t give it a thought, I just see a couple and that is what my brain processes: Couple in love. I wonder why so many of them, when they see two men or two women together, that’s the only thing they think about: Body parts.

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Childcare & Sunday School for children are available.

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Making the Scene

THE RAGING GRANNIES performed at the Marriage Rally on July 6 in Washington Square Park. Photo: Susan Jordan

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?: Bonnie Reda is a member of the Open Arms MCC congregation. Photo: Susan Jordan

CAMERA MAN: International photojournalist Doug Meszler has an in-front-of-camera moment. Photo: Susan Jordan

EQUAL GROUNDS: John White (left) and Harry Bronson at the opening ceremony on July 8 for their new coffeehouse at 750 South Ave. NYS Assembly member Susan John cut the rainbow ribbon. SEAC Executive Director Helen Hogan and South Wedge Planning Committee Executive Director Dan Beyer were also present.

BILL & CATHY: Rochester City Council member Bill Pritchard with Cathy Mazotta at the Pride Parade on July 8. Photo: Ove Overmyer

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

STAYIN' ALIVE: The Community Business Forum gave Lifetime Achievement Awards to Joseph Granville Baker (not pictured) and Susan Jordan. Photo: Ove Overmyer

TAKE THE TROLLEY: The MOCHA Project won the Community Pride Award at the Parade. Above: volunteer Carlos Merriweather. Photo: Doug Meszler
SOUND BYTE: Sen. Hillary Clinton talks to the media at the Gay Pride March on June 23. (Did she mention her opposition to marriage equality? Just asking....)

FAMILY OUTING: Sean Patrick Maloney, openly gay candidate for NYS Attorney General, with his family at the June 25 March.

KEVIN AVIANCE IS BACK: The drag star, attacked by gay-bashers on June 10, appeared at the Pride Parade riding on a fake pachyderm (the HX Magazine float), in spite of the fact that his jaw was wired shut.

MANHATTAN PRIDE: Kim Catullo, NYC City Council Speaker Christine Quinn (Parade Grand Marshal) and Mayor Michael Bloomberg take part in the Manhattan Gay Pride March on June 25: "The Fight for Love & Life."
Save the Date

FRIDAY OCTOBER 20, 2006
7AM – 4PM

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KEYNOTE
- KEVIN JENNINGS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GLSEN, NYC
  The son of a Southern Baptist evangelist, the nephew of a Klan leader, and
  the first of over 40 first cousins to graduate from college, GLSEN
  (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network) founder Kevin Jennings has
  travelled an unusual road from a North Carolina trailer park to the halls of
  Harvard to his current position as the head of the nation’s leading education
  organization working to end anti-LGBT prejudice in schools. In American
  Dreams, he shares the story of the his family’s journey from the segregated
  South to a brave new world of inclusion and acceptance.

MORNING WORKSHOPS
- WORKPLACE AND THE NEW EMPLOYEE: NEW
  EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS OF THE WORKPLACE CULTURE
  A panel of area college students, HR professionals, recruiters and
  managers discussing new employee expectations for a safe and inclusive
  work environment.
- THE ABCs OF BEING AN ALLY
  Interactive discussion about being an Ally, the importance of allies and
  how partnering with other Employee Resource Groups within your
  company can help.
- COMING OUT: THE CONTINUUM FROM STUDENT TO CEO
  Workshop to discuss the benefits, risks and rewards for LGBT and
  straight allies to “Come Out”

LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON
Presentation of business and Media Awards
Keynote Address: Kevin Jennings: American Dreams

AFTERNOON CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS
- EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS: WE WANT YOU!
  Workshop to look at the benefits of being involved in an ERG as well as
  how to attract and retain members
- LGBT EDUCATION IN THE WORKPLACE
  A workshop presenting different educational programs used locally to
  educate about LGBT issues

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The Seen: Ambrosia Salad

By Michael Stocek

“The Seen” is a series of articles that are about the people we see in our GLBT community all the time. We may know them by name or we may know them by face but however we know them, our scene would not be the same without them. These articles are a tribute to those seen in our scene, in a small attempt to put the “unity” back into the word “community.” This month’s featured person is local drag diva legend Ambrosia Salad.

From lip-syncing to Shaun Cassidy in his bedroom to recently celebrating his sixth year hosting “The Sal Bar Revue” at Club Marcella in Rochester, Ambrosia Salad a.k.a. Chris Steckel has had the handkerchief for entertaining his whole life. “I am the Jan Brady of the family; a middle child with an older brother and younger sister,” said Steckel. “That’s why I turned to drag. I needed attention.”

Steckel has been performing for 12 years as Ambrosia Salad and made his stage debut at Club Marcella in the summer of 1994. Born in Bradford, Pa., a town known more for its firemen, he moved with his family to New York State when he was five. After graduating from Canandaigua Academy, Steckel went on to receive his Bachelor of Arts from SUNY Brockport in Art History. Going out in the Rochester gay scene sparked a hidden desire for all that glitters.

“I got drawn into drag by the performance aspect of it,” said Steckel. “I started playing the bassoon and saxophone in school. I knew I liked performing. Plus the shoes!”

Drag Queens are not only known for their shoes (usually eight-inch heels in Ambrosia’s case) but also can be notorious for loads of “drag drama.” Ambrosia, who tries to steer clear of that aspect of it, does have some backstage secrets to whisper about. “A half-dressed drag queen isn’t a pretty picture,” said Steckel. “Sometimes a fully dressed queen isn’t pretty either but that’s another story. Body hair and under garments are not a few of my favorite things.”

Empire State Roar

Coaches Stand Behind Their Pride

By Jessie Baubler

Shawn Stauber, Head Coach of the Empire State Roar women’s professional football team, has a tall order for Rochester’s WPFL gridders to fill in 2006. The Roar needs to win all eight games of their first non-exhibition season in the Women’s Professional Football League, and Stauber holds every belief that they will do just that.

Stauber also wants the team to be treated as legitimately as other Rochester teams are, if not no other reason than the fact that team owner, Sandra Rogers, as well as coaches and players, have worked plenty hard enough to have earned respect.

Despite their late evenings and humid weekends sacrificed for wind sprints, pushups and tackling practice, the players know that the past is rare from the outside world. While a winning record would bring any team’s team automatic legitimacy, even an 8-0 record in October isn’t an automatic ticket to gaining respect for women’s football. Not does a winning record prove the Roar with a filled grandstand, lucrative player contracts, apparel deals, or national media attention; but the season continues, with the Roar hosting the Connecticut Coyotes on Saturday, Aug. 5, at East Rochester High School, with a 7:05 p.m. kickoff.

Women’s pro football is still largely unknown to its potential Rochester fan base, but Coach Stauber hopes that will change this year. Being an auto racing fan, Stauber compares the Roar’s quest for respect to that of racing’s hottest ticket, Indy racer Danica Patrick. When Stauber was watching Glenn in June, he said that “so many people showed up at the Glen strictly to watch Danica and not just because she’s a novelty. I see a strong correlation,” he said, “to the Roar team. Spectators showed up, he noted, “because she’s a legitimate racer. The men don’t hesitate on knocking her out of the race—because they saw she could beat them. Stauber has no doubt that the Roar has a lot to offer as a quality product in Rochester’s already crowded sports market. “We have the perfect product. Most people who have doubts and who come to see us (are) walk away in amazement—then they ask me when the next game is. People flock to come to see it. I see a lot of mothers who bring their daughters,” he has recalled from last season’s Roar games.

Defensive Coach Chris Weinbeck also stands solidly behind a viable product of the Empire State Roar team: “It’s a lot better product on the shelf than the [former] XFL. The Xtreme Football League of 2001 had the marketing, but not the football.” Weinbeck points out. “There was a lot of huffing, but no ring or sting. "What separates upper level pro sports from the rest is its competitive nature," Weinbeck says, a quality he feels is plentiful on the Roar team.

Stauber adds, "Off the field, a lot of [the players] are really laid back, but once on the field, it’s all-out combat." Besides stepping up to the competition, team members make numerous sacrifices off the field. Coach Stauber notes, “Most people don’t realize, these players have to punch a clock, come Monday, go back to work, some working two jobs.” While players and staff gather the salary only of satisfaction only, many of the women drive several hours—from Oswego, Buffalo, even Toronto—to practice, play and attend promotional events.

Talent on this year’s team is evident with the return of the Roar’s five
All home games will be at East Rochester High School, 222 Woodbine Ave., in East Rochester. Kickoff time is always at 7:05 p.m. III

**Empire State Roar hosts special guest at home game on Aug. 12**

The Empire State Roar is pleased to welcome actor-writer-producer-speak­er Randolph Mantooth to their home game on Aug. 12 at East Rochester High School.

Mr. Mantooth will toss the coin around 6:35 p.m. and the official start of the game is at 7:05 p.m. The Roar are playing the New England Intensity, from Massachusetts. The Intensity are a former WPFL team and just recently joined the IWFL (Women’s Professional Football League).

The Roar’s first official home game of the season is Aug. 5 vs. the Connecticut Cyclones, game time 7:05 p.m. at East Rochester High School.

Mr. Mantooth played firefighter/paramedic Johnny Gage on TV’s “Emergency.” The Roar will be donating half the ticket sales from the game to the Homocy­ne Falls Fire Department. The fire department will be on hand demon­strating their equipment and raffling about fire safety. Mr. Mantooth will be signing autographs before the game and doing the coin toss at the game.

The Roar are also hosting Mr. Man­tooth for a Chicken Barbecue at the Homocy­ne Falls Training Ground on Sun­day, Aug. 13 from noon to 6 p.m. All proceeds from ticket sales benefit the Homocy­ne Falls Fire Department. Mr. Man­tooth will be signing autographs at the barbecue. Photos and posters pro­vided by Third Alarm Fire Shop will be available for purchase.

For information, game tickets and barbecue ticket purchases, visit www. theempirestateroar.com and http://home. rochester.rr.com/tfhlfd.

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**Miss Gay continued from page 1**

hosting the evening that also features performances by the Honorary Repre­sentative Samantha Saly, Miss Mothers ’06, Marissa Saly, and special guest per­former Lorena Vazza from Puerto Rico.

The pageant is open to all NYS res­i­dents of 18 years or older. Categories are Egyptian Wealth, Clubwear, Evening Gown, Talent. There is no entrance fee and registration is from 7 p.m.-8 p.m. The show will begin at 8 p.m. Cover is $20 for general and $35 for under 21. No video or photography is allowed during the pageant.

For more information, contact orga­nizers through the pageant website: Miss­gaynortheastentertainer.com. III

**Geva holds acting, singing auditions**

Attention actors and singers! Geva Theatre Center will be holding general auditions for both acting and singing this month. The singing auditions will take place on Monday, Aug. 29 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. and the acting auditions will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 30 and Wednes­day, Aug. 31 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Requirements for the acting auditions include a headshot, resume, and two con­trasting monologues, not to exceed four minutes total combined length. For the singing audition, a headshot, resume, 16 bars of music and sheet music in the cor­rect key are all required. There will be an accompanist on site.

All auditions will take place at Geva Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Boule­vard. To make an appointment, call 232-1566, ext. 3052.

Those who were at the 2005 acting auditions cannot repeat an acting audi­tion at this time; however, they are still eligible for a singing audition.

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**ImageOut continued from page 1**

and occasionally campy depiction of the seedier side of life, and the tone is a per­fect match for the story.

Sexy, hilarious, touching, and featur­ing a phenomenal lead performance by Cervera, 20 Centimeters is the winner of a Showcase Award in the category of Best Feature Film at the Inside Out Toronto Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, the Youth Jury Award at the Locarno International Film Festival, and three prizes at the Malaga Spanish Film Festival, including the Critics Award. It was also a featured selection at NewFest New York LGBT Film Festival and OutFest Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, among others.

20 Centimeters is presented as part of the Snapshot Film Series, a partnership between ImageOut and the Dryden The­atre. For more information, visit www. imageout.org. III

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**Western NY's Only Women's Professional Football Team**

is presented as part of the 20th anniversary of the Empire State Roar.

---

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are you an HIV-POSITIVE MAN in love with an HIV-POSITIVE MAN??

Come and join a SAFE & CONFIDENTIAL space with other guys in relationships like yours.

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---

**Opposites attract**

---
wandered through her yard in the sun. She said she was a consolation of sorts. And we both believed that she might live for a little longer. Yet, as I spoke with her, I noticed how fragile and failing she was in the hospital. She was in the hospital since her husband’s death had seen our relationship prosper. We spent more time together. We talked about our family and how we had both possessed frugality, prudence, and tenacity of HIV/AIDS.

Later to recovery, therapy and meditation. It was either all this or all that. People could come in for a few hours to keep her company. It was like we were in a ritual leave-taking. A slow goodbye. I’d helped her choose her path. We watched them die because we have still not been able to fight this epidemic as women of African descent.

Consequently, because African-American women’s humanity is distorted and made invisible through a prism of racist and sexist stereotypes, so too is our suffering.

Growing up
DEAD END

By Eric Bahnkan

My sister died May 15, 2004. When it came, it was unexpected, a heart attack was not a specter I should have been prepared for. Already her health was fragile and failing. She was in the hospital for a procedure that couldn’t be considered trivial. Her death was her wish. She declined further treatment. She was tired, at peace. Her closest friend was at her side.

Still I was stunned. The last two years since her husband’s death had seen our relationship prosper. We spent more time together. We talked about our family and how we had both possessed frugality, prudence, and tenacity of HIV/AIDS. We talked about the future. Clearly she knew her time was coming. I planned a wedding trip early in June. It was our intention to look at places nearby where she might live. Yet, as I spoke with her on my cell phone while my sister recovered from surgery, I declared that I thought it was time to help. I wouldn’t want to keep her in her own house. She could still watch her bird feeders and the deer that wandered through her yard in climbing. Someone could be found who could come in for a few hours to keep her company, sit with her, think. It’s either all this or all that.

Tucked within my mournings was an awareness of the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance who wore and continue to wear the rainbow flag. I mean, just look at the Batcave; it’s an equal opportunity virus. There was something wrong, but there was also something right. There was something wrong, but there was also something right.

On May 15, 2004, I decided that the five days I would stay in her empty house would be a kind of ritual leave-taking. A slow goodbye. I’d feed the birds, water the plants, make coffee, sit in her chair.

No one called. No one came to visit or invited me for coffee. The half-dozens photographs I had accumulated and kept alongside, pictures of her as a young woman, pictures of us, together were relegated to a window ledge near the church’s front door. Slowly it dawned on me that she had passed. I was in her absence; her passing, I was in her absence; her passing.

One day, I am a crumb of the absence of the woman I knew. But the disparities within the health care system also contribute to the disproportionately higher number of HIV cases among African-American men. The Health Care system. The Health Care system.

The Black Church continues to play a role in the epidemic because people with AIDS are as unwelcome in the Black Church as gay people.

Growing up, I lived in South Boston, Belynda Dunn, died of AIDS in March 2002 at the age of 49. As a tireless AIDS advocate. I mean, just look at the Batcave; it’s an equal opportunity virus.

In African-American communities across this country, the disease still shows no sign of abating. These women have hidden and still hide from the community and each other. And with the community’s harsh judgment against women with HIV/AIDS. African-American communities are less likely than any other group to seek help.

The silence African-American women must access their beliefs, attitudes and their relationships with each other, only with secrecy that African-American women have not adequately come up with.

Besides, I love a man in uniform: be it cap or cape or utility belt. I love to imagine what it must be like to escape into those exciting adventures in exotic locales, like Superman’s Fortress of Solitude or the Fantastic Four’s Negative Zone or Aquaman’s underwater kingdom of Atlantis. Heck, I don’t get out much, so even Clark Kent’s hometown of Smallville looks pretty exotic to me!

A Few Bricks Short
SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS!

By David Hall

When my sister was young, (and by younger, I mean last month), her favorite comic book was Superman. My sister was my favorite time to relax, sit in the shade and read superhero comic books. Oh, to escape into those exciting adventures in exotic locales, like Superman’s Fortress of Solitude or the Fantastic Four’s Negative Zone or Aquaman’s underwater kingdom of Atlantis. Heck, I don’t get out much, so even Clark Kent’s hometown of Smallville looks pretty exotic to me!

The invisibility of the plight of African-American women and their struggle against the AIDS epidemic was never as glaringly obvious as it was in the 2004 vice presidential debate between Dick Cheney and John Edwards.

And the invisibility of my group’s plight has less to do with African-American women’s agency to combat the epidemic than with a distinct lack of tenacity from both African-American and white communities.

Gwen Ifill, an African-American journalist with PBS’s “Washington Week,” and moderator of the vice presidential debate, brought the issue of African-American women and their AIDS epidemic to the forefront by asking the men to comment on its devastating impact on African-American women.

“I want to talk to you about AIDS, and not about AIDS in China or Africa, but AIDS right here, right now. African American women between the ages of 25 and 44 are 13 times more likely to die of AIDS because of their countrymen. What should the government’s role be in helping to end the growth of this epidemic?”

Both men could not answer the question.

When the color of the epidemiological shift from white to black, the inherent gender bias focused only on the needs of African-American men and rendered women invisible.

And when gender became a lens to track the epidemicwelcome we gave it. The invisibility of African-American women in this epidemic has forced us to do with the absence of the gendered race analysis makes African-American womeninvisible to the larger society.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonprofit health organization, African-American women account for 72 percent of all new HIV cases in women, and they are 23 times more likely to be infected with the virus than white women. Again, in life, that people dislike you for who you are.

It’s certainly not the first time I’ve assessed a situation and figured out what was going on. It’s happened in workshop environments and in social situations, especially when I was young, when I naively believed I could be part of a general community, like in high school, even during high school. It took me a long time to understand that the disconnect I felt was not a crisis inside me.

People do not live in rural Georgia for nothing.

Two weeks after all that, back home now, I confided my mystery secret in a support group I’m fond of. To my surprise, half a dozen photographers, straight and rather conventions I’d evaded me not only for my loss, but also testifying to the human feeling they had all known, of not caring, of not caring.

We do not live in rural Georgia for nothing.

Email: ELBCAD@RITEDU
dark, it’s dark, it’s totally lacking in color. No queer superheroes would ever hang out there.

I’ve spent hours reading through those comics looking for the one time when Batman would solve a crime and the Boy Wonder would squeal: “Fabulous!” It never happened.

And when the Dynamic Duo return from a late evening of crime fighting and Alfred the butler serves them coffee, they have never once asked for a decaf latte.

If Batman and Robin are gay, then so are the Lone Ranger and Tonto, Star-tsky and Hutch and Sherlock Holmes and Watson. And again, after extensive research, I can say that they’re all just a bunch of straight guys.

So, I suggest a new team. A team fit for a queen. A team of real heroes.

And the team will be called S.W.I.S.H.

Yes, I said, S.W.I.S.H.

S.W.I.S.H. stands for Society of Wonderfully Intriguing Super Heroes. They’ll have stylish costumes, great hair and zero tolerance for homophobia.

Here’s the line-up I have so far:

Leather Man: He dresses like the motorcycle guy in the Village People and he’s the leader, or Master, of the team.

The Dynamic Decorator: He swoops down into villain’s homes and redecorates while they are away. When the villain returns to his house, he’s completely dis-oriented and easily thwarted.

Captain Vigil: Careful, Captain! You could take out an eye with that thing! And don’t be a doze’n if it lasts for more than four hours.

The Flamboyant Florist: He creatively dis-tracts the bad guy with fresh flowers or arrangements. He knows that Marsha says we should not be afraid to combine colors and textures to increase the overall stunning visual effect.

Terrific Tan Man: The harsh, eerie glow from his year-round artificial tan temporarily blinds attacking evildoers.

Super Songster: He stops villains by singing. I’m not really sure what his boots and no shirt is. So they are detestable to you.

Caribou: Has no scales and is bottom fed. So they are detestable. Shrimp, lobster, crawfish, crabs, lobsters... any living in the water that does not have fins and scales is detestable to you.

Caribou, fish have no scales and are thus detestable. But trees are not detestable beneath these verses are clams, crabs, lobsters, squid, sharks, swallows, ed., and sturgeon.

Why does God hate shrimp and catfish? It is because Leviticus 11:9-12 says, “Of all the creatures living in the sea and the seas, you may eat any that have fins and scales. But all creatures in the sea or on land that do not have fins and scales -- whether among all the swimming things or among all the other living creatures in the water -- you are to detest. And since you are to detest them, you must not eat their meat and you must detest their carcasses. Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is detestable to you.”

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Why does God hate potato? It is because Leviticus 11:4-8 says, “There are some that only chew the cud or only have a split hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. The coney, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. And the pig, though it has a split hoof, does not divide the hoof; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses. Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is detestable to you.

Pigs and hogs do not have a split hoof and do not chew cud; they are detestable to you.

So, if the “God Hates” protests at the next Pride Parade should care to engage in conversation, you might want to ask them why they are detestable. (God according to them) only recognize Leviticus 18:22 and its famous, or is it infamous, prohibition: “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; it is detestable.”

If the rest of the cited provisions of Leviticus have no meaning in contemporary society (and indeed many Jews do not find Leviticus’ dietary laws any more meaningful than why does Leviticus 18:22? This discussion ignores the many fine essays on Leviticus that are available at this site, which are too involved to repeat here.

Suffice it to say that there are many loving, accepting, and welcoming congregations, both Jewish and Christian, in the Rochester area which fully accept gays and lesbians into their religious families. These are members of the Interfaith Alliance. Don’t give up on relig­ion because of the bigots.

Embrace the spirituality which we all have, and are, growing up knowing. Look up a welcoming congregation near you on the Interfaith Alliance website. http://www.interfaithalliance-govy.org/events.htm

In A Family Way

On the Road Again

By Arlene Istar Lev

I’ve returned from three months of travel, my third time presenting on LGBT issues at conferences, and some of it vacationing in the lovely places where I was invited to present.

One nice side effect of becoming a frequent flyer is the virtual desensitization of my terror of airplanes. Other than a small lingering sense that it is simply illogical to be in a heavy metal aircraft soaring thou­sands of feet above the earth, I am mostly relaxed enough to sleep or read the entire trip.

One which I sort of enjoy is that I have a perpetual sense of jet lag that is vaguely reminiscent of having a colicky newborn.

My trips took me to Massachusetts (3x), Philadelphia, Phoenix, Topoeka (as in Kansas), San Francisco, and London (as in England). In between travel I would land for a few days of home and my “day job” – which for me meant seeing clients and teaching adult students – and then I’d be on the road again. The impact on my family: 1) I have barely seen my kids, and when I do see them I am busy struggling to keep my eyes open; and 2) I’m not sure what the next decade of my life will be like, now that I have given up to give children the consequences when you can’t stop laughing.

As the weeks quickly pass, for the last of this three month travel­ling period, my partner and I spent time vacationing in Key West for our 10 year­anniversary. Celebrating is not a simple thing for parents. Of course, the week we were in Key West was also the first week of summer vacation, when school closed and before any of the camps had begun. Of course, the day I was invited to keynote a conference in London was the same day as my younger son’s graduation from elementary school. I missed my older son’s flute recital, and my younger son’s first gymnastic routine – the invitation to keynote at the conference in New York State, my son­s family vacation depended on a complex and often stressful commitment to solid, professional medical information.

One woman introduced herself to me after the presentation on the morning pickup and drop-off. A relaxed vacation depended on a complex and often stressful commitment to solid, professional medical information. Fortunately, with the help of friends – on both sides of the pond – we were able to arrange a family reunion.

I’m not sure what the next decade of parenting will bring, but for the rest of my life I will be gardening. With a garden watering both the cucumbers and the children, watching them grow bigger and juicier, under the watchful eyes of a loving, caring, accepting and welcoming mother-in-law as you look on.

Please are our families thriving: from trans* parents to pick ups, drops offs, medical information, and educational events.

By Arlene Istar Lev

Arlene Istar Lev is a therapist and is an author of The Complete Lesbian and Gay Parenting Book.
The document was issued in order to detail discharge policies for service members with a diagnosis of mental health disorder. But in a section on "defects," the document lists homosexuality alongside reasons for discharge such as mental retardation and personality disorder.

It is particularly troublesome since it is legally recognized by the mental health profession as a mental illness, and homosexuality is not, in fact, a mental disorder. Indeed, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) has removed homosexuality off its list of mental disorders more than 30 years ago, in 1973.

However, the current mental health professional organization has followed suit. Today, it is widely recognized by mental health professionals that being gay or lesbian is not a mental disorder.

Moreover, the American Psychiatric Association's board, headed by James H. Scully Jr., sent a protest letter to the Department of Defense's top doctor in early June, denouncing the listing of homosexuality as a mental disorder.

"Based on scientific and medical evidence, the APA declined homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1973, and changed the majority of mental health professional organizations that being gay or lesbian is not a mental disorder.

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Let us know what we’re doing right – let us know what we can do better!

GO TO WWW.GAYALLIANCE.ORG

The GAGV
Anti-Violence Project

The GAGV’s Anti-Violence Project is dedicated to reducing violence within and against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in the greater Rochester area.

Our services include:
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vote (against) rather than the five percent that would win the race.

This decision is weighed regardless of how the candidate personally feels about the issue. What is so impressive about Eliot Spitzer's position concerning marriage equality is that he throws this caution to the wind. He knows that marriage equality is the just the right thing to do, and people respect that. Other candidates can't gauge their potential success or failure if they continue to send mixed messages, like Senator Hillary Clinton is presently doing this summer. She'll probably change her stance when the "tipping point" gets near, if she doesn't run for president and keeps her Senate seat. Statistical data and polling evidence provide the impetus to measure public opinion and convince the candidates and strategists alike that eventually they have to jump on the bandwagon if they want a political victory. This is why it's so important that you call your representatives now.

Let's keep our momentum moving in the right direction. Upcoming issues of the Empty Closet will feature interviews with candidates and help you assess the political playing field for this year's election cycle. Simply put, we must elect gay and gay friendly candidates on overall performance and voting records to have a more meaningful impact in shaping our government.

When I look at the big picture, I can't help asking myself this simple little question: Will the recent Appellate Court decision make me a single-issue voter? Well, I don't think so. However, this debate has slowly been eating away at my soul. When state and federal laws openly discriminate against LGBT people, it begins to weigh some of the other major issues we collectively face as a nation. Civic rights and responsibilities are primary to our personal and social well-being. How can we continue to ignore these truths? Organizations like the Human Rights Campaign and Empire State Pride Agenda would like to make marriage equality the "new abortion debate" in America, and rightly so.

We still face formidable obstacles in our pursuit of what's fair and equal. When it comes time for me to vote in this year's Democratic primary in September, I really have to ask myself the tough questions about homeland security, labor issues, educating our children, the economy and the distribution of state and federal funds with respect to our candidates priorities. When push comes to shove, who will I choose to get in bed with if I think that the candidates don't respect civil rights for all Americans?

I really can't answer that right now. I'm still doubting over being kicked out of the grin by the Appellate Court in early July. But I can tell you this. Local, state and congressional Democratic candidates better have their ducks in a row by Election Day, or they just might get blown out of the water. I have a feeling that this November could be the biggest single-issue voting election season facing candidates and voters since the socially turbulent days of the 60's and 70's. As ring announcer Michael Buffer would say, "Let's get ready to rumble."

Queer & Healthy

ONE A DAY... BUT NOT DONE AWAY

By Erik Libey

As we write this column, the United States Food & Drug Administration has just made one of the most groundbreaking announcements in the history of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

For the first time in slightly over 25 years, the FDA has given its approval to the wide release of the first ever anti-HIV medication that can be taken as a single pill in just one dose per day.

For years, while doctors have been able to offer treatments for those infected with HIV, those treatments have proved challenging for many patients. Early regimens required large numbers of pills taken at very specific intervals and on schedules that were to say the least, daunting. Being able to keep up with your HIV meds often felt like a full time job in itself... and not being able to keep up with your regimen often spelled disaster. Missed doses and drop-outs could lead to HIV drug resistance which in turn could lead to serious impacts down the road, including elevated HIV viral loads, quicker progression to AIDS diagnosis and, for some, serious illness or even death.

This newly approved pill, called Atripla, is the fulfillment of literally decades of research in the field of HIV treatment. The pill, which is a nearly unprecedented collaboration between two separate major pharmaceutical companies, combines three of the most commonly used drugs that are already available on the market for eliminating the need to take three separate medications and providing the ease of a single pill.

The hope of researchers, manufacturer's and physicians is that this new formula will make it easier physically and mentally for patients to start and adhere to this new HIV treatment regimen... which will, in turn, hopefully lead to increased health and longevity in the lives of people living with HIV and AIDS.

This news is truly remarkable in the world of HIV treatments, including this newly approved pill, often carry with them serious and unpleasant side effects for their users. The facts remains that HIV meds are expensive (a month's supply of Atripla will cost approximately $1200). The facts remain that while we can certainly celebrate the advances in medicine that have helped preserve our community's health, we must also be ever mindful that prevention is always better than treatment.

Working together to protect the health of ourselves and our communities... be out, be proud, and be healthy!

Erik Libey is the Gay Health Coordinator at AIDS Rochester, Inc. and can be reached at 442-2220 or by email at elibey@aidsrochester.org. An archive of his previous articles, as well as other gay health information, can be found at www.aidsrochester.org/gayhealth.
Soul & Inspiration

By Dr. Debra Stenal

It is through the lives of the people who follow my column that I come to know my church in Rochester called Tawa Pano Indian Church. While the church is slowly growing, I try very hard to make myself known as a representative for the Women and Gender Studies Program. As pastor and as professor, I so often find myself talking to the stories of those who are broken.

Most of us don't like to really reflect on the fact that others often feel the pain of being broken as a bad thing, at least that seems to be what society has led us to believe. Maybe, just maybe, I have come to think about brokenness in a new light.

Sometimes people seem to think they are alone in their brokenness, but there have been always people who have suffered with them who experienced brokenness. In fact, most of those who were in positions of leadership in Biblical times were people who had experienced brokenness. Paul talks about the thorn in his flesh. Mark struggles on his faith journey. Moses lacked confidence in his ability to speak on behalf of his people. And Jesus himself was broken in his ability to speak on behalf of his people.

What one begins to notice as they look at the brokenness in the lives of each of these people is that each person's story is unique. All of this is true for your years and yours is. Sometimes we try to compare and contrast suffering. That is a bit like comparing apples and oranges. This is not what Paul, Moses, and Jesus did. They saw it as a blessing and its consequences, the pain in their lives.

When I first met her when I was volunteering to work with people who had profound developmental disabilities. People were evenly distributed in parallel hills. The zucchini and cucumber plants were planted flowers ... the five o'clocks along my marigolds along her five foot long white picket fence. During the subsequent divorce war, my mother, in a gender specific way, back talking to God about my future for the freezer and their families. I was trying to earn enough points to win a gay paper advertising. Without my Grandmother, Alice, back in Rogers... I drove directly to my new home. Spade and fingers yearned for soil. I lamented my brokenness and befriend it. I was trying to earn enough points to win... I'm a big girl. think I can handle... I was trying to earn enough points to win... I was going to snap-off tender lettuce leaves, to gently pickled and canned her purple beets and her prickle-skinned cucumbers. During the day, I was... I have scattered angels, baskets, railroad spikes, drift wood, tree roots, my lawn menagerie, clay pots. The silver bells and cockleshells are back ordered.

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?" I can still hear Mommy reciting this to me. Nappy rhyme Mary replied "With silver bells and cockleshells, and little maids all in their Sunday best."

My Other self. I have experienced brokenness. I have had a gay paper advertising... I'm a big girl. I thought I'd stop being a twenty-something-year old gay boy in a big city, in an open and honest way, it was either all or nothing. If I was going to OK exposing the quirks that make me to the general public, I needed all the quirks. I knew exactly who to start with. I picked up the phone and called my Gay Alliance of Rochester, New York City, who, until this point, I had spoken to only a handful of times and let it go on in over a decade. "Hey Grandma, It's Rob." "Well, hey there kids," she replied. "What are you doing today?" "Well, I thought it'd be stopping a stranger and call you so. That's when one of the papers out here... and um..." I thought about ... "That's all you talked about." "Well, I still haven't written a book yet, but I've started writing a column for one of the papers out here... well, it's a gay paper and it's called 'The Empty Closet and it focuses on the gay community out here. It's the only gay paper that's a member of the gay community, so why not?"

"Sure."

"Other." "Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?" "How does your garden grow?" "Quite contrary. Mary, quite contrary. My adult-person garden... I thought I'd stop being a stranger to your life."

"Sure."

"When the crops were ready, I was sent to snap-off tender lettuce leaves, to gently cockleshells, and little maidens..." "Well, it's about damn time you started doing something with your write... I have some cool news. Recently I always said when I was little I would write a book one day. Of all you talked about." "Let's all you talked about."
She in turn would show it to the rest of the family and her neighbors. Every Sunday we would telephone and she would always make an effort to point out something she has read in the paper. During this time, I managed to cart myself down to Missouri for a long overdue visit (which I wrote about in my November 2 column.) I was touched to see that sitting beside her easy chair was the stack of the papers. She said she saved every one. Of course, after spending a week with her, I didn’t want to leave. I’ve never been big on goodbyes. But my Grandma had a special way of making me feel better. “This isn’t goodbye. This is I’ll see ya later. Besides, you can get home and write about your visit.”

Which of course, I did. Then in late March, I received the news that my Grandma was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The doctors explained, were hopeful that aggressive treatment would take care of this situation. Everyone was pretty confident.

“Don’t you worry about me,” she offered. “I’m gonna be fine. I gotta lot more tidbin’ and holletin’ to do to check out now,” she would reassure me. “But I do need you to do me a huge favor.”

“Anything?” I answered.

“I need you to find me some hair. I know you can handle that.”

Of course we both burst out laughing over that. My family is fully aware of my preoccupation with all things hair. As it turns out, though, I would never get the chance to follow through on that favor. It became obviously quickly that the situation was a lot worse than anyone had anticipated. Then came the call that she was being sent to the hospital. My Grandma wanted to make right arrangements. I couldn’t get a grip on just how quick the situation had declined. I sat at her empty kitchen table and cried like I haven’t cried since I was a child. I called telling my Mom I couldn’t do this. I was ready to let my Grandma go. I just got her back in my life. I wanted more time.

It was pretty clear that this trip back to Missouri would not be a good one for me emotionally. I decided to remain in Rochester and look after my parents’ house. That may sound bizarre to some. For me, it was the right thing for me to do at the time. I just couldn’t handle the idea of going back there to watch my Grandmother die.

It didn’t happen, however, need to do one important thing. Almost exactly like I had done a year prior, I took a deep breath and picked up the phone. I called my Grandmother’s hospital room. Thankfully, though medicated, she was perfectly coherent and was able to talk on the phone.

“Hey Grandma. It’s Reb.”

“Well, hell there kiddo,” she replied. “Whatcha doin’?”

“I just wanted to call, you know... I don’t think I’m gonna be able to make it back this time,” I started, my voice beginning to crack. “But I want you to know that I love you very much and I’m sorry I waited so long to get back in touch with you and hope it doesn’t hurt your feelings that I’m not...”, I had to cover my mouth at this point because I was choking back my tears.

She listened to me, she began.

“Don’t you feel bad for what happened yesterday and I promise I’ll try not to feel bad for being around for you tomorrow. We’re with each other in spirit, Deal?”

“Deal,” I answered.

“I’m happy we had the time we did. I sure did get a kick out of reading your stories. Maybe when you’re ready you’ll write about me again.”

“I promise.”

“I love you,” she continued. “I’m going to be just fine where I’m going, so don’t be sad. Remember what I told you when you were down here visiting? This isn’t goodbye, it’s I’ll see you later, OK?”

Those were the last words my Grandma said to me. She died the next afternoon. The moral of this story is simple: if there is someone in your life that you have been meaning to reconnect with, stop whatever the hell you’re doing and do it right now. Don’t waste another moment. Nothing is worth putting it off.

I try not to regret the tears I didn’t appreciate and spend with my Grandmother, and per her wishes, try to focus and think fondly of the time we did have instead. She was my biggest supporter and my brightest inspiration. I miss her everyday. Especially on Sundays. But I know that somewhere out there, Alice Smith is still paying attention and keeping tabs on a certain Serial Blonde. And for that I am truly grateful.

Robby wants to hear from you! Contact at serialblonde@herfag.com!

(Ambrosia from page 1)

As with any aspect of life, the Rochester gay scene is in constant flux, ever so slightly changing as the years prance by. Steckel has spent more than a decade immersed within the club scene and has noticed a different kind of divide. In the city’s GLBT nightlife.

“The biggest difference is that everyone is so young now, just kiddin’,” Steckel said. “I feel people don’t go out like they used to. I blame the Internet for that. Damn chat sites! Whatever happened to meeting someone face to face and then sleep with them? Now it’s all thumbtacks and Photoshop.”

Being a highly visible entertainer in the GLBT community can have its ups and downs but Steckel has no regrets when it comes to his decision to pursue his drag career.

“Drag has affected my life in many ways,” said Steckel. “It’s brought a lot of attention to me and allowed me to meet people and go places I wouldn’t have had the opportunity, had it not been for the drag. On the negative side, I think some people don’t take me seriously. You’re considered just that drag queen.”

Definitely more than just that drag queen, the fabulous Ambrosia Salad can be seen every Friday for her “Salad Bar Revue” at Mother’s Bar, 40 South Union St., Rochester, with shows at 11:30 p.m. and 2 a.m. and Ambrosia also appears weekly in the “GAY means happy SHOW!” every Tuesday at 9:30 p.m. and Friday at 10:30 p.m. on Rochester’s public access channel 15. For more of the scoop on Ambrosia, go to www.myspace.com/missambrosiaisland.

Every Now and Then: Ten questions for Ambrosia Salad

Influences: ABBA, Donna Summer, KISS.


Favorite Curse Word: Ta-Da! Most Praised Possession: My smile.

President “Drug” Moment: Winning Miss Rochester.

Most Embarrassing “Drag Moment”: Too many! Losing wigs, falling down, those moments on stage.

What would you say to your childhood nemesis today? No, I won’t pee in front of you.

If you could go back in time, what would you tell your younger self? It is really about confidence -- and study for your SAT.

What celebrity would you want to hook up with and would you watch the sex tape to get out? I just saw “Superman,” so I’m going to say Brandon Routh, too shocking for his own good. We could make a tape and I wouldn’t want it to get out. It’s all about the love, I'll say goodbye later.
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Youth Update: LOUD & PROUD AT PRIDE

By Toby Greenfield, Youth Services Director

The Youth Program is just coming out of a truly wild summer at Rochester. In my fourth summer as Youth Director, this has been our most active and successful Pride yet. Our youth turned out in great numbers to all the events, and were especially loud and proud at the Pride Parade.

The two winners of our annual Mr. and Miss Gay Youth Pageant rode in our youth convertible leading an incredibly large contingency of youth at the Parade. Congratulations to Skirt and Jazzy — the newly crowned King and Queen! (See a photo of the winners, see page A10.)

Over 100 youth attended the Pride Stage this year, making it our biggest pageant yet. A big thank you to Eric Lively for being the hilarious emcee that he always is, to Carlos and Brian of Mother's for always so generously hosting our dancers, and also to Barbara Turner, Samantha Vega, and Ram Bester for taking on the difficult task of being judges in a very close competition. The performers this year were all amazing, as was the audience of youth — who showed so much pride and class by cheering and supporting EVERY single performer.

Finally, to cap off our Pride events, we enjoyed our annual trip to Gay Day at Darien Lake on July 24. The summer just wouldn't be complete without 50 teenagers and me spending an entire day at Darien Lake... This month will give us a little breath, and then we'll start gearing up for school in the fall. Our hope this coming school year is to really expand the outreach of our Youth Program, which includes doing more work helping schools overcome obstacles in establishing GLAs (Gay Straight Alliances). I'm also looking for volunteers who are willing to teach some new specialties in the fall. Contact me if you have a specific skill or talent that you think the youth would be interested in! Call 244-8640 ext 13. III

Anti-Violence Project: HATE ACTIVITY SPIKES IN ROCHESTER

By Alexandra Cohn, Anti-Violence Coordinator

By the time you read this article, you will undoubtedly have heard or read about the recent spike in hate activity over the summer in Rochester. Well, it may not be referred to as a "spike" by other folks, but at GAGV's Anti-Violence Project (AVP), we track any and all anti-lgbt activity and we can report that there has indeed been a spike. Here are the facts:

In June, a man leaving a bar in the 19th Ward was viciously attacked by two unknown assailants. He was not robbed, and these attackers didn't appear to want anything except to assault this man after he had discussed being gay with another person at the bar just moments before the attack.

A week later, two women were leaving a bar on Park Avenue and were assaulted by two female attackers while these attackers yelled anti-lgbt slurs. The two victims suffered bruises, scrapes and a bite. One of the attackers has been caught and charged with a hate crime, while the other suspect is still at large.

Then sometime between July 2 and 3, the newly-hung Equality Marriage banner at the First Universalist Church was cut in half, but partially left intact for all to see this hateful vandalism. (See page A3)

Three days later, on July 6, the New York State Supreme Court handed down the decision that the New York State Constitution does not permit legal marriages of youth and LGBT New Yorkers. (See page A1.)

The following weekend was Rochester Pride. Saturday was the Annual Pride Parade and Festival in which AVP participated. This year, we planned a special hate-filled float (which, as always, refused to identify itself) with our float's theme being "Love Thy Neighbor as Themselves," lining up and spewing venomous hate through bullhorns in the name of religion. Yes, this hate activity has been documented by AVP.

APL believes there are several reasons why there has been an

Section C

GAGV Outing Workshops To Resume in September

The Gay Alliance will be offering a coming out outing series this fall. The six workshops will begin on Sept. 21 and end on Oct. 20. The workshops will meet every Thursday, from 7:30 p.m., at the New York State Supreme Court on the evening of Sept. 21.

Outing is a process which varies for each individual. The goals of the workshop series will be to assist participants in their coming out process, to offer support and safety to explore issues in a group environment; to serve as a sounding board for concerns; to identify and develop resources to aid participants in the process and to maintain a healthy balance in participants' lives via holistic activities.

The series is open to adults only. Free registration is offered, with scholarships available for those unable to pay. For more information and to register, contact Joe Russo at 500-5210 or jruss@rochester."

Community News

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

State of the Union: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

By Todd Blank, WNY Marriage Equality Organizer

On July 6 the NYS Court of Appeals announced its decision in the four cases that challenged the discriminatory practice of denying same-sex couples the right to obtain a marriage license and thereby have access to the approximately 700 rights and responsibilities, privileges and protections that are automatically extended to heterosexual couples in NYS when they enter into the civil contract of marriage.

The verdict of the court in a four to two vote was: "We hold that the New York State Constitution does not compel recognition of marriages of the same sex. Whether such marriages should be recognized is a question to be addressed by the legislature.

The majority also concluded that "New York's Due Process Clause simply does not encompass a fundamental right to marry the spouse of one's choice outside the one woman/one man construct.

Not being a legal expert, I do not hold myself as qualified to critique the court's decision on the New York State Constitution. I will express my disappointment and distress at the court's failure to recognize and respond to the very real needs and concerns of real families living in our great state. Even more disturbing to me personally is the disrespectful verdict, which was upsetting enough all by itself, was the homophobic bias underlying the illogical and faulty reasoning used to discount and discredit not only gay and lesbian families, but any families that do not conform to the ideal of a biological father, mother and their offspring. Procreation seemed to be at the crux of their argument in defense of 'traditional marriage.'

Using procreation as a litmus test for determining what constitutes a viable marriage disturbs me for several reasons. The implications are actually downright alarming!

Does this mean that married couples that are infertile and unable to produce biological children have less merit than fertile couples? What about couples who do not want to have children? Are we going to resort to administer fertility tests to determine eligibility for obtaining marriage licenses and then begin issuing licenses that are conditional on producing children within a prescribed amount of time? (Ex: This marriage license expires within five years of the date of issuance unless a minimum of children are produced.)

How about older adults who choose to marry or get remarried later in life? Since there isn't any possibility of starting a family (Union continues on page 2)
The fight for equality and justice for LGBT families is part of a larger struggle for human rights. The anti-Violence Project (AVP) administers a Hate Activity survey. To date, we have collected over 400 responses, and are continuing to collect them at various events in the area. You can complete this survey online at www.gayalliance.org, and then click on the Anti-Violence Project link. Our AVP intern Alison is busy already crunching the numbers and we hope to have results by the end of the summer. Stay tuned, and stay safe!

If you, or someone you know has been the victim of abuse, call the Anti-Violence Project at 585-697-3575. If you are a family, regardless of your age, you are seeking to become a modern day version of June and Ward Cleaver in its unnecessary and unreasoned fight to the forefront in New York State politics. Compared to last year’s hate activity, this year’s spike is bigger in New York State.

The battle for equality now goes to our legislators. They need to hear from us, including our family members, co-workers, members of our faith communities and any other people in our life who love and care about us. It is OUR RESPONSIBILITY to educate everyone in our sphere of influence as to why this blatant form of discrimination must end.

This is not an issue in which religious freedom should be permitted to be the final arbiter of justice. This is not a gay vs. straight issue. It is a social justice issue in which all fair-minded Americans must remain actively engaged with if we are to secure our rightful place in our country. It is unacceptable that as law abiding, tax paying citizens of this country who contribute in ways large and small to the greatness of this nation, that we should be relegated to second class status.

If we are to reach the tipping point, we must rally a large number of New Yorkers across this state and get them to communicate their support for a marriage equality bill to their members in the House and Senate. You can take the first step by contacting your leaders in Albany.

Please follow the lead of the Gay Alliance and the Empire State Pride Agenda and join the fight for equality and justice for ALL New Yorkers. Contact me, your Marriage Equality Field Organizer for WNY, to learn how you can take an active role in winning justice for LGBT New Yorkers. Tel: (585)244-8640 ext. 24; email: toddp@gagv.us.

Pride Agenda Update

For more information, see the Pride Agenda's website: www.prideagenda.org/events/legislative.html

Meanwhile, here is the Pride Agenda's latest bulletin:

Here’s what we need you to do right now after the court decision to put the leadership in Albany on notice that this issue is not going away.

Call Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and let them know that we expect immediate action in passing a marriage bill. Let them know that you stand with the majority of New Yorkers who support equal access to marriage and let them know that we will not accept anything less than full marriage equality!

Call Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno at 518-455-3101.

Call Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver at 518-455-3791.

Family Album Project

Send us a picture of you and your family at any event: wedding ceremony, graduation, birthday – a picture that celebrates your family. We are compiling pictures for an album "to represent who we are. Acceptable formats are photo paper, electronic files in jpeg or eps.

We apologize that we cannot return photos. By sending a photo to the Gay Alliance you are giving your permission for the photo to be used in the photo album project and the gayalliance.org site.

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We are Proud to Underwrite In The Life broadcast on WXXI TV at 11:30 PM, Sunday, August 20th

GayRochester.Com
Announcements, Calendar, Classifieds, Chat, Photos, Profiles

Since 1996
DIGNITY INTEGRITY

Dignity-Integrity/Rochester is an ecumenical religious, educational and social organization of gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, transgendered and intersexed people. We've been getting together at St. Luke and St. Simon Cyrene Episcopal Church ("2-Saints"), 17 South Fitzhugh St. in downtown Rochester, every Sunday for 5 p.m. for the past 31 years. Each gathering is followed up with a coffee social, and there's always a group that goes out for dinner afterwards—come join us for all or part of the evening.

Sunday, Aug. 6, will be our monthly celebration of the Eucharist in the Catholic tradition. While many of our members worship with their home church parish, this Liturgy empowers our mission, and through its celebration our union lines set by the diocese for parishes when a priest is unavailable to celebrate Sunday Mass. It's always a great time to come out and be a part of the Eucharist service, especially designed for those who have already been to church that day and just want a chance to pray and to be in communion with friends old and new.

We'll be celebrating Labor Day weekend with a Picnic in the Park on Sept. 5, leaving 2-Saints at 6:30, directly after our Episcopal Eucharist. Bring a side dish to pass and anything you'd like to throw on the grill. We'll supply the rest! For further information on these events and some other summer socials, see our website at www.di-rochester.org or call our recorded info-line at 254-5507.

EMPIRE BEARS

By Alan D. Van Gomp

The BEARS have been enjoying a great summer foraging in the forests for food, fun and fun. If you'd like to frolic in the alfalfa with some friendly men, check us out online at empirebears.org, or come to Mel's Diner any Monday night at 6 for supper and some laughs.

We welcome new members anytime. There are still plenty of camping weekends and picnics in the parks left in this summer. Members will be found at Jones Pond, Hillside, Oswego, Turkey Point, and Camp Davis in August. There is room for you.

In August, we have a meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 2 at the GAGV Community Center, 172 Atlantic Ave., at 7:30 p.m. On the agenda are our fall and winter schedule, board elections, the Oct. 28 Halloween Beer Party, and collecting teddy bears for kids.

Saturday, Aug. 5, we host BEAR-NIGHT at the FORUM. Leave your shirt at home, 'cause it'll be hot in there on 30B BEAR CHEST NIGHT. Show off those rippling pees you've been working on at the gym, or that furry round tummy you've grown at Mel's.

Thursday night, the 17th, the BEARS will be watching the Red Wings from the hot tub. That's right, we'll be ogling the cheerleader's boot butt as we chow on Red Os'r beef YUMMY! Have a woofy August. Relax, lay back, enjoy the ride.

LAMBDA NETWORK AT KODAK

By Donna Tiefenthal

The Lambda Network at Kodak is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Allied employee network at Eastman Kodak Company dedicated to creating and sustaining an environment that values and supports all Kodak employees, independent of their sexual orientation or gender expression.

Lambda was a co-sponsor of the July 6 Rochester Freedom to Marry Rally held in response to the N.Y.S. Court of Appeals decision on the constitutionality of forbidding same-gender couples to marry in New York State. Despite the short notice, a number of our members were able to attend the rally, including one who sang with the Raging Grannies. Lambda is sponsoring an educational event on Aug. 1 open to our members and friends and their partners and spouses. Local financial planner Kay Conhey will help clarify how Kodak's proposed changes to SEP will affect light employees. Lambda and WFKE partnered to put together a "carseat package" for each of the 300 members of the International Gay & Lesbian Band at the Gay Games held in Chicago in July. The care packages included one-time-use cameras and plastic Kodak bags. The OTU's had a "Please Visit www.kodak.com/gaypride" stickers on them. Lambda will partner again with WFKE and other Kodak Networks to take digital photographs of teams and individuals walking in the American Cancer Society Breast Cancer Walk on Oct. 1. If you are interested in helping, contact amy.friend@kodak.com.

For more details on how to volunteer on the part of Lambda at upcoming community events, visit our internal volunteer page at http://lambdakodak.com/lambdaContents.cfm?PageId=112

Lambda volunteers returned to the Pride Picnic this year where we took over 172 digital portraits using a new digital photo system assembled from donated pieces. Thanks to everyone for coming our showing your pride! Additional prints will be available for sale via the GAGV and Lambda together will benefit the GAGV. Read on...

GAGV and Lambda together will publish using the KODAK Gallery Affiliate program. Images will be loaded onto a KODAK Gallery site, which GAGV will link to. Any traffic that comes from the

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Sundays at 5:00 p.m.

1st Sunday:
Episcopal Eucharist with Music

2nd Sunday:
Presentation or Discussion*

3rd Sunday:
Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word

4th Sunday:
Evening Prayer & Pot Luck Supper

St. Luke / St. Simon Cyrene Church
17 S. Fitzhugh St. (corner of Broad St.)
—The church with the pink steeple

234-5092 Info-Line
Recorded information and voice mail
info@di-rochester.org
www.di-rochester.org

Each gathering is followed by Social Hour
* For topics and presenters, refer to our monthly article, website or Info-Line.
Strategies for work place).

• Software tools that your featured at www.kodak.com/go/diversity

• Imaginative depiction of the parade theme

• Hard work of Chorine Brian

• Prints than what you got at the picnic, buying prints, etc.

• Boot h, taking pictures, putting together

• Gallery affiliates

• On Kodak's global diversity activities are

• Amy.friend@kodak.com (724-4988).

• The intranet site for Kodak

• Voice mail (585)234-4388 Lamb­

• Co@kodak.co · (588-7105).

• This 6, with such tasks as staffing the Lambda

• 2006 • NUMBER 393 • GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESSEE RIVER

• OPEN ARMED METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH CELEBRATES 25 YEARS!

• By Bonnie Reda

• Armed, in their hearts, and op on anticipation, the congregation of Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church will celebrate their 25th anniversary July 29, Aug. 19 at Glensford's Party House on Old Browncroft Road.

• The celebration is open to the public. Tickets are $25 per person and $50 per couple for more information call 271-9478 or send an email to oarms@frontier.net.

• PLAGAL

• PLAGAL prides itself on the diversity of its membership. It is one of the few pro gay organizations in the Rochester area that all are who are pro-life. PLAGAL members come from different social and economic backgrounds, life styles and personalities. We have religious affiliations while others do not. We have members who are drag queen patrons, bisexual singles, those with long term relationships and we have heterosexual individuals in our group.


• PRIDE ALLIANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

• EStABLISHING A PRESENCE!

• By Brittany J. Lui

• Summer is an exciting time here in our city – and at the University of Rochester. The newly-formed Pride Alliance at the University of Rochester (PRIMUS) is close to completing our bylaws and we'll be submitting them for final approval within the coming weeks. We have over 30 members, so we're just getting started!

• This young organization, it's all about establishing a presence. We're posting signs throughout our various campuses and is participating in activities on the university. We're also working with our international students in the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Inclusion to capitalize on the resources available through our university. We're helping to create a website for pride and will have a dedicated phone line with voice mail, a mailbox for hard mail, and an internet website presence with links to resources throughout our enterprise and the community as a whole.

• The Pride Alliance is also poised to participate in the upcoming development of a connecting brochures that will highlight our affiliation groups, along with other diversity efforts. The University has been championing. We've met with – and secured the support of – the other affinity groups here in our system, and have promised to stand together to promote diversity at the Rochester Excellence. Among the priorities is helping us to establish a presence in our own community.
Advisory Delegate (YAD) was, but he was way more qualified than I attend an EXTREMELY

Stony Point, New York. So, I decided to present, which was what a Youth Advisory Delegate (YAD) was, but he made it sound important and that it would be a great honor to be chosen for it, so I gave my permission to be nominated. Little did I know how in over my head I would be in the coming months.

First was the interview process, we had several questions as to what we would "recommend" the General Assembly, the PC(USA) version of Congress, and so on. The other kid going after this was way more qualified than I, and the others altogether were way ahead of me in the game. But I did the best I could, and wasn’t expecting anything more than a "thumbs up for applying" letter.

A week later I get a letter, one that named me the YAD alternate for General Assembly, and told me that I was strongly recommended to go to a training in Stony Point, N.Y. So I did, and then Collins (the other guy who was applying and was named the YAD) told me that he couldn’t go and then I would become the full rep. Please picture a spoonful of cereal going from nearly entering my mouth to the bowl again without my arm moving.

At the training I learned about Robert’s Rules of Parliamentary Procedure and of an important report, the Theology Taskforce’s Final Report on the Peace, Unity, and Purity for the PCUSA, (the PCUSA), which is a biblical interpretation, discernment, sexuality, and ordination standards. Primarily the report which practically sees the PCUSA to remain a unified church. But it wasn’t that I would spend many sleepless nights over this.

It is important to mention that the Taskforce was made of 20 extremely different people, seemingly picked to fail, and they passed their report unanimously and without a minority report, a very rare thing as I would later find out in Birmingham.

The fifth recommendation of the PUP report was authoritative interpretation toward our national standards in ordination. It reaffirmed the PCUSA’s policy which states that the “light” affirms all persons as it lists (biological) sex, gender, and sexual attraction. The “light” affirms all persons, but it also states that a person of God’s love or a person of the church’s trust and that it would be like the sexuality rule for example, and perhaps the trials of this experience have made me more faithful in Christianity than ever before. Many youth are deciding to continue growing up in church.

If you had the world’s attention for one minute, what would you say?

"Intelligence is the door to freedom, and alert attention is the mother of intelligence." Would you try to apologize to everyone you hurt or thank everyone you love for loving you back? If you had the world’s attention for one minute the next most important of your life could be the most important and the decisions you make of what you’re going to say will be the best.

Life is all about the decisions you make: How ever are you to know if you’re making the right one? You’ll never know what might have been – whether it be good or bad. To choose one way or the other is to set the pace for the rest of your life. So the most important decision you can make is, how you’re going to feel about the decisions you make. II

GAGV Youth in the Spotlight:

CHRIS HENNING

GAGV Youth facilitator Chris Henning is producing and directing a musical revue for a New World presentation with music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown. The musical is titled "For a New World" and is a new, compilation of songs by an eclectic mix of songs of personal discovery, varying from ballads to pop to R&B. Each "story song" is a unique vignette portraying important moments in the lives of the characters.

Among the many musical styles included, a strong gospel flavor runs throughout the show highlighting the yearning for a "new world." The humorous "Surabaya-Santa" and "jazzy" "Just a Feeling" are both cabaret-style "Stars and the Moon" and the Motown/Rock sound of "The Steam Train" to bring a variety of characters together.

Henning explains, "I feel that this show is a great opportunity for Rochester to help bring people together, as this show is about community.

The show’s writer Jason Robert Brown agreg: "It’s about our collective need to join together and to overcome individual resistances to opening our hearts and souls to each other." In Chris’ spare time he is active in the community with the GAGV, helping out at the Youth Center, whether it be repairing the hall or facilitating support groups, or helping coordinate and prepare events like the BIG GAY PRIDE and the Rochester Pride Festival.

Along with Chris’ loyalty to the GAGV, he also leads his technical theater experience to other community organizations such as the Rochester Choir, Rochester’s Sing-Out, and A Magical Journey Thru Stages, where he is a member of the board of directors and the Resident Technical Director.

The show runs Sept. 15-16, 22-23, at the Upstate Performing Arts Center, third floor, 875 East Main St., Rochester. All performances 8 p.m. General admission $30. Students and seniors $20. By calling (585) 935-7175 or www.mpi-stages.com.

Cat Chat of Tedi:

SPEAKING OF DEATH

By Jessica Cale

Tedi is dead. She has developed a numb acceptance of this fact. A black and white
Ted is dead. There are no eloquent words to turn this prose into poetry. To soothe my center, to make sense of death. It has passed, the wind of the world turning has dried my tears.

"Why do we hate them, Mommy?"

By Jackie Bartalone

When I was a little girl my parents taught me not to judge anyone; that I should accept everyone for who they are. Ted accepted everyone for who they are. I love Ted. Ted brought moles to the neighborhood for action. In his early twenties he named the planet Mars. Moving homes. Growing old.

"It's never been taken before."

by garland tiller

You stole something that was precious to me. It's never been taken before. I thought I had full guard of it. But I was wrong. It was a priceless item. Never bought. Never sold. It was mine before I was born. Many people have tried, but it was forbidden. My guard has never been down. My parents tried to throw it away, but were not victorious. Friends tried to use it, but it was forbidden. And now you triumphed in stealing it, stealing it while I was looking. Do you want to know what you stole? My previous item. You stole my heart, I'm glad you did. I let you steal it and I don't want it back. Keep it for as long as you can. For my precious possession is yours to keep.

"With his seeming indifference for others."

You took away my heart. It is because of these lessons I seek it in me to see the discrimination being promoted by government officials and local citizens. It astonishes me to see the amount of hatred being thrust upon our society.

"Where I may be and how much longer it will take."

I can't remember the process to heal. I can't remember the stages of grief so that I can figure out where I may be and how much longer it will take. To go through each memory in my head, and sort them out in some organized acceptance. To find a sweater from last winter, and not pull a strand of fur from the wool. To visit my mother and not look for Ted sleeping among the plums. Dreaming of his younger days.

"Hatred being thrust upon our society."

It is because of these lessons that it sickens me to see hatred being thrust upon our society. Ted is dead. There are no eloquent words to turn this prose into poetry. To soothe my center, to make sense of death. It has passed, the wind of the world turning has dried my tears. Ted has been eighteen days without him. Time has passed, the wind of the world turning has dried my tears. Ted. At Christmas. Eating tuna. Drinking from the toilet. Ted.

"Eating old."

"Sending out a horrible message to local government officials and local citizens."

The Rochester Transgender Group (RTG) continues to meet on the third Wednesday of each month at the GAGV Community Center, which is on the corner of Atlantic Ave. and Elton St.

"The side door you come in is actually located on Elton St."

The side door you come in is actually located on Elton St. You can contact the RTG on our website: myrt.org or you can call the GAGV at (585)244-8640 and someone on the group will get back to you.

"In the fight for equal marriage and we cannot forget about them now."

We know how hard it can be for you to feel anything good about yourself. We know how much it can be to ask for help, or how or where to find help with the many difficult issues and situations facing you. We know that at times it all seems hopeless, that nothing will ever change or get better. Every one of our members has experienced these feelings and thoughts.

"We hold general meetings (open to the public) the Wednesday before each Bar Night at 7:30 p.m. at the Forum."

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

"Our home bar is the Bachelor Forum, 690 University Ave., where we hold Bar Nights on the third Saturday of each month."

"We hold general meetings (open to the public) the Wednesday before each Bar Night at 7:30 p.m. at the Forum."

"We hold general meetings (open to the public) the Wednesday before each Bar Night at 7:30 p.m. at the Forum."

Women's Hiking

Hey ladies... are you gunst? Then grab your hiking gear! We have lots of fun hiking at local parks. Great way to meet new friends or maybe find romance. New ladies always joining. Kids welcome. All ages and levels of hiking skill because we like an easy comfortable pace.

For more details, call Donna at 585-994-2095.
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Join the Family of the GAGV for an Evening of Dinner with Friends to Raise Funds for the GAGV, Promote GLBT Employment Rights, Family Equality, a Healthy Faith, & Coming Out for Our Gay Youth. Celebrating Our Accomplishments with a Dessert Reception at the Rochester Museum & Science Center 657 East Avenue from 8pm to Midnight
To Host a Dinner, call Bob Lewis at 585-385-5864

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Weekly GLBTI AA Meetings in Rochester

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

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

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

Open meetings are open to alcoholics and addicts as well as to our partners, friends, family and anyone else interested in the AA program of recovery. Closed meetings are limited to alcoholics and addicts. We ask that partners, friends, family and curiosity seekers respect our privacy.

Wednesdays

New Freedom/New Happiness Groups
7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S Winton Rd. Bus riders: Take the last #18 University bus to 12 Corners. Use the stop just past the top of the hill at Highland 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.

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

Fridays

Gay Men’s
7:30 p.m. GAGV Community Center, 171 Atlantic Ave. at Elton St. Bus riders: Take the #18 University Ave bus, use the stop between Montgomery Terrace and Elton St., walk one block south on Elton St. to the GAGV Community Center.

Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Men’s meeting
Handicapped accessible

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

Sundays

Rochester Gay Men’s
8:30 p.m. at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 17 S. Fifth St. Bus riders: Use the Pittsford St stop on Main St at the County Office Building and walk south one block.

Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Men’s meeting
NOT handicapped accessible

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

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August

TUESDAY 1

SATURDAY 5
Empire State Roar opening home game of the season. Against Connecticut. 7:05 p.m., East Rochester High School, 222 Woodbine Ave. Season passes, $26; game tickets $8; children 2-12 $2. www.empirestateroar.com.

SUNDAY 6

SUNDAY 20

ROAR vs. Wisconsin Wolves. For info call 232-2136 ext. 3052.

Toyota Beach Night at the Forum. 670 Rochester Ave, Rochester, New York 14625


Tuesday, August 13.

Honeoye Falls Volunteer Fire Department. Season passes, $26; game tickets $8; children 2-12 $2. www.theempirestateroar.com.

SUNDAY 13
Actors Randolph Moutnoost is guest of Empire State Roar at chicken BBQ, co-sponsored by Honoeay Falls Fire Department. Honoeay Falls Training Ground, noon-6 p.m. www.theempirestateroar.com.

SATURDAY 28
Empty Closet distribution of the Sept. issue. Noon-4 p.m. GAGV Youth Center. First Floor, 875 E. Main St. Call 244-9030 before noon on Sept. 1.

SUNDAY 3
Dignity Integrity Picnic in the Park. Leave “Two Saints” at 6:30 after Episcopal Eucharist. Bring side dishes to pass. 5 p.m., St. Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 234-5992; www.di-rochester.org.

TUESDAY 15
Empty Closet deadline for Sept. issue. 234-5693; empready@paganus.org.

FRI 25
Empire State Roar vs. Wisconsin Wolves. For Info call 232-2136 ext. 3052.

TUESDAY 17
Empire State Roar vs. Wisconsin Wolves. For Info call 232-2136 ext. 3052.
Ongoing Calendar

MONDAY

LGBT Support Group
Third Presbyterian Church, corner of Meigs, East Ave. First, third Mondays, 7:30-9pm, 336-3496

Rochester Historical Bowling Society
7:30pm, Mondays, Clover Lanes, 2750 Monroe Ave. (Group is full).

CDAP
Come Out and Play, Business meeting last Monday, 7pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave., 545-3900

HIV Positive Gay Men Support group
Every Monday, 5pm, AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave 442-2220, x5061

Green Party (political)
Second Mondays, 7-9pm, GAGV Community Center, Second floor. 234-3381

Atlantic Five
Atlantic Five, 420-1400

Way.

Tuesdays, 5:30-7pm,
Third Presbyterian Church, corner of Meigs, Atlantic
Atlantic Five
stevenfarrington@yahoo.com.

Way, 420-1400

Run/walk
Rehearsals
Eastman House parking
3-5 pm, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

North Adults Meeting
First, third Wednesdays, 11-12:30pm, Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. Sponsored by Genesee Region Home Care. 385-1880

Karaoke
Atlantic Five, 420-1400

Yoga
Atlantic Five, 420-1400

Support group for Parents who Have Lost Children
First, third Wednesdays, 11-12:30pm, Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. Sponsored by Genesee Region Home Care. 385-1880

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Thank you to the dozens of dedicated, energetic, and committed volunteers that helped make the 2006 Pride Picnic a tremendous success. You are individually and collectively the backbone of the picnic and we couldn’t have done it without you.

Lechele Adams
Karen Armstrong
(Pride & Joy Families)
Amanda Capuano
Ralph Carter
Judith Chryst
Derek Collins
Kay Conheady
Dick Connett
Sue Cownell
Owen Crawford
Jameka Dawson
Carrie DeBose
Holly DeFrancesco
Karen Dulcimor
Rick Easterly
Jack Ellis
Judy Glaubinger
Gary Hallinen
Flo Hicks
Kevin Indolina
Emily Jones
Bill Kelly
Mike Khennow
Thomas Krolak
Deb Krusemark
Ron Kwasman
Michelle Leach
Robert Lewis
Mike Luck
Dennis Mazur
Bud Minard
Melora Miller
Marylyn Mitchell
Kitty Moran
Debbie (Kitty’s Partner)
Lisa Nucci
Tom Ophart
Debbie Oppenheimer
Mike Oswald
Kraly Pannell
Claire Parker
Joseph Parks
Ja Pichitpichetkul
Patrick Patoni
Jean Pietl
Marcia Reaver
Kathryn Rivers
Deanna Rose
Marissa Santiago
Juanita Sastey
Beth Schmidt
Steve Tucker
Rev. George Tyger
Lou Vallone
Tony Vasconez
Bob Wilcox
Ann Young
Walter
Bridgette
Jesse
Hugh
Jay
Rob

The 2006 Pride Picnic Planning Committee:
Evelyn Bailey
Judy Cranston
Julie Devins
Cindi Eveleigh
Jackie Keenan

Equal Ground
Outlandish
Parkleigh
Eric Johnson,
Monroe County Parks
Margaret Reichert,
City of Rochester Special Events
Jim Perrin and Mark
Union Hill Grill
Jim Hall
All of Our Volunteers
GAGV Board of Directors
& the GAGV Staff