N.J. Supreme Court says same sex couples must have equal marriage rights
MARRIAGE OR CIVIL UNION? LEGISLATURE MUST DECIDE SOON

The Supreme Court of New Jersey on Oct. 25 ruled unani-
mosly that the state Constitution
requires that all of the rights and
benefits of marriage be avail-
able to same-sex couples, but in a
4-3 ruling, the legislature is directed to decide whether to grant same-
sex couples equal access to civil
marriage or whether to create a
separate institution as civil unions.

The Court gave the legis-
lature 180 days to act. At EC
time their decision was not
known, although some commen-
tators say that the legislature will
choose civil unions. If so, pre-
sumably such unions would have to
include similar legal rights of
marriage, in order to comply with
the court ruling.

People for the American
Way Foundation had filed an
amicus curiae brief in support of
the couples seeking to end their
marriage equality for same-sex
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N.J. Supreme Court
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"Today's ruling is an extremely
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the extreme Christian right is,
according to the National Gay
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"We are thrilled, ecstatic and
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Anti-marriage constitu-
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Anti-marriage amendments
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and were approved in seven of
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In Colorado, meanwhile,
voters were rejecting a measure
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rights to same-sex couples and
homosexuals.

(Election continues on page 3)

Election results encourage gay Americans:
support for LGBT families not a liability now

November's election results
proved encouraging to gay
Americans. For the first time, a
proposed constitutional amend-
ment to ban any form of legal
recognition for same-sex
marriage was defeated, and 39
per-
cent of voters opposed the ban.
A significant increase over the
33 percent who opposed similar
ballot measures in 2004.

As important, election results
in House, Senate and guberna-
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Perspectives

FROM THE EMPTY CLOSET EDITOR

SUSAN JORDAN

Tying up the loose ends (and means)

Election 2006 is history. The war in Iraq and corruption in high places seemed to matter more to voters than the Right’s “culture war” against their long-time scapegoat, gay Americans. Heterosexuals may not be ready to permit the M word to be used non-straight, but they apparently feel that the surging number of real casualties in Iraq is a greater problem than the rightwing fantasy that marriage will somehow become a threat to democracy. After Foley, FEMA/9/11-baiting Americans.

Many conservatives (and too many liberals) now support non-legal civil unions as the alternative to legal marriage rights. The ACLU iscorrecting its initial negative reaction to the Vermont civil union decision. The backlash to the Massachusetts ruling legalizing same-sex marriage was even more hysterical. By comparison, the New Jersey decision raised the “culture war” ends (and means) for non-straights, but as witness to the state of the Genesee Valley, the Gay Alliance — not “them”, they are “us”. LGBT people and our families and friends include every group we name, including the people who vote against us.

For this reason it is not possible to be successful in our efforts to eliminate homophobia and transphobia without actively working to end racism, sexism, classism, and other methods by which groups are divided and kept down. If the question is how to simultaneously address multiple forms of oppression, the answer is that there is no other way.

How do we do it? One way is to build coalitions with and an understanding of people facing oppression in any form, and to ask ourselves in what way are we contributing to it. Only then will we become true participants in the march toward social justice for all.

FROM THE GAY ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KRIS HINESLEY

Creating Change

Over 2,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning (LGBTQ) activists descended upon Kansas City during election week for the annual Creating Change conference organized by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

In the wake of the election, and as witnesses to the state of Missouri turning red from blue, there was a spring in our step. We watched as all challenges to reproductive freedom, including Roe, were defeated, and as the Senate changed hands, and as Arizona defeated its anti-gay ballot initiative. The resignation of Donald Rumsfeld brought smiles and cheers.

The conference was charged with cautious optimism,generosity of spirit toward one another, and the resolve to advance our agenda. We took power (and control) always justifies the means (lies, censorship, repression, etc.). OK, politics is like that — but it’s the hypocrisy of the Right’s claim to be morally superior, and their identification of religion with their region’s most disadvan-
taged and oppressed people. As I listened to the story of the new Tulsa, Oklahoma LGBT community center that materialized from an ap-

cial campaign (in Oklahoma) I became confident that we will raise the funds needed to buy a larger community center here in Rochester.

As I sat with leaders of this movement, I felt a sense of gratitude to work at such an established and successful organization, the Gay Alliance in Rochester, New York. I saw many knowing looks while dif-
cult issues came up before us and were addressed by people who have been working for change for decades. These leaders gener-

ously answered questions from those of us still learning what it means to balance the many needs of our communities and the capacity of our centers. We all face similar fiscal realities and political forces, and we are driven by a passion for creating change. The Gay Alliance is not for the smallest or the largest of the community centers, but we are one of the oldest.

In each of the sessions I learned something valuable. For example, I was reminded to ask myself who is included in our vision of the Gay Alliance is “us”. It ends (and means) for non-straights, but...
Historic win in Arizona

Arizona residents have become the first state to reject an anti-marriage constitutional amendment, by a margin of 51% to 49%. The ballot measure, which would have banned gay marriage, was rejected by 288,858 votes. In all, 8,281,090 votes were cast on marriage amendments since 1998, with Arizona being the only state to reject an amendment.

It's always wrong to put private rights above public safety and it is impossible for any minority to protect itself when that happens. But today, in Arizona, the voters looked to the future and, with the help of thousands of volunteers who worked on the campaign.

The No on 107 campaign in Southern Arizona was extremely successful at using messages that openly and honestly showed how same-sex couples in the state would be harmed by the amendment. And Arizona Together, the statewide campaign, was also extremely successful at showing how an anti-marriage amendment, that also outlaw domestic partner benefits and civil unions, harm everyone, including sexual couples. Combined, the messages of both campaigns were able to convince a majority of Arizona voters that marriage discrimination has no place in their constitution.

"Arizona will have a special place in history as the first state to reject an anti-marriage ballot measure. We know it will not be the last," said Foreman.

In Michigan, Democratic incumbent Jennifer Granholm defeated Republican challenger Dick DeVos. Gay and reproductive rights were a major role in the race. In mid-September, the Triangle Foundation, a statewide left organization, published a report on the Michigan's American Family Association, which is leading a boycott against Ford Motor Company because it advertises in gay publications. Because the financial woes of the big three auto companies have created a legal liability for them, Mr. Angel opposes abortion, she supported laws that oppose gay rights. Both candidates opposed a ballot initiative to end anti-gay zealot who puts his own bigotry over the needs of Michigan families and workers, Foreman said.

In Oregon, voters re-elected Gov. Ted Kulongoski, renouncing the most anti-gay votes in the nation, defeating Roy Saxton. During the campaign, Kulongoski stressed the need for union and employer health coverage. Then we learned that DeVos' family is supporting the boycott of Ford Motor Company because it advertises in gay publications. Because the financial woes of the big three auto companies have created a legal liability for them, Mr. Angel opposes abortion, she supported laws that oppose gay rights. Both candidates opposed a ballot initiative to end anti-gay zealot who puts his own bigotry over the needs of Michigan families and workers, Foreman said.

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Jerusalem Pride rally draws 9,000; anti-gay Orthodox confront gay Jews in NYC

"Jerusalem Gay Pride was a huge success, and passed peacefully," said Na'ama Sattath, Executive Director of Jerusalem Open House for Children of Israel. "Our community continues to advocate for equality and freedom of speech here. Jerusalem is home to many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. I am proud of the way the community faced the violence and hatred directed toward us these past few weeks. As a community, we didn't respond with hate or violence, but instead stood dignified and determined.

Activist leaders, artists and politicians presented inspirational and thought-provoking speeches at the rally. "There is more than one way to be Jewish," said Sattath. "Many held signs that 'Struggles in support of the community.' "We are straight and love gay people," said Sattath, "and 'Struggles against violence.'

The JOH reported that a large portion of the crowd were supportive heterosexually oriented, and that others who wanted to express their solidarity with Jerusalem's gay community. Many held signs that "Struggles in support of the community." "We are straight and love gay people," said Sattath, "and 'Struggles against violence.'

The JOH had originally planned a Pride March through Jerusalem. Anti-gay riots erupted in Jerusalem on November 2, the street that Jerusalem is becoming," said Kleinbaum. "For the past several weeks, ultra-Orthodox protesters have been rioting, setting fires, and throwing stones at passing motorists, police and firefighters. They called for the death of the leaders of the Jerusalem Open House, including the same rabbinic curse that was levied against Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin days before his assassination. This is big-otry in the name of religious inciting violence against gay people. Religious bigotry and ultra-Orthodox traditions have expressed support for these protesters and voiced similar sentiments denouncing the JOH March.

In the end, it was emerging national security issues, not the rioting and threats of violence, which led the JOH to change the march into a rally. Israeli police had originally planned to post 5,000 officers to protect those at the Gay Pride march. After the Israeli military-tragically killed 18 Palestinian civilians in a shelling attack in the Gaza Strip days before, the Israeli security forces went on a heightened state of alert to guard against a Palestinian attack.

"Our decision to change our March to a rally was due to the fighting in Gaza," stated Sattath. "In Israel, issues of national security change quickly and dramatically and we at the JOH take this very seriously. We have had responsible leaders in our community. After the shelling attack in Gaza, we knew that the new divisions on security meant it wasn't feasible to have the March. Gay's in Jerusalem are not only gay, we are also part of the community in large.

Although organizers were deeply disturbed by the anti-gay riots and violence, they noted that the collective reaction to the event attracted international attention to the issue of gay rights in Jerusalem.

"The incident and violence that preceded our event turned it into one of the most important human rights demonstrations of the decade," said Sattath.

Orthodox protest in NYC

The controversy regarding Jerusalem Gay Pride stretched beyond its country's borders. In New York City, thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews protested against the JOH March in Conulate Nov. 9, the day before the rally. Protesters called for a halt to the march, carrying black and white signs reading "Judaim Prohibit Homosexuality," and "Abominations in Parade in Jerusalem" which expressed the fear that the march would disturb the peaceful community. "We are all created in God's image," and "Haredim belong to all of us." The thousands of anti-gay protesters climbed out of buses and assembled, Rabbi Kleinbaum and Ayed Cohen, and Rev. Pat Bumbardger stood with their sign nearby. "As more ultra-Orthodox arrived, the police tried to make us leave the area and return to the 'gay area down the street,' said Rev. Bumbardger. "We explained that it was legal for us to stand where we were, so long as we didn't block the sidewalk or cross into the ultra-Orthodox area. We agreed not to bring our whole group over and to not engage the protesters. The police on duty even called the District Attorney's office, who told them that we were correct about our area.

The three continued to stand near the ultra-Orthodox protesters, their rainbow-colored signs bobbing in a sea of black and white signs and protesters.

"Some of the ultra-Orthodox protest­ers were incensed at our presence," said Rabbi Cohen. "They refused to respond to police requests that they stay within their own area and that they not engage us.

Inexplicably, police ended up forcibly removing Rabbi Kleinbaum and Rev. Bumbardger from the area. They arrested Rabbi Kleinbaum for creating a public disturbance.

"I was upset and bizarre that I was arrested and that we were physically removed from the area when we were acting legally and following police orders," said Kleinbaum, who received a sum­mons to appear in court in December.

"The police should have taken action against the ultra-Orthodox protesters who refused to respond to their requests.

"Congregation Beth Simchat Torah stands behind the actions of Rabbi Klein­baum and Rev. Bumbardger," said Rabbi Cohen. "They acted nobly and legally: we have the right to assemble and the right to free speech. CBST also stands in solidarity with our partner organization, the JOH, in calling for an end to the hate-motivated violence against gay people in Jerusalem and in declaring the necessity for freedom of speech and the right to peaceful assembly for all people in Israel.

"Tolerance is holy," said Kleinbaum. "Local gay groups, whether they are in Jerusalem, Brooklyn, Queens should be able to march through the streets of their communities, and without fear of bodily harm.

For years, violence has been used to intimidate, if not obliterate, mar­ginalized groups, including Jews and gay people. For over 30 years, these means, it is as tragic as it is predict­able.

Rabid homophobe to head Republican National Committee

Joe Solmonese, President of the Human Rights Campaign, has issued a statement on the announcement by Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa., to head the Republican National Committee (RNC).

"Senator Martinez was elected in 2004 by taking page one of Karl Rove's gay bating playbook. His campaign was one of the most anti-gay, bigoted and divisive campaigns in the nation's history. We are deeply troubled that this kind of Senator has been chosen to lead the Republican Party.

"For him to be tapped as the head of the Republican Party sends yet another message to our community and the country that the Republican leadership is con­tinuing their old ways of rewarding slash and burn politics instead of being inter­ested in uniting the country.

Sen. Martinez's (R-FL) record on equality and fairness: Scored a zero out of 100 on HRC's Equality Scorecard, supported the Federal Marriage Amendment; Martinez has been on the record opposing Repub­lican Congressman Vito Fossella's (R-NY) anti-gay marriage bill. As late as October, Martinez was reported on the floor of the Senate speaking about the need to pass the anti-gay legislation. He was a huge supporter of Go diễn's marriage amendment. In inexplicably, police ended up forcibly removing Rabbi Kleinbaum and Rev. Bumbardger from the area. They arrested Rabbi Kleinbaum for creating a public disturbance.

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Lambda Legal asks Bush to stop undermining judicial system

In an open letter sent Oct. 31, Lambda Legal Executive Director Kevin Cathcart asked President Bush to stop undermining the role of the courts. The New Jersey Supreme Court issued its ruling this week in the Lambda Legal case seeking marriage for same-sex couples, rule that the state constitution requires that same-sex couples be provided all the rights that different-sex married couples enjoy.

That very day President Bush was widely quoted saying that the country needed to be protected from "activist judges," prompting Lambda Legal to send the following letter.

Text of the letter:

Dear President Bush,

On behalf of all 50 Americans who depend upon a fair and impartial judiciary to protect individual rights, we call on you to stop undermining the courts and counter the country. You are undermining the credibility of a branch of government that produced the Legislature must approve it in two consecutive constitutional conventions. In July, the Legislature recessed without considering the amendment, and without a redolent four of the committee before Dec. 31, the petition dies, and opponents of marriage equality would have to begin collecting signatures all over again.

This fall, the Task Force launched an aggressive six-week grassroots lobby to persuade various South Shore area legislators just south of Boston to oppose the amendment. A team of four trucks, each staffed by a trained 134 volunteers to talk with voters face to face about same-sex marriage and ask supporters to sign postcards to their legislators opposing the ban.

In just six weeks, the Task Force generated an additional 3,040 postcards from constituents opposing the ban. In addition, 100 of these volunteers participated in a massive Election Day action on Nov. 7, where volunteers talked with voters at the polls and got cards signed. That action alone generated 2,140 cards.

The guidelines, which reaffirm church opposition to same-sex marriage and adoption, will be discussed at the November meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Responses from members of the Task Force's National Religious Leaders Roundtable

"Bishops being asked to vote on a document that is self-contradictory. It is logically and morally impossible to claim respect for lesbian and gay people and at the same time reaffirm opposition to their exercising the basic human rights of marriage and the formation of families.

"To systematically exclude from leadership those who hold enlightened, progressive views on sexuality is to deprive the Catholic community of the talents of some of its best and brightest people."

"Rather than adopt such a flawed document, the bishops would do well to convene an educational forum to learn the facts of contemporary life, including the witness of countless lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Catholics who live with integrity. LGBT Catholic scholars and their colleagues stand ready to provide such resources."

— Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., Co-Director, Our Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)

"The guidelines offered in this draft are out of touch with the vibrant pastoral ministry with lesbian and gay people that has blossomed in parishes across the U.S. in the last 30 years. Catholic people, priests, parishes and dioceses have opened their doors to lesbian and gay people and our church has benefited greatly from this encounter. This document tries to turn back the clock three decades on Catholic acceptance of lesbian and gay people."

"The plan here is not to minister but to make a 'problem' disappear. If the guidelines are approved, they will be (Religious Leaders continue, page 8)
New in town: MARCIA BRANT and SCOTT FEARING

By Susan Jordan

In our mobile society, it's a rare individual who lives in his or her original hometown. Scott Fearing and Marcia Brant have recently moved to Rochester and they are enjoying the challenges of adapting to a new town and community.

Empty Closet: When did you move to Rochester, and from where? Where is your original hometown? Is your company gay-friendly?

Marcia Brant: I moved to Rochester in August of this year from Chicago. I moved around quite a bit growing up, and have lived in Toronto, Mexico City, Phoenix, and the Midwest.

I relocated to Rochester for a wonderful opportunity at Bausch & Lomb, as Director of Global Benefits. My role involves the development of the global benefits strategy and oversight of our programs worldwide. Bausch & Lomb is a fine company, with 4,000 employees in the U.S., and approximately 10,000 outside of the U.S.

I knew that Bausch & Lomb was a great organization, but this was confirmed during my interview process and continues to be reinforced. My experience was unique. During the interview process, my partner, Beth, and I had decided to begin the adoption process of a child in the Philippines. This change in our lives made me realize that we needed to be particularly thoughtful about the company that I decided to join.

And, more than ever I needed to be selective about the culture of the organization that I would be embarking on. My experience has been extremely fulfilling for us, and we wanted to be certain that Rochester and Bausch & Lomb would be open and welcoming to our family.

During the final stages of my interview, I felt that I needed to be open about myself, and our plans to adopt. Some people thought that this was risky, and that I should keep this for the office. But I would not have wanted to join a company that would withhold an offer based on who I am. From my perspective the risk was low.

So, during my last day of interviews, I brought Beth and our one executive candidate along, for the interview process. And, I was not ashamed about our plans. And, the company notified us that my inklings were correct. I believe the company, with whom I am embarking on this new adventure, values the openness and warmth. They appreciated that I had confidence in the leadership and the organization to be open. They talked to me about the community, about their own diversity efforts, the domestic partnership benefits, the affinity groups. They even had two members of the diversity group call me in Chicago to answer my questions. One of the executives connected me with a reality (who happened to be gay) who served as an ambassador of the community, and who ultimately directed us to a wonderful neighborhood where we have bought a home.

Our decision to move was not an easy one. There was a logistical part of it, and there was also a personal part of it. It is reassuring to me that an organization would care enough to ensure that we felt totally comfortable and welcomed.

Scott Fearing: I am a native Minnesotan, who arrived here in Rochester in the middle of this past July. I arrived too late for the Pride picnic, but in time to experience the amazing heat wave. The 100 degree temperatures have been the climatological highlight of my time here so far although people keep telling me to be prepared for the snow. I tell people that the differences between Minneapolis and Rochester are: fewer mosquitoes, less heat, more snow, less cold, better wine, and fewer people who say, “Yeah sure, you betcha.” My current work situation is rather unique. While it is true that I am employed full time and I am looking for work, I am continuing to work as an independent trainer and consultant specializing in diversity education with a focus on GLBT issues. Since 1993, I worked as a “professional homosexual” for Minnesota’s GLBT Statewide organization, OutFront Minnesota. So, it is a gay friendly organization -- it was also lesbian/bisexual-transgender and allied friendly.

OutFront is interesting because its work does support to both GAVC and ESPA. Most of the time that I worked there, I was directing the organization’s educational and training efforts. When I left in early July, I did some quick math and realized that in my tenure at OutFront I spoke to nearly 250,000 people about GLBT issues.

EC: What were your first impressions of Rochester and have they been borne out or have you changed your mind? (In relation to the town/area itself, its attractions/events or lack of same, etc.)

MB: Rochester is definitely a city that I was looking for. I liked the hills, the lakes, the parks, and the close knit community. We were extremely fulfilled for us, and we wanted to be certain that Rochester and Bausch & Lomb would be open and welcoming to our family.

During the final stages of my interview, I felt that I needed to be open about myself, and our plans to adopt. Some people thought that this was risky, and that I should keep this for the office. But I would not have wanted to join a company that would withhold an offer based on who I am. From my perspective the risk was low.

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Our decision to move was not an easy one. There was a logistical part of it, and there was also a personal part of it. It is reassuring to me that an organization would care enough to ensure that we felt totally comfortable and welcomed.

SF: The biggest challenges I have faced so far have all to do with the streets of Rochester. Really. A couple of examples: I don’t understand how streets can just change names. I’ll be driving along and suddenly I look over and there is a one way. I am on a new name. Second, Rochester, like the Twin Cities, has the river running through town that prevents a real grid from forming. So, I still have trouble figuring out north, south, east and west as I am driving. I don’t understand it, but it seems that every time I get lost, I end in freeway, or there, I couldn’t find it. The last challenge the streets present, are your stoplights on cables over the intersection. When I stop at the intersection, I need to sit with my chin on the steering wheel to see the red light above me.

EC: Have you had to move often during your career? What are some of the ways you’ve learned to cope?

SF: Right out of college I did move to New Jersey and lived there almost three years, but then returned to Minnesota, and did not move again until 1993, when I started my current career change and my returning to school. I am a person who enjoys change and new adventures, so when the opportunity came to move east with him, I was ready and willing.

While the move itself was stressful, I enjoy new situations and new challenges. I love meeting people and getting to know new surroundings. While I am nervous about my own career (or currently, the lack there of), I am very excited about the possibilities that life and Rochester are presenting. I know that whether I continue to provide freelance consulting, location and training, or settle into full time employment, or possibly return to school for my degree, I am lucky to have landed in Rochester where there seem to be many options.

EC: Anything you would like to add?

SF: With all of the great resources that I have found in Rochester, I am certain that if I choose to take full time employment in Rochester, I suspect that I will be able to do it as a “team player.” And I am happy to know that if I have any problems, at work or elsewhere, there are local resources that are also available to me that make me feel really good and glad with my decision to move here.
David Caruso, These historic victories show that was the third attempt since 1991 to pass overwhelmingly approved nondiscrimination protections for sexual orientation and gender identity; we also witnessed a stinging rebuke to targeted anti-gay messages this year. The depth of local support for full equality for our families and government official from around country. In addition to the individual awards, GMAD started as a rotating weekly forum at the Harlem Health Center at Grady Memorial Hospital in New York. The Harlem based organization was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in 1990. Recognizing that there is no right to be a gay community of color, GMAD continues to provide targeted services in the form of drop-in groups, age and need appropriate activities and counseling. The organization offers a variety of services for those who identify as LGBT, including youth, adults, and families. The organization provides a safe space for individuals to explore their gender identities, access health care, connect with community, and receive support and guidance. NYC will be more flexible on trans gender ID The City of New York plans to make it easier to get access to other government IDs, such as driver's licenses, without the need to provide proof of gender reassignment surgery. This change will make it easier for transgender individuals to access government IDs, without the need to undergo surgery.
Vernon thanked Jennifer Gravitz, Esq, a Thursday of each month from were four victims, the most badly injured say how long the fight lasted or what, entendered and possibly a hate crime. Knocking me around, and every ground."

meanor charges, which were later upgrad­

Medicare. The victim needed three stitches above the face again and knock me down to the

AIDS Rochester staff members are honored

Paula Silvestrone, MS, AIDS Rochester's Executive, Director was a finalist in the 2006

Gay ministry developed in the church by Church, but this proposed set is certainly

Church, but this proposed set is certainly

AIDS Rochester's Gay

in New York State. The award

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blood."

Kicking me in the face repeat­

eight eye."

Stefanis, M.S., AIDS Rochester's Gay

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AIDS Rochester's Gay

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Some of the more welcoming language in this new document would be interpreted as an attempt to provide that. However, every positive statement in these proposed guidelines is contradicted by the bishops' own statements and even more by their actual actions.

This document attempts to welcome gay and lesbian people into an institution that is simultaneously leading attacks on our civil rights, our AIDS and families across the world. It is an invitation to collaborate in our own oppression.

"As LGBT Catholics, families and friends, we call on the U.S. bishops to listen to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans­
gender Catholics, who will willingly tell all of the gifts we have received through our God-given orientation and the blessings we know through our loving relationships - as well as of our spiritual struggles in our church. Our voices and that of the Holy Spirit speaking in and through our lives must be heard in outlining the pastoral care the church provides."

"Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgen­

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For more information on the Commu­

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Erik Libey, AIDS Rochester's Gay

Legalistic efforts to split body from spirit, being from living, and loving from touch­

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Erik Libey, AIDS Rochester's Gay
We need elected officials who have experienced poverty as well as riches

By Wende Jacobson

"They can't run anything right because the only test is political loyalty," remarked former President Bill Clinton during his visit to Rochester on Nov. 6, in support of the candidates of local Democrats Dan Maffei and Eric Marav. Clinton alluded to the Bush administration and their lack of management skills in the Katrina debacle as well as policy matters in general. He ran through a laundry list of failings on the part of Bush and the Republicans raising interest rates on college loans and cutting student loan programs for higher educations, giving tax cuts to the rich and to oil conglomerates, while slashing drug benefits for seniors with the new donut hole aspect of the Medicare drug bill demanding American jobs overseas and refusing to raise the minimum wage, therefore keeping millions of Americas in poverty even though they work for a living.

He stated, "I've been poor and I've been rich, and I like both better." He said of the Bush administration's favoritism of the rich, "They always had enough money to give millionaires like me a tax cut." The overall theme of Clinton's remarks was that Republicans are in it for themselves and their rich buddies, and could care less if people in the middle or lower class thrive or have the quality of life promised to previous generations. Bush and his colleagues effectively destroy the upward mobility and the promise of the American dream for all Americans.

Clinton's laundry list seemed to me to hit the nail on the head and explain the reason for the day to day struggles so many of us who are not millionaires experience on a regular basis. As I listened to Clinton, it became more and more obvious to me that it is important to put elected officials in office who have experienced wealth and also know the hardships of having few resources.

In order for America to have fairness and balance in government again, we need to elect officials who, like Clinton, have known and experienced both sides of the fence.

A return to reality: Haggard's fall

By Wayne Besen

In the very week Saddam Hussein was sentenced to hang, George W. Bush found his presidency in the gullies. Hussein now awaits his fate as a dead duck, while Bush will usher in his final two years as a lame duck.

How bitterly ironic it must be that the Democratic victory with Bush was fueled on outrage over the quagmire in Iraq and the president's refusal to "change the course" even after the facts repeatedly changed on the ground. This is more a victory for reality than a win over a sleazy and arritzic Republican majority that empowered lowlifes such as Tom Delay and Jack Abramoff and ex-Bronco Rick Santorum.

The GOP is learning that reality may take extended vacations, but it never completely vanishes. Dental may be effective as a tactic, but at the end of the day it does not stare off tragedy. In an even a greater state of denial than the president are Prozac Protestants, who must have become depressitated and stayed home in large numbers this Election Day. Who can blame them? First, we had Ralph Reed "humping in" with lobbyists Jack Abramoff and then we had Foleygate and now we have the fall of Rick Ted Haggard.

Haggard was the pastor of 14,000 member New Life Church in Colorado Springs and president of the National Association of Evangelicals. However, what started as Haggard's calling for the Lord ended with a call boy. Former sex worker Michael Jones accused Haggard of hiring him for sex and purchasing crystal meth, making Haggard a PNP preacher (Para and Play).

In a letter read to the New Life Church congregation on Nov. 5, Haggard confessed, "The fact is, I am guilty of sexual immorality. And I take responsibility for the entire problem. I am a deceiver and a liar. That's part of my life that is so repulsive and dark that I have been warning against it for all of my adult life. The accusations made against me are not all true, but enough of them are that I was accurately removed from my church leadership position."

What was most bizarre about the Haggard meltdown was watching the carnishly emotional reaction by his befuddled congregation. The pictures were telling in that, once again, we are seeing a church taking on a political flavor. I am a Christian and also a feminist. I believe that Evangelical Christians exchange their anti-gay rhetoric for reality. (Dobson, Haggard, Rees, Reed...)

Even after the disgrace of all these prominent men, the church refuses to ask relevant questions and continues to promote the lie that homosexuality is just a temptation that can be changed. Indeed, Haggard even sought the help of James Dobson and other preachers to "cure him of his impotence."

But if this preacher couldn't stay away from the gay, with all the power and prestige he had to lose, how can, and do, we who have less, know that he could keep his hands clean? Eve never had enough money to become an airport security guard.

Haggard is correct that there is a dark and repulsive part of his life, but it is not his homosexuality, it is his closet and the lies he has used to cover it up. He built his empire on the backs of openly gay people and now he faces an awful confluence for his anti-gay sins.

In an interesting twist, social conservatives originally whined that the timing of the Haggard outing was political. They might be right, but too bad. Having played the sexual orientation card as an election year ploy for decades, they are about to complain about this November ballot box boomerang.

In a church of 14,000, at least 5-10 percent of members are gay, including many children poisoned by their preacher's toxic rhetoric. Perhaps the fall of Haggard will make it easier for these young men and women to come out. But first, instead of washing away Haggard's supposed sins, the Christian Right must un-wash their brains and repent for the holy hell they have put so many good people through, including several of their most respected leaders.

Wayne Besen's column "Anything But Straight" runs in many national LGBT publications.

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Annie in the evening gown competition.

Samantha Vega won the Miss Gay Rochester title on Nov. 12. (See interview, page 1.) Photos: Jim Hanselman

The pageant was held at Harro East ballroom.

Ambrosia Salad celebrated her 10th anniversary title.

Samantha Vega’s talent number

Debra Carter

Aggy Dune, Mistress of Ceremonies

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every turn, Jesus sought to dismantle the wall between God and humanity. He healed some insiders and some outsiders, some ‘pious’ and others ‘impure.’ The Roman Catholic bishops instead lend the di­

Arch of the religious authorities whom Jesus consistently challenged. They seek
to make same sex relations bisexual and transgender folk impure. They strive to label some good and oth­
eresources of other resources. As a minister of the Christian gospel, I choose to stand with Jesus, whose ministry calls us to challenge documents like the proposed guidelines.”

--Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, Program Director, Institute for Welcoming

These proposed guidelines violate the very premise that sexuality is God’s life­
giving and life-fulfilling gift. All people are created in and for relationships; all can be in justice any faith community or in society at large on the basis of sexual orientation. Sexual differences is a blessed part of our
dominant; it is so many reli­

ious institutions, including the Catholic Church, continue to deny their own con­

tegates the right to full inclusion and welcome and their right to full lives in sacred relational faith.

— Rev. Debra W. Haftner, Director, Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing

“All persons of faith, regardless of their sexual orientation, should be able to par­
take in the Eucharist.” As faith leaders we are able to fully participate in their commu­

nities of faith without being told they are “fundamentally disordered.” It is extrem­

eously harmful to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans, espe­
cially LGT youth. We cannot believe a myth that their sexual identity can be changed through therapy or any other means.”

— Anna Maria, Member, United Church of Christ

“Everything the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church knows about marriage is secondhand knowledge. None of them are, ever have been, or will be married. But at least they can claim they have spoken with and understood what was said to them by who people who are, can be, and have been married. Apparently, that’s as good as its gets: from what has been reported in the press, it seems that even those who know only about the legal­
tation, sexuality and homosexuality is third­hand, fourthhand, or worse. That level of ignorance is very close to being willful.

“If the press has also reported, Limbo is a place children who die before they can be baptized — can be su­

denly determined to be no longer theologically necessary, if Limbo is not and therefore never was real, then surely it is not only possible but probable that the current policy of the Roman Catholic Church on homosexuality is a tremen­
dous error as well. The difference is that real living Christians were not harmed every day by Limbo’s existence or disappearance. It is a pity that any Catholic policy­

ical society. They strive to label some good and oth­
derers. As an advocate of the Christian gospel, I choose to stand with Jesus, whose ministry calls us to challenge documents like the proposed guidelines.”

— Emily Eastwood, Executive Direc­
tor, Luthers Concerned/North Amer­

ica

“Whether to continue to eduate the Catholi­

religious leaders, the Church hierarchy is the fact that sup­

pressing sexuality does not work. Physical­ly, this means that energy cannot be destroyed. When we attempt to suppress sexual ener­

gy, it escapes in unhealthy and appropri­
ate ways, as evidenced by the Church’s ongoing priest sexual abuse cases, the Fal­

comparable situations. As long as the Church and other phe­

ternal religious bodies continue to demonize sexuality, we will continue to witness its abhorrent expressions, both rape and sexual abuse.”

— Christian de la Huerta

To read the Associated Press story, please visit http://www.nytimes.com/ apotline/us/AP-Bishops-Gays.html

Amnesty Intl’s says NYC police must investigate transgender hate case

Amnesty International has called on the New York Police Department to investi­

gate possible human rights viola­

tions by its officers in their handling of the case of Christina Sforza, a transgen­

der woman involved in an altercation at a McDonald’s restaurant in Manhattan.

Sforza claims that officers respond­
ing to the incident failed to exercise due diligence in not taking seriously her claim that she was the victim of a hate crime, that they subjected her to false arrest and that they further abused her while in their custody. All charges against Chris­

tina Sforza were dropped on Oct. 26.

“The NYPD needs to conduct an immediate and impartial investigation into the incident — and hold accountable anyone found responsible for abuses,” said Michael Hefflin, director of OUTFront, Amnesty International USA’s program on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (lgbt) human rights. “If Sforza’s allega­
tions are substantiated, these are serious human rights violations. The allegations of mistreatment by police are especially troubling because the pattern of abuses that Amnesty International has docu­mented.”

Amnesty International members around the world are writing letters to Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly urging his immediate attention to the issue.

Sforza asserts that she is not guilty of the charges that were filed against her — “assault with intent to cause physical injury” and “harassment in the second degree.” She says that she was the one who was physically assaul­ted on July 10 at the McDonald’s res­

taurant at 341 Fifth Ave. by a man she

believes to be the manager.

Sforza reports that after being in the bathroom for a minute or two the man­
ganger began yelling, “I’m going to E kill you. Faggot.” She alleges that when she opened the door the man hit her across the head with a lead pipe and kept hitting her in the head, torso and groin, and on her arms when she tried to protect herself. Sforza told Amnesty International that other staff and customers were cheering and yelling “kill the fag.”

One of Sforza’s friends called the police, but when they came she says they refused to listen to herside of the story and arrested her after the manager claimed she had assaulted him. Sforza reports that officers verbally abused her, refused to allow Emergency Medical Ser­

vices personnel on the scene to examine her injuries and denied her access to dia­

betes medicine essential to her wellbeing while she was detained overnight.

Amnesty International is concerned that the alleged violations in this case may constitute discriminatory behavior, torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrad­ing treatment, false arrest, failure to exercise due diligence, and denial of access to justice.

Amnesty International’s Stonewalled report, released in September 2005, doc­

umented numerous incidents of alleged inappropriate police responses to violence against transgender persons and found that transgender persons were at heightened risk of police abuse. The report found that police officers often do not respond appropriately to "hate crimes" in which a transgender person is the alleged victim. This includes failure to properly investi­
gate and document crimes and hate crimes as well as sometimes blaming the victim and even arresting or threatening to arrest the victim of the "hate crime.”

“This is about accountability and this is about justice,” said Hefflin. “The NYPD has a choice — to show it cares about ensuring justice for all people, or it can turn a blind eye.”

Trans woman wins seat on Hawaii Board of Education

November’s mid-term elections marked a historic first in the movement for equal­

ity and civic engagement.

With a comfortable victory garnering 81,532 votes, attorney Kim Coco Iwa­

moto was elected to Hawaii’s state-level Board of Education (Oahu-at-Large), a non-partisan office. Ms. Iwamoto, an openly transgender woman, is a member of the National Center for Transgender Equality’s (NCTE) Board of Advisors.

Iwamoto holds a Juris Doctor from the University of New Mexico School of Law, is a volunteer guardian ad litem for the First Circuit Family Court, and is a frequent speaker at high schools and col­

leges on civil rights issues and community service.

“This is truly a historic win and marks an important first in the American politi­
cal landscape, said Mara Keizing, execu­
tive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. “Kim Coco Iwamoto is an outstanding individual with a long history of pro bono legal work and volunt­

erism benefiting her home state. She will serve the people of Hawaii well.”

There are currently only a limited number of openly transgender elected of­
cials serving in the U.S. and around the world. In the United States, Michelle Bruce serves on the City Council in Rivendale, Ga. and Jessica Orsini serves as an Alderman in Centralia, Mo. There are also dozens of other openly transgender appointed public officials across the U.S. New Zealand’s Georgina Beyer has served in Parliament since 1999; Aya Kami­

lev was elected as a municipal official in Tokyo, Japan; Vladimir Luxuria was recently elected to Italy’s Parliament.

As public education efforts aimed at ending misconceptions and prejudice against transgender individuals advance, (Trans cc continues on page 14)
the New Jersey decision only involves the right to enter into a marriage relationship — not religious ceremonies. This case does not affect religious institutions’ freedom to decide if they want to honor and recognize same-sex unions.

“Although this case is a major step forward in the fight for fairness and equality for same-sex couples in New Jersey and for all of us who care about basic human rights, today’s decision is just the beginning,” the New Jersey Supreme Court rightly found that the law denies equal treatment to same-sex couples by putting them in the same situation as marriage itself. It is now up to the New Jersey State Legislature to implement the Court’s decision and to take the next step toward allowing same-sex couples. New York State’s legislature must also address this issue, as New Jersey is a leader in civil marriage. The language used by the New Jersey Court, which so significantly differs from that of the New York Court of Appeals, reflects a basic, fundamental respect for same-sex couples.”

— Christine Quinn, NYC City Council Speaker
Disability or mental wellness issues. Concerned with the betterment of the country's economy, educational system, health care and security, candidates who also happen to be transgender are running for -- and winning -- political offices.

To read more about Board of Education Member, Oahu-At-Large, Kim Coco Iwamoto, please visit her campaign Web site at http://www.kimcoco.com.

About the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)

Transgender Equality is a 501(c)3 organization devoted to ending discrimination and violence against transgender people through education and advocacy on national issues of importance to transgender people. The National Center for Transgender Equality is a 501(c)3 organization. For more information, please visit www.ncteq.org.

GLSEN praises North Carolina student for forming GSA; school superintendent persecutes LGBT students

GLSEN, or the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, on Nov. 7 congratulated Danielle Smiley for her courageous effort to form a Gay-Straight Alliance at Currinck County High School despite a lack of support from the school system.

"GLSEN is extremely proud of the courage Danielle Smiley has shown in her effort to establish a Gay-Straight Alliance," said GLSEN Founder and Executive Director Kevin Jennings, a North Carolina native who as a teacher helped form the first GSA in 1988. "For Smiley to overcome the culture of misinformation and lack of understanding that far too often dominates these debates is an inspiration to all of us who value respect and the idea that all students have a right to a safe learning environment."

Smiley has endured unfair criticism from school and community members who misrepresent the purpose of GSAs and seem to be unaware of or just plain ignore the positive effects of GSAs on school climate.

While Smiley will be able to start the club, GLSEN is extremely discouraged by Superintendent C. Michael Warren's blatant effort to diminish the influence and benefits of the GSA.

In his decision to allow the GSA, Warren established new rules for all non-curricular clubs that require parental permission, will not allow yearbooks to recognize the clubs, will not allow the clubs to use "Currituck County High School" in identifying themselves and will not allow students to use the school's public address system, among other policy changes.

"The underlying positive is that the GSA will be able to meet on campus and work toward improving tolerance and respect on campus," Jennings said. "That said, the superintendent obviously knows judicial precedent shows that he would have lost a costly lawsuit if he would have banned the clubs. Instead, he has chosen to make life as difficult as possible for students involved in the GSA, at the expense of every other co-curricular club on campus. What a shame.

"The most basic of learning, not training camps for intolerance and discrimination, are serious problems [at Okeechobee High School (OHS)]. Unfortunately, school officials have made the problem worse by discriminating against LGBT students.," Jennings added. "Students Yasmin Gonzalez, Amber Sewell and Erica Rodriguez, among others, decided to form the GSA to discuss problems caused by anti-gay bias at OHS after school officials refused to allow Gonzalez and her girlfriend to attend the prom as a couple. They hope the GSA will promote equality and open-mindedness among students, administrators and staff of the high school.

"Straight kids cannot turn their backs on rising rates of violence and discrimination against gay and lesbian students," said Amber Sewell, one of the club's founders and straight members. "When students aren't safe, we can't learn. Only when we stand together will we find a solution."

The GSA, which currently meets at a local restaurant, has elected officers and adopted a constitution. The GSA now has approximately 50 members.

"The purpose of the GSA is to provide a safe, supportive environment for students to talk about anti-gay bias, harassment and violence and to work together to promote tolerance, understanding and acceptance of one another, regardless of sexual orientation," said GSA President Yasmin Gonzalez.

Gonzalez's mother, Frankie Michelle Gonzalez, supports her daughter's decision. "I was shocked when I learned that school employees go unpunished for discriminating against gay students. Every day, businesses across Florida provide training to their employees on how to prevent this type of discrimination; it's time for Okeechobee schools to put an end to bullying and harassment of gay kids and start telling teachers that it's not OK for them to do it."

The Federal Equal Access Act (20 U.S.C. § 4071(a)) requires schools that allow any extracurricular activities to meet on campus to allow all extracurricular student groups to do so and to treat every club equally.

"We are taking a stand today because students are entitled to a safe and secure education," said Robert Rosenwald, Director of the ACLU's Florida LGBT Advocacy Project. "Florida's gay and lesbian students deserve schools that are places of learning, not training camps for intolerance, intimidation and violence."

Even a gladiator could use some good press.

Our personals are viewed over 11,000 times each month!
Absenteeism and drop-out rates would decrease dramatically if our schools had local advocates organizing Transgender Day of Remembrance and our allies have made great strides advocating for federal Hate Crimes legislation to explicitly include crimes based on gender identity and expression—the language that covers transgender individuals, but we will need to continue educating policymakers about the rampant violence targeted at our communities.”

Studies estimate the murder rate of transgender persons as high as 16 times the national average. Approximately one murder is reported each month in the U.S.; however, experts believe hate crimes against transgender individuals are significantly under-reported because of pervasive doubts that authorities will treat victims with respect or fairly investigate the crimes. Despite the frequency of hate violence against transgender people, the FBI does not track or keep statistics on attacks that target transgender individuals.

Recognizing the level of violence facing transgender communities, 10 states explicitly cover transgender people in their hate crimes laws with “gender identity or expression” language (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, New Mexico, Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Vermont). While no transgender-inclusive federal law has been enacted, in 2005 the National Center for Transgender Equality was instrumental in passing an inclusive federal hate crimes bill through the U.S. House of Representatives — the first time a transgender-inclusive bill was passed in either chamber of Congress. The causes of transphobic violence are often more complex than discrimination based on gender identity or expression alone. Employment discrimination, high unemployment rates, and economic and social marginalization put transgender people in higher risk situations for violence. Race also plays a significant role in who is targeted in attacks, with young transgender women of color the most frequently victimized.

The news is all too familiar to our community — a transgender person violently attacked because of another person’s hatred or fear,” said Justin Tank, NCTE’s Program Manager and a principle editor of the manual.

“Hate crimes have a devastating impact on victims and survivors as well as on the larger transgender community,” said Richard Juang, co-editor of Transgender Rights and co-chair of NCTE’s Board of Advisors. “Our goal in developing this manual was to share practical ideas for working with crime victims, family members, law enforcement, and the media so local organizers responding to hate crimes have the information they need at their fingertips.”

A wide range of community leaders and professionals contributed to “Responding to Hate Crimes.”

About the Transgender Day of Remembrance

Transgender Day of Remembrance was established to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder on Nov. 28, 1998, kicked off the “Remembering Our Dead” web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999. For more information, please visit http://www.nctequality.org/resources/hate-crimes.

About the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE): The National Center for Transgender Equality, a national social justice organization, advocates for an inclusive federal policy to explicitly cover transgender people in hate crimes laws.
(Transgender continued from page 15) Der Equality is a national social justice organization devoted to ending discrimination and violence against transgender people through education and advocacy on national issues of importance to transgender people. The National Center for Transgender Equality is a 501(c)(3) organization. For more information, please visit www.nctequality.org.

(NJ Court from page 13) New Jersey whose protection and security today's decision moves onto the state's agenda. "The ruling is a tremendous victory for the plaintiff families, for their counsel at Lambda Legal, for New Jersey's LGBT community, and for all fair-minded people throughout the Garden State," Teasdale said. "In the months ahead, we are hopeful that New Jersey's legislature will extend full equality to gay and lesbian families, and we urge the media to continue moving this issue out of the abstract by turning a spotlight on the real families at the heart of today's decision."

Jennifer Chrisler, executive director of Family Pride, issued the following statement: "The unanimous New Jersey Supreme Court ruling speaks to the very real needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) headed families and recognizes our need to protect one another and our children. As the mother of twin four-year-olds, I know how important the protections of marriage are. I am hopeful that the New Jersey legislature will do the fair and just thing and pass a full marriage equality bill. "The simplest way to end marriage discrimination in New Jersey is to simply remove discrimination from marriage," Chrisler said. "The thousands of children being raised by loving LGBT parents in the state of New Jersey should have the most universal way of explaining their parents' relationship – that they are married. It is the basic currency of commitment the world understands and our families and our children deserve nothing less. "While the court has affirmed the need for our relationships to be protected, they left it in the hands of the Legislature to define those protections. We must tell them loud and clear that anything less than marriage is still unequal. Now is the time to stand up and ensure that our rights are not trampled on. Today is a day to demand that the New Jersey Legislature pass a law that would give us the same rights, responsibilities and protections as other loving couples and that those rights should be conveyed through nothing other than civil marriage." Family Pride is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated to securing equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their families. For more information about Family Pride go to www.familypride.org.

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Cleaning up our House
To the Editor:
Now that Decision 2006 is pretty much over and the bloggers and pundits have spoken, let's get back to what really matters—pointing fingers and assigning blame.
More informed folks know that on Election Day voters exercised a mandate to get a grip on the "war on terrorism" that exists in our nation's capital. At the same time, concerned voters were also giving Democrats a chance to restore integrity and civility to our government.
Exit polls suggested that three-quarters of those interviewed said corruption was a very or extremely important factor in determining how they voted. The quagmire we call Iraq also led some Evangelicals and conservatives to cross party lines and vote Democratic.
But let's save our energy for the next election cycle for those candidates who plan on out-praying each other for political gain. What we should be focusing on now is the gross negligence and incompetence of the Bush administration, which has been churning away unchecked for the past six years. The purported new Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, (D-Calif), has been almost too diplomatic of late, reserving her sound bites for instituting the Department of Homeland Security rather than calling for an immediate withdrawal of American soldiers. Instead of calling for a genuine change in priorities, she has continued to argue for balanced budgets and tax cuts for the rich. We need a housecleaning of priorities and an agenda that is both educational and economic.

Our democratic system is based on the notion of a government that is elected by the people and the people having the power to hold that government accountable. Yet we are witnessing a media and a political environment that make it almost impossible for the average citizen to cast an informed vote.

Local Catholic group is distressed by US Bishops' document
To the Editor:
It's difficult to express our level of distress at the U.S. Bishops' approval of "Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care." You can read the approved document at http://www.usccb.org/dpim/Ministry.pdf

Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli, Chair of the Committee on Doctrine that drafted the document, said the tone of the statement was intended to be "positive, pastoral and welcoming." Yet the statement says, "the homosexual inclination is objectively disordered" and compares it to other disordered inclinations such as those that lead to, malice, or greed.

Serratelli admitted that the committee did not consult with gay men and lesbians. Nor, did it consult with parents or pastoral ministers in this ministry. The result is a hurtful, harmful, and pastorally hollow document that essentially says the Church welcomes only gay people if they are admitted of their orientation and are willing to hide it, even if they are not sexually active--the same position the institutional Church holds relative to gay seminarians.

We are deeply concerned this document will continue the spiritual and psychological abuse of our LGBT loved ones, their families, and those who minister with them. By using Church ministers or parents to coerce people struggling with their sexual identity into ministries and therapy that will harm them and, if the person refuses, cause some families to be torn apart; Be used as a license to impede or end ministries that do not adhere to the Courage approach, and divert the energies of such ministries to fending off attacks; Be used to nullify the pastoral language of Always Our Children; this document, and its 45 footnotes, fails to even acknowledge the existence of Always Our Children: Cause many more LGBT Catholics and their families to leave our Church in search of Christian communities where they are truly welcomed and their gifts affirmed; Cause the Church to lose more credibility back on Capitol Hill, we must begin to flush out the ill wind to reveal a more transparent, open and honest environment.

We place these concerns in the care of our gracious and loving God as we pray for wisdom and for an appropriate personal response.

Knowing we must always follow our consciences, our decision must be intentional one. We suggest that to stay in this Church, one must do so in a way that does not enable the Church to spiritually abuse our LGBT loved ones. What might we do?

Do we throw up or hands and walk away? Do we simply ignore the document as the work of unchristened and pastorally insensitive men who reduce pastoral care to obsession with sexual activity? Do we speak our truth to church leaders challenging them to see God's love revealed in our children, as they stood so clearly in Always Our Children?

Perhaps, we can actively respond as the document itself recommends. The document says, "It is important that Church ministers LISTEN TO THE EXPERIENCES, NEEDS, AND HOPES of the persons with a homosexual inclination to whom and WITH whom they minister. Dialogue provides an exchange of information, and also communicates a respect for the innate dignity of other persons and a RESPECT FOR THEIR CONSCIENCES. Authentic dialogue, therefore, is aimed above all at the rebirth of individuals through interior conversion and repentance, but always with PROOF AND REMEDIES FOR CONSCIENCE and with patience and at the step-by-step pace indispensable for modern conditions." (John Paul II) Such dialogue facilitates an ongoing, interior conversion for ALL parties truly engaged in the exchange. (Emphases are ours)

It's too bad the bishops didn't heed their own words while developing this document. Still, we can find out if the bishops really mean they are serious about such dialogue. Here are some suggestions for what each of us might do:

Talk to your pastor individually or with other concerned persons. Call your bishop and ask to meet with him, as individuals, couples, or a group—perhaps in a listening session. Plan a service for LGBT Catholics and their families and friends to gather and affirm that "nothing can separate us from the love of God." Report on the service to your Bishop and perhaps in the local Catholic or secular media. Pray for the strength and wisdom to continue working for justice in the church. Pray for the bishops, so they will be graced by opportunities to get to know and see the faithfulness, goodness, and goodness of our LGBT loved ones. Come up with your own creative possibilities.

Fortunately, the Church of the People of God has been listening to our lesbian and gay loved ones, and their families and friends. That's why polls continue to show increasing grassroots support, acceptance, and affirmation (e.g., a July 2006 poll shows 63 percent of U.S. Catholics support civil unions for gay couples, 32 percent oppose them). That's where we find our hope, it's only a matter of time—time that unfortunately means too much before the Church hierarchy ceases to act.

We close with the remarks of a mom and dad who sent the following note with their survey to the Fortunate Families:

"This has been a 10 year journey... With the love and respect of those who came before us, we have been able to move from the pain and sadness, loss and grief to the joy, courage and passion to have a voice in places that our son cannot. To carry the message that God's love is given to EVERY Person. That this precipitation of ours is the same that we and God conceived, carried, gave birth to and had baptised into the Catholic Family. And the fact that we feel so compelled to fight for a place at the table, we will spend our last breath carrying the message that God loves each of His precious children and we do too."

With prayers that the bishops will soon come to see and cherish our fortunate families and that, in the meantime, our LGBT loved ones, their families, and those who compassionately minister with them are protected by our loving God.

Mary Ellen & Casey Lopata
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From Our Readers

A 17

DEC-JAN 2007 • NUMBER 397 • GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESSEE VALLEY • THE EMPTY CLOSET
MONSTER BALL: The Rainbow Seniors threw a terrific party on Oct. 28.

STICKS AND STONES: Alex Cobus of the GAGV Anti Violence Project, left, with Rochester Police Department GLBT Liaison Officer Jim Hall, and Alternatives for Battered Woman (ABW) Executive Director, Cathy Mazzotta, panel speakers from the October screening of “Sticks and Stones”, the film short about LGBT domestic violence.

CREATING CHANGE: Four GAGV staffers attended the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)’s Creating Change conference in Kansas City in November. Above: Clarence Patton (executive director, NYC Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project), Alex Cobus and Matt Foreman, executive director of NGLTF.

TRANSGENDER REMEMBRANCE: Ally Howell, Elder of the Downtown United Presbyterian Church, and facilitator of the Rochester Transgender Group, led a service at DUPC on Nov. 20 along with the Rev. Pat Youngdahl, to mark the Transgender Day of Remembrance, which honors those lost to transphobic violence. Studies estimate the murder rate of transgender persons is as high as 16 times the national average. Approximately one murder is reported each month in the U.S.; however, experts believe hate crimes against transgender individuals are significantly under-reported because of pervasive doubts that authorities will treat victims with respect or fairly investigate the crimes. Despite the frequency of hate violence against transgender people, the FBI does not track or keep statistics on attacks that target transgender individuals, according to the National Center for Transgender Equality. Ally W. Howell

BILL CLINTON AT THE AIRPORT: The former president was in town to support Democratic candidates. (See OPINION page 9)

Sen. Hillary Clinton visited Equal-Grounds Coffee House and The Pride Connection Gift Shoppe on South Ave. Sen. Clinton was touring the Southwedge neighborhood after announcing a community economic development grant in late October. She talked with patrons, posed for pictures and had a cup of java with John White and Harry Bronson (Monroe County County Legislator), co-owners of the establishment. Photo by Harry Bronson.
FAMILY VALUES: Cindy Meneghin and Maureen Kilian with son Josh after the New Jersey Supreme Court Decision on Marriage Equality, at Lambda Legal’s and Garden State Equality’s post-decision news conferences with the plaintiff couples, held at the Episcopal Diocese of Newark in Newark, NJ on Oct. 25.

ELLN AND PORTIA: Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi at the Ed Sullivan Theatre on Nov. 15 leaving The Late Show with David Letterman.

HAPPY HULAWEEN: Harvey Fierstein and Scott Nevins were at Bette Midler’s Hulaween to benefit the New York Restoration Project, at the Waldorf Astoria on Oct. 31.

IN THE LIFE: Martina Navratilova attends the Gay Life Expo on Nov. 16.

INFAMOUS: Toby Jones on Oct. 9 as “Infamous” premieres at DGA Theater in Manhattan. He played Truman Capote.

TRANS RIGHTS: Openly gay State Senator Tom Duane joins the Transgender Youth Protest on Oct. 25 at New York Port Authority. On Oct. 13, three transgender youth were arrested and charged with trespassing for using a woman’s bathroom at Port Authority. During the arrest, the youths were ridiculed and harassed by Port Authority Police Officers.

SUPER-CAL-IFRAGILISTIC: Calvin Klein at the New Amsterdam Theatre Oct. 16 for the opening of “Mary Poppins”.
AIDS Rochester wishes everyone a SAFE & happy holiday season.
**A view of India**

"Manuel Rivera-Ortiz: India," which opened Nov. 21 at Gay Hall's Link Gallery, will run through Jan. 8.

"Manuel Rivera-Ortiz: India" will be traveling to venues in Buffalo, in Minnesota at the William Whipple Art Center in New York City, abroad to Swiss Insurance in Zurich, Switzerland and beyond, after opening at the show's hometown of Rochester.

From NYFAORG: "A documentary dedicated to picturing stories of hardship and hope in the third world. New York-based photographer Manuel Rivera-Ortiz's photos are provocative and real, marrying journalism and personal experience.

"Rivera-Ortiz's photo reportage is linked to his childhood, which he spent growing up poor in outposts throughout Guaya­ma in Puerto Rico. With photog­raphic heroes that include Sebastian Salgado, Robert Capa, James Nachtwey, Disto­ thea Lange, Gordon Parks, and Steve McCarry, Rivera-Ortiz's work has led him to photograph people from Kenya to Cuba, Turkey to Thailand, and other places in between."

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**Georgia Beers to publish fourth novel**

By Rick Porlier

The Rochester author Georgia Beers is going in new directions as an author, as shown by her upcoming fourth novel, *Fresh Tracks*. Her latest novel involves seven characters in a cabin in the woods, between Christmas and New Year's, all struggling with their relationships and each other. It has made author Beers very proud.

"It's like my baby," she said smiling like a new mother. "It's a little different from what I've written before. Each chapter is written from one character's viewpoint, that way it touches on each character."

Another component of her new direction was the decision to go with Bold Strokes Books, a publishing company, for her third novel, *The Seen: Closer Than Whitney in a Primetime Maze*. Beers also hopes that people who find her newest book will also want to find her previous novels, *Da Brown with Viet Cakes*, *Lesbians who look for romance: where to look*, and *Au Pair in the Face: A Nation*, which she has just completed and is working on.

Despite her new paths, Georgia Beers has several constant in her life. The mainstay is her wife Bonnie, who reads to Beers everyday. "It's all about the family. Bonnie, her partner, her, who are all sitting at the next table, It is seriously challenging, it's an evening not to be missed."

With her work on her fifth novel there is romance, but there's also a bit of mystery added. "Always wanted to write suspense but it's hard. Romance, you know what you get, which is girl meets girl, girl loses girl, and girl gets girl."

Even with the changes of her evolving writing style and publisher there is one anchor in her books. "I like my characters to be real, sitting over at the next table," said Beers.

Those who want to see where the new paths have gone and see who is sitting at the next table can find out in *Fresh Tracks* (published Nov. 13). For more information about other books by Georgia Beers, visit her website at georgiabeers.com. III

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**The Seen: Samantha Vega**

By Michael Steck

"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 are a tribute to those seen in our scene, in a small attempt to put the entity back into the word, "community." This month's "Seen" person is drag queen diva and newly crowned Miss Gay Rochester crown, Samantha Vega.

As the year draws to a close, the anticipation builds in the local drag community and the queen pile their hair higher than Whitney in a Primetime interview. One of the most desirable destinations to wear upon your head in this city is still the Miss Gay Rochester crown. This

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**Save the date: Michael Lee Jan. 19 benefit to celebrate life, love, passion**

By Bill Krebs

For years, vocal artist Michael Lee has been showing the Rochester community how to live proud and strong in the face of adversity. A 20-year sur­vivor of HIV, Lee has used his music and activism to give hope to all who struggle to find life's purpose.

Those who have been touched by Lee, and there are many, know he gives so much of himself. Now he needs us to give a little back.

Over the past year, Lee has been facing a new - and extremely debilitating - challenge: throat cancer. Unlike his fight against HIV, this dis­ease hit him fast and hard. And although he has taken full advantage of Eastern and Western medicine, the cancer has already quieted his beautiful voice. Now, it is seriously threatening him financially. As [Benefit continues page 2](#)

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**RGMIC takes the stage at "Rochester City Music Hall"**

Prepared for a truly spec­tacular evening in the traditional holiday spirit of the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes -- or rather, the Rochesterers. It's all about singing, dancing and variety show theatrics.

"From our guest hostess Aggy Dunne, to Tim Schramm on the Theatre Organ and music rang­ing from the sublime to the ridiculous, it's an evening not to be missed," said Vega.

"It was my fourth year entering the pagant," said Vega. "It was very important to me to prove to, you know, that I could do it. It was very rewarding to [The Seen continues page 2](#)"
Samantha Vega hosts every Thursday and Friday night show. Vega has pranced onto the pavement in her stiletto heels in Rochester for years, and was the trainer for the annual "Salad Bar" revue, which is part of the "Night of 100 Stars" event. Vega’s first gay is that in a nutshell is RGMC.

What is your most proudest drag moment? On Jan. 19, at the First Unitarian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St., Rochester, Mary, "Step Into Life: Celebrating Michael Lee," the title of Lee’s CD was re-released last year. The goal is to raise at least $5,000 through the ticket sales ($20 each) and donations to go toward Lee’s medical costs and living expenses.

Event details, including the exact date and roster of entertainers, will appear on the website of The Empey Cloister and on posters throughout the community. To purchase Lee’s CD, "Step Into Life," and to learn more about Michael Lee, the artist, visit www.MLLMUSIC.COM

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Famous 1964 murder victim Kitty Genovese was a lesbian.

MURDER VICTIM AND LESBIAN KITTY GENOVESE IS SUBJECT OF J.R. TEETER’S NEW PLAY

Catherine Genovese, or Kitty as she was better known, lived in Kew Gardens, Queens. Little about her life is known, as it was her death that made her famous.

At 3:20 a.m. on March 13, 1964, Kitty, while returning home from work at Ev’s Eleven Hour Tavern, was murdered on her Queens doorstep in full view of acquaintances, neighbors, and friends—all of whom did nothing, even though the woman was stabbed repeatedly and stalked by her killer for more than an hour. The New York Times covered the story in many famous articles by A.M. Rosenthal, who later authored a book compiling his experiences, Thirty-Eight Witnesses.

The murder of Kitty Genovese led many individuals and organizations to action. The publicity led to the reform of the NYPD’s telephone reporting system (a precursor to the 911 system), academic psychologists began serious study of Genovese Syndrome later known as the Bystander effect, communities for the first time began instituting neighborhood watch programs and even today the Genovese case is studied in law schools and used as a rallying point for advocates of victims’ rights and self-defense awareness. It is unclear if any of these efforts have made a lasting impression on the blight of urban apathy, as demonstrated by the 1974 murder of Sandra Zahler, whose apartment building overlooked the Genovese murder site. Neighbors said they heard screams and the sound of struggling, but did nothing to save her.

For these reasons and many others, J.R. Teeter constructed the play Witnesses of Kitty Genovese in the spring of 2004. "Constructed is the appropriate term as the entire play is taken from first hand accounts of what happened that night," said Teeter. "I compiled over 500 pages of police hearing minutes, trial transcripts, television interviews, and newspaper articles on the crime. Through this information, the story of the last night of Kitty Genovese is told. I think it’s important for people to experience as much of the whole story as possible as the media has the tendency to focus just on the salaciousness of her murder and little else."

Some of the information often left out of media reports was that Ms. Genovese was a lesbian and living with her partner Mary Ann Zielonko at the time she was murdered. "At the time the police concealed this information as best they could because they were very concerned that homophobic bias on the part of the jury pool may cause her killer to go free. In truth, even Genovese’s family did not know she was gay until recently when Ms. Zielonko broke her silence in the article ‘Remembering Kitty Genovese,’ first aired on Weekend Edition Saturday in 2004 and now available online at www.SoundPrints.org," Teeter said.

Winston Moseley, Kitty’s murderer, is often the focal point of any new media coverage and even today more is known about his life than Kitty’s or anyone else involved in the case. In Witness… his entire life pre- and post murder are examined.

"There was a lot I did not know about Moseley at the time I began writing the play and still a great deal more that I want to know about him afterwards," Teeter said. "He has a despicable soul, but I am not his judge or jury. As far as the play is concerned, his own confession was enough to hang him." Moseley is currently serving time in Corcoran Prison.

"Our goal is to have a series of staged readings in 2007 to help me better the play and still a great deal more that I want to know about him afterwards," Teeter said. "He has a despicable soul, but I am not his judge or jury. As far as the play is concerned, his own confession was enough to hang him." Moseley is currently serving time in Corcoran Prison.

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The play needs to say to the public and some of that material may be added back in. We’re looking for community groups, college organizations and literary groups who are interested in hosting and in some cases participating in staged readings of Witness… with our eventual goal to produce the event locally for the public.”

The Witnesses of Kitty Genovese is looking for locations and community organizations to support and host staged reading and development of this play over the course of 2007. If your organization is interested in supporting this project and Bread and Water Theatre please call 585-271-5523 or e-mail Info@breadandWaterTheatre.org.
Aggy Dune, Kasha Davis
lead line up at Golden Ponds Dec. 8

Aggy Dune and Kasha Davis will perform at Golden Ponds, 501 Long Pond Rd. in Greece, on Friday, Dec. 8. Doors open at 6, dinner at 7 p.m., and the show starts at 8 p.m. (The Dec. 9 show is sold out.)

For reservations, call the Golden Ponds at 585-723-1344. Dinner and show are $27.95. This show will include holiday numbers, and performances by Cher, Tina, Liza, Celine, and Bette.

Buffalo United Artists
features Night of Dyke Drama with Los Deslos

Buffalo United Artists presents The Bosom-Faced Vortex in A Night of Double Dyke Drama, featuring Los Deslos. Terry Baum’s hilarious comedy about coming out, sex and escargot is returning by popular demand from the 2006 Buffalo Infringement Festival. Ramona and Juliet, by Shaw Northrup, is a bawdy parody of the Bard’s classic, tragic love story with a lesbian twist! Murder! Sex! Drunken Mothers! Sex Education with Hand Falo Infringement Festival. Terry Baum’s hilarious comedy about coming out, sex and escargot is returning by popular demand from the 2006 Buffalo Infringement Festival. Ramona and Juliet, by Shaw Northrup, is a bawdy parody of the Bard’s classic, tragic love story with a lesbian twist! Murder! Sex! Drunken Mothers! Sex Education with Hand Falo Infringement Festival. Terry Baum’s hilarious comedy about coming out, sex and escargot is returning by popular demand from the 2006 Buffalo Infringement Festival.

Performances are Thursday, Dec. 14, at 8 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 15, at 8 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 16, at 8 p.m. and Sun­day, Dec. 17, at 7.pm, as Main Street Cabaret, 672 Main St., Buffalo. For reservations, call 886-9239 or see www.buf­­­faloinsua.org.

Another GRRC production is recognized; show here in January

Greater Rochester Repertory Company, for the second time this year, has been recognized by TANYS (Theatre Association of New York State) for one of their productions. See Me A Place at Forest Lawn was granted an Excellence in Ensemble Acting Award to Diane Chernov (Rochester) and Joyce Starkowski (Irondequity).

Ruth Legg, bowing Adjudicator, Theatre Association of New York State (TANYS) had this to say about the production: “In a warm, inspired performance, Diane Chernov and Joyce Starkowski captured the warmth, fears and hopes of two elderly friends facing the future together. They proved that true friendship is to be protected and cherished forever.”

See Me A Place at Forest Lawn was in contention to be chosen for presentation at Festival. Bowing Adjudicators traveled the State and adjudicated over 60 to 70 productions during the year and then chose eight plays to be presented at Festival. GRRC’s May 2006 production of Agatha Christie’s The Mousetrap has also been honored with several Merit Awards. Ms. Chernov also received an Ensemble Acting Award for this produc­tion.

See Me A Place at Forest Lawn will be presented again in January 2007 at Chi Delihaski, GRRC’s new home in Mendon.

The awards were presented on Nov. 19 at the TANYS Festival Awards Banquet at the Queen­­­_-­­­­bury Hotel in Glens Falls, where Festival 2006 was held. The TANYS website is www.tanys.org.

People’s Pottery stages Dec. 11 event as benefit for Gay Alliance

Do you have people on your holiday shopping list who adore handmade creations in glass, wood, metal, fibers, or gold and silver jewelry? Do you like good deals? Then you’ll be interested in the big event on Dec. 11.

Make purchases at People’s Pottery located at 3025 Monroe Avenue in the Spring House Commons on Monday, Dec. 11, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and People’s Pottery will donate 20 percent of sales to the Gay Alliance. People’s Pottery will also supply door prizes and hors d’oeuvres on the evening of the event. Come out and shop!!!
Book Review

Gay Life and Culture
By Tony Lecuozzo

Wondering what to read during the post-holiday season? Maybe it’s time to put aside the steamy paperbacks and try all memoirs to brush up on your gay and lesbian history. If the alternative sounds dull, then you haven’t come across Gay Life and Culture: A World History, Universe-Rizzoli’s absorbing and comprehensive examination of same-sex life from the ancient world to the present.

Edited by Australian scholar Robert Aldrich, the book is comprised of 14 critical essays from every major historical period; each essay, authored by a well-known historian in his or her field, is richly illustrated with visual material, ranging from photographs and paintings, to sculpture and vellum manuscripts. Furthermore, in keeping with the user-friendly focus of the book, a name and subject index follows an extensive notes and bibliographic apparatus.

Gay Life and Culture is a run-of-the-mill history text. Each essay, though comprehensive, is surprisingly clear and concise. The authors know their audience — most likely armchair historians and neophytes alike — and write for them. The resulting narrative gallops from one era to another with a continuity that is difficult to achieve in books published by a number of hands. And if one thinks the preponderance of visuals is meant to stilt the lazy reader, the images actually encourage a closer engagement with the written narrative.

Aldrich begins Gay Life and Culture with a critical overview that addresses, among other things, problems with terminology and misguided assumptions about the linguistic continuity of certain acts and identities, thereby alluding to the book’s only obvious weakness: the title. (But then, from a trans-historical perspective, “Homosexual” and “Queer” are problematic as “Gay” while “Same-Sex,” I suppose, is less marketable from a 21st century consumer standpoint.) The second chapter addresses evidence of homosexual life in ancient Greece and Rome. Through his use of a surprising range of literary and cultural artifacts, Charles Hupperts weaves a convincing argument for the viability of homosexual activity from the beginnings of written record to the fall of the Roman Empire. Such sources, however, are less evident during the Middle Ages. Therefore, in the third chapter, Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller relies almost entirely upon negative references in a variety of religious and legal records — a trend that would persist into the early Modern Age. Notwithstanding the dearth of source material, we can learn a lot about Hergemöller’s method. “(W)omen were judged,” the historian contends, “according to their behavior in relation to ‘nature’; i.e., on whether their acts led ultimately to reproduction” (57). Thus, sexual deviance extended well beyond same-sex activity.

However, but one assume the Renaissance was initially more open-minded. Helmut Puff begins the fourth chapter with a frank assertion: “(T)he celebratory image of sexual freedom in the Renaissance is a figment, based on the selective use of evidence and inspired by works of art... Today’s homosexuals share much less with their supposed companions in the past than modern theories of sexual desire (which see it as innate) would suggest” (80).

Gay Life distinguishes itself from countless other digests of gay and lesbian history insofar as the history of women loving women is examined, when possible, with equal weight to the exclusively male sections. Laura Gowing’s “Lesbians and Their Life in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800” and Lesli J. Rupp’s “Loving Women in the Modern World,” are substantial additions to the collection, showing that the increased visibility of women in the material records enables new narratives to emerge.

Chapters 12 and 13 address non-western same-sex histories out of chronological sequence. This break in the timeline is not surprising through most of the text, Gay Life and Culture proceeds as a history of gay and lesbian culture in Europe — a focus that eventually extends to the Americas during the Colonial times. This solution is neither satisfactory nor avoidable. The average person’s understanding of the “Orient” and its traditions is still shockingly poor; to mix it alongside the evolution of same-sex histories of the West might cause a good deal of complications, especially since the two traditions were, in terms of day-to-day life, isolated from one another until rather recent times.

Overall, Aldrich’s Gay Life and Culture establishes itself as an informative and entertaining history that would grace the shelves of any reader curious about gay and lesbian history. Highly recommended. —

Gay Life and Culture

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Growing Up: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Erich Bellman

This is the year that...

In February, New York and New York Publishing Co. asked me to meet a man arriving later that afternoon. He added that he wanted to stay with me only over night. The trip was an arrangement to buy a property in a Connecticut village with me and a few others. The land was a house and a few acres around the place where I was to stay. He showed me around the house and the country, and I laughed like he was "casing the joint." I was scared to death. He took a shower, which he needed, and helped himself to food from the refrigerator. What he left looked nice and from time to time I would hear the sound of a clock as he moved around the room. He said I should pick him up. Then I sluffed into panic.

In May, M. and I stayed in sales in New York. The last time, in New York, I did not go well. He showed me up where I was staying and the room. His eyes darted around the place where I was sitting and I laughed like he said he looked like he was "casing the joint". I was scared to death. He took a shower, which he needed, and helped himself to food from the refrigerator. What he left looked nice and from time to time I would hear the sound of a clock as he moved around the room. He said I should pick him up. Then I sluffed into panic.

And then he told me that in the two years I had been with him he had never been in a relationship more than a month. I left this for my Brighton Mountain stories. I will ever see again! I don't wish him to be happy on that. And I don't want to worry about it. And I don't care that I was a year he stood up. And on this summer day, he tells me there is a point in his life he would find only one path, make me make my own. He chose the other path.

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Holiday Tips
What to do, where to go, who to call

By Susan Jordan

What goes on during the holidays? Are you running around frantically looking for that perfect gift for the person who has everything? Try the ABC (of course!) Ranch, where you can see the Abc and black tail cat! Maybe relatives are coming to town for the holidays and you don't know what to take them, or you're planning to throw a big party and need fresh ideas.

For great tips on food, drink, events, spirituality, gifts, decorations, stress-beating and more, so you can wrap it all up by the inexorable deadline and get ready for your post-holiday slump!

Food: Caterers Try Susan Plunkett's Fabulous Food: Check out the wide variety of available yummies at www.PlunkettsFabulousFood.com; call 427-2740.

(from several drains)

Caterers: Unik Moo's, 492 W. Ave. -- the best BBQ ribs and smoked turkey in Rochester and great fried okra. They cater and will also sell by the pan. They are family owned. You can Google them for reviews...

(from Anne Tisch)

Drink: Lemon Drop Martini

Microsoft

Juice of 3 Lemons

.5 oz bronze

1.5 oz orange

1 oz triple sec

1 oz cream

Shake and strain into a chilled small wine glass and garnish with a small lemon slice.

Janet's Fabulous Drink: "I love Christmas! To make it easier to prepare a drink, I have a Chartreuse, '57 shirt. A wonderful gift!" (From Janet)

Events: The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus Concert is a holiday tradition in the Rochester light community. "Rochester City Music Hall" takes place on Dec. 8 and 9 at Rochester Performance Center, 25 N. Plymouth Ave. For tickets, see www.rgmc.org or call the Chorusline at 585-423-6050. (From RGMC)

The Community Business Forum December "Mix, Mingle and Jingle" Social, 5:30-7:30 pm, Rochester Science Center, East Ave. $5 member, $10 non-member, open bar and food. All proceeds to support Pride 2007 "Going Hollywood." (From CBFB)

COAP Holiday Cartoon Night, 8 pm. Call Jay and Markis, 746-6105. (From COAP)

Decorations: The Public Market is an inexpensive source for holiday trees and presents. The Market, at 280 N. Plymouth Ave., is open seven days a week until Christmas. People's Pottery, 3025 Monroe Ave., will host an event on Dec. 11. Do you have people on your holiday shopping list who adore handmade creations? People's Pottery will have a large collection of holiday themed cards, ornaments, and other items, especially ornaments, ranging from our rainbow pride glass ornaments to our newest ornaments, the December Diamonds collection. He also picks our large collection of holiday themed cards, stickers, tags, and other very own Outlandish Gift Card.

This time of year, though we are known as a video store, we really do put the emphasis on the gift aspect of our operation because we all really love the holidays." (From Cornelia Bovet)

No Money, No Problem! "So as usual your ass ain't got no cash. Surprise, surprise. Your credit cards are maxed, your pony car is full of lint and your bills are backed up, including the phone bill! You raked up calling those porny phantasies when you had been drinking too much. Yet despite all this you still want to get in to the holiday gift-giving season or at least increase your chances of getting better presents. Well, as the old adage goes, if you can't buy it, steal it (or something like that anyway). Now, if you are a pro-shoplifter it's probably best to avoid big stores or else we'll end up like Winista. Besides you can imagine what a lovely gift a police report written up in the paper will be for your family. I think not. Let's at least TRY to maintain the glamour. The solution: you have all these holiday parties and get-togethers to go to (unless you have no friends and then tie that one name on it!)" (From Pandora Box)

Party Planning: Have a dinner and invite all of your single friends over. Not as a matchmaking exercise, just as a social thing that is couple-centric. Have everyone bring a favorite or interesting bottle of wine or after dinner drink. (From David Quick)

A party venue (let them do the work) Call The Inn on Broadway, 232-3995. (Michael Steck)

A White Christmas party. Menu: White Russians, vichyssoise, lobster tarragon, white asparagus, white chocolate soufflé, white wine. Decorate the house with white candles, white poinsettias, strings of tiny white lights and artificial snow: show the Bing Crosby movie (don't forget popcorn). (From Ronald Firbank)

Spirituality: FYI: Although the evangelical right insists that "Jesus is the reason for the season," the reason for the midwinter sacred time is the winter solstice, not the birth of the sun. Jesus was not actually born on Dec. 25.

Local elves offer tips on food, drink, events, spirituality, gifts, decorations, and elsewhere...

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Juice of 3 Lemons

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1.5 oz orange

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Spirituality: FYI: Although the evangelical right insists that "Jesus is the reason for the season," the reason for the midwinter sacred time is the winter solstice, not the birth of the sun. Jesus was not actually born on Dec. 25.
the church just wanted pagans to replace their old solar time with a Christian event. So the season is really the reason why Jesus is said to have been born on Dec. 25. Even though the Right has intimidated retailers and everyone else into replacing "Happy Holidays" with "Merry Christmas," "Happy Holidays" is still the most polite way to greet friends who are NOT Christian. (From Susan Jordan)

Tree lighting ceremony and luncheon on Sunday, Dec. 30, at 11 a.m. (Open Arms MCC, 740 Marshall Blvd., Chili). "Your honorees will receive acknowledgment cards and be listed in our Light of Love House book if you wish. Your donation of $5 per light will help fulfill the needs of our ministries." In order to participate, please call Anne at 426-0862 or email oamcc@frontier.net.net. (Open Arms MCC)

Tawa Pano Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. 758 South Ave.: tawapanoufcaaim.com.


Chanukah: Chanukah starts Dec. 15 and lasts for eight days. The goal is to eat things with oil --- latkes and dreidels, (From Rabbi Jennifer Gravitz)

"2-Saints" community will be joining Dignity Integrity at 5 p.m. for a traditional New Year’s Eve Service with Communion. "Prayers and petitions for the New Year can be submitted to our info line or email address. We’ll conclude with a holiday social hour," St. Luke St. Simon Crene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. www.di-rochester.org. (Dignity Integrity)

Beating the Stress! Breathe. Yoga instructor Jeffery Young tells his students, "The way to survive the holidays is to remember to breathe! If your buttons are going to get pushed, they’ll be pushed by your family. Go into another room, take some deep breaths, find your center, and then rejoin the party!" (From Jeffery Young)

I always like to decompress with a massage --- 60 minutes makes you feel like you’ve just taken a long weekend. (From David Quick)

"My biggest tip on the surviving the holiday season involves doing it in style. Of course I would have to go there! LOL! For me, the holiday season, especially Christmas, is the one time of year I get to see all of my friends and my family, sometimes in one place. And dammit, I want to look good at least one night of the year! So I tell everyone who will listen, Book that haircut or color NOW! Do not wait until a week before a holiday party or get together to call your stylist. She (or he) will laugh at you and ask what you’re smoking.

The holidays are the busiest time of year for our Hair artisans (rivaling back to school time!). Book appointments NOW or suffer what I suffered last holiday season: wearing a hair-piece that looked like a squirred slip on it... and smelled like one too!" (From Robby Morris)

A Parting Thought: Finally, the ultimate way to Get Through the Holidays — leave the country and have a nice warm vacation in the Caribbean (no anti-gay protestors in Puerto Rico), Mediterranean, South Pacific or possibly on another planet. Ho ho ho. (From S. Claus)

Cold vacation: My favorite thing to do is to go to Toronto. It’s not much colder but you can get a hotel room for $40. I get to see all of my friends and my family, sometimes in one place. And dammit, I want to look good at least one night of the year! So I tell everyone who will listen, Book that haircut or color NOW! Do not wait until a week before a holiday party or get together to call your stylist. She (or he) will laugh at you and ask what you’re smoking.

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Confessions of a Serial Bludger

By Bobby Morris

I'm sitting with a group of friends out on the back deck of my favorite people, Bonds, to discuss our love for the winter season. We are all winter enthusiasts, and our love for the season is driven by the cold weather, the snow, and the joy it brings to our lives. We are sitting at the table, drinking hot cocoa and enjoying the frosty air.

One of my friends, Erin, is a serial bludger and always brings up the topic of our favorite things to do in the winter. She is always looking for new things to try and can be quite adventurous.

She says, "I've been up to my ears in snow this winter. I love the feeling of being out in the cold, surrounded by the crisp air and snow. It's a great way to escape from the stresses of daily life."

I nod in agreement. "I agree. It's such a great feeling to be out in the cold, surrounded by the snow. It's a great way to escape from the stresses of daily life."

Our friend, Sarah, chimes in. "I've been up to my ears in snow this winter. I love the feeling of being out in the cold, surrounded by the crisp air and snow. It's a great way to escape from the stresses of daily life.

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He was telling me the other day that the ‘good work for gay people and the so-called “urban gay ways”’ is running rampant and needs to be addressed. Or that is what he guesses from his cáo deel he added. “The good of” boy network is alive and well here in corporate USA. I was feeling a little embarrassed. You see, Marc has never told anyone he works with that he is gay. God only knows if he could keep that a secret. Some time ago I asked him why he never mentioned it to anyone, thinking there must be one person he could tell. He said, “Are you me? Not only would I fear for my safety, if they knew I am gay, they would find a way to fire me or even fire me. Our company has no nondiscrimination policies in place, offers no group health insurance and has no formal gay employee groups.”

After listening to him, I began to appreciate even more how lucky I was to be working in an environment where diversity is respected and embraced.

Diversity and inclusiveness are hallmarks of one’s professional character. Not being able to actualize these traits in your place of work is troubling. It’s also prehistoric and incomprehensible. When an organization recognizes how diverse it can flourish, it can literally transform the employees as well as the products and services they provide. Being “out at work” is a kind of passive activism — but requires a disciplined judicial approach to be effective.

More and more, workplace rights are showing up in the private sector as well as state and local government. Corporate America is slowly warmung up to the idea that investing in a diverse workforce and the products and services to a gay demographic is just smart business. Many industry analysts suggest that companies who are “out at work” are trying to really make a difference in the lives of working families everywhere. Peace to you and yours this holiday season.

Faith Matters

BARACK OBAMA IS NO GREAT POLITICAL HOPEFUL FOR GAYS

By Rev. Irene Monroe

Barack Obama, the current Illinois sena­tor from Illinois, is a liberal, global phenom­emon. He is being praised as the ad­eine elixir for a nation divided along the fault lines of race, religion, and class.

Obama is also a soldier divided along the battle lines of red State vs. blue State. Obama’s visionary keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2004 — when he said, “There’s no liberal America and a conserva­tive America. There’s the United States of America. There’s not a black America and a white America. There’s not a Latino America and Asian America. There’s the United States of America. We worship an awesome God in this country, and I’m not going to stand here and let my political adversaries put a line across this country and say, ‘We’ve got a black America and a white America.’”

While we might like the idea of having a culture where that might even be possible. Some of us have lives that are so filled to the brim with stuff that you have to do, especially this holiday season, that there is no way we are going to squeeze anything or anybody else in.

Some of you might be wondering what 1 mean by being marginless. Richard Swenson described marginals as “being thirty minutes late to the doctor’s office because you were twenty minutes late getting out of the bank because you were 10 minutes late dropping the kids off at school and then getting the gas two blocks from the gas station and you forgot your wallet.”

Marginal is fatigue; margin is energy.

Marginal is not being able to pay your bills, but having money at the end of the month.

Marginal is busy; margin is calm.

Marginal is anxiety; margin is security.

Marginal is culture; marginal is com­munication.

Marginal is the disease of the new millennium; marginal is its cure.

All too many of us living marginals

Elaine Elkins, M.S.
Psychotherapist

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Grief & Loss
The theme of the text is the importance of Sabbath and the need for rest and renewal. The author discusses the concept of Sabbath as a time for nurturing, restoring, and healing. They contrast the busy modern world with the practice of Sabbath, highlighting its role in human well-being and survival. The text includes historical examples, such as the Exodus from Egypt and the efforts of oppressed minority groups, to illustrate the importance of Sabbath. The author also reflects on personal experiences, such as their own journey from feeling overwhelmed to finding comfort in Sabbath practices. The text concludes with a call to action, encouraging individuals to participate in Sabbath observance and to support organizations that promote Sabbath observance and equality. The text is written in a reflective and personal style, with occasional use of religious language and historical references. The tone is both reverent and engaged, with a strong sense of purpose and conviction.
**Travel**

**IWFL Hall Of Fame follows the New York Sharks to Wichita**

*By Merle Exit*

Women’s tackle football continued its place on the treasure map as a New York Sharks display was unveiled at the Museum of World Treasures in Wichita on Nov. 4, along with the official announcement that the Independent Women’s Football League will make the museum the home of the IWFL Football Hall of Fame.

“It is just the beginning of a long relationship we plan to have with the New York Sharks and the IWFL,” declared Lon Smith, director of sales and marketing for the museum.

“The Museum of World Treasures has agreed to offer these great athletes a well deserved place in history and we are very excited to work with them on this groundbreaking partnership,” stated Laurie Frederick, Chief Executive Officer of the Independent Women’s Football League. “We’ve known all along how tremendous these women are and the sacrifices they make to play this sport that has not gotten much media attention. Sharks players Diana Gonzalez and Jen Blum flew down for the exciting event while members of the local media were on hand as we interview the two wide receivers.

In addition a CD depicting highlights of the 2006 season was set up on a "loop" and shown in a monitor which will allow the public to experience the action of both the New York Sharks as well as other teams of the IWFL.

Later that evening we were treated to a great dinner at the nearby Larkspur restaurant. Joining us were Michael K. Noller, founders Jon and Lorna Kardatzke and the Coleman company’s Director of Global Continuous Improvement, Steve Moore. This was followed by an evening of Karaoke at Best Western Inn,

What did Diana have to say about the whole experience? “We were treated and given the respect NFL players would have been given. Lon Smith, director of sales, whom we dealt with most of the time, was great! He is pro-feminist and maintained an image and worked hard to be role models for other young ladies. I hope we can get the recognition we deserve to inspire others and make this team and league big!”

New York Sharks owner Andrea Douglass may still be in shock, “It is exciting to see our sport and our team getting some recognition. Our athletes and the people who make these teams a reality deserve credit and it can never be enough but this is a good start. I am very happy that Lon Smith and his museum have taken an interest and I look forward to good things coming from this affiliation.”

Air Tran, rated as one of the top airlines, will offer group rates when the yearly inductions begin. Even if you’re not in a group, Air Tran is a very comfortable way to get to Wichita. ❄️
Travel

Fulfilled in Philly
By Mede Debt

The last time I was in Philadelphia, the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts was being built. Its magnificent structure featuring a soaring arched glass facade sets the stage for attractions outside Center City. An advantage with this type of tour is that you are purchasing a 24-hour pass which gives you all around Philly. All of the tours begin at Market Street around 6th, just outside the Independence Visitors Center. Make sure you stop at the nearby Liberty Soft Pretzel at 618 Market Street, as Allan Barone creates the best. “Soft” is the key word. Not “cheesy.” Stuffed pretzels are quite plentiful here.

Philadelphia Trolley Works has a “ride and drop-off” tour that takes you to 20 sites that include major attractions outside Center City. This one incorporated some music sounds and its effect on the artists. The latest is a Blood Blossomed. The newest, called Grocery, is also a café. What is special about this is that Olive Bar, where you can buy various olive oils that Valerie and Marcie choose, is not far from the next for the brilliant couple! It seems that they are looking to open a BYOB Indian restaurant. Valanni is located at 1229 Spruce Street, just a few blocks from the Kimmel Center, but location is not just about where you dine here. The restaurant combines Mediterranean with a Latin cuisine. Executive chef R. Evan Turney uses organic ingredients from local purveyors to create a delicious menu. With a variety of tapas, I chose the Dolmades of spiced ground lamb and warm feta stuffed grape leaves, tzatziki. I was impressed that the stuffing was not simply “rice.” Grilled Romaine. Intriguing concept to your ordinary Caesar salad. A head of romaine was topped with roasted peppers, applewood smoked bacon, polenta croutons (great idea) and chipotle Caesar dressing. Typically, the Executive Chef, R. Evan Turney, is Marcie’s brother. Morimoto Omakase, “chef’s choice,” was a six-course tasting menu that I experienced at one of the Japanese Iron Chef’s restaurants, Located at 723 Chestnut Street, the atmosphere lends itself to white walls and changing colored lights. Yellow tail Tartare was the starter that combined crispy shallots, chives, soy, mirin, dashi, wasabi, and a yama momo. Sashimi salad was followed by Chituan Sea bass, assisted nigiri and a dessert of Tres Leches. Each course delivered some extraordinary tastes. Perhaps I’ll try the Morimoto in Manhattan.

Amada, located at 217 Chestnut Street, serves Spanish cuisine. Tapas-like chashu-stuffed peppers added to plates from the grill. Excellently seasoned lamb chops were a great accompaniment to the grilled seasonal Wild Mushrooms. What really stood out was the cheese plate, each of which had its own unique “dip.” Flan de Queso had a cherry pastry/cheesecake; Garboeta with garlic duck leche and Aged Mangacho had a crumbled lavender honey.

Another lunch was had at XIX, located at the Park Hyatt at the Bellevue on Broad and Walnut Street. This is all about grande arena with food to match. Endive salad with smoked salmon appetizer followed a wonderfully satisfying squash soup. Steak was my choice of entrée, cooked just as requested and topped with an herbed sauce. Not wanting the accompanying shoestring potatoes, a meaty mushroom combo was served.


Where NOT to stay: Marriott Downtown. Awful service and breach of security made it quite difficult for me to have a better trip. Yes, a letter will go to the corporation.

Histocn marker at site of 1960s gay rights demonstration, which predated Stonewall.

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Youth Groups:

Empty Closet

Youth Group (13-23)

Empty Closet

Empty Closet

floor.

The Gay

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Youth Groups:

The GAGV Youth Group (13-20)

meets Sundays 3-4pm at the

Youth Center, 105 E. Main Street, first

floor, Phone: (585) 244-8240 ext. 13

The MCHA Youth Group (14-20)

meets Tuesday from 3-5pm at the

MCHA Project Office, 105 Liberty

Pole Way, Phone: 855-420-1000

The Gay Alliance of the Geneseo Valley (GAGV) is a non-profit agency, dedi-
cated to cultivating a healthy, inclusive
environment where gay, lesbian, trans-
gender, and straight people are
welcomed and supported in asserting equal
rights. We are a coalition of individuals and
groups working to empower GAGV
people, to affirm their identities, and to
create community where the diver-
sity of our community can thrive both
collectively and separately. We educate
and advocate for our rights for all and
for the eradication of homophobia.

The Gay Alliance of the Geneseo Valley

Administrative Offices, Community Center, Empty Closet & Youth Center

875 E. Main Street, Suite 500

Rochester, New York 14605

Office Hours

Monday thru Friday, 9am-6pm

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Greetings from

Alexandra Cobus.


State of the Union:

MARRIAGE EQUALITY - PUT YOURSELF IN THE PICTURE!

By Todd Plank, WNY Marriage Equality Organizer

We’ve all heard the saying “A picture says a thousand words.” Images have the power to transcend our prejudices and stereotypes and can take us out of our heads.

They may evoke feelings and memories that enable us to relate to another person’s experience, whether similar or different from our own. In the upcoming winter and spring seasons the NYS marriage equality cam-
paigns will be using pictures and personal narratives to share important stories about how families (be they comprised of gay, straight, bi, transgender, intersexed, queer or straight identified members, or a unique combination of any of the foregoing), face discrimination in their daily lives.

In addition, these real life stories are intended to demon-
strate how in many ways the lives of these families closely resemble those of their hetero-
sexual counterparts in “straight” society. Gay and lesbian couples often get to work, argue about money, drive the kids to soccer practice, take out the trash, worry about how to care for their aging parents, and plan family vacations. Many LGBT families fit so seamlessly into their neighborhoods that their queerness is virtually invisible to the outsider looking in.

The fact that our families are increasingly perceived as “nor-
mal” is a mixed blessing. (I offer this context for understanding the meaning of normal... Erma Bombeck said that “normal is just a setting on the dryer.”) While it’s great that being a part of a same-gender loving household is, in some instances, losing its shock value in pro-
gressive communities, there is a danger that many potential allies to the marriage equality

(Union continues on page 2)

Youth Update

BOWLING, FEASTING AND POETRY

By Toby Greenfield, Youth Services Director

Happy Holidays. The Youth Program has several events planned the next couple of months, including our third annual Winter Bowling Party on Dec. 10, sponsored by GSLKen, our GSA Network Meeting on Dec. 14, a Holiday Feast on Dec. 17, and our annual Winter Poetry Slam to be held in January.

We’ll also be extending our drop-in hours the week between Christmas and New Years (only for you parents). Check out our youth calendar online at http://youth.gayalliance.org for exact dates and times of all our upcoming groups and events.

The Youth Program is continuing to grow by leaps and bounds, as we saw 17 new youth join the program in October alone. Because of our continued growth, more adult volunteers are needed! Are you interested in hanging out with some of our fabulous youth? I’m looking for adults to help with drop-in hours, and run new specialty groups. If you have a skill you’re interested in sharing with our youth, or just want to come help chaperone events or drop-in hours, please contact me at 244-8246 ext. 13.

Also, we’re looking for light themed books and movies to add to our library. Donations would be appreciated!

Anti-Violence Project:

COMMUNITY FORUMS

By Alexandra Cobus, Anti-Violence Project Coordinator

Greetings from the Anti-Violence Project! We hope everyone has a safe and joyful holiday season.

We are looking forward to 2007, and already have some events planned for the winter season. As we mentioned last month, Rochester’s Gay Health Coalition is still planning a number of wonderful events for National LGBT Health Awareness Week in March. Make sure you look for our ad in February’s Empty Closet for specifics. If you, or your organization have any ideas for events for that week, or are interested in helping us organize it, call AVP at 585-244-8246, x27.

Additionally, the Rochester Domestic Violence Consortium’s LGBT committee is going to keep the discussion going after the screening of the film short, Stricks & Stones. An Introduction to Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community. It was a well-attended event, and the dialogue just seemed to get started when it was time to go! So we would like to regularly offer a general LGBT community forum with representatives from local law enforcement, and other agencies, beginning in early 2007.

This will be an opportu-

tunity for the LGBT community to come and ask questions and get safety information from representatives from the Rochester Police Department, Monroe County Sheriff’s Department, the Anti-Violence Project, the MCHA Project, and other community agencies. We are still looking at dates and times, so please contact AVP if you have any ideas.

Again, have a safe and wonderful holiday season!

NETWORKING: At the New York State LGBTQ Domestic Violence Network’s Annual Meeting in Saratoga: Melissa Waterer of the MCHA Project, Cathy Mazzotta from ABW, Sue Tomkins from SUNY Buffalo Law School, Ron Pawelczak from MC Family Court. Photo by Alexandra Cobus.

FYI: Library/archive

The Gay Alliance Library and Archive will be closed to patrons until the move from 179 Atlantic Ave. to 875 E. Main St., starting Dec. 1, is complete. Check www.gayalliance.org for updates and contact information.
movement will remain dormant because they fail to understand the federal and state legal distinctions that continue to oppress and stigmatize families perceived as falling outside the mainstream culture.

The irony of this is that less than 25 percent of families in the U.S. are comprised of the original biological parents and children. This means that "alternative families" (single parent, blended and lgbtqi families to name just a few) make up the majority (77 percent) of American families. The public and even more so our governmental officials are slow to recognize that there really is no "average" American family anymore. Family units have become too diverse to lump them into a handful of convenient categories. Many of these "alternative families" lack the protections and advantages they need to prosper because the existing systems are operating on the false assumption that most families still fall within the framework of the "Leave it to Beaver" Cleaver's family model.

The challenge for lgbtqi families is to increase our visibility and educate our communities, health and human service providers and legislators on the changes that need to be made to rectify the injustices that create undue anxiety, frustration, anger and unfair financial burdens and collectively compromise the welfare of both couples and children in our state and nation. Local marriage action teams are embarking on a variety of projects to accomplish these objectives and they need your help!

Same-sex couples, lgbt adoption parents, children with one or more queer identified moms or dads, heterosexual couples with lgbtqi family members and anyone else who has a significant relationship with an lgbtqi person are being extended a special invitation to send in submissions for our Rochester "Family" album. You can send in snapshots of special (ex. wedding, baby adoption shower, anniversary cruise) and/or everyday occasions (backyard barbecues, children's birthday party, giving the dog a bath) that reflect the reality of your relationship.

When submitting photographs (FYI: the album will be 8x12 x 11) it is requested that you provide a brief description of what the picture (ex. "Family picnic at Letchworth State Park, Sept. 2007. Our family (from left to right): Jim, Jean, Carl, twins -- aged 3 -- Cyril and Simon, Bruce")

One of the goals of the family album project is to share these albums (several are being created throughout the State) with our legislators to educate them about our families and help them to understand the critical importance of passing a marriage bill to protect same-sex couples. Therefore, it is important that you include with your snapshot a statement about why marriage equality matters to you and your family. The more personal and specific you can make this the better!

For example: "My spouse and I, ages 74 and 71, have been together at 35 years, but we do not have any legal standing in NY. Although we have drawn up living wills, health care proxies and powers of attorney; we worry that our wishes will be challenged by relatives who refuse to recognize our relationship. Another grave concern is if and how the surviving partner will be able to keep our house, to keep not receive asitemap security survivor's benefit despite our paying into the system for our entire working lives (for, 10 or 15 years). And while we both served in the armed forces, we cannot pass on our military pension to our lifetime mate. Owe the years we have made sizable charitable gifts to the United Way as well as supporting the culture and arts in Rochester. We volunteer at the RPO and our local library. As contributing members of our society we cannot understand why we must continue to face marriage discrimination in what should be our golden years. Please help us get the protections and rights we deserve by supporting a marriage bill in NYS. Yours truly... Ned and Jules."

Along with the photos families are invited to include memorabilia from events commemorating milestones in their lives, such as a wedding, anniversary, birth/adoption or graduation announcement. Another special component of this album is the C.A.R.E. (Children's Artwork Recognizes Equal) project. Marriage Equality isn't just for adults! Children with gay and lgbtqi parents are also denied rights and protections because their families are not respected under the law. Every child should be able to celebrate his or her family's love. The challenge for the future is to increase our visibility and educate our communities, health and human service providers and legislators on the changes that need to be made to rectify the injustices that create undue anxiety, frustration, anger and unfair financial burdens and collectively compromise the welfare of both couples and children in our state and nation.
ily. As a part of our family scrapbook we would like kids to send in drawings of their families and, if they would like, a little story about why they are proud of their family.

All submissions should be sent to Todd Plank/GAGV, Family Album Project, 875 E. Main St, Suite 500 Rochester NY 14609. Please include your mailing address, telephone and email address so that you can be contacted if there are any questions and you can be updated about progress on the album as well as notified of upcoming marriage equality events.

Field Organizer Todd Plank at 585-244-8640 ext. 24 with questions, comments and to RSVP.

Lastly, if you would like to join our local marriage action team and get involved in this or other fun and exciting projects underway, contact me to find out the date of our next marriage action team meeting. Phone (above) or email me at toddp@gagv.us. Please put Marriage Action Team in the subject line.

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CATHOLIC GAY AND LESBIAN FAMILY MINISTRY

The Catholic Gay and Family Ministry is a support group for Catholic families of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered members. We meet on the third Thursday of each month at the school of the Good Shepherd Church, 3388 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester, 7 p.m.-9 p.m., for sharing, discussion, and refreshments.

Contact Ken or Jan for further information at 302-7862.

The topics of our upcoming meetings are: Dec. 21, the Holiday gathering with friends and family including the GLBT members; Jan. 18: Todd Roush, of the GAGV will talk about legislative concerns. Feb. 10: Day of Reflection at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, 190 Presbyterian Rd., Rochester.

Contact Mary Ann O'Brien at maob@rochester.org for info.

COAP

COME Out and Play has a busy schedule to keep us active this winter.

In December — COAPers Jay and Mark will be hosting the fifth annual Christmas Cartoon Night. And we will be visiting a new Indian Buffet. Find out where, when you come on our website.

Coming up in January we join as we check out Rochester’s new wine bar and The Gay Fathers’ Group concludes with a holiday social hour, leaving us with Music. While we are not allowed to distribute Communion, we will celebrate the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic tradition as an expression of our public discourse about the Church’s teachings concerning gay and lesbian children, this liturgy continues to affirm that our lives and loves are indeed sacramental. Social follows. Anticipating that most of our members will not be able to gather on Christmas Eve, we will have a Christmas MEETING ON DEC. 24 at 7 p.m. Consider going to "2 Saints" for their 10 p.m. Christmas service. On New Year's Day, Jan. 1, the "2 Saints" community will be joining us at 5 p.m. for a traditional New Year's Eve Service with Communion. Prayers and petitions for the New Year can be submitted to our info line or email address. We'll conclude with a hotel family hour, leaving plenty of time to go to other celebrations or church and around town.

On Jan. 19 we'll join in our second Episcopal Eucharist of the month, a simple service without music; coffee social to follow. Anticipating that most of our members will not be able to gather on Christmas Eve, we will have a Christmas MEETING ON DEC. 24 at 7 p.m. Consider going to "2 Saints" for their 10 p.m. Christmas service. On New Year's Day, Jan. 1, the "2 Saints" community will be joining us at 5 p.m. for a traditional New Year's Eve Service with Communion. Prayers and petitions for the New Year can be submitted to our info line or email address. We'll conclude with a hotel family hour, leaving plenty of time to go to other celebrations or church and around town.

On Jan. 24 we're trying SOMETHING NEW: 5 p.m. potluck (new year's gift exchange), after which we're proposing to St. Michael's RC Church on Clinton Ave. North of Clifford Ave. for their 7 p.m. Mass.

No longer on Sundays, our on-going Presentation Series will resume on a quarterly basis beginning for the new year with social activities as well. For further information on any of our gatherings, visit our website at www.coap-east.coop or call our recorded info line at 234-5092.

Check out the COAP website at www.coap-east.coop for more information about COAP — you can contact Jeni at 395-7913 or Tom at 454-3609. Hope to see you soon!
ship (Dan Sapper –daniel.sapper@kodak.com); and

ship (Dan Sapper -daniel.sapper@kodak.

ship (Dan Sapper -daniel.sapper@kodak.com); amy.friend@kodak.com); and

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Life in Three by Five
By Dalton Labarge
Just as the night before, and the night before that, and the accumulative nights before that - which piled up on his head - he woke up as the green light coming from the back corner of his darkened room ahind in its way past the bowls of silence and abyss, and appeared into his redfined eyes at 3:01.

As always, he counted the hours of sleep, never using more than a few fingers, and attempted to equate the bending of a finger in several angles and the crescent beauty of his family and daily routines, dictating to him the definitions of Grief, of mourning, of pain, of weeping, of prepared potluck dishes, and of the gathering of souls around a hollow body, elevated in the center room of the house. Unnoticed, he stepped back into the procession of sorrows, his absence replaced by the indifferent tones of conversation which his family was infamous for.

The body of a familiar stranger was before him, as he followed a line of guests from room to room, each too concerned with their own affairs to notice that he had escaped his mind in the night. The first floor of the house above his basement bedroom was filled with faces that had no names, and smells carded tuck away in the most strategic hiding places around his home.

He restored life that day to the weeping of family members, the smell of fried breads, and a lingering scent of death. The first floor of the house above his basement bedroom was filled with faces that had no names, and smells carded tuck away in the most strategic hiding places around his home.

My war cry is I will walk of Tears, I will steal a stallion I" I shout, and a smiley pinked face

New Age Ingen
By Dalton Labarge
I am a finger-painted face adorned in plastic beads, and a synthetic-feathered war bonnet. I am a savage.

I will spoil your husband, and steal your wife, as I did towns and shools, stealing plasma televisions.

My war cry is a repetitive slap, to and from my open mouth, as I cook my dollar store bow, a rubber tip at your dog.

I smear my mountain bike, with multicolored dyes. "Ride great roads!" I shout, charging General Custard's SUV.

I light for the honor, of my quarter Cherokee great-great Grandmother, the old Indian princess, with a Wageman's card.

I will walk the Trail of Tears, on a slow-paced segment, speeding my ancestors' ashes along the uneven paved sidewalk.

I will face the white devil under my shag-carpet shawl, indiscrately preparing for revenge.

After all I am an savage, Jonathan Marble of Greater Rochester, with a speck in one hand, and an boon in the other.

and feelings that he could not interpret. Confused by the presence of so many alien events, he searched for the index card that would reveal the purposes of the measures he was facing. As men of omnipotent Grief or, not for showing emotion. But you don’t know what goes on in my mind.

Haven't heard it before. You say my heart is ice for not showing emotion. But you don’t know what goes on in my mind.

Cold Hearted
Say what you will It’s not like I. Haven’t heard it before. You call me cold. And cruel because I’m honest and I. Speak my mind. Cruel or not I. Speak my mind.

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behind this corpse, but stood without re assurance, for there was no index card for this face.

"It's hard to lose a mother," a man spoke from behind, placing scarred hands that had once forged great works of iron on the boy's back. "And I'm sure you miss her, as we all miss her," the man continued, unaware of the boy's naivety. "But grief will swallow your words, and carve its path on your body if you bear it too long."

There were no index cards for such advice, for abstract phrases, or metaphors, so confusedly the boy questioned the man with a hand on his back. "I'm not sure I know her," he spoke, unaware the man had removed his hand from his shoulder. "My mother is Katali Swamps, and that is not my mother. She is silent of iron on the boy's back. 'I'm sure you misunderstood me.'"

The man was appalled at the boy's drifted into a temporary state of sleep, unaware of the card that was hidden under his mattress labeled "Deceased," "Tired."

The sun began to set, and as darkness,

"Work," mis-...
Please let me introduce myself. My name is Ralph Padilla—sales and leasing professional for Bob Johnson Chevrolet. As an automotive veteran, I am proud to be working at the #1 Chevy dealership in Rochester—Bob Johnson Chevrolet.

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classified ads are $5 for the first 30 words; each additional 10 words is another $1. We do not bill for classifieds, so please send or bring ad and payment to: The Empty Closet, 815 E. Main Street, Rochester, NY 14605. The deadline is the 15th of the month, for the following month’s issue. We cannot accept ads over the phone. We publish free ads for prisoners on a space-available basis. Pay when you place your ad.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Seeking reviewers, reporters, photographers, distribution volunteers. If you can write, take photos or distribute bundles of the paper around town, and are dependable and capable of meeting deadlines, please call Susan at 244-0159; empcloset@gagv.us. Meet new people and make new connections!

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PERSONALS
Handsome, friendly 38-year-old male. I enjoy: things related to scientific pursuits, gardening, fishing, miniature golf. Eastman concerts, baseball, chess, family and reading. Looking for life-long partner with some similar interests. Serious replies only. I am very handsomely – I have cute dark hair and brown eyes – so take a risk and write. Address: 12548 Latta Rd., Rochester NY 14612.

FOR RENT
House for rent, Winton Village area. Charming three bedroom, living, kitchen, dining, two bath, with stove, refrigerator, washer/dryer. Off street parking. No pets, $850 per month plus utilities and security deposit. Call 317-2465, Kristen or Jim.

For rent: Two bedroom, $700 plus utilities. Winton and Dalekith. Washer and dryer hook up, garage, sun porch, gumwood trim, spacious and charming, freshly painted. Please call 288-4200; 314-8259, Available immediately.

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. In our group, we are coming out and coming clean with terms of identity, self-acceptance, and facing our emotional challenges.

Opening our hearts and minds to the obstacles, other drugs of abuse run rampant in our community and we do not exclude those so addicted. We will not be shunted down for speaking words like pot, cocaine, crack, heroin, ecstasy, K, speed, meth, pills, etc.; the bars play a large role in socialization within our community which can present challenges even when we are fully committed to our sobriety.

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 Group: 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 Hillside Ave and before Highland Ave. Or take the #1 Park Ave to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton. 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, 179 Atlantic Ave, at Elton St. Bus riders: Take the #18 University Ave bus, use the stop between Portsmouth Terrace and Elton St., Walk one block north on Elton St. to the GAGV Community Center. • Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts • Men’s meeting

Saturdays
Saturday Night Special: 7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd. Bus riders: The #18 University Ave does not go by the church on weekend evenings. Take the #1 Park Ave to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton. • Open meeting, all are welcome, “straight-friendly” • Mixed men and women • Handicapped accessible, take the elevator to the basement

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

Sundays
Rochester Gay Men: 8:30 p.m. at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 175 Fitchburg St. Bus riders use the Fitchburg St stop on Main St at the Country 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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FRIDAY 1

Mardi Gras-Ortiz India. Photographs at Link Gallery. City Hall, through Jan. 8.

SATURDAY 2
COAP Bowlidays Night, 11 pm, John S., 621-1033.

Rochester Women’s Community Chorus concert, “Peace By Piece.” 8 pm, Hudson Church Performance Hall, 50 N. Plymouth. $10; students/ seniors $7; children under 12, Silent auction. 234- 4441; concert@ruwc.org.

SUNDAY 3
Dignity Integrity Episcopal Eucharist with music, followed by a brief coffee-fee social before heading over to Third Presbyterian Church for 7 p.m. AIDS Day Service, St. Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., www.di- rochester.org. 234-5092.

World AIDS Day Faith-based Prayer Service. Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Melds St at East Ave. 7:30-9 pm, 265-5904. Reflection by Wade Norwood, director. Safety Net Initiatives, Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, RATER.


MONDAY 4
COAP at Indian Buffalo 7 pm. Jeff F., 217/7786.

FRIDAY 8
Lakeview Gay Men’s Chorus, “Rochester City Music Hall.” Hudson Church Performance Hall, 50 N. Plymouth Ave. 8 pm. 423-0650; www.therGMChor.org.

SATURDAY 9


SUNDAY 10
Tree lighting ceremony and luncheon at 11 am (Open Arms MCC, 740 Marshall Rd., Chili). Honorees will receive acknowledgment cards and be listed in Lights of Love Honor book if you wish. Donation of $5 per light will help fulfill the needs of ministries. In order to participate, please call Anne at 426-0862 or email oammc@frontiernet.net.

Dignity Integrity Roman Catholic Sunday Liturgy of the Word with Music. Coffee social follows. 5 pm, St. Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., www.di-rochester.org. 234-5092.

COAP Youngstown party. 24- 8640, ext 13, Sponsoring by GLSEN. Pizza, GSA networking.

THURSDAY 14
The Community Business Forum December “Mix, Mingle and Jingle” Social, 5-7:30 pm, Rochester Science Center. East Ave.; $5 member/$10 non-member, open bar and food. All proceeds to support Pride 2007 “Going Hollywood.”

Gay Straight Alliances (GSA) meeting. GAY Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., 246-8640 ext 13.


FRIDAY 15
COAP Holiday Cartoon Night 8 pm. Jay and Mark, 745-6065.

SATURDAY 16

SUNDAY 17
GAY Youth Group Holiday Feast. 244-8640, ext. 13.


THURSDAY 21
Winter solstice. Ancient holy time marking the return of the sun. The “reason for the season.”

Gay Fathers Group holiday potluck. Call John, 426-3695.

SUNDAY 24
Tawa Pano Christmas Eve service at 7 pm. 758 South Ave.; 594-5613; twa-pano@aim.com.

MONDAY 28
Kwanzaa celebrations. Call Tawa Pano church, (585) 594-5613.

WEDNESDAY 27
COAP Game Night at Equinox Grounds, 7 pm. Craig W., 764-1926.

SUNDAY 31
Tawa Pano watchnight service at 10:30 pm. 758 South Ave.; 594-5613; twa-pano@aim.com.

Dignity Integrity New Year’s Eve the “2-Saints” community will be join-
**MONDAY**

LG&B Support Group
Third Presbyterian Church, corner of Meigs, East Ave. First, third Mondays, 7:30-9pm. Call for location, 254-4444

Rochester Historical Bowling Society
7:00pm, Mondays. Clover Lanes, 2750 Monroe Ave. (Area is full)

COAP
Come Out and Play. Business meeting last Monday; Equal Grounds Coffee Shop, 750 South Ave. 7pm, Tom M. 454-3609.

**HW Positive Gay Men Support group**
Every Monday, 5pm. AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave. 442-2220, x2361

Green Party (political)
Second Mondays 7-9pm. GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St., 5th floor. 244-6740

**TUESDAY**

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
Board of Directors Meeting, Third Wednesdays, 7pm, 875 E. Main St., 9th floor. 244-5610

New Freedom New Happiness AA Gay meeting
7pm, Umatan Church, 220 Winton Rd. Men and women. Open meeting

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

FrontRunners/RunWalkers
6pm run/walk, meet George Eastman House parking lot, 9 am, 442-7412

Empire Bears
First Wednesdays, 7:30pm. GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St., 5th floor. Info: 325-0156

MOCHA Youth Group
Third Wednesdays, 6:30-9pm. GAGV Community Center, 121 N. Fitzhugh St.

Multicomb Coffee Talk
7pm, Spa Cafe, 738 Park Ave. Social for former Multicomb 4 BBS members; other gay club geeks welcome, every fourth Wednesday 7pm

MOCHA Library & Archives
New Hours TBA

Brothers Keeper

ASA

**WDnesday**

Gay Men's AA meeting
Each Friday, 7:30-9:00pm. Closed meeting. GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St, 2nd floor, 244-6740.

ASA

MOCHA Hepatitis Clinic
Free HIV testing and vaccinations, Third Tuesdays, 5:30-8pm, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

Rainbow Seniors Yoga
6-7:45 pm, Arms MCLC, 125 Norris Drive, 442-6369.

**THURSDAY**

Women's Community Chorus
Rehearsals each Wednesday, 6:30pm. Call for location. 271-0355

Tawa Pano Choir Team, Study
Team rehearsals every Wednesday, 6pm. Study: 7:15pm, 758 South Ave.

Country Line Dancing/Two Stepping
Every Wednesday, buffalo, 7pm, 7pm, 758 South Ave.

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**Saturday**

Rochester Rams Bar Night
Third Saturday, 8pm-2am. Chancellor Forum, 670 University Ave. 271-0359

FrontRunners/RunWalkers
Run/walk, Meet George Eastman House parking lot, 9 am, 442-7412

Empire Bears Bar Night
First Saturday, Chancellor Forum, 470 University Avenue. Barline: 254-3381

Empire Bears Potluck
Second Saturday, MOCHA Youth Center, 875 E. Main, first floor. Prince St. entrance. Free. 244-6840


SUNDAY**

More Light Presbyterian Church for gay and lesbian people and friends. 11am, last Sundays. Downtown Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 325-4000

Tawa Pano Unity Fellowship Church
Sunday, 9:30am, 758 South Ave. 617-4278

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
Second or fourth Sunday, 1pm, 424-7185

Dignity-Spirit/Gay Men’s Support Group
3:30pm, last Sunday, Simon Cayne Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Every Sunday, 234-5092

Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church
420 Marshall Rd., Church, 234-5092

Gay Men’s Alcoholics Anonymous
Anonymous group. Every Saturday Night, 12:00am - 6:00am. 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 234-8670

**MONDAY**

Gay and Lesbian Professionals’ Social Group
Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 7:00pm, Moore 305 on River Campus of U. of Rochester, Email: glpsych@ur.syr.edu

Green Party (political): Movie Night
Second Thursdays, 7-9pm. GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St., 5th floor, 244-6740

Catholic Gay & Lesbian Family Ministry
Third Thursdays, 7-9pm, School of Good Shepherd Church, 328 E. Henrietta Rd. 324-9262

FRIDAY**

Gay Men’s AA meeting
Every Thursday, 9 pm, Monroe 305 on River Campus of U. of Rochester, Website: www.gm.asso.urochester.edu

**Saturday**

Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus
Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St., 3:30-9:00pm. 420-0650

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

Partner Bereavement Group
First and third Thursdays, 5:30-7pm. Line Care, 311 Winton Road, 244-1414

MOCHA Chat
Second Thursdays, 6-8pm, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

GAGV Anti-Violence Project Support group for LGBT victims of domestic violence. First Thursdays, Safe location. Call 244-66-40 ext 17.

**U. of Rochester Pride Network**
Every Thursday, 9 pm, Monroe 305 on River Campus of U. of Rochester, Email: www.urpride.uri.edu

Green Party (political): Movie Night
Second Thursdays, 7-9pm, GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St., 5th floor, 244-6740

**TUESDAY**

Atlantic Five
Support group for men of Second Mondays, 7-9pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 S. Fitzhugh St. Every Sunday, 234-5092

Gay Fathers’ Support Group
First and third Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30pm. GAGV, 875 E. Main St., 5th floor. The MOCHA Youth Group
3-5 pm, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400; 244-6840

MOCHA Hepatitis Clinic
Free HIV testing and vaccinations, Third Tuesdays, 5:30-8pm, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400

Rainbow Seniors Yoga
6-7:45 pm, Arms MCLC, 125 Norris Drive, 442-6369.

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Tawa Pano Choir Team, Study
Team rehearsals every Wednesday, 6pm. Bible study: 7:15pm, 758 South Ave.

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ELC '06 Huge Success

Now it’s time to thank the people who made it so.

The Honors: High praise indeed

The Gay Alliance Leadership Awards honor individuals and organizations that are leaders in advancing equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals in the greater Rochester area.

2006 GutShine Media Award
Christine Carrie Fien, Reporter, Messenger Post, honored for recognizing individuals and organizations who have made a significant contribution to the greater Rochester area LGBT community.

2006 Community Leadership Award
New York State Senator, Joseph E. Robach, honored for his leadership in the fight for LGBT equality.

2006 Business Leadership Award
Nixon Peabody LLP, honored for its commitment to LGBT inclusion in the workplace.

The Panelists: The Professionals

Thank you, Chris Beato; thank you, Darla Blazey; thank you, Stanley Byrd; thank you, Ralph Carter; thank you, Edward J. Ciavichi; thank you, Margaret A. Clemens; thank you, Derek Collins; thank you, Jeff Fowler, Ph.D.; thank you, Scott Fearing; thank you, Jeannie Gainsburg; thank you, Amy Gallina; thank you, Pamela Hines; thank you, Jonathan Lang; thank you, Nancy Laurie, Ph.D.; thank you, Samir Luther; thank you, Teresa Mayer; thank you, Marjorie Meyer; thank you, Karen M. Mustian, Ph.D.; thank you, Rich Ognibene; thank you, Todd Plank; thank you, Brian Quinn; thank you, Steven Salatino; thank you, Nikia Speed; thank you, Richard Spencer; thank you, Tim Stallman; thank you, Jamie Whitbeck; thank you, Shane L. Wingard; thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

The Key: Riveting Eloquence

Keynote by Kevin Jennings, E.D., GLSEN, NYC, stirs crowd. 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 traveled an unusual road from a Carolina trailer park to Harvard’s halls to his current position as the head of the nation’s leading organization working to end anti-LGBT prejudice in schools. Thank you Kevin.

The Sponsors: Without whom...

The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley and the Finger Lakes LGBT Workplace Alliance appreciate the continuing partnership of businesses within our community who support our mission and vision.

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The Recap: And what a Success it was

Workplace and the New Employee:
Managing Across Four Generations
Life changes, layoffs, new career entry into the work place are causing a dynamic of the new employees. Unlike any other time in western history there are four generations in the workforce. A panel of HR professionals, diversity champions, independent business owners and new employees will discuss generational and other differences related to LGBT issues such as: what to do next, how to come out, how LGBT friendly is a company or how to find out about LGBT benefits.

Employee Resource Groups: Now is the Time!
A workshop where all benefit from discussion of the four stages of growth for an employee resource group (ERG): Forming, Norming, Storming and Performing. No matter where you or your company’s ERG is, or may not be, on this journey, we'll help you get to the next step!

LGBT Education: From Classroom to Conference Room
It is well known that Rochester is facing a major brain drain of its young adult population. Local educator, Rich Ognibene discusses educational issues for LGBT youth, and what you and your company can do to create a more welcoming environment for your future employees.

The ABCs of Being an Ally
Do you want to be an ally for the LGBT community, but don’t know where to begin? Are you afraid of coming out as an ally? Come to this workshop to learn about the benefits of being an ally, and the stages of being an ally (awareness, education, skills, and action).

Coming Out: The Continuum from Student to CEO
Wondered about finding the right college or going back into the closet after being out in college? Starting your coming out journey at work and not sure what to do next? Is your college or company ready to come out in support of the LGBT community. Shane Windmeyer, author of the Advocates College Guide for LGBT Students and Samir Luther, Manager, HRC Workplace Project, help you navigate from college to the corporate board room.

The Business Case for Marriage Equality
Why is equal access to marriage important to LGBT families and the community? How do businesses benefit from marriage equality? What is going on in New York State? What can businesses do to respond to the changes that are occurring in the state?

The Committee: Pulled it off again

Thank you, Derek Collins, Co-chair; thank you, Jonathan Lang, Co-chair; thank you, Jim Anderson; thank you, Darla Blazey; thank you, Ralph Carter; thank you, Kay Conheady; thank you, Judy Cranston; thank you, Julie Devins; thank you, Scott Fearing; thank you, Amy Friend; thank you, Kris Hinesley; thank you, Emily Jones; thank you, Jacqueline Keenan; thank you, Teresa Mayer; thank you, Marjorie Meyer; thank you, Keith Powell; thank you, Rochelle Richardson; thank you, Kathryn Rivers

The fine print: Roll the credits

The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley is a non-profit organization established in 1973. Staff members, the board of directors, and hundreds of dedicated volunteers enable the Alliance to continuously provide equality programs and services to area communities.

Thank you David Carpenter and the Rochester Riverdesk Convention Center Staff.
875 E. Main St., Suite 500 Rochester, New York 14605 www.GayAlliance.org

Thank you, Citibank
Thank you, JP Morgan Chase
Thank you, Exelon
Thank you, Excellus
Thank you, Eastman Kodak Company
Thank you, NEC
Thank you, Mayo Clinic
Thank you, E.D., GLSEN, NYC,
Thank you, S: Group
Thank you, Empire State
Thank you, Imaging Financial Services, Inc.
Thank you, DBA: EKCC
Thank you, Thomson West
Thank you, University of Rochester
Thank you, Rochester Riverside Rochester, New York

Thank you, High praise indeed
The Gay Alliance Leadership Awards honor individuals and organizations that are leaders in advancing equality for LGBT individuals in the greater Rochester area.

Thank you, Platinum Sponsors:

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The Recap: And what a Success it was

Workplace and the New Employee:
Managing Across Four Generations
Life changes, layoffs, new career entry into the work place are causing a dynamic of the new employees. Unlike any other time in western history there are four generations in the workforce. A panel of HR professionals, diversity champions, independent business owners and new employees will discuss generational and other differences related to LGBT issues such as: what to do next, how to come out, how LGBT friendly is a company or how to find out about LGBT benefits.

Employee Resource Groups: Now is the Time!
A workshop where all benefit from discussion of the four stages of growth for an employee resource group (ERG): Forming, Norming, Storming and Performing. No matter where you or your company’s ERG is, or may not be, on this journey, we'll help you get to the next step!

LGBT Education: From Classroom to Conference Room
It is well known that Rochester is facing a major brain drain of its young adult population. Local educator, Rich Ognibene discusses educational issues for LGBT youth, and what you and your company can do to create a more welcoming environment for your future employees.

The ABCs of Being an Ally
Do you want to be an ally for the LGBT community, but don’t know where to begin? Are you afraid of coming out as an ally? Come to this workshop to learn about the benefits of being an ally, and the stages of being an ally (awareness, education, skills, and action).

Coming Out: The Continuum from Student to CEO
Wondered about finding the right college or going back into the closet after being out in college? Starting your coming out journey at work and not sure what to do next? Is your college or company ready to come out in support of the LGBT community. Shane Windmeyer, author of the Advocates College Guide for LGBT Students and Samir Luther, Manager, HRC Workplace Project, help you navigate from college to the corporate board room.

The Business Case for Marriage Equality
Why is equal access to marriage important to LGBT families and the community? How do businesses benefit from marriage equality? What is going on in New York State? What can businesses do to respond to the changes that are occurring in the state?

The Committee: Pulled it off again

Thank you, Derek Collins, Co-chair; thank you, Jonathan Lang, Co-chair; thank you, Jim Anderson; thank you, Darla Blazey; thank you, Ralph Carter; thank you, Kay Conheady; thank you, Judy Cranston; thank you, Julie Devins; thank you, Scott Fearing; thank you, Amy Friend; thank you, Kris Hinesley; thank you, Emily Jones; thank you, Jacqueline Keenan; thank you, Teresa Mayer; thank you, Marjorie Meyer; thank you, Keith Powell; thank you, Rochelle Richardson; thank you, Kathryn Rivers