GLSEN conducts training for Marshall High: GSA starts up again
By Susan Jordan
The Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) is working with local school administrators and boards to help make area schools safer for LGBT students. One ongoing issue has been the resistance shown in the past to establishment of a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) at Marshall High School. The Marshall GSA has now started up again, after a training held by GLSEN last fall for staff and administration.

GLSEN President Keith Powell told the Empty Closet, “This is a first step in the right direction. "As you are aware, a group of people spoke at the School Board meeting in late October about the lack of progress on implementing the recommendations from the School Board Task Force on GLBY issues, as well as concerns about the GSA at Marshall," Powell continued. "Following the meeting, members of the Task Force met with officials at Marshall."

GLSEN Rochester was asked to conduct training for all middle school and high school teachers in early November. That training took place at Marshall with tremendous support from the Marshall Principal Joe Munno and the rest of his team. Charlotte middle and high school teachers also participated in the training.

"My experiences tell me that teachers and administrators are looking for tools and support to help (and protect) all students, and especially GLBT students. (GLSEN continues on page 3)"

By Susan Jordan

Pamela Barnes has started a new area group - the Rochester chapter of NYTRO, the New York Transgender Rights Organization. The group will work for passage of GENDA, the Gender Non-Discrimination Act, which will give protections to transgender and gender-questioning New Yorkers in the same way that SONDRA protects gay, lesbian and bisexual citizens from discrimination in employment, housing, education and other areas.

Pam Barnes says, "NYTRO is a state group, with chapters in New York City, Albany, Buffalo and elsewhere. Now we have Greater Rochester NYTRO. It’s an organization that’s going to be judged by state and local officials and legislators to secure and maintain rights for transgender and gender variant people in New York State. The Rochester chapter will obviously focus on this area, but we are very much involved in working statewide for passage of GENDA."

GENDA would add the phrase "gender expression and identity" to those portions of the N.Y. State human rights law which "sexual orientation" was added when SONDRA was passed.

There are already two versions of GENDA in the legislature, introduced last year. One of the Assembly bills is #7490, which has around 50 co-sponsors; all but one are Democrats. Assembly member Richard Gottfried is the original sponsor. The Senate version, #4794, contains exactly the same language; openly gay Senator Tom Duane is the sponsor.

"NYTRO is part of the GENDA Coalition, led by the Empire State Pride Agenda," Barnes says. "The Coalition includes groups like Housing Works in Albany, various religious organizations, Rochester NOW, other trans groups around the state, the GAGV and the Pride Agenda. It has grown and it’s important that it continue to grow. I do think this will be a longer and harder struggle than I first thought when I got involved a year ago."

Barnes calls the Pride Agenda "an invaluable ally." She said, "One of the major missing ingredients to passage in the Assembly (where we stand the best chance in really education. We need to have more upstate Assembly members signed up. I’m pleased to say that Susan John and David Koon have signed as co-sponsors. But we need to do more. I hope to meet with other area state legislators, along with their constitu- ents. I hope to meet with Joe Morelle and David Gantt to discuss their support, and would love to have an upstate Republican senator sign onto the bill."

Passage of GENDA, Barnes said, will make the same kind of difference for trans people as SONDRA made for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. "The state of New York would be saying, we value all citizens and no one should experience discrimination. Will that stop all discrimination? Obviously not. But we’ll have the moral suasion of the state saying that discrimination is not accept- able. Right now, it is legal to discrim- inate against us."

Enforcement, as with SONDRA, will be up to the indi- vidual, and those who cannot afford a lawyer may not find justice. "The bill doesn’t contain provisions for enforcement, any more than SONDRA does," Barnes said. "The Human Rights Com- mission is buckled for years. I do believe that when laws are (NYTRO continues on page 3)"
Names vs. labels

What's in a name? For that matter, what's in a label? Many youth prefer to identify as gender queer, rather than as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. And plenty of people of all ages don't feel comfortable with labels of any kind.

That's up to the individual. But there is a difference between identifying ourselves and being labeled by others. A label is something stuck on us by people who may not be our friends. A name is something we can choose for ourselves, something that describes our personal reality.

In a society where being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersexed is forbidden, those words are literally unuseable. To afford an "outrun" identity - to name ourselves as we see fit - is to fight back against hatred. To keep silent and closeted indicates an affirm an identity - to keep silent and closeted indicates an endorsement of the name or photograph of that person or the organization, we have the right to refuse; advertisements or ads, photographs or art by any organization that are sexist, racist, ableist or anti-gay will be refused.

Submissions: For more information, send item text, ads, photos, letters, stories, poetry, ads, photographs or art by mail or in person to the empty closet, 400 Genesee St., Rochester, NY 14605; e-mail: emptycloset@bcard.net. For more information, please visit our website www.emptycloset.org.

The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., as stated in the bylaws of the organization. Its purpose is to inform the Rochester gay community about local and national gay-related news and events; to provide a forum for creative and creative and educational work from the local gay community; to help promote leadership within the community; to build a sort of national network of websites and gay publications that exchange ideas and experiences across the United States.

Part of our purpose is to maintain a more positive view of ourselves and our community within the entire community. We must be careful to respect all viewpoints in a way that takes into consideration the views of all people, not just of our own young and old, and those from various walks of life.

The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and other contributing writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or The Empty Closet. We will not publish letters at the editor's discretion and on a space available basis. We will not print personal attacks on individuals, nor will we be a forum for correspondence between individuals. We reserve the right to edit letters for space.

We will print any letters that the name and telephone number are provided to the Editor; confidentiality will be respected. Submissions of more than 750 words will be cut in half by the 15th of the month at The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main Street, Rochester, NY 14605; e-mail: emptycloset@bcard.net. Online edition of the EC available at: www.emptycloset.org.
NYTRO continued from page 1

...does that lead to discrimina
tion, harassment, and violence?

She added, “I’d also like to see the Human Rights Commission reviewed and changed, because it’s just not the right tool and it’s inequitable and inequitable.” But, she said, making human rights a real priority for New York State is “the way to go.”

Barres noted, “NYTRO is part of a broad social justice movement to try to allow people to be open and honest in a society, regardless of their economic status, sex, race, age, sexual orientation, gen
eral.”

“NYTRO is a non-profit, non-partisan group. It’s a community force. We need to do a
there. We need to work with the Rochester Cross Dressers Network in the late ‘80s, and the International Foundation for Gend
er Diversity.”

“As I became more comfortable, there were Lambda Kodak and the GAY. I am infringe on the rights of people. This has helped me become comfortable with myself. You start moving toward the front of the closet, then you open the closet, and then suddenly you move into the light. NYTRO is the next step for me in leaving the closet and being a political activist. I’ve been very impressed with a lot of the people I’ve met near the state and that’s why I decided to form a chapter of NYTRO there.”

GLSEN continued from page 1

My hope is that this is the beginning of a new partnership with the school district and the GLBT community.

Greece Central District School Board has recently experienced homophobia in relation to the GSA at Greece Odyssey Academy and the homophobic remarks made last fall by School Board member Charles Hubbard, who questioned spending money on GSAs. His statements were followed by a selection of classes and assemblies being held to educate students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. GSAs have proven to be an effective tool in providing safe and inclusive environments in schools. We have had a very good relationship with the schools in Greece, but these developments have been a setback.

The Rochester City School District has been responsive to a point to recommenda
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“We just want the district to implement the Equal Opportunity Policy,” said Powell. “Very simply, to provide a two-hour general awareness training, conducted by GLSEN and the GAGY, to all teachers and staff. There are additional, voluntary modules that can include in the continuing education curricul
num for teachers and administrators.

“We hope that Dr. Rivera’s new diversity initiative will include mandatory training that includes these modules,” said Powell. “It appears that this will be the case. We will continue to partner with the GAGY and others to make sure that the issue is fully implemented properly.”

GLSEN Rochester is pleased that Kevin Jenkins, Executive Director of national GLSEN, was recently named to this year’s Gay Alliance Equality Luncheon. “Kevin is a dynamic speaker, and we encourage you to join us for the event on Thursday, May 28, at 2 p.m. at the Doubletree.”

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Barres expressed the view that the pride Agenda and the Gay AllianceEmpty Closet have become an important and integral part of the LGBT community. She said, “I started its integration in the late 80s and a number of horizontal groups have grown very supportive of me and have helped move more and more out of the closet — one being Lambda Network at Kodak, where I was a board member, and the GAGY, where I was a board member and served as interim executive director.”

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Ford reaffirms commitment to LGBT advertising

In a letter released Dec. 4, Ford reaffirmed its commitment to progressive workplace policies and said it would place corporate advertising in LGBT publications on behalf of all of its brands, including Jaguar and Land Rover, and would support LGBT organizations and events consistent with its business condition. In response, a broad coalition of LGBT community organizations issued a statement commenting on Ford for its actions:

"We welcome (the statement) from Ford Motor Company and commend their firm stand in support of inclusion. It is an unequivocal reaffirmation of Ford's historic commitment to our community and the core values of fairness and equality. Moreover, it is substantive proof of what Ford leaders have repeatedly asserted to us -- that they were never at any point in anti-lgbtq organizations concerning our Ford's support for our community. We are proud to be back in growth with Ford and look forward to continuing our work with them in the years ahead."

Coalition Members:

- AMERICAblog.com
- Commercial Closet Coalition
- Freedom to Marry
- Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Discrimination (GLAAD)
- Gay and Lesbian Leadership Institute
- Gay and Lesbian Medical Association
- Grawemeyer and Straight Education Network (GLEN)
- Human Rights Campaign
- National Center for Transgender Equality
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
- National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
- National Minority AIDS Council
- National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC)
- Our & Equal Workplace Advocates
- PFLAG National (Parents and Family of Lesbians and Gays)
- Pride at Work
- ServiceMembers Legal Defense Network
- Tileston, Johnson & Pardo PC
- World Congress of GLBT Jews: Kesher Ga’ava

Equality Forum presents free event in Philadelphia this May

Equality Forum, a national and international GLBT civil rights organization, will present the nation’s largest annual GLBT civil rights event from May 1 to 7, in Philadelphia, with over 70 substantive programs, parties and special events.

Equality Forum annually gathers GLBT leaders from 40 nations and the 70 plus national organizations.

Equality Forum will present its third documentary, Síntesis de 909, a feature-length film about the life of FDNY Chaplain Dara Wilson, who officiated at the official opening ceremony of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Sunday, Oct. 3, 2004 in Philadelphia's trendy Old City district offers a wide array of entertainment options, including the city's largest GLBT street festival, and various Service events, in Independence National Historic Park, Old City art galleries, cafes, shops, and the Equality LIVE concert at Ponce's Landing featuring headliners performers.

Bryant Fund, an all-volunteer fund-raising organization for Philadelphia-area GLBT service organizations, will host its third Blue Ball weekend of parties and special events, in collaboration with more than 75 regional, state, national, and international organizations. There is no registration fee, and all substantive events are

Over 250 religious, civil rights groups back Calif. marriage equality

(San Francisco, California, January 10, 2006) -- In an eight-count brief filed with the California Court of Appeal, more than 250 religious and civil rights organizations, in addition to the California Supreme Court, properly issued an end to state laws that deny same-sex couples the protections of marriage.

In briefs filed with the court, nine Council members agreed that marriages between same-sex couples are inconsistent with the Constitutions and California law. In briefs submitted to the court by Professor Brian Gilley, PhD., Assistant Professor of Anthropology at University of Vermont, and who is of Cherokee descent, there is overwhelming evidence for the historical and cultural presence of same-sex couples and same-sex relationships among most if not all Native North Americans, including the Cherokee, and that they historically shared in the institution of marriage.

Professor Gilley’s article described the historical gender diversity among the Cherokee people, as well as evidence of marriage between Cherokee same-sex couples - with Gilley’s briefs, as well as Professor Gilley’s briefs, and the Court’s decision, are available at www.media.ford.com.

National Center for Lesbian Rights

Highest Cherokee court rejects invalidation of lesbian marriage

(Tahlequah, Oklahoma, Jan. 4, 2006) In a ruling issued on Dec. 22, 2005, the Judicial Appellate Tribunal of the Cherokee Nation, the highest Cherokee court, rejected an attempt by several tribal council members to invalidate the marriage of Cherokee citizens Kathy Reynolds and Dawn McKinney, who are represented by the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR).

The Court held that the council members, who are the legislative branch of the Cherokee Nation, had no standing to seek a court order invalidating the marriage because the council members could not show that they were individually harmed or affected by the marriage in any way. The Court rejected the council members’ argument that permitting the marriage to stand would “injure the reputation” of the Cherokee Nation.

“We are relieved by the Court’s ruling,” said Kathy Reynolds. “Dawn and I are private people, and we simply wish to live our lives in peace and quiet, just as other married couples are permitted to do. We are grateful to the Court for applying the law fairly and for protecting our privacy and our rights as equal citizens of the Cherokee Nation.”

This is the second time the Court has rejected a challenge to the couple’s marriage. In May 2005, Reynolds and McKinney applied for and were issued a marriage certificate and the couple wed shortly thereafter. On June 16, 2005, a member of the Cherokee tribe, Todd Hembree, filed a Petition seeking to have the couple’s marriage invalidated. On Aug. 3, 2005, the Cherokee Court found that Hembree lacked standing to bring suit challenging the validity of the marriage because he has failed to show that he will suffer individualized harm.

On Aug. 5, 2006, two days after the Cherokee Court’s ruling, nine members of the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council filed a petition for declaratory judgment against the couple in the Judicial Appellate Tribunal of the Cherokee Nation. The nine members of the Tribal Council, represented by Hembree, claimed to be filing the petition in their official capacity. The petition asked the Court to declare that marriages between same-sex couples are not allowed under the Cherokee Nation Code marriage statute. Six members of the Tribal Council declined to participate in the lawsuit.

“We are pleased that that Court protected the fundamental principles of the Cherokee legal system, which protects government officials from dragging private citizens into court unless the officials have a direct personal stake in the lawsuit,” said NCLR staff attorney Lena Ayoub, who represented the couple before the Cherokee Court.

“The Court held that legislators must demonstrate a specific, individualized harm in order to challenge the validity of a person’s marriage, regardless of whether the marriage is between a different-sex or a same-sex couple.”

In briefs filed with the Court, the nine Council members agreed that marriages between same-sex couples are inconsistent with Cherokee Nation culture, heritage, and tradition. The Court rejected the Council’s position on behalf of the Cherokee people, as well as evidence of marriage between Cherokee same-sex couples - with Gilley’s briefs, as well as Professor Gilley’s briefs, and the Court’s decision, are available at www.media.ford.com.

National Center for Lesbian Rights

Visit http://www.media.ford.com to download a pdf of the background.
There is great diversity among people of faith throughout California on the issue of marriage equality. For example, The Rev. Lindi Ramsden, Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministers of California, coordinated the filing of a brief. The Rev. Neil Thomas, Chair of California Faith for Equality, and the brief "embraces women to our highest religious values, honoring love, equality and commitment in human relations. This is an important day. We are telling the California Court of Appeals that many religious leaders and congregations in California continue to support civil marriage licenses to same-gender couples."}

"For over three decades, clergy from a number of different faith traditions have been performing weddings for same-sex couples," said Rev. Ramsden. "It's time for California to recognize that all people, regardless of sexual orientation, have the right to marry. The law should not impose the beliefs of some religions on the lives of people of other faith communities."

The Union for Reform Judaism, founded in 1875, emphatically rejects the notion that the state should discriminate against gays and lesbians. "With Reform Judaism and the United Church of Christ standing behind the right to civil-marriage equality," Rev. Ramsden observed, "it is simply not accurate to say that to say that equality before the law offends Judeo-Christian traditions."

"The drafters of the California Constitution recognized the importance of family law scholars in the nation, also

Point Foundation announces 2006 scholarships for youth

(Chicago, IL) — The Point Foundation, the first and largest national foundation to support academic scholarships for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students, has opened its 2006 application season by announcing more than 300 named scholarships, including an exciting new partnership with the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

The Point Foundation will also continue its partnership with mtvU, MTV's 24-hour college network. Recently featured in The Magazine and on the Oprah Winfrey Show, the Foundation has experienced exponential growth and anticipate 5,000 applications this year. In 2005, one in every 100 applicants was awarded a Point Scholarship. To meet the overwhelming need of LGBT students, Point is actively seeking funds to increase the number of scholarships it can offer in 2006.

Point Scholarship is the most substantive academic award of its kind, in most cases covering the cost of tuition, books, room and board, transportation and living expenses. The comprehensive scholarships allow students to excel in the classroom and contribute to our communities. In addition, Point Scholars are matched with mentors from the professions, who seek to identify leadership levels and provide personal support, ensuring that students build a foundation of leadership skills they can use throughout their careers.

"I am proud to be part of the Point Foundation's exponential growth this past year, as we expanded and work with more students who would not otherwise have the financial and emotional support necessary to pursue their dreams," said Judith Light, actor and longtime activist who joined the board of the Point Foundation in 2005. "Our commitment to Point scholars reenforces the best that our community can do for young people in a society that still discriminates, still marginalizes and still closes the door of opportunity for far too many outstanding individuals," Light concluded.

This year, the Point Foundation will partner with the Matthew Shepard Foundation to offer a slate of new named scholarships, awarding $10,000 to three Matthew Shepard-Point Foundation Scholars. The Matthew Shepard Foundation was founded by Dennis and Judy Shepard in memory of their 21-year-old son, Matthew, who was murdered in an anti-gay hate crime in Wyoming in October 1998. The foundations share a mission of empowering the LGBT community and educating others about equality. Vance Lancaster, executive director of the Point Foundation, will personally fund one of these new scholarships. The Point and the Shepard Foundations will partner to raise additional funds so that even more students can be helped.

"Judy Shepard and I are both about changing hearts and minds through education and turning around situations, making a positive out of what appears overwhelm­ ingly negative," said Lancaster. "It is often through Matthew and the terrible outcomes and crashing despair that too many LGBT youth still face. These scholarships aim to create a powerful legacy for our future leaders."

Additionally, mtvU, the largest, most comprehensive television network just for college students — will for the second consecutive year support a named scholarship in the amount of $1,000. The mtvU Scholarship is available to students attending any of mtvU's more than 790 affiliate schools, and the application and additional information can be found at mtvU.com.

"mtvU and the Point Foundation understand that paying for college isn't easy, and that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students face unique challenges that can make it even more difficult," said Stephen Friedman, General Manager of mtvU. "We're proud to join forces with the Point Foundation and help empower LGBT students to realize their dreams."

Additionally, the Point Foundation selects a range of students who are socially, eth­ nically, geographically and academically diverse. The students selected for Point Scholarships will earn their undergraduate and graduate degrees at some of the nation's most prestigious institutions of higher learning and pursue studies in a range of academic areas.

The Point Foundation continues on page 12)
Tim Mains feels proud of his campaign and his political career

By Susan Jordan

Tim O. Mains, after 20 years in public life as an openly gay elected official, has moved back into the world of a private citizen and school principal. He says that he feels proud of the support he received during his run for mayor, and especially proud of the way he was able to make poverty an issue during the campaign.

About the election, Mains said, "I knew we were swimming upstream. But I did it (ran for mayor) having a real clear sense about what I felt we should do for the city, and knowing the other candidates weren't really ready to do the job as I thought it should be done. Over the years, lots of people have said, 'You should run for mayor,' and I thought it was flattening, but in recent years that encouragement was not something that resonated with me. Unlike a lot of other folks, politics is not my career. Education is my career. For people whose lives revolve around politics, it's different. Wade Norwood was someone who had planned a run for mayor for many years and had done everything right."

"When people came to me in August 2004, during my court case (the attempt to remove him from City Council due to a supposed conflict of interest as a City school principal), we didn't know if we could win the case, or if it was going to drag on indefinitely. So my mindset was, I'm retiring. I was busy helping candidates I could help. If politics were my career, and the mayor's position was my goal, I'd have been working for a long time on that. That's part of what put me behind the eight ball. I didn't have the money or the access to insiders, business leaders, people who have access to money — some of them were initially generous, but they were hedging their bets."

"Why go ahead? I had a firm belief that the transition from Johnson was going to be difficult for the city. I wanted years as his administration sank deeper into the hole of poverty (thanks to George Bush) — not only poverty for the residents, but the structure of city government was sinking into poverty.

"The biggest problem was the amazing increase in the concentration of poverty. The year before I took over as principal, the number of kids who get the free or reduced price lunch at my school increased by 24 percent. The percentage in all city schools was the same or higher; some schools were 90 to 95 percent. Almost all the kids need that free lunch.

"So you have a city with enormous challenges and a government that has very few resources. My partner David and I, when we walked out of oral arguments (in the court case), were very encouraged... it seemed to us the court would rule in our favor, which it did. We got on the elevator, and David, who is not a fan of politics, said, 'If we win this case, you/HANE to run in the election.' He was the first to urge me to act on the court victory.

"So I shifted from thinking I wouldn't do anything to thinking I'd run for mayor instead of City Council. It came down to, I could run for City Council and hope to provide some help — but I thought we needed a mayor with strong financial credentials and one who understood that, because the resources are so limited... I decided to step up.

"By stepping up, I was saying, I have a very good idea of what the problems are, and I believe I have the credentials to do this. Whatever you might say about him... Tom Ryan was a hands-on mayor; Bill Johnson was a big-picture mayor. He did good things, but relied very heavily on his staff. A lot of good projects with Bill Johnson's signature really came about because Jeff Gelber or Tom August had recommended them. I don't want to imply that Bill wasn't a responsible guy, but he ran the city the same way he ran the Urban League — had many great ideas but would hand over execution to staff.

"Wade Norwood was, in my mind, very driven by political interests and tended to make decisions based on what's acceptable politically.

"Bob Duffy I didn't believe had the depth of experience to run government, and especially to do the city budget. He's a good, decent guy, but I wasn't sure he could learn all he had to learn in short order, to pull it off.

"The fall of 2004 was the turning point for me to be able to say, 'Maybe I should think about this.' I didn't have any money and needed to see if there was any chance of pulling this off. After I learned Bob was running, that caused me to slow down — we had several conversations about running for mayor, what we were thinking, where we were in all this. He was very interested in me not running, and supporting him. "I like Bob and consider him a friend. I tried five or six times to schedule a meeting with Wade, but he didn't return my calls. He'd say I'd call but we never did have that conversation.

"What I saw was a group of people I call the Anyone But Wade crew. They feared that if he became mayor, David Gantt would have undue influence, not just over Wade but over the Democratic Party.

"We had a fundraiser in December 2004 to see what kind of support was out there — it was intentionally vague and non-committal. It was a better fundraiser than I had ever had for a City Council race, but I wasn't sure if it was good enough to run for mayor... In January or February the final clincher was the notion that if I'm going to run for something, I should step up to the challenge and make more of a contribution than being on Council. My position on Council had changed, and even though I had new allies, the power structure of Council run by Lois Geis was intent on keeping me in a marginal position. So that idea wasn't attractive.

"The idea of running for mayor was scary and challenging — I knew it would be a challenge, but that's what I've always tried to do. Running in 1985 was a challenge, and many of the things I've done since have been, like fighting tobacco advertising, getting the living wage ordinance, etc. I didn't do them because they were easy or because I could score quick political points, I do them because they're right.

"I believed in a three-way tie I had a real shot. I was also convinced that if I didn't enter the race, the real issue of poverty wouldn't be dealt with. People would stick with the comfortable trial of schools, jobs and public safety. They're linked, but this cancer of poverty undercuts everything we do, and unless we address that, we can't attain the other goals. I knew when I announced in February that my entry into the race would change the tenor of the debate."

Mains said that he had found it very difficult to get the media to pass on his message. "It was awfully hard to get the media attention — if we ever did feel we succeeded in changing the debate, but more because of the impact my presence made on the margins, rather than because the media picked up on the message."

In Rochester Children's Initiative, to break the cycle of poverty — I had to find multiple ways to get that message out, because you couldn't."

"City newspaper also said, 'He can't get along with his colleagues on Council, so how could he run the city?' I felt along with my side pretty well. I've never retaliated, even after three years of being put through the meat grinder. I continue to act in a responsible way although I was politically targeted. I got targeted but then I got better, and got together, and fight against with them it's like blaming the victim."

Mains pointed out that if he had been elected, only two of his old opponents would have been left on Council. "The notion that I couldn't get along with people — so out of touch with my own personal and professional history. Leader- ers aren't isolated people — you don't suc­ ceed in function if you can't draw people together... The fact that we did run what I believe our campaigns and we did it on a shoestring. It's the ability to pull people together that made that possible. It was there was certainly bitter division between the Duffy and Norwood campaigns, I never lost my ability to communicate with either of my opponents or many of their major supporters.

"I filed as a Republican State Pride Agenda's deci­ sion to endorse Duffy rankled with Mains. "I was very disappointed and hurt," he said. "We had a deal to endorse Bob Duffy. I have deep roots in the activist gay rights movement, and believe people should not get sucked into trying to please those in power who don't support our values. ESPA is not alone in this the Human Rights Campaign endorsed Al D'Amato. Yeah, he managed to get AIDS funding, but on a good non-discussion clause for his staff. But as a conservative he was actively against gay rights, and when Vullo over Schumers, they were an example of having a relationship with a person in power, even if he had a record of support.

Mains emphasized that of the mayoral candidates he was the only one to support marriage rights for gay couples. The candidate you think has the best chance to win, over the candidate who's best on your issues, you think people should make the message to both the community and people in power. I find that unacceptable.

"Bob's whole message has come from the ferry. He ran — I'm disappointed to see us as quick­ ly abandon the effort," he said. "It's ironic because I think that really said I suspected the vessel was too large, and if I became mayor my first job would be to find a much smaller boat. But the service — does make us unique, and is a source of pride. There were a lot of positives over the beginning, but I believe the majority of the public wanted the ferry to succeed. I'm not privy to all the information Bob had, and I don't want to second-guess his decision. I don't know if it was good or bad. It would
Thinking back over his career, he said, "There's so much – 20 years is a long time, and I believe that I had many opportunities to have a positive impact... There's the fiscal staff managing and controlling the budget, and fighting for our fair share of the sales tax; creating the first tax reserve fund; finding errors in the budget; getting programs into balance, all of that."

"The civil rights stuff – trying to do things like be the first to have an AIDS policy that made it clear no city employee's privacy would be breached, and more importantly, that no one with HIV, or perceived as having HIV, would be denied delivery of city services (police, fire department, garbage pick up, etc.) That's pretty progessive for the late '80s. The domestic partnership legislation and the Civil rights ordinance we got in 2001... even today, with SONDA, our bill still provides protections that SONDA does not. The Rochester ordinance includes gender expression and identity."

"And of course the stuff for kids: my successful effort to ban tobacco billboards to be done, and then work on it and try to convince people we should be committed to doing it."

"The other piece, that's not legislative, is the impact that I've had on the political environment of the area. People had to deal with an openly gay public official. As we all know, the most powerful tool in advancing people's understanding of the LGBT community is to be open. Whenever stereotypes and prejudices people might have had, they had to reconcile it with the fact that, here's Tim Mains and he's doing this and this. I tried to encourage gay people to be active and be open in politics. It was great this year that there were so many openly gay candidates, I'm excited now about the prospects of Harry (Bronson) and Bill (Pinchard) continuing that impact."

"I'm very satisfied with my contrast to my first election in 1985. We haven't encountered homophobia, but we have established a political climate where someone who gives voice to prejudice is now viewed as fringe. This community's broad assumption of fairness – the self-image of a community that cares about the people who are part of it – has been expanded to include us."

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20

- you did your best."

"You lose, you want to feel you played well way diminished by what I went through for we failed again, it didn't...

"The inaugural speech to our office, and also about his

"I'm disappointed that we didn't win, but I do feel... I said to my kids at school, when 10 months. I said to my kids at school, when 10 months. I said to my kids at school, when..."

"I'm on the board of the Center for Dispute Resolution – he was so supportive and so insistent about 'You really need to do this mayor thing,' and was my most enthusiasstic... He's lived with my being out for the first public time. I have to cut vacations short to go to a meeting or make speeches."

"I'll do more things on a volunteer basis. I'm on the board of the Center for Dispute Settlement. I'll focus for the time being on school, on contributing to the community on a volunteer basis, and on home."
Wilby Wonderful
what a difference a day makes

Wilby Wonderful is a bittersweet comedy about the difference a day makes. Over the course of twenty-four hours, the residents of the tiny island town of Wilby try to maintain business as a gay sex scandal threatens to rock the town to its core.

The town’s video store owner, Dan Jarvis (James Allodi) — depressed over the pending revelations about his love life — decides to end it all, but keeps getting interrupted by Duck MacDonald (Callum Keith Rennie), the town’s dyslexic sign-painter, during his half-hearted suicide attempts. Meanwhile, Dan has enlisted blindly ambitious real estate agent Carol French (Sandra Oh) to sell his house in an effort to quickly tie up the last of his loose ends. Carol, however, is more interested in selling her recently deceased mother-in-law’s house to Mayor Brent Fisher (Maury Chaykin), in order to get in with the in-crowd.

Of course everyone’s concerns are going to be very different tonight when someone finds the body in the closet. Welcome to Wilby.

Tickets are $10 in advance ($12 at the door)

Advance Ticket Sales
Tickets can be purchased securely online at www.imageout.org or you may purchase tickets in person at OUTlandish Video & Gifts, 274 Goodman St N, Rochester NY and Pride Connection, 728 South Ave, Rochester NY.

To Request Interpreting Services Please call the Festival office at (585) 271-2640. Requests must be made at least one week in advance of the screening.

This screening is being co-sponsored by
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Articles of Faith: Religious right's moral failures a result of repressive religion
By Rev. Steven Baines

As someone who was raised and ordained as a Southern Baptist, I was astounded, but not shocked, at news of the recent arrest of Rev. Ronnie Latham, a minister from Tulsa, Okla., and executive committee member of the virulently anti-gay Southern Baptist Convention.

Rev. Latham was reportedly arrested for propositioning a male undercover police officer in front of a motel known as a high-traffic area for gay hustlers. Unfortunately, Rev. Latham’s story is too repeatable by those in the darkest corners of the closet who are trapped by the damaging teachings of misguided religious leaders.

The fall of this religious-right figure is part of an inevitable cycle of scandal, as the self-appointed guardians of “traditional values” moral ships sinking from under them, find themselves in the lurch for the rest of us sinners. The moral hypocrisy of many right-wing religious leaders comes from their fundamental misunderstanding of religion as the practice of a complicated set of rules designed to restrict guided religious leaders.

Many, and run the gamut from the tragic hypocrisy of the closet to personal ethical lapses to outright crimes. Here are a few recent high-profile examples:

- Ralph Reed — Reed, the former executive director of the Christian Coalition, is embroiled in the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal and stands accused of using funds Christian conservatives had donated to fight the spread of gambling, to actually promote gambling on Native-American reservations.
- Morris-Junge Eugene Clark — Clark used his pulpit at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City and program on the Eternal Word Television Network to blame gay priests for the Catholic sex abuse scandal and once denounced the United States as “the most immoral country in the Western Hemisphere.” He resigned in August 2005 after an affair with his married secretary.
- William Bennett — Bennett is the standard-bearer of the right-wing “traditional values” crusade and chief propagator of one of the most damaging lies being spread about the gay community: the statistic invented by a discredited psychologist that the average age of death of gay men is 43. In 2003, it was revealed that Bennett had a gambling addiction which he kept hidden from his family, despite losing a reported $8 million.
- John Paulk — Paulk is the former chair of Exodus International who appeared on the cover of Newsweek in 1998 as an “ex-gay,” and founder of Focus on the Family’s ex-gay program Love Won Out. He was discovered and photographed in September 2008 buying drinks for patrons in a gay bar in Washington, D.C. Although Paulk left Focus on the Family in 2003 to pursue “other ministry opportunities,” Love Won Out continues to hold events across the country.

It is not my intention to cast stones of condemnation at these individuals. We all have times when we need grace and forgiveness for our ethical failings or inconsistencies, whether from religious communities or from the community at large.

There is, however, a profound need to understand that, when religion is used to bring repression and darkness rather than liberation and light, it is toxic to both leaders and followers. It is inevitable that those who pile so much guilt on the rest of the world will sooner or later be crushed by it themselves.

The self-loathing that drives some public figures who have made careers of espousing “moral values” into lives of deception as they sneak into dice bars, cheap motels or gambling casinos for a night’s escape from a life of repression, is the same fear and shame that causes them to lash out at lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

The life-altering message that 1 and so many other LGBT people of faith have found is that freedom comes not from lies and denial, but by recognizing our mutual connection to all our neighbors with honesty and humility in the face of the Creator.

Based in Washington, D.C., Rev. Steven Baines is an elder in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and a member of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force National Religious Leadership Roundtable. He serves as chaplain of Gay, Lesbian and Affirming Disciples.

“Hello, Bob. I mean Bill. No, no, wait! It’s Brett! No, don’t tell me! It’s Ben!! Oops! Wait! It’s on the tip of my tongue!”

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THANKS, MARTINA; Community Health activist Martina Navratilova was honored at the 5th Annual Callen-Lorde Community Health Awards at Capitale on Nov. 15.

ELLEN: The Ellen DeGeneres Show taped in Times Square with Usher on Nov. 19.

DANCE ON: Move Against AIDS Dance-a-thon at the Manhattan Center on Dec. 3.

AIDS DAY VIGIL: On World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, Out of the Darkness opening ceremony and candlelight vigil was held at the GLBT Community Center in Greenwich Village.

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TAG AWARDS: TAG 2005 Research in Action Awards at Artists Space in SOHO on Dec. 11. Actress Kathleen Turner and filmmaker John Waters, above, were there.

COWBOY LOVE: Brokeback Mountain New York premiere was at the Loews Lincoln Square Theatre on Dec. 6. Star Heath Ledger, above, has received award nominations for his role as a gay cowboy in the hit film.

TRANNY GIRL: Felicity Huffman (Transamerica) arrives at the Late Show with David Letterman on Jan. 5. Huffman won a Golden Globe as Best Actress for her remarkable performance as a male-to-female transgendered person.

ANGEL AWARDS: GMAD’s 13th Annual Charles Angel Awards at the Alhambra Ballroom in Harlem on Dec. 6. Pictured are cast members of Noah’s Arc Christian Vincent and Darryl Stephens.
York State. The funding is largely used to support community health and human services programs targeting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities across New York State.

This figure is a substantial increase over the $1.0 million provided four years ago, the first year funds were included in the Executive Budget.

"We are pleased with this restoration of funding and we thank the Governor for his continued support for this program," said Alan Van Capelle, Executive Director of the Empire State Pride Agenda (Pride Agenda). "This was a good day for our community in New York State."

The funding is largely used to support members of the New York State LGBT Health and Human Services Network (Network), including the GAGY. The Network is a coalition of community-based organizations that operate 52 programs across the state. The Pride Agenda Foundation coordinates the Network's education and advocacy efforts in Albany.

LGBT youth, seniors and others in our community face longstanding health and social welfare challenges that government must meet," said Van Capelle. "While we continue to believe the state must do more, we are glad this year’s budget is a step in the right direction. We will continue our advocacy efforts and will be talking to the Legislature about additional funding this year."

Eight years ago, largely through the initiative of the Assembly, New York State began funding this unique program to provide health, mental health, alcohol and substance abuse treatment, violence prevention and other social services to LGBT youth, seniors, crime victims and others. Over the eight years, more than $720 million has been provided to sustain and help launch new programs from Buffalo to Suffolk County. For each of the eight years Speaker Silver and the Assembly Majority provided funding through its discretionary budget. With this year’s allocation, Governor Patiki has been funding these programs through the Executive Budget for five years.

—Empire State Pride Agenda

MOCHA Project presents “Black Diamonds: A journey through our past”

As part of Black Heritage Month, the Mest of Color Health Awareness (MOCHA) Project will host a discussion of “Black Diamonds: A Journey Through Our Past,” by Seijn Jackson, on Feb. 15 at the MOCHA office, 107 Liberty Pike Way. The discussion will run from 6 to 7 p.m. RSVP to Michael Booth, 240-1400 ext. 14, or Melissa Waters, ext. 16, by Feb. 13.

Seijn Jackson will talk about his work, which focuses on why people of color are where they are today, and the challenges endured to get there. Jackson writes, “When you look at history, only our best and brightest survived slavery. So each of us is descended from greatness.”

Jackson is a diversity consultant who went in to business for himself, after 15 years in both the creative and corporate sides of the music industry. He is also a classically trained dancer and choreographer, and the only male contributor to Sable Magazine, an online kobiyan publication.

Maryland court rules in favor of same-sex couples

Baltimore Judge M. Brooke Murdoch ruled on Jan. 20 that it is unconstitutional for Maryland to exclude same-sex couples from marriage. The judge ruled that since an individual’s ability to marry another person depends on sex, the exclusion is sex discrimination.

She said that it doesn’t matter that men or women as a group are disadvantaged, because the rights given by the state constitution belong to individuals, not groups.

The lawsuit was brought for nine same-sex couples, who had applied for marriage licenses in Maryland and been refused.

The lawyers defending the prohibition of marriage rights said that same-sex marriage is illegal in Maryland because of the Family Law statute that marriage must be defined as between man and woman.

The plaintiffs argued that the same-sex marriage ban constitutes unjustified discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation, in defiance of Maryland’s Declaration of Rights.

The Court found that the statute does in fact constitute unjustified discrimination based on gender, and does not serve any compelling governmental interest. The ruling states, “There is no apparent compelling state interest in a statutory prohibition of same-sex marriage discriminating on the basis of sex, against those individuals whose gender is identical to their intended spouses. Indeed, the Court is unable to even find that the prohibition of same-sex marriage randomly relates to a legitimate state interest.”

The Court disagreed that preventing same-sex marriage relates rationally to the state’s interest in promoting the best interests of children, since “This Court is unable to agree to such broadly stated principles because the vast number of assumptions necessary to do so, exceeds the scope of reasonable legislative speculation... (They...
African activists demand end to "marginalization" of people with HIV

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activists are calling for an end to discrimination and marginalization of LGBT people in South Africa and throughout Africa. The activists are demanding that the only human rights organization solely devoted to improving the rights of people around the world who are targeted for discrimination, abuse or murder because of their sexual orientation or gender identity or HIV status — IGLHRC — addresses human rights violations by partnering with and supporting activists in the ground in countries around the world, by monitoring and documenting abuses, by engaging offending governments, and by educating international human rights officials. A US-based non-profit, non-governmental organization, IGLHRC is based in New York, with offices in San Francisco and Buenos Aires. http://www.iglhrc.org.

Task Force gets $3 million grant from Arcus

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10, 2006 — The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force announced today that it has been awarded a combined gift of $3 million over three years from the Arcus Foundation and its founder and president, Jon Stryker, to support its nationwide campaign of organizing, capacity building, advocacy and public education to advance equal rights and respect for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.

"This combined award of $3 million by Mr. Stryker and the Arcus Foundation will make a huge difference to the LGBT movement at the state and local level," said Task Force Executive Director Matt Foreman. "Not only is it the largest award ever made to the Task Force in our 35-year history, it is the largest known gift ever given directly to support movement building and advocacy in the 50-plus year history of the modern LGBT rights movement."

The contribution comes at a crucial time for the LGBT community, which is facing a tough wave of ballot initiatives, constitutional amendments and other measures seeking to deny equal rights to LGBT people and their families at the state, local and national level.

Basic job discrimination laws, domestic partnership laws, civil union and marriage laws, adoption rights and family recognition are all under fire from heavily financed right-wing groups and are likely to appear on ballots in November 2006 in Arizona, California, Wisconsin, Minnesota and many other states.

The award consists of a three-year grant for 2006-2008, of which $1 million reflects an individual contribution from Jon Stryker and $2 million from the Arcus Foundation. The award will be used to train leaders, organize local communities, strengthen coalitions between LGBT and non-gay allies, build the capacity of statewide LGBT organizations and strengthen the Task Force's own capacity.

"We strongly believe in the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's talented staff, and experienced board leadership," said Arcus Foundation President Jon Stryker. "This is an urgent moment in the LGBT movement's effort to achieve full human rights and dignity — the work at the state and local level has never been more important. This is the ideal time to increase our investment in one of our community's most effective organizations, and we hope other donors will do so as well."

Over the past five years, Arcus has granted more than $6.6 million to the Task Force. Support from Arcus enabled the Task Force's Organizing & Training Department to become the LGBT community's most successful and experienced corps of trainers and organizers.

Since 2001, the Task Force's organizing department has grown to more than 11 full-time organizers and trainers directly trained more than 2,000 people worked with state and local organizations in 26 states and provided meaningful education, research, training, community organizing and leadership development to support local organizations in 22 ballot initiative campaigns, of which six out of seven successfully competed by the LGBT community.

(The Task Force continued on page 14)
MSNBC airs juvenile homophobic comments about Brokeback Mountain on “Imus in the Morning”

On the Jan. 18 edition of “Imus in the Morning” on MSNBC, host Don Imus and guest Chris Matthews (host of MSNBC’s “Hardball with Chris Matthews” and NBC News’ “The Chris Matthews Show”) used an exchange about the film “Brokeback Mountain” to engage in a sophomoric display of homophobia.

After Matthews quoted anti-gay radio personality Michael Savage as having called the film “Bordellos Mounting,” Imus added that one of his show’s staff members had titled the film “Fudgepack Mountain.” A video clip and complete text of Imus and Matthews’ exchange are available at http://www.glad.org.

That Michael Savage – whose 2003 MSNBC show was cancelled after he referred to a caller as a “sodomite” and told him to “Get AIDS and die, you pig” (see http://www.glad.org/media/archive...detail.php?id=3448 for more information) – would make such a comment about “Brokeback Mountain” is hardly surprising.

But when Chris Matthews, an NBC News host and commentator, repeats it on MSNBC and Imus then tries to one-up him with a “Fudgepacker” slur, that’s kind of just a very public display of homophobia that raises serious questions not only about Imus and Matthews’ racial behavior, but also about why MSNBC and NBC News would find such slurs acceptable for broadcast.

After GLAAD contacted MSNBC about the Jan. 18 broadcast, MSNBC Vice President for Communications Jeremy Gaines issued a statement saying: “Imus is produced by WFAN radio and is simulcast by MSNBC. The views expressed on the program are not those of MSNBC. Having said that, it was unfortunate that these remarks were telecast on MSNBC. We sincerely apologize to anyone who was offended by these remarks.”

Racism statements, however, avoid the larger questions: Why would MSNBC place its logo and the NBC Peacock logo on a show where these kinds of slurs are deemed acceptable? And even if MSNBC could credibly claim that Imus’ views were expressed on his daily, three-hour MSNBC show - aren’t those of the network, it’s ludicrous to suggest that Chris Matthews, one of the network’s anchors and most visible commentators, should not be held accountable to the network’s standards and practices, particularly for comments he makes on MSNBC.

Please write to Don Imus and Chris Matthews and let them know what you think about their exchange on Jan. 18. Also, please write to MSNBC. Ask whether such slurs are acceptable for broadcast under the standards and practices of NBC News and, if not, why MSNBC would place its logo and the NBC Peacock on a show where these kinds of slurs are deemed acceptable?

Announcing support for grieving partners

By Sebastian White

Twenty-five years ago this month, police officers in Toronto raided four gay bathhouses and arrested nearly 500 men in what has become the most significant turning points in Canadian LGBT history.

On the evening of Feb. 5, 1981, more than 150 officers converged simultaneously on four downtown sex clubs, cutting a swath through a maze of private rooms and saunas, charging club owners with “keeping a common bawdy house,” and arresting patrons for being “found-rins,” or simply, persons found in a place where prostitution or indecent acts take place.

In their path, police caused tens of thousands of dollars in physical and damage to the four bathhouses – the Club Baths, the Romans II Health and Recreation Spa, the Richmond Sonnet Health Emporium, and the Bar Rocks – and also found themselves facing countless claims of severe physical and verbal abuse against patrons during the sweep, which was codenamed “Operation Sauna.”

Men who were arrested that night later reported that Toronto police had been brutal, reckless, and blatantly homophobic as they made their way through the bathhouses, bloodying noses and destroying property with crowbars and hammers.

Most of the charges laid against men fell in five years that winter, but the legacy of the massive raid did not soon fade. The arrests effectively politicized the gay community in Toronto and more broadly, in Canada, spurring days of protests and rallies – including what was the largest gay demonstration in the country’s history of thousands marched on Queen’s Park – during which citizens of all stripes came together to question the legality and desireability of the police action.

Soon after, amidst a growing public backlash and mounting evidence of police brutality, Toronto’s city council launched an independent inquiry into police-gay community relations, whose recommenda­ tions became a model for similar inquiries across the country, and led to new legal protections in the areas of the ease and Canada. Today, official liaisons between police and the LGBT community are commonplace, including at the Rochester Police Department.

The police sweeps, however, have been 25 years since Operation Sauna, but the events of that February night remain deeply ingrained in the consciousness of Canada’s LGBT community as its own Stonewall moment, referring, of course, to the famous New York City riots that occurred the beginning of the modern gay rights movement. In a city best known for its proper Victorian values, it’s ironic that it was the local Toronto Police Services working to curb indecency that actually opened the door to a new era of civil rights for all of Canada’s LGBT community.

Sebastian White is a freelance writer in New York City. He can be reached at sebastianwhite@...
Marriage equality for same-sex couples: what’s not to like? Pride Agenda trains Marriage Ambassadors

By Melissa Blakestone

Getting married means many things, and has civil, spiritual, and emotional implications. The civil rights that are an “automatic” part of marriage for straight couples are typically taken for granted. For same-sex couples, we take extra legal steps when I arrived, and I was noted in clothes and lots of medical paraphernalia, her medical record as next of kin. My wake up call happened when my beloved was in the emergency room at a hospital about this injustice. Nevertheless, this left me with awareness that strategies for equal protection under the law in any form are required. We explored options for a civil ceremony to legalize the spiritual union that we’d made with each other nine years earlier and were married in Massachusetts in May 2004.

Equal protection under the law is important to me, not only as an “inalienable right,” but to ensure we’re afforded the same benefits that all taxpayers receive. Some tangible examples of benefits that have occurred since we were married include extension of the health insurance coverage available from my employer when we were “domestic partners” to now include life insurance, vision and dental insurance. We also are rated as a “married couple” on our auto insurance policy, which has led to some cost savings. Also, the bigger issues, including tax benefits, will occur only after a change in state and federal laws.

Admittedly, marriage isn’t for everyone, but for those who want it, shouldn’t we all do what we can to enhance that right? New York is one of the few states in the U.S. that doesn’t have explicit language defining the status quo in current marriage law. Building public support for marriage can take many forms, and is important both to protect and extend the benefits that have occurred since our marriage, and to ultimately provide the right of same sex couples in New York to marry here. For me, participation as a Marriage Ambassador is critical, and provides many useful tools.

The Empire State Pride Agenda convenes trainings across the state, in collaboration with the Lesbian and Gay Rights Project of the ACLU, Lambda Legal, Freedom to Marry, and GLAAD. The marriage education campaign training is excellent, very interactive, with exceedingly useful guidance about how to defuse the myths about marriage (e.g. avoid the phrase gay marriage, and replace with marriage equality for same-sex couples), media training: advocacy messaging and talking points, and ends with the establishment of a network with other trainees, development of a personalized action plan and subsequent follow-up opportunities for networking.

What’s happened since the Ambassador’s training? In the process of having conversations with my extended family, neighbors and work colleagues about the Marriage Equality cards, many realized they really didn’t have full understanding of what’s at stake, and readily signed the cards. We will be hosting a house party during “Freedom to Marry Week” (Feb. 12-18), and plan to attend Equality and Justice Day in Albany in May.

Working with gay and straight colleagues across the state, who are at every stage of a relationship and share a commitment to what is right and just, is very affirming about love, justice and finding a way to participate in creating a better future for same-sex couples and their allies.


All of us need to be working, right now in our communities to build public support for marriage. Over the next year, we need to assemble the right mix of supporters -- both LGBT and straight -- who will meet with their legislators and make it clear that the time is fast approaching for them to support our freedom to marry. III

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Conversations on Marriage:
People of Color Specific Marriage Training
March 17-18, New York City (Friday evening and all day Saturday)

All State Marriage Training
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Youth meet at Ryan White conference in Philly

The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA-US) will launch its 13th annual Ryan White National Youth Conference on HIV and AIDS in Philadelphia on Feb. 18 with more than 500 participants worldwide slated to attend.

AIDS activist Hydeia Broadbent will address conference participants and attend NAPWA's Positive Youth Institute, with more than 100 other HIV-positive youth, where they will learn advocacy and leadership skills from young trainers living with HIV.

"Young AIDS activists are our nation's greatest hope to end this HIV/AIDS epidemic," says NAPWA Executive Director Terje Anderson. "And NAPWA invests in its vision of a future without HIV by organizing our Ryan White National Youth Conference on HIV and AIDS each year."

AIDS activist Hydeia Broadbent, 22, was diagnosed with AIDS just prior to her fourth birthday, and was not expected to live beyond a year. Hydeia survived to initiate a public speaking career at the age of eight and has talked about living with HIV at countless seminars and events, notably at the 1996 Republican National Convention. Hydeia has also co-written a book with her adoptive mother, Patricia, in 2002 entitled You Get Past the Tears, an affecting story about growing up with HIV.

The Tarsha Durant Youth Award for Positive Leadership, named after the former NAPWA staff member who died of AIDS in 2001 at age 21, will be given to four youth who have made outstanding strides in the fight against AIDS.

The Ryan White National Youth Conference on HIV and AIDS focuses on effective community youth-led efforts to prevent HIV among their peers. The conference includes five plenary sessions, six workshop sessions and a town hall meeting where young people are encouraged to provide direction to NAPWA's efforts to prevent HIV among young people and to advocate for young people living with HIV.

The conference also features the Action Room, where conference participants can make art, send letters to their elected officials, interview with media representatives and enjoy a space to talk about the future of AIDS activism.

Interested parties can still register for the conference, to be held at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel by visiting www.napwa.org or calling (240) 247-1015. Onsite registration may be available at the hotel February 17-20 depending on pre-registration volume.
To: Mr. Charles M. Hubbard
School Board Member
Greece Central School District Board
750 Maiden Lane
3rd Floor, West Wing
Rochester, New York 14615

Dear Mr. Hubbard:

It was with great disappointment that we read your comments regarding funding of the Gay Straight Alliance at Greece Odyssey Academy. As co-presidents of PFLAG-Genesee Valley (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), we believe strongly that our schools should be safe places for all children whether tall, short, gay, straight, right-handed, left-handed, blonde, brunette or blue-haired. Every child has the right to a safe learning environment.

Research indicates that as many as one in 10 people are gay or lesbian. Studies also show that gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT) youth, or those perceived to be, face harassment and abuse in schools. The average high school student hears 25 anti-gay slurs daily; 97 percent of high school students regularly hear homophobic remarks. As a result of that harassment and abuse, these students are denied the right to a safe education. This harassment takes its toll: Gay students are far more likely to skip classes, drop out of school and/or commit suicide. Studies consistently find that GLBT youth have an almost three times higher rate of attempted suicide. The society that fosters, sustains and even promotes this hostile environment impacts all students negatively. (Information from www.PFLAG.org)

How can we as adults and you as an elected school official not help the students who most need our assistance? Please do not turn your back on them. We urge you to issue a public apology for your homophobic and discriminatory remarks today.

Sincerely,

Traci Cahill, Co-President
PFLAG-Genesee Valley
Christina Pearson, Co-President
PFLAG-Genesee Valley

Cc: Kenneth Walsh, School Board President, Greece Central School District;
Lynne Armstrong, School Board Clerk, Greece Central School District;
Josephine Kehoe, Acting Superintendent; Toby Greenfield, Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, The Empty Closet; The Democrat & Chronicle
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*Based on third quarter 2004 statistics from Inside Mortgage Finance 11/19/04.
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FIND THAT PERFECT PLACE

This is the perfect time to be buying real estate, interest rates are at their lowest and home values have become the best investment you can make for your future. We can guide you through the entire process and answer all your questions about your individual needs.

Buy or Sell a home with ERA and Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, and a $300 donation will be made in your name to the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, and ERA will pay for a one year membership for you as well.

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585-359-2000 ex 17

ERA
FIRST TEAM

Laurie Schulman
Associate Broker
Making the Scene

HONORING TIM: Tim Mains and former Mayor Bill Johnson at the December party celebrating Mains's 20 years on City Council.

ROCHESTER GAY MEN’S CHORUS CONCERT: The Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus held their annual holiday concert on Dec. 9 and 10 at Hochstein Music School. This year’s concert, “Carols for the Holidays,” brought viewers traditional music, some songs with a twist, and plenty of laughs. The “Ceremony of Carols” was performed with many famous Carols, including Carol Channing, Carol Brady, and several others! And if the music and merriment weren’t enough, chorus and audience members contributed very generously to the Bob Griffith Food and Beauty Drive for AIDS Rochester, yielding a record number of donations!

FUNDRAISERS: MOCHA’s John Morgan, Kraig Pannell and Kelly Clark at the Jan. 6 reception for the Association of Fundraising Professionals, launching the Genesee Valley Chapter’s Diversity Committee.

Row one: Cynthia Woolbright (Diversity Committee chair), Pamela White, Marie Philippe, Margaret Sanchez. Row two: Eric Shoen, Paul Berezney, John Williams. Photos by Gerry Szymanski.

DOING GOOD THROUGH ART: Local artist Thomas Somerville recently celebrated his 45th birthday. GAGV Anti-Violence Coordinator Alex Cobus told the Empty Closet, “Tom has done so much with his art: fundraising, raising community awareness about HIV/AIDS and hate crimes, etc.” Last year Somerville donated art to benefit the MOCHA Project and was honored with an award from the organization. This party was thrown by his family and was also a retrospective of his work. Above: Tom, second from left, and high school friends Jacob Versendaal, Valentin Ortaiza and Thomas Warfield.
2005 Best Men's Shave Cream
Instinct Magazine Men's Grooming Award

A Rochester NY based business
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**ImageOut Screens Wilby Wonderful** on Feb. 16 at Little

**By Dan Humphrey**

On Thursday, Feb. 16 at 7 p.m., Rochester audiences will have their only chance to see one of the most highly acclaimed gay comedy/dramas of 2005 on the Little Theatre’s big screen at ImageOut’s first 2006 fundraiser.

With a sharp and sexy ensemble cast featuring James Alodi (Murder in the Hamptons), Paul Gross (Tales of the City), Maury Chaykin (Being Julia, Calumet Keith Rennie (The L Word) and the incomparable Sandra Oh (Sideways, Grey’s Anatomy), Wilby Wonderful explores life in a small Canadian town over a single 24-hour period as a gay scandal threatens to rock the community. Most reminiscent of the past ImageOut hits (Murder in the Hamptons, Sideways, Wonderful) Wilby Wonderful uses tender romance, sophisticated humor, and an intricately plotted众 life of very different people.

At the beginning of the film, Wilby’s gay video store owner, Dan Jarvis (Alodi) — distressed over pending revelations about his gay love life — decides to end it all, but finds himself repeatedly interrupted during his half-heart­ed suicide attempts by handsom­e squeezer punk donor Duck­McDonald (Rennie). Meanwhile, Dan has enlisted ra­ventously ambitious realtor Carol French (Oh) to sell his house in order to put up his loose ends. Carol, however, is more interested in selling her recently deceased mother-in-law’s house to Wilby’s mayor, Bert Fish­er (Chaykin), in order to gain social standing with the local in­crowd, as it is.

In order to do so, Carol tries to enlist the help of her police officer husband Buddy (Gross), but he has other priorities, includ­ing an affair with way­way­wall class Sandra Anderson (Rebecca Jenkins). Sandra’s daughter Emily (Ellen Page), is none too thrilled about her mother reporting her typical pattern of dating married men and acquiring a bad reputa­tion wherever they go, but Emily herself is just about to have her heart broken for the very first time.

Before the 24 hours have gone by, Dan and Duck will forge a romantic connection that will change both of their lives and, possibly, the perceptions of the Wilby townfolk, as well.

**Director Daniel MacIvor** weaves his web of comedy and drama with the same skill found in many of the recently popular multi-character films currently wowing awards and accolades, such as Crash and Me and You and Everyone We Know. This sophisticated, funny and warm­hearted small town chronicle is a must see for Rochester LGBT filmgoers, looking for a classy fol­low-up feature to their Brokember Mountain winter high.

This fun­raising screening is being co-sponsored by Dame Edna, Back with a Vengeance, presented by the Rochester Broad­way Theatre League at the Audi­torium Theatre, Feb. 14-19. (The Feb. 19 performance of Dame Edna is ImageOut Night. Call Bruce Colburn at ImageOut’s office, 585-273-2640 for more information on a ticket discount for ImageOut members.)

Tickets for Wilby Wonderful are $10 in advance and $12 at the door and are available to pur­chase online at www.imageout.org or in person at OUTLandish Video & Gifts, 274 Goodman St. N. and Pride Connection, 729 South Ave.

To request interpreting ser­vices, please call the ImageOut office at (585)271-2640. Requests must be made at least one week in advance of the screening.

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**Alison Smith’s Name All the Animals is selection for “If All of Rochester Read the Same Book…”**

The entire Rochester com­munity will once again be turned into one giant book club this year, as Writers & Books, 740 University Ave., presents the sixth annual “If All of Rochester Read the Same Book…” community reading program. For this year’s program, Writers & Books has selected Name All the Animals by Alison Smith.

Smith, a Rochester native, was interviewed in the Empty Clo­set in the April 2005 issue, and spent time with the GAGV Youth Group that spring. She will be in Rochester for a variety of public events from March 29 to April 1.

One event will be a reading at the Central Library (May TBA).

An estimated 100,000 Roch­ester area readers have particip­ated in the five previous programs, which featured A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest J. Gaines, The Secret History by Russell Banks, Kindred by Octavia E. Butler, Pare’s Laby­rinth by Leif Enger, and Servants of the Map by Ajaun Barrett.

**About Name All the Animals:**

A luminous, true story, Name All the Animals is an un­paralleled

account of grief and secret love: the tale of a family cloistered to the memory of a lost child, and of a young woman struggling to define herself in the wake of his loss. As children of a broken home, Alison, Liz and Adam were so close that their mother called them by one name, Alroy. But when Alison was 15, Roy, 18, was killed in a car acci­dent.

Heartbreaking but hopeful, this extraordinary memoir, clearly told and expertly paced, explores the aftershock of Roy’s death, his parents’ enduring romance, the legacy of a deeply religious com­munity, and the excitement and anguish of Alison’s first love — a lesbian relationship that opens up a world beyond the death of her brother.

**About the author:**

Alison Smith’s writings have appeared in numerous antholo­gies.

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**15 minutes of Dame (not your average interview)**

**By Jeffrey Young**

**What can I say? An inter­view with Dame Edna Everage (a.k.a. Barry Humphries). A vir­tual brush with royalty, or at least so she says. The grand dame herself will be appearing in Rochester this February for a limited engagement in “Back with a Ven­geance,” beginning Valentines Day and closing on Sunday the 19th. (Feb. 19 will be ImageOut Night.)

“Dame Edna will be in her typical ra­fied form, so prepare your­self for an upbeat evening of comedy stylings the likes of which are most uniquely the Dame’s own. Listen in on our phone con­versation and share in your 15 min­utes of Dame. Mr. Warhol, I’m not going to say much, but it will be a delight.

Dame Edna: Hello Jeffrey. How am I, your bird of paradise, your right vulture?

Jeffery Young: My right vul­ture?

Dame Edna: Yes Jeffery dar­ling, I am quite the night owl don’t you know. But all I am not a carrier of that awful Avian flu virus.

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**TRAVEL:**

**Go West: Tucson, Palm Springs, Lake Tahoe**

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**BOOKS:**

Chris Packard talks about his book, Queer Cowboys

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**NUMBER 387 A PUBLICATION OF THE GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESEE VALLEY FEBRUARY 2006**
Allison Smith continued from page 1
goes and she has been a resident at Yaddo and MacDowell Colony. Smith attended Mercy High School here in Rochester and currently lives in Brooklyn.

All the Animals: Johnson. And do you think they may be Johnson gentleman.

Alison Smith
sad, and without a trace of self-pity, Name
found understanding of how we survive
finalist for the Discover Award from Barnes & Noble; nominated for an Original Voices Award by Borders Books; nominated for a Lambda Literary Award; nominated for best book of the year by UK’s Diva magazine.

What people are saying about Name All the Animals “Make time stand still and your coffee go cold beside you.” —The New York Times “Smith writes with such assured distance that this quiet examination of grief reads more like biography than autobiography, and displays a novelist’s gift for revealing character.” —Newsweek: “Stunning — (a) story of survival and sexual awakening.” —The, The Oprah Magazine, “I am speechless with admiration. Name All the Animals demands a ‘must-read’ list of its own. I find it hard to imagine the reader who would end Smith’s book and not have turned away a deeper, more profound understanding of how we survive this human condition of faith and grief, of love and life”—Judy Blunt, author of Breaking Glass “Alison Smith is a cool warrior of a writer, but she makes us want to hug her and her story with every ounce of our being”—David Sacke, author of Rising in Manhattan, “Tender, sad, and without a trace of self-pity, Name All the Animals is a beautiful memoir. I’ll never forget it”—Eileen Kimmell, author of A Girl Named Zippy.

Additional information about the author’s visit and a full calendar of events taking place February through April will be available February through April. They are so sturdy.

Sir Elton John ties the knot in Windsor By Sherrell Fulgham

Where else could a prince and a gay pop star be married by the same person and in the same building but in jolly old England? On Dec. 21, the pop star Sir Elton John married his partner of 12 years, Canadian filmmaker David Furnish.

Sir Elton, who is known for his flamboyance and extravagance, chose the 17th century town hall – the Guildhall – in Windsor for the ceremony. It’s the same place where the Prince of Wales married Camilla.

The service was presided over by registrar Clair Williams and attended by Sir Elton’s mother and stepfather, David’s parents, and a small group of friends. The couple arrived in a black Rolls Royce and wore black tuxedos. The only sign of Sir Elton’s usual wild dress was a pair of lavender glasses.

Upon leaving the town hall, the happy couple waved to the crowd outside the Guildhall. Sir Elton raised a hand to show off the diamond wedding bands that were exchanged. The couple left for the reception in a shower of rice.

The reception that followed was nothing like the quiet, private ceremony. Over 700 hundred guests gathered at Sir Elton’s mansion in London for a lunchtime that cost nearly $2 million. Like many married couples, Sir Elton and David then went on a honeymoon trip to Venice. The couple stayed at Sir Elton’s home on Guidecca – an island in Venice.

And since no wedding is complete without a pre-wedding party, celebrities had gathered the night before at the posh Soho pub Ten2Mash to throw Sir Elton and David a bachelor party. Among the list of guests were the Osbournes, members of Take That, Kid Rock, Bryan Adams, and Elizabeth Hurley. Paul O’Grady is queen Lily Savage hosted the affair. Waiters were clad in black ties, black pants, and black riding boots.

And there was plenty of entertainment to be had. Pet Shop Boy Neil Tennant and Scissor Sister Jake Shears opened the party with the glory Gaynor tune “I Am
BROKEDOWN MOUNTAIN

director receives HRC award

Award-winning gay author Alex Sanchez will attend the Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival, to take place on Saturday, April 30, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The festival will be at Fairview High School, 1358 Arctic Avenue. Sanchez, author of four novels and a collection of stories, is one of Rochester's leading adult literary market by focusing on stories that reflect the realities of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people and issues.

In an interview with Ove Overmyer for the Rochester City Paper's Empty Closet, Sanchez said, "There is a need for children and adults to learn the story of people who are different and that with the stories being told, we can feel connected to others who struggle or have gone through similar experiences."

Sanchez, who has made a name with his stories, is known for his ability to write about gay and lesbian themes in a way that is relatable to all readers. His most recent book, "Jenna's Dead," is a thriller that explores the themes of sexual orientation and identity. The book has been praised for its realistic portrayal of gay and lesbian characters and for its ability to engage readers of all ages.

"There are so many fascinating stories to tell and so many gay and lesbian authors," said Sanchez. "The edges of the mainstream are often where the most compelling stories are told, because of the struggles that marginalized groups have to go through.

Sanchez, who has been involved with the Lambda Literary Awards for several years, said he is excited to be part of the festival. "I'm looking forward to meeting some of the young people who will be attending and hearing their stories."

The festival will feature a variety of speakers and events, including a author reading, a panel discussion, and a Q&A session. There will also be a chance for visitors to meet some of the festival's authors and to purchase their books.

Sanchez's appearance at the festival is just one of many events taking place in the Rochester area this spring. The festival is part of a larger push to increase visibility and acceptance of gay and lesbian themes in literature and the arts.

For more information, visit www.rochesterliterary.org or call (585) 728-3355.
Wordsmith Profile: Chris Packard

Writer and Educator Uncovers the Truth About Gay Life in the Wild West

By Our Reporter

Many of what we recount and remember about the American cowboy comes from mid to late 19th century literature, cowboy movies, and later on, the TV westerns. Authors like James Fenimore Cooper, Walt Whitman, and of course, Mark Twain come to mind. There was also this twisting profile of the Marlboro Man, sitting tall in the saddle.

It was assumed that these hyper-macho masculine men of the deserts and prairies of the old West saved their伙伴关系 for when they blew into Dodge City, or the nearest frontier town on the horizon. After all, Miss Kitty over at the town saloon always had a shotgun for every cowboy who rolled in on horseback, didn't she? Or so most of the civil bourgeois society might have thought.

But audiences with different perceptions knew better. So did Jonathan Ned Katz, when he wrote American History (1975). He noted that the Wild West, with its vast open spaces and freedom to govern one's self away from the prying eyes of convention, seemed too good to be true for any gay folk. It's logical to surmise that they? why did they need to keep their unconventional lives secret on the horizon? After all, Miss Kitty over at the town saloon always had a shotgun for every cowboy who rolled in on horseback, didn't she? Or so most of the civil bourgeois society might have thought.

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The book is about 19th century literature. In any event, Packard is very excited about the prospect of reaching a greater audience because of their television commercials targeted to gay men.

Chris Packard was born in Topinka, Kansas in 1958. He was one of six children. His father was a landscape architect.

He has uncovered literary, documentary, and visual sources to provide the most comprehensive look at what was the world of gay male characters and relationships in the old West. His findings are hard to ignore.

Chris Packard's 2005 book, Queer Cowboys and other erotic friendships in nineteenth century American literature, attempts to decode the unspoken meanings that were often embedded in gestures, imagery, and figurative notions of the time. The author uses examples from works by James Fenimore Cooper (The Leatherstocking Tales), Claude Hardtland (The Story of Life), Frank Harris (The Memoirs of an American), as well as Owen Wister's seminal book, The Virginian, (1901) to help form his hypothesis.

Packard expertly convinces his readers to rethink the traditional assumptions of male friendship and its relationships as seen in the West. He skillfully reframes the discussion in non-normative terms, devoid of the trap-gemms. He has uncovered literature, documentary, and visual sources to provide the most comprehensive look at what was the world of gay male characters and relationships in the old West. His findings are hard to ignore.

In the book's introduction, Packard explains that he soon began to detect a pattern in language and word usage that was eerily similar in most of the friendships or buddy novels he researched. "It was more than heartfelt. You could just tell.""The trick was to dive right into the meat of the talk." The fact that your publisher is releasing the paperback edition of his book, Queer Cowboys (Palgrave, $12.99), around the time that time Ang Lee's film Brokeback Mountain is receiving attention, is just this a coincident?"I asked.

"Well, to be perfectly honest, yes it is," he responded. "I really don't get the connection between my book and the film. However, I can't deny the synergy that the two projects are experiencing. Somehow, the media's perception has made that link.

Having seen the film and read Packard's book, I understood the author perfectly. The characters in Brokeback Mountain are not cowboys. Annie Proulx, author of the original short story, calls it "a story about two inarticulate kids in 1953 who have left home and who find themselves in a personal and sexual situation they didn't expect and cannot manage." Chris Packard's book is about 19th century literature. In any event, Packard is very excited about the prospect of reaching a greater audience because of their television commercials targeted to gay men.

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Growing Up
NO BRAINER
by Eric Bellman

How best to refer to this delicate situation? I like the term and the phrase but not the subtext. The sun moon light is a little trite and "tricking" has no charm at all. "Doorbell trade" is equally crust. It is, after all, about a gentleman caller and that would be an appointment for sex.

This is not a new pastime. Hardly anything about act is new. The gentleman caller is not a boy friend or a partner or a lover. If optimism is required, I suppose he might be viewed as having potential in those categories, but for the time being he is none of those but an insignificant other. A sex trade. The only time the kids have plumped onto the behavior, they call it "a friend with benefits." Sex without strings.

What might be new is involves a shift in attitude. The furnaces and attendant shame, alas so typical of decades of gay activity, have to be included in this category. But the kid is more open mind and clear conscience. Discretion is essential. No casual bragging. And that may not be an easy catch for some gay men who are shifty in matters of self-esteem and fear they are only as good as their last catch.

A bastion runs the risk of being labeled. Shot is not a charming word. Sexually liberated sounds better. There are cultures where men engage in all kinds of shenanigans in society to emulate and duplicate the bland settle down.

sort of arrangement, kids have glommed categories, but for the time being he is none (that's a very big etcetera). It's all gans with one another and feel no remorse is expected and extended in minor issues of the sort.

If optimism is required, I suppose he might let's hear it for minorities who rebel!

Even with polished skill, sex is often not the most time-consuming of activities. Half an hour, maybe an hour. What gives this casual encounter its buzz are the details; this is the distinction between sexual acts and, as they make of Rhoda or Terry? A grown man can't have a best friend, but Janet is surely a wonderful friend. Her schedule has changed, she's suddenly free and asks if I want to hit an afternoon matinee. Well, I had actually been planning a matinee, but not at the multiplex (although in my heart I was sort of regretted, one used to be able to have sex at the movies in the long past dark ages). Anyway sure Janet, you're on.

I don't know what the term "Fire Engine Red" doesn't even come close to describing the intense shade of my skin. And I could still see my chest glowing in the dark when I switched off the bathroom lights.

No way in hell I was going to go any circu Missadventures In Boyland DEVIL IN A BOTTLE by Troy Robinson

I looked like an unshaved Butterball turkey sporting a bad sunburn. I have done a lot of stupid things in my life, but my most recent exploit is proof why God made me gay.

I'm not supposed to be dipping into the gene pool of humanity. God did not intend for me to pass along my DNA. I suffer from some sort of condition that makes me more harm than good and would inevitably bring about the downfall of the human species.

I had gotten a hold of a bottle of Nair at the local pharmacy, I picked up one a bottle of Nair for Men Extra Strength Hair Removal Lotion.

After losing some weight this past year, I had visions of actually pulling my shirt off at a circuit party and dancing with gods who have smooth chests and hairless abs.

But after looking in the mirror, I realized I was more funny than fat. So at the local pharmacy, I picked up a bottle of Nair for Men, which promised me "smooth, clean-looking skin" that "lasts days longer than shaving."

Little did I know that I also come with a manner of pain and suffering that had not been unlocked onto this world since the Spanish Inquisition. The medieval torture device the Jews had nothing on Nair.

After spreading the lotion across my chest as instructed by the directions on the back of the bottle, I waited for the magic to begin. According to the instructions, the man can't have a best friend, but Janet is surely a wonderful friend. Her schedule has changed, she's suddenly free and asks if I want to hit an afternoon matinee. Well, I had actually been planning a matinee, but not at the multiplex (although in my heart I was sort of regretted, one used to be able to have sex at the movies in the long past dark ages). Anyway sure Janet, you're on.

I don't know what the term "Fire Engine Red" doesn't even come close to describing the intense shade of my skin. And I could still see my chest glowing in the dark when I switched off the bathroom lights.

No way in hell I was going to go any circu Missadventures In Boyland DEVIL IN A BOTTLE by Troy Robinson

I looked like an unshaved Butterball turkey sporting a bad sunburn. I have done a lot of stupid things in my life, but my most recent exploit is proof why God made me gay.

I'm not supposed to be dipping into the gene pool of humanity. God did not intend for me to pass along my DNA. I suffer from some sort of condition that makes me more harm than good and would inevitably bring about the downfall of the human species.

I had gotten a hold of a bottle of Nair at the local pharmacy, I picked up one a bottle of Nair for Men Extra Strength Hair Removal Lotion.

After losing some weight this past year, I had visions of actually pulling my shirt off at a circuit party and dancing with gods who have smooth chests and hairless abs.

But after looking in the mirror, I realized I was more funny than fat. So at the local pharmacy, I picked up a bottle of Nair for Men, which promised me "smooth, clean-looking skin" that "lasts
Battery powered joy. He gleefully plays when his button has brought some animated figures to life in its violent defeat. Fortunately little Austin does not yet read, so there are times when he must interact with a living human to get game-boy's words. But most of the time, it is just A and AA and informationaided by his large deflated brain.

The nephew Adam just told me to tell him that he is a brilliant toy... CO-Q, a bat­tery-powered ball that think. A ball that, so far, has guessed every animal, vegetable, mineral or other, that he has submitted to its fascinating 20 questions. Questions of size: "Is IT heavier than a pound of batter?" "Is IT larger than a microwave?" "Is IT something you take along?" The human can reply: yes, no, sometimes, or unknown.

Hey, decided, I'm not going to play ball. My against two AAs, no contest. I decided to move 20-Q off on its little knees. I thought "grape" because was washing some for the fruit bowl, I knew 20-Q couldn't see me because I was in New York and it was in California. The challenge began. 20-Q asked me if IT grew on trees. Gleefully said I knew "no" believing, had wanted one of its ten. Then 20-Q asked me, "Can IT fit into an oven?" Well, I thought about IT and said, "Boo!" So, boom, up. Wow, I thought. I'm brilliant. Then 20-Q said "only kidding." Batteries with an attitude. And batteries with the right answer. Yes, magically, Q-brain did guess "grape." OK, so I have to give it some credit, some applause for entertaining me. But what so I understand is that this bat­tery-boy is one more isolation booth.

Excuse me for belaboring IT's learning of a file. I learned that I and my vocabulary are old. How so? Well, to determine size, I do not out for a comparison to a microwave. Next have always asked "Is IT bigger than a bread­box?" Breadbox! How many living people have ever seen one. More to the point, how many batteries-brains have been programmed by a person older than 50? In any case, now I can't wait to use "breadbox" to stamp 20-Q. When Q asks "Is IT a common household item?" I will so want to tell Q. "Yes, in my old days, and IT matched my grannie carton." But battery brains have their limits. I prefer the interaction between two soft brains by Patton heating. I like to play Twenty Questions with my wife­women...in the car or the little one in bed when we can't fall asleep. Twenty Questions lets us explore words and how it affects the way we use it. I especially like the brain process of creating questions, of following the maze of possible phrasing, of finding my head in my words. I find the perfect question.

I want to listen to my wife-women's answers because tone of voice and timing are additional clues. I particularly enjoy the silence as my human playmate considers her options. I like the sound of her thoughtful Hummum. I relish the challenge of a hint- answered question like the "not really." There is also that "oh my goodness!" or when one of us learns to the answer in very few question how, as though we can each other's minds. Most of all, I love the music of our laughter when one of us realizes we understand each other, with no answer. No battery-brained Q can do that. There are other games we lesbian life­partner like to play in bed before we go to sleep. Recently, we discovered the Alphabet. One of us selects a word from our daily activities, from the GEVA play we just saw, a movie, our dim. Or random subject. We select from toys, clothes, household items or things battery operated. Topic selected, we alternate through the alphabet. Sometimes we last for only one word before we sink into slumber. Recently, we two married lesbians were preparing to retire for the night. Our houseguest was our elderly, non-lesbian aunt. This was her first overnight stay in our new home, an 1838 farmhouse with paper walls. Wife-womyn told elderly aunt to have fun but watch out. Somewhere I was hearing hear voices because of our game playing. Wife-womyn proceeded to tell elderly aunt about our non-sleep-counting system, the alphabet game. Aunt-woman smiled blandly. "Well, now I can't wait to get home."有一位老伯伯要来参观我们的新家。1838年的小农舍，白色的墙壁。Wife-womyn对老伯伯说，要小心看住这位非女女的Kİ．他要来住一夜。老伯伯很乐意。狗年年她们聊天，玩字母游戏。Wife-womyn对老伯伯说，要小心看住这位非女女的Kİ．他要来住一夜。老伯伯很乐意。她们聊天，玩字母游戏。Wife-womyn对老伯伯说，要小心看住这位非女女的Kİ．他要来住一夜。老伯伯很乐意。她们聊天，玩字母游戏。
February is National Agency to eavesdrop on American citizens. But this was just the tip of the iceberg. Ellis told the Washington Post last year at New York University was a protest at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where student groups who oppose the military's recruitment on campus voiced their concerns. The protest included a demonstration where students disrupted the recruitment event by singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, along with other activities such as holding signs and distributing flyers.

Several media outlets have also reported that a protest at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was disrupted by student groups opposed to the military's recruitment on campus. The protests included activities such as singing the national anthem and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, as well as distributing pamphlets and holding signs opposing the military's presence on campus.

In order to maintain national security, the government has been operating a surveillance program that includes tracking the movements of individuals and groups. This program has been criticized for invading the privacy of citizens and violating their constitutional rights. The program has also been accused of targeting individuals and groups based on their political beliefs, including religious organizations and groups that support peace and nonviolence.

The Department of Homeland Security, which has been criticized for its handling of the situation, has been accused of engaging in activities that violate the civil liberties of citizens and residents. The government has also been accused of using excessive force and violating the rights of individuals and groups, includingnoc report protection of individual rights and freedoms.
Confessions of a Serial Blonde
THE L WORD
By Robby Morris

I have made a conscious choice to try my damnedest not to threaten the privacy of anyone who may be in the grocery cart or anyone who may be on the second floor in Room 875. These are not, let us be clear, the highbrow and gaybrow couples that make me want to snip the blooms off roses, cut holes in paper hearts, and last time to get my M.Div, some time to spend time with yourself. Do anything you are, God can help you make it better place.

Putting to rest the idea of anyone who walked in the door. In my dream, it was a church that was about the fertility of its fields and pastures. This is, as an individual are worthwhile. Claiming what love is, and worse, because of your word Hannah, which means grace. In Scripture, Anna was a Hebrew prophet named their children, their names meant something. Some of my best Valentine memories involve more than just hanging out with 

In other words regularly checking up all or sure, and even diabetes. Individuals who substance use. Smoking and heavy drinking sexual counterparts. Additionally, many of the important health concerns listed for Bats are high cholesterol and adult diabetes, which are both, coincidentally, also risk factors for heart disease.

An additional physical concern for heart disease could be one's HIV status, because they are aware of their heart risk is a part of a couple, you are somehow lacking in the greeting card or in the room? What do you said. I think a lot of us tend to fall for when we're emotionally vulnerable, such as a hory, I march on with hope and optimum. I know that you if kiss enough frogs, eventually one will jump into your lap, but I will definitely keep it. But until that moment arrives, I can buy my own dinner, thank you very much, and sit just as content to do so.

The only anti feeling I have on the subject is not wanting to concede to other people's expectations and ideas of what love and relationships are supposed to be, or their importance. If you have a man (or a woman), good for you! If you are in a loving, committed relationship, God bless. If you are single, God bless you. Stand strong from Sex & The City a run for their money, you go girl. But please don't assume that when two people are in a relationship, just because you are together, you are, be court, be proud, and be healthy!

Erik Likey is the Gay Health Coordinator at SUNY Buffalo State. He can be reached at 442-2222 or by email at elikey@buffalo.edu. An archive of his previous articles, as well as a list of his current courses, can be found at www.sdbuffalo.edu/gqhealth.

Soul & Inspiration NAMES
by Reverend Dr. Sharon Jacobson

Did you ever wonder what people in Rochester think of when they hear your name, or about what people are anywhere in the world think about when they hear your name? We could bring it a little bit closer to home. What do you think about when you think of your name? That your name means something to other people in Rochester or any- where else in the world. For me, my name means something to me. It is, I think, a problem that God places in her heart. It doesn't matter how old you are, how fit you are, or how healthy you are, God is asking you to name your name mean something by helping you work on your dreams. If all you do is dream about your dreams, it doesn't matter what you do. If you do something with them, then they can mean something.

One of the things I remember from my days working in substance abuse is the rule of threes: If you have been clean and sober for 20 years now, call the "fate til you make it" survival. The third module is that in our community we arecleaning our life's, whether coke or procrastination, is very different. Some-times maps may seem clear, but we know which are supposed to be doing, but we can act as if we do.

For a concern like the heart this is a partic­ularly dangerous trend because prevent­ative care is also other words checking up physically. Physical checkups involve heart disease. The Beat community, which includes many individuals who are HIV-positive should work closely with their treatment providers to monitor the health of their heart.

Within the gay and bisexual community contributing to heart risk is substance use. Smoking and heavy drinking can both lead to increased heart risk... Keeping your heart healthy and in great shape is a great step in the process to be queer, and be aware, and be healthy, and be proud, and be healthy! 

As an individual are worthwhile. Claiming what love is, and worse, because of your word Hannah, which means grace. In Scripture, Anna was a Hebrew prophet named their children, their names meant something. Some of my best Valentine memories involve more than just hanging out with... my name means something to other people in Rochester or anywhere else in the world. For me, my name means something to me. It is, I think, a problem that God places in her heart. It doesn't matter how old you are, how fit you are, or how healthy you are, God is asking you to name your name mean something by helping you work on your dreams. If all you do is dream about your dreams, it doesn't matter what you do. If you do something with them, then they can mean something.

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AIDS Rochester Presents:

**HIV 101**

get the facts!!!

Wednesday

**February 22nd, 2006**

7pm—8pm

1350 University Avenue

Rochester, NY

Light refreshments provided

- Basic details about HIV in our community
- Dealing with a friend’s or partner’s status
- Answers to many other questions.

For more information contact:

JRIGHIT@AIDSROCHESTER.ORG
American Idol finalist AnnMarie Milazzo was one of the first two contestants to be seen by opera buffs and rock fans alike. By Sherrill Fulghum

There are some CDs that after you listen to them the songs keep running in your head, said Fulghum. There are other CDs that do not have the masters rolling over in their graves. EVOC performs the songs in their original languages, but this in no way detracts from the music, it only enhances it.

In this day of putting labels on everything, the music of The East Village Opera Company is billed as classical rock, but their music is much more than that. This is not a CD to put on to crank up the volume and listen to. It is a CD to put on to allow the songs to wash over you. The members of The East Village Opera Company are a group of incredibly talented artists who have brought the world of Mozart, Puccini, and Verdi into the modern world of rock with a style and flair that do not have the masters rolling over in their graves. EVOC performs the songs in their original languages, but this in no way detracts from the music, it only enhances it.

The East Village Opera Company's debut CD on Decca records is a must have for opera buffs and rock fans alike. Jim Verraros Rollercoaster

There are some CDs that after you listen to them the songs keep running through your head. "Rollercoaster" is one of them. This 22 year old Chicago native made his mark as one of the first group of finalists on "American Idol." The then teenager was one of the first two contestants to be voted off, but the world had not heard the last of young Jim Verraros. Later he joined the British star of "Pop Idol" Will Young when he came out. While Jim says that there have been other gay artists on the scene, Jim remains the first and only openly gay American Idol finalist.

Fulghum has recorded an album, "Unusual and Understood," which was released on MP3.com and was a hit. That version is no longer available, but Jim Verraros has a new album, which contains much of the same material as "Unusual and Understood." The new album has two hit dance singles, "Rollercoaster" and "Rollercoaster" is an album of pop rock and dance music but "Rollercoaster" by Jim Verraros is not your typical dance record that has little more than a driving bass beat for dancing. Jim has taken his music a few steps further. The dance beat is there, but so are instruments carrying melodies that will entrance you almost immediately. And his songs contain interesting lyrics.

On "American Idol" did two things for Jim. They selected him for the show and then voted him off. "Rollercoaster" is anything but the typical cookie-cutter pop album associated with Idol winners. Like many other Idol finalists Jim has taken hundreds of minutes of footage of the show and turned it into something more -- an album of well crafted songs that not only display Jim's voice, but also the musicianship of musicians Gabe Lopez and Ricki Lake.

Jim cites George Michael as one of his biggest influences. The young singer indeed reminds you of Michael, but he by no means is trying to copy his idol. Jim Verraros is his own man with his own voice and musical style. A voice and style that leaves listeners wanting more. To hear samples of Jim Verraros' music or to purchase the CD, go to Jim's website at www.jimverraros.com. Under the music tab on Jim's website he offers four complete songs From "Rollercoaster" for people to listen to.

Find "love" in eight minutes: speed dating at Spot Coffee

8minuteDating.com, the world leader in speed dating, will hold a Rochester first at Spot Coffee, East Ave., on February 28 at 7 p.m. In cooperation with AIDS Rochester and Spot Coffee, 8minuteDating will hold a gay and lesbian speed dating event. AIDS Rochester will be on site and will provide free and confidential HIV testing from 6 – 10 p.m.

At 8minuteDating, single men and women have eight dates that last eight minutes each, and are guaranteed to meet someone they would like to see again, or their next event is free. Singles can also mix and mingle with a network of other online daters, while enjoying complimentary appetizers provided by Spot Coffee. Ages 25-39; women $25, men $30. Price $55.

8minuteDating.com's mission is to provide the highest quality events where people can establish relationships that add meaning to their lives. 8minuteDating.com provides a fast, fun, safe and comfortable way to meet people in-person and establish dating, friendship or business connections. Founded in 2001 as part of Match Events Inc., 8minuteDating.com is the world leader in speed dating. The company is headquartered in Boston. For more information, visit www.8minuteDating.com (8minuteDating.com and the 8minuteDating.com logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of 8minuteDating.com. Copyright © 2006 8minuteDating.com. All Rights Reserved.)

Musocastrop auditions are Feb. 27-28

On Monday, Feb. 27 and Tuesday, Feb. 28 evenings from 7-9 p.m, Greater Rochester Repertory Companies, Inc. (GRRC) will be auditioning actors and actresses for aged 25 and up for Agatha Christie’s masterpiece of mayhem, murder and mystery The Mousetrap.

The auditions will be held at STAGES on the third floor of Audition Point, 875 Main St. East. Dr. Allan O'Grady, coordinator of auditions for GRRC, acknowledged Agatha Christie enjoyed this genre and said the production of the play will be run the first three weekends in May. "Musocastrop opened at the Ambassadors Theatre in London on Nov. 25, 1952 and never closed. The production moved did to the larger St. Matthew's Theatre next door to accommodate larger audiences without a break in the run of the play. Nearly five million people have seen the play in London during the 48-year run. Over 150 performers have played the roles in the London production, following in the footsteps of Richard Attenborough, who played Sergeant Trotter with his wife Sheila Sims as Mollie Ralston.

For further information regarding the auditions and the play, please contact Michael H. Arve at (585) 234-1254.

New music label launches; has gay focus

By Sherrill Fulghum

Sony music, along with Wilderness Media and Entertainment, are launching a new record label that will feature queer artists.

While the label will not ban straight artists who want to sign, the focus will be on queer acts. The new label, Musik. With a Twist, will seek out artists who appeal to mainstream music listeners, as well as music fans from the queer community.

The label has yet to sign any artists, but will be releasing a series of compilation albums in June to coincide with Gay Pride month. The albums will feature queer and queer friendly artists.

Music with a Twist is not the first venue into the queer community for Wilderness, who launched the Logo network – which can be seen as a part of the DirectTV lineup. Wilderness has also recently launched a radio program, which is currently only available in nine markets, but will be expanding in the near future.
AIDS DIRECTORY

Free testing for HIV exposure is available from New York State Department of Health: call Rochester Area Regional Hotline (585) 423-8081, or 1-800-926-5063 for pay phone assistance. For any questions, do not hesitate to call: (585) 623-8200. If fear of death or helping impaired people call (585) 423-8120 (TDD). New rapid HIV Testing is available—available information can be obtained by calling 1-800-541-AIDS. Other organizations which provide AIDS-related services are as follows:

AIDS Rochester, Inc.
1030 University Ave., Rochester NY 14627.
Phone: 585-244-3679; Fax: 585-244-3680. Offers confidential HIV testing and information. Contact information: business line (585) 442-2220; www.ny.gov.

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
1891 St. Paul Pl., 4th floor. Collaboration of Monroe County Health Department and L.R. Prichard-Read training in prevention and management of STDs. HIV: TB and related issues, such as domestic violence and case management.

Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Area
114 University Ave., Rochester, NY 14605. To make an appointment, call (585) 275-0526. Planned Parenthood has led the way in providing high quality, affordable reproductive health care since 1916. Our experienced and compassionate medical staff will hold your concerns and answer your questions in a warm, welcoming atmosphere. All our services are confidential. We accept most insurances; including Medicaid. You may qualify for low to no-cost reproductive health training planning. When you make your appointment, be sure to ask about our sliding scale fees. No one is turned away for lack of ability to pay.

AIDS Community Health Center (achc)
917 Clinton Ave., Suite 400. Comprehensive HIV care and primary medical care for HIV positive individuals, their negative partners, and adult family members. Provides nutritional evaluation, vision screening, psychiatric, gynecologic care, medical case management/ counseling, and substance abuse counseling. The Center offers clinic-based health care and special services. Provides medical care to HIV positive, HIV negative, and uncompensated care populations. Offers clinical, educational, and support services, and individualized care to people with HIV/AIDS.

AIDS Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS (ARATA)
Is a collection of agencies providing a multiplicity of resources and services to the upstate New York community. Their offices are located at 1701 East Joseph Ave., the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, which also provides medical literature and newspaper clippings, as well as demographic and statistical data for use in developing health care services. (585) 461-3630.

Men of Color Health Awareness Project (MOCAP)
Provides one-on-one education, education, resource, and support group for men who are gay men or men who have sex with men (MSM) in the minority community. Support groups are on a daily basis: safe sex workshops, referral services, buddy testing. 107 Liberty Pike Way. 420-1400.

Monroe County Health Department at 855 W. Main St., offers testing and counseling for HIV and other sexually transmitted disease. (585) 464-5926.

Resources

Catholic Charities AIDS Services
A multiracial and U.S.-based staff providing care to a diversity of people infected and affected with HIV/AIDS. This AIDS-related care is provided through inpatient and outpatient setting. Services include but are not limited to: HIV/AIDS support services, including case management, housing assistance, and transportation; HIV/AIDS-related educational services; HIV/AIDS-related counseling and support services; and HIV/AIDS-related legal services.

FEBRUARY 2006 • NUMBER 387 • GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESSEE VALLEY • THE EMPTY CLOSET

AIDS Rochester Women's Health
1171 University Ave., Rochester NY 14620; (585) 275-6978. Comprehensive breast cancer screening services for uninsured and underinsured women.

Elizabeth Wende Breast Clinic
170 Swedge Dr, 442-8428. Dr. Wende Logan-Yang and an all-woman staff provide breast cancer screening services.

AIDS Rochester Women's Health Outreach
1171 University Ave. ARSH has services for HIV positive women and others in the lesbian community. 442-2220.

Community Health Network
1350 University Ave., Rochester, NY 14605. Provides positive, personalized care for HIV positive women, their negative partners and family members. (585) 643-9637, HIV positive and post-test counseling. Confidential or free HIV testing.

Alternatives for Battered Women
222-2200, TVV 220-1741. Shelter (women only), counseling. Lesbians, gay men welcome.

Victim Resource Center of Wayne County

Mary Magdalene House
Women's outreach center for HIV positive women and men at risk. 281 Loy M. Ave. Office: 585-275-0526. Planned Parenthood has led the way in providing high quality, affordable reproductive health care since 1916. Our experienced and compassionate medical staff will hold your concerns and answer your questions in a warm, welcoming atmosphere. All our services are confidential. We accept most insurances; including Medicaid. You may qualify for low to no-cost reproductive health training planning. When you make your appointment, be sure to ask about our sliding scale fees. No one is turned away for lack of ability to pay.

GAY HEALTH

Monroe County Department of Health STD Clinic
Phone: (585) 464-5828

Monroe Community College Student Health Services
Phone: (585) 292-2818 (MCC Students only)

Highland Hospital Nursing Staff
Robert & William Smith College Health Services
Phone: (315) 897-3600

Rochester Institute of Technology
Phone: (585) 446-7303 (On-Demand Ongoing)

Rochester Women's Health Resource Center
244-9000; TTY (585) 461-9000. TTY (585) 461-9020.

CULTURAL:

Rochester Women's Community Chorus
244-4414. (See Ongoing calendar.)

SPORTS

State University of New York Athletics
www.rochesterathletics.com

Rochester Renegades Women's Rugby
www.rochesterwomenrugby.com

ONLINE:

Rochester SportsDykes
www.rochesterdykes.com

WOWmen of Western New York: Women's Rugby
www.rochesterrugby.com

WOMEN'S RESOURCES

HEALTH:

Rochester Regional Breast Care Center
1000 South Ave., Rochester, NY 14620, 585-341-8689. Specializing in breast health, diagnostic breast imaging, treatment and mammography outreach and education.


B 11
In Tucson

By Morle East
Javelina, javelina, ugly little thing. Javelina (onk), javelina (sing). Oh, javelina, what's the difference if you are a hit. When you get too close to us, we smell like TUCSON, ARIZONA.

The Old West. The New West, and after all of that running around, I needed a WEST!

Why did I think that October would provide me with a temperature of under 90 degrees? But since the humidity was not to be dealt with, I spent much of the time enjoying the outdoor attractions. What grew and lived on the land made up of most of what I was drawn to.

My sibling Marlene and I checked into a time capsule, which I have now renamed WORSTITY Club. For that, you can read my article, “Sleepless in Tucson.” Marlene always wanted to be a cowgirl and is still too happy riding the range. But for me, the only range is the one in the kitchen. And so we rented a metal horse, gassed it up and off we went.

Rumor had it that the one place not to miss was the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, a world-renowned zoo, natural history museum and botanical garden, all rolled into one attraction.

We grabbed a map and proceeded along the paths. An Orientation Room taught us a bit about deserts, the Sonoran in particular, and what it has to offer. There was this limestone cave exhibit that provided an overview of the region of the Sonoran Desert Museum. The loop trail took us sighting coyote, a catamount, and what it has to offer. There was this one that was working in Tombstone, and it is said that also houses a special Jewish Memorial. In fact, Eileen Warshaw will take you on a walking tour and explain both the full Jewish heritage and knowledge and will share it with you before the tour and on your way to the caves via a tram. Just in case, there is an outhouse next to caves, if you think that the sounds of water might spark your kidneys.

It's all set out for walking along raised concrete paths and several “don't touch!” lectures. All I can say is that the ending is awesome and that I suggest you call in advance. Incidentally, there are other Arizona state parks in the area well worth visiting and later, I'll give you the best website to find it all.

Well, unlike Old Tucson Studios, Tombstone is for real, yes, it's a full working town with real folks. As we were driving into the area, we stopped at Boot Hill and checked out the legendary cemetery that also houses a special Jewish Memorial. But I don't think it had anything to do with Wyatt Earp's secret marriage. There it was, just as the movies depicted, with the famous landmark Bird Cage Theatre on the corner of Allen and 6th and the first place to catch Tombstone's history. Brrr, OK, we walked enough. Time for more hygene beginnings, as we hopped aboard the stagecoach to see more than Allen Street and got a glimpse of the O.K. Corral event, at none other than the O.K. Corral.

There are five museums at the corral located. A cowboy budhwooden, the original corral office, Prostitute's crib... not the legal and they were called Soiled Doves. The other two museums were the Museum and Arizona and includes such noted facilities as Canyon Ranch and Miraval. However, there are spas located in bushels, such as Hashani at the JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort, that are just as pleasing to the casing. A spa service here included a personal locker and the full day use of the spa lounge, fitness center, whirlpool and outdoor pool area.

And dandy, but all I wanted was the Sonoran Quench Wrap body treatment. Pure algae is blended with aloe vera and applied after a soothing application of lavender essential oils. As I was loosely wrapped in sheets, I enjoyed a scalp, foot and hand massage. This is especially great after hanging out in the sun and the shopping malls. Did I say that?

By the way, you may also want to visit the very tiny town of Tubac, located south of Tucson. Also, Tucson has its own gay Convention and Visitors Bureau. Now for that website www.tucsonarts.com. Great map that not only shows the attractions, but you can click onto the attraction itself and it will send you off to their website, Ill
Living the sweet life: Rochester's Ken Stabins acquires Palm Springs gay resort La Dolce Vita

Behind adobe colored walls in a quiet Palm Springs neighborhood lies an environment of tropical gardens, fountains, stone statues and handsome men. La Dolce Vita Resort is one of Palm Springs newest gay resorts.

Owners Ken Stabins, born and raised in Rochester, and his partner, Tim Phillips of Los Angeles, moved from executive positions at Orange County, Calif. companies to running this 20-room gay men's resort. "La Dolce Vita" is Italian for "The Sweet Life", which is exactly what Tim and Ken have created.

With panoramic views of the San Jacinto Mountain, the resort embodies relaxation and serenity. Begin your morning with a continental breakfast while reminiscing about the previous night's encounters.

Afterward, take a dip in one of two pools or submerge yourself in one of the two spas. The property is completely surrounded by walls, allowing for a clothing optional environment that is private and secure. After exercising in the outdoor fitness center, enjoy the modern sauna. For those of you who feel the need to work or even surf the net, the resort is equipped with free wireless internet access.

Serving the community since 1971, METRO releases its annual vacation guide. For more information, go to www.greatgaytravel.com.
The Tree of Friendship

Friendship is the oak of life
it grows through rain and drought,
It stands against the storms of night
deflecting fear and doubt,
It comforts us when illness comes
- reassures when conflicts rage,
And spreads its shading summer arms
in deference to age,
But like all earthly things God made
His creations aren't forever,
Our friends are pruned much too soon
as if we friended never,
Oh, lonely is the one who's lost
a love from friendship's tree,
But loneliness far is he
who missed the opportunity.

I came so you would have life
and have it abundantly,
I wrapped each day in newness
live it unredundantly,
Take time to plant a tree of hope
to tend a life that's bare,
And I will bless you richly
With friends beyond compare.

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Announcements, Calendar, Classifieds, Chat, Photos, Profiles

Since 1996
Purchasing a first home is a wise financial investment and can provide priceless personal and emotional rewards as well. Home ownership offers an unprecedented sense of security, accomplishment, success, and perhaps most importantly, personal freedom. But before you begin to look at homes, it is a good idea to first shop around for a real estate professional who is compatible with your needs and understands your buying goals. Most novice buyers do it the other way around: they see a house they like, call the phone number on the yard sign, and immediately enter into a professional relationship, entrusting the most important financial decision of a lifetime to any agent they happen to pick up the phone.

But nearly every first-time buyer admits to understanding little or nothing about the real estate business as they enter the real estate arena. As newcomers, they are suddenly confronted with complicated choices that carry powerful legal and financial consequences. They often encounter sellers who have the upper hand, thanks to prior experience in the real estate market. And the potential for "silent homophobia" in the real estate industry can present an invisible obstacle for GLBT buyers, and is a legitimate and potentially frustrating concern.

Tips for first time buyers: choosing a realtor before finding a home

Depending upon where you live, the real estate laws will dictate the responsibilities and rules of real estate agents and brokers. Some states allow real estate professionals to act in a dual capacity, and these "dual agents" will represent both the buyer and the seller at the same time, during the same transaction. They negotiate and mediate on behalf of both parties. In other jurisdictions, agents represent either buyers or sellers, but not both. Check with the local Realtor’s Association to find out what rules apply in your area, before you begin interviewing brokers.

Use a specialist. If you are relocating through your employer, you may want to work with a broker who specializes in relocation work, because they will have the experience required to help you locate the right property, at the right price, within your window of opportunity and according to the parameters outlined by your company's relocation program.

Similarly, if you are looking for rural property or farmland, there are brokers who specialize in that area of the market, as opposed to others who are expert at finding you a city dwelling close to the nightlife. And if it is investment property you want, you may decide to choose an investment property specialist. Once you have found someone who specializes in the kind of property you're looking for, you can narrow down your search by selecting a broker within that niche of the industry.

Check their credentials, and also see if you feel comfortable working with them.

As with any professional you hire, you will want to look for experience, a proven track record, a stellar reputation for customer satisfaction, and the ability to communicate with you and answer all of your questions in a way that inspires your confidence and trust.

Be sure to take advantage of free help along the way. A variety of convenient resources are available via the Internet, such as those offered by www.GayRealEstate.com, the largest online GLBT real estate network in the world. They offer solid expertise and a demonstrated proficiency in all areas of real estate. No matter where you plan to buy a home or what your budget is, they can put you in touch with professional brokers in your area who are responsive, reliable, insightful, and fully knowledgeable of the local real estate market.

Once you have a qualified and trustworthy real estate professional on your team to help you find a house, negotiate on your behalf, and inform and guide you each step of the way, you can relax and enjoy the adventure of shopping for your new home.
The Sweetheart Ball 2006

Saturday, February 11
6:30pm to Midnight
Rochester Convention Center
Cocktails at 6:30 / Dinner at 7:30
Dessert and Dancing follow
$50 per person

Relax to the sounds of the Basically Treblemakers during cocktail hour. Enjoy a special performance of love ballads by members of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus. Dance to the vibe of DJ Chuck Argento. (Take advantage of a sweet deal being offered by the Hyatt Regency: Enjoy luxury overnight accommodations for only $99. Call 1-800-233-1234 and be sure to ask for the special room rate being extended in conjunction with the Gay Alliance's Sweetheart Ball. A limited number of rooms are available at the discounted rate and reservations must be made by February 4.)

Make your reservations for the Sweetheart Ball by calling the GAGV at (585) 244-8640 ext. 20 or by printing and returning the online registration form found at www.gayalliance.org by February 4, 2006. Be sure to include your meal selection of Chicken, Beef, Fish or Vegetarian.
Youth Services Director
The Todd
www.gayalliance.org
Anti-Violence
Graphic Design
GAGV Phone
Community
GAGV Community Center
GAGV Website
Executive Assistant
Executive Director
Executive Assistant
Antio-Koivio
Coordinator
GAGV Youth Group (14-20)
Youth Group: The GAGV Youth Group (13-23) meets Sundays 9-4pm at the Youth Center, 875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, New York 14605. Call 600-244-9640 ext. 13. The MOCHA Youth Group (14-20) meets Tuesdays from 3-6pm at the MOCHA Project Office, 121 Liberty Pole Way, Phone 585-420-1400

Youth Update:
WINTER YOUTH BASH IS FEB. 25
By Tony Plask

Happy New Year! Everyone! I bet many of you made some New Year’s resolutions. I typically do not make this myself as it gets frustrat­ing when I break them within a week of the new year. But I do feel a sense of renewed energy around some topics here at the Anti-Violence Program.

Many of you know that there has been an effort for the past several years to advocate for the passage of legislation that would expand the definition of family in New York State. This would extend access to family court for the LGBTQ community (and other unmarried couples). Of primary concern with this legislation is the current lack of access for LGBTQ unmarried couples to get civil court orders of protection. Currently, New York State is beginning to plan for the Day of Silence (April 26), and our first annual BIG GAG PROM in May. Many details on that soon.

We are also working with Empire State Pride Agenda (ESPA) on planning a Youth Summit in conjunction with LGBTQ Equality & Justice Day this spring. Our hope is to gather light youth from around the state to participate in a day of youth empowerment, networking, and workshops in Albany.

Our drop-in hours and evening specialty groups continue to do well. Last month we added a new group called Healthy Chat, and started a monthly confidential HIV testing during drop-in hours (thank you Eric Libey and ARD... Please check our Youth Website at http://youth.gayalliance.org for information on all events, groups, days and times.)

Anti-Violence Project:
ACCESS TO FAMILY COURT
By Alexandra Cobus

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Men’s Dating Workshop
Want to meet the man of your dreams? Learn how to refine your relationship skills?

The GAGV will present a dating workshop in April. Watch for more information in March’s Empty Closet.
State of Marriage

from page 1
domestic partnerships create select rights and responsibilities for the couple. Other domestic partnership structures give no substantive rights at all, other than having the partnership documented.

However, neither civil unions nor domestic partnerships are the same as marriage. So far only marriage has been explicitly recognized under federal law and among the states, and neither civil unions nor domestic partnership secure the federal rights and responsibilities, such as Social Security survivor benefits, pensions, immigration rights and tax advantages.

It is also undetermined whether civil unions and domestic partnerships will be recognized outside of the jurisdictions that grant them, so that a same-sex couple who relocates or travels may not be allowed to take those rights with them as any civilly married couple does. There is also a far stronger precedent for private institutions like businesses recognizing civil marriage for benefits ranging from employee health insurance to bereavement leave to discount club membership.

What is the current public opinion around marriage for same-sex couples? The public is mostly split on the question of allowing same-sex couples to marry in New York. A Global Strategies poll with a +/-4 percent margin of error commissioned by the Pride Agenda in March 2005 found that 51 percent of New Yorkers support allowing same-sex couples to marry, and 42 percent oppose. Ninety percent of New Yorkers said they would be more likely to support a candidate for public office or that it would make no difference if he or she supported marriage for same-sex couples: 37 percent said they would be less likely to support such a candidate, 72 percent of New Yorkers also supported civil unions or domestic partnerships, and only 25 percent opposed. Fifty-five percent supported New York recognizing the marriages of same-sex couples legally performed in other jurisdictions, and 41 percent opposed. Students are asked whether they support allowing same-sex couples to marry for benefits ranging from employee health insurance to bereavement leave to discount club membership.

Another poll counted 46,490 New York households as being comprised of same-sex “unmarried partners,” with one in four of them raising an average of two children.

This number is widely viewed as being only a fraction of the actual number in New York State, as many same-sex unmarried partners are reluctant to disclose their relationship to a government entity out of fear of reprisal or discrimination. If these families are left without the social safety net that government provides to all other families, they are more likely to become a social or financial burden on society as a whole. It has yet to be shown how extending the rights and responsibilities of marriage to LGBT families undermines, threatens or diminishes other marriages.

Likewise, there is no evidence showing that children are harmed in any way by being raised by parents of the same sex.

Recognizing the critical importance of organizing, training and mobilizing Marriage Ambassadors from all across NYS, the Pride Agenda will be hosting several trainings early in 2006. The dates are as follows:

Marriage Training NYC: Feb. 17-18, New York City (Friday evening and all day Saturday)

Conversations on Marriage: People of Color Specific Marriage Training March 17-18, NYC (Friday evening and all day Saturday)

All State Marriage Training: April 7-8, Syracuse (Friday evening and all day Saturday)

To register for one or more of these trainings contact Director of Organizing Elizabeth Bello at ebello@gagv.org. Tel: (212) 627-6050 ext. 105.

Lastly, save the date, Monday, May 8, and join the Gay Alliance and other LGBT advocacy groups as we make our annual pilgrimage from Rochester to Albany, for Equality & Justice Day. Last year we had a full busload make the trip and we plan to do the same or better in spring 2006.

The Youth Group held a Holiday Feast on Dec. 18.

Anti-Violence

from page 1

knee or abuse at the hand of a roommate, and many others. Too many people are left unprotected. These folks end up at higher risk for being victimized longer, with fewer options out.

Rachael Bauman, National Programs Associate Director of NYC’s Anti-Violence Project, said, “The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, The Empire State Pride Agenda, the New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project and the New York State LGBTQ Domestic Violence Network are among many organizations across the state who are concerned about this situation and have worked to attempt to advocate legislative changes.

Each year we mount campaigns and raise our hopes, and each year this legislation has gotten hung up somewhere along the process. This year we are seeking to bring together those organizations who are interested and whose constituents have a stake in this legislation to strategize as a group about how to finally move this vital legislative change to success. It’s about time, New York!”

This group met in New York City on Jan. 5 for the first strategy meeting. GAGV’s AVP was able to participate in this meeting, and we look forward to continuing this important work throughout the year.

Now, we need your help! If you or someone you know is a survivor of domestic violence whose relationship didn’t meet New York State’s legal definition of family, and this was a barrier to access legal or other services, we need your help. Legislators need to hear your stories, and they need to hear them from you. We are collecting statements from survivors explaining their experiences, and how access to family court would have helped keep them safer.

You can contribute your story by contacting GAGV’s Anti-Violence Project at 585-244-8640, ext. 17, and email at alexandra@gagv.us. If you have any other questions about this effort, or would like to contribute in any way, please contact us as well.

Anti-Violence Training:

Feb. 9-10, 6:30-9:30pm

Jan. 30, 6:30-9:30pm

March 6-7, 6:30-9:30pm

Liturgy:

Thursdays: 7:00pm

Saturdays: 5:00pm

Sundays: 7:30am

Rainbow Bridge Meetings:

2nd Monday, 7 – 8:30pm

www.rainbowbridgegroup.org

Elaine Elkins, M.S.
Psychotherapist
244-4387

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

Together we will create an environment that promotes healing, provides support for exploring your personal journey and empowers you to make self-respecting choices.

THE GAY ALLIANCE IS NOW FORMING A COMING OUT WORKSHOP FOR 2006.
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT TODD AT (585) 244-8640
EXT. 24 OR EMAIL: TDDPP@GAGV.US.

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Buffalo trans leader disagrees on ex-mayor’s “inclusive” record
Camille Hopkins of Buffalo NYTRO (New York Transgender Rights Organization) told the Empty Closet, “A Buffalo News reporter contacted me to respond to outgoing Mayor Masiello’s observation that he has helped the City of Buffalo to become more inclusive and tolerant of minorities and gays. In the Buffalo News on Dec. 30, my remarks challenged his assertions. You can read the entire front page article at http://www.buffalonews.com/editorial/20051230/1035697.asp.”

Below, the relevant part of the article:

“City is more ‘inclusive’
Masiello said he also takes pride in helping to make the city a more “inclusive and tolerant” place for minorities and gays. ‘This is a much more open city that embraces people with differences,’ he said.

“...Camille Hopkins, who made local history three years ago by becoming the first city employee to openly transition from male to female in the workplace, challenged Masiello’s claim.

“I think the mayor is living in another country, because I don’t see it that way,” Hopkins said. ‘He’s shown up at a couple gay pride parades, but he’s not pushed legislation or followed through on important issues involving gender identification.’

Lumon Ross, president of the Black Chamber of Commerce of Western New York, said he is disappointed the Masiello administration refused to support a disparity study documenting the historical underrepresentation of minorities and women on construction projects. He disagreed that strides have been made, saying progress has been ‘very minimal.’

“There’s still a ton of work that has to be done in terms of including black businesses on the playing field,” Ross said.

“Masiello insisted that he has been an ally of the minority community.”

Dame Edna rides again
Dame Edna Everage, at Shea’s Performing Arts Center, 646 Main St., Buffalo, Feb. 7-12, 7 p.m. Prices are $22.50-$50.50. 716-847-0850.

Barry Humphries, as Dame Edna, is a funny straight man in a dress, possums. (See page B1: the Dame will also be tossing gladolias in Rochester Feb. 14-19, at the Auditorium Theatre, 885 E. Main St., with tickets $22.50-$49.50.)

Have you heard? The GAGV has a new Website
Go to www.gayalliance.org select Empty Closet to catch up on the latest local, state, national and world news, entertainment features, social notes and more!

To see the photo features albums, go to http://ec.gayalliance.org/photofeatures. Select your album and click on slideshow!
ARTSY-FARTSY FILM GROUP
Given the vagaries of movie theater scheduling, we never know more than a few days in advance what film we'll see next. So get your calendars out on Saturday, Feb. 18, at the Little Theatre (240 East Ave., Rochester) for whichever film looks best.

We're watching a heartbreaking Israeli film, Ushpizim, that portrayed a couple's deep faith with humor, drama, and gritting.

On or after Thursday, Feb. 16, you can call Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church at 413-848-4688 to hear a recording, check the church webpage at www.frontier.net/oamcc or e-mail oamccfeevee@frontier.net to get the film selection and the meeting time. We'd love to have you join us for the film and for discussion afterward.

EMPIRE BEARS
Brrrrrr! It's cold out there. Cuddle up with someone furry. snuggle down under the covers and keep warm. If you're looking to get out for a night, come to BEAR-NIGHT at the FORUM on Saturday, Feb. 4.

The theme is union suits, so show us your duds. The door check will be waiting for you. The BEARS expect a group of our friends in the Buffalo Bears to show up, so show some Rochester hospitality.

Saturday, the 11th, we'll host our potluck at the GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. It starts at 6:30, and this month's theme is the soup and chili contest. Some people will be heading to Buffalo for their bartender's nights. Come on along.

Every Monday, you can join us for supper on Main Street Drive on West Henrietta Rd. We're there at 6. We often see a movie afterwards. Spazzing of movies, the BEARS had a great time at opening night of Blakemountain at the Little. Twenty of us were there, and enjoyed every minute of it. For those of you who missed it, you might glean from Celtic spirituality and experience! Join the exploration of the Celtic Church: Model of Openness, part of Dignity-Integrity's ongoing second Sunday Presentation Series at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 12. 

Led by Patrick Fox, we will take a specific look at how the Celts' experience of family relationships helped transform a nomadic well organized culture into a settled Christian society. Having been involved in church ministry for 38 years, Pat has traveled extensively throughout Scotland and Ireland to uncover the Celtic roots of faith and community. The talk will be at St. Luke and St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 South Pkgh St. in downtown Rochester. Discussion will be followed by our weekly coffee hour social.

Other Dignity-Integrity events for the month are an Episcopal Ecumenical Service at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 5, followed up with a short coffee social and our monthly Community Council Meeting which is open to all. On Sunday, Feb. 19, there will be a Celtic Liturgy of the Word at 5 p.m. with a subsequent coffee hour social, and we'll gather for our last hurrah before Lent begins at an Evening Prayer Service on Sunday Feb. 26, followed by a "Mardi Gras" potluck featuring whatever delicacies and decadences you associate with this annual celebration of life!

For further information, see our website at www.di-rochester.org or call our record office at (585) 631-5055.

DIGNITY-INTEGRITY: ROCHESTER
A decentralized inclusive community of believers blending ancient culture, human experience and what Jesus Christ—this is the story of the ancient Celts of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. As we struggle to be chosen for one another today, which of the voices we might glean from Celtic spirituality and experience?

Join the exploration of the Celtic Church: Model of Openness, part of Dignity-Integrity's ongoing second Sunday Presentation Series at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 12.

February's Dinner Info: Saturday, Feb. 4, we will meet at the Olive Garden Restaurant (formerly the City Diner), Winton Place/Road, 3423 Winton Place (meet at front reception area at 7 p.m.).

February's Dinner Info: Saturday, Feb. 18, we will meet at Mykonos Cafe Restaurant (formerly the City Dine), Winton Place/Road, 3423 Winton Place (meet at front reception area at 7 p.m.).

Dinner Nights are free. Don't be surprised if some of your friends are coming—there are always people who have heard this is a good time. For more information, e-mail us at dinnernights@lambdane.org.

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Please call the GAGV office at 244-8840, extension 24, if you are interested in finding out more about us. There are also brochures and information available at our group at the GAGV Community Center.

LAMBDA NETWORK AT KODAK
The Lambda Network at Kodak is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender employee network at Eastman Kodak Company.

We held our first annual Lambda Membership meeting on Dec. 8 at Kodak Park. The post-meeting look great! Management Sponsor Bob Berman and Corporate Champion Charlie Brown attended along with some 35 other participants. After hearing about our 2005 results, participants circulated to learn more about the specific strategy teams and to provide ideas to increase the knowledge and age-appropriate tools they need to create safe schools. To schedule a program for your school, organization or event, contact us at (585) 244-3580.

For further information, see our website at www.glsen.org or call our record office at (585) 631-5055.

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For further information, see our website at www.glsen.org or call our record office at (585) 631-5055.
Lambda membership. Are you a Kodak employee or retiree, but not yet a member? Consider joining.

For information about becoming a Kodak Lambda member or upcoming activities, please visit http://www Lambda. kodak.com. More details on Kodak's global diversity activities are featured at www. kodak. com/godiversity.

OPEN ARMS METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH "BARN-RAISING"

Rev. Jim Mulcahy, pastor of Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, can't suppress a grin when he says, "Success comes with a serious illness."

"Barn-raising" is one way we have heterosexual individuals in our congregation, with interpreters available upon request.

ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus (RGM C) would like to thank everyone who attended and made our 2005 holiday concert a tremendous success. The RGM C held their annual holiday concert December 9 and 10 at Hochstein Music School.

This year's concert, "Carols for the Holidays," brought the traditions and music, some songs with a twist, and plenty of laughs. The "Carol of Gospels" was performed by our newest Carolers, including Carol Channing, Carol Brady, and several others!

The second act saw a light-hearted version of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," complete with Archie Bunker as Scrooge! And if the music and merriment weren't enough, chorus and audience members contributed very generously to the Bob Griffith Food and Liberty Price for AIDS Rochester, yielding $42,000 for AIDS Rochester, yielding

Our home bar is the Bachelor Forum, 175 Norris Drive, off S. Fitzhugh (St.)

ROCHERST RAMS M.C.

Join us for Body Modification Night on Saturday Feb. 18, at the Bachelor Forum. Show off your body link. Let your piercings dangle. Let hot hands run over your tattoos, let quick fingers play with your metal belts.

If you think the best bar is one that's full of Thomp- sons and leather, but no wine, then we're the place for you.

RENAISSANCE OF WESTERN NEW YORK

By Shelest Day, VP

A few quick notes this month to invite you to our annual Renaissance Intergenerational Panel, Sunday, March 19, from 6-6 p.m., at the First Universalist Church, 150 S. Clinton, corner of Court St.

It's always heartbreaking to learn about the struggles and triumphs of our broth­ ers and sisters, so come share the afternoon with us.

Monthly potlucks, thirds Sundays, 4-7 p.m., at the Rochester Church. For more information, call 271-8478 if you need more information.

WINE SENSE makes buying wine fun! And it's a great way to support AIDS Rochester, yielding $42,000 to the bar.

Now it's time to start thinking of February? A Valentine's Wine Tasting at The Chorus Line, 175 Norris Dr., Rochester, NY 14610.

For information about becoming a member, please call 332-8010, or e-mail info@di-roc hester.org.
A Call to Action
By Alexander Karsten
So here we are again. It seems only yesterday that I was writing my first article on the policy of excluding those under 21 from the Sweetheart Ball. Then the youth group met with some members of the board, who listened to our concerns, and said that they would get back to us.

In last year's article and at the meeting, I pointed out that there was no real integration of the adult community into the lives of the youth save the Sweetheart Ball, and to take that away was a problematic stance at best. In the last year, no real change has occurred, and once again, we are going to be excluded from the only space where this integration happens. In my last article I also pointed out that today's youth are tomorrow's leaders, and alienating us now is a bad idea. Since last year's approach didn't work...

Now for something completely different.

For the moment, I am going to set aside issues around the problematic construct of age, and the artificial differentiation of those under 21 and those over 21 because, realistically, that's a thesis within itself. I am also going to set aside the fact that there are other problems inherent in this event, especially around issues of class. I would also like to set out the disclaimer that although I deeply disagree with the decision this board made both last year and this year regarding this specific issue, I do respect and admire a group of people who are willing to put so much time and energy into serving the LGBT and queer community, and which is one reason I hold them to a high standard.

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To the youth in the youth program, it tells us very clearly that we are not safe, even in an LGBT “safe” space. We are being told that we cannot trust adults, as adults are not capable of controlling themselves in our presence. The message is we are all potential victims and the only way to protect us is to exclude us, that adults who are not acting in an “inappropriate” manner are unwilling to stand up to adults who are.

There is another, more subtle known we are learning about growing up in the LGBT community, that we too will become untrustworthy in the future by the mere fact that we are LGBT. It tells adults the same thing – that by virtue of being out, visible, and part of the queer community, they are not trustworthy to be in the presence of kids. To adults in the straight community, this policy only reinforces pre-conceived notions of who the LGBT community is, a group of pedophiles who cannot control themselves.

When are we as a community going to stop running scared every time something like this comes up? When are we going to turn around and say “No, including our youth in events that show queer couples in a positive light is too important to be high jacked by the actions of one person?”

The youth group is looking to the board, and the messages this board sends to us, for guidance on how we view ourselves and adults in our community and how we will be viewed when we become adults. We are being told that we are victims, that all adults are potential perpetrators and that we will become that too for no other reason than that the passage of time.

I want a board that will stand up and say, no, that we are all entitled to a safe space, that adults will take the ones on themselves to BOTH include youth AND keep us safe and will combat the assumptions that this policy rests on. Based on the short lived history of this debate, however, I am not optimistic.
The comic strip you are about to read is the last of its kind. After much deliberation and several attempts to "change" Subject to Change, I have decided the story would be best told in true comic book form. You can't really tell a dramatic story in just a few panels, and constant continuations. Instead, we are cooking up a new funny comic strip that doesn't take place in Divine Authority Comics' continuity, even though it will feature some of our characters, and we are calling it "Not Subject to Change".

FEBRUARY 2006  •  NUMBER 387  •  GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESEE VALLEY • THE EMPTY CLOSET

Our Story So Far: Eric is a superhero with limited shape-shifting abilities. His boyfriend, Chris, is a metaphorpher of Mutant Force. Recently, Chris broke off their vacation plans for a needless mission. Eric is pissed, not knowing that Chris is actually being brainwashed into submission by his superiors. Carla is Kelly's girlfriend, who is one of GAV's split personalities. Carla and Eric have been close friends for a long time, and they share everything with one another, mostly.

SuperFreak17: He totally blew me off to go do his superheroing. He didn't even stand up to them, he just took his orders and complied. Now our vacation is f@#$ed.
PrettyPoison: I know, me too. It's so disappointing. You should do something about it.

SuperFreak17: There's this hot guy on queen.com that's been bugging me to hook-up with him. Maybe I should do it.

PrettyPoison: Oh Eric, you know that's not the answer. I know you, you'll feel bad about it and the next time you do it you can't take it back.

SuperFreak17: But, you just say that 'cause all you lesbians are so monogamous and faithful.

PrettyPoison: Have you talked to him about it?
SuperFreak17: I've tried, he doesn't listen. It's almost like he's already got him brainwashed. BTW, I may have found a new way to vent my frustrations.

PrettyPoison: Which n??
SuperFreak17: There's this hot guy on queen.com that's been bugging me to hook-up with him. Maybe I should do it.

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• Conquer your fears
• Conquer your fears
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• Conquer your fears
• Conquer your fears

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Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry
University of Rochester Medical Center

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Rochester, New York 14607
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There Goes The Bride.
ANNOUNCEMENTS
Volunteer for the Empty Closet. Seeking reporters, reviewers, photographers, distribution volunteers. Write for your position. This is a great way to make a contribution to your community! You can give two hours or more per month! Call Susan at 244-9031.
The Lesbian Lube Project wants to know what you get wet. This online survey is an effort to find out what kinds of lube lesbians are using, how we are using it (what we're doing), and what we like and don't like about different brands of lube. The information will be included in a book on lesbian safer sex. We are putting together a comprehensive dating/safety/sex relationships/how to book that we hope will be fun and accessible with lots of fic­tion, personal information, and helpful hints. The ones we wish someone had shared with us so we didn't look like fools. We got to the changing of the lube and found that there had been very strong opinions about it, but we couldn't find anything that looked at the community as a whole. So we started the Lesbian Lube Project. For the purposes of the book and the survey, we define lesbians as women who have sex with women. If you are bisexual, queer, or transgendered, you are included—if you are for you have ever been, and if you have ever identified this way. If you want your input, regardless of your past, present, or future gender/orientation status. All results are confidential: we are asking for emails as confirmation and to share the survey results, but we will not be either publishing anything or linking to your email address. The survey can be found online at www.lesbianlubeproject.com. (If you have any questions or need any more information, please feel free to email Gwendolyn KG at gwendolynkg@yahoo.com)
Volunteer for Winter Party. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is seeking a few hundred dedicated men and women to volunteer for the Winter Party Festival presented by Baccard Limon, March 1-6. Volunteers are needed to assist in all aspects of Winter Party’s fun and exciting events, including bartending, security, staffing the Welcome Center, working behind the scenes at sporting and fashion events, and more. In addition, the Task Force is actively seeking candidates to fill two key leadership slots on the volunteer committee that produces the Festival ("the Executive Committee") — a Volunteer Coordinator and a Database Manager — with responsibilities indicated below! Volunteer Coordinator: The Volunteer Coordinator will work closely with the Winter Party Festival’s president, executive director, and co-chairs to respond to inquiries, receive volunteers, and make assignments for Festival events. The Volunteer Coordinator shall be responsible for planning, organization and interpersonal skills. Database Manager: The Database Manager is responsible for creating, managing, and updates the Winter Party volunteer database and creating and generating reports. He or she will work closely with the Winter Party President and the Co-Chairs to automate the volunteer application process and the method by which Executive Committee members record data and retrieve reports. The Database Manager should be skilled in Microsoft Access. Work will be done in two of these positions and a position in both will begin immediately. Anyone interested in either position should call (585) 576-6435 or e-mail winterparty@winterparty.com.

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Massage therapy, for ashes, pain, injuries or stress relief. Massage can enhance one’s sense of well being and is useful pre­ventive health care. I have 17 years of ex­perience and have helped hundreds of clients. Sliding scale fees. Call for an appointment at 244-2415. Jim Berger, LMT.

Free massages for anyone withwalk-in pantry, formal dining room, Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S Winton Rd. Bus riders: Take the #18 University Ave to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton.

Saturday Night Special: Meetings in Rochester will find this meeting particularly warm and inviting. As curiosity seekers respect our privacy, we will not be shouted down for speaking words like pot, cocaine, crack, heroin, ecstasy, K, speed, meth, pills, etc. or discussing such matters as drug use or prevention; use of alcohol or tobacco in your 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 we’re trying 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 curiously seekers respect our privacy.

The Next Open Meeting:
Saturday Night Special: Meetings in Rochester
Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts
Meet in their normal facility, restricted to alcoholics and addicts
Meetings in our community which can present challenges even when we are fully committed to our sobriety.

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Rochester Gay Men
7:30 p.m. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave, at Eton St.

Open meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Men’s meeting
Handicapped accessible

This is a round table discussion meeting. If you are shy about meeting people or speaking up in a group, you will find this meeting particularly warm and inviting because everyone gets their turn to speak (or not). As a result, this group often runs late, so plan on more than the usual hour.

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

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

After our meetings, we frequently go out for coffee, dinner, movies, whatever; while we’re trying 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.

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Wednesday 1
Imbolc, Candlemas. Ancient Celtic Festival of light, sacred to the goddess Brigid. Tree the novena. Through Feb. 2

Saturday 4

Sunday 5
Dignity Integrity Episcopal Eucharist service, 5 p.m. St. Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 254-5092.

Monday 6
Deadline for GevalWriters & Books, service, 5 pm, 740 University Ave., Rochester 14607, attention Regional Playwrights Festival. 232-3266.

Tuesday 7
Rainbow Seniors Yoga, Open Arms MCC, 175 Norris Drive. Also Feb. 16, 21, 28. For transportation call DecDue, 872-2631. For info call 442-6369.

Auditions for Bread & Water Theatre Rainbow Theatre Festival, Visual Studios Workshop, 7-10 p.m. 271-9523. Also Feb. 8.

Thursday 9
Gay/Lesbian Book Group, Barnes & Noble, Mall at Greece Ridge Center. 7 p.m. Discussion of A Seahorse Model of Openness," lead by Patrick Fox. 5 p.m. St. Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 254-5092.

RGMC wine tasting, 5-7 p.m. Wine Sense, 749 Park Ave. $20 donation. 423-6650; www.thergmc.org.

Friday 10
Rochester's First Leather Bear Ball, 10pm-2am, Nasty Ds, 40 Alexander St.

Saturday 11
Free mammograms. Highland Breast Care Center, 8 am-12 pm. To make appointment, call 341-6866 or TTY 341-6987. To make an appointment for another day, call Women's Health Partnership, 753-5334.

Empire Bears potluck at GAGV Community Center, 175 Atlantic Ave., 6:30 pm. Soup and chili contest. Empirebears.org.

GAGV Sweetheart Ball. Romantic dinner dance at Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Cocktails 6:30 with Basically Treblemakers. Dinner 7:30, love songs by RMGC's Cosmopolitans, followed by desserts, dancing to music by DJ Chuck Argento. $50/person. To reserve tickets call GAGV at 244-8640 ext. 20, or go to www.gagalliance.org. For info on special room rates at Convention Center, call 1-800-233-1234; for special rates for GAGV Sweetheart Ball. Human Rights Campaign Gala Dinner, Waldorf Astoria, Manhattan, 7 p.m. Honoring Ang Lee, director of Brokeback Mountain. 1-800-949-8477.

Sunday 12
The Broadway Bears IX. One night only auction to benefit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, BB King Blues Club & Grill, 257 W. 42 St., NYC, 7 p.m. Auction of autographed teddy bears. For information: www.broadwaycares.org.

Dignity Integrity Second Sunday presentation series "The Celtic Church: Model of Openness," lead by Patrick Fox. 5 p.m. St. Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 254-5092.

RGMC wine tasting, 5-7 p.m. Wine Sense, 749 Park Ave. $20 donation. 423-6650; www.thergmc.org.

February 15
MÖCHA discussion of "Black Diamonds: a journey through our past" by Selin Justin. 6-8 pm. MÖCHA 107 Liberty Pole Way. 420-1400.

Wednesday 16
Empoly Closet deadline for March issue. 244-9030; empolycloset@gagv.us.

Thursday 16
ImageOut fundraiser. Screening of Willy Wonka. 7 pm. Little Theatre One.

Friday 17

Saturday 18
Butch Femme Connection dinner night. Meet reception area at Miltontos Café, Restaurant, Winton Place/Winton Rd. Plaza, 7 pm. 805-4019.

Sunday 19
Imbolc, Candlemas. Ancient Celtic Festival of light, sacred to the goddess Brigid. Tree the novena. Through Feb. 2

Thursday 22
HIV 101. AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave. 7-8 pm. JewishAIDSChaplain.org.

Friday 24
Empoly Closet distribution, 1-5 pm, GAGV Youth Center, First Floor, 875 E. Main St. Cell 244-8600 before 1 pm.

Sunday 26
Dignity Integrity Evening Prayer service followed by Mardi Gras potluck. 234-5092. St. Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

February 27
Auditions for Monsetrap. Greater Rochester Repertory Companies, at STAGE-ES, third floor of Auditorium Center, 875 E. Main. 234-1254, Also Feb. 28.

ImageOut volunteer night, 7 p.m. ImageOut office, Village Gate, 274 N. Goodman St. 271-2640; imageout@rochester.rr.com.

Winter Youth Bash, 5-9 p.m. Murphys, 40 S. Union St. Ages 13-25. Call Toby, 244-8460 ext 13.

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February Erev Shabbat Service Schedule

Friday, February 3 ............. 7:30 pm .......... Erev Shabbat Service
Friday, February 10 .......... 8:00 pm .......... Erev Shabbat Service
Friday, February 17 .......... 8:00 pm .......... Erev Shabbat Service
Friday, February 24 .......... 6:00 pm .......... Erev Shabbat Service
Friday, February 28 .......... 6:00 pm .......... Erev Shabbat Service

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Ongoing Calendar

MONDAY
Gay and Lesbian Support Group
Third Presbyterian Church, 34 Meigs St., First, Third Mondays, 7-9pm, 330-3466
American Baptists Concerned
Third Mondays, 7:30pm, Webster House, 57 Alexander St. 442-5469
HIV Positive Gay Men Support group
Every Monday, 5pm, AIDS Rochester, 1550 University Ave. 420-2222

TUESDAY
Atlantic Five 0
Gay men 50 and over. Second Tuesdays, 6-8:30-10pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 451-0821
Gay Fathers’ Support Group
First and third Tuesdays, 6-9-9:30pm, GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave, info@empirebears.org
Tawa Pano Open Youth Chat
6pm-8pm, Meet George Eastman House parking lot. 442-7412
MOCHA Chemical Dependency Group
Support group for men of color. MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400
MOCHA Wind Up In Drop Ins
Mondays, Wednesdays, 3-7 pm, GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St. Prince St. entrance, first floor. 424-8640 ext. 13.

WEDNESDAY
Women’s Community Chorus
Rehearsals each Wednesday, 6-30pm, Call for location: 334-4441
Country Line Dancing/Two Stepping
Every Wednesday, Muthara, 41 S. Union, 7pm. Lessons followed by dancing until 10 pm. Beginners to advanced.

NEWFIT-Fitness the Genesee Valley
Board of Directors’ Meeting, Third Wednesdays, 7pm, 875 E, Main St., fourth floor Blue Room. 244-8640

New Freedom New Happenings AA Gay meeting
7pm, Urania Church, 220 Winton Rd.
out gay and lesbian and friends.
Rochester Historical Bowling Society
7:15pm, Mondays, Crown Lanes, 2700 Monroe Ave. (Group of 8)

THURSDAY
Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns
3:30pm, first Thursday. For location call Ralph: 271-7469
Community Business Forum
Gay and Lesbian Professionals’ social group. Second Thursdays, 5-30pm, 234-8708
GLOBAL

Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus
Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 6:30-8pm. 423-0650
Free confidential walk in HIV testing
Every Thursday night, 5-4, AIDS Rochester, 1550 University Ave. 442-2220

SUNDAY
More Light Presbyterians
6pm-10pm, every Sunday, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 423-0650

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C 11

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Rochester, New York
716-237-1740 Voice 716-237-9948 FAX

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