Victims allege police arrested them, let gay bashers go; police question suspects, officers involved

By Susan Jordan

An alleged gay bash held took place on Goodman St. at Monroe Ave. in the early hours of June 1, but when victims called police, they were the ones to be arrested, according to a June 6 item on Channel 7 News.

The Rochester Police Department has launched an internal investigation. In the search for the alleged attackers, June 16, police announced that they have begun questioning four suspects.

The FBI is also investigating the allegations of police misconduct. A community rally against the hate crime and police brutality was set for June 26, after July Empty Closet press time.

A conference was held on June 12 at City Hall. Mayor Bob Duffy announced that witnesses to the June 1 attack on two men and two women assaulted the six victims (two of whom are U.S. Marines) between 8 and 9 a.m., making comments which clearly indicated that this was an anti-gay hate crime. "It was a vicious and small act," he said.

There were actually two separate altercations which occurred within minutes of each other at the same location, Officer Jim Hall, 19th precinct liaison, told the Empty Closet.

Duffy asked for help from the public. He added that Police Department internal affairs investigators will determine whether police were involved inappropriately. No officers had been removed from patrol, at Empty Closet press time.

Three of the alleged victims have been charged with infractions for their role in the brawls, along with officers, and those charges still stand.

Hall said, "Discrimination — whether based on race, religion or sexual orientation — will not be tolerated in the public. Let them know that the public will uphold judgment until all the facts are in." This will not be wars under the carpet," he said. "We have great communication with the gay community and don't want to foster that relation... No one should question where we stand and what our relationship is. This is unacceptable.

Six men and women, who include both gay and straight people, told Mike Malloy of Channel 7 News on June 6 that they were attacked by individuals who came from a porch or yard on Goodman St. The attackers allegedly shouted anti-gay slurs and used a metal rod as well as their fists and feet, hitting and kicking the victims, some of whom sought medical attention.

The victims called police, they said, only to be manhandled by certain officers, who arrested some of the victims themselves. The police officers refused to make a report on the assault and let the alleged attackers go free, without taking their names, according to victims interviewed by Mike Malloy.

One man told Malloy that his toe was cut by a police officer's knife, requiring three stitches, and he was relating to a ground and then put into a police cruiser. One of the female victims alleged that she had been repeatedly called a "drunken dyke" by a police officer. (The Empty Closet has learned that none of the female victims are lesbians.) At the June 12 press conference, Chief Moore said, "I am 100 percent committed to getting to the bottom of this situation. There is compelling evidence that a hate crime took place."

Twenty internal affairs investigators have been assigned to the case, and have interviewed the dozen officers involved.

Officer Jim Hall, 19th precinct liaison with the Rochester Police Department's investigation will determine if there were inappropriate actions by police officers if so, I believe we will take appropriate steps will be taken," Pritchard said at the press conference that he has received many calls from gay constituents, expressing concern and fear. He said that the Mayor, the Chief and Officer Jim Hall are "the right people at the right time."

The Gay Alliance was represented at the June 12 press conference by Gay Alliance Executive Director Kris Hinesley, Board President Sue Connell, Anti-Violence Project Coordinator Alex Cobus, and Board Member Terrance Wren.

Kris Hinesley said, "The City and Gay Alliance are working together to address the incident.

NY State Assembly passes marriage equality bill by a vote of 85 to 61

On June 13, in a bipartisan vote, the New York State Assem­bly passed a Bill to allow same-sex couples equal access to marriage. The bill was passed by a vote of 85 to 61, the measure is not expected to pass in the Senate.

Assemblmenber Daniel O'Donnell (D-Manhattan), the bill’s prime sponsor, and the Empire State Pride Agenda, New York’s largest, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights advocacy organization, worked with the LGBT community and Assembly members especially in the weeks following Governor Spitzer’s introduction of the bill (A. 8300) to obtain the support necessary to propel the bill to the Assembly’s first-ever floor vote.

The Assembly has demonstrated once again that it is the leader on civil rights and providing equality for our community when it didn’t exist before in New York,” said Empire State Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan Van Capelle. “We thank Governor Spitzer for his leadership in introducing this bill into the Legislature, Assemblymember Danny O’Donnell for his hard work building support in the Assembly, and the diverse and bipartisan group of Assembly allies from Western New York to the Hudson Valley to New York City and Long Island who spoke strongly to say that New Yorkers want marriage equality for all families.

“We also thank our community and our allies who didn’t give up after last year’s demeaning court decisions. Instead of debating us, the decision energized us to work even harder. It made our voices stronger, our determination greater, and laid the groundwork for this great piece of history in the Assembly,” said Van Capelle.

Support for marriage equality has been on an upward trajectory in the Assembly since last year’s vote (Assembly continues page 3)
A Matter of Pride

It's Pride time again. Most LGBTQ communities around the country celebrate: Pride in June, but here in Rochester, July is Pride month. And yes, it always have to be different...

Why Pride? Why take pride in the more accidental occurrence of having been born lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender? Because it's the necessary antithesis to the centuries of shame foisted on us by the bigoted, the brainwashed and the ignorant.

Shaming and demonizing those who are “different” in their race, sexual orientation, class, religion, gender, gender expression, physical abilities, etc. — supposedly justifies denying equal civil and human rights to these groups in society. Prejudices sanctified for centuries can't be quickly changed. We need to organize for their rights in Rochester, July is Pride Month.

For a fee.

The Rainbow Seniors hosted their second successful Inter-generational Panel. Open Arms MCC organized a Gay History Fair, which hopefully will also become an annual event.

Both groups were surprised and pleased by the large turnouts and the interest shown. Our community seems to need a sense of our collective history and our connection to each other.

The Youth Group held another spirited Day of Silence rally in April, thanks to Toby Greenfield and the youth organizers — and no thanks to the local media, which ignored the gathering of 275 LGBTQ youth. Also, Rochester’s youth contingent in Albany on the Pride Agenda’s Justice and Equality Day was once again the biggest in the state. Outstanding!

Anne Tucker, Bess Watts and the other activities in SAME (Social Action for Marriage Equality) organized a very visible Tax Day demo on April 17. The demo achievements could go on and on.

We can also be proud of the fact that this year, it wasn’t tough, like gay people stick together. We can’t afford to let horizontal and vertical divisions widen and reduce our power to effect change.

Thirty years ago, police raided gay bars every weekend. The Stonewall Riots, the foundation of our movement and the reason why most communities celebrate Pride in late June, were set off by the brutality of having our identity as a core issue for our community. In Rochester in the ‘70s, the gay community and Gay Alliance worked with then-Chief Gordon Ulrich to end that era of official repression.

We won’t go back to the bad old days. It’s a matter of pride. Mayor Duffy says he hasn’t wanted to fracture the good relationship the city and the LGBTQ community have built in the past 30 years.

But that is exactly what will happen, if any police officers who let gay bashes go free are not held accountable for their actions.

How many groups of misunderstood people have to experience this cycle of invisibility, hate, consciousness raising, political battles, tolerance, acceptance, despair — before we stop doing this to people?

I am proud to say that on May 15 I lobbied federal legislators on the Hate Crimes Act (the real name is much lengthier) and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Both bills include gender identity and expression. This conclusion has taken two decades and is largely going unnoticed. In other words, it’s pretty much just no big deal, unless some so-called religious group makes it one. Conservative representatives who voted in favor of the amendment to ban equal marriage have voted in favor of the Hate Crimes Act, presumably because they see the value of hate crimes legislation.

Of the 175 or so transgender individuals who came to lobby on these issues, maybe five or six were all males. As I smoked my fore­head in amazement, I realized that transfolk are about the same place that gays and lesbians were 20 or 30 years ago. That is, there is a combination of ignorance of the physical safety transfolk face, a lack of perceived support from allies, and a collective standing about how many allles actually exist, to effectively launch a campaign for basic civil rights.

The National Center for Transgender Equality is doing phenomenal work to address these issues and to organize, educate, and lobby for change. If you’ve never heard of the Center, why not? Once you are missing an opportunity to watch a dynamic organization taking shape. Though small, this is the little organization that could. Watch for great things to come from Maura Keisling and her team.

Locally, our transfolk are active on the issues you care about, and are some of the most stalwart supporters of lesbian, gay, and bisexual rights. So, the next time you hear someone is going on that has to do with transgender people, imagine yourself as the ally you would like others to be for you. Then, be that ally. III

National Transgender discrimination NOT happening

If gays and lesbians are the last group that it is OK to rid­dle and deny civil rights to, transgender people are in even greater consideration of a group worthy of discussion.

When not a single national figure showed outrage or con­cern with Michael Savage’s hateful and ignorant comments about a transgender woman who was murdered, it shows that this issue is not on the national radar screen. Even left-wing radio is silent on these issues, maybe five or six on the 15th of the month. Design services that are sexist, racist, ageist, or anti-gay will still be advertised.

Submissions:
For publication, submit news items, ads, photos, stories, poetry, ads, photography or art by mail or in person to The Empty Closet, 16 Main Street, Rochester, NY 14605, by the 15th of the month. Design services for non-commercial use are available for a fee.

Publication Information:
The Empty Closet is published 11 times a year (December and January combined) by the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., a not-for-profit association for the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., at approximately 5000 copies of each publication. The first issue was published in January of 1971. The subscription price is $25/1yr., $30/2yrs., $40/2yrs. The subscription to The Empty Closet, only.

The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., as stated in the by-laws of the organization. Its purpose is to inform the Rochester gay community about social, political, gender-related news and events; to provide a forum for ideas and creative work from the local gay community; to help promote leadership within the community, and to establish a network of lesbian and gay publications that exchanged advertisements and information.

Part of our purpose is to maintain a mirror of the lives of the Rainbow Seniors hosted their second successful Inter-generational Panel. Open Arms MCC organized a Gay History Fair, which hopefully will also become an annual event.

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MEMBERSHIP/

Equal rights are for everyone, NO exceptions.

If family members are important to you, then...it's their 2 A THE EMPTY CLOSET • THE GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESSEE VALLEY • NUMBER 403 • JULY 2007

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**Save the Date: Equality Leadership Conference will be held on Oct. 19**

By Darrel J. Blazey, FLWJA Board Member, ELC Coordinator

**ALL LOCAL AND STATE**

The Reverend Jen Crow spoke with the EC about the refusal to sign marriage licenses. "About 50 Unitarian Universalists (UU) ministers around the country have made this decision to withhold signing the marriage licenses of the heterosexual couples they marry. We're trying to treat marriage as other countries do--separating marriage ceremonies from civil marriage."

Crow pointed out that many people do not understand that having a religious ceremony alone does not make a marriage legal. Marriage is a civil contract, which is legal only when the license is signed, whether by a religious official or a Justice of the Peace.

Heterosexual couples' licenses are usually signed by the priest/church official when they have a religious ceremony. Now, when straight couples are married at the First Unitarian Church, they must pay $50 to $100 to get their licenses signed by a justice.

Roy Crow said, "We see ourselves as saying yes to doing what our church wants us to do -- that we will sign at a religious wedding ceremony but -- we're saying no to what the state is asking us to do -- deny legal marriage to same sex couples. People see this as a political move, but we feel we are engaging in discrimination by perpetrating legal marriage for heterosexual couples and not for same sex couples."

She added, "It's hard for me, as a lesbian, to sign a marriage certificate for two men or two women who are in a relationship, but not engaged to be married."

However, the definition of marriage is offering services to one group but not another.

Crow and her partner will become (Unitarian continues on page 8)

**Fronts**

**First Unitarian Church gets bomb threat; connection to marriage license policy unclear**

By Susan Jordan

A few days after First Unitarian Church ministers were interviewed in the Democrat & Chronicle about their policy of not signing marriage licenses for heterosexual couples, in protest of discrimination against same sex couples, the church received a bomb threat.

The caller, who phoned in the threat at 7:45 a.m. on Sunday, June 10, did not mention any specific motivation for the act of terrorism. The Reverend Kaaren Anderson told the Empty Closet, "It isn't clear. We're just seeing a lot of things that might have brought this threat, like our anti-war vigils which we hold twice a week.""

"However, the threat reminds many of the vandalism of the banner supporting marriage equality which the church put up last year."

The service on June 10 went on as planned, but outdoors.

Please see page 8 for more information.

**Making A Difference: GAGV, HTUV host presentation on HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, May 18**

May 18 was a special day for staff and two members of the GAGV speakers bureau (who also happen to be vaccine study participants) conveyed information about "Phambili," HIV vaccine research in general and what's involved in being a study participant.

The HTUV's new video DVD, titled "You Can Make A Difference," also made a hit debut. The video paved the way to an excellent question and answer period.

Left to right: Scott Fearing, LLP Program Coordinator for GAGV; Patrick Fisher, HTUV Community Recruitment Coordinator; Jackie Lee-Williams, GAGV Outreach Consultant; Cathy Bunce, HVTU Finance Director; Dr. Mike Keeler, HVTU Director and Kris Hinesley, GAGV Executive Director.

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The keynote speaker will be Kirk Snyder, author of the book The G Questions: Why Gay Executives are Excelling at Leadership... and What Every Manager Needs to Know. Mr. Snyder is nationally recognized as an authority on the contemporary workplace and business leadership. His book is acclaimed as one of the best-management books of the year and has been named to Harvard Business Review's prestigious annual reading list. Kirk is also the author of Lawyer Road to Success, which was named by BusinessWeek.com as one of the best books of the year in the top 10 editors' picks.

Other activities throughout the day will include a variety of workshops, leadership luncheon, and presentation of business, media, and employee resource group awards. "About 50 Unitarian Universalists (UU) ministers around the country have made this decision to withhold signing the marriage licenses of the heterosexual couples they marry. We're trying to treat marriage as other countries do--separating marriage ceremonies from civil marriage."

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Mass. Legislature rejects homophobic amendment repealing marriage rights

“Today’s vote averts a divisive, defama­
tory and hugely expensive campaign that our national community would have had to wage between two groups—opponents and friends of marriage equality. We were able to pre­serve the freedom to marry in the one state where we have it,” said Marc Fore­man, Executive Director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

In its 11-to-45 vote, the Massa­chusetts Legislature on June 14 debated a proposed state constitutional amendment to specifically ban same-sex marriage. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force had conducted a vigorous campaign for marriage equality, and achieved significant staff and other resources totaling $600,000 to protect marriage equality in Massachusetts. The Task Force played an essential role in the victory. Task Force organizers had the effort that convinced two conservative legislators — Sen. Gale Candaras and Rep. Angelo Pappas — to listen to their constituents, and vote against the amendment. The group initially proposed a pro-marriage amendment campaign. These switch­es were the two votes who needed to win the margin of victory.

“The rejections — in terms of saved energy and millions of dollars that can be spent on other important social justices — cannot be overstated,” Foreman continued. “I am extremely proud that the hard work of our group and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force organizers deliv­ered two of the critical eight votes needed to win today. Once again, our organizations — this time Becca Aheja, Jason Cooper and Zebeer Hamed — were asked to do what seemed impossible by our constitu­ents and we delivered.

The victory preserves the marriage equality, quality and Marc Solomon and his predecessor Marty Roeke. For three and a half years we have worked to deliver the Bay State to the Massachusetts Constitution. We must build on this historic achievement and share our unshakable belief in Project.

The victory preserves the 2003 land­mark Supreme Judicial Court decision in Planned Parenthood v. Birchem, Department of Public Health, which concluded that denying same-sex couples the freedom to marry in Massachusetts.

To date, approximately 9,000 same-sex couples have been married in the state. Opponents of marriage equality have repeatably attempted to amend the state constitution to repeal same-sex marriage.

In January 2007, the Massachusetts legislature voted 151 to 45 to defeat a measure that would have eliminated marriage equality by excluding same-sex couples — who have been free to marry in Massachusetts for the past three years — from civil mar­riage. As a result of this victory, same-sex couples in Massachusetts and across the country can breathe a huge sigh of relief: the freedom to marry in Massachusetts is now resoundingly secure. Those who sought to turn back the clock on justice and equality have been handed a bruising defeat that will resonate throughout the country for generations to come. In future years, we will look back on today’s vote as the beginning of a new era — a hard-won tipping point in the fierce battle to over­come discrimination against our families and to achieve a true measure of dignity and basic protections. The victory goes to Massachusetts friends and colleagues.

“Today’s vote was a victory for Massachusetts families and for all Americans who value equality. The legislative, the elected representatives of the people of Massachusetts, defeated this initiative in accordance with the state Constitution. They made a wise judgment not to subject Massachusetts to a divisive and discrimina­tory ballot initiative designed to strip away the rights of thousands of citizens.

“Same-sex couples have been getting married in Massachusetts for three years now, and, despite a wave of hysterical protests from the far right, the sky hasn’t fallen. Instead, more people who love each other have come forward, and more families have the basic protections they need and deserve. Churches remain, more than ever, safe spaces, free to preach whatever they believe on the subject, and to make their own decisions about which same-sex couples they will marry. The church has an imperative to serve the medical health of all Americans. It is essential that American democracy remain free and open to legal marriage initiatives. It is clear that James Holsinger is to be nominated to the Surgeon General.

The Human Rights Campaign spoke out on June 4 in opposition to President Bush’s nomination. Director David Puppolo said, “Today’s nomination is a direct result of Task Force organizing. The other states with similar laws include Minnesota, Rhode Island, New Mexico, California, Illinois, Maine, Connecticut and Washington. The other states with similar laws include Minnesota, Rhode Island, New Mexico, California, Illinois, Maine, Connecticut and Washington. The Human Rights Campaign spoke out on June 4 in opposition to President Bush’s nomination. It noted that the Bush Administration has failed to make their own decisions about which same-sex couples they will marry. The church has an imperative to serve the medical health of all Americans. It is essential that American democracy remain free and open to legal marriage initiatives. It is clear that James Holsinger is to be nominated to the Surgeon General.

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The new Hampshire Senate President Sylvia Landriau said, "It is my hope that New Hampshire's successful effort will serve as inspiration across the nation."

Congress has served as America's chief health educator by providing Americans with the best scientific information available on how to improve their health, and reduce the risk of illness and injury. "We cannot abide a senate general prejudiced against an already underserved and medically stigmatized population," said Dr. Lyda Valente, executive director of the National Physicians Alliance. "It is imperative that the nation's chief health educator publicly recognize and work to address the health concerns of all people, including the GLBT community. Homosexuality itself is not an illness and prejudice based on the religious exclusion of gay and lesbian people is not consistent with medical ethics. The surgeon general should not be a person predisposed to denigrate an entire swath of our population."
Interview

Jamie and Sally Whitbeck

By Susan Jordan

Jamie and Sally Whitbeck are the recipients of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award from the Community Business Forum. The couple, longstanding allies of the LGBTQ community who have volunteered for the Gay Alliance Speakers Bureau, the Gay Men's Chorus and ImageOut, and have supported and been visible at almost every gay community event for the past decade or more, will be honored at the Pride Parade.

Jamie and Sally also received the Volunteer Award at last year's ImageOut film festival, and were recently featured in the Portraits of Love photo exhibit at Equal Grounds. Jamie was the first person to be given the Gay Alliance's Friend of the Community Award.

Jamie Whitbeck said, "We have gradually become more interested in and more responsive and closer to the gay community." In the '90s the couple, who had met and married at Peace Corps volunteers in Sierra Leone, returned to live in Rochester and became involved with the political work of Metro Justice (now Metro Act). They began by picketing Sibley's in Whitbeck work of Metro Justice (now Metro Act). This was the Whitbecks' introduction to political work.

Gradually, Jamie and Sally realized that their charming neighbors, and several other friends, were gay or lesbian. They had also started attending the First Unitarian Church and became very active in the congregation. Here too they met some gay men who they noticed were always on hand to help out at church events.

Jamie said, "We began to understand that gay and lesbian people were wonderful and that there were restrictions on what they could do." Sally noted that they began writing to NYS legislators in support of passing the gay and discrimination bill, which ultimately became law as SONDA, after 30 years of organizing. "We realized that most gay people couldn't speak out because of fear of losing their jobs, apartments, etc," Sally said. "We thought, it's up to us - it's up to people like us to con­­text these legislators. We would tell them that we were straight and felt that they should pass this law from a civil rights perspective.

The Whitbecks also started going to gay events, like the Dining for Dollars fundraisers for AIDS Rochester, and walking with the Unitarian group in the Pride Parade. They also attended productions at the New Life Presbyterian Church by a gay group called the Conundrum Players. At their first gay event, they felt that straight people might not be welcome, but Susan Kost took them under her wing, took them around and introduced them to other people. After that there was no stop­­ping them.

Jamie said, "In the early '90s we both started going to some GAGV programs and it was a learning process. It was a school in which the people who were there, whether as volunteers or participat­­ants, were always welcoming. I never felt I was being ignored or brushed off. It was a very comfortable way to learn. The motivation of civil rights turned into a more personal situation. It was our friends who were getting dumped on." Jamie continued, "The Unitarian Universalist Association had established a pro­­tocol by which Unitarian churches could attain the status of 'Welcoming Congreg­­ation.' The requisite for moving to that level was having an educational program to teach congregation members about gay people and how they could bring their gifts to the church. We were on the 'LDG' task force (this was before the 'T' was added). Part of the educational program was social events. The church showed movies, so that might be an example of what we thought, 'Why not show some gay movies?'

Jamie called Bill Coppland, then head of the Little Theatre, to find out where one might obtain gay movies. "He said he knew a man in his office who knew all about gay movies - and I found myself talking to Larry Champoux."

Meanwhile, the coordinator of what became the ImageOut Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival, gave Jamie some catalogues. Some time later, he called Jamie to ask him to come to the first film festival volunteer meeting. "I went and... Larry sketched out what he wanted, and I was hooked.

Sally also became involved behind the scenes, doing mailings for the festival and word processing and proofing for the Empty Closet. Jamie was on the festival board during its time of transition from a GAGV program to a corporation on its own, as well as working with the Gay Alliance's Speakers Bureau. He also got involved in volunteering for the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus and now is nearing the end of his three years on their board. It's been very rewarding because it's a group that contributes to the community," he said.

Jamie adds, "The cumulative effect is that I've been given a lot of gifts - understand­­ings I'd never have gotten otherwise. When somebody gets up and tells their stories, you get a perspective. It's been a growing process."

"Too me, too," Sally said. "It's important to say that we've always been well­­crafted for the gay community, right from the early days of the Conundrum Players when the director greeted us with a big smile and we felt so welcome. I enjoyed working with ImageOut, especially tak­ing tickets - you see so many people you would not think would come. I enjoyed being a part of the Gay Alliance things I've done have always been so educational and so much fun."

She said that at an early Sweetheart Ball, the couple had no table assigned and ended up at the transgender table, where they met Pam and Sue Barres, Ali Howell, Deb Oppenheim and others who have become friends. "What a gift it was to meet that part of the community," Sally said.

In later years, the Whitbecks became table captains at almost every Sweetheart Ball, as well as attending Pride Agenda dinners and GAGV annual meetings year after year. Regular guests at the Whitbecks' Sweetheart Ball table have come to expect gifts of large, delicious dark chocolate hearts, with their names in sugar.

Sally says plans to become active again with the newly-revamped Speakers Bureau. "I'm feeling more confident about doing more, kind of presentation. When I signed up for the Peace Corps, a reporter asked me what I expected it would be like, and I said, 'We'll be on a little village. I told him I had no idea what to expect, but I wanted to go and see what I would find there. I still don't have an agenda."

"My future will include ImageOut and the Alliances Community's Speakers Bureau (hearing their music has been very inspir­ing). But as a straight person I don't want to be guiding a gay organization... I just think there are so many strong gay people in Rochester, and I can serve with them but I don't want to be the leader or take that away from a gay person.

"Something I've said before and still feel is that both of us have been blessed by the friendship of the gay community. People have come out of their way to wel­­come us in a way I haven't discovered in any other relationship outside of family. Without being egotistical, we're proud that we have so many friends in the gay community.

Jamie added, "If I do have a specific goal, I always want to be able to make the straight people I encounter understand what they're missing. I always try to wear my ti­­rangenta pin or something like that, and sometimes straight people will com­­ment that they like it - and then I have a teachable moment!"
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NYC comptroller says marriage legalization would yield $142 million in economic benefits

New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr. on June 5 issued a study finding that the legalization of marriage for same-sex couples would yield $142 million in economic benefits to New York City.

The report, "Love County: The Economic Benefits of Marriage Equality for New York," concluded that the $142 million largely would be generated in the three years immediately following enactment of legislation, and would be derived from the spending of residents and visitors on their weddings, along with the spending of their out-of-town guests.

"Legitimating marriage for same-sex couples in New York would have impacts beyond allowing individuals to make the full legal commitments to their partners that opposite-sex couples take for granted," Comptroller Thompson said in the report.

The report -- which can be reviewed at www.comptroller.nyc.gov -- analyzed both the economic effects on the state and the fiscal impacts on government.

Thompson concluded that enacting marriage equality would entail costs to businesses and individuals that are similar to those that offer health insurance to employee spouses. However, the report noted that any additional costs would be partially offset by the fact that many firms already provide domestic partner coverage.

Among the Comptroller’s findings:

- The economic impact of legitimizing marriage for same-sex couples would add, on a net basis, about $184 million in spending to the State’s economy for the three years after legislative approval: the $142 million benefit to New York City’s economy would include spending on weddings by New York State residents who live outside the City but choose to marry there, and the fiscal benefits would be $177 million for New York State and about $7 million for New York City.

- Marriage equality would generate $1.17 billion in economic activity in the State and $3 million statewide, based on 50,458 applications at $35 each in New York City and $50 each in the rest of the State.

- The State’s personal income and estate tax revenues would benefit by about $500,000, while the City’s income tax and sales tax, would benefit by about $5.1 million, largely driven by $4.3 million in sales tax revenues resulting from travel by same-sex couples attending related tourism.

- The personal income tax and estate taxes also would witness small impacts.

- The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which receives a portion of the sales tax, would benefit by about $500,000, and the City also would collect an additional $767,000 in Hotel Occupancy Tax revenue.

- Same-sex couples currently are not allowed a "married" filing status on their federal tax returns. Since the State and City use federal adjusted gross income as a starting point for applying tax provisions, the State would have to make adjustments in the tax code to accommodate same-sex married couples who wish to file as married. If this occurs, there would be virtually no change in the City’s income tax collections and State collections would increase by $2.1 million, for the three-year period.

- Revenues from marriage licenses would total $3 million statewide, based on 54,958 applications at $5 each in New York City, and 32,012 applications elsewhere in the State at $40 each.

- Legalization of marriage for same-sex couples could prompt an increase in homeownership rates. Thompson estimated that the $142 million in additional real estate taxes in New York City could total as much as $40 million over several years and the State could collect nearly $14 million. (These figures are not included in the overall total)

- Thompson further noted that since domestic partners of New York State and City employees already are eligible for health benefits under the law, it’s unlikely that the public sector would incur additional costs due to spousal health benefits if marriage for same-sex couples is legalized.

- Additionally, individuals who receive assistance under certain means-tested programs -- such as Medicaid programs -- may become ineligible for them if they marry someone whose income or assets are above the public assistance income thresholds. Comptroller Thompson stated that the $142 million in additional revenues from Medicaid outlays over the three-year period would be $21 million.

The Comptroller estimates that New York City business establishments (about 219,000) would pay a total of $11 million per year in increased health insurance costs for employee spouses and families, while New York State establishments (a total of 503,000) would pay about $21 million annually for the additional coverage.

Thompson further examined the overall impact on legalized marriage for same-sex couples on the City's budget, concluding that it would draw in $7 million in revenue over the three years.

In addition, Thompson said that non-marriage revenues would amount to $5.1 million, largely driven by $4.3 million in sales tax revenues resulting from travel by same-sex couples attending related tourism. Clearly, marriage is not only good for the two people who say "I do"; it is also good for the economy.
Gay bishop is excluded from Anglican bishops’ conference in London

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force’s National Religious Leadership Roundtable members responded on May 30 to reports that Bishop V. Gene Robinson, the openly gay Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire, has not been issued a formal invitation to attend the 2008 Lambeth Conference in London. Every 10 years the Archbishop of Canterbury invites participants to the Lambeth Conference, a meeting of bishops and archbishops of the Anglican Communion.

Statement from the National Religious Leadership Roundtable

“The exclusion of a duly elected and consecrated bishop of a diocese which is part of the Anglican Communion from the 2008 Lambeth Conference is nothing short of outrageous. The profound struggle in which the Anglican Communion is engaged has implications that far exceed the issue at hand. Will the Anglican Communion respect the judgment of the Episcopal Church USA about those called to such pastoral leadership? As we have experienced so often in the political struggles of our own nation, the lives of same-gender-loving people have been wedged in the middle.

Regardless of what happens, the courageous witness of the Episcopal Church USA which made possible the election and consecration of the Bishop V. Gene Robinson and the pastoral leadership the Bishop offers the Diocese of New Hampshire and the world stand as powerful testaments to the grace of God. This struggle in the Anglican Communion serves as a sobering reminder of the dark and serious work before the many households of faith. Even for the most progressive communions, those seen as bastions of welcome, there is deep and serious work yet to be done to fully realize the vision of justice and inclusion that resides at the core of every faith tradition.

This is a time for solidarity across traditions in the struggle against marginalization and exclusion, holding with compassion all those who experience the pain of being on the front lines and resolutely offering witness to the liberating power of God, who continues to work through same-gender-loving people of faith to bring justice, healing and reconciliation in the world.”

Additional Responses from National Religious Leadership Roundtable Members

“We live in a time when fearless Christian leadership is desperately needed: pastors and prophets, popes and prophets who claim the extraordinarily welcoming gospel of God’s justice. All too often, however, we are given Christian leaders who try to choose the safe option, the middle ground. But when oppression and injustice, inhospitality and exclusion hold sway, such safe options become dangerous. They buttress hatred and deny the gospel.

Such seems to be the case in the latest move by the Archbishop of Canterbury in not issuing an invitation to U.S. Bishop Gene Robinson.

Those of us who are eccentrical partners of the Worldwide Anglican Communion and who minister with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Christians pray that the Archbishop of Canterbury and, indeed, all Christian leaders will act with the hospitality the gospel demands.”

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

“By failing to include a duly elected and consecrated bishop of the Church in the 2008 Lambeth Conference, the Archbishop of Canterbury has not soothed the bishop of Canterbury has not soothed the distress of his fellow, Bishop Robinson’s partner, as the Spouses Programme is a well-organized part of the event. One hopes the problem will be remedied pronto for the good of the whole communion. One speculates that it will not be. In any case, the issue is not whether Bishop Robinson and his partner are welcome, but whether the Episcopal Church in the United States, as Anglican policy permits, can make its own decisions without reprisals.”

Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., Co-Director, Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual

“How obscene that Bishop Robinson, an example of hospitality and a humble receptivity of Christ’s love and grace, is lumped with promoters of division and inhospitality in a sweeping disinvitation from the Lambeth Conference. The heart of the controversy is hatred and bigotry by antigay individuals — that is obscurity.”

Rev. Troy Plummer, Executive Director, Reconciling Ministries Network, United Methodist Church

For the economy.

“New York is a major tourist destination so there is no reason for marriage dollars currently going to Canada not to be coming here. And for same-sex couples who live in New York, they want to get married here at home anyway. Why get married in Toronto or Canada’s Niagara Falls, New York City or our Niagara Falls?”

JULY 2007 • NUMBER 403 • GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESEE VALLEY • THE EMPTY CLOSET
Sunday, July 1: A Fabulous Farewell: Tributes in music and word honoring Rev. Janie Spahr’s ministry. 10 am, Downtown Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St.

Saturday July 7: Take 415-8749.

Sunday, July 8: ImageOut Beach Tea Dance, 6-8 p.m. at Orange Glory Cafe, 240 East Ave. (Located next to the Little Theatre). The exhibit underscores the theme of marriage equality through the photographs and personal stories of Rochester and Buffalo LGBT families. Wine and cheese reception will honor 2007 Lifetime Achievement award recipients Jamie and Sally Whitehead for their many contributions to the LGBT community. For more info, contact Todd plank at 585-279-4000.

Wednesday, July 11: Drag Idol, Matrons, 40 South Union St.


Friday, July 13: Temple Sinai Pride Shabbat service. Rabbi Amy Sapowitz will lead the fourth annual Shabbat service at 8 p.m. at Temple Sinai, 365 Portfield Rd., Brighton. Open to all. 301-6890@www.tsinai.org.

Saturday, July 14: Dignity Integrity Pride Episcopal Eucharist. 3 p.m., before the Parade begins. Bishop Jack McKevey will preach. Look for the Episcopal Diocese section in the Parade line-up at Park and Brunswick.

Saturday, July 14: Pride Parade and Festival. Theme: CELEBRATING ADEGAYS RIGHTS! Kickoff 5 p.m., Park Ave. and Brunswick St. Pride Festival follows parade at Village Gate, 274 N. Goodman St. Grand Marshal: Sue Cowell, President of GAGV Board. Lifetime Achievement Award winners: Jamie and Sally Whitehead. Awards to be presented at the Festival after the Parade: Community Pride Award; Stonewall Award (most original idea by a community); Business Forum Award (pride in a business); Rainbow Award (most imaginative marching/walking unit); Show Stopper (best in Parade). www.streetsofpride.com: 234-8706.

Sunday, July 15: Pride Ecuemnical Service. 11 am, Geneve Valley Pk, Elmwood Ave at Genesee River, Rochester. Organized by Tawa Panu Unity Fellowship Church and Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church. 585-224-6113. tawapanu@aim.com. www.frontier.net.ni/center/

Sunday, July 15: GAGV Pride Picnic, Genesee Valley Park, 1-7 p.m. (See article, next page)


Tuesday, July 17: Pride Movies: “Dangerous Living - Coming Out in the Developing World”, 7 pm. Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St at East Ave, Rochester. www.thirdpresbyterian.org/morelight

Sunday, July 22, Happy Banch Day Trip to Chattanooga, 7:30 am - 7 pm. Hear Paul Rauschenbusch, great grandson of Rochester founder of Social Gospel movement. To car pool, meet at parking lot 3rd Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St at East Ave. Rochester. www.thirdpresbyterian.org/morelight


Tuesday, Aug. 7: Church Services: Friday, Aug. 10: MOCHA Week. 5 p.m. Rochester Museum & Science Center, Goodman St. & East Ave., Rochester. Sponsored by Interfaith Advocates for LGBT People, www.interfaithadvocatesLGBT.org.

Tuesday, Aug. 14: MOCHA Week Youth Event: 6 p.m.-10 p.m. at Church Mother’s, 40 South Union St.

Wednesday, Aug. 8: MOCHA Week Health and Wellness, 3 p.m.-8:30 p.m. at MOCHA Project Office, 107 Liberty Pole Way.
The Picnic: everything you need to know
By Evelyn Bailey, Co-Chair and Jeffrey M Lamica, Co-Chair

The GAGV Picnic Committee is pleased with the way this year's picnic is shaping up. The picnic brings over 2,000 people together each July to celebrate the LGBTQ community and the progress we make towards equality. The picnic is on Saturday, July 15 from 1-7 p.m., in Genesee Valley Park.

The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley’s (GAGV) mission statement states that the GAGV is dedicated to cultivating a healthy inclusive environment where all individuals of all sexual orientations and gender expressions are safe, thriving and enjoy full equal rights.

The GAGV has exclusive use of the north side of the Genesee Valley Park on July 15. Therefore, only people with valid tickets to this annual Pride event will be allowed in this section of the park during those hours. There will be a separate entrance for those who have already purchased tickets. Those who do not purchase tickets in advance may do so at the ticket table. Handicapped parking will be in the lot by the Roundhouse and parking rules will be strictly enforced. Alternate parking will be available in the University of Rochester parking lots.

The GAGV uses this event to celebrate our pride and raise funds for necessary programs such as our Youth Center Services, Community Outreach Program, Anti-Violence Project and numerous others.

Volunteers are working tirelessly to provide you and/or your family a fun, safe, and memorable day. These volunteers are the backbone of the picnic. It takes between 60-70 volunteers the day of the picnic to ensure everything happens as smoothly as possible. In reaching out to our community, we ask each of you to consider volunteering two hours of your time the day of the picnic. It is a great chance for you, or a group you are involved with, to come together to support the work the GAGV does, and to support the GAGV's efforts.

We need help with pre-picnic set-up (the morning of the event), parking lot attendants, family pavilion volunteers, park maintenance, information/volunteer booth, and post-event tear-down/cleanup.

HELP TO MAKE IT ALL HAPPEN! Volunteer by contacting the GAGV at 585-224-8640 ext. 24. ALL volunteers receive FREE admission to the picnic!

Advance sale tickets will be $5 for students and seniors (62 and older), $10 for pre-purchase, and the "at the gate" price will be $15.

We will have Information booths, food and merchandise vendors, a Family Pavilion, dog show, antique cars, motorcycles, community tug of war, and sports venues.

Show your pride and come to the Parade and Picnic!!

Sunday, July 15 will be a day full of fun in the park, with great food, a dog show, a Family Pavilion that’s bigger and better than ever, the usual full-blast dance action in the Roundhouse and much more.

6th Annual “Christmas in July”
To benefit G.R.E.A.T. to raise awareness and help find a cure for HIV/AIDS
Sunday July 29, 2007
@ 9:00 pm
Hosted by:
Y’vette Saphire
Silent Auction starts @ 6pm & Show starts @ 9pm
Paige Turner
Pandora Box
Samantha Vega
Samantha Sulay
GIGI
Lucy Lamore
and many, many more!
Music by: DJ Lenn
Desserts provided by: Creme De La Creme
153 Liberty Pole Way (585) 232-4719 Rochester, NY
June 5.

Tell...serving around the globe is standing on the streets of Baghdad and for a policy that is more solution.)

ical, however, to say they don't believe in Campaign President Joe Solmonese on concerned about the sexual orientation of an can people in the eye and voiced their over the Armed Forces Network, because of dishonor. For these candidates running date for President just looked the Amer­

tary's ability to decode the next piece of maneuvering," candidates correctness of this (as on most other issues). Ironically, Senator John McCain his position on this (as on most other issues). Senator John McCain stated that while the U.S. has a great milli­

tary, "there aren't enough of them." He then went on to state his willingness to kick out gay and lesbian Americans want­

to serve.

Progressive faith leaders oppose mise of religion for conservative political agenda

Bishop Yvette Flunder called on kendi, an gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people to "prophecy" to the American cul­

of racism, sexism, and homophobia.

During her keynote speech at Out­

Armenia calling on Christians to take steps against hate and discrimination, she admonished, "Don't let anyone hollow your spiritual self." Rev. Dr. Flunder, an African-American lesbian, is the senior pastor of City of Refuge United Church of Christ in San Francisco and presiding bishop of Fellow­

a national coalition of mostly African-American faith leaders working to develop LGBT-inclusive ministries. OutFront Arizona: Blessing ALL Our Families, which took place June 1 and 2, at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Phoenix, Ariz., was orga­

ized by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (CLGS) at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Calif. and No Longer Silent/Clergy for Justice; an Arizona coalition of LGBT-affirming clergy.

The conference offered workshops on subjects such as developing media skills, rethinking Christian sexual ethics, trans­

gender issues in the Church, and develop­

LGBT theologies. One workshop was reserved for local faith leaders to plan and strategize; the result was a call for greater­

statewide collaboration among clergy, lay faith leaders to change the tone of religious dialogue on LGBT issues in Arizona. Since November, when Arizona residents voted down Proposition 107, an anti-gay marriage and anti-civil union constitutional amendment, religious right organizations have flooded the state with false and misleading efforts.

Another featured conference speaker, Rev. Dr. Marvin Ellison, professor of Christian ethics at Bangor Theological Seminary, suggested that the religious right's drive for "traditional family val­

ues" is part of a larger project of preserv­

ing cultural conformity and the power of privilege. Marginalizing LGBT people is but one strategy in this overarching campa­

ign. Gay bashing sends a signal, to gays and straights alike, that any deviation from patriarchal norms will be subject to ridicule, violence, and even death. Elli­

son said, "Such threats are not inappro­

nate to dissuading people from giving credence to, let alone acting on, the rather intoxicating notions of sexual freedom, gender flexibility, and bodily self-deter­

mination."

Ellison called on Christians to "keep the focus not on family form, but on things that truly matter ethically and spiritually: protecting the dignity and well-being of all persons, insisting on the qualities of mutual respect, non-violence, and care in every relationship... and mak­

ing sure the community guarantees that every family receives the support neces­

sary for all their members to thrive."

Rev. Dr. Jay Emerson Johnson, acting executive director of CLGS and profes­

sor of theology at Pacific School of Reli­

gion, echoed the necessity of flexibility in family form. "Theologically speaking, what matters about a form is not the struc­

through which it is brought forth, but how well it responds to the deep desire in each of us for commu­

nity. Johnson suggested that Christians form an ethic of "communal fidelity," based on responsibility to an extended family, rather than a more limited and...
Justice. The Arizona organization has Award” west. Their states, sexual ship included an ecumenical communion featured a worship service titled, fidelity cannot be learned or lived in ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender individual and members of couples, and Plunder preached, evolution of early Christianity on issues of minority, Plunder preached, about marriage and biological families, and stressed instead the community of discipleship.” Johnson said. “Communal fidelity cannot be learned or lived in the choir sang, “We are Standing on Holy Ground,” families, including parents and children of all sexual orientations, same-sex and heterosexual couples, transgender individuals and members of couples, and groups of committed friends, came forward to be blessed by clergy from across the spectrum of denominations. The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry at OutFront workshops are designed to help progressive people of faith and their allies throughout the country become voices of authority and agents of societal change in the current heated debates surrounding homosexuality and religion by developing their expertise in matters of sexuality and religion. A primary goal of these workshops is to enable LGBT people of faith and their allies to counter those who use religious argumentation to alienate and marginalize LGBT people. For more information on CLGS, see www.clgs.org; for more on No Longer Silent/Clergy for Justice, see www.nolongersilent.org.

Founded in 2000, the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry at Pacific School of Religion is the first seminary-based center for the study of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in the nation. The Center works to transform faith communities and the wider society by taking a leading role in shaping a new public discourse on religion and sexuality through education, research, community building, and advocacy.

Proposed law would make domestic partners equal under tax code

Legislation introduced June 6 in the U.S. Senate by Senators Gordon Smith (R-OR), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), and Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT) would put domestic partners and spouses on the same page of the federal tax code when it comes to employer-provided health care benefits. Under current law, employers are subject to payroll tax, and employees to income and payroll taxes, for the value of covering a domestic partner.

Celebration of Genius is a 150-work retrospective that spans Ansel Adams’s 40-year career and presents many of his most famous photographs.

This extraordinary exhibition honors the man and celebrates his genius.

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Our tax code should help all families — traditional and non-traditional,” Senator Smith said. “Lower taxes help the family budget and this is a great opportunity to cut taxes.

“All families deserve to be treated equitably by the tax code,” said Senator Cantwell. “It is long past time for Congress to provide tax fairness for all, and I look forward to working with the biparti­san co-sponsors of this bill to correct this inequity.”

“This is an issue of fundamental fairness,” Senator Lieberman said. “That is why corporate America, the civil rights community and legislators from all part­ies can come together to support this common-sense solution.”

An increasing number of Amer­ican employers provide health benefits to their employees’ domestic partners, including over 50 percent of Fortune 500 companies. A flaw in the federal tax code keeps domestic partners from receiving the same health insurance. Furthermore, current law penalizes employers that pro­vide domestic partner health benefits by increasing their taxes and adding sig­nificant administrative burdens. The Tax Equity for Domestic Partner and Health Plan Beneficiaries Act introduced by Sen­ators Smith, Lieberman, and Cantwell would eliminate the inequity in addition. In addition, the new law would encourage employers to increase health plan coverage by reduc­ing administrative burdens.

Because Connecticut recognizes civil unions, this bill is especially essential to residents and businesses in the state. When employees receive employer-pro­vided health benefits for their civil-union spouses, the benefit is tax-free for Con­necticut purposes. But the benefit is cur­rently subject to Federal payroll tax (for the employer and employee) and Federal income tax (for the employee). This cre­ates a significant administrative challenge, with employers and employees treating benefits one way for Federal purposes and then recording them another way for state purposes.

Remarkably on this disparate treat­ment, Senator Lieberman said, “This bill is especially important to Connecticut and the other states that accord appropri­ate recognition to same-sex relationships. Under Connecticut law, when employers extend health benefits to civil-union spouses, those benefits are exempt from Connecticut state taxes — but are sub­ject to federal income taxes. The dispa­rate treatment creates an administrative headache for Connecticut employers and employees alike, and our bill would cor­rect that.”

The legislation, which was introduced in the U.S. House on March 29 by Rep. Jim McDermott, D-Wash., would end the tax inequities that currently apply to employer-provided health insurance for domestic partners.

Currently, the Internal Revenue Code excludes from income the value of insurance premiums and benefits received by employees for coverage of an employ­ee’s spouse and dependents, but does not extend this treatment to coverage of domestic partners. As a result, employ­ees are taxed on the coverage provided to their partners, but have no additional income to cover this tax burden. In addition, the value of domestic partner bene­fits is included in the employer’s wages for the purpose of calculating payroll taxes, thus increasing both the employee’s and the employer’s payroll tax obligations.

“This legislation takes the next step to ensure that all American workers receive equal benefits for equal work,” said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. “A majority of Fortune 500 companies, collectively employing more than 15 million people, offer healthcare benefits for the domestic part­ners of their employees. It is past time that our federal tax code is updated to reflect the reality of what is already happen­ing in businesses across the country.”

In growing numbers, both public and private employers across the country have made the wise business decision to pro­vide health benefits to domestic partners of their employees. As of June 1, 2007, a majority (266) of the Fortune 500 corpor­ations offered health benefits to employ­ees’ domestic partners, more than twice as many as in 2000 and more than a tenfold increase since 1995. Unfortunately, fed­eral tax law has not kept up with corporate change in this area and both employers and employees who offer these benefits are being taxed inequitably.

More than 30 businesses have joined the Business Coalition for Benefits Tax Equity in support of these changes becoming law.

“At Nike, we have a strong history of supporting an environment of inclusion for all of our employees alike, and our bill would help ensure that Nike’s GLBT employees do not incur undue federal tax penalties in order to provide essential medical coverage and benefits for their loved ones.”

“Domestic partner health benefits have been a key part of our effort to attract and retain a qualified and diverse workforce, and we are pleased to support Senator Smith’s legislation that will end the tax penalties we and our employees face when we make these benefits available,” said Julie Fesler Holden, corporate vice president for human resources, diversity & inclusion and public affairs at the Dow Chemical Company, a member of the Business Coali­tion for Benefits Tax Equity.

“At Chubb, we take pride in the prog­ress we have made in creating a workplace that values employee diversity. As one of the major corporations to extend ben­efits to domestic partners, we continue to seek ways to demonstrate how we value all of our employees’ diversity — enabling us to attract and retain the most talented and diverse group of employees,” said Kathy Marvel, senior vice president and chief diversity officer at Chubb & Son.

“Unfortunately, the continued taxa­tion of domestic partner benefits places an undue burden on our employees and our company. We support Senator Smith’s legislation that would end the tax penalty on domestic partner benefits,” said Senator Smith in supporting this legislation to make the continued tax penalty on domestic partner benefits illegal.

The legislation takes the next step in providing a tax incentive for businesses to extend health benefits to domestic partners, placing a tax burden on employees who do not extend this treatment to coverage of domestic partners. The legislation would update our tax code to reflect the reality of our economy and businesses, and would provide tax incentives to businesses that extend benefits one way for Federal purposes and another way for state purposes.

Senator Smith is the author of the Tax Equity for Domestic Partner and Health Plan Beneficiaries Act (H.R. 1840), introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on March 29, 2007, with cosponsors from both parties.

THERE will be a hurry-up event for one and all on holidays. It is a social opportunity for people to come together and enjoy a social opportunity while serving food and drinks. It is a great opportunity for many people to come together and have a really great time. It is a social opportunity for people to come together and enjoy a social opportunity while serving food and drinks. It is a great opportunity for many people to come together and have a really great time.
As an openly gay man," Steve Ralls, director of communications for Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), told the military newspaper Stars & Stripes in a statement, "There are clearly many people inside the armed forces who couldn't care less about sexual orientation. In fact, our national security would be far better served if more commands elected to do so visibly support their gay troops. The Navy has welcomed Jason Knight not once, not twice, but now a third time, and he has always answered the call to duty. His story proves there is no room to question the patriotism, dedication and commitment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans."

Knight captured national attention in May when he revealed, also in Stars & Stripes, that he accepted a call-back to active duty and deployed to the Middle East, where he served openly, despite the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ban on lesbian, gay and bisexual personnel. Knight had also been out to his first Navy command. That command also dismissed Knight for completion of service, despite knowing about his sexual orientation, and also assigned him to the IRP. That assignment led to his second tour in the Navy.

"I have been nothing but proud of my service in the Navy, and I'm ready to serve in the Individual Ready Reserves and to serve if more commands elected to so visibly support their gay troops.

Looking back at the past year, it is easy to see that we have come so far. I want you to imagine a fulcrum, a lever and a heavy weight. The weight represents the work we have yet to do. It's recently heavy. The fulcrum represents the Gay Alliance and our network of services, volunteers, staff and allies. If I use the fulcrum to lift the weight, wow! It is a whole lot easier!" Our job at the Gay Alliance is to be the fulcrum. We are much more effective when we are used to lift the lead of the work we all have to do together. If either of us—community members or the Gay Alliance, tries to lift the weight alone, neither can do it for long.

That's why the Gay Alliance is called the Alliance. We are meant to be a group of people working together. Beyond our current programs featured in this annual report—a growing speakers bureau, solid growth in our youth program, a steady stream of successes in our anti-violence project, and one of the oldest LGBT newspapers in the country, we are under-taking three new initiatives.

For the first time, the Gay Alliance has been awarded a Federal grant from the National Institutes of Health. The Community Partners Program, headed by Scott Fearing and supported by Jackie Lee-Williams and the MOCHA Project, is designed to take advantage of the existing network the Gay Alliance has developed, and to encourage new collaborations in the community to raise awareness of the work at the University of Rochester's HIV Vaccine Trials Unit. This effort will help us continue to strengthen the health of our community.

Second, we have been awarded a grant from the Community Foundation to build an LGBT network among area colleges, strengthening the civic engagement of students, promoting leadership and community involvement, and providing resources to support student development. We know that LGBT students experience higher levels of isolation and depression, so we know this program may actually save lives.

Third, we have been awarded a grant from the Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation to examine the issue of LGBT youth homelessness in our region. This modest project aims to identify needs and make recommendations to improve the lives of local youth. Finally, we have been awarded additional funds for our Anti-Violence Project to expand our outreach and visibility. These are important steps toward addressing critical needs in the lives of our community members.

I hope you enjoy the new format and information included in this report, and that you continue to support the Gay Alliance. We are your community organization.

Warm regards,

Kris Hinesley, Executive Director
Happy Pride to All From

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Outlandish is Proud to Underwrite In the Life broadcast on WXXI TV at 11 PM, Sunday, July 15th

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Special events will celebrate Rev. Janie Spahr’s ministry here

The Reverend Jane Adams Spahr will be retiring next month, and the Downtown United Presbyterian Church and That All May Preyde Serve (TAMFS) are planning a series of events this month and in August, to say goodbye and thank you.

A Fabulous Farewell! Tributes in Music and Word honoring Rev. Dr. Janie Spahr’s ministry, will take place Sunday, July 1, at 10 a.m. at the Downtown Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. Many members of Janie’s family will be joining the congregation for worship. Jim Spahr has asked for an opportunity to speak to the congregation for a few minutes.

On Sunday Aug. 12, at 10 a.m. Janie will be preaching for the last time as the Downtown Church’s Lesbian Evangelist and Curran Reichert will be the soloist. A reception will follow with words from some members of our congregation and representatives of TAMFS. Sandwiches will be served, as well as a special cake prepared by Tyler Carver and Bob Day, members of the TAMFS National Board.

A Memory Book will be presented to Janie with good wishes, reflections, cards and other mementos, TAMFS said. Betsy Winters is coordinating this project and welcomes your contribution. A note, especially handwritten notes, a photo, (please help out by identifying the names of those pictured as well as the date and place) or any other mementos that can be pasted flat in to a book would be welcomed. Please note that the memory book will be on public display and notes will not be confidential. Please send good wishes to Betsy by the deadline, July 27, to c/o 6420 Glencoe Court, Dallas, TX, 75214.

You can contact Betsy by email at bet-sywini@aol.com, or by phone at (214) 826-6034.

There will be an opportunity for members to participate in a gift for Janie. More information on that at a later date.

TAMFS says, “Even as we say a fond farewell to Janie, with hearts full of gratitude, we are thrilled to have Lisa Larges assuming the role of our new Minister Coordinator, and hope you will take some time to get to know her if you have not already. We hope to be with you this summer and look forward to sharing with you in greater detail more about our plans for the year ahead as we work for a church where All May Preyde Serve.”

Call the Downtown church for any clarifications 525-4000.

As part of our ongoing 15th anniversary celebration, ImageOut marks the arrival of summer with a lively Tea Dance on Sunday July 8, featuring DJ Leen. Sp your favorite drink poolside (kiddie pools provided) or get in on the action with dueling squirt guns and jumbo beach balls. Sample some savory warm-weather treats at our dipping station or fill up at the Sundae bar.

ADVANCE SALE TICKETS Tickets (capacity limited) are $10.00. For advance tickets, hit www.imageout.org, or visit one of our outlets: OUTlandish Video and Gifts, 274 N. Goodman St.; Equal-Grounds, 750 South Ave. For more information call 505-271-2640.

REV. JAMIE SPARR AND VIRGINIA DAVIDSON

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10:00 AM: Sunday morning worship service
11:30 AM: Class on LGBT Liberation Theology
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Lake Avenue Baptist Church is located just off Lake Avenue near the stop light at 145 Lake Avenue.

For more information phone 585-458-5765

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Making The Scene

AIDSWALK: Paula Silvestrone, Kevin Green and Marty Gray

At the Big Gay Prom

L.A. PRIDE: Joan Jett performs at LA Pride Festival.

The Indigo Girls with Suzanne Westenhoefer at Long Beach, Calif., Gay Pride. LA Photos: Renee Bottle

THE BIG GAY PROM was a Big Gay Blast on June 8. More coverage on page C 1. Photos by Amy Friend.

Spencerport’s GSA. All photos of AIDSWalk by Amy Friend.

AIDSWalk Top Team. $80,000 was raised for AIDS Rochester.

Bassically Treblemakers Band performs at AIDSWalk.

RSHS GSA at AIDSWalk.

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QUEENS OF QUEENS: 15th Annual Queens Pride Parade took place on June 3 in Jackson Heights, Queens.

EQUALITY AT WORK: Rochester’s Ralph Carter with William Steenburgh of the Xerox Corporation at the EBPA 4th Annual Equality @ Work Awards on June 6 at JP Morgan Chase Headquarters, Manhattan.

BROOKLYN PRIDE: Angel Mejias at the Pride in Bushwick March on June 16.

MARRIAGE EQUALITY ON THE BRIDGE: The annual Wedding March over the Brooklyn Bridge took place on June 19.
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Sunday 7/15 Karaoke

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Never a Cover
Take Me Out... to Blackfriars

Richard Greenberg's Tony Award winning comedic drama "Take Me Out" will be presented by Blackfriars Theatre July 14-29. Darren Lemming, the star center fielder of the world champion New York Empires, is young, rich, famous, talented, handsome and so convinced of his popularity that when he comes to bat, he assumes the news will be readily accepted by everyone. It isn't. When the young phenom Shane Mungitl close their games, the ambivalence turns to violence. Angry, lonely, guilt-ridden and confused, Darren finds some unwelcome slices in the form of friendship with his new business manager, Mason Marzaac - a brilliant but repressed guy, who, as everyone around him copes with disenchantment, bloomed the erotic discovery of baseball.

"... (What an enchanting and exciting take on baseball. Mr. Greenberg has created... passionately personal and lyrically analytical. It's a sensibility that is so smart, raw and sincere that might distract the audience from the play itself."

The Seen

EXPANDED... WITH MINK STOLE

By Michael Steele (michsteele.com)

Up until now, The Seen has talked with people from our Rochester community but there are obviously people that influence our community beyond the city limits. The Seen now goes beyond the Flower City, to talk to some people that have influenced me and probably some of you too.

I was lucky enough to get to talk to someone who I truly admire and who has made me and most of my friends spend endless hours together laughing. From reciting his lines, to reenacting classic scenes, he has truly influenced beyond what she may even know. As we march into our gay pride month, one person clearly rang out as one of my icons and certainly she is to many a gay man. That person is none other than the cult legend Mink Stole. After moving back to this area, Hoskins recently returned to this area after 10 years in college (Elmira) grad school (U. of S. Carolina) and working as an actor in NYC, and director and teacher at his alma mater of Elmira, where he became interim head of the theatre department.

The play requires several nude scenes, which, while an old story on Broadway, is not so familiar here in Rochester. Hoskins said, "I've been reading reviews of the original production, and there was a lot of talk about the nudity. To stay true to the script, there will be nudity (in our production). We've refined some of it, and we aren't going to shy away from it, but you run the risk of that being new to Rochester audiences. It's a balance of staying true to what the author intended, and some thing that might distract the audience from the play itself."

There's a shower scene and a locker room scene where the dialogue calls attention to the characters' body parts, and you can't get away from it. Hoskins, who grew up in East Rochester, recently returned to this area after 10 years in college (Elmira) grad school (U. of S. Carolina) and working as an actor in NYC, and director and teacher at his alma mater of Elmira, where he became interim head of the theater department.

After moving back to this area, Hoskins got a job with Young Audiences of Rochester last September. He met John Baldus of Blackfriars and directed "Little Women" there last fall. Hoskins sees "Take Me Out" as being about "two men who are unsure of who they are and where they belong, and it's the story of how they go about finding themselves and finding comfortable in their respective worlds. That's the heart of it - then there is the spectacle of baseball."

Hoskins has never been particularly interested in baseball, but has been doing research, including watching Ken Burns' documentary about the sport.

The Interview

An Interview with Take Me Out director Danny Hoskins

By Susan Jordan

Danny Hoskins didn't see the original NYC production of Richard Goldstein's "Take Me Out," and he feels there are certain advantages and disadvantages to that. Hoskins said, "The way the script is set up, there's a lot of unscripted movement, and I'd have liked to see how that was done. But it's good I haven't seen it, because that gives me a clear vision of what I want to see happen. Several cast members did see the show in New York, and they can advise me on that."

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When he first asked me to do it I said I would but I just really wasn't thinking and then when I really thought about it, I just said it's too dangerous. I really can't do it. And I really, really glad I didn't do it. It would have happened early in the film and what people remember about this film is what happened at the end. So nobody, nobody for the first time and I could be a lingering.

Mink had written the first half of Pink Flamingos as a play and later turned it into a screenplay. According to Mink, he knew that the line "I stab Divine. I kill my macrame. I've been strangled by my macrame." included in the film was that he would never want to be depicted as tying his lover to a tree, as was often the case in early films. However, he also admitted that he was willing to do it for the sake of art.

In the late 1970s, Mink was approached by director John Waters about writing a screenplay for his next film, "Female Trouble." Mink was hesitant at first, but Waters convinced him that it would be a great opportunity to explore his own interests in a more structured format. Mink eventually agreed to the project and worked closely with Waters to develop the screenplay for "Female Trouble." The collaboration resulted in one of the most commercially successful films of the 1970s, and it helped to establish Mink as a prominent figure in the underground film and theater community.

Mink was also known for his many other contributions to the world of entertainment. He was a frequent collaborator with the likes of Divine, Edith Massey, and Kathleen Turner, among others. He was involved in the creation of many other films, including "Mink Stole and Her Wonderful Band," and was also a published author. Mink's writing career spanned many years, and he produced many books and articles, including his autobiography, which was finally released in the 1990s.

Mink's legacy continues to be celebrated in the world of entertainment, and his contributions to the underground film and theater community have had a lasting impact on the industry. Despite the challenges he faced, Mink remained committed to his craft and continued to produce work until the end of his life. His legacy serves as a testament to the power of creativity and perseverance in the face of adversity.

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Let Me Entertain You: What's Queer On Screen And On TV This Month?

By Bobby Morris

ON THE BIG SCREEN

Once we've all recovered from our annual PRIDE weekend, prepare to have a blast the following weekend with the highly anticipated big screen adaptation of the Tony Award winning musical, Hairspray (which of course was adapted from the 1988 cult film directed by John Waters and starred Ricki Lake and the late, great Divine), which opens in the theaters July 20.

Introducing Nikki Blonsky and starring Michelle Pfeiffer (The Fabulous Baker Boys), Queen Latifah (Chicago), Christopher Walken (The Sheepdog Wife), and in his own "Divine" turn as Edna Turnblad, John Travolta (in his first musical since August return of Showtime hit series Queer as Folk) which just recently began its fourth season.

Weeds July 24. This internationally Gay Film Festival or a movie? Reading! And we all love a good summer read, don't we? I am a real fan of Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City books and miniseries. Imagine my delight when I found out he was releasing a new book featuring one of my favorite characters from that saga, Michael Tolliver Lives!

This new story is about the life our beloved "Mouse" is living now. Though specifically not a continuation of the original Tales series (the late official Tales novel, Save of You, was published in 1989), fans will be pleased to catch up with a few of their favorite characters from them.

Your picks & opinions are welcome! E-mail: entertain-ue@bluefrog.com!

Imagery 2007 seeks entries now for full art show, poetry reading

Lobian, gay, bisexual and transgender artists once again have a chance to see their best work showcased as Imagery prepares for its eighth annual exhibit and poetry reading.

This year, the exhibit will be featured at Rochester Contemporary, 137 East Ave., Sept. 28 through Oct. 14. The poetry reading will return to Equal-Grounds coffeehouse, 750 South Ave., Sept. 29. To be eligible, artists must be LGBT and video. And Imagery is Upstate New York's only juried art exhibi-

About Imagery

Imagery is a program of ImageOut, the Rochester Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival. Its mission is to provide the Upstate New York LGBT community with a forum to express artistic vision through a juried fine art show and a poetry reading.

ImageOut is the only festival of its kind that showcases LGBT films, video, poetry, and visual art. And Imagery is Upstate New York's only juried art exhibit. The poetry reading is an "open mic" format, and is not juried, but poets are asked to pre-register.

About ImageOut

2007 marks the 15th Anniversary of ImageOut. The festival informs, entertains, educates, and enriches filmgoers through the exhibition of film and videos by and about lesbians, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. ImageOut encourages lesbian and gay filmmakers, who, as a group, are rarely seen in mainstream media. It's an opportunity to record and preserve the stories and histories of LGBT people, and to foster collaborations and conversations to break down social and cultural barriers concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

For more information, visit www.imageout.org, e-mail Bruce Coburn at imageout@rochester.rr.com or call (585) 271-2640.
Restaurant Hours:

Monday - Thursday  
(Lunch) 11am - 3pm

Friday  
(Lunch - Dinner) 11am - 9pm

Saturday  
(Lunch) 11am - 3pm

Sunday  
(Breakfast) 8am - 2p

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Laurie Schulman  
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Columnists

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.

Growing Up

Ramon, my love

By Eric Bellouah

Ramon is so cute. If you don’t believe me, Swy and sweet, more than in his mid-twenties, he is clearly possessed of self-assurance, which tinges with tenderness and masculinity that Latin men often have.

He has a cascade of Chinese characters tattooed on the inside of his left arm, from his elbow to his wrist. I wonder if he ever looks at them while he’s running.

He’s a barber. My barber. My newly found, much-adored barber.

I had actually heard of a South Beach, Miami barber in search of Mr. Carmen, yep, that’s his name. No rose clamped between his teeth. Mr. Carmen is a crazy old gent, a Cuban who has been in Miami a long, long time. Finding anything of use, while accomplishing that. Everything really is designed for the transient consumer: clothes and food. If there is a hardware store or a shoe repair shop, I haven’t come across it.

So I was thrilled when he happened to wander down the street and found Mr. Carmen’s barbershop. A haircut is a magical thing. It can rejuvenate the heart and soul. And after those three weeks struggling among the astonishingly buffed and waxed throng that is South Beach, Miami, I was feeling tired.

This year the buffed beautiful seemed more oppressive than ever. While I had a better tan than the thugs who only show up for a week’s worth of wild living. I was, by week three, feeling dowdy. Off to Mr. Carmen’s I went. Can I say I was surprised to be welcomed that rents were rising, that young I didn’t give a hoot about how

my hair was cut. I had a lot of hair then.

Finding someone back home who is much adored barber. I am, after all a traveler, an adventurer, an

And aren’t all the Hispanic (or Latino or Hispanic guy in the neighborhood? A VCR is playing an action movie and a CD blares Latin music. No

E-mail: ELBCADGRITEDU

Without a Safety Net

S.O.S. PART

By Troy Robinson

Just a few weeks ago I was in a big gay panic. I was wearing a bundle of gay nerves.

I was sleeping nights of gay insecurities.

After my ex and I had broken up, I realized that it was just in time so that I don’t have a date to the prom, or a first date to the prom or a first date to the proms. I am not going to a prom ever since the Lime

DING).

I was once again without a date.

I was the big double "D."

Bored and desperate.

Finding someone back home who is much adored barber. I am, after all a traveler, an adventurer, an

I was one step away from picking up the phone and calling Nathan Lane. But before the Lime

E-mail: NOAFRONT@BLOGNET

Cleaning My Closet

STICKS and STONES

By Meredith Elizabeth Reiniger

(Sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me.)

I referred to him as a prissy old queen. (Damn my big mouth!)

When Ramon does the final review of拉斯维加斯 the entire story is, a combo beauty salon and barbershop.

I got down the address and phone number at the barbershop.

Eight-fifteen I drive by. Parking lot full. I’m parked on the street and go into the barbershop. (I am a loyal customer of Mr. South Beach.

I was so frantic that I was perusing The Daily News for fashion suggestions. I quickly

And Tim Gunn, fashion guru ofproj-

Closet.

When I referred to him as a prissy old queen. (Damn my big mouth!)

I was after all a traveler, an adventurer, an

I referred to him as a prissy old queen. (Damn my big mouth!)
We worked together on the school news­wall: walked. More incriminating, he wore ships. Dave (not my boyfriend) had been father's side). I had chosen to abandon from sticks, nor stones, nor lexicon. Mildly annoying. But now, now that the painful, negative attention. Maybe sticks

Beverly. Already cursed by that parental view of the passengers had stuck himself out of school. One hour later, after the police made my skin crawl with fear. It is a hate crime. It sends chills down our spines because now we know he was verbalized when my love and I were strolling past a druggist. And the mayor didn't happen for 10 days. Dogs was a hate crime. It sends chills down our spines because now we know our streets are not as safe as we had thought they were. Because now we know that at least one Rochester police officer is prejudiced. So the next time one of us calls for help, we will have to wonder, "Is this the cop who hates gays?"

Fear will surge across our skin.
Conundrums

by One Overrey

A former gay outreach adviser for the American National Committee (DNC) has filed a lawsuit against the DNC, its chair, Howard Dean and two party officials, Donald Hitchcock and Andrew Yandura, alleging discrimination and retaliation. In a response to the lawsuit, Hitchcock said that the DNC should be entitled to the protection of law to prevent what every other American has been guaranteed and has supported for generations.

The lawsuit was originally filed April 17 in D.C. Superior Court. Nothing publically came to light until just recently.

Like the one he did is not how Democrats do political business. Whether he's dealing with the day to day anxiety.

Trying to sort out what actually occurred here will be tough for the lawyers and court system. But if I had to take a stab at it, it seems pretty clear to me that the DNC specifically hired him to do gay outreach work to the LGBT communities.

The complaint says Hitchcock spent months trying to become involved with the DNC's political and outreach activities regarding gays, but made little progress. So that's why he was working out of the finance department. If he hired him for his policy acumen, it would of showcased itself much earlier. What did his written contract say anyway?

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Confessions of a Serial Blonde

By Robby Morris

Every year, again, a reader will e-mail me with a question about something I've written. I enjoy playing "psychologist" to people, we've known each other for years and they ask me to share my unique perspective on a current event. Take this for instance.

"You're a good balance of being optimistic and wry. I used to think Rosie O'Donnell was both, but I'm not so sure anymore. Her comments on gay things are thoughtful and angry. Sometimes I wonder just who the hell does she think she is? What do you make of her?"

I really enjoy e-mails like this.

Get a drink and snack, kids. We're going to have a lot to talk about.

I think it's safe to say that Rosie O'Donnell is a multifaceted individual. She is certainly a writer who knows how to command the stage, and has an enormous fanbase that supports her. And I don't mean the sort of support that comes from people who show up to hear her complain about men's big testicles or her ex's lack of masculinity. Her enormous fan base supports this. On the other hand, we've all seen her grow her hair out, get 80s styled spiky bangs, and range ranging from politics to religion, from The Bush to The Donald. Through her public persona she's made her personal life her business.

And I say more power to her. We need women who can be strong enough to use our stature and prominence in society to address issues we wouldn't otherwise dare to consider and thought. Regardless of what the popular opinion is, Rosie does this, sometimes effectively, sometimes like a bull in a china shop, but damn it, at least she does it. I would much rather have a woman in the public eye who cares so much over something that concerns, insults or offends her than deal with the alternati...
AIDS DIRECTORY

Free testing for HIV exposure is available in New York State through the Department of Health. Call the AIDS Regional Hotline at (800) 422-0282, or through the New York State AIDS Prevention Hotline at (518) 474-1570. The New York State AIDS Advisory Council recommends that you call a local AIDS service provider for information on testing, counseling, and other health services. For more information, call the local AIDS Hotline in your area.

Free Testing for HIV

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Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

Provides confidential testing for young people ages 12-25. Fees on sliding scale, no one denied service. Located at 250 State St., Suite 250, Buffalo 14202. Open Monday through Thursday, 8:30-9:30 pm, or by appointment. For more information, call (716) 328-6461.

AIDS Community Health Center (AHC)

AIDS Community Health Center (AHC) is a non-profit organization that provides health care and support services to individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS. The center provides primary care, support services, and education programs to help people who are living with HIV/AIDS, their families, and caregivers. The center offers a range of services, including medical care, counseling, and support groups. To find out more, call (716) 652-4555.

Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS (RATSA)

The Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS (RATSA) is a group of health care providers and community organizations working to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS in the Rochester area. The group provides a range of services, including medical care, counseling, and support groups. To find out more, call (585) 454-9000.

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Multicultural Health Care Services (MHCSC) is a non-profit organization that provides health care and support services to individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS. The center provides primary care, support services, and education programs to help people who are living with HIV/AIDS, their families, and caregivers. The center offers a range of services, including medical care, counseling, and support groups. To find out more, call (716) 652-4555.

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AIDS Resource Center of Rochester

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Soul & Inspiration

THE PEOPLE WHO COULD FLY

By The Rev. Dr. Sharon Jacobson

This morning, as I sat on my back porch and thinking about what I wanted to write about this month, as I was looking at the sky and praying for inspiration, this flock of birds flew by. As they did, it reminded me of the words of American poet, Rev. Moss, in Chicago. Moss said, "When the sky is blue, I call it God's laughter." It is a way of thinking that is often passed on through family and friends.

It is said that this story has been passed down for generations among the ancient peoples of South Carolina, a story passed down from generation to generation and trickled down to the generations on the coast of South Carolina. It is the story, a universal story, a story that is passed on to our children, it is part of our history.

It is said that this story has been passed down through the generations of African American families, a story passed down from generation to generation and trickled down to the generations on the coast of South Carolina. It is the story, a universal story, a story that is passed on to our children, it is part of our history.

By Kelisyn Rich, Planned Parenthood Region 10, South Carolina

The vagina dialogues

SHE OF THE STRIPED TALES

Sex with a Cherry on Top

By Kelisyn Rich, Planned Parenthood Region 10, South Carolina

The truth is, I love strawberries - I find the bright red color of the strawberry to be very attractive, and the texture of it is also very appealing. However, I must admit that I have tried a few other fruits that are similar in appearance and texture, such as raspberries and blackberries, but they do not compare to the strawberry in terms of flavor.

One of my favorite things to do during the summer is to go to a local farmers market and pick out some fresh strawberries. I love the way they look and the way they smell, and I enjoy the fact that they are not grown in a factory and that they are picked fresh from the vine. I also like to use strawberries in a variety of dishes, such as salads, smoothies, and desserts.

I have tried making strawberry shortcake, and it is definitely a favorite of mine. The combination of the sweet, juicy berries and the lightly sweetened, fluffy whipped cream just makes for a perfect dessert. I also enjoy using strawberries in a fruit compote, which is a mixture of fresh fruit that is slowly simmered with sugar and spices. The compote is then served over ice cream or other desserts, and it is delicious.

I also like to use strawberries in my smoothies. The sweetness of the berries complements the other flavors in the smoothie, and it makes for a healthy and refreshing drink. I have also tried making a strawberry ice cream, and it is a delicious and refreshing treat.

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Healthy and Gay
HAVE A SAFE & HAPPY PRIDE

By Erik Libby

As I sit here composing this month’s column, two important events in the lives of the Rochester queer community are starkly different from one another.

One of them is in our very near future and one in our very recent past. One of them is something about which we can think with hope and eagerness, while the other raises concern and fear.

The recent hate activity is a sobering experience of transgendered persons. On July 20, 2007, a hate attack on the Greater Rochester Pride celebration was carried out in Rochester, New York.

The chemistry of hate is always a combination of individuals who are acting upon similar or parallel motives.

The chemistry of hate is all about the reaction of individuals to each other and the way those reactions join forces to create a toxic mixture.

It’s interesting, however, that this reaction is often not a direct result of the individual reactions of those involved, but rather a byproduct of a larger societal context.

The recent attack is not an isolated incident. Hate activity and bias-related violence are on the rise all over the country.

Certainly, one of the most exciting things about Pride is seeing everyone in our community — some we haven’t seen in a while and some we have never seen before. The energy and chemistry of Pride every year is one of its most exciting offerings, and for many that excitement will lead to sexual celebrations.

This can lead to health issues, obviously, if you’re not careful. Many major cities have issued reports in years past that in the weeks following their city’s Pride festivals they’ve seen an upsurge in STD and HIV infections in their queer community.

Don’t let being a statistic ruin your memories of Pride... make sexual decisions you can live with (literally and figuratively)... use protection, talk about health status... even get HIV and/or STD tested this time of year.

I hope everyone in our community has an exciting and fulfilling Gay Pride 2007, and here’s to another year where we can... be queer, be proud, and BE HEALTHY!

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

Fun in The Sun of South Beach

By Merle Exit

Buying a condo in Miami Beach's South Beach seems to be the latest New York trend. Understandably so, the area is packed with New York City nightlife of clubs, Broadway theatre, fine arts and a heavy gay and lesbian community.

Traveling by AirTrain (www.airtrain.com) may be the best way to get there, but the least expensive (25 cents) and easiest way to travel the local area is via the Miami-Dade Transit's South Beach Local. Check it out on www.miamidade.govtransit.

"Always A View, Never A Jew" is typical of what was posted on hotels in Miami Beach several years ago. It wasn't until an ordinance had gotten passed regarding discrimination that those of the Jewish faith were allowed to live further north than 5th Street, the South Beach extension of the now MacArthur Highway.

Information such as this can be found at the Jewish Museum of Florida (www.jewishmuseum.com). The Museum, Home of MOSAIC (Jewish life in Flor- da), is in a former synagogue that housed the Jewish Museum of Florida (www.jewishmuseum.com) may be the best way to get there, and on the National Register of Historic Places, the museum houses a Collections and Research Center reflecting Florida Jewish history since 1763 and communicates Jewish history, values and issues to Jews and non-Jews alike in an informal manner.

Speaking of Jewish, who knew that some nice Jewish grandmother would run a museum called World Erotic Art Museum (WEAM). This is not to be compared to any sex museum or one that centers on pornography. Owner/Curator Naomi Wilzig needed to house her personal erotic art collection, which became quite vast in both quantity and size.

The fiber-optic lit cubicles display approximately 4,000 paintings, sculptures, and tapestries, tracing erotic art from early Roman Empire to the contemporary world of such memorable art sculptures as the male prop made famous in Stanley Kubrik's 1971 film, "Clockwork Orange" (www.weam.com).

With lots of bars and places to drink and dance the night away, I discovered two interesting evening spots, one called Studio Nightclub and the other a Greek restaurant, Taverna Opa Restaurant.

Studio Nightclub, located at the Shelborne Beach Resort, is known for its karaoke and will even give you some quick lessons on an instrument if you so desire. They have over 22,000 songs in 20 languages for you to sing and over 100 instruments for you to play. Studio is open from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. and there is no cover.

Taverna Opa Restaurant, located at 36-40 Ocean Drive, is set up for Fun. The room smelled of urine and one barmaid was checked in at the hotel nor were the room conditions viewed. If you've ever viewed a television report on hotel room conditions in regards to bed bugs, stains, etc., this is the one that should be profiled.

They still insist that "no one complained".

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Gay Alliance
of the Genesee Valley
The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley is a non-profit agency, dedicated to cultivating a healthy, inclusive environment where gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people are safe, thriving and enjoying equal rights. We are a coalition of individuals and groups working to empower GLBT people, to affirm their identities, and to create an atmosphere where the diversity of our community can thrive both collectively and separately. We educate and advocate for civil rights for all and for the eradication of homophobia.

Anti Violence Project:
HATE CRIME

By Alexandra Cobus

Sunday, June 15, is June is 15, the deadline for our Empty Closet article. By this time issue hits the streets it will be July 1, and by that time, everyone will have heard about the horrible hate crime, and urged police misconduct on June 1 on Goodman St.

Ideally, there will be an article on this month’s front page announcing that the perpetrators have all been caught and appropriately charged, and that the internal investigation of the police office is complete, and we have now all the answers to our questions, and justice has been served. But today is June 15. So instead, I thought we could look back at how we got here, and what we can each do to take action against hate crimes... and make it a matter of Pride!

Whenever there is a gay bashing, AVP can’t do anything until we are made aware of it. This can be by someone reporting it to us, or if we hear about it from the media. Reporting happen several ways. Victims and witnesses can call us directly to report, and then we can also offer them any direct services they may need such as police advocacy, crisis counseling, support groups and hospital accommodation. Victims and witnesses can call and report incidences anonymously. Sometimes, people hear about something through the grapevine or on the street. This can be reported to us as well, even if someone has limited information.

Once there is notification, we can start an investigation. In a case like Goodman St., where AVP continues on page 2

Youth Update:
PRIDE EVENTS

By Toby Greenfield

I’d like to start off by thanking all involved in making our second annual Big Gay Prom a tremendous success last month! Thank you to all the chaperones and sponsors, to Amy Friend and Virginia S. for taking tons of great pictures, and to our fabulous DJ Chuck Argento (and Gary!) for making the night so memorable for the 150 youth who attended.

A special thank you to my young adult “posse” for all their hard work and dedication in pulling everything together with the sponsors to keeping me sane. Without them, I would be one overwhelmed Youth Director.

July of course means one word: PRIDE. We’re gearing up for Pride Week activities, which include our annual Mr. & Miss Gay Youth Pride Pageant and Dance at Mather’s on July 9 from 5-9 p.m. Admission to the dance is $5 and lgbt youth and straight allies ages 13-23 are welcome. The winning king and queen will have the honor of riding in a convertible at the Pride Parade on July 14. At the Pride Picnic this year, we’ll be selling our very popular rainbow pride bracelets and temporary tattoos, so please come out and support us!

To all you college kids back in town for the summer, the Youth Program has bulked up our Young Adult Network for ages 18-25, so check out our online celebrated youth gayalliance.org for upcoming groups, activities and times.

And lastly, I’d like to wish a fond farewell to one of our youth, Josh Arpon, who is leaving this month to join the military. Josh has been a huge asset to our Youth Program, and his warmth, intelligence, kind heart and great sense of humor will be sorely missed by all of us here. Please stay safe and we wish you the best of luck, Josh!!

Alliance seeks mentors to support parents, spouses of gays and lesbians

By Janene Gainsburg

Finding a non-judgmental friend to talk to about their fears and concerns isn’t always easy. Certainly information can be found on the internet, but often, at least initially, nothing is as valuable or as influential as human contact.

Here at the Gay Alliance, we would like to build a network of parents and partners who have been through this experience and who find that they are stronger, more understanding people, possibly even closer to their loved ones than ever before.

We will be creating a list of people who are willing to have local parents and/or spouses occasionally call them or e-mail them for support. If you would like to be a mentor, please contact Janene.

Max and Kerry of Butch-Femme Connection.

Outreach Program:
TIKKI MASALA and THE BUTCH-FEMME CONNECTION

By Janene Gainsburg

As the Gay Alliance Outreach Coordinator, I have made a commitment to myself to get out more and learn. First hand, about the many diverse groups that Rochester has to offer. I often receive phone calls from lesbians looking for a way to meet other people that don’t involve the bar scene. So I thought I would start my adventure by spending the afternoon with the Butch-Femme Connection to see what they were all about.

The Butch-Femme Connection began in 1998, as a traditional support/social group, which met at the Gay Alliance, and it has evolved into a sort of network of local restaurants, women’s night out social events. Twice per month, on Saturday evenings, this lively group of women goes out to local restaurants, which are chosen based on suggestions from group members. The night that I chose to meet this group they were having a special men’s night out at the Blue Sonic Pub on Broadway.

Youth had traditional photos taken at the Big Gay Prom on June 8. Photo: Amy Friend
help us out with our support network, please call or e-mail Toby (tobyg@gagv. org) or Jeanne (jeanneg@gagv) at the Gay Alliance (585-244-8640).

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Our services include:
- Crisis counseling
- Detailed documentation of hate crime or hate incident
- Support groups
- Advocacy with law enforcement and prosecutors
- Referrals to resources
- Assistance with orders of protection
- Assistance with victims of crime compensation

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

All services are free and confidential.

585-697-3373

The Date: DINING OUT WITH FRIENDS

On Sept. 22, the Gay Alliance will present a special community social and fundraiser, Dining Out With Friends.

A reception will follow the diners hosted at individuals’ homes in the 8-10 p.m. at the Rochester Museum and Science Center.

The occasion is the celebration of community life and GAGV accomplishments. What’s needed: books for a dinner with friends to raise needed funds for GAGV programs and services; supporting gay rights and healthful introduction of our gay youth into society; celebrating and promoting the remarriage and accomplishments of the GAGV: socializing, cultivating new gay-friendly allies, and embracing our freedoms.

Call if you want to host a dinner: 605-2273. Thankful!!!

India Palace, but the conversation never lagged. Members talked about home improvements, fishing, the Vietnam war, and more exactly does our water come from? At one point, during a discussion about pets, people started to whip out their cell phones and pass them around the table to show pet photos. After dinner we regrouped at Equal Grounds for coffee.

The camaraderie of this group was made evident by the fact that some members come regularly despite the fact that they live an hour from Rochester. The Butch-Femme Connection is a warm and accepting bunch of women with a “the more the merrier” attitude about their group. Lesbians, age 30 and over, who are seeking enjoyable solo get-togethers that do not revolve around alcohol, should definitely check this group out.

New members can either call Max and Kerry (585-288-7208) or e-mail (D线索Femme@aol.com) to find out more or they can just show up at one of the scheduled dinners. (See the Groups pages, C-4-5 and the Calendar, C-10, of the Empty Closet for meeting times and places). Mangia!!!

Save The Date: DINING OUT WITH FRIENDS

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Marriage Equality

State of the Union: Happy Anniversary!

By Todd Plank, Field Organizer/Legislative Analyst, New York Civil Liberties Union

July 6 will mark the one year anniversary of the NYS Court of Appeals decision in the case of Hernandez v. Robles. In the 4-2 decision, that court abrogated its role as a fair arbiter of justice and defaulted on its obligation to light families.

The rationale of the ruling by the majority was an insult to gay and straight couples alike, implying that homosexuals couldn’t control their sexual impulses and therefore needed the institution of marriage to provide stability for straight couples in the event of any unexpected "surprises."

Gay couples, on the other hand, can’t reproduce by accident. They have to meticulously plan for their families and regardless of the avenue they pursue, be it surrogacy, adoption, or in-vitro fertilization, they have to enlist legal assistance and most likely the services of a social worker.

All of this comes at a considerable cost of time and money (assuming that one have the means) to have their marriage automatically annulled; (3) require proof of procreation within three years of the date of marriage or have their marriage annulled; (4) require the institution of marriage equality isn’t one of them.

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The majority was an insult to gay and straight people to carry. They have to reproduce by accident. They have to meticulously plan for their families and most likely the services of a social worker.

Needless to say not everyone appreciates Gary’s tongue and cheek approach to exposing the faulty procreation argument in defense of "traditional" marriage. Even local gay rights organizations are reluctant to have their names associated with L-957. Equal Rights New York isn’t endorsing it and longtime gay rights activist Bill Dubay said that while he gets the point of the initiative it’s unlikely he would sign it. Regardless of which side of this debate you fall on you have to give Gary Gadswell credit for being resourceful and taking an original approach to institutionalized homophobia.

On the east coast, we’ve been presented with a different opportunity, marriage bill A.9590. It’s amazing to think that less than a year’s time, New York State made history when its governor became the first in the nation to propose a marriage bill that would expand the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples, thereby extending to them the 1,324 state rights and responsibilities attached to civil marriage.

For a detailed explanation and enumeration of the revised number of marriage rights, formerly estimated in the neighborhood of 500-700, check out the press release and 170-page document created jointly by the NYS Bar Association and the Empire State Pride Agenda at www.prideagenda.org.

As I write this column, the marriage bill, with a record number of 75 co-sponsors, has just been passed by a vote of 85 to 61, by the NYS Assembly. Had anyone told the hundreds present at the Rochester protest rally at Washington Square Park on the infamous Day of the Decision, July 6, 2006, that we would have witnessed such unprecedented success within a year’s time -- would anyone have believed them?

The more reason to retain our sense of optimism when the going gets tough. Breakthroughs can and do happen. Like the determined Gary Gadswell, we must never concede defeat to the ignorant and prejudiced forces that oppose us in our struggle for equality and justice.

Every incremental inch forward or leap of progress deserves to be savored and celebrated, which is why Pride is such an important time of year for the light and allied community. This year I am once again extending an invitation for equality activists to march with me in the Pride Parade on July 14.

I will have free t-shirts from both the Pride Agenda and the ACLU, as well as signs for gay and straight people to carry. RSVP in advance to reserve your space and I’ll do my best to pride-afy you.

I can be reached at 585-278-4190 or Email: toddplank@gmail.com .

Happy Anniversary!

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Happy Anniversary!
Groups

BUTCH-FEMME CONNECTION
Join us for a great night out! The Rochester Butch-Femme Connection supper club will have two events in July 2007.

On Saturday, July 7, meet us at House of Poon Chinese Restaurant on Monroe Ave. in Brighton at 7 p.m.

On Saturday, July 21, meet us at Zebbs on South Clinton Avenue (Loehmann’s Tops Plaza) also in Brighton, at 7 p.m.

For further information on the Con­­nection, email Kerry at DressyFemme@ aol.com or call Kerry/Max at 385-288-7208. See you there all!

DIGNITY-INTREGITY
The Penticostal minister ‘Mother’ Waddles once wrote. “You can’t give people pride, but you can provide the kind of understanding that makes people look to their inner strengths and find their own sense of pride.”

That kind of understanding grows in the midst of a supportive community like Dignity-Integrity/Rochester. We meet every Sunday at 5 p.m. at St. Luke and St. Simon Cyrene Episcopal Church ("2-Saints"), 17 South Plymouth Street in downtown Rochester. We’re a small faith community that affirms our wholeness and holiness as lesbian, gay, straight, bisexual, transgendered and intersexed persons. While we worship in the Roman Catholic and Episcopal traditions, our fellowship is totally inclusive of all those looking for a safe and affirming Christian fellowship.

This month’s line-up includes two EPISCOPAL EUCARDISTIC CELEBRATIONS: with Music on Sunday July 1, and a simple service without music on Sunday July 13. A coffee social follows each of these liturgies.

During Rochester’s SUMMER OF PRIDE, D-I is joining many of our associates at Interfaith Advocates as we celebrate Pride Worship Services in our respective faith traditions. Episcopal Bishop Jack McKelvey will be marching in the parade this year with other members of his diocese, and will be the preacher at a 5 p.m. EUCARIST BEFORE THE PARADE begins.

Folks from all religious persuasions are invited to attend; just look for the Episcopal Diocesan contingent where the marchers line up at Park and Brunswick. As ‘official’ recognition of the dignity and worth of LGBT Roman Catholics and our relationships is “verboten,” D-I is inviting everyone to join us in our dissent at an RC PRIDE SERVICE on Sunday July 8, Reception to follow.

Sunday July 22 is a SUMMER SALADS POTLUCK, again beginning at 5 p.m. Afterwards some of us will head over to the 7 p.m. Mass at St. Michael’s RC Church to fulfill our Sunday obligation.

July has a fifth Sunday, so we’ve invited members of 2-Saints, as well as all of the local members of Integrity who normally worship with their supportive home parishes, to a 5 p.m. HYMN SING on Sunday July 29. An ice cream social follows.

For further information on any of these activities, visit our website at www.d-i-rochester.org or call our recorded info-line at 234-5092.

EMPIRE BEARS
By Alan D. Van Camp
Hot, sweaty, furry bears in the woods. The Bears will be camping at Hillsdale, Oneida, and Jones Pond campgrounds in July. We’ll do more camping in August, going to Canada to The Point.

Eating, hiking, swimming, sunning, dancing, and meeting new friends form all over. Summer camping is a great time. Join the BEARS and stay with us on our sites, share our big dining cano­­py, and enjoy bear cooking.

For those of us at home, BEAR­­NIGHT at the FORUM is July 7, and the theme is All-American Pride Colors. Rainbow Pride, Bear Pride, and Leather Pride flags and colors are encouraged.

The following weekend is Pride in Rochester. Parade on Saturday, Picnic on Sunday. See you everywhere.

The Bears will meet every Monday at the Coal Tower in Pittsford for supper. The patio is very nice, and Becky still invites us over. The Bears still meet every Monday at the Coal Tower in Pittsford for supper. The patio is very nice, and Becky still invites us over. Movie after eating most weeks.

As we head into August, the 4th is BeatNight at the Forum again, and the theme is "BARE as you Dare" on a hot Summer night. No meeting or potluck in July. Have a great Summer. WOOF!

GLSEN
GLSEN Rochester, in partnership with our local school districts, is preparing for the first school district­wide training.

Around 1600 school employees will participate in one of 40-plus sessions scheduled to begin in September. The topic at hand: Creating safe schools for LGBTQ Youth. This program is the first of its kind across the nation and is considered groundbreaking.

For the LGBTQ community, it is widely known that LGBTQ-identifying (or perceived) youth face struggles each day in their schools. This particular program has been added to its strategy to create a school climate free of bull­­lying and harassment for all students in the school district. While there are some general practices regarding harass­­ment and bullying, the focus of this program will be geared toward providing strategies to help faculty and staff address issues that LGBTQ students face.

The goal of these sessions is not just to provide a one-time training event, but rather to seek an improved school-clime over time.

This session will be led by members of the Gay and In Straight Education Network, as well as trained volunteers from the school district and the community. A “train-the-trainer” workshop is scheduled for Aug. 24 and 25 for those interested in helping to facilitate the sessions. School employees may be eligible for Professional Development credits.

For more information or if you are interested in becoming a part of this program, please contact GLSEN at (585) 244-1669 or at GLSEN.Roches­­ter@aol.com.

RAINBOW SENIORS
By Judith Chesay
Let’s be creative. Can we, for a moment, think outside the box? Let’s take a look at the possibility of how our “all or nothing” thinking traps us, holds us hostage.

“Not my attitude,” we say, “nothing less.” Can we approach the idea that those heterosexual folks, our friends, are right, the word "marriage" belongs to them? Instead, let’s adopt the idea that we would like our own word for our unique, wonderful way of life. Our own word for our style of loving and living portrays to the world we are unique, we are “different” and we are proud to be providing the understanding that fosters lgbti PRIDE!

Dignity-Integrity/Rochester

Our Church welcomes you. Regardless of race, creed, color, sexuality or the number of times you’ve been born.

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info@di-rochester.org
www.di-rochester.org

D-I will host a special Roman Catholic Pride liturgy on July 8, and everyone is invited to join Bishop McKelvey and the Episcopal Diocese for a Pride Eucharist as they line up for the Parade on July 14!
We will teach you to fish if you'd like.

Each member of a particular family helps their own proud label of community, organization, race, or individuality to show each other and the world how their particular family helps their world family have no doubt we can. We have no doubt we can.

As a community of GLBT people, we are asking for all the peaceful rights granted to folks who hold the title 'marriage.' Speaking only for myself, it is OK with me that this right is called another name we can and would carry proudly.

Another name gives us a chance to raise the bar, prove to the world those "differently named" folks have what it takes inside and out to be responsible to that name. Sure it sets us apart, but we are already living in different rooms. We want to be able to travel safely out and invite safe others through our doors. In addition, each and every "named" person and community needs their own "room" to return to for respite, privacy, and to be individually who they are.

Lots of ball teams have lots of names, and the unconditional rules are play nice, play safe, play fair. So, what's in a name? A lot. We are asking for equality, to be given an equal chance; it's a spiritual premise, nothing more. Call us what you want, it won't really matter if we are treated with love, respect, fairness, freedom, and justice. Our future is our children, and it should be a priority for a spiritually gifted community or individual family. The world would benefit if children universally were taught and fed love and respect in every setting. How wonderful it would be if children were emotionally, socially, and academically educated in spiritual premises rather than elitist religious premises rather than elitist religious rights.

The song, "Let There Be Peace on Earth and Let It Begin With Me" could be the anthem of the world sung daily at the U.N. and in each of our homes.
GAGV Youth Spotlight: Chris Dostie

Name: Chris Dostie
Age: 16
School/Year: Sophomore
Favorite subjects: DEFINITELY English
Future Goal: I want to become famous someday. But if that doesn't work out for me, I want to be a makeup artist and hair stylist.
Interests: Friends, Shopping, Boys, Reading, Sleeping, Photography, Running, Movie, Dancing, Parties, Java, Hair Products, Sunglasses, Animals, Myspace, Poetry, Art, Movies, Shoes, and the list goes on...

Last Movie you saw: Mean Girls, like duh.
Favorite Book: CRANK by Ellen Hopkins, but I'm currently reading The Barn Journals by Brent Runyon and I think it might top CRANK.
How long have you been coming to the Youth Program? My first time coming was last summer, but I didn't come again until October.
How are you involved in the Youth Program? I come to group on Sundays and sometimes drop-in on Mondays and Wednesdays.
Favorite thing about GAGV Youth Program? My favorite thing about the GAGV is that I get to meet a lot of cool kids like me and I don't have to feel uncomfortable about who I am. There.
Does your school have a Gay/Straight Alliance? Yes, I'm the president of it.
Favorite Quote “If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense. Nothing would be what it is because it isn't. And what it wouldn't be, it would be. And what it wouldn't be, it would be. It's from Alice In Wonderland and I wish I could make a world that is totally different.
What advice would you give to LGBT Youth? Just be true to yourself. Don't let anyone stop you from becoming who you want to be.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Volunteer for the Empty Closet. Seeking workers, reviewers, photo techs, truckers, distribution volunteers. If you can write, take photos, or distribute bundles of the paper around town, and are dependable and capable of meeting deadlines, please call Susan at 244-9103; emptycloset@gagv.us.

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Weekly GLBTI AA Meetings in Rochester

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

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

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

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

Wednesdays

New Freedom/New Happiness Group

7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd. Bus riders: Take the last #18 University Ave bus to 12 Corners. Use the stop just past the top of the hill at Hillside Ave and before Highland Ave. Or take the #1 Park Ave to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton.

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

Fridays

Gay Men’s

7:30 p.m. Area Artists’ Club at Village Gate, 274 N. Goodman, Suite D 242A. Bus riders: Take the #18 University Ave. bus north to Goodman. Walk one and a half blocks north OR take #8 E. Main bus to Circle St., walk one block south.

Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Men’s meeting

Handicapped accessible, take the elevator to the basement.

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

Saturdays

Rochester Gay Men

8 p.m. at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Bus riders: Use the Fitzgerald St stop on Main St at the Country Office Building and walk south one block.

Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Men’s meeting

NOT handicap accessible

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

JULY 2007 • NUMBER 403 • GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESSEE VALLEY • THE EMPTY CLOSET • C 9
FRIDAY 1
Dignity Integrity Episcopal Eucharist celebration with music. 1 pm. St Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., 234-5092.

FRIDAY 2
Texas. Everyone’s Theatre Co., 1242 N. Clinton St., 365-1313. Pre-concert celebration with music. 5 pm. St Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., 234-5092.

SATURDAY 7
The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas. Everyone’s Theatre Co., 1242 N. Clinton St., 365-1313. Pre-concert celebration with music. 5 pm. St Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., 234-5092.

FRIDAY 4

FRIDAY 5
La Gage aux Folles, Geneva Theatre Guild, Smith Opera House, 82 Seneca St., Geneva. 8 pm on Friday and Saturday, July 13-14, and 2 pm on Sunday July 15, $12 general, $10 students/seniors. Dinner theatre package is available Friday and Saturday at the Ramada’s Pist House Restaurant. Contact the restaurant at 797-5677 for reservations.

FRIDAY 6
3:14 PM. Dignity Pride Shabbat service. Rabbi Amy Saglow will lead the fourth annual Pride Shabbat service at 6 pm at Temple Sinai, 106 Penfield Rd., Brighton. Open to all. 455-6880; www.tsinai.org.

SATURDAY 13
Dignity Integrity 3 pm. Pride Episcopal Eucharist before the Parade begins. Bishop Jack McElveen will preach. Look for the Episcopal Diocese section in the Parade line-up at Park and Brunswick.

PRIDE PARADE AND FESTIVAL. Theme: Going Hollywood. Kickoff 5 pm, Park Ave. and Brunswick St. Pride Festival follows parade at Village Gate. 274 N. Goodman St. Grand Marshal: Sue Cowdell, President of GAGV Board. Lifetime Achievement Award winners: Jamie and Sally Whitbeck. For more info, contact Todd Plunk at 585-278-4190.

COAP (Come Out and Play) Pride Picnic. Illgion Park 5:30 pm. 367-2783.

WEDNESDAY 11
Drag Idol, Mothers, 49 South Union St.

THURSDAY 12
Pride Social, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Goodman St. and East Ave. 5:30-7:30 pm. Sponsored by Community Business Forum. www.threetreesofpride.com.

FRIDAY 13

SUNDAY 8
ImageOut Beach Party Tea Dance. 4-7 pm, Rooftop Pavilion, Crowne Plaza, 30 State St. Dignity Integrity Roman Catholic Pride Service, with reception. St Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church (77 S. Fitzhugh St., 234-5092).

Womyn’s Fishing Group: Webster Pier, Lake Rd. 2 pm. 288-7208.

MONDAY 9
Youth Pride Pageant at Muthers, 5-9 pm. LGB youth and straight allies. Pag-eant King and Queen will ride in Pride Parade convertible Admission $5. For info, call Toby Greenfield at 244-8640 ext. 10.

TUESDAY 10
Special viewing of Western New York exhibit Equal Measures Portraits of Love from from One Orange Gay Cafe, 240 East Ave. (Located next to the Little Theatre). Exhibit underscores the theme of marriage equality through photographs (by James Rajotte) and personal stories of Rochester and Buffalo gay and lesbian families. Women’s and theatre reception honors 2007 Lifetime Achievement Award recipients Jamie and Sally Whitbeck. For more info, contact Todd Plunk at 585-278-4190.

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FRIDAY 14
7:30 PM at Dignity Integrity 3 pm. Pride Episcopal Eucharist without music. 5 pm. St Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., 234-5092.

SATURDAY 15
Pride Ecnomicual Service. Genese Valley Park, Ellmen Ave. at Genese River, Rochester. Organized by Tawa Pano Unity Fellowship Church and Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church. 585-729-0113; tawanafourusain@aim.com. www.openarmsrc.org/

GAGV Pride Picnic, Genese Valley Park 1-7 pm. Advance sale tickets will be $15 for adults, seniors (62 and older), $10 for pre-purchase, and the “at the gate” price will be $15. 244-8640; www.gagval­liance.org.


Directly Episcopal Eucharist without music. 5 pm. St Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., 234-5092.

SATURDAY 17

FRIDAY 20
GRC’S 1 Do, 1 Do! Cibi Delizios, 3894 Rush Mendon Rd., July 20, 21, 27, 28, 8:00 pm. 624-8350.

SATURDAY 21
Genadonagan Native American Dance & Music Festival. Genadonag­an State Historic Site, Etc. 441, Victor. Traditional Navajo (Dineh Tlah) dance. Onondaga rock group The Fabulous Rockin’ Rigolettes, with nativecraft demonstrations, story telling, family drum jam, food, etc. Also July 22-23 am-6 pm. www.genadonagan.org.

Rochester Rams Harness Night. 9 pm-2 am. Bachelor Forum, 670 Univer­sity Ave.

Butch Femme Connection Supper Club, Zelman, Lodhzamis Plaza, S. Clinton Ave.; 7 pm. 288-7208.

SUNDAY 22
Happy Dunch Day Trip to Chan­taspa. Near Paul Raucherbach, great grand­son of Rochester founder of Social Gospel movement, 7:30 am-7 pm. To park and meet in parking lot of Third Presby­terian Church, 4 Meigs St. at East Ave. www.thirdpresbyterian.org/morlight.

Dignity Integrity Summer Salads potlock, followed by 7 pm mass at St Michael’s RC Church. 5 pm. St Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., 234-5092.

Womyn’s Fishing Group. Charlotte Pier, 2 pm. 288-7208.

SUNDAY 29
Dignity Integrity Hynn Sing, fol­lowed by ice cream social. 5 pm. St Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., 234-5092.


Situation

A Welcoming and Affirming Reform Jewish Congregation

July Erve Shabbat Service Schedule

Friday, July 6... 6:00 pm... Erve Shabbat Service
Friday, July 13... 8:00 pm... Erve Shabbat Service
Friday, July 20... 6:00 pm... Erve Shabbat Service
Friday, July 27... 8:00 pm... Erve Shabbat Service

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**Ongoing Calendar**

**MONDAY**
LGBT Support Group 7pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 1st, 2nd, 4th Mondays, 5:30-7pm, 244-2040
Gay Fathers Support Group 6pm, First United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St., 423-0650
LGBT Support Group 6:30pm, first Thursday, 7pm, St. Luke's/St. Simon Church, 242A 4th Street, 245-2040

**TUESDAY**
Atlantic Five 0 Gay Men 35 and over; Second Tuesdays, 5pm, GAS Women's Group, 875 E. Main St., first floor, Prince St. entrance, 248-4922.
GAGV Support Group 7pm, GAS Community Center, 875 E. Main St., 2nd floor, entrance, 2nd floor, 244-8640 ext 13.

**WEDNESDAY**
Women's Community Chorus Rehearses each Wednesday, 6:30-9pm, Call for location, 224-4441
Tawa Pano Church Bible Study Bible study, 7:15 pm, 758 South Ave.
Country Line Dancing/Two Stepping Every Wednesday, 6-9pm, 40 S. Union, 7pm, Lessons followed by dancing until 10 pm, Beginners to advanced.

**THURSDAY**
Support Group for Parents Who Have Lost Children First, Third Wednesdays, 11 am-12:30pm, Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. Sponsored by Genesee Region Home Care, Free, 325-1860
COMPA Come Out and Play, Business meeting last Wednesday, Equal Grounds Coffee Shop, 750 South St., 2nd floor, 7am, 345-3609.
Empire Bears First, Third Wednesdays, 7-9pm, GAS, Community Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor, info@empirebears.org
Transgender Group Third Wednesdays, 6-30pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 131 N. Fitzhugh St.
Multicom-4 Coffee Talk 7pm, 5th Floor, 739 Park Ave. Social for former Multicom-4 BBS members; other gbt cyber geeks welcome, every fourth Wednesday, 6pm.
GAGV Library & Archives 8 pm Wednesdays, 5th floor, Auditorium, 875 E. Main St., 244-8640.
Brothers Keeper Support Group Tuesday over 30, Second Wednesdays, 6-8pm, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400
ASA Support group for transgenders of color, Third Wednesdays, 6-8pm, GAS, Community Center, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400
GAGV Youth Drop In Hours Mondays, Wednesdays, 3-7pm, GAS, Community Center, 875 E. Main St., 2nd floor, Prince St. entrance, first floor, 244-9640 ext 13.
Stonewall Democrats of the Genesee Valley Meets Wednesdays, 7-9pm, GAS, Community Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor, Rainbow Seniors Yoga 6:30am, 1325 Monroe Ave, MRC, 125 Norris Drive, 442-6369.

**FRIDAY**
Gay Men's AA meeting First Friday, 1-3pm, Closed meeting, Area Artists' Club, Milo/Reade, 224-0292 ext 200, Closed meeting.
Bear and Leather Dance Night Second Fridays, 7-9pm, Empire Bears, 140 Alexander Street

**SATURDAY**
Rochester Rams Bar Night Third Saturday, 8pm-2am, Bachelor Forum, 470 University Ave., www.empirebears.org.
Catholic Gay & Lesbian Family Ministry Third Saturday, 7-9 pm, School of Good Shepherd Church, 3260 E. Henrietta Rd., 234-5080.

**SUNDAY**
Moore Light Presbyterian Church 11am, LGBT gay people and friends, 12:15pm, Last Sundays, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 117 1st, 2nd, 4th Sundays, 2pm, 3pm, 242-1400
Transgender Group Last Saturdays, 2-5pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh.

**Special Events**
Rochester 150 University Ave. 442-2200
Partner Beseassment Group First and Third Thursdays, 5-30pm.
LGBT Pride Network, 311 Winton Road, 214-1414
GAGV 6pm, MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400
GAGV Anti-Violence Project Support group for LGBT victims of domestic violence, First Fridays, 9am, Call 248-2040 ext 10.
U of Rochester Pride Network Every Saturday, 9 pm, 248-5020 on River Campus of U. R., address: www.u.rochester.edu
Green Party (political) Movie Night Second, Third Saturdays, 7-9 pm, GAS, Community Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor, 234-6470.

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Equality Leadership Conference 2007

Friday October 19, 2007
Rochester Riverside Convention Center

Keynote:
Kirk Snyder, Author, The G Quotient: Why Gay Executives Are Excelling as Leaders... and What Every Manager Needs to Know.

Kirk Snyder is nationally recognized as an authority on the contemporary workplace and business leadership. His new book, The G Quotient: Why Gay Executives Are Excelling as Leaders... and What Every Manager Needs to Know (Jossey-Bass/Wiley & Sons 2006), acclaimed as one of the best management books of the year by strategy+business and named to Harvard Business Review's prestigious annual reading list, is changing the way people think about business leadership. The G Quotient is generating headlines in TIME Magazine, Fast Company, Details Magazine and The Advocate. He is also the author of Lavender Road to Success (Ten Speed Press 2003), named by Amazon.com as one of the best books of the year as a top ten editors' pick.

At the University of Southern California, Kirk teaches strategies for business communication in both the undergraduate and graduate programs at the USC Marshall School of Business. In addition, he heads his own consulting firm, Equality Career Group, Inc., and speaks nationally on the subject of business leadership, career development and gay workplace issues. Speaking clients include McKinsey & Company, Lehman Brothers, University of California, Berkeley, Commonwealth Club of California, and Reaching Out MBA.

Other activities throughout the day include:
• Variety of Workshops
• Leadership Luncheon
• Presentation of Business, Media and Employee Resource Group Awards
• Cocktail Reception at the End of the Day

For information on conference or sponsorship opportunities, please call: (585) 317-8860 or e-mail ELC@gagv.us

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