By Our Owners

More than 1,000 activists from around the state converged at the Capitol on May 1 to push for legislation that would give equality and justice to hundreds of thousands of New York light people and their families.

Participants made almost 200 visits to legislators in the largest gay rights event in Albany since 1971. That year marked the first gay rights march on any state capitol. The Empire State Pride Agenda (ESPN), New York State's most powerful civil rights and advocacy organization sponsored the event.

At the mid-day rally, speakers from the faith community, law-makers, labor officials and other social coalition leaders called for the passage of measures that would protect gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students from harassment or bullying at school and prohibit discrimination based upon gender identity and expression. However, most of the activists' attention was directed to fighting for marriage equality legislation.

Chanting "All of us or none" and holding signs such as "Honor Our Love" and "Thank You Gov. Spitzer," the activists -- many of them same-sex couples denied marriage licenses in New York -- decried what they see as omissions in the state's protections for all people.

Gov. Eliot Spitzer announced his Marriage Equality bill on April 27, fulfilling a campaign promise and making him the first governor to do so. The bill would extend to same-sex couples all benefits that heterosexual couples currently enjoy. If the bill passes, New York would join Massachusetts as the only states that allow same-sex marriage.

However, Spitzer does not expect the Republican-led Senate to pass gay rights provisions in this non-election year.

"Gov. Spitzer has done more for the gay community in five months than we ever could've hoped for," said Alan Van Capelle, head of the Empire State Pride Agenda. He added that the goal is to pass the bill through the Assembly, where it already has about 60 supporters, and then focus on the Senate.

"It's a disgrace that we're still fighting for equal rights in 2007," said Alan Lubin, executive vice president of New York State United Teachers, one of several large unions backing gay rights legislation.

"We'll win. The question is, how long will it take?"

Tom Privitera, Poughkeepsie resident and Director of Field Services for the Public Employees Federation, ALF-CIO, said, "The climate in Albany has already changed. ESPA has done an excellent job building coalitions with the labor and faith-based communities. This is labor's fight too."

A representative for Assembly Minority Leader James Tedisco, R-Schenectady, said that a majority of Assembly Republicans are against same-sex marriage. Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, R-Rensselaer County, has said that the issue is not a priority and has expressed opposition to gay marriage. "I think they (activists) ought to discuss that with the governor, since he's the priority of the governor, and not a priority in the Senate," Bruno told reporters at a news conference on April 30. He said he would not support changing the law to allow same-sex marriage, and he is not alone.

Religious factions are very divided. The Rev. Norman Kansfield urged spiritual communities to "change the way they see and understand what truly makes a family." The Reformed Church minister was fired from his post as president of a New York City seminary and had his ministerial duties suspended after he presided over his daughter's 2004 wedding in Massachusetts to her lesbian partner.

"It's the wrong direction for the state to change the definition of marriage. All that this predates human history," claimed Denne (Activists continue, page 3).

O'Donnell introduces Spitzer marriage bill

On May 21, Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell officially introduced the Marriage Equality Act, Governor Spitzer's program bill providing same-sex couples with access to marriage in New York.

The bill (A8590) was introduced by lead sponsor O'Donnell with a record 53 co-sponsors. This year's co-sponsorship number is a large increase over the 24 that co-sponsored an earlier version of the bill carried in the Assembly last year by Assemblymember Richard Gottfried. Co-sponsorship this year is bipartisan for the first time ever.

The bill has carried the marriage equality bill in the Senate in the past and is expected to do so again.

A little over two weeks ago Governor Spitzer took a major step towards passing marriage equality legislation in New York, when he introduced his program bill," said Empire State Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan Van Capelle. "Now, Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell has taken the next big step by formally introducing the governor's bill in the Assembly with a record 53 co-sponsors representing both major political parties and all the geographic diversity of New York State."

We thank Assemblymember O'Donnell for his incredible hard work making sure his bill has so much support on the very first day it's introduced. We thank Assemblymembers Glecè, Gottfried and Titone for all their work on this issue and especially their efforts with Assemblymember O'Donnell in putting together this impressive co-sponsorship list. We also thank each of the 53 Assemblymembers from across the state who co-sponsored the bill," said van Capelle.
Censorship and the Empty Closet

Censorship of the Empty Closet through tampering has become a regular topic for this column. Unfortunately, it isn’t going away and it won’t as long as light people are demonized.

Once again this spring, stads of the paper were hidden under various publications at various distribution sites in the city. Once again, EC readers are reminded that if they don’t immediately see the paper at a site (see list in Section C), they need to row around under the piles of Golf Weekly, Bride Today, or whatever, and probably, they will unearth a quantity of Empty Closets. If the copies aren’t unearthed, they will go into the recycling bin at the end of the month – a total waste. Some business owners and employees may agree to monitor the ECs, but the reality is that they are often too busy to check. In some places, the employees themselves may be the problem.

Clearly, the most reliable sites for EC readers to pick up their papers is at gay-owned businesses like Outlandish, Equal-Grounds or the bars. Those who enjoy the paper every month also have the option of subscribing, or of becoming GAGV members, which includes a sub to the EC. Ironically, gay voices are often censored by those who loudly defend their own freedom of expression, while trampling on the rights of others. Nevertheless, while they aren’t allowed to express anti-gay, sexist or racist slurs in the “liberal media”, and that “political correct-ness” denies them their protected freedom to voice their “religious beliefs” – i.e., defending stereotypes about minorities and calls for political discrimination against them. The right wing media, such as Fox News, while they may claim objectivity, exist to promote the conservative agenda, not to provide objective information. The Right invented the myth of the liberal media, when the bottom-line reality is that the mainstream media exist, not to promote ideological any kind, but rather to sell their publications and raise ratings for their TV and radio news shows.

That is not to say that bias doesn’t exist in the media – but it is just as often conservative as it is liberal, and it is sometimes hard to distinguish deliberate homophobia from chronic indifference and ignorance that amount to homophobia. For instance, the Denver Post & Chron­icle ignored the 275 youth at the Day of Silence, while running a story about youth at a Day of Prayer. And once again gay organizations and events were omitted from the DCC’s “Liv­ing Here” supplement. Critics of Coulter, Imus, Sav­age, et al may be calling for an end to hate speech, but are not necessarily calling for censorship of responsible conservative opinion. Gay rights have to protest homophobic slurs, calls for deni­al of our civil rights, and atten­dances to violence against us. And as far as First Amendment rights go, the Right misses theirs to produce the vile, demeaning hate speech and to keep hate groups on line, media­tion of news, and commit­ter other acts of “insulting” and “tamp­per with the EC obviously hold the view that if one doesn’t agree with an opin­ion, it’s legitimate not merely to challenge it, but to suppress it. This is just as wrong when done to liberals and progressives, but it seems to be a specialty of the Right, and of fundamentali­st of all religions. That’s why you may find it difficult to locate your next copy of the Empty Closet. III

Photo Credit: The photo of Dallas Parke Coulter on page B of the May Empty Closet was taken by Tara Smelt (Rayven­sky.com).

From The GAGV Executive Director KRS HINESLEY

New programs and services

By Kris Hinesley

Spring brings events and more events at the Gay Alliance and around the city. Be sure to check our online calendar to see what’s all happening.

Highlights include the Big Gay Prom on June 8 (see page C-1), and the back cover in this section for details, the Annual Meeting on June 20 at 6 p.m. in the Youth Center (open and to the public), and, of course, the Pride Picnic on July 15 at Genesee Valley Park. The Annual Meeting is your opportunity to learn more about the Gay Alliance, and to hear about our successes and plans for the future. Light refreshments will be served.

Pride and Joy Families, a group of LGBT families with kids, is organizing games and activities for families with children at this year’s Pride Picnic. We listen to your feedback asking for more food vendors, so expect to see more choices this year. Remember, your ticket price doesn’t just pay for the picnic. It also helps pay for services throughout the year, like coming out workshops, the Empty Closet newspaper, and youth programs. So, whether you attend or not, buying a ticket is a great way to support your Gay Alliance.

New programs and services are coming on line this year, thanks to a grant from the National Institutes for Health. Last month we announced our partnership with the University of Roches­ter Medical Center HIV Vaccine Trials Unit. This month, I am pleased to announce our intent to begin a county-wide discus­sions about homelessness in the LGBT youth population. With help from the Daiya Marquis Jones Foundation and other local donors, the Gay Alliance plans to convene a working group to examine the issue locally and find new ways to support our youth. Nation-wise, we are see­ing an epidemic of youth home­lessness that affects LGBT youth at significantly higher rates than other youth. This is not surpris­ing, as we know that our word­suffer higher rates of depression and suicide.

In April and May, many of our Speakers Bureau volunteers participated in a 20-hour training that included answers to many of the common questions asked by audiences during presentations on “LGBT 101.” Participants learned to "tell their stories" in a way that will equip audience members to build their knowledge and learn to become allies to LGBT peo­ple in their community. This method of community educa­tion, the Speakers Bureau, has been used by the Gay Alliance for many years. It is a simple, afford­able way for community groups, universities and congregations to educate themselves through local community members who are happy to provide a presentation.

For more information please contact Jeanne Gainsburg at 244-8640.

It’s right civil rights! Last month the Gay Alliance and other com­munity groups sent the largest contingency statewide to Albany for Equality and Justice day. 250 people, including many youth and gay students, got on the bus and headed to the Capitol on May 1. Legislation to discuss this year included GENDA, the Gender Non-Discrimination Act; DASSA, the Disability for All Stud­ents Act, and Equal Marriage. It was an empowering day. If you would like to go next year, watch the Pride Agenda board for your first meeting in March and April for reg­istration details.

As always, if you have feed­back or would like to receive information about the Gay Ali­ance, please contact me at 244-8640 or, any member of your staff, or would like to update your mail­ing information in our database, please give us a call.

RE-MEMBER to be a Member: Support your life.

Full Name:
Residential Address:
City/State/Zip:
E-mail:
Phone:

I would like to volunteer on a committee or project.

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

Membership levels:
$30: Advocate (Individual, includes EC)
$50: Equality (Family, includes EC)
$100: Champion
$150: Stonewall
Above & beyond: $...

Check if you do NOT want to receive the Empty Closet.
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Letters to the editor

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Advertising policy:
The Empty Closet does not print adver­tisements that contain nude drawings or photographs, nor does it print adver­tisements that state that the person pictured is in a bar, or that you are “into” that particular person if you patronize the establishment. Advertisements that are explicitly racist, sex­ist, ageist, or homophobic will not be refused; advertisements from organiza­tions are so not, racist, sexist, ageist or anti-gay will be refused.

Submissions:
For publication, submit news items, ads, photos, letters, stories, poetry, ads, photographs or art by mail or in person to the Empty Closet office by the 15th of the month. Design services for computer-ready ads are available for a fee.

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The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., as stated in the by-laws. The purpose of this paper is to inform the Rochester gay com­munity about local, national and 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 be a member of a network of lesbian and gay publications that address mutual concerns.

Part of our purpose is to maintain a positive working relationship with the entire community. We must be careful to present a positive view of self that takes into consideration the ideas of all — we are not only gay, but we are also human, and from those various walks of life.

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SUSAN JORDAN

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Gay Alliance ushers in new era with Speakers Bureau revival

By Sue Overmyer

Bob Owens has been tirelessly advocating for the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley since the mid-1980s. A one-term president of the GAGV board, Mr. Owens has often ventured into hostile confines conducting educational programs about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.

The youthful-looking, 62-year-old SUNY Geneseo professor has been sharing his experiences with individuals and organizations by using the public arena as a means of creating positive cultural change. By telling his personal story, Mr. Owens has become a role model for others through openly supporting those individuals who are struggling with their sexual or gender identity issues.

Additionally, the challenge for Bob Owens and other speakers like him is to educate within the communities he represents and bring some understanding and clarity to the concerns that divide us as well. Just wouldn’t have it any other way. Really enjoy talking about the issues,” said Owens. “It’s just an extension of my earlier civil rights activist work when I assessed the urban poor and the ‘different labeled’ in Delaware years ago. Besides, it’s really a lot of fun to get out there and talk to people.”

High on the priority list for the GAGV staff in 2007 is an aggressive approach to re-dedicating the organization’s outreach strategy. Starting this month, the GAGV Speakers Bureau program will be

literally launching off in several different directions. The new focus for community growth will be headed by Jeanne Gainsburg, Outreach Coordinator for the GAGV. A mother of two from Pittsford, she first volunteered with the agency in 2003 and is now a committed part-time paid staff member. (See her first column page 1.)

Whether they have never spoken in front of a crowd or had been on the pro-front, speaking for years, Gay Gainsburg invited interested candidates to a series of workshops that were offered in local and early April of this year.

Scott Fearing, long time lgbt educator and previous senior program director of Ourfront Minnesotis, was conducting the workshops for the old guard and a new crop of volunteers. Fearing developed a training tutorial that he has been giving for many years.

“I began offering this class in Minnes­ota in 1997. By that time, the statehouse had the years nearly 1,500 people completed the trainings. It became the most ‘take’ class for people providing education in many venues, as well as people who just wanted to talk with friends and family members.

Fearing emphasizes, “It is time that responsible voices with messages of truth and connection become louder than those that have spent years of sitting in a room filled with the most important civil rights struggle of our time.”

Fearing continues, “I see this program as transforming our communities. The breadth and depth of this outreach is limitless. Scott Fearing is a very talented person and his expertise will take us to the next level.”

Gay GAGV Speakers Bureau volunteers have been around since the 1970s. GAGV speakers are trained to solicit questions and respond to comments. They listen to the perspectives of those who feel they have not had or heard enough inside them.

They have conducted informal, interactive speaking engagements in hundreds of venues, including high schools, colleges, businesses, libraries, government agencies, churches, synagogues, youth groups, and for community service organizations all around western New York.

The people that Bob Owens and other GAGV speakers have encountered over the years often are coming to grips with their authentic selves. Some of the attendees have even gained the courage to come out for the first time. There are other participants who often wonder how in the world they can appropriately deal with a gay family member or a flamboyant co-worker. Some corporations make listening to these speakers a requirement for employees, while other clerits think it just makes good business sense to educate their staff. “Sometimes participants don’t want to be there at all, and that can be a challenge,” said Fearing.

Volunteers speak in pairs (usually people of different identities, but also offer panel presentations as an option. They begin by talking for a few minutes about their own lives—their experiences of prejudice, as well as how gays have grown to understand, accept, and take pride in their identities. Volunteers talk about how we’ve come out to our families, friends, and co-workers, how we’ve faced discrimination, how we’ve fallen in love, and raised families just like everyone else, and how we’ve worked and lived our public lives.

Kathy Wright, an educator at a regional area school, has given several of her students in the bureau a great opportunity for her to give back to the local community. “Joining the Gay GAGV Speakers Bureau was the most important step in making a difference in improving the lives of young people.”

In the future, the volunteer candidates will follow the same training course program designed by Fearing. The training includes taking an assessment of personal values (Speakers continue on page 8)
Bill would allow "permanent partners" to immigrate to U.S.

On May 8, the Uniting American Families Act, which would allow gay, bisexual and lesbian Americans to sponsor their "permanent partners" for legal residency in the United States, was introduced in Congress.

The Act was introduced in the House by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), chair of the House Judiciary Committee, and in the Senate by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"Our bill recognizes that American families come in all shapes and sizes," said Nadler. "Our laws should work to keep loving families together and not tear them apart. This is a matter of basic fairness and compassion. I am proud to work with Senator Leahy on this issue. We simply ask that gay and lesbian American in loving, committed relationships receive the same treatment as everyone else."

Leahy said: "Our immigration laws treat gays and lesbians in committed relationships as second-class citizens, thus injure them needlessly. It is the right thing to do for the people involved, it is the sensible step to take in the interest of having a fair and consistent policy, and I hope that Congress will act to help demonstrate our Nation's commitment to equality under the law."

The Act would add the term "permanent partner" to those sections of the Immigration and Nationalization Act that apply to legally married couples. "Permanent partner" is defined as an adult who is in a committed, intimate relationship with another adult in "which both parties intend a lifelong commitment."

The legislation would afford equal immigration benefits to permanent partnerships, but would also apply the same restrictions and enforcement standards. "If a person is found to have entered into a fraudulent permanent partnership for the purposes of obtaining a visa for another person, they will be subject to the same five year maximum imprisonment, or $25,000 maximum fine, or both, as a person who contracts a fraudulent marriage would," Nadler and Leahy said.

The bill also requires that bi-national couples provide ample proof that they meet the definition of "permanent partner."

The bill has drawn considerable encouragement. I am thankful to the many witnesses who stepped forward to describe the violent actions of the Largo police and the utterly unfair statements included in the police reports. I have certainly wanted to talk. It is very difficult to remain silent in the face of injustice, and now that these outrageous charges have been dropped, I think it is very important to speak."

"But first I want to express the extraordinary gratitude I feel to the people throughout this community, this state and across the country who have written letters of support and sent words of encouragement. I am thankful to the ACLU for providing legal counsel and to the many witnesses who stepped forward to describe the violent actions of the Largo police and refute their fabricated justification for the arrest."

"I know that others who have been wrongfully arrested under similar circumstances and treated even more brutally do not always have the privilege to use physical force and to take away an individual's freedom, you must be held to a standard that does not allow that. The police appear to be dealing seriously with the outright lie that the bill would criminalize anti-gay speech. But unless they believe part of their religion is the practice of violence and intimidation, they should not be affected by this bill."

For the first time, the ACLU was able to announce its full support for hate crimes legislation. In the past, the organization has not been able to support hate crime bills because they were written in a way that threatened constitutionally protected speech. But the legislation introduced by Representative John Conyers (D-MI) shows that it is possible to protect targets of hate crimes without jeopardizing free speech or association rights. "Prosecuting violent hate crimes is critically important. This bill will also prevent the process of prosecution, especially our First Amendment rights to speak freely and associate with whom we choose," said Fredericksen. "Largo police should throw out the arrest and hold Firm to a commitment to non-violent social change and to speaking up without discrimination and bigotry show themselves in our midst."

"I attended and spoke at that second hearing and the atmosphere was different. The officer who arrested me and the others who slammed me around were nowhere to be seen. I was able to announce its full support for hate crimes legislation. In the past, the organization has not been able to support hate crime bills because they were written in a way that threatened constitutionally protected speech. But the legislation introduced by Representative John Conyers (D-MI) shows that it is possible to protect targets of hate crimes without jeopardizing free speech or association rights. "Prosecuting violent hate crimes is critically important. This bill will also prevent the process of prosecution, especially our First Amendment rights to speak freely and associate with whom we choose," said Fredericksen. "Largo police should throw out the arrest and hold Firm to a commitment to non-violent social change and to speaking up without discrimination and bigotry show themselves in our midst."

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that means approximately Judy Shepard, Executive Director of the ACLU whose dedication made this vote a step in when needed, but only after the support the expansion of hate crimes laws free speech than any other federal crime. It would allow the federal government to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. It would provide crucial federal resources to state and local agencies and equip local enforcement officers with the tools they need to investigate and prosecute crimes. While most states recognize the problem of hate violence, and many have enacted laws to help combat this serious issue, federal government recognition of the problem is crucial to its solution. Too many local jurisdictions lack the full resources necessary to prosecute hate crimes. For example, when Matthew Shepard was murdered in Laramie, Wyo., in 1998, the investigation and prosecution of the case cost the community of 28,000 residents about $150,000, forcing the sheriff's department to lay off five deputies in order to pay the money.

**Equipping Local Law Enforcement.** The act would provide federal resources to the states and local agencies and equip local enforcement officers with the tools they need to investigate and prosecute crimes. It would strengthen state and local efforts by enabling the Justice Department to provide training and technical assistance to state and local agencies and to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. The bill will also provide grants to help state and local agencies meet the extra expenses involved in hate crime cases.

At the federal level, the LLEHC- PA would increase the jurisdiction of the act to include crimes committed on an Act of Congress, including crimes against the government.

It would allow the federal government to step in when needed, but only after the department has certified that a federal prosecution is necessary.

**The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act would strengthen the ability of federal, state and local governments to investigate and prosecute hate crimes based on race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity.**

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**Specialty Local Law Enforcement.** The act would allow federal authorities to become involved if local authorities cannot or will not act. The bill would extend the jurisdiction of the act to include crimes committed on an Act of Congress, including crimes against the government.

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Kathryn Berg of Bergsqueroofoot.com

By Susan Jordan

A two-year-old website, Bergsqueroofoot.com is not actually a site for foot fetishists – although they are welcome to contribute. Rather, BQFP is dedicated to the issues of violence against women, the misrepresentation of women’s bodies and experiences and the censorship of language and sexualities. It is also a lot of fun – a concept heartily endorsed by the site’s co-author, Kathryn Berg.

The site mission statement says, “Out of the feminist anti-porn pro-sex debates emerged the call for a new erotic aesthetic: woman-authored, woman-centered, non-objectifying. But what would such pornography look like... BQFP intends to suggest, provoke and subvert...”

One photo shows toes gripping a lighted match which is setting fire to a picture of Rush Limbaugh – maybe not the sexiest shot but one which certainly represents many people’s fantasies.

Then there are the Footnotes, and many other sections, including links to some woman-created porn sites. The list of “funny girls with an agenda” who have inspired Berg and her collaborators includes Annie Sprinkle, Marga Gomez, Fairy Butch, Lily Tomlin, Margaret Cho, Lea DeLaria, Kate Clinton, Kate Bornstein and the art world’s Guerrilla Girls (“Fighting discrimination with facts, humor and fake fur since 1985”).

Empty Closet: Your mission statement says that your intent is to suggest, provoke and subvert. What is it you want to subvert, and why?
KB: Kathryn Berg: We’re addressing many issues, but the core issue is sexual violence against women. This includes the lack of representation of an authentic range of women’s voices and the misrepresentation of women’s bodies.

There are two aspects of addressing violence against women: political resistance and promoting women’s pleasure.

It’s a creative and complicated thing to do. Part of the solution is not only that women shouldn’t be victims of violence, but also that we experience our bodies as places for pleasure. If we do that, they are obviously not places of pain.

We need alternatives. We can’t just say, “end the violence”... we’re taking the next step forward. What alternative models for pleasure do we need?

EC: Why feet as opposed to other body parts – tits, armpits?
KB: I like to keep it ambiguous as to whether or not I’m a foot fetishist. My best friend is my collaborator on the project. We didn’t sit around and deliberate about using feet. We started two years ago with about 10 photos – when I should have been working on my senior honors thesis.

Feet tend to be thought of as a dirty and ugly body part. It has turned out to be this wonderful metaphor for freedom and travel and a fun way to comment – and feet are great for photography. You can do so much more with an ear or nose.

EC: Some of the photos of feet are butt, with hairy legs, while others are feminine, with toenail polish etc. Do you label yourself in some way, or are you against labels?
KB: I identify as “gender queer,” and also as a woman. But as far as gender, I like to deal with it on a day to day basis. I like to dress up. I was a woman’s studies major and this is a form of theatre and playing. I think rigid models of butch-femme are a generational thing.

EC: Why is Western culture so anti-pleasure? Where do all this sexual repression and body-hate come from?
KB: It’s used to reinforce gender roles that preserve a hierarchy, keeping people “in their place” and to regulate human relationships. Many people are comfortable with their sexualities, if we can experience different kinds of love – that threatens people in a position of privilege.

I think that’s an undertone on the website, that they’re not traditional in a variety of ways, not just in being gay or straight. We need to be inclusive of trans sexuality, bisexuality, polyamory, and we embrace the word “queer” not just as related to gays.

Our first audience we want to include anyone who identifies as a woman, as well as anyone born with female anatomy. Our second audience is in queer of all kinds.

EC: Is humor more subversive than explicit signs and rhetoric?
KB: I think they’re both really important, but don’t think they need to be in oppositional camps. Part of BQFP is to push boundaries. It doesn’t aspire to be respectable but rather to create a platform for other activism to look more respectable. Humor is a form of pleasure. Personally, I think sexuality is fun in a playful way.

EC: Along with feeling pleasures, women have been forbidden to love their bodies. Almost every woman you talk to, even the most attractive, always...
speak, “I hate my body.” And young girls are becoming anorexic now by kinder-
garten. Do you really love your body, and how did you get to that place?
KB: I served in the Peace Corps and I was in the Republic of Kiribati, in the
South Pacific. The one way I saw that those women had more freedom than we
do was that they didn’t experience hate of their bodies, and because there was
no media they didn’t see themselves with
hated.
I still feel to some extent that lov­
ing my body is something I practice in a
daily way. Culture influences you in a way
beyond our control and it’s an ongoing
struggle in this culture for women to love
their bodies. I’ve done a lot to experience
my body as a place for physical pleasure
– I eat and exercise well, and also have
done a lot of work on how women’s bod­ies
are perceived by the media. I’ve done
a lot of work physically, intellectually and
emotionally.
Human bodies don’t have to be thin,
blonde or young to be sexy. I think per­
fect beauty is to see a wide range of what
is beautiful.
EG: So for women to love their bod­ies and sexualities is one of the most
radical acts possible?
KB: No, I think it’s one very, very
important issue and I think it reaches
all groups and categories of women. As a
white woman, I have never had to work on
the ways facing women of color – unlike
my friends who are women of color. But I
have looked in the mirror and thought, I
wish I were thinner – so that’s something
all women deal with.
EG: Do you want women to get
involved in your website?
KB: Not everyone is drawn to it... but
we’re looking for volunteers to contribute
footnotes or “Guest Posts”. Send photos
and quotes to bergquee@footporn.com.
EG: The women-against-violence-
against women movement of the late
’70s, which challenged heterosexual
male porn and snuff movies of women
being tortured and killed, was vulner­
able to co-option by the right’s anti­
porn movement, led by Ramona Santorelli
of the site) is 53 and we have a lot of
overlap in our views, but she has a lot of
issues and uses the site as a tool for mean­
gingful change.
EG: Including the issue of censor­
she.
KB: How language is censored and
how women’s experiences and the repre­
sentation of their bodies are censored.
I don’t believe in censorship but the
majority of lesbian porn sites (created by
straight men) don’t turn me on. They
come to a straight male audience.
There are a lot of women-created porn
sites and it’s a growing thing. We intend
to provide links to a wide range of gen­
ders, races and body types. We primarily
represent white or Caucasian bodies. Most
of the male-created sites we’ve found that
use women of color were unquestionably
degrading. They’re in words of diverse, and indeed
global, content and encourage all women to
send in their feet and their latest.

Ee: Anything you’d like to add?
KB: I’d like to mention that I’m
involved now in promoting the site. The
word “porn” is so problematic for promo­
tion. Also, pictures of feet are still tricky
in some ways, in terms of getting a gal­
lery exhibit or a float in the pride parade
(which we would like to do this summer).
We’re not a porn site, but a site for dis­
cussion – we want people to discuss these
issues and use the site as a tool for mean­
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send in their feet and their latest.

Ee: The women-against-violence­
against women movement and saw
how did you get to that place?
KB: I grew up in Chicago and for high
school went to the Chicago Academy for
the Arts, and studied music and creative
writing. I went to Hollins University, a
women’s college in the mountains of Vir­
ginia. They’re known for their creative
writing programs and also for their dance
program, and I took some courses, but I’m
not a dancer, although I’m a performer
and artist. Their process of creative a mod­
er dance was very inspiring to me, I was
much more drawn to that than to writing.
Women’s studies became more important
and that ended up being my major.
After the Peace Corps I came to Roch­
ester where I have family. Now I’ve just
become a telemarketer for Geva Theatre.
I want to give more time to my creative
work and I want to travel more... I also
want to go to grad school, although I’m
not sure what I would do. I’m interested
in novel writing but I’m also drawn to
being a light counselor – I’m an educa­
tor at heart.
EG: Anything you’d like to add?
KB: I’d like to mention that I’m
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send in their feet and their latest.
By John Clinton Williams

Music Director of the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus has announced his resignation of the June 16 DIVA Nation! concert.

The Gay Alliance will be asking engagement sponsors to pay an honorarium to help defray the operational costs associated with outreach, training and scheduling of speakers. No engagement will be turned down because a sponsor is unable to pay.

For more information about booking a speaker or volunteering for this special project, contact the agency at 244-8640 ex 34 or email jeanneg@agasv.org.

Gay Alliance speaking engagements and presentations for the past and upcoming months will be listed in each issue in section C.

Nick Williams steps down as Music Director of RGMC after 24 years

Nick Williams, founding member and Music Director of the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus has announced his resignation from the position, effective the close of the June 16 DIVA Nation! concert.

Williams informed the Chorus of his decision at the end of the spring rehearsal retreat at Lake Avenue Baptist Church on May 12.

In making his announcement, Williams said, “Looking at my life and my energy level at the current time, I find it increasingly difficult to do all the things I have to do. As much as I love RGMC, it was something I had to give up to maintain my quality of life. This was not an easy decision as my life and soul have been given to RGMC. Although I’m leaving the directorship, I don’t think I’ll ever be able to leave RGMC. It is ingrained into the very core and fiber of my being.

Chorines, members of the Board of Directors and the Staff were greatly saddened to hear Williams’ decision.

Board member Todd Perkins said, “Nick Williams is a true music professional with dignity, class, and a great sense of humor. I will truly miss him.”

Business Manager Jim Janssen said, “In my nine year career with the Chorus, Nick has always been available to answer questions, solve problems and listen, to both business and personal issues. His vast knowledge of the Chorus and life in general created a support role, a figure to look up to. His absence will be greatly noticed by many and missed by all.”

Second Tenor Section Leader Jim Coschig said, “Nick Williams’ title is ‘Music Director’ but that says so little about what he gives us. He is an incredible vocal coach and teacher who developed each of our voices and then shaped them together to create a sound unique to the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus. You can pick us out from other men’s choruses that are the same size, thus giving us an identity and our own sound. It’s a sound that other choruses tell us they love.

He is a professional actor. I doubt our audience realizes that most of what we perform are his arrangements. I don’t know one of us could name all the ways he’s given to us, and the community, a voice. Now he’ll get a chance to sit in the audience, and we’ll get the honor of singing for him. I think that will be a great day.

Williams has continually nurtured and encouraged untrained voices to learn how to sing. And the result has been one of the best medium sized gay men’s choruses in all of North America.

He said, “All people have an ability to sing. Everyone else has the ability to improve their voice. The problem is we don’t know how to do this. It is through giving members the correct tools to monitor and evaluate their own voices that one allows the singer to improve and explore their own singing potential.”

Williams and four others founded the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus in a living room in November 1983. David Knoll, second tenor, was with Nick at that first rehearsal. Little did they realize that over the next 18 years, RGMC would grow to become the Voice of Pride in Rochester.

Through Williams’ efforts the RGMC became involved in the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA) and for one three year period he served on the national GALA Board of Directors. He was instrumental in bringing one of the first annual GALA Leadership Conferences to Rochester.

And Williams has taken the men of RGMC on the road. Just a few of the cities the Chorus has visited to make beautiful music are Buffalo, Syracuse, Toronto, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Seattle, Vancouver, Tampa Bay and Montréal. Everywhere the Chorus has traveled they have seen all 6’ 2” of him tap dancing and sporting stiletto heels and gaudy hats as he anchored the group.

“I love to perform. And when else can you perform and get a good physical workout? As I age, I find the need for aerobic activity increases. The Rochettes has been a great way to combine performance with exercise. If we could all be so lucky to be able to have such outlets. And don’t worry: I’ll be back dancing in a year or so!”

Second Tenor Nick Williams will be a great loss the last opportunity the Rochester community has to formally say, “Thank you Nick for all your good work,” and “best wishes as you enter a new phase of your life.”

A search for a new Music Director has begun.

Persecuted Gay Nigerian to speak here June 22

Davis Mac-iyalla will be speaking in Rochester on June 22 at 7 p.m., at St. Luke’s Episcopal Cathedral Church, 17 South Fitzhugh St. Mac-iyalla is the Director of Changing Attitude Nigeria, a group of gay and lesbian Anglicans in Nigeria.

Mac-iyalla made headlines in 2005, indirectly, the New York Times and the Times of London, for organizing the first support group for gay and lesbian Anglicans in Nigeria. He has been a target of Archbishop Peter Akinola’s wrath ever since.

Akinola is a leading proponent of a draconian bill in the Nigerian Parliament that would provide five years imprisonment to anyone who “goes through the ceremony of marriage with a person of the same sex,” helps or supports a same sex marriage, “is involved in the registration of gay clubs, societies and organizations, attendance, procession or meetings, publicity and public show of same sex relationships directly or indirectly in public and in private.”

Since founding the organization in 2005, Davis has been repeatedly denounced by the Anglican Church of Nigeria and has received several death threats. Davis was forced to flee Nigeria and now lives in exile elsewhere in Africa. Nevertheless, Mac-iyalla traveled to a meeting of Anglican archbishops in Tanzania in February, walked up to Akinola, and offered his hand.

Davis is traveling across the United States this summer to tell his story. Mac-iyalla’s local visit is co-sponsored by the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus in a living room in November 1983.

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Opinion

ACLU fights for Florida Gay Straight Alliance

By Brandon Hensler

Last year when Yasmin Gonzalez tried to form a new club at Okeechobee High School, she was told no by the principal. She wanted to form a gay-straight alliance and it didn't take her long to figure out that discrimination — not school policy — was the driving factor behind the principal's decision to reject the club. It was still fresh in her mind that the school denied her entrance to her prom in 2006 because she wanted to bring her girlfriend.

Gay-Straight Alliances, commonly known as GSA's, are formed by students who want to spread a message of tolerance and acceptance while working to combat bullying and harassment in schools. GSA's have been around since the late '80s and there are more than 3,000 nationwide — over a hundred in Florida. The ACLU has litigated on behalf of clubs all across the country and in every one of those cases the judges have upheld that the students forming GSA's have the same right to meet on campus as every other club.

The Federal Equal Access Act requires that the school district, the school itself, and the students, agree with the ACLU that the very personal interrogatory questions that sought to embarrass students should not be allowed. The judge stated in his opinion that he "does not see why this sensitive information is necessary or even relevant." The ruling even went so far as to say that the attempt to use such a personal line of questioning reinforced the need for the protective order.

Furthermore, the school's attempt to make the club out to be a "sex club" was dismissed by the court — sex is not even discussed at the club's meetings — and a ruling was issued granting access for the students to meet on campus while the trial moves forward.

The court seems to be sending a clear signal to Okeechobee School District: Stop discriminating against these students, or we will force you to stop. That message does not seem to have been digested by the school yet, but at least for now the students are able to meet on campus, discuss harassment issues and promote a safe environment where bullying is a thing of the past and tolerance is embraced. The teachable moment seems obvious here — the school district, the principal indeed all of us can learn an especially valuable lesson of equality and tolerance from these students who have already grasped those concepts.

This is the first lawsuit of its kind in Florida, so let it be heard here and now that the ACLU will be on hand to fight for the rights of anyone who is discriminated against by their public school. Whether it's a GSA or a bible club, equality means everyone is entitled to equal treatment, not just some.

Brandon Hensler is Director of Communications for the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida. This piece ran on Friday, May 11, 2007 in The Stuart News, The Vero Beach Press Journal and The Fort Pierce Tribune — it can be viewed at www.tcpalm.com.
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The Empire State Pride Agenda’s Justice and Equality Day on May 1 drew around 1,000 LGBT New Yorkers and allies to lobby and rally in Albany for Gov. Spitzer’s marriage equality measure, GENDA and Dignity for All Students. Left: Assemblymember Susan John supports gay rights.

What Becomes a Legend Most
a Pride Event
with
Kasha Davis & Aggy Dune

Rochester Museum & Science Center

Friday June 15th
Cocktails at 6:00
Buffet at 7:00
Show at 8:00
$32.00 per person

for reservations call (585)244-3390

www.kashadavis.com
www.aggydune.com

Poster design by Steven Levenson
Left: LGBT youth make their feelings known. The Rochester Youth contingent was the largest in the state to take part in Justice and Equality Day, for the second year in a row.

buffalo gay men’s chorus presents

friday june 15
unitarian universalist church of buffalo
695 elmwood (at w. ferry)

saturday june 16
first presbyterian church
1 symphony circle
interpreted for the hearing impaired
doors open at 7 • concert at 8
adults $18
students, seniors & disabled $16

artistic director
barbara wagner
accompanist
debi overton
716-883-1277
695 elmwood ave
buffalo, ny 14222
www.buffalogaymenschorus.com
same-sex couples in New York.

On Friday, August 24, unions, labor federations and union leaders whose combi­

nated by the New York State Department of Civil Service became the last entity to do so when it announced that any state or local employee married to a same-sex spouse will now have access to spousal benefits provided through the New York State Health Insurance Plan.

Massachusetts validates marriages of New York same-sex couples

Same-sex couples from New York who were married in Massachusetts between May 17, 2004 and July 6, 2006 have a legally valid marriage, according to a five-paragraph opinion entered by a Massachusetts court on May 10, 2007. The judgment overturns a bar for many families here in New York who have applied to these couples, and their marriages should now be treated as the fully valid, legal unions that they are. Because of GLAD's representation, said Celli, the judgment provides a unique vantage point to help the Board of Education steer the district in a positive direction for our children and community.

New York Party candidates win Board of Education seats

The Green Party of New York had two members elected to local school boards on May 15. Dr. Edgar Rodriguez was elected Trustee to the New Palz Board of Education and Rome Cells was re-elected to the Brighton Board of Education. Both candidates have a long history in education and community activism in their local areas.

Since 1973, I have the experience of putting six children through the New Palz schools with three children now completing their secondary studies. This direct experience has given me a unique vantage point to help the Board of Education steer the district in a positive direction for our children and community," said Dr. Rodriguez.

Rome Cells was elected to the Brighton School Board in 2004. He ran unopposed, winning one of the two seats on the Board for 2006.

"I have learned a lot over the last three years of service on our school board. I strongly support our district’s mission, vision of the future, administration and policies. I am committed to the district’s goal of realizing the high aspirations our community has for its students. I will work to help equip our students with the knowledge, values, and skills that will enrich their lives and enable them to become responsible, contributing citi­zens," said Celli.

The Green Party stands for Nonvio­


ice. For more information: www.nyp­

lad.org

from page 5)

to the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network, which spearheads National Day of Silence.

“Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans­

gender youth in this country face harassment, discrimination, and violence in their schools and communities on a daily basis,” said Christine Sun, a staff attorney for the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Project at the ACLU of Tennessee. “It’s completely unacceptable that a student should feel unsafe at school because of their race or gender identity or sexual orientation or any other aspect of their identity.”

The letter can be viewed online at http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/ 20050410007.html.

Task Force issues study on LGBT Asian, Pacific Islander Americans


Among the disturbing findings: 75 percent of respondents reported experi­

encing discrimination and/or harassment based on their race or ethnicity.

The lives of Asians and Pacific Islanders are complex, and they are made invisible by popular perceptions of our community as ‘the model minority.’ This research helps transform those invisibility issues from which we as a commu­nity can and need to mobilize," said Michael Hsiung of Telimos-Northeast in Seattle, Wash.

"When hate violence and harassment are on the rise, as they are, there are clearly at least one in five survey respon­

dents who have experienced physical violence for being either Asian/Pacific Islander, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, it underscores the need for Congress to pass and the president to sign federal hate crimes legislation," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Living in the Margins is based on analysis of survey data from 863 respon­

dents who live in a two-county area and the District of Columbia in a pattern that closely resembles the distribution of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. This online survey was conducted from June through September 2006 in the Washington, Chicago, and San Francisco regions.

Alaska, Hawaii, and Louisiana data were also made to increase participation from traditionally underrepresented groups, including South Asians, Pacific Islanders, Koreans, women, transgender people and elders.
As the Asian and Pacific Islander community grows in size and clout, we cannot leave behind Asians and Pacific Islanders who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. We are a part of both the API and LGBT communities and we raise our voices for inclusion in national debates around comprehensive and compassionate immigration reform, positive laws on marriage and hate violence that tears our community apart. We are silent at our own peril," said Donna Wong, co-chair of API Equality-LA.

"Asian and Pacific Islander LGBT community members report pervasive harassment in the form of homophobia in the API community and racism in the LGBT community. They are concerned with comprehensive and compassionate immigration reform, how they are portrayed in the media, and protecting their families and themselves from violence and harassment," said Alain Dang, a Task Force policy analyst and the study’s lead author. "These findings add to the growing body of evidence that support the need for not only legislative intervention, but community introspection."

Key findings of the report include:

Nearly every respondent (98 percent) had experienced at least one form of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or harassment in their lives; 75 percent reported that they were ineligible to vote. Strong majorities of respondents also reported that they participate in other political activities, including signing petitions, participating in marches or rallies and contacting their elected officials.

Only 50 percent of respondents said that English was their native language. Mandarin (11 percent), Cantonese (eight percent), Tagalog (six percent) and Vietnamese (five percent) were the most commonly cited native languages. Nearly all LGBT informational and advocacy materials are produced in English. Few resources are printed in any Asian language.

Demographics of respondents:

More than a dozen ethnicities were represented in the sample, including Chinese (40 percent), Filipino (15 percent), Japanese (11 percent) and Asian Indian (10 percent). Smaller numbers of Vietnamese, Korean, Hawaiian, Malaysian, Thai and Pakistani respondents also participated. These ethnic groups are Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, a term that encompasses a vast collection of ethnic groups with unique histories, cultures and migrations within both their Asian or Pacific Island ancestral country of origin and the United States.

Fifty-three percent of the participants identified as men, 41 percent as women and 10 percent as transgender. This adds up to more than 100 percent because respondents could select more than one option.

Forty-seven percent of respondents self-identified as gay, 19 percent as bisexual and nine percent as transgender. Twenty percent identified as "queer," with women and men equally represented. This label is often used by transgender people.

One-third of respondents reported being in a committed relationship and 10 percent reported having a domestic partner.

Living in the Margins: A National Survey of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Asian and Pacific Islander Americans was released May 10 in Los Angeles at a press conference at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center.

"This report would not have been possible without the dedicated effort of local organizations across the country participating and encouraging underserved voices to be heard," said Dang. "Living in the Margins continues the Task Force's longstanding commitment to racial and economic justice and supports the efforts of local activists in a partnership to create a strong, vibrant, diverse LGBT community where all are welcomed and supported."

A copy of the report and related fact sheets can be downloaded at www.thetaskforce.org.
have grown much more quickly over the last decade than those for lesbian, gay and bisexual people because of a commitment of the LGBT movement to insist that transgender people be included in new nondiscrimination laws and to go back and add protections for transgender people to existing sexual orientation-only laws. Since 2000, the percentage of the population living in a jurisdiction with nondiscrimination laws covering sexual orientation grew 14 percentage points from 38 percent to 52 percent. During the same period, the percentage of the population living in a jurisdiction with nondiscrimination laws covering gender identity/expression grew 32 percentage points from five percent to 37 percent, more than five times the rate of growth for sexual orientation protections.

The Task Force created and staffed its Transgender Civil Rights Project in 2001 with the goal of increasing the number of transgender-protective discrimination laws. Since the project’s inception, the proportion of the population covered by transgender-inclusive laws has increased from 6 percent to 37 percent.

“It’s clear that legislators recognize that transgender people face widespread discrimination and deserve the same protections as other minorities,” said Foreman.

“The common wisdom used to be that including protections for transgender people would kill a bill — that’s obviously not the case.”

Foreman noted that in the first week in May, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a hate crimes bill containing explicit protections for transgender people by a vote of 257–180 and that this year the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) was amended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression. There is widespread expectation that both houses of Congress will take up ENDA before the end of the calendar year.

Gains in State Protections for Same-Sex Couples

Over the last five months (December through April), state legislatures in three states — New Jersey, New Hampshire and Oregon — passed laws seeking to grant same-sex couples the same rights and responsibilities afforded married couples under state law through civil unions or domestic partnerships. As in the nondiscrimination arena, there are more states taking such action than in any previous state legislative session. As a result, only five (20 percent) of the U.S. population will live in a state that offers broad rights and responsibilities to same-sex couples.

(Other jurisdictions, including Washington state, Hawaii and the District of Columbia, have passed laws that give significant but not comprehensive protections to domestic partners. These jurisdictions are not included in the calculations. Five years ago (in 2002) just one state, Vermont, with 0.2 percent of the population, offered broad protections to same-sex couples. When the bills passed this session take effect, seven states (California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon and Vermont), with 20 percent of the population, will offer broad protections to same-sex couples.

The Task Force said Oregon’s new law was a particularly satisfying turn-around from 2004 when voters opposed a constitutional amendment banning the recognition of same-sex marriage by a margin of 57 percent to 43 percent; the narrowest margin among the 13 states voting on anti-marriage measures that year. The Task Force spent nearly $900,000 in cash in the attempt to defeat the amendment and sent 10 organizers to help staff the campaign.

While the 2004 loss really hurt, it’s now clear that our campaign really did convince people that all families deserve broad protections and relationship rights,” said Thalia Zepatos, director of the Task Force’s Organizing & Training Department. Zepatos, who played a major role in fighting every anti-LGBT measure in Oregon since 1988, attended the bill-signing ceremony in Salem, Ore.

2006 Elections and Years of Grassroots Work Credited with Surge in Protections

The results of the 2006 election played a pivotal role in four (Colorado, Iowa, New Hampshire and Oregon) of the six states passing nondiscrimination or family protection laws since December, the Task Force said.

Before the November elections, Demo­crats held control of state legislative state legislatures in three of the states taking pro-LGBT action: Vermont, Colo­rado and New Jersey. As a result of the November elections, however, Democrats picked up control of both houses in the other three states: Iowa, Oregon and New Hampshire. Before the elections in Iowa, the Senate was evenly divided and the House was Republican-dominated; in Oregon, Democrats controlled the Senate and Republicans controlled the House; in New Hampshire, both houses were controlled by Republicans. In Colorado, Democrats strengthened their control of the Legislature, and Democratic William Ritter succeeded Republican William Owens, who had twice vetoed the nondiscrimi­nation bill.

The change in control of the state legislatures was due to Democratic gains nationwide, as well as a specific work to elect pro-LGBT state legislators spear­headed by Colorado philanthropist Tim Gill.

“The lesson here? What a difference an election makes?” said Foreman.

In Oregon in 2000, then-House Speaker Karen Minnis was singularly responsible for blocking nondiscrimina­tion of gay and lesbian families in legislation bills. With Democrats taking control of that chamber, Minnis has since lost her leadership position.

Although it took Democratic control to move the bills, each passed with Republican support (although Colorado’s employment nondiscrimination bill passed with only one Republican voting for it).

The Task Force stressed that while the change in party control was an essential factor in moving bills this year, grassroots activists have been pushing a nondiscrimination law for nearly 30 years, and work on the comprehensive domestic partnership law was immediately after the 2006 election. Similarly, the LGBT community in Vermont has been pushing to include protections for transgender people for eight years, and New Hampshire’s civil union law is a direct result of marriage equality organizing by the New Hamp­shire Freedom to Marry Coalition.

“These bills would have never passed without the dogged work of state and local leaders and organizations, and, many, many, many, years,” Foreman said. “Our national community owes them all its respect and gratitude.”

Since Jan. 1, the legislatures of all 50 states have been in session. As of May 8, 29 legislatures remained in session.

Turkmen lesbian receives asylum in U.S.

On May 1, Columbia Law School’s Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic secured asylum for a Turkmen woman who feared persecution in this mostly Muslim country because she is a lesbian and because of her political opinions.

The grant of asylum, issued by the Department of Homeland Security, is believed to be the first-ever issued to a lesbian from Turkmenistan. The woman granted asylum in the U.S. prefers to remain anonymous as she continues to fear persecution of her family members in Turkmenistan.

“This victory is particularly impor­tant because, to our knowledge, it is the first asylum grant to a Turkmen lesbian,” said Professor John S. Stevens, who directs the Clinic. "Advocating on behalf of clients through the Sexuality and Gen­der Law Clinic provides a unique oppor­tunity for Columbia Law students to gain real-world experience in this emerg­ing and important area of the law," she added. "The intensive research and infor­mation about conditions for lesbians and gay men in Turkmenistan means that students on this case is now available to anyone from Turkmenistan seeking asy­lum because of their sexual orientation," she said.

Since January 2007, three students from Columbia Law School’s Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic have provided legal assistance to this woman. The asy­lum seeker was referred to the Clinic by Immigration Equality, a national organi­zation focused on immigration rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgen­der (LGBT) individuals, which provided important assistance in the case as a Clin­ic organizational partner.

“The dedicated work of law students and the support of the New York City’s law school clinics are crucial to Immigra­tion Equality’s Pro Bono Asylum Project. We are very pleased with the excellent and professional work performed by the law students of Columbia Law School’s Sexu­ality and Gender Law Clinic. As the first case of its kind, Immigration Equality was able to collaborate on this sexual orientation based asylum case and we look forward to a continuing partnership that will help more LGBT and HIV-positive immigrants who face persecution around the world find protection in this coun­try,” said Nikki Dryden, Staff Attorney at Immigration Equality.

The students, Marie-Amadie George ’07, Jonathan A. Lieberman ’08 and John Olsen ’08, are “thrilled ” that the process (NewsFronts continues on page 15)
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We are Proud to Underwrite In The Life broadcast on WXXI TV at 11:00 PM, Sunday, June 17th.

Lake Avenue Baptist Church
A WELCOMING & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION Invites You!
10:00 AM:
Sunday morning worship service
11:30 AM:
Class on LGBT liberation theology
Childcare & Sunday School for children are available.

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

PERSONAL

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To The Editor:

May 8, the Virginia Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the Commonwealth of Virginia has no say in a custody dispute that began in Virginia between Janet Jenkins and her former partner Lisa Miller.

This is a major milestone in this case, said Greg Nevins, Senior Staff Attorney in Lambda Legal's Southern Regional Office in Atlanta. "Lisa Miller's attempts to declare herself the sole parent to Isabella have failed, and it is now established that all courts recognize that Janet Jenkins is a parent, and Isabella is the child of two women."

Janet Jenkins (formerly Miller-Jenkins) and Lisa Miller (formerly Miller-Jenkins) were joined in a civil union in Vermont and shortly afterwards had a child. After the women ended their relationship, Miller moved to Virginia with the woman's daughter, and asked a Vermont court to dissolve the couple's civil union and sort custody of the child. When the Vermont court ordered visitation for Jenkins, Miller filed a new lawsuit in Virginia, using that state's bigotry-marriage law to have herself declared the child's sole legal parent.

Virginia's conflicting court orders come one from Vermont ordering regular visitation for Jenkins, and the other from a lower court in Virginia naming Miller the sole parent — led to a decision from the Virginia Court of Appeals reversing the lower Virginia court therefore recognizing Janet's parental status. The May 8 ruling confirms that Virginia courts must respect the ruling from Vermont that Janet is a parent to Isabella.

Throughout the case, Jenkins' legal team argued that the federal Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act and Virginia's Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act make it clear that the Vermont court had jurisdiction in the matter and that the state of Virginia cannot interfere with the existing court orders. Furthermore, the federal Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (PKPA) requires that the Vermont child be returned to Virginia. The Virginia Court of Appeals affirmed that finding.

To The Editor,

George.

Virginia court rejects denial of parenting rights to Vermont lesbian

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used religion to divide rather than unite our nation."

"We must create a world where we can’t help but to reflect on this life and think about all of the families he’s torn apart and teenagers that committed suicide because he made them feel inferior. He never missed an opportunity to kick our brothers to the curb and capitalize on our lesser demons to advance his career."

Falwell began as a segregationist preacher opposed to interracial marriage. As with his opposition to homosexuality, he used the Bible to justify his prejudice and discrimination. In 1958, Falwell gave a segregationist sermon, stating that "The true Negro does not want integration...He realizes his potential is far better among his own race."

When asked why he was not more of a force in the civil rights movement, Falwell replied, "AIDS is the wrath of a just God against homosexuals."

In 1989, Falwell embraced the gay ministry and termed a "cure" for homosexuals. He teamed up with Michael Johnston, son of the Rev. John L. Johnston. The two founded Contra Point, a therapy built by Falwell survives in Kentucky after he allegedly had sexual relations with a minor.

"Jesus" soap takes us down a dark and hilarious path when it comes to understanding the Gospel he claimed to preach. It is with great regret that we take God’s Word as our lesser demons to advance his career."

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"We are deeply saddened that Rev. Falwell did not embrace the radical acceptance and love of the Gospel he claimed to preach. We are especially troubled that his brand of Christianity has hurt so many, divided countless families, and helped to delay and derail progress on basic civil rights."

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Making The Scene

RIBBON CUTTING: Commissioner R. Carlos Carballada and City Council President Lois Geiss cut the ribbon on May 11 at the official opening of Chuck Argento and Gary Hess’s new used furniture store, Serendipity Annex, at 720 N. Winton Rd. Photo: Alex Cobos

DJ Chuck Argento is now also a city business owner. Photo: Susan Jordan

NYS Senator Tom Duane speaking at the mid-day rally. Duane is a sponsor of the marriage equality bill. Photo: Ove Overmyer

EQUALITY & JUSTICE: GAGV Past President Emily Jones with Bob Cook, Legal Counsel to Assemblyman David Gantt, at the Empire State Pride Agenda’s Equality and Justice Day in Albany, May 1. Photo: Ove Overmyer

MOCHA HEALTH FAIR at the Armory on April 21. Left: Louis Lespier, Black Men Latino Men Health Crisis. Right: Jeffery Medford, contractor working with the health community. Photo by Ove Overmyer

Jessica Cohen takes part in the SpeakOut training. Photo: Ove Overmyer

SPEAKERS BUREAU TRAINING: Dave Gaylord and Rich Laisner took part in the “Speak Out” Speakers Bureau training held by Scott Fearing and Jeanne Gainsburg on April 21 and 28. Photo: Ove Overmyer
Duffy Palmer, right, with partner Mark Siwic and Mayor Bob Duffy at the Pride Agenda spring dinner on May 19. Palmer, a former chair of the Pride Agenda board, received the Community Service Award.

Michele Balan, 2006 finalist on “Last Comic Standing,” was emcee for the evening.

Keynote speaker Christine Quinn and Pride Agenda Deputy Executive Director Carmen Vasquez. Quinn is speaker of NYC City Council.

Mary Collins and Chris Wilson. All photos this page by Garnetta Ely

Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan van Capelle. Over 600 attended the dinner.

Duffy receives his award from Will Trinkle and Kay Kakendal of the Pride Agenda Board.
BIG GAY PROM

Friday, June 8, 2007
6–10pm
Robach Community Center
Ontario Beach Park, 1 Beach Avenue
Ticket info: 585-244-8640, ext. 13
$10 Admission, Drug & Alcohol Free
Ages 15–25, Straight allies welcome
ImageOut brings Outing Riley to The Cinema June 28

ImageOut marks Pride Month (June 28 p.m. June 28 at the Cinema with a special screening of “Outing Riley,” a favorite in this year’s LGBT film festival Circuit Fest. Starring Pete Jones (also the film’s writer and director), Nathan Pitch, Michael McDon-ald, and JF Garlin, “Outing Riley” is a comedy about a gay man who has finally decided to come out to his Catholic family. There’s just one problem: he’s afraid to show the film. There’s just one problem: he’s afraid to show the film. Jones says that the story is not to hide your face underneath a towel. For effort the unity back into the word “community”.

THE BIG GAY SKETCH SHOW, or “Big Gay Blah” review

By Michael Steck

If I were handing out grades for a class theatre project I would have to give it an “A” for effort but since I’m not, I’ll give either a “B” for boring or a “U” for unfunny. I’ll start by saying I wanted to like Logo’s new show “The Big Gay Sketch Show” but really I did. I love sketch comedy. I love comedy period. Well, let me edit that last one a bit: I love funny comedy. There is a difference between comedy and funny. This show is not the latter.

The Big Gay Sketch Show premiered April 24 on Logo the MTV owned, all gay network. (and if you didn’t know that that’s a show that was basically not funny. The potential is there despite skits like the horrendous The Honeymooners with a gay twist or a painful faux tragic parody. Perhaps it’s the direc- tion that needs some tweaking and most definitely the writing. I’ll still hold out some hope that they can pull it together and make something out of this show before it lands in the pile of forgotten television shows.

The hit-or-miss-funny Madison & Grace, seen in our scene, in a small beach balls. Sample some savory warm-water treats at our dip-ping station, or fill up at the sundae bar. There will also be a cash bar featuring beer, wine, soda and frozen drinks.

Capacity is limited. Tickets are $10 in advance and at the door. For advance tickets, call the ImageOut office at 271-2640, or visit one of our outlets: Outlandish Video and Gifts, 274 N. Goodman St. Equalis Grounds, 750 South Ave.

For more information, visit www.ImageOut.org, or call (585) 271-2640.

The Big Gay Sketch Show.

The Honeymooners

Of course I honestly doesn’t cost anything to actually be funny. Of course, we are con-
tantly reminded when there are funny parts in the show by the dreadful laughter they seem to elicit. The potential is there, I have not given this show a “C” which I thought at this point was generous.

Who’s to blame for this lack-luster show? Rosie O’Donnell as one of its execu-
tive producers and features some up and coming gay comedians, including Oscar Steck, also known as “The Gay Pimp,” scooping the internet hit “Soccer Princess” (she is also probably the funniest person on the show save for the relatively unknown Nick Paolone). So with all that it seemed to offer I waited patient-ly for the debut. Then while watching the previous DVD I was given, I also waited. I waited for it to be funny. I kept waiting. I even tuned in to see an episode not on my advance copy, I was still waiting.

To say that this show is not funny would be an understa-
ment. It’s like watching a high school improv troupe have their first public show, complete with bad wigs, low budget sets and that embarrassed for them” got feeling you get when you want to hide your face underneath your shirt. OK, so maybe I’m being a tad harsh. The big screen that display different scenes, instead of actually building sets, actu-
ally seemed innovative to me at first. This show obviously doesn’t have a huge budget and

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tantly reminded when there are funny parts in the show by the dreadful laughter they seem to elicit. The potential is there, I have not given this show a “C” which I thought at this point was generous.

Who’s to blame for this lack-luster show? Rosie O’Donnell as one of its execu-
tive producers and features some up and coming gay comedians, including Oscar Steck, also known as “The Gay Pimp,” scooping the internet hit “Soccer Princess” (she is also probably the funniest person on the show save for the relatively unknown Nick Paolone). So with all that it seemed to offer I waited patient-ly for the debut. Then while watching the previous DVD I was given, I also waited. I waited for it to be funny. I kept waiting. I even tuned in to see an episode not on my advance copy, I was still waiting.

To say that this show is not funny would be an understa-
ment. It’s like watching a high school improv troupe have their first public show, complete with bad wigs, low budget sets and that embarrassed for them” got feeling you get when you want to hide your face underneath your shirt. OK, so maybe I’m being a tad harsh. The big screen that display different scenes, instead of actually building sets, actu-
ally seemed innovative to me at first. This show obviously doesn’t have a huge budget and
Coming up for Summer 2007

NYC's Fresh Fruit Fest in July celebrates LGBT theatre, art and jazz

The Fresh Fruit Festival, an annual international multi-genre celebration of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender Art & Culture, enters its fifth year July 9-July 23. It will be a festival year of jugglers, jazz, a bevy of international performance artists, a night of drag at Gotham Comedy Club, and lots of serious theater.

This five-year-old celebration has always included a diverse array of national and international creativity. Over its short history Fresh Fruit has been host to theater and performance pieces that have later received GLAAD, OOBIE and SummerTalkin' Broadway Summer Festival Awards, often before going on to even more lucrative commercial runs in New York and Chicago.

The festival was created by All Our Arts, a group of LGBT activists and artists who wanted to offer something more meaningful for and about their community than a cookie cutter rendition of gay theater. As activists they saw the arts as a mechanism to counter homophobia, as artists they sought to empower LGBT arts and artists. Both artists and activists saw The Fresh Fruit Festival as a celebration of the LGBT community's long and extraordinary contribution to art and culture, a contribution that is seldom honored.

This year's performers arrive from Canada, England, Germany and Kuwait and this year's events include a media event at Joe's Pub honoring LGBT jazz greats and benefitting the jazz musicians of New Orleans, through the American Foundation of Jazz, "Fund for New Orleans Musicians." It will be curated by Romero Smith, artistic director of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Under The Pink Carpet's Clever Honey. An evening of laughter with LGBT comics at Gotham Comedy Club will top off the festival.

Below is a listing of events. More information can be found on www.freshfruitfestival.com.

Ticket: Joe's Pub: 212-367-9000; 425 Lafayette St. NYC 10003; Gotham Comedy Club: 212-367-9000; 203 W. 23rd St. NYC 10011; Cherry Lane: Theatermania 212-352-3102, 38 Commerce St. NYC 10014.

A Benefit For The Fresh Fruit Festival and The Jazz Foundation of America's "Fund for New Orleans Musicians."

CAN'T PROVE IT ON ME: Celebrating 25 years of writing, performing, Bisexual and Transgender Jazz Greats Billy Strayhorn, Tessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Billy Tipton and Sun Ra are just a few of the LGBT community's jazz greats. Rome Neal, the multi-talented Artistic Director of Nuyorican Poets Cafe and professional Jazzer, curates a full throttle tribute to LGBT jazz greats of jazz, art and dance. Rome will be joined by singer BurtisPhi, bass player Linda O, pianist Justine Lamour and tap dancer Lorraine Goodman as well as all an women's band. Celebrate LGBT jazz with Nuyorican Poets Cafe and the New Orleans Musician's Fund of the Jazz Foundation of America. Monday July 9 at 8 p.m. at The Gotham Comedy Club, 23rd St. NYC 10011. Admission: $25. $20 V.I.P. $20 seniors and students. 212-967-7555.

SLAM POETRY SHOWCASE, curated by Janice "Cookie" Pemberton, is an evening of poetry that comes up and bleeds you. LGBTQ poets sing out. Featured in this event are poets Arlene Berdof, Chicago native and finalist in both the Buschwerger Poetry Slam and the Gothenburg Brown Open Mike Awards, Ainsley Drew, writer for GONY Magazine, artistic poet LeShawn Lovell and Christopher Lee. Tuesday July 10 at 7 p.m. at The Cherry Lane Theater: 38 Commerce St. NYC 10014. $20. Theatermania 212-352-3102.

VOYAGE D'UNE JONGLEUSE: Journey of a Female Juggler, performed and written by Miha akla Meden Fromm. Comedya, Hula Hoops, and Magic create a wonder world for audiences. With her unique blend of skill, beauty and visual artistry, this German-born performer moves beyond standard presentation to bring a Cirque-like visual experience to her show. Be astounded and delighted by an evening of visual delight, remarkable skill, humor and joy. Wednesday July 11 at 8 p.m. - Thursday July 12 at 6 p.m. at The Cherry Lane Theater: 38 Commerce St. NYC 10014. $20. Theatermania 212-352-3102.

THE ART OF DRAG: Drag Goddesses and host of Cable TV's Under The Pink Carpet. Clover Honey, hosts an evening of drag offerings in this one-of-a-kind town. Come enjoy the sparkle, freedom and fun only glitter, sequins and a new dress can bring. Wednesday July 11 at 9:30 p.m. at The Cherry Lane Theater: 38 Commerce St. NYC 10014. For Tickets: Theatermania 212-352-3102. Tickets $5.

Fresh Fruit in conjunction with Homo Comics presents GOING BANANAS! Time for a good laugh! Spent a night with the funniest Lesbian,Gay, Bisexual and Transgender comics in New York at the best comedy club in the city. Hosted by the inimitable Murray Hill. Robert Montgomery produces Homo Comics at the Gotham Comedy Club has selected the funniest LGBT comics he knows to help you laugh your cares away. The fruitiest of fun evenings. Thursday July 12 at 7 p.m. at The Gotham Comedy Club, 203 W. 23rd St. NYC 10011. For Tickets: 212-367-9000. $15 Admission, two drink minimum.

DEBUTANTE BALLS: Written and performed by Scott Turner Schofield. This Atlanta based transgender artist named a Young trans Hero by Her Ade­squate, had many comings-out over the years at 16 as a lesbian, at 18 as a radical feminist, at 21 as a transgender man. Debutante Balls is a comedic look at coming of age and coming out as a queer white Southern belle. Scott uses his personal experiences as a southern girl to highlight the challenging and often hilarious issues of gender, sexuality, race and class inside the "silk wall papered halls of High Society." To answer the question what does happen when a deb­utante comes out feminist? Or when a lesbian turns transgender? And what is a debutante and how and why do they ball? Thursday July 12 at 8 p.m. - Friday July 13 at 10 p.m. at The Cherry Lane Theater: 38 Commerce St. NYC 10014. For Tickets: Theatermania 212-352-3102. Tickets $20 Admission.

WHAT DO MEN WANT? An evening of two short plays that ask this burning and often hilarious question.

Lay Down and Love Me Again, written and performed by James Howell, makes its American Premiere at the 2007 Fresh Fruit Festival. It has been present­ed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, in Paris, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Paris, Brighton and Dublin. His work has been called "utterly magnetic" by Howard Pet­tray. Ken, a gay man, who wants to perform a show but can't seem to get out of his bedroom! There in his bedroom, Ken tells stories about his family, his ambitions and dashed dreams; stories filled with irony, wit and non-politically correct absurdity. Through Ken, John Howell becomes a post-modern every­man with a story to tell. What Do Men Want at The Cherry Lane Theater: 38 Commerce St. NYC 10014. For Tickets: Theatermania 212-352-3102 Tickets $25.

MONROE BOUND by Lucille Scott. Lexington Monroe is a lesbian but not to her family. Lexington's secret is her sexu­ality: her father has his own secrets in a play that explores the idea and experience of "coming out" in various formats and the effects of secrecy on how and who we love. Saturday July 14 at 8:30 p.m. at The Cherry Lane Theater: 38 Commerce St. NYC 10014. For Tickets: Theatermania 212-352-3102. Tickets $25.

THE LONG RIDE HOME by Robert Compers follows one gay couple at three different points in their lives in this study of first love, lost love, second chances and regret. We first meet the lovers in their mid-twenties and move with
them into their early 40s, following the paths that their relationship styles. This study shows that a single adult relationships will touch anyone who has ever been in love. Friday July 20 at 9 p.m. at The Cherry Lane Theater. Friday July 22 at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. at The Cherry Lane Theater. 38 Commerce St. NYC 10014. For Tickets Theatertopia 212-352-3102. Tickets. $25.

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352-3102. Tickets. $25.

THE CHERRY LANE THEATER 38 COMMERCER STREET NEW YORK, N.Y. 10014

version at its most political and winning critical acclaim and thrilling gay celebration, marks shadings. Friday July 21 at 8:30 p.m. at The Cherry Lane Theater. 38 Commerce St. NYC 10014. For Tickets Theatertopia 212-352-3102. Tickets. $25.

Also on Sunday, at the corner of Berri W. and Staulieu, huis drag queen will be the highlight of a spicy Latin music, and drag performing, as the event formed known as Cachando, la noche Latina becomes Cachando, la fiesta Latina.

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The first day, starting at 3 p.m., the new Berri South stage will sitze highlights of Moe Bertan's portrayal of Latinas, as shown at the Grand Bal disco featuring Patsy Gallant and guests. At the cherry Lane theater, dates: 5, boulevard des reves, returns Thursday, Aug. 2, with some of Quebec's most acclaimed and popular musicians.

Finally, four decadent shindigs will carry the festivities well into the wee hours of Monday, July 2. On Saturday July 2, a new event called Port Senneque will bring a secret show and special event to the National. If you wish that night: Louisebombe is back at the Just for Laughs Museum! On Sunday, July 3, the new Divers/Cite Party will take place, followed by the Divers/Cite Ball. With crowds of festivite-guers overcome by dance floor fever, this closing party is always a night to remember.

Toronto Pride Week will feature Prism parties

Toronto Pride Week is June 17 to 23. The official street party, which draws a million participants and spectators, the party events of Prism weekend, and official parties, say, will be bigger than ever this year.

SUGA-POP (Kick-Off Party) is Thursday and Friday June 19 and 20 ($10) at the Amsterdam. Suggested Drink Dress Code: Groovy.

THE LOVE SEE N (The SEEN continued from page 1) our essential juice, we must go through the luster of the sleek black Holy Grail, the bartender. I liken a bartender to a saint at times for what they have to deal with on a daily basis their main source of income. The lights, the quarter tips (who doesn't know you should ALWAYS tip your bar tender), the saving graces for some one who not only knows how to pour a mean cocktail but can do it all through a smiling and an amiable presence and attitude. Only a few names come to mind when I think of bartenders who fit that bill and one of that is Terry Bentley.

"I really enjoy meeting new people and hearing some of the stories I hear while working," said Terry. "It's greeting people that has helped me be more outgoing and comfortable with myself. I had the hardest thing meeting new people before I got into drag without talking up to someone and saying, "Hi, I'm Terry. I always had this shy side to myself. As a bartender, I have to put myself out there and make people feel welcomed."

After graduating from Royalton-Hart- land Central School in Middlebury, Vt., Terry was welcomed into the city of Rochester when he attended Rochester Institute of Technology in 1992, pursuing a Bachelor Degree in Food and Hotel Management. He was the first of his family to go to college. He'd always been welcomed into the Rochester gay community when one of his R.I.T. friends asked him to go see his boyfriend perform in a show.

We walked into the Saint, that was located on St. Paul Street, and found Terry. "As we stood there for a few minutes I was like OK... Where is your boyfriend? Have you seen him?" I said. "He said he was over there," I knew drag queens, "Oh he's over there." As I looked over there was a woman standing there, said, "No seriously he's a drag queen." That was my first time meeting Heather Sky, I knew drag queens existed, watching movies and all, but not seeing in person they threw me into a time warp.

Gulp! All the gay culture down in one big swallow, shortly afterwards he had his first venture into a leather bar: The Bachelor Forum, a place he has now been working at since the mid-minutes when he started working behind the bar. Terry works at the Bachelor Forum, a place he has now been working at since the mid-minutes when he started working behind the bar.

"My first experience at the Bachelor Forum, the leather? Hey bar, totally scared out of my mind with Terry said. Especially my first Bar Night experience, wall to wall men dressed in leathers, guys kick... This was a whole new world for me of being gay to me. I got my education fast going from one end of the gay spectrum to the other."

Though the Forum is not exclusively for the leather crowd, some people with whom the community might be scared by what they've heard or what to expect.

"I hear from a lot of people that they are scared to go into the Forum because it's the leather bar or the bear bar," said Terry. "It's really only that a couple times a month depending on what the themes are for Bar Night and Bear Night and the bar's scheduled events for that month are."

The people that hang out at the Forum are no different than the ones that might hang out somewhere else. It's a sense of being and defining one's self and interest.

Whether it's a bar where the customers wear leather chaps or a bar where the average man is doused in dewberry and wearing high heels, the same problem plagues the both: the "Bad Seed" patrons.

"It can be frustrating, when you get that one customer that is demanding or just right rude to you and oh yeah, tip you crappily," said Terry. "But I love having my backup while working. It's a wonderful sign that says "We have the right to refuse service, to anyone."

The one good thing about annoy- ing customers can be the drama that will inevitably ensue (that is of course unless you are a part of it). Those tales of the habitual drunked and usually obnoxious the stuff that local bar legend is made of.

We had this customer in who was driving some of the customers nuts talking about himself and going on and on," said Terry. "One customer had bad enough, He got up, walked over to the guy and ripped off his toupee and throw it on the floor and began kicking it around as if it were a soccer ball. It was just funny watching the gay chugging after his hair piece and running out the door."

While toasper socio can be fun, Terry finds his interests leading to different sports and activities. "I have been involved with the gay bowling league and I have been their social director," said Terry. "This coming season will be my fifth year folding that position. Just call me Jif McCoy (From The Love SEE N). Be it a bartender or cruise director. Terry has his friendly nature and optimistic attitude, the road of Terry's future life looks as bright as the yellow brick road.

"Growing up I have always had a desire to own my own business, whether it be a restaurant or a bar," Terry said. "I know of my dad's maybe something's that's day's I'm doing it, Can New York State Lottor"

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While Terry waits for his golden ticket, his golden attitude and glittering spirits can be seen at all of the three bars where he bartends. Terry works at the Bachelor Forum Tuesday and Fridays, Saturday and Sunday Happy Hour and every Monday at the Forum. Check out their website at www.bachelorforum.org. He can also be found at the Avenue Pub on Monday nights and The Avenue Pub on other Thursday night. For more information on the Avenue Pub on Monroe Ave call (585) 244-5600. Terry is also now the new co-owner for the Cockatrice Cocktail Lounge on Liberty Pole Way. For more information on Tara Cocktail Lounge call (585) 232-4719.

Every Now & Then Ten Questions for Terry Bentley

What is your favorite sweet/saucy word Puck (The SEEN continued on page 4)
If you could say one thing to a childhood nemesis now, what would it be?

Ooohhh, the years have not been kind to you have they?

If you could go back in time and see your younger self, what piece of advice would you tell him: Get the makeover for your younger self, what piece of advice would it be? And would you do anything differently?

What is the least favorite or most embarrassing bar moment: Getting embarrassed bar moment: Getting whatever happened to you?

What would you like to do or say to Paris Hilton if you were in a room alone with her. Ok, so, you are being a jerk, go to jail do not pass go and do not collect $200!

Favorite Movie: Whatever Happened, to Baby Jane?

Favorite Expression: WHAM!

Do you believe in aliens? I know quite a few of them.

Empire State Roar season starts Aug. 18

By Jennie A. Bowker

The tough-as-nails gridiron women of the Empire State Roar didn't wait for nice, comfortable weather to break, in order to show up on their practice fields.

In Rochester, Syracuse and Albany, dressing sweat, gloves and knit caps, they have already slugged through the mud and wet grass to run sprints, do push-ups and learn way too many play formations — all to pursue their championship dreams.

With 40 some players' footwork being perfected around agility cones, over ladders and through blocking and running drills, the third-year WPFL team's efforts are preparing the Roar for a daunting yet exciting 2007 season.

Roar's opponents have substantially changed this year. The women will not only go up against their longtime rival, the Connecticut Cyclones, but also will face two brand-new teams, and a highly regarded but never-before-faced San Diego team, the Southern California Scorpions. The two rookie teams new to the Roar's schedule are the New Jersey Titans and the Kentucky Valkyries.

The schedule itself starts a few weeks later than in the past, turning the WPFL into essentially a fall league. The Roar's first game is scheduled on Aug. 19, when it faces Connecticut at home. Home field location(s) are yet to be announced.

The team is lucky to have a home streak of three in a row; it'll be visited by the Titans on Aug. 25, and the Valkyries on Sept. 1. On Sept. 8, the Roar rests, taking its first bye in a 10-week WPFL regular season.

Post-season wild card games for the WPFL Championship begin Nov. 3.

A pre-season team roster, sponsorship opportunities and latest news are listed at www.thespirestateroar.com, the Women's Professional Football League's official website in at www.womensprofootball.com.

Beware! Danger! DIVA Nation!

By Lee Sheldon

A New Nation is coming. A Nation that will rock your socks off and give you a "wedgie" so tight, you will scream like Freddie Mercury. This is the DIVA Nation! and "inauguration day" is June 16 at 8 p.m. in the Hochstein Music School, 50 N. Plymouth Ave. in Rochester.

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus (40 "hot" men - some in six inch heels and lots of sequins) will present those lovable, hum-able classics made popular by our own beloved Divas. You will hear songs by the likes of Cher, Gloria, Bette, Judy, Liza, Aretha, Diana, Whitney, Collins, Barbra and Tina. I know I don't need the last names for these wonderful women, the singing icons of our community and our dance clubs.

You will also be enthralled by our nation's Cabinet: our founding father, Nick Williams conducting his last RGMC concert; the secretary for key-board wizardry, Tim Schramm; song settings by our small group, the Cosmopolitans and some dancing tspersichord by our own Rochlettes (who's understands we are doing numbers Hey, Big Spender and RuPaul's Supermodel. "You better work it, girl!")

So listen up, tap your feet and clap your hands to "I Will Survive, Believe, The Rose, a Madonna Medley, Cabaret, I Wanna Dance With Somebody and many others. We pledge to our constituents a roaring night of glitz and glamour, drag queens and feather boa. This is one party you don't have to vote for, you just have to attend.

Advance sale tickets are $15, students/seniors $12 or, $18 and students/seniors $12 at the door. Tickets are available at Pittsford, Outlandish, The Creator's Hands, Common Grounds, online at www.thergmc.org, or from any choirmate.

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The Empire State Roar's season has changed from spring to fall. Photo: Jennie A. Bowker
Growing Up SNAP!

By Eric Bellman

It's going to be a great Saturday. A beautiful summer day. I'm up early,eggs, the air is hot and dry. It's the kind of spring day in Manhattan that fills me with a bit of nostalgia and excitement. I can't wait to get going. The cat is fed, the plants watered, bystanders at the feeder, my morning tasks are done. I sit out the door, light a cigarette. I love Chelsea.

Despite the gay migration north to Hell's Kitchen, where rents are cheaper, in my book Chelsea is still the epicenter of the good life. After six consecutive weekend holding hands, Muscle man strolling with teenagup dogs. Baby carriages are the new window displays. Rainbow flags, fliers for club events, two serious weekly gay newspapers, everything, yes, yes, of course, yes. In fact, natural, might I even say normal?

What's taken for granted here, what's been forced on a long time? No, you can hear the music, a toning. I bless even focus on the gay stuff as much now that I am here so often. Last week we gave a bra to a bumps in a barbershop on 9th Avenue where I was the only Anglo. I got to the point where when I walked up the block I didn't even notice the hole-in-the-wall-Hispanic restaurants where everyone seems to speak only Spanish.

I shop for clothes in the stretch of thrift shops on 17th Street. If I stop and think a bit, I say what would I use to think of queer-phobia gay life is in fact integrated into the city. I don't feel any separation. This is what turns me on in the city.

I have a list of destinations, things I want to do for a long time: eat at a fantastic restaurant, see a movie, a tone, a blessing. I don't even focus on the gay stuff as much now that I am here so often. Last week we gave away a bra to a bunch in a barbershop on 9th Avenue where I was the only Anglo. I got to the point where when I walked up the block I didn't even notice the hole-in-the-wall-Hispanic restaurants where everyone seems to speak only Spanish.

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I shop for clothes in the stretch of thrift shops on 17th Street. If I stop and think a bit, I say what would I use to think of queer-phobia gay life is in fact integrated into the city. I don't feel any separation. This is what turns me on in the city.

I have a list of destinations, things I want to do for a long time: eat at a fantastic restaurant, see a movie, a tone, a blessing. I don't even focus on the gay stuff as much now that I am here so often. Last week we gave away a bra to a bunch in a barbershop on 9th Avenue where I was the only Anglo. I got to the point where when I walked up the block I didn't even notice the hole-in-the-wall-Hispanic restaurants where everyone seems to speak only Spanish.
Gown and I are not satisfied with a domestic partnership, a pseudo-permission slip that costs twenty dollars and earns zero rights. But, just in case some-one needed to be convinced that I and my wife-womyn seriously intend to be married in spirit and in deed, we did register a Domestic Partnership. We were #25, issued in 2004, pursuant to Chapter 47B of the Code of the City of Rochester.

When I read the document, I noticed that the city was quite willing to accept the spirit of marriage between two consenting taxpayers. (It wasn’t willing to brave the civil rights maelstrom. Shame on them... denying civil rights in the very city that bears the legacy of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Doug-las.) They captured the spirit of marriage; the declarations printed on this city document echo the vows exchanged in many sacred ceremonies. Although I read these words of the Domestic Partnership: "The individuals are committed to the physical, emotional, and financial care and support of each other," I heard... in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer.

Next I read Chapter 47B agreement #5: "the individuals intend to continue to live together." I recognized that the business language meant the same thing as the church’s ancient wording... Until death do us part.

The city code clarified its commitment to area citizens. The depth and breadth of the City of Rochester’s commitment expectation...#11: the religious organizations can create social change. How odious that we, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, intersex, queer neighbors, are treated like second class citizens, allowed to buy a mere certificate but not a powerful license. How sad that this disparity, this blatant discrimination persists in our country. I wonder. Is there no end? Will this administration and the ignorant decide that we LGBTQ humans will have to drink out of water fountains labeled “homo only”? Will the government and the ignorant resolve that we LGBTQ people will have to sit in the back of the bus?

Actually, Gown and I must prepare to drive the bus.

MeredithElizabethReiniger@Frontier.net

Conundrums

WORKPLACE ACCOUNTABILITY: WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Ove Overmyer

Most informed people believe that discrimination of any kind is unacceptable.

I also believe that the power of working together in collaborative force can create social change and improve the lives of all us who call New York home. Building social coalitions and reciprocity within these groups must flourish if we want progress to continue.

For the past 30 years, the GAGV has worked with hundreds of organizations to provide critical services and programs to area citizens. The depth and breadth of services enabled by these partnerships is truly amazing. As individuals and as a community, we are all most certainly better off as a result. Think of how lucky the Rochester community is because of our ability to share and document our lives through The Empty Closet newspaper.

As you know, our beloved agency has been asking others to include sexual ori-entation as part of their nondiscrimination policies because there are no federal protections for such employees at this time. Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese joined with Reps. Barney Frank, D-Mass.; Deborah Pryce, R-Ohio; Tammy Baldwin, D-Wisc.; and Chris Shays, R-Conn., to introduce the bipartisan Employment Non-Discrimi-nation Act in the U.S. House of Representa-tives last April. The bill, ENDA, would address discrimination in the workplace by making it illegal for an employer to refuse to hire or fire an employee based on the person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. As a result of this bill maturing over time, many organizations have changed their internal policies. For some, it was an easy change because their boards felt it was not only the right thing to do, but was an action long overdue. For other organizations, it still is a difficult process, and they realize a need to call on board members to look deep within their personal value systems to make the right decision.

We appreciate and applaud the actions of those boards that ultimately have decided to recognize sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination policies. However, we still have a long way to go. Many of us who work in the pub-lic sector, who are bound to mandatory these rights and this status unconditionally.

Now, gay activism needs to take workplace nondiscrimination to a higher register. This year and for years to come, we should be taking a stronger look at where organizations stand — and act — on the topic of equality.

You should not support or buy products from unfriendly companies. You should confront your employer. For that matter, look at your own reflection in the mirror and ask yourself, “Have I had enough of second class citizen-ship?”

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the term equal as: “Having the same privileges, status or rights.” And “Impartial; just; equitable.” Every worker and consumer should be evaluating ways in which your organization implements this concept among various internal and external functions, with particular attention on the staff, board of directors, clients and vendors.

For instance, consider such questions for your employer:

Do you provide equal benefits to all staff? Do you have a diverse staff and board composition? Do you have a “champion” who advocates for workplace equality, participates in the hiring process and HR practices, and acts as a resource for issues related to equality?

Are you willing to participate in training that increases your staff and board’s cultural competencies? Do your organization offer programs that help promote equality for all people? Do the vendors and suppliers you use also have nondiscrimination policies, and do they hire diverse people?

Equal treatment of all people is a critical component of many social movements. Making positive change to improve working conditions for all Americans must be a priority for the labor community as well. Until we all make the decision to change a critical aspect of our consum-er-based working lives, we ultimately may never see true equality in our life-time.

Of course, our destiny is left up to you and your willingness to make that change. Peace.

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Andy's Two Cents
THE DOUBLE CLOSET

By Andres Fernandez

When I was a little boy in Cuba, I opened my closet door only once and slammed it shut again. At school we were playing a game similar to "London Bridge." When my turn came to take the hand of the girl across from me, I did what came naturally for me — I grabbed the hand of the boy next to me. I found myself in a tug of war with my friends. Fists went flying and pandemonium reigned. It was the first actual manifestation of the homophobia that I sensed vaguely as an eight-year-old. That experience taught me to keep my closet door shut. I did for another 50 years.

"Oh no, here we go again with another coming out story!" You might say that. And you'd be half right. It's a double coming out story.

Shortly after that experience I found myself building another closet, one that might surprise anyone who is 40 years old or younger. I know that because every time I've told this story to someone in that age range they look at me suspiciously and ask why I had to do such a thing. Since the Civil Rights gains of the '60s, for example, at least they know what I was referring to. The answer to that one was: "Yes. I read his lines in an 'I Love Lucy' script once. He read as a very nice man." Little did people know that I came from a white father and a mother of mixed races; my maternal grandmother was Italian and my maternal grandfather was Spanish. This process of assimilating was commonplace. I remember many older Cubans and other Latin Americans in New York City who led less or more covert lives to blend into the fabric of American society. Because of these accidents of genetics I too was able to assimilate into American society. Like the children of most immigrants since the advent of television, I too learned to watch movies and TV shows to learn how to be an American and used Cary Grant as my model and mentor. Not that I poked fun at him (he was English anyway), but I certainly picked up more than a few normal American quirks and worked on my accent. It wasn't an unpleasant task after all, and still do, have the turns for the man — and I didn't even know he was gay at the time!

In spite of the times changing, I found myself keeping my closets tidied and organized. Coordinating my gay frocks and Cuban guayaberas. I somehow knew that someday I would need to take them out, fluff them up and show them off. It took me until the 1980s before I took out my guayaberas lined of course. By the '70s I had achieved the assimilation milestone. I had put on the mantle of American culture over my shoulders, learned to speak like a native and moved into the suburbs with my American wife. The marriage was valid in terms of love, respect and friendship. My struggle was unique for me in general in the closet. I succeeded. There were no men in my life during my marriage. The other part of my struggle was to maintain the appearance of an attentive husband. I cared for my ex wife as a friend which we were even before we married. That still continues, for which I'm grateful to her. We have two great children and I'm a grandfather.

The end of my charade came on October 3, 1997. The dour, depressed mid-aged man became an adolescent again! I burst out of the shoe box on the back of the top shelf of my gay closet feeling like I was a size 5, Italian, sling-back, stiletto-heel bomb shell OK, it should be "Cuban," but we don't make stiletto-heel shoes in Cuba. The double closet that I built in my youth kept me from many experiences for which I can only partially make up. It made me into a culturally different person than I would have been. It also provided me with two bonfires piloted out by my friends who have lived exclusively gay lives. At my age I escaped the scourge of HIV and I have children. I am grateful for that.

Now life would be complete if we all could share the protection afforded to all marginalized people. Not only the inclusion of Sexual Orientation in the Civil Rights Act, but also the reality of living with the protection it affords.

Only one thing remains. Find that perfect place and facilitates the Gay Life Support Group. Andres Fernandez is retired from the NYSDP. He is a counselor and facilitator of the Gay Life Support Group, aferand@gmail.com.

A Few Bricks Short
MAULED AT THE MALL

By David Hall

My parents, Bernie is not "into" the mall. He just doesn't get it. He's shopping for something from Macys, then he parks outside of Macys, gets what he needs and goes back out to the car. What the heck is that all about?

How can you even consider it a trip to the mall if you don't stop at a shoe store or a book shop or even a pretzel kiosk?

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JUNE 2007 • NUMBER 402 • GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESEE VALLEY • THE EMPTY CLOSET B 7
Needles to say, other than Christmas shopping, Bernie and I rarely go to the mall together. You see to me, the mall is like gay church. It's loud, it's splashing and when a store has a big sale and I find the item in my size, I do feel the presence of God.

Two of my female friends, who shall remain nameless to protect their identity, share my love of the shallow, material world of the shopping mall. Since their husbands are not 'into' the mall either, the two of us usually go together and spend the day shopping until we feel like dropping.

Not long ago we all took a vacation day from work and went on a trip to the mall. We decided to meet early for coffee and then do some shopping and have lunch. Then do some more shopping.

She said as she headed for the cash register. She flipped through books looking at photos and her magazine. She can help us.

As we walked away I looked back at her on the desk. The woman was reeling and her head. "We're leaving!" said my friend grabbing her head. "Thank you," she called to the information woman, "I'm going to have a tough time making this out.

I stepped up to the desk where the woman was seated. "You don't understand. We just wanted to ask about..." The woman straightened up and put her finger in her face. "I'm looking for my son-in-law's birthday." "I'll suggest. "If you want it to look nice, you might want to get rid of that 79 percent off sale tag on the front."

"It's a sticker. I'll just peel that off before I wrap the book," she wavered her hand and said, "But I can't fix this crumpled plastic on the back. I wonder if they'd just let me trade it for another copy?"

"We went back to the sale table, found another copy of the same book with the sealed plastic in excellent shape and headed for the cash register to ask if we could exchange it with the damaged copy.

At the register, the line of customers waiting to check out stretched halfway across the store. My friend had already waited in that line once, she didn't want to go through it again.

"Hey," I said, pointing to the front of the store, "That's the information desk over there and the woman is just sitting at it reading. She can help us."

The woman behind the desk glanced up at us as we approached her. "Excuse me," said my friend, "I had a question about a book I just bought. You see, the back was all crumpled and..."

"No," interrupted the woman, shaking her head, "I don't do sales. I'm just information." She looked back down at her magazine.

"Oh, not a sale," my friend tried to explain. "You see, I bought this as a gift and I just wanted to switch books because..."

"Go to the register," the woman replied sternly without looking up. "I'm just information."

My friend gave me a frustrated look. I suspected that she just hadn't made herself clear to this woman. All we wanted was information about switching the books. I decided to give it a try myself.

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The American Medical Association Alliance (AMAA) and the American Legacy Foundation have urged the MPAA to rate any new movie with smoking R, an evidence-based policy solution that would reduce youth exposure to film smoking. If it weren’t for the fact that I had a lit cigarette dangling from my mouth while reading this, you would have thought that the smoke was coming from my ears.

Now those of you who know me are probably thinking, “Poor Robby, you’re getting all worked up because the world is dosing in on your dirty little habit.” I admit I smoke. I’m neither proud of this, nor am I ashamed. Kind of like my penchant for dating guys that aren’t necessarily gay, more hetero-flexible good, bad, and indifferent is part of who I am right now. No, I’m much more concerned about the larger theme presented here.

I’m extremely bothered by the idea that the MPAA is being encouraged and is taking even more authority to judge, label, and essentially censor films. And let’s not pretend that that’s not what they are doing. While I agree that a rating system is a useful tool to point out content and themes of a work, I believe there is a huge difference between pointing out that, for example, TransAmerica contains language and themes that are of an adult nature, as opposed to TransAmerica, should not be seen by anyone under the age of 17.

Imparting useful information, good! Seemingly to make a decision for me, bad! Real bad. And let’s be honest. We all know that the MPAA’s guidelines for making their decisions are flawed and often appear hypocritical. Tits, ass, and beaver are OK. Dick is not. Blowing shit up and glorifying violence is OK. Honest portrayals of sexuality are not. It’s ridiculous and, to use a word I’ve been using a lot lately, arbitrary. Check out the documentary This Film Is Not Yet Rated by filmmaker Kirby Dick if you need more enlightening.

Now groups like the AMAA want to throw their two cents in. It makes my head hurt. I can see them growing up. I didn’t see people in the movie smoking and go, “Hmmm….that looks cool! I’m gonna be a rebel and smoke, too!” I thought Batman was cool, but I didn’t try to emulate him either (Batgirl was more my style, personally). And even if I did, I think my parents, especially my Mother, would take issue with the MPAA, the AMAA, the CIA or whatever hell blah-blah-blah AA trying to stop me and be my parent. Where were they during the 37 hours of labor and the episiotomy, she’d probably be interesting in knowing! Unfortunately, that’s the kind of climate that the world we live in. Apparently we all need Big Brother to guide us through life because we can’t be trusted to fuck it up enough on our own.

In truth, all of this is just another example, a metaphor if you will, of the battle personal rights continue to face. I’m just so irritated with the alarming number of recurring cases of imposing boundaries, limitations, and regulations on things that don’t really need these.

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Please note that the content of this text is a continuation of the column from the previous page. The full content is as follows:

...the truth is that there is nothing noble in being superior to somebody else. The only real nobility is in being superior to your former self...

—Whitney Young Civil Rights Leader (1921-1971)

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lic restrooms, and highway rest stops) is
integrity, and thought continue to be
men should not only be able to come out
that gay culture used to be so closeted
that men HAD to meet in parks but that
anonymous sex, but specifically in
blood or semen). Make good choices.
PHYSICAL: Whenever you're having
anonymous sex, but specifically in
transmitted orally (like syphilis and
spondom. Don't exchange body fluids (i.e.
Soul & Inspiration
BIRTHDAYS
By Rev. Dr. Sherron King
Have you ever wondered why you do the everyday things in life like celebrate birthdays? I have, maybe because so many people I know have birthdays in May and June (you mine is in June too). Or maybe because a woman that I respected and admired, Loretta King, passed on recently. Or maybe because I am questioning my own mortality and realizing what a gift it is just to wake up each morning.
In trying to figure out why we celebrate birthdays, I have come to realize that the act of celebrating one’s being is one of the oldest celebratory rites, if not the oldest. While the method in which births were recognized has changed, it seems the act of celebrat-
ing this world has remained the same.
For all that I have learned, it seems like ancient astrologers noticed that when the sun was in the same spot in the heavens that it was the day one was born, that person experienced great fortune. I was not that at some point people said, “yes, each year let’s celebrate a person’s birthday, but rather that this same time seemed to be lucky for the same person year after year.” When the planets were aligned in the same manner, that was your lucky day.

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AIDS DIRECTORY
Free testing for HIV is available from New York State Department of Health, call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at 1-844-364-0639 or 585-423-6120 (TTY). New Rapid HIV testing is now available for anyone who wants to know their status. Confidential testing is available at most New York State health facilities by calling 1-800-543-5599.

AIDS Rochester, Inc.
1350 University Ave., Rochester, NY 14607.
Provides confidential testing for HIV positive individuals, their partners, and groups such as families, friends, neighbors, and extended family members. Offers outreach and education programs to prevent HIV transmission and to educate communities about HIV/AIDS. Offers a referral service to other service providers.

AIDS Community Health Center (rachc)
67 N. Clinton Ave., 4th floor. Comprehensive HIV care and medical care for HIV positive individuals, their partners, and their extended families. Offers counseling, social work, support groups, educational programs, and multidisciplinary services.

AIDS Resource Center of Rochester
(ARC)
853 Main St., Rochester 14611.
Provides confidential testing for HIV positive individuals, their partners, and groups such as families, friends, neighbors, and extended family members. Offers a referral service to other service providers.

Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester
(BCCR)
3623 Atlantic Ave, Rochester 14604. Offers drug, social services, education, treatment. Risk Reduction Plus Team offers services to HIV positive and those at risk through substance abuse. Programs include outreach, transitional care management, free confidential testing. Call 1-800-422-0282.

Geneva Community Health
68 W. Washington St., Geneva. Provides HIV testing, specialty and primary care for residents of Ontario and surrounding counties.

GNY Health
Public health department.

Montgomery County Health
Department.

New York State Department of Health
STD Program.

Rochester Community Health Network
(ACHC)
Provides primary care, family planning, substance abuse counseling, and mental health services for all ages. Offers confidential HIV testing.

Rochester Women’s Community Health
Center.

The Center
U,R, Provides year-round training in prevention and health education programs for women. Offers free, confidential counseling every Monday and Thursday. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-422-0282.

The Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester
(BCCR)
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Provides drug, social services, education, treatment. Risk Reduction Plus Team offers services to HIV positive and those at risk through substance abuse. Programs include outreach, transitional care management, free confidential testing. Call 1-800-422-0282.

 Threshold Project
2317 St. Paul St., Suite 300.
Provides pre-test and post-test counseling for HIV/AIDS. Offers confidential testing. TTY: 1-800-543-5599.

Threshold Youth Services
205 Main St., Suite 1.
Provides walk-in HIV testing. Open daily, 24/7.

Townsend Center
3623 Atlantic Ave, Rochester 14604.
Provides confidential testing for HIV positive young people 12-25. Fees on site.

Wendle Breast Center
170 Sawgrass Drive, 442-8342.
Provides mammograms, screening and treatment.
you this upcoming year. You might find you and keep you this and every day.

In the trenches to bring inclusion of LGBTI people into mainstream churches and synagogues. They participate in speaking engagements, lobby for civil rights, write articles for both the Empty Closet and more mainstream papers, and participate in planning for community interfaith services, during Pride week and other times of the year.

If I have been a poor fit, it is because I am not just very "mainstream" in my faith connection. I believe all people need a faith connection and are entitled to it if they desire it, but I do not believe that it always needs to happen within the confines of a church or other organized religion. I want every individual to know that they are perfect exactly as they are, that they are a part of the human family made exactly as they were intended, whether they be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex. And that they are loved by whatever higher power they can conceptualize.

I think the mission of Interfaith Advocates is similar to that, only perhaps a bit more focused. And SO needed now. For so many of the faith traditions they come from, they need to hear in their churches and their synagogues that they are whole and they are loved! That is the mission of Interfaith Advocates. To raise consciousness and to affirm inclusion.

It may seem very insular to concentrate on religious organizations, but the religious organizations of this nation drive the lawmakers and the consciousness of the people far more than we may like to acknowledge. As such, the work that Interfaith Advocates does effects us all, regardless of our personal beliefs.

I have been honored to be a part of that organization for the past two years. I will continue to participate in some capacity. I don't want to withdraw from the community for this opportunity to learn and to grow. My fondest wish is that soon an organization like Interfaith Advocates can be focused on the whole person in their church and their synagogues.

The absolute most important part of achieving female O is being turned on. Some women enjoy vaginal and intercourse. Some don't. Some get off reading erotica or watching porn. Some like to turn on someone. Dorian and get down. Some fantasize about Shane or Bette from The L Word. Learn what makes you hot. Make it a multi-orgasmic femme fetale is a badge of honor for lesbian, bisexual, and queer women. Unfortunately, the available information about female orgasm is often vague and impractical, leaving those that are not having or giving orgasms feeling devalued and demoralized. So here's the scoop. Let's start by making it clear that there is no super special dyke secret to orgasm. Sorry. Every woman has a different way of achieving orgasm and it is unique to her own. Things that turn one woman off may make another woman burning hot. There is no right or wrong way to give or receive. That said, there are a few things that are pretty consistent.

The Golden Gate Bridge is the gift you give yourself. So plan to receive on this day of personal blessing. It is the gift you give yourself. So plan to receive on this day of personal blessing. It is what's the big deal? It helps you fall asleep. It releases tension. It can help relieve menstrual cramps and headaches. It's available to you whether you have a partner or not. Why not try it just once in a while and enjoy the summer weather. And look for more info on healthy sexuality from The Vagina Dialogues next month. Kitty Moran is the Community Affairs Coordinator at Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region (PPRSR). When she isn't visiting campus Queer chapters (PPRSR student advocacy groups), work on public affairs material, or advocate for reproductive rights in Rochester, she enjoys making zesty vegan meals, spending time with her pet cat and rabbit, and writing non-published poetry.

"We want to hear from you! If you have suggestions for a future Vagina Dialogues topic, contact Kitty at kmoran@pp.org. Friend us on MySpace as unzipped, campfire and search for "PPRSR" on facebook.com to join our Facebook group!"
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A Memorable Forgotten Coast

By Merle Estis

An area in the Northwestern Florida Panhandle known as "The Forgotten Coast," set to turn out to be an unforgettable trip and great vacation destination. The secret lies in the white sands, clean beaches, and great seafood, as well as the shrimp and oysters.

I had visited the towns of Apalachicola, St. George Island, Pace, Pensacola Beach, Pass-a-Grille, Perdido Key, and the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, all located between Tallahassee and Panama City. It's what I heard about Apalachicola that drew me to stay for a night.

Apalachicola Bay oysters are purposed to be the best in the world. After indulging in at least six dozen of these culinary delicacies I can truly vouch for their claim to fame. Coming from the monitored rich fresh waters of St. George Sound and St. Vincent Sound, they are plump, fleshy, and tasty, depending upon the time of year.

Oysters are not the only reason for vacating to the Forgotten Coast. There is a full of nature, shops, restaurants and great accommodations.

Back to Apalachicola. Head a few blocks down the road to the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve. Take in exhibits that feature live giant fish tanks. You can venture onto trails into the reserve itself to capture the "flora and fauna." Tour the estuary waters with Captain Gibby Conrad of Apalachicola Estuary Tours (www.apalachicolatours.com) that takes you up the river, through the marsh and deep into the swamps. An estuary is a place where saltwater from the sea mixes with fresh water from a river. Marine animals use the protection of an estuary in their early stages of life. Ospreys are a focal point of the tour as their pair for life and tend to use the same nesting site year to year. The female tests the male to see how well he can provide for the family before he attempts to mate, it's her way or the highway.

Take in a show at the historic Dixie Theatre (www.dixietheatre.com), constructed in 1912 that featured motion picture until 1967 when it was closed and shuttered. In June of 1998 the theatre, after much reconstruction and attempts at duplication, now features plays, concerts and lectures. On-off-kilter, art, antiques, and unique gifts abound in the shops. The shrimp and oysters.

Leaving Apalachicola and heading toward San Blas, Indian Pass, Capt. San Blas and Port St. Joe. as my next destinations. Indian Pass in itself doesn't provide for activities. The location is a little between St. Vincent Island and Cape San Blas.

Captain Gibby Conrad took Road to Happy Ours Kayak. Met owners Debbie and Dan VanVleet. As it was, the weather was perfect for a kayaking trip. The kayaks would have been another "first" for me. The kayaks are made for non-swimmers like myself, complete with life jacket and upright cushioned seat, not the usual ilk. Not a waste of time as I was able to place a live horse and donkey, feed some chickens, and check out www.happyourskayak.com to view the kayaks.

On to the town of Port St. Joe, where the downtown area sports a business district and only a few shops. The main street didn't strike me as being "like this." I checked out www.portstjoecity.com. The 24-foot Carolina Skiff took us out along the gulf and close enough out to get eye-to-eye with some dolphins. Sea turtles, rays, pelicans, sea urchin, starfish, crabs, and sand dollars are common sights. Capt. Alan has other boats for fishing, snorkeling, bird watching and shell collecting as well.

Getting around is not difficult as most places are only a few blocks from the beach and the streets run numerical, with the higher numbers going west. Addresses on Rte. 98 will tell you the cross streets.

Seneca Park is the place to go for Thursdays in September outdoor concerts, as well as the daily viewing of the sunsets. It's not quite the "party" celebration that Key West offers in the way of sunsets, but more like a neighborhood early evening meeting place. Check posters around town for other concerts.

Nightsky really multi revolves around your accommodations and restaurants. If that's not your scene, then head further west to Panama City. Otherwise, just enjoy mingling with the locals and tourists. Everyone is friendly in Panama City.

There are some excellent restaurants to check out, each features their own great tasty fish dip. Keep in mind that you'll find that dining is all about here, so don't expect much in the way of vegetables. Again, it's BTV.

For further information on a coast that you'll remember, visit www.visitflorida.com.
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### Health OUTreach Project of AIDS Rochester

Health OUTreach Project of AIDS Rochester

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Gay Alliance
of the genesee valley
Advocacy at the Gay Alliance

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 people who identify with us can thrive both collectively and separately. We educate and advocate for civil rights for all and for the eradication of homophobia.

Highlights of 2007

- Youth Groups: The GAGV www.gagv.us
  - Youth Groups: Youth Groups:
    - Empty Closet: www.gagv.us
    - Valley

Outreach Program:

Outreach Program: ACTIVIST IN THE MAKING

By Jeanne Gausen, Outreach Coordinator

It was a little tighter than usual in the Outreach Program cubicule on April 26, it was "Bring Your Daughter (or Son) To Work Day" and my 10-year-old daughter, Rebecca, accompanied me to the Gay Alliance administrative office.

I don't know who came up with this idea, but I think it's brilliant. My father left the house every weekday at 8 in the morning and didn't return until 7 p.m., and all I knew about his job was that he worked in NYC and that he was a lawyer. I had no idea what his daily life at work was like. Had I known, I probably would have convinced me that I never wanted to be a lawyer.

This was a conclusion I came to on my own, anyway, but that's another story. Instead of working in NYC and living on a jammed piece of paper, she helped me pack up brochures and flyers for an upcoming presentation at RIT, she heard me make important decisions like what kind of food should be served at the next Speak OUT, and she observed my semi-weekly wrestling match with the copier over a jammed piece of paper.

It has been a long time since most of us have been in fourth grade, so I decided to interview Rebecca about herself, her thoughts on LGBT issues and the political climate in elementary schools in the year 2007.

R: My name is Rebecca. I'm 10 years old. I have a one-year-old cat named Tas and I love horseback riding and playing volleyball.

J: If you get to miss a whole (Activist continues page 2)

Mustet Mentors’ Network: parents and spouses wanted!

By Joanne Gainsburg, Outreach Coordinator

Straight people in her heterosexually-oriented world receive little honest and realistic information about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. No wonder they often feel confused, upset, angry, guilty, and/or worried when a child or spouse comes out to them.

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.

The Gay Alliance would like to build a network of parents and partners who have been through this experience and now find that they are stronger, more understanding people.

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 and help us out with our support network, please call or e-mail Toby (toby@gagv.us) or Jeanne (jeanne@gagv.us) at the Gay Alliance (585-244-8640). Ill

The Anti-Violence Project:

National Coalition Conference

By Alexandra Cohen

The Anti-Violence Project (AVP) once again participated in the annual National Coalition of Anti-Violence Project’s (NCAVP) conference. This year’s conference was hosted by Wingspan’s AVP in (hot!) Tucson, Az. GAGV’s AVP is an NCAVP member and we participate every May.

This year’s conference facilitator was Suzanne Pharr (a hero of mine since college when I read Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism). She really challenged us as anti-violence activists to examine how we as individuals and as a movement continue to oppress others through our work, even inadvertently. The conference is divided into two parts: a few days of a business meeting for NCAVP member agencies, followed by a few days of a training academy on serving LGBT victims and survivors of violence. Tucson had over 70 folks registered just for the Academy! Wingspan did a fantastic job promoting this event, which will now trickle back out of the southern Arizona communities, and reinforce the great work they are doing here.

I look forward to sharing the information and energy I got from this experience with every one back in western New York. I only wish I could bring the weather with me as well.

May 2007 Speaking Engagements:

- By the Gay Alliance Speaker’s Bureau and Staff:
  - Catholic Family Restart Substance Abuse Div. Training - May 2
  - Speak OUT: Successful GLBT Educator Training - May 8
  - T&T Safe Zone Street Safety Workshop - May 9
  - Hillside Staff Training - May 11
  - HIV Vaccine Awareness Day Presentation - May 18

- By the Anti-Violence Programs:
  - Alternatives for Battered Women Wine Tasting - May 10
  - National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects Annual Training Academy - May 19 & 20

June 2007 Speaking Engagements and Presentations

- GAGV Youth Group Big Gay Prom - June 3
- GAGV Annual Meeting - June 20
- Citizenship Meeting - June 6
- Pittsford Suburban H.S. Minority Issues Class, date TBA

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
Youth continued from page 1:

at Ontario Beach Park.
The cost is $10 and all light youth and straight allies ages 15-25 are welcome.
Chaperones are needed, and if you’d like to volunteer your time (and wear a fancy dress or tux) please call me at 244-8640 ext. 13.

We’re also starting to gear up for Pride Week, with our Youth Pride Pageant set for Murtha’s on July 9 from 5-9 p.m., and the Youth Program will once again be selling temporary tattoos, pride bracelets, and other goodies at the Picnic on July 15.

Activist continued from page 1:

day of school today in order to see what the Outreach Coordinator at the Gay Alliance does all day. What do you think about the work that I do?
R: I think it’s interesting. It’s fun to watch. I like listening to what you say on the phone.
J: What’s your favorite thing about visiting the Gay Alliance?
R: I like your cubicle.
J: When people ask you what your mom does for a living, how do you feel about telling them that she works for the Gay Alliance?
R: I’m fine with it. I say, “She’s the Outreach Coordinator for the Gay Alliance.”
J: Do you want to do when you grow up?
R: I want to be a veterinarian.
J: Do most kids your age know what the word “gay” means?
R: Yeah, I think so. At least the kids in my class do.
J: Do you ever talk about it?
R: Sometimes with the fifth graders on the bus.
J: What kinds of conversations do you have?
R: Someone will say something like, “That’s so gay.” And I’ll say, “There’s nothing wrong with being gay. It’s just when two girls or two boys like each other.” That’s usually it. Sometimes somebody agrees with me, but hardly ever. Usually, they just change the subject.
J: Do your teachers ever talk with the kids about this stuff?
R: No.
J: As your mother and shopping partner, I happen to know that right now you are really into wearing “buy” clothes. Does anybody tease you at school about that?
R: No. But my brother does.
J: How do you think kids at school would react if a boy came to school wearing “girl” clothes?
R: They would probably make fun of him if he was wearing a dress. But some boys come to school in pink and they don’t get teased.
J: Do you think that gay people should be allowed to get married?
R: Yes.
J: Why?
R: Because there’s really nothing wrong with it. I mean, how would you like it if you weren’t able to marry someone you really liked?
J: You did such a nice job of organizing your cubicle this morning. How come your room is so messy?
R: Cause it’s not the same. I mean, I choose to do it. It’s not something that I’m supposed to do. So, I guess you should just tell me to keep my room messy.
Standing up to fifth graders on the school bus? Finding pleasure in a messy cubicle? Rebeca deaz, if you ever change your mind about being a vet, I think you’ll make a wonderful civil rights activist.

Although the Gay Alliance Speakers Bureau has not yet been invited into elementary schools to talk with the children about acceptance, name-calling and LGBT issues, we do present at local high schools and colleges. If you are interested in volunteering as a speaker, please contact Juana at 244-8640 ext. 14 or juana@agas.org. The Gay Alliance Speakers Bureau is a mind-opening experience.

The EC is available at...

Aaron’s Alley
Abundance Natural Food Store
ACHC
AIDS Rochester
AMF Terrace Garden Lanes
Anthony Jordan Health Center
A Step Apart
Avenue Pub
Bachelor Forum
Borders Books & Music (Hennierts)
Camelot Coffee Roasters
Cinema Theatre
Clover Lanes
Daniel Ward Salon
Dignity/Integrity
Eastman School
Empire State College
Equal-Grounds/Pride Connection
Family Medicine (Clinton Ave.)
Federation of Social Workers
First Unitarian Church
Genesee Co-op
Genesee Federal Credit Union
Greenwood Books
Hudson Video/News
HIVISTD Clinic (955 W. Main)
Image/Our Film Festival office
Industrial Video
Java
Jewelry Outlet
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Mercury Poster
Men...
Marriage Equality

STATE OF THE UNION

MAKING THE PERSONAL
POLITICAL

By Todd Plank
Legislative Advocates/Field Organizer
NYCLU/CACLW-Western New York

There is a time when I would have felt that it was inap propriate to talk about marriage in a political context. In my first and only marriage (to a woman) the focus was on the religious, familial, and social recognition of my relationship with my wife. Aside from the marriage license, I was not thinking of legal standing or legal recognition by the New York State and the Federal government. My purpose and I could remain blissfully ignorant of our heterosexual and political privilege in the United States of America.

Now that I have spent approximately the same number of years in a committed relationship as a man as I did with a woman, the blindness has come off and I am acutely aware of the unfair and arbitrary distinctions being made by legislators on both sides of the aisle (Democratic and Republican) when it comes to the issue of marriage equality for same-sex couples. Those lawmakers have the luxury of taking their own marital relationships for granted (“If it doesn’t work out, I’ll just get a divorce”) even as they disallow gay and lesbian couples from exercising the basic human right to marry the person they love and whom they have determined they want to spend the rest of their lives with.

Truth be told, marriage is a personal matter (whom I love is nobody else’s business) and it has been hijacked by more than one person that the government should get out of the marriage business altogether. Perhaps don’t will come to this—that indeed or perhaps centuries... maybe millennia from now. All I know is that the demarcation between the religious rite of marriage and the civil right of marriage has, I’m not prepared to wait for long (or at least not in my marriage) since a ghost of a chance of living to see that day... unless you believe in reincarnation.

The other problem that I see with taking the government out of the marriage business is that it is the most adamantly opposed to “same-sex marriage,” albeit largely for religious reasons, and I deeply regret that the gay community has turned to the courts (the courts that they helped to establish) in this battle. The earliest cases in the courts did help to break the ice. We can only move from where we are. The reality is that marriage equality is spreading around the globe and it is a matter of time before we achieve marriage equality.

Would we be better off if we had asked for less when the marriage debate first broke on the scene in the dreary honeymoon destination of Hawaii in 1998? This isn’t “I’m A Wonderful Life,” so we can’t go back and do it differently. Second guessing past decisions or criticizing those members of our movement who have had the courage to stand up and demand their rights at a time when gays hadn’t yet gone mainstream doesn’t help the cause one iota. We can only move from where we are.

Regardless of whether our federal or state government, employer, church/religion or family recognize our relationships, it is my hope that by the time you read this article that we will have amassed enough votes in the NYS Assembly to pass Governor Spitzer’s marriage bill. As of May 27 we had 69 of the required 75 votes to win a majority in the Assembly in this, the first legislative session in which Spitzer’s historic measure was proposed!

Even as we continue to lobby the Assembly and Senate on the Dignity For All Students Act (DASA) and GENDA, we will continue to press our legislators to make good on their ethical duty to deliver equality and justice to loving, committed couples who need and deserve the rights and protections of marriage, regardless of the gender of the parties involved. Exciting progress is already being made. Same-sex couples are getting legally married, having taken a walk down the aisle in neighboring Canada or at home, if they were lucky enough to have tied the knot in Massachusetts between May 17, 2004 and July 6, 2006. (For a detailed explanation of why these Mass. marriages are now recognized in NYS as valid review the Pride Agenda’s press release: Massachusetts Validates Marriages of New York Same-Sex Couples Who Wed Prior to July 6, 2006. See article, page A12.)

The Pride Agenda also recently reported that: “A growing number of public and private entities in New York are recognizing legal out-of-state marriages of same-sex couples.” On April 27, the New York State Department of Civil Rights became the latest entity to do so when it announced that any state or local employee married to a same-sex spouse will now have access to spousal benefits provided through the New York State Health Insurance Plan.”

Who knows, if all goes well, by this time next year I could be mailing out invitations to my official wedding ceremony. There isn’t much time to plan this event, so volunteers who would like to help with the “wedding” planning are welcome to join in the marriage movement.

There is a time...
Groups

BUTCH-FEMME CONNECTION

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

On Saturday, June 9, meet us at Mario's Steakhouse Restaurant on Monroe Avenue in Pittsford at 7 p.m.

On Saturday, June 23, meet us at the Beale Street Cafe's WEBSTER location on Empire Blvd. in Webster on Empire Blvd. headed east, right after Baytowne Plaza at 7 p.m.

For further information on the Connection, email Kerry at DressyFemme@AOL.com or call Kerry/Max at 585-288-7208. See you all there!

DIGNITY-INTEGRITY

What grounds our thanksgiving and our fellowship? The PRIDE that comes from knowing our lives to be whole and holy.

Dignity-Integrity/Rochester meets every Sunday at 5 p.m. at St. Luke and St. Simon Cyrene Episcopal Church (2-Saints’), 17 South Fitzhugh St. in downtown Rochester. We’re a small faith community of gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, transgendered and intersexed people with regional and national connections in the struggle for justice in church and society. 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 an Episcopal Eucharist with Music on Sunday June 3, at which we’ll be installing our new Community Council. On Sunday June 10 we’ll be celebrating our Roman Catholic Sunday Liturgy of the Word with Music, and on Sunday June 17 we’ll join in our second Episcopal Eucharist of the month, a simple service without music. A coffee social follows each of these liturgies.

Sunday June 24 is our Pride Fest Potluck, 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.

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

EMPIRE BEARS

By Alim D. Vann Camp

The EMPIRE BEARS have another full month of activities planned. Join us! Meet new friends, visit new places. Check out www.empirebears.org for more information.

Starting every month on the first full day of the month, the BEARS will be at the GAG Youth Center, having a potluck supper. It starts at 6:30. On June 5, you bring Daddy’s favorite foods, and we’ll supply beverages and table service.

That’s the last potluck for the summer. We’ll start again in September.

Saturday night, the 16th, will be at the Rochester Entertainment Center, where PRIDE will present The Incredibles.

Sunday June 24 the BEARS will host a picnic at Stony Brook State Park south of Dansville.

Don’t forget to come to the Coal Tower at Schoen Place in Pittsford every Monday at 6 p.m. for supper with Becky, our den mother. We also plan some movie and theater nights.

Outside Rochester, camping season has started. Many BEARS will be at Hillside in Pennsylvania June 1-3. We have camping trips planned to Jones Pond, Otselic, and the Point at 9. Join us to stay on our group site and share our good times canopy.

Climbing up in July, plan on being at the FORUM on Saturday the 7th wearing your all-American PRIDE colors.

Have a hot summer. WooHoo!

GLESN TRAIN THE TRAINER: SAVE THE DATE!

A Train-the-Trainer event will be presented by the Rochester chapter of the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLESN) on Aug. 24 and 25.

This is in preparation for some significant training that will start in our area in September.

Participants would be asked to help facilitate local training in support of creating a safe and inclusive climate in our schools for GLBT youth. PD Credits are available where applicable.

For more information, contact GLESN Rochester at (585)244-1509 or glesn-rochester@comcast.net.

FRONTRUNNERS/FRONTWALKERS

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers is a group of men and women who meet rain or shine to run or walk. Everyone is welcome regardless of fitness level.

On Mondays at 6 p.m. we meet at the George Eastman House parking lot on East Ave. Wednesdays we meet in Genesee Valley Park at the roundhouse at 6 p.m. On Saturdays, we’re back at the George Eastman House at 9 a.m. Also on Saturdays, we socialize over coffee following our run.

To add variety, we occasionally do our walks and runs at other locations. On Saturday, June 16 we’ll be at Cobbs Hill Park, and you can meet us at the George Eastman House at 9 a.m. or at Cobbs Hill at 11 a.m.

Further information is available at www.rochesterfrontrunners.org or http://www.rochesterfrontrunners.org/

LAMBDA CAR CLUB

Lambda Car Club is America’s largest gay and lesbian car club, with over 2100 members in 28 Local Regions. Our members share the same passion you have for everything automotive! The club just celebrated its 25th anniversary! Check out our national website at www.lambdacarclub.com

All you need is a passion for automobiles and everything about them! Lambda is THE club to join if you are thinking about getting involved in the old car hobby, but aren’t sure what car to get. Or, if you are a gay or lesbian person who has an old car that you just can’t imagine living without! Whether we share the love of and, fascination for all things automotive, and a great sense of fun!

There are Lambda chapters in our local region, The Finger Lakes Region. Although most of our members live in the Rochester area, we have members in Buffalo, Syracuse and the entire Finger Lakes area. We have events throughout the entire year, even when our classic cars are stored for the winter. One of our most popular events is the annual winery tour in the Finger Lakes area.

On Saturdays, the Rochester Pride Parade and Picnic are two more great events and of course our most visible. Other events include drive-in movie nights, indoor NASCAR events, and much, much more.

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

Whether you’ve been born once or born again, we invite you to come and join us in the fellowship and worship of Jesus Christ.

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where PRIDE is not a deadly sin!

Dignity-Integrity/Rochester

Sundays at 5:00 p.m.
St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene Episcopal Church
17 South Fitzhugh St.
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and outdoor go-karts, pool parties and parties, car museum tours, and various craft events and car shows throughout the summer. For more information please contact Joe at 585-288-3313 or email us at info@men4men.com. Come join us on the road!

MEN'S COOKING GROUP

The Men's Cooking Group (MCG) has been operating for more than 18 years. It began as part of the men's group of the GAGV to help gay men who might never have learned to cook to develop enough skills and recipes to feed themselves.

It met on the third or fourth Sunday of the month at a member's house. Food and recipes were supplied. Members with weak cooking skills were paired with members that had experience and each group prepared a dish. When the food was cooked, the members then shared the meal and the company.

Over the years the social aspect of the group expanded but the essential component of sharing a freshly cooked meal has not changed. We still meet in member's homes on a rotating basis and share a meal. The host may set up for group cooking, have a potluck or cook it himself, with a co-host. If the host is furnishing food, the people there chip in to share the cost. While there is a small fee, all members cover mailings of a monthly newsletter, the group is always open to new members. Anyone is welcome. For more information please call 355-7664 (Voice mail) or E-mail us at MCGofRochester@aol.com.

RAINBOW SENIORS

MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

By Sandra Ehman

Back when I was... to speak, not more than a glean in an eye, those of us on the original board had a brainstorm session and I threw out the suggestion of an intergenerational panel. Bringing on some teens, a few of us, and making in-between-age person

The naysayers said, "No one would ever be interested," "The kids just wouldn't want to," and so on. So after three years of my nagging, it got off the ground and WOW! If you saw the coverage in April BE — awesome.

That being said, I call your attention to an email I received from another Rainbow Jasen member regarding the opening of the first low-cost housing aimed at the Gay Community. Of course, it's in L.A. One hundred forty units around a pool, open courtyard complete with an activity center and facilities for people of all abilities.

I am going to suggest that New York has the highest gay population after California, let's do it here. Watch the information please call 355-7664 (Voice mail) or with a co-host. If the host is furnishing food, the people there chip in to share the cost. While there is a small fee, all members cover mailings of a monthly newsletter, the group is always open to new members. Anyone is welcome. For more information please call 355-7664 (Voice mail) or E-mail us at MCGofRochester@aol.com.

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Blunt Honesty
By Gabriel Bouffout
As I take a drag of my cigarette and queue in my dreams, thinking about Bobek tossing my solid in a dark ally, I come to the state of mind that my disabilities has taken over me. I see that I have messed up thoughts and an over load of cookies on a plane sitting in my bedroom.
I have to admit... I'm a liar, an ex-thief, a criminal, and a drag queen. Funny to know but it's the truth. I mean life itself is a mystery to me and to others, but I come across something that made think. I realize that I don't have a life.
To be honest I haven't even found myself yet, which is good because I want that in my life. I want to know what is going to come my way. I want to what is to be expected....

I sit in a dark room with a crack pipe and some incense, and I see the stars above staring right back at me. I feel the hands of God squashing my brain and him telling me to just relax for a moment. I wonder sometimes. I wonder if I myself can feel the sensations of my body belly dancing to a ukulele and having goats pretending to be some crazy animal running in front of me. OH the sound of my voice. I wonder... God, I wonder.

I see myself in a lava lamp and looking at the bubbles all over me with eyes that look Marilyn Monroes. What do we expect... from us? I'm in a parallel universe and having two or more lives and thinking that I have a personality disorder, I think I do, but I think that I should ask my therapist. What the hell does she know. All she does is listen to the nonsense that I have to say, pouring my fake heart out while she just sits there and nods her head saying, "Yup, yup... goodie, goodie." My universe is just a figment of what I have, and I hold it with my all that I can power. So... what is next? That I'll never know. And it seems that I have so many thin layers of things that make me hope to realize that... I'm just being the person that I'll never be. Wait a minute, I have to stop right there and look at myself and ponder, who am I?

The Pirate Queen:
A REVIEW
By Justin Crystal Willoughby
The Pirate Queen, which just opened at the Hilton Theatre in NYC, is a breathtaking musical which sweeps you off your feet and takes you on a fantastical emotional journey to 16th century Ireland, where it was a land free and unconquered.
Grace O'Malley, played by Stephanie J. Bloch (who has also starred in The Boy From Oz and Wicked, among others) is the daughter of an Irish chief, a pirate. She trains for the sea but is not allowed to sail with her father because she is a woman. She sneaks aboard, saves the ship, and there begins the story.

The costumes are exceptional, and keep true to the period time. To the men, all I have to say is Nice pants. Queen Elizabeth, played by Linda Baldord (who played Grizabella in the final company of Cats, Evita In Evita, and others) had some of the best, the brightest, and a drag queen. Funny to know but it's the truth. I have to admit... I'm a liar, an ex-thief, a criminal, and an over load of cookies on a plate sitting in my room. My universe is just a figment of what I have. I feel the hands of God squishing my brain and having the reader glance at my grotesque body in a cage with feathers and some elephant crap screaming from the top of my lungs, all black and sour looking. I wonder... I wonder.

untitled
By Cheyanne Lynch
Your words cannot hurt me
They crash into my wall
As you sit there watching
To see if I will fall
nothing you can say
could penetrate my pride
You make my a big deal
like there's some big divide
there's no big difference
I know you would see
if you just looked harder
just let me be me
don't complain
just accept me
for the person that I am

Faggot
By Josh
(THIS was one of the poems read aloud at the Day of Silence rally on April 18)
Faggot
Shocking isn't it
How a word
That's in most 12 year olds
Everyday vocabulary
Can carry the weight of a thousand worlds
And yet
We say nothing!
No form of correction
For the utterance of my “F” word—
Yes my “F” word, I’ll claim it
Since it’s what you’ve been giving to me
Even before my personal acceptance of self
Has no sponsor
No creator
No opposition either
Cause when I hear faggot
Screamed from cars
Or while walking down the halls
I am seemingly alone
Nobody wants to jump to the aid
Of the gay kid
Cause they don’t want people to start
Thinking
Wondering
Questioning their sexuality
So they just stay away
But only because they don’t know
What’s it like to receive this “F” word
And yet
This 6 letter “F” word will somehow
Follow me—
For life
Forever trapping me in a box of self defense
And constant struggles with bigotry
While the sound of my “F” word
Will resound, without remorse, internally
Until the next kid
Decides it will be fun to run around screaming,
“Attention all faggots
Attention all faggots
You will burn in hell!”

Amazing isn’t it
How a 12 year old learns that this is somehow okay
That the degradation of another
Is perfectly acceptable in today’s society
Shocking isn’t it
How people’s view reflect their communities
Until it goes to far
Like the day Matthew Shepard
Was beaten, tied to a fence
And left to die on a hill
Just for being a faggot
And it was okay to hate him
Until it went to far
Or how the people of Laramie, Wyoming say it
“We don’t raise fag killers here.”
Well newflash to the people of Laramie Wyoming
You did raise people like that there
That the degradation of another
Of people just because they are gay
Is perfectly acceptable in today’s society
Because no one ever said it was wrong
Because no one stepped up and said
How’d the people of Laramie, Wyoming say it
it went to far
it goes to far
cause it somehow made them less of a person
Thinking
Wondering
Who am I?

L to R: GAGV Youth Group members Terrence James, Chelly Enríquez and James Allen in Albany on May 1.

Photo: Oce Overmyer
My Undoing
By S. G. Johnson

My undoing was your eyes,
The deep brown eyes,
Those eyes told me everything would be alright,
When I last saw those eyes,
They were wide,
Gazed over,
No sign of life was behind them,
Those eyes stole me,
From the world,
Those lifeless eyes,
Turned my heart to ice,
With that last look at me,
You locked my heart away,
From more pain,
From the harshness of Reality,
From the heartbreak of your Death,
With you gone loving again is hard,
Being intimate with another brings my heart
back to you,
It's impossible to love another I still love you,
I see you everywhere,
Am I going crazy?
On the street I swear you passed by me,
In bed I feel your head on my pillow,
Your arm wrapped around me,
I feel your there to tell me,
You'll always be with me forever.

Forbidden Love
By Amos F. Cortes

Is it ok to love if the love is forbidden
Or is it a crime to keep this love hidden
I ask these questions every day
But still come up with nothing to say
It is these questions that tear me apart
Do I listen to my head or do I listen to my heart
If I listened to my heart, what would I say
To the person I think of each and every day
"Hey I think I love you" and then walk away
Or should I do the opposite... Should I stay
What if I stayed and my heart got broken
Can I mend my heart and still love
Secrets like these are hard to keep
It is those very questions that tear me apart
To dream of when we'd have our first kiss
To the person I think of each and every day
This is another question I ask every day
Is it a sin for me to think like this
Even if we do not last forever
Do I want to believe that
It was always you that I despised
It was always you that I despised
I want to spend my life with you,
I can't go on with out you,
But I was home sick,
I should have walked home with you,
I wanted to spend my life with you,
I thought I would be impossible to find
And then something happened
Something humble and something true
I fell for you

Three poems
By Joelde Crystal Willey

Head down, He walks away
Away from her
The only mother He's ever known
Walks away because She doesn't want
The only sister He's ever kept
The only time He's ever wept
Head down, He walks away
There is no reason for him to stay
Where no one can accept him
Because he is different
Different from them
Different from anyone they have ever met
But still he is human
Just as human as the rest of them
So why then do they turn away
He doesn't understand
Rainbow World
He wants him to love him
He wants him to see
That black and white
Isn't all it can be
He wants to show him
His own rainbow world
He wants to believe that
There's more he can hold
She thinks she can love him
She needs him to see
That sometimes wonderful
Is less than complete
She thinks she can show her
Her own rainbow world
She thinks she can prove that
Their life can be whole
But black and white intrudes
On their rainbow world
Abused, misused
They turn from their world

Suns rise, stars lie
It was always you that I despised
Moon moves across the sky
It was always you I wished to die
-MidnightGenius
Now I lay me down in peace
Pray some god my soul release
Stop my heart tonight forever
To see the dawn once more never
-Midnytmoon

To: My Angel
By Amos F. Cortes

Depressed and confused
That was me all the time
Something always bothering me
Something always on my mind
Questions unanswered
Things I could not say
One main question I asked myself
"Why am I this way?"
Unbearable disgust
Is mostly how I felt
And every night I would pray
For someone to offer help
A guardian angel who can help me
Get these evil thoughts out of my head
Someone to tell me
I'm better off alone I suppose to being dead
I'll admit that so many times
I just wanted to end my life
To spare myself all of this suffering
To spare myself all of this strife
And then you entered my world
Unexpectedly so
And gave me answers to questions
Of which I did not know
You assured that nothing's wrong with me
And that I'll be just fine
You gave me that comfort
I thought would be impossible to find
And then something happened
Something humble and something true
I fell for my angel...
I fell for you

You Left Me Here
By S. G. Johnson

You left me here in all my tears,
To bear the truth of your life,
I'm here at your resting place,
I can almost see your face,
I dodge the pity
From your Aunt Kitty,
I wanted to spend my life with you,
Now what am I supposed to do,
Still I am here,
You aren't near,
I am alive,
You are dead,
I can't go on with out you,
I should have walked home with you,
After school that day,
I should have walked home with you,
I was home sick,
I could've pushed you out of the way,
I was home sick,
I thought would be impossible to find
And then something happened
Some god I believed in returned
Still I am here,
I carry you in my heart still,
I am better off alive I suppose to being dead
I'll admit that so many times
I just wanted to end my life
To spare myself all of this suffering
To spare myself all of this strife
And then you entered my world
Unexpectedly so
And gave me answers to questions
Of which I did not know
You assured that nothing's wrong with me
And that I'll be just fine
You gave me that comfort
I thought would be impossible to find
And then something happened
Something humble and something true
I fell for you
I fell for you

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Volunteer for the Empty Closet. Seeking reviewers, reporters, photographers, distribution volunteers. If you can write, take photos, or distribute bundles of the paper around town, and are dependable and capable of meeting deadlines, please call Susan at 585-3103; emptycloset@rochester.rr.com.

Meals on Wheels routes go out mid-day about an hour to departments that are available throughout Monroe County. Volunteer either weekly, monthly or seasonally to help feed our community’s neediest. We need you! Call 585-787-8326.

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Looking for a male to share my home near Cobbs Hill off Monroe Ave. The rent is $375/month. Includes all. Call 271-3243.

Hirsute husky men in need of stress-relieving body rub by talented masculine hands. Call 442-9677 or bodyrubs@hotmail.com.

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 judged or 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 by sobriety.

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

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

**Wednesdays**

**New Freedom/New Happiness Group**

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

This is an open discussion meeting.

**Gay Men**

6:30 p.m. at the #18 University Ave bus stop, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton.

**Open meeting, all are welcome, straight-friendly.**

**Men and women**

**Handicapped accessible**, take the elevator to the basement. This meeting begins with a speaker who is followed by an open discussion.

**Saturdays**

**Saturday Night Special**

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

**Open meeting, all are welcome, straight-friendly.**

**Men and women**

**Handicapped accessible**, take the elevator to the basement. This meeting begins with a speaker who is followed by an open discussion.
FRIDAY 1

Southern Ontario Womyn’s Drum Camp. Through June 1, Kendall Point, Ontario, Canada. 519-435-0861; info@drumcamp.ca.

Bread & Water Theatre Rainbow Festival. Short queer-themed plays, through June 3, 243 Rosedale St. (New Life Presbyterian Church). Friday, Saturday 8 pm; Sunday 2 pm; $5-$8; 271-5525; www.breadandwatertheatre.org.

SATURDAY 2
Michaels’ Valley Pride Festival. Utica, 10 am-5 pm; Utica City Hall/ Hanka Park. 315-790-3000; micwaters.org.

RGMC Garry Sale. June 2, 3 at 38 Riverside St. Donations tax deductible. Call John Günthner at 602-0112 for pick up.

Buffalo Dyke March. Line up at 7:30 pm, Edwards parking lot, W. Utica St. March to Bidwell Park for parade. 11th Annual Brooklyn, NY Pride Celebration through June 3.


SUNDAY 3

Buffalo Pride Parade. “Happily Ever After, Legal or Not”. Line up 11 am, Kleinhaus Music Hall parking lot. March to Bidwell Park for festival.

Queens NY Pride Parade. 12 pm, Jack Herer Fest.

THURSDAY 7

FRIDAY 8
Big Gay Prom. GAGV Youth Group welcomes LGBTQ youth and allies 15-25, 6-10 pm, Robach Community Center, Ontario Beach Park, 1 Beach Ave. $10 admission, drug and alcohol free. For info call Toby at 244-9840 ext 13.


Brooklyn NY Pride Parade, 8 pm. Prospect Park W. at 15th St.

Boston Pride Parade and Festival

SATURDAY 9

Empire Bears potluck at GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main, first floor (Prince St. entrance). 5 pm, $10 donation. “Daddy’s favorite foods”. Last potluck until Sept. www.empirebears.org.

Butch Femme Connection supper club. Marie’s Steakhouse Restaurant, Monroe Ave. in Pittsford. 7 pm 288-7314; DearBears@aol.com.

SUNDAY 10


FRIDAY 17

TUESDAY 26
Monroe County Employee Network Discussion Forum: LGBT Concerns and Equities Issues and Equality. 6-30:30 pm. 106 Flinders St. off Thurston Rd. atITCHEN.net or 426-0462 for info.

THURSDAY 28

CatSkill Mountain Womyn’s World Drum and Percussion Happen-In. Thursday, June 29, 1l Avenues. Saguers NY. info@drumcentral.net.

FRIDAY 29
Empty Closet distribution of the July issue. Noon-4 pm. Youth Center, first floor, 875 E. Main St. Call 244-9930 before noon on June 29.

SATURDAY 30
Renewal of marriage vows celebration. Time, place TBA. Call Todd Plank at 585-278-4190; toddplank@gmail.com.

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**MONDAY**

**LGBT Support Group**  
Third Presbyterian Church, corner of Meigs, East Ave. First, third Mondays, 7:30-9pm. 338-3466

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

**HIV Positive Gay Men Support group**  
Every Monday, 5pm. AIDS Rochester. 1350 University Ave. 442-2220, 630-0561

**Green Party (political)**  
Second Mondays. 7-9pm. GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St., fifth floor. 426-9695

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

**GAGV Youth Drop in Hours**  
Mondays, Wednesdays. 7-9pm. GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor. 338-8977

**MOCHA Library & Archives**  
New Hours TBA

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

**AGA**  
Support group for transgender of color. Third Wednesdays. 6-8pm. MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way. 420-1400

**GAGV Youth Drop in Hours**  
Mondays, Wednesdays, 3-7 pm. GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor. 426-9695

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

**Rainbow Seniors Yoga**  
6-7pm. Arm Mac II, 125 Norris Drive. 442-6369

**WEDNESDAY**

**Women’s Community Chorus**  
Rehearsals each Wednesday, 6:30-9pm. Call for location: 255-4441

**Tawa Pano Church Bible Study**  
Bible study 7:15 pm. 758 South Ave.

**Country Line Dancing/Two Stepping**  
Every Wednesday. Mothers 49. S. Union. 7pm. Lessons followed by dancing until 10 pm. Beginners to advanced.

**Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley**  
Board of Directors’ Meeting, third Wednesdays. 7pm. 875 E. Main St., fifth floor. 244-1860

**New Freedom New Happiness AA Gay meeting**  
2pm, Unitarian Church. 220 Winton Rd. Men and women. Open meeting.

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

**COAP**  
Come Out and Play. Business meeting last Wednesday. Equal Grounds Coffee Shop, 750 South Ave. 7pm. 454-3609

**Empire Bears**  
First Wednesdays. 7-45pm. GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St., fifth floor. info@empirebears.org

**Transgender Support Group**  
Third Wednesdays, 6-30pm. Downtown United Presbyterian Church. 121 N. Fitzhugh St.

**Multicom - Fourth Coffee Talk**  
7pm. Spins Café, 739 Park Ave. Social for former Multicom-4 BBS members; other Blick cyber geeks welcome, every fourth Wednesday. 6pm

**GAGV Library & Archives**  
New Hours TBA

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

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

**GAGV Youth Drop in Hours**  
Mondays, Wednesdays, 3-7 pm. GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor. 338-8977

**Shenandoah Democrats of the Genesee Valley**  
Meets fourth Wednesdays. 7-30 pm. GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St., fifth floor.

**Frontrunners/Frontwalkers**  
6pm. Sunrise Valley Park Roundhouse. www.rochesterfrontrunners.org

**THURSDAY**

**Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns**  
3-6pm, first Thursday. For location call Ralph, 271-0749

**Community Business Forum**  
Gay and Lesbian Professionals’ social group. Second Thursdays, 3-5pm. 234-6706

**GLOBAL**  
(Gays and Lesbians of Bausch & Lomb.) Meets every third Thursday in Area 67 conference room at the Optic Center. Vaile: 338-8977

**Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus**  
Downtown United Presbyterian Church. 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 429-0650

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

**Partner Bereavement Group**  
First and third Thursdays. 5-30pm. Lifetime Care, 311 Winter Road, 214-1414

**GAGV Anti-Violence Project Support group for LGBT victims of domestic violence.**  
First Thursdays, safe location. Call 585-244-8640 ext 17.

**U. of Rochester Pride Network**  
Every Thursday, 9 pm. Monday 507 on River Campus of U. of R. Web address: www.su.rochester.edu/lgbt

**Green Party (political) Movie Night**  
Second Thursdays, 7-9pm. GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St., fifth floor. 244-6470

**Catholic Gay & Lesbian Ministry**  
Third Thursday, 7-8pm. School of Good Shepherd Church, 2288 E. Henrietta Rd. 382-3592

**FRIDAY**

**Gay Men’s AA meeting**  
Each Friday, 7:30-9:30pm. Closed meeting. Area Artists’ Club, Village Cafe, 274 N. Goodman St. Suite 201, 232-6703

**Gay Fathers’ Support**  
Second Thursdays, 6-8pm. MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way. 420-1400

**Support Group for transgenders of color**  
Second Tuesdays, 6-8pm. MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way.

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

**Gay AA**  
First Saturdays, 6pm-9pm. Community Center, 875 E. Main St., fifth floor.

**MOCHA Chat**  
Second Thursdays, 6-8pm. MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way.

**Saturday**

**Rochester Rams Bar Night**  
Third Saturday, 9pm-2pm. Bachelor Forum, 624 University Ave. 424-0760

**Bear & Leather Dance Night**  
Second Fridays, 10am-2pm. Nasty O’s, 160 Alexander St.

**GAGV Youth Group**  
Ages 10-25. Meets second Sundays. 1-2 pm. GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor. 244-8640 ext 13.

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

**Rainbow Seniors Bar**  
First Sundays: Eufine Club, 3-6pm. Third Sundays: Potlatch at First Unitarian Church. 150 S. Clinton Ave. 4pm. Accessible parking behind church; others please park in lot accross from Court St.

**Men’s Cooking Group**  
Third or fourth Sundays, 355-7664.

**Bassically Troublemakers Band**  
Rehearsals: 7-9pm, every Sunday. Call Tim, 242-0237
Equality Leadership Conference
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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