Tuesday, April 28 is the Pride Agenda’s annual Albany Lobby day, Equality & Justice Day. This year is going to be exceptional, with over 1,400 people from all over NYS expected to turn out for this historic lobbying effort.

With a pro-LGBT majority in the NYS Assembly and a pro-LGBT Senate Majority Leader and Governor, the Pride Agenda is working around the clock to build the grassroots support needed to pass a Marriage Equality bill, the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act and the Dignity for All Students Act.

Locally, four buses have been reserved to transport Rochesterians to Albany to lobby their elected officials. The registration period runs through April 10; however, it is best to register early to guarantee that you will have a reserved seat on a Rochester bus. You can register online at www.prideagenda.org and the form can be printed out and mailed to the Pride Agenda’s NYC office.

To obtain a scholarship you must print out the form and note that you are in need of a scholarship. The requested donation of $40 covers round-trip transportation, breakfast on the bus, lunch in Albany and a snack on the trip home. For individuals who have their own transportation, the cost is $15. Questions can be directed to Todd Overmyer (Tod@prideagenda.org).

GOV. PATTERSON VISITS ROCHESTER: On March 11, hundreds of people filled the Rochester Riverside Convention Center for a town hall style meeting hosted by Gov. David Paterson and moderated by News10 NBC’s Janet Lomax. At the meeting, Gov. Paterson reaffirmed his support for marriage equality legislation, drawing loud applause from the diverse crowd. Above: Gov. Paterson greets Anita Cameron, Systems Advocate for the Center for Disability Rights. Photo: Ove Overmyer

Sandra Arena convicted of manslaughter in Coleman death; sentencing is set for April 15

By Ove Overmyer

The high profile murder trial of a Rochester woman began in atypical fashion on March 9. Sandra Arena chose a bench trial, rather than face a jury. Arena, 48, who was described in the男孩子 as “Cougarr Ban’ bie'” put her destiny in the hands of Monroe County Court Judge Frank P. Corraro.

On March 18, the judge acquitted Arena of second-degree manslaughter but found her guilty of second-degree manslaughter in the death of Chad Coleman. She was also convicted of third-degree assault, a misdemeanor, for injuries suffered by the four women who were also hit.

Both charges are felonies with the same court majority that overturned the state’s previous overturned Prop 8. The requested donation of $40 covers round-trip transportation, breakfast on the bus, lunch in Albany and a snack on the trip home. For individuals who have their own transportation, the cost is $15. Questions can be directed to Todd Overmyer (Tod@prideagenda.org).

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By Ove Overmyer

On March 9, when the Cali­fornia Supreme Court heard argu­ments in the attempt to overturn Prop 8, gay rights attorneys were un­happy with the court’s reaction, according to Maura Dolan of the Los Angeles Times.

The lawyers had hoped the same court majority that over­turned the state’s previous prop­er­­age ban would conclude that Proposition 8 was an impermiss­ible constitutional revision.

However, Chief Justice Ronald M. George and Justice Joyce L. (California continues page 7)
Bisexuality: the invisible identity

Anti-gay evangelical preacher Ted Haggard, who, as Reverend Irene Monroe says, “is in love with heterosexual privilege and homosexual sex,” has admitted having at least two sexual relationships with men. He says that therapists have told him he is “heterosexual with homosexual complications” or “attachments” (sort of like a vacuum cleaner?). Apparently no one has broken the news to him about bisexuality.

Talk about the elephant in the room that everyone pretends not to notice—bisexuality is more like a Megalosaurus.

Although bisexuals are near-

ly invisible in our culture, there is a real possibility that most human beings are born bisexual and capable of attraction to either sex. This is socialized out of us as soon as we can com-

prehend the same theory that humanity consists of two teams, men and women, the “good” and “normal”—the majority and the Queers (bad and “abnormal”—a small minority). But what if “normal”—bisex-

ual? What if people who are exclusively heterosexual and peo-

ple who are exclusively homosexual are both minorities and the majority (say 70 to 80 percent of the human race) is bisexual? Talk the Kinsey scale, for instance. If those who have never had the slightest desire for opposite sex partners are at one end of the scale, and those who have never had any desire for people of the same gender are at the other end—where would most of the folks fall? Right in the Big Center.

This would mean that A, Team Queer has “the numbers”, B, human sexuality is more complex than we realize, and C, the conservative claim that strict heterosexuality is the norm is simply wrong.

If science eventually comes to this conclusion, the implications for the right’s politics of homophobia would be staggering. For one thing, Haggard and those like him would not be able to claim that they are really heterosexual because they have sexual desire for the opposite gender—which supposedly rules out their equally strong or stronger desire for those of the same gender.

The right could not demon-

strate three-quarters of the human race in order to gain the Bigot Vote. Most voters, including the bigots, would be bi themselves! Eventually Middle Plebe would come to terms with their repressed feelings, whether they acted on them or not. Despite the con-

servative terror of challenges to heterosexism and straight-line supremacy, the ideology would fall. In fact a less uptight, biased society would become less sex-

istic and discriminatory, and as a consequence, families (of all kinds) would be more secure.

That proof that most humans are bi would also challenge bi-phobia among lesbians and gay men. Purdun Purdun like “bisexuals are sitting on the fence” or “bisexuals don’t exist,” sadly still hear in queer circles, would be as obsolete as the ste-

reotype that being gay is “evil.”

Bisexuality, no longer invis-

ible, would become the new stan-

dard for normality and Haggard could finally get rid of his dumpy vacuum cleaner attach-

ments.

Activists for change: commit now!

My first two weeks as the Executive Director of the Gay Alliance have strengthened my resolve to continue the ongoing work to make change for our community.

We are fortunate to have a rich history of social and political activism in our region. When I moved to Rochester in 1977, activism was the first face of the Gay Alliance I witnessed.

I arrived for a job interview at the University of Rochester. I turned on the local television news. The Gay Alliance was staging a protest at City Hall over federal CETA fund-

ing for the Gay Alliance. The “Community Closet” did not want their community dona-

tions to be adversely affected by inclusion of the Gay Alliance.

Bill Johnson, then Executive Director of the Urban League, stepped forward to administer the program with full inclusion of our needs. The Gay Alliance received funding through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act for our first paid position.

Every day we make choices on how to use our time, energy and resources. The Gay Alli-

ance has a rich 35-year his-

tory in this region. Although our community visibility has waned and waxed over the years, our need to exist has not. The place where the entire community turns for support information, referrals, training and assist-

ance with domestic violence, harassment and hate crimes. Although our locations have changed, we have maintained the same phone number for more than 30 years. The very first AIDS Hotline was estab-

lished at the Gay Alliance in the early 1980s, through our peer counseling program.

For this, I am challenging time for non-profit organiza-

tions and the Gay Alliance is no exception. The difference is that as a staff, a board and a community, we will not retreat from our mission! Now is everyone’s time to re-com-

mit and make choices that will determine our future! Pending is every non-profit and edu-
cational organization’s biggest challenge.

Please commit the time to travel with us to Albany to help us advocate for our continued Equality and Justice Day will be held Tuesday, April 28 in Albany. If you are unable to join us, please send a donation, so we can provide the funds for those who can attend, but may not have the money to register. Details are on page A1 of this issue.

You can visit our web site at www.gagaliance.org for infor-

mation on all of our programs. PRIDE 2009 planning activi-

ties have begin and there information posted now for those who can attend, but may not have the money to register. Details are on page A1 of this issue.

Change

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☐ $100-999 Champion: Annual reception; early bird event discounts
☐ $1,000-4,999 Triangle Club: Life membership; exclusive events; major donor events
☐ $5,000+ Stonewall Society: Stonewall Society Breakfasts; private annual meeting; display name at events

Bring Change!
Thank you.

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Staff Reporters: One Overamy, Graphic Design: Jim Anderson


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The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., as stated in the bylaws of that organization. It is the official voice to inform the Rochester gay community, to further the cause of equality and justice, and to be a part of a worldwide movement that exchange ideas and seek to educate.

It is our purpose to maintain a middle ground in the discussions of the entire community. We must be care-

ful to prevent any attitude of domination or that you look at the issues.

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Empire State Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan van Capelle issued a statement on March 6 applauding Governor David Patterson’s appointment of two new lesbian judges to Appellate Court judges.

“Governor David Patterson has once again demonstrated his extraordinary commitment to equal representation and made history in New York by appointing two openly lesbian judges to Appellate level courts,” van Capelle said. “It is important that the judiciary reflect the rich diversity of New York State so that the judiciary can more fully understand the lives of the people involved in the cases they hear. This is the highest level judicial appointment that any member of the LGBT community has held in the history of the state.

“We thank Gov. Patterson for his continued support for LGBT people all across New York State. We also congratulate two immensely qualified justices — Rosalyn Richter and Elizabeth Garry — for their appointment to the late Division, First and Third Departments, respectively. They are role models and a welcome permanent place in the story of our community.”

Van Capelle said the decision announced by Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) on March 23 announced his support for marriage equality for same-sex couples and for the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

The announcement followed a meeting in Manhattan, initiated by Sen. Schumer, with a group of New York LGBT elected officials and leaders of the city’s largest LGBT organizations, including Empire State Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan van Capelle.

“I want to thank Sen. Schumer for his support of marriage equality and the repeal of the so-called Defense of Marriage Act,” said Van Capelle. “Like a majority of New Yorkers, Sen. Schumer recognizes that only marriage equality provides same-sex couples the status, protections, and rights afforded to all other Americans. We look forward to working with him to win marriage equality in New York State and around the country.”

Van Capelle said that during the meeting, Schumer pledged his support to repeal DOMA and, in the interim, to work to provide federal recognition and protection of benefits to legally married same-sex couples.

“Sen. Schumer is Vice Chair of the U.S. Senate’s Democratic Conference and the seven member of the Senate to endorse marriage equality.”

Among other topics discussed at the meeting were comments by Rep. Peter T. King and Ryan White Care Act funding, appointment of openly LGBT people to the federal bench, special issues facing LGBT youth and seniors, the U.S. Census (which is declining to include legally married same-sex couples) and passage of a trans-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and hate crimes legislation.

Ron Gonzalez
St. Martin of Porches Church in Buffalo and a journal of memories has been put together by his family and friends. A memorial fund has been established in his honor. Contributions should be made payable to AIDS Networks, 40 Gates Circle, Buffalo 14209.

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Burundi rejects law imposing prison terms

The Senate of the African nation of Burundi has rejected a bill which would have imposed a three-month prison sentence for engaging in homosexual sex, the BBC reported.

The bill was approved last year by the lower house of the legislature. However, Burundi law still punishes sodomy under a law banning "immoral acts," and Islamic law may be enforced regardless of national law.

Homosexual conduct is illegal in 75 countries, mostly in Africa and the Middle East. Punishments in some countries include execution.

-Gay City News

Gay Liberation pioneers seek "lost" colleagues for reunion in June

Former members of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), the organization that launched the modern fight for gay rights in the wake of the June 1969 Stonewall Rebellion in New York City, are seeking information about "lost" colleagues as they plan reunions in June to mark the 40th anniversary of Stonewall.

The reunions, including possible contingents in Gay Pride parades in New York and San Francisco, are being planned to include former gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered members of GLF chapters throughout the nation and the world.

Approximately 100 people are already connected to the planning group, while among those "lost" or otherwise unattainable are the following:


The current reconciliation among GLFers started in the fall of 2007, when an obituary about New York activist and GLF member Bob Kohler was circulated via the Internet. GLFer Nikos Diawan already maintained a list with some of the pioneers, as well as a web site with photos, history, memorial listing and updates — www.angelfire.com/on2gl/2001/.

Among those involved in the current effort to expand the network of GLF "alumni" are Nikos Diawan of California, Martha Sheldon of Oregon, Bob Bond of Arizona, Tommi Avicolli Mecca of Pennsylvania, Perry Beas of New York, Mark Segal of Pennsylvania, Allen Young of Massachusetts and Roberto Camp of Mexico.

Organizers are interested in hearing from members not already in touch. The pioneering activists, or friends who have information about such individuals, are asked to provide names, GLF chapter locations, and all contact information, including phone, e-mail and mail address.

Information about deceased members is also wanted. The organizers can be contacted by e-mail or USPS as follows: Nikos Diawan, 2950 Van Ness Avenue # 4, San Francisco, CA 94109-1036; nadia-man@aol.com.

Obama creates White House Council on Women and Girls

On March 11, President Obama signed an executive order creating the White House Council on Women and Girls.

The mission of the council will be to provide a coordinated federal response to the challenges confronted by women and girls and to ensure that all Cabinet and other federal agencies consider how their policies and programs impact women and girls.

The Council will be chaired by Valerie Jarrett, Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor, and will include as members cabinet-level federal agencies. The Executive Director of the Council will be Tina Tchen, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Public Liaison at the White House.

"The purpose of this Council is to ensure that American women and girls are treated fairly in all matters of public policy," said President Obama. "My Administration has already made important progress toward that goal. I am proud that the first bill I signed into law was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act. But I want to be clear that issues like equal pay, family leave, child care and others are not just women’s issues, they are family issues and economic issues. Our progress in these areas is an important measure of whether we are truly fulfilling the promise of our democracy for all our people. I am confident that Valerie Jarrett and Tina Then will guide the Council wisely as its members address these important issues."

The White House Council on Women and Girls will ensure that agencies across the federal government, not just a few officials, take into account the particular needs and concerns of women and girls. The Council will begin its work by asking each agency to analyze its current status and ensure that they are focused internally and externally on women.

In particular, the Council will work to enhance, support and coordinate the efforts of existing programs for women and girls. The Council will also work as a resource for each agency and the White House to ensure that there is a comprehensive approach to the federal government’s policies on women and girls.

In addition, the Council will also focus on the following areas:

- Improving women’s economic security by ensuring that each of the agencies is working directly to improve the economic status of women.
- Working with each agency to ensure that the administration evaluates and develops policies that establish a balance between work and family.
- Working hand-in-hand with the Vice President, the Justice Department’s Office of Violence Against Women and other government officials to find new ways to prevent violence against women, at home and abroad.
- Finally, the critical work of the Council will be to help build healthy families and improve women’s health care.

The White House Council on Women and Girls will meet regularly, and will serve as a forum for all involved agencies to focus on women.

Initial members of the Council include:


In addition to the initial list of members, the President may designate additional heads of other Executive Branch departments, agencies, and offices.

N.J. marriage bill may be delayed in 2009

Recently there has been speculation that New Jersey may be the next state to approve legal marriage for gay men and lesbians.

However, New Jersey Assembly member Reed Garofalo (D-Princeton), a sponsor of the bill, told the New York Blade in February that while there is expressed support for a New Jersey marriage equality bill, "the votes aren’t there."

Garcia-Ponce attributed the possible delay to the fact that the entire Assembly is up for election in the fall, and legislators fear losing votes. "A Zogby poll in January showed that 48% of the legislators support marriage equality by 52% to 42% percent."

The state commission report recently ruled that civil unions (legalized in N.J. in 2000) are not an adequate substitute for legal marriage and urged the legislature to move forward with marriage equality.

In the Human Rights Campaign fundraiser on Feb. 7, N.J. Governor Jon Corzine expressed strong support for marriage rights and said he would happily sign such a bill when it came to his desk. He did not, however, get specific about timelines.

Steven Goldstein, chairperson of Garden State Equality, disagreed with Reed Garofalo. He told the Blade that there is a "strong" chance that marriage equality will pass this year, in part because of the economic crisis.

Goldstein noted that same sex marriage in the state would add an estimated $1 billion to the state economy over the next three years.

- Trenton Straube and Chris Johnson, The New York Blade

Gays welcome exit of hate-monger Dobson

Truth Wins Out (TWO) expressed its hope on March 2 that James Dobson’s resignation as chairman of Focus on the Family would eventually lead the anti-gay organization in a new direction.

Dobson has created an entire industry that distorts the lives of gay and lesbian people for political gain, says TWO. James Dobson’s legacy of lies has caused significant pain for gay and lesbian people and their families,” said Wayne LaRue, executive director of Truth Wins Out. “We hope his departure will eventually signal a shift in tone and end Focus on the Family’s attacks against gay and lesbian Americans.”

The Associated Press reports that Dobson’s resignation has "caused significant pain for gay and lesbian people for political gain, says TWO. James Dobson’s legacy of lies has caused significant pain for gay and lesbian people and their families," said Wayne LaRue, executive director of Truth Wins Out. "We hope his departure will eventually signal a shift in tone and end Focus on the Family’s attacks against gay and lesbian Americans.”

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abandon the politics of polarization and choose moderate leaders who are not fremg attorneys, culture war, said Besen. "This would also be a good time for the organization to consider abandoning its fabled "gay" ministry, Low wrote Out."

In Nov. 2008, Truth Wins Out presented Dobson's selection into the Radio Hall of Fame. In the two years since, TWO has found eight researchers in three countries who say that Dobson has disowned their work. Videos and letters from these scientists sent to Dobson can be viewed at www.Respectmyresearch.org.

Dobson's rhetoric is so divisive that rightwing former House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-TX) said, "I believe Dobson's style has been more effective at making hate groups, exclusionary, divisive and alarmingly sectarian... James Dobson's political style has been more effective at demonizing his adversaries."

Dobson told The Daily Oklahoman on Oct. 23, 2004 that, "Homosexuals are not monogamous. They want to destroy the institution of marriage. It will destroy marriage. It will destroy the Earth," Dobson also told The Daily Oklahoman that Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) is "a God's people hater. I don't know if he hates God, but he hates God's people."

Truth Wins Out is a non-profit organization that deconstructs gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people against anti-gay misinformation campaigns. TWO also counters the "ex-gay" industry and educates America about gay life.

© 2008 Truth Wins Out

Hate groups grow 54 percent since 2000

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), the number of hate groups operating in the United States continued to rise in 2008 and has grown by 54 percent since 2000, an increase fueled last year by immigration fears, a failing economy and the successful campaign of Barack Obama, according to the "Year in Hate" issue of the SPLC Intelligence Report released March 2. (See the report at http://www.splcenter.org/medialibrary/report/intreport/ipt11/ipt11.pdf.)

The SPLC said the SPLC's "Hate Map," a "real-time, streaming video" of all active hate groups, was an active in 2008, up more than four percent from the 503 groups in 2007 and far ahead of the 21 active in 2000. A list of local and state-wide state maps of these groups can be viewed at http://www.splcenter.org/realmap/hate.jsp.

As in recent years, hate groups were antagonists of gay rights programs. This rise in hate groups has coincided with a 40 percent growth in hate crimes against gays from 2003 and 2007, according to FBI statistics.

Two new factors were introduced to the hate crime in the 2008 election year of the faltering economy and the Obama campaign.

"Barack Obama's selection has inflamed racist extremists who see it as another sign that their country is under siege by non-whites," said Mark Potok, editor of the Intelligence Report, a quarterly investigative journal that monitors the radical right. "The idea of a black man in the White House, combined with the deepest economic crisis and continuing high levels of Latino immigration, has given white supremacists a real platform on which to recruit."

Several white supremacists have been arrested while allegedly plotting to kill senior and gay officials. Focus on the Family co-founder Gil Alexander Moore called, "I believe Dobson's style has been more effective at making hate groups, exclusionary, divisive and alarmingly sectarian... James Dobson's political style has been more effective at demonizing his adversaries."

"This rise in hate groups has coincided with the change in their own families. Extremists are also exploiting the economic crisis, spreading propaganda that blames minorities and immigrants for the subprime mortgage meltdown. Tough economic times historically provide fertile ground for extremist movements."

"It's a silver lining to the set-back for our families experienced on Election Day, it is that our allies in communities across the country have been inspired to organize because of issues like the passage of Prop 8 and the local level and work for change," said Jody M. Huckaby, PFLAG's executive director. "From coast to coast, families have been inspired to organize because of issues like Proposition 8, and empowered by the example of heroes and heroines like Harvey Milk and Mary Griffith. New PFLAG chapters are forming in critically important districts and existing PFLAG chapters in many communities are reporting an increase in their memberships. Today, our families, allies and loved ones are organizing and pressing for change as they never have before."

PFLAG says it has received inquiries about starting new chapters in states such as Mississippi, Alabama, Ohio, Florida, California, Utah, Texas and Idaho, among others. In Texas, a dozen people have expressed an interest in organizing a local PFLAG presence and at least four inquiries have come from California, where many community leaders are working to rally allies and Yes on Prop 8's passage. The national office has also heard from organizers in Tennessee, Missouri, South Dakota, New York and New Jersey.

In Indiana, local allies have organized a new PFLAG chapter in Terre Haute. Writing in the Terre Haute Star-Tribune, columnist Stephanie Salter praised the new chapter, noting that, "the organization is based on personal relationships -- familial, collegial, among friends. It is always the personal level at which the majority of us connect. Given this," Chapter organizers told Salter they were inspired to bring PFLAG to Terre Haute.

"The new chapter is inspired by the story of Griffith, and seeing the change in their own families."

"If I saw that change in my mother, I thought, ‘This is important,’" said David Turnor told the paper, "I’ve been out for 11 or 12 years, but was not necessarily that active. What I was doing?"

Huckaby says the new chapters underscore the fact that, even today, PFLAG is a critical part of communities across the country.

"As President Obama has so often reminded us, change doesn’t come from Washington, it comes to Washington," Huckaby said. "That change in our culture, our communities and our country begins with local PFLAG chapters, and our national office is working hard to make sure that everyone who wants to bring PFLAG to their community has the resources and support to do so."

For a complete list of PFLAG chapters, visit the organization online at www.pflag.org.

-PRNewswire-USNewswire-

Attitudes change on medical marijuana

As the 10th anniversary of the Institute of Medicine's historic report recognizing marijuana's value as a legitimate medical approaches, medical marijuana patients and advocates see policy finally beginning to match scientific reality.

In late February, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder confirmed that President Obama's campaign promise to end Drug Enforcement Administration attacks on state medical marijuana laws "is now American policy." In November, Michigan voters passed a medical marijuana law by the largest margin ever racked up by such an initiative, and similar medical marijuana bills are moving steadily forward in legislatures across the country, including Minnesota, Illinois and New York.

After California voters passed the nation's first effective medical marrijuana law in 1996, the Clinton administration asked the Institute of Medicine to review existing research and report on the medical uses of marijuana. The report, "Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base," while cautiously and carefully written, clearly acknowledged marijuana's therapeutically valued potential for various seriously ill patients, clearly acknowledged marijuana's therapeutic potential for serious illnesses, including nausea, pain, and anxiety are all afflictions of wasting and all can be mitigated by marijuana.

A report released last summer draws of smoking and concluded a "rapid-onset, non-smoked cannabinoid delivery system," but added, "in the meantime, there are patients with debilitating symptoms for whom smoked mari­juana might provide relief."

Studies published since 1999 have verified that marijuana vaporizers provide patients with the therapeutic value for some seriously ill patients, to match scientific reality.

Until recently, federal officials ignored the scientific evidence. In 2006, John J. Benson told the New York Times that the government "loves to ignore the science.... They would rather it never happened...." For 10 long years the federal government waged a war against science, and against the sick and suffering, but the Obama administration has clearly sig­naled that this insane war on patients is going to end," said Rob Kampia, executive director of the Marijuana Policy Project in New York City.

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A 5
**Interview**

Lance Neve

By Susan Jordan

Lance Neve was viciously beaten in a bar in Spencerport in March 2008 by a man who made anti-gay statements. On Dec. 23, his attacker, Jesse Parsons, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to five and a half years in prison on a second-degree assault charge.

Parsons would have received a year and a half less if he had not made an extraordinary statement to the judge on Nov. 20. He said, “I didn’t mean to hurt Lance as bad as I did, but he deserved what he got.”

Judge Keenan immediately called a halt to the proceedings, while police officers re-arrested Parsons and handcuffed him. Neve had received a threatening e-mail the night before from the mother of Parsons’ girlfriend, so officers whisked Neve away to another room, in case Parsons or his supporters planned to attack him again.

In addition to serving time, Parsons will pay Neve’s medical expenses of over $24,000. Neve experienced fractures to his face and skull and blood on the brain.

Lance will speak about his experiences at the Annual Crime Victims Walk, on May 2 at the Crime Victims Memorial in Highland Park. The walk begins at 9:30 a.m. at the Crime Victims Resource Center, 244 S. Plymouth Ave., and will go to the Memorial in Highland Park. The Gay Alliance urges members of the LGBT community to come out and support Lance and the others who will be speaking.

The Empty Closet recently spoke with Lance about his condition now and his feelings about the double ordeals of the attack and the trial.

**Empty Closet: How are you doing and do you have any continuing physical problems? How has this changed your life?**

Lance Neve: No physical problems. I’m 100 percent back to normal. It’s all more emotional than physical.

I have a really good support team, including Ozzie (Maldonado, his partner) and family members. It’s made us all grow so much closer. That’s also what I love about the Gay Alliance – Scott (Reuring) and all of them. I always knew they were there.

Before this, I had honestly never in my life had somebody have an issue that I was gay/ I lived in this perfect little world. When that happened, it shattered everything that I thought my world was. I had this perfect picture where people were always nice to me. That’s what hurts me the most – it’s changed my view of the world. I never thought something violent would happen to me. I’ve never surrounded myself with negative people.

**EC: What was the trial like for you?**

Lance Neve: The whole trial process was wonderful. The DA (Harry Luckless) was wonderful. I’d always heard horror stories about dealing with the system, but they treated me and Ozzie wonderful. The Ogdon Police Department, DA Luckless and his assistant – everyone was amazing.

The DA made the whole process very clear to us; he was very detailed and on top of it. It was said that we had to go on as long as we had to, trying someone who was clearly guilty. People need to know that they have nothing to fear from the police or legal system; they can be turned to.

**EC: How did you feel about Parsons’ statement that you “deserved what you got?”**

Lance Neve: Throughout the whole courtroom you could hear a gasp.

Before he spoke, I had a chance to talk and I said, “I’d like the court to know that I am showing sympathy in this case. I’ve found a way to forgive him, knowing he’s somebody’s son.” The reason I did this was to say, “You did this because I am who I am – but because I am who I am, I can forgive you.”

The judge said, “You’re a bigger man than most who walk into this courtroom. I respect you for being as forgiving as you are – but you don’t have to feel that way.”

That’s when I sat down and Jesse stood up and said, “I’m sorry. I beat Lance as bad as I did but he deserved what he got.”

It was a total slap in the face. I thought, you just said in front of me that you don’t care – you almost killed me and I deserved it? Because I’m gay? I have never been that angry and never felt that much hate.

When I woke up in the hospital after the attack, Ozzie and I talked (as I went in and out of consciousness) and I told Ozzie, “I have to forgive him, because if I don’t it will be on my shoulders.”

After Jesse said that, the six or seven officers present surrounded Jesse and handcuffed him immediately. Ozzie and I were taken into a back room immediately. The night before I had gotten an e-mail from Jesse’s girlfriend’s mom, saying “What goes around comes around” and what a bad person I am. There was a third-party order of protection for me; they were aware that I might still be in danger.

**EC: Have you been back to the Stuygerry (the bar where the attack occurred)? How have you in Spencerport reacted?**

Lance Neve: No, I will not go back to the Stuygerry. That was a rare thing (for us to be in a bar). We went there because a friend’s mother was beaten up by her boyfriend and this was meant to be a chance for her to get out of the house and to give her a good time. We don’t go out there anymore.

I’d say 90 percent of people in Spencerport (my home town) were very supportive and the other 10 percent just didn’t talk about it. Perfect strangers came up to me and shook my hand and told me, “I am so sorry.” An elderly woman told me that she is praying for me. I was shocked at the way people stood up for me – with open arms.

**EC: How has the Gay Alliance been helpful to you? What would you say to people who have experienced hate attacks or harassment?**

Lance Neve: The Gay Alliance was there for me right from the beginning. They helped to hand out fliers at the post office in Spencerport. Then Ozzie and I went to Albany for a gay rights rally and we met Scott and a lot of people from the Gay Alliance, and they let us know “you don’t have to go through this alone and you don’t have to keep quiet.”

I would tell people to call the Gay Alliance immediately. They can expect open arms and to really know that they are not alone. The Gay Alliance will let you know who to contact and how to contact them. For me, it was a smile and a hug; it was very warming to know that there’s somebody behind you.

Ove (Overmyer), EC staff reporter who reviewed Lance after the attack) was wonderful. We loved Ove! Everybody was just wonderful to us.

**EC: Anything you’d like to add?**

Lance Neve: I’d pretty much say that if you are a victim, let it be known as long as you can. You don’t have to go through this alone and you don’t have to keep quiet.

The Gay Alliance will let you know who to contact and how to contact them. For me, it was a smile and a hug; it was very warming to know that there’s somebody behind you.
arena case witness

Karen Anne Bills, a neighbor of the bar, said that Arena was driving her car through the parking lot after the altercation, according to the incident of which she was witness.

She and Dalesandro fell to the ground.

Defense attorney Damelio called the incident "an accident" that was "not meant to happen." Damelio said Arena acted with negligence but argued that it was not a dejected action. In her opening statement, arena had the chance to leave the parking lot when the fight expanded and moved away from her, but she made a 300-degree turn and hit five people, including her friends Dale- sandro and Bowers.

"I didn't do it on purpose," Damelio said.

Defense attorney Damelio told the jury that "the evidence at the arena was against Arena, as it showed that Arena was not the person who committed the crime.

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Philly to host march, rally for equality in May

Philadelphia's Equality Forum will host a march and rally for equality on May 3. These major programs were announced for the National Equality Rally at Independence Hall, following the March for Equality on Independence Mall.

In the National Constitution Center’s Kirby Auditorium, where then-Senator Barack Obama addressed the crowd in 2004, there will be a National Interfaith Service for Equality, activists, demonstrators and straight allies in the March for Equality on Independence Mall from the National Constitution Center to Independence Hall.

Regional, state and national organizations, people of color, progressive religious institutions and college GSAs and straight ally organizations are invited to co-organizers without cost or legal obligations.

Point scholarship to honor Lawrence King

Point Foundation (Poin) is the nation’s largest scholarship-granting organization for gay, bisexual and transgender (GBT) students of merit. Point provides financial support and leadership training, mentoring and hope to LGBT individuals who are marginalized because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Point provides its scholars with the financial ability to attend the nation’s foremost higher educational institutions and its donors and mentors with the rare satisfaction of directly investing in their careers and future in generation of leaders.

For more information about Point Foundation, please visit www.pointfoundation.org. For information about Equality Forum, visit www.equalityforum.com.

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Missing person

Brenda Marie Dennis, 25, and her sister 1995 Oldsmobile Delta 88 have been missing since Feb. 12. They were last seen fleeing at Weir Park in northeastern Rochester on Sunday, Feb. 12, and were last seen on March 1 at the corner of East Ridge Rd. and left there at 9:40 a.m. on 3/2-12/29. She is described as a 5’4” African-American female with black hair and brown eyes, weighing 140 lbs. She has a tattoo on her right arm of a black rose and a black ribbon. The family of Ms. Dennis has increased the initial reward for information leading to her recovery to $10,000.

Anyone who has spotted Ms. Dennis or her vehicle is asked to call 911, the Rochester Police at (585) 399-6313 or Clindermost (585) 433-9300.

For more information on the Human Rights Campaign, I thank Congresswoman Taucher for her continued leadership on issues of LGBT rights and, particularly, her sponsorship of the Military Readiness Enhancement Act, said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese.

"Nearly 12,000 qualified individuals have been discharged from the military because they are lesbian, gay, or never have regard to the skills and expertise they possess. It’s unthinkable that a policy that prizes bipartisanship and country of our nation should remain the law of the land. We look forward to working with Congress, the Administration, and the military to end Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Approximately 10 percent of American soldiers serve under the "Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell" should be repealed. Additionally, former President of the John Chafee of Staff General John Shalikashvili and more than 100 high ranking Generals and Admirals have said the policy is harming America’s national security and needs to be repealed. Former Secretary of State General Colin Powell has also said that it is time for the policy to be reviewed.

"This discriminatory law has been in place for over 15 years and will not be repealed by either Don't Ask, Don't Tell requires a partnership with the Administration. We look forward to working with the Administration in achieving repeal, an effort that must include a strategy for building support in the Congress and in the Capitol Hill, continued Solmonese.

The policy has been a miserable failure, said Mr. Solmonese, noting what of its champions promised, HRC has. It has resulted in skyrocketing discharge, evasion of federal and state law, deprived the U.S. of valuable Arab soldiers, caused unit cohesion by breaking up families and undemocratic trust between soldiers and embarrassed the nation, the "civil-military" gap and the country’s reputation in the eyes of alienating Americans who view the military as out of touch.

Susan SanFilippo, C.S.W.

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Religion and Republicanism are losing converts
By Wayne Besen

In pandering to the fanatic and the fearful, both religion and Repub­licanism may have compromised their future.

First, the Republican Party seems in an awfully big rush to implode with Rush Limbaugh as its mercurial mouthpiece. The GOP’s other savior, Michael Steele, is just a big mouth who seems more suited to Limbaugh’s talk show gig than chairman of the Party. The GOP’s first African American leader, Steele promised a “hip hop makeover” when the host interviewed Frank Schaeffer.

A former member of the Religious Right and author of God,” Schaeffer once-mighty Republican organization, Exodus International, is a perfect example. It travels the world to proclaim its “love” for homosexuals. Yet, a Board member, Don Schmierer, spoke at a Ugandan conference that pledged to “wipe out” gay practices. Schmierer joined Holocaust revisionist Scott Lively to urge Uganda to continue its persecution of gay people, including life sentences for the “crime” of homosexuality.

In early March, the Vatican defended the excommunication of a nine-year old Brazilian girl’s mother and doctors, who helped abort the pregnant child’s twins. The procedure was recommended as Christians have shortened direction in America.

The state of the modern GOP was best captured on CNN’s D.L. Hughley Show, when the host interviewed Frank Schaeffer. A former member of the Religious Right and author of “Crazy For God,” Schaeffer said the GOP had created a “hard-assed neo fascist kind of direction in America.”

He went on to say, “The Republican base is now made up of religious and neoconservative ideologies and the uneducated white underclass with a token person of color up front of the TV to obscure the all-white, all reactionary, all backward and there is no global-warming rubble reality.”

The Republican St. Louis is referring to have lately come out of the woodwork in Utah, where State Sen. Chris Butt­tars called GLBT “advocates” the “meanest bigots.” A right wing organization, America Forever, placed full-page ads in the Salt Lake dailies comparing gay men and lesbians to “druggies” and “bokers.”

Of course, Utah Republicans might know about these things. A new study reveals that the conservative state leads the nation with 5.47 Internet pornography subscribers per thousand.

Similar to the Republican Party, religious organizations have catered to the crazies for far too long. The “ex-gay” organization, Exodus International, is a perfect example. It travels the world to proclaim its “love” for homosexuals. Yet, a Board member, Don Schmierer, spoke at a Ugandan conference that pledged to “wipe out” gay practices. Schmierer joined Holocaust revisionist Scott Lively to urge Uganda to continue its persecution of gay people, including life sentences for the “crime” of homosexuality.

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Shall, the second (LGBTA). The first GSA

resources available for teachers to discuss

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of gay, lesbian and Straight Education

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Mathew-Lowe and Arpon were among

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an all-time high," he said. "Teachers stand

It was not the first time the Rochester School

To close the report with a safe school policy that included

In 1995 GLSTN became a national organization and hired its first full time staff person, GLSEN founder and Executive Director Kevin Jennings. In 1997, GLSEN staged its first national conference in Salt Lake City, Utah to respond to principals and superintendents' needs to ban all student groups in an effort to prevent the formation of GSAs in the state. It was also this year that GLSTN changed its name to the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, or GLSEN, in order to attract new members and focus the struggle for safe schools for all students, regardless of sexual orien- tion or gender identity/expression.

GSA

Gly-straight alliances are student organizations; found primarily in North American high schools and universities, that promote a safe school climate; provide a supportive environment; encourage continued social and educational support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth; and their activities are supported by GLSEN. GLSEN was started in Concord, Mass. by Kevin Jennings, who also happens to be a native of Wisconsin. The first public school gay-straight alliance was started at Newton South High School (Newton, MA) in 1996 by teacher Robert Parlin.

Rochester Alloy

The history of the and the struggle to create a safe environment for our young people here in Rochester continues.

On Oct. 8, 2008, GLSEN released the most comprehensive report ever on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students, the 2007 National School Climate Survey. The survey of 11,300 middle and high school students found that nearly nine out of 10 LGBT students (86.2 percent) experienced harassment at school in the past year, three-fifths (60.8 percent) felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orien- tation and about a third (32.7 percent) skipped a day of school in the past month because of feeling unsafe.

In Rochester at the Nov. 25, 2005 Rochester City School Board Meeting, a tall African-American student from Edis­on Tech, stood to address the board. In sharp contrast to the delighted students who had preceded him, a serious Gaylord Miller-Lowe looked down at his notes and began to describe what a day in school is like for him as a gay student.

"Things are so bad, I can't get an educa­tion," he said. "Every day, someone is harassing me and calling me names." One of his teachers, he said, jokingly calls him "Gaylord."

Marshall High student Joshua Arpon was next. "I feel homophobic has reached an all-time high," he said. "Teachers stand there and do nothing when someone calls you a faggot. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation shouldn't be tolerat­ed, just as racial discrimination shouldn't be tolerated."

Miller-Lowe and Arpon are not alone.

Verbal abuse and harassment over sexual orien­ tation and gender identity/expression in both city and suburban schools.

"In afraid sometimes to go into the bathroom," says Josh Window, another stu­dent at Marshall. "They (other boys) will say things like I'm going to rape you, or they'll turn around and put their butts up against the wall if I walk in. One day, they threw baby powder all over me. They said if I wanted to be a girl, I might as well smell like one. I don't want to be a girl."

"One kid asked me what I was carrying and if that was my purse," says Rush­ Henrietta High School student Joe Giro. "I told him, yes, what about it?"

"The constant teasing can really get you down," says Giro.

Miller-Lowe and Arpon were among more than a dozen students and faculty members who spoke for the first time at a Board meeting, trying to convince the board to act more aggressively about discrimina­tion and violence. They also urged the board to be more supportive of Gay-Straight Alliance clubs, organizations like GLSTN, and to add high-school stu­dents that discuss issues of diversity and discrimination and try to provide support for LGBT students.

Miller-Lowe and Arpon's presentation was not the first time the Rochester School Board had heard about gay students' prob­lems. A similar presentation was made by students and members of the gay com­munity in December 2002. In response, the School Board formed a 14-member Task Force on Gay, Lesbian, and Trans­gender Bias, representing the board, the Rochester Teachers Association, the Gay Alliance, and others. School board mem­ber Jim Bowers chaired the group, which issued its report in June 2004.

The report was a thin one, giving a brief summary of anecdotal evidence—rather than extensive documentation of harassment. "Incidents reported to the task force from 2003-04, says the report, "suggest that many RCSD teachers, staff, and administrators remain uncomfortable with and uncertain how to address LGBT students' issues."

The task force recommended the dis­trict include a statement in employee handbooks saying that the Rochester school district is a "safe and bias-free environment;" immediately implement top-down, district-wide sensitivity training for all school personnel and provide domestic partner benefits for district employees by 2006.

The board accepted all three rec­ommendations, and, despite the report's brevity, Bowers says the task force was "extremely productive, given where we started."

Rochester sensitivity trainings


GLSEN has a guide and videos that walk teachers and school administrators through the questions that come up dur­ing sensitivity training sessions: "How do I handle parent objections to the course of this school year. According to follow

During this school year, GLSEN Rochester will continue the sensitivity training began in 2005. Already the majority of RCSD students are undergoing training. The goal is to have all school personnel trained by the end of this school year. A Bias-Free Environment survey, the presence of support­ive staff contributes to a range of posi­tive indicators including fewer reports of missing school, greater academic achieve­ment, higher educational aspirations and a greater sense of belonging to their school community, and students from a school with a safe school policy that included protections based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression had fewer homophobic remarks, experienced lower levels of victimization related to their sexual orientation, were more likely to report to staff when confronted with homophobia-related remarks and were more likely to report incidents of harassment and assault to school staff.

Currently, GLSEN has registered more than 4,000 GSAs, has approximately 40 full time staff, a governing board of 20 members and two advisory committees at the national level. Students in schools with a Gay-Straight Alliance reported hearing fewer homophobic remarks, experienced less harassment and assault because of their sexual orientation and gender expression, were more likely to report incidents of harassment and assault to school staff, were less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orienta­tion or gender expression, were less likely to miss school because of safety concerns and reported a greater sense of belonging to their school community. Here in the Rochester area, there are GSAs at Brighton HS, Rush­ Henrietta HS, East High, Marshall, Chas­ lotte, School of the Arts, and in Pittsford and Webster, to name a few.

GSA Rochanc and the Gay­straight alliances in the Rochester area continue to work toward creating a safe environment for their members. Shoulders To Stand Against Harassment, or STAH, was a local group in 1990, the Gay and Lesbian Independent School Teachers Network (GLSTN) began as a volunteer group of 70 gay and lesbian edu­cators. At that time, there were two Gay­Straight Alliances (GSAs) in the nation, only one state with policy in place to pro­

GAY-Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading nation­al education organization focused on creating safe schools for all students. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envision a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. shouldered the brunt of the uncomfortable work, or GLSEN, in order to attract new straight allies (LGBTA). The first GSA

On April 1, 1970 - The Advocate estimates that there are approximately 6,857,000 gays and lesbians living in the United States.

1995 - The first classes are held at the Harvey Milk School for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth, a New York city-funded in response to "Harvey Milk" is the first gay high school in America.

April 7 - The first "Gay Community Center" is opened in the United States. It is located in San Francisco.

1974 - The American Psychiatric Asso­ciation removes its "sickness" definition of homosexuality.

April 14


1981 - The First Gay Erotic Film Awards is held in Los Angeles.

April 23

1950 - The Hate Crimes Statute Act is signed into law by President George Bush. It is the first U.S. bill to use the phrase "sexual orientation."

April 24

1953 - MCC Reverend Troy Perry joins 1,500 gay and lesbian couples in a marriage at the IRS building in Washington, D.C.

April 25

1979 - Jury selection begins in the trial of Dan White for the murder of S.F. Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk.

1993 - The third March on Washington has an estimated attendance of more than ten million people.

April 28

1977 - Florida Governor Reuben Askew asks Miami voters to rescind a recently passed gay rights ordinance, saying, "I would not want a known homosexual teaching my children." 1981 - Marilyn Barnett files a palimony suit against tennis icon Billie Jean King. At the time, King denies that she is a lesbian, although she acknowledges the affair.

April 30

1957 - Ellen DeGeneres' character Ellen Morgan comes out on her television show during "The Puppy Episode." An estimated 42 million viewers watch the show.

**Picnic Food Menu for 2009 Gay Pride Picnic**

Sunday, July 19, 2009 is THE day to look forward to great Picnic Food! Genesee Valley Park, with warm sun, green grass and birds singing will be the background for Rochester Caterers, JC Barbeque and Abbot's to provide hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, chicken, ribs, pulled pork, fried pickles, salt potatoes, corn on the cob, ice cream and more to picnic goers at this year's Gay Pride Picnic. Check it out at GAGV website, www.gayalliance.org.

The Gay Pride Picnic is a major fundraising event for the Gay Alliance. Proceeds from the Picnic support the Youth, Education/Outreach, NYP and Community Safety Programs of the GAGV, and The Empty Closet. The proceeds also cover the cost of the Picnic. You may purchase your tickets online or at Oneida Bank, Equal Ground or the Parkleigh.

**Ticket Prices for the 2009 Gay Pride Picnic:**
- Adult: $20
- Child: $10
- Gate Price: $15

Volunteers still needed

For the Picnic to run smoothly we need approximately 90 volunteers willing to make a commitment of a minimum of two hours between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. on the day of the Picnic. The tasks to be done cover all aspects of the Picnic before and the day of - make pre-picnic phone calls, write articles, contact groups, set up, tear down, ticket sales, wristbanding, trash collection, putting up the fence, and security. Everyone who volunteers will have fun, meet new people and get a ticket to the Picnic. Thanks to those who have volunteered in the past. We welcome your help again.

If your organization or group would like to have a table at the Picnic to advertise events, products or services, or to just spread the word about what you do, please contact the GAGV at 244-9155 x 22 to be a vendor or email us at picnic@gagv.org, or go to GAGV website, www.gayalliance.org.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Gay Pride Picnic in the warm summer sun!

**Plan now for Dining Out with Friends Month: host your own event in Sept.**

By Evelyn Bailey

The month of September will be Dining Out With Friends Month. During this month there will be many "dinners" held by a variety of groups and individuals.

The purpose of Dining Out With Friends Month is two-fold: to enjoy the wonderful experience of sharing a meal with friends, and to financially support the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley and its programs.

The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley is dedicated to cultivating a healthy, inclusive environment where individuals of all sexual orientations and gender expressions are safe, thriving, and enjoy full civil rights.

Our community of friends includes our gay brothers and sisters, and also our non-gay allies, of which there are many.

September is a month to celebrate our friendships, and the many ways in which we support and help each other to be who we are, to be free, and to be equal.

Be the first in your circle of friends to commit to hosting a “dinner” during the month of September. We are asking for a $40 suggested donation from your dinner guests. Hosts will receive a free ticket to the Gala Reception. The time, cost and energy of hosting a dinner is in itself a large donation. The Dining Out With Friends Committee and the Gay Alliance are grateful to you, our host volunteers.

Regardless of when during the month of September you have your “dinner” with friends, each person will receive a ticket to the Gala Dessert Reception at the City Hall Armoury on Sept. 25. Planning for the evening has already begun. We are looking for new ideas. Volunteers will be welcomed with open arms. Volunteer and meet new people, and have some fun. For hosting information or to volunteer contact us at 244-5450 ext. 26 or e-mail us at diningoutwithfriends@gagv.us.

Don’t delay — be a host or volunteer. Contact us now!!!

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Objective advice for the LGBT community from one of your own.
The Little is a home for independent, foreign films in Rochester

To The Editor,

I would like to respond to Eric Bellmann's article titled "Growing Up: You Gays Did That!" and his statement that The Little Theatre "ignores" certain films. The Little is Rochester's home for independent and foreign films. Unfortunately not all films are available to us for a number of reasons.

There are many worthy films released each year (there were over 573 titles released in 2008), some of which we have attempted to bring to The Little, but they are simply not made available for a theatrical run in our area. Films may receive a one-week run in major markets, like New York and Los Angeles, as a way to create buzz around the film. The film distributors then decide how many markets they will release the film in.

Unfortunately Rochester is considered a secondary market based on our population size, so some of the smaller films do not reach us. The Little is considered a theatrical venue, so if a film is not designated for theatrical release, then we do not have the opportunity to show it, regardless of how interested we may be. It is wonderful that The Dryden Theatre is able to bring some of these films into Rochester for one-time screenings. But we are two distinctly different venues, so it's comparing apples to oranges.

In programming for the theatre, I always strive to bring a balance of films which I believe will be of interest to our community. Sometimes they may be larger independent releases, such as Slumdog Millionaire or Milk, but many times they are the smaller releases, like the award winning Frozen River and Man on Wire, or niche films such as Chris & Don: A Love Story and The Visitor. Of the 88 films which we showed during 2008, over 75 percent were true independent and foreign films. Others have noticed that blurry line that Hollywood has created as to what is indie or commercial, but they have always been what our supporters refer to as "Little movies". At the recent Film Independent's Spirit Awards, which honor the best in independent film, 100 percent of the award winning films and performances had been shown at The Little in the past year.

As a not-for-profit cultural arts organization which will be celebrating its 80th anniversary this year, The Little has always stayed true to our mission of supporting the independent visions and voices of artists, be it through our regular film programming or as the home for Rochester's premier film festivals. Rest assured, Mr. Bellmann, that we will continue to bring the best in independent and foreign films to our community for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Bob Russell
Executive Director
The Little Theatre

Eric Bellmann replies: Nonetheless, the points remain that if one loves movies, one should be aware of what the Dryden shows. And, of an small consequence, the parking is convenient and ample.

The Cover of LIFE

While three brothers are off fighting World War II, the women they left behind all move in with the men's mother. A rough and tumble female photographer from Life Magazine decides that this is worthy of a feature, but just what is the whole story?

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The Empty Closet

A Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

APRIL 2009 • NUMBER 422 • GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESEE VALLEY • THE EMPTY CLOSET
GOOD LUCK, KRAIG: Friends and family gathered together at Eros Restaurant and Bar in the East End on Feb. 19 for a bon voyage party for Kraig Pannell. Pannell, who was the program director at MOCHA, has accepted a position with the NYS Health Department’s AIDS Institute and is moving to the Albany area. We’ll miss you, Kraig! L-R: Dominick Rodriguez, Kraig Pannell and Dudley Duberry. Photo: Ove Overmyer

NEW YORKER: Brian Quinn, certified personal trainer, and Tom Somerville, artist and yoga instructor, during LGBT Health Week. Photo: Garnetta Ely

CHARLES TYSON & JUDITH BAUMAN at the Health Fair. Photo: Garnetta Ely

YES ON K8: Harry Bronson, Tom Ferrarese, Kate Clinton and Jo Meleca-Voigt at Clinton’s March 15 performance in Rochester, which benefitted LGBT FOGG. Photo: Garnetta Ely

ST. PATRICK’S DAY: NO QUEERS NEED APPLY. Eric Bellmann at Manhattan’s St. Patrick’s Day protest; Irish gays were once again denied permission to march openly in the Parade — although they do so in Dublin. Photo: Eric Bellmann

ARI hosts Dine Out Help Out event
By Ove Overmyer
On March 11, select restaurants and cafes across the region donated part of their food and beverage proceeds to AIDS Rochester Inc. (ARI) as part of the nonprofit’s Dine Out Help Out 2009.

Now in its fourth year, the event has grown from 14 restaurant venues in 2005 to 35 in 2008. This year, only 20 establishments participated. In this recession, nonprofit organizations have seen cuts in state and federal aid, making fundraisers like this event even more important.

According to Brian Doran, an AIDS Rochester spokesperson, last year’s event pulled in $14,016, plus an additional $10,000 in corporate and private donations. He reported that these are challenging times for most businesses — and especially tough for the nonprofits.

“I’ve seen a decrease in sponsors and funders for our different events,” said Doran. He added, “Corporations may be giving the same or giving a tad bit less than what they’ve given in the past. This year we dipped with the economy. A lot of restaurants had closed and were unable to participate this year.”

Doran travelled to several venues during the dinner hour and reported that most restaurants were busy. “It was really heartwarming to see,” he said.

At Equal-Grounds Coffee and Gift Shoppe at 750 South Ave., manager Randy Torgerson reported a brisk business on March 11, also the same night Governor David Paterson was in town. “It was pretty steady all night, and we had a lot of traffic in for desserts later on,” he said.

For the first time, Dine Out Help Out 2009 extended its reach beyond food and beverage establishments. With a mention, Geva Theatre donated $10 from every ticket sold for that night’s performance of Sweeney Todd.

With over 25 years of caring, AIDS Rochester, Inc. leads a compassionate community-wide effort within the eight county Finger Lakes region that provides a continuum of programs and services, including education, prevention, advocacy and support services for people infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

AIDS Rochester reaches 20,000 people every year through its efforts. Approximately 1,500 people are now living with HIV and AIDS in the Rochester area.
Rochester rally on March 5 challenges Paterson on tax reform

Around 400 local residents representing a diverse coalition of community organizations rallied at the Liberty Pole on March 5 under the banner of Fair Share Tax Reform, to call on the Governor and state legislators to support raising personal income taxes on New York’s wealthiest residents, as a better way of closing the state’s huge budget shortfall than the deep cuts to healthcare, education, and other vital services that have been proposed in Governor Paterson’s budget.

On March 27, after months of opposing tax increases for the wealthiest, Gov. Paterson and state lawmakers were said to be near an agreement to raise those taxes. Participating organizations on March 5 included the Gay Alliance, the Catholic Family Center, Greater Rochester Community of Churches, Center for Disability Rights, Grace United Methodist Church, Pride at Work, Metro Council for Teen Potential, CONEA, Metro Justice, New York Students for a Responsible Budget, New York State United Teachers, Alliance for Quality Education, Working Families Party, Bethesda Child Development Center, Rochester Labor Council, Rochester Surrogate Care, and many more.

The rally was just one of several being held around the state to protest the budget proposal announced by Governor Paterson in December, which includes $9 billion in devastating cuts to essential institutions and programs working families depend on — including schools and colleges, hospitals and nursing homes, aid to local communities across New York, and a broad range of social services.

The flat rate imposed by former Governor Pataki created a situation where someone earning $40 million a year pays the same rate as someone earning $40,000. Speakers at the rally called for a fair and reasonable proportionate increase.

Details of the Fair Share Tax Reform Campaign can be found at www.fairsharereform.com.
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Multi-use theatre space opens in Neighborhood of the Arts

With Renaissance Square’s original plans for two smaller theatres a distant memory, Doug Rice, founding director of ARTWalk in Rochester’s Neighborhood of the Arts, is providing new hope to local organizations looking for performing space.

“After 10 successful years of running ARTWalk, I felt I needed a new project,” says Rice. “At the same time, the church at 142 Atlantic Ave. – which had been for sale for three years with several failed deals – was still empty. Buying it for this purpose seemed like a ‘heaven-sent’ solution to everyone’s problems.”

The name that Rice came up with – MuCCC (pronounced "mack") – may not sound like a dream come true, but what it stands for certainly is: Multi-Use Community Cultural Center.

MuCCC will provide community groups with a turn-key, handicapped-accessible performing space with the flexibility (due to a moveable stage) to seat audiences up to 175. The 4,000-square-foot space will include a lobby, concessions area, lounge, balcony, offices, seating area, dressing rooms, a dressing room and its own parking lot (across the street) with a handicap-accessible ramp and a parking lot. “Another important aspect in that groups will have the ‘luxury’ of actually rehearsing in their performance space.”

MuCCC opened March 14, with a rare production of *The Lambeth Project: Let the Light Shine On*, a series of monologues by J. R. Teter, based on the life experiences of people from all over the world, of every sexual orientation and persuasion.

Mr. Teter has been compiling stories, via a series of online interviews, from people in the LGBTQ community since 2003. This year’s installation is part of an ever-growing tapestry of work, based around this year’s theme of the sun. (April 3, 4, 5 at 8 p.m.; April 5 at 2 p.m.)

In *The Last Sunday in June*, sun is given a more literal meaning, as the events of the play transpire during the summer. The play tests the concepts and stereotypes of the “gay play” as a group of friends meet in a Greenwich Village apartment for the pride parade on the last Sunday in June. The play attempts to redefine gay relationships through a series of unanswered questions.

Can gay culture exist in the suburbs away from bars and parades? Can a partnership exist without sex? What defines a marriage? The play primarily explores this through the largely platonic relationships of Tom and Michael, a couple in a slump about to move from the village to the suburbs and James and Susan, a gay man and a straight woman who decide to opt out of their former failed relationships through a legal marriage, to each other. The playwright, Jonathan Tolins, is best known for his writing for *Queer As Folk*, a cable television series that explored similar themes. (Performance dates: April 17, 18 at 8 p.m., April 19 at 2 p.m.)

In *Raincheck*, sun is interpreted as a central force within a system, in this case a family member around which the other characters unite and gravitate. Raincheck above all else is a love story. It explores the capacity to love within family, friendship, and romance.

Gwen and Thelma are women living in the same small town they grew up in. The women were close friends in high school, yet a series of events including Thelma’s recent divorce has created a divide between the two. When Gwen’s job as a nurse leads her to the home of Thelma’s elderly grandmother Pauly and great-aunt Flore, the two are reunited not just in their love for the aging sisters, but for each other as well. Thelma overcomes her *Raincheck* continues page 2)

What’s springing up in April/May:
**Rent**, Fagan Dance, more

The coming of spring to the Rochester area will be accompanied this year by an unusual series of opera, Broadway musical, ballet and modern dance performances.

The Broadway musical *Rent*, with gay content (and written by a gay man, the late Jonathan Larson) will be at the Auditorium Theatre from April 21 to 26.

In May, travel over the rainbow with Dorothy (May 26-31), when “The Wizard of Oz”, a “musical celebration of the immortality of 1939 film, arrives at the Auditorium Theatre. The show is 7:30 p.m. on May 26 through 28; 8 p.m. May 29; 2 p.m. May 30 and 1 and 6:30 p.m. May 31.Call *Springing Rand N (continued) page 2)

Multi-use theatre space opens in Neighborhood of the Arts

Bread & Water Theatre’s Rainbow Festival: Here comes the sun

Bread and Water Theatre’s theme for the 2009 Rainbow Theatre Festival is based on the color yellow, which represents the sun in the rainbow Pride flag designed by Gilbert Baker. Artistic Director J. R. Teter interprets the theme of sun in many ways in this year’s three productions: *The Lambeth Project: Let the Light Shine On*, *Aloud and* *Thelma and Joni (“Raincheck”)*.

Please note: the image on page 2 is not included in this page 1 text. Please refer to the full document for the image.
fears surrounding her own sexuality and takes the rain check on the relationship with Gwen se’s been missing. (Performance dates: April 24 and 26 and May 1-2 at 8 p.m.; April 27 and 3 at 3 p.m.)

Founded in 2000, Bread & Water Theatre is committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to a broad-based audience and acting as a positive agent of change in its community. Under the artistic direction of J.R. Teel, SWT develops theatre that speaks to our living, evolving, and dramatically changing world, to spark conversations and rare works of drama, and aspires to be a major force in American theatre, providing audiences with challenging, compelling, contemporary drama and innovative community outreach programs.

The Rainbow Theater Festival will be presented at 243 Rosedale St. (New Life Presbytery Church) beginning April 3 and running through May 3. Specific performance dates are listed above. Single ticket prices range from $5-$12 and may be purchased in person at the Bread & Water Theatre box office or through BreadAndWaterTheatre.org.

For more information, call (585) 271-5523, III

[CD Review: (springing from page 1)]

(585-232-1900 or visit www.tickethmaster.com)

Opera fans will enjoy the magnifi-
cent comic opera “Le Nozze di Figaro” by Mozart on April 24 at 2 p.m. and on April 5 at 2 p.m., an Easter Opera Theatre production at the Eastern Theatre, 26 Gibbs St. Tickets $10-$20; call 585-458-2100 or visit www.easterntheatre.com/dcncerts.

In May, Garth Fagan Dance will perform with the Greek Athena Show Choir at 2 and 8 p.m. on May 23, at the Performing Arts Center at Greece Athena High School, 800 Long Pond Rd, in Greece. Tickets are $40 or $25. 585-454-3206 or www.gargffaganforwardance.org.

Garth Fagan returns on May 28 for “Play on Two Renaissance Men,” Garth Fagan and actor/director Stephen McKinley Henderson will look at the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and its influence on playwright August Wilson and artist Romare Bearden. 7:30 p.m., Geva Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Blvd. $45, $35 seniors, $20 students; 585-454-3300 or www.gevatheatrecenter.org. (In addition, “Fahrenheit 451” by Brad Wilson will run May 19 through June 19 at Geva Theatre Center.)

Enjoy the spring. But watch out for flying monkeys over East Main St. and the Neighborhood of the Arts... III

Milk brings home

Oscars for Penn, Black

“You connie, hom-loving sons of guns,” Sean Penn said to the audience as he accepted his Oscar for Best Actor, 2008. “I did not expect this... I know how hard I make it to appreciate me.”

He added, referring to anti-gay protcators near LA’s Kodak Theatre, “For those who saw the signs of hatred as our opportunity to drive in to see Harvey Milk, I did not expect this and... I know how hard I make it to appreciate me.”

Milk was nominated in eight categories and received the Oscar for Best Original Screenplay, 2008. “Ain’t Woman Enough,” was written by Dustin Lance Black and directed by Sean Penn, 2008. It is online at glaadblog.org, 2009/02/22/dustin-lance-blacks-moving-acceptance-speech.

Milk depicts the life of Harvey Milk, an outspoken advocate for LGBT equality who successfully ran for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and became one of the nation’s first openly gay elected officials before his assassination in 1977.

During the highly competitive awards season, Milk received multiple nominations and honors, including the Stanley Kramer Award from the Producers Guild of America, which recognizes work that dramatically illuminates provocative social issues. The film was chosen as one of the top 10 films of the year by the American Film Institute and the National Board of Review. It was selected as “Best Picture” by the New York Film Critics Circle, and was awarded Best Actor Ensemble at the Critics’ Choice Awards.

In addition to the Oscar and Spirit Award, writer Dustin Lance Black received the Writers Guild Award for Best Original Screenplay and was honored at the Writers Guild Awards with the 2009 Paul Selvin Award, which recognizes written work that embodies the spirit of constitutional rights and civil liberties.

For his role as Harvey Milk, Sean Penn received the Screen Actors Guild Award. Critics Choice Award, Los Angeles Film Critics Association Award, and New York Film Critics Circle Award. Josh Brolin was also honored for his acting work in Milk, playing Harvey Milk’s troubled killer Dan White.

Coming to DVD – GLBT Style!

CAmpcelled by Robby Morris

Coming soon to a video store near you... DDB – Doubt – available on April 7... John Patrick Shanley adapts his own play about a concerned man who suspects that a high-ranking priest has been sexually abusing one of his students. Star ing Academy Award nominee Meryl Streep, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Amy...
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volumes explore a historically underreplicated journey of self-discovery, affirmation and love.

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for GLBT books is the Stonewall Book Award winner is

a beautiful homeless actress rear ends and friends relentless efforts to fix her car in this lesbian romantic screwball comedy.

*Release dates are subject to change!

Library Association announces 2009 Stonewall Book Awards

The first and most enduring award for GLBT books is the Stonewall Book Awards, sponsored by the American Library Association’s Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table.
The first award was presented in 1976 and initiated by famed activist Barbara Gittings as a grassroots acknowledgment honoring groundbreaking works in GLBT publishing. The Stonewall Book Awards became an official American Library Association award in 1986.

The history of the Book Awards has mirrored the growth of the GLBT publishing industry. Although in the first few years of the award, the committee had only a handful of books from which to choose, by 1995 they had to select winners from a list of over 800 eligible titles.

The 2009 Barbara Gittings Literature Award winner is “Light Fell” by Evan Fallenberg, published by Soho Press. Set in the context of Professor Joseph Licht’s 50th birthday party, this debut novel sensitively expresses and portrays the dilemma of an Israeli gay man who 20 years before left his wife and five young sons for the love of another man. Now, Joseph is trying to reconcile this life changing decision with his responsibility to his family, his spirituality, and his God. With rich characterization and eloquent writing, Fallenberg explores the inner lives of a family and the universal applicability of the social and religious issues they face.

The 2009 Israel Fishman Non-Fiction Award winner is ’Dishonorable Passions: Sexuality in America, 1861-2003’ by William N. Eskridge Jr., published by Viking. This landmark volume explores a historically underrepresented area of GLBT legal and social scholarship. The destructive impact of sodomy laws is traced through their evolution and the consequences for men and women who were imprisoned by their creation and enforcement. It makes a complex subject approachable for a general audience. This is the perfect marriage of scholarship and readability.

The Stonewall honor books in literature are “The Deception” by Joseph Oshlan (St. Martin’s Press); “A Perfect Woman, A Novel” by David Cleaveland (Bloomsbury) and “The Sealed Letter” by Emma Donoghue (Harcourt).

In keeping with the Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Round Table promotes and defends access to information by or about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people and provides bibliographic service to libraries, libraries, and library users. It was founded in 1970 and currently has over 900 members. This year’s awards will be presented during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, July 9-15.

NCLR challenges homophobia in sports

On March 10, the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) announced the publication of “The Positive Approach: Recognizing, Challenging, and Eliminating Negative Recruiting Based on Actual or Perceived Sexual Orientation,” by Alain Claude Carroll. “Putting an end to negative recruiting is critical not only to protect LGBT players and coaches, but also to attract and retain the best, most qualified coaches. As long as any athlete or coach can be harmed by being tagged with the lesbian or gay label, the goal of achieving true equality in sports will remain out of reach.”

In the first NCLR Sports Project Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Think Tank, convened by NCLR and co-sponsored by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in October, 2010, top sports leaders from across the country, including NCAA leaders, athletic directors, coaches and athletes, attorneys, conference commissioners, college presidents, researchers, and executives of national coaching organizations, came together to discuss the impact of negative recruiting based on actual or perceived sexual orientation.

The strategic discussion at the Think Tank ultimately resulted in this publication: The Positive Approach. It defines the problem, outlines practical steps for preventing negative recruiting, and includes a forward-looking model policy to eliminate negative recruiting based on both sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

“Equal opportunity in sport is a core principle that should be deeply valued and rigorously pursued,” said Dr. Pat Griffin. “NCLR, the NCAA and The Women’s Sports Foundation have worked to create a ‘level playing field’ where people are judged on the merits for their talent, capacity for hard work, and contributions to sport rather than personal characteristics — such as sexual orientation.”

In 2001, NCLR made history by becoming the first LGBT national organization to tackle the rampant homophobia and transphobia in sports with the launch of the Sports Project. Since the Project’s inception, NCLR has worked to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in sports through advocacy, outreach, and litigation. Under the leadership of former NATA women’s basketball championship coach and athletic director Helen Carroll, NCLR has provided assistance to hundreds of high school, university, and professional athletes, coaches, and sport personnel. The Sports Project works on all levels of athletic competitions, from the NCAA to the NFL, to ensure that LGBT athletes can compete and participate openly and equally.

The Positive Approach is available in PDF format online at: http://www.nclr.org/sports

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Travel

Eastern Townships of Quebec
WHERE ROUTINE IS ROUTINE
By Merle Esat

A question about Quebec cuisine was posed to a "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" contestant who had been called "poitine," as to what the brown gravy and choice cheeses were placed on. The contestant said, "barbequed ribs with dipping," he passed up the idea that it was over French Fries. Bye, bye, contestants. You're lucky, the ducks will emerge from the lake and allow you to feed them. These are not the same ducks that the Restaurant Review: GOOD LUCK
By Paul Hoffman

Good Luck opened in the former space of Fabrics and Findings onander Avenue near the Village Gate on August (the eighth month) 8, 2008. The word for "eigh" in Chinese is considered lucky, and a lucky sign that means "prosper," All those eights would indeed be considered a lucky sign for Good Luck. Good Luck became the number one restaurant when the owners got that advice from associates, while putting together their business plan.

Good Luck is owned by Mike Calabrese, owner of Javas, Chick-Ent, and general manager of Javas and Chef Dan Marrello, who heads up the kitchen. The original concept was to feature the bar and to limit the menu to simple pub fare, including cheeses, character items and other simple food. When the concept for Good Luck came together, the menu grew, as did the square footage the restaurant would ultimately occupy.

The concept of Good Luck is a restaurant scenes very "New York City," but the amount of space would make most New York City bistro operators green with envy. A large and very popular bar is next to the bustling open kitchen. The bar is great for people watching, as we've already seen several local celebrities there.

The dining room is partitioned from the kitchen by large banquettes. There was a factory before it was a fabric store, so it is cavernous, with tall ceilings, brick walls, and wood floors. Blocks of windowed beams and pillars. As the crowd grows, so does the noise level, to the point that background music would be welcome.

Some sound-absorbing materials would be a welcome addition to lower the roar of the crowd.

Chef Marrello graduated from the Institute of Culinary Education (ICE) in New York and worked at the Genesee Valley Club, Max at Eastman Place, 2 Vine and the New York Wine and Culinary Center in Cayuga, NY. His menu is imaginative and his talent and knowledge of his craft readily apparent. The menu (the current top of the menu) is the phrase "Food to Share." Some of the items are typical entrée site, but many are smaller portions. The menu is also chomphographed in the usual sense of appetizer, salad then entrée; here, it's the food served tapas style. Portions are designed so that they are ready. This style of food preparation lends itself to ordering several dishes for everyone to sample.

We think of the concept of Food to Share as interactive dining. Several of my friends and I had enjoyed something similar the minute it's occurring, especially when the experience is as positive as it usually is here.

We've been coming to Good Luck for several months and have seen the second, third and fourth editions of the menu. Menu changes are based upon seasonal availability of items, as well as how well they are received by diners. Menu changes are based upon seasonal availability of items, as well as how well they are received by diners.

The Good Luck Burger ($17) is cooked to your specifications. It's one pound of quality ground beef on a large roll, cut into signature and served with a large order of salted string fries, a side portion of lettuce "slaw" and several drops of a sweet mustard sauce. It takes the concept of a burger and fries to a whole new level.
Growing Up

By Eric Bellman

It begins innocuously, of course. Life gives up its secrets and absurdities. Is it make-up, a spatter from a broken egg, or what? Nothing worthwhile a second thought, well, maybe a half thought more.

Then a few weeks later, another spot, this one in the neck. Oh, and now another, in the bra. Is it make-up, a spatter from a broken egg, or what? Nothing worthwhile, a second thought, well, maybe a half thought more.

The out patient procedure is a snap. Adult Child Number Two brings her home only two hours later. No pain. I have screamed, "Get the prescription. It's a new anti-mottotop for the under medicated, they are co-dependent beasts." I am not the calmest person in her life. When I talk with her on the phone, anxious for the report, she is cooking soup for the weekend. I refer her to my bed for three days minimum with dozens of doughnuts, but that's just a small amount of queen for you.

However, there is the matter of waiting for the biopsy. Back to stuffed feelings, forced chill, resolution.

Then I turn on the TV. All hell breaking loose in San Francisco. The case has made the legal papers, in question, in question, in question. Very ugly, very vocal and it is, if nothing else, another wake up call.

Instead of the usual picture of a Chinese menu of appointments. Feelings crash into one another. No big deal, just routine, then deal understood.

Ah, yes, scary. The seemingly longer waits for returned phone calls. And that is when one must remember oneself to be cool-headed, methodical.

An array, a sonogram, an MRI, blood tests.

All in different offices, all with different support personnel to talk with, schedule through. It takes on its own life and, for a while, the distance one from the underlying fear: is it cancer?

Tests which are essential are nowhere to be found. Tests to be done. One must be forwarded, faxed.

Sometimes that works, others times one is told the tests haven't arrived. Someone is on vacation, someone else is out of town for person A, B, or C. A quiet urgency grows.

One never hears the word cancer.

This is the exploratory, diagnostic phase, the preliminaries. There is, it turns out, no odor of government-mandated thermostat temperatures, nor of the too-scary-to-use-at-night place, near the nipple. Then a test comes back bunched, or not clear enough which is as good.

Surgery is avoided that way. My body was redone, one learns there are two spots, two locations, not bad news.

Going through surgery is planned. It is a surgery but that word isn't used. It's a surgery but that word isn't used. It's the old days when gay life was zippy and full of movement. I do sometimes marvel at how it's improved for my minority during my long life. But in the face of the surgical operating, I am less content to hold my tongue.

I have signed on for equal rights, will I like to sign on in my time?

E-mail: ELBCADGR@GTDU

Cleaning My Closet

INVISIBLE STORIES

By Meredith Silverberg

The gray wad of tape is half a cen­

timeter thick. I have stuck it to a

scratched CD store that very wad

of paper was my first attempt to

rub down the tape around the shank of his going-steady symbol to make it stand out in my proud fin­
gure. I am a Frances Hauser, I amafraid to say, a true highlight of my ninth grade life. After all, Mickey's hand was my first lover.

My large, scratchy, with its red fake-leather cover and black bundles, bagged with autobiographical accumulations. No computer, public library, caption was any easier, my old days. I wasn't interested in fancy presentation. Oh no, I was a dedicated member of the University of Ephemera. I diligently glued in every single paper memento, I smoothed scab talcum powder onto it, I added everything there was to add to the too-scary-to-use-at-night place.

Another snapped scrap hangs on my wall of Daddy's Kocko moments... "Three Girls And A Gas Pump," Leslie, Betty, Meredith, and White Flash.

Another Leslie, his ceiling lamp and wearing a girl's hat (which, 48 years later, Leslie has dis­
tached on his head in ballroom)."

Mommy/Betty and her youngest three-dimensional scrapbook. It has time for recovery? And to ask Jack, his days on stage with the Jewel Box Proprietor, for that honor was whole.

But behind the satisfaction of being a successful businessman lay the story of the girl he felt he was not a fighting soldier. His entire physical had revealed diabetes, making him ineligible for battle, labeled 4F. To him it meant "for failure.

However, all through those WWII years he compensated to a wound­
selled self-respect, wars swinging the numerous bribes offered by those who did more galls than their rational amount. And so he told his son, although the metal sign over his station read: "THE EMPTY CLOSET. Proprietor," for that honor was whole.

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tion would be discovered. No matter how often I measured, I couldn't break the code. Thirty-four H couldn't be right. Then I remembered that a local JC Penny's second-floor housed a clang­destine lingerie department — isolated from less seductive apparel like overalls and galoshes. As Mona and I rode the elevator, I felt my chest tighten. Fortunately, when we reached the second floor, we were the only customers, and a kind saleswoman took pity and agreed to measure Mona. Of course, Mona had to tell the woman about my errors in attempts at measuring. Next, Mona pointed out the brass she was interested in, Flirtitude. "All the girls wear them," was her reasoning.

I noticed that some of them had padding on the bottoms. Pushup bras I protested! Even those of us caught in the church of the gay lifestyle have our scruples. Mona and I argued as I stood among the Flirtitudes, squeezing brass to separate the t-shirt style from the pushups. Suddenly I realized just how hopelessly I was. Squeezing brass in a sea of silks and lace and satins did nothing for me. I may as well have been squeezing grapefruits at the local food co-op. Who was I kidding? Recovery programs could never help me. After much squeezing and arguing, Mona and I left the store weighted down with a sack full of brass. It was Christmas­time, and right outside Penny's sat Santa Claus. I could tell from his smile that he knew I had just done something naugh­ty. I tried to sneak past him, but Mona announced, "I want to have my picture taken with Santa."

"I couldn't believe my cars. In vain, I reminded her that she was 12 years old and that she had just bought Flirtitude brass. But she refused to see the logic of my argument. I knew then that conserv­ative evangelicals were right (as in cor­rect). Queens should not parent! My gay lifestyle had led my daughter to make a mockery of Santa and now we have the photograph of Santa, Mona, and a sack full of brass as a constant reminder.

Later that evening, Mona and I talked about all the amazing changes that she's going through, and we chatted about our shopping excursion. I reminded her that there are women in her life that she can talk to (or shop with for bras) should she feel the need. I also reminded her that there is nothing about her that makes her dads uncomfortable, even if we're not very good at figuring out bra sizes.

Being mom raising a daughter has presented us with many wonderful chal­lenges, but so has being European Ameri­can parents raising an African American child and the list goes on. Most impor­tant, we work hard to remind Mona, through our words and through our actions, that she can come to us with anything. Just another one of those flaws in our gay lifestyle.

Random Reveries ONE GOOD TURN

By Paul Johnstone

Who says that mankind has turned into a bunch of cynical, self-absorbed and thoughtless souls? OK, I admit it, I sometimes do.

However, just when I think that the world is going to hell in a handbasket, I bear a story that pricks me right up and makes me smile. It never ceases to amaze me that among all of the stories of people losing their homes and livelihood, the continuing war, miss­ing children, homicides, spousal abuse, embezzle­ment and other unruly acts, there are still stories of genuinely honest and down-to-earth people who want to make the world a better place by spreading niceness.

It seems, in today's fast-paced, advanced-technology-and-man-world, we've become so tuned to the bad things in life that we forget there is kindness all around. There are cities around the country that are designated "random acts of kindness" zones; websites abound set up by "nurturers" that perpetuate kind­ness; heck, there's even a book called "Random Acts Of Kindness (365 Ways To Make The World A Better Place)."

When Hurricane Katrina left scores of people homeless, thousands of people across the country opened up their homes for the displaced families. In towns in Illinois and Des Moines, local Starbucks chains had generous cus­tomers "paying it forward." One car pays for the order of the car behind them, the next car does the same thing and so on and so on.

A man in Tampa pulled a police officer out of her smoking patrol car after it was involved in an accident; seconds later it exploded.

A man in California turned in to police over $20,000 in checks and $4,000 in cash that he found in a store parking lot. Thankfully, police were able to track down the woman who lost the money; she had just lost her job.

Stories like this, of people who put themselves out there to help their neigh­bors, are encouraging and offer hope that maybe things will be OK. These stories give us a glimpse into the strength of the human spirit and inspire us to believe that when the chips are down, the sun will still shine.

There is another side to this, however, and that is the selfish and thoughtless side of human nature.

A bus driver in Colorado was struck by a speeding truck as he helped two elderly women across the street. The woman who had just gotten off his bus, were safely pushed out of the way by the bus driver. To add insult to injury, the driver was ticketed for jurywalking (the ticket was later withdrawn).

A woman in California who had pulled her friend out of a crashed car was sued by the "friend" for contribut­ing to the injuries. The Supreme Court even ruled that the Good Samaritan law protects only those who provide medi­cal attention. Basically, one can be sued for any injuries that are incurred by the person when bringing them to safety, but cannot be sued for harm in trying to revive or provide aid to the victim.

Admit­edly, it's ridiculous, to say the least, but before anyone decides to keep driving past the next car crash they see, it's important to realize that it's asinine to try and hurt someone for acting in good faith. The people who are quick to sue (most of the time for the most outrageous things are, in my opinion, the same people who go through life as ego­istical fools thinking they are entitled to whatever they want at any cost. I for one would not even consider suing someone who tried to pull me from a burning car. I'd have to be out of my mind.

We can use even more acts of kind­ness. Can you imagine what our city would look like if everybody performed one act of kindness every day, no mat­ter how small or large? Can you imagine what a different place the world would be? My hat is off to the everyday people who give of themselves and perform those kind acts without even expecting recognition.

Instead of being bogged down by the humdrum and sorrow we have so much about, let's all go out today and do some­thing nice for someone. And then let's smile for helping to make someone else's day a little more pleasant.

Have questions or comments? E-mail me at pauls2973@gmail.com.

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We have over 800 profiles! There is never a charge to create your profile, browse others, or make connections.
I first met to witness the power of social at various locations. If you would meet at Dentico’s Italian Restaurant on Calver Rd. near Norton St. at 7 p.m. For further info, e-mail Kerry at DressyFemme@aol.com or call KerryMax at 585-288-7208.

DINING WITH DYKES (DwD)

Dining with Dykes is a fun social group for queer identified women, their friends and allies who support the queer community. Gay Alliance of Greater Rochester (GAGV) Community is welcome to join us.

During spring and summer months, we will be gathering on the fourth Wednesday of each month for a dinner social at various locations. If you would like to meet other like-minded individuals, hang out and have some fun, JOIN US!

For further information, please contact Cathy or Sue at 585-944-4272 or visit www.dykes-dining.org. DwD is located at 427 East Ave., post office box. Look up us, see what’s up to see real life love in action.

In March, the Bears held a Bearnight at the Forum, a game day and potluck at the GOV, went to Buffalo for their Bearnight, went bowling, attended an RGMG concert, went to Short Track for pancakes and fresh maple syrup, went out to eat, took some long walks, celebrated birthdays, showed up at the Rams banquet and kept busy.

At the beginning of April, a bunch of us will be in Erie for Drenched Fur, a weekend of fun that includes a night at the water park, a bar hop, brunch buffet, a hay ride, a night of eating and playing. At home, our BEARnight at the FORUM goes on the 4th, with a chance to meet and greet other local bears. Our next Bearnight at the FORUM is on April 1st.

Our monthly potluck is April 11. Try out a new recipe, and join the Bears at the Forum for some great food and good conversation. Our Bearnight is May 6th. We will per. Sunday afternoon, the 19th, we’ve got a couple of ideas for events. Check the wish to see what we do and why we do it. And what other events are in the works for late April.

Coming season is just around the corner. Campgrounds start to open in April. The Bears have reserved a space at Milepost for July and August campgrounds for all the baptised. Totally inclusive of all those looking for a safe and affordable Bearcation for Bears 2 and 3. We will also be at Jones Pond. We plan to be town for Gay Pride this summer, and we’re working on ideas for the parade. Interested in camping with us, or helping out with events? Contact us at info@diningdykes.org.

FLOWER CITY PRIDE BAND

IT’S TIME TO STRIKE THE BAND!

The Flower City Pride Band is getting ready to make music in the streets! Formed BASially TREPLeMakers, Flower City Pride has been Rochester’s LGBTQ band since 1993. The band is open to all adult LGBT musicians and allies, of all skill levels. We want to include any musical instrument, flag, banner, twirlers and volunteers.

For more information, contact Judy Ames at judy.ames@flowercitypride.com.

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That 70's Show Dance
Saturday, May 2, 2009 5:30 - 10:00 PM
Roger Robach Community Center Ontario Beach

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Invite you to join us April 18-19
For a weekend of festivities & worship featuring founder Archbishop Carl Bean

Saturday, April 18th
- Youth Revival
  • 7 pm - 9 pm: Youth led revival
  • 9 pm: Old School – New School Party, Host Miss Gay Rochester 2009, Keke Valasquez-Lord
  • 9 pm - midnight: Kickin-It Western NY Style (Youth Party) – free

Sunday, April 19th
- 10 am: Join us for a morning of spirit-filled worship. Experience the special blessing of hearing Archbishop Carl Bean bring the word. Archbishop Bean is listed as one of the 100 Leading Black Ministers in America.

For information call: 585-568-8391
or e-mail us at tawapanoufc@aim.com
or go to http://tawapanoufc.org/

Keke Valasquez-Lord
Kyle's Bed & Breakfast by Greg Fox

So, like... what are you?
A human being last time I checked.
And a fabulous one at that!
Why, thank you, Richard.
Really, Brad... how could you ask such a question?

I'm sorry, it's just... I don't know much about transvestites.

Well, let's start with that. I'm not a "transvestite".

Then... what's a transsexual?

Does that mean you... you know... cut it off?

That term has... fallen out of favor in recent years, anyway.

Transgendered individual is the most acceptable term, Brad.

Oy, and I thought I had chutzpah.

That's an individual decision that every transgendered person needs to make.

You're against the surgery, Morgan?

Not at all.

For me, personally... I'm quite content with my body the way it is. Yes, I was born biologically male... but I can express myself in a way that transcends gender.

Really? I have a list of changes I'd like to make for my body... what on earth for Richard? You're magnificent.

I knew I liked you, Morgan...

If a person feels they need that, then... by all means, I support that.

I feel like there's nothing that needs to be changed with surgery. But that's just me.

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Silent Rain
By De'aurn Rae
As the silent rain pounded on the window seal, wishing the sun would come out, She ajar the window to feel the warm breeze, Sorrows of a depressing past starts to reveal on her face, not even they can bare to be with her. Her eyes stay shut, she knows its the moon, here to protect her night. Darkness a figurement of imagination, portraying her eyes that were seeping black ink. A distraction of a white light shines across her face, My reason for not being depressed is that, yes my life may seem bad but there are always two types of people, those that are worse off than you and those that are better than you. I ask you now, why am I so quiet and what is on my mind?

The second annual “What Are We Thinking?” (WART) Ultimate Frisbee tournament to benefit Youth Services at the Gay Alliance occurred on Feb. 21. Thirty-six people raised $400 to support our youth programming efforts. The Gay Alliance Youth Program expresses its heartfelt thanks to tournament organizers Scott Franklin and Tanya Beiswenger for this wonderful gift.

Inside the silent mind
By Keith A Oliver Jr.
Why are you so quiet? What’s on your mind? Those two questions I hear the most, I have yet to answer either of them.

I’ll admit that I am quiet in the case of talking, but there is one thing that is never quiet, the mind. Now the mind is a complex thing, we always use it but the question is what do we use it for?

I spend my nights thinking about where I am. Those that know me will most likely tell you that I am a funny person. What most people don’t know, even those that know me, is that my humor is just a mask because I have problems that I am too insecure to address.

Insecurity is a funny thing, I always thought that people were avoiding me; I just never imagined that someone would actually say, “He scares all of us.” That hurt because I was trying and have been trying to prove that I am a nice guy, I just need a chance to prove that.

Most of all, the thing that has hurt me the most is the one writing this. I’m single because of my own mistakes, I always over plan what I am going to do or say what I am going to say. I always thinking about how bad my life seems to be to me, but I’m not depressed nor am I suicidal. I have thought about death, what person hasn’t thought about death. It doesn’t scare me, dying, what does scare me is that I haven’t helped enough people and I missed my shot.

My reason for not being depressed is that, yes my life may seem bad but there are always two types of people, those that are worse off than you and those that are better than you. I ask you now, why am I so quiet and what is on my mind?

Psycho Held
By Riley Williams, 18
I’m Psycho Held inside to confide in thee so you can see show to the world the Darker side of you.

Psycho Held in the soul of evil now you see so free yourself from the Psychoheld chains brake loose and see the light of Day,

sad and departed, Death and loss Psycho held forever in the chains that bind thee but you must free yourself once more to see the world around you, Psychoheld within my soul tell me once you know.

So I’m Psychoheld within my evil soul chained and bound to the Evil around me, so you see now I’m bound by the Darker side of you, Psycho held in the soul of evil now you see so free yourself from the Psycho held chains brake loose and see the light of Day,

sad and departed, Death and loss Psycho held forever in the chains that bind thee but you must free yourself once more to see the world around you, Psychoheld within my soul tell me once you know.

So I’m Psychoheld within my evil soul chained and bound to the Evil around me, I’m Psychoheld inside to confide in thee so you can see show to the world the Darker side of you.
Violence vices including mental health many members of the community, the
nity Safety referrals to LGBT friendly
counseling and legal aid. This
all forms of violence within and

program, the HIV Vaccine Trials
in the University of Roches
t the Gay Alliance will host the annual HIV Vaccine Awaren
ness Day event on Wednesday, May 6. The day will start with a
morning, press conference at Rochester Gay Hall, which will
highlight the start of new trials at the University, and celebrate
the long history of HIV Vaccine research in Rochester. Follow
the press conference, a two hour topping will provide local medical
and HIV/AIDS service providers with the most recent
information about the HIV Vaccine research that is occurring around the
state, and the basic importance of the local efforts.

Downtown Community Forum
On Wednesday April 29 at 6:45 p.m., the Gay Alliance, the Campaign for Love & Force
ness, WXXI, NCBH and the Downtown Community Forum will hold a free screening of Amy
ne and Everyone. The screening will be followed by a facilitated discussion of issues raised in the
film, which presents stories of parents with gay and lesbian children. Through these
community conversations, the Campaign for Love and Forgiveness aims to create a meaningful and
deliberate dialogue that will bring about positive change.

Online Resource Directory
The Gay Alliance Online Resource Directory (GARD) has recently been updated and
expanded. If you are ever in need of a resource, look to this important directory first.
From doctors and lawyers to counselors and support groups, it is all there, and if not, we will try to
find a resource and add it to our directory.

In this case, our AVP has been able to help the victim make some progress in getting the
issue addressed at school.

The second report is the con
in a core first reported to the
the AVP last October. The victim was harassed and threat
enced by physical harm by
neighbors. These incidents are now under investigation by the
police and the school District.

It is important for LGBT community members to call and
inform us of incidents, if the incident is not LGBT related, we need to track the types of violence
our community members experience. I can’t stress it enough; when in doubt, call us.

In the month of February, 20

Violence Project
In the month of February, two incidents were reported to the
A VP office. The first inci
dent was from a young man who was harassed and threat
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In this case, our A VP has been able to help the victim make some progress in getting the
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In the month of February, 20

Violence Project
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A VP office. The first inci
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In this case, our A VP has been able to help the victim make some progress in getting the
issue addressed at school.

The second report is the con
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AIDS DIRECTORY
Free testing for HIV exposure available from New York State Department of Health: call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at (585) 423-6281, or visit Rochester Regional Health on call 585-445-9000.
Planned Parenthood for pregnancy, HHS and their AIDS and their family, presents educational programs related to HIVST/AIDS to community groups, free; call 585-266-5333.

Rochester, Inc., 1350 University Ave., Rochester 14607. Provides free testing, counseling and education for treatment of HIV/AIDS and their family, presents educational programs related to HIVST/AIDS to community groups, free; call 585-266-5333.

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, 853 Main St., Rochester 14611, Callout: A multi-disciplinary care program providing general and primary care services, (585) 275-0526, Department of Psychology, 1704 University Ave, Rochester; (585) 423-2879, Program Director and Director Patrick M. Trevor, (585) 423-2879.


Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region, 14607 University Ave, Rochester, 14605; offers free counseling and counseling services, (585) 244-9202.

Gay Women's Health Project, 1704 University Ave, Rochester, Inc. (585) 753-5481. Phone: (585) 753-5481. E-mail: LesaGayFamily@gmail.com. Web: www.ProvideGayAidsProject.org.

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Gay Health
Monroe Co. Dept. of Health STD Clinic Phone: (585) 464-5288
Monroe Cam. Coll. Student Health Services Phone: (585) 292-1918 (MC) Students only
Hobart & William Smith Health Services Phone: (585) 791-9600
Rochester Colton & Racial Services Phone: (585) 244-5670
Institute of Technology Student Health Services Phone: (585) 756-2755 (RT Student-only)
Threshold Center for Alternative Youth Services
Provides confidential HIV, STD testing, general health care, sliding scale fee, no one denied, 1145 Pardee St., Monroe, NY 14618, Phone: (585) 753-7300 (ages 12-25) Gay Women's Outreach Center for HIV positive women and men at risk, 291 Life Ave, Open Mon.-Fri. 6:30-9:30 pm 456-5287.

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Man of Color Health Awareness Project (MOCAP), (585) 647-1550.

Spinal cord injury. for men who have sex with men (MSM) in the minority community. Support groups, one on one peer education, sexual sex education, outreach, support group, educational materials, support for people with HIV/AIDS, 124 Front St, Binghampton, NY 13239.

Women's Outreach Center for HIV positive women and men at risk, 291 Life Ave, Open Mon.-Fri. 6:30-9:30 pm 456-5287.

专线目录
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Join the group for the Saturday motorway to connect the generations, as the view in the Ee.

Years of experience and

including all meals, drinks and events.

More pleasure to the evening.

miles west of Rochester.

Trips by train, boats, cars... So we go

members are active and busy.

magenta, and TS, TV

members' homes.

near gathering.

 ding groups in the LGBT community; it will

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RSWNY are your shoulder

troduction a new feature:

Dining With Dykes

RSWNY are your shoulders, as you younger ones will be for the next.

The Lumberyard Grille in Canandaigua

RSWNY are your shoulders, as you younger ones will be for the next.

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Post

Serving the GLBT ham radio community since 1995 with now over

Night

Max at

Colors Awards dinner.

of work to emptycloset@gagv.us. We

only requirement is that one be

makers. Four active

of Silence, "Facets of Oppression," Albany, Through April 19 at the University At Albany. Information at www.NEWL- 

B. Anthony Institute for Women

in Roman Catholic

38, in a relationship with another woman

Rochester Rams general meeting.

THURSDAY

14 B THE EMPTY CLOSET • THE GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESSEE VALLEY • NUMBER 422 • APRIL 2009

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Volunteers needed: reporters, photographers for The Empty Closet. Call 244-9030 or send inquires, samples of work to emptycloset@gagv.us.

Research on female couples. Please participate in a University of Rhode Island (URD) ONLINE survey design to better understand relationship dynamics of female couples. Must be over 18, in a relationship with another woman for at least six months. Participants entered into a drawing via e-mail to win one of 20 gift certificates totaling

$600. Information to be used to better understand how women relate in romantic relationships. Data is anonymous, confidential and experience sharing. Participation completely voluntary, confidential, anony­mous. Available online by the URD interested in the survey, is available at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/an


Serving the GLBT ham radio community since 1955 with now over 160 members worldwide. Privacy respected. Four active weekly HF nets, newsletter, chat room, Doug's 170 South Fitzhugh St. www. di-rochester.org; recorded info-line at 585-234-5092.

Dinner at the Crime Victims Resource Center. Doors open 5 p.m. at the Crime Victims Memorial at High­land Park. Lunch is one of two planned events in March as a symbol of hate crime survivors.

That's Show Dinner, 5:30-10 p.m. at Ro­bach Community Center, Ontario Beach Park, $12 at door.

Beautify Rochester.

Drive race down East Ave. from lower Long Goodman St. 11 p.m. Midnight. Entrants must wear "g" igner gown (with label) and stiletto heels. Makeup optional, but encouraged. For info, call 585-318-8998.

WEDNESDAY

DrPride, 14602-0081.

Dining with Dykes Dinner Social.

Melt away with a very soothing, relaxing and therapeutic massage by a Licensed Massage Therapist. If you have stress, tension, aches or pains, then I am here for you. Along with stress, central locations or out calls too. Call John, at 585-314-0197.

Village Independent electrician.

Electronic work, phone jacks, cable TV, burglar alarm systems, paddle fans. Call 585-765-6335.

Hirute housey men in need of stress-reliev­ing body rub by talented masculine hands. Call Audition Center, 311 Main St., first floor, near the Crime Victims Memorial.

LGBT Survivors of Violence Support Group:

ATHENS, OHIO

Meet Tuesday nights from 7:15 to 8:30pm in the Gay Alliance Lounge, 1st Floor, 875 E. Main St., Rochester 14605. 


HAVE HELP WANTED

Administrative Assistant - Post high school business degree and a minimum of one year related experience. Requires a minimum of intermediate level computer skills including web work and experiences to include: strong organizational skills required. Spanish­ speaking preferred. Requires travel daily between two local offices. $21,237. Full job description at www.di-rochester.org.

Women’s Community Chorus Meeting

MOCHA WEDNESDAY
Second, fourth Tuesdays. GAGV Nopper St., 750 E. Main St., 875-2200. 8:45-9466

Green Party (political) Mondays, 7-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 875 E. Main St., fifth floor. 426-670-775

GAGV Youth Drop-In Hours Mondays, Wednesdays, 2-6 pm, 289 Monroe Ave.

Stonewall Democrats of the Genesee Valley

First Thursdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m., 875 E. Main St., fifth floor.

Support Group for Parents Who Have Lost Children First, second, third, fourth Tuesdays, 4 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church

COAP

GAGV Youth Trans Group Wednesdays, 6-7 p.m., GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., Prince St. entrance. 875-720-234-670, ext. 13.

TUESDAY

Free Hepatitis A Vaccine

First, 2nd, and 3rd Thursdays, 7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St.

Free Alcoholics

Third Mondays: Euchre Club, 3-6 p.m. Third Sunday: Euchre Club, 3-6 p.m. 220 Winton Rd. Bus riders: The #1 Park Ave. to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes north (uphill) on Winton. This is an open discussion meeting. All issues — as they relate to our alcoholism/addiction and recovery — are fair game.

Sundays

Rochester Gay Men 8 p.m. at St. Luke/St. Simon’s Episcopal Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Bus riders use the Fitzhugh stop on Main St. at the County Office Building and walk south one block.

AA Meetings in Rochester

Every week there are four regularly scheduled GLBTI AA meetings in Rochester.

Wednesday

New Freedom/New Happines Group

AA meeting, 7 p.m. School of Good Shepherd Church, 3208 E. Henrietta Rd. 392-2862.

“Second Thursdays”

Support group for transgender people of color.

Support Group for Parents Who Have Lost Children

“Second Thursdays”

Social and business networking, 5:30-8 p.m. 750 W. Main St. Ext. 190

FRIDAYS

Gay Men’s AA meeting

May 8-23. Every Sunday, 2-4 p.m., GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., 244-8640

Sacred Spaces Meditation

Every Sunday, 7 p.m., MOCHA Project, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 240-1400

Rainbow Seniors Yoga

Men’s meeting. 

Open meeting. All are welcome. 

MONDAY

LGBT Support Group

Meeting begins with a speaker, followed by open discussion.

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USURBANMALE.com presents
Tea Dance Party for Pride
with Special Guest DJ
Swimwear and Underwear Fashion Show featuring AussieBum Skympeeze
Sunday April 19th, 4-10 pm
Muthers
40 South Union St

$10 in advance
$15 at the door
Proceeds to benefit Rochester Pride 2009

Event Sponsored by
Usurbanmale.com Skympeeze Absolut Boulder Coffee AussieBum Steamworks Woody’s Northbound Leather Method Machine SpaExcess Fly Night Club Head to Fit Spa Muther’s