Parade, festival, picnic highlight Pride Week for thousands

By Ove Overmoyer and Susan Jordan


"Rochester is such a unique place — people here are so open to diversity and everyone appears to be embraced for who they are for the most part," says Adam. The Parés were walking with family and friends of a candidate running for City Council.

"We had awesome support walking up Park Ave. to Goodman St., but it made my blood boil to see all that hate coming at us from the religious right — and I’m telling you this as a straight man," he added.

Sarah called the Pride Parade "absolutely great" and referred to Rochester as "a city committed to diversity."

According to parade organizers, the 20th annual Rochester Pride Parade drew around 12,000 spectators and over 1,000 participants. At least 3,500 attended the Festival. Michael Hardy, GAGV board member and Pride Parade Chair, said over 50 units and many Prideroots page 3

John Attiery, Tim Tompkins, Tom Ferrarese, Council Member Bill Pritchard, Mayor Duffy, Michael Hardy, Susan Jordan, Carrie Verenon, Russ Shuner, Sean VanHouten, Rich Schroeodel, Norma Holland, Council Member Dane Miller, Council Member Carolee Conklin and granddaughter, and Sue Cowell.

Giant Rainbow Flag flies high at City Hall

By Ove Overmoyer

The news that the New York Senate may delay the marriage equality vote until a special session in September didn't dampen the spirits and enthusiasm of those who came to City Hall for a Rainbow Flagraising ceremony on July 12.

A giant 30 x 60 flag, donated by Russ Shuner and Rich Schroeodel of Outlandish, hung proudly for three stories in the Armory at City Hall, while more than 150 participants, including Mayor Robert Duffy and WHAM 13 News anchor Norm Holland (the emcee, gathered to hear elected officials and dignitaries speak of the extraordinary contributions of the Rochester LGBT community.

This is the second year that the City of Rochester has flown Gay Pride flags throughout the city.

Newsbriefs

LOCAL & STATE NEWS

Chautauqua to host LGBT conference

The Rainbow Erie Pride Connection Conference will take place Sept. 12-13 at the historic Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, N.Y., hosted by the Chautauqua Gay and Lesbian Community and the Erie, Pa. GLBT community. It will be the first gay event at the Institution.

The conference will feature workshops, dances and a performance by the Buffalo Gay Men’s Chorus on Aug. 13 at 5 p.m. Registration begins at 11 a.m. on Sept. 12.

Chautauqua is 30 minutes west of Erie, Pa., and one and a half hours south of Buffalo. Information and registration forms are available at www.rainbowerieconnection.com

Fun in the Sun at One to benefit Anti Violence Project Aug. 16

Fun in the Sun at One, a tea dance to support the Gay Alliance Against Violence Project, will take place Sunday, Aug. 16 from 2 p.m. to closing, at ONE Restaurant and Lounge, 1 Jay Street in the East End.

Tickets are $50 in advance and $60 at the door.

DJs Jon Herbert and Hector Arguinzoni will provide the sounds, and many fabulous drag performers will be on hand. The event will include door prizes and a silent auction.

The Gay Alliance appreciates the continuing partnership of businesses within our community who support our mission and vision.

Gold: Eastman Kodak Company; Mass Mutual Financial Group; Merrill Lynch; Nixon Peabody, LLP

Silver: Ace Mortgage Services; Bausch & Lomb Inc.; Corning Incorporated; Hatter Secret & Emory LLP; Hewitt & Hewitt CPA’s; ITT Corporation; Monroe Plan for Medical Care; Sage Advisors of Sage Realty; St. John Fisher College; Tim Tompkins Enterprises; Xerox Capital Services

Bronze: Canandaigua National Bank; Edgerton Florists; Empire State College; GALLAXE Pride at Work; Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church; Third Presbyterian Church; Wegmans Food Markets; The Woolbright Group

Pride: Thomson Reuters

The Empty Closet

A PUBLICATION OF THE GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESEE VALLEY

AUGUST 2009

NEW YORK STATE’S OLDEST LGBT PUBLICATION

Section A

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NEW YORK STATE’S OLDEST LGBT PUBLICATION
Hate crimes and the Right

The Right continues to reinforce the climate of hate violence in our country, through its irresponsible propaganda that dehumanizes and demonizes LGBT Americans. Like Taliban terrorists, fundamentalist conservatives try to justify discrimination and prejudice on grounds of religion, but unlike terrorist groups, they refuse to take responsibility for their followers’ violent acts.

According to the Right’s Traditional Values language and mythology, women are bad, inferior and less than human (unless they’re non-sexual Madonnas), and all gay men, whether muscular or effeminate, are like (bad) women—which is why, back in the “good old days”, gay men often joined elderly pederasts and/or sexual women on parades for burning “faggots.”

The human race has made progress since the witch-burning days. But on the far right would still like to see gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and trans­gendered men and women post to death. Why else do they adamantly oppose hate crime laws, as well as measures to protect queer youth from bullying and murder?

Extremist bigot Tony Perkins, arguing against the federal hate crimes law, twined language to claim, “A ‘hate crimes’ law is really a ‘thought crime’ law that punishes a person’s beliefs—a part of the Left’s intolerant agenda to silence the voice of Christians and Conservatives in America and eliminate moral restraint.” If only gay bashers would restrict themselves to “thoughts” and “beliefs!” And tell all that “intolerant” agenda is good, coming from a fanatic whose group is just the Christian “thought” crime.

The Conservative Christian solution to the “problem” of gay youth has always been to brutalize the queerens out of them. If they should be killed or commit suicide during the process of developing their “moral restraint,” so much the better! In February, three Illinois middle school children killed themselves due to harassment. In April, a 17-year-old (Ohio), an 11-year-old (Massachusetts), and another 11-year-old (Georgia), none of whom identified as gay, were driven to suicide by homophobic taunts teachers did nothing to end the abuse. (See page 5A)

Result: not six straight kids, but six dead kids. Another victory for Conservative Christian Morality.

Perkins and the other not-exactly-alternative-meepstpiece spreads lie and stereotype that supposedly justify discrimination, just as Jesse Goebbels brainwashed Germans to believe that Jews were a plague on earth. In both cases, centuries of church-sanctioned bias had prepared fertile ground for conservatives seeking power through the exploitation of ancient hatreds.

Fifty years after Stonewall, not only do we still not have equal rights, but gay youth and adults still face extreme harass­ment and violence. Transgender people are routinely murdered. Quite often, heterosexists (like those students) are also attacked, if they are perceived as gay. If some goon decides that Tony Perkins looks queer, Perkins might experience a Conserva­tive Christian morality that is the “natural” for himself.

And if Perkins, we do not wish that on anybody.

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Rochester, New York 14605

Contact us:
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Thank you.

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

Letters to the editor

The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and all other contributors appearing in this publication are their own and do not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or The Empty Closet. We will print letters to the editor under the following conditions: 300 words or less, typed or computerized, double spaced. We will not print personal attacks on individuals, nor will we be a forum for unfounded diatribes between individuals. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity. We will print anonymous letters if the name and phone number are provided to the Editor. Comments to the Editor will not be returned. Submission are due by the 15th of the month. The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, NY 14605; e-mail: empty­closet@gagv.us. Online edition of EC available at www.gayalliance.org.
Voices from the Community: The Meaning of Pride

By Laura McSpadden

On July 18, thousands of people gathered on the streets of Rochester to celebrate the city's 19th annual Pride Parade and Festival. Although the sky was slightly overcast, the day was warm and spirits were high as people of different sexual orientations, genders, and creeds and generations united in a colorful expression of LGBT pride.

"One thing I'd really like to see in my lifetime is the right to marry," says Eliah Sncipes (right). Also shown are Dustin Balles (left) and John Brinkley (center).

"Pride is a time for diversity and unity," says Eliah Sncipes (right). Also shown are Dustin Balles (left) and John Brinkley (center).

"It is definitely important to show people who are still in the closet and those who are not. It's a community that is safe and accepting, no matter who they are — lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender," says John Brinkley. "We're here. Deal with it."

Brinkley's friend Elijah Sncipes agrees. "I'm a man of few words, so I'll just say..."
Chief Justice demotes judge who ended Fla. gay adoption ban

Waymond Hudson wrote on Pam's House Blend blog on July 15, "The Miami-Dade Florida circuit court judge who ruled Florida's shameful gay adoption ban unconstitutional in November 2008 has been demoted.

"For over 15 years, Judge Cindy Led­erman served as top administrative judge over Miami-Dade's juvenile courts. The announcement came from the new Chief Justice over Miami courts, who says he 'wants new perspective and leadership in transition.' We need someone who doesn't like gays and will keep the bigoted status quo?

"This is a huge loss for the juvenile courts and for all fair-minded Floridians.

"It is also a huge loss for me and my family. Judge Lederman is the judge who placed our foster son with us and presided over our court cases.

For more information, go to Pam­houseBlend.com.

New publication on law empowers LGBT elders

On July 6, the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) released a new publication to help LGBT elders and their families and caregivers navigate legal issues.

"Planning with Purpose: Legal Basics for LGBT Elders" provides basic information about select areas of the law that are important to LGBT elders, especially individuals and couples who are age 55 and over, based on NCLR's expertise advocating for LGBT elders.

This guide includes information about issues related to relationship recognition, finances, health care, long term care, planning for the care of minor or disabled children, inheritance, elder abuse, and discrimination against LGBT elders. It covers many areas where rights, benefits, and protections are generally provided to heterosexual people based on spousal status, but are denied to same-sex couples, even if married or in other legal unions. It also highlights issues unique to transgender elders.

"LGBT people have made progress on our civil rights, but there is still a lot to consider if you are an older LGBT person in the U.S.," says NCLR Elder Law Project Consultant Joyce Pierson. "While it may not be easy to think about your life from a legal perspective, it is extremely important that you learn about and use all of the legal protections available to you.

Planning is the key.

Since 1999, NCLR's Elder Law Proj­ect has been empowering LGBT seniors to protect themselves, and advocating for equal treatment of LGBT seniors in law, public policy, health care and senior services. NCLR, is com­mitted to bringing LGBT people into the aging services network nationwide and helping LGBT elders into the center of the larger LGBT movement for justice and equality.

For this publication, NCLR worked closely with SAGE: Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders. SAGE is the world's oldest and largest non-profits agency address­ing the needs of LGBT older adults, and is an invaluable ally in this work.

"Information is power, and this new publication from NCLR will give LGBT older adults across the country vital infor­mation that they can use to advocate for themselves and vindicate their legal rights," says SAGE Executive Director Michael Adams. "Empowering LGBT older adults with information is a central tenet of SAGE's mission, so we're proud to be part of this project and extremely pleased with the strong support we've received from NCLR."

"We are excited about the release of this publication, which will provide LGBT elders with information they need to pro­tect themselves and their families," said Kate Kendell, NCLR Executive Director.

"Dealing with a discriminatory legal sys­tem can be daunting, and this publica­tion is designed to help LGBT elders raise the bar of their own lives."

To download a pdf of Planning with Purpose, visit www.nclr.org/elders.

D.C. recognizes same­sex marriages

A new District of Columbia law rec­ognizing marriages by same-sex couples performed in other jurisdictions began effecti­ve on June 30.

On May 5, the D.C. Council over­whelmingly passed legislation that express­ly recognizes marriages by same-sex couples performed in other jurisdictions, includ­ing foreign countries. The bill was signed by Mayor Adrian Fenty the next day and transmitted to Congress for review.

"Today, same-sex couples in D.C. who have married elsewhere, or who choose to marry in one of the growing number of jurisdictions that provide marriage equality, will have their relationships fully rec­ognized," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese on June 7. This law is an important and historic step towards equal dignity, equal respect and equal rights under D.C. law for same­sex couples. Congratulations to the D.C. Council, Mayor Fenty and the many advocates of equality in our community who have worked hard for, and continue to pursue, marriage equality in D.C."

Opponents of marriage equality attempted to stop the legislation from taking effect by proposing a referendum. However, the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics has ruled that the proposed refer­endum would violate the D.C. Human Rights Act and therefore was not a proper subject for a referendum.

Effective July 1, a D.C. Superior Court judge upheld this ruling and denied opponents' request for a preliminary injunction to stay the legis­lation. The law took effect June 7, at the conclusion of the 30­day Congressional review period.

Under the new law, a same-sex couple living in D.C. who are legally married in another jurisdiction — for example, in Massa­chusetts, Connecticut or Canada — will be recognized as married in D.C. and will receive the rights and responsibilities of civil marriage under D.C. law. D.C. law continues to provide for domestic partner­ships for same­sex and different­sex couples. Same­sex couples cannot legally marry in D.C. itself, although their mar­riages from other jurisdictions are now recognized.

Episcopal bishops open ordination to gays

On July 6 the National Religious Leadership Roundtable, convened by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, applauded the Episcopal Church House of Bishops' decision to open "any ordained ministry" to gay and lesbian clergy.

"Empowering, LGBT elders with information is a central tenet of SAGE's mission, so we're proud to be part of this project and extremely pleased with the strong support we've received from NCLR."

The resolution was introduced by the House of Bishops on July 12, while a similar measure was passed July 13 by the House of Deputies, the other Episcopal legislative body. The House of Bishops' version was reconsidered on July 15 by the House of Deputies. The measure will undergo a moratorium, discussed by gay and lesbian bishops that was adopted at the convention three years ago.

Susan Russell, Bishop of Massachusetts, Integrity National Religious Leadership Round­table, said, "While concurrency on the resolution by the House of Bishops is necessary before it is officially adopted by the church as a whole, there is a moral imperative to the House of Bishops' vote to be historic move forward and a great day for all who support the full inclusion of all the baptized in the Body of Christ."

"It was a tremendous privilege to be a witness to the courage and candor of the bishops who spoke truth to each other and to us — and who called the Episcopal Church to speak our truth to our Anglican Communion brothers and sisters and to the world.

"The truth is we are a church com­mitted to mission — we are a church committed to the full inclusion of all the baptized in that mission — and we are a church committed to creating as broad a place to stand as possible for all who wish to be part of this great adventure of being disciples of Jesus.

"In this carefully considered and prayerfully considered resolution, our pres­iding bishop got what she both asked for and voted for: a positive statement about where we are as a church in 2009 — a church striving to actually become the church Peter "Proving Bishop Edmund Browning called us to be nearly 20 years ago now, a church where there are no out­"-

"The debate on the floor of the House of Bishops made, very clear that our bio­logical Arm did not make a difference in love when they passed this by a nearly 2­1 margin.

The resolution passed by the House of Deputies may not be the perfect solution to the Episcopal Church's 'coming out' process — and it sends a strong 'come and see' message to anyone looking for a faith community where God's inclusive love is not just pro­claimed but practiced.

Archbishop decries decision, Afri­can church homophobic

The Reverend Irene Monroe writes in her nationally syndicated column, "...[The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, expressed his concerns about the recent legislation, telling the Associa­tion Press, 'I regret the fact that there is no will to observe the moratorium in such a significant part of the church in North America."

The conservative arm of the Episco­pal Church has rejected the ordination of a gay Bishop of New Hampshire, the Rev. V. Gene Robinson, should resign to avoid disintegration of the Anglican Commu­nion.

The tension that currently exists insi­de the Anglican Communion is undeniable. But what many don't real­ize is that it is as much about how its uneven legacy of unbridled missionary efforts expanded into the Third World as it is about the conservative arm of the Church repudiating homosexuality.

"But the two feed off each other with Robinson since his consecration being the Church's scapegoat.

"By partitioning marginalized groups like gays and Africans against each other, the Church trashes the geographies of race and place, prison homophobia.

"While the U.S. has, at best, approxi­mately 2.2 Episcopalians today, the center of Anglican gravity is neither here nor in Britain, but in Africa. There are approxi­mately three million in Kenya, and nine million from the two coun­tries combined do not come close to the 20 million in Nigeria, making Peter Aki­nola, the archbishop there, one of the most influential men in the Anglican Communion.

A vociferous opponent of LGBTQ civil rights, Akinola has used Robinson as his whipping boy to flex his muscle as

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Amen.”

will vote with the principle of love in wilderness among bishops. And it’s also a funding to implement a comprehensive categories often targeted by bullies, including race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and others. “Schools decriminalizes homosexuality; S. Asian gay leaders applaud

In an historic judgment on July 2, the Delhi High Court legalized homosexual" community to create dialogue around the world are focused on engaging South Asian queer leaders the larger community to create dialogue about issues of same-sex marriage and immigration policy.

The Commonwealth has presented the court with the stark facts of discrimination that should spell the end of DOMA," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. “Excluding our families from equal protections never had anything to do with promoting a legitimate interest, and has everything to do with being called "faggot,"" Walker testified. "He loved the Lord and he loved his family. What could make a child his age despair so much that it criminalizes gay sex among consent­

The court ruled that Section 377, as it stands, violates the right to privacy under the Indian Constitution and based its ruling on these constitutional values.”

Gay rights activists Mari O’Dennha, who was a panelist and moderator of the Queer Leaders Summit, argues that besides the reassessment of Section 377 being a major legal verdict, its nuanced language focuses on the social and emotional aspects of decriminalizing homosexuality. “What is fascinating about the ruling is the Delhi High Court’s understanding of New Section 377 subjected queer people to prejudice, discrimination, and violence,” said O’Dennha. “It is even better that (the court) grounded equality, inclusiveness, and a respect for minorities as a bedrock of the Indian Constitution and based its ruling on these constitutional values.”

Lifting HIV immigration ban About last week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued renewed travel and immigration regulations during the fiscal year's $900 billion omnibus spending bill, which also includes immigration relief to thousands of HIV positive immigrants.

“The last few days have been amazing and historic for sexuality and human rights organizing, especially in the international scope,” says Debunay Dasgupta, a gay and immigration rights activist in India and the United States. "While these regulations have not gone into effect yet, we applaud the issuance of such regulations and call for a prompt application of them."

Killer of D.C. gay man charged only with misdemeanor assault

The Human Rights Campaign has released a statement of outrage at the indictment of Robert Hannah on a charge of misdemeanor assault for the attack on a young gay man in Washington, D.C. Hannah is charged with multiple counts of harassment and assault. The Human Rights Campaign has expressed reservations about the decision to charge Hannah with only a misdemeanor assault. The campaign said that the decision was not appropriate for the severity of the assault.

Hungrily

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Spiritually hungry?

Try S’more Shabbat!

Join us for Temple Sinai’s Get S’more Shabbat Service, a spirited outdoor service with cookout, s’mores and songs on Friday, August 14. This event is free and provides an opportunity for prospective members to learn about the congregation. Temple Sinai is associated with the Union for Reform Judaism.

Reservations are required by Monday, August 10. To attend, please call the Temple Office at 38-6890.
Interview

Matt Haag, Candidate for Rochester City Council At-Large

By Our Observer

Supporters of Democrat Matt Haag will tell you he embodies what effective local government officials should be — he’s smart, accessible, active, trusting and a committed citizen who cares enough to step up and lead our community.

Matt has built an impressive resume in a career that has taken him from rural Pennsylvania and Baltimore, Md. to Rochester. In an exclusive interview for The Empty Closet, Matt exuded a quiet confidence and a passion for the possible.

As a lifelong political activist, Matt has been fighting for social and economic justice for many years. He says he understands what kids, neighborhoods, working families and mom-and-pop store-owners want and need from their local political leaders. Matt says he is also “very prepared” and more than capable of delivering on that promise.

Matt says that he is totally committed to helping our city find solutions that work for all our families, no matter how job working families and mom-and-pop store-owners want and need from their local government officials should be.

Matt says that he is totally committed to helping our city find solutions that work for all our families, no matter how

he defined leadership, he responded without hesitation, “I lead by example and stand up for what I believe in and I know when to get out of the way.”

In many ways, Baltimore is a lot like Rochester. A few years ago, Matt was president of a very large neighborhood association in historic Fells Point, M.D., a suburb of Baltimore, a blue-collar city with urban issues much like our own.

Under Matt’s leadership, the challenged neighborhood turned into a vibrant and exciting place to live, work and play.

“I helped start a neighborhood business association and got a buy-in from local government, we held house tours, and we created networking opportunities and established partnerships with two schools. We tried to encourage residents to share information and to take ownership of their streets,” he said. “In a way, it was very empowering.”

Matt’s first attempt at elected office came when he was a teenager in high school. Matt served two terms as the student representative on the Hamburg, Pa. City School Board. This experience solidified his desire for public service and he realized “what is possible with hard work.”

Now 37 years old and employed as the University of Rochester Senior Director of Major Gifts and Regional Programs, Matt turned a department of four staff members into 25 paying jobs in less than two years. He said that U. of R. came calling in 2000 and he hasn’t looked back since.

Right now, Matt is seeking solutions for our community that will create job growth through center city and neighborhood economic development. This is an area where Matt has some expertise — and it’s a City Council committee that he would love to be part of. He’s convinced that collaboration between local government and area universities is boundless and that “we have an incredible creative class of people in the Rochester area.”

Matt is also promoting eco-friendly green initiatives and calls our parks and open space one of Rochester’s greatest assets. If elected, one of Matt’s first priorities, other than creating a critical mass of homeowners and a better tax-base within the inner loop, would be to persuade a supermarket to return to the center city.

“Food markets are critical to the economic development and self-sufficiency of any neighborhood,” he said.

It seems that Matt has already opened the hearts and minds of his fellow citizens. Haag was one of only two Democratic candidates out of a field of 20 who received a nomination for City Council on the first ballot. The other candidate was incumbent City Council member Carolee Conklin, who is also seeking re-election this year.

Matt expects a crowded field of City Council hopefuls on primary day, but is very optimistic about his success.

“Our campaign is going very well,” he said.

Matt lives in the Park Ave. neighborhood with his partner of 11 years, Bill Schaefer, and their three dogs, Brodie, Timber and Brutus. Bill is a physician’s assistant with AIDS Community Health Center. Bill’s family lived on Magee Ave. near the neighborhood Park Ave. neighborhood, and we wanted to be close to our family. Now we are living that dream. We can do this,”

he said with a grin.

“When Bill and I bought our house in the city, our families were ecstatic about us living here,” Matt reflected. “Park Ave. was the neighborhood Bill had always wanted to live in ever since his early childhood, and we wanted to be close to our family. Now we are living that dream. We plan on staying here for a very long time.”

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error, who, three weeks before, had vowed to see a marriage equality bill reach his desk.

But the recent end of the month-long stalemate over control of the state Senate has apparently given new impetus to second thoughts about pushing his plan forward.

Empire State Pride Agenda Executive Director Philip A. Smith said on July 10, “Now that the stalemate is over and the State Senate has resumed its business, we posit that equality will remain at the top of the chamber’s agenda.”

“Senators from both sides of the aisle have indicated that they support the reform and doing the people’s business was central to the events that transpired,” Smith said. “It’s now up to the Senate to act on the winning Senate bill.”

Smith’s remarks come as the Senate’s new leadership appears to be holding firm on the majority’s resolution to enact marriage equality legislation. In a statement released moments before leaders announced Senate majority leader Dean Skelos had reached an agreement with Senate Democrats, Smith said, “This is a historic announcement. It is a testament to the tireless advocacy of New York’s gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) constituents.”

Smith added, “On this day, August 2, 2009, LGBT New Yorkers can look forward to a victory that will be meaningful and transformative for millions of people in the state. The Senate leadership has worked long and hard to get a marriage equality bill to the floor, and we are confident that it will pass. This is a historic day for all New Yorkers.”

In a statement, Skelos said, “It is clear that a vote is necessary in order for marriage equality to pass, and I believe the Senate will have a vote on marriage equality in the coming weeks.”

The Senate’s announcement came after a three-day meeting between Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and Senate Democratic leader John Flanagan, who met with Skelos to discuss the possibility of passing a marriage equality bill.

Skelos said, “We have reached an agreement on the Senate’s plan to pass marriage equality legislation. The Senate will vote on a marriage equality bill in the coming weeks.”

Flanagan added, “We are committed to passing marriage equality legislation, and we believe that the Senate will have a vote on this issue in the next few weeks.”

The Senate leadership’s announcement comes after months of intense lobbying and advocacy efforts by New York’s LGBT community.

In a statement, Governor Andrew Cuomo said, “I am pleased that the Senate leadership has reached a consensus on the need to pass marriage equality legislation, and I look forward to working with the Senate to ensure that this legislation is enacted into law.”

The Governor added, “This is a significant step forward in the fight for equality, and I am confident that the Senate will have a vote on marriage equality legislation in the coming weeks.”

The Governor’s statement comes after months of intense advocacy efforts by New York’s LGBT community.

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Kasha Davis by night (at the kickoff party).

Muthers won the Top Business Award.

Alyson Palmer of BETTY.

Mayor Bob Duffy.

AIDS Rochester’s brilliant half-brides and half-grooms marching unit, complete with cake on wheels, won the Community Award. Far left: Erik Libey
Miss Gay Rochester, Keke

Pepper MaBhay at the Festival.

Dan Mahoney, candidate for Greece Supervisor, and Brian Christopher, candidate for Webster Supervisor, show off their Pride at Work t-shirts.

Courtney Michie at the Picnic.

The PFLAG float.

John White of Equal Grounds.

Pamela Barres and Susan Jordan.

Tyler Smith.
Canine stars romp at Picnic's Pride Dog Show

By Susan Jordan

Although human beings (partners, poets and politicians) did their thing, the really important event of the Pride Picnic on July 19 was the Pride Dog Show, starring some of Rochester's most notable canines. Todd Plank served as emcee and judge, assisted by Sue Cowell.

Winner of Best in Show, Miss Pet Pride, was Sammie, a long haired black Chihuahua, owners Jane and Jill. Sammie wore his tiara with panache, but had won by only one dog hair over Oscar, a feisty white Bichon Frise, owner Dawn, who took the prize for Best Display of Pride.

Most Talented dog was Kita, a Deer Head Chihuahua, owners Tracy and DeVia, who prevailed because she is a cancer survivor and a comfort dog who provides cuddles and fun for human patients. Her pink toenails didn't hurt either.

Best Behaved Dog was the calm and lovely Sierra, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, owner Judy, who has taken part in every one of the four Pride Dog Shows.

The award for Best Outfit was a tie between two Smooth Chihuahuas named Desi and Lucy, owner Jackie. Desi was cool in a Hawaiian shirt, while Lucy sported a bikini.

The Longest From Head to Tail was a charming young St. Bernard named Tiberius, owner Danny, while the Smallest Dog was an even younger Chihuahua puppy, Mocha, owners Brittany and Yuri, so small that he could fit into a latte cup.

Finally, the Most Coordinated Couple (pet and owner) were Dassa, a black Pomeranian and owner Kirstie. The other dog stars were Hazel a Beagle/Lab, Ceci, a longhaired Chihuahua, Sydney, a Boxer mix, Lucy, a pug and Tucker, a Cockapoo. All were deserving of prizes — and in fact all participants received Puppy Cups at the Abbott's Custard booth.

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Alicia Daniel (left) said Marcus Alvarez, one of the DJs at the Pride celebration in Syracuse, “ultimately Pride is about everyone being together and joining forces.”

To me, Pride still mainly represents the commemoration of the Stonewall Riots,” said Michael Popovic. “I always hope that there will be a political aspect to Pride celebrations. Right now, there are many important political issues, such as gay marriage rights.”

The need for continuing activism and education was illustrated by the presence of fundamentalist protesters along the parade route. Their voices were amplified by loudspeakers as they accused church groups, youth and families, as well as other parade participants, of being “sinners,” “perverts,” and “the damned.” Although their messages of hate were saddening to some and angering to many, they failed to dampen the spirits, opinions and aspirations of parade participants. They were also completely ignored by local print and electronic media.

“We need to learn acceptance, because we’re not going anywhere.” Rochester’s 20th Pride Parade was a great time for all those who came out for the weeklong festivities, providing everyone with a chance to come together, express themselves and have their voices heard. “It’s good to see so many people together and happy — it’s family,” said Marilyn Mitchell, president of Rainbow Seniors. “If only we could all just accept each other for who we are — in the end, that’s all it takes.”

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Surviving and Thriving: The Coming Out Workshop Facilitated by: Joe Russo and Elizabeth Driscoll

Don’t know who to talk to or where to turn? Struggling with coming out as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender person? Trying to integrate your LGBT identity into your life? You may feel alone in this process. However, you are not!

Many gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender individuals have struggled with these issues and not only survived but thrived by receiving support and education at the Gay Alliance Coming Out Workshops. This fall the workshops will be offered at the Gay Alliance on Thursday nights starting Sept. 24, 2009 and ending Oct. 29, 2009 from 6:30-8:30pm. Meetings will be held in the Youth Community Center on the 1st floor of the Auditorium Center (875 E. Main Street 14605). There is plenty of free parking.

Coming Out is a process, which varies for each individual. Cultural, political and religious influences can affect the process. The workshop will discuss this process, as well as the risks and rewards of coming out, self-esteem issues, overcoming fears, and work and relationship concerns.

The group experience can help someone navigate the many aspects of the coming out process. Group size will be limited to 12 members and confidentiality will be a priority.

Co-facilitators, Joe Russo, Psy. D., LGSW-R, and Elizabeth Driscoll, LCSW-R, both have clinical experience working with the LGBT community in Rochester. Mr. Driscoll is a licensed licensed clinical social worker and certified group psychotherapist in private practice in Rochester. She works with adults and adolescents. She offers individual, couple, family and group therapy. Dr. Russo is a licensed psychologist and certified group psychotherapist in private practice in Rochester. He offers individual, couples, family and group therapy. Specialty areas are LGBT issues and addictions.

The workshop is open to adults 18 and older. Registration fee is $60 with scholarships based on need. To register or for more information call Jeanne at 585-244-8640 ext. 14 or e-mail comingout@gagv.us.

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The group experience can affect the process. The workshop will discuss this process, as well as the risks and rewards of coming out, self-esteem issues, overcoming fears, and work and relationship concerns.

**Do you strive to be more confident, more articulate and more informed about GLBT issues?**

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*Space is limited. To register phone: 244-8640 ext. 14 or scott@gagv.us.

**Lunch included.**

**Scholarships available.**

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Facilitator
Scott Fearing, Gay Alliance OutReach Director, facilitates this training. Past participants have had this to say: “Enlightening.” “This was a fabulous experience; it was powerful, enlightening, and motivating.” “I learned more about myself in these few sessions than in 50 years of living.” “A great value! Money well spent!”

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Confessed killer found not guilty: why?

To The Editor:
I read with interest stories in the July 7/8 Democrat and Chronicle about Wesley Scott, 68, owner of Mike’s Bikes on Jefferson Ave., being fatally stabbed in the back allegedly denying involvement, Frye finally had tried to sexually assault him.

The presence of a sleeping bag and blankets in the house apparently not add up. How can you have gay sex and threatening with a knife at the same time? The fact that Scott was stabbed in the back indicates that he was probably trying to escape from the knifer. There was no real evidence at all that supported the killer’s version of what happened, and the victim is no longer here to defend himself.

The jury found Frye not guilty of both murder and manslaughter charges. Only Frye knows what actually happened in that vacant house, and the jury may have had good reasons for their NOT GUILTY decision. But all gay people are put at risk when the system says that gay sex is punishable by death.

To Wesley Scott’s 68-year-old great grandfather and a state cancer survivor who is no longer here to defend himself.

John Randall, Rochester
FLYING THE RAINBOW FLAG: At the flag raising at City Hall, Tim Tompkins presents Mayor Duffy with the plaque honoring his resolution in favor of gay rights at the U.S. Mayors Conference in June.

Suzanne Comes to Town: Michael Gamilla, Jennifer Posey, Suzanne Westenhoefer and Zahra Longford at the reception before Suzanne’s performance on July 9, sponsored by ImageOut Film Festival.

Kick Off Party: Rich and Russ get “sashed” on July 17, at the kickoff party at the Strathallan, by Sean VanHatten, far left, and Michael Hardy, right.

EC Editor Susan Jordan was Honorary Grand Marshal.

Gay Alliance Executive Director Sue Cowell introduces Pride Parade Grand Marshals Rich Schrodel and Russ Shaner at the Flag Raising.

Joe McCrank and Suzanne Westenhoefer.

City Council member Elaine Spaull and Council candidate Matt Haag at the Flag Raising.

Antwan Williams and Rashid Oglee at the kickoff.

Suzanne Jordan

Aggy Dune, Sherwin Bothel and Pepper MaBhay at the Strathallan kickoff.

Judy Johnson & Mary Ann Sanford at the Tea Dance.

Norma Holland was emcee at the flag raising ceremony on July 12.
Buffalo Pride, June 7. Photos by Munelit

Syracuse Pride, July 19.

NYC Pride, June 28. Photos by Eric Bellmann
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The cast of Bravo’s “The Fashion Show”

Merlin Castell talks about his style

By Susan Jordan

Celebrity fashion designer and star of Bravo’s hit “The Fashion Show,” Merlin Castell is no newcomer to mesmerizing viewers with his glamorous design and eccentric personality.

Known for his haute couture tailored clothing crafted from highly luxurious fabrics, Merlin has attached his name to some of Hollywood’s most recognizable entertainers, such as Paris Hilton, Carlos Santana and even Marilyn Manson.

Merlin and his designs have been featured in both national and regional television shows, including “The Janice Dickinson Modeling Agency,” “LATV,” “The Insider,” “Al Rojo Vivo,” “American Latino Television” and Bravo’s “The Fashion Show.” Merlin has also been featured in print publications such as “Woman’s Wear Daily,” “Las Vegas Magazine” and “Las Vegas Weekly.”

Named one of the top designers to watch out for, this chameleon of fashion is constantly venturing into realms other designers dare not step into. On “The Fashion Show” Merlin made such an impression with the viewers and judges that Bravo asked him to appear back on the show’s finale as a fashion expert.

Merlin Castell answered some questions about his work for The Empty Closet.

What is your fashion or style philosophy? Well, to tell you the truth I really don’t have one. As a designer I’m always changing with the seasons. But if I were to have one, I would have to say, epic, timeless, sensual, emotional.

Which great designers have inspired and influenced you? Valentino would be my number one choice. A close second would be (a tie between) Yves Saint Laurent and Balenciaga.

Do you feel your work resembles haute couture in that you design for individuals, not the mass market? I would have to say yes. However, I would license my name so that the masses would be able to wear my product. With the same high standards, with more affordable prices.

Who have you never designed for but would really like to? I would have to say most definitely my princess/goddess Nicole Kidman.

What do you most enjoy about the show? The show afforded me the chance to go to New York City, where I continue to offer what I never had but never had the chance. And of course I can’t forget the massive amount of exposure.

Anything you’d like to add? I really got the chance to show the world that I’m a unique and talented designer, not just a character TV personality.

The Heart of Homo Hop:
A Conversation with Melange Lavonne

By Laura McSpadden

Melange Lavonne, the openly lesbian rapper whose name is quickly becoming synonymous with homo hop, is back in the studio to work on her third, as-yet-unannounced album. Meanwhile, many members in the LGBT community wait eagerly for its release.

Her last album, “The Movement,” was a testament to the power of music. Each song is an interweaving of engaging beats and heartfelt lyrics that call listeners’ attention to issues such as marriage equality, domestic violence, discrimination of all types, hate crimes and the importance of faith when confronting difficulties in life.

The videos for her songs have won the acclaim of critics and the public. The video for her song “I Got You,” a touching rap about loving gay parents, was an official selection at the 2008 “Q Film Festival” in Long Beach, Calif. and has been featured on MTV Logos. Meanwhile, the video for “Gay Bash” was an official selection at nine film festivals, including the 2008 London Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, the 2008 Outfest Film Festival (Los Angeles, Calif.), the 2007 Queens International Film Festival (New York) and the 2008 LesGaiMad Film Festival (Spain). As if all that wasn’t enough, she toured with HomoRevolution, the first LGBT hip-hop tour, in both 2007 and 2008.

She has also been recently honored as a “Who’s Who in the Black LGBT Community” by BET.com. Other honorees included elected officials, actors, athletes, movie directors and political commentators.

Lavonne has spoken about her struggle to honor all the aspects of who she is, but acknowledges that, in the end, the difficulty has had a positive effect upon her approach to MCing. “Being a gay female artist is very challenging,” she said. “Many times I feel like the underdog but what doesn’t break me makes me stronger. So, ultimately, it’s made me a more vocal artist.”

And yet, she has faced discrimination from both the hip hop world and the LGBT community while the former sometimes doesn’t accept her because of her sexuality, the latter has failed to embrace her role as a female rap artist. “It’s hard to deal with is the hip hop world and the lack of support within the gay community,” Lavonne continued. “I automatically assumed that because I was a lesbian that I was being directed towards the gay community.”

The fun-filled evening begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Club, doors open at 6:30 for a raffle and silent auction. Tickets are $25 in advance and $30 the day of the show, with a minimum purchase of $6 food or drink.

The show will benefit AIDS Rochester and the Gay Alliance. The ticket price includes two free raffle tickets. Prizes will include thousands of dollars worth of gift cards, trips, spa packages and more. Tickets are available at BrownPaperTickets.com.

Samantha Vega

Comedy Club presents Night with the Stars Sept. 13

Get ready for the glamour! On Sept. 13, the Comedy Club at Daisy Dukes, 335 East Ave., will present Steven Andrello as Cher, Donna Marin as Bette Midler, Samantha Vega as Tina Turner and host Steve the Nuclear Gay (as himself).

The fun-filled evening begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Club, doors open at 6:30 for a raffle and silent auction. Tickets are $25 in advance and $30 the day of the show, with a minimum purchase of $6 food or drink.

The show will benefit AIDS Rochester and the Gay Alliance. The ticket price includes two free raffle tickets. Prizes will include thousands of dollars worth of gift cards, trips, spa packages and more. Tickets are available at BrownPaperTickets.com.

Theatre students fight AIDS with love

From a high school auditorium to two of the best theatre spaces in Rochester, from a one-night performance to a two-weekend production, from a few flyers to a cable network commercial and a Web site, “Fight With Love” has come a long way.

Now in its third year, the musical theatre benefit is an established production and a statement that Rochester theatre students are committed to the fight against AIDS.
Writer" said. Nevertheless, she chooses to for a in her MC'ing while aspiring to be the community that they would listen to my messages need to out there to be heard. It's been hard and grateful.

The high school students, many of whom have worked in Rochester's professional theatre venues already, attend East Ridge, Webster Schroeder, Pittsford Sutherland and Our Lady of Mercy High Schools, The Harley School and more. Alumni of city schools School of the Arts and School Without Walls are also performing in the production.

Donated desserts will be sold at intermission for the charity, showcasing some of Rochester's best sweets, including items from Cheesy Eddie's, Premier Pastry and Gourmet Goodies, coffee from Starbucks, and more. A raffle will offer gift certificates for weekends at two Rochester bed and breakfasts and a night out at the restaurant 2 Vine. Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS is providing signed-by-the-cast Broadway show posters and Broadway memorabilia for the raffle, as well.

Tickets are $10 and are available at Wegmans stores and at the door on the day of the event. Group rates for 15 people or more are available. E-mail benefitaids@gmail.com for more information, or visit our Web site, www.fightwithlove.com.

"Chaz Bono's decision to live his life authentically represents an important step forward, both for him personally and for all who are committed to advancing discussions about fairness and equality for transgender people," said Neil G. Giuliano, president of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). "Coming out as transgender is an extremely personal decision and one that may be traumatic for those who need to keep it private. We look forward to hearing Chaz's story in his own words in the future."
The entrance to rocco is through a small bar that has fewer than a dozen seats. One can’t help but notice a framed photo of celebrity chef Mario Batali, wearing a Wegman’s hat and staring when Mark is not there. The third owner is Dan Richards. The Brasserie. He’s likely to be cooking for nearly months. The kitchen is run by Chef Mark Roos, LMT. We learned that what is noise to one person can be energizing and exciting to the next. We were seated at a table for two next to the front window on three separate occasions. I particularly liked sitting there because I could watch the activity in the restaurant as well as watch passers-by in front of the restaurant. The only downside to those front tables is that the air conditioning vent is under the table and the cool air stream can be distracting.

The menu is one page long, with the categories antipasto, pizza, pasta, piatti (main courses), sides and dolce. The fare works for small or large appetites, for a traditional dinner or several dishes to share. There are usually specials and vegetarian dishes are always on the menu.

Chef Cupolo and his staff are particularly goal-oriented. The dishes that come from the kitchen are usually perfectly seasoned, with well rounded, defined flavors. The Roasted Beets with Orange, Pecorino and House Made Ricotta ($8) is exceptional. The flavors went incredibly well together and the house dressing finished it. Bits of parsley, endive and radicchio all fit into the final result and would have preferred. The Clams, Pancetta and Parsley Pizza ($15) had our vote for first prize. The chopped clams and the intensely flavorful pancetta over the nutty melted parmesans really worked. The parsley provided a freshness to light on and punctuate the bold overtones of this pie. The All Day Pork with Fennel, Garlic and Raisin ($18) is the chef’s version of a pot roast. It’s pork shoulder, slowly braised in a light tomato and fennel based liquid until it has been infused with the perfume of the flavorful stock and is falling off the bones. That dish is a must try for anyone who is a pot roast lover or for those who think they may be.

The Brick-Oven-Roasted Potatoes ($6) sounded like a reasonable side dish to add. This one wowed us. The potatoes were large spears of Russets that had been caramelized almost to the point of being burned. The caramelization brought out another dimension in the potatoes that moved them from “side” to absolute center stage. What a surprise!

We had hoped to try the chef’s house-made gelato ($6). We learned that he had not made gelato recently because he’d been too busy. Home-made sorbetto ($6) was available, but instead we tried the Butterscotch Budino ($6). It is a cup of home-made silky-smooth pudding covered with a layer of semi-liquid butterscotch caramel, in which are floated several salty almonds. The budino is not just good, it’s heavenly. The saltiness of the almonds plays against the sweetness and complexity of the caramel. The softness of the pudding works against the crunch of the almonds. This dessert will conclude any meal with a special flourish.
Travel

Hearty Hartford

By Merle Exit

While New York State decides whether same-sex marriages should be legalised, people are crossing the border to Connecticut to tie the knot.

Fairfield County, particularly Greenwich and Stamford, are receiving the most New Yorkers, as they are the closest cities. I took a trip to check out wedding locales and will be returning to seek out attractions, as not only have New Yorkers taken advantage, but couples are also flocking from as far as California.

When it comes to spending time in one particular Connecticut city, Hartford, the capital, has much to offer, as it has recently been revived due to the opening of the new Connecticut Science Center and many other attractions.

I found it quite easy to take Amtrak directly to Hartford, arrive at Union Station and decide on whether to take a cab (less than $10) to the Marriott Downtown, the free shuttle bus, or the Star Shuttle. This shuttle bus later turned out to be a perfect way to get around the downtown area, stopping at or near the key restaurants, theaters, and attractions and operates approximately every 12 minutes. Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Saturday from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.

The Marriott Downtown has the best hotel locale, being next to the Convention Center and Connecticut Science Museum, let alone Riverfront Plaza and the Riverwalk. After checking in to my very cozy and comfortable room with a view of the famous Travelers Tower, it’s off to lunch at Trumbull Kitchen, one of the many restaurants owned by the Max group

Here’s it all about global comfort cuisine, having a tasting of tapaushi rolls, filet mignon on a stick with a tater tot and crab fritters made with crabcake and sweet potatoes. I just happened to find this particular restaurant from “googleing”. I had heard about this restaurant from “googleing” and was not disappointed. I will try one of the other Max restaurants when I return. www.maxestaurantgroup.com

A museum not to be missed is the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, America’s oldest public art museum. I’m sure that there are other museums to keep you amused, but time only allowed for this one, as the next stop on my itinerary was back to the hotel for a “wedding tasting”.

Raymond Benoit, Director of Catering and Events, and Stephanie Simmons, Senior Catering Sales Manager, arranged what would be a tasting of food and wines for a wedding event, while Raymond gave me the inside info on same-sex weddings. Rather than describe the menu, “menu”, it would be best to visit my blogsite www.merlewhirls.blogspot.com for photos and listen to two of my radio shows on Whirl With Merle at www.blogtalkradio.com.

The hotel’s restaurant, where I later had the opportunity to sample the fare, is a different executive chef for Vivo as a catering menu is geared for this one, as the next stop on my itinerary was much enjoyed. However, it is not an item that should be mass-produced due to the consistency of various ingredients being the same as coming out in small amounts.

A performance by the Tony-nominated “Dividing The Estate” was being performed at the Hartford Stage Company and I wanted to sample one of the two bigger theaters. I was not able to review, but... the acting was not short of Broadway talent and the sets were certainly well done. The play does not call for set moving so I was not able to get a sense of what the facilities had to offer by way of “stage” and such.

Looking at the website, www.hartfordstage.org, it doesn’t appear that you should expect a Broadway Tour at this facility but at the larger theatre venue, the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, where I saw a play called “Kiss Tuma”. This two-person performance had the talent, but certainly didn’t give me the view of seeing shows like “The Color Purple” and “Young Frankenstein”, www.bushnell.org.

Between my writing, the New York Sharks and my new kittens, I needed to de-stress at Glo, the spa at the Marriott. Spa Director Christina Pitcher took me on a tour and suggested the following: Skin Resonance Facial for sensitive skin (redness, age); Renewed Skin (sawedeed mask – dehydation); Aroma-Soil Asian Body Scrub for delicate skin (my kittens have been watching me as a searching pest and “weigh station” while referring to me as “cement head”).

The facial gave revival to my façade and I was able to take home some of the products to assist me between facials. Oh yeah, Barbara, the esthetician, did some reiki and massaged my head, neck and shoulders as well. As for Christina’s body renewal... let’s just say that I was so de-stressed that I had a bit of a problem staying awake for one of my events, not to mention that the detoxifying effect caused me to lose a few pounds (really). Comfort Zone is the product line used at this spa, one that I would highly recommend. Products were taken back with me on this line that I can home-spa in between spa visits, which according to Christina should be done quarterly. Mini-Makeup was the last step. Not one to wear makeup, I wasn’t sure that I should have it done. Let’s just say I wanted to research it for the bride or groom to be.

The makeup minerals were blended to handle the high elements of the sun and my redness problem. Mineral foundation has reflective qualities that protect the skin from UVA and UVB rays and doesn’t contain skin-smothering oils that clog and enlarge pores. My face would also stay hydrated (as long as I drank water as well). Additives: green tea extract; grape seed extract; licorice root extract; and so yinfluences.

If I wished, I could indulge in a swim at the indoor pool and the fitness room... but I didn’t as my last stop was the pre-opening event at the Connecticut Science Center. I’m looking to find a word to describe it other than “awesome” and a totally different experience from the one at Laughing Meadows-Cotona Park.

For further information and maps, the best site is www.hartford.com. I intend to go back soon to take in more of the Science Center and Riverfront Plaza for a water tour and some of the attractions that I missed. || ||
Growing Up

By Eric Bellissim

Roz Chast creates cartoons for The New Yorker. Her work is often controversial and has often been cited in court cases.

To every question posed to her, from "how do you begin your day?" to "who inspired you?", she usually responds with "I'm morning grudge." It appeared to be her worldview, her own deeply felt mantra. I was impressed. Roz Chast Needs Help!

For way too long I've been trying to think of myself as a coping, mentally healthy guy. What a waste of time. Truth is, ninety percent of the time I am obsessing about something else, in the mail, I'll think about it, and then I go to sleep. Usually I say, well, actually I shrieked, when I first heard her, "That brings them up short. This time however, I had already heard her voice, a probably very nice persistent voice, saying, "I've got news for him."

When I heard my dear, concerned spouse announce that she was going to call my doctor, I was nations away, throwing up, I clarified. My doctor, I explained, doesn't diagnose over the phone. I'll just tell me to go to the hospital. My ears heard only, more firmly, "We need to call your doctor." My mind was is talking to me, "always call an ambulance so that we may be able to give you an insurance immediate assistance." I had my mouth heard nothing. I bartered. Maybe an Urban Spousewoman left the room. She phoned the answering service. When she didn't hear back, she went to the Wizard. She then phoned her doctor. The doctor was not dubious. "'Go to the hospital.'"

With a deep breath she came to my bedside, apologizing for what ails me. "It sounds creepy. Actually I know that sounds creepy."

Donations!

Herewith, some examples. The other day I was in a room that I had been quite ready with advice for my own Procedure. Outpatient. It was only 38 during that other story. Remember, I stepped through the bright red doors, I became quite still and moved. Conversations among others, answering questions just like this? Spousewoman handled the paperwork, gently navigated my body to designated locations in Triag. Only she understood the words barium solution, CAT scan, white cell count. The edges of my world melted away and my insurance willingly covered organs and arteries rather than split infinitives and dangling verbs.

Before I hop back to gay rage, I want to say that Frank Rich, writing his courageous op-ed piece every week in the New York Times, has kept me closer to sanity than any therapist ever has. He's my Dr. He's straight. He has taken every one to task in unflinching language. Reading him every Sunday is a tonic. I just listened. I still was just interested in equality. Too late for just that. I want reparations. I want compensation, cash, for decades of oppression and abuse. I want someone other than myself to pay for my pain. And don't give me any shit about Brooklyn, some backwater where they do use their lives, how do they sleep at night, what kind of a program are they working? Before I hop back to gay rage, I want to say that Frank Rich is one. The French writer Colette is another. She was quite big on interpersonal romances. But that's another story. A small dog because all they really do is kiss, sleep and poop. That'sextraneous information, I'll add.

Anyway, Roz Chast has joined that pantheon of thinkers who inspire and comfort me, who reassure me that I am not alone within and without. For the guy I am, to even hold a grudge; hell, even to mention it sounds very complicated.

Cleaning My Closet

By Meredith Elizabeth Rich

It's good for what ails you. My question is, and I'm not reading it, do I have a problem? I have my icons and idols. Frank Rich is one. The French writer Colette is another. She was quite big on interpersonal romances. But that's another story. A small dog because all they really do is kiss, sleep and poop. That's extraneous information, I'll add.

Anyway, Roz Chast has joined that pantheon of thinkers who inspire and comfort me, who reassure me that I am not alone within and without. For the guy I am, to even hold a grudge; hell, even to mention it sounds very complicated.

What ails me. Last spring, I had been quite ready with advice for my sister when she became ill. Eager to tell her story. As though my Dr. label covered organs and arteries rather than split infinitives and dangling verbs.

But when the vomiting started in the middle of the night, it was not wise words that flowed from my lips. Instead, it was diatribe. I accused the intestine unkindly to an allergic reaction to five bug bites. On the other hand, barely I opted, it was the food that was somehow tainted only on my plate, not spousewoman's plate.

In agony, I stealthily left my sleeping mate, hauling the unbearable pain down the stairs where I could question myself. I applied a wet wadcloth, drank steaming tea, and sprawled across the couch. When spousewoman was awakened by water sounds, she hesitated only a moment before her mind knew that something was wrong. I immediately at my side.

"What's going on?" "I'm sick," woe wonder he can be so young, so very, very sick.

My mind leaves the room. It tells me another story. Oh yes, the funny story at my second Procedure. Onpatient. In a loud impatient voice, "I want all black...keep high boots, my mon­key-juu football, and my eight-inch high heels. And please tuck my clothes above my waist. The doctor instructed me to lie back. He told me he was going to remove the growth under my arm. Then, with a very slight surgeon-smile, he added, "We usually remove it and then try to fix it without surgery.

During the waiting, scattered thoughts of euphoria and dashes of fear, Jack Pearl took me into the current day. Fear that reminded me about an elderly friend...old, soft, mostly silent. Common, simple infection led her to ICU, unable to breathe on her own. Fear that just had to mention the mortality condition of a friend in the next wing. Her Oh Well. It's Just a Gall Bladder Attack was speculated by a concerned doctor who kept her to the unknown. Beware, malevolent Fear. At that moment, mean-spirited Possibility asked my spouse for a copy of my CAT health care policy.

Finally it was time for my pleasant role of patient nurse. I welcomed my beloveds, told them to assemble quickly, to follow her close, to keep fingers off the rolling bed over raised thresholds. Once parked, I was surrounded by love, hugs, and soothing. One special friend massaged my feet. One special friend caressed my head. I was very peaceful with those three earth close angels standing vigil. Then the anesthesiologist somehow made them float away. I became unable to breathe on my own. Fear. At that moment, mean-spirited Possibility asked my spouse you for a copy of my CAT health care policy.

Then, somehow, I was back in my room. All through the night, gentle words in white, "You are safe. You came to my bedside, apologizing for disturbing me. No, I clarified, don't you have to apologize you're here to save my life."

All through the night, my loving spouse was by my side. Under my hand, her fingers resting on my heart.

Conundrums

We SHOULD ALL BE VERY AFRAID OF THE FAMILY ON C-STREET

By One Overwayer

One is a Washington-based fundamentalist sect living in Arlington, Va. They insist they are just a group of friends, yet funnel millions of dollars through tax-exempt foundations. They claim to dissect politics, but these are elected congressmen for godskids, who are selected by a religious organization in our nation's capital.

They say they are not Christians, but simply believers. But in what? Behind the scenes at every National Parks Breakfast since 1953, The Family is an elite network of senators, operatives and pleaders dedicated to a religion of self-help with a capital goal of self-help. Their goal is Jesus plus nothing.

Their method is backroom diplomacy and they are highly skilled at manipulating the wealth of religious belief into civil rights legislation and the rule of law. The Family is the senior partner of the Family Foundation - part free-market fundamentalism, part imperial ambition - has come to be a part of the political alliance of nations around the world.

I first got wind of "The Family" when writer and religious schol Jeff Shaffer published his new book titled "The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the
Heart of American Power. The author contends that the influence of the Literary and Scientific Fund and its work in America and his reporting is the most astute and original explanation of fundamentalist power and culture.

He was shocked to find himself in the stronghold of a widespread influence. He discovered a strong current of ideas and people who had gathered under the banner of "Fundamentalism." His reports were based on interviews with leaders of this movement and their followers. The author notes that the movement was led by a group of powerful men who were determined to preserve their power and influence.

Every American should know about what is really going on at the Fundamentalist House. The Christian Right will never be perceived the same way again if more people begin to comprehend how dangerous and devastating this movement is. The author states that the influence of this movement is widespread and that it has the potential to undermine our democratic values and freedoms.

When we entered Equal Grounds coffeehouse after being exported from Britain, this is nothing more than protectivereporting. This is not just about power and influence, but also about the preservation of the values and ideals of the American people.

---

**By Bonnie Reda**

Hello ladies of Rochester! With this new column I am returning to my roots as a single column writer: chronicling stories, interviews, upcoming events, trivia, and tidbits of interest to the dynamic, fun-loving and courageous lesbians of this city. As always, I welcome readers’ comments and suggestions. Thank you.

My column may jog some coming memories, and how very long ago it seems.

Every day is a good day. I hope it when I help the elderly cross Main and Exchange streets during rush hour traffic. I have it when crazy little squares reverse course midway across the street and head into my lane of traffic, leaving me to crane my neck into the possibility of an unwanted "thump" under my tire. However, my empathy for the elderly, squirrels and anything else for that matter was in very short supply not too long ago.

It was strained to the max by a "just coming one" young lobster who was absolutely determined to find Rochester's "Ms. Perfect Lesbian." Like Teddy Roosevelt on the hunt, my friend asked advice from no one, sure she'd spot the perfect quarry, snag her, and live happily ever after. As days passed and Ms. Light continued to elude her friend, her temper and whitening increased, shrieking my patience higher than a lady's sea peah.

Finally, on the first day of the third month, I'd had it. I sat her down, faced her with the lovely book she'd been looking for: The Bachelor Forum. Sheepishly, she admitted to spending a lot of time wandering the area parks. Cobles Hill, Highland, Powder Mill, you name it, my friend had walked it. Evidently she'd heard that local parks were loaded with lesbians walking shots. Shoot me now.

OK, I asked, what else have you been up to? It seemed she'd also been spending endless hours at The Spot coffeeshop and Sunny Nites cafe. Drinking gallons of coffee, becoming very familiar with the baristas as a result, and getting some very odd looks deftly placed in front. Suppressing a smile, I took her hand and led her out the door. "It's time for a new campaign, you see.""
celebrities. It's a fascination that is both curious and in itself. The movie also points out how quick celebrities are to adopt, not children right in our own backyard, but children from other countries. Other targets include the Middle East, groups that convert gays and parents who are compulsive about thrusting their children into the spotlight.

Secondly, I can't see how anyone who sees this film couldn't get that it is exposing intolerance and phobias all over the place. First, the character of Bruno is so over the top and ridiculous and the scenes, from start to finish, are so blatant and obvious that it's evident in every frame he's using the film to hold up a mirror to ourselves.

Thirdly, part of the problem: we've been here before with the psychic is worth the ticket price and otherwise. Having said that, Baron Cohen is not the first filmmaker to make us squirm (go see Oliver Stone, Spike Lee or Michael Moore, to name a few) nor is he the last. Additionally, Bruno is not the first movie to deal with sex and hot button issues or stir up a few passions to adopt, not children right in our own backyard, but children from other countries. It's a fascination that is both curious and in itself. The movie, while harsh and at times uncomfortable, does remind us, or should remind us, that being comfortable with our shortcomings or faults, especially when it comes to sex.

Sasha Baron Cohen, who was born in England to an Orthodox Jewish family, deserves kudos for fashioning such a layered and indelible character who just wants to be loved and be someone special -- something we can all relate to, GLBT and otherwise.

As a gay male, I was even a little uncomfortable during some of the scenes. I realized though it was because I was forcing myself to see things that I needed to come to terms with in my own life but I can appreciate the film for what it is trying to do, which is to help us become a more accepting and open society. A society which does not shun outsiders or make people who are not quite like "us" (in whatever way that may be) feel less than human.

If you haven't seen the movie, I highly recommend it. I laughed through the whole movie, at times uncontrollably. However, before you see it, make sure to watch "Da Ali G Show" so you know what to expect and make sure if you do see it, you realize what the joke is.

One final thought about the film: The pantomime scene where Bruno is with the psychic is worth the ticket price alone.

Questions or Comments: E-mail Paul at paulie2973@gmail.com

September is Dining Out With Friends Month.

Please consider being a dinner host for Dining Out With Friends 2009.

Dining Out With Friends raises funds that benefit the Youth Program, Anti-Violence/Community Safety and Education Programs of the Gay Alliance.

Then join us as we wrap-up the month's dinner events at a gala celebration on September 26, 2009 at the Rochester City Hall Atrium. The evening will feature desserts, beverages and music.

For more information, call us at (585) 231-4040 or e-mail us at diningout@gayalliance.org.
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$5.00 Entrance Donation. No one under 18 allowed. Entrance is based on availability of space.

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A portion of all proceeds to benefit the programs of Aud-Rochester and the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
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Well, well... what have we here?

Oh, hallo. "Njord"? How interesting, I'm Richard.

Kyle told me we were expecting a new arrival. Do I detect an accent?

Or perhaps it is the sun?

Oh, my. Gorgeous and a sense of humor? I had no idea Scandinavian men were so... scandelicius!

Reflecting off of my bald head which is dazzling you.

Ja. I discovered a moon of Uranus when I was fourteen.

Uranus? That's... something I'd like to see.

Perhaps I can show it to you sometime, Richard.

Ja. I plan to set up my telescope out here on this deck.

Ja, I am from Norway. You will have to forgive me. English is not my first language.

You sound fine to me.

But then, maybe I'm just too dazzled by your sexiness to notice.

Or perhaps it is the sun?

Oh, my. Gorgeous and a sense of humor? I had no idea Scandinavian men were so...

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Youth Pride Pageant Winners:
Queen: Sapphira Crystal
King: Xavier
Come to the Gay Alliance in Rochester to participate in the Coming Out Workshop. This workshop will provide LGBTQ community members with a safe place to access the internet. The opening of the Cyber Center will occur on July 12th, 2009. The Gay Alliance is working to provide a safe environment for LGBTQ people to explore and affirm their identities. The workshop will be held on the first floor of the Auditorium Building in Rochester.}

**Outreach Program: COMING OUT, SURVIVING AND THRIVING**

By Jeanne Catenborg

**Coming out is a process which varies for each individual. Cultural, political and religious influences can affect the process, making it more difficult for some people than for others. Many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals have struggled with issues of when, where and how to come out.**

The Gay Alliance has been helping people in the Rochester community to not only cope with these issues, but also to help them navigate the process and reach real practical strategies for coming out to friends, family members and colleagues. The group experience can be especially helpful for individuals who are trying to navigate the many aspects of coming out.

At the Gay Alliance, the Coming Out Workshop will provide LGBTQ community members with a safe place to access the internet. The workshop will be held on the first floor of the Auditorium Building in Rochester. The workshop will begin at 10:00 a.m. on September 12th, 2009. The workshop will consist of eight sessions, each two hours long. The sessions will be held on Wednesday evenings from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The workshop will conclude with an optional social event.

The Gay Alliance is offering workshops in the coming out of LGBTQ individuals. This workshop will be held on the first floor of the Auditorium Building in Rochester. The workshop will begin at 10:00 a.m. on September 12th, 2009. The workshop will consist of eight sessions, each two hours long. The sessions will be held on Wednesday evenings from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The workshop will conclude with an optional social event.

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**Resources**

**AIDS DIRECTORY**
Free testing for HIV exposure
- Available from New York State Department of Health call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at (585) 475-2255.
- For pay or charity call outside Rochester.
- If you become infected, please call (585) 292-4050.

**AIDS Rochester, Inc.**
1305 University Ave., Rochester NY 14609.
Provides free resources for persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, presents educational programs related to HIV/AIDS to community groups, offers confidential testing every Monday and Thursday, 5-8 pm (no appointment necessary), offers testing on Outreach Van throughout the city.
Contact Information: business free telephone 585-294-0282; and Bath 1-800-904-2457.

**Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley**
Refers patients to other services.
Contact: (585) 476-7442 or fax: 585-473-7086.

**The HIV Vaccine Trials Unit**
University of Rochester Medical Center. One of several research sites worldwide that comprises the Rochester Center. Rochester is also conducting research-vaccine studies sponsored by National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the attempt to discover a vaccine that could prevent disease HIV infection or AIDS. Imagine a world without AIDS, learn how you can help create it. 585-745-1130, ext. 3302.

**Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/ Syracuse Region**
114 Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14605.
Offers confidential HIV testing and counseling.
When you make your appointment, be sure to ask about our sliding scale fees. No one is turned away for lack of ability to pay.

**AIDS Community Health Center (Schenectady)**
97 Clinton St., Schenectady, NY 12308.
Provides primary care medical HIV and primary care medical HIV positive individuals, their negative par­

**Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS (RATA)**
AIDS DIRECTIONS is a collection of agencies providing a multi­

**Middle Online**
415 W. Main St., offering testing and counseling for

**HIV/AIDS**

**Rochester Men’s Health Partnership**
111 Westfall Rd., Rochester NY 14626.
Provides HIV testing services for uninsured and underinsured men.

**Elaine Wende Breast Center**
1113 S. Main St., Rochester NY 14613.
Dr. Wende Logan-Yung and all women providers provide mammograms.

**SHARE: Support Help for Women with Breast and/or Cervical Cancer**
190 N. Main St., Rochester NY 14607.
Provides services to uninsured women.

**AIDS Rochester Women’s Health Coalition**
1350 University Ave. ARL has free services for HIV positive women and provides services to the lesbian community.

**Community Health Network**
87 N. Clinton Ave., Suite 2400-9000; (585) 687-9202.
HIV and Primary Care medical services for women, free reproductive providers and family members, OB/GYN, HIV post-test and

**Alternatives for Etted Women**
Provides support groups for women only, counseling, gay men help.

**GAY Anti Violence Project**
Providing services for women and girls.

**Victim Resource Center of Wayne County**
Box 93196; (585) 234-7019, ext. 17 and for women and girls.

**Respite for Breast Cancer Patients**
Service providers, Resource Directory.

**The Breast Cancer Coalition**
Coordinates with metastatic breast cancer.

**The Breast Cancer Coalition**
Provides services for breast cancer.

**Political: National Organization for Women (Greater Rochester NOW)**
50 W. Genesee St., Rochester NY 14614.
E-mail: info@rochesternow.org.

**Sports:**
Women’s Sports, Women’s Football
www.themostkickedofall.com

**Online:**

**Women’s Resource Center**
WVCA, 175 S. Clinton Ave, Rochester, NY 14614.
Provides services for women and girls.

**Public Health:**
Health: call Monroe County Health Department at 585-968-8200.

**Women’s Health:**
Health: call Monroe County Health Department at 585-968-8200.

**Women’s Resources:**
- Provides the latest HIV/AIDS resources.
- Provides confidential HIV testing and counseling.
- Provides breast cancer screening services for uninsured and underinsured women.

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**Sports:**
Women’s Sports, Women’s Football
www.themostkickedofall.com

**Online:**

**Women’s Resource Center**
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Provides services for women and girls.
AIDS Rochester
Red Ribbon Ride
www.AIDSRochester.org
585-442-2220
September 20, 2009
All Ability Levels Welcome
Register Today
Classifieds

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HELP WANTED
Sell ads for the Empty Closet! Good commission. If you are reliable and an energetic self-starter who works well with others, please call Susan at 244-5050. Experience preferred.

SERVICES

ROCHESTER RAMS M.C.
Motorcycles and the men that ride them are the featured theme for bar night on Aug. 15 from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. at the Bachelor Forum. Join us and show off your HOG. Have a beer on us if you check your helmet. We will be camping at Jones Pond's campground for their Red Hot Leather weekend Aug. 7-9. We hope to see you there.

The Rochester Rams M.C. is Rochester New York's foremost gay motorcycle and leather club as well as being one of the oldest clubs of its type in the country. All who are interested in the leather club scene are invited to check us out.

Our general meeting is open to the public and we meet the Wednesday before bar night at 7:30 p.m. Meetings are held at our home bar, the Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. Our next general meetings will be held on Aug. 12, Sept. 16 and Oct. 14. For more info, visit our website: www.rochesterrams.com.

ROCHESTER GAY MEN'S CHORUS
(RGMC) has completed its 26th season. It has been an exciting season for the RGMC, performing with Women of Note and the always-entertaining Lea DeLaria. In addition, the RGMC welcomed its new artistic director, Dr. Robert Strauss.

As the RGMC looks to start its new season, we would love to hear from you! If you are interested in being a part of a dynamic group, please join us at our first rehearsal on Thurs., Sept. 3. You do not need to be a professional singer or have trained voices. A love of music will suffice. Be sure to check out our website for all of our upcoming concerts, rehearsal times and events. As always, we can be found on the worldwide web at www.rgmc.org.

Do you or anyone you know have a terrifical summer and we look forward to making beautiful music with you all soon! II

ANNIVERSARY

August

SUNDAY 16

SUNDAY 23

SEPTEMBER

THURSDAY 3
RGMC first rehearsal for new season. Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. www.rochesterrams.com

FRIDAY 14
Empire Closet deadline for September issue. 244-9309; empursalot@gmail.com

SATURDAY 15

SUNDAY 16
MONDAY

LGBT Support Group
Third Presbyterian Church, corner of Meigs, East Ave First, 6:30 pm. 442-8640.

Free syphilis testing
AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave, 5:30-6 pm.

Rochester Historical Bowling Society
7:15pm, Mondays. Claver Lanes, 2750 Monroe Ave. (Group is full)

HV Positive Gay Men Support Group
Every Tuesday, 4pm. AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave. 442-2220.

Green Party (political)
Second and fourth Tuesdays, 5pm. Downtown Presbyterian Church, Nopper Room, 875 E. Main St., fifth floor, 244-8640.

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

Support Group for Parents Who Have Lost Children
First, third Wednesdays, 11am-12:30pm, Third Presbyterian Church, 4E, 875 E Main St. 424-8640.

COAF
Come Out and Play, business meeting last Wednesday, Equal Genders Coffee Shop, 750 South Ave. 5pm, John S., 261-2763.

Empire Bears
First Wednesdays, 7:30pm, GAGV Community Center, 875 E Main St., fifth floor, info@empirebears.org.

Rochester GAMS General Meeting

Transgender Group
Third Wednesdays, 6:30-9pm. Downtown United Pres. Church, 121 N. Fithngh St.

Multim+ Coffee Talk
7pm, 2nd Tuesdays. Empire Bears Bar. Social for former Multim+ 4 BBS member other GBTQ+ neighbors, every fourth Wednesday.

GAGV Library & Archives
8pm Wednesdays, 5th floor, Auditorium Center, 875 E Main St. 244-8640.

Brothers Keeper Support group for men over 50. Third Wednesdays, 9-1030pm, 7:30-9pm, MOCHA Center. 107 Liberty Park Way. 240-1430.

GAGV Youth Drop In Hours
5:30-7pm. Open drop-in session; professionally led. Freewill donation. 244-8640.

Every Wednesday, 5pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 424-8640.

GAGV Youth Group
3rd Thursday, 5pm-7pm. GAGV Youth Center, 875 E Main St., fifth floor. 244-8640.

THURSDAY

Presbyterians for Lesbians and Gay Concerns
6:30pm, first Thursday. Ralph, 279-7640.

Queer Radical Reading Group
First and third Thursday, 7pm. 7pm, GAGV South Center.

Prize at Work
First Thursdays, 5-6:30pm. 107 Flanders St. 670-0652.

GLBAL
(Gays and Lesbians of Black & latona)
Meets every third Thursday at 6pm. Open drop-in session. 609-0652.

Rochester Gay Men's Chorus
Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 630-4111.

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

Partner Bereavement Group
First and third Thursdays, 5-6pm. Open drop-in session; professionally led. Freewill donation to hospice requested. Lifetime Care, 3131 Winton Rd. 241-1944.

MOCHA/GAGV Youth Trans Group
First Thursdays, 5pm, GAGV Youth Center, 875 E Main St., first floor (Prince st. entrance). 244-8640.

U. of Rochester Pride Network
Every Thursday, 5pm, Money 502 on River Campus of U. www.uorzhou.edu/pride

Catholic Gay & Lesbian Family Ministry
Third Thursday, 7-9pm. School of Good Shepherd Church, 2288 E. Henrietta Rd. 392-3662.

AQA

“Second Thursdays” Social and business networking, 5-7pm. Location: e-mail thomas50@mac.com for information.

FRIDAY

FRIDAY Gay AA Meeting
Fridays, 7-9:30pm. Closed meeting. Emmanuel Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave.

Bear and Leather Dance Night
Second Fridays, 9pm-2am. Gaylords, 140 Alexander St.

GLBTQI Motorcycle Group
Second Fridays, 5:30 pm. Various locations. RochesterGLBTQIQeekers@yahoo.com 478-1555. hmdaniel@frontiernet.net.

SATURDAY

Rochester Rams Bar Night

Empire Bears Potluck
2nd Saturdays, GAGV Youth Center, 875 E Main, first floor, Prince St. entrance. 630pm green blue. Being blue to pass www.empirebears.org.

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

Wednesday New Freedom/New Happiness Group
7 pm. at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd. Bus riders: Take the last #18 University bus to 12 Corners. Use the stop just past the top of the hill at Highlinds Ave. and before Highland Ave. Or take the #1 Park Ave. to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton. This is an open discussion meeting. All issues – as they relate to our alcoholism/addiction and recovery – are fair game.

Fridays Gay Men's
7:30 p.m. Immanuel Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave.
• Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts
• Men's meeting
• Handicapped accessible

This is a round-robin discussion meeting. If you are shy about meeting people or speaking up in a group, you will be warmly and inviting because everyone gets their turn to speak (or pass). As a result, this meeting often runs long, so plan more on than the usual hour.

Saturdays

Saturday Night Special Gay AA
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Pride Thanks You!

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROCHESTER PRIDE • 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF STONEWALL

ROCHESTER PRIDE

Great to be together!

Thank You from The Gay Alliance & The Pride Committee
Thanks to all our Sponsors

Zanna Don’t & Reception, Thursday, July 9 • Pride’s Official Non-Alcoholic Event • Rob Sherman, Dan and Everyngo’s Theater Company – family show, great cast! Thanks also for the donation to GAGV of $340 for the Dessert with The Cast Reception • Boulder for the donated coffee and Volunteering for the case, punch and centerpieces • Karen Hardy, Sherwin Belfel, Kristin Rich and Kori L. for set-up and clean up • Orange for pictures for Funds Back to Pride • The School of The Arts, Adele Feco and staff for a super location and their collaboration

Thanks to Bagpro

Neighborhood Parades and Festival Notification Team Saturday, July 11 • Volunteers: Charise G., Jennifer Tobie, T. Byerly, Rainy Shores, Scott Fearing, Michael Erdy and Sue Cowell for hoofing it in the rain all day • Jim Caldwell for e-mails to both The Neighborhood and Merchants Associations

Thank You to the Photographers (hell yes), Ove Schlomper, Laura Mulcahy and Garnett El • A Special Thank You to Jim Anderson, Graphics Designer

Pre-Pride Fundraisers and Promotional Events • Vance Health, Skymeez, Swimwear Toronto Male Models, Kunde Burn Swimwear, Dudley Dubery, William Johnson, Wende Russe • Head 2 Toe Massage Toronto, Fly Tokyo Video, Spa Excess Toronto, Pegase Toronto, Woody’s Toronto, North Sound Leather Toronto, Steamworks Spa Toronto, Outbandian Video & Offta, David Henderson (Waldorf's), Brian and Carol of Muthur’s and their staff, John Stevens, Tim and Donny of Nasty D’s and their staff, GAGV Board Members, Boulder Coffee, USUrbanMale.com, John Tuttobene, Mike Passakell, Evan, DJ Chuck Argentor, DJ Jerry, DJ Mighty Mike, Miss Delicious, Miss Poison Waters, and Sherwin Belfel

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