**March into Pride at Monte Carlo Night**

Get in touch with your inner gambler, at no risk to your pocketbook! March 27 is "Monte Carlo Night" - a chance to play big spender at a glamorous casino, with music, dancing, and fresh our. The event runs from 4-7 p.m. at 140 Alex Bar & Grill, 140 Alexander St. A donation of $10 gets you 20,000 "dollars" to play back. Carpet and Roselette and win great prizes. Also by DJs JoJo and Ellen-0 and a hiphop line dancing. Tolls." Top: Jamie Burrows; Second row L to R: France McClo- and Judie D’Ambrosio. The third floor of Village Gate Square, presents two short plays by Christopher Durang: "Sister Mary Igniti- us. J "Dragtastic," an Obie-winning playwright, says, "Join us for a wild night of the night of her mother's death; then defined our mis- and Cultural Council for Greater Rochester. It was successful We went through the stra- and Video Festival is one of the most popular LGBT commu- the film will be screened on Feb. 28 at the Cinema Thea- re, 937 S. Clinton Ave., at 6 p.m. Admission is $10. Pro- viden ce to the next level - what does it look like and how do we get there? The strategic planning pro- cess should give us a road map to get there. It started when we applied for a Capistrano Build- ing grant in 2009 from the Arts and Cultural Council for Greater Rochester. It was successful and we hired Carol Love as our consultant. We then defined our mis- tion and values; the statement is on our website (http://www.imageOut.org (mission.php)." That was the main conclu- sion of the ImageOut LGBT Film and Video Festival is one of the most popular LGBT commu- nitv institutions. We cast a wide net of different areas we could improve on. That will be the real challenge this year - how do we embark on improve- ments! We have five new board members for 2011, each chosen for their experience with imple- menting strategic planning. We had our first board meeting on Jan. 10 and all the newbies were full of energy and ideas. They will be advising me as board president as we transform the board from operations to govern- ance focus. It's a natural shift for us. We have over 128 volunteers and we are very respectful of their time. (Allen continues page 8)

**MoeTown 2011 is set for March 5**

MoeTown, the annual party for lesbians and their friends, is coming up on March 5.

Organizer Ramona ("Moe") says, "Join us for a wild night of music and fun at 'Moe's' house for directions and information, call me at 264-1668." The party will run from 3 p.m. to midnight, and will fea- ture games, a wood-burning fireplace, an "old school" leb- an porch, bhopie line dancing and of course music, provided by DJ's Tulo and Elkes. - and a surprise DJ as well. (Allen continues page 8)
Dykes of Hazard celebrate anniversary

The Dykes of Hazard Variety Hour has taken Buffalo by storm. This month is the performance group's one-year anniversary. Filled with new sketches, some "best of the best" and an extended show, packed full of laughs, all followed by a giant dance party.

The event takes place Thursday, Feb. 25, at The Ninth Ward (inside Babeville, corner of W. Tupper and Delaware) in Buffalo, starting at 8 p.m. Admission is $12.


Meet the Dykes of Hazard...

By Laur McSpadden

I am one of the lucky ones.

Oh yes, it's true.

I count myself as lucky because I have

been fortunate enough to see the Dykes of Hazard perform and cherish Kristen Becker's solo show at Equal Grounds last September. Each time, I laughed so hard it was better than an ABS of Steel workout. Seriously.

Only, not really serious at all. The members of the troupe are off-the-wall hilarious, with a good dose of eccentric thrown in for shits and giggles.

The Dykes of Hazard are:

Kristen Becker, the host of the show, who serves up "bawdy reality topped with a slice of southern charm.

Karine Amaro, the experienced choreographer who "has been dancing since the age of two,

and Ava LaFey, one of the founders of Striperscar Burlesque, who "dazzles and dances as the shimmies, shakes and taunts at cultural correctness."

In honor of their upcoming anniversary show, several of the Dykes of Hazard answered a few of my questions on shorter notices and in good humor. Sadly, Karine Amaro was unavailable for questioning; if you want to hear her take on these and other important matters, get your ass to their upcoming show!

Laur McSpadden: Please describe the Dykes of Hazard experience in 50 words or less.

JW: A dysfunctional family which in as equally hilarious as it is intimate, that always pulls it off and comes together on the holidays. In this case, the holidays are more frequent though.

KB: What subject matter/topics do you find funniest and funniest to do in shows? Why?

LM: We try to stay topical -- we covered a lot of the elections and a LOT of Carl Paladino's campaign. Which practically wrote itself, honestly.

There have been a few characters that have developed throughout this year who we are really proud of. Just one example: we have two ridiculous librarians, reading to the audience from some very questionable material. They're always a crowd pleaser, and will be making an appearance at the anniversary show!

KB: Where do you tend to work in some more musical parodies, which are really fun. Turns out we harmonize well together, and usually the last thing people expect is a full cast musical number.

LM: Buffalo versus everywhere else: comments?

KB: Buffalo rocks.


LM: What is your secret super power?

KB: It's a combo -- Satire and Sass.

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The Rainbow Theatre Festival runs March 18- April 17: “Indigo”

This year, Bread & Water Theatre’s Rainbow Theatre Festival runs March 18 to April 17, at 243 Rosedale St. (corner of Monroe Ave. and Rosedale St.).

Performances are on Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Single tickets range from $20-$30 and season tickets range from $280-$350 and may be purchased in person at or BreadlandWatershedTheatre.org. For more information, call (585)271-5923.


The festival uses the original Rainbow Pride Flag as a guide in its annual productions. Playwright Chambers was a ground-breaking playwright who became known for his honest portrayal of lesbian relationships during a time when stereotypes were all too common.

In “The Postcard,” two Jewish women gain insight into their personal struggles when they buy a postcard showing two children in the Warsaw ghetto. A mysterious journey unfolds bringing the children and lovers together connecting the past and present. These two productions will be part of a double feature performance. Performance Dates: March 25, 26, and April 1, 2 at 8 p.m. April 3 at 2 p.m.

“The Paris Letter” is an absorbing play about power, money, and the rumous effects it can have on friendship, love, marriage, and ultimately one’s self. In this modern tragedy set in urban New York City, Wall Street powerhouse Sandy Sonenberg finds his personal and professional life threatened by the unraveling secrets of his past. After burying his true sexual identity, a lethal affair with a young male associate forces Sonenberg to confront a lifetime of unrequited love and betrayal. Performance Dates: April 5, 9, 13, 16, at 8 p.m., 10 and 17 at 2 p.m.

Miss Honey Dijon to rock Rochester Feb. 26

Miss Honey Dijon, internationally known trans-dj, will soon rock our town. On Feb. 26, DeBiase Presents is bringing Miss Honey Dijon to TILT Nightclub.

Based in New York, Miss Honey’s recent gigs for such clients as Vision-are, Hermes, Chloe, The CFDA Awards, Loewe, Narciso Rodriguez and other global taste-makers are making her one of the most sought after Djs for top fashion calendar events. Other headlining appearances include: Berlin’s Love Parade, Ministry of Sound, Respect Is Burning in Paris, and the annual Winter Music Conference in Miami.

A native of the Windy City, Honey is becoming a must-see dj in many cities.

Collectors delight

These Schoenbek lamps display authentic, semi-precious rock crystals and an array of aspirations – rare gemstones unique in the universe. From toed-in crystal, Schoenbek lamps are original designs, worthy of a discerning collector.

And, incidentally, they are highly functional light sources, with built-in dimmer switches. See the collection in our showroom.

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Psychotherapist

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Jetblueing to Long Beach

By Merle Exit

I “JetBlued” to Long Beach, California with one free baggage and less for me to tote onboard, lots of legroom, great snacks and television. Great for a trip across the country and non-stop.

It was that evening when we went to La Traviata, an Italian restaurant located in the downtown area of Long Beach, complete with an opéra singer and imported limoncello.

Adding to the Italian experience was an authentically gondola ride in the area known as Naples Island, provided by Gondola Getaways. Expensive houses were the scenery. Dean Martin music was playing in the background.

The next morning it was off to visit the Queen Mary, former cruise ship, now a hotel. It's a fabulous idea for people who want to experience sleeping on a cruise ship and not worry about becoming seasick or getting stuck in the ocean for four days. The one main activity on the Queen Mary is Ghost Tours, so don't expect an itinerary. Room with an ocean view.

That evening’s dinner was at Gladstone’s, located at the Pine Avenue Pier, an area of food and entertainment, where you can view the Queen Mary across the way. Gladstone’s has both indoor and outdoor dining. A sushi bar and entertainment are indoors. The outside area was especially set up for the cooler evening. There was one center table that had burning rocks in the middle. Heat lamps were fixed near each table around it, which accounts for why my photos came out with a red rone.

When it comes to sake, there’s nothing I like more than a carafe of Gekkeikan Black and Gold. If you remember from my trip to Folsom, I visited the company and did a tasting. It was paired with a Three Amigos Roll of salmon, tuna, yellowtail wrapped and covered in tempura flakes, topped with spicy mayo and papaya mango salsa.

We then got to sample their ahi tuna, mahi mahi and a Dungeness crab. You can't get more local on crab. I love it because it's the least salty while having the most meat.

For a behind-the-scenes tour at the Aquarium of the Pacific, going to areas that are usually restricted to the employees. It gave us access to viewing the main aquarium from above, as well as the animal care center. Frankly, I would recommend this one-hour romp only if you expect to spend much of the day there. Time allotted for the Lorikeet Forest. An extra $3 gets liquid in a small plastic cup to feed them. As you approach them the Lorikeets will fly over to you and rest on your hand, fingers, or shoulder to be fed. They are so cute and colorful.

After spending much time at the Aquarium, we were off to view some of the neighborhoods. Long Beach tourism has a great map to do so and then it’s lunchtime. Wokcano seemed like a good spot with its locale in a section called The Promenade. Sushi followed by short ribs and broccoli.

For further information on Long Beach go to www.visilongbeach.com.
Growing Up

By Eric Bellman

On Saturday, December 17, the phone line ran around three p.m. and there came a nasal-sounding announcement: "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." I think I stared blankly at the computer screen for a good five minutes.

Over the next week I had several conversations with straight friends as well as gay ones. One gay friend of many years standing only commented, "Well, I thought it was a dumb policy to begin with. I didn't see what they were afraid of."

I, on the other hand, was torn. My gay self, the one I write with, the one I,columnists or The Empty Closet. remains in the front of my brain and I very much want to have this event place being angry. But it helped fuel the conversations with straight friends as well as gay ones.

Another guy, one I think of as conservative, had this to say: "The name change is very emblematic of the Republicans having a different agenda - the Republicans have a different agenda and are hell-bent on oppressing others."

This superficial effort includes renaming committees and subcommittees to give them names that reflect the Republican agenda. The House has renamed several Congressional committees and given them certain words such as "civil rights" and "labors" from their titles. Some may call this a move to pander and insignificantly and believe it to be a move of second thought - I beg to differ.

Now, the Education and Workforce Committee became the Education and Workforce Committee, while the Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties is set to be renamed the Constitution Subcommittee.

This is not the first time that the Education and Labor Committee has been renamed. A Republican-run House led by New Gingrich first changed the name of a subcommittee from "Civil Rights" to "Civil Liberties" in 1995. Where does this name change really mean more than the standard rhetoric - the Republicans have a different agenda and are hell-bent on opposing others. The name change is very emblematic of the Republicans having a different agenda and are hell-bent on oppressing others.
Gay and Transgender Issues in the Workplace

By Brian McNaught

The most conservative member of the Republican majority has shown that it isn't quite the GOP talent? You've got to be kidding me.

To文件：GSMGAS, SAY SO

By Brian McNaught

Asking if Sarah Palin, and others who use inflam- matory rhetoric, will share blame for the attempted assassina- tion of U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords is like asking of spilling gasoline around a house anything to do with its destruc- tion by fire. Palin, Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh, among others, didn't light the match, but they encouraged someone else to strike it, and despite their "shock" that anyone would look their way, they're not without personal guilt. But neither are any of us who didn't complain loudly that we smelled gas.

By Brian McNaught

My bullying by straight and deeply-divested sailors in the U.S. Navy can likewise be attributed to the homeo- nymous rhetoric of Captain Owen Honors, chief officer on the U.S. Enterprise, who used anti-gay-bashes in his video communi- cations with his straight and new member. He doused his sailors with gasoline, but no one, until the video was finally leaked to the media, spoke up about the threats.

By Brian McNaught

If the head of your political party places a target on someone and repeatedly uses the terminology to describe them, and if your commanding officer repeatedly refers to gay soldiers as "Gay," there is no sanctified likelihood of violence. Sometimes the managers ignore the anti-gay comments of their big pro- ducers because they fear the consequences. When they have go there in another form, or because they assume there are no remaining people, they can do it with the knowledge of the entire office by the persons in charge, or with their approval, and human resources keeps wondering why no one complained.

By Brian McNaught

Someone should have said that Jared Lee Loughner was a threat. By saying with a voice should have publicly con- demned Sarah Palin's rhetoric. "Have no shame!" Some of the naval brass should have reported Captain Honors the first time a derogatory video of his aired and made him face the consequences. People should speak up about anti-gay language of the guys on the trading floor in New York, on the plant in Michigan, or the Human Resources manager in Dallas. All we have the responsibility to speak up and say, "I smell gasoline," and "That's unacceptable behavior."

What happened in the Arizona mall parkling is a horror story, but that's not surprising. Nor is it surprising that Captain Honors felt comfortable broad- casting this bias, if he's heard his friend's colleagues thought it was funny to call him "Rainbow Man." They're all all the same--all the same old gay people pouring gasoline of and of other people acting as if they don't smell it.

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Inspirational Flying Again

By the Rev. Sharon Henning

It has been quite a while since I have blogged about anything for The Empty Closet. I am not that any- thing I could say. I am not even longer write, it was that I was going through a time of hustle and uprooting, and transformation. Like a caterpillar, I needed to crawl into a cocoon and allow myself to go through a spiritual and personal metamorphosis.

Once I began to fly again, I found myself thinking about writing again. However, I had not yet done the deciding. So include this as part of my spiritual disci- pline. Then it happened -- I was hit over the head by this spiritual 2x4 at Weg- mans.

A woman came up to me and said, "Do you now who was locked at Wegmans said, "You don't look familiar, but that doesn't mean we have not met." So we continued with our shopping.

About two aisles later, we met up again. "Did you use to write for the Empty Closet?" she asked. "Yes, but it has been a while." I said.

"I used to read your column every month and then it just disappeared. I wish you would write again. It got me through some tough times," she responded.

I was never going to formally introduce ourselves as our cell phones rang with messages of each other, calling us home to the soothing realities of daily life. So to whoever you are, thank you for allowing the Creator to use you: that cold and lonely morning at Wegmans in aisle 10B.

The question she asked and I never got to answer was this: "Why aren't you doing since then?" The answer is simple and complex.

I have been on a constant journey of spiritual evolution and transformation. Four years after giving birth to something small and dear to my heart, I had to surrender to the Creator. I then spent several months living the three words the Creator gave me: Trust, Cleanse and Prepare. Having stepped away from just about every non-essential commitment/responsibility in my life, I went through a time of spiritual, emo- tional and physical cleansing.

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magnifying glass (which I’m sure was a subliminal symbol for something else) and it read: “I’m detecting a way to ask my Valentine.”

I gave a copy of that one to all the over boys in my class; of course, no one detected my true meaning. Anyway, I still love those superhero-themed Valentine cards.

Then, as a gay teenager, Valentine’s Day was a time to be feared. It was the 1970s — before Will & Grace and Modern Family — and society was in a different place. I didn’t know any other gay people, so I avoided Valentine’s Day since I knew the captain of the football team was never going to ask me out on a dare no matter what day it was.

After coming out of the closet as an adult, I went through that stage where Valentine’s Day was a sad, desperate wrist band, while Bernie, wearing his superhero-themed Valentine’s card, said, “Want another kiss?”

I don’t mean chocolate cake, if you know what I mean. “Of course, it’s Sunday,” I asked. “Do you know what day it is?” I asked, “It’s 9 p.m. on Valentine’s Day.” I sat down on the bed. “Back when we were dating, we would be out at dinner or at a movie or having sex — and by dessert, I don’t mean chocolate cake, if you know what I mean. “Unspecial things we got married the same. “I’m detecting a way to ask my Valentine.”

Biebsie gave me a frightened look. I’m usually not okay with this type of thing — growing older, for one reason, not getting any dinner, if you know what I mean. “No,” I assured him, holding up my hands. “I’m really okay. So, we didn’t go out to dinner or even remember to get each other a Valentine’s card — that’s okay. We don’t need a special day to say we love each other because we’re not special every day.” We leaned toward each other to kiss, but the hostess of Bernie’s deep-sea fishing machine got caught on corner of the nightstand and then I accidentally hit him in the face with my own tunnel wrist band. Like I said — we are a very hot couple.


David is a short story in the new Chicken Soup for the Soul book, entitled ‘Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Spirit of the NFL’ — available now at bookstores everywhere! You can contact David at DavidSmillie@aol.com

Beyond the Binary
UNITY AND DIFFERENCE

By Lauren MacDonald

I recently came across a very thought-provoking blog post, appropriately titled “Arc We on the verge of a Transgender Civil War?”

The post explored some of the schisms that exist in the trans communities, including the divisions and animosities between “cross-dresser, genderqueer and transgender people, on the one side, and transgender, intersexual and women/men of operative histories on the other side.”

Sadly, this is something I have seen evidence of in the trans communities. And, even more unfortunately, I think the root of the rupturing of the trans communities is even more complex than gender-queer v. transgender — class, nationality, race, religion, educational background and countless other aspects of each person’s context contribute to the lack of cohesion among transpeople.

In fact, it is in honor of this diversity that I refer to the transcommunities as the umbrella term? However, they adhere to living in a world that accepts and tolerates world.

The post was aptly titled: “I'm not detecting a way to ask my Valentine.”

In facing these common difficulties, we are all in it together, like it or not. If we truly care about bringing positive, healing change, we need to find a way to work together without denying the ways in which we are different.

In the words of my friend Tystyn, “I believe all trans folks can work together. On common ground revolves around experiencing natural gender variance. How we personally choose to deal with that incoherence and the political and personal priorities we embrace may be different, but in the end, we all want a more accepting and tolerant world.”

The path toward this world may be long and difficult — in fact, it probably will be. However, I have hope and faith that with rigorous honesty, hard work and a willingness to truly listen to each other, it is achievable. And, what better way to celebrate Valentine’s Day than in holy moly.

“By Irene Monroe

All couples like to bring the New Year in on a loving note. And what better way for two lesbian priests of the Episcopal Church to demonstrate their commitment to each other than in holy matrimony?”

By Irene Monroe

All couples like to bring the New Year in on a loving note. And what better way for two lesbian priests of the Episcopal Church to demonstrate their commitment to each other than in holy matrimony?

After a jubilant crowd of 400 packed on New Year’s Day, the Rev. Mally Lloyd, former pastor at Christ Church in Flemington, and now a ranking official of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, married the Rev. Katherine Ragsdale, dean and president of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., and Boards of Ministry (a council of the Diocese of Massachusetts), held on New Year’s Day, the Rev. Mally Ragsdale, dean and president of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., and Boards of Ministry (a council of the Diocese of Massachusetts), held.

No doubt, Lloyd and Ragsdale’s nuptials is historic. And both should be applauded for their courage.

The news of their wedding was swelldi by around the Episcopal Church. And while many of us here in Massachusetts — one of the few U.S. states that legalizes same-sex marriages — rejoice at Lloyd and Ragsdale’s news, the fallout, which many are anticipating from the conservative arm of the church will, perhaps, not be a quiet storm.

The Rev. Mark Richardson, dean of the Episcopal Church Divinity School of Rochester, wrote:

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of the Pacific in Berkeley, recognizes the possible success that might emerge, but for now is downplaying any immediate impact of Lloyd and Ragdale’s marriage by conveying his blessings, stating, “I am grateful that they have chosen to include their families in public recognition.”

Lloyd hopes her fellow Episcopalians won’t focus on their wedding, but rather as “a commitment and marriage like any other.”

The Reverend V. Gene Robinson said that “he always wanted to be a June bride.” And in a private ceremony that took place five years to the day from when he was elected as the ninth bishop of the Diocese of New Hampshire in the Episcopal Church, U.S.A. Robinson and his partner of 20 years, Mark Andrew, said “I do” in a civil union at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Concord, N.H., we came to do what that he “always wanted to do.” In a civil union at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Concord, N.H., we came to do what that he “always wanted to do.”

EC: [It’s hard to believe that ImageOut stopped publishing.] Yes, we’ve had a real challenge. What’s been the response to your work this past year?

PA: We’ve continued to focus on our mission of bringing quality filmmaking to the Rochester area. We’ve been able to bring in some new and exciting films this year, and we’ve continued to be able to offer a variety of programs and events. We’ve continued to support local filmmakers, and we’ve continued to partner with other organizations to bring in more programming.

EC: What are some of the challenges you face in running a film festival?

PA: One of the challenges we face is finding funding. We rely on a mix of ticket sales, sponsorships, and grants to cover our operating expenses. It’s been a constant struggle to find the right mix of revenue streams.

EC: Have there been any screenings that have had a special impact on you?

PA: Yes, we’ve had several screenings that have had a special impact on us. One that sticks out is the one we had just after the tragic 2006 tornado, which killed several people in the Rochester area.

EC: What’s your plan for the future?

PA: We’re currently working on our 2011-2012 programming calendar, and we’re looking forward to bringing in some new and exciting films and programs. We’re also looking to expand our outreach to reach more people in the Rochester area.

EC: How can people support ImageOut?

PA: We rely on the support of our audiences, sponsors, and donors. We encourage people to buy tickets for our events, support our sponsorships, and make tax-deductible contributions.

EC: How can people find out more about ImageOut?

PA: People can visit our website at ImageOut.org or contact us at info@ImageOut.org.
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**Bed & Breakfast**

**Kyle’s Bed & Breakfast** by Greg Fox

*Hey, Price... We need to talk to you.*

*If it’s about a three-some, I’m kind of busy today.*

*Don’t flatter yourself. We don’t wanna talk to you about all these crazy new policies and fees you’ve created around here...*  

*Ever since you became Kyle’s financial advisor.*

*That’s right. We don’t like it. We want things back how they were.*

*Look, Price... the only reason you’ve been able to get away with all this is ‘cause Kyle’s mom had heart surgery last month...*  

*I have to say... rarely have I seen a more selfish couple of ingrates.*

*And he hasn’t been around to see what you’ve been up to.*

*I am trying to help Kyle save this B&B from financial ruin...*  

*Yeah, but once he gets back... and we tell him about all the crap you’ve been pullin’...*  

*I have to say... rarely have I seen a more selfish couple of ingrates.*

*He’s gonna fire your ass and maybe boot you outta the B&B, too.*  

*And all you two care about are your precious selves!*

*Kyle never said anything about the B&B having money problems.*  

*However, things are turning around now... because of the changes I instituted to keep this B&B afloat.*

*Of course not. He didn’t want to worry you over the fact that his business is hemorrhaging money.*

*But, if you want to ruin that, then go complain to Kyle. Destroy his business.*

*No, uh... we won’t say anything... you do what you need to... to help Kyle.*

*Yeah, we only want what’s best for him.*

*It’s just too easy with these morons.*

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WINNERS PART TWO: The lovely Kasha Davis joins Gay Alliance staffers Jess Cohen, Susan Jordan and Laur McSpadden at the City newspaper “Best of Rochester” awards on Nov. 9 at Village Gate. The Gay Alliance won “Best Activist Group”. Photo: City Newspaper/Mike Hanlon.

Educational and outreach work of the Gay Alliance staff and volunteers

December/January 2011

Speaking engagements/presentations:

12/1 Student Safety at Franklin HS-Security
12/1 World AIDS Day Tabling Event at SUNY Brockport
12/2 Cultural Sensitivity/SafeZone at School Without Walls
12/2 Gender and Sex in Healthcare at Univ. of Rochester
12/3 LGBT Community Safety at DV Consortium
12/4 Unplanned Reading and Discussion at Gay Alliance
12/4 Lifeguard Training at Gay Alliance
12/5 LGBT Youth Issues at St. Joseph’s Villa
12/5 Tying the Knot: Film and Discussion at Gay Alliance
12/6 Sexual Identity at Coming Inc.
12/7 SafeZone Training at SUNY Geneseo
12/7 Trevor: Film and Discussion at St. Thomas Episcopal Church
12/8 BDSM 101 at Gay Alliance
12/9 Cultural Sensitivity/SafeZone at School Without Walls
12/9 LGBT Issues in Foster Care at New Life Presbyterian Church
12/13 LGBT 101/Issues with families at Hillside
12/15 SafeZone Training at SUNY Geneseo
12/16 Cultural Sensitivity/SafeZone at School Without Walls
12/23 Cultural Sensitivity/SafeZone at School Without Walls
1/5 Marriage Equality at Irondequoit Library
1/6 Cultural Sensitivity/SafeZone at School Without Walls
1/6 LGBT Issues in Schools at Pittsford Mendon High HS
1/10 Creating Community at University of Rochester
1/11 Spirituality for the LGBT Community at Gay Alliance
1/12 Safe Schools at Harley School
1/12 LGBT Sensitivity at North Street Recreation Center
1/13 School Without Walls Cultural Sensitivity/SafeZone
1/14 SpeakOUT Training at Gay Alliance
1/14 SpeakOUT Training at Gay Alliance
1/17 Lifeguard Training at Gay Alliance
1/18 SafeZone Training at Hobart and William Smith Colleges
1/19 LGBT 101 at Wegmans School of Pharmacy at SJFC
1/20 Cultural Sensitivity/SafeZone at School Without Walls
1/20 SafeZone Training at SUNY Brockport
1/24 LGBT Sensitivity at Franklin High School
1/26 Transgender Healthcare Panel at Wegmans School of Pharmacy at SJFC
1/26 LGBT 101/Issues in Healthcare at RIT Student Health Center
1/27 Cultural Sensitivity/SafeZone at School Without Walls

Ride For Pride seeks riders for June 2011

The second annual Ride For Pride Gay Alliance bike ride fundraiser event will take place on Saturday, June 18, 2011. The route is 100 kilometers long (about 64 miles) mostly on the towpath, but with some road riding. Registration fee is $10, which goes towards food, drinks and supplies. We are currently accepting new riders who are strong bikers, willing to bike with the group, willing to train and willing to fundraise (minimum total donation is $100). If you are interested in being a Ride For Pride biker, please contact Jeanne at jeanneg@gayalliance.org or 585-244-8640 ext. 14.

Gay Alliance Youth

The Gay Alliance offers Youth Services for Rochester area LGBTQ and allied youth ages 13-25

Check out what’s happening at: www.gayalliance.org or contact JessC@gagv.us

Monday and Wednesday Drop-in: 2-6pm

Sunday Support Groups: ages 13-23: 2-4pm; ages 18-25: 4:30-6pm

Special Interest: Transgender Youth, Arts/Crafts, Movies, Writing

Special Events: Youth Dances, Day of Silence, Big Gay Prom, Pool Table, LGBTQ Youth Library, Internet Access

Fun, friendly, safe adults are needed to volunteer their time and talents, providing positive role models, maybe sharing a talent or skill. Contact Scott Fearing, Outreach Coordinator for an application: ScottF@gagv.us or 585-244-8640, ext. 14
**Program Notes**

THE GAY ALLIANCE HAD APPROXIMATELY 10,000 HOURS OF DONATED VOLUNTEER TIME IN 2010.

THANKS TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS!

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**Big Gay Prom 2011**

Jessica Cohen, Youth Program Director, recently announced that the Gay Alliance will again be hosting the Big Gay Prom for LGBT and allied youth in the area. This year it will be held the evening of Saturday, April 9, and the theme will be “Over the Rainbow.”

“We expect about 250 youth from the region to attend the dance,” explained Cohen. “We will again run all the night ‘lock-in’ at the Youth Center following the Prom. We are looking for LGBT and allied adults in the area to help make the event a special evening for the youth by volunteering time, or helping to cover the cost of food, music and decorations.”

For more information, or to offer support, please contact Jess Cohen at JessC@gayalliance.org or 585-244-8640 ext. 13.

**InQuery Programs**

The Gay Alliance InQuery program has a number of special sessions coming up. There is the exciting new partnership with the Community Safety Program on a monthly series of workshops addressing legal concerns and issues.

On five Fridays, InQuery will be hosting screenings of films in conjunction with the Think Gay! Irs Friday! series of hosting screenings of films in conjunction with open houses that the Alliance is running.

**Youth active work on show at Barnes & Noble**

Barnes & Noble, GSLN Rochester and The Gay Alliance are proud to cosponsor a display of student artwork and poetry during the month of February at Barnes & Noble in Greece Ridge Mall. Students submitted their work as part of a local creative expression contest for National No-Name Calling Week. Work will be on display in the Barnes & Noble café during regular business hours. Stop by to see the work and thank Barnes and Noble for their support of this important project.

**Day Of Silence in Rochester is April 15**

The 2011 National Day of Silence is scheduled for Friday, April 15. The Gay Alliance and GSLN Rochester will once again partner to host a “Rally to Break the Silence.”

The event will be held from 4:30 p.m. at the Auditorium Center’s Apollo Room. The event is free for all youth between the ages of 13-23 and will include student performances, a youth dance, pizza/soda, free speech screening and health/wellness information.

For more information, please contact Jess Cohen, Youth Services Director at the Gay Alliance, at JessC@gayalliance.org.

**Community Safety series helps with legal needs**

Did you know that the Gay Alliance Community Safety Program supports community members with many different kinds of legal needs? Last year the Program fielded calls about child custody, job discrimination, adoption, marriage recognition and students’ rights, just to name a few.

The Gay Alliance does not have lawyers on staff, so it does not provide legal advice, but does provide information on resources and referrals and can even help callers strategize how best to proceed in their particular situations. In a few instances the Program has even been able to provide direct advocacy.

“We were able to help those callers in large part because of our Out for Justice Professional Resource Network,” says Kelly Clark, the Community Safety Program Director. The Out for Justice network is a group of professionals who work in law, law enforcement and allied legal fields such as victim services. They are both LGBTQ professionals and allies who offer their knowledge and support to the Gay Alliance to help us better serve the public,” says Clark.

This year, the resources of the Out for Justice network are being brought directly to the community through a year long series of legal workshops. The Out for Justice Workshop Series will hold the fourth Tuesday of each month, January-December of 2011. Workshops will include: Guardians & Students Rights in School, New York; The Twisted State of Marriage: Name Change and Other Legal Issues for the Transgender Community, The 411 on 911: What to Expect If You Need to Call The Police; Protect Your Assets Financial Management for Unmarried Partners.

“There are just so many things you never think about before you’re in the middle of a crisis,” says Clark. “For instance, we all know that the death of one partner is a very tricky and risky time for unmarried couples, but I never thought about things like disposition of remains. In other words, who gets legal custody of your body. Who thinks of that? Well, lawyers do, and that’s why this series is so important.”

Attorney and Network member Mar­cus Kroll, an Associate at The Offices of Richard A. Kroll, presented the January workshop on estate planning and end of life issues. When asked about why he volunteers, he said he found it important to work with the LGBTQ community because he believes in equality for all.

“Of particular concerns,” he added, “is treatment of LGBTQ individuals and their families within the medical system — I have personally witnessed many horror stories that could have been avoided with basic planning and knowledge, and I believe that is in need to share this knowledge.” Marcus feels so strongly that he has agreed to repeat the workshop later in the year for those who may have missed it.

Please join the Community Safety Program for the next workshop — What About the Children? What You Need to Know About Custody and Adoption — on Tuesday, Feb. 22 in the Community Engagement Room at the Gay Alliance, 875 E. Main St. Details of what the workshop will cover can be found at www.gayalliance.org/Out. For more information or to become a member of the Out for Justice Professional Resource Network, please contact Kelly Clark, 585-244-8640.
AIDS

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services free and confidential. Multicultural and bilingual staff, Jasrool Noble, program manager 3369 Chestnut St., second floor, M-F 8:30-5 pm, Monday-Friday, 2-430-392-5772. Free anonymous HIV testing on walk-in basis, Tuesdays, 4-7 pm, provided through NYSCHAP Thursday 1-4 pm at Amen Baptist Church, 175 Genesee St.

Anthony L. Johnon Health Center Prevention and Persuasion Program Provides Medical Case Management, Mental Health, Primary Care, HIV Counseling and Testing using the Dovetail Rapid Test. Education presenta-

and access to other Jordan services. Preven-

and Primary Care is a walk-in program, no appointment necessary. Hours: Mon - Fri, 8:30 am - 5 pm, extended hours on Monday until 8 pm (585) 423-2874, fax (585) 423-2876. Website: www.bbccr.org. For more infor-

ation, call Program Director Mark P. Trevor, (585) 423-2873.

CDC National STD and AIDS Hotline

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) 24 hours a day TTY service. 1-888 232 6346. E-mail address: otrinfo@cdc.gov

Fair Housing Enforcement Project of Monroe County:

35 St. Clair St., Rochester, NY 14607. (585) 325-2520. 1-800 696 9777. Deals with housing discrimination on basis of race, orienna-

tions, national origin, age, sexual orientation, familial status, and other.

Public Interest Law Office of Rochester

80 St. Paul St., Suite 701. Free legal services to HIV-positive persons, families. Spanish, bilingual legal advisors available. Cases accept divert no communal cases. Ask to speak to someone in.

PLR. (585) 339-9800.

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Family

and services.

Also, the Finger Lakes Health System, which also provides medical care and mental health services, has a dedicated program for LGBT individuals.

One of the centers that provides these services is the Rochester Women's Health Outreach, located at 100 South Main St., Rochester, NY 14607. For more information, call 585-424-6461 or see www.gayalliance.org.

The Rochester Women's Health Outreach

is dedicated to helping LGBT people achieve their goals of building and sustaining healthy families. We do this by providing support, advocacy, information, and access to community

and care.

The office of the Monroe County District Attorney has a dedicated unit for LGBT cases. The unit provides legal representation and advocacy for LGBT people and their families in a wide range of legal matters, including family law, domestic violence cases, and criminal justice proceedings.

The Rochester Women's Health Outreach

also provides a support group for LGBT parents and their children. The group meets on the third Wednesday of each month at the Monroe County Women's Health Center.

For more information, call 585-424-6461 or see www.gayalliance.org.
Groups

Find the friends and fun you need in your neighborhood of the LGBT community.

BUTCH FEMME CONNECTION

The Rochester Butch-Femme Connection will have two dinner events in February! For more information, call Bob at 585-667-6456 or e-mail broadcastfrontier.com. Hope to see you soon.

EMPIRE BEARS

The Empire Bears have been having a great season so far. A New Year’s branch, a busy Bearnighr, Christmas with the Calimari Sisters, and a potluck in the first week of January! Woof, I’m tired, but the winter still has far to go.

Squares meets each Monday at the Open Church, corner of Clinton Ave. South and Court St.

GAY SQUARES DANCE GROUP - THE LILAC SQUARES

We are planning another dance at 140 Ales like the ones we had in October, on Feb. 12, March 12 and April 9. The Lilac Squares meet each Monday at the Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church located on 740 Marshall Rd., Rochester, 14624 at 7 p.m.

Rainbow Sage

On Sunday, March 20, at 4 p.m., Rainbow Sage will sponsor its eighth Intergenerational Panel at the Universalist Church, corner of Clinton Ave. South and Court St.

There will be a broad spectrum of speakers from the LGBTQ community, from teens to age-60 plus. The event’s goal is to bring a better awareness and understanding of the past, present, and future of our lives in all generations.

Handicapped parking is available behind the church on Court St.

STEP UP:

THE ROCKET RAMS, NAUGHTY OR NICE? (OR BOTH?)

By Jeanne Gainsburg

As I was driving down University Ave on this past November, on my way to visit the Rochester Rams (officially "The Battering Rams, M.C.") at their annual holiday toy drive, I was trying to prepare myself for entering the Bachelor Forum. I had been outside the building on several occasions for marriage equality rallies and other events, but I had never set foot in the bar. Rams had told me that it was frequented mostly by large, hairy men. Rams and Bears, oh my!

There were several questions swirling around in my brain as I approached. What other animals lurked there? Was there really a dungeon in the basement? Would it be dark enough inside that no one would notice that my cheap Target jacket wasn’t real leather? “Get a grip!” I told myself, “It’s probably going to be 10 guys sitting around a toy table wearing leather jackets and Santa hats.”

As I turned the Rams’ headquarters, I saw Chip, the Rams’ Vice President, had asked me to get to the Forum at 9 p.m. as things would be fairly quiet that early as I would have a chance to talk with the members before things started rolling, but when I entered the bar I was surprised to see that the place was already hopping. There were definitely guys in leather and a few Santa hats too, but there were also at least 40 guys already in the bar, and a few women as well. As I started chatting with people I discovered that some of these folks had traveled to this event from Cleveland and Toronto.

I departed unimpressed by my Rochester Children’s Center on the tapidly filling toy table and received my free beer pass as a thank you. I found Chip behind the bar scanning drink orders. He introduced me to Bob, the Rochester Rams president. Despite many departures and old friends disappearing from briefly to give Bob a hug or kiss, he was kind enough to chat with me for quite a while about the history of the Rams.

I had done my research and I confirmed that I was confused by the knotty and complicated system that took place before someone could become a full member.

There is an application process, pledge, formal interviews, and a vote. The whole process could take years! What was worth the wait that I mean, if this was just a club for gay men who are into leather and motorcycles, why not just let everyone join and have a big, old party? The more the merrier!

Bob explained that this club has been in existence for over 30 years. The original group had come together due to their interests in leather, motorcycles and a similar way of expressing themselves and their masculinity. When the AIDS epidemic hit the gay community, several of the original Rams became infected, leaving the remaining members to care for their ailing brothers and eventually to mourn their passing.

The Rams, as a club, however, did not perish and the remaining men found that their connection to each other and their friendship was even stronger than it had been before.

This brotherhood became as much a part of the group’s identity as the leather and bikes. Today the Rams are very much like a fraternity. Membership is taken very seriously as brothers are considered family. Brothers take care of brothers when they are ill or dying. Appropriately the Annual Toy Drive is in honor of a Ram who has passed away, but who had been very active at the Rochester Children’s Center and beloved by the children there.

Some highlights of my night with the Rochester Rams:

1) Asking an associate member of the Rams to explain the difference between associates and full members. His response was, “We’re thinner.” Naughty.

2) Chatting with Jake, the bookthul at his boarsting station in the corner near the bar. Bookthulking, if you don’t know, is the art of caring for another person’s shoes while they are in them. He talked about how bookthulking and other parts of the oldest urban professions. Bookthulking was one of the few socially acceptable ways for two men to get to know each other that didn’t read, “Swallow My Pride” (LOL) to full leather bondage gear. Naughty!

3) Checking out all the interesting clothing at the bar. Clothing ranged from jeans, tees, and sneakers to part of the older urban professions. Prostitution were two of the oldest urban professions. Bookthulking was one of the few socially acceptable ways for two men to get to know each other that didn’t read, “Swallow My Pride” (LOL) to full leather bondage gear. Naughty!

4) Talking to a guy who lived in West Henrietta, NY and had just moved to Rochester, NY.

5) Watching the pile of Barb’s dolls, trucks, building blocks and other toys that they use to read, “Swallow My Pride” (LOL) to full leather bondage gear. Naughty!

For more information, call Bob at 585-667-6456 or e-mail broadcastfrontier.com. Hope to see you soon.

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church is accessible. ASL interpreting will be provided upon request.

A question and answer period for audience participation will follow the speakers. Everyone is invited to a meal inside, you don't have any questions about the group or what others have said about it, please call me 454-1597 and I will let you know what is occurring with the group. If there is no answer, please leave a name and number to and I can return your call.

On Jan. 29, our most recent last-Saturday of the month meeting, we had a special guest speaker from the U.S.'s Victory Alliance.

Our bi-monthly meetings are on the second Sunday at 140 Alex Grill, from 6:30-9 p.m., and the last Saturday or every other month from 2:30 to 5 p.m. at the GAGY Youth Center on the ground floor, on the west side of the building, at 875 Main St. (the Auditorium Theater building).

Parking is available behind the building and you may enter via the parking lot entrance or the front entrance. Call 454-1579 and I will let you know what is occurring with the group. If there is no answer, please leave a name and number to and I can return your call.

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MONDAY

LGBT Support Group
New Life Presbyterian Church, 243 Rosemont Ave., First, 3rd, 5th Mondays, 7:30-9:30 pm. Carol, 482-8583.

Lilac Square Gay Square Dance Group
Mondays, 7pm, Oon Anns MCC, 740 Marshall Rd. 520-3538, niggerheathercom.

Freestyle trucking
AIDS Care, 259 Monroe Ave., 5-8pm 442-2220.

Rochester Historical Bowling Society
7:30pm, Mondays, Clover Lanes, 279 Monroe Ave. (Group is full.)

HIV Positive Gay Men Support group
Every Monday, 5pm, AIDS Care, 259 Monroe Ave. 452-2220.

GAGV Youth Drop-In Hours
Mondays, Wednesdays, 2-6pm. First floor.

Newly Freed New Hope Community AAG meeting, 7pm, Christian Church, 220 Winton Rd. Men and women. Our turn.

Support Group for Parents Who Have Lost Children 1st and 3rd Monday, 7-8pm. First floor.

Empire Bears Potluck First Wednesday, 7pm, GAGV Community Center, 875 E Main St., Fifth floor. info@empirebears.com

GAGV Rams General Meeting 2nd Wednesday, 7:30pm, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. www.rochesterrams.com

Brothers Keeper Support group for men over 30. 3rd Wednesday, 5-7pm, MOCHA Center, 205 Liberty Pole Way, 604-4060.

GAGV Youth Drop-In Hours Mondays, Wednesdays, 2-6pm, First floor.

MOCHA Youth Drop-In First Tuesdays, 7pm. 875 E Main St, Prince St. entrance, first floor. 244-8640 ext. 13.

Support group for transgender people of color. 3rd Third Thursday, 5-7pm, MOCHA, 107 Liberty Pole Way, 420-1400.

GAGVFLQG Motorcycle Group 3rd Thursday, 7:30pm, Various Locations. rochestergaymotorcycle@gmail.com. 787-8055; bernard@frointhecknet

THURSDAY

Prebyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns 6:30pm, First Thursday. Ralph, 271-7048.

Queer Reading Group First and third Thursday, 3-5pm, Equal-Grounds, 750 South Ave.

Preachers at Work 1st Thursday, 10am, 167 Bond St., 426-0852.

Action Trans Group (TAG) Information Euxl Vailcourt, 4707216@gmail.com, or www.actiontransgroup.com

GLOBAL

Gays and Lesbians of Rhaush & Loan Meet every third Thursday in area 6th conference room at the Opic Center. Voice mail 338-8977.

Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus Brownstone United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 6-9pm, 425-6830.

Country Line Dancing/Wine Stepping 1st and 3rd Wednesday, Mothers, 40 S. Union, 7pm, Lessons followed by dancing until 8pm. Beginners to advanced.

U.R. Pride Network 7:30pm, Gamble Room as Ruth Rhys Library. repeter@gmail.com

Rochester Transgender Organizing Group 2nd Wednesdays, 6:30-9pm. 8640 ext 13.

Gay Alliance Board of Directors Meet Third Wednesday, 6pm. 875 E Main St, 244-8640

New Freedom New Hope Community AAG meeting, 7pm, Christian Church, 220 Winton Rd. Men and women. Our turn.

Support Group for Parents Who Have Lost Children 1st and 3rd Monday, 7-8pm. First floor.

Empire Bears Potluck First Wednesday, 7pm, GAGV Community Center, 875 E Main St., Fifth floor. info@empirebears.com

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TUESDAY 1

WEDNESDAY 2
National Black History & Lesbian Task Force Creating Change conference. Through Feb. 6, Minneapolis, MN.

THURSDAY 3
Trans youth Group, 5-6:30, GAVC Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor. Call 244-6460, ext. 13.

FRIDAY
Announcements. "Spirituality as an Essential Component of Effective HIV Prevention" panel discussion and Networking. 10-11 a.m. 9-10 a.m., The Empty Closet. 875 E. Main St., first floor. Free, open to all. Refreshments sold by Youth Program.

The Gallery @ Equal-Grounds, 750 South Ave., opening of February show, "Melody" by artists. 6 p.m. Free. "Dewlothing Wads" open to all at MuCCC, 142 Atlantic Ave.

SATURDAY 5

Butch Femme Connection Dinner Night, Out, Meat or Anya. Restaurant on West Henrietta Road in Henrietta at 7 p.m. (385) 288-7208, e-mail DressyFemme@frontiernet.net. Meet at Arigaro Restaurant on West Henrietta Road in Henrietta at 6 p.m. 670 University Ave. RSVP to bmdan iels@frontiernet.net.

Empire Bears BearNight at the Forum, 9 p.m., 607 University Ave. ROMANS (Rochester Male Naturists) clothed mental and great at local restroom prices. Free and cheap. Touch phone: 385-281-4678 for location. Open to all gay-friendly men 21 and over.

SUNDAY 6
Who Was This Man? WXXI program on gay civil rights activist Bayard Rustin. 10 p.m. Black History Month.

MONDAY
Adoption Resource Network, 6-8 p.m., Hillside Children's Center. 350-2501. The Injured Superheroes Show, benefit for MuCCC, 142 Atlantic Ave. 7 p.m., 435-6201.

TUESDAY 6
Marriage Equality Day in Albany, organized by Marriage Equality NY (MENY). Registration closed. Just Us Gems going on a tour to the Avon. Contact Mom beforehand for dinner; see TBA. Contact 223-2629 or e-mail murrine@comcast.net.

THURSDAY 10
Out & Equal Second Thursdays Networking Event, 5:30-8:30 p.m. consumer & community Brands, High Point Dining Room, 207 High Point Drive, Victor, off I-90 near Exit 50. "Share the Love" host committee: Executives of Community Brands, largest distributor of wine in the world. Come see their new HQ! Wine and beer product distributions by Community Brands will be featured, including Svejkova Vodka cocktails. All registration at the door covers all hot & cold beverages. 50/50 raffle to benefit GAGV and PRIDE 2011. Building tours at 6:30 p.m. Dinner special from High Point at 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY 11
TGIF: Think Gay, It's Friday! Inqueery presents Community Screening of documentary "Before Stonewall," 6:30-9 p.m., GAVC Youth & Community Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor. Free. open to all. Refreshments sold by Youth Program.

CampusOut Coffee Night, 6 p.m., Equal-Grounds, 750 South Ave.

SATURDAY 12
Free mammograms, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at Highland Breast Imaging Center, 500 Red Creek Drive Suite 130, Rochester 14623. Refills, manage available for women over 40 who have no health insurance or whose insurance does not cover mammograms. 687-3305.

Empire Bears Potluck, "Vegetarian," 6:30 p.m., GAVC Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor.

Lilac Squares Dance at 140 Alec. Info. Bob at 585-467-4054 or e-mail at_blueprint@comcast.net.

SUNDAY 13
Come Out Dancin', 3-5:30 p.m., Friends Meeting House, 84 Scioto St., entry on Charlotte St. Contact Dancin@yahoo.com. This week: Swing

Black History Month Celebration, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 17 S. Pirtisht St. in the Life: You Are Not Alone.

TUESDAY 15
Empty Closet deadline for March issues. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., gayalliance@rochester.rr.com.

THURSDAY 17
Black Sheep Theatre presents two one act plays by Christopher Durang, "Sexual Perversity In The West" and "You Are Not Alone." "For Whom the Southern Bells Toll." Third Floor, Village Gate Square, 975 St. Paul Blvd. $10; Good Sam, $8. Thursdays 19 and 26 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 19 and 26 at 2 p.m. Tickets $15.

FRIDAY 18
TGIF: Think Gay, It's Friday! Inqueery presents Community Screening of "Excluded," 6:30-9 p.m., GAVC Youth & Community Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor. Free, open to all. Refreshments sold by Youth Program.

Speak Out Training, 6:30 p.m. Pre-registration required: 244-8640.

SATURDAY 19
Speak Out Training, 8-10 a.m. Pre-registration required: 244-8640.

Rochester Rams Leather & Chains Bar Night, 9 p.m., Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave.

Erotic Night at Equal-Grounds, 750 South Ave. poetry, art, music.

SUNDAY 20
Rainbow SAGE Poduck Supper, 4 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church, 150 S. Clinton Ave.

TUESDAY 22
Out for Justice Workshop Series. Adoption, custody issues 6:30-8 p.m., GAVC Community Room, first floor, 875 E. Main St. 244-8640.

Syracuse Transgender Group Thera­py, First sessions of eight weeks 6:30 p.m., Brownwell Center, 1045 James St., Syracuse. Call 315-472-4471, ask for Delta.

THURSDAY 24
Gay Alliance reception for RPD Chief James Sheppard. 6 p.m., 460 East Ave. RSVP to GAGV, 244-8640.

FRIDAY 25

TGIF: Think Gay, It's Friday! Inqueery presents Community Screening of "You Are Not Alone," 6:30-9 p.m., GAVC Youth & Community Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor. Free, open to all. Refreshments sold by Youth Program.

MARCH 1
TUESDAY 1
LGBT Health Month Kick Off Coffee Hour, Equal-Grounds, 750 South Ave. Time TBA.
HELLO, darlings.
MRS. KASHA DAVIS here
INTERNATIONAL CELEBRITY housewife.
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March 2011 is NY LGBT Health Month

Our health matters and it’s time again to think about health issues. For the second consecutive year, communities throughout the state will spend the month of March considering the health and wellness of LGBT people during New York LGBT Health Month.

Erik Libey, Associate Director of LGBT & Rural Services at AIDS Care, and an organizer of Health Month both locally and statewide, explained, “The event is really intended to provide an opportunity to not only build community for LGBT people, but to provide opportunities to educate and advocate about those needs and issues, as well.”

These needs are significant, says Libey. A 2009 statewide, Health and Human Service Needs Assessment conducted by the Empire State Pride Agenda and its Health and Human Services Network, found such concerning facts. To name a few:

- Lack of culturally competent providers is a major barrier to healthcare for LGBT people in New York State.
- LGBT New Yorkers face homophobia and transphobia in their everyday lives, and are more likely to experience depression and lack of access to adequate mental healthcare.
- Transgender and gender non-conforming people are more likely to experience barriers to healthcare, and report higher rates of homelessness and exposure to violence.

(Health continues page 7)

MOCHA Center names new EDs, merges with AIDS Family Services

Stephan E. Wallace and Martha N. Blazek have been named Co-Interim Executive Directors of the MOCHA Center, Inc. by its board. MOCHA Center is the largest New York State organization working to improve health and wellness in communities of color, through intervention and services with an emphasis on LGBT programming.

Stephan Wallace has been with MOCHA Center for over two years and currently serves as director of programs for the Buffalo office, focusing on HIV/STI prevention, research and evaluation efforts of the agency. Blazek, currently serving as director of Finance and Administration in the Buffalo office, focuses on overseeing the Center’s fiscal operations.

Said Wallace, “This is an exciting time for MOCHA. We are currently piloting three HIV prevention behavioral and biomedical interventions and expanding services into Niagara Falls and New York City.”

MOCHA Center will appoint a permanent Executive Director in the near future.

NewsBriefs

LOCAL & STATE NEWS

Inquiry series offers fun on Frozen Fridays

The Gay Alliance’s Inquiry program is offering a new Friday Night Community Open House – “TGF” or “Think Gay Friday.”

The programs are either Community Game Nights or Community Screenings, both offering “friends and families fun on Frozen Fridays” through March.

“The Youth Community Room will be open for LGBT community members of all ages to socialize and relax in your community of space,” said GAVP Program Director Scott Fearing.

This month the dates for opening night are March 17 and March 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the Gay Alliance, 636 Seneca St., Buffalo. The Cafe, Bar and Snack Bar will be open for refreshments including fresh popcorn, coffee, hot cocoa, sodas and more. All ages and identities are welcome.

GAVP to hold reception for Chief Sheppard

The Gay Alliance will hold a reception in honor of Rochester Police Department Chief James Sheppard on Thursday, Feb. 24 at 6 p.m.

The event will take place at 460 East Ave., at the corner of Broadway and Clinton. For further information or to RSVP, call the Gay Alliance at 244-6646.

Gov. Cuomo ushers in new era for NYS; marriage advocates optimistic

By Our Observer

Declaring New York State a special territory, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo outlined, during his first State of the State Address on Jan. 5, an action plan to transform New York State’s government and economy by getting the state’s fiscal house in order, radically redesigning our governmental structures and operations, and restoring integrity and performance to state government.

Cuomo noted that the decisions we make now will impact our State for decades to come.

“We must turn this crisis into an opportunity to fundamentally rethink our state into the progressive capital of the nation,” Gov. Cuomo said in his message to the legislature. “We must seize this moment to build a new New York state for future generations.”

Cuomo promised his 2011-12 budget proposal would address the deficit without raising taxes or borrowing. Instead, he would cap state spending by reducing the number of state agencies, authorizes and commissions by 20 percent. He would put a freeze on state workers’ salaries and cut the cost of the Medicaid health care program. Cuomo’s address was what most lawmakers and politicians expected, echoing the dire straits of state spending and at the same time added humorous bits of his personality from time to time.

He said he would open up government to the public and work in partnership with all stakeholders to address the crucial fiscal challenges facing New York State and its local governments.

The new Governor delivered a well-rehearsed and sometimes funny oration in his State of the State address in the Empire State Plaza Convention Center, instead of the once opulent Capitol chamber, breaking with 85 years of tradition. The modest ceremony contrasted sharply with elaborate, expensive events of the past.

“This innovation has two points,” Cuomo said in an earlier interview. “Let’s invite the people of the state – because this is about reconnecting with the people of the state, building trust and building a relationship – and let’s introduce a more productive partnership with the Legislature.”

Traditionally, the speech is given to an audience packed with legislators and the judges of the Court of Appeals as well as top figures from around the state, including religious leaders, mayors, lobbyists and Congress members. Roughly 1,000 tickets for the event were made available to the public in a lottery. The hall holds nearly 2,000 people.

The State of the State offered an opportunity to outline his agenda before the Legislature, while New York residents were sitting on the edge of their seats. Since he declared his candidacy for Governor, Cuomo (Cuomo continues page 7)
Happy birthday to The Empty Closet

The Empty Closet turns 40 in April. The first EC was a four-page tabloid put out in April 1971 by a small group of UR students who called themselves the Gay Liberation Front. Forty years later, the human services agency called the Gay Alliance publishes a 40-page tabloid newspaper that has managed to survive and grow in spite of obstacles (and there have been plenty). This is due to the hard work, talent and dedication of many people - past editors like Jay Thompson, Howard Pollock, Michele Spring Moore, Rosemary Cahill, Tim Mains, Joe Baker and many others - and countless volunteer callers, distributors, reporters, reviewers, columnists (special thanks to our staff and TOP columnists, Eric Bellmann, photographers, artists and designers). And we can't omit the volunteers who have made up the GAVG boards over the years - our publishers.

In the area of layout and design, we should start by thanking Scan Driscoll, who created the first EC logo, an open closet door. Over the past 20 years we've had a huge debt of gratitude to Ellen Malmedoff, Judy Bocciotti, Victor Cardoso, Brad Pease, Don Albrecht and now Jim Anderson. And speaking personally, I'd like to thank the gay male, bisexual and transgender friends and co-workers who have generously educated me over the past 20 years.

You may have heard of "social dance" is that you will have the chance to dance and socialize. Every second and fourth Sundays of every month from 3:30-5:30 p.m. Location: Friends Meeting House, 84 Scio St. (14604). Entry is on Charlotte St.

New additions to the Gay Alliance community partnerships

There is a new group forming called "Coconuts Dance," Greater Rochester's LGBT social dance community. I am pleased to share this information with the community.

We receive many calls from community members looking for opportunities to meet other people outside of a bar situation. This is due to the hard work, talent and dedication of many people - past editors like Jay Thompson, Howard Pollock, Michele Spring Moore, Rosemary Cahill, Tim Mains, Joe Baker and many others - and countless volunteer callers, distributors, reporters, reviewers, columnists (special thanks to our staff and TOP columnists, Eric Bellmann, photographers, artists and designers). And we can't omit the volunteers who have made up the GAVG boards over the years - our publishers.

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The world the EC was born into 1973 was a very different one in many ways. It was a pre-computer/Internet world, a world in which homophobia and sexism had just begun to be challenged. A world dominated by the U.S.A.'s economic/political empire.

Today we live in a cyber-world full of new realities - and old ones too. (China is not a democracy and not gay-friendly.) It is becoming the dominant economic power. Twenty-first century LGBT youth have benefited from the advances of the past 40 years, but are still so appalled that too many take their own lives. Although bias and bigotry have been denounced, LGBT rights are still not seen as civil or human rights by conservative/conventional fanatics determined to turn back the clock on all progress made by past generations to improve the lot of gay, lesbian, women, people of color and working people.

LGBT organizations need to keep evoking to meet both new conditions and the same old challenges. Although many gay/patty publications have vanished, along with straight print media, the queer press is still alive and well as blogs like pantsuchas/blonde and Joc.My God. The EC is still around in print and online (www.gayalliance.org; click on Empty Closet news). We must continue to improve coverage and may someday evolve to a web magazine format. The paper has always been a work in progress.

The Empty Closet will probably be needed for the immediate future, since it's not likely that the DEPC, City or any local non-LGBT publication will be able to provide the Rochester community with comprehensive, queer-centric coverage of state/national/international news, a focus on local LGBT people and community events, and even queer-themed comic strips.

Here's to the next 40 years!!

If you have been bestowed a gift to the Gay Alliance and would like to give please let us know. I thank everyone who has. If you have any questions, do so. We would be happy to discuss the many options available.

Sue Cowell
Executive Director.
585-284-8640

The Empty Closet is published by the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, 875 E. Main St., Suite 500, Rochester, New York 14605.

Home Delivery of The Empty Closet is Free with your annual membership in the Gay Alliance.
Local and State

By Susan Jordan

Ron Matzer, 15-year-old son of Just Us Guys (formerly Atlantic 50) has generously added a bequest to the Gay Alliance to his will. He started coming to the Gay Alliance office recently to talk about what the Alliance has meant to him in his personal struggle to come out and be at ease with who he is, in a homophobic society that wants gay people to remain silent, self-hating and isolated.

Ron says, “I’ve never been married and up until age 50, I was dating women but never had any close attachment to a woman. I guess I had my head full of my sister, ‘You’d better sit down,’ and someone would stop by the GAGV office and say, ‘Dear God, you’re silent, self-hating and isolated.’

My regret is not realizing who was most important to them.

- When I finally started meeting important people, my three nephews and saying what they wanted was fine with that - in fact I was fine with that - but it didn’t register for me. I told their mother, my father and died of AIDS, ‘I’ve never been comfortable that people feel so comfortable now. It’s strange now. I have no problem telling people that I’m gay. I’m out at work. It was scary at first. I didn’t tell my best friend and when I did, I ended the friendship, not because I’m gay but because I have never told her.

The Gay Alliance is in my will because they helped me figure out who I am and provided resources for me. Now I’m contact person for Just Us Guys and that’s why I get calls from individuals who are most likely looking for social contacts with other individuals. I tell them what JUG is like and invite them to a meeting. I wear my rainbow bracelet when I work with ‘Listening Post’ at a local school. It’s sort of like being a grandparent - you sit with kids in the cafeteria and listen to what they’re talking about. Maybe this will help some young person who might spot a gay man in a building and feel he or she can talk to me. I told the woman who runs it right at the beginning, ‘This is basically my issue and I am fine with that - in fact I give her a copy of the EC every month and she can keep up with the issues.’

I feel it’s important to support gay organizations. If you’re in a position to help and to keep community organizations from disappearing, you should.

‘Maybe people reading my story will consider a bequest to the Gay Alliance, or any organization that has helped them. The biggest thing in that people should realize who they are and address that as early as they can. It was such a struggle for me. Personally I’m happy now because I don’t have to pretend to be someone I’m not.”

Intergenerational Panel is March 20

Rainbow SAGE will present its annual Intergenerational Panel on Sunday, March 20 at 4 p.m., at the First Unitarian Church sanctuary at the corner of Court and Washington. District Attorney. Also at Court Street.

Rainbow SAGE is sponsoring the panel and plans to have a broad spectrum of speakers from the LGBT community, with a question/answer period to follow. A chili dinner will include beverages, bread and dessert.

Trent Royster, 51, passes in D.C.

William Trent Royster died in Washington, D.C. on Sunday, Jan. 7, 2011 at the age of 51. He was a long-term survivor of HIV and a noted activist and advocate for the rights of gay men. He has been a Rochester native and has lived in Rochester and Tuskegee, Alabama.

Trent was born Jan. 3, 1960 in Rochester, the son of Gladys and Graham Royster. He was a graduate of The Harley School in Rochester and Tufts University in Medford, Mass. At Tufts he received a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science, and was named Outstanding Senior.

He also spent many summers attending the Highfields Camp in Union, Maine, and eventually served as a counselor there.

In Rochester, Trent worked for more than 15 years with the Rochester Pride Council of Rochester, and was a Roundtable member for the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus. He was a member of the Faithful and Full hearts LGBT organization, a member of the Rochester Pride Agenda.

In 2001 Trent joined the AIDS Council of Rochester, Inc. (ACOR), and served on its Board of Directors from 1998-2003. Trent was an ardent supporter of the LGBT community and was active in the local, state and national level. Trent was on the board of AIDS Rochester from 1994 to 2001, serving as vice president in 1998-99 and president in 2000.

Trent joined the board of AIDS, Medicine & Miracles, ultimately chairing the organization in 2001-02. He was deeply involved with the Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS and the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, and influenced countless families affected by HIV through his work with Camp SOAR in Rochester and Family Unity on Lake Lure, NY. He was also affiliated with the Advertising Council of Rochester, the Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum, and the Empire State Pride Agenda.

In 2001 Trent moved to Washington, D.C. to live with his partner. He worked for UnitedHealth and the District of Columbia Department of Health’s Office of LGBTQ Health Equity, and served on the Human Rights Campaign, and volunteered with Burgundy Crescent. Other affiliations included the National Minority AIDS Council, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, and the National Association of People with AIDS. He spent time living with his partner in Jerusalem and volunteered while there with Sechel Peace.

He is survived by his partner, City Councilman Chuck Goeringer; mother Gladys Royster; brother Anthony Tyrone Royster; niece LaToya Marc Royster; nephew Anthony Tyrone Royste; senior technician James James; and Eda Brown; several nieces and nephews, and numerous cousins.

Trent is also survived by his partner, Chuck Goeringer; mother Gladys Royster, brother Anthony Tyrone Royster; niece LaToya Marc Royster; nephew Anthony Tyrone Royste; senior technician James James; and Eda Brown; several nieces and nephews, and numerous cousins.

Trent is also survived by a special support network – Ken Williams, the Rev. Jonathan Rindner, and the staff at Marion Center who had “familied away from family,” as well as a host of other friends.

Memorial services will be held at All Soul Episcopal Church, in Washington, D.C. on March 4 at 1 p.m. Trent Royster’s memorial service is to be held on Feb. 26 at 3 p.m., at Unity Christ Church, 53 Prince St. 8

A Rochester memorial service will be held on Feb. 26 at 3 p.m., at Unity Christ Church, 53 Prince St.
Gay Latino hero saves Gabrielle Giffords after Tucson shootings

On Jan. 10, parshouseblend posted the following. Daniel Hernandez Jr., was the right man in the right place at the right time. Just five days into his internship with Arizona Representative Gabrielle Giffords, the 26-year-old college student was checking people into Rep. Giffords’ “Congress on Your Corner” event when the shooting started.

According to Arizona Republic, Hernandez started assisting victims before the shooting even stopped. When the shots began that morning, he saw many people lying on the ground, including a young girl. Some were bleeding. Hernandez said he moved from person to person checking pulses.

“At first the neck, then the wrist,” he said. One man was already dead. Then he saw Giffords. “She had like exhaustion,” he said. She was lying on the sidewalk. She was bleeding.

Using his hand, Hernandez applied pressure to the wound on her forehead. He pulled her into that lap, holding her steady against him so she wouldn’t choke on her own blood. Hernandez used his hand to apply pressure until someone from inside Safeway brought him clean smocks from the medic department. He used them to apply pressure on the injuries of a man who was bleeding to an exit wound. He never let go of her.

He stayed with Giffords until paramedics arrived. They strapped her to a board and loaded her into an ambulance. Hernandez climbed in with her. On the ride to the hospital, he held her hand. She squeezed his hand.

Hernandez’s immediate actions probably saved her life, a hospital physician said. Daniel is a Latino man.

As described by Belinda Marcos, Daniel is also a gay member and a member of the City of Phoenix Constituency on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender issues.

In a separate incident in Slippery Rock, Pa., 16-year-old high school student Tiffany Maxwell was shot and killed last week. The family said she was killed by anti-gay extremists.

The parents are hoping to now save other teenagers from bullying.

Catholics question bishops on ex-gay 12-step program

Catholics for Equality, a national political group of Catholics who support full civil equality for lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans, voiced concern on Jan. 21 over recent funding from the Diocese of Oakland to Calle and Cookies Springs, Colo., for the establishment of chapters of the Courage Apostolate, a discredited reparative therapy program.

The funding and endorsement of the discredited program reveal the disturbing trend of some bishops to align themselves more closely with anti-gay extremists than with most American Catholics and the American bishops.

The Courage Apostolate’s mission of the 12-step program holds the premise that same-sex attraction is a disease, similar to alcoholism, and should be “controlled.”

Catholics for Equality says its underlying...
ing intrinsic disorder philosophy mirrors the "reparative therapy" programs developed through Evangelical ministries, all of which have been discredited by both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association.

Recently, the Courage Apostle’s framing of homosexuality was used by Archbishop Timothy Broglio, Archbishop for the Military Services in the United States of America, in opposition to allowing gay and lesbian soldiers to serve openly in the military.

"As American Catholics we are embarrassed that our church would embrace such outdated and discriminatory rhetoric about human sexuality and the human condition," says Catholics for Equality Executive Director Phil Attey. "We fear that if American Catholics do not speak out against these trends and this restorationist movement succeeds, our church will fall back into the arms of the conservative Catholic fast-tracked, and American Catholic families seeking to be faithful Catholics as well as Americans committed to justice and equality for all citizens.

Catholics for Equality calls on all equality Catholics nationwide to ask their state legislators to refuse to allow the exemption for those who hold the false free marriage law was legalized in 2004.

In the ruling issued Jan. 10, 2011, the court said the effect of both options runs contrary to the Constitution in that they establish a religious test in violation of the 1st of the Charter. As a result, it put in place, either option would be unconstitutional and of no force or effect.

Lesbian Episcopal priests wed in Mass.

On New Year’s Day, some history was being made in Massachusetts, the Premier Ledger reports:

In a wedding that appears to be the first of its kind in the U.S. – at least in the Episcopal Church – former Plymouth pastor Rev. Ragsdale married the Rev. Katherine Raggsdale, dean and president of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, on Jan. 1, 2011. A former priest at Christ Church in Plymouth, it now is a ranking official of the Diocese of Massachusetts. The Rev. Lloyd and the Rev. Raggsdale were married in a ceremony at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston, with about 400 guests attending, Bishop M. Thomas Shannon, the state’s highest-ranking Episcopal official, officiating.

So far there has been no response from the conservative portion of the Anglican church. A press release from the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge said the two women were introduced by a mutual friend in the summer of 2008. That was a few months before the Rev. Lloyd was appointed canon to the ordinary – the diocese’s chief operating officer – and about a year before the Rev. Raggsdale became the diocese’s dean and president.

During their New Year’s Day ceremony, Bishop Shannon said: “God always rejoices when two people who love each other make a lifelong commitment in marriage to go forward into the love of God through each other. It’s a profound pleasure for me to celebrate with God and their friends Katherine and Mally their marriage today.”

Fla. governor denies civil rights for gays

Florida Gov. Rick Scott, the top-gauged founder and former CEO of a hospital group found guilty in the largest Medicare scam in history, began his tenure on Jan. 5 by issuing an executive order limiting the state’s non-discrimination law to those involving race, sex, age, color and national origin.

South Florida Gay News reports: "Governor Scott did not even include all of the classifications listed in the Florida Civil Rights Act – sex alone sexual orientation and gender identity," said Randi Hoch.

As president and founder of the Palm Beach County Human Rights Council, Hoch has become a familiar voice on behalf of equality issues in South Florida. He called Scott’s view of diversity “limited and very discouraging” according to an article by Steve Roachus with the Miami Herald. By ignoring the categories of ‘handicapped’ or ‘married in love’ to a non-discrimination policy, Scott has actually managed to add discrimination to the Florida Constitution which was not previously there. Those two categories are protected by Florida law under the state’s constitution and hãy been implementing groups have been working to add “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to the state’s constitution.

For Joe My God, 2002: The hospital group Founded by Scott plead guilty to the largest Medicare fraud scheme in U.S history, eventually paying an all-time record $215 in fines and settlements. Following small claims court, the state spent millions of dollars to settle the case. Scott was forced to resign, taking with him a mere $450 in stolen government money.

Iowa Gov. opposes impeaching judges

GOP Iowa Governor-Elect Terry Branstad told the Cedar Rapids Gazette in early January that the unanimous 2009 decision by the state Supreme Court legalizing same-sex marriage is not a reason to initiate impeachment proceedings.

Said Branstad, "I don’t think that impeachment is the appropriate remedy." Said Branstad that "appropriate remedy would be to vote them out when they are up for retention." Three of the seven judges were unseated in November following a heavily-financed anti-gay drive by religious right-wing hate groups and legislative conservatives. Since then, those same hate groups, along with GOP lawmakers, have been plotting ways to remove the remaining four judges, who were voted for equality for all Iowans, including calls for them to resign.

"The system is not broken," said Branstad in a wide-ranging interview. Branstad said he disagreed with the court’s marriage rulings and he also disagrees with a band of House Republicans who have indicated they are drafting articles of impeachment against Justices Justie Appel, Mark Cady, Ebdal Hecht and David Willet.

The two other members of court – Chief Justice Mansfield and Justice David Hecht – were recently elected in November. Following a raid at his office by the feds, Scott was forced to resign, taking with him a mere $450 in stolen government money.

Ireland recognizes same sex marriages, unions

Beginning Jan. 14, Ireland has recognized same-sex marriages and civil unions performed abroad. However, those married in other countries will have their civil partnerships "downgraded" to civil partnerships upon arrival in Ireland. Unions from 27 countries or states will be upgraded to civil partnerships. Branstad is automatically considered as civil partners and will not need to register.

Brian Sheehan of the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network said, "Same-sex couples married abroad are able to celebrate their relationships and make formal commitments to each other by having a civil marriage or civil union. In another country will today have those relationships recognized in Ireland. This recognition will provide significant protections for these couples."

New Hampshire faces attack on marriage law

Jpmazzar (on pamboukianbend.com) writes: "The Live Free or Die State is being swarmed with an all-out attack on gay marriage by anti-Marriage equality citizen groups. In November Republicans were defeated in vote-producing majorities to both House Speaker from the Senate, 298-102 in the House – and it is these states will in all necessary to trap the marriage equality vote this year again. Taking away their citizens’ freedom to marry, the state’s motto leaves them with but one other choice: death. "Already four Legislative Service (Newsfronts continue page 8)"
Dr. Ilan Meyer

By Susan Jordan

Ilan H. Meyer, Ph.D. is a Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences and Deputy Chair for Masters of Public Health (MPH) Programs at the Department of Sociomedical Sciences at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health. He will be keynote speaker at the Pride & Joy Families Conference, to be held April 8-10 at the RIT Inn and Conference Center.

Dr. Meyer’s academic background is in social psychology, psychiatric epidemiology, and sociomedical sciences. He focuses on studying public health issues related to minority health.

In several highly cited papers, Dr. Meyer has developed a model of minority stress that describes the relationship of social stressors and mental disorders, and helps to explain LGBT health disparities. For this work, Dr. Meyer received the Distinguished Scientific Contribution award from Division 44 of the American Psychological Association. Based on this body of work, in January 2010 he provided expert testimony in the Proposition 8 trial...a major civil rights case related to the right of gay men and lesbians to marry in the United States, and specifically, in California (Perry v. Schwarzenegger).

Prop 8 was overturned last August and is now in the appeal process.

Dr. Meyer is co-editor with Mary E. Northridge of “The Health of Sexual Minorities: Public health perspectives on lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender populations” (published by Springer in 2007). This influential text offers a multidimensional picture of LGBT health, incorporating contributions from across clinical and social science disciplines. Dr. Meyer is the Principal Investigator of “Stress, Identity and Mental Health,” known also as Project Stress, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. The study explored the impact of social stress at the intersection of disadvantaged identities related to gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation as they impact mental health.

Dr. Meyer says, “I did not study transgender individuals specifically and do not like to include ‘transgender’ in the titles of my presentations, so as to not misrepresent my work. I talk about same gender nonconformity, not specifically about transgender individuals.” The Family Building Project says that, while transgender-headed families face unique challenges, most of the issues are the same for all LGBT families.

Dr. Meyer responded to questions from The Empty Closet about his work and his recent findings about LGBT families. Empty Closet: How does your work as a scholar involve issues related to LGBT families? Dr. Meyer: My work does not specifically relate to families but to LGBT people in general. I study the social environment and the kinds of stressors that stem from social positioning. The social environment determines most of what happens to us and the kind of experiences we have. Thus, for LGBT people, a social environment characterized by stigma and prejudice leads to certain experiences of stress.

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Cuomo from page 1

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Agenda. “He has strongly and repeatedly emphasized those themes. He spoke of the need to ‘pull back the lens a bit.’ We have to get people believing in government again.’

Two main themes of the address focused on establishing a team to cut unfunded mandates imposed on local governments and school districts and creating a commission to cut government agencies and authorities by 20 percent. He specifically proposed merging the three agencies that regulate insurance, banking, and consumer affairs, saying that would save money and also better protect investors and consumers.

Pride Agenda reaction

The Empire State Pride Agenda, New York State’s leading LGBT advocacy agency, released a statement after Cuomo’s address expressing their optimism about working with the new administration.

“We are very pleased that Governor Cuomo is in his State of the State address specifically included LGBT New Yorkers as one of his themes,” said Andrew Ross Levi, executive director for the Pride Agenda. “He has strongly and repeatedly shown his support for LGBT rights, equality and, and the affirmation today of his commitment to see marriage for loving couples become law in New York State is another indication of that support.

We look forward to working with Governor Cuomo and Lt. Governor Robert Duffy — and elected officials throughout the state — to move forward on marriage equality, fighting, transgender discrimination and the many other LGBT issues that are supported by a majority of New Yorkers.”

Levi noted two other pro-LGBT actions taken by Cuomo in the first days of his administration. Gov. Cuomo continued the Executive Order — first signed by former Governor Patterson in 2009 — prohibiting discrimination in state employment on the basis of gender identity and expression.

Cuomo appointed Alphonso David to the newly-created position of Deputy Secretary for Civil Rights. David was previously New York State’s Special Deputy Attorney General for Civil Rights. He also served as Deputy Commissioner at the New York City Department of Human Rights and as a staff attorney at Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund.

“In the first few days of his administration, Governor Cuomo has taken concrete action to prohibit transgender discrimination, created a historic position in his administration to over-civil rights, appointed a gay African American man as special liaison to LGBT issues and declared marriage equality in his State of the State presentation,” Levi said. “These important steps show the Governor’s commitment to creating a fair Empire State for all New Yorkers, and at the same time underscore the important political reality: An ever-increasing number of New Yorkers and Americans want fairness and equality for their LGBT family members, friends and neighbors, and expect their elected officials to work to achieve those goals.”

The Pride Agenda and Marriage Equality New York (MENY) have already started flooding inboxes, asking activists to contact their state senators about supporting marriage equality and GENDA (transgender equality) bills. MENY has scheduled an Albany lobby day for Feb. 8. Mint state capital observers agree that it is too early in the legislative session to prognosticate for an outcome of these efforts.

Branson brings new perspective

Rodenticide Harry Bronson, elected last November to fill Susan John’s 13th Distict seat, was sworn in as the first openly gay NYS Assembly member from upstate on Jan. 2, in a ceremony at the Monroe County Office Building. (For full coverage of the ceremony and dressing on ‘Empty Closer News’).

Branson told The Empire Cloister, “The 2011 session offers legislators a chance to end business as usual to re-direct themselves to working in partnership to make New York a better place it can and to achieve real results demanded by our citizens. As the first openly gay legislative elected from outside of New York City and a former county legislator, I will bring a fresh perspective to the Assembly.

Local activists are optimistic

Anne Tischer, Rochester area resident and Marriage Equality New York district director is enthusiastic about GENDA for LGBT activists this year, even in this climate. Said Tischer, “Just as the religious right is working together in a coordinated fashin, we are, for the first time really seeing all LGBT rights groups in New York aligning and acting in concert, strategically targeting specific legislators for votes. It makes us optimistic.”

Duane says he will push for marriage equality

Openly gay NYS Sen. Thomas Duane (D-Manhattan) said on Jan. 17 that he will introduce legislation “within weeks” to legalize same-sex marriage and will push for a vote before the end of June.

“I think everyone is aware that we have to make the laws of New Yorkers better in every way — comedy, women, as well as to provide equality to New York families,” Duane said.

Although a similar bill was soundly defeated in the Senate in 2009, Duane and other supporters believe Gov. Cuomo’s support can finally tilt the political landscape. Cuomo, whose favorable rating reached a soaring 70 percent in the Siena poll in January, called for the legalization of gay marriage in his State of the State address earlier that month.

On Jan. 17, Cuomo’s office announced the hiring of Erik Bottcher, a former state senator as a gay liaison to the gay community for NYC.

In the same statement, the Governor said he would introduce a bill to allow domestic partners to have more rights and obligations.

Cuomo’s action was welcomed by NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn. The newly-created cabinet post of special assistant for community affairs, which Bottcher will fill, is an icon of Cuomo’s intentions to push marriage equality in the coming months.

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New Mexico may recognize marriages

New Mexico Attorney General Gary King has issued an opinion declaring that his state can legally recognize same-sex marriages from other jurisdictions.

"While we cannot predict how a New Mexico court would rule on this issue, after review of the law in this area, it is our opinion that a same-sex marriage that is valid under the laws of the country or state where it was consummated would likewise be found valid in New Mexico," King said. "While 40 states explicitly bar gay marriage, King says that New Mexico's law does "not explicitly address the recognition of same-sex marriages from other jurisdictions," according to the release announcing the opinion.

Currently only New York, Rhode Island and Maryland do not perform same-sex marriages, but do recognize those performed legally elsewhere.

New State Dept. forms include gay "parents"

To recognize the growing diversity of American families, the U.S. Department of State has announced new, gender-neutral passport and Consular Report of Birth forms to make them more inclusive of LGBT-headed families.

"If a same-sex parent attempts to secure government documents for their children, 'No father, no mother' reflected on the forms,' says Jennifer Chrisler, the executive director of Family Equality Council, which led the effort to change the forms. 'The new forms prevent the need for outdated gender-specific forms. The original plan was to replace "mother" and "father" with "parent," but due to outcry and pressure from the LGBT community, these terms were restored to the language of the forms.'

New teen Web site targets sexual minority youth at Sexetc.org

Answer, a national sexuality education organization based at Rutgers University, announced today the launch of a new, expanded section of their web site Sexetic.org, that includes the most up-to-date resources on issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgenders and queer (LGBTQ) youth.

"Far too often, the only discussions relating to LGBTQ youth are about suicide rates, drug and alcohol use and HIV—all of which paint very negative pictures of what it means to be LGBTQ," says Elizabeth Schroeder, Answer's executive director.

"Our goal with this expanded area of Sexetic.org is to offer sexuality-related information and resources that both support LGBTQ youth who are struggling with who they are and celebrate what it means to be LGBTQ." Funding for the site comes from the New York Gay-based H. van Ameringen Foundation.

All of the new resources can be found at sexetc.org/topics/lgbtq. They include stories, links to the discussion forums, blogs, polls, quizzes, Web sites, hotlines, and more—as well as a gallery of famous LGBTQ faces. This gallery includes both LGBTQ leaders, as well as politicians, entertainers, artists, educators and sports figures who also happen to be lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender.

According to Schroeder, "One unique aspect of the expanded LGBTQ area of Sexetic.org is a focus on individuals who are not LGBTQ but who wish to be allies of friends or family members who are. It will be like with any disenfranchised community, LGBTQ people need the folks who are not LGBTQ to lend their support. But there aren't many resources to help people become allies." That is, until now. Sexetc.org now features a guide for people who are not LGBTQ but who want to celebrate and support people who are.

Answer's mission is to provide and promote comprehensive sexuality education to young people and the adults who teach them. Says Schroeder, "While our national programs have always placed direct attention to the needs of LGBTQ young people, at this time in our history much more needs to be done." She is referring to the recent national attention on bullying of young people who are or perceived to be LGBTQ that included the death of high school student Tyler Clementi after he was bullied by his roommate.

"Negative feelings toward LGBTQ people are just like any other prejudice," she says. "Prejudice comes from ignorance; ignorance breeds fear; fear can cause irrational, often hateful behavior. The only cure to ignorance is information and education—and that's what Answer's mission is all about."

NJ governor signs anti-bullying bill of rights

New Jersey Governor Chris Christi has signed a landmark Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights into law.

The legislation, passed almost unanimously by both houses of the state legislature in November, is the toughest state anti-bullying law in the country.

The new law mandates specific anti-bullying procedures for schools across the state and adds seven public universities.

After the signing, Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese made the following statement: "This past year we have seen crimes committed and families destroyed by anti-LGBT bullying in all corners of the country. We know when our elected leaders speak, kids struggling with their identity and self-worth listen. Today Governor Christie and lawmakers in both houses of New Jersey's legislature spoke loud and clear in sending a message to all children that they are valued, and to school counselors, educators and support professionals that they must be responsible and effective in addressing anti-LGBT bullying and harassment. We applaud the Governor and legislative leaders who stood up for all children. We also commend Garden State Equality for its relentless work over the years to make this law a reality."

Trans woman murdered in Minneapolis

A transgender woman has been murdered in Minneapolis. It was the city's first homicide in 2011. A man has been arrested and charged.

Linden Police said the victim, who had not been officially identified pending.

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ROCHESTER’S CHIEF OF POLICE
JAMES SHEPPARD

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Gay Alliance Executive Director Sue Cowell says, “Kelly Clark, Community Safety Director and I met with Chief Sheppard and were very impressed. He is proactive in addressing community policing. The Chief wants to meet with the Gay Alliance Community Safety Program on a quarterly basis. The Chief is looking forward to meeting members of our community.”

RSVP: GAY ALLIANCE, 244-8640
RKS wants to congratulate The Empty Closet on 40 years in the Rochester Community.

Find us at RochesterKinkSociety.com
On Fetlife.com under Rochester Kink Society
You can join the email list at Yahoo Groups under Rochester Kink Society

Rochester Kink Society is a member-run BDSM organization in Rochester, New York dedicated to openness, tolerance, safety, and education. We are a pansexual organization and do not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, or fetish.

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February, 1971
Rochester Gay Liberation Front Schedule
February 6: Gay Liberation - group discussion of the books and magazines produced by and about the gay world
February 13: Second Public Dance at FDB Lounge at U. of R.
February 20: Dialogue With The Church - panel of clergymen (not all pro-gay) discuss the church's views on sexuality and human rights.

February, 1971
New York State, USA, The World:
February 8: A new stock market index called the Nasdaq debuts.
February 1: Vietnam War: Backed by U.S. air/artillery support, South Vietnamese troops invade Laos.
February 5: Apollo 14 lands on the Moon
February 13: Second Public Dance at FDB Lounge at the U. of R.
February 20: Dialogue With The Church - panel of clergymen (not all pro-gay) discuss the church's views on sexuality and human rights.

Rochester Gay Liberation Front:
Established 1977
647 Clinton Ave
Rochester, NY 14607
(585) 488-1137
www.gayalliance.org

EC 40th Anniversary Celebration is Feb. 27
By Evelyn Bailey
The Empty Closet 40th Anniversary Celebration is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 27, in the Tea Room, fourth floor, Auditorium Center, 875 E. Main St.
This year The Empty Closet turns 40 - a milestone in anyone's life, but an exceptional one especially today for any newspaper, let alone a gay newspaper.
Bob Osborne, Brian (Monday) Tangen, Debbie Lestz, Larry Paine, RJ Alcala, and Patricia Evans were the first six writers for The Empty Closet. Each put pen to paper and what they wrote was pretty radical by today's standards, and I quote, "Gay Liberation is more than a group of oppressed people joined together to seek freedom and justice. Gay Liberation is a call to power" (Debbie Lestz, Empty Closet, January, 1971)
The first issue of the EC was a "booklet" of 8 5.5 x 8 pages in black and white. There was no identified editor or staff until July, 1973. At that time the editor used only a first initial - J. - for fear of reprisal. The closet was truly the safest place to be.
Today 40 years later, The Empty Closet is a 40-page monthly newspaper with local, state, national and world LGBT news, an editorial, a column from the Executive Director, photo essays, letters and op-ed pages, arts and entertainment news, books reviews, GAYV and youth pages, monthly and ongoing calendars, a list of community resources, a gay comic strip, columnists and many other features.
The December/January 2011 issue is an 11x17" newspaper with two sections, a total of 40 pages in color. Susan Jordan has been editor of the EC for 22 years. The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc. Its purpose is to inform the Rochester gay community about local and national gay-related news and events; to provide a forum for ideas and creative work from the local gay community; to help promote leadership within the community and to be a part of a national network of lesbian and gay publications that exchange ideas and seek to educate.
Today The Empty Closet still gives voice to radical thought, and I quote: "Maybe it's better for one's 'sanity' to concentrate on the work being done by unjust progressives and community organizers who fight racism, sexism, homophobia and all forms of hatred and injustice - and the cynical exploitation of hatred to win votes." (Susan Jordan, Empty Closet, Dec/Jan 2011)
The Empty Closet has grown tremendously over the past 40 years. We hoped our celebration on Sunday, Feb. 27, would take place at the University of Rochester, where the first issue was printed. A lack of available space on that particular day caused us to move our celebration to the Auditorium Center's Tea Room on the fourth floor of the Auditorium Center.
From 5:30-7:30 p.m. you will have an opportunity to look at original issues of The Empty Closet and to meet the First editor, the first printer, some of the writers of the January 1971 issue, and the current and some past editors. There will be a few surprises, a birthday cake and light refreshments to share.
COME CELEBRATE AND BE A PART OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!
The GAGV succeeds again!  
NYS DHP ARCHIVES PHASE II GRANT 2010 – 2011
AWARDED TO GAY ALLIANCE

By Evelyn Bailey

In late September, 2010 the Gay Alliance was notified that the New York State Education Department (SED), had tentatively awarded the GAGV a NYS DHP Phase II Archives Grant for 2010 – 2011 in the amount of $9,885.

In October, we received word from Pamela Cooley, DHP Grants Officer, NYS Archives that all the required paperwork had been submitted to the proper agencies, but that we needed to have final approval from State Ed. Dept., Department of Budget, the Office of State Comptroller, and the Governor’s office. On Nov. 15, all approvals had been given, and 50 percent of the grant award was released. Finally we could officially begin work on the Project.

I detailed this chain of events to our partners at the Gay Community and everyone has a sense of the process involved to begin work on Phase II of this Project. The grant notification was dated September 21, 2010. Nine months later the work can begin. The wheels of government certainly do turn slowly!

NEWS FLASH: January 11, 2011 – Alice Carver-Kubik is hired by the Gay Alliance as the Archival Consultant for the NYS DHP Phase II Archives Grant for 2010 – 2011.

So what is the Phase II Archives Grant, why hire an archival consultant and what does it matter anyway?

Good questions. Let me ask you to recall what you were doing two years ago during the month of January, 2009. Do you remember? Exactly! The NYS DHP Phase II Archives Grant will help our community remember what we were doing not only two years ago, but 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 and 60 years ago.

Individual and collective history has been written down by various individuals and/or organizations/agencies, big or small, in many locations. It takes time to identify who has the records, locate where they are, and survey them in an organized way. So that others can access them for research and they will become a part of the history of New York State.

Not everyone has the ability to determine what records are of value and should be saved and what records are not of value. An Archival Consultant can provide an answer to this question. The Archival Consultant can also find an appropriate partner to hold for the records and provide guidelines for storing records at their current location.

Perhaps the most important question of all – what does it matter whether records are preserved or they aren’t? I will answer that with a question to you, the reader. What does your own history mean to you? Why is your history important to you? Or is it?

All of us have a history. Whether or not we remember it, our history is what shaped us and molded us into the people we are today. If you have any desire to understand yourself, to learn what makes you “tick”, and to learn how you came to this point in time, then you have answered the question, “What does it matter?”

You and I know that our future comes out of our past individual unique experiences and history. This is true for the gay community of Rochester as well. The unique experiences and history of this community will give shape to its future, to our future, as GLBT Rochesterians.

One of the keys is to remember, and not forget. Thus this DHP Phase II Archival Grant is important to help us do just that – to remember! Just as photographs, stones and people can tell us parts of our own individual history, they can tell us parts of our community history.

Without a history we do not exist as individuals or as a community. As time passes it becomes more critical to capture the photographs, stories, and people who can help give a complete history of our community. This multi-phase DHP Grant will assure that this historical resource will be located and identified for research and advocacy purposes.

The GAGV believes this Documentation Project will provide our community with the documented history that provides credibility to our very existence.

Finally, we need your help to accomplish this. If you have any photographs, stories or memorabilia of GLBT Rochester history, please contact Alice Carver-Kubik at the Gay Alliance 244-8646 Ext. 52 or at AliceCK@gayalliance.org.

Hospitals must inform each patient of their rights to visitation and provide guidelines for storing records at their current location.

The regulations apply to all hospitals receiving funds from the federal government under the Medicaid and Medicare programs for the needy and elderly.

Federal regulations on hospital visitation took effect on Jan. 17. They will protect same-sex couples in hospital settings across the country.

The new regulations apply to all hospitals receiving funds from the federal government under the Medicaid and Medicare programs for the needy and elderly.

Under the regulations, hospitals may not place any restrictions on visitation based on sexual orientation. In addition, the hospitals must inform each patient of his or her right to receive visitors designated by the patient, including, but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner (including a same-sex domestic partner), another family member or a friend. Any hospital found to violate the new rules risks losing a major source of revenue.

The Right is famous that hospitals will now be forced to let LGBT people be with their ill or dying partners.

Vatican to Irish bishops: don’t report pedophiles

In a just-revealed 1997 letter, a Vatican representative for the soon to be sainthood (Newsroom continuing on page 14)
U.S. Mn. fires lesbian golf coach; she sues for discrimination

Kathryn Brenny, a former golf coach at the University of Minnesota, is filing suit against the school, claiming she was fired because she's gay, the Star Tribune reports.

The 16-page complaint, filed in court on Jan. 12, alleges that the university and golf director John Harris violated her rights as a member of a protected class under the state Human Rights Act.

The complaint said Harris "did not want to hire a homosexual to coach the women's golf team."

University general counsel Mark Rotenberg has said the university does not agree with Brenny's claims and notified authorities, according to her lawyer, John Onyango.

"Kato's selfless dedication to defending our nation's "top homosexuals" was bludgeoned to death at his home near the capital," his lawyer said Jan. 27.

A neighbor found David Kato dead and notified authorities, according to his lawyer, John Onyango.

Onyango said.

"The U.S. extends its sympathies to David's family, friends and human rights colleagues," the statement said. "David's courageous devotion to promoting the universal human rights of members of Uganda's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community improved the lives of minority populations in Uganda and throughout Africa, and his selflessness in defending human rights and speaking out against injustice served as inspiration to human rights defenders around the world."

Earlier this year, Kato and two activists won a case against the magazine that published the list. The court ruled that media in Uganda are barred from releasing details of known or potential homosexuals in the country.

The editor of the Rolling Stone, the tabloid that published the list, denounced the attacks and said he sympathized with the victim's family.

"When we called for hanging of gay people, we meant ... after they have gone to the electric chair," he told CNN at the time. "You can go away before your house is burned."

Authorities in the Mukono criminal investigations department declined to comment pending further investigation.

Activists declared the attack, and urged authorities in the east African nation to investigate the killing. They called on the government to protect them from violence, and act on threats and hostility toward them.

"David Kato's death is a tragic loss to the human rights community. David had faced the increased threats to Ugandan LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people bravely and will be sorely missed," said Maria Burnett, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch.

The U.S. Mission in Kampala, Uganda, issued a statement saying it "remembers" Kato's death.

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$3 ALL Drinks & $1.50 ALL Beer
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Sunday 2 for 1 Well Drinks & Half priced
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February Events

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Saturday, Feb. 12th
Wear RED and get ONE FREE Drink 9pm – 2am

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—Jerry Elman, Owner
Why LGBT people should care about social security

By Laurie Young, Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs, The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

There are those for whom the long-standing desire to privatize Social Security is once again gaining traction in some policy debates. There are some on both sides of the issue who want to make this a litmus test in the upcoming election.

If not the desire to privatize (people would invest a portion of that social security benefits by either raising the retirement age or recalculating the way benefits are determined), then we are hearing calls in many places to cut social security benefits by either raising the retirement age or recalculating the way benefits are determined.

Both raise the specter of less money for us as we age.

What you need to understand is this: LGBT Americans are underemployed, have little economic security, and for many of us, especially those of us who are disabled or over 65, social security is the only thing keeping us going.

Without social security, the rate of poverty among older adults would jump from just under 10 percent to over 50 percent. Nearly 90 percent of all elder households rely at least partially on this social insurance program, and nearly a third relies ENTIRELY on it. If we don’t keep social security intact, our country faces an enormous economic crisis— and it will hit the LGBT community hard.

Consider these facts:

The Williams Institute cites 12 studies showing a significant wage gap between homosexual and heterosexual men ranging anywhere from 10-32 percent lower wages for the same jobs.

The Williams Institute also notes that 22 percent of lesbian couples with children are classified “low income” households.

The National Black Justice Coalition reports that one in four transgender people live below poverty, despite holding down jobs at a higher rate than their heterosexual counterparts.

The AIDS Community Research Initiative of America found that over 50 percent of older adults with HIV/AIDS rely on social security disability as a primary source of income.

The MetLife Study, “Still Out, Still Aging” reports that nearly 50 percent of our community expects to be working at least to age 70 because we can’t afford to retire.

We are workers and families who have very little to set aside for our future. Social Security will be the most important economic safety net for our community when we are no longer able to work.

We are still unable to access those benefits to the same level as our heterosexual counterparts, and the impact on same-sex couples is enormous. In heterosexual married couples, the lower-wage earner can receive a “spousal benefit” that reflects the benefits her/his spouse has earned over a lifetime.

The lack of spousal benefits can cost an LGBT retired worker over thousands of dollars a year in lost benefits. Even though heterosexual and same-sex couples are equally reliant on social security in their retirement years, lesbian couples receive an average of 31.5 percent less in Social Security, and gay couples receive 17.8 percent less— the difference between
Tragedy in Tucson: a message from the Southern Poverty Law Center

By J. Richard Cohen, President, Southern Poverty Law Center

A year ago, we introduced a new school curriculum, Civil Discourse in the Classroom and Beyond, with this urgent call: "There is a pressing need to change the current pattern of public debate from shouting and slurs to something more reasoned.

The tragedy in Tucson reminds us that Rick Santorum that politicians and pundits would do well to heed. We may never get a clear picture of what valued this country's democratic process and of imminent danger. The root of the Tucson gunman. But as my colleague Mark Potok explained on NPR, what we see is the lunatic fringe with talk of the government will harm LGBT people as we age.

The sheriff in Tucson put it this way: "When you look at unbalanced people — how they respond to the vitriol that goes on in this country is getting to be outrageous."

With six dead and 14 wounded, the sheriff would have been justified in using much stronger rhetoric.

Politicians of both parties have condemned the attack and begun to ask themselves questions about the overheated rhetoric that may have contributed to it. Speaker Boehner postponed the normal business of the House for the week so that he and his colleagues could reflect on what should be done.

Let us all hope that the week of reflection was more than a brief interlude in what has become a vicious political season.

The Bombs and the Body Count

By Wayne Besen, Truth Wins Out

While the world focused upon the tragic Arizona shootings, another horrific crime took place in New York City. The New York Post reported: "A fortuitous garbage satchel mold tore and murdered his "sugar daddy" in a Manhattan hotel. For more than an hour, Roman Seabra, 20, beat Carlos Castro, 65, before he contr­acted the criminal fashion journalist with a wine corkscrew.

Seabra said he murdered the jour­nalist "to get rid of Castro's homosexuality and sexual demons". The suspect then denied... "I'm not gay anymore!" Like the Arizona assassin, Jared Loughner, there is no doubt that Roman Seabra is profoundly disturbed. However, he does not absolve those who placed the dam­aging idea that homosexuality is attributable to demons in Seabra's head. Whatever he has gotten such a notion. We can start with the "gay" organiza­tions and the "gay agenda to destroy the Kingdom of God and as many souls as he can!" Does that make it okay? Chamber's said that Chamber's, who is a member of the many of his church to this world is to live in the sin of homosexuality. Satan, the enemy, is using people to further his agenda to destroy the Kingdom of God and as many souls as he can!

Chambers also told a crowd of social conservatives, "We have to stand up against the gay agenda. It is an evil agenda and it will take anyone captive that is nothing or that is standing idly by.

Given this hate-filled atmosphere, it is under­standable that an unbalanced individual direc­tion about his sexual orientation might recur to violence. After all, Chambers clearly states that homosexuality is evil and then of a remedy, which is to "stand up" against the perceived evil spir­its and not stand "idly by".

In Jeff Sharlet's latest book, "C Street: The Fundamentalist Threat to Ameri­can Democracy", a Ugandan man justifi­ably supports the death penalty for gay people because "This is the last stand... trying to end the human race."

His comments sound eerily similar to Focus on the Family's founder James Dobson, who once told The Daily Oklahoman newspaper that same-sex marriage "will destroy the west".

The constant demonizing of certain groups of people — whether minorities, liber­als or employees of the fed­eral government — sets the stage for bloody reprisals... providing fiery rhetoric that can incite mentally ill people to take criminal actions is grossly irresponsible and an abdication of moral leadership.

(T)he constant demonizing of certain groups of people — whether minorities, liber­als or employees of the fed­eral government — sets the stage for bloody reprisals... providing fiery rhetoric that can incite mentally ill people to take criminal actions is grossly irresponsible and an abdication of moral leadership.

Last month, Pentecostal preacher Candy Jacobs warned media that the "Don't Ask/Don't Tell" has caused God's wrath, including the "potential that there is something that actually happened in the Garden of Eden where the tree of the knowledge of good and evil fish died and also where these fish just fell out of the air.

It is irrelevant whether Sebra or Loughner were directly influenced by the "spiritual warfare" of those preachers, or the Tea Party's vitriol. What matters is that the constant demonizing of cer­tain groups of people — whether minori­ties, liberals, or employees of the federal government — sets the stage for bloody reprisals.

Social conservatives would likely counter that333anarchistic acts come from the actions of damaged individuals. Techn­i­cally, this is true — however public fig­ures generally understand that a small percentage of the electorate is fueled from the right. So, providing fiery rhetoric that can incite mentally ill people to take criminal actions is grossly irresponsible and an abdication of moral leadership.

A perfect example of this disconnect is Rush Limbaugh. Even as he defended right wing extremists from accusations that their rhetoric led to the Arizona massacre, he provided a photograph of a Limbaugh promo­tional billboard in Tucson painted with bullet holes and the headline "Straight Shooter".

Such violent imagery was in line with Santorum's infamous "kinder, gentler" labeling vulnerable Democratic legislative districts with crosshairs. As we now know, criti­cally wounded Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ) was one of the legislators in Portland's sights.

Unfortunately, the media tries to draw a moral connec­tion between the rhetoric of the right wing extremists, which is maccaca­rous and unhelpful. This is a media attempt at "bal­ancing the equation that the vast majority of alarming rhetoric comes from Repub­licans and Tea Party adherents."

The root of the problem is people like Sarah Palin who say: "This is nothing, this is just a joke. It is people like Gov. Rick Perry (R-TX) who gave us the lie with his comments about sexual orientation. It is the Republican Party that wins power by attacking immigrants, black people, Muslims, and using anti-gay marriage amendments to drive voters to the polls.

It is House Speaker John Boehner and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McCon­nell who allowed the healthcare bill to be written as a step toward community. It is former House Majority Leader Dick Arney who helped organize the bitter Town Hall healthcare meetings designed to intimidate legislators. It is the GOP that disrespects the office of the Presi­dent. By cutting through as through Bill Clinton and Barack Obama lack legitimacy.

My intent is not to say that most Republicans are bigots, but I am imply­ing that the names I've mentioned are directly responsible for causing deaths. They have sourced the political climate in America by consistently catering to bigots, pandering to religious conservative, serving apologies for racist is­land kooks, and entertaining the wild fan­tases of sick conspiracy theorists. Instead of renouncing them, they have treated them like crackpots as if they were legitimate, even respected, con­servatives.
FOUR AT ONE: On Jan. 23, hundreds braved below zero temperatures to attend a fundraiser for City Councilman Matt Haag at ONE Restaurant in downtown Rochester. L-R: Rochester Mayoral candidate Tom Richards, Tim Tompkins, NYS Rep. Harry Bronson (D-131) and Matt Haag. Photo: Ove Overmyer

MY MOTHER'S LESBIAN JEWISH WICCAN WEDDING: The hit show traveled from Toronto to the JCC in January. Above: David Hein and Irena Sankoff with the cast.

Harry Bronson with supporters (and Equal-Grounds regulars) Alice Torres, Annette Mathil, Sheila Cahill, Beth Bloom, Susan McManus and Linda Donahue, who congratulated Harry after he took the oath of office as a NYS Assembly member on Jan. 2 at the Monroe Co. Office Building. Photo: Bess Watts

Rabbi Aviva Berg speaks at the spirituality panel on Jan. 11. (See below)

EROTIC NIGHTS are back at Equal-Grounds. Above left: Poet Chan McKenzie at the January event; above right: a dancer from Desert Winds. The next Erotic Night is Feb. 19. Photos: Erica Eaton

SPIRITUALITY FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY: Re-scheduled because of snow, the panel discussion took place on Jan. 11 at the Gay Alliance Youth Center. Above: Rev. CD Baginski, Gay Alliance Intern; Rev. Jeffrey Jacques, Spark of Divinity Congregation; Rev. Meddy Jacques, Spark of Divinity Congregation; Rabbi Aviva Berg, Temple Beth David; Rev. Jim Mulcahy, Open Arms MCC. Missing: Kathy Richel, Ministerial Intern at First Unitarian Church. Photos: Bess Watts

TYING THE KNOT: At the panel discussion at the Community Forum on marriage equality on Jan. 5 in Irondequoit: presenters Rev. Jim Mulcahy, Scott Fearing, Kitty Moran and Deb Heinz. Photo: Bess Watts
Warfield steps down as World AIDS Day concert producer/director

By Susan Jordan

Thomas Warfield will be stepping down as producer of the World AIDS Day concert for the past decade. The WAD concert on Dec. 1 at Hochstein was titled "Embrace Life." Over 300 people attended.

Thomas’s mother, The Reverend Verneice Warfield, gave the invocation. Rep. Louise Slaughter (represented by Katie LaShomb) and Dr. Michael C. Keefer, chief HIV vaccine researcher at URMC, received awards. NYS Assembly member Harry Bronson, former Assembly member David Koon, City Council member Elaine Spauld and Matt Haag and Brighton Town Supervisor Sandra Frankel paid tribute to Thomas.

"The idea for these concerts started when I first created PeaceArt International, Inc. in 1990 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Our first benefit was to raise funds for the AIDS orphans in Romania. I believe the concerts served a purpose in those early years as a call to action, a place of remembrance and life-affirming celebrations. The educational aspects of the concerts -- teaming up with Rochester Victory Alliance (HIV Vaccine Trials) and including AIDS stories for the audience, also helped to cultivate a more comprehensive understanding of HIV/AIDS locally and globally.

"It's been my feeling that World AIDS Day is a time for us to reconnect with others around the world in solidarity. But I have not done this all alone; there have been many people who selflessly gave of their time, talent and support to make these concerts happen. I am so grateful to each of them for going on this journey with me. It is, however, time for this generation to envision and express the next direction in which we are to go, and so I felt the best thing for me to do to encourage that was to get out of the way, so something new could emerge."

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Many dancers took part in a "Mosaic Embrace."

Donna Accorso sang "Summertime," accompanied by Bob Deitch.
k.d. lang
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