Challenge Grant Success!

By Sue Cowell

Thanks to the generosity of a special group of supporters, the Gay Alliance was able to launch a $25,000 Challenge for our Fall Appeal donation campaign. This Challenge campaign was an historic first for us. The idea was that each donation made to the Fall Appeal would be matched dollar for dollar, up to $25,000. I am thrilled to report that with the community's help we met our goal.

Rochester has a long history of supporting local non-profit organizations and the Gay Alliance truly has a strong base of support from our donors. Many people have a shared history with the agency dating to the early 1970s. Many of our younger members came of age in the Gay Alliance Youth Program and are now active members. This year everyone played a part in helping meet this historic first.

The online giving response to the Campaign was incredible. We provided updates through our Web site and Facebook letting you know what amount was still needed to hit the $25,000 mark and you responded. Together we showed that many smaller donations can have a huge impact. Ultimately, these smaller gifts from many, many people in the community helped us meet our goal. As a community we all share in the success and pride of this campaign.

I realize we all have to make decisions concerning what we can support and at what level. Yet it is important to remember that each gift, even the smallest ones, makes a difference in our ability to continue the work that we do. Thank you for the encouragement and the trust you have shown in our agency.

The Transgender Panel drew around 50 people on Jan. 12. Photo: Jim Wilkins

Transgender panel explores “The Rainbow within the Rainbow”

By Susan Jorden

The Transgender panel discussion on Jan. 12 drew around 45 people to the Gay Alliance Youth Center, to hear the stories of diverse transgender lives and to learn the most effective ways to lobby for passage of GENDA, the NY State transgender rights bill. Moderator Pamela Barnes (MTF) started the evening by saying, “Welcome to the Rainbow within the Rainbow. That’s how I think of the trans community.” She explained how diverse the gender variant community is, and stated further, “Transgender is not about surgery, but what is deep in your soul.”

The panelists were Maur DeLaney, who identifies as genderqueer; Deb Oppenheimer, who is MTF, Pat Pitoni, FT/MI, Jane Marie, a cross dressing activist; Cassie Dubicki, a straight ally; Christopher Argyros, FTM and Empire State Pride Agenda Trans Rights Organizer, and Kelly Clark, Gay Alliance Wellness and Safety Director.

Pat Pitoni said he has been called a trans pioneer, which he initially objected to — “Don’t call me a pioneer!” But, he said, it is actually true. He transitioned, at age 27, and lived almost half of his life as a female. As a teenager, he identified as gay and joined the Gay Alliance at age 15. Pat joked, “I remember coming to the first (trans group) meeting and somebody said, ‘Which way are you going?’” Pat emphasized that all trans people are individuals and that it is easy to be invisible — which is not ultimately in trans people’s best interests.

Jane Marie said, “Cross dressers are a wide spectrum of people.” She noted that there used to be little signs indicating that someone was cross dressing, but “now everybody wants to be more visible.”

Many of Jane Marie’s friends who are cross dressers have been in the military services. “We do all the macho things and then we come back — and that’s who we are.” She explained, “I like to wear women’s clothes — it’s just another side of myself.” Cross dressers are often heterosexual and usually don’t desire to transition. But those who do transition usually start out as cross dressers. Some will cross dress occasionally, while others live it full time. We’re here and around, we’re not psycho, we’re Trans panel continues page 5

Comming up:

Red Ball, N.E. Pride conference

Don’t get cabin fever this winter — get out and about at these special February and March events.

The Red Ball, a Valentine’s Dance celebrating community, love and friendship, will take place Saturday, Feb. 11 from 7-11 p.m. in the Cathedral Hall at the Auditorium Center, 875 E. Main St., hosted by the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley. Tickets are $10 in advance and $15 the day of, are online at www.GayAlliance.org and will also be available at Equal Grounds and Outlandish. The dance ticket includes light refreshments and desserts. Wear red to win prizes: enjoy music, beer and wine cash bar, a Coming up continues page 6

Trans-Basics

See Centerspread

Two in One

Welcome to the new Empty Closet

The paper is now in one handy section of 36 pages. We hope you like it. Please check out the Empty Closet pages on our website — go to www.gayalliance.org, click on Empty Closet News. Also, The Empty Closet and the Gay Alliance both have Facebook pages. The EC will soon have a Twitter feed as well. Now there’s no reason to miss the latest gay news as it happens! Stand by for more improvements this year.

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Gay Alliance

Proud Publisher of New York State’s Oldest LGBT Publication
In this issue: transgender focus

In this special issue, The Empty Closet focuses on transgender and gender variant identity and lives. The diverse trans community is often misunderstood and stigmatized by knobby, bisexuals and gays as well as by straight society. Both gender identity and sexual orientation are much more complex than conventional wisdom dictates, and both transgender and bisexual people experience heteronormative stereotyping.

The gender variant community is not monolithic; it is made up of a wide spectrum of individual identities, including people who have transitioned from one gender to the other, whether male to female or female to male, and also people of intersex, androgynous, gender-nonconforming, genderqueer, transfeminine, transmasculine and other identities.

One major challenge shared by transgender and bisexual people is invisibility. Gay men and lesbians have worked with trans people on civil rights and AIDS issues, marched with them in Pride parades, sat next to them on barstools for decades—but the Empty Closet has focused on trans rights, and our community is not monolithic; it is made up of a wide spectrum of individual identities, including people who have transitioned from one gender to the other, whether male to female or female to male, and also people of intersex, androgynous, gender-nonconforming, genderqueer, transfeminine, transmasculine and other identities.

The Empty Closet is here to support our work. If you are interested in donating to us through United Way's 2012 campaign, just be sure to designate us on forms available through most employers (United Way Donor Option #1135, SEFA Donor Option #68-01048, CFC Donor Option #93910). People do not yet include donations made through United Way's ROC the Day, an unprecedented day of giving in which almost $100,000 was donated to the 100% within the space of 24 hours.

Another huge event in 2011 was the second annual Ride for Pride. The 35 riders, many of whom were straight allies, raised over $10,000 for their 100-kilometer bike ride on June 18. Several of these riders have already begun their fundraising for the 2012 Ride for Pride. Please visit our website for continuing information on how you can support these dedicated volunteers!

2011's GAGV Dines Out was also a wonderful success. We encourage our restaurants, coffee houses and taverns across Rochester to donate a portion of their sales on Oct. 25, which helped raise over $6000. Hundreds of people throughout Monroe County took part in the Empty Closet's support of our mission by going out with their friends for a delicious bite to eat. Stay tuned for news on 2012's Dines Out!

There have been so many ways that people have shown their support for the Gay Alliance, and every last contribution helps us provide the services that are needed throughout the community. Thank you all of our donors: your support is invaluable!
Labor Council presents Mother Jones Award to activists Bess Watts and Anne Tischer

On Dec. 8, Jim Bertolone of the Rochester Labor Council presented Bess Watts and Anne Tischer of MENCH-Rochester and Pride at Work AFL-CIO with the “Mother Jones Award for Sacrifice Above and Beyond,” for their work on marriage equality.

Thanks to years of work with labor, every labor union in Rochester supported marriage equality actively with petitions, calls, personal letters and lobbying by almost every union leader. It was the key to obtaining Republican Senator James Alesi’s vote.

To build relationships with union people, Bess and Anne made union rally signs, walked picket lines, cooked for striking workers, attended union events and spoke at every possible venue. Bess jokingly claims she was going “every possible venue. Bess jokingly claims she was going "every possible venue." I wasn't seeing the whole picture."

I wasn't seeing the whole picture."

Forney Center launches 24-hour drop-in service

The Ali Forney Center, the nation’s largest organization working on behalf of homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth, on Jan. 9 announced that it has been awarded a two-year matching $500K Challenge Grant from the Calamus Foundation of New York.

This grant will make possible the launch of the nation’s first 24-hour drop-in services center for homeless LGBT youth in New York City.

In 2012, the Calamus Foundation has pledged to match all donations made by new donors or increased donations made by existing donors dollar for dollar up to $250K. In the second year, 2013, the foundation will award $1 for every $2 donated by new or increased donors up to $250K. The foundation will also match new corporate and other foundation funding.

Said Carl Siciliano, Executive Director of the Ali Forney Center: "The Ali Forney Center is thrilled to kick off our 10th Anniversary year by opening a services center available to youth at any time of the day or night. This facility will help address one of our major concerns, the growing number of homeless LGBT youth who are trying to break away from gender conforming behavior to conform to gender stereotypes; because of this people who needed medical care did not receive what they needed. I had a safe zone to lay my head on, she said, "and I put one up in the shared office. It came down and I put it up again — and it came down again. I realized it was not safe. We need to move things forward."
California trans rights bills go into effect

Two landmark transgender rights bills signed by California Governor Jerry Brown last year became law on January 1, 2012.

AB 887, the Gender Non-Discrimination Act, authored by Assemblymember Toni Atkins, strongly clarifies the existing situations. The process of legally changing name or gender can take longer than expected with dignity and respect. Atkins said Kristina Wertz.

"This is a huge victory, and yet there is still work to be done in order to make sure all our laws and societal attitudes are fair and promote justice for transgender people," said Kristina Wertz. "The passage of these bills motivates me to work hard as never before to ensure transgender and gender non-conforming people have access to quality health care and are treated with dignity and respect."

Transgender Law Center will continue to offer assistance to anyone who experiences challenges in obtaining documentation appropriate to their gender identity or anyone who experiences discrimination in housing, employment and other situations. The process of legally changing name or gender can take longer than expected with dignity and respect.

"It's a new era for transgender Californians and their families. I am incredibly proud of our staff, our allies, the legislators and Governor Brown for putting an end to discrimination," said Maven Davis, executive director of the Transgender Law Center.

Frequently Asked Questions about these bills are available at www.transgenderlawcenter.org.

Report says Latina/o transgender people face increased legal protections for all Californians. The new law makes it clear that discrimination is illegal in California. AB433, the Vital Statistics Modernization Act, authored by Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal, streamlines the process for Californians to obtain and update birth certificates.

"A key finding of the original report was that, even given the uncontrolled levels of discrimination against all trans people to the U.S., people of color including Latinos/as experienced heightened levels of discrimination and had worse outcomes than the sample overall. Additionally, the findings reveal that immigration status also plays a role in these outcomes, with non-Latinos/as respondents often reporting even worse experiences.

"This study shows how devastating multiple discrimination is for Latino and Latina transgender people," says LULAC Executive Director Brent Wilkes. "We are committed to ensuring that all people, regardless of race, sexual orientation and gender identity are respected and treated fairly. We call upon other Latino groups to join us as we fight for the right of transgender people to live without fear of discrimination, harassment or violence. We will not stand idly by in a society where equality is not within everyone's reach."

Among the key findings from the report: Latino/a transgender people had a very high unemployment rate at 20 percent, higher than the overall transgender sample (14 percent) and nearly three times the rate of the general population at the time the survey was fielded (seven percent). We call upon other Latino groups to join us as we fight for the right of transgender people to live without fear of discrimination, harassment or violence.

"We have long known that race and citizenship status have a very real impact on transgender people. And for the first time, we can identify in specific terms, what these painful realities are. Documented or not, these numbers tell us that the LGBT movement must have an immigrant-industry agenda."

Poll: vast majority of Americans backs transgender rights

Overwhelming majorities of Americans agree that the right to be transgender and the right to have the same general rights and legal protections as other people, a 2011 study found.

The August and September "11 Religion and Politics Tracking Surveys were conducted by Public Religion Research Institute and released amid the increased attention towards transgender issues following news that Bonnie Erwin was chosen to "Dancing with the Stars." The combined surveys constitute one of the first independent studies of attitudes on transgender issues and Americans' knowledge of transgender identity.

"Three out of four Americans say Congress should pass employment non-discrimination laws that protect transgender people," said Robert Jones, CEO of Public Religion Research Institute. "This strong support is also broad, persisting across party lines and the religious spectrum."

Approximately three-quarters (74 percent) of Americans agree that Congress should expand hate crime legislation to protect transgender people. Additionally, the survey found that roughly two-thirds of Americans both report being well informed about transgender people and issues, and generally understand what the term "transgender" means, the new study found.

"To explore whether Americans know what the term "transgender" means, we ask them to name a group in their own words," said Daniel Cox, PRRI Research Director. "More than two-thirds of Americans know it means a gender identity that is different from the one assigned at birth."

Among the findings: Overwhelming majorities of Americans agree that transgender people should have the same general rights and legal protections as other Americans.

Approximately three-quarters (74 percent) of Americans— including strong majorities of all religious and partisan groups— agree that transgender people deserve the same rights and protections as other Americans.

Two-thirds of Americans agree that Congress should pass laws to protect transgender people from job discrimination. This support persists across the political and religious spectrum.
they were so
the original
transgender healthcare

WPATH sets new standards for
transgender healthcare

By Mike Andrews (distributed by Healthy Living News)


The new standards also allow for a broader spectrum of identities, in contrast to the binary “male” or “female” choices.

WPATH's vice president for communications of the Colorado Girl Scouts, Addy, “If a child is living as a girl, that's good enough for us. We don't require any proof of gender.”

According to a report in the Baptist Press, Trujillo also affirmed transgender children are currently serving in Girl Scout troops across the U.S., though she declined to give details.

The boycott is being spearheaded by a 14-year-old Girl Scouts member, who posted a YouTube clip the first week in January. Supporters of transgender children have dominated the comments for the WND article.

Civil unions went into effect in Hawaii, Delaware on Jan. 1

The New Year brought new opportunities for same-sex couples living in Delaware and Hawaii, where civil union laws went into effect after midnight. This brings the total number of states that allow such unions to five.

Four couples were quick to take advantage of Hawaii. A同性恋 and registered their relationship on Jan. 1 at 10:30 a.m., and lawyers Lisa Goodman

Civil unions continue page 6

Collector's delight

These Schnebly lamps display authentic, semi-precious rock crystal and other exotic materials—rare gemstones unique in the universe. From post to pendant, Schnebly lamps are one-of-a-kind designs, worthy of a discerning collector.

And, incidentally, they are highly functional light sources with bright, direct switches. See the collection in our showroom.

Collector's delight

Call for Art Deadline
February 2, 2012
18+ only

rochester
erotic arts festival

March 30–31, 2012
Radisson Riverside Hotel
International Art Show & Sale
Featured Photographer Scott Church
Burlesque & Aerial Arts
Workshops & Demos
CineKink Shorts
Body Art
Poetry
Vendors

rochestereroticartfest.org
Where I accepted that I can't change other worrying about well-informed people to insist that they society, not just put people into different for someone who identifies with their equal civil rights. The bill has already ernor Cuomo is willing to sign it. But lobby their legislators, or speak in favor of gendered."

"Finally what
care how I got here - I just care what I am assigning
gender.

Another audience member said,
"We continued from page 5) ents that really talks about, and gives parents the words to talk about the range of possibilities for their child, and lets the child grow into its own. I want to change society, not just put people into different boxes... I want to blow up the boxes." Kelly also said, in response to another question, that trans people of color are among the most at risk of violence and that they may be mistreated simply because, for instance, they can't afford a new razor that month and so have some facial hair—which can cause supposedly well-informed people to insist that they are male when in reality they are female, and to treat them unfairly and inappropriately.

"Audience members had questions like 'What is cis?,' referring to the term "gendered."

Doh explained that it is a "module for someone who identifies with their assigned gender." It describes anyone not in the gender variant community. Another audience member said, "Discourse always centers on 'how I got to be this way' and why I differ from an ordinary person. I'd rather talk about where I should go. Do you find that a limitation or can you change the discourse?"

Pam Barres said she used to waste time worrying about "how I got here." She said, "Finally I came to a place where I don't care how I got here - I just care what I am and I want to go in a direction of letting people know who we are."

"Another person in the audience said, "It's a process and that's where support people need to come in. I got to the point where I accepted that I can't change other people, but have to live my own life. And that can be a model for other people." Christopher Argyros ended the session by talking about how to advocate for the passage of GENDA, which would simply add transgender people to the protections already existing in New York human rights and hate crimes laws. It would establish trans people as an established, valid class of citizens deserving equal civil rights. The bill has already passed the Assembly four times and Governor Cuomo is willing to sign it. But the Republican-controlled Senate will not allow the bill onto the floor for a vote.

Christopher said that those wishing to lobby their legislators, or speak in favor of GENDA to anyone, need to "keep it simple and stay within our frame of everyone should be treated equally and fairly by the laws of our state."

Supporters of GENDA also should remember people care the core values of fairness, equality and opportunity; avoid engaging in debates with unrealistic hypotheses; avoid 'trans lingo' and explain issues clearly; appeal to fairness and compassion; create a mental picture by referring to specific stories or examples; clarify that opponents' claims are not rooted in fact and that their dire, hypothetical scenarios of what will happen if trans people gain equal rights have never occurred anywhere in the country where trans people have civil rights protections.

(Coming up continues from page 1) gift basket raffle and more. Friends, family and allies of all ages are welcome. Free parking is available in the lot on Col­ leges St., between Goodman and Prince.

"Coming up in March: the Gay Alliance presents the North East Regional Prides (NERP) Conference on March 10. The conference will include a community dinner, show and dance, featuring well-known entertainers, a silent auction, door prizes and a cash bar.

The action happens at the Radisson Rochester Riverside from 6-11 p.m. Dinner, show and dance are $45/$20 for show and dance only. For updates, see the March Empty Closet and go to www.Gay­Alliance.org where advance tickets will also be available. All proceeds will benefit Rochester Pride 2012, July 6-15."

(Trans panel continued from page 3) advantages among the pay-for-play Republicans who cough up campaign money. While Karen Santorum was home-schooling their seven children in Virginia, Santorum soaked the Pennsylvania taxpayers to the tune of $100,000 by enrolling the children in a Pennsylvania cyber charter school.

A Romney group, meanwhile, is escalating attacks on Santorum over wasteful spending. The New York Times investigated some of the earmarks in question, and found that Santorum gave out a lot of them, and that they often yielded campaign contributions. For example, Santor­ um helped secure a $3.5 million military gift basket raffle and more. Friends, family and allies of all ages are welcome. Free parking is available in the lot on Col­ leges St., between Goodman and Prince.

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(Civil unions continued from page 5) and Drewry Pennell were the first couple to take advantage of that during a ceremony at Wilmington's Trinity Episcopal Church. The couple, who have been together for 14 years, were joined by 400 family and friends, including Senator Chris Coons, who delivered the accompanying sermon. Lieutenant Gov. Matt Denns read some scripture.

"We felt so lifted up by everyone who was there," Goodman told CBS News. It is worth mentioning that both the Hawaii and the Delaware laws are explicit in noting that unions are not the same as marriage. "It is not the legislature's intent to revise the definition or eligibility requirements of marriage," read the laws.

While this is a notable win for equality, it's only the first step toward true marital inclusion, said Towleroad.com.

Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/2012/01/civil-unions-go-into-effect-in-hawaii-and-delaware.html#bizQm7KQsSKWY

GDP hypocrites, bigots distinguish themselves...

Columnist Maureen Dowd wrote in the New York Times on Jan. 8, "New Hampshire's feisty voters don't seem as enraptured with Santorum's rigid conserv­ativism and sweater vests as evangelical voters in Iowa were. Many are pushing back on the wacky worldview of Senator Slush, as Santorum was once known for his vicious attacks on Bill Clinton and other Democrats. He bashes President Obama as a European-style socialist and praises fiscal conservatism."

"Yet in the Senate, he made sure dollars from the socialistic Medicare program went to Puerto Rico on behalf of a hometown — United Health Services — that later gave him nearly $400,000 in direct's fees and stock options. He was among the pay-for-play Republicans who tried to strong-arm lobbyists and say that if you wanted to have influence you had to cough up campaign money. While Karen Santorum was home-schooling their seven children in Virginia, Santorum soaked the Pennsylvania taxpayers to the tune of $100,000 by enrolling the children in a Pennsylvania cyber charter school."

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Fee-only Objective advice for the LGBT community from one of your own!
Jim Costich is an activist for intersexed rights, and as someone with experience in the medical/healthcare field, he is especially well informed about the complex medical issues connected with intersex and with all forms of gender variance.

What is interesting, Jim says, "is that at some point, we decide who someone is. We have to be what we are."

He adds, "When we're born, we're not male or female. Intersexed people are erased either 'absolutely male' or 'absolutely female'. They are erased from the same sex. However, the medical establishment has created a profitable industry which claims to solve intersexed people's identity problems with a flourish of the scalpel - and without consulting them.

Jim says, "I have a friend born in Israel who, when they were 18 months old, was told they were a girl and have surgery, because that type of surgery would have been easier for them. So this had to do with everything from medical condition is sometimes misdiagnosed or ignored.

"Of course, there are people who are only 'allowed' half of their anatomy - because it says 'female' on her birth certificate - so she was treated as a girl. Jim himself experienced medical mistreatment in his youth. "I had a much better understanding of myself as a gay man than I had as being intersexed," he said.

For more information:
- [www.democrats.org](www.democrats.org)
- [intersex.org](intersex.org)
- [sitetheresoupsociety.org](sitetheresoupsociety.org)

A video documentary, "INTERSEXION, taped in 2007 by a New Zealand company, which interviewed intersex people all over the world, including Jim Costich. It was just released, but has not yet been distributed. To view it now, go to: [www.intersexions.org](http://www.intersexions.org)
(Interview continued from page 7)

100 has some characteristic which is unrelated to the gender they've been told they are, based on their genitalia. One out of every 2,000 has genital organs that can't be described as male or female. It's called 'ambiguous genitals' – that's just a description, not something that should be judged.

“People who say that intersex or transgender is against God’s plan should talk to veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. Street bombs rip off soldiers’ penises – are they women now? There is more to being a woman or a man than genitalia.

“Being intersexed is first about being your physical body. We are born between the sexes, we have parts that are male- or female-like. There are many reasons for being intersexed, not the least of which is toxic pollution. There are also genetic causes. Genes are switches that can turn on or off, and there are lots of things that interfere with the switches.

“Then we have the new field of epigenetics. The gene may say one thing, but whether the body decides to copy the gene or not is determined by external influences.”

What do intersexed people want? Jim says, “We want: to live in our own bodies. To have self determination and definition. To figure out our own gender. For our parents to have complete information about intersex and access to group counseling for unexpected birth outcomes.

“What we don’t want: surgery or hormones without our informed consent. To be assigned a gender and labeled as gender dysphoric if we don’t agree. For the medical profession to pathologize our gender while ignoring our health problems. For our parents to be lied to, misled, and isolated from other parents with intersexed children.”
The next year, executives from JLG gave just how poorly he will fare with main­

tries, but it’s something most Americans

will not stand

chance of his fellow Americans. That

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...
Making the Scene

Plans already underway for World AIDS Day 2012

By Lora C. Thody

It may seem like December is a long way off now, but for Scotty Ginett, the originator of the World AIDS Day Benefit Concert in Rochester, planning has already begun. Based on what can be done, rather than the obstacles, Scotty strives to be a positive influence in the community and give back to it every year.

The WAD concert for 2011 was held at Hochstein on Dec. 1 - World AIDS Day. The concert was the last in a series of events sponsored for the day by the University of Rochester Medical Center Development Center for AIDS Research (D-CFAR) and other community groups. The day's events included scientific presentations, a symposium and a candlelight vigil.

Proceeds benefit a variety of groups - this year's proceeds went to Safe Sex Inc., a student-run organization that is partnered with AIDS Care, the City of Rochester and Monroe County for Teen Potential. Safe Sex helps youth and teens to make informed decisions regarding health and sexuality in the forms of education and services to reduce risk. The 2012 beneficiaries have yet to be named.

Naming the beneficiaries is just one of the agenda items for Scotty and his planning committee. The group also begin the process of organizing the 2012 concert. Since the goal is for 100 percent of the ticket sales to go to the beneficiaries, Scotty and the committee must find sponsors to cover all of the overhead for the event. Some sponsors provide monetary donations, others donate services for the cause. Scotty's goal of covering the overhead was achieved in 2011 and he hopes to repeat that for 2012.

While the performers volunteer their efforts, the venue, setup and advertising can cost a substantial amount, which is where the sponsor funds fill the gap.

For Scotty, organizing the event in 2011 was a satisfying experience and a chance to reach out and make a difference in the community. As a pianist and singer, Scotty volunteered his time to sit at the 2010 concert, organized by Thorn­ as Warfield, the founder of PeaceArt and of the annual WAD concerts. Since that time, Scotty has been involved in organizing the concert and has now taken over the reins from Warfield. Scotty's joy in this pursuit stems from his knowledge that the organization and the work are about people coming together to try to change the world for the better—and succeeding in doing so.

As part of his planning, Scotty has expanded the visibility of the concert by adding a Facebook page. Scotty and the planning committee will choose a theme for this year's concert - last year's was "Believing the Dream"—and will focus on obtaining volunteer performers as well as on securing a venue, arranging for equipment and staff, and securing sponsorship to cover the costs.

You can Like the organization on Face­book—World AIDS Day Benefit Con­cert—doing the (positive) thing—donate time in planning the concert, or contact the program for information about sponsorship.

My Own Private Rochester:
Chip McDaniel

By Susan Jordan

Chip McDaniel is a longtime member of the Rochester Rams M.C., and works at DePaul Development Services. Born and raised in Canisteo, about 75 miles south of Rochester, he has lived in many places and settled in Rochester in January 1997.

Chip says, "This past year I have been an associate member of the Rams. I stepped down for a while because I had so much work in 2011. We opened a new group home for people with Prater-Willi Syndrome. That's when the chemical signals to the stomach don't make it to the brain, so people are always hungry and eat non-stop. "I've had to learn about many disabilities, I used to work at (the former) AIDS Rochester, and then for the Health Association. When DePaul bought out the Health Association, I worked on holistic therapies for HIV. When then HAART was found, I was transferred to development disabilities. I'm currently assis­tant director." The Rams' brotherhood is clearly the community group Chip feels closest to. He also likes RGMIC and the Gay Alliance Youth Group. "When it comes to volunteering and donating," he says, "I choose the Youth Group. Also I tend to be the person who sells 50/50 raffle tickets at the Forum in fundraisers for groups, which include Isaiah House and AIDS Care. They say, 'Let Chip do it!' The Rams also stage a toy drive every year for the Newark Children's Center.

Chip at Outlandish.

Chip's favorite Rochester-area event is the Lumberjack Festival in Macedon every fall. He notes, "I grew up in the country and uniformly I know how to use an axe. My father would have me out at 6 a.m., when I came home from a night out and I had to chop wood. I'm not into punishment! I'm not really big on festivals and prefer private events and parties at my friends' houses."

Chip does like to hang out at the Bachelor Forum, the home bar of the Rams, and he works part time at Out­ landish, more because he loves the store and its people than because he needs the extra job. He likes to eat at the South­ wedge Diner (between Mel's and Good­ man) because of their good breakfasts, but his very favorite restaurants are Shoë's and the Delmonico Steak House in Henrietta. Chip's favorite local sports team is the Rhinos, and he has also been to a Night­ hawks game, but he says he is not a "big sports person". He loves music, and names the Ruby Shoes from the southern tier as his favorite local rock group. His favorite kinds of music are country/western and Broadway musicals. Chip jokes, "That's the one gay gene I've got - I've enjoyed 'Wicked' and 'Miss Saigon' at the RIT/TNT Dance concert at the WAD concert."

"Believing the Dream"—and will focus on obtaining volunteer performers as well as on securing a venue, arranging for equipment and staff, and securing sponsorship to cover the costs.

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The Unity Fellowship Church choir, St'cheenah Glor­y of Voices Praise, sang at the WAD concert. Front row: Christ­opher Coles (MLL interpreter and choir member) and friend. Back row: Lisa Bennett, Rhaiselle Bennett, Allison Benn­ ett, Mildred Portella and Gwen Ashford.

Believing the Dream — and will focus on obtaining volunteer performers as well as on securing a venue, arranging for equipment and staff, and securing sponsorship to cover the costs.
ALESI FUNDRAISER: On Jan. 11 Tim Tompkins and Mark Siwiec hosted a fundraiser for NYS Senator Jim Alesi. Left to right: Bess Watts, Senator Jim Alesi, Anne Tischer, Jo Meleca-Voigt and Ove Overmyer. Photo: Christine Meleca-Voigt.

HOLIDAY SONGBOOK: The Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus presented its winter concert on Dec. 2 and 3 at Hochstein. One highlight was a Rochettes number depicting a battle between Santa and a rather elegant eight-armed bug and cohorts. Santa is saved by reindeer in pink ballerina skirts—well, you had to be there. Photos: Jeff Mills

CONGRATULATIONS: NYS Assemblymember Harry Bronson congratulates Bess Watts and Anne Tischer on their latest award at the Rochester Labor Council Awards Dinner on Dec. 8. (See story on page 3.) Photo: Ove Overmyer

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Opinion

Why we aren’t a real LGBT community yet
By Dr. Jillian T. Weiss

Several years ago, I wrote an article entitled “GL versus BT: The Archaeology of Biphobia and Transphobia Within the U.S. Gay and Lesbian Community” for the Journal of Bisexuality’s special 2003 issue called InterSEXions Of the Others. I was pleased to receive a call from the Journal noting that the article was one of the top downloads cited from its site, and requesting an “HRC: Equal or Less Than?” reflective paper on how subsequent events have impacted the issues I discussed.

The original paper made the point that heteronormative biases against bisexuals and transgenders exist not only in the straight community but in the gay and lesbian community as well. Are “biphobia” and “transphobia” examples of “phobias” – irrational fears?

No, such heteronormative attitudes are all too rational, mirroring social tensions, which only appear to be an ahistorical psychological phenomenon. Rather, as the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community developed, power relations arose which resulted in the four different groups (GL/BT), assigning them different social locations. Predilection in gay and lesbian communities against bisexuals and transgenders is heteronormism because it is, among other things, an accommodationist attempt to discover those more “radical” forms of sexuality.

This idea that the issue is one of power relations stands in contrast to other popular beliefs about the divide between gays and lesbians, on the one hand, and bisexuals and transgenders on the other, such as the idea that it is related to phobias, insufficient education, elitism, a smaller community as well. Are “biphobia” and “transphobia” examples of “phobias” – irrational fears?

Although many voices have been raised to point out these problems, the LGBT movement as a whole has yet to discover this in any meaningful way. I applaud those organizations and gay people who have discovered these issues and moved to address them. It is my hope that our LGBT civil rights movement will be able to put these problems in the past by recognizing the power relations at work, and using this understanding to create a genuinely universalizing movement, rather than a minoritizing movement.

(Originally posted on The Identities Project)

State of the State
By Ross Levi, Executive Director, Empire State Pride Agenda

We were thrilled (on Jan. 4) to hear Governor Andrew Cuomo highlight marriage equality so prominently in his State of the State address as one of the great accomplishments by state government in 2011. He said, “For decades, millions of New Yorkers had been treated as second-class citizens by their own government. We ended that injustice. … We passed marriage equality for ALL New Yorkers and we did it together.”

We were inspired by the prolonged and enthusiastic response from the audience to the mention of that momentous achievement. Clearly we have the wind at our back. 2012 holds real promise for LGBT New Yorkers, but we have to commit to the hard work ahead and that promise will be followed through.

The dream of equality is not yet fulfilled – there is much more that needs to be done.

We’ve been working for years to pass a statewide law that explicitly protects New Yorkers from being fired, evicted or denied service in public accommodations because of how they express their gender. All New Yorkers should be treated equally by the laws of the state, but until we pass a statewide non-discrimination law, this is unfortunately not the case. The Governor talked about New York being a progressive leader for the nation; we need to catch up to the 16 other states that have passed this common sense legislation and maintain our state’s leadership in equality.

We must find a way to extend protections to the most vulnerable members of our community. Runaway youth, many of whom become homeless and are left with no option but to live on the streets, need our help. Other LGBT people need mental health or substance abuse services, or support as our community ages. We must make sure government is doing its part to address our community’s health and human services needs.

And don’t forget that in 2012 the entire state legislature will be up for election. The nation will be watching as those who made our accomplishments a reality seek re-election. As a community, we must find a way to extend protections to the most vulnerable members of our community. Runaway youth, many of whom become homeless and are left with no option but to live on the streets, need our help. Other LGBT people need mental health or substance abuse services, or support as our community ages. We must make sure government is doing its part to address our community’s health and human services needs.

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The dream of equality is not yet fulfilled – there is much more that needs to be done.
must flex our political muscle and stand by those who stood by us.

The State of the State for LGBT New Yorkers is in our hands. We have had significant victories, but without these crucial next steps, the promise of equality will not be fulfilled.

We urge you to stand with us, and commit to taking action this year to ensure that our progress with New York State government continues. Whether it’s joining us in Albany for LGBT Equality & Justice Day, to 585/276-6313 • www.thirdpresbyterian.org

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BORN THIS WAY (LGBT Support)

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If you have any questions or need information about any of the above organizations, please feel free to contact us at 585-339-9150.

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John McCluskey, a longtime resident of East Rochester, said that marriage equality matters and why the legislature should pass it this year.

“I would honor the opportunity to earn your business and trust for all the vehicles you own.”

Jerry Elman, Owner

Taco...
innocent people based on their gender identity and expression,” said Masen Davis, Executive Director of the Transgender Law Center. “This type of hate speech incites violence and fosters a dangerous and discriminatory environment for transgender people in Tennessee. It is reprehensible for any elected official to encourage violence against people who are our friends and family and who are his constituents.”

Injustice at Every Turn, a report by The National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force illustrates the shocking levels of violence and discrimination transgender people face.

* Fifty-three percent of respondents reported being verbally harassed or disrespected in a place of public accommodation, including hotels, restaurants, buses, airports and government agencies. Respondents experienced widespread abuse in the public sector, and were often abused at the hands of “helping” professionals and government officials.

* One fifth (22 percent) were denied equal treatment by a government agency or official; 12 percent had been denied equal treatment or harassed by judges or court officials.

Fifty-three percent of participants had experienced a serious act of discrimination -- events that would have a major impact on a person's quality of life and ability to sustain themselves financially or emotionally.

We are extremely concerned that Rep. Floyd's hateful and bigoted comments will contribute to violence and discrimination against transgender people in Tennessee and elsewhere,” said Matt Wood, Staff Attorney with the Transgender Law Center. “If nothing else, law enforcement and community members should pay close attention to Rep. Floyd’s comments and respond immediately if they rise to the level of criminal threats.”

**Outrage mounts: Sweden may continue to sterilize trans people**

If you are a transgender person in Sweden wanting to change your legal gender, you are forced to undergo surgery that will render you permanently infertile and unable to have children in the future.

That's right: in 2012, Swedish law still mandates forced sterilization in order to do something as simple as changing the gender on your driver’s license.

Despite a massive push to repeal the law, including support from 90 percent of Swedish MPs, Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt has stayed silent on the issue, allowing one small conservative party to block the change.

Right now a reform of the law is being debated in Sweden. Activists are asking for a massive show of support across Sweden and Europe that finally convinces PM Reinfeldt to speak out and break the deadlock.

Forced sterilization has a long and frightening history in Sweden. Beginning with programs in the 1930s that tried to eliminate certain “undesirable” traits in society by forcing individuals to be sterilized, Sweden has long grappled with the painful history of stripping from citizens what we now consider to be a basic human right. Even Prime Minister Reinfeldt has publicly called sterilization law a “dark chapter in Swedish history.”

Now he has a chance to close that chapter for good. A reform of the law is ready to be presented directly to the Parliament - where 90 percent of MPs are in favor of banning forced sterilization - but without a push from the Prime Minister, the conservative KRISTDEMOKRATERNA party will use its seat in the government to block the reform.

Love Georg Elfvelin, a 21 year old store manager in Sweden, explains, “The Swedish government is forcing thousands of people like me to make an impossible choice. To make the ‘F’ on my identity card an ‘M’, my country makes me give up the right to have biological children. It’s not fair, and this practice must stop.”

“The thousands of people all over Europe who have already joined the call and the pressure to build on Prime Minister Reinfeldt to speak out and bring this to an end. Just yesterday, I took part in a protest here in Stockholm with more than 400 people in attendance. The momentum is building, but we need your help.”

He posted a video on Youtube with his appeal:

**VIDEO LINK:** http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=NSBtMiWM6co&memcmp-direct=1

We know Prime Minister Reinfeldt is on our side; whether you are straight, gay, kinob, bi or trans, will you take a moment to raise your voice and ask Prime Minister Reinfeldt to take a stand for human rights? RFSL, the Swedish LGBT Federation, will deliver your signatures directly to the Prime Minister’s office.

**PETITION LINK:** www.allout.org/stop_forced_sterilization

**Online campaign shuts Ecuador’s ex-gay torture clinics**

Ecuador’s Ministry of Health has begun investigating and closing hundreds of underground ex-gay torture clinics after more than 100,000 people joined an online campaign on Change.org.

Fundacion Causana, Taller de Comunicacion Mujer, and Artolucion Espiralina, a coalition of leading Ecuadorian women’s rights activists, started the campaign on Change.org after working with women who had escaped what they call “torture clinics.” Many of these women cite widespread physical and psychological abuse including verbal threats, shadling, days without food or water, sexual abuse, and physical torture.

“After years of campaigning about the practice of torture rehab clinics that claim to cure homosexuality, the Ecuadorian government has committed to destructing the belief that homosexuality is a sickness,” said Fundacion Causana representative Karen Barba. “Using Change.org, we were able to achieve victory in closing down ex-gay torture clinics.”

Before resigning from his position earlier this month, Minister of Health Dr. David Chiriboga announced the Ecuadorian government would investigate and close all torture clinics in the country. Launch a national advertising and awareness campaign against homophobia, and develop a crisis hotline for victims.

The Ministry of Public Health, the governing body of Ecuador’s health sector, is committed to strengthening the measures and institutions that contribute to the eradication of abusive practices such as the supposed treatment of homosexuality.”

Dr. Chiriboga said, “The Ecuadorian government rejects such practices as criminal and in direct conflict with the individual freedoms granted to all our citizens.”

Dr. Chiriboga will be replaced by Carina Vance, former executive director of Fundacion Causana and respected a gay rights activist in Ecuador. Under her leadership, three raids have already taken place in the Quito area, and dozens of women have been rescued.

The growth and ultimate success of Fundacion Causana’s campaign on Change.org is incredible,” said Change.org Human Rights Organizing Manager Emilia Gutierrez. “After 10 years of fighting for the closure of these clinics, it was a Change.org petition with more than 100,000 supporters across the world that tipped the scales. Watching the women of Fundacion Causana achieve this massive victory has been a truly empowering experience.”

(NewsFronts continues on page 16)
Another bullied child commits suicide

From WSMY.com: A Gordonsville, Tenn. boy's parents say bullying caused their son to take his own life. Phillip Parker, 14, died in late January. His parents said he was constantly bullied for being gay.

"He was fun, he was energetic, he was happy," said Gena Parker, Phillip's mother. To his many friends, Phillip was known as the boy who told everyone they're beautiful.

"He kept telling me he had a rock on his chest," said Ruby Harris, Phillip's grandmother. "He just wanted to take the rock off where he could breathe."

Phillip's family said they reported their concerns over their son's bullying to Gordonsville High School on multiple occasions, but the bullying by a group of students just got worse.

According to Box Turtle Bulletin, "After he did what he did, we found out a lot that we didn't know and there is a lot of bullying that goes on at the school," said Paul Harris, Phillip's grandfather.

"While those parents and grandparents had no idea, the students at Gordonsville High school bombarded them both with information after Phillip's death. More than 100 teens told them the bullying was obvious, and some said they went to teachers about it."

"Now the Parkers want to know why no one from Gordonsville alerted them to the apparent bullying happening in the hallways."

Barney Frank to wed in Massachusetts

Rep. Barney Frank (MA-CD), the senior out elected official on the Hill, is going to marry his long-time partner, Jim Ready, 42. Harry Gural, spokesman in Frank's press office, said that Ready is a photographer who also owns a small business doing custom awnings, carpentry, painting, welding and other general handyman services.

The 71-year-old Frank came out of the closet in 1987. He has said he will not run for re-election.

Chuck Wolfe of The Victory Fund stated, "We are thrilled for Barney and Jim, and offer them both our congratulations and best wishes. As one of the world's most visible out elected officials, Barney Frank has long used his position and influence to draw attention to the freedoms LGBT Americans deserve but still do not enjoy. It's fitting that as his time in Congress comes to a close, he will finally take advantage of the freedom to marry in his home state of Massachusetts."
Rainbow Sage
9th Annual
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Free and open to all
First Universalist Church
150 South Clinton, corner of Court Street
Plenty of free parking on the side streets

Theme: Importance of LGBT allies

From our youth to our elders, members of the LGBTIQ community will share personal experiences about the importance of allies in our lives as well as their personal journeys in life. Interpreters provided. Open to all.

We hope you’ll stay after the panel for a bite to eat and an opportunity to meet and talk with our speakers.

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Bobby
My gender identity is male. I was born into a female body that did not fit for me, so being a transman doesn’t mean anything other than becoming the man I should have always been. I feel that someone’s gender isn’t determined by what is between their legs but what is between their ears. Having gone through this transition has finally led me to the light that was hidden in the darkness.

If I could be any superhero I would be “The Man of Steel.” As Clark Kent he was humble and unique. He journeyed through conflicts with isolation and intimacy his whole life until finally becoming the man he was meant to be; therefore I am Superman.

Patti
I identify as female, and I always have, but being born transgendered it wasn’t always obvious to the world around me. That journey and subsequent gender transition have given me a keen insight, respect and awareness of the roles gender plays in our society, making me very aware of the importance to live an authentic life, true to who you are.

If I could be any superhero I would be Wonder Woman... for the obvious reasons... her super powers.

Jane Marie
I identify as a crossdresser. I don’t fully dress or present myself as a female 24/7. There are areas of my life that require that I maintain a male persona and I’m ok with that.

If I could be any superhero I would be LL Marissa Rahm, a male-to-female police officer. No super powers, but she has a badge and a gun, and excellent fighting skills.

Transgender Vocabulary

**Ally:** A person who does not identify with a group, but still advocates for that group’s rights.

**Cisgender:** The state of not being transgender. Someone who is comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Crossdresser:** A person who dresses in clothing deemed inappropriate by society for their gender. The purpose is usually emotional comfort or erotic fulfillment.

**Gender Expression:** The part of a person’s sexual identity that is about expressing masculinity or femininity as influenced by society, culture, and individual expectations.

**Gender Identity:** The part of a person’s sexual identity that is about their sense of self as male or female, neither or both.

**Genderqueer:** A person who expresses their gender in ways that do not conform to societal expectations.

**Intersex:** A person whose biological anatomy and/or genes vary from the expected male or female gender.

**Transgender:** In its broadest meaning, this term encompasses anyone whose self-identity, behavior or anatomy falls outside of societal gender norms and expectations.

**Transphobia:** Negative feelings, attitudes, actions, or behaviors against transgender people or people perceived to be transgender. It may also be a fear of one’s own gender non-conformity.

**Transsexual:** A person whose gender identity is not congruent with their biological sex. Transsexuals may or may not pursue hormonal or surgical means to bring congruity to themselves.

Books

- Transgender History by Susan Stryker
- Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman Out of Her Skin by Janet E. Steiner
- From the Inside Out: Radical Gender Transformations (Drama) directed by Kimberly Pierce

Websites

- Gender Education and Advocacy http://www.gendereducation.org
- PFLAG http://www.pflag.org
- TransActive http://www.transactive.org
- Transgender History http://www.pflag.org
- Transgender Aging Network http://www.tgnc.org
- TIC http://www.transgenderlegal.com
- Transgender Legal Defense and Education http://www.tlde.org
- Transgender Network http://www.transgendernetwork.org
- Transsexuals May or May Not Pursue Hormonal or Surgical Means to Bring Congruity to Themselves.

Movies

- Prodigal Sons (Documentary) directed by Kimberly Reed
- Armin and Unusual (Documentary) directed by Janet Buss et al

If I could be any superhero, I’ll be Superman. He has unlimited resources to develop new gadgets and to fund his favorite causes. Underneath it all, he’s a human like everyone else.
**BASICS**

Transgender orientations, gender identities and gender expressions are not an addition to transgender information and resources, but a PDF at www.GayAlliance.org.

**Trans in Rochester**

By Jessica

Transgender individuals have been lacking social and legal advocacy since the beginning of history and as a result have faced formidable injustices. This community faces complicated forms of prejudice that are embedded in every institution in the U.S. as well as compounded by race and class. These facts are well known to most trans people, who experience them in a very real way. There tends to be a divide between the reality of the situation and possible solutions to keep our siblings safe. In my own experience as a trans woman, I've faced frightening situations that statistics, lectures, and pamphlets didn't prepare me for. As I've explored my trans identity I've had to learn as I go. In these types of situations the learning curve is a lot faster.

Early in my transition, I experienced a handful of quickly escalating confrontations with people who perceived me as different or threatening because of my gender presentation. In one instance, I was cornered by a man who identified himself as a member of the U.S. military, while I was watching a band perform. He began to berate me by calling me a mug and referring to me with male pronouns. After several minutes of verbal abuse, I asked politely to see another performer if he was going to continue speaking to me or should I leave him alone. He was extremely angry upon hearing this request and began putting his hands on me, and slamming me into a wall. I had no confusion in my ability to fight, but I considered my options carefully before acting.

1. I could attack him and risk dealing with police or be sent to a male prison. "Nuff said.
2. Let him continue hitting me until he wears himself out.
3. Signal to a friend/staff member or anyone around to get security or contact the authorities.

Thankfully I decided on the third option, which resulted in him literally being thrown from the bar. Sadly, this isn't always how it works out. "Crazies" committed out of self defense have resulted in many trans people facing long prison sentences. Unfortunately, we have to resist the urge to respond violently in this type of situation, as much as these choices have to come. Unless you're certain your life is in danger and you don't have an out, leave the building to Tyson.

**Food For Thought**

By Jessica

Trans-mingling: The idea that trans women have discarded their better masculine gender and donned a feminine one that is less valuable, it accounts for why trans women tend to be more regularly ridiculed than trans men, and why trans women face forms of sexualization and misogyny that are rarely applied to chagedgender women.

Oppositional sexism: Sexism that is rooted in the presumption that feminine and male are "opposite sexes", rather than different sexualities. Oppositional sexism is specifically used to divide people up into two groups, each possessing a unique and non-overlapping set of stereotypes, attributes, abilities, and desires. It targets those who blur the lines of these two groups.

**Transgender legal issues: dealing with attacks**

By Jessica

Transgender individuals have been lacking social and legal advocacy since the beginning of history and as a result have faced formidable injustices. This community faces complicated forms of prejudice that are embedded in every institution in the U.S. as well as compounded by race and class. These facts are well known to most trans people, who experience them in a very real way. There tends to be a divide between the reality of the situation and possible solutions to keep our siblings safe. In my own experience as a trans woman, I've faced frightening situations that statistics, lectures, and pamphlets didn't prepare me for. As I've explored my trans identity I've had to learn as I go. In these types of situations the learning curve is a lot faster.

Early in my transition, I experienced a handful of quickly escalating confrontations with people who perceived me as different or threatening because of my gender presentation. In one instance, I was cornered by a man who identified himself as a member of the U.S. military, while I was watching a band perform. He began to berate me by calling me a mug and referring to me with male pronouns. After several minutes of verbal abuse, I asked politely to see another performer if he was going to continue speaking to me or should I leave him alone. He was extremely angry upon hearing this request and began putting his hands on me, and slamming me into a wall. I had no confusion in my ability to fight, but I considered my options carefully before acting.

1. I could attack him and risk dealing with police or be sent to a male prison. "Nuff said.
2. Let him continue hitting me until he wears himself out.
3. Signal to a friend/staff member or anyone around to get security or contact the authorities.

Thankfully I decided on the third option, which resulted in him literally being thrown from the bar. Sadly, this isn't always how it works out. "Crazies" committed out of self defense have resulted in many trans people facing long prison sentences. Unfortunately, we have to resist the urge to respond violently in this type of situation, as much as these choices have to come. Unless you're certain your life is in danger and you don't have an out, leave the building to Tyson.

**6 Steps to Being an Ally to the Transgender Community**

By Katy Elder

1. **Come Out:** Be vocal about your support of the transgender community. Make yourself visible to transgender people by putting a sticker on your car, laptop, or office door or wearing a pin. Ask your employer to include more than an M or F box on medical forms. Do you have your own gender identity and gender expression in the non-discrimination policy of your workplace?

2. **Speak Up:** When you hear derogatory comments about transgender people let people know that’s not OK. Ask your doctor to include more than an M or F box on medical forms. Do you have your own gender identity and gender expression in the non-discrimination policy of your workplace?

3. **Get Out:** Join a gay/straight alliance. Attend International Transgender Day of Remembrance events in November. Attend a Rochester Trans Group (RTG) meeting which is held the last Saturday of the month from 3-5 p.m. in the Gay Alliance Youth Center (805 E. Main St. 1st floor). There are lots of places that hold unique challenges for transgender people, such as public bathrooms, doctor’s offices, the DMV, etc. Offer to go along with a friend.

4. **Stand Up:** Get involved in the push to pass the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) in New York. Currently transgender and gender non-conformists are not protected from discrimination by law. Write your state representatives and let them know that you support equality for all, and are willing to put your vote behind this choice. Write to the U.S. Census Bureau to request that they include sex, gender orientation and gender identity in the next census.

5. **Buddy Up:** There are lots of places that hold unique challenges for transgender people, such as public bathrooms, doctor’s offices, the DMV, etc. Offer to go along with a friend.

6. **Look Out:** Check out some of the great resources listed in our “Want To Know More” box, and on the EC’s Resources page, or visit the GAGV Library and Archive, open 6-8 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, and 3-5 p.m. Sundays. A list of the library’s holdings are available at http://www.librarything.com/catalog/GAGVLibrary.

**Did you know?**

11 states currently have explicit transgender non-discrimination laws in place. In a 2011 study that surveyed 6,450 transgender people:

- 10% reported having been homeless because of their gender identity
- 51% reported having been harassed in public accommodations or government agencies
- 10% reported having been refused medical care because of their gender identity
A talk with transman
Jason Robert Ballard

By Susan Jordan

Empty Closet: Can you share some personal information?

Jason Ballard: My name is Jason Robert Ballard (named after the Red Power Ranger believe it or not) and I am a 24-year-old transman. While I’m from Rochester now, I like to say that my hometown is New York State since I’ve lived all over it.

I have a wonderful girlfriend that I met while attending Nazareth College. We’ve been together a short time, but she’s become a great ally and advocate for the Trans* community.

EC: When did you realize that your gender is male and what was your coming out process like? Have you experienced discrimination or hostility as a transman?

JB: When I was 13 years old I finally “created” myself in an online chat room. Four years later (when my mother found out) was the breaking point of the depression I had been going through. Depression caused by living life as a female and coming into womanhood. I was ashamed for quite some time after that… The negative stigma surrounding being a “transsexual” was more than I could really bear.

Accepting my true identity has really saved my life. When asked if I experienced discrimination or hostility, I’m sure that term also tends to have some negative stigma surrounding it, but I have been called such on occasion. I think that understanding what it’s like to be perceived as female, knowing the gender roles and having a strong sense of morals makes me a supporter of women’s rights. I also, though now male, connect with females on a more personal level than any guys I’ve met. It’s much like any cause, once there are faces to it, it’s easier to fight for… Well, half the population is women, so we shouldn’t be in short supply.

EC: We reviewed the Self Made Men calendar last year. Can you talk a little about creating it? Do you have other products and a website?

JB: Without that strong community, role models, or any decent websites, I took it upon myself to make sure that others had the necessary resources in their time of need. The Self Made Men has become far more than just a calendar project in the recent months.

Through 2012 calendars are still available for sale, we have produced “Trans*” cards for hormones and surgeries, pins, stickers, T-shirts and more. The funds from all of these pride products have helped us create TheselfMadeMen.com.

In just the last three months, we have created a trans pen pal program used by over 700 people, and developed an online resource hub with about 80 “Trans*” sites from binders to zines, pharmacies to surgeons. The most exciting thing to happen to us recently however, is that an LGBT bookstore in Melbourne, Australia is going to start selling our product!

EC: What does being a man mean to you?

JB: Being male, or being perceived male, to me has been solidifying. I once described fitting female gender roles as walking on a tight rope. The clothes, the hair, the female culture -- it was all very unstable. Once I started dressing comfortably, socially transitioning, physically transitioning, it felt like both of my feet were finally on solid ground. Socially I became a butterfly.

I must admit that being Trans* in a location that has an amazing LGBT community has made my confidence seem somewhat elitist at times, but with my life experiences, I can’t help but feel more than just male.

I regard myself as a feminist. I know that term also tends to have some negative stigma surrounding it, but I have been called such on occasion. I think that understanding what it’s like to be perceived as female, knowing the gender roles and having a strong sense of morals makes me a supporter of women’s rights. I also, though now male, connect with females on a more personal level than any guys I’ve met. It’s much like any cause, once there are faces to it, it’s easier to fight for… Well, half the population is women, so we shouldn’t be in short supply.

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Identify

By Evelyn Bailey

Tony Mascioli –
Thank you for your
Shoulders! We met your
$10,000 challenge!

In October, 2011, I asked Anthony Mascioli, a friend, native Rochestarian, and gay business man, for a rather large donation to the Shoulders To Stand On 90 minute documentary on the LGBT History of Rochester. I explained that the documentary has been in the making for over 10 years, and that our history needed to be documented and preserved.

He responded by saying he is much more comfortable Matching Donations than just giving a donation outright. Thus began the planning for raising $10,000 between December 2, 2011 and January 15, 2012.

You need to understand that Tony is a very sharp business man. His challenge energized the Shoulders To Stand On Committee who then began in a very focused way to energize the community to raise the money. If we had simply been given the money, we would not have reached out to the community strategically, and we would not have developed a longer range plan for actively raising money. I think Tony knew the importance of meeting his challenge would create other avenues of support and fundraising, and bring in more money.

As of Sunday, January 8 we had reached our goal of $10,000 plus. The total budget for the documentary is $120,000. We are on our way toward reaching that goal.

Our fundraising efforts have brought in approximately $36,000. With Tony’s match of $10,000, our total to date will be around $46,000. Tony’s generosity will make the video taping of individual interviews for the documentary possible.

We need to bring in another $15,000 to finish the filming. Next will be the editing and finally the finished product. An educational kit will be developed for the documentary to be used in schools k-12, corporate diversity programs, and on college campuses. This educational kit will become the foundation for a curriculum on local LGBT history.

Finally, Shoulders To Stand On will work to Legislative inclusion of LGBT history in the local history curriculum for New York State. Tony’s contribution brings us closer to filming the 90 minute documentary on the LGBT History of Rochester, which will be told by the stories of the many men and women who have contributed to our fight for equality and justice. Education through the sharing of personal stories has been shown to have the largest impact on lowering or removing barriers to acceptance. The stories of these courageous men and women need to be told to bring to light the many contributions the LGBT community has made, and their impact on the social, economic and political life of Rochester. Shoulders To Stand On is proud to recognize Tony Mascioli’s support of this community project. With more shoulders like Tony’s, we will reach our goal of completing the documentary for the 20th anniversary of ImageOut, October 2012.

Jennifer L. Gravitz, Esq.
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On Timeline:
Nov. 2002: Initial meeting to produce promotional video for the Gay Alliance.
March, 2004: Final draft of promotional video completed.
April 2007: Shoulders To Stand On committee formed.
Sep. 2010: 40 years of The Empty Closet microfilmed and digitized.
2009-2010: NYS DHP Archives Grant — Identify and locate records of 260+ LGBT organizations, agencies, groups and individuals.
2010-2011: NYS DHP Archives Grant — Survey minimum of five record collections.
Jan. 2011: Chronology of 40 years of The Empty Closet completed.
Dec. 2011: NYS DHP Archives Grant Awarded for 2011-2012 to place minimum of three record collections in permanent repository.
Jan. 15 2012: Reached fundraising goal of $10,000 to be matched by Tony Mascioli.
Growing Up
We Do What We Best
By Eric Bellenoue
Which movies do you play? Yes. Design smart clothes? Check. I could go on. Guys really enjoy the arts, make the point. This is, rich and meaningful. The list of talents is long and distinguished. Sundheim, Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, Kors, Marc Jacobs, Paul Rudnick, David Sedaris, jump in and add your icons. I’m an unapologetic Sundheim groupie. I get a kick out of walking past the Marc Jacobs store fronts on Bleeker Street. So creative, such fun! The theater would be a barren wasteland if it wasn’t for the energy of legions of writers, actors, designers, producers.

I am now, in this modern age that no one really expected to witness, so many out of the closet. Proud and very present. A fact that might be a surprise to some. Mr. Cooper, Miss Foster, but we know, we knew! I especially enjoy seeing Cheyenne Jackson in a production of "30 Rock". I’ve seen him twice on the stage he’s a great performer. Does average America know he is gay? I hope so. Last summer I went to Fire Island? Probably not. Openness matters to me. However that is not what is on my mind. Hang on dear hearts. What we see do at best is belleza, dimenion and diminish one another. We sneer at a man’s batiste or that he doesn’t comb it in the current hot gay style. We mock other gay men who are overweight, old or not in shape. It’s all self-hating tucked under the surface, projected on the nearest target, the enemy. I hope it doesn’t stop us. It’s a long-standing, sad and lamentable behavior that every minority group seems to need someone to feel as if that will make them feel better about themselves. It doesn’t work. It leaves a sour taste contributed to a sense ofolation, elements insecurities behind smart-ass put downs. Or I hope it does.

Did feminities deal with other women this way? Actually they did. There was a period when the newly emerging movement was really uncomfortable with Lesbians. That didn’t last terribly long. Sisterhood proved to be powerful. Men, the group I knew, seem to be different.

Oh sure we donate money, go on fundraising hikes, but just go to a well meaning gathering, a party and you can easily see the separation, the discrimination, it isn’t even subtle. We love cliches. A couple of years ago, I went to an Image Out screening. In front of me I saw someone I thought was a friend. But he was with another female, younger man and it was as if I wasn’t even there. I was invisible, I knew what was happening in a flash because I was capable of the same attitude.

In my school years, when I was really living and breathing with myself, I only wanted to be friends with the hottest guys, the most stylish women. Reflected glamour. Their acceptance made me feel better than what I truly believed of myself. Life and time helped me first realize what I was doing and then overcome it.

I have one lifelong friend, 40 plus years and counting, and he never fails to make a snarky crack about my decorating, my tastes in general. Odd thing is that he loves me. He doesn’t do a clue how he mocks me. So, I let it go. Why make a fuss? Why rock the boat?

I’m glad we’ve lasted. He used to refer to his partner in passing by saying, "Oh, he’s a hip. Oh, he’s gay." as if the guy was a pure breed dog. My boyfriend is hot, better than yours. Anything and everything to raise one’s level on some imaginary list of assets. Yuk.

That cutting quip, the brittle humor that made other people laugh, ingratiated us with the in crowd, seemingly won acceptance, friends, was not in the long run the best strategy. It only served to establish a detached state; a lack of intimacy, the most essential aspect of friendship.

Once upon a time I had a pair of summer shoes that were well, funny. Woven leather shoes that were so new the owner of the store would resist them when I saw them at Sims. I wore them to a work conference. Existing with style. I was a ‘sick’ young man, looked at me and said, "No self-esteem gay man would wear shoes like that!" Breaking me in sublimely. This guy wore gay drag worthy of satire. Baseball hat, plaid shirt, 401 Levi’s. Oops, I’m mock ing again.

See why I mean it’s ingrained, almost second nature. Consequently, I have my guard up. I never get used to feeling around gay men.

Or didn’t, not for a long, long time. What changed is that I got to know older gay men, the passing seasons have men more appreciative of the small kindnesses that make the days more bearable. Maybe the transition and loss of childhoods now are, more comfortable in whatever. They’re learning to live with themselves, more accepting, more tolerant, more appreciative of the little things that make life pleasant. Or maybe they have learned the wisdom of just shutting up.

Older gay men seem more often to espouse behaviors I aspire to: validation, acceptance, intimacy.

Email: elbcad@rit.edu

Cleaning My Closet
FRIENDING
By Meredith Elisabeth Batsioneer

I am once again annoyed that the red of Gift-mas has morphed into the red of Saint Mon­

day-pers. In pro­

test, I will not wear red this February. "LIKE."

Steadfastly I will refuse to swoon over sappy songs gush forth. Enough already! I am sick and tired of the 14th, the day dedicated to expressing your sweater with the myth, the dream, the hope of Eternal True Love.

I am super-sized-annoyed that December 27th was the start of gag-me-with-a-spoon Valentine hype. Weeks of a Dollar Store commercialized romantic love. For sale absolutely anything better than yours. Anything and everything to read the answer.

I really have more fun reviewing snippets from my life. Fragments that are mirrors of my formative stages. I remember my childhood friend, Donna, two years younger. We amused ourselves with my dollhouse and my rules. I, always and still bossy, claimed the doll, a plastic woman with a hideous red dress and movable but stiff arms and legs. I allowed Donna to play with the non-to-scale rubber baby. Due to the doll’s large size and its permanent sitting position, I diagnosed polio. Little Donna accepted her fate. Little Donna, a playmate, my friend for a season.

In high school I had an assortment of friends. Four years with peers who guided me as I shaped my personality. Four years studying the human body, learning about heterosexual neck­

ing and petting. My sorority friends taught me about me. My childhood friend, Donna, two years younger. We amused ourselves with my dollhouse and my rules. Personally I have very little inter­

est in my school friends. I have no desire to see, "So, what have you been doing the last five decades?" And I certainly do not want to read the answer.

For me, the past makes a good story, not a destination. Contacting sixty-eight high school friends, even those who attached two extra sheets of paper and swore to be friends forever. Two roads diverged in a frosty, yellow wood, a long, long time ago. But some of my really, really good school friends even made it to the woods.

In the beginning of my life, I had just plain, adjective-free friends. But such a time, I wanted to differentiate among degrees of friendship. I liked my good friends to be face to face quite regularly. Still do. I really need to have the added information provided by eye contact, body language, and tone of voice. I call those people my best friends. As time passes, some good friends and family friends have moved beyond reach.

Yes, emails provide the high-speed deliver­
y of charity news, written 24/7 as the mood strikes me. But a computer screen is a cold void. I can’t really feel hugs and kisses that come as ( ) or sx. I feel no surge of endorphins when I see LOL. Yet, there are some magical connection that keeps those distant friends close in spirit. They are my heartfriends. It’s the walkin’s that defying labels, I can easily define a colleague... we work together as employees, on committees, while volunteering. Our conversations are primarily activity centered. We have never been a guest in each other’s house.

Then there are the more long-term walkins, occasionally sighted. They are the folks not along the way, not chosen. I then have friendships. Apparently that term is old-fashioned and has been replaced by the ubiquitization "friends" and "friendships," and the need for a new way to note the level of the relationship. Maybe "friends" should work. A friendly is a person to whom one is cordial, perhaps excus­

ing the weather report and a vaguely answered "How Are You?" Two ships
FAREWELL TO 2012 • NUMBER 453 • GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESSEE VALLEY • THE EMPTY CLOSET

passing in the night. Or say, at a festive gathering.

Now it is 2012. My stand I have sur-
vived another year. I am deeper into
seriousness. These days my definition of
friend implies a backup system, the
person who will show up in a crisis. The
person who will listen to my woes and
worry. The people who will be there
when I fall to my knees.

These supportive friends would drive me
to doctors' appointments, meet me at
the hospital, sit with me when I am fright-
ened, hold my hand, make chicken soup.
My supportive friends will do for me
the things I cannot do for myself. Sup-
portive friends are friends for a reason.
The reason is love.

MeredithElizabethtreasurer@frontier.
net

Faith Matters

By Rev. Irene Monroe

It's not easy for any person of Afri-
can descent to be LGBTQ in our black
communities, but our transg-
ader brothers and sisters might feel the most discrimination.

A Look at Black Respondents in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey

A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey

TRANSGENDER, worries. The people who will be there
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force feel the most discrimination.

statistics are stark:

- In 1997, at 4 a.m., Forney was murdered in her home just
outside of Boston on Nov. 28, 1998. The crime kicked off the
"Remembering Our Dead" web project.

- Another example: in June 2006 the Ali Forney Center (AFC), in NYC, the nation's largest LGBTQ youth homeless service center, aggressively launched an advertising campaign asking the simple question: "Would you stop loving your child if you found out they were gay or lesbian?"

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Drug Treatment Coalition (NBDC), in collaboration with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), released a groundbreaking study in September 2011 called "Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey," exposing both the structural and individual racism trans gender people of color confront. The study is a supplement to the national study "Injustice at Every Turn:

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For more information phone 585-488-5785

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“Maybe Hollywood is still making good movies,” Bernie said. “But they’re for a younger generation and you’re too old to appreciate them.” I folded my arms across my chest and glared at him. “One more comment like that and we’ll be watching Funny Girl again this weekend.”

“Yeah, I know, Funny Girl is a movie for geezers.”

So my future seems clear – I’ll spend my golden years complaining about music that’s too loud, eating dinner at 4:30 p.m. at the village diner where there’s never a wait for a table, making exact change to pay my check and repeatedly watching Barbra Streisand sing. “Don’t Rain on My Parade.” Yeah, life after 50 truly is magical.

“I can contact this geezer at Davidbush59@gmail.com.”

NY Gay Wedding Consultant

By Eve Elzenga

Valentine’s Day. Love is in the air. What a great day to become engaged.

And for all you couples planning to do just that, the NY Gay Wedding Consultant wants to remind you to make your dinner plans as soon as possible. In a romantic setting – at a favorite restaurant, in front of the fireplace at your house, or maybe at Wegmans Pizzeria – place the ring in their windowsill and ask for the Gay Wedding Consultant. It is never too early to make a reservation at a restaurant. Call now.

But of course the main event of any engagement is the ring. Think locally as you shop in family-owned jewelry and antique stores. Estate rings may be just what you are searching for and you may find them in price points lower than something brand new.

Of course you can always use a placeholder ring – a band of paper or craft-store “gem” until you have time to go together to choose something for each of you.

Or maybe you have a family ring that can be upcycled for your life together, or that has elements that can be used in new rings that you design.

And now that you are engaged, it’s time for a party to share that great news with family and friends. You don’t need to have a wedding date set yet to celebrate. Have a party, a cocktail party at a hotel bar – the Hyatt Downtown comes to mind, or make it more formal if that’s what you and maybe your parents would like. You can always rent a swell place like the American Association of University Women and throw a cocktail party and/or dinner there.

It is the celebration that matters. We have all waited so long for our turn to shout the news to the world that we are in love – don’t hesitate to announce it every chance you get.

The people around us are truly delighted for us. And the more we announce our life-long commitments, the more stereotypes and prejudices we eliminate.

Once you have a date set for the wedding, it’s time to begin planning. Popular wedding venues book up more than a year in advance. Begin thinking about what you want your day to look like – the actual, physical setting you see yourself. Maybe it’s near a body of water, in the Finger Lakes at a winery, or at a historic old mansion, or at a BBQ in your back yard.

Research the options online or work with a wedding consultant who knows all the venues and vendors. And don’t forget to ask about their experience with gay couples.

Check it out carefully. Read and re-read the contract you are presented with. Deposits are nonrefundable on wedding venues.

Best wishes to all of you soon-to-be engaged couples. Enjoy the glow of happiness. And if you need help, I’m here. Ill. Eve Elzenga

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What effect will community have on your life?

There is always plenty to share. We've just found at our website (http://www.dlirochester.org) or by calling the DI Hotline at 585-234-5092.

News from the Pews: Our Fifth Annual Hymn Sing with Tim Schramm was a success! Because it was held on a weekday evening, we had a few new faces in the audience. A great time was had by all! We're hoping to have another one next year... put it on your calendar!

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on Feb. 22. Check the website to find out what our program during that time will be.

An apology: We had some problems with our Hotline for a while; seems the phone company updated their technology and it took us a bit of time to catch up. All done though... now you can leave messages and we can update it with our events! If you tried and couldn't get through to us, we apologized.

EMPIRE BEARS

The Bears have been playing games and cards a lot this winter. We like to stay warm with friends, share good food, and snuggle.

Recently, members have attended shows at Blackfriars, Downstairs Cabaret, and the Auditorium Theatre. We're organizing trips to hockey, soccer, and lacrosse games. We eat at the Wintonaire every Wednesday and Saturday at 6 p.m. We go to movies, concerts, and dinner together. Members go to winter reunions for Jones Pond and Hillside. Many members plan to attend Drenched Fur in Erie later this winter. We hang out at the Forum, where a great new bunch of guys have taken over the BEAR nights on first Saturdays. We host a Bear potluck every second Saturday at the GAGV Youth Center at 6:30. Bring a dish, and we have the rest.

Check us out at our new website www.empirebears.com.

(Community continues on page 26)
COMMUNITY

(EQUALITY ROCHESTER/MENY-ROCHESTER)

After taking a brief break following the successful passage of the Marriage Equality legislation in New York, EqualityROC is back in full swing.

The two primary goals for 2012 are the successful repeal of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) working under the umbrella of Marriage Equality USA which has recently merged with Marriage Equality USA and the passage of the Gender Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) in the New York State Legislature working with Empire State Pride Agenda.

Many exciting events are being planned. All are invited to our regular monthly meetings held on second Mondays at Equal Grounds Coffee House, 750 South Ave, 7-8:30 p.m. Also please join us for the Marriage Equality USA Kickoff Party being held Thursday, Feb. 16, 6:30-8 p.m. at Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 Fitch St, 14608. Brian Siba, new Executive Director of Marriage Equality USA will be there to discuss the vision of Marriage Equality USA and share ways that Rochester can advance the fight for marriage at the federal level. For information: AnneTischer@gmail.com, (585) 426-0862.

JUST US GUYS

Our group is off to a great start with a well attended gathering this past month to hear Brian Quinn, a health trainer, respond to our questions regarding exercise and fitness. We left the session to hear Brian Quinn, a health trainer, respond to our questions regarding exercise and fitness. We left the session

lower level conference room at

Ridge Road West, located near

Lounge of the Marriott Airport.

The Feb. 14 gathering will be hosted by staff of AIDS Care Outreach who will provide a routine examination of having to deal with the police. Of one the first things to do is to stay calm (or as calm as possible). Then cooperate with the officer(s) even if you don’t think you’ve done anything wrong. Show your ID, if asked, and keep your hands in full view. If you’re in transition and your ID doesn’t match your current gender presentation, explain that you are in the process of transition.

One of our members said she carried a letter from her doctor stating that she was undergoing gender transition and although she never had to use it, it gave her some comfort just having it. Be polite (again even if you feel you’ve done nothing wrong). And as an aside, every police show we’ve ever seen, do have the right to remain silent — you just have to say so loud.

A couple of people brought up harassment by security guards in the malls and stores. It was pointed out that if you’re dressed differently from your assigned gender you might be subject to more scrutiny. Kelly also said she works closely with the Rochester Police Department on all of our LGBT issues and if we had any complaints to contact her and let her know.

She also handed out a brochure published by the ACLU titled: “What to do if you’re stopped by Police, Immigration Agents or the FBI”. It has a lot more detailed information and is available at the Gay Alliance’s website: www.gayalliance.org under the Community Safety Program link.

At our Saturday, Dec. 31 meeting we learned that one out of every 2,000 babies is born with genitals that make it uncertain whether the baby is boy or girl. In the end the parents of the unfortunate baby are told, “Your child has a gender deformity which we will fix surgically. We can make a malformed girl into a boy or boy into a girl and they’ll never know the difference if we all keep the secret from them.”

Then five times a day here in the U.S. A forced infantile gender mutilation is performed that is considered by the interest community as a forced gender assignment. And this is: Wrong. Wrong. Wrong.

With yet another full house, Jim Turner said, “Your child has a gender deformity which we will fix surgically. We can make a malformed girl into a boy or boy into a girl and they’ll never know the difference if we all keep the secret from them.”

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Angels in America
opens at Geva: a talk with director David Henderson

By Susan Jordan

The first part of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," "Millennium Approaches," will have its official opening at Geva Next stage on March 23, produced by Artistic Director David Henderson. The second half, "Perestroika," will be staged next October.

We are so excited to be presenting "Angels in America," says Artistic Director David Henderson. "Kushner's play is the ultimate in modern theatre. Great characters, wicked special effects and a message that is vital."

Henderson teams up with company founder Marcy J. Savastano (Harper) and Jill Rittinger the Angel, Judy Molner (Hannah) and Peter Doyle (Roy Cohn). The company will also collaborate with acclaimed international video artist Monica Duncan to create the special effects and video for the production.

"Angels in America" is set in late 1985 and early 1986, as the first wave of the AIDS epidemic in America is escalating and Ronald Reagan has been elected to a second term in the White House. This Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play tells the story of a young gay man with AIDS and his frightened, unfaithful lover, a closeted Mormon lawyer and his volleyball- addicted wife, the right wing, closeted gay New York lawyer and a steel-winged, prophecy-bearing angel — as well as the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg and other supernatural apparitions.

The lives of these disparate characters intersect, intertwine, collide and are blown apart during a time of heartbreak, reaction and struggle, ranging from earth to heaven, from the political to the intimate to the visionary and supernatural. "Angels in America" is an epic exploration of love, justice, identity and theology of the difficulty, terror, and necessity of change.

Openly gay musician counts his blessings

By Robert Pulimer

Building a successful career in the arts is not for the faint of heart. The competition is stiff. Narrowing the path to accommodate a gay man with a passion for performing Early Music and Baroque opera might at worst shave the odds of success, and at best redouble the need for determination.

Enter the ebullient Michael Beattie, conductor and keyboardist, an Eastman School and Boston University grad who has navigated that tricky course to the doorstep of ensembles as impressive and diverse as the Boston Symphony, Mark Morris Dance Group and Pittsburgh Opera. This year, he excitedly imparts, his itinerary will intersect with the respected Chicago Opera Theater where he will conduct the Handel opera Tamer. And on Sunday, Feb. 26, you will find the lively, successful and openly gay musician imparting his enthusiasm for the music of Vivaldi, Telemann, Boismortier, Quantz and Leclair at 4 p.m. in Downtown United Presbyterian Church, along with the seven other Baroque chamber musicians of Fioritura.

The concert is part of the seventh season of the Pegasus Early Music series in Rochester. Beattie's daughter of local musician Deborah Fox who plays, among other things, the theorbo, a bass lute that looks something like an oversized mandolin stretched to adult human height.

"Michael is a great all 'round musician: a wonderful harpsichordist and organist," Fox says. It's fantastic to play chamber music with him because he listens, responds and is very easy to communicate with.

Beattie has been openly gay impac- ted the career of the 50-year-old Baroque devotee, whose music-making is often envied with — and performed in — the church. "It's a really good question," says Beattie, who came out at age 33. "I think if you ask that question of a lot of organists around the country, you will get widely varied answers — some pretty upsetting." Born in Rhode Island but living since age 10 in Greater Boston, Beattie said in a phone interview that he himself had to avert most such confrontation.

"I've been extremely fortu-

(Musicalian continues page 28)
His great person to have on the team, Haritatos says. He has a great rhythm and harmonic and gestural sense for the bass line. It’s very easy to play with him.

Beattie is equally commendatory. He says the proliferation of Baroque period-instrument performance has significantly raised the quality of such public offerings in the past decade. "Gonzalo (Rui) is one of the really finest Baroque oboe players performing today, he will remain private and available to event organizers only. Once registered, you will receive a member name tag and a score sheet to take with you. In the spirit of Speed Dating, you will spend about five minutes with each registered participant.

What will you ask them? That’s entirely up to you, we will make some suggestions for the shy types, light encouragement via a cash bar, and complimentary appetizers for the nervous.

At the end of the event you will review your notes and determine which of the presenters is an arrow through your heart, which have the potential, and which of them were just utterly bat guano crazy. You can choose as many as you like! Then just hand us your scorecard and go home. We do the rest!" and "The question is easy and fun to read. It is a welcome addition to anyone’s bookshelf."

Fioratura, an Early Music group, will appear with Michael Beattie on Feb. 20 at Downtown United Presbyterian Church.

(Book review: An Impossible Dream Story)

By James Mack

J. V. Petretta’s first novel, An Impossible Dream Story, (Dog Ear Publishing, 2011) begins as the story of a young man’s struggle to find his identity in a quickly changing world and ends decades later as the main character faces and overcomes one of his greatest challenges. Very loosely based on an outline of the author’s own experiences (which have been embellished, then further fictionalized for the novel), it introduces us to Vinny, a child growing up in Indiana during the 80s and 90s, and collaborates with famed contemporary American theatrical director Peter Sellars in the unconventional staging of Mozart operas.

Early on, Smith makes a fluff of Beattie. Literally.

You really should play some of our colorful characters. You might want to read figured bass!" Smith asked Beattie. The notation is a musical short-hand for keyboard players. Beattie agreed.

I said yes — and of course I didn’t," Beattie admitted. But I taught myself, played Early Music enthusiastically and eventually fell in love with the keyboard."

Vinny joins the U. S. Army and does a stint in Southeast Asia, gets married and stars a family, then becomes a successful businessman. After many years of internal struggles, he eventually comes out of the closet. Unlike a typical coming-out story where the character’s coming-out signals a turning point in their life, this story continues with Vinny’s head-first dive into unbridled sexual adventures, resulting in him facing another challenge — an HIV diagnosis. Vinny returns to his beloved sport of bicycle riding and organizes a 5,000 mile cross-country bicycle tour to raise funds and promote awareness of AIDS.

The story is told in the first person from Vinny’s perspective and realistically chronicles the character’s personal struggles, emotional setbacks and eventual achievements. Describing one of his first bicycle races he writes: “I don’t know if it was my damned determination, or perhaps the way I wobbled, ‘twee’-wheeled bears, but no one dared devour my lead.”

Much of the later part of the novel takes place in Washington, New York — Vinny moves to Buffalo — and in fact most of the novel was written while the author was living with his partner in Rochester, offering an air of intimacy and local readers.

An Impossible Dream Story is an honest story of love, loss, redemption and second chances. It highlights the mistakes, triumphs and rewards one experiences on a challenging journey through life. It is a written story in a style that is both easy and fun to read. It is a welcome addition to anyone’s bookshelf.

RGM speed dating event: All the single boys put your hands up!

On Feb. 22, at 6:30 p.m. at the Flour City Diner, the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus presents ‘Crusin’ with Cupid’, a speed dating event.

The Chorus says, “We’ve put a song in your hearts, and now it’s time to put that song to your throat while you help us look for love.”

How it works: You provide the Chorus with your contact information, they will remain private and available to event organizers only. Once registered, you will receive a member name tag and a score sheet to take with you. In the spirit of Speed Dating, you will spend about five minutes with each registered participant.

What will you ask them? That’s entirely up to you, we will make some suggestions for the shy types, light encouragement via a cash bar, and complimentary appetizers for the nervous.

At the end of the event you will review your notes and determine which of the presenters is an arrow through your heart, which have the potential, and which of them were just utterly bat guano crazy. You can choose as many as you like! Then just hand us your scorecard and go home. We do the rest!”

“We’re not the question. The question is how to do,” Rees told the Boston Globe. And so, in my own struggle, a large part of my question was how to be in the world, especially for high-schoolers, and especially for those who don’t have the luxury of time to think about how to do it.”

Audrey (Kim Wayman) — who demonstrates zero tolerance for her daughter’s sexual experimentation, and once represented a black goddess figure. Dunye’s mockumentary was written while the author was living with his partner in Rochester, offering an air of intimacy and local readers.

With the hopes of her shy tomboyish daughter blooming into a more socially fluid young woman, Audrey – or “black lesbians” — is a virginal 17-year-old African American lesbian high school student living in the South Bronx. She is a pampered daughter blossoming into a more socially fluid young woman, Audrey (Kim Wayman) — who demonstrates zero tolerance for her daughter’s sexual experimentation, and once represented a black goddess figure. Dunye’s mockumentary was written while the author was living with his partner in Rochester, offering an air of intimacy and local readers.

And unbeknownst to the general public, 20 feature films have been directed by women of color, from 1991-1996, dubbed the “Golden Age,” when black lesbians’ films were predominately documentaries.
The Lives of Transgender People: Studies in trans experience

On Nov. 20, the Transgender Day of Remembrance, "The Lives of Transgender People," a book detailing the experiences of thousands of transgender Americans, was released by Columbia University Press.

The book, by Genny Beemyn and Sue Rankin, is based on a survey of nearly 3,500 self-identified transgender individuals and follow-up interviews with more than 400 of the participants, making it one of the largest studies involving transgender people in the United States. The book’s release coincided with the International Transgender Day of Remembrance, an event remembering and honoring individuals who have been murdered in the previous year because of their gender identity or expression.

Beemyn and Rankin consider how transgender people experienced their gender identities growing up and how they came to see themselves as transgender. "One of the findings that surprised us was the wide variety of ways that people identified," states Beemyn, the director of Stonewall Center at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a transgender person herself (a pronoun used by Beemyn to reflect a gender identity that does not fit into conventional male or female gender categories).

Noted Beemyn, "When asked to describe their gender identities, the participants provided more than a hundred different responses."

Rather than defining a monolithic transgender identity, "The Lives of Transgender People" documents a transgender spectrum of a broad range of identities, including androgynous, gender-nonconforming, genderqueer, transfeminine, transfeminine, and transgender identities.

Given the lack of research on the lives of and climate for transgender people in the United States today, "The Lives of Transgender People" breaks new ground by examining the participants' concerns for their physical safety, their fear of being outed as transgender people, and their experiences with employment discrimination and harassment. Beemyn and Rankin find that, despite greater societal recognition of transgender people and a growing transgender rights movement, individuals who are or who are perceived as transgender commonly continue to face discrimination, harassment, and bias-motivated violence.

Said Rankin, "The climate for transgender people is less than welcoming. Our results parallel the findings of other recent studies indicating that transgender youth in particular are at great risk for gender bias."

To address these inequalities, Beemyn and Rankin call for policymakers to take action. Said Beemyn, "The widespread adoption of transgender-inclusive workplace nondiscrimination policies and practices would provide a crucial foundation for many transgender people as a whole to lead healthier, more dignified, and more economically secure lives."

Travel

They Call It Mellow Yolo

By Merle Ealy

The last leg of our California trip was Yolo County, the heart of Sacramento Valley. The city of Davis is the hub of the county and Woodland, the county seat.

Nancy, Barb and I stayed in Davis at the Hallmark Inn at 110 F Street. Great hotel and great location for all we needed to do.

Since much of the day had been spent completing Santa Rosa and traveling to Davis, we relaxed a bit before going to dinner at Seasons Restaurant, abutting the hotel. Seasons Restaurant serves contemporary American cuisine and utilizes fresh, local products. The restaurant features a wood burning oven, open kitchen, a Chef's table, and private dining facilities. Most important to me was that they use locally grown ingredients from the many area farms.

"Farm to table" has become a cuisine in some parts of the country and with a state like California growing grapes, olives, artichokes, avocados and rice, just to name a few, Nancy, Barb and I were off to visit some of their birth places.

The nearby city of Esparto is the locale of the Haag Family Farm, where walnuts are their thing. We met the owner Claire J. Haag, who gave us the tour. Loads of raspberries and both Bing and Rainier cherries to choose from as well.

Seasonal cuisine is the fare at Monticello at 630 G Street in Davis. Brunch, lunch and dinner menus showcase seasonal appropriateness, regional resources, freshness, and minimal interference between source and plate. Rhonda Gruska and her husband Tony are the owners, while Tony is the Executive Chef. A third co-owner is Jim Eldon, the "farmer."

Tucos Wine Market and Cafe was just down the street from the Hallmark Inn. Pru Mendez is the owner and Executive Chef. The menu is a bit worldly but with many Spanish influences and using local producers.

Ciocolat, at 301 B Street (530-775-3088) was the place for High Tea. I’m sure that you can get coffee, but hot tea should be part of this meal. Food is meant to be bites as you sip your tea and chat with your friends over four courses.

The Heidrick Ag History Center introduces visitors to the marvels of agriculture and commercial trucking through 130,000 square feet of interactive, one-of-a-kind exhibits. The cornerstone of these exhibits is the Fred C. Heidrick Antique Ag Collection, the world’s largest and most unique collection of one-of-a-kind agricultural equipment, and the nearby Hays Antique Truck Museum.

The Heidrick Center exhibits tractors and harvesting machinery from the late 1800s through the middle of the last century. With all of that running around I felt almost as old as some of the artifacts. The $8 admission price gets you both museums.
**SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2012**

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**Rochester Pride 2012**

**July 6-15**

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Michael Hardy – Past Chair & Marketing
Jeff Markarian & Zayne Austin – Picnic Co-Chairs
Bill Schaefer – Parade Co-Chair
Joe Murphy – Festival Co-Chair
Alysa Stryker – Sassy in the Southwedge
Peter Mohr – Sponsorship & Events
Lyjha Wilton/Louis Mistrette – Festival
Phil Rawleigh – Events

There is time to get involved or express your opinion!
Please e-mail Carrie at: carriev@gayalliance.org

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**DO YOU NEED INTERNET ACCESS?**

The Gay Alliance Library has two computers with internet access available during library hours:

**Sunday:** 3-5pm • **Monday & Wednesday:** 6-8pm

Computers are part of our David Bohnett Cyber Center

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**Coming Out, Bi Zach**

Coming out is like beginning a new life. Some have it good, others have strife. Then you have those that end it with a knife. For me, I had it good, I had it bad. In the end I had friends, but in the beginning I was alone and sad. Once you’re out, you’re a target. Everybody looks at you, with smiles or sneers. You begin to realize who your real friends are. They should love you regardless of straight or queer. I had names shot at me, faggot, homo and queer. But I had friends who told me, “You got to persevere.” Here I am today, writing for tomorrow’s youth. I’m not holding nothing back, what I say is the truth.

I Am, By Nereida Borges

I am a Gay Ally.
I wonder if anyone understands. I hear what other people say. I see many LGBTQs struggle. I want to help. I am a Gay Ally. I pretend not to care what someone thinks. I feel hurt when my friends get hurt. I touch the hearts of others. I worry about their safety. I cry when they cry. I am a Gay Ally. I understand who they are. I say to them, “You have the right.” I dream that one day the hate will end. I try to protect my LGBTQ friends. I hope they all know I love them. I am a Gay Ally!

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

**Address:** 875 East Main St, Rochester, New York 14605
**Hours:** Mon.-Fri., 9am-5pm • **Phone:** (585) 244-9030 • **Fax:** (585) 244-9035 • **Web:** [www.gayalliance.org](http://www.gayalliance.org) • **Board President:** John Altieri • **Executive Director:** Sue Cowell • **Administrative Assistant:** Laura McSwain • **Education and Outreach Director:** Scott Fearing • **Wellness and Safety:** Kelly Clark • **Outreach:** Jeanne Gaitenburg • **Youth Program Director:** Jessica Cohen

**The Empty Closet:** Editor: Susan Jordan • **Designer:** Jim Anderson
**Phone:** (585) 244-9030 • **Fax:** (585) 244-8646 • **Advertising:** (585) 244-9035 • **E-mail:** emptycloset@gayalliance.org

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The Gay Alliance Library is part of our David Bohnett Cyber Center.
Program Notes

Community Safety/Anti-Violence

The Out for Justice workshop for February is “Fair Housing,” on Feb. 8 at 6:30 p.m. in the GAGV Youth Center, first floor, 875 E. Main St. Laurie Lambeis, attorney from the Monroe County Legal Assistance Center, will talk about discrimination in renting and home-buying, as well as tenants’ rights and other issues. Free.

Save the date: In March, Out for Justice presents the Legal Expo on March 24, a day-long expo at the GAGV Youth Center, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. This event is part of LGBT Health Month. There will be information tables, workshops and free legal services.

February is Dating Violence Awareness Month. The Gay Alliance’s Anti Violence Project (AVP) will be at RIT, talking about healthy LGBT relationships as part of RIT’s dating violence awareness programming.

If you have any questions about these events, or if you have experienced harassment, domestic abuse or violence, please call Kelly Clark at 244-8640 ext 19.

Gay Alliance Youth

Another save the date: The Youth Group sponsors the first-ever Queen College Fair, Saturday March 31, at the Auditorium Center, 875 E. Main St. (call Jess Cohen at 244-8640 ext 13, or see March EC, for venue update). Noon-4 p.m. Colleges and universities in WNY, CNY and the Capital District have been invited to have information tables. There will be workshops for students and parents on issues including financial aid, coming out in college and filling out college applications. There will also be an opportunity to talk with representatives from college Pride groups, as well as admissions counselors. Jess Cohen and Youth Group member Dontae Williamson attended the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force’s Creating Change conference in Baltimore, Md. in January.

CALENDAR MAN

A big thank you goes out to our amazing volunteer Brad Smith for almost four years of service working as the Gay Alliance Volunteer On-line Calendar Manager. Brad, thank you so much for all of the time and energy you put into helping the community have up-to-date information about events. We appreciate all that you gave us. The Gay Alliance welcomes Robert Rogers as our new Volunteer On-line Calendar Manager.

ON-LINE RESOURCE DIRECTORY


Gay Alliance Youth

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

Call Jeanne Gainsburg at 244-8640 ext 19 for questions.

Special Events:
- Youth Dances, Day of Silence, Big Gay Prom, Pool Table, LGBTQ Youth Library, and 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 Jeanne Gainsburg, Outreach Coordinator for an application: jeanneg@gagv.us or 244-8640 ext. 14.

December 2011
- 12/5: Transgender Youth at Hilton High School GSA
- 12/6: LGBT 101 at St. John Fisher College
- 12/7: Safe Schools at Halpom Education Center
- 12/9: Transgender Issues in Healthcare at Anthony Jordan Health Center
- 12/12: Transgender Youth Issues at Hillside AY Program
- 12/13: LGBT Youth Issues at Center For Youth
- 12/16: Power of the Personal Story at the Gay Alliance
- 12/16: LGBT 101 at Monroe County Pretrial Services
- 12/3: Intersex Issues at the Rochester TrAns Group

January 2012
- 1/11: LGBT Tea at the Gay Alliance
- 1/12: Transgender Awareness Panel at the Gay Alliance
- 1/13: LGBT 101 at Pittsford Mendon High School (five classes)
- 1/14: Transgender 101/Gay Alliance History at the Gay Alliance
- 1/18 - LGBT 101 at SJFC/Wegmans School of Pharmacy
- 1/19: SafeZone Training at SUNY Brockport
- 1/20: SpeakOUT Training at the Gay Alliance
- 1/21: SpeakOUT Training at the Gay Alliance
- 1/25: Transgender Healthcare Panel at SJFC/Wegmans School of Pharmacy

Evaluations of the month:
- "I learned how to come out as an ally and how to respond to questions like, ‘You’re straight, why do you care?’ It was fantastic! Yay! J."
- "I wish we had more time! I feel like we could have talked forever.
- ‘They know their shit!’"
LEGAL

Cultural

The Rochester Women's Community Church
170 N. Main St., Rochester, 585-454-5554

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
Referrals to physicians and service agencies.

Victory Alliance
University of Rochester Medical Center. One of several research sites worldwide that conduct research on the role of HIV. www.uro.mhs.rochester.edu.

Center for Health and Behavioral Training of Monroe County
175 N. Main St., Rochester, 585-275-0526. Provides confidential HIV testing and counseling. 24-hour toll-free line available for anyone interested in testing.

Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/ Syracuse Region
114 Genesee St., Rochester, 585-275-0526. Offers confidential HIV testing and counseling. When you make your appointment, be sure to ask about our sliding scale fees. No one is turned away for inability to pay.

Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS
A collection of agencies providing a multiplicity of resources and services to the Rochester/Syracuse area. https://www.ratf.org.

MOCHA Center of Rochester
Our mission is to improve the health and welfare in communities of color through community organizing and service, with emphasis on LGBT+ programs.

Monroe County Health Department
500 Young Blvd., Rochester, 585-957-5491.

Strong Memorial Hospital
Provides a complete range of HIV medical care, including access to medical treatment protocols and HIV testing. Also provides individual and group psychotherapy. For health care professionals also available. Infections Disease Clinic (585) 274-9525. Department of Public Health (585) 274-5690. AIDS Training Project (585) 274-5690.

planned Parenthood of Rochester/Syracuse Region
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MONDAY
Rainbow SAGE Women's Group
Last Monday, 7-9:30 pm, GAU Library. 1st floor next to Youth Center, 675 E. Main St.
http://www.rochesterinnet.org

Frances P. Mihalik, 4-404, at the Library Price. Bore That Way
Formerly Gay Strider LBTG Support Group. First 3, Mondays, 7:30-9:30 pm, 34 Miss Gr. Carol, 452-3842 or Karina, 654-7516.

Tuesday
Just Us Guys
Gay men of all ages, 2nd Mondays, 6-9 pm, AIDS Care, 259 Monroe Ave. 223-2200.

Wednesday
Country Line Dancing/Two Stepping
Every Wednesday, 140 Alex Bar. Lessons followed by dancing until 4am. Beginners welcomed.

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

BGLITQ Motorcycle Group
Second Friday, various locations. Rochester BGLITQ@yahoo.com; 463-4545; jm@louisflynet.net

Saturday
Rainbows Bar Night
Third Saturdays, 8pm-2am, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. 271-6931

New Rochester Free clinic: 4 pm, University Church, 220 Winthrop Rd. Men and women. Open. Support group for parents who have lost children. First, 3rd Wednesdays, 11am-12:30pm. Third Presbyterian Church, 1405 S. Winton Rd. 244-8640 or x 10.

TUESDAY
New Freedom New Horseing
A.G. Gay meeting, 7pm, University Church, 220 Winthrop Rd. Men and women. Open. Support group for parents who have lost children. First, 3rd Wednesdays, 11am-12:30pm. Third Presbyterian Church, 1405 S. Winton Rd. 244-8640 or x 10.

THURSDAY
Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns
6:30am-7:30pm, First Thursday, Ralph, 271-7649.

Queer Radical Reading Group
First and third Thursdays, 7pm, Emmanuel Church, 750 South Ave.

Wednesday
Social/supervisory networking, 5-7:30pm, Changing venues. E-mail: mingle@takeitordiscardit.org

Joe Russo, Psy.D., GP
Licensed Psychologist
Certified Group Psychotherapist
25 Canterbury Road, Suite. 3018
Rochester, New York. 457-8296
Phone: 585-506-6096
E-mail: jrcrussopysyd@gmail.com

- Addiction
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Grief/Loss
- Trauma
- Relationships

The Empty Closet
Ongoing Calendar
Every week there are four regularly scheduled BGLITQAA and two NA meetings in Rochester.

Ongoing Calendar
Rochester Gay Men

New Freedom/New Horseing Group 3rd Sunday, 3-5 pm, Open Arts MCC, 740 Marshall Rd. 244-8640 ext 27; PFLAG@rochester.com

Gay & Lesbian Alliance of Rochester, www.rochesterlitas.org

Sophia’s Support Club
First and third Saturdays. http://www.inspirational biz/online-spiritual-evolution-group/
WEDNESDAY 1

THURSDAY 9
Out & Equal Second Thursdays Networking Event. 5:30-7:30pm, at Images Lounge of the Marriott Airport, 1800 Ridge Road West located near I-390. Event is free with cash bar and complimentary hors d'oeuvres. For more information, call 585-266-6337, or ralph.585-266-6337. or email Dressy-Femme@comcast.net or Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/bfconnec tion.

SATURDAY 11
Free mammograms for uninsured women over 40. 8am-12pm, Highland Breast Imaging Center, 500 Red Creek Drive, Suite 130, I4623. Call Breast Imaging Center at 585-887-3300 for appointment.

SUNDAY 12
Dignity Integrity: Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word, with music, 5pm, St. Luke/St Simon's Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

WEDNESDAY 15
Empty Closet deadline for March issue: 244-5930; susanj@gayalliance. org.

THURSDAY 16
Equity Rochester (as part of the Marriage Equality New York network) introduces Brian Silva, new Executive Director of Marriage Equality USA, at the Marriage Equality USA Kickoff Party 6:30-8:30pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 S. Fitzhugh St. All are welcome.

SATURDAY 18
Bunch Femme Connection Dinner at Jay's Diner, Route 15 (West Henrietta Road), 7pm. 585-288-7208; email Dressy-Femme@comcast.net or Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/bfconnec tion.

Dignity Integrity Cabin Party Potluck and Game Night. 4:30-9:30pm at local town park. Further details: website http://www.dl-rochester.org/ or DI Hotline at 585-234-5092.

SUNDAY 19
Dignity Integrity. Quiet Episcopal Mass in the Chapel, 5pm, St. Luke/St Simon's Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

TUESDAY 21
Mardi Gras
Out & Equal LEG Leadership Roundtable. 5-6:30pm, hosted by University of Rochester, River Campus. Join regional Employee Resource Group leaders to share best practices, gather ideas for programming. For RSVP, directions to conference room at the university, contact Ralph Carter, 585-265-5904 or ralph. carterr@rocn.com. More information at www.ucnYfingerlessservice.org.

Rev. Jimmy Creech gives Spring Christian Faith and LGBT Experience lecture at Ithaca Auditorium, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, 1100 S. Goodman St., 7:30pm.

THURSDAY 23

SUNDAY 26
Dignity Integrity. Evening Prayer, followed by a Potluck Supper, 5pm, St. Luke/St Simon's Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

Michael Beattie. Petrucci in concert, 4pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 S. Fitzhugh St. $25; Seniors $20; Students $10. 705-3990.

WEDNESDAY 1

THURSDAY 9
Out for Justice “Fair Housing.” 6:30pm, GAGV Youth Center, first floor, 875 E. Main St. Laurie Lambrix, attorney at Monroe County Legal Assistance Center, will talk about discrimination in renting and home-buying, tenants’ rights and other issues. Free. 244-8960 ext 19.

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

WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO ON A TUESDAY NIGHT, RICHARD?

YOUR BOYFRIEND?? YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND?

I’M JUST WAITING FOR MY BOYFRIEND.

DON’T BE SO SURPRISED.

T H A T H A P P E N E D O C C A S I O N A L L Y.

AH...HERE HE IS NOW.

SEE YOU LATER! DON’T WAIT UP FOR US!

WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED?

HAS KRISTIAN LOST HIS MIND??

GUYS, CMON. KRISTIAN IS OUR FRIEND.

LET’S BE NICE, OKAY?

YOU LOOK WONDERFUL, KRISTIAN!

AS DO YOU, ARE YOU READY?

Indeed.

I WAS ASTONISHED BY THE FACT THAT RICHARD HAD A BOYFRIEND, AND HE HADN’T DENIED IT UNTIL NOW, LANCE.

YEAH, BUT... HOW LONG UNTIL RICHARD GOES NUTS OR SCREWS THIS UP?

WHO KNOWS, BRAD...

THEY COULD BE TOGETHER FOR A VERY LONG TIME.

I’D RATHER POACH ON TAKE-DOWN THE HOLIDAY DECORATIONS, LANCE.

A WISE MOVE...

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Chris Del Conte
DelConte Services, LLC
Realtor, RE/MAX Realty Group
Interior Design and Home Staging
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CDeIConte@CDeIConte.com
http://facebook.com/cdelconte

PFLAG meets the 3rd Sunday of each month. Meetings are at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, 740 Marshall Road, Rochester 14624 from 1 to 3pm.

Join us!

Questions? Call: 585-244-8640 and leave a message, or e-mail: pflag@gayalliance.org

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90 Cook Street
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 353-9542
www.kenseanatmoving.com

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