LGBT Giving Circle awards $23,250 in grants, reaches $50,000 milestone

The LGBT Giving Circle awarded $23,250 in grants from its LGBT Fund for Greater Rochester to 13 nonprofit organizations, bringing the total of grants awarded in three years to $50,000.

Giving Circle members, guests and grantees attended a celebration on November 17 at Rochester Contemporary Art Center, where the new grants were formally announced.

“Members of the Giving Circle are extremely pleased to increase our philanthropic impact and our visibility in the community. This round we have awarded grants to a broad mix of social service and arts organizations that are either LGBT-focused or serve the community at large but are LGBT inclusive,” said Angela Bonazinga, co-chair of the Giving Circle.

“The Giving Circle’s mission is to help make a real difference (LGBT continues page 6).”

Mid-term elections bring big wins for conservatives, some victories for pro-LGBTQ candidates

By Ove Overmyer

Even though the 2014 mid-term election resulted in some crucial wins for our officials, most notably policymakers on Capitol Hill, it was a brutal night to be a Democrat.


Our candidates also broke new ground in Maine, where Maura Healey became the first openly LGBT attorney general ever elected in the United States. As she prepares to take office, Victory “looks forward to watching Healey continue to build a strong record of advocacy for our community.”

Pro-LGBTQ successes were not limited to the Northeast. Idaho’s John McCarstoe won his race for the state’s 1st House District, making him the state’s only openly gay official and ensuring that our community has an elected official who represents us in all 50 states.

Although some states and cities raised the minimum wage, Election Day saw a nationwide wave for Republican candidates, as the party took a larger majority in governorships and the House of Representatives and wrested control of the U.S. Senate for the first time since the party lost its majority in the 2006 election.

Reminding us that the path to a more progressive America is often a difficult one, the night saw losses for moderate and pro-LGBTQ candidates and big wins for Conservatives all across the nation. Mike Michaud came up short in his race for the governorship of Maine, a difficult outcome that followed one of the hardest fought races the nation has ever seen.

While political pundits continue to spin the results, here are some facts — the real story of the mid-term elections was not about which candidates or political Party won or lost — the real story was once again the same as it was last year and what happened in 2012 — votes stayed home.

In Monroe County, unofficial data from the Board of Elections suggests that only 45 percent of registered voters actually went to the polls on Election Day.

Governors’ races

Republicans didn’t just win statewide elections in Iowa red states like Arkansas or with imperiled incumbents in swing states such as Florida on Election Night. They won seats in seemingly safe Democratic states like Illinois and Maryland in what can be described as an utter rout.

In Illinois, embattled Democratic incumbent Pat Quinn lost his bid for re-election against Bruce Rauner. Despite the state’s Democratic lean, Quinn faced an uphill battle as an unpopular governor who alienated both sides of the aisle by raising taxes and fighting public employee unions. Quinn lost every county outside of Chicago in a surprising loss. However, Quinn can hold his head high in one regard. It’s rare that an incumbent governor in Illinois loses office without wearing handcuffs.

Perhaps the biggest upset of the night was in deep-blue Maryland, where Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown lost a shocker to Republican Larry Hogan. Hogan, who had never held elected office, won by five points over Brown in what had been assumed to be a safe Democratic state. In fact, Hogan is only the third Republican governor in the past 50 years. Other conservative winners included Wisconsin’s Scott Walker, Florida’s Rick Scott, Kansas’ Sam Brownback, and Maine’s Paul LePage.

Congressional races

The Republican Party regained the majority in the US Senate, now holding 52 seats. Democrats have 44 seats, while two remain Independent and caucus with Democrats.

The Republicans in the House of Representatives now boast a 242 to 184 margin over Democrats, with all seats still undecided at press time.

Locally, 15-term incumbent Rep. Louise Slaughter found herself in the middle of the biggest, most political challenge of her congressional career. Gates Town Supervisor Mark Assisi challenged her in the race for the 25th District in Monroe County and the count was still too close to call on Election Night.

While election officials continued to count absentee ballots in the following weeks, Slaughter opened up a clear statistical advantage and declared victory. That became official on Nov. 12.

In New York, the state will have several new members in the House of Representatives. State Senator Lee Zeldin defeated incumbent Democrat Timothy Bishop in the 1st Congressional District on Long Island, and Syracuse-area Congressman Dan Maffei was defeated by Republican challenger John Karko in the 24th District.

Republican Elise Stefanik defeated Aaron Woolf and Matt Funiciello to replace retiring Democrat Bill Owens in the 21st District.

NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli was reelected and was the top vote-getter in the state, earning more votes than both Governor Cuomo and Attorney General Schneiderman. The Attorney General was also reelected.

(Mid-term continue page 6)
The Empty Closet Editor
SUSAN JORDAN

Pay and equal rights for women – 100 years after suffrage. Transgender people have no anti-discrimination protections in NYS, where the Republican Party has kept GENDA off the Senate floor for a vote for seven years now. Apparently, the GOP still feels that demonizing gender-variant and gay people is a vote-winner. That may change before long!

That’s because LGB people are more accepted now, and trans people became much more visible in 2014. Our area saw a huge increase in visibility when Kimberly and Beck cracked their ugly “jokes” and suddenly found themselves out of a job, as the Rochester community, including major advertisers, made it clear that they don’t support transphobia. Kimberly and Beck are back on the air, on another station, but it will probably be a long time before they trash trans people again.

Nationally, Laverne Cox has made transgender a familiar concept to millions of Americans, with her TV show, Entertainment Weekly interviews, and her many projects to increase trans visibility. Cox’s show, “Transcendent,” was renewed by NBC in October. Violence continues to be a threat to transgender people, especially to trans women of color. The climate of violence in our own community is all the time, incited by people like the pastor who says Star-buck’s pulls “sodimetal” sperm in its lattes, the pastor who says an Ebola plague here would be good because it would kill off the gays, and the irresponsible extremists urging white working class men to pick up their guns and “take our country” from “the blacks, gays and luhards” – presumably in order to replace democracy with a Taliban-like theocracy/plutocracy.

Now 2014 is drawing to a close and here we are again at the season of love and compassion. Happy Holidays – oops, I mean Merry Christmas! Please don’t shoot me.

Pride in Rochester

The holidays and the new year provide a great opportunity to pause and reflect on our lives and what we value. This year the Gay Alliance is celebrating the LGBTIQ communities’ pride in our identities and in Rochester. I hope that you have seen our social media campaign to gather pictures of us Calvinizing at #PrideInRoc.

For 42 years we have called Rochester home, and we know how great Rochester is on LGBTIQ issues. Is it perfect? Of course not. However, I want to emphasize how proud the Gay Alliance is to be a part of Rochester, NY.

Rochester’s national reputation as a LGBTIQ welcoming place is growing. In recent months a number of studies have come out that show that Rochester is on its way to being a safe and welcoming place for all of our community members, at all stages of their lives.

In October the University of Rochester followed the City of Rochester by offering transition-related health care to trans-identified employees. This means that two of the largest employers in the area are trans-related health care. That is just the beginning; many other local employers are now updating their policies to become inclusive of gender alignment medical services for their employees.

Workplace protections don’t stop there, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRCF) Corporate Equality Index ranks employers on a number of items. Many of our local employers show up as leaders on LGBTIQ inclusion. But many are walking the walk to ensure equity for their employees.

In early November, we faced historically low voter turnout on election day (like to believe that every LGBTIQ person voted), but, the same week, we also learned that the City of Rochester scored 100 points in HRCF’s 2014 Municipal Equality Index. (See Local/State News). Compare that score to the scores of other upstate cities: Buffalo=73, Syracuse=85 and Albany=84 and your Rochester pride can shine bright!

Credit must be given to the bold leadership of Council member Matt Haag, Mayor Warren and the entire city council who made certain that policies were passed to ensure that our hometown achieved this remarkable score.

The University of Rochester Medicine’s Strong Memori- al and F.P. Thompson Hospitals were named 2014 Leaders in the Healthcare Equality Index also created by the HRCF. These are the only western New York hos- pitals to earn this distinction! Among the reasons noted for the recognition were the hospitals’ inclusion of the terms “sexual ori- entation” and “gender identity” in their non-discrimination policies, as well as the development of a web page specifically for LGBT patients and a pledge to promote equal visitation rights to LGBT patients and their families.

Congratulations go to The City of Rochester, as well as all of the local employers and health care providers who scored high in the various indexes. But the real congratulations go to you.

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Workplace protections don’t stop there, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRCF)
Leslie Feinberg, who identified as a trans-activist white, working-class, secular Jewish, transgender, lesbian, female, revolutionary communist, died on Nov. 19, 2014, amidst the swirl of discussions about the boundaries and complexities of gender. Sold by the conventional life plan and bouts of suicidal depression, she had received treatment for years when in the late 1960s LGBTQ activists began forming medical authorities on information, treatment, and research about lyme, babesiosis, and tick-borne diseases. She had received treatment for these only within the last six years. Feinberg was diagnosed with Lyme disease, babesiosis, and about the breadth of the organizing work that made clear they were not hostile to her sexuality and gender identity that made the trans* community's struggle worth fighting. Her family alerted the local news station, which sent a camera crew to work with Buffalo United for Justice to promote recognition of full inclusion in the workplace for LGBTQ educators. Shauna’s subsequent transition reflects the experiences of many others, including the African-American community: rejection from church, alienation from family, loss of employment, and bouts of suicidal depression. In June 2006, Shauna and her partner, Julie McDonald, separated, and Shauna entered the trans* community’s struggle worth fighting for and also at risk for suicide. Shauna was forced into the trans* community’s struggle worth fighting for and also at risk for suicide.
Supremes deny S.C. stay, court strikes down Montana marriage ban

On Nov. 20 the U.S. Supreme Court denied South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson’s request for an emergency stay on the federal ruling striking down the state’s ban on same-sex marriage. South Carolina NBC station WIS10 reports:

“…Seven of nine… justices denied the stay, but Justices Antonin Scalia and Justice Clarence Thomas said they would hear it.

Same-sex marriage applications began at noon Nov. 20 (even though at least one probate judge had jumped the gun and already began marrying gay couples in the state).

Read more: http://www.wowlread.com/?r2z=3dfile1HSM

Montana marriages begin
Gay couples began marrying in Montana after a federal judge struck down the state’s gay marriage ban on Nov. 19. The first marriage license to a gay couple was issued in Cascade County so Tonya and Angie Rolando, one of four couples who were plaintiffs in the case challenging the ban.

The Missoulian reports that couples have begun marrying there as well:
Leslie Burgess and Serena Early have wed in the Missoula County Court – they were plaintiffs in the case challenging the first marriage license to a gay couple was issued in Cascade County so Tonya and Angie Rolando.

The Missoulian reports that couples have begun marrying there as well:
Leslie Burgess and Serena Early have wed in the Missoula County Court – they were plaintiffs in the case challenging the
does ruling apply?

The U.S. Supreme Court denied a request Nov. 12 from Kansas to prevent gay and lesbian couples from marrying while the state fights the issue in court.

Anti-gay Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said that the pro-marriage law was adopted by the voters of Douglas, a northeastern Kansas county, and Sedgwick, in south-central Kansas, where the court clerks are defendants. The American Civil Liberties Union contends the ruling applies in all 105 counties. On Nov. 18 the Kansas Supreme Court added Johnson County.

The legal situation in Kansas is complex, but another case before the Kansas Supreme Court, which Schmidt filed last month, has the potential to impact the marriage licenses in Kansas issued by Schmidt but which were issued after the Kansas court clerk’s office after a mandatory three-day wait. In Johnson County, Court Clerk Sandra McCurdy said about 70 applications from same-sex couples are pending. “Until I hear something from the Kansas Supreme Court, I’m not issuing any marriage licenses,” McCurdy said.

Lyle Denniston writes at SCOTUSblog:

The Court has issued a series of orders in same-sex marriage cases over the past eleven months, but the Kansas order marked the first time that members of the Court had recorded dissents. Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas noted only that they would have granted the delay sought by the Kansas attorney general.

Kansas officials had attempted to show that their case was different from others that the Supreme Court had chosen to leave undisturbed, arguing that the federal judge’s order was an invalid attempt to second-guess a Kansas Supreme Court order delaying the issuance of same-sex marriages. The federal judge had rejected that claim, but it may have been the one that drew the implied support of Justice Scalia in the Supreme Court’s order.

The state still has an appeal pending at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, but that has little promise, because in appeals court has struck down bans in two other states in its region — Oklahoma and Utah. The Supreme Court refused to review those Tenth Circuit rulings on Oct. 6. The Kansas ban is almost identi-
cal to those in other states.

BACKGROUND. In a 38-page decision, U.S. District Judge Daniel C. Abernathy, an Obama appointee, issued on Nov. 4 a preliminary injunction against the enforcement of the Kansas law prohibiting of marriage rights for same-sex couples.

The injunction was warranted, Abernathy wrote, because of legal precedent and Philadelphia Gay Men’s Chorus, Equal-levitz, and subsets of the Los Angeles and Historical Park Superintendent Cynthia pendance Hall on Saturday, July 4.

The highlight the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the LGBT civil rights movement at Independence Hall on July 4, 2015, for the 50th Anniversary Celebration. Independence Hall now joins the celebration on Independence Square.

The LGBT civil rights movement began when activists from New York, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia pro- tested for equality each Fourth of July from 1969 to 1969 in front of Indepen- dence Hall and the Liberty Bell. It was the first time that activists from more than one city openly identified as gay and called for equality. The demonstrations, which were called “Annual Reminders,” were spearheaded by Washington’s Frank Kameny and Philadelphia’s Barbara Cut- tings. Kameny and Cuttings are recog- nized as the father and mother of the LGBT civil rights movement.

Philly approves hate crimes law; GOP keeps hate in the state

Via the Philadelphia Inquirer:

A three-judge appeals panel “has a landmark civil rights case. Via Agence France-Presse:

A three-judge appeals court panel ruled that a state provision that bars Mus- lims from dressing as women was unconstitutional, saying it “deprives the appellants of the right to live with dig- nity.”

“It has the effect of denying the appel- lants and others belonging to the GLBT (gender identity disorder) to move freely in public places... This is degrading, oppressive and inhuman,” judge Hishamuddin bin said. The panel reversed a 2012 lower court ruling, which had dismissed the challenge by the three appellants -- Mus- lims who were born male but identify as women -- over their arrest four years ago under the law in southern Negri Sembilan state. Malaysia has a double track court system with state Islamic laws governing civil matters for Muslims, who account for 60 per cent of the country’s 30 mil- lion population.

Under state Islamic laws, men dressing as women is punishable by up to three years in jail. Some state laws also outlaw cross-dressing by women. Ansa Paiva, the plaintiffs’ lawyer, said the ruling could be used to challenge any arrest of transgender people throughout Malaysia. “It’s quite historic... This will be a precedent... This court binds all other high courts,” Paiva said.

Malaysian trans women see major victory

Three Malaysian transgender women have won a landmark civil rights case. Via Agence France-Presse:

A three-judge appeals panel has approved a measure on Oct. 30 that would make it a crime to harm someone because of sexual orientation, gender identity, or disabilities.

The proposal was triggered by the Sept. 11 assault on a gay couple in Cen- ter City. In that case, police arrested three people but could not charge them with a hate crime because neither state nor city code makes it a crime to harm someone because of sexual orientation.

The measure approved Oct. 30, and expected to be signed into law by Mayor Nutter, calls for up to 90 days in jail and a fine of up to $2,000 for crimes committed against a person because of sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

A similar bill was stalled in the state legislature due to GOP obstruction. --JocMyGood.com

Philippines mark 50th anniversary of gay protest on July 4

A group from the Philadelphia Gay Men’s Chorus performed on Nov. 6 at a press conference to announce the city’s plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of an annual LGBT rights event that launched in 1965.

Via press release: With Independence Hall as the backdrop, plans were unveiled at a press conference for the 50th Anniver- sary Celebration of the LGBT civil rights movement at Independence Hall on July 4, 2015. The 50th Anniversary festivities from Thursday, July 2 to Sunday, July 5 include panels, LGBT history exhibits, parties, a festival and special events with the highlights the 50th Anniversary Celebr- ation on a large stage in front of Inde- pendence Hall on Saturday, July 4.

Participants in the press conference were Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nus- ter, Equality Forum Executive Director Malcolm Lazin, Independence National Historical Park Superintendent Cynthia MacLeod, Viiy Philip Starr Meryl Levitt, and subsets of the Los Angeles and Philadelphia Gay Men’s Choruses. Equal- ity Forum is the organizing committee of the 50th Anniversary Celebration. Inde- pendence National Historical Park has issued a permit for activities on Indepen- dence Mall on July 4, 2015, for the 50th Anniversary Celebration. Independence Mall will join the celebration on Independence Square.

The LGBT civil rights movement began when activists from New York, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia pro- tested for equality each Fourth of July from 1969 to 1969 in front of Indepen- dence Hall and the Liberty Bell. It was the first time that activists from more than one city openly identified as gay and called for equality. The demonstrations, which were called “Annual Reminders,” were spearheaded by Washington’s Frank Kameny and Philadelphia’s Barbara Cut- tings. Kameny and Cuttings are recog- nized as the father and mother of the LGBT civil rights movement.

Philippines mark 50th anniversary of gay protest on July 4

On Nov. 6, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati became the first federal appellate court in over a year to rule against the freedom to marry. The ruling overturned lower court decisions out of Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Michigan, all of which found that denying marriage to gay couples is unconstitutional. The 6th Circuit’s deci- sion is in conflict with favorable marriage rulings in virtual all other courts, and it sets this point, including the 4th, 7th, 9th, and 10th circuits and a strong majority of the American people.

Evan Wolfson, president of Freedom to Marry, released the following statement:

“This decision is an outlier that’s wrong about the law, and that the Supreme Court needed to weigh in, force- fully, to tip the federal balance in favor of fairness and equality, this was it... In many ways, the Sixth Circuit ruling reads like a last gasp for historical bigotry and close-mindedness. The high court would be right to put Judges Jeffrey Sutton and Deborah Cook — the opinion’s authors — in their place by saying so.

“Sixth Circuit laments the ’prejudice’ gay people have experienced in this country, but incredibly concluded that same-sex marriage bans are disconnected to animus or hostility. The logic is tor- tured, wrong and sickening.

“The Supreme Court is the only remaining remedy for the Sixth Circuit’s indulgence of bigoted and elevation of inequality over justice. The sooner the court can act, the better.”

-The editorial board of the Detroit Free Press

Bangladesh trans women stage first Pride march on Nov. 10

By Darren Wee on gaystarnews.com

Photo via Bandiha Social Welfare Soci- ety/Ditte

More than 1,000 transgender women staged Bangladesh’s first ever pride parade Nov. 10, as the movement there recognized them as a third gender, the colorful hijras, as transgender women who live in the conservative Muslim country, brought the busy roads of Dhaka to a standstill with their singing and dancing.

They unfurled a huge Bangladeshi flag and carried banners, one of which read, “We demand our rights, end the stigma, discrimination and fear are over.”

“I never dreamt that I would see this day in my life,” Sonali, 25, told AFP.

“We are stigmatized everywhere. We are discriminated against. We are laughed at just because we do not feel like a man or woman. But today is different. We feel...”

(Bangladesh continues page 13)
Little Mac, the first robot from page 1
Governor Andrew Cuomo won his re-election with 53 percent of the vote. Republican candidate Rob Astorino collected nearly 40 percent of the vote, according to preliminary counts. Howie Hawkins received almost five percent. Again, turnout was extraordinarily low.

In three schools. Culminates with school consolidation and regionalization project. Annual local school bond vote.

Wayne, Livingston, Seneca, and Yates counties. Additionally, Wayne County is the first state where a gay, married couple has successfully obtained an adoption.

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The 13 organizations receiving grants that were approved by the Circle membership were:

Alternatives for Battered Women: To increase awareness of LGBT intimate partner violence (IPV) and of 

AARP as a Safe Zone to support IPV victims through the development of print materials, website, and social media presence.

Center for Dispute Settlement: To recruit volunteer mediators from the LGBT community to serve as mediators in various settings.

Center for Democracy & Dispute Resolution: To expand a youth program, piloted in 2013 in the Geneva schools, that incorporates activities and discussions about nonviolent conflict resolution and staff training as well as technical support for students who want to start a Gay-Straight Alliance in three schools. Culminates with school climate surveys, 208.

Center for Teen Empowerment: To support the Youth Peace Initiative in southwest Rochester that will engage LGBT youth among the 500 participants.

Chances and Changes of Livingston County's Coalition of Sexual Health: To establish a monthly youth Gay-Straight Alliance support group that will provide professional speakers and experts and work towards acceptance by the broader community.

Gandith University: To work with seventh- and eighth-grade students at the Boys and Girls Club of the Kaysi Regional DISC West College Prep to provide them with tools related to internal and interpersonal diversity. Participants will develop skills for managing conflict.

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley: To increase understanding of LGBT history and issues by promoting and screening the Shoulders to Stand On video and holding a discussion or other interpretive programming at a public library in Monroe County and at an additional location.

Gay Alliance Executive Director Scott Fearing said, "It is so helpful to have a dedicated group of individuals in Rochester who see a standard of philanthropy within the LGBT community. This grant from the LGBT Giving Circle will allow us to complete our current outreach and education that without this support, we would not be able to accomplish.

Geva Theatre Center: To diversify the social offerings available to members of the LGBT community through "Our GEVA" events that encourage communication and cooperation among organizations.

HCR: To develop materials, conduct, and document "Can We Talk" transgender workplace training. The training improves the awareness and empathy for LGBT persons among health care professionals, which in turn lead to better health outcomes.

ImageOut: To help support film rentals for 2015, $2,000.

Rochester Gay Men's Chorus: To support the development of an original musical composition based on LGBT experiences, which would be performed in 2015, $2,000.

Martin B. Enneking Institute for Gender and Women's Studies: To support "Our At Work," a new day-long initiation that will address issues facing LGBTIQ undergraduates and graduate students when choosing, applying to, and attending graduate school and those in the community who work in professional jobs.

21st Century Fund: To support Rochester Area Community Foundation's GBTQI undergraduates and graduate students when choosing, applying to, and attending graduate school and those in the community who work in professional jobs.

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The Human Rights Campaign Foundation, has 60 member households.

The LGBT Giving Circle, established in August 2011 by the Rochester Area Community Foundation, has 60 member households. Annual membership contributions are expected between $25 and make for the forthcoming year and an endurance to meet future needs.

The LGBT Giving Circle, visit www.racf.org/LGBT.

Local and State

(Shauna from page 3)

crow to interview students. Her daughter flows through her work at an organization that supports LGBT youth.

"Murphy was an optimist," Shauna observes dryly. She was informed by the school district that they were unable to provide her daughter with classes or even placed on an improvement plan. She resigned in 2011. Shauna, 30, lived on $10 a day for a period where she was surviving on $10 of the concentration of poverty and its impact on the community at large. $1,150

though Shauna's story has a happy ending, the recovered financially, remarried, and is now studying to become a counselor for LGBT teens – many in the teens community have been not so lucky.

In 2007 a report – statistically valid and heavily footnoted – was released by the National Transgender Discrimination Survey.

Applied entitled "Injustice at Every Turn," the book detailed the experience of those who are "a visible, thin, middle-class, majority-white non-praying, non-practicing trans" folk remain legal at the state level and indeed throughout most of the United States. The Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act – the gender-based counterpart of SONDA – has passed the New York State Assembly seven years yet the State Senate refuses to hear it.

Shauna, the fall in social status from an affluent, educated white male to the "mud that the social ladder is built upon" has been a staggering blow, yet also a powerful motivation for her current activism.

In fact, she recently announced plans to run for the 55th NYS senate seat in 2016.

HCR Home Care is a leader in LGBT healthcare equality

On Oct, 16, HCR Home Care announced that it has been recognized as a leader in LGBT healthcare equality by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation.

The HRC Foundation recognized HCR in its Healthcare Equality Index 2016. This annual report that recognizes equal care for LGBT Americans and recognizes healthcare institutions doing the work.

HCR Home Care earned top marks in meeting non-discrimination and training criteria that demonstrate its commitment to equitable, inclusive care for LGBT patients and their families, who can expect significant improvements in the quality of care.

"HCR is proud to be named as a leader in LGBT healthcare equality," said HCR Home Care President Elizabeth Zicari. "The Human Rights Campaign Foundation's recognition is a testament to our company's commitment to the LGBT community and to our dedication of our clinicians and staff to care for all patients equally."

In order to receive this recognition, HCR Home Care met key criteria, including patient and employee non-discrimination policies that specifically mention sexual orientation and gender identity, a guarantee of equal visitation for same-sex partners, and a policy in place for spiritual education for key staff members.

"Leaders in LGBT Healthcare Equality Index recognize the lives and experiences of their families for the better and every day," said Chad Griffin, HRC president. "Our patients and their care teams deserve equitable care.

The LGBT Giving Circle, 2015. $2,000.

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The LGBT Giving Circle, 2015. $2,000.
Interview

The “eyes and ears” of Rochester’s LGBT community in City government: Liaison Andreas Rau

By Adam Young

As Executive Assistant and LGBT Liaison to the mayor, Andreas Rau’s main role is to keep issues of the LGBT community on the radar of city government. Acting as the “eyes and ears” of LGBT Rochesterians, issues brought to light in city government include AIDS awareness, causes of the Empire State Pride Agenda, and even the cultural awareness of the ImageOut Film Festival, Rau said.

According to Rau, the ultimate goal is “real equality” for all citizens. Rau wants the public to “not even think twice” when they see gay people walking down the street holding hands. Although efforts to achieve equality can always be improved, Rau attributed much of the recent progress to Mayor Lovely Warren, including insurance coverage for transgender city employees. Rau noted that Mayor Warren is the one who wanted the position of LGBT liaison filled to represent the interests of the LGBT community. “Rochester is a progressive city. She wants everyone to be whole… not just isolated segments. [LGBT people are] just like everyone else,” Rau said.

According to the city’s website at www.cityofrochester.gov, insurance coverage for transgender city employees will include medical and psychological counseling, and hormone therapy, as well as cosmetic and reconstructive surgeries for employees enrolled in the “enhanced” option. The coverage will go into effect on January 1, 2015.

Rau stated there have been “very few real complaints” in response to the new coverage. Any issues that were raised in proposing the coverage were related to details of the plan itself, not the individuals the plan is intended to cover. Rau noted that Rochester is generally very gay-friendly compared to other cities, even within New York state. “Rochester has been a leader in the LGBT community for 40 years,” Rau said.

In terms of future direction, Rau simply asked for concerned citizens to keep him in the loop about any issues affecting the LGBT community that the city should address. He noted that the MOCHA Center recently approached him to brainstorm about what could be done to extend efforts to provide more avenues for HIV testing for the African American community. Rau said he brought the issue to Mayor Warren’s attention immediately.

“Keep in touch. That’s what I’m here for,” Rau said.

For more information about services provided by the city, visit http://www.cityofrochester.gov/services.aspx. To contact City Hall, dial 311 within city limits, or call (585) 428-5990.

■
THE ROCHELLE GAY MEN'S CHORUS
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY!

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Nail Salon
Nursefinders

Oreck Clean Home Center
Paislee Boutique
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Southside Medical Supply
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TAGR hosts first Trans dance: the Eerie Promenade

By Laine DeLaney and JoAnne Metzler

Back in February, during the Red Ball, Laine DeLaney, the soon-to-be-elected President of the Trans Alliance of Greater Rochester (TAGR), bought up the idea of having a Trans dance. She said, “I don’t care if it’s only four people in the corner drinking Kool Aid, we need to have our own dance.”

Well, as you can see by the pictures a lot more than four people came to the first-ever annual Trans Dance: the “Eerie Promenade”. Over the next few months of planning we heard comments like, “There aren’t enough Trans people to make this worthwhile” and “If you do somehow manage to make this happen no one would even show up.” We found out the truth at Open Arms MCC who so generously offered both of their spaces to us to be decorated for a Halloween dance. They even rented a dance floor for the event! On the evening of Oct. 25, we found the truth when over 50 people showed up, almost every one dressed in wonderfully creative costumes.

We found out the truth that night that we could have a dance of our own, a dance for and by the Greater Rochester Trans community with our families, friends and allies. We found out the truth that there are enough of us to have a dance, a social event that was all ours, and uniquely ours!

There are so many people to thank for the huge success of this first Trans dance: first Jeff Myers, the Executive Director of Open Arms MCC and the whole congregation of Open Arms MCC for being so welcoming and accepting of the members of TAGR (as well as for contributing the dance floor)!

Thanks to Cath and Liz who offered JoAnne Metzler rides to home improvement stores, back and forth to Open Arms, a grocery store, and to her home.

Thank you also to Raquel for using an eclectic collection of costumes.

MISS GAY ROCHESTER 2015: Tasha Brooks is crowned at Harro East on Nov. 9. Assisting are, from left, Samantha Vega (hidden), Mercedes Sulay, Miss Gay Rochester 2014, V’ita and organizer Wayne Esposito (hidden). Photos: Jill Frier

MISS GAY ROCHESTER 2015: Tasha Brooks is crowned at Harro East on Nov. 9. Assisting are, from left, Samantha Vega (hidden), Mercedes Sulay, Miss Gay Rochester 2014, V’ita and organizer Wayne Esposito (hidden). Photos: Jill Frier

MC Aggy Dune.

Keke Velasquez

Alisha

Kasha Davis

Linda Wilson won the Rosie’s mural photo at the LICK Rosie’s Throwback Sunday Party at the Bug Jar on Nov. 16. Photos: Bess Watts

ROSIE’S THROWBACK: The second LICK Sunday party took place at the Bug Jar, formerly Rosie’s women’s bar. Around 100 people attended. The December party at ONE Nightclub is for everyone and there will be a guys’ January Sunday party at Abilene – a Tara throwback! (See Calendar Page 34).
discarded material so creatively to add just the right touch of disturbing ambiance to the walls in our dance hall. Also thank you to anyone and everyone who came Friday night to de-ecorate, and thank you to every- one who stayed after the dance to take everything down, pack it up, get it out and clean up both the Sanctuary and Community Center so they would be ready for services the next morn- ing! Thanks to you, cleanup took less than an hour!

Thanks to Brae Adams, for the massive donation of food and glassware. We’ll also like to give a special thanks to everyone who showed up — without you this grand event would not have happened. You are a source of pride to us all!

Afterward we began hear- ing things again, only this time they were comments like, “Had a really great time!”, “So much fun!” “Can’t wait for next year!” “We had a fantastic time!”, “We had a fantastic time!”, “Can’t wait for next year’s!”, “We had a fantastic time!” (quotes directly from Facebook). Brae reported hear-
ing someone say that this was ‘the best Trans Dinner ever!’ (quotes directly from Facebook). Brae reported hear-
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My Own Private Rochester: Darryl Tardy and Derek Cummings

By Susan Jordan

Darryl Tardy is president of the Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus board and works in marketing for real estate agents. His par-
tner Derek Cummings, a tech-
nician at Highland Hospital, helps Darryl with fundraising for RGMC. The two live in the 19th ward with their pit/lab/bouvier mix Sadie. Their shared hob-
bies are travel, socializing with friends and working in their flower garden. Darryl was born in Bergen, while Derek is a Rochesterian.

Without a doubt RGMC is their favorite local organization. Darryl says, “I went to college with (RGMC) Artistic Direc-
tor Rob Straus. He pushed me for years to join (I’m a second tenor) and I finally agreed. I got on the board and then after one year they asked me to take the presi-
dent position, which I did last June.

Darryl is also involved with Open Arms MCC, and the two are supporters of NYS Assembly member Harry Bronson. Their favorite places include Equal-Grounds and Mr. Hope Cemetry, where they walk Sadie, and in summer they love going to the drive-in in Avon. They take Sadie along and she watches the movies too. Darryl adds, “We love theatre – Down-
stairs Cabaret, the Auditorium Theatre/RBTL and Geva.”

Derek named the Jazz Festi-
val as one of their favorite Roch-
ester events. “We look forward to that,” he said, “and Ima-
gine.”

Darryl marches with the Chorus in the Pride Parade and especially likes the Picnic. Naturally they both count the RGMC Spa-gay-zy Dinner fund-
draiser as one of their favorite events. Darryl noted, “I’m work-
ing on changing the fundraising dinner for next year. We had standing room only at this year’s dinner for a while. Derek and his mom and our neighbors had to wait to get a table! On an ideal Saturday night, they might eat out at Pixley’s Diner in Gates or the Depot in Leroy. But their real favorite thing to do is “sit at home and watch a movie with neighbors and friends.”

They approve of some of the recent changes in our city. Darryl commented, “I like that they’ve turned St. Paul, part of Clinton and other downtown streets to two-way. Everybody downtown seems to have gotten the hang of it and it will attract people back downtown. Now people will find places to go and will be able to park too.”

“It’s great that Rochester is such a progressive city. Derek and I can walk down the street holding hands. We’re open and accepting here.”

The Chorus’s holiday concert “There’s Something About Mary” is coming up on Dec. 12 and 13. See page 27 for details.

CECE IN BUFFALO: At the Pride Center of WNY Trans Health Conference, Oct. 24 in Buffalo, keynote speaker and Trans activist CeCe McDonald addressed racism, transpho-
bias, and discrimination faced by transgender women of color. CeCe McDonald was a political prisoner incarcerated for 17 months for defending herself against a racist, transphobic assault in 2010. Today she is a leader in the fight for LGBTQ liberation, prison abolition, and racial justice. Photo: Marilyn Traver

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LAVERNIE AT UR: Jeanine Gainsburg of the Gay Alliance with Laverne Cox. The trans star appeared at University of Rochester’s Meliora event in October. Photo courtesy U.R.

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LAVERNIE AT UR: Jeanine Gainsburg of the Gay Alliance with Laverne Cox. The trans star appeared at University of Rochester’s Meliora event in October. Photo courtesy U.R.
of LGBT inclusiveness with exemplary policies ranging from non-discrimination laws and equal employee benefits, to cutting-edge city services.

Other findings contained in the 2014 MEI: Cities in all regions of the country earned excellent scores, demonstrating that commitment to LGBT equality is not confined to parts of the country many people assume are most LGBT friendly.

38 cities received perfect scores, even with this year’s more demanding criteria; that’s up from 11 in 2012, and 25 in 2013. Cities continue to excel even without depending on state law: of cities that scored a perfect 100, 15 are in states that don’t have comprehensive relationship recognition or a statewide non-discrimination law; that’s up from eight cities last year, and just two in 2012.

32 million people now live in cities that have more comprehensive, transgender-inclusive non-discrimination laws than their state or the federal government; The average city score was 59 points, with half of the cities researched scoring over 61 points. Eleven percent scored 100 points; 25 percent scored over 80 points; 25 percent scored 60-80 points; and four percent scored fewer than 10 points.

Cities with a higher proportion of same-sex couples tended, not surprisingly, to score better, and the presence of openly-LGBT city officials and LGBT police liaisons also were correlated with higher scores.

The MEI rates cities based on 47 criteria: Non-discrimination laws; Relationship recognition; Municipal’s employment policies, including transgender-inclusive insurance coverage, contract non-discrimination requirements, and other policies relating to equal treatment of LGBT city employees; Inclusiveness of city services; Law enforcement; Municipal leadership on matters of equality.

The full report, including detailed scorecards for every city, as well as a searchable database, is available online at www.hrc.org/mei.

Rochester hosts Meeting of the Groups IV

By Jeannie Metzler

On Oct. 25, trans people from Leroy, Buffalo, Naples, Syracuse, and of course Rochester, came to Rochester to be part of the “Meeting of Groups IV: Return to Rochester.” This is the fourth time that trans groups all over upstate New York have come together to reconnect with each other and find out what has been happening with the various groups since the last meeting in May of last year in Syracuse.

About 25 people were informed and entertained by four speakers. The first was attorney Julia Saenz of the LGBT Rights Project which she runs. She has been a huge resource, ally and friend to our local trans communities. She talked about how the project came to be and some of her experiences in protecting the rights of Trans people not just here in Rochester; she has had trans discrimination cases throughout upstate New York.

Then, Alya/Andrew Turnquist, a former leader of the Rochester Transgender Group, and a recent sociology major graduate of Nazareth College, talked about the research project she did as a student and the report based on that research titled “Employer Attitudes Toward Transgender Applicants” and discussed the implications of the research produced.

Next we had Ben Edelman, an illustration student at the Rochester Institute of Technology who is self described as “professionally queer”. Ben talked about the “Trans” Oral History Project that he has been conducting as part of independent study in public history at RIT. He also let us actually hear the voices of some of the people he had recorded, which added a whole new dimension to his presentation.

We ended that part of the meeting with Megan C. Lytle-Flint who is currently a Senior Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center. She discussed her current research focused on LGBT suicide prevention as well as her work on promoting LGBT strengths and well-being.

We then had representatives from the various Trans groups give a brief talk about what has been going on with their groups since the last “Meeting of the Groups”. We learned, contrary to the rumor that Spectrum in Buffalo was no longer in existence, in fact it has revitalized itself and is doing better than ever and has created a brochure for the group.

The Trans Alliance of Central New York, located in Syracuse, is working on some major things, among them elimination of the trans discriminatory exclusion in New York State’s Medicaid policy.

Maur of GV2, Genesee Valley Gender Variants, talked about the almost overwhelming success of this social group that meets every Thursday at Equal Grounds, where sometimes they take over half the place.

Rochesternygrrlz, represented by Cath, told us about the success her group is also having and that they have had joint get togethers with Syracuse over the summer.

We ended with a discussion on plans for our Trans future and when someone asked, “Where should we have the next Meeting of the Group?” one response was “The Southern Tier”!

GLEN report: NYS schools are still unsafe for LGBT students

On Nov. 13, GLEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) released state-level data from its biennial National School Climate Survey report that show that schools remain unsafe for the majority of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students.

The latest edition of GLEN’s National School Climate Survey, which first began in 1999 and remains one of the few studies to examine the middle and high school experiences of LGBT youth nationwide, includes four major findings: schools nationwide are hostile environments for a distressing number of LGBT students; a hostile school climate affects students’ academic success and mental health; students with LGBT-related resources and supports report better school experiences and academic success; and school climate for LGBT students has improved somewhat over the years, but remains quite hostile for many.

Specifically in New York State, the survey found that almost all LGBT students (90 percent) heard “gay” used in a negative way (e.g., “that’s so gay”), and more than eight in 10 (83 percent) heard other homophobic remarks at school regularly.

The majority experienced verbal harassment: 70 percent based on their sexual orientation and 53 percent based on the way they expressed their gender. Students also reported that they experienced other types of harassment at school: 58 percent were sexually harassed while 51 percent experienced “cyberbullying.”

Overall, 30 percent were taught positive representations of LGBT people, history and events, and nearly half (49 percent) could not access information about LGBT communities on school Internet.

“The majority of students reported that the interventions will be ineffective.” said Mary Jane Karger, Co-Chair of GLEN Hudson Valley. “In Westchester County, students report that they hear anti-LGBT comments not only from peers but also from school staff. In addition, students do not regularly report the harassment to school staff, believing that the interventions will be ineffective.”

THE BACHELOR FORUM
ROCHESTER’S OLDEST, NEWEST GAY BAR
COME OUT FOR THE BIGGEST, GAYEST HAPPY HOUR 3 FOR 2 HAPPY HOUR 7 DAYS A WEEK.
SCAN THIS CODE FOR UPDATES AND A SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.
Kimball "Kimy" Hartman, the brain-injured survivor of the Oct. 12 hate crime in Bushwick, Brooklyn, left the Bellevue Hospital Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit on Nov. 3.

Still suffering brain damage, Kimy will require 24-hour supervision at home, as well as 10 medications per day, intensive outpatient brain rehab, and additional neurosurgery to replace the missing portion of skull. An online fundraiser has been set up to pay Kimy's expenses, particularly expenses related to her car, which was towed while she was in the hospital. The fundraiser can be accessed at http://www.gofundme.com/gky85k.

Kimy and a gay male friend were walking down the street in Bushwick, Brooklyn at approximately 11:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 12 when they were approached by four men who asked what they were doing on the block. When Kimy responded, they could tell by her voice that she was a transgender woman, and they proceeded to call her and her friend "faggots" and other anti-gay slurs. The attack then escalated to violence, and Kimy was punched, kicked, and hit in the head with a plexiglass board. She suffered a severe traumatic brain injury and was taken to Elmhurst Hospital in critical condition. She was later transferred to Bellevue for specialized treatment.

Although surveillance footage of the attack has been made public, no arrests have been made in this case. The NYPD's Hate Crimes Task Force is investigating.

The Bangladesh Trans Pride March.

There is no excuse for a hostile school climate. We all have a responsibility to ensure that our schools have the necessary resources, supports and training to create a safe and affirming environment for all students," said Nicole Burjetka, Co-Chair of GLSEN New York City. "That cannot happen in a hostile environment. The good news is we know what works, including school personnel that are supportive of LGBT youth, student-led Gay-Straight Alliances and a curriculum that includes accurate and positive information about LGBT people, history and events."

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The Bangladesh Trans Pride March.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

(Bangladesh from page 5)

like we’re normal human beings.”

Bangladesh recognized hijras as a third gender in November last year, securing their rights and enabling them to identify their gender as ‘hijra’ on all government documents, including passports.

The government says there are around 15,000 hijras in the country but LGBTI rights groups put the number closer to 500,000.

The march was the culmination of the nine-day Hijra Pride, organized by Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS), the Ministry of Social Welfare and UNAIDS – “the first of its kind in the country at central and divisional level.”

The aim of the march was “to appreciate and acknowledge the decision of the government of Bangladesh on recognizing hijra as third gender... create social awareness on the respect of gender diversity [and] to sensitize policy makers on the need for social justice and dignity [for the] hijra community for a better future,” BSWS said in a statement.

“With opportunities, [the] hijra community can add value to the society and its growth with dignity and honor.”

Other events included a seminar on hijra rights and a talent show to identify the best dancers and singers. A hijra beauty contest was held later that month.

In January 2014, the country’s first LGBTI magazine was launched with hardly any protests.

The publication organized a diversity contest in April but said it was not a pride march.

Although hijras are recognized in Bangladesh, there are still laws against gay sex that the government has no plans to repeal.

See more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/trans-women-stage-first-bangladesh-pride11114

There will be more and more hijradditions in Bangladesh. Hijras are a cause of national pride, and they are able to participate in the political process. The hijra community has made a significant contribution to the nation’s social, economic, and political development.

The hijra community is a social phenomenon that has been present in Bangladesh for centuries. Hijras are a third gender recognized by the government and are considered to be separate from both men and women.

The hijra community has faced discrimination and violence, but they have continued to fight for their rights and for the recognition of their gender identity.

This recognition has allowed hijras to participate in public life and to advocate for their rights.

The hijra community is an important part of Bangladesh’s cultural heritage, and they have contributed to the nation’s economic development.

The hijra community has faced significant challenges, but they have continued to fight for their rights and to advocate for their identity.

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The first Trans Pride flag

Smithsonian expands LGBT collection, including original Trans Pride flag

Over the summer, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., announced the expansion of its LGBT collection.

A museum official said that issuing the new Trans Pride flag was a symbolic effort to demonstrate the institution’s “ongoing commitment to examining the rich heritage of LGBTQ Americans.”

The Trans Pride flag was first used in 1970 by the Transgender权运动 at the Gay Pride parade in San Francisco. The flag was later designed by Christopher Cardozo, a protege of Harvey Milk.

Today’s victory in Missouri marks progress for equality for gay couples. ‘’We must continue our fight for marriage equality for all Americans,’’ says Chief Justice John Roberts in his majority opinion. ‘’This year’s survey reinforces what we should all know already: that most people want the rights and protections that come with marriage for all including LGBT people and in 52 if one is trans-gendered.’’

Two-thirds of respondents said they would support same-sex marriage. ‘’This is a historic day for the LGBT community and for all Americans, and we will never turn back, we will never retreat, we will never go backward. We will not let anyone ever…’’

The survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago; Jaesok Son, NORC at the University of Chicago; and the Williams Institute.

For local and state election news, see page one.

Survey: 90 percent of countries studied have become more accepting of gays, lesbians

Residents in 90 percent of all surveyed countries have become more accepting of LGBT rights in the last 20 years, according to a study released by NORC at the University of Chicago and the Williams Institute.

The study, which examines the responses to 2,000 survey questions asked of residents of hundreds of surveys between 1981 and the present, was released in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 11 at a meeting of the American Enterprise Institute and the National Bureau of Economic Research.

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Michael Sam proves coming out gay in sport can still hurt your career
By Chris Morgan on gaystarnews.com

In my last QSN column I asked if the NFL was being homophobic in its treat- ment of Michael Sam. This was directly after he had been cut from the St Louis Rams and was just about to be picked up by the Dallas Cowboys to be part of their practice squad. At the time it was quite apparent that this was not a good position for Sam to find himself in, so for him now to have been cut from his second team in only a matter of weeks, leaves some serious ques- tions to be answered. To say this is damaging for his career is an understatement, as being dropped twice could be taken by other NFL fran- chises as a reflection of his inability to secure himself a place. But hold on one minute here. This is a player who was one of the most talent- ed defensive linemen of his year in col- lege football and only a few months ago was knocking down opponents as if they didn’t deserve to be on the same pitch. I can’t help wondering if this is the NFL’s way of saying that after such a famous “gay kiss” on NFL Draft Day with his boyfriend that Michael Sam doesn’t deserve to be on the same pitch. Sports history is littered with gay athletes who have been treated unfairly. Many have suffered both in their careers and financially for being openly gay. The most prominent case in the UK was Justin Fashanu who courageously came out and was then dropped by the tabled press until he took his own life in 1998. Justin’s story affected a whole genera- tion of athletes with the message that being gay is fine. However, for much time sports like NFL the Michael Sam story illustrates there is still a long way to go before all athletes can come out without any fear of discrimination. Undoubtedly the Michael Sam affair highlighted how much more than anything with him now left facing a difficult search for a third franchise in less than three months. The most searching question that needs to be asked of the NFL hierarchy is how they can allow someone with so much talent to potentially slip through their recruitment process because of the fact he is gay. The NFL draft itself is designed to offer fairness each and every year, in par- ticular to the teams that finish bottom of the championship system in the previous year. It is a system that effectively penal- izes the team that wins the super bowl, as they do not pick from the very top of col- lege players last year. So the team it appears is fair – that is of course unless you are openly gay.

The teams that have looked at Michael Sam already will of course argue that they gave him a chance and he didn’t make the grade. Sam, like always, has been gra- cious; replying thanking them for the opportunity that they offered and stres- sing he will continue in his quest. For the moment all he can hope for is that a place becomes available on another practice squad soon. I truly hope Michael will find himself another home and want to say that the NFL deck is completely stacked against him and I’m fearful that the Michael Sam saga has the potential of becoming a modern day Justin Fashanu style story which could have a negative impact on LGBTI athletes in team sports for a whole generation to come.

Chris Morgan is a seven time World Champion in Powerlifting and a Glob- al Ambassador for the Federation of Gay Games. His new book can be read at ‘Crowd Pusher’.

The next Gay Games will take place in Paris in 2018. For more information about the Gay Games visit GayGames.com and Paris 2018.com.

— See more at: http://www.gaystarnews. com/articles/michael-sam-proves-come- ing-out-gay-sport-can-still-hurt-your-career511413b2e2cf1704d4p

Coming out of the closet as a Naturist
By R.M. Cook

Even though our society is becoming more relaxed and less puritanical about nudity it can still be difficult for some people to enjoy a nude style of life to let friends and relatives know about their choice of a clothes-free life.

Nudity, nude sunbathing, and skinny dipping are widely accepted in Europe and Scandinavia. Communal nude bathing was universally practiced in the Roman Empire and is still accepted in Japan. Perhaps the introduction of hot tubs and saunas in American society will loosen up some of the stiffness regarding the naked body. In Scandinavia, “nu” is still a discussion point for those who want to practice nudity and don’t want to hide the fact from friends and family. Some have suggested that letting peo- ple know you are a naturist is the same process as coming out of the closet and telling society you’re gay. There may be some truth to that but it’s like comparing an acorn to an oak tree. Similarities, yes. Difference in magnitude, enormous. Too, living a naturist life style is a choice, being gay is not. Here are some thoughts to con- sider before making your big announce- ment.

First, accept yourself! Being nude is not immoral, naughty, sinful or “bad.” The best evidence of this is that we are all born naked! Accept that being naked makes you more relaxed and more relaxed. Keep in mind there are many other people who enjoy a nude style of liv- ing. You’re not alone.

Second, be prepared for consequences when you come out of the closet as a nud- ist. It is possible some people will be un- accepting of your nudism no matter what! You may lose some friends after disclosing your naturist lifestyle if your friends cannot accept you as nudist, cannot accept what makes you happy, cannot accept you for who you are, they were probably not good friends to begin with. If you are not ready to deal with this judgmental estrange- ment, then you’re not ready to come out. Delay it until you are ready.

Next, it’s best if you first disclose your clothes-free life to a friend who will be accepting of your choice. This will give you reinforcement and experience with having a conversation with others about clothes- free living. When coming out to parents, spouse, or your children it may not be best to come out to one at a time, as at Christmas dinner!

Choose a family member you feel is open-minded and least will be judge- mental. Ask them how they feel about naturists. Explain that Benjamín Franklin, Quincy Adams, John Quincy Adams, and Walt Whitman, among many others, enjoyed skinny dipping and sunbathing in the nude. Once this person is on board and accepting, use him or her as an ally when coming out to other family mem- bers. It may take some to accept your choice. Give them time and space to mull it over. Many people have misconceptions about naturists. Naturists are normal, happy, and healthy individuals. Be prepared to explain what naturists actually do and why you enjoy clothes-free activities. Explain that nudity is not the same per- son you have always been. Let them know you have not changed, it’s just you know more about you now. Assure them you wanted to tell them face to face instead of having them find out from someone else. Explain that “naked” or “naturism” or “nudist” carry negative baggage for some peo- ple. To many people ‘nude’ equals ‘sex’. Borrowing the word “naturist” may imply “natural”, “tree hugging”, or the environ- ment. Also, using the phrase “clothes- free” can be tendered and easier for some people to accept.

Good luck and use your sunscreen! Good luck… and use your sunscreen! Rocky River Male Naturists. Roman is a social naturist group for all gay and gay-friendly men ages 21 up. For more information about the group go to www.uroymans.com or call the contact number 765-281- 4964.

COMPLIANT
Injectible PrEP studies are moving forward

Studies focusing on injectible pre-exposure prophylaxis as a means of preventing the contraction of HIV are moving forward as researchers have seen higher rates of efficacy using certain drug combinations.

Currently Truvada, produced by Gilead Sciences, is one of the only commercially available forms of PrEP. The pill must be taken daily in order to be effective, and is actu-
ally a combination of the two antiretroviral drugs tenofovir and emtricitabine.

“The results of testing trials presented earlier this year showed that the drug cabotegravir proved to be effective as remaining within the bloodstream and preventing HIV infection. Two doses of the drug, then known as GSK744LA, prevented all eight of the test subjects from contracting HIV, while the control group not given the drug all became infected. Following the success of initial animal test groups, researchers are proceeding with human efficacy test trials.”

The potential benefits to using integrase inhibitors like cabotegravir could be signifi-
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tive being taken much less frequently. Opponents of Truvada often cite the need for a constant, regular dosage as a reason not to advertise drug use. In the end all – be it pro-
tection from HIV infection. An 800mg dosage of the drug injected into the soft tissue remained in the bloodstream for up to 12 weeks, meaning that future iterations of PrEP would not need to be taken quarterly.

While cabotegravir has shown promise, rilpivirine, another HIV drug being tested that has been shown to have much lower side effects in those taking it, was shown to have lost its efficacy after about 18-21 days. Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/#ixzz3IPH6oBvq

Interview: Dr. Thuc Huynh, Good MD

Dr. Thuc Huynh spoke with The Empire Closer about the benefits of her unique Membership Direct Care Practice for Individuals, Families and Companies, or “Good MD, localizing Village Gate, 274 N. Goodman St., second floor.”

As a member of Good MD you receive unlimited visits; same day/next day appointments; no co-pays; unlimit-
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Dr. Huynh said, “My practice has been open since Sept. 1. It’s direct primary care, which is relatively new. It has been around for a decade but most people have never heard of it. It’s a direct relationship between doctor and patient, a practice model that removes insurance from the equation. There’s a monthly members-
ship fee.”

It’s important to keep insurance in case of emergencies. For example, in a traditional practice you pay out of pocket costs for addi-
tional medicine. In my practice it’s $20.

“One example is, to have a mole removed would be $210-$300 in tradi-
tional medicine. In my practice it’s $20. Another example: if a patient has an abcess that needs to be drained, in tradi-
tional medicine that would be $200-
$300. In Good MD it would be free.”

Dr. Huynh noted, “I want to focus on patient care and bring back the doc-
tor-patient relationship that existed when doctors had more time. I want to do my due diligence and answer questions, and this model of care is most suitable because I can give more time to making sure we’re all in the right place.”

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Health

Changes may be in store for gay and bi men who want to donate blood

By Tristan Wright

Red Cross blood drives are a common component of American life. We’ve used to seeing volunteer workers set up shop for a day or two at farmers markets and festivals, libraries and local schools. For gay and bisexual men, blood drives aren’t just about getting a free cookie and juice box, they’re also reminders of 20th cen-
tury homophobia.

Since 1983, the Red Cross has been prohibited by the Food & Drug Admin-
istration from accepting blood from men who have engaged in same-sex sexual activity since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in 1977. Decisions regard-
ing the pool of potential blood donors are made by the Blood Products Advi-
sory Council, which advises the FDA. The FDA website justifies the ban by contending that same-sex activity carries a “increased risk for HIV, hepatitis B and certain other infections that can be trans-
mitted by transfusion.”

Over the past decade, numerous organi-
zations and legislative bodies have urged the FDA to allow gay and bisexual men to donate, including the city councils of New York and Washington, DC, as well as the American Medical Association which issued a statement in 2013 argu-
ing that the “ban is discriminatory and not based on sound science.” Notably, the Red Cross itself doesn’t support the life-time ban: they, along with the AABB (the accreditation organization for blood banks) and America’s Blood Centers, all support changing the policy to a one-
year deferral instead, where bisexual and gay men would be permitted to donate after one year of abstinence from same-

As citizens have become increasingly aware of the ban, LGBTQ advocacy orga-
nizations and activists have often orga-
nized boycotts in protest. Although they bring a brief bit of visibility to the ban, boycotts simply reduce the amount of blood available to patients who need it. The agency responsible for the ban feels none of the impact, while health care profes-
sionals and patients bear the brunt of it.

To maintain visibility without poten-
tially harming patients, a new kind of blood drive has recently entered the scene. The National Gay Blood Drive, where gay and bisexual men bring an ally or proxy to donate blood on their behalf. Since starting in 2013, the National Gay Blood Drive has taken place in over 60 cities nationwide drawing more than a thousand participants. Rather protesting by withholding their blood from the Red Cross and thereby reducing the available supply, donors draw attention to the ban through the act of donating.

The FDA ban may be on its way out: on November 13 this year, a Depart-
ment of Health and Human Services panel heard testimony and examined data regarding the ban. The DHS panel voted in favor of the aforementioned one-year deferral supported by the Red Cross, AABB, and America’s Blood Centers. The panel has made its official recommenda-
tion to the FDA. Although the decision is not binding, the panel added data and perspectives that will likely impact further deliberations. The panel’s recommenda-
tion will be formally made and considered by the Blood Products Advisory Council in early December.

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fun, introduce people to each other and celebrate once a year with long and short time friends, ‘family’, business associates, political acquaintances, and just the people I know. For me it has become my holiday ‘tradition’. I look forward to seeing people I have not seen in a long time, talking and catching up. We really do not take the time to be with each other in a fun relaxed way often enough. My holiday party gives me, and the people who come, permission to do just that! So happy holidays and give each other the gift of time!”

Laine Delaney: Celebrating Yule and the Solstice: “Maur and I like to celebrate multiple holidays in the depths of the winter. We celebrate Yule on the Winter Solstice, with older European Pagan traditions. We toast to the year past and the year to come and to our loved ones and the things that we’ve accomplished that we’re proud of. We decorate like most households do, but with more of an emphasis on green, living things. The green growth is a reminder that though the world appears dead, life will return with the warmth and the spring. Even in the darkest part of the year, life survives and thrives.”

“We love the process of choosing a tree for our home, and often take a while to pick the right one. We celebrate its gift to us by honoring and adorning it — similar to the traditions of many people at this time of year, but with different meanings. The lights represent the Sacred Flame, the bowl of water it uses for nourishment the Sacred Well, and the tree itself represents the World Tree — all important symbols in our religious tradition. We also place seasonal things — icicles and snowflakes — as well as mementos of hearth, family and home on it while we have it in our house. We keep lights burning through the night on the Solstice, the longest night of the year, a reminder and symbol of hope that the longer (and warmer) days will return.”

Deborah Poretta Smola & Brian Doran: Fried Cardoon: (Deborah): “The recipe is pretty simple. Clean and rinse the raw cardoon. You may wish to cut down larger stalks to approximately six inches. Then parboil until they get soft. Let cool. Roll each individual stalk in an egg batter, then Italian seasoned breadcrumbs. Meanwhile prepare your pan and a few tablespoons of olive oil over a hot flame. Drop the battered/breaded stalks in the oil and reduce heat to medium. Turning over to cook well on both sides. Place fried cardoon on paper towels to soak up excess oil. My mom would make these ahead of time and then warm up in the oven, putting cheese on top before serving... Enjoy!”

Brian: “I clean them and remove any leaves from the outside of the stem, cut them into 6” lengths, boil them until they are soft. Let cool. Make a batter of four eggs, with a pinch of salt, a dash of milk, 1/2 cup of parmesan cheese, two minced cloves of garlic, drag through seasoned Italian breadcrumbs. Pan fry in Wesson or your favorite oil... but not olive... until golden brown on both side and lay on top of paper towels to cool. Serve right away or refrigerate. Bet you can’t just eat one. They are currently $1.99/lb. at the East Ave. Wegmans.”

Laine and Maur’s World Tree.
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by Evelyn Bailey

This month Shoulders To Stand On will complete its presentation of Transgender History '90s to today. The ‘90s began the journey of visibility for the Trans community in many arenas. 1991 saw transvestite advocate Eddie Izzard receive a nomination for the prestigious ‘Perrier Comedy Award’ at the Edinburgh Festival, and FTM activist Jamison ‘James’ Green transformed Lou Sullivan’s FTM newsletter into FTM International, Inc., the world’s largest information and networking group for female-to-male transgender people and transsexual men.

In 1993 Cheryl Chase founded the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) to build awareness and offer support to intersex people. In that same year FTM transgender youth Brandon Teena was raped and murdered in Humboldt, Nebraska. This hate crime became the subject of the award-winning film ‘Boys Don’t Cry’. Trans activist Leslie Feinberg published ‘Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman,’ a who’s who of transgender people throughout world history that traces the roots of transgender oppression.

In 1998 trans visibility took a giant step forward. The Transgender Day of Remembrance was founded by Gwendylyn Ann Smith, an American transgender graphic designer, columnist, and activist, to memorialize the murder of transgender women Rita Hester in Massachusetts in 1998.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance is held every year on November 20. In 1999 a formal review of the US administration issued a directive stipulating that gender identity disorder, which was accepted by insurance companies for treatment, was now termed ‘gender identity disorder,’ which was considered stigmatizing, instead referring to ‘gender dysphoria,’ which focuses attention on those who feel distressed by their supposed gender identity.

In 2000 Terrence Zelman became the first openly trans person to be ordained in the Episcopal Church in the Americas and the main seminary for intersex people. He was ordained in 2010. In 2005 transgender activist Pauline Park became the first openly transgender person to be ordained in the New York City Pride Parade, March the oldest and largest LGBT pride event in the United States. Elliot Kukla, who came out as transgender six months before his ordination in 2006, was the first openly transgender person to be ordained by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, where she was the first openly transgender student. In 2007 the Transgender Day of Remembrance Board announced the inauguration of ‘Family’ Party

In 2001 the American Psychiatric Association published ‘Gender Identity Disorder,’ which was the first psychiatric resource to document and preserve the history of transgender and gender variant community through oral interviews, accepting record collectons for preservation in a permanent repositories, and research. Shoulders To Stand On will need your help to do this.

Over the past six months, Shoulders has presented a historic transgender and gender variant community from 1953 BCF to the current day. It is by no means a ‘complete’ record. Shoulders To Stand On hopes this historical timeline will provide a sense of pride, a sense of rootedness, and a sense of strength and courage to transgender and gender variant Rochester community. Already other ‘historians’ have been working on a Rochester Trans and Gender Variant history. Shoulders could not be more happy at this outcrop of interest and activism.

Shoulders To Stand On is proud to recognize the visible and invisible members of the Rochester Trans and Gender Variant Community (including the Trans Alliance of Greater Rochester and Genesee Valley Gender Variants) for their contributions and risk taking in the struggle for equality and justice. Thank you for your courage and perseverance to be who you are.

Transgender History ‘90s to today

shoulders-tostandon.org
Growing Up

By Eric Bellmann

The Empty Closet article, the first one published at the start of the 1991-92 season, appeared in one column, month during the years that followed. That adds up to 204 columns.

The first one was a memorial to an old friend whose death from AIDS I learned about after the fact. In the article I reminisced about our wild teenage years and what Rothestein was like when we were kids. Then the editor asked me to submit more articles about what it was like—growing up. Hence, the column title.

I don’t know if I’m revving up or winding down, but someone pointed out the prospect of stopping the column. A major contributor to my community. A number of comments from the feedback about the columns has been encouraging. No writer is ever 100 percent. I sometimes wonder if I am good enough, if I offend some people here, if I avoid me, if I am intimidating. My times in New York. I’ve written about the concept of a bucket list. On it is a lot of life experiences...my daily exercise-routine for syntheses...my daily exercise-routine for synthesizing...a white band. Oh my.

On the other hand, I don’t want to focus more on male imagery (which is, I think, more common in gay culture). More the “admiration” variety. Her surgeon was an extraordinarily kind doctor. More the “admiration” variety.

I love my doctor. Not in the heart-wrenching, cousins Lanie and Kathy, niece Jodi, his first column, he congratulated me for maintaining my body-mass approved weight. (Well, there are downsides. I have offended some people who I sometimes feel, her surgeon was an extraordinarily kind doctor. Not “give him an elegant lavender, ome Solo Sebes are artists in need of floor space to allow their art projects to want to wait, to want to write for my sister. A lot of poems—are ready to write for my sister. My printer is surrounded by drafts, drafts, drafts of poems-under-revision. I, with Wiki and tiny too-good-to-discard scraps. I sit with my hand-painted, tissue-paper sheets...a trial sequence. My studio is festooned with tiny spaced rows of tiny dots (my signature style) and a white band. Oh my.

There’s a full-service medical practitioner. I, with Wiki and tiny too-good-to-discard scraps. I sit with my hand-painted, tissue-paper sheets...a trial sequence. My studio is festooned with tiny spaced rows of tiny dots (my signature style) and a white band. Oh my.

Your dress is cunning, but too short, and I never want to see it again because, you know, to remember the image body and things of other people on their minds.” (Circa 1966.) Obdint, I bestowed my current dress on my mother. I digress. (A common path for my...thoughts...actually quite a flabbergast- ing detail.)

Yes, I am on my own, doctor. Living with one’s self is not an unusual arrange- ment. Some Solitary Selves have grown on their backs, but never in my opinion. Through the lens of the time of my eyes, until my eyelids shutter; ten hours later my body, not a jarring alarm, raise me into being.

I eat when I desire and what (melted peanut butter and butter slathered on a toasted English muffin) and where (OK, I confess: that particular gourmet menu item is more easily consumed while standing in the sink, when), I have spilled my employed cloth napkins, glass glasses, tables, and such fancinesses. Live/write: I offer to embrace the benefits of one, luxuriating in a flowing schedule, sailing calmly. Such a serene content for me to discover. I don’t want to forget that.

I’ve made up my mind. Or I think I have.

Email: ericbellmann@gmail.com

Cleaning My Closet

By Meredith Elizabeth Reiniger

During my yearly physical, my doctor, verifying his notes, confirmed: “Yes, I am upset.”


“Great,” he said. “Just like that. You should write about that in your column.”

The column idea. From my doctor. Now I have a full-time medical practitioner. I love my doctor. Not in the heart-wrenching, cousins Lanie and Kathy, niece Jodi, his first column, he congratulated me for maintaining my body-mass approved weight. (Well, there are downsides. I have offended some people who I sometimes feel, her surgeon was an extraordinarily kind doctor. Not “give him an elegant lavender, ome Solo Sebes are artists in need of floor space to allow their art projects to want to wait, to want to write for my sister. A lot of poems—are ready to write for my sister. My printer is surrounded by drafts, drafts, drafts of poems-under-revision. I, with Wiki and tiny too-good-to-discard scraps. I sit with my hand-painted, tissue-paper sheets...a trial sequence. My studio is festooned with tiny spaced rows of tiny dots (my signature style) and a white band. Oh my.

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That turns out to be a relief. A support but that felt too Sally Field (OK, kids, when Fields won her second Oscar, she blurted out, “you really like me, you really like me!”), and look, I just stuck it in. Shameless. Or perhaps I have nothing more interesting to say, except for the final analysis, a writer writes for himself. Some months I feel weary and anx- ious. What will I write about?

I’m not a single, I have many more hours available to play with words. Last count, I still have twenty-seven more columns to write for my year, and I am surrounded by drafts, drafts, drafts of poems-under-revision. I, with Wiki and tiny too-good-to-discard scraps. I sit with my hand-painted, tissue-paper sheets...a trial sequence. My studio is festooned with tiny spaced rows of tiny dots (my signature style) and a white band. Oh my.

I never knew.

At times I imagined I was making a contribution to my community. I imagined a number of straight people reading the column. I get more feedback from them. That has been encouraging, but I am not immune to feedback from even when I felt abandoned or angry. Did I flail in search of sympathy or recogn- ization? Maybe.

I thought of inserting a sentence at some point (have you read this far? Eat me or Susan and you say the column to continue) in hope of soliciting support but that felt too Sally Field (OK, kids, when Fields won her second Oscar, she blurted out, “you really like me, you really like me!”), and look, I just stuck it in. Shameless. Or perhaps I have nothing more interesting to say, except for the final analysis, a writer writes for himself. Some months I feel weary and anxious. What will I write about?

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At times I imagined I was making a contribution to my community. I imagined a number of straight people reading the column. I get more feedback from them. That has been encouraging, but I am not immune to feedback from even when I felt abandoned or angry. Did I flail in search of sympathy or recognition? Maybe.

I thought of inserting a sentence at some point (have you read this far? Eat me or Susan and you say the column to continue) in hope of soliciting support but that felt too Sally Field (OK, kids, when Fields won her second Oscar, she blurted out, “you really like me, you really like me!”), and look, I just stuck it in. Shameless. Or perhaps I have nothing more interesting to say, except for the final analysis, a writer writes for himself. Some months I feel weary and anxious. What will I write about?

I’m not a single, I have many more hours available to play with words. Last count, I still have twenty-seven more columns to write for my year, and I am surrounded by drafts, drafts, drafts of poems-under-revision. I, with Wiki and tiny too-good-to-discard scraps. I sit with my hand-painted, tissue-paper sheets...a trial sequence. My studio is festooned with tiny spaced rows of tiny dots (my signature style) and a white band. Oh my.

I never knew.
Muslims away from their faith.

“I don’t Salat, but I’m Muslim. My family is Muslim, too. My family doesn’t know about my sexual orientation. If they learn about my sexual orientation they will marry me off. I do pray to God every day about LGBTI people, and also for me,” Bordanacı shared with me.

As Turkey’s government flip-flops on LGBTQI civil rights – like in 2013 promising to provide constitutional protection against discrimination, then to let the draft proposal die — its LGBTQI population isn’t standing idly by. As a matter of fact, Turkey’s LGBTQ population is fighting back by organizing. And Bordanacı is among them.

“I’m doing activism via Internet. I speak on Skype at an underground Türk gay club.”

Turkish LGBTQ Union is a new activist website just months old that Bordanacı is promoting. Based in the country’s capital, Ankara, Turkey LGBTQ Union is a new umbrella organization combating both homophobia and transphobia by using the Internet. It aims to bring together all of the country’s LGBTQI groups and organizations.

“Because Turkey is an Islamic country, although not in the same league as Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iraq in its vehemently anti-LGBTI stance, there is need for togetherness and solidarity among LGBTQI groups to counter the homophobia and transphobia that exist in Turkey today,” Bordanacı told GayAsiaNews.com by email.

Turkish LGBTQ Union is founded by gay activist Nikopol who in 2006 also helped form the Türk Gay Club to create a network of gay activists. He also helped form the Turk Gay Club to create a new activist website just months old that Bordanacı is promoting. Based in the country’s capital, Ankara, Turkey LGBTQ Union is a new umbrella organization combating both homophobia and transphobia by using the Internet. It aims to bring together all of the country’s LGBTQI groups and organizations.

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Turkish LGBTQ Union is founded by gay activist Nikopol who in 2006 also helped form the Türk Gay Club to create community, safety, and anonymity.

Anonymity via Internet has been the way Bordanacı and I have communicated. I have no idea what he looks like.

I applaud his activism but I’m worried. Especially remembering the suspect of the bombing at the club in Istanbul in 2000, a radical militant who helped people in trouble — Flipp’s just wittter. That’s no reason to miss out on Christmas!

We did send out Christmas cards, but not I Dream of Jeannie! Jeannie could have decorated the whole house, wrapped all the gifts and prepared the holiday feast in three easy blinks — don’t tell me she didn’t have time.

I suppose things would not have worked out so well for an Incredible Hulk Christmas episode, but not I Dream of Jeannie! Jeannie could have decorated the whole house, wrapped all the gifts and prepared the holiday feast in three easy blinks — don’t tell me she didn’t have time.

The future certainly doesn’t seem to bode well for the Yuletide. The Jetsons had a Christmas special, but no one ever celebrated the birth of Christ on Lost in Space. And what would have happened if the Jetsons had a Christmas episode of Star Trek? I bet Mr. Spock would have told Doctor McCoy something like: “For some individuals an item without a gift receipt would be most illogical.”

And why did “The Superheroes never get Christmas? There’s no reason Alfred the Butler couldn’t have cooked a turkey with all the trimmings at stately Wayne Manor for Batman and Robin, especially if they invited the Green Hornet and Kato over for Christmas Eve. However, I suppose things would not work out so well for an Incredible Hulk Christmas episode, if just one rude shopper had pushed ahead of Bill Bixby while he was shopping on Black Friday, the way we all have over the years during the holiday season to accept the fact that I will probably never know how Herman and Lily decorate their haunted mansion on The Munsters or how Marshall, Will and Holly celebrate the Yule tide in The Land of the Lost.

First, I watch way too much TV. Second, I have to be brave enough during the holiday season to accept the fact that I will probably never know how Herman and Lily decorate their haunted mansion on The Munsters or how Marshall, Will and Holly celebrate the Yule tide in The Land of the Lost.

Third, and most important, my husband keeps warning me, be careful what you wish for. The way television is going, I never knew when I could know Rhoda’s Hanukkah Reunion or The Fij ferson’s Kwanza Special.

I guess we should all just try to have a Merry Christmas anyway.

Contact David at davidhallow59@aol.com.

Transmissions

The Greatest Gift You Can Give

By Letaine DeLaney

The holiday season can be tough for us. When many people are reaching out to family and underestimating others, people in the LGBTQI community and especially the trans* community often feel even more separate.

When families have been raised with often turn their backs on us and cast us out, leaving us to fend for ourselves.

That’s where your chosen family steps in. People who fit all of the qualifications of family other than being physically related to you, everyone is related anyway, right!?

The people who have been with you through thick and thin, always remember your name and give you a hug when you see them.

For people who are so apt to lose their families to bigotry and ignorance it is important to both cultivate and be open to the idea of a chosen family. I don’t know where I’d be without mine.

Chosen family can be found in a lot of ways and places. The people that you know at the coffee shop, your church, your apartment building. Even your workplace can provide the sorts of interactions that form chosen family.

I judge if someone has become family by how they act in your presence. What is going on there? I never know when I could see someone in the Yuletide in The Land of the Lost.

I’m grateful to have her.

I was little, when she talked to me, she even used the right pronouns and her name for me before we talked – someone must have let her know something.

She’s made me cry multiple times since I came out: when she apologized for telling me to act more like a boy when I was little, when she talked to me, unprompted, about the falseness of the gender binary, when she apologized for all of the time that we missed as sisters. I’m grateful to have her.

Some people don’t have as much as one member of their biological or adoptive families who love and support them. Some people don’t have anyone but the people that they know from other places. Biological family may be important, but chosen family is no less meaningful, powerful or valuable. Biological family members can’t help but be related to you — chosen family is there by choice.

So if you see someone this holiday season who is alone, or struggling, someone who you know has nowhere to go on any of the holidays other than being physically related to you — offer them shelter or to be alone, let them know that you care. Reach out to them. Give them the warmth of breath, friendship, food, drink, and company. Give them a place at your table.

You never know — they may end up being family, and as close and supportive as any other, and you may end up saving their life even on their own. If there is no other gift you can give this season, let it be that – companionship for someone who has to spend the icy winter months alone. They won’t forget the experience, and neither will you.

What’s Bothering Brandon?

Strolling Amongst Gilt Greatness

By Brandon W. Brooks

December has come, only to be replaced by January, with ever dropping mercury. I hate December because it means my winter clothing from its sweet, summertime slumber, curling my mouth downward amongst the wool's and cable-knits. And I hate it for these two times a year. But I shant complain (too much), especially because I am a Rochesterian by birth; I know there is much worse to come our way.

As I bring out the heavy garments of this season, replacing lighter twills and muslins with tears, I begin to recall my trip to New York this past winter (that...
Whenever I visit I always set aside a day to wander the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I love meandering through its grand halls, getting small whiffs of the Egyptian department as I enter, and glancing into the ancient Greek-Roman gallery to see some marble torsos. Those boys make it look so easy.

But no matter what exhibition is currently on display, I always save the best for last: The Wrightsman and Annie-Laurie Aikens Galleries. For anyone who reads my column regularly, or for anyone who knows me personally, you will know that these two expansive galleries are where I keep my heart. They consist of both French and English stately period rooms, whose walls, floors, ceilings, fixtures, fittings and furniture all come from their original homes in palaces and grand chateaux.

It always astounds me to think that the very planks of wood that I stand upon in these galleries were once stood upon by members of the peerage, nobility and even some members of former royal houses. It astounds and amazes me that these rooms, every nail and every piece of furniture, every object within them, were slowly taken apart and shipped across the Atlantic, and then reassembled painstakingly for our enjoyment (and the rooms’ preservation). They are rooms that are no longer made; they are rooms that, in some instances, cannot be made again due to their sheer financial and ecological cost.

Some rooms are entirely gilt, from their hand-carved paneled walls, to the ten foot mirrors and girandoles. Other rooms are more subdued, with walls covered in a more modest Wedgwood blue silk. Yes, that is modest for a room of this level of splendor.

One cannot, of course, touch anything in these rooms, as this would most likely result in landing in a debtor’s prison somewhere, languishing for the rest of one’s now-penniless life. Just walking through their finery should suffice I’d say.

Compared to the big box stores and the particleboard McMansions of suburban tract-housing, these rooms seem heavenly if not entirely divine. They are full of good taste, when such a thing still existed, without a single Kardashinan, Bieber or Cyrus in sight. Oh no – only Nymphenburg porcelains will do in places like these.

I must admit, it is difficult for me to leave The Wrightsman and Annie-Laurie Aikens Galleries when the time sadly comes. I often imagine ways that I could hide in the rooms, only to reemerge when the visitors and docents are gone. I would be able to saunter around each room, pretending it’s mine, pretending I live there, pretending it was made for me and only me to enjoy and savor.

These thoughts keep me warm during these cold and grey months. If you find yourself in New York, and enjoy the MET as opposed to “clubbing” as they say, be sure to make a stop in The Wrightsman and Annie-Laurie Aikens Galleries. While you’re there, say “hi” for me.

Questions, comments or critique? Please feel free to e-mail the author at: brandonb@gayalliance.org

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

Legal name change? Birth certificate amendment? You’ll need those forms notarized!
Community

EMPIRE BEARS
Dignity Integrity. It would be fantastic to ram, in place of the regular service that Dec. 21 at 5 p.m. We’re having our annual to share so invite a friend or two and join us to get the celebration started. Bring your close to the Chinese New Year, so we’ll have a 40th Reunion… you know, kind of the date has been set, but someone suggested of the Word, with music of the Greater Rochester Choral Consortium and will feature 16 various community choruses. The free concert is organ-ized by the Greater Rochester Choral Consortium and will feature 16 various community choruses. Our Christmas Eve service will be on Dec. 24 at 6:30 p.m. We will start our celebration of the holiday with Cocoa, Cookies and Carol. We will be singing Christmas Carols around the piano while exchanging cookies and eating some hot cocoa. Somerville for Yoga from 10:30-11:30 a.m. and it’s a $5 fee. Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. there is also Yoga with Tom Somerville, this is a mixed level class that welcomes all. We begin beholding once a month at BTW BYO mat (if possible). Cost is $15 per class.

OPEN Arms MCC
Our Open Arms MCC is committed to building bridges and changing lives and we are the only accepting church in Rochester. We are located at 707 Main St almost right across from Delta Sonic. There is plenty of free parking in front and to the side of our building. Updated information on these and other exciting upcoming events check our our website and announcements. New singers are our Angel Tree ministry which provides clothing and gives mon-ey. Food donations can be made in our building bridges and changing lives and we are the only accepting church in Rochester. We are located at 707 Main St almost right across from Delta Sonic. There is plenty of free parking in front and to the side of our building. Updated information on these and other exciting upcoming events check our our website and announcements. New singers are welcome to pass around!

ROCHESTER WOMEN’S COMMUNITY CHORUS
‘Tis the holiday season and the Women’s Chorus invites you to our concert “Simple Gifts” on Saturday, Dec. 6, at 8 p.m. at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church (DUPC), 121 N. Franklin St. If you are interested in singing with the chorus, our new season starts on Monday evenings, beginning at DUPC on Tuesdays from 6:30-8:45 p.m. with a short break for refreshments and an opportunity to talk about whatever is going on with you. We need and want to do! A Spring concert will feature the bi-annual prism-style concert “A Taste of Song” on Feb. 8, at 4 p.m. at the Eastman Theater. The free concert is orga-nized by the Greater Rochester Choral Consortium and will feature 16 various community choruses. For more information on the Rochester Women’s Community Chorus and its upcoming concerts, please visit our website, www.therwc.org. You can email me at RUCCSing@gmail.com or call and leave a message (507) 234-4441. You can also find us on Facebook.

ROMANS
Holiday Greetings to everyone! Whether it’s snowing outside or the area is hit by a polar vortex with freezing tem-perature, ROMANS members continue to crank up the heat inside a member’s home, get baked and enjoy some hot cocoa. What’s more welcoming than seeing some smiling faces and hugging some race warm bodies during this holiday season? We are glad to share that at one meeting we had a “virgin cocktails” hour serving non-alcoholic drinks using very special names and at another meeting we cel- ebrated the 23rd anniversary of the club with their birthday cake and some exciting games.

ROMANS is a gay all-male group in Rochester. We are associated with other groups in Western New York. Naturist Rochester, In-the-Red Buffalo, SUNY Buffalo Office of Ad- ventional and contemporary worship styles. Our Open Arms Choir will be performing once a month.

Find the friends, fun, and common interests you’re looking for through the various groups listed here.

DIGNITY-INTEGRITY
D-3 Rochester meets weekly on 3pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 37 S. Fitzhugh Street, corner of Broad St. We have the following services and activities for the months of December 2014 and January 2015.

1st Sunday: Episcopal Mass/Healing Service, with music.
2nd Sunday: Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word
3rd Sunday: Episcopal Mass, quiet
4th Sunday: Evening Prayer, followed by a Potluck Dinner.

Our 50th Sunday Potluck theme for December is “Holiday Food Re-gifted.” It’s easy, what did you have for Christmas that you’d love to serve again? Think about it and bring it along to share. Then, in January, Sunday’s potluck is close to the Chinese New Year, so we’ll have the celebration started. Bring your favorite Asian-themed dish. No time to cook? Don’t worry, there is always plenty to share so invite a friend or two and join us to get the celebration started. Bring your close to the Chinese New Year, so we’ll have a 40th Reunion… you know, kind of the date has been set, but someone suggested of the Word, with music of the Greater Rochester Choral Consortium and will feature 16 various community choruses. The free concert is organ-ized by the Greater Rochester Choral Consortium and will feature 16 various community choruses. Our Christmas Eve service will be on Dec. 24 at 6:30 p.m. We will start our celebration of the holiday with Cocoa, Cookies and Carol. We will be singing Christmas Carols around the piano while exchanging cookies and eating some hot cocoa. Somerville for Yoga from 10:30-11:30 a.m. and it’s a $5 fee. Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. there is also Yoga with Tom Somerville, this is a mixed level class that welcomes all. We begin beholding once a month at BTW BYO mat (if possible). Cost is $15 per class.

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Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest
Saturday, December 30th
Happy Hour 4pm – 8pm / Late Night 10pm – 2am
Show off your UGLIEST Sweater
The BEST one will Win A Great Holiday Prize!
1 Winner from Happy hour & 1 Winner from Late Night
Must be Present to Win!

Christmas Eve
Spread some Holiday Cheer and
join all of your friends!
$1.00 off Well Drinks 3pm – 2am

Christmas Day
Open at 8pm – 3 for 2 Drink Specials All Night!

New Year’s Eve
Our BEST Party of the YEAR!
Come ring in the New Year with all of your friends!
Free Pizza and Champagne Toast at Midnight

New Year’s Day Hang Over Party
Open at 2pm
Bloody Mary & Mimosa Specials
Food Buffet at 5pm

Updates are posted daily with drink specials & events
Beth Glover of Cinderella loves those strong, power-hungry gals

Beth Glover plays the Wicked Stepmother in Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella, at the Auditorium Theatre Dec. 9-14. Tickets are on sale at ticketmaster.com, 800-745-3000, the Auditorium box office and rbtl.org.


What appeals to you most about your role, and what is the biggest challenge?

It’s pretty fabulous being a powerful woman on stage. We’re not supposed to be mean or wicked and wickedly funny. I like to think of her as Margaret Channing crossed with Madeleine Kahn. How did you begin your career? What stands out as the highlight so far?

The day I graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts (Madeleine Kahn spoke at my graduation! along with Garrison Kamin), the oldest conservatory of acting in our fair land, was cast in the first national tour of The Tafters. We worked for Ray Charles.

So far, the height of my professional and artistic career has been playing The Edies in Grey Gardens in the regional production of the show (San Francisco Bay Area Best Actress Award) and playing Blanche Dubois in A Streetcar Named Desire.

Who are your most-admired performers and how did they influence you?

Early on it was Julie Kavner in Rhoda and Agnes Moorehead in Bewitched. Later it was Kathy Bates, Betty Davis, Katherine Hepburn, Margo Martindale, Bette Midler, Robin Wright, Jennifer Lawrence, Jennifer Carpenter, and, yes, Meryl Streep. All these women have in common, for me, is a fierce sense of self and pres- ence on screen and off. They seem fearless; their own unique characters. And they’re all talented as hell.

If you could play any role, what would it be?

Right now, I’m obsessed with playing Amanda in The Glass Menagerie. It’s so very, very in terms of creating new roles. Just sat Ryan, yes Satan, in a World Premiere. Analog & Vinyl -- talk about the freedom to explore and be. Hello divine manipulation.

It’s obvious I enjoy playing some strong power hungry gals. That’s one of the things that makes Cinderella a great time for me!

Pippin actor Callan Bergman is an upstate native

Pippin is back on Broadway for the first time since it thrilled audiences 40 years ago, and now the show is on tour, with an open casting call, coming to the Auditorium Theatre Jan. 13-18.

With a belved role by Tony nominee Stephen Schwartz (Wicked), Pippin tells the story of a young prince on a death-defy- ing journey to find meaning in his existence.

Callan, do you have a favorite character to play since seeing a local high school production when I was younger. I haven’t gotten to go on yet, but I’m seriously looking forward to it when I do!

The biggest highlight for me is getting to travel the country spreading the joy of live theatre. It sounds cheesy, but I LOVE what I do and it means so much to me to talk to fans after every show and see the impact we have on their lives. Another highlight is getting to show off all my skills (like I said before). The creative team really catered my version of Lewis to do just that. One of the biggest changes about touring is staying healthy. We have a very intense sched- ule and it’s really important to take good care of ourselves both physically and mentally. Luckily, we have a wonderful cast and crew that all supports and cares for each other. Another chal- lenge with our production is that we are not getting to go home for holidays. With two weeks (and a third on the way!) I wish I got to go home much more than our schedule allows. Thank goodness for video messages, e-mailing, FaceTime!”

Callan talked about the performers who inspired him the most. “David Eldridge is a Broadway song and dance man that I look up to and the hard working the while doing summer stock (Pippin) continues page 28

RGMCC’s holiday concert in 2013.

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Save the date: Red Ball 2015 is set for Feb. 7

Get ready for glitz! The Gay Alliance will host its annual Red Ball Community Valentines Dance, a celebration of love, community and friendship, on Saturday, Feb. 7.

This year we are “Puttin’ on the Glitz” and attendees are encouraged to dress in roaring ’20s attire evoking “Great Gatsby” elegance, or the speakeasy chic of “flappers and gangsters.”

The dance will run from 7 to 11 p.m., at the Diplomat Banquet Center, 1956 Lyell Ave. All are invited to a glamorous evening featuring gift basket raffles, a photo booth with vintage props, prizes for best outfits, complimentary hors d’oeuvres and desserts and a cash bar. Youth group members are working on fabulous flapper headbands for sale – or you can bring your own. Spend the night next door at the La Quinta Inn for $69 if booked before 1/7/15. Call (585) 254-1000.

Music will be provided by DJ Chuck Argento.

Tickets are $20 in advance, $30 at the door and are available online at www.gayalliance.org or at Equal Grounds, OUTlandish (cash only), Parkleigh and Hedonist Artisan Chocolates.

Melissa Etheridge is out there rocking about M.E.

By Merle Exit

Melissa Etheridge is a musical rocking good time is expected as singer Melissa Etheridge begins the tour to debut her new album, entitled “This Is M.E.,” with 11 brand new songs. At present her hit single is called “A Little Bit of Me” and it’s simply a coincidence.

Etheridge reviewed Melissa getting some inside details.

“It’s funny, I didn’t put that together until I was calling it “This Is M.E.” (regarding the single). Then we decided to use the photos of my fans as the album cover. If you look closely you can see that my portrait is a makeup of digital photos of thousands of fans.”

“A Little Bit of Me” keeps repeating, “There’s a little bit of me, in a little bit of you”. Melissa points out, “There is an activist part of me that believes that we realize that our diversity and uniqueness come together in one beautiful family.”

In the case of the photo, it is also a little bit of me in the fans in a little bit of her.

“I just finished my solo tour and it was a blast,” Melissa said. “Now, I’m going out with my full band in support of this record.”

Melissa continued, “My brand new tour is full of insanely moving music. I will be doing 10 of the 11 songs since they have gotten such great reactions from my fans saying things like ‘This could be my possibly favorite album of yours’. These fans go back 20 years and give me confidence to perform on them.”

Asking if she wrote all of the songs on the album, Melissa said that she collaborated somewhat with the musicians but wrote all of the lyrics except for “Do It Again” and “Ain’t That Bad”, co-writing with Angela Hunte, a hip-hop artist. “Ain’t That Bad” is more of a hip-hop rock tune,” Melissa remarked.

For the song “Take My Number”, the original single, she said that she was trying to think which song should first be released before the album itself. “Feedback was that it sounded more like an older song of mine that I would have done in the ‘90s. A comfort song. It’s a sweet song with a story that I solo with my acoustic guitar. It’s a grown up ‘call me, baby’ song of how we’re going to date after a divorce.”

What is behind each song that she composes? “It starts with an inspiration, whether musical or a story going on, giving me that feel of ‘I want to sing about this’. Each song on this album was driven by my own personal idea. ‘Who Are You Waiting For’, the only ballad on the record, was written for my wife, Linda, for our wedding. I actually sang that to her during our vows. It was a wonderful moment. She is an amazing woman and we both cried.”

Melissa also commented on her health being “just fine”. She is celebrating “Ten years this October of being cancer free” and feeling that her food regiment is what keeps it that way.


Quilt panels, concert mark World AIDS Day

To observe World AIDS Day (Dec. 1), Equal-Grounds Coffee House is hosting AIDS Quilt Panels 2528, 2476, 3702 and 4113, from Dec. 1-7. They can be viewed at www.aidsquilt.org.

Equal-Grounds is open to financial donations as the project costs approximately $700 annually, but the event is free and open to the public.

WAD Concert is Dec. 1

Doing The [Positive] Thing presents Rochester’s 14th annual World AIDS Day Benefit Concert on Dec. 1 at 7 p.m., at Third Presbyterian Church at 4 Meigs St. (at East Ave.) It will feature performances by Dangerous Sign, Bakari Poet, Thomas Warfield, Scotty Ginett, Jimmie Highsmith and others.

The event will be sign language interpreted and is sponsored by Third Presbyterian Church, and PrintRoc.

This year, the concert is in benefit of Trillium Health. Trillium Health has been providing education, HIV/AIDS testing and preventative services in the community for 26 years, under the names of AIDS Rochester, AIDS Community Health Center and Community Health Network.

Regular admission is $15. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/doingthepositive or email Director/ Producer Scotty Ginett at doingthepositive@yahoo.com.

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Volunteers of the Month: Cille Haley and Gabrielle Hermosa

We are pleased to announce a mother-daughter pair of Volunteers of the Month for December and January: Cille Haley and Gabrielle Hermosa.

On January 16, 2014, after forty-four years of struggle, Gabrielle came out to her mother, Cille, as a transgender. Determined to support her daughter in the best way she could, Cille became an Office Volunteer at the Gay Alliance in that spring. Gabrielle completed our SpeakOUT training and joined the Speakers Bureau, in addition to table-sitting on behalf of the agency sever-
al times. The contributions of these two wonderful women are indispensable to the work of the Gay Alliance.

Cille may be one of the newest members of the Office Volunteer team, but she brings a wealth of experience and skills to the job. In addition to her day-to-day office tasks, Cille is our volunteer notary, offering her services to the LGBTQ community for free. She has also been instrumental in the creation of our two new support groups, Adult Families of Trans Youth (AFTY) and Families & Friends of Trans Adults (F2TA), helping with planning, supporting, and providing insight based on her own on-going experiences. When she’s not working in the office, Cille is also a wife, mother, grandmother and gym rat; Zumba is her favorite activity at the Y. She’s involved in a book club, does church volunteer- ing and regularly checks in on her 97-year-old Dad in Brockport.

After Gabrielle came out, it seemed she had finally found her voice: in 2014 alone she’s spoken on 35 occasions, including LGBTQ & trans panels, SafeZone trainings, cultural diversity panels, and outreach programs. Her passion and life goal is to work as a profession- al motivational speaker, mentor and counselor. We asked Jeanné Gainsburg, Education Director, about working with Gabrielle, and she said: “She has such a welcoming and loving energy and message that partici- pants often flock to her following our presentations. She has taken hundreds of hours off from work in order to assist us wherever and whenever we need her. Gabrielle is a gem!” In addition to her time spent volunteering her voice and story with our education program, Gabrielle works for a small company in Broadview, Homosexual Education Outreach (BHOE) and the Jewish Book Festival, at the Community Center and also co-chairs courses in anthropology for RIT and queer theory for Nazareth College.

Serial Publications

FTM - Transculture Mag- azine, Jason Robert Ballard.
FTM: Transculture Magazine is a quarterly print and online collection of the female to male trans community and is the “first mainstream lifestyle maga- zine for trans men.” Launched in April 2014 by Jason Rob- ert Ballard, co-founder of Self-Made Men, FTM has well over 400 subscribers internationally. Available in both print and digi- tal versions, Ballard and his staff aim to revolutionize the cultural landscape using trans male vis- ible in various mediums. ImageOutWrite. Like its counterpart in the visual sphere, ImageART, ImageOUTWrite functions as the literary branch of Rochester’s LGBT film and video festival. Now in its third year of publication, this annual collection of prose and poetry shows off the best writing of the community.

Registration now open for winter, spring SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Programs

The winter and spring ses- sions of the Gay Alliance SafeZone Certification Program will take place on Friday, Jan. 23, and Friday, March 6, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (check in at 8:30 a.m.) at the Rochester Red Cross. We can also bring this program to your community.

The SafeZone Train-the- Trainer Certification Program is an interactive eight-hour course, which includes activ- ities, small group discussions and opportunities for practicing
skills as educators.

During this course, participants will be coached in running SafeZone training and offered opportunities to ask and answer questions in a supportive environment using the teaching skills that they acquire. Each participant will receive a SafeZone Training manual that will provide a complete course guide for running SafeZone Trainings, recommended exercises and activities, resources and suggested readings to extend knowledge, handouts to use in future SafeZone Trainings, a Gay Alliance SafeZone sticker and a certificate of course completion.

Ongoing support will be available to all participants through the Gay Alliance following the presentation, to offer assistance and suggestions for keeping programs fresh and up-to-date. Our October train-the-trainer session filled six weeks prior to the workshop date, so please register early!

To register go to the Gay Alliance home page at www.gayalliance.org and click on the SAFEZONE slide.

For questions, please contact Jeanne at jeannew@gayalliance.org or 585-244-8640 ext. 14

Speaking Engagements and Presentations for October 2014

- Being Trans, Being Healthy, Being Aware at Open Arms Community Center
- Shoulders To Stand On Film and Discussion at SUNY Brockport
- Shoulders To Stand On Film and Discussion at Rush Henrietta High School
- SafeZone Training at Corning Community College
- Transgender Panel at the University of Rochester
- SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Program at the Gay Alliance
- Safe and Inclusive Schools at Pittsford Central School District (2 workshops)
- SafeZone Training at Nazareth College
- Transgender Issues in Healthcare at UPMC Laboratories/Phlebotomy Dept
- Transgender Issues in Healthcare at University of Rochester School of Nursing
- Cultural Competency Panel at the Rochester Women’s Network Fall Business Women’s Summit
- St. John Fisher Health and Wellness Fair
- SafeZone Training at Penfield High School
- Safe and Inclusive Schools at Young Women’s College Prep Charter School
- SafeZone Training at Nazareth College
- LGBTQ 101 at West Irondequoit GSA
- A Night of Comedy at Spectra in Corning
- Transgender Issues in Healthcare at Bath VA Medical Center
- Communicating Respectfully with LGBTQ People at Harter, Secret & Emery, LLP
- LGBTQ 101 at Monroe County Dept of Social Services
- Transgender Health Conferences, Buffalo
- SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Program at Ventura County Behavioral Health (California)
- The Penguin Tango Talkback at the Red House Arts Center, Syracuse
- Sex and Chocolate Health Fair at the University of Rochester
- LGBTQ Youth Issues at the NY Chapter of the Society of Adolescent Health and Medicine
- SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Program at Volunteer State Community College (Tennessee)

Feedback from evaluations in Oct.

- “This was the most useful 1-day training I’ve ever been to! Thank you! The entire process was excellent. Various activities, pure learning, videos, etc. made the day fly by. Just fantastic. This day could change my life and hopefully allow me to help others.”
- “Superb! Competing! Pushed me to want to look/learn more! Activities, facilitator guidance was exceptional!”
- “Brilliant, extremely pragmatic information the entire day. Brilliantly helpful – I am far more confident to do my first training now. The presenters modeled very welcoming demeanor, very professional balanced with very approachable. I can’t think of a thing to improve and I can always find something! Thank you!”

SAGE DECEMBER CALENDAR

Saturday 12/6: .....6:30 p.m. Movie night at the Cinema, your Host Roza. Meet in lobby for coffee after at Crossroads cafe.
Tuesday 12/9: .....11:30-12:30 Brown bag & beverage.
Thursday 12/11: .....10:30-12:30 SAGE will meet at Denny’s 2890 West Ridge Road for breakfast. RSVP to 287-2958 by 12/10.
Thursday 12/18: .....Noon: we will be meeting at Nick’s Seabreeze Inn, 4581 Culver Road. PLEASE RSVP to 585-287-2958 by 12/11.
Thursday 12/25: .....NO YOGA OR PROGRAM TODAY. Merry Christmas

Rainbow SAGE, For LGBTQ People 50 and over, meets at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Center of Western New York (707 East Main St., Rochester 14605). Yoga is from 10:30 TO 11:30 $5 Per Person. Tuesday and Thursday. All programs are subject to change and Rainbow SAGE members are responsible for setting up their own transportation to and from any program. All programs are open to the community and the Gay Alliance welcomes all to participate to enhance the quality of diverse, member-driven programming.
**BISEXUALITY RESOURCES**

AMBi Los Angeles; American Institute of Bisexuality; Bay Area Bisexual Network; B4B. Bisexual Organizing Project (BOP); Biversary; Boston Bisexual Women's Org. Inc.; BBW—Columns, One; Fenway Health's Bi Health Project; Los Angeles Bi Task Force; New York Area Bisexual Network; Radical Transitive; The Bi Writers Association; The Bisexual Resource Center (email bi@re sus.org)

**CULTURAL**

Rochester Women's Community Church: 234-4444. (See Ongoing calendar.)

Rochester Gay Men's Chorus: www.theergmc.org

Open Arms Community Center
Available for public meetings, 707 E. Main St. Parking and welcoming of all. 217-6847.

**DEAF SERVICES**

Advocacy for Abused Deaf Victims
Mail box: 69260, PO. Box 20023, Rochester, NY 14620. 24-hour Hotline: ASDA-DeafInfo@rochester.rr.com; 888-969-9282; TTY: 585-232-2685

Lilac Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf (LRA)
Mail box 50, Rochester, NY 14640. (585) 275-3379. Provides round-the-clock research and information: rcoaster@rochester.rr.com

Spectrum LGBTI & Straight Alliance
RIT Hall: 176, www.spectrum-IMU@rochester.rr.com facebook.com

**ELDERS**

Gay Alliance Rainbow Sagamore
Mail box 307, 1534 South Avenue, Rochester. 24-hour Hotline: 1-800-323-9808

**FAMILY**

Open Arms Community Center
Open Arms Community Center available for parties, meetings and meeting rooms. Plenty of parking. We are inclusive, actively accepted and welcoming of all people. 217-6847 openarmsmcc.org

CNY Family Network
Information: (315) 578-4672.

Rochester Gay Moms’ Group
Support group for lesbian mothers and wannabe mothers in Rochester and surrounding areas. Subscribe: RochesterGayMoms-subscribe@ yahoogroups.com.

Lesbians & Gay Family Building Project
Headquartered in Binghamton and with a presence throughout Upstate NY, the Project is dedicated to helping who build and maintain their goals of building and sustaining healthy families. Claudia Southan, 124 S. Washington St., Binghamton, NY 13905; 607-724-4308; e-mail: lesbiansga@rochester.rr.com; Web: www.PrideAndJoy.org

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and LGTLQ (PFLAG)
PFLAG's thriftroom mission: supporting parents and family members in coming out process: educat the community; advocating on behalf of LGBT family members. rochester.pflag@pflag.org. 585-813-5925

Adoptive Parent Support Group
Monthly potluck lunches. For information, location, call Shen, 330-2528; PO. Box 20023, Rochester, NY 14620, 24-hour Hotline: ASDA-DeafInfo@rochester.rr.com; 888-969-9282; TTY: 585-232-2685

**Angel Food Ministry**
Give a person food for $30 in advance. Menu changes monthly. For information and dis tribution sites, call 585 861-4815.

**HIV/AIDS**

Free testing for HIV exposure is available through New York State Department of Health: Call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at (585) 224-2222; www.sidadev.org. Free confidential testing is available including hearing impaired people should call (585) 423-8327. AIDS-Rights Now, 201 W. Main Center, Rochester, NY 14607. (585) 232-3051. HIV and STD testing resource site. Rapid testing is only 10 minutes. STD testing provided by Bullis head, 14614. (585) 232-3051. Contact: Natasha @ Rochester hotline.

**Velvet Healthcare Services Project**

**Resources**

Check our monthly and ongoing calendar as well as the community section for more groups and events. For further information, call the Gay Alliance at 244-8640 or visit: www.gayalliance.org. Gay Alliance Youth Group info: pages 30-31.
LORA - Buffalo Women's Coffee Social
Weekly on Thursday. 7pm, 675 Elmwood, Buffalo. Contact Person: Barb Henderson Email: Morningstar548@yahoo.com More Info: www.loragroup.org/events; https:// www.facebook.com/groups/loragroups/island/ FRIDAYS
Gay Men’s AA meeting
On-Going, every Thursday. 7:30-9:30pm. Contact Person: Emmanuel- el Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave.
Gay Alliance Youth
On-Going, every Thursday. 7pm, Gay Alliance, 5th floor, 875 E. Main St., 244-8640; youth@gayalliance.org

LGBTQI Motorcycle Group
Friday, 5-30pm. Various locations. RochesterLGBTkikers@yahoo.com; 467-6456; brandworkx@frontiernet.net.

LORA GayNes Night

Monthly LITO WomenS Bingo Night
Third Friday, 7pm. at all Empire Bingo. Contact: Christine. Info@lnterapeuticrychicago.com; 585-943-1240 text/Ltalk.

SATURDAYS
Rochester Rams Bar Night
Third Saturdays, 6pm-7pm, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. 277-8300

Trans Alliance of Greater Rochester Support/Literational group for gender-variant people, allies. Last Saturdays, 5:30-10pm. Open MNC, 101 E. Main St.

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers

Lilac Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf (LRAD)
Meeting begins with a speaker, followed by open discussion.

Adult Families of Trans Youth (AFTY)
First, 3rd Wednesdays, 6pm-9pm, 750 South Ave. The group is facilitated by Delaina Fico. For more information, please contact Delaina Fico at dfico@arcmonroe.org or 750 South Ave. (750) 40-1050.

Women’s Community Church
Rehearses each Tuesday, 6:30-90pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh Street, 234- 4444; www.ference.org.

Gay Alliance Youth Trans* Youth Support Group
On-Going, every Thursday. 5pm-6:30pm, Q0GV office, 5th floor, 875 E. Main St. Ages 13-18, 244-8640.

WEDNESDAYS
Identity Group
The Identity group is for LGBTQ identified individuals who have a developmental disability diagnosis. The group meets Wednesdays 3-4 pm at ARC Health Services (2040 Brighton-Henrietta Townline Rd. 14623). The goal of the group is to provide a safe place to discuss identity issues, share personal experiences and increase self-esteem. The group is facilitated by Delatita Fico. LMOW. For more information, please contact Delatita Fico at dfico@arcmonroe.org or 750 South Ave. 40-1050 ext. 1552.

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

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

Support Group for Parents who have lost Children
First, 3rd Wednesdays, 11am-12:30pm, Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. Genesees Region Home Care. Free. 325-1660.

COAG
Come Out and Play. Wednesday game nights. 8-11 pm. Equal Grounds, 750 South Ave. (750) 40-1050; info@lorbgroup.org

Rochester Rams General Meeting
2nd (new location) 6pm, 1825 University Ave. University of Rochester. www.rochesterrams.com

HIV+ Mixed Men’s Group
Meeting every Monday, 10am-12:30 pm. Trillium Health, 259 Monroe Ave.

Frontrunners/ Frontwalkers
6pm at Chickman House parking lot. www.rochesterfrontrunners.org.

Gay Alliance Library & Archives,
Every Monday, 6pm-9pm. David Bahrett Cyber Center, 5-30pm, 750 South Ave. First Thursday of the month.

LGBT Health

Free syphilis testing
Trillium Health, 259 Monroe Ave., 5-8pm. 442-2220.

Women’s Community Church
Rehearses each Tuesday, 6:30-9pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh Street, 234- 4444; www.ference.org.

LORA Kolters Group

Gay Alliance Trans* Youth Support Group
5:30-7:30pm, Q0GV office, 5th floor, 875 E. Main St. Ages 13-18, 244-8640.

DAILY
Free HIV Testing
9am-7pm. Trillium Health, 259 Monroe Ave.

David Bahrett Cyber Center
Gay Alliance 5th floor lounge, Mon-Thurs. 11am-3pm, Fri. 11am-875 E. Main St. 244-8640; www.gayalliance.org

MONDAYS
L.O.R.A. Coffee Social

LORA Late Bloomers Coming Out Group for Women

Rochester Historical Bowling Society
7pm. Clover Lanes

Gay Alliance Library & Archives,
Every Monday. 6pm-9pm. David Bahrett Cyber Center. 5-30pm, 750 South Ave, First Thursday of the month.

Born That Way
Formerly 3rd Presbyterian LGBTQ Support Group. 1st, 3rd Mondays, 6:30-9:30pm, 34 Meigs St. Carol. 492-3832 or Kaara, 604-7516.

HIV Positive Men’s support group
Every Monday. Rochester Health Center for Positive Living, 259 Monroe Ave.

Frontrunners/ Frontwalkers
Mondays, 6pm, George Eastman House parking lot. www.rochesterfrontrunners.org.

Steps Beyond Shms
Crack Support Group. Mondays, 7-8pm, 259 Monroe Ave.

TUESDAYS
The Social grind
10am-12noon and again 7-9pm at Equal Grounds, 750 South Ave. Email: Duhatell4570@comcast.net.

Adult Families of Trans Youth (AFTY)
First Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30. Open AMS MCC Community Center, Main St.

LGBT Healthy Living

Free syphilis testing
Trillium Health, 259 Monroe Ave., 5-8pm. 442-2220.

Women’s Community Church
Rehearses each Tuesday, 6:30-9pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh Street, 234- 4444; www.ference.org.

LORA Kolters Group
Classifieds

Classified ads are $5 for the first 30 words; each additional 10 words is another $1. We do not bill for classifieds, so please send or bring ad and payment to The Empty Closet, 675 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, New York 14605.

Paying by check: checks must be made out to Gay Alliance. The deadline is the 15th of the month, for the following month’s issue. We accept only ads accompanied by name and phone number. Neither will be published, but we must be able to confirm placement.

The Empty Closet is not responsible for financial loss or physical injury that may result from any contact with an advertiser. Advertisers must use their own box number, voice mail, e-mail or phone number. No personal home addresses or names allowed. Classified ads are not published on The Empty Closet page of our website. However, each issue of the paper is reproduced online in its entirety.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Children’s Ministry: Hosting at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church for toddlers to tweens. Join us for vibrant, inclusive, progressive worship on Sundays at 10:30 am, 707 E. Main St. info@openarmsmcc.org; (585) 271-8478.

SERVICES

Rochester’s Best Man to Man Rubdown. Unwind with this degreed, employed, fit, friendly, healthy, Italian GWM. Middle aged, 5’8”, 165 lbs., 32” waist, non-smoker, d & f free, HIV-10 plus years experience guarantee relaxation and satisfaction. Hotel visit, in call in my home or out call in your residence. Reasonable rates. Discretion appreciated and practiced. Don’t delay, call me today at 585-773-2410 (cell) or 585-235-6688 (home).

Handyman: Simple repairs or full renovations, no job is too large or small. Carpentry, Plumbing, Electrical, Interior & Exterior. 35 years experience. Call Alan & Bill 585-204-0632 or cell 304-517-6832. Martin Ippolito master electrician. Electrical work, telephone jacks, cable TV, burglar alarm systems, paddle fans. 585-266-6357. Hate to paint or clean gutters? I have tall ladders! Dale’s Pleasure Painting and Gutter Cleaning has very reasonable rates for painting year round and gutter cleaning in spring or fall. 585-576-5042. Email dale.furlong@gayalliance.org. Wedding Space and clergy services available. Celebrate your special day at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, 707 E. Main St. info@openarmsmcc.org (585) 271-8478.
The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., as stated in the bylaws of that organization. Its purpose is to inform the Rochester gay community about local and national gay-related news and events; to provide a forum for ideas and creative work from the local gay community; to promote leadership within the community, and to be a part of a national network of lesbian and gay publications that exchange ideas and seek to educate.

Letters to the editor: The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and other contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or The Empty Closet. We will print letters at the editor’s discretion and on a space- available basis. Only one letter by the same writer in a six-month period is allowed. We will not print personal attacks on individuals, nor will we be a forum for grieving obituaries however heartfelt. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity. We will print anonymous letters only if the name and phone number are provided to the Editor; confidentiality will be respected. Submission is due by the 15th of the month at: The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main St., Suite 500, Rochester, NY 14608. e-mail: editor@emptycloset.org. The online edition of EC is available at www.gayalliance.org.

Advertising policy: The Empty Closet does not print advertisements that contain nude drawings or photographs, nor does it print advertising that states that the person pictured in the ad is for sale, or that you will “get” that particular person if you patronize the establishment advertised. Advertisements that are explicitly racist, sexist, ageist, ableist or homophobic will be refused; advertisements from organizations that are sexist, racist, sexist, ageist, ableist or anti-gay will also be refused. All political advertisements must contain information about who placed them and a method of contact. We reserve the right to refuse all political advertisements that are not required by law. We reserve the right to refuse any paid advertisement that focuses upon a rival product, or in the political area, a “attack” advertisements, whether they relate to a product or political candidate that has changed his or her position since the advertisement was produced. A negative advertisement is defined as one that licenses or knowingly participates in the inclusion of a non-endorser election candidate or party, in order to point out supposed flaws and to persuade the public not to buy it (or vote for him or her). The Empty Closet maintains, within legal boundaries, neutrality regarding products, political candidates and parties. However, “attack” ads that fail to print unidentified substantial information in the ad or is true but not in any way the objectives and policies of the Gay Alliance or The Empty Closet, including the primary tenet that The Empty Closet’s purpose is to inform the Rochester gay community and to provide an impartial forum for ideas.

Submissions: For publication, submit news items, ads, photos, letters, stories, poetry, ads, photographs or art - by mail or in person - to: The Empty Closet office by the 15th of the month. Design services for non-camera ready ads are available for a fee. 244-9300. e-mail: emptycloset@gagv.us.

Complete advertising, design, production and circulation services for non-camera ready ads are available. The Empty Closet is published 11 times a year (December and January combined) by The Empty Closet Press for the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc. Approximately 5000 copies of each issue are distributed during the first week of the month, somewhat more in a mail-issued envelope. The publication of the name or photograph of any person or organization in an ad is not an indication of the approval or disapproval of the person or the members of that organization. For further information, please write to: The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main St., Rochester, NY 14605, call (585) 244-9300 or e-mail: editor@emptycloset.org.

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GEVA THEATRE CENTER
DO SOMETHING FUN!

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS
FAMILY MUSICAL
JAN 13 - FEB 15

WOMEN IN JEOPARDY!
NEW COMEDY
FEB 24 - MAR 22

THE MOUNTAINTOP
INSPIRING DRAMA
MAR 31 - APR 26

“OUT” AT GEVA
2ND THURSDAY PERFORMANCES
The LGBTQ Community’s perfect way to make new or
catch up with old friends while enjoying Rochester’s
best theatre! Enjoy a free, open pre-show reception in
the Geva Café before the performance.
MENTION “OUT AT GEVA” WHEN YOU CALL

MAY 5 - MAY 31
Don’t miss the Tony®-Award
winning comedy!

VANYA and SONIA and MASHA and SPIKE
BY CHRISTOPHER DURANG
DIRECTED BY BRUCE JORDAN

DO GEVA
ESL 14/15 SEASON
WILSON MAINSTAGE
See all 4 shows from $112 with a seated package