Canandaigua VA Color Guard marches in Rochester Pride

By Susan Jordan

This will be the second year that the Canandaigua Veterans Administration Medical Center Color Guard has marched in the Rochester Pride, although LGBTISA Medical Center employees and Veterans have marched since 2010.

Wanda Martinez, who works at the Canandaigua VA, told The Empty Closet, “The VA Color Guard are part of the Police Department of the VA, they do presentations for many occasions. I suggested last year that they march in the Rochester Pride Parade and they were happy to do that and thought it was a good idea. The police chief, Mr. Joseph Day, gave the OK to march, with the approval of Mr. Craig Howard, director of the VA Medical Center. They are always very supportive.”

Wanda said that gay Veterans who are served by the Canandaigua VA have marched for five years behind the VA banner. “We have marched for Pride last year which represents the five branches of US military service. We want to make sure we honor and thank those who have served and are serving our country, defending our right to freedom and equality.”

On Sunday, June 1, the VACHS (VA Caribbean Health Care System) LGBT staff and Veterans group participated in the 24th LGBT Pride Parade of Puerto Rico, in San Juan. The VACHS group represented the VA Caribbean Healthcare System for the first time, promoting and educating on all system for the first time, promoting and educating on all system. Wanda commented, “We have several VAs in Puerto Rico, the San Juan VA marched in Pride this year. While I was on vacation in Puerto Rico in March, I visited the VA Caribbean Health Care System (HCS) and I met with Nilda Lopez, the HCS Equal Employment Office Manager (EEO) and LGBT Special Emphasis Program managers, Cyndia Ramirez and Yesenia Serrano… I spoke to them about marching in the Pride Parade, to be more visible and more supportive. I sent a photo of our Pride Parade last year as an example of what can be done. They made t-shirts, and also staffed an information table, etc. I was very proud of them. The crowd was very supportive they said. When I saw pictures the following Monday, my eyes filled with tears. The response was so positive!”

Efforts such as this across the United States and its territories help our LGBT Veterans and Military Service Members know that the VA is there for them and underscores the VA’s message: We Serve All Who Served – Servimos a quienes nos han servido – and they want all Veterans to know that.

“Within the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and Rochester VA Outpatient Clinic we have many Special Emphasis Programs (SEP), -- LGBT, Women, Hispanic, African American, Asian-Pacific Islands, Disabilities, Women Veterans and the Veterans Emphasis Program -- we have them all. The LGBT SEP has now been in existence for five years. In addition to organizing participation in the Rochester Pride Parade, the LGBT SEP has presented a Large Rainbow Flag in the Parade the last four years.”

The Canandaigua VA contingent at Pride 2013.

Unmask your true colors at Pride 2014, July 18-20

By Susan Jordan

Pride 2014, Rochester’s 25th celebration of our LGBTQ community, will be bigger and better this year, according to Pride Committee head Michael Lill, who adds, “We’re looking forward to everyone’s participation.”

The theme for 2014 is “Unmask Your True Colors,” Evelyn Bailey of Shoulder’s To Stand On will be honored as Grand Marshal.

The Flag Ceremony on July 18 will again be in Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park at Manhattan Square, and the Gay Alliance’s giant rainbow flag will fly over the city from the towering superstructure. The Central Library will again display rainbow lighting. The Parade the next day, July 19, will march down Park Ave. to Alexander St. and East Ave., and thence to the Park for the Festival.

So what’s new? For one thing, there will be many more ROC Pride sports events this year, including roller derby at Bill Gray’s Iceplex, bowling at Clover Lanes, and rugby, volleyball, softball and an obstacle course at Genesee Valley Park. The sports will go on all weekend.

Pride weekend will start with the Flag Ceremony at 6 p.m. on July 18 at MLK Jr. Memorial Park at Manhattan Square, and will feature Ride for Pride’s Rainbow Riders and the Pride Performance Ensemble, or PPE, a group of individuals led by Jeff Allen. New this year – the Gay Alliance will provide live updates on July 18 as the Festival site is set up, on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Go to twitter.com/GAGVInfo, facebook.com/RocPride and follow “gay alliance” on Instagram.

Michael Lill said, “We started PPE last year. It’s a color guard which also does flag spinning. We’re increasing our technical skill this year and doing more dancing. We’ve also performed at the Breast Cancer Walk and the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. At this point there are about eight people in the group – we’re always looking to increase our numbers!”

Betty Who headlines Festival... page 27

The Gay Alliance is publisher of The Empty Closet, New York State’s oldest LGBTIQ newspaper.
Does freedom of speech = freedom to abuse?

The upsurge over Kimberly and Beck’s abusive language about trans people is old news. Hopefully some cisgendered people learned some REAL facts about transgender, from Pam Barres, Maar and Laine Delaney, Jason Ballard and Scott Fearing, who were interviewed by local media, and from viewing “Just Gender” at The Little. Kimberly and Beck’s comments beyond the line of legitimate bullying and ridicule. In an op-ed piece for The Democrat & Chronicle, he claimed that challenging Kimberly and Beck’s verbal abuse violated freedom of speech, and therefore democracy is going down the tubes.

However, it’s likely most Americans would agree that freedom of speech does not include the right to bully and abuse others.

Conservative politician Bill Nojay says it does. In an op-ed piece for The Democrat & Chronicle, he claimed that challenging Kimberly and Beck’s verbal abuse violated freedom of speech, and therefore democracy is going down the tubes. Kimberly and Beck’s comments beyond the line of legitimate bullying and ridicule.

If you dehumanize an individual, or a group of people, then you can do whatever you want to them, because they are not really human. You can demonize them and depriv them of civil and human rights, which is happening to gays now in Uganda. The journey from trash talk to calls for repression and hate violence is not a long journey, as evangelicals have shown in their global campaign against LGBTQ humans.

Conservatives complain about “p.c.” or “political correctness”, meaning they want a return to the good old days when white, upper-class, heterosexual, cisgendered males were free to insult everyone else, with impunity. Their anger at liberal p.c. is ironic, considering the long list of conservative p.c. rules and taboos reinforced by the ultra-Right.

According to conservative political correctness, apparently, calling people sluts, liberals and nut jobs doesn’t harm democracy at all.

But this isn’t just about radio shock jocks’ trash talk. Too much of society’s discourse has become uncivil, disrespectful and even abusive, and liberals and progressives who engage in that are guilty too. The main offenders, though, are conservative extremists, who have exploited hate for decades in order to win votes, starting with their Southern Strategy of pitting southern whites against blacks. The Right has never hesitated to trash African American youth, inner city single moms, seniors on Social Security/Medicare, Hispanic immigrants, women, gays, union members, the unemployed, scientists, environmental activists, President Obama and his family and anyone else they see as a threat to their control of the universe. Classic example: Rush Limbaugh slurring Sandra Fluke as a “slut”. The latest abusive catchword from the Tea Party is “libtard” – which manages not only to trash the hated liberals, but also to insult innocent people who have traditionally been called “retarded” and seen as subhuman, and therefore legitimate targets for bullying and ridicule.

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According to conservative political correctness, apparently, calling people sluts, liberals and nut jobs doesn’t harm democracy at all.
The LGBT Special Emphasis Program lead by Wanda was created in September 2009 and has 35 members. Since 2013 Dawn Smith has co-managed the take with Wanda. In addition to her activities at the Camadai- su VA Medical Center, Wanda also serves on the VA’s National Special Emphasis Program Advi- sory Council (SEPC) LGBT Workgroup. She said, “We extend the invitation to all LGBT and Ally Veterans, Military Service Members and families to join us in VA on May 19 with Pride in this year’s Rochester Pride Festival.”

Harry Bronson announces Assembly passage of GENDA; Senate GOP refuses to allow vote
Taking a step forward in ensuring equality for all New Yorkers, Assemblyman Harry B. Bronson (D-Oswego/Henrietta) announced Assembly passage of the Freedom of Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) (A.4226B, GENDA), which Assemblyman Bronson co-sponsored, would prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression.

Wanda concluded, “We are all in agreement that harming LGBT youth is unacceptable and we must put an end to this damage of marginalized practice. We cannot let another day go by where our youngest New Yorkers are vulnerable to this avoidable harm.”

Sponsored by Assembly members Deborah J. Glick and Senators Brad Hoylman and Michael Gianaris, the bill would prohibit therapy that promotes conversion of LGBT youth, as recognized by the State of New York from engaging in efforts to “convert” the gender identities of transgender and non-binary persons. The legis- lation clearly defines the prac- tice as a dangerous and harmful approach. It also defines the consequences that a mental health professional who promotes this technique will be facing disciplinary action by the provid- ers’ licensors.

The bill, which was introduced only two years ago, has seen rapid movement through the legislative process and has earned bipartisan support. I applaud Assembly Mem- ber Deborah Glick for spear- heading the efforts to advance the A.6983-B to ban so-called “conversion therapy” on LGBT youth by licensing all mental health professionals,” said New York State Senator and lead Senate Sponsor on the bill Brad Hoyl- man. “Thanks to the leadership of Assembly Member Glick and Senator Schaff, we’re one step closer to joining New York and California in protecting our kids from being subjected to dangerous and harmful practices and their parents from being victims of a prov- en harmful and dangerous therapy that is a non partisan issue that should receive full consid- eration by my colleagues in the Senate.”

The vast majority of asso- ciations of mental health prac- titioners- mental health professions, and researchers acknowledge the detrimental effects of conversion therapy can have on minors. The Amer- ican Medical Association and the American Psychological Asso- ciation oppose this practice and are joined by the American Acad- emy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Acad- emy of Pediatrics, the American Association of Family and Therapy, the American Counseling Association, the Amer- ican Psychoanalytic Association, the American School Coun- selor Association, the National Association of Social Workers and the Pan American Health Organization in condemning this dangerous practice. All acknowledge that the practices cannot work as claimed, and are, in fact, harmful to those who undergo such treatment.

California passed a similar law in 2012, and New Jersey (Assembly continues page 6)
Federal judges strike down Wisconsin, Utah, Indiana marriage bans

U.S. District Court Judge Barbara Crabb on June 6 struck down the discriminatory amendment to the Wisconsin state constitution preventing same-sex couples from marrying. On June 9 she declined to issue a stay on the ruling.

Breaking news: on June 25 US District Judge Richard Young struck down the Indiana marriage ban in ruling #21 and an appeals court declared the Utah ban unconstitutional – ruling #22.

The American Civil Liberties Union had challenged the Wisconsin law on behalf of eight couples seeking the freedom to marry in Wisconsin or to have their out-of-state marriages recognized. Two of the plaintiffs, Kami Young and Karina Wille of West Milwaukee, were legally married last year in Minnesota and have a newborn daughter. But because Young is the birth mother, she is the only one who is recognized as the legal parent on the birth certificate.

“Our daughter has two parents who love her dearly,” said Wille. “I am no less a mother to her than Kami is, and she deserves the security of having both of her parents legally recognized. Our daughter shouldn’t have second-class protections.”

“We are tremendously happy that these loving and committed couples will now be able to access the security and recognition that only marriage provides,” said Larry Dupuis, legal director of the ACLU of Wisconsin. “These discriminatory laws are falling around the country and it is only right that Wisconsin move forward as well.”

“Wisconsin’s constitutional ban on marriage for same-sex couples is a striking example of intentional discrimination towards lesbians and gay men in Wisconsin,” said John Knight, staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Project. “The marriage ban has sent a powerful message that same-sex couples are undeserving of the dignity and important legal protections associated with marriage. Judge Crabb’s decision that same-sex couples are equal under the law sends an entirely different message – one inviting and encouraging fair treatment and respect for these couples.”

Human Rights Campaign

“Where you live should never limit your ability to marry the person you love,” said Human Rights Campaign (HRC) president Chad Griffin. “All across the country, from coast to coast and everywhere in between, judges are striking down marriage discrimination from the books using the U.S. Constitution as their guide. Because of the couples who brought this case, their attorneys with the ACLU and Mayer Brown LLP, and the hundreds of plaintiffs challenging marriage bans across the country, we as a nation are closer than ever before to full equality under the law.”

A May 2014 Marquette University Law School poll showed 55 percent of registered Wisconsin voters favor allowing same-sex couples to legally marry. The ruling in Wisconsin coincides with the release of new poll results by the Washington Post and ABC News which show that 50 percent of Americans believe that gay and lesbian couples have a constitutional right to marry guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution’s Equal Protection clause.

Additionally, 56 percent of Americans and 77 percent of those under the age of thirty support marriage rights for same-sex couples. There are at least 70 court cases challenging discriminatory marriage bans across the country in 30 states and Puerto Rico. So far five federal appeals courts are presiding over 10 marriage equality cases over the coming weeks and months. The Sixth Circuit has decided the distinction of being the only federal appeals court to date that will consider marriage cases from all states within its jurisdiction. Since the U.S. Supreme Court’s historic marriage rulings last year, no state marital equality law has survived a court challenge.

Same-sex couples can legally marry in 22 states and the District of Columbia, while 28 states have a law or constitutional amendment restricting marriage to the union of one man and one woman. Learn more about this and other marriage equality cases at www.americanfamiliesmarriagequality.org

Rep. Mark Pocan

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan (WI-02), a co-chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus, on June 6 issued the following statement on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin’s ruling that Wisconsin’s ban on gay marriage is unconstitutional:

“The federal district court in Madison took another step toward ensuring full equality for every American. It is clear the growing momentum of support for marriage equality will put an end to discrimi- natory laws that treat LGBT couples as second-class citizens. After years of ruling, it has become unmistakable that the promise of America is everyone should be treated equally under the law. Today’s ruling brings us one step closer to fulfill- ing that promise.”

In a press release for the rights of the LGBT community, Pocan has been married to his husband Phil since 2006.

Freedom to Marry

Evan Wolfson, president of Freedom to Marry, released the following statement today in reaction to Judge Crabb’s decision:

“Today’s decision out of Wisconsin agrees with the Supreme Court to bring resolution nationwide.”

“Gay Tea Party” group GOProud is gone

Tim Mak writes at the Daily Beast:

“Reports began trickling in, in the press this week (June 6) that GOProud had decided to close up shop.

In truth, the (original, (gay-conserva- tive) organization functionally folded a year ago. The Daily Beast has learned that the organization is being actively mocked by the men who founded the group.

The decline of GOProud is a prime example of what happens to an organi- zation that rises to prominence through controversy — the more under fire, the_healthier the press coverage — the more under fire, the better both the media and the organization’s donors get a good story out of it.

The long-term effects of GOProud’s exit are telling. First, the already weakened Tea Party movement is left without a gay wing. Second, the film the group has worked so hard to achieve will be dealt a severe blow. Finally, the experiment of trying to legitimize gay politics in the conservative movement will have failed. For the group’s ‘founder’ and ‘leader’ Tony Perkins, the damage to his political future is severe. It is going to be hard for Perkins to make [a] comeback to the political stage. Perkins isn’t likely to take the ADL’s advice to heart. But media outlets might have to reconsider whether it’s wise to provide him a forum to continue peddling his apocalyptic rhetoric on LGBT equality.

AMA board adds first openly gay trustee

GLMA (Gay and Lesbian Medical Association) has announced that one of its members, Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, has been elected to serve on the Board of Trustees of the American Medical Association (AMA), its governing body.

On June 10, the AMA House of Delegates elected Jesse to serve on the Board of Trustees, joining a handful of other health professionals who have made our LGBT individuals in positions of leadership.

Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, became the first and only LGBT organization to have a voting seat in the AMA House of Delegates, signaling a great increase in understanding of LGBT healthcare needs and promoting equality.

On June 6, Perkins blasted a Colorado cake maker for a gay couple, asking on his radio program Washington Watch, “I’m beginning to think, are re-education camps for gay people? Are we going to roll out the boxcars to start hauling off these Christians?”

Photo of his “deeply offensive” comments featured in the Huffington Post. For his “deeply offensive” comments, he was brought onto The Kelly File to attack basic anti-LGBT rhetoric. He was called a “troll” and is being actively mocked by the men who founded the group.

In 2010, Perkins blasted a Colorado cake maker for refusing to bake a wedding cake for a gay couple, asking on his radio program Washington Watch, “I’m beginning to think, are re-education camps for gay people? Are we going to roll out the boxcars to start hauling off these Christians?”

Tony Perkins’ invocation of the Holocau- st in his statement referring to a judge’s finding that a baker unlawfully discrimi- nated against gay customers is offensive and inappropriate.

“Tony Perkins’ invocation of the Holocaust in his statement referring to a judge’s finding that a baker unlawfully discrimi- nated against gay customers is offensive and inappropriate.

“There is no comparison between con- temporary American political issues and the actions of Hitler’s regime during the Holocaust. Such inappropriate analogies only serve to trivialize the Holocaust and are deeply offensive to Jews and other survivors, as well as those Americans who fought valiantly against the Nazis in World War II.”

“We urge Perkins to apologize and to refrain from using Holocaust imagery to make his point.”

Extreme anti-LGBT rhetoric has defined Perkins’ career, and the FRC’s defamatory attacks on the LGBT commu- nity led the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to designate it in an anti-gay hate group.

Despite that record, Perkins and FRC are frequent fixtures on CNN and Fox News. Fox’s Megyn Kelly in particular has given Perkins the star treatment, invit- ing him onto The Kelly File to attack basic anti-LGBT discrimination policies and to cham- pion anti-LGBT business discrimination.

Given his reputation and the fact that he is an annual convention speaker for the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) and is considering running for the U.S. Senate in Arizona in 2016, Perkins isn’t likely to take the ADL’s advice to heart. But media outlets might have to reconsider whether it’s wise to provide him a forum to continue peddling his apocalyptic rhetoric on LGBT equality.
of leadership with other health professional associations, it will not only provide an LGBT voice on the AMA Board of Trustees, but also serve as a role model to LGBT health professionals and students across the nation.

VA to give Burial Benefits to domestic, civil union partners

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force persuades a new rule released June 6 by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that will provide Burial Benefits to domestic partners and civil union partners. The Task Force recommended the change to VA in January, and LGBTQ veterans and their families will start to receive payments this year.

“This is an important victory for LGBTQ veterans and their families who are in civil unions and domestic partnerships. Now many more LGBTQ military families will be able to grieve the loss of loved ones who have served, without having the additional stress of worrying about funeral expenses.”

Early this year, the Task Force asked VA to recognize all relationships for the purposes of burial benefits; all same-sex marriages (regardless of where the partners live), as well as all civil unions and domestic partnerships. While VA remains constrained by law to recognize only those legal unions that are valid in the state where the couple lives, the decision to recognize domestic partnerships and civil unions indicates a willingness on the part of the nation’s second largest government agency to recognize the relationships of same-sex couples wherever they are legally able.

This may be the first time a federal agency has expanded so-called “spousal” benefits to include domestic partners and those in civil unions. VA’s decision comes less than a year after the Office of Personnel Management’s disappointing announcement that most federal benefits won’t extend to domestic partners under the Supreme Court’s Windsor ruling.

“We’re excited that VA is taking steps to provide benefits to our LGBTQ veterans and their families. But Congress must do more to unite VA’s hands. That’s why we’re calling on US Senators and US Representatives to change the discriminatory policy that keeps so many of our military heroes from getting the benefits they deserve.”

COLAGE hosts P-Town Family Week July 26-Aug. 2

COLAGE, the only national organization for and by people with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer parents, and Family Equality Council, the national organization which represents the three million parents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer, and their children, extended families, prospective families, and friends, it started 19 years ago and has continued to be a tradition for LGBTQ families. Family Week programs include a myriad of gatherings, workshops, social celebrations for parents and families, as well as programs for youth ages 8-18.

A youth in LGBTQ families attend Family Week, the gathering fosters lifelong friendships and provides a safe and supportive space to support empowerment, dialogue, and connections,” said COLAGE Executive Director Annie Van Arendonk.

For more information about Family Week, visit the websites of COLAGE and Family Equality Council: http://www.cologne.org/family-week/ http://www.familyequality.org/get-involved/events/annual_events/family_week/

School pays family $750,000 for letting son be bullied to point of suicide in 2010

By Andrea Potts on gaystarnews.com

The mother of a California gay teen who committed suicide in 2010 after enduring years of bullying at Jacobson Middle School has settled a lawsuit with the Tehachapi Unified School District — agreeing to receive $750,000 in compensation for its failure to protect him.

Thirteen-year-old Seth Walsh had already been subjected to bullying before he came out at school, but things only got worse and he was subjected to physical and verbal bullying inside and outside of school, as well as being bullied online and over the phone by other students.

Mother Wendy Walsh had initially sought $5 million over her son’s death, but agreed to settle at $750,000 on the advice of her lawyers to avoid the school board seeking to use legal technicalities to win the case.

“In order to avoid that risk and to bring closure to the most painful thing a parent could ever endure, the death of a child, Wendy Walsh decided to settle and forego reliving the trauma in the courtroom,” Walsh’s lawyer Daniel Rodriguez told the Bakersfield Californian.

California lawmakers reacted to Seth’s death by passing AB 9, also known as Seth’s Law, which requires Californian school districts to adopt policies prohibiting bullying based on actual or perceived characteristics including sexual orientation.

As a result of Seth’s death the Tehachapi Unified School District now provides an anti-harassment curriculum for all students from kindergarten to Year 12 and requires staff members to report any incident of bullying to an administrator within 24 hours.

Seth’s death was one of a number of suicides by young people who were gay or perceived to be gay that inspired writer Dan Savage to found the It Gets Better project.

Walsh said through Rodriguez that Seth’s death “had not been in vain,” because of the changes it had lead to.


Report: Most same sex couples now live in states that recognize marriage equality

The majority of U.S. same-sex couples now live in states that recognize same-sex marriage, according to a report by visual journalist David Mendoza.

On The Mendoza Line, he reports that with Illinois (home to 3.9 percent of same-sex couples in the U.S.) becoming the latest state to offer equal marriage rights, it pushes the figure into the majority, with 51 percent of U.S. same-sex couples being able to marry in a state that recognizes their unions. California has the
Interview

There is a growing need for foster parents in Monroe County

By Adam Young

The ultimate goal of the Homefounding Unit of the Monroe County Department of Human and Health Services is to keep children with their biological parents or other family members as often as possible. Foster care is reserved as a last resort. Yet the need for foster care homes in Monroe County continues to grow.

Todd Ranous, Senior Matcher for the Homefounding Unit, has been with the organization since 1999. According to Ranous, there are about 240 foster homes in Monroe County. However, there is always a need for more, particularly for foster parents accepting of LGBTQ youth.

“The double whammy of not only are you LGBT, but now you’re a foster kid, there’s a lot of stigma attached to it,” Ranous said. Often, abuse and neglect are the main reasons children are placed into foster care. Sometimes a child’s sexuality is cause for a parent to dismiss their child from their home.

Jessica Willie and Pauline Smith have been foster parents for three and a half years. Over this time they have fostered about 12 children, ranging from a week-end stay to much longer placements. When the couple first signed up, they did not anticipate the strong need for foster parents to care for teens who identify as LGBTQ. Yet Wilkie and Smith agreed that gay and lesbian foster parents have been pleasantly surprised by the number of foster children of a certain age group or stage of development they were initially against, Ranous said.

As foster parents, Willie and Smith agree there is no standard scenario, with adaptability and a willingness to deal with the unexpected being crucial traits. But other foster parents have been pleasantly surprised by the growth that you helped nurture, the experience is well worth it. Many foster children still reach out to Ranous to check-in after they leave the program. Willie and Smith report similar closeness with some of their past foster children.

“It takes about one year to become certified as a foster parent, Willie said. During this process, 50 hours of Model Approach to Partnership Parenting (MAPP) training is required to become certified. Although the certification process can be daunting at times, foster parents have a dedicated caseworker to consult with as questions and issues arise. Each foster child also has a caseworker. To determine placement, foster children are placed into a database to match them to a prospective foster parent. Characteristics such as age, medical/development issues, and the newly created LGBTQ status are considered when determining the placement of a foster child. Often, the case workers at the agency will have an idea of who to match up foster children with based on the staff’s personal interactions with the foster parents certified with the agency.

Although being a foster parent is challenging, when you’re helping among the agency, the court system, and ongoing training, Willie and Smith agree that you are prepared to possess the built-in inclination to choose their own families within the community, which can be an asset in foster parenting. “Our community tends to be very accepting of different kinds of families in a way that other communities might not be,” Smith said. ■

Get info about foster parenting at Pride

Stop by the Monroe County Homefounding Unit table and talk with agency staff and foster parents about their experiences during Family Fun Time at Roc Pride 2014, Saturday, July 19, 11 a.m. — 3 p.m.

Family Fun Time event is at Monroe County Fairgrounds.

Come with questions, get some first-person info, and play some games! For more information about becoming a foster parent in Monroe County, call (555) 753-6522, or visit http://www.monroecounty.gov/hfs-fostercare.php.

LOCAL AND STATE

(Assembly continued from page 3) passed its own in the summer of 2013. In June, after 36 years of leading the “ex-gay” movement, Exodus International disbanded amid growing skepticism of its top officials and board members that sexual attractions can be changed. But other organizations and practitioners continue to promote and engage in this discredited practice.

The passage of this bill comes on the heels of the November, 2013, American Medical Association (AMA) reports of surgery – which not all transgender individuals require – and adds protections for transgender New Yorkers to “ex-gay” movement, Exodus International disbanded amid growing skepticism of its top officials and board members that sexual attractions can be changed. But other organizations and practitioners continue to promote and engage in this discredited practice.

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Roughly 450,000 incidents of domestic violence are reported in New York State each year, and in Monroe County, calls issued over 300,000 orders of protection. At the same time, nearly 30 percent of transgender New Yorkers have experienced serious physical or sexual assault.

NYS modernizes policy on gender markers for birth certificates

The Empire State Pride Agenda, along with a network of partner organizations, on June 5 welcomed a policy change from New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo and his administration that removes the surgical requirement for New Yorkers to obtain a gender marker change on their birth certificates.

The policy, which hasn’t changed since the 1970s, reflects current medical best practices and is a long-overdue precedent, and brings the process up to speed with existing New York State agencies protocols.

This change comes as welcome news to the many New Yorkers who remain vulnerable without matching identification documents. The amended policy will allow a change of gender markers on birth certificates identified as LGT or non-binary who provide a certification from a licensed medical provider stating the applicant is undergoing treatment and removes the need for invasive requirements like operating room reports of surgery – which not all transgender people opt to undergo for financial, health, or personal reasons – in order to match their documents with their

The DHS table at Pride 2013.

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NYS modernizes policy on gender markers for birth certificates

The Empire State Pride Agenda, along with a network of partner organizations, on June 5 welcomed a policy change from New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo and his administration that removes the surgical requirement for New Yorkers to obtain a gender marker change on their birth certificates.

The policy, which hasn’t changed since the 1970s, reflects current medical best practices and is a long-overdue precedent, and brings the process up to speed with existing New York State agencies protocols.

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Thank you also to our friends who fundraised for us, but did not ride: John Braun, Bruce Ingersoll, Jodi Judis, Stella Lubowitz, Lucky Summer Light, John Lukash, Leann Michalis, Peter Mohr, Terrance Nichols, Manuel Pena, Craig Ronald, Kelle Ronald and Noah Wagoner. You're awesome!

THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING RIDE FOR PRIDE SUPPORT STAFF AND CREW: Home Base/Party Central: Kelle and Craig Ronald • Bag Hags: Joe Yokally, Talis Polasheniski and Brad-the-Boyfriend • Breakfast Rest Stop: Walter Polasheniski and Sue DelP • Lunch: Bruce Ingersoll, Michelangelo Gonzalez, Manuel Pena and Sue DelP • Party Food: Todd Gordon, Scott Fearing and Kelle Ronald • Party Central Assistants: Alan Metelsky and Deb Hartman • Beverages: Walter and Pam Polasheniski and Sara Zacharias • Cheeredeas: End Line Pics: Kal Wiggall, Jeff Nakita, Jason, Steve & Martha • Interpreting: Tristan Wright • Mapper: Emily Johnson • Road Photographers: Ed Freedman, Owen Zacharias and Maya Polasheniski • Ride Photographers: Owen Zacharias, Manuel Pena and Joe Yokally

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THANK YOU THE OVER 400 PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES WHO SUPPORTED OUR RIDERS THROUGH DONATIONS, INCLUDING: Kelle and Craig Ronald • Scott Fearing and Todd Gordon • Pam and Walter Polasheniski • Jeanne Gainsburg and Ed Freedman • Bruce Ingersoll • Century Liquor and Wine • Park Ave Bikes • Trader Joe’s • Wegmans • TheSelfMadeMen

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR TOP FUNDRAISERS: Jeanne Gainsburg, Scott Fearing, Pam Polasheniski, Aaron Gorelick, David Zona, Ed Freedman, Maya Polasheniski, Adrienne Cheress, Kerry Hannathy Matt Krueger, Jonathan Wetherbee, Hayden Freedman, Brad Flower, Bruce Ingersoll and Sara and Owen Zacharias

* Thank you to Pete Horrocks, our rider in white, who represented all of the people who cannot show their true colors and live authentically.

SHIFT HAPPENS!

RIDE FOR PRIDE 5 • GAY ALLIANCE BIKE RIDE FUNDRAISER • $20,000 RAISED
Making the Scene

My Own Private
Rochester: Lucky Ovalle
By Susan Jordan

Lucky Ovalle was born in NYC, moved to the Syracuse area at age 12, and arrived in Rochester in 2013 to get a degree at the College at Brockport, where she majors in social work and gerontology. She should get her degree in fall 2015. Lucky says, “I would like to work with LGBT youth, mentoring and counseling.”

Lucky has some Cherokee ancestry and identifies as “Queer Two Spirit.” Her interests include biking, hiking, jogging, mountaineering and rock climbing. She says, “I enjoy computer games and writing short stories and poems.” Her favorite authors include Emily Dickinson, Thoreau and Robert Frost.

Lucky lives in Brockport. She has no pets right now, but when she can get one it will be a shiba inu dog. “They’re my favorite breed of dog,” she said. “They are very cute, have a striking elegance, and I love their curly tails. And did I mention they are CUTE?”

Her most admired Rochester people are Gay Alliance Education Director Jeannie Gainsburg, who she worked with last spring, and Julia Saenz, a lawyer with the Empire Justice Center, who works with trans people on name changes and other issues.

This past spring Lucky was an education intern at the Gay Alliance. “It was nice during the semester not to worry about my appearance! One project I did was to create an educational flier for an aging service,” she said. “I also worked as an office volunteer at the end of the semester.” Lucky continues to be a member of the Speakers Bureau.

One of Lucky’s favorite hangouts is Burrito Fresco in Brockport. “They have a variety of burritos,” she said, “including vegetarian and vegan. I prefer chicken or seafood.” She also likes Aladdin’s, and would take out of town visitors there. When Lucky first came to this city, she was impressed by the sculptures in front of the Bachelor Forum, which indicated to her that Rochester is a gay-friendly place. Her favorite is the bi sculpture, which could also be seen as representing genderqueer people. Now all she has to do is get over her nervousness and actually go into the bar!

Lucky jokes that on an ideal Saturday night, she would be “home in my robe with a cup of tea, watching Netflix or reading a book or playing computer games.”

One of the things that Lucky appreciates about Rochester is the ordinance providing anti-discrimination protections for trans people. “I think that is really helpful,” she said, adding, “Brockport campus is a safe place; the college doesn’t tolerate discrimination.”

Lucky says, “I’m a hopeless romantic; everything I do tends to have an essence of romanticism: love of beauty, assuming goodwill from people, having a preconceived idea of how things are – or should be!”
PRIDE INFO:
We start celebrating Thursday, 7/17 with the folks from Mich Ultra helping us to kick off an exciting weekend! Soak up the sun and enjoy your food and drinks outside all weekend long. We are opening at noon Friday, Saturday and Sunday so that the party never ends.

Chef Greg will be grilling your favorites all three days. Be sure to get your free 140 Pride bracelet while they last!

Two floors of entertainment:
Food and drink specials all weekend
Karaoke
140 Float in Parade
Fabulous Drag Shows
Dancing
DJs
Give-a-ways

DAILY EVENTS:
Monday Happy Hour 4-9pm
*Dirty Trivia @ 7pm
Tuesday Happy Hour 4-9pm
*Paint Night 7-9pm (see paintnite.com for more info)
*Karaoke Night with $2 wells all night
Wednesday Happy Hour 4-8pm
*Drag Me To My Destiny @10pm
Thursday Happy Hour 4-8pm
Cocktails & Competition Gayme Night starting at 9pm
Friday Happy Hour 4-9pm
*Dj and dancing on both floors with 2 fabulous Drag Shows starting around 9:30pm
Saturday Happy Hour 4-8pm
*Karaoke downstairs and Dj and dancing upstairs along with 2 awesome Drag Shows starting around 9:30pm
Sunday Happy Hour 2-8pm
*Sunday Funday Mimosas & Bloody Mary’s only $3

***Happy Hour 7 days a week, specials are: $2 well and select drafts; $3 all bottles $4 call drinks
*** Kitchen hours Mon. thru Fri. $4-9pm, Saturdays 5-8pm
Upstairs area available for party’s - please contact us at 585-256-1000. Bachelorette and bachelor party’s always welcome with free reserve seating.

2014 Pride shirts available for $15
Local and State

(NYS continued from page 3)

gender identity.

This is tremendous news for New York and especially for the transgender community, and a great step forward to ensuring many transgender New Yorkers no longer need to undergo a process they not wish to in order to receive an identity document that truly reflects who they are,” said Empire State Pride Agenda Executive Director Nathan M. Schaefer. “This is an issue we’ve been advocating for the past several years and we are grateful for Governor Cuomo’s leadership and the Department of Health for moving us closer to equality and justice for all New Yorkers.

“Under Governor Cuomo’s leadership, New York is reclaiming its rightful place as the progressive capital of the nation and has made significant progress to advance the rights of all New Yorkers, including members of the transgender community. Much work remains and this administration is committed to promoting laws and policies that are fair and just for all,” said Alphonso David, Deputy Secretary for Civil Rights for New York State.

New York joins a number of Federal and state agencies and states that already offer similar policies.

According to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 40 percent of transgender people have faced harassment when presenting identity documents that did not match their gender identity/ expression. In addition, 15 percent report being denied entry or asked to leave because of gender mismatches, and three percent report facing physical assault due to mismatched ID.

“New York has joined several other states that have already modernized their birth certificate policies in the past several years (District of Columbia, Oregon, Washington and Vermont) as well as the federal government, which started updating its gender marker policies in 2010 to reflect modern understandings of transgender people. Not having an updated birth certificate, or having different genders listed on different pieces of ID, can cause problems in getting a job, enrolling in school, obtaining housing or public benefits, and can cause suspicion from public authorities,” said Deputy Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality Lisa Moritz. “This modernized policy makes it more likely transgender people are able to live their lives on an everyday basis without facing or fearing harassment in everyday transactions.

“Transgender New Yorkers face discrimination everyday just trying to be who they are,” said New York Civil Liberties Union Executive Director Donna Lieberman. “We applaud the Department of Health for taking an important step toward a society where the everyday business of being yourself is easier.”

“This is welcome news for transgender people across the country who were born in New York,” said Michael Silverman, Executive Director of the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund. “A birth certificate is a fundamental form of identification. This will ensure that transgender people can obtain accurate birth certificates that reflect who they are. It also means they will stop being subjected to harassment and discrimination in areas like employment where identification is essential to proving eligibility to work.”

In New York State, the Department of Motor Vehicles has been providing gender-appropriate identification cards since 1997, when it eliminated its surgery requirement in favor of a medical certification from a physician, a psychologist, or a psychiatrist attesting to the individual’s affirmed gender. Other states that have amended their policies include: California, District of Columbia, Oregon, Vermont and Washington. More information, including further instructions about the process can be found at the Department of Health’s Bureau of Vital Records at: health.ny.gov/vital_records/birth.htm.

This news comes on the heels of Rochester’s recent announcement that it will extend transition-related healthcare to transgender municipal employees, making it the third city in the U.S. to offer inclusive coverage. The Empire State Pride Agenda continues to fight for the passage of the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) to bring New York up to speed with the more than one third of the country that already provides protections on the basis of gender identity and expression.

See page 15 for a personal view of the issue, and local information.
The filing of this case in North Dakota coincides with the release of new poll results by the Washington Post and ABC News which show that 50 percent of Americans believe that gay and lesbian couples have a constitutional right to marry guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution’s Equal Protection clause. Additionally, 56 percent of Americans and 77 percent of those under the age of thirty support marriage rights for same-sex couples.

In addition to 77 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds, marriage equality enjoys broad support from 46 to 68 percent. Even 50 percent of those between the ages of 46 and 64 support marriage equality. During the 2012 presidential election, 84 percent of voters fell into one of these age brackets where there is majority support for marriage equality.

Among those who say they strongly oppose marriage equality, nearly half say it would be a "major problem," even "somewhat" important.

Other recent polls show rising support for marriage equality among various demographic groups. A March 2014 poll shows 61 percent of Republicans and Republican leaners under the age of 30 support marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples. One month earlier, the New York Times and CBS News released polling that puts marriage equality support among Catholics at 62 percent. Today 44 percent of Americans live in a jurisdiction with marriage equality.

Same-sex couples can legally marry in 22 states and the District of Columbia, while 28 states have a law or constitutional amendment restricting marriage to the union of one man and one woman.

Marriage rights are on hold in some states due to stay pending appeal.

For more information visit www.americanmarriageequality.org.

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

"With today’s addition of North Dakota, courts in every state are considering a freedom to marry case, 70-plus cases in total. With 50 percent of Americans believing the freedom to marry is a constitutional right, and a strong majority supporting marriage for gay couples, it’s time for the Supreme Court to be consistent nationwide. The time is now to get on the right side of history.

Medicare to end exclusion of transition-related surgery

On May 30, the Department Appeals Board at the Department of Health and Human Services issued a ruling invalidating the decades-old discriminatory Medicare policy excluding transition-related surgeries from Medicare coverage.

Rebecca Savoy, Executive Director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said, “The dominance of discrimination against transgender people is falling rapidly. Today’s ruling that transgender Medicare patients should have access to the medically necessary care their doctors prescribe, including transition-related surgeries, is a truly historic victory in the long struggle for full and equal access to medically necessary health care for transgender people. We know all too well the financial and social barriers transgender people experience in accessing the care they need, including a majority of transgender people being excluded from transition-related care because of their gender identity. While this is just the latest and one of many significant developments, we’ve seen out of the Obama administration, we know there is more to come. Having an independent medical review board determine that transgender people deserve access to the medical care their doctor recommends affirms what we already know—that transition-related care bans are designed to discriminate against an already marginalized group of people. We commend the Obama administration for its efforts and look forward to continuing the work of removing transition-related care exclusions from all health policies across the country."

The Task Force has been a leader in working with federal agencies to end the exclusion of transition-related care in all health policies, and this ruling is the latest win in a long and valuable push to secure full equality for transgender people in the health care context.

“As HHS appropriately points out, excluding coverage for sex reassignment surgery is unreasonable as viewed by the standards of the medical profession today—incomplete, unfair, and obsolete,” said SPARTA Policy Director and former Army Captain Allyson Robinson. “The application of scientifically proven, internationally recognized standards of care to recipients of Medicare is a step in the right direction.”

She continued, “As transgender service members continue to put themselves in harm’s way for our country, we look forward to the day when those same standards are applied to them. They’ve certainly earned it.”

SPARTA, an LGBT military organization, includes several hundred transgender members currently serving in uniform.

Feds will provide coverage for employee transition care

Chris Greider on Buzzfeed had the story: The federal government is telling insurers that they can now provide transgender people with coverage for transition-related care—including sex-reassignment surgery—in federal employee health care plans.

Two sources informed of the decision told Buzzfeed the long-time exclusion of transition-related care under the Federal Employees Health Benefits program came to an end on June 13 in the form of a letter sent to the insurance providers. …

The move came two weeks after Medicare, as discussed by a similar move. In the Medicare case, the Department of Health and Human Services’ Departmental Appeals Board issued a ruling that ended a ban on Medicare even considering the coverage of sex-reassignment surgery and related care because a fear of “serious complications” resulting from the “experimental” surgery.

The OPM change does not mean that federal employees with health insurance must cover transition-related care, the sources said, but the change does permit the insurers to do so.

The move by OPM has been long sought by LGBT advocates and appears to be part of a plan taken by OPM to “update various nondiscrimination provisions … to provide greater consistency and reflect current law.”

Under a proposed OPM rule from September 2013 slated to be finalized this month, “An employment practice must not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, age (as defined by the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended), disability, genetic information, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, status as a covered recipient of Medicare, or any other non-merit-based factor.”

-Buzzfeed.com

Attackers spray London gay men’s eyes with ammonia bleach

Three London men were sprayed with a concentrated ammonia solution in two separate attacks inside the Lightbox club in South Lambeth Place, Vauxhall, the first week in June.

One of the attacks was on a 23-year-old gay man from south-west London and his 21-year-old friend after they had begun talking to three people outside the club because it was after closing time, the Evening Standard reports:

“When the woman, said to be East European, discovered the pair were gay ([Attacker] continues page 14)
North Vietnam prepares for third Pride Ride
By Andrew Potts on gaystarnews.com
Photo by Viet Pride

The organizers of Vietnam’s largest public celebration of LGBTI Pride are hoping for an even bigger turnout this year, with 200 people taking part in its first Pride bike ride in 2012 and 250 in 2013.

Hanoi’s annual Viet Pride ride is a convoy of people on bicycles and motorbikes, carrying rainbow flag flaps that represent messages of equality, which is also supported by a program of events.

In 2014 Viet Pride will be celebrated on the first weekend of August and will aim to raise awareness of sexual diversity and the right to love that every person regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity is entitled to.

Viet Pride 2014 will also put a strong emphasis on forging connections and solidarity among LGBTI groups from all over Vietnam through a series of discussions and networking activities.

The events will be held with the support and involvement of civil society organizations from both northern and southern Vietnam, as well as foreign embassies, social enterprises, and the strategic partner of Viet Pride – the Goethe Institute.

The organizing committee also hopes to involve LGBTI organizations from overseas to exchange ideas and build bridges internationally.

Speaking of the progress of Viet Pride, director of the event since 2012 Nguyen Thanh Tam said, “Viet Pride is making small, yet firm and consistent, steps in fostering social acceptance and respect that has been sorely lacking in the Vietnamese society.”

“I am glad that in only three years, Viet Pride has grown to become an annual tradition and symbol of respect for diversity, with Vietnamese LGBTQ youth and allies quickly becoming the leading force.

“I also appreciate the fact that Viet Pride has proven to be not an isolated event or certified within Vietnam but part of a global movement that is changing the world in a way unimaginable just a few decades ago.”

Organizers are yet to release the details of the full schedule of events but these are expected to be posted on the Viet Pride website shortly.


Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/newsfronts/continues-on-page-16
The Power of Paper: Birth Certificates and Gender Identity

By Tristan Wright, Gay Alliance Office Administrator

I hate providing documentation for my legal identity: my license says “male,” but my birth certificate says “female.” When I had my license changed in 2012, I had my birth certificate amended to have the correct name. It arrived with a letter that said, “In cases of gender reassignment, a correction of the sex item on the birth certificate is based upon a legal and medical review. [...] Please note in cases of female to male gender reassignment a complete hysterectomy (removal of ovaries and uterus) is required.”

Living at the time without health insurance, on a meager income of $12,000 a year, a hysterectomy was clearly out of the question. Not to mention the fact that in order to be legitimate and fully male in the eyes of the state would require forsaking any possibility of having my own biological children. It would further require me to provide invasive personal medical documentation about my genitals. So, like plenty of trans* folks, I just figured I’d have that little F on my birth certificate until I die or — at least for the foreseeable future.

However, at the start of June, New York became the sixth state in the nation to permit trans* folks to have a birth certificate with the right gender marker without requiring genital or reproductive surgery. When the announcement was made, I quickly sent an email to the Department of Health, to get the paperwork I needed. This time, their reply was far more helpful, a letter describing how to get the marker changed, and two forms. Here’s the process I’m going through to get the certificate amended.

First, I have to collect two personal documents, the certified copy of my current birth certificate, and the letter from my doctor proving that I “should be considered male for legal and documentation purposes.” My doctor wisely signed a few copies of that letter for me — it’s the same one I used to get my license changed. Next is the Application for Correction of Certificate of Birth, and the Notarized Affidavit of Gender Error. The Affidavit of Gender Error has to be notarized before I can send it in. Lucky for me the Gay Alliance happens to have a notary who volunteers with us. Without that, I’d have to face coming out to a stranger and hopefully get their “approval”.

Once I have those four items together, I’ll be sending them to the Department of Health. And then I’ll wait — they estimate it’ll take about three months. With any luck, by 2015 my birth certificate will finally say male, 28 years after it was first issued.

If you’d like to do the same, send the documents mentioned above to: NYS Department of Health, Corrections Unit, Vital Records Section, PO Box 2602, Albany NY 12220.

Feel free to contact the Gay Alliance with any questions or to arrange an opportunity to meet with our volunteer notary.

The American Equality Bill: Seeking Full Equality in One Bill

By Anne Tucker

The Gay Alliance has recently joined over 250 LGBT organizations nationwide in signing the “Equality Pledge” for full LGBT equality at LGBTEqualityNOW.org. For good reason there is a growing nationwide movement to pass one omnibus LGBTQ civil rights bill rather than aim for incremental legislative steps. Today for instance in Pennsylvania you can legally marry your same-sex partner on Saturday and then be fired on Monday when your boss finds out you are gay.

Even progressive New York State offers no protections for trans people. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) conducted a random poll this year that showed 53 percent of lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender employees remain closeted at work despite advances in public opinion supporting LGBT civil rights.

The sense of inevitability about marriage equality nationwide makes me believe that other major LGBT equality like employment, housing, accommodations, public facility access, education, adoption, healthcare, credit and loans will resolve naturally also... when the evidence is to the contrary.

Pecuniary legislation like the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) has languished for nearly 20 years and now has been so perverted by overly-broad religious exemption language that major organizations like National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), Lambda Legal, the Transgender Law Center and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) warn against its passage. The ACLU says “ENDA’s religious exemption essentially says that LGBT discrimination is different – more legitimate – than discrimination against individuals based on their race or sex.”

Despite the controversy, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) continues to promote the bill… failing to publicize the exemption language that has rendered the bill a concern to LGBT workers.

An alternative is the American Equality Bill (AEB), a proposed federal law that will amend all existing federal civil rights laws to include “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”. Drafted by Karen Doering and refined by Todd Tif Fernandez, attorneys involved in significant LGBT victories and controversies, the bill takes the approach that precedent bills for various areas of discrimination will take too long and require too many resources to be successful.

Some have argued that the opposition of African-Americans and women to the idea of opening up the 1964 Civil Rights Act will doom this “one bill” approach but the bill’s backers assert that it is a win-win situation. Working to file and pass the AEB will stimulate real conversation about LGBT suffering under discrimination and combat the homophobia and transphobia that wind through our culture. For more information and to sign the pledge go to: LGBTEqualityNOW.org.
The American Medical Association on Wednesday passed a resolution that transgender individuals should not be required to undergo genital surgery in order to receive certain medical documents, including birth certificates. Just days after New York became the sixth state to allow transgender individuals to update birth certificates without proof of surgery, the AMA has amended its official position to advocate for similar action. "Birth certificates are primarily used for identification purposes and they are an important part of the national health information infrastructure," the AMA said in its resolution. "Requiring sex-reassignment surgery places a burden on an already marginalized population in order to acquire accurate gender markers on birth certificates." Historically, the AMA's policies regarding transgender health care have often been more progressive than actual public policy as implemented by lawmakers and courts. The AMA currently supports the inclusion of transition-related health care in public and private insurance and opposes policies that would allow governments to deny accurate gender markers on birth certificates. But those policies are not enough. "Any time we fail to accurately reflect our gender when they apply for jobs, travel and seek certain government services, it's a form of discrimination," said Dr. Rachel Levine, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Health. Levine said the AMA's resolution is an important step forward. But more needs to be done to address the discrimination faced by transgender people. "We need to continue to push for policy changes at all levels of government," said Levine. "We need to ensure that transgender people have access to the same rights and protections as everyone else." Levine encourages people to contact their elected officials and urge them to support policies that protect transgender rights. "We need to make sure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity," said Levine. "We need to work together to create a society where everyone is valued and respected."
Interior design trends

By Susan Jordan

Thinking about re-decorating? Interior designer Todd Perkins talked with the Empty Closet about the latest trends in home furnishing and design. He often travels around the country for various business, such as HunterDouglas design screen and roller shades. The hot thing now is roller shades and decorative screen shades. What’s nice about them is you can still see out but you block the light from coming in. There are textured shades, paneled shades. We do a lot of cellular, or double cellular, shades, which people are storing towels in.

“Upholstered antiques are great because they can be reupholstered to fit a certain style and decor, in other words, old made new. A great way to carry family heirloom pieces through the next generation.”

Most people love hardwood floors, as opposed to wall to wall carpeting. “I do a lot of hardwood floors,” Todd said, “and the new thing is engineered hardwood. You can get different panels and it won’t warp or dent as much as regular hardwood. You can get a six-inch-wide plank – just beautiful.”

What’s new in bathroom design? “They are quite amazing,” Todd says, “because when you do a bathroom, hardly ever do you do the tub. Today it’s walk-in showers. Some people are doing resin step-in claw foot tubs. But aside from that, tubs are out. And tiles for floors and showers are popular. The bigger the tile, the better. You can coordinate the bathroom to go with the bedroom, so you won’t have the same look to be updated.”

“Business changes so fast! You’ve got to keep up, by going out to stores, looking at magazines.”

“Right now blinds are a big part of my business, such as HunterDouglas design screen and roller shades. The hot thing now is roller shades and decorative screen shades. What’s nice about them is you can still see out but you block the light from coming in. There are textured shades, paneled shades. We do a lot of cellular, or double cellular, shades, which is insulating. And they can be dropped down from the top when you want to give privacy to a dinner party or bathroom. Metallic blinds are still in, but with easier operating mechanisms such as cordless or even power shades.”

“Changing lighting is always important. “Changing lighting is always a good update,” he says. “Over a kitchen island, hang a pendant light – use a red globe to spice up the color and make it pop.”

When you want to coordinate rooms with colors, Todd says that lighting is important. “Changing lighting is always a good update,” he says. “Over a kitchen island, hang a pendant light – use a red globe to spice up the color and make it pop.”

The old blinds of the past with their long tangly cords are gone. Todd said, “Right now blinds are a big part of my business, such as HunterDouglas design screen and roller shades. The hot thing now is roller shades and decorative screen shades. What’s nice about them is you can still see out but you block the light from coming in. There are textured shades, paneled shades. We do a lot of cellular, or double cellular, shades, which is insulating. And they can be dropped down from the top when you want to give privacy to a dinner party or bathroom. Metallic blinds are still in, but with easier operating mechanisms such as cordless or even power shades.”

“The cool thing is Power Rise – press a button and the shade goes up or down. You can run them from an iPad. Click on your phone and the blinds go up. It’s really innovative what they’re doing.”

Todd sees a lot of changes in interior design, and often the old becomes new again. He said, “I’ve been doing this for 20 years and it’s changed. It’s so innovative, so much easier to operate things. But people want what’s collectible. Wool carpeting is coming back, replacing synthetic. It is a little more expensive, but in the long run it will last longer, saving you money. Brass is back, as in candlestick holders, frames, etc. The old look is becoming in again. Antiques like the old glass-fronted doctor’s medicine cabinets, which people are storing towels in.

Todd said that the most trendy colors right now are primary colors, like orange, yellows, cobalt blue, purples. “I use them for accenting,” he said. “But classic colors like burgundy, caramel colors, sage, are still out there.”

“Panels are majorly in because you can open and close them more easily – and with decorative rods of course. Panels can be made of any fabric, any color.”

“Looking at magazines.”

“All about bedrooms? `Bedrooms are different. And if children are involved, they like to have their own style and environment.” Maybe being involved in creating their own bedrooms will inspire your kids to actually clean them and put their clothes and belongings away. One can always hope.

And kitchens? “There’s so much leeway,” Todd says. “In Connecticut I raised the corner cabinet to be on a different level from the other cabinets. The popular color for cabinets right now is expresso, warm white, or natural wood. You can get different panels and it won’t warp or dent as much as regular hardwood. You can get a six-inch-wide plank – just beautiful.”

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Shoulders to Stand On

Trans* 101
By Evelyn Bailey

Over the next several months Shoulders to Stand On will look at the history of transgender people.

Transgender is a blanket term used to describe all people who are not cisgender. And what you may ask is cisgender? A person who experiences gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex all align (e.g., man, masculine, and male; also woman, feminine, and female).

“Sex” refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women (people often use it to refer to sexual intercourse itself), “Gender” refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, attributes, and activities that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. “Male” and “female” are sex categories, while “masculine” and “feminine” are gender categories.

Aspects of sex will not vary substantially between different human societies, while aspects of gender may vary greatly. There is much confusion around these two terms, and cisgendered people often become confused and lingo of any who does not conform to the binary image of masculine or feminine regardless of the actual sex of the individual. To most cisgender Americans, humans are defined by their genitalia and nothing more!

Androgyny is a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity.

Homosexuality is a medical definition for a person who is attracted to someone of the same sex.

A lesbian is a woman who is sexually and emotionally attracted to other women; a female homosexual. The words dyke, bim, femme, lipstick lesbian, Sapphic sister, woman-loving woman are among the many labels that have been used to describe the gender expression of lesbians.

Gay describes a man who is attracted to men, but is often used and embraced by women to describe their same-sex relationships as well. Faggot is a derogatory slang term for gay men, which is a person who is attracted to members of their own sex, often times to align it with their sexual identity, or they may live their lives as the opposite sex. FTM/MTF is a person who has undergone medical treatments to change their biological sex (Female To Male or Male To Female), often times to align it with their gender identity.

Transvestite is a person who dresses as the opposite gender expression of their sex and gender identity (“cross-dresses”) for any one of many reasons, including relaxation, fun, and sexual gratification; may be heterosexual.

A Drag King is a person who consciously performs “femininity,” usually in a show or theatre setting, presenting an exaggerated form of feminine expression, usually done by a man who identifies as cisgender male, or by a transwoman.

A Drag Queen is a person who consciously performs “masculinity,” usually in a show or theatre setting, presenting an exaggerated form of masculine expression, usually done by a cisgender woman or transman.

Gender identity is the internal perception of an individual’s gender, and how they name themselves.

Gender expression is the external display of gender, through a combination of dress, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally measured on a scale of masculinity and femininity.

Gender variant is another term for trans, as is genderqueer. These terms do not imply surgery or any kind of transition from one binary gender to the other, but rather an identity encompassing both genders – a third gender.

Intersex is a person born with both kinds of genitalia. Often doctors and/or parents make the decision for these infants as to what their gender will be, instead of permitting the individual to decide when they are old enough.

Two-Spirit is a term traditionally used by some Native American people to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both genders. (This writer is appreciative of the courage of the offensive term bender in a previous article about the Native American traditions of homosexuality.)

Queer was a derogatory slang term used to identify LGBTQ* people. Today “queer” is a term that has been embraced and reclaimed by the LGBTQ* community as a symbol of pride, representing all individuals who are out of the gender and sexuality “norms”.

Transgender men and women make explicit what the rest of us take for granted concerning our gender identities and gender presentations. Most cisgender people feel comparatively comfortable with our bodies; we might complain about particular physical attributes and we may be uncomfortable with various social and economic restraints encountered because of our sex, but the majority does not question the fundamental issue of whether we are female or male. Transgendered people do not have this luxury because they feel at odds with their birth assignments. Some might want to alter the body and gender they grew up with to the opposite body and gender presentation. In order to do that, they have to define more explicitly for themselves what their gender identity is and what their gender expression will be.

Shoulders To Stand On will continue this historical presentation in the August and September issues of the Empty Closet.
As a teacher I enjoyed my young college age students. They were amusing, alert, and quick to learn. I also prize small animals for their affection. Geriatric papers keep the elderly alert, amused and active. A twenty-year-old male is not a puppy, frisky as he may be.

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Faith Matters

DYKES MARCH TO A DIFFERENT BEAT

By Rev. Irene Manning

Pride parades took place all over the country in June, and Boston’s was this weekend.

Race, unfortunately, continues to be one of the fault lines in many of our Pride festivals across the country. As is gender identity.

Long before Black and Latino Prides marched to their soulful and salsa beats in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, respectively, Lesbian Pride marches came on the scene in the ‘70s. And they were protest marches publicly challenging the political stronghold and exclusionary practices of Gay Pride events — as Wikipedia correctly notes — “by white gay men at the expense of lesbians in general and women of color in particular.”

By the 1990s, Dyke Marches emerged. Unlike Lesbian Pride marches (which were not an ongoing tradition in the ‘70s and ‘80s), Dyke Marches are now in their second decade of existence. This year marks exactly Boston’s 20th anniversary. These marches bring to the fore not only the visibility, activism, gifts and talents of lesbians, but they also highlight the visibility, activism, gifts and talents of all self-identified women within the LGBT community.

Heather Kough, co-facilitator of this year’s Boston Dyke March Committee, wrote in an email, “We are a grassroots, all-volunteer group with a deep commitment to inclusion, meaning that participa-
tion is open to folks across the gender and orientation spectrums, people of all races, ethnicities, ages, economic backgrounds, sizes, and physical abilities. To sum up, ‘The Dyke March Is For Everyone!’

And the Boston Dyke March poster makes it a point to celebrate on what the committee means by ‘Everyone’: ‘Lesbians—dykes—queers—bi-women—boy-chicks—tomboys—griffs—lesbian moms—lesbians—females—bitches—transwomen—androgs—transmen—gay girls—bois—womanists—for dykes—sorority girls with pearls who are sleep-
ting together—dykes on bikes—lesbian crones—Afican american lesbians—rural dykes—goddesses—pentequers—poly girls—amazonis—hippy chicks—lipstick lesbians—Asian dykes—lesbian aggressors—dykes in wheelchairs—wise old les-
bian—leather dykes—babdykes ... and You!’

As Boston Dyke March celebrated its 20th anniversary, I helped them, as one of three co-facilitators this year, to remember the 40th anniversary of the Combahee River Collective — a forgotten shoulder that has both shaped and informed theirs and all present-day feminist activism.

In 1974 the Combahee River Collective was founded in Boston by the bolda-
cious act of several lesbians and feminists of African descent. And as a sister-
tood that they understood that their acts of protest are shrouded by and because of their ancestors—known and unknown—who came before them, the Collective’s name honors the resistance action by abo-

cisionist Harriet Tubman in 1863 in South Carolina, known as the Combahee River Raid. Tubman, in a military raid that she both conceived and directed, freed over 750 slaves. No one—male or female—in U.S. military history during slavery had been able to do the same.

‘The Combahee River Collective was not only a response to the Black National-
list and misogynistic politics of the Black Power Movement, but the Collective was also excoriating the exclusionary practice of feminism.

With the rise of the Second Wave Feminist Movement that had primarily been an intentionally exclusive women’s country club that spoke to Betty Friedan’s feminine mystique of upper-crust “pumps and pearls-wearing” white women, black women — straight or gay — had neither voice nor visibility.

In explaining black women’s lives as interlocking oppressions, the “Comba-
hee River Collective Statement” is one of the earliest and most lauded manifestos to unapologetically denounce single-issue agendas and politics coming out of both black male and white feminists—straight and queer—circles.

Demita Frazier, Beverly Smith, and Barbara Smith were the primary authors of the Statement. In querying Frazier did they knew at the time what a seminal document they wrote, Demita who still resides in Boston humbly stated, “We wrote it as a collective. We crafted the Statement at a time it was ready to be heard. The content and the fullness of it came from our conscious-raising groups and testifying with one another. Although we were young and evolving we wanted to ensure an intergenerational connection to black and women of color feminism.”

Reflecting on the 40th anniversary of Combahee, lesbian activist Barbara Smith told Ebony Magazine she’s “... happy that now being called a Black feminist is often considered a compliment.”

As in the day of the Combahee River Collective, Boston continues to be one of the intellectual and activist circles of femi-
nism. The Boston Dyke March is follow-

ing that tradition. It is the nation’s third largest and most progressive march with over 3,000 in attendance.

Sadly, little has changed, even in 2014, in terms of the racial and gender compa-
rison of the organizational and planning committees of Pride parades across the nation. People of color Pride festivals and Dyke Marches, to name just a few, have been relegated to the lowest rungs of society unless they “passed” and “went straight.” It was accept-
able to erase, mock, and assault those with trans* identities because they had no recourse; authority figures would ignore them or even imply that their identities were sufficient cause for whatever censure or violence was levied against them.

The trans* community is coming of age right now. There is a side to it that appears divisive: arguments over terminology, the boundaries of the trans* umbrella and who belongs under it, our place in the

Margaret Stanley

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larger LGBT spectrum. These conflicts are not just impulsive as they may be because they are helping trans* communities establish a distinct identity within the larger society, often feeling as if they are a subset of as opposed to a side. Trans women are making it clear that they are not gay men in dresses, trans men that they aren’t butch lesbians. Genderqueer and other non-conforming people are making it clear that they are trans, and that many trans* people go through when trying to understand themselves. Having more clearly established identities will allow people to distinguish what care they need and the best options when working towards improving their lives and expressing their identities. There will be a greater acknowledgement of and understanding and acceptance of trans* issues in mainstream and LGBTQ culture, and acceptance and understanding will grow incrementally as education improves.

Coming of age and establishing identity are never easy or simple. It’s often more confusing and ridden with conflict. The trans community must focus on fostering understanding and education and deal with this awkward period with grace and compassion, while we encourage our LGB and straight and cisgender allies to acknowledge the same. If we work towards education rather than condemnation we will be able to emerge from this troubled period with the respect of the community at large, and an environment that is safer and more welcoming to all of us.

What’s Bothering Brandon?

I LOVE (HATE) A PARADE

By Brandon W. Brooks

Each year, we as LGBTQ persons celebrate and broadcast our pride in the form of a parade. This parade, known across the world now as The Gay Pride Parade, is the physical embodiment of our continuing struggle, strength as a community, and fight towards true equality.

It is our time to show our surrounding neighborhoods, cities and towns just what constitutes our colorful population, that we are not backing down in our demands for equal rights and representation, and that we as LGBT persons are simply “the same.”

Some parades are larger than others. Some are louder and more colorful, but they are parades nonetheless. They are parades, nonetheless, not only the fact that individual events exist everywhere, but that local companies, businesses, religious organizations, unions and families support the LGBT cause, and are willing to come out into the light to demonstrate that.

Pride Parades contain many facets of the LGBT population, in that sub-groups will often partake in celebrating. Pride by walking, driving or financially supporting the parade itself. Whether it be the family-oriented LGBT couple, the young (often underdressed) twink spouting of solidarity, the seasoned Leather-Daddy fraternity, the Trans community, or the pro-female-fourth-wave feminists (usually citing law and save-moms maxims we all said to poorly forget or undervalue), the Pride Parade acts to showcase these components (among many others) of our growing community.

So where’s the rub with that? We often find the Pride Parade and the Pride month of June (July in Rochester) to be a mixture of feelings. I usually experience an invigorated sense of community, belonging and even a renewed sense of trust and hope in humanity at large. It is quite a sight to see, but that is not always the case. Over the course of my short lifetime, our nation has truly made leaps and bounds – it’s great to see so much powerful and life-changing progress.

Without the other hand, it wouldn’t be completely honest for me to say that there are the only feelings that I experience. As with everything (with me), there are pangs to be felt, witnessed, articulated and endured. It is curious to experience the feeling of both pride in the self and community, while also experiencing the fear of future obscurity, the worry of a history forgotten and discarded, and the urge of why the LGBTQ community may suffer these heavy misfortunes.

As we look forward to the next Pride Month of June (July in Rochester) to showcase these components (among many others) of our growing community, we hope, Rochester can be included, with its local companies, businesses, religious organizations, unions and families supporting and participating the parade, of numerous cities) as regulated, standardized and homogenized in order to seem more “family-friendly.”

Indeed many shall we say, “mature” members of the surrounding community of Rochester itself have expressed a sense of disappointment and even reproach from the larger LGBT genre- nations, due to their expressed desire to celebrate all facets of the LGBT population in the parade. Many view the “modern” parades (of numerous cities) as regulated, normalized and homogenized in order to seem more “family-friendly.”

This idea of “family-friendly” truly disturbs me. To say that Pride Parades, in their most colorful and varied form, are not “family-friendly” is akin to saying that the LGBT population is itself not “family-friendly.” Some cite the nudity, or the displays of sex positive education, as not appropriate for children and families. However, do I see many grieving fourth-wave feminists correcting the (sometimes willfully) ignorant, heteronormative masses.

With President Obama’s recognition of June as National LGBT Pride Month, my agitation and worry has reached new heights. Do we really need or want a month commemorating our struggle for equality, when in actuality our struggle is taking place throughout the twelve months? I fear this may alter the psyche of LGBTQ and heterosexual persons nation-wide, implying to us all that the fight for equality is now completed, finished and over with.

These worries may be premature, or the result of my over-defensively-optimistic world view, but I urge nonetheless. I urge all of us, LGBT and straight, to consider these possibilities as we watch this year’s parade pass by. Let us at least consider and observe that there is still hope, be it in Rochester, in curing the morally corrupt nature of LGBT persons. Until these yokels are no longer, I continue to be faithfully bothered.

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

Until these yokels are no longer, I continue to be faithfully bothered.
Find the friends, fun, and common interests you're looking for through the various groups listed here.

**DIGNITY-INTEGRITY**

D-I Rochester meets weekly at 5 p.m. at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. FitzHugh St., corner of Broad St. We have the following services and activities for the month of July, 2014:

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

Our fourth Sunday Potluck theme for June is “Sunday Sandwiches”. Since summer has finally begun, we thought it would be wonderful to have ice cream and the fixings for “dinner.” Remember that “life is short; eat dessert first”, so ask a friend or two and join us for cool time!

You can call the Hotline at 585-234-5092 or check our website at www.di-rochester.org/ for updates on services and activities.

**OPEN ARMS METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER**

Starting in July, we will be having guest preachers from Colgate Divinity School for our Sunday services. They will bring diverse themes and excitement through our new Pride Worship Series. Each week our guest preacher will do a sermon based on the rainbow colors and what each one represents on the rainbow flag. Sunday Services begin at 10:30 a.m. and are followed by our coffee time and some good conversation!

Be sure to be here for the ongoing celebration of Pride with our Potluck Pride and Game Night Saturday, July 12, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Put some Pride in your potluck and some potluck in your Pride and play some games... with Pride of course!

**ROMANS**

Our July meeting will take place at Empire Haven Nudist Park. Members can enjoy the facilities at the park between 12 noon and 5 p.m. at a discounted entrance fee.

We will hold our meeting at one of the campsites and enjoy a BBQ sponsored by the club’s president. It will be a day of outdoor fun that also provide us with the opportunity to mingle with other nudists in the area. Empire Haven is a mixed nude camp located in Moravia, New York. It hosts the annual Northeast Naturist Festival from July 29 to Aug. 3 this year, that offers over 150 scheduled activities throughout the week. More information can be found at http://www.empirehaven.net/events.html.

July is the month for ROMANS members to register for the Gay Naturists International’s NakedFest in Maryland. Join us if you want to experience living clothes free for up to 10 days in a friendly and accepting environment. ROMANS is a social club for gay and gay-friendly male nudists over 21. Please check out our website at www.wnyromans.com. You can also contact the ROMANS at message line 585-281-4964, by E-mail wnyromans@yahoo.com or via regular mail at PO Box 92293, Rochester, NY 14602.
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Wear the Colors for $1.00 off Draft and Bottled Beer
9pm – 2am
Great view of the Fireworks!

Frankie & Jews
Thursday, July 17th
7pm – 10pm

Rochester Pride Events
Friday, July 18th – Flag Raising Ceremony
Come out after the Ceremony for our Extended Happy Hour til 9pm

Saturday, July 19th – Parade and Festival
Open at 2pm for Pre Parade Festivities!
Walk to the Parade from the Pub
After the Festival the Party continues with $1.00 off all mixed drinks ~ 8pm – 2am

Sunday, July 20th – Pride Picnic
2 for 1 Drink Specials from Open to Close

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**Arts & Entertainment**

**Singer/songwriter Betty Who headlines Roc Pride Festival 2014**

By Adam Young

Singer/songwriter Betty Who will take the stage as headline at the Pride Festival, at Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park at Manhattan Square on Saturday, July 19 at 7 p.m.

The show will be emceed by the lovely and talented drag queen duo Samantha Vega and Kash Davis. Tickets are $10 online, or $15 at the gate.

The Australian artist’s career has gained steady momentum since the release of her debut EP, “The Movements” last spring, spawning the dance hit “Somebody Loves You.” Spencer Stout of Salt Lake City, Utah used the song as a catalyst for a flashmob marriage proposal to his partner Dustin at a local Home Depot.

The video soon went viral on YouTube with over 12 million views to date.

The artist’s sophomore effort, the EP “Slow Dancing,” was released by RCA Records in April and includes songs “Alone Again” and “Heartbreak Dream.” According to MTV.com, “Betty Who blends indie and pop music into an irresistible mix of bold soundscapes, Top 40 hooks, and knowing lyrics.” Both of her EPs have received rave reviews on iTunes.

Betty Who will be performing in Rochester on the heels of appearances at other Pride events in Columbus, Chicago, New York City, Minneapolis, and St. Louis throughout June.

This fall, she will be joining Katy Perry on her Prismatic Tour throughout her native Australia.

Roc Pride will be held July 18, 19, and 20. July 18 will kick-off Pride with the flag ceremony at M.K. Jr. Memorial Park at 6 p.m. and Rainbow Ride. July 19 will include the Pride Parade, Family Fun Time, and Festival (including Betty Who in concert), and July 20 will see the annual Pride Picnic fundraiser at Geneseo Valley Park.

For more information about Betty Who, visit www.bettywhomusic.com. For more information about Roc Pride 2014, see the story on page one, the calendar on page 34, and www.gayalliance.org/pride.

**Disney’s Tom Vazzana returns home to direct “Nunsense” at Blackfriars**

It’s been 20 years since Rochester audiences have seen a full production of the smash hit off-Broadway sensation, “Nunsense.” This summer the wait is over at local star Phyl Contestable returns as the Reverend Mother Regina in Blackfriars’ productions.

“Nunsense,” which is written by Dan Goggin, begins when the Little Sisters of Hoboken discover that their cook, Sister Julia, Child of God, has accidentally poisoned 52 of the sisters, and they are in dire need of funds for the burials. The sisters decide that the best way to raise the money is to put on a variety show, so they take over the school auditorium, which is currently set up for the eighth grade production of “Grease.”

The prestigious Tom Vazzana, who has directed and choreographed several productions of “Nunsense” all over the country, returns as the director and choreographer of Blackfriars’ production this summer. In addition to a long career performing in Off-Broadway shows, Broadway tours and Broadway European tours, Mr. Vazzana is the Show Director at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida where he has directed “Beauty and The Beast” for Disney on Ice, “Hairspray” and the Hoop Dee DOO Revue. He is the creator and the director of the first Disney Glow in the Dark “Nightmare Before Christmas Parade”, Senior Show Director for Disney Asia Pacific, the development director of Hong Kong Disneyland and all Asian parades, shows and nighttime spectacles. He is also the Senior Show Director for Disney markets in India, Vietnam, Korea, and China and is collaborating with Disney on the entertainment development for Shanghai Disneyland in the coming years.

“Nunsense” is a unique theatrical experience. The show has a simplicity and truth about it that resonates with everyone,” says Mr. Vazzana. “It’s heartwarming and it’s funny!”

This Blackfriars’ company has an authenticity, largely due to Phyl Contestable as Reverend Mother. “I will be re-creating many moments from the original production that I believe (“Nunsense” continues page 28).

**JCC stages “Hairspray” July 19-27**

JCC SummerStage presents “Hairspray, the Musical”!, with music by Marc Shaiman, lyrics by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, book by Mark O’Donnell and Thomas Meehan.

Based on the popular John Waters cult film of the same name, “Hairspray” explores the impact on 1962 Baltimore when a plus sized dancer decides it’s time to end race segregation on television.

Performances will be Saturday, July 19 at 8 p.m.; Sunday, July 20 at 2 p.m., Wednesday, July 23 at 7 p.m.; Thursday, July 24 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, July 26 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, July 27 at 2 p.m.

Since 1977, JCC CenterStage is the resident professional theatre at the Jewish Community Center, 1209 Edgewood Ave. Performing in the JCC Hart Theater, CenterStage presents a five-show subscription series of plays and musicals, the SummerStage, musicals performed by area high school and college students and other special events.

**Bill Evans says farewell to Rochester with July 5 dance concert**

As he retires from the College at Brockport and prepares to relocate to Providence, Rhode Island, Bill Evans presents an Evening of Dance and Performance Art with featured guest artist Claire Porter. The performance will take place July 5 at 7:30 p.m., at Hartwell Dance Theater, Brockport.

Claire Porter is a highly-acclaimed choreographer, dancer, writer and performance artist. She will be in residence this summer at the annual Bill Evans Dance Teachers’ Intensive at the College at Brockport.

On Aug. 1, Dr. Don Halquist, Mr. Evans’ husband and a leading member of the Bill Evans Dance Company for 29 years, will assume the position of Dean of the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development at Rhode Island College in Providence. On Aug. 31, William (Bill) Evans will become Emeritus Visiting Professor of Dance/Guest Artist at The College at Brockport. On Sept. 2, he will assume the position of Artist in Residence/Professor of Dance in the Joan Palladino School of Dance at Dean College in Franklin, Massachusetts.

After 10 years as full-time faculty members at The College at Brockport, where Evans served as Guest Artist/Visiting Professor of Dance and Halquist served as Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Education and Human Development, the “academic couple” are moving on. This is a happy/sad occurrence. Happy because of the extraordinary opportunities available to Dr. Halquist and the chance for Evans to continue his work in a thriving school of dance, Sad because both men are reluctant to say goodbye to cherished friends they have made in western New York, and to their beloved Brockport students and colleagues and the many members of the Rochester area dance community.

The July 5 concert will be an evening of mostly humorous text and movement. Claire Porter has created one work and re-staged another for William Evans and Don Halquist — “In Gloves and See You Around.” Both will be reprised for this concert. Porter will create a new work for part

(Bill Evans continues page 28)
Drag Race who was named by Entertainment Weekly as their America's Next Drag Superstar, plays Adaora Jarr, a twisted bartending version of herself. "It's kind of fun. I'm flattened that I've even considered enough that I can play a crazy version of myself." Pandora says. "I know a lot of bitter queens so it was easy to take something from them and add it to this poor shell of a Pandora."

"The Good, the Bad, and the Funny" returns July 16 at Equal Grounds

Announcing the return of "The Good, the Bad, and the Funny: An Open Mic Event for the Transgender and Intersex Communities," on Wednesday, July 16, 7:30 p.m. at Equal Grounds Coffee House, 750 South Ave.

"The Good, the Bad, and the Funny" is an opportunity for members of the Transgender and Intersex communities to stand up and share their stories.

Organizer Shauna O'Toole says, "We share many of the same joys and sorrows in our journeys to being our true selves. Along the way, we run into the strange and bizarre, things that just make us shake our heads. If we pay attention, we even find events that are simply funny and make us laugh."

During Pride 2012, "The Good, the Bad, and the Funny" was a standing room only event at Equal Grounds Coffee House. "We hope to again fill Equal Grounds with stories and support for each other," Shauna said.

A tale of two Alpacas

By Merle Exit

Once upon a time there lived the Pine family that dwelled in a big house. As the years went by the offspring flew the coop as Mary and her husband Fran, were left alone with their bichon dogs, Max and Mandy.

Across the way was this 1870s stone farm house that Mary admired. It sat on some acres of land and had a pond. Mary heard that the house was up for sale and thought, "Why not buy it and turn it into a bed and breakfast?" Mary, having grown up on a farm had some other ideas as well. "The pond shall have a duck, swan, and turtles. The outside of our part of the house shall have a waterfall that leads into a koi pond. Fresh eggs are shall have hens."

Fran was okay with this but Mary wanted more. She wanted to have some pet alpacas.

Fran needed to come up with an anniversary gift, so he shopped on buying three alpacas. Due to their being "pets" the fiber that they produced would be of less quality than ones used to make clothing. That made Fran happy regarding the cost.

Mary told her mommey about this. The problem was that her mommey was very sick and staying in a nursing home. Her mommey was saddened because she felt that she would not live long enough to see the alpacas.

In the meantime, Kevin and Sue Zarin owned Eastland Alpacas at a not so far away place in Mr. Joy, Kevin and Sue, hearing the sad story, said, "Let's lean you two alpacas so you can take them to this nursing home." Mary and Fran placed the alpacas in the back of an SUV. They sat down comfortably and enjoyed the ride.

When they took it to the nursing home (even had them riding the elevators), everyone was filled with glee, especially Mary's mommey.

Mary and Fran returned the alpacas and after they purchased and restored the house, Fran bought Wilson, Bryce and Freddy (who will let you feed them).

The property was named Airy View Bed and Breakfast, located at 4956 Airy View Dr. The house had two pretty and comfortable rooms upstairs and one downstairs, called the Lancaster Room, which overlooks the waterfalls.

In case you want to fish, forget the koi pond. The bigger pond is stocked with bass and blue gill to "catch and release".

Merle and Laurie stayed overnight, listened to the tale and had a delicious breakfast in the morning. www.airyviewbnb.com

"Wow, an alpaca farm!" said Merle. "I wonder if I can pet them" (she has already held a three-month-old lion cub in her arms and cuddled up to a giraffe). They then drove to the 30-acre Eastland Alpacas as where they met Kevin and Sue at the "store", located at 2089 Risser Mill Rd.

The store had lots of clothing, such as sweaters, socks, gloves, ear warmers and blankets. You could even buy yarn. Sheep's wool might be warm but the fiber from an alpaca is warmer and weighs much less. "Oh, goofy," said Merle, "I can wear these with my sandals even when it's 10 degrees out."

Kevin and Sue took Merle and Laurie on a tour where they first stopped into the barn. There were bails of straw, just some of the alpacas, and a few young cats who like to play with the furry Huaaca alpacas. It seemed that the alpacas had all recently taken a haircut around their ears and tails (because from the neck up)

After putting these blue plastic "slippers" over their shoes, Merle and Laurie were taken out to see the rest of the group. They were all different colors, pretty and docile. Feeding them was fun for Merle especially when Katarina came up to her. She was all white with buck teeth on the bottom (they later learned that alpacas only have bottom teeth). Merle and Katarina seemed to glance into each other's eyes as Merle flashed a kiss and they obviously fell in love. But it was only a short term romance.

With many more alpacas to visit, Merle could not help but take a photo of "Joe Cool", with his furry face and sun glasses. It was an experience that Merle will always treasure. www.eastlandalpacas.com
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Tickets available at The Bachelor Forum or DJ Hector

www.pride.bachelor4m.com
New fantasy action novel dedicated to Gay Alliance Education Director
By Jeanne Gainsburg

As an up-and-coming writer, I was thrilled when my daughter Rebecca Gainsburg, age 17, published her first novel, Dragon Chick (book one of the trilogy) featuring a strong, funny, bad-ass heroine.

Book two, X Greene, just published, has made me even prouder. She has dedicated the book to me, which brought this to me as a young author.

As I write I discover my characters in her book.

Tell me a little bit about this book?

"It has fantasy, action, adventure and romance. I originally wrote it as a young adult book, but most of the reviews so far have been by adults, and it is clearly resonating with them as well."

Your seven reviews on Amazon were outstanding. All of them five stars! How did that make you feel when you saw those?

"Amazed! I actually wrote the book for myself. I wasn’t even thinking about publishing it, so to have complete strangers read it and love it really helped to validate me as a young author."

What made you want to feature a gay character?

"I’m not sure I really decided. As I write I discover my characters and how they fit into the plot. Once I got the idea in my head I knew he had to be gay."

Do you think your past volunteer work and involvement with the Gay Alliance influenced your decision?

"Definitely, yeah. My experiences, how I’ve been brought up... it seemed just as natural for him to be gay as for him to be straight."

Did you worry at all about having gay characters would upset people or influence sales?

"Maybe a little, but at the same time I wanted to represent my beliefs and be true to myself."

On Friday, July 18 between 5-6 p.m., the Rainbow Riders will be kicking off Pride Weekend by biking through the streets of Rochester in the Flag Ceremony at Martin Luther King Jr. Park at Manhattan Square.

The Rainbow Riders are made up of the bikers and support crew who helped to raise $20,000 for the Gay Alliance during the Tough Mudder to Tears. Below is a free ticket into the event that you work and an official Roc Pride tee shirt! If you are already a Gay Alliance volunteer you do not need to register. You will get information on Roc Pride volunteer opportunities automatically.

If you have never registered as a Gay Alliance or Pride volunteer, you can do so by this link: http://www.gayalliance.org/support/volunteer. Pride: We’re Full Of It!

The Gay Alliance, 875 East Main Street, Rochester, New York 14605 • Phone: (585) 244-8640 • Fax: (585) 244-8206
Website: www.gayalliance.org • E-Mail: info@gayalliance.org • Hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm • Board Presidents: David Zona, Scott Fearing
Executive Directors: Jessica Muratore, Education Director: Jeanne Gainsburg
Database: Kat Wiggall
Youth Intern: Dawn Balis
Bookkeepers: Christopher Hennelly
Office Administrator: Tristan Wright
The Empty Closet: Editors: Susan Jordan E-mail: susan@gayalliance.org Phone: (585) 244-9030
Designer: Jim Anderson
Fax: (585) 244-8246
Advertising: (585) 244-9030
Ad Sales: Brandon W. Brooks E-mail: brandonb@gayalliance.org
**JULY SAGE CALENDAR**

Rainbow Sage Lunch/Day program:

**July 1** ....... Meet at MCC church at 11:30am for a trip to Fingerlakes Gaming and Racetrack. Address is 5857 State route 96 Farmington, NY14425. (Please call 585-924-3232 for directions to facility.) We will be having lunch at the Vineyard buffet and enjoying the excitement of the facilities. Players card needed for senior discounts or valid New York state ID to players card day of trip. Jessie and Roza will be your hostesses for this event.

**July 4** ....... Happy 4th of July.

**July 8** ....... Brown bag Lunch at MCC church at 11:30am-2:00pm.

**July 10** ....... 10:30am (NO YOGA), Audet will be hosting Friendly’s breakfast club (2425 West Henrietta rd., Henrietta, 14623)

**July 15** ....... 11:45am-1pm, Meet at Equal=Grounds for lunch (750 South Ave., 14620). Rockin Roza will be your hostess.

**July 18-20** ... Happy Pride (check out July EC, Pride Guide, GAGV website or Facebook page for Pride events and cost of tickets.)

**July 20** ....... Rainbow SAGE Pride potluck picnic hosted by Audet. Chicken BBQ grilled by Audet with members asked to bring their own chair, beverage and dish to pass, please. (Pride admission ticket must be purchased) Picnic will be held by Roundhouse and handicap parking, look for SAGE signs.

**July 22** ....... Meet at Jay’s Diner for lunch (noon-1:30pm) and then off to St. John’s Meadows for housing talk & tour (2-3pm). 1 Johns Arbor Drive West, Rochester. Off Elmwood Ave., please call 585-760-1300 for driving instructions. Housing tour is given in the Briarwood building; please arrive 10 minutes prior to 2pm as the talk & tour will start promptly at 2pm. Your hosts will be Jessie and Roza.

**July 29** ....... Brown bag Lunch 11:30am-12:30pm with activity to follow, close down around 2pm.

Please note days, times and some events will have fees. GAGV calendar and Facebook page will be updated with change of events or cancellations. Volunteers are always welcome for clean-up, set up, teaching a talent, hosting an event and just coming to play games with Sage members. All are welcome.

Rainbow Sage programs: Rainbow Sage yoga is every Tuesday and Thursday from 10:30–11:30am with a $5 fee. Yoga is held at the MCC church and instructed by Tom.

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**The Gay Alliance Speaking Engagements, June 2014**

- SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Program at Johnson C. Smith University in North Carolina
- Just Gender: Film and Panel Discussion at The Little Theater
- Shoulders-To-Stand-On Film and Discussion at WXXI
- SafeZone Training at Center for Dispute Settlement
- Shoulders-To-Stand-On Film and Discussion at Our & Equal NY Finger Lakes Chapter
- Shoulders-To-Stand-On Film and Discussion at the Arnett Library
- Working With LGBTQ Clients at East House
- The New Black: Film and Panel Discussion at The Little Theater
- Effective LGBTQ Education at Canandaigua VA Medical Center

Quotes from evaluations following June Presentations:

"Eye opening, informative, empowering. Excellent! The best part of the workshop was the ability to learn without judgment, preconception or shame. I’m so glad I took the step to sign up for this presentation. You made a difference for me and positive impact on me."

"Unifying in regards to creating an environment; they encouraged everyone in learning more about the LGBTQIA population. This workshop was excellent and very informative. Not much to improve. Awesome opportunity.”

"Very impactful and enlightened information for me. Presenter was very knowledgeable. I’m very impressed with the information and look forward to sharing with my co-workers.”

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**JULY SAGE CALENDAR**

SAGE members celebrate Audet Price’s volunteer work at a lunch in his honor.

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**Ride For Pride**

Left: Rider Aaron Gorelick, made good on his promise to shave his head if he raised $1,000. Right: Bonnie Hallman-Dye and Chuck Dye on tandem.

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Left: Jeanne Gainsburg’s husband, Ed Freedman, son, Hayden Freedman and friend, Sara Zacharias, try and warm up the lunch break. Right: Education Director, Jeanne Gainsburg, made good on her promise to ride the entire 50 miles dressed as Tinker Bell if she raised $2,000.
Free testing for HIV exposure is available from New York State Health Department, call Rochester Regional Hotline at (585) 423-8081, or 1-800-563-5043 for pay phones outside Rochester. During or after being tested, impaired people should call (585) 423-8120 (TDD). New Rapid HIV Testing now available in 30-40 minutes. Statewide information can be found at www.health.ny.gov/doh/hiv/default.htm. Other organizations which provide AIDS related services are as follows:

LGBT HEALTH

Trillium Health Trillium is the leading provider of HIV/AIDS related services in the Finger Lakes and the Southern Tier. On-site services include HIV testing and counseling, HIV and Specialty Medical Care, and many more. Surgery offices in Geneva and Bath. Trillium Health is also a leader in providing HIV education and training to members of the LGBTQ community. Contact website: www.trilliumhealth.org. Main Office: 259 Monroe Ave., Rochester, NY 14607; Main Phone: 585-545-7200; Health Outreach and Counseling Site: 338 East Main St., Rochester, NY 14607; Case Management After Hours (Toll-Free): 585-275-5151; Fax: 585-244-6459. Free HIV testing from 6:30-7:30pm, Tuesday, Wednesdays 1-4pm through HIVDS-TR, Thursdays 1-4pm to Aeron Baptist Church, 175 Genesee St.

Anthony L. Jordan Health Center, Prevention and Primary Care Center: Provides Medical Case Management, Mental Health, Primary Care, HIV Counseling and Testing and rapid HIV testing. (585) 423-2872. Fax: (585) 423-2797. HIV testing is done on-site. Website available for more information, call (585) 423-2797.

CDC National STD and AIDS hotline 1-800-222-1222. (TTY) (585) 433-2634.

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley Referral to physicians and service agencies. (585) 433-2634.

Gay Alliance of Rochester Referral to educational groups. (585) 433-2634.

LGBT Home Care We provide a full multidisciplinary team consisting of primary care physicians, psychiatric social workers, case managers, and speech therapists as well as home health aides with who completes the eight-hour cultural competency program provided by the Gay Alliance. For more information, contact us at 585-272-1933 or visit us at HCRHomeCare.org.

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley Please see www.gayalliance.org for more information on referral to physicians and service agencies.

CNV Depression Bi-Polar Support Group Please see www.depressionbipolar.org and also Night Out for more information. Contact us at (585) 423-8120.

Central New York Support Group Please see www.cnyhealingarts.com for more information. Call 7:30-9pm at SAGE Upstate, 431 E. Fayette, Syracuse, 13202. The group meets second Monday of every month from 7-9pm. For information contact us at 585-305-2343 and 585-305-2345.


Volunteer Legal Services Project 14614. 585-949-2823. Free legal services for low-income individuals seeking a name change. Other legal services include family law issues, bankruptcy, unemployment insurance hearings, wills and advance directive documents for clients with serious illnesses.

Gay Alliance Youth Gender Identity Support Group A group for any gay gender identity youth, 5400 GAV Library, 1st floor, off Prince St. in Royse 675 E Main St., Ages 13-18. Contact at 585-990-7301.

Genesee Valley Gender Variants Thurs. 7-9pm, Equal Grounds, 750 South Ave, 585-597-4041.

Gays Night Out Social group for transmen, Third Saturdays, 111 West Street, 585-740groups.org.

Women Lesbians of Color www.oursistacinircle.com, A network to support lesbians of Black, Asian, African American, Latina, Native American, and other lesbians of color, launched 2009. OutlotsCircle the first free social networking site to offer comprehensive services that meet the needs of lesbians of color on member profiles. Currently 10,800 members of 200 groups worldwide.

Highland Hospital Breast Imaging Center 500 red Creek Drive, Rochester 14624, 585-471-5301. Specializing in breast health, diagnostic imaging and mammography outreach and education.

Breast Cancer Support of Rochester 640 University Ave., 585-473-8717. Fax: 585-473-8778. Email: info@bcrock.org. Breast Cancer Support provides support groups to local communities. Women programs designed to help those coping with a new or existing breast cancer diagnosis, and those coping with an advanced breast cancer diagnosis, such as the Advanced Breast Cancer Support Group. Support for those in the healthcare community breast cancer information. About breast cancer, legislation, funding, a members forum, and links to other resources. All BCOR programs, support services free.

Monroe County Women’s Health Center 111 West Street, Rochester, NY 14607 (585) 292-3500. Women’s breast cancer screening services for uninsured and under- served women.

Empire West End Breast Clinic 170 Sawgrass Drive, 442-8343. Dr. Wende Logan-Huang and an all-woman staff provide mammograms.

Self Help for Women with Breast or Ovarian Cancer (SHARE) 1-888-758-5473, www.share.org.

Alternatives for Battered Women 232-7535, TTY 223-2741. Shelter offers childcare, assistance and information.

Victim Resource Center of Wayne County New York 800-456-1172; office 317-514-1180.

Mary Magdalene House Women’s outreach center for HIV positive women and children. 921 State Street, Rochester, Open Mon-Fri. 6:30-9:30pm at 458-5728.

Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/ Syracuse Region 114 University Ave, Rochester, NY 14607; Toll Free: 1-800-277-2222. Accept most insurances; including Medicaid.

Alternative Services 121-443-2601. Free and low-cost family planning services.

Women’s Resource Center WYCA, 175 Clinton Ave. 546-7740.
LORA Late Bloomers Coming Out Group for Women
2nd and 4th Mondays of the Month, 7pm, Private Location. Call for info! Contact Person: Wanda Martin. Email: loranolatelatebloomers@yahoo.com. Phone: 585.414.9164. More info: www.loragroup.org. Events: https://www.facebook.com/groups/L.O.R.A.14464/. Email: info@loragroup.org

Gay Alliance Library & Archives, David Bonnelt Cyber Center. Every Mon.-Wed., 6-8pm. First Sat. 7:30am-9:15am. 251-2132; RCDNET@hotmail.com

Gay Men's AA meeting, closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts. 251-2132; RCDNET@hotmail.com

Handicapped accessible
This is a round robin discussion meeting. If you are not sure about meeting people or speaking up in a group, you will find this meeting particularly warm and supportive. Group members get their turn to speak (or pass). As a result, this meeting often runs long, so plan on more than the usual hour.

SATURDAYS

Saturday Night Special Gay AA
7pm, Bachelor Forum, 607 S. Main Ave. 244-0645.

Saturday Night Special Gay AA
7pm, Bachelor Forum, 607 S. Main Ave. 244-0645.

Montreal Church United Pres. Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 8pm, third Saturdays, at Gay Alliance, 875 E. Main St. 234-4441, www.therwcc.org

Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 8pm, 232-6720, Weekly.

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers
7pm, woody14619@yahoo.com. www.rochesterfrontrunners.org.

Cross Dresser Support Group
6-8pm. First Sat. @ First Presbyterian Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 232-6720, Weekly.

GLBTQI Motorcycle Group
875 E. Main St., 244-8640

300 East Avenue United Pres. Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 8pm, third Saturdays, at Gay Alliance, 875 E. Main St. 234-4441, www.therwcc.org

Equal Grounds, 750 South Ave.

Rochester Gay Men's Chorus
First Thursdays, 5:30pm. 1354 Buffalo Road, Rochester, 707 E. Main St.

Rochester GLBTIQbikers@yahoo.com; 467-8520; 633-2228

Rochester Lyme Support Group
2pm, 2nd Sunday of the Month, 289 Monroe Ave.

http://www.lympsupport.org

Crossroads Coffee House, 752 S. Goodman St.

Meets 2nd Saturday of the Month, 1-3pm.

Crossroads Coffee House, 752 S. Goodman St.

Rochester GLBTIQbikers@yahoo.com; 467-8520; 633-2228

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www.rochesterfrontrunners.org.

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First Thursdays, 5:30pm. 1354 Buffalo Road, Rochester, 707 E. Main St.

www.rochesterfrontrunners.org.
WEDNESDAY 2

SUNDAY 6
Dignity Integrity. Episcopal Mass/Healing Service. 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon's Church. 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Hotline at 585-234-5092 or website at www.di-rochester.org.

MONDAY 7
Future Queers of America Institute. Leadership series for LGBTQ+ students and others through July 11. 6-9 pm at Trillium Health. Free. Dinner provided. Receives proceeds for attendance and certificate upon completion. Call (585) 210-4178 to register.

THURSDAY 10
Out & Equal Second Thursdays. Lunch at South Co. 5:30-8:30 pm.

FRIDAY 11

Saturday 12
Open Arms MCC Potluck Pride and Game Night. 5:30-8:30 pm. 707 East Main St. openarmsmcc.org. 271-8478.

SUNDAY 13
Dignity Integrity. Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word, with music. 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church. 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Hotline at 585-234-5092 or website at www.di-rochester.org.

WEDNESDAY 16
This is the Good and the Funny. Open mic for trans community, allies. 7:30 pm at Equal Grounds Coffee House, 750 South Ave.

Out In The Dark, directed by Michael Mayer. ImageOut and JCC’s Jewish Film Festival host two films for Pride. 9 pm, Little Theatre. On July 19, 4 pm. Advance tickets: www.jff.org

THURSDAY 17
Cupcakes directed by Eryan Fox. ImageOut and JCC’s Jewish Film Festival host two films for Pride. 8 pm, Little Theatre. On July 19, 4 pm. Advance tickets: www.jff.org

FRIDAY 18
Pride Rainbow Flag Ceremony. 6-7 pm, Martin Luther King Jr. Park at Manhattan Square. Rainbow Riders, Pride Performance Ensemble, official proclamations, nailing of Grand Marshal, Latino/ Latina LGBT Voices. History Exhibit open until 9 pm, with displays including ‘Trans’ History from Stonewall Museum, Ft. Lauderdale, Fl.

Youth Pride dance. Gay Alliance Fabulous Friday Youth Group presents the LGBTQ+ Youth Pride Dance. Unmask Your True Colors. 7-9pm upstairs at 140 Alex (340 Alexander St Rochester, NY 14607). Music by DJ Mikey Vavatree. Includes pizza and sodas.

Coming Out at Caffe Cino. Opening night for three one-act plays from Caffe Cino in the ’60s: Lanford Wilson’s “The Madness of Lady Bright” and “Sex Is Between Two People;” George Bizimis’s “Daddy Violet.” 8 pm, Black Sheep Theatre, Village Gate. Runs through July 26.

SATURDAY 19
Pride Family Fun Time. MLK Jr. Park at Manhattan Square, noon to 3-30. Face-painting, mask design contest. Free. After 3-30, local performers & DJs, until Parade comes in and Festi- vals start at 7pm.

Pride Parade. Kicks off c. 3 pm at Park Ave. and Brunswick/Angle Sts. Theme: Unmask Your True Colors. Parade goes down Park Ave. to Alexander and East Ave, arrival at MLK Jr. Park 5 pm for award line up and Festival.


SUNDAY 20
Dignity Integrity. Episcopal Mass, 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Hotline at 585-234-5092 or website at www.di-rochester.org.

Gay Alliance Pride Fundraisers. Genesee Valley Park, 1-7 pm. Volleyball and other sports, DJ dancing in the Roundhouse; bands, karaoke and drag performers on the Community Stage by the river; food vendors (hogs, hamburgers, vegetarian and vegan options), children’s area at Riverbend, picnic site decoration contest, much more. Admission and food: $20 at gate; admission only: $15 at gate. Advance tickets: $15 for admission and food; $10 admission only; available at Outlandish, Equal-Gounds, Parkleigh, Bachelor Forum. http://gayalliance.ticketbud.com/rochester-pride-2014

Pride Picnic After Party. 7pm-2am. Pearl Nightclub, 349 East Ave. $10 in advance, $15 at door. Tickets available at Bachelor Forum or from DJ Hector. www.pride.bachelorfor4m.com

WEDNESDAY 23
Gay Alliance Youth Leadership Program. Three Wednesdays after Pride; through Aug 6. 13 field trip. Info: dawnhub@gayalliance.org

SUNDAY 27

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, 875 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 cannot accept ads over the phone. Pay when you place your ad. We will 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 are not responsible for financial loss or physical injury that may result from any contact with an advertiser. Advertisers must use their own number box, voice mail, e-mail or personal address/phone number.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Children’s Ministry thriving at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church for toddlers to tweens. Join us for vibrant, inclusive, progressive worship services 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, nonsmoker, d & d free, HIV negative. My 10-plus years experience guarantees your relaxation and satisfaction. Hosted, in call in my house or your call in your residence. Reasonable rates. Dis- cretion appreciated and practiced. Don’t delay, call me today at 585-773-2410 (cell) or 585-235-6688 (home) or e-mail me at: magichands@rochester.rr.com.

Handyman: Simple repairs or full renovations, no job is too large or small. Carpenter, Plumbing, Electrical, Interi- or & 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. 585-266-6037.

Hate to paint or clean gutters? I have tall ladders! Dale’s Pleasure Painting and Gutter Cleaning has very reasonable rates for painting your round and gutter cleaning in spring or fall. 585-576-5042. Email dale.furhony@yahoo.com.

Wedding Space and clergy services available. Celebrate your special day at Open Arms Metropolitan Commu- nity Church, 707 E. Main St. info@openarmsmcc.org. (585) 271-8478.

PERSONALS
Looking for relationship. GWM, 48, 6’2”, 230, seeks outgoing guy. Enjoy going to gym and camping, not into Bears or smokers. Send picture and info to pean- nucree@comcast.com.

FOR RENT

Property Solutions, LLC.

RDF Property Solutions, LLC.

Property Leasing & Management
General Remodeling, Kitchens, Baths, Decks, Painting
Repairs to full replacement, 1, 2 & 3 bedroom apartments. Call 585-288-0032 for estimates & availability.

Visit www.rdfsolutions.com for up-to-date listings.
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 help promote leadership within the community, and to be a part of a national network of lesbian and gay publications that exchange ideas and seeks to educate.

As part of our purpose is to maintain a middle position with respect to the entire community. We must be careful to present all viewpoints in a way that takes into consideration the views of all – women, men, people of color, young and old, and those from various walks of life. The Empty Closet does not print advertisements that are explicitly racist, sexist, ageist, ableist or homophobic. Patrons of organizations that are sexist, racist, ageist, ableist or anti-gay will also be refused.

The Empty Closet does not print advertisements that contain nude drawings or photographs, nor does it print advertisements that state 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 sexual, sexist, sexual, explicit or homo- or transphobic will be refused. Advertisements from organizations that are sexist, racist, ageist, ableist or anti-gay will also be refused. All political advertisements must contain information about why placed and and a method of contact. "Attack" advertisements, whether they relate to a product or political candidate or party, must be able to produce a negative advertisement is defined as one that focuses upon an individual, group, or political candidate or party. In order to print, it must be supported by the public not to buy (or vote for) the person or party that you are attacking. The Empty Closet maintains, within legal boundaries, neutrality regarding products, political candidates and parties. However, "attack" ads that fail to print the truth or anything positive about the products or candidates in the ad is true but not in any way the objectives and policies of the Gay Alliance or The Empty Closet, including the primary tenant 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, art, and film to The Empty Closet office by the 15th of the month. Design services for non-camera ready ads are available for a fee. E-mail: emp3200@earthlink.net

Publication Information:
The Empty Closet is published 11 times a year (December and January combined). All new subscribers and renewal orders should be sent to The Empty Closet Press for the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc. Appropriately, new subscribers who sign up by the 15th of the first week of the month, monthly mail in a predelivered envelope. The publication of the name or photograph of any person or organization in articles is not an indication of the sexual or affectional orientation of that person or organization. For further information, please write or call The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main St., Rochester, NY 14605, call (585) 244-9030 or e-mail emp3200@earthlink.net

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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 in 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 ongoing disputes between individuals. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity. We will print anonymous letters if the name and phone number are provided to the Editor; confidentiality will be respected. Submissions are due by the 15th of the month at: The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, NY 14605 e-mail: emp3200@earthlink.net. The online edition of EC is available at www.gayalliance.org.© 2017, The Empty Closet
UNMASK YOUR TRUE COLORS

PRIDE EVENTS

FRIDAY - JULY 18
Rainbow Ride,
Flag Ceremony,
Latino/Latina LGBTQ Voices,
LGBTQ History Pavilion
All at Martin Luther King, Jr.
Memorial Park at Manhattan Square

SATURDAY - JULY 19
Pride Parade down Park Ave,
Alexander and East
Family Fun Time,
LGBTQ History Pavilion,
Pride Festival
at Martin Luther King, Jr.
Memorial Park at Manhattan Square

SUNDAY - JULY 20
Pride Picnic Fundraiser
at Genesee Valley Park

ALL WEEKEND LONG
Roc Pride Games including:
Hockey, Roller Derby, Rugby
Bowling, Softball, Volleyball,
and an Obstacle Course!