Gay Alliance receives $200,000 bequest

By Susan Jordan

The Gay Alliance has received a bequest of $200,000 from the late Tony Mascioli. Other recipients of Mr. Mascioli’s generosity include WXXI, the Rundel Library, SUNY Brockport, and the Gay Alliance, the Library, WXXI and SUNY Brockport. Mr. Mascioli requested that the recipients work together to help increase visibility of LGBT issues in Rochester.

Gay Alliance Executive Director Scott Fearing said, “It was a kind and generous gift which will help secure the future stability of this 40-year-old organization. Our conversations with the other parties have been very fruitful and interesting, and I think will help to create interesting possibilities for the community. The gift has prompted the Gay Alliance Board of Directors to formalize a Legacy Circle of donors who have included the Gay Alliance in their estate planning. For further information on the Legacy Circle, contact me at scott@gayalliance.org.”

Evelyn Bailey of the Shoulders To Stand On history project commented, ‘Tony first and foremost was a businessman. He invested his money in organiza- tions and people he believed would make a difference and bring the LGBT community greater visibility. His legacy is much more than dollars and cents. His spirit, his passion, his belief in being openly gay, will provide the community with shoulders to stand on for many years in the future.”

Mascioli’s executor Richard Sarkis said, “Tony Mascioli had been to over 120 countries and 1 always remember him saying, ‘World travel opens the mind, opens the spirit and rewards the palate!’ In his youth he ran away from Rochester because in those day you had to be so closeted, and ran to New York City, but as he got older he recognized what a gem Rochester was. He loved the architecture, and the Gay Alliance, the Library, WXXI and SUNY Brockport. His talks with Evelyn Bailey led him to appreciate our local LGBT history.”

New York LGBT Health Month focuses on access to care

March is LGBT Health Month—a month focused on promoting health and wellness among LGBT individuals and families while raising awareness of health disparities facing LGBT communities. Notably, New York State is the only state in the nation that has an entire month dedicated to LGBT health. This year’s LGBT Health Month theme is “Get Healthy, LGBTQ NY!”

Sponsored by the New York State LGBT Health and Human Services Network, a program of the Pride Agenda Foundation, LGBT Health Month was first launched in 2000, in partnership with other LGBT communities around New York State. The Network is made up of over 50 LGBT-specific and LGBT-supportive nonprofit organizations that provide care to LGBT New Yorkers and their families. In Western New York, orga- nizations like Trillium Health, the Gay Alliance, the MOCHA Center, and Gay and Lesbian Youth Services of Western New York form part of the Network, addressing the continuum of needs facing the LGBT commu- nities.

It is through this network that LGBT Health Month is observed statewide via a series of events that bring attention to the unique health care needs of LGBT communities. Research conducted by Trillium Health through focus group and online surveys in 2012 and 2013 found that 20 percent of respondents reported having had at least one negative experience within a healthcare setting due to their LGBT identity. Nearly 10 per- cent lacked a primary care pro- vider, and for those that had one, 18 percent reported that they were not “out” to their provider.

LGBT individuals are also disproportionately uninsured, so the focus this year is on improving access to care. March is the last month for open enrolment through the New York State of Health insurance mar- ketspace, and uninsured individ- uals are encouraged to explore their options. Certified applica- tion counselors are available to assist at Trillium Health (contact Shannon Kelly at 210-4143 or insurance@trilliumhealthny.org) and the MOCHA Center.

For LGBT Health Month 2014, member organizations of the Rochester LGBT Health Coalition will once again offer programming around the city that includes education, enter- tainment, and community building. Much of the month’s programming will center around the Jewish Community Center’s production of “The Normal Heart” by Larry Kramer, about the rise of the HIV-AIDS crisis in New York City between 1981 and 1984 and how the LGBT community advocated for its own health.

“The Normal Heart” will have a run of eight shows over three weeks, Saturday, March 8 through Sunday, March 23. Talk backs are scheduled after five of the performances, with topics ranging from “HIV in 2014,” “Next Act-Up: Activism and Rights in 2014,” and “Connecting LGBT Communities.” Participating groups include the Gay Alliance, Trillium Health, the Normal Heart, and the MOCHA Center, the Victory Alliance, Empire State Pride Agenda, New York City Civil Liberties Union, Gay Student Alliance Coalition, and HCR Home Care.

Other LGBT Health Month events include film screenings by Image Out, networking for LGBT health at The Rochester Forum, and a performance by the Gay Men’s Chorus. The full calendar of LGBT Health Month events can be found at www.trilliumhealth- ny.org/lgbtmhealth. For more information contact Erik Libey, Trillium Health’s Associate Director of Health Initiatives, at 585-210-4192 or elibey@TrilliumHealthNY.org.

We hope to see you “out.”


Gay Alliance presents Vinnie, Vicki Cups at donor event at WXXI

By Susan Jordan

The Gay Alliance held a party for donors at WXXI studios on Feb. 4, to show apprecia- tion for their support.

Mayor Lovely Warren was present. She thanked Evelyn Bais- ley for the Shoul- ders To Stand On documentary and said, “I appreciate the sacrifices made by people who are part of that film.” She added that she would like to continue to build on the tradi- tion of partnership with the LGBTQ community. “My doors are always open,” she said.

Gay Alliance Board Presi- dient David Zona and Executive Director Scott Fearing wel- comed the crowd of around 80 people and presented the Vicki Cup, for the man or woman who have made the greatest contri- bution to the LGBTQ commu- nity in the past year, to Pride 2013 organizers Michael Lill and Christopher Hennelly. The Vicki Award went to Kashia Davis (Ed Popul) and Samantha Vega (Sam Brett) for their work as Pride MCs.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Elman won the raffle for tickets to ‘Kinky Boots’ on Broadway.
The Empty Closet Editor

SUSAN JORDAN

The other side of the Gay Alliance

I know you are used to me going on and on about the power and importance of community in this space. But this month I want to talk about the other side of the work that we do at the Gay Alliance.

Obviously it is still work about the LGBTQ community, but these are the services we provide to not the LGBTQ community members, but about our community members – the messages we send to the rest of Rochester and WNY.

From its earliest days the Gay Alliance has provided workshops filled with truthful and honest information about the LGBTQ communities to the broader Rochester community. In 1973, the University of Rochester students who founded the Gay Liberation Front went into classrooms to represent the LGBTQ communities.

This was done to counter the myths and stereotypes that were so prevalent at a time when LGBTQ people rarely stepped out of the closet in any setting outside of their home or a bar. It was this type of outreach that provided the seeds to drive the many changes that our communities have witnessed in the past 40 years.

Through our ReachOUT efforts, our Education and Training team delivers about 200 workshops each year, speaking to over 3,000 people! In each of these sessions we present information and we honestly answer questions. Our goal is always to reach the hearts and minds of the participants. We encourage social change by engaging with people no matter where they are in their process of understanding.

People are often surprised to hear that there is still a need for such training sessions. A lot of people remain ignorant about LGBTQ issues; however most of these are not stupid people. They often have LGBTQ friends, coworkers and even family members, but they still have questions about LGBTQ identity that they have never asked.

We provide education in workplaces, from consultations with top management to a casual lunch and learn conversation. We also provide multi-hour workshops with the HR department, sometimes in response to a situation or problem. We regularly help work teams prepare for the gender transition of a fellow employee.

We work with schools from K-to-College. We help to educate teachers about the best ways to include LGBTQ families in their classrooms and to develop LGBTQ inclusive curriculum. We help educators devise strategies to interrupt and end bullying, while we also help school counselors provide care to those who have been bullied. We have even worked with athletic department staff who suddenly have “out” athletes on their teams and are unsure how to proceed.

The Gay Alliance Safe-Zone training, long a popular program in our area, has developed a national reputation. Our outstanding reputation and strong evaluations got us a contract to provide LGBT SafeZone training to the Community Colleges of California. We are the local champions of LGBTQ life and culture. We provide service to our communities and about our communities. We are the place to turn to for all things LGBTQ in western NY and beyond.

Religious freedom or intolerance?

The Right’s favorite justification for their anti-gay political agenda is that it’s all about “religious freedom.”

No. It’s all about intolerance. On Feb. 20, Arizona used a law legalizing discrimination on the grounds of religious freedom. This would not be acceptable or justifiable now. It existed for centuries. That does not make homophobic hate central to the Christian religion. Prejudices talk, you would think His message was about love and not human.

But the way the TeaParty people talk, you would think his personal life. But in his role as City Councilman he publicly demonstrated the sin of pride.

Many conservative extremists and politicized clergy devalue their professional lives to trying to take away LGBTQ people’s civil rights and destroy their families. They are in effect saying, “Look at ME! I am superior to those sinful perverts! I have the right to condone gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, trans people or whoever is on my pc hate list. I am BETTER than the people I disapprove of – they are not human.”

If that isn’t the sin of pride, what would it be?

Religious freedom is the freedom to worship as we believe we should, without interference by the state. No one is preventing these anti-gay churches and denominations from worshipping, or from stating their views on morality and society from the pulpit!

But freedom, according to our Constitution, also includes freedom from coercive religious intolerance – from theocracy like the Taliban’s.

Religious freedom does not include the right to oppress entire groups of people, to demonize and demonize them, to destroy their families, to commit or condone hate violence, to force your religious belief on anybody, or to make society discriminate against minorities.

Calling bigotry “religious freedom” is just another politically motivated, homophobic lie.

The Gay Alliance Executive Director

SCOTT FEARING
Global Day of Action protests Uganda’s vicious anti-gay law

By Susan Jordan

Uganda’s long-anticipated anti-gay law, which mandates life in prison for “aggravated homosexuality,” was signed by President Yoweri Museveni on Feb. 14. A Global Day of Action on Feb. 10 protested this violation of all accepted standards of human rights, which has been promoted for many years by rightwing religious leaders, and international human rights, which has been condemned by almost every country and international human rights organization. The work of partner organizations underscores the urgent need for resource and political cooperation from the current Ugandan government, making the United States Department of State unwilling to intercede in the gross human rights violations now underway.

The Empire State Pride Agenda reacts

"Delivering on his campaign promise to address the crisis of-runaway and homeless youth — which disproportionately impacts the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community — the president has proposed a budget with 75 shelter beds at $3.5 million in 2014. This is not enough — or even anything — to halt the repression in Uganda. The US has failed to support the national Human Rights Commission and the government requests we send money to help.”

The budget includes the following statement:

"In New York’s LGBT advocacy organization, we’re proud to speak at Catholic Charities Convention. This year City News had called on the mayor to ban uniformed police officers from marching in an open uniform in any LGBTQ New Yorkers that these actions represents of extreme anti-LGBTQ legislation and discriminatory practices occurring across the world, including in the United States and countries like Nigeria, Uganda, and Russia."

Indeed, legal precedent on this issue is well-documented in the United States. In light of the fact that the police department treats a segment of the population of any race, religion, gender, national origin, or sexual orientation with contempt, so that the particular minority comes to regard the police as oppressive rather than protector, respect for law enforcement is eroded and the ability of the police to do their work in that community is impaired.

Read more: http://www.fourcornerscourage.org/

Empire State Pride Agenda’s Executive Director Nathan M. Schaefer stated, “Mayor De Blasio can no longer defend Mayor De Blasio’s public refusal to march in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade because of its “exclusion of some individuals into the city,” PolitiFact reported.

Said De Blasio, “No I am not planning on marching in the parade, I have not approached me in my capacity as a public official,” he added. “I will be participating in a breakfast with our gay and lesbian leaders to honor the Irish heritage of this city. … But I simply disagree with the organizers in their exclusion of some individuals in the city.”

The mayor says, however, that he won’t stop uniformed city workers from doing so: “I believe that the police and firefighters who have a right to participate if they choose to do so. And I respect that right.”

The parade bars the participants...
NewsFrom

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

Scotland gives final approval to marriage equality bill

On Feb. 4, Scotland gave final approval to a bill that allows same-sex couples to marry.

England and Wales passed the freedom to marry in July 2013, and marriage became legal there that month, leaving Northern Ireland as the only region in the United Kingdom where same-sex couples cannot yet marry.

Eric Holder: same sex couples now have full federal rights

On Feb. 8, Attorney General Eric Holder spoke at the Human Rights Campaign program and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, Holder said:

"Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their families experience discrimination in every part and at every step of the way, from low enforcement, to courts, to prisons. This weekend's very significant announcement means that the same-sex couples and their families must be treated equally in every program administered by the federal government. We applaud the leadership of the Federal Government and the Federal Labor Government to provide bold leadership for loving couples and for LGBT people on a range of issues," stated Rea Carey, Executive Director of National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund.

Challenge to Texas marriage ban goes before federal court

A lawsuit challenging Texas' ban on gay marriage went before a federal judge in San Antonio for the first time on Feb. 12.

U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia is expected to decide whether to temporarily block the ban, as approved by voters in 2005, until a trial can be held in the couples' case.

 Similar lawsuits have been filed in 22 other states, but the Texas lawsuit is the first of its kind in the region covered by the southern and deeply conservative 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, where the case will likely end up.

The suit was filed in November. The AP adds:

"Wednesday's hearing contains two cases, one from Mark Pharris and Victor Holmes and another from James Strickland and his partner John McCraney, both of Dallas, which is challenging the Texas ban. The judge will hear arguments as to whether to temporarily block the ban, as approved by voters in 2005, until a trial can be held in the couples' case.

"Similar lawsuits have been filed in 22 other states, but the Texas lawsuit is the first of its kind in the region covered by the southern and deeply conservative 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, where the case will likely end up."
NFL draft prospect
Michael Sam comes out

University of Missouri football star Michael Sam came out on Feb. 10. As an NFL draft prospect, Sam may become the first openly gay active player in the pro football.

Coaches at the University of Missouri divided players into small groups at a preseason football practice last year for a team-building exercise. One by one, players were asked to talk about themselves where they grew up, why they chose Missouri and what others might not know about them. As Michael Sam, a defensive lineman, began to speak, he huddled up a piece of paper in his hands.

“I’m gay,” he said. With that, Mr. Sam set himself on a path to become the first publicly gay player in the National Football League. “I looked in their eyes, and they just started shaking their heads,” he said.

The youth was found and beaten and dragged off to the police station, who arrested him, apparently for his own protection. The man who had been beaten earlier was also targeted again. He ran to the police station but the gang caught him outside and attacked.

Our contact suggests the gang had taken into custody and eventually moved to the police station who were interrogated about their sexuality in a derogatory way. However, a senior officer there intervened, reportedly telling the Ghishiri police they should have intervened earlier for the men’s safety. The same officer gave the LGBTI people 48 hours to leave Ghishiri for their own safety, providing them with an emergency number in the mean time.

The GSN source reports: “While that was happening, the villagers were going house-to-house painting “homosexuals must leave” on the walls.”

They also poured kerosene on the gay people’s houses and were only stopped from lighting it by the intervention of two women.

Our contact suggests the gang had wished to burn down the properties to disguise the fact they had stolen a sewing machine, plasma TV, phones and possibly other things from them. He added: “I am probably in danger but not in the way that the other gay men are. It is wrong. If someone has offended the law, you don’t take the law into your hands. You cannot do jungle justice.”

Nigerian LGBT activist Bisi Alimi told GSN: “The increasing attacks and witch-hunting of LGBTI people in Nigeria.’ The attacks in Abuja among others is a clear warning to others who think they can be doing this and getting away with it.”

“We are calling on the United Nations, United States, the British Government, EU, Commonwealth and the African Union to take a stand in the defense of vulnerable LGBTI people in Nigeria.”

See more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/nigerian-mob-beat-gays-piled-racks-force-them-flee-homes130214

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Hundreds of Mizzou supporters blocked a Westboro Church protest when Sam appeared at his old school.

Nevada withdraws from marriage equality challenge lawsuit

The State of Nevada has withdrawn its brief in the case of Sevick v. Sandoval -- the landmark marriage equality case in Nevada (continues page 12)
Stephaun Blahnik

By Susan Jordan

Stephaun E. Wallace (Blahnik), is an activist, HIV/AIDS and organizational development consultant, social/behavioral researcher, and political/social issues junkie with over 14 years experience in the field of public health (HIV/AIDS) and over 23 years experience in community mobilization and advocacy work. He currently serves as a project manager with the Legacy Project, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and as the chairman/president of the House of Blahnik, Inc. He lives in Atlanta and Seattle.

Empty Closet: What were the highlights of the conference for you -- what did you take away with you and what information was most useful?

Stephaun Blahnik: The theme of this year’s conference was ‘Black is, Black Ain’t: Celebrating Our Blackness’. This year’s conference was “Black is, what did you take away with you and what information was most useful?”

EC: Were there any surprises -- new information?

SB: I stay pretty closely connected to the areas of support and ongoing work to bring Black MSM, so I can’t say that any of the information that was presented to me was new information. I can say, however, that the divergent needs and concerns of the House/Ball community need to be acknowledged by the prevention providers, and it is clear (even before the presentations that occurred at this conference) that there are significant needs on the part of providers to invest in this community in a way that demonstrates value and receptivity.

This of course can also be said about providers who serve LGBT communities in general. Simply providing HIV testing, discussion groups and other programming elements are not sufficient steps to impact the environment that Black MSM experience to reduce the incidence of HIV within this population. It will require an intentional examination of the ecological fabric of these communities, and an investment by providers, researchers and funders to support culturally appropriate and relevant intervention into the lives and experiences of Black MSM at that level.

In order to see real change in the communities in which we serve, if our desire is to see change, we have to take a step back from doing the work from a place of ‘crisis’, begin to look at the bigger picture, and considering engaging in approaches that are inclusive of behavioral theories including the ecological systems theory.

For more information about NAEEM and the annual MSM Leadership conference, go to: www.naem.org.

For more information about the Legacy Project, go to: www.hanc.info or www.fhcrc.org.

For more information about Project Silk, go to: www.projectssilk.org.

For more information about the House of Blahnik, Inc. go to: www.houseofblahnik.org.

Interview

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**The Revery - (585) 340-6454.** In Rochester’s Neighborhood of the Arts district, at 1290 University Avenue there is The Revery, which truly gives its diners the red carpet treatment. Available for lunch and dinners from Tuesday-Sunday, Saturday brunch is also served from 11:30am - 2:30pm giving one a wide berth for a quality banquet. The Revery is proud a young talent in Rochester’s LGBT Dining Out event.

**Char Steak & Lounge - (585) 241-7100.** In the heart of Rochester’s Neighborhood of the Arts district sits Char Steak & Lounge, located within The Strathallan Hotel. Char provides us with a distinctly unique combination of both steakhouse and lounge. A stylish ambience paired with wood-fired steaks and even gourmet desserts created on-promises. Char Steak & Lounge will live up to your great expectations – and then some!

**The Bachelor Forum - (585) 271-6950.** What can be said about the Forum that has not been said already? Also located within the Neighborhood of the Arts district at 670 University Avenue, The Bachelor Forum is Rochester's oldest-running gay owned and operated bar, with recent and attractive renovations. Open from 2pm-2am/2am seven days a week, The Bachelor Forum allows passage to all those over 21 years of age.

**Equal Grounds Coffeehouse**

Equal = Grounds – (585) 256-2382. On the corner of South Avenue and Caroline Street sits Equal = Grounds. Sporting a great lounge full of deep sofas and settees, Equal = Grounds offers its coffee addicts a great variety of roasts, cuts and flavors. A venerable friend to the LGBT community, Equal = Grounds also offers great sandwiches, pastries and salads and supplies its patrons with shevels of books and board games!

**The Avenue Pub - (585) 244-4960.** Located at 522 Monroe Ave., is one of Rochester’s oldest gay bars, steeped in tradition and steadfast in its support of the LGBT community. Open Monday-Thursday from 4pm-2am, and Sundays from 12pm-2am, The Avenue Pub can easily be located by its colorful rainbow bow awning. Come on Fridays for their famous fish fry, served every Friday evening. Round Wednesday night food specials during the summer months include fried steaks.

**Boulder Coffee - (585) 454-7140.** Located at 697-0236, Boulder Coffee is known for its great coffee, freshly made paninis, wraps and sandwich-es, live music, open-mic nights, beers, wines and spirits, and ever-changing collection of artwork from local artists. Head for 100 Alexander, 739 Park Ave., 1 Public Market, or 960 Genesee Street. Boulder Coffee is a proud and dedicated supporter of Rochester’s LGBT community!

**The Otter Lodge – (585) 442-6790.** If you’re looking for a great place to watch the game and eat some lip-smacking food, look no further than The Otter Lodge, 1776 Monroe Ave., catering to Rochester’s hungry public since 1997. Bartender Zan states, “We have always been supportive of the LGBT community, open and friendly to all walks of life... humans and others alike.” From their famous Otter Wings, to their streaming sandwiches served directly from gridiron to your plate, The Otter Lodge has you covered – and in your very own choice of sauce!

**TAP & MALLET**

- **Tap and Mallet - (585) 473-0503.** 381 Gregory St., Rochester, NY 14620. A pillar in the trendy South Wedge gayborhood the Tap and Mallet has the most impressive collection of beer tap lines in the city. The menu includes a variety of treats from burgers to fish and chips and wide selection of vegan friendly fare. Many come for the beer but are equally thrilled with the food. Open 11:30am-2am.

**Joey B’s - (585) 377-9003.** If fine dining is what you’re in the market for, then Joey B’s should be on the top of your list. Specializing in exquisite dishes, Joey B’s serves your selection to your own place setting starting at $5pm Monday-Thursday, and 5:30 pm Friday-Sunday. Looking for a more private affair? Reserve your private or business party anytime until 4pm Monday-Saturday.

**John’s Tex-Mex - (585) 232-5830.** A staple of Rochester’s South Wedge district, John’s Tex-Mex can be found at 489 South Ave., offering a great selection of Mexican inspired dishes. Wash these down with a beer from their enviable variety of craft American and Mexican beers. Your only difficulty will be choosing what to order!

**Lady Dee samples the delicacies at John’s Tex Mex. Photo: Lorraine Woerner-McGowan**

**The Beale New Orleans Grill & Bar - (585) 271-4650.** Right at the corner of South Avenue and Gregory Street sits The Beale New Orleans Grill and Bar. The Beale is one of those rare gems that offers both authenticly southern and Cajun food, along with live music and great drink specials. Live music can be heard wafting down South Avenue every Friday and Saturday night – and without any cover fee.

**Brickwood Grill - (585) 730-8230.** Go to 250 Monroe Avenue and you will be greeted warmly by The Brickwood Grill. Serving lunch and dinner daily, along with brunch on Sundays, The Brickwood Grill supports the Rochester community by using healthy local foods in their delicious dishes. Whether it’s to enjoy the game on one of their gigantic plasma screens, or to sit and relax in the warming sun on their patio, Rochester’s LGBT community will find something that catches their eye – and appetite!

**John’s Restaurant - (585) 461-1280.** John’s at 639 Park Avenue is one of Rochester’s historic eatery fixtures. Available for breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week, there is no wrong time to go to John’s. An avid supporter of Rochester’s LGBT community, John’s can always be found to be full of happy customers, happy smells and happy wallets.

**The Frog Pond - (585) 271-1970.** Located at 652 Park Avenue, The Frog Pond is a great place to stop by for breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner or all four! Current owner Eli Papademetriou reports, “The Frog Pond proudly supports the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley and the LGBT community of Rochester!” Come see what’s leaping on this lilypad today!

**Marshall Street Bar & Grill - (585) 325-2191.** There’s a great place at the corner of Monroe Avenue and Marshall Street. Don’t let the great selection of wines, spirits and beers fool you; Marshall Street Bar & Grill has great food specials every day and welcomes Rochester’s LGBT community. Come reserve a space for your private party, business gathering, or birthday celebration! Don’t feel like leaving the house? Marshall Street Bar & Grill caters as well!
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Photo from left: Virginia Lefebvre / Bevilo Photo Arts / Brandon Vick Photography.
My Own Private Rochester: Jordan Allen
By Susan Jordan

Jordan Allen, 23, was born in Boston and moved 13 times; she arrived in Rochester a year and a half ago. She is a part-time student and health professional, and is looking for work in a hospital setting. She coaches the varsity lacrosse team, Greased Lightning, at Arcadia and Olympia.

Jordan played division lacrosse in college -- American University in D.C. She has coached lacrosse since high school. She held an administrative post with Special Olympics, but then moved to Washington to help her family. As of Feb. 22, however, she has returned to the Rochester area to be with her fiancee; they live in Irondequoit and plan to be married on Aug. 17.

Jordan said, “When I first moved to Rochester, I wanted to get involved with the community, and was a Gay Alliance office volunteer. Scott (Fearing) put me in touch with Jeannie (Gainsburg), and I have worked with the Speaker’s Bureau and Safe Zone. I enjoy volunteering very much.”

Jordan feels that everyone she has met in Rochester has been very friendly and nice. “I really enjoy taking pictures, and, coming to Rochester and not knowing very much about it, I’ve found the architecture here amazing, especially up and down University Ave. I fell in love with the statues (by Tom Otterness) in front of the Memorial Art Gallery.”

The artists’ space at Anderson Alley, and Village Gate next door, are among her favorite places. “I’ve met very interesting people there,” she said.

Both of Jordan’s parents went to Syracuse for college, and she is a big fan of the Orange, lacrosse as well as basketball. She has always taken her girls’ teams to see local college lacrosse games, since she feels they can learn a lot.

Last summer Jordan attended her very first Pride in Rochester and was impressed. “I’ve lived a lot of places,” she said, “but I had never been to Pride before.”

Her favorite hangouts include Magnolia Café on Park Ave., famous as President Obama’s lunch stop last year, and Chocolate and Wine on University Ave. “We found it on Groupon and it’s very good,” she commented. “I also like little hang-out places like Genesee Brew House, that are unique to Rochester, and also Starry Nights on University.”

An ideal Saturday night for Jordan and her friends would be dinner out and, she adds, “We’d probably end up at 140 Alex. I like to have a good time!”

Rochester appeals to her “because of the art and the history – the Eastman House and Susan B. Anthony House. There’s a lot to do here and I enjoy it!”

A STEAMPUNK AFFAIRE: 250 people attended the Gay Alliance’s Red Ball on Feb. 8 at the Diplomat Banquet Center. Photos: Jill Frier

Jordan Allen with the Otterness sculpture in front of the Memorial Art Gallery. Photo: Susan Jordan
Donor Event: Vinnie Cup winner Christopher Hennelly with Emily Jones at the Gay Alliance’s party for donors on Feb. 7 at WXXI. Photo: Lorraine Woerner-McGowan

Photos above and below: Lorraine Woerner-McGowan

Scott Fearing and Mayor Lovely Warren. Photo: Jill Frier

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Elman (above, with Scott Fearing) won the raffle for tickets to “Kinky Boots.”

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Tenth Year, The Feldman Family Has Been Providing Quality, Energy Saving Heating and Cooling.
Nevada issued the following statement:

"While we applaud the Attorney General for hearing the voices of Nevadans who let her know -- loud and clear -- that hatred and disrespect would not be tolerated in our state, we stand firm in demanding an apology for her past comments and have requested a face-to-face meeting between the Attorney General and LGBTQ community leaders immediately. Attorney General Masto clearly needs to have a better and clearer understanding of the lives of LGBTQ Ne- 

dans, and we would be happy to ensure that such a meeting takes place to increase her understanding."

Masto has now filed a motion with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, withdrawing her defense of the marriage equality lawsuit against the state. Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval says he agrees with the move, saying it’s clear the state’s arguments supporting the ban are no longer defensible in court.

The decision means Nevada will not argue to uphold the state’s constitution- al prohibition against same-sex marriage that voters passed in 2002. Eight same-sex couples sued the state, arguing the law is unconstitutional. Nevada lawmakers last year took the first step toward repealing that law. Legislators approve Senate Joint Resolution 13 again next year, it would go to voters on the 2016 ballot. Masto’s move comes due to last month’s ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court, which applied “heightened scrutiny” in an unrelated lawsuit about a gay man who was summarily dismissed from a jury because of his sexual orientation. At the time, Lambda Legal promised that the ruling would be a “game changer” for other LGBT-related federal lawsuits.

Lambda Legal reacts

"In the wake of the Ninth Circuit rul- ing in SmithKline Beecham v. Abbott Laboratories, the Governor has recog- nized that the writing is on the wall, and that arguments seeking to perpetuate discrimination are becoming extremely difficult to justify. Denying marriage to same-sex couples serves no legitimate state interest and is intended solely to perpetu- ate discrimination. As the Governor him- self recognized, the heightened scrutiny standard that the Ninth Circuit’s Smith- Kline ruling now requires be applied to discriminatory classifications based on sexual orientation renders arguments sup- porting the marriage ban no longer ten- able, and the Governor frankly made the only call he could."" Appeals Court grants expedited hearing

A federal appeals court has granted the Nevada Governor and Attorney General’s request to withdraw his brief defending the ban on gay marriage and granted an expedited hearing in the case. Lambda Legal reports:

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit today granted Lambda Legal’s request to expedite the hearing of the case, Lambda Legal reports:

The withdrawal of the two govern- ment defendants leaves only the Coalition for the Protection of Marriage, which the U.S. District Court had allowed to inter- vene, defending the marriage ban. -Towleroad.com

North Carolina trans youth is elected Homecoming King

Towleroad.com posted on Feb. 11, “Last week we reported that Blake Brockington, a 17-year-old transgender student at Charlotte, North Carolina’s East Meck- lenburg High School was nominated for homecoming king.

“Brockington, who had a difficult childhood and coming out experience, hoped to win in order to set an example for other transgender youth.

"He will be able to do just that, for on Feb. 7 he won."

WNC reports:

“Throughout my life I haven’t always been treated equally as a male, so I’ve always wanted this and everybody has told me I couldn’t do it. ‘You are a girl,’ even though I’ve always identified myself as a male,” said Brockington.

There were 13 seniors vying for the coveted title as king. Brockington won, collecting the most money for the school’s chosen charity, Mothering Across Contin- ntents. It’s a non-profit organization that funds the building of schools in the Sudan.

Brockington is no stranger to adversi- ty. He says he is living with foster parents because his father is unable to accept his gender identity. Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/izx2ztr59ShMQk

Idaho court rules gay parents may adopt partners’ children

By Andrew Potts on gaystarnews.com

Darcy Drake Simpson will become the first lesbian to legally adopt her partner’s children in the US state of Idaho after a state Supreme Court bench ruled unani- mously in favor of her right to adopt. Drake Simpson has been co-parenting Blake Brockington.

Idaho continues page 14
PrintRoc
By Susan Jordan

PrintRoc, Inc., a medium sized printing company located at 620 South Ave., is family-oriented in a big way. Two of the partners are husbands, and the third partner is the eldest of their grown sons. Dan McCarthy, Ron Schutt and their son, Jesse McCarthy, team up to make a very strong management team.

PrintRoc offers walk-in printing services and paper products, on top of being a premier mid-sized corporate commercial printer. If they don’t have it, they can get it and fast. Their retail hours were adjusted to meet the demand of the public: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Fridays, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. It works out really well for production and makes things run more smoothly.

PrintRoc’s building is 11,000 square feet. Ron says, “It’s amazing how quickly that space fills up!” Downstairs are the office, two presses and the distribution area, and upstairs is the bindery. The business employs two people in graphic design; one in marketing (Jesse) along with two part time sales people, one of whom is the previous owner; four in the full press room; two fulltime and three part time in the full bindery; two in digital printing – and as Ron says, “I do everything!”

Health insurance for so many is a problem because of the expense, but Ron, as a former employee himself, wanted to cover at least half of employees’ insurance costs. Ron said, “I love everything about the business. I’m here at 6 a.m. and don’t leave until 7 p.m. The time just flies by. I enjoy being the decision maker and learning all the new things, and how printing changes. The printing business is definitely changing. You upgrade, but carefully – like getting an iPhone 3, which isn’t as nice as iPhone 5, but is still good.

“I make sure everything is running. I have to know it all – or be prepared to find a partner or business or employee that does know about it.

“We do all kinds of jobs – from one to a million. We have a walk-in business and a corporate business. Right now we’re doing 50,000 barrel-shaped books for a customer in New Jersey, and they have another project that’s shaped like a bottle.

Though Jesse, the newest member of the staff, had little experience with print, he did know people and business, and

cover at least half of employees’ insurance costs. "You need to change what you didn’t start their own business have to be flexible. "You need to change what you didn't expect, including what your customers and employees want."

Ron also re-organized the work schedule. “We switched to four 10-hour days, Mondays and Thursdays from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., and a second crew on Tuesdays and Fridays, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. It works out really well for production and makes things run more smoothly.”

PrintRoc’s owners are active members of the Business Association of the South Wedge and the Rochester Business Alliance, and donate to JCC, as well as doing most of their print jobs.

Ron feels that people who want to start their own business have to be flexible. “You need to change what you didn’t expect, including what your customers and employees want.”

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Though Jesse, the newest member of the staff, had little experience with print, he did know people and business, and

he learned much very quickly, working alongside his employees for months before taking to the office. He was the perfect fit for Marketing & Sales Manager. His customers love him and his employees and partners can see the huge difference that has overtaken the company since its transition from Pinnacle. Jesse has been instrumental in changing the look, not only physically but also on-line with the new website and social media. Jesse is a member of the Rochester Referral Network, and he knows just how important networking is for a business such as this.

The three partners own four properties in the city limits, including the facility at 620 South Ave. Hard work, good people and a community to stand with have brought this "family" business in the South Wedge to new heights.
Pleasant Street Apothecary has just what you’re looking for...
Friendly, Personalized Service from the Experts!
Locally-owned and operated
24-Hour phone or online prescription ordering
Confidential delivery service and free parking
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585-241-9000 or 800-923-9394
Fax: 585-454-2017
pleasantstreetrx.com

The teenager spoke, and was open about, his sexuality. “I was outed by someone I knew and it hit me hard,” he said. “I was scared, but I knew I had to come out.”

The resolution allowing gay scouts, which passed last May, went into effect on January 1, and many people believe that Tessier, a member of Troop 52 in Chevy Chase, MD, is the first to achieve the proud rank of Eagle Scout. “I’m proud of him,” said Eric Andresen, father of Ryan Andresen, who was denied his Eagle Scout rank due to his sexual orientation just last year, commented on Tessier’s achievement. “I know of no other Scouts out there who have said, ‘I am gay and I defy BSA to kick me out’ — and Pascal has done that,” said Eric Andresen.

The fact that Pascal is now able to receive his award is directly because of what Ryan unfortunately went through,” Andresen said.

“We certainly think this is a day to celebrate,” Wahls said. “As we see more Pascal Tessiers coming up though the program, getting their Eagle Scouts, other scouting parents and other scouting leaders who might be a little more conservative will see there is nothing to be afraid of, that Pascal is a phenomenal young man and people like him make scouting better.”

Tessier’s achievement will open doors to other openly gay scouts. “I don’t think it will be easy, but I think it will be possible,” said Felker. “I think it will happen.”

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Federal judge rules Kentucky marriage ban unconstitutional

On Feb. 12, Kentucky became the latest state to have its ban on marriage equality ruled unconstitutional by a federal judge, and the case will soon join others based in Utah, Nevada, Ohio and Oklahoma at the appellate level.

U.S. District Court Judge John G. Heyburn II ruled that Kentucky’s marriage amendment violates the constitutional guarantee of equal protection and that the Commonwealth cannot refuse to recognize valid same-sex marriages conducted in other states. The judge, who was appointed to the bench by President George H. W. Bush, sided with four plaintiff couples who had legally married elsewhere before seeking state recognition in Kentucky.

Heyburn Rights Campaign (HRC) President Chad Griffin issued the following statement: “Today, this nation took another bold step toward its fundamental constitutional principles of equal justice under the law. This amendment is unconstitutional, and we believe the only true solution to the injustice faced by these plaintiffs is full marriage equality. We hope all parties act swiftly and fairly to allow all loving and committed Kentucky couples the opportunity to marry in the state they call home.

Gay scout is first to receive Eagle rank

Pascal Tessier was blown away Feb. 10, when he became one of, if not the first, openly gay youths to receive his Eagle Scout ranking.

The resolution allowing gay scouts, which passed last May, went into effect on January 1, and many people believe that Tessier, a member of Troop 52 in Chevy Chase, MD, is the first to achieve the prestigious ranking while being completely open about his sexuality.

Becoming an Eagle Scout is no easy task, requiring twenty-one merit badges, a community service project, and a meeting with a board of review, and Tessier’s road was even more difficult to traverse. The teenager spoke, and was open about, being gay to media last year while participating in a demonstration prior to the Boy Scouts of America’s vote regarding gay members. The outcome was positive, but Tessier easily could have jeopardized his standing with the Scouts, who still will not allow openly gay adults to participate.

The Washington Post reports, “It’s just really amazing, and it honestly hasn’t really sunk in yet,” said Tessier, a senior at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. “We didn’t know if it was going to happen at all.”

Both Zach Wahls, outspoken executive director of Scouts for Equality, and Eric Andresen, father of Ryan Andresen, who was denied his Eagle Scout rank due to his sexual orientation just last year, commented on Tessier’s achievement. “I don’t know of any other Scouts out there who have said, ‘I am gay and I defy BSA to kick me out’ — and Pascal has done that,” said Eric Andresen.

Felker said the problem with the Boy Scout’s new policy is that it suggests something changes in their children once they hit 18. “What no one really wants to talk about is the suggestion that gay adults are treated act swiftly and fairly to allow all loving and committed Kentucky couples the opportunity to marry in the state they call home.

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Affordable Care Act

Affordable Care Act expands coverage

By National LGBT Health Education Center

The Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act) is expected to significantly improve access to high-quality health services for LGBT people.

Research has shown that many LGBT Americans, particularly transgender people, and those living with HIV, have difficulty accessing insurance and are disproportionately likely to lack coverage.

This brief explains how the Affordable Care Act will benefit LGBT Americans, particularly through better data collection, stronger nondiscrimination policies, a new health insurance benefit standard, and other insurance reforms, and coverage expansions.

Part 1 provides an overview of the issues, while Part 2 discusses how America’s health centers, which are integral to efforts to enroll uninsured people, can help LGBT people access health care. Part 3 highlights key provisions of the Affordable Care Act.

Eating Disorders in the LGBT community

By NEDA (National Eating Disorders Association)

Eating disorders disproportionately impact segments of the LGBT population. Gay men are thought to only represent 20 percent of the male total population, but among men who have eating disorders, 42 percent identify as gay.

Elevated rates of binge-eating and purging by vomiting or laxative abuse was found for both gay and bisexual, or gender nonconforming individuals who identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Research suggests that eating disorders disproportionately impact some LGBT populations, though much research still to be done on the relationship between gender identity and eating disorders.

The myth of unique struggles related to sexuality and gender expression, such as coming out and harassment in schools or the workplace, can impact experiences of anxiety, depression, loneliness, trauma and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms such as substance abuse - all of which are common co-occurring conditions or contributing factors in the development of an eating disorder.

Why in the LGBT Community?

Potential factors that may interact with an LGBT person’s pre-dispositions for developing an eating disorder may include, but are not limited to:

Coming out: Fear of rejection/experiencing stigma by family, friends, or co-workers; Internalized negative messages/beliefs about oneself due to sexual orientation, gender expression, or transgender identity; Experiences of violence (gay bashing), contributing to the development of Eating-Related Disorders, which research shows sharply increases vulnerability to an eating disorder; Discrimination and/or being bullied; Discordance between one’s biological sex and gender identity; Body image ideals which are culturally specific to LGBT people, in addition to experiencing unique contributing factors, may also face challenges for accessing treatment and support; Transgendered individuals may experience heightened body dissatisfaction and excessive concern with appearance due to the emphasis on estrangement from their bodies.

What’s Your Diabetes IQ?

By National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

 type 1 diabetes: The body doesn’t make enough insulin or it doesn’t use insulin efficiently. In type 2 diabetes, the body is resistant to the insulin available.

Who should be tested for diabetes?

People who may be at risk for diabetes include:

• family members with diabetes
• those with high blood pressure and/or high cholesterol
• those with a history of premature heart disease in a parent or sibling
• those of Native American, African-American, Asian-American, or Pacific Islander heritage
• those with a personal or family history of diabetes
• those with a history of gestational diabetes
• those who are 25 years or older and are African-American, Hispanic, or Native American

Diabetes is a life-long disease that affects the way your body turns food into energy. Having diabetes means your body either does not produce enough insulin or does not use insulin properly.

Some symptoms of diabetes may vary based on the type. Examples are excessive thirst, extreme hunger, frequent urination, unexplained weight loss, blurred vision, unusual fatigue, numbness or tingling in the hands or feet, dry, itchy skin, cuts or bruises that heal slowly, and frequent infections. Because it is critical to detect this disease in its early stage, it is important to let your health care provider know. They can test a sample of your blood after you have not eaten all day (otherwise known as “fasting”).

Diabetes symptoms often go unrecognized, knowing common risk factors for diabetes is helpful in identifying people who should be tested for Type 2 Diabetes. This includes people younger than 45 who are overweight and have one of the following risk factors: a family member with diabetes; are African-American, Hispanic, Latin, Native American, Asian-American, or Pacific Islander; have high blood pressure or high cholesterol; gave birth to a baby weighing more than nine pounds; diagnosed with gestational diabetes; and/or are physically inactive. All people aged 45 or older should be tested.

Healthy Living is Important!

Diabetes can be a difficult diagnosis to take, but proper diet and regular physical activities make Diabetes manageable. It is recommended to eat regular meals and snacks, limiting saturated fats and choos ing healthy foods and vegetables, which are high in fiber. Regular physical activity is also extremely important. If diet and exercise are not enough to reduce your blood glucose levels, medication – typical ly pills – can be prescribed. In some cases insulin shots may be required. It is very important that you take personal responsibility for the treat ment of your Diabetes, including regular check-ups with your health care provider. Family members and friends also play a critical role helping diabetics stick to life style changes and medication regimen.

People with Diabetes can enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle!
child abusers, and that is infuriating," she said.

"It’s impossible to believe that the creme de la creme of the Scouts, just because they turn 18, are no longer suitable to participate in the programs," Felk said.

For now, though, Tessier sees an example of what openness and honesty can achieve. A formal ceremony will be held for him and other Eagle Scout honorees in June. Congratulations, Pascal!

Pascal's Eagle Scout ceremony will be covered in a separate story.

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**Federal court rules marriage equality is legal in Virginia**

A federal court in Virginia has ruled that same-sex couples in the state will be allowed to marry and all same-sex couples legally married elsewhere will have their marriages recognized. Additionally, marriage licenses cannot yet take place since the ruling was suspended in anticipation of an appeal.

The ruling was announced late on Feb. 13. The order released around 10 p.m. stated the following:


District Federal Court Judge Andrea L. Wright Allen promised to rule quickly after hearing arguments in Norfolk in one of two challenges to Virginia’s ban. The case is Bostic v. Rainey, and the plaintiffs were represented by (Prop 8 lawyers) Ted Olson and David Boies and the American Foundation for Equal Rights.

The WaPo reports:

"Gay and lesbian individuals share the same capacity as heterosexual individuals to form, preserve and celebrate love, intimate and lasting relationships," Wright Allen wrote. "They and other Chafin relatives are created through the exercise of sacred, personal choices—choices, like the choices made by every other citizen, that must be free from unwarranted government interference."

Wright Allen opened her decision with a quote from Mildred Loving, who was a plaintiff in the case:

"When you come to Facebook to connect with the people, causes, and organizations you care about, we want you to feel comfortable being your true, authentic self," Facebook said in a post on its Diversity page.

"You don’t have to be strictly a man or a woman on Facebook anymore. In a nod to the ‘it’s complicated’ sexual identities of many of its users, the social network on Feb. 13 added a third ‘custom’ gender option for people’s profiles.

In addition to Male or Female, Facebook now lets U.S. users choose among some 50 additional options such as ‘transgender,’ ‘cogender,’ ‘gender fluid,’ ‘intersex’ and ‘neither.’ Users also now have the ability to choose the pronoun they’d like to be referred to publicly: he/she/their.

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Choosing City Life

By Susan Jordan

LGBTQ people have traditionally chosen to leave their small towns and rural homes as soon as they could, in order to get away from homophobic gossip and harassment and lead lives of freedom in the gayborhoods of big cities—or as free as you could get in the closeted olden days.

Times have changed, and today many LGBTQ singles, couples and families live happily in suburbs and rural areas, although harassment can still happen there—and anywhere. But many say they enjoy the excitement and endless opportunities of city living.

The Empty Closet talked to a gay man Sam Brett, a queer friends couple, KaeLyn Rich and Zach Waflle, and transwoman Sam Brett, aka Samantha Vega, about their choice of city life.

Sam Brett

Sam Brett (aka Samantha Vega) lives just off Monroe Ave. He said, “Ironically, I once lived near this area in Swillburg, then on Linden St. in the South Wedge, then moved to Pearl St. in the Park Ave. neighborhood, then to Laburnum Crescent and now to Woodlawn off Monroe. I don’t have a car—by choice—and I grew up in Venezuela with public transportation.”

“Don’t he mind the hauses of getting around in winter?”

“No, I love winter,” he said. “I enjoy walking outside. So dealing with the elements at bus stops isn’t a problem. I do wish Rochester plowed the sidewalks though!”

Sam describes city life as “alive… community-oriented… convenient… dynamic.” He feels that city homeowers know all their neighbors and are friendly, with a real sense of community, although renters tend to be less committed to the neighborhood.

He enjoys getting around the city by bus. “Places I volunteer at are nearby and on bus lines. I’ve got three gay bars within walking distance—140 Alex is four blocks away from my house, the Pub is one block away, and I can make it to the Forum in 10 minutes.”

Even Tilt, the downtown club where he performs as Samantha on Thursdays and Saturdays, is easily accessible: “I can take a bus to Tilt, all the way! Buses also run to East Ave. Wegmans, there are a lot of restaurants, plus the RPO at the Eastman Theatre, any of the coffeehouses—they things are not inaccessible. People just have to work on making it work—the bus isn’t going to run on your schedule!”

Is city life really better for LGBTQ people? Sam said, “I feel safe as a gay man, I know my neighbors and have a good relationship with my landlord, and there are a lot of self-identified gay people in my neighborhood, with rainbow flags on the porches.”

Sam summed up, “There’s always something going on. Even though sometimes I choose to stay home, I can always go to a movie or bar or my gym downtown, even healthcare. I feel I have access to all the things I need.”

KaeLyn Rich and Zach Waflle

KaeLyn Rich heads the Rochester chapter of the NYCLU, and her spouse Zach Waflle works for Wegmans in distribution. They married in Canada in 2011, just before marriage equality became legal here, and then had a New York ceremony in June 2011. They bought a c. 1920 house on Wilmington St. in Swillburg in spring 2012.

KaeLyn said, “When we first came to Rochester in 2006 we lived on Laburnam Crescent and then other places in the Field St. area of Swillburg. We knew we wanted to buy either in Swillburg or Upper Monroe, because there are more single-family houses and these neighborhoods are not as gentrified as the South Wedge.”

“A lot of people our age (early 30s) are buying here, and the next generation of families with kids is happening now.”

“We love living in the city and when we saw this house was available, we made an offer the very day after it came on the market. We went from looking to buying in about 13 hours, and beat another offer by two hours.”

The house has gumwood trim, wood floors and attractive exposed beams in the living room/dining room ceiling (they may not be original) and the couple loves the window seat in the front room. A big plus was that the house had just been remodeled—neither KaeLyn nor Waflle have “handy” skills.

Both feel very safe. “It’s a pretty welcoming neighborhood,” KaeLyn said. “A gay male couple and a lesbian live nearby and people are very friendly. They assume we’re lesbian, and we’re not, but that’s fine.”

KaeLyn identifies as cis-gender and Waflle is “on the fluid side of traits.”

“What if any are the disadvantages of city living? KaeLyn said, “Noise would be my only thing—and also the lack of driveways.” (They do have one.)

Waffle said, “There’s the space issue—the houses in the city are too close to each other.”

But generally, they say, “City living is fine for us. We’re fine.”

“We are five minutes away from everywhere we need to be. Most of our friends live in the city and I don’t see us moving to suburbia. We eat out a lot, so it’s nice to have restaurants nearby and we don’t have to make the trip from the suburbs. I’m on the board of Imagine Our Rochester and Waffle has a season pass, so it’s convenient to be near that, and the other festivals.”

“I live in the suburbs, the buildings were too small, we wouldn’t do as much or be as active socially in the community.”

KaeLyn added, “We’re thinking of having kids in the near future, I’m a big queerfamilymatters.com, which isn’t just about us, but queer families in general. So schools are a concern, but we wouldn’t feel bad about our kids going to the Field St. school. But there are big problems with the city school district—schools are underfunded, there’s too much violence, etc. Mayor Waten, who we have supported since before the election, wants charter schools, but I think it’s a bad solution to the larger problem.”

At the moment, the couple only has animals—a cat, two guinea pigs and two rabbits. They are indoor pets, but the house does have a small backyard to which KaeLyn says, “We will have to do something with, eventually!”

Raquel Acevedo-Pagan and Shauna O’Toole

Shauna O’Toole

By Eileen Fay

“Right now here in the city, I live comfortably,” says Shauna O’Toole. “I’ve had challenges, but for Shauna, Rochester’s diversity has been a welcome relief after the isolation she experienced in the country-side. Now residing in the Swillburg/South Wedge area with fiancée Raquel Acevedo-Pagan, she is grateful for her friendly neighborhood.

It’s not a problem going to the closest gay bar for a pizza,” she says. “I don’t worry about showing signs of affec-

tion.

In her daily interactions she has discovered that most people are nonchalant about her trans identity. The Rochester Wom-

en’s Community Chorus, in partic-

ular, “has been wonderfully accepting. I’m just accepted as another woman in the chorus, with a rather deep voice,” Shaun-

a says. “And it’s really become my family.”

Another bonus of urban life is access to public transportation and walkable neighborhoods. As a former science teacher, Shauna is deeply concerned about global climate change.

Especially with CO 2 build-

up from cars, her mind often re-

fers mass transit from an ethical point of view.

On the other hand, lacking the protection of a private car has its drawbacks. “In the bus we are stuck,” Raquel via Face-

book: “People do double takes. Men and women alike mock in front of us like we can’t beat!”

Shauna recalls several unnerving incidents that occurred on the street, including one encounter downtown when a man stalked and harassed her.

Shauna had just finished per-

forming in the Fringe Festival’s Human Library project “and was feeling really good, really excited, really upbeat, and then I heard this and suddenly I didn’t know if I was going to have to

fight for my life or not.”

To protect herself, Shauna practices situational awareness and does not go out alone, at night. Still, she feels much safer in the city—in its mix of cultures, types, and identities—than she does in Small Town USA.

Even so, Shauna sometimes misses Wayne County’s wide open spaces and observes that Rochester can be crowded, noisy, and the bus system inconvenient. The benefits of the city nevertheless outweigh its disadvantages, and Shauna intends to remain an urbanite.

Right now he in the city, I can eat out anywhere I want to in the city,” she states. “If I were to go to Henri-

tetta, I could be arrested.”

So this optimistic acceptance will eventually spread across the region. One day, she believes, an LGBTQ individual will be welcome no matter where she or he chooses to live.
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6pm @ JCC

Ambush Rochester
Women’s Night Out

Opening Night
The Normal Heart
8pm @ JCC

Out & Equal
5-9:30pm
The Normal Heart
7pm @ JCC
Talk Back:
“HIV in 2014”
(Trillium, MOCHA, RVA)

MOCHA CENTER

The Normal Heart
8pm @ JCC

The Normal Heart
8pm @ JCC
Post Show Bonus:
Concert Preview by Rochester Gay Men’s Choruses

Empire State Pride Agenda
Community Forum:
“Legislative Priorities for LGBTQ New Yorkers in 2014”
6:30pm @ Trillium Health

ImageOut Film Night
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Reaching For The Moon
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Shoulders to Stand On: Gay Liberation Part 2
By Evelyn Bailey

It is subject to interpretation as to what influence the Iroquois Nation had on our founding Fathers or on the US Constitution. One claim goes without question. Both the Iroquois Nation’s constitution and the U.S. Constitution had as their goal for all members of the tribe and for all citizens of the United States the right “to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

It was an pianik of Iroquois and American life that articulates and focuses the challenge to be free, without fear of loss of life, job, a place to live and the pursuit of happiness. This in fact is the hope and desire of all peoples. From the founding of our nation to present day, we have striven to make this a reality.

The right to be free as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and men were expressed in short and sometimes intense bursts throughout history. The influences shaping attitudes toward homosexuals are international as well as American in origin.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries ‘liberation’ movements on many fronts created the critical mass necessary to bring the issue of gay liberation and homosexual life and culture to a level of visibility that would change the landscape politically, legislatively, medically, socially and economically. The visibility homosexual gained was a two-edged sword.

On the one hand the closet was less full, but on the other hand it became clear that prejudice, bigotry, and hatred of homosexuals and the homosexual culture was alive and well across the nation and the world. We will look at some significant historical moments that shaped the struggle for freedom and equality.

In 1867, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs was the first self-proclaimed homosexual to speak out publicly for homosexual rights when he pleaded at the Congress of German Jurists in Munich for a resolution urging the repeal of anti-homosexual laws in Germany.

In 1870 Joseph and His Friend: A Story of Pennsylvania was published. This was possibly the first American novel about a homosexual relationship.

In 1895, the trial of Oscar Wilde brought the issue of homosexuality to the forefront in America. Oscar Wilde was prosecuted under the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 for “gross indecency” and sentenced to two years hard labor in prison.

In 1897, Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Scientific Humanitarian Committee on May 14 to organize for homosexual rights in Germany and the repeal of Paragraph 175 which made homosexual acts between males a crime. Male homosexuals were in the forefront of gay liberation in the 1800s. They refused to be invisible, and spoke up to protect their rights.

In America, in 1910, Emma Goldman, an anarchist known for her political activism, writing, and speeches, began speaking publicly in favor of homosexual rights. Magnus Hirschfeld wrote “she was the first and only woman, indeed the first and only American, to take up the defense of homosexual love before the general public.” Emma Goldman also developed new ways of incorporating gender politics into anarchism.

In 1926, The New York Times was the first major publication to use the word ‘homosexuality.’ Also in that year, Chicago’s Society for Human Rights, an American homosexual rights organization, was established. Society founder Henry Gerber was inspired to create it by German Doctor Magnus Hirschfeld and his work with the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee. The Society for Human Rights was the first recognized gay rights organization in the United States.

It received its charter from the state of Illinois, and produced the first American publication for homosexuals, Friendship and Freedom. A few months after being chartered, an alarm was raised in the wake of the arrest of several of the Society’s members.

In 1928, The Well of Loneliness by Radclyffe Hall was published in the UK and later in the United States. The Well of Loneliness sparked great legal controversy and brought the topic of homosexuality into public conversation in both England and America.

In the 1930s two spurts of gay liberation caught my eye. First Monia’s 440 Club, the first lesbian bar to open in San Francisco in 1936, was outrageous for the time. Monia’s waitresses and female performers wore tuxedos and it was said that patrons prized their drees.

The second spurt occurred in 1939. Frances V. Rummell, an educator and a teacher of French at Stephens College, published an autobiography under the title Diana: A Strange Autobiography. It was the first explicitly lesbian autobiography in which two women end up happily together. This autobiography was published with a note saying, “The publishers wish it expressly understood that this is a true story, the first of its kind ever offered to the general reading public.”

In the 1950s, the violence for homosexuals and the struggle for gay rights took over other forms of expression. Between 1950 and 1952 three events happened almost simultaneously – the founding of the Mattachine Society, the Lavender Scare, and the identification of homosexuals as a dangerous subculture.

Three of these events would shape America’s attitudes toward homosexuality for generations to come. Some of the residue from these times can be seen today in 2014.

The first of these was the founding in 1950 of the Mattachine Society. The Mattachine Society was one of the earliest homophile/homosexual organizations in the United States. Harry Hay and a group of Los Angeles male friends formed the group to protect and improve the rights of homosexuals. Because of concerns for secrecy and the founders’ leftist ideology, they adopted a false all organization being used by the Communist Party of the United States. In the anti-Communist atmosphere of the 1950s, the Society’s growing membership replaced the group’s early Communist model with a more traditional ameliorative civil-rights leadership style and agenda. Then, as branches formed in other cities, the Society splintered into regional groups by 1961.

A largely amicable split within the national Mattachine Society in 1952 resulted in a new organization called ONE, Inc. In January 1953 ONE, Inc. began publishing ONE Magazine, the first U.S. gay publication, and sold it openly on the streets of Los Angeles. ONE admitted women and, together with Mattachine, provided vital help to the Daughters of Bilitis in the launching of that group’s magazine, The Ladder, in 1956. The Daughters of Bilitis was the counterpart lesbian organization to the Mattachine Society, and the two organizations worked together on campaigns, although their approaches to visibility in the mass media differed considerably.

The primary goals of the Mattachine Society were to unify homosexuals isolated from their own kind; educate homosexuals and heterosexuals toward an ethical homosexual culture paralleling the cultures of the African American, Hispanic and Jewish peoples; lead the more socially conscious homosexual to provide leadership to the whole mass of social variants and assuage gays who are victimized daily as a result of oppression. Due to internal disagreements, the national organization disbanded in 1961. During the 1960s, the various unaffiliated Mattachine Societies, especially the Mattachine Society in San Francisco and the Mattachine Society of New York, were among the foremost gay rights groups in the United States, but beginning in the middle 1960s and, especially, following the Stonewall riots of 1969, they began increasing to be seen as too traditional, and not willing enough to be confrontational.

Like the divide that occurred within the black civil rights movement, the late 1960s and the 1970s brought a new generation of activists, many of whom felt that the gay rights movement needed to be larger, more inclusive and more radical agenda – liberation rather than assimilation.

Shoulders to Stand On is proud to share with readers this brief history of the Mattachine Society. The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier was one of the groups that spoke at the first Gay Liberation Front meeting at the University of Rochester on October 3, 1970. Today in March 2014, Rochester continues to reap the benefits of the Mattachine Society’s contributions to the struggle for Gay Liberation in Rochester, NY. Remember the shoulders we stand on and be proud.

In next month’s issue of the Empty Closet, Shoulders to Stand On will look at the other two events of the early 50’s whose impact is still felt today.

History Corner
March 1974

A Monthly Newspaper of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley 812 Brown St. at West Main Rochester, NY 14601 (716) 245-7679

March, 1974 Number 37
Gay Alliance Meeting Schedule
Sun 3 Mar: Business Meeting/Gay Town Meeting.
Sun 10 Mar: Gay and Alone. But Not Gay and Alone. Mean being alone but does it have to mean loneliness.

Every Wednesday: Gay Radio Program – Green Thursdays! WCMP FM, 96.5thz. Wednesday morning.

Other area gay groups include:
- Buffalo Gay Freedom League meets Wednesdays at 6PM in Drs. 222 of the Sey- mour College Union. The office is in room 227/Seymour College Union. Phone 1-324-1211, or write to Box 32, Panas, N.Y. 14552

- Binghamton Gay Liberation, Box 209, Binghamton College, SUNY Binghamton, NY 13901

- Cornell Gay Liberation meets Thurs- days from 6-8pm at People’s Center, 410 College Ave., Ithaca, NY 14850. (607) 256-7292

- Genesee Gay Freedom Coalition. Office: room 312 College Union. Open 7-10pm weekdays, Box 58, Student Union, Geneva, N.Y. 14454. (716) 245-8981

- Geneva Gay Lib, Wm Smith/Hobart, Geneva, NY 14451

- Gay Men’s Gays for Human Liberation meets 7:30 pm Mondays at Hewitt Union Building, Oswego State, Oswego NY.

- Genesee/Cammon Gay Community Organization. Potsdam University, Pots- dam, NY

- Syracuse Gay Freedom League meets 7:30 pm Mondays at the Community House, 711 Comstock Ave. Box 34, Syra- cuse, NY 13201

- Utica Gay Liberation Front; c/o Ron- ald Denning 613 Nichols St. Utica, NY 13501

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Growing Up

I'VE HAD A GOOD LIFE

By Eric Bellmann

Apparently I said that to one of the nurses. The very same nurse that at some point I called a bitch.

When I believed there was a serious possibility I might die, I very quickly updated you on the progress and concluded that I was ready to meet my maker. My equanimity may have been born before but most likely after I screamed at the nurse, calling her a bitch, and demanded the door be opened.

I woke up feeling constipated. No surprise. A sudden snow squall Saturday night sent me to the bathroom. Twenty minutes later I dialed 911. Fifteen minutes later an ambulance pulled up. My first ambulance ride! Kind of bumpy ride. I am grateful I’m no longer alone. This is my first trip to an Emergency Room!

The ambulance folk whom I hardly pay attention to, strap me in and ask a lot of questions. Someone asks if I have any allergies. ‘Robin Williams’ is my first response.

It doesn’t seem like it happened in the ambulance, maybe at the hospital but I think someone asked me if I had any pets and I told them about my imaginary cat, Dorothy Robinson. There are probably a number of reasons to strap a patient down.

In the hospital I don’t think I have ever recited my name and date of birth as much as in the following hour. The doc asks me to put it on a chart. I indicate I expect shortly to go into nicotine withdrawal. He slaps on my shoulder and asks if I prefer nicotine lozenges or gum. No judgment. He does a bedside ultrasound. I wish I could help him more.

A man comes in to explain the Cat Scan. I get to drink a quart of pink liquid over an hour. Then this, then that. I am in process. I find that very reassuring. The IV is working. I can pee. I am sufficiently a vial of liquid. I am compliant. I know something is wrong with me and I am terrified I will end up in surgery. I know more than one person who has ended up with a colostomy. I don’t want that. The doctor agrees.

‘Nope, you don’t want that.’ He asks me if I am sure what I want. The pain has stopped. So I stare at the ceiling and practice breathing, it’s what I know to do, steady, slow breathing.

The morphine is working. At noon the nurse says I am ready for the April Fool column, which was to be for the April issue. Oops! I guess it was an early April Fool on me! This column was supposed to be for February. So, it’s a little late. And when April finally does roll around – please remember how much fun than texting!

Another word that has me puzzled is “Affluenza”. I don’t understand that this word has been around for a while and, by some, it is actually considered a real medical condition. Apparently it happened recently is that some 16-year-old in Texas was driving drunk and he ran over and killed four people. Instead of counting the youth was sentenced to probation and had to go for therapy, but would serve no jail time because he suffered from Affluenza – the mindset that his family was rich and there were really no consequences for his actions. You see, I just didn’t understand that drunk driving and killing people was a bad thing because he suffers from the dread disease known as Affluenza. So, now this youth has been sent to a chalet retreat in the mountains where he will receive counseling and be given time to think about what he has done while flooding in the infinity pool after he gets done using the sauna. And they won’t even let him have a cell phone!

The fact that this country is going in the New Year, let me tell you about some ailments I’ll be suffering from in 2014.

The first term I’ve learned is “Distraction Waking.” Now I’ve heard of distracted driving and I understand that’s dangerous, but what is this about distraction waking? Apparently it happens to 53 percent of all Americans and I never understood the difference. Distraction waking is when a person is walking while texting on their cell phone and then accidently stumbles into a broken bench, trash cans, trees, doorways and sometimes, even other people who are texting. Now, that has got to be embarrassing!

I’m not going to say that I haven’t been tended that all my junk foods into a bench or a doorway, but that has always been caused by some cute guy with a nice butt who has distracted me – not by my stupid cell phone! I mean, who hasn’t stumbled once or twice while checking out a hottie’s rear view as he passes by? I believe that may be called “Distracted Cruising” and although it could be considered dangerous, it’s a lot of fun than texting!

Joe Russo, Psy.D., CGP

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The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and other contributing writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or The Empty Closet.
I am not afraid of dying. I am occasionally apprehensive about the path that leads to death. When I think about that path, I picture my mother’s face and hear her words when, standing next to her hospital bed and her morphine drip, I asked “How are you doing, Mommy?” She answered, “I'm trying to die and it's raining forever and ever.”

I suppose there is the possibility that crossing-over leads to idyllic, cloud-purch and divine barking. Divine barking is a state of being with awe-full wonders beyond mortal imagination. Or poof! on the box, now off the box. Twenty-four hours have passed.

I have received death notices. In the beginning of my life, when I attended gettingChristened school, I was taught to pray at bedtime: “Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John bless this bed I lay upon. And if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my Soul to take.” (I do have serious concerns about their frightening little children. Mommy didn’t read that part.)

When I began to do obliteration of divine intervention, my early feminnism was born. I tried to keep up with my dearly departed: “Mommy, Grandma Bea, Grandmother OJNCH and Aunt Janie, bless this bed.” . . . “At the time, it seemed to me that familial spirits were more reliable than some stranger’s sanctum of how a wish could change events. Peacefully I began to sleep evenings everyday miracles of my yet-another-day.

Yes, world, here I am, seventy and alive. A good start to a morning, I plan to live to be 111,52 years very old. Then one day I will sit in a garden chair, take a nap, and wake up dead. (Well, anyway, that’s the Cause of Death that I have signed-up for.)

Some people plan for their departure day. Aunt Rut Olive, never reveal her funeral plans to her children, had filled a folder with hymns and readings, but regularly she kept appearing at Minister Clyde’s door with yet another something new that she had read and thought worth including. Sister Leslie, 77, keeps loosing questions” or propagate pseudo-machismo machismo. They have never been in an NFL locker room. there will be “a locker room problem” because they have the ability to say outra-geous things. Isn’t it a wonder to continue to the greater understanding of this social construct.

So, here’s a tip for all you jock journalists and hater out there: think before you speak. Think before you ask “gotta question.” It is possible to be a man of great character and substance -- all you have to do is watch him. Believe the fight for equality and justice will forever be an NFL locker room problem. Or poof! on the face of American sports when he gets to be a man of great character and substance -- all you have to do is watch him. Believe the fight for equality and justice will forever be a state of being with awe-full wonders beyond mortal imagination. Or poof! on the box, now off the box. Twenty-four hours have passed.

I am also reminded by what ironic civil rights activist/poet Audre Lorde once said: “It is not our differences that divide us, it is our inability to recognize and accept and celebrate those differences.” Amen.

The fact is, folks, we’ve always been about those differences, but some of us refuse to let the hate go and do not have the compassion or intellect to see what makes us similar as human beings. More than ever, I want to believe one day we will live in a world where a famous gay athlete can wear a professional team jersey and be judged just as their straight counterparts. Amen.

I hope that one day Michael Sam will be known as just another great pro football player -- and all of America can celebrate him. He is off to a terrific start. I celebrate and support him - I hope you will too.
Trans*missions DAMAGING WORDS

By Laine DeLaney

Tranny. She/She. The world is full of words and expressions that remind me that many (even some within the LGBTQ community) think that we should not exist.

I realized this when I was attending the School of the Arts performance of “Shrek: The Musical,” and the expression “hot and tranny mess” was used.

I heard it and sat, shell-shocked, through the rest of the performance. The action on stage hardly touched me as I was buried inside myself, remembering every time I had ever wanted to kill myself, remembering every time someone had made some offhand transphobic comment. Visions of messy suicide by firearm, of cleaner death through pharmaceuticals, of suicide by a drug I’d ever had due to my dysphoria and fear of society played itself out again in my mind as the performance ended.

I tried writing a letter to the teacher who was directing the play. The reply that I received explained that the use of the word was insensitive due to context, that the use was necessary to the character and plot development of the play, and in any case that the play could not be altered in any way due to contract with Music Theatre International (I have been informed since by performers in the play that there indeed have been lines that have been omitted or added).

I thanked him for his response. What else could I do? What could I say to someone who had never had the same experiences that I have, someone who hasn’t known a trans* person who has lost family, work, or their life because of the bone-deep dysphoria that drives us to commit the social sin of attempting to live the way that our bodies want us to or is otherwise consistent with the same. Though it may occasionally fall on deaf ears, I don’t think people wish to bring harm to those around them. While with a first explanation may fail, another may reinforce it.

Spout out against three kinds of words where you can. It will help to oppose them in the long run. More importantly, it will show you that you support their right to live and be themselves.

What’s Bothering Brandon?
LOOKING...FOR SOMETHING BETTER

By Brandon W. Brooks

As I see (spoilers) Cordelia Foxx being crowned as the reigning Supreme, the moment is bittersweet. I am happy that her evil twin and former Supreme Fiona Goode is no more; however, my happiness is overshadowed by the fact that AHS Coven will never again grace television screens.

I try to find a new show with which to waste away the time that would have been consumed by our every instinct tells us is correct?

I don’t know how to explain these things any more than I know how to explain how dominating the use of these words could be to those witnessing the musical. Maybe the students will grow up in a generation bereft of the type of violence that makes us aware of our existence. Unlike Shrek we don’t have to walk out every time we see someone in a TV commercial that says “I do not want to be seen by anyone” with the flames of a destructive and drug-fueled relationship (which also may have had some theft associated with it).

Then there is how sex is handled. There are no references or even feigned, after-sexual when they do. They spring out of the mouths of bystanders like their co-conspirators: rude gazes and mocking laughter.

More than I know how to explain these things any more than I know how to explain how dominating the use of these words could be to those witnessing the musical. Maybe the students will grow up in a generation bereft of the type of violence that makes us aware of our existence. Unlike Shrek we don’t have to walk out every time we see someone in a TV commercial that says “I do not want to be seen by anyone” with the flames of a destructive and drug-fueled relationship (which also may have had some theft associated with it).
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 March 2014.

1st Sunday: Episcopal Mass/Healing Service, with music.
2nd Sunday: Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word, with music.
3rd Sunday: Quiet Episcopal Mass in the Chapel.
4th Sunday: Evening Prayer, followed by a Potluck Dinner!
5th Sunday: NO service on March 30.

Our Potluck theme for March is “Soup and Bread”. This is our traditional Lenten event, with tasty soups and breads to share. Come to a potluck with the ward to spring.

It’s time to make your camping reservations! Do your spring cleaning; sweep out the bear cave. Come to a potluck with the Bears on the second Saturday, March 8 in the GAYG meeting room on the 5th floor of the Aud Center.

Sunday, March 16 we’re going to the Maple Tree Inn in Short Track for pancakes with fresh maple syrup. The Bears were at Carrabba’s by Markerplace on the third Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 6. Becky works there now, so we are following our favorite waitress.

March 22 we’ll be at a big 8-Ball party for a member. March 29, the Bears will be at the RGMC concert as they sing pop tunes with classical bits. We’ll be out at the movies and out to dinner other nights. Check us out. WOOF!

GAY GAMES 2014 IN CLEVELAND

Join “Team Rochester” for a short information meeting on Wednesday, March 12, 7 p.m. at Equal Grounds. Discussion will include choosing a uniform design for our entry during the Opening Ceremonies on Saturday, Aug. 9.

Questions? Email thomaso510@mac.com.

From the Gay Games website, www.ggc3e.com: The 2014 Gay Games presented by the Cleveland Foundation is one of the biggest sports and cultural festivals in the world and comes to Cleveland/Akron, 9-16 August.

The Games are open to all adults — regardless of sexual orientation or athletic ability. With more than 35 sports (from darts to triathlon, bowling to softball) and two cultural events (band and chorus), there’s something for everybody.

Games Week is about more than sport with spectacular ceremonies, Festival Village, parties and more. Let’s show the world. Now is the time, GO ALL OUT.

Register, volunteer, donate, sign up for e-newsletter, follow on Facebook and Twitter.

ROMANS

About 20 members of the Rochester Male Naturists (ROMANS) attended the February meeting at a member’s home. It was a very cold single digit afternoon but members sat together cuddly in front of the fireplace to mingle and talk.

Some members braved the cold to have a relaxing soak in the outdoor hot tub. Up coming events for Spring and Summer will include two more nude swims at Harro East (first weekend of March and April), some outdoor swim get togethers at a nude camp in the area, camping at Jones Pond, World Pride in Toronto and the Naked Fest organized by the Gay Naturist International (GNI) in Maryland on the first week of August.

This month a few ROMANS members will be on a cruise with a nude sunbathing deck sailing to a few Caribbean islands. The ROMANS is currently having a membership drive. Details about who we are and what we do can be found on our website at www.rnytg.com

ROMANS is a social club for gay and gay-friendly nudists over 21. You can contact ROMANS at message line 585-281-4964, E-mail wnyromans@yahoo.com or via regular mail at PO Box 52293, Rochester, N.Y. 14692.

TRANS’ALLIANCE OF GREATER ROCHESTER

In January, we had a support meeting facilitated by Maiz DeLacey. After the group made its introductions and those who wished to related and discussed their personal stories, the topic of medical care came up and was discussed for a good portion of the meeting.

Due to mixed experiences relating to handling transition with medical professionals in the area, it was decided that a list of truly trans* friendly medical professionals should be compiled. It was observed that in several cases a medical professional claiming to be “LGBT” friendly genuinely had issues treating trans* patients and aiding them in their medical transition.

A call was made for artwork by trans* people or relating to trans* themes for an upcoming show on the topic. More specific information will be provided relating to this as it becomes available.

In addition, the idea of having a second- ary planning meeting during the month was raised and discussed; most present agreed that it would be a good idea, as it would enable the group to plan the regular meetings more efficiently but also set aside time to plan for special events.

Our March meeting will be a regular support meeting hosted by Laine DeLaney. New members and allies are welcome to come and share their stories or just listen as we discuss!

We meet in the Gay Alliance’s office on the fifth floor area located in the Auditions Theatre, 875 E Main St. on the last Saturday of each month between 3-5:30 p.m. Parking is available in the back of the theatre off of Prince St. and College Ave. Note: if there is a guard at the booth, just say you’re here for the Gay Alliance and they have instructions to let you in without paying the parking fee. Once in the door, walk down the hall to the main lobby, turn right past the guard’s booth and the elevator will be right there, on the 5th floor just follow the signs to the meeting.

Also if you’re coming by bus get off at the Prince St. stop, walk up the sidewalk to the first set of doors (they have the number 875 in large letters over them). Once you’re in the lobby head toward the elevator and go up to the fifth floor and follow the signs.

Our website is: www.rntyg.org or on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/RochesterTransGroup.
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TARA RUSSOW, Ph.D.
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St. Patrick’s Day Weekend
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522 Monroe Avenue
585-244-4960
Miss Darienne Lake: “A thrill ride of twisted steel and sex appeal”

By Robby Morris

For more than two decades, Miss Darienne Lake has been entertaining Rochester audiences with her sassy attitude and comedic touch. Now, as a contestant on RuPaul’s Drag Race, she is poised to charm and delight audiences across the country.

Shortly before the start of the new season (which premiered on Feb. 24), Miss Lake took the time to share with me a little about herself, her drag career and her experience being a part of the popular reality TV competition that has brought the world of Drag performers to the forefront.

RM: How long have you called Rochester home? Darienne Lake: I moved to the western New York area when I was twelve from Long Island. I was twelve from Long Island. The western New York area when I was sixteen from Long Island.

RM: Who are some of your influences and favorite performers?

DL: Growing up, I was obsessed with Dolly Parton in The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas. The rhinestones, sequins, beads and feathers were a cornucopia of glamour to my wondering eyes. Boy George was my first introduction into blurred gender lines. He was a creature of beauty and didn’t care what people thought of him. Then it wasn’t until RuPaul shot the art of drag into the stratosphere that I realized that there is a business in drag.

RM: Your combination of humor and glamour has made you a Rochester legend. What is it that you want audiences to take away from your character and performances?

DL: Originally I wanted to just have fun with the crowd. Entertain them, whether it be the dancing, drama, or comedy. Recently, a woman came up to me and said that when she was a young teen, she saw me on stage and felt such a sense of pride seeing someone of my size, loving my body and myself. She left with such a changed perspective on her own life. Now I realize that there is so much more that someone can get from a performance.

RM: Rochester has always had an amazingly talented array of Drag performers. What are your thoughts on the Rochester scene and your fellow Queens?

DL: The RuPaul Drag Race queens learned that if we work together and support each other, we are only going to make more money for all of us. We bonded and became lifelong friends. In this city, you need something exciting to pull you away from your computer, phone, TV etc. We are here to give it to them!

RM: You’ve recently been gaining attention as a cast member of the new season of RuPaul’s Drag Race. When did you first become aware of the show and what made you audition?

DL: I’ve known about it since season one, but not being technologically savvy, I didn’t think it was a reality. After Pandora Boxx excelled in season two, I went to work on getting ready. Right before season three casting, we lost drag legends Heath Skye and Naomi Kane. They were two people who I would look to for help, and now they were gone. By season four, I sent my first audition tape in, but I wasn’t ready. Last year, I thought, “this might be it.” I was in the top five for the Facebook fan vote. This past year, with a great deal of research, polish, and perfection, I landed on season six.

RM: Cast members have described the experience of doing the show as simultaneously thrilling and nerve rattling. What was your experience like?

DL: It is surreal. You look around and can’t believe you’re there. But soon you learn that if you don’t get your head together, you will wind up on a plane back home. It is mentally and physically challenging. You have to be a hairstylist, I’m used to being on my feet all day, but the heels take a toll on your entire body. You have to be made of steel, but look like silk. But I made a promise to myself that I’d pass out before I quit!

RM: What is your take on this season’s cast?

DL: This cast will surprise you. Like superheroes, we all have different powers and are so closely matched. Some of the girls will bring looks and talents that have never been seen. Not only will people watch, but they will re-watch to catch every frame. I’m so proud to be part of it.

RM: As someone who is not a stue two, I’ve always felt that the show has been hit or miss with their portrayal of the Queer Queen. What are your feelings on this issue? Are you comfortable representing curvy Queens?

DL: My size is something I’ve dealt with my entire life. I’ve looked at my weight as a burden, curse, blessing and gimmick. At this stage of my life, my extra (Darienne continues page 28)

Matt DeAngelis stars in “Once”

By Susan Jordan

Matt DeAngelis (Švec) has been on Broadway, West End and the first national tour of Hair (Woof) and the first national tour of Green Day’s American Idiot. He’s humbled to be performing with this clan of wonderful people and musi cians. He believes in optimism, kindness, marriage equality, Actors’ Equity Association and the Boston Red Sox! Twitter: @Mattdelangelis22.

ONCE is the celebrated new musical based on the Academy Award-winning film. It tells the story of an Irish musician and a Czech immigrant drawn togeth er by their shared love of music. Over the course of one fateful week, their unexpected friendship and collaboration evolves into a powerful but complicated romance, heightened by the raw emotion of the songs they create together. Brought to the stage by an award-winning team of visionary artists and featuring an ensemble cast of gifted actor/musicians, ONCE is a musical celebration of life and love.

The Oscar winning independent Irish film ONCE was made for $150,000. Shot in 17 days, it went on to gross $200M worldwide becoming a critically acclaimed international smash. (DeAngelis continues page 28)
continued from Page 27)

(Darienne Lake)

It’s easy to feel comfortable around her. But was it like working with RuPaul?

Michelle Visage, Santino Rice and the guest judges?

What was your experience working with some times their critiques can be controversial.

What can audiences expect? “Once” is a musical love story, but does it include a musical love story, but does it include comedy or is it strictly drama? “It is a light-hearted, semi-comedic tale on a real life love story. This is a very honest and true story about love, music and timing.”

What is your hometown and at what age did you decide to go into theatre? How did you prepare? “Just out of high school I was 16 and I knew I wanted to do this when I was 8. I went to Boston Conservatory for theatre and moved to NYC in 2004.”

Do you consider yourself an actor or a singer, first and foremost? “The goal is to be an actor first, I grew up as a singer but I’d like to think I’m well rounded… with dance being last.”

Which performers have inspired you the most? “Gavin Creel changed my life. Working with him onstage made me a better actor and cowoker and joining him and Broadway Impact’s quest for equality and gay rights made me a better person.”

continued from Page 27)

(Matt DeAngelis)

Working with him onstage made me a better actor and cowoker and joining him and Broadway Impact’s quest for equality and gay rights made me a better person.

Matt DeAngelis answered some questions from The Empty Closet.

What is your take on your character, Svec? What drives him? “He is loyal and protective but is very free and silly.”

Svec? What drives him? “He is loyal and protective but is very free and silly.”

Where is your hometown and at what age did you decide to go into theatre? How did you prepare? “Just out of high school I was 16 and I knew I wanted to do this when I was 8. I went to Boston Conservatory for theatre and moved to NYC in 2004.”

Do you consider yourself an actor or a singer, first and foremost? “The goal is to be an actor first, I grew up as a singer but I’d like to think I’m well rounded… with dance being last.”

Which performers have inspired you the most? “Gavin Creel changed my life. Working with him onstage made me a better actor and cowoker and joining him and Broadway Impact’s quest for equality and gay rights made me a better person.”

Crystal Bowersox

April 2nd

Zeppa Auditorium (formerly The German House)
315 Gregory Street in the South Wedge
Tickets online at waterstreetmusic.com, Zeppa Bistro or charge by phone 888-512-SHOW
For dinner reservations call 585-563-6241
www.crystalbowersox.com
and catapults it into a whole new era of heart-pounding, mind-blowing entertainment for modern Broadway audiences. Refracted through a contemporary lens, After Midnight celebrates Duke Ellington’s years at the Cotton Club using his original arrangements and performed by a world-class big band of 17 musicians hand-picked by living jazz legend, Wynton Marsalis. The timeless tunes, set against a narrative of Langston Hughes poetry, provide an authentic backdrop for an array of cutting-edge performances by 25 sensational vocalists and dancers, including special guest stars, whose interpretations shatter everything you think you know about music, nightlife and Broadway.

The Jazz at Lincoln Center All-Stars, are a world-class big band of 17 musicians hand-picked by Wynton Marsalis. Steeped in the tradition of The Duke Ellington Orchestra, The Jazz at Lincoln Center All-Stars celebrates jazz’s large-ensemble tradition in a way never-before-heard on Broadway. The Jazz at Lincoln Center All-Stars include Mark Gross, Godwin Louis, Dan Block, Andy Farber and Kurt Bacher on woodwinds; Gregory Gisbert, Bruce Harris, Alphonso Horne and James Zollar on trumpets; Wayne Goodman, Art Baron and James Burton III on trombones; Adam Birnbaum on a Steinway piano; James Chirillo on guitar; Jennifer Vincent on bass and Alverett Garnett on drums.

Aside from this, I must share that each year Chicago hosts a Housewares Show while New York City has a “sneak peek”. I do get products to review and this one has to top them all. It’s a clock that runs by tap water. Yes, plain tap water. No batteries or electricity. Have we been wasting energy for so many years or did someone just discover this? Check the products out on www.bedolwhatsnext.com.

140 ALEX BAR AND GRILL
THE GAY ALLIANCE AND TODD RANOUS PRESENT:
A fundraiser for the Gay Alliance Youth Program’s

’80s Zombie Prom
March 30, 2pm - ?
140 Alex Bar and Grill
Poison Waters will emcee the event. Featured performers are Mercedes Sulay, Miss Gay Rochester 2014, Chastity Dee, Deelicious and Destiny Spice. This event will mark the much awaited return of Mary and Rhoda to the stage at 140 Alex.

There will be food for sale, raffles and a 50/50 draw
Minimum suggested donation $5 at the door.
Advance sale tickets will be available at the Gay Alliance & 140 Alex Bar and Grill.
Creating Change: Jeanne and Kellie do Houston

By Jeanne Gainsburg

I felt so incredibly thankful that I had the opportunity to participate in the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force’s Creating Change Conference this past month in Houston, Texas. I attended with my good friend Kellie Ronald, the Roe Pride Forum Co-Chair. I had only been to this conference once before and it was years ago. I think what impressed me most was how the hosting hotel turned into a microcosm of LGBTQ awareness and respect.

Gender neutral restrooms were the norm. Women in bow ties and men in skirts abounded. Women in bow ties were the norm. Women in bow ties and men in skirts abounded. Gender neutral restrooms were the norm. Women in bow ties and men in skirts abounded.

The 2014 conference was a coalition of individuals and groups working to empower LGBTQ people to affirm their identities and create an atmosphere where the diversity of our community is the empty closet:

An empty closet: A space to explore their identity, make friends, build community, gain life skills, become a leader and have fun!

Gay Alliance Education Program gains national attention

The Gay Alliance SafeZone Trainer-Trainee Certification Program has gained national attention on college campuses. The California Community College Student Mental Health Program hired the Gay Alliance to provide this program to a number of the community colleges in California. This past November Jeanne Gainsburg facilitated a full-day workshop at Cabrillo Community College in Aptos, Calif. and in January, Scott Fearing facilitated at Golden West College in Huntington Beach, Calif.

Other scheduled trainings will take place this spring at Shasta College, Redding, Calif., Niagara County Community College in New York, and a High Sierra Community College in Pennsylvania.

This program creates confident, knowledgeably trained and effective SafeZone trainers who can develop sustainable SafeZone programs on their own college campuses and in their workplaces after we have left. If you are interested in finding our more about bringing us to your campus or workplace, please email education@gayalliance.org or call Jeanne at 585-244-8640 ext. 14.

Thank you to RIT students for creating our new meeting space

By Jeanne Gainsburg

The Gay Alliance would like to thank Ryan Terry, Zach Bokuniewicz, Yuleish Panel, Paige Santtory, Dan Greer and Richard Loya for all the hard work and time that they put into helping us create our new meeting space on the fifth floor.

On Feb. 12, these wonderful student volunteers from RIT helped us break down cubicles, carry heavy items, store clean, stuff, clean, etc. We now have a great space to use for group meetings and the cyber center, attached to our office.

Thank you to very much for all your help! Thank you also to Carla Pennello, Residence Coordinator, for arranging this day for us. We look forward to working with you in the future!

Gay Alliance offers two panel presentations at the Rochester Erotic Arts Festival

This year the Gay Alliance Speakers Bureau will be providing two educational panels at the Rochester Erotic Arts Festival (REAF). On Friday, March 28 at 8 p.m., we will be offering our understanding of the Power of Stereotypes (aka: Who’s Who Panel) and on Saturday, March 29 at 4:30 p.m. we will be running our Transgender Community Awareness: The Gender Spectrum panel.

REAF takes place this year at the Radisson Riverside Hotel at 120 E. Main St. The festival is an 18-and-over event. For more information, check out the Festival’s website at: http://www.rochestereroticartsfest.org/
Meet Our Interns By Jeanne Gainsburg

This semester we are privileged to have three amazing interns working with us at the Gay Alliance. In an effort to introduce them to our readers, I asked each of them to briefly answer five questions:

1) What is something you love about the Gay Alliance?
2) What is something you don't love about the Gay Alliance?
3) What will you be doing in 10 years?
4) Please share a favorite LGBTQ book or movie with us.
5) In the movie of your life, who would play you?

Rowan Collins is a senior at Nazareth College majoring in Psychology with a minor in Women and Gender Studies. Here are her responses:

1) I love the commitment of everyone at the Gay Alliance to making the world a safer and more inclusive place for everyone.
2) I wish more people knew about the Gay Alliance and the contributions that they make to our area.
3) In 10 years I hope to be working primarily with the less fortunate population and helping them transition into adulthood.
4) My favorite LGBTQ movie is "Eat Pray Love".
5) I think in the story of my life Jennifer Lawrence should play me. We both say what is on our minds.

Dawn Balisi

Dawn Balisi is working on her Master’s in Social Work at Boston University. Here are her responses:

1) I love the commitment of everyone at the Gay Alliance to making the world a safer and more inclusive place for everyone.
2) I wish more people knew about the Gay Alliance and the contributions that they make to our area.
3) In 10 years I hope to be working primarily with the less fortunate population and helping them transition into adulthood.
4) My favorite LGBTQ movie is "Eat Pray Love".
5) I think in the story of my life Jennifer Lawrence should play me. We both say what is on our minds.

Anne is also actively involved in ESNA, Equality Rochester, Pride at Work AFL-CIO and Marriage Equality New York. She states that she recognized that before direct political advocacy for LGBTQ equality could happen, community consciousness-raising was required. She kindly credits the Gay Alliance for the early education and mentoring that enabled her and her wife Bess Watts to confidently advocate for equal rights for LGBTQ people.

Anne, you are a treasure! The Gay Alliance is grateful for all that you have done for us over the year.

By Jeanne Gainsburg

The anti-gay policies of the town of Greece School Board when a PTA mother needed Gay Alliance intervention on behalf of her bullied son; organizing a public response to the anti-gay slurs of a political candidate and to a Spencerport hate crime; contributing photos and articles to The Empty Closet, and presenting, as a Gay Alliance Speaker Bureau member, to college classes on "LGBT discrimination, policy and protest", "effective activism" and board and creating change.

Young Update: Fabulous Friday features films!

By Dawn Balisi

February was another fun month for our Fabulous Friday group. We made accessories for the Red Ball, which many of the youth attended. Movie night last month featured "Cry Baby", directed by John Waters, who is openly gay and very funny. We also had a fun and informative presentation from Sarah Keller who works as the Outreach Prevention and Education Coordinator for Chances and Changes. She gave the youth the 411 on healthy relationships and dating.

March is looking to be another great month for Fabulous Friday meetings at Open Arms MCC, 707 E. Main St. 7-9pm. The big event in March is a screening of the movie "Fish Out of Water", followed by a discussion of religion and the LGBTQ community. "Fish Out of Water" is a great film about a young woman’s quest, after coming out, to find out what religious scholars had to say about being LGBTQ in regards to the Bible.

In addition we have more fun things in the works. For updates please check us out on Facebook and Twitter (@G/GAYYouth).

May 3 is our ninth annual Jazz Night meeting at Open Arms MCC, 707 E. Main St. 7-9pm. The big event in May is a screening of the movie "American Honey". May 3 is our ninth annual Jazz Night meeting at Open Arms MCC, 707 E. Main St. 7-9pm. The big event in May is a screening of the movie "American Honey".

Rowan Collins is a senior at SUNY Brockport majoring in Social Work with a concentration in Aging Studies. Here are her responses:

1) I like that the Gay Alliance is committed to making the world a better place by starting within the community. I have become more versatile in a lot of my professional skills since I have started interning with the Gay Alliance.
2) I don’t like that the Gay Alliance does not have a steady income of a budget, like the HRC, to help make it flourish as much as possible in order to do all of the events and education possible in the community and beyond.
3) In ten years I hope to be working with an organization that still does LGBTQ advocacy and education, like The Trevor Project or Fenway Health in Boston, Massachusetts.
4) I don’t like that the budget and statewide funding cuts keep the Gay Alliance from doing everything they want to make the world a better place.
5) In 10 years I hope to be working in LGBTQ activism and education, just like I am today but on a bigger scale (and hopefully not while juggling two other jobs and being a full-time student!)

Barbara Smith’s "The Truth That Never Hurts: Writing on Race, Gender, and Freedom" is one of my favorites. I grew up knowing Barbara and this book is an absolutely amazing read.

If I think Nicholas Hoult would do a pretty good job. We don’t look extremely similar but he’s an incredible actor and I dig his style.

Thank you to Dawn, Lucky and Rowan for their commitment and all the time and energy they are giving to the Gay Alliance! You rock!
MARCH 2014 • NUMBER 476 • THE GAY ALLIANCE • THE EMPTY CLOSET

ROCHESTER AA/NA MEETINGS

Every week there are four regularly scheduled OGLBT AA and two inclusive NA meetings in Rochester.

TUESDAYS

Narcotics Anonymous
6:00pm & 9:30pm 1134 Culver Road (Covenant United Methodist Church) This is an NA meeting that is open to all addicts who have a desire to stop using. Although it is not specifically a gay-oriented meeting, it is welcoming to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as to anyone who is affected by HIV and AIDS.

WEDNESDAYS

New Freedom/New Happiness Group
7pm. First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd. Bus riders: take the 211 University bus to 12 Corners. Use the stop just past the top of the hill at Highland Ave. and before Highland Ave. Or take the #1 Park Ave. to the corner of East and Winton, then see every minute south (uphill on Winton). This is an open discussion meeting. All issues – as they relate to our alcoholism/addiction and recovery – are fair game.

THURSDAYS


LORA - Buffalo Women’s Coffee Social

TUESDAYS


SUNDAYS

Parents Families & Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG)

LORA GaYmes Night

FRIDAYS

Gay Men’s AA meeting
7:30-8:30pm, Closed meeting. Emmanuel Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave. Gay Alliance Youth Gender Identity Support Group
Thursdays, 5:30-6:30, GAGV Library, 1st floor, off Clinton Ave, 675 E. Main St. Age: 18-13, 244-8640.

The Social Grind
0-11:30pm in HIV testing. Every Thursday night, 5-6pm, Trillium Health, 295 Monroe Ave. 442-2220.

LORA - Buffalo Women’s Coffee Social
1st & 3rd Sunday of the Month. 11:30am - 12:30pm. Trillium Health, 502 South Ave. Contact Person: Kerry Calavita. Email: dressingyfemme@aol.com. More Info: www.loragroup.org. Events: https://www.facebook.com/groups/buffaloles/
**SUNDAY 2**
Dignity Integrity. Episcopal Mass/Healing Service, with music, 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

**TUESDAY 4**
Mardi Gras

**WEDNESDAY 5**
4/10 LGBT Month event: Spot Light Party. With Chanson Dace. 9 pm, 140 Alex Bar & Grill. Free HIV testing by Peer Health.

**FRIDAY 7**
Jeanne White-Grinder, mother of the late Ryan White, speaking at Catholic Church.

**SUNDAY 8**
International Women’s Day, American Association of University Women (AAUW) presents EWD Award for Education to Evelyn Bailey of Shoulders To Stand On. 8-5 pm, AAUW Perkins Mansion, 494 East Ave. (Reservations ended Feb. 28)

**TUESDAY 9**
Empire Bears postball, Gay Alliance, fifth floor, 875 E. Main St.

**WEDNESDAY 10**
LGBT Health Month event: The Normal Heart opening night. 8 pm, JCC, 1200 Edgewood Ave. Tickets: $60-2000; www.JCCOfRochester.org

**SUNDAY 9**
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.

**THE NORMAL HEART, 2 pm, JCC, Talk Back:** “The Next Act-Up. Activism & Rights in 2018” (Empire State Pride Agenda; NYCLU).

**WEDNESDAY 11**
Gay Games Team Rochester. 7 pm, Equal-Grounds, thomas0507@mac.com.

**THURSDAY 13**
The Normal Heart. 8 pm, JCC. 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

**WEDNESDAY 12**
Gay Games Team Rochester. 7 pm, Equal-Grounds, thomas0507@mac.com.

**THURSDAY 14**
Empire Bears deadline for April issue. 244-9030; susan@gayalliance.org.

**SATURDAY 15**
The Normal Heart. 8 pm, JCC.

**SUNDAY 16**
Empire Bears to Maple Tree Inn in Short Track for pancakes with fresh maple syrup.

**TUESDAY 17**
Dignity Integrity. Quiet Episcopal Mass in the Chapel. 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

**TUESDAY 18**
Empire Bears Talk Back: “The Next Act-Up. Activism & Rights in 2018” (Empire State Pride Agenda; NYCLU)

**THURSDAY 19**
Flower City Pride Band Open House. 6-8 pm, Anonymous Lutheran Church. Come meet the local marching pep band supporting the needs of Rochester’s LGBT community! All are welcome to come and meet the band and learn about upcoming opportunities and events. Food and refreshments.

http://www.flowercitypride.com

**THURSDAY 20**
LGBT Health Month event: Neighborhood Arts Networking for LGBT Health. 5:30 pm, The Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave.

**THURSDAY 21**
The Normal Heart. 7 pm, JCC. Talk Back: “Connecting LGBT Communities”.

**THURSDAY 22**
The Normal Heart. 8 pm, JCC. Post show bonus: concert preview by RGMC.

**SUNDAY 23**
Dignity Integrity. Evening Prayer, followed by potluck dinner. 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

**THE NORMAL HEART, 2 pm, JCC, Talk Back:** “In” (Trillium, GSA Coalition, HCR).

**MONDAY 24**
LGBT Health Month event: Legislative Opportunities For LGBTQ New Yorkers. 10 am, Empire State Pride Agenda Community Forum. 6:30 pm, Trillium Health.

**TUESDAY 25**
LGBT Health Month event: Imagine! An Evening of Film at the Cinema, 957 S. Clinton. Starts 6 pm.

**FRIDAY 26**
Rochester Erotic Arts Festival Gay Alliance panel: Understanding the Power of Stereotypes; 8 pm, Radisson Riverside Hotel, 120 E. Main St. 18-and-over event.

**SATURDAY 29**
Rochester Erotic Arts Festival Gay Alliance panel: Transgender Community Awareness: The Gender Spectrum, 4:30 pm, Radisson Riverside Hotel 120 E. Main St. 18-and-over.

**TRANS*Alliance of Greater Rochester.** 5:30 pm, Gay Alliance office, fifth floor, 875 E. Main St.


**SUNDAY 30**
Benefit for Gay Alliance Youth “80’s Zombie Prom.” 2 pm- 5 pm, 140 Alex Bar & Grill. Entry Fee: Donation, Free Gay Rochester Mercedes Sulay, Chastity Dee, Destiny Space. Delicious special surprises. Minimum donation $5 at door. Advance tickets at Gay Alliance & 160 Alex.

**MONDAY 31**
Deadline for open enrollment in Affordable Care Act through NY State of Health Marketplace. Contact Shannon Kelly at 385-210-4143 or insurance@trilliumhealthny.org.

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**UNIFIED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**Mountain Rise**
United Church Of Christ (by Appointment)
2 Mountview Drive, Fairport, NY 14450

**St. Dismas**
21 strawberry Ave., Fairport, NY 14450

**Catholic**
St. Dismas (by Appointment)
2000 Ivy Grove Rd., Fairport, NY 14450

**Second Thursdays, 5:30 pm at JCC, followed by potluck dinner. 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.**

**FLORIDA DRIVE-IN**

**IRONDEQUOIT**

**United Church Of Christ**

**IRONDEQUOIT**

**United Church Of Christ**

**Irondequoit United Church Of Christ**

**Irondequoit United Church Of Christ**

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**ASK EM BY JUSTIN HUBBELL**

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