U of R begins trial of potential oral HIV vaccine

By Adam Young

Researchers at the University of Rochester HIV Vaccine Trials Unit are conducting the first study in Rochester of a potential oral HIV vaccine.

The hope is that by delivering the vaccine in pill form via the "mucosal surface" of the mouth, the immune system's fight will be strengthened from the get-go.

Dr. Michael Keefer, Director of the HIV Vaccine Trials Unit of the Rochester Victory Alliance at the U of R, is one of the doctors leading the study.

"The idea is that by delivering it through these capsules we get it to the place where it can create these better immune responses on mucosal surfaces, which is where HIV first encounters the T4 cells when it causes infection in people," Dr. Keefer said.

The theory behind the oral delivery of the Harvard-developed vaccine is that the capsules can deliver the participant's stomach acid to reach the immune system at a greater depth and not be inactivated by the stomach. The main component of the vaccine, Adenovi-

russ 26, is expected to trigger an immune response from the body that may be capable of combating HIV. Though the vac-

cine may cause some "bug-like" symptoms, Dr. Keefer expects the vaccine will produce no serious symptoms in the trial participants. Since the vaccine contains no living or killed HIV, it is impossible to contract HIV from the vaccine.

The study is a "dose escalation" study. Four groups, each consisting of six HIV-negative participants between the ages of 18 and 40, will be under isolated observation at a site at St. Mary's Hospital. Assuming the first group tolerates the initial dosage, the dosage will be gradually escalated throughout each remaining group. Participants will be observed and isolated throughout the duration of the study to ensure the vaccine causes no serious symptoms and to prevent the possibility of spreading the Adenovirus to others.

"Our main concern is that it's safe," Dr. Keefer said. "Effectiveness is the next thing we want to achieve."

In order to combat the adaptability of HIV, Dr. Keefer stated the vaccine may need to be combined with other types of HIV vaccines to ultimately be effective. The one-two punch approach may be necessary to prevent virus immunity from fading over time. "We need to get the immune response to recog-nize the three-dimensional structures as opposed to just the linear structures on the virus," Dr. Keefer said.

After 27 years of preventing HIV vaccine research, Dr. Keefer believes this oral vaccine could be another piece of the puzzle in moving toward a safe, effective HIV vaccine.

"He is confident the study will go well and it will move on to larger studies, and ultimately licensure studies. I could see it making a fast track into larger studies. But this is the first thing we have to do and it does take a while to move through these phases of studies," Dr. Keefer said.

For more information about the vaccine, contact Dr. Michael Keefer at 585-266-8640, x13, annet@rochester-victoryalliance.org or call (585) 756-2329.

Intersections workshop repeats on March 7

Due to exceptionally high interest in the Feb. 21 Intersec-
tions Workshop, "Strengthening our LGBTQ and Ally Communities through the Lens of DIFFERENCE: Race, Sexual Orientation, Gender and Gender Expression," organizers are scheduling a repeat workshop.

It will take place on Saturday, March 7, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., at The MOCHA Center, 189 N. Water St., Suite 1, Chris-
topher Godwin of The MOCHA Center, Steve Jarose of National Coalition Building Institute and Sady Fischer, Diversity Consult-
tant, will again be the educators presenting.

Organizers hope to schedule new workshops in April and thereafter, dealing with the LGBTQ communities' relationship with other groups in our area which experience injustice, and how to explore the intersections between homophobia and different forms of prejudice.

A $10 donation is appreciated. Register to attend: www.
gayalliance.org. Please let organizers know about any needed accommodations.

For information: Anne Tischer 266-8640, x13, annet@gayalliance.org.

Wellness Begins With Me: LGBT Health Month 2015

By Trillium Health

Every year, the National Coalition for LGBT Health sponsors a week-long recogni-
tion of LGBT health in late March. Trillium Health, we know LGBT health is important every day, for every identity, at every stage.

Our Rochester community has an amazing group of LGBT-centered organizations that work hard every day to improve the quality of life for all of us. With the combined effort and strength of these organizations, we are proud to be able to dedicate an entire month to LGBT health awareness here in Rochester.

Some of the highlights of this year's health month include events and outreach to address current trends that we are observing in the community. These include everything from LGBT individuals looking to start families, to an increase in awareness of Truvada as PrEP - an HIV prevention medication strategy proven to be effective in preventing HIV infection.

One of the many exciting events during the month will be an afternoon of self-care focused on the Trans* community. This event, to be held on Sunday, March 29, will offer mini-workshops (such as Yoga for Your Body) and a free clothing closet. Another much-anticipated program, Creating LGBTQ Families, will take place on Wednesday, March 25. This event will offer both a panel discussion and information table with representatives from CNYFertility, Adoption STAR, Children Awaiting Parents, and Monroe County Foster Care.

Trillium Health will also be out at The Bachelor Forum on Mondays to cheer for Ms. Kasha Davis as she stars in RuPaul's Drag Race and to offer information and outreach about the importance of HIV and STI testing and how PrEP (pre-expo-

ture prophylaxis) can help pre-
vent HIV transmission.

Finally, don't miss out on "50 Ways to Play!" Jenna Weintrub, educator from Planned Parenthood, will lead this fun, sex-positive discussion. This kink event will be open to all people who identify as feminine in a way that is sig-
nificant to them.

For a complete listing of events, please look at the cal-
endar published on the back cover of this Empty Closet issue. It will also be posted on the Trillium Health website at www.trilliumhealth.org.

For further information about LGBT Health Month and local resources, please con-
tact Cara Wood (CWod@trilliumhealth.org) or Jessi-
ca Cohen (JCohen@trillium-
health.org) or contact us by phone at 585-545-7200.

Awareness around the need for increased resources for the health and well-being of LGBT New Yorkers is more impor-
tant than ever. Trillium Health and our community partners are committed to providing the ser-
VICES crucial to the health of our community. Wellness begins with you and me.

The Empty Closet
Religious liberty

It’s the latest weapon against LGBTQ people. Conservative extremists’ homophobic hate speech and unconstitutional discrimination now fall under “religious liberty.” According to them, the Catholics and Protestantst who slaughtered each other in the 16th century made the same claim, as did the religious and secular authorities who burned or hanged countless women accused of witchcraft from c. 1350 to 1750. If Christian extremists can claim that abuse of gays is vital to their religious faith, then it is perfectly acceptable for the Taliban, Al Qaeda and the Islamic State to say the same about non-Muslims. Theocracy means you agree with your beliefs. “Religious liberty” is actually a mockery and betrayal of Christianity. Jesus sat down with tax collectors and prostitutes. He scourged money-changers from the temple and said that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get to heaven. He never said a word about homosexuality. Whether you hate each other, they can all agree on hating gays!

“Religious liberty” is actually a mockery and betrayal of Christianity. Jesus sat down with tax collectors and prostitutes. He scourged money-changers from the temple and said that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get to heaven. He never said a word about homosexuality. Whether you hate each other, they can all agree on hating gays!

The Empty Closet Editor

SUSAN JORDAN

Perspectives

The Empty Closet Executive Director

SCOTT FEARING

The same social battles around race and gender that plague American Culture play out in our communities. Since we are a community that is all about one’s identity, the potential for conflict is amplified. Coming out in 1980, it shocked me how hard our little fledgling organization in rural Minnesota had to work to get the “lesbians and gays” to work together. Over the years I have seen these same troubling challenges play out across all identity lines. LGBTQ communities long ago learned the best way to eliminate homophobia was to encourage conversation. Sometimes difficult, sometimes challenging, often uncomfortable, these conversations are the only way to address bias. Social bias and personal bias. So, we must open our minds and hearts to learning from those who are hurting.

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Intersections: Love, Race, Faith and Class

If you paid attention during the Pride Parade last year you would have seen a float put together by the Gay Alliance touring our series of discus- sions called Intersections:

Intersections: Love, Race, Faith and Class

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Gay Alliance Board of Trustees

David Zona, President, Jessica Muratore, Vice-President, W. Bruce Gorman, Secretary, Peter Mohr, Treasurer, Jason Barnecut, Chris Hilderbrant, Emily Jones, Jeff Lambert, William Schaefer

Gay Alliance partnerships continued from page 1

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Intersections: Love, Race, Faith and Class
Dignity Integrity celebrates 40 years

By Pat Cloonan

On Easter Sunday evening, March 30, 1975, the newly-formed local chapters of Dignity (Catholic) and Integrity (Episcopal) met together at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in downtown Rochester to celebrate in a joint worship service.

Thus began a celebration that continues to this day, 40 years later. In a spirit of true ecumenism, Dignity-Integrity/Rochester, or D-I for short, still meets and worships every Sunday evening at 5 p.m. at the same church, now the Church of St. Luke and St. Simon Cyrene.

Over the years, several hundred people have passed through those church doors. Some came seeking to be healed and others for reconciliation with their Church. Some came seeking answers and others to have their belief validated. Still others came hoping to be a prophetic witness to their Church as LGBT Christians, or to be instruments of change within their faith traditions. Some were simply looking for a safe and comfortable place to worship. Whatever the reason, Dignity-Integrity has been there and is still here.

Like all organizations, D-I has faced challenges and change. The most notable was the infamous Ratzinger letter from Rome in October 1986, which eventually precipitated the removal of local Catholic priests from preaching at liturgy. Numerous Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, men and women, helped fill that void, as well as many courageous lay and religious Catholic priests who now lead the community in Liturgy of the Word.

Many people have come and gone at Dignity-Integrity/Rochester. The ties remain strong, however, and those people are fondly remembered and appreciated. To that end, D-I is planning a huge 40th Anniversary Reunion Picnic on Saturday, Aug. 15. A more formal liturgy and banquet will also be held in early October. Details will be shared in D-I’s monthly column in the groups section of the Empty Closet and on our website. Be sure to mark your calendars!

NCADV comments on intimate partner violence homicide of Candra Keels

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCADV) has learned of the alleged intimate partner violence (IPV) homicide of Candra Keels that occurred on Jan. 18, in Rochester.

Candra’s girlfriend, Sherrita Crumpier, has been arrested and charged with her homicide in what police are calling a domestic violence incident.

“Intimate partner violence affects lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer relationships with the same, if not higher, frequency as heterosexual relationships, yet the issue is seldom addressed in national discussions,” said Osman Ahmed, NCADV’s Research and Education Coordinator at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. “We need more education, services, and prevention programs that seek to end IPV in LGBTQ and HIV-affected communities and provide services and support to LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of IPV.”

In NCADV’s report Intimate Partner Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Communities in 2013, released on October 15, 2014, there were 21 IPV homicides in 2013, the highest recorded level, equal to the 21 homicides in 2012. This is up from 19 IPV homicides in 2011 and more than three times the six documented homicides in 2010. Additionally, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, lesbians, gay men and bisexual people experience intimate partner violence at the same or higher rate than non-LGBT people.

NCADV is working with Alternatives for Battered Women (ABW) to raise awareness of this homicide and to offer support to local communities. ABW is a resource to all survivors of intimate partner violence and domestic violence and offers counseling, education, support, and advocacy for survivors.

ABW operates a free and confidential 24-hour hotline at 585-232-7353.

NCADV is a resource for anyone who experiences violence. For more information, or to locate an anti-violence program in your area, go to infog@ncadv.org or visit us online.

To learn more about national advocacy and how you can get involved, contact or support, go to info@ncadv.org.

Nominate a local LGBT leader or ally who has made a difference

The nomination process is open to help identify 25 Western New York Community Champions who will be honored at the Empire State Pride Agenda’s 25th anniversary Spring Dinner in Rochester on Saturday, May 16, at the Joseph A. Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center.

“We are doing this work aren’t looking to be in the spotlight and promote themselves, but to locate an anti-violence program in your area, go to info@ncadv.org or visit us online. To nominate an individual or individuals in Western New York who have made significant or frequent contributions in the pursuit for LGBT rights locally, and for the betterment of LGBT people across the state, visit prideagenda.org/SPRING15. Nominations close on March 15. For 24-year-old Christopher Sandella, the Community Champion Awards are a way to say thank you: “I’ve been out for five years and have never felt unsafe, unwelcome or discriminated against, or even worried to hold another man’s hand,” he said. “Unfortunately, it hasn’t always been that way, but thanks to members of the LGBT community and allies alike who have fought long and hard to make Rochester and Western New York freer and safer for everyone, I’ve always been able to live my life freely and openly.” There are so many leaders, many who had to remain quiet, who have risked their positions within their community to open the conversation to create open and affirming change throughout the Rochester region,” Jones said. “It is time that we hear their stories and celebrate their courage.”

To nominate an individual or individuals in Western New York who have made significant or frequent contributions in the pursuit for LGBT rights locally, and for the betterment of LGBT people across the state, visit prideagenda.org/SPRING15. Nominations close on March 15.

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“Western New York has been the forefront of incredible political, pastoral, and faith community leadership during this critical civil rights journey for LGBTQ equality,” said Emily Jones, chairperson of the Community Champions Committee for the Pride Agenda’s Spring Dinner. “The 25th anniversary of the Pride Agenda seemed like the right time to collect these stories, to honor those who paved the way and also recognize the amazing work being done by young professionals and young people today.”

Since the inception of the Spring Dinner, each year the Pride Agenda has publicly recognized a member of the Western New York community for their commitment and work towards our mission with our Commuity Service Award. It only made sense to celebrate 25 great community leaders who have furthered LGBT equality in the organization’s 25th year.

“While celebrities can certainly help to place LGBT issues in the spotlight and promote acceptance, I believe that we need to identify and celebrate the local champions who’ve stepped up to make our community progressive and safe,” added Lorraine Woerner-McGowan, who has two teenage sons. “Whether they are LGBT or an ally, they are the true and honorable role models that we need to embrace and thank for setting a great example for how to be in this world, especially for our youth.”

A young attorney, Michael P. Scott-Kristensen expresses his gratitude: “I have escaped many of the ill of discrimination that people who are LGBT have experienced in the past and continue to experience. A major reason for my fortunate experience is the work of uncounted people who have risked much and labored hard to change laws, perceptions, and ideas concerning LGBT people. Most of these people I might never meet, but I am indebted to them for what they have achieved.”

“The LGBT rights movement has not been linearly focused, as LGBT people we are enwined in every fabric of every society,” explained well-known youth volunteer, BJ Scanlon. “There have been champions that have worked in late in the faith, education, marriage rights, health advocacy, youth mentoring, and counseling... the list goes on and on.”

“It’s honestly amazing to hear about the things that have been done in our community that happen on the periphery,” Jones adds. “Because we know that folks that are doing this work aren’t looking for recognition, they are just looking to do what is right, and we want to share their stories.”

Finger Lakes Pride @ Work gets national recognition

On Jan. 18, The Rochester Finger Lakes Chapter of Pride at Work AFL-CIO was recognized nationally by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) for the outstanding, community leadership and labor and civil rights activism they have exhibited since their inception in 2007.

The chapter was honored for “Keeping the Dream Alive” by supporting all workers rights and advancing LGBTQ civil rights in particular. Their success in expanding LGBTQ acceptance within Rochester unions was demonstrated by the “hands-on” advocacy of local unions, including police and firefighters, during the successful marriage equality campaign, while Rochester’s New York State Senator Alexa Flower authored the representative Republican legislator ever to publicly support same-sex marriage.

The labor recognition (and Pride @ Work continues page 6)
Gay couples across the U.S. could be celebrating the right to marry in every single state this June.

The Supreme Court has indicated the justices are likely to rule that no state can restrict marriage to only heterosexual couples. Only two out of the nine justices -- conservatives Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia -- have dissented from the court's refusal to block gay weddings from going national in June.

Marriage equality could go national in June

By Joe Morgan for gaystarnews.com

Gay couples in the 13 states where gay marriage was banned to “start your wedding plans now.”

NewsFronts

Sarah Warbelow, the HRC legal director, has said “There is virtually zero risk that [the justices] will issue an anti-equality ruling this summer.”

- See more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/gay-marriage-could-be-coming-entire-us-june100215#sthash.1saaWtby.dpuf

Brownback rescinds order protecting Kansas LGBT state workers

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback on Feb. 11 rescinded a 2007 executive order that protected state workers from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In place of that order, Brownback issued another order that he said “affirms the commitment of the State of Kansas to employment practices which do not discriminate based on race, color, gender, religion, national origin, ancestry, or age.”

Classes of protected citizens.

“Their election to deal with that should be done by legislation,” Hawley said. Asked if Brownback is proposing such legislation, Hawley said he is not.

The Human Rights Campaign reacts:

“This is a dramatic reversal for Kansas. For eight years, LGBT state employees have been guaranteed non-discrimination protections and in one foul, reckless, and shameful decision, Governor Brownback has taken the state backward. His deplorable behavior is a direct assault on fairness and equality in the state.”

-JoeMyGod.com

NYC Mayor DeBlasio will boycott St. Patrick’s Day Parade again

Via IrishCentral:

It appears New York Mayor Bill de Blasio will again boycott this year’s St. Patrick’s Day parade on Fifth Avenue because of the lack of an Irish gay group in the line of march, multiple sources have told the Irish Voice.

A non-Irish gay group from NBC, OUT@NBCUniversal, will march.

On Feb. 10, City Council Member Daniel Dromm of Queens confirmed to the Irish Voice that a majority of council members, including Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, will not take part in the parade. The council formally boycotted and withdrew its banner from last year’s march in protest, and plans on doing the same for 2015.

“Don’t march until an Irish gay group can march,” Dromm told the Irish Voice. “And there will be no council banner in this year’s parade – of course there won’t,” he added.

The decision by the parade committee to allow a gay group to march next month for the first time — OUT@NBCUniversal — came about for proper reasons only, Dromm said. “It’s not acceptable to us,” Dromm added. “We’ve been struggling for years to have an Irish gay group in the march and they still won’t allow us to march.”

Anti-gay Cardinal Timothy Dolan, this year’s grand marshal, has expressed support for the inclusion of the one corporate LGBT group, earning him widespread scorn on right wing sites. When De Blasio boycotted last year, rightwing Catholic extremist Bill Donohue was thrilled.

RELATED: The LGBT-inclusive St. Pat’s For All parade takes place in Queens on March 1.

SAGE launches senior housing initiative

Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) has launched a comprehensive national initiative to address the LGBT older adult housing crisis, hosting a panel discussion at its national headquarters yesterday with marriage equality pioneer Edie Windsor and key leaders working on this issue across the country.

LGBT older people often face unique challenges in finding safe, affirming, affordable housing, and are disproportionately living in poverty, often as the result of lifelong discrimination. A 2014 report by the Equal Rights Center, with support from SAGE, found that 48 percent of older same sex couples applying for senior housing as part of a national test were subjected to discrimination. This high level of discrimination makes it extremely difficult for LGBT older people to find appropriate housing as they age.

“Addressing the current housing crisis is a critical first step in improving the lives of LGBT older people—which is the heart of SAGE’s mission,” said Michael Adams, Executive Director of SAGE. “This initiative puts a national frame around the work of many talented leaders in the housing field, and will drive clear strategies to transform the housing landscape for LGBT older people.”

Jennifer Ho, Senior Advisor for Housing and Services at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, spoke at the launch of SAGE’s initiative and affirmed HUD’s support for the effort, stating that “the LGBT community’s needs must be front and center” as HUD expands senior housing across the country.

SAGE’s Initiative provides five strategies to expand housing opportunities for LGBT older people:

- Building LGBT elder housing and sharing SAGE’s expertise from such projects;
- Training existing housing facilities to provide housing in an LGBT-welcoming, non-discriminatory manner;
- Changing public policies to clearly allow the way for more LGBT elder housing and bar housing discrimination against LGBT older people;
- Educating LGBT older people in how to look for LGBT-friendly housing and how to exercise their rights; and
- Expanding LGBT-friendly services available in housing sites across the country.

SAGE will also partner with HELP U.S.A., a national affordable housing developer, to build New York City’s first LGBT-inclusive older adult housing: the project will be located in the Bronx. Planning for the New York City project is still in its preliminary stages, with further announcements to come at a later date.

ABOUT SAGE

SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders) is the country’s largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) older adults. Founded in 1978 and headquartered in New York City, SAGE is a national organization that offers supportive services and consumer resources to LGBT older adults and their caregivers, advocates for public policy changes that address the needs of LGBT older people, and provides training for aging providers and LGBT organizations through its National Resource Cen-
ter on LGBTQ Aging. With offices in New York City, Washington, DC and Chicago, SAGE provides vital information and support to 27 local SAGE affiliates in 20 states and the District of Columbia — including the organization that serves Rainbow SAGE of Rochester. Learn more at sageusa.org and lgbtagingcenter.org.

GOP blocks bill to protect LGBT students

The Republican-controlled House Education & the Workforce Committee on Feb. 10 prohibited a vote on the inclusion of non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ students as part of an education reform bill, reports the Washington Blade. And Washington Post, which covered the Student Success Act, the committee voted along the party-line by 21-15 to table the amendment. In its place, California’s Rep. Jared Polis, D-Colo., filed the bill that would protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students from discrimination. The Republican-controlled House education committee, which is considered a supporter of marriage equality and recently became a co-sponsor of the Respect for Marriage Act, is one of the Republicans who voted to table the amendment.

The proposed amendment was submitted by gay Democratic Rep. Jared Polis who is also co-chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus. Introducing the amendment, Polis said:

“This is something I think we can all agree on. Schools are there to serve all learners. I hope we don’t play out our social prejudices and arguments on the kids in school because it truly doesn’t matter in this context whether you think they ought to be able to have their marriages recognized by the government.

“Here, it’s simply about should they be able to go to school free of the fear of intimidation and every child has that right as an American.”

However, anti-gay North Carolina Republican Rep. Virginia Foxx said that although she abhors “any kind of discrimination or any kind of intimidation,” she objected to the amendment because it was not relevant to the larger bill.

Republican Committee Chairman John Kline agreed with Foxx, stating: “The amendment is beyond the scope of a bill, which addresses improving elementary and secondary school education.”

Ian Thompson, legislative representative for the American Civil Liberties Union, said that Republicans “had an opportunity to act to better the lives of LGBTQ students.”

The possibility that harassment and discrimination have no place in our country’s public schools, but the Republicans disagree in legislative gamesmanship instead.


SF trans community stages die-in at City Hall

Members of San Francisco’s trans community staged a die-in in front of the city hall to demand an end to violence against trans women.

More than 20 trans women, dressed in red and black, lay down on the sidewalk and stage a tableau in front of the words “stop violence against trans women” and “City Hall: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Center”.

By Darren Wee on gaystarnews.com

Michael Sam’s fiancé “made me comfortable to be who I am”

By Darren Wee on gaystarnews.com

Photo via Human Rights Campaign

Michael Sam said he knew “damn sure” he was gay after his first sexual experience and credited his fiancé with giving him the self-confidence to come out. The first openly gay NFL footballer on Feb. 13 received an Upstander Award at the Time to THRIVE gay youth conference in Portland, organized by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC).

In his acceptance speech, Sam paid tribute to his fiancé Vito Cammisano. “Vito has been with me for a long time and actually it is because of Vito that I am here tonight to talk to you guys,” he said.

“He is the only one who made me confident in who I am; to be comfortable in my own skin. And without him, this would never be possible. I owe him everything.”

Sam proposed to his college boyfriend at the Vatican in December.

The footballer said that he knew he was “different” growing up but he did not know he was gay.

“I didn’t know I was gay, I just knew I was different. But I always knew I had football. So, I was comfortable, you know, when I go to college I will experience, I will see — maybe, I’m not gay. Maybe, it’s a phase,” he said. “But after that first time, I knew I really didn’t want to take it anymore. It’s time for us to stand up together.”

The Trans Activists for Justice and Accountability Coalition (TAJA) demanded the city’s Board of Supervisors help to end what they see as systematic violence against the trans community.

Many attendees planned to attend the Board of Supervisor’s weekly meeting to demand they form a transgender specific mission whose aim is to address violence and provide support, including housing for the community.

In an interview with CBS local portal said, “I want our allies to stop videotaping us with their phones and recording the hate that’s constantly aimed against us and stand up for us instead of showing us like a circus act on YouTube.”

In 2015 six trans women of color have already been murdered in the US.

Last year, at least 226 trans people across the world were killed.

See more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/michael-sam-after-my-first-time-i-knew-damn-sure-i-was-gay160215#sthash.X2KgOEFE.dpuf

Poll: GOP support for marriage equality is rising rapidly

A new poll from NBC News and Marist College suggests that support for same-sex marriage among Republicans may be growing at such a rate as to make opposition to marriage equality a political dead-bolt for the majority of GOP primary voters.

As The Washington Post reports, opposition to same-sex marriage is as unpalatable as support for Common Core, immigration reform, a belief in man-made climate change and support for raising taxes on the wealthy.

The poll, in fact, show that about half of likely GOP caucus and primary voters in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina said they find opposition to gay marriage either “mostly” or “totally” unacceptable in a candidate. Fifty-two percent of likely Republican primary voters in New Hampshire and South Carolina said opposing gay marriage is either mostly or totally unacceptable, while 47 percent of likely Iowa caucus voters agree. By comparison, 63 percent of Iowa voters say belief in man-made climate change (and fighting it) is unacceptable, 56 percent of New Hampshire voters say raising taxes on the wealthy is a non-starter, and 52 percent of South Carolina voters say support for comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship is a deal-breaker on one level or another.

Voters in all three states find a candidate who supports gay marriage to be more acceptable as a final candidate who doesn’t see the party line on any of these issues.

And while the numbers are surprising, they make sense. A Pew poll conducted in March 2014 showed 39 percent of Republicans and Republican leaners supported gay marriage. Add the passage of time and the fact that non-Republicans can’t even vote, you’ve got essentially less anti-gay marriage electorate come next year. If we see a GOP candidate in 2016 who completely rejects same-sex marriage, we might as well say, “OK, let’s just cede more electoral turf.”

The report also speculates on whether the wording of the question in the polls -- asking about opposition to same-sex marriage instead of about support for it -- may have skewed the results. The other question that remains unanswered is how much a candidate’s views on same-sex marriage will motivate and influence Republicans who support marriage equality versus those who oppose it. “We’re guessing it’s still more of a voting issue for those who oppose gay marriage than those who support it — at least on the GOP side.”

See more at: http://www.towleroad.com/2013/03/30/trans-protest-violence-killing120215#.shxhJ7cTe1d

Elaine Elkins, M.S.
Psychotherapist
244-4837

Individual & Relationship Counseling

Anxiety & Depression

Loneliness & Separation

Communication Skills

Sexual Abuse Recovery

Drug & Alcohol Abuse

Grief & Loss

Travis County, Texas Probate Judge Gay Herman has struck down the state’s ban on same-sex marriage. The Austin Statesman reports:

Herman ruled as part of an estate that required same-sex couples to live together in light of the ruling. DeBeauvoir has said in the past that she is ready to begin discussions about issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. However, according to reporter Chuck Lindell, Travis County will not be issuing marriage licenses to LGBT couples just yet.

The marriage ban was previously struck down by U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia, though that decision was stayed until the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals could weigh in on the subject as it is considering a similar challenge to the Texas ban.

– Towleroad.com

Small W, Va. town passes inclusive anti discrimination order

Thomsontown, West Virginia has become the smallest town in the United States to pass an order banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, reports WVTV.

In a unanimous vote on Feb. 16, Thurmond’s five residents approved employment, housing and public accommodations protections to a new town-wide Human Rights Act. Township Supervisor Schneider, Executive Director of statewide advocacy group Fairness WV, said the Thurmond ordinance is stronger than most similar laws that have been passed in West Virginias Human Rights Act.

Although attempts to extend protections to Transgender people remain failed in the West Virginia Legislature for years, towns including Charleston, Huntington, Morgantown, and other towns have also considered similar ordinances banning discrimination against LGBT people.

Despite progress, politicians around the United States continue attempts to repeal non-discrimination orders. Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/2013/03/30/trans-protest-violence-killing120215

– Towleroad.com

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Grief & Loss
for justice and equality – fast food work-
community waging a beautiful struggle
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we stood alongside you all in the fight for
in our LGBT community have been, as
Justice, we know how inspirational many
demanding justice and equality. At Metro
of those same people standing up and
the beautiful and inspirational struggle
so.

By Colin O’Malley
The LGBT community is familiar
struggle. Not just the difficul-
ties experienced in the day-to-day lives
of often marginalized peoples, but also
the beautiful and inspirational power
of those same people standing up and
demanding justice and equality. At Metro
Justice, we know how inspirational many
in our LGBT community have been, as
we stood alongside you all in the fight for
marriage equality.

Today we stand alongside another
community waging a beautiful struggle
for justice and equality – fast food work-
ers. As part of the nationwide Fight for 15,
we are working with fast food workers to
demand an industry wage of $15/hr and
the right to form a union without retali-
ation in one of the most profitable indus-
tries in our country.

At first glance, some think of these as
totally separate fights. But, from the front
lines of both fights, I can tell you that
simply isn’t true. Higher-than-average
rates of poverty faced by lesbian and gay
families are even higher in the transgender
community, and downright frightening in
LGBT communities of color. We begin to
see incredible levels of poverty with people
that face a combination of racism, sexism,
and homophobia.

Many of the people that were fighting
for marriage equality were either unem-
ployed or stuck in low-wage jobs like fast
food. Today, many of the leaders in the
local Fight for 15 are LGBT, and that is
part of the reason they are fighting.

“Discrimination on the job is real, and
without unions workers have a hard time
stopping it,” said Kim Ramos, a local
Wendy’s worker and leader in the Fight
for 15. “I worked with my partner, and
it was nearly impossible to get time off
together. My manager said he didn’t need
to help ‘those type of people’.”

Transgender workers have also been
standing up and joining the movement.
“As a transman, making $15 an hour and
having a union would help get me out of
poverty, win respect at work, and contin-
ue forward with my transition,” said Oli-
ver Puente, Tim Hortons employee.

Flower City Pride Band

The Flower City Pride Band will kick
off its 21st season with an OPEN HOUSE
on Wednesday, March 4. This is a great
opportunity to check out the band, and
see how you might become involved.

Did you play an instrument in high
school or college? If so, it is never too late
continues page 11)
Abbe Land, Executive Director/CEO of the Trevor Project
By Susan Jordan

The Trevor Project was founded in 1998 by the creators of the film “Trevor” to provide crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ youth, ages 13-24. Many celebrities have signed on to help inform youth about the Project, most notably Daniel Radcliffe, who as Harry Potter is known to young people everywhere.

Abbe Land, Trevor ED spoke at the University of Rochester Medical Center on Jan. 27. She also talked with The Empty Closet about the organization and its services and programs.

Based in New York City and Los Angeles, Trevor also has volunteers and community resources in Atlanta, Chicago, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington D.C. The Project offers a 24/7 Lifeline with trained counselors, 1-866-488-7386; Trevor Chat, instant messaging; TrevorSpace online where youth can talk to each other, and Trevor Text, now in development, with text trained counselors for support and crisis intervention.

Abbe Land said, “Last year there was a 20 percent increase in use of the Lifeline. I think that means the word about Trevor is getting out as we expand our reach and use of social media. Unfortunately, statistics on calls are fairly the same since 1998. Research shows young people who identify as LGB are three to four times more likely to attempt suicide, and those with family rejection are more like eight times more likely. Transgender statistics indicate 40 to 60 percent have attempted suicide.”

She noted, “We’re a crisis services provider and certified lifeline. Our model is first to deal with the caller and de-escalate their tension. Sometimes they call back and sometimes they don’t, and there is no way to track them subsequently.

“We want to help young people find local help; we have a database of resources all over the country. We always say, ‘The most courageous thing you can do is ask for help.’ Suicide is a very complicated issue. Many factors go into why one person commits suicide and another person doesn’t. Although the issue of suicide is complicated, one person can make all the difference. We shouldn’t be afraid to talk about it.”

Land said that the Trevor Project wants to be there for the callers when they have reached out for someone to intervene. “We want to be that person at the essential moment when they reach out. Each call is different — we do what we call ‘active listening’. Many young people have challenges at home and school, but don’t attempt suicide.”

She said that she would like young LGBT people in Rochester to know how to look for resources. She added, “We do education in the general community so that everyone can be aware of the warning signs of suicide. We have a Lifeguard workshop, online or on DVD, designed for young people to learn how to become lifeguards for their friends, and we have education models designed for teachers and school personnel. Our website has a resource center with information for young people, parents and teachers.”

Forty percent of homeless youth identify as LGBT, Land said. “If families don’t welcome them at home, we can refer them to local and state resources.”

Land talked about Trevor’s social media outreach, and how it can help youth feel less alone. “TrevorSpace, online, encourages youth to join so they can talk to each other. It’s a great way for young people to share stories. I would say to Rochester-area youth, ‘You are perfect just the way you are. If you feel you need help, call the Trevor Project. If you have friends who are in trouble, don’t be afraid to talk to them or to an adult.’

“We want to be that person at the essential moment when they reach out. Each call is different — we do what we call ‘active listening’.”

Abbe Land of the Trevor Project. Photo: Susan Jordan

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ROCHESTER UNIVERSITY

This exhibition is organized by the Arizona State University Art Museum Ceramics Research Center, Tempe, AZ. In Rochester, it is sponsored by the Mobil Ferrer Lyon Fund, the John D. Greene Endowment for Contemporary Exhibitions, and the ENHAGE Foundation. Additional support is provided by Charlotte & Paul Herrera, Mary Sue Jack & Richard E. Kreipe, Deanne Molinini, Ron & Cathy Poprocki, and Mann’s Jewelers.

Make Rochester Green
and support the Gay Alliance with Broccolo Garden Center’s “Goodness Grows” Program.

On May 16th and 17th, Broccolo Garden Center will donate 10% of your purchase to the Gay Alliance when you present this coupon OR show the Facebook or email notice on their phones.
Making the Scene

My Own Private Rochester: C. Todd White
By Susan Jordan

C. Todd White, anthropologist and author and historian of the pre-Stonewall gay rights movement, has lived all over the country. He arrived in Rochester in January 2007, to teach at Brockport.

Todd has maintained a home in the South Wedge ever since, although he spends a lot of time traveling and teaching at the College of New Jersey. Many of his book reviews have been published in Out N.J. and he is author of Pre-Gay L.A. His current project is a history of the early gay group the Mattachine Society—“a society that never was.” He travels to New Orleans to talk with pioneer activist and ONE magazine publisher Billy Glover, who lives there now.

Todd’s travel companions are Skyler, a three-year-old dog he rescued from Lol-lipop Farm, and Gandalf, a 35-year-old parrot who has traveled with Todd since Todd was 16.

Todd said, “I drive cross country to L.A. with Gandalf and Skyler usually every other year. I put a lot of miles on the car, that’s for sure! Part of my job is to travel the country and rescue gay archives. The State of California is curating my personal archives.”

Todd works with the Homosexual Information Center archive, founded in 1965, at California State at Northridge. The HIC is the surviving half of the early gay magazine ONE, but is now called Tangents magazine, dba the Tangent Group.

Despite his frequent travels, Todd is devoted to Rochester. His most-admired local people include Ron Schutt and Dan McCarthy of Print Roc, John White of Equal Grounds, Todd Gustafson of RGMC, Gerry Szymanski of the Gay Alliance Library and Archives, Evelyn Bailey of Shoulders to Stand On and Buffalo historian Madeline Davis.

Todd notes, “I love Rochester’s coffee shops, especially Boulder and Equal-Grounds. And I like the Avenue Pub because it has a personality. I always run into someone I know. I also LOVE Jones Pond, and Park Avenue Pets, and Park Avenue in general. Also the South Wedge, of course!”

He adds, “A BIG one – Highland Park. I also like the Rush Rhees Library at UR – I worked there for a year.”

His favorite restaurants are La Casa, a new Mexican restaurant on Alexander St., and Mark’s Texas Hots on Montrose Ave. Todd especially likes the Lilac and Park Avenue Festivals. He said, “I love the RPO when I can afford it, and the free concerts at UR, and I love the George Eastman House and the Little Theatre.”

Todd observes, “True gay communities like Rochester are really rare. What’s amazing to me right now is the idea that ‘gayborhoods’ are falling apart. Maybe we need to look at ‘gay archipelagos’ – smaller gay communities.

“Rochester has staying power. It’s one of the best-kept secrets in the gay country. I fell in love with the city and the South Wedge. It’s been my home since 2007. As an anthropologist I’m trained to see systems – and everything here looked stable and had staying power. I don’t think people here realize this.

“Rochester though was hard to break into – kind of closed, like in Lincoln, Neb. I still don’t feel like I’ve broken through – and I shouldn’t – because I AM a newcomer.”

RPO
**LOCAL AND STATE**

(Band from page 6)

...to start back up. Have you always wanted to play a band instrument? If so, this is a great place to start.

Flower City Pride offers free music lessons to those wanting to learn an instrument, or simply get their chops back. The band will be adding more marching performances this year, so flag corps members are welcome, as always. While we specifically need drummers, new members are welcome on any traditional band instrument, at any skill level.

FCPB members are also members of the international Lesbian and Gay Band Association, which offers performance opportunities at annual conferences and events around the world. The LGBA is all about! Join us on Wednesdays, and we will have refreshments, an informational meeting, and a short rehearsal. Bring your instrument if you would like to play that evening. Call (585)420-8621 for more information.

**NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL**

(Newsfronts from page 5)

**Chinese film on accepting gay children goes viral at New Year**

Much like Thanksgiving here in the West, the Lunar New Year is a time for many of those celebrating to reconnect and gather with their families. In celebration of the Lunar New Year, PFLAG China has released a short film entitled “Coming Home” celebrating parents that have accepted their queer children for who they are.

The Hollywood Reporter notes that the film has already garnered over 100 million online views.

Though China as a country has steadily made incremental progress in its treatment of its LGBT population, a significant portion of the population and most of the Chinese government holds true to traditions and policies that discourage queer people from coming out.

“Coming Home” tells the story of an openly gay man who returns to be with his family years after they initially rejected him for coming out. The film’s popularity spiked, with hundreds of thousands of people sharing it via QQ Live, a Chinese video-based social networking platform.

“In the film, the boy’s family offered him a ‘brave and brave’ University, one of the mothers featured in the film implored those watching, ‘Tell your parents your experiences, and we will share with you.’”


**Slovenia moves forward on marriage equality**

Via RTV Slovenia: The National Assembly voted 11-2 on an amendment to the law on marriage and family relations, which changes the definition of marriage. Will same-sex partnership be seen as equal to a marriage between a man and a woman?

The debate lasted for several hours in the parliamentary committee for Labour, Family, Social Affairs and the Disabled. Members discussed the amendment of the Law on Marriage and Family Relations. The amendment was proposed by the opposition party, United Left, which says that marriage applies to two people—regardless of gender.

More from Pink News:

“This is an infinitely practical suggestion; it proposes treating all couples with dignity and respect. Such a move would signal that Slovenia values its same-sex couples just as much as its heterosexual citizens, based on basic equality principles and common sense,” said Evelyne Paradis, ILGA-Europe’s Executive Director.

A new Family Code which extended rights and protections currently enjoyed by married heterosexual couples to same-sex unions in Slovenia was previously approved by the parliament in 2011. However, that law was rejected by a narrow margin in a referendum held the following year.

**Chelsea Manning will finally receive basic medical care**

Chase Strangio, attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & HIV Project and counsel for Ms. Manning in her lawsuit against Department of Defense and Army officials for adequate medical care while she is incarcerated, issued the following statement.

“The lawsuit, Manning v. Hagel, was filed in September of 2014 and negotiations have been ongoing since the filing. “Chelsea has waited years to receive basic medical care that she needs to treat her gender dysphoria. Since she arrived at the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth in August of 2013, advocating for her medically necessary health care has been Chelsea’s priority. She has fought her whole life, and particularly over the course of the past few years, to be seen and affirmed as who she is—as Chelsea,” said Strangio.

“We are thrilled for Chelsea that the government has finally agreed to initiate hormone therapy as part of her treatment plan. This is an important first step in Chelsea’s treatment regimen and one that is in line with the recommendations of all of her doctors and the basic requirements of the Eighth Amendment. But the delay in treatment came with a significant cost to Chelsea and her mental health and we are hopeful that the government continues to meet Chelsea’s medical needs as is its obligation under the Constitution so that those harms may be mitigated.”

“Meanwhile the fight continues. The military continues to refuse to let Chelsea grow her hair like other female prisoners, a critical part of her treatment plan that has been recognized by her doctors. The resistance to meeting Chelsea’s full treatment needs is a reflection of the deeply entrenched stigma associated with transgender health care. There is no transgender exception to the requirements of the Eighth Amendment and we will keep fighting for Chelsea’s health needs.

(Chelsea continues page 12)
Egyptian man arrested at bathhouse attempts self-immolation

The self-righteous actions of conservative moral crusaders never fail to leave a swath of destruction in their wake.

In December there was a raid on an Egyptian bathhouse, lead by conservative moral crusader and all around awful human being Mona Irazi. Despite the raid probably being illegal, despite the allegations that vice squad leader of the raid Lt. Col. Ahmed Hashad fabricated his testimony, despite the fact that all of the men arrested were acquitted, the social fallout has prompted one of the victims to attempt suicide via self-immolation.

The victim had an interview with the newspaper El-Watan:

“I work in a restaurant in the Shobra district. I’m harassed constantly in my workplace by the words of the people and the looks in their eyes. I also told them that his family locked down on his movements, tried to keep him at home, and one of his broth-

ers insisted on following him everywhere to execute his freedom to marry.”

In February, Irazi returned to television, doubling down on her hate, accusing her detractors of being foreign agents and insisting her raid was about sex trafficking and preventing the spread of AIDS. Hashad, whose lies helped acquit her and also doubled down, saying that he had engaged in an extended surveillance of the bathhouse. Two days after the broadcast, the victim attempted suicide.

Paper Bird points out that self-immola-

tions carry particular significance in Egypt as the Arab Spring revolution was instigated by Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi setting fire to himself to protest the governmental bureaucracies that destroyed his livelihood.

Read more: http://www.towleroad. com/9ixzz30vALy.png

Federal judge orders Ala. county to issue marriage licenses

On Feb. 12, United States District Judge Callie V. S. Granade instructed Mobile County Probate Judge Don Davis to begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

The order followed a hearing in which four same-sex couples, who were unable to obtain marriage licenses in Mobile on Feb. 9 when marriage equality went into effect in the state, asked Judge Granade to instruct Judge Davis to begin issuing marriage licenses. The order requires Judge Davis to begin issuing licenses immedi-

ately.

The Alabama couples are James Straw-

ser and John Humphrey, who previously obtained a ruling from Judge Granade declaring that Alabama’s exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage is uncon-

stitutional, Meredith Miller and Anna Lisa Carmichael, Robert Povilat and Mil-

ton Persinger, and Kristy Simmons and Marshay Safford. The couples are repre-

sented by the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), the ACLU of Alabama, and Birmingham attorney Heather Fann, and the ACLU of Alabama.

Said NCLR Legal Director Shannon Minter: “Today’s ruling by Judge Granade provides clear direction to Judge Davis and other probate judges and will help ensure that all same-sex couples in Ala-

bama, regardless of whether they live, have the freedom to marry.”

Added Randall Marshall, Legal Direc-

tor of the ACLU of Alabama: “Judge Granade’s ruling confirms that the U.S. Constitution requires Alabama probate judges to issue marriage licenses to all qualified couples, gay and straight. We hope state and local officials will recog-

nize that their first obligation is to com-

ply with our federal Constitution and will move quickly to follow the court’s ruling so that all couples in Alabama will be able to share in the dignity and protection that marriage provides.”

In January, Judge Granade held that Alabama’s laws excluding same-sex cou-

ples from marriage are unconstitutional and may no longer be enforced. Judge Granade’s order was set to go into effect on Feb. 9, permitting same-sex couples across the state to marry.

While some Alabama counties began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex cou-

ples on that day, others — including Mobile County — did not, citing an “admin-

istrative order” by Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore, instruct-

ing probate judges not to comply with Judge Granade’s order. On Feb. 12, Judge Granade ruled that Mobile County must issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Trans woman of color killed in New Orleans

The National Coalition of Anti-Vio-

lence Programs (NCAVP) has learned of the homicide of Penny Proud, a trans-

gender woman of color, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

According to local NCAVP member organization BreakOUT, Penny Proud has been misgendered by the media in an article, which indicates that she was shot to death at around 1:30 a.m. on Feb. 10 near the intersection of Ursulines Avenue.
and North Claiborne Avenue in Treme.

In BreakOUT’s release they include the following request, which NCAVP echoes: “We are calling on the media to respect all transgender people and their families by using the correct pronouns and names for transgender victims and use current photographs to allow our community to maintain dignity both in life and in death.”

Lamia Beard was found shot to death on Jan. 17 in Norfolk, Virginia. Ty Underwood was found shot to death early on Jan. 26, after a woman called 911 to say a car had hit a telephone pole and that her children had heard gunshots. Her loved ones are speaking out, saying that they believe this was a hate crime.

Yazmin Vash Payne was discovered fatally stabbed to death on Saturday, Jan. 31 at the scene of a house fire in the Van Nuys district of Los Angeles. Payne’s boyfriend, Ezekiel Dear, has been arrested and booked for suspicion of murder in connection with her death.

Taja Gabrielle de Jesus was discovered stabbed to death on a stairwell in San Francisco’s Bayview District on Sunday, Feb. 1.

There is potentially a sixth homicide that NCAVP is tracking, an individual with the last name Edwards. At this time NCAVP does not have enough information with which to conclude how the individual with the last name Edwards identified, however the group continues to track this homicide. In 2014, NCAVP responded to the deaths of 12 transgender women of color.

“2015 has begun in absolute tragedy, with the loss of four black transgender women and one Latina transgender woman,” said Chai Jindasurat, Co-Director of Community Organizing and Public Advocacy at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. “We all must take immedi-

Volunteer and Help Make Our 23rd Year Great!
We can always find something for an eager volunteer to do, and we can use your specialized skills to help make our committees more effective. We’ll have volunteer information and ImageOut representatives available for questions before and after the screening on March 25 at The Little. You can see a complete listing with descriptions of the ImageOut committees as well as sign up online at www.imageout.org/volunteer.php or call the ImageOut office at 585-271-3640.

www.imageout.org
The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAPV) most recent hate violence report, Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-affected Communities in the United States in 2013, documented 18 anti-LGBTQ homicides. Of those homicide victims, almost 90 percent were people of color. Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of homicide victims were transgender women and men, and more than two-thirds (67 percent) were transgender women of color. NCAPV is working with BreakOUT! to support the local communities affected by this violence.

“Our 2014 report, We Deserve Better, BreakOUT! found that 84 percent of transgender people reported experiencing police profiling on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation in New Orleans, with 57 percent reporting being harassed during the encounter. Further, 42 percent of LGBTQ people of color reported calling the police for help and 42 percent of transgender people reported being arrested themselves, compared with zero percent of white respondents,” said Milan Nicole-Sherry, organizer at BreakOUT. “Transgender women of color need to feel safe in our communities. Instead of more police, we need more investment in education, jobs, and housing for LGBTQ people, particularly Black transgender young women.”

NCAPV is a resource for anyone who experiences violence. For more information, or to locate an anti-violence program in your area, please contact info@ncapv.org or visit us online. To learn more about national advocacy and receive technical assistance or support, contact info@ncapv.org.

Chile won’t defend marriage ban at Human Rights court

The Chilean government has announced it will not defend its ban on same-sex marriage following a lawsuit brought against the state by marriage equality advocates and presented to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, The Washington Blade reports. Members of President Michelle Bachelet’s administration on Feb. 17 met with representatives of the Movement for Homosexual Integration and Liberation, an LGBT advocacy group, in Santiago, the Chilean capital, to finalize “an amicable settlement” in the case filed in 2012 on behalf of three same-sex couples who are seeking marriage rights in the South American country.

The Movement for Homosexual Integration and Liberation in a press release it posted to its website said the government’s decision to end opposition to nuptials for gays and lesbians in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights case is part of a broader agreement that includes the introduction of a same-sex marriage bill in the Chilean Congress.

“We left the meeting very satisfied,” said the Movement for Homosexual Integration and Liberation. “We appreciate the government’s good disposition towards our proposals and principles, which stress that marriage equality is a human rights issue.”

Last month, Chile’s Senate passed a bill that would allow same-sex couples in Chile to enter into same-sex unions. President Bachelet has said she will sign that bill. Still, advocates for full marriage equality vow to continue their fight despite this new legislation.

It remains unclear when the Bachelor administration and the Movement for Homosexual Integration and Liberation will formally introduce the same-sex marriage bill in the Chilean Congress.

“Everyone was cheering for me when they announced it over email,” Sawicki said. “Everyone was very excited, very supportive, very happy.”

Gay submariner, partner are first same-sex couple chosen for ceremonial homecoming kisses

Via NBC San Diego. A San Diego man and his partner were the first male same-sex couple to be chosen for the ceremonial first kiss during the homecoming of submarine warship USS San Francisco. The fast-attack submarine reunited with its home port at Naval Base Point Loma on Feb. 9 while families lined the dock awaiting the arrival of husbands, sons, dads and brothers returning from a seven-month stint in the Western Pacific. Thomas Sawicki and his boyfriend Shawn Brier were the lucky couple chosen to share the first kiss off the ship.

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Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/sz2S7kqY/Wm
Murders of trans women of color represent a national crisis

The Trans* Activists for Justice and Accountability Coalition (“TAJA”) is united in anger and outrage over the murder of Taja DeJesus. TAJA’s Coalition includes leadership from: TGI Justice Project, EJ/La Para Translatinas, Trans March, Community United Against Violence, Transgender Law Center, St. James Infirmary, The SF LGBT Center, Trans Employment Program (TEEP), TRANSTHRIVE, Dimensions Clinic, Center of Excellence for Transgender Health, and Trans Life at the SF AIDS Foundation.

Taja DeJesus was stabbed to death on the streets of San Francisco’s Bayview neighborhood on Feb. 1. Taja was only 36 years old and friends and family describe her as a sweet, light-hearted and caring woman with a passion for music and a love for fashion. She was deeply involved in her community and her faith, volunteered at her local food bank, always had a smile and a story to share and constantly lit up a room. Taja was close to her friends and family. She was a caring woman with a passion for music and a love for fashion. She was deeply involved in her community and her faith, volunteered at her local food bank, always had a smile and a story to share and constantly lit up a room. Taja was close to her family in San Jose and found acceptance and community in San Francisco. She remained positive and resilient in the face of many struggles and was relentless in pursuing her wellness.

Taja is the fourth known trans* woman of color to be violently murdered in California in the last five months and possibly the ninth to be violently murdered in the United States in 2015. We recognize this epidemic of violence as being deeply rooted in systemic racism, trans* misogyny, class inequality, and lack of access to affordable housing for trans* communities. This is a national crisis in which the most vulnerable members of our community are fighting for their lives. In Taja’s memory, we will not relent in demanding justice.

Our communities are chronically underserved, over-policed and criminalized, and subject to violence at every turn. Trans* women of color are up to seven times more likely to feel unsafe in their daily lives than cisgender people, and experience pervasive safety concerns about where to live, socialize, and receive basic services according to a just-released LGBTQ Violence Prevention Needs Assessment compiled by the SF LGBT Center and the San Francisco Human Rights Commission – a full report was released Tuesday, Feb. 10.

A call to action was issued for Trans* Liberation on Feb. 10 to demand an end to the systemic violence targeting trans* communities. TAJA’s Coalition issued the following demands in advance of the action:

1. We demand that cisgender people end violence against trans* communities, and particularly transgender women of color. Transphobia and violence against trans* people is not a trans* problem. It is a problem rooted in and created by cisgender people, and there is a call to see active support of and participation in local and national efforts to create resources, access and justice for our trans* communities.

2. Trans* communities need safety and access to resources, not jails. We demand that all plans for a new jail in San Francisco be ceased, and that new jail construction is included in any City planning or budget with funds being reused instead to trans* community programming, especially re-entry support and anti-violence work, with respect for the depth of work not the quantity.

3. We demand safe, affordable, and accessible housing for trans* people. The rising cost of living in San Francisco, fueled by municipal protections for corporate interests at the expense of our most vulnerable residents, has forced countless trans* people into unsafe living situations. Additionally, the massive gentrification of the Mission, Tenderloin, and SOMA neighborhoods in the past two years has displaced countless residents. San Francisco must shift its priorities away from protecting corporations and toward providing affordable housing for all who need it and particularly creating affordable housing services, safe housing programs and more safe spaces for trans* people.

Inclusion anyone?

By Taieja Cook

Life as a Black lesbian in Rochester, who also happens to be in her twenties, isn’t ideal. I suffer from multiple mental illness disorders including depression and anxiety. Although these facts aren’t always interlinking, the truth is, they impact one another deeply.

Since moving back to Rochester, I have been in search of LGBTQ communi- ty and events that consisted of more than drinking, dancing, middle-aged couples, and youth focused on sexual prowess. I craved a place where being a triple or qua- druple minority was not just welcomed, but encouraged. A place where one of my identities did not overshadow the next, but also, where those identities did not compete for recognition. I am equal parts black, gay, woman, and mentally ill.

Unfortunately, finding a space to be all four simultaneously is difficult here.

I have been searching, for groups, for meetings, for events, where I did not have to be one or the other to be included and there is no such space. Or maybe I’m not looking hard enough! I have to wonder though, how hard must I look to find a group of people with shared experiences? I know there must be a place, in Rochester, where this exists.

So with that I must ask, “Where’s my space in 2015?” Not necessarily a more physical space but a more inclusive space. Where is the space for LGBTQIA of color? Where is the space for youth questioning their sexualities, their genders, their relationships?

Where is the space for disabled LGBTQIA people? Where is the space for POC? Where is the space for youth? Where is the space for disabled LGBTQIA people? Where is the space for POC? Where is the space for youth? Where is the space for disabled LGBTQIA people? Where is the space for POC? Where is the space for youth? Where is the space for disabled LGBTQIA people? Where is the space for POC? Where is the space for youth? Where is the space for disabled LGBTQIA people? Where is the space for POC? Where is the space for youth?

I want to believe this city has more to offer. However, I can’t linger on optimism. If the past triumphs of oppressed people could teach us anything in 2015, it’s that community and togeth- erness will accomplish more. So in 2015, is this structure set to change? I

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MARCH 2015 • NUMBER 487 • THE GAY ALLIANCE • THE EMPTY CLOSET
Early HIV treatment benefits may be lost if treatment interrupted

By Jacob Anderson-Minshall on The Advocate

One of the goals of HIV service providers is to connect patients with care as quickly as possible, especially since early treatment has been shown to provide long-term advantages. But a new French study reports that any immune recovery benefits gained by starting antiretroviral treatment (ART) eventually develop a near-normal CD4 count, only those who started treatment soon after infection, who have continued it ever since and remained uninfected stand a more-than-even chance of achieving an immune system where the balance of T-lymphocytes resembles that of a person without HIV in terms of their CD4:CD8 ratio.

The study's researchers conclude, "Our results underline the critical need in early-treated patients to maintain adherence, in order to limit cumulative HIV viruria [presence of the virus in the blood] and optimize immunological recovery, notably, the CD4:CD8 ratio."

But this does not mean that there is no point in starting treatment early, or in returning to treatment after a gap in adherence. While continuous treatment is better, this study's findings reiterate that antiretroviral treatment is critical to achieving a healthy immune system when possible.

Learn about healthy kidneys at SAGE meeting on March 24

Your Kidneys and You, a presentation by Rebaja Silserra, RDN, CDE, will take place at the Rainbow Sage Brown Bag Lunch on Tuesday, March 24 from 12:30-1 p.m. at Open Arms Community Center, 707 N. Madison St.

Do you know what your kidneys do every day to keep you healthy? Do you know that one in three Americans is at risk for developing kidney disease? Now is the time to learn more and find out if you are at risk.

The National Kidney Foundation’s new Your Kidneys & You program was developed to raise awareness among the general public and individuals at risk for kidney disease by educating them about kidneys, risk factors for kidney disease, and how to protect your kidneys.

For more information or to RSVP: Ellissa Rowley, 585:598:3963 ext. 31; Ellissa.rowley@kidney.org

National online support for cancer survivors starts this month

The National LGBT Cancer Network has announced the launch of online support forums for LGBTQ cancer survivors.

Three new groups will be starting in March 2015: Biexual Men (NEW!); Lesbian and Biexual Women and Transgender People.

The forums are open to individuals worldwide who are dealing with a cancer diagnosis. The groups are available 24/7 and are moderated by an LCSW.

Topics for discussion include coming out to providers; relationships and sexuality after cancer; the "feminization" of breast cancer and many more.

To register for the groups or to get more information, please go to http://cancer-network.org/support_groups_for_survivors/

URMC hosts April conference on LGBT elder health

URMC will host LGBT Health and Healthcare Across the Generations on Friday, April 25, from 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

The morning keynote speaker is Harvey Makinson from Fenway in Boston.

There will also be talks on elder healthcare and related topics. To register, go to grace_full@urmc.rochester.edu.

HIV treatment said to inactive virus in monkeys, prevent infection

By Joe Morgan on gaystarnews.com

An HIV trial in monkeys is being pronounced a huge success, after it incapacitated all strains of the virus and also prevented infection.

Researchers developed a protein-based treatment, when given to monkeys, worked as a "vaccine" for the simian version of HIV/SIV.

It found the protein, known as eCD4-Ig, when it enters the body, means that HIV cannot enter the immune cells and actually becomes inert.

In a paper published in the journal Nature, the team of researchers the technique can "function like an effective HIV-1 vaccine."

With the protein structures protecting the targeted white blood cells, researchers set out to engineer an antibody-like molecule that would mimic both of the proteins - acting like a decoy for the virus.

So instead of latching onto a cell that could do some damage, HIV would latch onto the specially enhanced protein molecule.

The next challenge was encouraging the cells of test animals to produce the molecule on their own.

They genetically altered an adeno-associated virus, or AAV, which infects humans and other primates, but does not cause illness, in a way that would instruct it to produce the enhanced protein.

Once inside the monkeys, it worked, even against repeat injections of SHIV.

"Although there are remaining challenges, these observations suggest that AAV-expressed eCD4-Ig could provide effective, long-term and near universal protection from HIV-1," the authors concluded.

But while this is potentialy exciting, HIV charities have urged caution.

Dr. Shaun Griffin, director of external affairs at Terrence Higgins Trust, said, "This is an exciting new approach, but until the vaccine has been tested in humans, there's no way of knowing how effective it will be."

"Although this vaccine was found to be effective in monkeys, HIV is an incredibly complex virus, with many different facets that we are still learning about."

"While there's still no cure or vaccine, prevention is the only way of protecting yourself so we encourage people to use condoms and get tested regularly, particularly if you're in a group at risk."

- See more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/hiv-vaccine-inactivates-all-virus-strains-monkeys-prevent-infection180215#sthash.qv0JU1A2.dpuf

A New Kind of HIV Vaccine

Volunteer for a new research study.

The vaccine is in pill-form (and the first of its kind being studied) - It is impossible to get HIV infection from the study vaccine.

Participants are paid an average of $2,050.

This study requires a 12-day course stay and additional clinical visits.

18-40 years old? Healthy? HIV-negative?

If so, you may qualify.

Researchers can't do it alone. They need healthy, everyday people to help find the answer - RIGHT HERE in Rochester.

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Idiosyncratic Fashionistas

By Valerie and Jean

We have been style blogging under the name Idiosyncratic Fashionistas for the past six years. We are women of a certain age. Our business card says we are out to set “a bad, bad example for older women everywhere.”

We’re actually educated, opinionated and funny, but most people know us because we are still playing dress up.

Traveling around all dressed up is the visual version of the secret handshake. Women who dress up find each other. We admire each other in passing on the streets, and avidly seize opportunities to make conversation because we recognize kindred spirits.

So it was no great surprise to us when Eva Weiss (resident of NYC but a former Rochesterite) came to our table while we were brunching one weekend, introduced herself, gave us her business card, and asked if she could photograph us. As women of a certain age, we delight in this question, because it is proof positive that youthfulness is not the only quality that attracts the eye. Every age has something unique to offer.

We were so happy with the first photograph Eva later emailed us that we took a long leisurely stroll through her web gallery. We liked that so much that we asked her if she would take a few photographs for a project we had in mind. We can’t describe the project as it’s still in the works, but these are some of the results of the day’s work.

Eva has a mischievous twinkle in her eye and a waggyb tongue in her cheek. She “gets” us. She allowed us to be our own stylists and directors. She showcased us as we are, not as social norms dictate older women are expected to be. We felt comfortable with her as soon as we met.

Eva’s specialty is hand-tinting, and the subtle color effects she added to the photographs are marvelous. They have a faintly old-fashioned warmth and charm. (Editor: Unfortunately, they don’t come over too well in newsprint, so these are not the tinted photos.)

Our mothers told us not to talk to strangers. Think what we would have missed out on had we followed our mothers’ advice. ■
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Shoppers To Stand On: A Community's Response To AIDS

By Evelyn Bailey

Over the next few months, Shoppers To Stand On will go back in Rochester's history before AIDS. Shoppers will look at the beginning of the LGBT community's immersion in what continues to be a growing global epidemic.

The Shoppers To Stand On documented the “tip of the iceberg” of this community's response to AIDS. Thirty-nine minutes and nine seconds could not possibly include all of the contributions the Rochester community -- gay and straight -- made to create hope and bring new life to so many relatives, friends and people we knew in passing -- all victims of this "plague." Pride, pain, hope and solidarity documented the "tip of the iceberg" of the Rochester community's response to AIDS.

In 1981, Dr. Gottlieb, then a 33-year-old assistant professor specializing in immunology at the UCLA Medical Center, described a new disease in medicine that seemed to have something to do with CMV and pneumonia. Relman advised him to see if he could find others with a similar illness.

Dr. Gottlieb was excited to think he might have made a significant discovery. He telephoned Arnold Relman, the editor of the New England Journal of Medicine, and declared that he had a story that was "possibly a bigger story than Legionnaire's disease." When Gottlieb described his patients suffering from this complicated new malady, Relman advised that publication in the New England Journal would take a minimum of three months. Gottlieb should first submit a brief article to the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, June 5, 1981. This would serve the dual function of alerting public health officials and physicians to the new disease and also stake Gottlieb's claim to be its "discoverer."

A longer and more detailed account could then be submitted to the New England Journal, December, 1981. The New England Journal article included the first description of the CD-4 T cell deficiency which is the immunologic hallmark of HIV infection. The rather tense announcement by the CDC was generally overlooked until a few weeks later Dr. Alvin Friedman-Kien of the New York University Medical Center published a description of twenty-six cases of Kaposi's sarcoma in gay men in New York and California.

Here in Rochester, in June, 1981, Dr. Bill Valenti, also trained at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, Dr. Michael Gottlieb came to the University of Rochester campus, and he trained in internal medicine at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester. Following a fellowship in infectious diseases at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, in 1980 Gottlieb accepted an assistant professor of medicine position at the UCLA School of Medicine in Los Angeles.

In 1981, Dr. Gottlieb, then a 33-year-old assistant professor specializing in immunology at the UCLA Medical Center, asked one of his immunology fellows to write a paper for an "interesting" teaching meeting. The fellow presented Gottlieb with a young gay man with unexplained fevers, dramatic weight loss, and a severely damaged immune system. Gottlieb later described a process of reasoning that led him to conclude that this patient was suffering from a syndrome that had not previously been reported. Additional blood tests confirmed a marked deficiency of T-lymphocyte numbers and function, and that the T-cells bearing the surface marker CD4, the "helper" cells, were virtually absent.

Soon thereafter, Gottlieb heard about two patients of Joel Weisman, Weisman and his partner were gay and practicing a largely gay practice. Both patients had chronic fevers, swollen lymph nodes, diarrhea, and thrush. T-cells of Weisman's patients had the same abnormality as his original patient. Over the next several months, both were diagnosed with Pneumocystis carinii, and the DNA virus cytomegalovirus (CMV).

For the fourth case, Gottlieb's friend, Wayne Shan- dera, who had become the CDC's Epidemiologist in Los Angeles, telephoned Gottlieb and told him that there was a new disease in gay men that seemed to have something to do with CMV and pneu- monia. Relman suggested he asked Gottlieb to see if he could find out what was happening. Gottlieb sent a report on his desk about a man in Santa Monica who had been diagnosed with pneumocystis pneumonia. The patient died, and when a virulence index was done on autopsy, CMV was found in his lungs. A fifth case came from a Beverly Hills internist. This patient, too, had Pneumocystis carinii and CMV. Several of these patients went on to develop Kaposi's sarcoma, a rare skin cancer sometimes found in older men or immunosuppressed kidney transplant recipients.

Gottlieb was excited to think he might have made a significant discovery. He telephoned Arnold Relman, the editor of the New England Journal of Medicine, and declared that he had a story that was "possibly a bigger story than Legionnaire's disease." When Gottlieb described his patients suffering from this complicated new malady, Relman advised that publication in the New England Journal would take a minimum of three months. Gottlieb should first submit a brief article to the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, June 5, 1981. This would serve the dual function of alerting public health officials and physicians to the new disease and also stake Gottlieb's claim to be its "discoverer."

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Here in Rochester, in June, 1981, Dr. Bill Valenti, also trained at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, first heard about AIDS and soon began to see the disease in Rochester. As Dr. Bill Valenti went on to say, "If you began to see the effects of this disease on people's lives, it is not a coincidence that Dr. Gottlieb and Dr. Valenti were trained at the University of Rochester. Shoulder to stand on"

Rochester will explore the connections their parallel paths, and the social, medical, religious and educational context of the disease in gay men that seemed to have something to do with CMV and pneumonia. The shoulder to stand on is the year 1981. The shoulder to stand on, along with the year 1981, will tell the story of the historically significant event and people whose shoulders we have brought us to March 2015 in our fight against this disease.

Shoulders to Stand On heralds Dr. Michael Gottlieb as one of the "Shoulders of Giants" we stand on. Shoppers To Stand On is proud and grateful for the contributions to medicine of Dr. Gottlieb, Dr. Valenti, the University of Rochester and many others who have made to the LGBT and Greater Rochester community journey from "Death to Life!"

History Corner:

March 1975

A Monthly Newspaper of The Gay Brotherhood of Rochester, NY; 713 Monroe, Room 4, Rochester, N.Y. 14601; (716) 244-8640

Vol. 1975; No. 48. IN THIS ISSUE: "Full Rights for Gays" says area college president pg.1; 9 Area Gays attend NYSGCO Conference in NYC pg.3; NYS Gay Task Force founder Brown Dies pg.1; Gay Brotherhood Budget 1975 - 76 Announced pg.1; R.C.C. Park Installed Amherst Community pg.1; Lobbying Day In Albany pg.2; Mardi Gras Costume Party at Jim's pg.4; Gays for President of S.U. Union build Virutu Awareness Rights of Homosexuals pg.7.

Do you want to read this issue of the Empty Closet? Here is the link: http://www.lib.rochester.edu/index/cfm/page=4800. On that page click on: Browse the Empty Closet issues. Go to 1975 – March. Calendar of Events:

SUN. 2 MARCH: COFFEE HOUSE MEETING SUN. 9 MARCH: SEMINAR ON GAY RELATIONSHIP ISSUES SUN. 16 MARCH: CARNIVAL PARTY (ELLISON PARK) MON. 17 MARCH: BUSINESS MEETING SUN. 30 MARCH: EASTER SUN- DAY (office open but no office program - ) OTHER EVENTS: Sat. 8 March GAY DANCE, Brockport State College- Rochester, 11 PM (FREE) NYSCGO Benefit Dinner, Bachelor Forum.8 PM 5$price. Fri.11 March LOBBYING DAY IN ALBANY - 244-8640 for details. Thu.13 March Gay Task Force 7:30 PM 713 Monroe Ave. (GRB office) Tues. 18 March Coordinating Council meeting.

Shoppers To Stand On: A Community's Response To AIDS

Shoulders To Stand On: The Gay Alliance invites you to celebrate 40 years of LGBT history in Rochester with your very own DVD/Blu-Ray of this powerful film.

Shoulders To Stand On: Evelyn Bailey, Executive Producer Kevin Indovino, Producer/Director/Writer

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MARCH 2015 • NUMBER 487 • THE GAY ALLIANCE • THE EMPTY CLOSET

21
Growing Up
SOLITARY, PORNY

By Eric Bellmann

I have a singular solitaire game. You played to beat the clock. The bottom line was to never quit. Some games ended in two or three minutes; others struggled with for upwards of an hour. The goal was to play fast to lower the averaged total.

But when I replaced my computer, the techno wizard, who transferred everything, lost that portion of solitaire. Do you know, in my opinion, which card is the ace? Better to count the stars in the sky. I could never find that exact game. There are games I do play, but not with the vigor I once had.

Facebook. How do I have a small, private presence on poor photographs. I take from my camera. Very limiting. On the other hand, pictures from holidays in New York... -Halloween especially but also the Polar Bear Plunge at Coney Island, or sometimes just random street stuff - do seem to please people. Maybe I forward animal videos. No one knows how many cat videos there are. It’s an endless stream. I also like seeing people’s posts. Kind of like a wave hello or a pat on the back. I want to be encouraging. Of course, take on a new dimension once one is on FB. This year I made a list of exactly who sent me greetings.

Which leads us to porn. A character in “Boys In The Band” observed that, while we’re all “mild,” at least, “men have to look better.” You can watch porn unshield, in sweats or a mug, for that matter, it’s always there, ready and waiting.

And it isn’t a little secret anymore. The most recent time I upgraded my computer, a few months ago, I explained to the current tech wizard that he/she needed to explain all the intricacies of my Mac, spread sheets and such, because I only used for email, Facebook, and porn. “Like everyone else,” he commented. That was sweet. It dimpled down any twinge of shame I harbored.

Needless to say I have lots of observations about porn, I figure every third person is in the business. So many people and all kind of the same: buffed, bland, mechanical. It’s the a mantra. Sex is,-暑期. So every college kid has posted a video of himself jacking off. Can anyone explain this to me? And they say porn is bad? It’s not, porn and clearly work very hard – great bodies.

I’ve known three men who done porn. Centuries ago I had an actor friend in New York. We planned for me to sublet his Sullivan Street apartment one summer while he was doing post-graduate work at Pratt. Visiting him one evening he said his current boyfriend would be coming. So I thought I was going to behold it turn out to be Calvin Culver, as he was then known. Sweet kid, very handsome, and an all around legit sport. I didn’t need a legitimate actor with a lucky stand: break- behind Ingrid Bergman in Mrs. Warren’s Profession.” He seemed very happy with that opportunity. He seemed an agreeable sort.

Calvin, of course, became Casey Donovan. “Boys In The Band” was one of the real big gay porn movies and produced a version of the play. He was from Canandaigua. Small world.

Another acquaintance, Bobby G., was a phys ed major at Brockport, very hot, scarlet, a cucumber. Boy who smiled had big teeth and his friends teased him about saying he had a rabbit face. In that film, he kept his jaws clenched, smiling give-away to his sweet nature. Bobby just grinned. Very naturally-grown. Later he told me that his father had molested him repeatedly as an adolescent. That may be is uncommong.

The third guy mostly worked locally as an escort. He was open about that. He got one shot at a Beepo, very hot, very it may have seen, wrote a lengthy essay about it and since he knew I was a writer, asked me to translate it for a book he was hoping to write. So once up a you broke into movies working for Roger Corman and cheesy indies. He was my local college studying photography with ambitions to work in Hollywood in the movies and told me that was how I was going to be. Now on myClark. We had a rabbit face. In that film, he kept his jaws clenched, smiling give-away to his sweet nature. Bobby just grinned. Very naturally-grown. Later he told me that his father had molested him repeatedly as an adolescent. That may be is uncommong.

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It's a polemic that has been avoided because of the politics of political correctness as well as how any discussion on race, no matter who's stirring the conversation—a black rabbi or a white rabbi or Attorney General Eric Holder—invariably inflame our emotions more that inform our faculties. Ironically, or tragically, the aversion to a conversation about race not only continues to harm people of color, but it also harms whites.

In her recent book "Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race" Cambridge author Debby Irving wrote the following:

"I can think of no bigger mistake in American history than the invention and perpetuation of the idea of white superiority. It allows white children to believe they are exceptional and entitled while allowing children of color to believe they are inferior and less deserving. Unlike adults, who understand racism, they will, as I did, unknowingly teach it to their children."

On one hand we have the dominant culture's continued indecency disbelief of white privilege and single-issue platforms which thwart coalition building with communities of color. On the other we have some people of color dismissing the notion that white marginalized and struggling groups (white women, LGBTQ, the poor) may have something to offer communities of color in terms of advice and shared (not same) experiences.

Both hands are right. And both hands are wrong. The one way for us to keep talking about race. But how do we make our way through the current tangle of misguided good intentions and valid suspicions?

My answer: past harms need to be redressed.

For example, the killing of unarmed black males has awakened the movement. "Black Lives Matter" has taken to the streets. As we celebrated Black History Month, 2015, in what is clearly not the post-racial era many hoped for, I wished as a nation we could begin an honest talk about race.

A Few Bricks Short
JUST A LITTLE PART-TIME JOB

By David Hull

I have been friendly for over a year and a half I thought it might be good to go back to work, just part-time, of course, and just to earn some extra spending money.

"You don't need to work," grumbled my husband. "Besides, I don't listen to my husband (honestly, I usually don't) and got myself a part-time job at a nearby convenience store called Thes Stop Express.

I know the type of store I'm talking about. It specializes in nothing, but only offers things like cigarettes, potato chips, canned goods, pop bottles, soda, water, and live ice. Oh, they also make some pies and sausages in a small kitchen in the corner. It's the kind of place you stop at as you way home from work to pick up some item you forgot to get at the grocery store.

Now my personal warning signal should have gone off during my interview with the manager, Ashlee (yes, that's how she spelled her name). She told me that the most important part of my Quick-Stop Uniform was my smile. "You're offering me minimum wage--for that price, you can't afford my smile," she thought. I got the job and a few days later I went to work. I had told Ashlee during my interview that I felt confident about mopping floors, stocking shelves, washing windows and emptying trash. However, I was concerned about my ability on the computerized cash registers because I was definitely not a "tech-savvy" person. "Oh, don't worry," Ashlee reassured me. "The company doesn't care what your religion is.

So, I spent my first two days on the job mopping the floors, washing windows and emptying trash while Ashlee supervised me closely. She then reassured everyone that they have a lot of encouragement to "Just make sure of mopping, I like how you washed that window. You did fantastic emptying the trash."

Ashlee failed to understand that I had been mopping, washing and emptying for the past 50 years—half that time under the critical eye of my husband—so there was no reason to doubt my skills.

What I was worried about was using that very complicated looking cash register with the computer screen.

Finally, halfway through my second day on the job, I insisted that Ashlee stop monitoring how I was cleaning the coffee station (I was said to "clean the station away from the way") and give me some training on the cash register.

She looked confused. "Oh, okay," she replied. "But you don't need to worry. They're really simple.

As I set myself on a register and showed her how the machine could be switched between three different screens on the monitor — one for cash and groceries, another screen for cigarettes, scratch-offs and lottery tickets and a third screen for pizzas, wings, coffee and newspapers. Then she casually mentioned that she had work to do in her office and walked away.

I was this way a long time to go well. My first customer approached me. "Yeah, I need $20 in gas at pump 3," he said, dropping a $20 bill on the counter.

"Welcome to the Quick-Stop Express," I said smiling. "How can I help you?"


Hey, it wasn't my fault— he told me to work to pick up some item you forgot to get at the grocery store.

"Okay," I said, staring at the screen. I was very confused about why I could have just ordered pizza! I had opened the screen for that and couldn't get out of it.

A second later I had the gas that I needed and punched in the gas purchase. Oops! Instead of $20, I had accidentally charged the guy $200 dollars for gas. I didn't have any idea how to fix the mistake. "You wouldn't happen to have an extra $180 dollars on you, would you?"

I asked the guy shook his head. He didn't think I was funny. I called for help. Ashlee appeared and fixed the problem.

"I don't think you should leave me here without help," I said. "I really don't have any idea what I'm doing."

"Oh, don't worry," Ashlee said, pointing to the register. "They're real simple."

So, Ashlee returned to her office (which I later realized was actually her code for "going out back to smoke") and I turned to face my next customer. A woman put a 2-litter bottle of soda pop, a bag of chips and a tube of lip balm on the counter.

"I'm kind of in a hurry," she told me. "You're in the wrong place," I thought.

I rang up her order, gave her change and bugged her items. Wow! I did it.

And then the woman said it. "I'd like five of the Win-For-Life scratch-off tickets too."

"Ashlee?" I called.

"I'm never going to get any work done if you keep calling me," Ashlee told me with attitude.

"If I don't keep calling you," I snapped back. "This store will never have another successful financial transaction again."

Ashlee decided the best way to handle this situation was to give me one of the store's walkie-talkies and if I needed her, I could call her. She'd give me any instructions needed from her office, which, of course, actually meant "out back smoking."

I will admit I wondered why a store that was so small one could practically spit from one end to the other would need walkie-talkies, but I just took mine and waited for my next customer. It didn't take long.

The guy put a six-pack of beer on the counter. "Yeah, I need the beer and a mega-millions lottery ticket," he handed me a fifty dollar bill. "Put whatever is left on gas at pump 5."

He had to be kidding me. How did I know where to find pump 5? Dear God, would I have to do math?

I grabbed the walkie-talkie and signaled Ashlee. That's when I realized that she had left her walkie-talkie on the counter behind me! "Ashlee!" I called.

"She's out back smoking," another employee told me.

At the end of my shift that day I didn't have to work. I decided to go back to work at Quick-Stop Express. I don't think Ashlee was too happy either. As I went out the door, she told me "see you tomorrow." I think I heard her whisper.

The next day I showed up for work and told her "see you tomorrow." I think I heard her whisper.

"Oh, you're here," said Ashlee. "The other one worked to pick up a doze appointment in 20 minutes and I have to go off-site to a meeting, so you're going to be in charge of the store this morning."

"Alone?"

Ashlee nodded. "Yes."

"Is this a joke?"

"No," said Ashlee. "Why?"

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“What the hell, Ashlee? You're going to do the grocery shopping and I'm going to stay and yesterday I charged some guy $200 for gas! I have no idea how to operate the gas pump. I accidentally cleared the differ- ence between the supreme pizza, the ultimate pizza or the maximum-loaded pizza — they all look the same to me! And you're going to leave me in charge of the store? Oh, sure, the floors and the windows will be killing you, and I know you're looking forward to the ‘Grocery Day’ for customers until some- one shows up who knows how to run the register.”

45 minutes later I was home sitting on the couch with Bernie watching Good Morning America, and it was just like old times.

“So, did you or was you fired?”

Bernie asked me.

I nodded. “Trust me — no one is more hopeful about than the customers at the Quick-Stop Express.”

Contact David at davidh89@aol.com

Trans*misions

VISIBILITY AND PASSING, RISK AND REWARD

By Laine DeLaney

“Last month we seldom got around to that time of year again: The Interacti- onal Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31). This holiday was origi- nally founded by Michigan-based transgender activist Rachel Crandall, partly as a reaction to the lack of holidays honoring transgen- der people.

As many of us are, she was appar- ently frustrated that the only holiday we had was one that revolved around our deaths (the Transgender Day of Remembrance). I am outspoken about being pro-visi- bility. Not every trans person is going to pass, and not every trans person wants to pass. In addition, there are many non-binary people whose gender identity and expression is such that they will never go into the dominant gender ste- reotypes even to “pass” as anything but their own amazing selves without compromising their identity.

I feel, however, that emphasis on pass- ing is dangerous to trans people, and a symptom of a deep current of fear that runs through our society. I have watched trans people live in fear of anyone find- ing out that they are trans, become brave enough to come out and “transition”, and then go back into hiding, once again living in fear of anyone find- ing out.

I personally feel that that deep-scar- ed fear – that fear so intense that people live in, pre- and post- transition (and that’s not even considering non-trans- i tioning people who are trans and non-trans- i tioning people who are not trans, and non- trans- i tioning people who are not trans) — can only be effectively fought by being “out”. Knowing people that we are not only our friends and family, but also our fellow parishioners, and their neighbors humanizes us and our struggles, and in time and time again has proven to be the best strategy to employ to normal- ize oppressed populations.

I am aware that not everyone has that option. Outing yourself, wheth- er pre-, post-, or non- transition(ing) can be very dangerous to some people, I grew up in a homophobic community where outing oneself would quite literally earn you my revulsion — I’ve seen people lose everything that they value other than their dignity and sense of self when they come out.

I’ve felt the siren of calling. Let me confess, I never came into this expiring it to happen to me, but the times that I’ve been correctly gendered or misgendered, I’ve crossed places by the thousands of strangers has blown me out of the water. Whenever it happens I think to myself, ‘You know, all of this is just like it is with anything. What if I never had to worry about people mocking me in public for being trans, or having to deal with all of the daily challenges that come with being transgender? But what if they had no choice? It’s probably better for people never to have to worry about it because being trans was normalized — that way everyone, passing or not, would feel safe.

While I will always encourage trans visibility and support it, I understand that not everyone can afford to engage in it. Passing and stealth can be a comfort and a balm to someone who has never been able to reveal all of their transness to the world, and it can be very important for personal safety — for those who can participate in transition, it is absolutely necessary to the time, or who will never “pass” as anything but trans because of physical features or a gender identity that pre- dictably stereotypes about appearance also need safety.

I feel that that safety will only come about when as a people we can let the world see us in our amazing variety and know that we are people like them.

What’s Bothering Brandon?

LIVING VIRTUALLY IN THE PHYSICAL REALITY

By Brandon W. Brandon

Last month we all honored and observed that holiday known as Val- entine’s Day — a day marked by my personal experience of love, affection, coupled with public ambivalence.

We were also spectacularly gifted with the presence of not one, but sev- eral, snow storms that rocked even our deaths at the hands of violent bigotry (the Transgender Day of Remembrance). With March upon us we will be provided with less of a daily challenge.

Something that I do not anticipate leaving us, however, is our addiction to social media. I find it somewhat ironic, and even cruel, that we have all deci- ded to name these media outlets (Face- book, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) as being social in nature and purpose. I say “ironic” and “cruel” in reference to how our usage of these services actually works against our abilities to form and authentic, attentive and participa- tory social exchanges between people.

Let the whining commence.

We have all been in the situation where we have met our friend, family member or significant other for a social call, a meal or even a holiday like Val- entine’s Day, only to be greeted with a meal, or even a holiday like Val- entine’s Day, only to be greeted with a meal, or even a holiday like Val- entine’s Day, only to be greeted with a meal, or even a holiday like Val- entine’s Day, only to be greeted with a meal, or even a holiday like Val- entine’s Day, only to be greeted with a meal, or even a holiday like Val- entine’s Day, only to be greeted with a meal, or even a holiday like Val- entine’s Day, only to be greeted with a meal, or even a holiday like Val- entine’s Day, only to be greeted with a meal.

I often wonder why this is, why younger people cannot grasp that texting while in conversation with someone who is actually in front of you, is entirely rude and noncommittal. Is it because they have grown up in an environment that affords this? Have we truly lapsed in our common social graces to the point where this should be considered part of the new norm, and just tolerated?

I say shout an emphatic no, in all caps.

Now, I must say, I have been an active participant in the downfall of this generation’s ability to commit socially and presently to those in my immediate vicinity. I have scanned my phone during times of boredom, during times when I would rather be somewhere else, and at family holiday gatherings, I tell myself that I would not be doing anything else of importance at this time anyway, and therefore it is acceptable for me to disen- gage socially.

This not only sends out the nonver- bal message that I am not interested in engaging, but that it is acceptable and indeed, normal, for others to disassociate with less of a daily challenge.

My lack of social commitment permits this behavior in others, perpetu- ating it. My lack of commitment to social engagements widens the margin for this behavior to be exhibited, acceptably, in others.

Now, as much as I’d like to think so, my behaviors alone do not shape the world in which we live. Others are actively disengaging whether or not we have seen them do so. In this sense we are communicating via group message that the connection superficially to many is more important and impactful than connecting more truly with few.

And it is no wonder why and how this message has spread so rapidly and perva- sively throughout the youth culture when one considers the nature of the products and programs we now use to communi- cate. Certainly these technologies have allowed us the opportunity to reconnect and re-establish our relationships with those we have lost over the ages.

But there is a cost to this, like most gifts, in that we lose the quality of our relation- ships when we try and increase our quan- tities of relationships.

The use of this technology is so per- vasive that it has influenced the ways in which we educate young children — we don’t even teach handwriting in schools any longer. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve cringed when a young something does not know the differ- ence between printing and writing. Even when considering typing itself, most mil- lenials lack a grasp of how to do this correctly, notably due to the use of the thumb over the fingers on modern typ- ing devices.

Nowadays it’s more word-thump over word-mouth.

Despite my penchant for withdraw- al in situations or around people with whom I cannot or do not want to iden- tify, I will try to avoid this for the greater good. I will live by example, behaving in a way that I would like to see others behave. When I am with my friends, I will make an active attempt to put down my phone and turn my face towards their, establish eye contact, and main- tain it.

I fear our abilities to carry out our active, extensive conversations that have more to do with ideas, rather than trivial events, have atrophied. We must exer- cise our in-person communicative skills lest we lose them entirely. A face trumps a screen any day.

Questions, comment or critique? Feel free to e-mail the author at: brandon- brooks@mail. adelphi.edu.
DIGNITY-INTegrity
Since March 1975, Dignity-Integrity Rochester has been welcoming all, who come through our doors, worshiping every Sunday at 5:30 a.m. at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., at the corner of Broad St. We have the following service activities for the month of March 2015:

1st Sunday: Episcopal Mass/Healing Service

2nd Sunday: Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word, with music

3rd Sunday: Episcopal Mass, quiet 4th Sunday: Roman Catholic Evening Prayer, followed by a Potluck Dinner

5th Sunday: Palm Sunday Mass

The theme for the March Potluck dinner is "St. Joseph’s Day." Pick what I was able to learn, the traditional foods are Italian but meatless, lots of vegatables, pasta and bread. Sounds like a yummy feast, so find your favorite St. Joseph’s day recipe and join us!

No time to cook or want to enjoy? Don’t worry, there is always enough to share. In fact, tradition has it that when we aren’t cooking up a Potluck supper on the fourth Sunday, we are for fellowship around a tasty coffee hour and going out to a local restaurant for dinner each Sunday.

On page 3 of this issue you’ll find an article on the history of Dignity-Integrity, written by one of our founding members.

Our 40th Anniversary! We’re booked for AUGUST 15, 2015 for a FABULOUS 40TH REUNION PICNIC! Volunteers are welcome to prepare a delicious meal, or by any of our founding members.

BEARs are out there, going to the movies, concerts, dinners, and can collection ministry. Rev. Jim Barlow is offering a year of free member meetings for their ongoing food cupboard.

You can call the Hotline at 585-234-5092 or check our website at www.di-stastic.org. Bearexpress.com always allows us to use their Community Center at 707 East Main St., almost right across from Delta Sonic. There is plenty of free parking in front and side of the Open Arms building.

If you are interested in any of the above nude activities, you can check for information that is frequently updated on ROMANS’ website at http://www.romans.org. ROMANS is a social club for gay and gay-friendly male nudists (or naturists) over 21. Currently the club is offering a year of free membership to all full-time students to promote the nude lifestyle among the younger generation. You can reach ROMANS at message line 585-281-4964, by E-mail wnyromans@yahoo.com or via regular mail at PO Box 9223, Rochester, NY 14602.

TRANS ALLIANCE OF GREATER ROCHESTER (TAGR)
Saturday, March 14, from 3-5 p.m., is our second Saturday of month Planning Group Meeting. So please come with your thoughts and ideas and hear what’s being planned for the next few months and the really exciting things for this year!

Our LAST Saturday of the month meeting is March 28, 3-5 p.m. and is our support group meeting. Our support meetings provide a safe and caring atmosphere so that you can feel free to talk about whatever is going on with you. Our members have all had many of the same questions and fears you may have. We know how hard it is to be the only gay person you might be going through. Together we can learn how to not just survive as a Trans person, we can learn from each other how to live a rich full life as a Trans person! Yes, it can and is being done. Come to a meeting and find out how you can do it too. As always our family, friends and allies are welcomed and encouraged to join us.

On Tuesday, March 31 from 6-8 p.m., to commemorate the Internation Day of Visibility, we will hold our first ever Open House, which will include an award ceremony to recognize the trans and non trans community who have supported us recently and throughout the past years.

We meet at the Open Arms Community Center at 707 East Main St., almost right across from Delta Sonic and there is plenty of parking in front and side of the Open Arms building.

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

EMPIRE BEARS
It’s been cold, but the BEARS are out there, going to the movies, concerts, dinner and bowling.

We go to supper every Wednesday at 6 p.m. at the Empire and you can call me on W. Henrietta, 5/11 will find us at JB Quiñones’ in S. Winton. The 18th we’ll go to Carabuhs on W. Henrietta. The 25th we’ll be at The Winfield Grill.

If you want to show off your favorite location in the GAYVY, please give us a call or send us directly to 17 S. Fitzhugh Street, 14614 so we can be sure to send you an invitation.

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

Youth, meets on the first Tuesday of every month from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the Community Center. This is a support group for parents and other family members who want to understand and support their trans child may be having and learn to best treat their child in a loving and accepting way.

On Tuesday and Thursday mornings Romans, Gay and Straight Together will be at Tom Somerville for Yoga from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., and there is a $5 fee. Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. there is also Yoga with Tom Somerville, this is a mixed level class that welcomes all including beginners. BYO mat (if possible). Cost is $15 per class.

PFLAG Parents, Friends, and Family of Lesbians and Gays (and those who question) is a support and activism group for anyone who supports the LGBTQIA Community. They meet on the third Sunday of each month at 1 p.m. in the Community Center.

Open Arms MCC is committed to building Bridges and Changing Lives and we are the only accepting church in Rochester. We are located at 707 East Main St., almost right across from Delta Sonic. There is plenty of free parking in front of the side of our building.

For updated information on these and other exciting upcoming events check out our website at: openarmsmcc.org. Brue Adams has office hours on Mondays from 12 to 2 p.m. and by appointment. You can reach us by email at (585) 271-8478 and our website is openarmsmcc.org.
The Gay Alliance is seeking a reliable, energetic self-starter to sell Empty Closet advertising for a generous commission.

For more information, phone Susan Jordan at 244-9030 or e-mail: susanj@gayalliance.org

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St Patrick’s Day
2013

St Patrick’s Day Celebrations
Saturday, March 14th
Rochester’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade
Open at 2pm
Come Party after the Parade!
$4 Bud Light/Coors Light 16oz Aluminum Bottles
$4 Irish Car Bombs

Tuesday, March 17th
Open at 4pm
Green Beer Specials
$4 Irish Car Bombs & Bud/Coors Light Aluminum Bottles

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Say Goodbye to Mr. Freeze and Hello to Spring!

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Local Topfree activist talks about “Free the Nipple” movement, film

By Susan Jordan

In 1986 and again in 1989 Rochester, New York, women, outraged at the Topfree movement, defied the law making it illegal for women to remove their shirts, as men could freely do. In 1992 New York’s top court, the Court of Appeals, ruled in NYS v. Ramona Santorelli that this was discriminatory, and that women's shirts should be arrested for going “topless.”

Ramona Santorelli and the other activists involved called their group “Topfree” because the term “topless” implies that women are “less” unless they are concealing their supposed-ly filthy yet desirable female body parts – which were (are) seen as male property.

In December of last year, New York Magazine published an article taking a section on what they referred to as “topless-ness.” This terminology might reflect a lack of understanding or lack of knowledge of New York Magazine – but the article included a quote from Lina Esco. Esco did not respond to requests for an interview.

Santorelli commented, “What I noticed is, that although Lina Esco has a feminist perspective, the film I saw doesn’t make the connection with porn and topless bars and how that connects with keeping women in sex roles. One woman interviewed in the documentary says that she didn’t want to offend men. It seems to be a trend now that women are apologizing and making excuses for simply wanting our rights. We have to tip toe around men’s feelings. Don’t challenge the patriarchal ox, and men owning women’s bodies. One woman interviewed in the documentary says that she didn’t want to offend men. It seems to be a trend now that women are apologizing and making excuses for simply wanting our rights. We have to tip toe around men’s feelings. Don’t challenge the patriarchal ox, and men owning women’s bodies. One woman interviewed in the documentary says that she didn’t want to offend men. It seems to be a trend now that women are apologizing and making excuses for simply wanting our rights. We have to tip toe around men’s feelings. Don’t challenge the patriarchal ox, and men owning women’s bodies.

So that, in 400 years, the threat to children, Santorelli feels, comes not from glimpsing a breast but from guilt-ridden, misogynistic attitudes that instill self hate and shame in females and objectification of women and refusal to take responsibility for their actions in males.

She added that although being topfree has been legal for over 20 years, women are still being arrested. “Then the charges are dropped,” she said. “One woman won around $20,000 for false arrest. Holly van Holst was arrested for going topfree in New York and she won in court and got her fines elimi-nated and got a settlement from NYC. That was not mentioned in the documentary.”

Santorelli is angry that after two decades and a change in the law, women in New York must still challenge the social mores of patriarchal culture. “It’s outrageous,” she said.

This month’s Queer Women of Color Film Festival screening will take place at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 14 at The MOCHA Center, 189 N. Water St.

Door opens at 6:30 p.m. The screenings are free and open to the public and are sponsored by Unity Fellowship Church of Rochester and The Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project.

Sam Smith wants his music to inspire gay youth

By Darren Weer on gaystarnews.com. Photo via samsmithworld/Instagram

British singer Sam Smith has said he wants to make music that inspires gay youths.

The Grammy-winner said he hoped his debut album, about his unrequited love for a straight man, would comfort gay children for years to come. “I’m just trying to make music that stands the test of time. So that, in 400 years, when a little kid who’s gay listens to In the Lonely Hour, or my next record, he will be inspired,” he told the London Evening Standard.

“...I want to be a different type of pop star who’s not Photoshopped, who’s straight-on human... Honesty is timeless,” he said.

Last month, In the Lonely Hour returned to number one in the UK after he dominated the Grammy Awards with four wins.

Patricia Arquette speaks out in support of Bruce Jenner’s transition
By Greg Hernandez on gaystarnews.com
Patricia Arquette, who won the Oscar for her performance in “Boyhood,” spoke out in support of Bruce Jenner’s transition to female and slammed the tabloid press for the way they have covered it.

“These newspapers, these magazines, that are being so disrespectful,” Arquette said during a Feb. 11 appearance on The Meredith Vieira Show.

“They should be ashamed because they really are on the unforgiving side of history and what they are doing is pathetic and-immature and repulsive.

For Arquette, the issue is deeply personal as she has a famous transgender sister, Alexis Arquette, who made headlines recently for revealing she had slept with Jared Leto when she was still presenting as a man.

“I feel like Alexis, my sister, has taught me so much about love and acceptance,” Arquette told Vieira. “It’s a very difficult thing to be transgender, especially twenty years ago when Alexis started. I said, I don’t care what package you’re comfortable in, I love and accept you. I am glad you are you. I look forward with each of you, I want to be with you, spend time with you.”

Arquette, whose other siblings include actor and Arquette actress Rosanna Arquette, referred to the 1976 Olympic Gold Medalist and Keeping Up With The Kardashians cast member as Mr. Jenner.

“You have to be so brave to live this truth of who you are,” Arquette said. “I think all of us support each other and love and appreciate everything she has given to America and her bravery because she is fighting a fight for a lot of better catches that are being kicked out of their own homes, society turns their back on these kids. It’s brutal.”


Indie film explores lives of gay farmers
The idea of the strong, strapping, knowledgeable farmer providing for his family is an almost an anachronism. In reality, however, farmers are a much more diverse set of people than traditional ideas would have you think of.

In its new film Our Here, The Queer Farmer Film Project explores what it means to be a modern-day queer farmer here in America.

The film, which is now touring throughout the Midwest and along the west coast, explores the relationships between the growing community of queer farmers and the larger modern food production industry that sustains our country.

Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/2012/05/10this-reel-queer-farmer-film.html

Fans demand tickets months before George Takei’s Broadway show “Allegiance” opens
Via the New York Post:
Can Twitter followers turn a Broadway floater into a hit? Outspoken gay “Star Trek” star George Takei has a total 9.5 million followers on social media, and demand for tickets to his upcoming Broadway show has been riding high months before tickets actually go on sale.

Takei’s musical “Allegiance,” opens in October, and the box office isn’t open for months. But producers have been getting many ticket requests, they’ve set up a priority list to give fans first dibs on tickets. They’ve received 10,000 orders to date, and are also giving early birds a download of the cast album when it comes out.

Scott Bakula plays “matter of fact” AIDS survivor on “Looking!”- He gave a lot of soul energy away!
By Greg Hernandez on gaystarnews.com
If Scott Bakula looks a bit tired in his scenes on HBO’s “Looking” this season, he’s got a good reason.

The 60-year-old actor juggled the shooting of his scenes with the filming of his new CBS hit series “NCIS: New Orleans.”

He tells tells xiFinity.com: “It was fun in terms of energetically [but] it was a nightmare because I was shooting here in New Orleans late on a Friday night until two in the morning or whatever and then getting up at six, taking two flights to get to San Francisco and then shooting until two in the morning on Saturday, and then getting two flights back on Sunday and back to work on Monday. So that was a challenge. But he feels it has been worth it to be able to play the role of Lynn, an entrepreneur involved with the decades younger Dom (Murray Bartlett).

Bakula describes Lynn as a survivor who he has been honored to play.

“He was there when the AIDS crisis began. He lost his friends. He lost the love of his life basically,” the actor explains. “He became, I think, relatively pragmatic about life and kind of matter-of-fact about it, and I think he gave and gave and gave a lot of his soul energy away.

“I think he saw something in Murray’s character, in Dom, that reminded him of the past, of his real, true love and at the same time, there’s a part of him that can only go so far, if that makes sense.

“It’s not that he’s dead inside. He’s still got a lot of passion and a lot of life, but he’s mature, and he’s seen a lot, and a lot of what he’s seen hasn’t been good and yet, that community went through that and survived that and stood proud and strong and tall and held people as they died and all of those things, they’re amazing, amazing people. I think of him in that light, and it was an honor to get to play someone like him.”

Scott G. Brooks creates “Phantasmagorical” art
By Christopher Harrow on The Advocate
“Phantasmagorical” is a word that gets too easily bandied about these days, especially in the graphic novel world and within geekdom at large, but Scott G. Brooks’s meticulous paintings deserve the label. Their bizarre invented creatures, with disturbing sexuality, make up his new exhibit “Inappropriate Nature.”

“As a gay man, I have been labeled by many as ‘inappropriate’ my entire life,” said Brooks in his comments on the exhibit. “By default my work has also been suspect. I learned long ago that I couldn’t control this, and instead embraced the fact that I, and my work, didn’t always fit in. Because of this I have never felt the need to create work that was mainstream or aligned with any preconceived notions of what art is. While I strive for beauty in the execution of the work, the subjects and themes reflect ideas and ‘nature’ that may not be aesthetically pleasing to some.”

Originally from Flint, Michigan, Brooks attended the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and currently lives with his partner in Washington, D.C. His subject matter ranges from portrait to intricate narratives. War, sex, and the abuse of the natural world repeat as themes in “Inappropriate Nature,” with a sense of absurdity suggesting Sir John Tenniel’s illustrations for Alice in Wonderland and Daumier’s political cartoons.

In addition to exhibiting in galleries, Brooks has illustrated several children’s books and a number of covers for D.C.’s Metro Weekly.

“Inappropriate Nature” is at Last Rites Gallery through April 4; 325 W. 38th St., #1, NYC 10018.

Laverne Cox to play trans attorney on CBS show “Doubt”
Via Entertainment Weekly:
In what could be another milestone moment for transgender representation, CBS has cast transgender actress Laverne Cox in its legal procedural pilot Doubt.

In the Orange is the New Black actress will play a transgender Ivy League-educated attorney, described as “as competitive as she is compassionate, she’s fierce, funny and the fact that she’s experienced injustice first hand makes her fight all the harder.”

The Doubt role was always conceived as a transgender character, and it’s tough that it took so long to be cast. But Cox made the cover of Time magazine last year in a story about the transgender movement. While there have been plenty of transgender characters on broadcast TV shows in the past, they are often short-term parts or comedic roles.

Pandora Boxx talks about her travels
By Garrett Johnson on gaystarnews.com
Image supplied by Pandora Boxx.

Pandora Boxx has undoubtedly been one of the stars to emerge from the phenomenon that is RuPaul’s Drag Race. A frequent flyer who jets around the world to perform, we recently caught up with Pandora to swap travel stories.

What’s the best random destination you’ve visited?

My job takes me all over the world which is pretty amazing. It’s always amazing to see LGBT Prides all over the coun- try, especially in small cities. Cities like Moscow, Idaho, Kalamazoo, Michigan and Guerneville, California. I never even knew they were cities! I had an amazing time in each of them and I’m so glad I got to experience it.

Where has been your best vacation and why?

Vacation? I don’t know if I get too many of those. There always seems to be work involved. My boyfriend and I did get to go to Australia for a show there but we also got to spend a week for fun. We made great friends there. It made for a nice little vacation before the show.

What has been your worst vacation and why?

I went to Disney World with my boy- friend (for the third time) and his family. He was a complete turd on the trip. I felt bad because his parents paid for this whole trip and he just wanted to break up the whole thing. I think his parents liked me better than him on this Vacation.” Thankfully, I had the good sense to break up with him shortly after this debacle.

What has been your most romantic trip?

I don’t think I’ve ever taken a romantic trip. Sad face. I think most of my travel has been for work. I need to work on doing a
romantic getaway this year. Would you avoid any specific countries? Any country that is adamantly against gay rights. Unless I know of an LGBT group or something that I could visit and show my support for them.

Do you prefer to travel solo or with a partner? If I'm working, I usually travel solo. That way I can rest and have a bit of quiet time before I need to let crazy Pandora out of her box.

What is your favorite thing about your home city? I moved to Los Angeles three years ago and what I love most, besides snow, is that there is always something going on. I don't think you could ever get bored living in L.A.

Where were you going the last time you stepped on a plane? I was going to Orlando to do a show at the Parliament House. I always have a fabulous time there and it's one of the oldest gay establishments in the country. Those gals put on one hell of a show.

Where do you hope to go on vacation this year and why? I would absolutely love to go to Hawaii. I want to get back to Key West. We stopped there when we did the Al & Chuck Travel Drag Stars at Sea Cruise but I want to go when I have more time. Oh, and Dublin. We keep talking about it and it needs to happen.

What is your dream destination and why? Some place warm with a beach nearby but that's close enough to some fun gay bars. A gal has to get her drink on, ya know?

- See more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/travblizzer-pandora-boxx-why-diane-world-wants-much-fun-kalamazoo-was-memorable170215#thread.bbbZ7PG.dpf

You can follow the travels of Pandora Boxx via Twitter.

much-fun-kalamazoo-was-memorable170415#thread.bbbZ7PG.dpf

Keith Haring's Australian mural vandalized

Famed artist Keith Haring died 25 years ago on Feb. 16. And this just happened in Australia on that day: Vandals have desecrated a heritage-protected mural in Melbourne’s north. Australia’s only surviving mural by world-renowned artist Keith Haring has been seemingly untouched for more than 30 years. But on Feb. 14, Collingwood locals found it covered in black graffiti, the name “Keith Renks” scribbled along with a love heart.

Haring, an American artist and social activist known for his political work the world over, died in 1990 after contracting AIDS. During a fleeting visit to Melbourne in 1984, he painted the mural on the wall of the then Collingwood Technical College — it’s one of just 31 known murals by Haring worldwide. The mural was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in 2004. Just 18 months ago, it was unveiled to the public after being restored to its former glory by Arts Victoria.

The above photo hangs in the NYC LGBT Community Center where you’ll also find Haring’s famed Once Upon A Time mural in one of the restrooms.

-JoeMyGod.com

Daring Criss will be the new Hedwig on Broadway

By Jerry Porteraon for The Advocate

Daring Criss has some mighty big shoes to fill (or tiny ones, if you know the size of John Cameron Mitchell’s feet). The Glee star is wrapping up his role as Blaine this season, and now he is set to play a limited 12-week run on Broadway in Hedwig and the Angry Inch beginning Wednesday, April 29, three days after JCM ends his fabulous run on Broadway in the role he created.

“I’ve got a grin plastered on my face that Daring is joining the brotherhood of Hedwigs,” Mitchell said in a statement. “I LOVED him in How to Succeed. His stage presence is electrifying, his rock and roll credentials and comic timing impeccable and I’m thrilled to be working with him to create a brand-new Hedwig!”

Stephen Trask, the show’s composer, also has guilty things to say: “The first time I saw Daring I knew he was a game changer. He’s that good. Then, when we hung out it was like we were old friends. I’m excited to spend the next few months making the show and getting to know each other better. I’m happy that Hedwig can be Daring’s next step on his way to world domination.”

The hairy-chested Criss will most likely have to shave more than the previous actors who have started in the role so far: Neil Patrick Harris, Andrew Rannells, and Michael C. Hall. But that’s OK, we’re sure he can handle it. And since Criss was a HUGE draw when he took over for Dan- al Radcliffe in How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, we’re sure he’s gonna be a Broadway box office hit.

And it appears that Tony winner Lena Hall, who plays Yitzhak, is prepared to welcome her fifth husband to the stage.

Honorung You- Cheng Ma for two Careers

By Merle Exit

It's not enough for a woman to have one full-time career. You-Cheng Ma has been maintaining two that are totally different as both a prominent musician and pediatrician. Born in France to Chinese immigrants, her parents had already been in the field of music. Yo-Yo's mother, Marina Lu, was a singer, while her father, Hsiao-Tsiun Ma, was an established violinist, composer and professor of music.

"I started to learn music at the age of 2 1/2," said Dr. Ma, "when my father taught me the violin. At 3, I took piano lessons, but with someone else."

In fact, she accompanied her famed brother, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, for nine years, but with someone else.

"I was proficient in math and science. Entering college I decided to major in chemistry. I was through the advice of a mentor along with my love for children that I opted to study pediatrics. This was through the advice of a mentor along with my love for children that I opted for a career in development pediatrics, the care of children with special needs, at Einstein Medical Hospital in the Bronx. "My focus is on children who have problems communicating."

She described one of her unforgettable memories as a pediatrician spending two months in Puerto Rico. "I was given the opportunity to partake in a free care clinic course learning to speak Spanish if I wanted to do some practicing in a Spanish speaking country, I chose Puerto Rico spending two months. As a physician it was much easier to communicate with the children in their own language rather than having an interpreter."

Dr. Ma finally took on the role of the Executive Director of CON after getting married and having a child. Her musician husband, Michael Dadap, said that he dreamed about having his own music school. It was then that Dr. Ma took on the role with Dadap as the Artistic and Music Director.

Musical "genes" have been passed down to another generation as both of her children are musically inclined. "My son has played the cello, piano, trombone and percussion as well as creating his own set of bagpipes. My daughter loves to sing, plays the cello and is pursuing an acting career. In fact, Laura has been touring with the show Voca People."

Getting a tour of Dr. Ma’s musical basement she spoke about her most fond memories as a pediatrician spending time with the show Voca People. "I can’t speak enough about her musical basement. She showed off her skills playing a few bars on the piano and part of a musical piece on her violin."

Darren Criss will be the new Hedwig on Broadway

By Jerry Porteraon for The Advocate

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Rowan Collins joins the Gay Alliance education staff

By Susan Jordan

Rowan Collins is the Gay Alliance’s new Education Coordinator. He officially joined the staff in January, but has volunteered and also interned during the past several years.

Rowan’s hometown is Albion, and he came to Rochester to attend Nazareth College, where he majored in psychology and minored in women’s and gender studies. He graduated in May 2014.

Rowan first heard about the Gay Alliance from Jason Baldard of Self Made Men. “He told me to go to a Speck Our training — and here I am,” Rowan said. “I started volunteering for the Speaker’s Bureau in January 2012 and have spoken in classrooms in every college in this area, and a couple of high schools and elementary schools. A lot of places!”

Rowan said he became interested in working at the Gay Alliance after his internship last spring. “After helping Scott and Jeannine with education programming, I realized I enjoyed it a lot and thought the work was really worthwhile. I could see change happening. Sometimes I’d run into people who had been in a training and they’d say that what they had learned and the education philosophy we went over had been helpful in having conversations with friends and family. I saw that what we’re doing can make a difference — and that was rewarding.”

Rowan feels the many programs and services the Alliance provides are important to the LGBTQ community in the Rochester area, and that the Alliance serves as a center point for the community. He said, “The amount of issues that we tackle is valuable. We do programming for youth and elders and parents of trans youth, we do the Red Ball and Pride — so we’re here and visible.”

Registration opens for spring SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Programs

The spring session of the Gay Alliance SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Program will take place on Friday, March 20, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (check in at 8:30 a.m.) at the Rochester Red Cross. We can also bring this program to your campus or workplace.

The SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Program is an interactive 8 hour course, which includes activities, small group discussions and opportunities for practicing skills as educators. During this course, participants will be coached in running SafeZone trainings and offered opportunities to ask and answer questions in a supportive environment using the teaching skills that they acquire.

Each participant will receive a SafeZone Training manual that will provide a complete course guide for running SafeZone Trainings, recommended exercises and activities, resources and suggested readings to extend knowledge, handouts to use in future SafeZone Trainings, a Gay Alliance SafeZone sticker and a certificate of course completion.

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

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

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

Volunteer of the Month: Marilyn Traver

We’re excited to announce that the March Volunteer of the Month is Marilyn Traver, a member of our Office Volunteer team.

Last month, Marilyn completed her first full year of volunteer service with the agency, contributing over 160 hours of her time and energy. Even in the coldest weather Marilyn makes the trip to our office and is always ready to take on any task we have for her.

Marilyn comes from Auburn, NY but moved to Rochester 20 years ago when she came to attend Monroe Community College. Upon graduation she worked for more than 10 years as sous-chef. She is a sci-fi and fantasy fan, and her favorite character is Supergirl.

Marilyn’s work with the Gay Alliance ranges from office work like stuffing envelopes to making entries into our database. She is always ready to cover other shifts for her fellow volunteers when they can’t make it in. Outside the office, Marilyn has joined the organizing committee for our Lick Events Day Party Sundays, where she has played an active role in crafting new events.

We are deeply grateful to Marilyn Traver for the spirit and life that she brings to the Gay Alliance and are thrilled to honor her as Volunteer of the Month for February.
Become a Gay Alliance Speakers Bureau member

At the Gay Alliance, we believe that one of the most effective forms of education is through personal narratives. We receive many requests throughout the year for presenters to speak about their LGBTQ identities and life experiences.

Gay Alliance Speakers Bureau Members are trained volunteers who go out into the community to schools, medical centers, faith communities, social service agencies, etc., and share their personal stories to help educate others. Some members present several times a month and some only once a year. We work with your schedule, interest and availability.

If you would like to become a trained Gay Alliance Speakers Bureau member, the first step is to participate in our SpeakOUT Training on March 13 (Friday evening) and March 14 (all day Saturday).

For more information or to register, please go to the Gay Alliance website at www.gay-alliance.org and click on the SpeakOUT slide or contact education@gayalliance.org.

SAGE MARCH CALENDAR

Tuesday March 3
10:30-11:30: Yoga with Tom
11:30-12:30: Brown bag & beverage
12:30-1:30: April calendar planning. Topic discussion: “What LGBTQ Equality means to Seniors”. Your host: Anne

Thursday March 5
10:30-11:30: Yoga with Tom
11:30: No Sage program today

Tuesday March 10
10:30-11:30: Yoga with Tom
11:30-12:30: Bro
12:30-1:30: Oasis presentation & programs by Josie & Ginny
1:30-3: Euchre. Your host: Anne

Thursday March 12
No Yoga. 10:30-12: Breakfast at Dennys, 911 Jefferson Rd. Please RSVP by 3/10 to 585-287-2958. Your host: Audet

Tuesday March 17
10:30-11:30: Yoga with Tom
11:30-3: Get Your Green ON. Brown bag & beverage - Irish history & travelogue. Your host: Anne Tischler

Thursday March 19
10:30-11:30: Yoga with Tom

Tuesday March 24
10:30-11:30: Yoga with Tom
11:30-12:30: Brown bag & beverage

Thursday, March 26
10:30-11:30: Yoga with Tom
11:30-12:30: Brown bag & beverage
12:30-3: Movie at the Center. Popcorn provided, bring a beverage. Your host Gerry

Friday, March 27
5pm: Fish Fry at Jays Diner. 6212 W. Henrietta Rd 14623 $ $ 10% senior discount. Please RSVP to 585-287-2958 by 3/25

Tuesday: March 31
10:30-11:30: Yoga with Tom

Bad weather days. If schools are closed all programs are canceled that day.

If anyone wants to host an event or an outing please let us know.

Rainbow SAGE, For LBGTQ people 50 and over, meets at Open Arms Community Center of Western New York (707 East Main St., Rochester 14605). Yoga is from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. $5 per person Tuesday & Thursday. All programs are subject to change and Rainbow SAGE members are responsible for setting up their own transportation to and from any program. All programs are open to the community and the Gay Alliance welcomes all to participate to enhance the quality of diverse, member-driven programming.
BISEXUALITY RESOURCES
AMBiLos Angeles; American Institute of Bisexu-
ality (Journal of Bisexuality); Bay Area Bisexual Net-
work; BRC; Bisexual Organizing Proj-
ect (BOP); Bixosity; Boston Bisexual
Women’s Network; C4C — Columbus, Ohv;
Fenway Health & BI&Q Health Programs. Los Angeles
Bi & Trans Force; New York Area Bisexual Network;
Rural Action Alliance; The Bisexual Resource Center (email brc@ure-
serve.org)

CULTURAL
Rochester Woman’s Community Church
234-4441. (See ongoing calendar).
Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus
www.rgmc.com
Open Arms Community Center
Available for parties, events, meetings, 707 E.
Main St. Parking. Accepting and welcoming of all.
271-8478

DEAF SERVICES
Deaf Rainbow Network of Rochester
See website for information.
Lilac: Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf (LRAD)
Meet on second Saturdays, 8-10:30 AM. For infor-
mation: reservation: rochesterlrad@er.com
Spectrum LGBTIA & Straight Alliance
www.spectrumlgbtia.org

ELDERS
Gay Alliance Rainbow Sage
Monthly meeting held on the 3rd Sunday at Open Arms
MCC 707 E. Main 244-8640; SAGE@gayall-
iance.org

FAMILY
Gay Family Support Group
Open Community Center
Open Community Center available for par-
ties, events and meetings. 707 East Main St.
Parking. Accepting and welcoming of all.
271-8478

CNY Fertility Center
Integrative Fertility Care. Support meetings, web-
inars, career community; advocating on behalf
of LGBT family members. rochestercnyfertility@-
com; www.cnyfertility.com

Rochester Gay Moms’ Group
Support group for lesbian and gay parents and family members
in Rochester and surrounding areas.
Subscribe: rochestergaymoms-subscribe@-
yahoo.com

LGBT & Family Support Group
Open Community Center
Open Community Center available for par-
ties, events and meetings. 707 East Main St.
Parking. Accepting and welcoming of all.
271-8478

Adaptive Parent Support Group
Monthly potluck lunches. For information, loca-
tion, call Shan 301-2529.

Angie Food Ministry
Box of fresh/rozen food for $30 in advance.
Ment, changes monthly. For information and dis-
tribution sites, call 585-861-4815.

HIV/AIDS
Free testing for HIV exposure is available from the New York State Department of Health: Call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at (585) 423-8001 or 1-800-962-5063. Free or reduced-cost testing is also available at Planned Parenthood of Rochester and Planned Parenthood of Rochester-Empire Zone: 2 South Clinton Street (East End), 585-423-6201. To预约 New York State of Health: HIV Testing and Prevention Services: Plan-
ning to test in Rochester? Come visit our testing site at 2 South Clinton Street in downtown Roches-
ter. For further details, call 585-232-3051; www.vlsprochester.org. 1 West
Volunteer Legal Services Project
head Clinic, 855 W. Main St., Rochester. Contact:
HIV and STD resource testing site. Rapid testing
Health: call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at
trorial site, ask about our sliding scale fees. No
members accepted. Mon., Wed., Fri. 9am-5pm; Tues.
9pm. Sat: 10am-2pm. www.Trans-
cest.org

Center for Health and Behavioral Training of Monroe County
853 W. Main St., Rochester 14611. Collaboration of
Monroe County Health Department and U.R.
Provides year-round training in mental health and
management of STDs, HIV, TB and related issues,
as well as domestic violence and case manage-
ment. (585)-753-5382 x-w/t
Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syrac-
use Region
114 University Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14605;
Toll-free: 1-866-601-0686. Offers confidential
HIV testing and information. When you make
your appointment, be sure to ask about our slid-
ing scale fees. No one is turned away for lack of
ability to pay.

Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS
A collection of agencies providing a multiply of resources and services to the upstate New York.
Community. Their office is located at the Finger
Lakes Health Systems Agency, which also provides
services in a number of other New York area region-
ings, as well as demographic and statistical data for
Healthcare development services. Health care.
(585)-461-3520.

The MOCHA Center of Rochester
Our mission is to provide high quality, affordable, and
health and wellness in communities of color. Youth drop-in center; HIV testing and counseling;
Gay-Straight Support Group; Computer lab, referral services and more. 189 N. Water St.
(585)-420-1400.

Monroe County Health Department
at 855 W. Main St., offers testing and counseling
for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
(585)-733-6484. Hours: M W 8:30-30; R;
8:30-11 am; F 7:30-2:30. Strong
Hospital provides a comprehensive range of medical care, including access to experimental treat-
ment protocols, and HIV testing, counseling, prevention and group psychotherapy. Training of
health care professionals in the use of human immunode-
fective Virus Disease Clinic. (585)-275-0526. Depart-
ment of Psychia-
try, (585)-275-3379. AIDS Testing Project, (585)-
275-0526.

Planned Parenthood of Rochester and Gen
ence Valley
Testing and information (585)-546-2595.

Rural HIV testing
Anonymous and confidential, in Allegany, Livingston, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben,
Wayne or Yates counties, call 1-800-962-5063.

Action Front Center
(Acting for a Better Community.) Provides HIV,
STD, and hepatitis C counseling, education and
reduction counseling. Tailored programs available
to incarcerated, at-risk, and homeless individuals. For people living with HIV/AIDS: Custom
peer support groups. United Colors support group
for people of color. Other groups include: bi-
color, cultural and leadership development,
multi-
cultural, bilingual, tech support, 2nd Floor
Rochester. 1404 Office. Hours F M 9-5 a.m-
pm. 585-262-4320.

Anthony L. Jordan Health Center, Prevention and Primary Care.
HIV walk-in testing Tues. & Fri.; Hot C Walk-in Testing.
Wednesday, Meet clinician by appointment.
720 Holland St., Rochester. 585-423-

CDC National STD and AIDS Hotline 1-800-232-4634. “If your state

Public Law 98-365, 390-200. Free legal ser-

vice to HIV positive persons, families. Span-

ial is not an issue. STDs accepted. Most

STD exceptions, except divorce; no criminal cases. Ask to speak to

roche
terlrad@er.com

Spectrum LGBTIA & Straight Alliance

www.spectrumlgbtia.org

ELDERS
Gay Alliance Rainbow Sage
Monthly meeting held on the 3rd Sunday at Open Arms
MCC 707 E. Main 244-8640; SAGE@gayall-
iance.org

FAMILY
Gay Family Support Group
Open Community Center
Open Community Center available for par-
ties, events and meetings. 707 East Main St.
Parking. Accepting and welcoming of all.
271-8478

CNY Fertility Center
Integrative Fertility Care. Support meetings, web-
inars, career community; advocating on behalf
of LGBT family members. rochestercnyfertility@-
com; www.cnyfertility.com

Rochester Gay Moms’ Group
Support group for lesbian and gay parents and family members
in Rochester and surrounding areas.
Subscribe: rochestergaymoms-subscribe@-
yahoo.com

LGBT & Family Support Group
Open Community Center
Open Community Center available for par-
ties, events and meetings. 707 East Main St.
Parking. Accepting and welcoming of all.
271-8478

Adaptive Parent Support Group
Monthly potluck lunches. For information, loca-
tion, call Shan 301-2529.

Angie Food Ministry
Box of fresh/rozen food for $30 in advance.
Ment, changes monthly. For information and dis-
tribution sites, call 585-861-4815.

HIV/AIDS
Free testing for HIV exposure is available from the New York State Department of Health: Call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at (585) 423-8001 or 1-800-962-5063. Free or reduced-cost testing is also available at Planned Parenthood of Rochester and Planned Parenthood of Rochester-Empire Zone: 2 South Clinton Street (East End), 585-423-6201. To预约 New York State of Health: HIV Testing and Prevention Services: Plan-
ning to test in Rochester? Come visit our testing site at 2 South Clinton Street in downtown Roches-
ter. For further details, call 585-232-3051; www.vlsprochester.org. 1 West
Volunteer Legal Services Project
head Clinic, 855 W. Main St., Suite 500, Rochester 14614.
Free legal services for low-income HIV positive clients.
No criminal cases. Appointments are scheduled at area medical provider locations or by calling
295-2760.

Volunteer Legal Services Project
(585) 232-3051; www.vlsprochester.org. 1 West
Main St. Suite 500, Rochester 14614. Free
legal services for low-income HIV positive clients.
No criminal cases. Appointments are scheduled at area medical provider locations or by calling
295-2760.

Gay Alliance Youth Group
(585) 232-3051; www.vlsprochester.org. 1 West
Main St. Suite 500, Rochester 14614. Free
legal services for low-income HIV positive clients.
No criminal cases. Appointments are scheduled at area medical provider locations or by calling
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No criminal cases. Appointments are scheduled at area medical provider locations or by calling
295-2760.
LORA Buffalo Women's Coffee Social
Walk on Thursday afternoons, 6pm. Spot: 765 Elmwood, Buffalo. Contact Person: Barb Henderson Email: morningstar56@yahoo.com
LGBTQ Motorcycle Group
FRIDAYS
Gay Men’s AA meeting
Fridays, 7pm-9pm. 205-3360. Closed meeting. Emmanu- el Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave.
Gay Alliance Youth
Fridays, 7pm. Gay Alliance, 5th floor, 875 E. Main St., 244-8640. Ages 12-19. youth@ogallia- nce.org.
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GLBTQ Motorcycle Group
**SUNDAY 1**  
Dignity Integrity, Episcopal Mass/Healing Service, with music, 5 pm, St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

**MONDAY 2**  
RaPaulls’ Drag Race screening at Bachelor Forum, featuring Mrs. Kash’a Davis and friends. 5 pm every Monday. LGBT Kinky Trivia, 7:30 pm, 140 Alex Bar & Grill. Health Month event.

**WEDNESDAY 4**  
Flower City Pride Band Open House, 6:30 pm at Open Arms MCC Community Center, 707 E. Main St.  
**Empire Bears at Jay’s Diner**, W. Henrietta Ave. 6 pm.

**FRIDAY 6**  
Baila Friday, 10 pm, Tilt, 444 Cen-
tral Ave. Health Month event.

**SATURDAY 7**  
Early bird registration ends for Pride Agenda Equality & Justice Day in Alba-
y, WA.

**SUNDAY 8**  
Dignity Integrity, Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word, with music, 5 pm, St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

**FRIDAY 13**  
Empire Bears at Cabalaba’s, W. Hen-
rietta Ave. 6 pm.

**THURSDAY 19**  
Mocha Soiree, 6:30-8:30 pm at Ballroom 384, 384 East Ave. Live jazz band, Tino More; passed hors d’oeuvres, champagne; silent auction; cash bar; Rochester launch of HIV STOPS WITH ME media campaign. Tickets $50, at MOCHA Center, 189 N. Water St. Online link: http://mocha3000.eventbrite.com/. Tickets must be purchased by noon, March 12.

**SATURDAY 21**  
Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus concert, “FantABBaTastic”, 8 pm, Hochstein.

**SUNDAY 22**  
Dignity Integrity, Roman Catholic Evening Prayer, followed by a Potluck Dinner, 5 pm, St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

**SUN宣 29**  
Trans Self Care, 1-5 pm, Trillium Health. Health Month event.

**MONDAY 16**  
Empty Closet deadline for April.

**WEDNESDAY 18**  
Empire Bears at Cabalaba’s, W. Hen-
rietta Ave. 6 pm.

**THURSDAY 19**  
Mocha Soiree, 6:30-8:30 pm at Ballroom 384, 384 East Ave. Live jazz band, Tino More; passed hors d’oeuvres, champagne; silent auction; cash bar; Rochester launch of HIV STOPS WITH ME media campaign. Tickets $50, at MOCHA Center, 189 N. Water St. Online link: http://mocha3000.eventbrite.com/. Tickets must be purchased by noon, March 12.

**FRIDAY 20**  
SafeZone Train the Trainer Certification Program, 9 am-5 pm (check in at 8:30 am) at the Rochester Red Cross.

**SATURDAY 21**  
Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus concert, “FantABBaTastic”, 8 pm, Hochstein.

**SUNDAY 22**  
Dignity Integrity, Roman Catholic Evening Prayer, followed by a Potluck Dinner, 5 pm, St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

**WEDNESDAY 25**  
Creating LGBTQ Families. Panel discussion, etc. Health Month event. 6-8 pm, Trillium Health.

**WEDNESDAY 25**  
Creating LGBTQ Families. Panel discussion, etc. Health Month event. 6-8 pm, Trillium Health.

**SATURDAY 28**  
TAGR support group meeting, 3-5 pm, Open Arms MCC, 707 E. Main St.

**SUNDAY 29**  
Trans Self Care, 1-5 pm, Trillium Health. Health Month event.

**WEDNESDAY 15**  
Dignity Integrity, Episcopal Mass, quiet, 5 pm, St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

**MONDAY 16**  
Empty Closet deadline for April.

**FRIDAY 13**  
Empire Bears at Cabalaba’s, W. Henrietta Ave. 6 pm.

**SATURDAY 14**  
TAGR planning group meeting, 3-5 pm, Open Arms MCC, 707 E. Main St.
**Letters to the editor:**

We welcome letters from our readers. We reserve the right to refuse any letter for any reason. Anonymity may be requested, and all letters are subject to publication discretion and on a space available basis. Only one anonymous letter may be published by the same writer in a six-month period.

**Advertise with us:**

Whether you’re showcasing a new product, promoting an event, announcing a local artist or band, or planning a fundraiser, The Empty Closet can help you reach our readers. Contact us for rates and design services for non-camera-ready ads.

**MARCH 2015 • NUMBER 487 • THE GAY ALLIANCE • THE EMPTY CLOSET**

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875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, New York 14605, call (585) 244-9030 or e-mail emp-closet@bytel.com

The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and other contributing authors do not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or The Empty Closet.

The publication of the name or photograph of any person or organization in any envelope, or in an indication of the sexual or affectional orientation of that person or the members of that organization. For further information, please write to The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main St., Rochester, NY 14605, call (585) 244-9030 or e-mail emp-closet@bytel.com

The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc, housed in the bylaws of that organization. Its purpose is to inform the Rochester gay community and to provide an exchange ideas and seek to educate.

The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and other contributing authors do not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or The Empty Closet. The publication of a letter that focuses upon a rival product, or in the political area, a campaign or candidate or party, may be refused. All political advertisements must contain information about who placed them and a method of contact. Additionally, The Empty Closet does not print negative or “attack” advertisements, whether they relate to a product or politics and no matter in whose interest the ad is being produced. Negative advertisements include advertisements that focus upon a rival product, or in the political area, a campaign or candidate or party, or that promote leadership within the community, and to be a part of a national network of lesbian and gay publications that exchange ideas and seek to educate.

Part of our purpose is to maintain a middle position with respect to the entire community. We must be careful to present all viewpoints in a way that takes into consideration the viewpoints of all – women, men, people of color, young and old, and those from various walks of life. We must be careful to present all viewpoints in a way that takes into consideration the viewpoints of all – women, men, people of color, young and old, and those from various walks of life.
LGBT Health Month 2015 in collaboration with Trillium Health

Please email us at lgbthealth@trilliumhealth.org or call (585) 545-7200 for more information about LGBT Health Month and local resources that may be available to you. Check our Facebook page for additional updates and details: facebook.com/TrilliumHealth

LGBT Kinky Trivia
Monday, March 2, 7:30pm
140 Alex Bar & Grill
Prizes for winning teams
21+

Baila Friday
Friday, March 6, 10pm
Tilt Nightclub & Ultralounge
444 Central Ave, Rochester
21+, cover at door

Ambush Rochester
Friday, March 13, 5:30pm
Location TBD (By Ambush)
www.ambushrochester.com
21+

Creating LGBT Families – Fertility Service, Adoption & Family Planning
Wednesday, March 25, 6pm – 8pm
Trillium Health
259 Monroe Avenue
Partner Organizations: CNY Fertility, Adoption STAR, Children Awaiting Parents, & Monroe County Foster Care
All are welcome!

Queer Body Love Yoga
Monday, March 16, 5:30pm
Trillium Health
259 Monroe Avenue

Trans* Self-Care
Sunday, March 29, 1pm – 5pm
Trillium Health
259 Monroe Avenue
Partner Organizations: GV2 and T*AGR

50 Ways to Play Exploring Safe & Respectful Kink
Tuesday, March 31, 7pm
Rochester Brainery
For self-identified women 18+

T*AGR Open House
Tuesday, March 31, 6pm – 8pm
707 East Main Street
Open Arms MCC

different, together.
health care that’s picture perfect for you.

It’s time your health care cared for you.
To learn how we can serve you, contact us today.
259 Monroe Avenue
(585) 545-7200
www.trilliumhealth.org
facebook.com/TrilliumHealth