

The EMPTY Closet



AUGUST 2004

A Publication of The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

www.gayalliance.org A1

NYC NEWS

NYC Pride

■ Color photo feature on the scene at Manhattan's June 27 Pride Parade. **Page A19**



eric bellmann



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Hothead sings

■ Animal's (left) rock opera about cartoon character Hothead Paisan debuts at Michigan Women's Festival. **Page B1**

FMA dies in Senate; House Republicans set vote for fall, just before the election

The Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA) died on July 14 in the United States Senate after backers failed to get the 60 votes necessary to shut off debate. The vote failed 48-50, leaving Republicans humiliated and Democrats and LGBT activists jubilant.

However, Republicans in the House of Representatives are moving toward a vote on another version of the amendment, scheduled for next fall, just before the election.

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-Texas) then pushed a vote on a bill preventing the Supreme Court from hearing challenges to the federal DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act). It passed the House on July 22 by a vote of 233-194. Among area lawmakers, only Louise Slaughter and Amo Houghton voted against this court-stripping measure, which may now get a companion bill in the Senate (see page A5).

Another DeLay bill would end recognition of same sex marriage by the District of Columbia.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said, "If DeLay has his way, no federal court would ever be able to review one of the most important laws affecting the rights of married couples and their families."

The July 14 Senate vote was not on the amendment itself but on a procedural motion known as cloture. Earlier in July, when Republicans realized they did not have the votes to pass the amendment, they introduced a second version, which they claimed would leave some rights open

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DOUG MESZLER

Co-Grand Marshal Thomas Warfield at the Pride Parade, July 17. For more coverage see pages 8, 10, 11.

Pride 2004: Fashion, families, fun mark Rochester picnic, parade

BY SUSAN JORDAN

A wedding party holding a reception at the Strathallen and a second wedding group emerging from the Third Presbyterian Church on East Ave. coincided with the kick-off of the Pride Parade on July 17.

Members of both weddings waved happily, listened to Basically Treblemakers Band, and gazed in fascination at the rainbow-hued marchers, many of whom were holding signs referring to the fact that loving same-sex couples cannot enjoy the basic civil and human right of marriage.

Police estimated that over 800 people took part in the Parade, organized by the Community Business Forum, and around 5,000 were in or watched the Parade and attended the festival afterwards at Manhattan Square Park.

The theme was "Fashion," and some marchers wore over-the-top outfits with

glittery gowns, multi-colored boas and Big Hair to rival Marge Simpson's. Faith groups, leather people, seniors, youth, parents with toddlers, club-scene queens and many others of all ages and races expressed the diversity of the LGBT community.

The GAGV Youth Group, in their new t-shirts designed by group members, chanted "Two, four, six, eight, separate church and state!" The Rochester Fire Department was represented by two fire trucks, and the Rochester Police Department was also represented. Grand marshals Thomas Warfield and Betty Meyer of Bullwinkle's waved to the crowds lining the streets.

The GAGV Award went to AIDS Rochester, as "the best unit exhibiting community pride in their presentation." The Ruby Slipper Award, for best marching unit, went to Basically Treblemakers.

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Pride Agenda grant to fund planning conference

BY SUSAN JORDAN

The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley will hold a Planning Conference for its Board of Directors on Aug. 28-29, to determine the agency's goals and strategies for the future.

The conference will be facilitated by Donna Red Wing and Ken Mosesian, and was funded through a grant from the Empire State Pride Agenda. The GAGV was one of only seven organizations to receive such funding.

Nora Yates of the Pride Agenda told the *Empty Closet*, "We are pleased that GAGV and six other members of the New York State LGBT Health and Human Services Network are receiving funds for technical assistance. These grants will strengthen organizations across the state that provide critical services to the LGBT communities."

The conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency. Board members will be considering re-definition of the mission of the agency, its future direction, methods of strengthening the agency's programs and collaborative network, the type of facilities that will be needed to accomplish the GAGV's mission, and funding for the agency and its programs which would

involve less reliance on grant funding from New York State.

Donna Red Wing served as both Director of Training and Policy Director for the Gill Foundation, the nation's largest funder of LGBT issues. As National Field Director for the Human Rights Campaign, she managed a national network of congressional district-specific activists and advocates, designed and managed Speakers Trainings, and created Faith & Fairness, a faith-based monthly consultation with LGBT leaders and national denominational leaders.

As National Field Director for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, Red Wing designed and managed a national field operation that created a network of successful grassroots media activists across the country. Her portfolio also includes field management, training and technical assistance, strategic planning, evaluative work and donor resource programming.

Red Wing has worked with the GAGV to develop her Quichemasters trainings for the Alliance's Speaker's Bureau program, helping volunteers gain professional presentation skills.

Red Wing said, "Having worked with



Ken Mosesian

the GAGV for the past year, I know that the future of the organization is limitless. The commitment by the Board of Directors to do this hard work in visioning the future of the agency will serve the greater Rochester community for many years to come."

Ken Mosesian is the president of Gulfstream21 Inc., a communications

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NewsFronts

LOCAL & STATE NEWS

Empty Closet online edition adds monthly color photo features

The *Empty Closet* online edition has a new color photo feature.

Go to www.gayalliance.org and click on "Empty Closet". When you get the front page of the online edition, click on "Photo Features" in the menu on the right to access the latest photo spreads. The feature offers pages of still photos and also a slide show version of each series. ■

MOCHA Project hosts a week of events, climaxing with picnic at Genesee Valley Park on Aug. 21

The Men of Color Health Awareness (MOCHA) Project will present its MOCHA Week events from Aug. 16-22, culminating in the annual picnic at Genesee Valley Park on Aug. 21.

The week starts on Aug. 16 with a Women of Color Panel presentation at St. Mary's, from 6-8 p.m. An LGBT Youth of Color Panel will take place on Aug. 17 at the GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor, from 6-8 p.m., and a Transgender of Color Panel presentation is scheduled for Aug. 18 at the MOCHA office, 25 Franklin St., Suite 1060, from 6-8 p.m.

On Aug. 19, MOCHA will host an evening of jazz and an awards reception at Montage Grille, from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. The suggested donation is \$10 and proof of ID will be required.

Aug. 20 is the date for two events: MOCHA Happy Hour at Tara from 6-10 p.m. and Freaky Friday at Odeysee Night Club, from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. (ID required for both events.)

The Community Awareness Picnic is at the Red Creek Pavilion at Genesee Valley Park on Aug. 21, from noon to 6 p.m. It is free. That evening from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., the MOCHA Week closing party takes place at Muthers.

On Sunday morning, Aug. 22, Bishop Zachary Jones will lead a faith based worship service at Lake Avenue Baptist Church from 2-4 p.m. ■

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Perspectives

viewpoints that matter

AN EMPTY CLOSET EDITORIAL BY SUSAN JORDAN

People, planet in peril

As lgbt people, we naturally focus on our own concerns, and, in relation to the presidential election, legal marriage is the central issue for us, especially since we and our families are being used by the Republicans as their ticket back to power. However, we mustn't forget that we live in a large and complex world, and many other factors influence our quality of life – and, indeed, our basic survival.

The war and the economy are the two most obvious examples. But there are other issues that are crucial to all Americans and also to the billions around the world who are impacted by HIV/AIDS.

Having suffered huge, heart-rending losses to AIDS since the early '80s, gays are only too well aware of what it is like to have our lives dismissed as insignificant, along with those of people of color, the poor and IV drug users. That is one evil legacy of the Reagan years.

Today the epidemic has swelled to global proportions, largely due to the cynical indifference and bigotry of conservative men in power. Incredibly, they are still in power after all these years, and still maintaining their condescending, dehumanizing attitude to those who are not white, male, wealthy or heterosexual.

The Bush administration's insistence on "abstinence" as the sole method of HIV prevention received the fury and scorn it deserves at July's international conference on HIV/AIDS in Bangkok. Not that the Bushies will pay attention to what insignificant, powerless people say. Our foreign policy will keep sending the right wing's supposedly "Christian" message: "Abstain or die".

Never mind if billions of women and young girls around the globe have absolutely no choice about whether to abstain or not. They are routinely raped by, or forced into marriages with, HIV positive men who don't care if they infect their sexual partners. Experts are calling for urgent research into microbicide gels that could protect women and girls who can't stop rape and can't force men to wear condoms.

Of course, both U.S. conservatives and the Vatican have been saying for many years that condom use is unacceptable and that teenagers should simply be told, "Don't have sex". If they disobey and get infected, apparently, that's just too bad. Neither condoms nor information are allowed. Keep the kids ignorant; if they disobey, they'll get what they deserve. It's this kind of



thinking that has destroyed millions of lives and left millions of orphaned children in this country and throughout the Third World. Hence the anger around the globe at the continued U.S. insistence on the Right's self-righteous and irresponsible party line.

Not only was abstinence the Bush administration's only answer to prevention, but they insisted that the Department of Health and Human Services cut all seven studies about men who have sex with men from the list of abstracts to be presented at the Bangkok conference. HHS officials did not respond to repeated requests for information from *The Washington Blade*.

It seems that details about insignificant people like gays and women -- especially gays and women of color -- are simply beneath the notice of the alienated straight men -- the Jehovah-appointed Masters of the Universe -- who control our global agenda.

Speaking of global agendas, our planet itself (or Herself) is undergoing major changes, and not for the better. The ozone layer is disappearing, we are poisoning our own air and drinking water, the polar ice caps are melting, and the oceans are absorbing air pollution (carbon dioxide) and turning into giant acid baths, destroying sea life and speeding global warming. Around 24 percent of all animal species are in danger of extinction, and that number is expected to rise. Our own species is not immune to extinction.

Guess who is profiting from this. Guess who is in denial about it, and why. And guess who says that global warming research is "junk science" -- unlike the "research" that claims to prove the things the fundamentalist Right *wants* to believe...

There's a lot more riding on the upcoming election than whether gays can get legal marriage licenses -- important though that is. A single-issue point of view isolates us from the rest of the world, a world in which lgbt people should be playing a full part, not inhabiting a gay ghetto.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and other contributing writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or the Empty Closet. We will print letters at the editor's discretion and on a space available basis. We will not print personal attacks on individuals, nor will we be a forum for ongoing disputes between individuals. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity. We will print anonymous letters if the name and phone number are provided to the Editor; confidentiality will be respected. Submissions are due by the 15th of the month at: *The Empty Closet*, 875 E. Main St., Suite 500, Rochester NY 14605; email emptycloset@gagv.us. Online edition of EC available at www.gayalliance.org.

BY GAGV EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHUCK BOWEN

Channel 13 found the story

Local ABC Affiliate WOKR (Channel 13) found the real story.

With all of the media attention being given to gays and lesbians, has the rate of crimes committed against us increased?

Not looking for a story to spin or sensationalize, the news team at the television station began their investigative report. The finished story that aired revealed more than most of us expected.

The reporter interviewed a 15-year-old member of the GAGV youth group -- an average kid who loves to write poetry and rides his bike everywhere he goes, including to meetings of our youth group.

A month ago, while riding in his neighborhood, he overheard a group of boys making comments like "we're gonna get that fag." Before he knew it, the gang had pulled him off his bicycle and began kicking and hitting him. Forcing him to the ground so he couldn't get a good look at his attackers, they kicked him so hard in the head that blood started to pour from his ears.

After they were through with both their verbal and physical assaults, they ran off into the neighborhood still talking about the fag they just "beat the crap out of." The victim was able to stand and walk home where his mother was waiting. An ambulance was called to rush him to the hospital, still bleeding from the ears.

Fortunately, there was no permanent damage and he was released. The police were called but there wasn't much they could do because the victim didn't get a good look at his attackers.

This wasn't the first time he had been a victim, he told the reporter from Channel 13. He is regularly harassed at school and in his neighborhood.

His story wasn't the clincher of the investigative report done by Channel 13's news team in my opinion. The reporter asked Rev. C.M. Touchstone, the self-anointed leader of the anti-gay marriage movement here in Rochester, about the increase of violence towards gays and lesbians. Touchstone responded that no one



seemed to care when there was violence against "Christians" and he just didn't think it was appropriate for the media to take so much interest in violent acts against homosexuals.

I'd wager Ms. Tulip's dinner that if I went out to Main Street in Rochester today and screamed, "I'm a Presbyterian!"

no one would notice. Unless to call the police to report some bald-headed religious nut violating the noise ordinance.

But what do you think would happen if I hollered I was a homosexual?

Fighting for our equality isn't easy, especially for the lgbt youth. Since the battle for marriage parity began a year ago, the incidence of hate crimes against us has increased by almost 30 percent. The number is even higher since most crimes aren't reported because the victim fears being outed.

The new anti-violence program at the GAGV is taking tremendous strides to help victims of hate crimes and domestic violence. Remember, we are only a phone call away if you need help.

On behalf of the Gay Alliance, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the news team at Channel 13 for not just reporting the news, but for looking deeper and finding the real story. We won't give up the fight, but there will be casualties because of the hatred that still exists even here in Rochester.

As for Reverend Touchstone, I hope you ask God to forgive you for being one of the intolerant "Christians" whose support of hatred has affected the lives of so many, including our youth. Open your Bible, sir, and read the most important Commandment of them all -- about love.

CORRECTION

The designer of the Pride poster image in last month's EC was RICHARD YOUNG.

The EMPTY Closet

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The EMPTY Closet

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The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., as stated in the bylaws of that organization. Its purpose is to inform the Rochester gay community about local and national gay-related news and events; to provide a forum for ideas and creative work from the local gay community; to help promote leadership within the community, and to be a part of a national network of lesbian and gay publications that exchange ideas and 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 views of all — women, men, people of color, young and old, and those from various walks of life.

The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and other contributing writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or The Empty Closet. The Empty Closet shall not be liable for any loss or expense that results from the publication (whether correctly or incorrectly) or omission of an ad. In the event of non-payment, your account may be assigned to a collection agency or an attorney, and will be liable for the charges paid by us to such collection agency or attorney.

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

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NewsFronts

LOCAL & STATE NEWS

FMA

continued from page one

to same sex couples. Democrats refused to allow the second amendment to be considered, so Republicans invoked cloture to limit debate and end any possibility of a filibuster. However, due to the deep division between Republicans on the amendment issue, there were not even enough votes to reach cloture.

"Election year politics may have pushed the amendment, but a commitment to fairness lead to its demise," said Christopher E. Anders, a legislative counsel for the ACLU. "The defeat of this discriminatory proposal is the true victory for American families.

The Senate has done the right thing by rejecting attempts to write discrimination into the Constitution."

The ACLU noted that the amendment had been sent to the Senate floor before the relevant committee and subcommittees had had a chance to give opinions on the measure.

Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn) indicated that he will drop further consideration of the measure. The amendment has divided Republicans, with Sen. John McCain and others voicing their disagreement. Former Congressman Bob Barr, who wrote the federal DOMA bill, commented, "If we begin to treat the constitution as our

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Planning

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consultancy. He works with for-profit and non-profit clients to enhance their success in fundraising, brand marketing, and long term planning, by developing powerful internal and external communications strategies. He has assisted companies in new product launches, organizational and strategic management and donor acquisition. He especially enjoys bringing for-profit and non-profit organizations together through corporate sponsorship programs.

Mosesian's clients include national not-for-profit organizations such as the Family Pride Coalition, and for-profit corporations like Volvo Cars of North America, Capital One and Wells Fargo.

Mosesian also works with executives who seek his coaching services to sharpen their leadership skills, assist with dispute resolution and transform their organizations.

He was previously a partner at Bold New World, LLC, a New Media company in Los Angeles, where he oversaw the marketing, creative and technology departments, and developed web-based strategies that supported the overall business needs of his clients, including MGM Worldwide Television, Paramount Pictures, Gateway Computer, and the Annenberg Center for Communications at the University of Southern California.

Mosesian said, "I have heard about the great work the GAGV is doing in Rochester, and I look forward to helping them define their focus for the future."

The Gay Alliance hopes, in addition to strengthening its existing programs and determining the resources needed for continued growth, to take on a leadership role by incubating new projects; supporting selected programs in their independence

from the GAGV, and providing infrastructure (administrative support, physical space needs and overall technology) for Rochester's network of over 70 lgbt organizations. ■

Pride

continued from page 1

COAP won the Stonewall Award, for most original unit expressing pride. Mothers' float took the Community Business Forum Award for "best unit representing pride in business". The Rainbow Award, for the unit with most imaginative depiction of the parade theme, went to ImageOut Film Festival.

GAGV Picnic

The insistent beat of DJ dance music mingled with the whinnying of miniature ponies and the sounds of laughter from the entertainment stage and the dunking booth, as the Gay Alliance's Pride Picnic got underway on a sunny July 11 at Genesee Valley Park.

The Picnic drew over 4,000 people, and the Alliance made \$25,000 for programs and services in the coming year. Ten families joined the Gay Alliance as members.

In addition, 53 people registered to vote, and 700 people signed the Empire State Pride Agenda's pledge of resistance cards - only 300 less than signed at N.Y.C. Pride in June.

The Picnic was covered by RNews, Fox, Channels 8, 13 and 10 and *The Insider*.

N.Y.S. Senator Joseph Robach, Monroe County Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn and Brighton Supervisor Sandra Frankel were present and met members of the lgbt community.

The Gay Alliance Picnic began in the early '70s as a small event, with GAGV board members cooking BBQ chicken and other picnic food themselves. This year, eight food vendors supplied treats ranging



More Pride Parade and Picnic coverage on pages A 10-11 and C12-14. Rochester Pride op/ed piece on page 8.

WEDDINGS AT PRIDE: Top: The wedding at Third Presbyterian Church and, bottom, the wedding reception at the Strathallan which coincided with the start of the Pride Parade. In her coverage for the *Democrat & Chronicle*, Donna Jackel noted that the members of the weddings waved encouragingly at the lgbt marchers, "not that they needed much encouragement." Third Presbyterian displayed a giant rainbow banner in honor of Pride on their bell tower.

from Greek food to clams to Kettle Korn, in addition to more typical picnic fare of hots and burgers.

Sales vendors and community group information tables drew a constant stream of people, and this year the GAGV Youth Group sponsored the dunking booth and also sold temporary tattoos, beads and glow sticks. Lambda Car Club displayed a selection of beautiful antique convertibles.

"Bev Jackson, a new GAGV member, did an outstanding job and sold over 100 advance tickets," said picnic organizer Chuck Argento.

New this year were the Doggie Drag contest and the pony rides from Small Wunders Miniature Horses. Bella, a Chihuahua dressed as a faery queen, took the title of Ms. Pet Pride 2004, with hot competition from a pack of enthusiastic canines (see page A10 and Miss Tulip's column, page B14).

While there was plenty of beer, dancing and socializing for the single crowd, the picnic had a much larger family-oriented area than in past years, especially appropriate because the right wing's campaign to prevent marriage rights and keep lgbt families invisible was coming to a head the following week in Washington, D.C.

Many children enjoyed the pony rides, the moonwalk, the petting zoo and the other fun things in the Family Area.

Another improved feature was the entertainment stage. The annual Interfaith Service took place there in the morning. During the afternoon, Aggy Dune served as witty MC for performances by Leah Zicari, M Shaka, Mike Gosech, Rainbow Sky Karaoke and the Earl Cram Revue.

Chuck Argento said, "The Earl Cram band was fantastic. We regret that their time had to be pushed back due to time constraints, and not as many people got to hear them. We hope to have them perform again next year. They are fabulous!"

Basically Treblemakers Band also performed in the entertainment pavilion, and a drummer's circle was led by Rose Husted. Local DJs provided music in the dance pavilion all afternoon; they included Hector, Flex, Sonic, MAH, Nasty D's and Cindi. Motor ran the cash bar.

Picnic sponsors were Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Eastman Kodak Co., Bausch & Lomb, HSBC Bank USA, Jeffrey Freedman Attorneys at Law, ID Lubricants Inc., Holiday Inn, Days Inn, Out & About Directory, CT's Image Creations, Hover-Davis, Motor, Tara, Muthers, and Nasty D's. ■

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Support Programs and Services!

NewsFronts

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Survey shows increasing tolerance toward gays

The American Enterprise Institute has released a new collection of survey data on homosexuality and gay marriage compiled by Resident Fellow Karlyn Bowman. Among the findings:

There has been a substantial liberalization in attitudes toward homosexuality. In 1973, 73 percent told National Opinion Research Center interviewers that sexual relations between adults of the same sex were always wrong. In 2002, 53 percent gave that response.

Large majorities say that homosexuals should have equal rights in terms of job opportunities. Fifty-six percent gave that response to Princeton Survey Research Associates interviewers in 1977; 87 percent did in early 2004. Majorities now support hiring homosexuals as members of the clergy and as elementary school teachers, two occupations about which there has been resistance in the past.

People are willing to vote for a homosexual for president. Fifty-nine percent told Gallup in 1999 that they would vote for a well-qualified person who happened to be homosexual.

Fifty-six percent in 2000 told Princeton Survey Research Associates that they had a friend or close acquaintance who was gay or lesbian, up from 22 percent in 1985.

Although support has grown for legally recognizing gay marriage, a majority are still opposed. In 1996, 27 percent said homosexual marriages should be recognized by the law as valid, with the same rights as traditional marriages (68 percent said they should not be recognized as valid). In May 2004, 42 percent said homosexual marriages should be recognized by the law as valid, 55 percent not recognized. When people are asked whether they favor legal marriage for homosexuals, civil unions, or neither, most polls show that about a quarter favor legal marriage.

People are divided about legally recognizing civil unions, although they support providing health insurance coverage to gay partners, hospital visitations, and inheritance rights.

Pollsters have been experimenting with different question wordings to see how much support there is for a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as being between a man and a woman. Slightly more than 50 percent in most polls appear

to support such an amendment, while around 40 percent are opposed. People would prefer that the issue be left up to the states. Around 20 percent say this issue should be a top priority for Congress.

"Public Opinion on Homosexuality and Gay Marriage" is one of a series of AEI studies on public opinion by AEI Resident Fellow Karlyn Bowman. The studies include trend data from most major pollsters in the United States and are updated regularly as new polls become available. The full text of the study is available at

http://www.aei.org/docLib/20040708_Homosexuality4.pdf

■ American Enterprise Institute

ACLU sues Maryland on behalf of nine same sex couples

The American Civil Liberties Union on July 7 sued Maryland county clerks, charging that the state law denying same-sex couples the right to marry violates the Maryland constitution.

"Lesbian and gay couples make the same commitments to each other and their children that straight couples do. Their families need and deserve the same protections," said David Rocah, Staff Attorney for the ACLU of Maryland. "Excluding lesbian and gay couples from marriage denies them and their children important safeguards and discriminates against families when they are most vulnerable."

The lawsuit, filed in state court in Baltimore by the ACLU with the cooperation of Equality Maryland, charges that the law violates the state constitution's guarantees of equality.

"This case is about building and strengthening families," said Dan Furmansky, Executive Director of Equality Maryland. "Maryland has said that it will not tolerate discrimination against lesbian and gay people. It's time for the state to live up to that promise and stop denying same-sex couples and their children the same protections and safeguards that straight couples and their children receive through marriage."

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of nine same-sex couples (and a man whose partner recently passed away) who would like to be able to marry one day. They live throughout the state, representing Baltimore, the Washington suburbs, the Eastern Shore, Western Maryland and Southern Maryland. They come from all walks of life, ranging

Canadian MP says conservative government would reverse legal marriage

A Canadian Conservative MP has caused a political firestorm by saying that a Conservative government would redefine the Canadian Charter of Rights and use the notwithstanding clause to overrule court decisions it disagrees with, including legal same sex marriage.

Opponents of Tory leader Stephen Harper are attacking him for the statements made by Tory MP Randy White in a new documentary. Liberal leader Paul Martin said, "The Conservative Party would make impulsive and widespread use of the notwithstanding clause to rescind the fundamental rights of Canadians."

■ *The Washington Blade*

from a former civil rights worker, a bus driver and a paramedic to a teacher, a dentist and a former police officer. Some have been together for decades, some are already raising children and one couple has a child on the way.

"When you hear the stories of the people involved in this lawsuit, it's obvious that lesbian and gay people in Maryland suffer real harms when their relationships aren't recognized," said Ken Choe, Staff Attorney with the ACLU's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project. "The Maryland constitution demands equal treatment, and that means equal treatment in marriage too."

The parties bringing the lawsuit include:

John Lestitian was in a committed relationship with his partner Jim Bradley for nearly 13 years. Both practicing Catholics, the couples exchanged vows in a holy union ceremony in 1991. Jim passed away unexpectedly in 2003. Unfortunately, Jim's will which would have left Jim's property to John and appointed John as executor of Jim's estate, lacked the signature of a second witness, making it invalid on a technicality. Without legal standing, John was forced into difficult negotiations with Jim's family over the burial arrangements. Without a valid will, John also lost the home in Western Maryland the couple shared because state inheritance laws failed to recognize their relationship. Had the couple been permitted to marry, the property would have passed automatically to John by law.

Donna Myers and Maria Barquero have known each other for nearly five years and have been a couple since 2002. When they met, Maria, a native of Costa Rica, was in the country legally on a work visa. Since only married couples are able to sponsor their spouses for immigration, Maria had to move back to Costa Rica when her visa expired in 2003. While the couple spends as much time together as legally possible, Donna had to abandon her career to accommodate the frequent travel between the two countries. Yet they are still forced to live much of the time apart. One day Donna would like to realize her dream of raising children with Maria on the family farm in Southern Maryland where Donna's sisters are building homes.

Alvin Williams and Nigel Simon, who live in Prince George's County, describe their meeting six years ago at a discussion group for black gay men as "love at first sight." Both active Baptists, the couple exchanged vows to each other at a holy union ceremony in July 2000. After adopting a six-year-old son, the couple would like to be able to marry in order to give their son the comfort and security that only come with marriage. The happy fathers have plans to adopt a sibling pair, ages eight and six, in the near future.

Jodi Kelber-Kaye and Stacey Kargman-Kaye have been together 11 years and are now the proud parents of two boys, ages six and one. Jodi and Stacey experienced the discrimination that results from the inability to marry when Stacey was hospitalized for a life-threatening emergency at a local Baltimore hospital and Jodi was literally pushed out of Stacey's room because the nurse refused to recognize her relationship to Stacey. In May 2003, when Jodi was giving birth to the couple's second son, they experienced similar treatment when Stacey, herself a doctor, was shut out of discussions about the medical treatment of their prematurely born child during a time when Jodi was unavailable immediately following the birth.

In addition to the ACLU of Maryland

and ACLU's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, plaintiffs are represented by the ACLU of the National Capital Area and cooperating attorneys Andrew H. Baida, formerly Solicitor General in the Maryland Attorney General's office, and Caroline D. Ciruolo of the Baltimore law firm Rosenberg Martin Funk Greenberg, LLP.

■ ACLU

N.J. issues domestic partnerships with some benefits

New Jersey began issuing domestic partnerships to same sex couples on July 10, but New Jersey gays made it clear that only full legal marriage rights will satisfy them.

New Jersey is the fifth state to recognize same sex relationships in any form. Domestic partners now have the right to make medical decisions for their partners, have some joint rights when filing state income taxes to be exempt from state inheritance taxes on their partner's deaths (like heterosexual couples), and to receive the benefits for partners of state employees.

"This is a very great day in New Jersey civil rights history," said Maplewood Mayor Fred Profeta. "The civil rights achieved here are very important - let no one doubt that."

Many of the dozens of couples who applied for benefits on and after July 10 wore buttons reading, "The Next Step: Marriage Equality".

■ Associated Press

From Toronto to Berlin to Tel Aviv, Pride takes over

Toronto's Pride Parade, on June 27, was huger than ever. Canadian TV and radio constantly repeated the figures: a million people took part in the three days of Pride celebrations, which brought in \$88 million to Toronto.

One group of queens, who came all the way from Memphis, Tenn., called themselves "Homeland Security". They wore uniforms complete with Big Hair, and pushed along a "metal detector," with a man continuously going through it and setting off the alarm. The queens then whacked him with their plastic billy clubs.

Over 300,000 people took part in Manhattan Pride on June 27, according to organizers. Marriage equality was a pervasive theme in the parade this year. Marching bands and Harvey Fierstein were popular with the watching crowds, but the married couples in the parade line up drew the loudest applause. Gus Archilla and Elmer Lokins, together for 58 years, got married in Canada in 2003; they waved from a convertible with a "Just-Married" poster on the bumper.

The parade included a strong political component, with several groups handing out voter registration forms. Politicians including N.Y.C. Mayor Michael Bloomberg and U.S. Congressman Barney Frank, and his partner Sergio Pombo, took part. Frank led a contingent supporting the candidacy of Sen. John Kerry.

In San Francisco, hundreds of married same-sex couples led the pride parade, the city's 34th. One couple told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Now that the issue is in the courts, it's hard to remember the simple joy that was around those weddings. Today we got to remember some of that."

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Berlin saw one of the biggest prides in the world on June 27. Gay mayor Klaus Wowereit led floats in Berlin's 12th commemoration of the Stonewall uprising, which Berliners call Christopher Street Day. Organizers estimated a crowd of over 500,000, while police gave a count of 200,000.

Israel's parade drew an estimated 70,000 people to Tel Aviv. The theme was "Proud Families," and many political figures attended, including Mayor Ron Huldai. A survey on the needs of gay men and lesbians in the city was held and the results will be distributed in popular gay establishments and on the Web. Major parades were also held on June 27 in Mexico City and Paris. A march also took place in Calcutta, where several dozen gays protested the illegal status of homosexuals in India, due to a law dating from the British colonial occupation.

Some information from Associated Press and *The Washington Blade*

Appeals court upholds ruling that Oregon licenses are valid; lawsuit pending in state top court

Oregon has become the second state after Massachusetts to officially register same-sex marriage licenses, after the Oregon Court of Appeals refused last month to block the process.

State lawyers dismissed the registrations as a mere administrative act, which would not authenticate the 3,022 licenses issued by Multnomah County this year, because the Oregon Supreme Court has not yet issued a ruling on a pending lawsuit on the issue.

The Court of Appeals' decision upheld an earlier ruling by Multnomah County Circuit Judge Frank Bearden, who ordered the state to process the existing licenses issued to same-sex couples. Bearden also ordered the county not to issue any more licenses until there can be a binding response to the issue from either legislators or the state supreme court. ■

House approves court stripping measure on DOMA

One week after the Senate rejected the discriminatory Federal Marriage Amendment, the House of Representatives passed a controversial court stripping measure.

That legislation would forever slam shut federal courthouse doors to gay and lesbian couples challenging the anti-gay federal marriage law known as DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act).

"House leaders seem to have forgotten their high school civics lessons," said Christopher E. Anders, an ACLU Legislative Counsel. "The entire system of checks and balances depends on an independent federal judiciary that ensures that laws passed by Congress are constitutional. This reckless bill would take away the Supreme Court's authority to decide whether a federal law is constitutional."

"Stripping the federal courts of their ability to review laws is wrong," Anders continued. "Just last week, the Senate had the courage to reject amending the Constitution, but now House leaders seek to violate it."

The Marriage Protection Act (H.R. 3313) would deny the Supreme Court and all other federal courts the ability to consider any challenges to the cross-state recognition section of the Defense of Marriage Act. It would deny gay and lesbian couples the right to even have their day in federal court, thereby violating both the Equal Protection Clause and the separation of powers principle.

The only option left for challenging DOMA would be in state courts. But because the bill strips the U.S. Supreme Court of jurisdiction to hear DOMA challenges, there could potentially be as many as 50 different interpretations of the constitutionality of DOMA, as each of the 50 state supreme courts would be a final authority on the constitutionality of DOMA.

Without the final voice of the Supreme Court and the supremacy and uniformity of federal law, legal chaos could ensue.

Former member of Congress and author of DOMA Bob Barr has expressed deep concern about the court-stripping legislation. In a letter

sent to Congress, he reiterated his belief that DOMA would withstand constitutional scrutiny, and that he "fears an increased likelihood of an adverse decision (by a state court) on DOMA" if the bill were to pass. Moreover, he reminded members that "our healthy democracy depends on having three separate and independent branches of government."

The Act would violate the Equal Protection Clause, as it would punish a specific minority group by completely cutting off federal judicial review of a statute affecting only that minority group.

Empire State Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan Van Capelle said, "(The) vote is just more election year posturing by the Bush administration and Republicans at the expense of the LGBT community. Our lives, our relationships and our families have become cannon fodder in the battle for the White House and the future of the country. We all know that. They all know that. All of America knows that."

■ ACLU, ESPA

Transgender groups attack Schwarzenegger for "girlie men" slur

The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) wants a repudiation of insulting comments made by California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on July 17. In a rally for support of his state budget, Schwarzenegger used the mocking term "girlie men" to describe some California state lawmakers opposing his budget proposal.

A spokesman for the governor, responding to the clamor from the state's Democrats, said that no apology would be forthcoming. NTAC claims the comment was contextually derogatory, and wants to know why the governor stands behind the implicit insults to not only Democrats, but to women and transgenders as well.

Schwarzenegger made the comment at a rally as he claimed Democrats were delaying the California state budget by catering

to special interests. Democrats claimed the Republicans were caving in to their own special interests, and protested the remark as being "sexist" and "homophobic."

"If they don't have the guts to come up here in front of you and say, 'I don't want to represent you, I want to represent those special interests, the unions, the trial lawyers...' if they don't have the guts, I call them girlie men," Schwarzenegger said to the cheering crowd at a mall food court in Ontario, Calif.

At a rally Sunday in Stockton, the governor gave a speech almost identical to the one he delivered in Ontario but without the "girlie men" remark.

The governor's spokesperson Rob Stutzman said the line was dropped because Schwarzenegger had already sent the message he wanted to send, not because he regretted his remarks.

"So in essence, girls or women are considered wimps or cowards in Gov. Schwarzenegger's eyes, and ditto for male-to-female transgenders," said Vanessa Edwards Foster, chair of NTAC. "Right now, some of these wimpy females -- and yes, some closeted transgenders as well -- are over in Iraq, keeping the peace in one of the most dangerous war zones on the planet! It's nice to see them so 'forcefully' dismissed, with no regrets by the governor whatsoever."

"Biological women, male-to-female transgenders, and gay men are giving their lives to defend the right of people like Gov. Schwarzenegger to make offensive sexist remarks," said Robyn Walters, Board Secretary and Chair of NTAC's Veteran Affairs subcommittee. "There is not enough respect in America these days, and our leaders are among the worst offenders."

The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC) also expressed disappointment.

Said GenderPAC Executive Director Riki Wilchins, "Attacking legislators' gender expression and identity is sexist and homophobic. Such remarks imply that weakness and femininity are synonymous. They have no place in the public discourse."

■ NTAC, GenderPAC

Interview:

Bob Crystal recalls the early days of the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Alliance

BY SUSAN JORDAN

Rochester's Pride Picnic and Parade have been around for many years. The Picnic, like the Gay Alliance itself, started in 1972 and the first official Rochester Pride was in 1989. Early activist Bob Crystal fills us in on the long-ago days before HIV, Queer Eye and legal marriage, when just acknowledging a gay or lesbian identity was as shocking as talking about marriage equality is today.

Can you tell us when and how the Gay Liberation Front was founded, and by whom? When and how did it become the GAGV?

University of Rochester Gay Liberation Front was the third college campus group in N.Y.S. (Columbia and Cornell continue to argue over who was first.) It was founded by Bob Osborn, J Alcalá, Larry Fine and Patti Evans, and two or three other women.

It was nominally a student organization. Bob was a grad student in Physics at the time. Almost immediately, us townies started showing up. Townies included me, Whitey LeBlanc, Jay Baker and many more.

Sometime in 1972, the U of R got wise to the membership of townies and insisted that if we didn't get excluded, the GLF would be dissolved. We started looking around and found a home at Bull's Head in the old Rite Aid building, owned by Mark

Hull. We started meeting there, and worked on a name

Simultaneously, we wanted to keep up the U of R GLF. CW Davis had started the SUNY Brockport GLF, the Speakers' Bureau started under Karen Hagberg had developed a life of its own, and so did the *Empty Closet* under Jay Baker, so almost from the beginning, we were an umbrella organization. We finally settled on GAGV, and that was it!

I think there were about four months where I was the acting head, before Whitey and Jay got the by-laws written and we held an election. I remember C.W. Davis was vice, whatever the title was.

The Alliance and GLF were originally political activist groups. Could you describe some of the first issues the group(s) dealt with, and the first protests or marches?

The first push that Osborn had us work on was inclusion in the anti-discrimination language, and the other half of that was decriminalization. That was the reason for the first three marches in 1972. The photo shows us marching across the river from East Ave. to City Hall. When the picture was published in the *Empty Closet*, Jay found a photo of Osborn facing the camera and cut-and-pasted it over the original. Eventually, Rochester became an early non-discrimination municipality.

I worked on the police issue. The police had a good-looking blond recruit acting as an entrapment. He would walk along the Broad St Bridge, headed east, and would thumb a ride. Any man who picked him up, he would ask for a ride to Jim's bar. If



The first gay rights march in Rochester took place in 1972. Above, marchers head to City Hall to protest police harassment and entrapment of gay men. Bob Osborn is on right, back to the camera.

they knew how to get there, they would be arrested as they parked and put into a Black Maria (paddywagon without the Irish slur) and the officers all around would applaud each time and he would take a bow, then go back to the bridge to do it again.

In the one night I observed, he caught five guys in an hour and a half. These men were then taken to the City jail, and the desk sergeant would volunteer to call their wives to bail them out. Most had a breakdown of some sort. They were ridiculed and verbally abused.

We marched, confronted and abused in turn. (I loudly declared that the Mayor was a bad lay and used his teeth while I was in City Hall). Eventually, Lieutenant Gordon

Urlacher was appointed liaison to the gay community. Through his actions, we were able to stop the entrapment, reduce the harassment and eventually did away with the other practice, taking down license plates numbers in Jim's and the Forum's parking lots.

The Picnic was one of the first gay community events. When did it start, and was it held in GAGV members' backyards at first? When was it first held in Genesee Valley Park? (I've heard 1973 or '72).

The picnic was held in Genesee Valley Park from the inception, 1972. It was held the same day as the N.Y.C. Pride march for those who couldn't get to N.Y.C. to march.

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The Rochester Pride Parades came much later; the first official one was 1989. At first they had much more political content than in recent years. Do you feel that Prides around the country have become corporate-sponsored parties over the past dozen years, and that we now have a generation that grew up in the '90s and sees themselves as consumers, not activists?

Among my straight friends of my own age, and among my siblings, we remember that most participants in the love-ins, the festivals and the anti-war marches were not radicals, and were there mostly because it was the "in thing." The same is true of the gay pride marches and the movement itself. One of the complaints (justified!) the women had with the men in the GAGV from the start was that we were there to meet others and the "cruising mode" was sexist.

The first parade in N.Y.C. was a protest march. The second one a year later was already a party. It was a celebration of the event, the uplifting of the movement, but first and foremost it was a party. A coming out party, a circuit party that lasted long after the parade was over.

There has always been a difference between what we did to make our point in the streets of Rochester and the Pride Parade. I wouldn't change it a bit. Listen to the commentaries out there about coming out and asking friends and family to vote against anyone who champions the anti-gay marriage amendment.

We need a national Coming Out Parade. If our kids of 20 to 30 are just consumers, it's OK, as long as they consume as gay people. We were too serious sometimes, back in the '70s, because so little progress had been made. There was nothing to celebrate. Now there is.

And if the bigots and persecutors win for a time, all our children who celebrate in public will refuse to go back into the closet. They will refuse to be like we were, Mattachines in our white shirts, ties and jackets or our white blouses and plaid skirts. We radicals will have a family, our spiritual sons and daughters, who have tasted freedom and will fight to get it back.

And don't lose sight of the un-sponsored marchers. We will be there, in our Episcopal Church floats and our PFLAG march-

ers and taking pictures for the *Closet* and whatever else groups there are. We radicals haven't left. We're just letting the kids play and have a good time!

Who were the people crucial to establishing the GAGV and the concepts of a gay community in Rochester, and of gay rights as a civil rights issue?

Members: Bob Osborn, Marge David, J Alcalá, Liz Bell, Bob Crystal, Karen Hagberg, CW Davis, Patti Evans, Whitey LeBlanc, Mike Robertson, Jay Baker, Walter ??? (the photographer), Joe Alongi, Bruce Jewell (radio show Green Thursdays).

(Legal marriage) didn't really have more than a place on our lists of what we were denied. But who would have thought gays would be adopting kids, serving as foster parents, sitting on City Council, working as school principals, preaching from pulpits?

Non-members: Ted Aldrich, Mark Hull, Arnie and Jim (the bar owners), Midge Costanza (Vice Mayor), Sheriff Maloney and Lt. Gordon Urlacher.

Did anyone in the early days talk about same sex marriage becoming legal, or was that not even a dream 30 years ago?

I grew up reading *The Sixth Man*, and listening to people saying queers were the only ones who deserved concentration camps. I almost went to Cuba to be a *Gay Bracero* for Castro's sugar crop. They came back from that astounded that they were not welcomed. Their labor was accepted, and then they were sent home without a thank you, while the straights, especially the blacks, were feted and honored.

I grew up with Liberace and Paul Lynde as my only role models. I can't believe that we're not reading Gordon Merrick and Whitman still.

I also had read Karl Marx and Freud, so I had decided long ago that seeking marriage rights was submitting to the oppressor by trying to comply. I believed there had to be a new paradigm for straights as well as gays, and I thought that gays would have to lead

the way. (Legal marriage) wasn't EVER on my horizon.

On the other hand, it has proved to be a uniting topic for both sides. Sort of like a crystallization point in a super-saturated solution. So as a radical, I rejoice in it.

It didn't really have more than a place on our lists of what we were denied. But then, who would have thought gays would be adopting kids, serving as foster parents, sitting on City Council, working as school principals, preaching from pulpits? ■



Above: the late Bob Osborn, founder of GLF/GAGV, 1972. Below: members of the 1972 Men's Group at a Christmas party. Bob Crystal is top left. Below left: CW Davis, founder of SUNY Brockport GLF. Below right: Unknown men; Ted Aldrich in argyle vest talks to Michael Robertson.



Right: the late Brita Lilius at the second GAGV picnic in Genesee Valley Park, 1973.




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Opinion

What Pride means to me: quotes from Pride Week '04

BY TIMM LOUIS MACALUSO

Pride can mean so many different things. In some respects, it has a negative reference to vanity. The Bible casts several warnings on the dangers of having too much pride. Buddha suggests that pride can be the source of human suffering and anguish. Yet, when it comes to our community, pride seems to fit perfectly.

For the better part of the 20th century, western culture in both Europe and America viewed us with contempt, encouraged ridicule, repression and isolation from our families; and at various times resorted to violence and imprisonment. It was widely accepted that homosexuality was a sickness, and most Christian pulpits preached their views of abnormality and sin. As a community, we have survived so much and come so far. There is every reason to feel pride.

My first experience with a Pride Fest was about 30 years ago in New York City. Like so many people, I wanted to see the Gay Mecca for myself. I had grown up in Rochester and Buffalo, but I knew there were places that we could go and live in such large numbers that people didn't care if you were gay or straight. I had heard of Stonewall, talked to people who were there and saw the sight of the old bar, but it wasn't anything that I associated with pride.

In the summer of 1977, I watched a spectacle unfold that changed my life forever. Anita Bryant, a former beauty queen, model and sometime talk show host, took to the airwaves to articulate her view that homosexuality was an evil and sinful act against God. At different times her particular brand of fire and brimstone got rather outrageous. She frequently included scripts in her public appearances on how a scourge like homosexuality would undo American society, and it shouldn't be tolerated. It was the first time I had heard the phrase "family values."

It came as such a surprise because Bryant had some gay fans and most of America saw her as a model and spokesperson. She was a regular on TV promoting the Florida Orange Juice Growers, a group of farmers who were supplying the big juice producers like Tropicana with fruit. Smiling. Holding the glass and tipping it sweetly to her lips. He was the picture of health and wholesomeness. Her story made headlines around the world and it was on everyone's mind.

A few days into the Bryant media fury on a hot afternoon in June, a group in the Village began distributing flyers about a march later that day. Sure enough, crowds in the thousands began at Christopher and marched up Broadway. Every block along the way seemed to gather hundreds more. Police were on horses and on foot, but they kept their distance. The crowd was angry and chanting various anti-Bryant slogans, but nothing was being damaged in the way of storefronts or cars. Instead, restaurants, bars, cafes and small markets began dumping orange juice down the nearest gutter. It poured out of apartment buildings from above and it was hurdled against brick walls. Within a few minutes the streets were soaked with streams of juice.

Reporters, TV crews and photographers were everywhere, rushing to catch images of angry gay men tossing Florida Orange Juice cartons to the ground and stomping on them. I had seen anti-war demonstrations, but I had never seen so many gay men gathered in one place as activists and protestors. Many people participated in the march from our gltb community, but at the time, it seemed that Bryant's attack was directed at gay men. The march went for a few hours and seemed to head toward City Hall, but

the visual images of orange juice dribbling down Broadway televised instantly. The next day reports of the crowds ranged from 1,000 to nearly 10,000. I would say it was probably somewhere in the middle. The print media and every major network were scrambling to get a reaction from Bryant regarding the stir she had caused in the gay community.

Of course, it should come as no surprise that most of the images of the march were those of men in female drag, some of whom were quite well known and made appearances at nearly every gay function. Somehow these images overshadowed nearly every other, and Christian fundamentalist supporters of Bryant used the images to show the rest of America the essence of the point she was trying to make.

Further, it caused anger and "horizontal hostility" within our own community because many people didn't want the sensationalized image of a "drag queen" taken out of context and used to represent what was being dubbed as "the gay agenda." Suddenly -- there actually was an agenda! And people were talking about our economic clout, how we needed to be more politically involved, and most important, the general public needed to see us as we really live and work -- as teachers, doctors, police officers and politicians.

Later that summer, the Florida Orange Juice Growers dropped Anita Bryant as their spokesperson. At one of the last stops on her morality crusade in Des Moines, Bryant took a pie in the face from a protestor. That highly publicized photo was to be among the last before her death in 1978. Even her Christian supporters had gone silent. It was a small but important victory.

The Rochester area's Pride Week celebrations for 2004 were fun, and just as emotionally moving, if less angry. Walking into the entrance to the Picnic, it was impossible to miss the placement of corporate sponsorship -- Wegmans, HSBC and Kodak to name a few. Think about it. Someone in these companies, and in companies all across America, sees us as an important market, and they want us to acknowledge them when we buy film or groceries.

It got better. There were many of the same vendors you would find at any of the area festivals -- Kettle Corn, Abbott's, Mykonos, etc. Best of all there were children. There was even a pony ride for entertainment. Seeing the Pride Picnic made me remember the old stereotypes from years ago. I realize now that generation were pioneers in a sense and must have suffered enormously for their candid and honest forms of self-expression.

On this day, looking out over the park grounds, families played, couples relaxed in lawn chairs, friends drifted from one blanket to the next to say hello to someone they had not seen in years. Plates were passed and grills were sizzling. There were young and old. Black, white and brown. Men and women. We were about as mainstream a crowd as you could find. This could have been a scene from a park in downtown Des Moines. New images of who we are and how we live were forming right in front of us. After spending years of trying to find acceptance, this is how it looked on the other side. Kind of ordinary.

I talked with many people about the reasons why they were there. Many of them expressed the same feelings as Eileen Hutcheson. "It's my third Pride event and I come here because this is my extended family. It's about making time to reconnect with old friends."

Reverend Dahn Gandell stood by his booth for the Episcopal Diocese of

Rochester. "We just want the community to know that this is a church where you are welcome. Being and living as you are, as God made you, is no reason to feel shame."

Ray Schlapfer was returning to Rochester for a visit. He has been living in Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale for 30 years and remembers when things were different in Rochester. "This is very nice," he said. "Things are so much better now. I like living in Wilton Manors because the community is larger and I've been there for so long I couldn't leave it now. But I have been to other festivals and today you can go wherever you want and find family. We're everywhere."

He's right. According to *Pride '04*, a glossy magazine on the subject, there are over 100 Pride events throughout North America annually.

Phillip Hemingway and his partner have been coming to the picnic for a couple of

years now. "It's just a great place to kick back and hang out, watch the people and have fun," he said.

As I was leaving I walked past a group of people who were laughing and saying things like, "You were gonna walk right past me girl without saying hello..." This drew more laughter. One of the voices was recognizable. I turned around and it was Stanley. He had beefed up and he still had those Marvin Gaye good looks. We had worked together many years ago and shared mutual friends. He was one of the last people I saw before moving to New York. We spoke briefly and all the way home I felt comfort in knowing I got to see Stanley again after all this time.

When I walked in the door, I went up stairs, flopped on the bed and flicked on TV. An ad was running on NBC. This Thursday is back-to-back *Will & Grace* night. Imagine a world without hours of all my gay TV favorites. I can't wait. Life is sweet. It's good to be gay in 2004. ■



THE PARADE PASSES BY... Hundreds of people stood along East Ave. as the Pride Parade wended its way toward Manhattan Square Park for the Festival on July 17. The 2004 Parade was the 15th official Pride to be held in Rochester since 1989. Below: Buffalo's Vicki Vogue hands a treat to one of the many children among the onlookers. PHOTOS BY GERRY SZYMANSKI



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AUGUST 16-22, 2004

- AUG 16 **WOMEN OF COLOR PANEL DISCUSSION** at St. Mary's Auditorium, 6pm-8pm, Free
- AUG 17 **LGBTQ YOUTH PANEL DISCUSSION** at GAGV, 3pm-5pm, Free
- AUG 18 **TRANSGENDER PANEL DISCUSSION** at MOCHA Office, 6pm-8pm, Free
- AUG 19 **JAZZ BAND & AWARDS RECEPTION** at the Inn On Broadway, 7pm-11pm Donation: \$10. (21 & over with ID)
- AUG 20 **MOCHA HAPPY HOUR** at TARA'S, 6pm-10pm
YOU DON'T WANNA MISS FREAKKY FRIDAY at Odyssey Restaurant & Night Club, 10pm-2am, Food & drink specials \$5, (21 & over with ID)
- AUG 21 **COMMUNITY AWARENESS PICNIC** at Genesee Valley Park (Red Creek Pavilion) 12pm-6pm, Free
- AUG 21 **MOCHA WEEK CLOSING PARTY** at Muther's, 10pm-3am, (18 & over with ID)
- AUG 22 **INTERFAITH SERVICE** with Bishop Zackary Jones of Unity Fellowship at Lake Avenue Baptist Church, 2pm-4pm, Free

The MOCHA Mission

The mission of the MOCHA Project, Inc. is to strengthen LGBTQ communities of color and their families, as they define them, by providing supportive environments. We recognize that social environments impact on healthy behaviors.

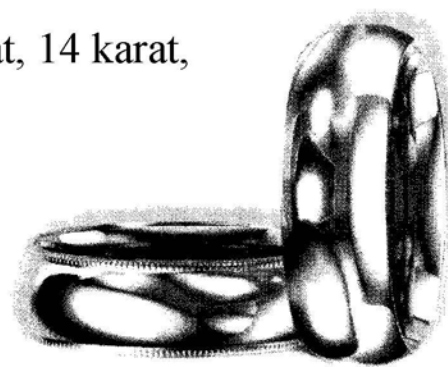
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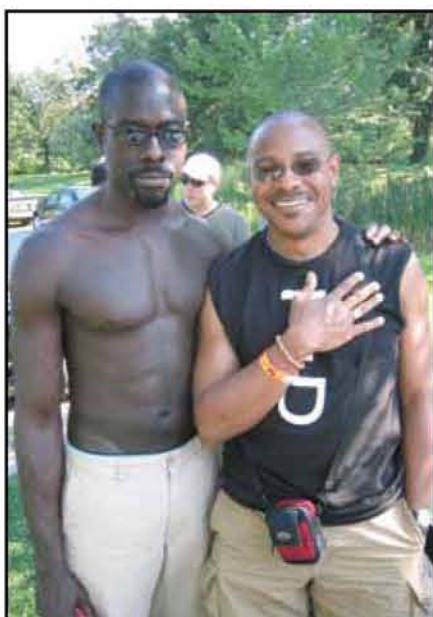
PRIDE PICNIC, JULY 12



Balloon arch courtesy of CT's Image Creations.



Aggy Dune was M.C. at the Entertainment Stage.



ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY GERRY SZYMANSKI UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



SUSAN JORDAN

Above: Bella, the Chihuahua who won Ms. Pet Pride 2004, poses with her human. She is dressed as a Faery Queen, and the Ms. Pet Pride tiara was too large to fit on her head. The Picnic took place at Genesee Valley Park. It is the Gay Alliance's major fundraiser of the year, and the Alliance depends on the funds taken in to support programs and services for the community, including the Speakers Bureau, Community Center, and Youth Group. The youth sold necklaces, glow sticks, and temporary tattoos, and presided over the dunking booth. For more Doggie Drag, see page B14.



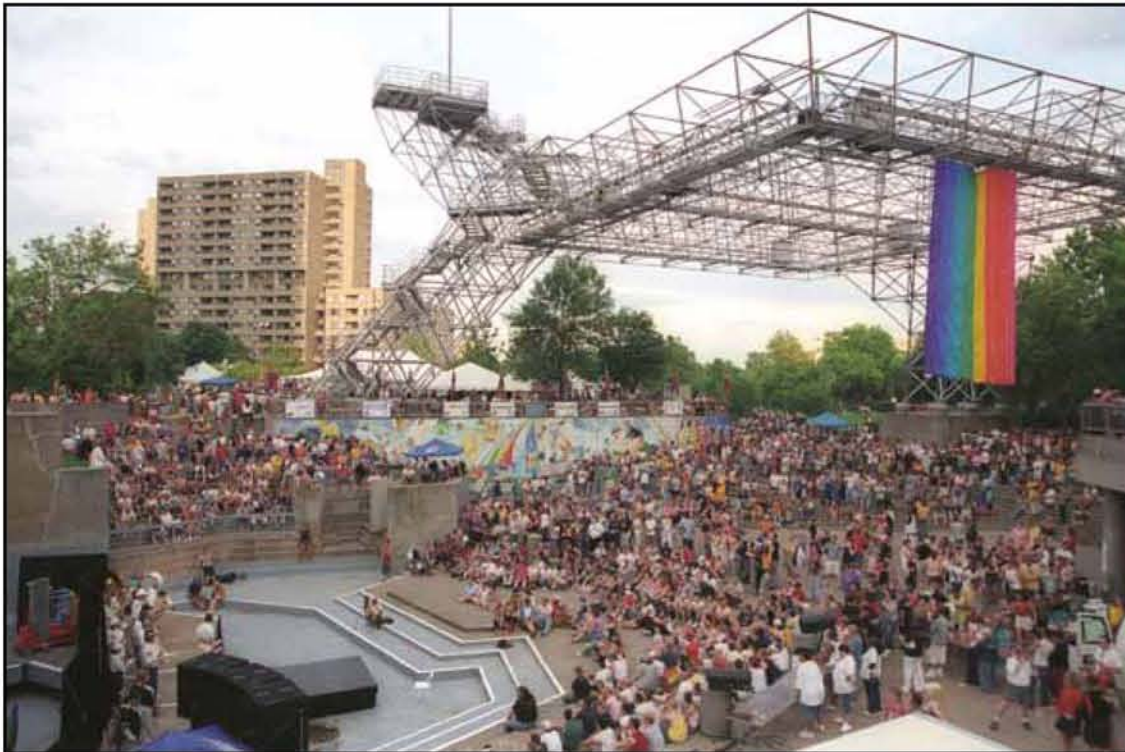
SUSAN JORDAN

Small Wunders Miniature Horses provided pony rides, much to the delight of the children.

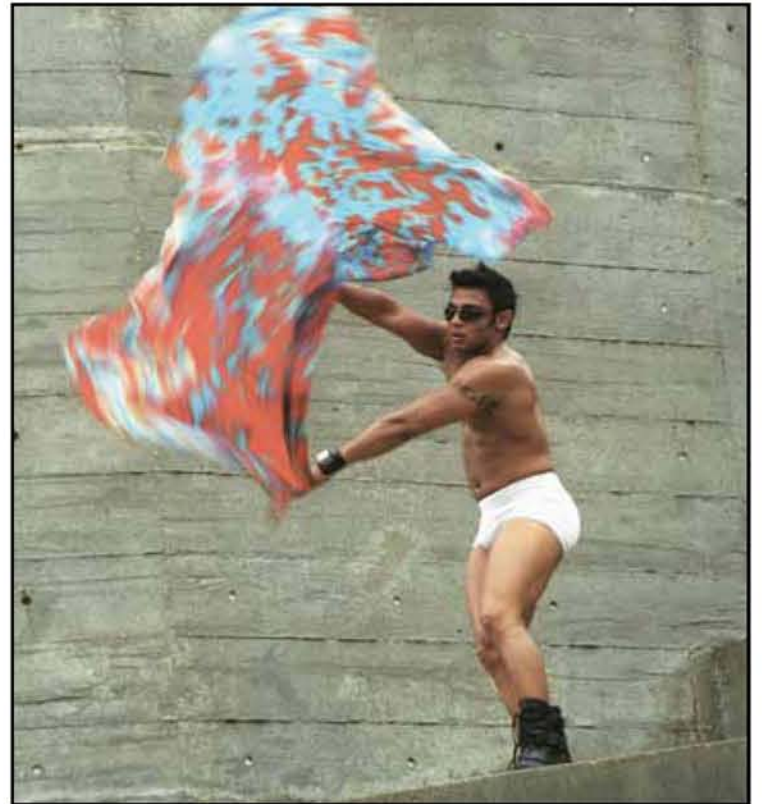


PRIDE PARADE, JULY 17

More Pride photos pages A18; C 2, 12 & 14



The Festival after the Parade was held at Manhattan Square Park. Over 5,000 people attended the parade and festival.



Above Right: Bill Hollenbeck and Michael Buckley. Above Left: Betty Meyers of Bullwinkle's was one of the two Grand Marshals. Right: a member of the Youth Group. Below right: Chuck Bowen of the GAGV and Miss Tulip ride in the Tulipmobile. In front seat are Judy Cranston and EC editor Susan Jordan. Todd Plank, Gay Alliance Community Education/Outreach Coordinator, decorates the car. Below: Teen Queen Mia Carrera and Teen King Hero ride in the Parade. Bottom left: Rochester Raptors float. PHOTOS BY DOUG MESZLER except for Hollenbeck/Buckley, Teen King/Queen, Youth Group Member, Fire Engine and Tulipmobile, by GERRY SZYMANSKI



Amendment

continued from page 3

own personal sandbox, in which we build and destroy castles as we please, we risk diluting the grandeur of having the constitution in the first place."

Alan Van Capelle, Executive Director of Empire State Pride Agenda, hailed the outcome of the vote and the four days of debate on the issue.

"Despite the best efforts of the Administration to use our relationships and our families to divide America during an election year and use the U.S. Constitution as a political bumper sticker for its cause, the discriminatory Federal Marriage Amendment failed miserably today," he said. "What was thought to have been a done deal, an actual vote on the amendment in the U.S. Senate, stalled and stalled embarrassingly for FMA backers. During four days of debate on the FMA, disunity and disagreement emerged within the Republican Majority and they were unable to assemble even a bare majority of the Senate, much less the 60 votes needed to shut off debate.

"Today is a rebuke to those who seek to use the U.S. Constitution to discriminate against our relationships, our families, and the millions of children we are raising," continued Van Capelle. "Far from there being an overwhelming sentiment among Americans that same-sex couples should not have access to the rights and responsibilities government grants solely through marriage, Americans want to learn more and think more about this issue. Passing the FMA ends this debate not only for the present generation, but for all future generations and there is no consensus in America to do that."

The debate and hoped for vote were widely seen as being more about election year politics than anything else, as backers knew they did not have the necessary two-thirds majority, or 67 votes, needed to pass an amendment to the Constitution. FMA proponents still wanted the debate and vote to occur, however, in an effort to force Senators to take an official position on the issue.

Cheryl Jacques of the Human Rights Campaign said, "This debate has always been about politics and undermining the Constitution is their tool."

The Reverend Troy Perry of Metropolitan Community Churches said, "Sadly, today's vote only marks Phase One of a crude political strategy by rightwing extremists... their strategy was to put senators on the record in order to use this vote as a wedge issue in upcoming elections. They presented their amendment as a high-minded attempt to protect 'traditional' marriage, when in reality it was a cynical attempt to influence future elections and win power. To use the amendment process for the U.S. Constitution in a naked attempt to manipulate the election process is a sad reminder of the hostility and political oppression still faced by LGBT people."

"Today's vote prevents defacing the Constitution for now," said Ralph G. Neas, president of People for the American Way. "Unfortunately, it will not put an end to attacks on constitutional principles. This vote was engineered for short-term political gain by those who care little about the long term harm they are causing to individuals and communities. This White House is all too willing to foment and exploit unfounded fears in hopes of distracting voters and energizing its political base. It is crass and destructive politics at its worst."

■ Empire State Pride Agenda, 365gay.com, ACLU, Human Rights Campaign, People for the American Way, MCC

Car insurance companies to give same sex couples coverage

The three largest car insurance companies in New York -- which, together, provide insurance to a third of all drivers in the state -- will respect the marriages of same-sex couples, providing them with the same rates and coverage as married heterosexual

couples, Lambda Legal said on July 7.

In recent months, Lambda Legal has been working with couples throughout the state who were married in Canada to ensure that their marriages are fully respected.

"New York law requires respect for marriages that were validly performed elsewhere. As more same-sex couples get married, it's critical that they receive rights and protections - from the government as well as the private sector," said Alphonso David, Lambda Legal staff attorney. "The insurance industry is making a strong statement for fairness, and we're working with other businesses and government agencies to secure similar results."

Allstate, State Farm and Geico auto insurance companies -- which are, in order, the top three providers in New York -- have agreed to comply with state law and respect all same-sex couples who are legally married, David said. Electric Auto Insurance also treats its legally married lesbian and gay clients equally.

Lambda Legal discovered that Geico had previously respected the marriages of only some same-sex couples, while denying the same benefits to others. Two New York couples, who worked with Lambda Legal and pay for Geico auto insurance coverage, were treated unequally by the insurance giant. But Geico recently reversed its inconsistent practice and said it will respect all same-sex couples who are legally married.

"Not all of the benefits and protections of marriage come from the government. Many of the practical changes married same-sex couples will see will come from private businesses. In some instances, like car insurance, the difference may add up to hundreds of dollars a year for gay couples. These couples are married, and their marriages must be respected like any other," David said.

State law in New York mandates full respect for marriages that are validly performed elsewhere, according to Lambda Legal. "Right now, gay couples cannot get marriage licenses in New York. We're working to change that because it's unconstitutional -- but even as our path-breaking marriage lawsuit in New York moves forward, businesses and government agencies must comply with the law and respect gay couples who were married elsewhere."

Earlier this year, Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit against New York City on behalf of five same-sex couples seeking marriage licenses. The case was the first of its kind to be filed in New York since the Massachusetts high court ruled that same-sex couples are entitled to full marriage under that state's Constitution.

According to the U.S. Census in 2000, New York City has the largest percentage of same-sex households of any city in the country, with 8.9 percent of the country's households where gay couples live together; statewide, the 2000 Census counted 46,490 same-sex couples throughout New York State. City and state laws provide minimal protections and rights to same-sex couples.

Other than Massachusetts, no state allows same-sex couples to marry, although three Canadian provinces now fully sanction marriage for same-sex couples. For a period of time this year, San Francisco, Portland, New Paltz and (briefly) Sandoval County, New Mexico, also married same-sex couples. Forty states explicitly ban same-sex couples from marrying or have laws refusing to respect marriages from other states. New York is not among those states.

The amendment to the federal Constitution which was defeated in Congress would ban marriage between same-sex couples and could also block other protections for couples. That amendment has ignited controversy even among some conservatives because of its breadth and because of the extreme nature of amending the nation's founding document. It seems to be dead, but may be revived in the House just before the election.

Besides its lawsuit seeking marriage in New York, Lambda Legal is also currently litigating marriage cases in New Jersey, California (with the ACLU, National Center for Lesbian Rights and Equality California), and Washington (with the Northwest Women's Law Center). ■

NYC Council overrides Bloomberg veto of Equal Benefits Bill

Fulfilling a promise by Council Speaker Gifford Miller and Councilmember Christine Quinn to New York City's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, the N.Y.C. City Council voted 41-4 on June 28 to override Mayor Michael Bloomberg's veto of the Equal Benefits Bill (EBB). An override requires the support of 34 or two-thirds of the Council's 51 members.

The EBB requires employers with contracts of \$100,000 or more from the city to provide the same benefits to employees with domestic partners that they provide to employees with spouses. Such benefits can include health insurance; family, medical and bereavement leave, tuition reimbursement, moving and relocation expenses and dependent care insurance. Enacting such a law has been a priority of the city's large LGBT community since San Francisco passed the first measure of this kind in the nation in 1997.

Empire State Pride Agenda (Pride Agenda), New York's statewide LGBT civil rights organization and the lead advocacy group working to pass the EBB, called the vote "one of the best days ever" in terms of its actual impact on the lives of LGBT New Yorkers.

"This one action will have a more tangible impact on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families than any measure ever passed by the City Council," said Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan Van Capelle.

"The City Council has said unequivocally that all workers must be treated equally by employers who do business with the city. Tens of thousands of LGBT families will now have access to the same benefits other families have and will no longer be left out in the cold to fend for themselves. This is one of the best days ever for LGBT families!"

"The Pride Agenda thanks every Councilmember who stood up a second time and voted to pass the EBB," he said. "We also thank our partners in the labor, religious and business communities and the citizens and the organizations that worked so hard to make this bill law."

Highlighting the efforts of particular Councilmembers, Van Capelle said, "We thank Contracts Committee Chairman Robert Jackson for moving the legislation through his committee and Speaker Gifford Miller for his leadership and determination to pass this bill, even over a veto by the Mayor. We give special thanks to Councilmember Christine Quinn, the EBB's prime sponsor, for her years of work on this issue and for moving the bill through the legislative process from beginning to end. We also thank Councilmembers Margarita Lopez and Phil Reed for their unyielding support and advocacy. Without Councilmembers Quinn, Lopez and Reed, our community would still be struggling to have its voice heard in City Hall on issues like this," said Van Capelle.

A still unanswered question is whether Mayor Bloomberg will follow through on his threat to block implementation of the EBB by challenging its provisions in court. During his election race in 2001, Bloomberg said in the Pride Agenda's candidate questionnaire that he supported the EBB issue. After the election he changed his position, making his opposition public for the first time at the Pride Agenda's 2002 annual fall fundraiser dinner. The range of concerns the Mayor cited then and again earlier this month, when he vetoed the EBB, have largely been put to rest by the experiences of San Francisco and other cities with similar laws in place.

Commenting on what the Mayor's next move will be, Van Capelle said, "We hope he takes another look at the bill and the good it will accomplish. We have always wanted the Mayor's support and we would still like to have it. But if that is not possible, we encourage the Mayor to not create impediments to the law's implementation,

but to allow the will of the people to be put into practice."

"The city has no place using tax dollars to support discrimination," continued Van Capelle. "There are thousands of contractors who treat all families equally and there are others who don't. We should not be rewarding those who choose to discriminate with the hard earned money of city taxpayers."

Absent any legal action, the EBB takes effect in 120 days and affects only new and renewed city contracts. Similar to the San Francisco law, the EBB is written to accommodate rather than penalize contractors who make reasonable efforts to comply with the law. A key element of the law is a streamlined waiver process. San Francisco used such an approach and because of it minimized implementation problems and achieved a high rate of compliance.

The EBB is also similar to the San Francisco law in that it acknowledges there will be instances where a few religion-based contractors may have differences with the law based on religious principles. In these cases, the EBB allows religion-based contractors the option of offering their employees coverage for a dependent household member instead of a domestic partner. This solution kept almost all such contractors in place in San Francisco.

"The EBB is about equality for all families," said Van Capelle. "Whether it be a same-sex domestic partner, an opposite-sex domestic partner, or, in the case of an employee who works for a religious charity a dependent household member like an aunt or a close friend, more people now have access to health insurance and other critical benefits that employers provide. Not only is this a huge victory for LGBT families, it's a win-win for all families in New York City, however you define them, and that too is why this is one of the best days ever!" ■

GAGV surveys area corporate commitment to diversity

The Gay Alliance has surveyed Rochester companies' commitment to workplace diversity. The survey was distributed in July and will be published by the GAGV as *The 2004 Greater Rochester Corporate Quality Index*.

Survey information will be part of the Alliance's 2004 Corporate Equality Leadership Conference on Nov. 6.

The conference will host members of LGBT employee resource networks from Kodak, Bausch & Lomb, Xerox and Thomson West, as well as senior management officials from local companies. New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer will be keynote speaker for the conference.

The Human Rights Campaign, the largest LGBT organization in the country, annually surveys companies listed on the Fortune 500 and rates them according to responses. The published information serves as a valuable tool for investors, customers and potential employees. Many companies use their HRC scores in advertisements and at public forums.

"The purpose of the project here in Rochester is similar in scope to that of the HRC on a national level," said Chuck Bowen, Executive Director of the GAGV. "With this information, we will recognize those companies whose commitment to diversity is exemplary, while at the same time offering to help those companies whose scores could be improved."

The Corporate Equality Leadership Conference, at a site yet to be determined, will include sessions led by employee resource groups on how such groups affect the bottom line of business, and on how to start resource groups. A panel discussion with senior management will focus on the successful recognition of diversity in their workplaces, and how real life problems have been addressed.

The conference will conclude with an awards presentation luncheon, and announcement of the Greater Rochester Corporate Equality scores. For more information, call the Gay Alliance at 585-244-8640. ■



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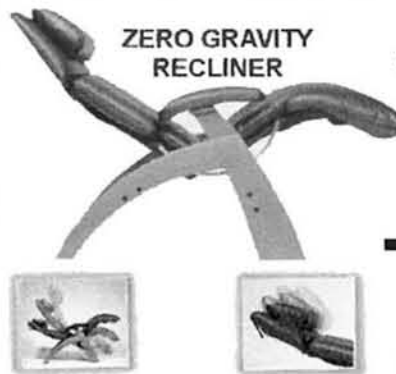
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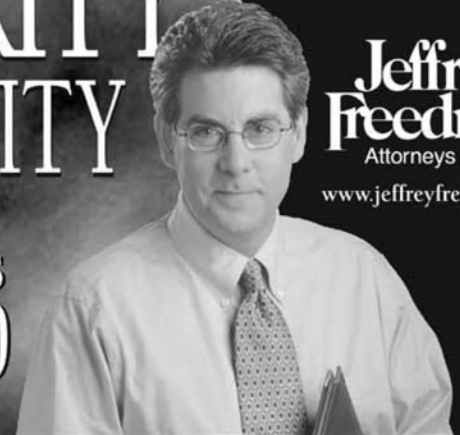
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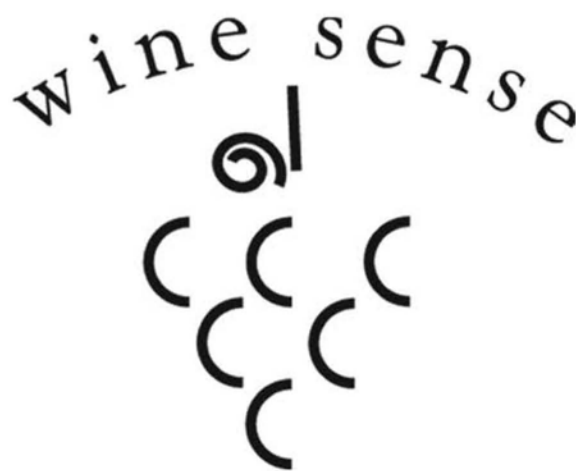
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NLGJA convention: gay journalists challenged by marriage

BY SEBASTIAN WHITE

For some in the audience, it was hard to know what to make of CBS News chief White House correspondent John Roberts's comment in New York City last month that "everybody's a little bit homosexual." But after the initial jaw-dropping surprise at his nonchalant response to a hypothetical question -- would being gay adversely affect his career -- tentative laughter slowly erupted from the nearly 700 professionals in attendance at the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association's (NLGJA) yearly convention.

Roberts highlighted a star-studded lineup of newspaper, television and online journalists, as well as a bevy of politicians and entertainers on hand for the three-day meeting. The event was punctuated by heated debate on some of the hottest topics in the news today, inevitably centering on the deeply intertwined issues of Massachusetts gay marriages and President George W. Bush's all-but-dead constitutional amendment that would limit marriage to heterosexual couples.

NLGJA bills itself as an organization of journalists working from within the media industry to foster fair and accurate coverage of glbt issues, and that works to promote diversity of all kinds in the newsroom. But this year, with the same-sex marriage debate awkwardly positioned at the intersection of the personal and the political, members' journalistic responsibility to be balanced and objective is being called into question.

On one extreme stand: a small number of ultra-conservatives who have been left wondering if NLGJA is essentially an activist organization whose members affect the news on which they're reporting. Cliff Kincaid, who writes for *American Daily*, a far right-leaning editorial Web site, and who is a staunch critic of NLGJA, wrote in the days after the convention that "gay 'journalists' are gay first and journalists second, if at all. Journalists who are not homosexual have to realize that support for the homosexual agenda is now expected of them."

But Eric Hegedus, NLGJA's newly inaugurated president, told the confab, "We're not changing journalism, we're just making it better." The convention's focus, he explained, was ultimately to help all journalists increase their fairness in the coverage

of gay issues, not to spin reporting in one direction or another.

Unlike groups such as the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), which largely affects change by mounting public information campaigns against news reporting or media outlets perceived to be anti-gay, NLGJA works on the newsroom level, helping to educate and foster fair coverage journalist to journalist.

How is the marriage debate affecting journalism and changing America?

NBC News correspondent Pete Williams was on hand to moderate a panel on same-sex marriage to answer these and other questions, a forum that brought in activists from the front lines of the debate to face a firing line of queries from journalists covering the issue.

Evan Wolfson, executive director of Freedom to Marry, the gay and non-gay partnership working to win marriage equality nationwide, was among those participating in that panel. The influential figure in today's battle over marriage for same-sex couples said he objects to President Bush's assertion that the "protection" of marriage is, as an extension, also about the protection of America's core values. Wolfson argued that his organization's efforts to promote equality are probably more aligned with American values than the actions of those in favor of amending the Constitution. "We stand in this struggle for our country and what this country stands for," he said.

Later, when the discourse shifted from the political to the personal, Williams himself faced some tough questions about gay journalists covering gay issues, a hot issue thrust into the spotlight after two women, both *San Francisco Chronicle* staff members, were reassigned from the breaking marriage story they were covering after it was discovered they themselves had gotten married.

What responsibilities do journalists have to their audience in these circumstances when participating in a civil right afforded most Americans can be perceived as participating in an act of political activism that could influence their objectivity? Parallels were drawn to participant-reporters in immigration, voter, and women's rights debates, but no consensus was established in how to handle these sticky, catch-22 situations.

Still, the audience was unrelenting. One journalist took the openly-gay Williams to task, asking if he ever plans to marry his long-term partner should the opportunity present itself. More difficult questions ensued: if he did, in fact, get married, would he tell his viewers or the higher-ups at NBC? Would he feel a need to avoid

reporting on gay marriage altogether?

It didn't take long for Williams to spout his unequivocal answer: "No, no, and no."

Sebastian White, who is a member of NLGJA, is a freelance writer in Boston. ■

SAGE conference shows risks, challenges, opportunities of aging LGBTs

BY TODD PLANK

Thanks to the GAGV, I had the privilege of attending SAGE's third National Conference on Aging in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Communities.

The conference was held at New York's Kimmel Center for University Life on June 18 and 19, and was preceded, on the 17th, by the Pre-Conference Institute and the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA). The conference was presented in collaboration with the School of Social Work at the New York University Ehrenkranz Center.

What is SAGE?

Before I elaborate on the theme of the SAGE Conference: "No Need to Fear? No Need to Hide? AGING ON OUR OWN TERMS," I'd like to introduce you to this remarkable organization.

Founded in 1977 as Senior Action in a Gay Environment by a group of seniors,

social workers, gerontologists, and activists in the lesbian and gay community, Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) is the nation's oldest and largest non-profit, community-based organization serving elderly lgbt people. SAGE's mission is to improve the overall quality of life for lgbt seniors; support and advocate for the rights of lgbt seniors; foster a greater understanding of aging in all communities; and promote positive images of lgbt life in later years.

The Sage Conference is one of the most progressive and provocative social justice gatherings confronting aging issues in the United States. It brings together the largest numbers of activists, scholars, community members, policy makers, and service providers addressing the most critical issues for the growing number of older lgbt individuals, both those who are elders now and those who will be part of North America's expected senior population explosion of the next 20 years.

Conference issues

Some of the questions explored at this conference were: Who will take care of lgbt people when we are old? What is the nation's commitment to Medicare and Social Security? Will nursing homes and other service providers educate their professionals and practitioners to understand and be compassionate about the particular needs of lgbt seniors? Will lgbt community institutions begin to acknowledge and welcome old lgbts? What supports will be in place for the coming generation of Stonewall lgbts?

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DOMA bill for N.Y.S. may come to Senate floor this month; gays "send strong message"

BY SUSAN JORDAN

The New York Senate's Republicans may try to get the anti-gay DOMA bill onto the Senate floor this month when the legislature reconvenes to pass the budget. The bill, which was not acted on before the legislature left Albany in June, would define marriage as "between a man and a woman".

The Assembly is not likely to approve the measure.

Ross Levi, director of public policy and government affairs for the Empire State Pride Agenda, told the *Empty Closet*, "The only real threat is in the Senate." He said that an important milestone was passed in June when the Senate adjourned without passing the bill.

One reason for the non-passage of the bill was that the Conservative Party endorsements were already decided.

"We must remain diligent," Levi said. "The bill can always come back next session, or next year, so we need to send a strong message now."

Levi said that that message has already begun to be sent. "Hundreds of calls and letters to legislators, starting after June 1, have made a difference," he said.

Lawmakers who had assumed that this vote would be an easy way to pick up a Conservative Party endorsement, and would not hurt them with voters, are no longer so sure of that, since they have started hearing from their lgbt constituents.

"The Senate went into this year expecting to do a DOMA bill," Levi said, "but they haven't because of the calls from our community." ■



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How is our aging different if we are poor or have wealth, if we are HIV positive or have AIDS? Where will we live as elders? How will we love? And, how do we negotiate loss, grief, and ailment as queer elders now and in the future?

The thematic question posed at the SAGE Conference was whether or not we need to fear for our futures and hide from the world. In the light of President Bush's open support of the discriminatory Federal Marriage Amendment, it is an important time to examine how we are constructing communities and families and how these developments will impact our ability to take care of ourselves and each other in old age. Not content to merely explore the question of whether we can make our society safe for lgbt seniors, the conference organizers used this opportunity to push against the silence surrounding lgbt elders by framing lgbt aging issues alongside other social justice issues such as racial and gender justice, class equality, and disability advocacy.

Old queers are not novices when it comes to advocating in their own behalf. Many of these folks have a history of activism spanning decades. They have protested and drawn public attention to a broad range of social (in)justice issues, including, but certainly not limited to racism, sexism, women's reproductive rights, the environment, economic and foreign policy, and freedoms of sexual and gender expression. LGBT seniors came of age and courageously carved out lives for themselves at a time when there were few, if any, visible supports or supporters. Gay people were marginalized, pathologized, ostracized, institutionalized (in some instances lobotomized), and yet they refused to concede to the constraints that society attempted to impose on them.

Thirty-five years ago, the Stonewall Riots marked the beginning of queer liberation. Another revolution is beginning, and lgbt seniors and baby boomers are in the forefront, getting angry, speaking and acting up, and instigating change for themselves and future generations of lgbt people. They are participating in the development of powerful policies that will benefit both lgbt seniors and seniors at large.

Being an aspiring senior (and, considering the alternative... isn't that what we all are?) I was eager to learn more about the complexity of aging as an lgbt person and how we can lay the groundwork here locally in Rochester, as well as on the national stage, to ensure that the issues associated with aging in general, and specifically lgbt aging, are given marked visibility (the U.S.A. is largely in denial about the tidal wave of grey hair about to wash over this country), understood, and taken seriously by health care providers and insurers, policy makers on all levels, human service agencies and basically any and all individuals, agencies, and organizations that are responsible, whether by intent or through default, of setting policy or providing care to lgbt seniors along with their families of choice. There is an incredible and daunting amount of work

to be done!

A potential window of opportunity may soon be opening up in the form of the White House Conference on Aging, currently slated for 2005. Depending on the outcome of the upcoming presidential election, this could be a milestone conference that brings much needed national attention to aging issues in this country or an ineffectual bureaucratic bomb, a terrible travesty with tragic consequences and repercussions that will be felt by our society, seniors and their families for years to come. Now is the time to begin shaping the direction of governmental policy and challenging societal assumptions about what it means, and doesn't mean, to grow old in America. More specifics on how to accomplish that will be the subject of a future article.

Medicalization of aging

There is a dangerous trend within the medical establishment to treat aging as a disease rather than a natural process. This was referred to by speakers at the conference as the "medicalization of aging". Growing old is treated as a condition that can and should be avoided for as long as possible. Our society is creating a culture of aging that perpetuates a myth that all forms of decline (physical, mental, economic, etc.) represent some kind of personal failure. The media and advertisers are painting an illusory portrait we call positive aging, which excludes seniors who are not agile, healthy, attractive, and wealthy (and, I've noticed, white). The baby boomers represent a giant cash cow that companies are all too eager to milk for all it's worth. Aging individuals with disabilities (not necessarily related to the fact of their aging), the frail elderly, and lgbt seniors (gasp! seniors aren't sexual and please... don't even suggest that grandma or grandpa could be gay!) don't fit with the popular picture of aging and therefore these folks are largely invisible to the public eye.

Pharmaceutical companies and HMOs are exerting tremendous power and influence to shape public policies that will determine, and by this I mean limit, our options and choices in healthcare, quality of life, and end of life decisions. When you hear government officials using words like reform and modernize, don't be deceived by their jargon. They are talking about allocating less money to senior programs and services. The dangerous possibility exists for the medicalization of all elder services. Gema Hernandez, former Secretary of the Florida Department for Elder Affairs and professor in the School of Public Administration at FSU, suggested that Medicaid could disappear in the next two years. In Florida, the State can intervene in a patient's choice of when and how to die, denying them the right to die with dignity. If this can happen in Florida, a state with one of the highest percentages of older adults (the last statistic I read was around 30 percent) in the nation, what might this purport for the future of our aging nation?

Senior Moment

Up to this point, I haven't talked much about the particular needs and concerns of culturally distinct elders, such as those in

the elderly lgbt community, as well as those who do not self-identify as lgbt but share the same concerns and face the same issues as they age.

There are a couple of reasons for this. First, the predominant concerns of lgbt seniors are largely the same as for the aging population in general. Housing, healthcare, financial security, and fears of isolation are common to all elders. We all have a vested interest in a shared future. For this reason, we (and by this I mean lgbt seniors and pre-seniors, a term coined at the conference) need to align ourselves with other mainstream organizations (ex. AARP) already watch-dogging politicians and corporate czars and championing the causes of the burgeoning number of elders in this country. My second reason for not going into more depth about the unique needs of lgbt seniors is that I have so much to share that I couldn't possibly do this justice in one or even a dozen articles.

Therefore, I will be introducing a column, Senior Moment, to share more from this amazing conference and help keep our public informed on issues of concern to the aging lgbt community. I will be inviting guests to contribute their perspectives and experiences to help enlighten us on pertinent matters and so I welcome contributions from elders, as well as folks who are blessed to have a special relationship with an older adult, be they a friend, family member, or caregiver. This column will be used as a platform to address the damaging effects of ageism in modern queer life, and explore what happens when ageism and homophobia intersect in a variety of set-



Todd Plank and Carmen Vasquez, Deputy ED of the Empire State Pride Agenda.

tings. I'll also endeavor to pass on resources that I have discovered in the form of websites, books, films, and other media that would serve to educate about, advocate for, and celebrate the wonderful complexity, challenges and opportunities afforded us as we grow older. So don't forget to look for



Terry Kaelber, Executive Director of SAGE, with author Naomi Replansky. She and her partner Eva Kollisch have been together since 1986. Replansky has published three books of poems, *Ring Song* (Scribner, 1952), *Twenty-One Poems* in 1988, and *The Dangerous World* (Another Chicago Press, 1994). Eva Kollisch was born in Vienna in 1925 and with her brothers escaped the Nazis in 1939 on a Kindertransport to England. A professor at Sarah Lawrence College for 30 years, she wrote her memoirs, *Girl In Movement*, which was published by Glad Day Press in 2000. Replansky and Kollisch were featured at the closing ceremonies of the conference.

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MAKING THE Scene

NYC News continued...



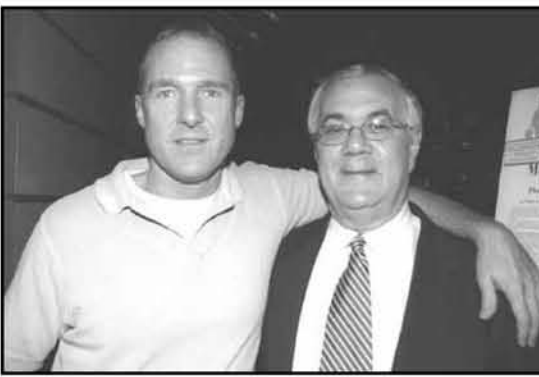
SF MEETS BROADWAY: GLBT Pride Awards at City Hall on June 24. The Theme was San Francisco and Broadway. Pictured are San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, Harvey Fierstein.



ARTIST AWARD: The Importance of Being Out: A Celebration of the Artist was on June 21 at Milk Gallery (450 W. 15th St. New York City). Pictured is Doug Wright, who won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award for Best Play (*I Am My Own Wife*).



KERRY ON: John Kerry and spouse Teresa Heinz attend a fundraiser at the Waldorf Astoria for the gay and lesbian community on June 25.



BARNEY: Barney Frank and filmmaker Bart Everly at a screening of Everly's documentary "Let's Get Barney" at Manhattan's Film Forum July 18. ALL NYC NEWS PHOTOS BY DOUG MESZLER.



ELTON JOHN: Left: Elton and his band performed at a benefit and gala dinner at Radio City Music Hall for the Juilliard School and Royal Academy of Music. He is pictured with Cornelia Guest and his partner David Furnish.



I DO: The Wedding Party held a mass wedding ceremony in front of the Plaza Hotel on June 27. Same-Sex couples like Robyn Sariq and Lori Connors-McLean of New Jersey exchanged symbolic wedding vows before the Pride Parade.

Wedding announcement



Wendy and Melissa Blackstone are happy to announce their marriage!

The wedding was performed by Rev. Ann Fox at the Unitarian Memorial Church on May 24, 2004 in Fairhaven, Mass.

Wendy is the daughter of Audra S. and the late Frederick K. Gray of Rochester. She graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology, is a graduate student at Capella University, and is on the faculty of Finger Lakes Community College.

Melissa is the daughter of the late Davis T. and Jill Gallison of Marion, Mass. She graduated from Northeastern University and the University of Washington and works for the American Cancer Society. ■



VIGIL: Stonewall Sunday candlelight vigil held during NYC Black Pride week. The march started at Sheridan Square and ended at the Hudson River.



RUPAUL: RuPaul's new CD, "RuPaul -- Red Hot" comes out in September. On July 19 he was at Scott Nevins Presents at Therapy.

Sending a message (spotted at Rochester Pride Parade)



DOUG MESZLER



ABOVE: BY DOUG MESZLER. BELOW: BY GERRY SZYMANSKI



NYC Council passes Dignity in All Schools Act by 45-3

The NYC Council overwhelmingly passed the Dignity in All Schools Act (DASA) on June 28, a bill aimed at making the city's public schools safer by addressing bullying and harassment motivated by bias. The vote was 45-3.

Empire State Pride Agenda, New York's statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization and a member of a coalition of groups advocating for the bill's passage, praised the action.

"We thank the New York City Council for passing this important bill and recognizing the indisputable link between bias and violence in schools," said Pride Agenda Executive Director Alan Van Capelle. "We especially thank Councilmember Alan Gerson, the bill's sponsor, who worked hard to build support for DASA among his colleagues on the Council and Speaker Gifford Miller who allowed it to come up for a vote and supported it."

"We also want to recognize the hard work of the DASA coalition leaders -- Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays/New York City (P-FLAG/NYC) and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). They remind us all of how difficult it is for students to learn in school while being targeted for bullying and often violence just because someone does not like who they are.

"We urge Mayor Bloomberg to sign this bill into law when it reaches his desk," said Van Capelle. "Our schools need to be safe for all students to learn."

DASA requires school administrators, teachers, parents and students to recognize and address bullying and bias-related behavior based upon actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and a number of other characteristics. Among its key provisions are: developing rules to prevent and respond to discriminatory violence; establishing teacher, staff and administrative training guidelines for dealing with diversity; reducing discriminatory behaviors, and responding to discriminatory harassment and hate violence; and incorporating discrimination awareness and sensitivity into civility and citizenship education curricula.

■ Empire State Pride Agenda

Gates man charged on July 8 with criminal sexual act

BY JOHN BANDALL

James W. Briggs, 35, of Gatewood Ave. in Gates has been charged with two counts of a felony first degree criminal sexual act.

According to Gates Police Chief Tom Roche, it is alleged that Briggs had oral and anal sex on June 16 with a 27-year-old Irondequoit man who could not consent to the acts.

The incident was reported 22 days later, on July 7, and Briggs was arrested the next evening.

According to the *Democrat and Chronicle*, Chief Roche said, "The victim was in a state of intoxication, rendering him unable to give consent."

First Degree Criminal Sexual act 130.50 involves anal or sexual conduct on a physically helpless victim. It is a Class B Violent felony with a maximum penalty of 12 1/2 to 25 years.

In a preliminary hearing before judge John J. Piasaturo in Gates court, on Monday 12 July, Briggs was offered a six month shock incarceration, 10 years probation, and registration as a sex offender.

Briggs is being held in Monroe County Jail, with no bail set.

The alleged victim was present with his family in the courtroom, and was wiping tears away as Briggs was escorted out of the courtroom in handcuffs.

Afterwards, the family expressed the opinion that some sort of pill may have been used along with the alcohol to pro-

duce the level of intoxication alleged.

According to experts there is only a few hours' window of opportunity in which to detect date rape type drugs.

In New York consensual sodomy, including anal and oral penetration, is legal, but persons under the age of 17 cannot consent.

Lack of consent, along with forcible compulsion, includes circumstances when the victim clearly expressed they did not consent to the act of intercourse or by means of age, mental disability, mental incapacitation or being physically helpless and a reasonable person in the defendant's situation would have understood the victim's words, actions or condition. ■

Register and vote: there's more at stake than ever

BY BILL PRITCHARD, ROCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

There is perhaps more at stake in this year's election than in any held other in the last two decades. The direction of future U.S. involvement in Iraq. A national economy that is shaking off a recession but fundamentally realigning in ways that are creating millionaires and paupers at the same time.

In Rochester, we continue to struggle with the question of how to revitalize downtown in ways that make sense and meet community needs, and that will serve as a catalyst for economic growth.

If these challenges were all that faced us we'd have a full plate. Unfortunately, as all of you know, committed lgbt relationships are under constant attack. There's something about two men or two women loving one another, dedicating their lives to each other, perhaps raising a family together, that scares the heck out of some people.

Perhaps this unreasonable and unjustifiable fear comes from a concern that we may actually show heterosexuals, with a 50 percent divorce rate and shamefully high levels of child abuse and neglect, how to get it right.

I do not believe I am overstating the importance this election will have on generations of Americans, gay or straight, for years to come. That's why it is so important to participate in the political process by voting. For those of you who have become disillusioned with our elected officials and the electoral process, and believe that your vote doesn't matter, I urge you to remember Florida and the 2000 election. In fact, the vote in several states that year was close enough where a shift of a mere few thousand votes -- out of millions of votes cast, would have changed the outcome.

The lgbt community fought hard to come out of the closet and we've made great strides. But there is more to accomplish, not just for our civil rights but also for our city, state, and country, because it would be a hollow victory if we finally secured equal rights and protection under the law, but did so in a country that is finally torn apart by the economic and racial divisions that have been festering far too long.

Make sure your voice is heard this fall. Don't like the war in Iraq? Vote. Concerned about the growing disparity between the rich and poor? Vote. Angry that you cannot legally marry the love of your life? Vote.

Voter registration forms are available in most post offices, at the Board of Elections (428-4550), or at the Gay Alliance, 875 E. Main St. (244-8640). If you have any questions, feel free to call these fine resources. Or you can also call my office at 428-6656 or email me at pritchaw@cityofrochester.gov.

Whatever you do, make sure you're registered to vote, then vote in November. You simply cannot afford to have your voice go unheard this year. The future of our lgbt community, our country, even the world, is at stake this year.

So vote and take the first step towards controlling your own destiny and that of future generations. ■

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NYC NEWS



NYC PRIDE: Right: The 35th Annual LGBT NYC Pride March took place on June 27. The march also commemorated the 35th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. Above: A LGBT Gay Pride Rally was held at Bryant Park on June 20. Pictured is Stephanie Adams, who is the first *Playboy* centerfold to come out as a lesbian. Adams has also written seven books on astrology.



 Three bottles of ZIRH skin care products are shown against a blue background. The bottles are silver with blue labels. The labels read "ZIRH CLEAN ALPHA HYDROXY WASH" and "1 Fl Oz / 29.6 mL". Above the bottles is a logo for "COSMETIC ENHANCEMENT CENTER" featuring a stylized figure.

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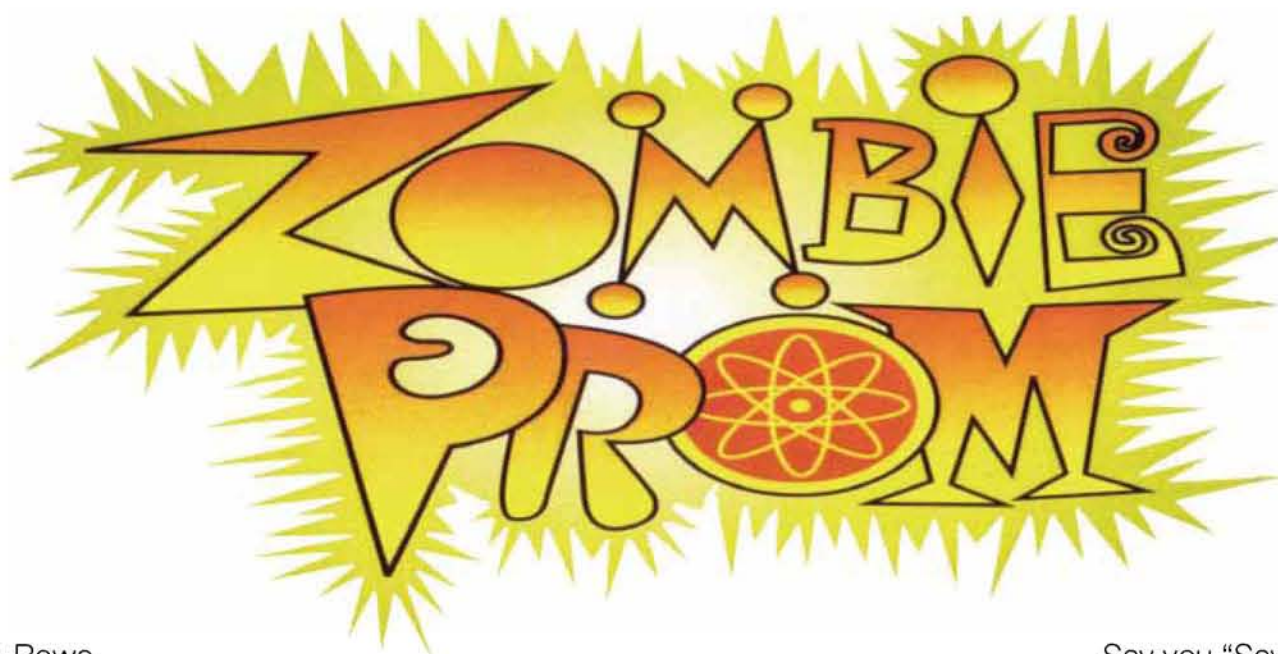
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COLUMNISTS

Normal Heart

■ Growing Up: Eric sees the NYC revival of Larry Kramer's classic play. **Page B4**

CHECK IT OUT

Beach books

■ Summer reading: the evolution of queer movie posters, a search for pirate queens. **Page B3**



HOME/TRAVEL/STYLE

Toronto trip

■ Travel tips: A gay man from Rochester takes the fast ferry to Toronto. **Page B10**



Coming Up

Isaac Julien video shows at CEPA Gallery

Buffalo's CEPA Gallery presents Isaac Julien's *The Attendant*, a video installation, as part of the Deviant Bodies exhibition, running through Aug. 21.

Isaac Julien is Britain's preeminent black filmmaker, an internationally recognized artist, writer, teacher, and scholar (he was nominated for the prestigious Turner Prize in 2001). His films include *Franz Fannon: Black Skin, White Mask* (1995); the Cannes Film Festival prizewinner, *Young Soul Rebels* (1991); and the critically acclaimed documentary on Langston Hughes, *Looking for Langston* (1989).

Julien's preoccupation is with the representation of race and masculinity in film. While his work is certainly considered "avant garde", Julien employs conventional filmic strategies such as narrative and beauty to explore and subvert stereotypical portrayals of gay and black subjects. More poetic than didactic, his films are characterized by their dream-like imagery and sensuality.

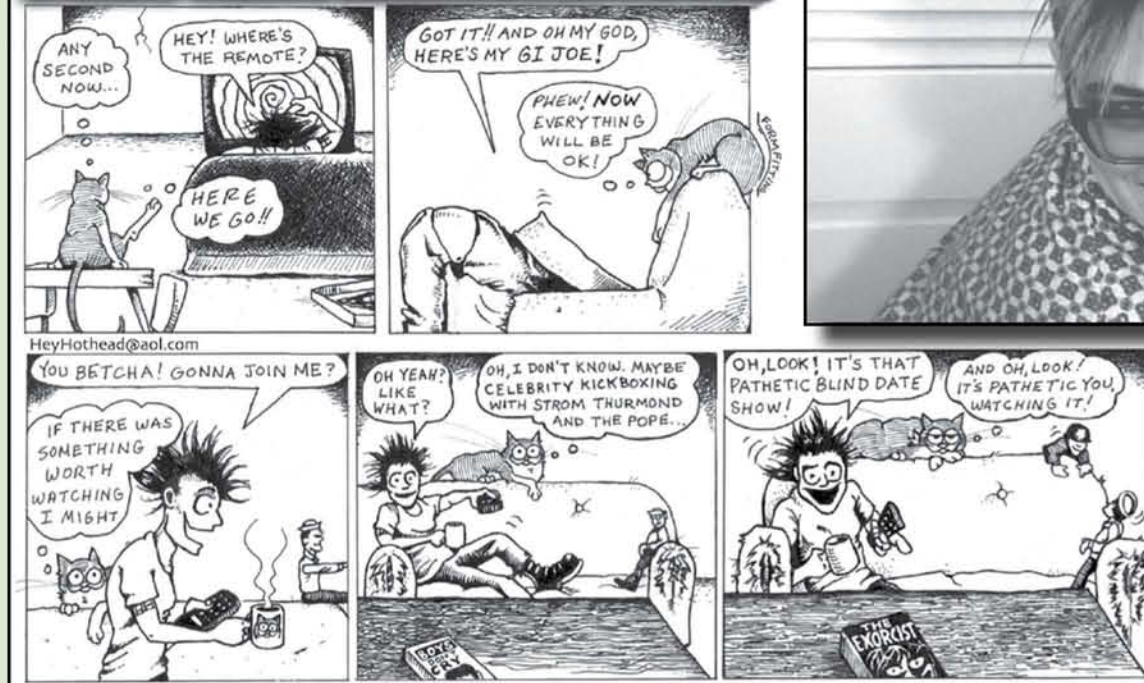
This exhibition at CEPA Gallery presents one of Julien's single screen museum installations, *The Attendant*. The intimate actions in this work occur in the public space of a museum, although, unlike so many recent works by artists that deconstruct the concept of such institutions, Julien sees the museum as a site for exploring issues of sexuality and race.

In *The Attendant*, a black, uniformed, male guard (the attendant) and a black female conservator are the protagonists. The attendant and the conservator are locked in silence, and no interaction takes place between them and a white visitor. This silence is shattered by the amorous sounds of the attendant and the visitor making love in the museum. Julien thus presents desire and pleasure as possible avenues for resistance to racial and class distinctions. Although she remains silent, the conservator is an ally, enabling the encounter between the lovers. ■



Isaac Julien

HOTHEAD PAISAN: Homicidal Lesbian Terrorist



Hothead Paisan, left. Inset: Animal has created a musical/rock opera based on Hothead, which will premier at this year's Michigan Festival, with an all-star cast including Ani De Franco.

Hothead Paisan (the musical) will debut at the Michigan Women's Music Festival

BY MARGARET COBLE

For the past 28 years, the Michigan Women's Music Festival has been a cultural and political hub for the international women's and lesbian community. It remains one of the largest of the ongoing 1970s-era women's music festivals spawned by the second-wave feminist movement, and has weathered many challenges over the years, the latest of which is the leveling off of attendance - down from an all-time high of approximately 8,000 in 1995 to 4,675 last year.

But rather than scale back any of its offerings or increase the ticket price

substantially, the festival has chosen to restructure its production workforce to cut costs, changes that will not result in any noticeable difference to the average festival attendee. And if this year's lineup of music, comedy, dance, circus and other performance art, workshops, and films is any indication, MWMF certainly hasn't cut back on its commitment to fostering a diverse and progressive women's creative community.

From longtime women's music favorites like Tret Fure, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Deidre McCalla, and Laura Love, to returning new-school darlings Alix Olson, Bitch, Kinnie Starr, Pamela

Means, Magdalene Hsu-Li and The Dolly Ranchers, to genre-bending upstarts like Bay area queer punk quartet Erase Errata and Brooklyn-based Jewish lesbian rapper God-des -- both performing for the first time -- the lineup shows a healthy balance between the old-school icons who helped build the women's music movement and the wealth of female talent performing today who carry their forebearers' torch.

In keeping with the festival's long tradition of nurturing and promoting cutting-edge artists and creativity, the *Hothead continued on page 3*

ImageArt's exhibit, poetry reading set for this autumn

The Fifth Annual ImageArt - the ImageOut art and poetry exhibit - will be hosted in this fall at the Little Theatre Café Gallery, where the first ImageArt was held in 2000.

The poetry open mic night is Sept. 11 and the ImageArt gallery opening is Oct. 3.

The return to the Little and the exhibit's timing there with the ImageOut Lesbian & Gay Film & Video Festival will strengthen the lgbt presence in Rochester and continue the artistic support, education, sharing, and dispelling of stereotypes that the program strives for.

The small gallery space lends itself to a unique theme for this year's art show: a Victorian-style gallery of inti-

mate, specially-made artworks measuring no larger than 10x10x10 inches each. The works, made by lgbt artists from Western New York, will be for sale and will be juried by a panel of three lgbt art jurors.

"The fact that we are again exhibiting at the Little after three years at large galleries (Gateway 2001, Hungerford 2002, Visual Studies Workshop 2003) is a wonderful opportunity to reach out to both the members of the Rochester community who attend the ImageOut films and also the people who visit the Little for all of the other great films it shows," said Aimee K. Wiles, the program's chairperson.

"Times are hard for artists everywhere," Wiles said. "With so many local gallery closings in the past few years and our inability to find a date-available and wheelchair-accessible gallery in the City of Rochester, our thanks go out to Bill Coppard for providing this support and solution."

Artists and poets can register on-line at "www.imageout.org" for the Sept. 11 Poetry Open Mic Reading at the Visual Studies Workshop Auditorium and for the Oct. 3 Art Opening at the Little Theatre Café Gallery. Deadlines, entry fees, entry requirements and other pertinent information are listed on the site. Artists and poets without internet access can request printouts of the pages and entry forms by Aug. 15 by calling the ImageOut office at (585)271-2640. Please specify "art", "poetry" or both, and leave your complete mailing address.

ImageArt/Poetry Open Mic Night is Saturday, Sept. 11, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Visual Studies Workshop Auditorium, 31 Prince St. It is free and open to the public.

ImageArt Gallery Opening will be on Sunday, Oct. 3, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Little Theatre Café Gallery, 240 East Ave. ■

Women's International Music Fest is Aug. 6-8 in Ohio

The Women's International Music Festival (WimFest2004) will take place Aug. 6-8, at Pine Valley Lake Park & Camping (just a few miles outside Akron, Ohio.)

The Park's address is 4936 S. Arlington Rd., North Canton, Ohio, and the contact number is 330-896-1381 (for camping reservations and information only). Info is also available at the web site, www.wimfest.com, or by email: wimfest@hotmail.com Host hotel for the event is Comfort Inn: www.comfortinnakron.com. Camping is also available.

Performers will include comedian Vickie Shaw, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Halcyon, CommonbonD, Wishing Chair, Leah Zicari, Red Letter Day, LoJo Russo, Frozen Feet, Lori Wyatt, Robin Stone, Alexis Antes, Troubadours of Divine Bliss, Claudia, Kindred, Christine Martucci, dancers Fire & Desire, and more TBA.

Organizers offer food, dancers, fishing, camping, contests, open mic stage, raffles, drawings, artists, vendors, music, music, and more music. They say, "Bring a cooler and spend the day or camp." ■

New gay cable channels are coming soon

Logo, an all-gay basic cable TV channel backed by MTV, will become available in the U.S. on Feb. 17, 2005.

Viacom owns MTV Networks. Their new cable channel will feature 25

percent original programming and 75 acquired programming, including previously aired shows and films, according to Viacom officials.

"It's so important that we roll out a slate of programming that represents the diversity of the gay and lesbian community," said Matt Farber, a consultant who proposed the channel and has led its development.

Under current arrangements, Logo will be available initially in Los Angeles, New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta and San Francisco. More cities may be added by the 2005 launch date. MTV aims to have Logo in 14 million homes by the end of 2005.

Logo will be an advertiser-based basic cable channel subject to the same rules and standards as any other, which means there will be no profanity or "intense adult situations"; if Logo wants to air "The L Word" or "Queer As Folk", the shows will have to be edited to remove profanity and nudity.

Logo has a better than average chance of gaining advertisers since it is backed by MTV, according to Howard Buford, CEO of Prime Access, Inc., an advertising agency that represents Fortune 500 companies in gay markets. "Logo will have the quality of an MTV or Comedy Central if Viacom is behind it, and that is going to put at ease any advertisers who might be concerned about content," he said.

The Traditional Values Coalition has announced that it will boycott Logo advertisers.

Here!TV

Here!TV launched on Satellite Providers DirectTV in August 2003, and the Dish Network in March of this year. It is currently an on-demand service which can be ordered by customers. It will launch as a 24-hour subscription service, similar to HBO or

Showtime, with RCN Cable in Boston, N.Y.C., Philadelphia and San Francisco, in August. Original programming for Here!TV includes "Dante's Cove," a gay series that recently completed filming, and "The Complex," a lesbian soap opera.

Pridevision TV

Canada's gay channel, PrideVision, announced in April that it is still seeking funding to launch on cable in this country by next fall.

Q TV

Q Television Network (OTCPK:QBID), headquartered in California, launches a subscriber channel for the gay and lesbian community this month. An industry soft launch for carriers and advertisers began June 1.

"It has taken more than seven years and millions of dollars to arrive at this day," said president and chairman Frank Olsen. "Clearly, the time to launch this network is now, and I am confident that the gay and lesbian community will embrace the unique perspective we offer as a family channel."

In a pre-public move to preview a sample of its programming to cable and satellite industry professionals, as well as potential advertisers, Q Television Network will offer a compressed daily broadcast that includes featured programs. The sample highlights Q Television's availability for carriage and sponsorship.

As executive vice president Steven Grunberg notes, "This is built by and for the gay community. Rather than a smattering of stereotyped gay characters offered because current market projections indicate it would be profitable, we offer a channel that will unite the gay and lesbian audience through a network that educates, entertains and informs -- a network of real value."

The network is available for viewing on Intelsat America's 7, 129 degrees West, Channel 1.

Olsen, an entrepreneur with a background in broadcast, was instrumental in the launch of The Movie Channel prior to its acquisition by Showtime. A pioneer in the development of new radio broadcast formats throughout his 40-year career, Olsen helped create African American radio and started the first gay radio stations.

"Just as CNN had tremendous hurdles to overcome, Frank and Q Television Network have had an uphill battle in the launch of Q Television," observes CFO Rene Schenk. "Q Television is positioned to successfully meet the demand that exists for a gay family channel."

Original and Acquired Programming

With a system of production crews throughout the United States, Q Television Network will offer a combination of original and acquired programming, which includes sports, fashion, travel, health and fitness, talk shows, plays, documentaries and movies. Teams of producers and directors will also bring breaking stories of interest to the network's audience via access to bureaus in Washington, D.C., New York, London, Paris, Moscow, Jerusalem and Iraq.

A preview of original programming premiered in May at the National Cable & Telecommunication Association's annual industry conference and was also included in a successful five-hour sample broadcast on May 15, which aired on Cox Cable in Louisiana and Comcast in the Puget Sound Region.

Included in that preview was "I Will, I Do, We Did," an original Q Television documentary exploring gay and lesbian marriage in America that offers an

inside glimpse of the challenges faced by this community. Independent films, such as "Intimate Friendship" and the award-winning "Straightman" are other examples of what will be available on the network, as well as commercial fare such as Bette Midler's "Divine Madness" concert.

About Q Television Network

This television network was organized to create and develop a network devoted to providing television programming for the gay and lesbian community. While the company expects much of its subscriber base to be comprised of members of the gay and lesbian population, management also believes that quality programming about the gay and lesbian experience, designed to entertain, educate and inform, will attract many other segments of the viewing public. The company's programming will be available on a subscription basis to those desiring its programming. The network will broadcast 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Providing distribution via satellite ensures availability of the network across the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Within the first day of the network's availability on Intelsat America's 7, 129 degrees West, Channel 1, Q Television received considerable response from potential carriers and advertisers seeking more information regarding the network and its anticipated public launch.

"We anticipated that the soft launch would generate lots of inquiries regarding the availability of Q Television for carriage and advertising," notes president Frank Olsen. "Yet we were amazed how quickly everything has moved forward within the past 24 hours." ■

Introducing a new column: Entertainment newsbriefs

BY SHERRILL FULGHUM

Buddies in Bad Times

Toronto's own gay and lesbian theatre, Buddies in Bad Times, has announced its new season and it is the biggest yet. The 2004-05 season includes three festivals, world premieres, and collaborations.

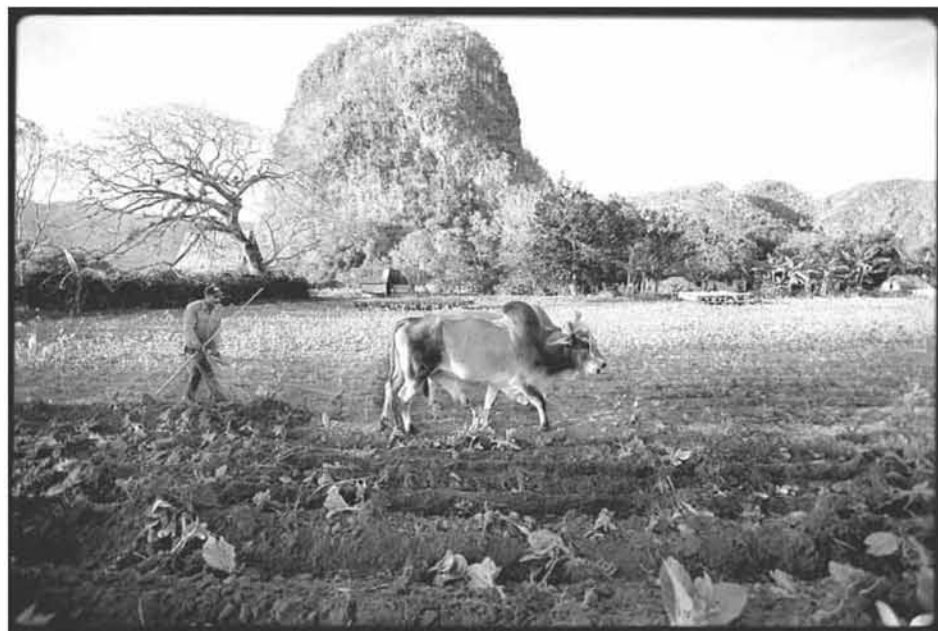
Buddies in Bad Times opens the season in September with the Toronto premier of "Snowman". October brings "Cul-de-Sac" to Buddies. November hosts the first festival and collaboration when Buddies in Bad Times joins with Nightwood to bring a festival called Hysteria. Another Toronto premiere is on tap in November when "Yapping Out Loud" opens. The production was written by transsexual sex worker and performer Mirha-Soleil Ross. November also brings the second collaboration when Native Earth and Buddies present "The Unnatural and Accidental Women".

The Buddies in Bad Times season continues in January 2005, when "Swimming in the Shadows" makes its Canadian premiere. The second festival comes to Buddies when the 27th celebration of the Rhubarb festival opens in February. In March "A Suicide-Site Guide to the City" opens at Buddies in Bad Times.

Things get very busy in April 2005 when three world premieres open at Buddies in Bad Times, including a production by Buddies in Bad Times' own Sky Gilbert. "Kingstonia Dialect Perversa", "Planet Claire" and "Rope Enough" all play in April at Buddies.

Entertainment continued on next page

Rivera-Ortiz photos of Cuba are on exhibit at City Hall's Link Gallery



"Tilling the Land," Pinar del Rio, Cuba, 2002. A man works the family tobacco farm in the shadow of the hills called mogotes. The valley floor around these mogotes has collected rich deposits of red soil which is perfect for growing tobacco. Tobacco from the Viñales Valley is considered to be the best in the world. Small farms like this one with farmers cultivating their fields with oxen are a common sight in Cuba. The mogotes are said to have been created during the Jurassic period, about 160 million years ago, as part of the Guaniguanico mountains. Today rain has reduced the entire range into these round topped hills which can distinctly rise as high as 1000 feet above the valley floor.

As Cuba continues to headline in the U.S., a local exhibition features photographs of the Caribbean nation taken in 2002.

"Manuel Rivera-Ortiz: Cuba," is a retrospective solo exhibition of 37 black and white images of the people and the landscapes of this island nation by Puerto Rican photographer Manuel Rivera-Ortiz. The exhibition runs through Aug. 30 at City Hall's Link Gallery.

Rivera-Ortiz traveled to Cuba in search of the Puerto Rico he left behind as a child in 1979 when his family left the island in search of a better life in the Mainland. What he found in Cuba was strikingly similar to home.

The exhibit is free at Rochester City Hall, outside Room 103A, 30 Church St. Hours: Mon-Fri 9-5 p.m.

For information call 585-414-9020. ■

Columnists

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constant interest in the size of other men's feet and hands and having a tape measure on hand at all times. Archrival is the elusive Needle Dick queen (the name says it all).

Queen-Size Queen: Gay men who won't sleep with other men unless it's in a bed that is at least queen-size or larger. Common characteristics are fear of falling out of bed and a childhood history of bunk beds.

Leather Queen: Gay men who like to wear leather and are attracted to other men who wear leather. Common characteristics are leather pants, leather boots, leather hats, leather vests, leather wristbands, leather jackets, leather masks, and a strong musky odor. Archrival is a stick of deodorant.

Leather Seat Queen: Gay men who furnish their houses with leather couches and chairs, OR gay men who like to make out in the backseat of a luxury car (think Lexus, Mercedes, and Jaguar).

Drag Queen: Gay men who like to dress up as women and perform (singing, lip syncing, stand-up) in front of a crowd for money and/or adoration. Common characteristics are wigs, make-up, and duct tape. Archrival is the bad tipper.

Rag Queen: Drag queens who use cheap wigs, don't blend their make-up along the jaw line, have runs in their stockings, and have never won a title higher than second runner-up in any drag contest. Common characteristics are broken heels and chipped fingernails. Archrival is a stable income.

Prom Queen: A poplar girl who is crowned the queen at her high school prom by the votes of her classmates (archrivals are all the girls in her "royal" court), OR the hot, closet-case jock who happens to be the prom queen's date, that you still pine for after all these years.

This is just a small sampling of the queens we see daily. My point is that we are all queens in some manner or other. And the type of queen we are can change from day to day or even from one minute to the next.

So the next time someone refers to you as a queen, demand that he curtsy and then bash him in the face with your scepter. Or, if he's cute, "knight" him.

Email: misadventuresinboyland@hotmail.com

Let's Talk

BY JULIE WEST



Large and small things

Yikes! It's causing me more angst than listening to Christmas songs in July or, horror of horrors, listening to my mother sing Christmas songs in July. Or listening to my mother sing ANYTHING for that matter.

And yes, it's even more nightmarish than attending a sardine-packed concert on a sweat-drenching day and having to use the hold-your-nose-God-awful-smelly blue plastic Johnny on the spot. And then suffering the added indignity of trying to keep your tush balanced four inches above the pit of glum and disgust to avoid sitting on the discolored horseshoe shaped toilet seat covered with... something... ugly.... Something... unmentionable.

While outside, some drunken numb nut pounds on the door, yelling, "What are ya doin' in there?" as you roar back, "Preparing the Challenger for take off you moron, what do you think I'm doing?"

Which turns out to be a bad decision as said moron's increased pounding sets the Love Boat of toilets a-rockin'.

And just what is this horrid thing that follows me every where I go? What is this demon of darkness that won't be gone?

It's ... it's... dare I say it? Blubber! There, I said it. Whew! That soft blubber-like belly bulge that follows me where ever I go. The woman's beer belly, the fist-full of flubber, call it what you will.

Easing into mid-life was a snap until my skin started sliding and, like Columbus, found a place to land. And also like Columbus, it too landed in the wrong place! My chest would have been a fine place but oh no, it had to go for the belly!

One night as I snuggled into bed reality hit as I realized my little belly bulge was falling asleep NEXT TO ME, not tight against my rib cage as it used to. YIKES!

Sadly, I knew I couldn't blame it all on age. My sordid past with those come-to-me-at-3 p.m. when you need a sugar pick me up workplace vending machines had played a role. And the three for \$1 Snickers, Clark and Nestle candy bars that called my name as I left Wilson Farms. And nights snuggled on the couch savoring tea and mint Peppercorn Farm cookies, enjoying such Blockbuster classics as "How I Survived Prison Life After Breaking into the Oreo Factory".

Yes, I can blame age for only part of my portly problem. If this were an AA meeting I suppose I'd have to stand in front of the group and say something like... Hi, my name is Julie West and I'm a chockaholic and this is my first meeting. I've been a chockaholic for most of my life.

But I wonder, would they understand the tales I'd relate or would they shrink away from me in horror?

Would I ever be able to tell them about the coworker's suggestion that just two tablespoons of peanut butter make a great snack -- but how I soon discovered that four tablespoons of crunchy style, heated in the microwave until soft, along with bananas and Nestles chocolate syrup, was way better?

And about those Weight Watcher ice cream bars? Heck, why eat one when you can eat two?

I sometimes wonder if my little jelly belly friend and I will ever part. But then again, I know that in the scheme of things there are things far worse in life than my Buddha Belly. More important than unzipping my jeans after eating.

Things like George Bush talking about freedom while denying rights to everyone in sight; things like Gov. Arnold extolling the virtues of not wasting gas while owning the equivalent of his own auto show room. Or the Sudanese crying out for help and no one listening.

Large things and small, sometimes it's hard to tell which is which.

Be well,
Julie West

PS: To rectify a past problem, my new e-mail address is Friend2426@aol.com.
Let's Talk!

Hear Me Out

BY MUBARAK DAHIR



Actually, we should thank Bush for forcing a vote on the FMA

Everyone knew going into the vote on the federal marriage amendment, which would have banned gay and lesbian couples from ever getting married, that the proposition was a loser. From the standpoint of pure votes, anyway.

No one, not even the most rabid conservative Republican legislators, believed that the amendment had a snowball's chance in hell of passing. And indeed, it didn't.

Still, conventional wisdom said that the vote was going to be a political plus for the president. In the political establishment, it was seen as a bone the president could throw to the right-wingers of the Republican party to bolster his conservative credentials with them.

In addition, the president and his Republican strategists figured it would put the Democratic challengers, Senators John Kerry and John Edwards, in an uncomfortable position, as they would have to explain to voters why they opposed the amendment if, as they both say, they oppose marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples.

Finally, conventional wisdom figured Bush could also use the federal marriage amendment, and the fact that it failed, in the presidential campaign. No doubt Bush planned to point to the effort and tell voters that it was the Democrats' fault the thing never passed. He would paint the Democrats and their presidential nominee as a bunch of lefty liberals who are out of step and out of sync with mainstream America, which he believes is opposed to equal marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples.

At least, that was the conventional wisdom on the federal marriage amendment as it approached time for a vote in the Senate.

The problem with conventional wisdom, of course, is that it is so often wrong. So was the case with the assumptions by the Republican taskmasters on the federal marriage amendment.

Instead of making Bush look like a hero of "traditional American values," and painting the Democrats as ridiculous left-wing Commies, or putting John Kerry and John Edwards in the uncomfortable political spotlight, the move on the federal marriage amendment split the Republican party, irritated most "mainstream" American voters and made Bush and his minions look a little silly, if not downright mean-spirited.

If the proposed amendment had ever made it to the floor of the Senate, it would have taken 67 votes to approve it and move it along the arduous process of becoming part of the Constitution.

But the pro-amendment forces couldn't even muster the necessary 60 votes they needed on a procedural issue to get the proposal to the floor. In fact, the final vote of 50 to 48 - not even a simple majority - was embarrassing to the Republicans and to the White House.

Indeed, the whole amendment issue made quite a few Republican Senators more than a little uncomfortable.

Six Republicans openly defied their

party and helped block the measure. Political analysts say that number doesn't even begin to reflect the amount of division in the Republican party, as many senators who are opposed to a constitutional amendment agreed to support their party's leaders on the initial procedural vote, knowing in advance it would fail and they wouldn't have to really make a stand on the federal marriage amendment.

Many Republican senators in close-call elections this fall reportedly resent the forced vote. They rightly reckon that the most conservative voters are also the strongest supporters of the federal marriage amendment. But swing voters - those highly coveted moderate Republicans and conservative Democrats - are the ones who would be more likely to be turned off by the gesture of voting on the amendment.

There was even a public split in the vice-presidential position on the subject. While Dick Cheney did the dutiful thing and publicly said he supported the president's position, news stations repeatedly ran footage of Cheney's comments during the 2000 presidential campaign, where he clearly said that he thought everyone should be left alone to make whatever relationships they chose, and that at any rate the states, not the federal government, should regulate such personal matters.

And just days before the Senate took up the measure, Lynne Cheney strategically expressed to the press her sentiment that the federal government shouldn't be in the marriage-amendment business. Of course, the well-known fact that the Cheneys have a lesbian daughter, Mary, left little doubt in most people's minds where the vice-presidential family's heart was on the amendment, regardless of the loyalty posturing by the vice president.

Meanwhile, if you are to believe public opinion polls and letters to editors and newspaper editorials all around the country, most "mainstream" Americans seem perturbed at best with the whole game-show like atmosphere surrounding the charade of the vote on the federal marriage amendment.

This national irritation at the staging of a vote on the amendment has little to do with whether or not a majority of Americans agree with such an amendment. (Most polls do show, however, that while a majority of Americans may still oppose marriage rights for same-sex couples, most also oppose enshrining that discrimination into the Constitution.)

Many voters, it seems, are rightly aggravated that the president and the Senate would waste precious time and energy on an issue whose outcome is already pre-ordained. Regardless of their opinions on the amendment or on their party affiliation, a lot of Americans simply saw right through the ploy as politicking at its worst.

A lot of people were rightly asking: What, we have nothing else more important to spend our time and energy on than an amendment we know is doomed to fail?

Ask the average Joe what's on his mind during this election year, and I doubt many would place homosexual nuptials before the war in Iraq, or worries over such things as the economy and jobs and inflation and education and healthcare.

Finally, Bush's notion that forcing a vote on the federal marriage amendment would put his Democratic opponents, John Kerry and John Edward - both senators - on the spot failed miserably. The two Johns were cleverly

Hothead

continued from page 1

most highly-anticipated and ambitious of this year's festival offerings is also a festival first: a rock opera. Produced by Animal Pruffrock, of the queer feminist musical duo Bitch and Animal, it is a musical adaptation of the popular yet controversial 1990s comic book character Hothead Paisan.

Hothead Paisan: Homicidal Lesbian Terrorist

Created by artist Diane DiMassa in 1991, the righteously-raging-against-the-patriarchy, slightly psychotic but ultimately hilarious dyke character Hothead Paisan was originally a sort of therapy homework assignment - something to help DiMassa deal with internalized anger issues while in substance abuse recovery. Not originally intended for public consumption, DiMassa's then-partner Stacy Sheehan convinced her to publish the frenzied-style drawings of Hothead, her mentor Roz, her cat Chicken, and other characters into a zine format. Before long, Hothead was an underground hit, having struck a chord with queers, feminists and freaks of all kinds.

The comics had a good long run through the 1990s, with a total of 21 zine issues and three book compilations published, but DiMassa's production tapered off near the end of that decade. Hothead's most recent public appearance was in the form of a newspaper strip two years ago, a project which unfortunately failed to reignite DiMassa's muse. "Why did I stop?" DiMassa posits. "Let's see: depression, major life changes, poverty, and depression. I've sort of gone all the way around the block mentally about art and come back to what's been right under my nose all along."

Through it all, DiMassa had been approached numerous times over the years for various Hothead spin-off projects, but was generally skeptical about the intentions of those making the offers. Animal, however, being the self-professed freak that she is, was somehow different.

Animal's Idea

"Hothead has been in me for many years," Animal says, when asked about the genesis of the concept for the musical. It's not everyone, after all, who can read a comic book and envision a rock opera. "Ah, (that is) only one of the things that makes me not like everyone -- I see art. Hothead Paisan is pure art."

A music theater major, Animal first discovered Hothead Paisan in 1996 and says reading the comics changed her life. "(Hothead's) one of the only women telling the truth," she says about the feminist-vigilante character, with whom she identifies. "The lack of rage in women based on the horror we are forced to live in/with in this patriarchal world is beyond belief."

Though the idea had been in Animal's head for many years to translate the Hothead comics to the stage, it wasn't until just recently that she could devote more attention to it, after she and her longtime musical partner Bitch mutually agreed to part artistic paths after last year's *Sour Juice and Rhyme* CD and their current "Pussy Primary" tour. "We are artists," Animal clarifies in her best Animal-speak, about her separation from Bitch. "Life is growth. 'Breaking up' -- no. Growing -- yes. And, like Cher, Bitch and Animal will also live forever. Both are possible in pussy."

So for the past two years, Animal has been working on making her dream of

Hothead Paisan: The Musical a reality - writing music, assembling a cast, and raising funds - and after playing some tracks over the phone to festival producer Lisa Vogel last fall, the project was booked for the 2004 festival.

Why was Animal so intent on premiering the project at the MWMF? "Because this precious space for women-only exists," she replies, matter-of-factly, in a statement which can only be viewed as supportive of the festival's controversial women-born-women admittance policy. "It has been, and always will be, a privilege (to perform there)."

Hothead Paisan: The Musical, Act One

As for the actual production itself, Animal is rather tight-lipped about the details. "Think glorious masks, brilliantly talented women, show stopping music... and, well, you'll have to come and see, won't you?" she muses.

Vogel offers a few more insights. "The format of a rock opera/musical

how much the community misses having such a laser-sharp harpoon aimed tightly (at) the patriarchy. We need to be pissed off at what's happening and not afraid to tell it like it is."

Broadway Bound?

All parties agree that the project's Michigan debut is just the beginning.

"What we're putting on at Michigan is just sort of a showcase," DiMassa explains. "Once we see what we've got, we'll tweak it and make it better, because we hope it will play in other cities." To that effect, DiMassa is tuning up her website to accommodate online ordering of merchandise, coming up with new designs (including a recently-released "Homicidal Lesbian Terrorist Social Club" t-shirt), and trying to raise the funds through the sale of said merchandise to print up new editions of the comics.

Animal's been a bit too busy to think too far ahead, but she does have some ideas. "I haven't thought about the road tour yet," she says. "I'm thinking



Cher

The all-star cast... includes Ani De Franco, Ubaka Hill, Toshi Reagon... Hothead's return is timely, given current world events...

for the festival is exciting," she says. "As 'Act One,' the emphasis will be on the music part of the musical, with theatrical interludes between songs. Diane DiMassa will be in Michigan to design and work on the set. I think it will absolutely translate to the audience. The artists involved in the performance are all individually amazing, and the theatrics will be bigger than life."

DiMassa is equally excited about her beloved character's big return to the spotlight. "We took the script straight out of the book, and I think my cartoons will translate into action very easily," she explains. She is, however, concerned with audiences, who may or may not be familiar with the comics or the character's particularly over-the-top brand of humor, "getting" it. "My biggest thing is being mindful of balance," she says. "I want it to be clear that this isn't about penis-chopping. I want all the levels to come through: Chicken's humor, Roz's spirituality, Hothead's soul-sickness over the state of the world."

"How it comes off, of course, is going to depend on the actors and the director," she summarizes. "I just kind of have my fingers crossed. Of course I want it to be great and perfect."

The all-star cast enlisted by Animal includes Ani DiFranco, Susan "Stop The Insanity" Powter, Ubaka Hill, Toshi Reagon, Julie Wolf, Kate Wolf, and Allyson Palmer of BETTY, among others. "I think so many great artists signing on is a tribute to both the Hothead material, and to how much Animal inspired (them) to be involved in the work, and to come together as a community to create the project," says Vogel.

She says Hothead's return is timely, given current world events. "I've been rereading the comics and they are spot on," she says. "I think the buzz about the Hothead show at Michigan reflects

Broadway." She does let us in on the scope of the project, however, as pertains to the Michigan debut. "A movie is being shot right now, a sort of 'VH1 Behind the Music' (project) of the making of *Hothead*. A movie will (also) be shot of the musical, and a record will be available... all, of course, on my website."

Vogel sums it up nicely: "Michigan is Act One -- who knows where it will go from here?"

For the complete Michigan Women's Music Festival lineup -- www.michfest.com. For more information about Animal Pruffrock -- www.animalsfarm.net. For more information about Hothead Paisan and Diane DiMassa -- www.hotheadpaisan.com. ■

Entertainment news

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"The Hudda Gabba" open in May and will carry into June. June will also bring the season at Buddies in Bad Time to a close when the third festival "Sexy Pride" coincides with Toronto's Pride Week. The Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is located at 12 Alexander St. For tickets or more information on the 2004-05 season at Buddies go to www.buddiesinbadtimes.com or call 416-975-8555.

Cher rides again

Last year Cher said goodbye to the musical world with a farewell tour that featured songs spanning her career as a singer. She announced to the world that she was going to retire from music to focus her attention on more theatrical pursuits.

Then "Love One Another" won Cher another Grammy. Her HBO special received numerous Emmy nominations. And just like that, a queen's favorite star has returned to the concert stage. The "Uh, Hello Again, Remember Me" tour will showcase more of what she displayed in her fare-

well tour - flashy costumes, fabulous wigs, and career-spanning hit songs.

Cher will not be making a stop in Rochester, but she will be in the southern Ontario and western New York areas. If we are to "Believe" that Cher is finally going to hang up the microphone, watch her as she "Turns Back Time" and catch her in Hamilton, Ontario on Aug. 23 or in September in Binghamton.

Nelly McKay

At 17 she was playing in gay bars and giving voice lessons. Nellie McKay (pronounced Mac High) marches to the beat of a different drummer - her own. Nellie admits to being a troublemaker, especially if it's about something she believes in.

Now 19, Nellie has her first album out and is the opening act for Sting's European tour.

The multi-talented teen was born in London and raised in the U.S. She makes her home in Harlem. During high school Nellie lived in Pennsylvania. She was involved in every band imaginable playing piano, cello, saxophone, and percussion.

Oddly enough, Nellie did not like music in school. "Music sucked," said Nellie. After high school, Nellie returned to New York City. She played gigs nearly every night in clubs all over New York.

After a little press, Nellie got noticed by a few record labels. A battle among the labels ensued and Nellie eventually signed with Columbia. Her debut album, "Get Away From Me," was released in February. In an unprecedented move, Nellie's debut album is a double CD affair. Her choice of a title is something Nellie admits thinking, but she adds that you can't say it without people accusing you of not being nice.

Nellie and her mother, actress Robin Papas, manage Nellie's career like a small family business, overseeing every aspect of Nellie's career. The even answer emails as much as possible. Nellie had a hand in every step of her album's creation, right down to the artwork on the CD. "This record is my life," said Nellie. She realizes that people who see and buy the album will associate Nellie's name - it is on the album - with everything in and on the package.

In just a few short years Nellie McKay has gone far beyond the small clubs of the East Village, but she still prefers the city and her home in Harlem.

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Entertainment

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RuPaul's new CD

"If you can dance, you can start a revolution," said RuPaul, who is releasing his first album in nearly five years. After spending some time with family, Miss RuPaul is ready to once again take on the world. "I reconnected with a part of me that I had left behind," he said.

When he was born, RuPaul's mother announced that her baby boy was going to be a star. On Nov. 17, 1960, in San Diego, RuPaul Andre Charles made his presence known to the world.

Ru's first introduction to show business was a lip synching act of "Baby Love" in the family's yard. His sister said that he did the act wearing a pink dress, Ru doesn't remember that part. Upon finishing the act, the neighborhood children informed RuPaul that he was a sissy. RuPaul was five at the time. At age 10, people began thinking that RuPaul was a girl; something that would come to pass later.

When RuPaul was 12 he had his first taste of falling in love - with a boy. He hid his feelings. The theatre beckoned RuPaul. In 1976, Ru moved to Atlanta and it was just the thing he needed. Atlanta was the home San Diego never was. RuPaul spent high school at The Northside School of Performing Arts. He was not always the best student, but he loved drama and that is where he got the best advice of his life -- don't take life too seriously.

In 1978 while on business for his brother-in-law in San Diego, RuPaul had his first experience with a man. "I was so swept away my knees buckled," said RuPaul. Working for his brother-in-law didn't earn RuPaul a lot of money, but then again RuPaul wasn't there for the money; he was there for the experience and the things it taught him - like the fact that he had the right to fulfill his dreams and to go after what he wanted.

January of 1982 marked RuPaul's official start in show business on "The American Music Show," a local cable access show in Atlanta. RuPaul was a part of a group called The U-hauls. The performance got RuPaul a gig in New York City opening for "Now Explosion". Upon returning to Atlanta Ru literally papered Atlanta with posters proclaiming "RuPaul is red hot". It worked. In 1983 a homeless RuPaul was part of a local band with steady gigs.

After the band broke up in 1984, RuPaul wrote a book and made his first movie. It was RuPaul's first performance in drag. The movie also brought him back to New York City and the Pyramid Club. With no home, RuPaul slept wherever he could find a place.

Back in Atlanta in 1985, RuPaul made his first record, a five-song EP. A stint as Riffraff in "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" landed RuPaul a job as a go-go girl.

Several trashy sex moves later, RuPaul returned to New York City, this time for good and armed with a new drag image. It won him the title of Queen of Manhattan in 1990. That was also the year RuPaul quit drinking and doing drugs -- a habit he had had since his early teens -- and returned to making movies.

RuPaul cites the VH1 aired "RuPaul Show" as the most fun-filled, creatively satisfying experience he has ever had. In the 20 plus years of RuPaul's career, he has been the subject of an A&E Biography show, the spokes-model for MAC cosmetics, has a wax model

of himself at Madame Tussaud's in Times Square, had his own TV show, appeared in over 39 movies and TV shows, and has appeared on 14 albums -- his own and as a guest performer.

On Aug. 17, RuPaul will release his new album "Red Hot". The album marks RuPaul's return to the forefront of the entertainment world; a place from which he has long been absent. The first single from the album, "Looking Good, Feeling Gorgeous," is playing in clubs and on dance radio stations. RuPaul said that she wanted to make an album of truth, love, beauty, and freedom. He even tackles the subject of gay marriage and being able to love whoever you want. ■

Book reviews:

Summer reading: queer movie posters and pirate queens

BY SUSAN JORDAN

The Queer Movie Poster Book, by Jenni Olson, with a foreword by Bruce Vilanch. S.F.: Chronicle Books, 2004; 131 pp.; paperback, \$19.95.

Jenni Olson has traced the evolving history of Hollywood's attitudes toward lgbt folk, as expressed in movie posters from 1915 to 2000. European film posters and porn ads are also included. In his insightful foreword, Bruce Vilanch comments, "It's interesting to watch the movie ads... go from coded to blatant over the years."

The coded language of the *Bad Old Days* employed the favorite adjective "strange" over and over again: "Strange Love" (*The Sinners*, 1952); "Strange Loves"; "The Strange Case of a Man Who Changed His Sex" (*Glen or Glenda*, 1953); "The strange rapport of two boys..." (*This Special Friendship*, 1964). Visual clues (like lesbians with downcast eyes in *The Children's Hour*, 1961) implied shame about being Strange.

Some films, like *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959), used images unrelated to their real content for posters. This Tennessee Williams-scripted movie about male homosexuality and cannibalism was advertised by a shot of Elizabeth Taylor in a wet white swimsuit.

Other movies promoted themselves as serious looks at "a major social problem". The sleazier and more exploitive the film, the more pretentious were its claims to relevance. *Chained Girls* (1965), a real Z-movie, provided reviewers with what Olson calls "possibly the greatest queer press book ever created". It's certainly a remarkable example of imaginative fiction. We are told that "the frequency of lesbian relations increases from two times a week in age group 16-20 to six times weekly in age group 36-40" (would that it were true).

"Conditions that cause lesbianism" include "Unfounded hatred of all men!" and "Neurotic fear of marriage!". Columns of "statistics" reveal that "college girls" are more susceptible to lesbianism, and that "90 percent of females with previous lesbian experience will continue this sexual deviation!" In a final blast of misogyny, we are informed, "Female deviation in normal sexual behavior greatly exceeds the male!" (Sorry, guys.)

All of this would be even more amusing if these views didn't represent the latest, most up to date information on homosexuality available from the "experts" so often cited by the Rabid

"I CHANGED MY SEX!"



WHAT AM I...
MALE or
FEMALE!

★
THE STRANGE CASE
OF A "MAN" WHO
CHANGED HIS SEX!

"Glen
OR
Glenda"

STRANGE LOVES...
OF THOSE WHO LIVE AND LOVE
BUT CAN NEVER MARRY!



Right - now we know where they've been getting their "facts".

Olson moves on through the '80s and '90s, with examples of advertising images that begin to show lesbians with non-downcast eyes, men kissing men, men with bare chests, etc. Strangely enough, some of the crude and sleazy images from the '50s are hotter than the airbrushed, slick, Madison-Avenue-style materials from post-1980.

Although supposedly lesbian films like *Personal Best* (1982) are still clearly intended for a straight male audience, the images gradually become more open and more often gay-created, and the old codes disappear. However, Olson notes, "By the time my children are grown, they will look at this book and find today's cutting edge representations of queer life completely hilarious and outdated compared to the movies of their own era, which will... reflect a social reality... that today exists only in our dreams."

Stranger things have happened.

Pirate Queens

The Pirate Queens by Barbara Sjöholm. Emeryville, Calif.: Seal Press (Avalon), 2004. 355 pp., paperback, \$15.95.

This fascinating book takes us from the legend-haunted western coast of Ireland, to the far northern Faroes Islands and Norwegian fjords, to volcanic Iceland, as the author searches for records of women who went to sea - whether as pirate captains, fisherwomen, sailors (in male disguise), Viking explorers, or in any other way.

Sjöholm finds a surprising number of sea-faring women, despite the skepticism of many people she interviews on her journey, who endlessly repeat, "But women *didn't go to sea...*"

Her favorite is Grania or Grace O'Malley of County Clare, who became notorious in the 16th century as com-

mander of a pirate fleet, often raiding the merchant ships of England, the occupier of Ireland.

Grania, like many Celtic women, was a capable war leader, as well as ship's captain, and defeated an invading Turkish fleet. Eventually she met England's Queen Elizabeth I, and made peace with the English - more or less.

The name Grania is a reference to an ancient goddess of Gaelic culture, and Sjöholm mentions many sea goddesses, mermaids and other mythical figures, such as sea witches who sold the wind tied into knots.

Norse myth tells of the two giantesses Fenja and Menja, or Finnie and Minnie, who turn a mill which grinds salt, thus making the sea salty. Drowned sailors were said to have journeyed to the world of the sea goddess Ran.

Sjöholm's research also leads her to more recent women connected with the sea and with fishing industries, such as the herring lassies of Scotland, who, up to the early 20th century, traveled along the coast in their own all-female community, following the herring fleet and cleaning the catch. She finds information on women ship owners and a Sami (Lapp) woman who was a great fishing boat captain and cross-dressing role model for the fishing women of northern Norway.

Along the way, Sjöholm traces her own personal journey toward changing her name and finding her true identity. Sjöholm, pronounced "Shoe-holm", means "sea islands". At one point in the book, talking with a straight woman she has met who questions her about her love life, she casually remarks, "I'm really more interested in women."

This book is perfect for whiling away vacation time on the beach. Female or male, you may find yourself gazing at the misty horizon, imagining yourself setting sail for the unknown. ■

absent from the Senate that day, and the truth is, they didn't need to be there. They knew the amendment was going nowhere, and they also knew that being on the Hill that day was a no-win situation. They deftly expressed their opposition to same-sex marriage and their opposition to the amendment to ban same-sex marriage, while avoiding both the avalanche of reporter's questions and TV news cameras.

As odd as it sounds to say out loud, we as gay and lesbian people should probably be glad that Bush and his advisers made the big mistake they did in focusing so much of a spotlight on such a losing proposition.

Conundrums
BY OVE OVERMYER



Decision 2004: Making Sense of Republican Logic

Way back in 2000, I spent a great deal of time and effort discussing the ramifications of George W. Bush becoming president, if elected

Believe it or not, I admit to knowing a few Republicans. I can remember one of those people telling me, "If Al Gore wins the election, the stock market would tank; the USA would be ostracized from the global community; we would lose millions of jobs; the economy would be in the toilet; the military would be mismanaged; Medicare and Medicaid spending would cripple states; affordable and equitable education would only be a dream; and our ecology and environment would be in serious peril.

Well, I did vote for Al Gore, he did win the popular vote, and I'll be damned if all these things didn't come true.

I assume most of the Empty Closet readership probably aligns somewhere to the left of center on the political continuum. That said, here are some "talking points." Consider this information as added ammunition whenever the topic of right-winged Republican ideology pops up. You can tell them that this thinking doesn't jive with the way you see the world. Or, maybe it does. I don't know. I'd like to think not. OK, check out some Republican logic:

Black Americans don't matter. The nation's oldest civil rights organization is urging its members to increase voter turnout to dump George Bush in November. Bush declined an invitation to attend the NAACP convention in July. NAACP spokesman John White

said that Bush has declined invitations in each year of his presidency - becoming the first president since the 1930s (Hoover) not to attend.

This is literally a slap in the face of every African American. Bush has systematically turned his back on black America with respect to education and employment bias. NAACP Conference Chairman Julian Bond said this about the situation: "They preach racial neutrality, and practice racial division." (Source: CNN.com, July 13, 2004).

After this treatment, it's hard for me to understand why any African American would want to support a president like Bush.

Jesus loves only you. He also shares your hatred of the glbt community. By the way, Jesus hates Hillary, too.

Government should limit itself to the powers named in the constitution, except, of course, when Republicans feel the need to amend to their specific beliefs. The Bush administration spends way too much time writing and rewriting constitutions. Writing one for Iraq, and telling them how they should live their lives, and rewriting the U.S. constitution with respect to DOMA.

The Attorney General feels that being a drug addict is a moral failing and a serious crime. Unless, of course, you are an influential conservative political talk show host. In this case, it's just an illness, and you need our prayers for a speedy recovery.

It's good public policy to codify the lgbt community as second-class citizens. Forget about what the constitution says about equality! Amoral people are not worthy of basic human rights. Does this bother you at all?

In 2004, a woman doesn't have the right or intellect to decide what's in her best interest concerning health care and reproductive rights. If condoms are kept out of school, then adolescents will not have sex.

With regard to the war on terror, foreign policy is best served by ignoring, alienating, and belittling our longtime allies. Then, when the Bush administration sees what a conundrum they're in, they demand money and cooperation from other nations because it's in their best interest.

It's important for our government to relax regulations on big business. Instead of dealing with the fiasco of Enron and Halliburton, the Attorney General focuses on really important issues like prosecuting medical marijuana users who seek relief from nausea and pain.

It's really important that all Iraqis get health care. Meanwhile, providing health care to all Americans would be

a concept of radical socialism. Besides, we all know that HMOs and insurance companies have your best interest at heart.

The best way to improve military morale is to extend their active tour of duty, oust gay Americans, slash veterans' benefits, reduce combat pay, and close V.A. hospitals.

Republicans believe in supporting states rights, which of course, means that Bush and Ashcroft will tell states what voter initiatives they have the right to adopt. A perfect example is DOMA.

Global warming and tobacco's link to cancer are "junk science." However, "Creationism" is something that should be taught in early childhood public education classes.

President Bush opposes classifying crimes against gays as hate crimes. Again, he relegates the gay American to second-class citizenship. He states this with absolutely no apologies necessary.

A president lying about an extramarital affair is horrific and an impeachable offense. However, a president lying to Congress and the American people about going to war where thousands of people lose their lives is just sound defense policy.

Finally, under President Bush's federal funding to "faith-based initiatives," your local religious ministry could effectively discriminate or deny you services or employment based on your philosophical or religious ideology. How does that grab you?

These are just a few "user-friendly" suggestions to help stimulate conversation in your corner of the world. When discussing the upcoming election, your quality of life could be seriously compromised (as if it isn't already) depending on the outcome in November. Let's not blow this opportunity to take back America. Peace.

Cleaning My Closet
BY MEREDITH ELIZABETH REINIGER



Marriage rights matter: the paper trail

Marriage matters because my pajamas don't have pockets.

And if, some night, as I turn down the covers, if that night my beloved spouse falls in the shower, if that night she lapses into a coma on our gray tiled

floor and the ambulance rushes her to the emergency room and the attending intake person asks if we are related and I tell her NO, BUT... But she is my partner...

And the intake person declares that only next of kin can enter and I explain that I have her health care proxy, I have her power of attorney... WITH YOU?... and the fax from the lawyer's office this late at night is slow to arrive and inside those frenzied hospital halls, alone with IV's and strangers, my beloved spouse dies alone and I stand in a waiting room because my pajamas don't have pockets...

For me this is hypothetical. For another two women it was nightmare.

Indeed my pajamas do not have pockets into which I can tuck the paper that allows me to be a spouse. And that, dear readers, is why our constitution must protect our rights and why we cannot allow rabid heterosexuals to amend OUR constitution to limit our rights.

We should not be second class citizens who have to carry our papers around with us every where we go. We are entitled to the rights and privileges and responsibilities of marriage.

Civil unions will not give me full rights. Marriage, only marriage, can give me immediate and full access to the powers issued by license to two legally united heterosexuals.

The government issues that power-filled license for a price, for forty dollars in Rochester. The applicants need to meet no requirements other than their apparent heterosexuality and their cash.

Apparent heterosexuality. What a concept. What a challenge for City Hall. What is going to happen if the "one man, one woman only" becomes a law? Will American citizens who seek a marriage license have to reveal their underwear to the license clerk? Will a transgendered person have to provide biological verification, a note from the doctor? Will City Hall count the number of hormones in each applicant to verify their sex? Do we have memories of the days in the south when they counted the number of black and white relatives to determine the right-of-whites to vote? Well, I deviate; we'll have to return to this scenario in a later column.

The point is: Marriage is a civil liberty. Personal choice is a mainstay of American values. And indeed I am an American citizen. I want to be able to protect the spouse I love and cherish.

I am an employed grown-up person. I want the right to include my spouse

Columns continued on page 12

www.ShippingDockTheatre.org

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Columnists

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PLEASE TAKE NOTE

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

Growing Up

BY ERIC BELLMANN



About The Normal Heart

Larry Kramer is not an attractive person. What makes Kramer unappealing is not exactly his looks, although he is a bit long in the tooth now and appears often with the kind of slovenly, what-the-hell look of someone for whom appearances are not the main issue. He's a bit of a dinosaur. He's not remotely a poster child for the current buzz of the gay movement. However, where the slow difficult procession towards our equality would be without him is impossible to imagine. Larry Kramer never was cool.

Larry Kramer is hot but not in the way we like to kid about. Larry Kramer is angry and he's been angry all along, for 20 years. That's unsettling. And that is the point of Larry Kramer.

I was wrapping up a vacation in Manhattan, easily the best two weeks of my life, and on the second-to-last day, I thought, why not amble through Central Park? I'd been tackling things I usually don't have time for or think are too hokey to be A-list events (Harlem, the Brooklyn Museum, Coney Island). After an hour in the zoo — the penguins and puffins are really adorable — I strolled down Fifth Avenue past all the tourist clichés which never cease to be thrilling: the Plaza, the carriages, Tiffany's, Rockefeller Center; it all felt wonderful and the weather wasn't muggy and I figured I could even handle the hell that is the TKTS booth at 47th St. Why not see a play?

So I waited on line, a prisoner, and listened for an hour to those damnable steel drums. They get my vote for the next terrorist target. Jeez!

I hate Broadway shows. I want Art to move me and heavily-miked dazzle doesn't do it. To my surprise, the 20th year anniversary New York Public Theater production of Larry Kramer's "The Normal Heart" was listed. I thought this limited run was a sell-out. With the ho-hum, what-else-is-there-to-do attitude that had enveloped me this New York jaunt, I got a ticket.

I'd seen a regional production of this play some years back. It isn't a very good play. Kramer is a crank, a haranguer and he's tedious because that's all he does. He complains, he rants. He knows no restraint. But the Public Theater is classy, very prestigious, and a couple of times over the past years I have seen some good things there.

"The Normal Heart" chronicles the story of Kramer's life during that time when no one knew what AIDS was, where it came from, how to treat it or cope with it. The era was a nightmare.

The battles with Mayor Koch, the intransigence of the CDC, Reagan's perfidy, Kramer, who helped found the Gay Men's Health Crisis, lived through it. So did I.

The play is performed in an open square with the audience seated on three sides. All the props are wheeled in and out. It's a minimalist production with all the focus on the actors and the plot.

As Kramer's play unfolded and addressed the confusion and fear and rage that gripped the community, my own memories surfaced. I remembered my dearest friend Terry who'd moved to New York, then when a mysterious affliction descended on him, fled to Athens where he died. Or Richard who'd moved to New York to live and returned to Rochester where his family spurned him, also to die delirious and alone.

At the tail end of the '60s I lived in New York. I spent long summers there doing graduate work and dreaming of ways to make it a permanent home. Those years were the absolute height of the sexual revolution. I thought of it as my shining hour. The sex never stopped. I spent every night at the trucks. Being gay finally had a pay-off. I didn't have the stamina, the guts for living in New York, and burned out. I took a job far away. Were it not for that, most likely I would have been infected. Because I ran away from New York, I lived. I have survivor's guilt. I am a witness.

And I'm watching this play, this theatrical entertainment.

Near the end, I think in the third to last scene, the woman doctor, who has been frustrated in her search for funding, screams at her interlocutors that she no longer wants her patients and in defiance, rage, hurls the stacks of papers, her patients' histories, across the stage, "You take them!" and I wonder how will they clear the stage for the next scene?

The papers scattered everywhere remained. In the next to last scene, the Kramer character returns home with bags of groceries to find his partner curled almost fetal-like on the floor eating potato chips. Why are you eating that crap, I've brought you good food, you need to keep your health up — that sort of thing, and the sick man could care less, whines and whimpers and they fight, all the frustration spewing about, and the Kramer character says well, then, you won't want this, and smashes a head of lettuce on the floor. It explodes. Then he says, well you don't want this either and smashes a carton of milk which explodes, splattering the audience. It's violent, great theater and it vividly captures the rage and frustration and confusion and pain that was the raw truth of those days. The characters collapse into a desperate embrace.

Then the final scene, the hospital. The doctor, friends and Kramer gath-

ered at the bedside of the dying lover. The Kramer character climbs onto the gurney and wraps himself around his lover. The doctor announces that since this is her hospital she will take the power and marry the two men. Was this in the earlier production I'd seen? I couldn't remember. Her speech is magnificent. It is about the needs and desires of a normal heart.

Then I got it. All my resistance to "gay" marriage evaporated in a flash. Love should not have to ask for recognition, should not have to beseech authorities for sanction. I realized how subtly and easily I can slip into acceptance of second-class status. I was thrilled and grateful and wrecked. So was everyone else.

The cast took their first curtain call with their backs to the audience. The lights came up bright. They stood motionless for minutes on end as the sobbing in the audience slowly abated. Everyone there had lived through the last 20 years, too. That night in that theater we became a community. This was very good Art.

I staggered into the Manhattan night. It was nearly twelve. I thought, I won't take the subway home. I'll walk awhile.

Email: elbcad@rit.edu

Misadventures in Boyland

BY TROY ROBINSON



Queen for a Day

If you look up the word "queen" in almost any dictionary, you'll find a multitude of definitions pertaining to a female monarch or a beauty contest winner or a social insect (such as a bee or an ant) whose function is to lay eggs for the hive or colony. You will also find the definition "a male homosexual; especially an effeminate one."

But I like the definition that leans towards "a thing having supremacy in a specific realm." In my everyday tongue, "queen" has taken on the meaning "to acknowledge one's strong interest, attraction, or addiction to a particular item or habit". The following list is just a taste of the variety of queens that we come in contact with every day.

Rice Queen: Gay men who are attracted to gentlemen of the Asian persuasion. Common characteristics are gray hair, old airline ticket stubs to Thailand and the Philippines, and a drawer full of Chinese take-out menus.

Rice and Bean Queen: Gay men who are attracted to gentlemen of the Latino flava. Common characteristics are Ricky Martin posters and flashing the bling-bling.

Taco Bell Queen: Gay men who are attracted to young guys who work behind the counter at any fast food restaurant. Common characteristics are a Daddy Warbucks attitude and a pocket full of candy.

Fast Food Queen: Gay men who order every single meal through a drive-thru window. Common characteristics are milkshake-stained clothing and difficulty breathing after walking a flight of stairs. Archrivals are the muscle queen, the liquid diet queen, and the Atkins Diet queen.

Gym Queen: Gay men who spend every waking hour in the gym when not at work or in bed or at a circuit party. Aliases: gym rat and gym bunny. Common characteristics are full body tans and a permanent towel hung

around the neck to mop up sweat after a long workout. Not to be confused with a muscle queen. Archrivals are the fast food queen, the locker room queen, and the steam queen.

Muscle Queen: Gay men who use steroids to build Herculean-sized muscles. Are often confused with the closely related gym queen (who commonly turns into a muscle queen), but prefer pharmaceutical remedies to actual bench presses in obtaining the perfect body. Common characteristics are necks that are thicker than the trunks of most Redwoods and a shotgun temper (have been known to throw step-aerobic instructors against walls when agitated).

Locker Room Queen: Gay men who frequent gyms just to catch a glimpse of guys changing in the locker room. Closely related to the steam queen (a gay man who hangs out in the sauna or steam room at a gym in the hopes for a little sweaty action). Common characteristics are a lack of muscle tone despite all the time spent in a health facility, pasty skin coloring, and shifty eyes. Archrival is the gym queen.

Office Queen: Gay men who work in corporate settings and know all the hot office gossip (who the boss is screwing, who went home with whom after the office holiday party, etc.) and think that they are the missing sixth homo from *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. Common characteristics are French cuffs, manicured nails, and a crush on the local UPS guy. Archrival is the born again Christian woman who sits in the cubicle across the aisle. (It is each of their goals to convert the other.)

East Avenue Wegman's Queen: Gay men who cruise the aisles (especially the "meat" and "fruit" aisles) of this well-known local supermarket. Are often gym queens dropping in from nearby health facilities or office queens stopping in on their way home from work. Common characteristics are shopping carts filled with bottled water, gourmet cheese, and sushi. Can be found during any time of the day but most frequently between 5 and 8 p.m. Would never be caught at a Tops Supermarket.

Mall Queen: Gay men who buy all their clothes and fashion accessories from the shops in a mall. Common characteristics are a wallet filled with maxed-out credit cards and a boyfriend that works at a store in the mall so he can partake in his lover's employee discount. Often found in the changing rooms at Kaufmann's. Archrival is the catalogue queen (a gay man who orders all his clothes through the J. Crew catalogue).

Abercrombie & Fitch Queen: Gay men who buy their clothes exclusively at Abercrombie & Fitch stores in order to portray an image of youth and vitality, OR gay men who only date guys who work at Abercrombie & Fitch (because the male employees portray an image of youth and vitality).

GAP Queen: Gay men who work for the GAP clothing store while making customers' lives hell by hiding all the good clothes in the backroom, so that when they go on sale their employee discount will cover even a larger percentage of the costs. Common characteristics are a preppy appearance and a fake smile. Archrivals are the Banana Republic queen (who looks down upon the GAP queen) and the Old Navy queen (who is below the GAP queen in the pecking order of the retail universe).

Size Queen: Gay men who are only attracted to "well-endowed" gentlemen. Common characteristics are their

Columnists continued on next page

Women's RESOURCES

AIDS DIRECTORY

HEALTH:

Monroe County Women's Health Partnership.

111 Westfall Rd., Rochester NY 14692; (585)274-6978. Comprehensive breast cancer screening services for uninsured and underinsured women.

Elizabeth Wende Breast Clinic.

170 Sawgrass Drive. 442-8432. Dr. Wende Logan-Young and an all-woman staff provide mammograms.

AIDS Rochester Women's Health

Outreach.

1350 University Ave. ARI has services for HIV positive women and others in the lesbian community. 442-2220.

Community Health Network.

87 N. Clinton Ave. 244-9000; TTY (585)461-9202. HIV and Primary care medical services for HIV positive women, their negative partners and family members. OB/GYN, HIV pre-test and post-test counseling. Confidential or free HIV testing.

Alternatives for Battered Women.

232-7353; TTY 232-1741. Shelter (women only), counseling. Lesbians, gay men welcome.

Victim Resource Center of Wayne County.

Newark N.Y. Hotline 800-456-1172; office (315)331-1171; fax (315)331-1189.

Mary Magdalene House.

Women's outreach center for HIV positive women and women at risk. 291 Lyell Ave. Open Mon-Fri. 6:30-9:30 pm 458-5728.

POLITICAL:

National Organization for Women

(Greater Rochester NOW.)

PO Box 93196; (585)461-1310. E-mail: info@rochesternow.org Web page: http://www.rochesternow.org.

CULTURAL:

Rochester Women's Community

Chorus.

234-4411. (See Ongoing calendar).

SPORTS:

Rochester Renegades Women's Rugby.

New players always welcome, any skill level. We will teach you the game. Hotline (585)234-3066; online at www.renegades-rugby.com

Rochester Raptors.

NWFA women's football. www.rochester-raptors.com.

ONLINE:

RochesterDykes:

www.rdykes.com;
e-mail sabrinabeach@yahoo.com

WOWcny:

email: WOWcny@aol.com

GENERAL:

Pride & Joy Families

See Ongoing Calendar

Rochester Gay Moms' Group.

Support group for lesbian mummies and wannabe mummies in Rochester and surrounding areas. Subscribe: RochesterGayMoms-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Women's Resource Center.

YWCA, 175 N. Clinton Ave. 546-7740.

Butch-Femme Connection.

Contact Kerry at 865-4619, or
e-mail DressyFemme@aol.com.

Color Outside the Line Crew.

Contact Jackie Williams, 482-4945.

WNY Lesbian Couples

Third Saturdays, GAGV, 7-9 pm.
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WNYLesbianCouples/

Check our monthly and ongoing Calendars and the Gay Groups section for more woman-centered groups and events, and call the GaySource Infoline for referrals, at 244-8640.

And send us your information!

Free testing for HIV

exposure is available from New York State Department of Health: call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at (585)423-8081, or 1-800-962-5063 for pay phones or calls outside Rochester. Deaf or hearing impaired people should call (585)423-8120 (TDD.) **New Rapid HIV Testing now available --test results in 30-40 minutes!** Statewide information can be obtained by calling 1-800-541-AIDS. Other organizations which provide AIDS-related services are as follows:

AIDS Rochester, Inc.,

1350 University Ave., Rochester NY 14607. Provide support services for people with HIV/AIDS and their families; presents educational programs related to HIV/STDs to community groups; offers free, confidential testing every Monday and Thursday, 5-8 pm (no appointment necessary). Also testing on Outreach Van throughout city. Contact information: business line (585)442-2220 V/TTY; www.aidsrochester.org. Rural counties served by ARI offices in Geneva (1-800-422-0282) and Bath (1-800-954-2437).

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

provides referrals to physicians and service agencies. Person on duty Mon./Thurs. 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri. 1-6 p.m.; message machine other times. (585)244-8640.

Center for Health and Behavioral Training of Monroe County.

691 St. Paul St., 4th floor. Collaboration of Monroe County Health Department and U.R. Provides year-round training in prevention and management of STDs, HIV, TB and related issues, such as domestic violence and case management. (585)530-4382 v/tty.

AIDS Community Health Center (achc)

87 N. Clinton Ave. (4th floor). Comprehensive HIV care and primary medical care

for HIV positive individuals, their negative partners, and adult family members. ACHC provides nutritional evaluation, vision screenings, gynecological care, medical case management/counseling, and substance abuse counseling. The Center also offers out-patient treatments and infusions onsite, liaison nurses to coordinate home-care needs, educational resources and support groups, an active Patient Advisory Committee (PAC), access to clinical trials, lab onsite, and referrals to psychotherapy and other specialized health services. (585)244-9000. TTY (585)461-9202.

Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS (RATFA)

is a collection of agencies providing a multiplicity of resources and services to the upstate New York community. Their offices are located through the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, which also provides medical literature and newspaper clippings, as well as demographic and statistical data for use in developing health care services. (585)461-3520.

Men of Color Health Awareness Project (MOCHA).

HIV prevention focus for men who have sex with men (MSM) in the minority community. Support groups, one on one peer education, safer sex workshops, referral services, buddy testing. Sibley Tower Building, 25 Franklin St., Suite 1060. 420-1400.

Monroe County Health Department

at 855 W. Main St., offers testing and counseling for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. (585)464-5928.

Strong Memorial Hospital

provides a complete range of HIV medical care, including access to experimental treatment protocols, and HIV testing. Also provides individual and group psychotherapy. Training of health care professionals also available. Infectious Disease

Gay Health Initiative



Clinic, (585) 275-0526. Department of Psychiatry, (585) 275-3379. AIDS Training Project, (585) 275-5693.

Planned Parenthood of Rochester and Genesee Valley

offers testing and information (585) 546 2595.

Threshold Youth Center

provides confidential testing for young people ages 12-25. Fees on sliding scale, no one denied service. Threshold Center for Alternative Youth Services, 80 St. Paul St. 454-7530. Free oral HIV testing Thursdays 2-4 pm., ages 12-25.

Rural HIV testing.

anonymous and confidential, in Alleghany, Livingston, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne or Yates Counties, call 1-800-962-5063.

Action Front Center

(Action for a Better Community.) Provides HIV prevention education and case management services. Training and technical assistance to service providers. Resource library open to public. All services free and confidential. Multicultural and bilingual staff. Jearald Noble, program manager. 33 Chestnut St., second floor. Hours 8:30-5 pm, Monday-Friday. 262-4330; fax 262-4572. Free anonymous HIV testing on walk-in basis, Thursdays 9 am-4 pm, provided through NYSDOH at Action Front Center, 242 Andrews St. Carmen Hau, 262-4330.

Anthony Jordan Health Center Prevention Counseling and Testing Program.

Part of national initiative to increase testing among communities of color, targeting the GLBT population. Provides prevention case management, educational presentations, and access to other Jordan services. Prevention Counseling & Testing is a walk-in program; no appointments necessary. Office hours Mon.-Fri., 8:30 am-5 pm; extended hours on Mondays until 8 pm. (585)423-2822; fax 423-2893. Website: www.jordanhealthctr.org. For more information call Program Manager Pearlle Breedlove-Luttrell, (585)423-2874.

Evergreen Health Services, Buffalo. Primary care, HIV and family care, HIV testing and counseling: (716)847-0328.

CDC National STD and AIDS Hotline.

1-800-342-2437; 1-800-227-8922. English service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Spanish service: 1-800-

344-7432, 8 am- 2 am, seven days a week. TTY service: 1-800-243-7889, 10 am- 10 pm, Monday-Friday.

Public Interest Law Office of Rochester (PILOR),

80 St. Paul St., Suite 701. Free legal services to HIV positive persons, families. Spanish bilingual advocates available. All civil cases except divorce; no criminal cases. Ask to speak to someone in PILOR. 454-4060.

Health Association HART (HIV/AIDS Resources and Treatment) Program.

250 East Ave. (585)232-6382. Provides housing assistance, acupuncture, massage, reiki, support groups, referral services, Positively Alive (HIV + women's support network).

Westside Health Services.

Brown Square Health Center, 175 Lyell Ave. (254-6480); Woodward health Center, 480 Genesee St. (436-3040). HIV/AIDS services, support, more.

McCree McCuller Wellness Center at Unity Health's Connection Clinic.

(585)368-3200. 89 Genesee St., Bishop Kearney Bldg., 3rd floor. Full range of services, regardless of ability to pay. Caring, confidential and convenient.

Catholic Charities AIDS Services.

A multicultural and bi-lingual staff providing services to a diversity of people infected and affected with HIV. Intensive home-based case management for all ages; a clinical crisis manager; a child/adolescent case worker; transitional case management for children and family members going through bereavement; recreational and support groups for children and teens, and camping experiences including Camp SOAR. We coordinate HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS) short term emergency assistance with rent/mortgage/utility payments and limited subsidized housing. 1945 E. Ridge Rd., Suite 24, Rochester NY 14622. (585)339-9800.

Huther Doyle.

360 East Ave., Rochester 14604. Offers drug, alcohol prevention, education, treatment. Risk Reduction Plus Team offers services to HIV positive and those at risk through substance use. Programs include outreach, transitional case management, free confidential testing (OraQuick Rapid Testing). NYS Dep't. of Health offers free on-site confidential and anonymous testing. (585)325-5100, M-F 8 am-9 pm, www.hutherdoyle.com.

Gay Health DIRECTORY

Monroe County Department of Health STD Clinic
phone: (585) 464-5928

Monroe Community College Student Health Services
phone: (585) 292-2018 (MCC Students only)

Highland Hospital Nursing Staff Hobart & William Smith College Health Services
phone: (315) 891-3600

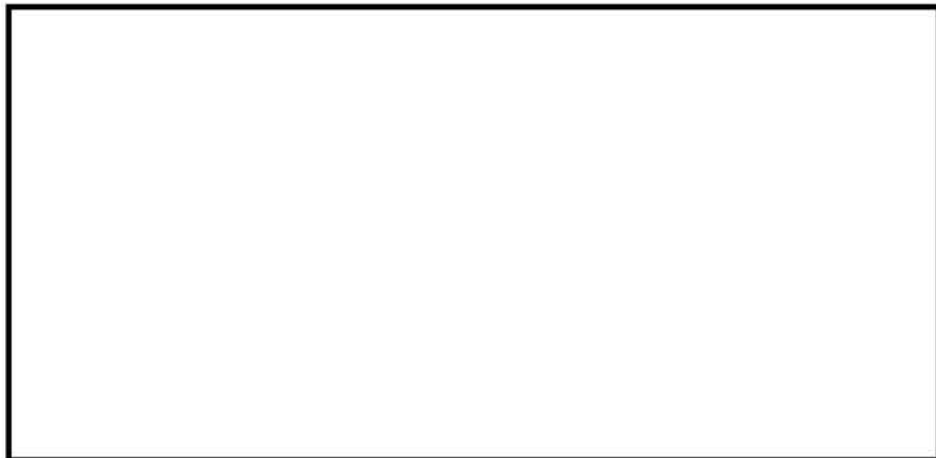
Rochester Institute of Technology Student Health Services
phone: (585) 475-2255 (RIT Students only)

Threshold Center for Alternative Youth Services
phone: (585) 454-7530 (serving ages 12-25)

Women Gynecology & Childbirth Associates, P.C.
phone: (585) 244-3430 (Main Office)

List compiled by AIDS Rochester, Inc. Further information on this list and related gay health topics available at <http://www.aidsrochester.org/gayhealth>

This list is under construction. If you are a provider, or know of one who would like to be included in this directory, please call Erik Libey at 442-2220 for more information.



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RocheSTAR for August:

Rainbow Seniors of WNY

This month the *Empty Closet* asked Rainbow Seniors of WNY about their very favorite Rochester people, places and things. Members' opinions and thoughts are as follows:

Favorite hangout: The Spot was the most favorite, with one vote for the Women's Coffee Connection on South Ave.

Favorite Restaurant: Aladdins, Don's Original, Northside Inn, King and I, Basha were all mentioned.

Favorite music source: WPXY, RPO (got most votes), 101.3, WDKX, Media Play. One RSWNY member is a radio scan addict with no favorite station, just favorite tunes! (Favorite local performer: Thomas Warfield.)

Favorite sports team and/or athletes: Red Wings (majority); Minnesota Vikings (apologetically stated by a member from Minnesota!), and Abby Wambach

Favorite clothing store: outlet malls, Second Hand Rose, Sears, The Avenue; one member hates shopping and does as much through catalogs as possible!

Favorite movie theatre: The Little, overwhelmingly; others are Tinseltown Cinemas; Cinema Theatre; Pittsford Cinema because of the comfortable seats).

Favorite area event: Lots of indecision here, but Pride Week festivities got most of the votes, indicating that even though we're older, many of us are still "Loud and Proud!" The Park Ave Festival got two votes, and the Lilac Festival and Naples Grape Festival each got a vote.

Favorite Saturday night out: Rainbow Seniors activities (good answer!); several people said going to a movie, one said "staying home," another going to the RPO, and several voted for getting together with friends. One member works on Saturday night and asked for clarification on exactly what "Saturday night out" meant!

Favorite Museum/Gallery: Several opted for the Memorial Art Gallery, and several like the George Eastman House.

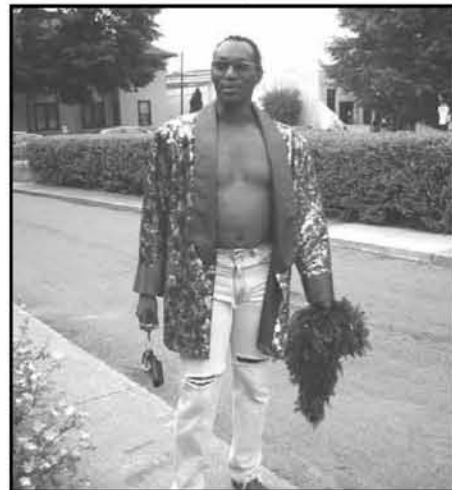
Favorite beach or pool: Several votes for Sherlea and Nancy's pool in Irondequoit; Durand Eastman Park; two votes for the pool at the Holiday Inn on Jefferson Road; one for Keuka Lake.

Favorite day trip included Casino Niagara, several votes for the Finger Lakes area, one vote for a train ride.

Favorite local celebrity included two votes for Abby Wambach, one for Tweet, one for Gap Mangione, one for the cast of Spezzano in the morning, and one vote for "everyone."

Suggested new categories include: Safe, tidy walking neighborhoods in Rochester; Favorite participatory sport, which one person answered as walking, working out, bicycling, canoeing; Favorite sports announcers; Favorite newscasters; Favorite psychiatrists; Favorite newspaper.

We had a lot to say! ■



Thomas Warfield, Rainbow Seniors' favorite local performer



JANET SANTIAGO

Travel Tips: Taking the fast ferry to Toronto -- it's great!

BY BRYAN J. BLOUGH

As my friends will tell you, I'm a traveler, usually to D.C., L.A., Fla., Ga -- you name it, I've visited. My list includes trips to Toronto via a car, but I took the Fast Ferry from Toronto to Rochester in June, and I must say the boat trip was much nicer than any of the road bound trips I've taken there.

I do hear all the negative talk about this ferry, saying it will never make it, but I have to say, from a gay man's perspective, I think it's great! I definitely will do the Friday night, two-hour sit back and relax trip to go partying in Toronto (a thing I wouldn't do if it meant driving). The eye-candy in

Toronto alone is worth the cost of a ticket. Keep in mind gas to get there, the inevitable parking fee in Toronto, and the stress of traffic jams, and the round trip fee for walk on fare is well worth it, and let's face it. have you ever actually driven anywhere in Toronto once there?

The ferry has two free movie theaters on board, which makes the time fly, but in addition to that there are a snack bar, a real bar, and assorted televisions around the ship to keep you occupied. The staff is friendly, and overall you're going to love this ship as a mode of transportation to Canada. The ship has plenty of room for cars and

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Natasha Doty and Jeanne Newland

"The Diane Miller Team made buying our home a joy. Everything was great!"

Lynda Baudanza and Deb Coffey

"When I first considered buying a house, my first reaction was, "I don't know how to do that," followed very quickly by, "I need a realtor!" How glad I am that *you* were that realtor. From the very beginning, your expertise, your professionalism, and your patience with me exceeded every expectation I had. I would, and *have*, highly recommended you, especially to anyone who wants to remove the anxiety from searching for a house.

Thank you. I am truly at home."

Nancy Brown

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cargo (my guess is that cargo is going to be what really keeps this boat running, no matter what the passenger load ends up being).

A couple of things you want to keep in mind when traveling to Canada are that, in addition to your driver's license, you want to have your Birth Certificate or Passport (I recommend using your Birth Certificate, because in the event you lose this document it is much easier to replace than your passport).

The entry laws require two forms of (approved) identification even though often only your driver's license is necessary (for U.S. Citizens). I have been informed from the U.S.A. side that to enter Canada you may be required to have additional identification, so just get a copy of your Birth Certificate and have it handy.

You do have to arrive at the terminal about an hour before departure, much like the airlines, for security screening; something we all need to accept as a way of life now. Customs went smoothly and quickly for me, but I'm realistic enough to know that may not always be the case.

Just like in the security screening part of any trip, it depends a lot on the idiot in front who is making the customs agent suspicious. Equate any delays in security and customs to traffic delays (except, of course, you won't have to be doing any driving once the jam-up clears).

If you want to impress with the intention of splurging on Business class, I wouldn't bother. Business class appears to be only a velvet-roped-off area of the ship on the upper deck that looks identical to the rest of the ship -- so save your cash. You will more than likely to be roaming the ship the first couple of trips aboard anyway.

A place you don't want to be stingy, though, is with the service staff. I noted that restaurant staff, clear and clean off tables, so be sure and leave a little gratuity -- you are gay, so set the example. (By the way, it is a myth that Canadian service staff has gratuities included in the price. This isn't Europe, Canadian bartenders and waiters work on minimum wage and survive on tips just like their American counterparts).

In the "coach" class there is plenty of seating with lots of tables (think cocktail lounge). For those of you who have kids, there is a play area for smaller children and one of the movies appears to be geared for family (on my trip it was Scooby-Doo II).

Keep in mind that if you have stayed in Canada less than 48 hours (which would be most of us who leave on Friday night and return Sunday morning), duty on goods you may return with significantly lowers. Fortunately most of us will be consuming our purchases in the form of cocktails. Keep in mind too that customs occurs in your destination country; with that in mind, both sides seem to be doing a great job in processing quickly in a friendly manner.

Let's talk Ports. The USA side clearly wins in appearance and style. The Canadian side reminds me of my days in the military: Portable buildings, bare bones functionality, but, it gets the job done. Both sides run well with what is there.

On the Toronto side you will definitely need to taxi it out or take the bus out of the port to the subway station (or walk from the subway station forward, as that is doable). The reason for this is that the Canadian port is in the middle of what looks like a container shipping port; you are not in the middle of a pretty shore-side hangout, you are in the middle of a working shipping port.

Once outside the port you will no longer need a taxi or bus until you return home (again only to get into the port area). The Toronto Port address is: 8 Unwin Avenue. Maps to both Terminals are located on the website (www.thebreeze.com) under FAQ.

One last challenge is to our gay and gay-friendly establishments: We all know where to party in Toronto, and if you don't, there are plenty of publications in that city to guide you along.

Here in Rochester, we may need to start getting a bit creative and give our Canadian brothers and sisters good reason to come visit us on a regular basis. Let's keep in mind that if it's all Americans going up to Canadian bars on the weekend, that doesn't leave much clientele left here in Rochester.

I certainly will do my part to get as many Canadian men as possible to visit Rochester (it's the least I can do). Maybe we can start an unofficial gay Rochester website where folks give the low-down on fun places and events, both gay and otherwise, here in Rochester. Hmm, maybe I'll do just that!

At any rate I hope this article has been helpful and I hope everyone starts spending at least some time visiting our Canadian neighbors -- now that we are much more connected, let foster good relations! ■

Pride fashion on parade



A certain spiritual motif was evident at the Pride Parade this year. The shirt above was worn by representatives of the Episcopal diocese.



The cowboy/girl look was also popular. Left: a COAP member. Right: Aggie Dune onstage at the Festival. TOP PHOTOS BY SUSAN JORDAN, BOTTOM PHOTOS BY GERY SZYMANSKI.

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Columnists

continued from page 3

under the insurance coverage provided by my employer.

I am a financially independent adult. I want the license that allows me to buy and inherit the house that we live in.

I am a taxpayer. I want the legal tool to access my spouse's social security benefits.

I am a property owner. I want the rights equal to my heterosexual neighbors'.

I am a registered voter. I want to elect a person who has a heart bigger than his Texas wallet. I want a President whose feelings are deeper than his Middle East oil wells.

In November, I hope that every closet door swings wide open and that every lesbian, every person who is gay, every person who is bisexual, every person who is transsexual, every person who is intersexed, and every person who is related by blood or choice to an LGBTI person will vote to eradicate prejudice. I want every one, every thousands and thousands of us to vote to defeat words of exclusion.

I want a President who celebrates the coming together of two taxpayers because they have love and respect. I want a President who supports two taxpayers who have agreed to be supportive and nurturing to each other.

To achieve this support, we need to control the words.

Perhaps Kerry and other elected officials will need some help in updating their vocabularies. Perhaps the book thumpers need to update their dictionaries. It will be imperative to have definitions that reflect the reality of 2004. And so, dear readers, I have an updated definition of marriage to share.

(This is like those emails that say "Pass this on to 20 friends or your left ear will turn purple.")

This is a column that comes with directions. Cut this out; scan it into your computer and send it to your whole address book. Mail it to every politician you can think of. Read it aloud on street corners. Transfer it to a t-shirt. Post it on telephone poles. Paste it onto the car bumper. Scatter a paper trail right down the proverbial aisle.

We the people of these United States of America in order to form a more perfect union pledge our allegiance to an **INCLUSIVE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE...**

Marriage: civil marriage, the legal status of two persons

Marriage: religious marriage, the symbolic rituals of a specific belief system that constitute the familial celebration of the joining of two persons.

Marriage: the togetherness, without reluctance, of two Homo sapiens. Homo (fr L, human being); sapiens (fr L, wise, intelligent).

Marriage: the joining of two adults, two adults, one Homo sapiens who loves another Homo sapiens, two adults, one Homo sapiens who in all ways is committed to another Homo sapiens.

Marriage: the emotional intimacy and the spiritual intimacy of two consenting adults.

Marriage: the monogamous sexual intimacy of two lifelong friends.

Marriage: the condition of ultimate tolerance.

Marriage: the commitment of one beating heart to another beating heart.

Marriage: the public declaration of the intent to persevere through sickness and/or health; poverty or wealth; trials and tribulations.

Ms. Spouse and Ms Spouse will join

their hearts and their hands in marriage in September 2004, wearing wedding attire that does have pockets.

They request the gift of equality.

the **Vagina Dialogues**
Talk to us. Turn to us.

Planned Parenthood
of the Rochester/Syracuse Region Inc.

BY SARAH EVANS, PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF THE ROCHESTER/SYRACUSE REGION

Bisexuality??

Gay and straight. These are words you probably hear more times throughout the day than you'd care to think about. Perhaps you have chosen one of these words or their countless replacements as your chosen manner of representing yourself, but perhaps you feel neither truly signifies your sexual identity. Can it be that the whole range of human sexuality can be classified into these two little words?

The answer to this question is a resounding "no." Bisexuality is a very common sexual orientation, regardless of the negative stigma so often attached to it in our society. Some people criticize bisexuals, saying they are simply trying to get the "best of both worlds" by not choosing to be gay or straight, but the sad truth is bisexuals are far more often confronted with the worst this world has to offer than the best. Here's why.

Bisexuality is hard to define, as a common definition does not seem to exist. Some people see bisexuality as a felt attraction to both men and women, while others define a person as bisexual only if they act on these attractions and find both satisfying and fulfilling. Some people assert that, to some degree, everyone is bisexual, because we all experience at least small amounts of attraction to both sexes at some point, while others see bisexuality as little more than a "transition phase" between gay and straight. It's no wonder the topic is so difficult to discuss when we can't even agree on what the term means! This is one major reason for bisexuality's negative stigma - it is not understood. This ignorance, found among both hetero- and homosexuals, makes it very difficult for bisexuals to find acceptance with either group, which is often one of the most painful aspects of a bisexual's life.

Many bisexuals feel they are accepted by no one. They are neither gay nor straight, and in a black and white society such as this one, that makes it very difficult to "fit in." Bisexuals often experience the same frustration as do people of mixed ethnic origins. They identify with neither group, leaving them to deal with their ostracism alone. Many straight people view them as more gay than straight, while many homosexuals think they are trying to lessen the pain brought on by being openly gay. While neither of these generalizations is true for everyone, both are experienced by many bisexuals and make it very difficult to cope with their sexuality.

If you are bisexual, you might find it comforting to know that you are not alone. Here in the Rochester area, you can safely connect with the Grey Area Group to discuss your feelings and experiences. You can learn more about them at home.rochester.rr.com/grayareagroup. Another wonderful on-line resource is the comprehensive

FAQ section at <http://serf.org/jon/soc.bi/faq/a.html>.

So what can you do to help if you are not bisexual? Educate yourself! No one can be helped by someone who doesn't understand their problem. While this advice would seem to be more aptly directed at a conservative heterosexual population, it is important for all homosexuals to embrace bisexuals as well, not make them feel unwelcome and alone.

Bisexuality is not the same as homosexuality, but neither is it the same as heterosexuality. This unique sexual orientation must be understood in order for it to be accepted, and the only way for this to happen is through education. We must not show bisexuals the "worst of both worlds." Show them acceptance, and perhaps we will come to know a new world all together.

For more information on sexual orientation, visit Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region's website at www.pprsr.org or call our toll-free helpline at 1-866-600-6886. The Planned Parenthood website features "Ask An Educator" where you can receive personal, confidential replies to your sexual orientation questions.

Queer & Healthy

BY ERIK LIBEY



Getting to Know You Vol. 5: The Meat of the Matter

This month in our series on male sexual anatomy and health, we're going to talk about something we're all familiar with... and yet know very little about: the penis.

As men, especially gay/bi men, we definitely know where our penis is located... and many of us spend a great deal of time thinking about the penis - both our own and those of others.

That said, however, a shocking number of guys really don't know that much about this important part of their body. There are misconceptions about what is "normal" for a penis... its shape, size, color, function, etc.; and a survey I read recently showed that only about 50 percent of adult males could even explain, in basic terms, how the penis works! (On the flip, though, almost all men can probably describe how to tell if it was NOT working!)

The penis is made up primarily of three separate cylinders of spongy tissue that run from the pelvic bone through the length of the penis shaft. The two upper cylinders, which run side by side, are called the corpus cavernosum and they make up the bulk of penis, especially when erect.

A tissue that wraps around them both called the tunica albuginea connects these two cylinders. The third cylinder runs along the bottom side of the penis and in many men creates a pronounced ridge when the penis is erect. This cylinder, which contains the urethra (the tube through which urine and semen pass to leave the body), is called the corpus spongiosum.

Laced throughout and around these three cylinders is a rich network of nerves and blood vessels. During normal penile function, these blood vessels fill the tissue of the cylinders with blood where it is trapped to create an erection and generally released after climax.

The health of the penis for men is often a complicated subject. Some issues are often influenced more by perceptions about what is "normal" for a penis.

For example, many studies have demonstrated that a predominant concern for men is the size of their penis... with MOST men having an exaggerated sense of what "normal" penis size is -- an estimated two thirds of men wish their penis were larger. This concern has led many men to seek out devices, medications, and even operative procedures to enhance the size of their penis... often with disappointing results.

So an important bit of trivia to start with is that, no matter what the online profiles you read say, the average erect penis size is about six inches and just under five inches in circumference!

Other concerns regarding the health of the penis are medical in nature. A very small percentage of men will experience serious health problems such as cancer of the penis... a condition that obviously should be both diagnosed and treated by a physician.

Other problems are less dangerous but, considering how important the penis is to most men, can be equally distressing.

One condition is called peyronie's disease. Most common in men between 40 and 60 and sometimes appearing with no discernable warning signs, this disease causes a severe and painful bend or abnormal shape in the erect penis. This condition is suspected to be the cause of scar tissue that forms in the tunica albuginea around the main cylinders of the penis. It will often resolve itself over time... but requires patience... or it can sometimes be treated by a physician.

Trauma to the penis is another health concern. Some traumas may be external, such as cuts, scrapes or bruising for a variety of reasons. Other injuries can occur internally. While there is no literal bone in an erect penis (despite the misnomer "boner"), an erect penis CAN break... and doing so is definitely as painful as it sounds! If this happens, go to the emergency room immediately!

The final significant risk to the penis lies in sexually transmitted diseases. Since the penis is one of the organs most commonly used during sex, it stands to reason that it is particularly vulnerable to most or all of the STDs out there... which may cause symptoms such as pain or blood during urination, sores, warts, or rashes.

All of these symptoms should be viewed as a warning sign and be evaluated by a doctor, too.

While I'm sure most gay/bi men don't need to be reminded of this... the penis can be an important part of our healthy sexual functioning... and so knowing how it IS and is NOT supposed to feel and work and reporting any problems to your physician is important to... be gay, be proud, & be healthy!

Erik Libey is the Gay Health Coordinator at AIDS Rochester, Inc. and can be reached at (585) 442-2220 x3042 or by email at elibey@aidsrochester.org. An archive of his previous articles, as well as other gay health information, can be found at AIDS Rochester's website dedicated to queer health at www.aidsrochester.org/gayhealth.

Acting on Faith

BY PAUL KNOKE

Rochester Quakers and same-sex marriage

This regular column is organized by Interfaith Advocates for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender of Rochester, NY. IA was formed in 1981 to seek increased awareness, understanding and inclusion of LGBT people by our individual congregations and by the larger community. Please visit the IA website at www.interfaithadvocates.org <<http://www.interfaithadvocates.org>> to find resources, upcoming events, welcoming congregations in greater Rochester, and to sign the Interfaith Statement in Support of Equal Marriage for All. Guest columnist for this month is Paul Knoke, longtime member of IA and of the Rochester Quaker Meeting, 84 Scio St, www.nyym.org/rochester <http://www.nyym.org/rochester> or call 585-325-7260.

On 12 March 1989, The Rochester Quaker Meeting became the first congregation in the area to approve performing same-sex marriages on the same basis as opposite-sex marriages. This decision came after a year and a half of the meeting seeking the truth together, and working towards finding "the sense of the meeting."

Some information about Quakers may be helpful in telling how this concern came to the meeting, and how this decision was made in response to the concern. Quakers do not have a creed or a specific set of defining beliefs.

There are, however, many values that are held by most, if not all, Quakers. These values include non-violence, truthfulness, simplicity, that there is something of God in every person, that no one person is more or less important than any other, and service in society is a way of showing our faith and belief in God.

Quakers are also known as the Religious Society of Friends, derived from an early name for the movement: Friends of Truth. The meeting in Rochester is an unprogrammed meeting. There is no minister or pastor, and meetings for worship do not include music, sermons, or any other pre-planned ritual or activity. Instead, members and attenders of the meeting gather together and wait in silence. Sometimes someone will feel that "the light within" is prompting them to speak. That person will stand and share their spiritual message with the others. Some other meetings, or Friends' churches, do have a pastor. Their meetings for worship resemble most other Protestant services, with a sermon and hymn singing.

Since there is no one pastor or minister, weddings in an unprogrammed meeting are a little different from those in other denominations. The meeting for worship gathers in silence, with the couple to be married usually seated either at the front of the meeting room, or near the center if the chairs are arranged in a circle. At least one of the people to be married must be a member of the Religious Society of Friends. After a period of silent worship, the couple stands and recites their vows to each other. When they are done, silent

worship resumes, with an opportunity for those present to share messages if they are moved to do so. Everyone who has witnessed the wedding signs a large marriage certificate at the end of the meeting for worship. The marriage license from the state is usually signed by the clerk of the meeting. The clerk is a member of the meeting who has volunteered to be responsible for coordinating the business and activities of the meeting.

Quakers have a long history of activism for human rights, particularly equal rights for minorities such as Native Americans. Quakers were very active in the abolition of slavery in the United States, and in the women's rights movements of the 19th and 20th centuries. When the concern about same-sex marriages was brought before the Rochester meeting in the late 1980s, it was clearly seen as fitting in with this tradition. The concern was brought to the meeting well before there was any request by a same-sex couple to be married under the care of the meeting. It was felt to be important that the topic be addressed slowly and carefully, without the pressure of people waiting for a response so they could be married.

The discussion of this concern was very wide-ranging and examined the question from many angles. Several people wondered about the separation of church and state, and whether religious organizations should be performing government sanctioned marriages. Some felt that if the meeting could not perform a legally recognized marriage for same-sex couples, it should not do so for opposite-sex couples. However, the meeting reached clearness on the concern in the spring of 1989. The minute, or written record, reads in part:

"Rochester Monthly Meeting affirms the goodness of committed, loving relationships that are enduring, unselfish, mutually tender, and supportive. We find it consistent with Friends' belief in the inner light to recognize the loving commitment of two people, regardless of their sex.

"We affirm our willingness as a Meeting to hold meetings for worship in celebration of loving commitment for both opposite sex and same sex couples."

The minutes were approved at the March, 1989 meeting for business, with a sense of great peace and joy.

Here are three short stories from three transgender females that may, or may not, pique your interest. Their names will be changed to protect the innocent, as follows:

Hi, they call me Cookie, why? Because I love my sweets. I am a transgender female who loves to eat all them foods that I was warned years ago to be careful of. I am now diabetic, and had to go through the healthy measures and procedures in order to stay healthy. When I first found out about my illness, I was sent back home four times before I finally came back the fifth time through the emergency room in their ambulance again. My hair was a mess,

my face began to show male obvious facial hair features, and my breast was obvious which they laughed at instead of seeing what's really going on. When I began to act like a damn fool, that is when they catered to me immediately.

It's a shame I had to act out in such a manner in order to get my health services.

My name is Precious, why? Because I am so pretty, and at first sight, a male most likely wants me sexually. I look so much like a female in the face, breast, height, weight, hands, and feet. I have this issue with people finding out what I really am, and they may find out that I am HIV positive, is what the doctors told me. I am sick of working the streets for sex, and at times I get so angry because there are so many doors that are shut literally in my face, so what do I do? I keep on spreading my love until I get the right treatments that others receive on a one percent to 99 percent scale. You don't have to love me, I will survive...

I am hepatitis-C, by the way. They call me big Sherily, and in my case I drank liquor alcohol, until a minor scrape to my liver over the years was discovered. Doctors told me that either I ease up on drinking, or I will have major liver and heart conditions in the future. I am now on a new trial for this illness, and it is working, yet I get so tired when injecting myself with the needles and medications that are prescribed to me.

VOICES: JAMES' STORY Family Secrets.....

You've got to be kidding!! Me? Syphilis?

I couldn't believe it. I've had HIV for over 10 years now, but I don't let that get me down. I take good care of myself, you know; the gym four days a week, I eat right, I look good, and I take all of my medications. My viral load is undetectable, so I don't need to worry.

Then a couple of weeks ago, I got this weird rash. After going from doctor to doctor, I finally went to the STD clinic on West Main Street. They did the swab test for gonorrhea and chlamydia, which wasn't as bad as I was told. They also did a blood test, and sure enough, that rash was syphilis!

I live in Canandaigua, but I travel a lot for work. That is how I get to know guys in other cities. I guess that's where I got the syphilis. I just heard that some of the places I go to, like DC, Miami, New York, are having a new problem with syphilis among gay men -- especially guys who go to the bath house or chat rooms and are HIV positive.

But that's OK. I'm fine now; I took

VOICES continued on next page



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Trans Talk

BY FATIMA WOODS



Trans women of color speak out

The names are changed to protect the innocent...

When going back out to my community of color, I now listen even closer to the transgender females of color... I hear things like, "I am sick of welfare," "Why can't I get the trainings and feed back from straight people, or so-called straight people," "I have goals and dreams to be somebody, and to share with that someone, or somebody who I prefer, in a constructive way..."

I am now a Peer Educator, and have come a pretty long way from the streets, yet my heart goes out to the transgender people who are now desperate to come into a healthy and professional setting and learn more, plus be grateful to their surroundings, and also feel good about themselves.

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Pet Talk with Tulip:

Another Pride comes and goes...

BY MISS TULIP (AS TOLD TO TODD PLANK)

Hello my Lovelies,

Another Pride has come and gone (sigh), but the memories still linger in the air (reminding Miss Tulip and her human companions at the GAGV of Miss Tulip's gastrointestinal problem... but that's a subject for another column.)

One of the highlights for me was, of course, riding in the Tulipmobile at the Pride Parade. Miss Tulip's convertible was tastefully adorned with a beautiful array of rainbow colored tulips (what else did you expect), and swathed in purple silk, while the front windshield was framed in an oversized pair of jeweled spectacles.

As Miss Tulip's caravan passed, her adoring fans gathered along the roadside and shouted her name (Tulip! Tulip! Tulip!), throwing tulip petals in front of her procession... OK, OK, maybe I'm getting a little carried away... it must be the heat making me a bit delirious.

The other thrilling event for moi was the Doggie Drag contest at the Pride Picnic. There were seven fabulous contestants who strutted their stuff before a packed crowd under the entertainment tent. Mistress of Ceremonies Miss Aggie Dune, and my personal assistant, Todd Plank, mc'd the pet pageant, under my careful supervision. The tiara, proudly worn by one of her owners (our human companions always seem to steal the limelight, don't they, Bella... Miss Tulip's owner is the same way!) and the title Miss Pet Pride 2004 went to a tiny Chihuahua, Issabella,

known as Bella Baby, who was clearly the crowd favorite in her fairy princess costume, wings and all! (Miss Tulip just thought of a funny joke... if this Chihuahua gains a lot of weight she'll be a portabella!... maybe I'll do standup comedy at the festival next year.)

Issabella may look like an angel (don't let those wings fool you), but, as she stated in her own words: "I have an MDA... Masters of Dominatrix, of all dogs 100 sizes larger than me... and can go from zero to bitch in 6.9 seconds!"

When Bella was asked why she felt that she should be awarded the title of Miss Pet Pride 2004, she said it was because "she may not live another year if she bites her mommies one more time." Don't worry about it Bella Baby, Miss Tulip is sure they must have done something to provoke you.

Miss Tulip would be remiss if she didn't include some honorable mentions. First (you know how Miss T loves leather! there was an adorable Pomeranian named Blessing, who sported a Harley vest and rainbow scarf and said that she's full of pride and won't let a male dog touch her... you go grrrr!

Best Talent went to the Fab 4, Bobbie, Chico, Buddie and Chewy, a singing quartet of chihuahua/mixes dressed in matching outfits. One of the lead singers experienced a little stage fright, but the other ear-splitting vocalist blew the crowd away... move over Mariah!

Sierra, a beautiful Rhodesian Ridge/Pit mix, received the award for Most Festive Pride Outfit, for her glamorous rainbow feather boa.



Miss Tulip finally steals the limelight from her human companion Chuck at the Doggie Drag pageant. PHOTOS BY GERRY SZYMANSKI

Most Playful Pair went to Pug/Terrier mix Winston and Cocker/Jack Russell mix Wyatt. They were as cute as the Olsen Twins, but (thankfully) you couldn't see their ribs.

Sammy, a Shih-Tzu (careful how you pronounce that), received the award for Best Black & White, looking very fashionable in his rainbow-striped visor and matching scarf.

Bringing up the rear (as dogs so often do) and awarded Best Puppy was Cassie, a cute five-month-old Pomeranian/Papillion mix, who we hope to see back next year. She clearly has a future, as she said in her own words: "I'm adorable and feisty, just like a drag queen."

Miss Tulip is expecting a fiercer competition next year, so all you 2005 Pet Pride hopefuls better start working on your routines (the talent part of

the contest was, I confess, rather lame this year) and attire for next year and PLEASE, start your costume shopping earlier. Miss T was aghast to see several contestants running around to the Pride Vendors purchasing last minute outfits for Doggie Drag... tsk, tsk.

Miss Tulip would also like to extend special thanks to Lollypop Farm and Pet Smart for their petting zoo (they kept it clean) and for their presence at the Pride Picnic.

We'll see you again next year!

Chow for Now.

Miss Tulip ■

Bottom: Sierra. Top Cassie and Sammy. For a photo of Bella, see page A10.

Columnists

continued from previous page

the syphilis treatments and now I'm cured. The nurse at the STD clinic said I should use condoms every time I have oral or rectal sex. She also told me that having an STD would increase my HIV viral load and that could bring on more AIDS illnesses.

But you know what? I still don't care because the way I see it -- the people I have sex with are all grown ups -- and they all know about HIV/AIDS. So it's not my responsibility to protect them -- they all make their own choices -- right?

I already have HIV and everything else is curable. I've heard that a person can't get HIV again, so what's the big deal? Not my problem.

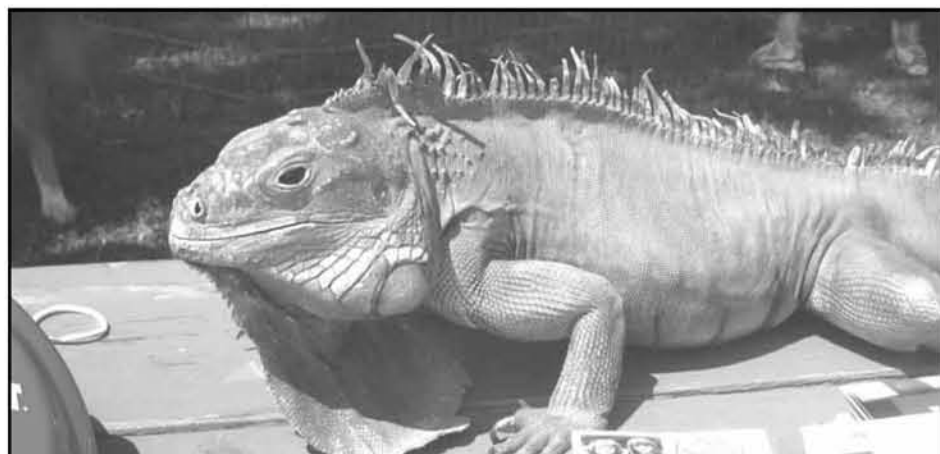
I'm tired of worrying about this stuff all the time. I just want to have some fun; I'm willing to spin the roulette wheel, and so are a lot of other guys.

If some guy wants to use a condom, I guess it's OK, but I'm not going to; what's the point?

The only thing is, I'm a little worried about my younger sister. She's only twenty-five. We don't talk much, but I heard she's going out with some new guy. I met him the other night at my parent's house - and he sort of looked familiar. Later on, I finally figured out why I recognized him.

You see, he's a regular at the bath house and I've slept with him a couple of times. What if I gave him syphilis or even my HIV -- and he passes that on to her? I know she's on the pill, but it won't protect her from STDs and HIV.

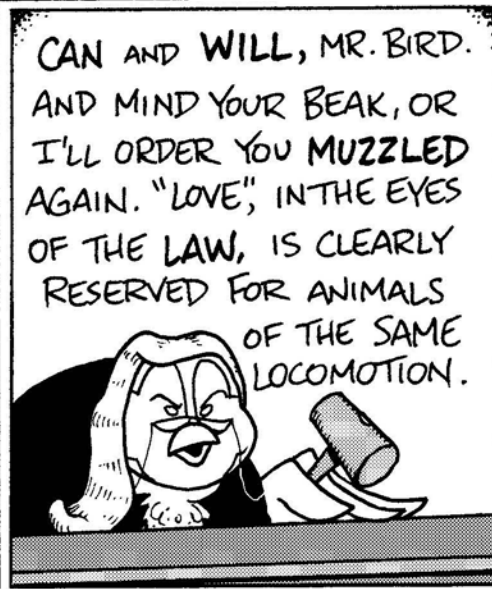
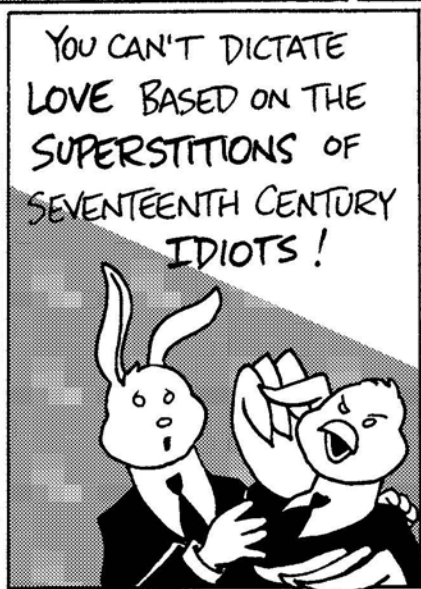
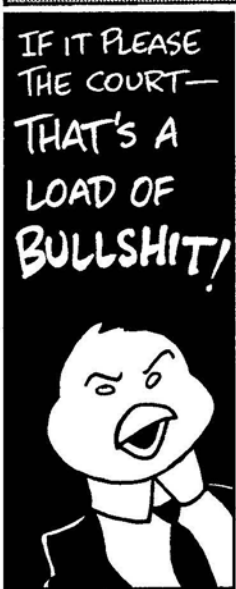
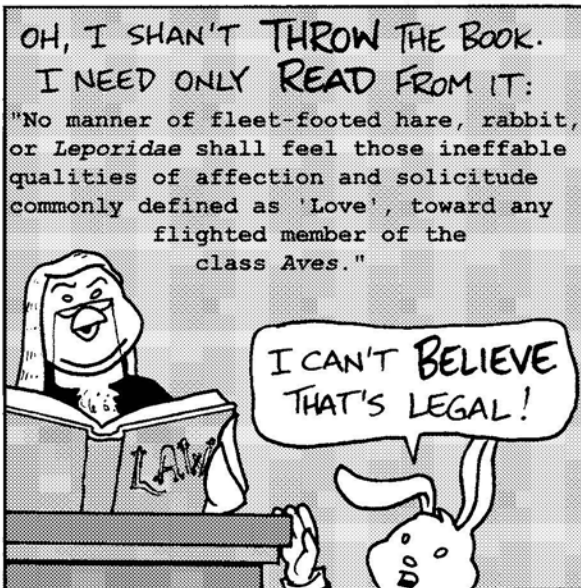
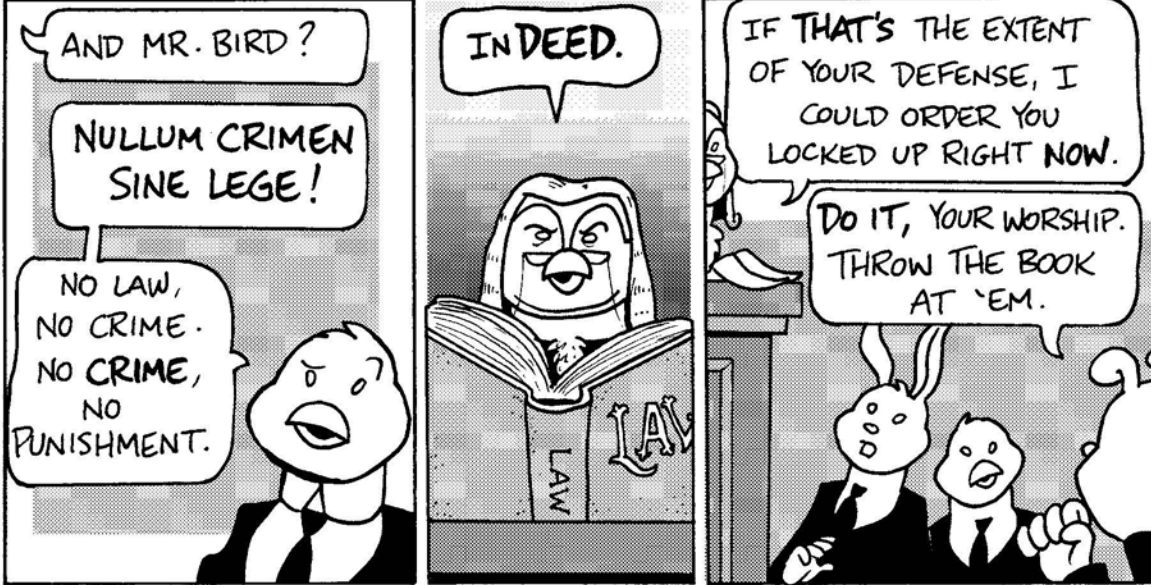
Maybe I should try to warn her about this new boyfriend. She knows I'm gay, but she doesn't know I'm positive. Maybe I have to rethink the condom thing. I couldn't live with the idea that something I did could end up hurting my little sister. ■



This iguana did not take part in the pageant. "Do I look like a dog to you?" he asked. (Actually, it's a stuffed iguana...)



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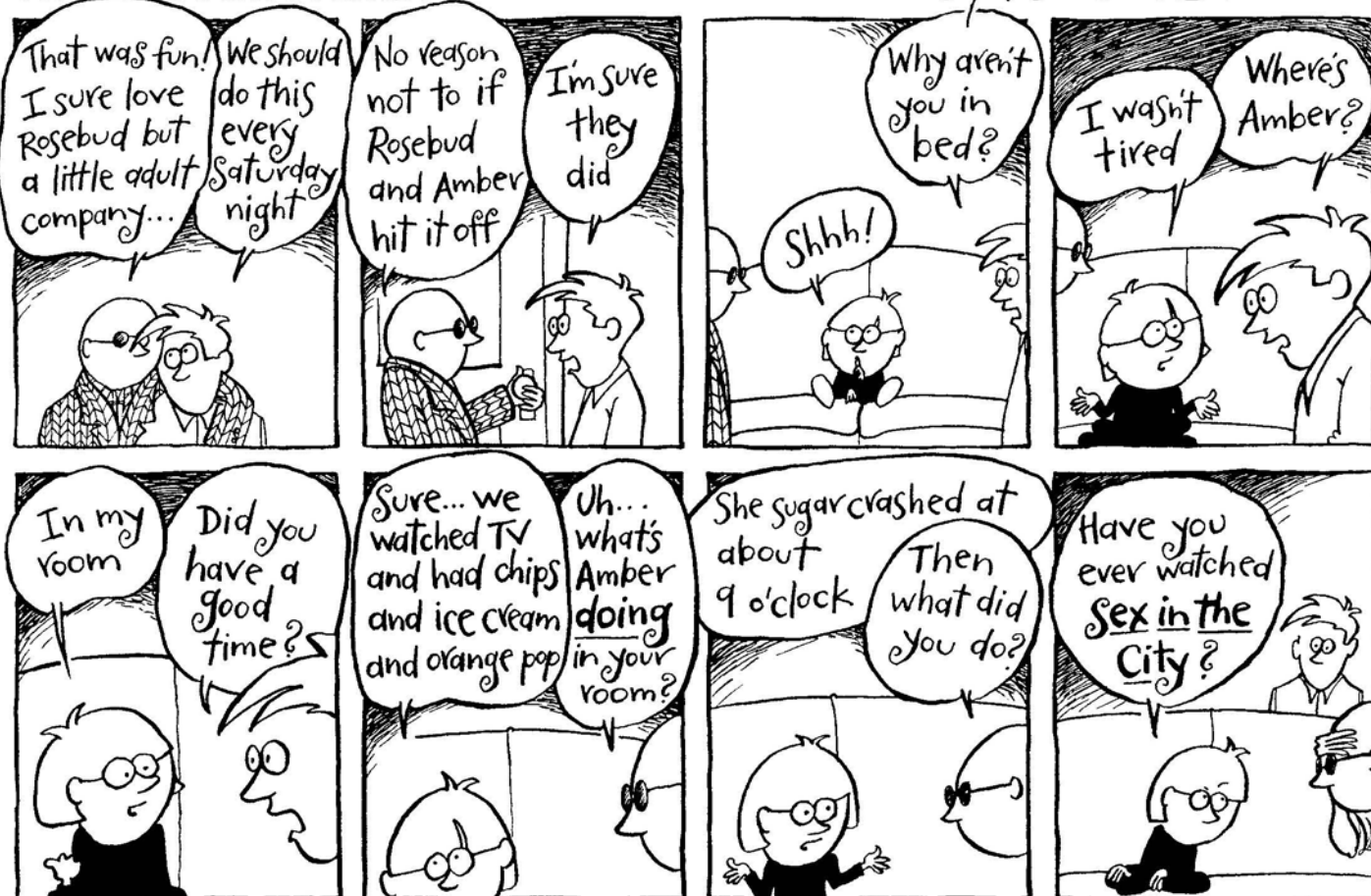
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by Noreen Stevens



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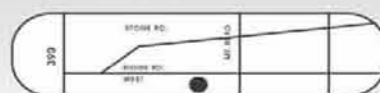
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GAGV Community Center News

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley... 32 years

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Gay Groups

■ Men's Chorus hosts City Garden Sunset Stroll on Aug. 22.
Page C4

UPSTATE REPORT

Queer at the Pier

■ The WNY Pride Center throws a bash at the Buffalo Pier.
Page C3

GAGV Information

GAGV Community Center
179 Atlantic Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607-1255
Hours by appointment only

Youth Center, Empty Closet & Administrative Offices
Suite 500
875 E. Main St
Rochester, NY 14605
(585) 244-8640

Empty Closet phone:
(585) 244-9030

GAGV/EC fax:
(585) 244-8246

GAGV E-mail:
info@gagv.us

Empty Closet E-mail:
emptycloset@gagv.us

GAGV Website:
www.gayalliance.org

Office hours:
Monday – Friday, 9AM – 6PM
Meeting space is wheelchair accessible.

Board President
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Executive Director
Chuck Bowen

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Empty Closet Editor
Susan Jordan

Community Relations Director
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Youth Services Director
Toby Greenfield

Executive Assistant
Cindi Eveleigh

Community Education Outreach Coordinator
Todd Plank

Graphic Designer
Jim Anderson

Anti-Violence Coordinator
Alexandra Cobus

Receptionist
Jeaneen Waddell

YOUTH GROUPS:

The Young Adult Group (18-23)
meets Sundays 12-1:30 PM at Youth Center, 875 E. Main 585-244-8640

The GAGV Youth Group (13-18)
meets Sundays 2-4 PM at Youth Center, 875 E. Main, 585-244-8640

The Youth Group of Color
meets Tuesdays from 3-5 PM at The MOCHA Project office, 25 Franklin Street, Suite 1060, 585-420-1400

GAGV JUNE USAGE STATISTICS

Community Center Usage	
Number of different groups	10
Number of people.....	256
Incoming telephone calls	
Youth Group.....	11
General Information	291
<i>(Community Programs & General Referrals)</i>	
Adult Crisis Counseling	5
<i>(not referred to other agencies)</i>	
Anti-Violence Program	5
Media.....	12
Youth Information	
New kids for June	6
Total youth served.....	325
Community Education Project	
Total number of presentations	3
Total audience.....	92
Website Visits	
www.gayalliance.org.....	3,177
ec.gayalliance.org.....	8,002
youth.gayalliance.org.....	231
Empty Closet Distribution	
Gross Distribution.....	5,000
Subscriptions.....	780



Youth on the march

The GAGV Youth Group marched in the Pride Parade on July 17. Group members created their own (often edgy) posters and wore new t-shirts designed by group members; thanks to Janet Santiago for designing the logo. For more coverage of the Youth contingent and the Teen King and Queen, see page A11 and next page.

Youth update: Pride was great!

BY TOBY GREENFIELD

Greetings from Youth Group Land... We are just coming off a fabulous month of July! Our Youth tables at the Pride Picnic and Culture Fest were HUGE successes as we tattooed many arms (and necks, thighs and backs!)... We also held our annual Mr. and Ms. Gay Teen Pride Pageant & Youth Dance on July 12 at Muther's and had a fabulous turnout! Thanks to the audience who came out in great numbers to the dance, and also to all the performers who were amazing this year! Congratulations to Mia Carrera and Hero as they were crowned our new Gay Pride 2004 Teen Queen and King!! A special thanks to Muther's for being wonderful hosts, to all the judges for

their great job, and to Erik Libey for his continued help and dedication to our Youth Program.

The fun continued as the newly crowned King and Queen rode atop their thrones at the Pride Parade! We had a great turnout of Youth and we all marched proudly down the Parade route as the King and Queen led our Youth Group chant!

To cap off our Pride Week events, we enjoyed our annual trip to Gay Days at Darien Lake on July 19.

Can you say whew! We are definitely looking forward to a little breather this month, as we prepare to begin our major work/renovation of the Youth Community Learning Center.

Thanks to ALL of you out there for your continued support of our Youth Programs. Please know how extremely appreciated you are. ■

Anti-Violence Program needs you: volunteer trainings begin in September

BY ALEX COBUS

The GAGV Anti-Violence Program (AVP) is a program designed to work for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims and survivors of violence.

Specifically, the GAGV-AVP offers free and confidential support to victims and survivors of hate crimes, rape and sexual assault, HIV-related violence, domestic violence and pick-up crimes.

We are currently seeking caring and committed volunteer advocates to work with our clients. Our Advocates provide phone support, which may include safety planning, education, referrals, as well as emotional support.

We are also looking for GAGV-AVP Advocates who can accompany clients to court, the hospital, the police, or other agencies to assist clients in obtaining the services they need. GAGV-AVP Advocates play a critical role in our program. The GAGV-AVP is committed to

diversity in all aspects of our program. People of color, transgender individuals, and both men and women are strongly encouraged to volunteer.

This is an incredible and unique opportunity for you to make a difference in your community, and gain some valuable skills in the process. No previous experience or training is required, although we certainly welcome those who do have some related background.

The GAGV-AVP will provide a six hour, extensive training covering issues such as violence in the lgbt community, crisis intervention, domestic violence, the police and criminal justice system, hate and bias crimes and incidents, and legal rights of victims.

Our next GAGV-AVP Volunteer Advocate Training will be Sept. 13 and 14, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., at the GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Call me at 585-244-8640, for more information, and to sign up for the training. ■

The GAGV thanks Rep. Louise Slaughter and Rep. Amo Houghton for voting against the court-stripping bill. (See page A5)

Coming Out workshops start Sept. 15

BY TODD PLANK

The Gay Alliance will be offering another introductory Coming Out Workshop series in the fall.

The dates are Sept. 15 through Oct. 27. The workshops will run on all consecutive Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. at the GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. The registration fee is \$35.

Scholarships are available based on need. Those persons wishing to participate must make a commitment to attend all seven weeks of the workshop. Interested individuals can register online or call me at 244-8640, ext. 24. ■

Quichemasters trainings for GAGV Speakers Bureau set for Sept. 11, 12

Interested in spreading the word about lgbt rights in the greater Rochester community? Eager to hone your public speaking skills and learn the most effective ways to do a presentation?

On Sept. 11 and 12, the Gay Alliance will offer training to individuals who are interested in volunteering as members of the GAGV Speakers Bureau.

The day-and-a-half QuicheMasters training will provide new members of the Speakers' Bureau with the skills and confidence to deliver presentations on lgbt topics to high school and college students, as well as other organizations that request education on queer topics.

Call Community Education Outreach Coordinator Todd Plank to enroll: (585) 244-8640 ext.24. ■

Don't miss this!
Speakers Bureau trainings:
Sept. 11, 12.

Anti-Violence Project volunteer trainings:
Sept. 13, 14.

And don't forget:
GAGV Library Summer Hours are 6-8 p.m. every Wednesday!

ings (open to the public) the Wednesday before each Bar Night at 7:30 p.m. at the Forum.

For more information, please visit our website: www.rochesterrams.com.

RGMC

July was truly one of the most exciting months for the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus (RGMC). From July 17 through July 24, the RGMC attended the VIIe Festival International in Montreal, sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA Choruses).

Held only once every four years, this event was a rare and extraordinary experience, as the Chorus sang alongside over 200 choruses from all over the globe. In honor of this special occasion, and in recognition of over 21 years of the RGMC being a celebrated face and voice of the Greater Rochester and Monroe County gay community, a joint proclamation was presented to the Chorus by County Executive Maggie Brooks and Mayor Johnson decreeing July 17 as Rochester Gay Men's Chorus Day!

On Thursday evening, July 15, the RGMC was also honored with a visit from Mayor Johnson at our last rehearsal before the GALA convention. He watched us perform one of our favorite numbers and then thanked all of the RGMC for continuing to bring wonderful music to the Greater Rochester community. Before leaving, he wished us the best of luck at GALA.

His visit was tied to the presentation of a second proclamation by city Councilmember William F. Pritchard at our send-off on Saturday morning, July 17. This proclamation recognized that the members of the RGMC were acting

as ambassadors of the City of Rochester at this international event. The proclamation was signed by Mayor Johnson, City Council President Lois Giess, and City Councilmembers Tim Mains and Bill Pritchard.

How can we top such an exciting month? By taking a relaxing sunset stroll in August! Specifically, A City Garden Sunset Stroll. The RGMC will be hosting a tour of some of the most unique private gardens in Rochester on Saturday, Aug. 21, from 5 p.m.-9 p.m. We currently have 10 gardens on our roster, with more possibly to be added.

Gardens visited will include ones located in the Southwedge, Cornhill, and the University area. Become inspired for your own garden or just admire the botanical beauty. You will even catch a special performance of The Cosmopolitans at one of the stops! Tickets are \$12 in advance or \$15 on the day of the tour. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit our website at www.thergmc.org or call our office at 585-423-0650.

Are you interested in becoming a part of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus? Voice placements for our December concert are at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 2, and our first rehearsal is on Thursday, Sept. 9, at 7 p.m. Please visit our website or give our office a ring for more information.

Don't forget to visit us at www.thergmc.org!

Rainbow Gospel Choir

The Rochester Rainbow Gospel Choir ended its fourth season opening for African-American gospel singer Delores Berry. Rev. Berry gave a moving con-

cert! The house was full, and all were truly blessed!

In September, the choir will begin its fifth season. New singers are encouraged to come and sing with us! Singers can choose from between two rehearsal times each week, either Sunday evenings from 5-6:30 or Tuesday nights from 7-8:30.

The RRGC rehearses at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church at 175 Norris Drive. Rehearsals will begin the week of Sept. 12. For more information, folks may call 288-4508 or e-mail at Rainbowchoir@hotmail.com.

Wine Society

The GLBT Wine Society is a group for those who enjoy socializing through the enjoyment of wine. We hold or attend a variety of activities that afford us an opportunity to sample wines and experience their endless variety.

In June, several of us attended the Night of Great Taste at Bru. We got to taste a number of wines from various New York wineries and sample food from several local restaurants. Look for this fundraiser for AIDS Community Health Center to be an annual event for the group.

Our next event will be 7 p.m., Friday, Aug. 13, at the home of Lou. V. The theme will be "Pacific Coast Wines," and admission is \$10. This will be a great chance to experience wines from an important, fast growing American wine region. RSVP to Paul at frederich59@hotmail.com (or 254-4422) and receive location information.

In September, the group will be touring the east side of Seneca Lake, stop-

ping at a number of wineries and experiencing some excellent wines. This area has some of the state's best wineries, so this promises to be a most enlightening and worthwhile event. E-mail or phone Paul for further information.

WNY Rainbow Seniors

BY NANCY FRY

Pride Week is one of the highlights of the gay community during the year. We have a chance to celebrate who we are and allow our friends and neighbors to share in our festivities, support us and be happy for us.

It is particularly eventful for our Rainbow Seniors group. There are many in our group who have only recently taken the bold step "OUT". Now, in today's climate, there is less shame; no shame. Finally, a world where you can walk in a parade or ride in a vehicle and smile and wave at the crowd of supporters, both gay and straight, without fear of retribution. We had fun this year (also last) decorating our car and truck, and ourselves.

The GAGV picnic at Genesee Valley Park was also fun for our group. Many of us went that day and found a nice spot under a vacant tree to park our chairs for the afternoon. Next year, as our numbers grow, perhaps we will have a grill and pitch a tent and make the party bigger.

Our information table was in the non-profit pavilion, some distance from the entrance. We distributed information to anyone stopping by our table, often explaining that Rainbow Seniors is for GLBTIs approaching middle age



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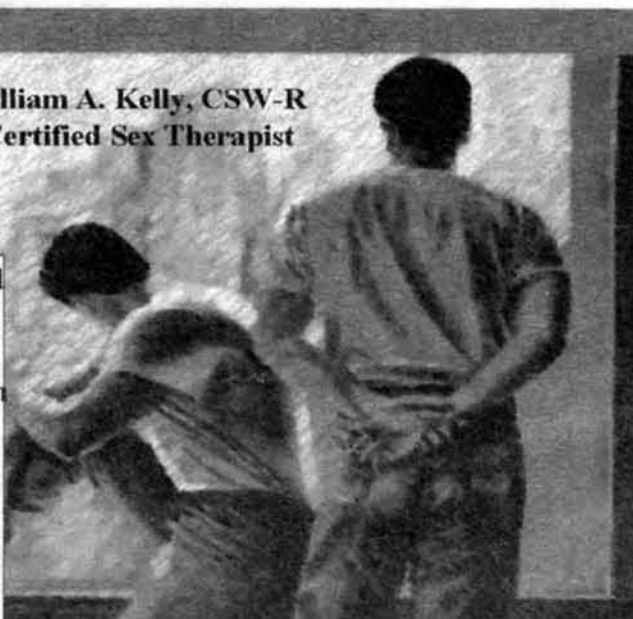
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The Wordsmith Profile

A reader's guide to contemporary literature

Patricia Nell Warren (part 1)

BY OVE OVERMYER

Editor's Note: This feature is part one of the second article in a series that highlights current events in contemporary gay literature. We will try to introduce you to a number of diverse authors, poets, screenwriters, and journalists who have dedicated their lives to documenting and enriching gay life as we know it.

There is a special emphasis on authors whose works are available at the GAGV Library and Archive, located at the Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. The Library presently houses hundreds of fiction and nonfiction titles, as well as movies, audiotapes, memorabilia, and ephemera. Library hours for the summer are Wednesday evenings, from 6 to 8 p.m. For borrowing privileges and related information, please contact Todd Plank, @ 244.8640 ex. 24.

You would be really living in a closet if you haven't come across the name Patricia Nell Warren some time or another in your literary pursuits. In just three decades, she has become one of the most popular and respected authors of literature and journalism in the world.

With eight successful novels circulating the globe and an estimated readership of over 20 million people, her works are considered classics of the gay American experience. Moreover, Warren has evolved into a distinguished investigative journalist and columnist, always ready to stimulate public opinion and willing to topple a few apple carts along the way.

Her most celebrated novel, *The Front Runner*, was first published by William Morrow in 1974. This title has become one of the most popular gay love stories of all time. It chronicles the relationship between an ex-marine track coach and his Olympic athlete love interest. Today, there is an estimated 10 million copies in circulation and it has been translated into 10 different languages. According to the Publishing Triangle, readers have picked *The Front Runner* as #1 of the 100 Best Lesbian and Gay Novels.

Released in 1994, it was on the Lambda bestseller's list for over 52 weeks. Additionally, *The Front Runner* is currently in development as a major motion picture scheduled for release in 2005. This will be big, really big.

Patricia Nell Warren was born in 1936, and grew up on a cattle ranch near Deer Lodge, Montana. She started writing professionally as a teenager, and her subject matter has varying appeal. Her provocative literary themes deal with ecology and the environment, goddesses, human rights, gay and lesbian issues, mixed-blood people, sports, animals, and current events. Through these topics, Warren reaches in and grabs a conflict by the neck to dramatize individual liberties juxtaposed to an authoritarian culture. She examines the unconventional social existence of her characters and educates the reader with understanding, empathy and compassion. By exploring the vulnerabilities we all inevitably face in life, she gives the reader hope and a promise that they indeed are not alone in this world of ours.

Warren explains that she really enjoys telling a powerful and original story.

"Even in my editorials, I am a storyteller," she freely admits. "Whenever I craft a story, I put myself in that character, and look for every possible parameter in that individual's world. I'm not interested in labels or being politically correct. In fact, I often explore the disastrous consequences of labeling people by merely going along with the status quo."

When I contacted Warren, she gave me the skinny on what she's been up to recently. As a columnist for the monthly periodical *Arts & Understanding* (A&U), her column, titled "Left Field," deals with what is really going on under the surface of the AIDS pandemic. She explains, "Many gay people have accepted what they're told about AIDS as 'truth' and 'good science'.

"However, much of what is going on is driven by politics and greed, not by truth and science," Warren says. "Right now, the religious right is doing their best to manipulate AIDS policy in their favor, and that's not good for gay people - as you can tell by reading my current piece (A&U, June, 2004) on 'fake conscientious objection,' which seeks the right to deny medical care to people whose lives and actions they morally disapprove of."

She continues, "On the election front, I feel passionately that if Bush gets another four years in the White House, our country will be in even more serious trouble than it is now. The Democrats do not have their act together either. Too many of them are pinging themselves to get the conservative vote, and forgetting what being a Democrat really stands for. Kerry is not sending a clear message. The whole party is not sending a clear message!"

Patricia Nell Warren is also juggling time with working on a new novel called *Wrong Side of the Tracks*, and writing a series of articles on gay pioneers in sports history for *Outsports.com*. She's adamant and excited about promoting this venture, telling me, "I encourage your readers to go to the website and check out the nine archived pieces there (<http://outsports.com/history/index.htm>). Next will be a piece on boxing, which should be posted sometime in the near future. I'm looking to focus on athletes who were active before Stonewall, because so much of the post-Stonewall stuff and the current events are intensively covered. There are some surprisingly vintage stories out there that haven't been told yet."

When I asked if she would be traveling to the northeast anytime soon, she replied that she isn't scheduled to visit New York from her home in Beverly Hills at this time. However, she does have a date planned with the D.C. FrontRunners in the nation's capital this fall. It will be an anniversary celebration she said she would love to attend.

Warren is also busy with a very demanding lecture tour and conducts many writers' workshops throughout the year. She is a tireless advocate for free speech, gay and lesbian issues, and for the youth of America. She and her company, Wildcat Press International, are also in the process of establishing the Patricia Nell Warren Endowment



Patricia Nell Warren

Fund, which supports creatively gifted but financially challenged youth. After communicating with this award-winning, generous, accessible author, my main question was, inevitably, "When do you take a breath?" You might be surprised by what she had to say.

You can go to www.wildcatpress.com and find out more information about all her books in print. I will continue this interview with Part 2 of "Wordsmith Profile: Patricia Nell Warren", in the September issue of the *Empty Closet*. Stay tuned. ■



Teen King Hero and Teen Queen Mia Carrera at the Pride Parade.

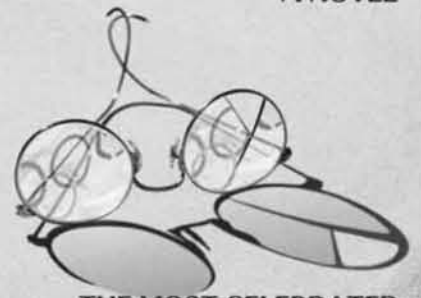
Youth talk about Pride...

BY JANET SANTIAGO

"I'm here today to support my cousin who just came out to the family last year. I wanted to show her that no matter what happens, I'll be here for her, and hopefully that will give her a reason to be proud. Pride, to me, is knowing who you are and accepting it." Mari Colon, 23

"Pride is being able to walk, in the open, with my wife hand in hand, not

PATRICIA NELL WARREN
the Front Runner
A NOVEL



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20th Anniversary Edition

worrying about people ridiculing me because of who I choose to love. I'm here today to prove exactly that." Tanya Leon, 21

"I came out here today to enjoy the music and the people. I'm celebrating my sexuality as well as our new generation. Finally, it's our time and it's about time." Chris Masterson, 19

"To me, pride is the knowledge of understanding one's being, whether it be my sexuality, my culture, or my heritage. It's the acceptance of who we are and the belief that we are equal to one another and in the end... that's what's important. This parade shows the differences and the truth that we're really all the same." Jamie Holmes, 22

"I think it's cool that Rochester is open enough to celebrate the differences in our community, rather than just completely avoid us. I'm glad I was able to be a part of it even as just an onlooker. The music is awesome and so are the people. I can't wait until next year. I'm proud... are you?" Liz Baia, 21 ■

Upstate Reports

LGBT News from around the region



Pride at the Pier:

What: Food, music, dancing, guest DJs

Where: Festival Grounds at the Pier, Buffalo

When: Aug. 22, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

How much: \$15. Tickets available at Pride Center and online: (716)852-PRIDE (7743)

Less than one month away, Pride at the Pier is already shaping up to be one of the biggest parties Western New York's LGBT communities has ever seen, according to organizer Jim VerSteeg, ED of the WNY Pride Center. "Then again, with Lady Bunny, legendary drag performer and star of *Wigstock: The Movie* headlining, any event is bound to be a blast," VerSteeg says.

But the fun doesn't stop there! Derek Hartley, co-host of the widely popular Derek and Romaine <<http://www.derekhartley.com/radio.html>> show on Sirius OutQ radio and host of Fantasy Man Island <<http://www.planetout.com/romance/fmi/>> on Planet Out will be on hand to emcee the afternoon. Click the Derek & Romaine link above to listen to their show free on the web.

For more information on Pride at the Pier, check out www.pridecenterwny.org <<http://www.pridecenterwny.org/>>. While you're there vote on our online poll and check out the new pictures from Rochester Pride.

The event runs from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and tickets are \$15. Stay tuned for more fun and party promotions - and you can buy tickets to the party

right on the Pride Center website. They use the PayPal secure server, so feel free! "And don't worry if you're coming from out of town -- you're all welcome," Ver Steeg said.

Driving directions can be found at www.pridecenterwny.org <<http://www.pridecenterwny.org/>>. Just follow the Bunny trail! ■

"Our State Fair is a great state fair..."

Syracuse's Stonewall Committee to have lgbt booth Aug. 26-Sept. 6

The New York State Fair runs Aug. 26-Sept. 6 in Syracuse. The Empire State Pride Agenda, Central New York Diversity and Syracuse's Stonewall Committee will have a booth at the Fair, from 10 am- 10 pm.

Educational information, the 2004-2005 Pride Book and many other resources will be available. Voter registration will be conducted and there will be a special day in recognition of gay families.

Evan Wolfson of Freedom To Marry has been invited to appear at the Fair. His first book, "Why Marriage Matters", was just released.

This booth is the only glbt booth hosted during the entire run of a state fair anywhere in the nation!

For more information, contact The Stonewall Committee, 315-476-6226.

APOLOGY

Eric Bellmann, artist and educator, was incorrectly identified in the Gay Alliance's profile in Rochester Business Journal on July 9.

Bellmann, a GAGV Board member, is greatly appreciated

Lake Ontario Bear Rendezvous October 1-3, 2004 Rochester, New York

Schedule (Exact times subject to change)

Friday, October 1:

9:00 PM: Registration opens at Tara
10:00 PM: Bear Piano Bar at Tara with our own Peter N.
2:00 AM: After Hours Party

Saturday, October 2:

11:00 AM: Breakfast (included) at Tay House Lodge
1 - 5 PM: Choice of:
• Party at Rochester Spa and Body Club (show badge for discounts)
• Games at Tay House Lodge
• Shopping or Museum Excursions
6:30 PM: Dinner (included) at Tay House Lodge
8:00 PM: Mr. Empire Bear 2004 contest at Tay House Lodge

10:00 PM: Bearnight at the Bachelor Forum
2:00 AM: After Hours Party

Sunday, October 3:

Noon: Farewell Brunch at Michelina's in Brighton (\$12).

Cost (U.S. \$):

Through 8/30: \$25 members, \$40 non-members.
After 8/30: \$40 members, \$55 non-members.

For reservations, visit our web site at www.empirebears.org/lobr2004 or call the Bearline at (585) 234-3381.



Groups*continued from previous page*

and beyond. Our age membership right now ranges from 38 to 91, with 200 plus people on our mailing list. Forty-three new names were added this Pride Week, of those who will begin receiving our information each month.

We had a 50/50 raffle. The winner is Lisa Smith of Rochester who won \$43. Congratulations, Lisa, and thanks to all who supported us by purchasing tickets!

We extend our thanks to the Pride committees and organizations which made the picnic and parade possible. They were great events. At the picnic, as a service to the less abled, it would be very helpful to have handicap parking arrangements or allow the cars transporting these people to drive down the paths in the park to drop off these guests before parking in the outside lots. Those guests struggling with disabilities found it very difficult to walk from the beautifully ballooned entrance all the way to our table. Food for thought for next year. Until then...

Women's Hiking

We're gearing up for summer hiking... join us! Cool way to meet great women.

We have lots of fun, and you are never alone because new ladies are always joining our adventures. Meet new friends or maybe find romance. For info call Donna Marie Kearney, 585-442-6399.

PLAGAL

PLAGAL prides itself on the diversity of its membership. It is one of the few pro life organizations that accept all those who are prolife. PLAGAL members come from different social and economic backgrounds, different political parties, some have religious affiliations while others do not. We have members who are drag queens, parents, bisexuals, single, those in long term relationships and we even have heterosexual individuals in our group.

Contact us for more information. PO Box 33292 Washington DC 20033; 202-223-6697; Fax: 202-265-9737; plagal@plagal.org; <http://www.plagal.org>. Rochester liaison: Donna Marie Kearney, 585-442-6399.

Volunteer's Corner: Aug.

BY TODD PLANK

As the GAGV continues to grow and expand its services and programs, we will be relying more than ever on the help of dedicated volunteers to get the job done. Regardless of your circumstances, we have fun and rewarding volunteer opportunities available that complement your lifestyle.

Only have a couple of hours a week/month to volunteer?

No problem! Help out occasionally at special GAGV sponsored events, fund raisers, and one-time projects.

Retired with too much time on your hands? We'll keep you busy! There are some large projects underway that require many (wo)man hours to complete.

A sampling of current volunteer opportunities are outlined below:

GAGV Executive Assistant Cindi Eveleigh, is regularly in need of someone to help with filing, organizing supplies, bulk mailings (as needed). In addition, file organization and reorganization are also periodic tasks.

Regular availability helps with structuring the tasks.

Alex(andra)Cobus, the GAGV's Anti-Violence Project (AVP) Coordinator is currently looking for three AVP Research Assistants:

1)Resource Directory This would entail mostly researching resources in the community, and putting the pertinent information together in one place. This will be an on-going project, as it will need to be regularly updated. 2)Help researching the history of lgbt hate crime activity in Rochester and Western NY, and 3) writing and administering a 3-5 questionnaire to give perspective referrals(therapists, lawyers, etc.),to add to our data base.

Additionally, Alex is looking for an AVP Media Assistant(a temporary volunteer position)who would assist with creating AVP related public relations material. Responsibilities would include assisting with creating a brochure for the AVP and developing other materials to promote the AVP program. Candidates for this volunteer opportunity would need good writing, editing and graphic design skills. In the future, Alex will also be looking for help in creating and maintaining a resource guide for LGBT victims of domestic violence, and hate/bias crimes.

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For more information call: 288-4508 or e-mail: Rainbowchoir@hotmail.com

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Gay Groups

it's all about having fun

MEET PEOPLE:

Check out this section and the Ongoing Calendar to find the group that's right for you! If you are already in a group send a monthly news update to the *The Empty Closet*, 875 E. Main St. Suite 500, Rochester, NY 14605 by the 15th of every month.

Butch Femme

Announcing Our Newest Endeavor -- Bi-Monthly Dinner Nights Out!

Come enjoy sampling the area's finest dining establishments with us, reunite with old friends and make new ones! All dinner events begin at the location specified at 7 p.m. and are pay-your-own-way.

August's dinners: Aug. 9: 7 p.m., Atomic Eggplant, Marshall St. (off Monroe Ave. -- vegetarian); Aug. 23: 7 p.m. Nasty D's (old RJ's), Alexander St. at Broadway.

September's dinners: Sept. 13: Olive Garden, Jefferson Rd., 7 p.m.; Sept. 27, Macaroni Grill, Jefferson Rd., 7 p.m.

The Discussion Night on Aug. 6 will be our Annual Topic Suggestion Night. Please come with discussion topic ideas and social event ideas and help us plan our events and gatherings for 2004-2005!

Our social event on Aug. 25 will be Scrabble Night -- we provide the game board, you provide the words! Both meetings are held at the GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave., corner of Elton/Atlantic).

For further info on our new Dinner Nights Out, and/or on our discussion/social event meetings, please contact Kerry at (585)865-4619; email DressyFemme@aol.com; or write P.O. Box 18734, Rochester, NY 14618.

Dignity Integrity

On Aug. 15, Dignity Integrity will host our annual summer potluck.

For time and place, call the DI info line at 585-234-5092, or see our website, <http://www.di-rochester.org/>. You can email us at info@di-rochester.org.

On Sept. 25 we will observe our 20th anniversary celebration -- details forthcoming. On the following day, Sunday, Sept. 26, we will hold our anniversary liturgy at St. Luke/St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. at 5 p.m. All are welcome.

Empire Bears

It's been a cool summer so far, but the EMPIRE BEARS are going to heat it up with our BEARnight at the FORUM on Saturday, the 14th.

The theme is BARE chest, so strip off that shirt and rub your furry belly. Come and enjoy snacks on the BEARS, and have a sweaty night at the Forum.

We're going camping at Hillside the last weekend of August, and our club plans on having a great time, as we've reserved an excellent group of sites right in the middle of the action. Good food, friends, fun, and fur. Sign up now.

Monday night suppers continue at Michelina's on West Hen. Stop in at 6 and chow down with the BEARS

every Monday. Take in a movie after if you're inclined. We also will have our regular monthly meeting on the first Wednesday, Aug. 4, at the GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave., at 7:30.

We're preparing for our big weekend Oct. 1-3. We have events scheduled all weekend. We've invited other BEAR clubs from upstate and Ontario. Check out our website at empirebears.org to find out more about our club and events. Furry men and their admirers are always welcome.

Womyn's Fishing group

The August 2004 outings of Fishing In The Fingerlakes, a social group for womyn who love freshwater fishing, will be held on Sunday, Aug. 15 (outing to Webster Pier on Lake Road in Webster, on Lake Ontario), and on Sunday, Aug. 22 (outing to Braddock Bay's fishing access area in northwest Greece).

For both events: Meet us outside the GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave., corner Elton/Atlantic Ave., between 10-10:15 a.m. and we'll head out for the day!

For further info., contact Kerry/Cindy at 288-7208, or email FishingFolksNY@aol.com

Rochester Rams

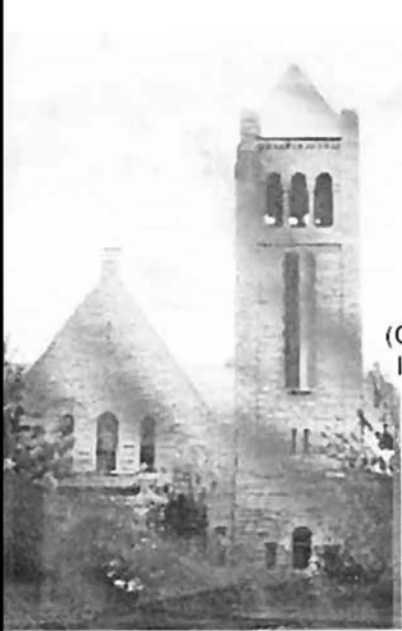
Join us for Military Night on Saturday Aug. 21 at the Bachelor Forum. Put on your uniform and come to the Forum to see all the hot men that will be out to celebrate our men in uniform.

Remember, this is barnight; leather, denim and boots never go out of style. All of our regular barnight features, like beer bar, boot shine, raffle and wall-to-wall hot men will be available at this full-service event.

Our September Barnight will be Western Night on Sept. 18. Get your hat, boots and buckskin out of the closet and come show it off at the Bachelor Forum.

Our annual run will be here soon. This year it is scheduled for Aug. 27-29. It a fun-filled weekend of partying with hot men on beautiful Seneca Lake. For more information check out our website: www.rochesterrams.com.

The Rochester Rams M.C. is Rochester's foremost gay motorcycle and leather club as well as being one of the oldest clubs of its type in the country. Our home bar is the Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave., where we hold Bar Nights on the third Saturday of each month. We hold general meet-



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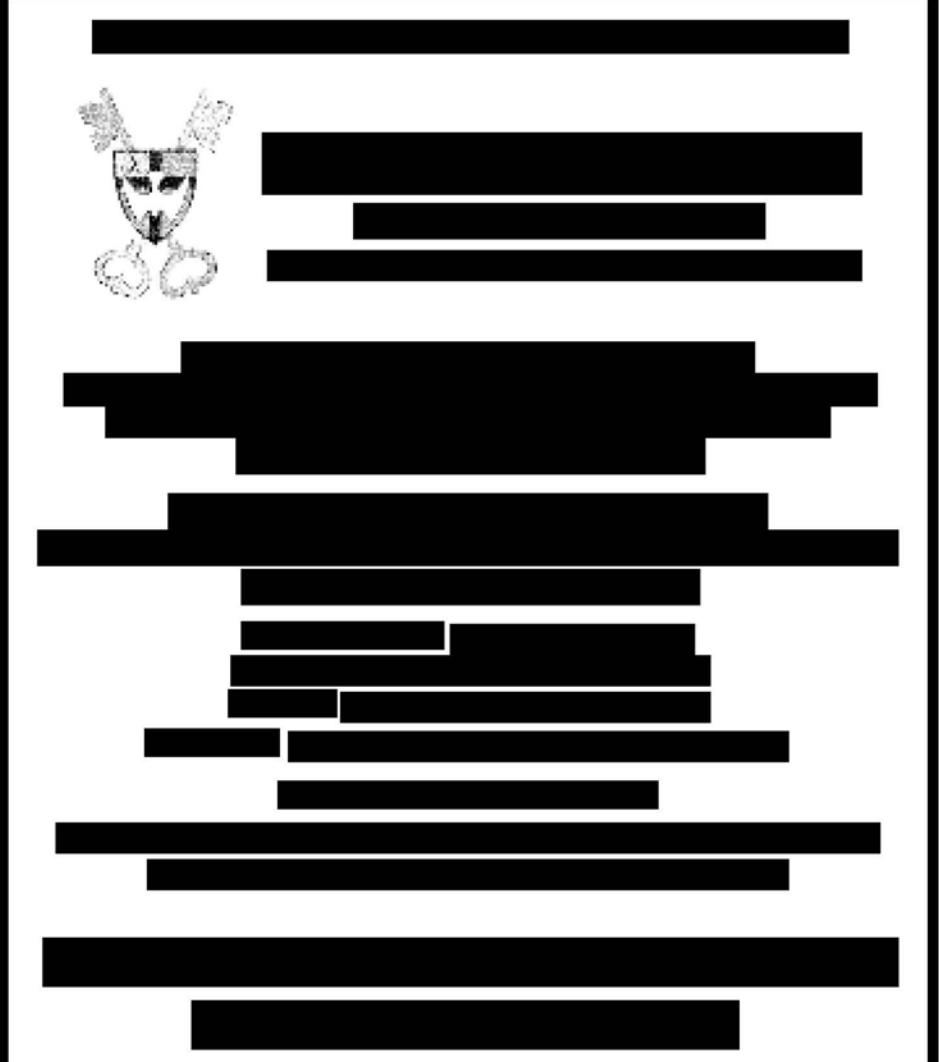
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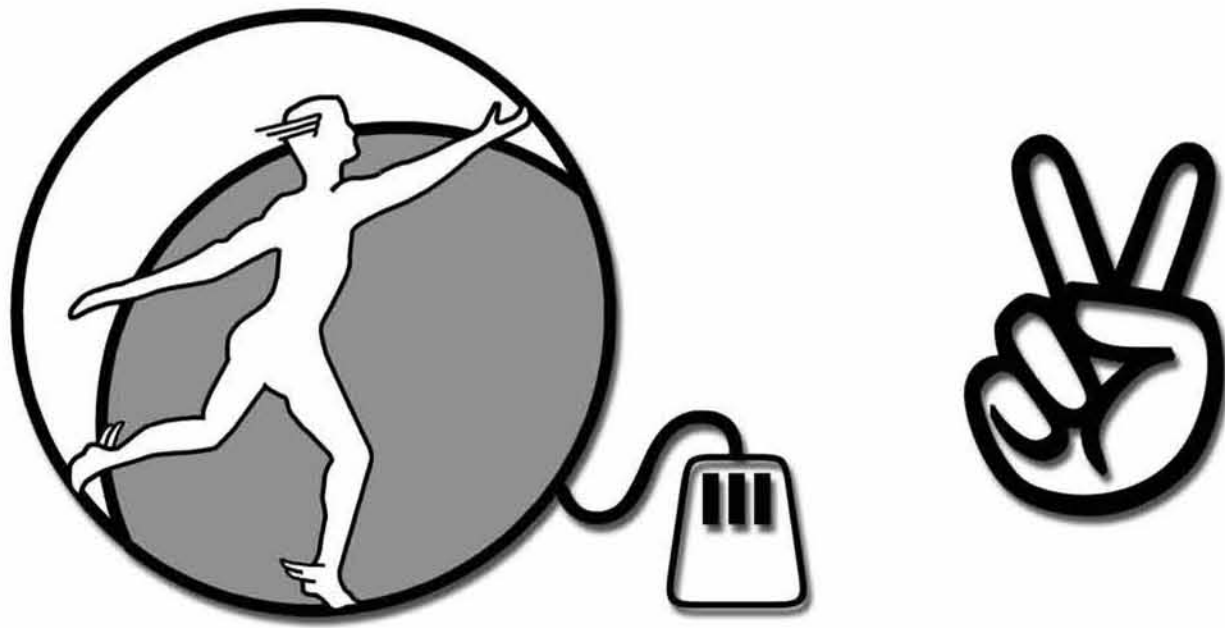
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Self-Defense Instructor: We are looking for qualified individuals to lead self-defense classes at the Community Center or the Youth Center on a regular basis. These classes would be designed specifically for the lgbt community at large, and potentially for rape & sexual assault survivors.

Susan Jordan, editor of the Empty Closet, is looking for photographers and reporters; individuals to watch movies, read lgbt flavored books (and magazines) and write reviews/critiques; proofreaders and word processors for the EC, as well as volunteers to assist with monthly mailings and distribution of the EC.

Todd Plank, Project Coordinator/Community Education Outreach Coordinator at the GAGV, is looking for volunteers to help with the seasonal decorating of the Community Center. If you are looking for an outlet for your creativity and want to have some fun, please call me.

With the move of our offices to the Auditorium Center, we are seeking volunteers to staff the GAGV Community Center at 179 Atlantic Ave and help with the general upkeep and maintenance of the Center (inside and out (any painters or landscapers out there?). I have an immediate need for volunteers to staff the library on Wednesday nights from 6-8 p.m. These hours will be expanded in the fall, so the need for volunteers to help oversee the GAGV library will be ongoing. There is also an exciting reorganization of the GAGV library and archives underway. This is an immense project involving the sorting, indexing and cataloging of books, magazines, the EC, and a plethora of archival material. Call and let me know when you would be available to help with the GAGV

library and archive project.

I am also looking for a "personal assistant" to help me get organized in my new office(s)-I will be maintaining a small office at the GAGV Community Center as well as operating an office out of our new space. Preferably, this would be someone who is computer savvy and who could help me simplify and streamline some of my tasks, such as developing and managing a database of volunteers.

Chuck Bowen, our Executive Director, is finding it a challenge to keep up with all the lgbt related news across the country. With things changing so rapidly, he would appreciate having someone who could assist him in keeping up with breaking news and in formulating announcements and posting stories and links to our GAGV website. If you are a news junkie (TV, radio and Internet) and have good communication and writing skills, your help would be most appreciated!

Toby Greenfield, Youth Services Director, is currently exploring numerous possibilities for after school activities in the new Youth Learning Center (YLC). To name just a few of the tentative volunteer opportunities: Individuals to staff after school hours and be available to provide on site tutoring at the YLC when the Center opens (probable hours: 4-7 or 8 p.m.) She also would like to offer Career Counseling at the YLC and offer youth assistance with resume writing, interviewing tips, job searches, and other career/employment related activities.

Mature folks to initiate and oversee various groups, such as Art and Poetry Groups, Girls and Boys Groups, Youth of Color and Gender Identity Groups, Special Events Groups to work

on events such as Pride week, holiday Events/Dances and Fund raisers, and a Parent Group, which would be a discussion group for parents and families of lgbt teens.

A Highs & Lows Group is also in the works and would provide a safe space for youths to come together to talk about a range of issues (depression, anxiety, coming-out, relationships, and celebrate milestone events in their lives). For this group Toby is seeking a Social Worker or Therapist as a regular facilitator. Other ideas include hosting a Games Night, Exercise/Aerobics/Yoga Night and Movie Night in the YLC.

The GAGV also has a pressing need for volunteers with experience in web design, graphic arts and media to assist with the youth website and the creation of brochures and fliers, advertising, and public service announcements.

Part Time Flexible Hours. Please call the GAGV at (585) 244-8640 or correspond via email to toddp@gagv.us to express your interest in any of the volunteer opportunities described above, or to offer your suggestions about additional ways that you could offer your time and talents in service to the GAGV.

GAGV Webmaster volunteer

Paul Berezney, Marketing & Development Director, created the following volunteer profile for a GAGV Webmaster:

The GAGV Webmaster will assist the IT Committee and Executive Director with GAGV website design and "behind the screens" programming.

Requirements: A working knowledge of Post-Nuke 0.72. Prerequisite is a working knowledge of PHP and MySQL. And a prerequisite for that is a working knowledge of HTML and CSS, with Javascript a plus, but not required. The EC Online uses MovableType 2.661 and Gallery 1.4.4.

Best practices: The ideal candidate will be committed towards producing semantic markup using validated XHTML 1.0 Strict or XHTML 1.1, producing validated cross-browser, cross-platform CSS 2 and implementing Section 508 compliance or Web Accessibility Initiative Level 2.A commitment to layout, architecture and navigation, which will enhance usability and the user experience, is desirable.

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HouseMen Cleaning Services is looking to hire a motivated, trustworthy and detail-oriented guy to join our cleaning crew. Must have spotless driving record and good references. Call Patrick @ 507-3935.

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Handsome, healthy, straight acting, professional GWM (30-something) looking for adventure and love. I actually am humble and honest; honesty however may make this invitation sound shallow. I am looking for a man who is above average in looks, thin or muscular and between the ages of 27 through 41; race/ethnicity are irrelevant. I am particularly attracted to dark and exotic people. I have a variety of interests. I am not looking for a one-night stand, which gets stale. My goal is a mutually exclusive relationship. I ask for serious replies only; photo is appreciated but not required. Send to P.O. Box 25365 Rochester NY 14625.

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Roommate wanted. Near East High School. Three-bedroom home. Phone, cable, laundry. Share with male and one dog. Smoker, non-drinker. \$325/month. First month's rent and security. 585-654-5109.

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Calendar

FOR AWESOME AUGUST

SUNDAY 1

Lammas, Lughnasad. Ancient Celtic fire festival of harvest. Aug. 1,2.
Deviant Bodies exhibit. CEPA Gallery, Buffalo. Through Aug. 21.
Manuel Rivera-Ortiz show of photographs from Cuba. City Hall Link Gallery through Aug. 30.

MONDAY 2

Third Presbyterian Church Support Group for GLBTs. First August meeting, 34 Meigs St.

TUESDAY 3

COAP volleyball, Ellison Park, 7 pm, every Tuesday of the summer.

FRIDAY 6

Butch Femme Connection Topic Suggestion Night. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 7 pm. 865-4619.

MONDAY 9

Butch Femme Connection Dinner Night. Atomic Eggplant, Marshall St. (off Monroe near Inner Loop), Vegetarian. 7 pm. 865-4619.

THURSDAY 12

COAP dinner night at Edibles. 7 pm. Dave G., 314-8212.

FRIDAY 13

GLBT Wine Society 7 pm, at Lou V.'s. "Pacific Coast Wines". \$10. RSVP to frederich59@hotmail.com or 254-4422.

SATURDAY 14

Empire Bears Bar Night at Forum. Bare Chest Night. empirebears.org.

SUNDAY 15

Dignity Integrity Potluck. For time and place: 234-5092; <http://di-rochester.org/>

Fishing in the Fingerlakes. Webster Pier, Lake Rd. in Webster. Meet outside GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave, between 10- 10:15 am. 288-7208.

Rainbow Seniors Picnic. 4 pm. Bring dish to pass, beverage. Ellison Park. 442-6369. Date changed from July 18.

MONDAY 16

Empty Closet deadline for September. Articles, display ads, letters to editor, classifieds, etc. 244-9030.

Third Presbyterian Church Support Group for GLBTs. Second August meeting, 34 Meigs St.

MOCHA Women of Color Panel Presentation, St. Mary's Auditorium, 6-8 pm. 420-1400. First event of MOCHA Week.

COAP Stained glass workshop. 5:30. Mike O., 415-6833.

TUESDAY 17

MOCHA LGBT Youth of Color Panel Presentation, GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St., first floor, 6-8 pm. 420-1400.

WEDNESDAY 18

MOCHA Transgender of Color

Panel Presentation, MOCHA Office, 25 Franklin St., Suite 1060, 6-8 pm. 420-1400.

THURSDAY 19

MOCHA Jazz band and awards reception, 7-11 pm, Montage Grille. Donation \$10. 21 and over ID required. 420-1400.

FRIDAY 20

MOCHA Happy Hour at Tara, 6-10 pm. 21 and over ID required. 420-1400.

MOCHA Freaky Friday at Odeysee Night Club, 10 pm- 2 am. 420-1400. 21 and over ID required.

SATURDAY 21

MOCHA Community Awareness Picnic, Genesee Valley Park (Red Creek Pavilion). Free. Noon- 6 pm.

Rochester Gay Men's Chorus City Garden Sunset Stroll. Tour of private gardens in Southwedge, Cornhill, University areas. \$12 in advance, \$15 on day of tour. www.thergmc.org; 423-0650.

MOCHA Week closing party at Muthers, 10 pm- 3 am. 21 and over ID required. 420-1400.

Rochester Rams Military Night, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. www.rochesterrams.com.

SUNDAY 22

MOCHA faith-based worship service with Bishop Zachary Jones, Lake Avenue Baptist Church. 2-4 pm. 420-1400.

COAP brunch. 11 am. Keith, 546-4717.

Fishing in the Fingerlakes. Braddock Bay fishing access area. Meet outside GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave., between 10-10:15 am. 288-7208.

Pride at the Pier. Buffalo's WNY Pride Center presents a big summer bash at the Festival Grounds at the Pier,

Buffalo. 11 am- 7 pm. \$15.

In the Life. National LGBT news-magazine. 11 pm, WXXI.

MONDAY 23

Butch Femme Connection Dinner Night. Nasty D's, Alexander St. at Broadway. 7 pm. 865-4619.

WEDNESDAY 25

Butch Femme Connection Scrabble Night. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 7pm. 865-4619.

THURSDAY 26

NYS Fair. Empire State Pride Agenda, Central NY Diversity and Syracuse Stonewall Committee booth Aug. 26-Sept. 6, 10 am- 10 pm.

FRIDAY 27

Rochester Rams Hell Weekend. Aug. 27-29, Seneca Lake. \$150 US by Aug. 9. All checks/money orders to "Battering Ram M.C."; mail to Rochester Rams 28th, PO Box 31727, Rochester NY 14603-1727. For more information or to pay through PayPal: <http://www.rochesterrams.com/run>.

Empire Bears camping weekend at Hillside. empirebears.org.

Empty Closet mailing of Sept. issue. 2-5 pm: stuff envelopes; 6:30-8 pm: bulk mailing and distribution. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave., second floor. Call 244-9030, or stop by the Community Center on Friday afternoon between 2 and 4 pm. Distribution volunteers are greatly needed!

SUNDAY 29

COAP Bike and Bacon brunch. 10 am. Tom, 454-3609.

MONDAY 30

COAP meeting, 7 pm., GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Triangle Talk resumes in September.

Weekly GLBTI AA Meetings in Rochester

There are six regularly scheduled GLBTI AA meetings in Rochester every week.

What makes GLBTI recovery a bit different is that we recognize: issues surrounding our sexuality can contribute to our alcoholism and addiction; coming out and coming to terms with ourselves as alcoholics or addicts can be as traumatizing as coming out and coming to terms with our sexuality; other drugs of abuse run rampant in our community and we do not exclude those so addicted (you will not be shouted down for speaking words like pot, cocaine, crack, heroin, ecstasy, K, speed, meth, pills, etc.); the bars play a large role in socialization within our community which can present challenges even when we are fully committed to our sobriety. After our meetings, we frequently go out for coffee, dinner, movies, whatever; while it's tempting to stay in the fold of GLBTI recovery, we live and work in a predominantly straight society, so we encourage our members to include "straight" meetings in their program.

Open meetings are open to alcoholics and addicts as well as to our partners, friends, family and anyone else interested in the AA program of recovery. Closed meetings are limited to alcoholics and addicts. We ask that partners, friends, family and curiosity seekers respect our privacy.

Tuesdays

The First Steps Group: 8 p.m. at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N Fitzhugh St. Bus riders: use the Fitzhugh St. stop on Main St. at the County Office Building and walk north two blocks, or use the Church St stop on State St across from the Federal Building and walk west one block turning right at City Hall.

Open meeting, all are welcome, "straight-friendly."

Mixed men and women.

Handicapped accessible, take the elevator to the basement.

Each week this meeting studies one of the Twelve Steps of AA and discusses how those steps relate to us and how to implement them into our daily lives.

Wednesdays

New Freedom/New Happiness Group: 7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S Winton Rd. Bus riders: Take the last #18 University bus to 12 Corners. Use the stop just past the top of the hill at Hillside Ave and before Highland Ave. Or take the #1 Park Ave to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton.

This is an open discussion meeting. All issues — as they relate to our alcoholism/addiction and recovery — are fair game.

Fridays (2 meetings)

Free to Be: 7:30 p.m. at The Yellow House, 1601 Jackson Rd, Penfield. NOT accessible by bus.

Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Mixed men and women

Handicapped accessible

This can be a speaker, discussion or steps meeting depending on what seems best at the time.

Gay Men's: 7:30 p.m. Beginning with July 2 meeting, group will meet at at GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. at Elton St. Bus riders: Take the #18 University Ave bus, use the stop between Portsmouth Terrace and Elton St., Walk one block north on Elton St. to the GAGV Community Center.

Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Men's meeting

NOT handicapped accessible

This is a round-robin discussion meeting. If you are shy about meeting people or speaking up in a group, you will find this meeting particularly warm and inviting because everyone gets their turn to speak (or pass). As a result, this meeting often runs long, so plan on more than the usual hour.

Saturdays

Saturday Night Special: 7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S Winton Rd. Bus riders: The #18 University Ave bus does not go by the church on weekend evenings. Take the #1 Park Ave bus to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton

Open meeting, all are welcome, "straight-friendly"

Mixed men and women

Handicapped accessible, take the elevator to the basement

This meeting begins with a speaker who is followed by an open discussion.

Sundays

Rochester Gay Men: 8:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 17 S Fitzhugh St. Bus riders use the Fitzhugh St stop on Main St at the County Office Building and walk south one block.

Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts

Men's meeting

NOT handicapped accessible

This meeting begins with a speaker who is followed by an open discussion. ■

The Ongoing Calendar

CONSISTENTLY SCHEDULED HAPPENINGS

Monday

Gay and Lesbian Support Group

Third Presbyterian Church, 34 Meigs St. First, third Mondays, 7:30-9 pm, 338-3466. This month: meeting July 12, 26.

Rochester Historical Bowling Society

7:15 pm, Mondays. Clover Lanes, 2750 Monroe Ave.

COAP

Come Out and Play. Business meeting last Mondays, 7 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Tom M., 454-3609.

American Baptists Concerned

Third Mondays, 7:30 pm. Webster House, 57 Ambrose St. 442-5486.

HIV Positive Gay Men Support group

Every Monday, 5 pm, AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave. 442-2220 x 3051.

Green Party (political)

Second Mondays, 7 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 234-6470.

Basically Treblemakers Band

Rehearsals 4:30-6:30 pm, every Monday. Call Tim, 242-0237. No meeting June 23.

Transgender Group

Second Mondays, Open Arms MCC, 175 Norris Drive, 6:30-9 pm.

Rochester Frontrunners/Frontwalkers

Run/walk every Monday, 6 pm, meet George Eastman House parking lot. 271-2709.

Triangle Talk

Fourth Mondays. Lgbt book discussion, Borders Books & Music, 7 pm. Free. Sponsored by GAGV. Resumes in September.

Tuesday

Atlantic Five 0

Gay men 50 and over. Second Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 461-0821.

Orleans Rainbow Fellowship

Support/social group, meets second Tuesdays, 7 pm. For location call Dale, 589-9107, or e-mail DLAubac186@aol.com

Gay Fathers' Support Group

First and third Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. On hiatus until Sept. 21.

MOCHA coffee chat

Open discussion for men of color who have sex with men. Coffee, refreshments. First and third Tuesdays, 6:30 pm. MOCHA Project, 25 Franklin St., Suite 1060. 420-1400.

Youth of Color Group

3-5 pm, MOCHA Project, 25 Franklin St., Sibley Center, Suite 1060. 420-1400; 244-8640.

First Steps AA Meeting

7:30-8:30 pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 244-8640. Open meeting, gay-friendly/welcoming.

LGBT Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Group

Second Tuesdays, 7 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Second floor. Paul, 244-8640 x 14.

Wednesday

Women's Community Chorus

Rehearsals each Wednesday, 6:30-9 pm, Call for location. 234-4441.

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley Board of Directors

Meeting, second Wednesdays, 7 pm, 875 E. Main St., fourth floor Blue Room. 244-8640.

New Freedom New Happiness AA Gay meeting

7 pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. Men and women. Open meeting.

Support Group for Parents Who Have Lost Children

First, third Wednesdays, 11 am-12:30 pm, Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. Sponsored by Genesee Region Home Care. Free. 325-1880.

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers

6 pm run/walk; meet George Eastman House parking lot. 271-2709.

Empire Bears

First Wednesdays, 7:30 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. emopirebears.org

Transgender Group

Third Wednesdays, 6:30-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Multicom-4 Coffee Talk

7 pm, Spin Cafe (739 Park Ave.) Social for former Multicom-4 BBS members; other gblt cyber geeks welcome, every fourth Wednesday, 8 pm.

Gray Area

Support/social group for bisexual women. First Wednesdays, 5:30-7 pm. For location, call 461-1338; 330-9738.

GAGV Library

Summer hours, 6-8 p.m. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. 244-8640. Books can be returned to GAGV offices, 875 E. Main St., Suite 500, from 9 am- 6 pm.

Thursday

Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns

6:30 pm, first Thursday. For location call Ralph, 271-7649.

Greater Rochester Gay and Lesbian Business Forum

Professionals' social group. Second Thursdays, 5:30-7 pm. 234-8706.

GLOB&L

(Gays and Lesbians of Bausch & Lomb). Meets every third Thursday in Area 67 conference room at the Optic Center. Voice mail 338-8977.

Rochester Gay Men's Chorus

Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 7-9:30 pm. 423-0650.

Free confidential walk-in HIV testing

Every Thursday night, 5-8 pm, AIDS Rochester, 1350 University Ave. 442-2220.

MOCHA movie night

Second Thursdays, 6:30 pm. MOCHA Project, 25 Franklin St., Suite 1060. 420-1400.

Friday

Gay Men's AA meeting

Each Friday, 7:30-8:30 pm. Closed meeting. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Saturday

Rochester Rams bar night

Third Saturday. 8 pm-2 am, Bachelor Forum, 470 University Ave. 271-6930.

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers

9 am run/walk. Meet George Eastman House parking lot. 461-4246.

Empire Bears

Second Saturdays, Bachelor Forum, 470 University Ave. Bearline: 234-3381.

Cross Dresser Support Group

First Saturdays, 6:30-9:30 pm, GAGV, 179 Atlantic Ave. Info: 251-2132. RCDNET@hotmail.com.

Transgender Group

Last Saturdays, 2-5 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Saturday Night Special Gay AA

7 pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. S. Men and women. Open meeting.

Lilac Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf (LRAD)

Fourth Saturdays, 6-9 pm. GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave.

Something for da Sistaz

Women's group, every third Saturday, MOCHA Project, Suite 1060, 25 Franklin St. 420-1400.

Pride and Joy Families

Third Saturdays, 1-3 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. NO

MEETINGS JUNE-AUGUST. Group will meet at kid-friendly area at GAGV Picnic on July 11.

WNY Lesbian Couples

Third Saturdays, 7-9 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Dykelywed and Game Night. Start-up after Labor Day. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WNYLesbianCouples/>

Sunday

More Light Presbyterians

for gay and lesbian people and friends, 12:15 pm, last Sundays. Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 325-4000.

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

2:30 -5 pm. Last Sunday. Call for location: 234-0156.

Dignity-Integrity

5 pm, St. Luke's/St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Every Sunday. 234-5092.

Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church

175 Norris Drive, Cobbs Hill. 11 am. Contemporary worship service, 7 pm. 271-8478.

Gay Men's Alcoholics Anonymous

St. Luke's/St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 8:30 pm, 232-6720. Weekly. Closed meeting.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Friends Association (GLBFA)

U. of Rochester. Sundays, 5 pm, Morey Hall 401. 275-9379. E-mail: glbfa@uhura.cc.rochester.edu

GAGV Young Adults

18-23. Sundays 12-1:30 pm. GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St. 244-8640.

GAGV Youth Group

Ages 13-18. Every Sunday, 2-4 pm, GAGV Youth Center, 875 E. Main St. 244-8640.

Rainbow Amateur Radio Assoc.

Finger Lakes chapter. Business meeting/lunch. Call Bob, 442-7185.

Food Not Bombs free food

2 pm, every Sunday, Friends Meeting House, 84 Scio St.. 234-0884.

Rainbow Seniors

Third Sundays. Potluck at Lutheran Church of Peace, 125 Caroline St. 4 pm. Meeting for August: Aug. 15: picnic Ellison Park.

Single Women's Potluck

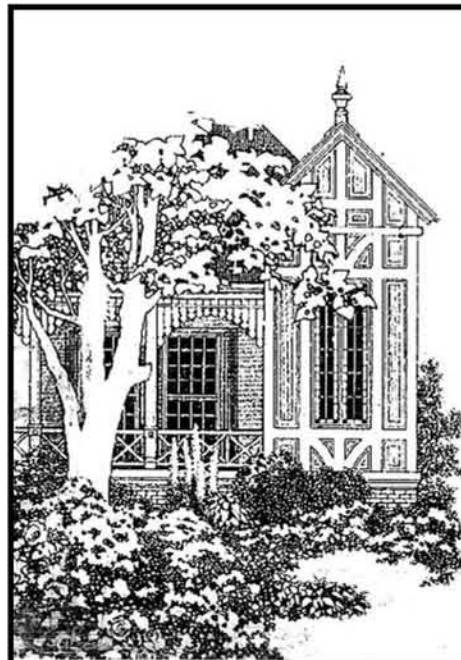
Fourth Sundays, 5 pm, GAGV Community Center, 179 Atlantic Ave. Bring dish to

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Parting glances: a final look at Pride 2004 (continued on page 14)



GERRY SZYMANSKI

The Gay Alliance banner. LtR: Pam Barres, Evelyn Bailey, Ron Pawelczak, Eric Bellmann, Shirley Bowen, Alex Cobus.



DOUG MESZLER



MARY LOU SMITH

The Muthers float.

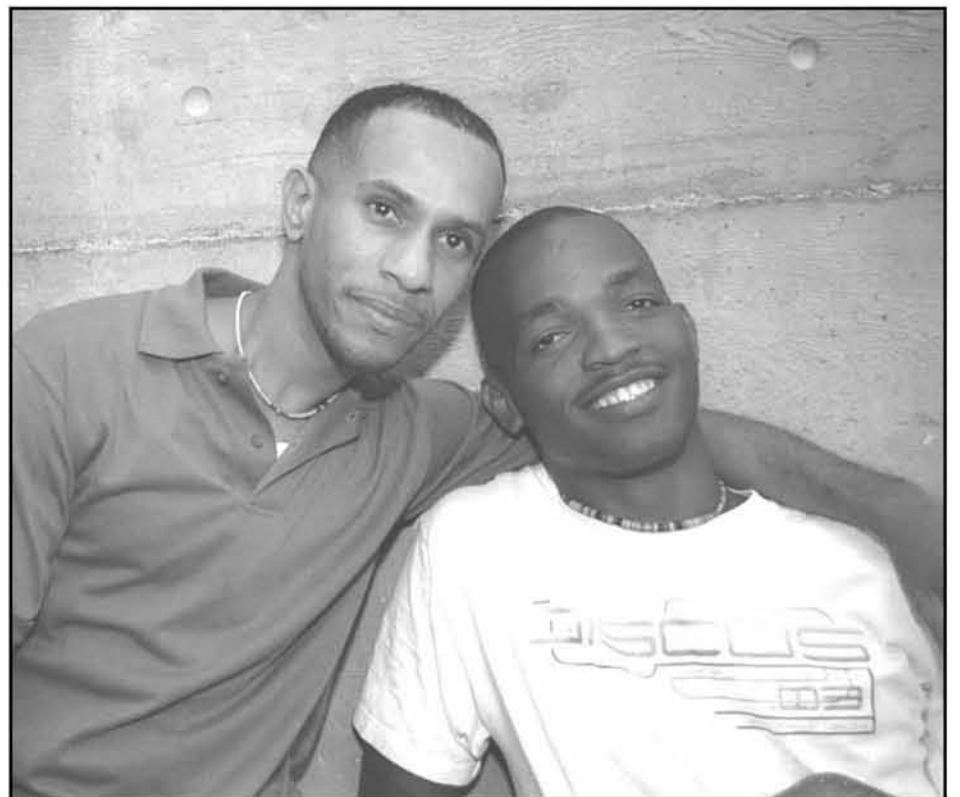


Photo above: DOUG MESZLER. Below: Basically Treblemakers. On Sousaphone is Joe (Jay) Baker, a co-founder of the GAGV. PHOTO: GERRY SZYMANSKI



GERRY SZYMANSKI





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Parting glances...



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ImageOut's award-winning entry; a cutout of the film festival's name is also a clothes hanger, appropriate for the Parade theme of Fashion.

THE EMPTY CLOSET IS AVAILABLE AT:
Abundance Natural Food Co-Op, Wine Sense, Open Arms MCC, A Step Apart, Planned Parenthood, Bachelor Forum, Rundel Library, World Wide News, Dignity-Integrity, Outlandish, MOCHA, Seattle's Finest Coffee, Java, The Spot, ACHC, The Spa, Tara, Motor, Little Theatre, Anthony Jordan Health, Genesee Federal Credit Union, Pride Connection, Cheesy Eddy's, Avenue Pub, Lakeshore Records, Record Archive, Canaltown Coffee Roasters, ARI, Borders (Henrietta and Victor), Barnes & Noble (Pittsford Plaza), Nasty D's, Muthers, Family Medicine (South Ave.), Utter Clutter, Monroe Show World, Atomic Eggplant, ImageOut office, Spin Cafe, Montana Mills, Greenwood Books, State St. News, Monroe Co. HIV/STD Clinic (Main St.), Ventures IRPT, Black Men Latino Men Health Crisis, and many other fine places!

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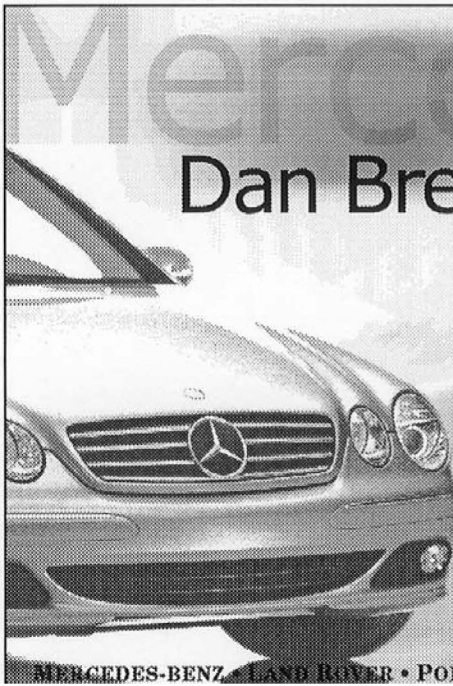
GAGV VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY
August 19th

6:00-8:00pm
 GAGV Community Center
 179 Atlantic Avenue
 If you have volunteered your time to
 The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley,
 you are invited to a party with food and beverages
 in appreciation for your hard work and thoughtfulness.
 We look forward to seeing you!
 Please RSVP by August 16th to 585-244-8640


LGBT ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

New Members Welcome!

Meets 2nd Tuesday of each month
 7pm to 8:30pm
 GAGV Community Center
 179 Atlantic Ave.
 Second Floor, Tulip Room
 Call Paul Berezney @ 244-8640 ext. 14
 Or email paulb@gagv.us for more information.



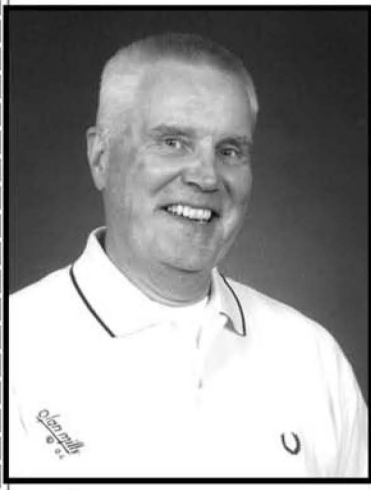
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Recognize a problem exists
 Acknowledge the pain you feel—or caused
 Ask for help, guidance, another opinion
 Do one small, concrete thing to create change
 Make amends if appropriate
 Remember you always have choices
 Pray for strength, courage, healing
 Share what you've learned with others
 Don't give up hope or extinguish it in others
 Forgive yourself. Forgive others

Ron Matter
 Broker Associate
 Notary

Author Unknown

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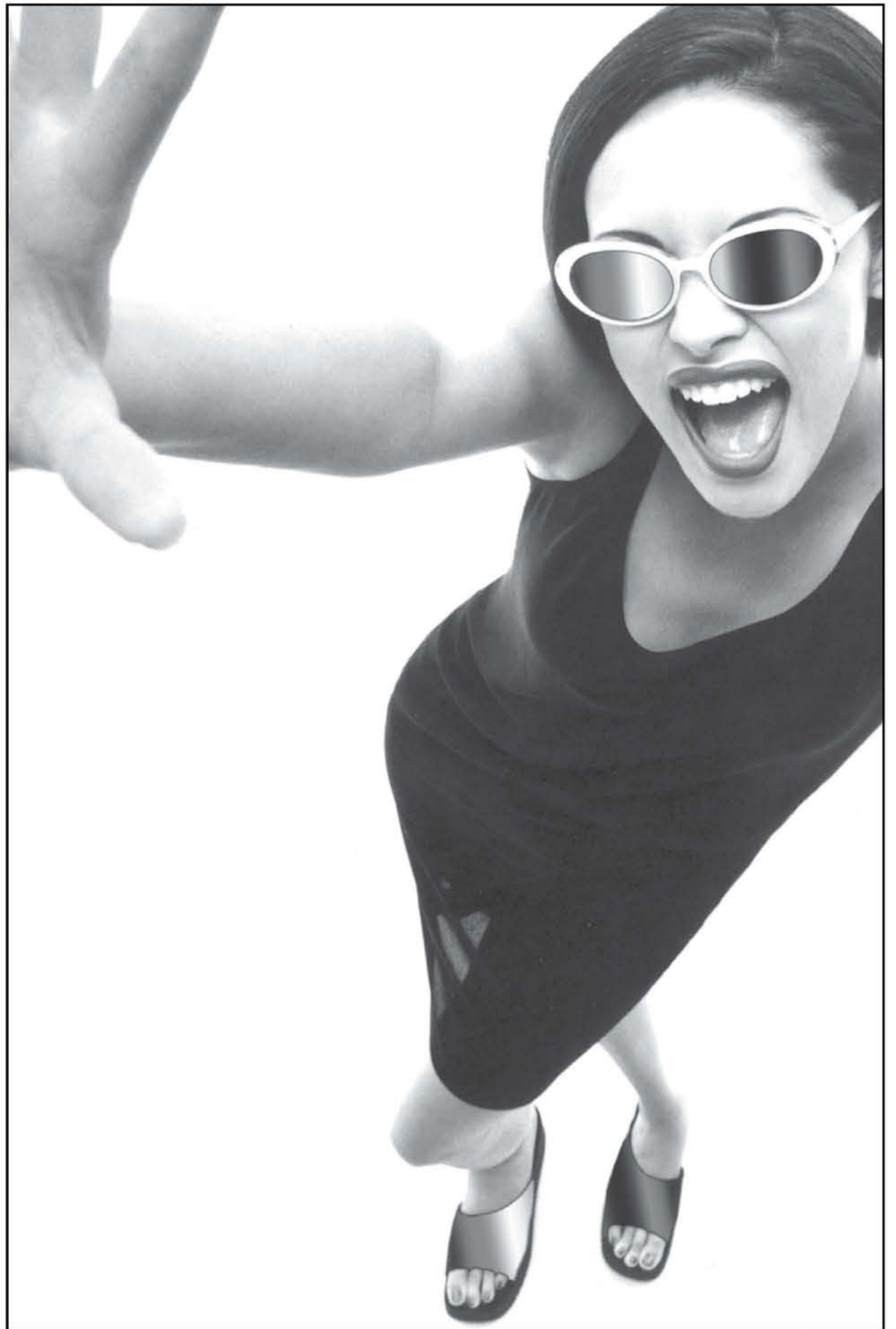

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 If you're buying or selling,
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For making it a beautiful day (Sunday, July 11, 2004) in the Genesee Valley Park

THANK YOU

Abbott's Frozen Custard, About Magazine, Action for a Better Community, Aggie Dune as Mistress of Ceremonies, AIDS Rochester, Alicia Kibitlewski, All Star Pizza, Amanda Massage, American Express Financial Advisors, Animal Rescue, Ann G.T. Young, Ann Sherman's Grill, Atlantic Beacon Sculpture Committee, Balloons, Basically TrebleMakers, Bausch & Lomb, Beverly Jackson, Bill Kelly, Bisque & Brush, Brighton Town Supervisor Sandra Frankel, C.T.'s Image Creations, Callabo Entertainment, Cash Bar by Motor, Cassidy's Ultimate Bar-B-Que, Channel 8, Channel 10, Channel 13, Charles E. Lytle, Chuck Argento, Chuck Cooper, Come Out & Play (COAP), D.J. Chuck Berry, Dancing with your favorite local Djs, Daniel Ward Salon, Days Inn, Deb Heintz, Deborah A. Krusemark, Dempsey Place Crafts, Dignity-Integrity/Rochester, DJ Hector, Doggies in Drag, Drumming Circle with Rose Husted, The Dunking Booth, Eastman Kodak Company, Edgerton Floral, Emily Jones, Empire State Pride Agenda (ESPA), Empty Closet Readers, Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, Eric Bellmann, Eric Johnson, Etc. & Plants, Evelyn V. Bailey, Excellus BlueCross/BlueShield, Fabrics & Findings, Face Painting, Flex, Fortunate Families, Fox News, Frederick Law Olmstead, Fusion Salon, GAGV Youth Group, Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Grana's at the Renaissance, Green Party of Monroe County, Groovy Stuff, HIV Trials Vaccine Unit, Holiday Inn, Hover-Davis, HSBC Bank USA, Humane Society at Lollypop Farm, Huther-Doyle, Memorial Institute, ID Lubricants Inc., ImageOut Gay and Lesbian Film & Video Festival, Imprints 4 All, In Mixed Company, Insider Magazine, Integrative Healing Arts Center, James D, Jeff Valuassori, Jeffery Freedman Attorneys at Law, Jewelry Outlet Boutique, Jim Hall, John Hover, Judy Cranston, J. Rivers, Katheryn Rivers, Keith E. Powell, Kettle Korn, King Sales, Kodak Lambda Photo Booth, Kraig A. Pannell, Lambda Car Club, Lambda Network at Kodak, Leah Zarcari, Log Cabin Republicans, Lorraine's Food Factory, M Shaka, MAH, Mary Kay Beauty Consultant, Michael Oswald, Mike Giosech, Miss Tulip, Monroe County Health Department, Monroe County Parks Department, Moonwalk, Mother Nature, Motor, Muthers, Mykonos Greek Cuisine, Mystic Moon, Nasty D's, Out & About Directory, Outlandish Videos and Gifts, Parents &, Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Parkleigh, PetSmart, Petting Zoo, Planned Parenthood of Rochester, R News, Rainbow Democrats of Monroe County, Rainbow Seniors of Western New York, Rainbow Skye Karaoke, Richard Young, Rick Easterly, Rochester City Council, Rochester Community Business Forum, Rochester Police Department, Rochester Women's Community Chorus, Ron W. Pawelczak, Senator Joe Robach, Sharkware, Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn, Shirley Bowen, Signs Now, Small Wunders Miniature Horses, Soka Gakkai, International (SGI)-USA, Sonic, Sunburst Tanning, Tara's, Tattoos, The "Green Gator", The City of Rochester, The Earl Cram Revue, The Estate, The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, The Gay Liberation Front, The Lyndon R. Huttemann Salon, The Pride Connection, The X & Y Chromosomes, Third Presbyterian Church, Thomas Lawrence Salon, Threshold, Treehug Trading Company, US Talent Management, Uter Clutter, Voila Hair Studio, Volunteers! Volunteers! Volunteers, Wegmans, and the Youth Sponsored Band



From the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley