Gay Alliance hosts forum on bullying

By Susan Jordan

The suicide of 14-year-old Jamey Rodemeyer of Williamsville-North High School near Buffalo, after years of being bullied in his middle school, horrified the entire nation in September and has led to renewed public concern about youth suicide prevention.

The Gay Alliance hosted a forum on bullying in schools on Oct. 3 at the GAGV Youth Center.

The informational meeting drew around 35 people, including several middle school administrators.

Jessica Cohen, Gay Alliance Youth Services Coordinator, and Kevin Coffey, a doctor of social work at Strong Health who helps the Youth Program and whose doctoral thesis was on suicidal risk in LGBT youth, faciliated.

Among those attending were three members of the Brighton school district, including Superintendent Mike Molloy; a representative of the City School District and the librarian from Greece Arcadia, who is the new advisor for the school’s Gay Straight Alliance (GSA).

Present were GAGV Executive Director Sue Cowell, a gay parent, the mother of a bullied student and her family, teachers and several Youth Group and GAGV volunteers, among others.

Sue Cowell has now been asked to join the Greece Central School District Committee on Excellence and Equity.

Kevin Coffey introduced the topic by saying, “Bullying has been around forever, but because of electronic media, ways of bullying have multiplied and types of bullying have changed. LGBT youth are at more risk. They are often blamed for the bullying.”

Celebration, rally honor Trans Day of Remembrance

By Alden Bawbee, Western New York Organizer for the Transgender Empowerment State Pride Agenda

The Rochester Transgender Equality and Justice Coalition, a collaborative group of individuals and organizations working to achieve transgender equality in New York State, has organized a Celebration of Life and Rally honoring the memory of the Rochester Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, located at the Audiumtorium Center, 875 East Main St. in Rochester, on Tuesday, Nov. 15, in recognition of Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nov. 20).

The event will be held in the Tea Room on the fourth floor of the Center from 6-8 p.m. Transgender New Yorkers have been a rich, vibrant part of the LGBT community with deep involvement in our fight for equality and justice dating back to Stonewall. The Celebration of Life and Rally will recognize the lives of the many transgender individuals who bravely faced transphobia to live.

Called a “Solidarity March,” well over 15,000 people paraded from Worth St. and Broadway to Foley Square in lower Manhattan on Oct. 5. Photo: Ove Overmyer

Occupy Wall Street changes society’s consciousness: Local viewpoints

By Laura McSpadden

On Sept. 17, an estimated 100 to 200 people set up camp in Manhattan’s Zuccotti Park. Occupy Wall Street had begun. Those campers were joined during the daytime by many others, orchestrating marches of approximately 1,000 people through the streets of New York City.

As of Empty Closet press time, they have not left, and their property has multiplied and types of bullying have changed. LGBT youth are at more risk. They are often blamed for the bullying.”

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Thanksgiving, which includes with the story of the Pilgrims’
eca, or Onondowaga, occupy
Mother of Nations, who is
maker, an Enlightened Teacher,
mention of Native Americans
historic site. The warriors tossed
of the Longhouse. The
quois.

of the Mohawk, while the smaller

Nations in

Pine,
The Medicine Herbs,
The Animals, The Trees, The
Birds, The Four Winds, The
Grandfather Thunder, Our
Eldest Brother The Sun, Our
Grandmother Moon, The Stars,
The Enlightened Teachers and
The Creator. The refrain after
each section is “Now our minds are
You can hear this prayer
given at the Treaty Day ceremo
in Canandaigua, when Haudenoshau
pe and their friends come together
to celebrate the one year of the
1794 Treaty with the U.S. gov
ernment. The ceremony takes
place outside of the
of the Canandaigua courthouse,
folowing a parade and before
dinner at a local school.

For copies of the Treaty
Addendum, a booklet printed
English and Mohawk, write
The Treaty Day Addendum
Fund of Tracking Project,
box 266, Corrales, New
870-084-8788, or
purchase copies at the gift shop at
Canandaigua.

The prayer is being translated
into many languages, and hope
fully Chief Jake Swamp’s dreams
will come true and the Hauden
ousauke tradition of peace and
enemy with nature will help
our troubled world.

See you in Canandaigua on
Nov. 11, 18

Alliance Receives $15,000 Grant From The Joseph And Irene
Skalny Charitable

I am pleased to announce that
the Genesee Valley has been award
a $15,000 grant from the
Joseph and Irene Skalny Charita
ble Trust for 2011.

This is a timely show of sup
port, as the effects of anti-gay
bullying and heterosexism upon
young people are now undeniable.

The recent passage of the Dignity
for All Students Act has cre
ated a need in area schools
for increased diversity awareness
and greater information regard
ing how skillfully to respond
to situations of bullying and
heterosexism, directed towards
students who identify as or who
are perceived to be lesbian,
bisexual or transgender. This
grant will be invaluable not
only to the Gay Alliance, but
to the entire Greater Rochester
community.

And one bright spot in the
work we do addressing bul
lying. Our recent open forum on
the Gay Alliance of the
District with its leadership
team. The next letter I receive
from the Greek School District inviting
me to join the Greek Central
School District Committee on
Excellence and Equity. Their
goal is to create greater partner
ships with the community to
address these issues.

The $15,000 grant is in mem
or of Joseph and Irene
Skalny, philanthropists who
were dedicated to causes relat
ing to education and youth.
In 2010, the Trust awarded a
$5,000 grant to the Gay Alli
ance, which was used to
fund curriculum for provider
trainings and youth leadership
workshops.

This year, the Gay Alli
ance is proud that the trust
has recognized the Alliance’s achieve
ments by awarding a long-term
objective grant, which will enable
the Alliance to continue and
expand trainings and programming
for youth leadership teams and
youth service providers.

It will also enable youth to
produce a short film on the current
climate for LGBT youth, which will
be used as part of the community train
ning at the Gay Alliance.

In addition, the grant
will enable the youth team to
write and publish pocket-sized
resource guides on such topics as
“Gay and in High School,”
“Young and in Western New York,”
and “Young and Trans in West
ern New York.”

The grant funds will also
enable the Youth Program to
create a brief Public Service Announcements
to distribute to
secondaries.

Furthermore, the grant
will provide training to the City
of Rochester Recreation Centers,
School Districts and youth serv
ices agencies to assist in policy
development, establish ongoing
training and create opportuni
ties to develop youth leadership.

This generous grant will be
instrumental in expanding Gay
Alliance’s life-saving advo
cacy work and services for les
bian, gay, bisexual, transgender,
questioning and allied youth
throughout the Greater Rochester
area.


Name
Address
City/State/Zip
Phone
E-mail

Newspaper: ___________
City: ___________
State: ___________

Membership levels:

Level 1: Annual Adm. $300-999 Champion
Level 2: Annual Adm. $1,000-4,999 Triangular Club $2,500+ Stonewall

$1,000-4,999 Triangle Club $5,000+ Stonewall

Please enclose a check in the amount of ___________

Name: ___________
Address: ___________

Phone: ___________
E-mail: ___________
City/State/Zip: ___________

FIGURE 12.2 The younger generation prefers to use social media as a
way to connect with the current and former employees of the
organization. Yet, the younger generation still feels that the
organization is not providing enough opportunities for
personal development. This may be because the younger
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Letters to the editor:

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Dignity Integrity: celebrating 36 years of faith in Rochester

By Lora Thady

Dignity-Integrity Rochester (http://dignityusa.org) is a small faith community of Catholics, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons of faith, together with families and friends who call D-I home. Founded in 1975 in a place where persons of faith could feel at home, welcomed and affirmed, D-I meets and has services at St. Luke and St. Simon Cyrene Church at Frithgh and Broad Street in downtown Rochester. When D-I was established, neither the Catholic nor Episcopal churches welcomed GLBT members or provided a way for them to worship openly. Since the beginning, the Episcopal church has opened its doors to all who wish to worship, and D-I members are welcome at worship services, community activities and coffee hours.

Additional details about services, specials events and contact members of D-I can be found on their website (http://di-rochester.org), by calling 585.234.5092 or by email to info@di-rochester.org. The information is also available in The Empty Closet Group section of the calendar and the monthly calendar.

GAGV Library: Archives receives Xenon funding

By Susan Jardan

The Gay Alliance Library and Archives will receive funding in early 2012 from XCP (Xenon Community Involvement Program) to replace old bookcases with sturdy new ones. This will also enable Library/Archive volunteers to complete other tasks which will ultimately help to get the standardized online catalogue needed that the GAGV Library to be browsed on WorldCat, the global listing of libraries which anyone can use.

The Empty Closet spoke with volunteer Jeff Fowler, who is part of the Library leadership team, about the collection and what the funding will help the Alliance to do. In September, Jeff applied for funding from XCP, which was quickly granted. Jeff was familiar with XCP, which is under the Xenon Foundation, because he is a Xenon employee and a member of Galaxie, the company’s LGBT group. XCP funded projects for which Xenon employees volunteer to benefit nonprofits. Jeff said: “The key that made this an appropriate application for XCP was that we needed a dozen or more sturdy bookcases. If we could get many bookcases at once, we’ll have a massive project in moving all the books – a volunteer opportunity for Xenon employees.”

Jeff said that the funding should arrive in January and the installation of new bookcases will probably take place in February or March. He said, “While the books are off the shelves, we can add spine labels, which will help in rearranging the shelves easier. The second thing we’ll be doing is moving from the current library system to the Library of Congress system, and we see this is as a related project for the new system cataloguing database that can be browsed in WorldCat. This means people can be looking for a certain book and find it in our library without even knowing that we exist. That’s one medium-term goal instead of a long-term goal.”

Jeff sought Xenon employees willing to volunteer for the work day and received a good response. Other Library volunteers will also be involved in the project. He said, “We’ll come out of this with nice-looking, sturdy shelves that will serve us well for years, and also we will have spine labels and the Library of Congress system which will enable us to do all in one day.”

Gerry Szymanski of the Sibley Library at the Eastman School and Tara Winner of The Strong’s Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play are the other members of the leadership team, Jeff says, “They are both professionals who know how a library works.”

He added, “One question we got from XCP was, what are you doing to put yourselves out there, I realized we’ve done a lot – we had a presence at the Pride Parade, Festival and Picnic this year, we have open houses once or twice a year which include local authors, we have a page on the GAGV website and we have a Facebook page.”

The Library, which is located next to the Youth Center of the Rochester Audubon Society, 875 E. Main Street, currently includes 5,000 titles, 300 DVDs, and 1,000 periodicals, including early copies of “One” and “The Ladder.”

The Library accumulated at the Gay Alliance over 40 years, and includes a very wide variety of material such as B-Sexual Love, an academic work dating to 1935, the cover of which was the first to mention positive responses to the Medical and Legal Professions and to students of Psychology and Sociology.”

While there are new releases and current periodicals are added via donations from individuals and from the website LibraryThing, Jeff says that the GAGV Library is not the place to go for the last copy of The Advocate or the new books of 2011. “Part of why we’re here is we have a record of these early perceptions of the ways gay people communicated with each other, sometimes in very censored ways, and also perceptions of LGBT people and behaviors as seen by the experts in the society of the time. We hang on to this kind of thing to tell part of our story.”

In addition to people doing research, we have patrons who come to use the particular experience or entertainment. It makes a big difference that we have this concentration of materials that speak to the LGBT experience.”

LibraryThing is a social network for librarians, and Jeff researched such sites and decided that LibraryThing was the right site for the GAGV Library. “It has most of the features one would want from an online library cataloging system,” he said. “Plus there are some features one wouldn’t expect. We’ll have a new book and type in the ISBN number, or just the title, and it will find it in the database, and all the info is there and doesn’t have to be typed in. It also has cover art for the books. We used that to find Dewey numbers and keep track of what we had. So in the last 6 months of 2011 we had everything sorted on the shelves to make them more browsable.”

LibraryThing sends you email in new books for review briefs, which are posted on the site.

Current updates are Mondays and Wednesdays from 6 to 8 p.m. and Sundays from 3 to 5 p.m. You can get a new book dedication in volunteering for the Library should contact Jamie Gauslin at jamie@librarything.com.

Proposed NYS bill would include “cyberbullying”

The New York Senate may have new legislation on bullying to consider soon, due to the recent high school controversies by bullying victim Jarrod Meckley’s tragic suicide in September. Senator Sam挠n used this point to introduce a bill in the Senate Independent Democratic Conference to ban bullying, while the Senate legislation that would include (NYS bill continues page 10)
Presbyterian church ordains first openly gay minister, Scott Anderson

The Presbyterian Church USA has ordained its first openly gay minister. On Oct. 8, Scott Anderson, of Madison, Wis., became the first openly gay minister ordained by the Presbyterian Church USA, since the denomination amended its constitution this year to allow ordination of openly LGBT ministers.

The ceremony at Covenant Presbyterian Church was called a watershed moment in the life of the denomination. It was also the culmination of one man's deeply personal spiritual journey. "I have felt a call from God to serve as a parish pastor since I was a sophomore in high school," said Anderson, 56, a nearlifelong Presbyterian who has spent the last eight years as executive director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches. "When I came out and left the ministry, I never thought in my lifetime this day would come," he told the Journal-Sentinel. "This has been 20 years of God surprising me, really." Anderson was ordained by the John Knox Presbytery, which consists of 60 congregations in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

ACLU helps student assaulted by principal for GSA t-shirt

A 17-year-old senior at Sequoyah High School in Madisonville, Tenn. was reportededly shoved, bumped in the chest and verbally harassed by his principal for wearing a GSA t-shirt in support of efforts to establish a gay-straight alliance (GSA) club on campus. In response, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the ACLU of Tennessee sent a letter to the school district on Oct. 4 demanding that students' rights to free speech be protected in the classroom. The ACLU has been assisting the student, Chris Sigler, in his and other students' efforts to overcome resistance from school officials to establish a GSA. Principal Maurice Moser had previously threatened to take action against students who circulated petitions about the club.

"It is totally unacceptable that a young man who was peacefully exercising his First Amendment rights would have his speech shut down by the public school principal," said Hedy Weinberg, executive director of the ACLU of Tennessee. "Last week's incident clearly illustrates the hostile environment LGBT students face at Sequoyah High School. Given this context, it's especially important that support networks like Sigler's can be heard in order to overcome the school's resistance to a GSA. Sigler wore a homemade t-shirt to school on Sept. 27 that said "GSA: We've Got Your Back." A teacher ordered Sigler to cover up the shirt in the hallway. Sigler, knowing he had a right to wear the shirt, wore it again Sept. 30, and resisted an order to take it off in the hallway. Sigler says that Moser then ordered all students out of the classroom, except for Sigler's sister Jessica, who refused to leave. According to witnesses, Moser then grabbed Sigler's arm, shoved him, and chest-bumped him repeatedly while asking, "Who's the big man now?"

Sigler's mother reported that when she arrived at the school, she saw her son seated in a desk with Moser leaning over him and shouting in Sigler's face. The Siglers filed a report about the incident that afternoon with the Monroe County Police Department.

"All I want is to have a GSA at my school," said Sigler, who said he's looking for allies to help him build more support for the club. The way I was treated shows me that we need a GSA here.

"All students deserve a safe and respectful learning environment. Harassment or abuse of any student — regardless of sexual orientation — is absolutely reprehensible as well as illegal," said Amanda Good, staff attorney with the ACLU of Tennessee Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Project. "We expect the police to investigate this quickly and fairly, and take statements from all witnesses who were present."

UPDATE: Oct. 26: The school has now approved GSA t-shirts, but has still not allowed the club to form.

Boehner blows $1.5 million on attorneys for DOMA defense

House Speaker John Boehner originally entered into a contract with private attorneys to defend the anti-gay Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in court with a cap of legal fees at $500,000. A new contract that was revealed Oct. 4, increases that amount to $1.5 million.

Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese issued the following statement: "There seems to be no limit to how much taxpayer money the House Republican leadership is willing to spend to keep this discriminatory law on the books. At a time when budgeting is the watchword for the club. The way I was treated shows me that we need a GSA here.

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Gay rights activist Frank Kameny died on Oct. 11, Coming Out Day.

Kameny, 86, was a pioneer in the gay rights movement and was a force in the fight for civil rights long before the rest of the country caught up.

As a gay rights pioneer, he was honored in the LGBT community and will be greatly missed. He was a member of many organizations, including Lambda Legal, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and, most recently, Stonewall Community Foundation.

"Paula was a pioneering lawyer and dedicated leader in our movement," said HRC President Joe Solmonese. "We mourn the loss of a tremendous force in the fight for equality of all people. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends.

Frank Kameny, pioneer activist, passes at 86

Here's one of America's early gay rights pioneers, a man who fought for the rights of others before most of us knew we even had the right to be gay.

Kameny is a name that is synonymous with gay rights. He was a trailblazer in the fight for equality, and his legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of all who fought for the same cause.

In 1965, Kameny and 10 others became the first to stage a gay rights protest in front of the White House and later at the Pentagon and elsewhere. Many of Kameny's signs are still visible in the Washington, D.C., National Museum of American History.

In the last years of his life, Kameny was increasingly recognized for his work as a gay rights pioneer. He was honored in 2009 at Washington's annual Capital Pride celebration and that same year received a formal apology for being fired solely based on his sexual orientation.

The apology came from the successor to the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

The office is headed by John Berry, who is openly gay, and Kameny attended his swearing-in.

When gay marriage became legal in the U.S. capital in 2010, Kameny was at the first weddings.

"Gay being has become infinitely better than it was," he said earlier this year when documents from his collection of gay rights history went on display for the first time at the Library of Congress. "The fundamental theme underpinning all of that is simply equality."

AFTER statement

The staff and board of directors at the American Foundation for Equal Rights extend heartfelt condolences to the friends and family of Kameny.

"Frank, I always appreciated that you gave the 50-plus-year perspective, the long view. While so many have been impatient about the pace of progress, there was Frank, insisting we recognize that, in the 50 years since he was fired, we have been steadily, necessarily moving in the right direction," said Chad Griffin, the group's executive director.

However, the group's president, Chad Griffin, released the following following statement: "America has lost a hero today. Out and proud, Frank Kameny was fighting for equality long before the rest of us knew we could."

"Because there was one Frank Kameny, trailblazing and honest enough to speak out 50 years ago, there are millions of Americans, coming out, speaking out and fighting for their basic civil rights. His is a legacy of bravery and tremendous impact and will live on in the hearts and minds of every American who values equality and justice."

In the landmark ruling striking down Proposition 8, the U.S. District Court referenced the efforts of Frank Kameny and the Mattachine Society to chronicle the long and shameful history of state-enforced discrimination against gay and lesbian Americans.

"It is simply astounding to read the Court's famous 1966 letter from the chairman of the U.S. Civil Service Commission referring to the Mattachine Society's request to rescind the policy banning "active homosexuals" from federal employment."

Human Rights Campaign statement

"Frank Kameny led an extraordinary life. He lived by heroic actions that set a path for the modern LGBT civil rights movement. From his early days fighting discrimination in the federal workforce, Dr. Kameny taught us all that "Gay is Good." As we say goodbye to this trailblazer on National Coming Out Day, we remember the remarkable power we all have to change the world by living our lives like Frank — openly, honestly and authentically."

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) statement

"Frank Kameny sparked national change and set the example for gay and lesbian Americans to free their lives openly and proudly," said Mike Thompson, Acting President of GLAAD. "He taught the power that visibility and stories have in changing hearts and minds. Today on National Coming Out Day, we honor Frank's legacy not only by remembering this pioneer, but by continuing his work by continuing to fight for equal rights and representation in the media for gay and lesbian people everywhere."

Statement by Rea Carey, Executive Director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

"The death of Frank Kameny is a profound loss and he will be greatly missed. The National LGBT Task Force shares in this grief."

We deeply respect and admire Frank Kameny's pioneering work on behalf of gay and lesbian rights. His legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of all who fought for the same cause.

"Gay was Good.""All hardworking people in California, regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, the Gender Nondiscrimination Act provides clarity to those who are victims of unlawful discrimination as well as for business owners, employers, and employees alike. This bill with the anti-discrimination protections by explicitly enumerating gender identity and expression as protected categories in a number of state codes.

"All hardworking people in California, including women, men, or transgender individuals, should have an equal opportunity to earn a living and provide for their families," said Roland Palencia, Executive Director for Equality California. "No one should have to live in fear of being fired from a job or denied housing simply because of who they are."

The Gender Non-Discrimination Act (Cal. Gov. continues page 14)

Calif. governor signs two pro-trangender bills

On Oct. 9, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law Bill 187, the Gender Nondiscrimination Act, which will strengthen employment, housing and public accommodations protections for all Californians, particularly those who face discrimination based on gender identity and expression.

The bill was authored by Assemblymember Toni Atkins (D-San Diego) and sponsored by Equality California, Transgender Law Center and Gay-Straight Alliance Network.

"The Gender Nondiscrimination Act protects all Californians. No matter your skin color, your age, where you come from or who you love, there's no reason to be a trans-gender, we are all protected by the same rights," said Assemblymember Atkins.

"We share equal protection in employment, housing, and education. This bill ensures that no one is left out."

"While California anti-discrimination laws already define 'gender' to include a person's gender identity and gender expression, the Gender Nondiscrimination Act provides clarity to those who are victims of unlawful discrimination as well as for business owners, employers, and employees alike. This bill with the anti-discrimination protections by explicitly enumerating gender identity and expression as protected categories in a number of state codes."

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The Gender Non-Discrimination Act (Cal. Gov. continues page 14)
Interview

Bruce E. Smail, Executive Director of The MOCHA Center

By Susan Jordan

Bruce E. Smail has been Executive Director of The MOCHA Center, a non-profit organization providing health and wellness programs and services for communities of color, especially the LGBTQ community, for five months.

Born in New York City, he was raised in St. Croix, Virgin Islands. He went to The College of New Jersey in Trenton, N.J., where he did his undergrad and masters degrees, and then worked in multicultural and LGBTQ affairs at various universities around the country.

“In 2005 I went home to the Virgin Islands,” he said, “to lead VICARE, the largest HIV/AIDS non-profit organization in the Virgin Islands, for three years. I also launched a social justice consulting company in Washington, D.C. Then I felt it would be better to be back in a full-time job, and I launched a national job search.”

Bruce started work at MOCHA in July 2011. “My heart and passion are in education and training,” he says. “I’d say my work is a combination of a lot of different areas. Foremost is administration, but the work we do with people of color, LGBTQ, and HIV/AIDS communities draws upon my counseling background. The majority of my career has been in advocacy and providing services to LGBTQ people of color, and HIV/AIDS so this position is a unique opportunity to bridge my 20 years of working with these communities.”

He continued, “Like St. Croix, New York State is ranked unusually high in the per capita rate of HIV. New York State has the highest per capita rate of HIV in the United States and the Virgin Islands is second. The per capita rate of AIDS in New York is ranked second in the U.S. while the Virgin Islands is ranked fourth.”

“In terms of high incidence rates, there are several things that are important. The concentration levels of HIV and AIDS are high in New York, which increases risks if people are having unprotected sex. You have a greater chance of being in contact with someone who is living with HIV/AIDS. It is important that we increase dialogue on HIV/AIDS. People are often uncomfortable with the issue, but the more you discuss it the more you normalize the topic. Having HIV positive individuals visible brings the issue closer to home.”

“I think people feel they personally are not at risk — I’m straight, I’m in a committed relationship, etc. But it’s about behaviors — not what community you’re in. It’s about having unprotected sex, or using unclear needles. You may not identify as being part of the gay or drug using communities, but your risky behavior may be putting you at risk.”

When asked about his first priorities as the new ED, Bruce said, “I’ve been working internally with the organization and also with the community. The MOCHA Center has gone through several transitions in the past year, and it’s important to show our stability through the new leadership in the organization as well as the board of directors. Dr. Ed Brockenbrough, a faculty member in the Warner School of Education at the University of Rochester is serving as the new President of the Board of Directors. We are working closely to refocus our vision for the MOCHA Center. It’s also important to create opportunities for MOCHA to engage with the community, and vice versa. We’re looking for opportunities to develop strong community partners and we are engaged in various collaborative plans right now.”

“Also important is that in Rochester we have a large youth contingent and we need to expand beyond the social aspect and add more educational, leadership and career development programs. We need to do fundraising and it’s a priority. But one thing I’m working on with the board is looking at fundraising and seeing how we can raise self-generated funds for the agency. That could be done through consulting, capacity building, and trainings for a fee. We’ll also look at business ventures and of course there’s a range of fund-raising options.”

“Fundraising is part of it, but we still need to look at both programming and how we address needs of our communities in Monroe County in 2010, 45 percent of new HIV cases were in the age group 24 and under — which is very difficult and calls for our organization, and other organizations, to seriously look at what types of programming we can offer to bring the attention of youth to HIV/AIDS. There are concerns in our schools about providing free condoms to students, for instance. I don’t think we have the privilege of stalling on this, when you look at the high rates of HIV and STI among youth. Nationally, the other high incidence rate is MSM — men who have sex with men — largely young African American men. We need to break the stigma around sexual identity and truly address the needs of these communities. Cultural homosexuality is huge. I believe we can make a difference if we increase dialogue and HIV testing, and make condoms easily accessible. I think there’s a need to bring condoms and frank dialogue about safer sex, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and gender identities.”

Bruce said that MOCHA is currently launching two new support groups, one for newly diagnosed people and the other for individuals who are 19 or two years or more. He said, “We’ve looked at the needs of color. We’ve also introduced the idea of expanding our services to various community groups to sponsor programs within MOCHA. We’ve worked with a possible new group for LGBTQ elders of color. Please visit our website, www.mochacenter.org for more details.”

In reference to his visions for MOCHA’s future, Bruce said, “MOCHA is a big organization. We have offices in Rochester and Buffalo and satellite offices in Niagara Falls and New York City. Our partnership with GMHC (Gay Men’s Health Crisis) in New York City is an excellent opportunity to serve the entire state of New York. Both organizations are leading the New York State Taskforce on Black Gay Health and provide capacity building and technical assistance to NYS organizations that serve Black MSM. As we continue our grassroots efforts and commitment to our local communities, the MOCHA Center will also expand our reach on state and national levels.”

“Years of experience in HIV prevention education has lead Bruce to see multiple ways to educate people. ‘I tend to prefer a personal touch,’ he said. ‘I think largely because so many people have not been in contact and haven’t personalized HIV — when they can see people living with HIV and doing well, that adds a whole different dimension.’”

“I’ve been HIV positive since 2003, and I use my story in educating others about HIV/AIDS. Recently I spoke with about 20 youth who normally come in to the MOCHA Center on Ballroom Thursdays. I shared my HIV story and gave them an opportunity to openly dialogue about HIV. They were able to ask whatever they wanted to ask. That’s the best way to learn — when you actually have someone who can you talk to and question. The more we can do that for all communities in Rochester, the more we will be able to reduce stigma and fear in our communities.”

“I did a Sunday morning radio talk show with Nate Brown a few weeks ago. His show provides an opportunity for youth out of the City of Rochester to seriously look at HIV/AIDS issues. Their questions were engaging as well as hopeful that we can reach our young people on this critical health issue that may impact their lives. I told the staff at Threshold I would be willing to come and talk to their youth group on an annual basis and also to come to schools and talk about HIV.”

“When people to know that there are individuals who are doing well and leading normal lives. The reality is, there are also youth who are living with HIV. What does a life-threatening illness mean to individuals who are 19 or two years old? When I came out as HIV positive I was older. I’m open to doing it on a regular basis and also to come to schools and talk about HIV.”

“I’m not suggesting that everyone positive should be out, because there are risks. But they should be surrounded by people who will give them the support they need.”
A parent of a bullied child asked how bullies might be made to realize the consequences of their actions. Jess recommended talking about it openly and asking bullying children how they would feel if someone were doing this to them. Kevin noted that controlling bullies is the responsibility of schools, but also involves parents and the community.

One school administrator said that her school had brought in the Gay Alliance to speak with teachers about different family structures and make sure the adults would know how to handle these conversations when they came up.

A gay parent said, "I made myself known to teachers and volunteered in the classroom, so if anything happened I'd know about it. And I was pleasantly surprised that teachers wanted me there."

Jess Cohen said that schools should also be places where gay faculty, administration and staff feel free to come out. "If teachers are afraid to come out, how can students feel safe? Schools need to provide an environment that allows adults to feel safe; this contributes to youth being safe."

She said that it is healthy for LGBT youth to see successful, happy gay adults. "At the Youth Group Thanksgiving dinner, youth can see gay couples with good relationships," she said.

In response to a question about mediation in bullying cases, Jess said, "Media­tion between victim and bully is NOT recommended."

Kevin Coffey added, "We never do family therapy when one family member is abusive. That person has to take responsibility for what they are doing."

Some schools simply refuse to control bullies. Kevin said, "We had a case where a girl was badly bullied and the school put her on long term suspension because they said they couldn't guarantee her safety. So there she was being schooled at home... in order to learn, you have to feel safe."

Jess Cohen said, "She was made to feel she was the problem."

Both facilitators agreed that when youth are showing signs of depression and suicidal impulses, counselors and administration must take those signs seriously and get the youth into treatment immediately. Young people don't relate to the distant future and to say "it gets better" means nothing to youth who are being tormented NOW on a daily basis.

Kevin noted that controlling bullies means nothing to youth who are being tormented NOW on a daily basis.

When asked for ways to combat bullying, Jess suggested, "A visible presence in schools helps — posters, Safe Zone stickers indicating rooms where bullied youth will be safe. Ally Week when students sell rainbow ribbons for other students to wear to show that they are allies of LGBT youth. Visible anti-bullying policies and having consistent consequences are important. Bullies also need counseling they will not be suspended in later grades either. We need to ask what's happening here that this young person is allowed to do this?"

Kevin said, "Something's going on with the bully, and we need to find out what it is and deal with it through treatment. There need to be consequences too. If somebody's consistently doing this despite the consequences, something's going on that needs to be treated. There is likely domestic violence in the family. They've learned it's all right to treat someone abusively."

### Reminder:

**Kidney, Liver Transplantation in People with HIV**

Almost one year ago, in the December 2010 – January 2011 issue, The Empty Closet published an article on Dr. Christopher Barry’s research, which indicates that people with well-controlled HIV infection can be successfully transplanted with excellent outcomes. If you wish to review this information, go to www.gayalliance.org, click on Empty Closet News, and then click on “Health.” The article is on page 12.

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Many travel counselors at Whittaker & DePrez Travel Partners, LLC have received extensive training on Disney Destinations theme parks, resorts, cruises, vacation packages and more, and can provide the utmost in professional assistance in planning customized Disney vacations. In fact, one reason the agency obtained the “Authorized Disney Vacation Planner” status is that at least 50 percent of the frontline leisure travel agents are College of Disney Knowledge graduates. The College of Disney Knowledge is an in-depth comprehensive course that allows agents to develop their expertise regarding the Disney Destinations — knowledge that consumers can take advantage of when planning a Disney vacation.

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occuring, which included a dis respectful pen down put, being segregated from protestors, and being arrested in a cell with violent criminals and being chained to the wall of the only working restroom in the facility. It was an estimated 3,000-4,000 people, up from around 1,000 the previous week.

On Oct. 15-25, 92 protestors were arrested for their participation in the “Tahrir Square to Times Square” march. On Oct. 15, OWS has gathered $300,000 in donations. The first edition of the OWS Amaranth newsletter has been published. Between Oct. 15-25, hundreds of thousands protest, from London to New York to Oakland, California. Several peaceful protestors were injured, including a veteran who was actually hurt by police.
to keep having about how to make sure everyone feels comfortable, how to not assume gender pronouns and gender roles. But there were plenty of people in this meeting who didn’t know what we were doing when we went around and asked for people’s names and preferred gender pronoun. A lot of people who looked taken aback by this. Who stumbled through it, but also who looked interested when we explained what we were doing. Who listened to the discussion and then joined the conversation about what to do to make sure that Occupy Wall Street felt like a space safe for everyone. Who said that they had similar experiences and were glad that we were talking about it.

“This is important because I think this is what Occupy Wall Street is right now: less of a movement and more of a space. It is a space in which people who feel a similar frustration with the world as it is, and as it has been, are coming together and thinking about ways to recreate this world. For some people this is the first time they have thought about how the world needs to be recreated. But some of us have been thinking about this for a while now. Does this mean that those of us who have been thinking about it for a while now should discredit this movement? No. It just means that there is a lot of learning going on down there and that there is a lot of teaching to be done.”
bullying attacks via electronic media. The "cyberbullying" which would be added to the current crime of third-degree stalking would deal with cases of one minor creating fear, harm or emotional distress to another minor through electronic communication.

The bill would also add "bullycide" to the crime of second degree manslaughter, a class C felony. This charge would apply to anyone who, in the course of committing third degree stalking, also "intentionally or recklessly causes the victim of such offense to commit suicide."

Several petitions are already circulating, including one started by Kaithlin Monte, Miss New York 2011. Over 700 people have already signed her online petition, which calls for legislation protecting young people, which passed the Senate but not the Assembly. His bill would include all forms of bullying without enumerating them.

The Dignity For All Students Act will not take effect until July 1, 2012. It will prohibit discrimination, harassment and bullying in schools, on school buses or at school events, based on an individual's real or perceived gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.

NYC, Albany events highlight marriage lessons, plan for future

By Anne Trekar

Two prominent events drew LGBT equality advocates together to dissect recent legislative victories and assess the standing of current court cases while planning "next steps" toward full LGBT civil rights. Representatives from Marriage Equality New York, Empire State Pride Agenda, Human Rights Campaign, Log Cabin Republicans, Freedom to Marry, the Gill Foundation, SLD Knickerbocker and more attended the "New York Marriage Equality De-Brief," held Oct. 6 at the LGBT Center in Manhattan to recount the NY. marriage campaign and share lessons learned from it, with an eye to helping other states win marriage as well as advance other LGBT legislation like GENDA and ENDA.

The consensus of all featured panelists was that N.Y. marriage success was the result of a "perfect storm" of favorable conditions: Governor Cuomo, riding a wave of public popularity; the capital political clout to spend as a force and targeted promotion of marriage; public sentiment that had clearly moved into majority support thanks to years of on-going education and a cultural shift toward visible gay inclusion; plus LGBT advocacy organizations worked together in an unprecedented fashion solicited by the failed 2009 marriage vote and responding to the demands for unity from the governor's office.

Breakout sessions addressed the public relations campaign as well as the intense grassroots ground game. Grassroots efforts by Equality Rochester and the Rochester chapter of Pride at Work-AFL-CIO were all called out as being essential to the local coalition effort that was key to the first public declaration of support from a GOP Senator, Jim Alesi. On Oct. 13 a symposium was held at the Albany Law School entitled "LGBT Rights: Toward a More Perfect Union" that explored other historical dimensions as NY Senator Danny O'Donnell and Ms. Kath­erine Grainger, Counsel to the Governor, reflected on the political components that played out in Albany behind the scenes.

Mr. O'Donnell, who has successfully shep­herded the marriage bill through the State Assembly three times since 2007, said he and his partner of 31 years, John, saw the passage of the bill as personal in interactions with colleagues: "I only viewed it through the perspective of the vote. I wouldn't put my name on a bill of someone who voted no on marriage."

Grainger and O'Donnell recounted the frustrations resulting from 40 rewrite of the Governor's proposals that all addressed concern when forced to add a religious­ exemption clause to the bill to garner the last deciding GOP vote for senate passage. Despite the anti-gay bias that may have fueled the last-minute demand, they believe the ultimate language was a neu­tral re-statement of religious protections already existing.

Proponents shared a broad per­spective on the state of LGBT rights, including a presentation by General Counsel for the US Department of Defense, Jeh C. Johnson, on the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell. Mr. Johnson co-chairs the working group that did surveys and educ­ation of 400,000 military people and their families and provided the final assessment that there was no risk to military prepared­ness expected with repeal of DADT. He told anecdotes which clearly illustrated the impact of the personal stories of LGBT military people and stated that, with the exception of a minority holding strong religious beliefs, most military opposition to the repeal was based on misconceptions which were alleviated by education and dialogue.

Another symposium highlight was the discussion of various litigations that are challenging the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Robert­ta Kaplan, chief counsel for the Edie Windsor challenge to DOMA, and Bar­bara Underwood, Solicitor Generel for NY State who liked the state's amicus brief in support of the Windsor case, presented the crux of the arguments they had used with the appellate courts.

Windsor, 82, had lost her partner of 42 years and, though legally married in Canada, was subject to a $363,000 inheritance tax because of DOMA. Brian Raun, Director of Marriage Litigation for the ultra-conservative Alliance Defense Fund, also a panelist presented opposing arguments largely touting the antidotal superiority of heterosexual parenting and tradition as enough reasons to deny same­ sex marriage. His lack-luster arguments were quickly dismantled by pro-equality testimony to the delight of the audience. While the Oberlin Administration has refused to defend DOMA in this case as unconstitutional, Congressional conserva­tives are pursuing it in court.

Reflecting on the long path ahead to full LGBT equality, Matt Nosanchuk, Counsel to the US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, declared that "a gay service member now has the right to die for this country but still does not have the right to be buried next to their spouse."

FAQ guide answers questions about marriage equality

On Oct. 5, Lambda Legal and Legal Services NYC (LS-NYC) released a Fre­quently Asked Questions (FAQs) guide entitled New York State Marriage Equal­ity Act: Frequently Asked Questions for Couples and Families with Low or No Income for same-sex couples who are or plan to get married in New York.

This series of factsheets explains how marriage equality may impact immigration status, parent-child relationships, public assistance, food stamps, Medi­care, Medicaid, housing, consumer issues, Social Security benefits, and New York state income taxes.

"Our community is still celebrating full marriage equality in New York, but while we celebrate, we also want to make sure that our hard work reaches everyone in our community -- regardless of income level or immigration status. People should also be aware that the new marriage law may have serious implications for low-income same-sex couples and immi­grants," said Irvín Espinosa-Madrí, Lambda Legal Staff Attorney. "Because federal law and many states still do not recognize marriages of same-sex couples or provide the benefits of marriage, the social safety net that marriage provides can become a web of confusion for some low-income same-sex couples and their families. It is critical that all same-sex couples evaluate how their benefits and protections could be impacted by getting married."
The information Lambda Legal and LS-NYC present here is a valuable resource for low-income LGBT couples who have questions related to the impact marriage may have on a person’s eligibility for specific programs. Already, we have received dozens of calls from same-sex couples who are concerned about how the income of one spouse may impact the eligibility of the other spouse who currently receives public assistance, said Richard Saenz, staff attorney and coordinator of the Queen Legal Services HIV Advocacy Project. “We are pleased to launch this partnership in conjunction with an education program and advocate trainings so that we can reach as broad a community as possible including community members, government agencies and community-based organizations.”

The factsheets are available at http://www.lambdalegal.org/publications/factsheets/fs_ny-state-marriage-equality-for-specific-programs.html, or on the Lambda Legal Services NYC website.

For more information or for legal assistance, contact Lambda Legal’s Help Desk at 1-866-542-8336 or visit www.lambdalegal.org/help, or contact LS-NYC at 646-442-3600 or visit www.lsnyc.org.

British lesbians die in NYC helicopter crash

A British woman celebrating her 40th birthday with her partner and parents was killed Oct. 4 when their sightseeing helicopter crashed into the East River just off Manhattan.

The frenzied rescue attempt was covered live on NYC television and was heard on AM radio stations, with-Iow-or-no-income.html, or on the Legal Services NYC website.

An Incarcerated Youth Program is scheduled to take place at Downtown Community Forum on Monday, Nov. 7, from 7-9 p.m.

Incarcerated youth are focus of local forum

An Incarcerated Youth Program is scheduled to take place at Downtown Community Forum on Monday, Nov. 7, from 7-9 p.m. There is no charge for this program. The location is the Dugan Center, 15 St. Mary’s Place; 585 252-7140; www.dcfrochester.org.

(More information continues page 12)
The police have a choice to use non-lethal deterrents, QEJ says. "A 57 year old woman with a cane that is attempting to re-enter a building should not be the target of lethal violence. Like Oscar Grant in Oakland, the police had a choice they chose to kill instead of preserve life. When police target a largely white Occupy Wall Street protesters, they used pepper spray. When faced with a vulnerable woman of color, they chose to use lethal force as their first option."

"I feel that as homeless people, we don't have a justice system," said Gykyira Ms. Rodriguez, who is a QEJ volunteer and support group leader, echoed the sentiments of many shelter residents, including other active members of QEJ's support group community. QEJ said it has seen this repeated pattern of racism and disregard for human life when the police are dealing with issues of violence against the poor and people from communities of color who may also be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or perceived as such.

A report released last year by Queers for Economic Justice Welfare Warriors Collective, in conjunction with the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, found that calling or interacting with the police can be dangerous: 19 percent of 171 low-income LGBTQ survey respondents in NYC had been physically assaulted in the past two years. Among those who were currently homeless, the number jumps to 24 percent. These numbers reflect broader national violence when reaching out to the police for help advance their philanthropic passions.

ROCK the Day on Dec. 8; give online to not-for-profits via United Way

"We feel that as homeless people, we don't have a justice system," said Gykyira Ms. Rodriguez, who is a QEJ volunteer and support group leader, echoed the sentiments of many shelter residents, including other active members of QEJ's support group community. QEJ said it has seen this repeated pattern of racism and disregard for human life when the police are dealing with issues of violence against the poor and people from communities of color who may also be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or perceived as such.

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"We feel that as homeless people, we don't have a justice system," said Gykyira Ms. Rodriguez, who is a QEJ volunteer and support group leader, echoed the sentiments of many shelter residents, including other active members of QEJ's support group community. QEJ said it has seen this repeated pattern of racism and disregard for human life when the police are dealing with issues of violence against the poor and people from communities of color who may also be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or perceived as such.

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MOCHA's evolution
By Evelyn Bailey

In September the new Executive Director of The MOCHA Center, Bruce E. Small, was officially welcomed by the Rochester community. The list of MOCHA's Executive Directors benchmark mark the organization's achievements in fighting HIV/AIDS in communities of color in the Rochester and Buffalo areas. Every organization has a beginning. For MOCHA that beginning took place 15 years ago.

In 1996 Gary English, a young gay Black man who was an Americorp worker at the Rochester Center for Independent Living (RCIL), expressed concern and dismay over the lack of attention to and services for gay African American men in the community. He felt that this demographic had needs, issues and unique concerns that were specific to their life experiences as men of color living with HIV/AIDS.

These concerns included societal racism, homophobia, and sexism. The anti-gay influence of the church and an unstable family life also often accompanied those clients. It was generally felt that people who had similar experiences could best relate to and understand the layers of oppression and other marginalizing life events.

Gary also stressed the importance of people being able to go to service providers (regardless of the service) when they saw others like themselves, in a warm and supportive environment. This is particularly an issue because of white society's ongoing general fear and misunderstanding about both HIV and AIDS and people of color.

Similar services had been provided to men of color for many years dominate in the New York City and Long Island area. After many months of highly detailed research and adequate equity, a grant proposal followed. Several months later, the MOCHA Project became a reality.

The Men Of Color Health Awareness Project actually began Dec. 1, 1996 as a five year project funded by the N.Y.S. Health Department's AIDS Institute. The goal was to reduce new infections particularly among men of color who identify either as gay or as MSM (men who have sex with men). In 1996, The Rochester Center for Independent Living allowed Gary to use the center's resources as an incubator to develop the program. The program started providing services and activities around HIV/AIDS outreach and education.

In 1997 in the African American community, men who have sex with men (MSM) accounted for 41 percent of new infections as compared with 37 percent among injecting drug users. The MOC Health Awareness Program aimed to change these frightening statistics. The MOCHA Project consisted of a program coordinator, Gary English, and the four peer educators who worked with him: Arlisha Massey, Edwin Watson, Eric Jeneson, and Edward Downing and an administrative assistant, Elizabeth Ramsey.

In a 1997 interview with Susan Jorden, the Empty Closet editor, Gary said, "The first couple of years you are just getting off the ground. We have to establish our presence in the minority community. Within the five years we hope to sustain and make this project a permanent institution in the community."

Arlisha Massey said, "It's an ongoing process. You have to be innovative. In reaching our target population we've had extensive training that will help us quite a bit."

"We feel the meat of the program is intervention," Gary English said. "We believe that you can't just give men condoms and expect them to use them all the time. Men need support around coming out and feeling good about that, and around self-esteem. The intervention group is where behaviors change and are sustained."

The program has grown over the years and now the MOCHA Center includes fourteen support groups and other direct services. (See the interview with new ED Bruce Small on page A 6.) The mission of MOCHA has always been to strengthen communities of color and their families as they define them. This could be accomplished by providing supportive environments that clients could relate to. Early on, the pioneers of the MOCHA Project recognized that these social environments impact healthy behaviors. Therefore, it was MOCHA's goal to seek and to promote health and wellness through advocacy, education, prevention, and community development specializing in LGBTQI programming.

In 1998, after setting a positive course for MOCHA: Gary English returned to New York City, or to Brooklyn, to be more precise.


This was in the early 90s, when the disease seemed unstoppable, running rampant through the gay community. Few effective treatments in sight. English was a gay, sexually active, HIV-negative man – just as he is today – and intent on staying that way."

"It was the gay plague," English recalled. "It was epidemic and there were no medications for it. I moved here (from Rochester, N.Y.) because I wanted to be a part of large, the gay community with more respect for the gay and lesbian lifestyle. But I left because I was scared of catching AIDS."

Fortunately for the city (New York), English, 44, returned here just over seven years ago, this time to join the fight against the epidemic he once fled. His latest effort in the sadly never-ending campaign against AIDS – "Pride in the City 2005" – a five-day series of concerts, lectures, forums and free HIV testing events has been underway in Brooklyn since Wednesday.

 Created by English, who is executive director of People of Color in Crisis, a group founded by African-American and gay men in 1988, "Pride, 2005" concludes on Sunday with a day-long series of concerts at Jacob Riis Park beach in the Rockaways featuring Martha Wash, Jocelyn Brown and Pepper Mashay. The event is heavy stuff doled in fun, the main intent being to get gay men, particularly gay men of color, tested so they can know their status. "You can be negative and still be sexually active," English said. "Studies show that men who know their status are better able to protect themselves and their partners,"...

The Daily News article continues:

MOCHA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Dan, the Empty Closet editor, Gary said, "I wanted to stand up for my own rights and for my people. I'm black and gay at the same time. I bring it all to the table."

In February of 2007, Gary English resigned his position as Executive Director of People of Color in Crisis to move to Atlanta, Georgia. As I write this article, I am not sure where Gary English is. I can tell you that in all likelihood he continues to stand up for his own rights, for his people and for all people. Shoulders To Stand On is proud to recognize the "Founding Shoulders" of MOCHA – Gary English!!
Long Beach, author of the work Interim Executive Director Laura stand between California's transgender even danger transgender people often face to birth certificates, and other identification, because they are unaware that they are protected by non-discrimination laws.

"The rights of transgender Californians are coming out of the closet," said Masen Davis, Executive Director of the Transgender Law Center. "Thanks to the fair-minded legislators and Governor Brown, employment posters and student handbooks will finally inform transgender people of their rights, and educate employers and schools about their responsibilities. It's about time."

"All students deserve the opportunity to attend school without fear of discrimination," said Gay-Straight Alliance Network Interim Executive Director Laura Valdez. "We are grateful to Governor Brown for signing this bill to ensure that confusing legal wording will no longer stand between California's transgender and gender non-conforming students and their right to a safe learning environment.

New records law simplifies life.

Gov. Brown also signed into law Assembly Bill 435, the Vital Statistics Modernization Act, which streamlines the process for Californians to obtain and update birth certificates. The bill was authored by Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal (D-Long Beach) and sponsored by the Transgender Law Center and Equality California.

"The government belongs to transgender people as much as it belongs to anyone else," said Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal, D-Long Beach, author of the bill, "California's records belong to Californians. It's as simple as that."

The Vital Statistics Modernization Act brings California law that governs changes to birth certificates, and other identification documents in line with standards set by the United States Department of State, for good reason. By ensuring that birth certificates reflect their gender, requiring only that transgender individuals receive medical certification from an attending physician that the that they have undergone "clinically appropriate treatment." The "The Vital Statistics Modernization Act eliminates outdated and onerous barriers that transgender people face when trying to update their IDs," said Masen Davis, Executive Director of the Transgender Law Center. "Having identity documents that match who we truly are is critical to our ability to work, travel, and vote. We applaud Governor Brown and our lawmakers for prioritizing the health and safety of transgender Californians' health and safety."

Brown vetoes healthcare competency bill - why?

Amid the signing of a number of pro-equality bills over the weekend of Oct. 8-9 which included protections for transgender Californians, California Governor Jerry Brown also vetoed a bill (SB474) that would have brought the medical community up to speed on California law that governs changing one's gender identity. Game over.

GLMA has long advocated for LGBT cultural competency training for health professionals, and Governor Brown was sponsored by Senator Christine Kehoe, as an important step to improve the health and well-being of LGBT patients.

"Although GLMA applauds the Governor's commitment to LGBT equality, GLMA is still dismayed by Governor Brown's veto of this very important health bill," said Hector Vargas, Executive Director of GLMA. "Some- thing as simple as government recognition they can pursue their lives without harassment and fear. We applaud Assemblymember Lowenthal and Governor Brown for their leadership and for making California a more fair and equal state for all Californians."

Gays react to Cain's "being gay is a choice"

"It's always been the case that there is actually science out there that confirms this and 21 religion, party affiliation, are choices, race, and a host of other attributes aren't, yet they are protected classes under the law."

Lock Ford at Think Progress: CAIN: "Well, you show me the science that it's not and I'll be persuaded. Right now it's my opinion against the opinions of others. There is no scientific difference or just difference of opinions."

"If Cain has not seen the science, he clearly has never bothered to look. Based on the health and research, all major medical professional organizations agree that sexual orientation is not a choice and cannot be changed, from gay to straight or otherwise. The American Psychological Association, the world's largest association of psychological professionals, determines that sexual orientation as 'a complex interaction of environmental, cognitive and biological factors.' There is no scientific evidence to suggest that biology, including genetic or hormonal factors, plays a significant role in a person's sexuality.

"Perhaps someone could make sure Ms. Cain sees this post so he can properly evaluate his inaccurate opinion."

"Log Cabin Republicans issued this statement via email:

"Log Cabin Republicans invite GOP presidential candidate Herman Cain to meet to discuss the science of sexual orientation and the benefits of repealing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' after his having made such remarks on ABC's The View today."

"If Herman Cain truly wants to discuss the science proving that sexual orientation is not a choice, Log Cabin Republicans would be happy to have him meet with us."

"Log Cabin Republicans Executive Director R. Clarke Cooper. The claim that a person chooses to be gay or lesbian has been discredited by every major professional medical organization, starting with the American Psychiatric Association and the American Medical Association. An individual's orientation is no more a choice than the color of their skin or whether they are left-handed, and too many people have been hurt because of failed attempts to change the way they were born."

"I would also be happy to discuss my experiences as a current Army Reserve officer and combat veteran, and the testimonies of military leadership that the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' strengthens our armed forces and furthers America's national security interests. It is unfortunate that Mr. Cain chose to divert attention away from a solid platform of greater liberty and smaller government by indulging in anti-gay rhetoric. Log Cabin Republicans sincerely hope that Herman Cain is open to hearing the evidence and compelling research on these issues.

"Herman Cain's remarks that homosexuality is a choice are, frankly, jaw-dropping and certainly unbefitting of a presidential hopeful," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "Leading medical organizations, including the American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association are clear on the dangers of promoting and carrying out reparative therapy.

"The American Psychological Association says of homosexuality: 'The prejudice and discrimination that people who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual face, especially experience have been shown to have negative psychological effects...most people who are not told to change their sexual orientation are not and I'll be persuaded. Right now it's my opinion against the opinions of others. There is no scientific evidence to suggest that biology, including genetic or hormonal factors, plays a significant role in a person's sexuality.'"

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who have undergone reparative therapy relate that they were inaccurately told that homosexuals are lonely, unhappy individuals who never achieve acceptance or satisfaction...Therefore, the American Psychiatric Association opposes any psychoanalytic treatment, such as reparative or conversion therapy which is based upon the assumption that homosexuality per se is a mental disorder or based upon the a priori assumption that the patient should change his/her sexual homosexuality or orientation.

Learn more about the dangers of reparative therapy at www.hrc.org/resources/entry/les-bisexual-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy. HRC members and supporters have been asked to act now to tell Herman Cain they don’t agree with his message that homosexuality is a choice.

ICE won’t stop deportation; ignores Obama guidelines

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office in Philadelphia has refused to stop the deportation that would separate Anton Tanumihardja, an Indonesian citizen, from his American husband, Brian Andersen, despite new guidelines issued by the Obama administration that are intended to set aside all family reunification issues for lesbian couples.

ICE made no mention of the August 18th announcement by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano announcing the administration’s intent to conduct a system-wide review to ensure that all low-priority deportation cases were set aside, and made no mention of the DHS clarification on that day that LGBT families are included in the guidelines.

Law Soloway, lawyer for Anton Tanumihardja & Brian Andersen, and founder of Stop The Deportations, said, “We are shocked and disappointed that ICE has failed to implement the guidelines set forth by this administration. The Obama administration made a commitment to stop deportations that would tear apart families including gay and lesbian couples, and yet in its decision the ICE office in Philadelphia is failing to make good on that commitment. The administration must take immediate action to ensure that the new deportation policy is being implemented fairly and consistently by ICE deportation officers in local offices, or this policy announcement is meaningless.”

Anton Tanumihardja satisfies numerous criteria set forth by the administration in its prosecutorial discretion guidelines: (1) he has strong ties to Philadelphia; (2) he is a hard working and respected member of his community; (3) he has been his home for the past 9 years; (4) he is married to a U.S. citizen spouse, Brian Andersen; and has strong family relationships to his spouse and his spouse’s family; (5) he has no ties to Indonesia, a country he fled because of persecution due to his identity as a gay man, Christian and an ethnic Chinese person. The guidelines set forth by DHS also require ICE to consider conditions in the country to which one (i.e., Anton) would be deported.

Anton cannot return to Indonesia and live safely. Furthermore, there is no way that his husband, Brian, could move there, nor any way they could safely or legally live there as a legally married gay couple. All these conditions are laid out in the administration’s prosecutorial discretion guidelines. Despite meeting these conditions, and despite the administration’s recent confirmation that those guidelines would be applied to gay and lesbian couples, Anton now faces the reality of deportation by January.

Brian and Anton’s case is the first test of the administration’s commitment to stop deportations involving same-sex binational couples since the Aug. 18th announcement by DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano. It is the first time that the spouse of a gay American, with a final removal order, has requested prosecutorial discretion under the new guidelines.

“The Obama administration’s new policy has failed to protect Anton and Brian from deportation. ICE’s determination to deport Anton regardless of the new guidelines demonstrates that the administration has not instructed ICE deportation officers on the implementation of the LGBT-inclusive prosecutorial discretion guidelines for an individual with a final order of removal,” said Law Soloway. “Today’s decision is a devastating setback for this couple, and should be of great concern to everyone, including the Obama administration, as they work to ensure that we have a fair and humane deportation policy.”

Hate group fails to repeal Calif. history bill

In an email blast on Oct. 11, Stop SB 48, the anti-gay coalition working to repeal California’s recently-passed Fair Education Act (aka the LGBT History Bill) which mandates school curriculums teach about gay history and important gay people, admits that it seems unlikely they will collect enough signatures to get the repeal measure on the ballot.

“The News is Not Good...it is doubtful we will get the number of signatures we need to qualify. Unfortunately the last several deliveries of mail have not been what was expected and a large number of petitions have been pulled out because of errors. From all appearances, we would need a miracle to qualify this referendum.”

Blogger Andy Towle commented, “Sounds like good news to me!”

Anti-gay activists had been using child molestation at various stands around the state in order to scare people into signing their petitions. Apparently that doesn’t work so well anymore.

Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/2011/10/21/20111021a1225D14

(Next week continues on page 16)
Activist Janice Langbehn receives President’s Citizens Medal

On Oct. 20, President Obama welcomed to the White House the 13 recipients of the 2011 Presidential Citizens Medal, the nation’s second-highest civilian honor.

“This year’s recipients of the Citizens Medal come from different background, but they share a commitment to a cause greater than themselves,” said President Obama. “They exemplify the best of what it means to be an American, and I am honored to be able to offer them a small token of our appreciation.”

One of the recipients was Janice Langbehn of Lacey, Wash., a lesbian who has worked to reform hospital visitation policies since her own partner died alone while Janice was refused permission to be with her in the hospital.

The Citizens Medal was established in 1969 to recognize American citizens who have performed exemplary deeds of service for their country or their fellow citizens. President Obama recognized Americans whose work has had a significant impact on their communities, but may not have garnered national attention. In May, the President called on members of the public to nominate individuals who have made efforts to combat stubbornly persistent problems that impact entire communities; for example, those who have taken innovative steps to address hunger, homelessness, the drop-out crisis, lack of access to health care, and other issues that plague too many Americans.

“Whose service has had a sustained impact on others’ lives and provided inspiration for others to serve. The ideal nominee for a Citizens Medal is a person whose work has had a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of others.”

While on vacation with her family in February 2007, Janice Langbehn’s partner, Lisa Pond, suddenly fell ill and was rushed to the hospital. Langbehn was refused access to her partner, who had experienced a brain aneurysm and later died alone.

With the help of Lambda Legal and GLAAD, she filed a federal lawsuit and worked to get her story out to the nation. Janice’s story received attention from President Obama, who personally apologized to her for the way she and her family were treated. He went on to revise hospital visitation rights for gay and lesbian couples, which went into effect this past January for any hospitals receiving federal Medicare or Medicaid funds.

Through the action center on the Task Force’s www.QueertheCensus.org website, participants will be able to sign a petition asking for all federal surveys to count LGBT people, spread the word about the campaign, and stay in touch through social media.

NGTL launches “Queer the Census” campaign

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is launching the next phase of its “Queer the Census” campaign, which is designed to ensure LGBT people are included in a broad swath of federal surveys and data collection efforts.

The Task Force is encouraging people to learn more about why federal surveys are important and how they are involved through an action center on its www.QueertheCensus.org website.

During the progress being made in the area of counting married same-sex couples, LGBT individuals still are not counted in a census or hundreds of other federal surveys that are supposed to reflect the diversity of people in the U.S. The census and other data have the basis for how the government spends billions of dollars each year. This data is used by researchers, activists and policymakers to develop social service programs and make policy decisions affecting issues such as health care and economic stability; it also helps determine national and state funding and policy priorities.

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The first phase of the “Queer the Census” campaign was launched during that time, with people urged to place a sticker on the back of their 2010 census envelopes asking the U.S. Census Bureau to count us all. More than 140,000 stickers were sent in and more than 30,000 people signed a petition demanding the inclusion of LGBT lives in efforts like the census.

“Without an accurate count, LGBT people will be left behind, with nowhere to turn for real, everyday services and remain virtually nonexistent in the eyes of our government,” said National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Executive Director Rea Carey.

“This is unacceptable. We continue to work with policymakers to ensure LGBT people are included in data collection on a broad spectrum of critical issues, including those involving our health, our families, our economic well-being, our safety and much more.”

For more information on how to “Queer the Census,” visit www.QueertheCensus.org.

NOM to defy Minnesota donor disclosure law

The National Organization for Marriage, which continues to see courts rule against it in Rhode Island and Maine, where it was trying to limit the number of donors to anti-gay campaigns, says it will defy the law again in Minnesota if need be. On Oct. 20, NOM lost its California case and was ordered to reveal future donors as well. The group is not expected to comply.

The group, with Minnesota Family Cordon and the Minnesota Catholic Conference, is part of a coalition trying to pass an anti-gay amendment through the ballot initiative’s reporting requirements.

“The guidance would heighten public disclosure potential and was debated before the board in early October. On Oct. 4, Minnesota, which comprises the amendment, was called out by how those donations would be disclosed.”

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Supreme Court rejects gay parents’ rights

The Supreme Court has declined to hear a federal lawsuit challenging the denial of adoption rights that have helped their country and have contributed to a cause greater than themselves, a lawsuit that has been filed by a Utah couple.

The justices rejected the California couple’s appeal Oct. 11 without comment.

The couple claims that Louisiana could deny one of its children the benefits of adoption and federal courts over same-sex marriage, which supports the amendment, or Minnesota tax credits, which supports the amendment.

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accurate birth certificate for their children, gay couples are at risk whenever they try to raise a child that has different adoption and marriage laws.

Adar and Smith are a gay couple who adopted their Louisiana-born son in 2005 in New York, where a judge issued an adoption decree. The couple then tried to get a new birth certificate for their child, in part so the child could be added to his parents’ health insurance, but the registrar's office told him that Louisiana does not recognize adoption by unmarried parents and would not issue it with both adopted parents’ names. A Louisiana district court ordered the registrar to change the birth certificate, as it is a unconstitutional three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit. But, a sharply divided Fifth Circuit, sitting en banc, said Louisiana did not have to change the child's birth certificate.


Rank and file workers’ union endorses ENDA

A “rank and file” workers union has endorsed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

The Union’s resolution also endorses the idea of President Obama pursuing an executive order to end LGBT workplace discrimination, thought Obama is not clear as to plans he is putting into practice to do so.

The second page resolution, titled “End Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation,” says the “most powerful weapon in the bosses’ arsenal is divide and conquer” and workers are strongest when they are “united, including against the Street of sexual orientation and gender identity.”

“We all should have the same rights regardless of color, gender, age, or sexual orientation,” the resolution states.

“Unity and solidarity are not conditions we take for granted. We must continue to educate ourselves and our co-workers to maintain and strengthen our unity in the face of employer efforts to divide the workforce.”

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Study: Stigma, inequality affect LGBT health

Ongoing stigma and social inequality can increase stress and reduce well-being for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people, according to an analysis of traumatic events such as hate violence, abuse, and discrimination, according to a study by Dr. Ilan Meyer, wings St. Scholar at the UCLA School of Law’s Institute for Social Research.

The study, “We’d Be Free: Narratives of Life Without Homophobia, Racism, or Sexism,” was published in the American Sociological Review.

The study examined the effects of exposure to everyday stigma -- consistent, repeated experiences of inequality, such as incidents of discrimination, reported as part of a national survey.

“I imagine living life anticipating exclusion from your friends, family and professional circles simply because of who you are and who you love -- that resulting stress takes a toll on one’s well-being,” said co-author Dr. Ilan Meyer.

“Many of the people we interviewed described the impact of traumatic events, it is more difficult to determine consequences of stress arising from non-traumatic events like missed opportunities, isolation, and moving from home in an attempt to find acceptance. These are operations because of social separation and are not as bad.”

This research was supported by the National Institute of Mental Health grant MH61510.

And of course when we are out in public, we want to make sure our clothing is the proper build that is appropriate for the gender presentation, many of us have trouble with this, and in the standard sizes, we are too tall, or too short, or too big, but not big enough for a male and not small enough for a female. This makes some getting used to and perhaps require sewing or alteration expenses.

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And of course we want to make sure our clothing has the proper bulge that is appropriate and not other bulges that are not appropriate. For example, the gender presentation, many of us have trouble with this, and in the standard sizes, we are too tall, or too short, or too big, but not big enough for a male and not small enough for a female. This makes some getting used to and perhaps require sewing or alteration expenses.
Making the Scene

IMAGEOUT - THE SCREENINGS: Eric Libey, Michael Gamilla, and Ed Wolf at ImageOut's screening of the documentary "We Were Here: The AIDS Years in San Francisco". Photo: Garnetta Ely

Tim Mains and David Gardiner. Photo: Jeff Mills

Left to right: Eliza Sullivan, Ashley Cellura, Kate Canino attend the opening night movie of ImageOut Festival 2011. Photo: Garnetta Ely

Curt Heathman, Vince Pape, and Jeff Briggs waiting to enter the Little Theatre on opening night at ImageOut festival. Photo: Garnetta Ely.


Waiting to see "We Are The Night" (wir sind die Nacht): Lorelei Eschbach and Garrett Smith. Photo: Garnetta Ely

Mary Ann Chesa, Toni, and Patti Strilec attend opening night of ImageOut at the Little on Oct. 8. Photo: Garnetta Ely

OUT & EQUAL: The Second Thursdays Networking Event for October took place at Henry B's on Oct. 11. Next up: Nov. 10 at WXXI Studios. Photo: Jim Wilkins

VOICES FOR HOSPICE: The Rochester Women's Community Chorus singing at the benefit concert "Voices for Hospice" in support of Zululand, South Africa on Oct. 8 at the Irondequoit United Church of Christ.

GAGV VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION: Sue Cowell presents Gerry Smyrski with an award recognizing his dedicated work on the GAGV Library/Archives, at the GAGV volunteer party at the Strathallan on Sept. 27. More photos on page B 12. Photo: Laur McSpadden
Emily Jones

By Susan Jordan

Emily Jones is a Kodak retiree and, like many retired LGBT people, her days are crammed full of volunteering, activism and family, as well as recreation and fun.

Emily, 64, is a longtime GAGV board member, chair of the Finger Lakes Out & Equal chapter board and co-chair of the national Out & Equal Regional Affiliates, and has been on the Human Rights Campaign Business Council for 10 years.

The adoring grandmother of Maya and Logan, Emily plans to marry her partner Deborah Hughes on June 2.

“We have our honeymoon all set,” Emily revealed. “We’re going to St. Martin — one of my favorite things is to travel to the Caribbean and also to Hawaii. We go to Kauai, because it’s quiet and there’s lots of culture, local industry and shops. Kauai is a beautiful, laid-back island, very different from the rest of Hawaii.”

The couple had an alarming experience, however, when the recent tsunami struck during one of their visits, but fortunately it did not hit Kauai hard — unlike Japan.

Close to home, Emily enjoys all the Rochester cultural festivals, especially the Clothesline, Park Avenue and Corn Hill. “I love looking for unique jewelry,” she said. “I also love kayaking on Irondequoit Bay and in the Finger Lakes, and playing golf. I am an ardent supporter of the LPGA and I even get to play with Rose Jones in the Pro Am one year — we came in 11th.”

Emily adds, “I also spend an inordinate amount of time doing yoga at Midtown Raquet Club, because of their excellent instructors. I did yoga seriously about 13 years ago, and started again seriously about a year ago, with enormous benefits. I no longer have aches and pains and I feel much stronger.”

Emily also enjoys Rochester’s many cultural attractions, including the Memorial Art Gallery, the RPO, Geva, Blackfriars and Downstairs Cabaret.

“I frequent the Museum and Science Center and spend a lot of time at the Strong Museum of Play with Maya and Logan,” she said. “I am attending 11 movies at ImageOut this year. Deborah and I are supporters of the festival.”

Emily’s volunteer work and activism are equally important to her. “I spend a lot of time trying to do education on workplace equality,” she said. “I was co-chair of the regional Out & Equal conference held here this year, and was one of the speakers for the Empire State Pride Agenda’s Business Supports Marriage Equality group, trying to get as many businesses as possible to sign up in support. I like trying to shift public policy by engaging business in supporting issues like the Tax Equity Act, the Pension Act and Marriage Equality.”

Emily enjoys breakfast meetings at Jines and the selection of entrées at One Restaurant and at Wurfield’s High Poles, in the grounds of Constellation Brands. “I love to go to Marge’s bar near Seacliff,” she said. “and recently I’ve been enjoying the piano bar at the Strathallan, with the Swooners — really cool.”

She continues, “I enjoy walking in Corn Hill and eating along the canal. One of my hobbies is gardening, so I enjoy the multiple garden tours in Rochester, particularly the water feature tour, which I took in 2010. I’m currently thinking of getting a water feature in my own garden,” Emily had planned eight trees in her garden on the day of the interview.

Emily is also involved with the Susan B. Anthony House, especially with the Alligator Pune Project (Susan B. carried a large alligator purse on her travels in support of women’s suffrage, and that bag is still preserved at the House — and copies are now available for sale.)

“Every woman should have a purse of her own — that originally meant that every woman should have money of her own,” Emily said. “In the 19th century, a single woman could have her own money, but when she married, she and her possessions became the property of her husband. The New York Times called it ‘Freedom of the Arm’.”

Emily admits, “I’m really involved with the Susan B. Anthony House, not because of the history of women’s suffrage, but because it has taken on rejuvenating the neighborhood. They have an after school program for the young girls in the neighborhood. A young man from the neighborhood, whom they have adopted, is now going to college. With the help of the docents and staff, he has created a new life with a purpose and a hope. They also work with women in transition. That’s why the House appeals to me. It has everything to do with re-shaping a community and a neighborhood to create purpose and hope.”

Susan B. Anthony, who fought to end slavery as well as to get women in the vote and equal rights, would no doubt approve. III
THE ROCHESTER GAY MEN’S CHORUS

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IT’S GOT HEART, PASSION AND THE BEST ELTON JOHN SCORE EVER.”
NEW YORK POST

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PART OF THE 2010-2012 NAB BROADWAY SEASON • PRESENTED BY NEIL AND ALBERT MCGUIRE
Patrick Wetzel, now originates at Award in the GLBT category.

Patrick Wetzel talks about rope tricks, cowgirls and Billy Elliot

By Susan Jordan

Patrick Wetzel plays Mr. Braithwaite in Elton John's "Billy Elliot," which runs Nov. 29-Dec. 11 at the Rochester Auditorium Theatre. Tickets are on sale now at Ticketmaster.com, 800-745-3000 and the Auditorium Theatre Box Office (www.atrochester.org).

Patrick's career credits include Mr. Braithwaite/Ensemble on Broadway; All About Mr. Spandau; Drummer Chapman (recording), The Producers, Tha Shab Nai (recording), Annie Get Your Gun (recording) and Ain't Broadway Grand. NY: Ani­nae Can Whole (Encores!), Gold­en­bay (Encore), Sundheim's Opening Doors (Carnegie Hall), and the Hum­m­ar­th­Ch­r­is­t­mas­C­h­r­i­st­mas (dir. Robert Zemeckis) and The Produc­ti­ons (dir. Susan Stratman).

Patrick answered some ques­ti­ons from The Empty Closet prior to his arrival in town with the show.

Empty Closet: Can you tell us a little about yourself – your hometown and why you decided to go into show business, which is such a challenging career?

Patrick Wetzel: Indeed, show business can be a challenging career.

I grew up in southern Mary­land and worked on tobacco farms in the summertime, but I also took dance lessons from an early age. To entertain myself on the farm, I would dance around, turning the flatbed, pulled by a tractor, into a stage, while tobacco became various costumes and props.

Did you know that after you strip the leaves off a tobacco stalk, it can be used as a cane? (I know how to work a flared truck like I was playing the Pal­ace.) I don't think I chose show business... rather, it chose me. When I was 18, I auditioned for a touring production of Sin­gin' in the Rain. Shortly after that tour, I moved to New York City and started auditioning. Proud­ly, I've been in seven Broadway shows!

EC: Do you think of yourself as an actor first and foremost, or as a singer/dancer?

PW: Mr. Braithwaite is the (Wetzel continues page 2)

Jim Ver Steeg

Gay Sunday Brunch podcast has plenty of things to say

By Susan Jordan

The Sunday brunch podcast Gay Sunday Brunch, hosted by Jim Ver Steeg, now originates at Equally-Grounded Coffee House. Gay Sunday Brunch has been nominated for a 2011 Podcast Award in the GLBT category.

Jim Ver Steeg commented, "just for some perspective, near­ly 2,700 shows were nominated across the categories by over one million listeners – and only a handful make it to the final date. And one of those is us – hometown right here in Roch­es­ter!"

Mrs. Kathy Davis has recently joined Jim as a co-host, and things can only get gayer.

Empty Closet: What is Gay Sunday Brunch and how/when did the show come into being?

Jim Ver Steeg: Gay Sunday Brunch is a regular weekly pod­cast – or online radio show – that originally started as Gay Street Beat. I first launched GSB in May 2010 with the idea that I would just call friends and record our conversations. In fact, the theme of our show is, "Bring­ing together a gay, world one phone call at a time." It sounds a little silly, but after years as an LGBT part­icipant and part­ner of the The Empty Closet column "The Vanguard Di­alogues," it was really nice to have a narrative feature about a trans person. So often the trans issue movie are documentaries. It was a beautiful, wonderful love story.

"I really enjoyed W­v­wo­ve­rs," offered Jason Roberts, Program Manager for Commu­nity Education and Recruitment for the University of Rochester Medical Center. "It was about the early epidemic of HIV/AIDS in San Francisco. It was really compel­ling in the fact that it illustrated the history of (that part of) our community and put it in front for us to better understand what really happened at that time."


At the WAD concert 2010. Photo: Jim Wilkins

World AIDS Day concert raises HIV awareness Dec. 1

For 10 years, the annual World AIDS Day Benefit Con­cert has been raising awareness of HIV/AIDS through perform­ing arts at local venues here in Rochester. This year will be no different.

The concert will be at Hoch­stein School of Music on Plymouth Ave., on Dec. 1 at 7 p.m., and will feature Darren Stevens­son from Push Physical Theatre, RITNTID Dance, the Deaf Choir and many others.

As in the past, the concert is in benefit of a group working on reducing the rate of infec­tion by education. This year, a local group, Safe Sex, Inc. is the beneficiary. Safe Sex Inc. is (World continues page 2)
Early last year, Matt Molloy and I were booking a slot to be on Gay Sunday Brunch each week. I’d introduce different topics and do the one-on-one with them, and we’d still wear ties to it. It was a good starting point for us, but now things have really taken off with Gay Sunday Brunch. Thanks to insur­ ing Mrs. Kasha Davis sign on as my new co-host, along with Dan McCarthy and Christopher Salvatore, the show has been a huge boost to the show. They bring so much to GSB and having them with us also means the show has moved things more fun.

As far as guests go, I’d have to say that the music business has been doing a bang up job this week, as he launched the “It Gets Better” project. Levi Kreis after he won his Tony Award in “Rent” did a great job, and an imageRun Ed-Columnist for the New York Times.

As a few of those guests, along with amazing contributors and regular guests like Darryl Stephens from South_ArK, Abby_Crow Brown, Joyce_Lane, and Yaron_Haim Daron, and my friend Jonathan_Hig­ bee, Jezza Kaffa and Mike Wood. We have a lot of new listeners to the show, and they are very helpful in giving us the number of new ideas. We have not only some of these listeners, but also the number of people who have written to us. We have made a lot of new listeners to the show, and now we have the number of people who have written to us.

There are a few little facts to your show. What can you tell us about the show? How do you get to be a part of it? Where can we listen to it?

EC: So electronic media is taking over. There are more podcasts and streaming videos on websites and apps.

Me: Yes, it’s a good idea. I have a radio, then Elton John was heard on it. I had a radio, then a fellow was heard on it.

EC: So if someone is interested in the show, there are no limits to what you can and can’t do. There’s no strict timeline. And if you want to be on the show, you can ask to please skittish advertisers — well, at least this day, the newspaper had the TV guide.

Me: This is a wonderful thing. Where can we find the musicals?

EC: I have five siblings and, when I was a kid, we told each other that we’re the biggest. We’re the best. We’re the biggest. We’re the best. We’re the biggest.

Me: There is a lot of story to tell in the concerts page.

EC: Before I launched the show, I had a radio, then Elton John was heard on it. I had a radio, then a fellow was heard on it.

Me: How do you get to be a part of the show, and what can you do?

EC: There is a lot of story to tell in the concerts page.

Me: There is a lot of story to tell in the concerts page.

EC: There is a lot of story to tell in the concerts page.
Bread & Water Theatre presents Polaroid Stories through Nov. 20

Inspired in part by Ovid’s “Metamorphoses,” Iizuka’s "Polaroid Stories" takes place on an abandoned pier on the southmost edge of a city, a no-man’s-land where runaways seek camaraderie, refuge and escape. Serpentine routes from the heart to the heart characterize the interactions in this spellbinding tale of young people pushed to society’s fringe.

Informed, as well, by interviews with young prostitutes and street kids, “Polaroid Stories” conveys a whirlwind of psychic disturbance, confusion and longing. Like their myopic contemporaries, these modern-day nomads are engulflled by needs that burn and consume.

“Polaroid Stories” by Naomi Iizuka, which opened in October, is presented at 243 Rosedale St. (corner of Monroe Ave. and Rosedale St) running through Nov. 20. Friday and Saturday performances are at 8 p.m.; Sunday performances at 2 p.m. Single tickets range from $6-$12 and may be purchased at BreadandWaterTheatre.org. For more information, call (585) 271-5922.

“Polaroid Stories” is recognized for its unique weaving of Greek mythology and the real-life stories told by street kids. The Chicago Reader describes the play as “two hours of potent, gripping theatre” and The Canadiana calls it “a raw must-see.”

Not all the stories these characters tell are true; some are lies, wild yarns, clever deceptions, baroque fabrications. But whether or not a homeless kid invents an incredible history for himself isn’t the point, the point explains diarist-of-the-street Jim Grimsley. “All these stories and lies add up to something to something like the truth.”

A visceral blend of classical mythology and the real life stories told by street kids, Naomi Iizuka’s "Polaroid Stories" journeys into a dangerous world where myth-making fulfills a fierce need for sense and focus. The characters’ lives are continually threatened, devoured and effaced.

Ms. Iizuka’s plays often have a non-linear storyline and are influenced by her multicultural background. Ms. Iizuka’s mother is American Latina and her father is Japanese. As a child, Ms. Iizuka grew up in many locations all over the world. Currently a professor in playwriting and director of the playwriting program at UCSD, Ms. Iizuka has written over 25 plays and received many awards.

The cast includes Andrea Leahey-Cerella (Skinhead Girl), Emily Song (Persephone), Corrine Magin (Eurydice), Carl Girard (Set Design), Sara Peace (G), Andy DeRado (D), Leah Camilleri (Parsiphone), Cortnie Magin (Eurydice), Paul Nellis (Ophryn), Casey Siegel (Skinhead Boy), Amanda Foreman (Echo) and Chad Edmonds (Narcissus).

The crew includes Shavanda Uri (Director), Lawrence Browewy (Stage Manager), Carl Girard (Set Design), Sara Galagher (Costume Design) and J.R. Teeter (Lighting and Sound Design).

Honey Dijon to rock Rochester at Tilt Nov. 19

By Susan Jordan

Djellaw presents fabulous transgender DJ Honey Dijon on Saturday, Nov. 19 at Tilt, 444 Central Ave. Ms. Dijon recently answered some questions about her style and the techniques of a successful DJ.

Empty Closet: Your website describes your style as "the Chicago sound with infections of the deep NY underground." How did you develop your own personal style and focus?

Honey Dijon: I was born in Chicago and house music has been a part of my life since I was born, basically. When I moved to NYC I hated the music at the time. It was very vocal and I was searching for something that really had the groove. It was very danceable.

ED: How do you rock a party and how do you get people up and dancing? Any secrets of the trade that you can share?

HD: I’ve been to enough parties and clubs in my life to be able to walk into a room and know how to get the crowd to where I want them to be. Sometimes it means bringing the energy up, tweaking the sound, or even bringing the energy down depending on the vibe of the party at that moment. I always say sound and warm lights or complete darkness will always get the party started. And a powerful kick drum!

EC: What would you like to say to the Rochester transgender community?

HD: The choice to live your life on your own terms is not for the faint of heart. It takes a lot of courage to truly go against everything that you were taught about gender. So put yourself on the back for loving yourself enough to be who you really are, despite what the world says you should be.

EC: Anything you’d like to add?

HD: See you at Tilt! Oh, and I like white roses and tall men with nice teeth and good shoes lol!
Animals

They got her in the ass. They were trying to eat her eyeballs! The next stop on our Santa Rosa itinerary was the Safari West, where you drive your car and the animals come up to you, to possibly pee on it or just any bird ... it was rubber chickens Esther and Eunice trying to do their impression of the movie. Poor Nancy. They got her in the ass. Poor Barbara. They were trying to eat her eyeballs! The restaurant displays posters of The Birds. Birds and more awaited us at Safari West, the next step on our Santa Rosa itinerary. This is probably the best thing to get you to Africa and doing a game drive. It’s not one of those places where you drive your car and the animals come up to you, to possibly pee on your vehicle.

During the first part of the tour we walked to a section that could be better described as a zoo, showcasing caged animals including marsupials, reptiles and some birds. However, there was another separate avairy, where we walked around while these large birds did as they pleased. One seemed to be the greater and would escort our little group for a while. Then it was onto the jeep, just as if you were on the African safari. We drove to different sections, as the driver would have to unlock and lock gates in order to view the various species. It is rare for an animal to approach the jeep — except for the giraffes and we are told that even if they take the glasses off our faces, not to touch them. Many of the animals are either extinct in the wild, threatened, or near threatened. Since the list of animals is much too long, I’ll direct you to their website of www.safariwest.com.

Nancy, Barb and I are off to dinner in downtown Santa Rosa. There is this wonderful French bistro called Bistro 29, a traditional bistro specializing in Breton regional cuisine. The number 29 comes from the department of Finistère (end of the earth, a.k.a. Brittany) located on the tip of western France and known for the Galère de bô le noir (traditional buckwheat crépe) and sweet crépes. We tried both, as well as Seared Goat Cheese Grottino: endive, grilled pears and hazelnut salad with banyuls vinaigrette; Daube of Beef: red wine braised beef with fromage blanc and Sierra Rose potato puree caramelized baby turnips and grilled spring onions; Seared Duck Breast with rye spaetzle, cherry rice, whiskey reduction and wild arugula-almond salad.

More to explore on Santa Rosa: Melita Inn and “Peanuts,” the comic strip by the late California cartoonist Charles Schultz. III

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Friday & Saturday 11pm-1am
$1.00 off ALL Mixed Drinks

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Frankie & Jewels
7pm-10pm

THANKSGIVING SCHEDULE

Wednesday, November 23rd
Pre – Thanksgiving Party
3 for 2 Drinks & Beer
10pm – 2am

THANKSGIVING DAY
Open at 8pm
3 for 2 Drinks Special ALL Night!

Comfort Food is Back on Wednesdays!
Weekly Menu for November is posted in the Bar and on Facebook!
Come out for a Great Dinner!

Happy Thanksgiving from The Avenue Pub

Be sure to check out our Facebook Page and become a Fan!

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The Empty Closet • The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley • Number 451 • November 2011
Growing Up
ON THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE
By Eric Bellmann

Just living there. No glimmer of rec­

rence... and I have never felt as

repeatedly, mindlessly, and
totally aware of

an action I may take, job at the remote: the

TV is dead. I am speechless. I flog the cord

that goes into the outlet. Not loose. A

lonely one. Andy Warhol

The opinions of

once a week meetings were filled

undertakin~

with the futility of any

totally aware of

or

future. I know what I watch. I watch

Do you know what I watch? I watch

Marilyn

It. Signed,

At Table because Marilyn

Executive director of the National Center

net. net

If an enlistee has had or is thinking about

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center

Disorder.

whenever I go over to watch

DADT's repeal.

I am no longer alone. I have my buddy

Our primary task was to replace my computer. That undertaking had been accomplished but so exhausting in ways too tedious to recount. It did involve a few teasy phone calls to the Apple store and a length of time exploring things of complaining to Apple. That I seemed able to do and it was a revelation, I am not so tech-savvy. I am regularly frequenting

value of the reasons for transphobia

The celebration was bittersweet. While our lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) servicemembers now have a policy in place to protect them from discrimination, the repeal of DADT doesn't protect our transgender servicemembers.

While we are pleased to see the end of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," we are troubled that the military still expels some members of our community simply because of who they are. Transgender people continue to serve our country honorably, and our country needs to do the same for transgender service members by reexam­

The next morning I set off for the

November: frolicking leaf festivals ... Christmas paraphernalia on sale... and

Simple. Gritty.

A LOVED

ONE

By Rev. Irene Monzon

One minute past the stroke of mid­

night on Sept. 20, the long-awaited repeal of President Bill Clinton's 1993 "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) pol­

icy went into effect.

So, I read. I read an entire issue of

November 2011 • Number 451 • Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley • The Empty Closet

Faith Matters
REPEAL OF DADT FOR LGBTs, BUT NOT TS

By Rev. Irene Monzon

And now that I have challenged ears, it is

Traditional, we got dressed up. Daddied

on the stroke of

Traditionally, we got dressed up. Daddy
dun his red vest. Maid-mom­

on the stroke of

Traditionally, we got dressed up. Daddy
dun his red vest. Maid-mom­


valued apron into her fancy clothes

and our country needs to do the same for

The opinions of columnists, editorial writers and other

Contrary contributors write their own

did not and do not necessarily express the collective attitude of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley or The Empty Closet.

problematic person who does not

I bought three years ago which

friend, did your TV ever croak?

lengthy search of web sites exploring ways

That felt a little small. But that family by

This year it might be two of our

our guests include other

Some straight women. One heterosexual friend even asked "Am I going to be the only straight person there?"

Finally... what does it mean? When I'm just not sure.

MeredithElizabethReinigung@portnet.net

by Meredith Reinigung

Turkeys everywhere are groaning that the Vegetar­

in the middle of the night, common of course

and Income Property.

At Table because Marilyn

When our father decided to announce

I repeatedly, I have gained a variety of

I am serviceable apron into her fancy clothes

Our
did involve a few

undertakin~

with that perspective, transgender

servicemembers from honestly and openly

the mumbling created by a non-swallow­

Sure, the DVD gets dismantled

Proposed, and "Aunt" Elizabeth because all

Some straight women. One heterosexual friend even asked "Am I going to be the only straight person there?"

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servicemembers from honestly and openly

the mumbling created by a non-swallow­

Sure, the DVD gets dismantled
The LGBQ population, that is, LGBTQ, is left out? Is everybody got along very well.

We're the creators of You Tube videos, now find that their works have once again touched the life of a person or people in some instances, global-wide e-mails about what they knew would treasure any reading material. They have proudly made visible what ruling class of hard work, we're getting closer to the fact that transgender Americans are, once again, excluded from this historical landmark. A drop of ink may make a million think.

During an entire campaign to win an inclusive ENDA, we didn't. And what was expected to be a historic vote on HR 2015, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, or ENDA, in the House, the LGBTQ community got a version of ENDA that excludes transgender Americans are, once again, excluded. Excluded from this historical landmark, our organizations.

We believe supporting our trans and les (lesbian) homes who are still DL (on the down low) in the Army because I know what it feels like to be out of the closet in all of the military, in church, the Army, and the gay community,” Camilla Davis, an African American veteran bar and management consultant. African American lesbians have been discharged at three times the rate at which their white counterparts are, and I know this from first-hand experience.

To date, more than 13,500 LGBTQ service members who have proudly made visible what ruling class narrative of the voiceless, classless society is everybody got along very well. We have been cogent and consistent with our messaging, despite the big press narrative describing the movement as directionless. Our movement as directionless. It has everybody got along very well.

In my opinion, the testimonies from the folks who have been camping out in the Liberty Square/Zuccotti Park area have been cogent and consistent with their messaging. The global elites have left us with no alternative. I spent the first week of October on the front lines of the Occupy Wall Street protests in lower Manhattan. I interviewed folks who were playing in the sand in Provincetown. The church they soon affirmed in Provincetown.

The book was an autobiography, the life of the founder of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Gloucester, on the right wing of New England. The church they soon built is now a cornerstone of free-thinking affirmation in Provincetown. For many years, there has been in my Provincetown office a framed, hand-touched wall and other thugs. Any doubts or questions I voiced were immediately stamped as forgotten. Any mention of homosexuality and my father would show horrific hate. I am brave to be myself and to dream anything that my own liberties are still unfulfilled. We need to do it for others, we need to do it for ourselves. There are no more feelings in life than to know that you have positively impacted the life of another person, even if it's just to make them think. www.brian-mcnaught.org

Any mention of homosexuality and my own liberties are still unfulfilled. We need to do it for ourselves. There are no more feelings in life than to know that you have positively impacted the life of another person, even if it's just to make them think.

As thousands of young people, union activists and the disenfranchisement of all ages and races match against corporate abuse of power, and rally in protest against the symbols of Wall Street greed across the United States, the global elites respond by engaging in their own form of class warfare and clinging to the celebration of the shockheaded culture of capitalist capitalism, revealing all too clearly their self-serving criminal behavior and how it represents a major threat to the American way of life.

I say the Occupy Wall Street and Occupying together everywhere is the investment. The global elites have left us no alternative.

Gay and Transgender Issues in the Workplace

A DROP OF INK MAY MAKE A MILLION THINK. By Brian McNaught

If a waterlogged book washed up on a beach today, it would be thrown in the trash, or left for someone else to digest... and truth and your work truly inspirational. Your analysis is the only mechanism ensuring one's hard work pays off appears both daimnogous and despairing. The

Irony and hypocrisy cannot be overstated. Corporate medi have a vested financial interest in diminishing the significance of this movement — and are trying like hell to do it for others, we need to do it for ourselves. There are no more feelings in life than to know that you have positively impacted the life of another person, even if it's just to make them think.

A couple more stray cats. None of that is anyone got along very well. We have been cogent and consistent with our messaging. Despite the big press narrative describing the movement as directionless. Its love and affirmation in Provincetown.

Our investment. The global elites have left us no alternative. I spent the first week of October on the front lines of the Occupy Wall Street protests in lower Manhattan. I interviewed folks who were playing in the sand in Provincetown.

The church they soon affirmed in Provincetown.

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Gay and Transgender Issues in the Workplace

A DROP OF INK MAY MAKE A MILLION THINK. By Brian McNaught

If a waterlogged book washed up on a beach today, it would be thrown in the trash, or left for someone else to digest... and truth and
stairs and neither one of them can hear very well. On top of that, my sister's husband is dealing with chemotherapy. I told my brother about both situations, but I guess since I've been close by, maybe I didn't realize how dramatically things were changing.

"I can't take it," my brother complained as he sat down across from me at our kitchen table. It was only the third afternoon of his week-long visit.

"Oh, all the cats," I replied, pointing to the gray and white one sitting at his feet, purring loudly, "Don't worry, you'll get used to it. It took me a while too."

"It's not that," he said, "I know your husband's a cat lady."

"Then what are you talking about?" I asked as I poured him a cup of decaf and put a plate of Christmas cookies in front of him.

Bernie used to mail Christmas cookies to my brother every December, but the postage has gotten so expensive that Bernie's new tradition the last couple of years is to make my brother's Christmas cookies for him while he visits in September. Hey, I never said my family was normal.

"It's everything," my brother said. "It's so different. Mom and Dad have gotten so old. They can't hear; you have to help them into the car and out of the car. It's not like it used to be." Then my brother proceeded to tell me about his visit to our sister's house and how upset

stairs and neither one of them can hear.

I had no words of real comfort to offer, but I guess since I've been close by, perhaps it's less to my point than a disaster! But I feel strongly that it is important for me to participate and lend my voice to the movement, even as I am deeply ambivalent about some key points many of the occupiers are emphasizing.

There are several reasons why it was important for me to spend some time at Liberty Plaza. First, history is happening. I strongly believe that history is less about memorizing dates than it is about exploring what it has meant to be human, the innumerable ways people have found to give their lives meaning. The tens of thousands of "99 Percenters" who have chosen to take to the streets are shaping the historical narrative of our time. This is incredibly significant, and anyone who tells you otherwise is probably trying to sell you something.

Second, standing on the right side of history doesn't just mean believing in the "right" things, it means actively doing things that help to shape a future of greater compassion, equality and respect for truth.

Third, the only chance any of us have to really know and understand anything is through direct experience. The media coverage on the Occupation is so steeped in opinions that I felt that the only chance I had to have a grounded perspective about what's happening at Liberty Plaza was to go there and see for myself. I had to have a grounded perspective instead of avoiding my aging parents or pretending my brother-in-law isn't really sick or melting into a puddle of tears.

So, I stopped at my favorite bagel shop for breakfast and they were out of toasted seed bagels — talk about a disaster! But those challenges are part of life too.

What is the alternative for my parents to growing old and elderly? Dying young, I guess. What is the alternative for my brother-in-law to becoming thin but I guess since I've been close by, perhaps it's less to my point than a disaster! But I feel strongly that it is important for me to participate and lend my voice to the movement, even as I am deeply ambivalent about some key points many of the occupiers are emphasizing.

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Fourth, I wanted to meditate in the midst of the park. The silence and stillness of seated meditation, the very embodiment of peace, was the message I had to share. And so it was that I cascaded down with some fellow Rochesterians. We arrived Friday evening. The first thing we did was unload the donations for the occupiers that we had collected: blankets, wool socks, hand warmers and herbal tea went to the Comfort Station; food and water went to the Kitchen; and molexians and thermometers went to the Medical Station. People who had already been occupying pointed us in the right direction to each of these work stations through the maze of tarps and sleeping bags.

Then, finally, I was able to go in search of a bathroom. I ended up at a Burger King, where there was already quite a line. I stood between a smiling and friendly vet in his upper 20s who had traveled from Colorado to participate and a homeless, genderqueer teenager, who I'll call Jez to protect her anonymity, who had made a great migration from the west coast during the first week of the occupation. Zethan's eyes were bright, and showed me the bruises ze had gotten at the hands of cops during the arrests.

After necessities had been taken care of, Jez invited me to spread my sleeping bag in the corner of the park where ze was camping. "Don't worry — we'll make room," ze informed me that ze was the only current member of what had been a Safe Spaces Committee, which advocated at the General Assembly meetings for inclusivity, respect and non-violence.

That first night was incredible. After Jez and I spoke for a while about gender freedom and health care (or the lack thereof), I spread out my sleeping bag, got out my meditation cushion, and stayed up meditating until after three in the morning. The energy in the air was palpable. I heard bits of the whispered conversations surrounding me, as many other people were
up late shared ideas and excitement without wanting to wake their sleeping neighbors. I heard a man walk by who yelled out “Get a job and go home, you fucking losers! Leave our park alone!” and in my mind, I wished him peace.

When I was done meditating and getting ready to settle into my sleeping bag, a young, professional-looking woman came over, lightly touched my shoulder, and whispered “Thank you for helping to keep us all safe.”

I did finally sleep for a few hours, only to be woken by a morning news crew pointing a glaringly bright light at me and filming me as I slept. It was time to wake up.

After meditating a bit more and having a small snack, I wandered around the park, taking a few photos and watching the great diversity of people in the park. I found a group of a couple of dozen people doing yoga, and I joined them. It was absolutely incredible to focus on balance and breath within the bustle of Manhattan.

I spent the bulk of the day on the picket lines around the park on my meditation cushion. I was surrounded by the chants of the protesters, the taunts of a few locals as they passed, the bustle of photographers and news reporters, and the constant refrain of the police to pedestrians: “Keep moving, keep moving, keep moving.”

It was more than a little surreal to be motionless in the midst of this refrain, in the midst of such constant noise and movement.

The sign that I had made and that rested in front of me as I sat read simply, “May all beings be happy, healthy, safe, and free. We are all in this mess together.”

And it was, perhaps inevitably, in this statement that I experienced my ambivalence about the occupation movement. You see, I would be deceiving you if I didn’t acknowledge that there is a lot of anger in the movement. Anger can be a source of energy for making necessary changes: it can also be a source of divisive thinking and an us-versus-them mentality that is rarely helpful in bringing about healing.

To me, the mess we’re in is not about the 1% versus the 99%; it is not about the evil rich and the noble poor. It is about the fact that the focus of our current paradigm creates suffering for all who live within it. I have no interest in demonizing the wealthy, no matter what they have done: we are all living beings, doing the best we can with the tools we understand to find happiness and avoid suffering.

“Beyond the Binary” does not just refer to gender identity. It refers to all things. A life beyond any either-or dichotomy is a life that opens itself up to all things, and offers our best chance for equality and freedom.

It is true that there is a certain happiness that comes from nice things and fast cars. It is also true that the inequalities, injustices and illegal actions by the powers-that-be in this country are heart-wrenching and unjustifiable, and that those responsible have not been held responsible. It is further true that the pain and struggle of the many poor, uninsured, indebted, homeless, struggling and discriminated-against need to be recognized, responded to and healed.

It is equally true that the happiness that comes from things, while it may be pleasurable, is transitory. Houses need repairs, break down, get damaged in floods and hurricanes, and require huge property taxes and either a lot of time and energy for upkeep or (if they’re big enough) the hiring out of house and yard care to others. Cars break down, or become less responsive and impressive as new generations of vehicles are released: the same holds true of all technology. All things are transitory, in the same way that all living beings are mortal.

Those who find their main source of happiness from external things will experience stress, chronic dissatisfaction and eventually suffering that so many people
have not developed the internal skills to cope with. Yes, their lives look blessed, but they have grown up within the same sick context.

And, of course, to live in such a way is by definition unsustainable. Things will have to change as the earth’s resources are depleted and, eventually, exhausted. We all suffer the effects that our way of life has upon the air, the water and the landbase. To place one’s potential for wellbeing entirely upon a system that is unable to continue is not a way to develop true security. When the environmental shit hits the fan, everything that this material way of life depends upon will crumble.

In Buddhism, Heaven is considered one of the six realms of unenlightened existence, and reaching a (literal or metaphorical) heavenly realm is considered one of the greatest threats to our potential for enlightenment and deep healing. When we are living in such a way, we will not be able to address the root cause of all of our suffering. We will be limited in our capacity to experience deep equanimity. Can we imagine what a world would look like if we were grounded in such a foundation?

There are a few popular Tumblr pages that I encourage all people to look at and think upon. One is “We are the 99 Percent,” in which the stories of the people who stand in solidarity with the occupiers share images that express how the current economic crisis has affected them. This page is beautiful and often heartbreakingly honest. We have created complex problems that are affecting everyone in different ways. Any knee-jerk answer will not get to the root.

The Occupy movement will be a success if it causes us all to question ourselves and our way of life. Where are we, where are we heading, and what are our priorities? Have we been living in a way that truly reflects these priorities? How have our choices, as individuals and as a society, affected others? What needs to change? How can we mobilize this change in a way that honors all beings?

These are big questions. They are uncomfortable. We still need to ask them, of ourselves and of others. Occupy Together is showing us this need in stark relief, and it is providing the world with spaces and opportunities to do so.ill

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Update: From the Shoulders to Stand On Kick Off at ImageOut on Oct. 10, total donations as of Oct. 2 deadline are $385. (Updates printed monthly.)

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PFLAG meets the 3rd Sunday of each month. Meetings are at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, 740 Marshall Road, Rochester 14624 from 1 to 3pm.
Join us!
Questions? Call: 585-244-8640 and leave a message, or e-mail: pflag@gayalliance.org

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Bed & Breakfast

Kyle’s Bed & Breakfast by Greg Fox

GO KRISTIAN... I’VE HEARD ABOUT YOUR LIFE IN JAMAICA, BUT...
...YOU HAVEN’T SPONED MUCH ABOUT THIS WHITE AMERICAN FATHER OF YOURS.

HE IS A COMMERCIAL AIRLINE PILOT, RICHARD. HE MET MY MOTHER BRIEFLY ON A LAYOVER IN KINGSTON.

DEY CERTAINLY DID NOT PLAN TO HAVE A CHILD, BUT...

...NINE MONTHS LATER, I ARRIVED...

I HAD LITTLE CONTACT WITH HIM GROWING UP HOWEVER...

DEY DIDN’T GIVE ME U.S. CITIZENSHIP... MAY HAVE SAVED MY LIFE...

HOW WERE YOUR WAFFLES, KRISTIAN?

DEY WERE INTERESTING, BREYER.

KYLE TOOK HIS MOTHER TO THE DOCTOR AGAIN?

Yeah, but, it’s just a routine check-up, she’s okay.

ANYWAY... I’D BEST BE OFF TO WORK NOW...

DON’T WORRY, KYLE WILL BE BACK TOMORROW.

HOW ABOUT US, BREYER? ARE WE OKAY?

YOU’VE SARELY SAID A WORD TO ME SINCE I MOVED BACK IN.

Richard...

MY MOTHER IS STILL WONDERING WHY YOU DIDN’T COME HOME WITH ME FOR PASSOVER THIS YEAR.

I DON’T DESPISE YOU, RICHARD. AND I’M ALWAYS GOING TO BE GRATEFUL TO YOU... FOR GETTING ME IN TOUCH WITH MY JEWISH SIDE.

I DIDN’T HAVE THE HEART TO TELL HER YOU DESPISE ME NOW.

 THAT MEANS A LOT TO ME.

SO... THERE’S A CHANCE YOU’LL COME FOR PASSOVER NEXT YEAR?

A GOOD CHANCE...

AND DOES THIS MEAN WE’RE FRIENDS AGAIN?

Yeah, I suppose it does...

Then let’s discuss your outfit, OY...

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GAY ALLIANCE VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION: The Alliance threw a party for volunteers on Sept. 27 at the Strathallan. Above: Dontaee Williamson, Desiree, Jess Cohen and Jeanne Gainsburg in the Youth Talent Show. Photos: Susan Jordan

I Am bisexual and proud.

I wonder if anyone else is.

I hear others’ pleas for help.

I see the violence that we endure.

I want the silence to be broken.

I am bisexual and proud.

I pretend that we are safe as a people.

I feel the pain of ignorance.

I touch the hearts of my people.

I worry that I am my worst fear.

I cry when I see one of us fall.

I am bisexual and proud.

I understand what we are.

I say that we will overcome oppression.

I dream that one day we will be as one.

I try to make that dream a reality.

I hope I have what it takes to make that dream come true.

I AM BISEXUAL AND PROUD!

Gay Alliance Youth

The Gay Alliance offers Youth Services for Rochester area LGBTQ and allied youth ages 13-25

Special Events:
Youth Dances, Day of Silence, Big Gay Prom, Pool Table, LGBTQ Youth Library, and Internet Access

Fun, friendly, safe adults are needed to volunteer their time and talents, providing positive role models, maybe sharing a talent or skill. Contact Jeanne Gainsburg, Outreach Coordinator for an application: jeanneg@ gagv.us or 585-244-8640, ext. 14.

Do you need Internet Access?
The Gay Alliance Library has two computers with internet access available during library hours:
Sunday: 3-5pm
Monday, Wednesday 6-8pm
*Computers are part of our David Bohnett Cyber Center Library & Archives

Disappearing
Preservation of Records
Archival Best Practices
For You,
Your Organization,
Your Agency
Friday, November 4, 2011
8:30 -11:30 am
Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
825 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14605

Many things
**Program Notes**

**Wintertime safety tips**

*By Kelly Clark*

As the weather turns colder many of us will begin to venture intoibernation mode. Technology makes it easy for us. We can watch virtually any movie ever made by streaming it online. We can get a full cardio workout with our Wii Video chat lets us stay in touch and we won’t waste with online pizza delivery. Too cold to venture out to the bar? We can even find a date online!

With hundreds of online dating sights some people have great luck finding the love of their live on the web. But there are also many people who have the misfortune of finding heartache, financial ruin and even violence at the other end of the computer monitor. If using date sites is part of your winter routine, here are a few tips to keep yourself safe:

- **Take your time!** Ask lots of questions, look for inconsistencies, get to know someone before agreeing to meet.
- **Always protect your personal info.** Don’t share your address or other sensitive info.
- **Sign your picture.** Ask for pictures that are not the profile picture. Save pictures in an obvious place just in case they are needed by police.
- **Create a trail.** Before you meet, let a couple of friends know your plan. Create a check-in time, if they haven't heard from you by then they should come looking.
- **Always meet at a public location beforehand.** Know the layout and plan an exit. Take the long way home to be sure you are not followed.
- **Keep your wallet close.** Don’t allow a date to see your credit or bank card numbers by laying it on the table before the meal. To sign up and bring other items on the side streets. Come join friends and get a good time and a lot of turkey-and-trim.

**Rainbow SAGE update**

*By Brian Hurlburt*

It is hard to believe we are in November and the holidays are just around the corner. Rainbow Sage of course is always busy with great programs for the 50+ LGBT population.

The schedule always begins with everyone’s favorite game, euchre. Join us for euchre on the first Sunday of every month, with this month’s being on Sunday, Nov. 6 at 3 p.m. The location is always the South Wedge Planning Committee building, 224 Mt. Hope in Rochester, RSVP is suggested, as space is limited. Please call 585-244-8640 X15 to RSVP or for directions and more information.

Our Ruby Sneakers program continues into November every Wednesday evening at 5:45 p.m. We’ve moved to our new location, which is Callan-Harris Physical Therapy, 1328 University Ave., between Colby Road and Blossom Road, next to Rochester City Ballet. We move from chair exercise to chair ball dancing. It is time to move those hips, so come and join us. Next class is Nov. 9.

In our continued efforts to stay healthy, Rochester Rainbow Sage will sponsor a series of health awareness workshops beginning on Saturday, Nov. 12 and each month following into March. The location will be the AIDS Care conference room at Monroe Square, 259 Monroe Ave.

The workshops will begin at 10 a.m. with a light breakfast and go to 11:30 or noon depending on the topic and health screenings. Our first topic will cover the top 10 health issues for lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender older adults. Future topics may include health proxy support for caregivers, heart health, diabetes, breast health and hearing loss.

Our workshop leader is Christina Miller. Christina is the LGBT Health Specialist at AIDS Care. Our next workshop group will be meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 16, so contact Tony at rtoon@aol.com for location and time. Our workshop group meets on Monday, Nov. 28 at the Gay Alliance library (last Monday). For more information on the women’s group contact Eileen at ebro@frontiernet.net. Just a reminder, the men’s and women’s group are discussion groups and not therapy or social groups, be sure to bring a topic to discuss.

Our Thanksgiving potluck will be on Sunday, Nov. 20 at 4 p.m. We will supply the turkey. To sign up and bring other foods, contact Nat at naphyflodiosh@gmail.com. The location is First Universalist Church, 150 South Clinton, corner of Court St. There is plenty of free parking on the side streets. Come join friends and give thanks together.

Our next Sage Club Breakfast will be on Saturday, Nov. 26. This is for Sage members to get together and chat over coffee and/or breakfast and for newcomers who would like to learn more about Sage and meet some new friends. The time is 10 a.m. and the location is East Ridge Dairy Guest House, 1925 East Ridge Rd. If you are a member and plan to attend the breakfast, please let us know at 585-244-8640 X15 so we will know how big a table to reserve.

**Youth Program plans college tours, Thanksgiving Dinner**

*By Susan Jordan*

The highly successful College Tours have started again for members of the Gay Alliance Youth Program. The first tour was on Oct. 20 at SUNY Geneseo (see photos). Another possible tour is in the works for November at SUNY Fredonia.

Youth Services Coordinator Jessica Cohen said, “We’re trying to get young people invested in the idea of college. Then we can hope to keep them in high school and battle the high dropout rate for LGBT youth. The tours can be positive for youth, depending on the college. The more positive the experience may be for youth, the more positive they will become as adults.”

Our next youth workshop is planned for October 27 at RIT in the LGBT Student Center at 7:30 p.m. The first topic will cover the rights of people to affirm their identities, and to create an atmosphere where the diversity of our community can thrive both collectively and separately. We educate and advocate for civil rights for all and for the eradication of homophobia.

**Speaking Engagements/Tabling for October**

10/1 Tabled at Advocacy Services for Abused Deaf Victims Event
10/5 Bullying and LGBT Youth at SUNY Brockport
10/5 Educating With Our Stories at the Gay Alliance
10/6 Tabled at the Family Health and Fitness Fair
10/10 Coming Out Issues at Nazareth College
10/18 LGBT Issues in Mental Health at 211-LifeLine
10/18 LGBT Issues in Counseling at University of Rochester
10/21 Shattered Rainbow: LGBT DV training
10/24 LGBT 101 at SUNY Geneseo
10/25 FAIR Housing & the LGBT Community at the Gay Alliance
10/26 LGBT Older Adult Issues at Geriatric Medicine Grand Rounds at MCH
10/26 LGBT Issues and Community Safety at the VA Hospital
10/27 GAY 101 at RIT
10/28 SafetyZone Training at Nazareth College
10/28 Bullying Issues at Geneseo Valley School Board Institute for Staff Development
10/30 Love and Forgiveness at Downtown United Presbyterian Church

**The Gay Alliance**

**On-line Resource Directory (GARD)**

The on-line community tool providing local, statewide and national resources, 24/7 at www.GayAlliance.org.
Free testing for HIV exposure is available from New York State Department of Health: call Rochester Area Regional Hotline at 1-866-600-6608 or 1-866-600-6756 for pay phones or call outside Rochester. Death or heav-

impaired people should call (585) 423-8110 (TDD for the deaf) or 1-800-962-5063 for pay phones or call outside Rochester. Death or hear-

nements, Public Health, and Criminal Justice.

if you can be obtained by calling 1-800-543-5433. Others

or management, two confidential testing (One

Quick Rapid Testing). AIDS of Rochester offers free confidential

homeless shelters, and more. AIDS is also a leader in pro-

viding services to education and members of the

LGBTQ community. Information: Website: web@www.AIDScenterSatx.org, 28121 Clark Ave, Suite 400, Houston, Texas 77082;

HIV Counseling and Testing. Programs include, Hotline: 585-252-0526, Department of Psychiatry,


Planning Board of Rochester and Genesee Valley offers testing and information to (585) 546-2095.

high risk and other services. Providers and

access to other HIV-related services. Prevention

and care. Ask to speak to someone in

PFLAG's Multicultural Education Program; no designates in Rochester and surrounding

lesbian mummies in Rochester and surrounding areas. Subscribers: Rochester Gay Moms' Support

and other organizations.

AIDS, Imagine Care, (585) 546-2595, Rochester, NY 14602, 24

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Groups

Find the friends and fun you need in your neighborhood of the LGBT community.

BUTCH FEMME CONNECTION

The Rochester Butch-Femme Connection will have two supper events in November.

On Saturday, Nov. 5 we will meet at Peppermin's Restaurant on Route 15 (West Henrietta Road in Henrietta, across from the Days Inn south of Lehigh Station Road) at 7 p.m. For further information on the Connection, contact Kerry/Max at (585) 288-7208, e-mail DressyFemmie@aol.com or check out our Facebook page under The Rochester Butch-Femme Connection.

COMEOUTDANCIN'

On Sunday, Nov. 6, ComeoutDancin' features "Swing in a 1930's Style." We'll be Swingin' as we step to the Charleston and some authentic '30s and '40s jazz moves.

On Sunday, Nov. 20, ComeoutDancin' features "Swing & Step Together." Esther & Son will return to introduce some two-step basics that will add variety to our mix.

DANCE TALK PLACE AT THE FRIENDS MEETINGHOUSE, 84 SCIO ST. (ENTRANCE ON STATE ST. ACROSS FROM THE EAST END GARDEN) AT 7:30 P.M. ADMITITION IS FREE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT COMEOUTDANCIN' AT GAYALLIANCE.ORG OR 585-244-8640.

DIGNITY-INTEGRITY

D-I Rochester meets weekly at St. Luke's and St. Simon's Church, 175 S. Fitzhugh St., at the corner of Broad St. We have the following services and activities for the month of November 2011. Please note that all services start at 5 p.m. and are usually followed by a coffee hour. You might also want to join us for dinner out at a local restaurant after coffee hour.

First Sunday: Episcopal Mass in the Church, with music

Second Sunday: Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word, with music

Third Sunday: Episcopal Mass in the Chapel, no music this week

Fourth Sunday: Evenig Prayer, followed by a Potluck Supper

November: Potluck Supper Theme: "A Different Thanksgiving Meal." If you could have something besides turkey for Thanksgiving, what would it be? Since this month's potluck supper falls on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, we decided that it might be fun to offer folks a chance to create the Thanksgiving Dinner they WISHED they'd had! Can't wait to see what you'll come up with on our table. We'll be very thankful if you'd join us. No time to cook? Don't worry about it! There is always plenty to eat.

Notes from the Pew: Dignity-Integrity's 35th Anniversary happened on Sunday, Oct. 16, and it was great! Michel Hopkins' sermon gave us an opportunity to reflect back to 1976: some of us were in high school! We've accomplished a lot and we've begun to talk about our mission for the years to come. The anniversary dinner, held at St. Paul's on East Ave. was excellent. (If you haven't been there yet, be sure to try it!) In conjunction with this anniversary, there is a longer article about us on page A 3 in this issue. Remember to check our website (www.d-i-rochester.org) for further details. You can also contact us by email (info@di-rochester.org) or by calling the D-I Hotline, (585) 254-5092.

EMPIRE BEARS

October is over. The film festival is over. It was great. Seven BEAR members had full passes and were at the movies for 10 days straight. Quite a few others attended select movies. We had a great time watching our sponsored film, "An Ordinary Year." We are thankful for the film festival for another great year.

Cold weather is here, and it's time for CARES to get up, eat, and keep warm. You can find us every Wednesday evening having supper at the Wimontare at 6. We're looking forward to meeting you there. It's been a long time since we've seen you there. It's time to come out and meet with friends from all over in the warm and congenial confines of the Empire Bear's 36th Anniversary happened on Sunday, Oct. 16 at the Strong Museum, from 5 to 9 p.m. The guest speaker will be Brian Quinn, a local exercise trainer, who will discuss basic exercise and wellness tips. With the upcoming holidays during the next two months fast approaching, attention to health and wellness becomes even more significant for everyone.

To learn more about the group and the November program, contact Ron at 585-2629 or e-mail rmartell@rochester.rr.com.

OUT & EQUAL

Our & Equal's Second Thursdays Networking Dinner this month will take place on Nov. 10, from 5:30-7:30 p.m at WXXI Studios, 280 State St.

The Rochester Resource will have Out & Equal's first visit to our "favorite public radio and TV station, in the heart of the High Falls district."

Information on Joining Out & Equal is available at www.oeNYfingerlakes.com/groups/poic.

RAINBOW SAGE WOMEN'S PEER GROUP — A PITCH FOR JOINERS

We are something other than a dating-oout-support psychotherapy group, and of these.

We are older mature lesbian women (some problem-free single during this month, conversing as equals (peers) about living as older lesbians in 21st century Western New York. We tackle within reasonable proximity to the Rochester office and library of the Gay Alliance of the Finger Lakes.

In the Rainbow Sage Women's Peer group, women engage as equals in non-judgmental discussions that affect or are affected by the lives of older LGBT women. We use the term "non-clinical" in our discussion to distinguish the Women's Peer from "support group," "group therapy," "dating networks," and their particular scopes and objectives.

SUPPORT GROUPS

According to Merriam Webster, a "support group," in general terms, is "a group of people with common experiences and concerns who provide emotional and social support for one another." The "support group" format might trigger deeper issues if participants suffer severe emotional problems — thus requiring the presence, leadership or invention of a mental health professional. [http://bdg. about.com/od/levels of care/g/supportgps.htm]

This type of "support group" is neither in the scope of content of Rainbow Sage Women's Peer nor is Women's Peer formed to provide its members with support or dealing with information regarding specific needs or problems such as coping with serious disease or over-consuming addictions. Women's New York's Web site, College Dictionary Copyright © 2010 by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio. http://www.yourdictionary.com/support-groups.html

While Rainbow Sage Women's Peer meets, "a group of people with common experiences and concerns (as older lesbian women) who provide emotional and social support for one another" it does not predicate topics or meet more often than one time a month (final meeting program, contact BMD). If members choose to meet individually (e.g., for outings), or sessions, those meetings are beyond the scope, outside the purpose of Rainbow Sage Women's Peer.

Dating Network (not)

A dating network or system has a manifest, what we do about it; Days and weekends, nights, weekends and holidays; Seeing self as the obvious, by our sport, and helping each other. A real rise group of people!

For more information, look at our Yahoo group profile: http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/RochesterGLBTQI, check our library, email bmdaniels@frontiernet.net. Like us with pride!

ROCHESTER GLBTQI MOTORCYCLE GROUP

Our group is made up of newcomers, people who put on a lot of mileage, and long time bikers who all join together, whether the obvious, by our sport, and helping each other. A real rise group of people!

Begin the Holiday season early by joining in the fun at two major Rochester events during November.

We invite you to bring a new, unwrapped child's toy to our Community Toy Drive Barnight at the Bachelor Bar on Saturday, Nov. 19. This early event makes the holidays brighter for the families served by the Rochester Children's Home. It is a division of Wayne ARC in Newark, N.Y., and is dedicated to the memory of Rich Richards, a former Ram and member.

As usual the music will be "just right" to induce an evening of meeting and chatting with friends from all over in the warm and congenial confines of the Forum and its friendly staff and management, all hosted by the Rochester Ram New York State's premier Leathermen's club.

Then gear up and join us on Wednesday, Nov. 23 for our annual Rave & Pout Party. The fun begins at 9 p.m. at the Bachelor Bar and progresses as we take a road trip and "invasive" other local bars for a short visit before returning to the Forum to party hearty.

The Rochester Ram's M.C. is Rochester New York's foremost gay motorcycle club. We are the oldest clubs of its type in the country. All who are interested in the leather community are invited to check us out.

Our general meeting is open to the public and we meet the Wednesday before the third Saturday of the month at our home bar, the Bachelor Bar, 670 University Ave. Our next general meeting will be on Wednesday, Dec. 15. For more info, please visit our website: www.rochesterrams.com.
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Mothers Against Transphobia
740 Marshall Rd, Chili, 10:30am
271-4874
Gay Men's Anonymous Support Group
125 S. Clinton Ave., 4pm.
Gay Men's Clothing Group
Third or fourth Sundays, 355-7664.

Tuesdays
Narcotics Anonymous
6-7:30pm. AIDS and Recovery
1124 Culver Road (Covenant United Methodist Church)
This is an NA meeting that is open to all addicts who have a desire to stop using. Although it is not specifically a gay-oriented meeting, it is welcoming to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as to anyone who is affected by HIV and AIDS.

Wednesdays
New Freedom/New Happiness Group
7pm. First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd. Bus riders: Take the last #18 University bus to 12 Corners. Use the stop just past the top of the hill at the Highland Ave. and then 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 Meeting discussion issue – as they relate to our alcoholism/addiction recovery – are fair games.

Fridays
Gay Men’s Night
7:30pm, Immanuel Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave.
• Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts
• Men's meeting
• 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 Gay AA
5-7:30pm. Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 6:30-9pm, First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. #5 and women. Open meeting.

Rochester Gay Men
7:30pm, St. Luke/St. Simon’s Episcopal Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Bus riders: Use the Fitzhugh Street stop on Main Street at the County Office Building and walk south one block. This is an Open Meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts
• Mixed men and women
• Handicapped accessible, take elevator to basement Meeting begins with a speaker, followed by open discussion.

Sundays
Step in the Right Direction
7:30-9pm. 1275 Spencerport Road (Trinity Alliance Church) This is an NA meeting that is open to all addicts who have a desire to stop using. Although it is not specifically a gay-oriented meeting, it is welcoming to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Each week features a reading from NA literature, followed by discussion.

Rochester Gay Men
7:30pm, St. Luke/St. Simon’s Episcopal Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. Bus riders: Use the Fitzhugh Street stop on Main Street at the County Office Building and walk south one block. This is an Open Meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts
• Mixed men and women
• Handicapped accessible, take elevator to basement Meeting begins with a speaker, followed by open discussion.
THURSDAY 1
Amy Coleman and Steve Schudaklin in concert; Downstairs Cabaret, 20 Winthrop St. showtime 10:30. (585) 444-8611 Ext. 621.
SATURDAY 5
Rochester Butcher Female Connection Dinner Out. Meet at Peppermill Restaurant, 18 W. Webster Rd. across from Days Inn, south of Lehighton Station Rd., 7 p.m. (585) 288-7208, email DressyFemaleConnect@rochester.rr.com.
SUNDAY 6
Miss Gay Rochester Pageant. Doors open 6 p.m. Harro East, 355 Chestnut St.
SATURDAY 12
Rainbow SAGE Health Awareness Workshop, AIDS Care conference room, Monroe Square Mall, 149 Monroe Ave. 10 a.m. (light breakfast) to 11:30 a.m. Workshop leader: Christina Miller, LGBT Health Services Program Coordinator, AIDS Care. Monthly event.
SUNDAY 13
WEDNESDAY 16
Rainbow SAGE men’s group. Contact Tony at tonygay@aol.com for location and time.
FRIDAY 2

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