



David Zona

## Meet the new Gay Alliance Board President, David Zona

By Susan Jordan

David Zona, 37, is a director at MVP Healthcare. He became president of the Gay Alliance Board at the annual meeting on Nov. 20.

The meeting took place at St. Mary's Church. The Alliance plans to hold a donor event this winter, at which time awards will be made, including the Vinnie and Vicki Cups.

David has been on the board for two years and became treasurer about a year and a half ago. He said, "A year ago I took on the co-chair role and now here I am!"

Why did he want to take on the responsibilities of being board president? David said, "I look at my experience growing up as a gay man, and realize how lucky I was growing up, and how well-received my coming out was by my family and friends. That's not the general rule, obviously; a lot of people don't have that kind of acceptance. In addition to generally believing in what we do, I wanted to pay it forward."

David sees his volunteer work on the board as very much a collaborative effort, as board,

staff and membership work on a vision and a strategy for the future. He said, "My personal perspective is the world has been changing so much over the last few years, and the Gay Alliance has been providing the same services for many years. They are still important, but we need to think of new ways of programming and innovating to support our constituents."

"I'll be working very closely with Scott. He'll help me understand what he sees as the future. I will work also with the staff, who have a long history with the agency. It's a collaborative exercise."

Vice President Jessica Mura-tore will also play an active role. David noted, "Jessica's strength is in governance – in the sense of governing the agency and making sure we are compliant with the regulations we need to be aware of, and making sure we have policies that enable us to do what we have to do."

He concluded, "It takes a village, and it's going to be very important for me to have the support and input of those we serve, and who are part of the agency. It's not a one-man show. We need to understand the community so we can make the

(Zona continues page 3)

## Gay Alliance receives grants from LGBT Giving Circle, Skalny Charitable Trust

By Susan Jordan

In its second year of grant making, the LGBT Giving Circle awarded \$18,000 in grants from its LGBT Fund for Greater Rochester to 11 nonprofit organizations, more than doubling the amount and number awarded last year.

Giving Circle members, guests and grantees attended a celebration on Nov. 18 at Rochester Contemporary Art Center, where the grants were formally announced.

"Members were extremely pleased to be able to boost our ability to help make a difference in the quality of life for many across the Rochester region," says Angela Bonazinga, co-chair of the Giving Circle. "Our goal this year was to increase our philanthropic impact and our visibility in the community, while awarding grants to a broad mix of social service and arts organizations."

The 11 organizations receiving grants that were approved by the Circle membership, were



Scott Fearing accepts the grant for the Gay Alliance from Catherine Lewis, chair of the LGBT Giving Circle grants committee, at RoCo on Nov. 18. Photo: Susan Jordan. More photos on p. 11.

Bread and Water Theater: to purchase lighting equipment for LGBT and Rainbow Theater Festival productions (\$1,100); Center for Dispute Settlement: to support training on topics involving the LGBT community for 60 volunteer mediators in Monroe County and five other counties (\$1,500); Chances and Changes of Livingston County's Coalition of Sexual Health: to support training in the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Val-

ley's Safe Zone Program for 10 people in Livingston County, who would then train others and implement practices in their workplace, organization or community (\$1,900); Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley: to create a business plan to help the LGBT community and allies not simply survive, but thrive (\$2,000); School of the Holy Childhood: an organization that is inclusive of the LGBT community, this

(Grants continues page 3)

## Election sees many national wins for gay rights; no surprises in local races

By Ove Overmyer  
Staff Reporter, Empty Closet

National Outlook: The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund celebrated success across the country as dozens of openly lesbian, gay, and bisexual candidates won election to public offices.

"We're extremely proud of all our candidates," said Chuck Wolfe, president and CEO of the Victory Fund. "The victories across the country and at all levels of government underscore the power of people fighting for fairness, progress, and LGBT equality."

In the 2013 election cycle, the Victory Fund endorsed 85 candidates, a record number for an odd-numbered election year. As of Nov. 7, 54 of these candidates were projected to win their respective elections, with three candidates advancing to run-off elections later this year. Two additional races remained uncalled.

In the top news: an openly gay man, Ed Murray, was elected mayor of Seattle, while homophobic Tea Partier Ken Cuccinelli was defeated in Virginia's gubernatorial race by pro-gay Terry McAuliffe, who immediately announced anti-discrimination protections for LGBT state employees. Outgoing Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell had refused to renew an executive order that protected LGBT state employees from



Matt Haag

discrimination, because, he said, there is no evidence that anti-gay discrimination exists. (See Newsfronts)

### Lovely Warren wins Mayor's race: historic victory

With a decisive win on Election Day, Democratic Mayor-Elect Lovely Warren will be sworn in as the next Rochester Mayor in January 2014.

Warren, 36, who is currently City Council president, will be the first woman to lead the city and second African American. She's also one of the youngest people to ever win the office -- a historic victory on multiple fronts.

According to unofficial results from the Monroe County Board of Elections, Warren took home 55 percent of the vote (18,117) to incumbent Mayor Tom Richards' 40 percent (12,957). Green Party candidate Alex White earned about 5 percent. This was a result expected by most local political observers.

In what some called "one of the strangest local election years ever," a rogue pro-Richards campaign sprang up after his primary loss, but it was too little, too late. And the campaign did not benefit from the support of its candidate. Richards backed Warren shortly after his Primary Election loss and did not actively campaign even though he appeared on the Working Families Party and the Independence Party line on the November 5 ballot.

In a statement released to the media after the General Election, Mayor Richards said, "I want to congratulate Lovely Warren on her victory tonight. We have already begun work on the transition and I have instructed senior staff and I'm asking all City employees to do whatever it takes to ensure a smooth and cooperative transition process. The job of mayor goes far beyond a single individual. It's now time for the entire community to come together

and support the new Mayor and continue working to make our City great."

### Matt Haag re-elected to Rochester City Council

When election returns tumbled in around 9:40 p.m. on Nov. 5, it was evident early on that all five incumbents would easily retain their seats on City Council. Those who were hoping for some local political theatre in this election cycle were disappointed. On this election eve, there was absolutely no drama about who was going to win.

Matt Haag, the only openly gay elected official in city government, placed third in the race with 17.63 percent of the vote (19,528) to retain his second four-year term on City Council. Loretta Scott was the top vote getter at 19.9 percent (22,416); Jackie Ortiz placed second with 17.63 percent of the vote; Dana Miller was fourth at 17.17 percent (19,342) and Car-

(Election continues page 3)

### GAY ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIPS

The Gay Alliance appreciates the continuing partnership of businesses within our community who support our mission and vision.

Platinum Level



Mercedes Sulay is Miss Gay Rochester 2014  
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PHOTO: JILL FRIER

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Proud Publisher of New York State's Oldest LGBT Newspaper

GAY ALLIANCE OF THE GENESEE VALLEY  
**Perspectives**

## The Empty Closet Editor

SUSAN JORDAN



## The year in review: POTUS, pasta and rainbow flags

By Susan Jordan

2013 was an interesting year for Rochester. Everyone from Spiderman's stand-in to President Obama stopped by – the former leaping over crashing NYPD police cars and closing downtown streets, and the latter lunching at Magnolia Café and closing down Park Ave. with his humongous, gleaming black bus with its blacked-out windows and escort of non-crashing police cars.

A small crowd waited in vain at Nick Tahou's, apparently convinced that only one thing could summon POTUSman to Rochester -- the garbage plate.

Another food-related story in the past year was the new East Ave. Wegmans, which really brought people together; the topics of the new parking lot and the crowing rooster recording provided Rochesterians with hours of absorbing conversation.

Nationally, Illinois, Hawaii and New Jersey were the latest states to pass marriage equality. But although they voted 45 times to repeal Obamacare, House Teapublicans "could not find time" to vote on ENDA once.

Rochester's LGBT community had a good year, with a wildly successful Pride, the premiere of the excellent Shoulders to Stand On documentary, and the 21st ImageOut Film Festival. Both Pride and ImageOut,

Rochester's annual LGBT signature events, were bigger than ever.

The D&C and gay blog Towleroad.com both noted the curious incident during Pride Week when the Democratic caucus hung a forbidden rainbow flag from their window in the Monroe County Office Building. The Monroe County Sheriff's Department immediately confiscated the flag, and threatened arrest when Democratic staffers said they would just put out another flag. They did so, but the authorities did not confiscate the second flag or arrest any Democrats, having determined that the flag did not pose a threat to the exterior of the County's building.

In international food-and-gay-related news, the president of the Barilla pasta company announced that he did not want to use gays to advertise his product, or to sell his pasta to gay consumers. Anti-gay activists could have hosted fundraising dinners of Chik-Fil-A takeout with Barilla pasta on the side.

As for dessert, a Teapublican religious radio guy made national news last summer when he stated that it is morally OK to bake a cake for a same sex wedding if you remember to inscribe upon it the death-to-gays passage from Leviticus, in icing. This is the same radio guy who said that Mark Twain was possessed by demons, the Colorado floods were caused by homosexuality, and the Boy Scouts will soon have merit badges for sodomy and – wait for it – cannibalism.

So bring it on, 2014! We cannibals can take it. The first item of interest coming up in the new year seems to be the Sochi Olympics. Fortunately the IOC has determined that there is no homophobic repression or hate violence happening in Russia, or at least not at the sports venues (Putin promised) -- so we should all just shut up, relax and enjoy the show. And of course purchase their advertisers' products, which hopefully won't include a certain brand of pasta. ■

## Gay Alliance Executive Director

SCOTT FEARING



## Changes

Depending on when you are reading this, you are either moving towards the holiday season, or recovering from it. No matter, you are dealing with the continual movement that is life.

The change of seasons, the change of the year, the change in the amount of daylight. Although it seems to be an oxymoron, "change" is one of the few constants in life.

Change has become the mantra at the Gay Alliance as well. In recent months we have embraced physical changes to our work and community spaces, we have managed staff changes, we have facilitated changes in leadership of staff and board. All that time we have been laying the groundwork for deep, transformative organizational change.

Last year The Gay Alliance celebrated our 40th Anniversary Year. We start year 41 as a strong, solid organization prepared to build on our long history and chart new courses.

Honestly, we still face financial challenges (what not-for-profit doesn't). We have experienced a loss of nearly \$300,000 in New York State support in the past three years. This means that we have had to trim, shift, partner, grow, and adjust -- we have had to change in ways that have been difficult, but, honestly, ultimately positive for us and the entire

LGBTQ Community in the region.

The pro-labor, union activist in me just felt my lip twinge and eyes roll as they do when I hear businesses talk about their need to "right-size." It has always seemed an excuse to cut people and reduce salaries. I am sure at times it has been that malicious.

But, for the Gay Alliance the adjustments we have made as we stepped away from State funds, and turned to you, our community members, have helped to be stronger, more responsive. As you have stepped up to help us, you have told us how we can be of more value to you, and we are responding.

For now, our budget remains lean. The New York Gap has us needing to raise just over \$4000 more each month. A task that is actually very doable. If each person reading this paper were to send us \$12, we would completely close the Gap caused by the loss of NYS funds.

\$12.00. Basically we need you to buy us two pints of good draft beer, or a couple of fancy coffee drinks, or a fire roasted pizza or donate a small fraction of your average cell phone bill.

Isn't a strong LGBTQ community worth that?

In the past three years the number of people who donate to us has increased. I believe that support has increased because people know that we are the oldest, strongest voice for LGBT people in the region, and that history has value to them; people trust us as good stewards of their donations; people like the changes that they have seen and are excited about our vision of the future and people believe, as we do, that the LGBT Community has an important role to play in the transformation of Rochester into a vital, green, robust city.

Please help us to complete our transformation by supporting us. ■

## GAY ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIPS

The Gay Alliance appreciates the continuing partnership of businesses within our community who support our mission and vision.

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3 Olives

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Barefoot Wine

Hedonist Artisan Chocolate

John's Tex Mex



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Equal Grounds Coffee House

Harter Secret and Emery LLP

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Kittleberger Florist and Gifts

Labor Federation

Macy's

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Out and Equal NY Finger Lakes

Outlandish

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### Champion Level

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Park Avenue

Merchants Association

Pride @Work

Third Presbyterian Church

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HCR Home Care

The Gay Alliance:  
 Forty years of advocating for the fair and equal treatment of all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Join us for forty more!

# 40

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#### Membership Levels:

\$30-99 **Advocate**  \$100 **Champion**

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I would be proud to have my donation publicly acknowledged.

**Benefits include:** Subscription to *The Empty Closet* mailed to home or work, plus privileges at each level. Phone: 585 244-8640 or mail to: Gay Alliance, 875 E. Main St., Suite 500, Rochester, NY 14605. Home delivery of *The Empty Closet* is free with your annual membership in the Gay Alliance.

## PAGE ONE

**(Grants from page 1)**

grant will support the opening of an "Activities of Daily Living" room at the school to teach students with developmental and intellectual disabilities self-care tasks and independent living skills (\$2,000); ImageOut: supports the rental of films for the annual festival in 2014 (\$2,000); and the Jewish Community Center: helping the agency to further develop its outreach efforts and collaboration with the LGBT community through staging of the Larry Kramer play on AIDS, "The Normal Heart" and event panel discussion (\$1,000).

**Skalny Charitable Trust grant**

The Gay Alliance will receive \$15,000 from the Joseph and Irene Skalny Charitable Trust, which donated generously to the GAGV in 2010 and 2011. The funds will be used to continue Gay Alliance anti-bullying outreach and other anti-bullying, youth suicide prevention and Gay Straight Alliance support in Monroe and surrounding counties.

The grant is in memory of Joseph and Irene Skalny, philanthropists who were dedicated to causes relating to education and youth.

Gay Alliance Executive Director Scott Fearing said, "The Gay Alliance is thrilled to have the financial support of these two important community resources. The continued support from the Skalny Foundation is especially exciting to me as it is a vote of confidence in our desire to reach people all around the region. The calls we get from beyond the Rochester city limits are often the most heartbreaking of calls and this gift will give us the ability to bring services into new areas around the region.

"The gift from the LGBT Giving Circle will allow us to strategically plan for our future. For 40 years we have focused on helping people to survive with their LGBT identity in a world that was openly hostile. As laws have changed and various social systems have become more accepting, our work needs to adjust and focus on building our communities in new ways. This support will allow us to create our new work plan to ensure that we are positioned to help LGBT people thrive in their identity. It is a subtle change, but we will focus on building strong, self-reliant individuals who want to remain connected to our vibrant communities and our shared history." ■

**(Zona from page 1)**

right decisions for the agency and those we serve.

"I also want to give a word of thanks to all the folks over the past 40 years who have built the agency and to thank the outgoing board leaders – and also my family and friends for their support." ■

**(Election from page 1)**

olee Conklin finished fifth at 16.55 percent (18,639).

The five At-Large incumbents were never in serious jeopardy of losing the election. They were challenged by the

Rev. Marlowe Washington on the Working Families line, and three Green Party candidates: David Atias, Drew Langdon, and Dorothy Paige. Of those, only Paige had at one time cleared 3 percent of the vote.

After the election, Haag said, "Thank you, thank you, and thank you to all my friends, family and supporters who endorsed my campaign. I'm truly blessed to be given the honor of serving you for four more years."

**Commissioner of Schools: RCSD**

Despite the Rochester City School District's abysmal academic performance and poor graduation rates -- something that has dragged on for years, marked by a declining enrollment and increasingly disengaged parents -- voters returned the three school board incumbents for another term.

Board members Jose Cruz, Cynthia Elliott and Van White, all Democrats, beat their challengers in the General Election, and they did so with fairly wide margins.

Led by White, the incumbents grabbed the lion's share of votes -- well more than 60 percent. And even though a credible candidate named Candice Lucas came extremely close to overtaking Cruz in the Democratic primary, she was no threat to him or Elliott on Election Night.

What this means for the RCSD and parents is hard to predict, except that a strong majority of the voters who turned out in the city passed on the opportunity to remove nearly half of the school board.

And while voters also showed their support for Lovely Warren as the city's next mayor (who incidentally campaigned heavily on an education platform endorsing Charter Schools), voters weren't necessarily giving her an automatic green light to make big demonstrative changes to the Rochester City School District, or to her plan for solving some of our biggest educational challenges.

**Monroe County Legislature**

Two Monroe County Legislature races were on the ballot, and could have conceivably shifted the balance of power in that body -- which favors the GOP -- to a super-majority. Monroe County Republicans held 19 out of the 29 seats before Election Day, and after a strong showing at the polls by Irondequoit Democrats, that numerical dynamic will remain for the coming year.

County Legislator Joe Morelle Jr., a rising star in local politics, will keep his Irondequoit-based 17th District seat, prevailing over attorney Ed McClenathan, a Republican. Morelle received approximately 68 percent of the vote, while McClenathan received approximately 32 percent.

In the 19th District, which covers parts of Greece and Parma, Republican Kathleen Taylor received approximately 63 percent of the vote, defeating Democrat Michael Bertolone, who received approximately 37 percent.

Taylor will replace Republican Jeff McCann, who has to leave at the end of the year due to term limits.

**(Election continues page 6)**

## NewsFronts

## LOCAL AND STATE



Dr. Bill Valenti, Ally Howell, Henry Hinesley, Bill Schaefer, Pamela Barres and Arai Moore. Photo: Ove Overmyer

**Community Forum highlights Trans\* Awareness Month**

By Ove Overmyer

The message to the Trans\* community was "Be your own best advocate."

As one of the marquee events highlighting Rochester Trans\* Awareness Month, more than 100 people attended an evening workshop titled Trans\* World Day: A Community Forum, on Nov. 12 at Trillium Health, located at the Monroe Square Building, 259 Monroe Ave.

Trans Day of Remembrance candlelight vigils were held at Monroe Community College, RIT, Open Arms MCC, The MOCHA Center and SUNY Brockport (see page 11) and a Trans open mic event took place at Equal Grounds on Nov. 22.

The Nov. 12 panel was hosted by the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley. Gay Alliance Executive Director Scott Fearing introduced the panelists and moderated the discussion. Several community groups and associations also co-sponsored the event, including Pride at Work, AFL-CIO; Trillium Health; Rochester Trans Group; MOCHA Center; Genesee Valley Gender Variants and The Self Made Men.

A panel of experts, including Bill Schaefer, M.S. RPA-C of Trillium Health; Pam Barres, transgender activist; Arai Moore, founder of SPECTRUM Transgender Group of WNY; Henry Hinesley, Coordinator of the RIT LGBT Center and Ally Howell, noted author, attorney and legal rights expert on Transgender issues, shared moving testimonies and insights on the latest information and social trends relating to gender nonconforming people.

The panel specifically addressed the current status of healthcare for gender nonconforming people, workplace rights and legal protections, and changing gender markers and also shared personal reflections on transgender identity as attendees considered best practices for creating change as self-advocates and allies.

Physician's Assistant Bill Schaefer talked extensively about the Affordable Care Act and how its language will protect

many gender nonconforming people for the very first time. He said, "Most people probably don't know that more than 20 percent of people who identify as transgender are refused healthcare with a primary care provider. Many just postpone care altogether because they are denied care so often."

Schaefer added that this is very tragic, considering that a leading industry study showed that 41 percent of those transgender respondents attempted suicide at least once and HIV transmission rates are four times higher for people who identify as transgender.

But now, says Schaefer, under the ACA, federal law prohibits any form of discrimination regardless of how you identify. All the panelists stressed that everyone in the community needs to be their own best advocate when it comes to understanding their legal rights and personal healthcare decisions.

Audience member Lizz McPhee of Henrietta told the EC, "It felt great to walk into a supportive environment where I not only got useful information from experts who are familiar with the diverse needs of Trans people, but just as importantly I got to meet Trans people who were comfortable in their own skin and living their lives openly and confidently. It was empowering."



Cael Keegan

**Keegan joins Hobart/William Smith LGBT Studies full time**

This semester, Hobart/William Smith Colleges in Geneva welcomed Visiting Assistant

Professor of LGBT Studies Cael Keegan as HWS' first full-time faculty member in LGBT studies.

Keegan teaches interdisciplinary courses centering on the relationship between queer, transgender, anti-racist, and feminist modes of consciousness and political critique. With his arrival, the Colleges were able to offer the first transgender studies class, "Transgender Identities and Politics."

He currently is teaching "Introduction to LGBT Studies" and is working with the LGBT program steering committee to develop new, cross-listed courses designed to be of interest to most students on campus. They are looking at the three other institutions in the country with LGBT majors or minors to see what differentiates HWS, as well as to learn from what others are doing.

"Hobart and William Smith are definitely leaders in transgender studies with the new courses we have developed for this academic year. We want to remain distinct and keep our cutting edge leadership status while developing a diverse program that offers a lot to a variety of students," says Keegan.

He asserts there is a need for the courses. "Most students will go on to work with some portion of the LGBT population, whether they are in sales, business, social work, nonprofits, therapy or work with foreign cultures. Having literacy around the issues LGBT people struggle with in our society is a key to success."

Keegan hopes that by helping students become more informed about the problems faced by LGBT populations, he will inspire them to become politicized about gender as a source of bias in society.

"Sexual/gender minority is an emerging and ongoing civil rights issue. Inequality for transgender minorities will be the big new problem society will have to face," he says.

In addition to the courses he was teaching this fall, the department has developed three cross-listed courses that will be offered in the spring (those in LGBT will be taught by Keegan): LGBT 204 "Bodies of Difference" will use first-person accounts to look at how disease and disability are interpreted by queer population; WMST 218 "Queer Representation in Theater and Film" will be taught by Assistant Professor of Women's Studies Michelle Martin-Baron and LGBT 301 "Queer Geographies and Migrations" will trace how modern queer subjectivity has formed and how it has been communicated and inherited by generations of queer individuals.

"Growing up as a scholar over the past 15 years, I did not have access to the courses I am now teaching," says Keegan. "There is a whole generation of scholars who had to invent a course of study to address all the academic issues related to LGBT. I became a professor because I wanted to provide students with the experiences I didn't have. If my courses in some way improve the lives of students -- LGBT or not -- that's what I want."

Keegan earned his B.A. in English from St. Bonaventure University, with a minor in women's studies. He earned an **(Keegan continues page 6)**

# NewsFronts

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL



Illinois Rep. Sam Yingling proposes to his partner Lowell Jaffe during a celebration of the Illinois marriage equality bill.

### Illinois passes marriage bill; 16 states now permit same sex marriage

The Illinois Senate passed SB10, the amended marriage equality bill also passed by the House, on Nov. 5. The Senate passed the bill 32-21 and it went to Governor Pat Quinn, who had promised to sign it.

The governor signed the bill on Nov. 20.

President Obama released this statement on the passage of marriage equality in Illinois: "Tonight, I applaud the men and women of the Illinois General Assembly, a body in which I was proud to serve, for voting to legalize marriage equality in my home state.

"As President, I have always believed that gay and lesbian Americans should be treated fairly and equally under the law. Over time, I also came to believe that same-sex couples should be able to get married like anyone else. So tonight, Michelle and I are overjoyed for all the committed couples in Illinois whose love will now be as legal as ours – and for their friends and family who have long wanted nothing more than to see their loved ones treated fairly and equally under the law.

"I also commend the members of the General Assembly for approaching this issue in a fair and open way, and for recognizing the importance of our commitment to religious freedom by engaging the religious community in this conversation.

"Throughout this debate, they've made it clear that this is about civil marriages and civil laws, and made sure that churches and other institutions of faith are still free to make their own decisions that conform to their own teachings.

"As I said in my Inaugural Address last January, our journey as a nation is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law, for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well. And tonight, I'm so proud that the men and women elected to serve the people of the great state of Illinois have chosen to take us one step further on that journey to perfect our union."

**Rep. proposes to partner at celebration**  
At a marriage equality celebration that night at the Governor's mansion, Rep. Sam Yingling stopped the party to propose to his longtime partner Lowell Jaffe. Said Yingling, "I love that you care about other people more than yourself... I want to spend the rest of my life with you."

Read more: <http://www.towleroad.com/#ixzz2jsHrcR00>

**Freedom to Marry**  
Marc Solomon, Freedom to Marry's national campaign director, released the following statement:

"Today's vote by the Illinois House means the Land of Lincoln will be our nation's fifteenth freedom to marry state. This is great news for the thousands of committed same-sex couples in Illinois who will now be able to make the ultimate vow before their friends and family, protected and supported by their marriage. It also represents tremendous momentum, with another victory in the heartland and our sixth state victory in 2013.

The inclusion of a few minutes of this

"Freedom to Marry is proud to be a lead partner in Illinois Unites for Marriage. We thank the tireless leadership of lead bill sponsors in the House and Senate, Rep. Greg Harris and Sen. Heather Steans as well as House Speaker Michael Madigan, Senate President John Cullerton, Governor Pat Quinn, and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, all of whom played crucial roles in advancing the legislation."

ACLU

James Esseks, Director of the LGBT Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, issued this statement: "With the Illinois bill's passage today, the march towards equality is turning into a stampede. One year ago, there were six states with marriage equality and now with Illinois there are fifteen. Once this bill is signed into law, over thirty-seven percent of the American population will live in states with the freedom to marry for all loving and committed couples. All families deserve the protection and security that only marriage provides and our fight to extend those protections to families in the remaining 35 states will continue."

John Knight, Director of the LGBT Project of the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, said, "Today is a great victory for thousands of lesbian and gay couples and their families and an historic day for the State of Illinois. To put an end, after so many years, to a law that has officially denigrated the love and commitment of lesbians and gay men is a cause for great celebration. We applaud the House members who stood up for basic fairness for all Illinois' families.

"Because of the hard work of many organizations and individuals, who never lost faith when the House failed to act in May, our State now joins the growing list of those advancing fairness by recognizing the freedom to marry for gay and lesbian couples.

"Today's vote means that the Illinois General Assembly now recognizes that all Illinoisans deserve the dignity, universal recognition, and concrete federal protections and obligations from marriage for their loving committed relationships and for the good of their children. Our clients in a court case challenging Illinois' discriminatory marriage law, and thousands of other same-sex couples in Illinois, can finally start planning their weddings."

### Russians spy on gay groups to smear gays before Sochi Olympics

The Russian government bugged a strategy meeting of LGBT activists in October and is using the audio to influence perceptions about gays ahead of the Sochi Olympic Games, Buzzfeed reports:

This surveillance was revealed on Nov. 12, when a state television channel broadcast audio from the meeting as part of a program presented as an exposé of the "threat to Russia" posed by the "homosexualists who attempt to infiltrate our country."

The inclusion of a few minutes of this

audio sent a chill through human rights activists in Russia and abroad...

...By highlighting Western human rights groups' interest in Russia, the program also appeared to be laying the groundwork for potentially accusing LGBT rights activists of being "foreign agents," which could be grounds for huge fines if activists are found to be taking money from foreign sources without reporting it to the authorities. The "foreign agent" law, passed last year, has been widely criticized for stifling Russia's already embattled civil society.

According to participants in the meeting, which was convened by the Open Society Foundation (a group founded by George Soros) and included members of international LGBT human rights groups and smaller Russian activist groups, the meeting was intended to strategize on how to assist the Russian groups against increased oppression ahead of the Sochi games.

Read more: <http://www.towleroad.com/#ixzz2kdolF613>

### Man arrested for crowbar assault on lesbian sister

On Nov. 7, a Lincoln, Nebraska man and an accomplice attacked his sister and her fiancée with a crowbar for "offending Islam" with their relationship. Both women escaped without injuries.

Police say Ahmad Tuma's sister and her fiancée arrived at home near 27th & M when he and a friend, 20-year-old Nathan Marks, ran up to them. Police say Tuma tried to hit her with a crow bar. The couple escaped into their car, but police say Tuma repeatedly hit the car with the crowbar.

"They were in fear for their lives, he had made some verbal threats to kill the sister," Officer Katie Flood with the Lincoln Police Dept. said. Police say the couple drove off, but Marks and Tuma got into Marks' pickup and followed, ramming them from behind nearly into oncoming traffic on S. 27th Street. The couple were able to get away and call police.

Tuma was arrested for attempted second degree assault, criminal mischief, two counts of terroristic threats and use of a weapon to commit a felony. All of the charges except use of a weapon carry a hate crime enhancement.

Tuma's accomplice also faces multiple felony charges.

### Point accepts LGBTQ scholarship applications until Jan. 21

On Nov. 1, Point Foundation launched its online scholarship application. Point Foundation empowers promising LGBTQ students to achieve their full academic and leadership potential – despite the obstacles often put before them – to make a significant impact on society.

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tion, mentorship, leadership development and community service training, and provides its scholars with the financial ability to attend higher educational institutions across the nation.

Point is currently supporting 78 undergraduate and graduate scholars during the 2013 – 2014 academic year. Each scholar is paired with a mentor who advises the scholar on education and career decisions, as well as helps guide them through the completion of an annual community service project.

Point's online scholarship application is now open and will be available until January 21, 2014. The Point Scholarship application is ONLY available online through their website: <https://www.point-foundation.org/OnlineApplicationInfo>

## Over 150,000 march for Pride in Buenos Aires

By Andrew Potts on [gaystarnews.com](http://gaystarnews.com)

Massive crowds came out to take part in the 22nd Buenos Aires Gay Pride Parade on Nov. 9, starting with a group kiss before over 150,000 took to the streets.

The parade wound its way through the city's streets to the Plaza de Mayo for an open-air festival and fireworks show.

Many of the signs and speeches at the event referenced Pope Francis I, who in his former role of Catholic Archbishop of Buenos Aires had vocally opposed efforts to legalize same-sex marriage in the Latin American nation.

"From the Pope's point of view there is no official line on the gay community," parade participant Norberto Lorenzo told AFP.

"And we aren't very optimistic. The church doesn't recognize the status of gay people, nor gay couples, gay marriage, lesbians, nor divorce. We knew quite well the Catholic Church wouldn't accept us. So we will continue to be Catholic and we do not deny our Catholicism or to be gay."

However Pope Francis has announced a year long global survey on Catholics' views on how the church should approach a range of social issues including homosexuality in a sign that he may be preparing for some level of reform within the church.

## Hawaii approves marriage equality; governor signs bill

On Nov. 12 the Hawaii Legislature approved a freedom to marry bill, putting Hawaii on track to become the 15th state where same-sex couples can marry (Illinois is technically the 16th). The bill then went to Governor Neil Abercrombie, who signed the measure into law the next morning. The law is expected to take effect on Dec. 2.

In 1993, Hawaii launched the ongoing global movement for the freedom to marry when the state Supreme Court ruled in the historic Baehr case that the exclusion from marriage was presumptively unconstitu-



Gov. Abercrombie signs the Hawaii marriage equality bill.

tional. The ruling sparked a debate and the freedom to marry campaign that has resulted in 16 states that will soon have freedom to marry laws and national support at a solid majority, as well as 18 countries on five continents where gay people can share in the freedom to marry.

In the past two months, two other states have also become marriage equality states, New Jersey and Illinois, the 14th and 16th, respectively, if order is determined by when the laws take effect.

However, expect challenges before then, says Towleroad.com. "We've already reported on wingnut lawmaker Bob McDermott and the lawsuit he has filed which claims that in 1998 when Hawaii passed a constitutional amendment voters thought they were voting for one man/one woman marriage rather than allowing the legislature to decide on what constitutes a marriage. KHON says that Circuit Judge Karl Sakamoto is expected to rule on that this week: '...opponents are counting on Circuit Court Judge Karl Sakamoto to stop the law from taking effect. On Thursday, he's expected to rule on a court order that could stop the state from issuing wedding licenses for same-sex couples on the basis that the people already voted against same-sex marriage in a constitutional amendment in 1998.'"

"If the judge grants the court order then another trial will be scheduled that could essentially strike down the same-sex marriage law. But the state Attorney General says the 1998 constitutional amendment gave the legislature authority to change the law and so the same-sex marriage will be upheld."

Sakamoto did rule that the marriage law could go into effect.

The amended bill protects clergy from having to perform weddings for same-sex couples and religious organizations from having to provide goods, services and facilities for same-sex weddings. The state Senate previously approved a similar bill 20-4 late last month, and the Nov. 12 vote came two contentious weeks after the special session began on Oct. 28 to con-

sider the bill.

### Statement by the President

"I want to congratulate the Hawaii State Legislature on passing legislation in support of marriage equality. With today's vote, Hawaii joins a growing number of states that recognize that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters should be treated fairly and equally under the law. Whenever freedom and equality are affirmed, our country becomes stronger. By giving loving gay and lesbian couples the right to marry if they choose, Hawaii exemplifies the values we hold dear as a nation. I've always been proud to have been born in Hawaii, and today's vote makes me even prouder. And Michelle and I extend our best wishes to all those in Hawaii whose families will now be given the security and respect they deserve."

### Freedom to Marry

Evan Wolfson released the following statement: "After twenty years of work to win the state where it all started, the Hawaii freedom to marry victory today is especially sweet. It also shows how far we have come. The same legislature that in the 1990's passed the first of the anti-gay constitutional amendments now voted resoundingly for the freedom to marry. Like the millions of Americans who have evolved to become the national majority for marriage, Hawaii's leaders opened their hearts and changed their minds, writing this new freedom to marry chapter in America's history of liberty and justice for all. In 2013 we've won the freedom to marry in our nation's first state and its 50th. We will keep going until we win the freedom to marry nationwide -- and, happily, it won't take another 20 years. Aloha, freedom to marry!"

### Rea Carey, Executive Director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund

"The fight for the freedom to marry for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people started in the Aloha State two decades ago. This makes today's victory all the sweeter for Hawaii families. Clearly, the national momentum for the option of

marriage for same-sex couples keeps rolling-on and across our entire nation. We congratulate Hawaii United for Marriage on their efforts to make the 50th state the next state to have marriage equality."

### Human Rights Campaign

"The unprecedented momentum for LGBT equality in America continues today, with Hawaii's passage of historic marriage legislation," said Human Rights Campaign president Chad Griffin. "Before this year, marriage was the law of the land in eight states. By the end of this year, that number will have doubled to sixteen. We're committed to working harder than ever before to bring marriage equality to all 50 states, so loving gay and lesbian couples everywhere can enjoy the same hopes, dreams and aspirations as their straight peers."

Sponsored by state Sen. Brickwood Galuteria in the state Senate and under the leadership of Senate Judiciary Chair Clayton Hee, House Speaker Joseph Souki, House Judiciary Chair Karl Rhoads, House Finance Chair Sylvia Luke, Representative Chris Lee, Representative Della au Bellati, and Republican Representative Cynthia Thielen, Hawaii's marriage equality legislation first passed the state Senate 20-4 on October 31, and the state House 30-19 on Friday, November 8. The state Senate on Nov. 12 passed the House-amended version 19 to 4. Hawaii's marriage equality law will go into effect on December 2, 2013.

### ACLU

We have made incredible progress in bringing marriage equality to more states, and our fight continues, with crucial ballot initiatives ahead and important legal cases advancing through the courts. The ACLU is proud to have been a part of the LGBT rights movement since 1936 and we will continue to work alongside our partners – in courtrooms and at ballot boxes – until the freedom to marry is extended to all 50 states."

Below is a statement from Lois Perin, ACLU of Hawaii legal director and founding member of Hawaii United for Marriage:

"This is a joyous occasion because Hawaii is a state that prides itself for its aloha, diversity, kindness and openness. On December 2, 2013, when the new Hawaii law takes effect, our gay brothers, sisters, neighbors and friends will finally be able to marry the person they love."

## Senate passes ENDA 64-32; House won't allow a vote

The U.S. Senate on Nov. 7 voted 64-32 in favor of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, landmark legislation outlawing workplace discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans.

The bill would prohibit employers with 15 or more workers from using a person's sexual orientation or gender identity as the basis for making employment decisions,

(ENDA continued page 6)

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**Individual & Relationship Counseling**

Anxiety & Depression  
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Conflict Resolution  
Communication Skills  
Sexual Abuse Recovery  
Drug & Alcohol Abuse  
Grief & Loss

## PAGE ONE

*(Election from page 3)***Towns of Henrietta and Irondequoit**

In two of the biggest suburbs in Monroe County, voters tossed out the incumbent supervisors in the towns of Henrietta and Irondequoit.

The Henrietta race was close, with Town Board member Jack Moore, a Republican, receiving approximately 51.3 percent of the vote and sitting Supervisor Michael Yudelson receiving approximately 48.6 percent. Moore and Yudelson already squared off once this election season in a Republican primary. Yudelson lost that race and has since registered as a Democrat.

In Irondequoit, Democratic challenger Adam Bello defeated sitting Republican Supervisor Mary Joyce D'Aurizio. Bello pulled in approximately 55.11 percent of the vote while D'Aurizio received approximately 44.78 percent.

That result wasn't a shocker for most political observers -- town residents continue to be frustrated with the lack of progress at Medley Centre and many were dissatisfied with the town's handling of the I-Square project. Moreover, the Democratic slate mates were considered savvy political campaigners and very hard workers.

Bello said after the election, "It's a great night for Democrats in Irondequoit." The Democratic candidates for Irondequoit Town Board, Dave Seeley and Lorie Barnum, beat out Republicans Paul Marasco -- a sitting Town Board member -- and Bill Brongo. The Bello, Seeley and Barnum wins mean that, come January, Irondequoit's Town Supervisor and Board will be entirely Democratic.

**Town of Greece**

Greece Democrats thought they had a decent chance at winning some town offices this year. But town voters have kept the GOP in control.

In the supervisor race, State Assembly member and Monroe County Republican Party chair Bill Reilich received approximately 59 percent of the vote, beating Democrat and Working Families champion Dick Beebe, a former Monroe County legislator. Reilich will replace sitting Republican Supervisor John Auberger, who couldn't run for re-election due to town term limits.

**NY Referendum One: Casinos**

New York voters approved a constitutional amendment to expand casino gambling, authorizing as many as seven full-scale casinos as part of a plan meant to bring jobs to economically distressed upstate regions, despite opposition from upstate New York voters.

Statewide, the measure to approve up to seven commercial casinos was passing 57 to 43 percent, with 60 percent of the vote counted. Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who pushed the idea, declared victory.

"The passage of Proposal One is a big win for local governments, school districts, and taxpayers across New York State," Cuomo said in a statement. "This vote will keep hundreds of millions of dollars spent each year in neighboring states right here in New York, while increasing revenue for local schools, lowering property tax taxes, and bringing proper regulation to the industry."

The casino proposition appears to have failed in Monroe County, however, by the narrowest of margins, 50.18 percent against to 49.81 percent in favor, say unofficial results from the county Board of Elections.

The Seneca Nation has exclusive rights to operate a casino in our area, so the ballot proposition does not impact Rochester and Monroe County. ■

## LOCAL AND STATE

*(Keegan continues from page 3)*

M.A. in American studies with a designated emphasis on global gender studies as well as his Ph.D. in American studies, from the University at Buffalo. He then moved to California and taught at San Francisco State, Sonoma State and Evergreen College before learning of the opportunity to join the faculty at HWS.

"It was encouraging that the Colleges were looking for someone to grow transgender studies in the department," he says.

Keegan is a specialist in the theory and history of sexuality and gender, with a focus on interdisciplinary queer and transgender studies as well as queer cultural politics, literature, media, aesthetics, performance, community formations, and social movements. His current research examines 20th century queer melodramatic representation and its political function in the postwar expansion of American democratic ideology. Keegan also has expertise in cultural studies and the politics of popular culture, affect theory, film and television studies, and the history of the moving image. He is a member of the National Women's Studies Association and the Transgender Caucus.

He is the author of a number of articles, the most recent of which are "Queer Sensations: Postwar Melodrama and the Crisis of Queer Juvenility," published in *Thymos: The Journal of Boyhood Studies* (Fall 2013), and "Moving Bodies: Sympathetic Migrations in Transgender Narrativity," published in *Genders*. Vol. 55. (Spring 2013). Forthcoming is an article, "California and the Queer Utopian Imagination," which will be published next year in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of California* (Cambridge UP).

In considering his goals for his first year at HWS, Keegan says, "I want students to come out of class feeling they can change the world and the world has a place for them in it." ■

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

*(ENDA continues from page 5)*

including hiring, firing, compensation or promotion.

It would exempt religious institutions and the military.

The bill then went to the Republican-dominated House where it faces a much tougher battle. House Speaker John Boehner has expressed his opposition to the legislation so it is unlikely to get a vote.

"The Speaker believes this legislation will increase frivolous litigation and cost American jobs, especially small business jobs," said Boehner's spokesman.

He did not explain how keeping people from losing their jobs would cost jobs and why anti-discrimination lawsuits are "frivolous".

Supporters have been trying to pass ENDA in one form or another since 1994 when it was first introduced by Sen. Edward Kennedy, Sen. Paul Tsongas and Rep. Gerry Studds.

**Freedom to Work**

Statement by Tico Almeida, founder and president of Freedom to Work: "The Senate has taken a bi-partisan and historic step towards ensuring that gay and transgender Americans have the same workplace protections that give all Americans a fair shot to succeed on the job. Our fight now moves to the House of Representatives where Speaker Boehner and the Republican Conference will have to decide which side of history they want to stand on. We will work with our Republican allies to push Speaker Boehner to allow this vote for the good of the country and the good of his party."

"Speaker Boehner is not the only one who needs to act. President Obama should sign the executive order that will immediately protect LGBT Americans in one quarter of the jobs in our nation's workforce. The President made this campaign promise to LGBT voters over five years ago, and he should not stall or hide behind inaction in Congress any longer. The Senate did its work, and now both Speaker Boehner and President Obama have their own job to do. We will not rest until they take action and LGBT workplace protections become the law of the land."

**Statement by the President**

"For more than two centuries, the story of our nation has been the story of more citizens realizing the rights and freedoms that are our birthright as Americans. Today, a bipartisan majority in the Senate took another important step in this journey by passing the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would help end the injustice of our fellow Americans being denied a job or fired just because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Just as no one in the United States can lose their job simply because of their race, gender, religion or a disability, no one should ever lose their job simply because of who they are or who they love."

"Today's victory is a tribute to all those

who fought for this progress ever since a similar bill was introduced after the Stonewall riots more than three decades ago. In particular, I thank Majority Leader Reid, Chairman Harkin, Senators Merkley and Collins for their leadership, and Senator Kirk for speaking so eloquently in support of this legislation. Now it's up to the House of Representatives. This bill has the overwhelming support of the American people, including a majority of Republican voters, as well as many corporations, small businesses and faith communities. They recognize that our country will be more just and more prosperous when we harness the God-given talents of every individual.

"One party in one house of Congress should not stand in the way of millions of Americans who want to go to work each day and simply be judged by the job they do. Now is the time to end this kind of discrimination in the workplace, not enable it. I urge the House Republican leadership to bring this bill to the floor for a vote and send it to my desk so I can sign it into law. On that day, our nation will take another historic step toward fulfilling the founding ideals that define us as Americans."

**GetEQUAL**

GetEQUAL issued the following statement: "For decades, LGBTQ workers have had to deal with heartbreaking discrimination when trying to find or keep a job. Today's passage of ENDA is, indeed, a historic moment for our community and our allies. As ENDA moves to the House of Representatives, we are reminded of the millions of LGBTQ workers who are depending on the House to do the right thing and pass this bill."

"However, this victory came at a high cost. The broad religious exemptions in the bill cemented into law the very biases that the legislation was intended to overcome. Our allies in the progressive movement, our volunteer organizers on the ground, and our online members have all spoken out against the broad religious exemptions in the bill."

"We're grateful to the Senators who stood up and opposed those exemptions. And we know that the road to full LGBTQ equality will continue to be a difficult one, as House Speaker John Boehner has made very clear that he has no desire or intent to bring ENDA to the floor of the House for a vote."

"This is why we are calling on President Barack Obama to immediately exercise his executive authority and to sign an Executive Order that would end LGBT discrimination by any company that contracts with the federal government. As we wait for Speaker Boehner to move this bill forward, it is imperative for President Obama to lead by example, and to sign his name to an Executive Order that would protect nearly 25 percent of this country's workforce from workplace discrimination."

"We are thankful for the president's vocal support for workplace fairness -- and we call on him to back up his words with clear and unmistakable action. President Obama has the executive authority to

*(ENDA continues page 12)*

# The AIDS Quilt Returns To Rochester

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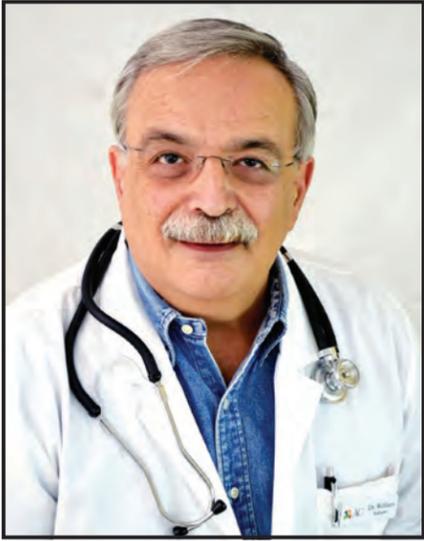


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# Interview



## Health Update: Dr. William Valenti of Trillium Health

By Susan Jordan

Dr. Bill Valenti of Trillium Health recently was given the Linda Laubenstein Award by the NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute.

It has been awarded since 1992 to physicians who were there early in the epidemic, and who have demonstrated “a compassionate manner” and “whole-hearted involvement” in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

He commented, “All I want to say about that is that Linda Laubenstein’s team was very early on in the AIDS epidemic at Beth Israel Hospital in NYC. She is an unsung heroine who identified the first patients with AIDS in New York. At one time she was taking care of 50 patients, more than anyone else.

“She had childhood polio and lived in a motorized wheelchair. And she made house calls on public transportation in a wheelchair!

“She died at age 48 of polio complications in the ‘90s, but she made contributions in that early era that set the stage for treatment of the epidemic.”

### Interview excerpt

Dr. Valenti was quoted about his experiences in the early years of the epidemic in an article by Christopher Glazek, a writer in Los Angeles and the founder of the Yale AIDS Memorial Project. The article was originally published on Playboy for iPhone. The excerpt follows:

Bill Valenti, an AIDS physician who ran a clinic in Rochester, New York: “Not everyone qualified for clinical trials, but we did our damndest to get them in anyway. For example, if a patient’s red blood cell level was too low because they were anemic, we would transfuse them so they would temporarily meet the criteria.

“My infectious diseases colleagues had no idea what we were doing. On Friday nights, after our head nurse went home, we opened up an underground clinic from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and gave people Compound Q, an experimental drug made from Chinese cucumber. We obtained it through a middleman — a gay PhD student — who got it from San Francisco.

“Patients often came in with their own drugs. The egg lipids, AL-721, were huge in New York City at the time. Everyone was putting them on their toast and eating them like butter. There was a lot of hocus pocus out there. More than a few times I told patients, ‘You shouldn’t do that.’ I was especially leery of ozone therapy, which involved sucking out people’s blood and replacing it with a fluid that contained ozone.

“When you start draining someone’s blood, you’ve gone off the deep end — at least in my medical opinion.

“Sympathetic doctors couldn’t get everyone into clinical trials, though. In

particular, women were shut out — generally speaking, women were neglected during the first decade of the epidemic — in part because of concerns about how ARVs might affect their fetuses should they happen to become pregnant while being treated.”

### Trillium update

In November Dr. Valenti updated The Empty Closet about the latest news at Trillium Health. He said, “What we have done was expand our model of care to everyone who needs health care. We do have areas of focus: we continue to do HIV big time and since July 1 have also enrolled 89 non-HIV-positive people in our LGBT Health program. We have enrolled another 40 people who are neither HIV positive nor LGBT, but need healthcare.”

About the LGBT Health program, he said, “The numbers have risen and there’s a demand out there. We want to improve primary care for all.

“For gay men and MSM (men who have sex with men but do not identify as gay) we focus on HIV prevention, STDs, anal cancer screening and general health maintenance. For lesbians, we have the Women’s Health program with Dr. Kristen Smith and for all women we are also doing gynecological screening onsite, and can do referrals to fertility programs.

“For trans people we do hormone therapy, and for uninsured people we have a grant to help them get health insurance through the NYS Health Exchange, via the Affordable Care Act.”

There is a move in NYS toward making PrEP better known. PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, a medication approved by the FDA for daily use that can help high risk patients who are HIV negative stay that way.

Dr. Valenti said, “We will work with the state Health Department to get word out via their statewide campaign targeting MSM and those at risk for HIV from unprotected anal sex. We have 12 people in that program now but we know there are many more who would benefit from this. The drug is one we use in the HIV cocktail. There are two meds in one pill, which should be taken once a day. If you take it all the time, it’s 95 percent effective. You need to take it daily to get a steady concentration of the drug, not just in the blood but in the tissue.”

He added, “Of course you still need condoms, regular HIV testing, knowing your status and reducing your sexual partners! We don’t just write a prescription and send the patient out the door. The patient sees me, the clinical pharmacist and the health educator, and gets screened for HIV and STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections a.k.a. STDs) and comes back every three months for a check up and discussion.

“It’s a highly structured program and not ‘here’s your prescription, goodbye’. We stay connected.

“The state Health Department is doing a pilot linking prevention programs with clinical sites. Part of the statewide message now includes PrEP. For instance, if a patient cannot for some reason get insured, we can now get the drug from the manufacturer.”

PrEP has not been well publicized in the past and not everyone is aware that it exists. Dr. Valenti said, “With this structured program and people coming in on a regular basis, people begin to change their behavior. Some research indicates that the number of partners and the occurrence of unprotected anal sex decrease. It’s HIV prevention in the modern era — we have a bio-medical intervention as part of the contemporary approach to HIV.

“I would say that, while we still have a significant amount of work ahead of us, we also have made some pretty significant

strides in terms of planning and roll out of LGBT Health.”

Dr. Valenti said that Trillium is also very concerned about the patient experience. He said, “Navigating the world of healthcare is difficult, complicated and frustrating. People don’t have all the bumps in the road taken care of. We have internal activity to improve patient experience, led by Steven Price, our former Prevention Director, who now leads patient activities here 16 hours a week to help people navigate the system.”

He concluded, “The system isn’t perfect and we’re aware there’s work to be done — and we’re serious about doing something about it. Because it’s important.” ■



## Health Update: Bruce Smail of The MOCHA Center

By Susan Jordan

The Empty Closet recently spoke with Bruce Smail, executive director of The MOCHA Center, about the new focus of the agency dedicated to improving the health and wellness of LGBT communities of color.

Bruce Smail noted, “All of the organizations in the state of New York are re-adjusting their priorities around HIV prevention and cure, for a number of reasons.

“The national HIV strategy, as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) high impact prevention, have caused a re-positioning. They’re doing more programming in the hardest hit areas. Nationwide right now the highest rates of new infections are young MSM of color, largely in the black community, and that becomes the highest priority.

“The NYS AIDS Institute has focused their energy around prevention knowledge, to make sure we are targeting the highest risk population and looking at programs that are having the highest impact in prevention.”

He gave as an example the fact that HIV testing is a huge push, as well as a focus on prevention for positives. “That means making sure that people who are HIV positive are in care and receiving

medical treatment, which lowers the rate of infection of others. If you’re on an HIV med that makes your viral load undetectable, the chance of you infecting anyone is reduced.

“There’s still a risk for transmission, but the latest studies found that people with undetectable viral load have the lowest rate of infection in the community, and this reduces the risk of having the virus passed on.”

Bruce said that there are three corners: first, target the population at highest risk; second, testing and third, prevention for positives. He said, “Because of that, anyone working in this field needs to shift in the way we do services in the community. Our effort right now is launching free new testing — hopefully beginning this month. We’re using Oraquick testing — the oral version, not the blood version. Once we get started, we will provide the official hours to the public, but right now it looks like they will be 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and 2-5 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.”

The MOCHA Center is located at 107 Liberty Pole Way.

The testing will be free and walk-in, with no appointment necessary. Results will be ready in 20 minutes. If the test shows a reactive (positive) result, the person will be given a confirmatory test immediately. Those results, however, have to be sent out and may take a week to get a response.

The MOCHA Center is also focusing on risk reduction, with four counseling-related programs. The first is CLEAR, or Choosing Life: Empowerment Action! Results!, which is an evidence-based health promotion intervention for males ages 16-24 living with HIV/AIDS or at high risk for HIV/STI/Hepatitis C.

The second program is Comprehensive Risk Counseling and Services (CRCS), which is a client-centered HIV/STI/Hep C prevention approach providing intensive, ongoing, individualized counseling and support.

Third is Counseling, Testing and Referral Services (CTRS), designed to increase clients’ knowledge of their HIV status, encourage and support risk reduction and secure needed referrals for appropriate services.

Fourth is RESPECT, a client-centered HIV/STI/Hep C prevention and counseling intervention designed to support risk reduction behaviors.

Bruce Smail said, “Everyone gets an assessment of their risk behavior, and counseling, with testing. If someone tests positive for HIV, or an STI, we give referrals to places that offer PrEP. We’re partnering with Trillium and the Anthony Jordan Health Center.

“We’re changing because of the times,” he concluded. “The spread of HIV in WNY is a serious issue that our community needs to be aware of. Our community needs to take action to understand prevention measures, and how to protect themselves. We’re here as a support.” ■



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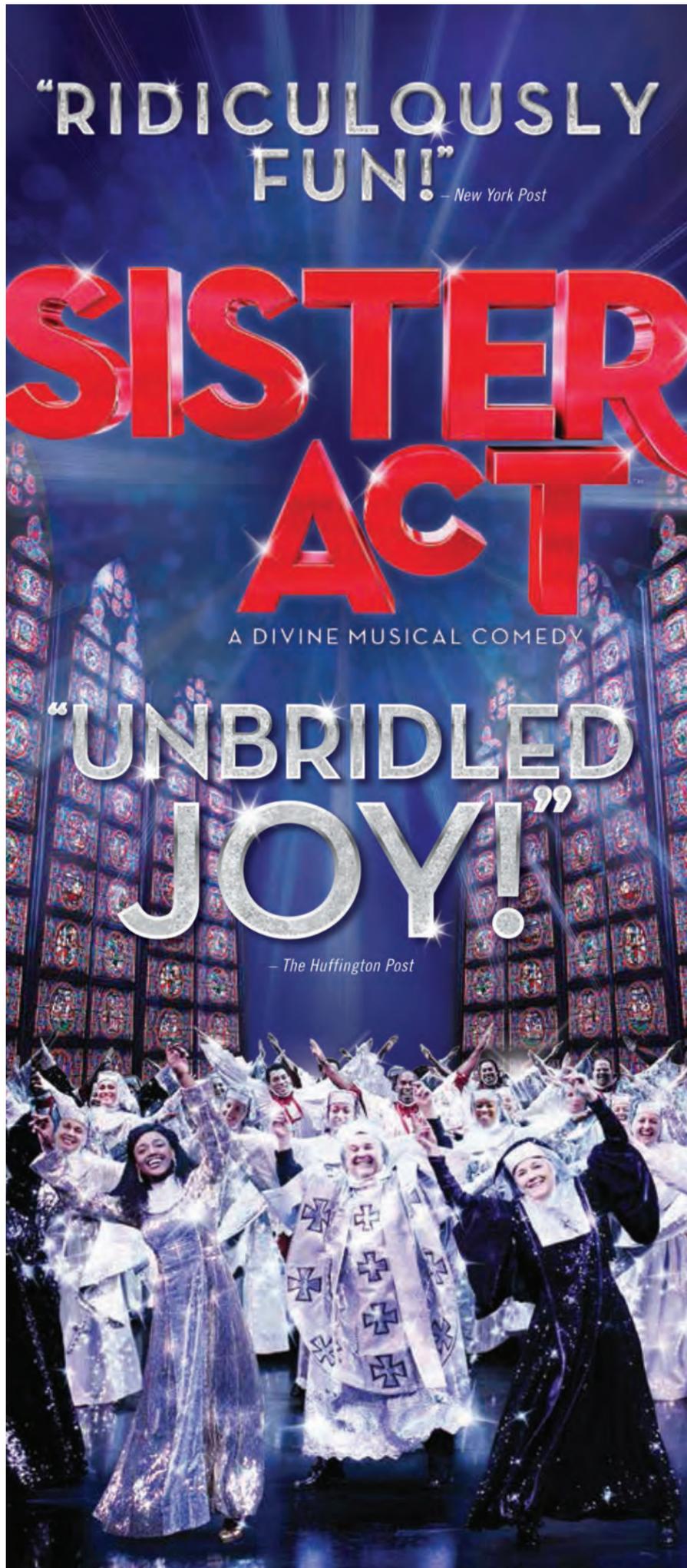
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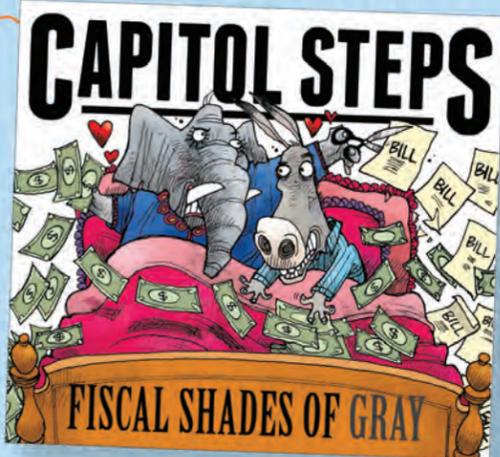
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# Making the Scene



**MISS GAY ROCHESTER:** Mercedes Sulay, Miss Gay Rochester 2014, in the performance segment of the Miss Gay Rochester pageant, held Nov. 10 at Harro East. Photos: Jill Frier



**Keke Lorde**



**Wayne Esposito (Liza) and Aggy Dune give the Pro Production Award to Evelyn Bailey of Shoulders To Stand On.**



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## My Own Private Rochester: Barbara Moore

*By Susan Jordan*

Barbara Moore is a computer consultant and troubleshooter who runs her own business, Moore Results. She has also been an officer in NOW (National Organization of Women) for 25 years and volunteers to manage both the local and state NOW websites.

Barb grew up in Lincoln, Neb. and after 10 years in Wisconsin she moved to Rochester on Jan. 1, 1983. She was a librarian and worked at the University of Rochester Rush Rhees Library as assistant director for automation. She says, "That was before the Internet, when it was 'Netscape' and when the Internet first became easy enough for non-scientists to use. When I first started out, I was explaining to people why email would be useful!"

Today Barb lives with three cats in Penfield, but her home is actually one block into Perin-

ton. "From my house I can walk to Perinton, Penfield and East Rochester," she explains.

Her work with NOW currently involves the big push for the Women's Equality Act, which passed (all 10 points) in the Albany House but was rejected by the Republican-dominated Senate due to point 10, updating reproductive laws so they are in sync with Roe v. Wade. "So," she said, "the whole Act lost, including the points about domestic violence, equal pay for equal work and all forms of equal civil rights for women."

Barb first came to Rochester because she had heard about the New Women's Times newspaper (which ceased publication in 1984) and the Women's Peace Encampment. She said, "Rochester is a very progressive place, home of Susan B. Anthony, and then there's Seneca Falls, home of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. There's social justice in the water here or something!"

The Rochester person who has inspired her the most is "my financial advisor Mary Spurrier. She started her own business and

helped me leave the library and start my own business. She put her money where her mouth was and supported a lot of feminist projects and speakers."

Barb's favorite Rochester events are the Metro Justice Alternative Fair, the first weekend in December, where she volunteers, and also the Lilac Festival. She says, "I love the lilacs and all the parks in Rochester, and the canal where I walk and bike. I also play pickle ball with people from Penfield, and at the Y. It's expensive, but I can play in the evenings – I work all day."

She also loves the Susan B. Anthony House and is on the Shoulders To Stand On committee.

Barb's favorite restaurant is Aladdin's on Schoen Place in Pittsford. She is interested in gardening and loves Halloween. "This year I just had one Jack O Lantern," she said. "I usually have about five – I'm trying to pace myself!" Her other hobbies include reading and going to the theatre. "I loved 'Me and Jezebel' at Blackfriars." An ideal Sat-



**Barbara Moore at the canal in Perinton Park. Photo: Susan Jordan**

urday night for Barb would be dinner with good friends – probably a burger at Zebb's, another favorite dining place.

She said, "If I want to lie awake worrying about something, I'd worry about climate change. Rochester is good because we have few tornados and hurricanes, and no frack-ing. I actually like the snow – I

do a little cross-country skiing. I would like a little more sun!"

Another thing Barb appreciates about Rochester is its convenient location, with easy access to Niagara Falls, Toronto, the Adirondacks, Corning, the Finger Lakes and other scenic or cosmopolitan places where she takes visiting out of town friends.



**TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE:** A candlelight vigil honoring the trans victims of hate violence took place at Rustic Village Entertainment Center, across from the MCC campus, on Nov. 20, sponsored by Self Made Men. Similar vigils were held at SUNY Brockport (sponsored by SOUL) on Nov. 19 and RIT (sponsored by OutSpoken), Open Arms MCC and The MOCHA Center on Nov. 20. Photos: Lorraine Woerner-MacGowan



**THE MOCHA CENTER** held an open house on Nov. 6. Above L-R: Stanley Byrd, President of the MOCHA Board; DeMarkis Bonner, Buffalo MOCHA Manager, Programs and Services; Julie Rosado, Buffalo MOCHA Director of Human Services, Administration QA and Michael Stevens, Senior Director of Programs and Services. Middle photo: Volunteer Donyell Smith; Right photo: Jasan Ward, Manager of Prevention Programs and Services. More information on page 7. Photos: Susan Jordan



**ANNUAL MEETING:** The Gay Alliance held its annual meeting on Nov. 20 at St. Mary's Church. Above: Scott Fearing with new board president David Zona and vice President Jessica Muratore. Full story: Empty Closet News at [www.gayalliance.org](http://www.gayalliance.org). Photo: Ove Overmeyer

**LGBT GIVING CIRCLE GRANTS:** Dr. William Valenti and Emily Jones at the LGBT Giving Circle grant awards reception on Nov. 18 at RoCo. Story on page 1. Photos: Susan Jordan

Paul Allen and John Williams of ImageOut receive the film festival's grant.

Wyatt Teeter, up and coming art critic, with his father JR Teeter (Bread & Water Theatre, Rainbow Theatre Festival) at RoCo.



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## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

(ENDA from page 6)

immediately end the pain and uncertainty of hundreds of thousands of LGBTQ workers who work for federal contractors, and we hope he will do so swiftly and without delay.”

### ACLU

Statement from Anthony D. Romero, American Civil Liberties Union Executive Director, on the passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) in the U.S. Senate:

“In a year of historic victories for LGBT people, this one ranks near the top. Getting ENDA across the finish line in the Senate after a nearly four-decade long journey is a huge win for all who believe that workers should be judged on the job by their merits, nothing more and nothing less. Under ENDA, workers would no longer have to hide who they are when they go to work in the United States. As this bill continues to move forward, it is critically important to ensure that it, like other landmark civil rights laws, protects as many people as possible from indefensible workplace discrimination.”

### Human Rights Campaign

Human Rights Campaign (HRC) President Chad Griffin issued the following statement: “Today, a strong bipartisan majority of the United States Senate made history by standing up for a fundamental American truth. Each and every American worker should be judged based on the work they do, and never based on who they are. This broad Senate coalition has sent a vital message that civil rights legislation should never be tied up by partisan political games.”

“We firmly believe that if the House of Representatives were freed by Speaker John Boehner to vote its conscience, this bill could pass immediately. It’s unconscionable that any one person would stand

in the way of this crucial piece of the civil rights puzzle.”

House Speaker John Boehner, a Republican, suggested that he will not bring ENDA to the floor for an up-or-down vote. However, that statement drew public criticism from some in the speaker’s own party.

In an interview with Greg Sargent of the Washington Post, GOP Representative Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania said, “I believe the Speaker should allow a vote on this bill. [...] I believe that the American public wants to make sure people are not discriminated against.”

“With today’s vote in the Senate, Majority Leader Reid, Chairman Harkin, lead sponsors Senators Merkley and Kirk, and Senators Collins and Baldwin have shown us all what leadership looks like. Now, Speaker Boehner should take up the mantle of leadership and allow the House to join them, Griffin said.”

“Separately, President Obama is also empowered to sign a long-pending executive order that would protect the employees of federal contractors from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This order is not a silver bullet, and ENDA is vitally necessary after the order is signed. But the Human Rights Campaign has long argued that, by signing the order, President Obama can extend workplace protections to over 16 million American workers.

“We urge the House of Representatives to pass ENDA immediately, and we call on President Obama to send a clear message in support of workplace fairness by signing this executive order,” Griffin said.

### National Lesbian and Gay Task Force

“This is a huge historic victory for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their families. Most Americans believe that everyone should have access to the American Dream, free from discrimination because of who they are or who they love. We thank the senators who voted to pass ENDA in a bipartisan fash-

ion,” said Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund.

Workplace discrimination negatively impacts all LGBT people. According to the 2008 General Social Survey, 42 percent of LGBT people overall have experienced at least one form of employment discrimination during their lives.

The trans community is disproportionately impacted as was noted in Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, a joint study by the Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality. The study found 26 percent of transgender people lost a job and 50 percent were harassed for being transgender. And people of color generally reported higher levels of abuse than survey respondents as a whole.

### National Center for Transgender Equality

“ENDA’s Senate victory is significant. This is the first time the Senate has voted on ENDA in nearly 20 years, and importantly, it’s the first time ever a Congressional chamber has voted on a gender identity-inclusive ENDA,” said NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling.

“Today’s vote shows how much has changed in the last decade. First, gender identity was in the bill and no effort was made to remove it. Second, we now have solid partners in the LGBT and progressive movements working hard to educate the public about transgender workplace protec-

tions. Third, we have rock solid champions on the Hill like Senator Merkley, who we’re honoring at our tenth anniversary event next week. He, along with Senators Kirk, Baldwin, Collins, Reid, Harkin, and many others paved this victory for transgender and all LGBT people. With today’s strong bi-partisan vote on ENDA, the Senate showed that it agrees with the super majority of voters that LGBT people should have these basic job protections.

“Now, we turn to the House where thus far Speaker John Boehner refuses to acknowledge the plight of LGBT workers. House gridlock cannot be allowed to delay these already overdue protections. With 193 ENDA cosponsors in the House, seven of whom have come on board in the last week, momentum is there. NCTE calls on House Speaker Boehner to put ENDA to a vote.”

### Pride at Work reception is Dec. 3 in D.C.

Pride at Work’s 4th annual Celebrating Solidarity Reception, a festive celebration of community/labor coalition organizing with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender labor and allies, will take place on Dec. 3, from 6-8 p.m. at the AFL-CIO Samuel Gompers Room, 815 16th St. NW, Washington, DC.

Tickets will be \$75; honorees to be announced.

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**Openly gay man becomes Seattle mayor**

Ed Murray, an 18-year veteran of Washington's legislature and an architect of Washington state's marriage equality law, declared victory in the Seattle mayoral race on Nov. 5, defeating incumbent mayor Mike McGinn. He'll be the city's first openly gay mayor.

The Seattle Times reports: Murray grabbed a commanding 56 percent of the votes counted on election night, compared with 43 percent for McGinn.

At a jubilant party at Neumos on Capitol Hill, Murray took the stage before 9 p.m. to cheers and hugs from supporters, including a pack of elected leaders who had endorsed him.

Signaling the change in tone he hopes to bring to City Hall, Murray said his campaign "was energized by the belief that Seattle can show the nation that government can work once again."

Read more: <http://www.towleroad.com/#ixzz2jsiLDi32>

**New Va. governor beats Tea Party candidate, vows to end discrimination**

Terry McAuliffe beat virulently homophobic Tea Partier and attorney general Ken Cuccinelli Nov. 5 in the Virginia Governor's race.

McAuliffe, a gay rights supporter, won by less than three percentage points, a much smaller margin than was predicted.

The NYT: "Mr. McAuliffe benefited from an electorate that was less white and less Republican than it was four years ago. He drew about as large a percentage of African-Americans as Mr. Obama did last year. Blacks accounted for one in five voters, according to exit polls conducted by Edison Research. Mr. Cuccinelli's strong anti-abortion views also brought out opponents, with 20 percent of voters naming abortion as their top issue; Mr. McAuliffe overwhelmingly won their support. The top issue for voters was the economy, cited by 45 percent in exit polls."

Politico's take on what happened: Cuccinelli actually won independents by nine percentage points, 47 percent to 38 percent, according to exit polls conducted for a group of media organizations. They made up about one-third of the electorate.

"Obamacare helped close the gap," said Richmond-based strategist Chris Jankowski, the president of the Republican State Leadership Committee.

Even before Cuccinelli delivered his concession speech, the candidate's close allies were beginning to blame outside groups for not helping out more.

McAuliffe outraised Cuccinelli by almost \$15 million, and he used the cash advantage to pummel him on the airwaves. A lack of resources forced the Republican to go dark in the D.C. media market during the final two weeks. The Republican National Committee spent about \$3 million on Virginia this year,

compared to \$9 million in the 2009 governor's race.

-Towleroad.com

**McAuliffe will ban discrimination**

Via the Human Rights Campaign: Signaling a new day for LGBT equality in Virginia, Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe said in his first press conference that his first executive order will be to ban discrimination against LGBT state employees.

"In his first day as Governor-elect, Terry McAuliffe has declared a new day for LGBT equality in the Commonwealth of Virginia," said HRC National Field Director Marty Rouse. "Inclusion and equality won in yesterday's election, while the politics of hate and discrimination were soundly defeated. We look forward to working with the governor-elect on moving Virginia forward."

RELATED: Shortly after he took office in 2010, outgoing Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell refused to renew an executive order that protected LGBT state employees from discrimination. Because he could find no evidence that such discrimination even existed.

-JoeMyGod.com

**Killer of trans woman gets life in prison**

The convicted killer of Cemina "CeCe" Dove, a transgender woman found murdered earlier this year, was sentenced on Nov. 13 to life in prison.

Andrey Bridges, 36, will be eligible for parole in 20 years, the Cleveland Plain Dealer reported. A Cuyahoga County jury found him guilty Friday of Dove's murder.

Dove, 20, was found in April in a pond in Olmstead Township, southwest of Cleveland. Prosecutors said she was stabbed 40 times on Jan. 5, tied to a concrete block and found three months later.

"The anger behind it, and the absolute brutality - I don't understand it," Assistant County Prosecutor Brian Radigan

told The Plain Dealer.

The brutality doesn't shock transgender activists, though. The International Transgender Day of Remembrance website lists 58 transgender murder victims from around the world who have been killed since the last ceremony in November 2012. Victims were stabbed multiple times, beheaded and dismembered, stoned, hanged and subjected to other forms of extreme brutality.

A June report from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs — an organization that includes Ohio's Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization — found that transgender women were the victims in half of all hate-crime killings of LGBT people.

Bridges claimed two other men killed Dove, but The Plain Dealer reported that he called her several times on Jan. 5 and paid for her cab ride from Cleveland to his apartment in Olmstead Township.

The jury decided not to convict Bridges of aggravated murder, which requires premeditation.

WJW-TV reported that a cousin of Dove spoke at Bridges' sentencing and offered no forgiveness to the killer. "Who gave you the right to decide who lives and who dies? You, Andrey, are a coward," Nicole Cantie said, according to the Cleveland station. "Was it worth it? You could have just walked away. Every breath you take is ten breaths too many. I hope and pray that prison doesn't treat you right. Have a nice life."

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**Internet companies block gay websites**

By Jane Fae, Tris Reid-Smith on [gaystarnews.com](http://gaystarnews.com)

Internet companies may be breaking the law by routinely blocking LGBTI websites, Gay Star News can reveal.

We have uncovered what appears to

(Internet continues page 14)

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## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

(Internet from page 13)

be a shocking level of ingrained cultural bias towards the gay, bi, trans and intersex community that infects almost every part of the internet.

And experts say it isolates vulnerable LGBTI people, stopping them accessing vital information.

The blocks can be traced back to a few firms most people have never heard of – but by using their services, companies in the UK, Europe and elsewhere could be breaching equality laws.

Meanwhile, in Britain, some are using a new government crackdown on internet nastiness to excuse their blocking of LGBTI sites.

Ironically, some of the sites at risk provide vital tools to support our most vulnerable young people.

Sites... are also censored, despite GSN's strict no-porn policy.

Feminist comedian Susan Calman blew the whistle in a recent case where she found the site of arts event Glasgay!, in Glasgow, Scotland, was not accessible from the wi-fi on her train. Glasgay! is not, as one of their management team explained, an adults-only event, or in any sense pornographic.

However, instead of the Glasgay! homepage, a warning popped up on her screen saying the page was 'restricted' as it was 'considered to be inappropriate or malicious'.

On complaining to Virgin Trains, she was given a number to call, where she was informed that Glasgay! had been classified as 'porn', and therefore blocked. The operator was adamant there was no automatic equation of 'gay' with 'porn'.

Calman complained to lesbian magazine DIVA too. The result was the block was lifted. A similar issue reported on Scotrail, another UK train operator, wi-fi

also 'cleared' at the same time.

But it has thrown up a wider issue – showing how a network of mysterious interlinked companies 'blacklist' LGBTI sites without direct accountability to internet users.

In this case, train operators are not internet experts, so they subcontract internet provision to providers – Icomera and Nomad Digital are the major players. Each, in turn, sub-contract their online filtering to other providers.

However, neither Icomera nor Nomad were prepared to confirm who their service providers are.

Nor, so far, have we been able to obtain details from either company of how their filtering works: why, for instance, Glasgay! might be wrongly categorized as an adult site.

Nicholas Fry, a lawyer at Bindmans LLP, a firm specializing in UK discrimination law, told us the filters may breach the Equality Act 2010. He said: 'Under the Equality Act it is unlawful to discriminate because of sexual orientation in providing services. In particular it says a service provider must not discriminate against a consumer by subjecting them to detrimental treatment in providing the service. It doesn't matter whether the service is for payment or for free.'

'If the internet search filter restricts LGBT users from accessing [non-sexual] LGBT sites and their only recourse is to call a helpline then this would appear to put them at a particular disadvantage because of sexual orientation.'

'Whether or not there is a breach of the Equality Act depends on all the facts, but on the face of it there is serious cause for concern here.'

'If the filter is "indirectly discriminatory", ie it applies to all users but puts LGBT users at a particular disadvantage, there is a defense: if the company can show the filter was a "proportionate" way to achieve "a legitimate aim" (eg stopping people seeing explicit material) then it won't be unlawful.'

'The argument might center on whether the filter could have been calibrated in a more subtle way to enable LGBT users to access innocent sites.'

He added in this case the train company was running the biggest risk of being sued, as they are the ones providing the service to passengers.

Potentially this exposes thousands of companies who provide public wi-fi access to legal danger. Often they will be unaware of the risk they are running.

And it's not just a hypothetical legal risk either – the filters appear to be so widespread they could cause real harm.

Leading UK gay rights organization Stonewall is certainly concerned.

Stonewall spokesman Richard Lane said: 'Organizations sometimes end up, often inadvertently, blocking gay content.'

'Our concern, which we have raised with both government organizations and with sites such as Tumblr, is that such filters can block important support information for young gay people.'

'For them, the internet is often the only avenue they have to access support and there's a danger that controls and filters can result in denying young people and teenagers access to absolutely vital information.'

The UK Government is backing online filtering enthusiastically. But despite the Prime Minister's personal support, their answer to GSN indicates even they now realize they may have gone too far.

The Prime Minister's office referred us to the Department for Culture Media and Sport, who said: 'Internet Service Providers constantly refine their filters to keep families as safe as possible in the ever-changing digital world.'

'Following a request from government, the UK Council for Child Internet Safety has set up a new working group involving charities and industry to look at the effectiveness of family friendly filters – in particular to check that they are not inadvertently filtering out content providing advice to young people in areas such as

sex education.'

Both Icomera and Nomad argue inclusion of gay sites on an adult block list is simply unfortunate and not evidence of any pattern.

Both have sought to distance themselves from any responsibility for the blocking software operates. And both point out individuals can have sites unblocked or 'whitelisted' by making a call to a helpdesk – albeit it is a paid-for call.

The real question is whether such blocks are simply random – or reflect a wider societal bias against the LGBTI community and an assumption a 'gay site' will automatically be sexual in nature.

This was highlighted by the response from the Icomera spokesman. He first suggested the site might be adult and, on being informed it was not, asked if it was not partly adult in nature.

We asked Icomera whether they did not consider such a reaction to be offensive to LGBTI people. We also asked them about the lawfulness of their software implementation – but they said they are too busy to reply.

Nomad, by contrast, has undertaken to carry out pro-active monitoring now we have highlighted the problem.

But their reply indicates how UK Government policy may have exacerbated problems.

A spokesman for Nomad said: 'Nomad takes matters of discrimination and inequality very seriously. It does not wish or intend to unfairly discriminate against any group or person.'

'Its over-riding goal is to provide an "appropriate and fair" service in the eyes of its passengers, operators and the UK Government. It was an active participant in the recent industry initiative, supported by the UK Government, to put measures in place to block website on its hotspots deemed inappropriate to children (such as pornography).'

'We do not believe that our web-filtering provider acts to discriminate unfairly either, but we appreciate some website

Photo by Annette Dragon Photography

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filtering could be deemed unfair and is therefore a grey area.

'If passengers (or others) highlight unfair or unnecessary blocking of sites, then we will of course review this. To date, we have had very few such requests.'

The company also said it would be prepared to 'review any case made to relax the current filters'.

Of all those involved, Scotrail offered the most fulsome apology. They told us: 'Unfortunately, the software appears to have blocked access to some lesbian and gay community websites, such as online lifestyle magazines.'

'As soon as ScotRail became aware of an issue with accessing the Glasgay! Festival website earlier this month, it was added to a "whitelist" of sites which over-ride the automatic filter.'

The train operator is currently in the process of adding dozens more websites to this whitelist.

'In addition, it is encouraging anyone who believes they are being wrongly blocked from a website to get in touch by calling 0845 601 5929 [in the UK] or emailing us.'

But even this response indicates the problem. Many people running LGBTI community sites are well-meaning volunteers, not internet experts. They naively assume freedom of speech is alive and well online. They simply don't know how to whitelist their content.

How are they supposed to know how to contact the faceless organizations blacklisting them in the first place?

It remains to be seen if the potential legal threat will encourage companies who use these filtering services to pressure them to change their mind.

But in the long-term a big change is needed to create a truly free, LGBTI-friendly internet, with a proportionate approach to porn and other sites harmful to children and vulnerable people.

The obvious solution is an international industry-wide code of conduct - backed up with a one-stop, well publi-

cized, whitelisting service which all filter-systems and all service providers sign-up to and use.

If it is really in the public interest to blacklist sites, the names of the sites blacklisted should be publicly available and the service providers should provide an appeals system for those who are wrongly blocked.

- See more at: <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/secret-censorship-stopping-you-seeing-gay-websites121113#sthash.YY5je6er.dpuf>

### AFSCME Council approves trans-inclusive healthcare resolution

Pride at Work congratulated AFSCME Council 31 for passing a trans-inclusive health care resolution on Oct. 29.

Their state convention in Illinois adopted it by a voice vote of the 450-plus AFSCME members. Pride at Work Chicago Chapter members spearheaded this important resolution.

"The labor community has traditionally been in the vanguard of civil rights for all minorities. It's time to ensure equality for all trans\* people. We applaud Illinois' example which makes us more resolute in our determination to accord the same protections in New York including advancing health care access and the passage of GENDA," said Bess Watts, Pride at Work AFL-CIO Vice President of Organizing and President, Rochester Finger Lakes Chapter.

Health Care Equity for All  
WHEREAS:

The labor movement has an excellent history of organizing for social and economic justice for all workers in the spirit of our historic motto, "an injury to one is an injury to all";

WHEREAS:

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers are a vital part of the

(AFSCME continues page 16)

# Health

## Care at Home: Congestive Heart Failure

By HCR Home Care

"I felt very stressed," Tiffany Speed recalls. Despite care from her physician, Ms. Speed continued to have symptoms of heart disease and wasn't feeling well.

Ms. Speed suffers from mild cardiomyopathy, which literally means "heart muscle disease" and although she took her blood thinner medication regularly, Speed's physician believed that she was not compliant.

Chronic heart diseases like Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) or cardiomyopathy are devastating conditions that can keep people from being able to perform simple tasks. It is the leading cause of hospitalization for people over the age of 65 (however younger individuals are also at risk). When an individual is diagnosed with CHF, it means that their heart is pumping blood more weakly than a normal, healthy heart; it does not mean that the heart has literally stopped. Over one million people are hospitalized and nearly 300,000 die from heart failure-related diseases each year.

An intervention from a home care cardiac team member saved Ms. Speed. A Nurse at HCR Home Care, detected Ms. Speed's resistance to her blood thinner medication and contacted her physician to ask that her dosage be raised; she responded to this treatment positively. "HCR's intervention opened the door between me and improvements to the treatment of my cardiomyopathy,"

Ms. Speed states she is now healthier and in more control of her chronic disease. "My nurse has been a blessing for my life and health. I am grateful for the dedicated, professional, and knowledgeable work of the cardiac team."

Two causes of heart failure are high blood pressure (or hypertension) and diabetes. When blood pressure is too high, your heart has to work harder to continue blood circulation, which will eventually weaken your heart. This also increases the risk of stroke and congestive heart failure.

Krishna Rao, MD, a cardiologist, often sees individuals diagnosed with chronic heart diseases for a second opinion when their disease seems to continue to be out of control. According to Rao, "Nurses play a key role in identifying and communicating early signs and symptoms of heart failure, leading to early interventions and improved outcomes."

Rao believes in the importance of consistent oversight from a medical professional, knowledgeable in cardiac disease, to help patients learn to control their disease and live healthier lives. Rao continues, "the tender loving and efficient care rendered by HCR staff is proving vital to the well being of this otherwise very sick population with heart failure."

Communication is a very important step in achieving better results, such as Ms. Speed's concerns with her medication management to her home care nurse. Sometimes individuals have to advocate for themselves or work with their nurse who can talk with the doctor in medical terms, and advocate for you.

Ms. Speed now feels in control of her heart disease. "My life style has change for good and my health has improved." Speed shows us all the necessity of keeping in contact with your health care providers, especially when you have a chronic health condition. "Now I am able to help myself and my daughter, whose condition is similar to mine," Speed boasts. Given the education and tools to succeed, health care providers can bring true success stories and results to individuals and communities

Do you know your blood pressure? Consulting with a home health nurse can put you on a plan to reduce the impact of cardiac disease. Don't be one of the more than 4,000 people in Northwestern New York hospitalized for heart failure each year.

Home Care HCR is a local provider of Home Care services, and the first such provider in the area to have a specific LGBT Care Team. The Gay Alliance provided HCR with the staff education necessary to become LGBT Culturally Competent. ■

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- TRAUMA AND RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE
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- RECOVERY ISSUES
- DEPRESSION/ANXIETY/SELF-CONCEPT

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

(March from page 11)

labor movement;

WHEREAS:

Both the LGBT communities and the labor movement share common concerns for economic and political justice, equal opportunity, and an improved quality of life for all working people;

WHEREAS:

Access to health care is regularly denied to transgender and gender-nonconforming people, who frequently experience discrimination when they seek health care;

WHEREAS:

In September 2011, the Pride@Work National Executive Board passed a resolution opposing discrimination on the basis of gender identity in health care and calling on our sisters and brothers in labor to take action in support of transgender workers;

WHEREAS:

Transgender and gender-nonconforming people have great difficulty securing affordable, comprehensive health care, and their situation is compounded by systemic discrimination and health care providers' lack of basic cultural competency on transgender issues;

WHEREAS:

Many transgender people have their applications for health insurance denied when they disclose their transgender status or transition-related medical history to a potential insurer;

WHEREAS:

Most health care insurance policies still specifically exclude transgender-related care and services, which often means that transgender workers and family members will not be covered for procedures such as hormone therapy, transition-related surgery, and/or gender identity-related mental health services;

WHEREAS:

Gender identity discrimination is alienating and keeps people from accessing medically necessary care, and lack of coverage can cause and/or aggravate additional serious and expensive health problems, such as stress-related physical illness, depression, and substance abuse problems;

WHEREAS:

Self and fully-insured employer health plans are available and attainable, and insurance carriers have available plans without blanket exclusions for transgender-related health care, and a growing number of private businesses, some public sector employers (City of San Francisco, City of Berkeley, City of Portland) and some unions including UNITE HERE and SEIU on the west coast are currently providing trans-inclusive health care coverage.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME supports the right of transgender members to have full access to all of their health care needs through their insurance policy.

### HOPE Act allows HIV positive transplants

Major news for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Think Progress reports:

On Nov. 12, the House of Representatives gave final approval to the HIV Organ Policy Equity (HOPE) Act, a bill that will end a 25-year ban on using HIV-positive donors' organs for any purpose, including medical research. If the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) concludes that transplanting organs between HIV-positive Americans is safe and effective under scientific guidelines set by the law, such transplants will then become legal and it will no longer be a crime for HIV-positive Americans to donate their organs. President Barack Obama is expected to sign the legislation into law.

Adds HRC:

The HOPE Act was introduced earlier this year in the Senate by Sens. Barbara

Boxer (D-CA), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Tom Coburn (R-OK), and Rand Paul (R-KY) and in the House by Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA). HRC has worked alongside several other organizations to ensure this bill becomes law, including AIDS United, amfAR, HIV Medicine Association and the American Medical Association.

Read more: <http://www.towleroad.com/#ixzz2kXoK416q>



Samuel K. Ganafa

### Ugandan police arrest gay activist leader

Samuel K. Ganafa, Executive Director of Spectrum Uganda Initiatives and Board Chairperson of Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), was arrested on Nov. 12.

He had reported to Kasangati Police Station on the outskirts of Kampala pursuant to a phone call from the District Police Commander Chemonges Seiko asking him to report to the said station.

Upon reporting he was immediately handcuffed by a police officer. Without being shown a warrant of arrest he was forced onto a police pickup truck and taken twice to his residence, which was searched. The search was conducted without a search warrant.

During the unwarranted search three houseguests of Mr. Ganafa, namely Joseph Kayizi, Kasali Brian and Michael Katongole, were also arrested and taken to the police for questioning. His nephew Brian Kasirye who had rushed to the police station to check on him was also detained.

Later the police subjected Mr. Ganafa to an HIV test without a court order or his consent.

One Disan Twesiga was the complainant. Disan alleges that Mr. Ganafa infected him with HIV and that there was more information in Mr. Ganafa's reading room, prompting another search of the residence. The police took him along for all three times they searched.

Twesiga held a press conference with all media houses at Kasangati Police Station. The police paraded Mr. Ganafa before the media during a press conference. This is despite the fact that he has not been found guilty by a court and is thus presumed innocent under the law. As of Nov. 14, all the five suspects remained in custody without being officially charged and without being brought before court despite the expiry of the constitutionally warranted 48 hours.

Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), Spectrum Uganda, Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law are closely following the case, and have instructed lawyers to represent all the accused. An application for the release of the detainees has been filed and is pending hearing.

SMUG also calls upon the Ugandan

Police to release Mr. Ganafa and the four other arrested persons or immediately produce them before a court of law, and urges them to respect the basic rights of the suspects.

SMUG notes that this is not an isolated case, but is one of a series of documented arrests targeted against LGBTI persons in Uganda.

-Sexual Minorities Uganda

### Classmates wear skirts to rally for burned student in Oakland

The classmates of Luke "Sasha" Fleischman, the Oakland, Calif. 18-year-old who was set on fire on Nov. 4 by a homophobic teen, as well as some of the staff of Maybeck High School in Berkeley showed solidarity for the recovering student by showing up for school in skirts.

According to other students, skirts were the article of clothing that Fleischman typically enjoyed wearing as a part of his "agender" orientation -- that is, he doesn't identify on the male/female gender binary -- as well as being the clothing he was wearing that prompted the attack.

In addition to donning Fleischman's favorite attire, the school planned to have a photo shoot during lunch of everyone in their skirts -- or kilts, or sarongs, or lava-lavas -- that would be then sent to him in the hospital, where he is presently recovering from second- and third-degree burns along his legs that will require massive skin grafts.

16-year-old Richard Thomas of Oakland High School has been charged as an adult with hate crimes in the attack and has yet to enter a plea as the family takes the time granted them by a judge to hire a lawyer.

### Bangladesh to recognize hirja as official gender

Bangladesh will officially recognize members of its hirja community as having their own gender. From the Bangladeshi news outlet, Daily Star:

The government on Nov. 12 approved a proposal of the social welfare ministry to identify "Hijra" as another form of sex and to use its sexual identity in different government's documentation like passports and national ID cards.

The approval came at the weekly cabinet meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat. Hijra community welcomed the government's decision saying it would help reducing their social discrimination.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary M. Musharraf Hossain said the approval has been given for the overall welfare of the Hijra people. He said there are 10,000 Hijra people in Bangladesh who are neglected in the society. He said the Hijra people face discrimination in education, housing, health, and in other fundamental fields and there was no identity of their sex in passports or national ID cards, among others.

There is disagreement in the hijra community about the move.

Omar Kuddus, a Bangladeshi LGBT activist, told GSN he feared the possible risks over identifying hijras as a separate gender.

"In Bangladesh already, there is a lot of discrimination," he said. "Many hijras earn their living by people giving them money because they think they're going to curse them otherwise. Many also work

as sex workers. By passing this policy, the Government could end up by identifying these people as targets for persecution and discrimination."



Jon Moscone

### Gay son of Moscone, mayor killed with Harvey Milk, weds at SF City Hall

By Andrew Potts on [gaystarnews.com](http://gaystarnews.com)  
Photo by California Shakespeare Theater

The openly gay son of the San Francisco mayor murdered alongside gay political pioneer Harvey Milk has been married by another former mayor of the city, Willie Brown, at the City Hall where Milk and George Moscone were slain.

Willie Brown is a family friend of Jonathan Moscone -- the son of murdered San Francisco mayor George Moscone -- who was married last month to partner of one year Darryl Carbonaro.

Moscone, 49, is the artistic director of the California Shakespeare Theater in Berkeley and Carbonaro, 46, is the associate general counsel for Clean Power Finance.

Their wedding was conducted on the Mayoral Balcony of San Francisco's City Hall by Brown in front of 80 guests.

The couple reportedly met online in November last year. Two days after their first date at a bar they met again for dinner and they have been together ever since.

In 2011 Jonathan Moscone directed a play about his father's assassination and its effect on his life, called "Ghost Light," which had been written by friend Tony Taccone.

He told the New York Times that directing the play had helped him reconcile some of his feelings about his father's murder.

"The play became about wishing him back," Moscone told the newspaper, "After living for years without even thinking about him. And I think the not thinking about someone is a way of not missing them."

Moscone was killed by former San Francisco city supervisor Dan White on November 27, 1978, after he refused to allow him to rescind his resignation from the City Board of Supervisors.

White then went into the office of pioneering gay rights campaigner Harvey Milk and shot him too.

What appeared to be lenient treatment of the murders and White sparked San Francisco's White Night Riots a year later.

-See more at: <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/gay-son-slain-san-francisco-mayor-moscone-marries-city-hall121113#sthash.nFUIHjM.dpuf>

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# Businesses in the Community



## Hodge Podge Lodge

By Susan Jordan

"If we don't have it, you don't need it!" That's the motto of Hodge Podge Lodge, 751 Stone Rd. in Greece, an indoor co-op and flea market run by Chuck Argento, also well known as a DJ.

About 15 vendors have joined Chuck in filling the huge area with innumerable items – everything from collectors' knives to children's toys, from electric guitars to wigs, from glittery stiletto heels to robotic cats. A tour through the crowded aisles is an exercise in sensory overload!

Chuck opened the business in September 2010. "We started out with a few cardboard boxes," he says, "and it just evolved."

He said that the biggest challenge in getting the Lodge off the ground was finding good and reliable vendors. "Phil has 'Blades for Life,' all kinds of knives and military stuff," Chuck said, "and Burt has sports memorabilia. Everybody has their own little niche. These vendors are very knowledgeable in their fields. And there are changes every day."

He added, "Hodge Podge Lodge is also a Safe Zone. We are very gay-friendly and have many gay-related items."

Chuck especially wants Rochester female impersonators and drag queens to know that he stocks fabulous shoes, dresses and wigs. Like the toys and the gift items and decorations, which are in demand right now for the holiday season,

wearing apparel is much less expensive at HPL than what you would find in a mall or specialty shop.

"With the economy the way it is," he said, "people can't afford to buy at expensive mall stores. We can offer lower prices because we buy used items. And our vendors negotiate."

"The funniest thing I've found in this business," he added, "is that more people come in to sell than to buy!"

Chuck buys at estate sales, garage sales and flea markets in the summer, and resells the items during the winter season. Right now is the time to check out HPL for holiday gifts.

HPL hosted its third annual Black Fri-

day Pajama Party on Nov. 29. On Dec. 14 the store and others in the same area will host their third annual Christmas party, from noon to 10 p.m., featuring food, a DJ and special vendor prices. This just might be the perfect time to go Christmas shopping! ■

"Hodge Podge Lodge is a Safe Zone. We are very gay-friendly and have many gay-related items."



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Candlestick by Albert Paley, necklace by Jade Gedeon, MAG Centennial umbrella, jewelry chest by David Zaborowski, rings by Maria Wagner.

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# Shoulders to Stand On



## Honoring 10 Shoulders

By Evelyn Bailey

Shoulders To Stand On honors 10 2013 Rochester Shoulders for their contributions to our struggle for equality and justice for the Greater Rochester community inclusive of our LGBT brothers and sisters and our allies.

First Shoulders To Stand On recognizes and honors – YOU! Your Shoulders carry the Rochester community to greater awareness, integrity, visibility and pride! Because of YOU, our LGBT brothers, sisters, and allies, the Closet is not as full! So take a moment to look at yourself and be PROUD!

### Shoulders honors the Gay Alliance

Celebrating its 40th anniversary, the Gay Alliance has stood as a beacon of light for those who still feel the oppression of being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex in Rochester, NY. In the hope that equality and justice will be the standard for all, the Gay Alliance responds to the variety of needs of the Rochester LGBT community from our very youngest to our very oldest, from our single men and women to our married couples and families. The Gay Alliance has never lost sight of its mission: to cultivate a healthy inclusive environment where individuals of all sexual orientations and gender expressions are safe, thriving, and enjoy full civil rights.

### Shoulders honors Louise Slaughter and Ove Overmyer

On Dec. 13, 2012 Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-25, Rochester), was honored with the Life-time Achievement Award given to a local individual in recognition of a lifetime of service and a dedication to the American labor Movement.

Ove Overmyer, president of the City of Rochester Library Workers Unit 7420 and Local 828 Vice president, was honored with the 2012 Working Families Advocate of the Year Award, given to an individual who has exceeded expectations publicly advocating for the needs of working men and women during the past year. Rochester labor plays a critical role in the economic success of the Rochester community.

### Shoulders honors Pam Barres and Ally Howell

Activist Pamela Barres has been fighting for passage of the New York State transgender civil rights bill for many years. Pam, a member of the Pride Agenda Foundation board, continues the daunting task of bringing awareness to the issue through discussions on translife and the need for basic civil rights protection for trans New Yorkers through GENDA.

In 2013, Ally Howell, a transgender attorney formerly from Rochester, finished writing "Transgender Persons and the Law". "In effect, gender is a language," writes Ally. In her interview with Susan Jordan in the EC, Ally stated "Gender

variance is not new." She also believes that education is the only way to change society's outdated views. The book is available at the Gay Alliance Library and will update yearly.

### Shoulders honors McQuaid Junior and Sophomore Attending Prom

Two McQuaid students asked their school counselor if it would be OK for them to attend the Junior Prom as a couple. The counselor referred the question to administration. The decision was no. One of the boys in the couple called The Brew (Wease) to express his disappointment. Support for the boys to attend the prom appeared in social media and a change.org petition signed by 828, and McQuaid alumni and parents expressed displeasure at the refusal. On March 27, 2013, Fr. Edward Salmon, school president, sent a letter to parents stating, "If our two brothers who have asked to attend the Junior Ball wish to do so, they will be welcomed."

### Shoulders honors Ralph Carter

The Empire State Pride Agenda, on May 18, 2013, honored Ralph Carter with the ESPA Community Service Award. A Xerox employee, Ralph has been a tireless advocate for civil rights and equality in the Rochester community. He has successfully integrated his spiritual life as a gay man with fully being himself at work. Ralph is the founding member of CREATE, the first ecumenical gay civil rights advocacy network in Upstate New York, the co-founder of Out & Equal NY Finger Lakes (OENYFL) and co-founder of the national LGBT Self-ID Community Practice. Ralph is a member of Third Presbyterian Church and organized ESPA "Pride in the Pulpit" events at Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

### Shoulders honors Justice Anthony Kennedy

On June 26, 2013 a rare moment occurred. The Supreme Court wrote a stream of words and made the lives of many thousands of people instantly better. Five Supreme Court justices did that by striking down the Defense of Marriage Act. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the majority opinion in this 5-4 case, joined by Breyer, Ginsburg, Kagan, and Sotomayor. You could say that he had been writing his way to this day since 1996, when he ruled against a Colorado law that took away rights for gay people granted by a local ordinance. Kennedy established a principle then that was key to his ruling on that Wednesday: The government may not single out a group it disapproves of for injurious treatment. Thank you!

### Shoulders honors Staff Sgt. Darren Manzella Lapeira (died August 29, 2013)

Darren was a brave, powerful and important voice in the battle to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Darren

was the first openly gay active duty service member to speak with the media while serving inside a war zone. He spoke out about his sexuality in an interview with Leslie Stahl on "60 Minutes." This led to his dishonorable discharge. He was twice deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi freedom. While under fire on the streets of Baghdad, he provided medical care to his fellow soldiers, Iraqi National Guardsmen and civilians. He was awarded the Combat Medical Badge in recognition of his courage and service.

These Shoulders have given the LGBT community and the Greater Rochester community a reason to be OUT and PROUD! Their activism and lives bear witness to the ever-opening door of our Closets! Shoulders to Stand On congratulates with gratitude its 10 2013 Shoulders!

## History Corner: A Monthly Newsletter of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, December, 1973

Gay Alliance Meeting Schedule

Sun 2 Dec: Business Meeting/Gay Town Meeting

Sun 9 Dec: Program: "The Business Of Being Gay." Money management is different for gays. Professionals attuned to the gay lifestyle discuss real estate, insurance, wills, stocks, and sound financial planning.

Sun 16 Dec: Social: A Gay Christmas Coffee House

Sun 23 Dec: No meeting

Tues 24 Dec: "A Whittie Christmas" Christmas Eve party at a member's home, for GAGV family and friends, by reservation only. Details; 436-7670.

Sun 30 Dec: No Meeting;

Sun 6 Jan: Business Meeting/Gay Town Meeting

Other Events Qf Interest

Sat 1 Dec: Cooking class. Also meets

Sun 9, 16 Dec. and other Sundays after holidays. Call Gary, 5:30-6:30 weekdays at 663-3713 for more info.

Sun 2 Dec: Feminist Film Festival. "The Fox" 2pm, Genesee Co-op 713 Monroe Ave.

Thu 6 Dec: Men's Health Check, AM-PM Club, 92 North 8-10pm. No charges of any sort. Questions? 325-9754

Fri 7 Dec: GAGV Dance 9pm. \$3.50. First Universalist Church Clinton Ave & Court St.

Sun 9 Dec: Feminist Film Festival. "Maedchen In Uniform" 2pm, Genesee Co-op, 713 Monroe Ave.

Sun 23 Dec: Empty Closet deadline.

Sat 30 Dec: Empty Closet Distribution.

Mon 31 Dec: Women's New Year's Eve Bash, Genesee Co-op. New Year's Eve Parties at most gay bars.

Gay Radio Program, "Green Thursdays" WCMP-FM, 96.5mhz. ■

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# Columnists

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

## Growing Up

### THE AHA MOMENT



By Eric Bellmann

Recently I heard a friend talk about a point in his work life when he realized that two highly motivated and skilled people could actually accomplish all the work that

was being done by his team of twenty-plus colleagues.

This insight encouraged him metaphorically to stand back now and then to assess matters, to not accept that situations necessarily had to be the way they were. It was, I suppose, a fairly pedestrian aha moment but it was significant for him and it triggered some thinking on my part.

I started to sort through memories in search of my own aha moments.

I recalled that the first time I saw "Brokeback Mountain", the breakthrough mainstream movie about a gay relationship, that while it had a tragic, sorrowful resolution, also succeeded in depicting intimacy and passion in a lyrical, moving manner and as I sat in tearful isolation in the emptying theater I wondered if this remarkable film would change my life.

I felt a surge of pride. I also used it as a challenge with straight friends. Would they go and see something that was for me a significant statement about my culture. Or were they squeamish, reluctant, the kinds of friends who seemed liberal, accepting but maybe drew a line at witnessing and were, in the recesses of their well meaning hearts, squeamish. The film was, after all, about sex.

At any rate I've come to feel that while "Brokeback" was an epiphany of sorts it was not a game changer. I already knew what it told me.

One friend emailed me that when he read Brene Brown's "Daring Greatly" he realized the difference between guilt and shame and how that difference had held him down his whole life. That was his aha moment.

Another acquaintance wrote that he read "The Structure of Scientific Revolution" by T.S. Kuhn and understood that progress isn't a gradient transition. It's seeing a new truth. This is impossible for some. He added, "Fortunately we all die eventually making it possible for new truths." He left it at that, didn't elaborate on how it changed his life. It seemed a rather cerebral response.

More to my taste was a comment made by a woman I'd known for years. Early in her marriage there was a disastrous kitchen fire in her house and for several weeks she and her family including three small children had to live in a motel while repairs were being made.

She watched the motel housekeeping staff. One day she reflected that she was like the woman who changed the linens, emptied the trash -- nothing but a maid. That was her lot. To cook, do laundry, to clean and it didn't make her feel very good. That role had not been her ambition.

Later, house bound with an expanding family, while the kids slept she plowed through "Moby Dick". Her aha moment enabled her to re-prioritize her life, expand her universe through reading. She continues to be an avid reader of serious fiction to this day. That's the kind of feedback I was looking for. Books, reading -- that seemed to be a catalyst for new insights.

I've had a slew of epiphanies, who hasn't? "Brokeback Mountain", a chance

encounter with a panhandler who proved to be articulate, a drive alone through the Finger Lakes.

I think I've had two major game changers, two significant aha moments. Both from biographies.

The first was reading Judith Thurman's "Colette: A Life of the Flesh". You can Wikipedia Colette for more about her life. Mainly she was an artist who had a tough time succeeding on her own. She was fiercely independent. She lived within society but on her own terms. She took lovers, men and women. She never apologized for who she was or what she did. She was tough. She loved cats and overate, grew fat, and she was vain.

I'm a 98% match, well, not famous and not, when I read the book, as confident about my life choices as I was by the time I finished the book. I was liberated. I could elect to examine the shame I retained over some of my choices and dump it. Once when I spoke about my behavior to my therapist, he endeared himself to me by commenting, "Just think of how much pleasure you have brought to so many men."

The other book was a biography of Samuel Steward, a very minor character in the scheme of things, no Colette he. He was a failed academic, a friend of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas with whom he maintained a steady correspondence, an openly gay man in an era that had little tolerance for such a creature. He became a tattoo artist. He lived under the radar, ultimately a recluse.

And he documented on three by five file cards every single sexual experience he ever had and he had a lot. He enjoyed his compulsion. He was by any account a sexual renegade. His record keeping somehow came to the attention of Alfred Kinsey, who acquired the archive and incorporated information from it into his ground-breaking book on male sexual behavior. He never experienced the acclaim bestowed on Colette. Any attention paid to him has been posthumously. Steward was not a happy man. He regarded his life as a failure. But he remained true to himself. I found that powerful. It bolstered my resolve to resist conventional thinking and to question many things, maybe everything.

Both writers understood and did not falter in the face of the evanescent nature of passion. Colette, in "Cheri" and "The Last of Cheri," chronicled a relationship between an older actress, Lea, and her youthful lover, no doubt drawing on her own life experiences. Steward documented in his secret files the legion of returning soldiers he serviced after World War 11. Both lived in times when sex was just that, was not political. Neither hedged their bets nor regretted their choices. I'm glad to have discovered both of them.

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## Faith Matters

MONOGAMOUS: TO BE OR NOT TO BE?



By Rev. Irene Monroe

The one thing you don't expect to see in any of the Bible Belt states (where most have amended their constitutions to define marriage between one man and one woman) is an organization promoting polyamory.

Last month at Atlanta's Pride Parade the group "Atlanta Polyamory Inc." did

just that — and in the wide open light of day. The result was the shock, awe, and disgust of a mixed group.

Atlanta Polyamory Inc.'s purple-lettered banner read "Polyamory: Having simultaneous close emotional relationships with two or more other individuals."

While many religious conservatives might argue that the legalization of same-gender marriage and shows like HBO's "Big Love" — about a fictional polygamist Mormon family which plants seeds to destroy the conventional family unit — we have to ask ourselves, is monogamy a natural instinct in us or is it a social construct which was obviously devised to protect and to regulate the institution of heterosexual marriage?

To be non-monogamous in this culture carries pejorative and judgmental connotations for both heterosexuals and LGBTQs. It assumes sexual promiscuity, a sex and love addiction as well as the inability to achieve emotional and sexual intimacy. But it also ignores the reality that some people really are polyamorous, and their ability to love more than one person at a time is not about a lust-fest for them.

Deepak Chopra, a renowned spiritual master and director for educational programs at the Chopra Center for Well Being in California, states, "As far as monogamy is concerned, I honestly believe that human beings are not monogamous biologically; they were not created that way. However, it is certainly helpful in society and social structure... because of the family structure... with gay and lesbian relationships... you're going to see children. You're going to see children. So in the interest of family structure, we've evolved biologically to the point where we are social creatures."

But the purported evolutionary benefits of monogamy have not panned out as expected. And the biggest benefit touted in support of monogamy is that it's the best social and psychological arrangement for children. However, evidence has proven over and over again that if couples are in a monogamous relationship solely for the kids, the children, too, suffer, because they witness no love, compassion or sometimes respect between the parents.

Contrary to popular belief, sociologist Elisabeth Sheff's forthcoming book, "The Polyamorists Next Door," reveals that polyamory is a "legitimate relationship style that can be tremendously rewarding for adults and provide excellent nurturing for children."

"I'm more involved in their lives (referring to children) and more aware of their inner thoughts or aspirations; I'm more involved in their long-term happiness," Mark told CNN reporters. Mark, who is a computer programmer, and his wife, an electrical engineer, have been married for over a decade. They have no children; however, they are actively engaged with the children from the two couples they have been sexually involved with for six years.

Societal condemnation of not being monogamous has halted many from taking the walk down the aisle, knowing the wedding vow to stay married until death cannot faithfully be upheld.

The evidence is the skyrocketing divorce rate among heterosexuals. Gay and lesbian couples are not immune, and as the number of states with marriage equality climbs, so will our divorce rate.

Many social scientists are recognizing that sexual fidelity to one person is a doomed aspiration. This notion will soon evolve into an antiquated notion because as our human clock ticks longer than previous generations, our appetite and yearning to experience sexual variety — with people of same and opposite genders — will also expand.

Our polyamorous nature, many contest, is evident in our acts of serial monogamy, which speak to our need to fulfill the impulse for variety. Once marriage shifted from its historical moorings of being solely economic and political arrangements to, now, romantic and consensual unions, sexual fidelity became the barometer of a

successful relationship, marriage or true love for a person.

While sexual jealousy and possessiveness would appear unavoidable in polyamorous relationship, there is also data revealing how having open relationships keeps these couples intact, and the love very much alive.

The practice of polyamory was once thought to be an absurd issue to explore as a relationship choice. But today it's not. More and more organizations like "Atlanta Polyamory Inc." are popping up across the country. Their members are coming out of the closet. Perhaps this will be the new civil rights battle before us.

Whether someone is monogamous or polyamorous is solely a personal decision.

And let's remember same-sex marriage once upon a time seemed a preposterous proposition to argue as a civil right.

## A Few Bricks Short

HO-HO-HOMO!



By David Hull

Hey, it's December, time to make the yuletide gay — and you can be sure we're doing that at our house. Nothing screams "gay" like tinsel and ribbons and twinkling

lights — and that's just what I'm wearing to dinner, don't even get me started on the decorations around the house.

You know something else that's really gay about December, but as far as I know has never been widely discussed, is the TV Christmas specials that have been broadcast over the years. Besides "Merry Christmas" and "buy stuff", many of them also seem to have an underlying sexual orientation diversity message for viewers.

Yes, the story includes Santa and a lesson about how important Christmas is, but we also learn that Rudolph and Hermie the elf are "different" and the two run away from Christmas Town because others there don't accept them. Hmm, where have we heard a story like that before? And, if you're looking for gay stereotypes, look no further than the Charlie-in-the-box on the Island of Misfit Toys — I'm surprised that fairy didn't have a purple triangle painted on the side of his box!

Another TV special that features the main character leaving town is Frosty the Snowman. Frosty has to move up North because he can no longer live in the South. He claims he's moving because of the heat, but I wonder if all those Republicans and Christian homophobes didn't have something to do with Frosty's relocation issues too.

Now if you've ever seen The Year without a Santa Claus, I really don't need to mention anything other than Heat Miser and Cold Miser. Those Miser brothers have fabulous hair, love performing show tunes and they are two of the most spiteful, malicious queens I've ever seen. I love them. Every Halloween I try to get my husband to dress up with me as Heat Miser and Cold Miser. The best part is that the Miser brothers' mom, Mother Nature, is tolerant and accepting of both of her boys, demonstrating a diverse and positive family relationship.

Santa Claus is Coming to Town has an important underlying message for viewers. The story's villain, the Burgermeister Meisterburger of Sombertown, has forbidden anyone to have toys, but he secretly loves the toys himself. To me, that sounds kind of like those slimy, two-faced politicians who spew their anti-gay venom in public, while in private they do the "gay-dance-with-no-pants" more than anyone else!

How can I ignore my favorite holiday classic, A Charlie Brown Christmas? Okay, the story itself is not so gay, but what the heck is going on between Peppermint Patty and Marcie. Marcie even refers to Peppermint Patty as "sir". Wow — they should both be wearing rainbow flag T-shirts, if you ask me. Then Linus could

really say, "And that's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."

And, finally, I think it's important to take a look at He-Man & She-Ra: A Christmas Special. There's nothing all that homoerotic about the show, but He-Man is one hot piece of animated superhero beefcake! "It's Christmas, He-Man! Meet me under the mistletoe and show me your Power Sword."

So, this year, while celebrating with family and friends, get out your favorite holiday DVD and take a closer look so that you can be sure to "make the yuletide gay"!

Contact David at davidhull59@aol.com

## Cleaning My Closet

WINTER IS



By Meredith Elizabeth Reiniger

Winter is snowflakes. Winter is inevitable. I do love, absolutely love winter. Nonetheless, getting prepared for it is an evolving

challenge. Every year I discover additional uncooperative body parts.

This year I started, as late as possible, stripping my yard. Before every task, I had to slip into an appropriate attitude. To attack wild jumble-ness in my garden shed, I needed an organized approach. So I summoned my neurotic-compulsive skill set. Emptied everything. Swept and hosed ceiling, walls, shelves, floor. Apologized to virtually hundreds of newly-homeless spiders.

More washing. Shed contents, lined up on the grass, were mud-caked. Sorting. Clay pots required sizing before construction of stabilized storage towers. Random decorative pots needed to be carefully nested.

Then I started filling every single space in orderly, of course, and categorized, for sure, ways, stacking systematically for optimum space allotment. Next I called up my inner-zookeeper. Hunted across the entire acre. Gathered, scrubbed, and shelved herds of ducks, frogs, angels, rabbits. And one hedgehog.

Too soon, reality made me face a sad, albeit annual, chore. Because October had pretended to be summer, my flowers and vegetables were still flourishing. However, my calendar and our meteorologists reminded me of our Fahrenheit future, forcing me to grab perky zinnias and rip off their little heads. Driving me to defruit my splendid tomato plants, un-stake their ravaged limbs, and heave them toward compost reincarnation.

After that I tackled heavy items. (Okay, truth be told WE tackled. A strong and faithful friend was there to lend two hands and a back.) We. Emptied soil out of 2,345 pots. Dumped and raked tons of previously-enjoyed dirt into the lawn's low spots. Lugged picnic tables and chairs. Hauled porch furniture.

While helper womyn converted my gas grill into charcoal-friendly, I endured tortuous hours draining and winding obstinate hoses. At some point in the battle, I turned into Cranky Twisted Lesbian Home Owner. (Will anyone ever create a cooperative hose?) Finally dragged those suckers into my tidy shed. Eventually, after my time out, the joy of proper placement of conquered coils reinstated my rapture.

Thus Meredith Manor is ready for winter. Bird food cans are battened down. I can sit on my soft chair in my bird room, peer out my sliding glass doors, and watch Survivor Webster. Squirrel tribe members will thoroughly study and test many ways to open the galvanized cans... cans that have half-inch iron T-bars through the lid handles. Raccoon tribe members, even though they have dexterous claws, will be foiled by mighty cement-encased bricks that will prevent them from pulling out

(oh yes they did) iron bars.

Ready. Set. Snow. Each day from now until May first, I (and my friend Sharon) will be tingling with anticipation, keeping a look out for abundant snow. Craving a real winter like our old-days. Deep, deep snow. Seriously covered everything.

Winter is snow art. During snowflake days I amble through North Ponds Park, admiring its topography softened by dazzling undulations. I watch my gardens grow crystal flowers. Brown birds... oh how I wish I could remember your names and recognize your songs... statue themselves on my split-rail fence. Cardinal-red virtually vibrates across frigid air. And I am mesmerized by soaring, somersaulting snowflakes. Winter is beauty.

But my winter worship is sometimes polluted by overheard complaints. I have experienced sixty-nine winters, and I know for certain that snow season is regularly scheduled to follow falling foliage. As a matter of fact, I have lived in this Up State New York area for all those many, many years and have witnessed a reliable pattern of spring-summer-autumn-winter. And for the life of me I cannot understand how residents can gripe through a lifetime of seasonal weather.

Constantly. From October first-freeze to April final-fall. As if frequency were not annoying enough, volume exacerbates already insufferable complaints. I do not, absolutely do not want to hear nagging nattering. I want to shout: Go into an empty closet and chatter to your Self about absurd accumulations, pokey people, perilous piles, frosted fingers, and flake fright.

In fact, it should be a law that persons who habitually bemoan Snow and Consequences within earshot of the Seasonally Sane will be incarcerated in a Frigidaire until right after July 4th fireworks.

Yes, I understand that winter has issues. We face walks to shovel, driveways to blow, snowbanks to move. We bear bundling bodies, swathing extremities. We suffer vehicular skidding, structural icing, blizzardly squalling.

But. But winter is snowflakes. Lovely crystals, sparkles, and puffs. Magical... created quite literally out of thin air. Intricate... prisms, needles, fernlike stellar dendrites, hollow columns, capped columns, stars, and rosettes.

Winter is appealing possibilities... celebrate snow splendor, snuggle in quilt caves, cuddle a canine, read a book cover to cover, dunk apples in warm caramel, simmer a hearty stew, sip mango tea from a delicate china tea cup.

Winter is exhilarating opportunities... hike among snow draped trees, walk the icy edges of Lake Ontario, stroll down a pier where waves are frozen mid-motion. Find ice crystal halos. Fashion a tribe of snow-lesbians.

Winter is laughter bubbling through my frozen lips. Laughter when every boot-step squeaks. Yes, I have mirth plans. To shuffle through snowflake euphoria. To throw snowballs into deep whiteness and watch my red dachshund snuffle into end-

less fluff in search of those elusive crystal orbs.

Maybe fall to the ground and flail an angel into existence. Maybe stick out my childhood tongue and eat snowflakes.

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## Conundrums

THE DREAM OF EQUALITY SHALL NEVER DIE



By Ove Overmyer

While recently sitting in the front row of a local community forum celebrating Trans\* Awareness Month, it didn't take but a second for me to

recognize the fact that I was one of the oldest persons in the room. And growing older is not the point I am trying to make here folks — I was thrilled to see so many young people who made an effort to attend. Well over a hundred people showed up on a cold and wet Tuesday night to share their stories, comfort others, listen, connect and learn.

As the moderator and panelists began the program, out of nowhere I asked myself the question, "What defines us?" My mind began to wander as I looked over my shoulder at the captivated audience. I was smitten by the diversity of the crowd. Maybe it's our appearance or the shade of our skin, the place where we grew up, the accent in our words, the makeup of our family, the gender we were born with, the intimate relationships we create or is it your generation?

As the collective American identity rapidly changes, here we all were—an inter-generational smorgasbord of old and young, gay, trans, straight, black, brown and white and everything in between -- in this big meeting room on a cold and crappy November night reinforcing the message and letting our historians know that, yes, our lives do matter. I immediately felt honored to be there.

The panel delivered as promised — we heard remarkable moving testimonies from a group of experts who have been fighting for adequate public healthcare and basic equality for all gender nonconforming people long before it became one of the final remaining fights for equality and civil rights in America.

While we have made some progress in recent years, especially here in New York State, we equality folks recognize the simple truth that we still have a very long road to travel. There is much more work to be done, especially when you talk to gender nonconforming advocates.

At the forum, I was reminded of something the late Sen. Ted Kennedy once said: "For all those whose cares have been our concern, the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die."

For me personally, these words once again transcended a moment in time and reinforced the notion that the struggle for



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equal rights will outlast my lifetime.

While some of the forum's equality language and text were familiar talking points to most of the seasoned activists who were in the audience, my attention was sometimes diverted by my own inner voice.

It's my hope that no one forgets the importance of our LGBT history and how we got to where we are today. While some of the younger folks do have the benefit of education, training and experience and a relationship with older LGBT community members, I still thought it was a good reminder for posterity's sake that I publicly repeat the fact that we all have to remember and embrace where we came from and stress the importance and value of community. This understanding is critical to create positive outcomes for future generations — and hopefully build and accomplish a more perfect world where humility and civility are commonplace.

The circumspect level of opportunity, freedom and liberty we now enjoy — passing sexual and identity non-discrimination laws, legal dignity protections for all New York State students, marriage rights for same-sex couples, cutting edge technologies, and global healthcare advancements being among those that first come to mind — were fashioned and fine-tuned by the struggle, sacrifice and unrelenting work and talent of those who came before us.

We didn't get here on our own. Today's activists never could have won hard fought victories if it wasn't for the likes of Harvey Milk, Bayard Rustin and former Rep. Barney Frank. They laid the ground work for us to be successful. In turn, my generation has to create the space for the twenty-somethings to actualize a plan so they can live in a world free of bigotry, homophobia and transphobia.

Machiavelli once said, "Whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times. This arises from the fact that they are produced by men who ever have been, and ever shall be, animated by the same passions, and thus they necessarily have the same results."

## Trans\*missions

ABOUT THE ASTERISK



By Laine Delaney

When I sent my first Empty Closet submission to Susan Jordan, she asked me why I was using the asterisk every time I entered the word Trans\*. "To me \* indicates a footnote!" she wrote.

I'll admit the first time that I saw Trans\* in a publication I scanned several pages trying to find the hidden footnote. Of course I didn't find one, but I had a suspicion as to what it might represent.

Long ago, somewhere in the late nineties, I considered myself something of a

computer nerd. A combination of interest in the still-budding Internet, a love of computer games, and an easily acquired tech-support job meant that I was much more computer-savvy than I've come to be. Those of us who understood DOS knew what an \* meant — it meant inclusion.

If you were searching for something, a convenient \* meant "everything". For instance, if you were searching for all the files with the name "trans" whether they were "trans.exe." or "trans.doc" you would type in an asterisk at the end, "Trans.\*" so as to say, "Show me everything that has the prefix "trans".

The Trans\* umbrella covers a whole lot of different types of people. There are transgender and transsexual people. There are also genderqueer, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, intersex, bigender, and agender people as well. There are probably more categories that I haven't listed here, and that's the point: as we continue to have the room to expand, explore our identities and genders, and embrace who we are, we discover more variations on the theme.

Trans\* identity isn't just about transgender and transsexual folks, it's about all of us. In most cases the rights that we seek are similar or overlap. We all want the right to express our gender identities without fear of violence, displacement, or loss of employment or medical care. We would all like to have the opportunity to be ourselves and grow and develop our identities. Ideally we'd like to live in a society where the people who are being brought into the world won't have to fight to be safe to do the same.

That little asterisk represents an inclusive stance that acknowledges a similarity in all of us — from the straight, cisgender man who likes to wear a little nail polish to the transgender person seeking gender confirmation surgery to the agender or genderqueer person fighting to find non-binary modes of dress and behavior in what is still a very binary society.

Some of us cross the binary line, some of us dance back and forth over it, and some of us ignore it, but in every case what restricts us is an unwritten social agreement on gender that doesn't take us into account. In the past the suggested emphasis on "trans" was in "moving across" and transitioning, but nowadays the emphasis is more on transcending the dominant culture's gender narrative. Even if we're just seeking to move from one socially accepted gender role to another, we are crossing a line that we've been told we're not allowed to cross.

I don't know if the use of the asterisk is a convention that will spread, but I think that it's a worthy addition to the language that we're still developing to describe ourselves. So in the spirit of inclusion I'll continue to use the asterisk whenever I write about trans\* issues, if for no other reason than to remind everyone that we're more than just one group or identity.

## What's Bothering Brandon?

TALES FROM THE BAGGAGE CAROUSEL



By Brandon W. Brooks

As I prepare myself for evening retirement, I catch a glimpse of what is happening outside. The wind is truly howling tonight, like some banshee

or wolf, whipping its way through the cracks of windows, doorjamb and crumbling grout. The crisp sky is dropping the first flakes of the 2013-2014 winter season, and my misery is complete. It's snowing.

No matter. I turn down the bed, and pour myself one last cup of chai rooibos before slinking underneath the sheets, still cold from the daylong absence of a warm body. I resign myself to accept the inevitability of winter; my own personal insult from Mother Nature. I wonder what it would be like to go a year without winter, if Rochester actually stayed warm for just one twelve-month period of time. Obviously this is quite impossible, but a boy can dream.

As I drift off to Lah Lah Land, I think of how volatile 2013 has been for all of us. So much has changed in the matter of the past twelve months, much to our continued benefit and dignity. We have had DOMA and Prop 8 overturned, a government shutdown, the controversial beginnings of the Affordable Health Care Act, and more than a handful of states ruling in favor of same-sex marriage. It seems the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel may be becoming brighter for the LGBTQ population.

The beginning of each new year gives us all the opportunity to assess our current states of being, evaluate the choices we have made in the last twelve months, and generally make goals that are equally as unrealistic as last year's. Besides trying to lose those 20 damned pounds again (not facilitated by drinking chai tea I might add), I have decided that this year I will begin letting go on a more metaphoric level. No, I am not planning to jump off of the Frederick Douglass-Susan B Anthony Memorial Bridge. By "letting go", I am referring to dropping the baggage we tend to carry in regard to ourselves and our identities as LGBTQ individuals.

To be honest, some of my baggage I have grown to love, to cherish and even guard against dropping. This baggage has become part of my identity, part of whom I think I am and what I am all about. I like to think of some of my baggage as coming from my own history as a gay male. I was raised in the rural fields of Macedon, attended Catholic school (mass every first Friday of the month), and then made the inevitable gay journey to

New York City for undergraduate work. Despite some of these places and events being more LGBTQ friendly than others, I still hold each as key in the development of my extremely agreeable and amazingly enviable personality. Please, no photographs.

All self-serving joking aside, I do realize that like most people, our pasts also instill within us ideas, feelings and beliefs that may not necessarily benefit us. I recognize in myself many negative ideas and beliefs that are a direct outcome of being told that being homosexual is morally reprehensible, that "living that sort of lifestyle" is subversive and not upstanding, and that I will eventually die of AIDS in a gutter somewhere, far away from the drawing-rooms of my potential straight future.

Pshaw.

My personal opinions obviously lie far from those mentioned above; however I must also recognize that these hateful ideas still affect my choices immeasurably. It affects my gender performance ("Am I masculine enough?"), where I go at night ("Will I be safe here?"), and even whether or not I decide to meet my friends' parents ("Will I embarrass them by being gay?").

Playing this little hoop-jumping game is exhausting, and as the years have passed I have become more and more resistant to changing for others. My father is a self-made businessman, and I cannot tell you how many times I have been told by him that I "look a little different." He has lovingly warned me (without ever bringing himself to utter the word "gay") of the dangers of appearing "different than"; how this can affect my ability to be hired, to find housing, to walk home safely, etc. I have begrudgingly accepted his critiques over the years, knowing them to be partially true depending on exactly where I work, live, or walk.

This year, I am done catering to the baggage of my past, my uncertainties and insecurities. I will be sorting through my baggage, one crocodile-skinned piece at a time, keeping some while cataloguing other pieces, and throwing the rest onto the front lawn. My hopes are that I will feel lighter (hopefully 20 lbs. lighter), and more prepared for the coming challenges and potential connections of 2014. This lightness will, with any luck, only add to the brightening light coming from the end of the tunnel.

Let's just hope that this light isn't coming from an oncoming train.

So I raise my glass once more to you all. May we learn to cherish the lessons from our pasts, and throw away the worn admonishments from our enemies. I shall see you all again this coming February, slightly lighter, slightly more positive, slightly less deferential to homophobia and heteronormativity. I can drink to that!

Questions, comments or critique? Feel free to e-mail the author at: [brandonb@gayalliance.org](mailto:brandonb@gayalliance.org)

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# Community

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## DIGNITY-INTEGRITY

D-I Rochester meets weekly at 5 p.m. at St. Luke's and St. Simon's Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., corner of Broad St. We have the following services and activities for the months of December 2013 and January 2014.

1st Sunday: Episcopal Mass/Healing Service, with music

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

3rd Sunday: Quiet Episcopal Mass in the Chapel.

4th Sunday: Evening Prayer, followed by a Potluck Dinner!

5th Sunday: Evening Prayer (December only)

Our Potluck theme for December is "Gastronomic Gifts". The January theme is "New Year, New Recipe". I can only begin to imagine what folks will bring to these two events. We've got some very creative cooks here... some are longstanding members of the Men's Cooking Group! No time to cook or shop? Just ask a friend or two and join us for food and fun!

News from the Pews: Our 38th Anniversary celebration was a success. Family and friends joined us at the Opa! Greek restaurant for a delicious meal. Looking ahead, we'll be gathering in February for our annual Winter Cabin Party. Catch the details in the February EC.

SAVE THE DATE: The 7th Annual Christmas Hymn Sing is scheduled for

Friday, Dec. 27 at 7 p.m. Come and join your voices with ours as we sing favorite Christmas hymns. Tim Schramm is returning to lead us on piano and organ; he is terrific! While you are here, you can see the redesigned sanctuary that was recently completed. In addition to adding a hearing loop, some of the old pews were removed and remade into chairs that allow for more flexible seating arrangements.

You can call the Hotline at 585-234-5092 or check our website at [www.dirochester.org/](http://www.dirochester.org/) for updates on services and activities.

## EMPIRE BEARS

It's December, and the weather outside is frightful. The BEARS are keeping busy inside.

Every Wednesday night we're at the Wintonaire at 6 having supper. We'll be missing a few nights this month, due to the holidays. Hope you join us for supper before Christmas.

The BEARS will be at the RGMC concert at the Hochstein at 8 on Friday and Saturday the 13th and 14th. Our potluck supper, usually the 2nd Saturday, may need to be a bit earlier than usual, so members can get to the concert on Saturday night. The potluck starts at 6:30 upstairs in the GAGV office board room. Be early, parking will be tight because of "The Grinch".

Have a great holiday season.

## ROCHESTER RAMS

The Rochester Rams would like to thank everyone who donated to our annual toy drive. We had a great showing of support, and are sure our donations will make this a special Christmas for the kids at the Roosevelt Children's Center.

It's time for our annual Long Johns Bar Night, it may be cold outside but it will be steaming hot inside. Our regular Bar Night features like boot shine, coat check, and wall-to-wall hot men will be available at this full-service event.

The Rochester Rams M.C. is Rochester New York's foremost gay motorcycle & leather club as well as being one of the oldest clubs of its type in the country. As this year comes to a close The Rochester Rams would like to thank everyone who has supported us through the year, especially the owner and staff of the Bachelor Forum.

Our home bar is the Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave., where we hold Bar Nights on the third Saturday of each month. We hold general meetings (open to the public) the Wednesday before each Bar Night at 7:30pm at the Forum. For more info, visit our website: [www.rochesterrams.com](http://www.rochesterrams.com).

## ROCHESTER TRANS GROUP

By Joanne Metzler

This will be the last entry that this writer of these entries will be doing. After writing these entries since 2001 - 2002 I am retiring. It is time for someone else to do this, a different voice than mine. A younger voice?

I hope that these entries over the past decade or so have made an impact and gave our readers some idea what the RTG is about and just how important it is, not to just the Trans community or even the LGB community, it is vital to all of Greater Rochester and New York State and the US of A and the world! Wow!

We didn't keep track over the years of how many attended one or more of meetings since its founding in 1997 by Perrette Beralla, a rough estimate I think would be around 200 people. Is that a lot?

The other reason I'm retiring is that all of these entries have been written using Microsoft Word on a PC that has Windows 95 (remember that!?) and has a floppy disc drive (remember those!?). And at some point this PC is going to die and that will be that.

To update everyone we've had some changes in the Steering Group, it now consists of Maur, JC, Izzy, Laine, Krystal and Gabrielle. Gabrielle has also "volunteered" to be (as she wants to be referred to) "Madam Web Mistress" for our website. So if you see Laine, Krystal or Gabrielle, be sure to thank them for being co-facilitators!

The Oct. 26 meeting was a big success. We had 16 people again, and four new people. Julia Hall from the LGBT Rights Project talked about what she could do to help with LGB & T discrimination issues. On Saturday, December 28 we will be celebrating our annual end of year party.

And we'll be meeting on Saturday, January 25 - and check our website for more details. We meet in the Gay Alliance's office on the 5th floor area located in the Auditorium Theatre, 875 E Main St on the last Saturday of each month between 3-5:30 p.m. Parking is available in the back of the theatre off of Prince St.

and College Ave.

Note: if there is a guard at the booth, just say you're here for the Gay Alliance and they have instructions to let you in

without paying the parking fee. Once in the door, walk down the hall to the main lobby, turn right just past the guard's booth and the elevator will be right there, on the 5th floor just follow the signs to the meeting. Also if you're coming by bus get off at the Prince St stop, walk up the sidewalk to the first set of doors (they have the large number 875 over them). Once you're in the lobby head toward the elevator and go up to the 5th floor and follow the signs.

Our website is: [www.rnyt.org](http://www.rnyt.org) or on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/RochesterTransGroup>

## ROCHESTER WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CHORUS

The Rochester Women's Community Chorus really believes in the saying "Free to be you and me" and we're going to sing about it at our next concert, "Yearning to Breathe Free".

We invite you to come and experience our musical journey at the Park Avenue Winter Festival on Dec. 5 from 7-8 p.m. Come and enjoy the beauty of the season, the bountiful shops and caroling of hope, strength and the longing for peace for all.

Our concert will be on Jan. 18, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Anne Church, 1600 Mt. Hope Ave. Tickets may be purchased from chorus members or at the door. Ticket prices are \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and students, \$5 for children 12 and younger. The concert is sign language interpreted and handicapped accessible.

But wait, while we are still in 2013 you have the opportunity to hear us singing on the avenue. For more information about the chorus you can call 585-234-4441, or find us at [www.therwcc.org](http://www.therwcc.org), or on [facebook.com/RochesterWomensCommunityChorus](https://www.facebook.com/RochesterWomensCommunityChorus).

## ROMANS

ROMANS members turned out in number to attend Rochester Naturists' Harro East and Men Only swims in November.

Members of both groups enjoyed lively conversations together and the friendly atmosphere well reflected the joyous mood of the holiday season.

At the November meeting, ROMANS members were treated to an award winning documentary, *Bridegroom*, a love story between two young men with a message about "... how people without the legal protections of marriage can find themselves completely shut out and ostracized..."

ROMANS' holiday celebration meeting will be held on Dec. 14. All ROMANS activities are listed on our website at <http://www.wnyromans.com>. You can also write to us at [wnyromans@yahoo.com](mailto:wnyromans@yahoo.com) or call our inquiry line at 585-281-4964.

Happy Holidays! ■

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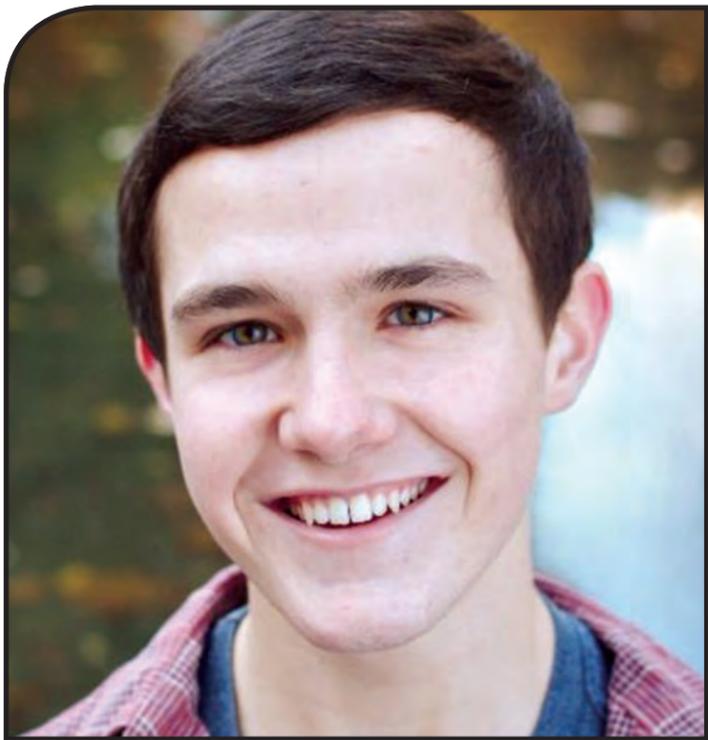
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# Arts & Entertainment



Andreas Wyder

## Andreas Wyder plays a puppy in "How The Grinch Stole Christmas"

Andreas Wyder plays "Young Max" in Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas the Musical*, at the Auditorium Theatre Dec. 10-15.

The Grinch broke box office records for two consecutive years on Broadway during its holiday engagements at the St. James (2007) and Hilton (2006) theatres in New York. Since then, thousands of families across America have been delighted by this heart-warming holiday musical, which The New York Times praised as "100 times better than any bedside story" and the Gannett papers hailed as "A genius of a show! A total delight for both kids and adults."

Tickets will range from \$32.50 to \$67.50. Tickets are sale via Ticketmaster.com, 800.745.3000 and the Theatre Box Office. The Auditorium Theatre is located at 885 East Main St., Rochester.

Andreas Wyder's credits include National Tour: *Titan-*

*ic the Musical*, Off-Broadway: *Mexican Hayride* (Junior), *Berenstain Bears LIVE!* (Brother Bear), Regional: *Next to Normal*. He recently talked to The Empty Closet about the show:

"A huge part of the magic of our show is the fact that it can be enjoyed by all ages! It is the full Broadway production... just performed on tour. This means that all of the sets, costumes, props, and the entire production are gorgeous and incredibly top-notch. The sets and props are all based on the exact drawings from the Dr. Seuss book, and it really takes the audience on a beautiful journey through Whoville.

"My favorite part of the show is that, although we are set in a magical fantasy land, the story is simply a beautiful tale of love, acceptance, joy, and Christmas spirit. Children can watch in joy and awe, while adults can watch and truly relate to these real characters living out the famous tale of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*."

Andreas plays a puppy in the fantasy world of Whoville. He commented, "The biggest challenge about playing Young Max has been the immense physical-

ity of the role! Puppies are adorable balls of energy, and that is exactly what Young Max is in the show. In one number, for example, I jump, frolic, toe-touch, and cartwheel around the stage, all while singing! Building up the stamina and endurance to effectively portray the role was a huge part of the rehearsal process for me. Young Max really is a dream role, though. I give everything I have in this show -- singing, dancing, acting -- and it is an immense joy. I also love Max's character arc -- he begins the show as a sweet, happy, innocent puppy, and as the show goes on, he grows into a more mature dog who has a deeper understanding of companionship and life in general."

If playing a puppy is the biggest challenge, what is the biggest reward for Andreas? He said, "The most fun and rewarding part of being in Grinch is the immense joy that comes from this show. Seeing the audiences light up and go on this journey with us is such an honor and a pleasure. But also, the immense joy within the cast is truly touching. We really are a family, and we feel the love, happiness, and friendship during each and every show. It is an honor to share the stage with these incredible performers who are also incredible people."

The Grinch cast did an "It Gets Better" video in 2010. Andreas was not a member of the company at the time, but he said, "I do remember watching it, however, while still living in Maine, and I found it phenomenally touching. Some of our current cast members were in it, and it is such a joy to know that they were a part of something so special! I would love to be part of an It Gets Better video because I know from true personal experience that it DOES! I would love to use my career as a way to help and inspire others to know that they can live their dreams, they can and will be SO loved, and that life really is beautiful."

Andreas is a Maine native. "I grew up in an adorable little town in Maine called Farming-

(Wyder continues page 28)



## A brief guide to Steampunk

By Laine Delaney and Krystal Mosher

Some people say that if you add brass gears to something that makes it steampunk, so we decided to add brass gears to the Red Ball this year! As there may be people who are unfamiliar with the style, the Red Ball committee thought that it would be helpful to provide a brief descriptive guide to steampunk.

The origins of steampunk lie in the writings of 19th Century speculative fiction authors including H.G. Wells and Jules Verne. Credit for the term "steampunk" goes to the author K. W. Jeter, who coined it in reference to the Techno-Victorian style of his novels *Morlock Nights* and *Infernal Machines*. Although it may have taken a few decades

to build up steam, the style began to flourish more in the late nineties and early aughts with the release of the graphic novel and movie versions of Alan Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and William Gibson and Bruce Adam's novel *The Difference Engine*.

Steampunk style is generally represented by a fusion of late 19th century garb (often Victorian or Wild West) and accoutrements representative of the technology of the time. Top hats, goggles, fascinators, bowlers and aviators caps are popular headgear. Ball gowns, waistcoats, frock coats, corsets and military jackets are frequently worn as tops, paired with appropriately styled trousers or skirts. Boots are a popular choice for all steampunk adventurers, due to both practicality and versatility

(Steampunk continues next)



Christie's staff members discuss the Francis Bacon painting.

## Gay artist Francis Bacon's painting brings record price at auction

Three Studies of Lucian Freud, a triptych painted by Francis Bacon in 1969 of his close friend and fellow figurative artist Lucien Freud, brought in \$142,405,000 over the phone in less than six minutes in a November auction at Christie's in New York City, the highest price on record.

Bacon was unapologetically open about his homosexuality at a time when it was still illegal in England, where he lived and worked. He was a bon vivant and socialized with all strata, from London society to street criminals. Bacon's work is painfully dark and psychological at times, and some of his most famous works were his triptychs and his "screaming Pope" studies of Pope Innocent X.

- Christopher Harrity on The Advocate ■



## Men's, Women's Choruses to perform winter concerts on Dec. 13-14, Jan. 18

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus will perform their traditional holiday concert "with a twist" on Dec. 13 and 14, at 8 p.m. at Hochstein Performance Hall, 50 N. Plymouth Ave.

The concert is titled "Come Wassail Away," and tickets are available at Parkleigh, Outlandish, Equal=Grounds and online at www.thergmc.org.

The Rochester Women's Community Chorus will present "Yearning To Breathe Free" on Jan. 18 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Anne Church, 1600 Mt. Hope Ave. A silent auction takes place at 7 p.m. For ticket information see www.therwcc.org or call 585-2234-4441. ■

(Wyder continued from page 27)

ton. I am so grateful to have grown up in the gorgeous land that is Maine, and it gave me a deep appreciation and love for simplicity, beauty, peace, and life. While I really do love Farmington, Maine, I've always known that performing is my one true passion and that NYC is the best place to do it!

"Because of this, I graduated from Mt. Blue High School one year early, having just turned 17 and then moved straight to New York City less than a month later! I've taken voice, dance, and acting lessons my entire life, and I performed in many, many local theatre productions throughout Maine while growing up. Thankfully, I've been very blessed to be working consistently since arriving in the city two and a half years ago, and life has been so wonderful! I'm truly living my dream to be working as a professional actor now. Grinch is my second national tour (I did the national tour of *Titanic the*

*Musical* last year) and I feel extremely fortunate and blessed! Here's to a lifetime of singing, performing, and joy!

"I have to say that my current dream role would have to be 'Crutchie' in Disney's *Newsies* on Broadway. I was in call-backs for the show a few months before Grinch, and that was a true honor. I also saw the show right before leaving NYC for Grinch, and 'Crutchie' is just a pure joy. He is optimistic, hopeful, and gets to sing some beautiful music. Dreaming big is the best way to go, and it sure is a dream role! Although, I must say, Young Max is an amazing dream role as well, and I am so happy to be playing him!" ■

(Steampunk continued from page 27)

ity of style. Monocles, veils, gloves, and pocket watches are all common steampunk accessories.

Steampunk style is always accentuated with various "tech". Often more common forms of accessories or jewelry and sometimes clothing will be touched up or modified with mechanical parts. The addition of clockwork or gears, rivets, buckles, brass fittings, and other alterations suggestive of the dominant forms of 19th century technology and their impact on the imagination all work toward providing the flair that steampunk is known for. Remember, bronze is not third place in a steampunk setting!

For those who are interested in dressing steampunk-style for the Red Ball (it is certainly not required, just encouraged), there will be two sessions of "Making Steampunk Attire & Accessories on a Budget" on Wednesday Dec. 11 from 5-7 p.m. and Wednesday Jan. 8 at 5-7 p.m. If you are interested in location or further information about either the classes or the Red Ball itself, email [redball@gayalliance.org](mailto:redball@gayalliance.org), or call the Gay Alliance at 585-244-8640.

Keep an eye out on the event page on Facebook and in the February Empty Closet for more updates! See you at the Red Ball! ■



On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Christmas, let's forget about this guy and the Three Fyreeh Men...I'd rather go to —

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Jingle Balls...

**Kmart sexy Christmas ad riles the Right**

Told you this was coming, says JoeMyGod.com, as the wingnuts responded to Kmart's Christmas "ball-ringing" ad:

"One Million Moms" (actually a right-wing propaganda machine) vented thus:

The title of the current ad is "Show Your Joe," and Kmart includes sexual content during a Christmas hand bell choir performance. The commercial focuses on several men wearing Joe Boxer underwear thrusting in a sexualized way to the tune of Jingle Bells. They start gyrating and shaking themselves instead of the hand bells, intending to make their "bells" ring in song - which is highly inappropriate. The commercial ends: "Shop Your Way, Joe Boxer, Kmart. Get In Get More Christmas." Normally, we do not provide a link since One Million Moms does not want to contribute to this filth being spread around even more, but we made an exception this time to show how ridiculous and disgusting this ad really is. The link to the commercial is provided here for reference only so you will have the information you need to voice your concern. If you would rather not watch the video clip, you may take our word on it, knowing this is not the first or second time Kmart has aired offensive commercials.

RELATED: AdWeek notes that the Chippendales beat Kmart to the joke three years ago. Sort of. ■

# Travel

**For the art of Detroit**

By Merle Exit

Pure Michigan [www.michigan.org](http://www.michigan.org) has been promoting tourism with some emphasis on the fine arts, the first city being Detroit, synonymous with "Car Industry" and "Motown" - and lately with financial problems.

Here I explored three great venues. My first art stop began with the Heidelberg Project, an open-air ménage of creations that look as if the parts were taken from a junkyard. In fact most of the art has been created from recycled materials. You won't find "name" artists. Instead, Tyree Guyton, an artist himself, set up the space for emerging local artists centering on art that draws attention to the blight and decay of Detroit.

One piece that stood out was a part of a hummer, which was pointed out as being something that could be recycled into homes. You can request a group tour for further insight. [www.heidelberg.org](http://www.heidelberg.org)

MOCAD, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, is located in a 22,000 square foot building that was a former auto dealership. They are a non-collecting institution, so one should not expect an "Andy Warhol" piece and artists are from all over the world. Each of the rooms is spacious and allow for some larger exhibits.

Two of the rooms feature ongoing films. There is a large space devoted to being a café and set up for an event such as documentary and art-based films as well as music performances. Check out the Mobile Homestead abutting the parking lot. There is a suggested admission price of \$5. [www.mocadetroit.org](http://www.mocadetroit.org)

The Detroit Institute of Arts, said to be one of the foremost art museums in the US, is located in Midtown Detroit's Cul-

tural Center Historic District, with more than 60,000 works that take in a multicultural array from ancient times through the present. The major part of the collection is in European painting, Italian Renaissance sculpture, French decorative art, African art, American painting and Islamic textiles. Due to Detroit's bankruptcy, the art collection is threatened with dispersal. See it while you can.

Upon entering through the main hall I viewed a fresco cycle by Diego Rivera called

Detroit Industry. Look closely and you can see one area that has some familiar faces from the funnies. [www.dia.org](http://www.dia.org)

The Whitney is an 1894 mansion turned restaurant that has its own unique cuisine. I dined with others in one of the rooms on the first floor in order to sample a chef's tasting. There is quite a large amount of history and decorative artwork located in this Library. There are three floors of eye pleasing woodwork to explore. A grand piano in the main hall creates an even more romantic environment.

Let's get to the food that Chef Greg Pawlowski sent out. Appetizers are one of



Merle at The Whitney.

the best ways to sample a menu, so let's start with that. Hamachi and Tuna Tartare - Yuzu marmalade, wasabi caviar and a spicy aioli. Chesapeake Bay Lump Crab Brick Roll - pickled spring vegetables, stone ground mustard sauce. Calamari - lightly breaded, lemon aioli, thyme beurre blanc. Eggplant Bruschetta - baked artisan baguette with flash fried eggplant and house pickled vegetables. Shrimp Bisque - the creamy kind. For an entrée: Beef Wellington - tenderloin of beef wrapped with prosciutto, spinach, mushroom duxelle in a pastry with a veal cabernet sauce. There was more. [www.thewhitney.com](http://www.thewhitney.com). ■

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Participants in the SafeZone training.

## Faces at the Annual Meeting



The Gay Alliance annual meeting was held Nov. 20 at St. Mary's Church. L-R: Pam Barres, John Altieri and Bill Schaefer, Peter Mohr. Photos: Susan Jordan

## Gay Alliance offers SafeZone Train-the-Trainer certification program

By Jeanne Gainsburg

On Friday, Oct. 25 the Gay Alliance offered their SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Program. There were 38 educators in attendance from colleges and universities all over New York State as well as from North Carolina, Indiana, Virginia, Massachusetts and Cairo, Egypt!

Through activities, small group discussions and practice sessions, participants received information on running a SafeZone training and brushed up on their skills as LGBTQ educators. Each participant also received a SafeZone Training manual that included tips for successful SafeZone trainings, SafeZone exercise descriptions, suggested agendas for running SafeZone trainings, additional reading to extend knowledge, resources and handouts to use in future SafeZone trainings.

Below are some quotes from the evaluations:

"Jam-packed full of great information. The presenters had a deep, profound understanding of the content and they were skilled at facilitation."

"Educational, inspirational, amazing! It was the best training I've been to in a long time!"

"Excellent training. Great

facilitation tips and techniques and strong exercises to use."

"It was absolutely wonderful. No improvements needed."

"Very educational and supportive. One of the best I have attended."

"This workshop gave me the tools to make a constructive change."

"Knowledgeable, approachable, professional and fun!"

"Open, honest and engaging. It was a fantastic day."

"Extremely informative and empowering. Also motivating. Excellent!"

"Very informative and resourceful! LOVED THIS!"

100 percent of the participants rated the content of the presentation, the workshop as a whole and the presenters "very good to excellent!"

If you are interested in becoming a Gay Alliance Certified SafeZone Trainer, our next training will take place on Friday, March 7 from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. You can register on our website at [www.gayalliance.org](http://www.gayalliance.org). Just click on the SafeZone slide. For information on how we can bring this training to your campus or workplace or for any other questions, please contact me at [jeanneg@gayalliance.org](mailto:jeanneg@gayalliance.org) or 585-244-8640 ext. 14. ■



David and Jill Frier.

## Gay Alliance Volunteers-of-the-Month: Jill and David Frier

The Dec./Jan. edition of The Empty Closet is a combined issue, so we thought we would combine our Volunteer-of-the-Month award and honor an amazing couple! Congratulations to Jill and David Frier

for being chosen as the Gay Alliance Volunteers-of-the-Month for January and February!

Since 2011, Jill has been sharing her beautiful photos with us as a volunteer Empty Closet photographer (see the Miss Gay Rochester photos in this issue) and David has been providing tech and information security support.

Both Jill and David were active Roc Pride volunteers in 2011 and 2013. This past Pride, David and Jill opened up their home to all of the parade volunteers to get out of the hot sun, use the facilities and get a cool drink.

They have actively participated as volunteers at the Red Ball for the past two years. Both Jill and David completed the Gay Alliance SpeakOUT Training and have trained to become Gay Alliance Speakers Bureau members. They often offer to jump in as needed to help out with other events, like the Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals Exhibit at the

JCC. Most recently, David and Jill donated some much-needed file server equipment to our office.

We are so grateful to have Jill and David Frier as a part of our volunteer team. On behalf of the Gay Alliance staff and board, we thank you for all of your hours, your commitment, your donations and your support. ■



## Youth Update: Fabulous Fridays

By Dawn Balsis, Youth Intern

I am an MSW student at Boston University. As part of my field experience I am interning with the GAGV Youth Program. It has been a wonderful experience so far and the youth have been fantastic. I look forward to every Friday night.

The purpose of this group is generally for LGBT youth and their allies to hang out in a safe place. Ages 13-20 are welcome. In addition to hanging out we are incorporating educational components such as sexual health, healthy relationships, basic life skills, creative activities, etc. On occasion we will also show movies, play board games and act on any other appropriate suggestions made by the youth.

Recently the youth voted on a new name for their Friday night social group: GAGV Youth Fabulous Fridays. The GAGV Youth Fabulous Fridays are located at Open Arms MCC, 707 East Main St. Rochester, NY. We are grateful to Open Arms MCC for being so gracious and letting us use this space for the youth.

In addition to Friday Nights there is a Gender Identity Support Group that meets every Thursday from 5:30 until 6:30 p.m. Ages 13-18 are welcome. This is a support group, NOT a social group. The Group meets at the GAGV library, located on the first floor, off the Prince St. lobby at 875 East Main St. ■



## Gay Alliance Youth Program

The Gay Alliance Youth program empowers today's teens to meet today's challenges! It provides a safe space to explore their identity, make friends, build community, gain life skills, become a leader and have fun!

**Gay Alliance Youth** (Ages 13-18)  
Fridays, 7-9pm, Open Arms MCC  
707 E. Main Street, Rochester 14605

**Gay Alliance Youth Gender Identity Support Group** (Ages 13-18)  
Thursdays, 5:30-6:30pm  
Gay Alliance Library  
(1st floor, off Prince St. lobby)  
875 E. Main Street

For more information:  
[dawnb@gayalliance.org](mailto:dawnb@gayalliance.org)

**The Gay Alliance**  
875 E. Main Street, Fifth Floor  
(Auditorium Theater)  
Rochester, New York 14605  
Phone: 585 244-8640



**The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley:** is a non-profit agency, dedicated to cultivating a healthy, inclusive environment where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are safe, thriving and enjoying equal rights. We are a coalition of individuals and groups working to empower LGBT 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. **875 East Main Street, Rochester, New York 14605**  
**Phone:** (585) 244-8640 **Fax:** (585) 244-8246 **Web:** [www.gayalliance.org](http://www.gayalliance.org) **E-mail:** [Info@gayalliance.org](mailto:Info@gayalliance.org) **Hours:** Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm  
**Board Co-Presidents:** Emily Jones, Bruce Gorman **Acting Executive Director:** Scott Fearing  
**Outreach:** Jeanne Gainsburg **Database:** Kat Wiggall **Youth Intern:** Dawn Balsis **Book keeper:** Christopher Hennelly  
**The Empty Closet: Editor:** Susan Jordan **Graphic Designer:** Jim Anderson  
**E-mail:** [susanj@gayalliance.org](mailto:susanj@gayalliance.org) **Phone:** (585) 244-9030 **Fax:** (585) 244-8246 **Advertising:** (585) 244-9030

# GAY ALLIANCE NEWS FOR NOVEMBER 2013

## Out & about with SAGE



Rainbow SAGE had a great time going out to lunch at La Tea Dah on Alexander St. and Park Ave., on Nov. 14. What a great place and a lot of fun. We all enjoy going out to different places.



SAGE held a spooky Halloween Party on Oct. 26.



## Library & Archives

### The Gay Alliance Library & Archives

#### Hours:

Every Monday & Wednesday: 6-8pm  
875 E. Main Street, (off Prince St. lobby)  
First Floor, 585-244-8640



### The Gay Alliance On-Line Resource Directory (GARD)

The online community tool providing local, statewide and national resources, 24/7 at:  
[www.GayAlliance.org](http://www.GayAlliance.org)

## SAGE CALENDAR

### Rainbow SAGE Calendar: December - January 2014

- December 1..... 3 Euchre 224 Mount Hope Ave. at South Wedge Planning Committee Building (parking in back of building).  
December 3..... 10:30 Yoga, 11:30 lunch: Chanukah Party, assorted beverages.  
December 5..... 11 Yoga, 11:30 Lunch: Brown bag lunch and beverage. Movie Day.  
December 10..... 10:30 Yoga. 11:30 Leave Open Arms to go to HCR Home Care for Lunch. Holiday gathering will be working with a trainer on balance and strengthening.  
December 12..... No Yoga today. We will be meeting at Friendly's at 10:30, 2425 West Henrietta Road. See you there.  
December 17..... 10:30 Yoga, 11:45 Out for lunch. Cookie Exchange and Gift Exchange (bring a gift to exchange; we will draw names that day).  
6:30 Coffee and Conversation at Equal Grounds (750 South Ave)  
December 19..... 11 Yoga, 11:45 Macaroni and cheese, Salad, Desert, and Beverage. Euchre or Scrabble.  
December 24..... No Group. Have a wonderful Christmas.  
December 26..... No Group today. See everyone on the 31st!  
December 31..... 10:30 Yoga, 11:30 Lunch New Year's Party. Bring a Dish to pass. We will ring in the new year early.

### JANUARY

- January 2..... 11 Yoga, 11:30: Lunch Brown Bag and Beverage, Scrabble or bring your own game .  
January 5..... 3 Euchre, 224 Mount Hope Ave. (at South Wedge Panning Committee Building) Parking in back of building.  
January 7..... 10:30 Yoga, 11:45 Leave to go out for lunch, Antonetta's, 1160 Jay St. RSVP by January 2, 585-857-9428.  
January 9..... 11 Yoga, 11:30: Lunch: Brown Bag and Beverage, Euchre or cards.  
January 14..... 10:30 Yoga, 11:30 Chili, Salad, Desert and Beverage. Music, Dance & Games  
January 16..... 11 Yoga, 11:30 Lunch: Brown Bag and Beverage, Game Day bring in your favorite Game to play.  
January 21..... 10:30 Yoga, 11:30, Lunch Beach Party. Bring your beach ball & blanket. We are having hot dogs, hamburgers and the fixings. Grab that sun screen: we don't want to burn. 6:30 p.m: Coffee and Conversation held at Equal Grounds (750 South Ave.)  
January 23..... NO YOGA. 10:30 Friendly's for Breakfast at 2425 West Henrietta Road. RSVP by January 21, at 585-857-9428.  
January 28..... 10:30 Yoga, 11:30 Lunch Brown Bag and Beverage, Game Day.  
January 30..... 11 Yoga, 11:30 Lunch: Brown Bag and Beverage, Movie Day, Popcorn.

### Please note:

Programs are subject to change without notice. It is also your responsibility to drive or carpool to any of our out of the center programming. We will be meeting at Open Arms MCC Church, 707 E. Main St. SAGE Phone 585-857-9428.

### Gay Alliance Speaking Engagements & Tabling for November 2013

- 11/4..... Towards LGBT Social Justice at TEDX Talk Rochester  
11/4..... LGBT Aging Issues at GRC MSW Program  
11/5..... LGBT 101 at Nazareth College Psychology Department  
11/5..... LBGT Issues in Social Work at SUNY Brockport Social Work Dept.  
11/6..... LBGT Issues in Social Work at GRC MSW Program  
11/6..... Jewish Book Festival Presentation at the JCC  
11/6..... Advanced SafeZone Training at St. John Fisher College  
11/7..... LGBT 101 at McArdle Ramerman  
11/7..... Transgender Activism at GRC MSW Program  
11/11..... LGBT 101 at Rochester Rehabilitation  
11/12..... Trans\* World Today: A Community Forum at Trillium Health  
11/15..... SafeZone Train-the-Trainer Certification Program at California's Cabrillo College  
11/18..... Transgender Panel Presentation at Alfred University  
11/19..... LGBT Youth Issues at Monroe Community College (Henrietta Campus)  
11/22 and 11/23....SpeakOUT Training at HCR Home Care  
11/26..... LGBT Substance Abuse Issues at DePaul's National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence

### Comments

- "The most important thing I learned today was to include 'cisgender' when saying that I am a straight ally."  
"I learned that transgender people are not protected by laws in the workplace. They can get fired! Great speakers! The knowledge I learned today will help me as a social worker."  
"The most important thing I learned was about straight and cisgender privilege and how we can change these things and how they affect others. I wish we had more time! I want to hear more. J"  
"Always awesome."

# Resources

Check our monthly and ongoing calendar as well as the community section for more groups and events. For further information, call the Gay Alliance at 244-8640 or visit: [www.gayalliance.org](http://www.gayalliance.org). And send us your information.

## BISEXUALITY RESOURCES

AMBI Los Angeles; American Institute of Bisexuality (Journal of Bisexuality); Bay Area Bisexual Network; Bi Café; Bi Definition; Milwaukee; BiNet USA; Bisexual Organizing Project (BOP); Biversity Boston; Boston Bisexual Women's Network; ComBlne - Columbus, Ohio; Dallas/Fort Worth Bi Net; Fenway Health's Bi Health Program; Los Angeles Bi Task Force; New York Area Bisexual Network; Robyn Ochs's site; Seattle Bisexual Women's Network; The Bi Writers Association; The Bisexual Resource Center (email [brc@biresource.net](mailto:brc@biresource.net))

## CULTURAL

**Rochester Women's Community Chorus**  
234-4441. (See Ongoing calendar).

**Rochester Gay Men's Chorus**  
[www.thergmc.org](http://www.thergmc.org)

## DEAF SERVICES

**Advocacy for Abused Deaf Victims**  
Mailing address: c/o ASADV, P.O. Box 20023, Rochester, NY 14602. 24-Hour Hotline: ASAD-Vhope@gmail.com; VP: 866-936-8976; TTY/FAX: 585-232-2854.

**Lilac Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf (LRAD)**

Meets second Saturdays, 6-9pm. For location, information: [rcoaster@rochester.rr.com](mailto:rcoaster@rochester.rr.com)

**Spectrum LGBTIQ & Straight Alliance**  
RIT/NTID student group. <SpectrumComment@groups.facebook.com

## ELDERS

**Gay Alliance Rainbow Sage**

Many monthly get togethers, some at Open Arms MCC 707 E. Main St. 875-9428; [SAGE@gayalliance.org](mailto:SAGE@gayalliance.org)

## FAMILY

**CNY Fertility Center**

Integrative Fertility Care. Support meetings, webinars, workshops. Information: [cbriel@cny-fertility.com](mailto:cbriel@cny-fertility.com); [www.cnyhealingarts.com](http://www.cnyhealingarts.com)

**Rochester Gay Moms' Group**

Support group for lesbian mommies and wannabe mommies in Rochester and surrounding areas. Subscribe: [RochesterGayMoms-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:RochesterGayMoms-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

**Lesbian & Gay Family Building Project**

Headquartered in Binghamton and with a presence throughout Upstate NY, the Project is dedicated to helping LGBTQ people achieve their goals of building and sustaining healthy families. Claudia Stallman, Project Director, 124 Front St., Binghamton, NY 13905; 607-724-4308; e-mail: [LesGayFamBldg@aol.com](mailto:LesGayFamBldg@aol.com). Web: [www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org](http://www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org).

**Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**

PFLAG's threefold mission: supporting parents and family members in coming out process; educating the community; advocating on behalf of LGBT family members. [PFLAG@gagv.us](mailto:PFLAG@gagv.us); 585-244-8640 x27.

**Adoptive Parent Support Group**

Monthly potluck lunches. For information, location, call Shari, 350-2529.

**Angel Food Ministry**

Box of fresh/frozen food for \$30 in advance. Menu changes monthly. For information and distribution sites, call 585 861-4815.

## HIV/AIDS

**Free testing for HIV exposure**

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

**Volunteer Legal Services Project**

(585) 232-3051; [www.vlsprochester.org](http://www.vlsprochester.org). 1 West Main St., Suite 500 Rochester, NY 14614. Free legal services for low-income HIV positive clients. No criminal cases. Appointments are scheduled at area medical provider locations or by calling 295-5708.

**Trillium Health**

Trillium Health is the leading provider of HIV/AIDS services in Rochester and the Finger Lakes. On-site services include HIV testing and limited STD screenings, Primary and HIV Specialty Medical Care, Pharmacy, and many more. Satellite offices in Geneva and Bath. Trillium Health is also a leader in providing services and education to members of the LGBT community. Contact Information: Website: [www.trillium-healthny.org](http://www.trillium-healthny.org). Main Office: 259 Monroe Ave., Rochester, NY 14607; Main Phone: 585-545-7200, Health Services After Hours: 585-258-3363; Case Management After Hours (Lifeline): 585-275-5151; Fax: 585-244-6456. Finger Lakes Office: 605 W. Washington St., Geneva, NY 14456, 315-781-6303. Southern Tier Office: 122 Liberty St. Box 624, Bath, NY 14810 607-776-9166. The Health Outreach Project: 416 Central Ave., Rochester, NY 14605; 585-454-5556.

**Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley**

Referrals to physicians and service agencies. (585) 244-8640; [www.gayalliance.org](http://www.gayalliance.org).

**Victory Alliance**

University of Rochester Medical Center. One of several research sites worldwide that comprise the HIV Vaccine Trials Network. Rochester site conducts research vaccine studies sponsored by National Institutes of Health (NIH). 585-756-2329; [www.vaccineunit.org](http://www.vaccineunit.org).

**Threshold**

At The Community Place, 145 Parsells Ave., third floor, 585-454-7530. Provides confidential HIV, STD testing and General Health Care, ages 12-25. Sliding fee scale, no one denied, most insurances accepted. Mon., Wed., Fri. 9am-5pm; Tues., Thurs., 9am-7pm; Sat. 10am-2pm. [www.ThresholdCenter.org](http://www.ThresholdCenter.org)

**Center for Health and Behavioral Training of Monroe County**

853 Main St., Rochester 14611. Collaboration of Monroe County Health Department and U.R. Provides year-round training in prevention and management of STDs, HIV, TB and related issues, such as domestic violence and case management. (585)753-5382 v/tty.

**Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region**

114 University Ave., Rochester, NY 14605; Toll-free Helpline: 1 866 600-6886. Offers confidential HIV testing and information. When you make your appointment, be sure to ask about our sliding scale fees. No one is turned away for lack of ability to pay.

**Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS**

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

**The MOCHA Center of Rochester**

Our mission is to improve health and wellness in communities of color. Youth drop-in center, HIV testing, peer education, support groups, computer lab, referral services and more. 107 Liberty Pole Way (corner of Pleasant). (585) 420-1400.

**Monroe County Health Department**

at 855 W. Main St., offers testing and counseling for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. (585) 753-5481.

**Strong Memorial Hospital**

provides a complete range of HIV medical care, including access to experimental treatment protocols, and HIV testing. Also provides individual and group psychotherapy. Training of health care professionals also available. Infectious Disease Clinic, (585) 275-0526. Department of Psychiatry, (585) 275-3379. AIDS Training Project, (585) 275-5693.

**Planned Parenthood of Rochester and Genesee Valley**

Offers testing and information (585) 546 2595.

**Rural HIV testing**

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

**Action Front Center**

(Action for a Better Community.) Provides HIV prevention education and case management services. Training and technical assistance to service providers. Resource library open to public. All services free and confidential. Multicultural and bilingual staff. 33 Chestnut St., second floor. Hours 8:30-5pm, Monday-Friday. 262-4330; fax 262-4572. Free anonymous HIV testing on walk-in basis, Tuesdays, Wednesdays 1-4pm, provided through NYS-DOH. Thursdays 1-4pm at Aeon Baptist Church, 175 Genesee St.

**Anthony L. Jordan Health Center, Prevention and Primary Care.**

Provides Medical Case Management, Mental Health, Primary Care, HIV Counseling and Testing (using rapid testing) Hepatitis C rapid testing and services, Educational Presentations, and access to other Jordan Services. Prevention and Primary Care is a walk-in program; no appointment necessary. Office Hours are Monday thru Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call (585) 423-2872; fax (585) 423-2876. Website [www.jordanhealth.org](http://www.jordanhealth.org). For more information, call the Program Manager Charlie Lytle, (585) 423-2872.

**CDC National STD and AIDS Hotline**

1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) 24 hours a day. TTY service: 1-888-232-6348. E-mail address: [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov).

**Fair Housing Enforcement Project of Monroe County**

585-325-2500; 1-800-669-9777. Deals with housing discrimination on basis of race, orientation, HIV status, etc.

**Public Interest Law Office of Rochester**

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

**Evergreen Health Services, Buffalo**

Primary care, HIV and family care, HIV testing and counseling. (716) 847-0328

**Westside Health Services**

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

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

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

**Catholic Charities AIDS Services**

A multicultural and bi-lingual staff providing services to a diversity of people infected and affected with HIV. Coordinates HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS) short term emergency assistance with rent/mortgage/utility payments and limited subsidized housing. 1945 E. Ridge Rd., Suite 24, Rochester NY 14622. (585) 339-9800.

**Huther Doyle**

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

**Geneva Community Health**

601 W. Washington St., Geneva. Provides HIV testing, HIV specialty and primary care for residents of Ontario and surrounding counties. Mon.-Thurs. 9am-5pm; Fridays 9am-noon. 315-781-8448.

## LGBT HEALTH

For a list of LGBT-friendly and competent health and human service providers in the Rochester and Finger Lakes area, visit the resource directory page(s) at [www.everybodysgood.com](http://www.everybodysgood.com).

**Trillium Health**

See [www.trilliumhealthny.org](http://www.trilliumhealthny.org)

**HCR Home Care**

We provide a full multidisciplinary team consisting of nursing, social work, physical, occupational, and speech therapies as well as home health aides who have completed the eight-hour cultural competency program provided by the Gay Alliance. For more information, contact us at 585-272-1930 or visit us online at [HCRhealth.com](http://HCRhealth.com).

**Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley**

See [www.gayalliance.org](http://www.gayalliance.org) Resource Directory under "Health" for Gay Alliance referrals to physicians and service agencies.

**CNY Depression Bi-Polar Support**

The Depression Bi-Polar Support Alliance of Central New York Support Group Adult Group meets the third Thursday of every month from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at SAGE Upstate, 431 E. Fayette St, Syracuse, NY 13202. The Youth Group meets the second Monday of every month from 5 p.m.-6:30 p.m. at Transitions Living Services, 420 E. Genesee St., Syracuse, NY 13202.

## TRANSGENDER

**Rochester Trans Group**

Social/educational group for gender variant people and friends. Last Saturday, 3-5pm, GAGV 5th floor, 875 E. Main St. 244-8640. [www.rnytg.org](http://www.rnytg.org)

**Volunteer Legal Services Project**

(585) 232-3051; [www.vlsprochester.org](http://www.vlsprochester.org). 1 West Main St. Suite 500, Rochester, NY 14614. Free legal services for low-income clients seeking a name change. Other legal services for low-income clients include family law issues, bankruptcy, unemployment insurance hearings, wills and advance directive documents for clients with serious illnesses.

**Gay Alliance Youth Gender Identity Support Group**

Thursdays 5:30-6:30 GAGV Library, 1st floor, off Prince St. lobby 875 E. Main St., Ages 13-18. 244-8640

**Genesee Valley Gender Variants**

Thurs. 7-9pm, Equal Grounds, 750 South Ave. [GVGenderVariants@yahoo.com](mailto:GVGenderVariants@yahoo.com)

**Guys Night Out**

Social group for transmen. Third Saturdays, 1pm, Equal Grounds, 750 South Ave. [tguys-nightout@gmail.com](mailto:tguys-nightout@gmail.com)

## WOMEN

**Lesbians of Color**

[www.oursistacircle.com](http://www.oursistacircle.com).

The first social networking site for lesbians of Black, Asian, African American, Latina, Native American, Pacific Islander, Chicano, Biracial & other lesbians of color, launched 2009. OurSistaCircle the first free social networking site to offer Skype mental health counseling. No nudity policy on member profiles. Currently 10,800 active members.

**Highland Hospital Breast Imaging Center**

500 Red Creek Drive, Rochester 14623; 585-487-3300. Specializing in breast health, diagnostic breast imaging and treatment and mammography outreach and education.

**Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester**

840 University Ave.; 585-473-8177; [www.bccr.org](http://www.bccr.org); email: [info@bccr.org](mailto:info@bccr.org). Breast Cancer Coalition provides support services that include programs designed to help those coping with a recent breast cancer diagnosis and those coping with an advanced breast cancer diagnosis, such as the Advanced Breast Cancer Support Group to support women living with metastatic breast cancer. Information about breast cancer, lending library, a monthly educational program. All BCCR programs, support services free.

**Monroe County Women's Health Partnership**

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

**Elizabeth Wende Breast Clinic**

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

**Self Help for Women with Breast or Ovarian Cancer (SHARE)**

1-866-53SHARE or 1-866-537-4273.

**Alternatives for Battered Women**

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

**Victim Resource Center of Wayne County**

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

**Mary Magdalene House**

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

**Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region**

114 University Ave., Rochester, NY 14605; Toll-free Helpline: 1-866-600-6886. Planned Parenthood has led the way in providing high quality, affordable reproductive health care since 1916. All services are confidential. Accept most insurances; including Medicaid. You may qualify for low- to no-cost family planning services. When you make your appointment, ask about our sliding scale fees. No one turned away for lack of ability to pay.

**Women's Resource Center**

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

# Ongoing Calendar

## MONDAYS

### LORA Coffee Social

Every Monday, 7-9:30pm, Equal Grounds Coffee House, 750 South Ave. For more info: <http://www.facebook.com/LORACoffeeSocial>. Contact Person: Cathie: Email: [ctimian@l-o-r-a.com](mailto:ctimian@l-o-r-a.com); Phone: 585.313.3037

### Gay Alliance Library & Archives,

David Bohnett Cyber Center. Every Mon./Wed. 6-8pm. First floor, 875 E. Main St. 244-8640

### Born That Way

Formerly 3rd Presbyterian LGBT Support Group. First, 3rd Mondays, 7:30-9:30pm, 34 Meigs St. Carol, 482-3832 or Kaara, 654-7516.

### Free syphilis testing

Trillium Health, 259 Monroe Ave., 5-8pm. 442-2220.

### Rochester Historical Bowling Society

7:15pm, Mondays. Clover Lanes, 2750 Monroe Ave. (Group is full.)

### HIV Positive Men's Support group

Every Monday, 5pm, Trillium Health Center for Positive Living, 259 Monroe Ave.

### Frontrunners/Frontwalkers

Mondays, 6pm, George Eastman House parking lot. [www.rochesterfrontrunners.org](http://www.rochesterfrontrunners.org).

### Steps Beyond Stems

Crack Support Group, Mondays, 7-8pm, 289 Monroe Ave.

### Equality Rochester

2nd Mondays, 7-8:30 pm, Equal=Grounds. 426-0862; [annetischer1@gmail.com](mailto:annetischer1@gmail.com)

## TUESDAYS

### Charlie's Group

2nd Tuesdays. Monthly peer-facilitated support group for married men who have sex with men. Confidential, free. For time, place: email: [charlie@gayalliance.org](mailto:charlie@gayalliance.org).

### Women's Community Chorus

Rehearsals each Tuesday, 6:30-9pm, Downtown United Pres. Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh Street. 234-4441, [www.therwcc.org](http://www.therwcc.org)

### Free HIV Testing

9am-7pm. Trillium Health, 259 Monroe Ave.

## WEDNESDAYS

### L.O.R.A Knitting Group

Now meeting on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at Cross Roads Coffee House, 752 South Goodman St.

### Identity Group

The Identity Group is for LGBT identified individuals who have a developmental disability diagnosis. The group meets Wednesdays 3-4 pm at ARC Health Services (2060 Brighton-Henrietta Townline Rd. 14623). The goal of the group is to provide a safe space to discuss identity issues, share personal experiences and increase self-esteem. The group is facilitated by Delaina Fico. LMSW. For more information, please contact Delaina Fico at [dfico@arcmonroe.org](mailto:dfico@arcmonroe.org) or 585-271-0661 ext. 1552.

### Gay Alliance Board of Directors

Meets Third Wednesdays, 6pm, 875 E. Main St. 244-8640

### New Freedom New Happiness

AA Gay meeting, 7pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. Men and women. Open.

### Support Group for Parents who have lost Children

First, 3rd Wednesdays, 11am-12:30pm, Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. Genesee Region Home Care. Free. 325-1880

### COAP

Come Out and Play. Wednesday game nights. 8-11 pm. Equal=Grounds, 750 South Ave. 7pm, [paulkaseman@gmail.com](mailto:paulkaseman@gmail.com).

### Rochester Rams General Meeting

2nd Wednesdays, 7:30pm, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. [www.rochesterrams.com](http://www.rochesterrams.com)

### Brothers Keeper

Support group for men over 30. Third Wednesdays, 5:30-7:30pm, MOCHA Center, 107 Liberty Pole Way. 420-1400

### HIV+ Mixed Men's Group

Wednesdays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Trillium Health, 259 Monroe Ave.

### Frontrunners/Frontwalkers

6pm, Eastman House parking lot. [www.rochesterfrontrunners.org](http://www.rochesterfrontrunners.org).

### Gay Alliance Library & Archives,

David Bohnett Cyber Center. Every Mon./Wed. 6-8pm. First floor, 875 E. Main St. 244-8640

### Empire Bears

Every Wednesday. 6pm dinner at The Wintonaire. [www.empirebears.com](http://www.empirebears.com)

## THURSDAYS

### Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns

6:30pm, first Thursday. Ralph, 271-7649

### Queer Radical Reading Group

First and third Thursdays, 7pm, Equal=Grounds, 750 South Ave.

### Gay Alliance Youth Gender Identity Support Group

Thursdays, 5:30-6:30, GAGV Library, 1st floor, off Prince St. lobby. 875 E. Main St. Ages 13-18. 244-8640.

### Pride at Work

First Thursdays, 5:30pm. 1354 Buffalo Road, Rochester 14624, 426-0862.

### GLOB&L (Gays & Lesbians of Bausch & Lomb).

Meets every third Thursday in Area 67 conference room at the Optic Center. Voice mail: 338-8977

### Rochester Gay Men's Chorus

Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 6:30-9pm, 423-0650

### Free confidential walk-in HIV testing

Every Thursday night, 5-8pm, Trillium Health, 259 Monroe Ave. 442-2220

### Out & Equal Second Thursdays

Social/business networking, 5:30-7:30pm. Changing venues. E-mail: [fingerlakes@outand-equal.org](mailto:fingerlakes@outand-equal.org)

### Genesee Valley Gender Variants

7-9pm, Equal=Grounds, 750 South Ave. GV GenderVariants@yahoo.com

### Buffalo Women's Coffee Social

Every Thursday, 7 pm - 9:30pm, Spot Coffee Shop, 765 Elmwood Ave. Buffalo. For more info: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/buffaloles/> Contact Person: Cathie: Email: [ctimian@l-o-r-a.com](mailto:ctimian@l-o-r-a.com); Phone: 585.313.3037

## FRIDAYS

### Gay Men's AA meeting

Fridays, 7:30-8:30pm, Closed meeting. Emmanuel Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave.

### Gay Alliance Youth

Fridays, 7-9pm, Open Arms MCC, 707 E. Main St., 244-8640

### GLBTQI Motorcycle Group

Second Fridays, 5:30pm, Various locations. RochesterGLBTQIbikers@yahoo.com; 467-6456; [bmdaniels@frontiernet.net](mailto:bmdaniels@frontiernet.net).

### LORA 2nd Friday LGBT Potluck

2nd Fridays, 6:30pm - 9:30pm. Please call for location. Bring a friend & a dish to pass! Everyone Welcome! Coffee/Tea/Hot Chocolate Supplied. For more info: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/L.O.R.A.14464/>Contact Person: Cathie: Email: [ctimian@l-o-r-a.com](mailto:ctimian@l-o-r-a.com); Phone: 585.313.3037

### Crystal Meth Anonymous

Immanuel Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave. at Brunswick. Meeting every Friday 4 pm in the basement.

### LORA LGBT Dinner & Movie

3rd Fridays, 6pm Dinner followed by a movie we voted on at dinner! Call for location. Bring a friend a join us for dinner & movie night! For more info: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/L.O.R.A.14464/>Contact Person: Cathie: Email: [ctimian@l-o-r-a.com](mailto:ctimian@l-o-r-a.com); Phone: 585.313.3037

### LORA LGBT Gaymes Night

4th Fridays, 7pm - 9:30pm. Please call for location. Bring a friend & a snack to share - Coffee/Tea/Hot Chocolate Supplied. For more info: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/L.O.R.A.14464/>Contact Person: Cathie: Email: [ctimian@l-o-r-a.com](mailto:ctimian@l-o-r-a.com); Phone: 585.313.3037

## SATURDAYS

### Rochester Rams Bar Night

Third Saturdays, 8pm-2am, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. 271-6930

### LGBT Family Pride Rochester

Meets second Saturday of the month, 1-4pm, Crossroads Coffee House, 752 S. Goodman St. Contact Person: Christine O'Reilly Email: [groups@loragroup.org](mailto:groups@loragroup.org); sponsored by: LORA - [www.loragroup.org](http://www.loragroup.org)

### Rochester Trans Group

Social/educational group for gender-variant people, friends. Last Saturdays, 3-5:30pm, GAGV fifth floor, 875 E. Main St.

### Frontrunners/Frontwalkers

9am, George Eastman House parking lot.[www.rochesterfrontrunners.org](http://www.rochesterfrontrunners.org).

### Empire Bears Potluck

2nd Saturdays, GAGV, 875 E. Main, 5th floor, 6:30pm greet; 7pm dinner. Bring dish to pass. [www.empirebears.org](http://www.empirebears.org).

### Cross Dresser Support Group

First Saturdays, 6-9pm, call for location: 251-2132; [RCDNET@hotmail.com](mailto:RCDNET@hotmail.com)

### Guys Night Out

GNO, social group for transmen, now meets on the second Saturday of the month, @ 1pm @ Equal Grounds, 750 South Ave.

### Saturday Night Special Gay AA

7pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd., S. Men and women. Open meeting.

### Lilac Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf (LRAD)

2nd Saturdays, 6-9pm. [rcoaster@rochester.rr.com](mailto:rcoaster@rochester.rr.com)

### Sophia's Supper Club

First and third Saturdays. <http://www.inspiritual.biz/online-spiritual-evolution-gro/>

## SUNDAYS

### Parents Families & Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG)

For location: 244-8460; [pflag@gayalliance.org](mailto:pflag@gayalliance.org).

### Rochester General Assembly

Sundays, Flying Squirrel Community Center, 285 Clarissa St.

### Unity Fellowship Church

Sundays, 1:30 pm, Lutheran Church of Peace, 125 Caroline St., 14620. 520-6188.

### Dignity-Integrity

1st Sunday: 5pm Episcopal Eucharist with music; 2nd Sunday: 5pm Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word with music; 3rd Sunday: 5pm Episcopal Eucharist (quiet); 4th Sunday: 5pm Prayers to start the week, followed by potluck supper.

### Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church

707 E. Main St. Rochester, 10:30am, 271-8478

### Gay Men's Alcoholics Anonymous

St. Luke's/St. Simon Cyrene Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. 8pm, 232-6720, Weekly. Closed meeting

### Men's Cooking Group

Third or fourth Sundays, 355-7664.

### Civil Rights Front

Every Tuesday, 5pm, Equal=Grounds, 750 South Ave. <http://www.civilrightsfront.wordpress.com>

### LORA LGBT Sunday Brunch

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11:30am - 2:30pm. Opa! Authentic Greek Koozina, 1175 Jefferson Rd. For more info: <http://www.facebook.com/lora-sundaybrunch> Contact Person: Cathie; Email: [ctimian@l-o-r-a.com](mailto:ctimian@l-o-r-a.com); Phone: 585.313.3037

### Gutter Gals - Bowling

2nd & 4th Sundays, 6:30pm - 9:30pm. Bowl A Roll, 1560 Jefferson Rd. \$5.70 for 2 games & \$2.50 for shoes. For more info: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/guttergals/> Contact Person: Cathie: Email: [ctimian@l-o-r-a.com](mailto:ctimian@l-o-r-a.com); Phone: 585.313.3037

## ROCHESTER AA/NA MEETINGS

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

## 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 Hillside Ave. and before Highland Ave. Or take the #1 Park Ave. to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton. This is an open discussion meeting. All issues – as they relate to our alcoholism/addiction and recovery – are fair game.

## FRIDAYS

### Gay Men's

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

7pm. First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd. Bus riders: The #18 University Ave. bus does not go by the church on weekend evenings. Take the #1 Park Ave. bus to the corner of East and Winton, then walk five minutes south (uphill) on Winton.

- Open meeting, all are welcome, "straight-friendly"
- Mixed men and women
- Handicapped accessible, take 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

8pm. St. Luke/St. Simon's Episcopal Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh Street. Bus riders use the Fitzhugh Street stop on Main Street at the County Office Building and walk south one block.

- Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts
  - Men's meeting
  - NOT handicapped accessible
- Meeting begins with a speaker, followed by open discussion.

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# December-January

## SUNDAY 1

**Dignity-Integrity.** Episcopal Mass/Healing Service, with music. 5 pm, St. Luke's and St. Simon's Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St. (Same schedule for Jan.)

**AIDS Quilt Panels on display** at Equal=Grounds Coffee House, 750 S. Clinton, through Dec. 7.

**World AIDS Day concert.** Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St. at East Ave. 7 pm. \$10; student admission with ID \$5. Tickets at Outlandish, Equal=Grounds and at door.

## SUNDAY 8

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

## WEDNESDAY 11

**Making Steampunk attire** 5-7pm. redball@gayalliance.org.

## THURSDAY 12

**Out & Equal Second Thursdays** Social Networking Event. 5:30-7:30 pm, Rochester Museum and Science Center, 657 East Ave.

## FRIDAY 13

**Rochester Gay Men's Chorus concert.** "Come Wassail Away." 8 pm, Hochstein Performance Hall, 50 Plymouth Ave. Tickets at Parkleigh, Outlandish, Equal=Grounds and online at www.thergmc.org.

## SATURDAY 14

**Rochester Gay Men's Chorus concert.** "Come Wassail Away." 8 pm, Hochstein Performance Hall, 50 Plymouth Ave. Tickets at Parkleigh, Outlandish, Equal=Grounds and online at www.thergmc.org.

**ROMANS Holiday Party.** For details see <http://www.wnyromans.com>.

## SUNDAY 15

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

## SATURDAY 21

**Winter Solstice**

## SUNDAY 22

**Dignity-Integrity.** Evening Prayer, followed by potluck dinner. 5 pm, St. Luke's and St. Simon's Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

## WEDNESDAY 25

**Christmas Day**

## FRIDAY 27

**Dignity-Integrity Christmas Hymn Sing.** With Tim Schramm on organ. 7 pm, St. Luke's and St. Simon's Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

## SATURDAY 28

**Rochester Trans Group End Of Year Party.** 3-5:30pm. Meet at GAGV, 5th floor, 875 E. Main St. Check website for details: [www.rnytg.org](http://www.rnytg.org)

## SUNDAY 29

**Dignity-Integrity.** Evening Prayer (December only). 5 pm, St. Luke's and St. Simon's Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

## TUESDAY 31

**New Year's Eve**

**SAGE New Year's Lunch Party.** Bring a dish to pass. 11:30 am, Open Arms MCC, 707 E. Main St.

## JANUARY

## WEDNESDAY 1

**New Year's Day**

## FRIDAY 3

**Open Arms MCC Opening Celebration.** Through Jan. 5, 707 E. Main St. Guests: Rev. Elder Dr. Nancy Wilson, Moderator MCC and Rev. Elder Ken Martin. Details at [openarmsmcc.org](http://openarmsmcc.org).

## WEDNESDAY 8

**Making Steampunk attire** 5-7pm. redball@gayalliance.org.

## WEDNESDAY 15

**Empty Closet deadline** for February issue. 244-9030; [susanj@gayalliance.org](mailto:susanj@gayalliance.org).

## SATURDAY 18

**Rochester Women's Community Chorus concert.** "Yearning to Breathe Free." 7:30 pm, St. Anne Church, 1600 Mt. Hope Ave. Silent auction 7pm. Tickets may be purchased from chorus members or at the door. \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and students, \$5 for children 12 and younger. Sign language interpreted, handicapped accessible. [www.therwcc.org](http://www.therwcc.org) or call 585-2234-4441.

## FRIDAY 31

**Super Ball at Bristol Mountain.** With Toronto Gay Ski and Snowboarding club. [www.bristolmountain.com](http://www.bristolmountain.com).

# Classifieds

**Classified ads** are \$5 for the first 30 words; each additional 10 words is another \$1. We do not bill for classifieds, so please send or bring ad and payment to: *The Empty Closet*, 875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, New York 14605.

**Paying by check:** checks must be made out to Gay Alliance. The deadline is the 15th of the month, for the following month's issue. We cannot accept ads over the phone. Pay when you place your ad. We will accept only ads accompanied by name and phone number. Neither will be published, but we must be able to confirm placement.

*The Empty Closet* is not responsible for financial loss or physical injury that may result from any contact with an advertiser. Advertisers must use their own box number, voice mail, e-mail or personal address/phone number.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Children's Ministry thriving** at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church for toddlers to 'tweens. Join us for vibrant, inclusive, progressive worship on Sundays at 10:30am. 740 Marshall Road off Chili Avenue. [info@openarmsmcc.org](mailto:info@openarmsmcc.org) (585) 271-8478.

## PERSONALS

**Looking for Mr. Right.** GWM, 47, in great shape, looking for LTR. Non smoking guy in good shape. All races and ages, please apply. Contact 585-698-8157.

## SERVICES

**Man to Man Rubdown.** Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! Call for special holiday rates! Relax with this experienced, fit, healthy, middle-aged, non-smoking GWM. Central location. Private home. Incalls/outcalls. Reasonable rates. cell#585-773-2410 or home#585-235-6688.

**Ask questions.** Established life coach opens your direction about goals, questions, issues using classic tarot symbology and fascinating, confidential discussion. \$65/hour in your home/office. [kivawyan-dotte@gmail.com](mailto:kivawyan-dotte@gmail.com)

**Wedding Space and clergy services available.** Celebrate your special day at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church 740 Marshall Rd. off Chili Ave. [info@openarmsmcc.org](mailto:info@openarmsmcc.org) (585) 271-8478

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## ASK EM BY JUSTIN HUBBELL





# Bed & Breakfast

**The Empty Closet** is published by the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, 875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, New York 14605. © 2013, All rights reserved.

**Editor-in-Chief:** Susan Jordan  
**Staff Reporter:** Ove Overmyer  
**Graphic Design:** Jim Anderson

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The Empty Closet does not print advertisements that contain nude drawings or photographs, nor does it print advertising that states that the person pictured in the ad is for sale, or that you will "get" that particular person if you patronize the establishment advertised. Advertisements that are explicitly racist, sexist, ageist, ableist or homophobic will be refused; advertisements from organizations that are sexist, racist, ageist, ableist or anti-gay will also be refused. All political advertisements must contain information about who placed them and a method of contact. Additionally, The Empty Closet does not print negative or "attack" advertisements, whether they relate to a product or politics and no matter in whose interest the ad is being produced. A negative advertisement is defined as one that focuses upon a rival product, or in the political area, a rival election candidate or party, in order to point out supposed flaws and to persuade the public not to buy it (or vote for him or her). The Empty Closet maintains, within legal boundaries, neutrality regarding products, political candidates and parties. However, "attack" ads that fail to provide undisputable evidence that the information in the ad is true do not further in any way the objectives and policies of the Gay Alliance or The Empty Closet, including the primary tenet that The Empty Closet's purpose is to inform the Rochester gay community and to provide an impartial forum for ideas.

**Submissions:**

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

**Publication Information:**

The Empty Closet is published 11 times a year (December and January combined) by The Empty Closet Press for the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc. Approximately 5000 copies of each issue are distributed during the first week of the month, some by mail in a plain sealed envelope. The publication of the name or photograph of any person or organization in articles is not an indication of the sexual or affectional orientation of that person or the members of that organization. For further information, please write to The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main St., Rochester NY, 14605, call (585) 244-9030 or e-mail emptycloset@gagv.us.

The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., as stated in the bylaws of that organization. Its purpose is to inform the Rochester gay community about local and national gay-related news and events; to provide a forum for ideas and creative work from the local gay community; to help promote leadership within the community, and to be a part of a national network of lesbian and gay publications that exchange ideas and seek to educate.

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

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

**Letters to the editor:**

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

## Kyle's Bed & Breakfast by Greg Fox

Panel 12: ...I JUST HAVE TO SAY...
   
Panel 13: ...I AM GOING TO SPEAK UP. I'M GOING TO BE A LOUDMOUTH FOR LGBT RIGHTS!
   
Panel 14: AND IF THAT COSTS ME AN OLYMPIC MEDAL, WELL... IT'LL BE WORTH IT.
   
Panel 15: SATISFIED?
   
Panel 16: HMM... PERHAPS. NOW... LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR COSTUME DESIGNS.
   
Panel 17: RICHARD, HE HASN'T EVEN CHECKED INTO HIS ROOM YET!
   
Panel 18: PRIORITIES, KYLE...
   
The comic ends with a silhouette of three people talking.
   
Greg Fox © 2013
   
Website - www.kylecomics.com
   
E-Mail - KylesBnB@aol.com
 


**PFLAG MEETS THE 3RD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH**

Meetings are at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, 707 E. Main St., Rochester, NY 14605 from 1 to 3pm. Questions? Call: 585-244-8640 and leave a message, or e-mail: pflag@gayalliance.org - Join us!

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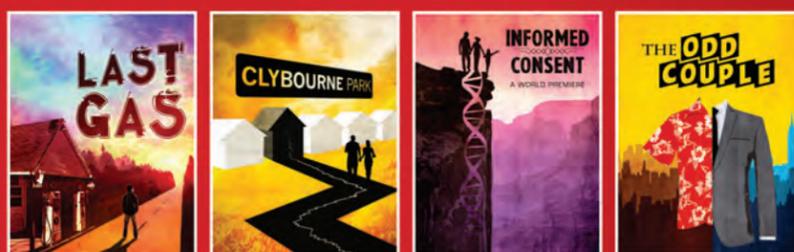
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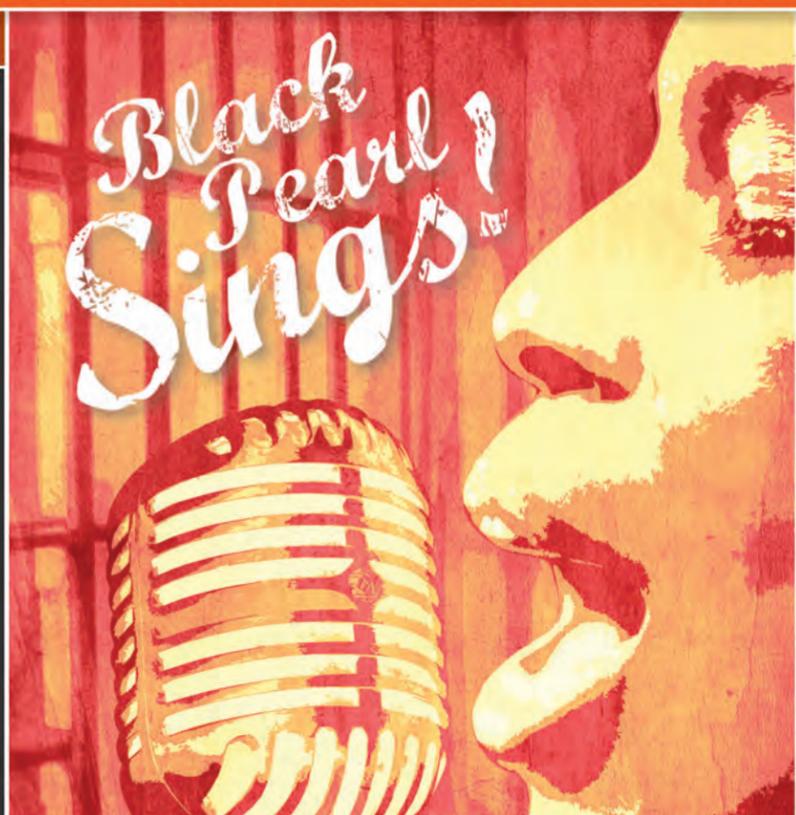
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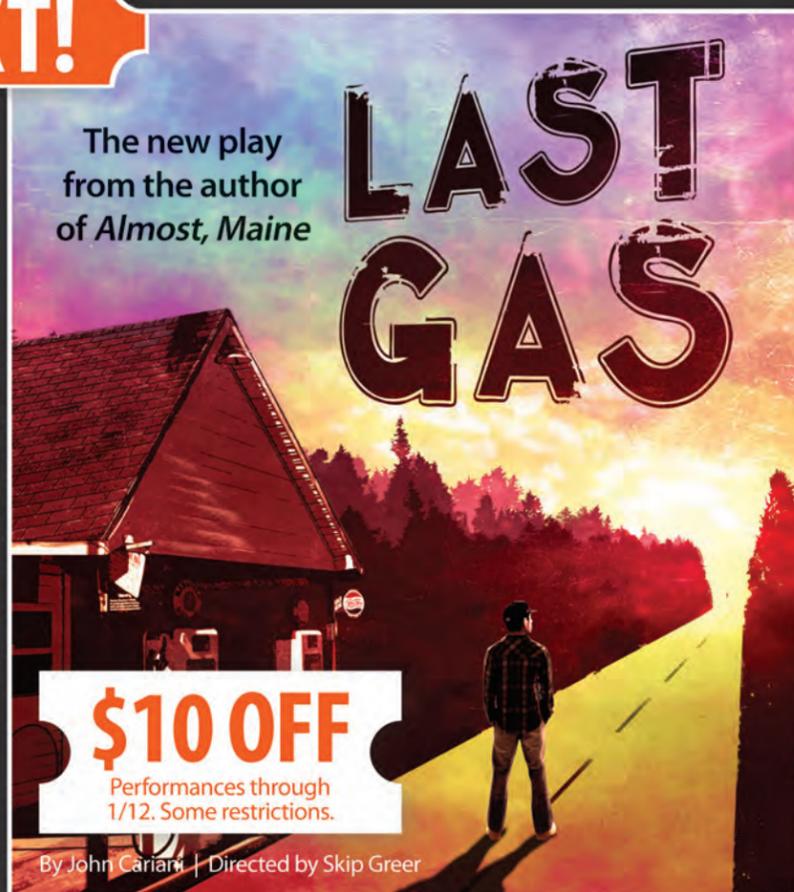
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## GREAT SHOWS UP NEXT!



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1/12. Some restrictions.

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**JAN 7 - FEB 2**

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