Sue Cowell accepts Triangle Award; LGBTQ scholarship funding takes off

By Susan Jordan

Sue Cowell has always been someone who modestly works behind the scenes and avoids the limelight. But on May 3 she was the center of attention, as over 150 people honored her lifetime of multiple and diverse achievements at Studio 180, 180 St. Paul St. The scholarship that will bear her name is off to a great start (see below). The Rochester Area Community Foundation will house a series of scholarships within the Rochester LGBTQ Scholarship Fund; the one bearing Sue’s name is the first.

Gay Alliance Executive Director Scott Fearing started the May 3 event by saying that it was “a wonderfully happy occa- sion, to pay tribute to someone who has accomplished so much.” Sue has been President of the Gay Alliance board three times, as well as serving as Executive Director from 2009-2012.

Referring to Evelyn Bailey’s term as “On the Shoulders of a Giant,” Fearing said, “Sue truly is a giant — in my 20 years of doing this work, there’s rarely been anyone so gracious, kind, thoughtful and wise.”

Evelyn Bailey presented Sue with the Shoulders To Stand On Triangle Award. She said, “Today we recognize a giant in our midst. Sue Cowell. Since coming to Rochester in 1977, Sue spent her time, energy and talent making the legacy of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass a reality.

“Many have fond memories of Wil- mer and Harper St. where it all began. Sue is a champion of gay rights through her political, medi- cal, social and econ- omic activism. Many are unaware of her ‘Softball Hall of Fame’ sta- tus when her batting average on Paul’s Grocery Softball Team soared to .700.

“Often in the forefront of our community’s strug- gle for equality and justice, Sue has faced many chal- lenges. Today she confronts the most personal challenge of all. Several years ago, Sue was diag- nosed with Alzheimers, a dis- ease that unbecknowst to her had already begun to inauspicious affect her life. As with all of the other challenges in her life, Sue faces this head on.

“In our ongoing fight person- ally, collectively and as a com- munity, to be healthy and free to be who we are — gay, straight, transgender, intersex, queer — the shoulders of this giant laid a strong foundation that brings us closer to a future of equality and justice for all, regardless of the arena. It is with warm heartfelt regard and deepest gratitude that I present the Shoulders To Stand On Triangle Award to Sue Cowell on behalf of the Rochester community.

“Sue’s diverse achievements brought people together on May 2 from many different worlds. From The MOCHA Project, serving the HIV prevention needs of communities of color, which Sue helped Gary Eng- lish to found in 1997; former MOCHA staffer Barbara Turner read a message from Gary, “Although it saddens me that I cannot be present for this well-deserved tribute, I would like to express my gratitude for the hard work and coalition build- ing that Sue Cowell exhibited while the MOCHA Project was being founded in 1997. Sue was one of four concerned individu- als who... laid the foundation for the establishment of what we today call The MOCHA Center. She provided the bridge to the...”

At the April 27 rally for marriage equality outside the Federal Building, the day before the Supreme Court heard arguments. Photo: Ove Overmeyer

Are our families real? SCOTUS to rule on marriage equality this month

By Susan Jordan

On April 28, plaintiffs in four same-sex marriage cases presented oral arguments before the Supreme Court of the Unit- ed States. A ruling is expected at the end of June.

DeBoer et al v. Snyder, filed by Michigan couples April and Jayne DeBoer and Jayne Rowe, is one of four cases making up the group Obergefell vs. Hodg- es that is asking the Court to establish whether the Four- teenth Amendment to the Con- stitution requires states to allow same-sex couples to marry.

Mary Bonauto of Boston- based Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), who presented oral arguments on behalf of the DeBoer-Rowe family, spoke of marriage as the foundation of family, and said that times can blind us to what is asking the Court to establish the security of having two legal parents. They later challenged the state’s marriage ban since it keeps April and Jayne, as well as the children, from being legally recognized as a family and from the protections other families enjoy.

They argue that state laws banning marriage equality vio- late the U.S. Constitution’s guarantees of equal protec- tion and due process. While 37 states currently recognize mar- riage equality, Michigan is one of the few remaining states that does not.

“This journey has been emo- tional and life-changing,” said Rowe. “We’re grateful to every- one in Michigan and around the country who has kept us in their thoughts and prayers, grateful for the support of our attorneys, and most of all to our children for their patience and strength.”

The DeBoer-Rowe family is represented by Michigan attor- neys Carole M. Starnay; Dana Nessel of Nessel and Kessel Law; Kenneth Mogill of Mogill; Posner St Cohen; Wayne State University Law Professor Robert Sceller and Bonauto.

April, Jayne and their fam- ily never imagined they would ultimately be a part of a prece- dent-setting, historic case which will decide the issue of marriage equality for the entire nation,” said Nessel. “It is time for our state and our country to give families like April and Jayne’s the full equal protection of the law. The United States will sim- ply be a better place when there is equality for all people.”

Along with Michigan, cases from Kentucky, Ohio, and Ten- nessee also make up the group Obergefell vs. Hodges argued on April 28. Jim Obergefell is ask- ing... (SCOTUS continues page 5)
Perspectives

The Empty Closet Editor
SUSAN JORDAN

Gay Alliance Education Director
JEANNE GAINSBURG

Closing arguments

The time may be near when LGBTQ Americans can end the struggle to have our marriages and families recognized nationally as ‘real’. Ahead of Supreme Court oral arguments on April 28, the national marriage-equal- ity group Freedom to Marry released a 30-second ad spot outlining what Evan Wolfson, the group’s founder, calls its ‘closing argument’.

Freedom to Marry explained that the phrase “closing argu- ment” is meant literally: the group will close its doors if the Supreme Court makes marriage equality the law of the land.

“This with latest ad, Free- dom to Marry is summing up our closing argument, in hopes of closing our doors after get- ting the national win,” said Evan Wolfson. “After 30-plus years of doing marriage work, I am grati- fied that we’re in such a strong place as we head into court…” The American people have resoundingly and unequivocally embraced the side of love and fairness. We hope the Supreme Court does the right thing, and agrees with more than 60 federal and state courts that have held marriage discrimination uncon- stitutional. America is ready for the freedom to marry. It’s time.’

Sixty percent of Americans support the freedom to marry, according to a Gallup poll released May 19.

But even if we win the right to marry, much work will remain before homophobia is only a memory, ugly prejudice reserved for the extremist minority. All Republican candidates are promising voters they will erase any progress made over the last 30 years to recognize gays as human beings and citizens with equal rights.

So even if there’s a big celebra- tion by the end of this month, we shouldn’t get complacent.

Women won the vote almost 100 years ago and have yet to earn the same pay for doing the same work as their male counterparts, while violence against women con- tinues to repress women’s lives. Slavery ended in this country 150 years ago, but racism, eco- nomic injustice (amounting to de- facto slavery) and white violence against African Americans have yet to end.

Recognizing our right to marry and recognizing our fami- lies as equal is so important for many reasons, perhaps most profoundly because such recognition makes it clear that LGBTQ people are human beings. The stereotype favored by the bigots is that gays are heartless, subhuman sexual predators incapable of love. And we know what can happen to those society sees as subhuman.

Their lives don’t count. It is becoming clear to most Americans that gays are capa- ble of love and commitment as heterosexuals. We can no lon- ger be stereotyped as criminals or deviant freaks, and punished by heterosexual eager to proj- ect their own guilt feelings and neurotic obsession with sexual- ity onto “The Other” – the sup- posed sexual outlaws.

Even when marriage equality happens, there will still be issues to deal with, such as ensur- ing compliance with federal law, and overcoming the hate rhet- oric that incites bullying, banning and murder. And if SCOTUS rules in favor, the bigot backlash could be violent.

We can’t close all our doors yet.

What’s not wrong?

Comfort is such a fascinating feeling immediately following a toothache. Why is it that we rarely appreciate or are even aware of comfort until we are in pain?

On a personal quest to find ways that I can bring more mindfulness into my life, I recently read Peace Is Every Step by world-renowned Zen mas- ter and spiritual leader Thich Nhat Hanh. The chapter titled “What’s Not Wrong” really res- onated with me.

For the past five months, I have been working towards thinking about what’s not wrong at any given moment. It makes me appreciate all that I have and helps me rejoice in what is good. Newspapers, by their very nature, must report on “what’s wrong,” so that we are aware of the injustice and inequality in our society, but this column will take a break from all of that.

Below is a small sample of the things that are not wrong in my little corner at the Gay Alliance.

For Pride is 6 is break- ing all current records for both number of riders and fundrais- ing. Scheduled to kick off at 10 a.m. on June 20 this ride and the people who help to make it work (I think of my “Blood, Sweat and Beers” article in the Gay Alliance section) make it so damn easy to be mindful of what’s not wrong.

Rowan Collins, our new Education Coordinator, has hit the ground running and does not disappoint! Barely at the legal drinking age, Rowan con- tinues to truly WOW partici- pants with his expertise, his caring message, his mora- lity and his skills at taking charge of making facilitation. I love that guy!

We recently were asked to work with the Rochester City School District to offer advice on an informational letter to parents to consult on a time line and provide educational train- ings to support a transitioning teacher. Our final presentation was to be an open educational forum for parents who had con- cerns or questions. The number of parents who attended: zero. Times they are a-changing.

News of our quality educa- tional programming has spread nationally and in the past year and a half, we have provided trainings in California seven times, Pennsylvania four times, New Jersey, Georgia, West Virginia, Mas- sachusetts and Tennessee. In June we are scheduled to run the program again in New Jer- sey as well as in Virginia and Illinois.

We are thrilled to be travel- ing the country with our train- ings and also provide school districts with written materials so that the vast majority of our educa- tional programming is done right here in our beloved Roch- ester community. In 2015, from January through the end of May, we have already provided 81 local trainings and presenta- tions, up from 55 at this same time last year.

I am truly thankful for the wonderful achievements we have had both with Ride For Pride and our education- al programming, and despite the added pressures and stress that come with success, I will continue to remind myself to breathe, be in the moment and revel in what’s not wrong.

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... study on AIDS in the American College Health Association Journal in 1985, Valenti said. “The best part about this is that Sue was seeking answers before we even knew what the questions were... This study was one of the first risk behavior studies in gay men done anywhere on the planet.”

Together they co-founded AIDS Rochester in 1983, and Bill Valenti recalled “that meeting on your front porch on Wilmer Street where the idea was born.” Sue also co-founded the Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS in 1985. Valenti commented on Sue’s continued work at the intersection of law and justice, including helping him contact the Calamus Foundation in NYC, which invested in Trillium Health’s End the Epidemic initiative in 2014 – their first investment outside NYC. “You gave to Trillium Health’s End the Epidemic initiative in 2014 – their first investment outside NYC.”

The Buffalo Pride Parade will feature a parade route from Allen Street to the Pride Festival at Canalside. Parade registration is free and open to the public.

The Pride Festival embodies 2015’s Show & Tell theme. One of the organizations participate in the parade, competing for awards like “Best Overall”, “Best Interpretation of Theme” and “Most Creative.” (See the back cover of this issue.)

CNP Pride Festival is scheduled for June 20, at Syracuse Inner Harbor. The theme is “Reflections of Pride: Stone Wall”. See CNP Pride.com for more information.

New York City Pride Week is June 21-28 (see HeritagPride.com for full details). On June 28, the Pride Parade starts at 11 a.m. and the March takes place at noon; the Dance on the Pier begins at 3 p.m. Grand Marshals are openly gay city leaders, including John Waters and Chaz Bono.

In June 20 is University of the City College of the University of the City. The Dyke March kicks off April 18. The Trans March is June 26 (see transpride@genderfront.com). It will honor Monica Forester, producer of Trans Pride Toronto, Dr. Alex Abramovich, advocate for home- less youth, and TransPULSE, health research project.

The Toronto Pride March, which draws over a million people, takes place June 28 at 2 p.m. Grand Marshals are David Fur- nish, Pussy Riot, Cyndi Lauper, John Waters and Chaz Bono.

COWELL (from page 1)

larger white LGBT community that supported MOCHA in its infancy... Let history be writ- ten that Sue Cowell has been the Susan B. Anthony of the black LGBT community in Rochester, New York. Long live the legacy and the great work of my friend Sue Cowell.

From the political world, where Sue manned or volunteered for many local political campaigns and served as a delegate to sev- eral national political conven- tions, came a group of elected officials, including Matt Haag, Harry Bronson, James Sandlin, Franklin, Eileen Spaul, Bill Mochtle, Tom Ferrante and Judge Ellen Yanus.

Rep. Louise Slaughter sent a message, which was not read on May 2, but it will appear in its entirety in the July Empty Closet. The letter reads in part, “I want to extend my gratitude for your years of service. Rochester has a long tra- dition of creating innovative and active policies. Sue’s contributions and your contributions carried on this proud legacy. Your record of social activism - spanning decades - has had a profound impact on our community... (E)very hero truly stands on the shoulders of a giant.”

Sue’s longtime friend Mark Swicewell commented on Sue’s social activism, stating, “Sue was one of the mentors in my life.” He compared her to board members who are younger brother and older sis- ter, adding, “I could go on for an hour or so believing all of the many campaigns and commit- tees and events that she chaired. However, I feel that it would dilute the full impact that Sue has had. She’s so much more than the sum of all that she has accomplished. In short, Sue became the voice and face of the gay community in Rochester.”

Swicewell remembered an occa- sion when candidates for NYS Attorney General were meeting in Albany with LGBT commu- nity representatives. Sue ques- tioned them about their suppor- t for SONDRA, the bill giving basic civil rights protections to New York’s LGBT community. The candidates were being evasive and dodging the question. From the back of the room Sue shout- ed, “Answer the question!”

To Swicewell, this was a revela- tion that changed his paradigm: “Why should we talk to can- didates this way? Why should we continue to present ourselves to their disrespect?” He said the atmosphere in the room became electric and the mood and our world had shifted.”

He ended, “Thank you for helping me realize that I more clearly see the correct response when they are confronted with the dilemmas we face as a gay community. And thank you, Sue, for ensuring that a greater part of the country is better informed and more fully prepared to ‘answer the question.’

From the world of medicine and HIV/AIDS treatment came Dr. Bill Valenti, recalling how he and Sue started their joint HIV-related work in the University at the Field of Rochester, where Sue, a nurse practitioner, worked at the AIDS Treatment and Health Service from 1977-1988. Dr. Valenti jokingly recalled his trepophobia, saying “I was confront- ed with ‘an lesbian activism.’

Recalling Sue’s work with Dr. Tom Rash to found the AIDS Screening Clinic in 1982, and their authoring of the first
Arkansas town blocks repeal of anti-discrimination ordinance

Some great news: People in Eureka Springs voted on May 11 to keep a measure that would prohibit the city and private businesses from discriminating against someone based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The unofficial final tally was 579 votes in favor of maintaining Ordinance 2223, approved by the city council in February; 231 people voted in favor of repealing the law.

The law is similar to an anti-discrimination ordinance passed by Springfield’s city council, that was later repealed by voters.

More than 2:1
-JoeMyGod.com

Oregon legislature passes ban on youth conversion therapy

On May 7, the Oregon Senate voted 21 to 8 to pass HB 2907, the Youth Mental Health Protection Act, which would ban conversion therapy for youth under the age of 18 by licensed mental health providers in Oregon.

On March 17, the Oregon House passed the bill on a 41 to 18 vote. HB 2907 moves to Governor Brown for consideration. She signed on May 22.

Oregon will become the third state to ban conversion therapy for youth, following California and New Jersey. Washington D.C. also has a ban. President Obama endorsed the states to test this practice on youth after the tragic suicide of transgender teen Leelah Alcorn after she endured conversion therapy. Earlier in May, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of New Jersey’s conversion therapy ban for licensed therapists.

Conversion therapy includes a range of dangerous and discredited practices aimed at changing someone’s sexual orientation or suppressing their gender identity or expression.

"This is an important step in protecting LGBTQ youth," said Nancy Haque, co-director of Basic Rights Oregon. "The harms caused by conversion therapy are very real and we must do everything we possibly can as a state to prevent the loss of even one child. I commend the Senate for its strong support of this bill."

Senators made strong statements in support of the bill and also for LGBTQ youth. Conversion therapy has no place in Oregon. 2307 moves to Governor Brown for consideration; she signed on May 22.

Oregon Action, PFLAG Oregon State Council, PFLAG Portland, PFLAG Portland Black Chapter, PFLAG Oregon Central Coast, Rural Organizing Project, TransActive Gender Center, Portland Two Spirit Society, Urban League of Portland and Western States Center.

Sociologists put “final nail in coffin” of anti-gay Regenrus study

Miranda Blue writes at Right Wing Watch

In an upcoming article, a pair of sociologists are putting what they call the “final nail in the coffin” of the most-critiqued study by University of Texas Sociologist Mark Regenrus that purported to show that being raised by gay and lesbian parents harms children.

The Regenrus study has become a favorite tool of Religious Right activists seeking to show that households led by same-sex couples are bad for children. At the same time, the study has come under scrutiny for the funding it received from anti-gay groups and for its lack of respon- dents who were actually raised in same-sex households.

Indiana University’s Brian Powell and the University of Connecticut’s Simon Cheng didn’t just find methodological flaws in Regenrus’ research — they took the data he collected, cleaned it up, and re-ran the study, coming to a very different conclusion about families led by same-sex couples. Their article will be published in “Social Science Research,” the same journal that published the Regenrus study.

By eliminating suspect data — for example, a 25-year-old who claimed to be 7’8”, 88 pounds, and another who reported having been arrested at age one — and correcting what they view as Regenrus’ methodologi- cal errors, Cheng and Powell found that Regenrus’ conclusions were so “fragile” that his data could actually show that children raised by gay and lesbian parents don’t face negative adult outcomes.

-JoeMyGod.com

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Gambia president slams threats to gay men

By Darren We on gaystarnews.com

Photo via Jeggaj/Wikimedia

The Gambia’s notoriously anti-gay President Yahya Jammeh has threatened to slit the throats of gay men in the small West African nation and said there was nothing the West could do to stop him.

The dictator, who seized power in a bloody coup in 1994, made the inflammatory comments last month during a stop on a nationwide agricultural tour.

VICE News obtained a translation of Jammeh’s speech, which was about fostering a healthy atmosphere for the country’s youth.

“If you do it [in the Gambia] I will slit your throat — if you are a man and want to marry another man in this country and we catch you, no one will ever see eyes on you again, and no white person can do anything about it,” he said in the Wolof language to a crowd in the town of Farafeni in the country’s North Bank Region.

Last year, Jammeh approved a law that punishes gay sex with life imprisonment. Since its enactment, dozens of gay men have been rounded up and thrown in jail.

The EU cut aid to the Gambia in response but that has not deterred the country’s president from threatening LGBTI people.

See more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/gambia-president-threatens-slitrthroats-gay130515#sthash.SE9xQrjB.dpuf

COMMENTARY: It’s ironic that Jammeh states that no white person can influence the Gambian approval of gay, since locally white evangelicals from the west have advocated for homophobia in Africa for decades.

Asامة gay group SMUG is suing U.S. evangelical groups who contributed funds to Jammeh’s campaign.

Photo via Jagga/Wikimedia

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Supportive government policies can even help reduce the astronomically high rate of suicide attempts among trans citizens, said Rebecca Copeland, a parent advocate with Equality Hawaii. The mother of a 14-year-old trans son, Copeland told the AP, “It’s the lack of recognition in society that really hurts people. When people look at [their birth certificate] and it doesn’t reflect who they are it can really have devastating consequences.”

Gay Luxembourg PM marries longtime partner
By Darren Wee on gaystarnews.com
Photo via Xavier-Bettel/Facebook

Luxembourg’s openly gay Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, married his partner in May.

Bettel kept tight-lipped about his wedding plans in order to minimize press coverage in the conservative Catholic-majority duchy, which legalized gay marriage in June.

“He does not want to put his private life in the public spotlight and he has turned down requests from the celebrity magazines to cover the event,” a source told AFP.

Bettel became prime minister in 2013. Luxembourg has had a long-standing same-sex civil union law.

In August, Bettel said he would marry architect Gauthier Desteny, with whom he has been in a civil union since 2010.

“He asked me and I said yes,” he told the LA Times.

Read more: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/gay-luxembourg-pm-marry-june11059?sh=QYAmGh.Chdpd

Laramie, Wyoming bans anti-LGBT discrimination

Laramie City Council, Wyoming has approved Laramie Ordinance 1915 which will prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment and access to public facilities, the AP reports.

The council of the town where Matthew Shepard was murdered 17 years ago voted 7-2 in favor of the motion.

The Legislature had repeatedly rejected anti-discrimination bills, most recently early this year.

Jeral Arney, head of the group Wyoming Equality, said: “What a day for Wyoming, and what a day for the city that became known in the world as a place where Matthew Shepard’s murder to now step up and do this right thing. And I would really encourage other communities across the state to follow Laramie’s lead.”

Matthew Shepard’s mother Judy, who is active in a Denver foundation focusing on equality issues, said she was thrilled “that Matthew’s doing it, at the same time sort of saddened that the state of Wyoming can’t see fit to do that as well. Maybe the rest of Wyoming will understand this is about fellow human beings and not something that’s other than what they are.”

Openly gay Rep. Cathy Connolly (D-Mont) said the bill “reflects the growing acceptance of trans people in the nation’s capital,” in Albany County, five of six of your senators and representatives not only supported that measure, but actively, vigorously supported that measure, and we will continue to do so. My hope is from tonight that we will do so using the leadership of Laramie.”

Two councils voted against the ordinance. Both Joe Virlee and Bryan Schuster said they were concerned the ordinance caused concerns about religious freedom.

Rep. Kendall Kroeker (R-Evansville), who voted against the anti-discrimination bill this year, said “the Matt Shepard case was a tragedy, but I don’t see how an anti-discrimination ordinance would have stopped somebody from committing that heinous crime.”

Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/ixzz3a7a77Ik2Y

Bullied 12-year-old bi girl told to “toughen up” commits suicide
By Darren Wee on gaystarnews.com
Photo via Facebook

A 12-year-old girl bullied for being bisexual has committed suicide.

Alyssa Morgan from Des Moines, Iowa hung herself in her family’s garage on April 3.

“I am the one who found my daughter and the image haunts me every day,” her mother Nicole Morgan told KCCI-TV.

“Something is wrong with society that our children are on their own and are being bullied,” said Alyssa’s father. “I just hope Alyssa is in a better place now.”

Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/ixzz3a7a77Ik2Y

Matthew M. Howden, LCSW, CASAC

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Interview

Scott Page of Full Moon Vista Bike & Sport

By Susan Jordan

Scott Page of Full Moon Vista Bike & Sport, 661 South Ave., is a gay-friendly business; owner Scott Page says, “We get lots of LGBT customers.” Page opened the store in 2005 on St. Paul and moved to South Ave. in 2011. He told The Empty Closet, “I’ve been in the industry for a while. I was a rep for a bicycle company. The Rochester area was my territory. I’m from Hilton. I just decided I wanted to do this kind of business – a city shop. Malls all look alike. We sell a lot of road bikes but even bigger is hybrids – made for canals and bike paths. They’re half mountain bike, half road bike.”

There are both environmental and health benefits to biking. It has been very popular for many years in Europe, and seems to be increasingly popular here as well, especially with high gas prices. Page commented, “From everything we’ve seen, it’s growing and growing. In the city it’s growing big time and in the South Wedge we see growth everywhere. In this neighborhood people love the idea of being healthy and traveling on their own fuel. It’s more about the values than the money. You feel great and healthy.”

Like everyone who opens their own business, Scott Page has had periods of struggle. “The biggest thing is perception vs. reality,” he said. “Most people think you’re immediately doing well, but it’s the complete opposite. You’re the last to be paid and it takes years to get going – about six years. We still have struggles, like this past winter was brutal. Nobody was thinking about bikes! The difference is, when you work for someone you get a paycheck – but when you own your own business you have to be prepared for weird times.”

“It’s not the most secure environment. Many times you go without. If you pay yourself first, you’re going out of business! That’s the tough part. The fun part is, it’s nice working for yourself and knowing you and your team pulled it off and made a success.”

Scott has put together a trusted staff. “My rule is, I hire people because of personality rather than knowledge,” he said. “You can train people about knowledge, but you can’t train personality.” The shop employs five full time and five part time employees.

Half of Full Moon Vista’s customers are women, compared with the 10 percent that Scott says most other bike shops have. “We pay attention to what our women customers need and treat them with respect,” he said. “The first couple of times they come in, they are wary. By the third time they come in, they’re friends with us. It’s a very humbling experience.”

Scott loves being in the Wedge, one of the city’s fastest-growing neighborhoods. “I think the Wedge is really cool and we (merchants) all work well together. I love when people come in and say things like, ‘I’ve got to go to Hedonist and will be right back.’ They’re not just looking to buy bicycles.”

“I think the Wedge is really cool and we (merchants) all work well together. I love when people come in and say things like, ‘I’ve got to go to Hedonist and will be right back.’ They’re not just looking to buy bicycles.”

Scott Page, Photos: Susan Jordan

Staff member Kinna.

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Making the Scene

By Susan Jordan

Ray Pool and John Kubiniec are professional musicians living in Irondequoit. They met in Manhattan and have been together for 17 years, moving here from NYC two years ago.

Ray is a harpist, originally from Tulsa, Oklahoma, who says he is “trying to be a retired musician. I teach workshop classes around the country and in the UK.” He was about to leave for workshops in Toledo, but also teaches his private students on Skype. He plays folk songs, pop music, church music, Broadway and classical, and used to be harpist at the Waldorf Astoria.

John is an organist and pianist. He is organist at Gates Presbyterian Church and is also with Pro Musica. He said, “I’ve lived in Rochester between 1982 and 1991 and worked for the Catholic diocese. Originally I’m from North Tonawanda.” He is also a quilter who designs and teaches.

Now upstate suburbanites, the two enjoy the comparative peace and quiet. Ray says, “We love to cook and have taken classes and we enjoy watching the birds at the feeder in the backyard.” And gardening, John adds. “We have perennials – the deer would eat vegetables. We see all kinds of birds and had a wild turkey in the yard for a while.”

Their favorite Rochester things include the musical experiences the city has to offer. John said, “We meet in Manhattan. I had friends up here and family in the Buffalo area.”

Their other favorite things about Rochester include the Little Theatre, Harr’s Grocery and the organ concerts at all the local churches. Ray noted, “I like Harr’s Grocery a lot.” John said, “They have $7 dinners to go with a different menu every day. Aladdin’s is one of our favorite restaurants.” Ray added, “And Flavors of Asia at Clinton and Meigs.”

An ideal Saturday night would be a cookout on their patio, which they built after moving into their house in August 2013. If they were showing visitors around town, Ray said, “We’d drive along the lake and walk on the jetty at Seabreeze.”

My Own Private Rochester: Ray Pool and John Kubiniec

By Susan Jordan

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John summed up, “What I like about Rochester is all the events – and it’s easy to get around. Rochester has a lot to offer.”
By Ove Overmyer

On May 16, the Empire State Pride Agenda (ESPA) celebrated its 25-year history by hosting its 16th Annual Spring Dinner at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center.

The Spring Dinner is one of the signature fundraising events for the statewide civil rights advocacy organization. Featuring a cocktail reception, grazing stations, a live band, a presentation of Community Service Awards to 25 western New York honorees and live auction, the Spring Dinner raised more than $100,000 and drew over 550 guests to celebrate and show support for the Pride Agenda’s mission.

This year’s event attracted many celebrities and elected officials. They included actor, singer and comedic host Lea Delaria from Netflix’s hit series, “Orange is the New Black,” keynote speaker NYS Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, NYS Assembly Majority Leader Joe Morelle, NYS Assembly member Harry Bronson, Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren, City Council members Matt Haag and Elaine Spaul, Monroe County Legislator Carrie Andrews, Former Brighton Town Supervisor Sandy Frankel, former NYS Senator Jim Alesi and former Rochester Mayor Tom Richards. The event was co-chaired by Bruce Gorman and Julia Green Sewuk.

ESPA Executive Director Nathan M. Schaefer reflected on Rochester’s role in transforming the civil rights landscape of New York State. He said, “Through it all, Rochester has been a beacon that shines on the rest of New York State and reminds us all how we can do better when it comes to LGBT inclusivity. Western New York provides a role model for leadership and caring for one another and the strongest showing of ally support anywhere in the state.” Schaefer also remarked ESPA was extremely proud to honor 25 western New York community champions who have dedicated their hearts, time and energy to empowering friends, neighbors and complete strangers to live healthier, safer and happier lives. He added, “These champions are true inspirations. Tonight we raise a glass in tribute to all they have accomplished and will continue to do in the name of equality and justice.”

The 2015 Community Champions are John Altieri, Bryan Ball, Shirley Bowen, Jessica Cohen, Larry Champoux, John Cullen, PhD, John Curtis, former Mayors Robert Duffy, William Johnson and Thomas Richards, former Brighton Supervisor Sandra Frankel, Gay Alliance Education Director Jeanne Gainsburg, ImageOut’s Michael Gamilla, Maureen Kelly, Catherine Lewis, Mallory Livingston, Laine Lundquist, Laurie Mancuso, Wanda Martinez, Ove Overmyer, Samuel Amoresio, Brett Sanchez, BJ Scanlon, Bill Schaefer, Dr. William Valenti, Jo Meleca-Voigt, Thomas Warfield, Dontae Wil-liamson.

The Community Champions honored by The Pride Agenda. Photo: Gregg Horst/Jeff Palm

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman was keynote speaker. Photo: Gregg Horst/Jeff Palm

Nathan Schaefer presents the award to Sandy Frankel, who has announced her candidacy for Monroe County Executive. Photo: Garnetta Ely

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Thousands march in Havana for equality, marriage rights

Thousands marched in Havana on May 8 to support gay rights and to join a symbolic marriage ceremony organized by President Raul Castro’s daughter Mariela.

Waving Cuban and rainbow-colored flags, the marchers called for equality and marriage rights for Cuba’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, on the 50th National Day Against Homophobia.

“What we must ensure that Cuban society as a whole is sensitive to these issues, is educated, and understands,” said Mariela Cas- tro, a university psychologist and LGBT rights activist.

She said the march was also a showing of “spiritual support” of gay rights in the communist island nation. “We must continue to make noise and move these issues forward,” she said at the rally, where several couples held symbolic wedding ceremonies.

Gay marriage is illegal in Cuba, though Castro has long fought to legalize it.

RELATED: Cuba decriminalized homosexuality in 1979. Gays have served openly in the military since 1993 and anti-LGBT employment discrimination was banned in 2015.

Fidel Castro denounced homophobia and apologized for the treatment of gay Cubans during the early years of his government.

An unions bill has remained stalled in the national legislature for several years.

Chelsea Manning statue unveiled in Berlin; will tour Europe

By Joe Morgan on gaystarnews.com

A statue made in tribute to Chelsea Manning has been erected in Berlin.

Alongside Julian Assange and Edward Snowden, the trans Wikileaks founder’s statue was unveiled in May in the Alexanderplatz public square in the heart of the German capital.

Chelsea-AVER Vice President and Secretary James Darby added, “This is the first monument for LGBT veterans created by LGBT veterans that will be dedicated at any cemetery in the National Veteran’s Cemetery System. I never believed anything like this could’ve happened because we’ve been discriminated against for so long in many areas of life including the military with the now-defunct Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy. This ceremony is going to be an incredibly emotional experience for all of us.

The monument is inscribed with the words, “Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people have served honorably and admirably in America’s armed forces. In their memory and appreciation of their selfless service and sacrifice, this monument was dedicated by Chicago Chapter American Veterans for Equal Rights ‘AVER’ (…with liberty and justice for all).”

The ceremony took place on May 25. Last year, the design was revealed for a memorial to gay veterans in Congressional Cemetery’s ‘gay corner’ on Capitol Hill.

Openly transgender individuals continue to be banned from serving in the military.

Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/#ixzz3a7yAbsxn

Turkish trans woman may make history, but violence continues

By Stefanie Gerdis on gaystarnews.com

Photo source: Twitter @DevaOzenen

The Turkish parliament could soon be home to the country’s first transgender MP. Deva Özenen, the candidate for the recently founded progressive nationalist party, could be making history if she wins the election on June 7. She is running as one of four LGBTI candidates standing for election in the whole of Turkey.

Her goal is to fight the growing discrimination the Turkish LGBTI community faces amidst the country’s growing conservatization and wants to give her voice to the growing equal rights movement.

“If we are waiting for Turkish society to get ready for us, we’ll wait a long time,” she told The Independent.

“We are trying to get our rights and we don’t care if society is ready for us or not. Özenen said people often laugh at her when she gives speeches and she receives threats on her voice mail and email on a daily basis. She will not back down, but says she is very aware of the safety of Izmir, a fairly liberal town, offers.

“In Kayseri, in eastern Turkey, I would be shot in the first week of my political career. Even walking on the street then, I would be killed,” she said.

In Izmir, where a trans woman was killed last month, Özenen says she only faced threats and harassment on the street. Turkey hosts the biggest Pride events in the Muslim world, but despite its active and lively LGBTI community, trans people often end up working in the sex industry because there are no laws protecting them against discrimination.

Özenen, who ended up a sex worker herself when she slipped into poverty a few years ago, hopes to introduce a law banning hate crimes and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

See more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/trans-woman-could-make-history-turkey170515#sthash.3f1f.hHt6.dpuf

Even Turkish trans women murdered

From Mitch Kellaway on The Advocate

Seven trans women in several different Turkish cities were stabbed last month, with numerous unrelated attacks happening within the space of several nights.

On May 2, trans woman Gülşen was stabbed in her Şişli home by two men with a knife and skewer. Friends told LGBTI News. Gülşen, who earns income through sex work, like many of Turkey’s low-income trans women, had previously encountered the men as clients. She remains in critical condition following surgery, according to Turkish news site Planetromeo.

On the same night, a second trans woman was shot and wounded, and was brought to the same hospital around 6 a.m., according to trans advocates who were at the hospital to support Gülşen.

Also that night, LGBTI News reports, a third trans woman, identified as Riyaş by Turkey’s Daily News Agency, was stabbed in İzmir by several suspects, who have yet to be identified, while in Kocaeli, a trans female sex worker was attacked by an armed gang.

One day earlier, a trans female sex worker named İpek was stabbed, beaten, and left to die in a Mersin orange grove. According to Ankara progressive news site Kaos GL, she had agreed to terms with two male clients who then forced her into the car and drove her to the isolated grove, brutally attacked her, then drove away. She was found by two farmers who worked in the grove and rushed to Merzifon Gov- ernment Hospital, where she was listed in “critical condition” after being treated for several deep wounds and fractured bones in her face.

Later in May, two other trans women were attacked on the same night in two separate districts of Istanbul in crimes that may be related to their occupations as sex workers, reports LGBTI News Turkey. One victim, identified as Migel, was attacked in her Fikirdede home by a group of men, sustaining injuries and deep lacerations to several parts of her body. Meanwhile in İskilip, five men attacked another trans woman walking on a street, breaking her jaw.

Following the May 2 attacks, a group of over 100 protesters gathered in Ankara.
to protest Turkey's lack of national outcry over the epidemic of violence facing trans women, according to Dicle News Agency. Activists were also incensed by the April 7 attack on trans woman Bihör, in which several men nearly cut off her left hand in an alleged attempt to steal her wedding ring and money. When Bihör reported her attack to police and Turkey's Ministry of Justice, authorities were reportedly apathetic and have made no progress on her case.

“We know that hate attacks [against LGBTI people] have a political base. The state that wants to introduce transgenders-only prisons should instead take necessary precautions against hate attacks,” Turkish trans rights activist Dehmat Aksoy told Dicle News Agency at the May 4 rally, adding that the recent rash of violence “proves that transgender violence is everywhere.”

“The heterosexual patriarchal mentality that ignores LGBTI people is being used every day by the state,” she continued. “LGBTI and sex workers, who are victims of this mentality, are struggling for their lives every day.”

Of all these recent attacks, LGBTI News reports that arrests have been made only in one: the attack on Mogol. Multiple suspects have been arrested and charged with assault.

**Feat: Bullying Wisconsin teen commits suicide**

By Mitch Kollanazy on *The Advocate*

Days after Racine, Wis., freshman Cameron Langrell announced to friends and classmates online that she identified as a transgender girl,switching her Facebook gender identifier to “female,” the 15-year-old took her own life at home on May 1.

The artistic freshman had faced incessant bullying at Horlick High School, family and friends told Racine's Journal Times. Enamored with singing, playing piano, dancing, and cheerleading, Langrell—who had also recently started dating a male classmate—apparently faced much teasing for appearing “feminine,” according to her mother Jamie Olender. “We told [Cameron] be who you are,” she said of the family’s response.

Olender tells the Times that in the weeks before Langrell’s death, she and Langrell’s stepfather, Eric Olender, had noticed their child starting to skip school to avoid being harassed; when Langrell got home, however, she reportedly continued to face taunting on social media. When the parents asked to speak with the school about addressing the bullying, they said they received no response.

Now, the Olenders are calling on officials to be more proactive about bullying to stave off the kind of harassment their child endured. “There needs to be more within the school, not just some outside resource,” Jamie Olender explained to Milwaukee news station WISN. “[Bullying prevention] needs to be taught in school.”

Racine School District spokesperson Stacy Tapp issued a statement, saying, “We are heartbroken over the loss of Cameron and we are doing everything we can to support our Horlick High School family. We have counselors across the district to give age level for students.”

Meanwhile, Langrell’s death is the tenth of its kind reported in the USA this year, in an “epidemic” that trans advocates say sees far more casualties than make headlines. Last week, gaming communities mourned the suicide of 23-year-old developer Rachel Bryk, while in April 19-year-old Michigan trans boy Sam Taub took his life. The highly publicized suicides of 18-year-old Charlotte, N.C., activist Blake Brockington, as well as that of 17-year-old trans girl Leelah Alcorn in Union Township, Ohio, last December, saw hundreds of thousands mourning worldwide.

An online fundraiser has been set up to help Langrell’s family offset funeral costs.

If you are a trans or gender-nonconforming person considering suicide, Trans Lifeline can be reached at 877-565-8860. LGBT youth (ages 24 and younger) can reach the Trevor Project Lifeline at 1-866-488-7586. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 can also be reached 24 hours a day by people of all ages and identities.

**Feat: Girl Scouts of USA welcomes trans girls; hate group protests**

By Darren Wee on gazetanews.com

*Photo via girlscouts/Instagram*

The Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) has reaffirmed its policy of welcoming transgender girls.

The policy, which was made public four years ago, only recently came to the attention of the anti-gay American Family Association (AFA), which the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated a hate group.

The AFA said the GSA had “lost its moral compass” and started an online petition urging it to rescind the policy and restrict membership “biological girls.”

“This means girls in the organization will be forced to recognize and accept transgenders as a normal lifestyle,” it reads.

“Boys in skirts, boys in make-up and boys in tents will become a part of the program. This change will put young innocent girls at risk.”

The petition had 39,000 signatures as of May 20.

A day after the petition was launched, Andrea Fantini Archibald, GSUSA’s chief girls expert, responded in a blog post.

“There is not one type of girl. Every girl’s sense of self, path to it, and how she is supported is unique,” she wrote.

“If a girl is recognized by her family, school and community as a girl and lives culturally as a girl, Girl Scouts is an organization that can serve her in a setting that is both emotionally and physically safe.”

“Inclusion of transgender girls is handled at a council level on a case by case basis, with the well-being and interests of all members as a top priority.”

*See more at: http://www.gazetanews.com/article/girl-scouts-welcomes-trans-girls210515#sthash.M4fWAQGc.dpuf*

**Feat: Kenyan tablet outs gay activists; arrests, violence feared**

From Kenya’s homophobic Citizen Weekly:

“When Kenya National Human Rights Commission and a section of non-governmental organizations came out guns blazing and demanded William Ruto apologize to the gay community for saying Kenya has no room for gays and lesbians, many were left wondering whether they were hearing right. Others won-
National and International

(Kenya from page 13) cited whether they were still in Kenya or in the Godless America or Europe. Addressing a press conference, KNHRC executive director Atsango Chesoni said Ruto’s remarks during a church service were homophobic and put the lives of gays and lesbians in the country in danger. (nip) Homosexuality and lesbianism are slowly taking root in Kenya. It was initially in boarding schools, prisons but now has found its way in churches and other institutions including blue chip companies and even among sportsmen and women. Government institutions such as the judiciary, parliament, senate and counties have not been spared. Of late, there are thousands of homosexuals and lesbians. The list of gays has widened to include governors, two senators and a cabinet secretary. Two women MPs are lesbians and one principal secretary is (sic) said not to be straight. A well-known billionaire who owns a media house is also said to be a homophobe.

From Gay Star News:

“Citizen Weekly has exposed 12 LGBTI activists and leaders. Several were previously in the closet. While some are known internationally as proud spokespeople for the community, others include a senator and a gospel singer. Few Kenyans are openly LGBTI as it is illegal to be gay. Activists fear the newspaper will incite mob violence, similar to when Ugandan activist David Kato was killed after being ‘named and shamed’ on the front page of a tabloid in 2010. While the frontpage headline reads: ‘TOP GAYS, LESBIANS LIST IN KENYA OUT’, the actual article reads: ‘Top gays and lesbians in Kenya are punishable by up to 14 years in prison.’

Philly trans woman is eighth in US to be killed in 2015; arrest made

By Darren Wee on gaystarnews.com

Photo via london.k.chanel/Facebook

A 21-year-old black transgender woman was stabbed to death early on 18 May in Philadelphia. London Chanel was stabbed twice in the back and once in the neck in an abandoned house at around 12:40 a.m. She is the eighth trans woman of color to be killed this year in the US. Philadelphia Police Chief Inspector Scott Small told NBC10 that an argument between Chanel and her 31-year-old alleged attacker escalated into a physical fight and she was stabbed as a result. Her assailant and a witness carried Chanel downstairs and put her on quilts outside. They performed CPR on the victim and then called the police.

Officers rushed Chanel to hospital where she was pronounced dead just after 1 a.m. Chanel was a native of Victoria, Texas and moved to Philadelphia several years ago.

Venonica Allen, Chanel’s mother, said her daughter’s transition had taken a toll on their relationship but they reconnected in March.

“She was going to go out to court to change her name and then she was going to come

home,” she said.

“That’s what we were working towards, but that man took it away from me.”

“She had a heart of gold,” Chanel’s “trans sister” Kione Seymore said.

“She hardly ever frowned. She always had a smile on her face. Her laughter was infectious.”

A folding pocketknife was found on the alleged attacker, Small said. Both he and the witness were taken into custody for questioning. The alleged attacker has now been charged.

-A see more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/trans-woman-stabbed-death-philly/19059#hash.Kc0S1d.6.dpuf

Vienna’s traffic lights go gay for Eurovision

Ahead of May’s Eurovision, Austrian capital Vienna made even the traffic lights gay. Vienna hosted this year’s musical extravaganza after Conchita Wurst’s victory last year.

In celebration, the city’s traffic signals now feature gay and lesbian couples, some with hearts above them, reports Pink News.

A spokesperson for the city said the change came about to attract the attention of pedestrians and drivers in order to improve road safety and to “present Vienna as an open-minded city.”

Read more: http://www.towleroad.com/#ixzz3a1UtK5S2

Oregon teen defends mom against haters

When high school junior Makaila Ragan noticed two men waving anti-gay signs outside her mother’s Oregon workplace, she decided to do something about it.

“I was so irritated because I see them all around town and all they ever do is make people feel like crap about themselves,” said Ragan, a junior at Tillamook High School.

The men were standing outside Eyes of Oregon, on 1st Street and Main Avenue, where her mother works.

“I went inside and asked her and her boss if it would be all right if I made a poster that stands up for what I believe in,” she said. “They were totally all for it. So I made a sign that said, ‘I love Gays.’”

The two men, said Makaila, began insulting her personally. “They were calling me names, and asking my mom questions, like, ‘How many times did you have to get an abortion before you were able to have your daughter?’ and saying, ‘You’re going to burn in hell right along with your daughter.’ The things they were saying were just awful, but I didn’t let them faze me.”

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“Makaila stood up. Boy, did she ever! Look what she did – wow! I’m so, so proud of her.”

-JoeMyGod.com
The New Black and marriage equality
By Yoruba Richen, Promised Land Film

When I began documenting the same-sex marriage quest in Maryland which ultimately became the award-winning film THE NEW BLACK, I was intrigued by the many nuances explored and positions justified when people were taking a stance either for or against.

Of particular note were those against same-sex marriage in the name of their religious platforms (e.g. “I can’t support this because the Bible says it’s wrong.”). Even now, that viewpoint resonates with me because it is laced with such innuendo, assumption and in some instances downright fiction.

Today, there are 37 states with legal same-sex marriage laws, which demonstrates a quantum leap since THE NEW BLACK premiered. To give you an idea of how far we’ve come, in February 2014 there were only 17 states with such laws. And to hopefully further progress, the U.S. Supreme Court is set to render a decision on whether states can institute a gay marriage ban. If victorious in favor of the LGBT community, it will overthrow existing bans in the remaining 13 states, declaring them unconstitutional. That would be a civil rights coup in the name of love and justice.

It brings to mind when less than 50 years ago a similar civil rights battle was presented before the U.S. Supreme Court — Loving v. Virginia (1967). This landmark ruling overturned Virginia’s ban on interracial marriage and was subsequently applied to the remaining 15 states that outlawed matrimony between people of different ethnicities. The similarities between today’s quest and the Loving story are astounding:

Today, 13 states still have bans on gay marriage, during the Loving battle there were 16 declaring interracial unions illegal.

Today, the LGBT community simply wants the right to a legal marriage in the states where they reside; Richard and Mildred Loving wanted to live in wedlock in their home state of Virginia.

Both battles call into question whether bans violate human and civil rights.

While similarities are stark, today’s challenge facing the LGBT population has an additional layer, which is cloaked in the Bible. Some who oppose legalizing same-sex marriage cite their belief that it is forbidden according to the “Good Book.” Though we are making great strides, choosing to discriminate against the LGBT community for sacred reasons continues to create a convenient, thorny cross for us all to bear — pun intended.

Let’s take the resurgence of The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which has recently passed in Indiana and Arkansas with a potentially blaring version being contemplated in Louisiana. Even with revisions to the language in Indiana, RFRA’s blatant legislation affords people legal legs to discriminate — and they can do so by applying sketchy and selective interpretation of religious doctrine.

For instance, a small business refuses to cater a wedding for a lesbian couple because Christian beliefs don’t support the lifestyle. In the Old Testament it states that sex with the same gender is an abomination. It also applies this same judgment to any sexual acts other than those between husband and wife. The New Testament condemns all forms of sexual immorality. There is no reference in the Bible admonishing gay marriage.

So I’ll argue that unless this establishment inquired about the lesbian couple’s sexual behavior and based its service refusal on the answer, it is unconstitutional to stand on religion. And for that matter, a heterosexual couple would also have to be polled to glean whether they’ve had premarital sex. Or, what if a heterosexual couple samples cake and the husband exclaims, “Oh my God, that is delicious?” Will they be escorted from the building since one of the Ten Commandments reads, “Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain”?

In order to base service decisions on religious freedom, one would have to investigate each customer and determine if they’ve violated doctrine in any way. Anything short of this is cherry-picking, exercising selective rights-of-refusal. In other words, it is DISCRIMINATION, and enacting legislation which makes such behavior legal is the real abomination.

As we continue the quest for the LGBT population’s right to legally marry in every state, we must also be vigilant about opposing legislation that allows someone to discriminate in the name of the Lord.

THE NEW BLACK is scheduled for Video-On-Demand and DVD release in June.

Opinion

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Strong Gender Clinic is back, with a website

The Division of Adolescent Medicine at Golisano Children’s Hospital, University of Rochester, has renewed its commitment to help families, young, and adults who identify as transgender, gender fluid, or have other questions or concerns about their gender.

The Gender Clinic says, “We offer appointments to our Health personnel twice per month, and even if a service is available for those at risk of having HIV/AIDS, we refer the individual through percutaneous contact with blood of another individual to our clinics. It is important to note that a history in the past 12 months of injecting drugs or needle sharing for money or drugs, or a history of non-prescription injection drug use, would evolve into a policy that the report says “moved toward a risk-based system for blood donations, which involves taking into account the type of blood products and the identity and risk factors of the blood donor.”

A history in the past 12 months of syphilis or gonorrhea, or treatment for syphilis is not a bar to donating.

For female donors: a history in the past 12 months of sex with a man was never a barrier to donating.

About those two last points: although it previously advised blood centers to consider transgender individuals to be at high risk for acquiring HIV, the FDA altered its guidance to consider male donors who have been tested and found to be HIV-negative to be at low risk for acquiring HIV. The FDA says “in the context of the donor history questionnaire, male or female gender is taken to be self-identified and self-reported. In instances where a donor has asserted a change in gender identification, it should be respected.”

Financial pressures have been a factor in the FDA’s actions. A report in 2014 by the National Institutes of Health found that the costs of running a blood bank were so high that many centers were unable to meet the demand for blood.

A history in the past 12 months of sex with another individual through percutaneous inoculation such as a needle stick or sharing a syringe is another reason for not donating.

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Opinion: HIV guidebook for the newly diagnosed is long overdue

By Dawn Ennis on The Advocate

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today issued a recommendation signaling the first significant change to its 35-year ban on blood donations by gay and bisexual men, but it maintains restrictions on former MSM who say they have sex with men who will be followed by a period of public comment.

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CSL is yet to respond to the suit. The new FDA document will be submitted to the FDA. The new FDA document will be followed by a period of public comment, when online statements in support or opposition were being submitted.

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The following people and organizations for helping to make the 10th Annual Gay Big Gay Prom Youth from 22 different schools had an great evening of fun.

Bill Grays • Cheesy Eddie’s • Classy Cookie Company • Wendy’s • Famous Dave’s • Sam’s Club of Greece • Barilla Pasta • Rochester Broadway Theatre League • Highland Hospital / Highland Family Planning • DJ Chuck Argento • JimmyC’s Photo Booths • Todd Ranous & 140 Alex BJ Scanlon • The Dudes • The Nerdy Octopus • Excellus • Anna Tischer • Liz McHee

And all of the volunteers who helped to make this such a wonderful event.

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SATURDAY @ 11 AM: Price Prazar on “Treasures of Yesterday vs. Today”
SATURDAY @ 1:30 PM: Don Hall on “Mansions of East Avenue”
To all who made the Sue Cowell Recognition Reception a wonderful success: Tim Tompkins • Mark Swiec • Bill Valenti • Dan Meyers • Calamus Foundation • Jeff Soref • Pam Barres • Duffy Palmer • Hedonist Artisan Chocolate • Phillips European • Kittleberger Floral / Jimmy Catalano • Gerry Szymanski • Green Zebra Catering • Bill DeStevens • Evelyn Bailey • Ove Overmyer • Studio 180 • Jim Anderson • All of the volunteers and members of the host committee. And for making it possible, Sue Cowell.

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A Community’s Response To AIDS - The Beginning Years Before 1986 in Rochester

By Evelyn Bailey

There had been a pivotal year in the identification of AIDS. Professionals and others were beginning to talk openly about the issue with as much information as was available at the time.

It would be later that the AIDS virus would be traced back to a flight attendant Gaëtan Dugas who paid his first known visit to New York City bathhouses in October, 1981. He was later termed “Patient Zero” for his apparent connection to many early cases of AIDS in the United States. In an interview with Tom Rush, MD by Sue Cowell, RN written up in the October 1982 issue of the Empty Closet, Sue asked, “Why is it important to conduct this study if there have not been any cases identified in Rochester?”

Dr. Rush responded, “It is generally accepted that A.I.D.S. is related to some transmissible agent and therefore the possibility exists that it will ultimately reach Rochester where there is a substantial gay community, many of whom may travel outside of Rochester. Also, the types of abnormalities of the immune system that we will be testing for would not be as meaningful if found in people with the full blown syndrome. People who are seriously ill may develop abnormalities not necessarily the cause of their illness but rather a result of it. Finding such abnormalities in mildly ill or healthy people would be more helpful in establishing a causal relationship.”

On January 15, 1981, Nick Rush became the first known AIDS death in New York City. In December of 1982, just a few months after Sue’s interview with Dr. Rush, the Monroe County Health Department acknowledged that a Caribbean immigrant to Rochester had died as a result of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It was also disclosed at that time that two other cases had been diagnosed.

In response to this one death, approximately 100 people attended a special clinic at Strong Memorial Hospital in early October. As you can see it did not take long for the disease to appear in Monroe County. In response to this one death, approximately 100 people attended a special clinic at Strong Memorial Hospital in early October. As you can see it did not take long for the disease to appear in Monroe County.

Thank goodness the medical community had been aware of what was going on and had already begun to track people who might be HIV positive. Much of that early work was done by Sue Cowell at the University of Rochester. Sue worked feverishly to identify the primary abnormality in the immune system that allows development of infections that the body can usually contain on its own, as well as identify agents that might be responsible for the damage to the immune system. In Rochester, Tom and other physicians associated with the Immunodeficiency Unit at Strong Memorial Hospital of the University of Rochester worked with Dr. Roy Steigbigel at St. Joseph’s who was working with a group called Leishmania donovani which caused serious illness in Asia and Africa. Roy used this organism to study how cells of the immune system work.

At that time the AIDS Syndrome seemed to be a failure of the immune system to kill the organisms that had been causing these serious infections in gay men and others. This study would provide information that would lead to effective treatment of the disorder. Other physicians were involved in the research as well as Sue Cowell, nurse practitioner at the University Health Service, who had consulted in the gay community. Sue was involved with various aspects of the project, particularly with maintaining patient confidentiality. At this point in time National Institutes of Health announced the availability of funds for research into the causes of this illness and funding of this study.

As a part of this research, an A.D.S. Screening Clinic at the University Health Service was established to identify the symptoms of A.D.S. (Acquired-Immune-Deficiency Syndrome). The screening consisted of a medical history, cal exam, and optional lab data. Sue was already working at the University Health Service. In the same issue of the Center for Disease Control, Sue stated: “He (Tom Rush) came to me because he knew it would be important to him to be able to make something like that work. Without a doubt, it would not have got going so fast without the help of Tim and the Drive of Tim and Dan andarella D balkaum. They were very instrumental in getting the ball rolling. There was research right from the beginning but you would not be aware of it unless you were reading medical journals. It took a while for the physician to recognize the immune disease. Then it must be reported to the Center for Disease Control. Then the information is communicated through the CDC’s morbidity and mortality weekly report.”

The Washington Blade reported, at about the same time, that Dr. Linda Pilfer, a microbiologist and assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in Knoxville, has developed a blood test that may soon be used to diagnose a virulent form of pneumonia that affected over 200 men - many of them gay - during the past three years.

In July 1982, at a meeting in Washington, D.C., the acronym AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) was suggested. The CDC used the term for the first time in September 1982. Throughout much of the reporting on AIDS and its history, not much attention is paid to the African American population. Much of the problem in the early years was the African American media’s perception of AIDS as a disease of white gay men. African Americans were given few reasons why they might be affected even though African American men made up a large proportion of the early cases of AIDS in the gay male bisexual community. From the outset, African American heterosexual adults and children were significantly more likely to be infected than white heterosexuals.

The first AIDS cases among black African Americans were identified in the early 1980s. In 1983 the CDC documented the first two cases of AIDS in women. Both women had acquired HIV though sex with an intravenous drug user. One of these patients was Latina; the other was African American. From this point on, the AIDS epidemic began spreading rapidly amongst the African American population. Women were particularly affected and by 1988, African Americans accounted for half of all AIDS in females in America.

Formed in San Francisco in 1980 by Mike Smith, Black and White Men Together (BWT) emerged as a conscious-raising and support group for black men involved in mutually monogamous relationships. A national organization grew from the San Francisco chapter, as groups were soon established across the United States. Early chapters included Boston, Los Angeles, Baltimore, and New York. The first national convention was held in 1981 in San Francisco.

As Shoulders To Stand On continues to present the Rochester community's response to AIDS, if you are aware of other efforts made by individuals or groups to raise awareness about AIDS in the early days of this epidemic, it would be very helpful to me if you would let me know at evelynba@gayalliance.org.

History Corner

A Monthly Newspaper of The Gay Brotherhood of Rochester, 713 Monroe Avenue, Room 4 (716) 244-8640

JUNE, 1975 NO 50

FOCUS

So we discuss this issue on gay pride. The center four pages, an E.C. special edition, is a commemorative statement of the gay movement in Rochester. Produced as an information flyer for the heart of the campaign week, it is available at the The Empty Closet. This centerfold is a handy parcel to mail to family or friends. And we have a lot to be proud of.

Page one chronicles some of the most recent breakthroughs in the gay pride movement, some have been "over the top" for one person. Hopefully these clarifications will give a clearer picture of some of these. Our apologies to Sue for any misstatements.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:30am Third Church chapel
10:45am Third Church sanctuary

BORN THIS WAY (LGBT Support) 7:30pm First & Third Mondays

DINNER THE MOTHERS' 6-8pm First and Fourth Wednesdays

FIRST THIRSDAY COMMITTEE

A community of faith where LGBT persons are welcomed as full partners in ministry.

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3:00pm First Church sanctuary

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Growing Up

By Eric Bellmann

The first year I lived in a mansion, the spring, in the study, I did not know to take away dozens of wet leaves that remained. The next year we moved to a house covered to my delight clusters of small flowers, grape hyacinths and crocuses. The second year was the first time I saw them.

Lots of firsts in owning a home. A close furry embrace first. Over floating flower aisle, an endless list of firsts, but it is mine, home, a haven, and I work my way through the days without a drink. I thought I knew a wonderful firsts in owning a home. A territory.

I can remember the first time I cleaned the outside of room who had died. My nephew. I can remember going through books in his room looking for poems my sister believed he had written. They were copies of song lyrics. I never told anyone.

I remember my first, and only, ambu- lance ride. I remember my first chest x-ray, my first CAT scan, my first MRI, my first dental implant.

So, of course, now I wonder if there are any more firsts. The cascade of early firsts is exciting; there are so many things that come along. Time slows down, not really, but it seems that way. I go back to Provincetown and back to Europe and back to and some of those things of early and comfortable. I wonder what's next.

Email: Eric.Bellmann@gmail.com

Cleaning My Closet

By Meredith Reigner

Can airborne words suffocate a human being? Can airborne words evaporate at will?

It happened in 1956, in seventh grade. We were in seventh grade. Will I remember the moment I looked up until about a dozen years later, I have just looked up Lesbian

Democracy can be a wonderful country to work when those relegated to the fringes of society connect.

When Chief Justice John Roberts told Bonauto, that her position would “cede to the states the power to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman,” she wasn’t counting on his vote.

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When someone in your life transitions,
worker in rural Pennsylvania telling me about the changes in the forms that they use now (they're better in some cases) of the medical forms I've seen in the past. See myself towards myself and other trans individu- als from random strangers, to the public outcast individual in the closet, the phobic remarks (where trans voices were loud and strong but in the minority), I've seen how the environment has really changed that I've spoken of before mounting.

The changes in the last couple of years have been huge. Because of improved communication, trans culture is becom- ing a real thing on a national and inter- national scale, Education and awareness through social media (it really does help) and personal interaction. Groups of trans folks are getting together and opening their minds to things that were ever before, and many are working to break down the boundaries that exist within our sometimes unwieldy umbrella.

It's not all sunshine and roses. It's still hard to leave the house for a lot of us sometimes (unfortunately that is a real thing). We still cope with depres- sion, addiction and suicide on a scale unlike almost any other population. We still have to fight to be recognized as who we are and have to navigate the mess of red tape, a lack of knowledge and gender markers legally. The threat of violence still looms large for all of us, especially in the United States.

These things can and will change, though, as long as we keep on with what we're doing to fight for and make ourselves visible, cultivating strong allies who will stand up for us in the situations where we cannot, and educating those who need educating! It's far more effective to educate and let people come to their own conclusions than attempting to tell them what they should be thinking.

So, good job! To everyone who helped to bring this about on so many fronts, thanks! To everyone who has worked so hard to humanize us in the public eye, and to everyone who has opened their minds and hearts to things that they may have never thought about before. It's incredible, isn't it? It's far more effective to educate and let people come to their own conclusions than attempting to tell them what they should be thinking.

What's bothering you?

BY BRANDON W. BROOKS

I am not one to readily try new things. I have a hard time trying new things because I usually enjoy keeping my surroundings and life mostly the same. I know it sounds strange, but also because I often do not see any need to change things. Knowing that change is a natural part of life, however, I can be witnessed not only to my thoughts and actions but also to what I see and what I do.

For anyone who knows me personally, you know that I am a self-proclaimed gay man. I am an avid viewer of movie and television shows. I have done so for many years and continue to do so even now.

This past week a dear and close friend of mine managed to rope me into something that I never thought I would be interested in watching. And it is that very interest that convinces me to watch any movie, television show, or form of visual entertainment that I am interested in. It is that interest that allows me to continue to do what I do.

For those of you who are interested in the show, I would like to give you a brief overview of the story. The story follows the life of Joe, a man who is dealing with the transition of his gender identity. It follows his struggles as he comes to terms with his identity and learns to accept himself for who he is.

What is bothering you?

By John Aceto

LMSW

I haven't felt stressed out at some point in time! I was stressed. I didn't have time to pick a topic for this month’s column, so I figure I'll write about what you know.

Stress is one of those ambiguous feel- ings because it is highly subjective. What worries you most may seem quite trivial to another. Giving a speech is a good exam- ple. Some people may find it nerve-wracking and terrifying, I’m in the latter group. I’m a talker, anyone who knows me can attest to that. But when confronted with giving a presentation, I freeze up, my mind goes blank, and I’m petrified.

Well, I used to be that way. To combat this fear I made some changes. I now use humor to relieve tension. I learned to let that fear by telling a joke or relating a funny anecdote taken from a personal experience because it makes the audience relax. While my audience relax I become relaxed as well.

Stress can make you feel anxious, overly worried or stressed out. It can stop you from having a normal or healthy sleep, and it can make you feel fatigued during the day. It can also affect your heart rate and blood pressure, and it can keep you from thinking clearly.

So what is the solution? It’s different for everyone, but some common strategies include: getting regular exercise, practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation, maintaining a healthy diet, and getting enough sleep.

Brandon W. Brooks

What is bothering you?

BY BRANDON W. BROOKS

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**BUTCH FEMME CONNECTION**

The Rochester Bench Femme Connection supper club will have two dinner events in June.

On Saturday June 6 we will meet at Keenan’s Restaurant on East Ridge Road in Irondequoit (across from Sonic) at 5 p.m.

On Saturday, June 20 we will meet at The Elmwood Inn on West Henrietta Rd./Rte. 15/Mt. Hope Ave. (next to Tim Hortons) in Brighton at 7 p.m.

For further information on the Connection, contact Max at (585) 975-6627 or e-mail Kerry at DressyFemme@aol.com, or see our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lfeconnection. Hope to see you there!

**DIGNITY-INTEGRY**

Since March, 1975, Dignity-Integry Rochester has been welcoming all who come through our doors, worshiping every week at 5 p.m. at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh Street, at the corner of Broad St. We have the following services and activities for the month of June 2015.

1st Sunday: Episcopal Mass/Healing Service, with music.
2nd Sunday: Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word, with music.
3rd Sunday: Episcopal Mass, quiet. 4th Sunday: Roman Catholic Prayers to start the week, followed by potluck.

The theme for the June Potluck is “Picnic Basket Potluck.” Think easy, summery foods that you might take along to a picnic. No opportunity to cook or shop? Don’t worry, there is always enough to share. In fact, tradition has it that when we aren’t cooking up a Potluck supper on the fourth Sunday, we’re gathering for fellowship around a tasty coffee hour and going out to a local restaurant for dinner each Sunday. Join us anytime!

Our ANNUAL GARAGE SALE is Friday through Sunday, June 26-28. Donations are welcome, or just come and shop! Check the website for times and location.

SAVE THE DATE…AUGUST 15, 2015! The FABULOUS 40th REUNION PICNIC is going to be great and you won’t want to miss it! We will be having a great raffle with 100 prizes in the envelope above your head. All money raised will go to the Rochester Bears’ Fund. The Bear Family was formed to help bear citizens, especially sanctioned handicap are 42 games the next two years, specifically 21 games of each the next two years, beginning THIS September 2015. Other sports may have similar requirements, so check out each of 35 sporting events. Further information can be obtained at www.Paris2018.com or at thomas50@mac.com

**OPEN ARMS MCC**

Open Arms MCC is Beyond Open and Affirming...Beyond Welcoming. We are a church for ALL.

Our 10:30 Sunday morning service is a celebration that blends traditional and contemporary worship styles. Our lay pastoral leader, Brad Adams, delivers an inspirational message that connects the scriptures with everyday life. Children are invited to participate in our Children’s Moment before heading off to Rainbow Rangers (ages 5-12) or Rainbow Sprouts (newborn to 5). Following the service, all are welcome to join us for coffee and snacks. Also on Tuesdays SAGE Rochester (ages 50+) gets together with Tom Somervile for yoga, from 10:30-11:30 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursdays (morning) except for the second Thursday of each month. Also on Tuesdays SAGE Rochester members go to Denny’s for breakfast. On Saturday, June 20 we will meet at The Elmwood Inn on West Henrietta Rd., June 10 at Carrabba’s on W. Hen., June 24 at Winfield Grill on N. Winton, and July 1 at Don Patron on W. Hen.

The Bears like to get together for camping, movies, meals, games, and trips out of town. Our favorite movie theater is the Cinema, where the price is right and the staff is great. RGMC continues to look toward renting a dedicated location. Find us out about other events on Facebook. WOOF!

**GAY GAMES 2018 IN PARIS, FRANCE!**

It is not too early to plan for the next Gay Games scheduled for August 2018 in Paris.

We are setting only $10 per week in the envelope in your top drawer should be enough to pay for the trip. Already the organizing committee in Paris is projecting 35,000 participants, making it one of the largest sporting events in the world. The rumor is that all events will be centered around the Eiffel Tower — imagine a running event in the streets around the center of Paris.

Our Chariot is looking forward to returning the 10 K in sight of the Eiffel Tower. Steve F., one of Rochester’s gifted lan-guage interpreters in French and Spanish, has already volunteered his interpretive services at these Gay Games.

Our Bees have established the Rochester bowling teams. Bowling has a Social Division and a Division which are specially sanctioned handicap which includes 42 games over the next two years, specifically 21 games of each of the next two years, beginning THIS September 2015. Other sports may have similar requirements, so check out each of 35 sporting events. Further information can be obtained at www.Paris2018.com or at thomas50@mac.com

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Financial Advisor
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thesartinigroup

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The Empty Closet • The Gay Alliance • Number 490 • June 2015
Arts & Entertainment

ImageOut partners for Fassbinder film series at Dryden Theatre

ImageOut is the Community Partner for the Rainier Werner Fassbinder film series screening at the Dryden Theatre at George Eastman House in May and June.

"Of the three major directors in Germany's New Wave (along with Herzog and Wenders), it's the late Fassbinder whose 41 features -- made from 1969 to 1982 -- convey the most obsessive interest in art and behavior.

Inspired by the French New Wave masters Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Marie Straub, Fassbinder combined form and provocation to a far greater degree than either Herzog or Wenders. The radicalism that set Fassbinder apart came, significantly, from working out his own sexual and moral ideas. As the most openly gay writer-director of his era, Fassbinder's range of interests shames the narrowness that passes for gay-identified work today. Fassbinder's personal agenda was inextricable from his imagination with how all humans interact.

Thursday, June 4, 8 p.m. The Merchant of Four Seasons.
Saturday, June 6, 8 p.m. Effi Briest.

"Mother Kusters Goes to Heaven" will screen on June 11 at 8 p.m.

Rochester Women's Community Chorus sings “Songs in the Key of She”

The Rochester Women's Community Chorus will perform a benefit concert in support of Alternatives for Battered Women (now Willow Domestic Violence Center) on June 6.

The concert, "Songs in the Key of She," will take place at Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St., at 8 p.m.

Admission is free; donations are welcome. The concert is handicapped-accessible and interpreted for the Deaf and hearing impaired.

TAGR hosts Spaghetti Western dinner dance

The Trans Alliance of Greater Rochester (TAGR) will host a dinner dance on June 5 at the Genesee Valley Park gazebo.

The dinner begins at 5 p.m. and will consist of spaghetti and meatballs, with a vegan option. Dinner will be followed by DJ dancing.

Tickets are available at trygg.org.

RGMC has it all wrong — or is it all right?

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus will present Miscast at Blackfriars Theatre, located at 795 E. Main St., on Friday, June 5 at 7 and 9:30 p.m.

Tickets are available online at www.rgmc.org for $12 presale, or $15 at the door.

Hosted by M.C. Robert Strauss, Miscast will feature talented members of the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus performing outside casting restrictions. Each performer will be singing a piece by a character as which they could never be cast. This type of cabaret-style show has been performed from Broadway to Los Angeles and many places between, and the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus can't wait to bring this fun concept to audiences in Rochester.

Audience members will hear songs from Chicago, A Chorus Line, Guys & Dolls, My Fair Lady, Wicked, and others, performed unlike they ever have been before. Some language may not be suitable for children.

Seats are limited, and audience members are encouraged to purchase tickets online for the discounted presale price.

Proceeds from ticket sales will benefit the RGMC's 2016 Get Us To GALA fund, allowing members of the chorus to attend the GALA Choruses Festival 2016 in Denver. At the festival, members are given the opportunity to meet and network with members of other choruses, listen to new repertoire and to experience the magic of music from other choruses from around the world.

Work by Eric Bellmann goes on display at NYC's Lohman gay art museum

The Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in New York City has acquired a portfolio of twenty watercolors and drawings created by Eric Bellmann.

Eric Bellmann was Chairperson of Art, Craft and Design in the Part-time studies program of the College of Continuing Education at RIT. He earned a MFA in Printmaking from RIT. He is a two time prize winner in Rochester's annual Finger Lakes Exhibition. His drawings have been published in The Advocate and The James White Review.

He is also a photographer and longtime columnist for The Empty Closet.
members will hear familiar songs, such as “Colons of the Wind,” “I’m Gonna Wash That Man Right Out-a My Hair,” and “Let the River Run,” as well as brand-new favorites, “When I Knew” and “If You Only Knew.” The chorus will also be performing a new song of their own, “The Silver Light Does Rise,” by composer Robert Deemer and lyricist David Henderson, thanks to the support of the LGBT Giving Circle and the LGBT Giving Fund.

RGMC in concert

LGBT Giving Circle and the LGBT Giving Fund.

The most famous tunes, including “Meadowsong” (The Baker’s Wife) and “Memory” (Cats), and many more. Ms. Callaway’s performance is due in part to the support of Strathallan, Blackfriars Theatre, and generous donors to the chorus.

Ticket prices are $6 for children under 12, $14 for students and seniors ($17 at the door), and $17 for adults ($20 at the door). Tickets are available online at www.thergmc.org, at 585-423-0650, at Outlandish, EqualGrounds, Parkleigh, Vittorio’s Men’swear and Tuxedo, or from chorus members. The chorus will also be welcoming Liz Callaway to the stage. Ms. Callaway is the Tony-nominated and Emmy-award winning singer and actress whose appearances on Broadway (Lizzie, Baby; Ellen, Miss Saigon; Grizabella, Cats) and film (singing voice of the title character in the animated film Anastasia) have made her a beloved performer across the country. Ms. Callaway’s singing voice of the title character in the 1997 Academy Award-winning animated film Anastasia has made her a beloved performer across the country.

The chorus will also be welcoming Liz Callaway to the stage. Ms. Callaway is the Tony-nominated and Emmy-award winning singer and actress whose appearances on Broadway (Lizzie, Baby; Ellen, Miss Saigon; Grizabella, Cats) and film (singing voice of the title character in the animated film Anastasia) have made her a beloved performer across the country. Ms. Callaway’s singing voice of the title character in the 1997 Academy Award-winning animated film Anastasia has made her a beloved performer across the country.

“Blackmail, My Love,” the debut novel by C. Todd White, is instantly curious about what happened to her charismatic big brother, and the risks and sacrifices Josie makes on his behalf reveal her vulnerabilities while making us care for her, too. Fueled against the specter of Jimmy, Joe/Josie is deftly constructed, and falls well within her genre. Gilmartin, a historian by training, uses her academic familiarity with San Francisco’s first gay places — the Black Cat Cafe, Finocchios, the Fillmore District, and the Tenderloin — to give society’s lowlifes. She asked the obvious question: does anyone here know my brother? And was quickly removed from the police department where her brother used to serve. The love of Josie and Jimmy provides the driving force in this book. The reader is instantly curious about what happened to her charismatic big brother, and the risks and sacrifices Josie makes on his behalf reveal her vulnerabilities while making us care for her, too. Fueled against the specter of Jimmy, Joe/Josie is deftly constructed, and falls well within her genre. Gilmartin, a historian by training, uses her academic familiarity with San Francisco’s first gay places — the Black Cat Cafe, Finocchios, the Fillmore District, and the Tenderloin — to give society’s lowlifes. She asked the obvious question: does anyone here know my brother? And was quickly removed from the police department where her brother used to serve.

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Legal name change? Birth certificate amendment? You’ll need those forms notarized! Our Notary can help! Schedule a free appointment today! Call 888-244-8640 or email: info@gayalliance.org

Taye Diggs takes over as Hedwig on July 22

By Greg Hernandez on gaystarnews.com

Taye Diggs via Twitter

Darren Criss has just settled into the title role of Broadway’s “Hedwig and the Angry Inch” and already his successor has been found.

Producers announced May 18 that Taye Diggs will take over as the transgender punk rocker on July 22, three days after Criss’ final performance.

Diggs, divorced from Idina Menzel, will play Hedwig for a 12 week run at the Belasco Theatre in New York City. It will mark Diggs’ first New York stage role since the 2005 revival of “A Soldier’s Play”. He made his Broadway debut in 1994 in the Tony Award-winning revival of “Carousel”.

His best-known Broadway role is that of Benny in the musical “Rent”, a role he recreated in the 2005 film version.

Diggs starred for six seasons on ABC’s drama “Private Practice” and now stars in the TNT drama “Murder in the First”. - See more at: http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/taye-diggs-chosebroadways-new-hedwig180515#sthash.flh0NUnc.dpuf

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The Arts Center thanks the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State legislature for its long-standing support.

Gardens & Landscapes Designed Installed Maintained mpergo65@gmail.com 219-360-5151

Mitch Pergolizzi

Pittsford Musicals presents The Pulitzer Prize-winning Musical next to normal June 19, 20, 26 & 27 at 8pm Onstage at Robert F. Panara Theatre at RIT To purchase tickets, please visit www.pittsfordsmusicals.org
Most Likely To Know Where Their Children Are

The Polashenski Family: This entire family has supported R4P since day one. This year Pam, Maya and Ana will fundraise and ride. Walter will (for the 6th year in a row!) offer up some delicious food, Tallis will rescue weary riders in the sag wagon and Sue Delp (amazing grandma-of-the-year) will be the hostess at our first rest stop.

Most Likely to Donate After Reading This Article:

YOU!!!! (Hopefully) Any amount is appreciated by so many! Please help us reach our goal of $25,000. Simply go to the Gay Alliance website and click on the Ride For Pride slide. Select the rider of your choice and make a secure and tax deductible donation. Thank you for helping us be the most likely to succeed!

Volunteer of the Month:

Brae Adams

In recent years a growing number of young people have come out as transgender or genderqueer, increasing the need for support services for both those young people as well as their families. Last year, in conjunction with our support group for trans youth we created a support group for their families: Adult Families of Trans Youth. The group is led by our Volunteer of the Month for June, Brae Adams.

Brae has been the AFTY facilitator since its inception. The mother of a transgender child, she brings her personal experience together with her leadership skills to provide a safe and comfortable forum for the family members of transgender youth to come together. She is an active member of the Genesee Valley Gender Variants, and has spoken publicly in support of trans rights and access to services. Brae's work with AFTY and the trans community provides a critical resource that benefits both the rest of the trans community. Congratulations to Brae Adams for being selected Volunteer of the Month for June!

The Gay Alliance is a non-profit agency, dedicated to cultivating a healthy, inclusive environment where Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) people are safe, thriving, and enjoying equal rights. We are a coalition of individuals and groups working to empower LGBTQ people to affirm their identities and create an atmosphere where the diversity can thrive both collectively and separately. We educate and advocate for civil rights for all and for the eradication of homophobia.

The Gay Alliance, 875 East Main Street, Rochester, New York 14603 • Phone: (585) 244-8744 • Fax: (585) 244-8246
Website: www.gayalliance.org E-mail: info@gayalliance.org Hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm • Board President: David Zona Board Vice Presidents: Jessica Munato, Executive Director: Scott Fearing, Education Director: Jeanne Gainsburg Education Coordinator: Rowan Collins Database: Kat Wigglam Bookkeeper: Christopher Hennelly Office Administrator: Tristan Wright

The Empty Closet: Editors: Susan Jordan E-mail: susan@gayalliance.org Phone: (585) 244-9130 Designers: Jim Anderson Fax: (585) 244-8246 Advertising: (585) 244-9130; jarend@gayalliance.org; cmunato@gayalliance.org

The avid Empty Closet reader already knows that Ride For Pride (R4P) was brought to life in 2010 by two visionaries, who were seeking a good reason to bike and drink beer. R4P has continued to grow and develop and for the past two years has brought in over $20,000, establishing it as among the largest fundraisers for the Gay Alliance. I picked up the management of the ride in year 2, and so often get credited with its growth and success, but I do not run this ride alone. Here is a short list of some of the many people who inspire me and help to ensure that R4P runs as smoothly as a well-lubed derailleur.

Most Likely to Raise the Most Money

Pam Polashenski: This wild and crazy doctor from Rochester General Hospital is one of a small handful of riders who have ridden all six years. One of the founders of R4P, Pam has raised more money than any other rider, bringing in more than 10 percent of the total amount donated to R4P over the past six years! Last year Pam dyed her hair the colors of the Polish flag as part of her fundraising efforts. This year she is likely to pass the $10,000 mark for total donations!

Most Likely To Be Awake at 3am the Day Of

Todd Gordon: Supporting Ride For Pride for the sixth year in a row, you can find this talented cook in his backyard in his pajamas smoking meats for the riders on our support crew to enjoy at the after ride party.

Ed Freedman, Owen Zacharias and Maya Polashenski: These three super athletes will be up again this year in the wee hours biking the route and marking it with arrows for the other riders.

Most Likely To Find Clothing on their Lawn The Morning After

Kellie and Craig Ronald: This dynamic duo has offered up their home as R4P headquarters and party central for the past four years! At the height of the after-ride party the Ronalds are likely to have a dozen people in their hot tub, every shower occupied, a yard full of family members and trans young people themselves.

Brae Adams grew up in Memphis, Tennessee. Her lifelong interest in issues of equality and non-discrimination began while she was working as an intern for the Women and Gender Studies department at Mississippi State University, where she helped design and implement the school’s first Gay Straight Alliance. Her work was put slightly on hold by the birth of three children, a series of moves around the south, and a career as a Montessori teacher, but her passion remained.

Upon moving to Rochester (where she saw snow for the first time) she began graduate studies at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, and became a charter member and co-convenor of the Open and Affirming Student Caucus. Currently, Brae serves as Lay Pastoral Leader at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church at 707 East Main St., Rochester. Wonderful and dedicated volunteers like Brae Adams are essential to the community work we do at the Gay Alliance. We are deeply grateful to Brae for the work that she does with AFTY and the rest of the trans community. Congratulations to Brae Adams for being selected Volunteer of the Month for June!

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Our 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!

**Fabulous Fridays:** 7-9pm. (Ages 13-20)

**Gender Identity Support Group:**
- Tuesdays: 5:30-6:30pm. (Ages 13-18)
  - More info: youth@gayalliance.org

The Gay Alliance
875 E. Main Street, (5th Floor)
Auditorium Center, Rochester, NY 14605
Phone: 585-244-8640 • Web: gayalliance.org

**Speaking Engagements April 2015**

- LGBTQ Issues in Social Work at SUNY Brockport
- LGBTQ Issues in Social Work at Greater Rochester Collaborative MSW Program
- LGBTQ 101 at Penfield High School GS
- LGBTQ 101 at Rochester AmeriCorps
- SafeZone Training at Henrietta Public Librar
- SafeZone Training at Nazareth College
- Creating Inclusive Workplaces at CooperVision
- LGBTQ Identities and the Equality Movement at Highlands at Pittsford
- This Who Panel at Nazareth College
- Creating Inclusive Workplaces at Progressive Machine and Design
- SafeZone Train-The-Trainer Certification Program at Utica College
- Health and Wellness Fair at SUNY Brockport (Metro Center)
- Straight Talk at SUNY Geneseo
- Understanding Transgender Identities at Barker Road Middle School
- SafeZone Training at the New England Transfer Association Annual Conference in Massachusetts
- Transgender Healthcare Panel Presentation at the University of Rochester LGBTQ Healthcare Conference
- Creating Inclusive Faith Communities at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church
- Creating Inclusive Schools at Brighton Central School District
- Transgender Inclusive Healthcare at Highland Hospital

Feedback from Presentations and Trainings in April:

“Enlightening, encouraging and supportive. Loved it! The respect and honesty in the room. We could not have had an excellent experience if the presenters did not create this space. I can appreciate how hard it is to stay ‘on’ all day – you nailed it!”

“I had previously had Safe Zone training at my institution and it was not very helpful. I would not have attended this session if there had not been a schedule change. Much to my surprise, this was incredibly informative and extremely useful. The presenter did a great job and should be commended for his efforts.”

“Overwhelming in the best possible way. This evaluation is not just me being agreeable. It is an honest opinion. The presenters were amazing! I so eagerly want to share with others what I’ve gleaned.”

**SAGE JUNE CALENDAR**

**Tuesday June 2**
10:30-11:30 Yoga with Tom. 11:30am-12:30pm Brown bag & beverage. 12:30-3pm Games & conversation. Hosts Anne & Jessica.

**Thursday June 4**
10:30-11:30am Yoga with Tom. No program after yoga

**Saturday June 6**
11am-3pm Pride float building party. Bring a snack or beverage to share. All are welcome to participate; all skills welcome. Please call Gay Alliance for information and location. 585-244-8640 ask for Anne Tischer.

**Tuesday June 9**
10:30-11:30am Yoga with Tom. 11:30am-12:30pm Brown bag & beverage. 12:30-1:30pm Presentation on safety in the community by Officer Scott Mckinny. What to do if someone tries to rob you! 1:30-3pm Birthday celebration & games. Hosts Anne & Jessica.

**Thursday June 11**
No yoga. 10:30am-12pm Breakfast at Dennys, 911 Jefferson Rd. Please RSVP by 6/9 to 585-287-2958. Host Audet.

**Tuesday June 16**
10:30-11:30am Yoga with Tom. 11:30am-12:30pm Euchre, games & conversation. 12:30-3pm Euchre, games & conversation. Hosts Anne & Jessica.

**Thursday June 18**
10:30-11:30am Yoga with Tom. 11:30am-12:30pm Brown bag & Beverage. 12:30-3pm Movie day at the center. “Imitation Games” drama film/thriller, 1hr, 54min. Hosts Gerry & Audet. 7pm Sage Coffee Social, Equal Grounds 750 South Ave. 14620. Your host David.

**Saturday June 20**
5-8pm Sage & Community Potluck and Bingo game. Please bring a dish to pass and go for the big win of token prizes! $3. fee for Bingo; held at OAMCC, 707 East Main St. Hosts Anne & Jessie. Call Anne Tischer at Gay Alliance with any questions, 585-244-8640.

**Tuesday June 23**
10:30-11:30am Yoga with Tom. 11:30am-3pm Low salt cooking demo. Bring in your favorite recipe to share. “Bring a friend or family day” games. Hosts Anne & Jessica.

**Thursday June 25**
10:30-11:30am Yoga with Tom. No Sage program.

**Friday June 26**
5:30PM Fish Fry Nite: Towpath Café, 6 N. Main Street, Fairport. Call restaurant for driving instructions, 585-377-0410. Please feel free to bring a chair or sit on the restaurant patio and listen to the bluegrass band at 7pm. Please RSVP to 585-287-2958 by 6/21.

**Tuesday JUNE 30**
10:30-11:30am Yoga with Tom. 11:30am-3pm Brown bag & beverage. Making PRIDE float arts and crafts with Sandra, conversation.

**SAVE THE DATE**
August 30, 4-8pm: SUMMER SAGE ROCHESTER BBQ BASH. DANCING AND BONFIRE. $5 PER PERSON.
More details to come.

**SAGE ROCHESTER.** For LBGTQ People, 50 and over, meets at Open Arms Community Center, 707 East Main Street, Rochester New York 14605. Yoga is from 10:30 to 11:30am, $5 per person. Tuesday & Thursday unless specified in calendar. All programs are subject to change and SAGE members are responsible for setting up their own transportation and meal to and from any program. All programs are open to the community and public; all are welcome. Please become a SAGE member today and update membership info by calling the Gay Alliance at 585-244-8640.
No criminal cases. Appointments are scheduled at area medical provider locations or by calling 259-2130.

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 linked STD testing, Primary and HIV Specialty Medical Care, Pharmacy, and many more. Satellite offices are in Geneva, Canandaigua, and Trumansburg.

Aids Task Force is also a provider in supporting services and education to meningismus through the community.


Sage Clinic
Sage Clinic is a regionally recognized health care center for the uninsured and underinsured. Sage runs a full range of services to the community including: medical care, lab, referral services and more. 189 N. Water St. Sage Clinic determines the fee for patients on an individual basis.

Volunteer Legal Services Project
Volunteer Legal Services is a not-for-profit legal aid organization. Legal aid ensures clients receive fair and effective justice. Volunteer Legal Services Project (VLS) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. To ensure the quality and accessibility of legal services, Volunteer Legal Services Project (VLS) is committed to offering services that are affordable and available to all members of the community.

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley

DEAF SERVICES
Deaf Rainbow Network of Rochester
See Facebook.

Spectrum LGBTI & Straight Alliance
See Facebook. Contact: Spectrum@funsupportgroups.

FAMILY
Open Arms Community Center

CATHOLIC CHARITIES
Catholic Charities
Community Services
1069 Jay Street, Building 1, Rochester, NY 14620.

PARENTS, FAMILIES and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
PFLAG’s Bridge mission: supporting parents and family members in coming out process; educating the community: advocating on behalf of LGBT family members. rochesterpflag@gmail.com. Phone: 585-993-3937.

Adoptive Parent Support Group
Monthly potluck lunches. For information, contact: shut, Sat, 350-2529.

Angel Food Box
Angel Food Box is a seasonal resource for food in need of distribution. Contact: www.angelfoodbox.org. Call: 585-305-8815.

Low-cost testing for HIV exposed. No criminal cases. Appointments are scheduled at area medical provider locations or by calling 259-2130.

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Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
**WEDNESDAYS**

**Identify Group**
The Identify Group is for LGBTQ identified individuals who have a developmental disability diagnosis. The group meets Wednesdays 3-4 pm at ARC Health Services 160 Brighton-Hettcsa 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 Delainza Fico. LMHWC. For more information, please contact Delainza Fico at dfico@arcmonroe.org or 585-271-0661 ext. 1552.

**LORA Knitting Group**
1st & 3rd Wednesdays of the month. Equal Grounds Coffee House, 750 South Ave, Rochester, 6-8pm. Contact Person: Kerry Cager. Email: knittinggroup@yahoogroups.com

**Gay Alliance Board of Directors**
Meets Third Wednesdays, 6pm, 875 E. Main St., 244-8640.

**New Freedom New Happiness**
AA 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. 325-1680.

**COAP**
Come Out and Play. Wednesday nights, 8-11 pm. Equal-Grounds, 750 South Ave, 3pm, woody1619@ymail.com.

**Rochester Rams General Meeting**
2nd Wednesdays, 7:30pm, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. www.rochesterrams.org.

**Positive Warriors**
Wednesdays, 6pm-12:30pm. Trillium Health, 259 Monroe Ave.

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

**FrontRunners/FrontWalkers**
6pm, Eastman House parking lot. www.rochesterfrontrunners.org.

**Gay Alliance Library & Archives**
Every Mon. 7-8pm, David Bohnett Cyber Center, 5:30-7:30pm, First floor, 875 E. Main St. 244-8640.

**Empire Bears**
Every Wednesday, 6pm dinner at various venues. www.empirebears.org.

**THURSDAYS**

**Preservation of Lesbian and Gay Concerns**
6:30pm, Thursday, First floor, 1554 Buffalo Road, Rochester 14624, 426-0862.

**GLOBAL** (Gay's Lesbians of Bausch & Lomb) Meets every third Thursday in Area 67 conference room at the Optic Center. Voice mail: 338-9977

**Rochester Gay Men’s Church**
Open to the LGBTQ community. 121 N. Fitzhugh St. 6:30-30, 423-0650

**Out & Equal Second Thursdays**
Social/business/networking, 5-7:30-7pm. Changing venues. Email: fingersnapper@outlook.com.

**Geneese Valley Gender Variants**
7-9pm, Thursday, 11 South Ave. GV GenderVariants@yahoo.comgruppen.com

**Rochester Gay Men’s AA meeting**
First, 7:30-9:30pm. Closed meeting. Emmanu-el Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave.

**Gay Alliance Youth**
Fridays, 7-9pm. Gay Alliance 5th floor, 875 E. Main St, 244-8640. Ages 13-20. youth@gayal-liance.org

**GLBTQ Motorcycle Group**
Second Fridays, 5-30pm. Various locations. RochesterGLBTQ@bakers.com; 647-4650; bakers2400@hotmail.com

**LORA GayNight Events**

**Monthly LGBT Womyns Bingo Night**
Third Fridays, 7-11pm, Empire Bingo. Contact: Christine. Irishfemmerochester@yahoo.com; 585-843-1320. Test text.

**SUNDAYS**

**Gay Men’s 7:30pm. Immortal Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave.**
- Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts.
- Men’s meeting, handicapped accessible.

**Mixed people**
This is a round-rum discussion meeting. If you are open to meeting people or speaking up in a group, you will find this meeting particularly warm and welcoming because the atmosphere is open (or pass). As a result, this meeting often runs long, so plan on more than the usual hour.

**Saturday Night Special Gay AA**
7pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd., S. Men and women. Open meeting.

**Sophie’s Supper Club**
First, Third Saturdays, 25 Bernie Lane, 6:30 pm.

**Men’s Cooking Group**
Third, fourth Saturdays, 8pm-2am, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. 244-8640.

**Sunday Night Special Gay AA**
7pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd., S. Men and women. Open meeting.

**Empire Bears**
Every Wednesday, 6pm dinner at various venues. www.empirebears.org.

**SOCIAL EVENTS**

**Rochester AA/NA MEETINGS**
Every week there are four regularly scheduled GLBTQ AA and two inclusive NA meetings in Rochester.

**TUESDAYS**

**Narcotics Anonymous**
6:30pm, 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 anyone who is affected by HIV and AIDS.

**New Freedom/New Happiness Group**
7pm. First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd. Bus riders: Take the #18 University bus to 12 Corners. Use the stop just past the top of the hill at Hull Street, and before Hull Street. 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 groups – as they relate to our alcoholism/addiction and recovery – are fair game.

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**Gay Men’s Bar Night**
Third Saturdays, 6pm-2am, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. 244-8640.

**Sappho Singles – Professional Women’s Group**
http://www.meetup.com/Sappho-Singles-Roch- ester/. Contact: Patty: email: pattya11@gmail. com. Phone: 585.223.6743. 3rd Saturday of each month. Monthly Dinner Socials for single professional women at various locations in and around Rochester NY area! Join us!

**Trans Ambiance of Greater Rochester Support educational group for gender-variant people. Allied Sports, Saturdays, 6-7:30pm, Open Arms 110, 725 E. Main St.

**FrontRunners/FrontWalkers**
9am, Eastman House parking lot. www.rochesterfrontrunners.org.

**Gay Men’s Night Out**
SOG, social group for transmen, now meets on the second Saturday of the month, 5pm @ Equal Grounds, 750 South Ave.

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6:30pm, 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 anyone who is affected by HIV and AIDS.

**New Freedom/New Happiness Group**
7pm. First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd. Bus riders: Take the #18 University bus to 12 Corners. Use the stop just past the top of the hill at Hull Street, and before Hull Street. 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 groups – as they relate to our alcoholism/addiction and recovery – are fair game.

**Rochester**
Gay Men’s 7:30pm. Immortal Baptist Church, 815 Park Ave.
- Closed meeting, restricted to alcoholics and addicts.
- Men’s meeting, handicapped accessible.

**Gay Men’s Bar Night**
Third Saturdays, 6pm-2am, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. 244-8640.

**Sappho Singles – Professional Women’s Group**
http://www.meetup.com/Sappho-Singles-Roch- ester/. Contact: Patty: email: pattya11@gmail. com. Phone: 585.223.6743. 3rd Saturday of each month. Monthly Dinner Socials for single professional women at various locations in and around Rochester NY area! Join us!

**Trans Ambiance of Greater Rochester Support educational group for gender-variant people. Allied Sports, Saturdays, 6-7:30pm, Open Arms 110, 725 E. Main St.

**FrontRunners/FrontWalkers**
9am, Eastman House parking lot. www.rochesterfrontrunners.org.

**Gay Men’s Night Out**
SOG, social group for transmen, now meets on the second Saturday of the month, 5pm @ Equal Grounds, 750 South Ave.

**Saturday Night Special Gay AA**
7pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd., S. Men and women. Open meeting.

**Sophie’s Supper Club**
First, Third Saturdays, 25 Bernie Lane, 6:30 pm.

**Men’s Cooking Group**
Third, fourth Saturdays, 8pm-2am, Bachelor Forum, 670 University Ave. 244-8640.

**Sunday Night Special Gay AA**
7pm, Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd., S. Men and women. Open meeting.

**Empire Bears**
Every Wednesday, 6pm dinner at various venues. www.empirebears.org.
WEDNESDAY 3
Best of the Fests. Little Theatre, 6:30 pm. “The Dog”. (ImageOut Film Festival) “Brothers”, 9 pm (Jewish Film Festival).
THURSDAY 4
ImageOut partners to host Fassbinder film series at Dryden Theatre of George Eastman House. “The Merchant of Four Seasons”, 8 pm. Tickets $12 pre-sale at thergmc.org, or $15 at door.
FRIDAY 5
SATURDAY 6
Rochester Women’s Community Chorus concert, “Songs in the Key of She”. 8 pm, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St, Free. donations welcome. Benefiting Alternatives for Bartered Women (Willow Domestic Violence Center).
SUNDAY 7
Buffalo Pride Parade. “Show and Tell”. Step off noon, Buffalo State campus. Downtown Elmwood to Allen St. Festival at Canalside.
Dignity Integrity. Episcopal Mass/ Healing Service, with music. 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.
TUESDAY 8
Shoulders To Stand On Screening. Brighton Memorial Library, 2300 Elmwood Ave., Brighton. 6:30-8:30 pm.
WEDNESDAY 9
Shoulders To Stand On Screening, Chili Public Library, 3333 Chili Ave. 6-8 pm.
THURSDAY 10
Fassbinder film series, “Mother Kusters Goes To Heaven”. 8 pm, Dryden Theatre of George Eastman House.
SATURDAY 11
Trillium White Party. 7 pm-midnight. Century Club, East Ave. Tickets online at www.3pepperyarnrochester17.st.
SUNDAY 12
Dignity Integrity. Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Word, with music. 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.
MONDAY 15
Empty Closet deadline for July issues. 343-0930; susan@gayalliance.org.
TUESDAY 16
Shoulders To Stand On screening, Pitsford Community Library, 24 State St., Pitsford. 6:30-8:30 pm.
THURSDAY 18
Fassbinder film series, “Fear Of Fear”, 8 pm, Dryden Theatre of George Eastman House.
FRIDAY 19
SATURDAY 20
Ride for Pride. 50 K bike ride benefitting Gay Alliance. 10 am. See page 30. Butch Femme Connection. Dinner at The Elmwood Inn, W. Henrietta Rd./Mt Hope Ave. 7 pm. www.facebook.com/bfconnection.
SUNDAY 21
Summer Solstice. Ancient Celtic Fire Festival celebrating the sun. Sacred tree oak.
Dignity Integrity. Episcopal Mass, querencia at St. Luke’s St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.
THURSDAY 25
Fassbinder film series, “Satanz’s Brew” 7 pm, Dryden Theatre of George Eastman House. Shoulders To Stand On screening. Henrietta Public Library, 435 Calkins Rd. 6-8:30 pm.
FRIDAY 26
SAGE fish fry at Twpowth Cafe; 6 N. Main St. Fast. 5:30 pm; blue grass band 7 pm. RSVP to 585-287-2958 by June 28.
SATURDAY 27
Open Arms MCC community potluck and game night. 5:30-8 pm., 707 E. Main St. Bring dish to pass, favorite card or board game.
SUNDAY 28
Dignity Integrity. Roman Catholic Prayer service to start the week, followed by potluck. 5 pm at St. Luke’s and St. Simon’s Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.
NYC, Toronto Pride parades.

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 Classified ads are $8 for the first 30 words; each additional 10 words is $1. The 1st word of the 2nd line is free for classifieds. Please list your ad payment to: The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, New York 14609.

By 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 phone number. No personal home addresses or names allowed. Classified ads are not published on The Empty Closet page of our website. However, each issue of the paper is reproduced online in its entirety.

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 10:30 am, 707 E. Main St. info@openarmsmcc.org; (585) 271-8478.


Martin Ippolito master electrician. Electrical work, telephone jacks, cable TV, burglar alarm systems, paddle fans. 585-6357.

Wedding Space and clergy services available. Celebrate your special day at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, 707 E. Main St. info@openarmsmcc.org (585) 271-8478.
The Empty Closet is published by the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley
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Advertising policy: 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 purchase the establishment advertised. Advertisements that are explicitly racist, sexist, aged, ableist or homophobic will be refused; advertisements from organizations that are sexist, racist, aged, ableist or anti-gay will also be refused. All political advertisements must contain information about the affiliation of the organization 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 purported flaws and to persuade the public not to buy it (or vote for him or her). The Empty Closet maintains, with equal 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 articles mail or in person to the Empty Closet office by the 15th of the month. Design services for four-camera ads are available for a fee. 244-0203, susan@gayalliance.org

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. Approx. 2000 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, or call (585) 244-0203 or e-mail empcloset@psgus.com.

The Empty Closet is the official publication of the Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley, Inc., as stated in the bylaws of the 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 issues that confront our 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, youth, young and old, and all parts of our community. We maintain, within legal boundaries, neutrality toward all political candidates, parties and issues unless the candidates, parties or issues are explicitly racist, sexist, ageist, ableist or anti-gay. We also maintain neutrality toward all religious and non-religious organizations. Our only exception to this policy is with respect to 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.

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 in confidence and well respected. Submissions are due by the 15th of the month: The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, NY 14605, e-mail empcloset@psgus.com. The online edition of EC is available at www.gayalliance.org.

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 in confidence and well respected. Submissions are due by the 15th of the month: The Empty Closet, 875 E. Main Street, Suite 500, Rochester, NY 14605, e-mail empcloset@psgus.com. The online edition of EC is available at www.gayalliance.org.

PFLAG MEETS 3RD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH
Meetings are at Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church
707 E. Main Street, Rochester, New York 14605 from 1 to 3pm.
Questions? Call: 585-993-3297 or Email: RochesterPFLAG@gmail.com
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FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

WED 6/3
BIG GAY SING

THU 6/4
GAY 5K

FRI 6/5
CHROMA: LGBTQ ART EXHIBITION

FRI 6/5
FLEX

SAT 6/6
DYKE MARCH

SAT 6/6
MOMENTUM

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