

The Rainbow Times

Your LGBT News in Western MA, the Capital District of NY, Northern CT, & Southern VT

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Opinions

Have a safe and happy Holiday Season

By: Nicole C. Lashomb/TRT Editor-in-Chief

The Holiday Season is already here. I do not know what exactly it is, but the air changes at this time of year. It begins to be easier for me to breathe and my heart is enveloped by beautiful memories of my present and past. I reminisce of my innocent childhood wondering and waiting for Santa to arrive. I suppose I still wait for Santa to arrive.

Whether you will be celebrating Christmas,

Kwanza, Hanukkah or the many other seasonal traditions, TRT wishes you a merry Holiday Season that is filled with peace, love and joy.

In this edition of *The Rainbow Times*, you will find our annual Holiday Guide. In it, is an abundant information about Holiday Gift ideas, catered specifically for the LGBT community. Also, please mind the local advertisers who want your business and want to cater to you, the LGBT consumer.

Read TRT's Trans Column on P. 6 & Lesbian Voices on P. 14

C'mon Out – Just Ask! Advice column

By: Tetty Gorfine*

Hi Tetty, I am hoping you can help me come to terms with the end of my relationship. My partner ended our relationship recently saying that I struggle too much for her and that she wants to have joy and bliss in her life every day. She also says that she wants a partner who will know her so well that she won't have to ask for what she needs. These things don't make sense to me and I'm wondering if you can give me some perspective.

Thank you Tetty.

—Marty

Dear Marty:

It's always difficult commenting on a relationship when I don't know the parties involved. I can't know what actually transpired between you two. That said, there are some important issues that may pertain to your situation and to other relationships as well.

The first is about polarization. When your partner says you struggle too much and she wants joy and bliss daily, this is an example of polarization. She is stating that you are one way and she wants exactly the opposite. As a therapist, when I see two people on opposite sides of the spectrum I know something else (some other issue) has propelled them into polar (opposite) positions. I have seen couples find common ground when things are going well only to move to opposite extremes when something else is awry. Of course I can not know what this was in your case, but you may ask yourself what other issue/s may have fueled this stance.

There's also her wanting joy and bliss every day of her life. I'm no guru, but from which planet do people experience joy and bliss every



TETTY GORFINE

day? Most people yearn to experience these things. Joy and bliss are wonderful aspects of life. But life brings many challenges. I do not personally know anyone who experiences joy and bliss on a daily basis.

Sometimes, people will see an aspect of themselves in another person (like perhaps struggle) and not want to feel it in themselves. Instead of feeling their own struggles, for example, they see it in another person and complain about that. Now I'm not saying this was the case with your partner, but this kind of projection is commonplace. The person who is doing this is not aware of it. It allows us humans not to feel things in ourselves that are difficult for us to either feel or process.

And lastly Marty, we humans are not mind readers. Asking for what we need in life can be difficult and there are many reasons people can have trouble with it. If indeed your partner wished that you could magically know what she wants/needs, this was fantasy and not reality. Many people, especially women struggle with this one. At times we all wish someone would swoop down and save us. But life requires that we take responsibility for ourselves and learning to ask for what you need/want is an essential element to being human.

I wish you the best Marty in healing from the end of this relationship. Break ups are painful and I send you my best wishes. —Tetty

See C'mon Out on Page 9

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The Controversial Couch

Lie back and listen. Then get up and do something

By: Suzan Ambrose*TRT Columnist

As Rosie O'Donnell begins her return to television, it seems clear there's only one question on the American television watching audiences' minds —“Just what is a variety show anyhow?”

Any long ago watchers of the 1970's *Hee-Haw* or *The Sonny and Cher Show* know the answer all too well: some dancing, a little laughter, and all sorts of music.

But we all remember that it's some good, some crunchy, some downright awful. And that, Virginia, is what a variety show is made of!

Variety. It's *the spice of life*—a mantra we've heard repeated throughout our lives. A little bit of this, throw in some of that and—

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

[OP-ED to President-Elect Obama]:

Congratulations. Like most Americans, I watched Tuesday night as history was made, wrongs were righted, hope was restored and the horrific cloud of exclusion, violence and hate finally lifted from the our great country. I wept at your speech. I could hardly speak because the lump in my throat, created by that palpable sense of pride I felt in your historic journey and the collective effort of the American people to bring your presidency to fruition, physically kept me from doing so. For the first time in my life, I felt that fear not govern my choices.

Then the news about the passage of Proposition 8 in California trickled in. Also—and somehow even more disturbing to me—the news that the Arkansas ban on adoption rights for gays and lesbians had passed. So on and so on, all through the evening, wherever gay rights were—inexplicably—on the ballot in states across the nation. That throaty lump of pride turned to sick stomach churning as I realized that, even now in this late but historic hour, your message “YES WE CAN” still does not apply to everyone. It does not apply to me.

“Others” are making it clear to me, in no uncertain terms: NO YOU CAN’T: turn over your land to the colonizers, march this long trail to diseased filled camps, get to the back of the bus, use a different drinking fountain, get back in the kitchen, give us control of your body... ad infinitum.

It is astounding to me that someone I do not know, in some place I have never been, would be able to walk into a small booth and decide with a finger touch what must happen (or not happen) in my personal life. It flies in the face of reason, compassion, and American patriotism that strangers could and would determine what is best for children who are in desperate need of loving parents—children that these same finger pointing/finger pushing bigots and homophobes are loathe to take care of themselves.

Sir, please remember that gays and lesbians put you in the White House. We helped you ...

More on Page 6



voila! A delicious soup is transformed virtually out of thin air. Presto!

Just think of the countless varieties in the LGBT soup! Dream of the possible offerings of soup du jour gayesque! Why? There's yummy Butter-nut, Cauli-flower, Garden Vegetables, Chicken and Dumplings or Sweet and Sour. How about Hearty Beef, Italian Meatball or, perhaps ... cremeamy? (!) Need I mention Egg Drop? Um, Um Good!

Soup varieties: all different tastes, different ingredients, different consistencies, colors and textures; different aromas, smells, temperatures and viscosities; all different but still all soups.

And from soup to nuts, the question begs to be asked: What exactly is the LGBT variety? Who are we?

We know we're often grouped together, even though we don't have the same philosophies, religion, hairstyles or pets. How about our buying habits? Lesbians might buy more Subarus and gay men perhaps like the same kind of heroine at the movies, but can we honestly paint ourselves with such a wide brush? Of course not!

And the similarities we're grouped together for? What we do in bed, how we have our sex but wait, even that's not true! We're as distinctly different in that

See Couch on Page 6

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HIV could be eliminated in a decade

By: Maria Cheng/AP

LONDON (AP)—The virus that causes AIDS could theoretically be eliminated in a decade if all people living in countries with high infection rates are regularly tested and treated, according to a new mathematical model.

It is an intriguing solution to end the AIDS epidemic. But it is based on assumptions rather than data, and is riddled with logistical problems. The research was published online Tuesday in the medical journal, *The Lancet*.

"It's quite a startling result," said Charlie Gilks, an AIDS treatment expert at the World Health Organization and one of the paper's authors. "In a relatively short amount of time, we could potentially knock the epidemic on its head."

Gilks and colleagues used data from South Africa and Malawi. In their model, people were voluntarily tested each year and immediately given drugs if they tested positive for HIV, regardless of whether they were sick.

Within 10 years, HIV infections dropped by 95 percent. Other initiatives like safe sex education and male circumcision were also used.

The strategy would cut the estimated number of AIDS deaths between 2008 and 2050 by about half, from about 8.7 million to 3.9 million, leaving only sporadic HIV cases.

Experts think the strategy's cost would peak at about \$3.4 billion a year, though expenses

would fall after an initial investment.

"This is certainly beyond the bounds of the current infrastructure for many countries, but that is not a reason not to think big," said Myron Cohen, of the University of North Carolina, who has done similar research. He was not involved in the WHO study.

Only 3 million people are currently on AIDS drugs. Nearly 7 million people are still awaiting treatment, and about 3 million more people were infected last year. Worldwide, WHO guesses that about 33 million people have HIV.

Increasing access to testing and drugs would stretch already weak health systems in Africa, which has most of the world's HIV cases.

"This is not like giving someone a Tylenol," said Jennifer Kates, director of HIV policy for the Kaiser Family Foundation in Washington, DC. Once people start AIDS drugs, they must continue indefinitely. "The idea should be explored, but it's a huge leap," Kates said.

Handing out AIDS drugs to everyone who tests positive could also worsen drug resistance.

In addition, doctors don't know if it's safe to take AIDS drugs for decades; the oldest drug combinations have only been around for about a dozen years.

Other experts questioned whether the strategy might infringe on patient's rights. Once people test positive for HIV, they would be advised to start treatment, even if they weren't sick.

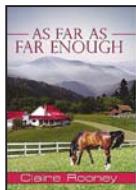
That would benefit the community, but not necessarily the patients themselves. AIDS drugs come with side effects including vomiting, liver failure, and heart attacks.

WHO emphasized that the study findings do not signal a policy change. "This is only a theoretical exercise," said Dr. Kevin De Cock, director of WHO's HIV/AIDS department. He said WHO would hold a meeting next year to study the idea more closely.

\$100,000 for women's/girls' organizations

The Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts is pleased to announce the availability of \$100,000 in grant funding. Grants are for organizations or programs serving women and girls in the four counties of western Massachusetts, and will range from \$3,500-\$10,000. Applications are due February 2, 2009.

"We look for projects that truly address the root causes, that influence long-term social change for women and girls, especially around education, economic development and safety," says Julie Kumble, director of grants and programs. "Our three grant categories make it easier for organizations to decide where they might best fit in: Operating Support, Project Support and Capacity Building grants. Before applying for a grant, Kumble strongly recommends that applicants attend a pre-proposal information session on December 2, 4, 9 or 11 where guidelines will be explained in depth. Meeting times and locations, and the application itself, are available at www.womensfund.net



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In 'The Name of God'

Faith, Family, and God: Proposition 8

By: Paul P. Jesep*

Proposition 8 has caused anger, disbelief, and disappointment. California's unjust democratic action, however, is an opportunity for members of the LGBT and searching community to show the world that it is true to Creation.

Let me clarify what I mean by "Creation." Creation is you. You're an intended, essential part of the universe. Creation is the better angles of each person who responds to hate, judgment, and injustice with patience, persistence, education, and gentle persuasion. It is all that is loving and beautiful. Creation is also art, music, autumn, mountains, spring flowers, crashing waves, the majesty of a snow storm.

Trying to make sense of an injustice can strengthen one's understanding of their personal Creation and one's place in the universe. Anger, a legitimate emotion, can turn

into hate, a very self-destructive feeling, if it's not kept in check. Of course striking a balance is not easy and revenge can be sweet temptation.

Every person, no matter their hurtful, misguided behavior, has value, purpose, and beauty. Hence, a response to injustice and ignorance must be deliberate and not a harmful reaction.

How should negative feelings be converted into positive energy regarding Proposition 8?

In late summer of 2007, business called me to lower Manhattan. During a lunch break I walked the streets and met Linda. She was a barefoot, middle aged, silver haired, pungent smelling woman with a face accented by the city's grime. Linda sat against a building with a cup for donations.

Linda and thousands of homeless like her are often the victims of assaults that include being urinated on or set on fire. In one case

a so-called entrepreneur paid and filmed homeless people beating each other senseless. The fights have been sold and distributed nationwide. I reminded myself of this painful reality when Linda came into view.

Linda's beloved friend, Mary, an orange colored cat meowed to passers-by who ignored them. I squatted to introduce myself. Mary purred, stood up with curled tail high in the air, and brushed against my knee.

I placed money in Linda's cup. "Thank you," she said, "but will you be okay? Do you have enough?" I assured Linda that I did and urged her to take good care of herself. "I have to," she replied, "Mary needs me."

No matter the hurt, pain, or indifference showed to her, Linda remained true to Creation. Linda did not hate passers-by who judged and ignored her. This rejected child of God still expressed concern for another. Linda showed love, kindness, and compas-

sion in a cold, confused world.

Don't lose hope because of Proposition 8's passage. It's ok to be angry, but don't hate. It's ok to be frustrated, but don't lash out. Think of Linda who still believed in people. She still thought the best of humanity. In so doing she never lost touch with her Creation. Like Linda's response to injustice, Proposition 8 is a chance for the LGBT and searching community to show that it has remained true to Creation. It is an opportunity, though an unwanted one, to convert negative emotions into positive energy that can fuel a renewed effort to achieve the justice that is long over-due.

* Paul is a practicing attorney in Albany, priest and prelate in the Eastern Orthodox Church, and author of "Crucifying Jesus and Secularizing America - the Republic of Faith without Wisdom." He may be reached at VladyskaPaulPeter@aol.com.

"Buying for Equality" Consumer Guide released ahead of Holiday shopping season

WASHINGTON—The Human Rights Campaign Foundation, the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender civil rights organization, today released its 2009 "Buying for Equality" guide, aimed at helping consumers identify hundreds of businesses and brands that support equality and fairness in the workplace for the LGBT community.

The guide includes listings from a record 260 companies that received a perfect 100 percent score on our 2009 Corporate Equality Index, an annual report on company policies related to diversity & inclusion training, non-discrimination policies and access to healthcare for LGBT employees and their families. To download or request a copy of the guide visit: www.hrc.org/buyersguide. "With this year's economy, we need to make sure every dollar we spend goes to businesses that have earned the right to call you a customer," said

Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "Every day, we make choices that send a powerful message about our values, our principles and our ideals. We do it every time we make decisions on how to clothe and feed our families or what investments to make.

Where we spend and invest our dollars has remarkable potential to positively affect the LGBT community because it reinforces what many companies know: fairness is good business." According to a Witeck-Combs/Market Research.com study, the buying power of the LGBT community is estimated to be \$75 billion in 2009. During difficult economic times, our nation's businesses know that every dollar spent by consumers figures into the success of their organization. This is the fourth year the Human Rights Campaign has published the widely-popular "Buying for Equality" consumer guide. The guide has been viewed and

downloaded off of HRC's website more than 275,000 times. This year, HRC included businesses that did not respond to survey request over the past three years. Each non-responder was provided a score of "?" and placed into the red section of the relevant buying category. HRC looks forward to building positive, working relationships with these businesses and encourages readers of the Buyer's Guide that contact these companies to report their

responses to HRC. Scores in the "Buying for Equality" guide are determined through scoring criteria in the HRC Foundation's Corporate Equality Index (CEI), the only nationally recognized measure of LGBT workplace equality. The CEI is the primary method for companies to evaluate their diversity efforts toward LGBT employees, customers, and investors. To learn more about the CEI visit: www.hrc.org/cei

Trans Parents group forms in Florence, MA

Do you have lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender parents? Join us for pizza and fun on Saturday, December 6, from 5-7 p.m. at 25 Mountain Laurel Path in Florence, MA. (Pathways Cohousing).

A chapter of COLAGE will be started in Western Mass. (www.colage.org). COLAGE is a national non-profit organization that brings together youth with LGBTQ parents for support and activism. Youth in grades 3-12 and their parents are especially welcome to participate in activities. We'll also hear from local middle, high school and college

aged COLAGErs about their experiences growing up with LGBTQ parents and how COLAGE has made a difference to them, even here in the 'happy valley.' There is no charge for this event, though donations are gratefully accepted, and RSVPs (colagewm.rsvp@gmail.com) are appreciated.

Teens, join us to see the film 'Tru Loved,' a movie about a high school girl with gay parents, shown at Northampton High immediately afterwards (7:30).

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Westenhoefer chimes in the New Year with Northampton audience

By: Nicole C. Lashomb/*Editor-in-Chief*

Nationally acclaimed and award-winning lesbian comedian, Suzanne Westenhoefner, has been described as fearless, bold, unapologetic, and freaking hilarious. She's made a career out of telling the truth. And, the truth is that life is funny and no one is off limits.

As the first openly gay comedian in the United States, Westenhoefner has delivered gay material to straight audiences in mainstream comedy clubs beginning in NYC since the early '90s. She holds over 100 performances each year at theatres, clubs, colleges, fundrainers and cruise and well-known LGBT resort vacations. In addition, Westenhoefner has also toured with high-profile celebrities such as the Indigo Girls and Ani DeFranco while performing at other venues.

Westenhoefner has also made a splash on the big screen. Her comedy special and documentary, "A Bottom on Top," aired on LOGO television in the fall 2007. Special appearances by Westenhoefner have been aired on HBO, Bravo and LOGO.

In TRT's exclusive interview with Westenhoefner, she speaks out about her maternal, life experiences, comedy strategies, her future plans to become queen and her thoughts about her premiere New Year's Eve comedy performance in Northampton, Massachusetts. Cheers!

Q. Why did you first get into comedy and what compels you to continue on that career path?
A. I got into comedy on a dare from my regu-

lars where I bartended in New Jersey. I continue on this path because other than bartending I have no other skills ... and this seems to be working out very well.

Q. I know that you work unscripted. Do you ever get nervous that you are working on improvisation? Why or why not?

A. It's not completely unscripted ... it's all in my head and it comes out extemporaneously. I don't write things down. I don't write jokes. It all happens on stage and then hopefully I remember it ... Not nervous, but it IS the adrenaline that makes me work and be funny, and that I don't know what's happening next.

Q. Where do you get your topics to talk about?

Are they based on your friends, your experiences, etc.? And, what are some broad topics that you bring up during your show?

A. I tend to talk about whatever is going on for me at the time I am doing the show. So, that could be [the] girlfriend, friends, family, life, politics ... whatever is foremost in my world, becomes the show. I think all the topics are broad; family, friends, relationships, life, traffic, movies, sex, etc. I don't think any comic has any NEW topics, just a new funny way to talk about it.

Q. Do you ever use members of the audience as part of your show?

A. I DO use members of the audience sometimes, but it needs to be the right time and place. It's not something I always do, especially if it's a huge theatre and I cannot see a face. Usually I speak to the audience because I see someone and think of something to ask or say

to them. It's always a risk. You don't want someone to heckle you or answer back in a negative [way]. It happens and I hate that!!

Q. When you first started your career entertaining the mainstream community, where you out as a lesbian? Describe how you came out to your audience/s.

A. I started my career as a lesbian comic. I billed myself as a lesbian comic and said it within the first two seconds of being on stage. That was very purposeful. I was doing this to change the world to make it ok for gays to be out. I never sugar coated it. I would either be introduced as a lesbian or I would say, 'Hi I am a lesbian' ... and then the comedy. It was crazy. It was 1991 ... people would freak. I loved it, but I also was occasionally afraid.

Q. What is it like doing a show for a straight audience vs. an LGBT audience?

A. A gay audience is like short hand. I don't have to explain anything. I can say P-town. I can say Michigan. I can say butch or Pat Summit ... whatever. I have to explain a little more for an entirely straight audience and I can't say "us." I have to say "we."

Q. You will be performing on New Year's Eve in Northampton, MA. What can your audience expect?

A. I don't know what to tell them to expect. I am SO FREAKING excited to be in Northampton for New Year's. I've never done a New Year's Eve show. My girl is coming with me and I am hoping that Rachel Maddow will be there!

Q. Have you been to Northampton before for

personal reasons or for business? Are you looking forward to being here?

A. I have done a few shows at the Iron Horse which was great, and once at Smith. (for a LGBT group I think), but I've not been back in a few years so I am really up for it.

Q. If you could give one piece of advice to a room full of LGBT people, what would that advice be?

A. COME OUT! It's still the same advice. It's still the most important thing we do. It's still the thing that changes people's minds more than anything.

Q. Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?

A. I love what I do so much. I hope in ten years I am just doing bigger and better shows. And, I would like to be queen, of something ...

Westenhoefner will ring in the New Year with her audience on December 31, 2008 at the *Clarion Hotel*, Northampton, Massachusetts. To purchase tickets, call 413-478-4165, visit www.nohopridepromos.com or pick them up at *Northampton's Pride & Joy*. For more information about Suzanne Westenhoefner and her upcoming shows, visit www.suzanne.com.

Noho Pride Promos, NPP, event and entertainment organizers for the LGBT community are responsible for bringing *Suzanne Westenhoefner* to Northampton, Mass., for their New Year's Eve Extravaganza. NPP brings a variety of LGBT events to the Northampton area throughout the year.

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A peaceful holiday season, full of love in spite of the discomfort and hurt

By: Deja Nicole Greenlaw/TRT Columnist

This is the time of year to celebrate and rejoice, to give and to receive and to share time together, to take a break from the too often hectic pressure filled pace of everyday life and to just relax and to appreciate. Forget the deadlines and the worries for a while and take the time to enjoy. It is a wonderful time of year, especially for the young and the young at heart. Happy holidays to everyone!

Yes, the holidays can be a very happy time of the year, but it also can be a very uncomfortable time of year. To us in the LGBT world this time of year can be very stressful and downright awful. This time of year brings us to spend time with our family and our relatives...and there may be some of our own kin who have trouble



DEJA NICOLE
GREENLAW

with accepting us for who we truly are. They do not like who we have "suddenly become." They want us to be "the old way, the way we should be." We may have to sacrifice our true selves a bit for these coming days or we may reopen wounds of the past or we may spend time all alone knowing that our loved ones do not want to deal with us ... this can be a truly sad season and one to be painfully dealt with until it has finally passes. Lord, give me and my brothers and sisters the strength to get thru this holiday season!

It does get exasperating when someone in your family will not recognize you, will not

speak to you, and will not even look at you. This person used to love you before, but not now. The days of their love for you have gone away and they may never come back. This person could be any member of your family, but since you have found the strength and peace to be who you truly are they turn their back on you. They are ashamed or are angry, or feel betrayed and they now just don't want to deal with you at all. You have lost them. Their love for you has gone, maybe never to return to you. This hurts like hell. Too many of us know this awful hurt.

But, then again, there are others in our families who have no problem with us, who accept us with their unconditional love, and who support us! They can deal with us and it's no big issue for them. They are happy that we are there

and they will love us no matter what. Bless them! Love them! Kudos to these wonderful angels! Please give them your warmest hug, your most loving kiss, your biggest smile and your most heartfelt love. These are the very special people in your life. May the higher powers give each of them a spiritual gift this season!

So, I am concluding by asking each of you to have a peaceful holiday season and if you can celebrate, by all means, do so and if you cannot celebrate, please know that you are not alone and that there are many, many, too many others, in the same boat as you. Just try your best to be busy and to get through this holiday period without crying too much. But, then again, a good cry just might be what you need.

Loves and peace to everyone!

Letters to the Editor from Page 2

write this momentous chapter in American's long, often sad, history. It is inexcusable that, at this time in our country's narration, others still exclude, still segregate, still hate.

You are here now, at the crux. With your election, we are far beyond the words tolerance and tolerate. We stand at the word right—in all of its definitions. I voted for you and now I hold you accountable. Do not let history persist in its mistakes. Do not let hatred persevere. As you so often put it during your campaign, "We cannot afford more of the same." I

Mpire you to make good on that statement in your administration. Just as you (and minorities, The GLBT community, women—even us Hillary supporters—elderly, union workers, the poor, the youth, etc...) organized and galvanized a country to vote for change in government, please urge the country to take that same momentum and apply it to a change of consciousness. We all must put forth the same amount of effort expended in your campaign into eradicating prejudice. It is still an issue Mr. President and I am still scared. Respectfully,

—Kimberly Ann Rogers, Easthampton, MA

Couch from Page 2

category as all the others one could name. In essence, we're unique, but part of the greater whole; isn't that what every minority group says? Somehow, I think our soup's got the rest of those groups beat out ten times over when it comes to absolute uniqueness.

This brings me to *Thomas Beatie*, world-famous member of the tribe. Thomas Beatie is perhaps better known as the "pregnant man."

Thomas Beatie made the international community's jaw drop when he became the first Trans Man to become pregnant, and subsequently, give birth—the old-fashioned way.

As many of us are aware, Thomas has had surgery to remove his breasts and had begun testosterone injections, but had not had his female reproductive organs removed, thus making him capable of giving birth to a child.

Somehow the "pregnant man" phrase has never worked for me. The "male mother" holds a better image of what it is I think

Thomas brings to the table. And I don't just mean the delivery table.

When one thinks of a man, one doesn't expect to see his abdomen protruding over his pants—uhh...not with a child, anyhow! Society is in shock over the whole thing...and why shouldn't they be? Part of the gay community is as well—they just don't want to talk about it. Like a magic trick: is that an illusion I see before my very eyes—or a real man? Some may suspect they are being fooled.

The transgender stories that I've been privy to hear are often heart wrenching. I can't imagine what it feels like to actually know you are living in the wrong gender body. And, although I can argue (hell, I can go to the carpet over!), the point that we are all responsible for what happens in, and to, our bodies, what I can't seem to figure out is the why. Why go all the way through physically becoming a man, living as a man, accepting that you are a real man

See Couch on Page 11

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Deep Inside Hollywood: Roland Emmerich Envisions 2012



By: Romeo San Vicente*
**Roland Emmerich
 Envisions 2012**

Some gay guys obsess over art or music or fashion. Director Roland Emmerich seems to enjoy freaking out over the end of the world. After directing little movies like *Independence Day* and *The Day After Tomorrow*, he's taking on another cataclysmic disaster movie titled *_2012_*. What's it about? Well, all the man in charge will say is that it's some sort of natural disaster and that the ancient Mayan calendar predicts the end of Earth life in about four years. Spooked yet? So is his cast: John Cusack, Thandie Newton, Amanda Peet, Woody Harrelson, Danny Glover, Chietet Ejiofor, and Oliver Platt, among many others. No word yet on whether or not the title actually means the number of actors involved, but the film is already hotly buzzed about and due sometime in 2009. That might give everyone the time to find a blueprint for escape, should the entire planet actually blow up then, after all.

Sharon Gless Free to Love Ladies

Let's say you (guiltily) watched Queer As Folk and secretly wished she would be your

personal P-FLAG mom, one who always told the bawdiest jokes right alongside your gay BFFs. Or, like guest star Rosie O'Donnell, you wanted Sharon herself in the more "Let's Get Physical" way. Well now, the gay rights advocate and QAF alumna will play an openly-lesbian woman in a time when that sort of thing just wasn't done out loud, in the indie feature *Hannah Free*, which finds two mid-20th-century women, once-intimate friends who'd gone their separate ways, falling in love all over again against the backdrop of history. In production now, audiences will be free to see Hannah sometime in 2009.

Finding Me To Find Its Way to Theaters

Noah's Arc: Jumping the Broom's box office receipts, while small by Hollywood standards, represents something of a milestone in queer cinema featuring African-American casts. Its per-screen average in limited release proved that gay films by and for people of color are not an impossible dream beyond the film festival circuit. Which makes the arrival of *Finding Me* a cause for hope. Picked up for theatrical distribution by TLA Releasing, the gay, black rom-com, the debut of director Roger S. Omeyus, Jr., tells the story of a young man trying to balance his new love interest with a complicated relationship with his own homophobic father. Not hurting the film's



profile are racy, skin-baring ads, featuring the hot young cast that should draw more than a few eager ticket buyers when the film opens in spring of 2009.

Van Sant Tests Out The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test

Hot on the heels of the mainstream-flavored biopic *Milk*, Gus Van Sant seems eager to get back to his favorite kind of filmmaking - the sort that takes a walk on life's wilder side - with a film version of Tom Wolfe's 1967 book, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. And few groups of American artists were wilder than the Beats, one of whom—Ken Kesey—undertook a now-famous cross-country road trip with his group of "Merry Pranksters." Along the way LSD was taken in serious amounts, and mind-expansion ensued, eventually resulting in the writing of *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. Milk screenwriter

Dustin Lance Black is reportedly handling script duties, but no casting announcements have been made. But what actor in his right mind would "just say no" to something that sounds this much fun?

Kidman and Theron Go Out for "Danish"

Nicole Kidman and Charlize Theron both won Oscars for playing lesbians and for wearing fake noses—in "The Hours" and "Monster", respectively—but the mind reels about what kind of prostheses will be required for their next movie. "The Danish Girl" will star the duo as real-life artists Einar and Greta Wegener. Einar (Kidman) began life as a man but later became the world's first transsexual in 1931; Einar's road to womanhood began when he stood in for a female model in a painting that Greta (Theron) was creating. Anand Tucker ("Shopgirl", "Hilary and Jackie") will direct from Lucinda Coxon's adaptation of David Ebershoff's book. Look for Kidman and Theron to astound the world almost as much as the real Wegeners did, when "The Danish Girl" eventually hits theaters.

* Romeo San Vicente's favorite flavor of Kool-Aid is purple. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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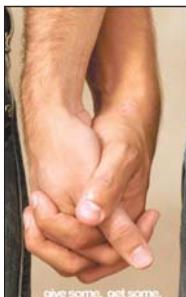
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Gay Holiday Guide 2008 (p. 8&10)



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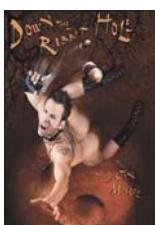
by mikey rox

"Top 100 Gifts," and it's the only one its kind lacking the kitschy company's trademark duck bill; rumor has it that the muse herself threw a hissy in order to have her own puffy pout placed front and center. (\$30-\$40, EverythingAmanda.com)



A FAIRY'S TAIL

Channel your inner Cheshire Cat with photographer Justin Monroe's highly anticipated coffee-table picture tome, *Down the Rabbit Hole*, from publisher Bruno Gmünder. Steeped in the surreal fantasy, sinister humor and visual allegory of Lewis Carroll's famous fable—among



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other notable fairy tales (Janice Dickinson as Glinda the Good Bitch, anyone?—the artist's 160-page paperweight features pseudo-celebs—like M4M adult actors Cody Fallon and Erik Rhodes—in highly conceptualized (and often compromising) positions, which is a good thing. Because while Monroe's deftly defined debut may never end up on an art-school curriculum, at least it proves that porn stars can still get better jobs than the rest of us. (\$97; Amazon.com, TLA.com)

XXXMAS

You wouldn't let your tree go untrimmed, and the same goes for your crotch. Spruce up those jingle balls with festive follicle dye from Betty Beauty, "color for the hair down there," available in two holiday hues—LOVE betty (red) and LUCKY betty (green). Free holiday stencils in seasonal shapes come with each kit. (\$14.99; BettyBeauty.com)

FRESH FACED

When winter weather lashes out like a leather daddy scorned, *Face to Face NYC Day Spa* has just what the doctor ordered. "Joy to the Face," a 60-minute holiday facial infused with clove and eucalyptus begins with an acupuncture scalp, face and neck massage before a deep pore cleansing gets down and dirty; the hour-long organic "Winter WonderRub" warms you inside and out with spices that melt knots away and leaves you smelling fresh and festive. Both treatments are completed with warm cider and a free Declor gift set. (\$80 each; FaceToFaceNYC.com)

SILVER LINING

Known for its culturally diverse designs and celebrity clientele (Tiki Barber and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson are on the shortlist), Cruz Azur lives up to its motto "Bold, Brave, Spirited" with three new men's jewelry col-

lections. New lines include "The Holiday Horns," inspired by old-fashioned Christmas tree lights, available in five vibrant colors: ivory, green, yellow, black and red; "The Holy Peace Rosaries," celebrating 50 years of the peace sign, which was created on February 21, 1958, to protest nuclear war; and "The Joy of Music," featuring a pair of headphones set against a CD-like, round silver pendant. (\$65-\$120; CruzAzur.com)

BLITZKREIG

Stand out in a sea of iPhones and Androids with Blitz, the back-to-basics mobile device from Verizon Wireless. Quick and easy texting is the name of the game with Blitz, which features a level handset combining a large screen and the convenience of a QWERTY keyboard with reliable messaging and voice features.

Additional specs include V CAST Music support, a microSD slot with support up to 4GB, Stereo Bluetooth, a 1.3 megapixel cam, and VZ navigator. Which'll come in handy the when you wake up on some dude's floor downtown. (\$69.99; VerizonWireless.com)

FRONT LOADER

That boy's built like a bulldozer! Maybe not, but at least he'll look like it in Ginch Gonch's Load'N & Dump'N briefs. Made from a breathable, body-conforming stretch fabric (95% cotton/5% Lycra), these multiple truck skivvies feature a quarry of diggers and haulers while the signature 1 ¼-inch microfiber elastic logo waistband and matching trim offers a hip and polished look. Briefs come in four day-laborer colors—blue, red, green and black. You provide the beeping sounds when he backs up. (\$31; GinchGonch.com)

FOND MEMORIES

Turn those dust-collecting home videos into timeless digital treasures with iMemories, the first online company to integrate digital conversion of old family films with online sharing, editing and storage capabilities. Just send your media—including VHS, DVD and any other type of film—to iMemories' start-of-the-

art facilities and they'll organize digitally re-mastered personal movies into clearly labeled scenes for you to easily identify, edit and safely share with the world. Just don't press

your luck; nobody wants to see your "Viagra Diaries." (\$19.99 and up; iMemories.com)

MERRY MARGARITAS

Feliz Navidad, indeed. Essential Artist Bottles from 1800 Tequila make it easier to drift away to a sunny south-of-the-border beach with nine limited edition decanters dressed in the works of previously undiscovered artists, such as Atlanta-based graphic designer Dosa Kim and illustrator Hannah Stouffer of San Francisco. Perfect for an agave connoisseur or the average cocktail enthusiast, these unique and decorative bottles will be the center of attention on any bar. (\$34.99; 1800tequila.com)



FULL STEAM AHEAD

Little luxuries—like having delicates professionally pressed—are the first to go in times of recession. Luckily, Whirlpool can help you channel your inner *Donna Reed* with its Fabric Freshener, a portable device that revives clothing while relaxing wrinkles. Using only water—no chemicals here—the Fabric Freshener immerses textiles in a blanket of steam for 30 minutes, leaving them looking and smelling like they came straight from the cleaners. Collapsing to the size of a small vacuum, this mechanical George Jefferson can easily travel on a business trip or store under a bed. (\$219; Whirlpool.com)

See Guide on Page 10

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Queer Justice & Queertations

Queertations: Say What?!

By: Rex Wockner

"Okay. So Prop 8 passed. Alright, I get it. 51% of you think that I am a second class citizen. Alright then. So my wife, uh I mean, roommate? Girlfriend? Special lady friend? You are gonna have to help me here because I am not sure what to call her now. Anyways, she and I are not allowed the same right under the state constitution as any other citizen. Okay, so I am taking that to mean I do not have to pay my state taxes because I am not a full citizen. I mean that would just be wrong, to make someone pay taxes and not give them the same rights, sounds sort of like that taxation without representation thing from the history books."

—Melissa Etheridge writing at The Daily Beast, Nov. 6.

"I've been out most of my life. I don't feel like I have a choice about it. I look gay."

—MSNBC talk show host **Rachel Maddow** to New York magazine, Nov. 2.

"(R)ight-wing forces led by the Mormon Church poured tens of millions of dollars into the campaign for Proposition 8 -- a measure to enshrine bigotry in the state's Constitution by preventing people of the same sex from marrying. The measure was designed to overturn May's State Supreme Court decision, which made California the second state to end that exclusion of same-sex couples. ... Apart from creating legal uncertainty about the thousands of same-sex marriages that have been performed in California and giving rise to lawsuits challenging whether the rules governing ballot measures were properly followed, the immediate impact of Tuesday's rights-shredding exercise is to underscore the danger of allowing the ballot box to be used to take away people's fundamental rights."

—New York Times' editorial, Nov. 6.

"If we can elect an African-American as president, we can support gay marriage! Defeat Prop 8! We will not give up!"

—Madonna, during a concert at Dodger Stadium, Nov. 6.

"(The campaign against Prop 8) was guided throughout, alas, by the same mentality that plagues the Human Rights Campaign. They are poll-obsessed, focus-group manic, and devoid of real, gut-level conviction. They ran a Clinton-style campaign in an Obama-style environment."

—Gay writer **Andrew Sullivan** on his blog, Nov. 6.

Lesbian Best Sellers*

1. The L Word: Season 5
2. Butch Jamie
3. Itty Bitty Titty Committee
4. She Likes Girls 3
5. Treading Water
6. Edge of Heaven
7. The Gymnast
8. Shelter Me [Riparo]
9. Drifting Flowers
10. I Wish You Would-Explicit

* By Wolfevideo.com

Gay Best Sellers*

1. Another Gay Sequel: Gays....
2. Arizona Sky
3. Whirlwind
4. Shelter
5. Adored: Diary of a Porn...
6. He Likes Guys
7. Boys Briefs 5: Schoolboys
8. Dantes Cove Season 3
9. Kiss the Bride

* By Wolfevideo.com

Queer Justice: Old vs. new wills, what to do?

By: Attorney Jennifer L. Dexter*

Dear Readers,

I have been inundated with follow-up questions to last month's column where I answered a question about wills and will contests. So, I figured I would spend some extra time on the issue. Please note that I do not regularly practice in this area of law, so if you have a serious issue, please contact an attorney.

The most asked question was what can you do or should you do if a relative passes and you read a will that is not representative of any will in the past.

This is a difficult question to answer. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 191 section 13 states that any person who possesses a will must deliver that will to either the Probate Court who has jurisdiction, or to the executors of the will within thirty days of the death. The difficulty lies in whether people know about someone's passing.

Theoretically, say my Uncle passes and his wife gives me a copy of a will. She doesn't know that I had read a will of his two years ago, that the will she gave me is not the same will, and it was also drafted by a different attorney. The first thing I would do is contact the attorney who drafted the original will if I can. The Board of Bar Overseers is the governing body over attorneys and exists in every state. They have current contact information about every attorney licensed in that state; they can assist you in your investigation. If the first attorney (who should have a copy of the will he drafted), was not told to destroy the will based on the execution of a new will you can hope-



fully find the old will that way. If you can't you can try to hire a private investigator to assist.

If you cannot find the old will and you believe that the new will was not drafted voluntarily and willingly, then you have the right to raise these issues with the court by filing a will contest. Keep in mind that the court will make its decision on what it believes to be the true intent of the drafter.

Once the will is presented to the court for probate, the executor must provide notice; if you feel like the executor named in the will cannot be trusted, you can also fight the appointment by not signing the acknowledgement of probate and appointment of executor.

Again, this is a very difficult area of law and if you are experiencing some of these issues you should contact an attorney.

*Attorney Jennifer L. Dexter earned a B.A. in Psychology from The University of Central Florida. She moved to Massachusetts to attend law school at The Western New England College of Law in Springfield, Mass. She is a member of the Massachusetts Bar and has a Solo General Practice in the Pioneer Valley Area. If you have legal questions that are unanswered, or if you would like to know more about a specific topic, then send your questions to: queerjustice@comcast.net

C'mon Out! from Page 2

Hi:

I am gay and have recently begun a new relationship. My boyfriend is great and I love being with him. But I'm finding that I am not seeing my friends much, not always getting things done around the house and I'm often tired (we stay up too late at night... you know, lol). What should I do?

Thanks,

—Brent

Hi Brent:

This is a good question and your timing is perfect given the last question asked. You are being faced with the challenge of saying what you need. Early in a relationship, when things are going so well, you may not want to seemingly put a wrench in the works and potentially bring up something difficult. But, in every relationship the time will come when one person's needs differ from the others. And the sooner you address this, the better. The longer something is not right for you (and in general in every relationship) the more likely you will become resentful and become upset about other things. And this puts you at risk for

overreacting.

It is sometimes hard and scary saying what is true for you and saying what you need. But it is exactly this kind of negotiation every relationship must be able accomplish in order to thrive. When you and your boyfriend succeed with this, it will bring you even closer.

Give it a try and good luck!

—Tetty

*C'mon Out! Submit your questions to Tetty Gorfine, Director of LifeCourse Counseling Center. Simply go to www.lifecourse.net and click on "Ask Us A Question." All questions will be answered on the bulletin board. One or two will be printed next month here in The Rainbow Times.

* Tetty has also been a psychotherapist since 1980. She has worked extensively with LGBTQ individuals, couples and groups and has supervised both clinicians and therapists in training. Her vision and leadership spirited nearly all of LifeCourse Counseling Center's programs. Tetty has also been on numerous radio talk shows and television programs. She has presented at professional conferences on topics pertinent to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals.

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Holiday Gift Guide from Page 8**POTENT QUOTABLES**

Self-proclaimed "Gay Pimp" Jonny McGovern knows how to make a statement. And, you will too in his slim-fitting, super-deluxe line of extra faggoty apparel. You'll draw stares of disdain and elevate discomfort at the family table with tees that shout out loud your recent secrets. Take your slut of a sister, for instance. Tell her how much you really love her with a fast and frank "Girl, I Fu@#\$& Yo' Boyfriend." Yep, that should do the trick. Jonny McGovern's Gay Pimpin' T-shirts are printed on American Apparel's 100% cotton jersey knits. (\$20.90 and up; GayPimp.com)

**BOTTOMS BUNKED**

Pack your bags for a gay vacay. OUT Adventures offers 80 exclusive small-group LGBT tours to destinations that span the globe. During your trip you'll stay at locally owned hotels, travel with local guides, support local craftsmen (and-women), and eat at local restaurants. OUT Adventures guarantees that no "gay" premiums are attached to their getaways, which are available in five unique styles: Active, Family, Comfort, In Style and Independent. In addition, tree huggers in the groups—(listen up, lesbians)—can sleep easy

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knowing that their carbon footprint is kept to a minimum as the company subscribes to a "leave no trace" philosophy. If only your ex would do the same. (\$1,000 and up; www.out-adventures.com)

STOCKING STUFFERS**BOOKS**

"A droll, spirited read," said best-selling author Augusten Burroughs of singer-songwriter-novelist Stewart Lewis' latest work, Relative Stranger, about the colliding worlds of a closeted British Broadway producer named Garrett Millward and Lucy Walker, a 16-year-old budding fashionista. When fate pushes the two strangers together in the first-class cabin of a London-bound airplane, their lives change in unimaginable ways. (\$14.95; AlisonBooks.com)

First-time author Alex Geana offers an autobiographical glimpse into the lonely life of a prescription-drug addict in Side Step Me: some poems, photos and short stories about pill-popping culture. Heavily rooted in Geana's experience withdrawing from Celexa, a powerful anti-depressant, his debut memoir captures in different forms the desperation of chemical dependency and the damaging effect it has on mind, body and soul. (\$12.99; SideStepMe.com)



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dance-floor rendition of "O Holy Night," along with original songs like "Everyday's a Holiday" and "Mr. Christmas" himself. (\$5.99; Borders.com)

DVDs

Six college friends struggle to preserve tradition—and their relationships—in Ornaments, a dark Christmas comedy from director Brian Samuel Davis. (\$29.95; Ariztical.com)



A weekend in the wilderness changes the lives of gay friends—for better and worse—in director Rob Williams' 3-Day Weekend, the flesh-filled follow-up to his award-winning Back Soon. (\$15.99; TLAVideo.com)

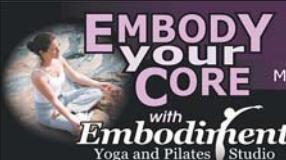
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ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Couch from Page 6

on the inside, asking others to try to understand that you are *really, truly a man*, rejecting the female form you were born into... And, then, you participate in perhaps the most female gendered wrap-your-little-brain-around-this-one activity. You do the most maternal thing the world has to offer: you become a mother. Pregnant. Not just once, but now, ready to bring a child into the world, all over again, for the second time.

The "male mother" fills a corner in this story that isn't expressed by the term "pregnant man." According to the ABC News Interview with Barbara Walters, when their daughter Susan was born, Thomas Beatie, in accordance with Oregon's law, was listed as the mother on the birth certificate; Nancy, his wife, had to be listed as the father. When the Beaties wouldn't accept that language, the birth certificate was changed, this time listing them as "Parent/Parent," as same-sex couples are required to do.

The Beaties claim they are a married heterosexual couple, and that they have the legal right to alter the names on birth certificate. They were turned down by the American Civil Liberties Association, and are still seeking someone to represent them legally.

Here's my thought: you can't have it both ways. You, of course, can do whatever you want to your body, if it doesn't hurt you or anyone else; this is a privilege we have most

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of the time in America. And, the T community has spent many years educating us, straight as well as gay community, about their struggles. And, there is some talk about what this man becoming pregnant has done to the movement.

One of the biggest questions you can hear underground is: "What community are Trans folks a part of now?" If they've transitioned, are they straight? Or, are they a part of hetero society now? "Queer" seems to cover the umbrella gambit so everyone can be included. It's almost like we've come so far NOT to label ourselves, we've labeled ourselves all-inclusive just to be sure we don't piss anyone off or hurt anyone's feelings in the sandbox. Sometimes I'm not sure who's in this soup, or if just everyone is. I believe this would qualify as the "Everything in the Refrigerator Throw In" variety.

What I do know is that variety is what makes us healthy, the true spice of life. And this subject is still an open thread. We'll just have to see what kettle Thomas Beatie, and any male mothers of the future, end up in.

The soup is on the table...bon appetit!

* Suzan Ambrose, when not cruising down the road less traveled, playing Pinocchio with friends or listening to talk radio can be heard on her call-in radio program, *The Naked Truth*, Monday evenings at 8 p.m., on 103.3FM, Northampton, MA. Also catch the show streaming on the web at www.valleyfreeradio.org.

Connecticut Connection & More

Gay marriage could bring major revenue to Conn.

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HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—A new report says same-sex marriages could pump \$3 million to \$13 million into Connecticut's economy over the next three years.

The Williams Institute at UCLA Law School says Connecticut's recent Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage could draw gay couples from throughout the country.

Massachusetts and Connecticut are the only states in which same-sex couples can legally

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Queer Movie Reviews

Hospitality and post-Halloween horror converge in 'Gay Bed & Breakfast of Terror'

By: Ginger Harris*/TRT Special

Picking up where Halloween left off, gore and suspense abound in MoDean Pictures' The Gay Bed & Breakfast Of Terror, directed by Jaymes Thompson, on DVD November 18.

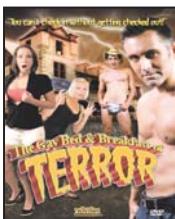
On the eve of the biggest gay party of the year, five thrill-seeking young couples head to the desert for last-minute accommodations at an out-of-the-way bed and breakfast run by an awkward yet oddly hospitable mother and daughter. What begins as an uneventful settling-in escalates into a whirlwind of strange occurrences, romantic intrigues, and bumps in the night. And when a ghastly family secret gets out in more ways than one, check-out time couldn't come sooner.

Helen (Mari Marks) and Luella (Georgia Jean) are just another typical God-fearing mother and daughter who run an outdated yet quaint bed and breakfast. Or are they? In the middle of the desert, far off the beaten path, lies The Sahara Salvation Inn, "a small slice of paradise here in the desert." As the partygoers check in, they slowly come to realize (at a dear price, for some) that The Sahara Salvation is so

much more than the gay-friendly oasis its Web site suggests.

Lured by the promise of a weekend of mayhem, the five couples trek out into no-man's land to set up shop and prepare for their evening exploits. There's Dom (Vinny Markus) and Alex (Michael Soldier), the performers; and Deborah (Shannon Lee) and Gabby (Denise Heller), the sophisticated, entrepreneurial bombshells. There's also Brenda (Allie Rivenbank) and Starr (Hilary Schwartz), the womanizing tomboy and soft-spoken folk singer. Also checking in are the sophisticated Mike (Derek Long) and Eric (Robert Borzych) and their chatty and high-strung gal pal Lizette (Lisa Block-Wieser), and finally Rodney (Jim Polivka) and Todd (James Tolins), the sugar daddy and 'personal trainer.' What should have been a fun-filled and sexy weekend getaway quickly turns into every gay and lesbian's worst nightmare!

It's not long before the newly arrived guests begin to notice Sahara Salvation's "extras."



Mysterious phone calls, eerie noises, and awkward run-ins with the staff put the couples on edge, and moments alone with Luella and her mother hint at a terrifying family secret that threatens to wreck havoc on the vacationers. Stealing away for a private moment proves to be a really bad idea, when unlucky tenants come face-to-face with the inn's dirty little secret.

Suspicious mount as the guests go missing one by one, and it's not long before the truth comes out: in the attic hides the crazed and disfigured brother Manfred, whose bloodlust is sated by the steady rotation of gay travelers who patronize The Sahara Salvation. But that's not all mother and daughter are hiding behind the walls of their home. Helen's chief wish is to find a husband for her daughter, and she has a plan in store that involves conversion, not consent. She aims to transform one unlucky gay man into the perfect husband for Luella: faithful, God-fearing, and straight!

Shocking revelations are in store for the 10 unfortunate travelers who find themselves in

the hands of a deceitful and hypocritical family bent on ridding the earth of what they see as "an abomination." Turned within the family adds a tragic twist, with Luella suffering the persecution of her own desires from her fanatical mother. At the same time, hilarious commentary on politics and religion is seamlessly worked in, with gut-busting one-liners in all the right places.

Too much is crammed into the ending for the plot to flow smoothly, but this style largely sticks to the outlandish flavor of the entire flick, and a perverse surprise ending will leave audiences doubled over and cackling. The gore is plentiful and impressively executed, giving the slasher aspect of the film an artistic authenticity.

The perfect nightcap to the Halloween season, The Gay Bed and Breakfast of Terror is sure to distress—and impress.

*Ginger Harris is a freelance writer with New York City-based Line/Byline Communications. She can be reached at ginger.harris@sju.edu.

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Marriage possible in all 6 New England states by 2012, says GLAD

Five years ago, the world changed for the better when the MA Supreme Judicial Court issued its decision in GLAD's marriage equality case, *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*. Six months later, same-sex couples started marrying, strengthening families, communities, and the Commonwealth itself.

On October 10, 2008, GLAD won the right of same-sex couples in CT to marry when the state's highest court ruled in *Kerrigan & Mock v. Department of Public Health*. Couples started marrying in CT last month.

Now on the fifth anniversary of the *Goodridge* decision, GLAD announced the goal of "Six by Twelve:" ensuring that same-sex couples in all six New England states will be able to marry in their home state by 2012.

"We can make New England a marriage equality zone by strategically combining existing legal, electoral, and on-the-ground know-how to fast-track marriage in every New England state," said GLAD Executive Director Lee Swislow. "By 2012 we not only can have marriage equality throughout New England, we can have a road map for the rest of the country."

GLAD will achieve this goal through litigation and by working with statewide equality groups and with *MassEquality*.

MassEquality defended the *Goodridge* decision with electoral, political, and lobbying work through three years of election cycles, constitutional conventions, and legislative sessions.

"The route to marriage equality looks different in each state—not every state is ripe for a marriage lawsuit like Massachusetts and Connecticut," said Swislow. "Through our collaboration with *MassEquality* we can add value to the state equality groups. To the state groups' local knowledge, grassroots experience and organizing strength, GLAD brings legal and communications expertise and *MassEquality* brings proven experience in legislative, political, and electoral strategy. This combination will accelerate the pace to marriage equality."

For three decades, GLAD has collaborated with state-based organizations to work towards marriage equality, providing support in strategy development, litigation, and public education. Collaboration with Love Makes a Family in Connecticut was critical to the win in that state.

In addition to GLAD and *MassEquality*, collaborators in the 6 x 12 effort include *Equality Maine*, *Marriage Equality Rhode Island*, *Vermont Freedom to Marry*, and a variety of allies in New Hampshire.

Miami judge rules against FL gay adoption ban

By: Curt Anderson/AP

MIAMI (AP)—A judge recently overturned a strict Florida law that blocks gay people from adopting children, declaring there was no legal or scientific reason for sexual orientation alone to prohibit anyone from adopting.

Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Cindy Lederman said the 31-year-old law violates equal protection rights for the children and their prospective gay parents, rejecting the state's arguments that there is "a supposed dark cloud hovering over homes of homosexuals and their children."

She noted that gay people are allowed to be foster parents in Florida. "There is no rational basis to prohibit gay parents from adopting," she wrote in a 53-page ruling.

Florida is the only state with an outright ban on gay adoption. Arkansas voters last month approved a measure similar to a law in Utah that bans any unmarried straight or gay couples from adopting or fostering children. Mississippi bans gay couples, but not single gays, from adopting.

The ruling means that Martin Gill, 47, and his male partner can adopt two brothers, ages 4 and 8, whom he has cared for as foster children since December 2004.

"I've never seen myself as less than anybody else," Gill said. "We're very grateful. Today, I've cried the first tears of joy in my life."

He said the two boys have been practicing

writing their new last names, and the older one said: "That's what's going to make us a family."

Attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union, a civil rights group that represent Gill, said the case was the first in the nation in which numerous experts in child psychology, social work and other fields testified that there is no science to justify a gay adoption ban.

Organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association and American Psychiatric Association all support permitting same-sex couples to adopt.

Florida Assistant Attorney General Valerie Martin said an appeal would be filed on behalf of the state Department of Children & Families. She declined additional comment.

Reaction came quickly from advocates of gay, lesbian and transgender parents who have long considered Florida's law the most draconian in the nation. Jennifer Chrisler, executive director of the Boston-based Family Equality Council, said the decision is a "long-overdue recognition of the equal ability of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to raise happy, healthy families."

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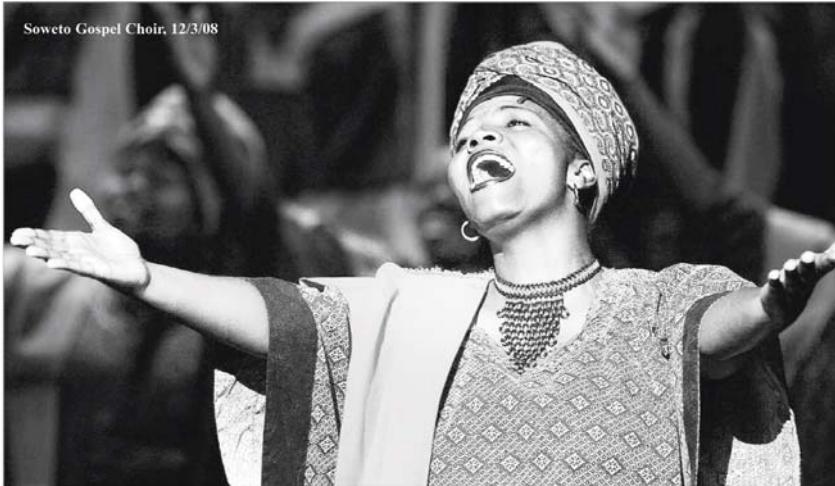


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Photo by Jay Town

Regional News

Gay icon's life yields lessons after 30 years

By: Lisa Leff/AP

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Early last month, when it looked like same-sex marriage was to be outlawed in California, gay rights activists summed up their angst about the upcoming vote with four wistful words: What would Harvey do?

Harvey was Harvey Milk, the late San Francisco city supervisor and subject of "Milk," the film that opened recently in the United States focusing on the pioneering gay politician assassinated along with Mayor George Moscone 30 years ago.

There are parallels between the gay rights battle of Milk's time and today. Defeating a ballot measure—a ban on openly gay teachers in public schools—was the apex of Milk's short career.

And now, with passage of California's ban

on gay marriage, activists re-examining Milk's legacy are questioning whether an outside political leader could have made the difference this time.

"Harvey Milk came from a politics of real discomfort. There was a righteous rage that was motivating him and the people he was working with," said Rafael Mandelman, president of a local gay Democratic club renamed for Milk. "Maybe the community got too comfortable."

Even in Milk's day, California was the center of a national fight pitting gays seeking expanded rights against conservatives espousing traditional values. In both cases, proponents of the ballot measures warned that schoolchildren would be taught a gay "agenda" if the initiatives failed.

The gay community corralled support from

high-profile Democrats—President Jimmy Carter three decades ago and presidential candidate Barack Obama this year—and Republicans alike. In persuading California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to come out against the vote, known as Proposition 8, gay leaders reminded him that another actor-turned-politician, Ronald Reagan, opposed the gay teacher ban in 1978.

Milk's contemporaries say the 2008 campaign against the marriage ban lacked a fiery figurehead to challenge gays to demand equality. When he was not debating state Sen. John Briggs, the Orange County lawmaker who sponsored the gay teacher ban, Milk rallied potential volunteers with a cry: "Come out, come out wherever you are!"

The Election Night triumph Milk celebrated 20 days before his death "shows you that an

ideal—well-organized and well-articulated—can go a long, long way," said Tory Hartmann, a Democratic activist in the 1970s. "It just takes one person."

In contrast, some activists have criticized the No on 8 campaign for being too reactive, failing to mobilize ethnic and churchgoing Democratic voters, and keeping gay couples out of advertisements.

David Mixner, who co-managed the campaign against the teachers ban, said same-sex couples might still have the right to wed in California if today's leaders had been less polite.

"It wasn't that Harvey was universally loved back then," Mixner said. "He was a hard-core player and at times he was difficult to love, but ... damn, did I respect him."

New York county nixes same-sex marriage challenge

By: Ben Dobbin/AP

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP)—An upstate New York county has decided not to challenge an appeals court ruling in February declaring that a lesbian couple's marriage in Canada should be recognized in New York.

Patricia Martinez, a word processing supervisor at Monroe Community College, sued the school in 2005 for refusing to extend health benefits to her lesbian partner, Lisa Ann Golden, while granting them to heterosexual married couples.

The Appellate Division of state Supreme Court in Rochester recognized the marriage and ordered the county to extend benefits

from Martinez' job to her spouse. Monroe County has now abandoned its intent to appeal and considers the ruling to be New York's law unless changed by the Legislature, said county Attorney Daniel DeLaus.

"It gives us a sense that we can now move forward with our life and our marriage," Martinez, 53, said in a telephone interview.

In a family ritual at Thanksgiving each year, "we go around the table and we talk about what we're thankful for," Martinez said. "We have an enormous amount to be thankful for during this holiday season."

Martinez and Golden have known each other for more than 20 years. They formalized

their relationship in a civil union ceremony in Vermont in 2001 and were married in Niagara Falls, Canada, in 2004.

The appeals court noted that New York state has historically recognized marriages contracted elsewhere except in cases of incest or polygamy.

"In dropping its appeal, Monroe County has finally recognized the fact that lesbian and gay couples are entitled to the same protections under state law that other couples receive," said Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties

Cooley Dickinson: Digital mammography services

AMHERST & NORTHAMPTON, MA—Area residents now have access to digital mammography exams at the Amherst Community Health Center and at Cooley Dickinson Hospital.

Technologists at both facilities are screening patients using digital mammography, a more advanced technology used in the detection of breast cancer. Screen-film mammography machines at both locations will be phased out.

Nancy King, director of imaging services says the benefits of digital mammography include shorter exam times and better image quality. "Within a matter of seconds following

the exam, the images of the breast are displayed on the technologist's monitor. We do not have to wait for the film to develop. The image quality is better as the images are viewed on high resolution monitors. Digital mammography is viewed as an improved technology simply because the images are digital."

For more information about prevention and early detection visit www.acs.org.

Cooley Dickinson's team of board certified radiologists interpret studies at both the hospital and University Drive locations. To schedule a mammogram, in Amherst call 413 253-8062 or in Northampton call 413-582-2101.

Queer Cinema You Can't Miss!

Chris & Don: A Love Story (G)

Genre: Documentary Rating: Not yet rated

Director: Tina Mascara, Guido Santi

Distributor: Zeitgeist Films

Release Date: 00/00/00

Notes: Premiered at 2007 Telluride Film Festival; limited 2008 summer theatrical release planned
Synopsis: This documentary chronicles the 30-year relationship between British writer Christopher Isherwood and American painter Don Bachardy. The two met in 1953 when Isherwood was 48 and Bachardy was just 18.

The Dark Matter of Mars (L)

Genre: Documentary

Rating: Not yet rated

Distribution: Limited Release

Director: Phyllis Famiglietti

Release Date: 00/00/00

Notes: Premiered at 2006 Newfest
Synopsis: Documentary about lesbian performance

artist Shelly Mars.

I Think We're Alone Now (T)

Genre: Documentary Rating: Not yet rated

Distribution: Limited Release

Director: Sean Donnelly

Release Date: 00/00/00

Notes: Premiered at 2008 Slamdance Film Festival
Synopsis: Called stalkers by the media, the two individuals profiled in this film would probably describe their shared obsession with 80's pop star Tiffany in far more benign terms. One of the film's subjects, Denver native Kelly McCormick, is intersex.

Lion's Den (L, B)

Genre: Drama

Distribution: Limited Release

Director: Pablo Trapero

Starring: Mariana Gusman

Status: screened in competition at Cannes 5/15/08
Release Date: 00/00/00

Synopsis: A woman is committed to an Argentine female prison. Various lesbian/bi elements.

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The Outfield: Washington embraces Trans Athletes

By: Dan Woog*

Before the 2006-07 school year, the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association had never fielded a question about transgender athletes. That year, they received four inquiries about whether teenagers with non-traditional gender identities could compete for their schools.

Trans issues were no longer out of bounds. "No one had ever asked, so we had no policy," recalls Jim Meyerhoff, assistant director of the WIAA—the governing body for all Washington state high school sports. "But when we got four requests in one year, our board and executive director felt the need to explore the situation."

Meyerhoff, the administrator charged with developing a policy, called local like the Human Rights Campaign and American Civil Liberties Union. They could not provide any information to help formulate a high school sports policy. In fact, the only athletics organization Meyerhoff could find that had addressed trans issues was the International Olympic Committee. In April 2007 the WIAA adopted the IOC's basic position, which stated that trans individuals could participate in sports in their reassigned gender, provided they had undergone surgery and a minimum of two years of hormone treatment. "At least we had a policy, even though it was fairly restrictive," Meyerhoff says.

That marked the first policy by any state athletic association in the country. And it caught the eye of HRC, which last fall requested a meeting. Meyerhoff says HRC realized that "they should have been with us at the front end," but did offer to help the association revise the wording.

Nearly two dozen representatives of groups like the HRC and ACLU, along with women's and other minority organizations, met with a professional facilitator from Evergreen State College. It took five hours, but they hammered out a rough draft.

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Meyerhoff and his committee then tweaked it.

Where the 2007 policy talked about "transgender" issues, the revised version referred to "gender identity or expression." It says: "Fundamental fairness, as well as most local, state and federal rules and regulations, requires schools to provide intersex and transgender student-athletes with equal opportunities to participate in athletics. This policy creates a framework in which this participation may occur in a safe and healthy manner that is fair to all competitors."

The policy says that if questions arise whether "a student's request to participate in a sex-segregated activity consistent with his or her gender identity is bona fide," the student may seek review of eligibility through a confidential process, beginning with his or her school administrators. A hearing would then be scheduled before a WIAA committee specifically established to consider gender identity appeals. The committee is to include at least one person from the medical or mental health field who is familiar with gender identity issues.

The second, and final, level of appeal is to the WIAA executive director.

"When there is confirmation of a student's consistent gender identity," the policy states, "the eligibility committee/WIAA Executive Director will affirm the student's eligibility to participate in WIAA activities consistent with the student's gender identification." In addition, the athletic association will help provide resources and training for schools seeking assistance regarding gender identity issues.

The organization disseminated information about the policy in its handbook, clearly indicating it was a "rule change," and in fall workshops with school administrators.

Already this academic year, the WIAA has had one request for review. The HRC helped the WIAA form an eligibility committee. Citing confidentiality, Meyerhoff would not reveal the sport or gender identity of the student. However, he says, because it involved a winter sport, the WIAA is handling the matter as expeditiously as possible.

There has been no opposition to the new policy, Meyerhoff says. One reason, he believes, is that "we were pretty upfront all along. We told people we'd had requests about this, so we addressed it. It's better to be on the front end of something like this than the back."

Meyerhoff says that when gender identity issues first arose, he knew "no more than the general public. With my limited knowledge, I thought it

would have been difficult for any teenager to do this [be open about gender identity issues, and ask to participate in sports] . . ." During his research, however, he real-

ized that the mission of the WIAA—to do the right thing for all student-athletes—necessitated accommodations.

Though Washington is the first state in the nation to address transgender issues in high school sports, Meyerhoff plays down the WIAA's pioneering stance. "A need arose, and we tried to meet it," he says.

"We're intent on implementing this. Once the first appeals are decided, we'll go back to the stakeholders who helped us form this. We'll see what else is needed. We realize this is a work in progress. In a few years, as society changes, we may tweak this again."

*Dan Woog is a journalist, educator, soccer coach, gay activist, and author of the "Jocks" series of books on gay male athletes. Visit his website at www.danwoog.com. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutField@qsyndicate.com.

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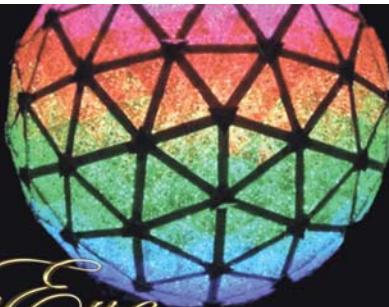
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