

The Rainbow Times

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

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FREE!

Gay-friendly place at a
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p. 14

A Transgender Valentine

p. 6



**RE-ASSIGNMENT SURGERY
& TRANSGENDER INMATES**
P. 3

**CUPID AIN'T STUPID:
LGBT VALENTINE'S DAY GIFT GUIDE**
P. 15

**LGBT STUDENTS OF COLOR
EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL**
P. 5

FAITH, FAMILY, GOD & SEX!
P. 4

**NATALIE PORTMAN,
FRANKENWEENIE & MAD MEN**
P. 7

**VAGINA MONOLOGUES &
MAMMA MIA COME TO NOHO**
P. 8 & 9

Opinions

C'mon Out – Just Ask! Advice column

By: **Tetty Gorfine***

Dear Tetty:

I have been out for years and for all this time my (republican) family have never really accepted me as a lesbian. They have referred to my partner as my friend, they never ask anything about my life and recently when I sent them an article about gay and lesbian marriage, my sister writes back telling me that I am no more oppressed than white Christian people. She cited the example that her daughter can't celebrate Christian holidays or sing Christmas carols in school! I want to stand up to them but I also don't want to lose their love. Can you give any advice as to what I can do?

Many thanks,
Jan

Dear Jan:

I am very sorry for you and countless other people who must cope with so much homophobia within your families. This is a very important issue; one in which affects so many LGBTQ people. So I'd like to spend some time with it.

It is unfortunate that people react to things they don't understand with judgment and sometimes even hatred. The judgment and hatred however, is really fear. When we humans don't understand something, it is common to feel fear, since on a primal level, what we don't understand could be a threat. A common response to threat is fear. But since fear is an emotion people often don't want to feel, it is easily turned into aggression, i.e. judgment and even hatred.

So when you come out to your family it is only natural for you to hope for support, understanding and to be seen. Too many people instead receive anger, confusion and lack of acceptance. When a person comes out to their family, it shakes up their world. The people who become angry or judgmental are not capable of seeing you. They are confronted with something they don't understand and have become afraid.

This is why it often takes family members time to work their way towards acceptance of their family member's sexual orientation or gender identity. In my years of working with LGBTQ people I have seen families respond one of three ways. There are those who can readily accept their loved one for who they are. There are those who gradually and over time come to accept to greater or lesser degrees' their relative And there are those who never accept. Fortunately most families fall into the first two categories. And this Jan, is good news.

Since it has been many years since you've been out and since you do not report that your family has rejected you, in all likelihood, no one



TETTY GORFINE

will. If you have been fearful of pushing the envelope with them and not speaking openly about your life as a lesbian, your partners, etc it does not surprise me that they have been more than happy to pretend your lesbian life does not exist. Most oppressed groups complain that it should not be up to them to be responsible in educating the dominant group. And while this may be true, often times, unless the oppressed person does not stand up and educate, it does not happen.

There's another piece of good news here. While this might be one of the most difficult things you can do, standing up for yourself is very very good for your health. Within the LGBT community there is a slogan, "silence equals death." To me this means that when we humans can't be who we are, when we hide and shirk away from the true expression of ourselves we can not thrive. Instead we can suffer an emotional and even a physical death. If silence equals death, then openness and standing up for ourselves must equal life.

Standing up for yourself, taking the risk of confronting your sister's ignorance may feel extremely frightening. But if she hasn't rejected you yet, I doubt she will. I have seen with my clients over and over again, that when they really stand up for themselves, their families begin to develop respect. If your family members get the message from you that you will no longer accept being invisible, my bet is that they will begin to change.

Family ties are often very strong. These ties are built on love. I believe in the end, love inevitably trumps fear.

Good luck Jan!
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 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.*

The Controversial Couch

Lie back and listen. Then get up and do something

By: **Suzan Ambrose***TRT Columnist



As one president enters the White House, another man slinks out—none too soon.

And, as the door hits the ex-prez in the proverbial buttocks, I don't think we'll be hearing the words, "Y'all come back and visit!" from the lips of the Obama's anytime soon. Change is the mantra of this President, and that's a good thing for our community and our world. Goodbye, George-boy.

One such positive change President Obama has promised is the repeal of the ban on gays in the military. If there's one way to bring the country together in unity, it's by bringing up those gay issues! Just ask Bill Clinton how well it went back in '93. And, as expected, the right-wing homophobes are already talking dirt.

One such individual is William Lind, co-creator of the Fourth Generation Warfare concept, who wrote in UPI.com that we shouldn't let gays in the armed services because if we do, "men who want to prove they are real men will not join." I don't know about you, but if a man has to *prove* he's a man—like you don't know this truth every time you head over to the bathroom—well, those are the ones I worry about the most (And then we give them guns?).

Lind assures us that "men fight to prove

they are real men." Their membership in fighting organizations is a "badge of honor" that says, "We're not sissies or pansies." An infusion of sissies and pansies among the company of real men, Lind warns, could damage "military unit cohesion."

Pansies, huh? I always thought of myself as more of a Venus fly trap—got teeth?

Can you imagine an openly gay military? It's hard to visualize a military in America without discrimination running through it. We know that certain individuals have fought against the idea of such an armed force their whole lives. How much more harassment would our gay soldiers have to endure if they were out? Would it be any more than women or blacks have received over the years? It wasn't that long ago that soldiers were saying they didn't want to serve next to 'negros,' women, or any other minority group that's gained entry into the good ol' boys club.

And, yet, a Dec. 2006 military poll found that 73% would accept openly gay and lesbian military members. That's a huge increase over the 90's when President Clinton was dealing with this issue, when 13% approved. But, there is still that 27% of soldiers that may make the transition difficult for LGBT people.

See Couch on Page 10

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I recently found your paper in downtown Springfield. I had no idea that there was such a great GLBT paper around. How long have you been publishing? I admit that I do not get out much, so I'm sure this is why I was unaware of your existence. Since I hate going out, is there another way I can get your paper at home?
—Gus Traverson, West Springfield, MA

Editor's Response:

Dear Gus,
I am thrilled that you have found us! If you would like to have *The Rainbow Times* delivered to your house, please visit our website and subscribe online.

Dear Editor,

I wanted to express my concerns about the front page picture of last month's edition. I found it inappropriate in nature and was completely shocked at your poor selection of the photograph. I have always respected your paper because of the "clean" content. I am very concerned that this is going to change. Please advise.
—Patricia Kene, Northampton, MA

Dear Editor,

Loved your cover! That man can just pin me down anytime. What a hunk! I picked up this edition especially because of the cover and I look forward to seeing more gay men on your cover.
—Greg Johnson, Albany, NY

The Rainbow Times

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Read TRT's Trans Column on P. 6
& Queer Justice on P. 4

Suicide raising concerns for transgender inmate

By: Denise Lavoie/AP Legal Affairs Writer

BOSTON (AP)—The apparent prison suicide of a cross-dressing dermatologist has exposed weaknesses in the state's ability to prevent inmates from killing themselves, according to lawyers for a transgender convicted killer who has been waiting for years for a judge to rule on a request to have a sex-change operation.

Michelle Kosilek, who has said she feels distressed "every waking moment" as a woman trapped inside a man's body, is housed in the same prison where Dr. Richard Sharpe was found hanging by a bed sheet from the top bunk last week. Sharpe was serving a life sentence in the prison in Norfolk for killing his wife in 2000.

Frances Cohen, one of Kosilek's lawyers, said Tuesday that she is concerned Sharpe found a way to commit suicide inside his cell.

"The Department of Correction has consistently taken the position that they have in place adequate suicide prevention policies, and the Sharpe case shows that that may not be the case," Cohen said.

Kosilek is suing the DOC in federal court, seeking to force prison officials to arrange her sex-reassignment surgery. A trial began in May 2006, but Judge Mark Wolf has yet to issue his ruling.

Kosilek testified at the trial that she suffered

from depression and had twice tried to commit suicide.

She also sent a handwritten letter to Wolf in October, saying, "no one but me truly knows the depth of my despair."

"This pain is intimately destructive," Kosilek wrote.

Diane Wiffin, a spokeswoman

for the Department of Correction, declined to comment on Kosilek's letter or on her lawyers' complaints that prison officials aren't doing enough to prevent inmate suicide.

"It's in litigation so we have no comment," Wiffin said.

The DOC and the Norfolk District Attorney's Office are investigating Sharpe's death. But Wiffin said last week that foul play is not suspected.

Kosilek—formerly Robert—was sentenced to life for murdering his wife in 1990. Kosilek legally changed her name to Michelle in 1993



and has been living as a woman in the all-male prison.

She first sued the prison system in 2000, saying its refusal to allow her to have sex-change surgery violates the Eighth Amendment protection against cruel and unusual punishment. The department has strenuously fought Kosilek's request for surgery, saying it would create insurmountable security problems and make Kosilek a target for sexual assault.

In 2002, Wolf ruled that prison officials had failed to adequately treat Kosilek's gender identity disorder, but stopped short of ordering the state to allow the surgery. Wolf found that the DOC had not violated Kosilek's constitutional rights because she did not prove that the correction commissioner had shown "deliberate indifference" to Kosilek's

needs.

Kosilek, now 59, sued again in 2005, saying the hormone treatments, laser hair removal and psychotherapy she has received since Wolf's earlier ruling were not enough to relieve her anxiety.

Wolf has heard hundreds of hours of testimony from witnesses, including at least 10 medical specialists.

Several experts who testified for Kosilek and doctors retained by the DOC's health provider said they believe the surgery is medically necessary for Kosilek. But other experts hired by the DOC said Kosilek does not need the surgery.

The case is being closely watched across the country by advocates for other inmates who want to undergo a sex change. Kosilek's lawsuit has outraged some Massachusetts lawmakers who say taxpayers should not have to pay for a convicted killer to have surgery that most private insurers reject as elective.

Cohen said Kosilek has been despondent while awaiting Wolf's ruling on the surgery.

"I think it is a long time, and it is definitely causing Michelle a lot of pain and anguish," Cohen said. "It's an important issue and we're confident the court will deal with it appropriately."

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In 'The Name of God' & LGBT Justice

Faith, Family, and God: SEX!

By Paul P. Jesep*

Did I get your attention? Physical intimacy is special, wonderful, important, and lots of fun. But what if your partner became facially scarred or badly disabled for life? Would loving him, caring for her, or having sex with the person become a burden or a privilege? Would it be an opportunity to show unconditional love and a permanent commitment to both your partner and the family that you made? Or would you leave?

These issues impact the current civil rights crossroads that the LGBT and searching community finds itself on. Opponents of same sex marriage often have an odd belief that it legitimizes a lifestyle "choice" based on sex. Sadly, the mental voyeurism of opponents who visualize what the act may include distorts the truth that two people of the same gender can be in love.

Love is not defined by how two souls satis-

fy sexual desires. Needing to be held or wanting to hold someone speaks to an emotional need. Enjoying the companionship of a mate during a hike in the Green, Berkshire, or Adirondack mountains in the autumn season is not sexual. It reflects something more profound - a desire to be spiritually connected with someone who completes you.

Joy in making someone a nice dinner shows a nurturing love. Coming up with a great gift for a birthday and anticipating the reaction is not about lust. Holding and comforting him or her when a beloved parent or sibling dies is not about sex. Listening to hopes, fears, and dreams while cradling the person is not sexual. Adopting cats, dogs, or human-children is not about sex.

Physical beauty is fleeting. Things that may have initially attracted you to someone, however, are not likely to go away. Her eyes, shared interests, his cute laugh, her quirky mannerisms, his Cheshire-cat grin, her volunteerism at a soup kitchen, or an off-beat sense

of humor are all things that transcend sex and time.

Relationships take work. You sometimes do things out of love, not because you like or want to do it. You learn that it doesn't matter who was right or wrong in an argument. You work it out. You move on. You try to keep pride and blame out of it. When a gay or lesbian family comes to a mature resolution after an argument the bond grows stronger. Sex is irrelevant.

Lust, passion, or sexual creativity with a spouse or someone you're dating is natural. It can be a manifestation of emotional love. Or it's just fun. Yet no genuine, successful relationship has ever survived based on sex. Necessary elements to make, build, and nurture a family or relationship leading up to a family must include: trust, respect, listening, compromise, communication, and not suffocating the partner so he or she can grow as an individual.

Ironically, opponents of same sex marriage

often cite the need to have children as one of the most important reasons to limit its definition. Does that mean the sex necessary to conceive children will stop for a heterosexual couple once the childbearing years are over? Of course not.

Sex is an important part of the human experience whether gay or straight. Yet it can never define the essence of an individual Creation of the Creator. Nor can the mechanics of sex be used as a foundation for a family or relationship. As noted, love, trust, respect, and communication are among the most important components for a gay or straight couple. Same sex marriage opponents must always be reminded of it.

*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 VladkaPaulPeter@aol.com.

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Queer Justice: Same-sex Child Support

By: Atty. Jennifer Dexter/TRT Legal Columnist

Dear Queer Justice:

My partner and I got divorced about 1 year ago. We have 2 children together and she is ordered to pay child support, which she is not doing. What can I do?

—Linda, Easthampton

Dear Linda:

A Complaint for Contempt is the tool you want to utilize. Whether you have a signed Separation Agreement or your case went to trial and therefore you have an Order from the Court setting out the terms of your divorce including child support, this is an enforceable Order of the Probate and Family Court.

When a party refuses to comply with a Court Order the aggrieved party (in this case you) can ask the Court, through a Complaint for Contempt, to enforce that Order as well as impose sanctions against the offending party. This complaint can be filed in the clerk's office in the County in which you were divorced. If you have moved to a different County, and as long as the child lives with you, you can ask the Probate and Family Court in that County to take jurisdiction of your case.



ATTY. JENNIFER DEXTER

If you do not want a lawyer or cannot afford one, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) can and will assist you in the collection of child support. DOR offers what is called payment through "wage assignment" which is a form of wage garnishment in order to assure payment.

This means that the payment is directly taken out of your ex-wife's pay check and then sent to you. If you ex-wife is not working the Court can even order her to find a job so she can realize her obligation.

*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

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Shared Differences Examines LGBT Students of Color Experiences in School

NEW YORK—LGBT students of color face unique and diverse challenges regarding victimization at school, according to Shared Differences: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students of Color in Our Nation's Schools, a report released recently by GLSEN, the *Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network*.

The report documents the experiences of over 2,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) middle and high school students of color who were African American or Black, Latino/a, Asian or Pacific Islander, Native American, and multiracial, using 2007 data collected as part of GLSEN's biennial survey of LGBT students, the National School Climate Survey, along with results from in-depth individual and group interviews.

"While research on the experiences of LGBT students has increased in recent years, few studies have examined the specific victimization of students who identify as people of color and LGBT," said GLSEN Executive

Director Dr. Eliza Byard. "Our schools are diverse environments, and it is important to understand how our students experiences differ based on personal characteristics such as race and ethnicity. This report provides alarming evidence that we must act now to ensure sure that America's LGBT students of color are safe in school."

The report also provides descriptions of the experiences of LGBT students of color in their own words.

"You could very well on any day hear someone yelling across the hall, 'fag,' etc," said a 10th grade Latino male student in the report. "I've heard it before. ... It's hurtful because it's just not something that you say. And it's just generally hurtful. And I know that I'll just be walking in a hallway, and someone will just say under their breath with a group of friends, 'fag' ... and hearing things like that in my school - it kind of brings me down almost. It kind of negates any hope that I have for our school to be a better place."

Key Findings:

Across all groups, sexual orientation and gender expression were the most common reasons LGBT students of color reported feeling unsafe in school. More than four out of five students, within each racial/ethnic group, reported verbal harassment in school because of sexual orientation and about two-thirds because of gender expression. At least a third of each group reported physical violence in school because of sexual orientation.

More than half of African American/Black, Latino/a, Asian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial students also reported verbal harassment in school based on their race or ethnicity. Native American



students (43%) were less likely than other students to report experiencing racially motivated verbal harassment.

About a quarter of African American/Black and Asian/Pacific Islander students had missed class or days of school in the past month because they felt unsafe. Latino/a, Native American, and multiracial students were even more likely to be absent for safety reasons - about a third or more skipped class at least once or missed at least one day of school in the past month for safety reasons.

Native American students experienced particularly high levels of victimization because of their religion, with more than half reporting the highest levels of verbal harassment (54%), and a quarter experiencing physical violence (26%).

Less than half of students of color who had been harassed or assaulted in school in the past year said that they ever reported the incident to school staff. Furthermore, for those students who did report incidents to school staff, less than half believed that staff's resulting response was effective.

Native American (57%) and multiracial (50%) students were more likely than other students of color in our survey to report incidents to a family member.

Performance at school also suffered when students experienced high levels of victimization. Students' overall GPA dropped when they reported high severities of harassment based on sexual orientation and/or race/ethnicity. Students experiencing high severities of harassment also reported missing school more often.

See Students on page 8



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Trans Opinions & Reviews

Transpective: A Transgender Valentine this February

By: *Deja Nicole Greenlaw/TRT Columnist*

Yikes! It's February already! Seems like just yesterday that we were celebrating the New Year and now we are whisked into the second month of 2009! January was a month of snow and cold, football playoffs, the arrival of a new promising president and hopefully a brand new era for us LGBT folk!

But now it is February. February is usually the last cold, snowy month and dreams of spring are born through thoughts of baseball starting up again in the southern, warmer states. This month also brings us the annual presentations of the Vagina Monologues and Valentine's Day.

For the past 5 year's I have participated in the Hartford Vagina Monologues and I will do so again during the first weekend in February. Also, for the past five years I have not participated in Valentine's Day and currently, I see no participation this year either. It's not because I do not like the occasion, it's just that it's very hard to find

someone who you can love and who will love you. I know that this is true for all people, but this particular issue is heightened even more when you are Transgender.

I recently attended a Transgender therapy group and the subject of dating arose. We spoke of looking for potential dates via the various internet dating venues. We all sparked interests from the people that we are looking to meet and that is reassuring. If you've ever dated online, you know how it works. First, there is an introductory flirt and then the email conversation starts. As the prospective dates explore each other by asking and answering questions, more is learned by both parties. If everything seems in



DEJA NICOLE GREENLAW

order then an initial date is planned. Then the Trans question begins to surface in the Transgender person's mind. Should the Transperson tell their prospective date of their gender history? Or, is it a maybe not yet?

If things click, then the upcoming intimate moments will surely, eventually come. This is a wonderful promise but also a very unsettling upcoming situation! The non-Transperson is going to find out that the other person is Transgender. So when should it be told? And, how the heck should it be told?

I've personally avoided this situation by either joining a Transgender dating venue where everyone knows from the get go what my gender story is or I have prominently mentioned my Trans status in my profiles on the other internet dating venues. This approach is fine if you are an "out" Transperson but if you are doing the stealth thing, (hiding your Trans status), then please go back to the questions at the end of the preceding paragraph. I wish that I had answers for you, but sadly, I don't.

Many people are very stuck in the binary gender system and have trouble being with those who have transitioned from one gender to the other. Being Trans is currently outside of the gender norm and although we Transgender people do attract some people who do "get" us, the average non-Trans person, especially at first, does not. They have to learn about us and begin to accept us much like we had to learn about ourselves and to accept ourselves when we started our transitioning. Then, they have to deal with their family and friends when they introduce us into their world. There are many tough situations that the non-Trans have to encounter. What really should be fairly simple now, suddenly, gets very complicated.

So I personally don't hold much hope for Valentine's Day 2009 but I do believe that in the future, people will be very ok with having a Transperson as their date, their steady, and their soul mate. After all, isn't it all about the spirit of the person that you fall in love with?

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Authors on Authors: Becka's Song, by Frankie J. Jones

By: *KG MacGregor/Author Reviewer*

Pack your bags for a Christmas holiday! Christmas, Arkansas, that is, an artist haven teeming with colorful characters caught up in the fall tourist season. Get ready to land on Main Street, where you'll see it, hear it, smell it and taste it, because no one puts you there like Lambda Literary Award finalist Frankie J. Jones.

Lee Dresher has a thriving art gallery, rich friendships and a freshly vacated nest, leaving lots of time for her two favorite pursuits—painting and photography. She likes being single...at least that's what she keeps telling herself, until the mysterious Becka James arrives in town. One smile from the attractive newcomer and something clicks inside for Lee. Suddenly that "being single" perspective doesn't seem all it's cracked up to be.

Trouble is, their path to happiness is lined with obstacles—little things, like flying bullets, exploding windows and ex-husbands—to say nothing of Becka's thorny past, which holds a

secret that could keep her from putting down roots in Christmas.

Looking for a quirky ensemble? Becka's Song is packed with eccentric, multi-dimensional characters who bring the town of Christmas to life.

Or perhaps you're in the mood for a nail-biting thriller. Becka's Song will have your heart pounding as you race ahead through the action.

How about an endearing story of awakening love that knots your stomach all the way to the end? Becka's Song delivers, and with lead characters you'll find engaging and believable.

Few authors can credibly dance across the genres, but Bella Books author Frankie J. Jones is the exception. Her gift for interweaving several strong plots shines in this, her fifteenth book.

**KG MacGregor is the 2007 winner of the Lambda Literary Award.*

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Deep Inside Hollywood: Natalie Portman, *Frankenweenie* & *Mad Men*



By: Romeo San Vicente*

NATALIE PORTMAN POSES FOR 17 PHOTOS

Star Wars and Garden State obsessives who still carry a torch for Natalie Portman aren't going to like where she's going next: marriage and motherhood. Not in real life or anything, just for a role. But still, movies feel like real life sometimes, so it may trouble the fanboys that her next project, *17 Photos of Isabel*, finds Amidala trading space adventures for womb-centric dramedy. She plays a careerist woman with eyes for the boss, only to find herself dealing with marriage, a stepchild, and pregnancy when he responds affirmatively. Romeo is going to assume that this coming-of-age-and-maternity material will be better than it sounds thanks to filmmaker Don Roos (*The Opposite of Sex*). That whole unfortunate *Bounce* moment notwithstanding, Roos remains one of Hollywood's sharpest, funniest gay creative minds. Best of all, Roos' snarky muse Lisa Kudrow is on board again, too.

SAM ROCKWELL'S WINNING SEASON

When you think of the WNBA, what's your next thought? That's right: Sheryl Swoopes. And your next thought after that? Swopets: lesbians. So why are there never any teen lesbians in TV shows or films featuring girls



(c) First Look International

NATALIE PORTMAN

basketball (or any sports for that matter)? The closest Hollywood will get is allowing the tough-girl protagonist of the little-seen *Stick It* to escape the third act without a male love interest. Will *The Winning Season*, a new feature about a down-on-his-luck coach (Sam Rockwell) and his underachieving high school girls basketball team (featuring *Hotel for Dogs*' Emma Roberts and *Half Nelson*'s Shareeka Epps), address this omission? Early reviews out of Sundance Film Festival don't say one way or the other, but it is an indie feature from *Grace Is Gone* director James C. Strouse, which means that the odds are better

than if Disney was behind it. Here's hoping for some balance.

JOHN AUGUST'S *FRANKENWEENIE*

It's good to know the names of people who write movies. It helps when you want to sing their praises or wonder aloud to fellow movie nerds how a misfire went wrong. But so far gay scribe John August can boast a pretty successful track record, one that includes both *Charlie's Angels* films, as well as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Big Fish*, and *Corpse Bride* for Tim Burton. And, now he's on board for yet another Burton project, an animated feature-length do-over of Burton's early short, *Frankenweenie*, about a pet brought back to life. August will also tackle the comic book *Preacher* for Sam Mendes. The plot of that one? Not controversial at all, really—it's just about a disillusioned minister who decides to hunt down God and exact some retribution. Now, guess which one will probably get its own Happy Meal?

ALL ABOARD FOR *MAD MEN*

Romeo is breathing a sigh of relief that hold-out *Mad Men* creator Matthew Weiner has finally signed on for a third season of the award-winning drama about advertising executives in the early 1960s. And it's not just about lust for Don Draper (Jon Hamm) or the vicarious va-va-voom thrills provided by Joan Holloway (Christina Hendricks). Queer viewers know that Sal (Bryan Batt), the deeply closeted and yet still married Madison Avenue

suit with enough fear and tension to fill a pre-Stonewall dive, is one of the most frustrating and complex gay characters on TV right now. And now his character gets to continue loving Joan Crawford and being miserable. Romeo's TiVo programming finger is already getting itchy.

*Romeo San Vicente can't stay mad at most men. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

MA Transgender Equality Bill

An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes is being filed for the 2009-2010 legislative session in the House by lead sponsors Representative Carl Sciortino and Representative Byron Rushing and in the Senate by lead sponsor Senator Ben Downing.

The bill would ensure that Massachusetts law clearly and uniformly protects all people regardless of their gender identity or gender expression, including transgender people, by adding the category of "gender identity or expression" to the state's hate crime laws and employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and public education non-discrimination laws.

For more information on the bill, visit the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition website at www.masspc.org.



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HUBBARD STREET DANCE CHICAGO
Weds, February 4, 7:30 PM | Concert Hall
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Pre-performance talk by Five College Associate Professor of Dance Constance Valis Hill 6:45 - 7:15 PM in Lobby.
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TOMÁŠ KUBINEK
Fri, February 13, 7 PM | Concert Hall
Part vaudeville, part improv, and completely magical, this artist of international renown leaves his audiences with a comically altered view of life's creative possibilities.
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Please come at 6 PM for our annual pre-show party for families. Join the staff of FamilyFun and Wondertimes Magazines for some hands-on craft activities and some healthy snacks for everyone while they last.

MARIZA
Thurs, February 19, 7:30 PM, Concert Hall
The reigning ambassador of Portuguese fado, Mariza has been seducing audiences globally with her awesome singing, charismatic stage presence, and powerful blend of traditional and contemporary songs.
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LUIS BRAVO'S FOREVER TANGO
Fri, February 27, 8 PM, Concert Hall
Widely applauded for its elegant artistry and sizzling sensuality, Luis Bravo's Forever Tango is a Broadway favorite that continues to wow audiences worldwide.
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Entertainment News

The Vagina Monologues: "Down There" in the Valley

Evelyn Maria Harris, formerly of Sweet Honey in the Rock, joins Connie Casagrande and Julie Waggoner, of The Villa Jidiots, in Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues" at The Academy of Music, in Northampton on February 21, 2009, for two shows: 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

The performance is a fundraiser for *The Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts*. Casagrande, who is co-producing the show with Waggoner, said "Since I saw 'The Vagina Monologues' onstage over 5 years ago, it has been my dream to perform in it! I'm thrilled to have a strong, locally-based cast and director." Casagrande began working to produce the play in 2007.

The play is a series of hilarious and often poignant character monologues, built from interviews with hundreds of women, incorporating stories of intimacy, sexuality, vulnerability and self-discovery. The play is dedicated to creating and strengthening global anti-violence efforts, and has been translated into 45 languages and performed in 119 countries. It received an Obie Award in 1996 for 'Best New Play', and Ensler received a 1999 Guggenheim Fellowship Award.

Evelyn Harris performed with the internationally acclaimed Black women's acapella ensemble Sweet Honey In The Rock for 18 years. Her compositions include the Grammy-nominated *State Of Emergency*. With Sweet Honey, she recorded and co-produced ten albums. She has shared the stage

with Safari East Jazz Trio, Lenelle Moise, Pamela Means and Miro Sprague, as well as Odetta, Holly Near, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, June Jordan and Sonia Sanchez. Julie Waggoner, a standup comic and member of The Villa Jidiots comedy improvisation troupe since 1997, is known in the Valley for energetic and intelligent comic characterizations. She has thrilled audiences at *The Pines Theatre* and *The Academy of Music* with parodies of (F)Eminem, Madonna, John Travolta, and Ed Sullivan. As a standup comic she has opened for Shazia Mirza and Maggie Casella, and for musicians Catie Curtis and Patty Larkin. Connie Casagrande has been a member of *The Villa Jidiots* comedy improvisation troupe since 2001, and has performed at Improv Boston. Stage roles include Lana Sherwood in "It's a Wonderful life"/Majestic Theater, Sylvie in "The Odd Couple, female version"/City Stage, and "Women at War/Center for the Arts. Other stage credits include roles in the indie-produced *Naked Theater*, and shows at PACE and Majestic Theatre. Lisa Rowe-Beddoe, the director, recently played Bananas in The House of Blue Leaves" / New Century Theatre, Lotty in "Enchanted April" and Mrs. Braddock in "The Graduate"/Majestic Theater. She stage-managed the Children's 2008 Summer Season, and "Jerry and Ed"/The Majestic Theater. Lisa teaches theater at PVPA Charter Public School and facilitates adult acting classes in Northampton.

The show is sponsored by WRNX, The Daily Hampshire Gazette, The Valley Advocate, and The Rainbow Times. "The Vagina Monologues" is at *The Academy of Music*, 274 Main St., Northampton on February 21, 2009. Two shows: 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. General admission tickets: \$22 adult, \$18 student/senior. For more information, visit www.vmnho.com and to purchase tickets, visit www.cabotix.com.

"Since I saw 'The Vagina Monologues' onstage over 5 years ago, it has been my dream to perform in it! I'm thrilled to have a strong, locally-based cast and director."

—Connie Casagrande, Co-producer, *The Vagina Monologues*

with Safari East Jazz Trio, Lenelle Moise, Pamela Means and Miro Sprague, as well as Odetta, Holly Near, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, June Jordan and Sonia Sanchez. Julie Waggoner, a standup comic and member of The Villa Jidiots comedy improvisation troupe since 1997, is known in the Valley for energetic and intelligent comic characterizations. She has thrilled audiences at *The Pines Theatre* and *The Academy of Music* with parodies of (F)Eminem, Madonna, John Travolta, and Ed Sullivan. As a standup comic she has opened for Shazia Mirza and Maggie Casella, and for musicians Catie Curtis and Patty Larkin. Connie Casagrande has been a member of *The Villa Jidiots* come-

Students from page 5

The report also looks at differing experiences based on the racial/ethnic make-up of students' schools. For all groups, LGBT students of color who were minorities in their school were much more likely to feel unsafe and experience harassment because of their race or ethnicity than those who were in the racial/ethnic majority.

GLSEN is releasing the report in conjunction with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Organizing Weekend, which takes place January 16-19. Dr. MLK Jr. Organizing Weekend provides an opportunity for students and Gay-Straight Alliances to honor the coalition-building work of Dr. King and other civil rights leaders, such as Bayard Rustin, by reaching out to others committed to working toward safe schools for all students.

* GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. For more information, visit www.glsen.org.



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Queertations: Say what?!

By: Rex Wockner

"Prior to my crisis, I was for equality under the law no matter how people grouped. Whether it was two old spinsters living together or a homosexual couple or a heterosexual couple, I think it ought to be the same under the law. But prior to my crisis, I thought the word 'marriage,' I thought it was worth defending the definition of it— the traditional definition of it, and I no longer believe that. ... I think the government should recognize the union between people whether they're gay or not in whatever the language they choose, whether they call it a marriage or a civil union, it's up to them. If the government is going to be in the business of recognizing people grouped together as couples, then they need to do that across the board. It's a big change for me."

—Disgraced former mega-pastor **Ted Haggard**, who was brought down by a gay-sex-and-meth scandal, to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 9.

"I am tired of seeing ministers who will preach homophobia by day, and then after they're preaching, when the lights are off, they go cruising for trade."

—The **Rev. Al Sharpton** from the pulpit of Atlanta's *Tabernacle Baptist Church*, Jan. 11.

"I was already a supporter of Obama before he declared his candidacy and remember discussing it with friends. If you look at LGBT rights in the U.S., 'DOMA' and 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' were passed under Clinton. But having said that, looking at the situation of the world and the U.S. in particular I think that there are too many hopes in President Obama and he will hardly be able to satisfy everyone, LGBT community included. Still, I believe he will do better than Clinton. A first step, that will not cost him anything, will be to put the signature of the U.S. on the (recent) U.N. statement which already 66 countries endorsed (that calls for the decriminalization of gay sex worldwide and affirms that international human rights standards include protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity)."

—Moscow Pride founder **Nikolai Alekseev** to this column, Jan. 18.

"Having lived through Mitterrand's inauguration in France, where everyone on the Left was overjoyed, and the same excitement in England over Tony Blair, I'm a bit skeptical though also eternally hopeful. I think that Obama is so intelligent -- and so confident as a man - that he's probably predisposed towards gays, but he's also such a realist that I doubt he'll waste any of his high cards betting on just five percent of the population."

—Celebrated gay author **Edmund White** to this column, Jan. 15.

"Of course, I am thrilled to see an end to the completely disastrous Bush years. And Obama's election is an historic advancement of monumental proportion in which all of us should revel. But, the ... inexcusable invitation to Rick Warren to speak at the inaugural ruined it for me both as a feminist and lesbian activist. ... I can only hope that it is not a portent of things to come regarding what the LGBT community can expect from the Obama administration."

—Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center CEO **Lorri Jean** to this column, Jan. 15.

Irresistible *Mamma Mia! The Sing-A-Long* comes To Northampton

"Mamma mia, here I go again. My, my, how can I resist you?" When it comes to *ABBA* songs, most people can't resist singing or at least tapping their feet. It's a no brainer that the sing-a-long version of "Mamma Mia!" is the newest hit sensation that is leaving a swath of pure joy across the nation.

OutForReel Film Series will present "Mamma Mia! The Sing-A-Long" on Friday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m. at the Academy of Music Theatre in Northampton, MA. This event is one show only for the 800 "Mamma Mia!" fans who will be lucky enough to get tickets.

"Just imagine 800 wildly happy people singing "Dancing Queen" at the top of their lungs," says Jaime Michaels, producer of the *Out! For Reel Film Series*. "It's going to be a fantastic, fun community event!"

Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door, \$8 for college students with current ID. Advance tickets can be purchased online at www.OutForReel.org. Tickets may also be purchased at four ticket outlets: Pride & Joy, Northampton, Food For Thought Books, Amherst, World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield, and The Odyssey Book Shop, South Hadley.

"*Out! For Reel's* mission is about creating and strengthening our LGBT community and building connections to our heterosexual allies. This sing-a-long event is for everyone - LGBT and straight, women and men, children

and adults. It's the pure essence of community," says Michaels.

Meryl Streep and Pierce Brosnan lead an all-star cast in this feature film adaptation of the beloved musical that has been seen by more than 30 million people in 170 cities and 8 languages around the world. Inspired by the storytelling magic of *ABBA's* songs from "Dancing Queen" to "S.O.S.", "Mamma Mia!" is a celebration of mothers and daughters and fathers, female friendships, true loves lost and new ones found, and the romantic possibilities of what can happen on a magical Greek island when love is in the air.

"Mamma Mia!" producer Judy Cramer and screenwriter Catherine Johnson feel that the story has universal resonance, with an appeal that crosses age, gender, and national boundaries. Just as *ABBA's* timeless music and lyrics do.

Explaining the worldwide phenomenon of the film's popularity, Craymer states, "Whoever the audience is, whatever age the audience is, they see themselves up on the stage in some form. They seem to totally immerse themselves in the experience."

Meryl Streep describes her experience of seeing the stage show in New York for the first time as "pure joy." "The songs are timeless," says Streep. "They just enter your body."

President Obama names openly gay man to Director of Office of Personnel Management

President-elect Barack Obama's latest round of appointments includes an openly gay man, John Berry, for the position of director of the Office of Personnel Management, which oversees the federal government's human resources department. The department provides personnel services to millions of federal employees.

Berry will become the highest-ranking openly gay official in history. Berry currently serves as director of the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park. He previously led the National Fish and Wildlife Association.

He also has experience in government and served under President Clinton as the Assistant Secretary of the Interior and was legislative director for the Maryland House of Rep. Steny Hoyer.

**The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate and inclusive representation of people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.*

Lesbian Best Sellers*

1. The L Word: Season 5
2. She Likes Girls 3
3. Drifting Flowers
4. Butch Jamie
5. Itty Bitty Titty Committee
6. k.d. lang: live in london
7. Girl + Girl: Classic...
8. Out at the Wedding
9. The Guitar
10. Dantes Cove Season 3

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Gay Best Sellers*

1. Whirlwind
2. He Likes Guys
3. Mulligans
4. Another Gay Sequel: Gays....
5. Scholboy Crush
6. Shelter
7. Arizona Sky
8. Ready? OK!
9. Dog Tags
10. Dantes Cove Season 3

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Couch from Page 2

This issue is a hot topic on some blogs, of which I found this entry at one site: *"The problem with gays in the military is you want your fellow soldiers covering your ass, not looking at your ass."*

This stereotype plays out over and over again in how we are viewed by the world; only as sexual deviants who have nothing exceptional between our ears or in our hearts, that our jobs wouldn't come first in situations

as recent wranglings over an economic stimulus package have shown, you can try to negotiate with people who disagree with you, but you run the risk of not getting exactly what you wanted.

Perhaps instead of *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*, we'd get a new variation of *Don't Show and Tell* or *I'll Make your Life Hell*. Why, one blogging soldier suggested that they'd need segregated showers if gays were allowed to

"The problem with gays in the military is you want your fellow soldiers covering your ass, not looking at your ass."
—Anonymous Internet blogger

like this, that we are, ultimately different, *less than human*; choosing sexual desire above all else.

When I hear the argument of how uncomfortable straight people would feel if gays and lesbians were perceived to "desire" them, I think to myself, "You should be so lucky. Don't flatter yourself." But, even if that were the case, one's first reaction should not be to feel threatened. Women, whether lesbian or straight, have to tolerate uncomfortable stares from heterosexual men everyday. We get used to it, find ways to ignore it or learn to stare right back, unflinching. So big Army boys, get over yourselves. Go ahead and be all you can be.

It's more about blatant discrimination; that we tend to fear things we don't understand.

All the more reason to hope President Obama is doing the right thing as he tries to build consensus within military personnel before Congress votes on it. In a September U.S. News and World Report interview, Obama said: "I want to make sure that when we revert *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*, it has gone through a process and we've built a consensus or at least a clarity of that."

But, here is my concern. Military people are specifically trained to follow orders and not ask questions. When you set out to have a dialogue with a specific group that doesn't usually get to voice its own opinions, aren't you asking for trouble? Although I applaud Pres. Obama for saying he will go down this road,

serve openly! I know, I know, so many penises, so little soap. Just where did all the fear come from?

It didn't always used to be this way. *BoomanTribune.com* adds this little piece of history to the mix: "The ancient Greeks believed that physical love between soldiers improved morale, bravery and overall battle efficiency. Plato, a philosophical father, considered it utter stupidity to ban physical relationships between soldiers. 'Wherever, therefore, it has been established that it is shameful to be involved in sexual relationships with men, this is due to evil on the part of the rulers, and to cowardice in the part of the governed.'"

Oh, the good old days. Do you think that paragraph will make one of Mr. Obama's future speeches?

In recent polling, 78% of Americans want a repeal of the ban on gays in the military. We wish the Obama administration luck as they try to reverse another piece of the discrimination pie that is long overdue.

Pansies and Venus fly traps deserve their day in the sun as well.

**Suzan Ambrose, when not snowshoeing through forests, saving shelter kitties or drinking coffee can be heard on her call-in radio program, The Naked Truth, Monday evenings at 8 pm, on 103.3FM, Northampton, MA. Also catch the show streaming on the web at www.valleyfreeradio.org.*

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Prop. 8 lawsuits draw 'friends' near and far

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Labor unions, churches and advocacy groups spanning the ideological spectrum are weighing in on the effort to overturn California's ban on same-sex marriages.

Mid-January was the deadline to file so-called friend-of-the-court briefs in the litigation seeking to overturn Proposition 8. The measure passed in November with 52 percent of the vote, eliminating the right to wed gays and lesbians had had in the state since mid-June.

After the election, gay couples and half a dozen counties brought a series of cases arguing the measure is unconstitutional and was improperly put before voters. In an unusual move, state Attorney General Jerry Brown has joined them in urging the California Supreme Court to strike down the ban, which amended the state constitution to limit marriage to a man and a woman.

At least three dozen amicus briefs were submitted by the close of business. More than half of the interested parties, including the California Labor Federation, the California Council of Churches and the League of Women Voters of California, asked the court to invalidate Proposition 8.

Those filing briefs urging the court to uphold the measure included the Family Research Council, the Eagle Forum Education and Legal Defense Fund, a Sacramento woman who worked for its passage, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations.

Internet search company Google joined other businesses in signing a brief in support of the lawsuits, saying California's image has suffered since the divisive election.

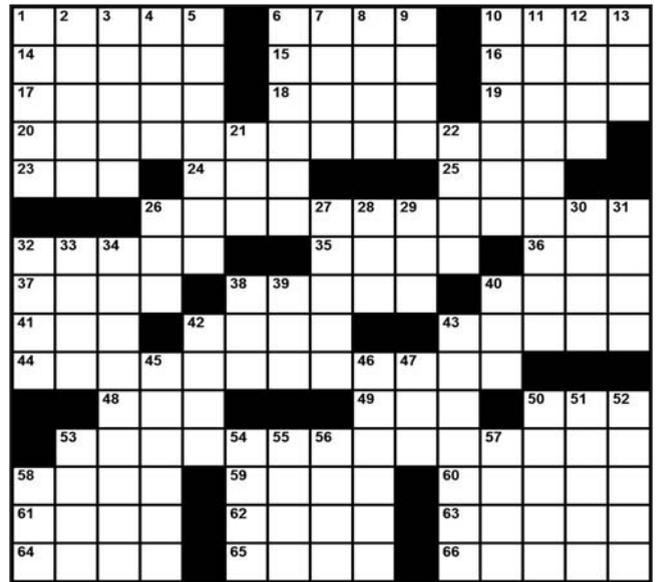
"Denying employees basic rights isn't right, and it isn't good for businesses," Google General Counsel Kent Walker wrote in a blog posted on the company's Web site. "We are committed to preserving fundamental rights for every one of the people who work hard to make Google a success."

Along with deciding whether Proposition 8 is an unconstitutional abridgment of the civil rights of gays and lesbians, the Supreme Court has said it will determine whether the 18,000 same-sex marriages that were sanctioned before election day will be valid if it upholds the measure.

The court could hear arguments in the cases as early as March.

Q Puzzle: "Fate Club"

Hint: A crossword that substitutes "ate" for "ight" in phrases to create new phrases.



Across

- 1 Stud fees?
- 6 Poet Teasdale
- 10 Nero's bird
- 14 Black to Bonheur
- 15 Singer Dobkin
- 16 Farm erection
- 17 Close of *Serving in Silence*
- 18 A little behind
- 19 Reproduced without sex, for short
- 20 Like Fosse missing a cue?
- 23 Lennon partner
- 24 Pirates' drink
- 25 Part of SASE (abbr.)
- 26 Evaluate Burke and Bean?
- 32 Masters
- 35 ___ of *Eden*
- 36 Sound of the New York Liberty cheerleaders
- 37 Curve and others
- 38 Terence of *Priscilla*
- 40 Mishima's continent
- 41 Bonehead
- 42 Pair, to Magnus Hirschfeld
- 43 Bear
- 44 Nominating a homophobe?
- 48 Leibman of *Angels in America*
- 49 Gene's makeup
- 50 Old streaker over the Atlantic
- 53 Put same-sex wedding vows on a plaque?
- 58 "Uh-oh!" to Lord Byron
- 59 Counterfeiters' nemeses
- 60 Lurer of phallic fish
- 61 Not straight
- 62 Began a hole, with "off"
- 63 One to ten, e.g.
- 64 Changes from a couple to a threesome
- 65 *Blowjob* filmer Warhol
- 66 Bone in the back

Down

- 1 *West Side Story* Jet, e.g.
- 2 Faith in music
- 3 Link with
- 4 Sea eagle
- 5 Kahlo and others
- 6 Oscar Wilde tragedy (1893)
- 7 Ruck of *Spin City*
- 8 Circumcision, for one
- 9 Tools for the Tin Man
- 10 Get up
- 11 Lisa Ben's magazine
- 12 "Why should ___ you?"
- 13 Gay, to Brits
- 21 Fruittcake
- 22 Made it to second base, so to speak
- 26 Lawyer's thing
- 27 Homophobia and such
- 28 Norma McCorvey's memoir ___ *Roe*
- 29 Gaydar, for example
- 30 Parade prohibition for Streisand
- 31 Swimmer you can eat
- 32 Retreat for D.H. Lawrence
- 33 Asian inland sea
- 34 Sitcom Jack
- 38 *American Beauty* director Mendes
- 39 Randy's skating partner
- 40 Went down on
- 42 House opening?
- 43 Galindo and Mattis
- 45 Proposals in bars

Solution on Page 13

Western Massachusetts

PINK

PAGES

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Street Sense & LGBT News

What are your feelings about the commercialization of Valentine's Day? Thumbs up or thumbs down?



"I wish more of corporate America made a profit off of love instead of war and destroying the environment."

Jaime Michaels
Producer
OutForReel Film Series
Northampton, MA



"It's a nice day to celebrate love. I don't think we honor and celebrate that enough—it's a nice thing to remind people."

Amy McCreary
Computer Tech/Support
Florence, MA



"I like to celebrate it in a simple way. It's not always about money. I love making homemade Valentine's Day cards, baking cookies— just keeping it simple and pure."

Meg Merrigan
Florence, MA



"Valentine's Day is like any other day for me- it's all about the love in your heart, and how you celebrate it with the special person(s) in your life. I'm going to treat somebody with love and respect everyday."

Tammy Lewis
Health Care Specialist
Florence, MA

HRC Foundation releases list of the 2009 "Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality"

WASHINGTON—The Human Rights Campaign Foundation, the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, released recently its annual list of "Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality." In 2009, 260 companies were awarded this distinction for their employment policies and practices that include LGBT workers. A complete list of the honored businesses is available online at: www.hrc.org/placestowork.

"As our nation faces unprecedented economic challenges, people are being forced to make important decisions about their career's and livelihood. 'Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality' helps job-seekers identify the most inclusive businesses for LGBT workers," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "Though equal opportunity and benefits are not the only factors that prospective employees should consider, they are vital to ensuring a business values and respects its LGBT workforce."

The "Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality" distinction is awarded to businesses that scored 100% on the HRC Foundation's 2009 Corporate Equality Index, the primary method for businesses to benchmark and evaluate their policies, practices and diversity efforts relating to LGBT workers. The index evaluates non-discrimination policies, benefits, diversity training and other internal resources for LGBT workers, as well as external support for LGBT consumers and job seekers. Released in early September, the 2009 Corporate Equality Index report is available online at www.hrc.org/cei.

The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all.

20th Annual GLAAD Media Awards announces nominees, Special Honorees, presented by IBM

Los Angeles, CA—The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) announced the nominees and honorees for its 20th Annual GLAAD Media Awards Presented by IBM. Among the nominees: Gus Van Sant's Academy Award®-nominated film *Milk*, Woody Allen's Academy Award®-nominated film *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, Patrick-Ian Polk's big-screen adaptation of his hit sitcom *Noah's Arc: Jumping the Broom*, BBC America's hit shows *Torchwood* and *Skins*, HBO's vampire drama *True Blood*, the episodes "Ghostfacers" from *Supernatural* and "Slam" from *Ghost Whisperer*, Logo reality shows *Shirts & Skins* and *Transamerican Love Story*, MSNBC programs *Countdown* with Keith Olbermann and *The Rachel Maddow Show*, *The Tyra Banks Show*, and Spanish-language nominees *Aquí y Ahora*, *Ventaneando América*, *Noticiero Telemundo*, *Hoy* and *Paparazzi TV*.

"The 20th anniversary of the GLAAD Media Awards is an excellent opportunity to reflect on how media representations of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community have evolved over the past two decades, clearly helping shape and evolve people's hearts and minds about LGBT people," said GLAAD President Neil G. Giuliano. "GLAAD's media advocacy and anti-defamation work as a resource for media professionals, combined with enabling LGBT people and allies to be com-

peting storytellers, has played a significant role in stories about our lives achieving greater visibility and being more compelling, honest, and real than ever before. We are proud to recognize all of this year's GLAAD Media Awards nominees."

The GLAAD Media Awards ceremonies will be held in New York on March 28, 2009 at the Marriott Marquis; in Los Angeles on April 18 at the Nokia Theatre L.A. LIVE; and in San Francisco on May 9 at the Hilton San Francisco. GLAAD also announced the Special Honorees for the New York ceremony: Tyra Banks will receive the Excellence in Media Award and Sufe Orman will receive the Vito Russo Award.

In addition to 125 nominees in 26 English-language categories, and 60 Spanish-language nominees in 15 categories, GLAAD also announced that it would present Special Recognition awards to *The Laramie Project*, *10 Years Later - The Lasting Legacy of Matthew Shepard*, a two-hour documentary broadcast on Sirius XM Radio; and to Lucía Méndez, an actress and singer who campaigned to bring awareness to the issue of LGBT teen suicide.

Broadcast networks and cable networks each garnered 22 nominations. Among the broadcast networks, ABC came away with 6 nominees, while Logo led cable networks with 5 nominations. A complete list of English language nominees are available at: www.glaad.org

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Maine poised to introduce marriage equality bill

State Senator Dennis Damon (D-Trenton) announced on Tuesday he plans to introduce a bill to the legislature that will amend Maine's existing law to include same-sex couples and recognize marriages performed from outside the state. Maine currently has a domestic partnership registry for same-sex couples, but Damon and marriage equality supporters argue that it does not provide the same benefits extended to straight couples.

House Minority Leader John Tardy (R-Newport) will likely work to strengthen the existing statute that defines marriage as being between "one man-one woman" by incorporating the language into the state constitution. The Family Policy Council has vowed to actively oppose any legislative measures and

the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland has announced its support to work against the marriage equality bill.

Equality Maine said they gathered more signatures than expected during Election Day that support marriage for same-sex couples. The Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, a New England-based LGBT group, have announced their goal of securing marriage for same-sex couples in all six New England states. Massachusetts and Connecticut are two of the six states providing the full benefits associated with marriage. Vermont and New Hampshire currently have civil union laws that provide limited benefits.

For more information about this bill, please visit www.glaad.org.

Suspects in lesbian rape case enter pleas

MARTINEZ, Calif. (AP)—Three suspects in the alleged gang rape of a lesbian woman pleaded not guilty Thursday and are likely to remain jailed until a judge decides whether there's enough evidence to put them on trial.

Lawyers for Humberto Hernandez Salvador, 31, Josue Gonzalez, 21, and Darrell Hodges, 16, entered the pleas to charges that include kidnapping, carjacking, gang rape and sodomy in the Dec. 13 attack in Richmond, about 15 miles northeast of San Francisco.

Salvador also was charged with committing a hate crime, and his lawyer said he was also pleaded not guilty to that.

A 15-year-old boy also accused in the attack has been charged as a juvenile in the case, but prosecutors are reviewing whether to charge him as an adult, like they did with Hodges.

Authorities say the woman was taunted for being a lesbian during the 45-minute assault, which started as she was walking to the Richmond apartment she shared with a partner and their 8-year-old daughter. Besides being beaten and sexually assaulted in the street, the woman was forced back into her car and assaulted at an abandoned apartment building where she was left without clothes, according to police.

The case has sparked protests and an outpouring of support for the woman, who turns 29 on Friday and has been too traumatized to go back to her apartment or use her car.

"She got beaten pretty bad and has a major medical situation around that, and she can't work," said Tallon Nunez, a Bay Area resident who has been raising money for the woman



and acting as her spokeswoman. "Suddenly they are relying on one income that was not that much to start with,"

Salvador, Gonzalez and Hodges remain jailed on bails ranging from \$1.9 million and \$2.2 million, and are due back in court in March.

Q Puzzle Solution from P. 11

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Gay Travel

Out of Town: Four Gay-friendly places offering great value



By: Andrew Collins*

The travel and tourism industries have suffered severely in recent months, as cash-strapped consumers pull back on discretionary spending and either cancel vacations or plan them closer to home. But if you're looking for an inexpensive getaway to a GLBT-welcoming city, there's rarely been a better time to travel, especially for U.S. citizens planning international getaways.

The American dollar has gained strength against most major currencies since fall 2008, making forays into the United Kingdom, Canada, and Mexico especially affordable. The long-affordable South American metropolis of Buenos Aires continues to rank among the world's leading gay-friendly travel bargains. And if you'd rather not travel abroad, consider glitzy Las Vegas—it's one U.S. city that's now working extra hard to entice travelers with super-low hotel rates and package deals. Here's some advice on how to stretch your dollar in five notable vacation destinations:

Buenos Aires, Argentina

The Argentine peso is very weak against most currencies, meaning that great deals on wine, meals, leather goods, and clothing abound in sophisticated Buenos Aires. Many of the high-end business hotels in the city's ritzy Recoleta neighborhood charge the same steep rates you'd pay in any major international city, but if you avoid big chain properties and stay in one of the more charming areas like Palermo Viejo and San Telmo, you can find some amazing bargains. And these two neighborhoods contain the bulk of the city's gay clubs, trendy eateries, and quirky bou-



San Telmo is one of the most historic, charming, and gay-friendly neighborhoods in Buenos Aires.

tiques. High-end, GLBT-friendly properties that generally offer plenty of great value include the Axel Hotel in San Telmo, and the Vain Boutique Hotel, 1555 Malabia House, and the Five Cool Rooms Hotel, all in Palermo Viejo. For inexpensive dining, simply stroll along the blocks off Plaza Palermo Viejo, where trendy and affordable restaurants abound.

Taxis are another great value in Buenos Aires—they're barely more expensive than public transportation in cities like New York or London. Getting to Argentina from North America is costly, but the dependable and well-run Chile-based airline LAN (part of the

OneWorld Alliance) often offers attractive specials from its North American gateways of Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and Toronto—fares sometimes dip below \$700 round-trip.

Las Vegas, Nevada

Once characterized by rock-bottom-discounted hotels and cheap buffets, Las Vegas became considerably more expensive in recent years as celebrity chefs opened fancy restaurants and developers built some of the most lavish casino resorts in the world. The city has been hit hard by the weak economy, however, and many of the swankiest new properties in the city—the elegant Trump International Hotel & Tower, the Palazzo, and Encore - are offering highly competitive rates these days.

As long as tourism numbers continue to fall flat, enterprising Las Vegas business owners will continue to entice travelers with inexpensive package deals, discounted tickets to shows, and reduced cover and drink charges at the city's top gay clubs, such as Krave and Piranha. Las Vegas has direct air service on just about every airline in the country, so competition is fierce, too. Gay-friendly Southwest Airlines has been especially aggressive in offering great Vegas fares.

Manchester, England

Compared with the other cities in this article, Manchester is still relatively costly. But this major gay destination - the setting for the original *Queer As Folk* series—is far less expensive than London, and because the British pound has fallen precipitously against the U.S. dollar, a hotel room that would have cost you US\$200 in fall 2007 might set you back only US\$150 today. For that matter, a venti latte at Starbucks has come down from around US\$8 to nearly US\$5. In other words, travel in Manchester now costs roughly the same as it does in higher-end U.S. cities like Boston or San Francisco, and that's good news for anglophiles who've been effectively shut out of the United Kingdom in recent

years because of sometimes unbelievably high prices.

Some gay-friendly accommodations in the city that have suddenly become a good bit more affordable include the regal Radisson Edwardian and, just a few doors down, the city's grande dame, the Midland Hotel. Both properties lie within walking distance of Manchester's vibrant Gay Village along Canal Street, where the pints of local bitter and lager have always been a good value.

Quebec City, Canada

Just three hours from Montreal, the small French-speaking city of Quebec is also within a day's drive of several major metropolitan areas, including Boston, New York City, and Toronto. You definitely don't need to leave North America to enjoy a truly French vacation, and if coming from the United States you'll also be rewarded with a favorable exchange rate in a city that already maintains a reasonable cost of living. The Canadian and U.S. dollars were nearly equal over the past few years, but U.S. currency enjoyed a major rally late in 2008—now you can expect accommodations, meals, drinks, antiques, and other goods and services to cost you from 25 to 40 percent less than what they would in many U.S. cities.

This charming, gay-friendly city of steep hills, stone houses, and cobbled lanes preserves its French heritage better than even Paris. There are enough fine accommodations in Quebec to make choosing a place to stay something of a challenge—many of the best are enthusiastically gay-friendly. Best bets include the uber-romantic Auberge St-Antoine, which sits next to the esteemed Musée de la Civilisation in Lower Town; and the luxurious Hotel Dominion 1912, a chic and gracious boutique hotel renowned for its stylish guest rooms and personable staff.

Flying to Quebec City is a bit pricey from U.S. cities, but the low prices you encounter once you arrive may help offset this. Another useful strategy, if you're also going to be visiting the dynamic metropolis of Montreal, is to fly there and either rent a car or take VIA Rail Canada—the scenic three-hour trip costs only about US\$50 each way.

*Andrew Collins is the author of *Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA* and eight additional travel guides. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutofTown@qsyndicate.com.

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Queer Cinema You Can't Miss!

Fame/G
Genre: Musical; Distribution: Wide Release
Director: Kevin Tancharoen
Starring: Kristy Flores, Paul Iacono, Paul McGill, Natari Naughton, Kay Panabaker, Kherington Payne, Collins Pennie, Walter Perez, Anna Maria Perez de Tagle
Release Date: 09/25/09
Synopsis: The remake of the classic 1980s musical will feature Paul McGill as Kevin, a gay dancer.

Fahlenback were actually pregnant!

Be like Others/LGBT
Genre: Documentary; Rating: Not yet rated
Distribution: Limited Release
Release Date: TBA
Notes: Premiered at 2008 Sundance Film Festival
Synopsis: In a country where homosexuality remains an offense punishable by death, this documentary shows that many young gay men and women in Iran are opting to undergo gender reassignment surgery, which is their only legal option under their country's interpretation of Islamic law. This film explores a culture in which shame and fear have led many to take extreme measures in an attempt to find acceptance.

The Baby Formula/L
Genre: Comedy, Romance; Rating: Not yet rated
Distribution: Limited Release; Director: Alison Reid
Distributor: Grindstone Media
Starring: Megan Fahlenback, Rosemary Dunsmore, Angela Vint; Release Date: 07/01/09
Notes: Initial release in Canada.
Synopsis: Athena (Vint) and Lilith (Fahlenback) are two lesbians that are desperate to give birth to their own biological child. In order to have their own child, they experiment with a scientific process that makes sperm from their own stem cells. The best part of this film is that it was shot while Vint and

Almost Myself/I
Genre: Documentary; Rating: Not yet rated
Distribution: Limited Release; Director: Tom Murray
Release Date: TBA; Notes: Premiered at 2006 Newfest
Synopsis: Director Tom Murray explores the lives of a group of diverse MTFs in this documentary.

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Cupid Ain't Stupid: Valentine's Gifts That'll Getcha Some

By: Mikey Rox*
Heart On

Love him tender, love him true with seductive new selections from Ginch Gonch. The 2009 Valentine's collection is comprised of three pumped-up picks, available in a trio of colors and cuts guaranteed to have your hot spots overheating. Each daring design features glitter accents for added glam around his yam, and come packaged with naughty names like "Heart as a Rock" (white), "Frosted Fakes" (black) and "Razzle-Dazzle" (red). It's as if the warden threw a party in the county jail. (\$27-\$32; GinchGonch.com).



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enhance stimulation and provide pulsating ecstasy through soft vibrating studs, this pliable silicone device maximizes comfort while delivering pleasure of Pompeian proportions. Each multi-use V-Ring is condom compatible and lasts for up to 20 minutes of elevated action, giving you the most bang for your fuck - er, buck. (\$7.95)

Love Blossoms

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Happy Endings



Your bathhouse membership won't fly at Las Vegas' Canyon Ranch SpaClub (located inside The Venetian and Palazzo hotels), but you can still wax that ass. Available through February, this high-end pleasure parlor offer Valentine's treats for every budget, from the Fruit and Chocolate Facial (cleansing, exfoliation, steam, extractions, toning and a warming cocoa mask) to the Couples Rasul (an oriental purification ceremony that ends with a chocolate-cherry moor-mud mask and chocolate truffle body milk). Canyon Ranch also offers dinner and dessert for two to top off your co-etheral experience. (\$165 and up; CanyonRanch.com)

Eau de Gaultier

At whit's end on how to satisfy your hard-to-please label where? Evian's Prêt-à-porter Bottle by Jean-Paul Gaultier may be the ultra-lux ticket. Evian Natural Spring Water has



partnered with the cutting-edge French designer to create a limited edition bottle for the fashionista who has it all but wouldn't mind a little more. Très chic! And volvez-vous coucher avec moi. (\$13.95; ShopEvian.com)

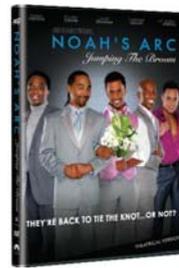
Undercover Lover



If the economic crisis has your love locked in, consider spicing up your current surroundings for a night of planned passion. A fiscally responsible alternative to purchasing new furniture or reupholstering the old, the Stretch Pique Slipcover from Sure Fit comes in soft, seductive colors like garnet and chocolate, and transforms worn fabric into an inviting makeshift make-out center. The sensual surface is so soft and cozy you might not make it upstairs. But don't fret - it's washable. (\$110; SureFit.com)

Noah's Arc: Jumping the Broom

Noah and the gang head to Martha's Vineyard for a weekend wedding getaway. But will mounting pressures and predicaments have Noah saying "I don't"? (\$24.99, DVD; \$29.99, 2-pack DVD & CD Soundtrack)



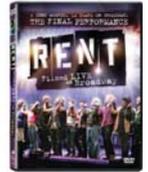
The Lair: The Complete Second Season



Bloodlust has never been sexier. The second season of here! TV's gay vampire saga bears its teeth with a two-disc set containing never-before-seen footage. (\$29.95, DVD)

RENT: Filmed Live on Broadway

Twelve years after its Broadway debut, Jonathan Larson's revolutionary rock musical bids adieu with a final performance. (\$38.96, Blu-ray Disc; \$24.95, DVD)



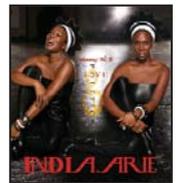
It's Not Me, It's You



Impulsive Brit import Lily Allen releases her sophomore album with more angst than an angry third nipple. Blender magazine recently described it as "part God, part country and all middle finger." Misery needs company. (\$18.98, CD)

Testimony: Vol. 2, Love & Politics

Lyrical poet India.Arie returns after a three-year hiatus with even greater—if not optimistic—insight into the interconnectedness of humanity as a whole. (\$1398, CD)



*Who is Mikey Rox? Who gives a @!#!? But you can find him at www.mikeyrox.com.

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Queer Sports & QClassifieds

The Outfield: Michael Irvin Makes Gay Radio Waves



By: Dan Woog*

Dallas' ESPN radio station is male sports heaven. Whether dissecting a disastrous Cowboys play, dissing the Mavericks' latest trade or calling for a coach's castration, 103.3 FM is all-sports, all the time.

Except 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekdays. That's when listeners hear Dallas Cowboys icon Michael Irvin and co-host Kevin Kiley discuss broken plays and *Brokeback Mountain*, primary receivers and Proposition 8.

After getting over their initial shock, Texans are enjoying a taste of gayness with their noontime sports fix.

The queer eye for the sports guy comes courtesy of Cyd Zeigler. Co-founder of OutSports.com, his introduction to sports radio came several years ago. Kiley, on another station, asked him to discuss rumors about the sexuality of Major League Baseball players. The interview was strong; Zeigler became a regular, and the men became friends.

Last year, Kiley and Irvin launched their Dallas show. Kiley is a gifted host with many interests, while Irvin - one of the best wide receivers in National Football League history - is a thoughtful former ESPN TV broadcaster whose career was derailed by drug and other controversies.

When Irvin was seeking someone to pick winners of upcoming NFL games, Kiley thought of Zeigler—and suggested he retain his gay sensibility. Irvin loved the idea, because it was new and different.

"I assumed most pro football players are homophobic, so I talked to Michael for half

an hour before accepting," Zeigler said. The Hall of Famer spoke about his strong Christianity—Zeigler calls it "love thy neighbor; embrace everyone"—and a deal was struck. Once a week, Zeigler would chat by phone from New York, picking winners against the betting spreads.

After the first show, letters and e-mails poured in. Most disliked the idea of an openly gay man being featured on a football show. Irvin was surprised by the outpouring of emotion, but forged ahead.

As the season wore on, the negative reaction eased. "It was good radio. People listened," Zeigler explains. "And, in the first couple of weeks, I was 29-19 picking against the spread, which was absurdly good." One day he analyzed an upcoming matchup with tremendous precision.

"Michael said he didn't know a gay man could have that insight," Zeigler recalls. "That got his respect."

Station managers were "probably worried at first," Zeigler admits. "It's their job to be nervous." But, ratings were high, trumping any fear.

Almost every show, Zeigler and the co-hosts tackled a gay subject. One week, Zeigler revealed which quarterbacks he thought were hot; another, he ranted about organized religion's role in California's vote to overturn same-sex marriage.

"My theme song is 'I'm Super' from *South Park*, so it's pretty clear I'm gay," Zeigler said. "And on the show, I gay it up a bit. One day I hit on the board operator and producer. That's what you have to do on radio."

But Zeigler's weekly segments were just a prelude to Dec. 23. Zeigler and his partner Dan were driving cross-country, to their new home in Los Angeles. Irvin and Kiley invited



Photo by Brent Minkus

CYD ZEIGLER

both men to the studio. Zeigler was the sole guest, for the entire three-hour show.

The show ranged from light issues (which partner cooks and cleans?) to heavy. When Zeigler asked Irvin his position on gay marriage, the football star admitted he had not thought much about it. But then he did—and said no one should tell anyone else how to live his life.

"The day was amazing," Zeigler says. A woman called from Oklahoma to say that 103.3 was the only station she could hear that

day, and the conversation was "a gift from God." A Dallas man declared it was time for prejudice against gay people to stop. Other callers lambasted the hosts for "promoting the gay lifestyle." Some just wanted to get back to sports.

The genuinely thoughtful questions from Irvin and the listeners impressed Zeigler. "Being able to educate in that way is what this show is all about," he said.

Zeigler gives huge props to Kiley for proposing and advocating for the show, and to Irvin for being so comfortable with it.

But Dallas is the only city with a regular gay guest on a major sports radio show. Why?

"Most hosts don't want to talk about gay issues," Zeigler said. "Or they don't have gay friends, or they don't know anything about it. And, of course, most sports shows are just sports shows: The Yankees won, let's talk about it. This is a sports show about life."

"I can't say enough about Kevin—who was raised in a white Southern household—and Michael, raised in a black ghetto household. No one clamored for them to do this. But they put their reputations on the line and did it—in Dallas. That says so much about them. All I do is show up."

* Dan Woog is a journalist, educator, soccer coach, gay activist, and author of the "Locks" 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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Looking for other women for outdoor activities: biking, hiking, and cross country skiing. I like to cook, especially coming up with healthy tasty recipes. Walks in the woods, sitting by a cozy fire, enjoying all life has to offer. Contact: Treesyster@aol.com.

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