

# The Rainbow Times

• Your LGBTQ News in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut & Vermont •



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## TRT wins 2011 Boston Pride Guide bid

By: Grisel M. Ocasio\*/TRT Publisher

By now, many of you already know that *The Rainbow Times* (TRT, New England's Freshest Newspaper) is Boston Pride's Official Pride Guide designer and producer. We cannot tell you how excited we are to collaborate with Boston Pride to create the 2011 Guide and to do so grandly. We thank the Boston Pride Board, Deputy Director, and Committee for having trusted us this first year with their Guide, their reputation and their product. To you I say, "We will make you proud, we will prevail and we will keep our promises." These principles, I strongly believe, are the reasons why we are bestowed such an important privilege this year. This bid is a historical event for *The Rainbow Times* and we want to ensure that we continue to work in good faith, with our team's professionalism on our sleeves, just as we have all along since 2006.

As I think about Boston Pride and its Guide, I also think about the other equally important Guides that we have produced throughout the years: the Noho Pride Guide and the Connecticut Pride Guide. We have always been proud to be the official designers of these Guides as well and we thank them for their trust in us too. Congratulations to Noho Pride and Connecticut Pride as they both prepare to celebrate their 30th

Anniversaries. All of these Pride organizations deserve our gratitude and support for helping to make LGBT lives visible and celebrated in New England and throughout the country. For more information about advertising in the Guides, please contact TRT directly at sales@therainbowtimesmass.com. To volunteer, donate or sponsor these organizations, please visit their respective websites: www.bostonpride.org, www.nohopride.org/, and www.connecticutpride.org/.

As I always emphasize, we would not be here without you, our readers, advertisers, allies and supporters. We could not do it without the dedication, respect and commitment that our team shows us each and every day either. Nicole and I cannot ever thank you enough, but we certainly mean it from the depth of our hearts.

*Happy Valentine's Day!*

*Grisel M. Ocasio*

*\*Grisel Martínez Ocasio is the co-founder, co-owner and Publisher of The Rainbow Times. She is a graduate of Marylhurst University, and Temple University. She has been in the journalism and publishing field for almost 20 years. You can reach her at: publisher@therainbowtimesnews.com.*

## Queeries: "I was outed on FaceBook," "Confronting a Cheater," & "First Timer"

ADVICE By: Steven Petrow\*/Special for TRT

### "I was outed on Facebook"

**Q:** *Even though my good friend Letisha lives with her girlfriend, she is not out to her family. At least she wasn't until last week. Right after the holidays I posted a lovey-dovey photo of the two of them on my Facebook page, tagging both. Then of course bam! The photo was automatically uploaded to Letisha's Facebook page and suddenly her whole family knew she was gay. Now Letisha won't speak to me because she says I outed her. I say it's her fault that she kept such a big secret from her family. Who's right?*

**A:** Every day I get more and more questions about Facebook gone awry. It's so easy to stumble on some social faux pas that didn't

even exist before. However, from what you write, there's enough blame to go around in this situation. First off, here's my advice to you: No matter what, don't tag people without asking their permission. Maybe you're at the beach and unaware that your Facebook friend has called in sick from work. Maybe you're photographing someone who is underage and the photo has caught him drinking. Or maybe your friend isn't out. On the other hand, Letisha does need to wake up and face the fact that everything about Facebook is viral. No matter how you set your privacy settings, you can't protect your privacy 100 percent. Lastly, a special note for your friend: Please don't ask others to be complicit in your secrets. It's certainly your right to stay

*See Queeries on page 13*

## Businesses giving back to the community

By: Jenn Tracz\*/CABO's Executive Director

As I mentioned last month CABO has created many great partnerships and initiatives within the CT community and with our membership and supporters statewide. This month I'd like to talk about CABO member, The Imperial Sovereign Court of All CT.

The Imperial Court is a CT non-profit that raises money for community organizations in need. Each year they hold their annual Coronation and this year it takes place February 18th - 20th. On February 19th join CABO and the many non-profit members we serve at Coronation at the Windsor Marriot. Festivities begin at 6pm and include dinner, dancing, a silent auction and much more. For more information visit their website at www.iscofallct.com.

This year the proceeds from Coronation happen to be going towards two CABO members, True Colors and the St. Phillip House. The synergy of CABO and all its members is something we are quite proud of. Are you a member or supporter with an interesting story to share, let us know!

We are always looking for ways we can improve and maximize our relationships with members, partners, supporters and friends. If you have a suggestion for what we can include in this column each month, don't hesitate



Jenn Tracz

to let us know. The better we can serve our audience the better we can serve the community. CABO's corporate partnerships include; Aetna, Foxwoods, Murtha Cullina LLP, Comcast Business Class, Clear Channel Radio and The Rainbow Times. Each of these businesses has something great to offer and their commitment and support to the LGBT community is what separates them from the rest. We highly encourage you to do business with one or all of them. As a CABO member there are many great exclusive offers to take advantage of.

*\*In her role as Executive Director, Jenn is responsible for maintaining and growing membership, developing strategic business partnerships and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the organization. In addition to being CABO's executive director, she also is a small business owner specializing in planning, branding, social media and design services.*

## My love for the world extends far beyond just those that I can hold within my arms

By: Jason Lydon/TRT Columnist

I am well aware that I am supposed to hate Valentine's Day. It is commonly understood that this is a day when we buy silly cards for our romantic partners, spend exorbitant amounts of money on cut flowers that have been shipped half way across the world and eat chocolates out of heart shaped boxes. Jewelry companies try to convince men that if they buy expensive diamonds that were mined with slave labor in the Ivory Coast, their girlfriends or wives will do whatever they want. So, many of these traditions hide the real importance of love and the beauty of being there for one another in meaningful and fulfilling ways. All of that is true, yet I have to say it, I pretty much love Valentine's Day. I love it because I like to reimagine it!

Imagine if Valentine's Day was when we got in touch with the erotic power that Audre Lorde, Black, lesbian, feminist, poet, organizer, wrote about. She reminds us that, "the very word erotic comes from the Greek word *eros*, the personification of love in all its aspects - born of chaos, and personifying creative power and harmony." I know that as I passionately kiss my sweetie in the street or dance with him in my kitchen that chaos seems to bubble up inside me, filling me with excitement and smiles. Audre Lorde continues on in her reflecting on the erotic describing it as "the open and fearless underlining of my capacity for joy, in the way my body stretches to music and opens into response, harkening to its deepest rhythms so every level upon which I sense also

opens to the erotically satisfying experience whether it is dancing, building a bookcase, writing a poem, or examining an idea." It is without a doubt that many of us have experienced that. Valentine's Day, the celebration of love and our erotic selves need not be limited to our romantic partners. We can celebrate our love of ourselves, love of our passionate lives, and love of our dear friends. Why should we let card companies dictate who we love on a day that celebrates the great power of *eros*.

One of the stories of Valentine's Day that I have no idea if it's true, but is one that I have heard numerous times and makes a beautiful myth, is that of St. Valentine. In the end of the first millennium Italy St. Valentine broke state and church law by marrying young men and women. Marriage was banned for a number of years because married men were not allowed to join the military and go off to fight war. However, there were many battles going on at the time supported by both the Church and the State. St. Valentine defied the marriage ban and continued to marry couples in defiance of the

*See My Love for the World on page 3*



Jason Lydon

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Ever since December 1, 1952 when the *New York Daily News* published a front-page story about Christine Jorgensen, "Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty," the world has been aware of male-to-female (MTF) transsexuals. Not so much for female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals and the trans masculine, whose very existence was denied for decades or only considered valid by the medical establishment if accompanied by a heterosexual orientation. Only recently has there emerged in the media a national figure, Chaz Bono, who represents FTMs and our struggles. Thank you for covering Mr. Bono and his transition in The Rainbow Times.

For a long while, The Rainbow Times has published not one, but two, columns every issue written by and about male-to-female transsexuals. Again, all to the good and I salute you for it. However, the voice of female-to-male transsexuals and other trans masculine individuals seems missing, at least on a regular basis, from the paper.

FTMs share some common issues with MTFs, but we also have aspects of our lives and transitions that are very different and, generally, little known. For example, our transsexual surgeries are medically quite different, as are the effects of testosterone. The fact that lower surgeries for FTMs are imperfect and costly presents barriers. The non-medical means we use to alter our appearances differ, too. We have relationship changes and challenges that are specific to us whether or not we medically transition. Our health-care experiences may also vary.

Mainly, though, transgender and transsexual men and youth have a problem with being voiceless and invisible in society, thus being misunderstood; which feeds abuse, hatred, and discrimination. Ignorance breeds

*See Letters on page 6*

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# Connecticut Supreme Court rules in favor of gay couple in parenting case

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

In a landmark decision, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled on January 5 that a gay male couple who wanted to have children and used a gestational surrogate are the children's legal parents, and that the state must permit both men's names to be placed on the birth certificates.

"It is instances like this landmark court decision that make me truly value and appreciate residing in the state of Connecticut," said Jenn Tracz, CABO Executive Director. "Connecticut shows time and again that support for LGBT individuals and families are a top priority. I am even more proud that Victoria T. Ferrara has been and is a proud member and supporter of CABO since inception. It is stories like this that validate the work that CABO and its members do for the LGBT community."

Shawn and Anthony Raftopol have been together for 16 years and married in Massachusetts in 2008. When they decided to expand their family, they entered into a contract with a gestational surrogate – a surrogate who carries a child, but is not genetically related, who gave birth to twin boys, Sebastian and Lukas, now 2, in April 2008. Following the birth, Connecticut's Department of Public Health would not allow the names of both fathers to appear on the birth certificates. The Supreme Court's ruling affirmed the lower court's order confirming their parentage and requiring the state to issue corrected birth certificates. The couple used the same egg donor and gestational carrier for the birth of their daughter Zoe in 2006.

"We are relieved with the Court's decision," said Shawn. "Now, we have the security of knowing that the law reflects our children's reality." Anthony said: "As a couple, we chose to create a family. We assumed the responsibility for bringing them into the world, with the understanding that we would love, support and nurture them in every way. In other words, to be what parents are supposed to be."

"This is the single most important decision in the history of gay men having children through surrogacy," said John Weltman, Esq., president of Circle Surrogacy, and author of an amicus brief in the case. "For a state high court to recognize the right of two gay men to be legal fathers of a child from the outset of the surrogacy process sets an incredible precedent. Furthermore, it positions Connecticut as one of the best states in the country for couples – gay and straight – to pursue gestational surrogacy with egg donation to create their family."

The Raftopols were represented in *Raftopol v. Ramey* by attorney Victoria T. Ferrara.

GLAD submitted an amicus brief on behalf of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, the American Academy of Assisted Reproductive Technology Attorneys, Connecticut Fertility Associates, and New England Fertility Institute. "This historic decision honors the intentions of everyone involved in bringing these children into the world, and provides those children with the protection of having two legal parents from the moment of their birth," said GLAD Senior Staff Attorney Karen Loewy, who co-authored the brief. "This ruling has

special significance for same-sex couples using assisted reproductive technologies like gestational surrogacy, because there will always be one intended parent who is not a genetic parent. It is now clear that Connecticut law honors and protects those intended families."

The decision will mean that all couples, gay and straight, who enter into a valid agreement with a gestational surrogate to bring a child into the world are the legal parents of that child, regardless of genetic connections.

GLAD's amicus brief highlighted some of the serious harms that could result from not recognizing the legal parentage of both intended parents for a child born through gestational surrogacy, and argued that the Legislature had provided a means to affirm

that parentage in exactly the way the plaintiffs in this case did: by entering into a valid gestational agreement and by asking the Superior Court for an order of parentage and for a birth certificate reflecting their parentage.

Additional counsel on GLAD's brief were local counsel Ken Bartschi and Karen Dowd from Horton, Shields, & Knox, P.C., Tom Ude of Lambda Legal, and of counsel John Weltman and Scott Buckley of the Weltman Law Group.

Ude noted that it was a "very important case for parents, whether they're straight or gay who choose to have a child with the help of a surrogate because it allows them to protect their family relationship and get a birth certificate reflecting the true family, at or before the child is born. It's a tremendous step forward for families."

*Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) is New England's leading legal organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status, and gender identity and expression.*

## My Love for the World from page 2

state and church. He did so for the purpose of keeping men out of war and standing by his ideas of love. St. Valentine was executed for his actions; he was made a martyr because he would not stand by as men went off to war. While I am not a fan of the modern institution of marriage, this act of anti-statist action inspires me and reminds me that my love for the world extends far beyond those I can hold in my arms. As carnations and roses get passed around on Valentine's Day I will also be thinking of this martyr who gave his life in the name of love and justice.

This Valentine's Day I encourage others to explore all the ways you can express your love. Help your neighbor dig out their snow covered car. Make a delicious meal for your best pal. Kiss your sweetie passionately so other people can see. Give your pet their favorite treat. Take your child on an exciting adventure. Treat yourself to your favorite dessert. Use all of your senses this Valentine's Day and help actualize the great power of love.

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# Faith, Family, and God – Who Am I?

By: Paul P. Jesepe\*/TRT Columnist

**O**n December 31st and in mid-January two events occurred that collectively gave me *A Chorus Line* experience. In the musical Paul sings, “Who am I anyway? Am I my resume?”

In mid-January the time changed on my computer from Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. to Wednesday, 12:00 a.m. Another snow storm had arrived. I worked on the laptop as huge red and orange flames suddenly danced outside my deck window across the parking lot. In moments heat and light became uninvited guests. The fire trucks were arriving. I alerted my neighbors. Most were sleeping. The gent next door cursed at the television. His

blood pressure seems to rise when watching the Sports Channel. I returned to the apartment. It felt like a preheating oven. From the time it took to knock on doors to my return the temperature had gone up considerably.

“What should I take,” I asked. I had no furry-four legged children to worry about. “Perhaps take the Ukrainian embroidery my grandmother made? Maybe pack some of my music collection? What about my degrees?” I parked my car in an enclosed garage blocks away due to the storm. Without the car to load I didn’t have many options.

Perhaps for the last time I surveyed my apartment. Before closing the door I looked at the many things that brought me comfort and pleasure – books, framed art, family photos, opera and ballet memorabilia, and numerous icons of various saints that included Sergius and Bacchus, lovers and life-long companions.

For practical reasons I took my laptop, cell phone, and brief case. I took nothing else. I did forget my reading glasses which later annoyed the hell out of me.

**If my soul or how the world perceives me is not defined by degrees, titles, my resume, or social status (or lack thereof) then by what? My effort to be true to my Creation as the Creator intended.**

I am not and will not be defined by “things.” Although my grandmother’s embroidery and many photos could not be replaced, people you love are held in the heart. Opera and ballet memorabilia is something in time and does not reflect what they are – a living, vibrant, dynamic feast for the eyes and ears. They live in the moment of the performance. Icons, clothes, books, framed reproductions of paintings, among other things can be replaced.

Before finally leaving the building I checked to make sure everyone was okay. Although my neighbors clearly were, gruff, testosterone-enthused police arrived to state the obvious. “You have to leave!” Yah think?

Other than damage to some cars in the back lot and smoked-kiebasa aroma permeating the building our respective homes were fine the next day. Most important no pet or person was hurt. Perhaps it had something to do with all the religious icons I left behind. Not likely.

See In The Name of God on page 6

# Catholic schools new policy implicitly welcomes the children of gay parents

By: Chuck Colbert/TRT Reporter

The Boston archdiocese has issued a new admissions policy for parochial schools, saying it will not “discriminate against or exclude any categories of students” but parents “must accept and understand that teachings of the Catholic Church are an essential and required part of the curriculum.”

The new Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Admission Policy comes eight months after a controversy erupted in Hingham, Mass. There, Father James Rafferty, pastor of St. Paul School, rescinded an admissions offer to an eight-year old boy, the son of lesbian parents.

In response, Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley directed a team of clergy and lay persons to formulate new guidelines. The team included school principals and pastors, as well as members of the Presbyteral and Pastoral Councils. Father Rafferty was also on the team.

The new policy allows for autonomy at the parish level. Pastors and principals, therefore, may draft their own admissions policies, but they must be “written, included in the school handbook, consider the welfare and best interests of the child and be disseminated to prospective students and their parents prior to registration.” The new guidelines also state “admission is dependent both on academic qualifications and the desire to promote what is in the best interest of the student.”

At the time of the Hingham flap, there was no specific archdiocesan policy for the situation, but children with gay parents were not barred outright from the schools.

Both archdiocesan officials and funders of Catholic education in Boston were critical of Rafferty’s handling of the matter. The Boston archdiocese assisted the parents in finding another school.

As the Boston Globe reported, the “Catholic Schools Foundation, which gives millions in scholarships to low-income students, said it would not subsidize tuition at any school with a discriminatory admissions policy.”

Michael B. Reardon, executive director of the foundation, told the Globe that his organization is pleased with the new policy. “From the perspective of the foundation, the key part of this is that it does not exclude any group of students, and it promotes what is essential to Catholic education, which is inclusivity,” he said.

But the new policy does not define what is considered a category.

“Our schools welcome, and they don’t discriminate against any categories of students,” Secretary for Education Mary Grassa O’Neill told The Pilot, the archdiocese’s official newspaper. “It covers all categories of students.”

Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia Father Richard Erikson told The Pilot, “Catholic education is a treasure of the Church, and we want to share that as broadly as we can,” adding, “We will not exclude any category of child from our schools and we expect pastors will be in conformity with the decision.”

Reaction among gay Catholics has been positive but skeptical.

Charles Martel, co-founder of Catholics for Marriage Equality, said he was pleased with the new policy and hopes other dioceses across the country follow Boston’s example.

“The painful circumstances of denying a child a parochial education only because their parents are a same-sex couple, has finally been rectified by the new archdiocesan policy welcoming all children,” Martel said. “This policy recognizes that there already exists a great diversity of families in which children are being raised, and the priority should always be about the children.”

Martel added, “An archdiocesan policy that welcomes all children to receive a parochial education is a step forward, implicit that the children of same sex parents will not be denied equal access. Single parents, parents who are not Catholic, parents who have divorced, and yes, same-sex parents, all need to feel able to fully participate in the education of their children.”

The Catholic Church defines marriage as a heterosexual union. The catechism says homosexual acts are “intrinsically disordered” and calls divorce “a grave offense against the natural law.”

Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of the LGBT Catholic organization DignityUSA, while praising the archdiocese for banning discrimination, wondered how pastors and principals would interpret what is in “the best interest of the child.”

As she explained, “My major issue with the guidelines is the same issue I have with everything about the official church and LGBT issues: When pastoral practice bumps up against doctrine that says gay and lesbian people are ‘disordered’ and ‘evil,’ doctrine almost always wins out.”

Duddy-Burke is also a parent. “I still wonder what would happen if my kids were in Catholic school, and someone went to the principal or pastor upset that a married lesbian couple’s children were enrolled,” she explained. “Would the school leaders really stand up for my daughters, for our family? Would archdiocesan officials back them up if they did? Would they say that judgment and exclusion are not Catholic values, and that we all need to work together to create community? I hope so, I really do, but I don’t feel ready to risk it yet.”

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## 337 Businesses awarded the distinction of “Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality”

### 100% Scorers on the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index offer Gold Standard of Workplace Fairness

WASHINGTON, DC—The Human Rights Campaign, the nation’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization, recently released its annual list of “Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality.” This year 337 companies were awarded this distinction for their employment policies and practices that include LGBT workers and their families. The list comes as Fortune magazine has also released their annual “100 Best Companies to Work For.” A complete list of HRC’s honored businesses is available online at: [www.hrc.org/placestowork](http://www.hrc.org/placestowork).

“With the amount of time people spend at work, having strong protections on the job make a real difference in the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans,” said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. “By mandating equal opportunity in hiring, ensuring equal compensation through medical and family benefits, and promoting inclusive and equal workplaces for LGBT employees, these companies are a model for other employers and federal and state governments.”

The “Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality” distinction is awarded to businesses that scored 100% on the HRC Foundation’s 2011 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 the LGBT community. Released in October, the 2011 Corporate Equality Index report is available online at [www.hrc.org/cei](http://www.hrc.org/cei).

The 337 businesses will be honored on March 23 at the Seventh Annual LGBT Workplace Awards Seminar and Reception hosted by Time Warner at the Time Warner Center in New York.

*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.*



#### Letters from page 2

fear. So, education, as always, is key.

I’m wondering whether you would consider adding a regular column such as “Ask a Trans Man,” to your enlightened publication? I cannot offer myself as the writer since I am currently focusing my energies on organizational development for the Sexual Minorities Archives. However, I am sure there are several talented trans male writers you could tap for such an informative piece.

Considering that trans men come in all sexual orientations, date and marry within the gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersex, and heterosexual communities - all parts of your readership - a regular column would go a long way towards breaking the silence about our lives and struggles for equality.

Respectfully,

—Bet Power, Founder, Facilitator  
East Coast FTM Group  
Northampton, MA

Dear Editor,

I am writing to inform you that Americas unjust immigration laws that prohibit an American citizen from sponsoring their foreign born non U.S. citizen same sex partner is destroying my family. Currently U.S. policy permits a heterosexual American citizen the right to sponsor their heterosexual foreign born partner for immigration purposes provided that they have met at least once in person in the past two years, but same sex binational couples are denied such an opportunity.

I am a United States citizen and have been in a same-sex binational relationship for the past four years with a British citizen. Our relationship has endured because of our commitment to each other despite the mental and physical hardships and expense that U.S. laws have forced us to endure. I am separated for great lengths of time from the love of my life, from my support system, from the person I intend to spend the rest of my life with. We have spent thousands of dollars, money which was and is difficult to raise, in order to spend short periods of time together.

We have been deprived of a chance of our home, health and happiness while our heterosexual counterparts are permitted such

freedoms. One can only imagine the mental anguish that my government has placed on me and that it fails in promoting my welfare as a U.S. citizen.

Over the past three years I have been a volunteer with a grassroots organization called OUT4Immigration. We have been diligently working towards bringing public awareness and Congressional support for the potential passage the Uniting American Families Act (UAFSA), which contains language that would include the ability for an American in same-sex binational relationship to sponsor their partner with all the regulations and penalties that exist in the process that is currently in place for heterosexual binational couples. We are a small organization with limited funds and resources and many of our members have already made the difficult decisions of leaving America in order to be with their partner in another country. I too am faced with this heart breaking decision of choosing between love and country, but I cannot live my life on hold any longer and I plead for increased support for the passage of UAFSA.

This is not just an issue facing the LGBTQ community, but it is a human issue. It is an American issue and I hope you will assist me and my family in raising public awareness of the discrimination placed against same sex binational couples.

Thank You,

—Gina M. Caprio, Sacramento California,  
(via the Internet)

Dear Editor,

I was proud to read TRT’s coverage, all the way up here from Manchester, NH. We love TRT here and we thank you for your quality coverage. We enjoyed the health issue and found it to be overall very informative, with local coverage and a touch of a national LGBT health news. I wish, however, that you had more coverage in this area. Is that possible?

—Mary Hendrichson, Manchester, NH

Dear Mary,

We are working diligently to ensure that other parts of New England are equally covered in our coverage. Our NH coverage continues to be of importance to us and we will take your comments and move forward with even more.

—The Editor

#### In The Name of God from page 4

If my soul or how the world perceives me is not defined by degrees, titles, my resume, or social status (or lack thereof) then by what? My effort to be true to my Creation as the Creator intended.

On New Year’s Eve I was at a Barnes and Noble. After spending too much money on books I don’t have time to read a woman approached me in the parking lot. She had been crying, was visibly shaken, and needed cab fare for about a sixty minute trip. I gave it to her. She pledged to pay me back and asked several times for my address. Before you think me naïve and living under a cabbage

leaf, I’m rather jaded. Yet I never doubted her sincerity to repay me or that the situation was as difficult as it appeared.

Although I thought about giving her my address, I said, “No. Don’t worry about it.” She asked several times, “Are you sure?” “Yes,” I responded. “A day may come when you’ll be in a position to do the same.”

*\*Paul is an author, attorney, and a seminary trained, ordained priest in greater Albany, NY. His book Crucifying Jesus and Secularizing America – the Republic of Faith without Wisdom, is available on Amazon.com. He may be reached at Dilovod@aol.com.*

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# ♥ VALENTINES ♥ WEDDINGS ♥ VALENTINES ♥ WEDDINGS ♥

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

By: Mikey Rox\*/Special for TRT



### PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE

Cupid's holiday calls for cocktails, especially if you've got a cutie to claim as your own (but probably more so if you don't), and Stirrings all-natural mixers and rimmers (mind outta the gutter!) get the party started. Just choose your favorite spirit, add a festive Stirrings flavor – like blood orange or pomegranate – and sip your way to satisfaction. To help you along, Carlo, the Naked Bartender – who's a dead ringer for Timothy Olyphant's younger, hotter brother – offers recipes and interactive video greetings when you become a fan of Stirrings on Facebook. Hands on the keys, please. (\$7; Stirrings.com)

### BY THE BOOK

While Kindle and Nook duke it out for dominance of eReader market share, Kobo is quietly gaining fans. Why? For starters, it's lighter and faster than Kindle, and Kobo features a chic quilted back available in several sexy colors, like Onyx, Metallic Silver and



Lilac. The WiFi-enabled eReader also comes preloaded with 100 free eBooks and access to a store that contains 1.8 million more freebies that can be read on nearly any other non-Kobo device. Which is more than Amazon can say for its prize pony since it's only compatible with in-network downloads. Three cheers for the underdog. (\$139.99; KoboBooks.com)



### HEARTS OF GOLD

It doesn't matter what kind of girl you have, diamonds are probably still her best friend. Because, well, who doesn't love a little bit of bling? From The Pearl Source, which uses freshwater and South Sea pearls at 75% off other retailers' prices, comes the Tahitian Heart-Shaped Diamond Earring set and the Tahitian Pearl & Diamond of the Heart Pendant. The former features 3.5 grams of 18K white gold and .15 carat SI-quality diamonds while the latter boasts .22 carats and 1.63 grams of white gold. Even so, the reaction you'll receive when she opens the box will be more than you can measure. (\$399-\$599; The-PearlSource.com)

### SEXUAL DELIVERY

What goes on behind closed doors is nobody's business but yours. Well, unless you count the FedEx guy who delivers your shipment of Collective Wellbeing sex toys. Then again, he's knows all your naughty secrets, doesn't he? Now he'll have something new to talk about it. We Vibe II – the first vibrator that can be used during intercourse and allows for simul-



taneous internal and external stimulation – is perfect for deepening intimacy and recharging passions, while Naughtibod by OhMiBod plugs into an iPod or other portable music player to send good vibrations to your erogenous zones in time with your favorite tunes.

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### PUBLIC SPEAKER

Nobody keeps wallet photos anymore. Except maybe your dad and he probably hid yours behind his Moose Lodge membership after you came out. Such is life. Since you're not an easily embarrassed old curmudgeon, you likely

want a better way to show off your sweetie. Enter Doodle from OrigAudio, a portable speaker that you can customize with personal pics (but not too personal), artwork, logos, graphics and more. Powered by two AA batteries, Doodle is compatible with any audio device that has a standard headphone jack, and it fits in your back pocket. Right next to his heartstrings. (\$39.99; OrigAudio.com)

See Valentine's Gifts on page 14

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# How to plan for your wedding, that special day when love trumps it all

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

Same-sex couples looking to spend a lifetime together want to make their wedding as special as possible. There are a lot of components which go into making the event a success: the location, the date, the guest list, the food, the flowers, and the music.

In addition, there are also the invitations, the wedding attire, the rings, hotel accommodations, and of course, the honeymoon to plan as well.

Who can assist you and your spouse to create the perfect wedding?

One resource is GayWeddings.com, a firm which provides products and information networking to same-sex couples who seek to affirm their life-long commitments to each other through commitment ceremonies, civil unions, domestic partnerships, civil marriage and other alternative weddings.

The site offers a list of LGBT-friendly vendors, including those specializing in cakes, catering, event rentals, flowers and décor, photography, and transportation.

There are also Wedding Checklists, including "Ten Things To Do Before Saying I Do."

One of the top priorities is working out a budget for the event which is within your financial range. "In the U.S., weddings cost \$26,000-\$30,000 on average, it's critical to measure one's finances against anticipated expenses. It's

possible to host a wedding for less and easier than you can imagine to host one for more. Before you begin, think about your finances and how much you and your partner can afford and whether or not you'll be asking parents to chip in," according to the site.

Another important task is to book your ceremony and reception site early. "Don't make the mistake of announcing your wedding date until you have a contract in hand for your ceremony and reception. You may find that you'll need to pick a date based on the availability of your dream venue. And, don't be surprised if you find that you [have] to book a space nine months or more in advance of a date if you are picking a popular time of year or a popular venue."

Other tips to make your wedding successful are to attend other weddings – straight and gay, to get some ideas, as well as to reach out to others who have already had their weddings, so they can give you some advice.

However, you also have the freedom to put your own personal stamp on your wedding. This day is about *you*, so feel free to use your own ideas on how to make the event a special one.

The site says: "Borrow from the traditional rituals that have significance for you. Add elements that speak to you and your community. Above all: be yourself and be present and the rest will follow."





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# Love Stories: Two couples reveal the success of their relationships

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

What makes for a successful relationship? How can a relationship stay fresh when the partners have been together for 30 years or longer? The Rainbow Times spoke with some couples to get their perspectives.

## Janet Peck & Carol Conklin, Colchester, CT

Peck, 60, and Conklin, 57, from Colchester, Connecticut, have been together for 35 years, and married for the last two of those years. The women knew each other in high school but were seeing other people at the time. A conversation at a dinner party between Peck and Conklin soon led to a friendship, and then a romance.

"We fell in love," Peck said, explaining her and Conklin have shared interests, shared values, and similar political views.

Their compatibility has been at the root of their relationship, as well as a deep mutual respect.

"We're there for each other emotionally, in hard times," Conklin said, noting they were able to count on each other for support during the deaths of their parents.

"We love each other to death, we respect each other, we support each other and like nothing better than to spend time together - hiking, biking, kayaking, camping and being women's basketball fans," Peck explained. "We have also had similar goals to shoot for - we built a house together, we built careers, worked for marriage equality in CT and we are now planning for retirement within the next 4 years when we hope to travel around the country in our camper."

Peck, who works as a mental health counselor and does couples counseling, believes the high rate of relationship failures is due to cultural conditioning.

"I do think we live in a throwaway society and that may have something to do with it but I think a better answer is that I don't think people find the time to check in with each other often enough - to connect with each other on a daily or at least weekly basis," Peck noted. "I also think

people do not find ways to resolve any differences they have and then these differences wear away at the good feelings they have for each other."

"People become attracted to people that they aren't very compatible with," Conklin added.

Peck and Conklin have always managed to discuss any problems in their relationship.

"No matter what our differences, I always know deep down inside that we will always resolve it," Peck said.

## Bruce Bell & George Smart, Quincy, MA

Bell, 67, and Smart, 60, have been together for more than 34 years. They married in 2004. Bell and Smart met at a gathering of gay men on Cape Cod in 1976.

"I wasn't out, I didn't have any gay friends," Bell recalled. "When I walked in (to a private home), I saw this person in a white sweater - George, and somehow I knew immediately (he was my soul mate), and we've been together ever since. It sounds like a real Cinderella story but it's basically true."

Smart had the same feeling toward Bell that fateful night: "I remember seeing (Bruce) in a blue sweater with a sailboat on it and I think I said as we were walking out that night, I said to (Bruce) 'are you following me?'"

Neither Bell nor Smart had ever been in a long-term relationship before, but found a common bond. Compatibility has been a key ingredient to their relationship.

"We have a lot of the same interests," Smart explained. "We both like theatre, we both like going to the movies, we have a good circle of friends

that we've formed over the last 30 years, we came out to both of our families, they were supportive once they got over the initial shock of it."

A challenge for Bell and Smart was the lack of role models to look to for guidance in their relationship.

"(In 1976) there had not been a single book which had been written about gay couples," Bell noted. "At first we tried to figure out (how to act) as a gay couple. Once we realized that we could make up our own rules, it became quite liberating," Bell said.

Being able to maintain a serious relationship in the midst of life's challenges is very important, Bell believes.

"A good sense of humor is important in the long run. The other thing is God knows we've been through enough changes and somehow through all the changes, both individual and the changes in the relationship, it somehow works. We still enjoy each other and have a good time."



PHOTO: COURTESY JANET PECK  
Janet Peck & Carol Conklin




PHOTO: COURTESY BRUCE BELL  
Bruce Bell & George Smart

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## Out! For Reel March offerings present beautiful, magical films celebrating love and friendship

**ENTERTAINMENT** NORTHAMPTON, MA—Two beautifully produced award-winning films that tell two compelling, magical stories about love and friendship will be presented by the Out! For Reel LGBT Film Series on Saturday, March 5, at the Academy of Music Theater, Northampton, at 7pm. Doors open at 6 pm for an informal social hour.

Produced in two different centuries, in two different countries, by filmmakers of two different generations, *When Night Is Falling* (Canada, feature) and *Donkey Girl* (U.S.A., short), are internationally award-winning films that easily captivate the viewer's attention.

*When Night Is Falling*, the lesbian film produced in 1995, was forced by the U.S. film ratings board to censor love scenes before it could be sold on DVD. Canadian filmmaker Patricia Rozema fought vehemently against the blatant homophobia by the board without success. Only recently was the film re-released in its original version.

"For over a decade LGBT folks have seen this film in its censored, edited version. Homophobia is not censoring us on this night. Finally we have the opportunity to see one of the most cinematically remarkable lesbian films in its entirety, uncensored, up on the big screen, just as the filmmaker envisioned it," says Jaime Michaels, Executive Producer/Director of the Out! For Reel LGBT Film Series.

*When Night Is Falling* tells the fascinating story of two women who live very differently lives, one is a college professor and one is a

performer, who accidentally meet and gradually fall in love. The depth of its characters, the quirky subplots, and the framing and lighting of each scene makes this film a passionate, uplifting, timeless lesbian classic. When *Night Is Falling* stands out in offering film as art at its best.

*Donkey Girl*, a charming short film by U.S.

filmmaker Ties Sche-nu, tells the delightful, heartwarming story of two young teenage girls somewhere in the Middle East, who unexpectedly form a friendship and deep soulful connection.

"Donkey Girl is by far one of the best short films I have ever seen," Michaels states. "It's an amazing story that achieves a level of depth and richness unusual for a short film."

Tickets are \$11 in advance, \$14 at the door, \$9 for students with current ID (Student tickets

are available only at the Academy box office.) Advance tickets can be purchased online at [www.OutForReel.org](http://www.OutForReel.org).

Ticket Outlets: State Street Fruit Store, Northampton, Food For Thought Books, Amherst, and World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield, Academy Box Office (box office fee applies).

Out! For Reel screens the best in award-winning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender films from around the world on a monthly basis during an eight month season.

*Out! For Reel's mission is to create and strengthen our LGBT community through cultural events, build connections to our heterosexual allies, and work toward the eradication of homophobia through the arts and entertainment. For more information visit [OutForReel.org](http://OutForReel.org).*



PHOTO: WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING

Passion flares in *When Night is Falling*

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## Book Marks: The latest and greatest in LGBTQ writing from all around the globe

By: Richard Labonte\*/Special for TRT

*I'm from Driftwood: True Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Stories from All Over the World*, edited by Nathan Manske. IFD, 168 pages, \$15 paper.

There is profound eloquence in this first-person collection of childhood stories – first crushes, loves realized, family reactions and more – gathered by editor Manske both in the course of a 50-state tour across America and through e-mails sent to [imfromdriftwood.com](http://imfromdriftwood.com). Hundreds of coming-out and living-gay narratives have been winnowed down to 51 queerly compelling mini-autobiographies, some of them heart-wrenching, some of them heartwarming, all of them proclaiming a truth for LGBT youth – that they are not alone. For the most part, though New York, San Francisco and Seattle are represented, these are primarily loud and proud voices from cities and towns not rich in queer resources: Clarksville in Tennessee and Mechanicsville in Virginia, Glasgow in Kentucky and Colby in Kansas, Hollis in New Hampshire and Driftwood in Texas – where 30-year-old Manske grew up, wishing on boyhood birthdays for a 1963 copy of *Uncanny X-Men #1* – and for a boyfriend. “You saved my life, literally!” one teen writes about a YouTube channel affiliated with the tour – a sentiment just as appropriate for this book.

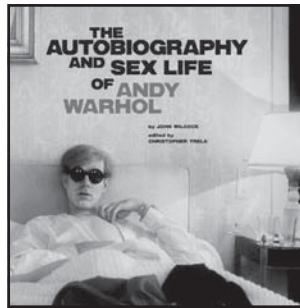
*The Autobiography and Sex Life of Andy Warhol*, by John Wilcock, edited by Christo-

pher Trela. Trela Media LLC, 264 pages, \$45 hardcover.

Forty years ago, Wilcock – a near-constant presence at Andy Warhol’s fabled Factory hang-out – self-published a bare-bones book of 25 revealing interviews with a pantheon of the artist’s erstwhile companions and colleagues. The book is back, handsomely tarted up by editor/publisher Trela with a wealth of previously unpublished Warholian photos and prefaced with a new scene-setting remembrance by Wilcock, who co-founded *Interview* with Warhol before eventually leaving for the west coast – where he still lives. Wilcock conducted his interviews in the late 1960s – with Viva nude in her Chelsea Hotel room, with Brigid Polk in the back of a cab, with Gerard Malanga, Taylor Mead and Ultra Violet, performers in Warhol’s early films, and with Fac-

tory personalities Paul Morrissey, Lou Reed and Nico. Trela’s foreword notes that the book’s title is somewhat inaccurate: Warhol didn’t write it, so it’s not really an autobiography; and as several interviews reveal, he was reticent about his sex life, so it’s not that racy a tome. But as an eyewitness perspective on Warhol’s eccentricities, enthusiasms and artistic explorations, it’s a true treasure.

*\*Richard Labonte has been reading, editing, selling, and writing about queer literature since the mid-’70s. He can be reached in care of this publication or at [BookMarks@qsyndicate.com](mailto:BookMarks@qsyndicate.com).*



## GLBTQ Online High School announces new spring tuition plan for fall enrollment

MAPLEWOOD, MN—GLBTQ Online High School announces a new spring tuition plan for students planning to enroll for fall 2011. The promotion offers full-time students a rate of \$3900 for a full year of courses beginning September 6, 2011.

Tuition is reduced from \$5,900 to \$3,900 for 12 semester courses over 12 months. Students must enroll before June 1st with a 50% deposit. The balance is due by September 6, 2011. The 12-month period of enrollment begins on the day the student starts his or her first class. The school will waive the normal \$50 application fee for students enrolling under this plan.

Dave Glick, Executive Director, commented on the new tuition plan, saying, “We’re very pleased to be able to offer this new tuition plan. Not only does this make the school even more affordable, but it also aims to create a cohort of students that will be able to learn and grow together throughout the year.” One current student recently commented that the school is providing

the best education opportunity he has ever had. The school hopes that this tuition plan will provide more students with that same experience.

For more information, visit GLBTQ Online High School’s website at [www.glbtqonline-highschool.com](http://www.glbtqonline-highschool.com) ([www.glbtqonlinehighschool.com](http://www.glbtqonlinehighschool.com)), or call 1-877-977-4101.



*GLBTQ Online High School is a private, non-profit school based in Maplewood, Minnesota. It is the world’s first online school created specifically for glbtq youth and serves students nationwide.*

*GLBTQ Online High School’s mission is to provide a safe and welcoming educational community that provides a high quality, comprehensive college-preparatory online high school experience for students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning their sexual orientation and others, using the best technology and techniques of distance education.*

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# Offering up a candid, first hand look at a straight man/transwoman couple

TRANS OPINION

By: Deja Nicole Greenlaw\*/TRT Columnist

Happy Valentine's Day everyone! Valentine's Day is a wonderful day that you can celebrate with the one you love! Jewelry, flowers, cards, chocolate and going out to dinner are on most people's mind that day along with sharing the wonderful love that drew you two together and that keeps you two together. There's something special about this day and it belongs to those who have that special someone in their life!

What about those of us who do not have that special someone in their life? Remember the quiet child in grammar school who didn't receive any valentine cards when everyone else received many? Well, there are a lot of us out there who will not receive any cards, or flowers, or chocolate that day. It's a tough day for us who are without someone. Being transgender doesn't exactly help either. Don't get me wrong, there are transgenders who do have that special someone in their life and I applaud them but there are many of us who are not in a relationship.

I have lived as a straight male and now as a transwoman and believe me; it is much easier for a straight man when it comes to finding that special someone. In my case, I make it even harder as I would like to be with a straight man as my love. It doesn't take a news flash to realize that most straight men don't want anything to do with a transwoman as a partner. There are, however, many straight men who do want to be with me, sort of anyway. Please let me explain.

I have been contacted by dozens of men who have shown an interest in me. They are interested in being with a girl with that special "something extra." No, these are not gay men, but actual straight men. One of my boyfriends once said: "Deja, I like women. If I were gay I would want



Deja Nicole Greenlaw

a man who looks like a man and acts like a man, but I do not want one of those. I want a woman and I don't care what her 'plumbing' is."

All of the men that I have known who like transwomen also like genetic women. They just simply like women. I think that only one man that I met admitted that he

was bisexual. All of the with a man.

So there are men out there who like transwomen. So, what's the problem? I have thought about this and I have talked to my boyfriends and girlfriends about it and I came up with an answer to that question.

For a straight man to be seen with a transwoman in public he must be very secure in his sexuality and he must not care what others say about him. Most straight men are not secure enough and worry as to what is said about them in any reference to their sexuality. If a man can get by these two deterrents, then he has others to deal with.

If a man is open enough about dating a transwoman he will get questions from his straight friends such as "Why are you going out with her?" "Why don't you go out with a 'real girl'?" And, one of my favorites, "Is she 'bigger' than you?" Let's face it; most straight people cannot understand why someone would go out with a transperson. The man has to deal with social stigma, gay issues and how to explain his decision to date a transwoman.

What can he say in his defense? There are some very good points that favor him dating a

transwoman. He may tell his friends that he connects her, that he loves her, that she represents the best of both worlds to him, that she may not be as high maintenance as some genetic women seem to be, that her interests may coincide with his, that she can communicate the same way that he does, that they have common experiences growing up, that they can understand each other and that she downright turns him on!

But will his straight friends understand these valid points? Can they think outside of the box? The answers are sadly, "no and no" in almost all cases.

So he dates a transwoman anyway because she is who he wants, but he will see her only a certain distance away from his home town, away from his friends, away from his family etc. I've personally only been with one man in public in his hometown and as a guest in his home. Yes, the people where he shops have seen me and so have his neighbors who live in the same apartment complex as he does but even he receives static from his friends and he will never, ever introduce me to his parents. It's just too much to deal with, much like my own issues with my own friends and family members who don't quite grasp the idea of me being a transwoman. Yes, he has the same problems and issues that I have/had. We are both really in the same boat! I still do see him a few times a year but we live too far apart from each other and his work hours are very demanding so we do date other people now and then.

I have gone out on several dates with men but I have also been stood up several times. I realize that straight men do stand up genetic women but I think that my number of "stood up" occurrences is greater because of the insecurities of the man. I have met many, many men online who seem very interested in me and everything seems wonderful until we decide to meet. He doesn't show up! Why? He may have second thoughts.

He may suddenly question his own sexuality. He might think about what may happen if someone he knows sees us together. What will he say? All of a sudden all of these questions and issues hit him at once and he panics. Simple solution, he doesn't show. Fantasy may be fine for him but it's not what I want.

I pretty much understand all of these issues that men have, after all, I have come from the straight community and I know its gender norms and expectations. It is not easy for a man to be brave enough to rise above these issues, although I have met a few who have done so. One of my girlfriends has a man who is so secure that he wants to spread the information that there are men out there who love transwomen and that it should be acceptable in society to do so. He dreams of giving seminars to support his views and to get the word out that it's ok for a straight man to date a transwoman. Kudos to this man! One of my boyfriends was thinking of having an internet site for all of those men who want to date transwomen and show the "hows, whys and the problems that might arise while dating us." I loved his idea!

However, there is currently a need for the straight/trans couple to be closeted. I know of a girl who lives with her boyfriend but they never go out in public together. "Sigh!" As Kermit the frog always says "It ain't easy being green." Yes, it does seem like we will need some time on this one but I do have high hopes for the future!

So, Happy Valentine's Day to all of you who have your sweeties with you and a huge smile to those who are in a relationship and at least one of you is a transgender person! Bless you and enjoy this wonderful day!

*\*Deja Nicole Greenlaw is a local transwoman who has 3 grown children and works at a local Fortune 500 company. She can be contacted at dejavudeja@sbcglobal.net.*

## "My mother actually brought up trans stuff with me and asked questions..." Where can I direct her?

By: Lorelei Erisis\*/TRT Columnist

Dear Lorelei,

So apparently the ice maker in hell may be churning a cube after all. My mother actually brought up trans stuff with me and asked me questions about it. Though this is probably good news, I'm not going to get my hopes up. This is the first time in my life she's actually been remotely interested in my life, which is really an understatement.

What resources would be recommended?? She wants to try the web approach before talking to anyone, but she's wanting information for mothers of transpersons. Any suggestions? Anything would be helpful. She is really introverted so web stuff would be her desired route for now.

—Japheth

Okay, you know, I honestly thought this was going to be easier. I read this question and BAM!, I knew it was the right one for this month's column. I thought, "This'll be easy, I'm trans, I've got a Mom, I had to do this. I know this."

But I kept trying to start and just not getting

anywhere. Moms are a tricky thing, really. We all have quirks about our Mom's and our relationships with them that feel so particular. Ways we react to each other that are just unique; ways we know our Mom's that no one else does.

For instance, my own Mom is the sort of person who can watch a *Lifetime* Original movie and not only not have to fight down the urge to throw things at the screen and wish horrible Voodoo curses upon the writers (my reaction), but actually enjoy it and even get all teary eyed. Whereas, I tend to favor independent densely plotted, obscurely surreal, Black Comedies. So you would not expect that one of the things we seem to bond over is a mutual love of Big-Budget, effects laden, whiz-bang, blow 'em-up Hollywood spectacles! You'd never guess this from meeting us.

So when it comes to giving advice about someone else's Mom, I was oddly hesitant.

Then I remembered an important thing. I'm an advice columnist! Taking that leap is what I do.

So, my friend Japheth, here is my advice.

First of all, I recommend brushing up on your own Trans 101. It's easy to feel like, being actually trans and all, that you have all the answers if they'd just ask. But trust me, if you're about to send your Mom out there into the wilds of the Internet, she's going to come back at you with some pretty wacky stuff. Your job is to be one step ahead of her and as familiar with what she might find as possible. It's also quite likely that you will be asked to define things that you never really felt the need to try to.

Things like, "How do you



Lorelei Erisis

know you're a man/a woman/not-any-gender-at-all?" (Pick your adventure and proceed to page 23, 5, or 42) Or my personal favorite, "Was this because of something I did?" (No Mom it wasn't. I swear, I promise!!-LE)

Getting on to the resources, first I am pretty much obligat-

ed to recommend checking out my own Mom, Linda Carragher Bourne's column in the online version of TRT, "Ask A TransMom." I'm kinda biased, but I think she's pretty cool and wicked smart. She'll be able to answer your Mom's questions from the perspective of someone who has been there!

Also, I highly recommend that you point your Mom towards PFLAG. The organization known formally as "Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays" has done a lot of good work reaching out to transgender people and their PFFs. Send her to the website, PFLAG.org and tell her to click the "Transgender" tab to go to TNET, PFLAG's Transgender Network. There she'll find all manner of articles, FAQs, terminology and links to local chapters for when she's ready for offline support.

From there you might also want to point her towards the website, "Transsexual Road Map," (tsroadmap.com). It's a site aimed primarily at Transsexuals, with all kinds of nuts and bolts information of the kind that transfolks need and parents may want to know. It's got a simple layout, user-friendly design, balanced tone and it's

well-sourced with over 1,500 pages of info and growing!

I've dropped the name of this website so often in this column that I think it's starting to show that I'm really kind of a fan girl for the site and its creator, Andrea James. Not only is it the first thing I encountered when I went looking for info myself, but it's also one of the oldest, continuously maintained websites on the internet! Plus Andrea James herself is kind of awesome! She's not only beautiful and smart; she's a writer, director, producer, activist and frequent guest blogger for my favorite non-trans website, Bo-ingBoing.net.

Getting back on track, there are lots of other places on the net, but the key Japheth is also not to totally overwhelm your Mom. Too many online resources will just send her down a rabbit-hole filled with too much flash animation, sparkles and pink butterflies. And while, I will give a shout out to the plethora of good resources available from "Laura's Playground," (lauras-playground.com), that's as far down into the Pastel-Flash Underground as I'm willing to go.

So, before I send you off with a truckload of links for your Mom, I would also like to recommend a book. (Shock, horror!) "Gender Outlaw" by Kate Bornstein was a book that was pivotal for me as a young transwoman and it was the book I gave to my own Mom. Kate Bornstein is an excellent writer and her book makes a good primer for anyone just entering this strange and topsy-turvy world of transgender.

Good luck!

Slainte!

*\*Lorelei Erisis, former Miss Trans New England, can be contacted at: loreleierisis@therainbowtimesmass.com.*



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## HRC announces “Back to Work” training program for Transgender job seekers to begin in Boston

### Free seminar helps address significant hiring bias

WASHINGTON, DC—The Human Rights Campaign, the nation’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender civil rights organization, announced today it will hold the inaugural event of its Back to Work project in Boston on February 26-27, 2011. The Back to Work project empowers transgender people who are unemployed or underemployed to find jobs that match their expertise and experience by providing them with essential skills needed to make the most of the job market. The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC), the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (BAGLY), AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts (AAC) and MassEquality are co-sponsors of the event, which will be hosted by AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts.

Allyson Robinson, HRC’s associate director of diversity, said the Back to Work seminars address a critical need. “Because of the widespread prejudice we face, transgender youth and adults experience unemployment at twice the rate of their fellow citizens and one in five have been homeless,” said Robinson. “Transgender people make great employees, but they need superior, specialized job hunting skills to help overcome the bias against us in hiring.”

Attendance at the Back to Work seminar is free and open to any unemployed or underemployed transgender person. In addition, the first 30 registrants for the seminar will receive, also free of cost, a suite of individualized, open-ended services after the seminar from a credentialed, experienced career coach to help them navigate their own job search.

“Not only do we need to pass the Transgender

Equal Rights Bill for employment non-discrimination protections here in Massachusetts, but also we need to get our transgender youth and adults back to work and give them the tools to do so,” said Gunner Scott, executive director of the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition.

Participants in the two-day seminar will be trained in refining their career focus, preparing a résumé, researching the job market, building a professional network and interviewing techniques. The Foundation for New Directions (FND), a non-profit, transgender-owned career coaching organization based in Atlanta, Georgia, will provide the training.

Sharon Skipper, CEO of FND, said: “We are the only national firm that offers professional job search assistance specifically to transgender individuals. With 25 years of experience in helping those in the LGBT community to successfully start second careers in rewarding positions, we’re confident the techniques we teach provide a real competitive advantage to our clients. A successful job search requires confidence, research, marketability and presentation and we cover all of that and much more.”

Registration for the Back to Work seminar in Boston will take place via the program’s website, [www.hrc.org/backtowork](http://www.hrc.org/backtowork).

*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.*

### Queeries from page 2

closeted, but as you can see, it gets mucked up when you’re asking friends to be accomplices. (And a technical pointer: Remember that you can always de-tag yourself from a photo.)

### “Confronting a Cheater”

**Q:** *I really need some advice. I think my boyfriend is cheating on me and sleeping with other guys behind my back. When we first got together we decided that we weren’t going to have an open relationship. Recently he said he would have no problem if I wanted to sleep with other guys – as long as I told him first. That made me suspicious so I did something I probably shouldn’t have: I logged into his Facebook account and found an incriminating message. I know we need to talk but I am really bad with confrontation. What should I do?*

**A:** Very few of us like the idea of confrontation, but when it comes to questions about monogamy and sexual health, you really have no choice. This doesn’t mean you need to come at him like a bat out of hell, but you do need to express your point of view and ask the important questions. The ability to do so is really important for your own self-respect. Perhaps there’s a middle ground that you’d be comfortable with? Many couples create rules in situations like this: No tricking in your own bed, for instance; it’s okay if one of you is out of town; or the number of liaisons is limited to prevent a romantic attachment. On the other hand, you may have no interest at all in anything but monogamy—as per your original agreement. Either way, you need to talk together and make some mutually comfortable decisions. If you do agree to have some new openness in your relationship, by the way, remember that you’ll need to come to some clear understanding of

what each of you considers safer sex; there are about as many different definitions of that as there are couples. As for your logging into your boyfriend’s Facebook account: That’s a form of cheating, too. Leveling with him about your actions may help him to do the same.

### “He’s never had sex before”

**Q:** *I’ve been going out with a guy who’s never had sex before with a man and is more than a little apprehensive. We’re really into each other, but to tell you the truth I’m a little nervous myself at the thought of initiating a virgin. I just want to make sure to handle things right. Do you have any advice for me?*

**A:** There’s a special responsibility in being someone’s “first.” I don’t know about you, but I still remember my very first time—and let me just say I was a nervous wreck. Since you already know that your fella is anxious, see if you can tease out what’s on his mind. Often a first timer’s main concern is that he’ll do something “wrong.” If you can help your new lover realize that it’s not about technical performance but rather emotional connection, you’ll both benefit. Also, let him know that he can determine the pace. Still, there will likely be some teachable moments as he tries new things on for size. I wouldn’t make corrections or suggestions in the heat of the moment, but instead maybe chat a bit later on if you feel the need. One last thing: Be sure to lead by example when it comes to the topic of safer sex.

*\*Steven Petrow is a regular contributor to 365gay.com, GayWeddings.com and the author of the forthcoming, “Steven Petrow’s Complete Gay & Lesbian Manners” ([www.gaymanners.com](http://www.gaymanners.com)). Send him your questions: [ask@gaymanners.com](mailto:ask@gaymanners.com).*

## Come join us for CT Transadvocacy's 5th Transgender Lives Conference

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# To Cook is To Love: A Foodies Journal Foreplay begins in the kitchen – a primer on aphrodisiacs

By: John Verlinden/TRT Cuisine Columnist

**¡MUCHO GUSTO!**



PHOTO: RACHEL POWER

**V**alentine's Day, 2010—for two weeks you planned – fine wine, a light dinner ... then, well you know what you wanted then. Things started so well; dinner was a big hit. But,

when you dimmed the lights and leaned into your beloved for a kiss, instead of sweet nothings your ears got snores.

Sound familiar? Well, never again, dammit! Chef Johnny's here with advice to ensure next time you throw an intimate dinner party; you get your hostess gift in the bedroom. The answer, isn't candy or flowers, it's aphrodisiacs. And the formula's simple: increase the aphrodisiacs in your meal, increase your chances. Suggesting you introduce aphrodisiacs into your cooking does *not* mean stirring a viagra-rhino horn-Spanish fly cocktail into your guest's mashed potatoes. I want you to bring nature's fresh aphrodisiacs into your kitchen.

Abundant and available everywhere, some even look the part. Take avocados, for exam-

ple. The sexiest fruit alive – curvaceous shape, the big, hard pit embedded in silky flesh, that rich and decadent taste. I get hot and bothered just writing about them. Then there's papayas – don't act like you don't know what I'm talking about. And, how about peanuts – lip-shaped shell with two darling little nuts inside? Whew!

These gifts from nature nourish our bodies, excite the senses and enliven our minds. Make them part of *your* regular diet. That's right; aphrodisiacs aren't just for the other people – the poor wretch you wish to bend to your will. Aphrodisiacs are also for you. They'll make you hotter, sexier, and more irresistible. Think about it – we are what we eat!

Skeptics say: "no food can make me do something I don't want to do." Well, of course not. Natural aphrodisiacs just make you *want* to do it! Or, you'll here: "there's no scientific evidence that consumption of any food arouses warm feelings or stimulates naughty thoughts." To this, I simply say it's not what you have; it's what you do with it. A boiled potato isn't an aphrodisiac, but a French fry can be a powerful one – especially when shared.

What's your favorite aphrodisiac? Got a story to share? Drop me a line at john@muchogusto.com or visit the food forum on my website: www.muchogusto.com.

Until next time – ¡Mucho Gusto!, ¡Muchas Gracias! y ¡Buen Provecho!

## Valentine's Gifts from page 7



## FORBIDDEN ROMANCE

Planning a low-key, lady-lovin' February 14th at home? Here's what you do: Spark up a couple candles, set the table with her favorite dishes and pour a few glasses of red. But that's just the beginning. Afterward, surprise her with the Nicole Conn Romance Pack from Wolfe Video, featuring three great girl-on-girl romance titles from the iconic filmmaker, including "Claire of the Moon," "Cynara" and "Elena Undone." Cuddle up in something sexy and let the evening unfold. All over the house. (\$34.95; WolfeVideo.com)



## CHEEKY VALENTINE

There's no shortage (pun totally intended) in this year's V-Day selection from aussieBum. Whether your guy's a hipster in the streets but a freak in the sheets, prefers boxers of briefs, or needs a little help from underneath, there's a pair of 'wear from Down Under sure to please his package. Styles include WJ Pro, which will give his nethers the ultimate upgrade; boxers adorned with amorous rabbits; Classics available in 14 different colors; and a sporty tank to help him sop up all that sweat – inside and outside of the bedroom. (\$19.25-\$40; aussieBum.com)

## PLATTER FLATTERY

Etsy aficionado Jennifer Matlack breathes new, functional life into vintage, silver-plated trays, bowls, plates and platters by self-stamping hand-picked pieces with words and phrases like "Love," "Adore," and "Be True." Smaller sizes are about four inches in diameter while larger works of art serve as true serving dishes with 12-inch diameters. They're perfectly sized to hold earrings, rings, perfume bottles, keys, wallets and change. They can hold food too, like, say, chocolate truffles or another aphrodisiac. Discovered at estate sales and flea markets, each piece is one of a kind in shape, amount of tarnish (or shine!) and design. (\$8-\$45; Etsy.com/shop/daisychestnut)

## SEALED WITH A KISS

Known the world over for its indulgent outlook on decadent confections, Godiva recently launched a line of Chocolate Infused Vodka, a five-times distilled, ultra-premium spirit, the taste of which will speak for itself. So here's a recipe: Combine one ounce of Godiva Chocolate Raspberry Infused Vodka with a half-ounce of Crème de Cassis in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake well and strain into a champagne flute. Top off with chilled bubbly. Serve with a smooch. (\$29.99)



## BARELY THERE

With sassy sayings like "Trophy Wife," "Just Married," "Bottoms Up," and "Domestic Diva," Smart Ass Thongs are perfect for that playful couple that never takes themselves too seriously. Undies feature an optimal rise and a floss width that's just right – not too wide or narrow. Colors vary per message, but include black, periwinkle and hot pink. Each pair comes beautifully packaged and ready for giving. Enter coupon code PAPERROX-SCISSORS at checkout to receive a 20% discount. (\$20; SmartAssGifts.com)

## HEAVY HEARTED

Business meets pleasure with the Museum of Craft and Design's set of paperweights from master craftswoman Judy Vilmain. At two inches, her Square Heart is cast in pewter with a small enameled red heart nestled inside to keep your love safe. For the even older fashioned, the pewter Love Letters is just right for that special someone who prefers handwritten forget-me-nots to fleeting sexts. Simply designed, both pieces embody the whimsy, inspiration and function with which we should all conduct our relationships. (\$40; shop.sfmcd.org)



\*Mikey Rox's gift guides – which include Mikey Rox's Ultimate Guide to Gay Gift Giving at holiday time – are the only such guides syndicated in LGBT publications across the country. If you have a product that you'd like to see featured in the future, contact Mikey at mikey@paperroxcissors.com.



Hispanic Black Gay Coalition Presents:

## Aren't I Black Too?

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Free event open to all ages. All are encouraged to attend regardless of how you identify.

The Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC) works to inspire and empower Black and Hispanic/Latino LGBTQ individuals to improve their livelihood through activism, education, outreach and counseling. Learn more at www.hbgc-boston.org.



Hispanic Black Gay Coalition

Saturday, February 19, 2011  
From 2:00 - 4:00pm  
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# Bryan Couzens: Businessman who looks beyond the balance sheet

By: Tynan Power/TRT Reporter

The line-up of projects Bryan Couzens juggles would be enough to overwhelm a lesser man. The owner of Chez Est in Hartford, Couzens has three major projects in the works at the Chez, is starting a separate business and is working with a family member on another one. He stays involved in many organizations for which the Chez does monthly fundraisers, like the Imperial Court of Connecticut and Our Companions Animal Sanctuary. Somehow he manages to keep all those balls in the air, while serving as president of Connecticut Pride.

"My plate is very full," Couzens acknowledges. "I learned a long time ago not to put all your eggs in one basket—but don't let them sit around too long, either."

"I cannot just sit around and do nothing, I would go crazy—er, crazier!" Couzens jokes. "I try to get involved in many different things to keep busy."

Couzens believes that staying active and involved is the best advice for anyone who wants to make a difference.

"It does not matter what you do, just do something. Pick something you find interesting and ask what you can do to help. Everyone needs help," Couzens says. "Go to fundraisers, even if you cannot help financially. There are always things you can do. I am very lucky to have a handful of people that go so far above and beyond to help me when we do benefits and fund-

raisers. I would be lost without them."

If Couzens has found a key to being a business owner who also contributes to the community, it's being able to keep self-interest in perspective.

"Help the people in need, don't always put yourself first, and remember, it's not always about the money," he says. "In this economy, where so many people are jobless, and barely making ends meet, it's good to do things for others and not always for yourself."

Don't get me wrong, it's very difficult to keep any small business open today, but sometimes good deeds are rewarded in other ways. I am fortunate to be in a safe and stable position. I like to help others, and using Chez to do various fundraisers and benefits is a great way to meet new people and show full out support."

Couzens credits Chez Est's former owner with being a great role model and a great support to the LGBT community.

"Gary Bechard has been most influential to me in all my years at Chez," Couzens says. "As a 'straight owner,' I cannot name anyone else who has done more for the LGBT community. If you really want a hero, it would be Gary. No one else would have gone through what he did over the years to keep Chez and all his other bars open, if he did not care."

As for Couzens' own contribution to the

LGBT community, he is most proud of the work he has done with Connecticut Pride since 2002.

"It's been very difficult to build up Connecticut Pride for many reasons. Connecticut Pride is basically the 'big party' held on one day to celebrate a year of very hard work."

Despite the fact that so much work goes into an event that lasts only six or seven hours, Couzens thinks it is worth it.

"It is really meant for people to be themselves and not feel ashamed or embarrassed about who they are or what they believe in."

These days, Couzens feels there is an acute need for places where LGBTQ people can be safe and proud.

"With the huge increase in teen suicides and all the media coverage on bullying, it's more important than ever for people to take part in some of the groups out there like PFLAG and GLAD."

Couzens thinks LGBTQ people may not achieve full equality in his lifetime. "But I am sure it will happen someday," he says.

Change, after all, is already taking place.

"The younger generations are more accepting," he notes. "More and more states are passing laws and allowing the LGBT community to feel more accepted and more comfortable. More restaurants and bars are becoming popular as meeting places. People seem to be comfortable going out in public and not worrying about what others will think or say."

The sticking points, though, seem to Couzens

**"Parents need to realize it's too late to start accepting their children and understanding them the day after they bury them."**



PHOTO: GLENN KOETZNER

Bryan Couzens

to be closer to home.

"Many issues come from family—overcoming what seems to be impossible for some people. How you are brought up usually is where people need to start. PFLAG is an amazing organization for families to get involved in, to help understand their children and/or friends."

"Parents need to realize," Couzen says, "it's too late to start accepting their children and understanding them the day after they bury them."

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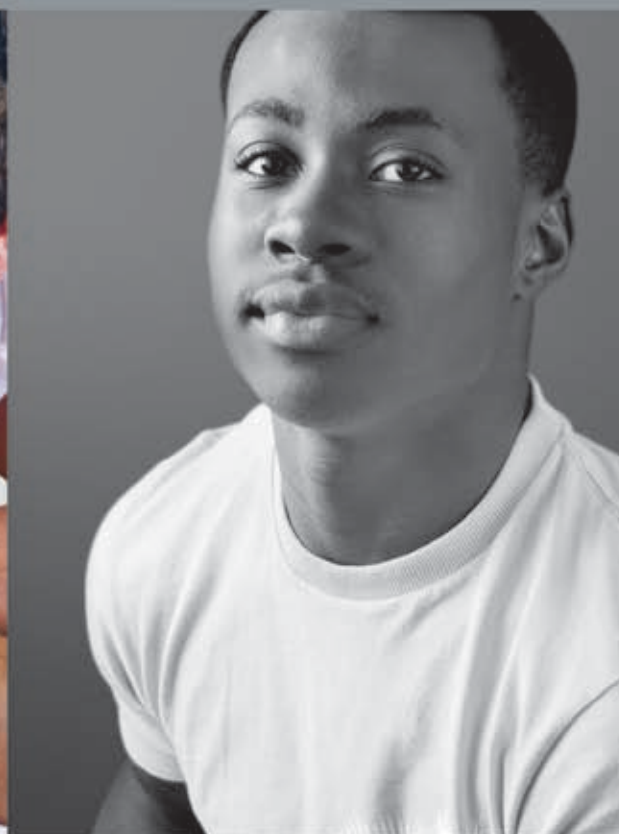
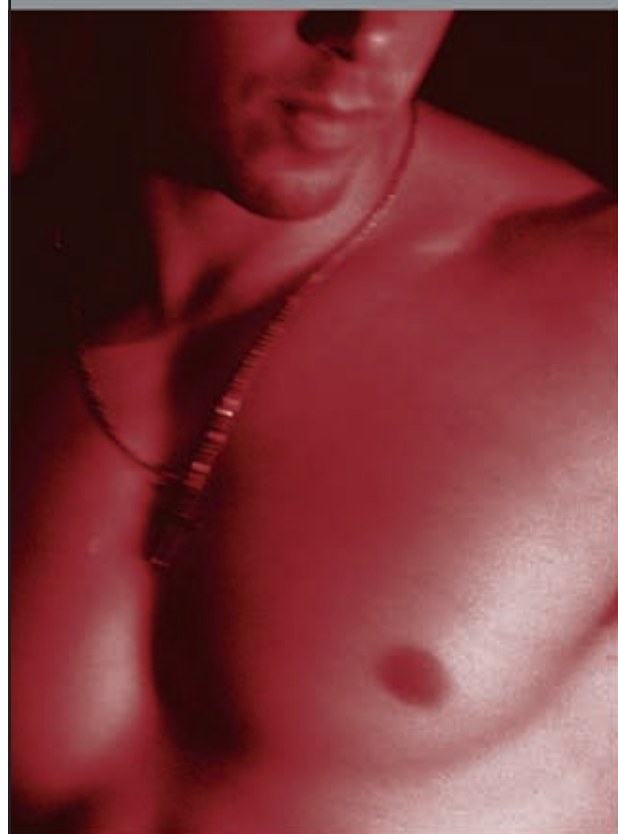
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*If you know someone else who may be interested, please pass this information along.*

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# The Real L Word's Tracy Ryerson & Stamie Karakasidis speak on love, life

By: Clara Lefton/TRT Reporter

The Real L Word co-stars Tracy Ryerson & Stamie Karakasidis took their relationship on-screen last January through April for Ilene Chaiken's latest production. The couple became an instant hit with viewers and Tracy was recently named SheWired's Gay Woman of the Year.

Despite the show's success, the couple felt it was too difficult to continue participating on the show's second season while balancing three children and jobs. "We're glad they renewed the show—because visibility matters—and wish everyone the best of luck," says Ryerson. "They are filming the second season as we speak! Cameras are following Whitney and her friends."

Recently the two had an exclusive interview with *The Rainbow Times*.

**TRACY:**

**Clara Lefton:** How did you first hear about the show and tryout?

**Tracy Ryerson:** At the time, I was working behind-the-scenes for Jerry Weintraub Productions at Warner Bros. A few months prior to being asked to come in [and] I saw a press release about the Showtime show. I thought it was a great idea, but had no intention of putting my hat in the ring. Turns out that my roommate, a TV producer, an event planner, and a friend put my name in the mix and I agreed get on tape. Honestly, I had tons of questions ready to fire at the producers, but all turned quickly in the room, and the next thing I knew I was babbling on and on about my life as a lesbian living in Los Angeles. It was like I got my therapy session for free!

**CL:** How exactly are you involved in the film industry?

**TR:** As a development executive at Jerry Weintraub Productions on the Warner Bros, my job was to turn ideas into entertainment. I find unproduced screenplays or books, attach talent, package the project, and sell to a studio or network. It's a job that requires a lot of patience, networking, and passion. I love it. Currently, I'm pitching a few reality shows, a TV series, and writing a book. Creativity excites me. It was hard to not include my professional life on cam-

era, but I made the decision before taping that the two be very separate, due to confidentiality.

**CL:** Where in New Jersey are you from? Did you ever spend any portion of time in the New England area? Or were you more a New York City/New Jersey girl? What sent you across the country to California?

**TR:** I was born in Morristown but grew up a few miles away in Dover, NJ. I lived in Northern Jersey until I left for college in Miami.

I was definitely more of [an] NYC girl, but occasionally made my way to the slopes in Vermont for some snowboarding. Other than that, I've been to Provincetown and the casinos in Connecticut. I would have loved to spend some time in Boston as a kid, but my father was such a big NY Yankees fan, that we weren't allowed to set foot on Red Sox soil. Go Yankees!

**CL:** Did you have a message you wanted to send, perhaps as a role model, to the queer community by participating on the show?

**TR:** A large part of the reason that I decided to participate was the fact that taking part in a television show like this gives you a platform to spread positivity. Since I've come out, I've been surprised to see the lack of role models in our community. Now, more than ever, we're realizing that LGBT visibility

matters. If I can help one kid who's struggling with his or her sexuality, then I know I've made an impact. I enjoy challenging stereotypes and helping to show the world that we have a voice as well, but mostly, we're just like everyone else. Equal.

**CL:** What's the strangest fan experience you've had so far? Any that stand out?

**TR:** There have been a few strange experiences but the one that stands out happened in Houston, TX. A young woman came up to me, got on one knee, and asked me to marry her! Stamie was also proposed to on the same trip, except that she was presented a cool ring pop.

**CL:** The episode featuring mom was an emotional one for viewers and yourself, has your relationship with her progressed any further since?

See Tracy & Stamie on page 21



PHOTO: FAITH WHITE

Stamie Karakasidis & Tracy Ryerson

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## XL Center to host the Big East Women's Basketball Championship

HARTFORD, CT—For people who enjoy watching elite basketball, there is a great opportunity coming to Hartford this March. The BIG EAST Women's Basketball Championship will be held at the XL Center in Hartford, Conn. on March 4-8. All 16 teams in the BIG EAST Conference will advance to the Championship, making it a jam-packed weekend with plenty of college basketball action.

Women's basketball has grown in leaps and bounds over the last few years and continues to expand, gaining recognition and exposure. The BIG EAST is leading the pack, helping to create a name and identity for the sport. Last year, seven BIG EAST teams were selected to the NCAA Women's Basketball Championship, tying for the most of any conference. Over the last four years, BIG EAST teams have made 30 NCAA appearances, proving that the quality of competition is strong. The women's game continues to shatter the preconceived notions of what females can do in athletic settings. The sport is changing the view of many people and as the exposure expands, so does the apprecia-

tion of true talent.

"Now that I'm a senior, I've gotten a chance to look to sit back and reflect on my experience being a part of the BIG EAST," said BIG EAST Preseason Player of the Year Maya Moore at the 2010 BIG EAST Women's Basketball Media Day. "It's been more than I could have imagined. The fact that we had seven former and current players on that World Championship team, coached by UConn's Geno Auriemma along with DePaul's Doug Bruno, speaks to the quality and competitiveness of our conference."

The BIG EAST Women's Basketball Championship is the pinnacle of action, competition,

excitement and sportsmanship. Whether cheering for the powerhouses or the underdog, it is an experience like no other and an event that no fan wants to miss.



There are four first-round games on Friday, March 4 and four second-round games on Saturday, March 5. The quarterfinals will be held on Sunday, March 6 and the semifinals will take place Monday, March 7. The final game will be televised on ESPN at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 8. Tickets can be bought at [www.BIGEAST.org](http://www.BIGEAST.org) or [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

Between the games, there is plenty to do in Hartford and the Greater Hartford Convention and Visitors Bureau (GHVB) has some ideas on how to do that at [www.enjoyhartford.com](http://www.enjoyhartford.com).

The BIG EAST Women's Basketball Championship FanFest is a fun-filled fan area located in the XL Center Atrium during the tournament. The FanFest provides fans entertainment and opportunity to get to know the local businesses and organizations who display at the event.

The FanFest is a tremendous exposure opportunity for local companies.

For more information, fans can log onto [www.BIGEAST.org](http://www.BIGEAST.org) and click on the women's basketball Championship Central page, a one-stop location for all needs involving the competition.

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### We regret misinforming our readers:

The Rainbow Times' January 6-February 2, 2011 issue on page 16, under "Connecticut News" incorrectly reported "The Imperial Court of Rhode Island is holding their annual Coronation... etc." The right information should have read: "The Imperial Court of All Connecticut" is holding their annual Coronation ... etc. We thank Mr. Dan McCarthy, Vice President, Board of Directors, Imperial Sovereign Court of All Connecticut, for calling our attention to this error and we regret that such information was published.

—The Editor

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# Deep Inside Hollywood: *Glee*'s Colfer takes advantage of open window



By: Romeo San Vicente\*  
/Special for TRT

## Chris Colfer strikes with *Lightning*

Actors' shelf-lives can be short, so it's never wrong to take advantage of any window of career heat. That's the wisdom *Glee* cast member and recent Golden Globe-winner Chris Colfer is living by these days;

he's all set to make his first film, a comedy titled *Struck by Lightning*. And by "his," that means he wrote it in addition to planning to star. Director Brian Dannelly (*Saved! United States of Tara*) will take the helm this summer while Colfer makes good use of his small-screen hiatus. The project is reported to be a John Hughes-like high school outing, a welcome thing, since Hughes never included gay characters in his '80s classics. (No, Duckie doesn't count. Neither does Mary Stuart Masteron in *Some Kind of Wonderful*.) And if the film turns out to be gay teen classic, then all the better. *Beautiful Thing* could use some company in that category.



Chris Colfer

PHOTO: JUSTIN LUBIN/FOX.

in 1963 she made a decision that caused outrage across Italy: she had a baby with a married man. But in keeping with her liberated persona, she kept her head held high and remained a beloved figure to her fans. Sounds like a movie, right? It's going to be, thanks to Pedro Almodovar, a man whose powerful female-centric stories have made him one of the world's most acclaimed directors. At the moment Marisa Paredes, one of Almodovar's go-to actresses, is set to star and production should go into full swing as promotion for his latest feature, the Antonio Banderas-starring *The Skin That I Inhabit*, winds down.

## Finally: A lesbian sitcom on a major network. Maybe.

As NBC ushers in a new network chief, Bob Greenblatt, another change is possibly in the air. *I Hate That I Love You*, from former *Will & Grace* producer Jhoni Marchenko, is going to pilot. That's typical news at this time of year, but what makes *Hate* different is that if it goes to series it will be the first primetime, major network sitcom about lesbians. Here's the logline: "A straight couple introduces two of its lesbian friends to one another and what results is both instant attraction and a pregnancy." There's no casting news yet, but it's still an exciting development, one that's

long overdue in this post *L-Word* world. Suggestion for the creators: If they didn't both have to be white bread safe and super-lipsticky that would give you even more cred among actual lesbians, but then again they'll be sure to tell you that themselves should you wind up making that error in judgment.

## MTV gets better with Dan Savage

MTV might be feeling the heat of advertiser disapproval right now with its decision to air the sexually charged teen series *Skins*, but that isn't stopping them from moving forward with a pilot from *Savage Love*'s Dan Savage, the longtime sex advice columnist from Seattle's *The Stranger* and The Onion's AV Club. The man who created the "It Gets Better" campaign that saw gay adults making videos to encourage younger gay and lesbian people not to give up hope for a better future, Savage will pattern the show's pilot on his college campus lecture tour in which he fielded questions from the post-

adolescent audience. And if you've seen him speak publicly or read his column, you know that his brand of sex advice is unflinchingly honest and almost always graphic. Makes you wonder how much language bleeping MTV is prepared to do in the name of authenticity. No news on when the show may air, but brace yourself when it does.

*\*Romeo San Vicente gives out free sex advice but it's always hands-on, never hypothetical. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.*

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# NOM-RI Airs Television Commercial

**By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter**

The Rhode Island chapter of the National Organization for Marriage (NOM) is airing a television commercial in an effort to prevent a same-sex marriage bill from being passed by the state's General Assembly.

Two bills have been introduced which would allow gay and lesbian couples to exchange marriage vows.

NOM's 30-second television ad takes aim at Governor Lincoln Chafee (I) who urged legislators to pass a marriage equality bill soon. Former Governor Don Carcieri, whose two terms in office ended in January, was an outspoken opponent of same-sex marriage. Carcieri even endorsed the efforts of NOM to prevent gays and lesbians from getting married in the state.

"Lincoln Chafee got just 36% of the vote in the recent election, and fewer popular votes than the Cool Moose Party's candidate for Lieutenant Governor," said Christopher Plante, Executive Director of NOM-RI. "Our message is that getting 36 percent of the vote is no mandate to redefine the institution of marriage for all of Rhode Island society."

"Eighty percent of Rhode Islanders want the chance to vote on marriage, just as voters in 31 other states have done," the NOM ad states. It calls on Rhode Islanders to call Chafee's office, and that of House Speaker Fox and Senate President Theresa Paiva-Weed to express their views.

The NOM-RI advertisement is running statewide on broadcast and cable stations. The group is spending in excess of \$100,000 on the advertisement.

However, advocates for marriage equality remain skeptical about NOM's efforts.

Kathy Kushnir, MERI's Executive Director, said the NOM commercial ignores the main issue at stake: bringing equality to gay and lesbian couples.

Kushnir noted that NOM's campaign to influ-

ence legislators to put the issue of same-sex marriage on a ballot is not working.

"The people of Rhode Island understand that what they have done over the last election cycle was to send equality supporters to the State House," Kushnir said, adding members of the LGBT community and their allies were contacting their elected representatives about passing a same-sex marriage bill.

"No more waiting, no more delaying, no more denying civil rights for same-sex couples," Kushnir added. "The legislature can right that wrong immediately and that's what the people are asking them to do."

MERI has no plans to run any advertisements on television, preferring to focus their efforts on lobbying legislators.

However, a stinging rebuttal of the NOM ad was produced by a pro-LGBT organization, Stop8.org. The video featuring Matt Baume can be seen on YouTube.

"Same-sex marriage enshrines a tragic situation into law," Plante says in the video.

Some of the state's religious leaders have expressed their scorn for Chafee's support of same-sex marriage.

Bishop Thomas Tobin, the head of the Providence Archdiocese, criticized Chafee in a column titled "Has Our State Has Lost Its Soul?"

Tobin wrote: "We have a ton of problems in our state - a depressed economy, a fragile social service network, a distressed public education system, the demise of the family, a wave of urban crime and domestic violence, and what promises to be an intense and divisive debate created by the ill-advised desire to redefine marriage."

A 2010 poll commissioned by MERI showed that 59 percent of Rhode Islanders support extending marriage rights to same-sex couples.

# Creep of the Week: Let's talk about Gordon Klingenschmitt and his gay exorcism ideas

**By: D'Anne Witkowski\*/Special for TRT**

**Y**ou know what gay people need? Exorcisms. It's the only way to get rid of the gay-making demon lurking in the homosexual soul.

And who better to do that exorcism than Gordon Klingenschmitt, an ex-Navy chaplain, bootied out of the military for insubordination? After all, he has a great track record, according to himself.

"As a chaplain I prayed with a young lesbian sailor who came to me and said, 'Chaplain I don't like the way I'm feeling, can you help me with this?' We prayed with her," Klingenschmitt said on the David Pakman show Jan. 20.

Needless to say, Klingenschmitt doesn't like the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" one bit. It's going to destroy us, he says.

"It's going to lead to a national draft. The number of homosexuals coming in will never eclipse the mass exodus of Christians leaving the military," he told Pakman.

I wonder when Christians are planning this mass exodus and where they plan on going. Because so far there's no evidence of Christian soldiers fleeing the demon-infested homos that the DADT repeal will foist upon the general public. If they are indeed leaving, they seem to be going pretty quietly.

"Not only that, it's going to cost the blessing of God upon our troops," Klingenschmitt continues. Everybody knows that God loves America best and helps American soldiers kill kill kill. But the tables are turned, he argues.

"I'm concerned as a chaplain that America will no longer be able to fight and win wars because now we're fighting against almighty God, the government has declared war on God and god will ultimately prevail in that battle."

Klingenschmitt claims that DADT was a good policy "in that it prevented people from lying about who they really are." Because homosexuals are, by Klingenschmitt's definition, a bunch of dirty crooks who think nothing of waking up and declaring that they're going to be someone else today. Someone gay. Klingenschmitt said gay men need to "man up" and start being straight and stop acting like women.

And then, of course, for our complimentary exorcism: "It's the only spiritual solution to a spiritual disease," says Klingenschmitt.

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*\*D'Anne Witkowski has been gay for pay since 2003. She's a freelance writer and poet (believe it!). When she's not taking on the creeps of the world she reviews rock 'n' roll shows in Detroit with her twin sister.*

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## Tracy & Stamie from page 17

**TR:** Oh boy, that was an emotional journey! It was one of my most honest and scary moments on the show and in my life. I didn't think my Mom would agree to participate or even be able to talk about our issues in front of producers, let alone the World, but she did! I'm so proud of her! I think it's important for people to hear the mother's point of view when it comes to acceptance as well. Since the show, my Mom has opened up tremendously about her feelings, but is still taking "baby steps" towards fully accepting the whole picture. She's getting there and I'm beyond proud of her and excited to move forward. No more walking on egg shells! I hope to have many more of those "I Choose Me" moments in life!

**CL:** Have you pursued anymore of a modeling career since your start on the show?

**TR:** I like to call myself a part-time model. I wouldn't say it's a career path, but it's definitely a fun challenge that I'm continuing to pursue.

## STAMIE:

**CL:** How did your blog "Our Fifteen Minutes" come about?

**Stamie Karakasidis:** When we decided to participate in the show we wanted a way to keep in touch with the fans and get to know them on a more personal level. Visibility matters and having a site where people could literally talk to each other via live chat and share their stories was something we thought would help the LGBT community. It is a tough road dealing with your sexuality and we wanted to help in any way we could.

**CL:** How has the show affected your comedy career?

**SK:** So much! Stand-up comedy is my passion. It feeds my soul and I love to see people laughing. I like to think that is my gift from God. I

have been lucky enough to travel with my comedy now and am starting to be offered some writing jobs. My next big show will be performing at Girl Bar's Dinah Shore comedy show on March 31 and I am really excited about that. Both Tracy and I will be participating in their events all weekend. I am very grateful for the exposure I have received from the show. Comedy90210.com has also been packed at my bi-monthly Thursday show in Beverly Hills.

**CL:** What was your first reaction when Tracy asked you to be a part of the show?

**SK:** I was very excited. I got all my Adidas sweatpants washed and ironed. I didn't even have to leave my house. I love having people around and it was fun having the whole crew in your house with all their equipment and having to pretend they were not there. They kept telling me daily, "Stop talking to us, we are not here, we are invisible." I also thought what better way to get to know Tracy than on camera? So natural, right?

**CL:** Whose on your Ipad currently?

**SK:** I am a big fan of John Meyer, XX, Pink-

Love her! She always delivers a positive message in her songs. 30 Seconds to Mars, Florence and the Machine, Coldplay and my beloved Anthony Robbins and Brian Tracy. I am big on listening to self-improvement CDs. If you just learn one new thing, it will make you a better person.

**CL:** Where did you go to school? What did you major in? Have you always been a West Coast girl?

**SK:** I am originally from Philadelphia, lived in Greece from 5-8 years old. Living in Greece so early on has really made me appreciate living in the states. I love what the U.S. has to offer. You work hard and you get rewarded. Other countries don't always offer that, especially Greece. I went to Temple University and majored in exercise physiology [but eventually] transferred to California State University at Northridge because I fell in love with my first girlfriend who was a soap star and was moving back to Los Angeles. I love the west coast and all it offers.

**CL:** How does your family feel about your participation on the show?



PHOTO: BRANDON SHOWERS

Tracy Ryerson

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## Alex Morse hopes to put his experience and knowledge to work for the people of Holyoke

By: Tynan Power/TRT Reporter

Alex Morse has a vision for Holyoke—and it begins with “a leader...for a change.”

Morse, a 22 year old senior at Brown University and a Holyoke native, believes he can bring that change to the city. On a freezing day at the end of January, he stood on City Hall steps to kick-off his campaign. Joined by a small crowd that braved fresh snow to be there, he shared his comprehensive vision for the city of Holyoke. With the election ten months away, he is currently the only challenger to Mayor Elaine Pluta.

“Now what we have is the same thing, year after year,” Morse says.

Despite his youth, Morse has already racked up more than 10 years of experience as a leader. As a high school student, he founded the Gay Straight Alliance at Holyoke High School. He subsequently founded the Holyoke GLBTQ Task Force, recently renamed Holyoke For All – “Holyoke Para Todos,” which is in its 5th year of organizing the Western Mass Youth Pride Prom.

Though Morse acknowledges that his LGBT community experience informs how he leads, his civic engagement has not been limited to LGBT-specific causes. He sits on the Board of Directors for the Holyoke Community Land Trust, the Latino Scholarship Association, the Friends of the Holyoke Public Library, and the Holyoke Public Library Capital Campaign Steering Committee. He is also a member of the Holyoke Youth Task Force, the Holyoke Family Literacy Coalition, the Department of Mental Health Citizen Advisory Board, and Holyoke Unites (an organization combating Holyoke's high dropout rate).

Impressively, he has maintained his involvement in local issues at the same time he has pursued a rigorous program in Urban Studies at one of the country's most prestigious universities, Brown University, two hours away. To make it work, he attends classes in Providence, but spends the rest of his time in Holyoke.

“Last year, I stayed overnight in Providence three nights a week,” he explains. “This year, I'm not staying in Providence at all.”

His dedication to his own education reveals a deep-seated value. Education is a key component of his platform. Dropout prevention and recovery, for example, are at the top of his priority list. With its 45% drop out rate, Holyoke seems to Morse to be suffering from the impact lack of education can have on economics, public safety and pride in the city.

“It all comes down to education,” Morse says. Growing up in a working class family, Morse had personal insight into how much difference education can make. Morse reveals that both his parents dropped out of high school (only one has a GED) and they worked hard to feed four children and provide a home for them. Today, Morse says his family's economic status is improved from what it once was, thanks to their diligent hard work over many years.

As a student at Brown, his experience of class sets Morse apart from many of his peers at the elite school. Yet there are few better places to have studied urban renewal than in Providence, Rhode Island. A city which was once far from being a vacation destination, Providence has experienced a remarkable turnaround in recent years.



PHOTO: COURTESY ALEX MORSE

### Morse addressing supporters in Holyoke

One component of that change has been a renewed celebration of arts. The river art installation WaterFire, in particular, has changed a run-down area of town in which people feared to walk alone at night to one bustling with people. The event regularly draws tens of thousands to the Providence riverfront on summer weekends. Similarly, Morse feels that an arts and entertainment district could breathe new life into Holyoke.

“Now, when you go into Holyoke at night, it's deserted. It used to be that people could go to the theater, and there was a hotel next door, and restaurants. The historic Victory Theater is being renovated,” Morse says. “It's an opportunity to build on.”

In Providence, Morse had the opportunity to work closely with then-Mayor David Cicilline, now serving as a Democratic Representative in Congress. Cicilline, like Morse, is openly gay. Morse says Cicilline gave him good advice on being gay without making it the central issue of a campaign.

Morse seems to have taken that advice to heart. He is proud to acknowledge the work he's done for the LGBT community in Holyoke, yet it's not a specific bullet point that he addresses in his platform, nor is there anything about his presentation that draws attention to his sexual orientation. A discrete HRC equality bumper sticker on his car and perhaps his style sense are all that might cue in the astute observer that he's gay.

“Being gay is only part of who I am,” he says. Still, as Mayor, he would want to use that position to address LGBT rights. “We don't have an anti-discrimination ordinance, here,” he says. “I've already been in touch the LGBT Coalition of mayors.”

In fact, his vision of how to lead the city goes far beyond identity politics—unless that identity is “Holyoke.”

Morse would like Holyoke to reclaim its once golden promise. The first planned city in America and once home to more millionaires per capita than any other city, Holyoke was once so vibrant that Belle Skinner (1866-1928) is reported to have said “There are only three cities in the world: Holyoke, Paris and New York.”

Continue this story online at: [www.therainbowtimesmass.com/2011/02032011/morse](http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com/2011/02032011/morse).



Alex Morse



## HRC: U.S. Pastors are exporting bigotry to Uganda with brutally murderous results Murder of Ugandan human rights defender was avoidable

WASHINGTON, DC—In the wake of the murder of Ugandan LGBT civil rights leader, David Kato, the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest civil rights organization dedicated to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality, is calling on U.S. fundamentalist pastors Carl Ellis Jenkins, Lou Engle, and Scott Lively, to quickly abandon their hateful and dangerous anti-LGBT rhetoric and actions. David Kato, the gay Ugandan human rights defender, was brutally murdered in his home on Wednesday. David was the Advocacy Officer for Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), a coalition of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex human rights organizations in Uganda.

"While they didn't physically beat Mr. Kato, the words and actions of these three U.S. fundamentalist ministers were just as harmful," said Dr. Sharon Groves, acting director of HRC's Religion and Faith Program. "They have perpetuated a climate of fear and violence that runs contrary to the core values of all religious traditions. Stoking fires of hostility isn't religion, it is blasphemy."

At the top of his agenda, U.S. pastor Lou Engle has called LGBT people a threat to Uganda. Engle has publicly defended the Ugandan govern-

ment's efforts to pass the "Kill the Gays" bill, citing increased sponsorship of gay lifestyles in schools and colleges by international NGOs and the increase in gay clubs attracting materialistic youth as rationale. Scott Lively held an anti-gay conference in Uganda that provided religious justification for the "Kill the Gays" bill. Carl Jenkins is opening 50 new churches in Uganda to "help clean up bad morals, including homosexuality."

Earlier last week HRC sent a nationwide action alert to its 1.3 million members and supporters, asking them to sign a petition to the three leading anti-LGBT fundamentalist pastors to stop exporting hate in the name of religion. Planning is underway for nationwide vigils honoring the life of David Kato.

"We hope and pray that some good will come out of David's untimely and tragic death," added Groves.

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.

## ¡Vamos a ser ricos en amor y relaciones!

LATIN VISION



**Por: Wilfred W. Labiosa\*/Columnista de TRT**

La cosa importante es esforzarse hacia una meta que no sea inmediatamente visible que la meta no es el referir de la mente, pero sino del espíritu. --Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Durante este mes de Febrero vamos a tratar de unirnos como comunidad Latina LGBT y queremos más. En el 2011 debemos de tratar algo nuevo, ¿por qué no invertir en relaciones con otro/as? ¿Por qué existe tanto odio y no tenemos relaciones positivas y una unidad entre la comunidad Latina y LGBT?

Quizás sea porque no compartimos nuestro amor y porque pensamos tanto con la mente y no con nuestros sentimientos y corazón. Quizás sea porque todo/as halamos por nuestro lado y no compartimos con otro/as nuestras tribulaciones y nuestro amor.

Comencé esta columna con una frase del libro "Flight to Arras" de Antoine de Saint-Exupery

por que nos debe hacer reflexionar sobre nuestros objetivos para el 2011 como comunidad Latina LGBT. El odio que existe nos disminuye como individuos y como comunidad. Reemplacemos el odio por la compasión el compañerismo y el amor y usemos esto positivamente para unirnos y comprender que los objetivos vienen de adentro, de nuestro espíritu. Si nuestros espíritus no tienen odio y sólo amor entonces al unirnos como comunidad podemos lograr la igualdad y el compañerismo que tanto anhelamos.

Durante este mes del amor, vamos a practicar el significado de amarnos uno/as a lo/as otro/as.



PHOTO: ERIC HESS

### Miembros de la Comunidad Latina y GLBT

tener una comunidad unida Latina LGBT. Les deseo a todo/as un feliz mes del Amor y que todo/as tengan un Año 2011 lleno de paz, prosperidad, amor y relaciones! ¡Feliz Mes de San Valentín! Y, amor, mucho amor para todo/as!

To read this article in English, please visit: [www.therainbowtimesmass.com/2011/02032011/latinvision](http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com/2011/02032011/latinvision).

\*Escrito en ambos idiomas por Wilfred W. Labiosa, líder comunitario y psicólogo. Para más información sobre el columnista visita [www.unidoslgbt.com](http://www.unidoslgbt.com) o envíale una nota en Facebook.

## The OutField: Kye Allums is trans; world doesn't end



Dan Woog

By: Dan Woog\*  
/Special for TRT

The most newsworthy part of college basketball player Kye Allums' coming out story as the first openly transgender man to play on an NCCA Division I women's basketball team may be how little attention the news story drew.

Beyond brief, matter-of-fact articles in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *USA Today*, and on websites like *The Huffington Post*, reaction seemed muted – if non-existent. Granted, Kye Allums is no Tiger Woods, Reggie Bush or Michael Vick. Still, you'd think the potent combination of sex and college hoops would send the sports world into a twitter.

Instead, Kye simply announced he was no longer Kay-Kay. He said that after 20 years – as a junior playing for George Washington University – he'd be the man he'd always felt he was. He had not begun hormone treatments or had reassignment surgery, however, so he could continue to play on the Colonials' women's team.

And he had the full support of his coach and teammates.

It had been a long journey for the Minnesota native. While growing up, his mother forced him to wear "girl clothes" – not the sweats and basketball shorts he felt much more comfortable in. So he changed into them at school.

For a long time he thought he was a lesbian. But, as *Outsports.com* reported, he realized he didn't share the feelings they felt. Not until freshman year in college – when his mother texted him, "Who do you think you are, young lady?" – did he realize he was not a young lady at all.

He began sharing his secret with teammates the next year. As he described the enormous disconnect between his body and his heart, they began to understand.

"Everybody's pretty much accepting of everyone on the team," he told *Outsports*. "Everybody is different. We're teammates, we're like family. It's a bunch of brothers and sisters. Everybody brings their life and issues to the family."

Allums was gratified by the players' response. But he feared telling head coach Mike Bozeman, a religious man. Last June, during a conversation that began on a different topic, Allums broached the subject. Bozeman asked Allums if God had made a mistake.

It was a difficult moment, but Bozeman soon offered support. He reminded Allums he'd always "had your back." He said he'd continue to love Allums, the same way he loved all his players.

Allums' next concern was for his scholarship. Researching his options, he realized he was protected by a Washington, D.C. law that prohibits discrimination based on gender identity. The NCAA seemed to clear the way for his continued participation on the women's team as well, noting that gender classification should be based on "state identification documents, such as driver's licenses and voter registration."

Still, when the news broke in early November that Kye – not Kay-Kay – Allums would begin playing as a man on the women's team two weeks later (ironically in Minneapolis, half an hour south of where Allums grew up) – he was not sure what would happen.

He needn't have worried.

He told the *Washington Post* the next day, "I've had numerous Facebook messages, text messages, people calling me, people I don't

even know, telling me how they're proud of me and how I'm a really brave person, and it's been really positive."

From as far away as Germany, men and women said "they wish more people were like me, or more people would be able to say something."

But that was that. There was no feeding frenzy in the media. The blogosphere did not

erupt. Radio sports call-in shows scarcely mentioned the news.

Part of the reason may be Allums' personality, and his forthright discussion of what it means to be a transgender male. According to *USA Today*, he spoke "openly and with disarmingly nonchalance to an array of local and national news media outlets."

Part of the reason may be that the NCAA did not turn this into a pitched battle. George Washington University administrators consulted with the governing body about Allums' competitive status. The NCAA affirmed that it follows conduct outlined in an October report by the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "On the Team: Equal Opportunity for Transgender Student Athletes" emphasizes the importance of playing sports free from discrimination. The report notes that an environment unfriendly to trans students can harm all members of a team.

And part of the reason may be that – as Allums' teammates and coach demonstrate – coming out as a trans man is not as big a deal as it once might have seemed.

When *USA Today* asked whether winning games or inspiring others is most important, Allums sounded like any athlete, male or female: "Winning games."

Of course, he added, "by winning games I hope I do inspire people."

## Not until freshman year in college – when his mother texted him, "Who do you think you are, young lady?" – did he realize he was not a young lady at all.



PHOTO: GW SPORTS INFORMATION

### Kye Allums

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TO DO:

NOTHING



NOTHING



NOTHING



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