

The Rainbow Times

The Freshest Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Newspaper in New England

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PHOTO: JACQUELINE BAPTISTE

Celebrating Black History month respectfully

By: Nicole Lashomb* / TRT Editor-in-Chief

OPINIONS This February, we celebrate Black History Month, honoring the many contributions the black community has made to America. Often, it is accompanied by a plethora of facts to enlighten others of such contributions. Students may learn the famous words of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech or study George Washington Carver's research, which lead to promotion of alternative crops such as cotton, peanuts, soybeans and sweet potatoes, or study other African-American inventors. And, like the months honoring the history of other marginalized communities, those teachers and their students are likely to move on to the next one, usually only paying homage during those 28 days in February, in this case.

While these facts are indisputably significant for the country to learn about, especially since much of black history has perished due to racism and extremism of the "majority," it isn't solely about the few lessons we are taught during these mere 28 days. But, somehow, many Americans take comfort in thinking that they have done all is possible to educate themselves on Black History and on our country's tainted past, a past that still wreaks havoc today.

The question I posit is not about the usual facts that are often regurgitated year after year to honor and learn about black history. However, it is about how we can bring to life the experiences of the African American community from the past and into the present. In addition to learning the facts, we should also address issues like racism and

discrimination and honestly discuss how it has transformed from the past and morphed into today. We should especially discuss the impact that racism has within our LGBT community. Through personal journeys and narratives, black history will not become solely the facts of the past, but a life-altering experience in the present.

I will continue to seek the truth in others' experiences and learn from them about racially and ethnically marginalized groups. Since I cannot speak from personal experience, I can be the best ally possible and attempt to bring awareness to these issues. I urge others who hold societal privilege to do the same and get involved in local community organizations that play a crucial role for the black/LGBT community. Corey Yarbrough, Executive Director of the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition, sums up what black history means to him.

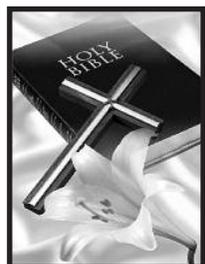
"...We also do this by celebrating the nameless faces and experiences that make our community so diverse, resilient, and unique. ..."

"For me, Black History Month is a time to intentionally affirm the beauty, perseverance and brilliance of African Americans and all people of African descent while educating new generations on the

momentous contributions of Black people across various fields, professions, and geographic locations. We do this by honoring past figures, many who have been erased or excluded from modern history books and discussions. We also do this by celebrating the nameless faces and experiences that make our community so diverse, resilient, and unique. With only 28 days dedicated to this endeavor, Black History Month is ultimately about instilling ongoing values of pride, empowerment, appreciation, and education not just for the month of February but every day, every month, all year long."

Faith, Family and God – L'chaim! (To Life!): from Jewish scripture to gay marriage

By: Paul P. Jesepe* / TRT Columnist



The Talmud, a sacred Jewish book distinct from the Torah (Hebrew Scriptures, improperly referred to as the Old Testament) is divided into two parts: the Mishnah and Gemara. It contains wisdom about law, ethics, history, folklore, and philosophy

from rabbis going back almost two thousand years.

There's something inherently logical about Judaism. It permits you to argue with the Creator. You may even change the mind of the Giver of Life. Judaism balances faith with commonsense. It encourages a different kind of relationship with the Maker of the Universe than found in Christianity.

Jewish logic came through in a recent column by Shmuly Yanklowitz, "5 Reasons

I would add that many immigrant groups should reflect on how their ancestors were discriminated against by Anglo-Protestants controlling America at one time.

Being an Orthodox Rabbi Compelled Me to Support Gay Marriage (<http://tiny.cc/3dh39w>). He makes a powerful observation distinguishing morality from the study of God's word, writing "the theological issue is complicated, but the moral issue is increasingly clear." His argument for same-gender civil marriage is based on justice.

To read the rest of this story visit: <http://wp.me/p22M41-2DX>

We need justice for all the CeCe McDonalds

By: Keegan O'Brien* / Special for TRT



The long-awaited day finally arrived January 13 when CeCe McDonald was freed from prison. For those unfamiliar with CeCe's case, she is an African American trans woman from Minneapolis who faced spending the remainder of her life in prison for defending herself against a life-threatening, racist, transphobic attack at the hands of a white supremacist and his fellow thugs. Thanks to CeCe's incredible bravery, her willingness to speak up and fight, and the hard work of activists to build an international campaign to raise awareness about her case — and demand her release — CeCe was able to take a plea bargain, which reduced her sentence to 17 months. Although CeCe never should have been incarcerated in the first place, let alone in a men's facility, her lessened sentence and subsequent release from prison should be viewed as victory.

As Black transgender actress and trans rights advocate Laverne Cox explained on "Melissa Harris-Perry," those who attacked CeCe and worked to throw her in prison were trying to make her invisible, but she didn't let them. CeCe's actions in the face of the nightmare she's been forced to endure over the past two years make her nothing

Unfortunately, CeCe's case has not received nearly the amount of attention it deserves from large, mainstream LGBTQ and African American civil rights organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign and the NAACP.

short of a heroine, a queer freedom fighter. Her case provided a national audience with a glimpse into the realities of being a transgender woman of color in American society, and the ugly racism, transphobia and injustice at the core of this country's criminal legal system. Far from being an exception,

See Justice for CeCe on Page 15

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

[Six Same-sex Couples Seek Freedom to Marry in FL Story] In states with Legislatures dominated by Republican, the court system is really the only path to equality.

—Bruce Robinson, Online

Dear Editor,

[Fenway Study Enrolls Gay Men Who Have Experienced Childhood Sexual Abuse Story] This article shows just how devastating the effects of child sexual abuse is. Since crimes against children are so heinous accused pedophiles like Sylvain Kustyan, Jerry Sandusky, etc. and their enablers must be apprehended before they have years to continue to destroy young lives. Sandusky is now safely behind bars. But unfortunately, Kustyan, who has been formally charged with two counts each of 1st Degree Sodomy and Sexual Abuse of a ten-year-old little boy, fled to avoid imminent arrest. Kustyan, formerly of Tuscaloosa, Alabama and Hermin/ Mazingarbe, France, as an English teacher, has led numerous groups of schoolchildren on trips to the US, the UK and Ireland. Pedophiles condemn their victims to a lifetime of emotional and psychological trauma and often permanent physical ailments as well. Since the average pedophile has 300 different victims in their lifetime and since the recidivism rate among pedophiles is virtually 100% and since there is no effective treatment and no known cure they must be stopped ASAP!

—Caroline Redbrook, Online

To submit your letters to the editor, please send them with your full name, phone (to verify identity) & e-mail to TRT's editor: editor@therainbowtimesmass.com

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Tisei vs. Tierney rematch likely in Mass. 6th Congressional District

By: Chuck Colbert/TRT Reporter

IN THE LIMELIGHT

WAKEFIELD, Mass. — No Republican candidate has ever been openly gay when first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and no openly gay Republicans have served in Congress since Rep. Jim Kolbe of Arizona retired in 2006. In Massachusetts, moreover, the GOP has not won a House seat since 1994. However, that political status quo is likely to be tested again this fall as openly gay Richard Tisei announced his candidacy in the Massachusetts 6th Congressional District.

“I’m running for Congress because Massachusetts deserves an independent voice in Washington who actually takes time to listen,” Tisei told approximately 125 supporters Thursday, January 23, at the Wakefield Americal Civic Center, where he made his candidacy official.

This is Tisei’s second run for the House. Two years ago, he came within one percentage point of ousting longtime, eight-term incumbent U.S. Rep. John Tierney of Salem. The district includes North Shore and most of Essex County.

Tisei’s brief remarks touched upon major campaign themes — lower taxes, limited government, personal responsibility, and freedom. Tisei also called out another campaign theme: “Obamacare,” of which he said is “the biggest expansion of government in our lifetime,” causing “millions to lose their healthcare coverage and left millions more with fewer choices and higher premiums.”



Richard Tisei making official his candidacy for the U.S. House of Representatives from Mass. 6th Congressional District.

To drive home the point, small business owner Erin Calvo-Bacci of Reading, who owns a family-run chocolate company, told the gathering the Affordable Care Act, the national healthcare plan, “forced us to sell our home in Wakefield and move a family of five to a two-bedroom apartment above one of our stores.”

In a pitch to former Tierney backers, Mike Buetow of Amesbury, who also spoke to the crowd, said, “I punched the Democratic ticket [before]. In Massachusetts, that’s the easy way out. Not anymore. Richard is not-

ing like his opponents say. He is a listener.”

During his remarks, Tisei swiped at national Democratic Party leadership.

“Nancy Pelosi does not represent the North Shore,” Tisei said, pledging not to “follow the leader,” as Tisei said Tierney has, voting with party leaders “99 percent of the time.”

Afterwards, when asked about House Speaker John Boehner’s refusal to bring federal employment non-discrimination protection to a vote, Tisei said, “I don’t agree with the party. I think the party is wrong on issues like ENDA [Employment Non-Discrimina-

tion Act].”

In a bid for bipartisan advocacy on LGBT rights, Tisei added, “It’s important to have people on both sides of the aisle,” with Republicans “standing up and saying everyone should be treated equally and fully protected under the law.”

“I’ve done that as a legislator here and will do that in Washington,” Tisei said. “I’d support ENDA and probably would co-sponsor it as well.”

Also on hand for the official announcement was Bernie Starr, Tisei’s longtime partner and now husband. The couple was married last summer. Asked about any role in the campaign, Starr said he would “be going to more functions and be at [Tisei’s] side more.”

Reid Lavoie was also present for the announcement and said he liked Tisei’s “common sense” and “practical” approach. For those who are “not policy wonks,” said Lavoie, “Richard does things that make sense.”

Tisei, 51, of Wakefield, is a former state Senate Minority Leader, who served in the Legislature from 1985 until 2010, both as a representative (1985-1990) and senator (1991-2010).

Sure enough, Tisei is somewhat at odds with the GOP. He is openly gay, pro-choice and favors same-sex marriage. However, he is not the only openly gay Republican seeking to serve in the U.S. House. In nearby New Hampshire, Dan Innis, a former business school dean, launched his candidacy last October for the House in the Granite ...

See Tisei on Page 13

SIDNEY BORUM JR. HEALTH CENTER

ARE YOU A YOUNG PERSON WHO

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Major Transgender Victory in Maine

By: Lisa Keen/Keen News Service

In an historic first, a state high court ruled yesterday that a male-to-female transgender student who was accepted by school staff and students as a girl could not be barred from using the girls' bathroom at school.

Jennifer Levi of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), which brought the lawsuit on behalf of the girl and her parents, called the decision in *Doe v. Clenchy* a "huge breakthrough" for transgender young people. GLAD also noted that the decision marks "the first time a state court has ruled that transgender students must be allowed to use the bathrooms that match who they are."

"This ruling is an important breakthrough for transgender students," said Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. "Schools have a desire and responsibility to make schools safe and welcoming for all students. And this ruling helps schools meet that mission. In fact, this is consistent with what educators and human rights commissions around the country have concluded. Trans girls are girls, trans boys are boys and schools that understand that will better serve all their students."

GLAD took the appeal to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court on behalf of Nicole Maines (identified in court papers as Susan

Doe) and her parents after losing in a state superior court. Their girl attended public schools whose staff and students seemed to be handling her transition well. Controversy erupted, however, after one boy — prompted by his guardian — followed Susan into the girls' bathroom, claiming that he, too, should be allowed to use the girls room. The incident garnered considerable media attention and prompted school officials to require Susan to use a unisex staff bathroom.

The Maines filed suit, saying forcing Susan to use a separate bathroom violated the state human rights law against sexual orientation discrimination.

Saying it had to enforce the law "without regard to the public's potential discomfort with the result," the 6 to 1 majority said that segregation or separation is a form of discrimination. Noting that another state law requires school bathrooms be segregated by sex, the court said that policies concerning the use of those bathrooms must nonetheless comply with the state non-discrimination law. Given that the school staff and Susan's parents agreed that Susan is a girl, wrote the majority, the school violated the human rights ordinance when it "treated [her] differently from other students solely because

What bathrooms transgender people use has often been trotted out as a major concern by opponents of equal rights for transgender people.

Read the rest of this story at:
<http://tiny.cc/2fpmax>

LGBT Momentum Report: Some Surprises

By: Lisa Keen/Keen News Service

An independent think tank that studies the progress of the movement on equal rights for LGBT people released its latest report Tuesday, and the assessment is a surprising "mixed."

The Movement Advancement Project's "Momentum Report" acknowledges "unprecedented progress" towards marriage equality in the past two years but notes that, while 17 states allow same-sex couples to marry, 33 don't. And progress on other issues of importance to the LGBT movement, such as bullying and employment discrimination, "have slowed significantly."

"In fact, over half of U.S. states lack even the basic laws protecting LGBT people from discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations," notes MAP, a Denver-based group whose work is funded by 13 foundations and LGBT supporters, including the Gill Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the David Geffen Foundation, and James Hormel.

"The fact is, most states have passed few or no laws protecting LGBT people," states the report. "In the spirit of Charles Dickens' famous line, 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,' the remarkable progress of recent years in some states has obscured the fact that in a majority of states, LGBT people still are treated under the law as second-class citizens."

The report divides the states into three categories: "High Equality" states (20 plus D.C.), "Medium Equality" states (2-Wisconsin and Indiana), and "Low Equality" states. The "High Equality" states include Califor-

nia, Illinois, Massachusetts, and New York. The "Low Equality" states include Arizona, Florida, Michigan, and Texas.

The report said momentum favors continued progress in marriage equality, in large part because public opinion polls show a growing percentage of Americans accept the fairness of allowing same-sex couples to marry. But it noted that, despite the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision striking down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the availability of benefits involving certain federal agencies — Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare, to name three big ones — remains "unclear."

The report also noted "real progress" in fighting discrimination through local government ordinances and major employer policies. It noted that 188 local governments in states with no sexual orientation discrimination protection now prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, as does 91 percent of Fortune 500 corporations.

Among the more interesting facts included in the report this year are:

- every state but one has an openly LGBT elected official;
- there are more than one million LGBT veterans; 71,000 are serving in the military currently;
- there are about 140,000 transgender veterans;
- only 21 states and D.C. have "unambiguous laws" allowing same-sex couples to adopt children;

Read the rest of this story at:
<http://wp.me/p22M41-2vG>

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Fenway's Sidney Borum moves to new location, continues providing youth with services

By: Lauren Walleiser/TRT Assistant Editor

BOSTON, Mass. — The Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center, a program of Fenway Health, provides safe, non-judgmental care for young people ages 12-29, serving as a licensed health center, mental health clinic and substance abuse center for many Boston-area youth, including those who are homeless, LGBTQ, gang-involved, low income, and those living with HIV/AIDS. Named in honor of Sidney W. Borum, Jr., an African-American HIV/AIDS activist and educator who worked with adolescents and other young people at risk for HIV transmission, the Borum (as it is called by many) has been in operation since 1988.

“Originally it was part of the Justice Resource Institute (JRI), a social service agency in Massachusetts that works with high risk youth,” said Ralph Vetter, the Borum’s medical director. “It was started when the social workers in the organization noticed that there were a lot of kids sleeping in the cemetery in Boston Common, and being social workers, they went out and talked to the kids to find out what they were doing. Turned out these were a lot of queer and transgender kids who were homeless — lots of them because of being kicked out of their homes by their family — who were living on the street, using and selling drugs, doing survival sex work.”

The first drop-in center was set up at the Arlington Street Church, which turned into a



Fenway's Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center provides a variety of physical health, mental health, and substance abuse services to youth ages 12-29. The Borum moved to 75 Kneeland Street in 2013.

health center at 130

Boylston Street. The Borum eventually merged with Fenway Health and moved to their new site at 75 Kneeland Street in 2013.

Vetter said the new space is bigger, with more exam rooms and a larger, more comfortable waiting area, which allows them to see more patients. The behavioral health, medical and psychiatry teams are all located on the same floor, making it easier for patients and providers to work together. As part of Fenway Health, they also have the ability

to provide youth with eye care, dental care and X-rays. It is conveniently located near Boston Common, the Tufts Orange Line stop and the Downtown Crossing Red Line stop.

“We say that we meet kids where they’re at, which means we will approach them with a harm reduction philosophy: if they’re not ready to quit drugs, then we’ll try and make sure they use drugs in as safe a way as possible; if they are doing sex work, then we’ll make sure they have access to STD screenings, counseling, and pre- and post-exposure HIV prophylaxis,” Vetter said. “We are sex positive. It’s going to happen, so let’s make sure they know what they’re doing and

how to minimize their risks.”

Vetter shared why he believes the Borum is important to LGBTQ youth in Boston.

“We’re so normal about it all,” Vetter said. “Being LGBTQ identified is not an outlier status for us; we know these kids, their lives, the fears and concerns they have, so we can just talk to them about it in the same way any other pediatrician will talk to a straight kid from the suburbs about a sports physical. It’s so easy for LGBTQ youth to come here because they don’t have to explain everything all the time. We get it. Also, for trans youth, we have the clinical experience and expertise to provide them with the highest quality of care and we know how to talk to their parents and ease their parents through the worries and concerns about their kid’s safety and future. All these youth can come and see us and know they won’t be sitting in the waiting room feeling like everyone is staring at them, that the nurse doesn’t know what pronouns to use, that they’ll be shamed for having anal sex. It’s their own space and they are utterly comfortable and confident in it.”

Coco Alinsug — outreach and insurance manager for Fenway Health, executive director of the North Shore Alliance on LGBTQ Youth (NAGLY), and a commissioner on the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth — shared the impact he believes the Borum has on the lives of young people.

“Based on my conversation with some of my members that regularly go to the Borum

See Sidney Borum on Page 15

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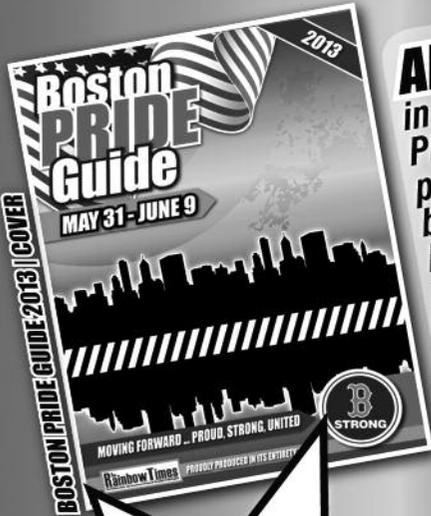
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Op-Ed: St. Patrick's Day Parade continues to be divisive – 3 years of exclusion is enough!

By: Pat Scanlon*

The exclusion of Veterans For Peace, the LGBT community and other peace organizations from participating in the Saint Patrick's Day Parade should come to an end. It is time that there be one parade that is open, inclusive and welcoming to any group wishing to celebrate this very special day. It is Saint Patrick's Day, a celebration of the patron saint of Ireland. Saint Patrick was a man of peace.

The exclusion of Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgendered groups because of who they are is just unacceptable in 2014. Times have changed, the culture has changed, laws have changed, and the neighborhood of South Boston has changed. Many members of the LGBT community currently live, work and worship in South Boston. It is time the Allied War Veterans Council (AWVC) also changes! There is gay marriage in Massachusetts, Don't Ask, Don't Tell is history, gay and lesbian men and women serve openly and proudly in all branches of the U.S. military and many have paid the ultimate price in defending this country. Even Pope Francis states, "who am I to judge". If the Pope can come around so can the AWVC.

It is true that because of the Supreme Court's Hurley decision the AWVC has the legal right to exclude any group for whatever reason they choose, no questions asked. However, just because AWVC has the legal right, does not make it morally right. Veterans who have dutifully served this country, peace groups and members of the LGBT community should be able to participate. The Supreme Court also once ruled that slavery was legal. Not the Mayor, or any of the other forty plus non-profit organizations from South Boston has a say in who can be on the streets of South Boston on Saint Patrick's Day. The City of Boston spends upwards of \$400,000.00 in police, emergency and DPW services yet has no say in who can participate in this historic parade to celebrate the patron saint of Ireland.

The vast majority of people in the city of Boston want to see an open, inclusive and welcoming parade. The Boston Globe, Boston Herald and The Rainbow Times have written editorials condemning the current practice of exclusion. Neither Mayor Menino nor our new Mayor, Marty Walsh, will not walk in the parade because of these discriminatory practices.

For the past ten years members of Veterans For Peace have attempted to walk in the Saint Patrick's Day Parade. As a result of being excluded three years ago (2011), Veterans For Peace applied for our own permit to have a parade, the "Saint Patrick's Peace Parade". The first group we reached out to was the LGBT community saying, "you were denied to walk in their parade seventeen years ago, how would you like to walk in our parade. We are proud to have all the major LGBT organizations represented in our parade. Last year

our small parade grew to 2,500 marchers, six bands, eight separate divisions (Veterans, Peace, LGBT, Religious, Environmental, Labor, Political, Social & Economic Justice), trollies, duck boats, floats etc. Our parade and it's messages of peace and inclusion has received an overwhelming positive reception by the residents of South Boston.

Today there are two parades on the streets of South Boston celebrating Saint Patrick's Day. Veterans of the United States Military organize both parades. As coordinator of Veterans For Peace for the Greater Boston area, as a decorated Vietnam Veteran, as someone who grew up in an Irish Catholic family and

The Boston Globe, Boston Herald and The Rainbow Times have written editorials condemning the current practice of exclusion. Neither Mayor Menino nor our new Mayor, Marty Walsh, will not walk in the parade because of these discriminatory practices.

neighborhood, seventeen years of Catholic schooling and incidentally born on March 17, it amazes me that I, and my fellow Veterans For Peace members are prohibited from walking in a Saint Patrick's Day Parade. We, who have served our country honorably, have seen first hand the horrors of war and now work for peace and non-violent means of resolving differences are not allowed to walk in the Saint Patrick's Day Parade and to have our messages of peace seen on the streets of South Boston. We walk in many parades and

only this parade bars us from participating. The reason given by Phil Wuschke, the parade organizer three years ago when asked why the AWVC denied our application was, "They do not want to have the word peace associated with the word veteran."

This year we propose to have our Saint Patrick's Peace Parade, at the rear of the first parade, possibly separated by police motorcycles delineating the separation of the two parades. We would prefer not to have any separation, to just be at the rear of the first parade. Together we make one large parade with the street sweepers at the rear. This would certainly assist the police in their work of monitoring the parades in this post Boston Marathon bombing era. It would make it easier for the Department of Public Works in the post parade clean up. It would allow the first parade to maintain its message and allow our parade to maintain our message of peace and inclusion. This inclusion of the Saint Patrick's Peace Parade at the end of the first parade, essentially making it one large inclusive, open and welcoming parade would certainly signal to all that the two veterans organizations have made peace with each other, that we recognize among veterans there can be differences of opinion, and we have all come together to celebrate Saint Patrick and the proud Irish traditions in a unified inclusive manner. Putting the two parades together would signal to all those watching that the AWVC wishes to rectify the situation and create a parade without controversy which is acceptable to all. It would be nice to see both the old and new Mayors of Boston walk in this year's parade.

*Pat Scanlon (VN 69'), the writer, is the Coordinator of Veterans For Peace, Chapter 9, Smedley D. Butler Brigade.

New England couples share tips on lasting love for Valentine's Day

By: Lauren Walleser/TRT Assistant Editor

SAME-SEX LOVE In 2013, marriage equality became legal in all New England states, as it has been in Massachusetts for some time. Still, the media lags in representation of LGBTQ couples compared with those of heterosexuals. For this year's Valentine's issue, The Rainbow Times interviewed local New England couples who have been together for 5 years or more, married or not, and asked them to share their tips for a long-lasting, healthy relationship.

Lois H. Johnson and Sheri Barden, Boston, MA

Lois H. Johnson and Sheri Barden will celebrate 50 years together February 8, 2014 and were married March 27, 2008. Mutual friends introduced the couple. Barden said she knew they would always be together the first night they went to a party and Johnson sat down at the piano and played Brahms.



Lois H. Johnson and Sheri Barden on their wedding day, standing in front of Johnson's Real Estate office where she has worked for 34 years.

PHOTO: LOIS H. JOHNSON AND SHERI BARDEN

"Because Valentine's Day coincides with our anniversary of February eighth, we would always go out for a romantic dinner," the couple shared. "As we've grown older, we've wanted to share our special day and Valentine's Day with friends, especially with all the new friends we have met through the LGBT Aging Project."

Some of the tips they shared for a lasting relationship included having a sense of humor, shared interests, a willingness to talk about differences or problems, learning not to harbor resentment but talk it out instead, trying not to go to bed angry and upset, forgiving one another, enjoying life, and being grateful for your love.

Fifty years ago, when Johnson asked Barden on a date, Barden asked herself "Oh my God, what are we going to talk about?" The two said "We started on that first date and haven't stopped talking since."

Jamaal Crone and Ronald "Oz" Esquivel, Boston, MA



Jamaal Crone and Oz Esquivel, together for seven years, were engaged on Christmas.

PHOTO: JAMAAL CRONE AND OZ ESQUIVEL

He works as a Substance Abuse and Mental Health clinician for Pine Street Inn. Esquivel is a Psychology and Sociology major at UMass

Jamaal Crone and Oz Esquivel will celebrate their seventh anniversary together in April. Crone is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with a Master of Arts in Religion and is currently obtaining licensure for Mental Health Counseling through Cambridge College. He works as a Substance Abuse and Mental Health clinician for Pine Street Inn. Esquivel is a Psychology and Sociology major at UMass

Boston and works as a Program Manager for Massachusetts Association for the Blind. Crone shared that he and Esquivel, who is from Guatemala City, Guatemala, both moved to Boston in the same year.

"The story of how we got together is quite amazing in my eyes," said Crone. "He and I actually first met through our friend 'Craiglist' while I was completing my second year of seminary. What's cool about the story is that we did not actually 'hookup' as planned; we cuddled and fell asleep. We began dating, and through many trials and tribulations, are here now."

Crone, who shared that the two were engaged on Christmas this year, said they have learned much throughout their relationship.

"Perhaps the most important [thing we've learned] is understanding, forgiveness, patience, and vulnerability with one another," Crone said. "Our unwillingness and inability to be vulnerable about our life, romantic desires and goals led us through some pretty tough times and dark places. Fortunately, we learned to create a culture of openness, forgiveness, understanding, and patience in our relationship that continues to allow our love to grow. We have shed many tears together and shared many laughs together. We are not only romantic partners, but also best friends. We learned that to continue growing as a couple while growing as individuals means that we sometimes have to accept mistakes for what they are, process them, forgive them, and move on. Oz and I have learned to keep our relationship active by scheduling weekly time to read together, work out together, and have discussions about the world around us. We will even sit with my guitar and worship together at times. We try to live the biblical notion of 'be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.' Of course, this is a daily struggle, as with most relationships. The awesome thing is that Oz and I begin each day with a kiss and this principle in our hearts. In the six-plus years together, we've understood that our most fervent growth comes as we trim and prune 'those things' that have proved to be devastating—to any relationship—and enrich our lives with an unconditional positive regard for one another. Great sex helps too!"

Crone said that while it's Esquivel's year to make Valentine's Day plans, he has hinted that he would enjoy dinner at a steakhouse.

"I'm not one for bells and whistles, but I'm sure whatever we end up doing will be amazing," said Crone.

Jen and Kendra Bauer, North Andover, MA



Jen and Kendra Bauer with their three children.

Jen and Kendra Bauer, who met through a

See Valentine's on Page 15

SociallyGay.com

A new social media site that is dedicated to the gay community will be going live in March 2014. The site is going to be unique and not like anything that is currently online. The idea of SociallyGay is to have a site where people can meet for friendship, knowledge, like minded interests and just generally hanging out. This will not be a site about sex or dating. Here at SociallyGay we refer to the site as: **'a hook up site for everything in life but sex and dating.'**

As part of the SociallyGay site there is an online magazine, *SG Life*. *SG Life* will be published quarterly with the first issue going live, May 2014. The first issue is about gay weddings and the second issue is about adventure.

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■ We are looking for chefs and restaurant owners to share their stories and/or experiences

■ But most of all, we are looking for freelance writers and contributors

SociallyGay.com

Please contact us at: sociallygay2014@gmail.com

Cupid Ain't Stupid: Valentine's gifts that'll getcha some

By: Mikey Rox*/Special to TRT

Christmas just ended, but there's another gift-buying season right around the corner. The best thing about Valentine's Day, however, is that it really is the thought that counts. (People lie about that at Christmas-time, ya know.)

To help you pick the perfect gift for your sweetie this Valentine's Day, here's our list of fun and frisky ideas that they'll love to unwrap.



Between Me and You Honey Journal

Think you know everything about your significant other? Think again. But you two can build a relationship that's closer and more honest than ever with

the Between Me and You Honey Journal, a handsome spiral-bound notebook dedicated to sharing personal experiences, life stories, hopes, fears, fantasies, and more. The books are divided into six chapters, each concerning a specific phase of life or point in a relationship, which feature questions that are comfortable, conversational and often include a bit of humor. Gift one to be filled out and returned by someone special, or fill one out for your lover in advance of the big day. Between Me and You Journals also are available for other recipients, including mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, and grandparents. (\$14.95; www.sanddunebooks.com)

The Home-Made Gin Kit

There's nothing more satisfying than coming home from a long



day at the office and enjoying a freshly prepared cocktail with your sweetie – unless, of course, that cocktail is made from a DIY gin that you two have created yourselves. You can do just that with the HomeMade Gin Kit, which helps you produce a small batch of the herbal spirit by mixing a bottle of your store-bought vodka

with the kit's blend of juniper berries and a proprietary blend of spices, botanicals, flowers, and aromatics. The HomeMade Gin Kit also includes instructions, a double mesh fine strainer, funnel, and two clear Italian glass swing bottles, which all come neatly packed in a box that's ready for gifting. Salud! (\$49.95; www.homemadegin.com)



Cocoa Canard Spooning Chocolate

Lovers with allergies have a hard time enjoying all the sweet treats that the holidays have

to offer, and that especially includes Valentine's Day since chocolate – in all its delicious forms – is the name of the game. But this year, thanks to Cocoa Canard, lactose-intolerant and celiac-suffering chocoholics can celebrate with the rest of Cupid's cocoa-covered targets with Spooning Chocolate, the first dairy- and gluten-free pure, non-bitter dark chocolate that instantly dissolves in a cup of hot water. The makers like to call it the Espresso of Hot Chocolate, but you'll probably just call it Liquid Yum. To enhance the gift-giving experience, Cocoa Canard has put together a handsome gift package, which includes a can of Spooning Chocolate, Spooning Mug, and personalized stationery. (\$24.95; www.cocoacanard.com)

See a Heart, Share a Heart Photo Book

It may not seem like there's a whole lot of heart left in this wacky



world we live in, but it's there – you just have to look hard enough. That's how photographer Eric Telchin stumbled upon his latest project and gift book; See a Heart, Share a Heart, which features found hearts in the most mundane of places – like sweaters, sidewalks, leaves, and animal fur. If you think you've already heard about this project, it's possible: Telchin's book is based on his "Boy Sees Hearts" Tumblr that continues to find and release a little bit of love back into the world on a daily basis. A portion of the proceeds from sales of See a Heart, Share a Heart and available prints will benefit the It Gets Better Project. (\$10.70; www.amazon.com)



of the proceeds from sales of See a Heart, Share a Heart and available prints will benefit the It Gets Better Project. (\$10.70; www.amazon.com)

Égalité Wine

Even if you're not a wine-and-dine couple (and who can blame you? It's totally...

To read the rest of this story visit: <http://wp.me/p22M41-2DE>



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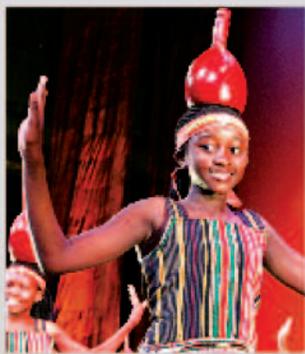
16th Annual Billy Taylor Jazz Residency

GRACE KELLY QUINTET

Thursday, February 13, 7:30 p.m., Bowker Auditorium

Kelly's saxophone skills recall the fitful style of Wayne Shorter while her vocal melodies put in her league with more pop-oriented artists such as Norah Jones. She has already gigged with the likes of Wynton Marsalis, Harry Connick Jr., and mentor Lee Konitz. Catch this rising star while you can.

SEASON SPONSORS: Baystate Health and Health New England/Event Sponsors: El Sol Latino, UMass Hotel and Conference Center, NEPR 88.5FM



SPIRIT OF UGANDA

Wednesday, March 5, 7:30 p.m., FAC Concert Hall

"Invigorating the stage with that elusive thing called joy" (New York Times). To the melodic tones of standing drums, with dramatic choreography, bright, layered rhythms, and gorgeous call-and-response vocals, a vibrant cast of 22 performers, ages 10-20, bring to life the sounds and movements of East Africa.

Pre-Concert talk at 6:30 p.m. at the University Club.

SEASON SPONSORS: Baystate Health and Health New England/Event Sponsor: WEIB 106.3FM



DANÚ

Wednesday, March 12, 7:30 p.m., Bowker Auditorium

Hailed as a "spirit-raising concoction" by The Irish Times, this five-member ensemble is among the most charismatic traditional Irish groups working today. Built around virtuoso players and the rich vocals of Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, their concerts are at once authentic, clever, and fun.

SEASON SPONSORS: Baystate Health and Health New England/Event Sponsors: The Recorder, WRSI 93.9FM, The Harp Pub in Amherst

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Valentine's Day and the transperson: On finding love and loving yourself

By: Deja Nicole Greenlaw*/TRT Columnist

TRANS NEWS



It's February, and once again Valentine's Day is upon us. It's a day of presenting your sweetie with traditional gifts of jewelry, flowers and chocolate as signs of your love. For many it is a wonderful day, but for others it can be rather sad. If you're not with someone and you see what others may have on this day, it may be hard not to feel sad and to just want this day to be over.

A few years ago I wrote about whether it was time yet for "the transgender valentine." Since then, I am certain that there are transgender valentines, but I don't think that there are as many as there could be. The trans valentines that I do see are usually those who are in love with another transperson. They may define their relationship as a lesbian relationship or a gay relationship, but they are also in a trans relationship.

It's my belief that in a trans/trans relationship, there seem to be fewer questions and more understanding than in a trans/non-trans

relationship. Don't get me wrong: there are successful trans/non-trans relationships, but I'm pretty sure that they take a little more work to keep the relationship going. It seems to be much easier for two transpeople to relate to each other.

I know many transwomen who would re-

Many men are fine being with a transwoman miles away from their friends and family, but many are not going to have you meet their friends, nor will they bring you home to meet their parents.

ally love to be in a relationship with a non-trans female. Some desire a lesbian, some desire a straight woman. I've seen success with both, but the success percentage appears to be low for either relationship. It is getting better as time goes on, but I believe that these relationships are still a long way off from being commonplace, and I can't say exactly what can be done to make it better. The only thing I can suggest is that transwomen might consider pairing up with other transwomen.

For the transwomen who want to be with men, I can speak with some experience. I

have been on dating sites since 2008 and can honestly tell you that there are many non-trans men who would love to be with a transwoman. The caveat is that many of them don't want to be seen with a transwoman. Many men are fine being with a transwoman miles away from their friends

and family, but many are not going to have you meet their friends, nor will they bring you home to meet their parents. There are some men who are okay with these meetings, but sadly, many are not.

A better situation is for transwomen to pair up with transmen. I have seen this work out successfully several times. Again, there seem to be fewer questions and more understanding between two transpeople, and meeting friends and family is often not a big deal at all.

Now, let's look at the guys. Transmen who prefer non-trans women may have some

successful relationships. Some have continued relationships that were once lesbian relationships and now have made it work through the transman's gender change. Still, many of these relationships don't make it. Some transmen have relationships with straight women, but I haven't seen many of these. The transmen who pair up with transwomen seem to have the most success.

Transmen who prefer non-trans men may have a tough time. I can't say that I know any transmen who have successfully paired up with a non-trans man, gay or straight, but I do know of several transmen who have successfully paired up with other transmen.

Yes, the trans/trans relationships seem to work out more frequently than the trans/non-trans ones, but love is a funny thing. Sometimes things work out and sometimes they don't. The world is changing and is more accepting, but it's still not easy finding a relationship that works no matter who you are, trans or not. I hope that this coming Valentine's Day is kind to you and if it isn't, please treat yourself well that day.

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

Ask a Transwoman: Yes, but what should I call all of us? Using language in flux

By: Lorelei Erisis*/TRT Columnist



changes and adapts. Sometimes dead parts of it fall away and are replaced by something entirely new.

I understand and can speak bits of several languages. I try to know at least my "please" and "thank you" in any number of them. I habitually swear in an odd mixture of Brazilian Portuguese and Mexican slang, and I am remarkably fluent in both kitchen and farmacia Spanish, especially if I've been drinking. My native language, however is English. Beyond that, as a writer and an actor, it is the primary tool of my trade.

My particular focus is language as it applies to the identities of LGBTQIKAP&GQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex, Kinky, Asexual, Polyamorous/Pansexual & GenderQueer) communities generally and trans people specifically. If you've been a regular reader of this column, you may have noticed that even the words I use here are often in flux.

I was thinking about this last month when I answered a question in which the word "trans*" was used. If you missed the distinction, that's trans with an asterisk. It has become a popular way to connote inclusion of a number of different communities and identities under one loosely affiliated umbrella. These communities and identities aren't always comfortable being lumped together, but they share an element of gender vari-

ance/exploration/transition outside of a strictly cisgender identity and therefore some degree of political/social commonality, i.e., those who identify as transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dressers, drag queens, two-spirited, etc.

Though there are lots of us who identify somewhere within that list who will happily

spoken conversation. Additionally, for anyone not familiar with it, I fear they will see the asterisk and then wonder why they can never find the footnote. By extension of that thought, I personally find it somewhat othering in that it seems to imply that some identities might simply be a footnote. But hey, I'm a language nerd. I think far too

pointed out to me rather persuasively that there was a fairly significant group of transsexually identified people who actively resented inclusion under a transgender umbrella. They felt that their specific needs and identity were being subsumed and lumped in with those of people they themselves feel no connection to whatsoever.

I personally identify as transgender and also transsexual and have no problem with this, but that's me. I want to respect the concerns of my readers as much as possible, so I started using both transgender and transsexual wherever possible, but that brings me to another problem. This is a newspaper column. There is an ink-printed-on-dead-trees hard copy version of this paper that comes out to newsstands around New England every month. I have a pretty hard and fast word count to which I need to stick. Considering my usual topic, using both transgender and transsexual eats up a lot of those carefully doled out words.

So, "trans" becomes the compromise, the shorthand that we use to refer to our loosely affiliated communities and identities without getting mired in contentious identity issues. I use it to bring my column in under my allotted word count, which is precisely here. Slainte!

**Lorelei Erisis is an activist, adventurer and pageant queen. Send your questions about trans issues, gender and sexuality to her at: loreleierisis@gmail.com.*

But "trans with an asterisk" is just awkward in spoken conversation. Additionally, for anyone not familiar with it, I fear they will see the asterisk and then wonder why they can never find the footnote.

call the others family, you could pick any two of those identities and find people who will vehemently explain how they have absolutely nothing in common with the other, often using virtually identical arguments. It often seems like a sort of separate identity MadLibs.

"Trans*" is an attempt to sidestep all that, which I applaud. Clearly, if someone finds it useful, I will be happy to mirror their usage, as I did last month.

For myself though, I'm not crazy about it. So far as the words I use myself are concerned, I don't like to use anything I cannot easily say. I can spit out "hir," "ze," "heteronormativity," and even "LGBTQIKAP&GQ" without a pause (that last one does take a bit of practice). But "trans with an asterisk" is just awkward in

much about these things.

I much prefer simply "trans." It speaks as well as it reads and I think it's a nice compromise, elegant even. That doesn't mean I won't use "trans*." If people like it, if it works for them, they'll use it, and when it's contextually appropriate, I'm sure I will use it too. That's just how language is.

Grammatical or political correctness," even intent, doesn't mean much in the face of whether people like a word or not. Even if a word was acceptable yesterday, it may not be tomorrow. Heck, it may not even mean the same thing tomorrow! So language changes, and words mean different things to different people. It used to be that in this column, I used "transgender" to refer to a large group of people that included those who identify as transsexual. That was, until it was

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La equidad en salud para personas GLBT, ¡vamos a darle el frente!

Por: Dr. Alberto Roque Guerra*/Especial de TRT

LATIN VISION

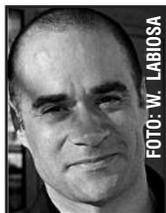


FOTO: W. LABIOSA

La salud debe ser un derecho humano universal; sólo hay ciertos países en que lo es, sin embargo. Las políticas de salud se estructuran e implementan desde una norma heterosexista (heteronormativa) con fines reproductivos y reconocen la rígida existencia de dos géneros: masculino y femenino.

De este modo, las personas homosexuales masculinas y femeninas, l@s bisexuales y Trans enfrentan limitaciones en el proceso de atención, además de que sus necesidades de salud específicas no se reconocen en las políticas.

Tal contradicción obedece a que las normas culturales patriarcales y heterosexistas vigentes generen estigmas y actitudes discriminatorias, caracterizadas como una valoración negativa, que sitúa a las personas y grupos humanos con sexualidades no heteronormativas en un estatus ciudadano infe-

rior y les asigna un escaso poder relativo por su orientación sexual o identidad de género. Estos son determinantes sociales de la salud que tienen un impacto nocivo, no solo en relación con el derecho al acceso a los servicios, sino también con la calidad de la atención.

El estigma, la discriminación y el pobre empoderamiento de las personas con sexualidades no heteronormativas conllevan a una mayor vulnerabilidad en el contexto de la atención de salud. A ello se suma la ausencia de una formación de los profesionales de la salud con perspectiva de género. Tanto los usuarios como las personas que se encargan de brindar el servicio pueden ser víctimas de estigmas relacionados con la orientación sexual o la identidad/rol de género. El estigma relacionado con la orientación sexual — al igual que el étnico y el religioso — funciona en el ámbito privado hasta que la persona lo hace público. Mientras que los estigmas relacionados con el racismo, los roles de género o las discapacidades son visibles y por ende, de dominio público.

Muchas personas homosexuales (masculinas y femeninas) utilizan estrategias de ocul-

tamiento de su orientación sexual ante el temor de ser discriminadas. En el caso de la identidad/rol de género, algunas personas muestran lo que realmente no sienten o desean expresar en relación al género con el cual se identifican. De hecho, la situación puede ser aún peor cuando se trata de una persona que ha realizado una transición de género y se le sigue reconociendo de acuerdo a los datos de los documentos de identidad (basados en el sexo).

Las mencionadas limitaciones se conocen como barreras personales y estructurales. Las personales dependen de la relación usuario-proveedor del servicio y en ellas median las ideas, los afectos y las actitudes entre las personas. Las estructurales dependen de las instituciones y son independientes del proveedor del servicio y del usuario.

A todo lo anterior se suman las relaciones laborales en las instituciones, que obligan a mantener en privado las expresiones de las sexualidades no heteronormativas, mientras se privilegian y legitiman las expresiones heterosexuales hegemónicas. ¿Entonces, que? La posible solución a esto es no sólo hablar al respecto abiertamente pero también se requiere que el personal de la salud tenga las competencias culturales necesarias para una adecuada comunicación con el usuario o usuaria y que se establezca una relación dialógica y de carácter integral y humanista entre ambos. Para ello es vital modificar las políticas asistenciales y educa-

tivas con la inclusión de los temas sobre sexualidad y género, además de la necesaria interrelación con las disciplinas de las llamadas ciencias sociales o humanidades.

Equidad en el campo médico sólo puede llegar cuando tod@s nos tratemos por igual, cuando haya un diálogo no privado pero público al respecto y haya una conexión entre la política pública y la privada — cuando el estigma es dialogado y cuando se pregunta que significa este estigma para el paciente.

Comentario: En Cuba el derecho a salud es para tod@s pero todavía se exhiben estas interacciones heteronormativas entre médico y paciente. Aunque hay much@s que tienen a un médico que dialoga abiertamente de una perspectiva homosexual, no es la regla común pero la excepción y se nota más en ciudades metropolitanas. El problema más grave de la situación en Cuba es la falta de producto de medicinas por que el sistema de proveedores médico es de alta calidad. Médicos, enfermer@s y demás personal en el campo de la salud es entrenad@ rigurosamente.

*Escrito por Dr. Alberto Roque Guerra desde Cuba; medico en la Habana, filósofo y activista GLBT. Editado y comentario escrito por Wilfred Labiosa. Para dar tu opinión al respecto, glbtcuba@gmail.com; comentarios serán enviados al escritor.

Pregúntale a Lambda Legal – El Matrimonio Civil en Utah y ¿qué significa esto para mí?

Por: Hayley Gorenberg/Adjunta Directora Legal para Lambda Legal



P: He estado leyendo acerca del matrimonio civil en Utah y la Corte Suprema ¿Qué tan grave es el problema?

R: La alegría y celebración de bodas en Utah paró a principios de este mes, según las indicaciones de la Corte Suprema de los EE.UU., hasta que se resuelva la apelación del gobierno estatal. La oleada de familias que buscan licencias de matrimonio para celebrar su amor de muchos años y seguridad, se ha detenido — y eso significa que algunas familias no van a saber nunca lo que significa estar casadas.

La situación representa un duro golpe para los que desean casarse ahora. Afortunadamente, los matrimonios de los que ya se casaron, en virtud de una orden de la corte perfectamente válida, son válidas a menos que un tribunal específico diga lo contrario.

Hasta la victoria en New Jersey de Lambda Legal hace apenas unas semanas, estos aplazamientos legales pendientes de la última decisión en los casos sobre el matrimonio civil eran habituales. Ellos eran habituales, pero nosotros argumentábamos que no tenían razón y finalmente ganamos el punto.

Después de junio del 2013, cuando la Corte Suprema de EE.UU. anuló parte de DOMA, la ley que había prohibido que las parejas del mismo sexo recibieran beneficios federales conyugales, los ejemplos de la desigualdad se mostraban claramente día a día. Las parejas casadas podían tomar tiempo en el trabajo para cuidar de sí y de sus hijos en asuntos médicos, tenían derecho a ser colocados juntos en lugar de ser separados en centros de enfermería bajo Medicare, y podrían extender los beneficios de inmigración a los cónyuges y parientes de los cónyuges.

Después de analizar los argumentos y el impacto de hacer a las parejas del mismo sexo esperar, el alto tribunal de New Jersey negó aplazar el fallo por unanimidad. Y en Utah, el tribunal de primera instancia y el tribunal federal de apelaciones también se negaron a frenar la otorgación de los matrimonios civiles.

Trágicamente, la decisión del Tribunal Supremo significa que algunas personas en Utah nunca se casarán. Como la Corte Suprema de Nueva Jersey reconoció, "Los demandantes subrayan un crudo ejemplo para demostrar el punto: si una pareja en unión civil fallece mientras esté vigente un aplazamiento, la pareja sobreviviente y los hijos serán para siempre negados de las protecciones conyugales federales".

Lambda Legal ha ganado recientemente los matrimonios acelerados para todas las parejas del mismo sexo de Illinois que, a causa de una enfermedad que amenaza la vida, no pueden esperar hasta el próximo verano para casarse, cuando la nueva ley de matrimonio civil en el estado comienza. Y, por supuesto, sabemos que en Utah, también, hay parejas que se enfrentarán a circunstancias similares, y pueden no llegar a la alegría del matrimonio y gozar de la seguridad que éste conlleva. Aunque el caso de Utah parece moverse muy rápidamente, por desgracia para algunos, no se va a mover lo suficientemente rápido.

Si tienes alguna pregunta o sientes que has sido discriminado por tu identidad de género, orientación sexual, o estatus de VIH, comunícate con nuestra Línea de Ayuda al 1-866-542-8336, o visita nuestra página web: www.lambdalegal.org/ayuda.

¿QUIERES SER MI VALENTÍN?

To Cook Is to Love: A Foodie's Journal — A delicious warming trend from the tropics

By: John Verlinden*/Special to TRT

¡MUCHO GUSTO!



PHOTO: RACHEL POWER

The forecast this time of year is often for blowing snow and bitter cold. I sometimes ask myself: "Why is it again that we live at the North Pole?" Our winters are long and tough,

and I'm always looking for ways to beat the chill. A mid-winter beach getaway would be nice, but many of us can't afford a tropical vacation. Bringing a taste of the Caribbean home for dinner, however, is within everyone's budget.

Next time there's a storm, make a batch of my plantain soup. If you haven't cooked with plantains before, this recipe from my new book, *To Cook is To Love*, is a good one to try. Plantain soup is a hearty, delicious and inexpensive comfort food that's easy to make. Add a salad and a sandwich and you've got a dinner that will make the howling wind and snow falling outside a little more bearable. Plantains are also good for us—low in sodium, rich in potassium, vitamin A and vitamin C. They are a good source of fiber, and a cup of cooked plantains is only 125 calories.



- 6 cups beef stock
- 4 green plantains (peeled and cut into chunks)
- 1 medium potato (pared and quartered)
- 1 large onion (peeled and quartered)
- 1 large green pepper (cored, seeded and quartered)
- 6 cloves garlic (peeled)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon powdered cumín
- ½ teaspoon dried leaf oregano (crushed)

Directions:

1. In a large deep pot, combine all ingredients and bring to a boil over medium-high heat for 10 minutes.
2. Reduce heat to low and continue to cook slowly for about an hour or until the vegetables are tender.
3. Remove from heat.
4. Ladle the cooked vegetables and broth into the bowl

of a food processor and puree until smooth.

5. Pour the soup into serving bowls and garnish with cheese or a fried plantain chip.

Variation: Plantain Soup is a great choice for vegan or vegetarian guests. Substitute vegetable stock for the beef in the recipe above.

To share your favorite winter recipe, ask a question or suggest a topic for a future article— contact me at john@muchogusto.com or visit www.muchogusto.com for more plantain recipes and join our Latin food forum.

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

Sopa de Platano (Plantain Soup)

Serves: 8

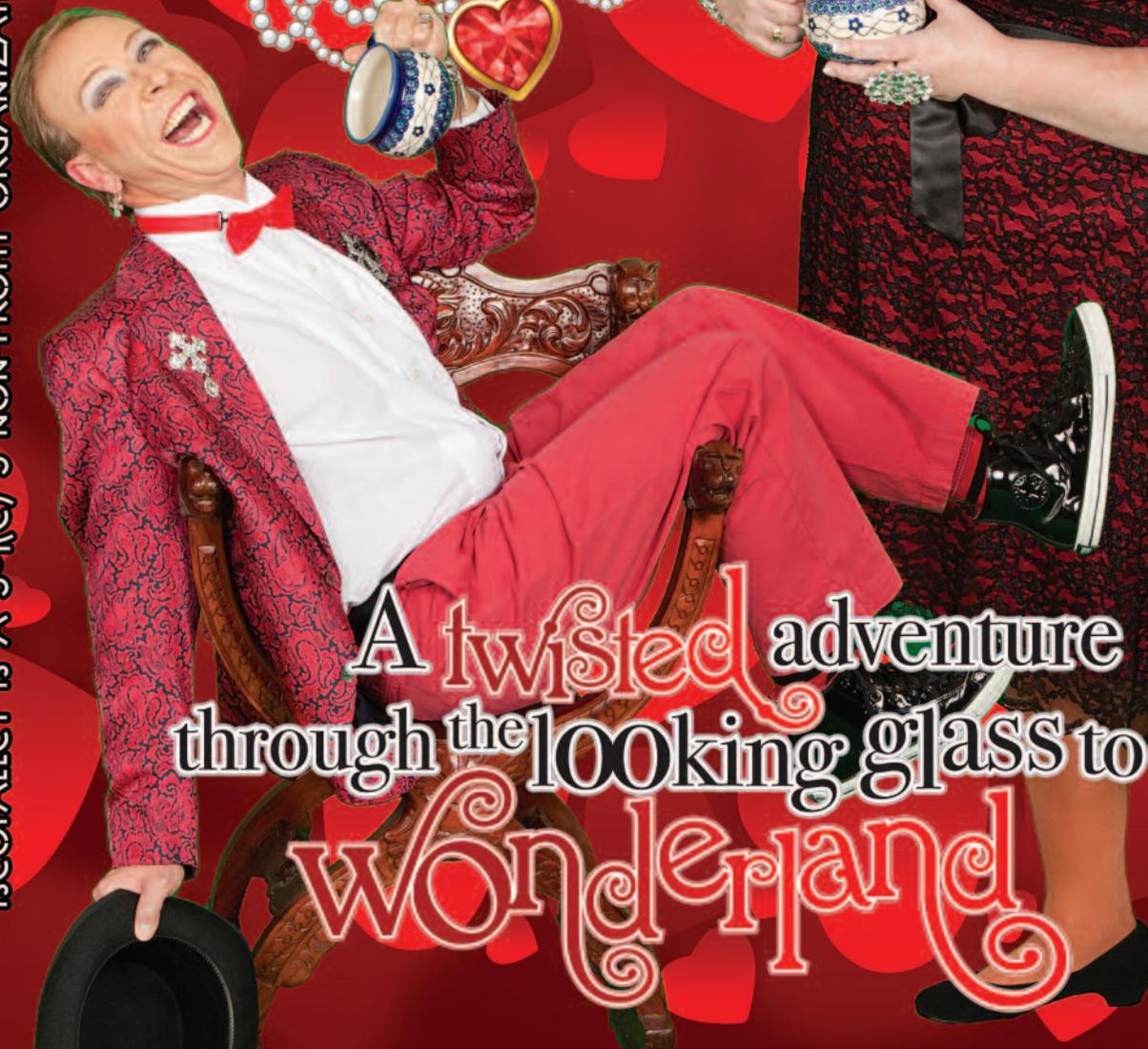
Ingredients:

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A twisted adventure
through the looking glass to
Wonderland



Boston-area organizations build community through LGBT dance nights

By: Brook Rosini/Special to TRT

BOSTON, Mass. — A number of organizations in the Boston area offer queer-friendly or LGBT-specific dance classes and dance nights in a variety of styles, ranging from Country and Western line dancing to ballroom classes, swing, hip hop, and DJ dance nights.

“When queer and straight folks dance and party together, hours of political work are accomplished in a deep way just by swinging out on the dance floor together, melting away some fears, and getting to know each other one dance step at a time,” explained OUT to Dance instructor and Swingtime instructor and committee member Liz Nania.

Some of the dance organizations are LGBT-focused groups that also welcome straight people and allies, like Gays for Patsy, a volunteer-run nonprofit group for Country and Western enthusiasts that also makes donations to other nonprofits. Another is Boston Open DanceSport, an LGBT business that trains individuals in competitive ballroom dance styles. Other groups, like OUT to Dance and Swingtime, offer queer-friendly dance classes and programs, as well as events especially for those who identify as LGBT and their friends and allies.

Bella Luna Restaurant and Milky Way Lounge take a different tack, offering rotating lesbian, gay, and LGBT live music and DJ dance nights monthly, as well as a popular open mic night for burgeoning poets and performers that is dedicated to the LGBTQI communities of color and their allies. Carol Downs, the owner of the establishment, describes the programs as “open to all and offer[ing] a safe environment for socializing, dancing, performance, and fun.”

Beyond providing a welcoming environment, many of these organizations see themselves as doing important work in the LGBT and straight communities — from donating



Liz Nania teaches a student some dance steps.

to other nonprofits to uniting the communities through the common language of dance. Boston Open DanceSport Director Kalin Mitov expressed a strong belief in the ability of LGBT and LGBT plus straight dance classes to break down barriers within the LGBT community, and between the LGBT and straight communities.

“Same-sex partner dancing has incredibly far-reaching implications to unite people under the shared belief that tolerance of one another’s differences is not enough: diversity must be celebrated,” said Mitov.

Despite their focus on different dance ...

Read the rest of this story at: <http://wp.me/p22M41-2Dy>

Tisei from Page 3

State’s 1st Congressional District, which includes most of the eastern part of the state. Like Tisei, Innis is married even as many elected Republicans denounce same-sex marriage and GOP religious conservatives consider homosexuality, let alone same-gender sexual activity, to be immoral.

Another gay man, former San Diego City Councilor, Republican Carl DeMaio is running as a Republican candidate for the House in California’s 52nd Congressional District.

Already, all three gay GOP candidates have raised concerns and objections from Republican partisans. At the end of last year, U.S. Rep. Randy Forbes, a Virginia Republican, said national GOP campaign efforts should not support openly gay candidates. However, Speaker Boehner has said he would support them. In fact, when Tisei ran in 2012, the Ohio Republican traveled to Massachusetts, helping to raise campaign funds for Tisei.

Currently, Democrats have eight openly gay members serving in Congress, including U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, who made history in 2012 as the nation’s first openly gay senator.

Meanwhile, the House seat in Massachusetts’ 6th Congressional District is one of the nation’s most closely watched races.

Roll Call Newspaper Online identifies Tierney as one of ten “most vulnerable House members.” In a November 5 article, the publication noted, “If Tierney survives the primary, he is likely to face another tough election against Tisei,” adding, “Without Obama on the ticket, Tierney won’t have much help to pull him over the finish line.”

Tierney faces two primary challengers who are likely to press Tierney on “his past ethical dust ups,” according to Roll Call, which include “his wife’s ties to an illegal gambling ring run by her brother.” Still, “Some Democrats argue Tierney is in better shape going into 2014,” Roll Call pointed out, given “an ethics investigation into his personal finances behind him.”

At his announcement, however, Tisei seemed disinclined to revisit Tierney’s past difficulties.

“I am anxious to have a discussion on issues that are important to peoples’ daily lives,” Tisei said, adding he would focus on Tierney’s “bad judgment” in Washington on “taxes, spending, the economy, and Obamacare.”

The primary election will take place September 9 and the general election will be held November 4, 2014.

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Foodies filled the Boston Center for the Arts Cyclorama for last year’s Taste of the South End, which raised more than \$120,000 to pay for services provided by the AIDS Action Committee for people living with HIV.

Annual Taste of the South End raises money for AAC

BOSTON, Mass. — The 19th Annual Taste of the South End — a fundraiser for AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts (AAC) — will take place March 4 at the Boston Center for the Arts Cyclorama in Boston’s South End. Those who attend will have the chance to sample small plate culinary creations from at least 40 South End restaurants, enjoy live cooking demonstrations, a silent auction and raffle, wine tasting and beer sampling.

“Taste of the South End raises critical money that pays for the programs of AIDS Action Committee,” said Rebecca Haag, CEO of AAC. “At any given time, AIDS Action Committee is providing services to at least one-in-six of the 18,000 people living in Massachusetts with a diagnosis of HIV, giving them the resources and support they need to stay healthy. Public investment in HIV prevention and support services continues to decline. Since 2000, state funding for HIV/AIDS has decreased 38 percent while the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts has increased 40 percent.”

According to Haag, AAC expects to raise more than \$125,000 for AIDS Action programs and services through Taste of the South End, an increase of about 25 percent from five years ago. She went on to explain

who benefits from the funds raised.

“AIDS Action connects people with healthcare, peer support, counseling, free HIV testing, housing, nutrition, fuel assistance, and legal services,” Haag said. “As a result of this work, Massachusetts has reduced new HIV diagnoses by 52 percent since 1999. This means that approximately 6,400 people who might otherwise become HIV positive have remained negative, which will save the state more than \$2.4 billion in HIV-related healthcare costs. We also work with those who are vulnerable to HIV infection to develop strategies that keep them and their families safer. Gay and bisexual men are at least 44 times more vulnerable than the general population to HIV infection. Transgender women, meanwhile, are 49 times more vulnerable to



Rebecca Haag, CEO of AIDS Action Committee with James Corbett with Steward Health Care, at last year’s Taste of the South End.

infection.”

Haag also shared why she believes this particular event is so important.

“Taste of the South End also serves as a public awareness and education event around HIV,” said Haag. “There is still a tremendous amount of stigma associated with HIV. It is impossible to overstate the ...

Read the rest of this story at: <http://wp.me/p22M41-2Du>

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Braxton: Still breathing & singing, lesbian experience in the works

By: Chris Azzopardi*/Special to TRT

Toni Braxton is getting deep. Real deep. "I have a bit of a cold," she says, her voice doing that sexy-low thing it does when she sings, "so yeah, it's very Bea Arthur from *The Golden Girls*."

A little cold can't stop Braxton, who's already faced bankruptcy, is managing lupus and then, before friend/producer Babyface intervened, almost retired from the music business altogether. Luckily, he changed her mind, and hearts everywhere were unbroken.

Love, Marriage & Divorce, her first album since 2010's *Pulse*, brings Braxton back together with Babyface. The two most notably collaborated on her self-titled debut, the

singer's mega-selling caper that scored her a Grammy for Best New Artist in 1994.

Braxton was candid as ever in our recent chat, talking about why she told Babyface that she's a grown woman ("I have breasts now"), her desire to have a lesbian experience and how short hair put her back in touch with her roots.

Chris Azzopardi: First of all, thank god for Babyface. I am so glad he wasn't about to let you throw in the towel. What were you smoking when you said you were gonna give up on music?

Toni Braxton: Obviously not weed, because I would've still stayed in the business! (Laughs)

You know what, I was just in a sad space in my life. I think everybody goes through that, but I didn't realize, I guess, just how sad I was at that time — and friends like Babyface, Missy Elliott,

Fantasia and Anita Baker helped talk me out of that state. Sometimes you just need friends and family to rally around you and let you know it's gonna be OK.

Q: And now you're in it for good?

A: I'll never retire. I'll be 85 years old singing at the

Cafe Carlyle like Eartha Kitt.

Q: How does *Love, Marriage & Divorce* compare to the work you and Babyface did in the '90s?

A: It's similar. Kenny Babyface helped make my dreams come true. He helped develop my sound, and so I'm more comfortable with him than any other producer I've worked with. And he's given me great songs in my career but not the biggest songs in my career, which is really odd. He didn't write "Un-Break My Heart," he didn't write or produce "He Wasn't Man Enough," but I was still on his label so he still fostered my career. But whenever we're together, he is the one I'm most comfortable and creative with, and I feel home.

Q: You've been very passionate about wanting a lesbian role on *Orange* is the New Black. Where's that at?

A: My agent is working on that for me as we speak. I got a call (recently) that said, "We're working on it." We believe they're ...



PHOTO: MARC BAPTISTE

Toni Braxton, who releases her new album with Babyface, *Love, Marriage & Divorce*, on Feb. 4.

Read the rest of this story at: <http://wp.me/p22M41-2DU>

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<p>LESBIAN TOP 10</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reaching for the Moon 2. Blue is the Warmest Color 3. Margarita 4. Woman's Lake - Digital Only 5. Concussion 6. Lost Girl: Season 3 7. Breaking the Girls 8. Cloudburst 9. A Perfect Ending 10. A Map for Love - Digital Only 	<p>Courtesy: WolfeVideo.com</p>	<p>GAY TOP 10</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pit Stop 2. GBF 3. Free Fall 4. I am Divine 5. Four 6. Eastsiders: The Movie - Digital Only 7. Truth 8. Long-Term Relationship 9. The Perfect Wedding 10. Interior. Leather Bar.
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