

# The Rainbow Times

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



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PHOTO: NEW LINE CINEMA





# The DOMA Decision: Massachusetts is still pioneering the movement towards freedom

Publisher's Desk

By: Gricel M. Ocasio\*/TRT Publisher

The DOMA decision was a major victory for all of us, members of the LGBT community, allies and marriage equality advocates. It was satisfying to read that a Boston judge ruled that in two separate occasions, a critical part of the Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional. Because of these two DOMA parts, its past rhetoric and the unequal treatment it creates, I hope that the U.S. Supreme Court upholds this decision.

Although comments made to the Associated Press by Andrea Lafferty, of the Traditional Values Coalition, stated that "We can't allow the lowest common denominator states, like Massachusetts, to set standards for the country," we are obviously a pioneer commonwealth that will not stand for its people's abuse, all of its people, and not just some, as Lafferty implies. It is not about standards, Lafferty, it is about "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," like the country's Declaration of Independence states. That includes us all, and not just "a few."

What does this mean? It means that the struggle

is on again. It means that once again, the commonwealth of Massachusetts pioneers equality and freedom for all who live under its state statutes. I am proud to live in Massachusetts, for its recognition of all families and citizens alike. It is not perfect, by any means, but this is as close to perfection as I imagined it when I was a young woman and dreamed of these freedoms.

Regardless of how the country's conservative "Christians" see us, we should stand tall and proud, for we are making history. My accolades go to GLAD, the attorneys representing the case, the couples standing against injustice for all of us, and to the courageous justices of this state, like U.S. District Judge Joseph Tauro, for keeping it as close to what our fore people wanted it to be, for being fair to all, which is what real justices should do.

Gricel M. Ocasio

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

## Doing business with those who support the community

By: Jenn Tracz/CABO's Executive Director

CABO's mission is simple, to create, identify and enhance business opportunities for LGBT and LGBT-friendly organizations, to foster a more inclusive and vibrant economy. Have you ever given thought to the impact of doing business with LGBT owned businesses or with those businesses that are known to support you and the community?

CABO is an affiliate member of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC). The NGLCC is the direct link between LGBT business owners, corporations, and government that represent the interests of more than 1.4 million LGBT businesses and entrepreneurs. CABO with the help of the NGLCC and many other affiliate chambers are working hand in hand to provide more opportunities to LGBT business owners and the corporations that support them.

Foxwoods Resort Casino, which is the largest resort casino in North America, became CABO's Cornerstone Casino Partner in June of this year. Not only is their partnership with CABO beneficial to LGBT individuals, who can now visit the resort casino with confidence, but it also boosts morale among LGBT employees. Wouldn't it be a wonderful feeling if you knew



Jenn Tracz

that the company you work for is supportive of you? Foxwoods can proudly claim this position, as can our other corporate partners; such as Aetna, Comcast, Murtha Cullina, Clear Channel Radio, Bearingstar Insurance and of course, The Rainbow Times.

CABO should be your number one resource to doing business within Connecticut and surrounding areas. If you need a bookkeeper for your business or are looking for a new restaurant to dine at, always consult your local LGBT chamber of commerce to find those who support you and the community. For a complete listing of LGBT chambers nationwide, visit the NGLCC (www.nglcc.org).

CABO holds regular monthly events in North Haven and West Hartford, and hosts open houses throughout the state. For more details on CABO events in your area, visit www.TheCABO.org. If you have any particular questions or comments, I am always available via e-mail and would be happy to talk with you. Send me an e-mail today at jtracz@TheCABO.org.

## Fix It; Forget It: Gay Sexless Relationship; know yourself!

By: FIFI Nigel\*

Dear FIFI,

I love my boyfriend and we are the perfect couple. He's gorgeous and so am I. We go out and other men want to be with us constantly. They want threesomes and our phone numbers, etc. We love each other, but we've been having some problems lately. I should say, well, that we're having sexual misunderstandings. He's having problems with ED it seems, or else he doesn't want me anymore. I think it could be a combination of both, so I'm not so sure if I should ask him about the sex or if I should ask him about me. Or, if I ask him about not loving me, should I also point out about the ED?

—Gay Sexless Relationship

Dear Gay Sexless Relationship Guy,

On the one hand, you seem cock-sure regarding your gorgeousness as a couple and

your love for each other. On the other hand, you seem to have jumped to the worst conclusion regarding erectile dysfunction. My sweet little narcissistic boy ... why do you assume the ED has to do with YOU? Why must something be wrong with YOU?

You mention the constant come-on's from others. Is this what keeps your sex life going or is it simply your utter hotness? Is your love "love" or merely huge attraction?

If you had more of a relationship beyond the physical, you most likely would have spoken with the other hottie by now. To be sensitive and not jump to the worst conclusions, why don't you ask your gorgeous guy "What Up?" or more precisely, "What not Up?" in a playful way when you are in the moment. Then be prepared to listen.

See FIFI on page 7

## We have the power to create the just world we envision

By: Jason Lydon/TRT Opinion Writer

First, my apologies for disappearing after Pride. I had the great pleasure of joining a caravan of five buses filled with 200+ grassroots organizers from the Greater Boston area that made the drive to Detroit, Michigan for the United States Social Forum (USSF).

The USSF was a gathering of nearly 20,000 individuals from all around the country who are struggling for justice and liberation in their own communities as well as internationally. There were Native/Indigenous leaders, immigrant/migrant leaders, anti-racist white leaders, Palestinian leaders, anti-Zionist Jewish leaders, queer liberationist leaders, and many more.

New England brought our own incredible leadership. There were so many youth who brought with them their knowledge and experience organizing for youth jobs, youth access to public transportation, and inclusion of youth voices in all decisions that impact their lives. The Boston Workers Alliance sent many members to talk about the campaign for CORI reform (Criminal Offense Record Information) that many people have been pushing for in Massachusetts for several years, with victory getting closer.

Massachusetts' welfare rights group, Survivors Inc., was present and educating USSF participants about the work that continues in the state to protect welfare recipients. New

England was incredibly well represented and the report-backs from those who went should be happening in your own communities. Watch for the updates.



Jason Lydon

One of the ways people could participate in the forum was to attend the People's Movement Assemblies. These Assemblies were brought together by those most affected by certain conditions or particular issues to name the problems and propose solutions, as those who are experiencing oppression know best what their liberation looks like. I attended several assemblies, including the Queer and Trans People's Movement Assembly.

In the process of hearing everyone's voice and experiences, the group of over 150 queer and trans people wrote a resolution that included the following statement: "We do hereby establish our interdependence to one another to ensure our people's Safe Self-Determination; to abolish the state privileging of marriage or certain kinds of heteronormative families, kinships and communities; to respect and celebrate our varied gender and sexual identities, languages and indigenous knowledge about our world and our roles in healing ourselves;

See Envision on page 15

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Thanks for the great Rhode Island Pride photos. We loved seeing friends and acquaintances in them.

—Robert M., Providence, RI

Dear Editor,

CABO and The Rainbow Times? A force not to reckon with, Woo-hoo! I like it. I'd like to see more of TRT in CT.

—James Gonzalez, West Hartford, CT

Dear Editor,

Another gay mayor for Cambridge! I wish our prominent figures, however, came out when they know they are gay and can help us all. With more exposure of their work, the people that they are and so forth, we'll be able to establish the links to gain equality for us.

—David H. Cambridge, MA

Dear Editor,

I didn't like the Gaysogynist article by Mr. Rox. He sounds elitist about his views on our gay community. I like being around gay people who are not drunk or act stupidly. Going to gay or queer places makes me feel better because they are my kind and do not discriminate against me. Maybe that's why I, and many others, choose it this way. I'm sorry that Mr. Rox feels the way he does. Mr. Rox, fyi, there is drama everywhere. Have you recently checked the drama in the heterosexual community?

—Anthony M., Boston, MA

Dear Editor,

Chely Wright's article was very inspiring to read. She sounds like she's suffered a lot while being in the closet. I wish that she had come out sooner, however. Her story resembles that of many celebrities. And, I guess you know who your real friends are, once you come out!

—Helena S., Northampton, MA

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# Baystate Medical Center Honored by HRC for LGBT-inclusive policies

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

SPRINGFIELD, MA—Baystate Medical Center has been honored for their inclusive policies and treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

Baystate, a 'top performer' in the organization's Healthcare Equality Index (HEI), is one of just two individual hospitals in New England and eight in the country singled out for the honor.

"This honor represents how far we've come in our efforts to become an inclusive organization, one that serves all the members of our community," said Visael "Bobby" Rodriguez, the chief diversity officer of Baystate Health.

The hospital has been working for the past two years to modify and improve its policies toward LGBTs, Rodriguez noted.

Baystate Health's LGBT employees are very visible in the community. They attend Northampton Pride every year and provide information about programs and services. The hospital is also the largest employer in Western Massachusetts.

The report follows President Obama's memorandum in April directing Health and Human Services to make rules that require all hospitals that receive federal Medicare and Medicaid funding – nearly every hospital in America – to protect the visitation and healthcare decision-making rights of LGBT people. It also comes as the Joint Commission, which accredits and certifies healthcare facilities, has announced new, fully inclusive patient non-discrimination standards as part of their accreditation process.

At the time of President Obama's memorandum, Baystate Medical Center already provided full visitation and healthcare decision-making rights to LGBT people.

"We're proud of our leadership in recognizing the rights of every individual to receive the full support of loved ones during his or her hospital stay," said Rodriguez. "Nothing less is acceptable."

The HEI honor represents only part of Bay-



PHOTO: ED COHEN

Baystate Medical Center's employees march for Pride at NoHo Pride

state's efforts to improve cultural competency throughout the organization, Rodriguez noted. The health provider is currently engaging its workforce in intensive cultural competency training. To better engage and connect with patients, Baystate Medical Center is also offering language classes to an increasing number of nurses and other providers to complement its extensive array of translation services available around the clock.

The HEI independently reviewed a representative sample of 200 of the largest healthcare facilities nationwide. The report found that in all 50 states – and even in historically LGBT-friendly cities like San Francisco and New York – there are facilities that do not fully protect LGBT people from healthcare discrimination. Ninety-three percent of healthcare facilities included in the study do not have fully inclusive policies toward LGBT people, and 42 percent don't include "sexual orientation" in their Patients' Bill of Rights/non-discrimination policy.

The HEI 2010 also includes data from 178 facilities across the country that voluntarily provided information on patient non-discrimination, visitation, cultural competency training, and employment non-discrimination. Baystate Medical Center was among eight hospitals, three clinics and one health system nationally to receive perfect ratings for LGBT-inclusive policies and care.



PHOTO: ED COHEN

Baystate Medical Center's employees march for Pride at NoHo Pride

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## Family, Faith, and God: TV show spotlights that life is about making the world a better place

### In the Name of God

By: Paul P. Jesep\*/TRT Columnist

If you're a fan of British comedies I recommend *Mulberry* — the *Complete Series* (1992). It stars Geraldine McEwan as Miss Farnaby, an elderly, lonely prim and proper lady living on her manor. She hasn't enjoyed life for a long time.

One day *Mulberry* shows up (played by Karl Howman). In myth, legend and folklore the mulberry tree/bush usually symbolizes caring, support, and self-sacrifice. Asian cultures use the bark, leaves, and berries of the mulberry for an array of medicinal purposes. Howman's character is a bubbly, playful and charming gent who successfully challenges the stern Miss Farnaby to live and enjoy what's left of her life.

*Mulberry* is sent by Dad to learn the family business. Dad is Death and expects his son to bring the crabby Miss Farnaby to the other side. *Mulberry* refuses. He won't do it until the spiritually and emotionally repressed lady has lived, loved, and experienced joy. *Mulberry* takes after his mother, Spring.

The series is about living. *Mulberry* doesn't focus on getting Miss Farnaby to spend money. He teaches her to embrace joy in bicycling, ice skating, friendship with rascally servants, and enjoying a simple dinner with friends. She finds bliss in simple pleasures all too often taken for granted.

Minister Benjamin Disraeli, 19th Century British prime minister, once said, "The greatest good we can do for others is not just to share our riches, but to reveal to them their own."

Sister Joan Chittister, executive director of Benetvision and tireless advocate for gender equality, reflected that "our role in life is to bring the light of our own souls to the dim places around us."

The most obvious message in the BBC series is using precious time to help another unleash

his or her own inner riches or to bring light to someone in a dark, foreboding place. Everyone needs encouragement. Everyone deserves a kind word. How often do you ask a waiter to tell the chef he or she did a fabulous job? Or have you ever asked to see the chef? Did you ever think about writing on a restaurant check that the service was impeccable? Good tips pay bills, but written words of praise have a lasting, positive emotional impact.

The BBC comedy makes another important point. No one is too old or young to make their life or someone else's better. Perhaps someone is stuck at a crossroads or they identify a person needing a nudge to make a decision. It might be relationship or professionally based. Or maybe you have good friends, a great career, and still search for the right person with whom to form a family. Loneliness, even with supportive friends, is debilitating and sometimes destructive.

Look back. Never stare. Life is always about now and planning and hoping for a future. Plan for tomorrow, but never forget that only today counts and the future is a possibility. If you are stuck in time, though time passes, write a plan and work it.

There's a sweet theme song to the British comedy. It begins:

*Some say they touch the sky  
Some say they see the wind,  
a whisper of spring is near  
Can you hear it say,  
These are Mulberry days?  
Some say they'll understand.  
Some hold an open hand,  
a shimmer of moonlit haze.  
Can you hear it say, these are Mulberry days?*

*Mulberry days are now. Seize them for you, your family, and those around you. Live.*

*\*Paul is an author, attorney, and a seminary trained, ordained priest in greater Albany, NY. His new book, Credit Card Usury and the Christian Failure to Stop It, was released in June. He may be reached at Dilovod@aol.com.*

## Queer Carnevale's September debut and the LGBT Coalition of Western Massachusetts

By: J.M. Sorrell/TRT Reporter

On July 1st, I sat down with the Suzanne Seymour, Executive Director of the LGBT Coalition of Western Massachusetts, to talk about the Coalition, their upcoming fund-raising event and to find out more about the Coalition's mission. We talked about Ms. Seymour's interest in youth issues and her goals for the coalition.

**J.M. Sorrell:** Why and how did you get involved with the LGBT Coalition of Western Massachusetts?

**Suzanne Seymour:** It was founded by Nicole (Lashomb) and Grisel (Ocasio). We had talked about it last year. In 2009, the Coalition showed a film *Dangerous Living: Coming Out in the Developing World* at First Churches (downtown Northampton), and Grisel spoke about the death of Carl Walker-Hoover (the 11-year-old boy who hung himself in Springfield, MA in April 2009). We discussed the world of bullying and what the coalition may take on. During the following fall/winter, I spoke with Grisel and Nicole about doing something together, and then they had to bow out due to other circumstances.

In January, I took the reigns. We had already reserved the fairgrounds for the event coming up this fall (known as Queer Carnevale), and I became the executive director.

**JMS:** What is your mission?

**SS:** We are committed to education, outreach, and advocacy for the LGBTQ communities.

**JMS:** Do you worry that it is too broad?

**SS:** The mission this year is to bring awareness to the Coalition and to raise money for it, as we are building and networking during these early steps. We will achieve tangible things first while building towards other projects.

**JMS:** "Coalitions" are defined as partners or alliances with others. Is the LGBT Coalition of Western MA an umbrella for other groups or is it a collaborative venture with pre-existing LGBT groups in the area?

**SS:** We have reached out to pre-existing groups such as the Stonewall Center at UMass, Gen Q (Northampton/Greenfield youth), OutNow in Springfield, and the Berkshire Stonewall Center in Pittsfield.

**JMS:** According to your website, the Coalition will work to "bridge gaps between the LGBT and mainstream communities. How will you do that?" Does this goal account for our own heterogeneous identities?

**SS:** One of the ways I see that is to deal with GSAs (Gay/Straight Alliances)—to give them opportunities to work with other organizations—to expand themselves. They may not be working together as is. We will be an umbrella organization to bridge those gaps.

We will push the educational component within diverse communities. Regardless of race, there may be a pushback to youth coming out. We will continue education for heterosexual parents in those communities so they may learn more about what it means to be LGBT youth.

The welcoming churches will play a role. We should continue to have the dialogue with those churches who are not accepting. In my own self-discovery, coming out as a lesbian, it was painful to be rejected by the Catholic Church as I had revered it my whole life. It is my lifelong mission to work on communities of faith.

**JMS:** How about the needs (or what are the needs) of the non-white LGBT people?

**SS:** There's real need for education between white and non-white people. Cultural differences should be spoken about, and groups

should be brought together in forums—to be heard.

**JMS:** How often are you planning to reach and assist non-white members of the LGBT community? How can the LGBT Coalition ameliorate such needs?

**SS:** As we connect and plan events with other organizations in the many diverse communities throughout western Massachusetts, we will be able to identify the needs of our non-white members and provide forums, networking events and support services to address those needs.

**JMS:** I have lived here for a long time and I know we have a sizable aging lesbian community. The Coalition's focus appears to be on youth and on LGBT people with children. What about others?

**SS:** The coalition is not just for LGBT people with children. It is for diverse communities, youth, and marginalized people within our own groups, such as aging lesbians, transgendered people, etc.

**JMS:** What are the immediate plans (other than fund-raising events) to assist the community? Do you have an office or public space?

**SS:** We are sharing an office on Pine Street in Florence. We have meetings there and at the Unitarian in Northampton. We are working now to have meetings in other communities to increase our presence and to learn the needs of these communities. We are interested in hearing what people need so we can gather funds to give back to our community in the form of grants.

**JMS:** There is no mention of a Board of Directors or mission statement on your web site, and yet you describe the organization as having "pending" status and you convey that donations are tax-deductible. When do you anticipate the 501(c)(3) status approval?

**SS:** The paperwork was sent in March. We are incorporated [as a non-profit] in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as the LGBT Coalition of Western Massachusetts. Our mission statement and Board of Directors are on the website. We are a 501(c)(3) pending organization because we have confirmation that our application has been received and is being processed (the web site is www.lgbtcoalition-wma.org).

**JMS:** Where do you see the Coalition five years from now?

**SS:** There is no five year plan yet, but I do have a one-year plan. There will be attention to our mission, to networking, fund raising, and grant-giving to individuals and groups. We are paying attention to the eligibility requirements for grant-giving. There will be a focus on youth, financial need, and an application process.

### Queer Carneval: The September Event

**JMS:** What inspired you to do Queer Carnevale?

**SS:** It is out of my strong love of fun activities in our community (there are never enough). I envision opportunities for older and younger people to congregate. It's important for us to see one another. The only alternatives are the pride march and the club scene. It is important for youth to come out to see creative ways to live healthy lives. There is a big focus on the youth tent—with workshops, a graffiti art project, etc.

**JMS:** Why call it a "September" Mardi Gras?

**SS:** Those of us in New England may want to celebrate Mardi Gras, but the weather does not cooperate in February. Plus, if people are

See Carnevale on page 5



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## JACOB'S PILLOW celebrates Bill T. Jones with performances, pillowtalks, The Jacob's Pillow Dance Award and new exhibit

BECKET, MA—The work of Bill T. Jones, eminent choreographer, Tony Award-winner, and director, will be celebrated throughout the *Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 2010*. The Pillow presents a six-performance engagement of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, a season-long photography exhibit titled "Arnie Zane on Bill T. Jones," and a PillowTalk, featuring Jones, about his iconic partnership with Arnie Zane. Bill T. Jones is also the recipient of the 2010 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award.

"Bill is quite simply one of the greatest artists of our time," comments Ella Baff, Jacob's Pillow Dance Executive Director. "Fearless in his thinking and aesthetic investigations, he has taken his art, and his audiences along with it, to illuminating places. He will continue to make an enormous contribution to the arts and the Pillow is proud to honor him this season."

Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company performs in the Ted Shawn Theatre July 21–25. The multi-layered work, *Serenade/The Proposition*, was created in celebration of the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth and features striking visual design and live folk and classical music. Live musicians Jerome Begin, Lisa Komara, and Christopher Antonio William Lancaster will perform as part of *Serenade/The Proposition*, alongside additional music and lyrics by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Julia Ward Howe, William Walker, Alexander Means, and traditional American folk music.

In addition to *Serenade/The Proposition*, Jacob's Pillow presents, "Arnie Zane on Bill T. Jones," a photography exhibit of images featuring a young Jones by his late partner Arnie Zane, a provocative photographer, choreographer, and company co-founder. The free exhibit is located in the Ted Shawn Theatre and is open to the public from June 23–August 29.

Bill T. Jones was recently honored with the 2010 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award at the Pillow's Season Opening Gala. The annual Award, which supports visionary choreographers, is made possible by a generous anonymous donor. Given each year to an exceptional choreographer, the award carries a cash prize of \$25,000 to be used by the artist in any way they choose.

The Jacob's Pillow Dance Award was created in 2007 with an ongoing, annual anonymous gift. In addition to the \$25,000 cash award, the honoree receives a custom-designed glass sculpture by Berkshire-based artist Tom Patti, whose work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, among other prominent collections worldwide. In 2007, the inaugural Award was given to An-



PHOTO: PAUL B. GOODE

Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company

nie-B Parson and Paul Lazar, co-directors of Big Dance Theater. In 2008, Alonzo King, Artistic Director of Alonzo King's LINES Ballet, was honored and in 2009 the Award was given to Merce Cunningham, whose company gave its final performances during his lifetime at Jacob's Pillow.

*The performance will run from July 21 through July 24th at 8 p.m. and from July 24–25th at 2 p.m. There will be free pre-show Talks with Jacob's Pillow Scholars-in-Residence are offered in Blake's Barn 30 minutes before every performance. Tickets prices range from \$58–63 and are on sale now online at jacobspillow.org, via phone at 413.243.0745, or in person at Jacob's Pillow.*

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### Carnevale from page 4

concerned about the "coming out" process, they can wear masks and be hidden.

**JMS:** What do you expect it to bring in terms of funding for the Coalition and services for its supporters?

**SS:** We are hoping to get up to 10,000 people. There will be a ticket charge for general admission. I would like to make \$30,000. There is no committee for this; it is just a goal.

**JMS:** Who will enjoy Queer Carnevale the most?

**SS:** I will. Anyone who is young at heart will enjoy this as well.

**JMS:** What makes it unique to other fairs and events in the region?

Carnival games will be different. The youth tent and Zen zone, the Mardi Gras theme, bringing in the churches ... There will be prayer circles, counseling, and guidance, and AA meetings.

It will be more than just music and partying. Mainstream people know what that looks like. Here there are other elements such as the spiritual community and love of youth.

**JMS:** You seem to convey a grim picture for youth. Why?

**SS:** There are plenty of well-adjusted youth here. Our vision is to work with those who are less fortunate, and to find materials that will assist them. My own experiences, and others I have spoken to, suggest the idea that there are kids slipping through the cracks who are not being supported and who may not walk into a GSA but maybe they will come to the Zen zone. It's important to offer opportunities for those of us who have left be-

hind spiritual homes to continue our healing and to revisit spiritual opportunity.

**JMS:** What would you like to say to encourage people to support the Coalition and to attend Queer Carnevale?

**SS:** We have a stellar lineup of great and interesting entertainment! Who does not want to celebrate Mardi Gras in New England?

*\*Suzanne J. Seymour, the LGBT Coalition's Executive Director, is 48 years old. She lives with her wife and two teens in Northampton (Leeds), along with four cats and a dog. She has lived in the area for over seven years. For more information about the LGBT Coalition of Western Massachusetts, to be a part of Queer Carnevale and to place your ad in the Queer Carnevale Guide, visit: www.lgbtcoalition-wma.org.*

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# Definitely, Not the L-Word: Butch Voices Leads Stampede to Hollywood

Television may represent West Coast lesbians as glossy, straight-looking women in a soap-opera world, but this fall's *Butch Voices* L.A. Conference promises a very different L-Word. Over 400 butches, genderqueers, and similarly identified lesbians are expected to attend *Butch Voices* L.A. in West Hollywood, California on October 8-10. The conference will highlight the ever changing definitions of "butch" and explore the new politics of this spectrum of LGBT life. BVLA is a Southwest conference making special outreach to butches in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, Utah and New Mexico.

Boys Don't Cry writer/director Kimberly Peirce will headline the panel discussion, "Butch in the Movies." Dr. Judith 'Jack' Halberstam, author of *Female Masculinity* and New York activist, Carmen Vazquez, will be featured keynote speakers. The gathering of the butch tribes will center on twenty workshops and three performance events headlined by nationally known performers including Phranc, D'Lo, Sandra Valls and Latina performers Butchlalis de Panochtitlan. Opening night will present a fashion show called, "INVINCIBLE: A night of daggers, dandies, dapper dykes." Saturday night's performance is called, "SWAGGER: Butch Bravado by Those who live it and Those Who love it." Sunday afternoon will showcase, "Witty & Wild" a butch comedic wit and spoken word show.

Workshops moderated by Kimberly Peirce, Jeanne Cordova (author and lesbian feminist activist), Joe LeBlanc (President of *Butch Voices*), filmmaker Cheryl Dunye and other well known butch community activists will address wide-ranging topics, including butch

identities formed in the Western states melting pot that is Latina, African American, Asian and Anglo. Lighter life dilemmas such as "How to Lead in Ballroom Dancing" and dressing up "To Windsor or Not" will juxtapose with serious fare like, "Butch Sexual Expression" and "Conversations in Butch Socio-Political Theory."

Overall, the organizers—L.A. based lesbian cultural guerilla group LEX-The Lesbian Exploratorium—promise an once-in-a-lifetime experience for masculine-identified women who are most often marginalized and persecuted by hetero-normative society. The event will provide butches with the opportunity to connect with one another and their allies, and foster spirited discussion about identity and the struggle to find ways to make the world safer for masculine kinds of women, and trans-identified butches.

Thanks to a grant from the City of West Hollywood, conference registration fees are only \$50 for all three days. Youth and limited-income folks are welcomed for as low as \$25. Many ten-dollar scholarship registrations are offered as well. The Conference will take place at Plummer Park Community Center, located in West Hollywood. For more info see [www.BVLA2010.com](http://www.BVLA2010.com) or email [bvla2010@gmail.com](mailto:bvla2010@gmail.com)

The Los Angeles conference was inspired by 2009's inaugural *Butch Voices* gathering in Oakland, which drew over 350 participants. According to many, the Oakland event marked the birth of the butch renaissance movement currently building in the US. National Butch Voices Board member, Krys Freeman, who identifies as genderqueer, notes, "A lot of mas-



PHOTO: LYNN H. BALLEEN

## D'Lo-performing at Butch Voices conference

culine-identified women are victims of hate crimes and harassment and all sorts of things that don't get the media's attention. Butch Voices is about a sense of community and a space where they can share their experiences, good or bad." To that end, *Butch Voices* L.A. welcomes, "Queer, feminist, lesbian, trans ... whatever kind of butch you are!"

### Beyond bars, ball fields & blogs

For a generation of butches and studs that may have only seen itself reflected online, this is a chance to see each other in real life. At the Conference, butches will be coming together to bond, organize, strategize, be inspired, entertained and educated. Beyond labels and stereotypes, masculine-identified lesbians and trans folk who identify as butch are reclaiming a rich history. Workshops such as "1950s Bar Life as Church" will speak to butch history, and others like, "What Butches and Femmes Need to Know about One Another" will address femme concerns as well.

Crossing race and class barriers, the Conference sees "butch" as a unifying umbrella identity that will bring together all those "who identify as butch, boi, genderqueer, tomboy, stud, aggressive, butcha, macha, drag king, jock, dyke, two-spirit, androgynous-with-a-butchtwist, transmasculine, and FtM." Femmes, divas, MtFs, and other allies who partner with any of the above, are also welcome.

According to Conference Chair Jeanne Cordova, "Butch as a stereotype is being blown

out of the water by a younger generation of lesbians and queers who are comfortable playing with gender and embracing their masculinity or boyishness. We need to address this re-definition of ourselves." LEX and *Butch Voices* also see the L.A. conference as a space for butches to bond and overcome stereotypes from both the heterosexual and the LBGTQ world toward each other. Los Angeles was asked by *Butch Voices*, along with Portland, Dallas, and New York City, to present regional conferences during 2010. As Cordova explains, "We particularly planned the Southwest Conference to be in LA, home of the 'lipstick lesbian,' as a rebellious act of butch reclamation." Labels like butch, femme, stud, and genderqueer don't have to be exclusive or restricting, said the organizers. They see labels and identities as a source of pleasure and community, desire and presentation.

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# Major victory for LGBT rights: U.S. District Court rules Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

BOSTON, MA—In a major victory for LGBT rights, U.S. District Court Judge Joseph L. Tauro ruled on July 8 that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is unconstitutional with regards to claims brought by seven married same-sex couples and three widowers from Massachusetts. Under the ruling, the plaintiffs are entitled to the same federal spousal benefits and protections as every other married couple.

The ruling stems from the lawsuit *Gill et al v. Office of Personnel Management et al*, filed by Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) in March 2009.

Meanwhile, Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley filed her own lawsuit on behalf of the state against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"I know that today's landmark decision is a very important step towards achieving equality for all married couples, particularly here in Massachusetts," said Coakley. "We alleged in the suit and the judge found, we are pleased to say, that it's unconstitutional for the federal government to discriminate as it does because of DOMA's restrictive definition of marriage. It is also unconstitutional for the federal government to define who is married and to create a system of first and second class marriages."

"Today the Court simply affirmed that our country won't tolerate second-class marriages," said Mary Bonauto, GLAD's Civil Rights Project Director, who argued the case. "I'm pleased that Judge Tauro recognized that married same-sex couples and surviving spouses

have been seriously harmed by DOMA and that the plaintiffs deserve the same opportunities to care and provide for each other and for their children that other families enjoy. This ruling will make a real difference for countless families in Massachusetts."

"I am thrilled that my family will now be treated in the same way as those of my married co-workers at the post office," said Nancy Gill, who is a plaintiff with her spouse, Marcelle Letourneau. "Marcelle and I married out of love and commitment to each other first and foremost, but federal recognition of our marriage means that we'll have equal access to important protections for our two children and for ourselves."

Gill is a 22-year employee of the U.S. Postal Service who cannot cover Letourneau on her family health and vision insurance plans, forcing the couple to pay extra to insure Letourneau. Marcelle is also ineligible to receive the federal health benefit given to surviving spouses or to access Nancy's pension should Nancy predecease her.

The next step in the case is for the federal government to decide whether it will appeal Judge Tauro's ruling to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. That decision should come within the next 60 days.

Congress passed DOMA in 1996. Section 3 of the law states that only a marriage between



PHOTO: MARTHACOAKLEY.COM  
Martha Coakley

one man and one woman will be recognized for federal purposes.

"Congress should repeal it because (DOMA) is harming married couples every day," Bonauto added.

In June 2009, LGBT rights groups expressed outrage when the Justice Department, under the direction of President Barack Obama, defended DOMA in a federal court. U.S. Department of Justice lawyers argued that DOMA is constitutional and contended that awarding federal marriage benefits to gays would infringe on the rights of taxpayers in the 30 states that specifically prohibit same-sex marriages.

GLAD filed the *Gill* case on the grounds that DOMA Section 3 violates the federal constitutional guarantee of equal protection as applied to federal income tax, Social Security, federal employees and retirees and the issuance of passports. The passport issue was resolved in 2009 when the State Department changed its policy.

Co-counsel in the *Gill* case included attorneys from the firms Foley Hoag LLP, Sullivan & Worcester LLP, Jenner & Block LLP, and Kator, Parks & Weiser, PLLC.

Bonauto predicts the case could go all the way up to the Supreme Court, should the plaintiffs prevail in the First Circuit Court. However, a definitive answer from the court may take up to 3 years.

See FIFI from page 2

To be honest, it will not play out like an ED commercial, no doubt. You may not like the response. Perhaps your mate will tell you that he is unsure about you or that he does not like your constant comments about the other guys. He may be just as insecure as you.

Your shared vulnerability may help to deepen your relationship (amongst other things!), or you may decide to call it quits.

Let me ask you, "Is gorgeous the ONE or not?" Figure that out for yourself, since it may make the difference in your conversation. Should you indulge in that ever-hanging ménage-a-trois? Are you willing to stand by him? Can you work with him and the ED?

Know yourself, lad, and then deal with things.

FIFI

*\*FIFI Nigel tells it as it is, whether you like it or not. Using satire and wit FIFI addresses issues in our community and tackles them all truthfully and to the point! Have a question that is burning you up? Contact FIFI at fifinigel@yahoo.com. This column is not intended to replace your psychologist's advice. For medical advice, please consult your medical provider.*

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## Pass the trans bill now, it is imperative to do so

By: Susan Ryan-Vollmar\*/TRT Columnist

Conclusions from a draft report on how homophobia and transphobia contribute to the spread of HIV clearly show the need for the passage of the Transgender Civil Rights Bill in Massachusetts and a trans-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act by Congress.

A draft report from the HIV Prevention Justice Alliance titled "LGBT Marginalization as a Social Driver of HIV" is a fairly depressing primer on just how homophobia and its resulting ills contribute to HIV infection. Homelessness, un- and underemployment, lack of health insurance, increased mental illness, high rates of substance abuse, and a simple lack of social visibility — all of which impact LGBT people at rates higher than the population as a whole — push people to the margins of society. And that is where HIV infection opportunistically feasts.

Perhaps the most shocking statistic in the report, which can be read at [www.prevention-justice.org/lgbt+marginalization+brief+draft](http://www.prevention-justice.org/lgbt+marginalization+brief+draft), is that an estimated 25 percent of transgender women are HIV positive. (The report cites a meta-analysis of 29 studies focused on male-to-female transgender women to get this estimate. You can read that analysis, titled "Estimating HIV Prevalence and Risk Behaviors of Transgender Persons in the United States: A Systematic Review" at [www.medscape.com/viewarticle/571708](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/571708).)

There are two primary reasons for the high rates of HIV infection among trans women. Risky sexual behaviors, "such as having multiple sex partners or unprotected sex, frequently within the context of commercial sex work," according to "Estimating HIV Prevalence" and the "unsafe injection of recreational drugs

or substances to alter gender presentation (i.e., hormones and silicone)." Secondary reasons include the lack of stability from higher rates of rejection by family members, unemployment, homelessness, and lack of health insurance.

The report makes several recommendations for reducing the spread of HIV among LGBT people, including the creation of an Office for LGBT Health at the U.S. Office of Health and Human Services and targeted outreach tailored to the many communities within the larger LGBT community who are most vulnerable to HIV infection. The last recommendation? "Reform and repeal laws and policies that reinforce stigma and discrimination..."

Yes. Wouldn't it be helpful if our laws — which we pay for the enactment of — didn't actually perpetuate discrimination? The HIV report references a 2009 nationwide employment survey of 6,450 transgender men and women by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force which found that one in four had lost their jobs because they are transgender; 97 percent reported that they had been harassed while working; and they experience unemployment at twice the rate of the population as a whole. As a result of job loss and insecurity, transgender people experience poverty, homelessness, and decreased access to health care at rates much higher than the average population.

What's one way to deal with the crisis rate of unemployment among transgender people? Pass laws making it illegal to fire them simply because of who they are. Here in Massachusetts, the proposed Transgender Civil Rights Bill would make it illegal to fire people based on their gender identity. It would also protect

**See Trans Bill on page 10**

## Creep of the Week: Mike Huckabee

By: D'Anne Witkowski\*

If I said, "Hey, remember that time you pictured Mike Huckabee and his wife having sex?" You might well reply, "I've never pictured that before, thanks a lot. Ouch, my eyes."

But you should know that Huckabee has thought about you having sex, and it grosses him out.

Asked in a recent *New Yorker* interview why he opposes gay rights, Huckabee replied. "I do believe that God created male and female and intended for marriage to be the relationship of the two opposite sexes. Male and female are biologically compatible to have a relationship. We can get into the ick factor, but the fact is two men in a relationship, two women in a relationship, biologically, that doesn't work the same."

Ah, yes. The whole "1 penis + 1 vagina = TLF" argument. In other words, marriage is defined by the naughty bits. Huckabee opposes marriage equality on the grounds that, to him, penises touching are "icky."

I'm sorry, but are we in third grade?

His comment might, on some level, seem innocuous. After all, he said, "We can get into the ick factor," but he doesn't. However, "the ick factor" has long been an anti-gay staple. Reducing gays to nothing more than walking,



Mike Huckabee

talking sex freaks works wonders when it comes to denying said gays basic civil rights or anything resembling human decency.

Huckabee doesn't need to go into detail because "the ick factor" is well-established homophobic code for "two guys having butt sex," often followed by, "with your kids."

This is, of course, not new territory for Huckabee. When he was governor of Arkansas he was all for laws to ban gays from adopting or becoming foster parents. "Children are not puppies — this is not a time to see if we can

experiment and find out how does this work," he said at the time. "You don't go ahead and accommodate every behavioral pattern that is against the ideal. That would be like saying,

'Well, there are a lot of people who like to use drugs, so let's go ahead and accommodate those who want to use drugs. There are some people who believe in incest, so we should accommodate them. There are people who believe in polygamy, should we accommodate them?'"

That's right. To Huckabee, being gay is the same thing as being a junkie or diddling your little sister or having a harem. After getting flack for these comments he complained about

**See Creep on page 9**

**To Huckabee, being gay is the same thing as being a junkie or diddling your little sister or having a harem.**

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# Fenway unites with Sidney Borum to provide LGBT youth health services

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

BOSTON, MA—On July 1, Fenway Community Health united with The Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center. The Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center will operate as part of Fenway Health and continue its mission of serving disenfranchised young people, including those who are LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender); homeless or living on the streets; struggling with substance use or abuse; sex workers; or living with HIV/AIDS.

For more than ten years, Fenway Health has shared medical staff with the Borum.

"Our missions are very similar in terms of the populations that we serve," said Dr. Stephen Boswell, Fenway Health President & CEO. "We want to keep Sidney Borum because of its unique atmosphere and patients pretty much unchanged."

The Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center will continue to operate the programs and services offered at its 130 Boylston Street location in Bos-

ton and at drop-in centers for homeless youth in Cambridge and LGBT youth in Boston. Patients at the Borum will now have access to expanded services at Fenway, including dentistry, optometry and The Fenway Pharmacy.

The merger comes after a year of study and consideration and will ensure the sustainability of the Borum and allow for expanded collaborations among staff at both organizations. Fenway Health and Justice Resource Institute, the Borum's current parent organization, hope to explore new areas of collaboration moving forward.

"The Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center and its sensitive approach to caring for a very vulnerable population that often is not served effectively in other settings is well aligned with the mission of Fenway Health," said Boswell. "We can help the Borum to not only thrive but to reach even more

people in need of its services. The merger will enable their patients to access all of the services provided by Fenway while continuing to receive the quality care they are accustomed to. It will

allow us to expand research on health disparities in populations of vulnerable young people, including LGBT youth, and help us better address their needs."

"We believe that the clinical orientation and comprehensive care approach of Fenway Health makes it the right home for the Borum," said Douglas Brooks, Senior Vice President for Health Services at Justice Resource Institute and the Executive Director of JRI Health. "Our entire organization is proud of founding, nurturing, and growing The Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center, and we know that Fenway will, with certainty, continue to grow and build this vital health center."

*JRI Health is a division of Justice Resource Institute (JRI). JRI Health has over 80 full time equivalent employees and \$8 million in revenue. The organization's mission states that "JRI Health pursues social justice through providing underserved individuals and communities with opportunities to develop the tools and skills essential in creating strength, well-being and autonomy." The agency has many programs tailored to individuals with HIV and AIDS as well as programs that support HIV/AIDS prevention.*

For more information, go to [fenwayhealth.org](http://fenwayhealth.org).



PHOTO: CRAIG BAILEY

Dr. Stephen Boswell

## Creep from page 8

people criticizing him for his "well known and hardly unusual views."

Just don't call him a homophobe. "I've had people who worked for me who are homosexuals," he tells *The New Yorker*. "And I don't walk around thinking, Oh, I pity them so much. I accept them as who they are! It's not like somehow their sin is so much worse than mine."

Oh, how generous of him. But his "sin parity" claim is bullshit. After all, he's already made it clear that he defines gay people by their sexuality alone. A sexuality he finds sinful and, not incidentally, "icky." So yeah, it actually does seem like he thinks that sin "is so much worse than" his.

I think it's interesting that *The New Yorker* quotes Brenda Turner, Huckabee's chief of staff from when he was governor, saying, "My personal feeling is what we don't understand, we fear. And what we fear, we seek to destroy."

She's not talking about homosexuality. She's talking about how exhausting it was to defend Huckabee from his critics, who lambasted him because he was an outsider, misunderstood and dismissed as a hick. He was beat up by his opponents for not being afraid to be himself.

So when he tells gays and lesbians whose civil right he opposes, "It's not personal," it's awfully hard to swallow.

*\*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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## Amber charmed everyone at The Chez Est!

Story & Photos By: Glenn Koetzner

HARTFORD, CT—When Amber stepped out onto the stage at The Chez Est it was obvious that she's a true performer. She communicates easily with the crowd, saying "I've got a secret. Did you know that listening to my music will make you gay?" The crowd roar with adoration. They're ready for her. It is 12:35 a.m. and DJ Lady Tita has adeptly kept everybody moving since 9:00.

"I've been doing this for fourteen years, and I owe it all to you, my fans" Amber says before launching into a set of her hits.

Amber's return to The Chez Est brought out a whole crop of new faces to the club; some who remember her from her string of dance hits and some who are new to her music, said Alejandro. As one of the managers, he knows it's all good business.

Her set was short, a medley of her hits, touching on most of them: "Sexual,"

"Above the Clouds," "Need to be Naked," "One More Night," etc. She has that performer's positive energy, and it was obvious that she just adores the LGBT community. She sat for an hour afterwards talking, sitting for pictures, signing singles, body parts and head shots, all while smiling and chatting away as if she were a regular there. And, that wouldn't be such a bad thing. The Chez Est, under the direction of Bryan, is staffed by all those beautiful, helpful people that made the whole night easy and fun. Amber was in good company, and so was I.





## GLAD to Honor Longtime Activists Alix Ritchie & Marty Davis at Annual Summer Party Comedian Kate Clinton Returns as Auctioneer Extraordinaire!

PROVINCETOWN, MA—Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders will honor Alix Ritchie and Marty Davis with the GLAD Community Award for their longstanding commitments to advancing LGBT issues and their decades of work to shape and preserve the cultural and natural aesthetics in Provincetown, where they have lived since 1980. The couple will accept the award at GLAD's 28th Annual Summer Party at the Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum on July 31.

"Alix and Marty's support for GLAD stretches back to 1991, which gives you a sense of their longstanding commitment to LGBT rights," said Executive Director Lee Swislow. "More than that, in their environmental advocacy, their support for the arts in Provincetown and Alix's former role as publisher of the Provincetown Banner – to cite just a few examples – they have been stewards of a community that is very special to LGBT people around the world."

"Marty and I share a commitment to giving back to our community, be it the LGBT community or this magical place at the end of the earth called Provincetown," said Alix Ritchie. "We are honored to accept this award from GLAD, an organization whose work we have long admired and supported."

Political humorist Kate Clinton will once again wield her wit and the auctioneer's gavel, making live bids on travel packages and Red Sox tickets hard to resist.

The Summer Party also features a silent auction, activities for children, beautiful views of Provincetown Harbor, tasty summer fare, cocktails courtesy of Bacardi, Barefoot Wine & Bubbly, and Sam Adams. Proceeds support GLAD's efforts in the six New England states to end discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status, and gender identity and expression.

This year's event co-chairs are P.J. Layng & Maryann McCarthy; Maria Lopez & Stephen Mindich and Richard D. McCarthy & Gary Bailey, MSW. Mindich, publisher of the Boston Phoenix and a close friend of Ritchie and Davis, will present the couple's award.

The lead sponsor is Broadway Cares.



**Gay & Lesbian  
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*Individual tickets are \$70 and  
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Children are admitted free of charge.*

## Two Boston-area AIDS service organizations set to join forces

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

The Boards of Directors of AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts (AAC) and Cambridge Cares About AIDS (CCA) voted in June to merge their organizations into a single agency. On July 1, the two agencies began operating as one organization which will operate under the AIDS Action name and 501(c)3 charter. All services previously delivered at sites operated by CCA and AAC will continue uninterrupted.

"This is fundamentally about being better positioned to serve our clients," said John Gatto, senior vice president of programs for AIDS Action and formerly the executive director of CCA. "By merging, we have eliminated redundancies, reduced administrative expenses, and freed up resources for services. We've also responded to the wishes of public and private funders who want to see nonprofit organizations reduce administrative costs and leverage management talent. We fully expect that our new agency will be more competitively positioned for future funding opportunities."

The new agency will transform the AIDS service delivery model in the Greater Boston/Cambridge metropolitan area. The first year of operations will be focused on providing a seamless service delivery model to clients and stabilizing the delivery of programs even given the difficult financial times. But the long-term vision for the new organization is to create more collaboration among providers and social justice organizations serving people with HIV/AIDS to ensure better health outcomes for clients and to reduce the spread of new infections.

The merger also will allow the 2 agencies to respond more quickly to changes in data about what the community needs and the population being impacted by HIV.

"We also feel we can achieve healthier outcomes for the people we serve and for the community as a whole," Gatto added.

"The merger will also allow us to focus more intently on the root causes of HIV transmission," said Rebecca Haag, president and CEO of AAC. "Building on the historical social justice work of AIDS Action and Cambridge Cares About AIDS, our new agency will be better positioned to address how HIV/AIDS



PHOTO: AIDS ACTION COMMITTEE

**Sam Woldu (L), a walker for Cambridge Cares and Katie Joe Markman (R), a Case Manager at Cambridge Cares**

resides squarely at the intersection of homophobia, racism, poverty, and all that comes with it: homelessness, substance abuse, and weakened communal supports."

The merger was the result of a strategic alliance process funded by The Boston Foundation which provided the assistance of New Sector Alliance, a national social impact consulting and leadership development consulting firm.

*Founded in 1983, AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, Inc. (AAC), is New England's first and largest AIDS service organization. AAC provides services for men, women and children living with AIDS and HIV; educates the public and health professionals about how to prevent HIV transmission in accordance with harm reduction principles; and advocates for fair and effective AIDS policy at the city, state and federal levels. AAC also provides targeted outreach to those most vulnerable to HIV infection. AAC runs the only state-wide AIDS/STD Hotline (1-800-235-2331) and Hepatitis Hotline (1-888-443-4372). All Hotlines offer multilingual support. Free and confidential rapid HIV testing and counseling, and clean needle exchange are also available. Learn more at [www.aac.org](http://www.aac.org).*

### Trans Bill from page 8

trans men and women from discrimination in the areas of housing, education, and credit. And it would add transgender people to the list of categories, including race, religion, and gender, protected from hate crimes.

The bill garnered 84 sponsors in the House of Representatives, including House Speaker Robert DeLeo, and 21 sponsors in the Senate. And, yes, that means that the law has already won the support of more than half of all lawmakers. Gov. Deval Patrick, meanwhile, has already pledged to sign it.

So why hasn't it passed? Who knows. It's most likely a case of election year nerves coupled with an extremely effective anti-trans bill PR campaign — bathroom bill, anyone? — by the state GOP and the Coal-

tion for Marriage and Family.

Although the current legislative session doesn't run out until July 31, don't hold your breath expecting action on this bill before then. What you can do, though, is only support candidates for state office who have pledged to vote for this bill. Expect an extremely busy campaign season this fall. When a candidate knocks on your door or calls you at home, ask for their position on this bill and let them know that their answer will impact your vote. To learn more about the bill, visit [www.masstpc.org](http://www.masstpc.org).

*\*Susan Ryan-Vollmar is a media relations and communications consultant. One of her clients is MassEquality, which belongs to a coalition of groups working to pass the Transgender Civil Rights Bill.*

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# Voy por la vereda tropical en Cuba

**Visión Latina**

Por: Alejandro Cuque\*/Guest Writer

No fui privilegiado. Nací 10 años después de la Revolución de 1959 en Cuba.

Mi abuelo fue descendiente de españoles, abogado, adinerado, inmiscuido siempre en malos negocios. Viajó a nombre de farmacéuticas, brindó su casa para atentados a lacayos sanguinarios de la dictadura anterior. Apoyó a jóvenes de todo tipo, que se hicieron guerrilleros, barbudos, revolucionarios, socialistas, comunistas... dictadores, represores, censores... y usted sabe qué más.

El hizo propaganda gratuita a favor de la nueva revolución de América. Tuvo muchísimo dinero y terminó estibando en el puerto. Bajo tormentas, salvaba vidas y su propia casa se inundaba. La sorpresa fue que se colgó del cuello en el baño y no hubo más amaneceres de reproches. Por mi abuelo pude haber sido guerrillero, secuestrador, oligarca, burgués o comunista.

En la Habana hoy en día hay acontecimientos de todas índoles; Damas de Blanco por las calles, pidiendo "Libertad para esposos e hijos" y el gobierno eso no lo tolera, y responde con patadas y empujones. Es represión y agresión. Otros prefieren manifestarse silenciosamente.

Los medios oficiales nunca dicen la verdad y tildan de mercenario a todo el que piensa diferente. ¿Qué pasará con Cuba en los próximos tiempos? Quién sabe, pero creo que algo pasará...esperemos. Espero que los Orishas, Dios, o Buda nos ayuden y comiencen los cambios pronto....de no ser así, nuestro futuro no se ve bien.

Obama representa buena voluntad, intención de diálogo, mejorar relaciones...tan terribles por tantos años... y siempre el que gobierna Cuba (no sabemos quién es) con su respuesta de puño cerrado...

La mayoría en Cuba vive con una doble moral y están obligados a asistir a mítines de repudio. Recordemos el Mariel en 1980, donde se tiraron huevos que hoy no tenemos.

El presente es complicado; los jóvenes no creen en el gobierno y se manifiestan indistintamente, el resto se mantiene, sin acceso a otro tipo de información, pensando que el mundo está mal y no Cuba. Ha crecido el culto a la personalidad de forma irritante.

Aquí hablamos del sistema que nos desgoberna y que ha repartido la miseria por más de 50 años a todos menos los que tienen las riendas del poder.

Ministros son sustituidos sin explicación, otros pierden su trabajo por corrupción, con-

ocidos en altas esferas desde el principio de sus andadas "desautorizadas" por el "Nivel Central"; es un país donde todos tenemos a un agente para saber qué hacemos o cómo pensamos.

Hoy para almorzar, compré a \$2.00 (CUC) un picadillo hecho en E.U., "Gold Crest, Grounded Turkey, 400 gr", distribuido por Butterball, LLC, Garner, NC, 27529, USA; mi salario mensual es 250 (Pesos Cubanos=\$10.00 CUC) así que me costó este picadillo 50 (pesos cubanos). ¡Imagínese un picadillo tan caro! Supo buenísimo, ¡pero a qué costo!

Increíble pero cierto... Los tabacos/Habanos Cohiba son el máximo trofeo para llevar a EU, tan cerca que estamos y tan lejos. Este trofeo no se puede llevar pero si se puede llevar a EU arte, música y libros, pero tabacos hechos a manos no. ¿No son acaso, un arte?

Las cosas están escasas... no hay medicinas pero tenemos el "mejor" cuidado médico. Tenemos mucha educación pero no hay trabajos y cuando tienes un trabajo, los salarios están por el piso. Imagínese que no tengo ni papel sanitario. Le comentaba a mi amigo en Boston, que literalmente tuvo que limpiarme con Mariela Castro; su rostro ocupaba parte de una página de una publicación. Siempre buscamos opciones—si se acaba el papel sanitario no me queda más que usar ese artículo que guardaba para él por no tener papel higiénico. Lo sentí mucho por mi amigo al no enviarle el documento original. Nos la tenemos que buscar por acá.

Cada domingo salgo a caminar pero nada cambia, sólo cambian los precios y la escasez de artículos y demás. Terminó este pequeño paseo a través de mi ciudad con anhelos de conocer a mis lectores algún día y de poder respirar el aire dominical. ¡Hasta el próximo paseo dominical! Saludos desde la Habana para todos mis lectores LGBT y en especial a mis amistades ¡por 'allá! Espero que puedan visitar y poder hacer su propio paseo dominical en Cuba.

\* Escrito en Español desde Cuba por Alejandro Cuque y traducido al inglés por Wilfred Labiosa. Editado por Wilfred Labiosa y Natalia Muñoz. To read this column in English, please visit: [www.therainbowtimesmass.com/latinvision\\_july15](http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com/latinvision_july15).

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# Nueva política de HUD protege a la comunidad LGBT

WASHINGTON, D.C.—El Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano de los Estados Unidos (HUD, por sus siglas en inglés) anunció el 1 de julio una nueva política que proporciona más ayuda cuando miembros de la comunidad lesbiana, gay, bisexual o transgénero enfrentan discriminación en la vivienda.

La nueva póliza trata a este tipo de discriminación (la cual ocurre con más frecuencia a personas transgénero) como discriminación en base al sexo o género la cual es una clase protegida bajo la Ley de Equidad de Vivienda, e instruye al personal de HUD que informe sobre agencias estatales y locales que tienen leyes contra la discriminación que incluye a la comunidad LGBT a los individuos que presenten quejas.

El secretario de HUD Shaun Donovan anunció la nueva póliza durante la Celebración del Mes de Orgullo LGBT de HUD.

"Nuestro trabajo para prevenir y combatir la discriminación en la vivienda no está completa sin abordar los problemas del siglo 21", dijo John Trasviña, Secretario Adjunto de Vivienda Justa e Igualdad de Oportunidades." Nuestro personal de equidad de vivienda trabajará con agencias estatales y locales de derechos civiles para investigar y referir casos de discriminación y trabajará para combatir todos los aspectos de la discriminación de género."

La Ley de Vivienda Justa prohíbe la discriminación en el alquiler, las ventas y los préstamos en base a la raza, color, origen nacional, religión, género, discapacidad y estado familiar. Aproximadamente 20 estados, el Distrito de Columbia, y más de 60 ciudades, pueblos y condados en todo el país cuentan con protecciones adicionales que prohíben específicamente este tipo de discriminación contra las personas LGBT. Bajo la póliza anunciada, HUD, cuando apropiado, mantendrá su jurisdicción sobre las quejas presentadas por individuos o familias LGBT, investigará en forma conjunta o remitirá el asunto a los gobiernos estatales, locales y regionales que

poseen protecciones legales adicionales.

Por ejemplo, si un hombre afirma que está siendo desalojado porque él es gay y su propietario cree que infectará a otros inquilinos con VIH, entonces la alegación de discriminación puede caer bajo la jurisdicción de la Ley de Vivienda Justa basada en la discapacidad porque a el hombre se le está considerando como si poseyera una discapacidad, el VIH / SIDA. Similarmente, si a una mujer que está

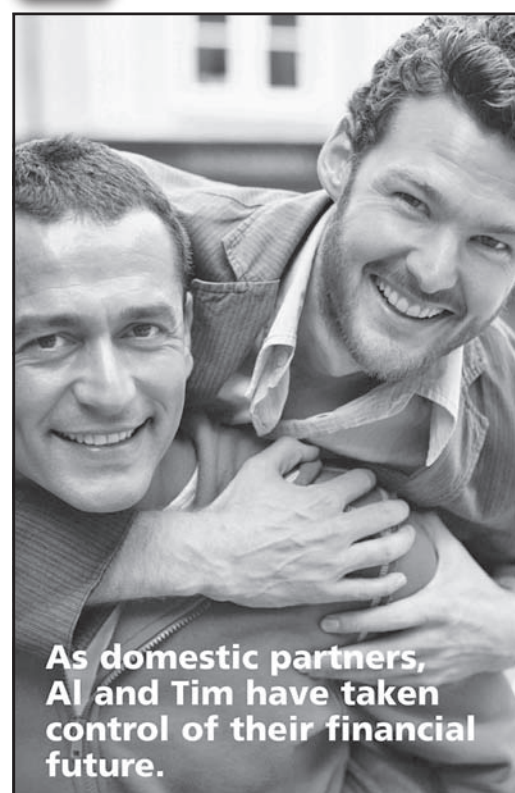
en búsqueda de apartamento se le discrimina porque utiliza ropa masculina y participa en otras expresiones físicas que son estereotípicamente masculinas, su denuncia puede tener jurisdicción bajo las Leyes de Discriminación en base al sexo.

Adicionalmente, HUD tiene la intención de proponer nuevas regulaciones que aclaren que el término "familia" (como se usa para describir a los beneficiarios elegibles de los programas de HUD) incluya las personas y las parejas elegibles LGBT. La intención del Departamento al proponer nuevas regulaciones es aclarar la situación familiar para asegurar que sus programas de vivienda básica están disponibles para todas las familias, independientemente de su orientación sexual o identidad de género.

La Administración de Vivienda Federal (FHA, por sus siglas en inglés) también instruirá a su comunidad prestamista que los préstamos hipotecarios asegurados por la FHA deben basarse en la solvencia de los prestatarios y no en factores no relacionados o características como la orientación sexual o identidad de género. Por último, HUD comisionará el primer estudio nacional de la discriminación contra los miembros de la comunidad LGBT en el alquiler y venta de la vivienda. El Departamento está solicitando comentarios públicos por el Internet sobre como diseñar este nuevo estudio.

To read this column in English, please visit:  
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# DEEP INSIDE HOLLYWOOD: Cynthia Nixon catches *The Big C*

Entertainment News

By: Romeo San Vicente\*

**Cynthia Nixon catches *The Big C***  
Time to shake the embarrassing sands of Abu Dhabi from Cynthia Nixon's resume with some fresh work, wouldn't we all agree? Well, she's got some – and the new gig will take her right back to a premium cable channel sitcom, Showtime's upcoming Laura Linney-and-Gabourey Sidibe-starring cancer dramedy *The Big C*. It debuts Aug. 16, and during the show's inaugural stretch of episodes – it's assumed some remission time will be involved if it gets picked up for multiple seasons – Nixon will play Linney's long-lost college roommate for a four-episode story arc (Idris Elba will also guest star for a four-episode run). There's no word on whether her character will eventually be recurring, but it's a good casting move all the same, since Nixon brings with her that acerbic voice from her own hit franchise. That's tone a comic looks at chemotherapy will probably employ in large quantity.

## **Zombieland director takes on *White's Babe***

Call it beginner's luck if you want, but the reality is that Ruben Fleischer, who made his directing debut with the surprise hit horror-comedy *Zombieland*, has been in the business working his way up the ranks for some time now and he's had a cool queer ally along the way: Mike White. Still not a household name but known in Hollywood for his off-kilter wit and hilarious writer's sensibility, White is the man who not only competed along with his own gay father on *The Amazing Race*, but also penned *School of Rock*, *Chuck* and *Buck* and directed the strange and strange-



Romeo San Vicente

a female Yale freshman who becomes a mafia target. So think *The Sopranos* meets... *The House Bunny*?

## **Anthony Rapp stage *Without You***

Few Broadway musicals of the past 20 years have inspired as intense a subculture of fandom as *Rent*. It's not simply a show its devotees like, it's a show they *love* for wildly varied, intimate and personal reasons and will see it over and over, sometimes developing connections even to the cast. Anthony Rapp, one of those original cast members, seems to feel the same way about the show. It inspired a memoir *Without You*, about his experiences with the show and about the death of his mother, and now the book will become a stage musical all its own. Rapp has turned *Without You* into a one-man production that will debut in September at this year's New York Musical Theater Festival and will feature original songs as well as music from R.E.M. and *Rent*'s creator, the late Jonathan Larson. Rentheads, book your tickets now.

## **Tiffany+Debbie = *Mega Python Vs Gatoroid***

Syfy network fooled us all once with the sobad-it-zoomed-right-past-good-and-landed-back-at-just-plain-old-boring-and-bad *Mega Shark vs Giant Octopus* (but seriously, how do you turn the most awesome TV movie title ever into something so sleepy and lame?). And so, as the saying goes, shame on them! But now they want to make us say shame on us by attempting to manufacture a camp film again? OK, yes, the title is great: this time it's *Mega Python vs Gatoroid*, and not only will Deborah Gibson (for-

ly funny *Year of the Dog*. His new script, the comedy *Babe in The Woods*, is on track to be Fleischer's third feature, right after he finishes the caper comedy *30 Minutes or Less* starring Jesse Eisenberg, Danny McBride and Aziz Ansari. No one's cast for it yet, but the plot concerns



PHOTO: NEW LINE CINEMA

Cynthia Nixon

merly Debbie, and make sure you say it right or she'll cut you) be reprising her scientist role from the first movie, but her '80s bubblegum pop star archrival Tiffany is also going to be in it. And, well, OK, we are also intrigued by the concept of a "gatoroid" because that just sounds like an animal made of electrolyte-containing sports drinks. So... yes, we're in. It airs sometime in 2011. Shame on us.

\*Romeo San Vicente, by popular demand, has also decided to apply the "mega" prefix to his own name. He can be reached care of this publication or at [DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com](mailto:DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com).

# MTPC Steering Committee Expands, Retains Key Leaders

By: Tynan Power/TRT Reporter

The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition recently introduced an expanded Steering Committee for 2010-2011.

Steering Committee Chair, Nancy Nangeroni, returns for a third year at the Committee's helm. Nangeroni is an MIT-educated engineer and long-time transgender activist who founded the Gender Talk radio show in 1995. Poet Rachel K. Zall moves from an At-Large Member role to the Vice Chair spot. Grace Sterling Stowell, Executive Director of the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth (BAGLY), will serve as treasurer for another year. The Committee's new Clerk, Jesse Begenyi, a film-maker and intern at MTPC, also moves from an At-Large Member position.

"I cannot tell you how excited I am about this new steering committee," Nangeroni said. "We just expanded from 8 to 12 people and the people that we added are all really talented smart."

At-Large Members of the MTPC Steering Committee for 2010-2011 are: Daniel Basil Hamilton (Reynolds), who brings a background in social services; Theadora Fisher, who holds a Masters in Public Policy from Brandeis and has focused her work with MTPC on the transgender civil rights bill; Liz Monnin-Browder, who is a founding member of the Massachusetts Transgender Legal Advocates, a graduate of Boston College School of Law, and a member of MLGBA's Committee on Transgender Inclusion; Christina Knowles, State Director and Lobbyist for the National Organization for Women; Barusch, a past Steering Committee member, graduate of Boston University's School of Law, and a founding member of the Massachusetts Transgender Legal Advocates; Mycroft Masada Holmes, who is Co-Chair of the Interfaith Coalition for Transgender Equality and is involved in several other faith, religion and spirituality organizations; Raffi Freedman-Gurspan, the policy intern at MTPC who brings an educational background in political science and social policymaking; and Dale Marie Edwards, a leading member of the Boston Transgender Day of Remembrance planning committee, who works in health research and has been involved with MTPC since 2005.

"What that means is that MTPC is going to be able to do more in the future," said Nangeroni. "It's very exciting to see an organization prosper especially at a time that has been such a challenge to so many organizations. That is a tribute to Gunner's leadership I think, as well as to the talents of all of the people who show up at MTPC and help do this work."

For more information about the MTPC visit: [www.massstp.org](http://www.massstp.org)



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# I don't need the surgery to feel at peace with myself

## Trans Opinions & More

**By: Deja Nicole Greenlaw/ TRT Columnist**  
Sex change surgery, SRS (sexual reassignment surgery), GRS (gender reassignment surgery), the bottom surgery, call it what you will but many transgender people want it.

I've asked people why they want it and the most common answers are, "It completes me," "It makes me feel whole," "I am now in tune with my body," "My body flows better" and "I needed to get rid of the genitalia that I was born with."

These people really, really want the change and are determined to get it.

Me? Well, I've never been dead-set about getting the surgery, but as time went on I decided to investigate the possibilities of getting it.

I went to two clinical behavioral therapists to get my two official documents to approve my surgery and I found two surgeons in Connecticut who worked together at the UConn Health Center about 45 minutes from home.

One is an urologist who does the inside workings while the other is a cosmetic surgeon who does the outside "finish work."

Everything was going fine until the cosmetic surgeon ceased being affiliated with the UConn center. It just fell apart right in front of my eyes. I began looking for other surgeons and did not feel the comfort level that I had with my origi-



Deja Nicole Greenlaw

nal two surgeons. You see, most, if not all, SRS surgeons are cosmetic surgeons and I don't feel confident that they can do the inside work good enough for me.

I did check quite a few out and talked to a lot of girls who have had surgery. At first they all said that it was the greatest

thing that ever happened to them but afterward, when I asked if they had had complications or problems, the story went deeper.

I have heard of urination problems, infections, fistulas (where you excrete waste through your vagina), soreness, things not healing right and no ability to orgasm.

Please keep in mind that all of these things may not happen to you after surgery but they are all very real possibilities.

I thought about the complications that might happen and it does make me step back and wonder if it is worth it.

I picture a scenario where everything goes well. But I still have to take into account dilation, which is keeping the vagina open by inserting a phallic-shaped device into the new vagina. You see, the new vagina is really an open wound and your body wants to close it so you must dilate to keep it open.

I've heard that this is a painful and a some-

what nasty process as there is blood, dead skin and God knows what coming out of your new vagina. You have to dilate several times a day right after the surgery and then decrease the dilations eventually to once or twice a week.

Weekly dilations will go on forever — you cannot stop if you want depth in your vagina. Some girls dilate faithfully for a while and then get lax with it. The vagina then starts to close and then it takes more dilation to painfully open it up again.

Even if you dilate faithfully it still hurts and it's a constant reminder of what you must do to keep your depth. Most girls like to keep the depth so that they can have intercourse or use a dildo.

But, even if you dilate faithfully, it still hurts when having sex. Let's face it; this vagina is not like a vagina that one is born with. This new vagina does not have vaginal walls and will not expand or contract while hosting a penis. The new vagina is nothing more than the skin of your penis and perhaps some scrotal tissue. It may be good enough for most girls but it is not good enough for me.

I want a vagina like the kind that females are born with. I know that it is impossible to get one like this at this point in time. The best I can get is what's offered now.

So I tally up all of the pros and cons about the surgery and I find that the cons vastly outweigh the pros. The only thing that could possibly change my mind is the fact that I may need to do this so that I will have peace, feel complete, feel whole, feel in tune, feel better body flow,

or I just need to get rid of my male genitalia. I now realize that I already feel peace and that having my male genitalia doesn't really bother me. I tuck it when I get dressed and then I forget about it. I don't even think about it. It's like I don't have it anyway.

I really don't have a pressing need to change that area. Simply living as female and taking hormones is good enough for me. I realize that for many girls it is not. They need to have the surgery for their peace of mind.

For those that do need to have the surgery may I suggest that you might think of having an option which I call the Ann Stebbins option? Ann is one of my good friends and her idea is to have everything done but skip the vagina part! The vagina part is where you can have the most after-surgery problems and you must dilate to keep it open. Skipping the vagina part you can still have the outside appearance of female genitalia, have the chance of after-surgery complications greatly reduced and you will not have to dilate for the rest of your life! No, you won't be able to accommodate a penis, but you may be still able to orgasm as you will still have a clitoris.

Yes, I've thought of this vagina-less surgery for myself but I find that I don't even need that to feel more at peace than where I am now. I think that when I transitioned to living full time as female that was enough for me. That was the biggest thing that I needed to do. I just needed to live as a female. I don't need the surgery to feel at peace with myself.

## Ask a Transwoman: How we identify ourselves? Where we feel most comfortable

**By: Lorelei Erisis\*/TRT Columnist**

Dear Lorelei,

*I have a sincere question that I have never had the opportunity to ask. I hope it's OK to ask you. I have a friend who was a woman and became a man. Surgery. Name, passport, driver's license changes. He married a woman. So you have a man and woman couple. So why does this transgender person, and others, align themselves with the gay community instead of the heterosexual community? Forgive my naiveté, but I am truly curious about that.*  
— Anna M.

Ah, no worries Anna, I'm probably the best person to ask. After all, this is what I am here for!

And it's a fairly simple answer really, especially when dealing with transmen. (And of course by calling it "simple" I will probably bring howling outrage down on me from all corners. But I digress ...)

Many transgender women often identified as heterosexual men previous to transition will flip that around to identify as heterosexual women post-transition.

Many of the transgender men I've met and been aware of came out as lesbians before deciding to transition and so as a result, the gay community is often where they feel most comfortable. They will usually have made close connections in the gay community prior to transitioning as well as having developed their support structure inside that community.

More than anything it's often a simple matter of where we feel most comfortable.

Many transmen I know date lesbian identified women who are more likely to be open minded about the differences in transgender sexual anatomy and the bevy of gender related

issues they must cope with. To be blunt, if you're not familiar, "bottom surgery" for transmen, which can include: hysterectomy and/or bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy and genital reconstructive procedures like metoidioplasty or phalloplasty (phew!) is not as well developed and streamlined as it is for transwomen. Many will opt simply to have "top surgery" (bilateral mastectomy) and leave the rest be.

They'll go for what I call "The King Missile" option - detachable penis.

Additionally, whereas many transwomen, as I mentioned, change their sexual attraction while retaining a heterosexual orientation, many transmen will change their basic orientation but not their sexual attraction. Yes, this can make your head spin.

Also, and I think this is kind of important to take into consideration, being technically heterosexual does not in my experience necessarily make a person "straight." I know lots of very, very queer folks who prefer partners that identify as a different gender than their own.

One very close friend of mine for instance, who had previously identified as lesbian, now self-identifies as queer due to her discovery that while she is not especially attracted to cisgender men, she is attracted to folks with very, very butch gender presentations. And further, she prefers the particular "go all night" advantages of transmen to the sometimes all too brief sexual encounters that are often to be had with cismen. No offense to you cisguys! I'll be more than happy to roll the dice on a good time in bed with y'all myself!

(Oh, and any Butch Transguys out there who'd like to meet my super-awesome friend, just drop me a line and a pic right here and I'll see what I can do.)

Now, politically and socially speaking, there are lots of other reasons why transgender folks

choose to associate/align themselves with the LGBTQ community. For one thing we have some very similar goals. We are all struggling for the same basic equal rights, so having a larger power-base to support that struggle helps enormously. Basically we are more powerful together than apart. Also, and I tell people this a lot when they ask me what T people have in common with LGB & Q people.

Although we may ourselves be aware of and conversant with, the often very large differences between folks who are transgender and are fighting for rights based around issues having to do with gender presentation/identification; and with Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Queer folks who are fighting for rights based more around their sexual orientation. The larger straight, cisgender society very often doesn't care about our differences or the nuances of division between LGBT and Q people. They see "those people." In their eyes we are grouped together anyway.

For example, despite the current uproar around the perceived offensiveness of the word "transny," I have never had that word used against me as an insult. But I have been called "faggot" more times than I could count.

So basically, until everyone else can tell the difference between us and we find a more stable place in the larger society,

we're all stuck on the same gay side.

So, there you go. Not so simple after all, but really what is? Hope that helps.

On a quick final note, I just wanted to take a bit of space here to say how wonderful it was to meet so many fantastic and beautiful fans over the past month or so as I was making the rounds of all the Pride Celebrations in the region. You all made me feel so loved and so happy! I just love you all!

And I was just so incredibly proud to see so many Trans, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer folks (and all the rest of you, too!) turning out to celebrate as well as to be heard on the streets of Boston, Hartford, Providence, NYC and my own beloved Northampton. All of you were so amazing and accepting and you welcomed me with open arms to your fair cities.

Thank you!

So keep reading friends and spread the word. Keep sending in those questions.

We'll figure this all out together! Slainte!

\* Lorelei Erisis is Miss Trans New England 2009. She can be contacted at: [loleleierisis@therainbowtimesmass.com](mailto:loleleierisis@therainbowtimesmass.com).



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# Moderate Party candidate Ken Block promises modern leadership for RI

**By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter**

Ken Block is hoping to make history, as the first Moderate Party candidate to be elected governor of Rhode Island.

He is one of seven candidates vying for the chance to succeed Republican Gov. Don Carcieri, whose term ends in January.

Block, who lives in Barrington, found himself becoming increasingly frustrated with what he refers to as "irresponsible" leadership from both mainstream political parties.

In 2009, Block co-founded the Moderate Party so that voters would have an alternative to the other political parties.

"I've lived (in Rhode Island) for 20 years," Block said. "We've had chronic budget deficits every year I've been here. We have had a class of elected officials on both the legislative and the executive side who haven't been able to deal with the problems that we have."

The state has also been stuck with the fourth highest unemployment rate in the country. Block wants to create a more business-friendly environment, in order to motivate more com-



PHOTO: THE BLOCK CAMPAIGN  
**Ken Block**

panies to settle in the state.

"We have had an extraordinarily non-competitive economy," explained Block. "I know 25 fellow entrepreneurs who have picked up their businesses and left for Massachusetts and they took hundreds of millions of dollars in payroll with them."

Block believes that lowering taxes, as well as more effectively routing out waste and fraud, will benefit the state's economy.

"I don't want to cut existing social safety net programs," Block said. "I think they're all important. I think they're all there for a reason but we have to make sure that the people who are supposed to be getting it, get it and those people who are gaming the system and stealing, stop."

Block is the president of Simpatico Software Systems, a software engineering firm, and Cross Alert Systems, a manufacturer of specialized traffic signals for recreational trail/public road intersections.

The Connecticut native graduated from Dartmouth College, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in computer science. After graduating, Block wrote software for Wall Street trading desks in New York City. Block later took a one-year consulting job with GTECH Corporation before coming to Rhode Island in 1991.

**See Block on page 15**

# Businessman Gemma announces run for Congress in Ocean State's 5th District

**By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter**

Businessman Anthony Gemma is one of the four Democrats running in Rhode Island's First Congressional District. Gemma's rivals include Providence Mayor David Cicilline, and State Rep. David Segal, and Bill Lynch, the brother of Attorney General Patrick Lynch.

They are all hoping to succeed outgoing Congressman Patrick Kennedy (D), who decided not to seek reelection after his father, Massachusetts Sen. Edward "Ted" Kennedy, died last August.

The Democratic primary is Sept. 14. The winner will face Republican State Rep. John Loughlin in November.

Gemma is a Providence native who attended Suffolk University in Boston, and later ran his family's business, Gem Heating and Plumbing. In 2008, Gemma founded Mediapeel, a full-service marketing firm created to help organizations promote and market their products and services.

"The citizens have become disconnected from their government," said Gemma. "We're trying to get them reengaged and reinvigorated with their government."

To do this, Gemma has come up with the FOCUS Plan – financial accountability and transparency, open and honest government, communication, unemployment reduction, and schools.



PHOTO: THE GEMMA CAMPAIGN  
**Anthony Gemma**

Gemma calls himself a "consensus builder" who has the ability to work with different groups of people to create solutions.

Gemma also touts his business acumen as a valuable asset.

"I have run successful businesses. I have hired people directly. I bring a unique skill set and a different way of thinking about government," Gemma said. "I'll be more pragmatic than most."

Gemma's status as a political outsider has been embraced by those he has encountered in his travels throughout the state.

"They're excited because I'm a fresh face," Gemma noted. "Many people have come to me and said, 'You're a breath of fresh air.' They're hoping we can change the way politics are done here in Rhode Island."

On LGBT issues, Gemma supports the repeal of the military's anti-gay "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. He supports same-sex marriage as well as the repeal of DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act). In addition, he supports the passage of ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act).

Gemma also shared his thoughts on the massive health care reform bill which was signed into law last April.

"I'm happy that it passed. I believe it need

**See Gemma on page 15**

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- Mädchen in Uniform
- The World Unseen
- 8: The Mormon Proposition
- The Runaways
- The L Word Final Season
- The Baby Formula
- Training Rules

**Gay Top 10 Sellers**

- 8: The Mormon Proposition
- Pornography: A Thriller
- Boy
- La Mission
- BOYCRAZY
- Mr. Right
- The Butch Factor
- A Single Man
- Hit Parade
- Shut Up and Kiss Me



# The OutField: Reading between the lines



Dan Woog

By: Dan Woog\*

**T**hey're buried deep inside glossy media guides or in the middle of websites that take several clicks to reach. They're usually succinct: "Coach So-and-So is married to (spouse's name). They live with their (x number of) children in (insert town here)."

Those brief lines say a lot. Their absences say

even more.

Most people who read coaches' bios – sports-writers, avid fans, potential recruits and their parents – don't give them much thought. But Austin Stair Calhoun has.

A doctoral student at the University of Minnesota, she developed two research studies examining the biographies of college head coaches. She wanted to see whether coaching bios reinforced heterosexism in athletics – and how coaches who did not fit "heteronormative" patterns were portrayed.

Calhoun did not just wander into her project.

A media-relations professional, she had written coaches' bios at Washington and Lee University and the University of Delaware. There was a pattern: Male coaches were often described as "single and living in (town name)." Women were not. She wanted to explore those differences.

Working with Dr. Nicole LaVoi, associate director of the University of Minnesota's Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, Calhoun looked first at the biographies of Big Ten varsity coaches. She coded 10 items, ranging from gender of the coach and sport to personal information, such as hobbies, spouses, children and pets. All, she said, are "markers of traditional nuclear family narratives."

A second study included major Division I conferences, including the Big Ten, Pac-10, Big 12, SEC, ACC and Big East, as well as regionally representative Division III leagues. That study looked at over 1,900 biographies.

The first study found no mention of any gay or lesbian partners. The second showed only two: a male head coach of the female softball team at Oregon State University and the female field hockey coach at Wake Forest.

Though one hypothesis – that D-III schools, with less rigorous athletic demands and tamer recruiting battles, would be a more hospitable environment for openly gay coaches – was shattered, Calhoun looks at the glass as half full.

"I think it's fantastic that there are at least two college coaches who are openly gay in their bios," she says. "At least we're talking about it."

Calhoun also found something that wasn't there. Over 35 percent of the coaches' bios contained no information at all about spouses

or partners.

"It's improbable to think that only 0.1 percent of coaches are gay or lesbian," she says. "There are people who are out in many facets of their lives. They're just not out in their on-line coaching bios."

Of the 690 coaches with no mention of a significant other, 57 percent were male, 43 percent female. They fell into two categories. Some bios included "some level of personal information," such as interests or community work. Others did not. "When a bio stops at high school or college, that's indicative of something," Calhoun says.

"Over 1,200 coaches have some personal text. So the absence of that becomes visible. It's almost like not including personal information is a way of implicitly outing someone. People reading the biography may say, 'Why isn't there any information about this person's personal life?'"

Coaching is a high-stress profession, Calhoun notes. "There are plenty of barriers for women. In some cases, there is no time for a female coach to have a family. But lots of coaches say 'our team is a family.' If there's no traditional family involved, that's an interesting dichotomy."

LaVoi passes along an interesting saying: "The best qualification for a female coach is to be divorced, with no kids." Calhoun interprets that to mean: "You're 'safe' in terms of sexual orientation, but you're not distracted by children."

The feedback to the studies has been "fantastic," she says. The pilot research was presented last year at the Sport, Sexuality and Culture Conference at Ithaca College, and published by the Women's Sports Foundation. The national study was presented at the Tucker Center, and is being submitted to a professional journal.

Calhoun recently finished her coursework, and is embarking on her Ph.D. dissertation. The topic is "Gatekeeping Mechanisms of NCAA Media Professionals."

She'll examine how sports information directors' staffs prepare coaches' biographies, with an eye toward how and why information on personal lives is included (or not).

"I want to see whether it's the result of institutionalized homophobia" – meaning it comes from the culture of sports and individual institutions – "or if it's internalized" (resulting from the coaches' own desire to maintain privacy).

"This all started as a little idea of mine," Calhoun says. "Now it may be the research of my career."

Years from now, her own biography should make for very interesting reading.

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



Austin Stair Calhoun

## Gemma from page 14

some tweaking," Gemma said, adding he would have liked more bi-partisan support for the bill.

When it comes to the war in Afghanistan, Gemma supports President Barack Obama's decision to send in more troops, but also wants a quick end to the conflict.

"I am supportive of bringing home the troops as quickly as possible," Gemma said, noting the mission wasn't over yet. "We have a job to do, we have to finish the job. We can't put our troops in jeopardy."

Although the national unemployment rate remains close to 10 percent and some economists' fear that the country could head into a depression, Gemma doesn't feel another economic stimulus is needed.

"I believe that we're heading in the right direction," Gemma said, noting the economy was showing signs of recovery.

Gemma has drawn a lot of inspiration from his parents, who raised nine children in modest surroundings.

"We were a very poor family growing up. We lived in a single tenement home. We had four bedrooms for nine children and two parents. That humbleness that was there growing up, and those values that were instilled in us, still live today and makes me the person I am today," he said.

## Block from page 14

On social issues, Block is much more moderate than Carcieri, who has displayed animosity toward the LGBT community by supporting the anti-gay National Organization for Marriage (NOM) and vetoing a bill granting death benefits to domestic partners.

Block, who supports same-sex marriage, promises to be a much more inclusive leader.

"It's a question of basic civil rights," Block said of allowing gays and lesbians to be wed. "A heterosexual couple can be married and as a result obtain specific rights from the state. I don't think the state has any business to deny those same rights to homosexual couples."

Block believes the governor needs to maintain an open line of communication with the General Assembly to get things done. The governor needs to be involved with the legislative process, Block noted.

Block's skills as a software engineer will also be invaluable, he explained: "We need a governor who's modern. We need somebody who understands technology. We haven't had that."

The response to his candidacy has been positive, and Block is pleased to put to rest the public's preconceived notions about his upstart political party.

"It's been fun to watch because people had no expectations for me at all," Block said, explaining his fellow Moderate Party candidates were not "crazy."

"These are reasonable, rational people who have gotten involved in politics because they are realizing the problems are not getting fixed," noted Block. "We need non-conflicted, open people running for office."

## Envision from page 2

to ensure the human rights of our migrant, displaced, and refugee people; to promote economic justice and to support new, small, local economic systems created and maintained by our people; and, to secure our political and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the silencing and erasure of our peoples."

We as queer/transgender/gender non-conforming people have a responsibility to struggle for our own liberation, and recognize our liberation as part of a complex and interwoven collective liberation struggle. In order for us to win, to see a global transformation that does not solve our problems by turning to the state for validation, we must act in solidarity with queer Palestinians, gender non-conforming migrant workers, transgender prisoners and all others among our community who are pushing beyond survival and into celebration of life.

Among the amazing workshops and assemblies going on during the USSF were incredible and inspiring beautiful people. It was an immense blessing to pray and sing with Unitarian Universalists from around the country. It was a joy to raise fists with anarchists from rural and urban areas. It was invigorating to listen to the words of revolutionaries like Grace Lee Boggs, a woman who has given all of her 95 years of life to the struggle for justice.

I listened to stories of undocumented migrant folks who consistently reminded me that they didn't cross the border, the border crossed them. U.S. economic policies have ruined the lives of so many people in other countries and working in the United States is one of the only ways they can make money to support their families.

These connections inspired me to live more authentically and to take my faith seriously.

I will be joining tens of thousands of other people in Phoenix, Arizona, the week of July 25-31 to say, "NO to SB1070!" and all other racist anti-immigrant legislation.

As a queer person, I know that I need to put my body on the line and do all I can to join in the collective NO! while also standing side by side with those who are taking the time to use their hands to create something new and transformative.

In the words of the organizers from Young Women's Empowerment Project, an organization of girls and young women impacted by the sex trade and street economies, when taking action in our world we must denounce the way things currently are, resist systemic and interpersonal violence, and create the world we wish to see.

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