

The Rainbow Times

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

Year 3, Vol. 5 • June 4 - July 1, 2009

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Opinions

D-Day rally at City Hall

By: J.M. Sorrell, TRT Columnist

On Tuesday, May 26, the California Supreme Court made public its decisions. First, the 18,000 same-gender marriages that took place last summer are preserved. Secondly, by a 6-1 vote, the Court voted to uphold Prop 8 (the vote last November that eliminates same-sex marriage as a right in California).

Natalia Tylim was one of the organizers for a protest/rally at Northampton City Hall that evening. She works with the Socialist Workers' organization and is a recent college graduate. Approximately 120 attended the open-mic event. Attendees expressed appreciation for how far we have come in Massachusetts and frustration that we still have DOMA and other forms of state and federal discrimination throughout our country.

Tylim stated, "The tide has shifted immensely. Social movements change people. Protesters do this. Anyone who says 'wait' is perpetuating oppression."

Daniel Rivers teaches LGBT history at Smith College. He spoke of being raised by a lesbian mom at a time when he was told never to use the "L" word in public.

"The contradictions inherent by the fact that the state of California failed to continue to make legal same-sex marriage but let the

18,000 marriages stand will illuminate the issue and push it to the United States Supreme Court," Rivers said.

Ginny Lyons, an LGBT ally who attended the event said she did so because "people refuse to acknowledge they are everywhere. Everybody knows a lesbian." She agreed with the social workers' position that all civil rights are relevant, including the rights of same-sex couples.

Carolyn Gutierrez spoke of the similarities with the oppression of undocumented workers and the need to engage in the intersection of all of our issues.

"I am just furious," Gutierrez said. "I am not the marrying type but how dare the government not give that right to all couples."

Gutierrez grew up in Springfield, MA, and said that gay bashings and racism were common in schools there. Now she is thrilled when she sees young LGBT people with parents and grandparents at pride marches.

The intelligence, ethics, and sense of connection of social justice issues from the mostly young adult crowd made this almost 49-year-old lesbian, leftie activist believe I may be able to relax in retirement one day (but is it in my nature?).

See Rally on Page 4

C'mon Out – Just Ask! Advice column

By: Tetty Gorfine*

Hi Tetty, I've been in a 9 year relationship. I love my partner and very much want to stay with her. But things aren't as they used to be. We're not so passionate any more and sometimes I'm not sure what to talk about. Can you give me some suggestions in keeping our relationship fresh? Thank you! Kindly, Mari



TETTY GORFINE

change or accommodate individual difference, the relationship will be stifled. It is very important that people maintain parts of themselves that function independently from the other. This does not mean giving up things that are important to the two of you together, but

includes your individuality. When each person is free to explore aspects of life on their own, imagine what "newness" can be brought back to the relationship. When it is new, it is not yet experienced and shared between the two of you. When couples function as "one unit," no new life can be brought back to refuel the relationship.

This also holds true for couples who can not disagree. When two people must be the same, i.e. share the same opinions, attitudes and tastes, what will ever be fresh? Lively debate can teach new things and bring new perspectives. There are just so many reasons that people within a loving and committed relationship should let fresh air blow between them. Life lives itself through cycles of change. Breathing in requires that we exhale. Waves rushing into the shore must move back out to the open sea. Like all of nature we humans need to come together and we need to move apart. This is the nature of life. Trust that letting go allows for homecoming, fresh, alive and anew. Go for it, Tetty

Tetty, Hi. Can you help shed some light on this? This guy I know wants to become a girl, but says she will still be into women sexually. So is she straight or what? I don't understand. Thanks, Jon

See C'mon Out on Page 5

The Controversial Couch

Lie back and listen. Then get up and do something

By: Suzan Ambrose/TRT Columnist



I love bodies. Not talking bootyie, although that's great as well. No, I'm talking the fabulous human form, that physical entity that houses our souls and allows us to experience the most intense of feelings; from touch to pleasure or pain ("What's the difference?" a bunch of you naughties are thinking.)

I don't discriminate against any kind of body, although, clearly, I have a particular preference for the soft, warm female version (see my April TRT column on bisexuality). All bodies have something beautiful about them. Beauty, we've heard, is in the eye of the beholder. But, does beauty include fat people?

Fat is something most cultures frown upon. Fat is not the new black or the new gay, because people aren't born fat, so that discrimination issue falls flat. Fat develops from poor eating and even worse exercise habits. You can't change your skin color or the fact that you're gay, but you can decide what you put in your mouth everyday. (My girlfriend suggests I should just munch on her when I'm feeling hungry, but that's a column for another day!)

In our 21st century world, it's apparent that the concept of beauty is equated with weight. And by that I mean the lack of it. Thin is in. Fat is not *Phat*. Oh sure, we've got the big

Mommies and the Bears in the LGBT family but fat's the unspoken (or perhaps often spoken!) elephant in the room. (did I just say elephant? Ouch.)

Queer people can be very judgmental about bodies. I can hear the gay boys now, cackling by the bar: "Girl! Are those pants... or paint?" Or the lesbian elitist with her "1-2-forget about you" dismissal look if one doesn't possess that pinnacle of beauty: the thin body.

In ArticlesBase.com, Dominic James writes about an essay by P. Giles that highlights the "almost Fascist tendencies displayed within the gay community - to each other ... if you seek compassion and tolerance, you are best looking outside the LGBT community. We tend to belittle and deride overweight gay men and lesbians in the same way that anti-gay, right wing factions belittle us."

Haven't we felt discrimination enough to not scorn others? How many of us have felt the unloving stare of our sisters and brothers? We talk the good talk about community, but we divide like all groups into subcategories, especially when it comes to who looks good on a Friday night.

And it appears this extreme fixation on body image affects the way we see others. James continues: "We make all sorts of assumptions about other people based

See Couch on Page 8

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

In a recent issue of The Rainbow Times you had an article about UConn and I wanted to congratulate you on running it. Our community and fellow students really enjoyed it.

—Billy Johnston, Hartford, CT

Dear Editor,

The article by Tynan Power about the 11-year-old student who died in Springfield, Mass. was not what I'd consider good journalism. The writer quoted Rev. Monroe almost comparing this 11-year-old to Jesus! I found it offensive, to say the least. The reporting should have been more in-depth.

—Marjorie R., Northampton, MA

Dear Editor,

The Controversial Couch story about Rachel Maddow followed that she now wears make-up to state societal rules, so to speak. I watch her show and at times she wears make-up and other times she doesn't. What she is a strong lesbian presence who's not afraid to speak her mind. So, who cares if she wears make-up?

—Y. Rosenberg, Springfield, MA

Dear Editor,

I think that the Rainbow Times is doing an amazing job. I want to express my gratitude for what you do. It's great to have such a professional looking paper that informs us about so many things.

—M. Seanacey, Easthampton, MA

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In 'The Name of God'

Faith, Family, and God: Joy

By Paul P. Jesepe*

Not long ago someone in her mid-twenties road raged me. I approached and stopped at a busy intersection rather than speed through a yellow light that remained yellow for several seconds. From the rear view mirror I received the middle finger several times. The hand gestures were accompanied by an array of unusual facial expressions. A very attractive woman failed her Creation.

Until the light turned green, she carried on with movements as if performing modern dance. At one point I thought the Church Lady from Saturday Night Live might be needed for an exorcism. I wondered how different her behavior would have been had I worn my cleric's collar.

In the practice of law, I remind colleagues in law school to find joy and beauty in each day. The day can be routine, mundane, and

without fun. Yet there's joy and beauty to be found.

Enjoy a detour on the way home to Borders or Barnes and Noble. Nurse a cup of overpriced coffee at the café and read something you probably won't buy. Stop by the grocery store and pick up brownies or fresh flowers because you are loved unconditionally by the Creator. Drive through a park to see flowers in all their majestic color and splendor.

Ironically, much is taken for granted that gives comfort each day. As difficult as the boss or colleague is keep perspective. At the end of the day it doesn't matter. Many will go home to the arms of a wife or husband and the purrs and licks of animal-children.

Time is gone as soon as events occur. Don't live in the past. In addition, there is no tomorrow, though you must plan for it. There is only now. What are you going to do with it? Don't waste time allowing someone's negative

opinion minutes, hours, weeks, or years ago to become your reality. Nor be overly concerned with life's challenges in general. Life is. You can, however, empower yourself in deciding the reaction to certain things.

I can still see the driver's face over something so inane. Regardless of whether I drove as an octogenarian, she misused personal energy that may negatively impact her karma. My gut tells me she didn't find much joy or beauty in the rest of the day. Although I didn't know her personally and never will, I have no doubt she is beautiful in mind and spirit. We share the same Creator. By the way, I'm able to credibly, I think, still celebrate an annual thirty-something birthday.

You may be taigoted tomorrow on your way to work. Think before you react. Although tempting, don't respond with anger. A negative emotion can define your day. Maybe the driver just had an argument with a

spouse. Or, if the boss is particularly prickly on Monday morning maybe he or she is late on a mortgage payment or a child may flunk out of college.

There are many reasons why people forget their humanity. This doesn't excuse bad behavior. But souls, like the driver in my case, may have been projecting deeper personal issues. The next time you're about to react with or initiate hostility ask yourself why. It's not about you. Further a universal sister- and brotherhood by example.

Be true to your Creation as the Creator intended. Find joy and beauty everyday, especially in those who offend you.

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

Gay Guide to Manhattan: The places to see and be seen at in NYC

By: Taylor Dunni TRT Special

All types are welcome at Fire Island Pines, but if you plan to visit Manhattan while you're in New York, it's best to know your place. Manhattan is too big for just one central gay area. The city has five - each attracting a different subset of gay.

Chelsea - Eighth Avenue between 14th Streets and 23rd Streets is where the muscle boys shop, eat and play. Best eats: Elmo, The Dish, and Cafeteria. Hot stores for tight duds that show off your great body are Barney's Coop, Jeffrey, Universal Gear and Scoop. Hot spots include G Lounge, Barracuda and the mega gay dance club, Splash.

Hells Kitchen - Ninth Avenue between 39th and 57th Streets has recently toppled Chelsea as the prime center for the city's gay community. It is where the young and hip boys live and hang. It's also a great place to land a Broadway chorus boy. Best eats: HK Restaurant (on 39th St), Eatery, Ariba Ariba and Vinyl. Hot stores: Wear Me Out and American Apparel. Hot spots include Therapy Lounge, Vlada, Ritz and the chic haunt, HK Lounge.

East Village - If you prefer the dark, sinful gay scene, you'll want to take the N train down to East 8th Street and troll the rock n' sleaze fag underground. It is where leather daddies and skinny New York University boys intermingle

and experiment with everything your mama warned you against. Best eats: Butter Lane, Lucky Chungs. Hot stores: stroll the booths on St Mark's Place. Hot spots include: The Cock, Boiler Room, and EasternBloc.

West Village - What used to be the main hub for the gay community is now a straight chick tourist trap for Sex in the City wanna-be looking to drop serious cash at the slew of high end retail shops that have taken over the neighborhood. Christopher Street is still a fun place to visit, if only to get a taste of gay history. Best eats: Manatus and Lips. Hot stores: Marc Jacobs, Juicy Couture, and Ralph Lauren. Hot spots for white-hairs are Boots & Saddle, The Monster, and Stonewall Inn.

Upper East Side - If you're over 50, looking to land a boy under 20 - or if you prefer the Asian persuasion - you'll want to head over to Manhattan's Upper East Side. It's where the sugar daddy's meet their boy toys. Best eats: Baluchi's and La Mediterranea. Hot stores: Bloomingdales and Diesel. Hot spots include The Townhouse, and the Asian club, The Web. Want to experience a little culture while

you're in the NYC? Be sure to check out exhibits at the MoMa (Museum of Modern Art), The Frick and The Museum of Sex (a jaw dropping experience!). The Duplex in Sheridan Square is a fun place for comedy. Don't Tell Mama in Hell's Kitchen is the best joint for cabaret and fans of dance should plan to catch a performance at City Center. To learn more about what gay NYC has to offer, visit www.nyctrip.com.

Rally from Page 2

The hope from many at the protest was that the LGBT community would not run the fear-based, tepid campaign it ran to fight Prop 8. Speakers noted that TV ads never used the word "gay" for instance. Judging from the photos of protesters throughout California, we are not lying down anymore (except to stop traffic).

* J. Mary Sorrell is a lesbian and Massachusetts Justice of the Peace. She believes our world is falling apart (ala Pema Chodron---this a good thing!) and that our consciousness and principle of "no separation" has never been more apparent. Getting married? Contact her at jm@jmhejp.com.

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Kate from Page 3

A. I am very scripted-old high school English teacher training- think lesson plan-and then I feel comfortable improvising from that.

Q. Have you obtained all of your professional goals? If not, what is still on your list to do?

A. I want to be a clue in the Sunday New York Times crossword puzzle. Damn that Margaret Cho!

Q. You have an upcoming show at the Hu Ke Lau in Chicopee, Mass. on June 13th. Can you give us a sneak peak of that show?

A. Not without an upfront payment. Make sure you read the paper for a few days before you come. Not that there'll be a quiz, just so I don't have to hire a current events interpreter.

C'mon Out from Page 2

Hi Jon:

Lots of people have questions about transpeople and their sexual orientation. First, remember that gender identity and sexual orientation are entirely different matters. People get the two confused because they somehow link them together. The way in which a person relates to their gender and to the extent that their biological gender agrees with their sense of self, is about gender identity. Which gender a person is attracted to has nothing to do with ones gender identity.

Part of what is confusing is that sexual orientation seems to change after a person transitions. Say, for example, a biological male has always been attracted to women. Once she transitions she will probably still be attracted to women. Before transition this person is seen by our culture as heterosexual, but after transition she is then seen as lesbian. I know, people's heads spin about this. Keep in mind, though, for the person who has just transitioned, nothing has changed in terms of sexual orientation. She always knew she was female and probably hated having to "perform" the male role. Now that she has transitioned, she is much more in alignment with who she has always been.

Many transmen I know originally came out as lesbians because they felt at such odds with themselves. Coming out as lesbian seemed the closest to what was true to them. As the trans movement has progressed these same people have come to realize that in fact they are not lesbians, but men. These individuals have had to come out twice! The first time it fit only to the extent that they had a form in which to have relationships with other women. But things didn't real-

ly snap into place until they became men. Then, by the way, they are now seen as heterosexual. This can become a big problem for the partner of this transman. But I won't get much into this just now. You can just begin to imagine the ramifications!

There are also people who have been in so much conflict with their gender that sexual orientation has had to take the back seat to the conflicts of gender. Some people do not know until long after transitioning to whom they are attracted.

Remember Jon, sex role stereotyping is still the norm. Trans people are helping us all re-evaluate the meaning of sex and gender. Personally, I am grateful. I hope this helps in sorting all this out. Best, Tetty

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

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

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Trans Opinions & More

Transactivism: Trans Pride only for T's seems rather exclusive

By: Deja Nicole Greenlaw/TRT Columnist

Pride is for All as We are All in this Together! June is Pride Month!!! Yes, it's true, NoHo led the 2009 Pride charge in early May, but the major area Prides coming up in Hartford, Boston, Providence and NYC are in successive weeks in June. I have attended all of the aforementioned Prides and I've loved them all!

The thing that I love best about the Prides is the whole idea of Pride, celebrate who you are and be proud of who you are! And, since you are celebrating your pride please celebrate the prides of others. I love to see an LGBT Pride, for that one day we can truly be ourselves and see others being themselves. We can also be witnesses to our numbers and we can feel a sense of community, which is a very powerful feeling.

This year is the 40th anniversary of Stonewall. Yes, it was those hot, sweltering nights back in New York City in late June, 1969 when the birth of Gay Liberation started. A couple of members of the NYPD came into the Stonewall bar on Christopher St. and started harassing the patrons of the Stonewall. The patrons who were harassed were who we today would call, Transgenders. And, to further describe them, they were minority Transwomen.

There was smearing of make up and name calling and general meanness. This continued until the girls became fed up with this nonsense and they grew a 'tude that the NYPD would

never forget! The girls started hurling broken bottles and chunks of the road and anything else that they could find at the policemen. The police feared bodily injuries so they stayed inside the bar. The girls kept them at bay with their projectiles and they even cut the phone lines so there wouldn't be a call for backup. Yes, the NYPD, New York City's finest, were being trapped in a bar by these fed up minority Transwomen!

So the birth of Gay Liberation actually was started by minority Transwomen. The word "Transgender" wasn't coined yet, so these girls were called "Gay." Back then, if you weren't straight, you were gay. Gay was the umbrella term before for the whole LGBT population. That is why it is called Gay Liberation.

But it really doesn't matter who started the movement. The important thing is that it started, and that we are all in it together! I'm speaking of all LGBT peeps. Yes, it was the Transgenders who started it, but Pride belongs to all of us no matter who you are!

Being Transgender and going to the Pride parades is a huge thing for me, and I naturally thought other Transpeeps would be jazzed about it too, but to be truthful, I was always a little dis-



DEJA NICOLE GREENLAW

appointed in every Pride parade that I've ever marched in (Northampton, six times; Boston, three times; NYC, four times). I was always disillusioned with the lack of Transgender marchers in these Pride parades. Even at Northampton Pride this year our numbers were small.

Last year there was the first ever area Trans Pride in Noho and the parade featured many, many Transgender marchers. I am happy that so many Transgender people marched in that parade, but I am perplexed by the comparatively meek showing in the Noho Pride 2009 parade.

I've asked around why more Transgenders did not march in the Noho Pride parade this year. Some of the answers I received were from the bad feelings that surfaced when the "T" was left off of the revised ENDA bill last year. Some Transpeople don't want to be associated with the LGBT community because they felt betrayed due to that action and similar past actions. There also is a homophobic element ingrained in some of the Cross dressers. They don't want to be linked in any way to the Gays because of the fear that they might be looked upon as Gay. Whether it is classic homophobia, or the feeling of betrayal brought on by the lopping the "T" off the rights bills last year, the sour feelings are there and they are real. I am asking my Trans brothers and sisters to rethink their stances on celebrating their Pride and the Pride of others with the greater LGBT community and consider marching in the Pride parades.

On a similar note a Trans pride seems rather

exclusive. A Pride celebration held only for the Pride of Transgenders? What would happen if the Lesbians held a "Lesbian Pride" to honor only Lesbian pride? Or, if the Gays had a pride for Gays only? It just doesn't seem right to exclude others. When that happens there may be hurt feelings and other problems, and anyway, excluding people is usually not such a good idea. Please don't get me wrong, I'm not against a Trans Pride (Lord knows, if anyone has a need to feel good and feel pride about themselves it's a Transperson! I know!), but I have to question the exclusion element of having a Trans Only Pride.

What I'm saying is that we are all in this together and we should support and celebrate each other. I personally love LGBT Prides and I see so much advantage to partaking in one. It's awesome to celebrate being yourself and to also celebrate others being themselves. Most of us have come a long, painful, confusing way to finally accept ourselves, celebrating and being proud of ourselves is so important! It doesn't matter if you are Gay, Lesbian, Bi or Trans! It's all about celebrating who you are and having Pride in yourself

So I'm calling for all Transgenders to march in the Boston Pride parade on Saturday, June 13 and especially the NYC Pride parade on Sunday June 28. Please come and march in the Transgender sections or in any section. Just come and march! We are all in this together and we are an LGBT Community. Be proud of who you are!

Planning underway for New England Trans United Pride March

Northampton, MA— Members of the transgender, transsexual, and gender-variant communities and their allies from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Maine, and eastern New York

have announced plans to hold a New England Trans United (NETU) Pride March and Rally this fall. The event, with its theme "Live Out Loud," will take place in Northampton, Massachusetts on either October 3 or 10,

2009 pending permission by the city.

The rally will assemble at 11:00 a.m. at Lampron Park. Marchers will step off at noon and proceed down Main Street for a rally at 1:00 p.m. at the Armory Street parking lot.

"This is only the second New England-wide march and rally for transgender civil rights," said Bet Power, a NETU organizer. "Last year's event in Northampton drew more than 1,000 participants and educated the public about the lives and experiences of transgender people. This year, there is a continuing need to rally for critical gender-rights bills making their way through state legislatures, speak out against an increase in hate crimes based on gender identity/expression, and celebrate our humanity, diversity, and strength."

Thousands of transgender people and supporters from throughout New England are expected to attend the event, which is free and open to the public. The march will include a wide spectrum of transgender, gender rights, LGBT, and social justice organizations, while the rally will feature a mix of political speakers, musicians, and cultural performers. Details will be announced in the coming

months.

"We hope to bring together all segments of the transgender umbrella for political, social, and economic power," adds Christa Hilfers, another NETU organizer. "Issues including transgender health care, medical insurance, removing gender identity disorder as a psychiatric diagnosis, bullying in schools, discrimination in the workplace, and more will all be addressed."

The NETU steering committee is seeking volunteer workers and sponsors for the event. A community-wide organizing meeting is scheduled for June 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the Frances P. Crowe community room at the Media Education Foundation located at 60 Masonic Street, Northampton. Interested individuals and organizations are invited to help with the many facets of producing the march and rally. New England Trans United may be reached by email sent to newenglandtransunited@yahoo.com and found online at: MySpace: www.myspace.com/476711638; on Facebook by searching for "New England Trans United," and on Twitter: http://twitter.com/newenglandtrans

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Lesbian Loving: A one day workshop for women

By: Pamela Madison*

Intimacy, ecstasy, bliss. Lesbian sex & spiritual connection: can one really enhance the other? Tantric sex expert, Pamela Madison says YES! Offered for the first time in Northampton, Lesbian Loving, a one-day workshop led by Madison, will teach women the ancient sacred sex practices known as tantra. Participants will not only learn skills to deepen intimacy and bring more spiritual energy into the bedroom, but will get nitty-gritty instruction on the G-spot and other lesbian essentials. a

"For the past fifteen years I've been troubleshooting people's sex lives. I think tantra is the perfect antidote to the all-too-common lesbian bed death. I've created this workshop to be an inspiring and transformative experience for all of us who have a sense there's more to sex than what we've learned," says Madison, who founded the Women's Sexuality Center in Santa Barbara, CA. She is featured in the award-winning film, Hearts Cracked Open: Tantra

for Women Who Love Women.

The workshop contains no nudity or sexually explicit activity.

For more information & registration visit www.Qtantra.com or call (805)729-2590.

WHAT: Lesbian Loving: A workshop for women

WHO: Pamela Madison, Instructor

DATE: Sat. June 13th

TIME: 10a.m. to 5p.m.

WHERE: Inspirit Common Bookstore, 123 Russell St, Hadley, MA 01035, phone: 413-585-1169

WHO: Singles/Couples, All women welcome.

COST: \$75 per person

* Pamela Madison is the founder and director of the Women's Sexuality Center in Santa Barbara, CA. Pamela is a licensed acupuncturist, sex educator and pioneer in the field of female sexuality. She assists women in raising their sexual self esteem, experience greater orgasmic abilities and increasing the connection between sexuality and spirituality. Her groundbreaking work also includes

recovery from psychosexual traumas such as childhood sexual abuse and rape.

Pamela teaches sexual empowerment programs, tantric trainings and maintains an extensive private practice as a sexual healer. She is featured in the award-winning film, Hearts Cracked Open: Tantra for Women Who Love Women.



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Stonewall & Obama's empty words

Fighting for same-sex marriage, for equality, for trans rights in the workplace and everywhere—the continuous struggles facing the LGBT community—could seem to many similar to what happened 40 years ago, on the night of June 28th—what history has come to know as Stonewall. During that night members of the LGT community and other bar goers of Greenwich Village rose up to resist harassment and mistreatment by law enforcement, which set the historical clock to what we know today as Stonewall.

What took place that night also marks the birth, accepted by historians, of modern gay-rights movement worldwide. It is the 40th celebration of the riots at the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in New York City. The celebration of today's Stonewall can be found everywhere on the Internet, but the faces of diversity that fought police harassment that night, are not so apparent.

We must not forget the beginnings of this movement, what it means to today's LGBTQIs Americans and the constant remembrance of struggle to attain a better living, the civil rights that we are promised through our Constitution that every man and woman are created equal, period.

Same-sex marriage, equal rights for Transgender people, laws protecting each member of the LGBTQI community; these represent some of today's struggle, today's Stonewall. While celebrating Stonewall in our communities, let's not forget that we are all together in this celebration and in our current struggles. Alienation is not an answer, as it was not 40 years ago in 1969, as the historical pictures depict. Only by uniting and understanding the true meaning of equal LGBT rights for everyone, can we only move forward.

The Rainbow Times' staff rejoices in this celebration, which is taking place in many places in the U.S., but especially in NYC. Let's celebrate, let's march and let's remember its origins, fully and adequately, even though to date, our President has not attempted to resolve our struggles, as promised.

TRT interactive web poll results*

Is President Obama meeting your expectations of his promises to the LGBT community?

YES 6%

NO 94%

*To cast your vote, visit www.TheRainbowTimesNews.com

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Quertations & the Creep of the Week Winner

Queertations: Say what?!

By: Rex Wockner

"Rush Limbaugh, one of your big critics. Boy, Rush Limbaugh said he hopes this administration fails. So you're saying, 'I hope America fails.' ... He just wants the country to fail. To me, that's treason. He's not saying anything differently than what Osama bin Laden is saying."

—Openly lesbian comedian **Wanda Sykes** to President Obama at the White House Correspondents' Association Annual Dinner, May 9.

"At a state level, it's (same-sex marriage) up to them. I don't want it to be a federal thing. I personally still think it's wrong. People don't understand the dictionary -- it's called queer. Queer means strange and unusual. It's not like a slur, like you would call a white person a honky or something like that. You know, God is pretty explicit in what we're supposed to do -- what man and woman are for. Now, at the same time, we're supposed to love everybody and accept people, and preach against the sins. I've had some friends that are actually homosexual. And, I mean, they know where I stand, and they know that I wouldn't have them anywhere near my children. But at the same time, they're people, and they're going to do their thing."

—**Samuel "Joe the Plumber" Wurzelbacher** (see Creep of the Week, side article) to *Christianity Today*, May 4.

"Tom Brokaw appears with his wife. Why can't Anderson Cooper appear with his boyfriend?"

—**Gay activist and author Larry Kramer** to *New York's Daily News*, May 3

"Listen, I like a good ass f@#\$ as much as the next guy. ... That makes me gay? C'mon. It's the 21st century. ... Despite what Family Guy would lead you to believe, I'm not gay."

—**Seth MacFarlane**, creator of the TV show *Family Guy*, on *Real Time with Bill Maher*, May 10.

"Only in America would the notion of a nearly naked fundamentalist Christian beauty queen tossing her processed hair and parading brand new pageant-bought plastic breasts across a Las Vegas stage in front of millions of television viewers with all the modesty of a blue ribbon heifer at a county livestock fair (the same fundamentalist Christian beauty queen who would later tell a television reporter that she heard God whispering in her ear as she answered a celebrity-worshipping Internet gossip columnist's question about gay marriage) be treated as anything other than an occasion for high comedy and mirth."

—**Journalist Michael Rowe** writing about Miss California USA/Miss USA first runner-up Carrie Prejean at *Salon.com*, May 4.

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Lesbian Best Sellers*

1. The L Word: Season 6
2. She Likes Girls 4:...
3. Drifting Flowers
4. Itty Bitty Titty Committee
5. The Secrets
6. Finns Girl
7. Butch Jamie
8. Girl Play
9. Le Jupon Rouge
10. Girl + Girl: Classic...

* By wolfevideo.com

Gay Best Sellers*

1. Were the World Mine
2. Mulligans
3. Pedro
4. The New Twenty
5. Whirlwind
6. Ready? OK!
7. Lilies
8. Milk
9. Holding Trevor
10. Boy Crush

* By wolfevideo.com

Creep of the Week: Samuel "Joe" Wurzelbacher

That quintessential everyman all good Americans strive to be

By: D'Anne Witkowski

Ah, Joe the Plumber. That quintessential everyman all good Americans strive to be: hardworking, heterosexual, white male, and strongly opinionated without any idea what he's talking about (aka Republican). Not only can the man snake a toilet, he has also unclogged this country's political consciousness. Finally Americans have permission to hold strong opinions about subjects they know virtually nothing about and become famous for their very ignorance. God bless this country.

Every time I think of the years wasted before Joe the Plumber took to the national political stage, I die a little bit inside. Listening to Joe speak is a breath of fresh air. Granted, that air is devoid of any oxygen and thus incapable of sustaining intelligent life, but it's still air.

Hot, hot air.

I mean, the man is an expert on just about any subject – whether it's business taxes, war correspondence or, now, gay marriage.

During an interview with *Christianity Today*, Wurzelbacher was asked what he thought about gay marriage at a state level in light of recent developments in Iowa and Vermont.

"At a state level, it's up to them," he said. "I don't want it to be a federal thing. I personally still think it's wrong."

OK, so far so good. He's not calling for a federal marriage amendment or anything and he has every right to think marriage for gays and lesbians is wrong. Opinions are like assholes, after all.

But then things start to fall apart. "People don't understand the dictionary – it's called queer. Queer means strange and unusual," Wurzelbacher says. "It's not like a slur, like you would call a white person a honky or something like that."

I realize that it appears he is saying that the dictionary is queer and thus misunderstood. But I think he's substituting the word "diction-

ary" for "definition of the word queer." Maybe that's all the dictionary is to him. Reading is pretty gay, after all. Now I could jump all over him (figuratively, of course) for using the word "queer" as a pejorative. Instead I'll just say this: Wurzelbacher is a honky.

His answer continues. "You know, God is pretty explicit in what we're supposed to do—what man and woman are for," he says.

That's right. God is pretty explicit if you take the idea that the Bible is literally His word. There is some racy stuff in that book. But what Wurzelbacher is referring to specifically here is the commandment: "Thou shalt have penile-vaginal intercourse."

Not that Wurzelbacher will hate you if you don't "do it" right.

"We're supposed to love everybody and accept people, and preach against the sins," he says. "I've had some friends that are actually homosexual. And, I mean, they know where I stand, and they know that I wouldn't have them anywhere near my children. But at the same time, they're people, and they're going to do their thing."

Gosh, I wonder what lucky homosexuals get to be Wurzelbacher's friend. Nothing says, "I value your friendship" quite like, "Stay the- away from my kids you hideous pervert."

But hey, at least he acknowledges that homosexuals are people. And I am happy to return the favor. Wurzelbacher is only human. A deeply flawed, proudly ignorant human being who embodies the face of today's Republican Party.

Congratulations, G.O.P. "Joe" Wurzelbacher is your boyfriend.

** 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 and roll shows in Detroit with her twin sister and teaches writing at the University of Michigan.*

Couch from Page 2

upon their physical appearance, including how much they earn, how trustworthy, intelligent and their overall morals. This affects how willing we are to engage in a conversation with that person, let alone embark on an intimate relationship.

Aren't we something? *Even speaking* to someone in a club is taboo if they don't display perfect AAPs. (abs, ass and pecs.)

Our body-conscious culture is examined in the documentary *Do I Look Fat?* According to their website, the film examines having fat on the brain—fat that we feel, fat that we think and all sorts of fat problems that manifest from fat-phobic thinking inside the fat-wary gay community. This movie uncovers

recurring and interconnecting themes that support this 'self-esteem disorder,' such as childhood wounding, internalized homophobia, the effects of HIV/AIDS on the body and the prevalence of substance abuse.

Well, I guess that explains some things about our world of gay relationships, but does it excuse us? In a world full of hate and intolerance, I'd like to think we can rise above that, to some extent. Being fat shouldn't be seen as a stigma, but as an opportunity to see our bodies through the lens of compassion as we heal ourselves, one gay at a time.

** Suzan Ambrose can be spotted making fire on cool summer nights or kayaking on the Connecticut River when she's not writing diligently for The Rainbow Times.*

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CONNECTICUT PRIDE GUIDE 2009



EMCEE RACHEL LUTZKER

A familiar face to Connecticut commuters, Rachel Lutzker, has joined the award-winning Fox 61 News at Ten.

Rachel is the traffic reporter for the Fox 61 Morning News weekdays from 5 a.m. - 8 a.m. and then hosts the Fox 61 Morning News with Jeff Valin from 8 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Rachel will continue to provide traffic reports for Clear Channel stations WWYZ, WKSS, WURH and WPOP and serve as evening host on Clear Channel Radio's WHCN The River.

Rachel began her broadcasting career as a traffic reporter for several Hartford-area radio and television stations. In 2001, Lutzker moved to New York City as a dedicated traffic reporter for WCBS-TV.

She returned to Connecticut for the launch of TimeSaver Traffic on WFSB-TV, WHCN, WPHH, WWYZ and WKSS. In addition to traffic reporting, Lutzker is the on-air host of the nightly program Acoustic AfterDark on The River (WHCN).

Performances By:

TIFFANY

Pop Superstar Tiffany is the original 80's artist that brought you the #1 Pop Hits "I Think We're Alone Now," "I Saw Him Standing There," "Could've Been" and "All this Time," with over six million-selling albums to her credit.

It's no fluke that Tiffany works more than ever these days. Her her

voice is top notch shape. Her personality and professionalism makes you feel like you have known her for years. NO diva demands for this truly gifted performer - singers of today should take note!

Tiffany more visible than ever as the result of the huge publicity of NBC TV's hit show Hit Me Baby One More Time! (both in the US and the UK).

Tiffany has enjoyed the publicity and success from her recent dance album titled "Dust Off and Dance," that is being called one her best in years. She's at the top of her game with this brilliant CD that her fans have been clamoring for her to record for years.

She recently starred in VH1's Celebrity Fit Club, on VH1, and released a new album called, "Just Me" on 10 Spot records.

Tiffany recently found herself at the top of the Billboard Dance Charts with her amazing new dance song called "Higher". Reaction to this song has been very exciting to Tiffany, as dance is area that she feels comfortable performing in.

Tiffany just finished filming a new reality show for the CMT network and recorded two new dance songs called "Just Another Day" and "Move Ya" which were produced by Dave Aude "Annie Lennox's remixer/producer" and is presently on a nation wide tour all around the country.

BETTY

BETTY is an alternative rock group from New York City. The group originated in Washington, D.C. and traces its lineage to a birthday party for Dodie Bowers (the original owner of the 9:30 Club). The band's harmonies and unique lyrics attracted a cult following in the vibrant alternative music scene and among gay/lesbian audiences. A "BETTY Rules" t-shirt, an early marketing item of the band, appears on one of the AIDS quilts.

In the late 1980s the band relocated to NYC. The name of their first album, "Hello, BETTY!" comes from the standard opening for all their



Photo by: Nation

appearances. In 1995, the band expanded by adding lead guitar and drums to the initial line-up primarily of vocals with electronic accompaniment.

Betty appeared in every episode of the 1986 HBO Series Encyclopedia, as well as performing the opening and closing theme songs. The members involved were Alyson Palmer/Amy Ziff/Elizabeth Ziff, although they were credited in the show's opening titles as simply "Betty".

In 2003 the group starred in its own off-Broadway show BETTY RULES directed by Rent's Michael Greif. The musical ran for 6 months at the Zipper Theatre. The show has since been performed in Chicago at the Lakeside Theatre and at Theater J in Washington, DC. BETTY has appeared as a regular guest artist on the television show The L Word, for which they provided the theme song.

D.J. John Rizzo rocks the house all night long!

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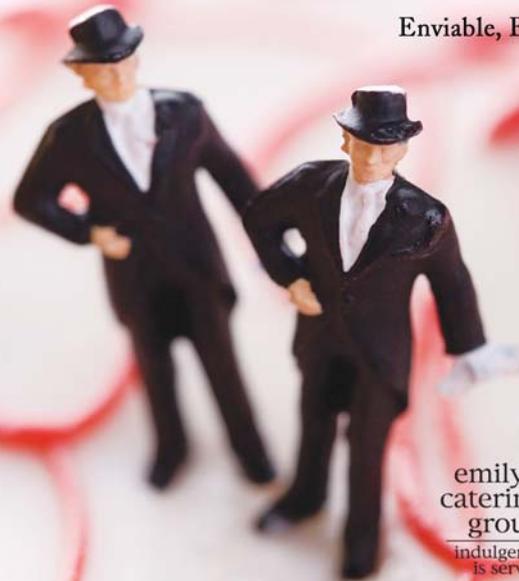


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Political IQ: The 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Wimp Out



Diane Silver

Obama Can Suspend the Ban Today, But Refuses to Act. Aaron Belkin, Nathaniel Frank, Gregory Herek, Elizabeth Hillman, Diane Mazur and Bridget Wilson took Barack Obama's last excuse away. The two law professors, one attorney and assorted other academics penned a study telling Obama exactly how he can end the ban on gays serving openly in the military.

Step one? Immediately suspend all investigations, separation proceedings and other personnel actions under the policy commonly known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." The six authors even drafted an executive order Obama can use to do it.

Issued by the Palm Center at the University of California in Santa Barbara, the study moves the DADT debate to a new level. Before now, politicians and pundits (myself included) argued that Obama didn't have the power to unilaterally suspend the policy. A law passed by Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton stood in Obama's way, or at least that's what we thought.

Obama even used that excuse when he replied to a letter 2nd Lt. Sandy Tsao sent to

him, explaining why she came out to her superiors. In a hand-written note, Obama said he is "committed to changing our current policy," but added "it will take some time to complete (partly because it needs Congressional action)."

The Palm Center's squad of experts say Obama is flat-out wrong. Existing laws governing the president's power over military personnel give Obama the authority to temporarily suspend the policy.

A bill permanently overturning DADT would still have to pass Congress, but our overstretched military wouldn't be losing needed soldiers like Tsao, or Lt. Dan Choi, an Iraq veteran and Arab linguist, who is being discharged after coming out on TV.

The Palm Center theorizes that DADT is caught in a Washington game of cover-your-backside. Many members of Congress worry that supporting repeal would cost them votes, so Congress is trying to shift responsibility to the Pentagon.

"Senior insiders in the Pentagon are unwilling to tackle 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' because they view the issue as a 'hot potato' or 'career killer' so they seek to shift responsibilities back to Congress," the study notes.

The White House is ducking the issue and

wishing "the impetus for change to appear to come from the Pentagon," the study says.

Legal experts disagree every day, so it is possible that the White House is following a different legal interpretation than that proposed by the Palm Center six. (Examine their arguments for yourself at www.palmcenter.org.)

But the authors are to be applauded for shifting the DADT debate and for raising the most important question of all for our president: How can you, in good conscience, not even make the attempt to stop discharges under a policy you say you oppose?

Obama came into office with the support of most LGBT voters. We knocked on doors and opened our wallets to him. Except for his ridiculous insistence on backing civil unions over marriage equality, Obama promised he would fight for us. Repeal the Defense of Marriage Act? Absolutely! Full rights and benefits for same-couples? You bet! Push for a transgender inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act? On the agenda!

These days it seems as if Obama has embraced what author and blogger Andrew Sullivan calls "the fierce urgency of whenever." Almost nothing, in fact, is being done to end the legal tragedies LGBT Americans suffer every day. The administration won't even speak up for us. Officials run for rhetorical cover every time our issues are raised.

I love Sullivan's line because it captures the

adolescent disregard we're getting from Obama. We expect a sulky "whenever," when we insist that our teenaged children do their chores. No sane parent allows a child to get away with that kind of defiance, but we also know that if we enforce the rules, our children will someday grow out of such selfishness.

We expect more from our presidents. We expect them to understand that lives are at stake. People like Choi and Tsao only want to serve their country with honor, but now they can't. Meanwhile, the military units that need their skills don't have them.

What worries me is that Obama is showing signs that he may not comprehend something the much younger Tsao appears to understand well. In her letter to the president, Tsao explained that she informed her chain of command of her sexual orientation because she believes she has to live with integrity.

It's worth repeating what she wrote, not just here, but in letters, e-mails and phone calls to The White House and Congress. What's integrity? Tsao wrote: "It means choosing to do the right thing no matter what the consequences may be."

* Diane Silver is a former newspaper reporter and magazine editor, whose work has appeared in *The Progressive*, *Salon.com*, *Ms.*, and other national publications. She can be reached care of this publication or at PoliticalIQ@qsyndicate.com.

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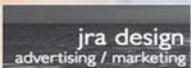
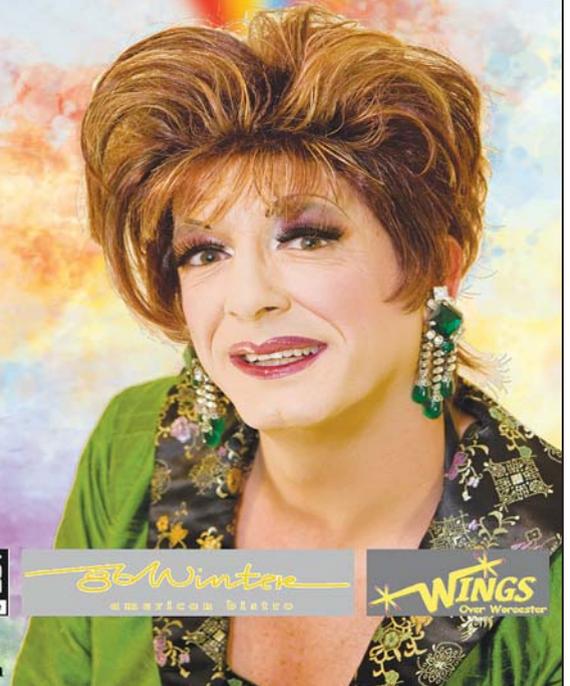
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ExxonMobil continues to oppose shareholders' vote for non-discrimination policy

For ten years, executives continue to resist smallest steps towards equality

Washington—The Human Rights Campaign Foundation, the nation's largest gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization, released a statement today on the shareholder vote at Exxon Mobil Corp. (NYSE: XOM) in favor of a resolution to add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the company's official equal employment opportunity policy.

The percentage of shares voting in favor of the proposal has grown each of the last ten years, with 39.3 percent of shares voting in favor of the policy this year compared to 8.2 percent in 2000. While not yet a majority of shareholders, a growing block of shareholders has sided against ExxonMobil for more than a decade.

"ExxonMobil continues to have the dubious

distinction of being the only Fortune 50 company that refuses to add sexual orientation and gender identity to their non-discrimination policy, and is stuck in the ever-shrinking minority of businesses that don't offer domestic partner benefits," said Human Rights Campaign Foundation President Joe Solmonese. "It is irresponsible for ExxonMobil to ignore overwhelming shareholder support and not to join the majority of companies that provide equal protections and benefits to all families."

A total of 423—85 percent—of Fortune 500 companies include sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policies and 176—more than 35 percent—include gender identity, including ExxonMobil competitors BP Corp., Chevron Corp., Dow Chemical, DuPont and Shell Oil. ExxonMobil is the only Fortune 50 company that refuses to write sexual orientation protections into its primary non-discrimination

policy, which can be found in the company's Standards of Business Conduct at <http://bit.ly/exxonmobil-eeo>.

"While the rest of corporate America recognizes and respects the diversity of their workforce, ExxonMobil continues to resist the most basic protections that should be afforded to all Americans," said Solmonese.

The legacy Mobil Corp.'s equal employment opportunity policy included "sexual orientation," and the company offered domestic partner benefits to its employees; however, upon its 1999 merger with Exxon, the non-discrimination protection was removed and the domestic partner benefits program closed to new employees. Twenty-four members of Congress, and thousands of stockholders and consumers, wrote to ExxonMobil Chairman Lee R. Raymond in December 1999 to protest the policy reversals. In January 2000, stockholders and

activists protested at a company facility in Houston, causing the facility to close for the day. Current Chairman and Chief Executive Rex Tillerson has maintained the same position on ExxonMobil's policies.

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation was present at ExxonMobil's annual shareholder meeting in Dallas to present the shareholder resolution which it co-files in coordination with the New York City Comptroller and New York City Pension Funds. For more information about the resolution, visit www.EqualityatExxon.org.

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

After 5 years of same-sex marriage, new studies show MA has attracted highly-skilled workers & experienced economic boost of over \$100M

On the eve of the fifth anniversary of same-sex couples marrying in Massachusetts, two new studies released today by UCLA's Williams Institute show clear economic gains for Massachusetts that have resulted from marriage equality. Massachusetts gained a competitive edge in attracting young, highly educated "creative class" professionals who are in same-sex couples, according to one study. The second study confirms that the weddings of same-sex couples have given a significant boost to the state's economy.

Earlier studies predicted that state economies would gain in several ways from allowing gay couples to marry. Economic development expert Richard Florida argued that policies promoting tolerance and equality would be a welcome mat for highly mobile creative class members whose creative energy drives economic growth. Other studies have predicted a wedding windfall for many businesses as same-sex couples and their guests spend money on weddings, gifts, and tourism. However, until today, no one had tested whether those predictions have actually happened.

"Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey show that same-

sex couples in the 'creative class' were 2.5 times more likely to move to Massachusetts after 2004 than before," notes Gary J. Gates, Williams Distinguished Scholar at UCLA's Williams Institute and the author of one study. "The timing of this movement to Massachusetts suggests that those couples were flocking to the first state to allow them to marry."

Gates argues that this infusion of younger and highly educated same-sex couples could help improve the long-term economic prospects for Massachusetts.

As states struggle with the current downturn in the economy, marriage equality has also given a boost to businesses, according to the second study. A new survey of married same-sex couples shows that the typical gay or lesbian couple spent \$7,400 on their weddings in Massachusetts, with one in ten couples spending more than \$20,000. The study's analysis of state data on hotel occupancy tax payments confirms the boost from out-of-state guests at these weddings.

"Florists, caterers, hotels, bakers, restaurants, and many other businesses have gotten a share of the \$111 million spent on the 12,000-plus weddings of same-sex couples,"

notes economist M. V. Lee Badgett, a study co-author and director of the Center for Public Policy & Administration at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. "Allowing gay couples to marry won't end the recession, but their spending still helps in tough times for businesses."

The findings of these two studies confirm the predictions made in previous studies. They also indicate that other states allowing gay couples to marry—including Connecticut,

Iowa, Vermont, and Maine—will see similar economic gains.

The Williams Institute for Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy advances law and public policy through rigorous, independent research and scholarship, and disseminates its work through a variety of education programs and media to judges, legislators, lawyers, other policymakers and the public. These studies can be accessed at the Williams Institute website, www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute.

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PANEL 1: A LESBIAN WOMAN FROM OUT OF STATE WAS ADMITTED TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM WHERE I WORK, REV'RUNT OGLEBERRY... AND I WOULDN'T LET HER LESBIAN LOVER OR THEIR KIDS SEE HER—ON ACCOUNT OF MY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

PANEL 2: I EXPLAINED TO THEM OUR STATE DOESN'T RECOGNIZE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE, CIVIL UNIONS, OR HOMOSEXUAL ADOPTION, SO THEY'RE NOT NEXT-OF-KIN, BESIDES!

PANEL 3: BY THE TIME THE WOMAN'S SISTER SHOWED UP THE NEXT DAY, THE WOMAN WAS DEAD.

PANEL 4: HAVE I DONE THE RIGHT THING? WHAT, BY COMING TO BRAG TO ME ABOUT IT?

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Boston Lesbian Voices

Lesbian Voices: Proposition Hate Redux



By: Rev. Irene Monroe*

The California Supreme Court ruled again on same-sex marriage. This time it did to uphold Proposition 8, restricting marriage to one man and

one woman. In a 6-to-1 decision, the justices decided that Proposition 8 would remain part of the state constitution. And, the 18,000 same-sex couples that ran to the altar to legally consecrate their nuptials before November 4 - well they're the lucky ones, since our right to marry can be so easily taken away by the pull of a lever.

For a fleeting moment in 2008, we saw democracy work for same-sex couples in California. In a 4-to-3 decision, the California Supreme Court in May of that year ruled that a "separate and unequal" system of domestic partnership for same-sex couples is not only blatantly discriminatory, but it is also unconstitutional.

The Court upheld the democratic process, offering same-sex couples "marriage" and not "marriage-lite" with civil unions and put forth the following statement:

"In contrast to earlier times, our state now recognizes that an individual's capacity to establish a loving and long-term committed relationship with another person and responsibly to care for and raise children does not depend upon the individual's sexual orientation, and, more generally, that an individual's sexual orientation - like a person's race or

gender - does not constitute a legitimate basis upon which to deny or withhold legal rights."

But California's same-sex couples and their allies knew the knot on this issue was not securely tied. Proposition 8, so rightly dubbed "Proposition Hate," would be the determining factor. And, it was.

With six months now passed since the historic day in November 4 that threw LGBTQ Americans under the bus, and symbolically removed black Americans, with the election of Barack Obama as this nation's first African American president, from riding on the back of the bus, I'm confused in terms of where my seat is on this bus ride toward democracy, being both African American and lesbian and bi-coastal.

Yes, I live in Massachusetts, the first state in the nation to legalize same-sex marriage. And on May 17, Massachusetts celebrated five years of marriage equality. But one of my jobs - coordinator of the Africa American Roundtable at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies and Ministry at the Pacific School of Religion - is in California. I'm free to marry as long as I stay within the five states that now offer me the right to do so.

The fight for marriage equality in the U.S. is similarly to my ancestors' fight for freedom. In their day, before the Civil War in 1861, the U.S. consisted of 19 free states and 15 slave states. As a matter of fact, in the 2004 presidential race between John Kerry and George Bush where marriage equality was a hot-button issue, the election map results between Kerry's blues states and Bush's red states corresponded to the pre-Civil War free states and slave states, respectively.

As LGBTQ Americans, we're not in slavery, but we are certainly in a civil war. Whereas President Lincoln acted on behalf of my ancestor's civil rights, Obama is immovable on ours.

When Press Secretary Robert Gibbs was asked

for a response to California's ruling he told the Associated Press, "I think the issues involved are ones that you know where the President stands."

When society narrowly defines marriage as the union between a man and a woman, it is not only policing the sexual behaviors of lesbian and gay people, but society is also policing the sexual behaviors of heterosexuals. Handcuffing marriage to a heterosexual paradigm merely chokes its possibility of ever flourishing and lasting, especially as we are coming to understand the fluidity of not only gender and sexual identities but also of the constant changing configuration of family units.

But with heterosexual marriage being so sacred, opponents to same-sex marriage fail to see how it is constantly desecrated on any given weeknight by being slotted for family entertainment - television shows like "The Bachelor" that cavalierly join people together for high Nielsen ratings.

To me, democracy is an ongoing process where people are part of a participatory government working to dismantle all existing discriminatory laws that truncate their full participation in society. The work of democracy is rooted in justice and social change allowing us to see, along this troubling human time line, those faces and to hear those voices in society of the damned, the disinherited, the disrespected, and the dispossessed.

Democracy can only begin to work when those relegated to the fringes of society can begin to sample what those in society take for granted as their inalienable right.

A government is ethically bankrupt when it legally frames a minority group's civil rights as a ballot question.

If I waited for slaveholders to free my ancestors predicated on a ballot vote, we all wouldn't be living in the America we know today. And Barack would not be president.

** Rev. Irene Monroe is the Coordinator of the African American Roundtable of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (CLGS) at the Pacific School of Religion, and a religion columnist. A native of Brooklyn, Rev. Irene Monroe is a graduate from Wellesley College and Union Theological Seminary at Columbia University, and served as a pastor at an African-American church before coming to Harvard Divinity School for her doctorate as Ford Fellow. As a syndicated queer religion columnist, Monroe columns appear across the country on the Huffington Post, in the Boston Globe, the Boston Herald, the Bay State Banner, Cambridge Chronicle, and Metro News.*

Her award-winning essay, "Louis Farrakhan's Ministry of Misogyny and Homophobia," was greeted with critical acclaim. Monroe has been profiled in O, Oprah Magazine, and CNN's Paula Zahn Now, and "CNN Headline News." She was also profiled in the Gay Pride Episode of "In the Life" TV where the segment on her was nominated for an educational Emmy. She has received the Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching several times while being the head teaching fellow of the Rev. Peter Gomes, the Pusey Minister in the Memorial Church at Harvard.

She is in the film, "For the bible Tells me so," an exploration of the intersection between religion and homosexuality in the U.S. and how the religious right has used its interpretation of the Bible to stigmatize the gay community, and her coming out story is profiled in "CRISIS: 40 Stories Revealing the Personal, Social, and Religious Pain and Trauma of Growing up Gay in America" that was just released in September 2008. Monroe sits on the advisory board of several national LGBTQ organizations. Monroe lives in Cambridge and can be reached at revimono@earthlink.net (no hyphens).

Southern VT Pride

This June, local organizers will again bring a variety of great events to the southern Vermont community to celebrate LGBT Pride. June is the traditional month for Pride events for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender communities and their allies. Celebrating the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity takes on special significance this year, as 2009 marks the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion of 1969, in Greenwich Village, New York.

Locally, an exhibit entitled "Our History, Our Lives: Celebrating 40 Years Since the Stonewall Rebellion" will open on Gallery Walk night, Friday, June 5, at the Hooker Dunham Theater & Gallery, and will be up for viewing the entire month. This display will include an historical installation by D.M. Hall, and a "Grassroots Wall" of memorabilia from LGBT individuals in this area. The Grassroots Wall will be installed on Wednesday, June 3, beginning at 4:30pm, and local LGBT folks are invited to stop by and contribute to the memorabilia wall.

Following the opening of the exhibit, at 8pm on Friday, June 5, the Hooker Dunham Theater will host the second "Queer Tales" literary event, an evening of readings by local LGBT individuals including poetry, fiction and memoir. "Queer Tales" has an admission of \$5, and reservations are encouraged.

See VT Pride on Page 21



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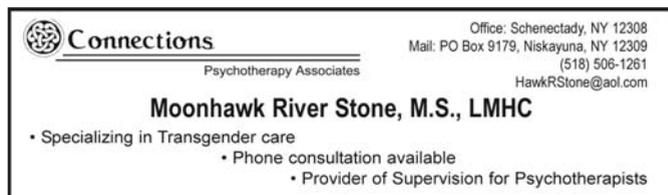
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Bebe Zahara Benet Wins the 'Race' and her Next Stop is Boston Pride!

By: Michael Knipp

"You better work!"

It's the most famous of RuPaul's caustic catchphrases, and one that drag artist Bebe Zahara Benet lived by on the Logo reality competition "RuPaul's Drag Race."

As the first season winner of the campy contest, Benet - whose legal name is Nea Ngwa Marshall Kudi - received a feature photo spread in Paper magazine; a portrait taken by renowned photographer Greg Gorman for the L.A. Eyeworks Legendary designer eyewear campaign; a headlining spot on the Absolut Pride Tour; and \$20,000 in cash.

But perhaps the most important prize is one that can't be quantified—the title of "America's Next Drag Superstar."

And Kudi—who was raised in Cameroon and worked in France before moving to the United States—doesn't take the honor lightly.

"Winning the race has not changed me; I'm still the same person I was before the win," he says. "But I will say that I am blessed to see that my persona inspires a lot of people who find a connection with [BeBe], and as an artist, that's huge - even money can't buy that. As for my career, this is a stepping stone to take my artistry to the next level, and I'm thankful for all the opportunities that have come my way



BEBE ZAHARA BENET

Photo by: Terry Hastings

and those that are still to come."

A testament to that humble statement is Kudi's life after the win. Since the show ended, he has returned to his home in Minneapolis, Minn., and to his job as a cast member at the La Femme Show Lounge.

"People talk about 'achieving status' so much. I think it's more important to focus on how you are impacting others and the world with said status," he says. "For me, it's not so much about the status, per say, but what work I am doing to move people forward."

That work includes an upcoming EP titled "Beautiful Day: Prelude to the Dance," and charitable contributions on behalf of the less fortunate living in his native Cameroon.

"I want to empower and inspire people through my artistry. I want to make change, on many levels," Kudi says. "To start, I want to be able to bring resources to my home country for two projects - first, HIV resources; and, second, to establish art and music resources for the youth to explore the creative."

As much as Kudi aims to inspire others, however, there are still those who inspire him. His alter ego, who has just been passed RuPaul's crown, is the product of an inspirational moment during his days as a male model on the runways of France: During a show, when some of the female models failed to

appear, Kudi was asked to step in - as a female. Identifying the opportunity as a chance to creatively channel that inspiration, Bebe Zahara Benet was born.

"I get my inspiration from different people, experiences, cultures, environments and artists, but I have always been inspired by female role models that I grew up with, and my mom is number one, so I strive to empower women and create and celebrate all kinds of beauty," he says.

While Kudi is empowering others, he knows, however, that not everyone is empowered by him. Much of mainstream America still doesn't wholly understand or accept drag culture. But he hopes that people like him and shows like "Drag Race" will help usher in that change.

"The media just have to do us justice by showcasing who we really are, the right way and with respect. 'Drag Race' has sown the seed, and now more people are looking at our art in a new light, and accepting it as a legitimate career. We still have a long way to go, but nothing is impossible."

Meet Bebe live and in-person at Boston Pride on June 10th. For more information visit www.bebezaharabenet.com.

VT Pride from Page 20

On Sunday, June 7th, there will be a Lesbian Tea Dance at the Hooker-Dunham Theater, from 4-7 p.m. Tickets will be \$8 at the door.

On Wednesday, June 10, renowned filmmaker John Scagliotti will show his film "Dangerous Living: Coming Out in the Developing World" at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Springfield at 7 p.m. This screening is free and open to the public.

An array of exciting events will occur on Friday, June 26, starting with a Benefit Wine Tasting at Windham Wines, on Main Street in Brattleboro. Windham Wines is holding this wine tasting for the benefit of the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont. The tasting will run from 5:30-8:30pm, and tickets are \$25.

Following the tasting, the opening night of "CineSLAM! Vermont's Pride Film Festival of Shorts" will take place at Hooker Dunham Theater, at 7 p.m., featuring short films from around the world and down the street. Admission is \$6.00 and reservations are strongly encouraged. The films include adult situations, and are not recommended for children under 18.

After taking in the opening of CineSLAM! folks can walk right up the street to attend the annual Pride Dance Party at the American Legion, which runs from 9 p.m.-1 a.m., with an admission of \$5. CJ the DJ will be playing dance music and raffle and door prizes will be given away. Refreshments will be available, along with a cash bar.

On Saturday, June 27, the second day of

Paradise City Arts Festival: Art fitting into a greener environment

By: J.M. Sorrell, Arts Reviewer

The beautiful weather of the three-day holiday weekend was reflected by the nearly 18,000 people who attended the Paradise City Arts Festival at the Three County Fairgrounds in Northampton, MA. Over 250 artists had booths inside and outside.

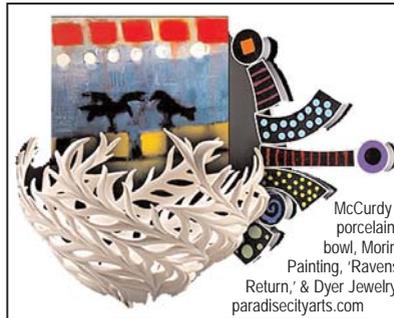
Last year, I wrote about my love of functional art. I noticed the festival website now says "Fairs of Fine and Functional Art." Several artists I spoke to conveyed the importance of supporting independent artists in today's economy. In turn, they get it. Buyers want to use or wear their art.

Fine art continues to sell, and yet it seems the recycled metal art is the rage. These metals are used in lawn sculptures but also in jewelry, wall-hangings, and furniture. There is enough of a range of prices and sizes to please just about anyone—from children to elders.

The general ticket price of \$12 may seem steep to some. I think of it as a great value: a visual feast, free jazz and theatre, access to a variety of interesting and delicious food, people watching and a unique and engaged way to spend the day. The only tortuous part is not having the space (or money!) for a 12-foot metal robot sculpture (butches), or the pocket-book to buy hand-stitched, colorful one-of-kind jackets (femmes).

p.m. and ending with a delicious BBQ at 6pm. Three sessions of short films and the BBQ are included in the admission of \$10. Reservations strongly encouraged as seating is limited!

These Pride events are open to all LGBT individuals and our friends and allies.



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In fact, my partner did buy a handmade reversible chenille jacket (1/2 price and gorgeous from New York artist Sue Lances) and I bought metal art—a fallen angel and depression era budget bank from my favorite local artist and member of our tribe (Deb Kracht). You must go to www.artheadstudio.com. Her sense of humor and politics are right on.

I spoke with Steve Fleury about his kinetic rolling ball art (www.stevefleury.com). He lived in California for many years and has worked as an illustrator and arts editor in Silicone Valley. This is his very first art show and he just started making kinetic art 18 months

ago. He is originally from South Hadley, and it was sweet to see his local family members sitting at a table nearby to support him. I was mesmerized, as were children of all ages. It takes Steve two-three weeks (and up to six weeks) full-time to create each piece. He lives in Houston, TX now.

Gigi Laberge (www.gigilaberge.com) makes landscapes in glass. They appear to be live and are depictions of real landscapes from Alaska to Maine. She also has a line of "slice of life" glass pendants where a portion of the proceeds goes to hospice organizations.

Bob Dewitt not only makes beautiful handcrafted cooking accessories, but he also had his tools with him and continually hand carved spoons while in his booth. He answered questions about the gouges, mallet, and drawknife-tools of the art-- and showed the intensive sanding, watering, and oil processes for each piece. An environmentalist, Bob keeps in mind the impact of clear cutting and biodiversity in his work.

If you missed the festival, there's always Columbus Day weekend. Buying or not, the artists love to talk, to feel supported, and to answer any questions about their craft. It's hard to beat the potential learning experiences and the pleasure this festival brings to us twice a year.

Foundation.

Please visit the websites of the Hooker-Dunham Theater (www.hookerdunham.org), the Men's Program (www.mensprogram.org), & CineSLAM! (www.cineslam.org) for additional details.

eflash@sover.net or 802-254-4444. Individual events are sponsored by the Active Lesbians of Monadnock Region (Dance Party), Kopkind Colony (CineSLAM!), the Men's Program (Dance Party), Queer Community Project (Queer Tales and Dance Party), and Windham

Latin Vision: A GLBT Pride Revolution



By: Wilfred Labiosa*

Happy Anniversary to the GLBT Movement! Another year we celebrate! There is always a group of individuals (including myself) that plans activities to raise our voices, educate, celebrate, and protest for inclusion and GLBT rights. Forty years ago our movement was born from a protest that was claiming rights for the GLBT community, from this day our movement transformed itself to weeks, even months of celebrations and protest. Like it is stated in Cuba and other countries, Nation or Death? We will succeed! Movement or Death? We will succeed!

Yes! Being people of color (POC) and GLBT, we strive in bringing balance to our already unequal lives. We force ourselves to survive in a classist society full of "isms" that are a part of society's norm. We are all immigrants that have chosen to live in this nation as it affords different opportunities than where we used to be. Does this place we call now home has met our expectations? Some individuals may answer yes, but the majority may answer no. This last group has decided to develop organizations, celebrations, and movements to help bring equity and equality to their "new home." Group of individuals



Latin Community Leaders, Pedro Julio Serrano, Puerto Rico, Wilfred Labiosa, MA, and Rep. Liz Mallia, Boston, Ma. Spanish: Líderes de nuestra Comunidad Latina, Pedro Julio Serrano, Puerto Rico, Wilfred Labiosa, Massachusetts, y Representante Liz Mallia, Boston. Photo by: Eric Hess

come together to advocate for equality and equity that is much deserved; these activities are noted mostly during June, as it is the month when our GLBT movement began.

We live in a country full of inconsistencies. In the same state were gay marriages are legal, hate crimes still occur against POC and GLBT people. We made history electing an

African-American as President; we have a Latina nominee to the highest court of the US; and, then we have Proposition 8 in California. We have many transgender people that cannot even go to a clothing store to buy their clothes as they are afraid to be discriminated against. I cannot provide you a solution to these problems, but I can say that we need to come together and unite in this struggle, and we need to continue educating others, one by one. We should be consistent, united, and be present throughout the year.

During this month of Pride, we should be celebrating our accomplishments, and the work ahead. We need to bring back a "revolution" to our GLBT movement just like we used to do and still do in Latino countries. We

need to create a unity and agenda in our movement that includes us all equally. A "revolution" that can demonstrate inclusion of all races, classes, ages, ethnic groups, and all. We need to keep optimism alive and to have energy to continue educating folks about our struggle while we include ourselves in the struggle itself.

Let's remember that in this democratic nation we can raise our voices in order to bring a "revolution" that is heard and educates others of our needs as a community. Become involved not only during this month of Pride, but during the whole year. Let's celebrate not only our Pride, but also the other aspects that make us unique as a community and as individuals and create a "revolution."

* Written in Spanish & translated by Wilfred Labiosa, local activist; member of the Board of Directors of Boston Pride and Unid@s, the National GLBT Latino Organization for Human Rights. (To read this column in Spanish, please visit therainbowtimesmass.com).

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- Black & Latino Pride, Albany, NY: June 5-7, 2009
- Boston Pride Week: June 5-14th 2009
 - Capital Pride: June 5-14, 2009
 - Hartford Pride: June 6, 2009
 - New Jersey Pride: June 7, 2009
- Southern Maine Pride: June 14-21, 2009
 - Toronto Pride: June 19-28, 2009
 - NYC Pride: June 20-28, 2009
 - Pride Vermont: July, 25, 2009
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ARIES (March 20-April 19): You don't need to respond to everything people say. A simple retort could drag you into a tedious, time-consuming battle. The right intonation - "Oh, really?" or "That's very interesting" - can be far more devastatingly dismissive than any argument.
TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You may be too eager to assert your sense of self-worth. (1) You don't have to prove anything to anyone but yourself. (2) Your real value is in your heart, not in your wallet! (3) The people who matter already know your worth!
GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Getting into a political argument can be a lot easier than getting out of one. Resist the urge to smash your opponent. You'll do better to practice your debating skills, especially listening and learning from others!
CANCER (June 21-July 22): Your ability and passion for helping others is part of what helps you get ahead. Your own competitive edge is not so much in pushing yourself forward as it is in bringing others along. The more you offer, the more you get!
LEO (July 23-August 22): Your own religion, spirituality, or lack thereof may serve you better than any alternative, but remember that testimonials should have their own time and place. Answer questions as they come up. Otherwise, let your acts speak louder than your profession of ideals.
VIRGO (August 23-September 22): Passion is powering your ambitions. Don't be afraid to speak up, but do be clear on the stakes. You may have to declare yourself on one side or the other. Trust your heart, but think ahead before you decide!
LIBRA (September 23-October 22): Resist the urge to look smarter than your partner. Better to play up his or her brilliance. If you really are opponents more than teammates, you need to make some changes. A common enemy - say a shared political goal - could help.
SCORPIO (October 23-November 21): Being great at sex isn't enough. You want to be the best; that's pretty subjective. The bigger challenge is to be more emotionally open and intimate. Try to find some spaces in your heart between your usual "all-or-nothing."
SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 20): Cooperation will get you further ahead than flying solo. Try letting someone else take the lead now and then. You can do a lot better at team efforts if you remember you're part of the team.
CAPRICORN (December 21-January 19): Your criticisms of community politics are right on the mark, but saying them nicely enough to be heard can be a challenge. Listen to others, and give credit where it's due. Remember, you need to work with the folks you're criticizing!
AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18): You're already cleverer than you should be, so hold back on the bomb mots. Even though you just mean to be playful, you could come off a lot nastier than you intend. If you need to sharpen your wit, do it in writing!
PISCES (February 19-March 19): What are "traditional values" really? The core principles you grew up with may have surprising relevance in your GLBT community, and what you've learned in your queer community has value with your family of origin.

** Jack Fertig, a professional astrologer since 1977, is available for personal and business consultations in person in San Francisco or online everywhere. He can be reached at 415-864-8302, through his Web site at www.starjack.com and by e-mail at QScopes@qsyndicate.com.*

The Outfield: Emile Griffith: Out for the Count



By: Dan Woog*

In 1962, Emile Griffith killed Benny "Kid" Paret. The occasion was a nationally televised fight, with boxing's welterweight crown at stake.

If ever there were a non-gay event, a death in the boxing ring would seem to be it. But—as with so much else in life—there is far more to the story than meets the eye.

Griffith—the holder of six championship belts, a charter inductee in the International Boxing Hall of Fame and a fan favorite for both his exciting style and charming personality—did not reveal at the time what caused him to knock Paret unconscious in the 12th round, then pummel him a dozen more times as he stood propped against the ropes. Griffith was not a vicious man; entering the bout, his 28-3 record included just 10 knockouts.

Yet over the years, rumors filtered through the boxing world: Griffith's rage had been ignited hours earlier, during the weigh-in, when Paret called him a "maricón" (Spanish for "faggot"). Griffith almost attacked him right there, the story went; later that night, his fists finished the job.

At the time, Griffith's homosexuality was known to many sportswriters, but, following the standards of the times, no one mentioned it publicly. Though Griffith never hid who he was—he walked proudly through the front door of Times Square gay bars, rather than slinking in the back, someone noted — it took decades for him to actually say, "I am gay."

Today there are no shades of gray. Griffith—who is suffering from the twin effects of pugilistic dementia and a vicious beating outside a gay bar several years ago —

has allowed his story to be written. *Nine...Ten...And Out! The Two Worlds of Emile Griffith* is the first book to explore the life of a championship gay boxer.

And what may be most revealing of the difference between 1962 and 2009 is how little reaction the once-explosive revelation has generated.

Nine...Ten... is the work of Ron Ross, a veteran boxing writer and former pro boxer, fight promoter and manager. He is an unapologetic Griffith fan — and he understands the two worlds his subject long straddled.

"The '50s and '60s were a more homophobic time than today," Ross says, "but Emile was still accepted for who he was. He was an upfront guy, and people in boxing respected him for that. Outside of the boxing world, though, most people didn't know."

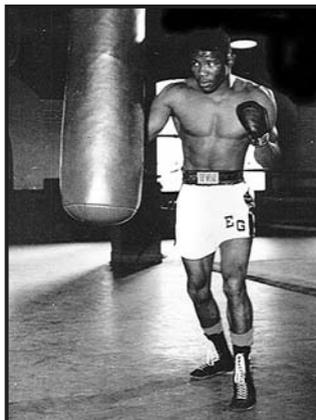
Years ago, *New York Times* sports columnist Bob Herbert asked Griffith about the rumors. "I have been with men and women," the boxer responded.

Not until the premiere of the movie "Ring of Fire" — a documentary that traveled the decades from the fatal fight to a heart-rending meeting between Griffith and Paret's now-grown son — did the former boxer use the "g" word, and come fully out.

The film—which, to use a boxing analogy, pulled no punches — had an enormous effect on Griffith. "He told me, 'I guess the whole world knows now,'" Ross says. "As he walked out of the theater, people cheered him. That was a revelation to him. People still loved and accepted him. That opened a door for him to step through. And he did."

But why a book about a gay welterweight now?

"The time is right," Ross says. "Emile and Muhammad Ali were two of the all-star boxers of the '60s. People have wanted to do



Emile Griffith - Six Time World Champion

something on Emile for a long time, but everyone wanted to focus on the lurid parts. When his manager and trainer, Gil Clancy, asked me if I'd be interested, I took a long time to decide. But they knew I'd be sensitive to his situation, so I said yes."

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There was another reason: Ross has a lesbian daughter.

"I wanted a book that portrayed Emile Griffith, the person," Ross explains. "Not just a gay person, not just a fighter — but a human being. Something anyone — boxing fan or not, gay or straight — could relate to. I think I achieved that objective."

Does Griffith leave a legacy?

"Definitely," Ross says. "He stood up at a time when many people were in the closet. He carried himself honestly, without flaunting anything. His legacy is that an athlete can love himself completely. He sends the message that it's OK to live your life openly, with sensitivity and compassion."

Ross then recites his favorite line from the book: "I killed a man, and most people understand and forgive me," Griffith said once. "However, I love a man, and to so many people this is an unforgivable sin; this makes me an evil person. So even though I never went to jail, I've been in prison almost all my life."

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

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