

The Rainbow Times

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

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DR. KEN MAYER,
*Named latest recipient
of Fenway Health's
Gerry E. Studds Award*

p10

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*Radical Spirituality
unfolds at recent
Noho staging of*
**THE LESBIAN
TENT REVIVAL**

p6

PHOTO: GLENN KOETZNER



**CONNECTICUT'S
TRUE COLORS XVIII
CONFERENCE**
*Empowering
LGBTQ Youth*

p16

SPECIAL REPORT: Anti LGBT Groups in New England **p3**

DOMA: What does turnaround mean for same-sex couples? **p14**

BOSTON PRIDE: Vigil held to raise awareness of David Kato's murder **p8**

**Reichen
Lehmkuhl**
**Ex-Air Force Captain
and reality TV star of
Logo's *A-List New York*** **p19**

TRT HEROES:
**Polly Bixby &
Karen Grzesik**
p22

Promises made are not so empty after all

By: Nicole Lashomb*/TRT Editor-in-Chief
OPINIONS We've all heard it. President Obama is not living up to his promises he made to the LGBT community. I beg to differ. Not only has this President's administration done more for the LGBT community than any other President's in the history of this nation, he is unwavering in his support of it, regardless of how "vocal" he is.

Since his inception, President Obama has repealed the discriminatory ban on gays to serve openly in the military (DADT), he has extended hospital visitation rights to same-sex couples regardless of their marital status, he has granted federal employment benefits to same-sex coupled government employees and most recently, has declared Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional as it describes marriage as only between one man and one woman – not a bad track record for someone sworn in just over 2 years ago.

I get it. I am just as eager as the next person who is waiting for their day to wipe away the face of bigotry from the nation, our nation. I am waiting for the day that my wife and I can travel throughout the United States without the fear of being without our health care proxy and power of attorney; when we can adopt a child without worry-

ing about the legalities surrounding it, regardless of where we live –when we can live completely free. But, politics is a game after all. If Obama had waived his rainbow flag mighty and high on Capitol Hill, my guess is we wouldn't even have achieved what we have today.

We have to be realistic with how expedient our rights are able to be attained. I am not happy with how treacherous the road is either. It should not be that way. However, like with the failed economy, which was doomed long before President Obama ever took office, the President does not have a magic wand to make it all go away; he doesn't even hold that type of power without the cooperation from Congress and other members of government.

Before casting stones and pointing fingers at our "friend" in the White House, we have to remember that we are indeed breaking through the chains that have entrapped our community for decades, even if that means one link at a time.

Nicole Lashomb

**Nicole Lashomb is the Editor-in-Chief of The Rainbow Times, holds a Bachelor's degree from SUNY Potsdam, and an MBA from Marylhurst University. Send your Letters to the Editor to editor@therainbowtimesnews.com.*

Queeries: Spilling to Grandma & Web Hookups

By: Steven Petrow*/Special for TRT
ADVICE "Desperately Seeking Sex Online"

Q: I need a bit of advice on my sex life. I'm 24 and my main goal at the moment is to have fun and sleep around. I'm not bad looking but I'm no model. Here's the problem: Ever since I came out eight years ago, I feel like an odd-ball on the scene as I don't know how to approach guys with the intention of it leading to sex. My friends say I look very sweet and innocent and they think it can put guys off. I am on Gaydar and other sex websites that are only about hooking up, but I struggle about what to write and most of the messages I send go unanswered, or worse, I get a "no." I'd really like to hear what you've got to say.

A: Man, I really feel for you, especially since

you're reminding me of what dating and hookups were like for me when I first started playing around. Before I give you any advice, let me just say two things. First off, it's great that you know what you're looking for – in this case, sex. Less risk of wasting other people's time, let alone your own. Second, if some guys aren't turned on to you because you're "sweet and innocent," believe me they are going to be many more who just love those qualities in you.

To get to the nitty gritty, I think there are some other things you're likely overlooking. Hooking up online is all about first impressions and that's why you need to pay such close attention to your screen name, profile, and photos that you post (and you must post pix). When it comes to a screen name, be explicit:

See Queeries on page 8

Using CABO as your everyday resource

By: Jenn Tracz*/CABO's Executive Director

Each month when I sit down to write my column I am always drawn to the multitude of benefits CABO has to offer the businessperson. However, this month I'd like to focus on the many benefits CABO can offer you, the everyday consumer. The buying power of LGBT individuals is expected to hit \$800 billion in 2011. That's a lot of money that we are all spending, so doesn't it make sense that we spend it at places and with businesses that support equality?

Taking a step back from my leadership role in the CABO organization and placing myself in the shoes of the average LGBT consumer I see the value of spending my money with companies that support me. As I plan for my wedding this summer the CABO member directory has become a resource that I keep close by to help guide me in my purchasing decisions. I've successfully found an amazing photographer, a hair salon and several companies to help me with invitations and keepsakes for my guests.

It is gratifying for me to be able to put money into the pockets of businesses that support CABO and support equality. I encourage you to look into your local LGBT chamber of commerce to help you decide whom to do business with. CABO is CT's LGBT chamber and it is likely the state you live in has one too. To find the chamber closest to you, go to the National Gay and Lesbian Cham-

ber of Commerce's website, www.nglcc.org. CABO has great relationships with the surrounding states, which are home to the Greater Boston Business Council (www.gbbsc.org) and the NGLCC New York (www.nglccny.org), both amazing LGBT chambers.

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

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



Jenn Tracz

Voices of Young People: Shaping of our ongoing struggle for GLBTQ liberation

By: Jason Lydon/TRT Columnist

I must say that the past few weeks have made it very difficult to focus on any one thing. There are revolutions happening globally in ways we have not seen in generations. The uprising in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and the growing campaigns in Jordan, Syria, Algeria, and elsewhere are all part of a people's movement to draw great inspiration from. Right here in the United States people are occupying the State House in Wisconsin, demanding their rights as human beings be respected. This is an unprecedented moment and as GLBTQ folks we are in the thick of it as well. We are in all of this because we are part of all of these communities, globally, nationally, and locally.

On February 24th I had the opportunity to take part in a Massachusetts struggle for justice. Young people in the Commonwealth are organizing together to pressure the Patrick Administration to take a stand in support of youth jobs. These young people are pushing to restore and replace funding to two youth jobs line items, the School to Career program and Summer Works program. Well over a thousand youth, along with their adult allies, converged on that State House to show that the \$8 million in youth jobs money would be spent to save their lives. These programs could produce 2,700 jobs for young people, specifically young people who have less access to other resources.

As I stood outside the State House I spoke with three youth and an adult staff person from The City School, a youth-led adult supported

organization in Dorchester that "develops and strengthens the power of youth to work towards building a just society." These young people are fighting for jobs because it gives them a deep sense of independence, putting money in their pocket that they can make choices about. It gives them workplace experience that they can take with them for the rest of their lives. One young person explained to me that having a job gives him a great opportunity to better himself. These are the things young people are striving for. Ruby Reyes, Co-Executive Director of The City School explained, "Today young people are needed to help financially support their families yet young people do not qualify for unemployment." These youth need to bring home paychecks to help keep the family budget going. The economy we are living in today forces many adults into unemployment and underemployment, this reality requires a large response from our government, including the funding of youth jobs.

The push for youth jobs directly impacts GLBTQ young people. Thanks to the data available through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey



Jason Lydon

See Voices on page 4

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I live in Nashua, NH for now and absolutely love reading The Rainbow Times. I was wondering if at some point you'd be adding New Hampshire onto the list of states that you cover. Keep up the good work!

—Jean Crosby, Nashua, NH

Dear Jean,

Thank you for your feedback. Currently TRT is available at several establishments in NH. However, we are always willing to expand our routes. Please feel free to send us suggestions of where you'd like to see The Rainbow Times and we will do our best to make that happen. Thank you for your loyal support!

Best, The Editor

Dear Editor,

We loved your cover story on Tracy and Stamie from The L Word! It was sad to find out that they were not going to be doing the show any longer. But, they are real people close to home now thanks to your story. I follow you on Twitter and have also now followed them too.

—Marinna Sanctresh, Northampton, MA

Dear Rainbow Times,

Congratulations on getting the Boston Pride Guide! What an honor and to know that you care for us here at Boston and having event met you in person last night at the Spirit Magazine's networking event was so amazing. Thanks for the work that you do and for being so personable. You are unlike any other publisher and editor's profile that I've ever met, so down to earth. That comes across in your stories and content. Thanks for giving us The Rainbow Times!

—John Matthews, Boston, MA

See Letters on page 4

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Beware: These are the Anti-LGBT groups in New England—our gayborhoods)

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

The civil rights progress achieved by the LGBT community in the New England states has met with opposition from a variety of organizations billing themselves as “pro-family.”

These organizations do what they can to influence legislators into sponsoring bills which promote their conservative agenda. They have worked to keep marriage as a union between a man and woman only, as well as to curtail funding for abortions, and to keep sex education and promotion of condom use out of public schools.

In the Bay State, the main anti-LGBT organization is the *Massachusetts Family Institute*. MFI was founded in 1991 and bills itself as “a non-partisan public policy organization dedicated to strengthening families in Massachusetts and affirming the Judeo-Christian values upon which it is based.”

MFI boasts on its web site – www.mafamily.org – that it has been a proactive, public voice on issues including educating families and children about the dangers of unsafe Internet use, preventing sexual abuse of children, restricting gambling throughout the state, and strengthening, protecting, and preserving marriage between a man and a woman.

The organization’s opposition to marriage between same-gender couples is explained in the following paragraph:

“In keeping with the Judeo-Christian values that our society was founded upon, MFI believes that all sex outside of heterosexual marriage is detrimental to families and that includes homosexuality. Our compassion is for those struggling

with same-sex attraction and we encourage the healing of individuals who wish to change their choice of lifestyle through the work of Exodus International, Love Won Out and Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays. MFI strongly opposes any efforts by political activists to normalize homosexual behavior and all attempts to equate homosexuality with immutable characteristics such as skin color, or the “gay rights” movement with the civil rights movement.”

Among the bills that MFI is vowing to oppose include a transgender rights bill, which MFI dismissively brands as a “Bathroom Bill.”

“The homosexual special interest groups have pledged once again to devote significant resources to a bill that would normalize transvestism or so-called ‘transgenderism.’ If adopted, this bill would allow virtually anyone, regardless of sex, to enter single-sex bathrooms and locker rooms including public schools. It would also add the vague term ‘gender identity or expression’ to the hate crimes law.”

MFI also objects to comprehensive sex education in public schools, in addition to funding for

“homosexual agenda” in schools.

“MFI will continue to work to eliminate taxpayer funding for groups such as the state’s Independent Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth that seek to normalize homosexuality in the eyes of school children. Organizations and promoters of these programs continue to use the guise of ‘suicide prevention’ and ‘diversity’ training to gain support for the funding, and demonize those who question the wisdom of encouraging behavior that is dangerous and potentially deadly.”

Another “pro-family” group is *Mass Resistance*, which has filed bills for the 2011 legislative session which include eliminating the Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth.

According to Mass Resistance’s website: *“Many of these ‘Commission’ activities are extremely graphic, explicit, and dangerous, and often include other homosexual, transgender, and even sadomasochist activists mingling with kids. There is no oversight to this commission, and their activities over the last few years have outraged parents and even public officials. In addition, last sum-*

mer one adult commission member was arrested for soliciting homosexual sex from a minor.”

The group also wants to repeal an anti-bullying law, passed last year.

“It was written primarily by political activists – particularly from homosexual groups –who included their special-interest programs in the bill. Much of it is from the GLSEN website,” explains Mass Resistance.

Another bill – “An Act Regarding Parental Notification and Consent,” amends the current parental notification law written by Parents’ Rights Coalition (now *MassResistance*), expanding upon it and modernizing it to address current conditions.

Explains Mass Resistance: *“It will effectively stop their agenda in the schools by giving parents the right to decide what their children are introduced to regarding sexual perversions. It is very specific rather than vague, and changes the current ‘opt out’ to ‘opt-in’ - like every other elective in the schools. Right now, ‘sexuality’ is the only opt-out subject in school curriculums. The homosexual groups like that because it makes it difficult, intimidating, and embarrassing for parents and kids.”*

Among the accomplishments the group boasts about are: the passage of the Parental Notification Law, the successful fight “to stop dangerous bills filed in the Mass. Legislature for: mandatory sexuality and homosexuality education in schools; decriminalization of bestiality and sodomy; and legalization of homosexual ‘marriage’ through statute.”

The Family Policy Council, based in Maine, was instrumental in repealing marriage rights for same-sex couples in that state in 2009.

See Beware on page 21



PHOTO: THE HARTFORD COURANT/SHANA SURECK

Peter Wolfgang of the Family Institute of Connecticut, whose organization attempted unsuccessfully to amend the state Constitution to prevent same-gender couples from marrying in Connecticut.

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Faith, Family, and God: Women driven out by male power hunger & insecurities

By: Paul P. Jesepe*/TRT Columnist

IN THE NAME OF GOD Power and control are some of the most socially, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually corrupting forces since human existence. These twin evils have been especially used by men to repress women. In doing so, everyone has been denied the guidance, benefits, and contributions of women as religious leaders and spiritual teachers.

Women were priests and deacons in the Christian church for the first several hundred years of its history. There were women apostles that travelled with Jesus. *Mary Magdalene, wrongly labeled a prostitute by men of the early church, wrote a beautiful gospel that never made it into the final version of the Bible. The men made sure of it.* Although only fragments of a copy have survived, it still provides much timeless wisdom and insight.

As the Christian church developed male insecurity marginalized women so successfully that they were completely pushed out of the hierarchy. Although much has changed in the last fifty years, there is still more work to be done to accord women in several faith traditions the respect and equality they deserve as religious leaders and spiritual teachers. It is necessary because it is the ethical and moral thing to do. Just as important there is the enormous benefit those on a faith journey will receive from the guidance of women.

The dominant male role in overseeing several religions and denominations within faith traditions understandably has distanced many women from a close relationship with a higher power. Overtime, God has wrongly become "father" and paternalistic. This stems in part from the failure to

find a gender neutral pronoun (his/her/he/she) in referring to Perfect Goodness. Often is read "God the Father" or references to the Creator as "His covenant" or "He said to them."

There are many names for God. They include: El, Adon, Yahweh, Yeshua, Elohim, Creator, Jehovah, Almighty, Emmanuel, Holy Light, Supreme One, Alpha and Omega, Giver of Life, Maker of All Good, Governor of the Universe, and the list goes on.

I've never thought of the One Who Cannot Be Named as a father or mother figure. If I did then it limits my faith journey and most important projects personal limitations on Holy Silence. Moses asked Holy Mysticism what is the Divine Author's name and the response was: "I am that I am." Another translation is: "I-shall-be that I-shall-be." In my opinion, this suggests that a male hierarchy whether in organized religion or elsewhere cannot be justified because Infinite Knowledge transcends gender.

Anytime I write about God I do so in a gender neutral manner. I don't alternate between God and Goddess. God is God. Just. Eternal. Infinite. Mystery. Omnipotent.

No human being has the ability or even the potential to grasp Divine Timelessness. Theologians, philosophers, and religious leaders all attempt to establish guides to help the individual journey toward the holy. It's an effort to foster a personal spiritual awakening that expands throughout life.

In the Gospel of Mary Magdalene the apostle writes, "For the seed of true humanity exists within you. Follow it! Those who search for it will find it." She told the faithful to "clothe ourselves with perfect humanity." This perfect humanity is a journey toward God, revelation, and enlightenment. Don't let religious politics, defined in part by gender or the hypocrisy of those identified as

"leaders," deter you from the spiritual growth and awakening that brings you closer to Infinite Love. Moving closer to the holy will empower you to embrace a higher truth while providing you the opportunity to better the world.

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

Letters from page 2

Dear Editor,

The story written by Joe Siegel about the CT Supreme court was excellent. His story really allowed me to understand the importance of this ruling on gay parents. We are lucky in CT and New England.

—Sherri Rosado, Hartford, CT

Dear Editor,

Good coverage on the Alex Morse story. He is someone with lots of passion and desire to help Holyoke. He is also inclusive and he was clear about it in his campaign speech. As a Mayor so young, however, I think he'll encounter what ageism can do to a young gay man's campaign. I think he should be older to run for this bold position, but I support him nonetheless. I believe he can bring change and I was glad to see the story by Tynan Power, which also shed some light about who Morse is and his family's working class background. Only someone with such knowledge and who is pro-diversity can truly understand what Holyoke needs.

—Angelo Medina, Holyoke, MA

Voices from page 2

in Massachusetts we are able to see the disparities in health between gay, lesbian, bisexual youth and their heterosexual peers. GLB young people are over four times more likely to have skipped school in the past month because of feeling unsafe and over twice as likely to have been injured or threatened with a weapon at school when compared to peers. As we are pushing for changes on the school level and increasing the safety of young GLBTQ people during the school day we also need to make it so they can go to work so that rather than simply telling them, "It Gets Better," we can support them making their own lives better now! Too often youth are referred to as the leaders of our future, but they are leaders of today. The voices of young people need to shape our struggle for GLBTQ liberation. One of the ways adults can be allies is by supporting youth jobs and being sure youth get access to the resources they need to make life better today. Youth leadership is there and it simply needs adults to listen and take action in solidarity with their vision of a better world. I felt honored to be part of the rally on February 24th and the work is not over, I implore others to join me in standing with the young people who are demanding funding for youth jobs, funding that will save the lives of young people.

been there? on that. **therainbowtimes**

transparent

THURSDAY March 31, 7 pm
Free Film Screening and Panel

Discussion of
Transparent, with Director Jules Roskam
and 3 Local FTM Parents
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Northampton

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Award-Winning LGBT Films in Noho March 5 and April 2

WESTERN MA

NORTHAMPTON, MA—From passionate lesbian romance to a gay man coming out to his beloved grandmother to two girls falling in love in the Middle East, to a teenage girl seeking her birth mother, Out! For Reel LGBT Film Series is presenting an outstanding variety of LGBT films for their March and April screenings.

On Saturday, March 5, lesbian romance is the focus of two beautifully produced, award-winning films: When Night Is Falling (uncensored version) and Donkey Girl (short film). The screening is at the Academy of Music Theater, Northampton, at 7pm. An After Party with DJ Jodi follows 9 pm -12:30 am at Page's Loft, Clarion Hotel, Northampton.

On Saturday, April 2, Out! For Reel co-presents with the Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival two inspiring films about family and identity: Off And Running and Second Guessing Grandma. The screening is at the Wright Hall, Smith College, Northampton, at 8:15 pm.

When Night Is Falling (Uncensored Version), whose love scenes were edited due to censorship by the U.S. film ratings board in 1995, tells the story of two women who live very differently lives, one is a college professor and one is a performer, who accidentally meet and passionately fall in love.

"The cinematography in When Night Is Falling is beautiful, the story is compelling, and the love scenes between the women are some of the most aesthetically beautiful love scenes ever filmed. It



PHOTO: COURTESY WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING
Passion fueled When Night is Falling

will be fantastic to watch it on the big screen in its entirety," says Jaime Michaels, executive producer/director of Out! For Reel.

Donkey Girl, a charming short film tells the evocative story of two teenage girls in the Middle East, who begin to fall in love with each other.

The April 2 screening presents Off And Running, the story of Avery, a African American teenage girl who, adopted by white Jewish lesbian parents, decides to contact her birth mother. She is propelled into an exploration of race, identity, and family. This is an inspiring, uplifting story that is suitable for the whole family to watch.

Second Guessing Grandma, is a charming short film about a twenty-something Jewish gay man who finally comes out to his beloved grandmother against his mother's desire to protect her from the truth.

Advance tickets for the March and April screenings and the After Party are available online: www.OutForReel.org.

Tickets for When Night Is Falling: \$11 advance, \$14 door, \$9 students with ID (Student tickets are available only at the Academy box office.) After Party tickets are available only online. Combo film and party tickets: \$17.

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

Tickets for Off And Running: \$9 Advance/Door, \$7 Seniors & Students (Door only). Advance tickets available online only.

For more information: www.OutForReel.org.

Youth LGBT leaders sought for Congressional internships

WASHINGTON, DC—The Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute announced last month a program to bring five outstanding college students to Washington, D.C., this summer to participate in the Victory Congressional Internship.

This competitive leadership program will place college undergraduates in Congressional internships with members of the LGBT Equality Caucus. They'll also have access to leadership development opportunities provided by GLLI and will be required to participate in a community service project while in D.C.

"The VCI program will prepare young LGBTQ people to become informed decision-makers

and influential leaders who can change their communities and our world," according to the program Web site.

Following the summer program, students will apply their learning during the fall semester and, in December, will attend GLLI's annual international conference for three days of training, skills building, networking and discussion alongside hundreds of openly LGBT leaders in government, politics, advocacy, business and community organizations.

To learn more about the VCI program or to begin an application, visit www.glli.org/vci. All applications are due by March 7, 2011.



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Co-presenting: Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival
OFF AND RUNNING



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APA publishes latest research on gay and lesbian parents and their children

NORTHAMPTON, MA—Stigma, Social Context, and Mental Health: Lesbian and Gay Couples Across The Transition to Adoptive Parenthood, groundbreaking new research about gay adoptive parents by Dr. Abbie E. Goldberg, has been published in the Journal of Counseling Psychology by the American Psychological Association in February, 2011.

Dr. Goldberg's new work, co-authored with JuliAnna Z. Smith at The Center for Research on Families at The University of Massachusetts/Amherst, is the first study to examine changes in depression and anxiety across the first year of adoptive parenthood in same-sex couples. Ninety same-sex couples (52 lesbian couples and 38 gay male couples) were studied and profiled at three separate times during their first year of adoptive parenthood.

Dr. Goldberg's research indicates that, among same-sex couples raising adoptive children during the first year those who lived in states with anti-gay laws and social attitudes had more mental health issues than those who lived in states that provide a more supportive legal and social environment towards gay parenting and parents. In addition, same-sex couples who reported higher perceived workplace support, higher family support and more gay-friendly neighborhoods reported better mental health than those who reported poor workplace, family, and neighborhood support.

The full article, Stigma, Social Context, and Mental Health: Lesbian and Gay Couples Across The Transition to Adoptive Parenthood, is available in PDF format on Dr. Goldberg's website: <http://www.clarku.edu/faculty/goldberg/publications.html>

Dr. Goldberg's landmark 2010 book Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children: Research on the Family Life Cycle, also published by the American Psychological Association, was the first full-length analysis of the research on gay parenting, summarizing research data on the subject from the 1970's to the present. That research was consistent in suggesting that the outcomes and well-being of children raised by gay and lesbian parents were no different than those of children raised by heterosexual parents.

Research for Stigma, Social Context, and Mental Health: Lesbian and Gay Couples Across The Transition to Adoptive Parenthood was funded by grants from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development; the Wayne F. Placek award, from the American Psychological Foundation; the Williams Institute at the University of California Los Angeles School of Law; the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues; and the Lesbian Health Fund, awarded by the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association.

Abbie E. Goldberg, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Clark University in Worcester, MA. Her research has examined the transition to parenthood in diverse families, including lesbian-parent families and adoptive-parent families. In particular, her work has focused on how families' relationships and identities change across the transition to parenthood, and how gender and sexual orientation figure into individuals' adjustment and experience of parenthood. In addition, she has also studied the experiences of adults raised by lesbian, gay, and bisexual parents.

Radical Spirituality reveals itself in area groups' staging of Lesbian Tent Revival

By: Tynan Power/TRT Reporter

NORTHAMPTON, MA—On February 19, women of Northampton welcomed prolific lesbian-feminist author, playwright and performer Carolyn Gage in her hit show "The Lesbian Tent Revival."

"The show was a fabulous success!" said Mary McClintock, one of the event's organizers. "One hundred women had dinner and discussion (with Gage). About two hundred attended the Revival and many stayed after for dessert and more conversation."

An informal group of organizers calling themselves "Gather the Lesbians" teamed up to create the event.

"Carolyn was really impressed with how well produced it was," McClintock said.

Gage, who has lived in Portland, Maine, for 13 years, is no stranger to Northampton.

"I performed *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc* at Thorne's Market about six years ago, and then I came back and performed again at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst," she said. "I love the area, and, of course, it's supposed to be Planet Lesbian."

The Lesbian Tent Revival intentionally draws on an evangelical religious style of preaching a saving message.

"There is a lot of power in organized religion," Gage said. "I saw in the South of my childhood how the Southern Baptist Church became the center, as well as a spiritual support, for the Civil Rights Movement. And, then, of course, there are the evangelical tent revivals. It occurred to me that radical lesbian-feminism had saved my life. I felt, literally, as if a great light had shone on my world and suddenly all kinds of things were illuminated. So I actually do feel evangelical, or zealous, about lesbian-feminism."

"Lesbians are in sore need of a revival," Gage said. "Our identity has been labeled a 'label,' which effectively dismisses centuries of fascinating history and invigoratingly anti-patriarchal culture. So this is what the Tent Revival is all about: reviving, bringing back to life."

"And," she added, "Tent revivals are fun!"

"Carolyn is a brilliant thinker, performer, and activist," McClintock said of Gage's appeal. "Using skillful delivery of profound thoughts and humor, Carolyn's Lesbian Tent Revival builds lesbian community and provokes thought, laughter, and conversation about important radical feminist topics."

A show by an articulate, passionate radical feminist draws a sure audience to Gage's shows, but Gage doesn't just preach to the choir.

"Who comes to Lesbian Tent Revivals? All kinds of folks," Gage said. "Sure, the (lesbian feminist) 'choir' is there, but so are the sick, the depressed, the desperate, the downtrodden, the overwhelmed, the curious, the skeptical, the doubting, and the challenging."

"Younger women are especially revived. They have been starving in the patriarchal, perpetrator-identified desert of post-modern theory," Gage said. "The Tent Revival is about connection—deep, radical connecting. It's about putting lesbians back together, connecting us with our roots, with our history, with each other, with our memories, and with our potential by primary commitment to women."

Building community based on a primary commitment to women is different from building queer community, according to Gage.

"In the words of poet and author Susan Hawthorne, '*Queer*' has become so inclusive; it doesn't allow the space for lesbians to exist.' This is definitely what I am seeing when I tour to college campuses. The men are all gay and very proud of it, but the women are nearly all 'queer' or 'curious' or 'bisexual' or 'polymorphously perverse' or 'gay women.' Where are the lesbians?" Gage explained.

"My experience of queer theory is that it is self-referential and that it gets off the synaptic bus ten stops before the end of the line," she said.

Gage is committed to fostering radical spirituality.

"We need our lesbian history, our bold lesbian archetypes, our wild lesbian cultures. This is what I try to bring to the Tent Revival. I want to provide a space for the creation of a radical feminist spirituality," Gage said. "The Tent Revival is creating a global 'Sisterhood of the Sacred Synapse,' because it is a tenet of the Revival that radical thinking is a sacrament. It's not optional. It's a sacred duty."

For more information about Carolyn Gage, visit www.carolyngage.com. To get involved in planning future lesbian-centered events in the Northampton area, call 877-925-2999 or email gatherthelesbians@yahoo.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY CAROLYN GAGE

Playwright and performer, Carolyn Gage



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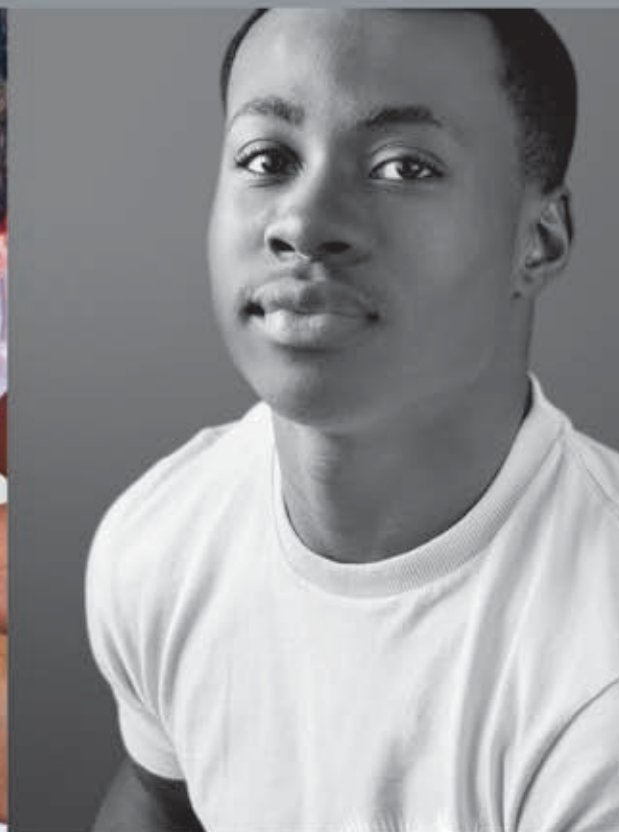
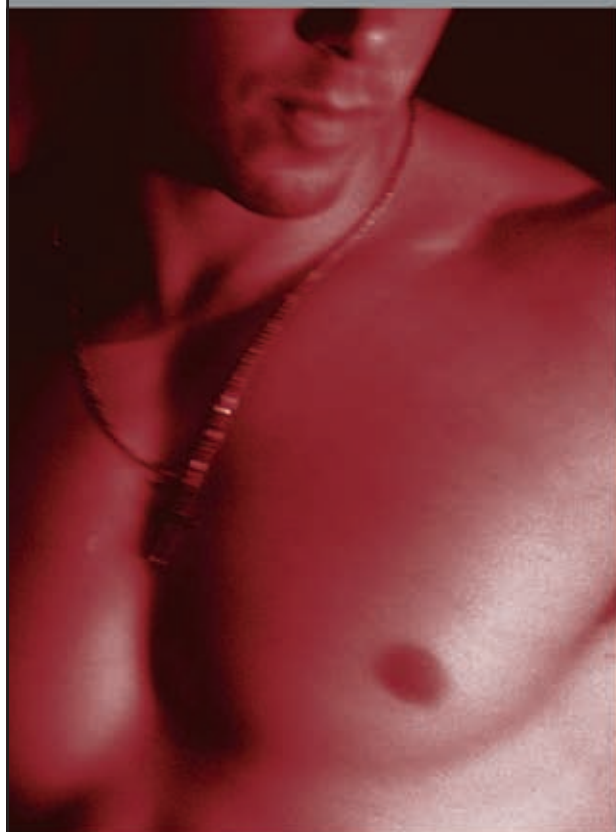
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David Kato: His murder not the first, and sadly, he'll surely not be the last Boston Pride organizes memorial vigil, seeks to raise awareness of intentional hate crimes

EASTERN MA

By: William Ulrich*/Special for TRT

On Thursday night, February 10, 2011, a candlelit vigil was held in a very frigid downtown Boston, Massachusetts to raise awareness of David Kato's murder. David was an out and proud human rights activist in a very homophobic Uganda, bludgeoned to death at his home in Kampala on January 26th with repeated hammer blows to his skull. Just weeks after winning a landmark lawsuit against a newspaper that published his photo and those of other GLBTI activists with their addresses under the caption, "HANG THEM!," David's tragic loss has sent all Ugandan homosexuals into hiding and is a horrifying foreshadowing of what is to come.

David's murder took place in the wake of a frightening growth of anti-gay expression throughout Christian Uganda. The "Kill the Gays" bill, authored by MP David Bahati and spurred on by U.S.-based evangelicals is still pending in the Ugandan Parliament and expected to pass later this month.

The vigil was organized by members of the Boston Pride Committee. It was a small gathering, not as large as the one organized by Human Rights groups in NYC, which culminated

with a march on the Ugandan Embassy across the street from the United Nations building the week before. There was no glitz, no headlining speakers, no chanting and no walk to anything Ugandan. However, it was a grassroots move on the part of local Pride organizers, complete with bull horns, to use their voice in the community to do what Prides should be doing all over the world: raise awareness of the horrors GLBTI people in other parts of the world face every single day. It was reminiscent of the early days of Pride activism and serves to remind us all that our work in the global struggle for equality is far from over. Boston Pride is to be commended for their efforts, as they set an example for all Pride organizers everywhere.



PHOTO: SHERRI RASE

William Ulrich

A resident of Springfield, Massachusetts, Fundamentalist missionary Dr. Scott Lively's name was referenced by the shivering group. The "Kill the Gays" bill is largely attributed to Lively's visit to Uganda in 2009, during which he gave workshops and speeches to the Ugandan people teaching them of the evils of the homosexual agenda to rape their adolescents and recruit their children into homosexuality. Dr. Lively has also written the book, "The Pink Swastika," which puts forth the proposition that homosexuals were responsible for the Holocaust.

Immediately following the vigil, participants

went indoors to Club Café for a viewing of the Current Vanguard TV documentary "Missionaries of Hate," which chronicles the development of the Bahati bill and describes in frightening detail what the situation for GLBTI people in Uganda is like.

My speech at the vigil expressed our sorrow, and what I believe David would have wanted. "We are gathered here in anger, fear and sadness to mourn David's murder. But David would not want such sorrow and mourning connected with his passing. Rather, I believe that David would want us to pick up our 'own' hammers to build on the work he so cherished, and ultimately died

for. When his struggle has become our struggle, we celebrate David's life in a manner for which he would be proud. Make David proud, everyone. Pick up David's hammer, your hammer, and continue to build on his work. We must work together, and turn David's hammer into a gavel, and bring it down on injustice wherever it may be."

*Vice President, InterPride, the International Association of GLBTI Pride Coordinators and Chair of the InterPride Committee on International GLBTI Human and Civil Rights.

Queeries from page 2

BangUBud, SexyStoner, and Jeff11X7 put it on the line. For you, I might suggest: NastynNice – or some other handle that suggests there's more to you than meets the eye. Then, you also need to be clear in your profile about what you want. Here are some highly specific ones I found online: "I'm most attracted to younger, masculine bottoms." "Definitely not a vanilla type of guy" or "Poz seeks same."

One of the great advantages of hooking up online is the ability to put out there what you want – and, often, get it.

Next: Your photos. Sometimes I visit sex pickup sites and I see a handsome guy but he looks like he just came from work. You need to show some skin! Or he's a perfect ectomorph and has unwisely chosen BigMuscle.com as his hookup site. Choose a site that's going to work for who you are and who you're seeking. Last point: You need to be explicit in your photos although it's your choice whether that extends to full-frontal nudity; remember what you put up online stays online – potentially forever.

Finally: Bear in mind that many – if not most – guys don't get responses back. Don't take it to heart; it's simply the way of the Internet.

"Grandma, I'm bi"

Q: I'm a bi woman, and my current boyfriend knows it – and it's not a big deal to him. My grandparents however, don't know yet and I want to tell them. They're very loving but deeply religious. However, they deserve to know the truth since they took ten years raising me when they didn't have to. How do I tell them that I like men and women equally without worrying about how they'll react to the news?

A: I think it's great that you want to share your truth with your grandparents (even

though being in a relationship with an opposite-sex partner means you're don't have to) and that you're so considerate of their feelings. Most of the time, respect begets respect (if not acceptance). Of course, coming out to one's family as bi – or gay or transgender for that matter – is often a big step and telling your religious relatives could put your knickers in a twist (it would make me want to reach for an Ativan.)

Before you sit down and talk with them, I suggest doing some research into your grandparents' likely beliefs on this subject so that you can be prepared. Certainly, not all religious folk are homophobic, especially when it comes to a family member. But if that's what you're facing, take aim against that much-quoted Leviticus argument against homosexuality: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination," which is frequently translated by Christian fundamentalists to: "Homosexuality is absolutely forbidden, for it is an enormous sin." A good reply to this argument is to point out that Leviticus also says that shaving and eating pork are abominations – and supports the idea of owning slaves.

Whichever way the discussion goes, I would definitely be careful to avoid getting into an argument. Fights generally produce more fire than light. Do your best to remain patient and respectful, speak from your heart, and be prepared to walk away if necessary. And definitely don't expect to actually change your grandparents' views on bisexuality – at least not right away.

*Steven Petrow is the author of the forthcoming book, Steven Petrow's Complete Gay & Lesbian Manners (www.gaymanners.com). To ask him your personal question: ask@gaymanners.com.

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Dr. Ken Mayer to be honored in April by Fenway Health at *The Men's Event*

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

Dr. Kenneth H. Mayer will be honored by Fenway Health with this year's Congressman Gerry E. Studds Award, which will be given at The Men's Event on April 9.

The award, named in honor of the late Congressman, is presented to individuals of integrity and selflessness who embody the spirit of service and provide positive leadership for the LGBT community. Studds represented southeastern Massachusetts in the U.S. Congress from 1973 to 1997 and became the first openly gay Member of Congress in 1983 when he proudly acknowledged his sexual orientation standing on the congressional floor.

"Ken is being honored for his lifetime of work to improve the health of the LGBT community," said Philip Finch, Fenway Health's Vice-President of Communications and Development.

Finch noted that Mayer helped discover some of the first cases of HIV in New England in the mid-1980s.

"(Mayer) was sort of the guy who was a groundbreaking scientist in New England to help ensure that (HIV patients) had access to fair treatment, had access to trial drugs and experimental treatment programs during the early days of HIV and managed to save dozens and dozens of lives," Finch noted.

Mayer is Medical Research Director and Co-Chair of The Fenway Institute and led the Fenway team involved in the groundbreaking iPrex

study, which showed that high-risk individuals who took a single daily anti-HIV pill dramatically lowered their risk of HIV infection. The approach, known as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), has the potential to lower HIV infection rates worldwide, saving millions of lives.

In addition to his work at Fenway, Mayer has been the Director of the Brown University AIDS Program in Rhode Island and Professor of Medicine and Community Health at Brown University. He is involved in HIV/AIDS research programs around the world, including most notably with Humsafar Trust in Mumbai and YRG Care and the TB Research Center in Chennai, India. He has co-edited 5 scholarly texts (including "The Fenway Guide to LGBT Health") and more than 450 peer-reviewed papers, and has served on the national boards of the Gay Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA), the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), the Foundation for AIDS Research (amFAR), and is currently a member of the Governing Council of the International AIDS Society.



PHOTO: FENWAY HEALTH
Dr. Kenneth H. Mayer

The 2011 Men's Event will be held on Saturday, April 9 from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Boston Marriott Copley Place. It is a black-tie fundraiser for Fenway Health that brings together more than 1,300 gay, transgender and bisexual men, their friends and supporters for a night of dinner and dancing. More information is available at www.mensevent.org.

Young Leaders Council celebrates one-year anniversary

On Tuesday, February 22, more than 125 people gathered at the Ames Hotel to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Young Leaders Council (YLC). Among the special guests was Sheriff Andrea Cabral, who reminded attendees that young people have immense power when they come together and decide to make a difference. The YLC is an initiative of Fenway Health to engage Fenway supporters in their 20s and 30s. Through special events and other programs, YLC members raise funds, learn more about Fenway's work, and of course socialize and network. In its first year, the YLC has grown to 92 members, pledging more than \$45,000 for Fenway's programs and services.



Suffolk County Sheriff Andrea Cabral addresses the crowd at Fenway's Young Leaders Council anniversary celebration on February 22.

PHOTO: SAM SCHWARTZ

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Public forum engages black community, LGBT people of color for common cause

The struggle for LGBT equal rights is a pursuit beyond any perceived racial divides

By: Chuck Colbert/TRT Reporter

The headline for a recent public forum was as provocative as it was unsettling.

Even the event's keynote speaker acknowledged that the title "Aren't I Black Too? 'Disturbed me.'"

The question refers to a common experience among LGBT people of color, that of having to choose between racial identity and sexual orientation.

And yet Sharon Lettman-Hicks, executive director of the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), left no doubt about the answer.

"No one should have to ask that question to themselves or to their community," she told a gathering of more than 125 people on Saturday afternoon, Feb. 19, at First Church in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston.

Lettman-Hicks was clear on another point. The fight for racial and economic justice includes LGBT equality. "All of us grew up and live in a world where being gay in America, especially black America was and is considered to be taboo," she said. "Black America invented 'don't ask, don't tell' so far as I can tell."

The line drew spirited applause.

"The problem is often described as fear, but fear of what?" she continued. "Do you think you can catch being gay? It's time to have a real conversation in America about our hypocrisy and ignorance of sexuality."

The occasion of Lettman-Hicks remarks was a two-hour panel discussion exploring race and homophobia. The Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC), a local non-profit organization, sponsored the event.

NBJC is a civil-rights organization dedicated to empowering African-American lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Panelists included Darnell Williams, president of the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts; longtime gay activist and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Mandy Carter; the Rev. Michael Walker, minister of Messiah Baptist Church in Brockton; Ben Perkins, project director at the Fenway Institute; and Christopher Goodwin, a student and LGBTQ activist. Dr. Kim Parker, an educator in the Newton Public Schools, served as moderator.

Just how do gay people of color experience the dilemma of double identity?

"Are you LGBT in the sense of being black, or are you black first or gay first?" explained Corey Yarbrough, HBGC's executive.

Furthermore, "The black LGBT community is so invisible, particularly in Boston," he added. "If you are a part of the LGBT community, you almost think that being gay is being white." In a word, being gay is "synonymous" with being white, Yarbrough said.

"By having the event, we were hoping to tackle that stereotype," he said. "Gay people of color do exist in Boston. We have a growing community and have a desire not only to be part

of the LGBT community, but also to be expressly incorporated in the black community."

For audience members and panelists alike, HIV/AIDS and the black churches were key issues of concern.

"What must be done to end HIV" among people of color? asked moderator Parker.

"Denial kills" and "truth telling is scary" said project director Perkins. "But based on my work and a lot of public health research, it all suggests that denial and secrecy are a breeding ground for HIV, so we are going to have to get real and get honest about sexual practices."

At Fenway, "Research team meets with black men, some of whom have never told a soul about their sexual practices. The fact that we ask questions about their lives and behavior is the first time someone has expressed an interest," he said, adding, "That's the beginning of the journey for some of the men. Truth happens."

High rates of other sexually transmitted disease are also problematic. "Let me be clear," said executive director Lettman-Hicks, "African American young ladies have the highest teenage STD rate, and I can guarantee they did not get [STD's] from black lesbians."

The moderator also asked about religion. "Why do you think hostility exists in black

churches regarding homosexuality?"

"It's unfortunate," said Rev. Walker, "and not just in the black community. It's exacerbated in the black church" insofar as "the history of Christianity has fueled anti-sexual rhetoric, anti-sexual condemnation, and anti-sexual pleasure." But he added, "That's not Christianity."

A woman in the audience pressed Walker further about creating safe spaces for LGBT youth.

"Within the Church there is a divide between sensuality and spirituality," he replied. "Not only do we not have a place for LGBT children to talk about sex, we don't have a place for anyone to talk about sex. I would welcome this conversation."

Roxbury resident Soledad Boyd pressed even further.

"Would you be willing to go to the Black Ministerial Alliance, Gene Rivers, Gil Thompson, Ray Hammond, and Willie Dickerson, who managed to drive down Blue Hill Avenue to the State House to say gay marriage is a threat to the black community," and along the way, "passed the all the violence, all the homelessness, and all the decrepit buildings to speak out against us?"

Boyd was referring to the outspoken opposition marriage-equality advocates faced from some black pastors as lawmakers, from 2003 to 2007, considered a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage.

"I've only been out a few years," she said afterwards, when asked what prompted her question. "It was difficult for me to come out in Grove Hill in the heart of Roxbury's black churches," she said. "I am tired of hearing the hate perpetuated: 'Love the sinner, but hate the sin.' What is this?"



PHOTO: CHUCK COLBERT

Attendees line up at an open microphone during Hispanic Black Gay Caucus public forum at First Church in Roxbury.

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TRANS NEWS

By: Deja Nicole Greenlaw* /TRT Columnist

A few weeks ago while on Facebook, my good friend Ethan and I were trading comments about some silly subject and we were cracking each other up. All of a sudden my cell rang and it was Ethan. He wanted to chat with me for a bit. Ethan and I always have fun together as we are similar in a lot of ways particularly in the way that we approach this thing called life. We agree on many issues and we both have a crazy sense of humor. We spend a lot of time laughing about the world and ourselves!

He invited me to be on his internet show, TransFM, in the future. I was on his show about 5 years ago and it was non-stop craziness and silliness and laughter. I remember Rebecca calling in, as she would do weekly back then, to talk about serious issues. When she felt the mood of the show was anything but serious she joined right in with the fun! I asked Ethan if that was what he wanted me to bring to the show. He told me that he wanted me to bring my spirit to the show. He wanted a guest who actually celebrates being Trans. He said that a lot of T folk don't celebrate being themselves and are rather depressed about it. It's true, there are many, many Transfolk who do not celebrate their Transness and some do become rather down and depressed, but then there is "moi" who revels in being who I am. I agreed to do the show (no official date as of yet) but it got me to thinking, "Why aren't more Transpeople celebrating who they are?" I am positively thrilled about being who I am and I love life more now than I ever did. Why is there so much unhappiness and depression and negativity in the Trans community? I'm not saying that most Trans are this way but there is a large population that is like this. I do not know their story but I do know mine.



Deja Nicole Greenlaw

out." So I pushed, pushed, pushed my thoughts and feelings way deep down inside my soul and I never gave even a clue to anyone. My thoughts and feelings would constantly surface but I kept a close guard on any of them ever escaping to my parents, my family and my friends. It was awful!

Of course, I was curious about why I had these thoughts and feelings and I wondered if others had them too. I knew that I couldn't ask anyone so I did what many of us did back then; I went to the library. I checked the card catalogs under "Psychology" to help me find myself and to find what the heck was going on within me. It was in the library circa 1968 where I found the medical words "transvestite" and "transsexual." I read the definitions and heard the sound of these words in my head (because I was too afraid to say them out loud) and I immediately hated both of these words! Both of these words disgusted me and scared me even more and my denial mechanism kicked up several notches. When I was younger I could sort of deal with my "aberration" with a feeling in a broad sense that I was just plain different but now I was reduced to either being medically labeled as a transvestite or as a transsexual. I was horrified and scared to death now. How could I deal with this? What could I do? Why? Why me? What would my

future be like? Maybe I should just pack it in and take my troubles with me to the grave so that no one would ever know? I began thinking those dreadful thoughts of taking my life.

Somehow I got through high school and two years of community college. I did well, honor roll, Dean's List and all, but I was still searching for some answer in private by myself. I refused to allow myself to be labeled as either of those awful "T" words. Then suddenly, a girl came into my life and I was thrown in a new direction. We immediately bonded and we were married within a couple of years. We had three children, the house, cars, etc. There was also the much more important bond of love of family and the pride and delight in watching my family grow and learn and love and laugh together. There were ups and downs but mostly ups and I was so immersed in my new life that I didn't have much

time to think about my personal troubles. Oh, the thoughts and feelings never went away but they were being constantly blocked by the demands of being a husband and father of three. I loved being a major part of a family and my being different didn't bother me so much in those times.

But time passed, the children grew up and this thing called the internet came into my life. As the home nest emptied I had more time for myself and my curiosity about myself renewed. All of a sudden it was the late 90s, I had a computer, and the world opened up to me. By then there was a new word "transgender" and I immediately was drawn to that new word. I now

had a third "choice" and this third choice did not repulse me, partly because it didn't come from the medical community. It came from the community itself! I was intrigued with the word "transgender," which means "crossing gender." This made perfect sense to me! I even discovered via the internet that there were actually people who felt as I did! I no longer felt alone! This started me on my road to happiness!

I first found dozens, then hundreds, of sites of transgender girls or Tgirls as we were called back then. I looked at their photos. I read their words. I followed their life as the time passed. I felt a connection to this growing T Community.

Then September 11, 2001 came and that day changed my life forever. That was the day that the twin towers in NYC came down and the Pentagon was hit. It was then that I realized that I had to act and act pretty fast on discovering this hidden side of

I don't hide the fact that I am Trans. I do not try to "pass" as a person who has been socialized since birth to be female. I am me and I am a Transwoman. Yes, I am female, yes, I am a woman and yes, I am Trans. Every day I wake up and I'm ready to be myself no matter what I do and where I go.

me before some religious extremist might possibly kill me before I even begin my process. I did not want to go to my grave never even trying to find my true self. After all, isn't that a major part of life, finding yourself?

I went into high gear. I found local Trans support groups, went out dressed "en femme" as much as possible and talked to other Trans as much as possible to hear what they learned. I made my first public appearance as Deja with a Halloween appearance at work in 2001.

To continue reading this story, please visit us online at: www.TheRainbowTimesMass.com/2011/03032011/deja.

Traveling along the path to a greater understanding - The first of two installments

By: Lorelei Erisis* /TRT Columnist

Dear Lorelei,

I have (a question) that I am asked all the time by straight and gay people. "I have read and heard that transgender people are confused. That many like Chaz Bono first thought he was a lesbian and now he is transgender. Isn't there a risk that a transgender person may want to 'switch' back?"

Lorelei, I am sure you have heard this question before. And I am shocked every time I hear it and I know what to say to the people that ask it, but we need to think about the proactive approach of this.

—Tom Lang

I'm glad you asked this question Tom. It's certainly not an easy one and it is definitely one that can be thorny to bring up.

The basic problem with this question is that, really it's a much more complex thing they are asking than most folks who ask it actually realize. Many of us can take years and years to

fully figure out just what or who exactly we are. There can be a lot of starts and stops. A plethora of identities we may try on until we can accept ourselves. I know I certainly did.

I've mentioned before that I "knew" I was a woman for about as far back as I have thoughts. That doesn't mean I understood exactly what was going on. I may have known in my heart of hearts that I was female, but everyone around me was treating me like a boy.

I had a boy name, I wore boy clothes, and I even had boy parts. So how could I possibly be a girl? It made no sense.

Although my parents were good, progressive, hippie types and they never really imposed a lot of gender roles on me; never forced me to play sports or be rough; gender roles were, nonetheless, pretty hard to ignore.

At home I remember spending every spare moment I could get alone, sneaking into my Mom's room and getting all dressed up like a girl. I would stare out the windows of the school bus and fantasize about magically trading places with the girls walking by. I wanted to be a girl. I often felt like a girl. But, I was also savvy enough or intimidated enough I suppose, to think I needed to keep my feelings a secret.

There was no internet, few books that I could find, and almost no media presence for transgender people. I found what there was to find, I was a voracious reader and consumer of media. Everything I found in years of searching represented



Lorelei Erisis

less than a single percent of what I can pull up on Google now in five minutes.

The only time I ever went to a therapist, he told me it was a phase and it would pass. Not much help there.

So, I was left to figure out who and what I was, alone, with what few scraps of examples I could glean. When I was teenager, I figured maybe I was gay. I liked musicals and was a pretty snappy dresser. But then I realized I was primarily attracted to women, guys, not so much. So no go there.

I was still sneaking any chance I got to get all dressed up. I still wanted more than anything to be a girl, though I was more and more terrified to admit that part even to myself.

So, I decided I must be a transvestite, or a cross dresser, or what was the difference again?! (I know, I know, I'm speaking of then not now. No need for those cards and letters!) But, the more I came into myself, the less I fit the popular (and often false) image of the lonely cross dresser, hiding myself from the world.

I was going out "en femme" more and more often and although I would still get all dressed up by myself, alone in my room, almost everyone who knew me, knew that I liked to play with gender.

I also moved to Northampton when I was 18 and so many of my closest friends were les-

bians and gay men. There was even a period when I felt like I was about the only "straight boy" in my circle of friends! "Aww, isn't he cute! He likes girls!!!"

A number of women I dated over the years even met me while I was dressed in "girl drag!" Many of them dated me partly because of my gender flexibility. Heck, I even had a close lesbian friend, who had only ever dated women, who decided to see "what boys were like" with me.

That really should have been a clue. Also around this time I was given a big stack of "Forced Feminization" type magazines by a friend, whose former roommate had left them behind when he split rather surreptitiously. They blew my mind; especially the ads for "feminizing hormone supplements" in the back. I fantasized endlessly about ordering them, but could never quite work up the courage.

After a while I decided my identity was as a straight Drag Queen! I always had kind of an over the top presentation, whether it was in girl or boy mode. And I knew by now that Theatre was going to be my life. I loved performing!

But, even this was never quite right. For one thing, I can't stand Barbara Streisand and I'd much rather listen to The Dead Milkmen than Madonna. Also, I'm not so crazy about sequins. And yeah, I'm a terrible dancer. Despite having worked as a nightclub cage dancer for a stint in Boston as well as a singing, dancing waitress, who was I?

Come back next month to read the rest!!

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



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Trans man's view: A Singular (Trans) Experience

By: Tynan Power*/TRT Columnist

TRANS MAN



there are two columns written by trans women—male-to-female (MTF) transgender people—but the experiences and issues faced by FTMs and MTFs are quite different.

I agree. Bet mentioned a number of differences, but I'll add one more: we have different relationships to the other groups in the LGBTQ community. MTFs and FTMs may share in the struggle for transgender rights, but what we embrace and what we leave behind is often very different.

Sometimes when transgender people courageously share their experiences, educating LGB allies and the general public, putting their lives on stage or under a microscope—I find that even as I applaud and learn from them, I feel like my own experience has been misrepresented.

Then I remember something important: representing me is not their job. Instead, when I feel misrepresented, that's my cue to get out there and represent myself. As I see it, we are all responsible for sharing our own unique and personal truth. We are also all responsible for truly listening to each other for those unique and personal truths—not so we can generalize what

we hear to all people who share a particular identity, but so we can understand the breadth and complexity of the human experience.

In taking on this column, it is my hope to portray some of that breadth and complexity. Some of what I hope to share will be my own perspective—a perspective that is intentionally left out of my reporting. However, I am only one person. I have one example of an FTM experience. There are a thousand aspects of my perspective that make it uniquely mine. I can speak as a 40-year-old who transitioned at 30, but not as a 20-year-old transitioning in college or eschewing transition in favor of gender-neutral pronouns and breaking down the gender binary. I move through society as an English-speaking white man with two university degrees, yet I lived through my early formative years as a woman and I am the biological mother—a term many FTM parents would never claim—of two nearly grown sons. I'm a religious, feminist, disabled, bleeding-heart liberal whose ethics are vegan, but whose eating habits haven't caught up. There are many people I can't speak for—and so I hope to let them speak for themselves, here, as well. Whenever possible, I hope to draw on other voices to reflect viewpoints that differ from my own in transition status, age, race, class, religion, dis/ability, sexual orientation or politics.

Each of us can only tell one story: our own. Yet that doesn't make sharing my story mere irrelevant navel-gazing that only matters to me. As Frederick Buechner, the American writer and theologian, said:

My story is important not because it is mine... but because if I tell it anything like right, the

See Trans Man on page 19

Four ways to improve the state's anti-bullying law

By: Carly Burton*/Special for TRT

The state's new anti-bullying law is a tremendous step forward in keeping students safer in our schools. But there are several ways to improve the law so that students who need help get it in the quickest, most efficient way possible.

Identify those who are most at risk

The law currently states that schools "may establish separate discrimination or harassment policies that include categories of students." This isn't sufficient to address the specific challenges of LGBT youth, youth with LGBT parents, and other students who are proven to be more at risk for harassment and bullying. The law should be amended to include a non-inclusive list of categories of students who are at a disproportionate risk of being bullied. The inclusion of this language would reflect a greater focus on bullying prevention by acknowledging the fact that certain students with actual or perceived differences are more at risk. According to the 2009 national climate survey by the Gay and Lesbian Straight Education Network, more than 84.6 percent of the almost 10,000 students surveyed stated that they had been verbally harassed at school because of their sexual orientation.

Put safeguards in place so students aren't inadvertently outed

The coming out process for LGBT students is very individual and personal. Though students may be out to friends and peers at school, they may not be out to their family. Parents should be notified when a student has been bullied based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, but a student's privacy interests also should be taken into consideration. Revealing a student's status to his/her parent/guardian may

put that student at risk within the home environment. Research has shown that youth who experience rejection by their families when they reveal their sexual orientation are more than eight times as likely to have attempted suicide and nearly six times as vulnerable to severe depression as those whose parents respond positively. The consequences of familial rejection are at cross purposes with the intent of the Commonwealth's anti-bullying protections, and great care is required to determine when parent notification is safe and appropriate.

Fund the program

As it stands, the state's anti-bullying law is an unfunded mandate on the Commonwealth's cities and towns, which are currently struggling with tightened municipal budgets. The statute requires that the anti-bullying plan include an important provision for ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff members in combating bullying, and it requires a robust list of what should be included in the professional development offerings for each district. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has put forth \$1 million to help school districts fund this professional development work until June of 2011. But once this funding is depleted, there are no monies attached to the legislation to help school districts pay for professional development. A bullying prevention fund needs to be created that would pay for school districts' professional development programs for teachers and staff.

Measure results and make improvements

The statute requires periodic review school

See Improving Law on page 19

Come join us for CT Transadvocacy's
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Conference details, Sponsorship and Registration at TransgenderLives.org

Registration Costs: General Admission \$25, CEU Registration \$50

Transgender Lives 2011 - The Intersection of Health and Law Conference
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President Obama, Justice Department back off 'Defense of Marriage Act'

By: Chuck Colbert/TRT Reporter

N.E. NEWS

In a surprising and significant legal turnaround, President Obama has determined that part of the Defense of Marriage Act, DOMA, is unconstitutional, handing gay-rights activists a big win.

The news came on Wednesday, Feb. 23, in a letter from Attorney General Eric Holder informing Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner that the Department of Justice will no longer defend in court Section 3 of the 1996 law that denies married same-sex couples federal recognition.

"After careful consideration, including a review of my recommendation, the president has

concluded" that "classifications based on sexual orientation should be subject to a more heightened standard of scrutiny," the attorney general wrote, referring to their view that DOMA should be held to a careful legal standard of review.

"The president has also concluded that Section 3 of DOMA, as applied to legally married same-sex couples, fails to meet that standard and is therefore unconstitutional," Holder's letter continued. "Given that conclusion, the president has instructed the Department not to defend the statute in such cases. I fully concur with the president's determination."

Two pending lawsuits in the New York-based Second Circuit — *Pedersen v. OPM*, filed by Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, and *Windsor v. United States*, filed by the ACLU — gave the White House an opportunity for the turnabout.

In the Second Circuit, the court has not ruled one way or the other to the proper level of constitutional scrutiny that applies to anti-gay discrimination.

But in July, 2009, in Boston, U.S. District Judge Joseph Tauro ruled in one case, *Commonwealth v. Department of Human Services* that DOMA violated states' powers granted them under the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. In another

case, *Gill v. Office of Personnel Management*, Tauro ruled that DOMA violated equal protections embedded in the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment insofar as to "disadvantage a group of which it disapproves," as reported by Keen News Service.

Both cases are on appeal in the First Circuit, but the Department of Justice will not be defending DOMA in court. But Congress could mount a defense.

Right away, gay-rights lawyers and state officials in Massachusetts hailed the president's move.

Anthony D. Romero, Executive Director of the ACLU, praised the president in a statement for doing "the right thing," and for propelling "gay rights into the 21st century where it belongs. Government finally recognizes what we knew 14 years ago — that the so-called 'Defense of Marriage Act' is a gross violation of the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection before the law. DOMA betrays core American values of fairness, justice and dignity for all, and has no place in America."

Mary Bonauto, civil rights director for Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, which successfully litigated the Gill lawsuit, also issued a statement. "It is extraordinarily significant that the Department of Justice recognizes what we have been saying for years in our litigation," she said. "Laws that distinguish between people based on sexual orientation are more likely to reflect prejudice against gay people than good public policy."

Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley, whose civil rights division successfully litigated the Commonwealth lawsuit, said that she was "very pleased" with the president and Justice department's determination.

"We brought our case based on a firm conviction that to achieve equality for all married couples in Massachusetts, we need to ensure that all citizens enjoy the same rights and protections under the Constitution," Coakley said during an afternoon press conference on Feb. 23. The determination, she said, "Means that DOMA has been declared discriminatory and unconstitutional by a federal judge, the Department of Justice, and the President of the United States."

The attorney general said that if Congress decides not to defend the law, Judge Tauro's decision would be "the final decision," adding, "as a practical matter in Massachusetts that would be the end of it."

It is not yet clear what Congress intends to do. To date, House Speaker Boehner's office has not said if Republicans plan to defend DOMA. But a spokesperson for the Speaker, Michael Steel, said in a statement, "While Americans want Washington to focus on creating jobs and cutting spending, the president will have to explain why he thinks now is the appropriate time to stir up a controversial issue that sharply divides the nation."

U.S. Republican Senator Scott Brown also criticized the president. "We can't have presidents deciding what laws are constitutional and what laws are not," he said in a statement. "That is a function of the judicial branch, not the executive."

Social conservatives assailed the president, too, and pressed Boehner to defend DOMA. As Kris Mineau, president of the local anti-gay Massachusetts Family Institute, explained, "We

To continue reading this story, please visit us online at: www.therainbowtimesmass.com/2011/03/23/2011/doma.

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1/3 of Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender individuals in Connecticut have experienced Domestic Violence

A recent survey of over 350 gay, bisexual and transgender (GBT) individuals in Connecticut showed that 33% had experienced domestic violence. This percentage roughly equals the range of prevalence rates most often cited for heterosexual women experiencing domestic violence (25% – 35%).

Additionally, the survey found that 50% of GBT individuals were unaware that Connecticut's domestic violence laws apply to their GBT relationships and 77% were unable to name a resource that they could turn to for help if they were a victim. Only 2% considered the police or district attorney's offices as a resource they would reach out to for help.

The survey was conducted in 2010 by the Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project (GMDVP) at Hartford Gay Pride. GMDVP has conducted surveys of the GBT community in Massachusetts for 14 years and in Connecticut for the past four years. Notably in Connecticut, over the past four years the statistics have remained constant.

In December 2010, the Verizon Foundation awarded a \$25,000 grant to support GMDVP's

hotline services for GLBT victims throughout Southern New England, including Connecticut, and to connect with domestic violence service providers to raise awareness and provide technical assistance and support. GMDVP is collaborating with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence in July to provide training on GLBT domestic violence for Connecticut advocates.



About GMDVP:
GMDVP provides crisis intervention, support and resources for victims and survivors of domestic violence.

The organization focuses on gay, bisexual and Transgender domestic violence, but works with anyone who is without services, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. GMDVP's programs include education, policy advocacy, and direct services which include a 24-hour emergency hotline, an emergency 3-bedroom safe-home, legal representation, counseling, safety planning, and first/last month's rent program. GMDVP provides full services throughout Massachusetts and hotline services in Rhode Island and Connecticut. 24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-832-1901.

CT Transgender Conference to be held in April

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

The Fifth Annual Transgender Lives: The Intersection of Health and Law Conference will be held on Saturday, April 30 from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. at the UConn Health Center in Farmington, Ct. This year's speakers include Dr. William Howe from the Connecticut Department of Education, who will discuss the department's role in supporting transgender rights, Dr. Ilja Hulinsky, who will discuss medical treatment for transgender patients, and Michael Munson, who will lead a workshop about Anti-Transgender Hate Crimes and Sexual Assaults.

Other subjects will include peer support in the trans community, eliminating trans health insurance exclusions, working with transgender clients, transition-related health care, safer sexual practices, and facial feminization surgery.

There will also be discussions on transgender law issues and transgender legislation featuring members of Lambda Legal and CT Equality.

This conference attracts several hundred people from throughout the New England area and is represented by members of the trans community, allies, service providers, medical professionals, educators and lawyers.

Until the formation of Transgender Lives, there hadn't been a forum to discuss transgender health and legal issues in the New England region, ac-

cording to Jerimarie Liesegang, Director of the Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition.

"They really work together. My access to medical care may depend on my legal rights," said Liesegang. "For the trans community, legal and health are not separate entities."

The Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition, CTAC, aims to make the state a safe and tolerant place for the Trans and gender nonconforming individual through education, social advocacy and activism.

Sponsors of this year's conference include CT Outreach Society, Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective, Twenty Club, the Ct TransAdvocacy Coalition, and the University of Connecticut Health Center.

Please register by April 15th. If you require interpretation services, please register by March 15.

General Registration is \$25, \$50 for NASW/CT CEU registration (National Association of Social Workers/Ct), though no one will be turned away due to registration cost.

The UCONN Health Center is located at 263 Farmington Avenue, Farmington, CT.

For more information call CTAC at 860.983.8139, email: conference@transgender-lives.org or visit the web site at www.transgender-lives.org.

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GLOBAL GOURMET: Pre-show dinner, call 545-2511 for details.

Sponsored by: Applewood & WGBY TV57



PHILADANCO DANCE COMPANY

Thursday, March 10, 7:30PM, Concert Hall

Fusing ballet, modern, jazz, and ethnic dance, Philadanco exhibits sizzling energy and enjoys international renown. The centerpiece of this performance is a new work By Way of the Funk, set to the music of the Funkadelics and Parliament.

Sponsored by: PeoplesBank, The Rainbow Times, 93.9 The River, UnityFirst.com, & the UMass Alumni Association



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Tues., Mar. 22, 7:30PM, Concert Hall
Cirque Mechanics performers, formerly with Moscow Circus & Cirque du Soleil strike it rich by setting their newest creation in an 1865 mining town, where an unlikely discovery sets off a series of hilarious & unexpected events full of the lore, excitement and adventure of the old west.

GLOBAL GOURMET: Pre-show dinner, call 545-2511 for details.

PRE-SHOW EVENT: Circus Arts in the lobby beginning at 6:30PM

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Wednesday, April 6, 7:30PM, Concert Hall

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PRE-SHOW EVENT: Mexican Culture Festival in the lobby beginning at 6:30PM

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True Colors XVIII Conference: Gathering held to empower and educate queer youth

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

More than 2,500 LGBTQ youth and their allies will gather at the University of Connecticut on March 11 and 12 for the True Colors XVIII Conference.

The two-day event will feature speakers and over 125 workshops concerning issues regarding LGBTQ youth.

True Colors was founded in 1992 by Executive Director Robin Mchaelen, who was studying for her Master's degree in Social Work at the UCONN School of Social Work.

The organization provides counseling and services for queer youth, including a mentoring program, Youth Leadership development with LGBTI youth and allies in Gay/Straight Alliances and other youth groups and advocacy work with legislators.

Mchaelen organized the first "Children From the Shadows" (CFS) conference - Children From the Shadows: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth At Risk. The University of Connecticut, School of Social Work approved the idea of creating a conference about LGBTQ youth and the risks associated with sexual minority status. The Connecticut State Department of Children and Families gave their support as well as The Department of Education, Mental Health and Addiction Services. Both Connecticut Teachers Unions came on board, as did more than 30 grassroots community organizations.

The first conference, held in March 1994, attracted 160 teachers, social service and mental health care providers, and 90 LGBTQ youth.

This year's conference will feature author and consultant Robyn Ochs, who is the editor of the Bisexual Resource Guide.

There will be a panel called *Hidden Voices: the Lives of LGBT Muslims* with queer Muslim activist Faisal Alim; *Coming Out Bi in a Gay/Straight World*, a workshop by A.J. Walkley, author of *QUEER GREER*, which tells the tale of a high school girl coming to terms with her bisexuality when she falls for a boy and a girl at the same time, and *Supporting Caregivers of Young Children who identify as Transgender or Gender Variant* with Nancy Meyer-Lustman, Ph.D., a New Haven-based clinician who has worked with many families of transgender and gender non-conforming children.

The True Colors conference provides an opportunity "to see healthy LGBTQ teens", said Kamora Harrington, the Mentoring Program Director for True Colors.

The event brings together not only queer youth, but their straight allies as well.

LGBT teens who have attended past conferences have described the experience as "life-changing," said Harrington, adding "the e-mails and letters we get are amazing."

Harrington explained that the youth-run workshops "give kids a chance to share their voice."

The True Colors web site features testimonials from past attendees, including T.H., age 13: "I had no idea that there were so many gay youth just like me in Connecticut. I'm so happy being here."

O.M., age 15, said: "This is my first year and I can't tell you how good it makes me feel. The staff here is so helpful and kind!"

The conference attracts youth from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New York. Harrington said it is "the largest event of its kind in the country."

The conference serves to empower queer youth, as well as educate them about the importance of doing work on behalf of LGBTQ issues, Harrington noted.

The new leaders of tomorrow are being created at events like True Colors 18, and will put them in a position to help their LGBTQ elders in the future.

"They will be taking care of us," Harrington added.

To register for True Colors XVIII, go to www.ourTrueColors.org or call 888.565.5551, or 860.232.0050.



PHOTO: GLENN KOETZNER

LGBTQ youth enjoying the moment at True Color's 2010 conference.

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To Cook is To Love: A Foodies Journal Celebrating St. Patrick's Day is a must!

By: John Verlinden/TRT Cuisine Columnist

iMUCHO GUSTO!



PHOTO: RACHEL POWER

Green is Good! Every one's going green these days. Concerns for our planet's health have motivated us to recycle more and waste less, to conserve our precious resources and reduce our carbon footprints. Government, businesses and organizations are all involved; we have new environmental policies, new earth friendly products and new programs promoting education and involvement on behalf of Mom Nature.

And, now we're about to enjoy our greenest holiday of the year - no, I don't mean Earth Day, it's St. Patty's Day - the wearing of the green, green shamrocks, green leprechauns and GREEN BEER! I'm only a wee bit Irish, but I'm still a whale of a lot angry that we LGBTers aren't welcome to participate in the parade. When that ruling came down in 1995 I was so upset; I stopped celebrating this really cool holiday.

Well, no more! This year, as my own personal act of Irish pride, green activism and gay defi-

ance, I'm making a culinary statement. And, I encourage you readers to do the same thing. I'm going green in my kitchen by adding a big batch of greens to my boiled dinner. That's right greens - those dark, green leafy things in bundles at the supermarket. For some reason, outside of the American south, people are scared of greens. Well, trust me those beautiful collard, kale and Swiss chard leaves aren't just for decorating party trays, they're delicious and so good for us. Our prehistoric ancestors ate pounds of them every day, and no wonder because greens are one of nature's most powerfully nutritious foods. Greens are rich in minerals (iron, calcium, potassium and magnesium), vitamins (K, C, E and many of the Bs), phytonutrients (beta-carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin) and fiber and they contain almost no carbs. Best of all, they cost very little green - a great value, you can get a big bunch for just a couple of dollars. So, join me and go greens this St. Patty's Day!

Oh, and one more thing - just so you'll know, St. Patrick's Day falls on Thursday this year ... and only queers wear green on Thursdays. ;)

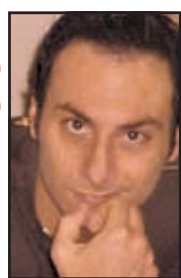
Until next time - ¡Mucho Gusto!, ¡Muchas Gracias! y ¡Buen Provecho!

*Have questions? Need a recipe? Want to suggest a topic? Contact me: john@muchogusto.com or www.muchogusto.com.

Lee Daniels turns his eyes toward Bradley Cooper

By: Romeo San Vicente* /Special for TRT

DEEP INSIDE HOLLYWOOD



Lee Daniels eyes Bradley Cooper

What movie will Lee Daniels (*Precious*) make next? It seems like he has a new potential project every few weeks. Will it be *Selma* like we keep hearing? *The Butler*? That remake of Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*? Well, the answer is maybe "none of the above" if *The Paperboy* happens. Based on Pete Dexter's 1995 novel, it's a crime thriller about two brothers pulled into the investigation of a rural sheriff's murder and it's set to star *I Am Number Four*'s hot young thing Alex Pettyfer. Word is that Daniels is already reading actors for roles and has made offers to both Bradley Cooper to play Pettyfer's older brother and to *Modern Family*'s Sofia Vergara. Of course, what

Precious fans want to know is if there's a part for Gabourey Sidibe in all this, because given the fleeting nature of deals and shelved projects, literally anything can still happen at this point. So stay tuned for further speculation.

Griffin's *Glee*ful Tea Party

It wouldn't be a proper week of entertainment news if the *Glee* PR machine didn't have some kind of announcement. And this week's flash is the addition of a new right-wing character to the cast. A Tea Party-loving, homeschooling, Sarah Palin type. Played by Kathy Griffin. Now, contrast that casting announcement with creator Ryan Murphy's stated intention to make this character part of the show's inclusive vibe. Does

anyone think it's possible to have it both ways? Will it ride the outside edge of insulting, like the way Ashley Fink's character Lauren Zizes gets to be powerful *an* the butt of fat jokes? Will the show simply abandon the character and her story lines when the next sensational musical guest star comes along? Can politically outspoken Kathy Griffin play a sympathetic right-winger without smirking? And, more to the point, how long before Sarah Palin takes to the Internet with a video explaining how offended she is?

Tilda's Thai debut?

That tiny sound you just barely heard was the collective swoon and sigh of art film fans who very much want the following project to hurry up and become real: hyper-acclaimed gay Thai



PHOTO: NEW LINE CINEMA

Bardley Cooper

filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul, whose latest film *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* won the Palme d'Or at Cannes and is currently in a handful of U.S. arthouse cinemas, is working on his next film, *Mekong Hotel*. And it looks like it *might* star Queen of Everything Cool, Tilda Swinton. What's it about? The director says it will "address the relationship between man and water, the catastrophic flooding which is blamed on Chinese dams and diseases spread by industrial-scale pig farming." Of course, if that's the case then expect those themes to be dealt with obliquely; Weerasethakul is infamous for plotlines that feel baffling right

down to the closing credits. But who cares, really, because if Swinton winds up taking part it'll get the visionary director seen by even more sets of confused eyes. And in the movie business that's how you win.

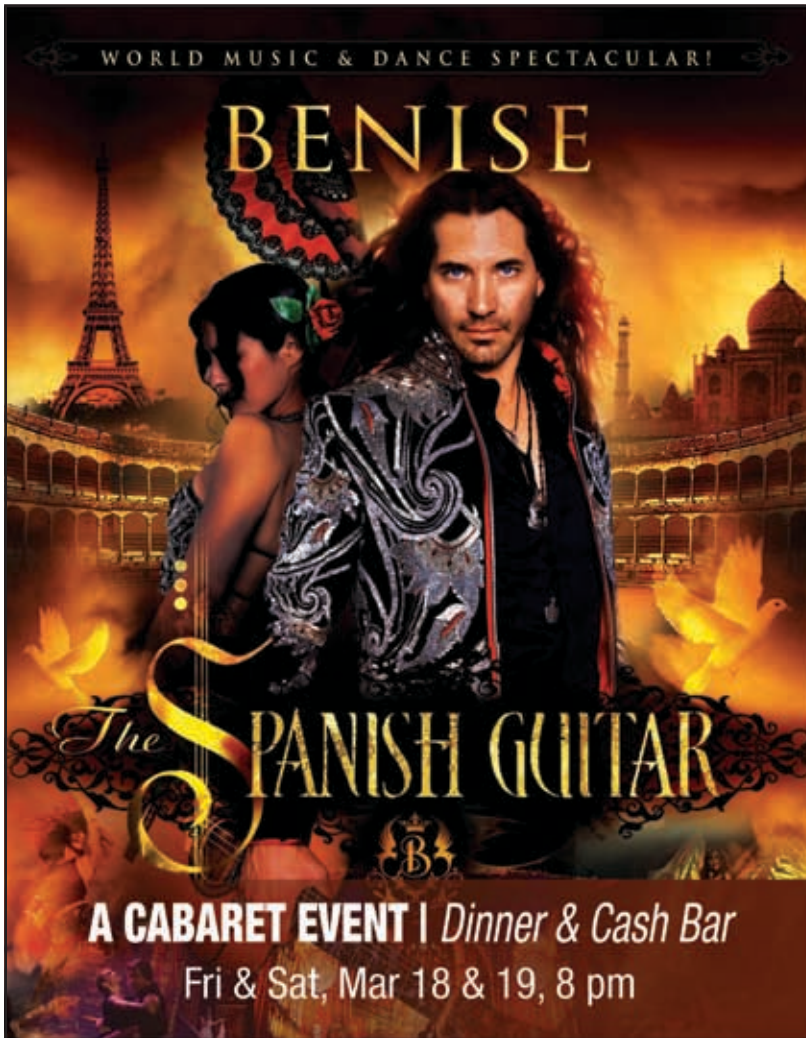
Lesbian directors are all right

Everything's coming up deals for two lesbian directors. One of them is hot off an Oscar-

See Hollywood on page 22

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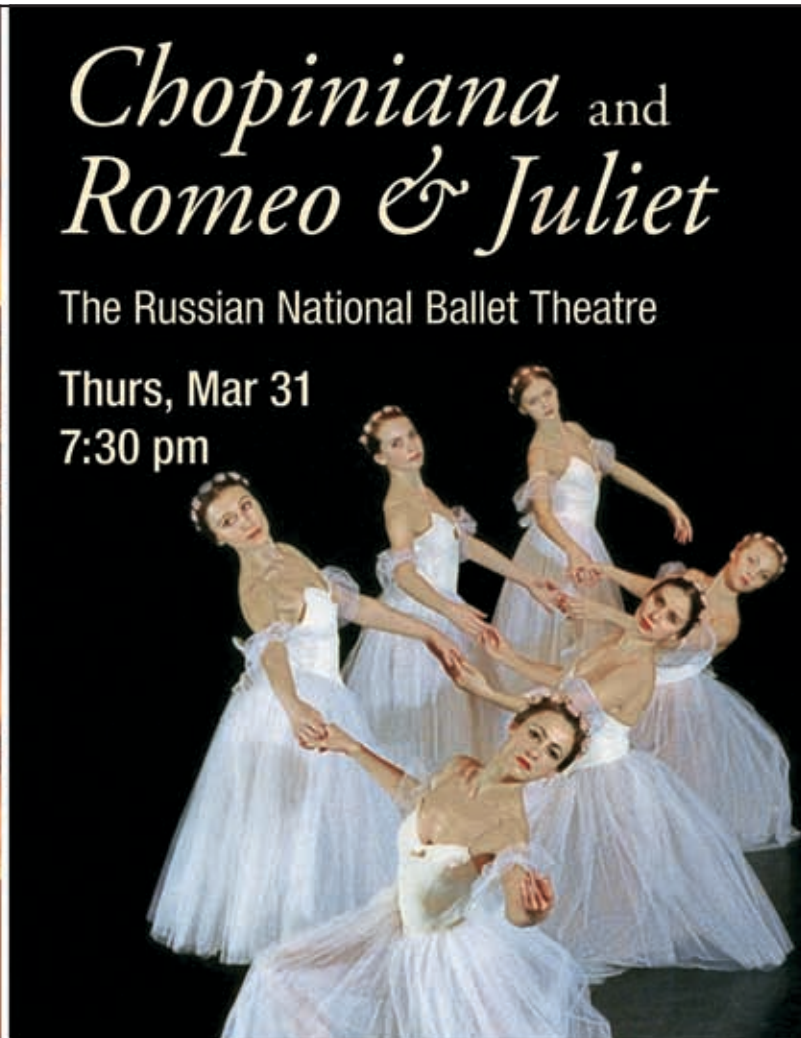
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Life After A-List: Reichen Lehmkuhl candidly on reality regrets, DADT, and a mimicking ex in Bass

By: Chris Azzopardi/Special for TRT

Some people had a hard time sitting through *The A-List: New York*, Logo's tawdry teledoc about a gay gaggle that got eye-roll reactions from viewers who couldn't completely look away. Imagine starring in it.

Reichen Lehmkuhl, who became the show's punching bag for nasty names, looks back with regret that you didn't see him like you should have. But he's learned to get on with his life and focus his attention on the future – one that includes a film based on his first book (a follow-up to 2006's *Here's What We'll Say: Growing Up, Coming Out, and the U.S. Air Force* is in the works) and exploring other avenues of his bottomless ambition as a political activist, model, musician and jeweler (seriously: he has his own line).

In a recent chat with Lehmkuhl, the 37-year-old got personal about his hurt feelings, how the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" affected him, his book-turned-movie, and his take on ex-boyfriend Lance Bass seemingly copying his career.

Chris Azzopardi: A: You were called lots of nasty names for your behavior on *The A-List: New York*. How do you feel about the way Logo cast you?

Reichen Lehmkuhl: It hurts. If it didn't hurt, I think there'd be something wrong with me. I see myself differently. Clearly when I look at my life I see myself being raised in a trailer park and breaking into a successful military career, serving my country and graduating from the Air Force Academy.

After getting out and writing a book that sticks up for our entire community and cries out for help from everyone to get rid of a policy that's going to help a lot of other anti-gay policies fall, to see anyone in the community turn around and call me a douche bag, it just makes me say, "Wow." I watch *A-List* with different eyes, I'm sure. I guess if I were watching the show from those people's eyes, maybe I would think I was a douche bag, too.

CA: How is it balancing serious stances on issues like DADT and then doing a reality show like *A-List*?

RL: (Laughs) It's really hard, because with a show like *A-List* the cameras are on us for five months – 3,600 hours over the summer just of me – and you probably saw, over 10 episodes, maybe three hours. Imagine what they can do. I tell people, "Don't talk to me about editing until you've done a reality TV show, because you don't know what you're talking about." Out of 3,600 hours, you take three hours of that and you make a person whatever you want them to

be. ... We signed up for this and we understand what they're going to do. I wish I could just tell people, "That's not the way it is." But you look even more stupid sticking up for yourself, so I've learned to just let it go.

CA: You said you're surprised by some of the reactions, but you also said you knew what you were getting into. Do you have regrets about doing the show? Would you do a second season?

RL: Umm... I don't know. They haven't even said yet if there will be a second season, so we haven't really thought about it yet. I think that there are definitely some regrets. There are moments when I think, "Wow, we shouldn't have even given them that." A show can make you look like you're hitting on someone in a club, but the editing doesn't let you see that it's your friend of 13 years. (Laughs) Suddenly, you're hitting on someone in the club because you're having a conversation and saying it's too bad someone's leaving the next day. That's terrible, and it's hard.

Even doing my song ("Up to the Sky," a DADT protest tune), the show showed the one moment where I really screwed up, and anyone who's a singer screws up. They took that and ran it over and over and over, and it ruined any credibility that I had to sing or to have a song or to try to do something good. You see the tragic part, and that's it.

Had I known it was going to be so negative, I wouldn't have done any of that on camera. I would've kept it as a very private part of my life and just released a song on my own, because now a lot of people won't even download the song. They're judging it based on what they saw on the TV show.

CA: Would you like to continue to pursue music?

RL: Um, yeah. I think I'd love to record more songs. I play the guitar all the time. I've been playing the guitar since I was 7, but the show makes it look like I am 7. (Laughs) If I did record more songs, I would never ever do it on the show. It was a humiliating experience for me when I set out for it to be really great project from the heart and to make a difference.

To continue reading this story, please visit us online at: www.therainbowtimesmass.com/2011/03032011/reichen.

Improving Law from page 13

districts to determine whether they are in compliance with this act. However, the legislation is not specific as to what this evaluation will entail. The statute should be amended to be more specific about how school districts will be evaluated. For example, the legislation could require the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop survey instruments for distribution to a variety of stakeholders including students, parents, administrators, staff, and other experts to gauge how effective the plan is in the anti-bullying efforts of that particular school district.

With these changes, the Commonwealth's commitment to ending bullying in our schools would be enormously strengthened.

*Carly Burton is the Director of Public Policy and Political Affairs for MassEquality. This column was adapted from testimony Burton gave at a February 17 public hearing held by Attorney General Martha Coakley's Commission on Bullying Prevention.



Reichen Lehmkuhl, the former Air Force captain and star of Logo's "A-List: New York."

Book Marks: Delicious LGBT books offer up some spice and much bite!

By: Richard Labonte*/Special for TRT

Angels and Manners, by Cynn Chadwick. Bywater Books, 300 pages, \$14.95 paper.

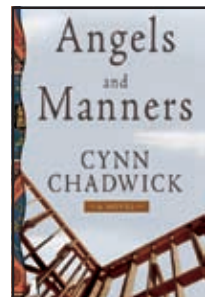
Carrie Angel is a working-class mother scrapping by in Section 8 housing while apprenticing for her carpentry license, dueling with her demanding and emotionally abusive ex-husband for custody of her two teenage sons (one a feisty



queer boy), and trying to contain her fiery temper. Jen Manners is a more hoity-toity woman – but, in the aftermath of an ugly divorce, she's forced to move onto Carrie's subsidized housing block with her aggrieved daughter, selling jewelry to get by. Lower-class and upper-class don't blend well at first, but eventually the two women bond – a friendship forged in part through the three teens – in this in-touch-with-the-times novel about home closures, government cutbacks and a degrading downward economic spiral. Carrie and Jen both start out straight, but they aren't destined to fall in love – the lesbian twist involves a third woman. Instead, Chadwick's expertly constructed novel (she was once a master carpenter) focuses on the process of women learning to discover their strengths and to trust themselves.

The Case of the Missing Boyfriend, by Nick Alexander. BigFib Books, 364 pages, \$15.95 paper.

After charming readers in recent years with a series of winsomely eccentric, gay-centric romances (*50 Reasons to Say Goodbye*, *Sleight of Hand*), Alexander expands his storytelling reach with an engaging twist – the character missing a boyfriend is female ad executive CC, adored by colorful gay pals while yearning for an apparently unobtainable Mr. Right. The title is



quite misleading; this is no mystery. Rather, it's a sly reversal of your typical gay romance, focusing on a straight character – an endearing blend of youthful Auntie Mame (she's nearing 40) and self-doubting Bridget Jones – who falls for a man who, distressingly, seems as gay as the male friends with whom

he parties. The British author's six previous books were written primarily for a queer audience, and gay readers will no doubt relish the queer content of this well-written seventh. It's a slight stretch to compare Alexander's fiction to that of, say, Armistead Maupin – but this slyly commercial novel could share the crossover appeal, to straight readers, of Maupin's work.

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

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Trans Man from page 13

chances are you will recognize that in many ways it is yours.

I hope that you recognize something true here in this column. I invite your questions, comments and concerns.

*Tynan Power is a parent, a writer, a progressive Muslim leader, an interfaith organizer, a (very slow) runner, mostly a big goof, sometimes taken too seriously, loving, gentle, FTM, queer-cultured, a pen geek, often dehydrated, full of wanderlust. He also happens to be a transgender man. Tynan can be reached at tynanpower@yahoo.com.

A Rhode Island Gay priest's life story circles back on itself, again embracing the church

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter
Reverend David Martins is the pastor of Saint Therese Old Catholic Church in downtown Providence.

The church is not affiliated with the Catholic Diocese of Providence. It is a part of the North American Catholic Church and is an LGBT-friendly congregation.

Saint Therese Parish gathers in the chapel on the first floor of Mathewson

St. Church. The 80-member congregation is a mix of gays and straights. The church also welcomes homeless people to come and worship.

"They all look the same to me, which is nice because they all look the same to God," said Martins of his diverse congregation.

Martins, who is gay, grew up as a Catholic.

Martins went to Catholic school as a child, was involved in parish youth groups and even served as an altar server. His father is a Deacon in the Roman Catholic Church.

Martins realized that he wanted to become a priest so, fresh out of high school, he joined a seminary.

At the time, Martins knew he was attracted to other men. Some of the priests knew it too, but "it almost didn't matter," Martins noted, since all seminarians were called on to be celibate.

However, seminary life at Providence College

was something he wasn't suited for. The seminarians were monitored closely by the priests. There was no privacy.

"You live in a fish bowl," Martins explained, noting the priests would listen in on their students' conversations.

Martins experienced what he called a constant state of paranoia. The pressure became overbearing.

"I couldn't take it anymore," Martins said. "It felt very liberating to leave."

Looking back, Martin believes his mistake was entering the seminary at too young an age. He needed more time to live his life and experience the world before making such a serious commitment.

Martins eventually landed a job as a bartender in Providence and became very close to the LGBT community.

Martins enjoyed the socializing with other gays but eventually became disillusioned with the experience and wanted something else in his life. He also wanted to quit drinking, which had become a serious problem.

"I felt empty inside," Martins noted. "I wanted to make a difference."

Martins decided to embrace the Catholic Church again.

"Once you've had a faith experience, it always stays with you," Martins noted

Being a pastor has been very rewarding for Martins.

The congregation members share their feel-

ings about their relationships and "ask me to pray for friends," Martins explained.

When he isn't preaching from the pulpit,

Martins serves as an OUTspoken Coordinator for Youth Pride, Inc. (YPI), the state's largest organization which serves the needs for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning youth. "The kids are great,"

Martins said. "It's a great position."

Martins is trying to get the word out about Saint Therese through social media sites such

as Facebook. He doesn't want to draw people from other churches, preferring to attract people who may have felt alienated from religion in

general and are seeking a welcoming place to pray.

"I would love to see the parish grow," Martins said. "I couldn't be happier with it."

For more information about Saint

Therese Old Catholic Church, go to the church web site at www.saintthereseocc.org or call 401-263-4296.



David Martins

PHOTO: JOE SIEGEL

NOM-Rhode Island launches radio campaign

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

The Rhode Island chapter of the National Organization for Marriage (NOM) is taking aim at Governor Lincoln Chafee's support for same-sex marriage in a new radio advertisement.

Two bills have been introduced which would allow gay and lesbian couples to exchange marriage vows. The House Judiciary will hear testimony on the bill next Wednesday.

The 30 second ad features a man and a woman discussing Chafee's attempt to "redefine" marriage instead of tackling the state's economic problems.

"I don't want legislators messing with marriage," says the woman. "Marriage brings men and women together to help ensure that as many children as possible are raised by a mom and a dad. And kids need a mom and a dad."

The ad ends with the man saying that the same-sex marriage issue should be placed on a ballot for the voters to decide.

Last month, NOM paid for a 30-second television ad which also took aim at Chafee's support for marriage rights for same-sex couples.

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

Last year, NOM commissioned a poll which

said that 80 percent of Rhode Islanders wanted to vote on the issue.

However, a poll commissioned in 2010 by Marriage Equality Rhode Island (MERI) found that 59 percent of respondents favored allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry.

In his Inaugural address last month, Chafee urged legislators to pass a marriage equality bill soon. Former Governor Don Carcieri, whose two terms in office ended in January, was an outspoken opponent of same-sex marriage. Carcieri even endorsed the efforts of NOM to prevent gays and lesbians from getting married in the state.

NOM spent in excess of \$100,000 on the television advertisement. They are also encouraging support-

ers to e-mail their state representatives in an effort to put the same-sex marriage on a ballot.

State Rep. Jon Brien (D-Woonsocket) has announced plans to file legislation which would allow the issue to be decided by voters, not the General Assembly.

The legislation would ask voters in the 2012 election to approve or reject a constitutional amendment specifying that "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in the State of Rhode Island."

Brien said he believes the issue of what constitutes a marriage is very important because the union "serves as a societal cornerstone."

"The people are the sovereign rulers in Rhode Island, not the politicians, and putting the issue on the ballot for the people to decide is the right thing to do," Brien added.

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- My Normal
- The Kids Are All Right
- The Real L Word - Complete First Season
- And Then Came Lola

GAY TOP 10

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- Role/Play
- Prayers for Bobby
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MassEquality newest initiative aims to help schools in anti-bullying prevention

By: Chuck Colbert/TRT Reporter

Two hundred people turned out on Feb. 19, as the state's largest gay-rights and lobbying organization rolled out the color red—ruby, crimson, scarlet, lipstick, and cherry. The occasion was MassEquality's Red Party, the group's signature fundraiser. This year marked the second annual celebration, held at The Estate, a nightclub located in Boston's Theatre District neighborhood.

Altogether, a host of individual and corporate sponsors raised \$75,000, with proceeds going to fund a new MassEquality initiative that would provide support to schools across the Commonwealth in implementing the state's anti-bullying law, passed last spring by the Legislature.

The new initiative adds another policy piece to MassEquality's expanded mission of making the state the best place for LGBT people to live "from cradle to grave."

"What we are looking to do is fund a position for someone to be responsible for working with school districts, helping to ensure that the policies put in place are, at a minimum, in compliance with what the law requires," explained Kara Suffredini, MassEquality's executive director.

"We want to provide technical assistance for educators, helping them to craft the best policies that we know of and to ensure that policies put into place are successful in protecting LGBT youth and children with lesbian, gay,

bisexual, and transgender parents," she said.

Massachusetts has one of the nation's strongest anti-bullying laws, providing broad protections against harmful behaviors.

The law defines bullying as repeated acts that cause physical or emotional harm, places students "in reasonable fear of harm," or create an "unwelcoming or hostile environment at school for another person."

It prohibits bullying on school grounds, on school buses, at school-sponsored activities, and through electronic communication like e-mail or social networking media.

The law requires that every school employee report incidents of suspected bullying and that principals investigate each case. It also requires schools, both public and private, to develop comprehensive bullying prevention, intervention and notification plans and to publish them in student handbooks.

In addition, the law provides for training of teachers and students on how to identify, prevent, and manage incidents of bullying.

But for all its strengths, however, the anti-bullying measure lacks enumerated characteristics of protections for types of students most likely to experience bullying.

"Our law only prohibits conduct, not particular kinds of bullying," Suffredini said.

Why is listing specific categories so important? Anti-bullying laws that name categories

teract the hateful propaganda spread by groups such as the Massachusetts Family Institute.

The battle to protect marriage rights in the Bay State has been a top priority of Mass Equality.

"As the years go by since marriage equality become the law of the land in Massachusetts, we continue to witness how equal marriage is good for families, the community, and the economy, and hurts no one," said Kara Suffredini, Executive Director of Mass Equality.

Suffredini said that the predictions made by groups like the Massachusetts Family Institute and Mass Resistance about what marriage would bring are "not only flat wrong, but nothing more than fear mongering."

Still, the financial contributions these groups make to political candidates who are opposed to any type of pro-LGBT legislation make them a powerful force to be reckoned with.

"In 2010, we bucked the Tea Party Express and elected another supermajority of pro-LGBT lawmakers," Suffredini added. "And voter by voter, election by election, that's what we'll continue to do to promote family values that value all families in Massachusetts."

Lee Swislow, the Executive Director of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD), said the anti-LGBT organizations still have a lot of power.

"They may be losing their influence among some segments of the population, but among others I think they still have a lot of influence and they're fighting us hard," Swislow noted.

Swislow says the LGBT community should focus their energies on promoting a positive message, instead of worrying about the "pro-family" groups' misleading messages.

"We know the most important thing any (LGBT person) can do is to be out and talk with their family and friends about their lives," Swislow said. "Our message is about our basic humanity, fairness, and equality."



PHOTO: KIRK J. MILLER

Kara Suffredini, MassEquality's Executive Director

of protections such as gender, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression put everyone on notice for who is protected, Suffredini explained.

"Without enumerated characteristics school officials might not know they need to protect LGBT kids, or teachers might not feel comfortable standing up for LGBT youth because they don't want to bring gay issues into the school by doing so," she added.

Last fall more a dozen teenage boys committed suicide after reportedly experiencing peer harassment for being gay or being perceived to be gay.

Perhaps the most widely covered incident was the death of Tyler Clementi, an 18-year-old freshman at Rutgers University. There, roommates secretly videotaped Clementi and another male during an intimate sexual encounter. A day later, after they had posted it on the Internet, Clementi, jumped from the George Washington Bridge.

Fortunately, none of the most recent teen suicides occurred in Massachusetts. But two years ago, 11-year-old Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover of Springfield hanged himself after enduring bullying at school, including daily taunts of being gay, despite his mother's pleas to the school to address the problem.

During a short program at the Red Party and afterwards, several people discussed LGBT-related bullying in highly personal terms.

"If it's happening in Cambridge, we know that it is happening in our cities and towns across the state."

Executive director Suffredini, for example, told the gathering of her experience. "I was called 'Tom Boy' to my face and 'dyke' behind my back," she said.

Another person spoke of being bullied for coming out bisexual: "People kept calling me names like 'dyke' and 'fag.' I've been bullied for how I look. When I told my mother I was bi, she didn't believe it."

Julie Goodridge, treasurer of the MassEquality Education Fund, discussed her daughter's bullying, starting in nursery school for having two moms. "Two years ago, a classmate called her a 'fucking homo freak' on Annie's Facebook page," which is minor compared to the abuse kids like Carl Walker-Hoover endured," Julie said.

"I know that school yards and school environments can be very rough places for kids who identify as LGBT and for kids whose parents identify that way," said Sue Hyde, a mother of two, who also serves on the MassEquality Education Fund's board of directors.

"My kids were not subject to the fierce and relentless bullying and taunting that we hear about," she explained. "They certainly experienced, in grades K - 8, a variety of ways that their family was disparaged and spoke about in unkind ways. This was in the City of Cambridge. If it's happening in Cambridge, we know that it is happening in our cities and towns across the state."

Immigration Equality announces a new record number of asylum victories achieved in 2010

Organization, and its Pro Bono partners, secure a safe haven for individuals suffering persecution

PRNewswire-USNewswire—Immigration Equality, a national organization that helps obtain asylum for individuals persecuted in their home country based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV-status, announced today that its legal and pro bono teams won a record 101 cases in 2010. An overwhelming number of those wins – 38 – were for clients from the Caribbean, with 28 of those for individuals from Jamaica. Other cases included 24 asylum seekers from Central and South America; 16 from Eastern Europe (including seven Russian clients); nine from the African continent and five from the Middle East.

Immigration Equality maintains the largest pro bono network of attorneys – in addition to its in-house legal staff – dedicated solely to securing asylum for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender asylum seekers. Firms providing pro bono representation for Immigration Equality clients include Dewey & LeBoeuf; Jones Day; Kirkland and Ellis; Latham Watkins; Ropes and Gray; Skadden; Weill Gotshal; and White & Case. In addition to the 2010 wins announced today, the organization has 97 additional cases, filed in 2010, which are awaiting a ruling, as well as several cases filed prior to 2010.

"For too many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, the world remains a dangerous place," said Rachel B. Tiven, the group's executive director. "In many cases, the clients who turn to Immigration Equality for help are literally running for their lives. They have been mistreated and beaten by authorities in their

home country, disowned by their families and ostracized by society. By offering them safe haven, the United States is not only saving their lives, but benefitting from the talent, skills and service these asylees bring to our country. We are proud, and honored, to help them begin life anew here in their adopted homeland."

Since the mid-1990s, the United States has recognized persecution due to sexual orientation and gender identity as a basis for seeking asylum. In the past five years, Immigration Equality and its partner law firms have represented more than 500 LGBT people fleeing persecution abroad. Clients have hailed from some of the most notoriously homophobic countries in the world, including Uganda, Syria, Egypt and elsewhere.

"Every day, we hear from vulnerable LGBT people who desperately need legal help and have nowhere else to turn," said Victoria Neilson, Immigration Equality's legal director. "Our in-house legal staff maintains an average open case load of more than 100 cases at any given time. It is our generous network of pro bono firms, which donate so much time and energy to our clients that make the breadth of our work possible. With their help, we are able to tackle some of the most complicated, heart-wrenching cases and ensure that we help as many people as possible."

For more information on asylum for LGBT people, or to join Immigration Equality's pro bono network of attorneys, visit www.immigrationequality.org.

Beware from page 3

Last March, the organization issued a press release which included the following: "It is one thing if homosexuals want to live quietly in their homes and their private clubs; after all, it is a free country. But the homosexual activists want to force their will on us, influence our families by redefining the blessed institution of marriage for the rest of us, fool the educators and the kids in our schools with the slogan: 'it is everybody's business'."

The Family Institute of Connecticut has also taken a leading role in opposing marriage rights for same-gender couples. The organization supported amending the United States Constitution to restrict the definition of marriage to be a union between a man and a woman only.

The FIC also attempted unsuccessfully to amend the state Constitution to prevent same-gender couples from marrying in Connecticut.

New Hampshire's Cornerstone Action and Cornerstone Policy Research have also devoted themselves to opposing any type of LGBT civil rights legislation.

Cornerstone's vision is "to create an environment in which strong families—the foundation of our society—can lead New Hampshire into a new era of prosperity and strength."

The Executive Director of Cornerstone is Kevin Smith, a former NH State Representative. Smith earned the Christian Coalition's "Pro-Family" House Member of the Year honor in 1998.

In Rhode Island, the state chapter of the National Organization for Marriage (NOM) has flooded the radio and television airwaves with ads in an attempt to stop a same-sex marriage bill from being passed.

Recently, it was revealed that NOM was lying in its mailers to Ocean State voters when it claimed that very young children in Massachusetts were being taught about gay marriage.

Several LGBT organizations continue to coun-

Pioneering Heroes for a whole town: Polly Bixby and Karen Grzesik

By: Tynan Power/TRT Reporter

Polly Bixby and Karen Grzesik didn't set out to become pioneers in the Massachusetts schools. When the two gym teachers helped establish one of the state's first Gay Straight Alliances, they followed the lead of determined students at Ralph C. Mahar Regional School. Yet they brought convictions born of their own experiences with homophobia to their roles as GSA advisors.

When the two women first met, neither was out as a lesbian.

"In the 70's," Grzesik says, "You didn't 'come out.'"

Especially in Orange, Massachusetts, an industrial town north of the Quabbin Reservoir.

When Bixby realized she was a lesbian, she was married to a man and had two children. She already knew Grzesik as a colleague and her children's teacher. They eventually fell in love. Today, they've been together almost 30 years.

The early days weren't easy, though.

They were 'outed' at work by a local man who saw them together and spread rumors, according to Bixby.

"The faculty was good about it," Bixby recalls, "One day, the vice principal came up to me, put his arm around me and said 'We love you anyway.'"

The school often treated them like any married couple, putting them on "early bird" duty together instead of on separate days.

A turning point came when they began taking graduate classes in the social justice program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. In one memorable class, they heard a powerful message that has stayed with them.

"You're either part of the solution, or part of the problem," Bixby recalls. "If someone name calls you or calls someone else a name, you have to confront them. If you don't, you're part of the problem."

Bixby started treating slurs and insults as opportunities to challenge homophobia. Then an even greater opportunity came in the early 90's.

"The kids came to me and wanted to start a GSA," she says. She agreed to help. While GSA advisors today often receive a stipend, Bixby and Grzesik received no compensation for the time they devoted to the GSA.

For the students, two key events served as catalysts. A girl from Athol had been badly beaten at a bus stop because she was perceived to be a lesbian. At the same time, Mahar students participating in a regional student council advisory meeting in Boston were talking about the need for safe space for gays and lesbians in schools.

Bixby is careful to note that at the time public discussion centered around gay and lesbian students; bisexuality was starting to be part of the conversation and transgender came later.

The students chose to call their new GSA "Save Our Students" or "SOS."

"Back then, we couldn't even use the words. It was like [gay] was a dirty word," Bixby recalls. "GSAs were all called something else. In North Adams, they were 'A Bunch of Grapes.'"

Even though the group was officially called 'SOS,'" Bixby says she always made sure to use the word "gay."

Bixby and Grzesik weren't alone in their efforts. Teachers in the high school and the middle school helped and the support of the administration, under Dr. Francis Zak, was crucial. Parents

got involved, as well.

"People weren't complacent," Bixby says. "Now they are complacent."

"Things can take generations to change," Bixby says. "But then you have to be vigilant."

Thirty to forty students would show up for the GSA meetings. Sometimes, what they needed most was just to tell their stories.

Once, the students performed a skit on the steps of the state house as part of a spirit contest. They won a rainbow flag, which was kept in the school office and brought out for special events.

"Dr. Zak instructed the custodial staff to put up three flag poles," Grzesik recalls.

Thereafter, the rainbow flag flew alongside the American flag and the state flag. After a new building was constructed for the school, the flag poles were removed. Today, all three flags hang in the school library.

In 2007, the two women received an unforeseen honor. The school's two gyms were named after them, in a ceremony honoring the retired teachers' contributions to Mahar over careers that spanned more than 30 years each.

"We were in the right place at the right time," Bixby says of the honor. "If it was 10 years later or 10 years earlier, it wouldn't have been our names on that building."

"It's such an honor to have a facility like that named after you," Grzesik says. "You know, that was my life down there [at the school]. It's nice that this town has grown to be that

accepting."

Many of their friendships are based more on common interests, they say, and less on shared identity.

"I don't believe gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people or heterosexuals should live in isolation. We live in the world together," Bixby says.

Both women name Pat Griffin, a professor emerita in the Social Justice Education program at the University of Massachusetts, as a role model and inspiration.

"She gave me courage," Bixby says, "and she inspired me with the message that this is important."

The two also say they are each other's inspiration.

"Polly has given me the strength to deal with things I couldn't have dealt with alone," Grzesik says.

"Karen has been a major supporter," Bixby adds.

Over time, their support for each other has nurtured a whole town.

"I treat being lesbian as normal," Bixby says. Her message for people who don't see it that way is simple: "Get over it."

"It's easy for me to say that, at 70. I've built a reputation," she says. "But we have to be careful not to put that [gay] 14 or 15-year-old in danger."

"Sometimes," she says, "they're not ready to hold hands."

"Then," Grzesik adds, "we have to hold their hands."



PHOTO: TYNAN POWER

Karen Grzesik and Polly Bixby at home in Orange, MA.

Creep of the Week: Springfield author Scott Lively - claims Nazis were all gay

By: D'Anne Witkowski/Special for TRT

I don't know if you've been paying attention to what's been going on in Uganda lately, but you should know that it's really, really bad for gays there. Like, get-murdered-with-a-hammer bad.

Gay rights advocate David Kato was killed last month after his photo appeared on the cover of Ugandan tabloid "Rolling Stone" (not to be confused with the American music magazine) that proclaimed in huge block letters across its cover: "100 Pictures of Uganda's Top Homos Leak."

Next to the headline is a little yellow banner reading, "Hang them."

Kato wasn't hung, but he was beaten to death with a hammer. The cops say it was just a robbery. But gay advocates in Uganda aren't buying it. Considering the level of anti-gay hatred in Uganda - the country is considering a bill that would call for the execution of gays - you can hardly blame them for not taking the police's word for it.

According to a statement by Val Kalende, chairwoman of gay rights group Freedom and Roam Uganda, "David's death is a result of the hatred planted in Uganda by U.S. evangelicals in 2009. The Ugandan government and the so-called U.S. evangelicals must take responsibility for David's blood."

One of those "U.S. evangelicals" Kalende is referring to is Scott Lively, president of Abiding Truth Ministries and the author of a book that claims the Nazis were all gay. Back in 2009 Lively and two other American evangelical Christians went around Uganda giving talks about homosexuality.

According to The New York Times, "thousands of Ugandans, including police officers, teachers and national politicians, listened raptly to the

Americans, who were presented as experts on homosexuality. The visitors discussed how to make gay people straight, how gay men often sodomized teenage boys" and how gays are evil and want to destroy marriage and replace it with free-for-all orgies.

A month later the "kill the gays" bill was introduced.

Coincidence? Well, no.

And while Lively has said he doesn't support

In a Feb. 5 rant, Lively claims that "Uganda is being murdered" by a Western-led "army of agitators ... who now seek to re-homosexualize Ugandan culture" and the only logical response to such an attack is violence.

the "kill" part, he does think that making homosexuality illegal is a "step in the right direction" for Uganda.

After Kato's murder, Lively went on the defensive, denying any culpability and basically saying that Kato's murder was no big deal in light of the real murder in Uganda: the murder of the whole country by gay activists.

In a Feb. 5 rant, Lively claims that "Uganda is being murdered" by a Western-led "army of agitators ... who now seek to re-homosexualize Ugandan culture" and the only logical response to such an attack is violence.

"And that is, of course, the strategy: the agents provocateur are goading unsophisticated natives into over-reacting, while the 'gay' media lie in

wait to catch the images and spin the propaganda that is even now poisoning the gullible against the Ugandans," he writes.

Wait, what? People who are horrified by the "kill the gays" bill are all a bunch of suckers? Right. And, yes. The "gay media" just loves it when gays get murdered. Anything for a good story. Building the gay revolution one body bag at a time.

"These very media have rushed eagerly to judge (Kato's murder) a hate crime and to blame those, like me, who have spoken against homosexuality in Uganda," Lively continues. "It is the central (but patently false) narrative of the left that all criticism of homosexuality leads inevitably to violence and murder."

Um, no. All criticism of homosexuality doesn't "inevitably to violence and murder." Duh. The kid who calls you a dyke in gym class because you tagged him out in dodge ball doesn't "inevitably" punch you in the face, nor does your grandmother "inevitably" stab you and your partner to death after refusing to come to your commitment ceremony.

But what's happening in Uganda goes beyond "criticism of homosexuality." LGBT Ugandans are the subject of constant harassment and state-sanctioned violence. That Lively holds up a country that is seriously considering a law to literally kill gay people just for being gay as an example of a place where people can respectfully disagree about homosexuality shows a serious, and dangerous, disconnect with reality.

**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.*

Hollywood from page 16

nominated success story. The other one brushed up against Academy Award acclaim a few years ago. And both of them have high profile projects lined up. Lisa Cholodenko, whose *The Kids Are All Right* is the movie to beat in the Best Actress race, is taking on the film adaptation of Tom Perrotta's novel *The Abstinence Teacher*. In the same vein as Perrotta's earlier stories, *Election* and *Little Children*, it will mine anxiety in suburbia when a New Jersey sex education teacher has to battle local conservative forces that would seek to silence her curriculum. Meanwhile, tough-minded *Boys Don't Cry* filmmaker Kimberly Peirce has set up *The Knife* at Universal, a true crime drama about an L.A. gang member-turned-FBI-informant whose life is in constant danger. No casts or start dates for either of these projects, but details are sure to come soon enough.

**Romeo San Vicente thinks abstinence is hilarious. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.*

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Mi serenata LGBT cubana y el entendimiento cubano de nuestra comunidad

Por: Wilfred W. Labiosa*/Columnista de TRT

LATIN VISION



PHOTO: ERIC HESS

Regreso a Cuba, esta vez no sólo para trabajar en situaciones humanitarias pero también para aprender y compartir más con la comunidad LGBT. Esta vez me uno al grupo del CENESEX llamado Grupo HxD (Hombres por La Diversidad) y sus facilitadores. Además regreso para saborear mi “serenata cubana” compuesta de comida, arte, música, sonidos y la gentileza de la gente. Este es un viaje con tantas expectativas, y todas ¡gracias a Yemaya, Elegua y a la Caridad del Cobre, se hicieran realidad!

Yo añoraba compartir con individuos de la comunidad LGBT en Cuba y en este viaje pude hacerlo en Habana y Santa Clara. Pude tener un “conversatorio” con la comunidad LGBT. Gracias a mis “hermanos” Roque y Camilo pude conocer a lo/as líderes de las comunidades LGBT Cubana en Santa Clara y Habana. Conocí a personas ilustres cubanas que se esforzaron, sufrieron y siguen trabajando con y por la comunidad LGBT Cubana. ¡Qué lindas las personas (y líderes) como lo son Silverio, Mariela, Roque y Camilo!

Pude compartir una tarde tan amena con excelentes preguntas y conversaciones con miembros de los grupos LGBT del CENESEX. Ello/

as planifican una Jornada en contra de la homofobia a través de todo el año y mi presentación fue la primera actividad del 2011. Esta Jornada, durante el mes de Mayo, tiene su marcha y eventos especiales—los que consideramos acá como Orgullo/Pride. El título de mi presentación fue: “Conversatorio sobre Teoría Queer: un lente diferente para entender nuestra comunidad.” En este conversatorio incluí el documental de Mizery y le obsequié libros de Johnny Díaz y la película hecha en mi patria Puerto Rico, “Manuela y Manuel”.

En esta conversación pude abordar “los significados de “lo queer”, en contraposición a las categorizaciones que clasifican a los seres humanos basados en la orientación sexual y la identidad de género. También incluí brevemente a los teóricos más destacados que formularon las bases de esta proposición y su aplicación en la actualidad. Resalté así mismo el papel transgresor de “lo queer” frente a todo enfoque normalizador de la sexualidad humana (CENESEX, 2011).”

El “Mejunge” es un centro de reunión, club nocturno, bar, restaurante, y galería de arte, abierto por más de 25 años en el pueblo de Santa Clara en la provincia de Villa Clara. Las personas de toda índole, incluyendo universitarios, músicos, dragas, adolescentes, personas de tercera edad y de la comunidad GLBT, vienen a este local para participar de conciertos, exposiciones de arte, su cafecito y para bailar. Cuando se entra por las puertas del Mejunge se siente la unidad y la alegría. Su gerente, Silverio, es una persona increíble que trata a todo/as por igual. El ayuda a esos desanparado/as, a la comunidad LGBT, al estudiante y al viajero. El trata a todo/a

ser humano como se debe tratar. Gracias a Silverio pude conocer otra cara de la comunidad LGBT. En este lugar la comunidad de hombres gay y transgéneros coordinaron una noche inolvidable para el grupo de personas con quien viajaba y en especial para Oz y yo. ¡Qué bellas personas son todo/as! Esta comunidad es unida,

es gay y están orgullosos/as de quienes son. ¡Los familiares, madres, vecinos, y otro/as vinieron a compartir una noche de música, compañerismo y amistad!

Puerto Rico y Cuba son similares pero cuando se habla de derechos de la comunidad LGBT, ¡Cuba nos gana por mucho! La música, comida, el calor humano, la bebida, y el idioma son similares, pero en términos de entender la política LGBT y el liderazgo son totalmente opuestos. En vez de ellos/as hablar sobre las diferencias usan las semejanzas para trabajar juntos/as, para incrementar la igualdad y solidaridad del movimiento LGBT en Cuba. Debemos de aprender de ellos/as para poder encontrar nuestra fortaleza. A los líderes en Puerto Rico de la comunidad LGBT les invito a que visiten a Cuba para que aprendan todos/as de su Jornada en contra de la Homofobia/Transfobia. Debemos reconocer que mucho se puede aprender de la historia y movimiento LGBT Cubano.

Quiero darles las gracias a todos/as mis compañeros/as de viaje, ¡qué grupo más chévere! A los grupos LGBT que conocí, les exhorto a que sigan su camino y que sigan siendo tan cálidos ya que el calor humano que sentí fue inolvidable. Les doy las gracias por haberme aceptado en sus grupos y por haberme dado la oportunidad de

seguir construyendo enlaces entre la comunidad Latina LGBT de Estados Unidos y Cuba. Gracias a Camilo, Roque, Silverio, Yosley, Jose Luis, Papito, Mercedes, Mariela, Carmela, y a todos/as los que compartieron conmigo. ¡Gracias les envío al personal de la Fundación Ludwig, CENESEX y Mejunge! A todos/as les digo que sigan su visión de traer a Cuba el derecho a la libre libertad de expresión

sexual y de género. ¡Les felicito y espero verlo/as pronto! ¡Qué siga la Jornada del 2011!

Para más información de este grupo y la Jornada visita: www.cenesex.sld.cu/webs/diversidad/diversidad.htm

*Escrito por Wilfred Labiosa, activista y trabajador social en el área de Massachusetts.

To read this article in English, please visit: www.therainbowtimesmass.com/2011/03032011/latinvision.



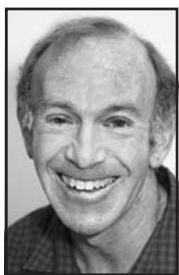
PHOTO: WILFRED LABIOSA

La delegación con miembros de la comunidad LGBT de Villa Clara en el Mejunge; Pescador en la Habana, Cuba.

The OutField: Dallas serves up a gay Super Bowl

By: Dan Woog*/Special for TRT

Q SPORTS



How cold was it in Dallas during this month's Super Bowl?

So cold that revelers at the Cedar Springs Super Street Party kept ducking into bars and clubs—even though DJs, live bands, beer booths, food vendors and to-die-for swimmer Michael Holtz (the emcee) beckoned on a long block of the Oak Lawn neighborhood that was closed to traffic.

It was so cold that all the hot bodies—belonging to Dallas residents and tourists alike—were bundled up. There was not a steely ab or bare quad in sight. The only six-packs were the liquid kind.

Still, organizers were thrilled. The Cedar Springs Merchant Association—a primarily LGBT organization, located in the heart of Dallas' “gay mecca”—threw a Super Bowl street party, and everyone came.

Dallas' gay sports scene was well represented. There were softball teams, rugby teams and bowling leagues. The Texas Gay Rodeo Association was there; so were groups with clever names like Different Strokes (golf) and DIVA (Dallas Independent Volleyball Association). They set up tables near the Bud Light main stage, passing out information and hoping to attract members.

Cedar Springs/Oak Lawn is 20 miles from Cowboy Stadium. Sometimes pro football and the LGBT community seem thousands of miles apart. But on Super Bowl eve, the entire Metroplex—gay and straight—wanted to strut its stuff to the world. And the weather be damned.

Though originally from New York, John Selig spent the last 25 years in Dallas. He's proud of his adopted city's large LGBT community—and its

diversity. He mentions the 225-voice Turtle Creek Chorale, and the 4,000-member Cathedral of Hope.

Selig is not a big sports fan. But he and his partner spent the night before the Super Bowl on Cedar Springs Road, and had a great time.

“I watched one Super Bowl, and said that the guys with blue asses were cuter than the ones with red asses,” he laughs. “But I went Saturday night to support my community. I'm supportive of anything that helps the gay community, this neighborhood, or all of Dallas.”

The Super Street Party “was not necessarily a sports event,” Selig says. “It was a block party themed around the Super Bowl.” He expected more Steelers and Green Bay jerseys, but notes he might have missed them underneath so many layers of warm clothing.

Scott Whittall is president of the Cedar Springs Merchants Association. He's also a big football fan (“I went to the University of Oklahoma!” he explains). He owns Buli Café, which sponsors a softball team that three years ago went to the Gay World Series. “Nearly every business on this road sponsors at least one sports team,” he says.

Cedar Springs Road even boasts a gay sports bar: Woody's.

Whittall saw the Super Street Party as a way to draw sports fans together—and show off the neighborhood to out-of-towners in for the game. Many gay football fans had booked hotels nearby.

“Why should there be only straight parties out there?” Whittall wondered before the event. “We know how to throw a big old, loud crazy party. We're going to close the street down and show everybody how the LGBT community parties.”

The event was in the works for a year—with plenty of support from straight folks. “The city wrapped their arms around us,” Whittall says. “The visitors and convention bureau said, ‘Yeah, go ahead and close the street down and have a party.’”

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