

# The Rainbow Times

Your LGBTQ News in MA, RI, North Central CT & Southern VT

Year 3, Vol. 10 • Nov. 5 - Dec. 2, 2009

[www.therainbowtimes.com](http://www.therainbowtimes.com)

**FREE!**

## National Equality March

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Photo: Gary Lappon

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Photo: Courtesy of HGLHC

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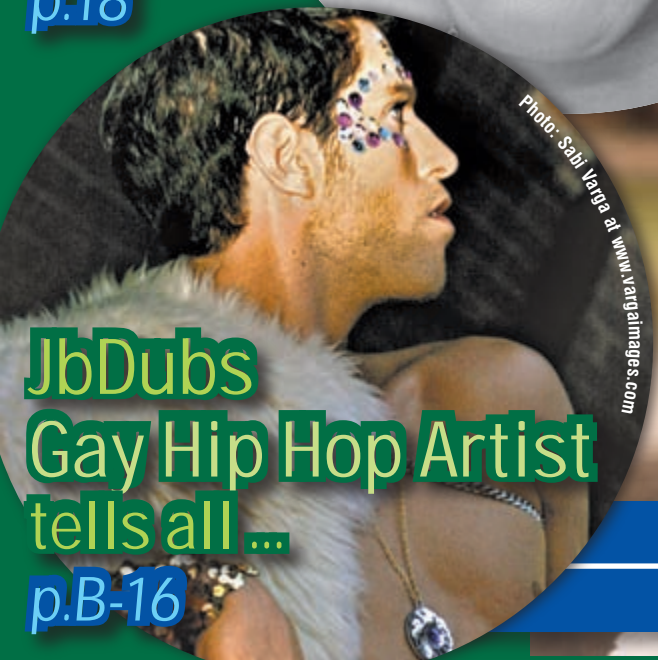


Photo: Sabi Varga at [www.vargaimages.com](http://www.vargaimages.com)

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# Is Obama doing enough?

By: Grisel M. Ocasio/RTT Publisher

**O**ther states, aside from Massachusetts, have legalized same-sex marriage and now the commonwealth is suing the federal government to provide federal benefits to the same-sex married couples in all five states: Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. But, the Obama administration is not biting.

Why can't same-sex couples who are legally married in these five states, like any other heterosexual married couple, be afforded the same rights at the federal level? According to a recent AP story, the lawsuit states that "the 16,000 same-sex couples who have married since the state allowed it in 2004 are being unfairly denied federal benefits given to heterosexual couples." When income tax time comes, we do cannot claim our spouses in the federal returns, as we do at the state

level. It becomes a sovereign mess for our accountants and a reminder of our second-class status in this country. I know of many friends and family members who suffer from anxiety during this time. But, the reminder that I am not an equal is something that I live with everyday, especially once you have such rights at the state level. It is discrimination when others who have also entered into matrimony agreements in these five states have more than 1,074 civil rights that the rest of us, the second-class citizens of this country, do not have. At least the state government of these five states is reaping the benefits that same-sex marriage has brought in these times filled with financial hardship. We are good for some things, but not others. If Uncle Sam did the math, and educated the naïve Republican and conservative Democrat base, they would understand that by doing the right thing (by its citizens) could also improve the economy.

See Opinion on page 18

# The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later

By J.M. Sorrell/ RTT Reporter

**O**n October 12, 1998, Matthew Shepard died from wounds inflicted by two men who tortured and murdered him on the outskirts of Laramie, Wyoming. Shortly after his death, the Tectonic Theater Project created The Laramie Project from interviews with townspeople. It was made into a film for HBO.

Ten years later, the group returned to Laramie to talk to people about what occurred or changed in Laramie since Shepard's death. The Epilogue was performed on October 12, 2009 in over 130 towns and cities around the world including Northampton, Massachusetts.

Chris Rohmann and Meg Gage produced and directed the staged reading at the Academy of Music. The eighteen performers for the production included local actors, politicians, and activists. At least 600 people were in attendance. Countless volunteers worked

hard in less than a month's time to make this happen, and after expenses, all monies raised went to the "No On 1" campaign to preserve same-sex marriage rights in Maine.

Several things struck me. First, the production was free of charge and open to the public. Those who could donated to cover costs. Secondly, the assortment of heroes on stage reminded me of how fortunate I am to live in this city.

The reading was a bit long/drawn out at times, and the characters from academia pontificated a bit much, and yet as a whole, the reading was magnificent. I was especially moved when

Stan Rosenberg read the part of the (Republican) governor of Wyoming. As it turned out, the proposed DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) in Wyoming failed by a vote of 35-25, with a large percentage of Republican politicians weighing in about fairness and respect.

See Laramie Project on page 12

# C'mon Out - Just Ask! Advice column

By: Tetty Gorfine/RTT Columnist

Hey Tetty:

I'm 36 and I've just met this really amazing guy. The only thing is that he's 58. I'm really attracted to him and I think he's great. He thinks he's too old for me but I don't. What do you think about relationships where there is a big age difference? For me, it's the person, not the age that matters. But I'm not sure. I would like to get your perspective.

Thank you, Joe

Hi Joe:

From my perspective Joe, in an adult relationship, age, per se is not the issue. Age differences may bring up many different life experiences. Age difference however, is only one of thousands of differences couples may experience.



As I think about your question, the issue that comes to mind is about awareness and how much a couple values it. When considering any difference or issue that emerges in relationship, for me the question is, what, if any, does this age difference mean to each person? There may be little attached to this difference, or it could have great meaning. If I as the older person can only feel wanted or needed by taking care of a younger

person, I certainly want to be aware of this. And should the younger person be unknowingly looking for someone to take care of them, there could be problems down the road when the excitement of new love subsides and both parties begin to

See C'mon Out on page 12

# The Controversial Couch

Lie back and Listen. Then get up and do something

By: Susan Ambrose/RTT Columnist

**S**weden: a far-away land of snow and ice, fair-skinned, blue-eyed beauties and ... a village of 25,000 hot lesbians? Too good to be true? I wish I had known that before I booked my trip with Scandinavian Airlines.

It all started a few weeks ago when the Xinhua news agency in China reported the existence of a city in the northern woods of Sweden where women were living together to satisfy their sexual desires. And, um, no, it's really not Northampton!

This much-sought city, Chako Paul, was supposedly founded in 1820 by a rich widow and is guarded by two blonde guards that will strike down men that try to enter this delicious place of lesbian love. This does sound reminiscent of my time at the Michigan Women's Music Festival, but just two blonde guards? Please.

However, the widow concept gives some credibility to the tale because we know lots of widows who prefer the company of each other instead of another old crust that tells them what to do with their lives. Especially if



they were left bundles of cash; then there's not such a rush to remarry, is there?

But I digress.

Let's look at more of the story translated from Shanghaiist.com:

If men transgress into the forbidden city, they will be beaten half to death. The citizens of Chako Paul are mostly engaged in the forest industry; because of such many of the women wear thick belts full of woodworking equipment.

I hear an ad for Strap-On Tools in there somewhere.

Some go into nearby cities to work and return to Chako Paul by night. Chako Paul's tourism industry is increasingly prosperous, with hotels and restaurants everywhere that cater specifically to women around the world.

Now if that isn't something to go to Sweden for! What a great concept! ABBA hasn't been heard from for so long it's possible the Swedes came up with this idea on their own to lure the Chinese and others to their shores! Now if only things that come up in relationship,

See Couch on Page 12

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I loved the coverage the Rainbow Times is having. I liked the "Couch" story by Susan Ambrose. But, when it comes to Elton John, I just think he's too old to have kids! Great points she made though.

-Jackie M., Northampton, MA

Dear Editor,

The "Hatred in Medford" story was right on! I know because I live in Jamaica Plains and there's so much discrimination here toward the LGBT community. It really astonishes me to find this kind of bigotry in Massachusetts. I moved here because of same-sex marriage and have found that, like the article says, "especially in New England" we have to keep our eyes open. That church in Medford is anti-gay and those people spread hatred constantly. What kind of "Christians" are they? But, keep it up, your work is truly great TRT!

-Jonathan S., Jamaica Plains

Dear Editor,

I love the Ask a Transwoman column, but I also get so confused by all of the terminology used. My brother is gay and I'm straight, but I love the content of your paper. This specific column makes me very confused. This cisgender thing that Ms. Erisis talks about and some of the other stuff she writes about sounds really "out there." I wish trans people could understand that it's hard to grasp all of the "things" that they're throwing to people right now. We're still trying to understand how a trans man wants to be with

See Letters on page 18

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# GBBC promotes professional networking opportunities for the LGBT community

By: Lisa A. Eramo/TRT Reporter

What began as an informal gathering of 12 individuals in 1990, the Greater Boston Business Council (GBBC)—an affiliate of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)—is now one of the oldest gay chambers of commerce in the country.

Its mission? To promote a positive image of the diversity of LGBT citizens and enhance the personal, professional, and social growth of its members. This year, the organization celebrates its 20th anniversary.

The GBBC currently has more than 2,000 members from a variety of professional backgrounds, and the numbers keep growing.

Any business, individual, or corporation can join the GBBC as long as it is willing to work within the organization's mission. "The one thing this organization will not do is discriminate," says Ed Travers, president of the GBBC.

The organization offers nearly 30 social and networking events per year that are open to its members and the public (for a non-discounted rate). Events run the gamut from networking lunches to professional development sessions and lectures. The GBBC's annual Makin' Waves Dance Party Cruise—its most popular event—offers members an opportunity to network while enjoying a cruise on the Boston harbor.

And it doesn't stop there. The GBBC also offers referrals and provides a directory of LGBT-friendly businesses on its Web site, all of which is free to the public.

GBBC members have access to a wide variety of benefits, including discounted rates to

all GBBC events, discounted insurance, membership to the NGLCC, and more. Business members are also listed in the GBBC's business directory.

"The biggest benefit is being able to meet with LGBT people who are like-minded and interested in making connections," says Rick Kraft, GBBC member and attorney with Kraft Law Offices. Kraft, who joined the organization four years ago, says his membership has allowed him to network with other small and large business owners. Some of these connections have even led to client referrals.

Kimberly Bisset, GBBC member and CEO of Radiate Career Consulting, says her reasons for joining more than four years ago are twofold. "I wanted a professional referral base. I also wanted to develop my business more in the LGBT community. I'm a lesbian woman, and I wanted to serve more lesbian clients," she adds.

As a career consultant, Bisset says her GBBC membership has been particularly



GBBC members networking at the annual Makin' Waves Dance Party Cruise. Photo Courtesy of the GBBC

helpful in building a professional network on which she can rely when assisting job seekers with information about a particular profession.

In addition to its individual and business members, the GBBC has 18 corporate sponsors, including Legal Sea Foods, Sun Life Financial Inc.,

Bank of New York Mellon Corporation, Massachusetts General Hospital, Hard Rock Café, Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and the Hyatt Regency Boston to name a few.

Tasha Morris, diversity and inclusion consultant for Sun Life Financial Inc., says Sun Life's two-year corporate sponsorship is part of a larger diversity inclusion strategy. She adds that the professional connections she's made at various GBBC events have been helpful in her role to enhance overall inclusion of the LGBT community into the corporation's workforce.

For example, Sun Life recently hosted a PFLAG panel discussion for all employees that was led by a speaker she met at a GBBC

event. "[The event] definitely had a positive effect on our internal community," she says.

Recognizing corporations for their support of the LGBT community is important, says Travers. "In today's world, we've been practicing and preaching tolerance and diversity. I really have to recognize and commend these corporations," says Travers.

Each corporate sponsor's business logo is placed prominently on the GBBC's Web site, indicating its advocacy for LGBT inclusion.

In light of its growing membership, the GBBC continues to focus on giving back to the community. The GBBC is part of a national scholarship program through the Point Foundation that offers financial assistance for LGBT students pursuing higher education.

"We felt strongly that we allocate a consumable amount of funds to the LGBT youth in this country," says Travers.

In addition, the GBBC offers a nonprofit affiliate program in which nonprofit organizations that are created solely to support the LGBT community receive a free GBBC membership, provided that they meet certain other criteria. The program currently includes 22 organizations, including Greater Boston PFLAG, the LGBT Aging Project, and Fenway Health to name a few.

For more information about GBBC membership options or events, visit [www.gbhc.org](http://www.gbhc.org).

**Boston News**

## umass fine arts center CENTER SERIES 2009-2010

**BILL T. JONES/ARNIE ZANE DANCE COMPANY ANOTHER EVENING/SERENADE: THE PROPOSITION**

Thursday, November 5 | 7:30 PM | Concert Hall

Serenade/The Proposition is a lively, colorful rumination on the nature of history that features a cast of fierce dancers, an iconic set, beautifully deconstructed costumes and an original score. \$40, \$30, \$15, Five College/GCC/STCC and Youth 17 and under: \$15. Post-performance talk-back with the artists immediately following the performance.

The Arts Give Back: Please bring a new, unwrapped toy, game, winter clothing item or non-perishable food item to donate to families through the Amherst and Northampton Survival Centers.

**CIRQUE MECHANICS IN A BIRDHOUSE FACTORY**

Tuesday, November 10 | 7:30 PM, Concert Hall

It's a wild and wonderful workshop where the machines are circus props and the workers are acrobats, dancers, contortionists, and clowns. The performers, from Cirque du Soleil, Pickle Family Circus, and the Moscow Circus, transform the mundane into the magnificent. \$35, \$25, \$15, Five College/GCC/STCC and Youth 17 and under: \$15. Please join us at 6:30PM in the lobby for some pre-circus hijinks with Show Circus Studio.

The Arts Give Back: Please bring non-perishable food items to donate to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Global Gourmet: Prix Fixe dinner at the University Club & Restaurant. Call 545-2511 for details.

Funded in part by the Expeditions program of the New England Foundation for the Arts, made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from the six New England state arts agencies.

Sponsored by: Cooley Dickinson Hospital, the Daily Hampshire Gazette, Finck & Perras Insurance, Hampshire Hospitality Group, Whole Foods, The River 93.9FM and the UMass Alumni Association

Global Gourmet: Prix Fixe dinner at the University Club & Restaurant. Call 545-2511 for details.

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The Davis Financial Group, The Rainbow Times, and The River 93.9FM

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Sunday, November 8 | 2pm-4:30pm | Concert Hall Lobby

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# Family, Faith, and God:Justice

By: Paul P. Jesepl TRT Columnist

**M**ysticism, self-awareness, or a deeper consciousness can originate from silence. Using silence is a meaningful way to embrace your core being that sometimes causes profound, positive experiences. It's a spiritual tool all too often overlooked. Sometimes it's mistaken for reading the newspaper on a lazy Sunday or watching one of those inane weekday news programs in the morning before work while enjoying tea, coffee, or Diet Pepsi.

Silence requires "thoughtlessness." Empty your mind of every worry and personal or professional task that needs to be accomplished during the day. If you find yourself starting to think about something stop. Silence requires focus, practice, and discipline.

There are times I enjoy gentle music during my early morning routine. Late at night I sometimes enjoy a British comedy or a re-run of Fran Drescher in the Nanny to decompress. Yet there is nothing more powerful in the morning or evening than sitting in silence for several minutes without a thought or care in the world. Even good thoughts should be put aside. Don't think about anything. Watching a sunrise, observing the evening stars, walking among trees during the autumn splendor, or just enjoying the silence sitting in a comfort-

able chair without any thoughts is one of life's simple pleasures.

Silence is experiential. It's something you need to feel and not mentally process. If the sunrise is especially spectacular that morning don't let the voice in your head tell you. Just sit, take it in, keep your brain still, and enjoy. Feel it. Don't think it. Experience it. Soak it in with the eyes and soul.

Think about tears of joy or pain. We've all experienced them. There is an emotional expression that comes from within that often has an absence of thought.

Some reading this column engage in silence on a regular basis. But for those of you who have never tried you'll be greatly rewarded if you do. There will be a peacefulness within that you never knew could exist. If you find that silence is unsettling then ask yourself why. Your subconscious is trying to tell you something.

Mystics, theologians, and spiritual guides and teachers of different backgrounds and denominations have often said in various ways that you can find God in silence. It can help you be connected to a greater universal power. It is a spiritually transcendental experience that has nothing to do with organized religion. Finding time each week for silence can lead to an individual spiritual awakening that makes

you more in tune with people, yourself, and the world around you.

It can assist in connecting the worldly with the spiritual. Silence complemented with stillness provides an inner refuge, a sanctuary from all of life's ups and downs. It is simplicity at its most majestic and beautiful.

According to Lao Tzu, the 6th century B.C. sage who nurtured a mystical philosophy, "no thought, no action, no movement, total stillness: only thus can one manifest the true nature and law of things from within and unconsciously, and at last become one with heaven and earth."

He further observed that "at the center of your being you have the answer" of who you are and what you must do in this world to be organically part of it to help make it and yourself complete. This is personal enlightenment. Silence. It is something wonderful that all of us can use to enhance life's journey and our unique spiritual path.

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

## Lesbian Best Sellers\*

1. The L Word Final Season
2. Girl Seeks Girl - Chica Busca Chica
3. Steam - the Movie
4. She Likes Girls 4: Tomboys and Tough Girls
5. Ghosted
6. Itty Bitty Titty Committee
7. Drifting Flowers
8. The Secrets
9. I Can't Think Straight
10. Loving Annabelle

## Gay Best Sellers\*

1. Pageant
2. Hollywood je t'aime
3. Were the World Mine
4. Eating Out 3: All You Can Eat
5. Newcastle
6. Mulligans
7. Half-Life
8. Redwoods
9. Tru Loved
10. Little Ashes

\*By wolfevideo.com



THE FACT IS, 63% OF ALL HIV/AIDS CASES IN THE U.S. ARE IN GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN AND HIV INFECTION RATES ARE RISING AMONG MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN.

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OR CALL 617.927.6450

FENWAY  HEALTH



## Lesbian Film Sweeping The Nation, HANNAH FREE, Premieres in Northampton

NORTHAMPTON, Mass.—HANNAH FREE, starring Emmy award winner Sharon Gless (“Cagney & Lacey”, “Queer As Folk”, “Burn Notice”), will premiere in western Massachusetts for one night only on Friday, November 13, at 7:30 p.m. at the Academy of Music Theatre, Northampton, MA.

Out! For Reel, New England’s popular lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender film series, is presenting the premiere as well as hosting a huge after party beginning at 9:30 p.m. at the Hotel Northampton’s Grand Ballroom.

HANNAH FREE Director, Wendy Jo Carlton, will be flying in from Chicago, to make a special guest appearance and host a Q&A with the audience.

“We are honored and thrilled to have Wendy Jo attend our premiere screening,” says Jaime Michaels, producer of Out! For Reel. “She’ll be able to give us the inside scoop in the making of the film and working with Sharon Gless. I know that all the Sharon Gless fans will love to hear all about it.”

HANNAH FREE is passionate lesbian drama about a lifelong love affair between an independent spirit and the woman she calls home. Weaving between past and present, the film reveals how the women maintained their devoted love relationship despite a marriage, a world war, infidelities, and family denial.

The Huffington Post states in its review of HANNAH FREE, “Ms. Gless delivers a stellar performance that is gritty, poignant, and real.”

Sharon Gless said, in a Windy City Times interview, “HANNAH FREE is a very unusual, very intimate story—and it’s a story that really needs to be told,” said. “I’ve always believed that for an actor, your initial intention is to entertain. But if you can educate also, that’s

a really nice thing.”

“This is a wonderful film and it is playing to sold out crowds at film festivals around the country. Out! For Reel’s screening will sell out as well so we are encouraging everyone to buy their tickets early and not wait until the last minute,” says Michaels.

Over 300 people are expected at OFR’s After Party following the film at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Northampton, King St., Northampton. There will be catered food, cash bars, and DJ Jodi from Ogunquit’s popular women’s dances, providing the crowd with hot music to dance to.

Tickets: \$12.50 Advance, \$14.50 Door, \$20 Film + Party, \$10 for students with ID (Door only). Included in the ticket price is the Academy of Music facility fee of \$1.

For Online Tickets and more information visit [www.OutForReel.org](http://www.OutForReel.org).

Advance tickets: Broadside Bookshop, 247 Main St., Northampton, Booklinks Bookseller (Inside Thornes), Northampton, Academy of Music Theatre Box Office, Northampton, Food For Thought Books, Amherst, World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield, and The Odyssey Bookshop, South Hadley.

Sharon Gless, the winner of two Emmys and a Golden Globe award for her role as Cagney in the television show, “Cagney & Lacey” and who now co-stars in USA Network’s hit series “Burn Notice”, made her stage debut in Springfield, MA at Stage West Theater.

Out! For Reel, based in Northampton, Massachusetts, screens the best in award-winning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender films from around the world on a monthly basis during a ten month season, beginning each year in September.

[www.therainbowtimesnews.com](http://www.therainbowtimesnews.com)



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(North Adams, Pittsfield, W-town and beyond)

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**Out! FOR REEL**  
LGBT film series

**SHARON GLESS IN**

**HANNAH FREE**

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NOV 13th  
7:30 PM**

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MUSIC THEATRE  
NORTHAMPTON**

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Sweeping The Nation!*

**SPECIAL APPEARANCE! Film Director Wendy Jo Carlton**

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PARTY: \$7.50 Advance w/Film Stub / \$11 Non-Filmgoers

Ticket Outlets: Broadside Bookshop & Booklink Booksellers (Thornes), Northampton;  
Food for Thought Books, Amherst; The Odyssey Bookshop, South Hadley;  
World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield

Tickets online + info: **OutForReel.org**

RainbowTimes Advocate 88.5 WYCH GAZETTE women'sTimes



# Transactivism: Trans hatred that leads to crime must stop

By: Deja Nicole Greenlaw/RT Columnist

Imagine that you are on a date and it's going quite well! You are a woman who is getting connected to a man and everything is going like a dream! It's going to be a nice night!!!

You met at a Coffee Shoppe and you both hit it off right away. After an hour or so he asks if you would like to go somewhere for a drink. It feels right so you ask yourself "Why not?" and you agree to his offer. At the club you laugh and drink and flirt. He asks you to dance slowly with him. You smile and do so. After a few drinks he asks you to spend the night. You think about it, look at him and smile and accept. After all, it's been a while ... The alcohol is rushing to your head and he smiles and leads you to lay with him. You happily oblige and nice things happen!

You are now nested in his "nook," (where one lays their head on the shoulder of the other so that their arm can cuddle you)! You are laying in the arms of a man who has just made love to you. What a great night! You are sooo happy, you close your eyes, give him one more hug and you are ready for sweet dreams ... then, it happens!

His brain has been numbed by the lovemaking, but now he is coming down off that blissful high and now he has to come to terms with having been with a Transwoman, who, suddenly in his eyes, is perceived to be a man who has become a woman. It hits him! He thinks that he has just made love to a man! He starts worrying about his sexuality and what will happen if his friends, co-workers, neighbors and family

ever find out that he made love to a "man!" He starts to freak. He looks at you and you open your eyes, not to the loving soul who has just made you the happiest girl in the world, but to a scared, murderous man! He then punches you and chokes you and beats you and beats you and beats you! You are confused, and then in shock, you see your blood! He may knife you several times or even shoot you a few times. You think to yourself, "This can't really be happening! Tonight was such a wonderful time and he was such a wonderful man. How can this really be happening? You see more and more of your blood everywhere now! Then, the worst hits you! You realize that are going to die!

After you pass he now has to get rid of your body. Maybe he will take you out to the outskirts of town where you will be buried in a hastily dug shallow grave, maybe you will be dismembered and scattered, perhaps thrown into the river, or possibly even thrown into the nearest dumpster. A once wonderful night with a promise of a loving mate is now a nightmare, which ended up with your brutal beatings and finally, your death.

This is one of the horrendous scenarios of a Transgender death. There are many others, like



Deja Nicole Greenlaw\*

Brandon Teena, a Transman who was beaten by two men and then raped by them. They were going to show "her" that "she" was not a man but a woman! He was brutally beaten and killed also. It doesn't stop there, there are many, many more terrible instances and not all of them are aimed at Transgenders. How about Matthew Shepard's horrible experience of being beaten to near death and left for 6 days tied to a fence in rural Wyoming? These are all heinous crimes and no one should have to experience what these souls have had to endure!

All hate crimes must be stopped, no matter if they are against Transwomen, Transmen, Gays, Lesbians, or anyone! This has been a long, overdue issue to be reckoned with and the U.S. Government has finally come to the task of recently voting for the latest Hate Crimes bill after years of LGBT lobbying.

These hate crimes are unacceptable but they will still occur. The general public needs to know about the truth and to see how horrible that these crimes really are. That is why we, Transgenders, hold our annual "Transgender Day of Remembrance" (TDOR). We need to show the world what is happening and we need help in getting this to stop! I ask all of you to please attend one of the local TDORs to help raise awareness. Please look for TDORs starting on Friday November 13th through Sunday November 22.

You can find more information about more TDOR observances and information by visiting this link: [www.transgenderdor.org](http://www.transgenderdor.org)

## T.D.O.R. Events

### Springfield, MA

Nov. 13; 6:30pm  
UniTy of the Pioneer Valley  
Transgender Day of Remembrance, (TDOR)  
3300 Main St, Springfield, MA  
The program will include speakers and musicians and everyone's participation is encouraged as we pay respect to our brothers and sisters and we help bring awareness to the surrounding area. Everyone is welcome. UniTy will sponsor a buffet directly following the TDOR.

### Amherst, Massachusetts

Nov. 19, 2009; 7 p.m.  
at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst, Meeting House.  
121 North Pleasant St. Amherst, MA  
FMI, UMass Stonewall Center: [stonewall@stuaf.umass.edu](mailto:stonewall@stuaf.umass.edu) or (413) 545-4824.

### Providence, Rhode Island

Nov. 18, 2009; Vigil at 6pm  
at Brown University on the main Green.

### Burlington, Vermont

Nov. 20, 2009; 6:00 - 8:00  
Burlington College (in the Gallery) 95 North Ave. Burlington, VT 05401  
For more information contact: [dawn@ru12.org](mailto:dawn@ru12.org) or [sharon@ru12.org](mailto:sharon@ru12.org)

### Boston, MA

Nov. 20; 7-9:30pm  
St. Luke's & St. Margaret's in Allston  
5 St Lukes Rd, Allston, MA (617) 782-2029

## Ask a Transwoman: Do I sound angry? It's because I am!

By: Lorelei Erisis\*ITRT Columnist

Sometimes I don't understand how a friend of mine, who is a trans man calls himself straight and then complains that he doesn't have the full support of the L&G community. But when somebody is a transgender person, how is it possible that they classify into a heterosexual terminology of straight? For example, if there is a "straight" trans man and has had his documents changed to reflect his gender, then that means that he can go and get married to another woman and reap all of the benefits of traditional marriage despite the fact that he, biologically speaking, is a she. I think part of the tension, at least in the lesbian community with trans men, is that while we are still fighting for gender equality and marriage rights throughout the nation, the trans men reap those benefits of straight heterosexual status. Sometimes they use the L&G community to advance their cause and then they leave US behind as well, once they don't need us anymore. Comments?

--Strong Butch

Wow. Just wow. I was sitting at the kitchen table with my girlfriend Widow last night talking and drinking cheap red wine and I read this question to her. I will, primarily due to issues of space, not relate the two or three hours of intense discussion that followed. But if Jack M. of Florence, MA thinks these questions sometimes strike a nerve with me, he should hear how my sweet love reacts!

Personally, and I've mentioned this before, I find it immensely frustrating that this issue of same-sex marriage keeps being presented as the premier issue that we should all be focusing on. I find it offensive in fact.

Don't get me wrong I believe in and support same-sex marriage. I have done so at great and impressive volume! Ironically, I'm not even a big believer in the traditional institution of marriage. Buy me several drinks and you're sure to hear the spectacular and surreal story of how my own marriage ended. I like being with a person simply because we like each other and make good partners. I do not

wish to own my partners or be owned by them. That said, rights should not be selectively applied. If a thing is going to be called a "right," it should be applied to all people, regardless. Heck even things we call "privileges" in this country aren't so selectively implied. I mean could you imagine if we said that gay people couldn't drive?! And as our criteria

for this we said it was because there were no gay people in the Bible that drove!

Back to my point, what bugs me about all this is that marriage, while an important issue, is not anywhere near the very basic human rights that trans people are still fighting for. We're talking basic bread and butter rights here like the right to not be fired from your job just because of who you are or, to be able to even get a job in the first place! Or, what about the right to not be beaten or killed because you differ in some way from what is laughingly called "the norm?" And to expect the full and equal protection of the law if you are!

These are not just trans rights we are fighting for or gay rights, these are human rights. I'm talking about the right to be treated with the same basic dignity that all people deserve, no matter who you are or how you identify, or even where you come from.

So yeah, you know what? If some of the trans men you know seem a little over-excited about being able to marry the person they love or get a job more easily than they could before they transitioned, try to cut them a little slack. It is small reward for those trans people who are able to "pass" in that way, compared to the



Lorelei Erisis\*

price we all, even they, pay to simply be who we are. We all too regularly lose friends, family and very often our whole support network. We are ostracized, beaten, marginalized and belittled, frequently even by our own closest allies.

Many in the transgender community still feel badly burned by our exclusion from ENDA last year. When the going gets tough, the "L&G Community" rarely seems to hesitate to sideline or just outright drop their trans allies.

I believe that this is beginning to change, but it's at least partly because transgender folks have started to stand up and say, "We will not be quiet anymore! We will no longer be ignored!"

Do I sound angry? It's because I am.

I generally, in these columns, try not to let that show through. I try to be affable and patient. Anger tends to shut people down and they stop listening. Also, I believe that the great majority of people are good and decent and want to understand and be supportive, if you just give them the chance to be.

But, you did not actually ask me a question Butchy L, you asked for my comments. And, my primary comment in regards to what you have written is that it is a perfect representation of the misunderstanding and ignorance that transgender people face from even our closest allies.

I'm going to break it down for you. A transman is a man. Period. Seriously. That's it. Yes, he has had the experience of transitioning from one gender to another. Hence, the

See Angry on page 8



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## AIDS CARE/Hampshire County announces annual fundraiser, sponsors

NORTHAMPTON, Mass.—Organizers are gearing up for the much anticipated 16th annual Chocolate Dessert Buffet & Silent Auction that will be held on Sunday, November 15 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center.

At the annual event that draws chocolate lovers and silent auction aficionados from across the region, guests sample chocolate desserts and bid on a variety of items, all to benefit a good cause. Pioneer Valley bakeries and restaurants donate more than 70 chocolate desserts, cookies and cakes that will be available for sampling at the event. For those whose chocolate cravings are harder to satisfy, there will be a chocolate fountain overflowing to create culinary delights with marshmallows, fruit, pretzels, and more. Hundreds of auction items will be auctioned off to benefit AIDS-

CARE/Hampshire County, a Northampton-based agency that provides comprehensive support services for people living with HIV/AIDS throughout Hampshire County.

Tickets are \$15 donation per person and can be purchased in advance or at the door.

The major sponsors of the 16th annual event to date include The Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, Florence Savings Bank, Northampton Cooperative Bank, and Webs America's Yarn Store.

To make arrangements to donate an auction item or a chocolate dessert, call (413) 586-8288 ext 5.

For ticket information or more information about AIDS CARE/Hampshire County, call (413) 586-8288 ext. 5. AIDS CARE/Hampshire County is a program of Cooley Dickinson Hospital.

## Cooley Dickinson Hospital Craft Fair Scheduled

NORTHAMPTON—Cooley Dickinson Hospital will hold its annual Craft Fair on Friday, Nov. 6, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the hospital's Main Entrance Hallway. Items on sale will include pottery, assorted fleece items, hand-painted items, jewelry, paintings, quilts, soaps wall hangings and vintage heart ornaments.

available at all hospital information desks and in the Pastoral Care Office, or to download a form visit: [www.cooley-dickinson.org/auxiliary/trees-of-love-and-thanksgiving](http://www.cooley-dickinson.org/auxiliary/trees-of-love-and-thanksgiving). For more information, call Janice in the CDH Public Relations Office at 413-582-2422.

## Annual Trees of Love Lighting Ceremony Scheduled at Cooley Dickinson

NORTHAMPTON—On Sunday, Nov. 22 at 4:30 p.m., community members are invited to Cooley Dickinson Hospital's main entrance to participate in the lighting of more than 2,000 lights as part of the 12th annual Trees of Love & Thanksgiving project.

Karen Marney, chairperson of the Trees of Love & Thanksgiving Committee, says each gift of \$10 will sponsor a light in honor of or in memory of someone special. Community members are encouraged to pay tribute to someone special by donating to this project. The people being honored and the donors will be posted at Cooley Dickinson Hospital's main entrance.

The Trees of Love & Thanksgiving project is sponsored by the Pastoral Care Committee and the CDH Auxiliary. Donor forms are

## Prostate Cancer Screening Clinic

NORTHAMPTON—The annual Prostate Cancer Screening Clinic sponsored by Cooley Dickinson Hospital's Cancer Care Program will be held on Saturday, Nov. 21 from 8 a.m. to noon.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men. Men ages 50 to 75 are encouraged to sign up for a rectal exam and PSA blood test. African American men and men with a family history of prostate cancer should be screened starting at age 40.

Exams will be provided by the physicians from the Urology Group of Western New England. Cooley Dickinson Hospital's lab will provide the blood tests.

Pre-registration is required as a limited number of appointments will be offered. To schedule an appointment, call the Cancer Care Program office at 582-2028.

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## From Angry on page 8

“trans” descriptor. It is not appropriate and is in fact belittling to refer to a transman as a “she.” Or a transwoman as a “he” for that matter!

Now, I may not personally dig the inflexibility of labels like straight, but the norm in this society is that a man who is attracted to women and not to other men, unless they choose to identify themselves differently, would generally be referred to as “straight,” at least in regards to their sexual orientation. So, it would be perfectly accurate and normatively acceptable for a transgender man who prefers the romantic and sexual company of women to identify as “straight,” no matter how much this bugs you or what an incredibly sexy butch dyke they may have appeared to be before they transitioned.

And, yes, I have spoken to some close lesbian friends about this. I understand how frustrating it is that “all of the good Butch Dykes are transitioning.” Seriously, I get it. It sucks. One of the biggest objections that I received myself from my female friends when I decided to transition was that it wasn’t fair, because I was one of the best men they knew! And, I was pretty darned good at it by the end dear readers. But that’s almost entirely because I was faking it. It was a role I had learned how to play and I like to think that I’m a pretty good actor. But it was just that, a role, a character, a suit I used to hide in plain sight. I was then and I am now, a woman. So I transitioned. Hence a transwoman.

There is a trend in the lesbian community to talk about how these transmen have transitioned simply to gain the right to marry and

maybe get a better job. I have heard this same opinion from perfectly nice, decent, wonderful people! And, I suspect that most of them have no idea how incredible offensive and short-sighted this opinion is. It presupposes that the ability to get hitched legally is worth losing your family, rejecting your identity, leaving your community, etc. They don’t even consider for a moment how wildly difficult it is simply to get people to call you by a whole different set of pronouns!

I have met a lot of transmen at this point and I am confident in telling you that not a single one I’ve met transitioned to make it easier to get married.

It’s a little like saying an amputee got rid of their legs so they could always have a comfy chair to sit in. Or, get the good parking spots. Perhaps it never occurred to you that it might be a whole lot easier and less expensive to simply move to a state where same-sex marriage is legal than it is to change your gender.

Fair enough. I forgive you. I am thankful actually that you have sent me this “question” Butchy! It needed to be answered.

My best hope is that maybe by reading this; you can have a fresh start with your friend. Because after all, isn’t a good friendship more important than a common label?

That’s all for your friendly neighborhood TransWoman this month dear readers, but keep those cards, letters and emails coming! Your questions need answers, and maybe I’m just a little bit of a masochist, but I love to answer them! After all, dispelling ignorance (and a good drink) is what makes me feel alive!

Slainte!

\* To contact Lorelei, please email her at: [loireierisis@therainbowtimesmass.com](mailto:loireierisis@therainbowtimesmass.com)

# Creep of the Week: Keith Bardwell

By: D’Anne Witkowski\*

Pop quiz: You are a Justice of the Peace in Louisiana and a couple comes to you to be married. The woman is white, the man is black. You turn them away because you don’t want them to have mixed race babies. You are:

- A) Racist.
- B) A defender of children.
- C) Treating everyone equally.

If you answered both B and C, then you’re probably Keith Bardwell, a New Orleans Justice of the Peace who recently declined to marry an interracial couple because, in his experience, those kinds of marriages just don’t tend to last.

Not surprisingly, Bardwell is getting a lot of shit for his stance, and folks, including Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, are calling for his resignation.

“I’m not a racist. I just don’t believe in mixing the races that way,” Bardwell told the Associated Press. Bardwell has never married an interracial couple in his entire career. “I try to treat everyone equally,” he said.

See? He’s not a racist. Duh, obviously. And anyway, with the election of Barack Obama, America has finally proven that racism no longer exists in this country. We are so post-race that you can even believe that mixing races is horrible and still not be a racist. So long as you have black friends, of course. Does Bardwell? Yes.

“I have piles and piles of black friends,” he said. “They come to my home, I marry them, they use my bathroom. I treat them just like everyone else.”

OK, wait. Bardwell keeps his black friends in piles? What? Are they buried in his yard? I’m sorry. I’m being too hard on Bardwell. After all, he lets blacks use his bathroom. See? Not racist.

Besides, Bardwell is a man who puts children first, especially hypothetical mixed race children who might face hypothetical adversity someday because some idiot let a black

man and a white woman get married. Everyone knows that children from such a union would never be accepted anywhere.

“There is a problem with both groups accepting a child from such a marriage,” Bardwell said. “I think those children suffer and I won’t help put them through it.”

“Perhaps he’s worried the kids will grow up and be president,” Bill Quigley, director of the Center for Constitutional Rights and Justice, told the AP.

The irony of Bardwell’s motives also did not escape Bill Burton, Obama’s deputy press secretary. “I’ve found that actually the children of biracial couples can do pretty good,” he said.

When Bardwell appeared on CBS’ “The Early Show” he stated that being interracial isn’t the only reason he would refuse to marry a couple. He’d also say no if they were drunk or stoned.

“Racial discrimination has been a violation of Louisiana and U.S. law for decades,” said Quigley, obviously not getting the whole post-race thing. “No public official has the right to pick and choose which laws they are going to follow.”

As for Bardwell, he’s unapologetic. “It’s kind of hard to apologize for something that you really and truly feel down in your heart you haven’t done wrong,” he said according to the New York Daily News.

“I’m sorry, you know, that I offended the couple, but I did help them and tell them who to go to and to get married. And they went and got married, and they should be happily married, and I don’t see what the problem is now,” he told “The Early Show.”

Uh, the problem, dude, is you.

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

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# Boston Pride announces call for 40th Anniversary theme

Boston, MA--The Boston Pride Committee is excited to announce the nomination period for the 2010 Pride theme.

"This is a special year for us" said Linda DeMarco, President of the Board of Directors for the Committee. "This year will mark our 40th anniversary, and we have a lot to celebrate."

DeMarco went on to explain that it was 40 years ago that a group from the community gathered on the Boston Common to protest the discrimination they were facing.

"The discrimination was literally killing people in our community," DeMarco added, "and after the Stonewall uprising, Boston's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community responded. Because of this remarkable anniversary,

our theme needs to be special."

The Boston Pride Committee first opened the annual theme nomination process to the public when searching for the theme for the 2008 celebration, and the number of submissions has grown exponentially since then. Anyone can nominate a theme by visiting [www.bostonpride.org/theme](http://www.bostonpride.org/theme). The nomination period will open November 1st and remain open until November 15th. The Committee will then compile the nominations, and open the voting period to the public on November 22nd. The results will be announced after December 5th.

Questions can be directed to [info@bostonpride.org](mailto:info@bostonpride.org) or by calling the Committee's PrideLine at 617-262-9405.

# International Transgender Day of Remembrance

Transgender-supportive groups in the Pioneer Valley will be holding events the week of November 16 to recognize the 11th Annual International Transgender Day of Remembrance. The Day of Remembrance memorializes individuals who have been killed throughout the world in the previous year because of anti-transgender hatred. Since last year's event, more than 100 people are known to have been murdered because of their gender identity/expression.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance will be observed in the Pioneer Valley on Thursday, November 19 at 7 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst meeting-house (121 North Pleasant Street). Speakers at the memorial will include Reverend Alison Wohler, the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst; Rabbi Raquel Kosovske, the rabbi of Beit Ahavah: The Reform Synagogue of Greater Northampton; Rabbi David Dunn Bauer, the rabbi of the Jewish Community of Amherst; Reverend Louis

Mitchell, a founder of Recovering the Promise Ministries; Reverend Liza Neal, the minister of the Village Congregational Church in Cummington and the director of the Spiritual Life Office at Hampshire College; and Gunner Scott, the director of the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition. A reception sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst will follow the event.

A number of area churches and synagogues will also be incorporating the experiences of transgender people into their services and programs the week of the Day of Remembrance. Among the religious groups participating are Beit Ahavah: The Reform Synagogue of Greater Northampton; Belchertown United Church of Christ; First Churches of Northampton; First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Amherst; Haydenville Congregational Church; North Congregational Church, Amherst; North Hadley Congregational Church; St. John's Episcopal

See *Transgender* on page 22

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# Howard Dean: Speaker at Fenway Health’s Board of Visitor’s Meeting

Governor Howard Dean, former Chair of the Democratic National Committee, presidential candidate, author and physician, delivered the keynote speech at Fenway Health’s annual Board of Visitor’s meeting late last month in the conference center at Fenway Health’s 1340 Boylston Street home. The program included an update on the state of Fenway Health from Dr. Stephen L. Boswell, Fenway’s President & CEO, and a panel discussion in response to Governor Dean’s speech. Other panelists included: James Hunt, President & CEO of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers; Dr. Gene Lindsay, President & CEO of Atrius Health and Harvard Vanguard; and, Lynn Nicolas, FACHE, President & CEO of the Massachusetts Hospital Association.

The panel was moderated by Nancy Turnbull, Associate Dean for Educational Programs at the Harvard School of Public Health. Other notable attendees included: State Representative Carl Sciortino, Cambridge Mayor Denise Simmons, Steve Grossman, President of Grossman Marketing Group and candidate for Massachusetts State Treasurer, Ron Ansin, philanthropist, and Dennis Duffy, Duffy Design Group. For nearly forty years, Fenway Health has been working to make life healthier for the


people in our neighborhood, the LGBT community, people living with HIV/AIDS and the broader population. The Fenway Institute at Fenway Health is an interdisciplinary center for research, training, education and policy development focusing on national and international health issues. On March 30, 2009, Fenway Health opened the doors of its new 1340 Boylston Street home, the largest facility ever constructed by an organization with a specific mission to serve the LGBT community. More at [www.fenwayhealth.org](http://www.fenwayhealth.org).

Carl Rosendorf, independent consultant and former President & COO of Smartbar-gains.com, is the Chair of Fenway’s Board of visitors. Established in 2005, the mission of Fenway’s Board of Visitors is to heighten the visibility of Fenway Health and to provide additional expertise and experience to support the organization. Members are interested and influential members of the community, patients, donors, and friends who lend their contacts, connections, and goodwill to help advance Fenway’s mission.





Fenway Health President & CEO Dr. Stephen Boswell with Governor Howard Dean at Fenway Health’s annual Board of Visitor’s Meeting on October 21 at Fenway Health, Ansin Building, 1340 Boylston Street, Boston. Governor Dean delivered the keynote speech on The Health of Our Nation and then participated in a panel discussion on the topic. About 140 members of the Board of Visitors were in attendance. Photo: Marilyn Humphries



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# Hate Crimes Legislation passes: Remain vigilant!

By: Jason Lydon/TRT Columnist

On October 28, 2009 the President Obama signed the Defense Authorization Bill, which had the *Matthew Shepard Act* attached to it. This Act is the federal hate crimes legislation that mainstream gay and lesbian organizations have been pushing for nearly a decade now. The passage of this bill is lauded as a step forward for glbt/queer people. Support flows freely for hate crimes legislation without any time offered for further discussion of the implications such policies will have on communities most impacted by the reach of the U.S. penal system. The passage of the *Matthew Shepard Act* will lead to more power within the federal government to put more people behind bars and to grow our already exploding prison population. The *Matthew Shepard Act* intends to decrease violence yet relies on a system of violence to achieve its goals. Not only will this Act give more power to a system that tears at the fabric of our humanity it was passed in coalition with the funding of the U.S. military's offensive operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Advocates for the *Matthew Shepard Act* celebrated their victory of removing an amendment that would have allowed the death penalty in hate crimes cases. This is, certainly, a good development but the examination of the prison system must go deeper. In the United States today 1 in 99 people are incarcerated (Pew Foundation, 2009). Of this popula-

tion in prison Black and Latino men make up more than half of the 2.4 million people who are incarcerated. There are no statistics available on the number of queer/trans/gender non-conforming people who are locked up, however we know that our communities are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, economic exploitation, police harassment, and

ized by hateful individuals or groups desire the involvement of law enforcement agencies in solving their problems. This Act does not work to address the underlying injustices that allow oppressive and hateful violence to continue. This Act can even be used by straight people against us. Dwayne Buckle, who harassed a group of Black lesbians in New

**"In the United Central & Eastern MA News States today 1 in 99 people are incarcerated (Pew Foundation, 2009). Of this population in prison Black and Latino men make up more than half of the 2.4 million people who are incarcerated. There are no statistics available on the number of queer/trans/gender non-conforming people who are locked up, however we know that our communities are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, economic exploitation, police harassment, and addiction."**

addiction. These factors lead to more queer/trans/gender non-conforming people being incarcerated. The very system of punishment that the hate crimes legislation depends on is the same system that harms our communities.

The *Matthew Shepard Act* increases funding for prosecution in local and federal cases. The Act assumes that those who have been victim-

ized by hateful individuals or groups desire the involvement of law enforcement agencies in solving their problems. This Act does not work to address the underlying injustices that allow oppressive and hateful violence to continue. This Act can even be used by straight people against us. Dwayne Buckle, who harassed a group of Black lesbians in New York City, is threatening to sue the women who defended themselves against him claiming they committed a hate crime against him as a straight man. The government does not recognize the role of institutional power, thus these hate crimes statutes can be used against those who are striving to get the legislation passed in the first place.

While New England States work to expand Hate Crimes legislation attention must be given to important critiques. In New York the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and a coalition of other groups, expressed their nonsupport for hate crimes legislation in their own state. These organizations, comprised primarily of queer people of color and low-income people, highlight the fact that the passage of hate crimes legislation harms queer communities of color and low-income queers. Not everyone is celebrating the passage of the *Matthew Shepard Act*. The conversation about what queer liberation means must include a debate about the violence imposed by hate crimes legislation.

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**couch from page 2**

I had a “lesbianscope” so I could find it!

The Swedish internet was actually crippled as millions of Chinese men tried to locate this city of luscious lesbos. And why, I ask? Why are hetero men trying to find a city where women prefer women? What would they hope to do there? Gain entry in more ways than one?

And that’s the dichotomy: chicks doing chicks is exciting to men but guys on guys are repulsive enough to kill over. And of course, the city of Chako Paul is right out of a straight man’s fantasy novel with the lesbians being from Sweden, complete with tall, blond guards and let’s not forget 25,000 hot women all conjugated in one place!

What!? There aren’t enough straight women on this planet to scratch that itch? Men have to *have lesbians* because these women don’t know real pleasure until they’ve met Mr. Penis up close and personal? I beg to differ. How many of women have heard that line? How many of us decided/were pressured to give that perspective a try only to be disappointed or feel slightly used like a Kleenex after a bad cold?

There will always be those who think lesbians are just women who haven’t found the right man (aka D-i-c-k) but we know better. And we don’t have to live in the forests of Sweden with 25,000 others to have legitimacy, although that sounds like a heck of a good time.

Better not forget my “woodworking” belt on this vacation; and throw it in my luggage, just in case.

*\* Suzan Ambrose is often seen wandering the forests of Vermont and Western Massachusetts with her hiking stick when she’s not writing diligently for The Rainbow Times.*

TRT

**Laramie Project from page 2**

It seemed clear that this would not have been unlikely without the tragedy and subsequent growth that occurred after Matthew Shepard’s death.

The interviews with the two murderers were disturbing and moving. It is hard to reconcile that good resides with evil when such an atrocity is committed. It is also necessary for healing.

I met Shepard’s mom when she came to speak at Amherst College several years ago. She told me she was not into public speaking at all but that her comfort level was hugely superseded by her desire to make meaning out of her son’s death.

This particular production in Northampton on an October night was magic. I never underestimate the power of art to heal and transform us.

**C’mom Out from page 12**

feel the constriction of these roles.

Now Joe, in no way am I saying this example applies to you and this new man. We could be discussing a class difference, a political difference, personality differences and so on. The point I am trying to make is that the things that come up in relationship, by themselves probably have little meaning. The meaning is in how each person relates to the issue. For example, if two people have very different styles in socializing, where one person likes to go out a lot and the other likes to stay at home more, neither of these styles have meaning by themselves. They only represent what each person prefers. But should one person in the couple not like that the other goes out more often, or should one always want the partner to go out when he/she does not want, then there may be a problem. From this point, the question, again, is one of awareness. Here I begin to ask, what does it mean to each of the people that the other leans in the direction they do? Where are the threats, what mean-

ing does each person assign to the likes of the other? How much do we have to be alike and agree? Can both people respect the other’s preference and find ways to both be true to that preference but also be flexible enough to build a bridge between those differences?

Being willing to explore differences and understanding how they affect each person and the relationship is what is important here. Committing to awareness, becoming curious as to our motivations is part of what keeps us alive as separate humans beings and as a couple. In order to thrive, relationships must be watered and fertilized just as any other living organism. Our differences actually, I believe can bring some of these nutrients as long as the people involved are not threatened by them. Should important differences go unspoken, when people insist on keeping things status quo, then drought is likely to follow.

I think Joe, perhaps I’ve given you more than that for which you asked. Talk to this man about age since it is a concern for you. Do your best to be open and curious. If you both can do this, you may just be laying a solid foundation for the future.

Good luck Joe.

Best, Tetty

Dr. Tetty:

I have a friend who is OCD. I really like this person but should I be worried that she is crazy? I met her at school this semester and really like her. It’s nothing romantic but if she is crazy I don’t know that we should be friends. Can you help me?

Thanks a lot. Marsha

Dear Marsha:

Relax. OCD, obsessive compulsive disorder does sound rather daunting, doesn’t it? Our diagnostic terms can sound really “out there” and scary. This one, as others, come with much stigma and lack of understanding. So I will explain to you a little about that with which your friend is struggling.

I think of OCD as a way in which anxiety is felt and expressed. The root, I believe is anxiety. Now who doesn’t have some of this? We all experience anxiety differently. We can become jittery, agitated, or angry, just to men-

tion a few possibilities. How we cope with that anxiety is individual as well. Some people engage in some form of exercise or physical activity, some people may eat and others may bite their fingernails. Our coping mechanisms are vast. People with OCD attempt to cope with their anxiety by fixating on one or two things and try to gain mastery over them. An extremely orderly person is trying to gain control over something that feels out of control. A person who washes their hands over and over again is trying to rid themselves of some threat. The OCD behavior is only trying to manage the underlying anxiety.

Marsha, we all do things to manage our anxiety. Your friend is most likely not crazy. She is human and struggling with something. Diagnosis itself only points to a cluster of symptoms. It does not say much about the person as a whole human being. Diagnosing while helpful in certain situations can also impede seeing a person as whole. We human beings are complex and must, in my opinion be seen in many different lights, not just a cluster of symptoms.

If you can, talk to your friend about what their experiencing. Your curiosity may make your friend feel that you care. It may help you understand your friend better and bring the two of you closer.

Best to you Marsha, Tetty

**C’mom Out! Submit your questions to Tetty Gorfine, Director of LifeCourse Counseling Center. Simply go to [www.lifecourse.net](http://www.lifecourse.net) and click on “Ask Us A Question.” All questions will be answered on the bulletin board. One or two will be printed next month here in *The Rainbow Times*.**

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

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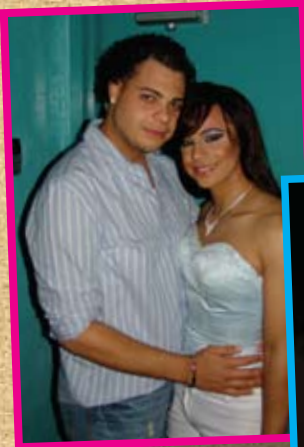
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Photos by: Bill Berggren

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# Deep Inside Hollywood: Peter Paige directing: Madonna gives it another try

Q-Wood

By Romeo San Vicente\*

**Madonna makes another movie.**

**Guy assists.**

Madonna is going to direct again. What, you say you didn't know she'd already directed one feature film? Well, she did. And it was called "Filth and Wisdom." It was bad. Came out in 2008. A handful of people saw it. So she's giving it another go. After promising not to be in the film, the former Mrs. Guy Ritchie has received generous help from her filmmaking ex-husband in finding a cast for the currently titled *W.E.*, a romantic comedy with roots in the relationship between Britain's Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson. Meeting with respected U.K. actors Mark Strong and Toby Kebbell (both from Ritchie's cool crime-comedy *RocknRolla*), the singer is also seeking a big name to help boost the film's budget. In other words, she's going to have to get Guy to call Gerard Butler for her, too – and that this movie is at least a couple of years away from any ticket-purchasing opportunity.

## Peter Paige in a *Panic*

If you want to know more about the bad old days and how homosexual citizens of the United States had to live extremely discreet lives not so long ago, you should really read Neil Miller's disturbing book *Sex Crime Panic: A Journey to the Paranoid Heart of the 1950s*. Filled with instances of incarceration in prisons and mental hospitals for no other

reason than being discovered as gay, it's non-fiction that will shake you up. And soon it will be Peter Paige's (*Queer As Folk*) third feature film as a director. The indie drama Paige is helming will be titled simply *Sex Crime Panic* and will follow the harrowing story of a group of men suffering under American anti-gay laws half a century ago. And, OK, sure, maybe that doesn't sound like much fun to watch, but when did important history lessons ever promise you a rose garden? Casting now, the film shoots mid-2010. That gives you plenty of time to read that book first.

## Gay neo-Nazis in love

The "Hitler was gay" crowd is going to like this one. Homosexuals sporting shaved heads who also have a fondness for swastikas have generally been the sole provenance of avant-garde Canadian filmmaker Bruce LaBruce, but it looks like the shiny leather boot is now on the other foot. At the recent Rome Film Festival, critics and jury members alike went gaga over *Brotherhood*, a film generally considered to be the best of the fest. Director Nicolo Donato sets his story in present-day Denmark, where neo-Nazis perpetrate violent crimes against gays and foreign immigrants. So naturally things get a little awkward when new recruit Lars (Thure Lindhart) finds that he has feelings for gang leader Jimmy (David Dencik) and that those feelings wind up being mutual. Given its timeliness to say nothing of the film's sex and violence *Brotherhood* looks like a good candidate to get a U.S. release;



Photo by: Christopher Lim/Ping Pong Playa LLC

look for it to hit art-house screens, or at least stateside film festivals, sometime in 2010.

## Heather Matarazzo as Jessica Simpson. Yes, really.

Heather Matarazzo is a brave young performer, and not just because she came out of the closet. She played the aggressively nerdy (and horribly dressed) Dawn Wiener in her film debut, the modern classic pain-comedy

*Welcome to the Dollhouse*, and she screamed and screamed while her blood rained down onto another naked woman who paid to torture her in *Hostel 2*. Now she's playing *US Weekly* cover staple Jessica Simpson – sort of. Matarazzo has signed on to play the lead role in *Magnus!*, a new film from gay *Fat Girls* director Ash Christian. And while

See Hollywood on page 16

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# MERI advocates for same-sex couples' right to marry in Rhode Island

By: Lisa A. Eramo/TRT Reporter

The words "I do" continue to fall on deaf ears in Rhode Island thanks to marriage equality legislation currently stalled in the House and Senate.

But one group seeks to change all of that.

Marriage Equality Rhode Island (MERI), whose acronym aptly signifies the right for which it supports, considers advocacy and education its primary missions.

MERI's educational efforts have included hosting discussion groups as well speaking in churches, civic groups, and at schools during diversity week. MERI also commonly collaborates with local universities to show the documentary "Saving Marriage," which details the legal journey for marriage equality in Massachusetts.

And so far, the efforts seem to be paying off. A 2009 study conducted by researchers at Brown University found that Rhode Island voters favor same-sex marriage by a margin of 60% to 31%.

"People are educating themselves, and they don't want to be seen as a community that doesn't welcome all of its citizens and treat them all equally. That's not how Rhode Islanders want to be thought of because that's not who we are," says Kathy Kushnir, executive director of MERI.

There are many ways in which individuals can become involved advocacy for marriage equality, the most important of which is to contact your legislator, says Kushnir.

"Take whatever time you have to make your desires known to your legislators. Governor Carcieri can do whatever he wants, but the people of Rhode Island—through their elected representatives at the statehouse—need to show him that he doesn't get to decide for everybody," she adds.

Legislators need to hear how a lack of marriage equality affects peoples' lives, says Richard Corso, 38, of Providence, who serves on the board of directors for MERI as well as on several of its committees.

"Personal stories make all of the difference when you are working for change on issues such as this. The more personal connections legislatures have to our community, the harder it will be for them to say no to us when or if it comes to voting," he says.

Corso and his partner, Don Laliberte, 47, who have been together for almost 10 years, say they prefer to wait to get married until they can do it in Rhode Island. Until then, they have sought legal protection through wills, powers of attorney, durable powers of attorney, and more.

Rhode Island's current lack of marriage equality means same-sex couples must go to great lengths to legally protect themselves or achieve the same rights as heterosexual couples, says Kushnir. "You can't really piece together more than 1,000 federal rights and hundreds of state rights. You can't write enough contracts to cover all of it," she adds.



Don Laliberte (left) and Richard Corso (right) after a press conference and rally for MERI held last February. Photo: Richard Corso

Karen Loewy, senior staff attorney for Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), says extending health and other benefits to same-sex partners commonly poses a common legal conundrum. Although some employers provide same-sex domestic partner benefits, there are restrictions placed on these benefits (i.e., couples must be living together for at least one year in order to be eligible). Many employers simply don't extend the benefits, citing the Defense of Marriage Act as a reason why they can't do so, she adds.

"I think employers need to understand that there is nothing...that prevents them from doing the right thing," she says, adding that she frequently meets with employers and personnel to advocate on behalf of same-sex couples.

Another common legal question is how same-sex couples can ensure legal protection to their children. "When a child is born into a legal marriage, it is presumed to be the legal child of both spouses. When a same-sex couple doesn't have a [legal marriage], the person who is not the birth parent is considered a legal stranger to that child right up until there is a second parent adoption," says Loewy.

GLAD has published a marriage guide recently updated in July to help Rhode Island couples navigate this legal maze. Download it at "<http://www.glad.org/uploads/docs/publications/ri-marriage-guide.pdf>" GLAD also sponsors a legal information hotline that individuals can call with specific questions. The InfoLine is open Monday through Friday 1:30-4:30 EST at 800-455-GLAD.

Editor's note: For more information about MERI, visit <http://www.marriageequalityri.org/>. On Tuesday, November 10 at 6:30pm, MERI will host its monthly base building meeting to train those interested in working with the community and their legislators. For more information about this meeting that is open to the public, email Kathy Kushnir at [kjkushnir@marriageequalityri.org](mailto:kjkushnir@marriageequalityri.org). The meeting takes place the second Tuesday of every month at MERI's main office located at 17 Gordon Ave, Suite 205, in Providence.

Rhode Island

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## Rhode Island's Youth Pride honors Vorro, Stewart and Megghe

By: Joe Siegel/TRT Reporter

Youth Pride, Inc. (YPI), Rhode Island's only statewide nonprofit organization devoted to serving the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning youth, will honor several outstanding individuals on Friday, November 13 at the Providence Biltmore. *Kick Up Your Heels* is the theme of this year's event, which also doubles as a fundraiser.

The event will include dinner, a silent auction, awards, dancing, and the chance to show Rhode Island's LGBTQQ youth that they are valued. All proceeds help to support YPI's programs and services, working to make Rhode Island's families, schools, and communities safer and more welcoming for young LGBTQQ people and their allies.

This year's honorees include Beth Vorro, a former YPI Board President, Kaytee Stewart and AJ Megghe, and the Rhode Island College School of Social Work.

Vorro will receive the Founders Award for "the impact her volunteer work with the organization has had," said James Robinson, Executive Director of YPI.

Stewart and Megghe will be honored with the Luis Pagan Youth Leadership Award for the work they have done on behalf of YPI. Pagan was a longtime YPI member who died in 2007 while on vacation in Mexico.

The demand for services for LGBTQQ youth has increased, according to Robinson, who said between 25 and 40 kids come into the center every day. Positive developments include the large increase in the number of Gay/Straight Alliances in schools throughout the state. And the queer youth have taken a page from the playbook of their elders and have become active in the fight for equal rights.

"We've seen more kids get involved on an activist and advocacy level," Robinson noted.

Kick Up Your Heels will serve as a tribute to the dedication and commitment exhibited by YPI's staff and volunteers, as well as a reminder of the importance of offering a support system for queer youth.

"It's about celebrating the work we do with in the community," Robinson added.

YPI began as a support group of the YWCA of Greater RI in December of 1992. It expanded rapidly to meet the needs of its constituency and work on the environmental change needed. YPI has drop-in centers in Newport and Providence. They are safe, youth-centered spaces that are home to YPI programming. The Way Out is a peer support group which is offered weekly in Newport and Providence.

YPI's GSA Coalition is a youth organizing project connecting students from high school GSAs to each other and community resources. The Coalition empowers youth to share their experiences, strategies and ideas on combating homophobia and transphobia in their schools through discussions, workshops, social events, and community outreach.

YPI offers a Drop-In Center at 171 Chestnut Street in Providence, and additional programs in Newport. For more information, please call (401) 421-5626, or go to: [www.youthpride-ri.org](http://www.youthpride-ri.org)

From Hollywood on page 14

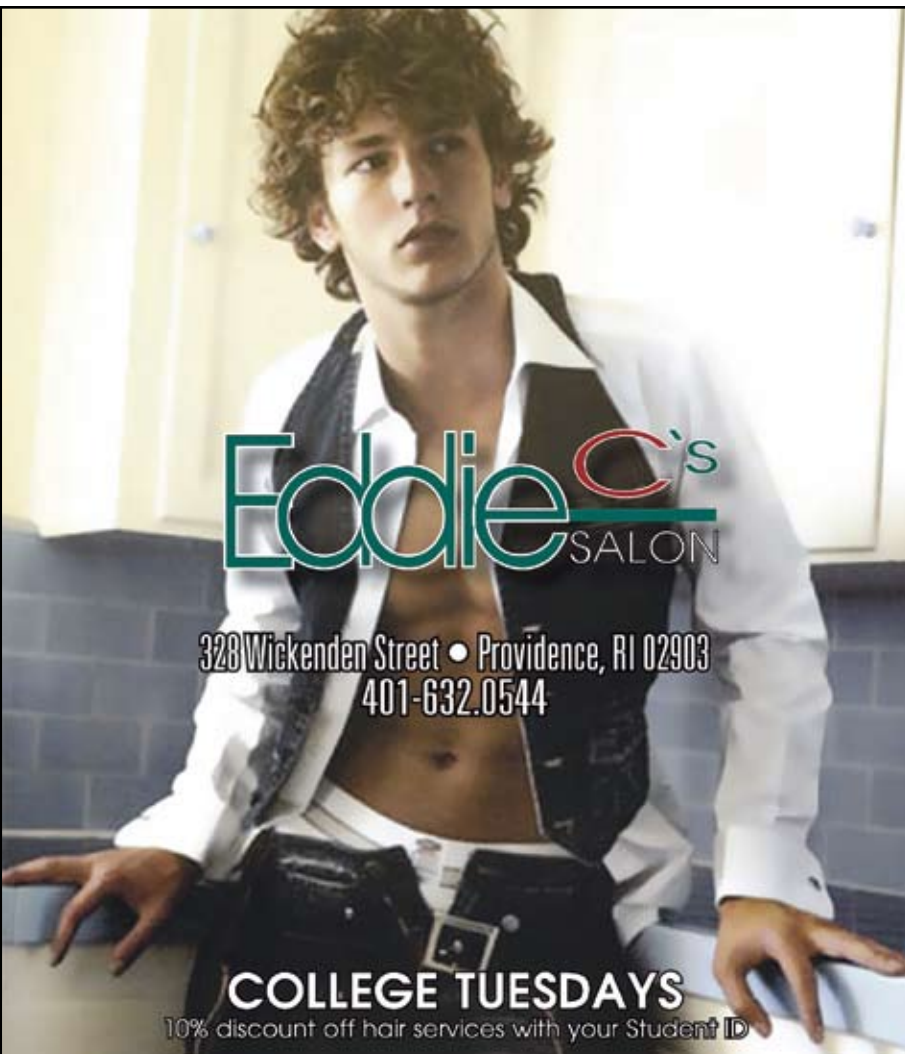
Christian says that it's not exactly Simpson's life story, Matarazzo will play a trailer-trash gal who loves singing and gets cast in a local production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Romeo's already intrigued, but the casting of the hilarious Jennifer Coolidge as Matarazzo's mom makes for the perfect cherry on top. Shooting starts in late November, which means *Magnus!* should be ready to hit all the queer film fests next summer, just in time for Simpson to start a tabloid feud with everyone involved.

*\*Romeo San Vicente wants you to join the Special People Club. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInside-Hollywood@qsyndicate.com.*

There is another PFLAG chapter in Rhode Island for LGBTQ families! The East Bay chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at the East Bay Center, 2 Old County Road, Barrington, RI. The East Bay chapter has been established as a satellite group of PFLAG South/Central Rhode Island. For directions go to [www.eastbay.org/locations-hours.htm](http://www.eastbay.org/locations-hours.htm). For more information about the meeting, call the East Bay Chapter PFLAG South Central Rhode Island at 401-952-6720.



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# Hundreds attend AIDS Project Rhode Island's 22nd Annual Walk for Life



Mayor Cicilline presents a check to APRI board members. Photo: Joe Siegel



A group of walkers, Mayor Cicilline and his team (in blue shirts). Photo: Joe Siegel

Several hundred participants gathered at Roger Williams Memorial Park in Providence on Sunday, October 25 for AIDS Project Rhode Island's 22nd annual Walk for Life. The event raises thousands of dollars for the agency's programs and services.

The 3 kilometer walk took the walkers through parts of the city's Fox Point neighborhood and through the East Side.

More than \$29,000 has been raised, with the majority of the money from on-line donations.

Mayor David Cicilline, who walked with a large contingent of volunteers, presented a check for \$10,000 to AIDS Project Rhode Island.

Cicilline praised APRI's education, advocacy, and outreach programs, noting the significance of the work the organization does on behalf of those afflicted with HIV/AIDS.

The Walk for Life was sponsored by the Cardi Bros, Tectron, and the City of Providence.

AIDS Project Rhode Island offers a variety of programs including case management, mental health and substance abuse treatment and safety net services, such as emergency rental and utility payments. The organization also offers a meal site and a drop-in center.

AIDS Project Rhode Island is located at 404 Wickenden St., Providence.

For more information, go to [www.aidsprojectri.org](http://www.aidsprojectri.org), or call 401-831-5522.

# WORLD AIDS DAY! WEAR YOUR RED ON DECEMBER 1ST

By: Kalene Brennan/AIDS Care Ocean State

PROVIDENCE, RI—In support of World AIDS Day on December 1st, AIDS Care Ocean State will be offering free, anonymous HIV testing from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at our Prevention Center located at 605 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, RI. Testing is provided in a safe, confidential environment and is one of the many services AIDS Care Ocean State provides to our clients. If you cannot come in on World AIDS Day, please call 401-781-0665 to schedule an appointment.

In addition to free HIV testing, be sure to keep an eye out for our local drag queens who will be distributing safe sex kits at gay bars in the Providence area. Stop by and say hello to our lovely queens and grab a free sex kit to support World AIDS Day.

AIDS Care Ocean State is the largest AIDS Service organization in Rhode Island and is committed to providing quality programs and services to those affected or affected by HIV/



AIDS. For more information about AIDS Care Ocean State, please visit [www.aidscareos.org](http://www.aidscareos.org). Respect and protect yourself on December 1st by getting tested and picking up your safe sex kits to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Rhode Island News



Miss Kitty Litter addresses the walkers. Photo: Joe Siegel

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## Karen Williams performs at One Big Event

**CT News** The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective is pleased to announce that renowned comedian Karen Williams will be this year's entertainment at One Big Event on Saturday, November 14th at the Hilton Hartford Hotel. This annual fundraiser for the state's only health organization devoted to the LGBT community is always a great time. Last year we sold out, so mark your calendar now!

Karen is one of the most prominent lesbian comedians working today. Her new special on the Logo Network, *I Need a Snack*, was captured live for a sold-out audience at the Knitting Factory in Hollywood. Karen shares her stories about sex, online dating and customer service in the irreverently hilarious way only Karen can deliver. Now she comes to Hartford to deliver her wisdom in person.

As a single lesbian mom living in Berkeley in the 1980s, Karen Williams started doing stand-up comedy "because it was something I could do that didn't cost anything." Known for her quick repartee, insightful commentary and audience rapport, Williams is a comic craftmaster, a gifted actor, a multitasked



writer, and an inspirational lecturer. Armed with her "heal with humor" philosophy, she gives humor workshops specifically designed to build self-awareness and self-confidence, and to encourage tolerance and respect for the dignity of human life. She is creator of the Humor-at-Large workshop series and founder of the National Women's Comedy Conference. Featured in the award-winning comedy/documentary "We're Funny That Way," she's shown regularly on HBO and was a nominee for the 1999 GLAMA Award for her outrageously funny comedy CD, "human beings: what a concept" (Uproar Records). As a solo entertainer, Karen Williams delights SRO audiences from San Francisco to South Beach to Sydney. As adjunct faculty at Cleveland State University, Professor Williams taught a Senior Seminar in Stand-Up Comedy.

This year, ING is our Biggest Sponsor and Citizens Bank and Van Horst General Contractors are our Really Really Big Sponsors. Tickets for One Big Event are \$100, \$150 and \$200. For more information, contact Coordinator Dan Millett at: danm@hglhc.org, danm@hglhc.org or at (860)278-4163 x18. For more information and updates, go to our website: www.onebigevent.org.

### Opinion from page 2

But, the current older lawmakers must be gone before we see any real change. The Obama administration is catching on to some things and fulfilling certain promises, but is that enough?

This month, we celebrate the Transgender Day of Remembrance and I wonder if the current law will really protect our Trans brothers and sisters. Safety comes first. It must in this case. But, as we continue to witness, LGBT hatred in Massachusetts (one of the most progressive places in America) continues to take place, even when we are possibly afforded more rights than any other place. Will the hate crimes legislation that was signed into law last month really prevent future harm to our Trans people? Or, will it just be there for the books? Will it be just like the equal-pay bill signed in his first 100 days? Or, will it just become a bunch of legal gibberish that has not shown results yet? Is new legislation effective, or is it there to quiet us down? There are many laws that protect members of minority groups, but do these laws really protect us, or are they a mockery only followed by some and ignored by the small, but reigning majority?

Until next time,  
Gricel M. Ocasio

### Letters from page 2

a man. Couldn't the trans man before the "change" have stayed a woman and love a man anyway?

-Heather T., Greenfield, MA

Dear Heather,

I think that there is a big difference between gender identity and sexual orientation. Perhaps that will help you understand how someone who has transitioned can still fall in love with whomever they feel that special connection with. However, I believe that you should submit your questions to Lorelei Erisis. I am certain that she will be able to better answer your concerns.

Thank you, The Editor

Dear Editor,

I was really bummed to find out that Boston lost the Gay Games bid. I wanted to thank you for your coverage of this story. We sure deserved it!

-Gary M., Boston, MA.



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## HRC: Justice For ALL

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Human Rights Campaign Foundation, the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization, recently expanded its *Justice For All* educational curriculum to cover issues addressing gender identity and expression. The newest addition to the curriculum provides educators with three new lesson plans that will help them to engage their students in discussing gender identity and how gender identity discrimination affects people in education, employment, and family law.

"Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history and legal rights have been overlooked in educational curricula around the country. It is our hope that the gender identity curriculum will encourage teachers to discuss gender identity and expression openly and frankly with their students," said Human Rights Campaign Foundation President Joe Solmonese.

Created through a grant from the Open Society Institute, the Justice For All program was developed to inform the public about the importance of an independent judiciary in protecting the civil rights of LGBT Americans. In particular, the Justice For All program responds to rhetorical attacks on "activist judges" by opponents of LGBT civil rights, increases awareness on attempts by state and federal legislators to reduce the power of the judicial branch, and highlights the growing threats of violence against federal and state judges who have been involved in deciding LGBT civil rights cases.

In 2006, the Justice For All curriculum was created to provide college and high school educators in the fields of social studies, history, government, and humanities with the tools to discuss issues affecting LGBT civil rights with their students. The gender identity lesson plans are the second expansion of the curriculum, which earlier this year was modified to include sections on the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

To date, educators from over 650 colleges, high schools, and middle schools have used the Justice For All curriculum in teaching thousands of students the fundamentals of civil rights and how these issues affect the LGBT community. Educators who are interested in learning more about the gender identity modules or the entire Justice For All curriculum can visit the Justice For All website at [www.hrc.org/justice](http://www.hrc.org/justice) or contact us at [justiceforall@hrc.org](mailto:justiceforall@hrc.org).

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



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# DC March for LGBT Equality: A Success

NoHo News

By: J.M. Sorrell and Gary Lapon

Early last summer, I heard that a grassroots national march was being considered for LGBT equality in DC. My immediate internal response was to feel we should have a bus from western Massachusetts. A woman I met at a rally suggested I contact Gary Lapon, an ally and a socialist, to help with organizing.

We met regularly and began spreading the word. Before I knew it, Gary reserved two buses and was convinced they would be filled. He met with Five College students, and helped inspire a third bus (Hampshire College).

My two jobs precluded me from going to DC, so I was happy to support the process and be with Gary in spirit. Gary did fill those buses and I suspect there is no stopping him as the work continues. He is one of my heroes. In this one-on-one interview, I asked him about the march, his experiences, etc.

*JM: Describe your interest in the march. How did you come to this place?*

I was excited by the response to the passage of Proposition 8, which took away same-sex marriage in California. Tens of thousands of predominately young people took to the streets in anger in California, joined by similar numbers across the country. I take a principled stand against all forms of oppression and believe that real change requires the self-

activity of regular people, so I was inspired by reports of a new, youthful, diverse, largely working class LGBT movement and wanted to help it take the next step: a national march for full civil equality.

The contradiction between growing support for LGBT equality and the discrimination still on the books at the federal, state, and local level is large enough to drive a movement through, and given the hopes and confidence of a young generation that just played a leading role in electing an African American President in a country based on slavery, I became convinced that the potential exists to build a new civil rights movement for LGBT equality.

I met a wonderful group of activists who came together to make this happen; The Rainbow Times, Pride & Joy, Out For Reel film festival, and Amherst Community Television all provided us with free publicity, which is greatly appreciated.

*JM: What excited you the most about your experience at the DC march/rally? Any surprises?*

I was surprised by the turnout of over 200,000 people. The march was organized in large part by new activists with limited resources, only 1 paid organizer, less than \$250,000, no corporate sponsorship, and very little assistance or support from mainstream LGBT rights organizations.

Given these factors, I thought that 50,000 would be a success. That so many people came



Photo by: Gary Lapon

out is a testament to effectiveness of independent grassroots organizing, and the demand—full civil equality for LGBT people in all matters governed by civil law in all 50 states, now—resonated with people who, as march steering committee member Sherry Wolf writes, are sick of “begging for crumbs.”

I was excited to collaborate with the Graduate Employees’ Organization (UAW Local 2322) at UMass Amherst, whose financial support was essential. Christopher Sweetapple, a GEO organizer who played a leading role, explained the need for labor to support LGBT equality:

“Economic justice is crucial to fighting all other forms of oppression, and thus unions like ours support the struggles of many minorities—LGBT people against homo/transphobia, but also the struggles of non-whites against persistent racial oppression, women against ... misogyny and people of differing physical abilities to find accommodation and respect in society...second, there are members within our unions—gay men, trans and bisexual people, lesbians—who suffer from legal-

ized discrimination right now...”

Also inspiring was the talent and enthusiasm of students from UMass and Hampshire College. Madeline Burrows, Hampshire class of 2013 and a leader in bringing a bus of over 50 Hampshire students, explained:

“This generation of students [faces] a looming contradiction: we’ve grown up in a society far more open to sexuality and gender variance than ever before, but LGBT Americans lack basic civil rights. With huge budget cuts less students are able to afford college...lacking job security due to discrimination takes on a whole new meaning in this economic crisis. Students played a leading role in the sit-ins that sparked the civil rights movement that overthrew Jim Crow in the 1960s, and students today are playing a leading role in initiating building a civil rights front on college campuses across the country.”

*JM: What now?*

The next step is to build a local chapter of Equality Across America (over 20 of us are already involved), composed of students and others, to continue to educate, agitate, and organize for LGBT civil rights.

We need your talent and energy, whether you’re LGBT or an ally, a student or a worker, an experienced activist or someone getting involved for the first time. Join us and let’s make history by making LGBT inequality history!

Check us out online at [equalitywmaass.blogspot.com](http://equalitywmaass.blogspot.com) and get involved in our era’s civil rights movement!

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“We can't prevent them from showing up. They are entitled to show up,” said Levi. “The bigger issue is that some [trans] people worry about going to an event because they are afraid of being harassed. So the idea is to have people there to ensure that nothing happens that might make the attendees more uncomfortable.”

**The Rainbow Times**

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# ¡Vamos a dar gracias! Es necesario

Visión Latina Boston

By: Wilfred Labiosa\*

**G**racias damos en este mes de Noviembre, en verdad deberíamos dar gracias a través de todo el año. Hay muchas personas que deben dar gracias pero no las dan. Gracias a quien(es) y por qué es su decisión pero sí pienso que nuestra comunidad Latina y GLBT ha tenido un año increíble. Estas son sólo nueve cosas para reflexionar y dar gracias.

Primero tenemos un presidente que nos escucha, entiende y que lucha por los derechos de todo/as. Sabemos que ha tomado más tiempo de lo que nos prometió, pero por lo menos podemos pensar que el cambio viene y que todo cambio toma tiempo.

Segundo, tenemos a la primera juez de la Corte Suprema que es Latina. Vamos a ver como va esto. Tercero, la legislación en el estado de Massachusetts para inclusión de nuestra comunidad transgénero va por el camino correcto. Cuarto, nuestra comunidad se movilizó (y se moviliza) cuando hay atropellos en contra de nuestra gente. Por ejemplo, cuando una iglesia en el pueblo de Medford de Massachusetts escribió en su rotulo frases homofóbicas, no solo los periódicos pero legisladores y la comunidad en general se movi-

lizaron al igual que en Nueva York, Rhode Island, y en otros estados donde iguales (o peores) cosas suceden.

Quinto, hay mas políticos Latinos y GLBT que en cualquier otro año de elecciones locales y las otras personas en la política nos incluyen en sus campañas y nos ofrecen más atención (bueno ¡la mayoría!). Sexto, tenemos un movimiento nacional Latino que está creciendo más y más y paso a paso llamado Unid@s: La Organización Nacional Latino GLBT de Derechos Humanos. Esta organización llega en momento clave para llenar el vacío que tenemos a nivel nacional.

Séptimo, demos gracias para que las redadas disminuyan en nuestra región. Por supuesto todavía siguen deportando a nuestra gente y separando a nuestras familias pero el porcentaje es más bajo. Es tiempo de dar gracias y seguir pidiendo fuerzas para seguir el trabajo abogando por una póliza justa de inmigración que incluya derechos para esta parte de nues-



tra comunidad. Octavo, tenemos que dar gracias que tenemos este vehículo para educarnos. Este periódico está fundado por una Latina lesbiana y es importante dar gracias y seguir creciendo. También al igual tenemos que dar gracias que tenemos organizaciones como Somos Latin@s que siguen creando espacios para aprender y reunirnos como comunidad LGBT durante todo el año (y durante la semana anual de Orgullo Latino).

Y por ultimo demos gracias ya que todavía estamos aquí y que hay personas que están sacrificando sus vidas para que nosotros podamos vivir en esta democracia. Ello/as son los héroes. Demos gracias a esto/as héroes de nuestra época. Ello/as son lo/as que deben estar ganando galardones y beneficios. Es increíble que estos héroes cuando regresan tienen problemas en recibir beneficios y cuidado de salud. Espero que pronto podamos participar de un programa de salud que nos incluya a todo/as por igual.

Por supuesto que no nos podemos dormir ya que todavía hay mucho por hacer pero en el Día de Acción de Gracias vamos a tomar unos momentos para reflexionar y dar gracias por todo lo que tenemos y pensar en las cosas que en los próximos meses y año debemos de alcanzar par que en el año entrante demos gracias.

Gracias a mi familia extendida, esposo, compañero/as de trabajo y de "lucha". Doy gracias a este periódico por darme esta oportunidad y reconocer la importancia de esta columna. ¡Gracias!

*\*Escrito por Wilfred Labiosa, activista local, miembro de las Mesas Directivas de Unid@s, la Organización Nacional Latina GLBT y de Boston Pride. Editado por Grisel Martínez Ocasio.*

To read this article in english: [www.therainbowtimesmass.com/latinvisionnovember](http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com/latinvisionnovember)

From Transgender on page 9

Church, Northampton; Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence; Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst; United Methodist Church of Holyoke, South Hadley and Granby; Village Congregational Church, Cummington; and Westhampton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

"The growing involvement of religious groups in the Day of Remembrance and other transgender-focused events has been a welcomed addition," states Genny Janiczek Beemyn, the director of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Stonewall Center and an organizer of the Pioneer Valley Day of Remembrance for the past four years. "It shows that gender prejudice impacts everyone and should be important to everyone. The Day of Remembrance is about--not just for--transgender people."

In conjunction with the Day of Remembrance, two new transgender films will also have their New England premieres. Riot Acts: Flaunting Gender Deviance in Music Performance will be shown on Tuesday, November 17 at 7 p.m. in room 137 of the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The filmmakers, Simon Strikeback and Madsen Minax, will lead a discussion after the screening. Diagnosing Difference, a film about the pathologizing of transsexuality, will be shown on Thursday, November 12 at 7 p.m. in room 101 of the UMass Campus Center. Dr. Shelley Janiczek Woodson, a licensed psychologist and gender therapist, will lead a discussion following the film. Both films are free and open to the public.

Sponsors of the Pioneer Valley Day of Remembrance include the UMass Stonewall Center, the UMass Everywoman's Center, the Hampshire College Spiritual Life Office, the Amherst College Rainbow Room, Beit Ahavah: The Reform Synagogue of Greater Northampton, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst, LGBT Associates of Western Massachusetts, and The Rainbow Times. For more information, contact the UMass Stonewall Center: [stonewall@stua.umass.edu](mailto:stonewall@stua.umass.edu) or (413) 545-4824.

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# The OutField: Crafting a Career



By: Dan Woog\*

Bren Ahearn is very crafty.

Growing up in New Jersey, Ahearn now 45 spent hours pursuing sand art, decoupage and the like with his craft-loving mother. Yet as he grew older he believed that to fit in with peers,

he had to be in the closet about crafting (and other things). Eventually, his creative activities ceased.

From age 8 to 17, Ahearn swam competitively. He played soccer until early adolescence, then ran high school cross-country for two years. His blue-collar, middle class, early 1980s environment and Catholic upbringing made it difficult to come out as gay. So, he says, "I felt disconnected from both my teammates and the gay community that was presented to me through the lens of mass media. And that image wasn't very flattering."

Ahearn learned early that rigid adherence to gender roles is "a violent tool employed by society to keep girls and boys in line." In first grade, he realized he was not supposed

to bring his flowered lunchbox to school. In gym class, he was bullied for his less-than-masculine athleticism.

In 1996, Ahearn signed up for a textiles class, reawakening his dormant artistic side. He flourished – and felt free to reach beyond gender lines. When he entered grad school, he decided to focus on traditionally feminine textile crafts as "a way to make a commentary about gender." In his first semester he created a floral pattern. The flowers' centers were baseballs; the petals, footballs.

That year, flipping through channels on TV, he discovered cage fighting (mixed martial arts). Ahearn was intrigued to find some of the fighters – "nearly nude men with hot bodies" – caught in compromising sexual positions. He took screen shots of the images, and machine-stitched outlines of them on Bristol board.

A friend told a mixed martial practitioner about Ahearn's work. The fighter responded: "Sometimes it just feels good to punch someone in the face." That was a telling remark. "He responded to a comment about the homoeroticism of fighting with a violent comment," Ahearn says.

He recently began work on his thesis. It explores the art of men like Paul Cadmus (who painted "YMCA Locker Room" in 1933) and Eugene Frederik Jansson, who painted numerous bathhouse and pool scenes in the early 20th century. In a self-portrait bathhouse scene, Jansson depicted himself as a dandy in

a suit – the only fully clothed person in front of nude bathers.

That convinced Ahearn that "sometimes gender roles are performed with ambivalence." For instance, he says, "one of my straight friends said that he felt pressured to go into sports. He didn't even really like them."

Ahearn has been humbled to learn that his own biases needed reworking. Four years ago, he followed his husband Doug from the San Francisco Bay Area to Sacramento when he was promoted.

"The political environment is quite different here. The socioeconomic demographics are similar to the area in which I grew up," Ahearn notes. He was surprised that people in Sacramento were "nice – not like the demons I remember from my youth in a similar area." He asked himself how many of his youthful terrors "were in my own head."

A decade after he first found cage fighters, Ahearn began revisiting his work. "There's something fun, so subversive, about seeing them immortalized in sexual positions," he says. "I did a series of 16 of these two years ago. The response has been so supportive, from both the LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ communities."

He continues to seek out gender-non-conforming areas for inspiration. Last year, he began a series of cross-stitch samplers. "They were created centuries ago as a way to teach little girls the ABCs, and show that they were proper marriage material," Ahearn explains. "I've tried to incorporate lessons I've learned

about performing my gender into my own samplers."

For instance, he stitched: "When I refuse to fight, I am called a pussy." He also stitched a wedding sampler, with an image of Doug and himself at the Sacramento Pride Parade with a "Sodomy is Sin" sign behind them.

While looking ahead to a show in April, Ahearn is continuing with large-scale cage fighters. At a recent flea market he found a gun-parts catalog. He is integrating that into a quilt.

"Stitching and crafts are my life," Ahearn says. "There's something so wonderful about making something in this increasingly digital world. The trick is to have fun and be lighthearted as I deliver my message. People seem more willing to reflect on serious topics like homophobia and gender roles if the message is delivered in a non-threatening way. I hope that when they see my work, viewers will engage in a dialogue about the confining nature of behavioral norms."

That's a crafty way to deliver a very important message.

Bren Ahearn's Web site is [www.brenahearn.com](http://www.brenahearn.com). His e-mail address is [brenahearn@sbc-global.net](mailto:brenahearn@sbc-global.net)

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

## Event of the town



From L-R are Imperial Crown Prince Michael LaValley, David N. Cicilline, Mayor of Providence, RI, Imperial Crown Princess Jacqueline DiMera, Imperial Crown Prince "Big Daddy" Austen Daniels, Karen Adams, WPRI 12 Anchorwoman, Imperial Crown Prince Justinus Phoenix.




The Garden Room of the Historic Biltmore Hotel in Providence, RI was transformed into "The Imperial Cabaret" for the backdrop of the Imperial Crown Prince & Princess Ball presented by the Imperial Court of Rhode Island at Providence. The event was hosted by Their Most Imperial and Sovereign Highnesses Imperial Crown Princes Austen Daniels, Michael LaValley, Justinus Phoenix and Imperial Crown Princess Jacqueline DiMera (former Miss Gay Rhode Island 2008). The charity ball featured performers and guests spanning all over the United States and Canada from places such as, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Buffalo, New York, Massachusetts and St. Catharines, Ontario. The attendees gathered together in their glitz and glam all to raise money for the Matthew Shepard Foundation and Rhode Island Pride.



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