

The Rainbow Times

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www.therainbowtimesmass.com

Your LGBT News Connection in Western Massachusetts



TRT Queer Justice's Atty. Jennifer Dexter discusses adoption issues faced by same-sex couples and how to cope with the law, asked from TRT readers. Send her your questions!

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LGBT Homelessness: Part II of III in Western Massachusetts. Greenfield's DIAL/SELF Teen Services offer hope to the homelessness epidemic of LGBT youth in the region.

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TRT's LGBT Health Doctor Renee Lang talks about taking care of your heart, even after Valentine's, literally and seriously. Follow her tips for heart health.

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HRC Corporate Equality Index: The companies with the worst scores and the ones that follow them. It is worth it to take a look at these scores and judge by yourself!

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TRT Just Tech's Jason Turcotte on the browser wars. Is Internet Explorer better than Firefox, Safari and what about others? Find out what Turcotte has to say about this hot topic!

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The Women's Fund Gala Event: 'For the Love of Women,' nothing better

By: NICOLE LASHOMB
TRT Editor-in-Chief

NORTHAMPTON—On February 10, 2007, the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts kicked off its 10th annual gala celebration at the Hotel Northampton in downtown Northampton, Mass. This year's gala, For the Love of Women, was filled with women, celebrating women, their contributions to society, and their contribution to each other.

"November 1st marks the 10th year Anniversary of the gala celebration,"



Carolyn Schreiner, from Cape Cod, enjoys the wonderful food served at the Women's Fund Gala, For the Love of Women, celebrated at the Hotel Northampton. Photo: TRT

said Suzanne Slater, Co-president of the Board of the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts. "We are going to announce that we would've given away \$1 million by then."

According to the Women's Fund, the organization raises money to build long-term financial resources for women and girls, build women's programs through grant-making and technical assistance, promote

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Meeting promotes transgender civil rights

By: LINDSAY HURTEAU
TRT Reporter

Northampton, MA—On Saturday, Feb. 10, a community meeting was held in Northampton to discuss transgender civil rights. The meeting was run by the Boston based Mass. Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC), a group of volunteers who maintain chapters in Worcester, Boston and the North Shore, and who have helped to pass non-discrimination ordinances in Boston and Northampton.

MTPC hopes to revitalize a Western Mass. chapter group.

"Saturday's meeting was

tion," said Laura Langley, MTPC legislative committee member.

According to Langley,

"... There's hatred right on Main Street, there are people losing jobs on Main Street, not to mention the surrounding towns."

—Susan Geary

held to educate LGBT people and allies about the context of the legislation, to give tools to help in lobbying to state reps, and to educate friends, family members and others in the community about the importance of the legisla-

the legislation will clarify existing law and make clear that discrimination against transgender people is impermissible in Massachusetts. The legislation will prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, credit, pub-

lic accommodations and public education.

"We know that the community is ready, we believe that the commonwealth is ready—and we're excited to clarify that state law protects everyone, including transgender people," said Langley, who also chairs the Committee on Transgender Inclusion for the Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Bar Association, MLGBA.

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Street Sense: Do you think same-sex marriage will be overturned in Massachusetts and why?

"It is difficult to predict, Massachusetts is a very liberal state, especially on social issues. However, there is a Puritan influence, and the churches have a strong presence in this state. But I hope gay marriage stays as it is."

Jim Croft & Claire Johnson-Croft, South Hadley



"No, it won't be overturned because the state legislature will go to any lengths to prevent a binding ballot question—which is probably the right thing to do in this case. When it comes to issues of civil rights, democracy shouldn't always come first."

Edward Ryan
Greenfield



"I think if there was more of an imminent threat, more people would be going out and protesting against it. I also think that a lot of straight people think it is ridiculous that if [the law] is being questioned because of the high gay population in Mass. I don't think it will be overturned."

Gina Gaetz
Northampton



EDITORIALS

Love, rights and the rest of it

By: J.M. SORRELL (AKA JM THE JP) TRT Columnist

When the publisher asked if I wanted to be a regular columnist for this regional LGBT publication, my response ran somewhere along the lines of incredulity and joy. As I am known to do, my thoughts were verbally expressed before I could stop, and I exclaimed, "Do you mean that I would have a legitimate forum for my big mouth and my opinions?"

This is the dream I have

been waiting for—one-way expression with responses that are lapsed and, to a large degree, anonymous. Wow. As a writer, I can have such relationships with hundreds of people who will laugh, critique and wonder how Grisel and Nicole could have been so desperate.

After just two paragraphs, I now have the attention of dozens of therapists who are positing theories about the origin of my self-deprecation and what appears to be an

avoidance of relationship.

I'd like to thank you for your concern and also let you know that unless you can barter therapy sessions for tennis lessons, I will not be your client. My health care coverage exists (gratitude), but is extremely limited for mental health services (capitalist pig insurance companies, don't they know I have anger issues?).

By the way, my name is J.M. Sorrell. I am a lesbian and a Justice of the Peace.

See JP from Page 11

Letter to the Editor: Homeless article right on target

Congratulations on launching The Rainbow Times! It should meet some very real needs in our community.

Your article on homeless LGBT youth is on target. Most shelters in our area do not accept individuals under 18. There is one program in Franklin County which serves youth ages 11-22: Dial/Self. Director David Voegel encourages any young person, including LGBT, to call the Dial/Self TeenLine at 800-878-0698 and speak with Meredith Doster about services, which include an overnight teen warming center during cold months. Located in Greenfield, Dial/Self serves young people in Franklin and Hampshire Counties and the north Quabbin region.

In addition, individuals may call First Call for Help in Northampton at 413-582-4237 or 800-339-7779 for information and

referral on a wide range of services in Hampshire County.

Sincerely,

Beverly J. Weeks

Beverly,

Thank you for your words and enthusiasm for The Rainbow Times. We were happy to receive very good feedback for that story, and we are continuing our part II with the addition of the same shelter that you mentioned in your letter. It is letters from readers like yourself that make us feel that we are doing the right thing, right from the beginning. We are behind the concept of awareness, and will continue our quest to provide our Western Massachusetts community with the best news that affects our region.

—The Editor

The Angry Inch: Gay/Straight ... Does it really apply to transsexuals?

By: JANE HAMEL*
TRT Columnist

First things, first! I am a pre-op transgender woman who has been transitioning for several years. I am not an expert in transgender issues, but I believe I know more about it than the average person. I plan to inform/educate/share with people with this column, "The Angry Inch."

I decided to call it so because transitioning at my age has not been easy, and at times we get bitter after the constant struggle. With that said, I look forward to sharing more of my thoughts with you, to open up some people's eyes, to shock others, but most importantly to try to bring awareness to a cause that does not have many supporters or advocates, for that matter. I am the Angry Inch, and I will take you for a ride with my experiences, and those of close and dear friends, in future columns.

And by "transsexuals" I mean "me". In the sense that I can only truly speak from my own perspective, that of a middle-aged for-

mer "family man" who doesn't see being trans as "ooooo fabulous!" I try hard to keep up with the ever-growing list of labels, which try to "box" up anyone different as soon as we escape from the closet. My favorite is still Metro-sexual, which instantly summons the mental image of a platypus. So, reaching back to examine my own label/s, I see that the identity tag is quite clearly stamped "transsexual" with sub-headings of transgendered, M to F, No. 5 on the Harry Benjamin scale. On the reverse side, however, the ink is all blurry where orientation is marked.

Yes, I was happily married to a genetic woman while still living in denial as a man, and let me stress happy. Denial, for me, did not mean not knowing I was a woman in a man's body, but having the ability to live that lie. But, we're talking about orientation and living behind the curtain, so to speak. I was in a Lesbian relationship and loving it. So ... was I gay? I would have to say yes. But, there's



Jane Hamel

this, throughout my life I've had dreams and fantasies about sexual experiences with men, but only with the image of myself as female. Trying to envision myself as a man in those instances was a complete turn-off. Is that social conditioning? Quite possibly! The fifties were harsh on homosexuality. Then a curious thing happened about six months into hormone therapy. (I know, I skipped the part where my happy-in-denial life becomes a train wreck). Men became a whole lot cuter! I suppose this only makes sense. As I became more comfortable with my body morphing into womanhood, my early fantasies could become real. At the same time, my attraction to women, including my

now-alienated wife, was still there.

And the winner is? Bisexual? Crap! Another label! But, I didn't feel "Bi," even though it fit my attraction to both men and women. What I feel is that I am not a well defined man or woman, therefore how can labels applied to men and women be used to define me? This one issue, I believe, can link the division between orientation and identity that still keeps "Ts" apart from the "LGBs." We understand women loving women, men loving men and men and women loving either and both, but what about us "Fluids?" (Yes, I just made that up). A gender fluid, I like it! But, back to the matter, because of my social conditioning, or nurturing, I need to alter my body to fit my mind. I know that only I know that I'm female and it's not easy to convince a potential lover of that since because of my inability to afford the final operation, I still live with the "angry inch." I can't become a physically complete woman so as to be

labeled gay or straight which brings some enlightenment to my dislike of labels. When you're barred from the "club," you start to hate that club. Let's get beyond my own prejudice, what about a post-op transwoman who loves women. Is she a lesbian? And a trans-man who loves men,

is he gay? A trans-man loving a trans-woman ... help! Maybe self-labeling is the right answer. You are what you feel, but I would rather see no labels at all, and I'm still dateless.

* Jane Hamel teaches Bluegrass and Clawhammer banjo styles to beginners and advanced, old and young. She has been playing and teaching for more than thirty years.

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COVER STORIES

LGBT homeless youth: Help is on the way

By: GRICEL M. OCASIO
TRT Publisher

GREENFIELD, MA—While Western Massachusetts' homeless epidemic of LGBT youth members continues to climb and few shelters exist that cater to youth populations throughout the state, there is a place for youth to turn to in Western Massachusetts. According to a TRT special investigative report, this place is as close as Franklin county, and there youth can find that safety is not so far from home, after all.

DIAL/SELF, a community based, non-profit agency provides services and opportunities for Western Massachusetts youth since 1977.

"We operate several programs throughout the Franklin/Hampshire counties and North Quabbin region. Programs include the ACT Community Service center, YouthServe AmeriCorps, Communities in Schools pilot project at Greenfield Middle School, Night Owl Teen Warming Center, TeenLine Resource &

Referral and the Step Program," said Phil Ringwood, Sr. Dir. of Development & Special Projects, DIAL/SELF Teen Services, Greenfield, Mass. "We work with a number of youth every week and numbers vary depending on the program. We also work with youth who self identify as LGBT."

Although current programs are not tailored specifically for LGBT youth members, appropriate measures are taken by the facility to ensure that all members the youth population are taken care of with viable options, respect and cultural sensitivity.

"Our current programs are not specifically designed for LGBT youth, but provide referrals to programs that are geared towards that population. These include: Women in Action, Community Action Youth Programs and its Hampshire County equivalent," said Ringwood. "We are sensitive to the needs of this population and we have staff members who have

received LGBT Awareness training."

With limited local emergency shelters for youth to turn to, DIAL/SELF Teen Services, in partnership with the Youth Services Roundtable, has created the Night Owl Teen Warming Center, a safe place for young people to stay warm throughout the winter months. The warming center relies on a trained volunteer staff to continue its mission and emergency services to Western Massachusetts youth.

"All volunteers will be trained in Night Owl procedures and will attend basic youth work training," said Meredith Doster, TeenLine Director, Dial/Self, Greenfield, Mass.

In addition to the emergency shelter for teens, DIAL/SELF also offers a transitional living program which is designed to assist older teens and young adults with supported housing in moving

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"The bill has been co-sponsored by 21 representatives, and is being lead by Rep. Carl Sciortino of Medford/Summerville and Rep. Byron Rushing of Boston."

The gay and lesbian legal community is firmly behind the legislation, and is reaching out to attorneys throughout the commonwealth to gain their support and to educate them about the bill," she said. "MTPC's hope is that attorneys will help to lobby, as well as garner institutional support from other bar associations. It's important for lawyers to be familiar with the legislation and to understand that while the law already protects trans people, this modification is really important."

Brett-Genny Beemyn, a MTPC volunteer, is the director of the Stonewall Center at UMASS, an office that serves the needs of LGBT students and allies on the Amherst campus. Beemyn said the legislation would be a "huge help" to students and community members who would no longer "have to worry about facing discrimination without having any recourse."

"Most people don't recognize the fact that it is perfectly legal to fire someone from their job because they now present a gender that the employer may not expect them to present as—to have to



MTPC VOLUNTEERS (Left to right): Back row: Emily Metcalf, Sophia Lanza-Weil, Gunner Scott, Brett-Genny Beemyn. Front row: Shane Landrum and Spencer Hardy.
Photo by TRT's Lindsay Hurteau.

look stereotypically male, or stereotypically female," said Beemyn, who believes meetings like this are important in terms of raising people's awareness. "I think that there is a lot of ignorance in terms of the needs and experiences for transgender people. ...The focus has been on same sex marriage rights—which is important and good in itself, but it's not the only issue we face."

Susan Geary of Easthampton was the previous moderator of the original Western Mass. Chapter that helped to pass the Northampton ordinance in 2005. She said that she hopes that people from the community will come together to help rejuvenate the chapter.

"There's a lot of assumptions that because we're a rainbow community that 'everything's cool in

Northampton,'" she said. "But there's really a lot that we need to do. ...There's hatred right on Main Street, there are people losing jobs on Main Street, not to mention the surrounding towns."

For the past few years, MTPC has also been working on policy changes regarding RMV driver's license gender change requirements. Currently, a gender change requires a letter from a doctor stating an individual has had irreversible sex change surgery, evidence of a legal name change, and an updated birth certificate as well as a letter stating the change.

*For more information about MTPC, please visit their website at <http://masstpc.org> Or for information on joining the Western Massachusetts Chapter, please email susan_g_tg@hotmail.com.

Have you experienced discrimination?

The Human Rights Campaign is urging Congress to enact a federal law banning workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. To do that, we need to educate lawmakers, the media and the public about how this discrimination is hurting our community. And the best way to make our case is by putting a face to the policy — by telling the stories of real people who have suffered the effects of job discrimination.

For more information or to share your story! Go to: www.therainbowtimesmass.com and click on our Human Rights Campaign Logo

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LGBT HEALTH

Be Good to your Heart even after Valentine's Day

By: **DR. RENEE LANG***
TRT Health Columnist

The month of February brings a plethora of red and pink hearts symbolizing love and lust. The heart is the energetic seat of love and joy. Though the typical heart shape only vaguely resembles the anatomical heart, the abundance of hearts reminds us to focus on our own heart health. Our anatomical heart and our energetic heart relate to each other. Women who are in loving, positive relationships have fewer heart attacks. So remember this Valentine's Day, even after its celebration and be good to your heart!

Heart disease continues to be the number one killer of both men and women in this country. Heart disease includes multiple abnormal conditions that affect the heart and the vessels of the heart. Coronary artery disease (CAD), heart failure, and heart arrhythmias are some of the conditions classified as heart disease.

Cholesterol deposition along arterial walls causes CAD. Cholesterol attaches to the arteries when found in elevated concentrations in the blood and in the presence of inflammation. Inflammation is caused by stress, high blood pressure, sugar, coffee, and trans-fats.

CAD causes the majority

of heart disease. CAD, the narrowing and hardening of blood vessels, causes decreased blood supply and increased pressure through the vessels. CAD causes angina and the majority of heart attacks. Angina, chest pain due to a decreased supply of blood and nutrients to the heart itself, indicates a higher risk for heart attack.

A heart attack occurs when a part of the heart is deprived of blood and therefore oxygen for 20 or more minutes. Symptoms of heart attack include crushing squeezing pain in the chest, arm, neck, back or jaw, shortness of breath, and breaking out in a cold sweat.

Heart attacks can be fatal depending on which vessel is obstructed and the length of time before treatment. The heart facilitates the rhythmic distribution of oxygen through out the body, necessary for all cellular function. Without a beating heart the body does not survive. The best prognosis for survival of a heart attack relies on prompt treatment. Getting treatment within 1 hour greatly improves recovery and decreases long-term negative effects.

The risk factors for heart disease include obesity, smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, family or personal history of heart disease,



Dr. Renee Lang, ND

excessive alcohol intake, low physical activity, and age: men 45 years and older and women 55 years and older. These risk factors apply to everyone.

In addition, emotional risk factors such as stress, anger, worry, rage, hostility, distrust and unhealthy relationships increase risk of heart attack. Individuals with Type A personality characteristics, who feel impatient, are at a loss for time, or feel hostile, may also have increased risk of heart attack. Finally, HIV infection and certain HIV medications may increase risk for heart disease.

Male risk arises in part from higher levels of testosterone and without the protective effects of estrogen. Testosterone effects in the body include increased cholesterol and blood stickiness. These effects increase the tendency toward blood clotting. The use of oral and synthetic testosterone

amplifies these effects.

Estrogen and progesterone balance in women provides an innate protection against heart disease and heart attack. However, post-menopausally with the decline of both hormones, this protection diminishes and risk approaches male levels.

Alcohol and substance abuse continues to be a problem for many in the LGBT community. Cigarette smoking increases heart disease risk for everyone. Although low to moderate alcohol consumption (1-2 drinks for women, 2-3 drinks for men) may be protective of the heart, excessive consumption increases risk.

Special risk factors for transgender individuals exist. Synthetic hormones

do not function identically to natural hormones, nor to endogenous (meaning made by the body) hormones. The synthetic estrogens taken by MTF increase the risk of blood clots, weight gain, and emotional sensitivity. FTM have increased heart disease risk via blocking their natural estrogen production, increased cholesterol levels from testosterone, and emotional sensitivity.

The best protection against a heart attack is a yearly check-up with screening tests including blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes screening, weight, and exercise evaluation. A significant fear for transgender individuals lies in the expectation that their doctor will recommend discontinuing hor-

mones due to the elevated risk. Working with the suggestions below to decrease your risk, and honest communication with your physician, will help you enjoy a long and happy life.

To prevent heart disease

- Exercise: begin slowly if you have not exercised in a while. Walking is a great form of exercise or you can work with a trainer.
- Stop smoking
- Eat a diet high in fiber (30gm/day) including whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Lose weight: get on a healthy eating/weight loss regimen.
- Decrease or eliminate trans-fats (hydrogenated oils) and limit saturated fats in your diet.
- Limit alcohol and sugar intake.
- Limit coffee to 1-2 eight ounce cups per day.

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towards living independently.

"Our Transitional Living Program has incorporated a new level of aftercare and permanency coordination and is now called the 'Step Program,'" said Ringwood. "Youth may stay in the program up to 18 months, and the total program capacity is 14 youth at any one time."

Although Western Massachusetts's shelters are mostly for the homeless adult population, the region at least counts with the services Dial/Self. From this need, Dial/Self has developed this program to assist youth that would otherwise have very few viable options and resources available to them.

"There are no other open Transitional Living

Programs for youth in the area," explained Ringwood. "Other programs require court orders for youth to enter the programs."

According to The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force report, An Epidemic of Homelessness, Transitional Living Program grants are available to public and private nonprofit agencies, Indian tribes, and faith-based organizations and each organization is eligible to apply for a maximum grant of \$200,000.

Dial/self provides safe services to all youth members regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

"Young people of all sexual orientations and genders are welcome and supported in all DIAL/SELF programs," stated Ringwood.

DIAL/SELF's main administrative offices are located at 196 Federal Street in Greenfield. The Night Owl Teen Warming Center and The ACT Community Service Center are both located at 21 Abbott Street, Greenfield, Mass. Services such as evening drop-in hours (M-F, 5-8 p.m.), which will include dinner, access to local resources, assistance with homework and other needs are also provided. In addition, a new office will be opening shortly at 15 Main Street in Orange, Massachusetts, that will have drop-in hours and access to free clinical support.

For more information about services or to volunteer, please contact DIAL/SELF at 1-800-878-0698 or 413-774-7054.

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QUEER JUSTICE

Legal rights to partner's biological children: Are there any?

By: ATTORNEY JENNIFER L. DEXTER*
TRT COLUMNIST

Q. If my partner gives birth to a baby, do I need to adopt the baby to be considered the other parent?

A. The answer would depend on the legal status of your relationship. I'll first answer the question assuming you and your partner are not legally married. The easy answer to your question is yes.

Whether your partner gives birth to a child or you jointly decided to

adopt, process is governed by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 210 section 1-11A. The wording of the statute does not explicitly allow for the co-adoption of a child by same-sex couples; but on September 23, 1993 in Adoption of Tammy, 416 Mass 205, the Supreme Judicial Court upheld the entry of an adoption decree allowing the joint adoption of a child by her biological parent and her lesbian partner finding that the statute does not prohibit such adoptions either. Typically adoption calls



for the termination of parental rights by one or both of the biological parents. Under the co-adoption paradigm, you and your partner would become co-parents and no one would lose parental rights.

Now if you and your partner were legally married in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts the story may differ a bit. Under Massachusetts of General Laws Chapter 209c section 6 when a child is born during a marriage there is a presumption of paternity to the husband. Under Constitutional Law, a statute must be applied evenly to all citizens or it is unconstitutional. To my knowledge, in the eyes of the Courts this issue has

yet to be decided. The statute states in part, "(a) In all actions under this chapter a man is presumed to be the father of a child ... (1) he is or has been married to the mother and the child was born during the marriage..." We all know that in a same sex female couple the other parent is not a man. But the argument can be made that the same presumption arises under a same sex marriage.

**Attorney Jennifer L. Dexter earned a B.A. in Psychology from The University of Central Florida. She moved to Massachusetts to attend law school at The Western New England College of Law in Springfield, Mass. She is a member of the Massachusetts Bar and has a Solo General Practice in the Pioneer Valley Area.*

The information contained herein is intended for educational purposes only and does not represent legal advice. Should you need legal advice, please contact an attorney.

Workplace Fairness for LGBT Employees & HIV Employees

Dallas, TX—Lambda Legal unveiled its plans for 'Clock In For Equality'—a national day of action for workplace fairness for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender workers, and workers living with HIV.

"Of the over 5,000 calls our national help desk hotline received last year, the rights of LGBT employees was far and away the most common concern raised by our callers," said Kevin Cathcart, Executive Director of Lambda Legal. "Clock In For Equality" is Lambda Legal's response to a very real need our community has identified: creating and maintaining discrimination-free workplaces for all employees."

Even though the latest Gallup Poll from May

2006 shows that 89% of Americans believe that discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation is wrong, there is still no federal law that forbids it and a majority of the states still lack laws to protect against such discrimination.

On Tuesday, May 15, 2007 workers from coast-to-coast will participate in activities that aim to advance basic nondiscrimination measures to rid the workplace of discrimination so all employees can be free to do their jobs. Lambda Legal is working with local groups nationwide to plan simultaneous activities including advocating for nondiscrimination policies to protect LGBT workers and workers living with HIV, sup-

porting a bill or local ordinance that will protect all LGBT workers and workers with HIV from workplace discrimination, and holding educational forums on harassment-free workplaces.

Lambda Legal is partnering with local groups as diverse as farm workers to Ernst & Young's and Levi Strauss & Company's LGBT employee associations in cities across the country to produce events and forums aimed at making the work environment places where all employees have the opportunity to do their jobs free of harassment.

For more information about "Clock In for Equality" please visit www.lambdalegal.org/clockin.

Not as friendly as you thought!

The 2006 Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index, A Report Card on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Equality in Corporate America, reports scores based on companies' answers to a variety of LGBT issues. The criteria used to measure their HRC Corporate Equality Index include the companies' answers on domestic partner benefits beyond health insurance, such as retirement benefits, leave policies and other perks, and supportive guidelines and wellness benefits for transgender employees.

TRT's investigation shows that there are well-known companies whose scores are not up to par. In an effort to share this knowledge, TRT has listed some of the companies with the worst (lowest) HRC Equality Index scores. The following companies are not as LGBT friendly as many may think they are. The lower the number, the worse the company is when it comes to LGBT rights/benefits/wellness.

From all of the companies



listed, only two made it to a zero score. The winners are: **Exxon Mobile Corp., and**

Meijer. It makes the local shops look better and better. For more information online visit the following: http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Get_Information&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=33909

Airlines: Northwest Airlines Corp., **65**
J. C. Penney Company Inc., 50
Fashion Dept. Stores: REEBOK International, Canton MA **68**
Donna Karan New York NY 45
Automotive: NISSAN North America, **15**
Chemicals & Biotech: Praxair Inc. Danbury CT **25**
Comp. Hardware & Office Equip.: Gateway Inc. Irvine CA **508 65**
Consulting Busines: Gallup Organization Washington DC **30**
Entertainment: Blockbuster Inc., **60**
Food: H. J. Heinz Co., **15**
KELLOGG Co., 50
DOMINO'S PIZZA INC., 45
High Tech/Photo: Nokia, **50**
Emerson Electric Co., 45
Hotels: Marriott International, **75**
Host Hotels & Resorts, 45
Insurance Co.: American International Group Inc., **30**
Law Firms: Fish & Richardson Boston MA, **75**
Howard & Howard Attorneys,

48
Mail & Freight Delivery: FedEx Corp., **55**
Manufacturing: Lauren Manufacturing Co., **5**
Oil & Gas: **Exxon Mobil Corp., 0**
Pharmaceuticals: Bayer Corp., **15**
Publishing & Printing: Dow Jones & Co. Inc., **30**
Retail & Consumer Products: Wal-Mart Stores Inc., **65**
Procter & Gamble Co., 65
Amazon.com Inc., 65
Barnes & Noble, Inc., 60
AutoZone Inc., 25
Avon Products, 30
RadioShack Corp., 40
Toys 'R' Us Inc., 45
Circuit City Stores Inc., 55
Meijer, 0
Telecommunications: EarthLink Inc., **63**
Verio Inc., 50
ALLTEL Corp., 30
Transportation/Travel: Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., **55**
APL Limited 30

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Q ENTERTAINMENT

We laughed him out of town!

By: NICOLE LASHOMB
TRT Editor-in-Chief

A notorious drag queen's show scheduled to perform at Hartford's the Chez Est nightclub bar was canceled due to the fast action and efforts of local community protestors.

The "Shirley Q. Liquor" performance by Chuck Knipp, a White man from Kentucky, has received mixed reviews and protests across the nation for his characterization of a Black Southern woman, on welfare, who is an alcoholic with 19 kids. According to one of the protestors, such a performance displayed stereotypical "Black" behavior.

"I was upset that Shirley Q. Liquor was booked to come to Hartford and thought that we should hold an alternative event; the idea being that we would offer a positive alternative rather than just demand that the show be canceled," said Kamora Herrington, Mentoring Program Coordinator, True Colors Inc., Hartford, CT.

With the True Colors' valiant efforts and the help of supporting organizations such as The Connecticut State Conference of NAACP, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, PFLAG

Hartford, The Hartford Commission on LGBT Issues, Queers Without Borders, CT State Representative Michael Lawlor, CT State Senator Andrew J. McDonald, Love Makes a Family, Women's Caucus, UCONN School of Social Work, Women and Gender Resource Center, Trinity College, The Black Law Students Association, and UCONN School of Law, amongst others, the Chez Est finally announced its cancellation of "Blackface, Shirley Q. Liquor."

To offset the attendance at the Shirley Q. Liquor performance, True Colors Inc., a social service agency that serves sexual minority youth, offered an

alternative event to the "deprecating" Shirley Q. performance. The agency announced an alternative performance by Karen Williams, a nationally known African American lesbian comedian. The free show will take place the same night that Shirley Q's scheduled performance was to take place.

"Our aims were to convince the Chez Est to cancel and to promote Karen Williams instead," said Herrington.

"We're still bringing in Karen Williams on the 23rd and the show will still be free to the public," said Herrington. "When the show is over, I plan on going to the Chez to show my support. Our intent was

to keep the Chez a safe space for all of Hartford's LGBTIQQA community. In order to thank the owner for making the right decision, we are asking our supporters to thank the Chez in writing as well as by patronizing them."

TRT efforts to contact Chez's management for comments were in vain.

To honor Black History Month, True Colors's Karen Williams will be performing at Buckley High School, 300 Wethersfield Ave, Hartford, CT on February 23, 2007 at 8 p.m. This is a free event for the public. For more information call 860-649-7386, extension 203 or write to hartfordactionworks@gmail.com.



The Women's Fund Gala offered a grand prize raffle from Olivia Cruise lines, amongst other prizes. Photos: TRT

Gala from Page 1

empowerment and leadership in women and girls and educate women about money and philanthropy.

"We are a foundation. Our mission is to effect social change by philanthropy," said Carla Oleska, Executive Director, the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts. "We raise funds through grant making, strategic advocacy, and collaboration with other women and men's organizations."

This fund has been built by thousands of women locally and beyond, according to Oleska.

"We just don't give money," said Oleska. "We



CARLA OLESKA
Women's Fund
Executive Director (TRT Photo)
try to offer events, confer-

ences, and work funds for women and girl organizations. We build those relationships by linking arms across all different back-



Romantic dance and fun were part of the evening.

grounds to make positive changes to ultimately create an equitable society."

The night's festivities included dancing, mingling, hors d'oeuvres and succulent desserts. There were raffle drawings for 16 different gift bags and the grand prize raffle was an Olivia Cruise giveaway. Entertainment for the event was provided by Smith College a cappella group, "Groove" and the music of DJ Thonsey.

As the event came to an end and attendees began to trickle out, there was something unperceivable about this shared space. A powerful energy still filled the half empty room, an energy that came from women uniting for the same valiant cause.

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JUST TECH

Battle of the Browsers: An ever growing field

By: JASON TURCOTTE
TRT Technical Writer

The Internet web browser arena is a lot like the automotive field. Are you a Chevy or Ford person? Toyota or Nissan? What about your web browser... Internet Explorer or Firefox?

The majority of people that browse the Internet use Microsoft's Internet Explorer, commonly referred to as IE. Depending on the report you read, Internet Explorer has a lock on 75-85% of the web browser market, meaning that for every 100 computers on the Internet, 75-80 of them are using Internet Explorer.

For years the Microsoft browser was like a locomotive, gaining momentum and basically flattening just about anything in

its path. There have always been other browsers to choose from, some of the most popular being the now almost unheard of Netscape Navigator, Apple's OS X browser called Safari, Opera and many others. For the purpose of this article, we are going to focus on the two major browsers for the Windows® operating system.

Something 'weird' started happening a few years ago. The percentage of people using Internet Explorer started to decrease. Suddenly people were asking "Have you tried that new browser, Firefox?" After years of dominance by Microsoft a new browser was starting to have a big impact. Firefox has steadily eaten into the browser market-



Jason Turcotte

place and month after month more and more people have switched to Firefox, either permanently or at least on a part-time basis.

You may ask yourself what is the big deal, what's the difference between the two big players, IE and Firefox? Until the recent release of Internet Explorer 7, Firefox (www.mozilla.org) was a much more secure browser, providing such safety

net features as not letting software be installed on your computer without permission from you.

Firefox also allows the browser to be enhanced by installing various extensions or plug-ins to increase the functionality of the browser. Examples of plug-ins could include one called Ad-Block. Ad-Block is an extension for Firefox that prevents the majority of ads on web pages from being displayed. There are literally hundreds of Firefox extensions to choose from.

Another advantage for Firefox is that it is a standards compliant browser. This is a great feature for people like me that design websites for a living. We can concentrate on creating standards compliant pages and not have to worry about peculiarities

of the browser's rendering engine, or the part of the software that actually displays, or renders, the page.

Internet Explorer has had a bad reputation lately, especially on the security front. Internet Explorer 6 has many known issues that make it much easier for a malicious website to gain access to your computer by installing software without your knowledge. Microsoft took a great step forward in combating that vulnerability when they introduced IE 7 in late 2006. Internet Explorer 7 includes new features like an anti-phishing filter to protect you from fraudulent websites, confirmations on whether you want to install software on your computer before it is actually installed, and a new 'Protected Mode' which

runs IE as a separate process on your computer and prevents other applications from accessing the browser without user permission.

Microsoft has also moved the browser towards being more standards compliant. While not quite as compliant as Firefox or some of the other browsers like Opera, it's a step in the right direction.

As a website developer, I use both browsers on a very regular basis, but most people will find one they like and stick with it. I encourage you to try both and see what you like! Let me know your favorite features of your browser at tech@therainbowtimes-mass.com!

Apple's amazingly small iPod Shuffle
Next "Just Tech" Story

Tax glitch causes confusion for Springfield retirees

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP)—Thousands of retired municipal employees face penalties from the Internal Revenue Service after the city discovered it has been making an accounting error for more than a decade.

Since 1993, the city has

calculated health insurance premiums for retired employees based on pretext dollars, Marilyn Montagna, Springfield's director of personnel, told The Republican of Springfield. Two weeks ago, the city learned the practice was illegal after it

hired a contractor to handle payroll services, she said.

The city will send notices to 3,000 former employees, alerting them that they may have to refile taxes for the past three years.

Montagna said the city



hopes the mistake will not result in tax penalties.

"We're working with the IRS to negotiate some

relief," she said. "We're in the early stages of discussion and we're trying to make this happen as soon

as possible, but we don't know how it will work out."

Former police Patrolman Robert W. Brown said many retired employees are outraged.

"(Retirees) live on small, menial incomes," he said. "With taxes going up and everything else going up, there's no room to spare."

This could be your same-sex marriage announcement

Jeffers Healy-Christopher Cook

Jeffers Healy and Christopher Cook were joined in a holy union ceremony at All Saints' Parish in Beverly Hills, Calif. The Rev. Jimmy Bartz, formerly associate rector of All Saints' Parish, presided at the ceremony. Their two children, ages 3 and 4, joined the ceremony.

Cook is a son of Dr. and Mrs. William Healy, Jr. and Mrs. William Healy, Sr. He graduated from the University of California and is the director of annual giving for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, better known as GLAAD. Healy is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Healy of Beaufort, S.C., formerly of Mt. Kisco, N.Y. He graduated from Dartmouth College and is a vice president at Citigroup providing corporate and investment banking services for Mexican companies. They live in Los Angeles and also have a home in Durango, Colo.



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PRIDEENVIRONMENT: EARTH TALK

Global warming and “urban heat islands,” what are they?

Dear EarthTalk: What is an “urban heat island” and does it have anything to do with global warming?

—Max, via e-mail

An urban heat island is a metropolitan area that is significantly warmer than its surrounding rural areas. Unlike global warming, which entails a worldwide rise in temperatures, heat islands occur at the local level. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), many cities and suburbs have air temperatures up to 10 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than their neighboring areas.

Heat islands form as cities replace their natural land cover with pavement, buildings and other infrastructure. These changes contribute to higher urban temperatures in a number of ways. For one, displacing trees and removing soil and vegetation takes away the natural cooling effects that shading and water evaporation from soil and leaves ordinarily provide. Meanwhile, tall buildings and narrow streets can heat the air trapped between them and reduce airflow. And waste heat from vehicles, factories and air conditioners adds warmth to the surroundings, further exacerbating the heat island effect.

The intensity of a heat island will also depend upon its topography, its proximity to water bodies, and local weather and climate. Urban heat islands can also impact local weather, altering local wind patterns, spurring the development of clouds and fog, increasing the number of lightning strikes, and

influencing the rates of precipitation.

And although urban heat islands are distinctly different from the phenomenon of climate change, during the summer months they can contribute to global warming. The increased use of air conditioning and refrigeration needed to cool indoor spaces in a heat-island city, for example, results in the release of more of the heat-trapping greenhouse gases that cause global warming. Furthermore, the poor air quality that results from this increased energy usage can affect our health, aggravating asthma and promoting other respiratory illnesses.

Costs are impacted, too. The Heat Island Group, a research and advocacy organization that works to educate the public and policy makers about the heat island effect, estimates that the city of Los Angeles spends about \$100 million per year in extra energy costs to offset its heat island effect.

The heat island effect can be reduced through the use of white and light-colored construction materials (including white roofing materials) in buildings, which will work to reflect the sun's heat skyward rather than absorb it, as dark surfaces tend to do. Also, preserving or creating pockets of green space and vegetation help to cool areas naturally. A national program called Cool Communities, coordinated by American Forests and supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, encourages building owners and local policy makers to adopt just such practices. Another useful prac-



Heat islands form as cities replace their natural land cover with pavement, buildings and other infrastructure. Preserving or creating pockets of green space and vegetation can help beat the heat naturally.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

tice is the creation of “green roofs” or rooftop gardens, in which roofs are partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil, or a growing medium, planted over a waterproofing layer.

CONTACTS: EPA Heat

Island Effect Information, www.epa.gov/heatislands; Heat Island Group, eetd.lbl.gov/HeatIsland; American Forests, www.americanforests.org. Got an environmental question? Send it to: EarthTalk, c/o E/The

Environmental Magazine, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; submit it at: www.emagazine.com/earthtalk/thisweek/, or e-mail:

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PARENTING, CEREMONIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mexican lawmakers file legal challenge to same-sex union law

By: JUAN MONTANO

Associated Press Writer

PIEDRAS NEGRAS, Mexico (AP)—State legislators from President

Felipe Calderon's conservative National Action Party have asked Mexico's highest court to overturn a same-sex civil union law

in the northern state of Coahuila.

Francisco Cortes, one of the Coahuila lawmakers, said Saturday that the legal



istrar's office.

In November, Mexico City—which as a semi-independent capital zone has some of the same powers as states—passed a similar measure, the first in the nation's history. The law takes effect in mid-March.

While homosexuality is still taboo in many rural parts of Latin America, some of the region's urban areas are becoming more tolerant of gays. Mexico City and Coahuila join the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires and the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul in legalizing same-sex civil unions.

At the national level, lawmakers in Costa Rica and Colombia have debated, but not passed, similar measures.

challenge filed with the Supreme Court argues that the law—which grants registered same-sex partners rights similar to those of married couples—violates a constitutional clause protecting the family.

Article 4 of Mexico's Constitution covers the rights of spouses, children and the family, and states that "men and women are equal before the law. This will protect the organization and development of the family."

"By common sense, we all know that a family is integrated by a man and a woman with the objective of perpetuating the species," Cortes said.

The law was approved by Coahuila last month and on Jan. 31, a lesbian couple in the state registered what officials called Mexico's first "civil solidarity union."

Television footage showed the couple smiling broadly and shaking hands with officials after the simple ceremony at a reg-

TRT Calendar

Mature Lesbian Support

Group; Group for women 55+ meets monthly at the Northampton Council on Aging at 240 Main St., at 6 p.m., the second Monday of each month. For more information contact Jennifer Higgins at 413-587-1226.

DISCUSSION GROUP FOR

LESBIANS 40+ meets every Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Stonewall Center at UMass. Each week, we discuss a topic chosen by group consensus the previous week. Past topics have included: Lesbian Feminism

and Queer Theory, Gay Marriage, Lesbians in Film, Metrosexuality. This is a warm and welcoming group of intelligent women. Come join us. For further information simply send an email to: JBGGreenize@aol.com

Queer Carnivale

(Mardi Gras/ midwinter 'blahs' break theme dance), Friday Feb 23, 2007 9pm-1am, at the Quality Inn on Rt. 5 n (Putney Rd.) in Brattleboro VT, Music by DJ Thonsey; admission \$5. Discounted rooms are available. For more info contact (802) 254-4444. Sponsored

by The Queer Community Project, The Mens' Project and Active Lesbians of the Monadnock Area (ALMA).

Contradance for Western Mass.: For the GLBT community, friends & allies, No partner or experience required. Feb. 24; Caller Tim Van Egmond, music by Brendan Taaffe & Roger Kahle to be held at The Montague Grange, 34 Main Street, Montague, MA, from 7-10 p.m.; cost is \$7-\$10 sliding scale; \$5 with student ID. Info. at 413.247.9604 or: <http://www.lcfd.org/westma>

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*Certain restrictions apply. Small for-profit events/groups, 35 words or less, are considered for a small fee. Large/for-profit events are not considered. All submissions appear online.

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BRIEFS & POLITICS

District pulls video showing same-sex couples from curriculum

EVESHAM, N.J. (AP)—A video showing same-sex parents that was used as part of the third-grade curriculum in this Burlington County town has been pulled after parents protested.

School officials decided to stop using the documentary titled "That's a Family" while a committee decides whether to use the video in future classes.

The video, produced by a San Francisco-based non-profit organization called Women's Educational Media, shows children discussing the different types of families they come from including homes led by single parents, adoptive parents and same-sex couples.

The documentary was only shown once at an elementary school before it raised concerns among many parents.

The district plans to have a committee made up of parents, teachers and administrators review the documentary and advise whether it should be used in the future.

Schools ask court to dismiss suit

By The Associated Press

BOSTON (AP)—Officials from a suburban school district asked a federal judge recently to dismiss a lawsuit filed by two couples who claim their parental rights were violated when homosexuality was discussed in their children's classrooms.

U.S. District Judge Mark Wolf did not immediately issue a decision in the case,

but peppered lawyers on both sides with questions and said he understood the importance of the case to both parents and school administrators.

Tonia and David Parker sued after their 5-year-old son brought home a book from kindergarten that depicted a gay family.

Another Lexington couple, Joseph and Robin Wirthlin, joined the Parkers in the suit after a second-grade teacher read "King and King" to her class. The fairy tale tells the story of two princes falling in love.

Both couples claim Lexington school officials violated their parental rights to teach their own morals to their children.

The case has attracted a great deal of attention in Massachusetts, the only U.S. state that allows same-sex marriage.

John Davis, an attorney for Lexington school officials, argued in court Wednesday that teaching diversity is a "legitimate state interest." He said that it would be "an administrative nightmare" for schools in Massachusetts to try to predict when the topic of gay marriage will come up and to inform parents ahead of time.

Italian government plans to grant couples legal recognition

ROME (AP)—Italy's center-left government is moving ahead with a divisive plan to grant unmarried couples, including same-sex



partners, legal recognition amid heavy and repeated criticism from the Roman Catholic Church.

Some of the government's top ministers met informally recently to discuss a draft proposal, which all of the Cabinet could be asked to approve soon.

The issue is a touchy one in Italy, an overwhelmingly Catholic nation that is still influenced by church positions.

The daily newspaper of the Italian Bishops Conference, *Avvenire*, condemned the plan in a front-page editorial titled "non possumus," which is Latin for, "we cannot."

Pope Benedict XVI also has called same-sex unions anarchic "pseudo-matrimony," and campaigns to protect traditional families.

Colombian court gives gay couples rights

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)—Colombia's top court ruled that gay couples in long-term relationships should have the same rights to shared assets as heterosexual couples, marking the first recognition of gay couples' rights in this South American nation.

The Constitutional Court ruled recently that if a gay couple of two years separates, the assets accumulated during the relationship will be divided between the two, and in the case of death, the survivor will receive all the assets.

While homosexuals cele-

brated the ruling, activists said they would continue fighting for parity with heterosexual couples, including the right to social security payments of the partner and protection under domestic violence laws.

Homosexuals in Colombia continue to face a number of threats in this traditional country, where the Roman Catholic church is by far and away the largest religious denomination, from casual homophobia to murder for their sexuality.

While homosexuality is still taboo in many rural parts of Latin America, the region's urban areas are becoming more socially liberal. Mexico City and the state of Coahuila recently joined the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires and the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande in legalizing same-sex civil unions.

Michigan ruling alarms advocates nationwide

By DAVID EGGERT/AP

LANSING, Mich. (AP)—A Michigan appeals court ruling that bans public universities and state and local governments from providing health insurance to partners of gay employees has alarmed gay rights advocates nationwide.

They fear the decision could encourage similar rulings in 17 other states whose bans on gay marriage could be interpreted to prohibit

domestic partner benefits for same-sex couples.

Michigan became the first state to rule that public employers cannot offer health benefits if the benefits are based on treating same-sex relationships similar to marriage.

In Alaska, the only other state to rule on the benefits given to same-sex partners of public employees, the courts ruled the other way, saying it was unconstitutional to deny them.

Dennis Patrick, a professor at Eastern Michigan University, worries that Michigan's ruling will strip his partner's health insurance.

The couple has adopted four foster children, one with a developmental disability, and Tom Patrick works part-time so he can care for them.

He is one of 21 plaintiffs who sued the state. They will appeal to the state Supreme Court.

Twenty-seven states have passed constitutional bans on gay marriage, mostly since 2004 in response to gay marriages being performed in Massachusetts. Eighteen of them, including Michigan, have broader amendments that also prohibit the recognition of civil unions or same-sex partnerships.

Conservatives, however, are lauding the decision and say the amendment's wording was clear. Other states

are examining the reach of their gay marriage bans.

JP from Page 2

Also, I am a want-to-be writer, a want-to-be comedian, a want-to-be spiritually-centered being with a calm core, a want-to-be wealthy philanthropist only saving for retirement but giving the rest away to various disenfranchised people, and (this is the biggest stretch) a want-to-be "strong, silent type" butch.

This column will cover issues of love, civil rights, controversy, and diversity. It will not be nearly as compelling as *Queer as Folk* and it will be as inconsistent as the writers of *The L-Word* (is it uppers or just organic A.D.D. that causes these people to try to combine Sex and the City, Sisters, Beverly Hills 90210, QAF, and lesbian movie plots that failed the first time?). If you are annoyed, just wait until I start writing real columns.

Stay tuned. I promise to make it local, relevant and thought-provoking.

** To those couples who have given me the honor of serving as your wedding officiant: My principle of ethics and sense of duty will prevent me from spilling the goods here (even if you are interesting beyond belief). OR you are leading the good provincial life that would put the readers to sleep and cause the publisher to desperately seek a new columnist.*

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SPORTS

Amaechi to come out publicly, three years after career ended

By BILL KONIGSBERG
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—English center John Amaechi became the first NBA player to publicly announce he's gay.

His admission comes three years after his playing career ended, making him the sixth professional male athlete from one of the four major U.S. sports—basketball, baseball, American football, ice hockey—to openly discuss his homosexuality.

Amaechi details his life in his autobiography "Man in the Middle," which was released on Feb. 14.

"He is coming out of the closet as a gay man," Amaechi's publicist Howard Bragman said.

Martina Navratilova, perhaps the most famous openly gay athlete in the

world, praised Amaechi's decision and said it's imperative for athletes to come out because of what she called an epidemic of suicides among young lesbians and gays.

"It's hugely important for the kids so they don't feel alone in the world. We're role models," she said. "He will definitely help a lot of kids growing up to feel better about themselves."

LeBron James, however, said he didn't think an openly gay person could survive in the league.

"With teammates you have to be trustworthy, and if you're gay and you're not admitting that you are, then you are not trustworthy," James said. "So that's like the No. 1 thing as teammates—we all trust each other. You've heard



John Amaechi

Photo by: hrc.com

of the in-room, locker room code. What happens in the locker room stays in there. It's a trust factor, honestly. A big trust factor."

Injured Philadelphia Sixers forward Shavlik Randolph acknowledged it's a new situation.

"As long as you don't bring your gayness on me I'm fine," Randolph said. "As far as business-wise,

I'm sure I could play with him. But I think it would create a little awkwardness in the locker room."

In his book, Amaechi describes the challenge of being gay in a league where it's assumed all players are heterosexual. He describes the blatant anti-gay language and attitudes he experienced in NBA locker rooms.

"We're all insensitive at times. There's no taboo subject in the locker room," said Celtics coach Doc Rivers, who coached Amaechi in Orlando, where he said he had one of his strongest locker rooms. "I think if he would have come out they would have got on him jokingly. ... And I actually think that when guys do come out, when that day happens, it will make it easier."

Amaechi also writes that while playing in Utah, coach Jerry Sloan used anti-gay innuendo to describe him. Sloan said

that although his relationship with Amaechi was "shaky" because of the player's attitude, he didn't know Amaechi was gay. Sloan had no comment about Amaechi's contention that Sloan used anti-gay innuendo when referring to him. Amaechi said he found out about it in e-mails from friends in the Jazz front office.

Asked if knowing Amaechi was gay would have mattered, Sloan said: "Oh yeah, it would have probably mattered. I don't know exactly, but I always have peoples' feelings at heart. People do what they want to do. I don't have a problem with that."

Former NFL running back David Kopay came out in 1977; offensive lineman Roy Simmons and defensive lineman Esera Tuaolo did so more recently. Glenn Burke, an outfielder for the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Oakland A's in the 1970s,

and Billy Bean, a utility player in the 1980s and 1990s, also have come out.

Each did so after retiring. Burke died of complications due to AIDS in 1995.

Amaechi, 36, played in 301 NBA games for four teams over five seasons. The 2.08-meter (6-foot-10) center averaged 6.2 points and 2.6 rebounds. He began his career with the Cleveland Cavaliers in 1995-96, then spent a few years playing in Europe. He rejoined the NBA to play for the Orlando Magic from 1999-01, then played two seasons for the Utah Jazz.

The Jazz traded him to Houston, which traded him to the New York Knicks. When the Knicks waived him in January 2004, he retired. He came out of retirement to help England win the silver medal in last year's Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia.

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