

Erie Gay Community Newsletter - Extra!

April/Spring 1993 Edition

AIDS Council Responds to Clients

by Greg Valiga

Anger and frustration were vented at a meeting March 10th at the AIDS Council of Erie County, Inc. between about 30 clients, volunteers, and the board of directors. The meeting was called in the wake of two case manager resignations and a growing rift between clients, the gay community, and the Council.

Major complaints centered around the use of monies earmarked for direct client services and the general lack of caring provided the HIV-affected community by the AIDS Council. Those in attendance made a strong case for a more client-oriented approach, with oftentimes emotional appeals to the board.

A long-time complaint of clients—obtaining emergency cash from the direct client service fund—resurfaced during the session. Some clients feel that it is too difficult to receive assistance, others feel it is distributed unevenly or not at all. A former case manager cited an incident in which a client was told “there is no money”; apparently this involved a miscommunication. This type of comment served only to provoke further negative criticism of the agency and staff. A director cautioned everyone involved to relate the actual acceptance or denial more accurately so clients don’t become even more disenchanted with the organization.

Craig Bennett, the executive director of the AIDS Council, explained that a primary function of the council is to refer clients to other agencies and their resources, thereby preserving very limited client monies for absolute emergencies. Even though this policy makes fiscal sense, access to the funds should be made easier—it will enable clients to cope financially and develop goodwill in the lesbian and gay community for easier fundraising. A temporary procedure for obtaining emergency funding was developed: clients are to

talk to their case manager, or, in the cases where the client involved may not be involved with case management, contact Jeff Schwenk at the AIDS Council. On April 19, a permanent procedure is to be completed.

The board of directors addressed another pressing issue of the clients—a sometimes uncaring environment at the Council. It was related that although there is a need to run any service organization like a business to remain viable, the board needs to respond to needs of the clients. Clients want to be better informed of events, cancellations, and even other client deaths. They want to be able to contact the

agency through an 800 line. They are willing and very capable, with proper training, of lending their support to get projects finished, such as the newsletter. In fact, case

managers stress that clients need to become involved to improve their quality of life and establish a sense of well-being.

The board of directors, on one hand, should be praised for both holding this meeting, and their compassionate commitment to solving client generated concerns. The board is heavily qualified in health care, financial, legal, grant writing, and leadership areas. A June 30 audit found

**Washington DC
APRIL 25, 1993**



**DON'T MISS
THIS ONE!**

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the Council accounting to be in compliance with accepted standards. After the much-needed reorganization last year, the Council is in a better position to expand services and programs, and, with the help of volunteers and clients, is poised to become a strong community-based AIDS Service Organization.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, a well-informed board of directors may not have needed this meeting to learn first-hand problems within its organization. The suggestions that board names be available to interested parties would encourage information exchange and change the public perception that the Board is somewhat out-of-touch.

Clients' concerns with the board of directors range from the lack of representation to justifying the salary of the executive director. How will the board attempt to address these concerns? First, by implementing the Program Committee and annual calendar of events to keep everyone aware of Council business. Contact Jackie Kocz or Jim Molczan for calendar information. Second, the board has agreed to a special meeting with clients to discuss and prioritize items of concern, and to pick a client and an alternate to fill the open position on the board. [**Ed. note:** *This will be happening in very early April. Contact Jeff at the AIDS Council for exact details. It is very important to attend this meeting if you are a client. Your voice should be heard!!!*] Third, documentation of a system for accessing direct client funds will be completed on April 19. Fourth, consideration of recurring meetings between the clients and members of the board.

I must stress that the board of directors has availed itself to discuss and interact with the HIV-affected community; now we, as a community, must respond. As difficult as it must be for alienated clients and volunteers to believe the change will come with their reinvolvement, they must understand that without their input and constant pressure, support for their ideas and needs may not materialize. A strong, focused client group, with the involvement of the minority communities most affected must be established and maintained for this purpose.

The troubles concerning the AIDS Council can be overcome, but must be dealt with openly, deliberately, compassionately, and calmly. For everyone even remotely interested—make it a priority to learn **first-hand** the business of the board of directors. Meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month at the Council offices. For clients wishing to improve the Council and develop a sense of empowerment, **attend** the meeting set up for the purpose of prioritizing concerns and electing a board candidate. Contact the AIDS Council for time and date.

It is imperative for the Erie area to set aside personality conflicts and power struggles when dealing with HIV. Many concerns which were raised by the staff, volunteers, and families were addressable; organizations around the country have dealt successfully with them. There is an urgent need to resolve our problems here; for we will have precious little energy left to battle AIDS if we must constantly scuffle with each other. ▼

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of *Erie Gay Community Newsletter* is to serve as a voice for lesbians, bisexuals, gay men and our friends & families in the Erie area. We wish this newsletter to be a source of information, support and affirmation. We also see *EGCN* as a vehicle for celebration of the goodness and diversity of the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. *EGCN* is a cooperative effort between lesbian/gay groups and individuals to help our community develop and thrive.

Subscriptions & Ad Rates

Wanna be sure to always get the latest and greatest in Erie's lesbian/gay community news every month? Have we got a deal for you! For just \$15 per year, we will mail you the quarterly expanded edition of *EGCN*, as well as the regular edition of the newsletter in the months that the supplement is not published. That's \$1.25 per month! How can you pass this up? Send your check for \$15, payable to *EGC Coalition*, to *EGCN*, PO Box 3063, Erie, PA 16508-3063. Call (814) 456-9833 for more information. The newsletter arrives discreetly in a security envelope with just our PO Box as the return address. We won't put your name on any other mailing list without your explicit consent.

Business and Sponsors! Show your support and reach Erie's lesbian/gay community directly! Advertising space is now available in the quarterly supplement for just \$20 for an eighth page ad, \$35 for a quarter page ad, and \$65 for a half page ad. Write the address above or call (814) 456-9833 for further details!

Editorial Policy

We will consider for publication any material which broadens our understanding of our lifestyles and each other. Views and opinions appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the staff nor those of the component groups.

We will not publish any material which promotes hatred or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, race, gender, religion, age, class, physical ability or any other reason. We do not support exploitation of minors.

All materials submitted must be signed so we can contact the authors should we need to consider editorial revisions. However, within the pages of the newsletter, articles may appear anonymously, upon request, and strict confidentiality will be observed. If you wish to have your full name published, you must send a written and signed note that gives you permission to do so. This publication will not "out" anyone.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit news for publication and to share your comments, criticisms, and positive feelings with us.

Materials should be sent to: *EGCN*; PO Box 3063; Erie, PA 16508-3063. Call (814) 456-9833 for more information.

Letters

Integrity

Integrity of NW/PA is Christian support group for gays & lesbians sponsored by the Episcopal Church, but all people and all ways of believing are welcomed. We of Integrity believe that it is vital to nourish that part of ourselves which is spiritual, however we may define that, on an individual and personal level.

I define spirituality as feeling, caring and loving, as compassion for others, as joy for living. For me, spirituality is of the heart, not of the head. I personally believe that many of us ignore that part of ourselves which is spiritual and by ignoring that part of ourselves we become less than we could be, less than human, less alive. I think we seek to fill the emptiness of a spiritual void with new, fast and quick relationships, alcohol and drug abuse, overwork, food.

We all must do the work of change ourselves but Integrity can help because the space is safe. Come and be with us and be with God, however you understand God.

In community,
Jacquelyn

"I Never Said Goodbye to Nat"

In May of 1988, three weeks after we brought him home from the hospital for the last time, my son, Nat, died from AIDS. After realizing I was having difficulty coming to terms with his death, I wrote a poem to him entitled "I Never Said Goodbye to Nat" which has now inspired me to compile a book with the same title.

We hope the book will be a beacon of comfort to the many people who have lost someone to AIDS and that it will put an end to AIDS discrimination & bigotry.

I am seeking submissions of poetry, letters, prose, etc written to or for those who have died from AIDS (or are HIV+) for this book. Profits will go to AIDS organizations. Please send submissions to:

Mary R Sanders
The Nat Foundation
PO Box 308
Briarcliff NY 10510

Snippety Bits

Donna Shalala

Donna Shalala, new secretary of Health & Human Services, has been "outed" by gay rights activists who assert that she is a lesbian. Shalala denies being a lesbian. Recently, the Book-of-the-Month Club and Quality Paperback Book Club featured a dust-jacket quote from Shalala praising lesbian classic *Rubyfruit Jungle*, written by Rita Mae Brown.

Spirituality Group Forming

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual people who are interested in forming a discussion group about earth-centered/alternative spirituality should call 455-9049.

Yet Another Newsletter...

The Men's Coffeehouse now has its own newsletter, currently called *The Dish Rag*. This friendly little publication keeps the guys informed on what's going on with each other. It's being distributed just about everywhere that you can find EGCN (and is edited by EGCN editor Michael Mahler, who admits to being a glutton for punishment and more than a bit loopy!) *The Dish Rag* was inspired by the always entertaining and community-building *Womynspace Newsletter*. Thanks! ▼

Bridges Fun!

Potluck/Open Discussion - May 15

Eat & Meet! You are warmly invited to the next Bridge's Potluck and Open Discussion on Saturday, May 15 at the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Erie (7180 New Perry Highway). Bring a dish (and a smile!) to share. We will be chowing down at 6:00 and starting to chat at 7:00. All people interested in building local lesbian/gay community are most heartily welcome! We will be scheduling these quarterly; the next will be on Saturday, August 21.

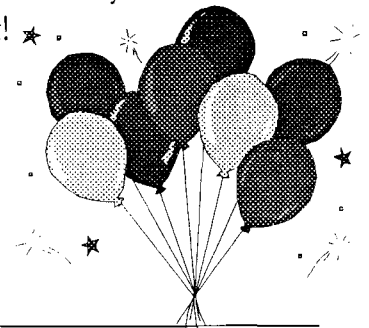
"Somewhere Over the Pride Rainbow" Dance - Jun 5

Yes! Another fabulous dance! Be there on Saturday, June 5th to help us celebrate National Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Pride Month! The cost will be \$5 (\$4 with a non-perishable food item for the AIDS Council of Erie County, Inc) and will run from 8 pm to 1 am.

Festival! - Sept 5th

Join us at the secluded Glinodo Conference Center for a day long festival of fun folks! Softball, swimming pool, volleyball, treasure hunt and more! Dance at 7 pm! Miss it not! ★

Bridges - Building Community!



Sex & Love & Warm Fuzzies

Sex & Love & Warm Fuzzies will be a regular feature of our quarterly edition.

In it we will talk to each other about sex, relationships, romance, and sensual pleasures.

Safer sex will be a major emphasis of this feature because of the times we're living in. We'll be featuring articles and interviews by real people from our area getting really specific about how they live a safer sex lifestyle. Recent research on safer sex education seems to indicate that friends talking to friends about safer sex is perhaps the most important factor in encouraging safer sex practices in a community. We hope that this feature will encourage our friends out there to talk with each other, and we also hope that this will provide important, life-saving information.

We expect to catch some flak about this. First, because these friends-talking-to-friends will often be explicit in their descriptions of what they do and say. Second, because local gay people have been using this newsletter as a bridge to heterosexual friends and family, and inclusion of such material may make some people feel uncomfortable about heterosexual people reading it. And third, because some of the people in these interviews and articles will be describing sexual lifestyles that involve more than one sexual partner, and some readers will think that such a lifestyle has nothing to do with safer sex.

So tell us what you think. Let's talk!

Safer Sex & Sensuality by Johnny

The following article is distilled from a taped interview with a gay man who lives in Erie.

People who know me know that safe sex is *the* thing with me. There's no other sex for me but safe sex.

That's where we're at in 1993. When we were in that bad blizzard, we wore warm coats, boots, and things like that. I don't like wearing that. I have the most fantastic summer wardrobe. But winter clothes are for wearing when it's cold out. Rubbers are for when the health climate is not nice either.

In 1993, we need not take risks that we aren't comfortable with. Safe sex is an inte-

gral part of society, not only with homosexuals but with heterosexuals as well.

We can't be sucking people's body fluids like they're draft beer. We can't get ridden bareback.

I'm being playful about all this, but you have to realize that this is not dress-up day. We're talking about your life. You have to burn that into your mind.

Yes, sex is wonderful, sex is great. Having sex with a hot body is one of the nicest things around. Right up there with frangelico creme coffee. But just like I don't put strychnine in my coffee, I don't want to take the risk of contracting a fatal disease with my sex.

♂

I've found so many different and exciting ways of having safe sex. And you don't always have to use a condom. There are so many things you can do with other parts of the body as well.

For me, the act of sex isn't only arriving to the point of ejaculation, but it's all the integral parts of intimate contact. Holding, touching, loving, foreplay, squeezing. And kissing! I'm a big kisser. I praise God every day when I see reports that say it's very unlikely that you transmit AIDS through kissing.

My present lover was in town for four days recently. We had some oral sex, but for the rest of the time we just got into hugging and holding and kissing. Call me a romantic, call me an old-fashioned guy, but *I LOVE HUGGING!* It's a scientific fact that hugging keeps you healthy, all these articles say it.

Body rubbing is really fun. "Come on me not in me" is standard practice for me. There's all different kinds of ways to do body rubbing. You just have to use your imagination a little bit.

Kissing all over is a great turn-on for me. My neck and ears are very erogenous, and they're quite far away from any mucus membranes, so I'm not worried about somebody sticking his tongue in my ear. I love when somebody sucks my neck. And armpits are incredibly erotic for me, as long as they're clean.

Just being naked with another body is so intimate for me.

I love showering together. Because it's good clean sex. You can really go ahead and explore the other person's body and it's in a clean way. And baths! What's sexy about baths and showers is the naked bodies, the erections, and the cleanliness of it all.

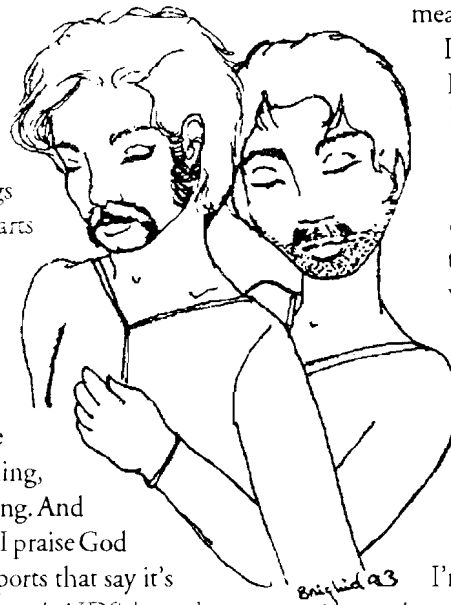
By the way, when I say "baths", I don't mean the gay steam baths.

I've never been to one. I'd like to, but I don't know if I'd partake in any of the activities there, because I've heard it's quite wild. I've heard these are big-time havens for germs in the bods. We don't need that. Why subject yourself to something you don't need?

I'm an aggressive type of guy, and when I'm with another aggressive type, that makes it even more fun. Aggressive sex is one of my favorite kinds of sex, with the holding and the wrestling.

And then there are times when I don't feel like wrestling. I'm tired, so then we'll curl up and wrap our bodies around each other and hold each other, and talk nice and intimately. And if we should feel that we need to reach climax, then we'll take that matter into our own hands. You know what I mean.

Our bodies are so incredibly enjoyable. There's no need to put anything in me that I don't need.



♂

Using condoms is no problem for me. I don't really lose that much sensation.

As for sucking on a condom...myself, I'm not that wild on the taste of someone's orgasm. I don't like salty things to begin with. So this is no big loss for me. The flavor of the condom doesn't really matter to me. I have used the ones flavored with mint, but I don't mind the taste of latex. Maybe I'm romantic, but what matters to me most when I'm doing that is bringing pleasure to my partner. Of course some condoms taste awful, like the ones with spermicide. You might want to avoid those for oral sex.

I always have condoms with me, so I'll be prepared.

Once I was at this gentleman's house, and he wanted me to give it to him, and I had no condoms. And he was so adorable! Anyway, I went out looking for condoms...a half hour later I ended up at a mini-mart buying these expensive condoms, which were no better than the ones stockpiled in my dresser drawer. After that escapade, I decided I better start carrying them. You have to think about these things and plan a little bit.

If you have no condoms, try some of the other ways of being intimate.

♂

Safe sex is just a topic of conversation with me in getting acquainted with someone. Like, if we're talking about sex and getting forward with each other, I will mention how much I enjoy sex. And then I'll just insert at that point that I have absolutely nothing but safe sex.

I do talk about sex before we get intimate. That's half the fun. Guys who don't want to talk about sex...those are the ones I get concerned about. If they're not open enough to talk about sex and safe sex, I get leery and wonder if there's something they're hiding.

If a guy doesn't want to do safe sex, I just say, "Sorry, I really want you in me, however, you have to wear a condom."

I'm usually on top in anal intercourse, so it's easier to introduce safe sex, because I'm the guy who needs to wear the condom.

I say, "Well, if you want it, you can have it, but it's going to be latex covered."

When I was in the situation where I didn't have any condoms on me and I wanted to have sex, I told the guy, "We can't have intercourse. We can hug and kiss but anything more would be a risk." I find that line to be a really good one that works. I'm not that big a risk-taker, especially when it comes to my life.

I have a couple buttons I wear sometimes. One says "Safer Sex". The other says "For my next trick I will need a volunteer and a condom." It starts people talking about it.

If a guy argues that he doesn't need to have safe sex because he's clean and tested negative, ask him for a couple tubes of blood and his testing records, and send him to the JP's office to get it notarized. But seriously, that's a line of bullshit...don't fall for it.

♂

Routine HIV testing is an important thing. I get tested regularly. It's just something I want to know about. I go to the Martin Luther King Center. A woman named Alicia does the work. She's wonderful. We've talked about safe sex and talked about the virus. She's fantastic, and she will talk to you.

♂

If you love having sex, practice safe sex, so you can have sex for a long, long, long time to come! ▼

25 Romantic Things to Do for Each Other

by J.M. Tigre & Jaybird

- ♥ Send flowers just because.
- ♥ Leave love notes on her pillow.
- ♥ Hold hands while watching TV.
- ♥ Snuggle—*just* snuggle.
- ♥ Take a walk on the beach.
- ♥ Look at the stars.
- ♥ Share your dreams and talk, *really* talk.
- ♥ Watch the sunset and the moonrise, or better yet, take a thermos of tea and a blanket and watch the sunrise.
- ♥ Light her cigarette.
- ♥ Slow dance in the living room.
- ♥ Make a candlelit dinner with all the trimmings.
- ♥ Send a Hallmark card (the mushy kind).
- ♥ Hug—a lot!
- ♥ Say I love you (often!)
- ♥ Have a candlelit bubblebath.
- ♥ Make her breakfast in bed.
- ♥ Give her a full-body massage, because she has had a hard day at work (even if you're tired, too).
- ♥ Look through family photo albums.
- ♥ Champagne—no explanation needed!
- ♥ Call in the middle of the day just to say "I'm thinking of you."
- ♥ Go on a picnic for two.
- ♥ Pick wildflowers for each other.
- ♥ Take a walk in the rain—no umbrella.
- ♥ Make a video "love letter."
- ♥ Go out on a date. A *real* date.



March on Washington Events

Many other events will be going on during the week of the March on Washington. Here are some of the highlights. Call the listed phone numbers for time and place. Call the Erie Area March on Washington Committee if you don't have the latest schedule (456-9833) or the National March office (202)628-0493. TDD (202)628-0471.

Wed. April 21

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (202)628-0493.

March on Washington Lobby Days (202)628-4160. Goes on Wed., Thurs., Fri.

Thursday April 22

AIDS Cure Now Demo—ACT UP (414)483-0376

Masquerade Ball (202)628-0493

People of Color Lobby Briefing (202)628-0493

National Minority AIDS Council Dinner (202)544-1076.

Holocaust Museum Candlelight Vigil (202)628-0493.

Friday April 23

Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International Banquet and reception (301)762-4828.

Hoedown! 93, A Country Western Extravaganza (202)298-0928

People of Color Conference (202)628-0493.

Lesbian Country Western Dance (301)840-8402

Drag show extravaganza (202)265-5891

Gay and Lesbian Elected Officials Gathering (206)684-5321

People with Disabilities Dance (408)929-7128.

BiNet-USA Annual Meeting (301)460-0810.

Saturday April 24

Lots of events for Asian and Pacific Islander lesbians and gay men on

Saturday! Lesbians meeting (301)589-4462. Gathering (301)345-1230.

Dinner and Social (301)345-1230.

Evening of Creative Reading by South Asian Lesbians contact Pittsburgh

LGLV's Susan YF Chen (412)422-0161.

Lesbian/Gay Bands of America Concert. 2nd Annual Bisexual Conference (301)460-0810..

Evening of Jewish Lesbian Entertainment. Follows Havdallah service. (617)983-5251.

A Dance to Benefit Lesbian Health Care (202)332-5536.

Time to Shine: A Day of Healing for PLWA's (415)255-8436

Lesbian Health Teach-In. (202)797-3585.

Soccer Tournament (202)965-1549.

Transgender National Meeting. (206)329-9474.

The Wedding—Interfaith Ceremony of Commitment (Mass wedding). Contact

Rev. Troy Perry (213)464-5100. Wedding Reception.

Youth Empowerment Speakout (YES) and Youth Dance (215)241-7133.

Sunday April 25

Opening Stage and Rally 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

The March - Noon

Main Stage & Rally - 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. NAMES Project Quilt Display (415)863-1966.

Wreath Laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (802)479-7934.

Monday April 26

Direct Action/Civil Disobedience (415)930-0616.

Open Planning for 1994 National Lesbian and Gay Labor Conference/ Pride at Work (617)462-0410 ext. 307.

Holocaust Museum Opens.

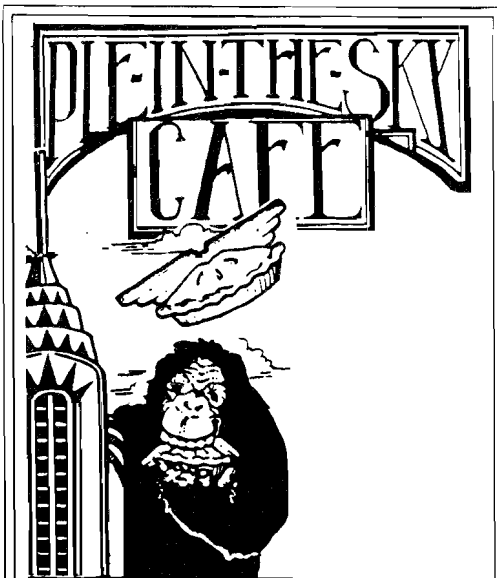
CONFERENCES AND ONGOING EVENTS

April 22-24—National Bear Gathering (206)329-1135.

April 23-25—Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf Conference (301)270-5484 V & TTY

April 23-25 Prejudice Reduction Workshops (202)785-9400.

April 24-25 Biblical Self-Defense Workshops. Sponsored by Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns. Register by April 9 (202)397-5585. ▼



Casual Fine Dining

463 W 8th St, Erie PA

459-8638

Breakfast Mon-Fri 7:30-11:00

Lunch Mon-Fri 11:30-2:00

Dinner Thur-Sat 5:30-9:00



INTEGRITY

A Christian-based spiritual and support group sponsored by the Episcopalian Church that welcomes people of all faiths.

Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at 7 pm at St. Paul's Cathedral, 133 W 6th St. Erie, PA

Our mailing address is: Integrity-NWPA, PO Box 1782, Erie, PA 16507-1782.

For more information, call (814) 455-0549

☞ = New Group/Event this issue

Events & Happenings

Important Note: Events listed here are specifically gay or of interest to a lot of lesbigay people. If you know of an event that should be listed here, please get the info to us by the 20th of the month. For out of town events, call a day or two before to confirm that it is still on; mistakes can occur and circumstances can change at the last moment.

- ☞ **Thru Apr 7—Safe Sex** In Buffalo, NY. 3 one-act plays written by Harvey Fierstein. Performed by Buffalo United Artists. Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday at * pm. ☎ (716) 832-7320
- ☞ **Apr 1—Paris is Burning** Film on Harlem's drag queen sub-culture. 7:00 & 9:30 pm, Edinboro U, Doucette Hall, Room G-9. Free & open to the public.
- ☞ **April 1 - Take Back the Night March** At Penn State-Behrend. A Rally, March & Reception to raise awareness about victims of sexual violence. 7:00 pm. March begins at Wilson Picnic Grove. 8:30 pm. Reception in Studio Theater. ☎ Theresa Sumner 899-2672, Box 1176 or Jacquie Wade, Reed 115, X-611
- ☞ **Apr 2-4—Gay Encounter for Men (GEM) Weekend** "To help gay/bisexual men grow from alienation toward reconciliation & celebration" \$58 inc room, board & materials ☎ (412) 362-2349 or ✉ PO Box 362 Pittsburgh, PA 15230
- ☞ **Apr 3—Gay/Lesbian Conference & Dance** Speakers 4-6:30, Pizza supper 6:30 - 8, Dance 8- 12 Midnight. Tickets: \$10 at the door, \$5 for dance only. Many groups from NE Ohio participating. Sponsored at HUGS East at East Shore UU Church, 8181 S Center Street, Mentor, OH. ☎ (216) 974-8909.
- ☞ **Apr 4—Erie Area March on Washington Meeting** Gearing up for April 25th. At AIDS Council at 2 pm
- ☞ **Apr 4—LGLV Meeting** Working on primary election, voter registration. At AIDS Council at 5 pm
- ☞ **Apr 6—10th Annual Community Passover Seder in Cleveland** Sponsored by Chevrei Tikva (Cleveland's gay & lesbian Jewish organization). At the Pewter Mug in Cedar Center, 7 pm. ☎ (216) 932-5551
- ☞ **Apr 7-8—Bent** at Kent State University, Kent OH. Production of the Broadway play centering around love between 2 men in a concentration camp during Nazi persecution of gays. Reservations advised. ☎ (216) 672-2497
- ☞ **Apr 8—HIV/AIDS Focus on Women** For health care professionals. 8 am to 4:15 pm at Churchill Valley Country Club, Penn Hills PA. ☎ 1-800-446-0354. CEU/CME credits available.
- ☞ **Apr 11—Integrity Meeting CANCELLED!!!!**
- ☞ **Apr 14—Coming Out to Your Children** HUGS East Parent Group, East Shore UU Church, 8181 S Center Street (Rt 615), Mentor OH
- ☞ **Apr 15-25—17th Cleveland International Film Festival** For the first time, this festival will

feature a special section of gay & lesbian films. For info or tickets, call 1-216-349-FILM.

- ☞ **Apr 16-May 9—Before It Hits Home: A Drama about a Community with AIDS** Buffalo NY. By Ujima Theater Company at 545 Elmwood Ave. Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays @ 8:00 pm, Sundays @ 6:00 pm. General admission \$14.00, Students & Seniors \$11.50 (Thursdays & Sundays only). ☎ (716) 883-0380
- ☞ **Apr 17—Lesbian Moms Group Italian Night** Spaghetti & meatballs. Bring a covered dish. ☎ (814) 452-4614
- ☞ **Apr 17—Building Relationships That Endure** 9:30-3:30. Communicate more effectively and resolve conflicts over power & control issues, jealousy, financial concerns, family demands, and sexual desire differences. South Shore Counseling. \$50/couple ☎ (814) 725-8504 or ✉ South Shore Counseling Group, 55 East Main Street, North East PA, Dale Allgeier, Facilitator
- ☞ **Apr 18—March on Washington Committee Meeting/Bon Voyage Party** Drawing for raffle, Bon Voyage Party. 2 pm at AIDS Council of Erie, 554 E 10th
- ☞ **Apr 19—Last Day to Register to Vote in Spring Primary**
- ☞ **Apr 20—AIDS Council of Erie Board Meeting** Open to public. At AIDS Council at 7:30 in the morning.
- ☞ **Apr 20—GALA-10 Meeting** Open to public. At Mercyhurst College at 8 pm
- ☞ **Apr 21—HIV & Lesbians** Open meeting at HUGS East in Mentor OH. 7:00 pm at East Shore UU Church, 8181 S Center St (Rt 615).
- ☞ **Apr 21—HIV Housing Town Meeting** Episcopal Cathedral of St Paul, 134 W 7th, 6:00 pm for those interested in housing for HIV-positive people. ☎ Deb at (814) 838-0123
- ☞ **Apr 23—Elton John in Concert** Richfield Coliseum, Richfield OH. Ticketmaster (216) 241-5555. Elton is turning over all profits to combat AIDS.
- ☞ **Apr 25—March on Washington** Don't Miss This One!!! See the article in this issue. ☎ Michael at (814) 456-9833 or ✉ Erie March on Washington Committee, PO Box 3063, Erie, PA 16508-3063.
- ☞ **Apr 25—Integrity Meeting/Evening Prayer & Fellowship** With Fr Joel Mason. At 7:00 pm at St Paul's Cathedral.
- ☞ **Apr 25—Elton John in Concert** Buffalo, NY. Tickets: Sold Out!
- ☞ **Apr 29—LGLV-Erie Roller Skating Party** From 7-10 pm. Skateway Roller Rink, 4646 Buffalo Road. We'll have the whole rink to ourselves; bring family, friends, kids, whatever! Admission: \$5, \$4 for students/low income, \$3 for kids under 12. Skate rental additional \$1. ☎ Michael at (814) 456-9833
- ☞ **May 2—Out & Proud Organizational Meeting** At AIDS Council of Erie at 2:00 pm. All

welcome! We need your input! ☎ Michael at (814) 456-9833

- ☞ **May 5—Coming Out Okay: Group Therapy for Those Who Have Recently Come Out** For 8 weeks on Wed 7-8:30 pm. Issues such as denial, fear, confusion, guilt, dating, safer sex, relationships dealt with as group determines. South Shore Counseling. \$20/eve ☎ Dale at (814) 725-8504
- ☞ **May 8—Ins & Outs of Safer Sex** Making safer sex hot, how to negotiate safer sex, etc. 12-3 pm. \$15 (sliding scale) South Shore Counseling. ☎ Dale at 725-8504
- ☞ **May 9—Integrity Meeting/Instructional Eucharist** At 7:00 pm at St Paul's Cathedral.
- ☞ **May 15—LGLV Pancake Breakfast** Postponed. **But look at next entry!**
- ☞ **May 15—Bridges Potluck/Discussion at Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Erie** Open to all! Potluck at 6:00 pm, open discussion at 7:00 pm
- ☞ **May 27—Integrity Meeting/Evening Prayer & Fellowship** With Fr Joel Mason. At 7:00 pm at St Paul's Cathedral.
- ☞ **May 29—Carole & Bren Concert** Performance at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie. Details later. ☎ Lisa at (814) 734-1358
- ☞ **Jun 5—"Somewhere Over the Pride Rainbow" Dance** Sponsored by Bridges. At UU Congregation. Open to all our friends. \$5 per person, \$4 with donation for AIDS Council of Erie County ☎ Jacquelyn at (814) 455-0549 or Michael at (814) 456-9833 for more info or write to Bridges.
- ☞ **Jun 12—Cris Williamson & Tret Fure in Concert (Tentative- details later)** Cleveland OH.
- ☞ **Jun 12—Rainbow of Love Concert** Cleveland OH. Gala AIDS Benefit.
- ☞ **Jun 13—Stonewall Cleveland Pride Dinner** Cleveland OH. Stouffer Tower City Plaza Hotel, 6:30 PM
- ☞ **Jun 18 & 19—"Puttin' on the Ritz"** Performed by the North Coast Men's Chorus, Lakewood High School and Try-Out Theater, Franklin & Bunts Rd, Lakewood OH 8:00 pm. ☎ (216) 473-8919
- ☞ **Jun 19—Cleveland Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Pride March & Festival**
- ☞ **Aug 21—Bridges Potluck/Discussion at Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Erie** Open to all! Potluck at 6:00 pm, open discussion at 7:00 pm
- ☞ **Sep 3-6—International Friendship Weekend** Pittsburgh. Sponsored by Asians and Friends. ✉ Box 134, 1487 W Fifth Ave, Columbus, OH 43212. ☎ (614) 341-7349
- ☞ **Sep 5—Bridges Festival** All day, dance at 7 pm. At Glinodo Conference Center. Swimming pool, volleyball, softball, games, treasure hunt, merchants and lots of neat people like you. ✉

Festivals, Conferences & Camps

May 7 - 9 — *"Celebrating Lesbian Relationships"*. Country weekend retreat in eastern PA for lesbian couples and singles for affirming, supporting, healing and celebrating ourselves. Sliding scale: \$225-\$275. ✍ Wissahickon Counseling Associates, 1530 Locust St., No. 2F, Philadelphia, PA 19102. ☎ (215) 732-3556.

May 8 - 9 — *North Atlantic PFLAG Conference*. Harrisburg Hotel, Harrisburg PA. ☎ (412) 372-4059.

July 8-11 — *18th National Conference on Men & Masculinity*. San Francisco CA. ✍ M&M 18 News, P.O. Box 43714, Tucson AZ 85733. ☎ (602)577-7234.

July 30 - Aug. 9 — *Celebration of Ten-Year Peace Presence at Women's Peace Land* (formerly Women's Peace Encampment). ✍ WPL, 5440 Rt. 96, Box 34, Romulus, NY 14541 ☎ (607) 869-3801.

September 3 - 6 — *12th Annual (National) PFLAG Convention*. New Orleans LA ☎ (412)372-4059.

Women's Music Festivals

Although these festivals are called "music festivals", you can also find lesbian comedy, dance, films, videos, artwork, speakers, workshops, merchant areas and more. There's a lot of variety among the festivals, too. They are usually held the same time every year, so keep this list to refer to when planning next year's vacation!

April 7-11 — *Gulf Coast Women's Festival*. Near New Orleans. ✍ Henson Productions, 1806 Curcor Drive, Gulfport, MS 39507. ☎ (601)896-3196.

May 14 - 16 — *Virginia Women's Music Festival*. ✍ INTOUCH, Route 2, Box 1096, Kent's Store, VA 23084. ☎ (804)589-6542.

May 27 - 31 — *Campfest*. ✍ Campfest, RR Box 185, Franklinville NJ 08322. ☎ (609)694-2037.

May 27 - 31 — *Southern Women's Music & Comedy Fest*. Near Henderson, NC. ✍ Robin Tyler Productions, 15842 Chase St., North Hills CA 91343. ☎ (818)893-4075.

May 28 - 30 — *Wimifest*. ✍ Wimin, P.O. Box 80204, Albuquerque NM 87198-0204. ☎ (505)265-3297.

May 28 - 31 — *West Coast Lesbians' Festival*. ✍ Particular Productions, 279, Lester Ave., Oakland CA 94606. ☎ (510)763-9228.

June 3 - 6 — *National Women's Music Festival*. ✍ NWMF, P.O. Box 1427, Indianapolis IN 46206. ☎ (317)636-7382. (Some Erie will be going this year; if you're interested in connecting with them call 455-0549).

July 2 - 4 — *Pacific Northwest Women's Music & Cultural Jamboree*. Beachfront Productions, 25-6 NW 23rd Pl #416, Portland OR 97210. ☎ (503)223-7237.

July 23 - 25 — *Northampton Lesbian Festival*. ✍ WOW Productions, 160 Main Street, Northampton MA 01060. ☎ (413)586-8251.

August 10 - 15 — *Michigan Womyn's Music Festival*. ✍ WWTMC, Box 22, Walhalla MI 49458. ☎ (616)757-4766.

Sept. 2 - 6 — *West Coast Women's Music & Comedy Fest* (Labor Day Weekend) near Yosemite CA. ✍ Robin Tyler Productions, 15824 Chase St., North Hills CA 91343. ☎ (818)893-4075.

Sept. 3 - 6 — *East Coast Lesbians' Festival*. Eastern NY State at NY/PA border. ✍ ECLF, 2854 Coastal Hwy #7, St. Augustine FL 32095. ☎ (904)826-0410.

Labor Day Weekend — *RhythmFest*. ✍ RhythmFest, P.O. Box 15427, Atlanta GA 30333. ☎ (404)687-8833.

Sept. 10 - 12 — *Sisterspace Pocono Weekend*. In the PA Poconos. ✍ Sisterspace, 351 S. 47th St. B-101, Philadelphia PA 19143. ☎ (215)476-2424.

Spring... Into Your Wallet!

Help us blossom with a bit of green! The Erie Gay Community Newsletter wants to provide this newsletter to everyone who needs it, but we need your loving care to do this. Donations gratefully and warmly appreciated. Please subscribe. It lets us know you care and helps us grow! Write to EGCN, PO Box 3063, Erie PA 16508-3063.



SpiritualityEvents

April 30 - May 3 — International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews. Held in London, England. Contact Cleveland's Chevrei Tikva (216)932-5551.

July 28 - Aug. 1 — 1993 Dignity/USA National Convention. New Orleans LA. Dignity is the national organization for gay/lesbian/bisexual Catholics, which demands full equality for men and women in the Church and society, and celebrates gay and lesbian relationships. This is the New Orleans Archdiocese's 200th anniversary year, and being chosen as the site for the Dignity convention is certain to make things interesting! ✍️ Dignity National Convention, 1500 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 11, Washington DC 20005.

July 16 - 18 — 7th Annual Radical Faeries Gathering. A weekend of outdoor camping and earth-centered spirituality for gay men; Chautauqua Gorge area; ☎️ 455-9049 for more info.

July 20 - 25 — Starwood. In Sherman, NY. North America's largest gathering of people into earth-centered spirituality: Native American, wicca, neo-pagan, Radical Faeries; drumming, rituals, workshops, concerts and more. Mixed, but welcomes and encourages lesbigay people to attend. For registration info: ✍️ A.C.E., 1643 Lee Road #9, Cleveland Heights OH 44118. ☎️ (800)446-4962. For general info, call locally 455-9049

Sept. 2 - 6 — Womongathering. PA Poconos. Women's spirituality gathering: yoga, drumming, circles, rituals, spiral dance, experiential workshops. ✍️ Campfest Festivals, RR 5 Box 185, Franklinville NJ 08322. ☎️ (609)694-2037.

Note that there will be many spirituality events going on at the March on Washington on April 25. See you there!

Kids' Stuff

August 1993 — Mountain Meadow Feminist Summer Camp for Girls and Boys. Near Ithaca NY. Welcomes and celebrates children from nontraditional families: children of lesbians and gay men, biracial children, children of single parents, etc. For kids ages 8-14. ✍️ Mountain Meadow Collective, 63 West Washington Lane, Philadelphia PA 19144. ☎️ (215)843-0332.

Also: Many of the events listed here have camps, activities, etc. for kids while their parents are attending the events. Contact them for specifics.

People With Disabilities & Events ♿

Most of these events make some attempt to be accessible to people with hearing and mobility impairments. Contact them for the specifics.

At West Coast Lesbians' Festival & East Coast Lesbians' Festival, there will be a Silent Pre-Fest (ASL Intensive for Lesbians).

Also of interest is the *Gayellow Pages* travel guide, which includes some architectural accessibility info in its descriptions. ▼

Gay/Lesbian Travel Publications

Ferrari Publications publishes a line of excellent guidebooks for the gay and lesbian traveller. They've just come out with the brand-new editions. All these books are world wide in scope.

Ferrari's Places of Interest (\$13.95, 325 pp.) is a guidebook for both men and women. Usually this particular book also carries maps, but this year there was a problem getting them in on time for publication. It's still great, featuring all kinds of vacation info.

Ferrari's Places for Women (\$12.00, 424 pp.) Lists women's music festivals, events, organizations, bars, restaurants, bookstores, accomodations, etc.

Ferrari's Places for Men (\$13.95, 850 pp.) pocket-sized gay man's guide to accomodations, entertainment, bars, bookstores, organizations, AIDS organizations, cruises, etc.

INN Places 1993 (\$14.95 616 pp.) Gay and lesbian accomodations guide. First-ever winner of the Outstanding Achievement Award for Gay & Lesbian Guidebooks given by the Gay & Lesbian Press Association. Speical women's index.

Get the guidebooks wherever gay and lesbian books are sold or order directly from Ferrari Publications, P.O. Box 37887, Phoenix AZ 85069. (609)863-2408.

THE ERIE PLAYHOUSE

13 West 10th Street

presents

AMADEUS - March 25 to April 10

PIPPIN - April 29 to May 15

THE MIRACLE WORKER - May 20 to June 5

MAN OF LA MANCHA - June 10 to June 26

Ticket prices:

Adults - \$14, Senior Cit - \$13, Students - \$7

Call 454-2851 for reservations

Group rates available

Seats available at the door



Groups & Organizations

AIDS Council of Erie

Location: 554 East 10th Street, Erie, PA 16503-1314. ☎(814) 455-5492. ♿ Hours: 8:30 to 4:30 Mon.-Fri. *Activities:* Living with HIV Group: 1st Wed of month, 6 pm. Coffee-house/Social every other Fri. Pot-Luck Supper (open) last Wed. of month. Also Buddy program, Memorial service, Bereavement group. Call for more info.

Bridges

A coalition of organizations which seeks to use networking and communication skills to build a better community. ☎Bridges, PO Box 3063, Erie, PA 16508-3063. ☎(814) 455-0549 or (814) 456-9833.

Committee in Support of Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual People

A support group for Allegheny College students/faculty. ☎CSGLBP, Box 186, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA 16335. ☎Jill at 332-4368 or Dan at 332-2238.

Edinboro Gay Organization (EGO)

Student group, primarily social. *Meetings:* Tuesdays from 8-10 pm in Hendricks Hall, Room G13 (♿). ☎Jessica at (814) 732-2574 or David at (814) 732-4278.

Erie Sisters

Non-sexual social support group for TV/TS/CD. Good manners, taste & common sense expected. Monthly meetings, newsletter, Meetings in even numbered months are social events held at accepting establishments. Changing room provided. Interview with a club officer required before first meeting. ☎Erie Sisters, 2115 West 8th Street, Suite 261, Erie, PA 16505

Friends Alike

Peer support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual & cross-gendered people in Oil City. ☎PO Box 904, Oil City, PA 16301-0904. ☎Chris at (814) 676-0836.

Gay and Lesbian Alliance - the Other 10% (GALA 10)

Support group for gay men and lesbians and friends and family. Open to public. *Meetings:* 3rd Tuesday of month at 8:00 pm, call for site.

Next meetings are April 20 May 18 & Jun 15. ☎Mercy Institute, 501 East 38th Street, Erie, PA 16546. Attn: Sr Marlene Lehmkuhl ☎Sr Marlene at (814) 824-2572.

Gay and Lesbian Drug & Alcohol Abuse Support Group

Meetings: Thursdays at 7:00 pm at Jamestown Community College (in Chautauqua room at the Library). ☎(716) 664-5556 or (716) 483-0749

Girth & Mirth

For big men & their admirers. ☎PO Box 7048, Erie, PA 16510-7048 ☎TC at (814) 899-0202.

HUGS East

Activities & events for the gay and lesbian community of Ashtabula, Lake & Geuga counties. Newsletter published ☎HUGS East, PO Box 253, Mentor, OH 44060 ☎(216) 974-8909.

Integrity

A Christian-based spiritual and support group, sponsored by the Episcopal Church that welcomes people of all faiths. *Meetings:* 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month (7:00pm) at St. Paul's Cathedral, 133 West 6th Street. ☎Integrity-NWPA, PO Box 1782, Erie, PA, 16507-1782. ☎(814) 455-0549.

Jamestown HIV Positive Support Group

☎Jill Johnson at (716) 664-7855

Jamestown PFLAG

For parents & friends of lesbians & gays. Meets last Tuesday of the month, call for site. *Meeting Dates:* Apr 27, May 25 & Jun 29. ☎(716) 488-1264 or (716) 763-1529

Jamestown Social Group

For men & women. Meets 3rd Saturday of the month at 7 pm at Unitarian-Universalist Church on Prendergast. *Meeting Dates:* Apr 17, May 15, Jun 19. ☎7 Sampson Street, Jamestown NY 14701 ☎(716) 484-7285 or (716) 664-5556.

League of Gay and Lesbian Voters (LGLV)

Non partisan voters group. Publishes Voters' Guide for primary and general election, voter

registration/education, lobbying. *Meetings:* 1st Sunday of the month at 5:00 pm at AIDS Council, 554 East 10th Street in Erie. Next are April 4, May 2 & Jun 6. ☎Michael at (814) 456-9833. ☎LGLV-Erie, PO Box 3063, Erie, PA 16508-3063. ♿

Lesbian Moms Support Group

Support group for lesbian moms, co-partners and women interested in parenting. ☎Lucinda Marsh, 214 Walnut Street, Waterford, PA 16441. ☎(814) 796-3535.

Life's Blood

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for Gays and Lesbians. *Meetings:* Sundays at 8:00 pm at the AIDS Council, 554 East 10th Street in Erie. ♿

March on Washington Committee

See article in this issue. ☎Michael at (814) 456-9833 or Sally at (814) 454-2713. H

Men's Coffeeshouse

The Men's Coffeeshouse is an alcohol & smoke-free environment with a particular theme, topic or activity for each month. They get together on the 2nd Friday of each month at 7:00 pm. *Meetings:* April 9, May 14 & Jun 11. ☎(814) 455-9049 for more info. ♿

Out & Proud

Support group for media issues, those dealing with coming out. Organizational meeting on May 2 at 2:00 pm at Erie AIDS Council, 554 E 10th Street ☎OP, PO Box 3063, Erie PA 16508-3063 ☎(814) 456-9833

Trigon (Gamma Beta Lambda)

Support group for Behrend students, faculty, alumni. ☎College Mailroom, Box 1054, Behrend College, Station Road, Erie, PA 16563. ☎(814) 453-6232

Womynspace Coffeeshouse

The Womyn's Coffeeshouse is an alcohol & smoke-free environment for lesbians, with a particular theme, topic or activity for each month. They get together on the 1st Saturday of each month at 7:30 pm. Hope to see you on April 3, May 1 & Jun 5. ☎Sally at (814) 454-2713.

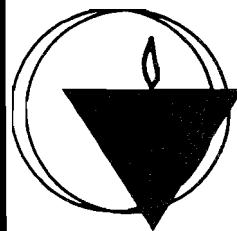
LGLV Roller Skating Party

Skateway Roller Rink
4646 Buffalo Road, Erie
Thursday April 29th
7:00-10:00 pm

Donation: \$5, \$4 for students & low income, \$3 for kids under 12, \$1 for skate rental



For more info, call (814) 456-9833



*The Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Erie invites
you to join us for worship
10:30 am, Sundays
7180 New Perry Highway
Childcare provided
Rev. Terry Kime, Minister*

Since 1970 our denomination has welcomed the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities and supported them in their struggle for equal rights and acceptance. We recognize gay and lesbian ceremonies of union, and affirm openly lesbian and gay clergy. For further information, call 864-9300.

Gays in the Military—An Overview

By Greg Valiga

Just days after President Clinton took office, the nation's attention was focused on, of all things, the rights of gays and lesbians to serve in the U.S. military armed forces.

When Clinton's plan to end the discrimination based on sexual orientation exploded onto the national scene with such force, one would have thought Armageddon had arrived.

The religious right has successfully employed its network of media outlets to spread fear and misinformation to churchgoers across the nation. Likewise, Senate and military leaders suddenly appeared, predicting disastrous consequences to the military if gay men and lesbians are "allowed in".

Locally, thousands of angry and hateful callers jammed the phone lines of Senators Spector and Wofford and Congressman Ridge demanding they support the ban. Ridge issued a politically expedient statement in which he raised points clearly based on stereotypes and homophobia. If these reactions are any indication, Erie and the nation has quite a fight ahead.

Historically, the ban was nonexistent until World War II, although there were occasional attempts to stop homosexual activity. During the 1940s, the military switched its attention from sexual conduct to status, perhaps with good reason: A later Navy report issued in 1957 estimated that 37% of their sailors (of which 90-96% were estimated to be heterosexual) had engaged in homosexual activity with one another. It is also interesting to note that each branch of the service has an "escape" clause, allowing retention of members who have engaged in homosexual conduct for reasons including immaturity, intoxication, and a desire to avoid military service, among others. It is ironic that the military is now emphasizing that homosexual behavior will increase dramatically if the ban is lifted, but currently turns its back on the activity now if a heterosexual is involved. It is also deplorable how the government will retain an "innocent homosexual" (i.e., a heterosexual en-

gaging in homosexual conduct), but is willing to spend up to \$120,772 to discharge an "avowed homosexual", with no evidence of any sexual activity.

The military also seems to have a perverted notion of how to deal with known lesbians and gay men during times of war. During World War II, the wars in Korea and Vietnam, and even the Gulf War, the number of discharges dropped dramatically. If gays and lesbians can put their lives on the line for this country, if the Armed Forces admits its own actions that homosexuals are fit and capable of fighting in the foxholes with heterosexuals, if the military can go out of its way to reinstate gays to solve manpower shortages (as Secretary of War Harry Stimson did during World War II), then there are no intelligent or reasonable arguments to keep the ban in place.

Racial integration of the Armed Forces occurred in 1948 amid outcries similar to those heard today. President Truman's executive order to integrate, while controversial, was implemented with success; nobody today can argue that it wasn't the right thing to do. A major argument then was that white troops would not tolerate taking orders from a black person; today Colin Powell chairs the Joint Chiefs of Staff and gives orders to most everyone in the military, without repercussion.

Many countries do not exclude gays and lesbians in their military, although most of these do have certain

restrictions. The United States is one of the last remaining NATO members with a ban. Two countries—Australia and Canada—recently rescinded their policies with few problems. According to Dayne Oglvie, managing editor of Toronto's *Xtra*, Canada has already experienced the tactics by the far right. Fortunately, with the help of the courts, our northern neighbors now enjoy an open policy with little, if any, backlash against the lesbian community. The issue just doesn't seem to be as earth-shaking as we have been led to believe; when Clinton opens up the military to gays, life will return to normal.

The cost of implementing the Department of Defense Directive 1332.14 sec. h.1 has been staggering, to say the least. The cost

Oh fer god's sakes, Bradley - can't you wait till you're off duty?



Reason #273 why gays shouldn't be in the service (hetero point of view). They won't participate in sexual degradation of women.
 Drawing P.K. 93T
 Idea: Jen (thnx!)



to replace enlisted personnel is \$28,226; officers a more hefty \$120,772. This is directly from a June 1992 study by the U.S. General Accounting Office. The cost for replacing the 16,919 members expelled from 1980-1990 totals \$493,195,968 (almost half a billion dollars). Incredibly, this figure doesn't even include investigative, internal personnel activities, and associated court costs. Yet, military leaders continue to justify the cost, because the Department of Defense Directive now in effect states "Homosexuality is incompatible with military service. The presence in the military environment of persons who engage in homosexual conduct or who, by their statements, demonstrate a propensity to engage in homosexual conduct, seriously impairs the accomplishment of the military mission."

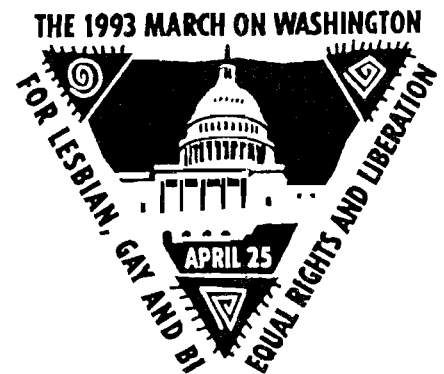
Most of today's arguments in favor of keeping the ban in place center around homophobia and ignorance. The spread of AIDS, gays and lesbians coming out of the closet en masse, ass-grabbing and same sex dancing in the barracks, privacy concerns, spousal benefits, disruption of military readiness, etc. are all concerns which are being dealt with *now* by policies in place. These policies, along with a uniform code of conduct, strictly enforced, will resolve most of the problems. Media accounts indicate that there will be no parade out of the closet, for obvious reasons. This quote by Larry Doyle (*Spy* magazine, March 1993) sums it up: "The only thing that will change if the military's policy is overturned, it seems, is that gay sailors will be allowed to participate in all the fun [homosexual innuendo, sexual activity, and hazing by heterosexuals] openly, as long as they don't mind being beaten or killed." ▼

March on Washington Update

In case you've been in a cave, the March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Rights is expected draw a million people, making it the largest civil rights demonstration in US history. You can be a part of history! There are limited bus seats available, so you need to register right away. There will be a one day bus leaving Erie and making stops in Edinboro and Meadville. The cost of the bus is \$37 per person and your check payable to "EGO" should be mailed to Prof. Jessica Jopp, EUP, Faculty Annex 108, Edinboro, PA 16444. You can call 1-694-2484 or 732-4278 for more info.

The Anderson Tours bus with TV, VCR & bathroom will leave Home's parking lot at the Millcreek Mall on Saturday, April 24 at 11 pm and make a pickup at Hendrick's Hall at Edinboro University at midnight.

The Erie Area March on Washington Committee will be having a Bon Voyage Party, which will feature a drawing for the Raffle at the AIDS Council of Erie County, Inc (554 East 10th Street) on Sunday, April 18 at 2:00 pm. Call Michael at 456-9833 for more info. ▼



Comments by Military and Senate Leaders:

"Legislation which would require the military to accept homosexuals would do much more to violate the rights of heterosexual personnel than it would to promote the rights of homosexuals."

— Eugene Gomulka, Deputy Chaplain, USMC, 1992

"Promiscuity, already a major health problem in the homosexual community, will likely increase in on-base clubs, local nightclubs, and throughout forces deployed worldwide."

— Senator Bob Smith, 1993

"Opening the ranks to homosexuals would exacerbate this hardship and transgress upon the legitimate privacy rights of heterosexual soldiers who may find homosexuality offensive and corrupt."

— Senator Bob Smith, 1993

Comments by gay military personnel:

"I've had friends who've been on submarines who were gay, and they were always saying that all the straight guys are the ones that were fooling around with each other, it was the gay guys who knew how to control themselves."

— Petty Officer Keith Meinhold, USN

"My big problem was staying out of their way. You'd call it gay sex. It was sex. I had [straight] guys who would beg me to go to bed with them, almost to the point of desperation."

— Paul Hardman, U.S. Military (branch unknown).

"If they threw everybody out who played with someone else's dick. they'd have to toss out almost all of them."

— Copy Berg, U.S. Military (branch unknown)

This column will continue in coming months, dealing with issues such as women in the military, the backlash against lesbians & gays, and local and national efforts by our community to head off the opposition. ▼

Out & About

Dee Dee Foll: Out in Erie County

This article was distilled from an interview with Dee Dee Foll, a 28-year-old Erie lesbian who is open and proud about who she is. Her experiences and thoughts will be of interest to lesbians and gay men thinking about living more openly. Ms. Foll says that she is available to speak publicly on gay issues. She can be contacted through the Erie Gay Community Newsletter.

I came out when I was 16. I waited seven years before going on to college, so I didn't have a group to hang with like you would if you were going to college right out of high school. I was pretty much on my own for most of that time.

Soon after I started going to college in Edinboro, I saw an announcement in the campus newspaper, for a meeting of EGO (Edinboro Gay Organization). There must have been 20 people at that meeting. And that's how I started meeting other gay people.

EGO was very important to me. Before I started going to EGO meetings, I felt like I was the only gay person on campus. Because up to that point I hadn't connected with a lot of other gay people. Even when I was in Erie, I hadn't really built a network of friends for myself at all. I was in a relationship for three years, and that pretty much was it.

Learning about myself as a gay person was very important. Learning about your identity is always important. Because you can't be complete unless you know yourself.

In the spring of 1990, I was contacted to do an article about EGO for *The Spectator*, which is Edinboro's campus newspaper. I let them use my full name in the article. EGO was something I wanted to talk about, because I knew how important it was to me. And there were many other people, including freshmen and transfer students, who didn't know about the organization and

were looking for the same things I had been looking for.

The reporter asked me why I wanted to do the article, and I answered that I shouldn't have to not do it just because of what it was about. She was curious, too, because she had never done an article on a gay person before.

The straight people that I had already established friendships with had no problem about finding out I was gay. The one I was worried about was my first room-mate in college. She thought being gay was completely wrong. So, shortly before the article appeared, I came out to her. I wanted to tell her in person. I didn't want her to find out through the newspaper, because I had too much respect for her to do that. We had lived together and become such good friends. Well, she didn't believe me at first. A little while later, she looked at me and said "You want to know something? I never thought I could like a gay person, but I love you enough that it doesn't matter." She said that she wouldn't be judging people on that anymore. I felt that if that article I did accomplished anything, it did, right there. Because it's not that she was hateful towards gay people, she just didn't know.

I didn't expect too many repercussions from the article. I did get some prank phone calls. Nothing big or threatening...kids playing around, name-calling, giggling. It went on for about a week after the article appeared and then they quit.

At the time the article appeared, I was working in the Edinboro donut shop. Now, up to this time, they had no problem with me. They said they liked me a lot and that I was a good worker. After the article appeared, all of the sudden they had a problem with me. They would never tell me what it was. They suddenly started telling me I was rude and obnoxious, that I was offensive,

*Continued
on page 14*

Out & Proud

by Michael Mahler

Are you thinking about using your full name in an article in this newsletter?

Perhaps you'd like to speak to a class or group about being gay.

Or maybe you'd like to speak on the radio without using your full name, or speak to the media using your full name.

If so, please make a note of the group Out & Proud. This group will offer insight and support for people who think they might want to be a little or a lot more open about who they are. We invite people who are more public about themselves to come and share their own feelings and experiences.

Attendance at a meeting does not obligate you to take any action, and nobody will pressure attendees to do anything. Also, this group will not "out" anyone. Our first meeting will be at the AIDS Council of Erie County, Inc. 554 East 10th Street on Sunday, May 2 at 2:00 p.m.

Interested? Have questions? Then contact me at 456-9833. ▼

Local Media Stuff

In February...

WSEE-TV featured reporter Randy MacIlwain interviewing the girlfriend of a lesbian serving in the U.S. Navy. MacIlwain respected the woman's request for anonymity, disguising her face and giving her a pseudonym, and conducted the interview in a respectful and non-sensationalistic manner.

The *Erie Sunday Times-News* printed an announcement about the organizing efforts of the Erie Area March on Washington Committee on the front page of its Metro section.

Michael Mahler appeared on WLKK-radio to talk about the March on Washington. The interview was scheduled to go on from 7:15 a.m. to 7:25 a.m., but because of the volume of calls, the program's host kept extending the interview. Mahler finally cut the interview off at 8:00 so that he could get

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Local Media, Cont'd from Page 13

to work. Most of the calls were anti-gay and had little or nothing to do with the March.

WSEE-TV carried an interview with "Elaine", the mother of a gay man who was removed from the Navy because of his sexual orientation. Reporter Carol Wilson did the story, who respected "Elaine's" request for anonymity and dealt with the subject matter with sensitivity.

Michael Mahler appeared on WQLN-TV's "Focus" to discuss the subject of gays in the military. Most of the callers phoning into the live program were sympathetic to the cause of allowing gays into the military.

Erie lesbian rights activist Sally Meiser spoke with WSEE-TV reporter Randy MacIlwain about his "outing" of two gay people in his series "Erie's Gay 90s". The outings caused a lot of anger in the local gay and lesbian community. Sally reports that MacIlwain defended the outings because the individuals who were outed were "part of the environment" of the story. He also reportedly stated that his outing of Dr. Cindy Marsh's lesbian business associate—in which he aired footage of the business associate's repeated refusals to be part of the story—was done to show the difference between someone who wants to be out and someone who doesn't want to be out. MacIlwain told Meiser that he wrote a letter to the outed woman, but WSEE's legal advisors discouraged him from sending it. The woman who was outed is considering legal actions against WSEE and MacIlwain.

Several local people wrote into the newspapers about gays in the military, both pro and con

In March...

The Men's Coffeehouse viewed "In the Life", a gay/lesbian variety show aired on numerous public television stations around the country. It started a discussion about possibly trying to get the show to air in Erie.

Erie lesbian Dee Dee Foll called WJET-radio to complain about some novelty Irish tunes that they had played, which she considered to be homophobic and "about gay-bashing". Foll said the DJ she spoke with was sympathetic. (See article about Dee Dee in this issue.) ▼

Dee Dee Foll, Cont'd from Page 13

that I was scaring people. I kept asking them to tell me what was going on, but they wouldn't tell me. They'd say "You know", and I told them, "No, I don't know and I'd like to know." They never actually said that the reason they were having problems with me was because I was gay and had just come out to the Edinboro community. Eventually I was fired. I heard a rumor that after I was gone they had taken the article about me and put it on a wall in the back of the donut shop, where they threw darts at it.

I didn't fight the firing, because I didn't feel there was much I could do. The owners of the shop were well-established, well-respected businesspeople in Edinboro. I didn't feel like I had a chance. I was just some unknown college student, in town for not even a year. I decided the only thing I could do was to stay in town and not let myself be run out.

This wouldn't be the last time I felt the sting of homophobia. Shortly after all this happened, a gay male friend and I were kicked out of the Waverly Station Bar in Edinboro. They told us we were not their type, that we didn't fit in with that crowd. The Waverly is a fraternity and sorority bar. Now, we were minding our own business, sitting at the bar, drinking our beer. We

**Washington DC
APRIL 25, 1993**



DON'T MISS THIS ONE!

didn't talk to another soul in that place, except the bartender when we asked him for a drink. We certainly weren't "acting gay", I mean, he's a man, and I'm a woman. I don't know if they knew who I was. The impression they gave us was that they figured we were gay because of our looks. They never told us exactly why we were asked to leave. It really irritated me, and hurt me. Because I love people, I like to be around people, and here I was being judged before they even knew who I was! This was a new experience for me. It made me more aware of what other groups go through. Up to that point, I thought I could get along with anybody. It made me more aware that there are people out there who will do this. That's when I started paying attention to people getting gay-bashed.

Most people in Edinboro know about me, and I don't have a problem anymore. This all happened three years ago, and now I feel very safe and comfortable when I go there. I've made a lot of good friends there.

Nowadays I work at Erie Ceramic Arts, and there is no problem there. Everybody knows I'm gay. I wear my gay pride shirts to work. I'm still invited to go out with all the straight girls and guys. I've never been hurt there.



Last spring, *Erie Sunday-Times* reporter Jerry Trambley was doing an article about gay-bashing in Erie, and I called him to be interviewed. I wanted to use my real name, but my mother pleaded with me for days not to use it. She was afraid of what members of the family would think. And she was afraid of somebody hurting me if they knew. Eventually, I gave in to her wishes. But I didn't want to use a fake name. I was proud to be a part of that article.

I thought Jerry did a good job on that article. He covered some areas that people really hadn't been exposed to.

I basically thought Randy MacIlwain's series on "Erie's Gay 90s" was positive.

I did think there were things that could have been done differently. I would like to have seen more about professional gay people, more done with the different gay groups in Erie, who'd talk about the work they're

doing to gain acceptance in our community, rather than focusing so much on the bars. Not that I'm putting bars down. The bars are important; they bring people together and they help provide a sense of community. But I would like to have seen them go beyond that a little bit more. What was on that series was important, but the media needs to go beyond that. Maybe next time they'll get into some different areas. But I definitely think Randy's effort was positive.

I think he overstepped when he outed those people who asked not to be seen. No question about that. Like a lot of straight people, he just doesn't understand or isn't aware of what can happen when you're outed. He took a completely personal issue with these people and took it into his own hands, as if he knew what was best. But until you've been kicked out of your home, fired from your job, or beaten up, you just don't understand the repercussions of being outed.

By the way, I was shown on the series, but I told him I didn't care if I was seen or not. But that was my choice to make. Not his.

A little before St. Patrick's Day, WJET-radio was playing novelty Irish songs, two of which I considered homophobic and about gay-bashing. It kind of got me worked up, so I called the station, and I spent an hour and a half with the DJ, Tony Jay. He had no clue as to why this would bother us, and what kind of repercussions would come from it. I enjoyed talking with him. He was very curious and sympathetic to our concerns. I don't know if anything was accomplished. But he really did have no idea of why this would upset gay people.

Sometimes I'm in awe over how ignorant straight people can be about what happens to gay people when they try to be themselves. I'm in awe over the ignorance of gay-bashing. I don't get how people can do it. And gay-bashing is everywhere. What they played on WJET is a form of gay-bashing. Walking down the street or getting out of your car at a gay bar and having someone yell "Faggot!" is a form of gay-bashing. It's not just getting beaten up. And

everybody in the gay community knows that.

My feeling is, they can beat me up, they can fire me, they do anything they want to, but it's not going to make me go away and it's not going to make me change. I'll continue to do it, over and over again.

My mother was commenting on the 20/20 segment they showed awhile back, in which lesbians from Northampton, Massachusetts talked about themselves on national TV. She said "You know, people think those women have guts to go on TV like that. But it's people like your friends, being out in a town like this, who really have guts."

Well, every group that has ever been discriminated against has its own trials, its own obstacles. They're different but the same.

I plan to go to the March on Washington. I wouldn't miss it. I'm taking the bus that EGO's organizing because I want to support them.



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Someday I'd like to see a gay pride parade in Erie. Wouldn't that be nice? From 10th Street to Perry Square.

I really feel the need to just talk with straight people about what it's like to be gay. Rather than coming on really defensive. Rallies and marches are important when we need them, but we don't always have to be aggressive to get our needs met. In the Erie straight community, there are a lot of people who just don't know what it's like. Sometimes you just need to tell them about the problems we're faced with and about the lives that we lead. I think if we just do that, we'll find that we have more friends than we realize. ▼

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Deb Monohon and Stephanie O'Neal have been named as "Targeted Case Managers"

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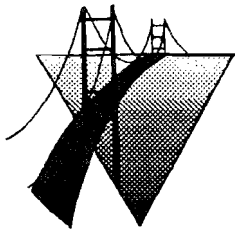
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Community Directory

24 Hour Counseling:

- Saint Vincent 452-5151
- Family Crisis 456-2014
- Hamot 877-6136

AIDS Services:

- AIDS Council of Erie, Inc. 455-5492
- AIDS Factline 1-800-324-AIDS
- National AIDS Hotline 1-800-662-6080

Bars:

- Ashtabula, OH*
Erie, PA
Leeward Lounge, 1022 Bridge St.
Lizzie Bordon's Part II, 3412 West 12th St.
Silver Slipper Lounge, 1317 State St.
- Jamestown, NY*
Nite Spot, 201 Windsor St.
Sneakers, 100 Harrison

Community Service Organizations:

- Bridges 455-0549
- March on Washington Committee 454-2713
- Out and Proud (Speakers' Bureau) 456-9833

Counseling:

- Lisa DiPlacido, MS, Private Psychotherapist 452-4366
- South Shore Counseling Group (North East, PA) 725-8504
- Fore more info, call Greg 833-3258

Medical Services and HIV/AIDS Testing:

- Erie Co. Dept. of Health (VD Clinic/AIDS Testing; confidential and anonymous); 2nd & Cherry St., walk-in (Mon. & Thurs., 9:30-3:30) 451-6700
- Martin Luther King Center (misc. medical/AIDS Testing),
312 Chestnut St. 459-2761 (by appointment only)
- Minority Health & Education Delivery Services (misc. medical/AIDS Testing),
325 W. 26th St. 453-4728 (appt. only)

Political/Advocacy Organizations:

- League of Gay & Lesbian Voters 456-9833

Publications:

- Erie Gay Community Newsletter 456-9833

Religious Organizations:

- Integrity 455-0549
- Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie 864-9300

Social Organizations:

- Mens' Coffeehouse 455-9049
- Jamestown Social Group (716) 484-7285 or 664-5556
- Womynspace Coffeehouse 454-2713

Student Organizations/Youth:

- Committee in Support of Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual People (Allegheny College, Meadville) 332-4368
- Edinboro Gay Organization (EGO) 732-2574
- GALA 10 (Mercyhurst College) 824-2572
- National Runaway Switchboard 1-800-621-4000
- Teen Hotline (412) 771-8336
- Trigon (Gamma Beta Lambda, Behrend College) 453-6232

Support Groups:

- Erie Sisters, 2115 W. 8th St., Suite 261, Erie, PA 16505
- Friends Alike (Oil City) 676-0826
- Gay & Lesbian Drug & Alcohol Abuse Support Group 716-483-0749
- Jamestown HIV Positive Support Group (716) 664-7855
- Jamestown PFLAG (716) 488-1264 or 763-1529
- Lesbian Moms Support Group 796-3535
- Lifes Blood (AA) Sundays, 8:00 PM, 554 E. 10th St.

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