



EGN



Erie Gay News

Calendar

This calendar is also online at www.eriegaynews.com/calendar.html

Feb 21 - Mardi Gras Party - Zone Style! at Zone Dance Club 1711 State St, Erie PA. (814) 459-1711. "Follow the parade from New Orleans to the Zone! Join your friends, come let loose, have some fun! Show us some skin ...we'll give you some beads! We want to see who has the most outrageous and flamboyant costume! Erie's biggest and best Gay Mardi Gras Celebration! Get into the Zone!"

Feb 21 - Mardi Gras at The Village (Erie PA) 133 W. 18th St. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Email: village@velocity.net.

Feb 21 - Menspace meets (Jeff's) 1146 Brown Ave, Erie PA. 7:30 PM. Contact: Michael Mahler. (814) 456-

9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Feb 21- 10% Network meets: Movie Night (Jamestown) Unitarian Church of Jamestown, 1255 Prendergast, Jamestown NY 7:30 PM. Contact: Don. Phone: (716) 484-1661. Email: donjaye@hotmail.com. Browse to <http://jamestowntenpercent.tripod.com/>

Feb 21 - National Black AIDS Awareness Day in Chautauqua Co. (Jamestown) Cathy Harrison at AIDS Community Services (716) 664-7855.

Feb 22 - Film: Yossi & Jagger at Academy Theatre (Meadville PA) Based on a true story, the love affair of two male Israeli officers in a remote army

(continued on page 3)

At the February 7 PFLAG Bingo, Jayne May hugs her nephew, Joshua Adams. Joshua's boyfriend, Derrick McClain leans in to share the love.

Jayne was coordinator of the fundraising event. The next PFLAG Bingo is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 15.

(Photo by Mike Mahler)



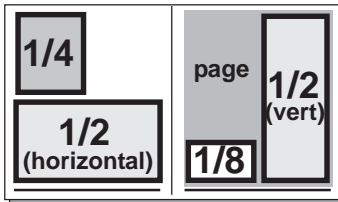
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On the Cover...

Jayne, Joshua and Derrick at PFLAG
Bingo Photo by Michael Mahler

EGN Ad Rates



Ad Size	Price/Issue	Dimensions
Eighth	\$30 (\$27 prepaid)	1-5/8" high X 2-7/8" wide
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Page	\$160 (\$144 prepaid)	7-1/2" high X 6" wide

call 456-9833 or email info@eriegaynews.com
 Deadline for ads is the 15th



Erie Gay News
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www.eriegaynews.com

Editors: Deb Spilko and Mike Mahler
Deadline: the 15th of each month.

The *Erie Gay News* is published monthly as a source of news, events, information and support for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered people (GLBT's), their families, friends & supporters in the Erie and Northwest Pennsylvania Area.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit timely news, comments and opinions of interest to local GLBT's for publication in these pages. We will consider for publication any nonfiction article, blurb or illustration graphic which upholds this spirit. Please include your contact information with any piece that you submit.

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

Views and opinions expressed in this publication don't necessarily represent those of the EGN staff.

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Thank You:

To James von Loewe, Marshall Snyder, Dave Amy, Norm Zymm, Tim, Neal for folding and Dave S, Kate Hentz and Jerry McCumber for distributing last issue. Big thanks to Bob for proofreading. Thanks!

If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com for date/time.

Calendar

base on the Israeli-Lebanese border. They are commanders, they are in love, and they try to find a place of their own in a rigidly oppressive system. For further information call (814) 337-8000.

Feb 28 - Johnny Hazzard in person at Body Language (Cleveland) 1 PM - 3 PM. Johnny Hazzard, star of stage, screen and adult films will be signing autographs. 11424 Lorain Ave, Phone: (888) 429-7733. www.body-language.com.

Feb 28 - Cabin Fever Party at Two Friends Italian Market (Erie) 8 PM - 10:30 PM. Come on out for Two Girls Alone and the best pizza, stromboli and calzones in town! 25 E 10th St, For more information, or for a pizza coupon good for that night, email twogirlsalone@att.net

Feb 28 - 5 Empty Chambers at Uncle Charlie's (Edinboro) 10 PM

Feb 28 - Cause for Celebration "Roaring Twenties" (Buffalo) Gala fundraiser for AIDS Community Services of Western New York 9 PM Hyatt Regency, 2 Fountain Plaza (716) 847-0340 or visit website for details www.aidscommunityservices.com for more information on how you can participate.

Feb 28 - Brian & Friends at Rascals (Jamestown NY) 701 N Main St. Strippers. (716) 484-3220

Feb 28 - Erie Sisters meets (Erie PA) Transgender/crossdresser support group. Contact for location of meeting by email, phone or write to LEG, PO Box 1131, Erie PA 16512-0131 Phone: (724) 368-3793. Email: eriesisters@eriesisters.org. Browse to www.eriesisters.org.

Mar 2 - New York Primary Election Don't forget to vote!!

Mar 2 - Ohio Primary Election Don't forget to vote!!!

Mar 3 - "Always Our Children" meets (Erie PA)

Catholic Charities, 329 W. 10th St. (814) 456-2091

Mar 6 - Menspace meets (Neal's, Erie PA) 7:30 PM. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Mar 6 - Buffalo Girls at Rascals (Jamestown NY) 701 N Main St. (716) 484-3220

Mar 8 - PFLAG Meeting-Erie/Crawford (Erie PA) 7 PM - 9 PM. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Highway. Regular monthly meeting. Contact: Maureen Koseff. Phone: (814) 898-8341. Email: pflagerie@adelphia.net.

Mar 12 & 13 - Margaret Cho at the Improv (Homestead, PA) Ticket Info: (412) 462-5233. 21 & over.

Mar 13 - St. Patrick's Day Party at The Village (Erie PA) 133 W. 18th St. Will also be open on St. Patrick's Day, March 17. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Email: village@velocity.net.

Mar 13 - St. Patrick's Party - Zone Style! at Zone Dance Club 1711 State St, Erie PA. Will also be open on St. Patrick's Day, March 17. (814) 459-1711.

Mar 14 - Jazz Brunch at The Village (Erie PA) 133 W. 18th St. 1 PM til whenever. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Email: village@velocity.net.

Mar 15 - Deadline for April 2004 edition of Erie Gay News Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com.

Mar 15 - Indigo Girls in concert (Pittsburgh) AJ Palumbo Center. They will be adding shows so check back. www.indigogirls.com

Mar 19 - Amateur Strip at Rascal's (Jamestown NY) 701 N Main St. (716) 484-3220

(continued next page)



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Mar 20 - Dinner for Cause for Celebration at Rascals (Jamestown NY) 701 N Main St. Hosted by Martin and Don. Buffet, starts at 6:30 PM. Donation is \$25, ticket admits you to Cause for Celebration gala at Crystal Ballroom (Hotel Jamestown) on March 27. Information: Don at (716) 484-1661.

Mar 23 - Ostara: Open Circle at UU (Erie PA) GLBT-friendly coven of Brighidshaven is hosting an open circle for Ostara (Spring Equinox) includes kid-friendly egg-hunt. As for times, doors open at 7 PM, rite starts around 8 PM, feast to follow. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Highway, Email: prosperotter@yahoo.com. Browse to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/brighidshaven-announce/>.

Mar 24 - Lecture: Christian de la Huerta at Allegheny College (Meadville) Henderson Auditorium, Quigley Hall. The Office of Diversity Affairs presents Christian de la Huerta's "How a Gay 'Gusano' Discovered Self-Acceptance: A Personal Perspective on Diversity" 7:30 PM. Cost is Free. Info (814) 332-3332.

Mar 26 - Drag King/Queen Contest at Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock PA) The Slippery Rock University LGBA will be sponsoring a Drag King/ Queen contest. "There will be performances by the Distinguished Iron City Kings, Lady Rose of Pittsburgh and more. This event is free to the public. Y'all come to the university's Swope Music Hall at 7 PM" Email: lgbasec@hotmail.com.

Mar 27 - Cause for Celebration: "Stayin' Alive" (Jamestown NY) Gala fundraiser for AIDS Community Services of WNY Crystal Ballroom, 110 W 3rd St. "This promises to be the disco party of the season, complete with music and dancing, casino gaming, luscious desserts, a silent art auction, and more polyester than you can shake a stick at." Info: ACS Southern Tier office at (716) 664-7855.

Mar 27 - Erie Sisters meets (Erie PA) Transgender/crossdresser support group. Contact for location of meeting by email, phone or write to LEG, PO Box 1131, Erie PA 16512-0131 Phone: (724) 368-3793. Email: eriesisters@eriesisters.org. Browse to www.eriesisters.org.

Mar 27 - Karen Williams at Carnegie Library of Homestead Music Hall (Munhall PA) with special guests Renaissance City Wimmin's Drumming Circle. (412)795-2022 Pghconcert@aol.com

Mar 27 & 28 - North Coast Men's Chorus concert: "Only in the Movies" (Cleveland) Waetjen Auditorium, Cleveland State University, 2001 Euclid Ave, (800)766-6048, www.ncmchorus.org

Mar 30 - Verizon Ladies First Tour at Gund Arena (Cleveland) Beyonce, Alicia Keys, Missy Elliott, Tamia. (216)241-2121.

Apr 6 - Verizon Ladies First Tour at University of Pittsburgh Beyonce, Alicia Keys, Missy Elliott, Tamia.

Apr 7 - Always Our Children meets (Erie PA) For Catholic parents of GLBT children Catholic Charities, 329 W 10th St. Phone: (814) 456-2091.

Apr 12 - PFLAG Meeting (Erie PA) Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Highway 7 PM - 9 PM. Regular meeting. Contact: Maureen Koseff. Phone: (814) 898-8341. Email: pflagerie@adelphia.net.

Apr 15 - Deadline for May 2004 edition of Erie Gay News (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com.

Northwest Pennsylvania Rural AIDS Alliance

GET TESTED : YOU NEED TO KNOW

Provides access to educational, medical, financial, and supportive services for those affected with HIV/AIDS in Northwest Pennsylvania

*For more information contact us at:
15870 Route 322
Clarion, PA 16214
814-764-6066 or 800-359-AIDS (2437)*



*In Erie contact us at:
1001 State St. Suite 806
Renaissance Centre
Erie, PA 16501
814-456-8849 or 800-400-AIDS*

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.NORTHWESTALLIANCE.ORG

EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO PREVENTION



Calendar

Apr 17- 10% Network meets: Silent Auction & Pot Luck (Jamestown NY) Unitarian Church of Jamestown, 1255 Prendergast Ave, 7:30 PM. Contact: Don. Phone: (716) 484-1661. Email: donjaye@hotmail.com. Browse to <http://jamestowntenpercent.tripod.com/>.

Apr 18 - Jazz Brunch at The Village 133 W 18th St, Erie PA 1 PM til whenever. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Email: village@velocity.net.

Apr 21 - National Day of Silence www.dayofsilence.org A student-led day of action where those who support making anti-LGBT bias unacceptable in schools take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment — in effect, the silencing — experienced by LGBT students and their allies. More information on page 21 and www.dayofsilence.org

Apr 21 - Performance: Folk Singer Ellis at Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock PA) Sponsored by the LGBA at Slippery Rock University, held at the university Email: Jazzie1@zoominternet.net.

Apr 25 - March to Save Women's Lives (Washington DC) Information page 7. Organizers: Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood Federation of America Contact: Rebecca Pruveadenti. Phone: (814) 838-9034.

Apr 30 to May 2 - Rainbow Wranglers Round-Up (Cleveland) Annual LGBT country dancing event (216) 961-5817, www.rainbowwranglers.org.

Apr 30-May 2 - Cleveland Leather Annual Weekend (Cleveland) Parties, receptions, forums, cabaret, stage show and auction party, vendor and education mart. More at www.clawinfo.org

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On stage

Selected area events that may be of interest to GLBT audiences

A Night with Dame Edna Feb 17-29 Barry Humphries performs as Dame Edna Everage. Cleveland Playhouse Square Center, Cleveland. Toll Free (800) 766-6048 Website: www.playhousesquare.com

Barry Manilow's "Copacabana" March 12 at Barrow Civic Theater, 1223 Liberty Street in Franklin PA www.barrowtheatre.com (800) 537-7769

Miss Gulch Returns, March 12 to 27, Kennedy's at Playhouse Square, 1501 Euclid Ave, Cleveland. One-man musical revue from the perspective of Almira Gulch, that nasty, bicycle-riding woman from The Wizard of Oz ("I'll get you and your little dog too") Starring openly gay actor Nick Vannello, 1-800-766-6048. www.missgulchreturns.com

Lips Together, Teeth Apart by Terrance McNally at Youngstown's Oakland Center for the Arts. March 26-April 10 It's the 4th of July on Fire Island. Two married couples celebrate the 4th at a beach house that one woman inherited from her brother who died of AIDS. www.oaklandcenter.com (330) 746-0404

Evening of One Acts at Directors Circle Theatre 1001 State St, 2nd Floor, Erie PA. April 22 - May 16. "Toyer" is a psychological thriller whose next Good Samaritan might be a serial killer. Stars Scott Frisina. Directed by Jenn Highfill. "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You" is the Christopher Durang black comedy. Stars Jo Laurie. Directed by Michael Weiss. (Latter play includes gay character. Shows will generally run for four weeks at 8 PM nightly, except for Sunday matinees at 2 PM. Show times will be Fri / Sat on the first week, Thu-Sun on the second, Thu-Sat on the third, and Thu-Sun on the last week. Season tickets are on sale now at \$56, \$37 for seniors Phone: (814) 451-0036.

Websites and email lists for appearances by area performers:

Greg Ropp www.gregropp.com.
Leah Zicari www.leahzicari.com
Two Girls Alone <http://twogirlsalone.iuma.com>

Letters

PFLAG Bingo Thanks

On behalf of PFLAG Erie and Crawford Counties, I extend a warm thanks to those who supported our BINGO and came out in the cold to enjoy fun, food, delicious homemade baked goods, Jayne's secret sloppy-Joes, Jeff's cakes, and games. We had 47 players at this event, 5 Drag Queens, numerous volunteers, a great kitchen crew, and a welcoming sponsorship by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie. A special thanks (after several evenings of meetings) to the entire BINGO planning committee: Jayne May, Mark H, John Daly King, Michael Mahler, Lynne, Keith Rounfort, Don Craig, and Marcha V. A big thanks to Jayne May for the awesome Chinese Auction organization offering chances on great/beautiful gifts, which greatly helped PFLAG donations. Thank you one and all for your donations and support at this event. We are presently planning the next one at a midpoint in May; watch for more information in the future.

As you hear the news reports supporting gay marriages in San Francisco and Massachusetts, it can only harken us to prepare as the moment approaches our community in the near future. PFLAG will no doubt be there to support.

Therefore, your support now and at future events helps always for the greater causes that face us. A famous person once said: "If not you, who? If not now, when?"

by **Mark Hoovler**
PFLAG-Erie

PFLAG News

by *PFLAG-Erie Chapter*

PFLAG Scholarships Available


PFLAG is offering national and regional scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for high school seniors entering college in September, 2004. The program includes 23 different scholarships, which include: Palmer B. Carson-PFLAG Scholarships; and The DOW Chemical Company-PFLAG Scholarships. GLBT students, or straight students who have worked significantly to improve the welfare of GLBT people are eligible. Please check the PFLAG website, www.pflag.org, for info and applications. While parental support of, or consent to, the submission of an application to the PFLAG National Scholarships Program is desirable, it is not a requirement of the program. Special consideration is given to students in need, and to students who are living independently of their parents. Even students who are ineligible for federal funding may apply to the program for support.

Scholarships are restricted to graduating high school seniors with a minimum GPA of 3.0 who will be attending 2 or 4-year colleges in the fall of 2004. Other eligibility requirements are set out in the application materials available on the PFLAG website. Application packets should be mailed no later than March 15th, 2004. There are nine \$2,500 scholarships and fourteen \$1,000 scholarships available. Students can apply for more than one scholarship, and the scholarship committee will decide which will be awarded. Please, check out: www.pflag.org.

Meeting Notes

Our next PFLAG meeting is, as usual, the second Monday of the month: March 8th, at the UU Church on Route 97, Erie, from 7-9 PM.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) support group meets the 2nd Monday each month, 7-9 PM at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Hwy (Rte 97), Erie, PA. Also Straight Spouse Network focus group meets ad hoc (call for location/time for this meeting.) Call Maureen (814)-898-8341, write to PFLAG-Erie, PO Box 133, Harborcreek, PA 16421 or pflagerie@adelphia.net.



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Hispanic American Council of Erie

<p>554 East 10th St. Erie, PA 16503 814-455-0212 Fax-453-2363 hivtob@velocity.net</p>	<p>Sr. Sonny Concepción Melissa Montero HIV/AIDS Education & Prevention Outreach Worker / Educator</p>
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Community Announcements

Pride Picnic Committee to begin meeting

from Mike Mahler

The 12th Annual Erie Pride Picnic will be Saturday, June 12 at the Rotary Pavilion at Presque Isle State Park. This is a new venue for us and has some wonderful new features - more space, a lovely floating dock nearby, a small kitchen with running water, electricity, etc.

We need to do some planning for this year's picnic and are looking for people who want to be involved in making this fun and friendly event happen! We plan to start meeting in March. Contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or email info@eriegaynews.com to get involved. Looking forward to hearing from you!

"One Book, One Erie" begins with Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451"

Information from Erie County Public Library

The Erie County Public Library will sponsor a community-wide reading and discussion program, "One Book, One Erie," from Feb. 28 to April 15. Its first book project will be *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. *Fahrenheit 451* is a futuristic novel set in a totalitarian society of nonthinkers, where books are banned.

"One Book, One Erie" is modeled after a popular community book discussion program that has already been held in over 100 cities. Scheduled events include discussions, speakers, local author forums, readings from once-banned books, conference with Ray Bradbury, theater presentation, and other special events. For information call 451-6928 or 451-6908. Or browse to www.erialibrary.org

All programs are free and open to the public. "One Book, One Erie" is presented by the Erie County Public Library with support from the Friends of the Library and the Pennsylvania Humanities Council.

Community Announcements appear for free. Please include contact and attribution information.

March for Women's Lives

from Rebecca Pruveadenti

Do you want to see reproductive rights vanish? Save women's lives—take part in the March for Women's Lives on April 25, 2004.


George W. Bush opposes reproductive freedom in the US and around the globe... Roe V. Wade is hanging by a thread in the Supreme Court. Right wingers in Congress have intensified their attack on abortion rights... Ultraconservative judges are being promoted to powerful, lifetime seats... Bush's extremist friends want to outlaw abortion and birth control. This April the campaigns for the 2004 elections will be heating up. What better time to demonstrate the vast numbers of reproductive rights supporters in this nation? Come to Washington DC and help make the March for Women's Lives, the biggest abortion rights march in over a decade! Tell the President, Congress and the Supreme Court "We will not let you take away our reproductive freedom!" Organizers: Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood Federation of America Contact: Rebecca Pruveadenti. Phone: (814) 838-9034.

Slippery Rock bus to March for Women's Lives

from Salena Walter


On April 25, the Women's Center at Slippery Rock University will sponsor a bus trip to Washington, D.C. for the March for Women's Lives. If you wish to join us, send donations, or want further info contact T.J. at (724) 738-2992 or email tej014@sru.edu.

**18th Annual Pittsburgh Public Theater
Benefit for the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force**



**March 17, 2004
O'Reilly Theater, 621 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh**
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 Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force
Where Every Life Matters

Your Health Focus...

Alcoholism

by **Christine D. Hudak, MD**

Archeologists estimate that people have been making wine for 10,000 years, and beer even longer! Drinking alcohol is integral to many societies and cultures. Yet, 14 million people in the United States struggle with the disease of alcoholism. There have been a few studies that suggest that LGBT people have a higher risk of problem drinking – alcoholism or alcohol abuse, than the rest of the population. These studies have some design flaws, and so their conclusions may not be accurate. But even if our risk is not higher, it's probably at least the average, which is a staggering 1 in 13 adults. I am not here to tell you that alcohol is "bad." However, I do think it is important to talk about what health risks and benefits surround alcohol use, and offer some guidelines.

First off, let's talk about the benefits of drinking alcohol. It has been shown that drinking one to two alcoholic drinks per day decreases the risk of heart attack. Now, no physician is going to recommend someone start drinking for their "health," as many people do not stay within this limit and alcohol overuse can lead to a whole host of problems which I will touch on in a bit. The generally recommended amount of alcohol use that will not cause harm in most folks is one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men. Women are more sensitive to the effects of alcohol because of body water content, hormones, and differences in metabolism. (Certainly, there are some situations where no use of alcohol is safe, like during pregnancy.)

It would be important to define here what one drink is: 12 ounces of beer, 4 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of liquor. (My uncle used to have just "one drink" a day which measured about 8 ounces of scotch!) Alcoholism is a bit more difficult to define, as it is not necessarily just a numerical calculation of how much one drinks. The definition of alcoholism from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, www.niaaa.nih.gov, includes the components of craving, loss of control, physical dependence,

and tolerance. One of the definitions that I think accurately describes addiction is "use despite harm." We don't know exactly the cause of alcoholism, but there is definitely a genetic component.

Signs that you or someone you know may be having difficulty with alcohol include a high level of consumption, missing work, driving while intoxicated or getting a DUI, trouble in love relationships, financial trouble or health problems. Health effects include damage to the pancreas and liver, bone marrow suppression, heart problems, fetal alcohol syndrome and brain/central nervous system injury. It is estimated that there are 100,000 deaths per year where alcohol is a major factor. Of course, we can't overlook the 17,000 traffic fatalities per year involving alcohol, either.

There are a variety of ways to get help for problem drinking, and this will depend on the individual's needs. Some will need inpatient "detox" to manage withdrawal symptoms before going in to multi-disciplinary outpatient treatment. Some prefer to work with a personal chemical dependency counselor in a more one on one fashion. Though not for everyone, Alcoholics Anonymous is still one of the most successful programs to help people obtain and maintain sobriety. I suspect you can get a meeting schedule from the local Erie Alcoholics Anonymous branch at 452-2675.

The tragedy of alcoholism is that it destroys not only lives, but relationships – between lovers, parents and children, siblings, friends. There is help out there for those who choose it. Some of the most interesting, kind and joyful people I have met are recovering alcoholics. I get the sense that they sincerely appreciate each and every day – "one day at a time." Not a bad motto for all of us to consider.

Wishing you health and happiness ...Christine

Sign up for our email list!
<http://eriegblt.eriegaynews.com>



PFLAG-Erie and Crawford Counties Chapter

Support, Education, Advocacy
for GLBT People, their families and friends

(814) 898-8341

pflagerie@adelphia.net

[PFLAG-TNET marchadenise@hotmail.com](mailto:PFLAG-TNET.marchadenise@hotmail.com)

Transgender Coordinator

HIV/AIDS News

Black Church Week of Prayer – March 7 - 13, 2004

by Patty Puline

Today, The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS is among the largest HIV/AIDS awareness programs targeting African communities with an estimated reach of over 200 million church members worldwide – Balm in Gilead Website

In Erie, we have been actively preparing for The Black Church Week of Prayer which began with our first Religion and AIDS Conference through the Erie County Dept of Health. Several ministers of African American churches attended these conferences and expressed interest in uniting an effort for black churches in an alliance to educate their congregations about HIV/AIDS issues.

Through our S.T.O.P. (Street Outreach Prevention Program), we have interacted with several churches in this effort. Greater Calvary and St. James A.M.E. (African Methodist Episcopal) have launched their own AIDS awareness programs in the black community.

Jannette Crosby and Elder Braxton Vaughan of Greater Calvary coordinate an annual HIV education event at their church with the Erie County Dept of Health. They have been conducting HIV/AIDS prevention education awareness programs since 1996. Youth from the city and county meet to learn about AIDS, listen to people who are living with the disease, and attend workshops. The workshops are designed to heighten awareness, impart scientific and biological information about the replication process of HIV, and prepare the religious youth leaders to introduce and initiate health HIV/AIDS programs within their youth activities. Faith leaders tie in religious scripture to reinforce abstinence values within the framework of each workshop. Students receive handouts and complete activities to strengthen those principles.

Fifty percent of all new HIV infection is among people ages 15-24, yet many young people still lack information not only on sexual and reproductive and life skills, but also negotiation, decision making, and communication. Each training workshop brings together religious youth leaders who are trained in basic

facilitation and communication skills and local HIV/AIDS educators and outreach workers

“AIDS is the leading cause of death for African Americans ages 25-44 and currently AIDS is not only the leading cause of death in many African countries, but it has reduced life expectancy (in Kenya, life expectancy has dropped due to AIDS from 63 to 45 years) and is leaving orphaned children to fend for themselves in an environment increasingly empty of healthy adults. It is projected that in the next decade AIDS will orphan almost one half of all Zimbabwean children, and half of those orphans will be HIV positive.” – Balm in Gilead Website

Saint James A.M.E. Church, through the leadership of Miss Claudette Macadory, has agreed to host the very first “Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS”. This church has consistently worked with the Erie County Dept of Health on World AIDS Day, providing services to the community reflecting the spiritual issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. They have worked in concert with other organizations to further the effort of HIV education by being members of the S.T.O.P. project.

Once again, The Balm In Gilead invites all congregations who have not yet joined this crusade for HIV/AIDS education, prevention, service and compassion to join us now! Currently the worldwide AIDS pandemic continues to disproportionately affect African peoples around the country and around the world. – The Balm in Gilead website

These types of approaches towards the fight against HIV/AIDS increase the reach and impact of HIV prevention education health interventions directed to young people to break the silence in their faith-based communities. Building community support for behavior change also is essential, to ensure that young people find approval for their actions and have access to services.

The Erie County Dept of Health invites all African American Churches to participate in this day of healing. For more information, please call Steve Simmelkjaer at 451-7875 or 572-3146.

Pray for healing,
Patty Puline, Health Educator
Erie County Dept of Health
Erie Gay News Contributing Writer

Youth

Day of Silence

by Jeremy Person

The Day of Silence, a project of GLSEN in collaboration with USSA, is a student-led day where many people who support creating safe schools for all GLBTQ students take a day long vow of silence to recognize and protest the harassment, bullying and discrimination - in effect, the silencing - that GLBTQ students face in schools.

In 1996, students at the University of Virginia organized the first Day of Silence with over 150 students participating. In 1997, organizers took their effort national and nearly 100 colleges and universities participated. In 2001, GLSEN became the official organizational sponsor with new funding, staff and volunteers.

The Day of Silence Project has been very successful thus far. On April 10, 2002, an estimated 150,000 students - more than one in 10 American high schools - organized events, making it the largest, one-day student-led grassroots action on GLBTQ rights in American history. GLSEN spokespeople appeared on national media outlets including CNN and NPR, with extensive local media coverage from coast to coast.

The Day of Silence Project is a very necessary project. GLSEN's 2001 National School Climate Survey found that 4 out of 5 GLBTQ students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment at school and 30% report missing at least a day of school in the past month out of fear for their personal safety. The Day

of Silence helps bring us closer to making anti-GLBTQ bullying, harassment and name-calling unacceptable in America's schools.

The Day of Silence is one element of a larger effort to create safe schools for all GLBTQ students. Many communities, in addition to supporting the Day of Silence, host Breaking The Silence events, rallies, legislative lobby days, performances and more - both on the Day of Silence and all-year round. We are also asking our national leaders to support policies that create safe schools for all. Many communities are asking their local and state leaders to support and implement similar policies.

McDowell High School has been involved in this project for the past two years. We are planning now to achieve a great day for all April 21st. And as a final charge to all, what are you going to do to end the silence?

Third Of Northern Ireland Gay youth attempt suicide

The Luck o' the Irish doesn't seem to apply to gay youth in Northern Ireland.

A recent report by the government of Northern Ireland shows that nearly one of every three gay youths attempt suicide and a quarter more physically harm themselves. The study, commissioned by Northern Ireland's Department of Education, found what it calls "staggering" levels of prejudice and bullying in the British province's schools and that five times as many gay young people are being medicated for depression as in the general student population. Gay rights activists called on the government to "wake up" to and act on the report. The report also says that LGBT youths were 20 times more likely to develop eating disorders than heterosexuals of the same age, and that after realizing they are gay, students wait an average of five years before coming out to their parents out of fear. "This report makes very stark reading which reflects the isolation these young people are facing here," said Dennis Palmer the director of Youthnet, one of the groups which carried out the research.

—Information from *ebonylesbigay.com*

No Name-Calling Week

The national *No Name-Calling Week* Coalition aims to create safer schools by making bullying, harassment, and name-calling unacceptable through public education campaigns that motivate youth to change their behavior and mobilize students and educators to take school-based action around the problem of name-calling and verbal harassment. National No Name-Calling Week takes place March 1-5, 2004. For information visit www.NoNameCallingWeek.org

National News Briefs

by Bob

Courts Take Different Directions on Gay Issues

Courts in Massachusetts and Kansas have moved in different directions on issues dealing with equal rights for gays and lesbians.

The Massachusetts Supreme Court, clarifying its landmark ruling, has told the state's legislature that only full, equal marriage rights for gay couples - rather than civil unions - are constitutional. The move clears the way for the nation's first same-sex marriages in the state as early as May 17.

"The history of our nation has demonstrated that separate is seldom, if ever, equal," the four justices who ruled in favor of gay marriage wrote in the advisory opinion requested by the state Senate. Seven gay couples sued in 2001 and last November, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled 4-3 that gay couples have a constitutional right to marry. The court gave the legislature six months to change state laws. However, the vague wording of the ruling left state lawmakers on both sides of the issue uncertain if Vermont-style civil unions would satisfy the court's decision.

The Massachusetts court said any civil unions bill that falls short of marriage would establish an "unconstitutional, inferior and discriminatory status for same-sex couples."

Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, a Republican, and some legislative leaders are pushing for an amendment to the state constitution defining marriage as between a man and a woman. However, the earliest a constitutional amendment could appear on the state voting ballot would be 2006.

Another court ruling in Kansas however, has affirmed the right to set different standards for gays. The Kansas Court of Appeals has ruled that it is legal to hand down harsher criminal punishments for illegal sex with children when homosexual acts are involved.

The Court, in a 2-1 decision, said the legislature can justify different legal penalties for heterosexual vs. homosexual sodomy because of higher health risks or in attempting to "encourage and preserve the traditional sexual mores of society."

The ruling came as a result of an appeal from a young Kansas man who was sentenced to 17 years in prison for having sex with a 14-year-old boy. The convicted man was 18 at the time of the incident. If his partner had been female, his maximum prison sentence would have been one year and three months.

The American Civil Liberties Union which argued that the different sentencing was unconstitutional, cited last June's U.S. Supreme Court ruling which struck down state laws criminalizing gay sex between consenting adults. But the Kansas judges rejected the argument saying the Supreme Court ruling did not apply to sex acts involving children.

Ohio Legislature Bans Same Sex Marriage

In one of the most sweeping measures of its kind, the Ohio legislature has passed a bill making same-sex marriage illegal in the state. Republican Gov. Robert Taft says he will sign the bill into law.

The new law also bans civil unions. In addition, it prohibits domestic partnerships that extend medical insurance and other legal benefits of marriage to same-sex couples. That provision only applies to state employees and their partners, but some businesses fear the language could prohibit private companies from offering similar benefits.

Ohio's new law was a reaction to the November Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling that declared bans on same-sex marriage unconstitutional.

"You can hear the rumblings everywhere, like a herd of buffaloes. We're not going to let liberal Mas-


(continued next page)

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National News

(continued from previous page)

sachusetts define marriage for the rest of America," said Phil Burress, president of Citizens for Community Values in Cincinnati, and a leader in the national effort to stop same-sex marriage.

The new measure makes Ohio the 38th state to adopt so-called "Defense of Marriage" laws.

Community Establishes Couples Registry

While Ohio lawmakers were making gay marriage illegal, the city of Cleveland Heights, OH, was taking steps to recognize domestic partnerships.

As a result of a measure approved last fall by 55% of the city's voters, the domestic registry allows both gay and straight unmarried couples to register at City Hall as domestic partners. Those registering receive a notarized document which has no legal standing, but supporters hope it will eventually make it easier for them to share employment benefits, inherit property and get hospital visiting rights.

Cleveland Heights, a city of 50,000 residents, has a history of supporting gay rights. It was the first city in Ohio to adopt an ordinance giving health benefits to same-sex partners of city employees.

The fee for registering a domestic partnership is \$50 for residents and \$65 for nonresidents. Mayor Edward Kelly says he's received many calls from gay and straight couples interested in the registry. He indicated that eventually, the city will offer the registration online and by mail.

PA Young Democrats Elect Gay President

The Pennsylvania Young Democrats have elected a gay man as president of the state-wide organization.

Tony Campisi, who is also Vice Chairman of the Delaware County Democratic Party, was elected to the post in January. He has been active in Democratic politics since 1994, and plans an aggressive program to reach out to young voters and recruit new members into the organization.

"The Young Democrats are very active in parts of Pennsylvania but not in others," he notes. "I want to help the existing chapters grow and establish new

chapters as well." He plans to do this by getting people involved in politics, and he sees the Internet as an important tool in accomplishing this goal. Campisi points out that presidential candidate Howard Dean has shown how important the Internet can be in advancing ideas and giving people a voice in politics.

Campisi explains that one of the main roles of the Young Democrats is to support the state Democratic Party and help funnel volunteers into the campaigns of Democratic candidates. Any Democrat up to age 36 can belong to the Young Democrats. He predicts that 2004 will be a good year for Democrats in Pennsylvania, thanks primarily to the strong leadership of Gov. Ed. Rendell.

Campisi says his sexuality has never been an issue in his political activities. "I don't wear my sexuality on my sleeve," he states. His goal is to do the best job he can for the Democratic Party and for Democratic candidates in Pennsylvania.

Baylor University Revokes Gay Student's Scholarship

A student at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas, claims that the university revoked his scholarship because he is gay.

Matt Bass, 24, said he was halfway through his course of instruction when two assistant deans summoned him to their office and asked him if he was gay.

"I said it was none of your business," Bass stated, adding that his decision to come out to his friends in May 2003, led to him losing his scholarship.

"One of my friends told his girlfriend who happened to tell her sorority, and it spread like wildfire and got around to a pastor of a church. He asked me if I was gay and I told him," Bass recalls. "It's generally assumed that if you talk to a minister that conversation is private," he added.

But Bass claims the pastor revealed his sexuality to officials at the university, which is affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. In December, Bass said he received a letter explaining he was losing his scholarship from Baylor because he was gay.

"The standards for a university scholarship are having a good moral Christian life and high grades. I didn't break any rules," he said.

PA State representative proposes anti-gay legislation

A Pennsylvania State Representative is set to introduce a package of fifty-one amendments expanding the state's Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to include civil unions and domestic partnerships and limiting same-sex couples' abilities to adopt and the availability of benefits to LGBT state public employees. Rep. Jerry Birmelin (R-Monroe, Pikes and Wayne Counties) is the sponsor of the legislation that will attempt to amend House Bill 345, which is an adoption bill. House Bill 345 may be voted on as soon as March 15, 2004.

Pennsylvania LGBT activists began hearing about the amendment strategy on February 10 and began to see the text of some the amendments later that week. While approximately forty of the amendments have not been available for review yet, they reportedly address the same issues.

"It is unfortunate that some of our legislators have nothing better to do than introduce anti-gay, anti-family legislation that really hurts all Pennsylvanians, especially children," said Stacey Sobel, executive director of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights.

One of the amendments would limit adoption to married couples, a man and a woman, and two

others prohibit adoption by gay and lesbian people. Currently, it is legal in Pennsylvania for same-sex couples to adopt children.

The other amendments would not only keep the state's DOMA law in place, but would expand it to prevent "spousal equivalent relationships" which are defined as "A relationship between two individuals of the same sex or different sexes which the individuals may believe is similar to marriage, regardless of what the relationship is called. The term includes a domestic partnership, life partnership, civil union, domestic union, reciprocal beneficiary relationship and cohabitation relationship."

The website of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights will be carrying updates on these developments in the near future. They are at www.center4civilrights.org

Quote-Unquote

"You can't claim you're the party of smaller government, and then clamor to make laws about love."

Bill Maher
in the *Boston Globe* February 14, 2004

"Like the naturalized citizens who are expected to know more about America than those of us born here, gay couples are being held to a standard the denizens of Vegas chapels and divorce courts have never had to meet: to justify the simple human urge, so taken for granted by the rest of us, to fully and legally come together."

Anna Quindlen

Contact your Pennsylvania State representative

Pennsylvania voters are encouraged to contact their state representatives to let them know how they feel about this legislation.

Remember that politeness is more effective in these communications. In letters and other written communications, it is preferable to address to: The Honorable [their name]

To find out who your PA representative is: visit www.house.state.pa.us

If you are not registered to vote, this is a good reason to consider becoming registered. Contact your county voter registration office for a registration form. Also check out the online registration link at the Erie Gay News website: www.eriegaynews.com

Michael Dithers

by Michael Mahler

Recently, I was talking with someone who thought that the difference between civil unions and marriage was just a name. This turns out to be very common (over 50% of GLBT folks mistakenly think so.) They are NOT the same!!! There are over 1,000 rights that couples get when they are legally married that they do NOT get if they enter into a civil union in Vermont. That's part of the reason why the Massachusetts Supreme Court said that separate and equal was hardly ever equal.

Today, a lesbian couple wrote to ask where they could get married. I told them that although there are places in Erie where they could have a commitment ceremony performed, it would have no legal weight. Pennsylvania wouldn't recognize a civil union performed in Vermont.

Although San Francisco is issuing same sex marriage licenses at this writing, there is a good chance that they will be nullified.

There is NO place in the US where same sex couples can be legally married. The Massachusetts State Court has ordered equal marriage rights by May, but that is being fought, and untested how other states will handle that.

Marriage info & updates

To stay informed and updated on marriage issues and events around the country, visit the **Freedom to Marry** website at www.freedomtomarry.org

Where can you pick up EGN?

Check our website for a list of locations
www.eriegaynews.com

Pride 2004

Dates for Pride events in the region are here:

June 4 - June 6 Pride Buffalo
www.pridebuffalo.org (716) 879-0999

June 6 - Erie Pride Picnic Presque Isle (New location—Rotary Pavilion!) More info at: info@eriegaynews.com, (814)456-9833, or www.eriegaynews.com

June 17-20 - Hamilton (ON) Pride Festival
www.hamiltonpride.com

June 19 - Pittsburgh PrideFest Street fair and parade www.glccpgh.org

June 19 - Cleveland Pride Parade and Festival, (216) 371-0214, www.clevelandpride.org.

June 21-27 - Toronto Pride
www.pridetoronto.com

June 26 - Columbus Pride Parade and Festival (614) 299-7764.

July 4-13 London (ON) Pride
www.londonpride.ca

July 9-11 Rochester Pride Basics Tim Rhoades@usa.xerox.com

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Entertainment Notes

by Deb Spilko

Television

Comedy Central's ***Straight Plan for the Gay Man*** is a hilarious and well-crafted parody of *Queer Eye*. In each of the series' three episodes four straight male comedians ("the Flab 4") work with a gay man to help him pass as straight for a day. In the wrong hands this could have been pretty offensive, but it's all pretty good-natured, and the straight guys actually poke a lot of fun at themselves. Mondays at 10 PM, starts February 23, for more info, videos of the show, and repeat schedule, visit www.comedycentral.com

It's not exactly a parody, but FOX is sort of turning Bravo's *Boy Meets Boy* upside down with their new reality/dating series ***Playing it Straight***. 14 bachelors will compete for the affections of one single woman, but some of the bachelors are just—you guessed it—*playing* it straight. The series airs Fridays at 8 PM, starting March 14.

PlanetOut and **Gay.com** now carry an extensive **GLBT "TV Guide"** on their sites, with a unique feature: Some of the listings are linked to articles about the show or about a particular person or celebrity. To get to the listings, click on Entertainment.

Just 11 days after its debut, Showtime announced it would renew ***The L Word***, making it the quickest renewal Showtime has ever made. Ratings for the first two episodes were four times Showtime's average rating. The new season will begin in June 2004.

Here's a first—Erie's FOX affiliate, WFXP, has been running an ad for **Interactive Male** phone dating service since last September. The ad usually airs weeknights a little after midnight.

Meeting people

Unfortunately, when I listed dating/introduction services in the "Love stuff!" article last month, I wasn't aware of **TG Personals**. This service provides a lot more choices for Transgender and Intersex people and others who are interested in meeting them. TG Personals helps people meet for love, friendship, penpals, roommates, or advice. Check them out at www.tgpersonals.com

Festivals

WimFest 2004 (Women's International Music Festival) will be held in August 6, 7, and 8 in North Canton, Ohio. The festival includes workshops, fishing, hiking, vendors, dances, car & bike show, workshops, performances by Vickie Shaw (comedian), Leah Zicari, 2 Girls Alone, Alexis Antes, Robin Stone, Christine Martucci, Claudia, Troubadours of Divine Bliss, Kindred, Emily Zuzik, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Halcyon, Wishing Chair, CommonbonD, Mother Jane, Kim Tuvim, Christine Havrilla, Lori Wyatt, Lojo Russo, Red Letter Day, Frozen Feet, Natalie Darkes, IBA Champion Vonda Ward, Fire & Desire...and more. More details soon. Info: www.wimfest.com or (330) 219-0409.

Vacations for families & kids

GLBT parents have increasingly more vacation choices.

Family Pride Coalition offers a number of events for GLBT parents and their kids. The events allow the kids to be around families like theirs, and they provide a safe and supportive environment for the parents. Some events this year include their Family Pride Camp Weekend in New Jersey (March 28-30), Weekend at Walt Disney World (June 17-20), Family Week 2004 (Saugatuck, MI from July 17 to 24 and Provincetown, MA from July 31 to Aug 6). www.familypride.org or (202)331-5015.

Rosie and Kelly O'Donnell have started **R Family vacations** which offers "Family friendly vacations designed especially for the gay and lesbian community." Their first-ever gay and lesbian family cruise happens July 11-18. In the future, they plan to offer a variety of family activities, like small tours, ski trips, resort programs, fishing trips and safaris. Browse to www.rfamilyvacations.com or call 1-866-R-FAM-VAC.

Mountain Meadow's Summer Camp is a two-week overnight camping experience (not a family vacation thing, in other words) for kids 9-17 from GLBT and other nontraditional families. It's located in southern New Jersey and runs from August 15-28. Visit www.mountainmeadow.org

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No Appointment Necessary

**Erie County Health Department
 606 West Second Street**

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Monday 12 noon - 3:30 pm

Tuesday 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

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No Appointment Necessary

Erie County Health Department

Monday 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Wednesday 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Thursday 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

**Appointments can be made
 at the following locations:**

Erie County Health Department
 Erie Office, Outreach Services
 (814) 451-6732

Erie County Health Department
 Corry Office - (814) 663-3891

Hispanic American Council
 (814) 455-0212

Multi-Cultural Health Evaluation
 Delivery System (MHEDS)
 (814) 453-6229 or (814) 453-4728

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