

March 2005



EGN

Erie Gay News



Pride Events meeting

We will be meeting to set up 2005 Pride events on Sunday, March 13 at 2 PM at Dave's, 3123 Raspberry St, Erie. All interested folks are invited to attend. The date of the Pride Picnic will be Saturday, June 25 at the Rotary Pavilion at Presque Isle. Please note that this is 2 weeks later than most years! We will need more volunteers the day of the event than we had last year. We already have a page at www.eriegaynews.com with information about the event. You can also preregister for the event!

We also need someone who is willing to be in charge of coordinating a possible fall Pride Rally/Weekend. We typically have done this in the time frame of mid September through early October. I am only up to doing one Pride event per year. If we don't get a coordinator, then we will only have a Pride Picnic and no fall Pride event this year. I am more than happy to advise and help out.

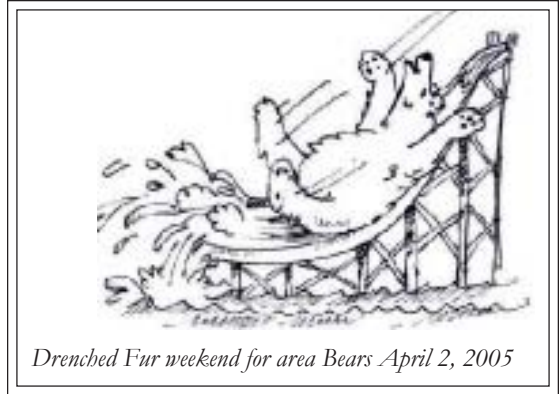
For more info, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com

Erie Gay/Straight Alliance for Equality update

The new political group is working on a voters guide and other projects. They will be meeting the last Thursday of the month at 7 PM at Aroma's Coffeehouse, 2174 W 8th St, Erie PA. For more info, call Parris at (814) 825-2669, email phobbs101@aol.com or browse to <http://hrc.meetup.com/101/events>.

Menspace weekday get togethers

Please note that Menspace will be getting together about every 3 weeks on a Wednesday at 7 PM at Moonsense, 5442 Peach St in Erie. The next get together is on March 9. This is a coffee shop and is across the street from Millcreek Community Hospital. For more info, call Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833, email info@eriegaynews.com or browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>



Drenched Fur weekend for area Bears April 2, 2005

Drenched Fur Weekend!

Saturday, April 2nd from 1 PM - 5 PM Erie, PA. Join the Bears from Buffalo, Cleveland, Erie, & Pittsburgh for good fun at Erie's Premier Indoor Water Park Resort - Splash Lagoon! Wet 'n wild Bear camaraderie for only \$20! Then join the guys from 8 PM 'til ? for the Bear Bar Night at Erie's Own Trance Dance Club. Stay overnight in downtown Erie for a great price! -Only \$52 / night with up to 4 guests/room w/Continental Breakfast & Saturday bar/hotel shuttle service! Call the Ramada Inn directly at (814) 456-2961 to book the 'Bear' Special! Check out the web page for more info at www.eriegaynews.com/drenchedfur or email us for questions at drenchedfur@hotmail.com. Sign up today! Participating in Splash Lagoon has two options: Spectator - Ya just want to come and watch! OR Swimmer - Don't be shy, join in the fun and get wet! Mail payments to: Drenched Fur PO Box 3753 Erie PA 16508. Confirmation Packets including directions and details will be provided upon receipt of payment. All reservations & payments must be received by Monday, March 21, 2005. Email us for questions at: drenchedfur@hotmail.com (contributed by Gary Snyder)

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www.eriegaynews.com

Editors: Deb Spilko and Mike Mahler
Ad Design: MAL
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 NW PA 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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PFLAG-Erie and Crawford Counties Chapter

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

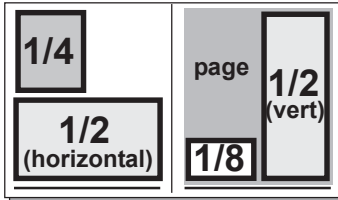
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Half (vert)	\$90 (\$81 prepaid)	7" high X 2-7/8" wide
Page	\$160 (\$144 prepaid)	7-1/2" high X 6" wide

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

Trance March Calendar

Tuesday, March 1st

**DRAFTS 75¢
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10 PM - MIDNIGHT**

Bob Bearfield

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Thursday, March 17th

**WELL DRINKS
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\$1.50**

St. Pat's Party

Cum get
your Irish
up with Us!

PART 2

**DRINKS
SPECIALS**

Saturday, March 12th

St. Pat's Party

Prizes for
wearing of
the GREEN!

PART 1

Saturday, April 2nd

A Drenched Fur Weekend

We are hosting a
Bear Party. Welcome
all Bears from the Tri-Cities.

Saturday, March 26th

Prizes for the coolest
sunglasses and for the
guys and gals who have the balls and
ovaries to wear their bathing suits out
on this night!

**We can't wait for
Summer Party!**

Live Trivia Mondays!
7PM until 9PM

Girls you asked for it! Come meet
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Also, Please welcome John also a
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(continued from cover)

Renaissance City Women's Choir tour comes to Edinboro

(Pittsburgh, PA) The Renaissance City Women's Choir (RCWC), Pittsburgh's only choir comprised of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and supportive individuals, has announced details of its first-ever concert tour. Their second stop will be at the University Center of Edinboro University on Saturday, March 19, 2005, at 7:00 PM. The sponsoring organizations are Identity – IUP's Gay/Straight Alliance, and the Women's History Month coordinators. This performance will be free and open to the public, and is suitable for all ages. A reception will follow the concert. The music will be a combination of songs about adventurous women, love, and empowerment.

The tour is in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the RCWC. The Three Rivers Community Foundation has provided funding support for this initiative. "We are excited to be reaching communities outside of Pittsburgh," commented RCWC Artistic Director Susan Haugh. "Performing at the universities gives us the unique opportunity to reach young people with our message of creating change through the power of music."

Comprised of approximately 35 individuals from the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, the Renaissance City Women's Choir performs at numerous venues throughout the year, including the annual Pittsburgh Pride Week festivities. The group is a member of GALA, one of the nation's leading choral music advocacy organizations. For more information about the tour or the Renaissance City Choirs, please visit our website at www.rccpittsburgh.org

Bethany J. Robson, CSW-R	
515 Pine St. Jamestown, New York 14701 Phone: 716-483-5830 Fax: 716-664-5186	
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Erie Networking Group

The GLBT/friendly business and professionals group is next meeting on Tuesday, March 15 at 7 PM at Trance, 1607 Raspberry, Erie PA. We are currently working on a print version of the Resource Directory, which should be out by the end of the year. For more info, contact Brian at glbterrie@aol.com, Michael at info@eriegaynews.com or (814) 456-9833. You can also sign up for the email list at http://www.eriegaynews.com/mailman/listinfo/networking_eriegaynews.com

Thanks from SHOUT Outreach

SHOUT Outreach would like to thank Lee and all of his staff at Trance Dance Club for their help with the Red Ribbon Evening. The evening was a success and the party was enjoyed by all. SHOUT Outreach and Trance invites you to our next event which we hope to have in April. Be sure to read the Erie Gay News to join us .

Adult Mart

a proud sponsor of



invites you to the Grand Opening
of **The Zone** Dance Club at 133
West 18th Street on March 5th.
Come join ALL the FUN!

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12 noon - 3:30 pm

TUESDAY
9:30 am - 1:00 pm

MONDAY
9:00 am - 11:00 am

WEDNESDAY
1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

THURSDAY
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

HIV & STD CLINIC **451-6700**

Appointments can be made at the following locations:

Erie County Health Department
Erie Office
Outreach Services
814.451.6732

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

All services are free and confidential.
Specially trained outreach workers are available for in home appointments, (HIV testing only).

Leah Zicari, Jamie Anderson in Erie April 9

by Kate Hentz

National touring artist Jamie Anderson and Leah Zicari, favorite of local fans and with a national career of her own, will perform a double bill concert at 8 PM on Saturday, April 9th at the UU Congregation, 7180 Perry Highway in Erie.

A touring artist since 1987, Jamie Anderson is a self-described “singer/songwriter/parking lot attendant.” Jamie doesn’t really park cars for a living, but her mother always said she “should have a career to fall back on.”

With a style that is a remarkable combo of Shawn Colvin satin-smooth and Suzanne Westenhoefer wacko, Jamie’s songs have been featured on the Dr. Demento radio show and National Public Radio’s “Car Talk.” Jamie has been a main stage performer at Kerrville Folk Festival and the National Women’s Music Festival. The newest of her seven CD’s to date, “Listen,” appears regularly in the list of the Top 40 on Outvoice.net. Jamie resides in North Carolina with a cat that thinks he’s owed royalties for her composition, “When Cats Take Over the World.” This stop on her tour marks Jamie Anderson’s first visit to Erie. Find out more about Jamie at www.jamieanderson.com.

Another national artist who is no stranger to local audiences, Leah Zicari’s most recent appearance in Erie was her opening performance with Tret Fure at the Unitarian Universalist Church in November, 2003. Classically trained with a master’s degree in guitar performance, Leah has a vocal sensibility that matches her gorgeous string play.

Leah’s current release, “Pretty on Thursday,” has won kudos from fans and peers alike. Says fellow singer/songwriter Edie Carey of the cd: “Pretty On Thursday is just a phenomenal record. Zicari is on fire from the first whispered notes of the record to the very last chord. This is a woman who knows exactly who she is, who knows how to play the hell out of her instrument, and who has clearly had music running through every last vein since the day she was born. I don’t know exactly what happened in that studio up there in Canada, but it was clearly magical.” Visit Leah’s website at www.leahzicari.com

Tickets (\$15) for this special event are available at Aromas Coffeehouse, 2174 W. 8th Street in Erie, from Chiropractic Works, 413 High Street in Waterford, and from tallfirs booking at 716-326-7480.



*Above: Leah Zicari (photo: Vivian Babuts)
Below: Jamie Anderson (photo: Robert Campbell)*



Calendar

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

Feb 23 - Performance: Kinsey Sicks at Edinboro University (Edinboro PA) Gay musical/comedy group details page 10.

Feb 24 - Erie Gay/Straight Alliance at Aroma's Coffeehouse 2174 W 8th St, Erie PA Join us for coffee and chat. Email: phobbs101@aol.com. Call Parris at (814) 825-2669. Browse to <http://hrc.meetup.com/101/events/>.

Feb 25 - 27 - North Coast Leather Weekend & Mr. Leather Cleveland Contest (Cleveland OH) Presented by Laws Leather & N.A.I.L. (New Age In Leather) . Friday Night Registration Party (Meet The Contestants & Judges), Friday Night Pub Crawl, Saturday Brunch, Saturday Dinner, Saturday Contest, Saturday Night Dungeon Party, Sunday Brunch, North Coast Leather Weekend Run Pin, Shuttle Service For Out-Of-Town Guests, Complete Run Packages. (216) 961-0544. Details www.mrclevelandleather.com/.

Mar 2 - Always Our Children meets Catholic Charities, 329 W 10th St, Erie PA. For Catholic parents of GLBT children. Phone: (814) 456-2091.

Mar 4 - Vertigo Party (Butler PA) Vertigo is BYOB vertigov@aol.com. www.webspawner.com/users/vertigov.

Mar 5 - Martika, Tiffany & Sabrina at Rascals (Jamestown NY) "80s Theme. \$1 off for biggest hair." 701 N. Main Sr. (716) 484-3220.

Mar 5 - Menspace meets: Be Colorful (Peter and Tim's, Erie PA) 7:30 PM. "In honor of Neal, who always hosted during March, there is a theme *and* a donation! Since Neal loved a good party, we will not be in mourning, but we will celebrate for him! Theme: "Be Colorful." As winter continues, let's brighten

things up a bit! Colorful Attire; Colorful Snacks; Colorful Stories! Donation: In Memory of Neal, we would like to plant a tree at Frontier Park with a name plaque on it. If you can afford to donate cash, whatever amount, we will make this happen." Contact: Michael Mahler. (814) 456-9833. info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Mar 5 - Grand Opening of the New Zone Dance Club (Erie PA) Join us for the party of the year as we officially open the doors to your New Zone! We've moved! - and your favorite party place has gotten bigger and better! You asked for it ! We gave it to you! - Bigger bars!, bigger lounge!, bigger dance floor!, bigger sports/game room!, bigger parties!- and the Zone is now open Sundays! We are Erie's Largest Gay Party Complex! Get into your Zone! The New Zone Dance Club- 133 West 18th St.(just 2 blocks from the old Zone!) (814) 452-0125 www.thezonedanceclub.com

Mar 5 - CLAW Members at the Zone (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie PA) Cleveland Leather Awareness Weekend (CLAW), a Pansexual, 100% Non profit organization will have representatives at the



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& MAJOR HOLIDAYS

Calendar

Zone Dance Club on 133 West 18th Street Erie PA to Promote the Cleveland Leather Awareness Weekend, which will be held in Cleveland Ohio on April 29 thru May 1st. The Erie, PA event is being sponsored, in part, by Adult Mart - Erie, 1313 State Street, Erie, PA (814-459-7014). Contact: Ms Marcha. Phone: (814) 454-6214. Email: mistress_marcha@yahoo.com. Browse to <http://www.clawinfo.org>.

Mar 8 - Support group for those dealing with loss Hospice of Metropolitan Erie, 202 E 10th St, Erie PA 7 PM. Also meets Thursday, March 17 at 10 AM. Phone: (814) 456-6689. Email: hospice@velocity.net.

Mar 9 - Menspace get together at Moonsense 5442 Peach St, Erie PA 7 PM. "Informal get together to hang out at this local coffeeshop." Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Mar 12 - St. Pat's Party Part 1 at Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie PA "Prizes for wearing of the green!" Phone: (814) 456-3027. Browse to <http://www.trancedanceclub.com>.

Mar 12 - O'Zone St. Patrick's Day Party "Feeling Lucky? Join your friends for some four-leaf fun at our 6th Annual St. Patrick's Party! Wear Green! Have some green beer or dance an Irish jig! Catch the leprechaun and he might give you his pot of gold! Food, Fun, Friends! Get into your Zone! -the Gay rainbow ends here!" Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie PA (814) 452-0125 www.thezonedanceclub.com

Mar 13 - Pride Events meeting (Dave's, 3123 Raspberry St, Erie PA) 2 PM. We will be meeting plan for the Pride Erie Picnic on Saturday, June 25 at Presque Isle, and also about a possible Pride Rally/Week-

end this fall Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to www.eriegaynews.com/mailman/listinfo/picnic_eriegaynews.com.

Mar 14 - PFLAG-Erie-Crawford meets Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Highway, Erie PA 7 PM - 9 PM. Regular monthly meeting Phone: (814) 898-8341. Email: pflagerie@eriegaynews.com.

Mar 15 - Deadline for April 2005 EGN

Mar 15 - Erie Networking Group meets Trance Dance Club, 1607 Raspberry St, Erie PA 7 PM. GLBT & Friendly professionals/businesses Contact: Michael or Brian. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: glbterie@aol.com. Browse to http://www.eriegaynews.com/mailman/listinfo/networking_eriegaynews.com.

Mar 17 - St. Pat's Party Part 2 at Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie PA "Cum get your Irish up with Us! Well drinks and green beer \$1.50." Phone: (814) 456-3027. Browse to www.trancedanceclub.com.

Mar 18 - 2nd Annual Kings and Queens Contest at Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock PA) Swope Music Hall, 7 PM. "The contest is for drag kings and queens of Slippery Rock to compete for the titles of 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place. Prizes are awarded. It is hosted by Lady Rose Amore and Eda Bagel from Pittsburgh. We also will have some members of the Distinguished Iron City Kings there performing. The event is free and everybody is welcome to attend as it is part of our Unity Week at Slippery Rock University." Email: lgbasru.edu.

Mar 19 - Joker Night at Frank's (Warren PA) Contact Don Johnson at jtown10



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Reverend Gerald Knepper 835-0176
Non-denominational

Calendar

owner@eriegaynews.com. Bring a wrapped white elephant/gift.

Mar 21 - Postcards from Buster "Sugartime Episode" WQLN will at its normally scheduled time of 3:30 PM.

Mar 26 - Easter Bunny Hop! at Zone Dance Club "Hop on into the New Zone for our 6th Annual Easter Party! The Easter bunny will be handing out Easter eggs and treats! Guys-Hunt for a nice big basket! Ladies- find a cute cuddly chick! Dance on down the Bunny trail! Join your friends for a 'hopping' good time! - Happy Easter from your friends at the Zone!" 133 W 18th St, Erie. (814) 452-0125. www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Mar 26 - We can't wait for Summer Party! at Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie PA "Prizes for the coolest sunglasses and for the guys and gals who have the balls and ovaries to wear their bathing suits out on this night!" Phone: (814) 456-3027. www.trancedanceclub.com.

Mar 27 - Zone open Easter Sunday 133 W 18th St, Erie PA Spend Easter Sunday with your "Gay Family

and Friends" at the New Zone! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Mar 31 - Erie Gay/Straight Alliance at Aroma's Coffeehouse 2174 W 8th St, Erie PA Join us for coffee and chat. Email: phobbs101@aol.com. Call Parris at (814) 825-2669. Browse to http://hrc.meetup.com/101/events/.

Apr 1 - Vertigo Party (Butler PA) "Vertigo is BYOB we supply everything Cups, Ice, Mix, just bring your booze." Email: vertigov@aol.com. Browse to www.webspawner.com/users/vertigov.

Apr 2 - Drenched Fur Weekend (Erie PA) Details on front page of this issue.

Apr 4 - Ohio Residents: Last day to register to vote in OH Primary Election

Apr 9 - Menspace meets at Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie PA 7:30 PM. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to http://menspace.eriegaynews.com.

Apr 18 - Pennsylvania residents: Last day to register to vote in Pennsylvania Primary Election

Drenched Fur Weekend!

Saturday, April 2nd

1PM-5PM Erie, PA



Join the Bears from Buffalo, Cleveland, Erie, & Pittsburgh for good fun at Erie's Premier Indoor Water Park Resort - Splash Lagoon!

Bear camaraderie for only \$20!

Then join the guys from 8pm 'til ? for the Bear Bar Night at Erie's Own **Trance Dance Club**. Stay overnight in downtown Erie for a great price - only \$52/night with up to 4 guests/room with Continental Breakfast & Saturday bar/hotel shuttle service! Call the downtown **Ramada Inn** directly at (814) 456-2961 to book the "Bear" Special!

Make your reservation at www.eriegaynews.com/drenchedfur

E-mail us for questions at: drenchedfur@hotmail.com

Checks or Money Orders can be made payable to:

Drenched Fur PO Box 3753 Erie PA 16508

All reservations & payments must be received by Monday, March 21st

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On stage

Selected area events that may be of interest to GLBT audiences

Rent at University of Buffalo Center for Performing Arts, Feb. 22 and 23. (716) 645-ARTS www.ubcfa.org

Kinsey Sicks performs University Programming Board, Student Government Association and Identity are sponsoring Dragapella starring The Kinsey Sicks on February 23, at 8 PM in the Louis C. Cole Auditorium - Memorial Hall at Edinboro University. For over a decade, The Kinsey Sicks, America's Favorite Dragapella Beautishop Quartet, have served up a feast of music and comedy to audiences across the United States. Combining award winning a capella singing, sharp satire and over-the-top drag, The Kinsey Sicks have developed a large and loyal following. Free to University students, \$5 for general public. Tickets can be purchased at the door starting at 7 PM.

The Laramie Project Allegheny College (Playshop Theatre) in Meadville. February 24, 25, 26 at 8 PM and February 27 at 2:30 PM (814) 332-3414. Chronicles the life of the town of Laramie, Wyoming in the year after a young gay man named Matthew Shepard was murdered there.

Black, Gay & Proud, February 26. Evening of performances by Cleveland's top African American same-gender-loving singers, dancers, poets, musicians and actors, presented by BlackOut Unlimited in celebration of Black History Month, 8 PM, \$10, Cleveland State University Center Auditorium, East 22nd and Euclid Ave, Cleveland, (216) 937-2268.

Bob Bearfield performs at March 1 Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie PA. Singing and playing acoustical guitar Phone: (814) 456-3027. Browse to <http://www.trancedanceclub.com>.

Ani DiFranco in concert, March 2, 7:30 PM, Lakewood Civic Auditorium, Franklin Ave and Bunts Rd, Lakewood, Ohio (Cleveland), (216) 241-5555, www.cc.com.

LP Performs March 3 at Club Cafe 56 South 12th St., Pittsburgh, PA Box office Line: (412)431-4950 www.clubcafelive.com

Melissa Ferrick performs March 3 at the Grog Shop, 1765 Coventry Rd., Cleveland, OH Box office & Info Line: (216) 321-5588

Vagina Monologues March 12 8 PM Barrow-Civic Theatre, 1223 Liberty Street, Franklin, PA (814)437-3440, (800) 537-7769 www.barrowtheatre.com sponsored by Victims Resource Center of Venango Co.

Indigo Girls will perform with Magnapop March 12 at Odeon Concert Club, 1295 Old River Road, Cleveland OH, Box office & Info Line: 888-633-6688

Off the Wall: Marga Gomez presents Marga Gomez's Intimate Details at Andy Warhol Museum, 117 Sandusky Street, Pittsburgh PA March 12 (412) 237-8300. www.warhol.org/calendar

Paula Poundstone March 31 (note date change) at The Tralf 622 Main St., Buffalo, NY Box office & Info Line: 716-854-3068. *18 & over show.* www.newtralf.com/

Tribute to Liberace March 20 at Warner Theatre, Erie PA "An Erie Civic Music Presentation. Martin Preston performs a unique program that includes spectacular costume changes. The great opera singer and stage star William Garron accompanies Preston." Tickets (814) 864-5681 Web: www.ericcivicmusic.com

Kate Clinton April 1 at The Tralf, 622 Main St., Buffalo, NY Box Office & Info Line: 716-854-3068 www.newtralf.com *18 & over show.*

Shear Madness performed April 3 through 30 by Studio Arena Theater at The Tralf, 622 Main St., Buffalo, NY Box office & Info Line: 716-854-3068 www.newtralf.com

North Coast Men's Chorus: "Broadway Our Way" April 9 and 10. Waetjen Auditorium, Cleveland State University, 2001 Euclid Ave, Cleveland, Ohio. www.ncmchorus.org, (216) 556-0590.

Websites and email lists for area performers:

Greg Ropp www.gregropp.com

Jocelyn Porter Project
www.jocelynporterproject.com

Leah Zicari www.leahzicari.com

Two Girls Alone <http://twogirlsalone.iuma.com> *email list: twogirlsalone@att.net.*

Michael Dithers

by Michael Mahler

Well, it has certainly been a busy month! With some of the new organizations and activities that are starting to develop, I have joked to a few folks that I should turn straight, just to free up my calendar.

I am glad that WQLN will be airing the Sugartime! episode of Postcards from Buster. The small snippet that I saw looked perfectly innocuous. But leave it up to the Religious Right to throw a hissy fit over a barely-there reference to a lesbian couple. Noted Whack Job and Shrieking Virago Extraordinaire Diane Gramley even had some kind of headline on her (poorly designed!) web site "Yes, they have come for our children!" As I have found occasion to remark lately, "I may sometimes do theatre, but I NEVER do drama."

But kudos to those who showed up and spoke up with quiet dignity. I think that speaks volumes for our community. Jan the sugarmaker asked us to share this event with our readers on **Mar 12 - 13 - Maple Syrup Weekend** 10 AM - 4 PM. Browse to www.northwestpamapleassociation.org.

As mentioned elsewhere, the first meeting for the Pride event planning will be Sunday, March 13 at 2 PM at Dave's near 31st and Raspberry. We have a fair grasp on the Pride Picnic, but the Rally/Weekend is up in the air. I was really stressed out last year from doing 2 events in a short space, and have decided that I cannot be the coordinator for a fall event. So, someone needs to step forward, or we will just have only the Picnic.

Among the groups coming into existence is the Erie Gay/Straight Alliance, which I have tried to help along. This group is particular important because of not only the large number of new candidates in the

elections this spring, but because some Pennsylvania legislators have introduced House Bill 204 which would repeal sections of the Hate Crimes Law of 2002 that added sexual orientation, gender identity, actual or perceived ancestry, mental or physical disability. We must not allow these important protections to be removed! Take action today! You would be surprised by how little it takes to make a difference.

I have been doing some small amount of work with local GLBT history. I have a page with some info going back to the late 1960's at www.eriegaynews.com/history. We really need to expand what is in there and add more. I have also been in contact with 6 GLBT archives, and have sent them 2000 and later runs of PRIDE News and Erie Gay News, and have put together pre 2000 runs that I will be sending out. It means a lot to me that our history will be spread around.

We will have more next month about the response to a local gay youth in the Just Ask Vicki column. I believe that the columnist showed extremely bad judgment in how she responded to his claims of the Erie GLBT community as being nasty, gossiping and backstabbing.

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WQLN previews “Sugartime!”



An information table offered free materials about the Postcards from Buster series and children’s programming. At the table is A.J. Czerwinski, F.A.M.I.L.I.E.S. Ready-to-Learn Coordinator at WQLN



Moderator Cindy Patton, takes questions from those in attendance.

by Deb

On February 9, WQLN-TV held a preview showing of the “Sugartime!” episode of the Postcards from Buster series. The episode shows Buster visiting a friend in Vermont during maple syrup time. The friend has two moms.

PBS pulled the episode after newly-appointed Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings denounced the “Sugartime!” episode and demanded that if PBS aired it, she would demand a refund of the portion that the Department of Education had funded. Boston PBS affiliate WGBH, which had produced the episode, offered to distribute it to affiliates that chose not to ban it. After viewing the episode, WQLN decided they would air “Sugartime!”

WQLN president and general manager Dwight Miller introduced the preview, giving some background about the series, which is a spin off from the popular *Arthur* series.

Miller also read a statement from Erie native Marc Brown, creator and executive producer of the *Postcards from Buster* series; Brown said that he was disappointed by PBS’ decision. Miller also speculated on what Fred Rogers—of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood—might have said about the controversy, and cited pro-tolerance statements that Rogers had made.

The 30-minute “Sugartime!” episode was then shown. Afterward, Miller took comments from the audience, with Saint Vincent media specialist Cindy Patton moderating. Most of those attending the preview responded in a supportive manner. In also seemed that few of the episode’s opponents had made the effort to actually come and watch the episode.

As the meeting was breaking up, a man stood up and, angrily jabbing his finger toward Miller, told him that if WQLN aired this episode he would complain to Congressman English about government of funding PBS. Another man said, “Well, that just means I’ll have to increase my contribution!” The latter remark drew some applause. Caillean McMahon then walked up to Miller and handed him a contribution.

Buster brouhaha

“Buster has it right!”

The following is a condensed version of the statement made by Jan at the “Sugartime!” preview.

I am a sugarmaker. I am here tonight because I am not in my sugarhouse boiling down the 750 gallons of sap my crew gathered yesterday. I will boil tomorrow and I can guarantee that I won't be alone in that sugarhouse – people will come. You see, Buster has it right, “Sugartime!” *is* about building communities the old-fashioned way—when neighbors and *all* families come together to celebrate not only spring but each other. In my sugarhouse that's what it's about —building community. It's not about the design of our family —a “nontraditional family”— it's about all families, all Kids, all parents, all neighbors.

Last March, the sugarmakers in Northwest Pennsylvania hosted an openhouse, inviting the community into our sugarhouses. Our “non traditional family” hosted 700 visitors. Buster is right – we all are family.

Buster understands very well that all kids need to be validated. “Sugartime!” shows the value of diversity not in a make-believe world but a real world of diverse neighbors and diverse families.

Sugarmaking has been a way of life for *all* Americans for centuries and making sugar each spring has been a way of building communities and a country since we arrived here. Thomas Jefferson, our third president, even planted sugar maple trees at Monticello. Dr. Benjamin Rush, speaking to Jefferson stated that “The general happiness which heaven seems to have prepared for mankind will be derived from the use of Maple Sugar.” Buster, the lesbian moms and their kids and all their neighbors would agree.

WQLN will air the “Sugartime!” episode of Postcards from Buster on March 21, in its normal time slot of 3:30 PM



Lisa and Jan, as Jan proudly announces, “I’m a sugarmaker.”



Caillean McMahon, northwestern Pennsylvania Board Member for PA-GALA offers a contribution to WQLN.

PFLAG News

by PFLAG-Erie and Crawford Counties Chapter

A reminder that our regularly scheduled meetings are continuing unless severe weather prevents us.

We are presently in the early stages, networking, and planning some fund raisers for this year in Summer 2005 to help our Chapter with the help of volunteers and local gay businesses. We are presently seeking names of talented individuals who may be interested in performing a small act: magical, drag, musical, vocal, stand-up, tasteful comedy, dance, or another talent. We are also seeking ideas of who to contact for donations, regarding area GLBT or GLBT friendly businesses. We have secured a local sponsor to graciously host. Again, we would like to thank all of those who helped in 2004 and continue into 2005. Please send all of your ideas in writing to our new email or regular US Postal address listed below.

A third reminder that we are operating on two fronts from now through April, 2005, (Erie and Florida), PFLAG-Erie has a new (temporary) email address. You should discontinue using the adelphia.net email address now, and use the following address, until further notice: pflagerie@eriegaynews.com. Our snail mail address remains the same.

Our next PFLAG support group meeting is, as usual, the second Monday of the month: Monday, March 14th. Feel free to bring a refreshment. The meeting will be at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Hwy. (Rte. 90), Erie, from 7 to 9 P.M. (Take exit 27 off of Rte. 90, and go north about a half mile.) For support, call Maureen (814-898-8341), email us at pflagerie@eriegaynews.com, or write to: P.O. Box 133, Harborcreek, PA 16421.



Meet Kathleen Hanson, Kathleen is a Case Manager in our Erie office, she has been with the Northwest Alliance for 2 years and has been in the field of social work for 15 years. Kathleen is another of the dedicated people you'll find at the Northwest PA Rural AIDS Alliance

The Northwest Pennsylvania Rural Aids Alliance

"We provide access to testing, education, and medical, financial, and supportive services to those infected with HIV/AIDS in Northwest Pennsylvania." With Clinics in Erie, Warren, Clarion, Clearfield, Seneca, Sharon, Greenville and Farrell staffed by HIV specialists. Support Groups are also offered, please contact Sue at the Clarion office for that information.

For more information, contact:

Northwest PA Rural Aids Alliance
1001 State St. Suite 703
Renaissance Centre
Erie, PA 16501

814-4568849 or 1-800-400-2437

Clarion Office:
15870 Route 322 Suite 2
Clarion, PA 16214

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Hágase un examen del VIH: Usted necesita saber.

National News Briefs

by Bob

New York Judge Rules for Same-Sex Marriage

In a first-of-its-kind ruling in New York, a judge has declared that banning same-sex marriage violates the state's constitution.

State Supreme Court Justice Doris Ling-Cohan issued the ruling in a case brought by five couples who were denied marriage licenses by the New York City Clerk's office. The judge said the clerk's office could not deny the license application solely on the ground that the couple was of the same sex.

However, before New York City's LGBT community could celebrate the landmark ruling, Republican Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the city will appeal the decision to the state's highest court.

In a statement, Bloomberg said he wanted "to expedite the appeal directly to the highest court," the state's Court of Appeals, "so that people will have a right once and for all to know where they stand." Bloomberg's action now prevents same-sex couples from getting married until the Court of Appeals rules on the case.

At the same time he was announcing the appeal however, The New York Times reported that Bloomberg personally favors same-sex marriage. At a Human Rights Campaign dinner, the mayor told guests that he would "work with you to change the law" in Albany if the lower court ruling was struck down.

"I think people have the right to love, to live with and to marry whoever they want, regardless of their sexual orientation," the mayor said in The Times.

New HIV/AIDS Report Sends Warning

HIV/AIDS is disproportionately infecting and killing members of the African-American community, according to a new report issued this month by The Black AIDS Institute.

The report, titled "The Time is Now!" suggests that one out of every three gay or bisexual African-American man may contract HIV by the time he is 30. It also notes that African-Americans make up 54 percent of annual new infections, though they are just 13 percent of the population. In addition, African Americans account for two-thirds of new AIDS cases among teens, but are only 15 percent of the national teen population. "For black America, the moment of truth has arrived," said Black AIDS Institute Executive Director Phill Wilson. "If we're going to survive this epidemic, we are going to have to gather all of our resources and marshal them for the struggles that lay ahead."

In another finding, the report concluded that African Americans who contract HIV/AIDS are seven times more likely to die than their Caucasian counterparts and are twice as likely as whites to not receive "combination therapy," which is credited with reducing AIDS death rates.

Kansas Voters to Have Say on Gay Marriage

Kansas has become the latest state to jump on the antigay marriage bandwagon. The state legislature has approved an amendment to the Kansas Constitution banning gay marriage and civil unions. The amendment will go before state voters on the April 5 primary election.

The vote to pass the amendment was 86-37, three more than the two-thirds majority necessary.

The proposed amendment declares that only couples in a traditional marriage of one man and one woman are entitled to the benefits associated with marriage.



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National News

Gay Friendly Wal-Mart?

Wal-Mart's price-slashing happy face has a new reason to smile. The nation's largest employer and the world's biggest retailer, has changed its definition of "immediate family" to include same-sex partners. Wal-Mart disclosed the change in a filing of its ethics policy with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The change deals with employees using confidential information to benefit themselves or immediate family members.

In a press release, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) excerpted a portion of Wal-Mart's new policy: "You may not take any opportunities or use any confidential information for your benefit, or for the benefit of your immediate family members, that you discover or obtain through your employment with Wal-Mart." The statement adds that criteria for defining "immediate family" include relations by "birth, adoption, marriage or domestic partnership or civil union, if recognized by your state or other local law."

While not a huge step forward, the HRC sees the move as an encouraging sign.

"We are encouraged by this sign showing America's heartland employer understands same-sex couples share the responsibilities that come with being a family," said Daryl Herrschaft, deputy director of HRC's WorkNet program. "We hope that with equal responsibility come equal benefits."

A Wal-Mart spokesman would not say if the change would affect employee benefits. Nor would he say whether it means Wal-Mart is taking a position on the issue of same-sex marriage or civil unions.

In July 2003, Wal-Mart expanded its nondiscrimination policy to include sexual orientation.

Gay Marriage Bill Introduced in Canadian Parliament

As promised, Canada's ruling Liberal Party has introduced its same-sex marriage bill in Parliament, taking a decisive step in the country's long-running marriage debate.

The bill faces opposition from Conservatives, who are backed by religious groups that oppose the bill, claiming it will destroy the traditional families and promote "unnatural" relationships.

In addition, a new poll from the Toronto Globe and Mail newspaper found that only 139 members of Parliament said they would vote in favor of the bill, 15 short of the required number. According to the survey, 118 are opposed to it, while 49 would not reveal how they will vote.

The Canadian government's action comes after courts in several of Canada's provinces and territories, including Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia, ruled that same-sex couples have the right marry.

Illinois Enacts Discrimination Prohibition

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich has signed a law that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, making Illinois the 14th U.S. state, in addition to the District of Columbia, to extend such protections.

"We will not tolerate discrimination of any kind in Illinois," said Blagojevich, a Democrat. "The new law is a critical step forward in the struggle for equality."

The law amends the Illinois Human Rights Act to forbid discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, public accommodations and credit. Transgender people are also protected, as the bill defines sexual orientation as "actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality or gender-related identity, whether or not traditionally associated with the person's designated sex at birth."

Helpful numbers

Gay and Lesbian National Hotline 1-888-843-GLNH www.glnh.org/index_.html

Covenant House Nineline (youth)
1-800-999-9999

Trevor Helpline for Suicidal Gay Youth
1-800-850 8078

Doctors warn of a new drug-resistant strain of HIV

by **Patty Puline, Michelle Palmer**
Erie Co. Health Dept. Contributing Editors

(CNN) – “Doctors reported for the first time Wednesday the ominous spread of a strain of the AIDS virus that is resistant to protease inhibitors, the medicines that have revolutionized care of the disease.

At the 12th International AIDS Conference, San Francisco doctors reported one new infection with a highly resistant virus. A Swiss team said it has seen several more. No one knows yet how frequently these strains are spreading. “CNN – 2/14/05

This type of panic sets the HIV service providers on edge, since we work on the front lines with HIV positives and people living with AIDS. We need to allay fears and promote HIV awareness.

It is curious that these cases have not received as much attention in the past, but now people are paying attention to the drug resistant viruses. Good news, because they will serve as a benchmark for scientists and pharmaceutical companies to measure the difference between those taking the “cocktail” and the new fusion inhibitors.

Not much data exists on the new fusion inhibitors, but this class is revolutionary since it inhibits HIV from entering the cells itself. The protease inhibitors, non-nucleoside and nucleoside inhibitors only respond once they enter the T-cell and begin to replicate.

Fuzeon, one of the newest class of fusion inhibitors, prevents HIV from entering the cell, thereby allowing the virus to remain at a lower level of replication, and the immune system to remain intact longer to fight the virus. However, due to its high cost (thousands of dollars at this time) fuzeon is not readily available to the general public. It was released for compassionate care several years ago, and now is being touted as the new “get fixed quick” HIV drug.

Rebecca Armstrong of Playboy fame is seen on the cover of POZ (www.poz.com) with a hypodermic syringe extolling the benefits of fuzeon, and the simplicity of its use. However, needles can be a trigger for former substance abusers, and if they were infected through sharing needles, this may be a consideration worth pondering.

This drug, although it is expensive now, could actually save money in the long run. If HIV cannot enter the cells, it cannot replicate. By prohibiting the fusion, we would avoid long term HIV medication that only works now once HIV has entered the T-cells, released its proteins, combined and made proviral DNA and then released into the bloodstream as new RNA copies of HIV.

Truly, this is not the first case of drug-resistance to develop in the last decade. We have had reports at the last few International AIDS Conferences, but have not had as much in depth information about the man, his partners, and his sexual behaviors.

In addition, this strain of HIV was exceptionally alarming because AIDS appears to occur within two to three months and sometimes up to 20 months after infection. According to Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Frieden, HIV can take up to 10 years to de-

(continued on next page)

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New HIV strain

Continued from previous page

velop into AIDS, and can be “difficult or impossible to treat.” –CBS news.com 2/12/05

“What happened here is somebody who was on therapy and who was not properly treated, (was) inconsistently treated, developed a resistant virus and transmitted this virus to another person,” said Tom Coates of the UCSF AIDS Research Institute.

The new patient, a middle-aged San Francisco man, caught the virus last fall. He was infected by a man whose own infection was diagnosed in 1990 and had taken many different AIDS drugs on and off, including protease inhibitors.

The San Francisco man’s virus is resistant to four different protease inhibitors as well as the drugs AZT and 3TC. Hecht said doctors first became concerned about the patient after he responded much more slowly than usual to drug treatment. The man stopped therapy entirely after learning his virus was resistant, but he is still healthy.

What can we learn from this? People who are living with HIV and are on medication cannot afford to miss doses, or take a drug holiday. Even a few days off gives the virus enough time to become drug resistant, the “wild” type virus that grows more quickly.

Is it time to panic? Not really, “it’s happening but it’s rare, and it would be wrong to say that this is a rampant phenomenon. It’s not, but it’s the beginning,” said Dr. David Ho of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center. “CBS – February 15, 2005

For more information on HIV and educational programming, or prevention efforts, contact Patty Puline at 451-6543 or email her at ppuline@ecdh.org

Letters

Thanks

... Just wanted to tell you that you helped save a life with your newsletter.

I was a drug and alcohol counselor in a very small closedminded town, and had a teenager in his senior year of high school. He had come out at the beginning of the year in school and home when his mother found some books on homosexuality in his room. Needless to say he was extremely depressed due to the tormenting by “friends and family”. He was suicidal and addicted to d and a. As part of my work with him, I would bring him a copy of your newsletter when each new one came out. It became his lifeline to know that a possible life was out there. Long story...he recovered, graduated, and got out of Dodge. I saw him again two years later, and he expressed his gratitude for those newsletters that made him feel human again.

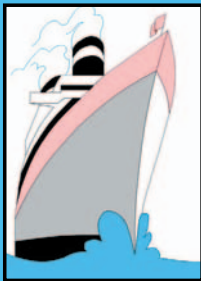
So...thanks and keep up the valuable work. You’d be surprised how far away the newsletter circulates.

Goddess Bless You!
Sorrowgael

Neal remembered

Just recently having heard of the passing of Neal last month, it left me with a deep sense of sadness and loss. I had known Neal for many years and even though I moved from Erie, Neal included me and kept me informed of the happenings and events. He had included me in several of the mens group functions which i had the privilege of attending. I will miss my friend very much. When I thought of Erie with fondness, Neal always came to mind. Many good memories still remain with me,

Sincerely,
David Welser Wwelsda@aol.com



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See next month
for more details!

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This & That

by Deb Spilko

On September 22 & 23, 2001, songwriter/producer Nile Rogers and Tommy Boy Music president Tom Silverman brought together 200 celebrities, public safety workers, and ER doctors to record Nile's song, "We are Family." They saw this project as a way to heal, to unite, and to create hope during the sad and frightening aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Shortly after that, the world of children's television created a children's version, featuring over 100 kids' TV personalities from Arthur to Zoom, as well as celebrities like Bill Cosby and Whoopi Goldberg. On March 11, 2002 and September 11, 2002, the children's "We are Family" video was aired simultaneously on PBS, Nickelodeon, and Disney Channel. The **We are Family Foundation** was formed in July of 2002. According to its Mission Statement, the foundation "celebrates our common humanity and the vision of a global family by creating and supporting programs that inspire and educate individuals of all ages about diversity, understanding, respect and multiculturalism; and to support those who are victims of intolerance."

The foundation is asking Congress to recognize March 11 as National "We are Family" Day. On March 11, 2005 the children's "We are Family" will once again air simultaneously on the above channels. Also in March, the foundation will distribute 61,000 copies of the children's video to elementary schools, along with a teachers' guide for teaching tolerance.

Two rightwing Christian groups—**James Dobson's Focus on the Family** and **Donald Wildmon's American Family Association** say that the We are Family organization is "hijacking" children's symbols in a "sinister" attempt to promote the homosexual agenda. They are particularly distressed by the foundation's Tolerance Pledge. Borrowed from the anti-bias group Southern Poverty Law Center, it contains the phrase "I pledge to have respect for people whose abilities, beliefs, culture, race, sexual identity or other characteristics are different from my own." In the minds of people like Wildmon and Dobson, of course, this amounts to recruiting for homosexuality.

To visit the We are Family website, go to www.wearefamilyfoundation.org

Before showing a clip from the "Sugartime!" episode of *Postcards from Buster*, a local TV news anchor warned parents that it would be showing the most controversial part of that episode. In the clip Buster's friend Emma is showing him some photos of her family.

"Is that James?" asks Buster.

"James, David and I," says Emma. "And Gillian."

"So Gillian's your mom too?"

"She's my step mom."

"Boy, that's a lot of moms."

"Yep, this is Mom and Gillian right here."

"That's a nice picture."

"This is one of my favorite pictures."

"How come?"

"Cause it has my mom and Gillian, people I love a lot and they mean a lot to me."

Wow, —good thing they warned us about that sordid exchange, huh?

I'm not mentioning the station or the anchor who offered this warning, because I understand why they felt the need to do so. Religious bigots are jumping all over this, and if the station hadn't offered that warning there would have been holy hell to pay.

But here's the thing. For months, the local news has covered the abysmal life and tragic death of 15-year-old Brittany Legler, brutalized by her biological family and then constantly beaten up by her adoptive mother and the mother's housemate. If ever there was a local news story that deserved to have a parental warning on it, this would be it. If ever there was information that would have been harmful for a child to hear about or imagine, it would be the detailed account of the horrors that these adults inflicted on a helpless and mentally disabled child.

Would the religious bigots flood a station with complaints for reporting this without a warning? No...that's not what gets them going these days. What gets their self-righteous panties all twisted in a knot is the idea that two people of the same gender love each other deeply, and that they and their families are not much different than anyone else.

Yet another example of the emptiness of the religious right's exclusive claim on "moral values."

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