

Documentary looks at high school homophobia in Venango County

by Deb Spilko

We Belong is the story of two Venango County gay teens who had the courage to stand up to bigotry and intolerance in their schools – and the determination to tell their stories to the world. The film was produced and directed by former Oil City resident Joe Wilson.

In the documentary, C.J. Bills tells about the constant "sheer hell" he endured as a gay student at Franklin High School. He tells about the day he went to the locker room to use the bathroom, and tells of taunts, harassment, and hearing threatening remarks about "smearing" him. He goes to the administrator to protest what has happened, and ends up with the state police arresting and handcuffing him for disorderly conduct. To fight back, he decides to make a documentary about discrimination against gay youth in school. With his family's help, he also initiates an investigation by the Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission and shames the school district into developing an anti-bullying and diversity training program.

C.J.'s documentary project also leads him to Tim Dahle, who challenged the years of anti-gay harassment he suffered as a student at Titusville High School. After several years of harassment at his school, Tim made a serious attempt on his life. His parents decided to sue the school district for failing to protect him. According to the film, "the school district that failed to protect (Dahle) agreed to one of the largest sexual harassment settlements in history, sending a signal to school districts around the country that such behavior can be costly."

We Belong demonstrates that young people have the power to change their communities and the world, and that helping youth to tell their stories, in their own way and on camera, is enlightening, empowering, and effective.



C.J. Bills, the gay youth from Franklin PA whose documentary is the subject of We Belong.

PHOTO: We Belong/Joe Wilson

The film is one of six semi-finalists in Current TV's Seeds of Tolerance Contest. The winner of the contest will be chosen by viewers. (you have until December 2, 2006 to vote for your favorite.). The grand prize winner will receive \$100,000 in cash and an additional \$15,000 to donate to the charity of his or her choice. Two finalists will also receive \$10,000 apiece. The awards will be presented at a screening event in Los Angeles in December.

On the web (dickable links at web version of this article).

Seeds of Tolerance website

www.current.tv/make/vc2/sot

Oil City Derrick article about the film

www.thederrick.com/stories/11152006-3102.shtml

http://minionofhades.livejournal.com/370303.html

For more about producer and filmmaker Joe Wilson http://webelongthemovie.com

More Community News on page 4!

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Camera ready art or manuscript and/or photos, illustrations and logos must be received by the 15th of the month. Photos and Illustrations should be PDF or TIFF and HIRES. All hardcopy ads submitted will be reproduced as close as possible.



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Editors: Deb Spilko and Mike Mahler

Ad Design: Mike Lipiec

Deadline for next issue: Dec. 11 (Monday)

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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Thank You:

To the Avalon for hosting, Brian and Larry, Mike Fuller, Joey Grego, Aaron Hepfer, James von Loewe, Lynne Rhodes, and Sarge for folding; James von Loewe, Deb Spilko, John & Paula King, Brian & Larry, Mike Fuller, Joey Grego, Aaron Hepfer, Brian How and Sarge for distribution. Bob for proofreading. Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. Thanks! If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com for date/time.



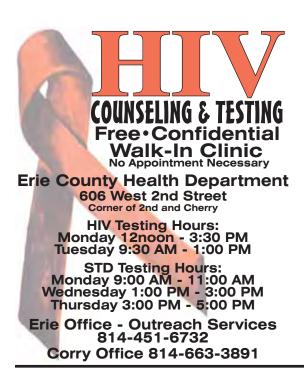
Community News

Forum on equal marriage rights

A forum on equal marriage will take place on November 29 at 6:30 PM in the Admiral Room of the Blasco Memorial Library. Panelists are Dave Martin (NWPA American Civil Liberties Union), Susan Woodland (NWPA National Organization for Women), Michael Mahler (Erie Gay News), and Dr. Caillean McMahon. Moderating will be Rev. Steve Aschmann of the Unitarian Universalist of Congregation of Erie. Discussion will focus on the efforts to legalize samesex marriage, understanding the opposition to it, and finding ways to counter those objections. The event is jointly sponsored by NWPA NOW and the NWPA ACLU. Free and open to the public.

Erie Gay News deadline changing

Because of scheduling issues for some months, the submission deadline may be earlier than the 15th. For example, for the next issue (January 2007), which will come out in late December, the deadline for submissions will be Dec. 11.



Letters

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus concert

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus presented a wonderful concert "Standing on the Side of Love" on Sunday, Oct. 22, in tribute to Jeff Grego, and to benefit the local high school HIV/AIDS education program, and the Unitarian sanctuary renovation project.

About 200 people attended.

The Chorus opened the concert procession with "How Can I Keep From Singing?" sang many songs for a very appreciative audience, and ended the concert with "Standing On The Side of Love", before their Encore, "Nessun Dorma".

Volunteer hosts and ushers, from P-FLAG and the Unitarian Congregation hosted the reception after the performance.

Thanks to so many people who gave of their time, energ, and resources to help provide the concert:

Unitarians (in no specific order)

Janet Krack, Diane Guthrie, John Daly King, Lynn Stephens, Peggy Richardson, Reid McFarlane, Nancy Lorei, Evelyn Walzer, AnnDrea Benson, Michelle Rupp, Mary Zuck, Chris Koehle, Michelle Willey, Al Richardson, Larry Wander, Jim Smith, Rev. Steve Aschmann, Howard Krack, Deb Haire, Rich Haire, Bob Guthrie

P-FLAG

Mark Hoovler, Cedric, Brian, Pat, Millie, James **EGN**

Michael Mahler

Reception sponsors

Papa Joe's Pepperoni Cafe, Matthew's Trattoria, Wegman's

Concert Sponsors

Peggy and Al Richardson, Bonnie & Bruce Kern, Charles Scalise, Lake Erie Alliance for Democracy, Paper Moon Restaurant and Jazz Club, Gary's Flower Shoppe, Erie Gay News, PFLAG Erie and Crawford County Chapters

Mary Zuck

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie

Letters to Erie Gay News are welcome. E-mail format is preferred. Please try to stay within or below 250 words. Send to info@eriegaynews.com, or EGN, 1115 W 7th Street, Erie PA 16502.

People Say the Stupidest Things

by Reverend Richard Moyer

In Mark Chapter 10, starting with verse 35, James and John asked Jesus "Teacher, there is something we want you to do for us. When you sit on your throne in your glorious Kingdom, we want you to let us sit with you, one at your right and one at your left." Jesus replied "You don't know what you are asking for."

"That was a stupid thing to say." I still remember my mother saying that to me over 40 years ago. I still remember the circumstances and how foolish I felt. I still remember, after all these years, how it hit me like a ton of bricks. My mother called me stupid. She had never done that before and I don't remember her ever saying it again. What I knew was that I must have done something pretty stupid for her to have pointed it out to me. I could tell by the long silence that followed that it even took my mother off guard. She did not intend to say it. It just came out of her mouth.

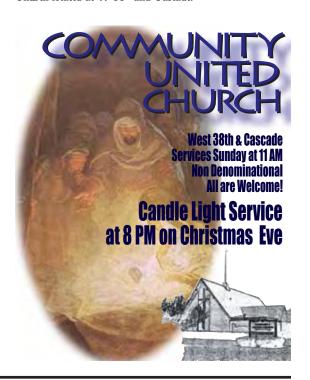
Some years ago a member of the congregation walked into my office and said "I just did something stupid. But that's all right; I've done stupid things before." And how true this is for each of us? We've done stupid things; we've said stupid things and had stupid ideas. It's part of being human.

In the above scripture, we find stupidity at its highest level. It's hard to even imagine what it would take to out-do the stupidity of James and John in asking Jesus to sit at his left and right hand side. They come to Jesus with this very presumptuous request. We would expect such foolishness from Peter who in his own self-confidence decided that he too could walk on water. Only to realize that he could not and quickly sank beneath the waves.

Jesus' reply to James and John is fascinating. When they ask to be given the seats of honor in the Kingdom of God Jesus says, "But you do not know what you are asking. You cannot expect to be elevated to such a high and enviable position in the Kingdom of God." He further reminds his disciples of something that he had been teaching them all along. "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant."

As one biblical scholar wrote: "Throughout Mark's Gospel the disciples just don't get it." Why is it that they who are the closest to Jesus, listening to his preaching day in and day out, just don't get it? Well, we should understand that sometimes we just don't get it either. Sometimes we do or say stupid things because we're naïve or uninformed. Other times we might do something stupid because we are afraid. Knee jerk reactions have started wars, caused divisions in churches and society and have hurt many innocent people, sometimes beyond repair. When we fear people who are of a different cultural or ethnic background or people of a different economic situation or those who have a different sexual orientation we not only have the potential of doing injustice to them, but to ourselves and the whole human race.

Reverend Richard Moyer is the pastor at Community United Church located at W 38th and Cascade.



2nd Annual LGBT Colloquium at Allegheny College

from Allegheny College

Call for proposals: Allegheny Pride Alliance and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies Minder invites submissions for the Second Annual Colloquium on LGBT Studies to take place on Saturday, March 31, and Sunday, April 1 at Allegheny College.

The theme of this year's colloquium is Performing Politics: Activism, Inquiry antistry. Submissions that fit within the broad outlines of the theme are particularly encouraged, as are nontraditional proposals such as performance or studio art pieces, interactive panels, or roundtable discussions.

This colloquium seeks to create a space where all members of academic institutions and their surrounding communities can share research, pedagogy, artistic endeavors, and synergies for activism on LGBT issues.

The colloquium is designed as a two day event, with paper presentations and panels running on Saturday and creative, visual and performing arts exhibitions running on Sunday. Proposal topics across a range of disciplinary perspectives from students, faculty and staff are invited, and submissions from institutions beyond Allegheny are encouraged. Such topics might include (but are not limited to) the following:

How to address LGBT issues in the classroom; How to mobilize student activism around LGBT issues; The psychological development of sexuality; Representations of sexual minorities in popular culture; The history of marriage; The relationship between the law and the LGBT community; The intersection between sexual identity and other identities such as gender and race; Religious perspectives on sexuality; The portrayal of sexuality in art, music, video, photography and/or theater; How to do research that involves the LGBT community.

Research projects, material developed for courses, presentations based on practical experiences with activism, and creative, visual and performing arts pieces are welcome. If you are interested in participating in the colloquium, please send a title, an abstract of 100 words, and any special technology requests (such as a TV, DVD player, Internet access, etc.) To Professor Courtney Bailey by **Friday, Dec. 1**. Please send your proposal as a Word attachment to cbailey@Allegheny.edu. If you're planning a creative, visual, or performing arts piece, please indicate how much time, space and equipment are required.

If you have any questions about the colloquium, feel free to contact a member of the programming committee:

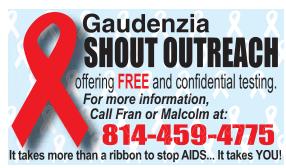
Courtney Bailey, Department of Communication Arts, Allegheny College (814) 332-2301; CBailey@Allegheny.edu

Vesta Silva, Department of Communication Arts, Allegheny College (814) 332-4385; VSilva@Allegheny.edu

John Golden, Department of Economics, Allegheny College (814) 332-3337; John.Golden@Allegheny.edu

Aimee Knupsky, Department of Psychology, Allegheny College (814) 332-6270; aimee.knupsky@Allegheny.edu





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

Nov 22 - "Hollywood" Album Release Party for Mas Nova at Sherlock's 508 State St, Erie, PA. 9 PM. With special guests Super No. 7 and Dirt McGurtt. Help save Rock and Roll! Phone: (814) 453-7760.

Nov 22 - "Family Reunion" at the Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. Everyone is coming home for the Thanksgiving Holiday—Catch up with old friends and family for a night of dancing and fun at the Zone. Kitchen is open at 8 PM - 2 AM for 1 Wing Madness, Happy Hour 9 to 11 PM. Dance to your favorite videos all night long! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Nov 22 - 25 - Trance's Welcome Home Bash Weekend at Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. Dance club opening at 8 PM. Welcoming back all the old familiar faces. Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancedanceclub.com. Browse to http://www.trancedanceclub.com.

Nov 23 - Thanksgiving Day at the Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. We open at 8 PM. Join us for an after dinner drink and dance off all those extra calories! Happy Thanksgiving from the Zone! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Nov 24 - Black Friday Party at the Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. Don't let the horrors of the Christmas shopping season get you down—Join us for a night of fun in the dark. Wear black—glowsticks and blacklights! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com.

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2809 Route 426 Findley Lake, NY 14736 716-769-7474 New Artists Welcome Nov 25 - Studio 54 Party at Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. Everyone is on the VIP list for a night of Glitz, Glitter and Glam! as we open the velvet ropes to the best dance party in town. Come "celebrate the night-life" with your favorite Disco Divas and dazzle us on the dance floor as we play the hottest videos and music in town! Dress to impress, put on the glitz, glitter and glam! Or dress as your favorite Disco Diva, Saturday-night Stud, or one of the Village People. Phone: (814) 452-0125. www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Nov 29 - Forum on Equal Marriage Rights 6:30 PM in the Admiral Room of the Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front Street, Erie PA. The event is jointly sponsored by NWPA NOW and the NWPA ACLU. Free and open to the public. Details on 4.

Nov 29 - Mad Man Matt's Birthday Bash at the Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St Erie, PA. Join us as we celebrate Bartender Matt's Birthday. Come buy him a shot and get him out on the video dance-floor.

(continued on next page)





Happy Birthday from everyone at the Zone! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 1 - World AIDS Day

Dec 3 - Mas Nova "Hollywood" CD release party at Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. Doors open at 8 PM. Come early to get a seat to this much anticipated show. Shake off the winter blues with an acoustic performance by Mas Nova and special guest Super Ño. 7. Help save Rock 'N' Roll. Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancedanceclub.com. Browse to http:// www.trancedanceclub.com. Mas Nova website: http:/ /www.myspace.com/masnova

Dec 6 - 'The Guys' Papa Joe's Pepperoni Cafe, 408 W 8th St, Erie PA. 7 PM. Informal get-together. Meets every 3 weeks. Now will be moving location each time. For more info, contact Brian at (814) 825-6203 or email eriebrian@gmail.com.

Dec 8 - Denise Russell at the Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. Your Favorite funny lady is back for a great Holiday Show. Get here early ... tables fill up fast! Holiday humor, songs and fun! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 15 - Christmas Disco Drag Show at Trance **Dance Club** 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. It was so much fun last year, we're doing it again. Come check out all your favorite Trance performers as they help spread the holiday spirit in their own special way. You never know who will have their tinsel around their ankles... Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancedanceclub.com. Web: www.trancedanceclub.com.

Dec 16 - Menspace (Bob's, Erie, PA) 7:30 PM. Social group for gay/bi men. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Web: http://menspace.eriegaynews.com.

Dec 16 - Disco Party at Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. Break out the disco balls, platform shoes and leisure suits for a flashback night featuring a hot mix of disco hits with your favorites from today's music scene. Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancedanceclub.com. Browse to http://www.trancedanceclub.com.

Dec 16 - Santa's Naughty or Nice Underwear & Pajama Party! at Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. Santa Clause is coming to the Zone and wants to know who is Naughty or Nice! Show off your big package—Wear Christmas boxers and naughty underwear, sexy lingerie, and warm fuzzy pajamas! Gifts to those who participate... Coal to those who don't! Come sit on Santa's lap and tell him how bad you have been. Holiday drink specials, giveaways, prizes and fun. Happy Holidays from everyone at the Phone: (814)452-0125. www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 22 - Shari Gross performs at Raphael's Tavern 363 W 8th St, Erie, PA. 10 PM - midnight. Contemorary blues. Raphael's is a smoke-free tavern. Phone: (814) 454-1879. Email: gaiasong@verizon.net. Dec 22 - Diva Candy Company! Sweet Holiday Show! at Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice! The Sexy Ladies of the Zone, along with the Diva Dudes invite you and your friends to come enjoy a tasty evening of Holiday entertainment! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 22 - Yule Tide Weekend Part 1 at Trance **Dance Club** 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. Start your





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holiday weekend off right with your Trance family. Take a well earned break from all the holiday hustle and bustle. Suck a candy cane and keep your eye on the mistletoe for your chance to grab a kiss from the hottie you've seen around all year. Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancedanceclub.com. Web: www.trancedanceclub.com.

Dec 23 - Peppermint Ball - Zone's Christmas Party 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. The elves are done decorating and it's a Candy Cane Christmas at the Zone! Santa Clause will be handing out gifts and surprises! Wear red or white or dress up in costume! Play a few reindeer games, try our special Holiday shots, and dance the night away on our Video Dancefloor. A Sweet night to enjoy friends and fun! Happy Holidays from everyone at the Zone! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 23 - Yule Tide Pre Christmas Eve Bash at Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. Santa Claus and the elves will be stopping by for a

night of holiday cheer. Whether you're nice or naughty, Santa will have something in his sack for you. Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancedanceclub.com. Browse to http://www.trancedanceclub.com.

Dec 24 - Christmas Eve at the Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. The shopping is done!, Stop in for some fun—we open at 8 PM - Kitchen is open! -2 for 1 wing madness! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 25 - **Christmas Day at Zone Dance Club** 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. We will be open at 8 o'clock for a relaxing night with friends and family. (Or a chance to slip away and have some real fun!) Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 31 - New Year's Eve Blast at Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. Don't miss out on Erie's Biggest and Best gay New Year's Eve Party! Champagne toast, buffet, party favors and giveaways. Wear red or black or glamorous Holiday attire. Let's welcome 2007 with a blast! Balloon drop and toast at

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midnight. Ring in the New Year with friends on our Video Dancefloor. Happy New Year from the staff of the Zone! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 31 - Ice Party at Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. Bring in the New Year at Trance with it's first New Year's "ICE PARTY" Celebration! Hottie Dancers, Hot Spots, Catered Buffet, Champagne, Chocolate fountain, All the fun party noise makers, hats and more to bring in the New Year! Join us for a night of energy, elegant food, fun and dancing! White attire is encouraged! Doors Open at 8 PM! Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancedanceclub.com. Web: www.trancedanceclub.com.

Let us know about all your New Year events!

We'd like to provide a wide variety of choices for people wanting to bring in the New Year.

Please don't exclude your event because you are closing early on New Year's Eve. In the past, we have included events and places that closed early in the evening, or that took place on New Year's Day. Some people prefer to have a New Year's toast with an afternoon cappaccino; others might want to attend a New Year's Day religious/spiritual activity.

Some of the possible activities and places that our readers would be interested in include parties, performances, pot luck, game night, religious/spiritual observances or activities, GLBT-friendly restaurants and coffeehouses, non-alcoholic gatherings, and so on.

Please let us know by December 11. Please note the early deadline!!!

Contact info@eriegaynews.com or 814-456-9833.

On stage

Selected area cultural events that may be of interest to GLBT audiences.

Nov. 24-Dec. 23 - The Santaland Diaries and **Season's Greetings** The Roadhouse Theatre presents two plays by David Sedaris. Nov. 24-Dec. 23, Fri & Sat 8 PM. Reservations 456-5656.

Dec 1 & 2 - Angels in America - Part One: Millenium Approaches by Tony Kushner. Presested by Buffalo United Artists, a staged reading to benefit AIDS Community Services of WNY. 8 PM at Main Street Cabaret, 687 Main Street, Buffalo NY. All tickets \$25 www.buffalobua.org

Dec 14-17 - Ramona and Juliet plus Dos Lesbos presented by Buffalo United Artists in association with Brazen-Faced Varlets. www.buffalobua.org

Dec 15-17 - "A Joyful Noise," North Coast Men's Chorus holiday concert, Cleveland State University Music Bldg, 2001 Euclid Ave, Cleveland OH 800-766-6048, www.ncmchorus.org, info@ncmchorus.org

Feb 3 - Pink with Justin Timberlake in Cleveland, OH at Quicken Loans Arena

Feb 18 - Pink with Justin Timberlake in Buffalo, NY at HSBC Arena

Mar 24 - Ember Swift in Buffalo at Nietzsche's www.nietzsches.com

Apr 13 - Christina Aguilera in Cleveland, OH at Wolstein Center at CSU

Apr 14 - Christina Aguilera in Pittsburgh, PA Mellon Ārena

Apr 17 - Tony Kushner, George C. Wollfe. Lecture at Allen Theatre, Cleveland. On sale at (216) 749-9486.

Websites/email lists for area performers

Judith Avers www.judithavers.com/

Bob Bearfield www.bobbearfield.com

Carrie Sample www.myspace.com/carriesample

Jocelyn Porter Project www.jocelynporterproject.com

Kendall www.kendallshead.com/

Leah Zicari www.leahzicari.com

Two Girls Alone http://twogirlsalone.iuma.com *email list:* twogirlsalone@verizon.net.

Theatre

"Santaland Diaries" and "Season's Greetings" Written by David Sedaris
Presented at the Roadhouse Theatre

It's time for some holiday cheer Roadhouse style...

What do you do with those episodic holiday letters that land in your mailbox year after year after year? How would you document your career as an elf in SantaLand? If you're playwright, author and National Public Radio commentator David Sedaris, you compose two entertaining, irreverently witty essays. Adapted for the stage by Joe Mantello and both wickedly funny, "SantaLand Diaries" and "Season's Greetings" highlight the desperate need that many of us have to display holiday cheer, even if it kills us.

In "SantaLand Diaries," David (Jimmy Mehs, back on the Roadhouse stage) details his indoctrination into SantaLand after earning a job as an elf at Macy's. The newly named "Crumpet" takes us on a twisted tour through Santa's maze of misery, consumerism and overbearing parents.

In the second act of the evening, the Christmas lights twinkle, the magi-glow fire flickers and the stockings are hanging from the mantle in the Dunbar home, but as Mrs. Dunbar (Sue Ellen Wojciechowski) recounts in her latest holiday letter to friends and family, the past year has been anything but jolly. Through a composed façade and counterfeit smile, Mrs. Dunbar leads us through a droll tale of woe that is as hilarious as it is disturbing.

The production opens with a post-show reception the evening after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 24 and continues through Saturday, December 23 (Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.). Admission: Regular seating \$12, Riser seating \$15, VIP table seating \$20. Reservations can be made by phone at 814.456.5656 or in person at the Roadhouse Theatre for Contemporary Arts 145 West 11th Street. Box Office hours are 2-6 PM Tuesday - Saturday. The theater accepts cash, checks, Visa, MasterCard and Discover.

—Article written by the Roadhouse Theatre.



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Hi Biff, Did you hear that the every 3rd Wednesday, The Guys are gonna start meeting at different places? I think it's gonna be swell! Just give Brian a call at





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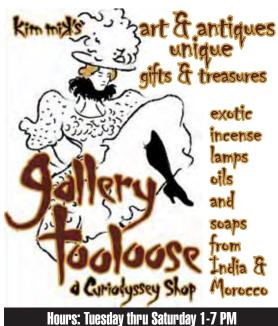
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Election 2006

Some photos from the fall elections of 2006. Photos by Deb Spilko.



Derick from Liberty PA, at the Erie Pride Rally. Derick registered voters at the Rally and came up two more times to register people at the local GLBT bars.



Poll worker John Daly King helped voters of all stripes to use the new electronic voting machines.



Defeating the anti-gay Senator Rick Santorum was the highest priority for many GLBT activists around the state. This T-shirt was worn by an attendee at the Erie Pride Rally.



NWPA PFLAG representative Maureen Koseff and Al Koseff at the Rendell-Casey-Porter headquarters in Erie, celebrating what was turning out to be a good night for human rights.

National News Briefs

by Bob

Mid-Term Elections Bring Hope

With the Democrats taking control of both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives following this month's elections, gay rights organizations are optimistic that the new 110th Congress will be more fair-minded and gay-friendly.

This year, the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest GLBT civil rights organization, endorsed a total of 225 candidates running in Congressional and Governors' races. Of those endorsed candidates, 208 won, with several House races still undecided. Those victories resulted in the defeat of some of the country's most anti-gay politicians, including Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, Sen. George Allen of Virginia and Congressman John Hostettler of Indiana.

"American voters sent a clear message that the era of gay-bashing to win elections is over, as voters flatly rejected anti-gay and divisive candidates," said HRC President Joe Solmonese.

Among the new HRC-endorsed senators taking office in January are Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Ben Cardin of Maryland, Bob Casey of Pennsylvania and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

"HRC got behind my campaign early and has been a tremendous help," said Senator-elect Bob Casey. "The energy and commitment they put behind our campaign was extraordinary. I look forward to working with HRC's incredible staff and membership, especially to advance hate crimes legislation in the Senate."



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1702 West 8th St. • Erie, PA 16505 814-453-4543 • 800-724-1683 • Fax:814-455-3911 E-Mail:silkscreenunltd@yahoo.com Web site: www.silkscreenunltd.com The Nov. 7 election also saw Arizona became the first state to defeat a constitutional ban on samesex marriage by popular vote. The proposed ban was defeated, 51 percent to 49 percent.

Unfortunately, constitutional amendments to ban same-sex marriage won approval in all of the other states where it appeared on the ballot: Colorado, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin.

Colorado voters also defeated a measure that would have created a domestic-partnership registry for unmarried couples.

Though similar marriage amendments have passed in all 20 states that previously considered them, this year's victory in Arizona has given activists some hope that the tide may be turning.

Mexico City to Recognize Civil Unions

The legislature of Mexico City, the capital of Mexico and the world's fourth largest city, has approved a measure recognizing same-sex civil unions and the city's mayor is expected to sign it into law, according to the Associated Press.

The city, with population of 8.7 million, could see its first same-sex civil unions in late February or early March.

The new law is an historic first for Mexico, allowing gay and lesbian couples to voluntarily register their union with civil authorities, granting them inheritance and pension rights and other social benefits. The law will apply only to Mexico City residents.

Catholic Church officials immediately condemned the action, accusing lawmakers of railroading the legislation to avoid debate.

"They want to pass it quickly and at the last minute so they don't run the risk of the Catholic public opinion expressing itself," church spokesman Carlos Villa told the Reuters news service.

A similar bill has also been introduced in the more conservative Mexican state of Coahuila, located on the Texas border. That bill has the support of the state's governor.

National News Briefs

Transgender Candidate Wins State Election

An openly transgender woman won a seat on the Hawaii State Board of Education and a place in history as the nation's highest-ranking transgender elected official.

Kim Coco Iwamoto, a 38-year-old attorney, came in third in the competition for three seats on the 14-member board, which governs the state's 285 public schools. During the campaign, Iwamoto did not tout her gender status but has long been an advocate for transgender youth and related issues.

According to Denis Dison, a spokesman for the Victory Fund, a Washington-based group that tracks lesbian, gay and transgender candidates and helps fund their campaigns, Iwamoto will be the highest-ranking openly transgender person elected in the United States. Previously elected transgender candidates have primarily been limited to local posts, Dison said.

Iwamoto was born on the island of Kauai, attended a Catholic boys' school in Honolulu and has a law degree from the University of New Mexico. While in law school, she was featured in a handbook on transgender policy for her advocacy of special restroom facilities on the school's campus after she was harassed for using the women's bathroom.

Gay Service Members Warned About Web Activity

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network is warning gay and lesbian service members to choose their Web activity prudently, this in response to increased Web monitoring and security by the U.S. military.

The legal group cautioned that a military agency, the Army Web Risk Assessment Cell, is monitoring "official and unofficial blogs and other Web sites" as well as checking Web site visits for members of the military.

According to the Associated Press, soldiers are being required to register their blogs with their commanding officers. As a result, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network has posted guidelines on its Web site to help gay and lesbian service members. Information related to sexual orientation on the Web would be grounds for dismissal from the armed forces under the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policies.

The group advises service members not to access sex-related Web sites on a military computer, to erase cookies and history regularly and not to indicate which armed services branch or base they are affiliated with.

Massachusetts Legislature Halts Marriage Amendment, for Now

The Massachusetts State Legislature has recessed without taking any action on a proposed constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriage in the state.

Opponents of gay marriage had gathered 170,000 signatures to put a proposed ban before the current Legislature, but their initiative effectively died when the lawmakers voted to recess. While the legislature will meet again Jan. 2, the final day of the legislative session, it's unlikely a vote would take place in time to get the proposal on the November 2008 ballot.

(continuted on next page)

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National News

(continued from previous page)

"This is over. It's over," proclaimed Arline Isaacson of the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus. Under Massachusetts law, the proposal needs the approval of a quarter of the Legislature — or 50 lawmakers.

The lawmakers' action prompted an angry response from Kris Mineau of the Massachusetts Family Institute, who complained that the legislature was "thumbing its nose" at the constitution.

"We might be able to take it into a federal court, who knows? Certainly this denies due process of the people," Mineau said. "The people's right to free speech is being throttled. The people's right to vote is being throttled."

During the debate, Democratic Sen. Jarrett Barrios, who is openly gay, pointed to his wedding ring and warned colleagues that putting same-sex marriage on the ballot would open the doors to a negative campaign against gays.

"You don't have to live next to us, you don't have to like us," Barrios said. "We are only asking you today to end the debate so that we can sleep easily knowing that while you may not live next to us or even like us that we will at least have the right to enjoy the same rights the rest of you enjoy."

Landscaper Refuses to Work for Gays

Garden Guy, a mom-and-pop landscaping business in Houston that promotes itself as "making Houston beautiful since 1991," promises to treat its customers with respect and honesty.

Apparently, that does not apply to gays and lesbians. In recent weeks, the landscape firm has been vilified around the world as a bunch of bigots because its Christian conservative owners refused to do work for a gay couple.

Michael Lord and Gary Lackey, a Houston area gay couple who was requesting bids for a landscaping job at their new house, received a polite — but honest — e-mail from Sabrina Farber, a co-owner of Garden Guy: "I need to tell you that we cannot meet with you because we choose not to work for homosexuals."

Stunned but the response, Lackey forwarded the e-mail to 200 friends, asking them not to patronize Garden Guy and urging them to pass the word on to friends and family. "I'm still shocked by the ignorance that exists in today's society," Lackey said in his e-mail.

Word of the incident spread fast and within days, quickly became the subject of heated and often ugly debates on the Internet. A forum on the Garden Guy Website normally reserved for discussions about land-scaping and shrubbery, was bombarded with angry comments, venomous attacks and threats from as far away as Australia.

Farber said she was shocked by the reaction. "It was just our intent to uphold our rights as small business owners to choose our clientele," she said. "All the hate, the threats of sodomizing my children, the threats of me being murdered, came out because of a very businesslike straightforward e-mail I sent. The crowd of tolerance and diversity is not so tolerant."

"Imagine if it had been a black or Hispanic couple that they wouldn't provide services to. It's really bad," said Jack Valinski, a Houston gay activist. "A lot of gay couples have kids, live in the suburbs and have neighbors that are straight. Yet, we still have instances like this. There is still always that underlying discrimination we all have to deal with."

Houston has no ordinance prohibiting businesses from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation.

The incident and email exchanges came to the attention of the Harrisburg, PA, offices of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers, which said that the Farbers were misrepresenting themselves as current members of the group and no longer belong to the 1,200-member association.

The group issued a statement criticizing the Farbers and as a result, established a nondiscrimination policy.

"It has come to our attention that a former member has declined a professional engagement on the grounds of the prospective clients' sexual orientation. This conduct does not conform to the policy and practice of APLD," the organization said.

Regularly meeting

Always Our Children Dec 6, Jan 3, Feb 7, Catholic Charities, 329 W. 10th St, Erie, PA. For Catholic parents of GLBT children Phone: (814) 456-2091.

Deadline for print edition of Erie Gay News Dec 11, Jan 15, Feb 12, EGN, 1115 W 7th St, Erie, PA. Contact: Michael Mahler. (814) 456-9833. info@eriegaynews.com.

Butler Area Equality Project Dec 27, Jan 24, Feb 28, Ginger Hill UU Congregation, 174 S Main St, Slippery Rock, PA. 7 PM. Contact Reid at (724) 735-4407 butlerdiversity@yahoo.com.

Be Ye Kind One To Another (BYKOTA) Dec 5, Jan 2, Feb 6, Please check to confirm dates! Unitarian-Universalist Parish House, 346 Chestnut St, Meadville, PA. 7 PM. We are a cross-denominational Christian group of/for LGBT people – encompassing spiritual nurture, discussion of LGBT issues, and mutual support. All are welcomd Phone: (814) 724-1832. Email: bykota@eriegaynews.com.

Lake Erie Alliance for Democracy (LEAD) Dec 4, Jan 8, Feb 5, 218 E 11th St, Erie, PA. 7 - 8:30 PM. Contact: Cindy Purvis. Phone: (814) 453-4113. Email: cindypurvis@velocity.net. Browse to www.erielead.org PFLAG Erie/Crawford County Dec 11, Jan 8, Feb 12, Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Highway, Erie, PA. 7 - 8:30 PM. Contact: Mark H pflagerie@eriegaynews.com. Phone: John at (814) 454-1392.

Support group for those dealing with loss Dec 12 at 7 PM, Dec 21 at 10 AM, Jan 9 at 7 PM, Jan 18 at 10 AM, Feb 13 at 7 PM, Feb 15 at 10 AM, Hospice of Metropolitan Erie, 202 E 10th St, Erie, PA. Ph: (814) 456-6689. Email: hospice@velocity.net.

The Guys Dec 6, Dec 27, Jan 17, Feb 7, Feb 28, Various locations, Erie, PA. 7 PM. Informal get together for gay/bi men at local establishments. Contact: Brian. Phone: (814) 825-6203. Email: eriebrian@gmail.com.

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Changes in US-Canada travel

When will you need a passport to travel between the United States and Canada?

The following is from the U.S. State Department: New Requirements for Travelers Between the United States and Canada: Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)

Effective January 8, 2007, all U.S. citizens traveling by air to and from Canada are required to have a valid passport to enter the United States. As early as January 1, 2008, U.S. citizens traveling between the United States and Canada by land or sea (including ferries), may be required to present a valid U.S. passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security. Ample advance notice will be provided to enable the public to obtain passports or passport cards for land/sea entries. American citizen travelers are encouraged to apply for a U.S. passport or the passport card when it becomes available, well in advance of anticipated travel. American citizens can visit travel.state.gov or call 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778) for information on applying for a passport.

For more information visit http://travel.state.gov

EARLY DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE!

Please submit items by **December 11**

We will be publishing earlier due to the holidays!

Winter travel info

If you are new to the area, or a younger driver, you may not be aware of how seriously one should take local winter travel advisories and warnings. If you are traveling to an out-of-town event during the winter months, it is always a good idea to check the weather and road conditions before heading out.

Following are some helpful phone numbers and links. (Clickable links at the web version of this ar-

ticle).

If you'd like to call about the road conditions in the tri-state area, here are the numbers:

In the City of Erie, call 452-2000 extension 7669. For Pennsylvania interstate road conditions call 1-888-783-6783.

In Ohio, call 1-888-264-7623

New York State, the number is 1-800-847-8929. New York Thruway www.nysthruway.gov/wtas/ netdata/

Western New York (NOAA) http://www.wbuf.noaa.gov/



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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

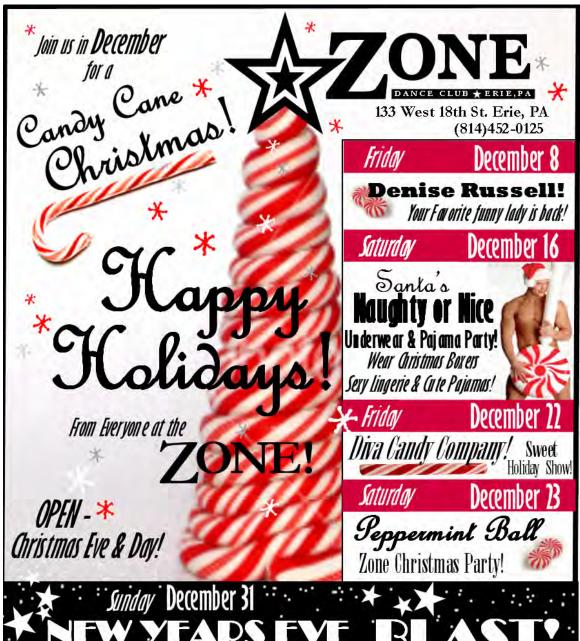
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