

January 1993 - January 2008



EGN
Erie Gay News



PA Hate Crimes Law Ruled Unconstitutional

Gov. Ed Rendell is appealing a Nov. 15 ruling by the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court declaring unconstitutional an amendment to the state's hate-crimes law that includes crimes committed on the basis of the victim's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, ancestry or mental or physical disability.

The Court ruled 5-1 that the legislative process that led to the amendment's passage was unconstitutional, not the actual substance of the law. The ruling is the result of a lawsuit filed in 2005 by the group Repent America.

In addition to the Governor's appeal, the state House and Senate are debating whether or not to file their own appeals. In order to do this, both party caucuses within each chamber have to agree jointly to the appeal in order for it to move forward. Either the House or the Senate (or both) can file an appeal. Watch for further updates in the coming weeks.

Come on OUT! and Join the Fun in December and January

from Come on OUT!

The Nov. 29 Trivia Night sponsored by "Come on OUT!" was such a popular success that it is being held again Thursday, Dec. 20, at the Zodiac Dinor, 2516 State St., Erie.

In addition, "Come on OUT!" is sponsoring a Bowling Night on Sunday, Jan. 20, beginning at 6:30 PM at Rolling Meadows Lanes, 3304 Zuck Road, Erie.

Come on OUT! a new monthly social networking group, offers the regional GLBT community an opportunity to get together in a social setting, have fun and make new friends. The Dec. 20 Trivia Night will run from 7-9 PM and the dinor will be open for this event only. Desserts and beverages will be available for purchase, and those over 21 are invited to BYOB. Interested participants can bring their own team of four or come solo and be paired up with others to form



Sacred Heart's heartwarming Thanksgiving message promoting discrimination. For more see page 10.

teams of four. All teams will have a maximum of four members, and prizes will be awarded to the winners.

For more information, call Brian at 1-888-749-7073 (toll free). Come on OUT! is being presented in cooperation with Erie Gay Pride, Inc., Erie's new GLBT community organization.

Rainbow Elders Dance

from Rainbow Elders of the Niagara Frontier

Western New York's Rainbow Elders will have a dance on January 19 at Unity Church, 1243 Delaware Ave., Buffalo NY. The dance will run from 9 PM to 2 AM. Admission is \$6. Pop, snacks, Chinese Auction; no alcohol. Rainbow Elders is a social and support group for mature gay women and men and their friends.

For more information contact Danny at 716-881-7234.

(continued on page 4)

In This Issue...

Statewide Week of Action: Jan 28- Feb 3....4	
Calendar.....6	
On Stage9	
Java Buzz.....9	
Sacred Heart Anti-Marriage Sign10	
Simplicity12	
National News Briefs13	
Recurring events.....15	
OutProud for GLBT youth16	
Update on Canada travel17	
Election 2008.....17	
15th Anniversary of Erie Gay News18	
New Year events19	

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EGN Rates & Data

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EIGHTH	\$30 - \$27 Prepaid	1 ⁵ / ₈ " high X 2 ⁷ / ₈ " wide
QUARTER	\$50 - \$45 Prepaid	3 ¹ / ₂ " high X 2 ⁷ / ₈ " wide
HALF VERT.	\$90 - \$81 Prepaid	3 ¹ / ₂ " high X 6" wide
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FULL PAGE	\$160 - \$144 Prepaid	7 ¹ / ₂ " high X 6" wide

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.



Erie Gay News
 1115 West 7th St.
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 Phone: (814) 456-9833
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Editors: Deb Spilko and Mike Mahler
Ad Design: Mike Lipiec
Deadline for next issue: Jan 14 (Monday), will be out night of Tuesday, Jan 22.

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.



To the Avalon for hosting, James von Loewe, Jeff, Lynne Rhodes and Charles for folding; James von Loewe, Deb Spilko, Jerry McCumber, Charles, Paula and Dylan for distribution, Bob for proofreading, Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

He's back!!! Another year older and he's pissed!

Saturday
January 12th

Come celebrate the

20th

ANNIVERSARY
of Lee's
30th birthday!



Forever Young!

Specials!

Lee's shot glasses.

Come get your liquor on with Lee!

2008

CRYSTAL BALL
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NEW YEAR'S EVE
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Doors open at 8PM so get here early!!

TRANCENIGHTCLUB.COM
1607 Raspberry St., Erie, PA 16502
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Community News

(continued from front page)

Men's Greet 'n Chat update

by Michael Mahler

The Men's Greet and Chat welcomes all gay and bi men looking for a friendly and informal social environment.

We will next be getting together on Thursday, Dec. 27 at 7 PM at Hoss's, 3302 W 26th St, and then on Tuesday, Jan. 29 at 7 PM at Panos Restaurant, 1504 W 38th, Erie PA. Hope that you can join us! Also, there will be a Menspace at Rich's on Saturday, Jan. 19 and another Menspace event on Saturday, Feb. 9. For more info, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or email info@eriegaynews.com

Stay updated!

Subscribe to the **Erie GLBT Mailing List**
Visit www.eriegaynews.com



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Lic. NCTMB/ACE

Statewide Week of Action: Jan 28- Feb 3

by Jake Kaskey/Equality PA

This has been a busy several months There was the introduction of state non-discrimination legislation, the fight to keep transgender protections in ENDA, and the first-ever State Government Committee hearings on LGBT legislation in Erie. A lot of momentum has been building in Pennsylvania to pass important anti-discrimination legislation, and with your continued activism and advocacy in Erie, we're making great strides toward this victory.

After the Holiday season, Equality Advocates is planning a massive, first-of-its-kind, Statewide Week of Action from January 28 – February 3 to not only mobilize individual activists around current legislation, but also to raise awareness on LGBT issues across Pennsylvania.

We are asking you to call your state representative to set up a meeting and talk about the importance of passing this non-discrimination legislation. We are asking you to ask your friends to sign form letters in support of this important bill. We are asking you to hold a house-party to raise awareness on LGBT issues in Erie. There are countless ways to become involved with this important week, and we hope you take a moment to consider how you can best be engaged.

If you have been putting off talking to your legislators, this is the time to act. Be an integral part of a massive statewide effort to draw attention to LGBT issues in the state. Don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today.

To find out who your state representative is, please visit <http://www.equalitypa.org>. For more information on the Statewide Week of Action, or for help setting up a meeting with your legislator, please contact Jake at jkaskey@equalitypa.org or (866) LGBT-LAW ext. 14.

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Erie Gay News

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that You had
the Best Year Ever
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**Even Better
New Year!**

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EGN

Erie Gay News

Celebrating
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of Serving the Gay Community

Calendar

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

Dec 20 – Trivia Night at Zodiac Dinor 2516 State St, Erie), 7-9 PM. Sponsored by “Come on OUT!”, Erie’s new GLBT monthly social group. Bring your own team (maximum of four people) or join in with others to form a team. Presented in cooperation with Erie Gay Pride, Inc. For information call Brian at 1-888-749-7073.

Dec 21 - Santa Baby! Diva’s Holiday Show! at Zone 133 W 18th St, Erie,. Stand in line because the Divas of the Zone are about to give you a Holiday kiss under the mistletoe! Did I see Miss Erie kissing Santa Claus? Join us for a sexy night of entertainment, but get here early—tables fill up fast! (814) 452-0125. www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 22 - Jingle Bells - Zone’s Christmas Party! 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. The elves are done decorating and it’s a North Pole Christmas at the Zone! Santa Claus will be handing out gifts and surprises! Play a few Reindeer Games or try our special Holiday

Shots, and dance the night away on our Video Dance floor! Join your friends and Santa’s Elves for a night of dancing and fun! Did I hear sleigh bells up on the Zone roof? Happy Holidays from everyone at the Zone! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to <http://www.thezonedanceclub.com>.

Dec 22 - Naughty or Nice at Trance Night Club and Oasis Patio/Martini Bar 1607 Raspberry St, Erie. 10 PM. We’re bringing back host Jamie Lynn and Akashia for a show featuring the FINEST in local drag entertainment. Dare play Jamie’s “Naughty or Nice” contest? Prizes and tons of laughter and fun! Don’t miss out on this spectacular holiday event! Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancenightclub.com. Browse to www.trancenightclub.com.

Dec 24 - Christmas Eve at the Zone! 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. 8 PM. The shopping is done! Stop in for some fun! We open at 8 PM - Zone kitchen is open till 2 AM! - 2 for 1 Wing Madness! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Do you know the signs of an abusive relationship?

- Does “IT’S HIS/HER WAY OR THE HIGHWAY” apply to the relationship?
- Does one partner get blamed for everything that goes wrong? “IT’S ALL YOUR FAULT!”
- Is the relationship full of put downs and disparaging comments?
- Is jealousy off the charts?
- Are there constant calls and “tracking” of the partner?

These are just a few of the signs that a relationship is on its way to devastating intimate partner violence. Learn more!



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www.safenerie.org



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Most insurance plans accepted. For those without insurance, fees for most medical services (excluding prenatal care) are based on income and family size. Most medical services are provided at no cost to those age 17 and under. Breast & cervical cancer screening may be provided at no cost to those who qualify.

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Calendar

Dec 24 - 'Twas the Night before Christmas College night at Trance 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. Drag show and Dance Party. Performance by your favorite house cast with special guest performers. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancenightclub.com. Browse to www.trancenightclub.com.

Dec 25 - Christmas Day at the Zone! 133 W 18th St, Erie. We will be open at 8:00 for a relaxing night with friends and family. (Or a chance to slip away and have some real fun!) Happy Holidays from the Zone! (814) 452-0125. www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Dec 27 - Men's Greet 'n Chat At Hoss's Steak & Sea House, 3302 W 26th St, Erie PA, 7 PM. Monthly week night social group for gay/bi men. All are welcome! Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Dec 31 - 'Crystal Ball' at Trance Night Club and Oasis Patio/Martini Bar 1607 Raspberry St, Erie. 8 PM. Countdown your 2008 at Alternative Erie's BIGGEST and HOTTEST Premier Party Spot! DJ

Jason G spins this year's countdown with the BEST of 2007's dance hits with funky flashbacks! Ice Luge – Champagne – Party Favors – Free Food Buffet – Prizes Give aways – and more! Doors open at 8 PM so get here early!! Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancenightclub.com. Web: www.trancenightclub.com.

Dec 31 - Zone's New Years Eve Blast! Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie. Don't miss out on Erie's BIGGEST and Best gay New Year's Eve Party! Champagne toast, buffet, party favors, glowsticks, and giveaways! Wear red or black or glamorous Holiday attire, Lets welcome 2008 with a BLAST! Balloon drop and champagne toast at midnight! Ring in the New Year with friends in our Video Dancefloor. Happy New Year from the staff of the Zone! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Jan 11 - Watchfire Alliance socializing and planning meeting (Assembly Hall, Lily Dale, NY) 7 PM. Watchfire Alliance of Chautauqua County will be gathering for socializing and for planning community building.
(continued on next page)



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Wednesday 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Thursday 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

**Erie Office - Outreach Services
814-451-6727
Corry Office 814-663-3891**

Calendar

Please join us whether you want to just meet up or get into action! Contact: Bethany. Phone: (716)499-4817. Email: watchfirealliance@yahoo.com.

Jan 12 - Lee's 20th Anniversary of 30th Birthday Party at Trance 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. He's back!!! Another year older and he's pissed! Come celebrate the 20th anniversary of Lee's 30th birthday, Come get your liquor on with Lee! Botox Drink Specials! Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancenightclub.com. Browse to www.trancenightclub.com.

Jan 19 - Menspace get together (Rich's, Erie, PA) 7:30 PM. Social group for gay/bi men. Contact Michael Mahler for location info. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Visit <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Jan 19- Dance with Rainbow Elders and Lesbian Women's Social Group (Buffalo) At Unity Church 1243 Delaware Ave., 9PM-2AM, admission \$6. No Alcohol. Pop, snacks, Chinese Auction, DJ Dancing. Info: Danny: 716-881-7234.

Jan 19 - Snowball- Winter White Party! at Zone

Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA) Snowflakes are still falling, Winter is still here, Join us for our first BIG party of the New Year! Wear White! - and dress in layers because we are going to heat things up! White leather, white lace, white denim, white underwear! Every snowflake is Original and Unique - just like you! Everyone Wear White!- we want to create a blizzard inside the Zone! The Zone's ORIGINAL White Party started 9 Years Ago! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to <http://www.thezonedanceclub.com>.

Jan 20 - Bowling Night (Rolling Meadows Lanes, 3304 Zuck Road, Erie) 6:30 PM, sponsored by "Come on OUT!", Erie's new GLBT monthly social group. Bring your friends, join up with others and have fun! Presented in cooperation with Erie Gay Pride, Inc. For information call Brian at 1-888-749-7073.

Jan 22 - Erie Gay News folding/distributing work party at Trance Night Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie PA) 7 PM. PLEASE NOTE! New location! We will be alternating between Trance and the Zone from month to month. Help us get out the print edition of Erie Gay News. We will be folding and distributing the copies. It's also a great way to hang out and chat with folks! Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://www.eriegaynews.com>.

Jan 29 - Men's Greet 'n Chat (Pano's, 1504 W 38th St, Erie PA) 7 PM. Monthly week night social group for gay/bi men. All are welcome! Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Feb 3 - End-ZONE Superbowl Party at Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA) Watch the game with us on our Giant screen TV and cheer your

the Rural AIDS Alliance

We provide access to testing, education, and medical, financial, and supportive services to those infected with HIV/AIDS in Northwest Pa. 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:

Erie Office: Booker T Washington Ctr
1720 Holland St, PA 16503
814-453-5744 or 1-800-400-2437

Clarion Office: 15870 Route 322
Suite 2 Clarion, PA 16214
814-764-6066 or 1-800-359-2437

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Calendar

favorite team to victory! The kitchen is open all night with specials on all your favorite munchies and 2 for 1 wings- Wing Madness! The Super Bowl - a night of Food, Friends, Fun, and Football! Get into the End-ZONE and score a Touchdown! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Feb 5 - Interactive Trivia Night Kick Off! at Trance Night Club and Oasis Patio/Martini Bar 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA) We're kicking off Interactive Trivia Tuesdays! Bring your smart friends for our live interactive trivia contest. Plenty of fun and prizes for the winning teams! Contact: Tim. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Email: contact@trancenightclub.com. Browse to <http://www.trancenightclub.com>.

Feb 9 - Menspace (Rick & Rod's) 7:30 PM. Details TBA. Social group for gay/bi men. Contact Michael Mahler for location info. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Visit <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

On Stage

Selected performances of possible interest to GLBT audiences.

Dec 29 (Sat) - Shari Gross performs contemporary blues/holiday music (Gino's Bistro & Jazz, 28 W 21st St, Erie, PA) 9 PM - 12 AM. Contemporary blues/jazz, plus holiday songs Phone: (814) 454-4466.

Jan 3 - Rufus Wainwright in Pittsburgh. Rufus will be performing solo. Opener: Lucy Wainwright Roche. Carnegie Music Hall www.rufuswainwright.com/

Jan 25 - Ember Swift in Pittsburgh, PA Modern Formations Gallery www.emberswift.com/

Jan 27 - Ember Swift in Cleveland, OH Beachland Ballroom & Tavern www.emberswift.com/

Jan 25-26 - Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus presents "The Proud and the Passionate" in Buffalo at UU Church of Buffalo (1/25) and Temple Beth Zion (1/26). Buffalo NY. www.ubcfa.org

Mar 28 - Bernadette Peters with the North Coast Men's Chorus and the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, 8 PM, Allen Theater, 1407 Euclid Ave. , Cleveland ; tickets only with Men's Chorus season package until Jan. 15, www.ncmchorus.org or 216-556-0590, then from Playhouse Square at 216-241-6000 or www.playhousesquare.com.

Java Buzz

Eclectic Etceteras

118 Erie St., Edinboro, PA www.myspace.com/eecoffeehouse. We are in the process of organizing open jam sessions during the December - January holiday season! Let us know if you and your friends are interested!!!

Dec 21 - Frank Marzano 5-7 PM

Dec 22 - Dustin Miller and Saturday 1-3 PM

Dec 29 - Dustin Miller from 1-3 PM

Intermezzo Coffeehouse

12 Park Place, Fredonia, NY (716)672.6070 Fredonia NY www.intermezzocoffeehouse.com Intermezzo Coffeehouse is proud to periodically showcase the talent of area musicians. There is no cover charge. Watch flyers posted in the coffeehouse and local media for announcement of scheduled musicians. Through a special partnership with the Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet (CRYB), where Monika is artistic director, we currently are exhibiting photographs of CRYB's production of The Nutcracker taken over the past several years by Jamestown photographer Rob Sigler. The photography exhibit runs through Dec. 31.

Some spots in Buffalo's Allen Street area

You can find a lot of nice spots in and around Buffalo's gay neighborhood in the Allen and Elmwood area. Here are a few:

The SPOT 227 Delaware (Delaware at Chippewa) (716)332-2299. Said to be a great place for "people-watching"!

Cafe 59 59 Allen St. (716) 883-1880 www.cafe59.com

The Java Temple 57 Allen St. (716) 882-1250

Moka Cafe 199 Allen St.

Cybele's 206 Allen. (716)882-1247

Cafe Taza 100 Elmwood Avenue www.myspace.com/cafetaza

Topic Cafe 138 Allen St.. (716)883-4760

New Year's Eve idea

Most coffee houses will be open till late afternoon or early evening on New Year's eve, allowing for yet another way to bring in the New Year!

Sacred Heart Anti-Marriage Sign

A message on an electronic sign in front of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Erie is raising many concerns in the community because of its opposition to equal marriage rights.

The message, which can be seen in front of the church at W. 26th and Liberty Streets, says in part, “Help Save Marriage in Pennsylvania,” “Marriage Matters,” “Call your legislators... Protect God’s gift of marriage” and “What does Jesus say about marriage?” Photos of the sign with the text are linked from the Erie Gay News web site.

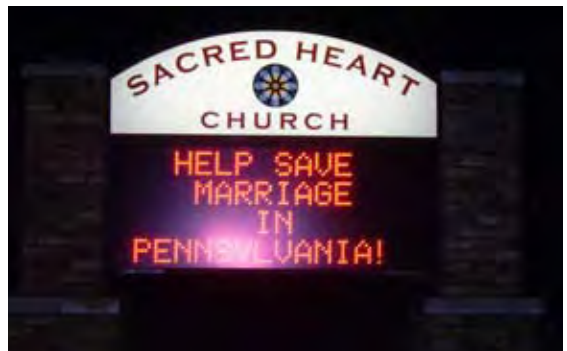
Many local people, both gay and straight, have found the message to be mean-spirited and jarring, especially since the context is linked to the holiday season and Mass times. Some have sent letters to the editor of the Erie Times News. A letter from L. Finch, a local woman who entered into a civil union with her partner in Vermont, ran on Wednesday, Dec. 12.

From Sacred Heart’s 11/18 church bulletin: Last week, several Pastors throughout the Diocese, along with their parish representatives, attended a meeting at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Oil City to discuss “Preserving and Protecting Marriage in Pennsylvania.” A “grass-roots” movement is brewing throughout all of the Catholic dioceses in Pennsylvania to try to influence the state Legislature to adopt a Marriage Protection Amendment. This movement is in part, a response to the legalization of same-sex marriages in Massachusetts and the creation of “civil unions” in Vermont and other states.

Those initiating this movement feel that Pennsylvania needs to join 27 other states that have voted to protect the institution of marriage by amending their state constitutions. However, same-sex marriage is already illegal in Pennsylvania as a result of the “Defense of Marriage Act” passed in 1996. Amending the state constitution would protect the current law from court challenges, would prevent the state from recognizing same-sex marriages performed in other states and countries, and would bar legal recognition of civil unions, which have the same benefits of marriage under a different name.

Over the next several months, Catholics throughout Pennsylvania are being encouraged to lobby their state legislators to support this effort to amend the state constitution. Members of the LGBT community are encouraged to lobby their state legislators in opposition to this amendment effort.

BELOW: These were among the messages that appeared during Thanksgiving weekend at Sacred Heart Church in Erie. They are part of a new effort by some members of the Catholic Diocese of Erie to legislate discrimination.



What the Bible says about same-sex marriage

from ReligiousTolerance.org

Bible passages describing same-sex marriage:

There are none! You can scan from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, and not see even a single same-sex marriage mentioned.

The Bible does contain:

- Three stories of loving, same-sex relationships in the Bible involving David, Ruth and Daniel. But there is no indication that any of the three involved sexual activity.
- A dozen or so oft-quoted passages about homosexual behavior in the Bible. Because conservative and liberal Christians interpreted the Bible very differently, they reach totally different conclusions about their meaning:
 - **Many conservative Christians** interpret these passages as stating unambiguously that all homosexual behavior is forbidden, is an abomination, and is hated by God. It does not matter whether it is in the form of casual sex with a stranger, or sex within a committed, monogamous relationship. It is all sinful. Some consider it an "ordinary" sin -- in the same league as all other incorrect behavior, like lying, cheating or stealing. Others consider it such a serious sin that it will prevent gays and lesbians from attaining Heaven after death, even if they had previously been saved.
 - **Many liberal Christians** largely ignore English translations of the Bible which are often heavily biased against homosexuality. They prefer to refer to the original Hebrew and Greek. They frequently interpret these passages as condemning:
 - Homosexual rape (Genesis 19; Judges 19:14).
 - Homosexual ritual sex in Pagan temples -- a religious taboo (Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13).
 - Homosexual prostitution (Deuteronomy 23:17; 1 Kings 14:24, 15:12, 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7).
 - Heterosexual men and women going against their basic nature and engaging

in homosexual Pagan orgies (Romans 1:26).

- Men who sexually molest boys -- and the boys that they abuse (1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:9).
- Bestiality: Men engaging in sex with males of another species -- angels in this case (Jude 7).

But on the topic of sexual activity within a loving, committed, monogamous homosexual relationship, many religious liberals view the Bible as being completely silent.

One of the very few beliefs on which conservative and liberal Christians agree is that there are no definitive statements in the Bible which deal directly with same-sex marriages (aka domestic partnerships, civil unions, holy unions, etc.)

The books in the Christian Scriptures were all written before 100 CE (according to most conservative Christians) or 150 CE (according to most liberal Christians). The concept of homosexuality as a sexual orientation that could lead to a committed, long term relationship was not developed until the late 19th century. Thus, one can not expect to find biblical references to same-sex marriage. There are no references to planes, trains or automobiles, either.

There are two sources that we can use to infer Christian perspectives on same-sex marriage:

- **Bible passages** which deal with principles of love, sex, and marriage. Conservative and liberal approaches are described below [in additional articles on the web version of this article]. They come to opposite conclusions.
- **Direct assessment of the will of God** through prayer. Unfortunately, according to a pilot study of some visitors to this web site, this path does not seem to be available.

This article was reprinted from ReligiousTolerance.org, which is maintained by the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, an agency that promotes the freedom of individuals to follow the religious path of their choosing, without discrimination or oppression. You can view the original version of this article, which includes numerous links, by visiting www.religioustolerance.org

Simplicity

*Rev. Richard A. Moyer
Pastor Community United Church*

On a recent news program, they featured a mega-church in Florida. Each year, the church puts on a spectacular Christmas pageant that costs almost \$1 million to produce.

In an interview with the pastor, he indicated that a ticket for the Christmas extravaganza can cost as much as \$35. He also said that each night of the performance, some tickets are given away to the poor who could not otherwise enjoy the elaborate program that includes live camels and donkeys, as well as fine costumes.

There were a number of questions asked by the news reporter who interviewed the pastor. "Couldn't the million be spent in a better way?" was the first question. The pastor had an answer that, at least in the mind of some people, would justify the extraordinary expense.

The second question from the news commentator was about the free tickets for the poor. "Wouldn't it be better to get them something they could really use

like food or shelter rather than a ticket for a one-time performance?" he asked. Again, the pastor replied with an explanation that most likely satisfied some people.

If I would have the opportunity to speak with the pastor whose church spent \$1 million on a show, I'd question him about simplicity.

What ever happened to the simplicity of a birth that took place in a cow shed behind a crowded inn, a Child laid in a straw-filled manger, and only poor parents and simple shepherds in attendance to witness the event that would take place that night? Isn't the whole point of Christmas simplicity?

The church symbols of Advent and Christmas are a simple candle, an unadorned wreath and unsophisticated carols. Christmas is about simple love and child-like faith.

Usually the best and most appreciated gifts we receive are the simple ones, meaningful because they were given with love.

To love another person is a very simple act of shared joy, deep affection and genuine respect. Extravagance and excess often get in the way of true love.

Jesus was angered by the Scribes and the Pharisees who paraded around in their expensive robes and acted religiously superior to ordinary people. He was impressed by the simple but sincere act of repentance on the part of the tax collector who came into the Temple to pray for the forgiveness of his sins.

My fear is that when the simple story of the birth in a lowly manger goes high tech and becomes more show than substance, the real meaning of Christmas is misunderstood.

To my way of thinking, a better understanding of what Christmas is really about is found in the words of Martin Luther in one of his Christmas sermons.

He said, "Note how simply these events happen on earth, yet so highly regarded in heaven. There is the poor, young wife Mary, living in Nazareth, thought nothing of, and regarded as one of the lowliest of women in the town... Not a soul notices, not a soul understands what God is doing in a stable. He leaves empty the palaces and stately homes."

Christmas is all about simplicity-the simple hope that the love of a Child can bring peace to the world.

**COMMUNITY
UNITED
CHURCH**

**Christmas Eve
Candle Light Service at 8 PM**

West 38th & Cascade
Services Sunday at 11 AM
United Church of Christ
Church of the Brethren
All are Welcome!



National News Briefs

by Bob

Court Ruling Seen as Setback

The Rhode Island Supreme Court has ruled that a lesbian couple who married in Massachusetts cannot get divorced in their home state of Rhode Island. The 3-2 decision is being viewed as a setback to gay rights' advocates who sought greater recognition for same-sex relationships.

In the ruling, the justices said that the family court lacks the authority to grant a divorce because Rhode Island state lawmakers have not defined marriage as anything other than a union between a man and a woman.

"The role of the judicial branch is not to make policy, but simply to determine the legislative intent as expressed in the statutes enacted by the General Assembly," the court wrote.

Cassandra Ormiston and Margaret Chambers wed in Massachusetts in 2004 after that state became the first to legalize same-sex marriages. The couple filed for divorce last year in Rhode Island, where they both live, citing irreconcilable differences.

Though the women could divorce in Massachusetts if one moved there for a year, Ormiston said that was an unfair burden and something she would not do.

Rhode Island has no law specifically banning same-sex marriages, but the state has taken no action to recognize them.

The justices said Rhode Island laws contain numerous references to marriage as between a woman and a man. The court also said the General Assembly did not have gay marriage in mind when it created Rhode Island's family court, which handles divorces, in 1961.

Court Dismisses Gay Student's Expulsion Case

Four years ago, Jeffrey Woodard was expelled from a Christian School in Florida after telling the school chaplain that he was gay. After the expulsion, Woodard filed suit against Chaplain Todd Bellhorn, who had promised to keep Woodard's sexual orientation a secret, but passed the information on to school administrators.

Now, the Florida Supreme Court has declined

to hear the case in a 5-2 ruling. The short ruling said the court would not rule on an issue that a lower court considered a matter of great public importance.

Dissenting justice Barbara Pariente criticized her ruling colleagues, saying the decision created confusion.

"The emotional distress Woodard allegedly suffered as a result of the school chaplain's breach of confidentiality is at least equal to that typically suffered by the victim of a defamation or an invasion of privacy," she wrote, referring to those who have collected damages purely for emotional distress.


Woodard's attorney, William Booth, said the court's refusal to hear the case should alert others who confide in clergy. However, John Bryan, the school's attorney, said the Supreme Court's intervention in the matter would violate the separation of church and state. He also said that Bellhorn is not a cleric and that Woodard was openly gay to friends, which no longer made that information confidential.

Secretary of State Criticized by Gay Ambassador

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was openly criticized for failing gay and lesbian diplomats and their families at a State Department going-away party for Michael Guest, the openly gay former US Ambassador to Romania under President George W. Bush.

In his speech Guest, 50, who became dean of the Foreign Service Institute's Leadership and Management School, told his colleagues, "For the past three years, I've urged the secretary and her senior management team to redress policies that discriminate against gay

(continued on next page)



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National News Briefs

and lesbian employees. Absolutely nothing resulted from this. And so I've felt compelled to choose between obligations to my partner - who is my family - and service to my country. That anyone should have to make that choice is a stain on the secretary's leadership and a shame for this institution and our country."

Guest said he tried to get Rice to give same-sex partners the same rights as spouses of diplomats, including security training, free medical care at and transportation to overseas posts, evacuation in emergencies, and special living allowances when partners are not able to accompany the diplomat to his or her post in such hot spots as Iraq.

Pat Kennedy, undersecretary for management who heard Guest speak, told the Washington Post, "These are complex issues. We are committed to giving our personnel the support they need to get their jobs done." Kennedy insisted that Rice and the department do not "discriminate on hiring or promotions."

Gay Cruise Passengers Welcome in Grenada

The government of the Caribbean island nation of Grenada has announced that it would not prevent several cruise ships carrying gay passengers from docking at Port St. George over the next few months.

In a statement, the Ministry of Tourism said there has been negative fallout as a result of foreign press reports suggesting that the country was moving to ban gay cruises from visiting the island. The cruise liners Queen Mary 2 and Legend of the Seas have scheduled cruises with gay passengers to several Caribbean countries, including Grenada, in December, January, February and March.

"The Ministry of Tourism views with concern the recent negative and adverse reactions being promoted in some sections of the media on the perspective visit of homosexual visitors to our island," said the statement. "Of equal concern are the negative reports which have now appeared in the foreign press stating that Grenada has barred gay cruises from docking in our island."

Tourism Minister Dr. Clarice Modeste Curwin also complained that inaccurate reports suggesting that Grenada was planning to ban gay cruises to the island have led to a number of cancellations at local hotels.

Conference Committee Drops Hate Crimes Legislation

A House-Senate conference committee has dropped the hate-crimes legislation co-sponsored by Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., and Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., from a defense authorization bill because it does not have sufficient support in the House.

The legislation, formally known as the "Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act" (S. 1105), would have expanded federal law to include crimes committed against people because of their gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Wade Henderson, president of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, reacted strongly, telling the Associated Press that the legislation is "the last clear chance this year for Congress to make a meaningful effort to stop hate crime violence."

Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese added, "The decision is deeply disappointing, especially given the historic passage of hate crimes legislation through both Houses of Congress this year. After more than 10 years and several successful bipartisan votes, it is heartbreaking to fall short this close to the finish line. However, we are not giving up on efforts to find another legislative vehicle, in the second half of this Congress, to move the Matthew Shepard Act."

Matthew Shepard's parents, Judy and Dennis, released a statement saying, "At this time of year that fills us all with hope for humankind, we are sad to find that a Congressional majority of each House who have already adopted the Matthew Shepard Act cannot yet come together."

The Shepards said they are "dedicated to redoubling our efforts next year to achieve our vision of a hate-free America that truly includes everyone. This has never simply been about Matthew Shepard and our family, this legislation is a gift delayed but never forgotten for all America's families."

Heading Out of Town?

Looking for bars, accommodations, restaurants,
—or just general visitors' information?

Visit the Resources section at www.eriegaynews.com.

Recurring events

Always Our Children, Catholic Charities, 329 W. 10th St, Erie, PA. Jan 2, Feb 6. 7 PM. For Catholic parents of GLBT children. First time attendees should call facilitator before attending meeting. Phone: (814) 456-2091.

Deadline for print edition of Erie Gay News. Jan 14, Feb 15. EGN, 1115 W 7th St, Erie, PA. Contact: Michael Mahler. (814) 456-9833. info@eriegaynews.com.

Folding/distributing work party for print edition of Erie Gay News. Jan 22 at Trance Dance Club, 1607 Raspberry St, Erie PA, Feb 26 at the Zone, 133 W 18th St, Erie PA. Contact: Michael Mahler. (814) 456-9833. info@eriegaynews.com.

Lake Erie Alliance for Democracy (LEAD.) Jan 7, Feb 4. Chris Mitchell. Phone: (814) 899-8920. Email: president@erielead.org. Browse to www.erielead.org
PFLAG Erie/Crawford County. Jan 14, Feb 11. Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Highway, Erie, PA. 7 - 8:30 PM. Contact: Mark Hoovler pflagerie@eriegaynews.com. Phone: John at (814) 454-1392.

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

DEADLINE for next issue is
January 14

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
Erie Hotline (814) 453-5656

Oral HIV Testing LOCAL TREATMENT

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45% of new HIV infections are between

Men Who Have Sex with Men.

Community Health Net offers:

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Call 814-454 - 4530 ex.290
for more information



This ad is made possible by a Federal Grant under the Ryan White Care Act of 1990.

OutProud for GLBT youth

from OutProud

OutProud, The National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Youth, serves the needs of young GLBT men and women by providing advocacy, information, resources and support.

They provide outreach and support to queer teens just coming to terms with their sexual orientation and to those contemplating coming out. They let them know they're not alone by helping them find local sources of friendship and support.

OutProud believes in effecting change at a grassroots level by catalyzing and fostering the development of a new generation of youth activists who will take positions at the forefront of our civil rights and social movements.

Among the many resources available at OutProud:

- Coming out stories - read others' stories, or share your own.
- Local resources of friendship or support, or get involved in the the GLBT community.

- Community Role Models Archive - Explore the Community Role Models Archive to find out more about people making a difference in the world Oasis Magazine Forum. Correspond with other GLBT youth on issues affecting our community.
- The School Resources Library provides a range of tools to help make schools safe and supportive Links and resources – educational resources, magazines, and special areas for GLBT youth.
- Information for GLBT youth and their families.
- Wide range of online brochures.
- TransProud - OutProud introduces TransProud, a special resource and support area for transgender youth
- OutProud Library for the latest recommendations for GLBT youth, their families and teachers Oasis Magazine, the leading online community by and for GLBT youth everywhere

You can visit OutProud at www.outproud.org

Men's Treet 'n' Chat

Social Group for Gay/Bi men.
Once a month every nite at 7 PM.
All are welcome!

Upcoming Dates:
Thurs. Dec. 27 at Hoss's
3302 W 26th St, Erie PA
Tues. Jan. 29 at Pano's,
1504 W 38th St, Erie PA

Contact: Michael Mahler.
Phone: 814.456.9833.
Email: info@eriegaynews.com

Last month at Dominick's Eatery

Update on Canada travel

The date for requiring a passport to travel to Canada by land appears to have changed. For the most updated information, stop by a postal facility that handles passport processing. You can also visit <http://www.travel.state.gov>

The following is from the Visit Canada website at <http://visitcanada.com>

NEW PASSPORT REGULATIONS FOR PERSONS ARRIVING IN THE U.S. OR RE-ENTERING THE US, FROM CANADA, BY LAND AND SEA.

Presently, the regulations governing U.S. and Canadian citizens traveling to, or returning to the U.S. from Canada, by land and sea, remain unchanged; all U.S. and Canadian Citizens crossing the U.S. and Canadian border by land and sea must be prepared to show either a passport, or other proof of citizenship such as a birth certificate, and a government-issued photo-ID such as a drivers license. A driver's license is never proof of citizenship, of course, but can serve as documentation of the bearer's identity in support of other proof of citizenship.

For resident aliens, an original green card is proof of permanent U.S. residence and, together with a photo-ID, will also suffice.

However, proposed, as yet unspecified changes mandated by WHTI [Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative] will take effect sometime between January 1, 2008 (at the earliest), and June 1, 2009 (at the latest), whereupon U.S. and Canadian citizens will be required to present either passports "or other secure documents", yet to be designated by the U.S. State Department.

Advertising and Editorial Copy
DEADLINE
is Jan 14 for Feb issue!
Your support and contributions are appreciated.



Election 2008

Dates of State Primaries

New York	February 5
Ohio	March 4
Pennsylvania	April 22

**WHERE?
CAN YOU FIND
EGN**
Erie Gay News

Check Out Our Website at: www.eriegaynews.com
for our list of locations

Before you travel.
Check out these websites
or Call these Numbers
for weather and travel information.

all locations: **erie county**
 WEATHER UNDERGROUND 452-2000
www.wunderground.com ext. 7669 (snow)

pennsylvania ROADS AND WEATHER
<http://65.246.225.166/site/site.nsf/mainpage>
ROADS 1-888-783-6783

new york ROADS AND WEATHER
www.thruway.state.ny.us/weather/index.shtml
ROADS 1-800-847-8929

ohio ROADS AND WEATHER
www.buckeyetraffic.org
ROADS 1-888-264-7623

KNOW about your community, read the

and learn

EGN
Erie Gay News



15th Anniversary of Erie Gay News

by Michael Mahler

This issue (January 2007) marks the 15th anniversary of Erie Gay News!

A little history:

Our first issue was published with funds raised from a community dance held by Bridges, a GLBT networking group that started in 1992. We also received a grant from the Pittsburgh-based Lambda Foundation in 1993, which funded printing costs for a year. The Lambda Foundation encouraged us to become more self-sufficient—with ads and donations—and that soon happened. We are one of the few smaller-city GLBT publications that actually supports itself. We have had a web site continuously since January 1996, and have had the eriegaynews.com domain since April 1998.

As part of the city of Erie's Bicentennial in 1995, a copy of the December 1995 issue is included in the time capsule in the Bicentennial Tower at Dobbin's Landing. We are very proud that we will be included in Erie's history when the capsule is opened in 2095.

Although the print version went on hiatus from late 1999 until late 2002, we did maintain the EGN website without interruption, and started up again with a print publication in late 2002. Back issues are being scanned, and we hope at some time to have the complete collection available to read online.

Words cannot express the gratitude we feel for our advertisers, volunteers, contributors and distributors. A lot of people have worked to keep Erie Gay News going, and we look forward to many more years of serving the community!

EGN
Erie Gay News

CALENDAR LISTINGS
Are Free!

All listing entries must be received by the 15th of the month.

PROGRESSIVE CALENDAR!

Visit the Erie LEAD calendar at www.erielead.org for local events dealing with issues like peace, social justice, health reform, the environment, civil liberties, diversity, gender, human rights, and wildlife.

Check out the LEAD Calendar for events in the Erie area, like:

Vigils	Performances	Festivals
Speakers	Gatherings	Picnics
Parties	Films	Hikes
TV programs	Spirituality	& more!

A project of Lake Erie Alliance for Democracy www.erielead.org (click on "Events")

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New Year events

by Deb Spilko

Theater

New Year's Eve Gala at Erie Playhouse 13 West 10 St. Erie, PA. Ph: (814) 454-2852 ext. 0 7:30 PM www.erieplayhouse.com

Restaurants & Coffeehouses

Restaurants and coffeehouses are often open till late afternoon or early evening on New Year's eve. If you'd like to celebrate with a visit to a gay-friendly spot, check with them later in the month to see how late they will be open. Some suggestions:

Papa Joe's at 8th & Chestnut in Erie. (814)835-3360.

eclectic etceteras 118 Erie St., Edinboro, PA www.myspace.com/eecoffeehouse.

Intermezzo Coffeehouse 12 Park Place, Fredonia, NY (716)672.6070 Fredonia NY www.intermezzo-coffeehouse.com

Two Friends Italian Market 827 State St., Erie PA. Phone: (814) 453-2328.

Zodiac Dinor 2516 State St., Erie (814) 455-3543.

Religious/Spiritual

Visit the Resources section of the Erie Gay News website for a list of welcoming, inclusive congregations in your locale. Here are a couple such congregations in Erie:

Community United Church 1011 West 38th Street, Erie, PA 864-4429. Rev. Richard A. Moyer, Pastor. Sunday morning worship 11 AM.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie 7180 New Perry Highway, Erie PA. Services start at 10:30 AM. As we approach the threshold of the New Year, let us glean from the futurists of the past how to shine our light on the coming year. Rev. Steve's sermon will be "Transcending our Horizons." www.uueric.org/

Intermezzo Coffeehouse

12 Park Place, Fredonia, NY ~ 716-672-6070



Where coffee & the arts unite!

Soups, Salads & Sandwiches ~ Homemade Desserts
Specialty Coffee & Espresso Drinks ~ Live Music ~ Regional Art

Bars

Zone Dance Club 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Web: www.thezonedanceclub.com. Check EGN calendar for details.

Trance Dance Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. 8 PM. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Web: www.trancedanceclub.com. Check EGN calendar for details.

Sky Club 108 Fairmount Parkway, Jamestown NY. Phone: (716) 661-3212. www.gaybarjamestown.com

Sneakers 100 W Harrison St, Jamestown NY. Phone: (716) 484-8816.

Mixers 204 Coleman Street, Olean, NY. (716)372-1004 <http://www.mixerspub.com/>

Club 441 441 East Market St., Warren OH

Various

Pittsburgh First Night 2008 Wide array of festive indoor and outdoor events. Alcohol-free atmosphere. <http://firstnightpgh.com>

First Night Buffalo 2008 www.firstnightbuffalo.org
Gay Buffalo - If you like to do a lot of different things on New Year's Eve, how about a trip to Buffalo's Allentown district? Considered the center of Buffalo's GLBT community, there is a nice selection of night-spots, restaurants, coffeehouses, accommodations, and other places, all within easy walking distance. Check out these links: Welcome to the Queen City! www.visitbuffaloniagara.com/visitors/gnl/ Allen Street site: www.allenstreet.com Buffalo gay bars (features listings and map of places in the Allen area) www.buffalogaybars.com

QueeryTV Don't feel like going out? Check out the TV viewing guide at www.queery.com/tvgayguide/

Celebrating New Year's Eve Guide from eHow www.ehow.com/sublist_2610.html

Accommodations

If you are travelling out of town, here are good sources for finding accommodations anywhere.

MotelGuide.com www.motelguide.com/

Hotel Guides US <http://hotel-guides.us/>

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The Zone 2008

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Saturday, January 19th



133 West 18th St.
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www.thezonedanceclub.com