



## Local Wedding Officiant Directory planned

Erie Gay News is compiling a directory of authorized wedding officiants who will perform services for same-sex couples.

We will be asking every district justice in Erie and Chautauqua counties if they will treat same-sex couples' wedding requests in a respectful and equal manner.

In addition, we are asking our readers to let us know about any other authorized wedding officiants in the area (clergy, civic officials, etc.) who would perform same-sex weddings. We will then contact those officiants to confirm whether or not they wish to be listed in the directory.

Send information and suggestions to [info@eriegaynews.com](mailto:info@eriegaynews.com) by February 15, 2015 .

## Laverne Cox to Speak at Penn State Behrend Dec 9

In the Netflix original series "Orange is the New Black," Laverne Cox's character, Sophia Burset, is a victim of transmisogyny from other characters. It's not an unfamiliar role for Cox considering it's something she has been subjected to in her own life as well.

An outspoken transgender advocate, Cox is the first trans-woman to produce and star in her own television show, "TRANSForm Me," appear on the cover of TIME Magazine and be nominated for an EMMY.

Cox will discuss her life story when the 2014-15 Speaker Series resumes at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, on Tuesday, Dec. 9. Her presentation, "Ain't I a Woman: My Journey to Womanhood," begins at 7:30 p.m. in Junker Center and is free and open to the public.

Cox received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series. Cox has written about transgender rights for a number of publications, including the Huffington Post. For additional information, contact the Office of Student Activities at 814-898-6171.



*Attendees at the Annual Lake Erie Gala, Nov. 22.*

*Photo by Mike Mabler*

## Marriage Equality for PA is now Pennsylvania Equality Project

Reflecting a new mission, the Marriage Equality for PA organization has become the Pennsylvania Equality Project.

You can find the new organization at [www.paequality.org/](http://www.paequality.org/) and on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/equalpa>. You can follow them at Twitter @PaEquality.

## Evergreen Health Services move

*from Evergreen Health Services, Southern Tier*

Evergreen Health Services has moved their Southern Tier offices.

They are now at 408 West 5th St., Jamestown NY.

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**Assistant Editor and Layout: Deb Spilko**  
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**tribution is Tue, December 23 at**  
**Mental Health Association.**

**ISSN 2159-1792**

The *Erie Gay News* is published monthly as a source of news, events, information, and support for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people (GLBTs), their families, friends, and supporters in the Erie PA area.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit timely news, comments, and opinions of interest to local GLBTs for publication in these pages. Please include your contact information with any piece you submit.

**PRINT EDITIONS AVAILABL**  
**ONLINE**  
 www.eriegaynews.com

Click on the PDFs for this & previous issues of EGN from 1992.

Also, check out our Photo Galleries, Videos, Contests, Reviews & much mor

## EGN Erie Gay News Rates & Data

<b>QUARTER PAGE</b>	<b>FULL PAGE</b>	<b>HALF PAGE VERTICAL</b>
<b>HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL</b>	<b>EIGHTH PAGE</b>	

AD SIZE	PRICE/ISSUE	DIMENSIONS
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	7" high X 2 7/8" wide
HALF HORZ.	\$90 - \$81 Prepaid	3 1/2" high X 6" wide
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 is now included in  
**The EBSCO *LGBT Life*<sup>®</sup>**  
 with Full Text Index &  
 Six LGBT Archives  
**WORLDWIDE!**

## THANKS

From Your Friends at Erie Gay News

To Mental Health Association of Northwestern Pennsylvania for hosting! Andrea, Collis, Johauna, Julie, Kim, and Melanie Shubitowski for folding; Andrea, Collis, Jerry McCumber, Johauna, Julie, Kim, and Melanie Shubitowski for distribution; Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

# Web Server Crash

by Mike Mahler

The websites of NW PA Pride and Erie Gay News experienced a web server crash on October 3.

Here is what was lost, recovered, and not affected:

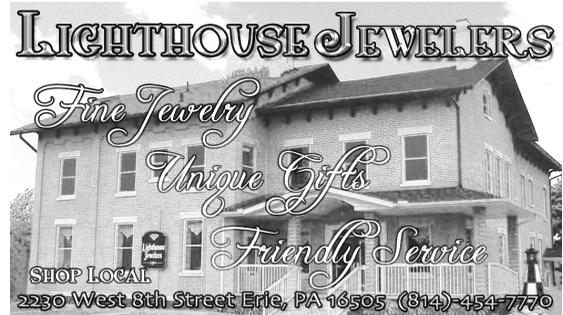
**BACK ISSUES** The PDFs of back issues of Erie Gay News back through December 1992 are still on our site. Additionally, six LGBT archives in the US, the Netherlands and Canada have copies of the print edition dating back to our first issue in December 1992.

**ARTICLES** The database that drives the sites was lost. The sites are back up and functioning, but some information will need to be re-created. Unfortunately, some articles that were only posted online were lost.

**EMAIL LISTS** The email lists were lost in the crash. If you had previously been on one of the email lists that we maintain, you will need to sign up again at <http://lists.eriegaynews.com>. Please note that you need to click on the link in the email asking you to confirm subscribing to each individual list. If you have ques-

tions about email lists, please email Michael Mahler at [info@eriegaynews.com](mailto:info@eriegaynews.com).

**HISTORY** *Erie Gay News* has long maintained a page for area LGBT history. We have rebuilt that for events from the 1960s through the end of the 1980s. There are cached versions of local LGBT history from our site from the 1990s forward that we will be bringing back online.



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**Extension 477**



# NW PA Pride Annual Report

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*from NW PA Pride Alliance*

As the Northwest PA (NW PA) Pride Alliance begins its fifth year, we are delighted and proud to see how much we have grown in such a short amount of time. We are pleased to share this success by providing our 2014 Annual Report. This report highlights some the accomplishments and activities involved in continuing our mission of improving the visibility of the LGBTQIA community and facilitating communication and collaboration between groups and individuals.

## **Candidate Forums**

Collaboration is an essential part of what we do. The Alliance was pleased to coordinate candidate forums for the 2014 primary and general elections. The forums brought together several of Erie's LGBTQIA organizations in one location to discuss issues and legislation critical to the community. In total, approximately 70 people were able to interact with candidates running for local and state legislative offices. The Alliance was pleased to work with several co-sponsors for each forum: Erie Gay News, Greater Erie Alliance for Equality, LBT Women of Erie, Marriage Equality for PA, NW PA NOW, Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition, Persad Center, PFLAG of Erie & Crawford Counties, and TransFamily of Erie Support Group.

## **REUNITED Drag Show**

The August REUNITED drag show benefit at Dramashop provided an opportunity for partnership, entertainment and fundraising. The Alliance is pleased to announce that over \$200 was raised for the two organizations.

## **HIV Testing Task Force Participation**

Participation on the HIV Testing Task Force provided an opportunity to address an important health issue in our community. The Alliance continues to partner with the Erie Gay News to provide free condoms at the Zone, and was pleased to collaborate with Community Health Net and the Erie County Department of Health to provide free HIV testing at the August Pride Fest. Fifteen tests were provided in three hours.

## **Visibility**

In 2014, the Alliance continued its focus on raising visibility of the LGBTQIA community in

Erie County. We are proud to report another year of reaching over 150,000 people through various events and activities.

## **Pride Events**

The Pride Picnic and Pride Parade and Rally continue to be the largest summer celebrations of Erie's LGBTQIA community, bringing together people in the tri-state region and Canada. Over 50 pounds of food were collected for the Second Harvest Food Bank.

## **Addressing issues of inequality**

The Alliance continues to work with local and statewide partners and legislators to address issues of inequality.

On May 20, 2014, a US federal district court ruled the 1996 ban on same-sex marriage as unconstitutional. With less than 24 hours notice, the Alliance organized a gathering of about 200 in Erie's Perry Square. The gathering joined organized events around the state celebrating the landmark ruling.

## **Supporting the events of others**

The Alliance helped to sponsor the Miss Erie Pageant, and broadened its regional visibility by attending the Youngstown Pride Event, PFLAG Butler Picnic and Jamestown Price Picnic.

## **And more...**

Other notable events include Pride Night at a June Erie Seawolves home game, creating a float for the Millcreek July 4th Parade, and staffing an information table at the Erie Blues and Jazz Fest.

We gratefully acknowledge our sponsors' support that has been the catalyst for furthering the Alliance's mission in Erie. As Pride Sponsors, their contributions have helped to improve visibility and unity in the community. We look forward to the continued support of our current partners as well as forming new relationships the Erie community.

If you have questions about the Annual Report or the Alliance, or would like to discuss sponsorship, please contact Michael Mahler, President, at 814-456-9833 or [mmahler@nwpapride.org](mailto:mmahler@nwpapride.org). The board, members, and volunteers of the NW PA Pride Alliance are honored and excited to thank you for a fabulous 2014, and anticipate to an even brighter 2015.

# Calendar

Detailed calendar listings in our online calendar  
[www.eriegaynews.com](http://www.eriegaynews.com)

**Nov 29 (Sat) - British Invasion Party** (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA) Wear leather gear or come dressed as your favorite James Bond character. (814) 452-0125. [TheZoneDanceClub@aol.com](mailto:TheZoneDanceClub@aol.com). [www.thezonedanceclub.com/](http://www.thezonedanceclub.com/).

**Dec 1 (Mon) - World AIDS Day Ceremony: Focus, Partner, Achieve: An AIDS-Free Generation...** (Erie County Department of Health, 606 W 2nd St, Erie, PA) 9 AM. The ceremony's aim is to bring increased public awareness to a health problem which can be avoided, but affects the lives of far too many neighbors, friends, and relatives. Please help us to mark this occasion for those we know and love. (814) 451-6700. [info@ecdh.org](mailto:info@ecdh.org). [www.ecdh.org](http://www.ecdh.org).

**Dec 1 (Mon) - World AIDS Day** [www.worldaidsday.org/](http://www.worldaidsday.org/).

**Dec 5 (Fri) - Bear Bar Night** (Zone Dance Club,

133 W 18th St, Erie, PA) 11 PM. Join the Bears for a night of fun and friends! Contact: Gary Snyder. (814) 446-2327 [info@drenchedfur.com](mailto:info@drenchedfur.com). [www.drenchedfur.com](http://www.drenchedfur.com). [www.thezonedanceclub.com/](http://www.thezonedanceclub.com/).

**Dec 5-7 - "Merry and Bright"** Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus [buffalogaymenschorus.com/](http://buffalogaymenschorus.com/)

**Dec 6 (Sat) - Kierra Darshell presents A Night of Songs Starring Jason Walker** (Cabaret at Theater Square, 655 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA [www.jason-walkermusic.com/](http://www.jason-walkermusic.com/)).

**Dec 6 and 7 - Baby, It's Cold Outside**, holiday concert by the North Coast Men's Chorus, 3 and 8 pm Sat, 3 pm Sun, Hanna Theater at Playhouse Square, 2067 East 14th St, Cleveland; 216-241-6000, [www.ncmchorus.org](http://www.ncmchorus.org).

**Dec 7 (Sun) - PFLAG Butler meets** (Covenant Presbyterian Church, 230 E Jefferson St, Butler PA, PA) Contact: Joshua Crawford. (724) 290-9674 [president@pflagbutler.com](mailto:president@pflagbutler.com). [www.pflagbutler.com/](http://www.pflagbutler.com/).

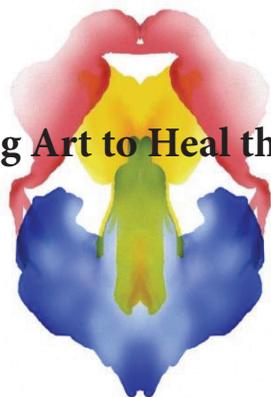
**Dec 8 - Sister Act** Warner Theatre. Part of the Broadway in Erie Series. 814-452-4857 [broadwayinerie.com/](http://broadwayinerie.com/)

## Expressive Therapies Center

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# Calendar

**Dec 8 (Mon) - PFLAG Erie/Crawford County meets** (Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 Perry Hwy, Erie PA) 7 PM. Support group for parents, friends and families of gay, lesbian and transgendered people. Also meets 4th Tuesday of the month at 7 PM at Stone United Methodist Church, 956 S. Main St. Meadville, PA. Contact: Alex Sphon. (814) 314-9259. [pflag.erie.crawford@gmail.com](mailto:pflag.erie.crawford@gmail.com). [www.facebook.com/pages/PFLAG-Erie-Crawford-Countries/1](http://www.facebook.com/pages/PFLAG-Erie-Crawford-Countries/1). venue web site [www.uuerie.org](http://www.uuerie.org).

**Dec 9 (Tue) - Community United Church: Theology on Tap** (Andy's Pub, 3866 Peach St, Erie, PA 16509) Theology is the discussion of divine things. Essentially, it is what a person believes about God/The Divine and the relationship of The Divine with the universe (or lack thereof). It is natural to have questions, to not know exactly what you believe or to be confused by conflicting things you have been taught. Come grab a drink in a public and relaxing atmosphere, gathering with friends to ask your questions and share your insights and experiences. As the

conversation flows, we will challenge, encourage and teach one another without a set curriculum, reading assignments or the pressure of "finding the right answer." People of all faiths are welcome to come and share their thoughts. Contact: Jodi Shay. (814) 864-4429. [communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com). [communityunitedchurchoferiepa.weebly.com/](http://communityunitedchurchoferiepa.weebly.com/).

**Dec 9 (Tue) - Speaker Series: Laverne Cox: Ain't I a Woman: My Journey to Womanhood** (Penn State Behrend, Junker Center, 5103 Station Rd, Erie, PA) 7:30 PM. Laverne Cox, transgender activist, actress and author, will discuss her life story, free and open to the public. [psbehrend.psu.edu/](http://psbehrend.psu.edu/).

**Dec 10 (Wed) - J-Pride - LGBT Social Group meets** (Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County, 31 Water Street Suite 7, Jamestown, NY) 6 PM. Drive into the big parking lot at the Gateway Center and drive to back of the building to the smaller rear parking lot. You'll see a bright light over door 14. Enter there. Contact: Steven Michael Cobb. (716) 661-9044.

**Dec 12 (Fri) - LBT Women go to Christmas Tree Ship** (Erie Maritime Museum, 150 E Front St #100, Erie, PA 16507) 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM. Meet at 5:10 in front of the Gift shop. Santa arrives at 5:45. Free, family friendly event. Children activities and see the Niagara decorated for Christmas. Contact: Kim Conti. (814) 314-9512. Venue (814) 452-2744. [ErieBeans@aol.com](mailto:ErieBeans@aol.com). <https://www.facebook.com/LBTWOMENOFERIE>. venue web site [www.flagshipniagara.org/](http://www.flagshipniagara.org/).

**Dec 12 - 14 (Fri - Sun) - Dreams of Hope: The Lavendar Spell** (Alloy Studios, 5530 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA) The Fey, the world of the witches, is a world without bodies or divisions, without race, gender, or class. Powerful magic forces have torn a



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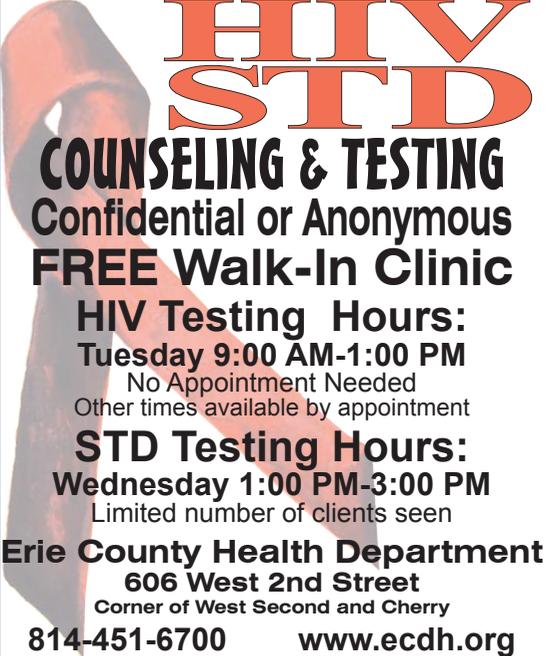
# Calendar

hole in the fabric of this world, leaving it vulnerable to the mortal realm. A young witch stands trial. Can they explain what led to this disaster, and why they cast the Lavender Spell? \*Dreams of Hope will be collecting personal care and hygiene products at all shows, to be contributed to Cathy's Closet at the Pittsburgh LGBTQ Community Center. (412) 361-2065. info@dreamsofhope.org. www.dreamsofhope.org.

**Dec 13 - "Winter Serenade Renaissance City Choir**  
rccpittsburgh.com/current-season/

**Dec 14 (Sun) - Deadline for Erie Gay News January 2015 print edition** (Erie Gay News, 1115 W 7th St, Erie, PA) Please have all articles, ads, and submissions in by this date. This issue will be released the evening of Dec. 23. For a complete list of upcoming deadlines and release dates, check the print edition schedule at [www.eriegaynews.com/printedition/deadlineschedule.php](http://www.eriegaynews.com/printedition/deadlineschedule.php). Contact: Michael Mahler. (814) 456-9833. info@eriegaynews.com. www.eriegaynews.com.

**Dec 14 (Sun) - COLORS Annual Christmas Party**  
Speedtrap Restaurant 543 Spitzer, Limestone, NY



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# LGBTQ QUESTIONS?

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PERSAD CENTER's Community Safe Zone program works to eliminate bullying, hate crimes and discrimination aimed at LGBTQ people in western PA. Community Safe Zone partners with law enforcement, schools, social service agencies, churches, community groups and other organizations to create safe communities. If you, or someone you know, have been the victim of a bias-related incident, PERSAD can assist you in getting the help you need.

**1-888-873-7723 ext. 359 • [persadcenter.org](http://persadcenter.org)**

# Calendar

Come One, Come All...Non-members welcome to attend. COLORS adopted a family of 6 for the holiday season. \$5 single \$8 family Contact us at colors.14760@gmail.com with questions or to RSVP (RSVP by Dec 5)Find COLORS Unity on Facebook.

**Dec 16 (Tue) - PFLAG Meeting in Meadville** (Stone United Methodist Church, 956 S Main St, Meadville, PA) 7 PM. The meeting is co-sponsored by Stone United Methodist Church and Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville. For more info, call (814) 724-6736 or email sroncola@allegheny.edu (Stone UMC) or (814) 724-4023 (UU Meadville.) Contact: Sarah Roncolato. (814) 724-6736. www.facebook.com/pages/PFLAG-Erie-Crawford-Counties/1.

**Dec 16 (Tue) - Spirituality and Sexuality Discussion Group meets** (Community United Church, 1011 W 38th St, Erie, PA) 7 PM. Facilitated by the Rev. Dr.

*Check out special bonus content online at [eriegaynews.com](http://eriegaynews.com).*

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**Rich McCarty** This group provides LGBTQA people the confidential opportunity to share questions, stories, and experiences about what it means to be both a sexual and spiritual person. Contact: Rich McCarty. 1-866-229-1974 (toll free). richmccarty@msn.com.

**Dec 16 (Tue) - Bears Do Dinner** (McGarry's Oakwood Cafe, 1624 W 38th St, Erie, PA) 7 PM. Join the Bears for a casual dinner of food and fun! Dinner is on your own. Contact: Gary Snyder. (814) 446-2327. info@drenchedfur.com. www.drenchedfur.com.

**Dec 17 (Wed) - GEAE Monthly Happy Hour/Erie Community Service Project** (Calamari's Squid Row, 1317 State St, Erie, PA) 5 PM - 8 PM. GEAE provides light snacks and water—all welcome. (866) 229-1974. . GEAEinfo@gmail.com. greaterericealliance.com/.

**Dec 19 (Fri) - FroZone Diva Drag Show** (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) (814) 452-0125. TheZoneDanceClub@aol.com. www.thezonedanceclub.com/.

**Dec 20 (Sat) - FroZone XmasParty** (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to [www.thezonedanceclub.com/](http://www.thezonedanceclub.com/).

**Dec 21 (Sun) - Michelle Michaels presents FACE** (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA) 11 PM.



*Laverne Cox speaks at Penn State Behrend Dec 9.*

# Calendar

Don't miss a fun-filled night of great entertainment with all of your favorite drag queens, new drag queens and special guests the third Sunday of the month at 11 PM. (814) 452-0125. [TheZoneDanceClub@aol.com](mailto:TheZoneDanceClub@aol.com). [www.thezonedanceclub.com/](http://www.thezonedanceclub.com/).

**Dec 23 (Tue) - Erie Gay News folding/distribution work party** (Mental Health Assoc. of NWP, 1011 Peach St, Erie, PA) 7 PM. Help us get out the print edition of Erie Gay News. We'll be folding and distributing the copies. All ages welcome! It is also a great way to hang out and chat with folks! [info@eriegaynews.com](mailto:info@eriegaynews.com). [www.eriegaynews.com](http://www.eriegaynews.com).

**Dec 24 (Wed) - Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service** (Community United Church, 1011 W 38th St, Erie, PA 16508-2540) 8 PM. (814) 864-4429. [communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com). [communityunitedchurchoferiepa.weebly.com/](http://communityunitedchurchoferiepa.weebly.com/).

**Dec 27 (Sat) - TransFamily of Erie Support Group meets** (Mental Health Assoc. of Northwestern PA, 1011 Peach St, Erie, PA) 2 - 5 PM. Support group dedicated to providing safe, supportive space for transgender, gender non-conforming, gender-questioning, and intersex people and their loved ones in Erie Co. and the surrounding region. Judgment-free environment. Refreshments provided. Attendants are encouraged to bring something to share with the group, but this is not required. Contact: Caitlyn Strohmeier. (814) 823-1969. [caitlyn\\_xpress@verizon.net](mailto:caitlyn_xpress@verizon.net). [www.facebook.com/TransfamilyOfErie](http://www.facebook.com/TransfamilyOfErie).

**Dec 27 (Sat) - Erie Sisters meets** (Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 Perry Hwy, Erie, PA) 7 PM. Erie Sisters is a local transgender support group that provides support and encouragement for both MTF and FTM transgender individuals. The group meets for discussion the fourth Saturday of each month, followed by dinner at a local restaurant and dancing at The Zone Dance Club. (440) 265-8191. [shub1@suite224.net](mailto:shub1@suite224.net). [eriesisters.ning.com/](http://eriesisters.ning.com/)

**Dec 31- Community Board Game Night, Commu-**

nity United Church 1011 West 38th Street, Erie PA (814) 864-4429 10:30 pm, \$5 donation.

**Jan 20 (Tue) The Prayer Vigil to End Hatred** (Gannon University) 7:30 PM. This is a Gannon Tradition and organized by LIFE

**Feb 20 - RuPaul's Drag Race Condragulations Tour** 9 pm, Connor Palace Theater, 1615 Euclid Ave, Cleveland, OH. Hosted by Michelle Visage, with guests Alaska 5000, Ben DeLaCreme, Courtney Act, Ivy Winters, Jinx Monsoon, Raja and Sharon Needles, special guest Cary Nokey, [rupaulbots.com](http://rupaulbots.com).

**Feb 24 - RuPaul's Drag Race: Battle of the Seasons** Byham Theatre Pittsburgh PA hosted by Michelle Visage and features live performances by popular drag queens from the reality TV show -- Alaska 5000, BenDeLaCreme, Courtney Act, Ivy Winters, Jinx Monsoon, Raja, Sharon Needles plus special guest Cary NoKey. Expect comedy, circus tricks, lip syncs, musical numbers, parodies and more! Contains adult content and is recommended for mature audiences. Line up subject to change. [rupaulbots.com](http://rupaulbots.com)



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# Michael Dithers

by Michael Mahler

One of the frequent objections about anti-discrimination legislation on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression is that it will somehow mean that men claiming to be transgender will cross dress and use restrooms and presumably sexually assault women or expose themselves.

For states that have had this sort of anti-discrimination legislation, there was no increase in sexual assaults as a result of this legislation, nor verifiable reports of people using this as a defense. As a matter of fact, there don't seem to be any incidences of men crossdressing and entering women's restrooms and locker rooms to sexually assault. Heck, just try to get a cisgender male to wear a bright pink shirt most of the time. Even something that is just a color currently associated with the other gender is enough to make most men resistant.

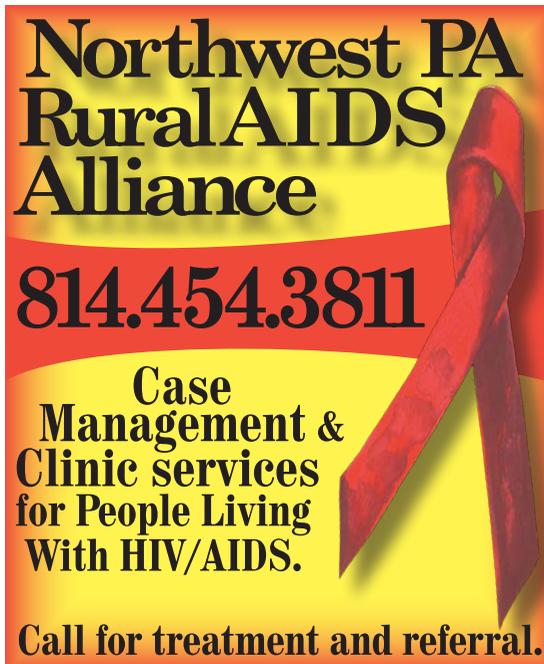
Oddly enough, there was a time when some states required some segments of the population to share a unisex restroom, although they didn't use that term. A

while back, I was at a meeting and some friends were sharing about having been active in civil rights efforts in the 50's and 60's. In the period when some states had racially segregated restrooms, there were generally three restrooms, not four. One restroom was for white males, another for white females, and the third was for people of color, whether male or female. So, if you were a black female in Alabama or Mississippi at that time, you were required to share a restroom with men of color. But of course, the focus then was on ensuring white privilege, so it didn't make a difference to those in power.

Many of you may have seen the recent viral video of a woman walking down the streets of New York City for a 10-hour period and getting harassed. There was an insane number of comments and many of the comments are from men who claim that this is just being friendly or are compliments. What no one seemed to be noticing is that there are apparently no comments from women in this thread saying anything like "I like getting this kind of attention" or "when I am walking down the street, and someone that has not even made mutual eye contact with me tells me that I am pretty, it is an ego boost that just brightens my entire day!" Isn't it odd that if this behavior is fairly widespread and is supposedly communicating a compliment that virtually no one that is the recipient of that kind of exchange is commenting that they enjoy it?

The stark contrast for me is that when transgender people use the restroom that aligns with who they know themselves to be, there are no actual reported cases of problems happening as a result of where this is implemented and folks act like this is a sexual assault tidal wave ready to sweep the nation. But when actual interactions are happening where many women report that they find to be annoying, intrusive and possibly intimidating, it is just ignored as being not properly appreciative of compliments.

That is an incredible disconnect from my perspective. Permitting the lie of allowing people to use the restroom of the gender that they identify with = assaults gives legislators an excuse not to pass anti-discrimination legislation that the LGBT community needs. And it is beyond insulting that a "threat" that has virtually no evidence to back it up is taken seriously, but



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# Michael Dithers

actual incidences that are harassing are treated as “you just don’t know how to take a compliment.”

On a brighter and happier note, it really is amazing how much progress is being made with marriage equality. On May 20 of this year, Pennsylvania became the 19th state, Here we are six months later, and we are up to 35 states, which is almost double! As I write this, it is not known whether the US Supreme Court will take up the issue. Initially, they weren’t going to get into it because all of the federal appeals courts since June of 2013 had ruled for marriage equality. Now that the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled differently than the other courts, and if the Supreme Court does take this up for this session, it is conceivable that we might have a nationwide ruling by the end of June, 2015.

Also, next October will mark the 20th anniversary for the first-ever Erie LGBT Family Portrait on the steps of the Erie County Courthouse. A copy of the photo is in the Bicentennial Time Capsule at Dobbins Landing. Maybe we should plan an anniversary photo next fall?

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## Online Contests

Here are new contests for this month...

Contest	Begins
Isabel Rose - Trouble in Paradise	November 28
4 Moons DVD	Dec 2
Blackmail, My Love	December 5

Here are contests which are currently active..

Contest	Ends
Grydscaen; Nick Jonas’ self-titled album	November 28
The Talk Show - Joe Wenke; Ball of Confusion download	December 2
The Room: The Definitive Guide	December 5
Odd Girl Out	December 9
Men of the Manor ebook	December 12
The Door of the Heart	December 16

More contests at [eriegaynews.com](http://eriegaynews.com)!

Sign up for the Erie GLBT News and Events email list at our web site, and you will get first notice on new contests PLUS news and upcoming events!

DEADLINE for next issue is  
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