



EGN



Erie Gay News

Calendar

*This calendar is also online at www.eriegaynews.com/calendar.html
Listing of Holiday celebrations at inclusive area congregations (see page 6.)*

Dec 24 - The Village open Christmas Eve 133 W 18th St, Erie PA Phone: (814) 452-0125.

Dec 24 - Zone open Christmas Eve (Zone Dance Club, 1711 State St, Erie PA) "The shopping is done, the stockings are hung by the fire and now you need a drink to relax! Join your friends for some holiday cheer! Maybe Santa will show up when he's done delivering his gifts!" Phone: (814) 459-1711.

Dec 25 - The Village open Christmas Night 133 W 18th St, Erie PA Phone: (814) 452-0125.

Dec 25 - The Zone open Christmas Night 1711 State St, Erie PA. "Join your friends and 'family'

after your relatives have gone! Happy holidays!" Phone: (814) 459-1711.

Dec 26 - Asians and Friends host Christmas Party (Cleveland) Hosted at a member's house, featuring the Secret Santa Gift Exchange, bring a present worth around \$15, no calendars, \$3 members, \$6 nonmembers, 6 PM, (216)226-6080 ext. 3, afccleveland@aol.com, <http://members.aol.com/afccleveland>.

Dec 27 - Laura Presutti at Papa Joe's West 8th & Chestnut, Erie, PA. 8-10 PM

Dec 27 - BlackOut Unlimited Holiday Bash (Cleveland) sponsored by BlackOut and Zami Womyn's Circle, \$10 advance, \$15 door, \$25 VIP 9 PM, at Moda Nightclub , 1871 West 25th St, Cleveland, www.blackoutunlimited.org (216)937-2268 www.modanightclub.com

(continued on page 3)

Leah Zicari with Erie fans Dee Dee Foll and Sue Davidson at the Tret Fure concert November 22. Leah played the opening set for that concert.



(photo by Deb Spilko)

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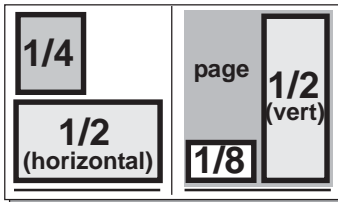
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On the Cover...

Leah Zicari with Dee and Sue

Photo by Deb Spilko

EGN Ad Rates



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 (horiz)	\$90 (\$81 prepaid)	3-1/2" high X 6" wide
Half (vert)	\$90 (\$81 prepaid)	7" high X 2-7/8" wide
Page	\$160 (\$144 prepaid)	7-1/2" high X 6" wide

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



Erie Gay News

1115 West 7th St.

Erie PA 16502-1105

Phone: (814) 456-9833

Fax: (270)423-6217

info@eriegaynews.com

www.eriegaynews.com

Editors: Deb Spilko and Mike Mahler

Deadline: the 15th of each month.

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

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

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

Views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the EGN staff.

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Thank You:

To James von Loewe, Neal and Tim Smith for folding and Dave S, Paula and Jerry McCumber for distributing last issue. Thanks!

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

Calendar

Dec. 28 - Discussion/Worship Service: Global HIV/AIDS Action (Fredonia NY) At Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Chautauqua County 11 AM "What can we do to educate our community and to advocate politically? Come fill your mug, pull up a chair, and share in the discussion this morning." Silent Meditation will be held in the Grange basement between 10:15 and 10:45 AM. At Grange Hall, 58 West Main St., Fredonia, NY. Voice mail: (716) 679-7944, email: information@uusnc.org

Dec 31 - New Year's Eve: Check our New Year's Events listing (page 7)

Dec 31 - New Year's Eve Party at The Village 133 W 18th St, Erie PA Phone: (814) 452-0125. . www.thevillageerie.com "Champagne toast, buffet and more. Bring in the New Year at The Village."

Dec 31 - New Year's Eve Blast at Zone Dance Club 1711 State St, Erie PA. "Welcome in the New Year with all your friends at the Zone! Champagne toast at midnight - Good friends who bring in cheer—Buffet, party favors and surprises—Our last big party of the Year! Get into the Zone! We'll give you more in 2004! - Have a safe and happy new year from the staff at the Zone!" (814) 459-1711.

Dec 31 - New Year's Eve Bash at Rascals (Jamestown NY) 701 N. Main St. (716)484-3220. Food, party favors, champagne, more.

Jan 1 - On TV: Fred Rogers: America's Favorite Neighbor WQLN (PBS-Erie) and WNED (PBS-Buffalo) 90-minute special celebrates the life of the gentle man who taught children to be tolerant and understanding of others. (of interest to our readers, Fred was a member of More Light Presbyterians, which affirms GLBT people).

Jan 7 - "Always Our Children" meets (Erie PA) Catholic Charities, 329 W. 10th St. (814) 456-2091

Jan 10 - Sabrina and Company at Rascals (Jamestown NY) 701 N. Main St. (716)484-3220.

Jan 11 - Jazz Brunch at The Village (Erie PA) 133 W. 18th St. 1 PM til whenever. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Email: village@velocity.net.

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

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

Jan 16 & 17 - Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus: "If Music Be the Food of Love, Play On" (Buffalo) 8 PM. Jan. 16 at Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo and Jan. 17 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on Main St. www.buffalogaymenschorus.com

Jan 17 - Grand Re-Opening celebration at The Village 133 W. 18th Street in Erie (see page 17 and back cover ad). www.thevillageerie.com

Jan 17 - 10% Network meets: Porn Swap (Rob & Jon's, 18 Lakeview Dr, Jamestown NY) 7:30 PM. Contact: Don. Phone: (716) 484-1661. Email: donjaye@hotmail.com. Browse to <http://jamestowntenpercent.tripod.com/>.

Jan 17- Asians and Friends: Chinese New Year Banquet and Show (Cleveland) annual celebration held by Asians and Friends Cleveland, \$29.50 members, \$35 nonmembers before Jan. 10, all tickets \$40 after, 6:30 PM, Tin Fu Café, 3400 St. Clair Ave, Cleveland, (216)226-6080 ext. 3, afccleveland@aol.com, <http://members.aol.com/afccleveland>.

Jan 17 - Five Empty Chambers at The Hangout (Edinboro PA) (Special guests Montage & other band tba). All ages!!!



Real Estate Services

Linda Foll Johnson, GRI, RRS
Associate Broker
814-864-3200 ext 325
or 814-397-0615
lfjohnson@howardhanna.com



Calendar

Jan 18 - On TV: *L Word* premiers on Showtime 10 PM. To subscribe or for more info visit www.sho.com

Jan 24 - Menspace meets (Erie PA) 7:30 PM. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814)456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Jan 24 - Winter White Party at Zone Dance Club 1711 State St, Erie PA. "It may be cold outside- but we are going to warm you up with our Winter White Party! - Wear White! -white denim, white lace, white toga, white boxers- just wear anything white!" (814) 459-1711.

Jan 27 - On TV: *In The Life* "Culture Wars" 10 PM. WNED (PBS-Buffalo) 10 PM. Special guest Lesley Gore travels back to 1950s Greenwich Village, the epicenter of the lesbian pulp fiction underworld. (Repeats Wed., Jan. 28, 4:30 am)

Feb 4 - "Always Our Children" meets Catholic Charities, 329 W 10th St., Erie PA. Support group for Catholic parents of gay children (814) 456-2091.

Feb 8+ - Jazz Brunch at The Village 133 W 18th St, Erie PA 1 PM til whenever. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Email: village@velocity.net.

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

Feb 13 - Five Empty Chambers at Docksider (Erie PA) 1015 State. Special guests TBA

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

Feb 21 - Menspace meets (Jeffs) 1146 Brown Ave, Erie PA. 7:30 PM. Contact: Michael Mahler. (814)456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

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

On stage

Area events that may be of interest to GLBT audiences

Something's Afoot Produced by our own Patrick Hiller. Musical spoof of Agatha Christie's "Ten Little Indians" Tickets: General Admission - \$10, Students & Seniors - \$7 Dates: Dec. 5 & 6, 12 & 13, 19 & 20, Jan 2 & 3. All shows start at 8:15 PM Reservations: (814)456-9584 Location: Stage Right Productions, 652 W 17th St, Erie PA.

Last Sunday in June, Buffalo United Artists, opens January 27, Buffalo premiere of play set during Pride festivities. More information next month or call (716)886-9239.

Websites and email lists for appearances by area performers:

Greg Ropp www.gregropp.com.

Leah Zicari www.leahzicari.com

reservations appreciated **455-7766**

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Holiday celebrations & services

A listing of observances by area congregations that are inclusive, welcoming, and/or affirming

December 19 ~ Chanukkah Shabbat at Temple Anshe Hesed 930 Liberty St, Erie PA, 8:00 PM.

December 24 ~ Cascade United Methodist Church is having a Christmas Eve Service at 7:30 PM at the church, located at 1001 W 21st Street in Erie. 7:30 PM. Cascade is a GLBT- affirming church and its pastor, Rev. Walz, is pleased to be able to reach out to the community in this listing.

December 24 & 25 ~ Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul 134 West 7th St., Erie PA. *December 24* Holy Eucharist will be celebrated at 5:30 PM & 10:30 PM, *Christmas Day* service 10:30 AM

December 24 & 25 ~ Mount Saint Benedict 6101 East Lake Road, Erie PA. *December 24* 9:00 PM. *December 25*, 10:00 AM Phone: 899-0614

December 24 ~ Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie 7180 Perry Highway, Erie. With Rev. Nancy Roemheld. "This will be the traditional Christmas Eve service with a story and carols, special music from Kelly and Dave—and closing with our lighted candles while singing 'Silent Night' as the lights are dimmed." Browse to www.uuerie.org

December 24 ~ Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville: "The Gift" The Rev. Kate R. Walker, Dr. Beth Etter-Owen, the Unitarian Universalist Meadville Choir with Rebekah Woodworth. "Come join in our annual traditional celebration of Christmas." 346 Chestnut Street, Meadville. (814) 724-4023. Doors open at 5:00 PM. www.uumeadville.org

December 28 ~ Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie: "Favorite Gifts" and Games Sunday "The Sunday after Christmas is traditionally our "Games Sunday", where everyone is encouraged to bring their favorite new/old games

to play during the Coffee hour. This year, we'll also be having a brief, regular service and won't be taking our tree down until our Pot Luck on January 4. Please plan to join us for an enlightening and enjoyable service and games during Coffee Hour. Remember to invite any guests or friends to join us, too!" The service coordinator is Lynne Stephens. The church is located at 7180 Perry Highway, in Erie information 864-9300 Or browse to www.uuerie.org

December 28 ~ Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Jamestown: "As the World Turns" 1255 Prendergast Avenue, Jamestown NY just off Buffalo Street, across from Lakeview Cemetery. "Could your life pass for a soap opera? Perhaps we can take the opportunity at this turning of the wheel of the year to explore living with intention." Speaker: Michelle Buhite Pianist: Michelle Buhite Services start at 10:30 AM Visitors are always welcome at worship and social events. Social hour follows the service. www.netsync.net/users/unu or email unu@netsync.net

December 30 ~ Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville: Winter Solstice - Held by CUUPS of MEAD (Covenant of UU Pagans), "There will be a joyous ritual at 6:00 PM, followed by a pot luck supper at 7:00 PM. Special activities for adults and children of all ages — carol singing, storytelling and a few surprises. The event is open to all people regardless of age or faith journey. If ritual makes you uncomfortable, come anyway for the supper." 346 Chestnut Street Meadville, PA (814) 724-4023 www.uumeadville.org

January 1 ~ Mount St. Benedict 10:00 AM The Mount is located at 6101 East Lake Road, Erie PA. Information: 899-0614 or browse to www.eriebenedictines.org

New Year's Eve events

A few ideas for things to do on New Year's Eve (or New Year's afternoon!)

Restaurants and Coffeehouses

papermoon's New Years Eve celebration : 1325 State Street, Erie, PA. *First seating:* Dinner reservations from 5:00 to 7:30, off menu with entertainment by Julio and Jeremy Quezado, acoustic guitars....Latin jazz. *Second seating* starting at 8:30 til ????, Music by Mambo, minimum is an entree plus a \$20.00 entertainment fee, includes dancing to the music of Mambo, party favors and hats and a champagne toast at midnight. Reservations required, call 455-7766

Two Friends Italian Market At 10th & French in Erie. Open till 9 PM on New Year's Eve. 461-9966.

Eclectic Etceteras 118 Erie Street in Edinboro, PA will be closing 5 PM on December 31.

Papa Joe's 402 W. 8th St., Erie PA. Closing at 8 PM; if you're planning on heading over, you might want to call (455-1292) that day to make sure that's still the plan.

Theater

Directors Circle: Celebration. Opens New Year's Eve and plays through January 25. Tickets \$12 that night. Lets out by 10:15 PM. Jeff Lepiec, Duane Rhodes, Bill Williams, Krista Lamb, Kathleen Bureck, Caitlin Kelly, Nicole Gernyi, Preston Brown, Dan Pruyn, Tim Crandall, Cathi Kohler. Directed by Michael Weiss. Reservations 451-0036. New Years Eve tickets are \$12.

Erie Playhouse "Hooray for Hollywood" New Year's Eve Gala "a musical excursion through the golden age of Hollywood ..." 7:30 PM, all seats \$25, to make reservations call 454-2852, ext. 0. Located at 13 W. 10th Street, Erie PA.

Bars

New Year's Eve Party at The Village 133 W 18th St, Erie PA Phone: (814) 452-0125. Email: village@velocity.net. www.thevillageerie.com "Champagne toast, buffet and more. Bring in the New Year at The Village!"

New Year's Eve Blast at Zone Dance Club 1711 State St, Erie PA. "Welcome in the New Year with all your friends at the Zone! Champagne toast at midnight - Good friends who bring in cheer—Buffet, party favors and surprises—Our last big party of the Year! Get into the Zone! We'll give you more in 2004! — Have a safe and happy new year from the staff at the Zone!" (814) 459-1711.

New Year's Eve at Sneakers (Jamestown NY) 100 Harrison Street (716) 484-8816.

New Year's Eve Bash at Rascals (Jamestown NY) 701 N. Main St. (716) 484-3220. Food, party favors, champagne, more.

Also...

First Night celebrations out-of-town include First Night Buffalo information at www.firstnightbuffalo.com (716) 635 - 4959 and First Night Pittsburgh information at www.firstnightpgh.com or call (412) 456-6666.

Other ideas about how to spend New Year's Eve. On the *Erie Gay News* we have posted a listing of other possibilities. Visit www.erigaynews.com

And be sure to read some of the responses to best and worst ways to spend New Year's Eve. (see page 17)

**Best wishes
for a wonderful New Year!**

Community announcements

Meadville Unitarian Universalist Church becomes “Welcoming Congregation”

MEADVILLE (December 8) — At its December 7 annual congregational meeting, members of the Meadville Unitarian Universalist Church voted to become what the U.S. Unitarian Universalist Association calls a “Welcoming Congregation” for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. Through an overwhelmingly majority vote, church members officially agreed to proclaim an alternative, prophetic and life-affirming message of “welcome, inclusion and love of the other,” in response to the prevailing anti-gay and inhumane voices in our communities, whose message is “fear, exclusion and hatred of the other.” The church will now take on the UUA “Welcoming Congregation” designation, officially proclaiming to the rest of the community its status as a spiritual community for all people, and an open and welcoming religious community for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender.

“Over the past two years we have worked diligently toward the goal of creating a welcoming church community and safe religious space for persons who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender—a space available in very few other places in our world, and in no other places in our immediate area,” explained Rev. Kate R. Walker, the church’s Minister. “We have always believed that we are a spiritual community where people can really be themselves. And at our annual congregational meeting, we stated emphatically and officially that we are that kind of community.”

The “Welcoming Congregation” program is a nationwide effort of the UUA. To date over 400 UUA-affiliated churches have decided to become Welcoming Congregations.

The Meadville Unitarian Universalist Church is located at 346 Chestnut Street at Diamond Park in Meadville, Pennsylvania. Their website is at www.uumeadville.org

“POS-TIME” Drop-in center opens

The Drop in Center “POS-TIME” will be open starting January 2.

It will be held at Community Health Net, 1202 State Street in Erie, and will be open every Friday from 10 AM to 12 noon.

POS-TIME will provide conversation, and a safe place to meet others and the staff, watch videos, read, or just relax. Coffee, tea, soda, water, snacks will be served.

For information call 454-4530 ext. 236 or toll-free 1-866-220-9800.

Re-framing me

The Crime Victim Center will hold a workshop called *Re framing me* for ages 13-18 to experience art, healing and self discovery while creating a one-of-a-kind masterpiece on canvas. The four-week workshop will be held at the Center (125 W. 18th St.) on Wednesdays beginning February 4, 2004. Registration: Marge or Carol at 455-9414, \$3 fee for materials.

Happy Holidays from Community Health Net

Full service Primary Medical,
Dental & specialty care.

Open M-F 8:00 - 5:00.

**HIV/AIDS drop in center
open every Friday 10:00—12:00**

*New Patients welcomed, Most insurances
honored, Sliding Fee for anyone without
insurance.*

Community Health Net
1202 State Street Erie, PA 16501
For appointment, call *free*: 1-866-220-9800

Obituary

DonPaul Lucas

Received Congressional Certificate of Merit

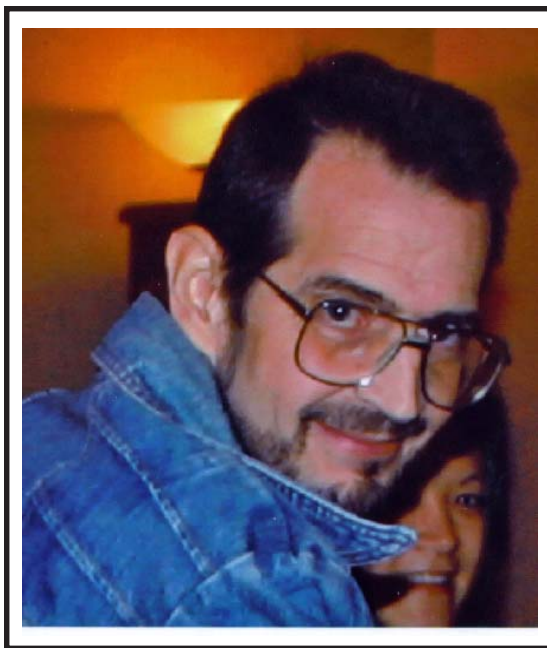
DonPaul Lucas, 50, 1147 W. 24th St., Erie, passed away Monday, Dec. 1, 2003, at Hamot Medical Center from complications due to AIDS.

He was born March 27, 1953, in Pittsburgh, son of Merna C. Alberts of Greensburg and the late James W. Lucas.

DonPaul Lucas was a giant of a man, both in stature and in his sense of service to the community. Most recently, as a volunteer with Camp Hot-to-Clot, a summer camp for children with bleeding disorders that he and his wife, Jackie, started in 2001, he gave of himself tirelessly. Not to be slowed down by the daily pain of arthritis and by the joint assault of HIV and Hepatitis C, DonPaul gave of himself fully and in a manner that was gentle, gracious and amiable, whether he was walking on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC to fight for the rights of the bleeding disorders and HIV/AIDS communities or talking to one of his campers. The legacy of DonPaul Lucas will live on forever in the hearts of all who had the opportunity to meet him.

As a volunteer for the National Hemophilia Foundation and various AIDS service organizations, he received the Ryan White Award and the Congressional Certificate of Merit. He was an HIV/AIDS educator for NW PA Rural AIDS Alliance and frequently spoke with the media as a person living with HIV. In the mid-1990s, he often wrote about HIV/AIDS issues for Erie Gay News.

DonPaul was as wholistic healer and licensed hypnotist who owned and operated The



Angel and The Eagle relaxation center in 1998 and 1999 with his wife Jackie. He was a jeweler who owned Cocoon with Tina Loomis in the mid-1990s.

He enjoyed fishing and working with computers.

He was preceded in death by a brother, Richard A. Lucas.

Survivors include his wife of 30 years, Jacqueline L. McDonough Lucas; three sons, Shawn M. Lucas and his wife, Christine, of Sunderland, Mass., and Timothy P. Lucas and his wife, Lindsay, and Zachary D. Lucas, all of Erie; a sister, Sandra Ruggiero of Greensburg; and a grandson.

He was buried at Restland Memorial Park, Monroeville.

Memorials may be made to the National Hemophilia Foundation, Western Pennsylvania Chapter, 532 S. Aiken Ave., Suite 102, Pittsburgh, PA 15232.

Obituaries, written by spouses, partners, family, or friends, may be placed in Erie Gay News. They can be sent by mail or fax. Include your name and phone, so that we may contact you. A photo may be included; please send a self-addressed stamped envelope if you wish to have it returned.

A Look Back, A Look Ahead

By DonPaul Lucas

Editors' Note: DonPaul Lucas originally wrote this article in 1995, for the special issue of this publication (then called Erie Gay Community Newsletter) that observed Erie's Bicentennial. A copy of that issue was included in the time capsule at the Bicentennial Tower at Dobbins Landing. DonPaul Lucas passed on Monday, December 1, 2003 (which is World AIDS Day) after having lived HIV for over 20 years.

I'd like to begin by saying I'm honored to be considered part of the *Erie Gay Community Newsletter* that will be enclosed in the Bicentennial time capsule.

I am a 42 year old male. I've been married for 22 years to the same woman. We have three teenaged sons, Shawn, 19, Timothy 15 and Zachary 13. I am also a person living with hemophilia and HIV disease. I was infected with HIV through the use of Factor VIII clotting factor used to control bleeding, sometime in late 1982 or early 1983. Although the early prognosis was grim, I have learned to successfully live with this disease for over 12 years. Using medicines developed to fight the virus and a program I developed from reading (vitamins, good nutrition, stress reduction and a spiritually based world-view), I found a regimen that has worked for me.

I also had a brother who was two years my senior. My brother Richard's story is quite different. He was also a person with hemophilia, also infected with HIV, and also a father of one son. His infection progressed more quickly though. He suffered his first bout of pneumonia in 1987,

before the first medications for HIV disease were discovered.

By 1989, he had pneumonia 3 times. In October of 1989 he was hospitalized for the last time with this particular opportunistic infection. He was admitted to the hospital on Saturday. He asked that no heroic measures be taken to prolong his life. He asked that he just be made comfortable. He was tired of fighting, he was tired physically, mentally, emotionally.

Early Sunday afternoon, he woke from an uneasy, painful sleep. He called to my mom. She walked up beside his bed and took his hand in hers.

He said, "It hurts. I'm tired."

My mom replied, "I know. Try to relax."

With that he leaned his head on her breast, took a slow painful deep breath and died.

On that day my mom lost her son, my nephew lost his father, my sister and I lost our brother, and my kids lost their uncle. I lost a fishing buddy and a friend. The world lost a promising and bright life. My brother was 38 years old.

By 1995, different versions of this story could be told in the U.S., about over 100,000 men, women and children. It is estimated that this story will be told over 1 million more times. Worldwide, those numbers will probably be 10 times those numbers.

But I have hope. Hope that when this article is read 100 years from now, HIV will have joined the ranks of the Black Plague, polio and other diseases as just a part of history. My hope is that those who read this will come to value each person for their unique qualities, their individual talents, and worth as a person. My hope is that each will be regarded and valued as a person no matter what their race, spiritual preference, sex or sexual orientation.

My hope is that people realize that what happens to one affects all. My hope is that each individual let their Higher Power, no matter what name it is called by (God, Buddha, Great Spirit, etc.) touch their heart with the true love of enlightenment.

This is my hope. Love is my hope. Acceptance is my hope. You are my hope.

Safe Journey,
DonPaul

August 21, 1995



PFLAG-Erie and Crawford Counties Chapter

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

(814) 898-8341

pflagerie@adelphia.net

PFLAG-TNET marchadenise@hotmail.com

Transgender Coordinator

Letters

Dear Deb and Mike:

When I introduced you to Tret Fure at her concert here last month, I told her that, but for your help, the venue might have been empty that night. I truly believe that.

Deb Spilko, you were wonderful with your steady supply of tips and advice on where to place publicity, whom to contact, what's up in Erie. From the first time we met at the Pride Sunday brunch, you pledged your support in bringing the production of Tret's concert to Erie, and you were true to your word.

And Mike Mahler, you're my hero for opening up the EGN pathways of communication to spread the word about Tret and her music. You came through every time.

There are several others to whom I owe a word of thanks for their support in making the Tret Fure/Leah Zicari concert a success, and a fun evening even for this producer.

Many thanks to:

- Lynne Stephens for the yeoman's task with venue logistics;
- Dave Richards of the Erie Times-News for the fabulous Tret interview;
- Karen of Aromas Coffeehouse for providing the ticket outlet, raffle donation, and,
- Elizabeth for coffee service at the concert;
- Tess Dunlap of Tree Hug Trading for raffle donation and kind heart; and,
- Cheryl Sealy for being the all-around go-to person on concert night.

Thank you, all. It's been a true delight producing my first ever Erie concert; I want to extend my thanks as well to all of the concertgoers who support live music by coming out to the venues to see and hear touring artists like Tret Fure. I look forward to doing it again.

With a wish for one moment of love and peace in the world,

Happy Holidays,
Kate Hentz
Westfield, NY

Celebrations

Marc and Ted engaged

We're pleased to announce the engagement of Marc Ellis Holland and Ted Smith on December 6, 2003.

Marc lives in Franklin, PA and is originally from Sandy Lake, PA. He is an award winning Choreographer, Broadway dancer (Cats), and Dance Instructor. Ted lives in Meadville, PA and is originally from Rochester, NY. He is a housing administrator for Allegheny College. Both are involved in the local community theatres.

Marc and Ted are planning a small intimate ceremony in the future, with reception to share with family and friends.

Where can you pick up EGN?

Check our website at
www.eriegaynews.com

Save The Date

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

The 18th Annual Pittsburgh Public Theater Benefit
for the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force
Accidental Death of An Anarchist
by Dario Fo



Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force
Where Every Life Matters

Get your tickets early.
Call 412-242-2500 ext. 122

National News Briefs

by Bob

Response Swift to Massachusetts Court Ruling

Politicians, clergy and others are responding quickly to the most recent gay marriage legal decision.

On Nov. 18, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled it is unconstitutional to bar gay couples from marriage. The court has given the Massachusetts Legislature 180 days to rewrite the state's marriage laws to provide benefits for gay couples.

Massachusetts' four Catholic bishops condemned a ruling by the state high court calling it a "national tragedy" — language that gay Catholics say amounts to "preaching hate" from the pulpit.

The letter, read at liturgies, said the court's decision on gay civil marriage is a "sure formula for chaos" that could "erode even further the institution of marriage."

Many Massachusetts politicians, led by Republican Governor Mitt Romney, are calling for an amendment to the state's Constitution banning gay marriage. Romney has also stated he will veto any bill granting equal marriage rights to gays. Others however, such as openly-gay state Senator Jarrett Barrios, has said he will do whatever is necessary to support the court's ruling.

The court ruling also received the attention of all of the 2004 Presidential candidates. According to *The Advocate*, President George Bush responded by saying, "I will work with Congressional leaders and others to do what is legally necessary to defend the sanctity of marriage."

The Democratic candidates for President in 2004 responded cautiously to the court ruling. Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, who championed the civil union laws in that state said, "This decision should be viewed as an opportunity to affirm what binds us together — a fundamental belief in the equality of hu-

man beings, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation."

U.S. Sen. John Kerry, who is from Massachusetts said, "While I continue to oppose gay marriage, I believe that [the ruling] calls on the Massachusetts state legislature to take action to ensure equal protection for gay couples. These protections are long overdue."

Congressman Dick Gephardt of Missouri, who has an openly-gay daughter, said he supports civil unions for same-sex couples. "I also support the right of states to make decisions regarding the protections afforded same-sex couples. I do not support gay marriage."

Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut and Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, both said they oppose gay marriage and both believe that states have the right to adopt laws that address same-sex unions. Retired Gen. Wesley Clark said that as President, he would support giving gays and lesbians the legal rights that married couples enjoy.

Cities Account for Half HIV Cases

During the observance of World AIDS Day, the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) announced that more than half of the HIV/AIDS cases in the United States reported between 1986 and 2001 were found in 15 large U.S. cities. During that period, 816,149 infections were reported.

According to the study, HIV infection rates have shown "alarming" increases recently. It was also noted that some trends mirror the high infection rates of the early 1980s.

The NYAC data indicated that AIDS is one of the leading causes of death for young people. More than half of all new infections occur in people under 25. In major cities, the study noted, the infection rate for sexually active young gay men is greater than 10 percent.

The 15 cities cited in the study are: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Atlanta, New York, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Newark, Chicago, Philadelphia, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Dallas, Houston, Boston and San Juan, PR.

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National News

(continued from previous page)

School Punishes Child

Public school officials in Louisiana are defending their punishment of a 7-year-old Louisiana boy who was disciplined after he told a classmate his mother was gay.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Marcus McLaurin was in line for recess when a classmate asked about his parents. Marcus explained that he had two mothers, because his mother was gay. When the classmate asked what that meant, Marcus replied "gay is when a girl likes another girl." A teacher who overheard the comment, allegedly scolded the boy and sent him to the principal's office.

According to published reports, Marcus' mother, Sharon Huff, became concerned after receiving a call from the school's assistant principal, who informed her that Marcus was in trouble for using a word so bad that it couldn't be repeated over the phone. But according to, Huff her concern, "was nothing compared to the shock I felt when my little boy came home and told me that his teacher had told him his family is a dirty word."

Even though the ACLU has threatened legal action against the school district if it does not apologize to the boy's family, school officials have refused to do so, saying the boy was not being singled out because his parents are gay.

Naval Academy Rejects Gay Alumni Group

The alumni association of the United States Naval Academy (USNA) has rejected a bid by gay graduates to establish an official chapter for GLBT alumni.

The alumni association's board of trustees ruled that the bylaws of USNA Out, the new alumni group, conflict with the overall association's mission and that all chapters of the USNA are based on geographic area.

"The Alumni Association has never before chartered a special-interest chapter and does not want to begin that practice," the trustees wrote.

The USNA alumni who wanted to form the new chapter said that because they are gay, they often feel unwelcome by USNA alumni chapters.



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Monday 12 noon - 3:30 pm

Tuesday 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

STD TESTING

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No Appointment Necessary

Erie County Health Department

Monday 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Wednesday 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Thursday 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Appointments can be made at the following locations:

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

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

Hispanic American Council
(814) 455-0212

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

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

Review of World AIDS Day events

Patty Puline
Erie County Dept. of Health

This year, we added a new dimension to World AIDS day, the inclusion of the GLBT group, Identity at Edinboro University.

Spearheaded by President, Michael Lecker, Identity held a World AIDS Day observance, December 1st, 2003, on main campus. The group held a candlelight vigil, made human size red ribbon displays, passed out information cards about World AIDS day, and personalized red ribbons for students and staff.

Their role in this year's events is significant because it marks the importance of HIV education. It the first time a GLBT group staged a World AIDS Day service at Edinboro University.

This year, Erie County Dept of Health partnered with Identity, PFLAG, and Trigon to heighten awareness among GLBT communities regarding HIV issues. Identity chose to promote HIV awareness through focus on World AIDS Day by providing HIV prevention messages on local campus radio stations, and HIV education articles in the Spectator campus newspaper; which allowed students the opportunity to realize the importance of HIV knowledge.

Identity is the highlight of this year's programs because it marks their solidarity and commitment to GLBT issues.

"Our national response to this pandemic has been inadequate. It needs to be dramatic. It requires us to approach young people with the facts about their risk for HIV (and other STI's) and the steps they can take to prevent infection if they are sexually active. We must speak candidly about risk reduction, particularly the use of condoms, and teach comprehensive sexuality education, which includes a discussion of abstinence, but does not rely on it exclusively."

Craig Bowman
Executive Director
National Youth Advocacy Coalition
World AIDS Day 2003 message

I'm grateful to Michael Lecker for his leadership for Identity, bringing hope and vision to Edinboro campus. The observance, incredibly simple, yet profound in its simplicity, worked to spread the message of "Stigma and Discrimination: Live and Let Live" –this year's World AIDS Day theme.

Stigma and Discrimination are felt keenly among all of us at one time or another. Most often, it is when people do not take the time to understand each other, or accept each other for who we are, what we are, and how we are.

Identity is unique in its title, its mission, and its message to others. They serve as a model for others to emulate.

To learn more about HIV education programs, please contact:

Patty Puline, Health Teacher
Erie County Dept of Health
451-6543
ppuline@ecdh.org

Northwest Pennsylvania Rural AIDS Alliance

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(2437)*



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

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WWW.NORTHWESTALLIANCE.ORG

EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO PREVENTION



PFLAG News

by Maureen Koseff
PFLAG-Erie/Crawford County

During the holidays, we wish everyone warm greetings, safe travels and happiness. See you in the new year.

Michael Mahler Receives PFLAG Award

At our December 8th meeting, PFLAG-Erie and Crawford Counties Chapter presented an award to Mike Mahler for the exceptional contributions he has made to PFLAG's mission, which is: to promote the health and well-being of GLBT persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and secure equal civil rights. Mr. Mahler helped establish the Erie and Crawford Counties Chapter of PFLAG three years ago. Since then, he has consistently supported all aspects of its mission through dedicated personal work and by reinstituting the *Erie Gay News*. For many years, we have depended on him to mobilize the gay community to lobby for revisions to the Erie County Human Relations Commission ordinance and other legislation, to be the media spokesman for GLBT issues, and organize the annual gay pride picnic. The degree to which he sacrifices to meet the needs of Erie's



From left: Marcha Vecchio, Mike Mahler, Maureen Koseff, Mark Hoovler.

gay community is exceptional and exemplary, and he deserves special recognition for it.

Bingo set for Saturday, February 7

PFLAG-Erie and Crawford Counties chapter will be holding yet another Outrageous Bingo fundraiser at the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Erie on Saturday, February 7 from 6 PM to 9:30 PM. This is a joint fundraiser for both PFLAG and the UU. Jayne May is working on yummy treats from the kitchen and some nifty gift baskets for a Chinese Auction. Mark, Lynne, and John are putting together a really fun night of bingo and we are asking our fabulous drag queens to join us again! There will be 15 games played, and also a chance to visit with friends old and new

Meeting Notes

We held a poorly-attended PFLAG meeting in Meadville in November. We will have another meeting in Meadville on Tuesday, Dec. 16th, at the Unitarian Church, next to the YMCA. (6:30-8:15 PM.). Please come!

Our next Erie meeting is, as usual, the second Monday of the month: January 12, at the Unitarian Church on Route 97, Erie, from 7-9 PM.

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

OUR DEADLINE

for ads, articles, calendar
announcements, letters and emails is the
15th of the month!

Please email to
info@eriegaynews.com

What do you say?

We recently asked people on the Erie GLBT list to respond to one or both of the following questions. Their responses are below.

“What’s the worst way you ever spent your New Year’s Eve?”

“What do you think is a really great way to spend New Year’s Eve?”

Fred L. May Conneaut Ohio:

The only worse New Years Eve, that I remember spending is I had to attend a funeral, in Spokane, Wash in the middle sixties. I feel that the best way to spending New Years is, if one can, just being with family and friends, and looking forward, to having each other, and being closer, in the coming year.

Steve Black

Worst (Funny) New Year’s Eve Story -

On New Year’s Eve 2001 - I went out in Philadelphia with my good friend and neighbor John McNeill of the gay band “the bootlickers”. We went to several Philadelphia Bars but ended up at the after hours club “2-4” in Philadelphia. At about 2 am I went to use the bathroom. Another totally messed up guy walks in behind me and stands at the urinal next to me and proceeds to begin peeing on my shoe.

He didn’t even realize it. I turned to him and said “excuse me, but you are peeing on my shoe.” He said “What?” I said “your peeing on my shoe and If I wasn’t doing ***** it would really bother me!” He said “Oh - sorry” and then adjusted himself and began hitting the urinal.

The other four guys standing at the urinals just laughed.

I tossed my boots in the trash on New Year’s Day 2002.

Lynne S

Worst: Stuck in an airport, trying to get to vacation. Best: In a hot tub, relaxing, remembering the year past... and dreaming of the New Year to come...

Marcha

Worst: Alone. Best: Cuddled up with another special person next to the fireplace under a big fuzzy blanket kissing and enjoying a bottle of white wine

Michael Mahler

Actually, I had 2 New Year’s Eves that vie for the title of Worst. In 2000, I had my leather jacket stolen at the bar during a cold and snowy night and a train wreck of an encounter at a hotel room. (No more details, but it eventually Mike and I laughed at having an evening that bad.) The following year, my now-ex and I went to an after bar party after New Year’s. I am a fan of walking to where I am going if it’s close enough. But it was cold and Mike didn’t feel like it. Normally, we have a hard time finding a parking space, but we happened to find something right across the street. A while later at the party,

(continued next page)

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What do you say

(continued from previous page)

someone was walking around if he knew who owned a car that he had just smacked into while backing out his van. (The individual in question was a tad tipsy, and it was snowy.) Of course, it was my car. It wasn't incapacitated, but it didn't look good. The individual later lied and said that he hadn't hit the car. (Um, duh, not a believable thing after walking around and talking to a room full of people.) Last year was the first New Year's of being single again, but since there was no loss of property or other casualties, it felt like paradise. The best New Year's Eve would probably be hanging out with friends, meeting my true love (or even just a fun time), but heck, I'll settle for almost anything that doesn't involve having stuff wrecked or stolen!

Grant & Bruce

The best way to spend New Year's Eve..... is standing on Waikiki Beach watching the sunset and fireworks..... (got to do that 12/31/99 when everyone thought the world would come to an end).....

Marshall Snyder

WORST NEW YEAR'S : having to work at a nearby resort serving customers expensive wine and not being able to enjoy the festivities! BEST NEW YEAR'S : spending time with my partner and friends

Abbey Atkinson

Worst: Sadly, the worst New Year's Eve I remember is 3 friends being in a collision with an Amtrak, but the biggest dud of a New Year's Eve was flying my girlfriend to South Florida and promising we'd see spectacular fireworks on the beach...but apparently, the celebration spots have changed since I last lived there and we sat on the beach in Fort Lauderdale and squinted to see the shows off the coast of Miami! Best: I prefer to have a gathering of friends and loved ones at my house. No driving with crazy drunks involved.

Aunt Killer

There is definitely a winning worst way that I have spent New Year's Eve, but gawd it is even more sad to think of how many runner-ups there are to this tragic eve. I was alone in my apartment on that soggy evening. There were inadequate spirits in the cupboard and even less funds in my pocket, so getting properly bombed was out of the question. I was lonesome and even more dangerous, I was bored. I picked up my guitar and strummed a few chords. The only thing I had to amuse me was a little story that someone had recently told me. It involved a certain Rubbermaid container that sat high on a top shelf of her kitchen cabinetry. That container was gloriously filled with an abundance of the golden treasure known as Captain Crunch. She had slipped her hand into the container so often that she no longer had to watch what she was doing. But there was more than one Rubbermaid up in that cabinet. One day her hand groped to find the box of sweet morsels. She grabbed a handful and popped them into her mouth. Her tongue searched for the sugary nuggets but found nothing to answer to that description. Suddenly she lunged toward the garbage can and spat out the mouthful. It was then that she realized she had mistakenly snacked on Meow Mix. So in my apartment I strummed my guitar and wrote a blues song about her story. I called it "The Captain Crunch Blues".

Paul

OK - worst N.Y.E. - a large party at the home of friends and the hosting couple had a humongous fight/shouting match at about 11:50PM. yikes. A very sober New Year was rung in and we guests slipped quietly into the night shortly thereafter.

Really great way - hmmm - good question. Incredibly intimate and elegant dinner for two at a restaurant on top of a skyscraper with dimly lit slow dancing following.

Stay connected!
Subscribe to the Erie GLBT list at
<http://erieglbt@eriegaynews.com>

Entertainment Notes

Bars

The Village is having its *Grand Re-Opening Celebration* on January 17, and you're invited.

"We're all really excited," says Leslie Clifton, one of The Village's new owners. "The whole process has taken a couple of years."

The Village now has three new owners—Leslie, Bob (who also owns the Zone) and Lou. "Bob and Lou bring an incredible amount of experience and energy to this business." Final closing took place on November 1. The business was formerly owned by Nick Panos.

"We see this as a new era," says Leslie. "We have a lot of new ideas. We'd like to open the downstairs area. We're also thinking that in the future we could have a special dining night once a month, where couples could go out and have a nice romantic evening together and feel comfortable together, hold hands, that sort of thing." Other changes include holding catered events, for occasions like commitment ceremonies.

Changes in décor are also planned, says Leslie. First order of business along those lines: installing new barstools to replace the ones that had, um, seen better days. "We've been joking about charging for rides when people would get up on those old stools," she joked. "We used to say you had to be this tall to get on them."

Some things will stay the same. Brunches will continue, and Sunday hours have been extended. "Obviously there's still a spirit of cooperation between the two bars. We'll continue to have some events together, like Mardi Gras, which seems to work better when people can go back and forth between the two bars," said Leslie. The two bars will maintain their own distinct atmospheres, though. "The Zone is a little hipper and edgier," said Leslie, "And The Village is more comfortable and spread out."

So what's happening on January 17? That was still being planned at this writing, but they plan to have special entertainment and a champagne toast. Sounds like fun!

Music

Leah Zicari made quite a few new fans when she played the opening set at Tret Fure's November 22 concert in Erie. Her new CD *Pretty on Thursday* is available now, and you can order or sample it (and her other CDs) at her website at www.leahzicari.com

The Divine Miss M—**Bette Midler**—brings her Kiss My Brass tour to the area next month: January 5 at Cleveland's Gund Arena, January 8 at Pittsburgh's Mellon Arena, and January 12 at Toronto's Air Canada Centre. Midler's first tour in four years also sees her reuniting with Barry Manilow, who was her accompanist and musical director when the two were performing at New York's Continental Baths back in the very early 1970s.

Travel

Since we include a lot of out-of-town travel information in EGN, we've started including **road & weather condition** numbers and websites for travelers (see next page). People who are new to the area—or younger people who have just started to drive—may not realize how intense the weather situation can be in this area. Although it's been relatively mild so far, it's always wise to check the situation before heading out at this time of the year.

Also, if you're heading into Erie or Jamestown for New Year's Eve—especially to the bars—I've listed some **accommodations** near the bars in case you have a bit too much holiday cheer. If you already know that's the kind of night you have ahead of you, and you have no designated driver, you may just want to make reservations ahead of time. Note that most Erie hotels and motels are located by Presque Isle or past the Millcreek Mall.; the main reason I've listed these particular Erie accommodations is that they are the *only* downtown locations (i.e., near the bars). Prices, quality, service, room availability and other concerns are beyond the scope of this list, and, to be honest, there is some vari-

(continued next page)

Entertainment

(continued from previous page)

ety in quality of accommodations. Other accommodations that aren't downtown can be found online or in the phone book.

Downtown Erie accommodations:

Holiday Inn (Downtown) 18 W. 18th Street
(814) 456-2961

Avalon 16 W 10th St. (814) 459-2220

Downtowner Super 8 Motel 205 W 10th St.,
(814) 456-6251

Bay City Motel 344 E 6th St. (814) 455-7594

Jamestown, NY accommodations:

Holiday Inn 150 West Fourth St., Jamestown,
(716) 664-3400 or 1-800-HOLIDAY

Best Western 200 West Third Jamestown, NY
(716)484-8400

Comfort Inn, 2800 N Main St Extension (716)
664-5920

Hillside Motel, Foote Av Ext Jamestown, NY
(716)488-1133

Travel info

An easy way to get to these long web addresses is to go to our website and just click on them!

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Roads 1-800-847-8929

Roads & Weather

www.thruway.state.ny.us/weather/index.shtml

OHIO

Roads 1-888-264-7623

Roads & Weather www.buckeyetraffic.org/

Holiday safety

Local authorities encourage the use of sober Designated Drivers this winter Holiday season

As family and friends reunite this holiday season, the N.W. Regional Highway Safety Network and local authorities want you to know: when “*You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*” Law enforcement will be out in full force to prevent impaired driving by setting up sobriety checkpoints. We want you to know that if you drive after drinking or using drugs, you will be caught, arrested and prosecuted. Not only is this an embarrassing situation but it is also expensive; the cost of your defense and potential fines can be thousands of dollars and you can even lose your car.

The winter holidays are among the deadliest times of the year because of impaired driving, which is why December is designated National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month. The statistics are alarming: 663 people died in Pennsylvania in 2001 due to drunk and drugged driving crashes. Many people simply do not realize the consequences of driving after drinking or taking drugs, even prescription and over the counter medications. If you are impaired, local authorities urge you to:

- Take a cab home
- Have a sober designated driver
- Stay the night where you are

“Impaired driving has a devastating effect on our community,” said Holly Miller, director of the N.W. Regional Highway Safety Network. “The vigilant efforts of law enforcement personnel, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Erie County Department of Health and many other organizations will help make roads and highways safe from those irresponsible individuals that make the fatal decision to drive after drinking or using drugs.”

For more information on drinking and driving, contact the N.W. Regional Highway Safety Network at 814-451-6717

Have a safe and sober holiday season!

~from Kim Sayre

NW Regional Highway Safety Network

Michael Dithers

by Michael Mahler

I may be blathering more than normal. ("Like that's possible?", some will note.) This is not certain, but it does appear that since we all worked together, that the Human Relations Commission will not be defunded and the GLBT community will not be left out in the cold. So, the next time someone wants to whine about how backwards things are, have them remember this. Progress happens because we help make it happen. I also believe that people eventually achieve understanding. Kudos to all who worked on this!

Given that President Bush has announced his support for an amendment to the US Constitution that would permanently bar equal marriage rights for GLBT couples and enshrine discrimination in law, I encourage everyone to register to vote and participate. How many recent elections have been decided by a very narrow margin? Sit this one out, and we could be paying the price for decades!

I had a really wonderful time at the Tret Fure concert in November. It was interesting being one of only 4 males in the room, but the women were all kind, fun and a joy to be around. Someone from outside the area was talking to me and contemplating moving back to Erie. He was a little pleasantly surprised when I told him that the 2 bars here tend to draw a mixed crowd in terms of demographics. Actually, that is one of the things in general that I treasure about living here; unlike some larger areas, people tend to talk to each other. I think we are all richer for it, male, female and other, young and old, etc.

I was very saddened to read of DonPaul Lucas' passing. He was a kind and gentle man, and someone I really admired. I have fond memories of Cocoon, a store he ran with a woman named Tina. I must admit that when I first read the article reprinted on page 9 that we first ran in 1995, it made me very misty eyed originally. I thought of it when I read about his death and pulled it out again, and I still felt very moved and on the verge of tears.

I have faced some recent additional sadness. Back in 1996, Morgaine Imelda, a beautiful German Shepherd/Golden Lab, entered my life.

She was the first dog I ever owned and we were also both born on August 21 (as was Jeff Stryker, who knew?) My friend James noted in early November that she was not looking right at all. I had just thought that she was getting a tad thick in the waist with age. The next day I went to the vet, and it was cancer that was quite advanced. So, I cried in the office, and on the way home. Not fun.

Morgaine had been looking even bonier and her paws were enlarged for a few days. Recently, I was working out upstairs. I heard paws on the steps, and then a thud. I dashed down to find her sitting on the landing. It was clear that all she wanted was to come up for some muzzle nuzzles. She hadn't been coming up to sleep for a while, and it was now clear that she couldn't physically do that anymore. (I even tried to help her upstairs that night.) It was heartbreaking. That morning, I got an email from my friend Paula who dreamed about Morgaine and wondered how she was.

I took her to the vet's that night. Mom met me there, and I brought my friends Deb and James. The vet was surprised that she was still alive and indicated that her time left was probably only a few days. It was clear she was suffering, and I didn't want her to die alone while I was at work, unnoticed.

While being held and petted by me and my Mom, Morgaine left this world. I told her how sorry I was that she had to go through this, and how much I loved her. I am grateful for every time I got to pet her or wake up to find her snuggled in bed or just being silly.

So, tell someone you love them, or call up a friend to say hello or trust someone to be cool when you are honest with them. Love and trust are permanent gifts that outlast death. I still love and miss Morgaine very much, and will think of her happily playing in the Summerland.

The same day that I took Morgaine to the vet's, my Mom called about a litter of black lab puppies. So now I have a puppy named Hecate Sable and Mom has her sister, Emily Elizabeth. Morgaine could never be replaced, but I am heartened by new joy in the house.

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