

April 2004



# EGN

Erie Gay News



## Erie couple weds in San Francisco

***“It’s not just a movement, it’s our lives.”***

Leslie Sadley and Julie Metzler were married in San Francisco on March 1, 2004.

The couple had originally planned to have a civil ceremony in New England this summer. Then President Bush indicated his disapproval of same-sex marriage during his State of the Union address. In early February, San Francisco’s Mayor Gavin Newsom responded by authorizing such marriages to be performed in his city. Over the next month, some 3,700 couples would be married at San Francisco’s city hall.

Leslie and Julie were moved by these events and decided that this was the right time for them. “We realized that the marriage wouldn’t be recognized in Pennsylvania,” said Leslie, “and that legal measures may be taken to annul it some time in the future. But we felt that it was important to go and take advantage of this opportunity to show our support. Ultimately, I believe that change is taking place because the cause is becoming real ...there are faces and names, couples who are in love and committed to one another. It’s not just a movement, it’s our lives. And when people are made aware of the legal implications of marriage and the protection that we are denied, I hope that will compel them to act.”

The ceremony took place at San Francisco City Hall.

Flower bouquets and wedding cake had been donated to the couples by anonymous supporters.

After the ceremony, Leslie and Julie went sight-seeing.



### **Julie Metzler ~ Leslie Sadley**

Julie Metzler (left) and Leslie Sadley (right) exchanged vows on March 1 in San Francisco, California.

Julie is a counselor, and a graduate of Edinboro University, who is presently working on her Masters in Social Work. Leslie works in advertising and is a bartender at The Village, and is a graduate of Mercyhurst College.

Julie and Leslie have been together for three and a half years. They live in Erie, and plan to have a honeymoon in New England this summer.

*Erie Gay News wishes the  
happy couple many years of joy!*

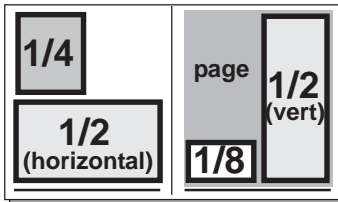
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### On the Cover...

**Julie Metzler and Leslie Sadley** *Photo by unknown San Francisco City Clerk*

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**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 don't necessarily represent those of the EGN staff.

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## Thank You:

To James von Loewe, Marshall Snyder, Dave Amy, Norm Zymm, Tim, Neal and Ray for folding and Dave S, and Jerry McCumber for distributing last issue. Big thanks to Bob for proof-reading. Thanks!

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

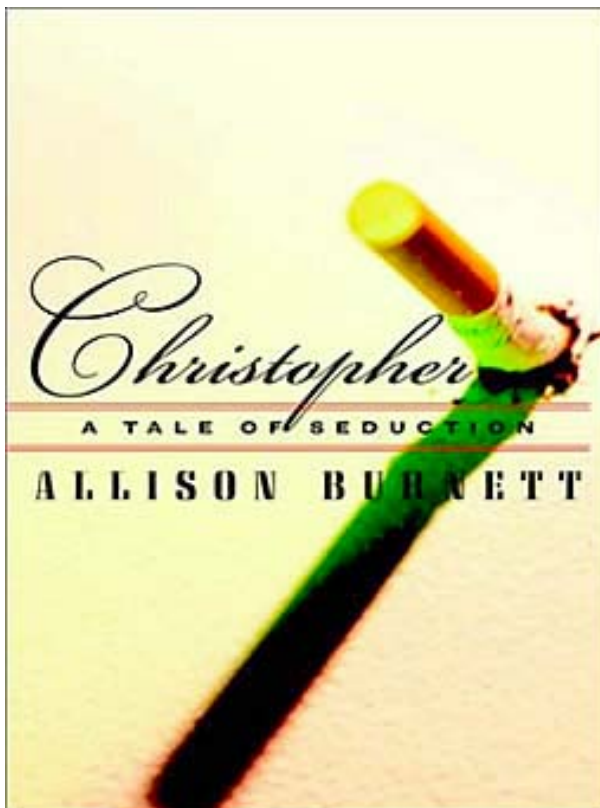
# What the critics are saying about *Christopher*:

“An unusual, touching, and often hilarious tale of friendship and love. “ — *The Gay City News*

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# Calendar

*This calendar is also online at [www.eriegaynews.com/calendar.html](http://www.eriegaynews.com/calendar.html)*

**Mar 20 - Dinner for Cause for Celebration at Rascals (Jamestown NY)** 701 N Main St. Hosted by Martin and Don. Buffet starts at 6:30 PM. Donation is \$25, ticket admits you to Cause for Celebration Gala at Crystal Ballroom (Hotel Jamestown) on March 27. Information: Don at (716) 484-1661.

**Mar 23 - Ostara: Open Circle at UU (Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Highway, Erie PA)** GLBT friendly coven of Brighidshaven hosts an open circle for Ostara (Spring Equinox) including a kid-friendly egg-hunt. As for times, Doors open at 7 PM for social time, rite at approximately 8 PM, the classic potluck feast to follow the rite. Vikki will be leading us in our Ostara celebration, marking the Vernal Equinox! This event promises to be fun-filled and kid-friendly, including a great egg hunt and plenty of sweet treats. Come and celebrate all of the new life and discoveries that spring-time has to offer! Please wear bright colors and bring a dish to pass for the reliably excellent potluck feast afterwards and please note that a three-dollar dona-

tion is requested to help defray the cost of renting the space Email: [prosperotter@yahoo.com](mailto:prosperotter@yahoo.com) . Browse to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/brighidshaven-announce/>

**Mar 24 - Lecture: Christian de la Huerta at Allegheny College (Meadville)** Henderson Auditorium, Quigley Hall. The Office of Diversity Affairs presents Christian de la Huerta's "How a Gay 'Gusano' Discovered Self-Acceptance: A Personal Perspective on Diversity" 7:30 PM. Cost is free. Info (814) 332-3332.

**Mar 26 - Drag King/Queen Contest at Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock PA)** The Slippery Rock University LGBA will be sponsoring a Drag King/Queen contest. "There will be performances by the Distinguished Iron City Kings, Lady Rose of Pittsburgh and more. This event is free to the public. Y'all come to the university's Swope Music Hall at 7 PM" Email: [lgbasec@hotmail.com](mailto:lgbasec@hotmail.com).

**Mar 27 - Cause for Celebration: "Stayin' Alive" (Jamestown NY)** Gala fundraiser for AIDS Community Services of WNY. Crystal Ballroom, 110 W 3rd St. "This promises to be the disco party of the season, complete with music and dancing, casino gaming, luscious desserts, a silent art auction, and more polyester than you can shake a stick at." Info: ACS Southern Tier office at (716) 664-7855.

**Mar 27 - Erie Sisters meets (Erie PA)** Transgender/crossdresser support group. Contact for location of meeting by email, phone or write to LEG, PO Box 1131, Erie PA 16512-0131 Phone: (724) 368-3793. Email: [eriesisters@eriesisters.org](mailto:eriesisters@eriesisters.org). Browse to [www.eriesisters.org](http://www.eriesisters.org).

*(continued next page)*

## Northwest Pennsylvania Rural AIDS Alliance

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# Calendar

**Mar 27 - Karen Williams at Carnegie Library of Homestead Music Hall (Munhall PA)** with special guests Renaissance City Wimmin's Drumming Circle. (412)795-2022 Pghconcert@aol.com

**Mar 27 & 28 - North Coast Men's Chorus concert: "Only in the Movies" (Cleveland)** Waetjen Auditorium, Cleveland State University, 2001 Euclid Ave, (800)766-6048, www.ncmchorus.org

**Mar 30 - Verizon Ladies First Tour at Gund Arena (Cleveland)** Beyonce, Alicia Keys, Missy Elliott, Tamia. (216)241-2121.

**Apr 2 - Performance: Jocelyn Porter Project at Urraro Gallery (Erie)** 2416 Peach St, Erie PA 10:30 PM - midnight. Browse to [www.towerrecords.com/product.aspx?pfid=2872555](http://www.towerrecords.com/product.aspx?pfid=2872555)

**Apr 6 - Verizon Ladies First Tour at University of Pittsburgh** Beyonce, Alicia Keys, Missy Elliott, Tamia.

**Apr 7 - Always Our Children meets (Erie PA)** For Catholic parents of GLBT children Catholic Charities, 329 W 10th St. Phone: (814) 456-2091.

**Apr 10 - Womynspace Planning Meeting (Meadville PA)** See article in Community Announcements, page 11.

**Apr 10 - Menspace meets (Geoff's home, Meadville PA)** 7:30 PM. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: [info@eriegaynews.com](mailto:info@eriegaynews.com). Browse to <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

**Apr 10 - Easter Bunny Bop at The Zone Dance Club, Erie PA** "Hop on into the Zone for some Easter fun! The Easter bunny will be passing out eggs and prizes! Dancing and fun for everyone! Search for a cute 'chick' or find a big *basket* Happy Easter from your friends at the *Zone*!" 1711 State St, Phone: (814) 459-1711.

**Apr 12 - 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](mailto:pflagerie@adelphia.net).

**Apr 15 - Deadline for May 2004 edition of Erie Gay News** (814) 456-9833. Email: [info@eriegaynews.com](mailto:info@eriegaynews.com).

**Apr 17- 10% Network meets: Silent Auction & Pot Luck (Jamestown NY)** Unitarian Church of Jamestown, 1255 Prendergast Ave, 7:30 PM. Contact: Don. Phone: (716) 484-1661. Email: [donjaye@hotmail.com](mailto:donjaye@hotmail.com). Browse to <http://jamestowntenpercent.tripod.com/>.

**Apr 18 - Jazz Brunch at The Village (note date)** 133 W 18th St, Erie PA 1 PM til whenever. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Email: [village@velocity.net](mailto:village@velocity.net).

**Apr 20 - Safer Sex Cabaret (Erie)** Penn State Erie, Reed Commons at 7 PM Info: [KARMA4950@aol.com](mailto:KARMA4950@aol.com)

*(continued next page)*

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# Calendar

## Apr 21 - National Day of Silence

[www.dayofsilence.org](http://www.dayofsilence.org) A student-led day of action where those who support making anti-LGBT bias unacceptable in schools take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment — in effect, the silencing — experienced by LGBT students and their allies. More information in last month's issue of EGN and at [www.dayofsilence.org](http://www.dayofsilence.org)

**Apr 21 - Performance: Folk Singer Ellis at Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock PA)** Sponsored by the LGBA at Slippery Rock University, held at the university Email: [Jazzie1@zoominternet.net](mailto:Jazzie1@zoominternet.net).

**Apr 24 - Performance: Two Girls Alone at Two Friends Italian Market** 25 E 10th St, Erie PA 8 PM - 10:30 PM. The evening will include a special guest, Donna Sawver, producer of the upcoming International Women's Music Festival (August 6-8). Women interested in the festival can come out and get tickets, more information about the festival, and even promotional items. Email for more information about the evening, or for a pizza coupon good for that night. Email: [twogirlsalone@att.net](mailto:twogirlsalone@att.net).

**Apr 25 - Eighth Annual Buffalo Brunch for Empire State Pride Agenda** At 12 noon, Hyatt Regency, Buffalo. Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell Info: Jeffrey Platt, (716)881-7766, or [plattjh@dyc.edu](mailto:plattjh@dyc.edu).

**Apr 25 - March to Save Women's Lives (Washington DC)** Information in last issue. Organizers: Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood Federation of America Contact: Rebecca Pruevadeni. Phone: (814) 838-9034.

**Apr 30-May 2 - Rainbow Wranglers Round-Up (Cleveland)** Annual LGBT country dancing event (216) 961-5817, [www.rainbowwranglers.org](http://www.rainbowwranglers.org).

**Apr 30-May 2 - Cleveland Leather Annual Weekend (Cleveland)** Parties, receptions, forums, cabaret, stage show and auction party, vendor and education mart. More at [www.clawinfo.org](http://www.clawinfo.org)

**May 5 - Always Our Children meets (Erie PA)** For Catholic parents of GLBT children Catholic Charities, 329 W 10th St, Phone: (814) 456-2091.

**May 10 - PFLAG Meeting (Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Highway, Erie PA)** 7 PM - 9 PM. Regular monthly meeting Contact: Maureen Koseff. Phone: (814) 898-8341. Email: [pflagerie@adelphia.net](mailto:pflagerie@adelphia.net).

**May 15 - Deadline for June 2004 edition of Erie Gay News (Erie Gay News, 1115 W 7th St, Erie PA)** Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: 814-456-9833. Email: [info@eriegaynews.com](mailto:info@eriegaynews.com).

**May 15 - 10% Network meets: Toy Party (TBA, Jamestown NY)** 7:30 PM. Location to be announced later Contact: Don. Phone: (716) 484-1661. Email: [donjaye@hotmail.com](mailto:donjaye@hotmail.com). Browse to <http://jamestowntenpercent.tripod.com/>.

**May 16 - Jazz Brunch at The Village Supper Club, (Erie )** 12 PM. Doors open at noon, start serving at 1 PM Phone: 133 W 18th St. (814) 452-0125. Email: [village@velocity.net](mailto:village@velocity.net). Browse to <http://www.villageerie.com>.

**May 20 - 30 - 14th Annual Inside Out Lesbian & Gay Film Festival (Toronto)** Browse to <http://www.insideout.on.ca>.

**May 22 - Erie Sisters meets (Erie PA)** Transgender/crossdresser support group. Contact for location of meeting by email, phone or write to LEG, PO Box 1131, Erie PA 16512-0131 Phone: (724) 368-3793. Email: [eriesisters@eriesisters.org](mailto:eriesisters@eriesisters.org). Browse to <http://www.eriesisters.org>.

**May 24 - Human Rights Campaign Cleveland Dinner and Dance (Cleveland)** Playhouse Square Center, 1501 Euclid Ave, 5:30 PM.



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## Calendar Listings are FREE!

*please submit information by the 15th of the month*

# On stage

*Selected area events that may be of interest to GLBT audiences*

**Miss Gulch Returns**, March 12 to 27, Kennedy's at Playhouse Square, 1501 Euclid Ave, Cleveland. 1-800-766-6048. [www.missgulchreturns.com](http://www.missgulchreturns.com)

**Pterodactyls** Buffalo United Artists March 19-April 20. Main Street Cabaret 672 Main Street Buffalo (716)886-9239.

**Lips Together, Teeth Apart** by Terrance McNally at Youngstown's Oakland Center for the Arts. March 26-April 10 It's the 4th of July on Fire Island. Two married couples celebrate the 4th at a beach house that one woman inherited from her brother who died of AIDS. [www.oaklandcenter.com](http://www.oaklandcenter.com) (330) 746-0404

**Evening of One Acts at Directors Circle Theatre** 1001 State St, 2nd Floor, Erie PA. April 22 - May 16. "Toyer" is a psychological thriller whose next Good Samaritan might be a serial killer. Stars Scott Frisina. Directed by Jenn Highfill. "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You" is the Christopher Durang black comedy. Stars Jo Laurie. Directed by Michael Weiss. (Latter play includes gay character.) Shows will generally run for four weeks at 8 PM nightly, except for Sunday matinees at 2 PM. Show times will be Fri / Sat on the first week, Thu-Sat on the second, Thu-Sun on the last 2 weeks. Season tickets are on sale now at \$56, \$37 for seniors Phone: (814) 451-0036.

**Erie Broadway Series: Fame: The Musical** May 20 at Warner Theater, 811 State, Erie Phone: (814) 452-4857. Browse to <http://www.erieevents.com/warner.html>.

**Visiting Mr. Green** Buffalo United Artists April 22- May 23 Main Street Cabaret 672 Main Street Buffalo (716)886-9239.

**Websites and email lists for appearances by area performers:**

Greg Ropp [www.gregropp.com](http://www.gregropp.com).

Leah Zicari [www.leahzicari.com](http://www.leahzicari.com)

Two Girls Alone <http://twogirlsalone.iuma.com>

# News briefs

## Antigay amendments withdrawn

Pennsylvania GLBT's scored a temporary victory when Rep. Jerry Birmelin (R-Wayne County) withdrew the antigay amendments to House Bill 345. HB 345 enjoyed bipartisan support because it was originally about adopting difficult to place children. Rep Birmelin was attempting to subvert the bill to include numerous antigay amendments, including no recognition for civil unions, same sex marriage or domestic partnerships, barring any gay person from adopting, etc. The amendments were anti-family in that many of the provisions would have impacted non-married heterosexuals as well.

A coalition of groups and individuals called Valuing All Families conducted a grassroots campaign to encourage constituents to contact their legislators. Strategies included lobbying legislators and a postcard signing campaign. The coalition's success may have been due to its diversity. It included child advocates, labor unions, civil rights groups and religious organizations. Several people from the Erie area helped out with postcards and lobbied legislators.

As a result of these actions and what seemed to be mostly unfavorable editorials in newspapers across the state, Birmelin withdrew all of his amendments, and HB 345 was passed in its unamended form. Birmelin has threatened to introduce similar legislation, possibly after the April 27 primary. It is not clear whether this would be a separate bill or attached to yet another bill.

For updates on similar legislation, visit [www.paga.org](http://www.paga.org) or [www.center4civilrights.org](http://www.center4civilrights.org).

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# PFLAG News

## *by PFLAG-Erie Chapter*

Gay marriage is much talked about in the media. I think everyone realizes that those opposed to it are bombarding the media with information opposed to it, and are pressing in the political arena for legislation on all levels to ban it. If you don't want them to be successful, you *must* contact your representatives in the Pennsylvania legislature and at the national level and urge them not to support these bans against gay marriage.

Use your own words and experiences to explain why this is an issue for you.

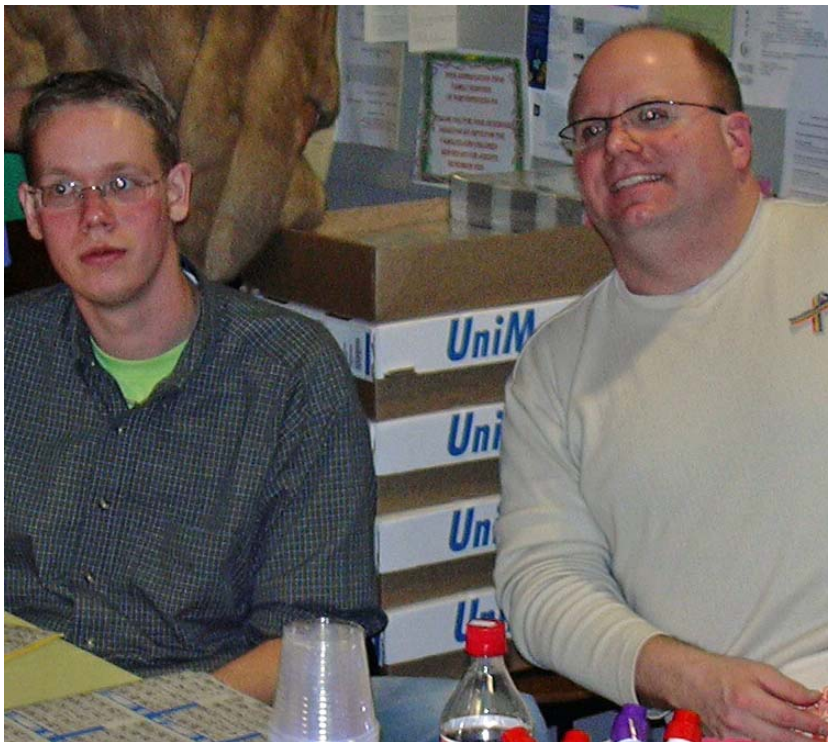
Many representatives are willing to vote either way on this issue, and we can't afford to have the opposition be the only ones they hear from. They need to hear our side!!! Please write and call.

## Meeting Notes

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

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) support group meets the 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, P.O. Box 133, Harborcreek, PA 16421 or [pflagerie@adelphia.net](mailto:pflagerie@adelphia.net).

**Stay informed—Subscribe to the  
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email [info@eriegaynews.com](mailto:info@eriegaynews.com)**



*Don Craig (left) and Mark H (right) at PFLAG's Bingo fundraiser in February. Don volunteered at the event and Mark was co-coordinator. The next bingo night is scheduled for May 15.*

*Photo by Mike Mahler*



# Some Thoughts on Gay Marriage

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by Bob

Instead of reporting on national news this month, the editors of the *Erie Gay News* have graciously allowed me to share some thoughts on the issue of gay marriage. I think it's safe to say it is an issue that interests all of us. More importantly, it is an issue that could have a profound impact on this country, no matter what the outcome.

We have seen a flood of activity in recent months. B from the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruling to the issuing of marriage licenses to gay couples in San Francisco and elsewhere. And like most floods, one could make the case that it all began with a trickle of events.

When the governments of The Netherlands and Belgium decided to make gay marriage legal a few years ago, it hardly made headlines in the United States. When the courts in the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Ontario legalized gay marriage, that got a little more attention. With the establishment of Civil Unions in Vermont, the religious right really started to get nervous. Now, add to this the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling declaring unconstitutional state laws banning gay sex between consenting adults. Is it any wonder that such "progressive" thinkers as Pat Robertson and Rick Santorum started thumping their Bibles?

President George Bush has always opposed same sex marriages. Time and again, the "compassionate conservative" has said that marriage should only be between members of the opposite sex. Until last month however, he stopped short of supporting a proposed constitutional amendment defining marriage as only between man and woman. It should come as no surprise however, that in a Presidential election year, he would do whatever was necessary to strengthen his conservative political base.

In the days following the President's endorsement of the constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, the issue was fuel for editorials around the country. Newspapers, big and small, took up the issue and few took the President's side.

"With so many urgent challenges confronting the country, why would President Bush push a ban on gay marriage to the top of the national agenda?" wrote the *Miami Herald*. "It ill-serves the country. Yet Mr.

Bush puts the weight of the presidency behind a measure that would make denial of basic civil rights to some individuals a Constitutional mandate."

The *Washington Post* accused the President of abandoning the Constitution to election-year politics. "We believe that extending the benefits and responsibilities of marriage to same-sex couples would be fair and beneficial..." the *Post* wrote.

Even newspapers in small communities voiced opposition to the President. The *Poughkeepsie (NY) Journal* said, "We believe there is no sound legal reason for the government to prohibit gay couples from having the same rights and liberties as straight couples." And closer to home, the *Harrisburg Patriot-News* said in an editorial, "We have better things to do in this country than to turn the Constitution into an instrument of malice. The government doesn't belong in people's personal lives, which comes close to defining what freedom is, or isn't, all about. A constitutional amendment banning gay marriages is wrong. It is bad public policy. It would amount to a giant step backward toward enforcing bigotry."

Even the student newspaper at Baylor University in Texas, the nation's largest Baptist university, editorialized in favor of legalizing gay marriages. The university's president, however, was not pleased!

In endorsing the constitutional amendment effort, the President said it's the only way to protect the country from "activist courts" who want to change the meaning of marriage. But why do we need to be protected from "activist courts?"

If it wasn't for "activist courts" back in the 1950s, black children might still be attending segregated schools. Because of "activist courts," anyone charged with a crime has the right to legal counsel. And what health issues would women face today if "activist courts" had not handed down *Roe v. Wade*? Frankly, it is the "activist courts" that protect us from the political whims of individuals on both the far right and far left.

When the President announced his support for a constitutional amendment, he, like so many others, played the religious card.

*(continued next page)*

# Thoughts on Gay Marriage

(continued from previous page)

"The union of a man and a woman is the most enduring human institution, honored and encouraged in all cultures and by every religious faith," Bush said.

Let's back up a second. Marriage is a legal, not a religious institution. Sure, many marriages take place in churches and many marriage ceremonies are performed by clergy, but those ceremonies have no legal standing without the marriage license which is issued by the government, not the church. And churches are not required by law to marry anyone. It is their choice to marry who they want, and don't want. If same-sex marriages become legal in the United States, no church could be forced to marry gay couples.

Mr. Bush also stated, "Marriage cannot be severed from its cultural, religious and natural roots without weakening the good influence of society."

In America today, 50% of all marriages end in divorce. How is this a good influence on society, Mr. President? And exactly why is the union of loving, same-sex couples a bad influence?

One of the first same-sex couples to be married in San Francisco last month were two elderly women who had been together for more than 50 years. Their devotion to each other is unquestionable. Yet the President would have us believe that this couple is a bad influence on society. But Brittany Spears can get married for 50 hours and that's okay? What's wrong with this picture?

Amending the Constitution to "correct" society's ways doesn't work anyway. Remember Prohibition? That certainly was a huge success!

Fortunately for all of us, the process of amending the US Constitution is very difficult. It has only been amended 17 times (not counting the Bill of Rights) in 215 years. The amendment would require the approval of two-thirds of both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, and then it would have to be ratified by three-fourths, or 38, of the 50 states.

The President's action is more about election year politics than it is about "saving" the institution of marriage. As the *Miami Herald* said in its Feb. 25 editorial, "Those who would make our Constitution a refuge of hatred and intolerance mustn't be allowed to succeed."

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Tuesday 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

### STD TESTING

#### WALK IN CLINIC

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).

# Community Announcements

## Pride Picnic Committee Update

*from Mike Mahler*

The 12th Annual Pride Picnic is set for Saturday, June 12 at the Rotary Pavilion at Presque Isle. Last year we had about 275 people, which was an all time record. The first organizational meeting for the Erie Pride Picnic went well. We are next going to be meeting on Monday, April 19 at 7 PM. Anyone wanting to be involved is welcome to attend.

This year we will have a central check in table where you can get information, be counted and also register to vote. We will need volunteers the day of the event to work the check in table. (And it's a nice way to meet new friends!)

Contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or email [info@eriegaynews.com](mailto:info@eriegaynews.com) to get involved. Looking forward to hearing from you!

## Womynspace Planning Meeting

*from Darla*

There is a potluck planned for Womynspace for April 10th. It will be at Tanya Unger's home. It will also be a planing meeting. I can be reached at [fluffybear57@earthlink.net](mailto:fluffybear57@earthlink.net) or call 814-337-8749 Tanya can be reached at 814-724-2613 to get directions or if you have any questions. We can meet at 6 PM. If the date or time is bad for anyone please let one of us know. If it is a problem for a lot of people we can reschedule.

Please try to attend this meeting or at least check in with us. Due to health concerns I have had trouble finding the time and or energy to plan events on my own. I need help to keep this group going. If we all

pitched in a little we could make this group as strong as it used to be.

## HIV+ MSM Social/Support Group meets in Olean NY

*from Tom Place*

The Cattaraugus/Allegany County Social/Support Group for HIV+, Gay Men will meet in Olean on Friday, April 9th from 6 P.M. to 8 P.M. For more information please contact Tom Place at (716) 664-7855 or [tomplace@aidscommunityservices.com](mailto:tomplace@aidscommunityservices.com).

## Local Pro Wins 2<sup>nd</sup> State Championship

*from Shari*

Karen Morton, Erie's own professional racquetball player, competed at the Pennsylvania State Racquetball Singles Championships in State College March 5-7. Morton defeated Kahn Holtslander (Harrisburg) to become the PA Racquetball Women's Champion for a second year. Morton has also held the PA title for Women's Doubles these past two years. Now ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the Ladies Professional Racquetball Association (LPRA), an international tour, Morton has her sights set on improving the consistency of her game. She goes on to compete at the LPRA stop in Nashville, Tennessee (March 12-14.) She will close her first full season on the LPRA tour at the Pro National Championships in Phoenix, Arizona, April 30-May 2. (For more information about the LPRA, including rankings, tournament results and schedules, go to [www.ladiesproracquetball.com](http://www.ladiesproracquetball.com).) Morton will also compete for a spot on the U. S. Team at the National Racquetball Singles Championships in Houston, Texas, May 27-31, 2004.

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## Corrections

We listed Erie Pride incorrectly on this page last month. It is Saturday, June 12

Also, the cover photo caption should have noted that Jayne May was the co-coordinator of PFLAG Bingo (with Mark H)

# Community Announcements

## "Queer Eye" for the Mental Health System

From NAMI PA Erie County Affiliate

The Erie County chapter of NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) is in the process of focusing on Gay & Lesbian issues with regards to mental health.

On April 8, 2004 at 7:30 at Erie Insurance Group Auditorium, we will have Mark A. Davis, M.A. present on such issues. His topic is: *"Queer Eye" for a Heterosexist Mental Health System: Challenging & Supporting the Needs of Mentally Ill Consumers from Sexual & Gender Minority Communities.*

This workshop will address the diverse issues of Bisexual, Gay, Intersex, Lesbian, Transgender and Questioning Mental Health Consumers while challenging the design of a heterosexist system of care. Peers and allies are encouraged to join in a lively discussion about the health, psychosocial and behavioral health needs and issues of people from sexual and gender identity cultures. Historical information, current trends and gaps in service will be highlighted so attendees will be understanding and open to diversity.

Mark A. Davis is Special Needs Analyst at the Philadelphia Office of Mental Health. He is a liaison to several communities including behavioral health consumer/survivors, people living with HIV/AIDS and individuals and groups representing sexual and



Mark A. Davis, M.A.

gender minority cultures. He is located at PMHCC, a nonprofit social service organization and is the Founding President of the PA Mental Health Consumers' Association and has worked in the mental health consumer/survivor movement for 20 years. He facilitates two Pink & Blues peer support groups with the Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance at Belmont's Rainbow Haven and St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Center City Philadelphia.

Mark tested HIV-positive September 27, 1988 and is a long-term survivor living with the virus. He also is a person living with bipolar affective disorder (BAD) as the roots for his passion to share the messages of hope, recovery and empowerment. He has been in the forefront of national efforts to eliminate the health disparities and stigmas connected to being HIV-positive and a gay person living with and recovering from a mental illness, addictions and hearing loss.

This event will be free and open to the public. Use main entrance of Sixth & French Street. For more information on this event or NAMI call (814) 456-1773.

## Online Voter registration!

Residents of any state can register online at from the home page of  
Erie Gay News  
[www.eriegaynews.com](http://www.eriegaynews.com)

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# Letters

## Open Letter to Pres. Bush

February 24, 2004

Dear Mr. President,

This morning you felt compelled to encourage passage of an amendment to the Constitution of the United States defining marriage as existing only between one man and one woman.

You say that this will create "clarity." I would like you to share this clarity with my first grade daughter on her school playground, when the children, imitating their role models as they always do, will take up the issue. Because I dread those conversations with every fiber of my being.

Challenged by another child, my daughter will declare forthrightly that of course her two moms are married. After all, we have wedding photos in our home, as any couple does. They show her two moms, fourteen years ago, in front of our Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Smiling, with many of our friends and family members around us.

You see, we have not yet discussed with this seven year old, precocious as she is, the distinction between civil and religious marriage. She knows only that we are her parents, the only ones she's known. She knows that we got married in our church, as her aunts and uncles did, and that our neighborhood and church, her school and social circle, involves a significant number of kids with two moms and a few with two dads. She knows that we provide the only stability, the only bedrock, that she has ever known.

Of course she knows that there are people who say that two men or two women cannot be married. She knows that, not very long ago, some people said that no one could marry someone of a different race, but now we no longer believe that. But I haven't yet been able to break it to her that some people want to change our Constitution to say that our family isn't part of "We the people". I just haven't found a way to fit it in between soccer and karate and church.

Tonight I will sit her down, after we've done her homework, and have the conversation that I hoped I could avoid. I will tell her that you, the President of the United States, have decided that only a man and a woman can be married, and that you want to make that part of our Constitution. Yes, the document she adores from watching Liberty's Kids and reading Magic Treehouse books. I will tell her that I don't believe this change in the Constitution will happen, not enough people will vote for it. But it does mean that people may say very mean things to her at school about our family. She will be afraid. I will project confidence and good humor, but I will be afraid, too.

I do not want to teach my daughter that the President of the United States does not include our family in the people he serves and protects. I do not want to say to her that the very flag she loves will be waved by people who believe that it does not belong to our family.

Please, Mr. Bush, tell me how I should conduct myself "without bitterness or anger" at this time, as you instructed me today. Come over to my house tonight: you look at my daughter's eyes as they absorb the fact that you, the first President she has ever known, thinks she can no longer be included in the very Constitution of this land. You tell me how to "conduct this difficult debate in a matter worthy of our country." Because I am at a loss.


Sincerely,

**The Rev. Meg A. Riley**  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
Washington, DC

### Marriage info & updates

To stay informed and updated on marriage issues and events around the country, visit the **Freedom to Marry** website at [www.freedomtomarry.org](http://www.freedomtomarry.org)


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# Michael Dithers

by Mike Mahler

Congratulations to longtime advertiser Linda Foll-Johnson for receiving the Realty Alliance National Sales Excellence Award! I'm always happy to see someone supportive of our community be recognized for good work.

So, many folks have voiced fears that being out means that one will receive a barrage of nasty threats. Truth to tell, it is incredibly rare and usually so lame, you just feel embarrassed for the other person for being so lame. After several years of not one harassing contact at all, I finally got the following gem of a voice mail message on Mar 8 4:34 PM. "My name is Butch Ring and I'd like to know how does... how does one become a pervert. Uuuuhhhhh, yeah, my name is Butch Ring and I'd like to know how does someone become a pervert? Someone might give me a call back at 555-6568, 555-6568. Aaaaannnd, I'd like to know how does someone become a pervert. Like all you perverts are. (Cheerily) Thank you!"

Most folks worry about someone like Freddy Krueger screaming "Die, faggot!" and threatening to

attack with a chain saw, and it has invariably been something more like Beavis or Butthead saying something like "You're a stupid stupid dummyhead! Nyah, nyah!" and not threatening any harm. I think the total number of voice mail messages and anonymous letters that I have received in the 12 years that I have been out could be counted on both hands. By the way, I have never had an actual phone conversation with any of these scintillating spewers of half-witticism. That would require having balls. Invariably, they are a voice mail message or a letter with no return address. The emotion that they invoke is definitely not fear (at least for me), it's more like "Wow. You need to get a life. That was lame and trite."

We have made some strides in planning for the Pride Picnic on Saturday, June 12 at the nifty new Rotary Pavilion at Presque Isle. More details as they develop.

Kudos to all of the wonderful people who helped with the recent postcard campaign to fight the vicious antigay amendments to PA House Bill 345. I was so proud that when we needed effort to fight this crap, that so many people rolled up their sleeves and pitched in. Doc, Carrie, Chris, Marshall and etc, you folks were fabulous. We are blessed to have such a wonderful community. I was also reading posts with editorial board pages from papers across the state, and I was surprised by how many saw through this transparent gaybashing. I genuinely feel like we are making progress.

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*My dog, Hecate  
Sable, found a  
discarded  
oatmeal canister.  
I came home for  
lunch to this.  
Once I stopped  
laughing, I took  
the photo. She's  
fine now, but  
who knew that  
getting fiber was  
so risky?*

# This & That *(formerly Entertainment Notes)*

by Deb Spilko

## Music

Some area appearances of interest...**Sophie B. Hawkins** appears April 29 at The Tralf in Buffalo (16 & over show) and May 8 at Rex Theatre in Pittsburgh. [www.sophiebhawkins.com](http://www.sophiebhawkins.com) . . . **Janis Ian** performs at Pittsburgh's Club Cafe on May 1 Pittsburgh, PA Club Cafe (412)431-4950 [www.clubcafelive.com](http://www.clubcafelive.com) and May 6 at Rockwell Hall at Buffalo State (716)878-3005. . . **Blondie** appears May 5 at the Odeon Concert Club in Cleveland . . . **k.d. lang** performs live with the Buffalo Philharmonic May 14 at Kleinhans in Buffalo. (716) 885-5000 . . . **Melissa Ferrick** appears April 16 at Nietzsche's in Buffalo and May 20 at Cleveland's Grog Shop. . . **Christina Aguilera** appears June 25 at Post-Gazette Pavilion at Star Lake (Burgettstown PA) and June 28 in Cleveland at Gund Arena. . . **Johnny Mathis** will be at Pittsburgh's Heinz Hall on June 25 and 26. . . The **B-52s** will be at the Chautauqua Amphitheater on July 30.

## Sports

Fans of women's football—the schedule for the **Erie Illusion Women's Football Team** is posted on their website at [www.erieillusionfootball.com](http://www.erieillusionfootball.com) Also posted on the site is the team's roster, staff, ticket information and news. Note: Preseason Scrimmage Saturday March 27, v. Rochester Raptors 2 PM Veteran's Memorial Stadium, 26th & State.

## Campgrounds

Area gay and gay-friendly camps are starting their 2004 seasons now. Check out their websites for schedules. **Camp Gay USA** maintains a fairly updated and informative listing of gay and gay-friendly campgrounds in the US and Canada. Visit [www.campgayusa.com](http://www.campgayusa.com)

**Camp Davis**, in Boyers PA, is mixed men and women. Although it's presently more men than women, the owners want to keep it mixed, and told me "we'd really like to see more women attend." (724) 637-2402 Email Address: [campd@aol.com](mailto:campd@aol.com) [www.campdavis.com](http://www.campdavis.com) **Jones Pond** is an all-male campground in Angelica NY [www.jonespond.com](http://www.jonespond.com)

## Radio

If you want to keep up with everything that's been going on, check out **Sirius OutQ**, which features GLBT news and talk with hosts like Michaelangelo Signorile. It's not all serious of course—they also have GLBT lifestyle and entertainment programming. Listen online at [www.siriusoutq.com](http://www.siriusoutq.com) Sirius has over 100 other streams of specialized programming as well, for example five dance/electronic streams.

**Dr. Joy Browne** is the host of a syndicated radio advice show. While her listeners are largely straight,, when she gets callers who are dealing with sexual orientation or gender issues, she usually handles it in an enlightened way. She is, in fact, pretty much the opposite of that shrieking rightwing meanie, Dr. Laura Schlessinger. In Erie, you can hear her on WJET-AM at 11 PM to 1 AM or online during the day at [www.drjoy.com](http://www.drjoy.com)

## Meeting people

Some places of interest:

**Shoe International Network** calls itself "The leading online lesbian community." It's a lively group, and friendly and fun as well. They have forums, chat, free personals, plus games, news, and more Check them out at [www.shoe.org](http://www.shoe.org)

**Rural Gays** is a new yahoogroup for connecting with other gay men who live in the country or small towns (they call themselves "the friendliest front porch on the web.") They're at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ruralgay/>

**GayGoth.net** is a website for gay teenagers into Gothic culture. They have lots of personals for friendship, chat and relationships, and they're at [www.gaygoth.net](http://www.gaygoth.net)

Dating can be rough if you have a chronic STI like herpes, HIV or HPV. If you're in that situation, there are a number of dating services that are geared to meet your needs. **A Greater Date** has assembled a listing of those services. Visit [www.agreaterdate.com](http://www.agreaterdate.com)

**Complete Area GLBT  
Resources Listing  
at [www.eriegaynews.com](http://www.eriegaynews.com)**



# **Cameo Artist:** ***Franco Monastero***

**Saturday, April 24**  
6 pm to 9 pm  
**Glass Growers Gallery**  
10 East Fifth Street

On Saturday, April 24, cameo artist Franco Monastero will be demonstrating and displaying the refined art form of cameo carving at Glass Growers Gallery.

The crafting of cameos is an art form that is almost nonexistent in the United States. Franco's cameos are hand carved from Sardonix and Cassia Madagascarensis, considered to be the finest shell for carving cameos.

Mr. Montasero will have approximately 42 to 50 pieces on display and for sale at the Glass Growers Gallery. Also, during his visit, he will demonstrate the unique methods used to create these delicate works. Prices are incredibly reasonable for these elegant, handcrafted works, starting at \$150.

Remarkably, Franco can be commissioned to create a one-of-a-kind cameo for you or a loved one. His custom work is an iconographic symbol, a moment frozen in time, transformed into an exquisite and enchanting masterpiece beloved for generations to share.

Franco Monastero resides in Torre del Greco, Italy, considered the world's center for cameo artistry. Notably, Francesco developed a reputation as a fine artist by the age of 11. From that time, cameo carving has been his vocation and devotion. Consistently, Franco has remained true to his convictions by only creating cameos that illustrate his technical expertise while manifesting a specific individual interior life.

You are invited to attend the reception for Franco Monastero on Saturday, April 24 from 6 to 9 pm at Glass Growers Gallery 10 East Fifth Street.

Glass Growers hours are M-W 10-6, Th-F 10-8, and Saturday 10-5.

For more information, contact Deb Vahanian at  
814.453.3758 or [glassgrowersgallery@yahoo.com](mailto:glassgrowersgallery@yahoo.com).

