



Several members of the GLBT community met Congressman Kathy Dahlkemper shortly in her Erie office on Jan 23. Pictured here C Michael, Dave Martin, Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper, Janice Hannusik, Richard McVay; (in front) John Max Irvin, Laurie Finch. Related article on page 11. More photos online at eriegaynews.com Photo by Amy Cuzzola-Kern, Ph.D.

Vertigo has its own place now!

from Kirsten

We're back and here's the info!

I've signed a six-month lease at 300 B East Jefferson St Butler PA 16001. Vertigo is on the corner of Franklin St and E Jefferson St, bottom entrance. Vertigo is BYOB, \$5 cover, 18 and over. We will have drink mixes for sale, soda, juice, tonic, chips, candy bars. Cups and ice will be provided and there is a fridge to keep your beer cold. We'll be having great dance music, and a comfortable place to hang out. We have a pool table and megatouch, so bring your quarters. Vertigo is every week now, alternating Fridays and Saturdays. Upcoming Vertigo dates: Friday Feb 27 (Grand Opening), then March 7, March 13, and March 21. www.myspace.com/butlervertigo

G2H2 at Sheraton Hotel Bayfront on March 6

from Karl

Our next G2H2 (Gay Guy/Girl Happy Hour) will be Friday, March 6th from 6-8 PM at the Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel, 55 W Bay Dr, Erie, PA. G2H2 is modeled after similar regional groups in Cleveland and Pittsburgh where GLBT professionals and their colleagues and friends meet once a month for happy hour at a local bar for networking. It's also a great opportunity for us to improve the image of our local GLBT community. And it's been great fun. We have been having great turnouts and we have been able to add to the list of guests each month. Please spread the word to other GLBT professionals and our friends (gay and straight alike) who aren't included on this distribution list. We hope to see you on March 6.

(continued on page 3)

In This Issue...

| | |
|---|----|
| Rock the Dome! | 6 |
| Help for Male Victims of Sexual Assault ... | 7 |
| Calendar | 8 |
| On Stage | 10 |
| Meeting with Kathy Dahlkemper | 11 |
| It's Not a Choice | 12 |
| Equality Legislation Meeting | 13 |
| LBT Women news | 14 |
| NY State marriage updates | 15 |
| "Don't Divorce Us" campaign | 16 |
| Equality Advocates PA welcomes new executive director | 17 |
| Lawyers association supports marriage rights in immigration cases | 17 |
| Obama names openly-gay Fred Davie to Faith Council | 17 |
| Screen | 18 |
| Photos | 19 |

**Classified Ads are available!
See website for more info.**

EGN Rates & Data

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| QUARTER PAGE | FULL PAGE | HALF PAGE VERTICAL |
| HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL | EIGHTH PAGE | |

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

Camera ready art or manuscript and/or photos, illustrations and logos must be received by the 15th of the month.

Photos and illustrations should be PDF or TIFF and Hires.

All hardcopy ads submitted will be reproduced as close as possible.



Erie Gay News
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
Ad Design: Mike Lipiec
Deadline for next issue: Sunday, March 15;
this will be distributed the night of Tuesday, March 24.

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

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

We will not publish any material that 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.



To the Zone for hosting, Andrea, Bruce Shrou, C. Michael, Charles, David, Dennis, Doug Mauri, Erin M. M., Jack Walburn, James von Loewe, Janice Hanusik, Jeff, Jerry McCumber, Johauna, John, Kim, Laurie Finch, Mark, Marshall, Michelle, Mike, and Richard McVay; Bruce Shrou, Charles, James von Loewe, Janice Hanusik, Jeff, Jerry McCumber, Johauna, John, Laurie Finch, Michelle, Mike, and Paula for distribution, Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

Community News

Drenched Fur Celebrating 5 Years

by Gary Snyder

As the weeks pass, more and more guys from across the country and the local tri-state region are registering and making plans to attend Drenched Fur 5, Erie's Bear Run Weekend. This year's event weekend is coming up next month from Friday, April 3rd thru Sunday, April 5th, 2009. The DF5 Committee has been hard at work on preparing for the attendees this year. One important update is a new host hotel with Quality Inn and Suites near the Presque Isle Downs and Casino on Perry Highway (Rte 97). Just like last year, local guys are welcome to join us for our private event outing to Splash Lagoon Indoor Water Park Resort on Saturday night. Also, we're bringing back some afternoon tours around the Erie region on Saturday including the ever popular Winery Tour. Prior to these events, we will be having a bar crawl on Friday night out to Craze and The Zone. We will be updating our website periodically with announcements and further information in the coming weeks. Since the launch of our on-line

registration on January 1st, we have received over 100 registrations in the first month, and booked over 50% of our host hotel rooms. If you're interested in more information, feel free to point your web browser over to www.drenchedfur.com to review the schedule of events, register for some/all of the weekend and more. If you have questions, you can contact Gary the Run Coordinator at gnsnyder@drenchedfur.com or (814)384.0463 for further details.

Call for Vendors and Crafters

from Edinboro Art and Music Festival

The Edinboro Art and Music Festival is placing a call for vendors and crafters. Only artisans and crafters making their own goods need apply, No items bought for resale are permitted, for the May 14-16 festival. The vending will only be on Saturday May 16, at Our Lady of the Lake Church social hall. Please contact Shannon at (814)734-5858 or Renee at (814)734-2909 to get on the list for a vendor application.



DATE: Saturday
March 28th, 2009

TIME: 8PM until 1AM

TICKETS: \$10 per person

PLACE: Rainbow Gardens
Erie, PA

WHAT IS IT: An 80's dance party featuring the M80's and DJ Bill Page, Technobowl Tournaments to win a Wii, casino area and other games of chance.

**80's
REWIND
DANCE**

This event is Bring Your Own Beverages and Snacks!
To reserve a table contact Heather Mc Brier
814-454-0738

The 80's Rewind Dance is a fundraising event to support the Junior League of Erie.
For more information about us please visit www.juniorleagueoferie.com

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Community News

PFLAG Scholarship

From PFLAG National and PFLAG Erie-Crawford

Gay? Lesbian? Bi? Trans? Straight Ally? Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) wants to help you pay for college with their 2009 PFLAG National Scholarships! Now available: Three \$5,000 scholarships, three \$2,500 scholarships, and up to ten \$1,000 scholarships! To qualify, you need to...

- * Be a graduating senior entering higher education for the first time in 2009. (If you graduated in 2008 and took a year off you are still eligible to apply.)
- * Self-identify as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) or a straight ally.
- * Demonstrate an interest in service to the GLBT community.
- * Are applying to an accredited higher education institution.

All completed applications must be postmarked by March 13, 2009.

Application information: All applications must

include: Completed application form, One-page essay, High school transcript, One reference & Completed release form

Apply online at www.pflag.org and click on Scholarships. Or mail completed package to: Suzanne Greenfield, PFLAG National, Scholarship Application, 1726 M Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036 Contact us locally at PFLAG.ERIE.CRAWFORD@GMAIL.COM or John at (814) 454-1392 for more information or visit: www.PFLAG.org for online information, too.

2nd Annual Legal Domestic Violence conference

from SafeNet

SafeNet and Protection From Abuse Coordinated Services, Inc. are pleased to present the 2nd Annual Legal Conference "Domestic Violence: The Change Process" Wednesday April 15th 8:30 AM to 4 PM Bel-Aire Hotel and Conference Center Erie, PA. Continuing education credits will be offered.

This presentation begins with a brief overview of the causes of domestic violence perpetration. Next we will look at the elements of change, including consequences, education, confrontation, and accountability.

Appearing at the conference will be nationally-known author, advocate and lecturer Lundy Bancroft. Bancroft has twenty years of experience specializing in interventions for abusive men and the children that are exposed to them.

For more information call SafeNet (814) 455-1774 or visit www.safeneterie.org



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Community News

Junior League at play

from Junior League of Erie

The Junior League of Erie wants to invite you to the First Annual 80's Rewind Dance and Casino Night. It features entertainment by the M-80's and disc jockey Bill Page, a Techmobowl Tournament on flat screens—the winner gets a free Wii! The tickets are very limited due to pre-registration so make sure to get your tickets now!

The date is Saturday, March 28th from 8 PM to 1 AM at Rainbow Gardens at Waldameer Park.

Event chairwomen: Heather McBrier, Catherine Fox, Amanda Snedden, Demarie Thompson, Karen Migdal, Christy Carucci, Nicole Caldwell and Char Syzmanowski are working with League president Liz Sharp and Board members Kelly Hetz, Heather McBrier, Tricia Ackerman, Amy Swenson, Lisa Grassi, Holly Mackenzie, Cindy Christiansen, and Bernadette Sitter.

Tickets are available for \$10 each at Pony Express, 1903 W. Eighth St. and Ambridge Rose. For more information, call Heather McBrier, Fundraising Chair at (814) 454-0738.

Proceeds will help fund the organization's various endeavors. The Junior League of Erie is an organization of women committed to training philanthropic leaders and improving the community. Its current focus is children's health issues, including childhood nutrition and infant preventive health initiatives.

Crime Victim Center Lisa Maas Memorial Bowling Tournament

from Crime Victim Center

The Lisa Maas Memorial Bowling Tournament – hosted by Melanie Maas as her Senior Class Project - will be held at Noon, March 1, 2009 at Greengarden Lanes. The tournament is open to all individuals and the "9 pin/no tap" format allows people of all skill levels (or no skill at all) to bowl and have a good time! Cost of the tournament is \$15 for three games.

There will be prizes, a gift auction and raffles. Proceeds from the event will benefit thousands of men, women and children at the Crime Victim Center whose lives have been touched by crimes.

To pre-register for the tournament, call Greengarden Lanes at (814) 864-2642. For more information about the event call (814) 899-1198.

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Stand Up, Speak Out, and Rock the Dome!

By Jake Kaskey

Policy and Outreach Coordinator, Equality Advocates Pennsylvania.

How often have we gathered, brothers and sisters across the Commonwealth and indeed the nation, to stop or protest harmful and hurtful legislation that affects the entire LGBT community? Thousands across Pennsylvania and millions from coast to coast took to the streets following the devastating passage of Proposition 8 in California. We were, at that moment, standing arm-in-arm in solidarity with those on the entirely opposite side of the continent. Often our voices, and the voices of our allies, speak out against something. Against the passage of Proposition 8. Against the effort to amend our own state's constitution to limit same-sex relationship recognition. Not this time.

This March, Representative Dan Frankel (Pittsburgh) will re-introduce legislation that would protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from getting fired from their jobs and kicked out of their housing simply because of their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. Eighty percent of Pennsylvanians live in areas where there are no local laws that protect against such discrimination, and every year our legal clinic receives hundreds of calls from nearly every county in Pennsylvania to report this type of discrimination. Last session, Representative Babette Josephs (Philadelphia), Chair of the State Government Committee, held public hearings across the state on this bill, and heard from victims of discrimination, people of faith, business leaders, and others who strongly support this bill. Over the years, the groundwork has been laid and public support garnered to pass this legislation that will directly impact the lives of thousands across Pennsylvania.

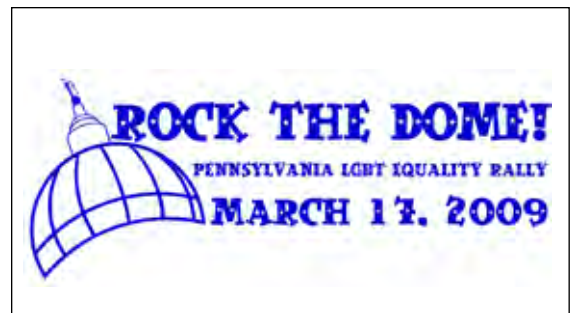
But to pass this bill, we all need to stand up, speak out, and let our voices be heard. Gay, straight, bi, lesbian, trans, queer, allied folk-- however you identify-- need to collectively speak with one voice and demand these basic protections. Recent polling shows broad-based overwhelming support across every demographic group and geographic region across the state, yet a vocal minority has time and again been able to thwart the popular will, and basic fairness.

Upon this bill's introduction this session, LGBT and allied Pennsylvanians need to speak out for our

brothers and sisters for which the passage of this legislation would have a tremendous impact on their daily lives. Written here, many times before, has been a call to contact your legislators. But the impact of these phone calls and visits are large and consequential-- every constituent that calls their legislator truly have a major impact on the livelihood of thousands of people in Pennsylvania. To find your legislator, and to get their contact information, just visit <http://equalitypa.org>.

Individually every one of us can make a difference, and collectively we can demonstrate the breadth and power of our support. On March 17, we will gather in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg to speak together, in one voice, to pass this legislation. Buses will leave from both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and hundreds will gather in the halls of power to demand fairness and equality. Lobby training and free lunch will be provided at 11:30 AM, then we will move into the Capitol Rotunda to rally at 1 PM. More information can also be found at <http://equalitypa.org>.

Amy Balliet gained national attention when, after the passage of Proposition 8, she created a website, JointheImpact, and mobilized millions of LGBT and allied people in nearly every major American city to speak out, and stand up for equality. I went to high school with Amy, and spoke with her after the rallies. She was humbled by the power of her voice; one voice. Collectively in Pennsylvania, speaking with one voice, we can all make a tremendous impact and pass legislation to protect LGBT people against discrimination. Join us on March 17, and let our voices resonate through the halls of the Capitol. Speak out, stand up, and help us Rock the Dome on March 17!



Help for Male Victims of Sexual Assault

by Angela Porfilio, Crime Victim Center

The February 2009 issue of Erie Gay News featured an article based on a study published in the International Journal of Child Abuse & Neglect. It stated that men who engage in risky sexual behavior report much higher than average rates of severe childhood sexual abuse.

Estimates are that one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18. Children who have been sexually abused have a higher chance of being raped as adults and often have difficulty in unhealthy relationships. People who are sexually abused as children are three times more likely to suffer from psychiatric disorders and four times more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol.

Counseling to address sexual assault issues is important and available free of charge at the Crime Victim Center. The Center provided services to 5,234 victims, their family members and witnesses to crimes last year. Nearly 1,500 of those seeking services were due to sexual assault. About 18% of the sexual assault victims were male.

Sexual violence is never the victim's fault—ever! It doesn't matter if the person was drinking or using drugs, out on a date, dressed seductively or flirting.

Anyone can be the victim of sexual violence. Victims are people of all genders, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, education levels, socio-economic status and ages.

The decision of whether to report abuse lies solely with the victim (except in child abuse cases). On average, 70% of sexual assault victims do not report the assault to law enforcement.

It is never too late to seek counseling. Regardless of when the abuse or assault occurred, if you're ready to talk about it, we're here to listen.

The Crime Victim Center - reducing the impact of crime through counseling, education and advocacy. Services are free, confidential and non-judgmental. To make an appointment, call (814) 455-9414 or 1-800-352-7273.

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Calendar

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

Feb 25 (Wed) - Lecture Series: Moral Disapproval, Bigotry, and Same-Sex Relationships Edinboro University, Hendricks Hall, Room 124, Edinboro, PA. 4:30 PM. Speaker: Dr. Stephen Sullivan (Department of Philosophy.) TPart of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania President's Commission on the Status of Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgender People, and Allies 2008-2009 Lecture Series.

Feb 28 (Fri) - Mixers Mardi Gras Party 204 Coleman Street, Olean, NY. \$2 cover 10 PM (716) 372-1004 v2hot4u14760@aol.com. www.mixerstavern.com

Mar 6 (Fri) - G2H2 - Erie Gay Business Alliance social get together Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel, 55 W Bay Drive, Erie, PA. 6 PM - 8 PM. Gay Guy/Girl Happy Hour (G2H2) is modeled after similar regional groups in Cleveland and Pittsburgh where GLBT professionals and their colleagues and friends meet once a month for happy hour at a local bar for networking. It's also a great opportunity for us to improve the image of our local GLBT community. And it's been great fun. We have been having great turnouts and we have been able to add to the list of guests each month. Email: egba-owner@eriegaynews.com. Browse to www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=54742829807.

Mar 8 (Sun) - Pride Picnic Meeting Panera's Yorktown, 2501 W 12th St, Erie, PA.. 2 PM. We will be meeting to discuss planning for the 17th Annual Erie Pride Picnic, which will be held on Sunday, June 13 from 1 to 6 PM at the Rotary Pavilion at Presque Isle State Park, Erie PA Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to www.eriegaynews.com.

Mar 13 (Fri) - WatchFire Alliance Game Night (Lily Dale, NY) 7 PM. Bring game(s) of your choice. Social/support group for GLBT people and their allies in Chautauqua County NY area. Contact: Bethany Robson. Phone: (716)499-4817. Email: brobson515@msn.com.

Mar 14 (Sat) - Craze Night Club: St. Patrick's Party Craze Night Club, 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA) Get your *green on!* Celebrate the *Irish* in us all at *Craze* Night Club! Contact: Duane. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Browse

to www.crazeerie.com.

Mar 14 (Sat) - O'Zone Dance Party (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) Feeling Lucky? Join your friends for some four-leaf fun at our St. Patrick's Party! Wear Green! Have some green beer or dance an Irish jig! Catch the leprechaun and he might give you his pot of gold! The Gay rainbow ends here! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Mar 15 (Sun) - Deadline for EGN April 2009 print edition (Erie Gay News, 1115 W 7th St, Erie, PA 16502-1105) Please have all articles, ads, and submissions in by this date. This issue will be released the evening of March 24. For a complete list of upcoming deadlines and release dates, check the web site at www.eriegaynews.com/printedition/deadline.php. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to www.eriegaynews.com.

Mar 17 (Tue) - Craze Night Club: St. Patrick's Day (Craze Night Club, 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA) Happy St. Patrick's Day from *Craze!!!* The Martini Bar is *open* with \$3.50 *Green Martinis* Contact: Duane. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Browse to www.crazeerie.com.

Mar 17 (Tue) - Rock the Dome! Rally in Harrisburg Rally for LGBT Equality in Pennsylvania. Details page 6

Mar 18 (Wed) - Lecture Series: Parenting a Gay Son Edinboro University, Hendricks Hall, Room 101, Edinboro, PA. 12 PM. Speaker: Dr. Ken Adams (Dean, School of Education). Part of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania President's Commission on the Status of Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgender People, and Allies 2008-2009 Lecture Series.

Mar 19-29 - Cleveland International Film Festival Over 290 films from 60 countries includes Ten Percent Cinema LGBT series, Tower City Cinemas, Cleveland; www.clevelandfilm.org, (216) 623-3456.

Mar 24 (Tue) - Woman's Night Out at Claytopia (Claytopia, 2503 W 15th St # 8, Erie, PA) 6:30-8:3 PM. You pay a \$6.00 paint fee for 2 hours. (Payable when you paint.)Details in LBT Women update, visit 14. Contact: Laurie. Phone: (814) 452-6645. Email: womynspace-owner@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://womynoferie.wetpaint.com/>.

Mar 31 (Tue) Renaissance City Women's Choir: Lesbians and Gays Creating Change through the

Calendar

Power of Music will perform March 31 at Edinboro University, Alexander Music Center Recital Hall. Details page 5,

Apr 3 - 5 (Fri - Sun) - Drenched Fur 5 Quality Inn South, 8040-A, Erie, PA 16509. Erie's 5th annual Bear run! Contact: Gary Snyder. Phone: (814) 384-0463. Email: info@drenchedfur.com. Browse to www.drenchedfur.com.

Apr 3 (Fri) - Under-Bear Party - Zone's Bear Bar Night! (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA. The Zone welcomes all the guys from Drenched Fur to a night of Dancing and fun at our Under-Wear Party just for you! Show off your Under-Bear! Wear *fun* boxers and underwear and lets see some fur! Hungry? Grab a bite to eat from the Zone Kitchen, Try a Zone Twister Cocktail & join your friends on the Video Dancefloor as fellow bear DJ TC plays your requests! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to www.thezonedanceclub.com.

Apr 5 (Sun) - LBT Women of Erie meets Presque Isle Gallery Coffeehouse, 35 Peninsula Drv, Erie. 2 PM. Social group for lesbian, bisexual and transgendered women. Meets the 1st Sunday of each month at Presque Isle Gallery Coffeehouse. Sign up for email list at <http://lists.eriegaynews.com/> Email: womynspace-owner@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://womynoferie.wetpaint.com/>.

Apr 13 (Mon) - Deadline for EGN May 2009 print edition Please have all articles, ads, and submissions in by this date. This issue will be released the evening of April 21. For a complete list of upcoming deadlines and release dates, check the print edition schedule here. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to

www.eriegaynews.com.

Apr 13 (Mon) - PFLAG Erie/Crawford County meets (Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Erie, 7180 New Perry Highway, Erie, PA 16508) 7 PM - 8:30 PM. Support group for parents, friends and families of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) people. Phone: (814) 454-1392 (John). Email: pflag.erie.crawford@gmail.com.

Apr 16 (Thu) - Lecture Series: GLBT, Hate Crimes and Human Rights in the Criminal Justice System Edinboro University, Hendricks Hall, Room 200, Edinboro, PA. 11 AM. Speaker: Elvage Murphy (Dept. of Pol. Sci./Criminal Justice). This event is part of Criminal Justice Day. Part of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania President's Commission on the Status of Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgender People, and Allies 2008-2009 Lecture Series.


Apr 24-26 - Opening Weekend at Jones Pond Welcome Home Potluck www.jonespond.com

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Corry Office 814-663-3891

On Stage

Renaissance City Women's Choir at Edinboro University on Mar 31

Renaissance City Women's Choir: Lesbians and Gays Creating Change through the Power of Music will perform March 31 at Edinboro University, Alexander Music Center Recital Hall, Edinboro, PA.

The Renaissance City Women's Choir was born in January 1995. A tremendous turnout of over 60 women responded to the first audition call, and several of the choir's current members sang in the inaugural season.

Our membership includes women from many professions, avocations, and musical backgrounds. Susan R. Haugh was the founding director of the RCWC and served as the artistic director until January, 2006. Andres Cladera assumed the position of artistic director in August 2006, beginning an exciting new era for the choir.

There have been many highlights in the choir's history. Our premiere performance was to a standing ovation at the Benedum in Pittsburgh for the Gala

10th anniversary celebration of the Renaissance City Men's Choir.

In 1999, the women recorded their first studio CD. Ferron headlined at our Womenfest in 2000. In 2001, we joined with RCMC in hosting a weekend retreat with Ysaye Barnwell, a founding member of Sweet Honey in the Rock and one of our favorite composers. We premiered "I Look Like a Girl" the first commissioned composition by Susan R. Haugh in 2002. It was part of our first concert for children and families on a double bill with "Oliver Button is a Sissy" performed by RCMC. Although our major concerts get most of the publicity, the choir is just as passionate about our performances at community events: for the Thomas Merton Center, PFLAG Pittsburgh Chapter, Jewish Community Center of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Arts Festival and more. In 2004, the RCWC toured local universities, performing at California University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro University, and Penn State's Fayette campus.

Throughout the many seasons we have brought to our members and our audiences the power that comes with making music together. We look forward to continuing to grow in our core values: musical excellence, respect for diversity, and community. And we look forward to continuing our mission as Lesbians and Gays Creating Change through the Power of Music. If you would like to learn more about the Renaissance City Choirs visit www.rccpittsburgh.org

Sponsored by the EUP Women's History Month Committee and the EUP President's Commission on the Status of Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgender People, and Allies Reception to follow the event - open to the public. This is the closing event of Women's History Month at Edinboro University!

Upcoming

Apr 1 - David Sedaris in Pittsburgh at the Benedum Center, 7:30PM www.pgharts.org

Apr 1 - Rachael Sage in Oil City Robert W. Rhoades Center, Clarion Venango Campus, Oil City PA. Free and open to public. Part of Coffeehouse Series. www.myspace.com/rachaelsage

Apr 7 - k.d. lang in Pittsburgh at the Benedum Center, 8PM www.pgharts.org

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Meeting with Kathy Dahlkemper

By Dave Martin

Our Erie GLBT lobbying group of seven (Michael Mahler, John Max Irwin, Janice Hanusik, Laurie Finch, Richard McVay, C Michael, and David L Martin) met with newly elected Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper and her aide Dr Amy Cuzzola-Kern Ph.D at 1:30 PM on Friday, January 23, 2009. The meeting lasted about 40 minutes, during which we discussed potential legislation regarding the Employment Non-Discrimination Act hate crimes, military readiness, and Defense of Marriage Act.

Our objectives were: to continue the relationship and rapport the Erie's GLBT community had developed with Congresswoman Dahlkemper during her campaign; to acquaint her with legislation that's important to our community, to act as a resource for information on these bills as they are introduced, and to gain her support and encourage her to act as a co-sponsor of these bills.

Congresswoman Dahlkemper warmly welcomed us and seemed genuinely pleased that we were the very first group to meet with her since her swearing-in, and that made our meeting with her relaxed, pleasant, and productive.

In preparation for the meeting, we had circulated nine "Congratulations" cards on which we had collected hundreds of signatures from GLBTs and allies which we presented to her after the introductions were completed. She seemed genuinely pleased and appreciative.

We then turned to our four presenters who were all very well prepared on their individual topics using material research from the websites of The Task Force, the ACLU, Lambda Legal, Equality Advocates of PA, Services Members Legal, and from the Human Rights Campaign as well as several other sources.

Thanks to the skills and passions of our lobbying group, the presentations went very, very well and were quite interactive, with Kathy and her aide frequently asking questions and adding supportive comments. It is worth noting that the most powerful elements in each of the presentations were the personal stories, the personal 'face' that the presenters wove into their presentations making the talking points and statistics from the web pages come alive and meaningful. One member of our group, for example, told the Congress-

woman of the heavy financial burden that she and her partner face each month in paying the premiums for medical insurance denied to them by her employer who does not grant medical coverage to non-married partners. No statistics, no talking points from the web pages could speak so eloquently and persuasively to Mrs Dahlkemper as this heartfelt and emotional testimony which perfectly illustrated the need for legislation to repeal DOMA and ensure fairness and equality for GLBT partners.

After completing the presentations, we next asked Congresswoman Dahlkemper for her support for GLBT bills as they are introduced which she readily gave to us. We also handed to both Kathy and her aide folders containing our contact information as well as the talking points we had used during our presentations. Importantly, Congresswoman Dahlkemper asked us to keep her advised when bills were to be introduced and given a number since she thought we might get this information from the national GLBT organizations even before she got the information from her caucus. We promised to do so.

On our way out of her office one astute member of our group commented on a family photo standing on a bookshelf. Kathy immediately began naming the family members and giving us a brief description such as "this is my daughter who is in the Coast Guard and yes, she has told me of the unfairness of Don't Ask/Don't Tell."

Without any doubt whatsoever, I believe Congresswoman Dahlkemper, PA 3rd District, "gets it" and will be a reliable and early supporter of GLBT legislation.

We concluded this wonderful meeting by dashing out to a florist shop to purchase a floral arrangement (under \$50 per ethics regulations) and placing it prominently on her desk for the District Open House which was just getting under way.

Truly, a very successful lobbying day thanks to to receptiveness of Congresswoman Dahlkemper and her aide, Dr Cuzzola-Kern, as well as to the hard work and preparation of our grassroots lobbying team, and lastly, but importantly, thanks to the encouragement and guidance of Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission Chairman, Stephen Glassman.

It's Not a Choice

By Rev. Richard A. Moyer
Pastor, Community United Church

Every day I read the letters to the editors in the local newspaper. I don't know why. Sometimes I get extremely frustrated because it seems like little thought is put into writing the letter. Occasionally, though, I am impressed with the quality of the writing and the wisdom that the letters contain.

For the most part, I don't think much about the opinions expressed in the letters after I read them. I go on to something else, and by the end of the day I remember precious little about what I read over a morning cup of coffee.

But early in December one letter caused me to contemplate its contents all day. In fact, the more I thought about it the more frustrated I became!

It was written by an African-American man. He indicated that in the final paragraph of the letter.

His letter began with his objections to those who support gay rights and gay marriage. Of course, that is neither new nor unique. Many people would agree with him.



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He then goes on to point out that the Bible calls homosexuality an "abominations." That, too, is a familiar and well-used argument against homosexuality.

But, of course, he fails to point out that in his own life he himself is most likely committing some biblical abominations, such as not following the dietary laws that are outline in Leviticus 11. But, again, what else is new? Most people pick and choose when it come to biblical abominations!

What bothered me most was the way he concluded his letter. He objected to his own struggles (as an African American) being equated with that of gays. He wrote that while homosexuality is a choice (he says that earlier in his letter), his race is not.

The writer of the letter, of course, didn't choose to be Black. That's who he is, and he's proud of it. He should be! But why does he so easily concluded that homosexuality is a choice?

My theology tells me that each of us is created by God, in the image of Gad – a God who is spirit, and neither male nor female.

I have no idea why some people are created as homosexuals. But I am certain that few if any people choose to be gay. What is important is that we learn to be comfortable with who we are, acknowledging that God loves us the way God created us.

Fortunately, the letter I refer to did not go unchallenged.

Nancy Zawadzki responded with a well-informed and brilliantly written letter of her own. It is worth reading again and again

"A wealth of scientific evidence now exists to suggest that being gay is not a choice but a genetically determined characteristic, as unchangeable and involuntary as the color of one's skin. Denying civil rights to gays is no different than supporting racial segregation because both are based on a cultural prejudice against people who are from the time of their birth, different from those in the majority."

Thank you, Nancy. Thank you!!

The Community United Church is an open and affirming congregation and is a member of United Church of Christ and Church of the Brethren denomination. . It is located at 1011 W38th St. in Erie. Services are Sunday at 11am. (814) 864-4429. The pastor is Richard A. Moyer and his assistant is Dr. Richard McCarty.

Equality Legislation Meeting

by Mike Mahler

On Sunday, February 8, about 30 people attended a meeting in Erie about passing GLBT equality legislation at the state level in Pennsylvania.

The meeting had been convened by Steve Glassman, Chair of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission; Andy Hoover of the American Civil Liberties Union and Jake Kaskey, outreach coordinator for Equality Advocates of Pennsylvania. Much of the publicity for the meeting was via the GLBT Voter/Activist email list.

The turnout for the Erie meeting was larger than the meeting that was held in Pittsburgh the previous day.

The focus for the next legislative session will be on amending the statewide Human Relations Commission statute to include sexual orientation and gender identity, and also including both of those categories in hate crimes laws. Hate crimes laws previously had included those categories, but they were removed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court for procedural issues, rather than the substance of the statute.

Those of us who had recently lobbied US Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper about federal legislation shared what we thought had helped make the session a success. Steve Glassman emphasized the need for people in different legislative districts contact their state representatives and establish a dialogue.

Erie Gay News will be carrying articles about how you can get involved and make a difference. Sometimes, it can take a surprising little effort on the part of folks to effect huge change.



About 30 people showed up at the February 8 meeting in Erie. Andy Hoover from the state ACLU; Steve Glassman, chairman of the PA Human Relations Commission, and Jake Kaskey from Equality Advocates PA. More photos of the event at www.eriegaynews.com. Photos by Deb Spilko





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LBT Women news

by Laurie Finch

The LBT Women of Erie and friends recently enjoyed snowshoeing at Asbury Woods. We were not deterred by the 18 degree temperature or the fact that most of us had never put on a pair of snowshoes in our lives! It was actually a beautiful sunny day, and it wasn't cold once we got moving on the trails.

A big thanks to Dee Dee for organizing the event, and helping all us novices learn how to stay on our feet! Well, on our feet most of the time.

I am happy to report that there were no casualties, and we all had a great time! At this writing, we are looking forward to our Tubing Party at "The Peak" February 21st!

Another event will be a Woman's Night Out held at Claytopia. We need a minimum of five people to commit to ensure the group rate prices. What we know so far is that the party will be held at Claytopia, which is in the strip plaza behind Giant Eagle in the Yorktown Plaza on W. 12th street. It will be held on Tuesday March 24th at 6:30 PM. If we get more than five people we could possibly have our own private room! Anyhow, this is how it works. You pay a \$6.00 paint fee for two hours. You also pay for the piece you choose to paint. You have two hours to complete the project, and you leave it there for them to fire for you, and pick it up later. Easy, fun and you get to be creative! You may even want to plan ahead, and stop in and see whats available, get a price, and then you can think ahead and plan what you want to do with it. That way you wont waste any of your two hours thinking how you want to decorate your piece! More exact info is forthcoming, but we wanted to get the date set. Robin is going to call and find out what the prices run for the



Snowshoe chorus line!

pieces, and what types of things they have to paint. So you will have an idea of the cost for this event. It is payable when you actually paint your piece, not when you pick it up. So, more exact info on the way shortly, and please respond to this post by e-mailing me at LFinch003@neo.rr.com if you are confirming that you will attend. Thanks to Robin for coming up with this idea, and doing the research on it!

So, think it over and let us know! We are gonna have a great time!

Hurry Hill Farms Maple Syrup Weekend Sugar Shack Taste & Tour Weekend is on March 14. We plan on meeting there about 10:30 AM. Janice and I have taken this tour twice before and find it to be the best. This is a friends and family event. Wear boots and dress warm!!! We didnt buy enough last year, so we are stocking up this year! It is alot of fun, so make plans to join Jan and me!

Hurry Hill Farm is owned by Janet M. Woods & Lisa G. Nathanson 11380 Fry Road Edinboro, PA 16412. Directions: From I-79 Edinboro Exit, Take 6N east 1/4 mile, turn left (north) onto Fry Road. Go 2 miles to 11380 Fry Road. Park in lot. Mapquest says this is a 1/2 hour drive from our home near bayfront and frontier Park. When you arrive, take the easy walking trail or wagon ride to sugar house.

~ Laurie

Check out the LBT Women of Erie Pa. website at <http://womynoferie.wetpaint.com/>

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NY State marriage updates

Update on government recognition for NY same-sex couples married out of state

from Empire Pride Agenda

New York, January 26, 2009 — Lambda Legal, Empire State Pride Agenda, New York Civil Liberties Union and the American Civil Liberties Union have released a guide outlining government protections and obligations for same-sex couples in New York who married out of state. The updated guide is released as the first anniversary of *Martinez v. County of Monroe* draws near, and in light of last week's decision in *Lewis v. New York State Dept. of Civil Service*—both notable appellate court rulings that upheld government recognition of out-of-state marriages of same-sex couples.

The document, titled: *Your Government Respects Your Marriage: Developments in New York State Agency Recognition of Same-Sex Couples' Out-of-State Marriages*, details many of the ways state agencies around New York accord legal respect to married same-sex couples. Lambda Legal, NYCLU, Empire State Pride Agenda and ACLU worked closely with state agencies to confirm and clarify the legal rights afforded to same-sex couples married out of state. The summary offers an overview of some of these statewide protections.

“Couples in New York who have never known true security for their families are finally getting a taste of the family protections other married couples and their children enjoy,” said Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union. “The governor's determination was based on the NYCLU's victory in the case *Martinez v. County of Monroe*, in which an appeals court unanimously ruled that New York State must recognize valid out-of-state marriages of lesbian and gay couples. We commend the governor and our state agencies for following the law and standing up for fairness. But lasting progress requires leadership from both the judicial and legislative branches. It's time for our political leaders to do what's right. New Yorkers should not have to leave the state to protect their families.”

To read *Your Government Respects Your Marriage* visit Empire Pride Agenda at www.prideagenda.org and click on Press Releases or visit this article at the Erie Gay News website for a direct and clickable link.

Human Rights Campaign supports Gillibrand's appointment as Hillary's replacement

from Human Rights Campaign

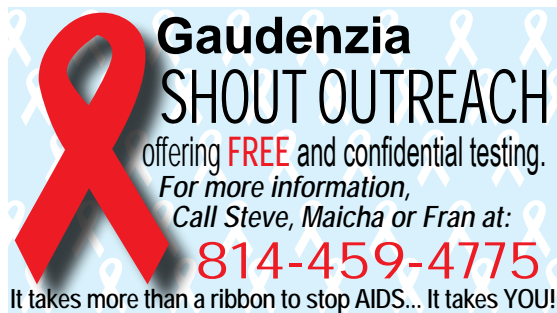
WASHINGTON, January 23, 2009 – The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, issued a statement today on the appointment of Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) by New York's Gov. David Paterson to fill the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who resigned as the state's junior senator in January 2009.

“Governor Paterson's pick of Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand's is a step forward for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community as she brings with her a strong record of support and understanding,” said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. “Gillibrand has already spoken out in support of marriage equality for same-sex couples; hate crimes protection legislation covering our entire community; fully inclusive employment non-discrimination legislation, and the repeal of ‘Don't Ask, Don't Tell’. As we advance pro-equality legislation in the 111th Congress, we look forward to Senator Gillibrand's support and votes.”

Rep. Gillibrand was endorsed by the HRC PAC in 2008. The Human Rights Campaign has confirmed the following positions on her LGBT record:

- Supports marriage equality
- Cosponsored and voted in favor of the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act
- Cosponsored inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and supports enactment of inclusive bill

continued on next page



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NY updates

(continued from previous page)

- Voted in favor of ENDA
- Supports repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell
- Supports repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act
- Supports equal tax treatment of employer provided domestic partnership benefits
- Voted against allowing discrimination in hiring for the Head Start program
- Voted in favor of allowing Washington, DC to fund needle exchange programs with local funds
- Supports the Early Treatment of HIV/AIDS Act (ETHA) to allow states to provide Medicaid coverage for HIV-positive persons
- Voted against procedural attempts to derail ENDA and hate crimes

The Human Rights Campaign The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality. They are on the web at www.hrc.org

“Don't Divorce Us” campaign launched in California

from Courage Campaign

On December 19, 2008, Ken Starr and the Prop 8 Legal Defense Fund filed legal briefs defending the constitutionality of Prop 8 and seeking to nullify the marriages of 18,000 devoted same-sex couples solemnized before Prop 8 passed.

The California Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in this case on March 5, with a decision expected within 90 days. That would forcibly divorce 18,000 same-sex couples that were married in California last year before the passage of Prop 8.

The Courage Campaign—an organization for progressive Californians—asked its members to send images appealing to the state Supreme Court not force people to divorce.

The result was a video almost guaranteed to make the viewer cry.

You can see the video at the Courage Campaign couragecampaign.org/Divorce or from the Erie Gay News website. At this writing the video has received over a million views on Vimeo and YouTube.

“Fidelity” used with permission from Regina Spektor and EMI Records.


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One of the many images shared by people appealing to the California Supreme Court not to force people to divorce in the wake of Proposition 8.

Equality Advocates PA welcomes new executive director

from Equality Advocates Pennsylvania

Equality Advocates Pennsylvania announced today the appointment of Lynn Zeitlin, Esq. as Executive Director. Ms. Zeitlin was chosen by the Board of Directors after an extensive national search. She comes to Equality Advocates after a distinguished career as a corporate and real estate lawyer and passionate activist. She brings her experience of 30 years as a successful lawyer coupled with an equally impressive array of work in the Philadelphia nonprofit and community relations community.



Lynn Zeitlin, Esq.

Lawyers association supports marriage rights in immigration cases

from the American Bar Association

The American Bar Association is moving to encourage American immigration officials to treat same sex partners in the same manner as spouses when applying for permanent residency in the United States.

The ABA's House of Delegates approved the new ABA policy during its Midyear Meeting in Boston on Feb. 16. The policy calls for federal legislation enabling permanent legal residents of the United States to sponsor partners of the same sex for permanent residency.

The background report noted that currently "thousands of lesbian and gay bi-national couples and their children are kept apart, driven abroad, or forced to live in fear of being separated" and added, "this policy damages not only those families, but U.S. society generally."

The policy and report is posted in full at: <http://www.abanet.org/leadership/2009/mid-year/recommendations/108.pdf>

There is also a clickable link in the online version of this story at www.eriegaynews.com

Obama names openly-gay Fred Davie to Faith Council

from GayPolitics.com

Fred Davie, the openly gay president of Public/Private Ventures, has been named to serve on President Barack Obama's Policy Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Davie will work to provide objective, nonpartisan advice to the president on a variety of public policy matters, including strategies to increase the effectiveness of social services delivered by community and faith-based organizations.

Speaking about his hopes for the Office at the National Prayer Breakfast, Obama emphasized the importance of reaching out to "foster a more productive and peaceful dialogue on faith":

"I don't expect divisions to disappear overnight, nor do I believe that long-held views and conflicts will suddenly vanish. But I do believe that if we can talk to one another openly and honestly, then perhaps old rifts will start to mend and new partnerships will begin to emerge. In a world that grows smaller by the day, perhaps we can begin to crowd out the destructive forces of zealotry and make room for the healing power of understanding."

The logo features the text "the Rural AIDS Alliance" in a stylized font. "Rural AIDS" is in blue with a red ribbon icon, and "Alliance" is in blue. To the left, "the NORTHWEST Pa." is written vertically in yellow and red. Below the main text, there is a red banner with white text: "We provide access to testing, education, and medical, financial, and supportive services to those infected with HIV/AIDS in Northwest Pa. With Clinics in Erie, Warren, Clarion, Clearfield, Seneca, Sharon, Greenville and Farrell staffed by HIV specialists. Support Groups are also offered, please contact Sue at the Clarion office for that information." Below this banner, contact information is provided for Erie and Clarion offices, including phone numbers and addresses. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text: "GET TESTED: YOU NEED TO KNOW" EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO PREVENTION.

Screen

VIDEO

Chris & Don: A Love Story (2007) The true-life story of the passionate three-decade relationship between British writer Christopher Isherwood (whose Berlin Stories was the basis for the beloved *Cabaret*) and American portrait painter Don Bachardy. Released 2/24. *Zeitgeist Films*.

The House of Adam (2006) Inspired by actual events, a gay recluse is brutally murdered by religious fanatics. His lover, a closeted police detective must now solve the case. *Ariztical Entertainment*

On the Other Hand, Death: A Donald Strachey Mystery (2008) When the residents of a neighborhood are offered huge sums of money to sell their homes to a developer, the only ones to refuse are an elderly lesbian couple. Soon after, the couple's home is besieged by anti-gay vandalism, but Don suspects that the attack is motivated by big-business rather than homophobia. *Liberation Front*

The Lair: Season Two (2007) *Liberation Front*

Laughing Matters...Next Gen (2008) Outstanding cast of the new up and coming comics on the LGBT comedy circuit. Available 3/17. *Ariztical Entertainment*

Milk (2008) The powerful biopic about gay activist Harvey Milk. Nominated for 8 Oscars, and won another 24 and 40 nominations Available in DVD, Blu-Ray and On Demand March 10. *Universal Studios*.

Noah's Arc: Jumping the Broom (2008) *MTV*

Otto; or Up with Dead People (2008) Director Bruce LaBuce toys with genre conventions, combining different media, and making use of Medea's humorous film-within-the-film, while creating a new, sexy, hyper-politicized zombie mythology. *Strand Releasing*



*Chad Allen is back as gay detective Donald Strachey in **The Other Hand, Death***

Out at the Wedding (2008) Straight white Alex tries to hide her engagement to a Jewish African American man by pretending to be gay. But when her sister visits her in NYC and Alex must show her lesbian lifestyle, things get crazy. 2/17 *MTV*

Red is the Color Of (2007) The tense marriage between two artists is disrupted when the husband's provocative female model ignites his wife's sexual and spiritual awakening. In a three way game of subtle seduction, each confronts unfulfilled desires and festering frustrations that threaten to destroy the illusions of their lives. Released 2/24 *Ariztical Entertainment*

Rent: Filmed Live on Broadway (2009) *Sony Pictures*.

Rick and Steve Season 2 (2008) Animated Logo satire. Available 3/03. *MTV*

A Siren in the Dark (2008) The Sixth Sense and Blue Velvet meets gay cinema. *Ariztical Entertainment*

TELEVISION

RuPaul's Drag Race The race to crown America's next drag superstar is on! New episodes of RuPaul's reality show can be seen on the Logo Channel Mondays at 10PM, and you can watch previous episodes on www.logoonline.com

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Screen

THEATRE

"A Powerful Noise" LIVE comes to Erie's Tinseltown and almost 500 other theatres on March 5, 2009

Fathom, CARE and ONE are proud to present a one-night event featuring the acclaimed documentary "A Powerful Noise," followed by a live town hall discussion with leading humanitarian experts and activists. The event celebrates International Women's Day and highlights the important role that women play in bringing lasting solutions to global poverty. Broadcast live from New York City, this inspiring event will take place in select movie theatres nationwide on Thursday, March 5, 2009 at 7:30PM ET

"A Powerful Noise" is a film that proposes the solution to global poverty and injustice lies in the ability of women and girls to have a voice in their societies.

It will show audience members the lives of three women working to create change in Bosnia, Mali and Vietnam. After the documentary, theaters across the country will turn into community forums as experts and celebrity advocates give their personal insights into the problems and solutions facing women in the world's poorest countries.

Panelist will include actress and activist Natalie Portman; Helene Gayle, president and CEO of the humanitarian organization, CARE; Christy Turlington Burns, model, filmmaker and CARE advocate for maternal health; and Nicholas Kristof, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and New York Times columnist. The movie theater is located at 325 Sloan Ave., Hamilton. Tickets for "A Powerful Noise" range from \$15-\$18. They are available at participating theater box offices and online at FathomEvents.com.

To learn more about the film and the March 5 event, visit [/www.apowerfulnoise.org](http://www.apowerfulnoise.org)

One minor connection to Erie is that the film's director, Tom Cappello, is the nephew of former mayor-oral aide Rita Cappello.

Photos

Pics of some of the folks who showed up at the Latonia Valentinue's Party on February 14. More photos online at www.eriegaynews.com Photos by Mike Mahler



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