

N E T W O R K I N G NORTH

VOLUME 10 • ISSUE 3 • May • June • 1996

City Commission to Vote on Sexual Orientation

Jim Poole

The Traverse City City Commission has on its agenda for May 6 a vote on the proposed amendment to the city personnel policy to include sexual orientation. This change in policy, recommended by the Traverse City Human Rights Commission, would protect city employees from being fired from their jobs or denied hiring/promotion because of their sexual orientation. The *Record-Eagle* reported that over 105 letters were sent to the commission, including 77 from individuals, 26 from businesses, and two from churches. Only one letter of opposition was received. A City Commission meeting is open to the public. Friends North is asking everyone to attend this May 6 meeting to show support for the amendment. The meeting is scheduled for 7:30 pm at Traverse City's Governmental Center, 400 Boardman. Following is a list of how commissioners responded to questions asked, along with their phone numbers (if you do not speak at the meeting on May 6, you may want to give them a call before the vote):

Peter Taylor (mayor) 941-1826

Shelley Kester (mayor pro-tem) 946-2700 work
(off for maternity leave: leave message)

James Tompkins 947-2695

Jack Boynton 947-5944

Jasper Weiss 947-4420

Phil Orth 941-7013

Larry Hardy 947-7189

1. Do you support the proposed amendment to the city personnel's non-discrimination policy to include sexual orientation?

Taylor: Absolutely. I hope it passes. It's something that should not threaten anyone because we don't discriminate based on sexual orientation anyway. Those two words just aren't written in the policy.

Kester: (Did not return message left with co-worker. Record-Eagle reported that she opposes amendment.)

City Commission (continued page 18)



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FROM THE EDITOR

After reading almost a hundred letters, articles, and editorials from around the country on same-sex marriage, I am feeling a desperate need to distill it all.

All the justifications and arguments against same-sex marriage really seem to come down to this: One group of people would like to have some special privileges simply because they're heterosexual. It's that simple.

If we hadn't been born in a country that was based on such high ideals and raised to believe that fairness would always prevail, none of us would be surprised. Our schools, our parents and our government have taught us to believe in the complete benevolence and fairness of America and how it was superior to all the others in the world. This country has forever stood for equality for everyone, with liberty and justice for all, and America was a melting pot of people who welcomed in the oppressed.

Well, there were some things that were seldom mentioned. No one much likes to talk about what this country did to discriminate against the Jews, the Irish, the Japanese, and the Blacks; not to mention women, children and Native Americans. This country has routinely discriminated against people because of race, creed, religion, national origin, age and sex. And, the discrimination was not just passive, it was ugly, blatant and violent. We even had to pass more laws—even amend the Constitution—to better control this discrimination. We apparently weren't able to be fair and non-bigoted on our own.

Today there are many people in this country who are working devotedly to take away what little freedoms gays and lesbians have and to insure that we get no more. They see no correlation between what they are doing today and the history of America's past discrimination which we all find so detestable and unbelievable.

As Canada considers an equal rights amendment for gays, the Netherlands are set to award marriage rights to gay couples. Other countries have or are initiating protections for gays. I can no longer deny that my country has let me down. How can many Europeans be awarding rights to gays while America isn't? Hasn't everyone else always been inferior to us? Backward even? Certainly no one has a democracy like we have. We are always supposed to be better and more fair than everyone else.

We are facing a historic juncture in the gay rights movement. The debate about our freedoms has come in an unexpected form with that of same-sex marriage. It isn't the debate many of us would have chosen, but it is the issue upon which the debate centers. If we lose this, we will face a much more divided, costly and lengthy set of small battles in the individual states.

It's time for my country—our country—to stand up for us before we must face the tiring and divisive prospect of fighting in 50 states. It is time for the Congress, the President and the Supreme Court to begin addressing the current wronging of an American minority. And, if not, then welcome back to the America of the 19th century—the same America that none of us want to talk about and few can believe existed.

Richard Tuxbury

Friends North, Inc., P.O. Box 562, Traverse City, MI 49685-0562 (616) 946-1804 (This is a general information line to receive F/N information.)

FRIENDS NORTH is an organization of lesbians, gay men, bi-sexuals and their friends from northwestern lower Michigan. Located in Traverse City, we provide social activities, a newsletter, phone line, workshops, and a community needs fund for financial assistance.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS of FRIENDS NORTH is composed of nine women and men elected each December. Regular board meetings are held at Northwestern Michigan College, West Hall, Room 2 in the cafeteria the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Greg Baird	Victor Dinsmoore—secretary	M'Lynn Hartwell
Jim Ingelson—president	Tom Kincaid	Carol Lambertson—VP
Julie Parker	Jim Poole	Scott Southwell—treasurer

Networking 45° North, P.O. Box 562, Traverse City, MI 49685-0562

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Networking 45° North is the newsletter of Friends North, Inc. Viewpoints expressed do not necessarily represent those of the board or general membership.

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CONTRIBUTIONS to *Networking* are welcome. Letters, essays, features, reflections, and original artwork should be sent "c/o Editor" to above address. (*Networking* will not accept material that is sexist, discriminatory or sexually explicit. Contributors are responsible for obtaining permission from those whose names they submit for publication.)

DEADLINES: Issue #4—June 15; Issue #5—August 15; Issue #6—October 15.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Please notify us in advance if a change is coming. Call John Evans, 922-0746, or send changes to our address.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

This past Sunday was the annual Friends North High Tea. It was a beautiful, sunny, Traverse City afternoon; the kind that reminds you why you stay here through winters like the one that is just about over, almost...??? In the street, in front of the historic TC Opera House where the Tea was held, the Earth Day celebration added to our day with music and the sounds of spring.

We were pleased to welcome about 150 people throughout the afternoon. We welcomed representation from P-FLAG, the Out 'n About Lesbian Coffeehouse, HIV/AIDS Wellness Grand Traverse, the Bookie Joint, GLSTN, and the Democratic Party (Voter Registration)... and a very special performance by the Northern Michigan Womyn's choir. I want to personally thank everyone who took part in the enjoyable afternoon.

I have one very important additional thank you: to Carol Lambertson who is the BEST Vice President I could have asked for. She has been such a great help in so many ways and was in charge of, and gets all the credit for, the success of the Tea. Thank You, Carol. (I wonder if Bill has had this kind of luck with Al?)

We have several important events coming up. On May 6th the TC City Commission meeting, as reported on the cover of this issue. Please attend and offer your personal support, even if you are not a city employee or live in the city. This show of support is important and is a step forward for us all.

On June 15th there will be a Gay Pride Picnic and Day of Celebration at the Robb Farm in the heart of the beautiful Leelanau peninsula near Suttons Bay. I had the good fortune, a couple of Saturdays ago to spend the afternoon with Cindy Robb wandering the grounds. This will be a wonderful event just based on the location alone. There are lots of places to walk and relax, while enjoying all the activities that are being planned.

You will be able to camp under the stars and enjoy this beautiful farm for the entire weekend. Please watch your mail for further information on the Celebration, or write to FN, POB 562, Traverse City, MI 49685 with inquires.

Are you registered to vote? If not, we will mail the form to you. Leave your address on the FN phone line at 946-1804 and, as always, if you have questions or concerns please let us know either on the phone line or write us.

1996 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 15- F/N Pride Picnic Celebration

The Robb Farm, Leelanau County

June 15 - Yard Sale

We really need great stuff donated for the P-FLAG/Friends North Yard Sale. Call Jim at 933-5436 to Donate!!!

June 21-23 - Pride Celebration in Lansing

July 9 - Bed Race, TC Cherry Festival

July 26-28, Friends North Bike Tour

Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore

September - Autumn Hike and Dinner

(date and location to be announced)

October 11 - National Coming Out Day

Celebration to be announced

October 10-13, Wellness AIDS Quilt Trip to Washington D.C.

Call Tom at 947-4647 for details

October 25-27, 2nd Annual Gay & Lesbian History & Education Conference

Sugar Loaf Resort

December 3 - Friends North Annual Meeting

Unitarian Universalist Church - Traverse City

Mark your calendars now so you won't miss any of the events. Details will be published in future issues of *Networking 45° North* as the events approach. For more information call 946-1804.


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A Tsunami is coming! A Tsunami is coming! Don't head for high ground, though. Head for the May 18th gathering of the Out 'n About



Jamie Anderson

Lesbian Coffeehouse and the music of Tsunami Records recording artist, Jamie Anderson. Her songs and comedy will engulf you in wave after wave of laughter and appreciation of her many musical talents.

We're "pleased as punch" to welcome back and again present to our lesbian community the world-renowned singer, songwriter, comic, baton twirler, and parking lot attendant, Jamie Anderson. She energized Out 'n About on a cool Spring evening during her virgin visit

to our area, last year, and was visibly impressed with a view of "our Northern Lights" (someone please bring a down jacket for her use... yes, even in late May). With this return trip, she will be promoting her newly released recording, *Never Assume*.

Jamie Anderson will be performing at the Out 'n About Lesbian Coffeehouse on Saturday, May 18. The doors will open at 7 p.m. A cover donation will be sliding-scale from \$5-\$10. A recent review of her performance describes Jamie in this way: "...(she) sings funny and touching songs about the life and romances of an average goddess babe lesbian." — A.B. *Dirty Linen*. You won't want to miss this concert!

On Saturday June 15, the Out 'n About Lesbian Coffeehouse presents — "OUT, Loud, and Laughing" stand-up comedy! . Sara Cytron is no stranger to the comedy circuit. This strong Brooklyn butch-lesbian has shown the many faces of lesbian life through her cutting-edge comedy. She has performed for clubs, festivals, pride events and progressive organizations. Some of the places she has performed include: New York City's Music Festival, Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, "The Club" at New York City's La Mama Theater, Provincetown, San Francisco and Los Angeles. She has also appeared at New York City's Town Hall in "Joan Rivers and Her Funny Friends" and several times on Olivia cruises. She has been featured in *New York*



Sara Cytron

Newsday, *The New York Daily News*, *The Village Voice*, *The San Francisco Sentinel*, and *The Advocate*. Segments of her act appear in *Out, Loud and Laughing*, a collection of lesbian and gay comedy published by Anchor Books. The director and chief writer of Sara's act is Harriet Malinowitz.

Look for Sara Cytron to take the Coffeehouse stage on June 15. Doors open at 7:00 pm. A cover donation will be sliding-scale from \$5-\$10.

Out 'n About Lesbian Coffeehouse is managed by an informal gathering of lesbians who call themselves the Steering Committee. This committee meets for a few hours on the Monday prior to the 3rd Saturday coffeehouse for planning of each month's event. The Committee is always seeking input from you, the lesbian community, about what or who Out 'n About should feature in upcoming months. Please consider joining the Steering Committee so that your ideas can be heard and so that you can make a positive impact on your own community.



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Out n' About Lesbian Coffeehouse is held on the third Saturday of each month except August and December. The Coffeehouse comes alive between 7:00 and 11:00 pm at the Unity Church, 3600 Five Mile Road, Traverse City. Smoke-free and Chem-free with a cover donation of \$3 (\$5-\$10 if we have entertainment). Coffee, tea and snacks are free; soft drinks are available.

For more information, or to have your name placed on the Out 'n About Lesbian Coffeehouse mailing list, call Brenda at 946-2708—leave message. (Please note this telephone number is for Coffeehouse information only. If you have other questions or needs, please call Friends North at 946-1804.)

ALIX DOBKIN — A COFFEEHOUSE REVIEW

by Staff Writer

"If it wasn't for the women, women
We would not be living, living.
We would not be joyful, singing
Loving and be loved women."

Alix Dobkin has sung tens of thousands of songs as first a folk singer and then as one of the first lesbian-identified singers on the international folk and women's music circuit.

This refrain is well-known among fans of lesbian music and women's music festivals. And it was that song Alix sang—and taught complete with sign language—after the more than 75 women at the Out 'n About Lesbian Coffeehouse on April 18 gave her a standing ovation following an often humorous performance filled with folk songs, banter and Alix's thoughts on lesbian community.

Mention the birth of modern lesbian music and herstorians will immediately say one name: Alix Dobkin. A folk singer since the early 1960s, she married and had a daughter. She later divorced and in 1972 fell in love with a woman and came out with the release of her album, *Lavender Jane Loves Women*. In 1973, the irrepressible Dobkin (her FBI file called her a dissenter type, argumentative and a troublemaker) began a career not only in lesbian music but in community organizing.

For her, the two go together because lesbian music, art, theater and literature help build our culture and community.

"Whether we realize it or not, we need music, art, theater and literature by, for and about ourselves," she wrote in the recent edition of the Lansing-based newsletter *Lesbian Connection*. "We are the movers and shakers, the ones who have built culture for ourselves because we know no one else will."

"...A few of us may make it onto the pages of the *Times*, the cover of *Newsweek* or a segment of *20/20*, but no matter how famous or comfortable any of us gets, we will still rely on each other for love and inspirations," she wrote. "...By involving ourselves in whatever makes us real, whatever reflects us back to ourselves, we create something that the mainstream can never replace no matter how good it gets."

One of the strong themes that Alix carries in her songs and her on-stage story telling and repartee is that lesbians need to support each other and lesbian community.

Alix has six recordings—*Lavender Jane Loves Women*, *Living with Lesbians*, *XXAlix*, *These Women/Never Been Better*, *Yahoo Australia and Love and Politics: A Thirty Year Saga*. The last contains 20 songs that span her 20-year career as a singer-songwriter. It includes *If It Wasn't for the Women*, recorded live at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which has never been on any of her previous albums though it has been part of a festival album.

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FRIENDS NORTH RAP GROUP

For several years the Friends North Rap Group has been a friendly and comfortable opportunity for men and women to get together for conversation. It is an excellent way to see old and new friends, and a valuable resource for newcomers trying to get acquainted with our community. However, there has been hardly any attendance lately, and the group is in danger of disappearing. If you have any interest in preserving the Rap Group, please come to the meetings. In the next meeting we could discuss the direction we all want the group to take. We meet the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm at Grace Episcopal Church, 349 Washington Street, Traverse City, downstairs. There is parking on the street or on the north side of the church building. For more information call Tom at 616-275-6127, —mornings, and from 11:00 pm to midnight. or call Ed at 616-947-4697, evenings.

LOCAL GLSTN CHAPTER NEWS

If you are in education, an affiliated service, a concerned parent or friend and you have a sincere interest in the mental health and welfare of our youth, we invite you to attend the next Grand Traverse area Gay, Lesbian, Straight Teachers Network (GLSTN) meeting.

Our next meeting will be held Monday, May 20, at 7:00 pm, at Third Level, 1022 E. Front Street in Traverse City. Their telephone number is 616/922-4800. If you wish to contact GLSTN call 943-8800.

At our May meeting we will be watching the film: "Setting the Record Straight." Made by Philadelphia film maker Jim Caiola (winner of a 1995 National Golden Apple Award for his educational film AIDS: The Next Generation), "Setting the Record Straight" features lesbian, gay, and straight teachers and youth addressing how homophobia damages schools in a dramatic eleven minute video.

The film is a direct response to anti-gay events such as the U.S. House "Hearings on Parents, Schools, and Values" held at the behest of far right Traditional Values Coalition in December, 1995, as well as propaganda such as The Gay Agenda, a video distributed to thousands of churches by far right groups over the past few years.

Jennings added that local GLSTN chapters would premier the film in over twenty cities, and that the video will also be available for other individuals and organizers to utilize.

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Contributions

FROM THE COMMUNITY

JUST ONE COFFEE, THEN I'LL GO

by Greg R. Baird

I've been looking out my window today in thought and watching Mother Nature bring some much needed warmth to our Spring season. It feels great to see the sun again. It's funny how this time of the year plays such a positive point in our lives.

With all that I watch outside, I have seen some changes within myself. Changes that I'm proud of. I have reached a point, professionally and personally, where I feel it is time to step forward and move on. It is a move that will take me out of the area and onward to the East Coast to further my career as a Performing Arts Director/Teacher. I'm excited for my move which will come the first part of June, but sad of what I will leave behind.

After moving from Petoskey to Traverse City three years ago, I have found this to be a friendly and supportive community. I have enjoyed my involvement with Friends North as a board member and as columnist for the Networking 45° North Newsletter. Its hard to believe I have been writing for the newsletter for over two years now. I'm very thankful that I had an outlet to express myself. Thanks to everyone involved with the publication!

Living in Northern Michigan has been full of challenges. Two years ago, I started facilitating a gay and lesbian youth group. I was thrilled that I could help educate this fine group of young adults. They needed to be told that they are okay the way they are and never to think of themselves as the worst humans alive. I wanted to let them know that the gay and lesbian lifestyle is not horrible and dirty, but rather it can be very loving and embracing with the right people. I feel that I have made a difference.

There were those people, though, that made themselves vocal, saying that a caregiver of teenagers and an educator should not have this kind of influence over these children. My

question for these people is: "When is teaching young students the value of having a positive self-esteem and acceptance of themselves a taboo subject?" It isn't. These teens are better off because someone gave a damn and reached out to them. I have been blessed with this experience.

Working on the board of Friends North has also been a great experience. There were times when we also hit some road blocks, but thank goodness we had a great navigator to get around them. It is those times when we come across obstacles that make us stronger for the next time we are faced with adversity. And boy, do we have adversity!

I will be resigning from the board in June and wish them all well as I move onward. Traverse City is a beautiful area. I'm one of those people who just love being by the water. I hope in my new home I'll be near an ocean, lake or river. It will give me a chance to daydream of Traverse and remember my friends and the beautiful sunsets. I'm a pretty sentimental mushhead when it comes to that kind of stuff. A hopeless romantic at heart.

Thanks for taking the time in reading my column. Your comments were appreciated. I hope in some small way, I got you to think, laugh and like me, be a sentimental mushhead from time to time.

I have decided that down the road when I get situated, I'll sneak a column in and say hello. Tux, thanks for all your friendship and encouragement. Friends North, thanks for giving me an opportunity to have a voice among our gay community. It has been a good experience.

So let's all sit down and have a laugh or two. I'll have just one coffee, then I'll go.

(Greg will be missed by me, both as a personal friend and as a writer whose experiences he's shared over the years. I also know that Interlochen will have to search long and hard to find a person with a heart as big as Greg's and a commitment to seeing each and every one of his kids excel. We wish him all the best on the East Coast, and an invitation to join us again at any time-Editor)

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Lesbians have been in the forefront of every movement for social change: from abolition to revolution, from AIDS activism to the fights for peace and nuclear disarmament, and in all the struggles for civil rights, women's rights, gay rights, and housing and environmental justice.

The Lesbian Avengers are on the front lines of the struggle against the bigotry and hatred of the Christian Right. We've confronted homophobic school districts, gone on the road to sound an alarm about local right-wing organizing, founded a Civil Rights Organizing Project and now are moving into small town and rural America. We would like you to join us. The Lesbian Avengers is a direct-action group focused on issues vital to lesbian visibility and survival.

The Lesbian Avengers are everywhere — We Recruit! The Lesbian Avengers are now in Traverse City! If you would like to join us, or would like more information. Please write: LATC — PO Box 9 — Traverse City, MI 49685.



It's been almost a year since we saw Jigger Johnson. Rick Gould gave us this photo of Jigger that was taken when they were both in Europe last year. We thought that other friends of his might want to see it too—a reminder of his quick wit behind those sparkling eyes. A more gracious and kind person would be hard to find in our community, and the void is still there for many of us.

BORN-AGAIN-PAGAN-SEEKER

SEX—SEX—SEX

Richard Curtis

"Sodomy, fellatio, cunnilingus... masturbation can be fun" famous lines from the 60's musical *HAIR*. I'm not embarrassed to admit that I'm a child of the 60's (I'm really quite glad to have been spared being a child of the Reagan years—that sorry-unopininated-I-don't-care-you-decide generation). I am very thankful that my coming out years were pre-AIDS. When I see young flesh, I don't envy its elasticity, its flush of vigor, its softness. I've been there, and in the rosy glow of memory that time, when my body was in their space, was a time of promise. Then, Youth lived with a freedom that now seems more a dream than the birth right of every person. Experimentation was simply a way of life. Questioning the status quo was seen as the natural way of life for youth.

Some say that this generation is rightfully reacting to the extremes of our generation. After all we (the baby-boomer queers) brought the world the AIDS epidemic. "We were so evil that God himself has sent a plague to destroy us." And if you believe that or even in the back of your thoughts believe that may be, I pity you. Sex ≠ evil. Sex may not equal love, but what is love? (The ancient Greeks had 16 words for different emotions which we label with the one word "LOVE." Sex IS an expression by and in the flesh of divine ecstasy.

As a Pagan, a member of an ancient and honorable religious tradition, I often feel like a stranger in a strange land. There are plenty of reasons for this, but perhaps the most obvious is in the realm of human sexuality. In short, most Pagans like sex. That is to say that we incorporate sexuality within our religion as a sacrament, or employ sexual symbolism in our rituals, or at least accept sex as a positive human activity. Usually all three. Because the public perception of

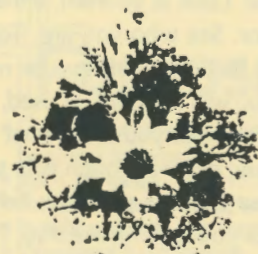
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religion is heavily influenced by Christianity, sex and religion are generally regarded as having nothing to do with each other, or even as contradictory. So it is that "sacred sexuality" has hitherto been regarded as mostly a middle-eastern or oriental phenomenon, not Western. Yet Paganism in its European and American forms is profoundly Western, predating Christ by thousands of years. There is no reason to believe that Pagan attitudes towards sex are not just as legitimate as the Christian ones. And for us, of course, they are more so.

This was gleaned from the internet (one of my first ventures into inner/outer space). I found it on just the perfect day. I needed it. I needed to speak to something which was burning in me. Queer folk so damaged by their childhood programming that they have rejected not only themselves but their natural, and holy desires. Brainwashed by hate and fear to doubt their very selves and reject the most universal form of the expression of the divine on earth.

Sex is what it's all about. Sex is why they tell me I'm going to hell. It's not because of my liberal arts degree, or my subscription to Architectural Digest, and it has nothing to do with my collection of fine art photography.

It's sex.

It's because I suck _____,

It's because I _____ butt,

It's because I kiss men

on the mouth - with tongue.

It's because I like to feel

the stubble of several days

growth of beard rubbing against the tender skin of my inner thigh.

It's sex.

Sex is what it is all about. Sex is why some people think I should be killed, or locked away in an asylum, or a federal prison, they don't seem to care which. It has nothing to do with my compassion for the homeless, or with my theories on the feminization of political systems. And it has never had anything to do with who I am.

It's what

I do.

*It's sex.***

So, of course I'm writing once again about Coming Out. This is our Gay Pride issue. Come out to yourself. Look at yourself, either in your mind's eye, or naked before a mirror. See who you are. Touch your skin. Touch your mind. This could be done with two or more people, but walk before you run. Alone you will be more focused, less influenced. Stretch your arms. Think about what you are—what you desire. Massage your neck. Are these natural desires? Touch your toes. When did desire first appear? Stretch your back as you look behind yourself into the mirror. Did someone force you to think like this? Twist your spine. Did someone force you to feel like this? Begin to move/dance. Can you be forced to desire someone? or not to desire someone?

Be proud of who you are. You are not evil. The God/Goddess

made you as you are. Christianity does not exclude you. The Episcopal church has been ordaining gay and lesbian priests for several years. The Methodist church hierarchy has recommended inclusion of gay and lesbian peoples. All major Protestant churches are moving toward acceptance.

Queer Folk have been honored in many different cultures from the earliest times to present times. In the Pacific Northwest Native Americans honored the *Maho*, the "Twin Souled Ones." The plains Indians honored their "Berdache." In the Yurba tribe of West Africa, today, we are by birth the "Gatekeepers" of the passage from this world to the world of spirit. By birth we are priests and priestesses trained and honored from early childhood. The list could go on. Our heritage is without bounds in human history we have always been and always will be.

Blessed Be

** excerpt of poem titled SEX by m.j.arcangelini, fields landing, ca
Reprinted from RFD (Radical Faerie Digest) No. 85 Spring 1996

WORDS AND MUSIC: A LOCAL GUIDE TO BOOKS, MAGAZINES, TAPES AND CD'S

by Rick Gould

Who's got time to read or listen to music now that spring has finally arrived? Why, you do, of course—You can't rake ALL of the time! So here's suggestions from our local book and music stores.

At **The Bookie Joint**, Shelley gave us the following list:

The Tree and the Vine by Dola de Jong, \$9.95. A rediscovered classic, this is the story of two women caught between personal desires and taboos in occupied WWII Amsterdam.

Honor by Ann Decter, \$14.95. An inspirational novel about three contemporary women who are longtime friends and sometime lovers. Sequel to *Paper, Scissors, Rock*.

Lesbian Sacred Sexuality by Diane Mariechild, \$24.95. A stunning collaborative work by Mariechild with photos by Marcelina Martin. Empowering, exquisite.

Breaking the Surface by Greg Louganis, \$12.95. The moving story of the Olympic swimmer is now in softcover.

Nightswimmer by Joseph Olshan, \$6.99. An intense novel of obsessive love, set in New York, is superbly written and haunting.

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The Invention of Heterosexuality by Jonathan Ned Katz, \$13.95. Soundly and seriously written study of the evolution of "heterosexuality."

Mask of a Diva by Grant Michaels, \$9.95. A Boston-set mystery in the fine tradition of the acerbic amateur who becomes a sleuth.

At **B. Dalton's** Beth gave us the following:

A Queer Geography, by Frank Browning, \$24.95. Browning delves into the minds of gay men in America and around the world to discover how their lives are shaped by time, place and the culture in which they live.

A 3rd Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul, by Jack Canfield, \$12.95. Shining stories of examples of the best qualities we all share as human beings: compassion, grace, forgiveness, hope and courage.

At **Horizon Books** Alex gave us these suggestions:

Gay by the Bay, by Susan Stryker, \$24.95. All about San Francisco, of course. Informative, entertaining, photo-filled look at the city, from pre-WWII to present.

Paris Was a Woman by Andrea Weiss, \$20.00. Pictures and text make up this essay on the "women of the left bank." I.E. Colette, Djuna Barnes, Gertrude Stein and more.

Riding Shotgun by Rita Mae Brown, \$22.95. The author of the famed *Rubyfruit Jungle* has a new one out. This is the story of a Virginia horsewoman who travels back in time to the Civil War era and learns about herself through examining her ancestors.

Young, Gay and Proud edited by Don Romesburg, \$5.95. The new edition, now in paperback, just in time for Pride.

Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai, \$23.00. Growing up gay in Sri Lanka!

Fifty Hikes in Lower Michigan by Jim DuFresne, \$14.00. The best walks, hikes, and backpacks from Sleeping Bear dunes to Oakland County.

At **AB CD's** Norm gave us this list:

Fun Soundtracks!

The Truth about Cats and Dogs, featuring Suzanne Vega, Dionne Farris, Sting, Cowboy Junkies and Jill Sobule.

Songs in the Key of X-Music inspired by The X-Files featuring the main title song, Sheryl Crow, Meat Puppets and Frank Blank.

Tales of the City, the BBC series features a Fab Seventies soundtrack.

Braveheart, the Oscar-winning movie features music by James Horner.

And finally, Kevin at **Waldenbooks** suggests these new titles:

And this too Shall Pass by E. Lynn Harris, \$23.95. A blockbuster novel set in the world of professional football. From the locker rooms to the newsrooms, four lives are about to intersect when a closeted gay player is accused of sexually harassing a female sportscaster.

Honky Tonk Logic by Tom Hollis, \$24.95. This wild and woolly romp across America follows the adventures of an unhappily married Arkansas housewife! She joins the circus and finds herself in relationships with people of every sexual variety, winding up in San Francisco.

Let's Get Criminal by Lev Raphael, \$20.95. When Perry Cross is hired from outside to fill a created university position, teacher Nick Hoffman is curious. But he is soon obsessed when he finds out that

the new hire shares a past with Nick's lover. When Cross is murdered, both Nick and his partner are prime suspects. Read on!

Best Gay Erotica 1996 selected by Scott Heim, edited by Michael Ford and *Best Lesbian Erotica 1996*, selected by Heather Lewis, edited by Tristan Taormino, are both in paper at \$12.95.

These stores appreciate your business and comments.

COMING OUT, COMING TOGETHER

By Craig Wilson

Christopher and Marlene Shyer do some of their best thinking at lunch. It was there, two years ago, that they decided to write a book together - a project fraught with problems for any mother and son.

What they didn't know at the time was how painful the process was actually going to be.

"I had no idea it was that bad for him," she says.

She's not talking about her son's writing abilities. She's talking about his childhood. Chris grew up gay in a straight, suburban world.

"I had just finished reading Paul Monette's *Becoming a Man*, and I thought that I'd like to tell my story, too, to maybe help someone else," he says.

"But I thought it would be more interesting to tell the story from two vantage points. . . . I thought a mother's perspective could help."

Enter Mom, a former suburban housewife and now novelist and children's book author in New York City. "I remember him saying, 'I want to write this book to help others,' " she says. "And I said, 'Give me a break!' "

She also added, as only a mother can, "It'll never work."

Then they went to work.

The book is *Not Like Other Boys* (Houghton Mifflin, \$21.95). One chapter is written by Chris. The next by his mother. And so on. The technique gives the reader a double-barrel view of life in the Shyer household in Larchmont, N.Y. To the outside world it looked like a happy nuclear family. Father. Mother. Three children. It was not.

"It was very painful to me to hear things that had gone on that were finally revealed," says Marlene. "Heart-wrenching things."

"We jogged each other's memories," adds Chris, now 34.

Coming Out continued next page



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"Chris would talk his chapters into a tape recorder," she says, "and I'd fluff it up."

"I'm not sure you want to say fluff it up," he says.

"Whatever," she responds.

Then they laugh.

Marlene admits she's still learning the lingo, still becoming politically correct, as she says, to the nuances of gay life. The book has opened a whole new world to her, far from the pools and country clubs of Westchester County.

Out on a publicity tour, she signs books in gay bookstores and attends gay churches. Most recently she was introduced to applause at Dallas' Cathedral of Hope, the largest gay congregation in America.

"I've never been to a place where the line to the men's room is longer than it is to the women's," she says. "Chris has brought me into a whole new world."

The liberation of writing the book, however, has come with a price for both of them.

Although Chris has been out of the closet for a few years now, he still has to deal with the people in his life who appear in the book.

He works in his father's eyewear business, and at least one of the 75 employees is right there on page 255. The man who called him a fag.

"There will be some trouble, no doubt," Chris says with resignation.

As for his father's reaction to the mother-son collaboration, Chris knows what it will be. "Dad will get angry at first, and then he'll get over it," says Chris. "But he hated the whole idea. He thinks this is all very personal, very private business. He'll say he's just protecting my career. He still believes that." (The Shyers are now divorced.)

Others will not be that pleased, either. Names of the characters in the book have been changed, but certain Shyer family friends will have no trouble identifying themselves. Members of one Larchmont family were Chris' closest friends, his second family, until they found out Chris was gay and dropped him cold. "It was very painful to me," he says. "But I hope they can learn from it. That I'm the same Chris they always knew."

Chris' mother hopes a lot of people can learn from the experiences they've written about. She says she has. Although the two say they always had a good relationship, "there was always a certain tension, which came from my trying to turn him into Arnold Schwarzenegger," she admits.

"I'd accept him," she says, talking of how she'd do things differently today. "I wouldn't try to change the character of a child. There was a time I wouldn't let him into the kitchen. If he wants to cook, let him cook."

She says she'd also tread more lightly. "It's amazing the things I said, just off the cuff, that he still remembers. Hurtful things. I'm still surprised how the small, innocuous comments I made years ago he's carried with him all his life."

What Marlene likes more than anything now are stories about families who handle the news of a gay member with aplomb.

"My favorite coming-out story is when this son tells his mother that he's gay and the mother, without missing a beat, says, 'Great. Let's go shopping!' Don't you just love it?"

(From USA TODAY)



Marlene Fanta Shyer and Christopher Shyer



S H A M A N I S M

Shamanism is the most ancient method of mind-body healing. Shamans the world over saw illness as a break in our spiritual essence causing debilitation and disease.

Trauma or negative energy from another person causes spiritual break resulting in loss of power, soul loss or spirit intrusion.



Symptom of power loss are chronic bad luck, illness, frequent accidents or low self esteem.

Symptom of soul loss are empty feelings, depression, loss of vitality, gaps in memory and long grieving periods.

When we are dispirited, who helps us? We have doctors for the body and mind. As a practicing shaman, Nancy Hayward uses techniques from the ancient ones. She journeys to other worlds and with spirit help restores personal power, knowledge, healing and wholeness to her clients.

Nancy has her training from the Foundation for Shamanic Studies. For information or for an appointment call her at 616-223-7999.

THE LOCKED DOOR

What are you hiding,
Behind your locked door?
To hide from the world,
Forever and more.

What little secret,
Can you not tell?
Will it kill you,
Or damn you to hell?

I have my secrets,
Behind my locked door.
But is it locked,
Forever and more?

What evil lurks behind,
That door of oaken wood?
I can't open it, I can't
I promised I ne'er would.

Who has the key,
To my locked door?
To open it up,
Forever and more.

How strong is my lock,
That holds the door?
To keep it safe and shut,
Forever and more.

Someone has knocked,
On the front of my door.
Who could it be,
Outside by my door?

Someone wants in,
Inside my locked door,
That I said I'd keep locked,
Forever and more.

I will let them in,
Inside my locked door.
And I shall be proud,
Forever and more!

—Corey Thomas 1/25/96

(Cory is 16 years old, enjoys writing and theater and lives in Northern Michigan)

A SELECTIVE APPROACH TO SCRIPTURAL IMPERATIVES

By JOHN TALLY

With publicity over gay marriages, the debate over homosexuality and the Bible once again fills radio talk-show airwaves.

Many of the hosts support gay marriages, but biblical arguments favoring the Christian fundamentalist cause go unchallenged. The debate usually goes something like this:

Host: So what's wrong with two loving, committed men or women being legally married?

Caller: The Bible says homosexuality is a sin.

Host: So you believe everything in the Bible is literally true?

Caller: Yes.

Host: Then you believe it's a sin to eat pork or shellfish, or for a man to shave his beard, and that those who work on the Sabbath should be put to death?

Caller: No, the coming of Jesus brought a New Covenant which freed us from those rules of the Old Testament.

Score one for the fundamentalist.

But with a few hours of Bible reading, the host could unmask the ever-popular New Covenant argument for what it really is: a justification for selective prejudice.

Host: But even under Christ's New Covenant, the New Testament is still the literal word of God isn't it?

Caller: Certainly.

Host: So you believe anyone who marries after divorce commits adultery (Mark 10:11); that women must remain silent, not teach and have no authority over men (1 Tim 2:11); and that slaves must obey their masters at all times (Col. 3:22).

Caller: Well...

Host: And if the New Covenant freed us from the regulations of the Old Testament, doesn't that do away with all three of its anti-gay passages?

Caller: Um... no... the New Covenant primarily did away with the strict dietary and health rules, not the moral laws, of the Old Testament.

Host: So when Leviticus prescribes death for all adulterers and for all who curse their parents just before it prescribes the same penalty for any man who lies with another man, each of those moral laws applies to us today?

(continued page 14)



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GETTING AND KEEPING A RELATIONSHIP: A workshop for men on May 17-19 and for women on May 31-June 2. For information, call Sol Rising at 517-336-0115. The workshop is scheduled to be held in Saugatuck. (issue 3)

MAY MEANS RODEO IN MICHIGAN: May 17-19 at the Michigan State Fairgrounds Coliseum in Detroit. Sponsored by the Gay Rodeo Association, it will feature traditional rodeo events, roping, and riding. Funds raised will benefit local AIDS charities. Info and tickets: Call 313-438-1305 (issue 3)

ADOPT-A-ROAD CLEANUP scheduled for 1996. The dates to clean Friends North's section of M-72 near Acme are: July 18, September 26. Again, we will gather at the theatre in Acme at 5:30. (issue 3)

N.W. MICHIGAN BEARS CLUB. A Bear Club is now being organized for bears and those who like them. For information, please write to PO BOX 283, Northport, MI 49670. (issue 3)

GAY GAMES IN 1998: Team Great Lakes is organizing for the upcoming games in Amsterdam, scheduled for August 1-5, 1998. Those interested, please call Ann Heler at 810-547-4692. Team Great Lakes sent 180 individual athletes and teams to New York City in '94. (Issue 4)

BI-MONTHLY, BI-SEXUAL, WOMEN'S LUNCHEON: Meet the first and third Tuesday of each month, from 11:30 am until 1:00 at a local, Traverse City restaurant. Call Pamela at 922-0734 or contact Friends North. (issue 3)

WASHINGTON D.C. QUILT: I am putting together a group of people who are interested in going to Washington in October to see the entire Names Project Quilt. Please contact me, Tom, at 616-947-4647 or write: 208 Circle Dr., Apt. C, Traverse City, 49684. (issue 3)

PLEASE SPONSOR OUR POSTCARD PROJECT: They do make a difference! The cost for printing the 2800 postcards is \$100.00. To contribute specifically to the Postcard Project, please call Richard at 271-3042 or send a check (in an amount of \$100.00 or less) directly to Friends North. (issue 3)

QUESTIONS ABOUT HIV AND AIDS? Call locally 24 hours a day to 947-1110. This program is sponsored by the HIV/AIDS Wellness Networks Grand Traverse Area and is staffed by Third Level Crisis Center volunteers. (Issue 3)

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION HAS MOVED to a new location in Petoskey, at the Concord Academy, 2230 East Mitchell St. Services will be held on alternate Sundays with dates disclosed in their newsletter, Diversity. Please call 348-3117 for details or write to us at POB 271, Petoskey, MI 49770-0271 (Issue 4)

HATE CRIMES WATCH: The Triangle Foundation of Michigan has begun a VICTIMS' PROGRAM COMMUNITY WATCH COALITION. The group will collect hate-crime information from Lesbian and Gay victims of such crimes. For details, call 313-533-1166 or 517-753-9823. Report Hate Crimes! Stop the Violence! (issue 3)

CREATING CHANGE: The annual NGLTF Conference is being held in Alexandria, VA, outside of Washington D.C., on November 6-10. For information contact NGLTF through their web page or call 617-492-6393. (issue 3)

FRIENDS NORTH ANNUAL BIKE TOUR SCHEDULED: The weekend of biking and camping at spectacular Sleeping Bear National Park in Leelanau County, is planned for July 26-28. All those who like to bike, either long or short distances, should plan to attend. Last year, about 120 gays, lesbians and their friends, spent the weekend, which features bike rides on Saturday and Sunday, a catered dinner on Saturday night, a bit of beach time, a commemorative tee shirt, and people from all over the country. Reserve early, as this year the tour will most likely be sold out. Cost is \$70.00, (or \$50.00 if payment is made before May 15.) Contact Jeff at 616-271-3042 or Gretchen at 943-9819. If you would like

information sent, please leave your name and address on the machine. (issue 3)

TWIN CITIES TO CHICAGO AIDS RIDE: Over 1700 riders plan to take part in this benefit ride (not race) between the two cities. Six days and 450 miles, the group will cycle through some of the most incredible scenery in the Midwest, while raising money for six AIDS service agencies in Chicago. July 1-6. Call 312-880-8812 to order a free color brochure. (issue 3)

PERSONALS:

SHARE HOME: in town, one single male, \$325 per month, includes all utilities, laundry and parking. \$200 security. Call Charles 616-929-2605. (issue 3)

CHRISTIAN, LESBIAN, WOMAN committed to Jesus Christ offers bible study with fellowship and fun for like-minded gays and lesbians. If you are interested, please send information on how to contact you. Please write: Bible Study, PO BOX 188, Suttons Bay, MI 49682. Confidentiality assured. Let's get together and celebrate the fact that Jesus loves us just the way we are! (issue 3)

GWM: 40, 5'11", 185#: Black hair, brown eyes, muscular build. For a serious lifetime commitment. Codell Wombles #5817, PO Box 41 (A&O B-1-5), Michigan City, IN 46361. (issue 3)

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT: Their Reproductive Health Clinic is open to women and men of all ages. Confidential services provided are physical exams, HIV counseling and testing, pregnancy testing, sexual transmitted disease testing and treatment, all methods of birth control available, FREE Norplants, Depo-Provera, IUDs, and Condoms. For more info about these and other methods which are charged on a sliding fee scale, call 922-4630. Services are by appointment only. (issue 3)

GROUPS:

FRIENDS NORTH BOARD AND MEMBER MEETINGS: The Friends North Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm. at Northwestern Michigan College, West Hall on the first floor, Room 2 in the cafeteria. Everyone is welcome! (issue 3)

GLSTN, the Gay-Lesbian-Straight Teachers Network, is meeting monthly in Traverse City. Newly forming, they welcome all interested educators. The May meeting will be held on the 20th, at 7:00 pm, at Third Level, 1022 E. Front St. in T.C. For more information, call M'Lynn at 943-8800. (issue 3)

FRIENDS NORTH RAP GROUP is a group of men and women who get together monthly for lively discussion on a particular topic and a good time. Please consider joining them on the second Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Church, 349 Washington, T.C. Look for the Rap Group article elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter. (issue 3)

P-FLAG: (Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays.) This is a network of parents, friends, and families of lesbians and gays who meet monthly to offer information, support, and a place to talk with others about the issues concerning them. Gays and Lesbians are also welcome and encouraged to attend P-FLAG meetings. Meet at Grace Episcopal Church every third Wednesday of the month, at 7:30 pm. For more information call Cindy Robb at 271-5045 (Issue 5)

WINDFIRE: This is a local youth support group for teens and others under the age of 25, which meets on a weekly basis in an atmosphere that is comfortable and friendly. Please contact Third Level at 922-4800 or 1-800-442-7315 for location, date and time. (issue 5)

OUT 'N ABOUT is a lesbian coffeehouse featuring entertainment as well as a chance to meet others from the area. It all happens at the Unity Church, 3600 Five Mile Rd. in T.C. Please see the Out 'n About calendar elsewhere in this newsletter for times and specific activities. (issue 4)

TRAVERSE CITY FRONTRUNNERS If you are interested in running, call Paul or Jim at 271-4510 and leave your name, number, and that you are interested in Frontrunners. We will return your call with information on where to meet. All ages and abilities are welcome. (issue 4)

WELLNESS NETWORKS SUPPORT GROUP is for people with HIV or AIDS and they welcome you to attend. Please drop in Monday evenings from 6:00 to 7:30 pm at the Grace Episcopal Church library at 341 Washington in Traverse City. Every fourth Monday of the month the Significant-Other Support Group will be meeting at 3301 Veterans Drive, Suite 221, just north of S. Airport Road. For further information, please call 933-0279. (issue 3)

THE PETOSKEY GROUP: A social group for lesbian, gay and bi-sexual persons is meeting weekly in Petoskey. The group meets at 7 p.m. Thursdays at the Park Garden Cafe on Lake Street. For information please contact Tim at 348-8151 or Zalmon at 348-5079. (issue 24)

NORTHERN MICHIGAN WOMYN'S CHOIR is always looking for new voices. To obtain more information or for a performance schedule, please contact Deb at 275-5924. (issue 4)

H.A.N.D.S is an HIV/AIDS Network located in Petoskey. They are currently seeking volunteers in the northern lower peninsula and eastern upper peninsula of Michigan. HANDS is a non-profit organization that has committed itself to helping and supporting the needs of HIV infected persons. They offer a number of services, including support groups, education, public awareness, and one-on-one friendship support. Volunteers are urgently needed in the Alpena, Gaylord, and Rogers City areas. If you would be interested in the program, please call 616-526-9213. (issue 4)

GAY ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: Meetings for gays and lesbians are held each Saturday at 11:00 am and have been moved to a new location at Grace Episcopal Church, corner Washington and Boardman Streets in TC. For further info, call John at 922-0746 or Tom at 947-4647. (issue 4)

FRIENDS LIKE US: A social group in north east lower Michigan for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. Meets monthly. For info, please contact Jeff @ 517-354-7702, or write to him at POB 391, Alpena, MI 49707. (issue 4)

FRIENDS NORTH BIKE TOUR July 26-28 Sleeping Bear National Park

Join us for a weekend of camping, biking and socializing with gays and lesbians in a beautiful, duneside campground. The cost is \$70.00 (or \$50.00 if received by June 1), and includes the camping, Saturday night's catered dinner, and a great tee shirt—custom designed for the event.

All proceeds will go to support this newsletter and other Friends North events.

Call Jeff at 616-271-3042 or

Gretchen at 616-943-9819 for an information packet.

SHARED LETTERS:

Mr. Michael G. Gardreau
Anti-Violence Project Coordinator
Triangle Foundation
19641 West Seven Mile Road
Detroit, MI 48219-2712

Dear Michael;

I have been asked to respond to your request for information from Mr. Kessler regarding the university's efforts to prevent anti-gay/lesbian violence on the Central Michigan University campus. As my office has been directly involved in these efforts it is appropriate for me to provide this information.

You and I have talked a number of times about the need for greater education of CMU students on matters related to gay, lesbian and bi-sexual matters. One of the topics which is of concern to us is violence directed at gays, lesbians and bi-sexuals as we are troubled by violence which is directed toward any CMU student.

We currently are directing our efforts in two areas. The first is educational programs in the residence halls and among students who are employed on campus. The second is the production of a brochure which will be distributed widely throughout the university community. We have received permission to take information from the enclosed brochure which was developed at Texas A&M University. Although this brochure does not deal directly with violence it does communicate a clear message about bias-related conduct, harassment and discrimination. We believe these two actions are moving us in the right direction with regard to addressing this issue.

Michael, please feel free to communicate with me directly regarding the information I have provided and/or suggestions you have for additional efforts.

Sincerely,
Bruce Roscoe, Ph.D.
Dean of Students
Central Michigan University

SHARED LETTERS continued next page

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- spiritual crisis

Equality Encouraged

Dear Editor:

As reported in a March 15 article on the recommendation by the Traverse City Human Rights Commission to the City Commission to amend the city's equal opportunity employment policy to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, City Commissioner Phill Orth said that as a representative of a public body, he could not condone homosexuality, a lifestyle he disagrees with for personal, moral and religious reasons. He said, "I don't want to do anything that encourages it or legitimizes it as an accepted lifestyle," but that he would not take action to condemn it.

The Human Rights Commission is not asking anyone to "encourage" a lifestyle. Extending rights to all city workers, whatever their sexual orientation, simply protects them from being fired or denied being hired or promoted on a basis that has nothing to do with the ability to do a job. The right to employment and earning an income is fundamental and should not be denied because of sexual orientation.

If Mr. Orth truly will not take action to condemn homosexuality, he will not vote against this change in policy. As it stands now, there is no such protection on the state or federal level, and no legal recourse guaranteed to someone who is discriminated against because of sexual orientation. Opposing this amendment would act to condemn homosexuality by not standing up against discrimination. It is, in itself, discrimination by default.

I ask not that Mr. Orth change his personal beliefs, but only that he support protection for people who work for the city that he represents. The same protection he is granted, and should be, for his religious beliefs.

James Poole
Suttons Bay

Dear Editor:

I do not believe that the government of the State of Michigan should be meddling in the employee benefit program at the University of Michigan and Wayne State University. A dear friend of mine is one of many gay or lesbian employees at the University of Michigan. These universities employ many gay or lesbian people for good solid business reasons. They are conscientious employees and are of great value to the University and their contributions benefit each member of our society. In other words, the Universities consider them a sound investment.

Many gay or lesbian employees occupy management posts and are responsible for the fine programs and advanced research that the University of Michigan and Wayne State University provides, including their world renown medical schools. If the statistics in the *Detroit News* are correct, the cost for partnership benefits amounts to a mere \$4.50 a day (a mere .054% of the employee benefits budget). By any standard of measurement, this is an excellent investment in order to retain the valuable services of the 110 employees who are currently receiving partnership benefits.

As a Traverse City resident and a Michigan taxpayer, I am displeased that George McManus is wasting his time, and our money on this non-issue.

Catherine Thompson
and M'Lynn Hartwell
Traverse City

Caller: Well... I didn't say that...

Host: And when Deuteronomy prescribes death for nonvirgin brides shortly before it claims no homosexual shall be a son of Israel, you agree with both those moral laws?

Caller: Well, of course not...

Host: So you do pick and choose which parts of the Bible to believe.

Since fundamentalists are rarely confronted with these and other troubling Biblical passages, most sincerely think they believe every word of the Bible.

When has Jerry Falwell called for the stoning of Ronald and Nancy Reagan, Pete and Gayle Wilson and everyone else who has remarried after divorce?

When has the Christian Coalition ever organized to ban women from teaching positions and from elected office?

No, it's selective prejudice and old-fashioned fear of the unknown that motivates fundamentalists to target gays and lesbians. Biblical principle has nothing to do with it.

Take away the phony claim to a literal view of the Bible, and the religious argument against homosexuality falls like a house of cards. (John Tally is a San Francisco attorney. This column appeared first in the SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER, April 11th)

GOVERNMENT'S PLAN FOR ME

By Chris Crain

Turning 30 when you're single is never easy. As the middle kid of a loving family, I always imagined that by now I'd be married with children, secure in my job, spending Saturdays painting our picket fence.

Like many of my friends, I'm determined to find a balance between a career and a family. As I take stock, I've welcomed advice from family and friends and a very special religious counselor, always mindful that whatever decisions I make, I must accept responsibility for my life.

If only I could. Unfortunately when you're turning 30 in Georgia and you happen to be gay or lesbian, there's also input about life decisions from the government—and it doesn't come in the form of advice. It comes in the form of laws and judicial decrees.

Government continued next page

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Mark Lizenby

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RESOURCES

STATE AND NATIONAL HOTLINES

Department of Justice Hotline (for reporting
Hate Crimes against gays and lesbians) 800-347-HATE
Child Abuse Hotline 800-392-8222
Michigan Wellness Networks 800-872-AIDS
Gay/Lesbian National Youth Hotline 800-347-TEEN

STATEWIDE SERVICES SOCIAL / POLITICAL / MEDIA

The Network: Lesbian and Gay Community Network of W. Michigan
909 Cherry St. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506 616-458-3511
Lavender Morning
P.O. Box 729, Kalamazoo, MI 49005 616-685-6061
Kalamazoo Resource Center
P.O. Box 1532, Kalamazoo, MI 49005 616-345-7878
Affirmations Lesbian/Gay Community Center
Suite 110, 195 W. Nine Mile Rd.
Ferndale, MI 48220 313-398-GAYS
<http://www.webspace.com/~tcc/affirmations/index.htm>
Lansing Association of Human Rights
P.O. Box 18062, Lansing, MI 48826 517-332-3200
Capital Men's Club
P.O. Box 18062, Lansing, MI 48902 (Kelly Stevens) 517-482-0860
Ambitious Amazons/Lesbian Connection
P.O. Box 811, East Lansing, MI 48826 517-371-5257
Lesbian Alliance
P.O. Box 6423, East Lansing, MI 48826 517-394-1454
Triangle Foundation (Lesbian/Gay Foundation of Michigan)
19641 W. Seven Mile Rd., Detroit 48219 313-537-3323
..... Fax: 313-537-3379
email trijeffm@aol.com
PRIDE-Flint: P.O. Box 7014, Flint, MI 48507 313-238-9854
Aurora Newsletter: (reaching out to gays, lesbians, bisexuals in the UP &
Canada) POB 626, Marquette, MI 49855
Team Great Lakes
195 W. Nine Mile Rd., Suite 106, Ferndale, MI 48220 .. 810-553-3586

NATIONAL SERVICE / SOCIAL / POLITICAL

P-FLAG: Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
1012 14th St. NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20005 202-638-4200
GLAAD: Gay/Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
80 Varick St., #3E, New York, NY 10013 212-807-1700
..... Fax: 212-807-1806
email glaadnatl@aol.com
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 202-332-6483
2320 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009 Fax: 202-332-0207
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012 212-995-8585
ACLU Lesbian/Gay Rights Project
1370 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94130 415-621-0674
HRC: Human Rights Campaign (National Coming Out Day)
1012 14th St. NS #607, Washington, DC 20005 202-628-4160
..... Fax: 202-347-5323
email www@hrcusa.org
Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, Political Action Committee
1012 14th St. NW #707, Washington, DC 20005 202-842-7679

LOCAL SPIRITUAL:

The Reverend Emmy Lou Belcher
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Grand Traverse
6726 Center Rd., Traverse City—Home: 938-9078 ... Office: 947-3117
Rev. Nancy Hayward, Circle of the Sacred Earth 616-223-7999

LOCAL COUNSELING:

Third Level Crisis Intervention, 902 W. Front St. 616-922-4800
..... and 800-442-7315
Women's Resource Center 616-941-1210
Rodger Landvoy, PHD 616-929-1711
Susan Breuer PHD (Frankfort / Traverse City) 616-352-4261
Margo Million, ACSW 616-947-0511
David Blisk (Maple City) 616-228-5105
Joanna T. Lauber, MA, OTR, CHt 616-947-8842
Barbara Jones Smith, PHD 616-947-1444
Elizabeth Most, MSW, ACSW (Petoskey) 616-348-2415
William D. Gould, MA (Gladwin) 517-426-2351
David Rushlow, ACSW, Munson Medical Center 616-935-6385
Bay Area Counseling (Petoskey/Harbor Springs)
Margalo Bley, MSW, ACSW 616-348-3616
Daniel C. Doran, PHD, CSW 906-495-5061
Lois Martindale, Ph.D., Benzonia 616-882-5888
CDRS (a free substance abuse referral agency)
808-A S. Garfield, Traverse City 929-1315 or 800-686-0749

LOCAL SERVICE / SOCIAL / POLITICAL

Friends North (information line) 616-946-1804
Windfire Gay & Lesbian Youth Support Group—
Call Third Level for location & time 616-922-4800
or 800-442-7315
Side Traxx Nite Club, 520 Franklin St. off of 8th St. 616-935-1666
Traverse City Human Rights Commission, 400 Boardman . 616-922-4700
Gay Alcoholics Anonymous,
Grace Church, Washington at Boardman, TC John 616-922-0746
P-FLAG, Traverse City
POB 1705, Acme, MI 49610 Cindy 616-271-5045
GLSTN (Gay/Lesbian/Straight Teachers Network) 616-943-8800
NOW (National Organization for Women) Gail Trill 616-938-1333

LOCAL HIV/AIDS HEALTH COUNSELING:

Wellness Networks, Grand Traverse,
P.O. Box 1632, Traverse City, MI 49685 616-947-1110
Wellness HIV Support Group and
Family and Significant Other Support Group 616-947-1110
Grand Traverse County Health Department 616-922-4831
(anonymous HIV Testing Center)
Mary Dillinger, RN, Clinical Nurse Specialist 616-935-8140
Munson Medical Center HIV Clinic 1-800-847-8474
Community Health Clinic 616-929-4448
(anonymous counseling/testing; same-day results no fee)
H.A.N.D.S. (HIV/AIDS Support: Petoskey) 1-800-248-6777

HERE ARE SOME PHONE NUMBERS EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE: The White House (202) 456-1111; the U.S. Capital (202) 224-3121;
and some phone numbers for Northwest Michigan Residents—Carl Levin (202) 224-6221 or in TC (616) 947-9569;
Spencer Abraham (202) 224-4822 or in Grand Rapids (616) 456-2592; Bart Stupak (202) 225-4735 or in TC 929-4711

The
Grand Traverse County Democratic Party
Invites you to attend the annual Truman Day Dinner

SATURDAY

May 18th, 1996

Social Hour 6 p.m. • Dinner 7 p.m.

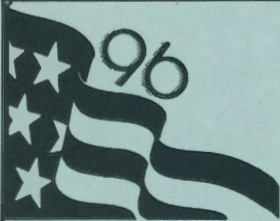
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I / We would love to attend the Dinner!
Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ dinner tickets.

- I'd like to sponsor a table (includes 2 tickets) \$100.00
- I'd like a Full page ad in the program book \$50.00
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- I'd like a 1/4 page ad in the program book \$15.00
- I'd like to help with a donation of _____

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Joann Ewing at 947-1965 or
Gerry Greene at 947-7450 or
Mark Jensen at 929-3610

Enclose a Business Card or
Ad Copy if placing an ad in
the program book

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please fill out and return this form to Joann Ewing,
120 S. Elmwood, Traverse City, MI 49684
(make checks payable to
"Grand Traverse Democratic Party")

It's a little surreal. I woke up one morning wondering whether my two-year relationship was ready for marriage and all of its commitments. Then I learned that Georgia's General Assembly had already made the decision for me. Apparently, we can't get married because it would cheapen the institution for everyone else, tear at the very fabric of American life, and even threaten the survival of our civilization.

Since my government has decided that it's best if I don't get married, maybe I can manage a committed relationship with my partner making do without the "social glue" of marriage.

Not according to the Supreme Court of Georgia, which ruled recently that my partner and I could be arrested for being intimate in the privacy of our own home, even though Attorney General Mike Bowers has acknowledged that enforcing the same law against married couples would be an unconstitutional invasion of their privacy.

Obviously, my government isn't keen on my having much of a personal life. I supposed I could bury myself in my career. At least my job performance has nothing to do with my sexual orientation.

But the same Mike Bowers fired a top-notch lawyer named Robin Shahar in 1990 simply because she and her partner, who is a woman, exchanged vows in a private wedding ceremony in South Carolina. A panel of federal appeals judges ruled that Shahar's rights had been violated, but this month, that opinion was thrown out. The entire appeals court will rehear the case, and it will likely conclude that Bowers was within his governmental authority in firing Shahar.

Turning 30 in Georgia is starting to look pretty bleak. Until I realized I'm gay. I thought these important decisions were mine to make. But now the government has assumed that responsibility for me.

Well, if the state can decide how I'm not to live my life, the least it can do is give me some hint as to how I'm supposed to live. I if can't get married, and if a long-term relationship violates laws and threatens my job security, what kind of life does my government want for me?

I sure hope the answer isn't for me to "straighten up," find the right woman and start a real family. Nothing would degrade the institutions of marriage and family more than encouraging gay men into loveless sham marriages with unwitting women. But I'm sure my government knows best.

(Chris Crain is an Atlanta attorney.)

COMBATTING HOMOPHOBIC RADIO

-by Barry Wick (facesd@aol.com)

After years of working in radio-I am a certified radio marketing consultant-the only way to deal with homophobic radio hosts is through their sponsors. Don't bother going to the radio station. Don't bother calling. The following suggestions are guaranteed to piss off any radio station manager and homophobic talk show hosts. It must be followed to the letter in order to get the message across. Remember, don't negotiate away your rights as a listener and as a member of the public who owns the airwaves. Radio station executives will likely kiss your butt after about six months of intense scrutiny. Stand firm.

Here are my 7 Steps to Pissing Off any Radio Station Executive and Getting Rid of Homophobic Comments on Radio.

First, record every single program on the station that features these two homophobes. This could be costly in cassettes...but it is well worth the effort... 20 or 30 friends can make this happen easily.

Second, gather your friends together to take down the name of every sponsor of the program.

Third, then go to the radio station and ask to see the public files to see if the names of those sponsors are listed in letters, i.e. good comments, anything. You have a right to examine the public files of any radio station and radio stations just love to put their good letters in their public files. You'll be looking for addresses, etc. However, the station managers, sales people, and secretaries are there to keep you away from the sponsors, other than to buy the sponsors product.

Fourth, make copies of offending statements on cassette and

Fifth, send them to the sponsors with a complaint letter about the exact time, day, etc. Approximate times are okay, dates are important, and especially make note of the closest sponsor to the offending statements.

Remind sponsors that the offending announcer/talk show host has just told potentially as many as 10 per cent of the listeners, their friends and their families that offensive language and statements was adjacent to their commercial. You'll get their attention-I can assure you. Phone calls, etc, don't do any good. Letters with transcripts and copies of cassettes do get results. Trust me on this one.

Sixth, Also send copies to the FCC and to the offending radio station, making certain that your cassette tape and your letter get put into the radio station's public file. And check a month later to be certain that your letter and your cassette is in the station's public file. It is most likely a finable offense to tamper with the public file. Make sure the cassette is intact. Take your own cassette recorder to be certain someone at the station hasn't erased it. Ask the radio station and FCC when the FCC will review the public file. Make sure the FCC knows there is a copy of the tape in the station's public file.

Seven, make certain all your friends write letters to the Complaints Division of the FCC in Washington and make sure copies of those letters get into the station's public file as well. Then, sit back and watch how many times you get your butts kissed. Count. You might enjoy it.

(Altered slightly from the original for continuity and content-Editor)

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PLANNED GIVING

by Nan P. Bailey, MBA, CFP

In deciding who to name as the beneficiary of your retirement plan, like most people, you probably have chosen your partner or a close relative. Chances are, you assume this person will be entitled to receive the full market value of your account, be it a 401(k), IRA, or pension plan. Unfortunately, your beneficiary might not receive as much as you think.

All funds in a qualified retirement plan left to an individual beneficiary will be subject to two separate taxes before the net amount of the distribution can be calculated. First, the death benefits distribution is subject to income taxes which, on the federal level alone, can run as high as 39.6%. Combine this with state and local taxes, and your beneficiary could receive as little as 50% of the actual value of your investment.

In addition, the death benefits distribution is also subject to estate taxes. For a taxable estate valued at over \$600,000, (including the death benefit of any life insurance owned by the deceased) the federal estate tax rate starts at 37% and gradually increases to 55%.

While each tax by itself can substantially reduce the amount of the bequest to your beneficiary, these taxes combined can potentially decrease the distribution by as much as 76%!

There are other ways to bequeath the principal in your retirement account, so that every dollar of what you give is actually received. For example, leaving your retirement account to a charitable organization will have the effect of avoiding *both the income and estate taxes*. A \$100,000 retirement account (401(k) or IRA) left to your partner for lump sum distribution could result in he or she receiving as little as \$24,000 after all the taxes are paid. However, the same \$100,000 retirement account left to a charitable organization would result in the charity receiving the full \$100,000.

With this in mind, there may be more appropriate assets to leave to your heirs than your retirement account. To review how this information applies to your financial situation and to make the most of your investments, you should consult with your professional financial advisor. For further information, you also may contact Development Director Bill Peters at LLDEF office in New York.



kd lang COMING TO TC!

If you've always wanted to see her in concert, here's your chance to do it without having to drive to Chicago or Detroit. Yes, Interlochen will be hosting kd on Wednesday, August 7, 8:00 pm, outside, at Kresge Auditorium. Tickets range from about \$25.00 and up, and can be secured through the box office at Interlochen Center for the Arts. Call 616-276-6230 for reservations.

FRIENDS NORTH, INC., P.O. BOX 562, TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49685-0562

YES, I want to be a supporting member of the Friends North Organization.

Single: \$15.00 Couple: \$25.00 (includes one-year newsletter subscription)

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and I would like to see this used for: Newsletter Where needed Community Needs

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NON-COMMERCIAL TV & RADIO TUNE INTO LESBIAN AND GAY COMMUNITIES

by Maureen Bagues, Freelance/San Francisco

OK, so they had a lesbian wedding on "Friends" and everywhere you look on commercial TV, somebody is coming out. Primetime national news programs are running series with titles like "Gay in American," and many public radio news programs regularly run news from gay communities. Flavor du jour, or are we really becoming a presence to reckon with? Only time will tell.

If you really want to know what is going on in the lives of average gays and lesbians, commercial TV and radio aren't the best paces to turn. Instead, check out some of the spunky, spirited and enlightening gay-produced syndicated broadcast TV shows, plus the nationally syndicated radio program "This Way Out."

Below is a list of some of the most familiar entities, though chances are good that you can catch some other offerings on public-access cable TV.

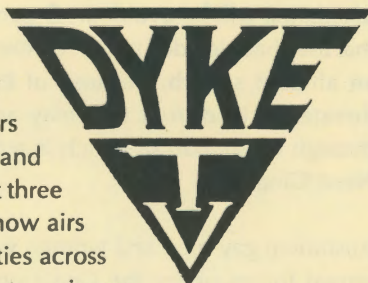
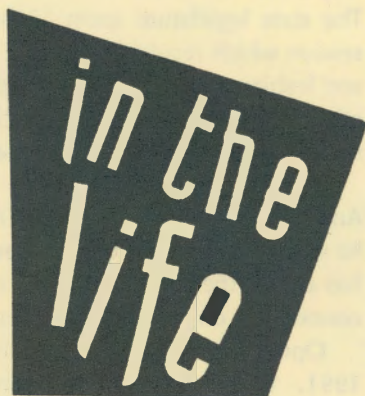
In the Life:

Probably the best-known of the bunch, "In the Life" is an hour-long bimonthly newsmagazine created by New York-based John Scagliotti that airs on 70 PBS stations across the country. Now celebrating its fourth season, the show began as a 30-minute monthly variety show, according to Charles Ignacio, co-executive producer. Facing criticism that its material was "too inside," producers adapted the format to target a wider audience. The show now covers cultural events and news with an eye toward putting them into historical context. "ITL" just won a regional GLAAD award for a recent segment on homosexuality and the Catholic Church, and has gotten positive notices in such mainstream publications as USA Today, TV Guide and the New York Times.

For information: Call "In the Life," (212) 255-6012.

Dyke TV

A weekly half-hour newsmagazine, DYKE TV is produced by lesbians, for lesbians. Founded by executive producers Linda Chapman, Mary Patierno and Ana Marie Simo, it made its debut three years ago in New York City and now airs on public-access stations in 61 cities across the country. Funded by grants, viewer donations and the sale of DYKE TV memorabilia, the non-profit group puts positive images of dykes on the air in such segments as "Dyke



Dish" (gossip), "From the Archives," (lesbian herstory), "Eyewitness" (in-depth look at lesbian issues) "Jocklife" (athletes) and "I Was a Lesbian Child," (photos, home movies and remembrances of tomboy childhoods.)

For information: Dyke TV, P.O. Box 55, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012. (212) 343-9335.

This Way Out

Creator Greg Gordon calls "This Way Out" the "best-kept queer media secret." The weekly syndicated radio program has been on the air since April 1988 and is available to U.S. public radio stations via satellite. Currently, 85 stations in the US and Canada carry it. The program has won awards from such groups as the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, GLAAD and P-FLAG. Gordon admits that he operates on a shoestring budget, but every time he thinks of throwing in the towel, he gets a letter from "some 16-year-old kid" struggling with his sexuality who heard and appreciated the program, which mixes entertainment, news and advocacy.

To contact "TWO" write: P.O. Box 38327, Los Angeles, CA 90038-0327.

"This Way Out" airs in TC on WNMC, 90.9 at 7:30 pm every Sunday.

Network Q:

Begun three years ago, Atlanta-based Network Q is a weekly half-hour program available to public TV stations via satellite. Network Q travels all over the country, showing gay and lesbian life in its many varieties—the first lesbian sergeant on the Chicago Police force, a gay youth group in Salt Lake City, the Ballot 9 election in Oregon. "We like to showcase diversity away from the (gay) meccas, taking care of what needs to be taken care of," said executive producer David Surber. A new batch of programs is now being produced, and will be released in April. Network Q operates under the auspices of the non-profit Atlanta-based South-eastern Arts Media and Education Project, and receives funding from individual donors, plus major corporate sponsors like Tanqueray and Hilton Hotels.

For information: call (800) 368-0638

Gay Cable Network:

Originally started by Lou Maletta in 1982 as a program to review the latest X-rated male films, GCN has evolved into a vital entity that was one of the first media outlets to cover the AIDS crises. It continues to cover politics, arts and gay culture, producing six weekly half-hour shows (featuring various aspects of mostly New York gay/lesbian life, including politics, entertainment, the S&M community and gay male films) aired on leased-access and public-access stations in New York. A seventh program of national interest, "Gay America," an hour-long newsmagazine, airs weekly in eight US cities, including Los Angeles, Atlanta, Boston and New York.

For information: Gay Cable Network, (212) 275-8850



Tompkins: At this moment, I can't say that I have a position. We've had so little information. All I've seen is a letter from Pam Haley and Carol Anderson talking about the possible amendment. I'm hoping we will get more legal background. I like to know everything I can.

Boynton: Not Yet.

Weiss: No. (Did not want to comment, but said that he would have some comments to make at the meeting)

Orth: (Stated that he had already gone on record opposing amendment. The Record-Eagle reported on March 15 that Orth said he could not condone homosexuality, a lifestyle that he disagrees with for personal, moral and religious reasons, and that he did not want to do anything that encourages it or legitimizes it as an acceptable lifestyle. He also said he would not take action to condemn it.

Hardy: (Asked that he not be quoted directly, but stated that he did not know at this point, and that he was going to wait until he had all the facts in front of him.)

2. Do you feel that it should be possible for city employees to be fired for being homosexual?

Orth: No. I don't believe that that alone is a basis for terminating someone's employment.

Tompkins: Absolutely not.

3. How do you plan to address the fear of discrimination that city employees who are homosexual face in the workplace?

Orth: I'm not aware of anyone that has filed a complaint or grievance against the city of Traverse City directly or indirectly that they have been discriminated against, based on their sexual orientation. The city manager (Richard Lewis) indicated that he would not and has not discriminated based on sexual orientation.

Tompkins: I'm not sure that having a policy in and of itself is going to guarantee that people will or won't discriminate. I am not aware of discrimination going on.

Boynton: I'd have to hear more about that fear to determine, but I haven't heard anyone complain yet.

Three of the commissioners have expressed opposition and only one has voiced support. The amendment has little chance if one of the remaining three votes against the change or abstains from voting. A strong presence of supporters at the meeting is important to show the commission that this issue is of importance to our community.

Some thoughts from Jim

Jim Carruthers did significant legwork and distributed many form letters to local businesses and individuals who replied to the City Commission. Next time you see Jim, thank him for all his work.

It seems that there is little awareness of the fear that we face as lesbians/gay men. Our commissioners need to realize that there is prejudice in our community, which can easily lead to discrimination. Recent letters to the editor in the Record-Eagle have quoted verses from the Bible that call homosexuality worthy of death and have made threats for greater violence in the future. How would the individuals who wrote these letters treat us as our employers? It is such threats that keep so many of us closeted in fear. An anti-

discrimination policy gives us a safer, more relaxed and healthier environment in which to work.

Some of the commissioners have stated that they do not feel it is right to fire someone for being gay. I don't know how anyone could make this statement and not support the amendment. You either support the right for someone to obtain/maintain employment regardless of their sexual orientation, or you support the right for someone to deny them employment. This policy is not about legitimizing homosexuality. There is no punishment through this amendment for someone who does not accept homosexuality. It is solely about a person's rights. We need to be assured of our most basic right, that which enables us to earn an income.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gay clubs have been outlawed in public schools by the state of Utah. The state legislature spent 12 hours in a gay-bashing, emotional session which resulted in forcing school boards to ban clubs for gay and lesbian students and other select organizations, while allowing other groups access to school facilities. The governor is expected to sign the bill into law. A legal challenge is sure to follow.

Andrew Sullivan, the editor of The New Republic, announced that he would step down from his post at the end of May. Sullivan, who has edited the magazine since mid 1991, said that he wanted to concentrate on writing, and will continue to write for the magazine.

Openly gay, Sullivan was only 28 when he was named editor in 1991. Conservative, a practicing Catholic, and a doctorate from Harvard in political science, he devoted more attention to popular culture and gay issues, while continuing to cover American politics and economics. Sullivan argued in favor of gay marriage and against the Catholic Church's doctrine on homosexuality.

Fodor's has become the first major publishing company to print a gay travel guide. Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA (\$19.50) will be in stores on May 1. It offers detailed, witty commentary on 29 destinations.

The Olympic Torch Relay will travel 15,000 miles across the US right before the start of the Olympics. However, Cobb County, just outside of Atlanta, will be avoided. Organizers of the Olympic Games said that they had decided not to run the torch relay through Cobb County, an affluent suburb, because of its anti-gay stance. Activists had threatened to disrupt the relay across much of the US if it came through Cobb, part of which is represented in Congress by Speaker Newt Gingrich.

Australian gay men and women would be allowed to remain in the armed forces under the Coalition Government. The Minister for Defense, Ian McLachlan, said, "As long as these activities don't interfere with the operation of the defense forces, then they'll be permitted."

*"What's openly gay?
I mean, people know.
They just know.*

*But you don't see me doing gay parades.
Why put so much emphasis on that when
it has nothing to do with skating?...
What does that have to do
with my triple axel?"*

*—U.S. figure-skating champion Rudy Galindo
as quoted in Washington Post reporter Christine
Brennan's new book "Inside Edge."*

**"You don't have to see God as
straight, white and a man."**



"I hadn't been going to church for five years, because I couldn't believe in anything. I wanted something I could relate to as a woman. A lesbian woman."

"It was the same for both of us. Walking into a Unitarian Universalist service and feeling immediately at home. We felt welcome. We didn't have to be different people—we could be ourselves."

"We could be together... a couple. And no one was going to kick us out."

"It goes way, way beyond tolerance. Unitarian Universalists encourage diversity. And acceptance."

"I mean, not everyone is Ozzie and Harriet, you know?"

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

for the location of a congregation near you, call:

1-800-464-0336

PFLAG GOES TO WASHINGTON: YOUNG ROBB MAKES THE NEWS

-Staff Writer

The byline read: "10-Year-Old Lobbyist-Young brother of gay man helps lobby for fair treatment." While in Washington with his parents, Dean and Cindy, fifth-grader Matthew Robb was interviewed by Polly Elliott for the Ottaway News Service, and the story of why the Robbs went to Washington spread across the country.

Ms. Elliott writes: Matthew Robb doesn't much care that his older brother is homosexual, but he knows not everyone is so nonchalant on the subject. "I wouldn't be in Washington if people didn't have a problem with it," explained Matt. "I love my brother. (That he's gay) doesn't make my brother any different."

This is the message family members hope to have driven home on Capitol Hill with their visit in March. National PFLAG organized this lobbying effort, attended by hundreds from around the country, to support the passage of ENDA, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. The passage of this bill would protect gays and lesbians from discrimination in the workplace, as well as preventing employers from making hiring or firing decisions based on real, or perceived, sexual orientation.

Cindy Robb told the reporter that neither her family nor her son had endured much discrimination but that she was mindful of the struggles faced by others. During the interview she stated, "Prejudice affects me whether it is personally directed at me or not."

Cindy Robb wrote of her trip in the April issue of the Traverse City PFLAG newsletter: "It was exciting to arrive at the hotel and find a welcome table with a "scroll" announcing our personal message to the White House. We all met early in the morning at the White House offices and went to a reception hosted by Hillary Clinton's personal secretary. There were many spokespersons, including Mitzi Henderson, PFLAG national president. We went to Rep. John Dingell's office as well as meeting with Rep. Bart Stupak, Senator Carl Levin, and an aide from Senator Abraham's office. Our reception was warm everywhere we went and we all felt we were really listened to."

Later that evening, the planned candlelight vigil was rained out, and instead took place in a local church.

The Robbs returned from their trip ready for more battles as well as celebrations. In fact, they are hosting the first annual Traverse City Gay/Lesbian Pride Celebration at the family farm just West of Suttons Bay. The Robbs have long been known for supporting gay rights issues and those of other discriminated minorities.

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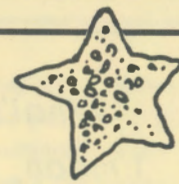
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300 TEACHERS MEET IN CHICAGO

M'Lynn Hartwell

Marge Piercy writes in The Low Road:

"...What can they do to you? They can scrawl "DIKE" [sic] on your notebook when you didn't even think you were gay. They can whisper 'faggot' behind your back as you walk down the hall. They can spread vicious rumors, refuse to sit by you in class, kick you out of your house. They can disown you. They can beat you up. They can rape you. They can ignore you exist."

"As we all know, this is too-often the case for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. Hi, my name is Phoebe Hanshew. I am seventeen years old. I live in Bloomington, Indiana with my mother, brother and stepfather. I am a senior at Bloomington High School South."

As I sat at the center table during our luncheon mesmerized by the strength of character of this articulate young woman, Ms. Hanshew's words agonizingly consumed me with memories of what I once felt like as a queer student, alone and afraid.

Phoebe Hanshew and the thousands of wonderful young men and women like her are the reason I have chosen to be an active GLSTN member. They are why I got out my credit card and attended the Midwest Regional GLSTN Conference held in Chicago this March.

Phoebe went on to describe her trials and tribulations, sometimes with humor, often with tears and frustration, in order to establish a gay/straight student alliance in her high school. She continued, "But two people fighting back to back can cut through a mob, a snake-dancing file can break a cordon, an army can meet an army. Two people can keep each other sane, can give support, conviction, love, massage, hope, sex. Three people are a delegation, a committee, a wedge. With four you can play bridge and start an organization. With six you can rent a whole house, eat pie for dinner with no seconds, and hold a fundraising party."

A successful gay/straight alliance known as PROUD was born from this remarkable young woman's unrelenting energy. She states, "Our posters get torn down - but we have posters! Our announcements aren't read by all the teachers - but we have announcements." Phoebe goes on to say, "knowing that GLSTN exists is an inspiration to me. I'm sure all of you know how important it is to queer youth to feel supported by their teachers, gay and straight!"

During the kickoff luncheon, Chicago Alderman Gene Schuler delivered a welcoming resolution from the Chicago City Council and signed by Mayor Richard M. Daley that read in part, "We all know

schools are one of the last bastions of institutionalized homophobia and I would like to applaud all of you as true pioneers." Kevin Jennings, the Executive Director of GLSTN followed Schuler to the speaker's platform and said, "We will not retreat. We will be in every town in America and we will make sure that the next generation of gay and lesbian youth will not be picked on and beat up because we will not stand for it." The crowd rose to their feet in thunderous applause.

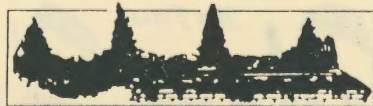
More than 300 people from the Midwest attended speeches and workshops addressing safe schools, homophobia, HIV/AIDS education, suicide prevention, curriculum development, youth support groups, gay-straight alliances, and responding to anti-gay rhetoric. Most of the conference attendees were teachers, but administrators, counselors, social workers and students were plentiful.

Jamie Nabozny, was the recipient of this years GLSTN Pathfinder Award. He called upon all of the teachers present to "create a safe space" for gay and lesbian students. Nabozny's lawsuit against the Ashland Wisconsin school district is currently before a federal appeals court.

Jamie shared his story openly: The name-calling started when he was in the seventh grade when he was just beginning to understand that he was gay and what that meant to him. Classmates called him "sissy" and "queer" and "faggot." Their words hurt, he said, but he always knew "there was nothing wrong with being gay." Jamie pretty much stayed to himself and brought home good grades, making his parents proud because he wanted to do what they had not - graduate from high school. In the next few years vicious words turned into brutality. Once, he said, a group of boys surrounded him and performed a mock rape; another time they shoved him into a urinal and urinated on him as they jeered. School officials and teachers looked the other way - his tormentors were never disciplined. His journey through high school became a daily battle for survival. He sued the school system for failing to protect him.

Phoebe Hanshew's speech ended, as it had started, with the words of Marge Piercy, "A dozen make a demonstration; A hundred fill a hall; A thousand have solidarity and your own newsletter; ten thousand, power and your own paper; a hundred thousand, your own media; ten million your own country. It goes on one at a time, it starts when you care to act; it starts when you do it again after they said no; it starts when you say WE and know who you mean, and each day you mean one more."

The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teachers Network has over thirty chapters, and a membership of over three thousand teachers, parents, and concerned citizens.



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GLAAD NEWS

GAY & LESBIAN ALLIANCE AGAINST DEFAMATION, INC.

Big PR Blunders of '95

Two of the top ten "1995 Annual PR Blunders List" centered around gay/lesbian issues. The list is generated each year by Fineman Associates Public Relations in San Francisco. Number 7 was the White House situation where security guards donned rubber gloves when greeting elected gay officials visiting with President Clinton. The guards were obvious in their fear of AIDS. President Clinton had to apologize on their behalf.

Number 10 on the list was the Ben Wright fiasco. He is the golf commentator (recently fired by CBS) who made the homophobic and misogynistic statements earlier this year in connection with the LPGA Championship. Initially, Wright denied making the comments. GLAAD spearheaded a campaign that resulted in enormous pressure for CBS to fire Wright, which it did in January 1996. (*Knight-Ridder*)

Commend CBS on their decision. Send comments to: David Kenin Sport President, CBS • 51 West 52nd Street, 25th floor • New York, NY 10019

No Apologies for APA's Pathologizing Lesbian and Gay Youth

Although in 1974 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed "homosexuality" from its list of mental illnesses, hundreds of g/l/b/t youth each year are sent to psychiatric institutions and/or subjected to "treatment" for "Gender Identity Disorder." The APA stands in opposition to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and the Child Welfare League of America; these organizations listed have refused to pathologize lesbian and gay children and teenagers.

The APA's classification must certainly hinder g/l/b/t youth from seeking health care, when it is known they may be labeled, and subjected to unnecessary, and most likely, harmful "treatment," which could possibly include incarceration. Often, these young people already have to deal with isolation, hostility and rejection from the society around them.

Please send your letters to the APA urging them to cease pathologizing gay and lesbian youth. The APA does not pathologize adults who are members of a sexual minority.

Send to: Dr. Mary Jane England, President • American Psychiatric Association • 1400 K Street NW • Washington, DC 20005, and Dr. Chester W. Schmidt, Chair • Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders • Working Group/APA • Johns Hopkins Bay View Medical Center • 4940 Eastern Avenue, B3 South • Baltimore, MD 21224.
(*International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.*)

Who Ya' Gonna Call? Bigot Busters!

Recently in the State of Washington, a group known as "Bigot Busters" was successful in encouraging voters to decline signing an anti-gay petition. The petition's aim was to put anti-gay initiatives, which would legalize discrimination against gays, lesbians, transgendered and bisexual people, on the ballot. This is the second year in a row that such initiatives have failed to get on the Washington State ballot.

Congratulations to Bigot Busters and the myriad of other groups that opposed this attempt to legislate hate. Let us all commend the fair-minded citizens of Washington State!

Send congratulations to: Bigot Busters • 1202 E. Pike #1110 • Seattle, WA 93122-3934 • 206.767.2457

Texans Lobby for Tough Laws

The Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby (LGRL) of Texas is urging supporters to contact the Texas state government regarding hate crime laws. Language of the current law does not include race, color, disability, religion and national origin. Dianne Hardy-Garcia of Austin, executive director of LGRL, says fifteen people have been murdered in Texas since 1988 because they were gay. She wants to see statutes for hate crimes change to include those which occurred due to the victim's sexual orientation; this would also increase the penalties incurred if the perpetrator chose someone based on their being a member of a sexual minority.

Get involved by requesting specially printed postcards from the LGRL of Texas.

You may call: Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby • 512.474.5475, or Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus • 512.521.1000
(*The Houston Chronicle*)



CRIMES AGAINST GAYS DROP, BUT NOT THE VIOLENCE

Offenses against gays and lesbians increased only slightly in 1995, but that's not the whole story, stated leaders of Detroit's Triangle Foundation.

Such offenses are increasingly more violent, according to the foundation, a gay rights group. In Detroit, 40 percent of the victims were killed or seriously injured, officials said.

Metro Detroit offenses increased from 108 in 1994 to 113 last year (5 percent), a national report shows.

"Look at the context and social environment in which they're occurring," urged Triangle Foundation President Jeffrey Montgomery. He cited:

- Demetrius Robinson, described as a "male hustler," on trial for the July 1995 killing of the Rev. Donald Clark, a Detroit Roman Catholic priest. Triangle said Clark had "a longstanding, hidden relationship" with Robinson.

continued next page

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- Jonathan Schmitz, who soon goes on trial in Oakland County for the March 1995 shotgun slaying of Scott Amedure. The victim professed his "secret crush" on Schmitz when they appeared together on a taping of the Jenny Jones show.
- "Unprecedented" anti-gay election-year political rhetoric that he predicted would lead to increased violence. The previous peak year for anti-gay offenses, the 1992 election year, may "pale by comparison" to 1996, Montgomery said.

Montgomery added that research shows that 70 percent of anti-gay offenses go unreported. Victims "essentially are 'outing' themselves" by making their sexual orientation public, he said.

Detroit statistics came from a report by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. The group's leaders met in Detroit last year and developed uniform criteria for reporting incidents.

Wayne County Prosecutor John O'Hair and Macomb County Prosecutor Carl Marlinga publicly expressed support for revising Michigan's "hate crimes" law into a Bias Crimes Act that would include offenses against gay people.

The state task force that recommended the change, further recommended that offenders serve two additional years for hate-related crimes, rather than the current two years served concurrently with other sentences.

Crimes in which one person hurts another "are horrid to contemplate," Marlinga said. "Relating it to race or sexual orientation," he said, elevates that act of violence to something even more horrid."

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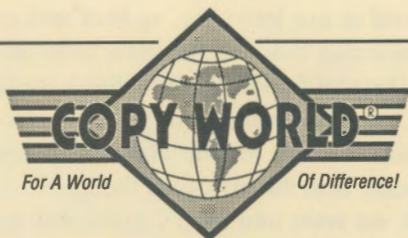
McMANUS CO-SPONSORS ANTI-GAY BILL

Traverse City Sen. George McManus is attempting to push through a bill which would curtail state universities from offering benefits to same-sex partners of its employees. Sponsored by Wm. Schuette, the two senators don't believe that it targets gays. However, Schuette says that "it is consistent with Michigan law that recognizes marriage between two members of the opposite sex. It affirms marriage."

The bill has nothing to do with affirming marriage, but it certainly discriminates against gays. Currently similar gay-exclusion bills are being foisted on many of the states around the country. This is typically by Republicans interested in making a name for themselves at the expense of gays and lesbians. It appears no different here in Traverse City.

Currently there are about 120 State university employees (from the University of Michigan and Wayne State) whose same-sex partners receive health and other employee benefits. The McManus-Schuette bill would penalize those institutions by forcing them to pay back the cost of those benefits to the State.

Your State Senators and Representatives are waiting to hear from their constituents on this mean-spirited bill.



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PROFILE: CINDY ROBB

by John Evans

When her son, Ben, was seven years old, a gay couple, longtime friends of Cindy Robb said, "You know Ben is gay, don't you?" And when she countered "How would you know that?" They said, "You just watch!"

"And that has always stuck with me," Cindy explained. "And I thought - well, you know, he always enjoyed the same things I did and we always had such a great time together and were very, very close but it was because he really held my interest a great deal."

We talked about environmental influences. Cindy is the oldest of five girls in her family, and she was for a while the only married one with a child. This meant that for a several years Ben had four doting aunts. Add to that, the fact that Cindy and Ben's father, Joe Maddy, were divorced when Ben was but four years old, Ben grew up in a woman's world.

"So, I kept thinking, maybe environment, but I'm not going to decide. I'm going to give him the benefit of the doubt. I decided not to say anything. I decided to let it ride until he decided to tell me. But I always thought that he was. And I laugh now and say my biggest tipoff should have been that for his second birthday he wanted a pair of Calvin Klein blue jeans."

Ben is now twenty, a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy and working in Chicago.

Cindy is now president of the local chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Born in Lansing, she moved to Traverse City with the family and graduated from high school here. All but one of her four sisters live and work here also.

Cindy went to college at the University of Dayton and became a respiratory therapist. She worked at Osteopathic Hospital and then Munson for several years.

"I actually worked there until I had Matthew - I worked through my pregnancy and when I had him that was the end of my respiratory therapy career."

Matthew, now an engaging young man of eleven years, is the child of Cindy and Dean Robb, whom she married in 1983 at the farm on which they now live in Leelanau county.

We spent an inordinate amount of time talking about the children—hers, mine, and others—but that comes naturally when parents get together. Finally we got on the subject of PFLAG.

"Ben and I marched in the Stonewall march in New York and we noticed the people (spectators) were so moved by the PFLAG contingent. I really think the tide is turning. I think that things are changing. Kids are coming out a lot younger while they're still at home. There's a lot more support there when kids can come out earlier. They're still in the home - the parents are there for them."

Cindy has been on the road a lot on behalf of PFLAG these past two years.

"Recently, I attended a GLSTN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Teachers Network) conference right before we went out to Washington, in Chicago. There were a lot of youth who spoke at that convention.

I asked Cindy what keeps her going in all this, besides Ben.

"If I'm not doing this just for my own child, why am I involved



or what am I doing? One reason, I think, is when I see a woman coming to a meeting with a 15 year old son and they are lost. And then one of the biggest motivating forces is just the climate in this country. Even though the tide is shifting, Pat Buchanan echoes Adolf Hitler almost verbatim, and people don't see that. He's not going to be elected president this year, but he's not going to go away, and that's a frightening thing."

"And then there is Pat Robertson in everyone's living room every day. And you know, he seems like a real nice grandfatherly type man and very concerned and so wonderful...If I'm just home in the kitchen I'll watch it because I have to know what is going on. Some of his heart-warming little stories get to me - but I'm on to the guy!"

"Robertson is threatening suit to any network who airs PFLAG's 60-second ads. Some of his rhetoric is quoted in them. One is on teen suicide and one is on gay-bashing. They are really powerful ads. We're going to use them on public access. He won't touch public access."

Recently the Robbs joined parents from all over the country in Washington to lobby for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)

"We did get in writing the commitment for Bart Stupak's vote on the ENDA. There's a list a mile long of people who are already co-sponsors of the bill. We met Candace Gingrich - she was working with the Human Rights Campaign. We lobbied Spence Abrahams office."

Just at the end of our interview, as Matt was coming in from school, Cindy revealed that she has now been appointed Great Lakes Regional Director for PFLAG. We didn't really explore what that will mean, besides more travel! She will certainly be in Washington again this fall for the National PFLAG convention which will coincide with the display of the quilt.

Before I left, we went into the TV room and watched a video put out by Mel White, Metropolitan Community Church Minister, which neatly refutes each anti-gay comment made by Pat Robertson. Watch for this. It is excellent. We will have opportunity to meet Mel in person during his week-end here in Traverse City September 6, 7 and 8th.