



LGBT Activists Close to Buying Church of 'Sodomite Semen' Pastor

BY NEAL BROVERMAN

Pastor James David Manning has long been an enemy of LGBT New York, with his church putting up signs that call for the stoning and damnation of gay people. In what is a satisfying turn of events for many, his church is now under water and about to be sold at public auction — and the Ali Forney Center and the LGBT-friendly Rivers of Living Water church are working hard to purchase the Harlem house of worship.



Ali Forney — which houses and assists homeless LGBT youth — and the Rivers congregation had raised over \$118,000 by late Monday to buy ATLAH World Missionary Church on 123rd Street; \$200,000 is needed to meet their fundraising goal. If they are successful, Ali Forney would use part of the church as more housing for queer youth, while Rivers of Living Water would use the remaining space for its parish.

Should the purchase go through, it would offer psychological benefits, along with practical.

"I think it would represent a real healing of a terrible wound that's been in that neighborhood," Carl Siciliano, founder and executive director of the Ali Forney Center, told The Guardian.

Pastor Manning has become notorious over the past few years for signage at the church with messages such as "Jesus would stone homos" and that all supporters of LGBT people should be cursed with cancer, HIV, madness, and eternal damnation.

He has also posted videos online in which he claims that "upscale sodomites" gather at Starbucks to spread Ebola and other diseases and that the coffee chain flavors its drinks with the "semen of sodomites." And he's said that President Obama has "released homo demons on the black man" and that gay athletes are pedophiles.



Homophobia Helped Ted Cruz Win The Iowa Caucuses

BY: JOHN GALLAGHER

Voters in Iowa upset the political wisdom Monday night by picking a weasel over a blowhard.

The success of Ted Cruz was in keeping with the suspension of political rules this campaign season. By all accounts, Cruz was on a downward slide in the weeks leading up to the caucuses. Ostensibly, the reason for Cruz's decline was related to questions whether he was allowed to become president, since he was born in Canada. That feeble argument allowed the GOP establishment to pile onto Cruz, whom is universally loathed by party leaders. Meanwhile, support for Donald Trump — at least in polls — was growing.



But Cruz was running a very smart — and very homophobic — campaign in Iowa. He counted on the support of the state's evangelicals, who turned out in record numbers for him. In his stump speech, Cruz called his supporters "the body of Christ," which apparently resonated in a way that the rhetoric of a thrice-married casino magnate from New York could not.

Cruz also had the backing of the fringe of the right wing fringe, amassing an impressive number of homophobes to back his campaign. Right up to the last minute, Cruz was playing on his antigay credentials, appearing at a rally with Duck Dynasty patriarch Phil Robertson, who blasted marriage equality as "evil."

Notably absent from his campaign so far is gay PayPal billionaire Peter Thiel, who bankrolled Cruz's Senate race. Thiel has been sitting out the current election cycle, preferring to focus on initiatives to revive nuclear power and detect bad steaks.

Just as surprising as Cruz's victory was the strong showing of Sen. Marco Rubio, who is a kind of Stepford version of Cruz. Rubio finished a strong third, far above expectations. That's solace for the political establishment, desperate for an alterna-

(Continued on page 2)

February 5th, 2016 - February 19th, 2016

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tive to Cruz and Trump.

So where do things go from here? Trump's support in the polls didn't translate into support at the polling place, which could mean that his huge (or in Donaldese YUUUGE) polling lead in next-to-vote New Hampshire might be a mirage. Cruz can



claim a solid victory, but Iowa's winners often go on to lose everywhere else (Rick Santorum won in 2012, and Mike Huckabee in 2008). Rubio has some much-needed momentum now, but he faces a lot of other establishment alternatives, including fellow Floridian Jeb Bush, the forgotten man of 2016.

If Trump had won, his path to the nomination looked clear. Now it looks like the GOP primary season will be another long slog, much like 2012.

Which will allow the Democrats time to settle their own disputes. With a neck-and-neck finish in Iowa, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders will be debating each other for a while, allowing the political press the chance to write about a horse race that exists only in their imaginations. Barring a catastrophe, Hillary is bound to be the party's nominee. As for Republicans, the catastrophe will be whoever the nominee is.

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Ireland Bans Discrimination Against LGBT Teachers

BY DAWN ENNIS

Ireland's Parliament has passed a bill banning religious schools from discriminating against LGBT teachers, reported Gay Star News.

With the passage in the House and the previous approval of the Senate, the bill is now on the desk of Ireland's president for signing.

The bill amends Section 37 of the republic's Employment Equality Act, which allowed schools and hospitals to "take action" to prevent employees from "undermining the religious ethos of the institution."

The Gay and Lesbian Equality Network said this section of the law had a "chilling effect" in religious schools.

"This bill is the key piece of the legislative map that will allow LGBT people to be themselves, get married and have a family without a threat to their job if they work in a religious run institution," said Sandra Irwin-Gowran, director of education policy at GLEN.

The bill marks another milestone for Ireland. In May, the republic became the first country to legalize same-sex marriage by public vote, and marriage equality was signed into law in October.



The Bear-Naked Chef is Back

BY NICHOLAS RICHARD REES

The Bear-Naked Chef, Adrian De Berardinis, is back behind the stove wearing nothing but a tiny white apron.

The third episode of his cooking web series follows the muscled stallion as he teaches us how to whip up Italian favorites—this episode it's pappardelle pasta with bacon and peas—in the buff.

For those that have difficulty heating up soup, cooking bare would be troublesome, but De Berardinis makes it look effortless. The hunk of a man moves around the kitchen with ease while smelling basil, chopping onions, and teasing us with glimpses of his behind.

Before digging into the heaping bowl of pasta he's made, Adrian asks, "Are you guys jealous?" And the only answer is yes, we certainly are.

You can see the Bear Naked Chef at work on Youtube at: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=The+Bear+Naked+Chef

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Mom Sues School, Says Teacher Threatened to Kill Gay Son

BY BIL BROWNING

An Oregon school district faces a federal lawsuit from a mom who says her son's teacher threatened him violently.

The teen's mother claims her son, who is gay and disabled, has been targeted numerous times for "harassment and discrimination."

In the lawsuit, teacher Brett Trosclair is singled out for allegedly threatening to kill the teen during a school assembly, according to The Oregonian. Court papers claim the student told a friend that he thought another boy was cute when Trosclair turned around, told them to be quiet, and threatened to throw them down the stairs.

After the two boys complained to school officials, Trosclair was placed on administrative leave.

"Plaintiff suffered emotional distress, embarrassment, humiliation, anxiety, stress, fear, and ultimately, loss of a public education," the lawsuit reads. "As a result of Hillsboro School District's deliberate indifference to the sex-based discrimination and hostile education environment, Plaintiff's existing anxiety was exacerbated, as well as his fear for his personal safety."

"Defendants had an unofficial policy, custom or practice of condoning harassment and discrimination based on sexual ori-



entation. Defendants' conduct toward Plaintiff was extreme and outrageous and constitutes an extraordinary transgression of the bounds of socially tolerable conduct."

According to the Hillsboro Tribune, Shawna Dicintio's lawsuit claims the school district violated the First and Fourth Amendments along with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity.

Several students have rallied to Trosclair's defense, saying he was only joking with the teenagers. They have started a social media campaign using the Twitter hashtag #TeamTrosclair with many of the students accusing the gay teen of being the bully.

Gays Compared to Nazis at Massive Homophobic Rome Rally

BY NEAL BROVERMAN

An enormous crowd turned out Saturday at Rome's Circus Maximus for "Family Day," where a proposed civil unions bill was denounced and LGBT families were condemned.



Prime Minister Matteo Renzi is hoping to push through a civil unions bill and finally offer legal recognition to same-sex couples. Italy is the only Western European nation to offer no protections for such couples, and the nation is under pressure to take action by the European Court of Human Rights.

But the Catholic Church's hold over daily Italian life remains strong and many Italians want the legislation killed. Opponents to the bill turned up Saturday by the thousands, bused in from all over the nation, according to the Los Angeles Times. Some of the protest signs went far beyond opposition to civil unions,

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with one placard reading, "Say no the Gaystapo."

As is common for battles over LGBT rights, "Think of the children" concerns were trotted out. Renzi's bill includes a very contentious clause that would allow gay and bi people to legally adopt their partner's biological children.

"Family Day" is not a good sign for the civil unions proposal — as Italian officials often consider protests and public sentiment before proceeding with legislative changes — though a pro-civil unions rally was held the previous week.

Gay Men, We Have a Drinking Problem

BY TYLER CURRY

The birth of gay culture happened on the corner of "after hours" and "drink until you're comfortable." In a society where being homosexual was taboo, not to mention illegal, those on the LGBT spectrum gathered in small bars across the country where they would drink, let down their exterior defenses, and commiserate with the people who accepted them for who they really were. The music, the style, and the laws against homosexuality have all changed, but that drink is still there.

Cut to today, decades after the first brick was thrown at Stonewall, years after the 1990s brought gay characters into the mainstream media, and months after same-sex marriage became a right to all LGBT Americans, the definition of gay culture is now in limbo. For so long, the homo identity flourished in the ghettos of gay bars, but today, the modern homosexual is a fully realized member of society. Only problem, however, is that the resounding presence of alcohol leading up to this historic LGBT moment in history has given him a bit of a drinking problem.

Make no mistake, the delicious, gritty, and decadent history of the gay bar is a beautiful one. I cut my teeth on cherry vodka sours well before I turned 21 at a rickety gay bar called Moby Dicks, sneaking into the side door and trying not to look the bartender in the eye. The sparkle of drag queen gowns and the pulse of strobe lights lit my heart on fire as I danced to remixed Britney and learned to feel comfortable in my skin. But that experience isn't as uniquely gay as it is textbook adolescence. I just happened to go to gay bars, and that's how we do nightlife. I wouldn't want to deny any young gay person that beautifully messy but ultimately liberating experience. But there is this notion that by leaving the gay watering holes and recognizing the destructive nature of binge drinking as you grow up, you are somehow rebuking gay culture and "normalizing" into hetero oblivion.

In the Slate article "The Gay Bar. Is It Dying?" one of my favorite LGBT culture writers, June Thomas, wrote about what seemed like the slow death of gay life as she knew it. "I'm relieved that for my generation, gay bars are but one dish on a vast menu of leisure-time options. But I'd feel their passing far more fiercely than the loss of the neighborhood video store. Without the gay bar, gay culture and gay rights might not exist. ... But if the gay bar disappears, where will we learn to



dance? Where will we realize that we're not alone? Where will we go to feel normal?"

Some gay bars may close if they cannot compete, while others may become less gay and more "queer" as time goes on. However, this article represents a popular belief that the substance of the gay ghetto and gay culture is waning just because gay bars are no longer the singular avenues for our lives. The fear that our neighborhoods are becoming commercialized, and straight people are taking over, is as real as it is irrational. Quite frankly, the evolution of modern gay life will

(Continued on page 6)

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only increase the presence of gay culture, as more men and women feel comfortable expressing their identity in the way they choose.

But instead of fighting to keep this booming bar culture alive, younger generations are championing new avenues and experiences that allow for gay men and women to navigate other areas of adulthood, with their LGBT identities firmly intact. The ever-so-slight shift away from the gay bar is a good thing. And whether you like it or not, it's time to take a sober look at the health of the LGBT population.

Of course, alcohol use and abuse isn't unique to gay, bisexual, and trans people, but it has come to be one of our most recognizable traits. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, LGBT people are more likely to use alcohol and drugs, have higher rates of substance abuse, and are more likely to continue drinking into later life. Gay men represent the only demographic where HIV infection continues to rise. The use and abuse of substances are linked to risky sexual practices.

Being gay should not be an indicator of an increased propensity towards substance abuse. But as the CDC states, alcohol and drug use among gay and bisexual men can be a reaction to homophobia, discrimination, or violence they experienced due to their sexual orientation. Substance abuse also can result in other mental or physical problems, and it can disrupt relationships, employment, and threaten financial stability. So, given this sobering information, wouldn't the subtle waning of the gay bar culture indicate a step in the right direction?

In an op-ed for The Advocate titled "The Fine Line Between Gay Pride and Alcohol," I wrote about my own journey to redefine my relationship with alcohol.

"Recognizing your alcohol abuse doesn't mean that you have to forever define yourself as an alcoholic, it is merely an acknowledgement of a behavior that you have exhibited and actively working to change it. This year, I celebrate my gay pride by taking a little more pride in who I am and the person I want to become. And despite the desire we all have to be forever 21, that means cooling it on the booze so that this gay boy can start acting like a man."

This, however, struck a nerve among many people who do not want to see the gay party culture they know watered down for fear of the homogenization of what it means to be gay.

One dissenting commenter, whose opinion was shared by many, wrote in response, "Drink if you want. Fuck if you want ... Smoke if you want ... Swear if you want ... Stop sanitizing my gayness. You're implying that you are not a real man if you drink. Don't you think gay men have been told too many times in their lives they're not real men? Tell me what it's like to be a real man?"

To me, acting like the gay man I want to be means acknowledging destructive behaviors for what they are (binge drinking, drug use, etc) and taking the steps to change them. To me, acting like a gay man means no longer selfishly masking or dismissing bad habits to enable my behavior or the behavior of others. To me, acting like a gay man means seeking better for myself and for my community so that gay children today do not continue to have higher rates of smoking, drinking, drug abuse, and HIV. My gayness cannot be sanitized regardless of how

many or how few drinks I have. My health and the health of the community I am a part of, however, can be.

What it means to be gay will forever and always be synonymous with the fabulously alternative, the flamboyant, and the queer. The LGBT movement has fought hard to be respected, so it can be difficult to take evaluation of our collective flaws in order to get better. We owe it to the future generations of gay men, trans women, and everyone else under the queer umbrella to not only gain equal rights, but also improve the value and self-worth of the LGBT population. That means preserving our history while allowing for a healthier, more evolved future. Gay bars are fabulous, but they are no longer the singular realm in which our lives exist. In the light of day, let's take inventory of our alcohol abuse and quit confusing it with gay culture, because that is not a culture worth claiming at all.

TYLER CURRY is an activist and the author of *A Peacock Among Pigeons*, a new children's book that celebrates diversity. Get your copy at www.apecockamongpigeons.com. He is also the senior editor of *HIV Equal*, a comprehensive online publication dedicated to promoting HIV awareness and combating HIV stigma. To learn more about *HIV Equal*, visit HIVequal.org or follow Tyler Curry on Facebook or Twitter @iamtylercurry.

Gay Soldier Claims Colonel Disclosed His HIV Status to Colleagues

BY ELIZABETH DALEY

An out soldier who was stationed at the United States Army's Physical Disability Agency located in Arlington, Virginia, told the Washington Blade he was devastated when his HIV status was disclosed by a colonel to his coworkers there.

Sgt. Joseph Wittig, 34, told the paper that his name was on a list of HIV positive service members circulated for the past two years at the agency, which is tasked with providing fair hearings to determine whether injured military members are fit to serve.

Wittig learned he was HIV positive shortly before arriving at the disability agency in 2013 and was still grappling with his diagnosis when he says he was outed to colleagues. "I had just found out before I got here," he told the paper, "and they spread it all over the world as if it was something like, oh, he's got a cold."

"You're not supposed to do that. That's a major privacy violation."

Although Wittig said his former coworkers did not openly discuss his HIV status, he was made to feel ostracized in other ways. On one occasion at an office potluck dinner, Wittig told



the Blade he noticed those working at a food service table immediately removed communal serving spoons after he had used them. "People with HIV are made to feel so low," he told the paper. "No one should feel they are garbage. It really gets to you. You don't do that to people."

Since the disclosure of his HIV status, Wittig has been transferred to Walter Reed Medical Center in Maryland where he told the paper he receives daily treatment for the anxiety and stress he has experienced since his status was disclosed.

The issue of HIV status disclosure has been a hot topic since actor Charlie Sheen came out as HIV positive on NBC's Today Show to prevent continued extortion efforts. Sheen said he had spent millions of dollars paying people who threatened to out him as HIV positive so he decided to come out to stop the blackmail.

Wittig, who has served for 12 years, including tours in Iraq and Haiti, said he filed a complaint with the Army's Office of Inspector General in 2014 regarding the disclosure, but he said he did not receive a response until he reached out to the Blade. Subsequently, Wittig told the paper he received a personal visit from the current director of the Physical Disability Agency, Col. Todd Garlic, who personally apologized to him.

Pentagon spokesperson Paul Prince told the Blade in an email: "We are looking into this matter and will implement the appropriate action(s)." He wrote that "Army leadership views all allegations of violations of soldiers' privacy as a very serious matter." Prince wrote that the Army is "prohibited by law to confirm the names, units or duty assignments of soldiers who may be Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) positive."

However, another Pentagon spokesman, Maj. Ben Sakrisson, told the Blade in an email that military health care providers, commanders and their designees are exempt from privacy rules in certain circumstances.

"Further dissemination of Personal Health Information (including but not limited to HIV status) is limited to those with a 'need to know' that information in the performance of their duties," he wrote.

Wittig's complaint identifies former Army Physical Disability Agency director Col. Carl Johnson as the person who allegedly asked staff to compile a list of their HIV positive colleagues. The Blade could not reach Johnson for comment.

Indian Supreme Court to Reconsider Criminalization of Homosexuality

BY JAMES MCDONALD

In 2013, the Indian Supreme Court shocked the nation and the world by re-criminalizing homosexuality. Decades of progress, which had culminated in a 2009 ruling by a lower court to legalize same-sex activities, were swept away by the odd decision to reinstate a ban first imposed by British Colonial authorities in 1860.



Tomorrow holds hope for change, however, as India's supreme judicial body is set to decide whether or not to revisit the issue. Activists are hoping that the Supreme Court, which is known for its progressive approach to civil rights and the rights of minority groups, will rectify what many have interpreted as a gross affront to human dignity in the world's largest democracy.

Sadly, the legal challenge faced by LGBT people is not unique to India. While Britain has progressed immensely on LGBT issues in recent years—marriage equality is now legal in England, Scotland, Wales, and the Republic of Ireland—its legacy around the globe is far less positive. Of the 76 countries that still criminalize homosexuality, more than half of

(Continued on next page)



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them do so because of laws imposed by the British Empire in the 19th century. Activists have repeatedly called upon Britain to pressure Commonwealth nations (former colonies) to overturn the archaic laws. At the opening ceremony for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, held in Glasgow just months after Scotland voted to legalize same-sex marriage, organizers included a same-sex kiss—something that was broadcast live to more than 1 billion people across the Commonwealth.

While a number of countries retain laws on the books without actively persecuting gay people, more than 600 arrests were reported in India in 2014. Shashi Bhooshan, a gay rights activist, spoke with the Guardian about what a positive outcome would mean:

“I feel excited and nervous for tomorrow. If we get a good verdict, it will be a big step forward and give me security as a citizen of this country. How can I be living in the world’s biggest democracy in 2016 and still be denied a fundamental human right?”

“Right now, I am considered a criminal. There’s a fear around it, a social stigma. But it becomes easier to change people’s minds if the law is on your side. It is easier to explain to them that you’re not doing anything wrong, that you’re normal.”

UPDATE: On Tuesday, February 2, the Supreme Court announced that it would reopen hearings into the criminalization of homosexuality. It’s a rare move to accept a “curative petition,” a legal procedure that allows for Supreme Court rulings to be revisited. BuzzFeed reports that only three such petitions have been successful since the procedure’s inception in 2002.

Mark Kirk Is First GOP Senator to Cosponsor Equality Act

BY DAWN ENNIS

The Equality Act now has bipartisan support in both the U.S. House and Senate, with the announcement by Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois that he has signed on as a cosponsor.

“Discrimination on the basis of being gay is against the law in Illinois and should be against the law nationwide,” Kirk told BuzzFeed, which broke the story.

Kirk was cheered by Human Rights Campaign president Chad Griffin: “His support for the Equality Act sends a strong message that fairness and equality are bipartisan values. It also reflects the view of the overwhelming majority of all Americans who believe that everyone, including LGBT people, should be able to have a fair chance to earn a living, provide for their families, and live free from fear of discrimination.”

The bill, endorsed by President Obama last month, would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal laws to protect Americans from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, public accommodations, and several other areas.

But even though least one member of the GOP in each cham-

ber supports the bill, most Republicans oppose it, and their control of both the House and Senate means the bill is unlikely to pass this session.

Democrats Jeff Merkley of Oregon, out senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, and Cory Booker of New Jersey are the lead sponsors in the Senate; David Cicilline of Rhode Island, also a Democrat, is the lead sponsor in the House.



Kirk’s support is seen as an encouraging sign, said Sen. Merkley. “In communities across America, Republicans and Democrats alike share a common belief that discriminating against someone just because of who they are is fundamentally wrong,” he told BuzzFeed. “It is time for all Americans to work together to end long-standing discrimination against the LGBT community.”

Last week, Rep. Bob Dold, also of Illinois, became the first Republican cosponsor of the Equality Act.

Although he called the bill “not perfect in its current form,” Dold issued a statement heralding what he described as “an important first step” toward bipartisan support of equal rights for all Americans.

“Illinois has a long and proud history of fighting for equal rights, and I am proud to continue this tradition by supporting the Equality Act. Engraved on the front of the Supreme Court is the phrase ‘equal justice under the law,’ but as long as any Americans can be legally discriminated against, there is not equal justice in this country,” the congressman said in a statement last week.

Life Beyond Therapy

By Michael Kimmel

Visit Michael's website:
www.lifebeyondtherapy.com



Dear Michael:

I am a 27-year-old gay man who only recently came out. I was married for a few years and that was just to shut my family up. My problem is that my dad is a minister and I was raised in the church from childhood on. I used to play the organ every Sunday (no pun intended).

I have found a wonderful boyfriend and am discovering what real love and sexual connection is all about. I can't let go of the idea that God hates me now and that I am now a disappointment to Him. When I have an orgasm with my boyfriend, I feel incredible guilt and shame, like I'm "dirty". Can you help me?

Confused child of God

Dear Confused:

Thanks for your letter and your honesty. I appreciate your dilemma. It brings up some fundamental questions: Does God love everyone, or is Her/His love conditional? Is it true, as Pastor Charles Lanier of Unity Fellowship Church used to say, "God has no respect of person. God is love and love is for everyone"? Or is it true that "God hates fags" as those religious extremists so tastefully point out every year at Pride. If your childhood concept of God is a punishing one, why hold onto it as an openly gay man?

Easier said than done. Luckily, you don't have to tackle this alone. Metropolitan Community Church (Clairemont), Unity Fellowship Church (Hillcrest), Universal Spirit Center (Hillcrest) and the Unitarian Universalist Churches (Hillcrest and Solana Beach) are some of the San Diego churches who welcome LGBT members with open arms. You might call one of these churches and ask to have a talk with the minister/pastor. Get spiritual support from someone who knows what she/he is talking about. Don't listen to ignorant religious extremists as you explore how to be a joyfully gay child of God. Go to people who have scholarly knowledge (of the Bible, Koran, etc.) and learn from them. In addition to churches themselves, there are LGBT groups like "Dignity" for gay Catholics. For more resources, look in Gay San Diego, call The Center or use Google.

How do you keep your faith and drop the guilt? I strongly recommend the book "Coming Out Spiritually" by the brilliant Christian de la Huerta. De la Huerta is the founder of Q-Spirit (www.qspirit.org), an international network of LGBT people of

spirituality.

In his book, de la Huerta explores spiritual roles/archetypes that LGBT people have often assumed and continue to enact today, e.g., creator of beauty, consciousness scout, mediator, shaman and healer. The book may open your eyes to the many possibilities that we as LGBT people have for spiritual happiness.

Consider the Men's Coming Out Group at The Center. You'll likely find that you are not the only newly out gay man to experience the guilt of a God who allegedly hates you now because you're a happy, loving homosexual.

Don't do this alone; you've had 27 years of anti-gay conditioning. It will probably take you a while to "de-program" yourself of your internalized homophobia. Talk with your boyfriend and supportive friends, read up on queer spirituality, and consider connecting with a spiritual/church community whose fellowship will be a loving and nurturing one.

While I am not an overtly religious person, I am a gay man whose connection with God is important to me. My own experience is that being gay, lesbian, transgendered or bisexual is a GIFT from God...a blessing, a privilege and an honor. I don't think God gives these gifts out haphazardly.

My experience is that She/He bestows these gifts on souls that are ready to take them on and use them in this lifetime. The awareness, intelligence, sensitivity and strength that are born of being gay, lesbian, transgendered or bisexual are not known by most heterosexual folk...we have special gifts, and like any gifts, they come with obligations and responsibilities.

I believe we are here to TEACH heterosexual folks about love, tolerance, kindness, forgiveness and unconditional positive regard. To quote gay literary icon Paul Monette:

"Gay and lesbian people who have fought through their self-hatred and their self-recriminations have a capacity for empathy that is glorious and a capacity to find laughter in things that is like praising God. There is a kind of flagrant joy about us that goes very deep and is not available to most people."

You might consider brief psychotherapy to help you with the guilt you experience after orgasm. Cognitive therapy could be useful in replacing the guilt-based thoughts with neutral or supportive thoughts...the logic here being that guilt is an emotion caused by distorted thinking (i.e., "God must hate me because I'm having an orgasm with another man.")

If you can change the thoughts you're having during sex to something like "God loves me and I love my boyfriend" or "Loving my man is an expression of God's love for me", your guilt over orgasming is likely to dissipate fairly quickly.

Does all this sound like too much work? I encourage you to flip it and see it differently: integrating your happy new life as a gay man with your previous religious conditioning can be seen as a troubling burden, or as an amazing adventure. Because there are so few guidelines for living our lives as queer children of God, we get to make it up as we go along.

Churches and organizations can be helpful, but, ultimately, it's an individual decision how you choose to live your life: spiritually, sexually, etc. The possibilities are infinite...may you enjoy the journey.

GAYZETTE EVENTS

The Gayzette

(mail address: PO Box 8583 Omaha NE 68108)
(email to: Gayzette@cox.net)

Published every two weeks and distributed in paper copy and online on the web.

To subscribe to the free online edition, go to:

www.rainbowoutreach.org

Click on the Gayzette tab and click on the Subscribe link. It's free and we won't give out your email address or send you a bunch of junk email.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Every Sunday

WORSHIP SERVICES:

AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA, 3647 Lafayette Ave., Omaha GLBT friendly, www.augustanalutheran.com

DIETZ METHODIST 1423 S.10, Coffee-house casual downstairs at 9am, Traditional Worship at 11am

EPISCOPAL GLBT FELLOWSHIP, St. Andrews Church, 84th & Pacific, 6-7PM, email: EpiscopalGLBT@yahoo.com

FIRST CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST, info at: www.firstcentral.org

FIRST UNITED METHODIST 7020 Cass, 8:30 & 10:45am services

FIRST UNITARIAN 3114 Harney, 9:30 a.m. "eclectic service" and 11:15 a.m. "traditional service"

GAY MEN'S ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS 4pm, Augustana Lutheran Church 3647 Lafayette Ave., Info call Mark 639-3055 **HASTINGS COLLEGE GSA** 8PM FFI: Judy Sandeen (402) 461-7372

HIV+ SUPPORT GROUP 7-8:30 pm at the NAP office located at 1921 South 17th Street in Lincoln, NE.

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF OMAHA 819 S. 22nd St., 345-2563 Sunday Worship 9:30am and 11:15am

ONE PROMISE GROUP, Narcotics Anonymous, every Sunday at 6PM, MCC-Omaha, 819 South 22nd St., for info contact Tamara B. at 714-8552

RIVER CITY MIXED BOWLING

LEAGUE, 3pm, Maplewood Lanes, at 402-572-9393

SECOND UNITARIAN, Sunday morning services, 3012 S 119th St., Omaha, info@2uomaha.org, 402-334-0537

UNITY CHURCH OF OMAHA, 3424 N. 90, Omaha, 10:30am service and Wednesday meditation service at 7pm

WIMMIN'S SHOW, KZUM 89.3 12:30pm

Every Monday

A A GLBT "RAINBOW GROUP"

Meeting Place, 28 & S, Lincoln, 7:30 pm

GAY/BI/STRAIGHT SUPPORT GROUP

HIV+ MEN 7pm every Monday, NAP, 2147 S. 15th St., Lincoln NE, contact Nick or Rick at 402-476-3144

NA RAINBOW GROUP, Narcotics Anonymous, meets Fridays thru Mondays at 10pm, MCC-Omaha Church, 819 South 22nd St

RIVER CITY MIXED CHORUS RE-

HEARSALS, 6:45PM—9:15PM, First United Methodist Church, 7020 Cass St.

Every Tuesday

HASTINGS COLLEGE ALLIANCE

meet Tuesdays at 7PM (when college is in session), Please contact Dr Antje Anderson at aanderson@hastings.edu or Judy Sandeen at jsandeen@hastings.edu for further information.

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

OF OMAHA 819 S. 22nd St., 345-2563—Bible Study at 7pm

UNL LESBIAN/BI/QUESTIONING SUPPORT GROUP

7-8:30PM, Women's Center, Nebraska Union, Lincoln, 472-5644

Every Wednesday

AA FOURTH DIMENSION, 7pm, Open to men and women, 219 North 48th Street

FRONTRUNNERS RUN/WALK

6:30pm, Elmwood Park Parking Lot by softball field, Omaha (402-804-8720)

HIV TESTING LINCOLN, 4-7 pm, results in 20 minutes, 1921 So. 17th St. 402-476-7000

LGBT A A 7:30pm, Alcohol Ctrl., 2116 W. Faidley, Grand Island. Peggy (308) 226-8286, Center (308) 398-5427

Metro Omaha Prime Timers, 4:00-6:00pm Coffee with the Boys at Howlin' Hounds Café, 712 South 16th St. Meet up for coffee and conversation. Many of the guys go out for dinner afterwards. Everyone welcome to attend.

NAP HIV TESTING, 250 South 77th St., by appointment only on Wednesdays from 1:30 to 3:30pm

UNITY CHURCH OF OMAHA, 7pm

Every Thursday

NAP HIV TESTING 250 So. 77th., by appointment from 1:30pm to 3:30pm and Walk-In from 5pm to 8pm

Every Friday

LIVE & LET LIVE AA Meeting

8:15pm to 9:15pm, Open to men and women, at Underwood Hills Presbyterian Church, 851 North 74th Street

LIVE & LET LIVE AL-ANON, a group focused on support and recovery for the friends and relatives of alcoholics, 7pm to 8pm at the Underwood Hills Presbyterian Church, 851 North 74th Street

OUT & ABOUT SOCIAL CLUB

Open to everyone 21 and over, every Friday 6:30pm (time may vary), for more info email outandaboutsocialclub@gmail.com

Every Saturday

AA SATURDAY AFTERNOON

1:30pm, Open to men and women, 219 North 48th Street, call 402-558-0733 for more info

Metro Omaha Prime Timers

9am—11am Coffee with the Boys at Paradise Café, Regency Court. Meet up for coffee and conversation. Good food and good coffee too. Everyone welcome to attend.

PROUD HORIZON YOUTH GROUP

4-6pm, First United Methodist Church, 291-6781 proudhorizons@yahoo.com

MONTHLY EVENTS

1st Monday

FREE RAPID HIV TESTING, 8pm to 10pm at Flixx Show Bar, STD testing also available for \$10, call 552-9260 ext. 113 or 142 or visit www.nap.org for more info

1st Thursday

GLBT PROFESSIONALS, meeting at 5:30pm in various locations. Email at: GOglbt@cfep-ne.org or see www.GOglbt.org for info

1st Friday

FIRST FRIDAY COFFEE HOUSE 8pm. Musicians, poets, open mic, First Unitarian Church, 3114 Harney, Omaha

1st Sunday

Soka Gakkai International (SGI-USA), Lay Buddhist organization based on Nichiren Buddhism, World Peace Prayer the First Sunday of each month, 10am-11:30am, LGBTQIA Friendly, 1021 N 46th Street, Omaha, NE 68132, call 402-558-6148

SPIRITUAL FRIENDS OF LINCOLN

12-1pm Fellowship and 1p-2p worship Meets Lincoln at Bennett Martin Library info@inclusivelife.org and on Facebook

2nd Monday
NAP HIV TESTING

Respect Clinic, walk-in from 5:00pm to 7pm
—50th & Ames Ave.

2nd Thursday
HEARTLAND PRIDE, Board Meeting- at D Dale Clark Library, 215 S. 15th St. 6:30pm-8pm, Email: info@heartlandpride.org, or find us on Facebook

PFLAG- OMAHA, 6:30pm to 9pm, Country-side Community Church, 8787 Pacific Street Omaha, Nebraska

2nd Sunday
Metro Omaha Prime Timers, Monthly Meeting, Abrahams Library, 5111 North 90th St, Stop by our monthly get-together to hear about the great upcoming events, and spend time with good friends. 3pm to 4:30pm. Snacks and beverages provided. Everyone Welcome !!

3rd Monday
FREE RAPID HIV TESTING, 8pm to 10pm at Flixx Show Bar, STD testing also available for \$10, call 552-9260 ext. 113 or 142 or visit www.nap.org for more info

IMPERIAL COURT OF NE, Board of Governors meeting, 6:30pm, meeting at the MCC-Omaha, www.imperialcourtofnebraska.org

3rd Sunday
CBCA MEETING 5 PM until about 6:30 PM is our monthly meeting with potluck. We meet at St Paul's Episcopal Church in Council Bluffs – see website for more information at www.councilbluffscommunityalliance.org

4th Monday
NAP HIV TESTING
Respect Clinic, walk-in from 5:00pm to 7pm—50th & Ames Ave.

4th Tuesday
PFLAG-CORNHUSKER Unitarian Church, 6300 & A, Lincoln, 7 p.m.

YOUTH HIV TEST Lighthouse, 2530 N, Lincoln, ages 13 to 18, FFI: 475-3220. 3-5:30 pm

Grandpa and the IRS

The IRS decided to audit Grandpa and summons him to the IRS office. The IRS auditor was not surprised when Grandpa showed up with his attorney.

The auditor said, "Well sir, you have an extravagant life style and no full time employment, which you explain by saying that you win money by gambling. I'm not sure the IRS finds that believable."

"I'm a great gambler and I can prove it," says Grandpa. "How about a demonstration?"

The auditor thinks for a moment and said, "Okay, go ahead."

Grandpa says, "I'll bet you a thousand dollars that I can bite my own eye."

The auditor thinks for a moment and says, "It's a bet!"

Grandpa removes his glass eye and bites it.

The auditor's jaw drops.

Grandpa says, "Now, I'll bet you two thousand dollars that I can bite my other eye."

Now the auditor can tell that Grandpa isn't blind, so he takes the bet.

Grandpa removes his dentures and bites his good eye.

The stunned auditor now realizes he has wagered and lost three grand with Grandpa's attorney as a witness. He starts to get nervous.

Grandpa says, "Want to go double or nothing? I'll bet you six thousand dollars that I can stand on one side of your desk and pee into that wastebasket on the other side and never get a drop anywhere in between."

The auditor, twice burned, is now cautious but he looks carefully and decides there's no way the old guy could possibly manage that stunt, so he agrees again.

Grandpa stands beside the desk and unzips his pants, but although he strains mightily he can't make the stream reach the wastebasket on the other side, so, he pretty much urinates all over the auditor's desk.

The auditor leaps with joy, realizing that he had just turned a major loss into a huge win. But Grandpa's own attorney moans and puts his head in his hands.

"Are you okay?" asked the auditor.

"Not really," says the attorney. "This morning when Grandpa told me he had been summoned for an audit he bet me twenty-five thousand dollars that he could come in here and pee all over your desk and that you'd be happy about it."

The Economy is So Bad....

I received a pre-declined credit card application in the mail.

CEO's are now playing miniature golf.

Exxon-Mobil laid off 25 Congressmen.

Angelina Jolie adopted a child from America.

Motel Six won't leave the light on anymore.

A picture is only worth 200 words.

They renamed Wall Street to Wal-Mart Street.

Finally, I called the Suicide Hotline. I got a call center in Pakistan and when I told them I was suicidal, they got all excited and asked if I could drive a truck!

Marine Genius

By the time a Marine pulled into a little town, every hotel room was taken.

"You've got to have a room somewhere," he pleaded. "Or just a bed, I don't care where."

"Well, I do have a double room with one occupant - an Air Force guy," admitted the manager, "and he might be glad to split the cost. But to tell you the truth, he snores so loudly that people in adjoining rooms have complained in the past. I'm not sure it'd be worth it to you."

"No problem," the tired Marine assured him. "I'll take it."

The next morning the Marine came down to breakfast bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. "How'd you sleep?" asked the manager.

"Never better."

The manager was impressed. "No problem with the other guy snoring, then?"

"Nope, I shut him up in no time" said the Marine.

"How'd you manage that?" asked the manager.

"He was already in bed, snoring away, when I came in the room," the Marine explained.

"I went over, gave him a kiss on the cheek, said, 'Goodnight, beautiful,' and he sat up all night watching me."

How Come?

A little boy says to his mother, "Mommy, how come I'm black and you're white?"

His mother replied, "Don't even go there! From what little I can remember about that party, you're lucky you don't bark!"

Stop It !!

I recently went to the doctor and he said, "Joe, you have to stop masturbating."

I said, "Why?"

And he said, "I'm trying to examine you."

GLBT RESOURCE LIST

OMAHA BASED

BiMenNebraska, Social Support for Bi and BiCurious Men <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BiMenNebraska> and <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Bi-MEN-MIDWEST>

Camp Kindle, Nebraska based summer camp for kids affected by HIV/AIDS, 877.800.CAMP, www.CampKindle.org

Citizens for Equal Protection 1105 Howard St. Suite 2, Omaha NE 68102, 398-3027 www.cfep-ne.org, email to: Michael@cfep-ne.org

Family Foundations Therapy for individuals, couples or families, for info call 558-3856

First Central Congregational Church UCC, 421 South 36th St., 402-345-1533, www.firstcentral.org, GLBT-affirming

First Lutheran Church, 542 So. 31st St., 402-345-7506, GLBT Friendly www.firstlutheranomaha.org

First Unitarian Church, 3114 Harney Street, 402-345-3039, www.firstunitarian.org, GLBT Welcoming Congregation

First United Methodist Church, 7020 Cass St., 402-556-6262, www.fumcomaha.org, GLBT-affirming

Flat Water Bears, (group disbanded)

Front Runners/Walkers, Wednesdays at 6:30pm, Elmwood Park Parking Lot by softball field, Omaha (402-804-8720)

Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network - Omaha, Box 641676, Omaha 68164, 712-325-0117 <http://www.glsenomaha.org>

GayLibrary.com, World Wide Resources

GOglbt Professionals, meeting at 5:30PM. Email at: GOglbt@cfep-ne.org or see www.GOglbt.org for info

Greater Omaha LGBT Democrats <http://omahalgbtDemocrats.wordpress.com> - contact Ken @ 402-686-6389 See also <http://ProgressiveOasis.com>

Heartland Pride www.heartlandpride.org, email: info@heartlandpride.org; meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 6:30pm to 8pm. @ D. Dale Clark Library

Ice Bowl Invitational Bowling Tournament (IBIT) P.O. Box 31838, Omaha, 68131 R. Hollendieck (402) 556-5556

Imperial Court of Nebraska, Box 3772, Omaha 68103, www.imperialcourtofnebraska.org

Inclusive Life 402-575-7006 www.inclusivelife.org Offering religious and non-religious care and services to all without exception. Weddings, Funerals, Coaching and Pastoral Care.

Learning to Exchange Power, no current info available

Leather Engineers of Omaha (LEO) not currently meeting

Metro Omaha Prime Timers, provides a welcoming and supportive environment to

mature gay and bi men and their fans to encourage participation in fun, cultural, educational or social activities. Email PrimeTimersEvents@gmail.com for more information & schedule. Also on Facebook as Metro Omaha Prime Timers Also see the Events list on page 10

Metropolitan Community Church of Omaha, 819 S. 22 St., Omaha 68108 345-2563, mccomaha@mccomaha.org Website: www.mccomaha.org Sunday Worship 9:30am and 11:15am

NAMI - Community Mental Health Support for the LGBTIQ community 415 South 25th Ave, Omaha, NE 402-345-8101 or 877-463-6264

NA Rainbow Group, Narcotics Anonymous, meets Friday thru Monday at 10pm, MCC-Omaha Church, 819 South 22nd St

Nebraska AIDS Project, 250 So. 77th St., HIV testing and counseling

NebraskaEquality.org, Find out everything about Nebraska and the GLBT Community www.NebraskaPrideIDOL.com

Nebraska Zen Center, Soto Zen Buddhist, 3625 Lafayette Ave., 402-551-9035, www.prairiewindzen.org GLBT inclusive

North Side Christian Church 5555 Larimore Ave., Sunday service at 9:30am, see www.NorthSideOmaha.org

The 'Ohana Group, (GLBT / Non-traditional Family group), email to: Theohanagroup@msn.com

Omaha Metro GLBT Sports League, See www.oglbtsports.com for more information

Onyx Images, Box 31026, 68131-0026 Social/Support Organization for African American Males age 21 and over

Out and About in Nebraska, website: www.travel.to/outabout Email: NeOutAbout@yahoo.com

OUUT (Omaha Unitarian Universalists for Tolerance) First Unitarian Church, 3114 Harney, 68131, 345-3039, www.ouut.org

PFLAG Omaha Chapter, For confidential information or support, call: 402-291-6781, meeting at Countryside Community Church, 8787 Pacific Street Omaha, Nebraska

Proud Horizons Youth Group, Sat Afternoon 4pm to 6pm, for info: email proudhorizons@yahoo.com

River City Gender Alliance, PO Box 284, Boys Town, NE 68010, email president@rcga.co or call 402-541-5792, web site www.rcga.co

River City Mixed Bowling Sundays, Maplewood Lanes Omaha, at 3PM call 402-572-9393 for details

River City Mixed Chorus, Box 3267, Omaha, NE 68103, 402-341-SING Website: www.rcmc.org

Second Unitarian Church, 3012 S 119th St., Omaha, www.2uomaha.org, 402-334

-0537, LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation

SNAP Productions, Box 8464, Omaha, NE 68108 www.snapproductions.com

Temple Israel Synagogue, 7023 Cass St., 402-556-6536, member of the Union for Reform Judaism, GLBT inclusive

Unity Church of Omaha 3424 N. 90, Omaha, Sunday worship: 10:30am Wednesday meditation service 7pm: 571-1344; www.unityomaha.org

Youth Emergency Services, Inc. (Y.E.S.) Offices: 2679 Farnam Street, Suite. 205 Omaha, NE 68131, 402-345-5187, email to info@yesomaha.org

Y.E.S. Drop-in Center, 2057 Harney Street Omaha, NE 68102, 402-505-6922

LINCOLN BASED

GLBT and Allies coffee house, 3rd Fridays, Unitarian Church, 6300 A, 7:30 to 10:30pm

LGBTQ and Ally Programs and Services Resource Center, Pat Tetreault, LGBTQ Resource Center Director, <http://involved.unl.edu/lgbtqa> - 402.472.1752 or 402-472-1652 <http://www.unl.edu/health/sexuality>

Lincoln Women's Center, Lincoln 402/472-2597.

Nebraska AIDS Project, 1120 K Street Suite 100, Lincoln, NE 68508, (402) 476-7000

Nebraska Trans* Community This group is for individuals that identify with a nontraditional masculine or feminine sense of self (MtF, FtM and anywhere in between) and their Partners. Contact info can be found at: NebraskaTransCommunity.com

OUTInc, a nonprofit organization that engages in and fosters the well-being and advancement of the LGBT community, www.outinc.org, Lincoln NE

PFLAG Cornhusker Chapter, Box 30128, Lincoln 68508, Meet 4th Tues, Unitarian Church, 6300 A, email to Barbara Kimberly, jbkiber@hotmail.com. Website: <http://pflagcornhusker.org/>

Queer Student Alliance, UNL, contact unlqsa@yahoo.com for info

SAGE, Box 22043, Lincoln 68542 Coffee House 2nd Sat, 6-9pm, Lesbian Videos 7:15pm, 3319 S. 46

Spiritual Friends of Lincoln Offering fellowship and worship for those seeking radical hospitality, openness, and inclusiveness. Meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday in Lincoln info@inclusivelife.org and on FaceBook

Straight Spouse Support Grp 402-429-6094

TriCity GLBT, serving Central Nebraska, web site at <http://www.tri-city-glb.com/>

UNL Committee on GLBT Concerns, Contact Pat Tetreault, (402) 472-1752 or email: ptetreault1@unl.edu / www.unl.edu/cglbte

Women In Trades/YWCA, 1432 N St., Lincoln 68508; 434-3494,

Youth Support Group, (402) 434-9880

Iowa Based

Council Bluffs Health Department/Free STD Clinic
209 Pearl Street, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503, 712-328-4666 – ask for Rachel, Monday – Friday by appointment, call to inquire about extended hours, **FREE testing for HIV, Syphilis, Gonorrhea and Chlamydia**

Council Bluffs Community Alliance
www.councilbluffscommunityalliance.org

Council Bluffs Pride, www.councilbluffspride.org
First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. GLBT friendly. 611 First Avenue, Council Bluffs, IA 51501, 712-322-5324 - <http://www.cbfirstcongregational.org/>

Iowa Equality, GLBT –allied against change to the state and federal Constitutions, <http://www.IowaEquality.org>

Sioux City, Iowa Resource Web Site: www.siouxlandpride.net

Nationally Based

Trevor-24-hour National Suicide Hotline for GLBT and Questioning Youth 1-800-850-8078 or see web site at <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/helpline.html>

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The Hungry Homo

Absolute Best Ever Lasagna

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lbs lean ground beef
- 1/2 lb Italian sausage
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 -3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 1/2-2 teaspoons salt (or to taste)
- 1 teaspoon fresh coarse ground black pepper (or to taste)
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 2 (14 1/2 ounce) cans whole tomatoes, undrained and chopped (or canned chopped tomatoes)
- 2 (6 ounce) cans tomato paste
- 24 ounces cottage cheese or 24 ounces ricotta cheese
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons parsley
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 lb mozzarella cheese, divided
- 12 -15 lasagna noodles

Directions

Brown ground beef, Italian sausage, onion and garlic. Add salt, pepper, parsley, oregano, basil, chopped tomatoes with juice, and tomato paste; stirring until well mixed.

Cover and simmer 1 hour (or longer but watch for getting too dry).

Cook lasagna noodles according to package



Where Can You Find The Gayzette?

Omaha:

- Dixie Quick's Restaurant, 157 West Broadway 712-256-4140
- First Unitarian Church, 3114 Harney
- Flixx , 1015 South 10th Street Omaha 402-408-1020
- Lover Luxuries, 6065 Maple St. 402-932-3377
- The Max, 1417 Jackson St. 402-346-4110
- Metropolitan Community Church, 819 South 22nd Street
- Mystery Bookstore, 1414 South 13th St. 402-342-7343
- Nebraska AIDS Project, 250 South 77th St 402-552-9260
- Omaha Mining Co., 1715 Leavenworth 402-449-8703
- Rodeo Saloon & BBQ 164 W Broadway 712-256-0510

directions; drain and set aside.

Spray a 13 x 9? baking pan with cooking spray.

Combine cottage cheese, eggs, pepper, 2 tablespoons parsley, Parmesan cheese and 1/2 1lb of mozzarella cheese; In a lasagna pan, layer noodles, meat sauce, and cheese mixture; repeat. Top off with layer of noodles; sprinkle evenly with remaining mozzarella cheese; make sure to cover noodles completely. Bake at 375F for 40-60 minutes, or until cheese mixture is thoroughly melted. (I cover w/ foil for about 40 minutes, then uncover for 15-20 minutes.

Let sit for 15-20 minutes before cutting and serving.

Cheesy Baked Dip

Ingredients

- 8 oz. sour cream
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 16 oz. cheddar cheese, grated (sharp or mild)
- 4 oz. chopped green chilies
- Green onion (suit your own taste)
- 1 c. chopped ham
- 1/2 pound chopped cooked bacon
- 1 round bread loaf, hollowed out *a pre-baked loaf you'll find in the bakery. I used a sourdough loaf.

Instructions

Mix first seven ingredients together and put into the hollowed out bread loaf. Bake at 350 degrees uncovered for one hour. Serve with leftover bread or chips.



I'm HIV-Positive and Still Not Into You

By Tyler Curry

As someone who is out about being HIV-positive, I often get the privilege of hearing from other newly diagnosed gay men from across the country. As anyone can imagine, learning you are positive can feel like taking a cannonball to the chest. So, sometimes you need to talk to a stranger before you can catch your breath and find the words for your family and friends.

Although I'm no psychotherapist, I can relate and speak to the myriad of fears that flood your headspace while sitting in the clinic and receiving the news. In almost every instance, the most pressing concern in the emails, texts and phone calls I receive is about how HIV will affect a person's dating life.

I remember it all too well. When I first found out about my status, all of my romantic dreams instantly felt like dead ones. Who would love me now? Can I ever enjoy sex again? Will I ever get married? And I went wah, wah, wah into my wine glass all through the night.

The truth is, once I picked myself out of the puddle of tears, I was relatively unaltered. Besides a recurring doctor's appointment every four months and a new pill to add to my pill box, my worth on the dating market remained the same. Of course, the first couple months were pretty shaky. Learning how to disclose your status isn't something most gay men discuss over cocktails on a Saturday night — although it should be.

I've had to answer the question I'm asked over and over again. When is the right time to disclose? Many of my friends think you should let the person get to know you first before launching into your medical history. After all, you don't disclose all of the dirty details of your life on a first date, so what makes your status any different? Right?

Wrong. Being HIV positive isn't the same as having a beast of a mother or being a Log Cabin Republican. Those dirty details are the layers of who you are as a person, and they're revealed as a relationship develops. Your status isn't a part of your character; it's a matter of logistics. Either your Friday night date is someone who understands the logistics of dating someone positive, or he doesn't.

If a potential match is afraid of dating someone who is positive, your personality and charm will not remedy his fear. Your status isn't a deep dark secret or something to hide. But acting as if it is will most assuredly scare away anyone who is unsure about dating you.

Just as in any dating environment, confidence goes further than any amount of money, expensive suit or HIV-negative status. If you treat your status as some cloaked secret that you're asking him to overlook because everything else is great, he'll re-



spond accordingly. But if you tell him before the first drink is served and approach it as if it's something you need to clear up for the benefit of both of you, your honesty will be appreciated and will most likely be a turn on.

You know what confidence is? It's knowing that the goods you're selling are worth their sticker price, and you don't need to discount them for anyone. It doesn't matter if you're positive, negative, too short, too tall, balding or bushy-browed, you should be worried about who is right for you and forget about trying to be the right person for anyone else. It may never move past the first date regardless of your status, so don't act like you're desperate for your potential match to love you until you know you love him back.

Unfortunately, some people would like to see you stay in a state of despair rather than have you realize you're the same good catch you've always been. It's human nature to want to feel superior, and people will use any excuse to justify their feelings. You may even have men lash out at you for not being a sad sap and giving them the attention they think they deserve. It's as if, because you are now positive, you should be grateful for their interest. Conversely, your disinterest in them is a disruption of the natural hierarchy.

To these types of men, just smile more, because there's nothing more gratifying than getting under the skin of a person who wants to feel better than you, but can't.

Yes, people will try to put you down. A lot of people love a sob story, and a lot of people love to hate a story of success. But, regardless of your status, you'll always deal with people who want to see you struggle.

People like their boxes. If you're positive, many will want you to stay in yours. I've been told that I have no idea what I am talking about, and I'm not realistic about how hard living with HIV really is. True, living with HIV can be difficult, but only if you listen to other people's opinions and beliefs of what it's supposed to be like. If you don't, you're free to define how your life is viewed for yourself.

It's your choice to live your life as a tragedy, a drama or a romantic comedy. Just remember, you're in charge of casting your leading man. If he isn't smart enough to understand your script, then he doesn't get the part.

Obama: 'I Won't Fade Away in my Final Year'

AP Writer Josh Lederman

WASHINGTON — Closing out a tumultuous year, President Barack Obama laid the groundwork Friday for his last year in office, vowing not to fade into the background but instead use his remaining months to push longstanding goals to fruition.

"In 2016, I'm going to leave it all out on the field," he said. "Wherever there's an opportunity, I'm going to take it."

In his annual year-end news conference, Obama portrayed 2015 as one of significant progress for his agenda, pointing to diplo-

macy with Iran and Cuba and an Asia-Pacific trade agreement as big wins for his administration. He also praised a Supreme Court ruling legalizing gay marriage and a congressional rewrite of the No Child Left Behind law as further victories for causes he's made central to his presidency.

Still, he said, he plans to do much more in 2016.

"I said at the beginning of this year that interesting stuff happens in the fourth quarter — and we are only halfway through," Obama said.

Calling attention to his signature legislative achievement, Obama announced that 6 million people had signed up for health care so far this year under the Affordable Care Act, a surge that officials say illustrates the program's durability.

After the news conference, Obama was to depart for San Bernardino, California, where he planned to meet with families of the 14 victims of the recent mass shooting. He then will fly to Hawaii where he'll spend two weeks on vacation with his wife and daughters in what has become a family Christmas tradition.

Hours before his departure, Congress passed a major bipartisan budget package that staved off a potential government shutdown and extended tax cuts for both families and businesses. The White House has indicated Obama will sign it.

Crediting lawmakers with ending the year on a "high note," Obama offered rare if muted praise for a Congress that more often than not has obstructed his legislative agenda. He said he'd called new House Speaker Paul Ryan to thank him for "orderly negotiations," describing the Wisconsin Republican as professional and straightforward.

"Kudos to him," Obama said.

The president noted optimistically that by averting a funding crisis for the next nine months, Congress had cleared a path for cooperation with him next year on areas of common ground. He pointed to a potential criminal justice overhaul and congressional consideration of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact as areas ripe for cooperation.

"Congress and I have a long runway to get some things done for the American people," he said.

Obama took questions as he closed out a turbulent year marked by successes on restoring diplomatic relations with Cuba, clinching a nuclear deal with Iran and finalizing an unprecedented global climate treaty. Those successes have been tempered by a lack of progress on the president's other priorities, like closing the Guantanamo Bay detention center.

Obama said he'd present a long-delayed plan to close the prison to Congress early next year, then wait for lawmakers' reaction before determining whether to take action on his own to shut it. He predicted the prison population would dwindle by early next year to less than 100, a threshold his administration has been pushing for to bolster its argument that keeping the facility open isn't cost effective.

Amid widespread fears about terrorism and extremists, Obama pushed back against critics questioning his strategy for overcoming the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. "There's only so much bombing you can do," he said, though he insisted

anew. "We're going to defeat ISIS."

He also affirmed his longstanding position that Syrian President Bashar Assad must leave power for Syria to resolve its civil war, even though his administration has recently said it could accept an unspecified transition period during which Assad stayed.

Still, Obama contended about Syria, "Five years later, I was right."

The end of 2015 marks a major transition point for the president, who has one year left to try to finish as many of his projects as possible. He won't be rolling out sweeping new policy proposals that would be unlikely to get serious consideration amid the focus on electing his successor. The White House is promising Obama will deliver a "non-traditional" State of the Union address in January laying out an agenda that includes further executive steps on climate change and gun control.

Obama plans to return to the White House in early January to begin a final year in office that will be increasingly overshadowed by the 2016 presidential campaign. Predicting success for his party, Obama said he was confident Democrats would nominate a strong candidate to replace him.

"I think I will have a Democratic successor," Obama said. "And I will campaign very hard to make that happen."



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GOING OUT, RUDY?

YES, KYLE... I'M HAVING LUNCH WITH ONE OF MY FACEBOOK FRIENDS.



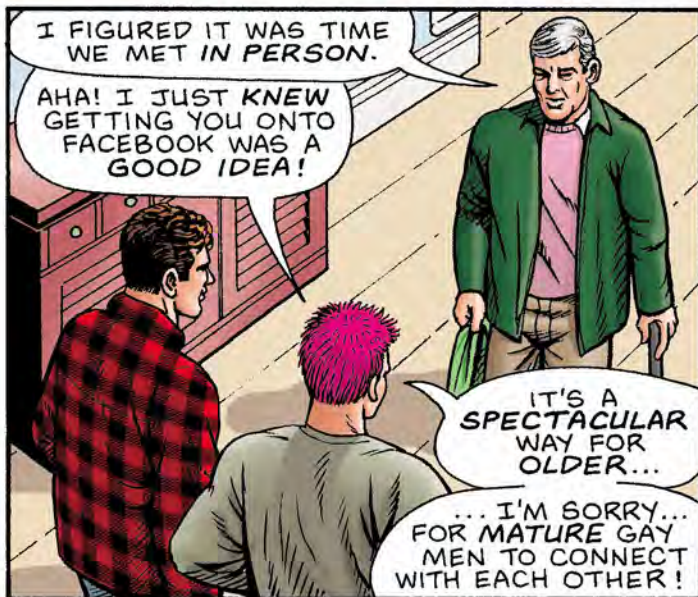
WHOA. YOU'RE HOOKING UP WITH SOMEONE YOU MET ON FACEBOOK?

I WOULDN'T DESCRIBE IT AS "HOOKING UP", RICHARD.



TERRENCE AND I HAVE BEEN CORRESPONDING ONLINE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS NOW.

HE SEEMS LIKE A PERFECT GENTLEMAN... AND WE HAVE A NUMBER OF COMMON INTERESTS.



I FIGURED IT WAS TIME WE MET IN PERSON.

AHA! I JUST KNEW GETTING YOU ONTO FACEBOOK WAS A GOOD IDEA!

IT'S A SPECTACULAR WAY FOR OLDER...

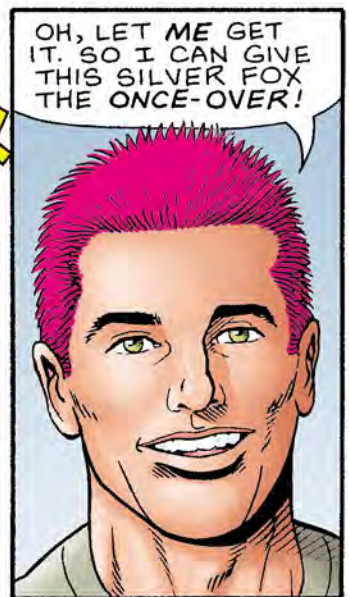
... I'M SORRY... FOR MATURE GAY MEN TO CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER!



ACTUALLY, RICHARD...

KNOCK KNOCK

AH, THE DOOR. THAT'S PROBABLY TERRENCE!



OH, LET ME GET IT. SO I CAN GIVE THIS SILVER FOX THE ONCE-OVER!



WELL, HELLO--

HUH?!

HI, I'M TERRENCE. I'M HERE FOR RUDY.

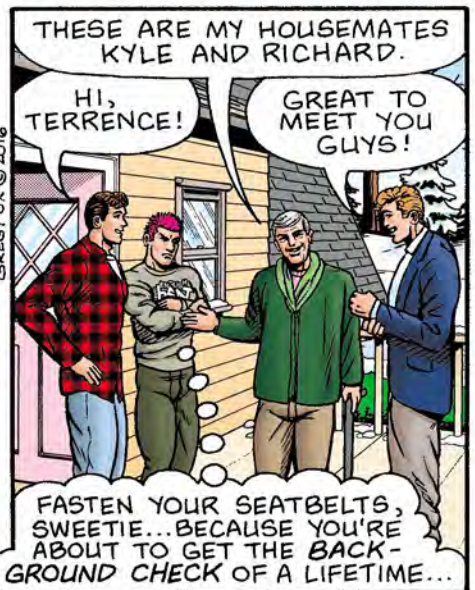
YOU'RE TERRENCE?!



TERRENCE... YOU LOOK JUST LIKE YOUR PICTURES!

LIKELIKE, RUDY!

HOW NICE TO FINALLY MEET YOU IN PERSON!



THESE ARE MY HOUSEMATES KYLE AND RICHARD.

HI, TERRENCE!

GREAT TO MEET YOU GUYS!

FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS, SWEETIE... BECAUSE YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET THE BACK-GROUND CHECK OF A LIFETIME...