First City Network, Inc. is a local, private, non-profit community service organization chartered in 1985 by concerned citizens seeking a gay and lesbian positive community. First City Network serves as a forum to share strengths and ideas, stimulate personal growth and provide social activities. We provide national, state and local information and referral services for health care, counseling, education, advocacy and mutual support.

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SATURDAY SOCIAL
Hosted By: Kem Highfill
May 7th
7:30 – 10:00
Info - 912-897-7058
115 Teakwood Drive
Wilmington Island, GA
More Info on Page 5

LESBIAN POTLUCK
Hosted By:
First City Network
TBA
for information visit our website for directions and up to date information.

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CLASSIFIEDS AND EVENTS
GAY GUIDE CONTINUED
FREE - EMAIL EDITOR@FIRSTCITYNETWORK.NET FOR PLACEMENT BEFORE THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH

INTEGRITY AT ST. PAUL’S
7 PM, Third Tuesday of every month, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 34th & Abercorn. Contact: Roland Guney, Phone: 912-273-5346

GAY MEN’S HEART CIRCLE
7 PM, Second Tuesday of every month, Los Robles, 101 East 34th Street (contact: Mary Jo O’Connor, Phone: 912-354-1264)

SUNDAY SOCIETY
Hosted By: Kem Highfill
May 7th
7:30 - 10:00
115. Teakwood Drive
Wilmington Island, GA
More Info Below

Go to www.FirstCityNetwork.net for up to date information regarding The Socials and Potlucks

LESBIAN POTLUCK
Hosted By: First City Network
TBA

For information visit our website for directions and up to date information.

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$100 Corporate - $40 Family/Couple
$25 Individual - $10 Student w/ ID
You can also become a member online: at firstcitynetwork.net

May Social on Wilmington Island: May Day, May Flowers, and a Hint of Summer to Come

Kem Highfill hosts the First Saturday Social at his gracious home on Wilmington Island. His address is 115 Teakwood Drive, Wilmington Island.

Directions to the Social:
From Victory Drive going east toward Tybee Island, drive thru Thunderbolt (U.S. 80 East), past the first Johnny Mercer Blvd and proceed to the Islands Expressway traveling toward Tybee Island. Proceed on the Islands Expressway for about three (3) miles until you see a Wendy’s Restaurant on your right, a two story grey stucco house.

Proceed for about three (3) miles until you see a Wendy’s Restaurant on your right, a two story grey stucco house. Turn right onto Johnny Mercer Blvd and proceed for 1/2 mile to Walthour Road. Turn left onto Walthour Road and proceed about 1/4 mile and turn left again onto Teakwood Drive (which is also the entrance to Bleck Creek Subdivision). Proceed on Teakwood Drive for about 1/4 mile till you reach 115 Teakwood Drive on the right, a two story grey stucco house.

Kem’s home phone number is 912-897-7058.

Bring yourself, your boyfriend, girlfriend, a dish to share and a happy attitude.

THE SAVANNAH GAY GUIDE
SUPPORT GAY-FRIENDLY BUSINESS - TELL THEM YOU FOUND THEM IN THE FCN NETWORK NEWS
A Book Review

The L Life: Extraordinary Lesbians Making a Difference
By Erin McHugh

My first thought when I opened the package was, “What a beautiful book.” The L Life: Extraordinary Lesbians Making a Difference is simply stunning. This coffee table book has gorgeous photos by Jennifer May of some of the most well-known lesbians of our time.

Lesbians Who Have Made a Difference
Erin McHugh set out to write a book about lesbians who have made a difference. And she found some great women to interview. She sat down with well known lesbians like comedian Kate Clinton, cartoonist Alison Bechdel and activist Phyllis Lyon. And she introduces us to some we might not know, but who we probably should.

She and photographer Jennifer May crisscrossed the country to conduct the interviews and she says, “I felt a little bit in love with every single one of these women.” And you will too. The diverse group of women include actors, a sheriff, filmmakers and public servants. They talk about their lives, the LGBT movement, their coming out or what being a lesbian means to them.

The great thing about The L Life is the mix of women you probably already know and those you don’t. For example, I learned about Lisa Sherman who is the general manager and executive vice president of Logo. I met Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum from New York City, business woman Sally Susman and Nan Buzzard who runs international program for the Red Cross.

I also found out things about lesbians I already knew. I learned that breast cancer guru Dr. Susan Love used to be a nun and that Michigan Woman’s Music Festival producer Lisa Vogel probably already know and those you don’t. For example, I learned about Lisa Sherman who is the general manager and executive vice president of Logo. I met Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum from New York City, business woman Sally Susman and Nan Buzzard who runs international program for the Red Cross.

Each woman in this book shares a bit of their philosophy. Like Candace E. Hardnett, she says, “I felt a little bit in love with every single one of these women.” And you will too. The diverse group of women include actors, a sheriff, filmmakers and public servants. They talk about their lives, the LGBT movement, their coming out or what being a lesbian means to them.

What PFLAG believes
Historically, we were heteros who joined our gay loved ones in Gay Pride Parades, re-educated ourselves and each other, stood up against gay-bashing, and created the support group straight allies needed. In time, realizing that support is best done in family units, we welcomed non-hetero–all who were sexuexially different. We worked to encourage and reinforce our mutual desire to speak out against homophobia in an ignorant and hostile society.

Today, we are people of all proclivities who gather to help those who are coming out and the straight people who love them. We are neither a “gay” group nor a “straight group” but a mixed group committed to human dignity and civil rights for every citizen.

What PFLAG does – and does NOT do
We welcome everyone who hopes to benefit from and give back to PFLAG in return. We do NOT discriminate on any basis, whatever.

And finally, we endeavor to educate, NOT back away from ignorance. We have much to learn ourselves, we have much to teach each other, we have wisdom to gain together. We make use of many different educational resources, including our own candid conversations. PFLAG has access to superb materials of its own which can be downloaded free online or purchased for a small fee in booklet form.

What YOU Can Do
Visit PFLAG National’s excellent website. You’ll find answers to nearly every organizational question there. www.pflag.org. The information is vast and VERY user-friendly.

Visit our website for the local chapter, PFLAG Savannah. You’ll find announcements, a bulletin board, showing events, a chat line, print resources from PFLAG National, and links to key articles and groups. www.pflagsav.org

Email us to ask your own personal questions before you decide about joining. info@pflagsav.org
Write to us at PFLAG Savannah, Inc., P O Box 1743, Savannah, GA 31402.

Join our Facebook Group: PFLAG.Savannah
Get acquainted with our officers:
Nicole Withers, President nicole@pflagsav.org
Christine Alpaugh, Secretary christ@pflagsav.org
Antonio Rodriguez, Treasurer antonio@pflagsav.org

Come! Meet us! Join us!

The L Life: Extraordinary Lesbians Making a Difference
By Erin McHugh

After years of inactivity and a lapsed charter, PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians And Gays) has returned to the Savannah area. We were incorporated as a non-profit by the State of Georgia and affiliated with PFLAG National on April 15, 2011. Beginning in June, we will meet on the second Sunday of every month, from 2 – 5pm, at 307 E. Harris St., Savannah (second floor). All are welcome.

Our title was copyrighted in the 1970s, but the organization has since extended membership to those who are relatives and friends of Bisexuals and Transgenders. Keeping up with the science of human sexuality, brain research, and gender identity wasn’t easy in those days. Imagine: that was before personal computers! But now we acknowledge and embrace the range of sexual diversity, even though our official title does not reflect it.

What PFLAG believes
“Homophobia is not a gay problem; it’s a straight problem.”
“Separate is not equal.”

Who PFLAG is – and is NOT
We are hetero-, homo-, bi-, and transgender/transexual.

We are a corporation of dues-payers, NOT a casual free assembly. Our chapter and PFLAG National exist only because we pay annual dues. Although dues are not tax deductible, financial GIFTS are. Annual dues are $25/individual or $35/household. We offer no discounts, but we can work with the impoverished to help them raise a membership fee.

We advocate change but are NOT a political action group. Our individual members may seek social and civic justice on behalf of themselves and those they love. But as a non-profit corporation, we do not lobby, we do not endorse political parties, and we do not sponsor political candidates.

We do NOT bow to ignorance in the status quo. We categorically reject the misapprehension that sexual diversity is a moral issue, a sin, a disease, a neurosis, or a threat to the stability of the American Family. We do not support the unscientific notion that sexual diversity is unnatural. From the best and most recent research, we know it occurs in vastly different forms of life, including mammals, of whom we are part.

We welcome everyone who hopes to benefit from and give back to PFLAG in return. We do NOT discriminate on any basis, whatever.

And finally, we endeavor to educate, NOT back away from ignorance. We have much to learn ourselves, we have much to teach each other, we have wisdom to gain together. We make use of many different educational resources, including our own candid conversations. PFLAG has access to superb materials of its own which can be downloaded free online or purchased for a small fee in booklet form.

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Email us to ask your own personal questions before you decide about joining. info@pflagsav.org
Write to us at PFLAG Savannah, Inc., P O Box 1743, Savannah, GA 31402.

Join our Facebook Group: PFLAG.Savannah
Get acquainted with our officers:
Nicole Withers, President nicole@pflagsav.org
Christine Alpaugh, Secretary christ@pflagsav.org
Antonio Rodriguez, Treasurer antonio@pflagsav.org

Come! Meet us! Join us!

PFLAG Returns!
By Betsy Barber, Board Member

I want to take you to Washington, D.C.
By: Candace E. Hardnett

On May 22nd my spouse and I will travel to Washington, D.C. for the Human Rights Campaign’s Annual Clergy Call. While there we will have the opportunity to meet with our State Representatives and participate in a Lobby Day. It is our goal to make the religious voice known and in doing so I want to include you!

Between now and May 22nd it is my goal to collect personal stories from members of the Savannah gay community that I can take with me and personally deliver to Washington. If you have a personal story that you would like to share concerning unfair treatment as it relates to LGBT Equality please submit them to me before May 15th.

Some story ideas:
• Unfair hospital treatment
• Unfair Tax representation
• Unfair Marriage and Domestic Partner Recognition
• Adoption Rights
• DOMA Repeal
• Military Discrimination
• Hate Crime and Violence

Please share your story. You may submit your letter to me via email: pastorceh@gmail.com or by mail:
Candace E. Hardnett, PO Box 60841, Savannah, GA 31420.
April's Social – Bon Appétit with Bonnets
By Marsha Ipson

If you missed April's First Saturday Social you missed a good one. Hosted by the Savannah Lavender Womyn and held at Samantha Claar's cozy cottage by the sea, all in attendance enjoyed a comfortable spring evening with clear skies and bright stars. Billed as the Easter Bonnet Social, guys and gals alike arrived in their festive hats. The Savannah Lavender Womyn went all out and provided entertainment by 12 string guitarist ALBERTO PUENTES who played some downright relaxing music that made you just want to sit down and spend time with friends.

Samantha Claar's lovely home was the perfect setting for socializing. There were guys and gals by the fire pit in the front yard, others on the front porch, back porch, dock and, of course, the kitchen. What made this social so great was when you went to get food and then returned to where you had been sitting, it was an entirely new set of faces. Definitely a great mix of familiar faces and new ones from our growing community.

The food at these socials continues to get better and better. A big thanks goes out to everyone who brought a dish or dessert to share. We had chicken, pork, pasta salads, veggies, sandwiches, casseroles and Gayles coleslaw which should win some kind of award. And oh my God, the desserts were to die for. Cookies, Carrot, lemon and chocolate cakes, but the grandest of them all was a 7 layer rainbow cake crafted by Elizabeth Edge. Delicious! Definitely worth dieting to prepare yourself for the next social.

Let me finish by making a shameless pitch for Samantha Claar's artwork. Samantha had donated some of her fine art prints for last months Oyster Roast silent auction and they raised a nice sum for FCN. We greatly appreciate that. At the social, Billy Wooten and Melvin were seen carrying off more of Samantha's fine work. We have a creative community and First Saturday Socials are a great way to get out and meet some of these talented individuals.

For those who missed out on the winning bid for Samantha's fine art at the Oyster Roast, or could not attend April's social, Samantha's work is on display at The Wooden Sheep on Liberty St. for the remainder of April and possibly into May. And if you enjoyed 12 string guitarist Alberto Puetas’ music and would like to have him entertain your event, he may be reached at: alputores@yahoo.com or (912) 349-0354.

Thank you, Savannah Lavender Womyn and Samantha Claar for hosting such a fine event. We look forward to future FCN Socials with you...
Study Shows Aging Lesbian, Gays, Bisexuals, Face Health Challenges
By Healthy Living News

A new study has revealed that, in addition to dealing with the challenges of growing old, aging lesbians, gays, and bisexuals (LGB’s) have higher rates of chronic illness, mental distress, and social isolation.

The study, part of the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), is among the first of its kind to examine the challenges that the coming generation of aging lesbians, gays, bisexual’s face as it doubles in population over the next two decades. It included LGB men and women, age 50-70, and compared their status to that of aging heterosexual men and women.

The study revealed that LGB men and women suffer from more chronic health conditions than their heterosexual counterparts. That included higher rates of hypertension, diabetes, and physical disabilities. They also appeared to suffer higher rates of psychological distress.

Contributing factors to the higher rates may have included the lack of health care insurance. The study showed that although LGB’s may not be as poor and uneducated as straights, they lacked health insurance at about the same rate.

Also, study researchers believe that as patients, LGB’s may not have felt comfortable disclosing their health problems to care providers who were often heterosexual and untrained in dealing with LGB specific health issues.

“Access may be equal, but we know that quality of care for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals often isn’t,” according to Susan Cochran, a co-author of the study and professor of epidemiology at the UCLA School of Public Health.

And although health care providers are becoming more sensitive and knowledgeable about providing LGB specific care, older GLB patients may still feel stigmatized by the medical profession.

“Attitudes are changing, but we still have to push to eliminate discrimination and increase the understanding of the diverse life experiences of these individuals to improve their quality of care,” said Cochran.

The CHIS study also revealed that, at home, aging LGB men and women were more socially isolated than heterosexuals. About 50% of the GB men lived alone, a far higher rate than the 13% of the straight men in the study. For LB women, around 25% lived alone compared to 20% of straight women.

And according to the studies lead researcher, Steven Wallace, compared to heterosexuals, aging LGB men and women have fewer children or other supportive family members to fall back on.

The researchers believe that lack of family support may contribute to problems aging GLB have confronting and coping with ill health and chronic illnesses, physical disabilities and poor mental health.

“Many aging LGB do not have biological children or strong family support...” Wallace noted. “...Organizations that serve LGB communities need to take this into account and consider outreach and support mechanisms that enable these individuals to maintain their independence and ability to age safely and in good health.”

The California Health Interview Survey is one of the nations largest state health surveys and one of the largest of its type done in the U.S.
In Defense of Queer
By Mark Krueger

Last year a group of Armstrong & SCAD students asked my help with an event they wanted to hold - the QUEER POWER MARCH. Months later 500 proud young people marched from Johnson Square (the old) to Ellis Square (the new), holding banners calling for the repeal of Don’t Ask/Don’t Tell, marriage equality, domestic partnerships for city employees, women’s power, as well as banners for Georgia Equality, Act-Out, students and church groups, and others.

I could have withheld my support based on the fear that the word ‘queer’ would alienate some people, but I chose to support Jess & Laura & Tommy & Travis & Brittany because they proved that the word was accepted by many of their peers; it has been used in the titles of TV shows - QUEER AS FOLK, QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY; and it was considered more inclusive (gay men, lesbians, transgendered, bisexual, etc.) than the old ‘gay’.

I could have withheld my support based on the fear that the word ‘queer’ would frighten potential sponsors of the march. Not too many years ago, the fear of the word ‘gay’ caused it to be removed from the Savannah Pride and the defunct Savannah Business Guild. They were advised that they would be more successful if the word ‘gay’ was removed. Now the offending word is ‘queer’. I am proud that the 41 progressive AS FOLK, QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY; and it was used in the titles of TV shows - QUEER Power Movement, Pam Miller, and Thomas, Bob and Bill.

Thanks to each and every one of our Fantastic Volunteers: Carlyle, Anne, David, Kyrston, Jeremiah, Emily, Robert S., Kenya, Sakari, Erica H., Michael, Erica R., Ken, Craig, Mark, Candace, Jerry, Kevin, L. Williams, N. Carter, Courtney, Angel, Dionne, Bonnie, Angel, Charles, LeRhonda, Erika, Consweulo, William, Lamar, James, Emily, Jess, Sean, Pam, Katie, Caitlin, Daniel, Elle, Krista, Barbara, Lana, Robert D., Clinton, A. Robinson, Betty, Kim, Darl, Dewayne, Karen, Terri, Elizabeth, and W. Huff, Pat Gallagher and their fabulous paint crew.

Union Mission

The fourth Gay Volunteer Day orchestrated on Saturday, April 16, 2011 at Phoenix House exceeded all expectations and was a huge success.

Over 60 proud volunteers representing 9 Savannah area GLBT organizations came together to transform Phoenix House. By the end of the day, windows were cleaned inside and outside, ceiling tiles replaced, gutters cleaned out, steam-cleaning done, rotten wood replaced, broken fence panels repaired, trees and shrubs were pruned, raised planters repaired and pine straw distributed throughout the courtyard. Additionally, interior painting was done Saturday, April 23 by Wilson Huff, Pat Gallagher and their fabulous paint crew. A huge thank you to all participating organizations: Georgia Equality - Savannah Chapter (lead sponsoring organization), First City Network, Agape Empowerment Ministries, Stand-Out Youth, Georgia Southern University Gay/Strait Alliance, Armstrong Atlantic University Gay/ Straight Alliance, Savannah College of Art and Design Queers and Allies, Queer Power Movement, and Georgia Leg Cabin Republicans-Savannah Chapter.

Thanks to our donors: First City Network, Richard Bono, Alan Brown, Jim Daly and Donnel, Queer Power Movement, Pam Miller, and Thomas, Bob and Bill.

Union Mission

City Seeks Proposals for 2012 Cultural Services

By Jessica Putallaz, Marketing Coordinator

[SAVANNAH, Ga.] -- The City of Savannah’s Cultural Affairs Commission has issued a “Call for Proposals” for the 2012 Contracts for Cultural Services Initiative. The deadline for applications, whether postmarked or hand-delivered, will be Saturday, July 9, 2011 at 5 p.m.

In 2011, $646,200 was allocated to 14 recipients for cultural programming within the City. In 2012, funding will be available in three categories: Cultural Education and Access; Festivals; and Cultural Tourism. Each category has specific funding criteria.

To be eligible for consideration, an organization must have a non-profit 501(c) 3 status and be headquartered within City limits. Proposed programs must take place within City limits during the 2012 calendar year. Submitted proposals will be reviewed by the Cultural Affairs Commission, whose recommendations will be sent to the City Manager. The City Manager submits those recommendations to Mayor and Council for final funding approval.

Free workshops will be held to explain the 2012 Contracts for Cultural Services process. The workshops will focus on funding categories, eligibility criteria, funding priorities and the application process. Workshops will be held at the Department of Cultural Affairs’ office, located at 9 W. Henry St., on the following dates:

- **· Festivals:** May 10 at 3 pm; May 16 at 5:30 pm:
  - June 9 at 9:30 am
- **· Cultural Education & Access:** May 10 at 12 noon;
  - June 16 at 3 pm; June 2 at 5:30 pm; June 3 at 9:30 am
- **· Proposal Review:** June 6 – 10, 1pm – 5 pm

The workshops are open to the public. Registration is required.

Workshop dates and times are subject to change. Space is limited and registration is required.

For more information or to register for a workshop, please contact Michelle Hunter at 912-651-6417 or mhunter@savannahga.gov.
Tracy Turnblad wants just one thing: to dance on The Corny Collins Show, the coolest TV show in all of Baltimore! Aided by her best friend Penny, and against the wishes of her mom, Edna, Tracy becomes a local star and sets out to challenge the teen dance world. Winner of eight Tonys, including Best Musical, Hairspray is a modern classic and a worldwide hit.

“IRRESISTIBLE! Fresh, winning and deliciously tuneful!” — The New York Times

Winner of eight Tonys, including Best Musical, Hairspray is a modern classic and a worldwide hit.

Intown Close-up

Spring Cleaning at Phoenix House

Several local organizations came together on April 16th to spruce up Phoenix House, a HIV support service provided by Union Mission. Pictured above are representatives from: Georgia Equality, First City Network, Agape Empowerment Ministries, Stand Out Youth, Georgia Southern Gay/Straight Alliance, Armstrong Gay/Straight Alliance, SCAD Queers and Allies, Queer Power Movement, and Georgia Log Cabin Republicans along with several local leaders.
Hair-Raising Good Time:
Big Tunes And Lots Of Dance “Hairspray”

By Tim Hagar

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — Break out the Aqua Net — the glamour do is back! “Hairspray,” Broadway’s big musical comedy, will be rockin’ the Arts Center this spring with the music and dances of the trend-setting ’60s — and some very cool coifs.

Casey Colgan returns to Hilton Head Island April 27-May 29 (preview performances are April 27-28) to direct this new-millennium mega hit, winner of eight Tony Awards and the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Musical. He also stars as Edna Turnblad, the protagonist’s mom, in a role traditionally played by a man.

“It’s an uplifting story with lots of catchy tunes,” said Colgan, who has directed more than a dozen Arts Center musicals including “Les Miserables” and last spring’s production of “Aida.” “It’ll make you want to get up and dance.”

It’s 1962 and the Mashed Potato is all the rage on “The Corny Collins Show,” Baltimore’s homegrown version of “American Bandstand.” Pleasantly plump Tracy Turnblad (newcomer Lindsay Braverman), a 16-year-old with big dreams and even bigger hair, will do whatever it takes to claim a spot on the TV dance program and win the heart of teen idol Link Larkin.

Without ruffling so much as a hair of her ‘do, she dances her way to stardom and into the arms of her heartthrob. But this dancing dynamo doesn’t stop there. With the help of her gal pal Penny, she sets out to integrate television in Baltimore.

“It’s a social commentary on discrimination in American society in the ’60s,” Colgan said. “The landmark moment in the show comes when everybody gets to dance together.”

The show also stars Yvette Monique Clark (“Hello, Dolly!”) as Motormouth Maybelle, Robert Anthony Jones (“Man of La Mancha”) as Wilbur and Deonte Warren as Seaweed. The cast features a few familiar, local faces, including Tara Bianco, Daniel Derrer, Whitaker Gannon, Caroline Santorum, Skylar Stephens and Michael Weaver.

Based on John Waters’ 1988 cult film of the same name, “Hairspray” opened on Broadway in 2002 and ran for more than 2,500 performances. Unlike the movie, the stage musical was written with an entirely original score.

Choreographing the show is Jill Gorrie, who appeared with Colgan in the Arts Center’s first production in 1996 and most recently choreographed “Aida.” For 10 years, she has been the dance captain and resident choreographer of the European tour of “Grease” and has cast and re-staged productions of the musical in Berlin; Frankfurt, Germany; Zurich, Switzerland; Istanbul, Turkey; Lebanon; and Austria.

“‘Hairspray’ opened on Broadway in 2002 and ran for more than 2,500 performances. Unlike the movie, the stage musical was written with an entire original score.”

The costumes also reflect the changing times. Fifties poodle skirts were out; shirtwaist dresses were in. And while the clothing wasn’t flashy, the hairstyles were. In the story, Tracy wears a Jackie Kennedy bouffant teased to mountain-range proportions. Unwilling to tone it down, she gets into trouble at school and is sent to detention where she learns the new “downtown” dance moves from her African-American schoolmates.

“The hair is the most outrageous part of the costumes,” Correll said. “And there’s a lot of it. I think we have 75 wigs in the show.”

Tickets for “Hairspray” are $55 for adults and $39 for kids, or save $5 with a preview ticket April 27-28. Audiences can also save $10 to the May 1 evening performance with a Heritage pass, badge or ticket stub. Group rates are available. For information or to purchase a ticket, visit www.artshhi.com or call 843-842-ARTS.

“The League of Family”

By Randall Forrest Snead *

“A new novel of international espionage, human rights and targeted assassinations now available on AMAZON.COM”

* Search by authors’ full name or full novel title in quotations

*Available on Amazon Kindle.*

Two Sunday Services
9:15 am: meditative/contemplative
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“THE LEAGUE OF FAMILY”

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Network News
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Motivational Quotes
By Ronald Blake

Motivational quotes are the spark plugs to our wellness engines. You can have a full tank of gas, a clean carburetor, all the fluids topped off, and 300 horsepower of Detroit’s finest under the hood but you’re going nowhere without that initial spark. In your quest for well-being, you need to have a catalyst to move you from idle to ideal. Here are some motivational jolts to get your health and fitness vehicle moving.

Thomas Paine said, “The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.” You will have conflicts with making time for exercise each day. The treadmill will conflict with enjoyment of the cushioned couch and its fluffy pillows in your living room. Your body will engage in conflict with dumbbells and exercise balls as it seeks better health. Embrace these conflicts with excitement and walk through the smoke and fire. Triumph is waiting on the other side.

John F. Kennedy said, “Things do not happen. Things are made to happen.” The firefighter’s 55 pound weight loss did not just happen one day on a call with Ladder Company 14. The computer programmer’s success in the Chicago Marathon did not just happen on a Sunday in October. The 4th grade teacher’s significant drop in cholesterol level did not just happen the day before spring break at Coolidge Elementary. These people made things happen…and it took time.

Ralph Marston was quoted as saying, “What do you do today can improve all your tomorrows.” Let today be the first day in 28 years without a cigarette. Stay another 5 minutes on the recumbent bike at the gym today. Start training today for the 3 day breast cancer walk that is scheduled for November. Tomorrow is always waiting to see what you put in your piggy bank today. Invest wisely and watch the dividends grow.

Jill McLemore once said, “Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, bank today. Invest wisely and watch the dividends grow.” These motivational quotes should help get your wellness motor running. Once your car is started there’s no telling where your health and fitness can go. Send me a postcard when you get there!

Washington DC -The Obama Administration has announced the implementation of several ambitious, new, initiatives to reduce ethnic and racial health disparities.

The initiatives, part of the administration’s goal to create a healthier America, will be implemented by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Office of Minority Health, and public and private partnerships established through the National Partnership for Action (NPA).

They include implementing the nationally coordinated HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, along with the NPA’s National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity.

According to HHS, the action plan outlines goals and actions the administration will take to end health disparities. The goals and strategies of the National Stakeholder Strategy, meanwhile, provide a blueprint for cooperative, strategic, actions at the local, state, and regional levels.

Also expecting to play a role is health care reform. The Affordable Care Act should improve health care access and insurance coverage for under-served communities.

With all initiatives together the administration believes it can significantly reduce health disparities for under-served racial and ethnic minorities.

“For the first time, the United States has a coordinated road map designed to give everyone the chance to live a healthy life,” said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. “We all need to work together to combat this persistent problem so that we can build healthier communities.”

Components of the aforementioned HHS Action Plan include increasing the number of minority students being trained to become health professionals. Also, the plan calls for an increase in language translators who do outreach and serve patients with limited English language skills.

Another goal is to improve the ability of community and health-care workers to navigate the countries fast-changing medical infrastructure.

In addition, the Affordable Care Act will help improve standardization of data on race, ethnicity, language and other demographics.

“Health disparities have burdened our country for too long,” said Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Howard Koh. “The administration’s efforts will reaffirm and revitalize a national commitment to helping all persons reach their full health potential.”

At the grass roots, community level, the National Partnership for Action will also help organize individuals, groups and organizations to end health disparities.

“Where people live, learn, work and play affects their health as much as their access to health care,” said Dr. Garth Graham, deputy assistant secretary for minority health. “We have to confront the social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to health disparities if we are to fulfill the President’s goal of “winning the future.”

For more information on the initiative to end health disparities visit the National Partnership for Action site at www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa. Information on health disparities and the Affordable Care Act can be found at: www.healthcare.gov/iai/infocus/disparities
Grand jury hands up 15-count indictment against roommate of Tyler Clementi
By Kelly Heyboer & Tom Haydon - Courtesy The Star-Ledger

PISCATAWAY — In the days after Rutgers University freshman Tyler Clementi committed suicide, his roommate tried to cover up his alleged role in using a webcam to secretly watch Clementi in an intimate encounter with another man, prosecutors said today.

Dharun Ravi, 19, misled investigators by deleting text messages from his phone and changing an incriminating post about the webcam on his Twitter account, Middlesex County Prosecutor Bruce Kaplan said. The teenager also allegedly tried to convince friends not to testify against him.

A grand jury indicted Ravi, of Plainsboro, on 15 counts today as prosecutors for the first time labeled the case a hate crime. If convicted of the most serious charges, Ravi could face five to 10 years in prison, Kaplan said.

Clementi jumped off the George Washington Bridge Sept. 22, shortly after learning about the webcam. His story became national news as an example of gay bashing and cyberbullying.

The indictment handed up by a Middlesex County grand jury in New Brunswick included two counts of invasion of privacy and two counts of attempted invasion of privacy. Ravi was charged with shorty after Clementi’s suicide.

But the indictment also included several new charges related to Ravi's alleged attempts to dupe investigators by deleting text messages and replacing one of his Twitter posts with a new statement designed to mislead police. The additional charges include three counts each of tampering with evidence and hindering his own apprehension and a single count of witness tampering, the prosecutor said.

Ravi was also indicted on several bias charges. Investigators said he targeted his roommate because Clementi was gay. Though prosecutors did not give specifics, they said the evidence of Ravi's bias crimes date back to Aug. 6, the day he learned his roommate's name.

"The grand jury indictment spells out cold and calculated acts against our son, Tyler, by his former college roommate," Clementi’s parents, Jane and Joe, said in a statement released through their attorney.

"If these facts are true, as they appear to be, then it is important for our criminal justice system to establish clear accountability under the law. We are eager to have the process move forward for our criminal justice system to establish clear accountability of their case:"

Here’s what Tyler’s parents had to say about the current status of their case:

"The grand jury indictment spells out cold and calculated acts against our son Tyler by his former college roommate. We are eager to have the process move forward for justice in this case and to reinforce the standards of acceptable conduct in our society."

Steven Goldstein, chair of Garden State Equality, New Jersey’s largest gay rights organization, also praised the indictment as a step to stem bigotry. "This indictment is an important step in this heartbreakening case," Dow said. "New Jersey's bias law recognizes the terrible harm caused by acts of bigotry and hate and imposes harsher punishment on those who commit such crimes."

Steven Goldstein, chair of Garden State Equality, New Jersey’s largest gay rights organization, also praised the indictment as a step to stem bigotry. "This indictment is an important step in this heartbreakening case," Dow said. "New Jersey's bias law recognizes the terrible harm caused by acts of bigotry and hate and imposes harsher punishment on those who commit such crimes."

The charges against Molly Wei, the other student accused of spying on Clementi, were not presented to the grand jury "at this time," Kaplan said. The case remains open and the charges against Wei are still pending, he said.

Investigators said Ravi was in Wei’s room Sept. 19 when he used her laptop to remotely turn on a webcam in the room he shared with Clementi on Rutgers’ Busch campus in Piscataway. Wei and Ravi, who were both graduates of West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North, allegedly watched two men in a romantic encounter.

“Roommate asked for the room till midnight. I went into molly’s room and turned on my webcam. I saw him making out with a dude. Yay,” Ravi wrote in a Sept. 19 post on his Twitter page that was later taken down.

Prosecutors identified the men as T.C. and M.B. to protect their identities. Clementi’s family identified them as one of the men. M.B. has never been publicly identified.

Altman, Ravi's attorney, has previously said the images viewed on Wei's computer showed nothing more than hugging and kissing and were never transmitted to others.

Two days later, Ravi allegedly tried and failed to use the webcam to catch Clementi in a second private encounter with the same man after telling friends where to log on to watch. Clementi allegedly posted pictures of himself on the webcam and filed a complaint with Rutgers officials Sept. 22.

The 18-year-old accomplished violinist from Ridgewood committed suicide later that day after posting "jumping off the gw bridge sorry" on his Facebook page.

Rutgers students react to the suicide of Tyler Clementi after his sexual encounter was broadcast online Reports say that Dharun Ravi tapped into his computer’s webcam from the computer of student Molly Wei and broadcast a gay encounter between Clementi and another man over the internet. Further reports say that Clementi appears to have killed himself last week, after jumping off the George Washington Bridge. Several Rutgers students spoke to the media outside Davidson Hall about the incident.

State Attorney General Paula Dow hailed Ravi's indictment as a step to stem bigotry. “This indictment is an important step in this heartbreakening case,” Dow said. “New Jersey’s bias law recognizes the terrible harm caused by acts of bigotry and hate and imposes harsher punishment on those who commit such crimes.”

Steven Goldstein, chair of Garden State Equality, New Jersey’s largest gay rights organization, also praised the indictment as another step in the campaign against bullying. “We continue to mourn the loss of Tyler Clementi deeply. Today is a day of justice,” Goldstein said.

Dharun Ravi, left, has been indicted on charges of spying on his roommate Tyler Clementi, right, through a webcam just days before Clementi committed suicide.

Tyler Clementi’s Parents Move Forward With Lawsuit Against Roommate
Courtesy Perez Hilton.com

Back in September, we were truly saddened to hear about the suicide of Rutgers University student Tyler Clementi, who killed himself after roommates secretly filmed him having sex with another man and broadcast it over the internet.

Tyler’s parents have moved forward with a lawsuit on their deceased son’s behalf, and the Middlesex County, NJ Prosecutor’s Office announced today that a 15-count indictment was filed against Tyler’s former roommate Dharun Ravi.

Ravi could face up to five years in prison for his charges.

As far as the other responsible classmate Molly Wei is concerned, she's been charged with invasion of privacy, but her case hasn’t been presented to a grand jury YET.

Here's what Tyler’s parents had to say about the current status of their case:

"The grand jury indictment spells out cold and calculated acts against our son Tyler by his former college roommate. We are eager to have the process move forward for justice in this case and to reinforce the standards of acceptable conduct in our society."

We couldn’t agree more! We truly hope that justice is served.

Our hearts continue to go out to Tyler’s family, friends, and loved ones. Such an awful, unnecessary tragedy.

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## Facebook Removes Photo Of Kissing Gay Men, Users Respond In Anger

**By Ben Zweig**

Last Wednesday, staff members at a London pub asked a kissing gay couple to leave, prompting hundreds of Brits to participate in a “gay kiss-in,” attracting media and closing the pub for the night.

After the event, the Dangerous Minds Facebook page used a photo of two men kissing to accompany a post about the protest, but found it had disappeared by the following morning, as had the event page organizing the kiss-in:

Ah…yeah… it seems that the sight of two fully-clothed men kissing was too much for Facebook, or too much for some closet-case assholes… who complained about it.

Typically, the “report” button on Facebook flags content so that a site administrator can decide if the content violates Facebook’s (wordy) Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. Reporting content does not alone guarantee its removal; someone from Facebook must voluntarily hit the “delete” key. And according to the email Dangerous Minds received from Facebook, the photo did violate these terms:

Shares that contain nudity, or any kind of graphic or sexually suggestive content, are not permitted on Facebook.

Yes, that’s right. A photograph of two men kissing is too “graphic or sexually suggestive” for the folks at Facebook. But the onslaught of anti-Japanese comments and groups linking the tsunami with Pearl Harbor including “Karma is a bitch” and “Forget Japan, Remember Pearl Harbor” were ignored by Facebook administrators.

Don’t forget, Facebook just added “civil union” and “domestic partnership” as options in the “relationship status” field of user profiles, a progressive move on Facebook’s part. But this week’s content removal is a step backward.

Enraged Facebook users are responding by switching their default profile picture to the controversial photo, posting it on walls, and generating as many instances of the picture on the site as possible. It’s like an early Easter egg hunt for Facebook! Happy hunting!

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## Jesus as an openly gay man

**By Michael Ruse - Courtesy The Guardian - London**

What if the newly found codices provided evidence of Jesus’s same-sex activity? Michael Ruse imagines the implications

The most astounding finding from the newly discovered lead codices is that Jesus Christ was unambiguously and openly gay. He and his disciples formed a same-sex coterie, bound by feelings of love and mutual support. There are recorded instances of same-sex activity – the “beloved disciple” plays a significant role – and there is affirmation of the joys of friendship and of living and loving together.

A whole new complexion is given to that rather puzzling passage where Jesus exhorts his followers to break family ties: “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14, 26). It seems clear now that this is less a negative repudiation of family and more a positive exhortation to join in affirmation of a gay lifestyle and love.

There is at least one new parable, that of the two young men. There are clear echoes of the relationship between David and Jonathan, for Jesus speaks of one young man having his soul “knit with the soul” of the other, and loving him “as his own soul”. Intriguing is evidence that the Catholics might be closer to the truth about the status of Mary, the mother of Jesus, than are the Protestants. She has a much bigger role in the life of Jesus than many hitherto expected, with Jesus frequently returning home and making much of her.

Conversely, there is at least one incident when Jesus quarrels violently with Joseph, who shows great hostility and makes wild claims about “manliness”. Before, one might have thought that, given Mary’s virginity, Joseph’s attitude was reflecting the ambiguities of his status in the family; but now it seems more probable that we have here a classic example of the Freudian triangle: over-possessive mother, hostile father, gay son.

Why have we known so little about all of this before? A newly discovered Pauline epistle, appropriately to the Athenians, suggests a major Platonic influence, particularly of the Republic. The classically educated Paul, who was himself gay, saw that same-sex activity was inimical to the success of Christianity in the highly homophobic societies in which he lived. Hence, same-sex affections and activity were concealed, to be known to and practised by only the leaders in secret – the guardians of Christianity as one might say. Obviously, this is a tradition that has flourished and lasted. It is not by chance that John Henry Newman is being made a saint.

Finally, the most important news is that nothing in the newly discovered codices challenges in any way the essential message of Christianity. Jesus was the messiah; he died on the cross for our sins; and through his death and resurrection made possible our eternal salvation. Our overriding obligation is to love God and we do this by loving our neighbours as ourselves. Christianity will never be the same again. Christianity will go on completely unchanged.

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**A-A**

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Absolutely Fabulous Darling! Hit BBC Comedy Show to Make TV Comeback? 

Comedy writer Jennifer Saunders is said to be considering writing another series of Absolutely Fabulous after co-star Joanna Lumley confirmed they had been approached by the BBC about a new series.

Absolutely Fabulous is a BBC sitcom about two immature, chain-smoking, alcoholic fashion-obsessed Londoners that ran for three series from November 92-95 with a fourth in 2001, a fifth in 2004 and two Christmas specials. Saunders announced in 2005 that she would not write another series of the comedy, saying: “The barn calls to go to make-up and all the promotional work wear you down.”

Lumley confirmed the rumours in an interview with Playbill magazine: “Jon Plowman, who’s the Executive Producer, wrote to Jennifer, and Jen wrote to me and said, ‘Let’s talk through it. What do you think?’ And I said, ‘Bring it on.’ Because we’re all still here. Mother’s still alive – the wonderful June Whitfield. Julia Sawalha, Jane Horrocks – the basic five Js – all our names still here. Mother’s still alive and available – ish – to do it.”

She added: “I think we just have to do it. And the great thing is that because in our show, we fast-forwarded to where they’re very old and nearly dead and practically plugged into vodka machines and things. It doesn’t matter how beyond [the original series] we do it because we know they’ve been that, that they still were Patsy and Edina at the time. So this makes it heaven!”

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will be holding a hearing on May 13 addressing inter-student violence targeted against LGBT youth. According to Commissioner Roberta Achtenberg, the event is historic as it will be the first time the Civil Rights Commission will host a hearing on an LGBT-related issue.

We’ve received a specific request to encourage our members touched by inter-student violence targeted against LGBT youth (and those perceived to be so) to share their stories in writing with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights for inclusion in the public record. The Commission defines “inter-student violence,” as any verbal and physical assaults, teasing, bullying and any other form of harassment.

The goal of the story collection is to build a record from the contributions of people all across the country. If possible, please forward this information to your networks, or otherwise share it with anyone whom you think might want to contribute a story. These letters will be an invaluable means for helping the Commission understand the nature, pervasiveness, geographic spread, and negative outcomes of such violence. Stories shared in this way will help to set the stage for testimony and filings by a number of social science, mental health, and legal experts who are contributing to these efforts from their professional perspectives.

The letters need not be formal or in any particular format. Each author is encouraged to write in their own voice and to tell their story in the terms in which it was experienced. The Commission should learn of the personalities of the students and families involved, the way things happened (or are still happening), what types of people were involved (other students, school staff, and/or others), and what outcomes are being experienced for the student and for the rest of the family. Thoughts about what types of intervention might be helpful to address the causes are important as well.

In order to humanize this issue as strongly as possible, families and individuals who are comfortable doing so are encouraged to attach a picture to the front of the letter. For those contributors who are not comfortable sharing their identity openly, they should use at least one initial to identify themselves and any people relevant to their stories since the letters will be submitted to the public record. It would be extremely helpful if writers who are maintaining anonymity could at least identify a region of the state in which they live (“Northern Georgia”, for example).

Letters should be sent, if possible, by May 1, 2011 for introduction into the Commission’s record in advance of the May 13 hearing in D.C. The letter itself should be addressed to:

Kim Tolhurst, Esq., Acting General Counsel
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
624 N. 14th St, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001

Please note that the envelope should be addressed and mailed to Commissioner Achtenberg’s special assistant, Alec Deull at:

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Enroll by mail or at the start of any monthly meeting.

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The first hour is social, open to anyone who is interested in learning about and joining our non-profit corporation. Very often, the second two hours are open to members only.

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