

# the RAINBOW CONNECTION

The Advocacy Council for Human Rights

February 2009

## ACHR Board of Directors

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## “Saving Marriage” comes to Normal

The critically-acclaimed documentary “Saving Marriage” will be shown at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 24 at the Normal Theater in Uptown Normal. Admission is free.

“Saving Marriage” chronicles the struggle in Massachusetts, which in 2004 became the first state to recognize gay marriage. Opponents immediately proposed a constitutional amendment that would reverse gains in marriage equality. The film focuses on lgbtqa activists and their fight to save marriage – a fight that will change forever how people (including them) view same-sex relationships. Civil rights history begins a new chapter in Massachusetts, and “Saving Marriage” is there on the scene as the drama unfolds.

“Saving Marriage” has been shown at many film festivals around the country and won the Best Documentary award at the New York Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and the Audience Award at the Indianapolis LGBT Film Festival.

Critics also have applauded the film. A review by the San Francisco Chronicle says “the people in “Saving Marriage” put everything they have into a cause they believe is the biggest of their lives, and there are few things more powerful to witness than that.” A critic in Variety adds that “Saving Marriage” is “a solid, engrossing mix of reportage and human-interest stories.”

The showing of “Saving Marriage” is sponsored locally by the Advocacy Council for Human Rights and coincides with National Freedom to Marry month. The Advocacy Council also wishes to thank Regent Releasing for its generous cooperation in bringing this film to Bloomington/Normal.

## Lesbian author visits B/N

Author Nancy Agabian will be in Bloomington/Normal for two events on Feb. 11 and 13.

Agabian will give a presentation at noon on Wednesday, Feb. 11 in the Third Floor East Lounge of Bone Student at Illinois State University. She also will give a reading at 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 13 at Borders in Normal.

Agabian will discuss her book “Me as Her Again: True Stories of an Armenian Daughter.” The book tells of her quests to L.A., New York and the interior of Turkey to discover a unique identity between her Armenian family history and queer identity, via the stories of her genocide survivor grandmother and her feminist mother who came of age during the conservative 1950s in America.

Agabian’s other books include “Princess Freak,” a collection of poems and performance art texts that documents her coming of age as a “bisexual Armenian Princess Freak”. In the 1990s she was a member of the punk-folk duo Guitar Boy and in 1999 released the CD “Freaks Like Me.”

Agabian’s local appearances are sponsored by the Unit for International Linkages, Office of International Studies and Programs, and the Women’s Studies Program at Illinois State University.

## Local universities receive mixed grades

Central Illinois universities – including Illinois State University and Illinois Wesleyan University – received average to poor grades on a web-based assessment conducted by the Pre-Professional Preparation Project of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance.

The project conducted the assessment by looking at the universities’ web sites to determine their LGBTQ content. Although website data do not show the day-to-day activities of college campuses, the researchers assert that web sites are frequently the information that is most readily available to prospective students, particularly queer students who may be reluctant to talk about LGBTQ issues with college counselors or university officials. In short, they say, online searches offer students an anonymous way to assess whether or not a campus is a comfortable place for queer and questioning young people, has an established “out” queer community, and prepares future teachers to engage with queer students and families in their classrooms and curricula.

Universities’ web sites were judged on university policies, student rights and responsibilities, campus life, presence of anti-lgbt content, and LGBTQ inclusion in teacher preparation.

Locally, Illinois State University received a grade of “C,” while Illinois Wesleyan University earned an “F.” Other area schools including Bradley University and Eureka College also received “F” scores. The University of Illinois at Urbana received a grade of “C.”

Statewide, 41 of the 57 schools examined earned an “F.” The University of Illinois at Chicago was the only school to receive an “A.”

For more information about the web-based assessment go to [www.illinoisafeschools.org](http://www.illinoisafeschools.org).

*more stories on back page ...*

## Bistro February events

The Bistro, 316 N. Main St. in downtown Bloomington, has packed the month of February with a variety of events.

On Friday, Feb. 6 the Bistro will celebrate First Fridays beginning at 4:30 p.m. As part of the First Fridays promotion PRIDE, State Farm Employee Resource Group, will provide free appetizers for everyone.

On Saturday Feb. 7 the bar will host an American Honey Whiskey Party. Drink sponsors will be on hand to pass out samples from 12:30 to 1:30 a.m.

The Bistro also plans two Malibu Parties – on Friday Feb. 13 and Thursday, Feb. 26.

Those lgbtqa folks looking to celebrate Valentine's Day in a different way should head to the Bistro for its "Burnt By Love" Party on Saturday, Feb. 14.

Besides these special events the Bistro continues its regular activities which include Happy Hour each Friday at 4:30 p.m. and Bingo each Thursday from 8:30 to 10 p.m.

For additional information about Bistro happenings check out the bar's myspace page at [www.myspace.com/bloomingtonbistro](http://www.myspace.com/bloomingtonbistro).

## CISSA update

CISSA, the Central Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, meets on a monthly basis to organize events for local GLBT youth and their allies. Currently, CISSA is in the midst of planning a "Love is for Everyone" bash scheduled to take place later in February.

This party will serve as a social gathering for students currently involved in their high school GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) groups.

CISSA is very happy to also report that as of January, four area schools: Bloomington High School, Normal Community High School, Normal Community West High School, and University High School, all support active GSA chapters.

CISSA is looking for help from the adult GLBT population as well. The organization is currently creating a budget based on donations, and if you would like to donate money toward the bash, or for the group to use in funding future events, please visit the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance website at [illinoissafeschools.org](http://illinoissafeschools.org). Once on the site, click on the "donate now" icon. Your funds will go directly toward your local chapter: CISSA.

More information about CISSA events and meetings will be forthcoming. Thank you for your support of the GLBT youth of Central Illinois!

## B/N Dining OUT events

The Bloomington/Normal Dining OUT group has made its dining plans for February and March.

The group will get together at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 10 at Destihl Restaurant, 318 S. Towanda Avenue in Normal. Reservations are required at Destihl so anyone planning to attend should e-mail [skeenka@yahoo.com](mailto:skeenka@yahoo.com) to RSVP attendance plans.

On March 10 the group will eat at Bandana's, 502 IAA Drive in Bloomington. Dinner time will be at 6:30 p.m.

For more information on the group go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BNDiningOUT/>.

## Calendar

### Recurring Events

#### Every Wednesday

ISU PRIDE  
7 p.m.  
Student Services Building  
Room 375  
Illinois State University  
<http://www.isupride.org>

#### Every Thursday

IWU Pride Alliance  
9 p.m.  
Evelyn Chapel  
Illinois Wesleyan University  
Bloomington

#### Every Friday

Open Door Youth Center  
7:30 – 10:30 p.m.  
Connections Community Center  
313 N. Main St., Bloomington  
[www.opendooryouthcenter.org](http://www.opendooryouthcenter.org)

#### Every Saturday

MenN2Men Group  
7:30 – 10:30 p.m.  
Connections Community Center  
313 N. Main St., Bloomington  
[www.mcatf.org/menn2men.htm](http://www.mcatf.org/menn2men.htm)

### One-Time Events

#### Tuesday, Feb. 3

4:45 p.m.  
ISU Triangle Association  
Faculty Staff Commons  
Bone Student Center

#### Friday, Feb. 6

5 p.m. - ????  
First Fridays at the Bistro  
316 N. Main St.  
Bloomington

#### Saturday, Feb. 7

12:30 – 1:30 a.m.  
American Honey Whiskey Party  
The Bistro

#### Monday, Feb. 9

5:30 p.m.  
Central Illinois Safe Schools  
Alliance Meeting  
ICB Room 2012  
Heartland Community College

#### Tuesday, Feb. 10

5 p.m.  
Advocacy Council for Human  
Rights Meeting  
Connections Community Center  
Bloomington

#### Tuesday, Feb. 10

6:30 p.m.  
Bloomington/Normal Dining OUT  
Group  
Destihl in Normal  
(Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BNDiningOUT/> for more information)

#### Wednesday, Feb. 11

Noon  
Presentation by Lesbian Author  
Nancy Agabian  
Third Floor East Lounge  
ISU Bone Student Center

#### Friday, Feb. 13

7 p.m.  
Presentation by Lesbian Author  
Nancy Agabian  
Borders in Normal

#### Friday, Feb. 13 Thursday, Feb. 26

Malibu Party  
The Bistro

#### Saturday, Feb. 14

Burnt by Love Party  
The Bistro

#### Tuesday, Feb. 24

7 p.m.  
Film – "Saving Marriage"  
Normal Theater  
Uptown Normal