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THEATRE
COMPANY**

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Community Activity Center
Normal IL

RESERVATIONS
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boxoffice@heartlandtheatre.org

The National 10- Minute Play Festival
June 2006

The Drawer Boy
September 2006

Morning's at Seven
October-November 2006

The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek
February 2007

The Women of Lockerbie
April 2007

www.heartlandtheatre.org

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Colage

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere

www.colage.org

For information about our monthly chapter meetings, call 309-287-3516, or e-mail bloominginrml@aol.com

Gretchen Shelly
Owner

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On raising a daughter ... continued from page 2

The bond we formed as a "gay" family—as two men raising a daughter—was and continues to be unique and powerful, as unique and powerful as it needs to be to keep a society that does not always understand us from pulling us apart. Today, Ron and I and our daughter and now, of course, her husband, are more than anything else really good friends—friends working together to keep watchful eyes on our two grandsons, those meteors of the next generation, as they blaze across the sky. And for the friendship we have developed as fathers and daughter, as parents and grandparents, for that above all else I find an immense gratitude in my heart today.

She discovered with great delight that one does not love one's children just because they are one's children but because of the friendship formed while raising them.

- Gabriel García Márquez (b. 1928), Colombian writer. *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985; repr. 1988, p. 207), said of Fermina Daza.

the RAINBOW CONNECTION

The Advocacy Council for Human Rights

May 2006

Voter survey reveals surprising support for GLBT couples

A recent Illinois Wesleyan University survey of 300+ registered voters in Bloomington uncovered majority support for legalization of glbt relationships.

IWU politics and government professor Tari Renner's class conducted the survey in late February and asked the following:

Which comes closest to your view - Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry, or gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry, or there should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship?

The results were 25 percent said gay couples should be allowed to marry; 34 percent said gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry; 32 percent said there should be no recognition of gay couples' relationships; and nine percent were undecided or had no response.

A March nationwide telephone survey of 1,405 voters conducted by the Pew Research Center revealed similar attitudes. Thirty-nine percent favored gay marriage while 51 percent opposed gay marriage. The researchers noted that opposition to gay marriage peaked in 2004 and has been falling since.

Earn \$ for Gay and Lesbian romantic couples UIUC study

The Relationships Research Laboratory in the department of psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is seeking gay and lesbian couples (in committed relationship of at least 1 year, and 18 years of age or older) for a single session study of emotion in gay and lesbian partnerships. Each couple will receive \$100 honorarium for participation.

The goal of the study is to understand why some couples succeed in the long-term, even in the face of adversity, while other relationships end. As the country has turned a spotlight on gay and lesbian relationships with the gay marriage debate, it is necessary to begin addressing the many unresearched facets of gay and lesbian relationships. In addition, the

Relationships Research Lab is one of the few laboratories focused on the role of earlier relationship experiences as well as gay and lesbian identity in the development of healthy adult relationships.

For more information contact Eric Clausell at eclausell@uiuc.edu. The research is sponsored by Professor Glenn I. Roisman, Department of Psychology - Developmental Division at UIUC.

A Taste of Chicago at the Bistro

Jan at the Bistro is in the process of finalizing details for the Chicago Beef Dancers to perform at the bar.

At press time the date has not been set, but check out the Bistro web site at <http://www.thebistro.us> for the specific details.

Central Illinois Transgendered Group

A social/support/discussion group for for transgendered people in central Illinois has formed.

The group met in April and is open to all transgendered people including CD, TG, TS, Genderqueer, MTF, FTM - whether gay, bisexual, straight, or other identified. Supporters, friends and family are also welcome to attend.

For more information contact Veronica at VeronicaMoonlit@mchsi.com.

COLAGE plans May 13 outing

The Central Illinois Chapter of COLAGE (Children Of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere) is planning a picnic at Lake of the Woods beginning at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 13.

People participating should bring a game to play, a dish to share and your own table service. Drinks, burgers and dogs will be provided.

The group will meet at the playground by the tower. If you plan to attend please RSVP to Gretchen by Friday, May 12 by e-mail bloominginrml@aol.com or by phone 309-287-3516.

Family Reunion Picnic reminder

Just a reminder that the annual "Family Reunion" Picnic is set for Sunday, July 16. Please make plans to join us for a day of food, fun and laughter.

If you'd like to volunteer to help plan this year's picnic please e-mail us at info@achr-il.com.

GLBT Alcoholics Anonymous Group

An Alcoholics Anonymous group for glbt persons is meeting at 7 p.m. on Thursday nights at Connections Community Center, 313 N. Main St. in downtown Bloomington.

For more information call 309-828-8471.

Interweave news

Randy from the Unitarian Church of Bloomington is working to reactivate the church's Interweave group.

Interweave is dedicated to the spiritual, political, and social well-being of Unitarian Universalists confronting oppression as lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender persons, and their heterosexual allies. Interweave facilitates the celebration of the culture and the lives of its members.

If you are interested in becoming part of the Interweave group please contact Randy at randy_0421@yahoo.com or by phone at 309-825-0696.

GLBT alternative prom May 6

An alternative prom for the glbt community and their supportive friends will kick off at 6 p.m. on Saturday, May 6 at the Bistro, 316 N. Main St. in downtown Bloomington.

Activities at the Bistro will include dancing and drag performances. Then, at 8 p.m. the festivities will move across the street with a party at the Connections Community Center, 313 N. Main St. The party will include lots of food, games, movies and music.

The evening also will include the crowning of kings and queens.

Activities at both venues will be chaperoned at all times and will be substance-free environments.

For more information contact Josh at joshking@mcatf.org or at 309-827-2437.

John Pavich debuts new Website

The Pavich for Congress Campaign has a new website with a completely new look! The updated site makes it easier for the campaign to communicate with district residents, from listing events, to posting press releases, to keeping a campaign weblog. With the primary complete, John is looking for volunteers throughout the district to help his campaign. Volunteers are needed to make phone calls, walk in parades, work at festival booths, register voters, and talk to voters to name a few. You can sign up to volunteer, donate money, or sign up for campaign email by going to www.pavichforcongress.com.

Middle Aged Gay Guy 6:

On raising a daughter

By: Tom O. McCulley

You may give them your love but not your thoughts. For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls, For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

- Kahlil Gibran (1883–1931) Lebanese poet, novelist. The Prophet, "On Children" (1923)

When I met Ron in February, 1983, he told me on the way back to his house that there was one "complication." Today, that "complication" is twenty-five, married, and the beaming mother of two rambunctious boys. Ron never meant that his then two-and-a-half year old daughter was a complication to him, but I think she had proven a complication to other men that he met while he was figuring out his own sexuality. "Cool." I said.

To this day, "cool" is my universal response to something that I need more time to digest. For instance, if someone told me a meteor was going to hit the earth and destroy all civilization in two days my response would probably be "cool." I might start screaming a few hours later.

And like a meteor, Ron's daughter was suddenly being handed off to us by a babysitter. There she was in all her blondeness, full of questions and energy and glowing with stardust as she blazed across the floor of their small apartment.

Of course I fell in love at first sight.

With father and daughter.

Ron's appearance in my life, complete with a "ready-made" family, was the answer to my wildest hopes. Despite what some misinformed nabobs might try to foist on the American public, many gay men and lesbians have enduring desires to start families. In 1983, I sure wanted to start a family, and to this day I count among my blessings the fact that Ron and I and our daughter were destined to meet.

Two gay men raising a daughter presents a number of issues, too many, I think, for this short column. But I can tell you one thing, when Ron and I appear before college students to talk about forming and maintaining a "gay" family I often brag that I know more about the female body than most straight men.

What choice was there? When Heidi began to grow breasts, I had to find out about breasts. When Heidi needed to know what was happening to her body, I had to find out what was happening to her body—a body obviously very different from my own.

Thankfully, we had help. To this day I am grateful to a cadre of women that were as unafraid as I pretended to be about sharing intimate details about their own bodies. This gay man learned what he had to do about shaving legs and armpits, "vaginal secretions," what to do to protect against yeast infections, and the side-effects of birth control pills by asking very direct questions of a series of fearless women friends who did not blush or run away.

I hate to generalize, but I argue that all gay men, for whom the female body is often a giant mystery, should undergo such an education. Straight men too! Guys, the female body is really complicated! Those "cycles" and "moods" that so often drive us crazy? They've got a biological basis that is worth learning about and respecting.

When those "cycles" started in our own daughter, Ron and I did the only thing two gay men could do; we threw a party! One night, shortly after our daughter began to menstruate, we served her The Great Red Dinner in celebration of blood. We had red steak and red wine (a little sip for the new "woman" in our lives), red beets and even a red dessert. Soon after that we also had a series of frank but gentle talks about sexuality and boys and babies and condoms and HIV.

Did we do the right thing to make such a big deal about a "first period"? I don't know; we don't talk that often to our daughter about her cycles or her sexuality anymore. I will note, however, that the open and easy way the three of us can still chat about sexuality in general is something our daughter's husband has learned to adjust too—and that says something, I think, about the healthy way we tried to treat the fact in our family that we have bodies at all.

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ACHR values our sponsors ...

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www.aches-away.com

E-mail:
info@aches-away.com

Calendar of Events

Every Friday

Open Door Youth Center
7:30 – 10:30 p.m.
Connections Community Center
313 N. Main St., Bloomington

Every Saturday

MenN2Men Group
7:30 – 10:30 p.m.
Connections Community Center
313 N. Main St., Bloomington

Saturday, May 6

Teen Alternative Prom Dance
6 p.m.
The Bistro
316 N. Main St., Bloomington

Saturday, May 6

Teen Alternative Prom Party
8 p.m.
Connections Community Center
313 N. Main St.

Saturday, May 6

Adult Alternative Prom
9 p.m.
The Bistro
Theme: Return to Oz!

Tuesday, May 9

Advocacy Council for Human Rights
5 p.m.
Conference Room
First United Methodist Church
211 N. School St., Normal

Tuesday, May 9

McLean County AIDS Task Force
6:30 p.m.
McLean County AIDS Task Force
313 N. Main St.

Saturday, May 13

COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere)
Visit to Lake of the Woods
Call Gretchen at 309-287-3516
for more details

Thursday, May 18

Bloomington/Normal chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays)
7 p.m.
Yoke Room
First United Methodist Church
211 N. School St., Normal

Sunday, May 21

HIV/AIDS Candlelight Service
6:30 p.m.
Withers Park, downtown Bloomington