

it was apparent that central Illinois needs more GLBT cinema.

If you are interested in being a part of the planning of the 2010 festival please drop us a line at [info@achr-il.com](mailto:info@achr-il.com) and we will be in touch with our meeting schedule.

### HIV Testing offered at McLean County AIDS Task Force

The McLean County AIDS Task Force, 313 N. Main St. in downtown Bloomington, is offering free, drop-in HIV testing from 2 to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays.

The task force uses the OraQuick and OraSure tests which produce a result in 20 minutes via an oral swab – no blood draw is necessary. Both male and female testers are available for those who have a preference.

Testing can also be given at other times. Appointments for testing on days other than Wednesdays can be made by contacting the task force at 309-827-2437 or David at 217-766-6848.

### ISU Journal seeks submissions for Spring GLBTA Edition

The editors at Euphemism, a creative arts/writing journal mainly run through ISU, are working on a special GLBTA edition for Spring 2010.

Editors are looking for submissions from anyone, not just students or ISU students. Categories include poetry, short fiction, visual art, original music, comic strips, and video. The word to construct writing/art around in any fashion is: Acceptance.

The deadline for submissions is Feb. 1st, 2010. Submissions should be sent to [euphem@ilstu.edu](mailto:euphem@ilstu.edu).

More details on the journal can be found at <http://english.illinoisstate.edu/euphemism/index.htm>.

**HEARTLAND THEATRE COMPANY**



**AFRAID OF FRANKENSTEIN**  
A Comedy  
by John Ficca

**November 1, 5, 6, 7, 8,  
12, 13, 14 and 15**

Everyone has something they're afraid of, and that is no less true for all in the Martino family of Oak Park Illinois. Mother, father, daughter and granddad are all at a loss as to how to deal with their own personal "Frankensteins" – until, that is, the mystery lady from Italy comes to conjure those fears away.

**Reservations: 309 452 8709 or  
boxoffice@heartlandtheatre.org**

**www.heartlandtheatre.org**

Questions that are not answered on the Euphemism website can be sent to Sarah at [sachanc@ilstu.edu](mailto:sachanc@ilstu.edu) or [euphem@ilstu.edu](mailto:euphem@ilstu.edu).

### Safe Schools Forum set for Champaign/Urbana

The East Central Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (eCISSA) will sponsor a public forum concerning the needs of LGBTQ students.

The forum will be at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 2 at the Parkland Theater, 2400 W. Bradley Avenue in Champaign.

Forum speakers will include Christopher Koch, the Illinois Superintendent of Education and a panel of speakers including local students, teachers, administrators and mental health experts.

eCISSA is an initiative of youth, adults and organizations in the greater Champaign-Urbana area concerned about the academic, social, and emotional outcomes for our community's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students.

### Task Force plans December fundraiser

Details are still being finalized, but the McLean County AIDS Task Force is planning a Dining With Friends fundraiser to take place in December.

Restaurants tentatively lined up to participate in the fundraiser include Noodles and Company (both B/N locations), Rosati's in Normal, and Kelly's Bakery & Café in Bloomington.

More specific information will be posted to the task force's web site at <http://www.mcatf.org/events/>. The information also will be published in the December issue of this newsletter.

### B/N Transgender Group Update

A new group for the local transgender community is up and running and recently attracted a good turnout to its first meeting.

The group, which does not yet have a name, plans to meet on the second Saturday of each month; upcoming meetings are Nov. 14 and Dec. 12. The social support group has as its goal to address the issues of transgender men and women in the community.

Anyone wanting to attend should contact Dana at [tginbnil@hotmail.com](mailto:tginbnil@hotmail.com) or call 217-251-3115 and ask for Dana.

# The Rainbow Connection

## November 2009

ACHR Board of Directors: Dave Bentlin; Peggy Burton; Gary Gletty; Margo Mendoza; Donna O'Crowly

The Rainbow Connection is published by the Advocacy Council for Human Rights (ACHR). Correspondence can be sent to P.O. Box 5048, Bloomington, IL 61702-5048, or e-mail [info@achr-il.com](mailto:info@achr-il.com)

## Hate Crimes Bill awaits Obama's signature

Halvorson lone local Representative to support

The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act was passed in late October by the United States Senate, sending the legislation to President Obama for his promised signature.

Both of Illinois' senators – Dick Durbin and Roland Burris – supported the legislation which was adopted as part of a larger defense appropriations bill.

Locally, only Debbie Halvorson, 11<sup>th</sup> district congresswoman, supported the bill. She voted for the original bill in April and the

larger defense appropriations bill in early October.

Rep. Aaron Schock, 18<sup>th</sup> district representative whose district covers Peoria, Springfield, and other areas in central Illinois, voted against the bill. His predecessor, Ray LaHood, supported the bill in 2007.

Rep. Timothy Johnson, 15<sup>th</sup> district congressman whose district includes parts of Bloomington/Normal and east central Illinois including Champaign/Urbana, also opposed the bill. Johnson has been a longtime opponent of

equal rights for LGBT people and opposed previous hate crime bills that included sexual orientation protections.

Johnson has consistently received scores of zero on the Human Rights Campaign Congressional Scorecard for his non-support of LGBT issues. Halvorson and Schock are freshman congressmen and have not yet received a score, but Halvorson did receive HRC's endorsement in her congressional race last year.

## Rainbow Connection goes green!

The Advocacy Council is trying to be a little greener. Help us achieve this goal by submitting your email address to ...

**[info@achr-il.com](mailto:info@achr-il.com)**

... in order to receive your electronic copy of the ACHR newsletter.

December 2009 will be the last mass snail mailing of the newsletter to our readers. We are going to cut costs and save a few trees (as well as volunteer spit) by going electronic. This will leave some extra money in the coffers so we can continue to do outreach and education in the community.

If you do not have access to the internet or would rather receive a paper copy of the newsletter we

can arrange to continue mailing the newsletter to you; in return we ask that you consider a donation of \$10 to ACHR to help offset printing and mailing expenses for the calendar year 2010.

Please know that we NEVER sell or give away our mailing list, so you will only receive newsletters and the occasional announcement from ACHR.

We don't want to lose any of our readers, so please make sure you get your email address to us before Dec 15, 2009 or send your \$10 donation to:

Advocacy Council for Human Rights  
PO Box 5048  
Bloomington IL 61702-5048

**Send your e-mail address NOW!**

## Halvorson fundraiser

Join us Dec. 10 to raise funds for the re-election of 10<sup>th</sup> district congresswoman Debbie Halvorson.

The original date of Nov. 20 had to be changed because Ms. Halvorson will be back in Washington for a session of Congress.

Halvorson, a freshman Democrat whose district includes parts of Bloomington and Normal, will be at the fundraiser. She recently voted for the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Act., and has expressed support for the Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA).

Tickets for the fundraiser will be \$15 and will be available from Advocacy Council board members, at the December First Fridays event at the Bistro, and can be requested via an e-mail to [info@achr-il.com](mailto:info@achr-il.com).

## Queer Manifesto Gay spirituality

By Gene Naden

By “gay” I include lesbians, trans-men and trans-women and bisexual persons, as well as lot of other queer folk.

A man once told me that he didn't pray for knowledge of God's will for him because if he got the answer then he might have to do something about it. This stopped my thoughts dead in their tracks. He had my number.

Later, I tried to intellectualize the problem. I figured that because I like men I was gay, and I thought about why there are gay men in the world. I made a couple of assumptions. First I assumed that the word “gay” actually means something specific about a person's psychological makeup. Second, I assumed that humanity in its present state was the result of a deliberate act of creation by some kind of deity. So I have wondered: Why in fact are there LGBT folks on earth and why is it so difficult?

On the face of it, being gay is not exactly a blessing. One of my first lovers told me that my sexual orientation would cause me more trouble than anything else in my life. It is not hard to see why he said that. There are laws punishing sexual expression between consenting adults, there is the current prejudice and discrimination, there are (or were) Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and Fred Phelps and there are the various bans on marriage. Then there is the historical Nazi Holocaust that burned gay men as well as Jews and others. Where is God in all of this? Just as no white church is going to appreciate the ongoing struggles of African Americans against racism, similarly only a gay church is going to appreciate our continuing struggle against the social sickness we call homophobia. In a mainstream church I would not be allowed to hold God accountable for these things.

It seems that a person's good words, a blessing, does not have the power to change our lives. So why do we still read the Bible? Beneath the surface it seems to me that science and factual history are not enough. A friend of mine, an atheist, recently remarked that belief in God satisfies a basic human need. For example, I believe that God made gave me a strong attraction to men for a reason. Gay women and men, maybe not me but rather those who come after me, will one day transform our society's twisted, harmful attitudes about sex and bring freedom and happiness not only for ourselves but for all kinds of people: straight as well as lesbian, transgender and bisexual men and women.

I will always remember the day when a young man passionately preached from the pulpit the need for a new scripture, a document that goes beyond the Bible and addresses life we as live it today. He was a lay person and he was practically begging for a prophet to appear. Basically, I agree. We need a new word, a new Word, a transforming agent, yes a prophet.

It is not hard to see one reason why no one has stepped forward; prophets and those like them tend to have shortened life expectancies. For contemporary example, think of Harvey Milk or Martin Luther King. Reach a little ways into the past and you have Mahatma Gandhi. Going further back, a number of saints who were canonized by the Catholic Church, you have Joan of Arc and many others. Then of course you have Jesus Christ, who may not have been the Son of God but who brought God to lots of folks and paid dearly for it.

**On the face of it, being gay is not exactly a blessing. One of my first lovers told me that my sexual orientation would cause me more trouble than anything else in my life.**

I have to believe some things not because of observation or evidence but because my life would otherwise be meaningless. So it is with our queer prophet. She will come.

One of the founders of scientific medicine, Louis Pasteur, remarked “Chance favors the prepared mind.” I think about that when the wonderful “coming-out” experiences I had in downstate Illinois and now in Chicago. The folks who helped me along, or people like them, have existed throughout my life and in all the places I have lived, but it is only recently that I looked for them or made myself known to them. What made the difference?

Now I am going to finish with an unpopular statement. Here is my bit of truth: prayer prepares the mind. Not every prayer has to start with “please.” It might be more like “God, what the hell do you want me to do?” Or even, “I can't believe this shit!” These are not the prayers you learn in Sunday school. Later, as things improve, one may find sufficient faith to utter prayers like “Thanks for this bed.” Or “Thank you for Joe/George/Juan/Pierre” or “Thanks for this apartment.” Without some kind of dialog – and yes, it is dialog – the signs of daily progress are at best nebulous and the goal elusive.

## Bistro sets November schedule, plans Dec. 13 holiday show

The Bistro, 316 N. Main St. in downtown Bloomington, has scheduled its November events and is making plans for a holiday show in December.

The kings and queens will be out in force on Nov. 13 for the Hot Spot show. The event begins at 7 p.m. and cover charge is \$5.

The monthly edition of the talent night is Friday, Nov. 27. The competition begins at 10 p.m. and there is a \$3 cover charge.

The Bistro continues its weekly Bingo nights each Thursday night beginning at 9 p.m. Lots of prizes – including some you would never find at the Catholic bingo games – go to the lucky winners!

Also, save the date of Sunday, Dec. 13 – the date of the Bistro Holiday Show. More details to follow in the December Rainbow Connection.

For more information on any of these events contact the Bistro or visit the bar's Facebook page listed under bloomingtonbistro.

## Decatur group sponsors free concert by Amasong Nov. 15

Champaign-Urbana's award-winning chorus Amasong will present a free concert at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 15 at the First Presbyterian Church of Decatur, 203 W. Prairie Avenue.

Amasong will be singing selections of the elements “Fire, Air, Earth, Water.” The free concert is being sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur (GLAD) along with the Acorn Equality Fund, Decatur Area Artist Against AIDS, and the Decatur Area Arts Council.

Amasong was founded in 1990. In 1999 the chorus won a GLAMA award as Best Choral Group in the country. Over the last decade, the group has released three critically acclaimed CD's. Their music will be

# THE BISTRO

Friends, Family,  
Community, Fun & Love.

316 North Main  
Bloomington, Illinois 61701  
309/829-2278

M-TH: 8p.m.-1a.m.,  
FRI: 4:30p.m.-2a.m.  
SAT: 8p.m.-2a.m.

on sale at the GLAD concert.

GLAD, founded in 1993, is a social group that promotes LGBT and ally fellowship. The group holds socials the second Saturday of each month.

Donations will be accepted to help offset the concert's costs. More information about GLAD can be found at [www.gladdecatur.com](http://www.gladdecatur.com). More information about Amasong can be found at [www.amasong.org](http://www.amasong.org)

## B/N Dining OUT dates

The B/N Dining OUT group will meet for dinner at 6:30 p.m. on Tues., Nov. 10 and Tues., Dec. 8.

The November dinner will be at Benigo's in Bloomington; the December dinner will be at Logan's Roadhouse in Normal.

For more information about the group visit its Yahoo Groups web page at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BNDiningOUT/>.

## First Fridays Nov. 6

Head to the Shark Bar, 3 Finance Drive in Bloomington, for the next edition of First Fridays on Nov. 6.

The food for this edition of First Fridays will be provided by the

McLean County AIDS Task Force. The bar will open by 5 p.m. so that everyone can begin their weekend on a positive, fun note.

First Fridays is a monthly promotion sponsored by local organizations including the Advocacy Council for Human Rights; ISU Triangle Association; State Farm Pride; and the McLean County AIDS Task Force.

## GLBT Film Festival Committee

The Bloomington/Normal GLBT Film Festival Committee has already met several times and are planning a FANTASTIC festival for the fall of 2010.

The festival will be Oct. 7 – 10, 2010 at the Normal Theater. The committee is in the very early stages of working on funding, film selection, marketing, and programming for the event which will feature the latest releases in GLBT cinema

Nearly 200 people attended our Oct. 6 downstate premiere of Hannah Free at the Normal Theater. The film's executive producer and one of the lead actors commented that the audience was great and that

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## New Covenant Community

An Open and Affirming/More Light congregation which welcomes all persons into full participation in the life of our community, regardless of race, gender, age or sexual orientation.

**Worship Sundays, 10:30 a.m.**  
Sunday School and childcare provided during worship

Chapel of the Campus Religious Center  
210 W. Mulberry St., Normal, IL 61761 | (309) 454-7362  
[www.nccnormal.org](http://www.nccnormal.org)

**Don't miss an issue!**

**Send your e-mail address to :**

**[info@achr-il.com](mailto:info@achr-il.com)**

Past **Rainbow Connection's** are available on the Advocacy Council website:

[www.achr-il.com](http://www.achr-il.com)