



Blind LGBT Pride The “Inside Out” Newsletter

June, 2010
Volume 10 Issue 2

The Newsletter of Blind LGBT Pride International is published in March, June, September, and December. Material to be published of interest to the membership is welcome. All material for inclusion must be received prior to the first of the month of publication. Items for publication should be sent to: Connie Torrisi, LavenderQ@comcast.net

Blind Pride is a Special Interest affiliate of the American Council of the Blind and is dedicated to facilitating the free exchange of ideas, opinions and information relative to matters of concern to blind people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Visit us at www.blind-lgbt-pride.org

EDITOR'S NOTE:

You can skip to the next article or section of the newsletter by using your word processor's Find or Search function to find the ## sign.

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From The Presidents Desk

By Don Brown

I am writing this column on the Saturday of the Memorial Day holiday weekend. I am happy to report that spring has sprung. The 72 sunny degrees, clear blue skies and warm gentle westerly breeze I'm experiencing here on my patio is exactly why 8 million of us call the San Francisco Bay Area our home.

As mentioned in my last column, I have decided to not seek a second term as President, which makes this my last opportunity to communicate with you through the "FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK" column.

As is often the case with out going presidents, I've been asked what would I consider as Blind Pride's primary accomplishments during my presidency. I believe our primary accomplishments over the past 2 years had to have been changing the name of the organization and opening meetings and meeting minutes to the Membership and the general public.

The Membership's decision to move from Blind Friends of Lesbian and Gays to Blind LGBT Pride International, in my view represented a progressive evolutionary shift from an ambiguous group identity to one that is clear, affirming and purposeful. I am pleased to have played a role in that process.

Creating more transparency in the organization by opening monthly board meetings and making meeting minutes available to the Membership and public is another significant achievement. This is an issue I felt very strongly about and promised to make happen if elected President. The new transparency does two things. It allows Members, (if they choose) more involvement in the organization's decision making process and it make board members more accountable to those who elect them.

Our enhanced world wide web presence, our now quarterly newsletter, our now impeccable membership records and data files, our new and more manageable tax filing status, our partnership with other LGBT organizations are all examples of achievements reached over the past two years.

Another question out going presidents are asked is, where do you see this organization going in the future. In a sense, I see this organization as having a re-birth as it approaches its tenth anniversary. Over the past two years I have had the opportunity to communicate with vision impaired LGBT people from many states and other nations. Many of these individuals are seeking accessible LGBT-related information and find Blind Pride accidentally. As a woman from Canada recounted, "it didn't initially occur to me to type both words "blind" and "pride" together in the search box." I'd like Blind Pride to move toward developing a inclusive outreach plan and a comprehensive information and referral service.

All and all, the future for this organization is bright and the possibilities are nearly endless.

Obviously, good leadership is essential to a growing and changing organization. Here is where you the member can help. Consider running for Blind Pride's board of directors. It doesn't matter whether you've been active in the past, nor does it matter whether you will be present in Phoenix. What matters is your interest in seeing this organization grow and evolve. Learn how to throw your hat in the ring in an article below.

Speaking of Phoenix... The Convention Coordinating committee is in full gear. Blind Pride's 2010 Convention Program is set. One of the highlights of the action packed week is Blind Pride's Tenth Anniversary Cocktail Party, scheduled for Wednesday evening. Workshops, mixers, discussion groups, and a private movie screening are all part of the plan. See the program in its entirety in this Convention edition of InsideOut and stay up to date on convention activities by visiting www.blind-lgbt-pride.org. Don't wait. Make your plans to be in the Copper State July 9th through the 17th.

In closing, I'd like to say it has been my pleasure to serve as President of this organization for the past 2 years. I'd like to thank each member of the board of directors for her/his dedication and hard work. I also thank you, the member for all of your suggestions and support. I look forward to serving Blind Pride on the Board of Directors as its Immediate Past President.

As always, I hope you enjoy this edition of InsideOut.

##Convention/Conference Announcement

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Blind LGBT Pride International

“Celebrating our past, embracing our future”

July 9 - 17, 2010

Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel

340 North 3rd Street

Phoenix, Arizona 85004

(602) 262-2500

[Blind LGBT Pride Convention 2010](#)

The Downtown Phoenix Sheraton Hotel will be the home for Blind LGBT Pride International during July 9th through the 17th 2010 and you are cordially invited to join us.

In conjunction with the American Council of the Blind's (ACB) 49th annual Conference and Convention, we will celebrate our tenth year as an ACB Special Interest Affiliate.

Whether you're interested in amercing yourself in the over 300 workshops, seminars and plenary sessions; or making new friends and getting reacquainted with old ones; or completely losing yourself in the exhibit hall with hundreds of vendors of blindness related electronics, technology and services; or getting out and experiencing Phoenix; or simply lounging by the pool with a good book, it's all waiting for you at this year's convention and conference.

Our Convention Coordinating Committee has put together an outstanding program for the week. Visit the Convention 2010 page on our website at www.blind-lgbt-pride.org to view the 2010 program in its entirety.

Again this year, our hospitality suite will be open Sunday through Friday of convention week. Feel free to drop in and say hello. I look forward to seeing you in the Copper State, where we will toast this organization's 10thth Anniversary.

With pride,
Don Brown, President
Blind LGBT Pride International

Come Fly to Us!

Special Airfare Discount for the ACB Conference & Convention

As reported in the previous issue of InsideOut, Don Wilson, Secretary of Blind LGBT Pride, has secured a special discount on airfare with AirTran Airways. Don has been an employee with AirTran Airways for over three years and was able to work with his manager to receive a special twenty percent discount off the lowest available airfare on AirTran Airways flights to the ACB Conference & Convention. This special twenty percent discount starts July 6th, three days before the event begins and ends July 20th, three days after the event is finished. This special twenty percent discount is through the AirTran Airways Event Saver program. To receive the special twenty percent discount reservations must be made through the AirTran Airways Event Savers desk. To make reservations or get more information about the special discount call the AirTran Airways Event Savers desk at 1-866-683-8368 Monday - Friday 08:00am - 9:00pm. When calling, provide the event code of PHX070910 and the event name of ACB 49th Annual Conference & Convention.

2010 Convention/Conference Program Schedule

Blind LGBT Pride International (BPI)

10thth Annual Convention/Conference

July 10 - 17, 2010

Phoenix Arizona

“Celebrating our past, embracing our future”

Convention Schedule

Saturday July 10

7:00PM - Get Together Dinner

Meet in Blind Pride Suite

Sunday July 11

3:30PM - Welcome to Phoenix Mixer

Kick off convention week at our annual mixer, where you can reconnect with old friends and make new ones.

Blind Pride Suite

Pre-registration: \$15

At the door \$17

7:00PM - Opening Ceremony of the 49th Annual ACB Convention

Join the excitement and tradition of opening session; entertainment begins at 6:30PM.

Grand Ball Room

Monday July 12

8:30AM - Noon

ACB Convention General Session
Grand Ball room

1:30PM - Workshop A

Author Michelle Alexander, talks of her amazing journey as an RN with a blind, terminally ill transgender woman.
(See ACB Convention program for location)

7:00PM - Annual Business Meeting and Elections

Blind Pride Suite

Tuesday July 13

8:30 AM - Noon

ACB Convention General Session
Grand Ball room

1:30PM - Workshop B

Kathy Martinez, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, addresses Federal initiatives impacting LGBT people in the workplace.
(See ACB Convention program for location)

9:00 PM - Discussion Group

Blind Pride Suite

Wednesday July 14

8:30AM - Noon

ACB Convention General Session
Grand Ball room

3:30PM - Workshop C

Terra Hartwell, Indigenous LGBTQ, discusses the “two spirit people” cultural belief.
(See ACB Convention program for location)

5:30PM - BPI's 10th Anniversary Cocktail Party with Jason Castonguay at the piano

Join us for cocktails, Hors D'oeuvres, and music as we celebrate our tenth anniversary.

Blind Pride suite
Pre-registration: \$20
At the door: \$22

Thursday July 15

8:30AM - Noon

ACB Convention General Session
Grand Ball room

3:00PM - Souvenir Shopping

Spend part of the afternoon shopping with us at The Arizona Center, located across from the hotel.
Meet at the Blind Pride suite

7:00PM - Movie Night with Snacks and refreshments.

Join us for a screening of "MILK".

"MILK" charts the last eight years of Harvey Milk's life. While living in New York City, he turns 40. Looking for more purpose, Milk and his lover Scott Smith relocate to San Francisco, where they found a small business, Castro Camera, in the heart of a working-class neighborhood. With his beloved Castro neighborhood and beautiful city empowering him, Milk surprises Scott and himself by becoming an outspoken agent for change. With vitalizing support from Scott and from new friends like young activist Cleve Jones, Milk plunges headfirst into the choppy waters of politics.

Bolstering his public profile with humor, Milk's actions speak even louder than his gift-of-gab words. When Milk is elected supervisor for the newly zoned District 5, he tries to coordinate his efforts with those of another newly elected supervisor, Dan White. But as White and Milk's political agendas increasingly diverge, their personal destinies tragically converge. Milk's platform was and is one of hope--a hero's legacy that resonates in the here and now.

Blind Pride suite
Pre-registration: \$5
At the door: \$7

9:00PM - Discussion Group

Blind Pride Suite

Friday July 16

8:30AM - Noon

ACB Convention General Session
Grand Ball room

5:00PM - Farewell Dinner

Top off convention week with a relaxing dinner with friends.
Meet in Blind Pride Suite

2010 Annual Business Meeting Agenda

BLIND LGBT PRIDE INTERNATIONAL

Annual Business Meeting

Monday, July 12, 2010, 7:00 pm PDT

Phoenix, Arizona

ITEM: Call to order

ITEM: Roll call

ITEM: Approval of June's minute

ITEM: Public comment

ITEM: President's remarks

ITEM: Treasurer's report

ITEM: Public relations and communications committee Annual report

ITEM: Membership committee Annual report

ITEM: Outreach committee Annual report

ITEM: I.T. committee Annual report

ITEM: Constitution and bylaws committee Annual report

ITEM: Convention coordinating committee Annual report

ITEM: Proposed constitutional amendments

ITEM: Elections

ITEM: Adjournment

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

This year, there are two proposed amendment changes for the membership to consider:

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

Article VI: Officers

Section E

(Current Language)

The term of office of each officer shall be two years and shall begin at the close of the Annual Convention at which he or she is elected. A one-time exception to this will be made so that the Secretary and Board Member At-Large elected at the 2000 convention will serve one year terms, these positions then being elected for two year terms again starting in 2001.

(Proposed Language)

The term of office of each officer shall be two years and shall begin at the close of the Annual Convention at which he or she is elected. The positions of President, Treasurer and two Board Members At Large are elected in even numbered years and the positions of Vice President, Secretary and one Board Member At Large are elected in odd numbered years. A one time exception will be made in 2010 where the positions of Vice President and Secretary elected at the 2010 convention will serve one year terms. The Vice President and Secretary positions will resume being elected for two year terms again starting in 2011.

PROPOSED AMMENDMENT TO BLIND LGBT PRIDE INTERNATIONAL'S CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS UNDER BYLAW 4 - AFFILIATE RESPONSIBILITIES.

(A(a) An Affiliate may be deleted from the Roster of Affiliates by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, for being more than two (2) months overdue in payment of annual dues. Blind LGBT Pride International, sets January 15th as the due date for dues collection.

(b) An Affiliate may be deleted from the Roster of Affiliates by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, for

1) Failing to supply the board with an up-to-date list of its members every year by February 15th.

2) Failing to satisfy the Board with respect to its purposes or membership.

3) Conducting or participating in activities contrary to the good reputation of Blind LGBT Pride International.

(c) When the Board intends to pass a motion of deletion, of an Affiliate the Affiliate concerned must be given thirty (30) calendar days notice of the intended motion and the charges on which the motion is based.

(d) Within the required thirty (30) calendar day period, the Affiliate has the right to submit answers to said charges and reasons why the motion should not pass for the Board's consideration.

(e) When a motion of deletion is passed by the Board, the Affiliate concerned has the right to appeal the action to the Board.

1) The appeal must be received by the Board within thirty (30) calendar days of the mailing of notice of deletion to the Affiliate.

2) The Membership shall vote to affirm the Board's action by a unanimous vote, or to reinstate the Affiliate by a unanimous vote.

3) The vote on the appeal shall be conducted according to the voting procedures outlined in these Bylaws, and will be held within two (2) months following the deletion vote by the board.

4) If the vote of the Board is to affirm the deletion, the deleted Affiliate will be removed from the roster of Affiliates immediately after the vote of the Board.

5) If no appeal is made, the Board's resolution to delete shall take effect thirty (30) days after its vote, and the Secretary shall enter the deletion to the roster of Affiliates and inform all Affiliates accordingly.

(E) All members of such deleted Affiliates may retain their privileges of membership in Blind LGBT Pride International and shall become Members-at-large in the case of withdrawal of their affiliate's charter.

Doing Business on the Convention Floor

by Rob Hill

How decisions are made in General Sessions.

Convention week is crammed with activities. Among them are, usually, six sessions devoted to items of interest to the whole ACB organization. There are special speakers who give news of interest to many members. The general sessions are the times during which the business of ACG is conducted.

When ACB was formed, great attention was paid to empowering members in decision-making. During the general sessions, officers and board members are elected. Also, resolutions, or statements of instruction and of policy are presented for approval by members.

Who may vote?

Individuals who are ACB members through their paying dues to an affiliate or by paying directly to ACB as a member-at-large receive a name tag upon registering at the registration desk. That name tag will include a colored dot that indicates its holder is a voting member. Affiliates may also cast a vote.

How is voting conducted?

Most votes are taken by voice and the chairperson announces which side seems to have won. However, the rules allow a demand from members that that vote be taken again by

calling the roll of affiliates. Some decisions must be made by roll call vote, such as elections of officers and of board members.

The Roll Call vote: Here's where it gets interesting.

When a vote is to be made by roll call, a standing vote is first taken. During that portion of the roll call, those wishing to vote in favor rise and tellers physically count those standing who have a dot on their name card.

Next, the name of each affiliate is called and the official delegate from that affiliate stands at a microphone and announces that affiliate's own, internal, decision. An affiliate may have assigned to it between 1 and 25 votes, depending on its number of members. Those votes may be divided in accordance with the proportion members have already stood to respond to the standing vote. Some affiliates require themselves to cast all their votes according to the majority shown in the standing vote.

A problem arises with special affiliates, such as Blind Pride. Our members may be scattered through the floor in their own state affiliate's seating. Some affiliates meet to decide in advance in what way they want their delegate to cast its vote. This is mostly done in the case of elections.

What does a delegate do?

The designated person should always be on the convention floor in case of the need to cast a roll call vote. If that person must miss all or part of a session, it's important that the alternate delegate be in place. If neither may be there, we must let the convention secretary at the front of the hall know whom we've designated as replacement. The person making that notification should be the delegate or alternate.

The delegate may cast the affiliate's votes, using his or her own judgment. The delegate may have been directed how to vote as a result of an earlier meeting of members. Blind Pride has not established an on-going policy in this matter.

Who is the delegate?

Some affiliates elect the delegate and alternate. Others allow the board to make the selection. In the past, people were chosen for their willingness to attend the general sessions and to perform voting duties. Blind Pride has no established policy on this matter.

Board of Directors Seats Available

This year there are several seats on the Blind-LGBT-Pride Board of Directors that need to be filled. Why not consider running for one of those seats? Like any organization, Blind-LGBT-Pride needs dedicated people to keep things running for the benefit of all members. The time commitment for these volunteer positions varies somewhat, depending on the position, but generally, the board meets via conference call once a month for one or two hours. Duties such as Fund-raising, Outreach, Marketing, etc. are distributed and handled by appointed individual board members.

The positions up for election in July are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and one Board Member at Large. The president and treasurer and Board Member-at-Large will be elected for a 2-year term. The Vice President and Secretary will, just this one time, be elected for a 1-year term. The reason for this is to insure an easy transition between administrations. This system was in place until recently when for one reason or another, positions were vacated mid term and had to be reassigned.

Interested individuals who have not already submitted a candidacy statement to the Nominating Committee can still run from the convention floor. Women are encouraged to consider running for a seat on the Board.

Statements by the Candidates

Several members have expressed interest in serving on the Blind LGBT Pride Board of Directors. Below are the candidacy statements submitted by individuals who wish to be considered for a seat on the Board.

Candidate for President:

Hello, my name is Don Wilson. I am submitting my name as a candidate for President for the Board of Directors of Blind LGBT Pride. I have served as Secretary of this organization since July 2009. Over the past twenty years I have served on several different Board of Directors. I have served in every capacity from President to Member at Large. I have also served as a volunteer Executive Director for an all volunteer HIV/AIDS clinic. I have enjoyed volunteer work over the years. Some of the agencies I have volunteered with include American Red Cross, National Disaster Medical System DMAT, Chilton County Theatre Guild, Theatre OUTlanta, West Alabama AIDS Outreach, HIV/AIDS Consortium of West Alabama, and Fraternal Order of Police.

In my professional career I have worked in leadership roles such as Assistant Manager for a retail drug store chain; Assistant Director of Ambulance Services for a hospital based ambulance service; Computer Center Manager for a University Student Computer Center; Office Administrator for a non profit HIV/AIDS organization; and Project Manager for AIDS Walk Atlanta.

I reside in the Atlanta Georgia area, where I have lived for the past ten years. I have been vision impaired since 2004. I have a B.S. in Technology with a Computer Information Systems emphasis. I currently work at AirTran Airways in the Atlanta Reservations Center. I am an Assistive Technology Specialist performing JAWS scripting and other information accessibility work. I have been with the company over three years. Before that I worked at the Center for the Visually Impaired as an Interim Assistive Technology Instructor.

Sincerely,

Don Wilson

Candidate for Vice President:

My name is George Ashiotis and I hereby announce my candidacy for the office of Vice President of this affiliate. In Louisville, 2008 I was voted onto the board to serve out the remainder of Jeremy Lane's term after he was voted to the position of secretary. At the convention in Orlando, 2009 I was voted on to the board for a full two year term.

It has been an honor and a great learning experience serving this affiliate, and a time of personal growth. My primary function over the last couple of years has been to chair the membership committee. As such, I have established a solid working relationship with ACB's national office; I have created and maintained a comprehensive database; and, developed a welcome packet for new members. I am also chair of the nominating committee and have worked hard on the program planning committee to make our Tenth Year Anniversary in Phoenix a memorable one. My responsibilities on the board have always been carried out with a deep sense of commitment and respect for this affiliate and its purpose.

Whether I'm elected to the office of Vice President, or serve out my term as Board Member at Large, my goal is to become more intimate with the demographics that constitute our membership, so that our programs, and advocacy work more accurately reflect our constituents. I humbly ask for your support.

By way of a brief resume, I offer the following:

Director on the Board of ART/NY (Alliance of Resident Theatres of New York), 16 years-- serving on the nominating committee. ART/NY is an umbrella organization serving over 300 not-for-profit theatres, including, The ROUNDABOUT Theatre, The NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE Company, and LINCOLN CENTER THEATER.

Theatre panel of NYSCA (New York State Council for the Arts), 3 years -- reading, assessing and ultimately making recommendations on applications from theatres seeking state funding.

Special project committee member of NYFA (New York Foundation for the Arts), one year -- developing accessibility guidelines for theatres receiving government support.

Until August 2008, I was co-artistic director of Theater By The Blind, a not-for-profit Off Broadway company. Aside from the wonderful theatrical opportunities this organization afforded me, one of my chief administrative duties was managing the theatre's data base and generating reports based on annual contributions and various demographic criteria.

Respectfully submitted,
,George Ashiotis

Candidate for Secretary:

Hello; my name is Mikey Wiesman and I would like you to consider me for the position of secretary on the board of directors of Blind LGBT Pride International. Although I have only been a member for the last year I feel quite attracted to the group and know that I can bring a refreshing new perspective to all aspects of the organization.

A bit about myself:

I am 31 years old and live in Miami, Florida and have been legally blind for 4 years and gay for 31 years and 9 months (yes, I count my time in this world). I have worked as a corporate trainer in an international company serving the highly regulated telecom industry and now dedicate my time to serve on city commissions and a myriad of local non profits. My forte is public relations and special event planning/fundraising.

I look forward to serving you as your secretary and hopefully meeting you all in person in Phoenix at the convention.

Best regards,
Mikey

Candidate for Treasurer:

My name is George Abbott and I am running for Treasurer for Blind Pride LBGT International. I have served in this capacity for the past 2 years. During my time in office, I have managed and aligned Blind Pride LGBT International's bank accounts so that the board has a better picture of the affiliate's financial status. In addition, I have provided more accountability to the board regarding the organization's bank accounts than has been done in previous years. My work as the Treasurer had been rewarding and my wish to serve again stems from my desire to support an organization that promotes integration of low vision and blind LGBT individuals in the greater gay community.

George Abbott

Candidate for Member-at-Large:

My name is Rob Armstrong and I seek a leadership position as Board Member At Large of Blind GLBT Pride International. I have been a member of Blind Pride for 1 year. I think this organization provides a much needed forum for members and interested friends to network and learn from each other. I will not be in Phoenix this year, but I enjoyed the Blind Pride events at the Orlando convention last year.

I am 59 years old with 35 years experience programming and designing mainframe computer systems. Technology is my primary interest. I do not have experience building web sites, but I would like to learn about web technology and hopefully contribute to the affiliates growing need for a strong and interactive presence on line.

I will work to strengthen participation in the organization if I am elected.

Rob Armstrong

Another Ex-Gay Movement Leader Bites the Dust?

by Tommi Avicolti-Mecca, Feb. 18, 2010

NT

A South Florida gay paper is alleging that one of the national leaders of the so-called ex-gay movement, which purports to “cure” gays of their homosexuality, has a criminal past as a con artist.

Published as a joint investigation by the South Florida Gay News and Truth Wins Out (TWO), an organization that counters the lies of the ex-gay movement, the article contends that Arthur Goldberg, the head of JONAH (Jews Offering New Alternatives to Homosexuality), went to federal prison for 18 months as part of a plea bargain for illegal dealings on Wall Street.

Goldberg serves as president of PATH, Positive Alternatives to Homosexuality, and executive secretary of National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), a group that believes homosexuality is a “developmental disorder” that is “treatable.” “Curing” queers seems to be an obsession of Goldberg’s.

K. William O’Connor, the U.S. attorney who obtained Goldberg’s conviction, described him at his sentencing two decades ago as a “man who habitually took advantage of people who were economically dependent upon him.” As an investment guru with Matthews & Wright, a New York-based underwriting firm, Goldberg earned the nickname “Abba Dabba Do” and called himself Arthur “Abba” Goldberg.

In his work with the ex-gay movement, according to the exposé, Goldberg does not use his middle name, “Abba.” He dropped it after being released from prison. He authored a book, *Light in the Closet: Torah, Homosexuality and the Power to Change*, under the name of Arthur Goldberg.

Explained TWO founder Wayne Besen: “We have long considered Arthur Goldberg a con-artist, but our investigation shows he is also an ex-con.”

“His diabolical past mirrors his dishonest present-day work with JONAH,” Besen continued. “Whether it was shady deals on Wall Street or shading the truth on gay issues, Goldberg is someone who lacks credibility and can’t be trusted.”

The ex-gay movement also lacks credibility. Sexual orientation cannot be willed away. Ever since there’s been an ex-gay movement, there’ve been reports of so-called ex-gays cruising in gay bars or having sex with men, even as they were professing that they were “cured” of their sexual desires.

Among the many fallen ex-gays: a poster child for the ex-gay movement (he was featured on the cover of *Newsweek*) was photographed and confronted at a gay bar in Washington, D.C. by gay activists; a founder of Homosexuals Anonymous was caught giving nude massages to men he counseled in order to “desensitize” them to homosexual sex; and a man who appears in the American Family Association’s anti-gay *It’s Not Gay* was found to be having unprotected sex with other men after his “cure.”

Those who want to change their sexuality desperately need help accepting who they are. They don’t need to be deceived into thinking they can become something they’re not. As for Goldberg, it doesn’t matter whether he is or isn’t the same man who went to jail

20 years ago. Leading people to believe they can magically change something as basic as their sexual orientation is morally reprehensible.

Tommi Avicolti Mecca is co-editor of Avanti Popolo: Italians Sailing Beyond Columbus, and editor of Smash the Church, Smash the State: The Early Years of Gay Liberation, which has been nominated for an American Library Association award. His website is www.avicollimecca.com.

News Flash: LGBT Nursing Homes

The Elsie Frank House at the Leonard Florence Center for Living -- a nursing home specifically for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender senior citizens -- opens this month in Chelsea, Mass.

Named for openly gay Congressman Barney Frank's mother, who had been a longtime supporter of LGBT rights at the time of her death in 2005, the home marks the nation's first Green House for LGBT elders.

"We have chosen to dedicate one of our Green Houses to the LGBT community because everyone deserves to live and receive care in a place that is filled respect for who they are, and for their dignity," Green House CEO Barry Berman told the *Golden Rainbow Times*. "Be assured that the staff at Elsie Frank have chosen to work with LGBT residents and we look forward to creating a strong sense of community in this house."

Editor's Trivia Spot

It was quietly known during his lifetime that the great Russian composer, Pyotr Llich Tchaikowsky, (1840-1893) was homosexual. A number of his relationships with men are well documented. He married in 1877, but separated from his wife after just a few months. In a letter to his brother, Tchaikowsky admitted that marriage to a woman could not change his true nature.

In Review

"Hannah Free"

DVD Film

Reviewed by Amos Lassen Two Women in Love:

Sharon Gless is Hannah Free who is at an old age home and just a few feet away

from her girlfriend for life, Rachel (Maureen Gallagher) who is comatose and under the guard of a homophobic daughter who will not let Hannah visit. Hannah seems to have the ability to speak to Rachel in her fantasy world but is only able to see her physically when her former college student, Greta (Jacqui Jackson), comes to visit. Greta is interested in Hannah's life story and she interviews her for a project she is working on and also sneaks her into see Rachel.

The film jumps between hospital scenes and flashbacks of the life of Hannah and Rachel. This is quite the tear-jerker of a film. We learn that Rachel was a widow and her relationship with Hannah included a lot of berating her for wanting to travel and see the world. The film looks at the treatment of the elderly, Christian proselytizing, the difference in generations, and the relations of family members to other gay family members and the issue of life support. Basically what makes the film important is the way it looks at gay love stories especially at the time before death. Here is lesbian love in a universe of homophobes and we know that what we see on film is what is really happening in the world today. It is a soap opera of a film that indeed documents gay love and shows us the hardships it has to deal with.

Gay Life Around the World

Gay Life in India

The criminalization of homosexuality in India dates back to 1860, when the country was still under British rule. The statute, officially Indian Penal Code Chapter XVI, Section 377, punished "whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal." Violations are punishable by a prison term up to 10 years and possible fines.

On July 2, 2009, the New Delhi High Court, under Justice S. Muralidhar, [repealed Section 377](#), decriminalizing consensual sex between LGBT adults.

In June of 2008, three Indian cities, [Bangaluru](#), Calcutta and New Delhi, held their first LGBT pride marches just days before the Naz Foundation India Trust, an activist group, presented arguments before the New Delhi High Court to repeal Section 377. The repeal of Section 377 came just days after the second pride marches in [Delhi](#), and [Bangalore](#).

Gay advocacy groups argued that Section 377 had been used by Indian police to discriminate against and blackmail India's LGBT citizens. "In India, gays and lesbians still live highly closeted lives," Vikram Doctor, a member of the Queer Media Collective, told The Washington Post. "There is still violence. There are still many desperate suicides by gay couples. There is still harassment. And there is still intense pressure to marry those they do not want to be with. But today we have a voice."

It is unclear what affect the reversal of Section 377 will have on India's transgender population. *Times of India* writes, "Even if the HC [New Delhi High Court] rules in favour of transgenders [known as hijras or eunuchs] and declares Section 377 of IPC unconstitutional, it would mean little if corresponding legal rights were not conferred

on them through amendments to the Constitution, as well as personal laws, that require moving of appropriate bills in Parliament by the political class."

Board of Directors

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