

Blind LGBT Pride The “Inside Out” Newsletter

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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, Editor, 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.

AUDIO VERSION: The Inside Out Newsletter is now available by phone! BPI’s quarterly publication is now available in an audio version by phone. To listen to the latest edition call 773 -572-7846 and follow the prompts. (Check with your provider to determine if toll charges apply.)

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From The President's Desk

By Don Brown

As I write this column, it's hard to believe that Blind Pride's twelfth annual conference and convention is just one month away. Rather than to go into convention details here, I encourage you to visit www.blind-lgbt-pride.org and click on convention 2012, to get all the pertinent information. BPI's official conference/convention announcement and program can be found within the pages of this newsletter.

I cannot wait to see you in the Blue Grass State.

Since this is my last time to speak with you as BPI's President, I'd like to take some time to share with you some of my thoughts regarding this fine organization. I'll do so within the context of a "SWOT" context. SWOT is a candid method of assessing and organization by considering its "Strengths", "Weaknesses", "Opportunities" and "Threats."

STRENGTHS:

- 1) BPI continues to be the only organization of its kind in the world.
- 2) BPI's parent organization (American Council of the Blind) has positive name recognition and a long-standing history of being a Civil rights and consumer advocacy organization.
- 3) BPI continues its demonstrated commitment to transparency by adopting and implementing an Open Meetings policy and encouraging full participation of the Membership

WEAKNESSES:

- 1) A lack of adequate internal and external communication mechanisms.

- 2) A lack of interest among Membership to assume leadership roles.
- 3) A lack of a comprehensive fund raising program.
- 4) A lack of a method to get and keep membership engaged.
- 5) The increasing costs associated with attending a National convention.
- 6) Being behind the curve with respect to effectively embracing accessible social networking opportunities.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- 1) Develop recruitment efforts both domestically and internationally.
- 2) To grow the number of affiliates.
- 3) To develop partnerships with like organizations.
- 4) To play a central role in educating the greater LGBT communities.

THREATS:

- 1) Any inability or unwillingness to embrace and/or support change within BPI.
- 2) An external perception of BPI not being inclusive of people who are lesbian, bisexual and transgender.

I look forward to working with the new leadership in the capacity of Immediate Past President to further advance this organization's mission.

In closing, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you the Membership for allowing me to lead this organization since 2008. It has been my honor and pleasure to get to know many of you and to work with those board members who have taken their duties and responsibilities so seriously.

As always, I hope you enjoy this edition of Inside Out.

2012 Annual Convention and Conference

2012 Announcement and Program for
BLIND LGBT PRIDE INTERNATIONAL (BPI)
2012 Conference and Convention
July 6 – 14
Galt House Hotel and Suites

140 North 4th Street
Louisville, Kentucky

“Celebrating Self, Creating Community”

Dear members and friends,

In conjunction with the American Council of the Blind’s 51st annual conference and convention, Blind LGBT Pride international will celebrate its home coming in Louisville, Kentucky at the Galt House Hotel and you are invited to join us.

Waiting for you will be over 100 workshops, seminars and plenary sessions, an exhibit hall with hundreds of vendors of blindness related electronics, technology and services, city excursions and side trips, or quiet times simply lounging by the pool with a good book.

BPI’s Convention Planning Coordinating Committee has put together an outstanding program for the week. (see below) Visit the Convention 2012 page on the BPI website at www.blind-lgbt-pride.org to stay up to date with details.

Again this year, BPI’s 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 Blue Grass State, where we will celebrate our home coming and 12th anniversary.

With Pride,

Don Brown, President

President@Blind-LGBT-Pride.org

Blind LGBT Pride International (BPI)
July 6 – 14, 2012 Louisville, Kentucky
“Celebrating Self, Creating Community”

Program Schedule:

Sunday July 8th

9:00 – Get AQUAINTED BRUNCH

Meet in BPI Suite

3:30PM –WELCOME TO LOUISVILLE MARDI GRA MIXER

Kick off convention week at our annual mixer where the Big Easy meets Derby City. Get complementary beads, masks and a commemorative hurricane glass.

Pre-registration: \$15

At the door: \$17

**7:00PM - Opening Ceremony of the 51st Annual ACB
Conference and Convention**

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

Monday, July 9th

8:30 - Noon

ACB Convention General Session
Grand Ball room

7:00 pm – BPI BUSINESS MEETING AND ELECTIONS

BPI Suite
Chair: Don Brown, President
Richmond, California

Tuesday, July 10th

8:30AM - Noon

ACB Convention General Session
Grand Ball room

1:30 – Workshop A

THE STATE OF KENTUCKY'S FAIRNESS (ANTI BULLYING) LAW
This workshop will focus on the reasons for the failure of Kentucky's Fairness Law despite a reported 83% support among Kentuckians, and future legislative actions.

Chris Hartman, Director
Fairness Campaign
Louisville, Kentucky

3:30 – Workshop B

Workshop B: PARENTS OF ADULT LGBT CHILDREN COME OUT
This workshop examines the "coming out" process experienced by parents of adult LGBT children and issues they face in work, church, and community.

Shirley Lakes, President
Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
Louisville, Kentucky

9:30pm – DISCUSSION GROUP

Facilitator: Ken Rodgers
Minneapolis, Minnesota
BPI Suite

Wednesday, July 11th

8:30 - Noon

ACB Convention General Session

Grand Ball room

3:30 WHAT'S APPENNING Workshop

This fun info-share workshop will give Android and iPhone users an opportunity to demonstrate and exchange ideas about useful and fun apps they use in work, learn and play.

BPI Suite

5:30 pm - BPI's HOME COMING celebration PARTY

Join us as BPI's suite is transformed into the Winner Circle Saloon in celebration of our being chartered in Louisville in 2000.

BPI Suite

Pre-registration: \$20

At the door: \$22

Thursday, July 12th

8:30 - Noon

ACB Convention General Session

Grand Ball room

3:00PM - Souvenir Shopping

Haven't done your souvenir shopping yet? Don't worry, we've got you covered. A guided hotel shopping trip awaits you. Meet in the BPI suite.

7:00PM –BPI's Movie night with Snacks and refreshments

Join us for a private audio described screening of the Oscar winning movie "Ray" (2004). This film biography focuses on 30 years of the turbulent life of Ray Charles, one of this country's most beloved rhythm and blues, country, and gospel performers.

BPI Suite

Pre-registration: \$5

At the door: \$7

9:30 – Caucus MEETING

Chair: Rob Hill

BPI National Delegate

Tulsa, Oklahoma

BPI Suite

Friday, July 13th

8:30AM - Noon

ACB Convention General Session

Grand Ball room

1:30 – 4:00

ACB Convention General Session

Grand Ball room

10:30 pm – FAIRWELL Celebration

Meet in BPI suite

Notes on ACB General Sessions

Below are a few notes about the daily general sessions of the ACB convention. A variety of events occur and there are likely to be elements of interest to each person who attends

ACB General Business

Both the ACB president and its executive director will report on activities of the organization over the past year. The discussion centers on legislation and other advocacy activities as well as a financial report from the treasurer.

Scholarship Awards

During one general session, winners of ACB-sponsored scholarships will be introduced with a listing of each student's achievements. We usually have an outstanding group of recipients.

Blindness Business

There will be a report from the Library of Congress. In the past few years, we were kept up to date on the lengthy process for establishing digital talking books. We frequently hear from directors of important organizations serving the blind, including American Printing House and American Foundation for the Blind.

ACB Business

During the ACB business sessions, members present in the hall are allowed to vote on constitutional changes and resolutions which are often drafted by members themselves. ACB officers and board members are elected during the final general session. Each candidate for a board position, as well as the person making the nomination is given the opportunity to make brief comments. Persons may be nominated from the floor. Nominations are also put

forward by the nominating committee, which is composed of a person from each affiliate.

A brief comment about the voting process may be useful: most votes are cast by voice vote, including any resolutions. Constitutional changes and elections to office must be done by roll call vote. During a roll call, the secretary asks those in favor to rise and those standing are counted. Those on the opposite side are then asked to stand. There is a count of the standees on each side and those counts become part of the final tally. Then, the secretary calls each affiliate's delegate to announce the vote of his or her affiliate. Those numbers are then added to the standing vote totals. Each affiliate is allowed a certain number of votes, depending on the number of its members.

The general sessions offer a wealth of information and are a worthwhile way to participate in ACB.

Constitutional Amendment Change

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Article 5 Section B

Current Language

B. Voting:

Each voting member and affiliate in good standing attending an Annual Convention of Blind LGBT Pride shall be entitled to one vote. A person casting a vote on behalf of his or her affiliate may cast both his or her individual vote and the vote for his or her affiliate.

PROPOSED LANGUAGE

B. Voting:

Each voting member and affiliate in good standing may opt to vote either by electronic ballot or by attending an Annual Convention of Blind LGBT Pride and shall be entitled to one vote. A person casting a vote on behalf of his or her affiliate may cast both his or her individual vote and the vote for his or her affiliate.

1) ELECTRONIC VOTING

Each voting member and affiliate who will not be present at the Annual Convention of Blind LGBT Pride and who opts to vote electronically, does so with the understanding that they will not be able to cast a vote for a candidate running from the floor.

Bylaw Amendment Change

PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT

ELECTRONIC VOTING:

The Secretary shall provide each member and affiliate in good standing an electronic ballot at least 7 days in advance of BPI's annual Business Meeting at the ACB conference/convention.

Each ballot shall contain language regarding members and affiliates who vote electronically do so because they will not be present at the annual conference/convention and therefore forfeit the option of voting for a candidate running from the floor.

Electronic ballots must be received by the Secretary no later than 5 PM convention time on the day of the business meeting. Ballots received later than 5 PM will not be counted.

Electronic ballots will be treated as confidential.

Electronic votes will be included in the tally of the votes cast at the business meeting.

Proposed Resolution

PROPOSED RESOLUTION #12-01

Whereas, among the constitutional purposes of Blind LGBT Pride is to seek to assure adequate services to those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender by agencies and institutions serving the blind and,

Whereas the American Council of the Blind forbids discrimination in its employment practices as follows, "ACB is committed to a policy of equal employment opportunity, and does not discriminate in the terms, conditions, or privileges of employment on account of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or otherwise as may be prohibited by federal and state law."

and

Whereas The above policy of The American Council of the Blind is to be held as an example of proper practice for all agencies of and for the blind and visually-impaired,

Therefore be it resolved by Blind LGBT Pride at its annual business meeting in Louisville Kentucky on July 9, 2012 that

1. Blind LGBT pride expresses its support of the American Council of the Blind's policy of affirming a practice of not discriminating in its personnel practices based on an applicant's and/or employee's sexual orientation and

2. The American Council of the Blind urge other agencies serving persons who are blind and vision impaired to adopt a similar non discriminatory personnel policy and

3A copy of this resolution is forwarded to the Executive Director of the American Council of the blind.

Candidate Statements

Editor's Note: The following statements by candidates seeking positions on the Board of Directors have been edited only for spelling, punctuation and formatting. The content of these statements has not been altered except in terms of syntax and sentence structure for the purpose of readability.

Candidate for President: (1 candidate)

My name is Sean Hasberry, and I am 33 years old.

I'm advancing my candidacy for President of Blind LGBT Pride International (BPI)

Born in New Orleans Louisiana and currently living in Laurel Mississippi, I've worked for the Louisiana Center for the Blind, (LCB) doing their database and some teaching. Since then I've advanced through KAVI academy for the Blind.

Within complete support of BPI's mission, I believe my knowledge, skills and abilities in the areas of leadership would prove to be invaluable assets to this organization's stated goals and objectives.

Specifically, my assistive technology skills and experience in the areas of social networking and accessible electronic communications will have a direct positive impact on BPI's recruitment, membership development, education and information dissemination and fund raising efforts. In short, I am willing to work toward enhancing BPI's visibility so that it can reap the benefits due it

as it being the only organization of its kind in the world. Enhancing the Twitter page and updating the Facebook page and our youtube page. Making videos which show what we do by way of acting with persons in situations of being Blind/Gay or just a first person chat on our organization. In that respect, the world can see us clearly for who we are universally.

Completely believing in my completion of ACB's first leadership seminar, I'll be provided with a comprehensive understanding of ACB's infrastructure and the tools necessary to assume a leadership role in a special interest affiliate such as BPI.

I am a person who honors commitments, works well as part of a team, and places a high value on being responsible and accountable.

I'd appreciate your vote as we all work toward building upon past achievements of those who have tirelessly worked hard on behalf of Blind LGBT Pride International

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Hasberry

Candidate for Vice President: (1 candidate)

My name is William Burley and I wish to announce my intention to run for BPI vice president. While I am a fairly new member of BPI, I bring a wealth of nonprofit administrative work history to the table. I have worked for nonprofits and the fields of disability, LGBT rights, and human/civil rights. I believe my more than 12 years knowledge will be a strong help to our incoming president and board of directors. I have worked in the legal field since 2000. I served as president of the second largest paralegal organization in the United States. I lost my sight in late 2008. Subsequently, I became active in the blind community which was linked with my work in the LGBT community. I bring a hunger to build awareness, membership and inclusion for those in the blind LGBT community. I look forward to working with you as your vice president should you choose to see fit.

Yours and pride,
Will Burley

Candidates for Member-at-Large: (2 candidates – one position)

Candidate #1

My name is Barbara Mattson and I hereby submit my name as a straight ally candidate for board member at large.

I served in this capacity during Butch Arnold's and Don Brown's presidencies. During this time I implemented the reading, duplicating, and distribution of the cassette edition of the Inside Out newsletter. I also created a general information brochure when Blind LGBT Pride International was still BFLAG.

My membership in BPI has been continuous. I see BPI as being vital to the blind gay community and possibly even to gay people with other disabilities. Though I see any discrimination as wrong, I see gay discrimination as the worst.

I pledge to support this organization in any way I can because many of its members are not only dealing with the misconceptions about being gay, but also the negative notions about blindness.

Signed,
Barbara Mattson

Candidate #2

I would like to thank you very much for welcoming me into this branch of ACB. I'm grateful that ACB provided the opportunity for persons to utilize their leadership skills to establish this affiliate, on both the local and national levels.

Let me introduce myself. I am Mr. Tyrone White, also known as Miss Terry.

I have been a member of ACB for approximately 12 years, both in my local affiliate of the Westchester Council for the Blind, and a member in good standing in the national affiliate. I served as Recording Secretary of the New York Guide Dog Users, as part of their Board of Directors, and as Associate Membership Chair of both affiliates.

In my community, I have served on various public committees relating to disability issues, such as the Taxi & Limousine Commission, as a

Consumer Advocate, and as a board member appointed by my State Senator. I have also served on County Committees. Recently I have joined two focus groups dealing with Blind Gay issues and LGBT issues. I have had support from the Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender community in working with committees within the office of the previous County Executive.

I am established as a licensed Social Worker, both in New York City and Westchester County, with experience working on mental health issues.

All the knowledge and experience which I have acquired gives me a good foundation for being an effective board member. I am asking for your support, as well as that of board members, of my candidacy for this Member-At-Large position.

While I have diabetes, I will attend to my duties on the Board, working around my scheduled medical procedures. I've attended five past conventions. I may not be able to attend this one, due to medical treatment, I expect to attend future ones.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Tyrone White

Annual Business Meeting Agenda]

BLIND LGBT PRIDE INTERNATIONAL

Annual Business Meeting Agenda

Monday, July 9, 2012

Louisville, Kentucky

ITEM: Call to order

ITEM: Roll call

ITEM: Approval of June meeting minutes

ITEM: Public comment

ITEM: President's remarks

The year in review

The state of the organization

ITEM: Treasurer's report

Monthly expenses
Monthly revenues
Account balances
ITEM: Membership committee report
Annual report
ITEM: Communication committee report
Annual report
ITEM: I.T. Committee report
Annual report
ITEM: Constitution and bylaw committee report
Annual report (Proposed amendment)
Proposed constitutional amendment
ITEM: Conference/Convention committee report
Annual report
ITEM: Elections
Office of President
Office of Vice President
Office of Treasurer
Member-At-Large
ITEM: Adjournment

Disability Rights

This guide from the U.S. Department of Justice (Civil Rights Division) provides an overview of Federal Civil Rights Laws that ensure equal opportunity for people with disabilities. To find out more about how these laws may apply to you, contact the agencies and organizations listed within the documentation below. For persons with disabilities, this document is available in large print, Braille, audio tape, and computer disk; contact the proper agencies for details.

[PDF](#) Available for Download

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Trivia Spot

The **Scientific-Humanitarian Committee** was founded in Berlin on the 14th or 15th of May, 1897, to campaign for social recognition of homosexual, bisexual and transgender men and women, and against their legal persecution. It was the first such organization in history.

Homophobic Evangelizing in Public Schools

Shutterstock.com~ March 22, 2012

In February 8,000 public high school students in Montgomery County, Maryland, went home with fliers informing them that no one is “born gay” and offering therapy if they experienced “unwanted same-sex attraction.”

The group behind the flier, Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX), isn't the kind one expects to find represented in student backpacks. Peter Sprigg, a board member of PFOX who doubles as a senior fellow at the Family Research Council, recently told Chris Matthews that he believes “gay behavior” should be “criminalized.” PFOX president Greg Quinlan told another talk show host that gays and lesbians practice “sexual cannibalism.”

A number of Montgomery County parents, understandably concerned about the unusual flier, filed a letter of complaint with the school district. “Everything in this flier makes it sound like the goal is to be ex-gay,” said Ms. Yount-Merrell, mother of a high-schooler. “It reiterates a societal view that there's something wrong with you if you aren't heterosexual.”

In response to student questions, Superintendent Joshua Starr agreed that the flyer was “reprehensible and deplorable.” But he then pointed out, correctly, that he had no choice in the matter. A 2006 decision by the fourth circuit court of appeals made it clear that if the district allowed any outside groups to distribute fliers through the school, it could not exclude groups like PFOX.

Similar events are taking place with increasing frequency nationwide, and they represent the wave of the future in America's public schools. Indeed, at this very moment, the New York state assembly is deliberating a bill – already passed by the senate – that will allow New York's public schools to double as a taxpayer-subsidized marketing channel for extremist groups of every variety.

How did this happen to our schools?

Appropriately enough, it goes back to a lesson we all used to learn in

school – but that many people seem to have forgotten. America’s founders understood very well that the freedom of religion and the separation of church and state are two sides of the same coin. Only by keeping government out of the religion business can we ensure that religion may go about its business freely. They also understood that, as a consequence, freedom of religion is different from freedom of speech. Indeed, they guaranteed those two freedoms in two separate and distinct clauses of the first amendment.

Over the past 20 years, legal advocacy groups of the religious right – a collection of entities that now command budgets totaling over \$100m per year – have been pushing a new legal theory, one that has taken hold of some parts of the popular imagination and that has even been enshrined in recent judicial rulings. The essence of the theory is that religion isn’t religion, after all; it’s really just speech from a religious viewpoint. Borrowing from the rhetoric of the civil rights movements, the advocates of the new theory cry “discrimination” in the face of every attempt to treat religion as something different from any other kind of speech.

One implication of this novel theory is firmly embedded in the US supreme court’s 2001 6-3 decision in *Milford Central School v The Good News Club*. Justice Thomas stated in his majority opinion that to exclude a group from school because it is religious in nature is to discriminate against its religious viewpoint, and therefore to violate its free speech rights. No one challenges the exclusion of partisan political groups using the same thinking – we all recognize that partisan political groups are partisan in nature. But because religion alone is a “viewpoint”, opines Thomas, it is apparently different

Scientists Produce Eye Structures from Human Blood-Derived Stem Cells

Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science (Online Issue, March 12, 2012)

Madison, Wisconsin - For the first time, scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison have made early retina structures containing proliferating neuro-retinal progenitor cells using induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells derived from human blood.

At 72 days, stem cells derived from human blood formed an early retina structure, with specialized cells resembling photoreceptors (red) and ganglion cells (green) located within the outer and inner layers, respectively. Nuclei of cells within the middle layer are shown in blue. These layers are similar to those present during normal human eye development.

And in another advance, the retina structures showed the capacity to form layers of cells - as the retina does in normal human development - and these cells possessed the machinery that could allow them to communicate information. (Light-sensitive photoreceptor cells in the retina along the back wall of the eye produce impulses that are ultimately transmitted through the optic nerve and then to the brain, allowing you to see.)

Put together, these findings suggest that it is possible to assemble human retinal cells into more complex retinal tissues, all starting from a routine patient blood sample.

Many applications of laboratory-built human retinal tissues can be envisioned, including using them to test drugs and study degenerative diseases of the retina such as retinitis pigmentosa, a prominent cause of blindness in children and young adults. One day, it may also be possible replace multiple layers of the retina in order to help patients with more widespread retinal damage.

"We don't know how far this technology will take us, but the fact that we are able to grow a rudimentary retina structure from a patient's blood cells is encouraging, not only because it confirms our earlier work using human skin cells, but also because blood as a starting source is convenient to obtain," says Dr. David Gamm, pediatric ophthalmologist and senior author of the study. "This is a solid step forward."

In 2011, the Gamm lab at the Waisman Center created structures from the most primitive stage of retinal development using embryonic stem cells and stem cells derived from human skin. While those structures generated the major types of retinal cells, including photoreceptors, they lacked the organization found in more mature retina.

This time, the team, led by Gamm, assistant professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences in the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, and postdoctoral researcher and lead author Dr. Joseph Phillips, used their method to grow retina-like tissue from iPS cells derived from human blood gathered via standard blood draw techniques.

In their study, about 16 percent of the initial retinal structures developed distinct layers. The outermost layer primarily contained photoreceptors, whereas the middle and inner layers harbored intermediary retinal neurons and ganglion cells, respectively. This particular arrangement of cells is reminiscent of what is found in the back of the eye.

Further, work by Dr. Phillips showed that these retinal cells were capable of making synapses, a prerequisite for them to communicate with one another.

The iPS cells used in the study were generated through collaboration with Cellular Dynamics International (CDI) of Madison, Wisconsin, which pioneered the technique to convert blood cells into iPS cells. CDI scientists extracted a type of blood cell called a T-lymphocyte from the donor sample, and reprogrammed the cells into iPS cells. Cellular Dynamics International was founded by UW-Madison stem cell pioneer Dr. James Thomson.

"We were fortunate that CDI shared an interest in our work. Combining our lab's expertise with that of CDI was critical to the success of this study," added Gamm.

The research is supported by the Foundation Fighting Blindness, the National Institutes of Health, the Retina Research Foundation, the UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, the UW Eye Research Institute and the E. Matilda Ziegler Foundation for the Blind, Inc.

In Review

The Blind Doctor: The Jacob Bolotin Story ~Written by Rosaland Pearlman (2007)

Reviewed by Midwest Book Review, (Wisconsin)

The Blind Doctor: The Jacob Bolotin Story is the true-life story of Jacob Bolotin, born blind to impoverished Jewish parents in Chicago in 1888. Determined to be of service to others, Bolotin had a dream of becoming a doctor. He sold brushes and typewriters door-to-door to raise money, earned his passage through the Chicago College of Medicine, graduated with honors at twenty-four, and keenly trained his senses of touch and hearing to earn himself a name as one of the top heart and lung specialists in the city. Bolotin raised awareness about the plight of the blind, and the need to treat people with disabilities as productive citizens; he even started one of first blind Boy Scout troops in the United States. Though he died at the young age of thirty-six, Jacob Bolotin's exemplary life and his determination to overcome phenomenal challenges makes for inspirational and unforgettable reading.

Around the USA in Brief

WASHINGTON, DC :

In a nod to a dramatic shift in public opinion, Barack Obama became the first sitting president to announce his support for same-sex marriage.

Rhode Island:

Same-sex marriages in Rhode Island are recognized if performed in another state, but not if performed within the state of Rhode Island. On May 14, 2012, Governor Chafee signed an executive order recognizing out-of-state same-sex marriages.

North Carolina:

A North Carolina pastor may have thought he was simply addressing his local flock when he suggested that gays and lesbians be rounded up and held behind electrified fences until they die off. Now, he's finding himself under fire across the country. The sermon, captured on a video camera and posted on YouTube, has gone viral:

Maine:

The Christian Civic League of Maine and the National Organization for Marriage say they've combined forces to defeat the same-sex marriage referendum proposal on next November's ballot.

The chairman of Protect Marriage Maine, Rev. Bob Emrich, says it will organize groups of different faiths as well as people with no faith traditions at all in opposition to the ballot initiative. Maine voters defeated a gay marriage proposal that was on the 2009 ballot.

New Jersey:

The 20-year-old former Rutgers University student convicted of a bias crime against his roommate who soon after committed suicide was sentenced to 30 days in jail by a New Jersey judge.

Dharun Ravi had been found guilty of charges including bias intimidation, invasion of privacy, hindering apprehension and tampering with evidence after the death of Tyler Clementi just three weeks into their first semester of college. The 18-year-old freshman jumped off of New York City's George Washington Bridge after realizing Ravi had set up a video camera to record a sexual encounter between himself and another man.

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This newsletter welcomes advertisements from businesses, organizations, educational programs, as well as for products, and services.

Blind Pride’s Board of Directors retains sole discretion to reject ads, which are considered to be offensive or inappropriate for the intended audience of the newsletter.

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