

Experience THE BISTRO

*friends, family,
community, fun & love.*

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

M-TH: 8 p.m. - 1 a.m.,
F-SAT: 8 p.m. - 2 a.m.

www.myspace.com/bloomingtonbistro

Calendar

Recurring Events

Every Wednesday

ISU PRIDE Meeting
7 p.m.
Student Services Rm. 375

Every Thursday

IWU Pride Alliance Meeting
9 p.m.
Basement, Evelyn Chapel
Illinois Wesleyan University

Every Friday

Open Door Youth Center
7:30 - 10:30 p.m.
Connections Community Center
www.opendooryouthcenter.org

Every Saturday

MenN2Men Group
7:30 - 10:30 p.m.
Connections Community Center
www.mcatf.org/menn2men.htm

One-Time Events

Friday, March 28

Drag King Show
The Bistro
316 N. Main St.
Bloomington


Thursday, April 3


7 p.m.
Equal Marriage Illinois Book Club
Community Room
Bloomington Public Library

Tuesday, April 8

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

2-for-1 Special for ACHR Members & Friends!

 Bring in this ad and \$12 (Regular Price for one Adult ticket) to exchange for TWO Adult tickets at the box office before the play. **Please make reservations for TWO and mention this ACHR special offer.**



**HEARTLAND
THEATRE
COMPANY**

**ALL NEW
THEATRE SPACE
IN SAME LOCATION**
Lincoln & Beech St
One Normal Plaza
Community Activity Center
Normal IL

**RESERVATIONS
RECOMMENDED**
309 452 8709
or email boxoffice@heartlandtheatre.org

Bus Stop

by William Inge

Directed by John Kirk

April 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27 &
May 1, 2, 3, 4 - 2008

"...Mr. Inge has put together an uproarious comedy that never strays from the truth." —NY Times.

"William Inge brings to the theatre a kind of warm-hearted compassion, creative vigor, freshness of approach and appreciation of average humanity that can be wonderfully touching and stimulating." —NY Post.

[General Audiences]

More about the Play, Maps, Tickets
and Times at:

www.heartlandtheatre.org

Wednesday, April 9

Lobby Day in Springfield for Civil Unions Legislation
(see article for more information)

Monday, April 14

5 p.m.
Central Illinois Safe Schools Alliance Meeting
Connections Community Center

Saturday, April 19

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

Tuesday, April 22

6:30 p.m.
Making Schools Safe for LGBT Students
Normal Community High School

Saturday, April 26

7:30 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.)
Chicago Gay Men's Chorus and Amasong
Westbrook Auditorium at Presser Hall
Illinois Wesleyan University

the RAINBOW CONNECTION

The Advocacy Council for Human Rights

April 2008

ACHR Board of Directors

Michael Pullin; Donna O'Crowly; Margot Mendoza; Peggy Burton; Dave Bentlin; Gary Gletty

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

WGN Radio host to emcee concert



The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus and Amasong, the lesbian/feminist chorus from Champaign/Urbana, will headline a concert at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 26 in Westbrook Auditorium in Presser Hall at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington.

This year's concert will be emceed by radio personality Kathy O'Malley from WGN Radio (The Kathy and Judy Show). Kathy's funny, witty personality will only add to an evening that promises to be full of energy, laughter and good music.

The award-winning groups are making a return engagement to Bloomington/Normal following their successful 2005 concert that drew more than 300 concertgoers.

Tickets for the show are \$15 and can be purchased at the door or in advance by completing the ticket order form in this newsletter and mailing it to the Advocacy Council for Human Rights. Ticket buyers will receive an e-mail or phone call confirming that their request has been received and tickets will be at the "will call" table the night of the concert. The box office will be open at 6:30 p.m. that night.

Tickets are also available for sale at the Garlic Press, 108 W. North St. in uptown Normal.

The concert is the chief fundraiser for the Advocacy Council for Human Rights, Bloomington/Normal's LGBTQ civil rights organization. Since forming in 1995 the council has played a significant role in attaining equal protection for LGBTQ people through local actions (Normal and Bloomington human rights ordinances) and through state lobbying efforts that helped gain passage of LGBTQ-inclusive state human rights act. The Advocacy Council also serves by educating the Bloomington/Normal communities about LGBTQ concerns and advocating for the inclusion of this valuable segment of society.

For more information about the concert contact the Advocacy Council at info@achr-il.com. For directions to Illinois Wesleyan University go to the school's campus map at <http://www2.iwu.edu/aboutiwu/campus/index.shtml>.

Help needed for concert

ACHR is seeking 4 to 6 volunteers to assist with the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus and Amasong concert on Sunday, April 26, 2008 from 4:00-10:00 PM. The 7:30 PM concert is in Illinois Wesleyan's Westbrook Auditorium in Presser Hall. Pre-concert help is needed to: set-up risers on the stage; set-up tables in the lobby; and hand out programs. Post-concert help is needed to: take down risers; put away tables; and clean up the auditorium. Each volunteer will receive free admission to the concert. If you would like to assist with these tasks please send an email with your name and contact information to [<achrbn-concertvolunteer@yahoo.com>](mailto:achrbn-concertvolunteer@yahoo.com) by Monday, April 7, 2008. All are welcome but only 6 are required so people will be accepted on a first come - first served basis. Thank you for your help.

April 9 is Lobby Day for civil unions in Illinois

Hundreds of LGBTQ people will converge on the state capitol April 9 for a lobby day to help move forward important civil unions legislation.

The event, sponsored by Equality Illinois, will start with morning registration, orientation and lunch at the Stratton Building. Rep. Greg Harris, chief sponsor of HB 1826, along with Equality Illinois Director of Public Policy Rick Garcia will lead a discussion of talking points that constituents can use when they talk to their legislators.

Constituents will have an opportunity to talk to their legislators from 1 to 3:30 p.m. in the Statehouse. Afterward there will be a short debriefing followed by a reception and dinner.

The Advocacy Council would like to coordinate a contingent of constituents to visit with Rep. Dan Brady, Sen. Bill Brady, and Sen. Dan Rutherford. Although they do not support the legislation it is important that they are aware of the unfairness and challenges LGBTQ couples face when the state does not recognize their relationships.

If you are interested in joining us for Lobby Day, please contact the Advocacy Council at info@achr-il.com.

Drag Kings Take the Stage

Drag kings are front and center Friday, March 28 when the Bistro hosts a Drag King Show at the bar, 316 N. Main in downtown Bloomington.

For more information call 309-829-2278.

Can't attend Lobby Day?

Can't attend the April 9 Lobby Day for Civil Unions? We urge you to call, fax or e-mail your legislators and ask them to support Senate Bill 2436 and House Bill 1826!

Representative Dan Brady (R) 88th District (McLean County)

Springfield Office:
200-8N Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-1118
(217) 558-6271 FAX

District Office:
202 N. Prospect
Suite 203
Bloomington, IL 61704
(309) 662-1100
(309) 662-1150 FAX
dan@rep-danbrady.com

Representative Bill Mitchell (R) 87th District (Macon County)

Springfield Office:
238-W Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-8163

District Office:
332 W. Marion
Suite N-1
Forsyth, IL 62535
(217) 876-1968
(217) 876-1973 FAX
repmitchell@earthlink.net

Senator Bill Brady (R) 44th District (most of B/N, McLean County)

Springfield Office:
Senator 44th District
105D Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-6216

District Office:
2203 Eastland Drive
Suite 3
Bloomington, IL 61704
(309) 664-4440
(309) 664-8597 FAX
billbrady@senatorbillbrady.com

Senator Dan Rutherford (R) 53rd District (part of B/N, Livingston County)

Springfield Office:
Senator 53rd District

105B Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-6597

District Office:
320 N. Plum Street
Pontiac, IL 61764
(815) 842-3632
(815) 842-2875 FAX
danrutherford@danrutherford.com

Readers wanted

Rainbow Connection contributor Gene Naden now has a blog: jupitersmoons.blogspot.com. Gene's blog includes comments on issues of interest to the LGBT community as well as artificial and natural intelligence, astrophysics, computer software and other topics.

You can add comments to the blog, provided you have signed up with Google. All it takes is an email account (any account, it does not have to be Google email.)

Gene looks forward to hearing from you.

Local LGBT groups sponsor book club discussion

Equal Marriage Illinois/Bloomington-Normal and the Advocacy Council for Human Rights are sponsoring a book club discussion at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 3 in the community room of the Bloomington Public Library.

The featured book is *Why Marriage Matters* by Evan Wolfson. Wolfson, executive director of the National Freedom to Marry Project, was co-counsel in the historic Hawaii marriage case and argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*.

The book is a must-read for anyone who cares about marriage equality: lgbt people, family members, parents, friends, supporters, coworkers. The goal of the book group is to further dialogue and understanding of the marriage equality issue and why it is important that lgbt couples be afforded equal marriage rights.

Copies of *Why Marriage Matters* can be checked out from the Bloomington and Normal public libraries. Copies of the book also are on sale at Borders Books in Normal.

For more information about the book club discussion e-mail Equal Marriage Illinois/Bloomington-Normal at emi-bn@hotmail.com.

Middle Aged Gay Guy 16

"Not this time"

Tom O. McCulley

In the state of nature...all men are born equal, but they cannot continue in this equality. Society makes them lose it, and they recover it only by the protection of the law.

- Charles de Montesquieu (1689 - 1755)

It's hard to escape presidential politics these days. Senator McCain is on a whirlwind tour to establish his foreign policy credentials while at home Senators Clinton and Obama continue to fight for the heart of the Democratic Party. Just this week Senator Obama gave an eloquent and far-reaching speech about race in America. Whether one agrees with the senator's political views, the speech in and of itself was a masterful piece of rhetoric.

Obama's speech made this middle-aged gay man long for the possibility that at some future date such a speech might be delivered on the topic of how this country has treated lesbians and gays and our bisexual and transgendered sisters and brothers.

There are so many different places in Obama's speech that could pertain to the LGBT community; here's an excerpt that I found to be moving.

"For we have a choice in this country. We can accept a politics that breeds division, and conflict, and cynicism. We can tackle race only as spectacle - as we did in the OJ trial - or in the wake of tragedy, as we did in the aftermath of Katrina - or as fodder for the nightly news. We can play Reverend Wright's sermons on every channel, every day and talk about them from now until the election, and make the only question in this campaign whether or not the American people think that I somehow believe or sympathize with his most offensive words. We can pounce on some gaffe by a Hillary supporter as evidence that she's playing the race card, or we can speculate on whether white men will all flock to John McCain in the general election regardless of his policies.

We can do that.

But if we do, I can tell you that in the next election, we'll be talking about some other distraction. And then another one. And then another one. And nothing will change.

That is one option. Or, at this moment, in this election, we can come together and

say, 'Not this time.' This time we want to talk about the crumbling schools that are stealing the future of black children and white children and Asian children and Hispanic children and Native American children. This time we want to reject the cynicism that tells us that these kids can't learn; that those kids who don't look like us are somebody else's problem. The children of America are not those kids, they are our kids, and we will not let them fall behind in a 21st century economy. Not this time" (Senator Barack Obama).

Powerful words for a powerful time.

We can see the end now of a presidency that used the "gay" card to win votes and divide people, especially crucial votes among disenfranchised, uneducated, religiously fundamental white voters in rural Ohio. That's the group, in this writer's opinion, that gave the presidency to "the current occupant" in the white house in 2004. Bush used images of gay pride parades—of men dressed as women and women dressed as men—of flaming leather daddies with their padded jock-strapped crotches and motorcycle lesbians with their babies in tow—to frighten "middle America" into thinking "our kind" would bring down the very moral fiber of the USA if John Kerry won.

But the end of the Bush presidency—the end of the hate-filled rhetoric that masks itself in evangelical Christianity on one hand and in the cold calculations of vote counters on the other hand—that end has not yet arrived. We must still be vigilant. We must also, I think, as Senator Obama did in his speech, be honest about our past.

Well, let me lend a hand here to those who still want to use fear to divide our nation. I once was that thing in gay America that you fear most. Though I have spent

the last twenty-five years promoting a sort of assimilation with my straight brethren by showing the family side of my life—I was once that man in tight-tight jeans and cut-off T-shirts that danced until 3 a.m. and then went home with strangers—week after week—to screw my brains out. I was that "disco queen" who inhaled poppers until my nose bled and sometimes went home with one man at nine only to return to the bar at midnight to go home with someone else at 2 a.m.

For awhile, promiscuity was my politics. It was the angry politics of my youth and I am not ashamed that it was a part of my life. And I am still angry—angry that our causes have been too often reduced to the politics of my youth. Angry that the time of our more mature politics has not yet arrives. I am angry that our rights are not at the forefront of today's political battle, that at election time our votes will be taken for granted but our rights will once again pushed to the back burner.

I agree with Obama about one thing—maybe this time we need to focus on real issues. Maybe this time we need to remind our straight brethren about young gays being beat up in high schools, about lesbian moms losing their children, and about long-term companions being torn apart by a legal system that is still stacked against them.

This is not the time—dear readers—to go into the shadows. It is the time to get out there, be loud and proud, get our voices heard so that when—not if—when a candidate in any political race in any district in this great county tries to play the "gay card" we can join with our distinguished senator from Illinois and look our enemies in the eye and say, "No. Not this time. Not this time." This time—we will be heard.

Gretchen Shelly
Owner
309-661-1726

merry maids.

1806 E. Empire St.
Bloomington, IL 61704
309-661-1729
mmofbn@aol.com

A **ServiceMASTER**
Brand

The Advocacy Council for Human Rights presents...

The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus *and Amasong*

Share a night of musical entertainment with the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, joined by the award-winning female vocals of Amasong. We hope to see you there!

Saturday, April 26, 2008 / 7:30 p.m.

Illinois Wesleyan Westbrook Auditorium at Presser Hall

\$15 General Admission / No refunds

For more information, contact The Advocacy Council at info@achr-il.com. To locate Westbrook Auditorium, visit: www.iwu.edu/aboutiwu/campus/index.html

Tickets for the 7:30 p.m. show can be purchased by completing the order form below and mailing it to ACHR. You will be acknowledged with an e-mail message or phone call. Tickets will be available for pickup at the "will call" table the night of the show.

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone number: _____

of Tickets: _____ Total \$ enclosed (\$15 per ticket): _____

Please mail this order form with a check payable to ACHR to:

ACHR
P.O. Box 5048
Bloomington, IL 61702-5048



Making Our Schools Safe for LGBT Students

You are invited to attend a public forum focusing on the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students.

Featuring
**A Panel of Local Students
and
Parents, Teachers, and Mental Health Experts**

Tuesday, April 22, 2008, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Normal Community High School

3900 E. Raab Road, Normal, IL

CISSA Partner Organizations

ACLU of Illinois

Acorn Equality Fund

Advocacy Council for Human Rights

Central Illinois Chapter, ACLU

East Central Illinois Gay Youth Project

Heartland Faculty Assoc, AFT/IFT Local 6038

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance

Illinois State University Pride

Illinois State Triangle Assoc.

McLean County AIDS Task Force

New Covenant Community Church

Open Door Youth Center

PRIDE Employee Resource Group at State Farm

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal

CONTACT: cissa.bn@gmail.com