

## Web Sites You Should Visit:

The Shark Bar  
[www.thesharkbarbloomington.com](http://www.thesharkbarbloomington.com)

Central Illinois Gender Society  
[www.illinoisgender.com](http://www.illinoisgender.com)

Advocacy Council for Human Rights  
[www.achr-il.com](http://www.achr-il.com)

Out & About Illinois  
[www.outandaboutillinois.com](http://www.outandaboutillinois.com)

The Bistro  
[www.myspace.com/bloomingtonbistro](http://www.myspace.com/bloomingtonbistro)  
 New Covenant Community  
[www.nccnormal.org](http://www.nccnormal.org)

Lancaster's Fine Dining  
[www.lancastersrestaurant.com](http://www.lancastersrestaurant.com)

ISU Pride  
[www.isupride.org](http://www.isupride.org)

ISU Triangle Association  
[www.ilstu.edu/employee\\_groups/triangle\\_association/](http://www.ilstu.edu/employee_groups/triangle_association/)

McLean County AIDS Task Force  
[www.mcatf.org](http://www.mcatf.org)



Peoria PRIDE on the Peoria Riverfront Landing  
 For More Information:  
[www.peoriapride.com](http://www.peoriapride.com)

## Serving Our Community

### Insurance and Financial Services

Scott Simons  
 Financial Services Associate  
 The Prudential Insurance Company of America  
 2305 Village Green Place, Suite A  
 Champaign, IL 61822  
 217-398-2500  
<http://www.prudential.com/us/scott.simons>  
[scott.simons@prudential.com](mailto:scott.simons@prudential.com)



Insurance issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America, Newark, NJ and its affiliates. IFS-A113832 Ed. 10/2007

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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)

# The Rainbow Connection

## August 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)

## First Fridays back in August

After a brief hiatus in July local LGBTQ organizations and businesses are once again sponsoring First Fridays events at our local LGBTQ bars.

August kicks off with the Aug. 7 First Fridays event at the Bistro, 316 N Main St. The fun begins at 5 p.m. with a variety of finger foods and appetizers provided by the ISU Triangle Association.

Future First Fridays events include Sept. 4 at the

Shark Bar; Oct. 2 at the Bistro; Nov. 6 at the Shark Bar; and Dec. 4 at the Bistro.

The First Fridays promotions are a joint effort involving the bars and local organizations including the Advocacy Council for Human Rights; ISU Triangle Association; McLean County AIDS Task Force; Scott Simons/Prudential Financial; and PRIDE - a State Farm ERG.

For more information about First Fridays contact the Advocacy Council at [info@achr-il.com](mailto:info@achr-il.com).

## Picnic a great success!

What do you get when you combine sunny weather; great food; grilled brats, dogs and burgers; water balloons; piñatas; a rockin' raffle; and lots of fun people? A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY REUNION PICNIC!

Between 40 and 50 people attended this year's picnic and everyone had a great time. The Advocacy Council would like to thank everyone who attended, local businesses that donated raffle items, and the McLean County AIDS Task Force for donating the paper products.

Please make plans to join us next July for another edition of this summer event.

## ACHR needs YOUR information!

The Advocacy Council is in the process of updating its database and mailing list. At the present we are lacking specific e-mail addresses and would like to get your information.

Please send an e-mail to [info@achr-il.com](mailto:info@achr-il.com) with your e-mail contact information. Rest assured... we NEVER share our mailing list and database with anyone so your information is strictly confidential.

## Dining OUT events

The Bloomington/Normal Dining OUT group will dine at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 11 at Chevy's Fresh Mex, 704 S Eldorado Road in Bloomington.

For more information about the group go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BNDiningOUT/>.

## Gender Society sponsors cookout

The Central Illinois Gender Society is sponsoring a potluck/cookout from 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, August 1 at the Patton Ball Park covered shelters, 869 S. Ward St. in Macomb.

Those attending are asked to bring at least one food item to share. Attendees are also encouraged to bring games and a friend.

RSVPs for the event are requested. Please e-mail [tylana@illinoisgender.com](mailto:tylana@illinoisgender.com) with your attendance plans.

For more information about the Central Illinois Gender Society visit the group's web site at [www.illinoisgender.com](http://www.illinoisgender.com).

## Shark Bar in August

Details were still being finalized at press time, but look for watergun wars, a bean bag tournament, a masquerade ball and cookout in August at the Shark Bar, 3 Finance Drive in Bloomington.

The Shark Bar also has new hours which are:

Tuesday - 7 p.m. to midnight  
 Wednesday - 7 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
 Thursday - 7 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
 Friday - 7 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
 Saturday - 7 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
 Sunday - closed  
 Monday - closed

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For more information about Shark Bar events go to [www.thesharkbarbloomington.com](http://www.thesharkbarbloomington.com).

## Spotlight show, talent night at Bistro

Momma and her crew have whipped up an August that's sure to offer something for everyone at the Bistro, 316 N Main St.

Join in the fun on Friday, Aug. 7 as the Bistro and local LGBTQ organizations sponsor "First Fridays" from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Look for drink specials, FREE food and lots of good music and conversation at this monthly event.

The queens and kings take the stage on Friday, Aug. 14 for the 11 p.m. Spotlight Show. All of your favorite performers including Sharon Sharealike, Devin Graberass, and Decevia Mann will be on hand with DJ Rakestraw offering support in the booth. There is a \$5 cover for the show.

The last Friday of the month - in this case Aug. 28 - is home to the Bistro Talent Night hosted by Sharon Sharealike. The competition begins at 10 a.m. and there is a \$3 cover charge for the competition.

These special Fridays are in addition to the regular monthly happenings at the Bistro which include Thursday bingo nights and numerous drink specials.

For more information contact the Bistro or visit their facebook page listed under bloomingtonbistro.

## ACLU looks for transgender birth certificate concerns

The ACLU has worked for the last few years to challenge Illinois' restrictive rules for allowing transgender people to correct the gender marker on their birth certificates. In January of this year ACLU filed a lawsuit, Kirk v. Arnold, to challenge the constitutionality of these state rules.

The Kirk case challenges two

## THE BISTRO

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

aspects of Illinois' rules for getting birth certificates: 1) the rule requiring transgender persons to go to a U.S.-licensed surgeon in order to correct their birth certificate; and 2) the requirement that F to M transgender persons have genital surgery before they can get a birth certificate.

The ACLU and senior staff attorney John Knight continue to challenge these two restrictions in court, but they would like to get a better sense of the various problems people have faced in trying to get an accurate birth certificate.

To do that, John needs to hear from additional persons born in Illinois who have not been able to correct their birth certificates because of Illinois' restrictive rules. He would like to hear from people who have been affected by the 2 rules described above as well as others who have been unable to correct their birth certificate for other reasons. For example, if you or someone you know has not been able to change their birth certificate because they have not had surgery, John would like to hear from you.

Feel free to contact John:

John Knight  
Senior Staff Attorney  
ACLU LGBT & AIDS Projects  
180 N. Michigan, 2300  
Chicago, IL 60601

P: (312) 201-9740, x335  
F: (312) 288-5225  
jaknight@aclu.org  
[www.aclu.org/lgbt](http://www.aclu.org/lgbt)

## CISSA fall kick off meeting/potluck

The Central Illinois Safe Schools Alliance will kick off the new school year with a meeting and potluck at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 17 in Room 1406 CCB at Heartland Community College in Normal.

Those people planning to attend should bring a food or beverage to share. RSVPs are also encouraged and can be made by e-mailing the group at [cissa.bn@gmail.com](mailto:cissa.bn@gmail.com).

In Illinois, 43% of LGBT students were physically harassed in school in the past year because of their sexual orientation, 31% because of how they expressed their gender and 97% of LGBT students regularly heard the word \*gay\* used in a negative way in school.

(Source: GLSEN Research Brief, Inside Illinois schools: The experiences of LGBT students (2009))

Fortunately, many of our local senior high schools have GSAs (Gay Straight Alliances) to help create safer and more welcoming environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning students and their straight allies.

During the 2009-10 school year, CISSA's focus will be helping those GSAs grow and become stronger by providing connection space for their members and adult supporters to network, receive training, and develop joint programs and activities. CISSA will also focus on developing GSA support in area schools that do not have GSAs (yet!).

Please join us and other parents, teachers, families and school administrators in helping to create a stronger LGBTQ environment in Central Illinois. For more information on the group go to [www.myspace.com/cissail](http://www.myspace.com/cissail).

## Queer Manifesto: What is a Lesbian?

By Gene Naden

I use the phrase "Queer Manifesto" because "manifesto" sounds political and "queer" is inclusive. "Queer" also sounds (to me) more powerful than the acronym "LGBT."

But I struggle frequently with the question of whether and how to label myself: "gay"? "bisexual"? "a man who would have sex with men"? "queer"? I don't have any solid answers yet. Recently I told two presumably straight coworkers that I was "queer as a three dollar bill." I was trying to make clear my reason for wanting to move to the Lakeview neighborhood of Chicago and I wanted to sound assertive. I am not sure how well my choice of words served me.

Lately I have looked for answers in a book and a screenplay. In Psychology and Sexual Orientation by Janis Bohan, I was struck by the remarks of one A. Martin, quoted from the Harvard Gay and Lesbian Review:

"Society calls me a lesbian because it has a controlling stake in underlining the fact that my life partner is a woman. But I call myself a lesbian as a very personal expression of my opposition to those societal forces... In the absence of repression, there would be no need for such an identity. In the presence of it, however, my identity as a lesbian is a vital part of how I give meaning to my life and acquire the strength to survive and surmount social difficulties."

*As an individual, I simply cannot buck the flow of history. Sex and gender and sexuality have been power issues probably since the day when one human being first uttered a recognizable word to another.*

Martin has produced a definition that is personal, political and, at the same time, rational.

In my quest for meaning I viewed Tony Kushner's screenplay Angels in America. Actually I watched it twice. Anyway, there is this really powerful scene where the big shot lawyer Roy Cohn is confronted with the fact that he has AIDS. He gets angry with his doctor and says:

"Your problem, Henry, is that you are hung up on words, on labels, that you believe they mean what they seem to mean. AIDS. Homosexual. Gay. Lesbian. You think these are names that tell you who someone sleeps with, but they don't tell you that... Like all labels, they tell you... where an individual fits in the pecking order... Now to someone who does not understand this, homosexual is what I am because I have sex with men. But really this is wrong. Homosexuals are not men who sleep with other men. Homosexuals are men who in fifteen years of trying cannot get a pissant antidiscrimination bill through City Council. Homosexuals are men who know nobody and who nobody knows. Who have zero clout. Does that sound like me, Henry?"

I was fascinated with this little monologue because it seems so powerful, so true. But I don't like being identified as a loser. So, should I not call myself gay?

People like Kushner's character exist in real life. Plenty of them. In fact, the Roy Cohn in the play and movie is based on a real person. I have seen quotations where the real Roy Cohn makes remarks similar to what the fictional Cohn says above. This kind of talk really makes my tail drag. It just perpetuates the stereotype that men who have sex with men, or even men who would like to, are weak and submissive. I expend a lot of energy trying to appear powerful; at least to appear to have a powerful intellect. Sometimes I think that if people didn't say things like what Cohn said then I wouldn't have to go around trying to prove something. You could say that by reacting to homophobes like Cohn I give them more power, the power to make me defensive. As an individual, I simply cannot buck the flow of history. Sex and gender and sexuality have been power issues probably since the day when one human being first uttered a recognizable word to another. Since the beginning of the human race. When I think only of the past then I get caught up reacting to it.

That is why it is so important to be proactive, to change the world. This could mean political action at any level, or legal action. But it could just as well mean changing the experience of one lonely man or woman, or the experience of a stressed-out adolescent, or the experience of a child. It plays itself out in the words we use and the way we dress. It could mean trying to relate to your partner without concern over who is the most powerful. It could just mean dressing differently. There are an infinite number of ways to "push back" without being defensive.