

# The Rainbow Connection

June, 2012

The Rainbow Connection is published by the Prairie Pride Coalition (PPC). Send correspondence to P.O. Box 5048, Bloomington, IL 61702-5048, or e-mail [info@achr-il.com](mailto:info@achr-il.com)

ACHR Board: Dave Bentlin; Peggy Burton; Gary Gletty; Margo Mendoza; Donna O'Crowly; Elizabeth Anvick; Suzie Hutton; Olemuel Ashford; Ryan Mishler; Tony Thieman-Somora; Tony Somora



Hundreds of visitors came out to enjoy the 2nd annual Springfield Pride Festival on Sunday, May 22nd, in downtown Springfield. The Prairie Pride Coalition was among several of the booths set up during the festivities, handing out information about the group, as well as the upcoming Your Normal Film Festival this fall.

## “Like” us on Facebook!

In efforts to raise awareness of our new name, and to get information to our friends, the Prairie Pride Coalition (formerly the Advocacy Council for Human Rights) is inviting you to “like” us on our Facebook page!

The Facebook page will also carry up-to-date information about our organization, upcoming events, and access to the PPC newsletter.



Be sure to visit the page, click “like,” and pass it along to your friends!

[www.facebook.com/  
PrairiePrideCoalition](http://www.facebook.com/PrairiePrideCoalition)

## Dear Harvey to Play June 8

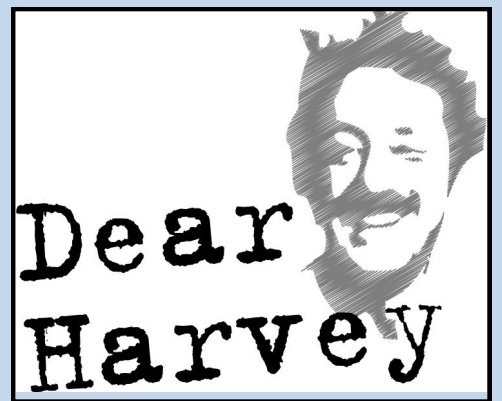
PPC is thrilled to present Patricia Loughery's drama, *Dear Harvey*, with music by Thomas Hodges, on Friday, June 8 at 7:30 p.m. at Kemp Recital Hall on the ISU campus.

The staged reading is free and open to the public. The performance will also feature local residents taking on the roles of the friends and associates of the legendary Harvey Milk.

The documentary-style play recounts the life and lasting impact of groundbreaking activist and politician Harvey Milk, as told by the people who knew him best.

The play combines music with spoken word and multimedia to tell the story.

Described as “extensively researched and beautifully constructed,” this spirited play reaffirms the lasting impact of Milk and the continued relevance of his campaign towards equality, three decades after his assassination.



## Rainbow Connection

# Reflecting on Our Issues: On Visibility

by Dave Bentlin

"And the young gay people in the Altoona, Pennsylvanias and the Richmond, Minnesotas who are coming out and hear Anita Bryant in television and her story. The only thing they have to look forward to is hope. And you have to give them hope. Hope for a better world, hope for a better tomorrow, hope for a better place to come to if the pressures at home are too great. Hope that all will be all right ... I know that you cannot live on hope alone, but without it, life is not worth living. And You...and You...and YOU...gotta give 'em hope." - *Harvey Milk*

Lately I've been thinking a lot about Harvey Milk. That isn't really surprising – after all, PPC is sponsoring a staged reading of DEAR HARVEY, a play about our most famous gay activist, on June 8. In addition, as I write this it is May 22. Harvey's birthday. He would have been 82 years old today were it not for the deranged actions of a man who served far less time than he should have.

I wonder what Harvey would think about the state of our LGBT world today. I imagine he would be pleased about the increased concern for anti-gay bullying in schools. I remember the scene in the motion picture *MILK* where Harvey takes a phone call from a gay teen in Minnesota who was contemplating suicide until he saw Harvey on television. Seeing someone like him helped that teenager realize that there was hope, that he wasn't alone, despite the bigotry around him. That phone call seemed to haunt Harvey, but if he were alive today I think he would find great comfort knowing that people like Dan Savage and groups like the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance are working to protect LGBT kids from the violence and harassment that was so commonplace during Harvey's heyday.

So much else has happened since Harvey was killed in 1978. HIV and AIDS, the growing political clout of LGBT groups like the Human Rights Campaign, Barney Frank, Ellen DeGeneres, Fred Phelps, LGBT adoption, transgender rights, gay/straight alliances, gay retirement communities, *Will and Grace*, *Brokeback Mountain*...all of these would alternately thrill and/or no doubt exasperate Harvey.

## Save the Date!



**The Prairie Pride Coalition annual Family Picnic will take place on Sunday, July 15 at Underwood Park. The PPC will provide main dishes, beverages and tableware, as well as games and prizes! Bring a dish to share if you wish. All are welcome!**



Law office of  
Allison & Mosby-Scott

**Jon D. McLaughlin**

Attorney at Law  
*Caring help when you need it most*

Phone: (309) 662-5084 · Cell: (309) 319-6206 · Fax: (309) 662-2994  
Jon@allisonmosby-scott.com · www.allisonmosby-scott.com



Law office of  
Allison & Mosby-Scott

**Michelle Mosby-Scott**

Attorney at Law  
*Caring help when you need it most*

Phone: (309) 662-5084 · Cell: (309) 310-1154 · Fax: (309) 662-2994  
Michelle@allisonmosby-scott.com · www.allisonmosby-scott.com

June, 2012

# MCATF to Sponsor AIDS Walk/Run

Help the McLean County AIDS Task Force in their tireless fight against AIDS at the AIDS Walk/Run for Life.

The 5K race is scheduled to take place on Saturday, July 21 at Tipton Park. Participants should meet at the North Pavilion to register at 7 a.m. The race will begin promptly at 7:30 a.m.

Cost to participate is \$25, with an added \$5 donation for a t-shirt. These registration fees

may be paid at the event, or before. To ensure receiving the correct size t-shirt, it is asked that participants to wish to have a

shirt pre-register by Friday, July 6.

More information can be obtained through the organization's website: [www.mcatf.org](http://www.mcatf.org).

Name: _____	Check One: <input type="checkbox"/> Walker <input type="checkbox"/> Runner <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer
Address: _____	Age on date of race (runners) _____
City/State/Zip: _____	Gender (runners) _____
Phone: _____	T-shirt Size (S,M,L,XL, XXL,XXXL) + \$5.00
Email: _____	(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)
Registration Fee of \$25 per walker/runner (\$20 for students with ID) may be paid in advance or at the start of the walk/run. To assure receiving a t-shirt, your registration fee must be prepaid no later than July 6, 2012.	
To help cover the cost of t-shirt please add \$5.00 to your donation.	
<i>All walkers &amp; runners must read and sign the waiver below:</i>	
For consideration of the foregoing, I for myself, my executors, administrators and assignees, do hereby release and discharge the McLean County AIDS Task Force and other sponsors and supporters for all claims and damages, demands, actions, whatever in any manner arising or growing out of my participation in this walk/run. I attest and verify that I have full knowledge of risk involved in this event and I am physically trained to participate in this event. I grant permission to all the foregoing to use any photographs, motion pictures, recordings or any other record of this event for any legitimate purpose.	
Signature: _____	Date: _____
Under 18 Years Parent/Guardian Signature: _____	
Mail to: MCATF, 1100 N Beech St, Suite 11B, Normal, IL 61761	
(MCATF is an all volunteer non-profit organization, 501c(3) tax status provided through Illinois Prairie Community Foundation)	

## Calendar

- **Friday, June 1**—First Fridays in downtown Bloomington. Come to the Bistro and enjoy appetizers and drink specials, hosted by the Open Worship Church of Hope.
- **Saturday, June 2**—Plain Jane performs at the Bistro
- **Saturday, June 9**—The Transgender Support Group meets the second Saturday of each month at the Community Room of the Heartland Community Bank—200 W. College Avenue in Normal.
- **Monday, June 11**—PFLAG meets on the 2nd Monday of each month from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian-Universalist Church—1613 East Emerson Street in Bloomington.
- **Friday, June 8 and 15**—The Mr. and Miss Bistro Pageants will take place at the Bistro in downtown Bloomington.

Gretchen Shelly  
Owner  
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1702 W. College Ave  
Suite A-3  
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**TREY POLESKY, MSW, LSW**

Individual, Couples, and Family Counseling

2416 E. Washington Street  
Suite A2  
Bloomington, IL 61704

treypolessky@gmail.com  
[www.tinyurl.com/counseling1](http://www.tinyurl.com/counseling1)

Phone (773) 819-5428  
Fax (206) 426-1837



# On Visibility

*Continued from page 2*

Safe to say he would be disgusted by Proposition 8, yet heartened by the actions of other states that provide same-sex couples with either marriage or civil unions options. No doubt he would be thrilled that for the first time a sitting U.S. president has voiced support for marriage equality...yet he would also be muttering the question "what took you so long?"

But I wonder if he also might have some harsh words for our community, specifically our complacency and nearsightedness on some of the issues. According to the McLean County Clerk's office, 90 same-sex couples have applied for civil union licenses since the law went into effect last June (none of the 90 unions have been dissolved by the way). Yet none of these couples have opted to celebrate their unions via a formal announcement in the *Pantagraph*.

Now I'm not one to shill on behalf of our local newspaper. Over the years they have opposed civil rights legislation for LGBT people; in their defense, they have become a bit more progressive. Still, early on they chose to side with the vocal opposition instead of taking a more courageous stand against discrimination.

So let's be clear: the *Pantagraph's* revenue from paid civil union announcements is of no interest to me. But I wonder... why are the happily "civilized" couples out there not sharing their joy similar to the married straights who foist their nuptials in our faces every Sunday? Are these same-sex couples not proud of their newly-recognized relationships? I would guess that's not the case. Are they afraid of retribution? I am sure at least some – though not all – of them fear this, although their names are already a part of the public record at the County Clerk's office and in the records section that runs in each Sunday's newspaper. Are some simply on a budget and thus can't afford a paid announcement? That might be, although I know at least one local couple who spent several thousand dollars on their civil union reception.

By now some of you are probably wondering why I give a damn about all this. At the moment I'm single so none of this immediately or personally affects me, although I hope to remedy that situation in the near future. So why is this stuck in my craw?

It all originates with Harvey Milk's famous words, his words that implored the gays and lesbians to come out, to be an example for not only their contemporaries, but for the

future generations like that young teenager in Minnesota who was looking for any small scrap of evidence that he was not alone, that his feelings were not wrong, that this was a world where he could proudly take his place as an openly-gay man.

Our visibility is our life blood. If we are invisible we can't be role models, and if our younger generations don't see the potential for what they can be the change we all hope for will still happen – for sure – but it will no doubt be a slower journey. Let's do whatever we can to speed that bus along.

Happy Pride Month to all!

## Bistro Bears Batter Up

The Bistro Bears, a Bloomington Parks and Rec adult co-ed softball team sponsored by the Bistro, won their first game, with more games are on the way!

The Bears play every Monday evening in June at 7 p.m. at the Pepper Ridge Park west field.

The team is doing great, but they can use a bigger cheering section! Come on down and enjoy a summer evening of fun and sportsmanship. As added incentive, the Bistro will be open on Monday nights after the game for further celebration and socializing!

For more information on the Bears' schedule, visit the Bloomington Parks and Rec website:

[www.cityblm.org/parks/Programs-Events/Sports/pdfs/Co-RecMonPRW.pdf](http://www.cityblm.org/parks/Programs-Events/Sports/pdfs/Co-RecMonPRW.pdf)

*Jeanette L. Roberts*

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### Open Worship Church of Hope

An Affirming Church Where ALL Are Welcome !!!



Sunday Worship Service 10 AM  
722 W. Chestnut Street  
Bloomington, IL 61701

[www.owcoh.com](http://www.owcoh.com) / (309) 827-6236



### 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 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)