



The Rainbow Connection is published by the Prairie Pride Coalition (PPC).

Send Correspondence to
P.O. Box 5048
Bloomington, IL
61702-5048
e-mail
info@ppc-il.org

PPC Board:
Dave Bentlin, Peggy Burton, Garry Gletty, Margo Mendoza, Donna O'Crowly, Elizabeth Anvick, Suzie Hutton, Olemuel Ashford, Ryan Mishler, Tony Thieman-Somora, and Tony Somora

Rainbow Connection

SEPTEMBER, 2012

PPC Kickoff Sept. 28

Come help us celebrate the transition of the Advocacy Council for Human Rights (ACHR) to the Prairie Pride Coalition (PPC).

The kickoff event will take place Friday, Sept. 28 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Heartland Bank Community room next to the Normal Public Library.

The event will be a celebration of the PPC's work as the Advocacy Council for Human Rights and will be catered by Moe's of Normal.

ACHR was formed in 1995 in response to the failure of both the Bloomington city and Normal town councils to pass the Human Rights ordinance to include sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination language.

The members of ACHR worked to lay a foundation of communication and education on LGBT topics for the community. After five years, the ordinance changes were revisited

by both the city and town councils and they were easily passed.

ACHR focused on political action in its early years, and then later, as acceptance and support improved,

Please see "Kickoff," continued on page 6

American Foundation for Equal Rights
& Broadway Impact's



A new play by Dustin Lance Black
chronicling the federal trial for marriage equality

One-Night-Only Staged Reading
Saturday, September 8
7:30 p.m.

Center for Performing Arts Theatre at Illinois State University

Admission is free

Sponsors: Prairie Pride Coalition and Illinois State University's School of Theatre and Dance, University Housing Services, Diversity Advocacy, and the LGBT/Queer Studies and Services Institute

If you need a special accommodation to fully participate in this event, please contact Janet Wilson, School of Theatre and Dance, at 309-438-8088. Please allow sufficient time to arrange the accommodation.

MCC Peoria Opens its Doors



By Dr. Tony Thiemman-Somora

MCC, the Metropolitan Community Church in Peoria opened last month in Peoria, meeting at the Universalist Unitarian Church on 3000 Richwoods Blvd. with the Rev. Dr. Tony Thiemman-Somora, officiating.

Dr. Thiemman-Somora, the Pastor of

Heartland MCC in Springfield, coordinator of the Heartland MCC Spirituality Group of Bloomington-Normal and a board member of the Prairie Pride Coalition, is leading this new emerging church community.

Heartland MCC is sponsoring this venture and they recently be-

came an official emerging church with the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Their worship service is at 7:30pm.

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is a global Christian church of loving, affirming and welcoming communities of faith. We are "Tearing Down Walls" of oppression and injustice in our communities and around the world.

Because we are a people of the Good News, we are working with our Divine Creator to "Build Up Hope" among our siblings worldwide.

We are a people of hope. We are a people of faith.

Rev. Dr. Tony Thiemman-Somora and a core team have been in discussion for several months and began the emerging church community recently.

Peoria MCC welcomes anyone to join them on this lifelong journey and mission!



Susan Fox, Caroline Fox, David Bentlin, and Elizabeth Anvick (not pictured) worked at the Equality Illinois booth and collected signatures on cards expressing support for marriage equality at the Illinois State Fair in August. The cards, provided by Equality Illinois, will be mailed to Illinois legislators to show Illinoisans support for equal marriage rights.



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

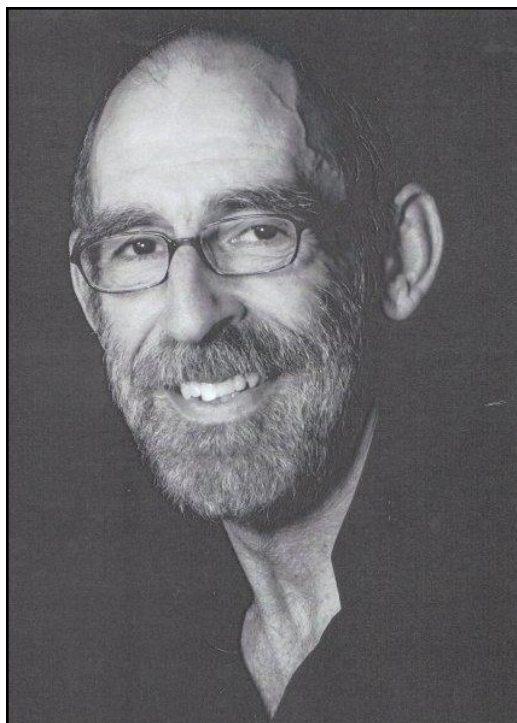
Phone: (309) 662-5084 · Cell: (309) 310-1154 · Fax: (309) 662-2994
Michelle@allisonmosby-scott.com · www.allisonmosby-scott.com

Michael Pullin: a Life Well Lived

Central Illinois lost a trail-blazer and a vibrant voice of the community when Michael Pullin, of Normal, died on Tuesday, Aug. 7. Known for his humor and creative talents, including cooking and the theater, Michael was an actor and set designer who put his heart into productions of local theater, and taught cooking classes at The Garlic Press. He was a passionate advocate of equal rights for everyone and was one of the founding members of the Advocacy Council for Human Rights.

Michael will be missed terribly by individuals and by the community at large. Some of his friends from PPC (formerly ACHR) put into words how Michael's life affected them:

“What I will remember about Michael is the passion he brought to everything he did. Whether it was LGBT activism, teaching at the Garlic Press, acting and set designing at Heartland Theatre, or the beautiful landscaping he constructed at his home...he always seemed driven and purposeful, yet didn't take himself or the work too seriously. The last time I saw Michael was shortly after the United Methodist Church at its annual conference opted to maintain its unequal policies toward LGBT clergy and members. Michael was on his high horse about it as he was an active member of the First United Methodist Church in Normal and played a vital role in its success and prosperity. I think he struggled with remaining in a religious organization with policies that discriminated against him, but Michael felt that he could do more – help enact change – by working from the inside rather than leaving the church. I have many fond memories of Michael...some printable and others not! Michael was an original, lived life on his own terms and did it with grace, style, and compassion. I will



miss his hearty laugh and sly smile.”

-David Bentlin, Prairie Pride Coalition Board Member

“Michael always had a great sense of humor. His wit was dry and a treat to hear but never mean. I'm smiling just thinking of his playful way with words. What a voice! He could make reading the yellow pages seem dramatic. You could say I was a groupie. If he was in a play at Heartland, we were usually in the audience. How he used his talent was inspiring. He shared himself in so many ways.

Michael was nearly always smiling. His serious moments were the result of moral outrage or passion about something he believed in. He was honorable and gave others the courage to be honorable as well.

I'll miss Michael's voice and his humor. Most of all I'll miss his involvement in things that mattered to the LBGT folks in BloNo.

Create a set design for the angels, Michael. They couldn't ask for a better person for the job.”

-Donna O'Crowly, Prairie Pride Coalition Board Member

“Michael had such an infectious laugh. It was a delight when he found something funny and invariably everyone else would end up laughing as well. Sometimes he had a dry sense of humor and you had to pay attention to the sly smile he would get so you would see the joke. He was a dedicated worker and always would pitch in when needed during his time with the Advocacy Council for Human Rights. He had a quiet but confident approach and many different people would listen to him. He made a difference by setting and example for others to follow in life, and many people took his

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Your Normal LGBT Film Festival

Debuts New Logo



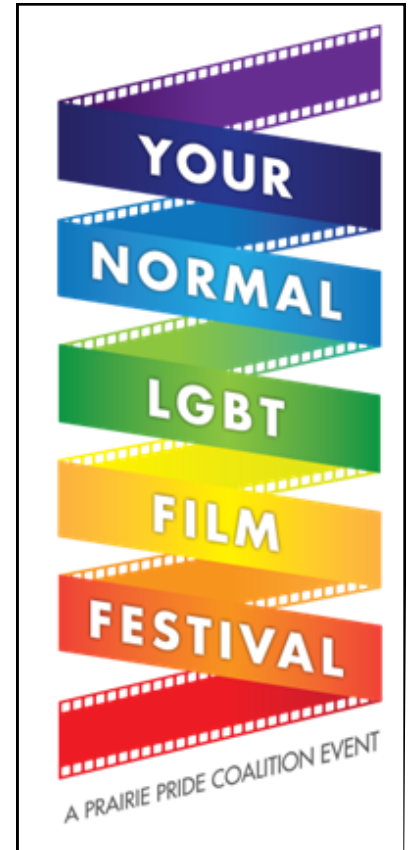
Through the generosity of the State Farm Creative Services Department, Your Normal LGBT Film Festival (October 17 - 21, 2012) celebrates its third year with the introduction of a new logo. The film festival committee reviewed artistic renderings that blended film references and colors from the pride flag to arrive at this fresh and striking new design.

The new logo will be used in promotional publications and incorporated into the film festival web site (yournormalfilmfest.com).

The film festival committee has been busy researching and evaluating films with a goal to bring you an exciting 2012 line-up of feature films, comedies, documentaries, and short films that will enlighten, inspire, and entertain.

We've been fortunate this year that our festival has gained international recognition. With an entry on the queerfilmfestival.org website and the "submit a film" feature on our festival website, the committee has been receiving submissions of feature films, shorts, and documentaries from the U.S. and abroad.

We're looking forward to seeing you at the Normal Theater in October!



ISU Alumna Award-Winning Author to Give Reading



Rachel Spangler, an Illinois State alumna and award-winning author of lesbian romance, will return to Illinois State on Monday, Sept. 10, at 7 p.m. at the LGBT Queer Studies Institute to give a reading of her most recent book.

The event, sponsored by the LGBT Institute and the Triangle Association, is free and

open to the public.

Spangler's first publication, *Learning Curve*, won the Golden Crown Literary Award for Debut Author, and won another Goldie for her second novel, *Trails Merge*. Since then she has continued to publish such works as *The Long Way Home*, *LoveLife* and *Spanish Heart*.

Spangler holds degrees in politics and government, women's studies and English, along with a master's degree in college student personnel administration from Illinois State.

PFLAG Group Discusses School Bullying

In their August 13th meeting, the PFLAG (Parents, Families, Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Bloomington/Normal chapter discussed bullying in schools and what can be done.

There was a lively discussion lead by Caroline Fox (local teacher), Camille Taylor (retired school counselor), and Suzanne Hutton (local teacher).

They discussed what efforts are being made in their schools and what they know of surrounding schools. An interesting fact was after the establish-

ment of a GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) club in a school, all types of bullying was reduced.

Finding an adult teacher or counselor who was supportive helped students feel safe in schools. For more information about PFLAG Bloomington/Normal, check out their Facebook page or email info@pflagbn.com.

PFLAG meets on the second Monday of every month at the Unitarian Church at 1613 East Emerson at 5:30 pm.

Calendar

- **Monday, Sept. 3**—Attend the annual Bloomington Labor Day parade and cheer on PFLAG, who will be marching with the McLean County AIDS Taskforce (MCATF).
- **Friday, Sept. 7, First Fridays** – join the fun at the Bistro, 316 N. Main Street, Bloomington, for appetizers and drink specials. Hosted this month by PPC
- **Friday, Sept. 7**—Hot Spot show at the Bistro, hosted by Sharon Share-a-Like
- **Saturday, Sept. 8**—Come and see the staged reading of *8* at the ISU Center for the Performing Arts at 7:30 p.m.
- **Saturday, Sept. 8** – Transgender support group meets on the second Saturday of each month. Contact tginbnil@hotmail.com for more information.
- ISU Alumna and lesbian romance writer Rachel Spangler will be at the ISU LGBT Queer Studies Institute at 7 p.m. to give a reading of her most recent book.
- **Monday, Sept. 10** – PFLAG, the Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays, meets on the second Monday of each month at the Unitarian Church – 1613 E. Emerson, from 5:30 – 7:30.
- **Tuesday, Sept. 11**—Come to the first ever Bistro Open Mic Night!
- **Friday, Sept. 14**—King Show at the Bistro, hosted by Devn Graberass
- **Wednesday, Sept. 26**—Drag Queen Shangela will be at ISU to perform and speak about her experiences as a drag queen, homosexual and African-American. The presentation is scheduled at 7 p.m. in the Brown Ballroom.
- **Friday, Sept. 28**—Prairie Pride Coalition Kickoff event at the Heartland Bank Community Room at 5:30 p.m.
- **Friday, Sept. 28**—Benefit show for the MissFits Roller Derby at the Bistro
- **Every Wednesday and Thursday** – Bingo and Karaoke at the Bistro, starting at 9 p.m.

Pullin

Continued from page 3

opening to be better people and make better decisions.

He was such a good cook and made it seem so fun and easy. I remember taking a cooking class from him at the Garlic Press and going right home and trying what he did. By golly it really does work!! He was a great teacher using humor and just the right amount of encouragement that you thought it possible that you could be a successful cook.

He was not a complainer. He might say a thing or two but he never carried on especially not in public. He made his life his statement to others. He did not run down others but found a way to bring the best out in all of us. He was a sharp dresser and it was fun to see what he was wearing. He made his clothes look good as he had a way of walking and carrying himself that made you enjoy the way he liked being alive.

It is rare that a person's mere presence could make you feel better but Michael was that way. He is inspiring others in a different way now. He

is greatly missed.”

- Peggy Burton, Prairie Pride Coalition Board Member

Michael's life served as an example for many, who will greatly miss their dear friend.

Kickoff

Continued from page 1

the group's focus turned to communication and education.

In an effort to accommodate the new needs of the group, ACHR applied for 501(3c) status and changed its name to Prairie Pride Coalition (PPC).

We are excited about the growth and opportunity to serve an important function in our community. Come and meet the board members and help reminisce about old times and look forward to new times.

Please come and help us kick off this new organization.

Gretchen Shelly
Owner
309-661-1726 • 309-661-1729

merry maids.

1702 W. College Ave
Suite A-3
Normal, IL 61761
mmofbn@yahoo.com

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2416 E. Washington St.
Suite A2
Bloomington, IL 61704

www.treypolesky.com
treypolesky@gmail.com
phone [773] 819-5428
fax [678] 716-1539

 **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