

Gay Day '97: Will You Have the Lavender Flu or Just Spring Fever?

by Ana Melo

On Monday, March 24th, will you and your co-workers come down with Lavender Flu or Spring Fever?

Gay Day, also known as Gay Strike Day, will be observed this year for the first time in both the United States and Canada. On this day, Gay Day organizers encourage people to call in sick to demonstrate the presence and economic clout of the gay working community.

Unlike Gay Pride Day, Gay Day will be a quiet affair. No parades celebrating our colorful diversity will be held. A rainbow ribbon or pin will be worn by those participating or those in sympathy with the gay community.

This idea was first proposed by Debbie Golden and Wayne Seidl during a discussion on the Internet. Debbie commented, "Gay Day to me is a day when we show the rest of the country what we do, who we are, and how important our contributions are to this country. This is not a celebration or a party — well you could have one if you wanted — this is a self-reflective day where we are very much in touch with how we make our contribution to our countries."

Seidl added, "The purpose of my idea (Gay Strike Day) is to show the country that we do indeed make up a large part of the population, that what we do does matter in the general course of things."

He envisions "one day to remind the rest of the population that we still do not have even the basic rights to which we are entitled: equal taxation and legalized relationships." Seidl further hopes that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people will use the day to volunteer time to community groups. "By spending the day in community service, whether volunteering to work with an organization for the victims of AIDS, volunteering at a local soup kitchen or food bank, or organizing a community cleanup, we will be getting our point across while doing something to benefit the communities in which we live."

Gay Day is dedicated to gays living and working in high risk areas where coming out of the closet may lead to job loss or physical injury. Calling in sick will give them an opportunity to express themselves in a safe, non-confrontational way. As was expressed by one member of the on-line discussion group, "You can't be fired or beat up for being sick and taking a day off to recuperate."

Ron, another contributor to the discussion, summed it up nicely when he said, "Gays have from day one been the bread, comfort, wine and culture to a hungry world. Can you possibly imagine living in a world without gay artists, writers, decorators, designers, engineers, marines, and football players? It would be a dull world indeed."

For more information you can contact Gay Day organizers via e-mail at GAYDAY97@aol.com, or fax a request for more details to (305) 296-9599. ▼

Regular Meetings

AA MEETINGS:

BURLINGTON — Sundays, 5 p.m., Christ Church Presbyterian, Redstone Campus, University of Vermont.

— Thursdays, 7 p.m., St. Paul's Cathedral, Cherry Street, Burlington. Call 658-4221.

CONCORD (NH) — Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., First Congregational Church, North Main and Washington Streets.

KEENE (NH) — Saturdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Call (603) 357-4300.

MANCHESTER (NH) — Sundays, 7:30 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church, 669 Union St.

NASHUA (NH) — Mondays, 7:30 p.m., Nashua Unitarian Church.

BISEXUAL NETWORK OF VERMONT

Last Saturday of each month, 6:30 p.m., City Market, Burlington. Call 658-9544 or 865-3062. Discussion group: first Sunday of each month, 4:00 p.m., Outright Vermont offices. For more info, call 849-6638.

COLLEGE GROUPS:

Beacon Club (Lyndon State) — Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. For details, call 626-4154.

Middlebury GLBA — Sundays, 8:00 p.m., Chellis House (behind Proctor Hall).

UVM GLBA — Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. For location and/or more details, call 656-0699.

GAY GUY GET-TOGETHERS in SE VT

Second and fourth Monday (2/10 and 2/24). For more info, call Carey at 254-8263.

HIV/AIDS MEETINGS:

AIDS SERVICES FOR THE MONADNOCK REGION — "Coffee Clutch" for people with HIV/AIDS every Tuesday from 1-2:30 p.m. at 25 Roxbury St, Keene NH. For more info, call (800) 639-7903.

BRATTLEBORO AREA AIDS PROJECT — For PLWA, friends, and families. 4th Floor, 67 Main St., Brattleboro. Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30 p.m. Call Maryann at 254-8263.

— Support/discussion group for Gay/Bisexual Men. 2nd and 4th Sundays, BAAP Meeting Room, 67 Main St., Brattleboro. 3-5 p.m. For more info, call 254-8263.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR HIV+/AIDS WOMEN — Mondays, 3:30-5:30 p.m., Greenfield MA. Call (413) 773-8888.

VERMONT CARES — Support group for gay/bi men living with HIV/AIDS, Mondays, 5:30-7 p.m. Call 863-2437.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN living with HIV/AIDS — Alternate Tuesdays, Call Ayana at 863-2437 for dates, times, and locations.

WASHINGTON COUNTY AREA SUPPORT GROUP for people living with HIV/AIDS — Second and fourth Thursdays, 2-3:30 p.m. Call 229-4560 for location and more info. Support group for family and friends of people living with HIV/AIDS, Thursdays, 5-6:30 p.m. Call 863-8162.

HUNTINGTON OPEN WOMEN'S LAND (HOWL)

Sunday brunches, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Call 864-5595.

INTERWEAVE (Unitarian Universalist Group) Brunch on 2nd Sundays, 12:30 p.m. at First Unitarian Universalist Society, Burlington.

KEENE GAY MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP Tuesdays. Unitarian Universalist Church, 69 Washington St., Keene, NH. Call (800) 639-7903.

LESBIAN SOCIAL/SUPPORT GROUP For women 40 and older. In Brattleboro. For more info, call 254-7345.

MYRIAD NETWORK

For g/l/b/t's in the Berkshires. Fridays, 7 p.m., First Congregational Church, Williamstown MA. Write Box 288, Williamstown MA 01267.

NETWORK NORTH

Cheap Movie Nights, Tuesdays, 6:15 p.m. at Wilton Mall Food Court, Wilton NY.

Coffee Nights, Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. at Uncommon Grounds, Saratoga Springs NY.

Coffee Mornings, Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. at Uncommon Grounds, Saratoga Springs NY.

OUTRIGHT VERMONT (GLBQ youth)

Groups are for youth age 23 and under; call (800) GLB-CHAT for more info.

Youth group: Fridays, 7-9 p.m.

Men's group: Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

Zine publishing group: First Wednesday of every month, 7-9 p.m.

Women's group: Second and fourth Tuesdays of every month, 7-9 p.m.

P-FLAG OF CENTRAL VERMONT

3rd Sundays, 1 p.m., 2nd Floor Chapel, Unitarian Universalist Church, Montpelier (use School Street entrance). New contact to be announced.

P-FLAG OF CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

2nd Sundays, 2-4 p.m. at the First Methodist Church, Burlington (use the Buell St. street level entrance). For information, call Lil at 863-4285 or Jeneva at 878-2838.

SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES FOR MEN (SAM) Tuesdays, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. For more info, contact Ed at 649-3133 or SMED@valley.net.

STRAIGHT SPOUSES OF GLB PARTNERS Support group, every third Tuesday at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Northampton MA. Call Jane at (413) 625-6033.

TRANS (Transgender Support Group) First and third Tuesdays of every month in Burlington. For more info, call 472-8115.

YOUTH AWARE

Support for GLBT youth in Addison County. First Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m., Ilsley Library Meeting Room, Middlebury. Coffeehouse and movie ten days later. Call (800) GLB-CHAT for more info.

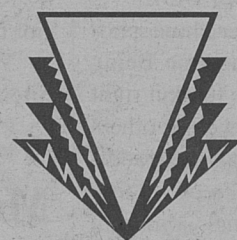
Big City Players Looks Ahead to 1997 Season

BURLINGTON — Big City Players, Inc., a Burlington-based theater company, hopes to finalize plans to bring Greg Louganis to Vermont this coming year to perform his one-man show "The Only Thing Worse You Could Have Told Me..."

Also on the schedule are productions of BCPI's first musical, "Cowgirls," and the world premiere of "If Only for a Moment," another musical which looks at HIV/AIDS and discrimination. BCPI plans to bring the Massachusetts *a cappella* group Harmonic Convergence to the area for a spring concert.

BCPI has also made significant changes to its membership structure (\$25 for a lifetime membership), resulting in more benefits (such as free tickets and a newsletter) for those who help to support the group. The installation of a toll-free number for information and ticket sales (1-888-212-5884) should also help to boost publicity around the group's performances.

For more information about Big City Players, call 864-1574 or the toll-free number, or write to BCPI, c/o PO Box 1012, Burlington VT 05402-1012. ▼



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SAVE THESE DATES: Thurs & Fri. May 8 & 9

Vermont AIDS Symposium '97

ISSUES IN MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE AND PAIN MANAGEMENT
May 8-9, 1997, Stratton Conf. Ctr., Burlington

An intensive skills-building and training opportunity for physicians, nurses, home health providers, mental health workers, substance abuse counselors, case managers and others involved in the support and care of people living with HIV and AIDS.

Featuring 30 workshops in 4 Focus Tracks:

- Medical Information
- Chemical Dependence/Recovery,
- Mental Health Practice
- Case Management

CEUs pending for all providers. Costs To Be Determined. Scholarships* and Childcare available.

*We are hoping to make this free to anyone living with HIV or AIDS. Call your ASO or these numbers for details.

For more information call: 802-656-2292 or 800-244-7639

Jointly Sponsored by the Vermont HIV/AIDS Care Consortium; Vermont Department of Health AIDS Program; The New England AIDS Education and Training Center and the University of Vermont College of Medicine