

See you in court

Marty Rouse to leave MassEquality

GLAD to challenge legality of marriage petition

by Ethan Jacobs

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) has announced that if enough signatures are certified to send a ballot question asking voters to amend the state constitution to ban civil marriages of lesbian and gay couples, it will file suit charging that the ballot question should never have been certified by Attorney General Tom Reilly in the first place.

Gary Buseck, legal director of GLAD, said that if registrars certify at least 65,825 signatures, enough to send the ballot question to the Legislature, where it will need the approval of at least 50 legislators in two consecutive legislative sessions before proceeding to voters, GLAD will file suit early next year against both Reilly and Secretary of State William Galvin to bring the petition process to a halt.

Buseck said GLAD's argument in the suit will be that the certification of the petition violated Article 48 of the Massachu-

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Political director taking position with Human Rights Campaign

by Laura Kiritsy

It's been just two years since Marty Rouse transformed MassEquality from a loosely-knit, all-volunteer coalition of organizations working against long odds to defend the *Goodridge* decision from being relegated to the dustbin of history into a political powerhouse. Now, he's leaving his post as campaign director to bring his expertise into the national LGBT political arena as the field director for the Human Rights Campaign.



MassEquality will have large shoes to fill as Marty Rouse departs for D.C.

Rouse cited "an urgent need" at the national level for the type of LGBT political organizing he has done in Massachusetts and family considerations

as his primary reasons for leaving MassEquality. He begins his new post at HRC on Jan. 2.

MassEquality's board of directors is currently mull-

ing options for new leadership of the organization, but both Rouse and others in the marriage equality movement agree that he is leaving the organization in good hands and on solid footing. "MassEquality is in great shape," said MassEquality board president Elyse Cherry, who cites a strong board and staff, an organized strategic operations committee, and a concerted lobbying effort led by the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, a MassEquality member organization. "Every organization goes through transition and the trick is to have good strong succession planning," Cherry added. "And I'm pleased to say that we're there."

The board is examining

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Pride Committee pulling together

Group has new board members and has complied with IRS and state regs

by Ethan Jacobs

Three months after firing operations manager Andre Davis, the Boston Pride Committee is on track to resolve some of the organizational problems that came to light at the time. After Davis's Aug. 31 firing, *Bay Windows* reported that Pride Committee President Linda DeMarco had been serving as the lone board member for about a year, that the

Pride Committee had failed to file required annual reports with the Secretary of State's office since 1999, and that the IRS had threatened to fine the committee \$14,580.50 for late filings in 2001 and 2002. In the intervening months, the Pride Committee has brought on two more board members, prepared the late annual reports to be sent to the Secretary of State and petitioned the IRS for a

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Sylvain Bruni (in cap) and Pierce Durkin are new Pride Committee members that want to set things right.

On the right path for 16 years

by Laura Kiritsy

There's a needle protruding from my third eye and I feel great.

Laying alone in a darkened treatment room at Pathways to Wellness, a sense of deep relaxation and well-being is spreading through my insides. Besides the one stuck in my forehead (for the uninitiated, that's the acupuncture point for the third eye) hair-thin needles puncture my left wrist,

the web of flesh between my right thumb and index finger, my right ankle and the flesh between the first and second toes of my left foot. Then there's the matzo ball-sized clump of the artemesia herb burning on the head of an acupuncture needle lodged in my stomach — a warming therapy known as moxibustion. The cumulative effect is that of a subcutaneous humming sensation coursing through my limbs; I feel like a purring cat. As acupunc-

turist Irene Martyniuk, a slender, earth-mother type with salt and pepper hair, explains as she preps me for my first acupuncture treatment, "Some people describe it as massage from the inside, which is a very cool way of describing it." But in the back of my now mostly-quiet mind I have the vague sense that perhaps feeling this good shouldn't be legal.

Of course, there's nothing

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Pathways to Wellness provides acupuncture to the LGBT community

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Pathways

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PHOTO: MELISSA OSTROW

unlawful in the slightest about acupuncture, the ancient Chinese medical art that is the cornerstone of the holistic care that Pathways to Wellness has provided for 16 years. Owing in part to its roots as an agency that aimed to ease the suffering of gay men afflicted with AIDS, Pathways has developed a large LGBT clientele: A 2002 survey of 190 Pathways clients found that well over half self-identified as members of the community. Aside from early mobilizing around HIV/AIDS, Pathways Executive Director Kristen Porter attributes the high ratio of LGBT clients to the center's expanded outreach to the community. Pathways, for instance, was a sponsoring agency at an Aug. 2004 LGBT health summit in Cambridge, it is a member of the American Cancer Society's GLBT Advisory Board and has reached out to LGBT youth with presentations at the Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth and Boston GLASS. "We've certainly made it a priority to have a focus on the GLBT community, and we're open to everybody," says Porter. "We're a public health modeled program with targets to communities that may be more disenfranchised than others." The center has also broken ground with in-the-field transgender health, as Porter and a colleague in 2003 authored the only article to date addressing trans health issues to be published in a national trade magazine, *Acupuncture Today*. "So we're somewhat on the forefront of having trans health be a part of the acupuncture profession," says Porter, who holds a master's degree in acupuncture. The Greater Boston Business Council, an

LGBT business association, honored Pathways to Wellness with its Award for Excellence last year.

Porter also says that LGBT clients are attracted to the nonprofit's "Share the Care" payment plan, in which clients who pay full price for treatments help defray the cost of care for less fortunate folks. "I think in the GLBT community that's been something that's been very embraced," says Porter, "because I think there's a certain activist spirit that you find within that community that really embraces that and thinks it's cool and tells their friends."

Porter cites one other reason for Pathways's appeal to LGBT people: "I think holistic medicine or certainly what some people describe as being 'alternative medicine' may be a model that might be easier to embrace if you're coming from what was considered an 'alternative lifestyle,' she asserts. "Perhaps there's something inherent in the uniqueness and the nontraditional sense of what we do that is also attractive."

So what are LGBT clients getting at Pathways? The center offers a range of acupuncture styles — including non-needle treatments — shiatsu massage and other forms of bodywork, yoga (there is a class specifically for gay men), and a Chinese herbal pharmacy. Many LGBT people come for Pathways's smoking cessation program, says Porter, noting the historically higher incidence of smoking within the LGBT community. Pathways offers a program that combines acupuncture, herbal tea, aromatherapy and smokeless cigarettes aimed at helping clients reduce their urge to light up.

Fertility enhancement "is a big thing in the GLBT community right now," she also observes. To that end the center has developed a program of acupuncture and yoga



Acupuncture programs at Pathways to Wellness have a following of LGBT clients.



A place to go to relieve stress and anxiety is an important part of the Pathways experience.

for both men and women looking to improve their chances of conception. First and foremost, says Porter, stress and anxiety are often big barriers to conceiving a child, “and certainly acupuncture and yoga are very well known to be effective with stress and anxiety.” For men, she adds, acupuncture can facilitate sperm concentrations and motility; for women it can increase blood flow to the uterus, help rebalance the menstrual cycle and regulate reproductive hormones.

Needless to say, its skilled outreach to the LGBT community has won Pathways to Wellness a devoted following in the community. Kelly Dunn, a 30-year-old Jamaica Plain resident and nursing student first turned up at the center about two years ago looking to expand her knowledge of complementary therapies. “It wasn’t an intimidating way to start looking into it,” she says of Pathways. Two years later she has sampled many of the center’s services, among them acupuncture and a women’s yoga class, but she’s “crazy about” shiatsu massage. “Edie [Snow] is a wonderful practitioner,” says Dunn. “By the time you’re done with shiatsu it feels like you had a great yoga workout but you haven’t actually done much more than lay down on the table. That’s going to make me sound really lazy,” she laughs. “It’s hard to explain. I have lot of back and knee problems and when I leave shiatsu everything feels right and balanced. I feel like I walk easily, I feel taller. If you spend a lot of time hunched over a computer like I tend to do you wind up getting sort of bad curved-forward posture. So shiatsu sort of makes me feel like everything’s in line.”

Dunn credits Pathways with helping maintain her balance through difficult times. “In the times in my life where I’m feeling really sort of stressed to the limit for personal or academic reasons. I really do look to Pathways to help,” she says. “It has added a lot to my quality of life and being able to continue to go even when I’m sort of underemployed — the sliding scale has made a huge difference — if they didn’t have that there are definitely times that I wouldn’t have been able to get any care and the things that they provide.” But Dunn has been willing to return Pathways’ generosity: As part of Wonder Women Bos-

ton, a social group for lesbian, bi and trans women, Dunn helped organize a fundraiser for the center last year.

Pathways also gets points for its bedside manner from Jason Goldberg, an Arlington resident who is transgender. After being successfully treated with acupuncture for a longstanding urinary problem, a year-and-a-half ago the 27-year-old gardener and self-described “Jason of all trades” continues to receive treatment for carpal tunnel syndrome. “One of the things that really makes a difference is the practitioners,” he says. “It’s quite amazing to have someone actually sit down with you and just listen and not rush you through an appointment.”

Porter herself offers a pretty powerful testimonial to the impact Pathways to Wellness has had within the LGBT community. Back in the late 1980s, when the only Western medical treatment for AIDS was the drug AZT, Porter found herself accompanying many dear gay friends to an all volunteer clinic called the AIDS Care Project — Pathways’ original incarnation — for acupuncture treatments. “I would see a shell of a person going in for treatment and I would see that flicker of vibrancy back when my friends were done,” she recalls. Many of them eventually died, but even so, Porter came to appreciate the way in which acupuncture restored dignity and quality to her friends’ last days. “There was a peace that people were getting from this treatment in their last days of life that was profound,” she recalls. “And being in those last moments with many of those people I noticed a big difference.” In 1990, she began volunteering at the organization — answering phones, assisting with grant writing and drawing on her business background to put the place on sound financial footing. “I became an acupuncturist through seeing Pathways work what I consider to be miracles in people’s lives,” she says. “Not that a miracle is that somebody is cured from something — a miracle can be a moment, an hour, in somebody’s life where they’re not throwing up, or a peaceful sleep or a sense of feeling whole for the first time in a long time. I just fell in love with the mission of this organization,” she laughs. “And I’m still here.”