

The Journey

THE WINCHESTER MULTICULTURAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER

“We all need to reflect on the subtle ways racism infiltrates our lives, the way we speak, the way we act and the way we think. How do we view the people of the world, for example, the people of Iraq or other Muslim countries? What about members of other religions? Or opposing philosophies . . .”

Father Richard Messina, St. Mary’s Parish, Winchester



WINCHESTER
MULTICULTURAL
NETWORK

We Educate, Advocate and Respond.

EDITORS:

DOTTY BURSTEIN AND
SANDY THOMPSON

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WINCHESTER MULTICULTURAL NETWORK

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Looking Ahead

Town Day

Saturday, June 2

Join the festivities on Town Day, Saturday, June 2! Stop by the Multicultural Network’s table any time from 10:00 a.m-4:00 p.m., and put a pin on the world map where you or your ancestors came from. This year we are offering Multicultural Network mugs with our new logo and motto. If you’d like to have one, we ask that you consider making a small contribution to the Network (\$5 suggested donation). We will also be selling greeting cards with peace cranes inside, created by Kimie Shirasaki to benefit Winchester High School’s Multicultural Issues Group. The cards will be \$2.00 each.

You are also invited to help us dedicate the bench that the Network donated to the town of Winchester. (It’s across from Karol’s Ice Cream Shoppe.) We’re offering a limited number of coupons for a free scoop of ice cream for those who stop by to visit the bench and perhaps have their photos taken. The Multicultural Network donated the bench as a permanent reminder that multiculturalism is here to stay in Winchester, and to appreciate the rich and growing diversity in our community.

“More Than Money”

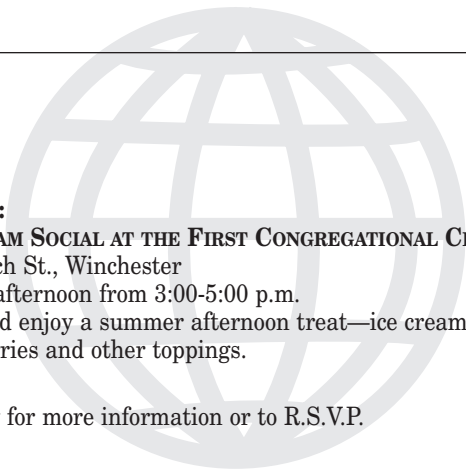
On April 24, the Network co-sponsored “More Than Money,” a program featuring guest speaker Nancy McArdle, who discussed the findings of the Metro Boston Equity Initiative’s research on patterns and causes of residential segregation in Metro Boston.

Ms. McArdle, a Harvard researcher, addressed the much-cited claim that racial segregation is due merely to the inability of people of color to afford homes in certain communities. While minority homebuyers in the Metro Boston area do, on average, face greater affordability constraints than do whites, affordability alone does not explain the continued residential segregation. McArdle’s research focuses on Metro Boston residents’ preferences for living in integrated communities and on the role that fear of being unwelcome plays in restricting residential choices of people of color.

A board member of the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston (FHCGB), Ms. McArdle discussed data gathered through extensive paired testing performed by the FHCGB. These data documented discrimination in the rental, purchase, and financing of properties to people of color, families with children, and people receiving housing assistance.

Data from the research shows that people of color experience discrimination in at least half of their attempts to secure housing in the Greater Boston area. In addition, families with children, and people receiving housing subsidies experience discrimination in roughly two-thirds of their attempts to rent in the Boston area. McArdle touched on some of the costs of this discrimination: lower asset accumulation for people of color; psychological pain and stress, and the fear, suspicion, and rejection that results from segregation.

continued on page 3



International Connections

Ongoing through June:

DROP-IN COFFEE AT CAFÉ DOLCE

Thursday morning at Café Dolce, 831 Main St., Winchester
Stop in and enjoy coffee and conversation between 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. on Thursday mornings.

June 17:

ICE CREAM SOCIAL AT THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

21 Church St., Winchester
Sunday afternoon from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Come and enjoy a summer afternoon treat—ice cream, strawberries and other toppings.

Call Liz Sayre at 781-729-9242 or Email office@wmcn.org for more information or to R.S.V.P.

May is Asian-American Heritage Month

For information on events and issues relating to the wide variety of Asian cultures represented in the greater Boston area, check out the **Asian-American Resource Workshop** (www.aarw.org) “The mission of the Asian-American Resource Workshop is to work for the empowerment of the Asian Pacific American community to achieve its full participation in the U.S. society.”

You may not know about **The Japan Society of Boston** (www.us-japan.org/boston/) which was founded in 1904. It is “a non-profit membership organization dedicated to strengthening communication, understanding, and enlightened relations between the people of Japan and Massachusetts . . .” The Society publishes a monthly calendar of events for members among other activities.

You also may want to check out **Cheng and Tsui Publishing** (www.cheng-tsui.com). Its spring/summer '07 catalog lists books on Asian cultures as well as curriculum materials for Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, Arabic, and Thai language instruction.

Organizations as Resources and Inspirations

For many of us, the demands of our busy lives—jobs, family, community commitments—make it difficult to attend forums, arts events, and activist gatherings, much as we’d like to. But there are ways that we can educate ourselves and even perform the role of activist by subscribing to the email news of organizations that do important multicultural work and advocacy. Yes, we know, you already get too many emails and don’t have time to read half of them. However, even picking and choosing only what you have time to read can provide new insights into issues of race, class, prejudice, heterosexism—you name it. We will highlight some of these organizations in upcoming issues of *The Journey*, and we begin here. Background information taken from these websites is indicated with quotation marks.

Community Change, Inc. (CCI) (www.communitychangeinc.org) is a small non-profit organization, founded in 1968 and based in Boston with a “particular focus on systemic racism committed to serving as a center for action and collaboration among individuals and multiracial grassroots groups in the fight to achieve racial justice and equity.” CCI has a wonderful library in its office at 14 Beacon St., Room 605, in downtown Boston (easily accessible on the T).

Recently, CCI announced its new **Anti-Racism Media Blog**, “created as an online activist tool to monitor and hold local media accountable for racist media representation and to analyze how white power and privilege frame media content.”

You can take part in dialogue around racism in the media or just read the views and insights posted there. CCI analyzes a *Boston Globe* article, “A ‘Smoking Gun’ on Race” and suggests looking up guidelines on detecting bias in the media by going to “Six Harmful Patterns in Newspaper Presentations of Race.” There is also a list of important links to resources such as the Center for Media Literacy.

The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston (www.boston-fairhousing.org) “is the only private, non-profit organization solely focused on ending illegal housing discrimination in the greater Boston area. It serves the communities of Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Suffolk counties.” The Fair Housing Center deals with issues such as mortgage discrimination based on race and rental discrimination based on family status. To receive the Center’s online newsletter, email info@bostonfairhousing.org.

United for a Fair Economy (www.faireconomy.org) “is a national, independent, nonpartisan, non-profit organization. UFE raises awareness that concentrated wealth and power undermine the economy, corrupt democracy, deepen the racial divide, and tear communities apart. It supports and builds social movements for greater equality.” Sign up to get UFE’s online newsletter. We learned about two of the books (*The Color of Wealth* and *Inequality Matters*) that we are reviewing from the website.

Winchester as a Multicultural Community . . . a sampling

- The Winchester League of Women voters prepared a display for Women's History Month in the public library.
- The youth group at Parish of the Epiphany went on a mission trip to a town near Biloxi, Mississippi during their school break. Nearly a year and a half after Hurricane Katrina, the area is still devastated. Epiphany's Rev. Robert Trache, and the Rev. Bud Cederhohn will go to New Orleans at the end of June to explore how the Episcopal Diocese of MA and the Diocese of Louisiana can work together to eradicate the racial and social injustices that plague the Boston and New Orleans areas.
- Two tenth grade English classes from the English High School in Jamaica Plain visited Winchester High School for a day of dialogue and peer education. The exchange is a project of Winchester's Connect and Commit Program, and Boston's Teen Empowerment Program. The students discussed issues that urban youth face and the challenges that suburban youth experience. Through this dialogue, the students hope to break down stereotypes and make their communities more accepting.
- Town Clerk Mary Ellen Lannon recently announced the availability of Automark, an ATM-like machine that makes it possible for the blind, vision-impaired, or disabled to vote. The machine was supplied by the Secretary of State.
- Lincoln School fifth-graders raised money to support New England Assistance Dogs for Deaf and Disabled Americans. The effort followed an assembly during which a NEADS volunteer, who suffers from cerebral palsy, demonstrated with his golden retriever how much the dog assists him every day.
- Students at Winchester High School observed a "Day of Silence," a national youth-run effort using silence to protest the actual silencing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people due to harassment, bias and abuse in schools.
- Winchester resident Kathy Held, Assistant Director of Extramural Programs at Boston University's School of Medicine, traveled to Nicaragua as part of Project Stretch Group to provide dental services to disadvantaged children.
- McCall Middle School held an assembly for seventh-graders that is part of ongoing efforts to make McCall a safe and supportive learning environment. The assembly was planned with the help of PFLAG (Greater Boston Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and featured a panel of three speakers, including a Winchester parent of a gay person. The assembly's focus was on one of the school's core values: respect for self and others.
- The Griffin Museum of Photography hosted an exhibit of photographs by Winchester High School and Boston Arts Academy students. According to Dave Ardito, WHS Arts Director, the project enriched both groups of students by helping them see that others have different world views depending on where they live and what their background is.
- Winchester High School's Gloria Dove spent her April vacation in Slovakia where she taught with her son at his high school. Gloria teaches students for whom English is not their native language, and she gave a workshop for English teachers in Slovakia.

"More Than Money" *Continued from page 1*

In communities across Massachusetts, Fair Housing Commissions, Human Rights Commissions, and similar organizations are working to address housing discrimination through education and outreach efforts. These organizations provide assistance to people who experience discrimination, and advocate for local and state policies that promote open communities with housing opportunities for all.

McArdle made several recommendations to address housing discrimination in the metropolitan Boston area. They included: providing more affordable housing; enforcing fair housing laws; expanding audit testing and education; providing counseling, information, and marketing about towns like Winchester; and encouraging real estate agents (especially people of color) to list properties in suburban towns. Some of the discussion following McArdle's talk centered on how to make it known that communities are welcoming, particularly those communities that

may have a reputation, based on past incidents, of being racist or anti-Semitic. It was also suggested that communities like Winchester, Belmont, Arlington, etc. work together to do education, training, and marketing.

McArdle conducted her research through the Metro Boston Equity Initiative of the Harvard University Civil Rights Project. The full text of the study can be found on the website of the Civil Rights Project: http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/metro/residential_choice.php

The program was held at the Belmont Town Hall and co-sponsored with the Belmont Human Rights Commission, Belmont Against Racism, the Belmont Housing Trust, the Arlington Fair Housing Advisory Committee, the Medford Human Rights Commission, and the Watertown Fair Housing Initiative.

Expanding Your Multicultural World

The Journey offers book reviews, movie titles, television programs, and lists local and national organizations. On Tuesday evenings on WGBH-TV *La Plaza* features interviews and programming about local issues and personalities relating to the Latino/a communities in the Greater Boston area and on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m., in a similar format, *Basic Black* presents interviews with authors, artists, historians, and personalities of African descent. You can see and/or hear past programs by logging on to www.wgbh.org.

Book Suggestions for Summer Reading

Global Values 101

Edited by Kate Holbrook, Ann Kim, Brian Palmer, and Anna Portnoy

Global Values 101 is appropriate for teenagers as well as adults. This is a delightful collection of interviews with “some of the most original thinkers” today—Howard Zinn, Lani Guinier, and Paul Farmer, among others. It evolved from a popular course taught at Harvard University and includes thought on diversity and equality, ethics, the global economy, war and genocide, and poverty. The book is recommended “for anyone who has been moved by idealism and longed to become a more proactive citizen.”

Reviewed by Dotty Burstein

Inequality Matters: The Growing Economic Divide in America and its Poisonous Consequences

Edited by James Lardner and David Smith

Inequality Matters is eminently readable, despite its ponderous title. The forward by Bill Moyers lays out the theme of the book—the growing gap between rich and poor in this country. The essays/chapters in the book are grouped under one of three headings: “How Unequal Are We Anyway?” “Dynamics of Inequality,” and “Changing the Conversation.” Each chapter presents the perspective of a different author. Among the contributors are Barbara Ehrenreich, James Lardner, Betsy Leandar-Wright, Meizhu Lui, and David Smith. Topics include issues of housing, college education, health, and retirement. The book jacket states that “These essays are a wake-up call for a nation that has been drifting from its founding ideals. The authors draw on the best and latest research to make sense of a tangle of economic statistics. They delve into the hidden—and human—causes of a trend too often, and too easily blamed on forces beyond our control and take stock of consequences that reach into every dimension of life. Far more than a catalog of society’s ills, the book concludes with a plausible and hopeful path—beyond redistribution—to a more just and humane economy.” Each essay is thought-provoking and at times disturbing, but always stimulating, and the format makes it an easy book to read in sections.

Reviewed by Sandy Thompson

The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide

By Meizhu Lui, Barbara J. Robles, Betsy Leandar-Wright, Rose M. Brewer, and Rebecca Adamson.

This book, which was published in conjunction with United for a Fair Economy, an economic justice organization based in Boston, examines how class and race intersect in America and asserts that economic and racial inequality are intrinsically intertwined. The authors note, for example, that “For every dollar owned by the average white family in the United States, the average family of color has less than a dime.” Why? It may be that wealth, rather than income alone, is the more revealing indicator of inequality. This is because wealth, unlike income, consists of a “cushion of

assets” such as homes, savings accounts, stocks and bonds, and inheritances. Some white families are in a position to pay the college tuition for their children, thereby providing future opportunity through education. A smaller but significant segment of white parents may even help their grown children begin to establish this “cushion of assets” by contributing the down payment on a house. These assets are transformative, because they increase financial security and prosperity over a lifetime. Although the authors believe that access to better paying jobs for people of color, affirmative action, living wage campaigns, and welfare rights have been worthwhile efforts to boost income, they believe this focus on income overlooks much of the problem. “People of color are more likely to be tossed on the waves of economic turmoil—and sometimes drowned—because they don’t have big enough asset security boats to keep them afloat.”

Closing the racial economic gap by building assets will continue to be a challenge. However, the authors assert that key to closing the gap is democratically deciding on a set of policy changes. These changes include implementing universal health care, taxing the ‘super rich,’ awarding more scholarships to people of color, eliminating ‘redlining,’ and implementing more rent control along with providing for more affordable housing. People’s thinking about race must change as well. The authors note that “The myths of racial superiority and inferiority can be debunked, and the government’s hand in creating racial categories and distributing economic resources by race exposed.” We must all get around to accepting the notion that the economy is “not a zero-sum game, in which some must lose in order for others to win.”

Reviewed by Dotty Burstein

Born on a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant

By Daniel Tammet

This is the memoir of Daniel Tammet, a British autistic savant. Tammet has a form of Autism known as Asperger’s Syndrome, a condition that affects social and communication skills. He also has Savant Syndrome, which typically can affect the individual’s development as well as his mental abilities. However, as in the author’s case, Savant Syndrome also can allow the individual to have extraordinary skills in other areas such as mathematics and memory. Tammet experiences synesthesia, a condition that results in the ability to see numbers in colors, shapes, and textures.

This book is easy to read and gives the reader an insider’s perspective. The author gives a detailed account of his life and the many challenges he faced growing up with a disability. Tammet progressively takes the reader through each stage of his life in such great detail that one can almost picture what he sees and feels in his unique world. I would highly recommend this book because it not only gives information on a rare and unique disability but truly makes the reader contemplate the perplexity of the human brain and how relatively little we know about it.

Reviewed by Sahar Ahmed

Did you know about...?

The World Language Network in Arlington was launched in May of 2006 to support K-12 world-language learning and literacy and multicultural enrichment curricula, programs and activities, especially in the public schools; to work with community members and cultural groups to facilitate language learning opportunities and multicultural enrichment programs and events; and to serve as a resource center for the teaching and learning of world languages and cultures. Check out the WLN's website: worldlanguageNetwork.org and for more information, email info@worldlanguageNetwork.org

The World Language Network recommends www.awesomelibrary.org/classroom/English/languages/languages for links to more than 70 world languages.

If prejudices are learned, then we can unlearn them.

I sometimes feel that racism can be like a car that zooms past and splashes you with water from the nearest puddle, leaving your clothes soiled. Although my racist experiences were not my fault, at the end of the day, I was the one walking around with the sullied spirit, wishing I could wipe away the stains. The perpetrator goes on his or her way, often not even aware of having offended anyone.

Elizabeth A. Reyes,
writing for the
Chronicle of Higher Education

Pathways To China

Winchester High School is one of five schools that are part of a grant program that is taking students to China in 2007. The program began when a group of administrators, including Jim Marini, Tom Gwin, and the Superintendent of Burlington Schools, Katie Spinos, went to China several years ago and began to discuss how they could bring students from their districts to China.

The first trip was over April vacation and included most of the Winchester students that had applied to go on the trip. One of those students, David Silverman, describes his experience:

Since China is going to be a new world power, and since we, as current High School students are going to be the generation interacting with China as a world power, it is good for us to experience, appreciate, and understand Chinese culture first hand. The Pathways to China program does this. In the class entitled "A Day in the Life of" we learned what it was like to be a teenager in a rural village or in a big city. On the trip we went to visit students in a rural village (Punglu village, outside of Xi'an) and an English speaking middle school in Beijing. Learning about Chinese teenagers in a classroom was not as valuable as actually meeting them in person. Interacting with the students in Beijing we learned how much homework they had and how little time they had for socializing and sleeping!! When we visited the rural elementary school, we were told that not all of the students would make it to high school because of the strict examination system in China. Seeing all these students made us appreciate the privilege of the education that we are guaranteed in the United States. It was a wonderful opportunity to travel to China with a good group of students and knowledgeable teachers.

David Silverman, 9th Grade, Winchester High School

An Update on Immigration

- The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid at a New Bedford factory in March resulted in the deportation of three of the approximately 361 original detainees, including a pregnant woman. However, U.S. district Court Judge Richard Stearns issued a temporary restraining order in early April barring additional deportations. Currently, 230 detainees, some of them parents of small children, remain in facilities in El Paso and Harlington, Texas. In mid-April, a team of Boston immigration lawyers traveled to the Texas facilities to interview the undocumented New Bedford workers being detained there. Lawyers' concerns included alleged mistreatment of detainees, the expiration of the judge's order to halt deportations, the well-being of detainees' children now in foster care, and the possibility of some detainees being tortured or killed if they are returned to their country of origin.
- The Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition reported that negotiations in Congress on immigration reform "are currently far from ideal." MIRA recently sent a letter to Senator Ted Kennedy to express concern that "family reunification [between detainees and their families] be fully addressed in a compassionate and realistic reform."
- In Massachusetts, MIRA and supporters launched a Week of Action and Advocacy for April 30th through May 3rd in support of the Education Parity Act (formerly known as the In-State Tuition Bill). To find out how you can help make equal access to higher education a reality for all high school students in 2007, call 617-350-5480 x207. You will receive information about how to advocate for the Education Opportunity Act (HB 1197/S 714).
- There has been a movement underway by state and local police and MBTA officials to enforce immigration laws by asking people about their immigration status. Since Governor Deval Patrick rescinded the Memorandum of Understanding that would have given the MA State Police the authority to enforce immigration law, now only the responsibility of the Federal Government, this interrogation by area police officials should not be happening. If you or anyone you know has been questioned about his or her immigration status by local area police, please contact the American Civil Liberties Union at 617-482-1181.

In this issue we welcome Mindy Arbo as a new contributor to *The Journey*. The following is a list of multicultural films she recommends—just in time for summer viewing!

Recommended Multicultural Films

by Mindy Arbo

Email: filmophile@comcast.net for more suggestions or to add your own. These films are available through The Winchester Public Library and its Minuteman Library Inter-library Loans, <http://library.minlib.net> and/or Video Horizons. All foreign films are subtitled. Ratings are provided when they exist. Family-friendly films are noted as such. Regardless of their ratings, none are extremely violent or sexually explicit.

Al Otro Lado (The Other Side)

A wonderful Mexican family-friendly film that parallels three stories about children needing and seeking their fathers, in Mexico, Cuba and Morocco. The excellent cinematography really allows the viewer to feel and become familiar with, the different rural and urban environments in those countries, as well as the intimate social lives of families, neighbors and strangers. The girl in the Moroccan story is quite the heroine. The DVD Special Feature of "*The Making of Al Otro Lado*"—takes viewers along with the film crew as they explore shooting locations in each country, so it is a very educational travelogue! Not rated

PowWow Highway

Great award-winning family-friendly film about American Indians, filmed on a New Mexico Indian reservation. This is a road movie that, through the two buddy/heroes, highlights two sides of the Native American coin. One is a tradition-embracing spiritual Cheyenne who views the world in a clear uncontaminated way. His friend, the reservation's political activist, has abandoned his spiritual traditions. Together, they set out to right a wrong, but of course, much more awaits them. Many laughs, but it's the beauty that will stay with you. Not rated

Divided We Fall

In WWII Nazi-occupied Amsterdam, an ordinary non-heroic couple agrees to hide the son of their former wealthy Jewish employer, who they last saw divested of his home and possessions and 'deported' with his family on a horse-drawn cart. Some dire and many humorous experiences fill this film which, in the end, comes to be about altruism, loyalty, and irony and the many shades of grey in the world of 'good' and 'evil'. PG13

Babel

Winner of many 2006 Oscars, this film may cover the most diverse multicultural issues of any one film ever made. "Ultimately about parents and children" according to its director, the seemingly disparate stories of Americans, Mexicans, Japanese and Moroccans are seen intertwining. In the end, they all come together and complete a profoundly moving experience about 'coincidence', injustice, emotional pain, hope and the ties that bind parents and their children. Rated R for violence and nudity.

Into the West

In contemporary Dublin, two young boys who have recently lost their mother are living in a dreary public housing project with their bereft father. Through their gypsy grandfather, the boys discover a magical white horse who carries them away on a journey of adventure and self discovery. Set in the breathtaking scenery of western Ireland, the film and its conclusion of reconciliation will touch all ages. Rated PG

Tsotsi

Winner of the 2005 Foreign Film Oscar, a gritty and touching film about one man breaking the brutal loveless cycle of "What comes around goes around" in the shantytowns of contemporary South Africa. Rated R for violence.

The Nasty Girl

In the late 20th c., a young German woman discovers the hidden sordid truth about the concentration camp complicity of her small hometown. As she attempts to expand her knowledge of her town's history, she comes up against an angry majority who endanger her project and her life. No rating; no sexuality or violence.

Saving Face

Two young professional Chinese American women fall in love, and so begin their troubles. With a very realistic screenplay, unsentimental compassion and great humor, this film leads the viewer into a thorough understanding of the strictly structured traditions maintained by the heroines' families. An amusing side story involves the mother of one of the women, who has strayed from her traditional Chinese American widowhood, and, expelled from her parents' home, moves in with her closeted lesbian daughter to continue her pregnancy and attempt to be a matchmaker for her daughter! Rated R for some sexuality and language.

The White Countess

Tour de force performances by Ralph Fiennes, many Redgrave family members, and all its lead actors center this recent Ivory Merchant film as it takes us deep into the changing world of WWII Shanghai on the brink of collapse and invasion. The intertwined fates of American, Jewish and White Russian expatriates and refugees with the local Chinese and invading Japanese are highlighted by the deep unspoken love between a lonely blind American and the sensitive noble Countess who sings in his bar. No rating; no sexuality or violence.

Water

The last of a recently filmed trilogy, this is a beautiful film about a microcosm of Indian society on the brink of Gandhi's rise. Focusing on 'widow cloisters' where widows of all ages are forced to support themselves while living as outcasts, the film is beautifully scripted and photographed, and gives great insight into the traditional roles of women in Indian society. The delightful performance of the 8 year old non-professional heroine complements the touching love stories, expressed and unexpressed, that center the film. No rating

Italian for Beginners

Scandinavians spoof their infamous gloomy winter moodiness with this funny film about a disparate group of Danish small town lonely hearts who sign up for an adult-ed class in "Italian for Beginners." Whether they're aware of it or not, Italy is their iconic land of sun and romance and chances for new beginnings. Rated R for language and some sexuality.

From PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays):

Here are a few of the rights that are not automatically available to same gender couples.

- Recognition as “Next of Kin”—A partner in a same sex couple is not given automatic preference for hospital visitation, making medical decisions, or making funeral arrangements.
- Health insurance—Generally, there is no access to joint health insurance policies and there is no recognition of one’s partner as a qualified dependent on a health insurance policy.
- Federal rights—There is no recognition of rights to Social Security retirement and disability benefits. In addition, the same sex partner of a veteran may lose certain VA benefits.
- Rights of parents—There is no presumption of parentage for children born during marriage, including automatic guardianship (during illness or at the death of a partner) and the right of custody.
- Property rights—There is no protection for jointly held property in same gender partnerships.

The rights stated above are basic human rights that should be available to everyone, including same gender couples who are married or in a committed relationship.

Help Lines and Phone Numbers

Fenway GLBTQQI
(Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex) Helpline:
1-888-340-4528

Gay and Lesbian National
Hotline:
1-888-843-4564

Resources for Use at School and at Home:

Curriculum Development and Books

- **The GLSEN Lunchbox:** This kit contains a teacher training program to provide background information, suggestions, and tools for use in student workshops designed to end heterosexism in schools. The tools consist of exercise cards, a video of students telling about their experiences, and favors for students who participate in a workshop. The kit may be used by guidance staff, administrators, and community youth leaders as well as by teachers.
www.glsen.org

- *How It Feels to Have a Gay or Lesbian Parent: A Book by Kids for Kids of All Ages* by Judith Snow.

In this book, 30 young people, ages 7 to 31, talk about their experiences growing up with gay or lesbian parents.
www.haworthpress.com

- *GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for Queer and Questioning Teens: A young woman shares her journey of coming out and eventually becoming comfortable with her own sexual identity.* The author writes frankly about homophobia, sexuality, and religion.
www.freespirit.com
- *Cleaning Closets: A Mother’s Story* by Beverly Cole. Chalice Press, 1995.
- *The Family Heart: A Memoir of When Our Son Came Out* by Robb Forman Drew. Ballantine Paper, 1994.
- *Now That You Know: A Parent’s Guide to Understanding Their Gay and Lesbian Children* by Betty Fairchild and Nancy Hayward. Harvest/HBS Books, 1998.

Here are a few things we all can do to make our world a better, more tolerant and open place:

- Call or visit your state representatives and let them know where you stand on issues of concern to the GLBT community. Make sure they understand that you and your family will watch how they vote on important issues.
- Write to the editors of your local newspaper and let them know you support equal opportunity and fairness for all.
- Advocate for change. Speak out on behalf of the GLBT community wherever and when

Support for Parents of Gay and Lesbian Children

The following questions are part of a survey conducted in February 2007 on a Boston college campus. The survey was designed to elicit answers that would support parents of gays and lesbians.

1. What helps GLBT people in the coming-out process?
 - The willingness to understand, ask questions, and seek out resources
 - Judgment-free discussion
 - Love, no matter what
 - Acceptance of friends, even if they are also gay
 - Treating my partner the same way my parents treated my brother’s girlfriend
 - Reassurance that I am still my parents’ son/daughter regardless of my sexual preference
2. What do gay men and lesbian women need as they come out?
 - A safe place to talk about my concerns, i.e., a non-judgmental, confidential space that is free of harassment
 - An ally who: listens, avoids assumptions and stereotyping and doesn’t try to “fix” things, knows when and how to refer someone to outside help if necessary, is genuine and has a sense of humor.

The journey toward tolerance begins when we recognize and try to heal the intolerance in ourselves.

from *Teaching Tolerance*
by Sara Bullard

ever you can. Join the PTA or a local civic organization and represent those you love.

- Stay informed. Sign up for PFLAG’s Weekly Update at www.pflag.org/signup.html
- Take action at the polls. Register like-minded voters, participate in get-out-the-vote efforts, and above all, vote.
- Join forces with PFLAG today. Make a generous, tax-deductible donation. Host a House Party. Spread the word. Get active!
Together our voices will be heard!

GUEST COMMENTARY

In this issue we welcome our first guest commentary. We would be delighted to have more contributions such as this. If you would like to submit something for our fall newsletter, call Sandy Thompson at 781-729-8063 or email office@wmcn.org

“Acknowledging Racism” or “Kramer’s Missed Opportunity”

by the Rev. Eric M. Dupee, Crawford Memorial United Methodist Church

You might remember, back in November, Michael Richards (formerly Kramer on the television show Seinfeld) made headlines during a stand-up comedy routine. He called two black hecklers the “n-word” and enthusiastically referenced a time when blacks were routinely terrorized and lynched in the United States. It was a comedy routine that quickly became ugly.

During a satellite appearance for David Letterman’s “Late Show,” his tone became angry and frustrated as he claimed, “I’m not a racist. That’s what’s so crazy about this.” As I watched Richards apologize and deny his racism, I found myself wishing he would have responded differently. Wouldn’t it have been refreshing if, instead of denying his racism, he acknowledged it?

If I were his publicist, I would have encouraged Richards to come out and say, “All my life, I’ve received messages that black people are inferior to whites. I grew up saying, ‘Eanie, meanie miney moe, catch a n----- by the toe.’ In the movies, the villain was always dressed in black. I feel superior to black people because I routinely see white people in positions of power. I fear black people because I don’t really know them. I assume the worst about them because of the way they are portrayed in the nightly news.” I would have counseled Richards to say, “Like most people, I try to resist the influences of these messages, but it all came pouring out in a moment of weakness.”

If Michael Richards would have had the courage to be honest with himself, this episode could have been an opportunity for personal transformation. It could have been the start of a process of healing from the wounds of racism. It also could have begun an honest conversation in America about how we all are affected by the constant exposure to the message that “white” is superior and “black” is inferior. Unfortunately, Richards chose denial.

Television personality Dr. Phil is fond of saying, “We can’t fix what we don’t acknowledge.” As a society we cannot heal from the wounds of racism until we acknowledge its existence. It is not by chance that there are more African American young men in prison than in college. It is not by chance that in the year 2000, the median net worth of households maintained by African Americans was less than one tenth the net worth of white households. It is not by chance that there are very few African Americans living in towns like Winchester, Massachusetts.

My hope is to live in a world where people like me and Michael Richards can say, “I am a racist. But I’m working on myself. I’m learning how racism impacts me and people of color. I’m recognizing and resisting the privileges that come with having ‘white’ skin.” That will be refreshing.

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