

# OUT Loud Baltimore

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

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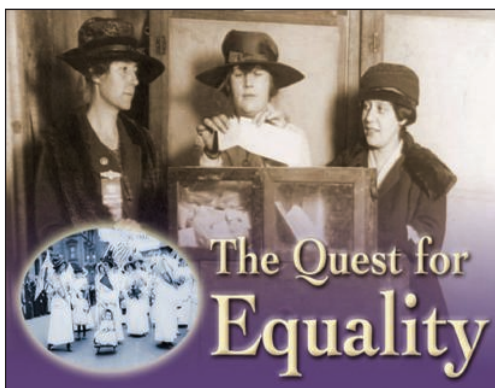
## 'Our History is Our Strength' The Nation Kicks off Women's History Month

BY REV. MOTHER MEREDITH MOISE, SPSA

As we roll out of Black History Month, people around the nation are celebrating the contributions of women. March is Women's History Month. Schools, places of worship and government are commemorating the genius of women in the form of exhibitions, shows, performances and book readings. The national theme of March 2011's Women's History Month is "Our History is Our Strength".

According to Women - history-month.gov, "The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a 'Women's History Week' celebration in 1978 and chose the week of March 8 to coincide with International

Women's Day." The celebrations caught fire around the state and eventually around the US. In 1981, our own Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) co-sponsored a Congressional Resolution nam-



ing a "Women's History Week". Six years later, Congress expanded the week to a month. The National Women's History Project asked Congress to encourage citizens to celebrate and remember women in US history throughout the month of

March in 1987.

Since then, the popularity of Women's History Month has grown. From schools to libraries, from arenas to theatres, people from all walks of life remember the contributions,

sacrifices and strength of women in this nation, and indeed the world.

Young women from around the nation take comfort in learning about their foremothers.

"A woman, young or old, must take pride in being an independent woman," recalls Teria Floyd, a junior at Western High School. She takes pride in learning about the contributions of women spanning the generations. When asked about the month's commemorations, her step mom, Vann Mills, replied, "She=he." According to Vann, these mass celebrations promote the equality of women in our society.

Nicole Benson, a grad school student from West Virginia thinks March is a good time, but not the only time, to learn about the women who have shaped the nation. Benson urges, "March is a good time to indulge in [celebrating] the contributions that women have made the America... However, it should not be forgotten in the 11 months of the year... we should learn about it through-

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## House of Delegates Takes up Key Bills

BY STEVE CHARING

At press time we don't know if the Maryland House of Delegates will be the venue that will move equality another step forward or will it be a house of horrors. By the time you read this story, there should be an answer.

One bill, the Civil Marriage Protection Act, finally made its way to the floor for debate following its drama-filled consideration by the House Judiciary Committee whereby the measure barely passed by a 12-10 vote. Several lawmakers who were co-sponsors were hesitant to vote for the bill for varying reasons but one such co-sponsor, Del. Tiffany Alston (D-Prince George's) had decided to vote against the measure saying, "For my constituents, no." And Jill Carter (D-Baltimore), in a stunning display of gamesmanship, eventually voted for it after being excoriated by angry pro-marriage equality activists and constituents for holding up the vote.

The bill required the "yes" vote from committee chairman Del. Joseph F. Vallario, Jr. (D-Prince George's), a firm opponent of same-sex marriage in order to save it. He wanted it to advance to the 141-member chamber for whatever reason.

Prior to the beginning of the debate on March 9, we learned that another legislator, Del. Peter Murphy (D-Charles County), a divorced father of two who also has two grandchildren, came out as gay. His family and colleagues have known for years, according to a report in the *Washington Blade*. This brings the total to eight

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## Vigil for Tyra Trent

BY DANA LAROCCA

Against the din of traffic on North Avenue near Charles Street a diverse crowd of about 70 people gathered on March 4 in memory of slain transwoman Tyra Trent, who was found dead, presumed murdered, in a vacant house in Northwest Baltimore on February 19. National leadership, the Mayor's office, local activists, and the faith community offered their support. Speaking from the perspective of the national transgender community was Denise Leclair, executive director of the International Foundation for Gender Education:

"I have been to so many of these things; it breaks my heart every time. Our commu-

nity is beautiful. We're smart. We're strong, we're proud, and we don't need to be oppressed year after year after year. This is just senseless. We all need to stand up and start demanding our rights – and for the people out there who say they are our allies, let's see you actually

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credit: Donna Simone Plamondon



# Johnny Down-Low on the D-List

BY MICK SANDOVAL

Eighties punk music valley doll Josie Cotton is set to release *Pussycat Babylon* this month. It's her first studio album in three years. The first single, "Johnny R U Queer?" is a dance floor remake of her 80's new wave hit about a gay boy living on the down low. The updated version features deliciously dirty rhymes by gay rapping twins Jackson and Coleman Vrana, better known as Elephant.



To promote the re-release of Johnny, Josie and the boys are hosting a video contest on the popular gay social networking site, Dlist.com. We spoke to the motley crew about the infamous gay track and why its message still resonates with gay boys and girls today.

**Tell us about Johnny R U Queer contest on Dlist.com.**

**Jackson:** The original Johnny came out in the 1980s just when video was killing the radio star on MTV. Now that technology has made it possible for everyone to make music videos, we thought it would be a cool way to pay homage to the original by encouraging fans to be creative.

**Coleman:** Plus we know gay boys out there need cash, so here's an easy way to win some! **Josie, why re-release "Johnny, R U Queer" now?**

**Josie:** I knew if there was ever a time to re-release, now was the moment. But it raised a lot of questions. Was it still relevant? Was it still funny? Was it the right tempo to dance to? Did the lyrics need to be modernized? There was a lot of head banging around it and everyone around me had a radically different opinion, especially about Elephant being on the record. Of course, that made me want them on it even more.

**How did you boys become involved with the Johnny project?**

**Jackson:** Josie saw us performing in downtown LA last year and asked us to lend our voices to the song. Since then, we've become friends and love working on each oth-

er's projects.

**Josie, you have called the Elephant boys your long lost vampire children.**

**Josie:** Yes, the twins I forgot giving birth to, although I vaguely remember breast feeding them. We look eerily alike with our deathly white skin and their Children of the Damned piercing blue eyes.

**How do you explain the chemistry?**

**Josie:** They are so brainy and sweet and talented, it's ridiculous.

**Elephant, is the feeling mutual?**

**Jackson:** Josie is an unbelievably creative force, with a quirky, sexy voice and an anything-goes musical style that is totally unique to her. We've seen and heard nearly everything she's been involved in.

**Your publicist describes your unification as The B52s meet the Black Eyed Peas.**

**Josie:** He said that? Mmmm... I guess he was referring to my sick sense of humor in a more current dance format.

**Are you the punk Fergie?**

**Josie:** Nah, I'm more like her zombie sister-wife.

**Josie, how would you describe the new sound of Johnny?**

**Coleman:** No-nonsense, stripped-down electronic dance, included with some fun retro synth. We prefer the new version, as it's simply more melodic and edgy, but we may be biased.

**Josie, thirty years after the original, are Johnnys still hiding in closets?**

**Josie:** Yes, of course there are. The original song died an un-natural death back in the day because of political maneuvering and people completely taking it the wrong way. There was never a dialogue about its true message which I always regretted. Considering what's happening in Uganda and the complicity of our American senators, we better start talking about the gay issue and our role in the world in regards to human rights.

**Elephant, when did you break out of your closets?**

**Coleman:** We broke out at 14 years old, and had our asses kicked nearly every day in high school after that. Coming out gave us self-respect, but also many busted lips.

**Would you boys date a Johnny?**

**Coleman:** Absolutely not, but that doesn't mean we haven't slept with our fair share of them.

**Josie, how do you feel about Elephant calling Johnny's girl a bitch?**

**Josie:** I don't have a problem at all with Elephant's lyrics. For one thing there's a lot of tongue in cheek humor there and I'm kind of amazed when it upsets people. I like the urgency of their music and I understand the inherent anger. Anyway, the people most offended by Elephant are older straight white guys. They actually think Elephant is homophobic which is so funny to me. And the way I see it, Elephant was calling Johnny a bitch for leading his girl on.

**Elephant, why all the obscenity in your music? Are today's gay youth angry?**

**Jackson:** We think it's important to challenge people to embrace language and culture in a way that makes them uncomfortable; we actually see it as a form of social progression. And yes, today's gay youth is very angry; they need people out there on their side, people who are intimidating.

**Josie, tell us about Pussycat Babylon.**

**Josie:** It's a very electronic sounding, story driven, dance-y record. And it's more similar to my early records than anything I've done to date.

**Do Elephant appear on any other songs?**

**Coleman:** No, but we are making the music video for "Recipe for Disaster," a fantastic track from the album. It's going to be something that just might glue her fans' jaws to the floor.

**Elephant, tell us about the new album you're working on.**

**Coleman:** It's called "Don't Sit There. It's Wet," and it still surprises me when I hear it. It's everything we've needed to say since those bruised and bloodied-days in high school. It's about total and complete power and owning of oneself, one's sexuality and their place in the world. It's funny yet dead serious at the same time and it's full of phrases you'd never hear on another record.

**Josie:** I am singing on the record.

**Anything else to add before we sign out?**

**Josie:** Be sure to check out the contest on Dlist.com. I can't wait to see how creative my little Johnnys can be. ▼

For more information on the Johnny R U Queer video contest, visit <http://www.dlist.com/johnnyqueer>.

