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Equality Forum's Malcolm Lazin

Equality Forum Takes The Lead In Gay History Month

BY ON TOP MAGAZINE STAFF

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The history and achievements of the gay movement are observed during October as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month celebrates the pioneers who have contributed to the gay movement. LGBT History Month originated in 1994 by Missouri high-school history teacher Rodney Wilson. And while many organizations organized events in past years, there was little coordinated effort between their contributions.

In recent years, however, Malcolm Lazin's Philadelphia-based Equality Forum has taken the lead in the effort to highlight gay and lesbian achievements. The group has been diligently adding profiles of LGBT icons at the website glbthistormonth.com.

"Starting in 2006 Equality Forum, which has had a real interest in our history, undertook to coordinate the project. And so each day in October there's a different icon and for that icon on our website, which is glbthistormonth.com, there's a video, a biography, bibliography, downloadable images and other educational resources," Equality Forum Executive Director and Founder Malcolm Lazin told OUTTAKEonline CEO Charlotte Robinson in an exclusive audio interview available at her website.

The pair also discussed the group's upcoming Equality Forum, which takes place next April in Philadelphia. Lazin said this year's forum will emphasize gay and lesbian civil rights in Russia.

Gay stigma in the former Soviet Union remains high in a country where gays and lesbians face institutionalized discrimination. Gay activists in Moscow have been denied a Gay Pride parade license since 2006. And last June, four activist in the Russian capital were arrested by police in their apartment, after participating in a gay rights demonstration that lasted only minutes and consisted of hanging a banner near City Hall that read "Rights For Gays and Lesbians" and setting free hundreds of balloons. Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, who has called homosexuality "satanic," said the activist's actions were "criminal."

"The forum is really unique in that it has both a national and international focus. It provides a perspective in terms of all of our major issues. ... For each issue we bring together diverse leaders around those issues in order to discuss where the community currently is and where it needs to be going," Lazin said.

Lazin also told Robinson that he believed an Obama administration would help the



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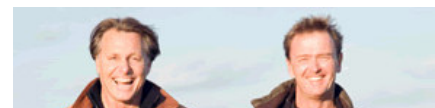
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gay movement achieve greater equality. He cited passage of ENDA, repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and DOMA, and securing federal benefits for gay and lesbian couples as examples of what could be accomplished in the next four to eight years.

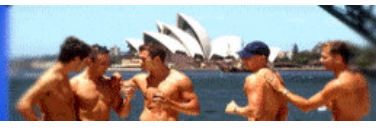
Listen to the entire interview at OUTTAKOnline.com.

On the net: Equality Forum is at www.equalityforum.com



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