



Press Release

**EQUALITY FORUM PRESENTS
FILM DOCUMENTARY *JIM IN BOLD***

Equality Forum presents **JIM IN BOLD**, a documentary by award-winning filmmaker **Glenn Holsten** in collaboration with **Young Gay America**.

Equality Forum, formerly PrideFest America, presents the world's most comprehensive programs about the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community at an annual symposium and festival each spring. Equality Forum 2003 featured nearly 75 programs and social events by 95 regional, national and international GLBT organizations.

JIM IN BOLD examines the many complicated issues facing gay and lesbian teens. Titled after a poem of the same name by **Jim Wheeler**, the young man in whose memory Equality Forum's **National Youth Panel** is dedicated, **JIM IN BOLD** explores the profound impact of nationally tolerated homophobia in our culture and public schools on GLBT youth.

"**JIM IN BOLD** tells the stories of gay youth in this country, from the tragic impact of hatred to the triumphant resilience of youth," said Equality Forum's Executive Director Malcolm Lazin. "This is the second documentary production by Equality Forum, the first being *Gay Pioneers* which premiered last year. We are proud to be adding to the canon of work which records the history of the GLBT civil rights movement."

JIM IN BOLD draws on Jim Wheeler's story as a framework to fuse two very different experiences of youths in America. By reconstructing the emotional journey which led to his unfortunate death, the film reveals the many warning signs that pointed to his suicide, including his writings, paintings, pleas with friends to assist him and threats to his family. In addition, the film explores how a high school system tolerated the kind of bigotry and harassment Jimmy endured daily as student at Cedar Crest High School in Lebanon, PA.

JIM IN BOLD simultaneously reveals a hopeful aspect of being young and gay in America, by documenting the activities of **Young Gay America** founders **Benjie Nycum** and **Mike Glatze** as they traveled around the United States and interviewed gay youths. Their tour took them from Utah to Jim Wheeler's hometown of Lebanon, PA where Benjie and Mike met and interviewed gay teens in Lebanon to include in their Young Gay America website project where, information via the Internet -- highly accessible but also anonymous -- allows teens to come out of the closet, via a virtual community of support. The film features many resilient gay teens who are creating and promoting a positive self-image of what it is like to be young and gay in America.

Following the premiere of the documentary on May 2, 2003, Benjie Nycum and Mike Glatze received Equality Forum's **National Role Model Award** for their extraordinary work on **JIM IN BOLD** and their groundbreaking documentation on their Young Gay America website



of the varied experiences of GLBT youth.

Glenn Holsten (Director) is a producer and director of documentaries and performance programs for public television. His national PBS production credits include *Gay Pioneers*, *Mothers March*, *The Sounds of Philadelphia*, *Philadelphia Diary*, *The Great Comet Crash* and *Neptune All Night*. He was director of *An Angel In The Village* (a portrait of Philadelphia-based artist Lily Yeh), which was broadcast on public television in May 1999. He also directed *Gay Bingo*, *MURAL*, and *Intersections at Third and Indiana*, which was produced in collaboration with the MIT Media Lab.

Glenn is a recipient of the 1997 Pew Fellowship in the Arts, a 2000 Independence Foundation Fellowship in the Arts and a 2001 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship. His works have been featured at the Dance on Camera, Houston, Columbus and New York Film Festivals, and have been awarded silver and gold awards from Corporation for Public Broadcasting for innovative television production. He has been honored with sixteen Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards. A collection of his work was exhibited in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's 20th Century Video Gallery.

Young Gay America, is a long-term research project / road trip adventure dedicated to improving the lives of GLBT youth. Founded by **Benjie Nycum** and **Mike Glatze**, YGA's mission is to educate and inform GLBT youth about their importance in society by placing their individual stories in an international forum (via the Internet); to foster and encourage the exchange of ideas by queer youth on issues pertinent to queer youth (to allow their voices to be heard); and to promote positive self-image and sense of belonging.

Since its founding in 1993, Equality Forum has become the world's largest annual gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) symposium and festival. It has expanded from a three-day conference of regional organizations to a full week of events featuring national and regional leaders on a broad range of compelling issues. With more than 75 programs and social events presented by 95 regional, national and international organizations, Equality Forum is the world's most in-depth program of the emergence of a vibrant GLBT community and its civil rights aspirations.

For further information, please call 215-732-3378 or visit Equality Forum's website at www.equalityforum.com.

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Equality Forum

Equality Forum is the premiere annual global forum for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues. Equality Forum began in 1993 as PrideFest Philadelphia, a different paradigm with 15 regional GLBT organizations presenting substantive programs over a weekend. In 1999 with 60 regional and national programs, the Board renamed the week of events to PrideFest America. For 2003, with global programming and Germany as its Featured Nation, Equality Forum was approved. Equality Forum is a non-profit corporation and an IRS designated 501 © (3) organization.

In 1999, the Board of Directors authorized producing biannually a documentary about the GLBT civil rights movement. The initial documentary, "Gay Pioneers" was about the first homosexual demonstrations, which occurred annually from 1965 to 1969 in Washington, New York and Philadelphia. These demonstrations preceded Stonewall. PBS award winning documentary film-maker Glenn Holsten was the Director. "Gay Pioneers" was premiered in 2001. It documents with on-camera interviews the pioneers together with archival footage from these seminal demonstrations.

Equality Forum selected JIM IN BOLD as the second biannual documentary. The film highlights the impact of homophobia in our culture and specifically on GLBT youth. JIM IN BOLD premiered at The Kimmel Center on May 2nd during Equality Forum 2003.



Malcolm Lazin
Executive Producer
JIM IN BOLD

Malcolm Lazin is the Executive Director of Equality Forum. Mr. Lazin is a graduate of Boston University School of Law. He served in the United States Department of Justice, where he led federal grand jury investigations into white collar crime and official corruption. He taught investigators of white collar crime to US Attorney's offices. He received the Department's highest annual honor, the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award.

Mr. Lazin chaired the Pennsylvania Crime Commission with a staff of 60 employees. The Pennsylvania Crime Commission's principal mission was to investigate organized crime. Mr. Lazin entered private practice where he was a partner at the law firm of Rubin Quinn Moss & Paterson.

In 1985, Mr. Lazin left the active practice of law to be the president of a real estate development firm specializing in urban waterfront renewal. His company built the first major project on Philadelphia's dormant waterfront. That project included a 300-slip full service marina; a 10,000 square foot pier for outdoor dining and entertainment; a rehabilitated 180,000 square foot pier for indoor dining and entertainment and the decking of charred pilings into a 85,000 square foot parking pier.

Mr. Lazin chaired the Philadelphia Waterfront Developer Council. During his term the Council initiated major infrastructure planning for Philadelphia's waterfront. In 1985, Mr. Lazin conceived the idea to light the Ben Franklin Bridge as the permanent commemorative to the bicentennial of the US Constitution. He helped organize the bi-state bridge lighting committee and served as the co-chair of the \$1.8 million fundraising committee. The lighting of the bridge premiered on September 17, 1987 and has become a moniker for the Philadelphia region.

Mr. Lazin has served on numerous philanthropic, business, religious and community service organizations. From 2000 to 2003 he was President of Society Hill Civic Association. He presently serves on the Board of Trustees, Lebanon Valley College. He is the recipient of numerous regional and national community service awards.

In 1992, Mr. Lazin helped found Equality Forum. He served as the volunteer Co-Chair until 1999, when the Board of Directors unanimously asked him to serve as its Executive Director.



Glenn Holsten
Producer/Director

Glenn Holsten is a producer and director of documentaries and performance programs. His most recent documentary for PBS, *Thomas Eakins: Scenes from Modern Life*, examines the city through the eyes of the 19th century American painter.

National PBS production credits include *Mothers March*, *Gay Pioneers*, *The Sounds of Philadelphia*, *Philadelphia Diary*, *The Great Comet Crash* and *Neptune All Night*. He was director of *An Angel In The Village* (a portrait of Philadelphia-based artist Lily Yeh), which was broadcast on public television in May 1999. *Gay Bingo*, is a portrait of AIDS in the year 2000, as seen through the community surrounding Philadelphia's premiere AIDS fundraising event. He directed *MURAL*, a video diary project involving four Philadelphia mural artists. In collaboration with the MIT Media Lab, Glenn developed a prototype for an interactive documentary titled *Intersections at Third and Indiana*.

Many of his works have examined the complexities of life in Philadelphia. Such programs include *AKA Judy Garland Park*, *Pulling it Together in North Philadelphia*, *The Sounds of Philadelphia*, *First Person Philadelphia*, *Words In Place* (a series of video-poems inspired by the city), and *Philadelphia Diary*, a feature-length fictional film inspired by the drama of everyday life in the city of Brotherly Love.

Glenn is a recipient of the 1997 Pew Fellowship in the Arts, a 2000 Independence Foundation Fellowship in the Arts, and a Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship. His works have been featured at the Banff, Dance on Camera, Houston, Columbus and New York Film Festivals, and have been awarded silver and gold awards from Corporation for Public Broadcasting for innovative television production. He has been honored with eighteen Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards. A collection of his work was exhibited in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's 20th Century Video Gallery.

On the international production scene, Glenn has directed documentaries in Portugal, Kenya, Northern Ireland, Poland, Bosnia and the Republic of Georgia.

In the summer of 2000, Glenn traveled to Mongolia, where he conducted a workshop for television professionals that explored creative methods for storytelling on television. In Philadelphia, Glenn has taught a post-production workshop for adults at the Scribe Video Center and after-school video production workshops with teens at North Philadelphia's Village of Arts and Humanities. He holds a BA in English from the University of Pennsylvania.

Glenn is currently in working on *The Polish Poster: Freedom on the Fence*, a documentary film that examines the tumultuous history of Poland through the remarkable art form of the poster; and *Heartland*, a portrait of painter Bo Bartlett, a painter who examines modern American life on an heroic scale.



Young Gay America

It's as powerful a movement as Stonewall, and we want to record the voices of this moment as it happens.

-- Benjie Nycum, Young Gay America

After leaving their jobs at **XY Magazine** in San Francisco, Benjie Nycum and Mike Glatze had a simple idea. Travel around the United States and interview gay youth along their way. Oh, and post the interviews on the Internet. Within days, a website was born. The team conducted and edited interviews on each day of the initial trip, uploading stories and images with the assistance of a volunteer webmaster. The idea was instantly successful, and the dynamic duo has since conducted interview tours of South, Midwest, and Northwest America (using their own savings). In collecting stories, there is no criterion except they come from youth. Their goal is to just collect everybody's experience, if it's good, bad, sensational, boring – in hopes that kids reading the information on the website will find common experiences.

Queer youth still don't have a voice. They still feel isolated in most cases. There are millions of young queer people out there, and they are ignored in almost every part of the media.

-- Mike Glatze, Young Gay America

According to Benjie and Mike, "Finding information and guidance is the biggest challenge for gay kids. But thanks to new technologies such as the Internet, it's now possible for even deeply closeted kids to learn about coming out, sex, and relationships – and do so anonymously. For us, technology is crucial. We can edit photographs and stories while we drive and upload them via our cell phone or hotel phone line, and by the next morning we'll have two or three E-mails from kids as far away as Switzerland, or from right down the road, saying they had no idea there were people in the same situation so close."

Benjie and Mike have learned a lot, and have a lot to tell. They point out that many original theories about the country were wrong. Among the most surprising fact revealed to them during their travels is that in many communities churches are a powerful -- and sometimes the only -- resource for gay youth.



Susan Wheeler
Mother

Susan Wheeler is a native of Lansdowne, PA. She was a stay-at-home mom for her seven children. In 1994, at the age of 44, Susan received as a part-time student from Elizabethtown College a degree in secondary education in history.

Susan's two youngest children are in secondary school. Susan works a substitute teacher. She is an ardent conservationist and is equally as passionate on humanitarian issues. Susan and her husband Glenn have two grandchildren.

Susan works with the parents of GLBT teens to come out of the closet with their sons and daughters and to advocate on behalf of their children.



PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

The screening of JIM IN BOLD can include the following:

- ? Exuberance!, an up to 300 photo exhibit of GLBT youth of North America by photographers Mike Glatze and Benjie Nycum, Co-Founders of Young Gay America and Rachelle Lee Smith. Some of the Exuberance! photographs were taken by Glatze and Nycum during Young Gay America's JIM IN BOLD National Road Trip. Exuberance! was featured in the April edition of The Advocate (two-pages); June edition of Genre (five-pages) and The Philadelphia Inquirer (two-pages). There is an Exuberance! catalogue, which is available on request. Exuberance! can be accessed at www.younggayamerica.com/exuberance.shtml
- ? Youth Panel. The youth panel can be constituted by Equality Forum and Young Gay America and could include regional youth.
- ? Gay Youth in Post-Gay America. A 45 minute media presentation by Young Gay America.
- ? Panel on GLBT Civil Rights as constituted by Equality Forum and could include regional experts.
- ? Panel on the impact of homophobia on society as constituted by Equality Forum and could include regional experts.

Representatives of JIM IN BOLD for post-screening discussion including:

Glenn Holsten, Director
Susan Wheeler, mother of James Wheeler
Mike Glatze, Co-Founder, Young Gay America
Benjie Nycum, Co-Founder, Young Gay America
Scott MacPhee, Young Gay America
Malcolm Lazin, Executive Producer and Executive Director, Equality Forum