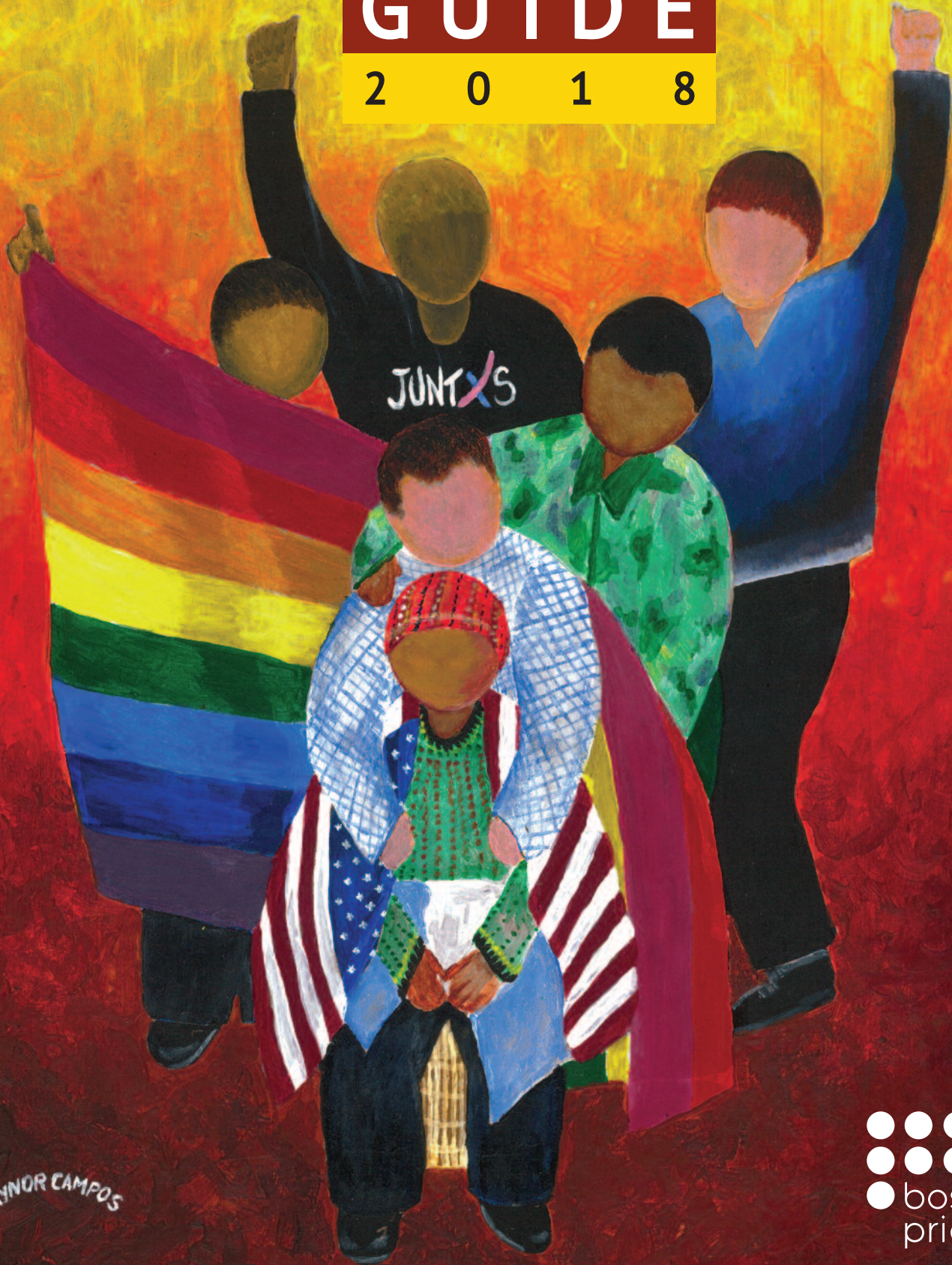


# BOSTON PRIDE GUIDE

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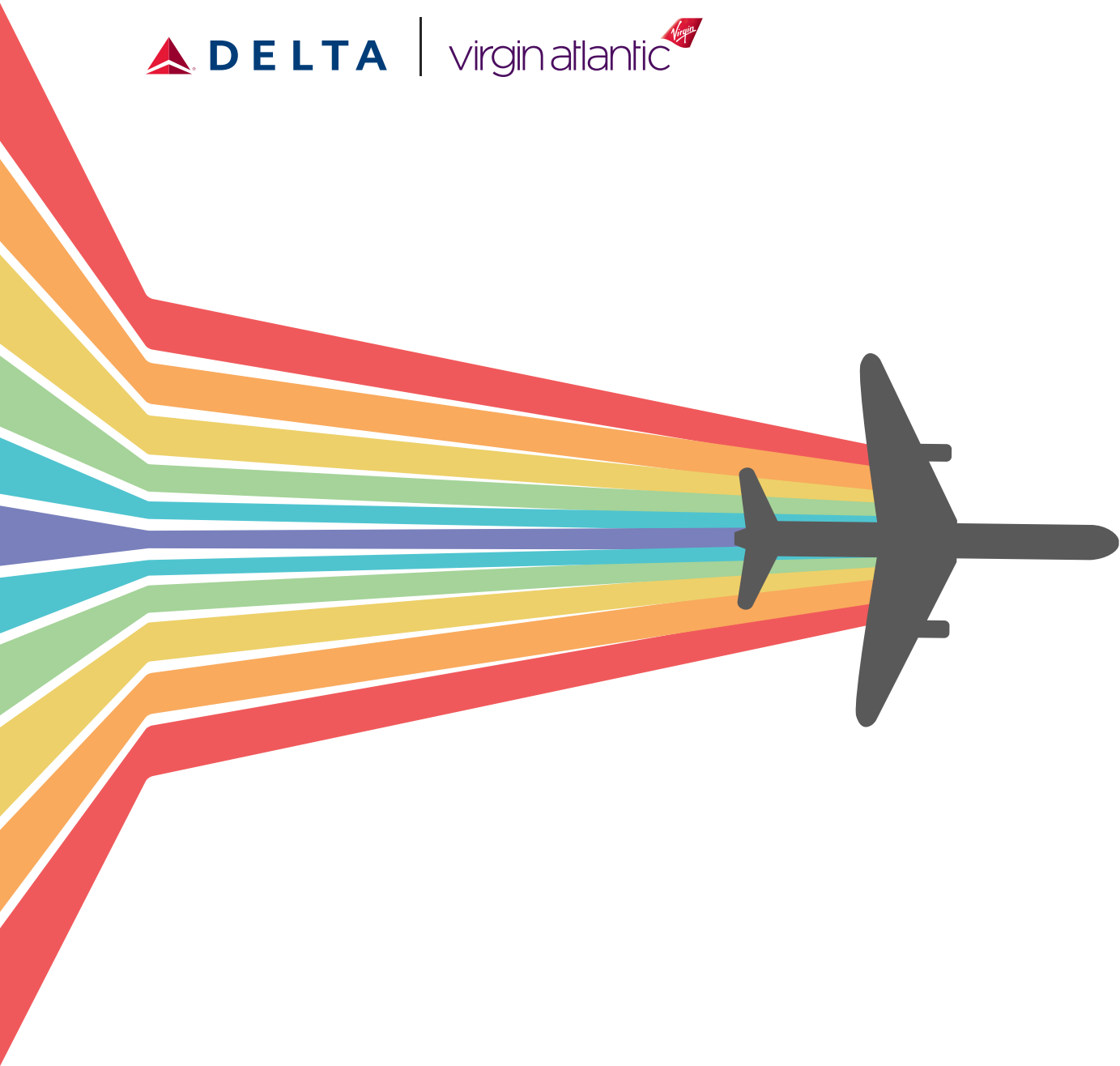


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## OUR PROOF



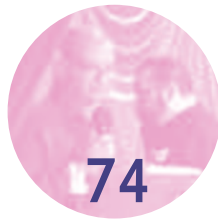
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Did you know there is a pill  
that can prevent HIV?



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find out more at the Pride Festival!*

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# A Rainbow of Resistance

Credit: Boston Pride.

Boston Pride's 2018 community-chosen theme is *Rainbow Resistance*. It's an apt choice in light of the attacks our community, particularly queer people of color and trans people, is facing here in Massachusetts and beyond. The theme is infused into every aspect of this year's *Boston Pride Guide*, beginning with the cover, which prominently features fists raised in the universal symbol of resistance – a protest piece against the oppressive immigration policies of the current administration. The cover is both personal and communal, exploring artist Maynor Campos' unique, yet familiar, experience as a queer immigrant, and honoring the importance of keeping our movement intersectional. The image is a dynamic addition to our series of locally made cover art and an excellent successor to Louisa Bertman's androgynous embrace, which has been selected for inclusion in the 37<sup>th</sup> volume of *American Illustration* as one of the best editorial works of 2017.

From our inaugural issue in 2015, the Pride Guide has fueled resistance by providing a platform that well over 100 people and organizations within the community have leveraged to educate and inspire action. The 2018 volume – the luminous yellow addition to the Guide's progressive rainbow-banded bindings – sheds light on local acts of *Rainbow Resistance*: Suffolk Law's efforts to combat transgender housing discrimination and Boston Pride Grand Marshal Freedom for All Massachusetts' campaign to protect transgender public accommodations rights, which are at risk of being eliminated this November. We explore the different forms that resistance can take across the nation, from queer-focused gun control protests that reprise ACT UP's brand of political performance art, to collaboration with unlikely allies to establish a LGBTQ center in rural Indiana. The mere act of staging and attending a Pride celebration can be an act of resistance in less queer-friendly countries like Suriname, and local activists can have an international impact, as demonstrated by a former Boston Pride volunteer's endeavor to restore marriage equality in his home country of Bermuda.

The current volume also celebrates smaller, more personal acts of resistance. Coming out is one of the bravest individual acts of resistance, particularly in rural Appalachia. Indeed, not long ago, Boston was a far more difficult place to be out, as exemplified by the life of Charlie Gibson, founder of the Gibson House Museum. Yet, coming out is not limited to sexual orientation and gender identity; it also includes the quest for spaces where our intersectional identities can be embraced in their entirety. Whether raising culturally queer children, challenging oppressive institutions like the Church, or embracing body positivity, our contributors are embodying the spirit of *Rainbow Resistance*.

Pride developed as a way for the community to celebrate the historic act of *Rainbow Resistance* that occurred 49 years ago at the Stonewall Inn and to continue the fight for queer equality. We explore the many acts of resistance that steadily rose to a crescendo, climaxing at Stonewall. From the first anniversary of the uprising, Pride's dual components – celebratory acts and activism – have been intrinsically intertwined. Pride has long served as a context for community members to educate each other on issues that are near and dear to their hearts, from musical responses to community tragedies to the need to carve out spaces for queer people within traditionally heterosexual sub-cultures, such as Greek life.

The Guide wouldn't be complete without our comprehensive, straight-from-the-source listing of all official Pride Week events, including our newly minted Pride Sports program and the continued expansion of Pride Arts. As the Pride Movement continues to flourish, we are seeing an increasing number of new Prides develop across New England, over 20 of which are present in our useful directory of Sister Prides.

The participation of nearly 100 businesses, nonprofit organizations, and candidates for elected office as advertisers in the Guide demonstrates the positive evolution of our movement: it shows that our *Rainbow Resistance* has succeeded in driving visibility, acceptance, and equality in broader society. However, the fight is far from over. Not only are we battling to protect the rights we have gained as a community, we are also engaged on new fronts. The expansion of religious accommodation laws, particularly as they impact healthcare, is a threat to queer people everywhere. Sex workers, disproportionately members of the queer community, are facing heightened policing. Income inequality is worsening and many states still lack LGBTQ employment protections, making it increasingly important to highlight the contributions of queer workers. Queer immigrants are facing increasingly outrageous attacks from the current administration. While we have won many battles, our continued *Rainbow Resistance* remains as imperative as ever.

Persist with Pride,



Jessie DeStefano  
Co-Editor-in-Chief  
jdestefano@bostonpride.org



Michael Anthony Fowler  
Co-Editor-in-Chief  
mafowler@bostonpride.org

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# The Boston Pride Guide

Volume 4 (2018)

the official annual publication of the 501(c)3 nonprofit  
The New Boston Pride Committee, Inc. DBA Boston Pride  
ISSN: 2471-5972



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**pride** SM

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398 Columbus Avenue #285  
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## **Publisher**

Sylvain Bruni

## **Editors-in-Chief**

Jessie DeStefano

Michael Anthony Fowler

## **Associate Editor**

Kevin Schattenkirk

## **Manager**

Ed Hurley

## **Designer**

Pam Rogers

## **Contributing Photographers**

Marilyn Humphries

Christine Hurley

## **Accountant**

Linda DeMarco

## **Sales Representative**

Bill Berggren

## **Mission Statement**

Boston Pride produces events and activities to achieve inclusivity, equality, respect, and awareness in Greater Boston and beyond. Fostering diversity, unity, visibility, and dignity, we educate, communicate, and advocate by building and strengthening community connections.

## **Vision Statement**

Boston Pride creates change and progress in society by embracing our community's diverse history, culture, and identities, promoting community engagement and inclusivity, and striving for visibility and respect in unity.

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Photo credit: Marilyn Humphries.

Cover art: Maynor Campos.

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# Celebrate and Demonstrate: Carrying the Pride Banner into 2018

2017 will go down in history as a banner year for Boston Pride and the Pride Movement in the United States.

Our local celebration experienced unprecedented growth, both in the number of events held during Pride Week, and in total attendance. Animated by a galvanized community demonstrating Pride and solidarity against the hostile policies of the newly installed administration, participation in the Boston Pride Parade exploded: 331 groups came out (a 31 percent increase from 2016) with 45,000+ members marching in the streets of Boston before an audience of over half a million people. Combined with increased attendance at the Festival and Concert at City Hall Plaza, a growing social media following, and ever-expanding national and international readership for the *Boston Pride Guide*, Boston Pride directly reached, for the first time, over one million people in our community. In addition, thanks to television, print, and online coverage by media outlets, in particular our premier media partner NBC 10 Boston and its sister stations Telemundo and NECN, over five million people were exposed to Boston Pride and our programs – a milestone for queer visibility.

The 2018 theme for the Boston Pride celebration, *Rainbow Resistance*, is a rallying cry for every segment of our community to unite in resistance against the oppressive and regressive politics of the current government and the systemic threats to communities of color and trans people across the country and here in Massachusetts, including the potential repeal of our trans antidiscrimination legislation. The theme resonates with the long-standing dual identity and role of Pride in our community. Since its very first years in the 1970s, Pride in Boston has been a space to celebrate our collective victories, won through hard-fought legislative and civic resistance; and it has equally been a platform to raise awareness and inspire action on social and political issues that still affect our community.

In this spirit, Boston Pride continues to innovate and support

social justice programming. This year, 10 percent of our corporate sponsorship revenue will be earmarked for the 2019 Boston Pride Community Fund, to provide financial support to even more grassroots organizations in our community (see page 74). During the 2018 Boston Pride Parade, a special commemorative contingent in the leading section of the Parade will honor trans people whom we have lost this year to violence and suicide (see page 38). As of the writing of this letter, eight transgender people have already been murdered in 2018. We remember them and we #SayTheirNames: Amia Tyrae Berryman, Zakaria Fry, Viccky Gutierrez, Tonya Harvey, Phylcia Mitchell, Christa Leigh Steele-Knudslie, Celine Walker, and Sasha Wall. In an effort to improve the visibility of queer athletes and to combat the well-documented homo- and transphobia in athletics, Boston Pride has enhanced our partnerships with professional and nonprofit sports organizations in our region, by formally adding a Pride Sports program to our structure (see page 28). The mandate of this new program is to create spaces and opportunities to foster visibility and respect for athletes in our community, at both the professional and amateur levels.

Boston Pride is an all-volunteer organization: every event and every program is produced by community members who donate their time, skills, and personal resources to Pride each and every year. We thank our devoted event and operations leaders on the Boston Pride Committee for their hard work and their commitment to guarantee that Pride continues to happen in our city. Similarly, we commend our Pride volunteers for their dedication to ensuring the success of Boston Pride events. Finally, we thank our loyal partners for providing the financial resources essential to fulfilling our mission.

In closing, on behalf of everyone at Boston Pride, we thank our #WickedProud community for coming out and supporting our events each year. We wish you a wonderful 2018 Pride Week!



Sylvain Bruni  
President

Linda DeMarco  
Vice President

Martha Plaza  
Clerk

Malcolm Carey  
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Tina Rosado  
Board Member

Marco Torres  
Board Member



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our colors.



# The City of Boston



## PROCLAMATION

**Whereas:** *The Boston Pride Committee has been a strong advocate and support of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender communities throughout New England and is celebrating Boston Pride in the City of Boston; AND*

**Whereas:** *The City of Boston is honored to welcome members of the LGBTQ community and their Allies to celebrate 48 years of Boston Pride; AND*

**Whereas:** *The theme for this year's Boston Pride is "Rainbow Resistance," which is meant to recognize and support the continued fight of equality for all identities within our very diverse community and Boston Pride is an organization that stands with all people who are struggling for basic rights, acceptance, visibility, safety, acknowledgement, and equitability; AND*

**Whereas:** *The City of Boston would like to thank the Board of Directors, the Committee Chairs and all of the volunteers, for your continued support and commitment to the mission of Boston Pride over the past 48 years; NOW*

**Therefore,** *I, Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of the City of Boston, do hereby proclaim Friday, June 1st to Sunday, June 10th to be:*

## ***Boston Pride Week 2018***

*in the City of Boston*

*I urge all of my fellow Bostonians in recognizing the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer communities and their enormous contributions to the quality of life in the City of Boston.*

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**MAYOR OF BOSTON**

*June 1, 2018*





CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
MARTIN J. WALSH

June 1st, 2018

Dear Friends;

It is my honor and distinct pleasure to welcome you as you gather for our city's 48<sup>th</sup> *Annual Boston Pride Week*. I thank you in advance for coming together to acknowledge the importance of these cultural events celebrating LGBTQ equality.

Celebrating Boston Pride's 48<sup>th</sup> year, is a week that has grown to become the largest pride event in New England. As Mayor of Boston, I've seen the powerful and positive impact these events have on both individuals and our communities, and I remain committed to creating a supportive network and true equality for all residents in our neighborhoods.

This year's inspiring theme, "Rainbow Resistance" is meant to highlight the continued struggle and fight by all identities within the very diverse LGBTQ community. Boston Pride is an organization that stands with all communities and people who are struggling for basic rights, acceptance, visibility, safety, acknowledgement, and equitability. It sends a strong message for the LGBTQ community as we celebrate the unity and resilience of our strong city and our profound spirit. As we all are One Boston, we all have Boston Pride.

On behalf of the City of Boston, I wish you a joyous and memorable week of events and encourage you to embrace all our city has to offer.

Sincerely,

Martin J. Walsh  
Mayor of Boston

# Points of Pride

Boston Pride's 2017 year-end giving campaigns raised \$10,000+ to benefit the on-the-ground hurricane relief and recovery work of Puerto Rico-based LGBTQ non-profit Waves Ahead. Here's where the money went:

542 people in 160 households received a month's supply of water bottles and water filters for use in their homes. An additional 50 people also received toiletries.

76 adults and children in 15 households received a month's supply of meals in January, which allowed them to celebrate the Three Kings' Day holiday.

Three families received new roof sealer system installations to repair their heavily damaged houses.

Six municipalities (see map) received a total of 15 pallets of water for public distribution to many families.



Boston Pride provides monetary and logistical support for Massachusetts Youth Pride, co-producing the event with BAGLY since 2016.



In 2020, we will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Boston Pride. While Pride was founded in 1970, the first Boston Pride March was held in 1971.



Since 2012, Boston Pride has gifted over \$5,000 to InterPride's Solidarity Fund, to support grassroots Pride organizers in hostile environments.



Boston Black Pride, a program of Boston Pride, celebrates Black History Month with a series of events every February.



Boston Pride hosts two open houses annually (one in the spring, the other in the fall) for community members to get to know the Pride team.



After an open call for nominations, the Boston Pride themes and marshals are selected every year through an online community vote.



The Boston Pride Community Fund has disbursed \$51,633 to 35 small organizations in our community since its inception in 2016.



The money to support our Boston Pride Community Fund is raised at our block parties and at the High Heel Dash for Charity.



Boston Pride events and programs are 100% volunteer-staffed. 100% of event proceeds are re-invested into our programs and the community.





**CHARLES D. BAKER**  
GOVERNOR

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**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
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**KARYN E. POLITO**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

April 2018

Dear Friends and Visitors:

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Lieutenant Governor Polito and I wish to welcome you to Boston Pride 2018!

By embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity Boston Pride Week continues to honor and recognize the achievements of the LGBT community here in the Commonwealth. 2018's Boston Pride week will again serve to celebrate diversity and foster a sense of unity and visibility under the theme of "Rainbow Resistance." We are all proud of the meaningful and significant contributions that have made Massachusetts richer in history and more diverse in culture. These contributions will surely bring long-lasting impacts to the Commonwealth and beyond.

We send our thanks and congratulations to the organizers for the hard work that goes not only into the advocacy and outreach, but also into putting together this week of fun and celebration.

Please accept our best wishes for an enjoyable week!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Baker".

**CHARLES D. BAKER**  
GOVERNOR



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karyn E. Polito".

**KARYN E. POLITO**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



# Boston Pride Week Calendar

■ Flagship events ■ Pride Sports ■ Pride Arts ■ Black Pride & Latinx Pride ■ Youth Pride ■ Pride@Night events, see page 70

## SATURDAY, MAY 19

11:00AM-4:00PM ■  
Massachusetts Youth Pride  
*City Hall Plaza (Boston)*

## TUESDAY, MAY 29

6:00-8:00PM ■  
Bowling Night  
*Jillian's Lucky Strike  
(145 Ipswich St., Boston)*

## FRIDAY, JUNE 1

12:00PM ■  
Flag Raising Ceremony  
*City Hall Plaza (Boston)*

7:30PM ■  
Family Movie Night:  
Ferdinand  
*Boston Common (Boston)*

## SATURDAY, JUNE 2

11:30AM ■  
High Heel Dash for Charity  
*Hanover and Union Streets (Boston)*

12:00-5:00PM ■  
Pride Day @ Faneuil Hall  
*Faneuil Hall Marketplace  
(Boston)*

5:00PM ■  
After Party at the Bell In Hand  
*The Bell In Hand Tavern  
(45 Union St., Boston)*

7:30PM ■ ■  
Pride Night @ The Revolution  
*Gillette Stadium  
(1 Patriot Pl., Foxborough)*

## SUNDAY, JUNE 3

10:00AM  
AIDS Walk Boston  
*Boston Common (Boston)*

11:00AM-2:00PM  
Brunch of Queens - A Drag  
Brunch  
*The Bell in Hand Tavern  
(45 Union St., Boston)*

3:00-7:00PM  
The Silver Party: The Annual  
LGBT Senior Pride Coalition  
Dinner Dance  
*Holiday Inn  
(1200 Beacon St., Brookline)*

5:30-9:00PM ■  
Bears and Cubs  
Boston Harbor Cruise  
*Bay State Cruise Company (200  
Seaport Blvd., Boston)*

6:00PM  
Pride Remembrance Memorial  
*Garden of Peace (Plaza of 100  
Cambridge St., Boston)*

## MONDAY, JUNE 4

6:00-9:00PM ■  
Political Forum  
*District Hall (75 Northern Ave.,  
Boston)*

6:00-9:00PM  
OPEN: Out Professional  
Executive Networking Event  
*Red Lantern (39 Stanhope St.,  
Boston)*

## TUESDAY, JUNE 5

6:30PM ■  
Pride Lights @ the BCA  
*The Plaza at Boston Center for  
the Arts (Tremont, St., Boston)*

10:00PM ■  
Paradise Pride  
*Paradise Cambridge  
(180 Massachusetts Ave.,  
Cambridge)*

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6

5:00-9:00PM ■  
Family Dinner @ CPK  
(Mention "Boston Pride" and 20%  
of your check will go to support  
Pride programming!)  
*California Pizza Kitchen  
Prudential (800 Boylston St.,  
Boston)*

## THURSDAY, JUNE 7

7:00PM ■  
MFA Lecture: "(un)expected  
families: Pride"  
*Museum of Fine Arts  
(465 Huntington, Ave., Boston)*

7:10PM ■ ■  
Pride Night @ Fenway Park  
*Fenway Park (4 Yawkey Way,  
Boston)*

8:00PM-12:00AM ■  
Boston Bear Pride 2018:  
Bears Bare It All  
*Paradise Cambridge  
(180 Massachusetts Ave.,  
Cambridge)*

8:00PM-1:00AM ■ ■  
If You Can Feel It, You Can  
Speak It  
*Milky Way (284 Amory St.,  
Jamaica Plain)*

10:00PM-2:00AM ■  
Pride Queeraoke  
*Midway Cafe  
(3496 Washington St.,  
Jamaica Plain)*

## FRIDAY, JUNE 8

6:00PM  
Boston Dyke March  
*Parkman Bandstand, Boston  
Common (Boston)*

7:30PM ■  
Back Bay Ringers Concert  
*First Church in Boston  
(66 Marlborough St., Boston)*

9:00PM-1:00AM ■  
Official Dyke March AfterParty  
*Milky Way (284 Amory St.,  
Jamaica Plain)*

## SATURDAY, JUNE 9

10:00AM-12:00PM  
Pride Services  
*Union Church, Old South Church  
(Boston)*

11:00AM-6:00PM ■  
Boston Pride Festival  
*City Hall Plaza (Boston)*

12:00-7:00PM  
Festival Bar  
*Across from the Stage, City Hall  
Plaza (Boston)*

12:00-6:00PM ■  
Boston Pride Concert  
*City Hall Plaza (Boston)*

12:00PM ■  
Boston Pride Parade  
*Copley Square to City Hall Plaza  
(Boston)*

1:30-7:00PM ■  
Chandler St. Block Party  
*Corner of Chandler and  
Berkeley Streets (Boston)*

2:00-7:00PM ■  
Esme Women's Block Party  
*Corner of Lagrange and Tremont  
Streets (Boston)*

6:00-10:00PM ■ ■  
Boston Pride Youth Dance  
*City Hall Plaza (Boston)*

7:10-10:30PM ■ ■  
PrEP for Pride Community  
Boat Cruise  
*Mass Bay Lines  
(60 Rowes Wharf, Boston)*

9:00PM-2:00AM ■ ■  
LUSH: Official Womxn Pride  
Party  
*ICON Nightclub  
(100 Warrenton St., Boston)*

## SUNDAY, JUNE 10

1:00-9:00PM ■ ■  
Back Bay Block Party  
*St. James Avenue  
(at Berkeley St., Boston)*

2:00-8:00PM ■ ■  
JP Block Party  
*Perkins Street (at Center St.,  
Jamaica Plain)*

9:00PM ■ ■  
Pride Grand Finale  
*The Grand (58 Seaport Blvd.,  
Boston)*

## MONDAY, JUNE 11

6:00PM ■  
"A Discrete Society: The  
World of Charlie Gibson,"  
A Lecture by John Burrows  
*Gibson House Museum  
(137 Beacon St., Boston)*

## TUESDAY, JUNE 12

6:00PM  
BoConcept Pride Party:  
A Benefit for Boston Pride  
*BoConcept (999 Massachusetts  
Ave., Boston)*

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

6:30PM ■  
Oscar Wilde Tour of LGBTQ-  
themed Art at the MFA  
*Museum of Fine Arts  
(465 Huntington Ave., Boston)*

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20

6:30PM ■  
Oscar Wilde Tour of LGBTQ-  
themed Art at the MFA  
*Museum of Fine Arts  
(465 Huntington Ave., Boston)*



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Gay Men's  
Chorus

# Together

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Gretjen Helene Photography



# Flag Raising

The 48<sup>th</sup> annual Boston Pride celebration officially kicks off with the Flag Raising Ceremony, as we hoist the symbol of our *Rainbow Resistance* above the City of Boston. Mayor Marty Walsh will preside over the ceremony at City Hall Plaza, where attendees will be introduced to the 2018 Boston Pride Marshals. In a year that has been marked by so many setbacks in government recognition of LGBTQ rights, the ceremonial raising of the universal emblem of queer Pride in our civic center is particularly stirring. ●

Friday, June 1  
12:00PM, rain or shine

1 City Hall Plaza, Boston  
 Government Center (Blue and Green lines)



Free and open to the public

For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/flag](http://www.bostonpride.org/flag)



The ceremonial raising of the rainbow flag marks the commencement of Pride Week. Credit: Marilyn Humphries (above) and Hurley Event Photography (below).



A TIP FROM A  
**FORMER  
SMOKER**

**HIV alone  
didn't cause the  
clogged artery  
in my neck.  
Smoking with  
HIV did.**

*Brian, age 45, California*

*Brian had his HIV under control with medication. But smoking with HIV caused him to have serious health problems, including a stroke, a blood clot in his lungs and surgery on an artery in his neck. Smoking makes living with HIV much worse. You can quit.*

**CALL 1-800-QUIT-NOW.**



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Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention  
[CDC.gov/tips](https://www.cdc.gov/tips)

#CDCTips



# High Heel Dash for Charity

Cheer on contestants as they slip into their stilettos to raise money for the Boston Pride Community Fund at our second annual High Heel Dash for Charity. The event, the first in our organizational history to be broadcast in full on a major network (NBC 10 Boston), proved to be so popular in 2017 that we're readying for an even bigger, more colorful race this year.

Bring your friends, strap on your highest heels, and meet us at the starting line. Registration opens at 9:00AM at The Point (147 Hanover Street), with a light breakfast available for the contestants. Come ready to slay and win prizes for the Best Heel, Best Group, or Best Costume. And of course, the ultimate prize goes to the first diva to cross the finish line! ●

Saturday, June 2  
11:30AM, rain or shine

Intersection of Hanover and Union Streets  
 T Government Center (Green and Blue lines),  
 Haymarket (Green and Orange lines),  
 State (Blue Line)

Entry fee \$20 with online preregistration / \$30 on site



Free and open to the public

To register, and for up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/dash](http://www.bostonpride.org/dash)



Racers dash to the finish line to raise funds for the Boston Pride Community Fund, which offers grants to small grassroots organizations. Credit: Marilyn Humphries.







## Every story in the rainbow

Stirring romances. Inspiring dramas. Uplifting biographies. Pride comes in many stories. Xfinity X1 has the first-of-its-kind, community endorsed LGBTQ entertainment experience. Simply say "Pride" into the X1 Voice Remote to easily search this awesome collection. On X1, it's Pride all year, only with Xfinity.<sup>SM</sup> Find yourself at [xfinity.com/LGBTQ](https://xfinity.com/LGBTQ).

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# Pride Day @ Faneuil Hall

Mark the opening weekend of Pride Week as we celebrate our diverse local LGBTQ community with an exciting day of family fun and entertainment at our 18<sup>th</sup> annual Pride Day @ Faneuil Hall. Dance, sweat, and get active during one of Boston's largest annual outdoor Zumba classes, led by Zumba with Jess. The beat goes on with pan-Asian women's arts organization, The Genki Spark, which builds community through art, including Japanese taiko drumming. Enjoy performances by Queens with a Mission (see page 56), SueVee, a multi-instrument vocalist, Tammy & Jeana, a Providence-based acoustic duo, and The Hawkettes, University of Massachusetts Lowell's female a cappella group. Boston's favorite drag queens will be featured on our stage throughout the day, and get ready for some booty-shaking, foot-stomping, and lung-bursting beats brought to you by DJ Moxie. There will also be face painting courtesies of GigiLand Face Painting, amongst other family activities. ●

## EVENT DETAILS

Saturday, June 2  
12:00-5:00PM, rain or shine

West End of Quincy Market behind  
Historic Faneuil Hall  
Merchants Row, Boston

Ⓣ Government Center (Green and Blue lines),  
Haymarket (Green and Orange lines),  
State (Blue line)



Free and open to the public

For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/faneuilhall](http://www.bostonpride.org/faneuilhall)



Historic Faneuil Hall Marketplace serves as the backdrop for a day of entertainment, Zumba, and family activities. Credit: Marilyn Humphries.





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Good makes a difference. Good promotes equality. Eastern Bank continues to support local LGBTQ communities and organizations, and has been named one of the best places to work by the Human Rights Campaign. Eastern Bank proudly gives 10% of its net income to local charities. To learn more please visit [joinusforgood.com](http://joinusforgood.com).

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# Pride Sports

Boston, a City of Champions, is home to some of the sporting world's most passionate fans, queers among them. After years of collaborating with New England's professional sports organizations, in 2018, Boston Pride formalized the various athletic events and partnerships into a newly minted program: Pride Sports.

The sixth annual Pride Night @ Fenway Park, a community favorite, will be held on June 7. The Pride section of the stands will be packed with fans decked out in rainbow gear, enjoying the game, and rooting for our beloved Sox as they battle the Detroit Tigers. A lucky raffle winner will throw the first pitch at the game, making the evening all the more special for our community.

For the second year, soccer fans will cheer on our New England Revs at Pride Night @ The Revolution (June 2). Rainbow flags will be flying proudly at each corner of the field and from the Gillette Stadium Lighthouse. And for the first time, the team will wear Pride-themed jerseys.

Finally, Boston Pride is partnering with Team Boston, the French Consulate General in New England, and the various local sports teams in our community to spread awareness about the upcoming Gay Games X events in Paris this summer (August 4-12). This partnership will ensure accessibility and affordability to all queer athletes who wish to compete at GGX, representing our great city. ●



## EVENT DETAILS

For a complete schedule of events, including times and locations, visit [www.bostonpride.org/sports](http://www.bostonpride.org/sports)

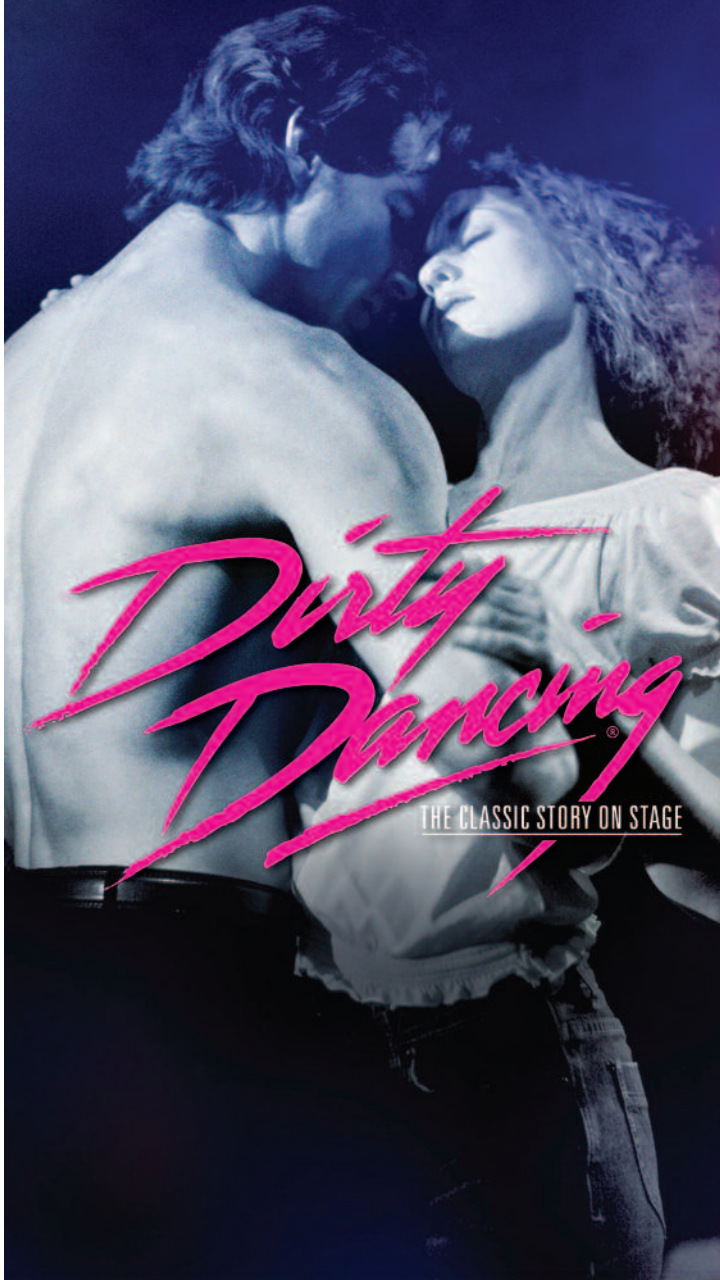
Purchase tickets online at [www.bostonpride.org/tickets](http://www.bostonpride.org/tickets)



Community members show their pride while cheering on the Boston Red Sox and the New England Revolutions. Credit: Hurley Event Photography (above) and Joe Raviele (below).



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# Pride Remembrance Memorial

The Holocaust is a harrowing chapter in global history, a time when those in power systematically imprisoned, tortured, and exterminated those whom they regarded as inferior and expendable. Jews, LGBTQ folks, and others who didn't conform to a narrow, specific, preferred model of race, religion, sexuality, gender identity, or nationality were vulnerable to persecution.

In observance of this history and to commemorate those whom we have lost to violence, the Pride Remembrance Memorial was inaugurated in 2017. The event invites all people, religious and non-religious alike, to come together in solidarity.

In its second year, the Memorial will take place in the Garden of Peace. This venue, created to function as a physical testament to the toll that violence continues to take on our communities, is a most fitting place to come together in remembrance, reflection, and sympathy for those coping with loss.

The Memorial seeks to provide solace. It also aims to focus our grief toward the elimination of bias and the enhancement of understanding of, and appreciation for, our collective differences, so that everyone in the LGBTQ communities may be free from oppression and proud of who they are. ●

## EVENT DETAILS

Sunday, June 3  
6:00PM, rain or shine

Garden of Peace  
Plaza of 100 Cambridge Street  
Beacon Hill, Boston

Ⓣ Bowdoin (Blue line), Government Center (Green and Blue lines),



Free and open to the public

For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/memorial](http://www.bostonpride.org/memorial)



The Pride Remembrance Memorial is a transformative act of communal commemoration and personal reflection. Credit: Boston Pride and Jennifer Boyer (lower left).



*Nous marchons pour nos athlètes !*



*fierté francophone*



Cet été, Paris accueille la 10<sup>ème</sup> édition des Gay Games - GGX. À cette occasion, Boston Pride, le Consulat Général de France à Boston, et Team Boston (l'équipe des athlètes LGBT de Boston) s'associent pour promouvoir la participation aux GGX, et pour engager le soutien de la communauté française, francophone, et francophile à toutes celles et ceux qui nous feront honneur lors de la compétition quadriennale. **Samedi 9 juin, rejoignez le groupe "Fierté Francophone - #TeamBostonGGX" à la 48<sup>ème</sup> Marche des Fiertés de Boston. Ensemble, célébrons la liberté, l'égalité, et nos diversités. Point de rendez-vous avant la marche : à partir de 11h le 9 juin devant le restaurant L'Espalier (774 Boylston St, Boston).** Plus d'informations disponibles en ligne sur [bostonpride.org/TeamBostonGGX](http://bostonpride.org/TeamBostonGGX) Contingent non-partisan sponsorisé par Sylvain Bruni, conseiller consulaire pour les Français-es de Nouvelle-Angleterre.

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More Information at  
[www.BostonPride.org](http://www.BostonPride.org)

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Monday, June 4  
6:00PM, rain or shine

District Hall  
75 Northern Avenue  
Boston

T South Station (Red line)  
Courthouse Station (Silver line)



Free and open to the public

For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/humanrights](http://www.bostonpride.org/humanrights)

# Political Forum

Every year during Pride Week, Boston Pride hosts a public policy panel discussion on issues facing the LGBTQ community. This year's event, *Defending Transgender Equality in Massachusetts – A Public Discussion on the Repeal of the Public Accommodations Ballot Question* is co-hosted by Freedom for All Massachusetts, in partnership with District Hall. The panelists will discuss the upcoming Massachusetts ballot question that would repeal the law providing critical protections for transgender people. After addressing the imminent threat and the national consequences that are posed by the ballot question, the panelists will give practical tips on how the LGBTQ community and its allies can mobilize to defend fairness and dignity for all. Moderator Alison King, NBC 10 Boston's Political Reporter, will invite guests to ask questions during the program. Panelists include Lizbeth DeSelm (transgender activist, Melrose School Committee member), Deborah Drew (Worcester Pride Vice President), Mimi Lemay (parent advocate of a young transgender child), State Representative Byron Rushing, Kasey Suffredini (Freedom for All Americans President of Strategy), and Nicole Talbot (teenage transgender activist). ●



Learn how you can protect the rights of transgender Bay Staters at the political forum. Credit: Marilyn Humphries.





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# Pride Lights

This annual event remembers and celebrates the lives of the community members we have lost to HIV/AIDS through performance art. Hundreds of people descend on the Boston Center for the Arts Plaza to witness the towering evergreen tree become illuminated with pink lights. The ceremony not only commemorates those who are no longer with us, but also fosters awareness of the epidemic that continues to have a devastating impact on our community today. Pride Lights, started by the AIDS Action Committee, is now a collaboration of Boston Pride and the Boston Center for the Arts. ●

## EVENT DETAILS

Tuesday, June 5  
7:00PM, rain or shine

Plaza at Boston Center for the Arts  
NE corner of Tremont and Clarendon  
Streets

Back Bay, Boston

Ⓣ Back Bay (Orange line)



Free and open to the public

For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/pridelights](http://www.bostonpride.org/pridelights)



LGBTQ people and allies gather to honor the memory of those we have lost to HIV/AIDS. Credit: Marilyn Humphries.



# Boston ElderINFO

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info@bshcinfo.org

**Boston ElderINFO** is the multilingual helpline of The Elder Care Alliance, an innovative nonprofit collaboration of three Boston home care agencies, **Boston Senior Home Care, Central Boston Elder Services** and **Ethos**. For more than 25 years, we have provided the information, guidance and support necessary to identify, plan and secure alternatives that help make living independently possible for individuals of all ages.



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**Mission:** It is the mission of Boston ElderINFO to be the resource that meets all the information needs of every Boston elder, person with a disability, and their caregivers to live with dignity, safety, and independence in their communities.

# Pride Arts

In its third year, Boston Pride's Pride Arts program continues to grow, expanding the types of art represented in our event offerings. Instituted as a series of events that focuses on queer-related art and culture, Pride Arts ventures to showcase LGBTQ artists, writers, and performers in the Greater Boston area, and to connect our larger community with arts and culture in all of its forms and expressions. In 2018, Pride Arts will include poetry readings ("On Our Own Terms: Underrepresented Voices in Poetry" on May 6), museum tours ("Oscar Wilde Tour of LGBTQ-themed art at the MFA" on June 13 and 20), and a handbell musical performance ("Back Bay Ringers Concert" on June 8).

Additionally, Boston Pride is delighted to continue its partnership with Boston's world-class Museum of Fine Arts, which will hold a special lecture on June 7, "(un)expected families: Pride," based on the eponymous exhibition which runs through June 24. Moderated by Karen Haas, the exhibition's curator, this event will explore the depiction of subjects and families by three of the photographers featured in the show (Amber Davis Turlentes, Jeannie Simms, and Zoe Perry-Wood).

On June 11, Boston Pride inaugurates a new partnership with the Gibson House Museum, the best kept secret of queer culture in Boston. In "A Discreet Society: The World of Charlie Gibson," past president of the Gibson Society John Burrows will discuss the world of Anglo-American gay men and women of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, in which Charles Gibson, Jr., the Museum's founder, came of age.

For continued updates on upcoming Pride Arts events, visit the abovementioned website. ●

Pride Arts celebrates the power of the arts to express a diversity of queer identities and experiences. Credit: Hurley Event Photography (below) and Courtesy of the Gibson House Museum (right).

## EVENT DETAILS

For a complete schedule of events, including times and locations, visit [www.bostonpride.org/arts](http://www.bostonpride.org/arts)

Purchase tickets online at [www.bostonpride.org/tickets](http://www.bostonpride.org/tickets)



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# Boston Pride Parade

In nearly half a century, the Parade has grown from a few hundred marchers to the biggest annual parade in New England. The Parade, to be broadcast in full by BNN, with extensive coverage by NBC 10 Boston and its sister channels Tele-mundo and NECN, is one of the most visible Pride Week events. In this politically tumultuous time, the Parade is not only a celebration, but also an act of *Rainbow Resistance*.

The 2018 Parade promises to be another record-breaking event, as the City of Boston prepares to welcome over 300 contingents with a mix of marching groups, floats, bands, and more. The Parade will pass by the iconic Boston landmarks of Copley Square, Boston Common, and the State Capitol before ending at the Festival and Concert on City Hall Plaza (see map on page 48). Come early to claim your spot on the Parade route and join the diverse queer and allied spectators in cheering on our marchers!

This year, we welcome first-time marchers such as Act Blue, Boston Taiwanese for Equality, Irish Pride, and Salsify. The Transgender Remembrance section will honor all those we have lost to acts of transphobic violence. Freedom for All Massachusetts, a coalition working to expand public accommodation nondiscrimination laws for transgender people, will preside over the Parade as Grand Marshal. We will also celebrate the contributions of Marshal Jo Trigilio and Honorary Marshals Gordon Burns and Edie Windsor (for more information on our Marshals, see page 42). ●



The annual Parade offers unparalleled visibility to the local and national LGBTQ communities, our allies, and our causes. Credit: Marilyn Humphries.



## EVENT DETAILS

Saturday, June 9  
12:00PM, rain or shine

For the Parade route and closest  
T stations, see map on page 40

Free and open to the public



For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/parade](http://www.bostonpride.org/parade)

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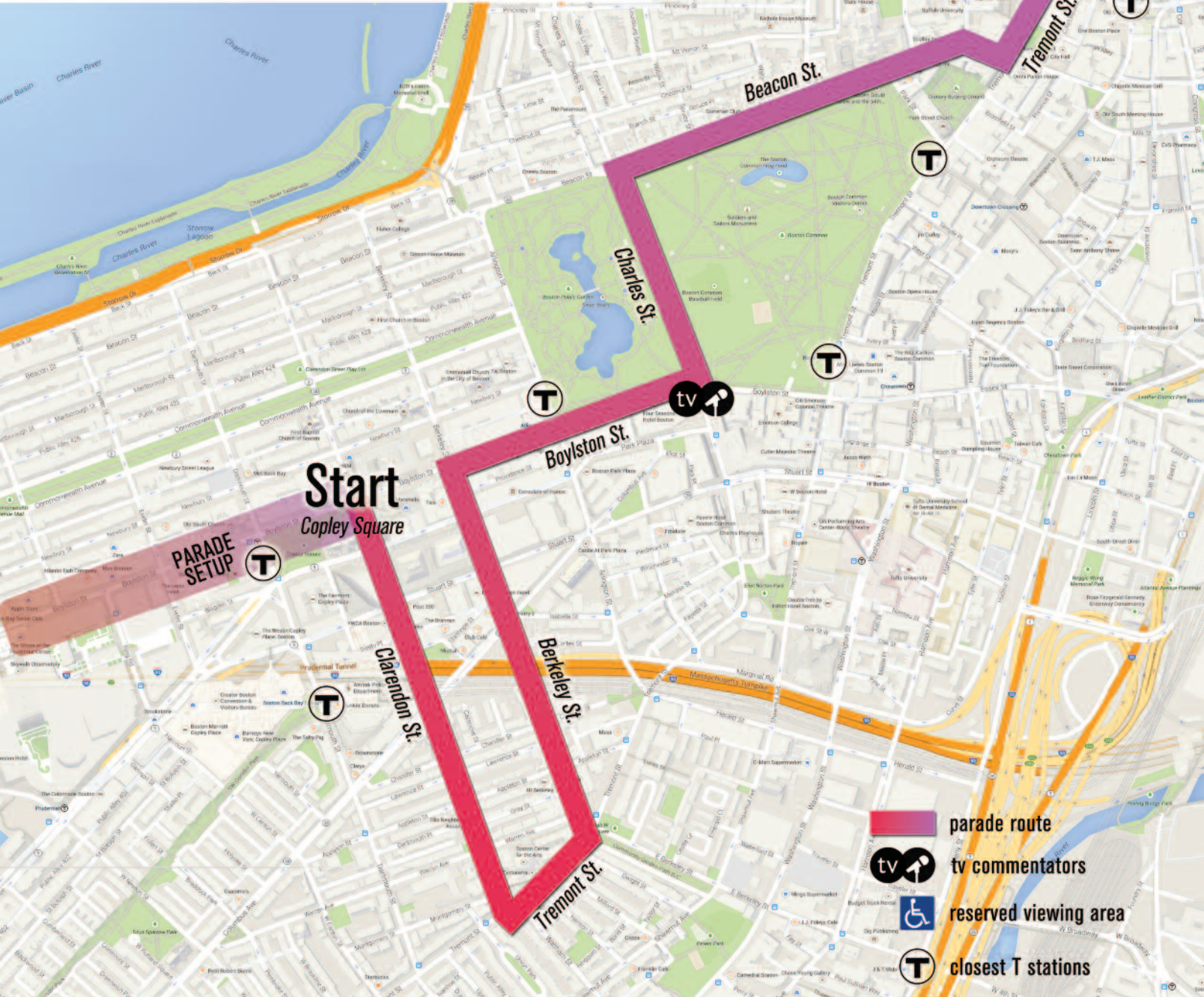
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# 48<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BOSTON PRIDE PARADE

Saturday, June 9 | Kick-off: 12:00PM  
Copley Square to City Hall Plaza







# HAPPY PRIDE, BOSTON!

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Matt Wilder, Principal

# Boston Pride Marshals

Local and National Community Leaders to Preside over  
2018 Pride Celebrations



## GRAND MARSHAL

Credit: Boston Pride.

## Freedom for All Massachusetts

In June 2015, the broad-based, bipartisan coalition Freedom for All Massachusetts was assembled with the goal of updating Massachusetts' longstanding civil rights laws to include nondiscrimination protections for transgender people in places of public accommodation. The campaign aimed to add gender identity as a protected category to the Commonwealth's public accommodations law. By June 2016, the law (SB 2407) had passed with an overwhelming bipartisan supermajority of votes in both legislative chambers.

Shortly after going into effect on October 1, 2016, opponents of the legislation gathered enough signatures to place a veto referendum on the 2018 ballot, the potential impact of which could be the repeal of the transgender anti-discrimination law. The Freedom for All Massachusetts campaign continues to educate the Commonwealth about transgender people and the challenges they face, and to bolster support for fair and equal treatment, so that transgender legal equality is preserved throughout the Commonwealth.

## MARSHAL



Credit: Jessica Nelson.

### Jo Trigilio

Jo Trigilio has long been a leader in the local LGBTQ community, serving on the Boston Dyke March organizing committee from 2000 to 2014. Jo was instrumental in growing the March from a few hundred to several thousand participants, while maintaining its status as a grassroots, noncommercial, and radical event committed to all-gender inclusion. They now head the Boston Dyke March History and Archive Project, which makes archival materials publically available online.

Jo is a known peacemaker, beloved professor, and activist. They are an ongoing contributor to the *Boston Pride Guide* and have extended themselves to assist Boston Pride in addressing issues brought by the community.

Jo is currently Program Director of Gender/Cultural Studies at Simmons College. Their current work focuses on nonbinary gender and ethnic/racial intersectionality.



*"I am honored to be able to lead this year's parade as Mayor of the City of Boston and look forward to many more in the years to come.*

*Thank you for your commitment to making us part of one Boston!"*  
**Mayor Martin J. Walsh**

*Paid for and Authorized by the Committee to Elect Martin J. Walsh.*

## HONORARY MARSHAL



Credit: Courtesy of Stonewall Special Interest Group of OLLI.

*In Memoriam*

## Gordon K. Burns (1939 – 2017)

Gordon Burns, who passed away in September 2017, was a longtime Boston Pride volunteer and Committee member. Gordon joined Pride over 10 years ago to foster the engagement of LGBTQ older adults in the Pride celebration, and to ensure continued exchanges between the older and younger generations of our community.

Deeply engaged and active in our region, Gordon was a founding member of

the Senior Pride Coalition and the Stonewall Special Interest Group of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at University of Massachusetts Boston, as well as a member of the Boston Prime Timers, the Boston Partnership for Older Adults, and the Massachusetts Association of Older Americans. His joyfulness and willingness to help everyone will always be remembered.

## HONORARY MARSHAL



Credit: Donna Aceto.

*In Memoriam*

## Edith "Edie" Windsor (1929 – 2017)

A hero of the fight for marriage equality, Edie Windsor was the lead plaintiff in the Supreme Court case that bears her name. She made groundbreaking contributions to our community through her activism over the years, lending her energy and talents to several organizations and causes in our community: from legal defense, to out athletics, activism-driven theatre, and advocacy for the aging LGBTQ population.

The Supreme Court's 2013 *Windsor* decision required the federal government to recognize all same-sex marriages performed in marriage equality states – including Edie's own marriage to the late Thea Spyre, her dedicated partner for over four decades.



▶ want the latest news about Pride events?

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▶ [bostonpride.org/news](http://bostonpride.org/news)



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# Boston Pride Festival & Concert


The Boston Pride Festival was born in 1971 as a political post-march rally on Boston Common. The Festival has since grown to be the largest Pride celebration in New England, attracting more than 150,000 LGBTQ people and their allies. This year, in a show of *Rainbow Resistance*, we will celebrate the progress we've made over the past 48 years, while recognizing the work that remains to be done.

Throughout City Hall Plaza you will find Boston Pride merchandise and over 100 LGBTQ-supportive local and national nonprofits, exhibitors, and businesses (for a full list see page 50). Enjoy an array of refreshments at the Food Court and visit the Family Fun Zone for face painting and to meet animals from Franklin Park Zoo and the New England Aquarium (for a map see page 48).

A free concert, beginning at noon, features a diverse slate of local and national performers (see page 52). The Festival Bar (21+ to drink) will provide attendees with a shaded and elevated spot from which to watch the on-stage performances. ●

## EVENT DETAILS

Saturday, June 9  
11:00AM, rain or shine

1 City Hall Plaza, Boston  
 Government Center  
 (Blue and Green Lines)



Free and open to the public

For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/festival](http://www.bostonpride.org/festival)



For 48 years, the community has been coming out and coming together at the Boston Pride Festival. Credit: Christine Hurley.



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# 48<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BOSTON PRIDE FESTIVAL

Saturday, June 9 | 11:00AM to 6:00PM  
City Hall Plaza





*“For me, equality isn't just political,  
it's personal - it's about family”*



Governor Baker and his brother, Alex, who has been married to his husband for over a decade.

**Charlie Baker**  
**Karyn Polito18** 

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Credit: Marilyn Humphries

# Boston Pride Festival Exhibitors

Over 100 LGBTQ-supportive Businesses and Organizations Await You on City Hall Plaza!

*(list as of May 1; ● indicates sponsor)*

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 Infinite Arrows  
 International Socialist Organization  
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 Libertarian Association of Massachusetts  
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 The History Project: Documenting LGBTQ Boston  
 The LASIK Vision Institute  
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# 2018 Boston Pride Concert Entertainment

## Headliner MARTHA WASH



Martha's voice has dominated the airwaves, and her charisma and spirit have embraced millions of people around the world. She is responsible for some of the top-selling, most recognizable pop hits of the 80s and 90s: the cult pop classic "It's Raining Men," "Sweat (Everybody Dance Now)," which sold five and a half million copies worldwide, and "Strike It Up," which is still heard at every NFL and NBA game! Martha is the heart and soul of dance music; the highlights of her career create a colorful history, telling the story of dance and pop music from the days of disco to the present. All these hits were turning points in pop music, bringing an underground, club flavor into the mainstream and enduring as classic radio favorites. To honor her timelessness and her renowned presence, which has been instrumental in shaping popular music as we hear it today, *Martha Wash: The Collection* was released in January 1998 on Logic Records/BMG.

Martha began her musical career at the age of two in her parents' church in her native San Francisco. She went on to study opera and tour Europe while still in high school. Martha became part of a contemporary gospel group called NOW (News Of the World). The mix of classical and gospel training accounts for her seemingly effortless transition, from ballads to dance music to pop. In addition to her vast career in pop music, Martha has also starred in major theater productions, and has recorded numerous jingles and movie soundtracks including *Kiss Me Guide*, *First Wives Club*, *Mighty Ducks*, and *Gun Ho*. Martha's stunning new LP, entitled *Something Good*, transitions away from her tradition of top-notch, foot-tapping, voice-soaring dance numbers, taking listeners on more of an alternative pop-rock journey. "It's My Time," one of the album's main singles, is a righteous celebration of the self, a tribute to the indomitable human spirit which is on the rise toward ultimate achievement and glory.

Martha, who has encountered more than any artist's fair share of adversity - famously filing suit against Black Box and C&C Music Factory for failing to give her due credit for her lead vocals on their albums - is a patron saint of perseverance. Martha also stays busy with her charity work. She serves as spokesperson for QSAC, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides comprehensive services to individuals with autism and their families. Martha is also active with You Can Play Project, which is dedicated to ensuring equality, respect, and safety for all athletes, without regard to sexual orientation; and the Huntington Arts Council, which inspires lives and minds through education, entertainment, and intellectual motivation, ensuring each of us a place for expression and creativity.

Martha is noted for her many voices. Those voices add up to one big-hearted diva who truly practices what she preached in her early disco hit, "Earth Can Be Just Like Heaven": Give a little, take a little, put a little back, we're all brothers and sisters, and that's a fact!

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# Headliner BIG FREEDIA

Known as the Queen of Bounce, Big Freedia is a New Orleans-based rapper and ambassador of bounce music – a vibrant form of hip-hop, characterized by call-and-response lyrics on top of rapid-fire beats. A prominent force in the New Orleans club scene for over two decades, Big Freedia brings bounce to the worldwide stage with her hit reality show *Big Freedia Bounces Back* on the Fuse channel. Now in its sixth season, and the highest-rated original series on Fuse, the weekly docu-series follows Big Freedia's journey from gay choirboy to bounce rapper.

Big Freedia collaborated with Beyoncé on the Grammy-nominated single, "Formation," and with Sia on "Eye of the Needle," which appeared in the *Adult Swim* series. Big Freedia is well known for the single "I Heard." Her 2015 memoir *Big Freedia: God Save the Queen Diva!* was well-received by *Rolling Stone*, *Pitchfork*, *Bust*, and *OUT*. Critically acclaimed by media outlets such as *Pitchfork*, *SPIN*, *USA Today*, and *Consequence of Sound*, Big Freedia's first LP *Just Be Free* was ranked 13th on *Rolling Stone* magazine's "20 Best EDM, Electronic and Dance Albums of 2014." Her sophomore album will be released in the near future.



## Emcee

### VERNA TURBULENCE

Verna Turbulence has been working in the community as a drag performer for two decades and is considered by many to be a living legend. Verna's male alter-ego, Daniel Faucher of Daniel Faucher Couture, has been a couture designer for over 30 years and is Senior Instructor at the School for Fashion Design, Boston. Verna has performed in numerous queer performance venues in Boston, including Jacques and Club Café. She has dedicated her life to giving back to her community, raising more than \$10,000 each year for the Boston Living Center at her annual Drag Brunch. Verna is Queen Mother and Protector of the Realm of the Imperial Court of Massachusetts.





**DJ KITTY GLITTER**  
HEADLINER



# SUNDAY, JUNE 10TH BACK BAY BLOCK PARTY

ST. JAMES AVE, BOSTON 1-9PM  
ALL AGES • FOOD • 21+ BAR  
\$15 ONLINE AND \$20 AT DOOR



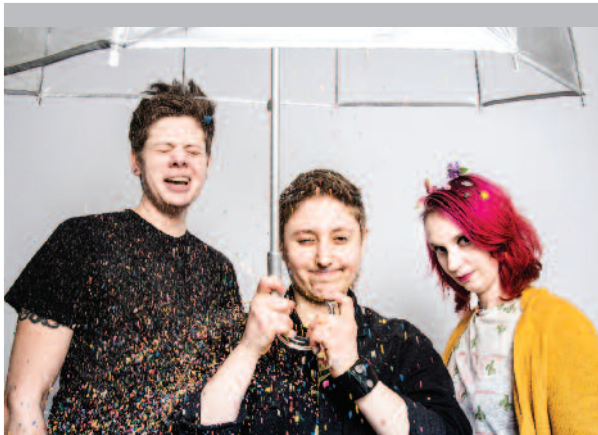
ARLINGTON STATION  
(GREEN LINE)  
BACK BAY STATION  
(ORANGE LINE)



**DJ GAY JIM**  
OPENER

**ADVANCE TIXS: [BOSTONPRIDE.ORG/BACKBAY](http://BOSTONPRIDE.ORG/BACKBAY)**





## HAPPY LITTLE CLOUDS

Happy Little Clouds, the brainchild of Jac Mestel, formed in 2010 and has featured various talented local musicians over the years. In 2016, the band released their first studio album, *Shift*, recorded by Jonathan Wyman over five days at The Halo, a converted barn near Portland, Maine. To celebrate the album, the band performed a sold-out show at O'Brien's Pub in Allston, Massachusetts. For the show, the band's favorite local artists, poets, and musicians held an art auction that raised \$500 for the nonprofit Girl's Rock Campaign Boston.

While Happy Little Clouds calls the Boston area home, the band performs around New England, opening for popular 90s "queer-core" band Pansy Division and for Madame Gandhi (*aka* Kiran Gandhi, former drummer for M.I.A.). After winning the Ourstage.com 2012 Warped Tour Regional Competition for their song "Somebody Help Me Forget," Happy Little Clouds was invited to play the 2012 Van's Warped Tour festival concert in Hartford, Connecticut. Performing on the Boston Pride Concert stage this year, the band's current line-up includes Jac Mestel (vocals and guitar), Rainy Maple Logan (drums), and newest member Beck Goguen (bass).



Emcee

## FAST FREDDY

Born in Boston and raised in radio, Fast Freddy is back on the Boston Pride Concert stage once again. Freddy is a lover of life, music, laughter, pop culture, and people, especially the diverse cast of characters that make up his beloved city! Since 2005, he has happily co-hosted Mix 104.1's *Afternoon Drive* with Gregg Daniels. In his "Life in the Fastlane" reports, Fast Freddy loves to give his own unique take on celebrity gossip and the top entertainment stories of the day. Fast Freddy is out and proud, both on and off the air. A longtime advocate and activist for the LGBTQ community, he continues to champion equal rights for all through his participation in community events and support of charitable causes throughout New England.



## LONG ARM REX

Long Arm Rex, a female-fronted reggae/jam band based in Boston, Massachusetts, returns to the Boston Pride stage after winning over the crowd in 2016. Since forming in 2014, their brand of groove-oriented music often incorporates elements of dub, psychedelic rock, pop, and ska. The five-piece powerhouse has continuously made it their mission to bring audiences what the band describes as a unique, "Rexified" spin on modern reggae.



## QUEENS WITH A MISSION

Established in 2016, Queens with a Mission (QWAM) champions LGBTQ Bostonians and members of the local dance scene. A diverse, all-male dance crew, they are a group of friends who want to express themselves and to experience the art form in all its varied aspects. Through a collaborative movement, QWAM brings freshness, fun, and spontaneity to venues across the East Coast.





**DJ L'DUKE  
(LEAHV)**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 10TH**

**3PM: KRISTEN PORTER'S 6TH ANNUAL  
DIVAS, DOGS, & DRAG SHOW**

**JP**

**BLOCK PARTY**

**1 PERKINS ST, JP | 2PM-8PM | RAIN OR SHINE  
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EMCEE AND  
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### BOKETTO THE WOLF

Local indie-rock group Boketto the Wolf consists of Julia Maree (vocals/guitar), Erik Grimm (guitar/vocals), Tim Washington (drums), and Catherine Parke (bass/vocals). The band defines itself through a deft combination of electric rock, raw folk, and crafty lyrics with layered vocal harmonies. The band's recently released debut EP *Sleepless* is available for purchase either at their shows or online through iTunes, CD Baby, and Amazon.



### JUSTIN DEARBORN

The music of Boston-based Justin Dearborn fuses elements of electropop and dance-pop, appealing to a wide demographic. His voice combines the technique of powerfully-sung tenor phrases with a warm, rich tone, inspiring pop music website CrossRadar's review of his performance style: "[his] vocals start off with a lilting tone, the kind of young male tone that so easily makes the girls swoon."

Dearborn's collaborations with high-profile producers, such as Andrew Goldstein (Britney Spears, Jason Derülo, Selena Gomez) and Brad Young (LMFAO, New Kids on the Block), have assisted Dearborn in bringing his creative vision to life.

Songwriting is the heart of Dearborn's work. Dynamic and charismatic, whether he's performing an intimate nightclub set or a larger event for an audience of thousands, Dearborn draws inspiration from artists past and present while maintaining his own individual artistic voice. Pop music website SnapCacklePop comments, "[he] has boy band charm all on his own," while CrossRadar enthuses, "this is the kind of pop that does its job so well – always leaving the listener thirsty for more."

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Martha Wash



Big Freedia

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**Boston Pride.**



**FENWAY PARK**



### NIYA NORWOOD

A self-described 90s baby, Niya Norwood was born and raised in the DC/Maryland/Virginia area. She comes from a musical family who introduced her to many genres from a young age. Norwood's influences include Luther Vandross, Michael Jackson, Prince, Lisa Fischer, Brandy, and Justin Timberlake, among many others.

Norwood is a graduate of Berklee College of Music and a proud alumnus of Duke Ellington School of the Arts. She has performed with some of the greatest names in pop music, including Stevie Wonder, Earth Wind & Fire, John Legend, Smokey Robinson, Patti LaBelle, and Lauryn Hill. As a member of the Ellington Showchoir, Norwood performed numerous times for President Barrack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, and Vice President Joe Biden.

While attending Berklee, Norwood worked alongside The Mamas, backing vocalists for pop superstar Beyoncé. Norwood currently sings with independent artist YEBBA, and runs her own non-profit talent agency, Real Entertainment Industries. Norwood's single, "Black Girl Magic," is available on all streaming platforms, and her debut EP will be released this coming summer. ●

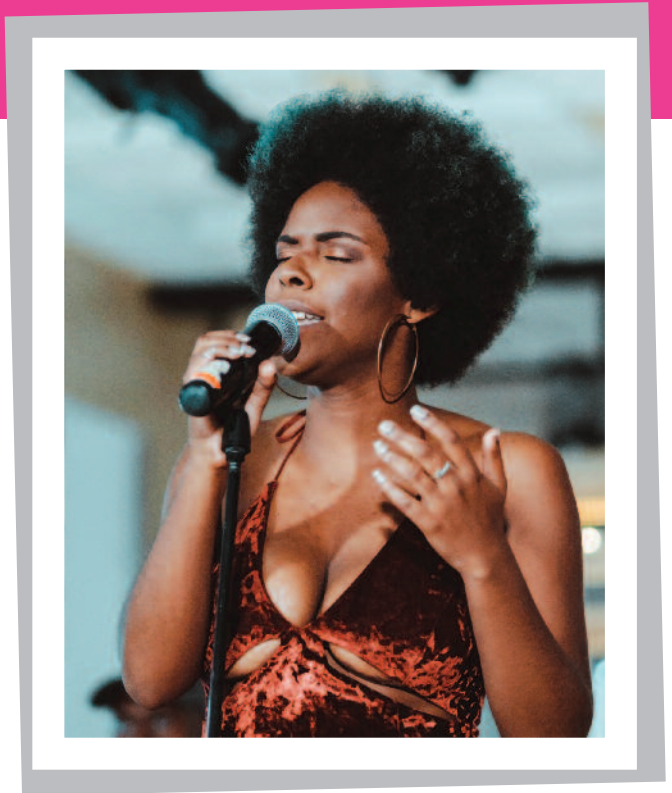


Photo Credits  
 Martha Wash: Mike Ruiz.  
 Big Feedia: Hunter Holder.  
 Verna Turbulence: Courtesy of the Artist.

Long Arm Rex: Mike Clinton.  
 Happy Little Clouds: Jenny Bergman,  
 The Secret Bureau of Art & Design.  
 Queens with a Mission: Courtesy of the Artists.

Fast Freddy: Diane Anton.  
 Boketto the Wolf: Adam Cruz Photography.  
 Justin Dearborn: MVB Photography.  
 Niya Norwood: Ariff Danial.

SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH

# FESTIVAL BAR

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PRIDE CONCERT • 21+ BAR • GIVEAWAYS

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# Boston Pride Youth Dance

Calling all LGBTQ youth and allies under 21! Gather your squad and join youth from all over New England to dance with Pride in a safe, inclusive space after the festival. For the fourth year, the dance will take place under a large open-air tent to the right of the main entrance to City Hall (see map on page 48). DanceAway Sound's DJ Lisa and Yolanda MC will be spinning the tunes. Win the grand door prize, a Xbox donated by Microsoft. New this year, Boston Pride will be selling Pride flags (\$10.00) for an array of the identities under our queer umbrella. Free water will be provided and pizza will be available for \$2.00 per slice. Grab your friends and join us for a fun-filled evening. ●

## EVENT DETAILS

Saturday, June 9  
6:00-10:00PM, rain or shine

1 City Hall Plaza, Boston  
 Government Center (Blue and Green lines)

Under 21 (alcohol-free event)  
 Tickets \$7 until June 1 / \$10 after June 1  
 Purchase advance tickets at  
[www.bostonpride.org/tickets](http://www.bostonpride.org/tickets)



For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/youthpride](http://www.bostonpride.org/youthpride)



The annual Youth Dance provides young queers and their allies a unique, safe space to celebrate Pride. Credit: Hurley Event Photography.



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HAPPY PRIDE!



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FOR CONGRESS

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# Back Bay Block Party

Dance Boston Pride Week away at the annual Back Bay Block Party! What started as a small dance in a back alley in 2001 has grown to become the largest annual outdoor fete for our community. The Block Party draws thousands of New Englanders and visitors eager to dance and to party to the sounds of local, national, and international queer DJs. With a portion of every entry donation supporting the Boston Pride Community Fund (see page 74), the Block Party is not just a sunny day of musical revelry; it's also a crowd-source for social change.

Seven full bars sponsored by Pinnacle Vodka and a pop-up Budweiser station offer a thirst-quenching variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic options (21+ to drink). Be sure to arrive early to enjoy a special cocktail while supplies last.

This year will see the return of DJ Gay Jim to Boston in a special opening set at the Block Party. A longtime on-air personality, producer, and music director for local radio station Kiss 108, Jim Clerkin will delight the crowd with trendy beats and vocal dance to get the party started.

Headlining the 2018 edition of the Block Party is international sensation DJ Kitty Glitter. This will be the first Boston appearance of the Sydney-based artist, who has enjoyed great worldwide success. From Japan to India, from France to Canada, her signature blend of remixed pop and uplifting vocal house music have made Kitty an annual top 10 Podomatic artist with a growing international following. Get ready, because the *glitterstorm* is coming to Boston!

So on June 10, carouse with your friends while giving back to the community, at the Back Bay Block Party! ●

## EVENT DETAILS

Sunday, June 10  
1:00-9:00PM, rain or shine

St. James Avenue and Berkeley Street  
Back Bay, Boston

Ⓣ Arlington (Green line)



All ages, 21+ to drink  
Admission \$15 online up to the day before / \$20 at door

Purchase advance tickets at  
[www.bostonpride.org/tickets](http://www.bostonpride.org/tickets)

For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/backbay](http://www.bostonpride.org/backbay)



Thousands of revelers whirl in the street during the annual Back Bay Block Party. Credit: Marilyn Humphries.





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FEATURES

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ELLEN DEGENE-ROLL  
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THE LANCE BASS  
SYLVIA RIVERA RAMEN  
NEIL PATRICK CARROTS

COCKTAILS

BI TAI  
PRETTY MESS  
WILL & GREY GOOSE  
STONEWALL SANGRIA  
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# Back Bay Block Party Entertainment



Credit: Courtesy of iHeart Radio.

## Opening DJ Jim Clerkin *aka DJ Gay Jim*

Jim Clerkin began his career in radio broadcasting and music as an intern with *Matty in the Morning* on Kiss 108 in Boston. He rose through the ranks and eventually became Assistant Program Director and Music Director for the station and its sister Evolution 101.7.

In the same period, he launched his DJ career at the now-legendary Fran's Place in Lynn, Massachusetts. Over the past 20 years, he has spun at almost every club around Boston and traveled around the Northeast for Pride and other gay-related festivals.

## Headlining DJ KITTY GLITTER

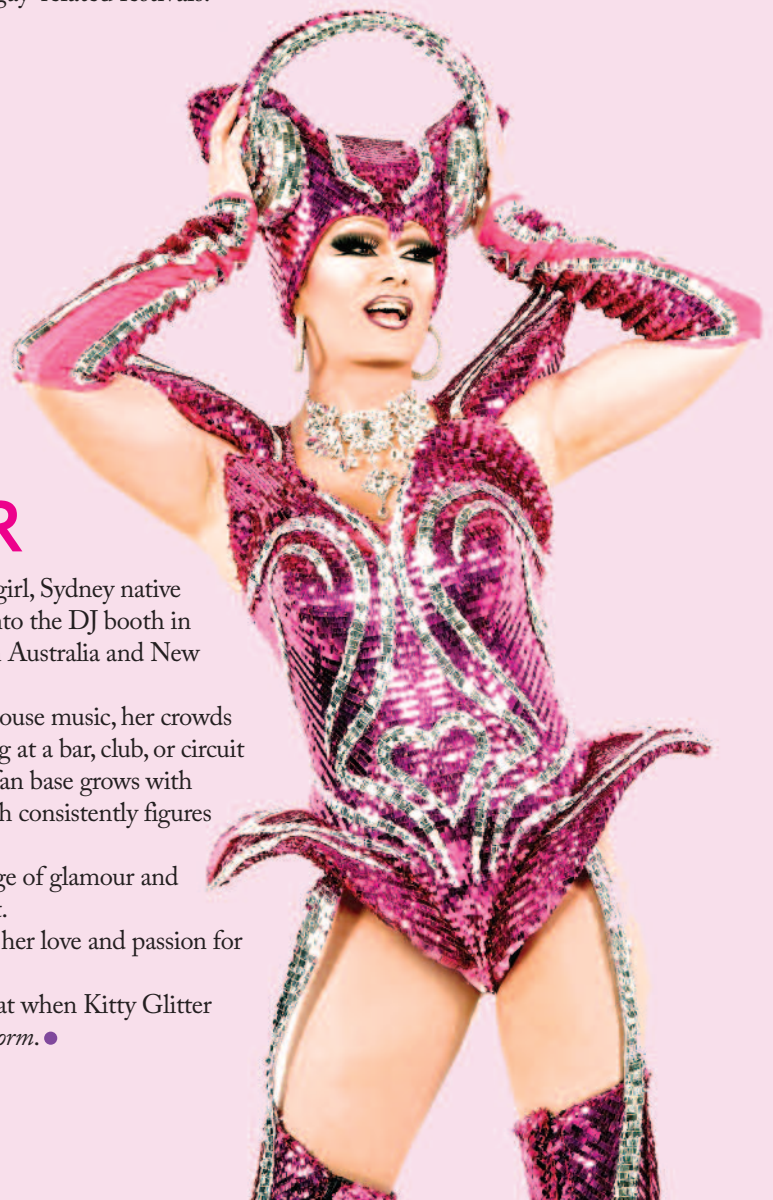
After a decade-long, award-winning career as a drag queen showgirl, Sydney native Kitty Glitter gracefully bowed out of the stage spotlight and moved into the DJ booth in 2007. Since then, she has shined on dancefloors across the globe, from Australia and New Zealand, across Asia and Europe, to North America.

Loving Kitty's unique blend of remixed pop and uplifting vocal house music, her crowds lick up every bit of sparkle she shines on them. Whether she's spinning at a bar, club, or circuit party, Kitty delivers in flawless fashion. It is no wonder why her loyal fan base grows with each new city she visits. DJ Kitty Glitter also produces a podcast which consistently figures among the top-10 most-downloaded on Podomatic.

A regular feature at Pride events and festivals, her *purrfect* package of glamour and dance music is without a doubt a highlight for every party she spins at.

Constantly on tour, Kitty Glitter is happiest when she is sharing her love and passion for dance music around the world.

Her playful *purrsona* and vibes are addictive. Everyone knows that when Kitty Glitter is on the decks, you're gonna get caught up in her exhilarating *glitterstorm*. ●



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# JP Block Party

Over 2,000 LGBTQ women, nonbinary folks, drag queens and kings, rescue dogs, and friends of all ages take over Perkins Street for our annual Block Party, co-sponsored by Kristen Porter Presents (Dyke Night® & The List: Boston's Queer Agenda). Enjoy several cash bars (21+ to drink) and food while celebrating the closing day of Pride Week.

After enjoying tunes from decades past with DJ Maryalice, join popular emcee Sapphira Cristal (former Miss Gay NY USofA and Queen of Boston Pride) for live music and fun for all ages, including face painting and a dress-up selfie booth. At 3:00PM, we welcome back the beloved sixth annual Divas, Dogs, and Drag Show featuring available-for-adoption rescue dogs showcased by drag performers.

Following the show, get your groove on as DJ LDuke (LeahV) and New Fame, a female hip-hop/soul duo based in Vietnam, take the stage. ●

## EVENT DETAILS

Sunday, June 10  
2:00-8:00PM, rain or shine

Corner of Perkins & Centre Streets  
Jamaica Plain, Boston

🚇 Jackson Square (Orange line)



All ages, 21+ to drink  
Admission \$15

For up-to-date information, visit  
[www.bostonpride.org/jp](http://www.bostonpride.org/jp)



Families and friends soak in the fun and sun at our annual Block Party. Credit: Hurley Event Photography.





RAINBOW RESISTANCE

# RESIST

BAGLY HEELS FOR HOPE **MONDAY 6/4**

DRAG DIVAS GIVE BACK **TUESDAY 6/5**

ATOMIC KARAOKE PRIDE EDITION **WEDNESDAY 6/6**

#YAASSS! IT'S PRIDE THURS **THURSDAY 6/7**

BITCH IS BACK: POSA AS JOAN **FRIDAY 6/8**

**FRIDAY 6/8** SPECIAL GUEST DJ. NO COVER

**SATURDAY 6/9** PRIDE DAY!

**PRIDE 2018 DANCE CELEBRATION**

**SUNDAY 6/10** BRUNCH WITH MARIMBA CABARET

RETRO TEA DANCE: ANTHEM



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PHOTO: MARLENE HUMPHRIES



EST. 1983

# Pride@Night Calendar

■ Flagship events   ■ Black Pride & Latinx Pride

## TUESDAY, MAY 29

6:00-8:00PM  
Bowling Night  
*Jillian's Lucky Strike*  
(145 Ipswich St., Boston)

## FRIDAY, JUNE 1

7:30PM  
Family Movie Night:  
Ferdinand  
*Boston Common (Boston)*

## SATURDAY, JUNE 2

5:00PM  
After Party at the Bell In Hand  
*The Bell In Hand Tavern*  
(45 Union St., Boston)

## SUNDAY, JUNE 3

5:30-9:00PM  
Bears and Cubs  
Boston Harbor Cruise  
*Bay State Cruise Company (200 Seaport Blvd., Boston)*

## TUESDAY, JUNE 5

10:00PM  
Paradise Pride  
*Paradise Cambridge*  
(180 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge)

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6

5:00-9:00PM  
Family Dinner @ CPK  
(Mention "Boston Pride" and 20% of your check will go to support Pride programming!)  
*California Pizza Kitchen Prudential (800 Boylston St., Boston)*

8:00PM-12:00AM  
Boston Bear Pride 2018:  
Bears Bare It All  
*Paradise Cambridge*  
(180 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge)

8:00PM-1:00AM ■  
If You Can Feel It, You Can Speak It  
*Milky Way (284 Amory St., Jamaica Plain)*

10:00PM-2:00AM  
Pride Queeraoke  
*Midway Cafe*  
(3496 Washington St., Jamaica Plain)

## FRIDAY, JUNE 8

9:00PM-1:00AM  
Official Dyke March AfterParty  
*Milky Way (284 Amory St., Jamaica Plain)*

## SATURDAY, JUNE 9

1:30-7:00PM  
Chandler St. Block Party  
*Corner of Chandler and Berkeley Streets (Boston)*

2:00-7:00PM  
Esme Women's Block Party  
*Corner of Lagrange and Tremont Streets (Boston)*

7:10-10:30PM ■  
PrEP for Pride Community Boat Cruise  
*Mass Bay Lines*  
(60 Rowes Wharf, Boston)

9:00PM-2:00AM ■  
LUSH: Official Womxn Pride Party  
*ICON Nightclub*  
(100 Warrenton St., Boston)

## SUNDAY, JUNE 10

1:00-9:00PM ■  
Back Bay Block Party  
*St. James Avenue*  
(at Berkeley St., Boston)

2:00-8:00PM ■  
JP Block Party  
*Perkins Street (at Center St., Jamaica Plain)*

9:00PM ■  
Pride Grand Finale  
*The Grand (58 Seaport Blvd., Boston)*

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~~Shame~~  
~~Fear~~  
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# MAKING CHANGE THROUGH CELEBRATION

Boston Pride Finds Creative Ways to  
Give Back to the Community



Ever since the beginning of the Pride movement, LGBTQ people have been engaged in a spirited conversation about what Pride is, or ought to be. This conversation has long been dominated by two contending notions: Pride as celebration versus Pride as socio-political demonstration. Yet, the issue with proceeding along such binary lines is that it does not acknowledge that Pride festivities and socially transformative actions are not mutually exclusive things. In fact, with Boston Pride, not only are they complementary, they often coexist in one and the same event.

While Boston Pride is best known as the organizer of Pride Week, the organization offers a number of year-round programs for our community, including recurring annual offerings (Black Pride, Latinx Pride, Youth Valentine's Dance, Community Fund) and special events. In its programming, Boston Pride constantly seeks new ways to harness the dynamics of celebration for the benefit of social change efforts. What follows is a brief presentation of three events or programs that Boston Pride organized in 2017-2018, each of which demonstrate that festivities can also be occasions for meaningful change.

### Hurricane Relief Fundraisers for LGBTQ Puerto Ricans

Hurricane Maria, which struck Puerto Rico in mid-September 2017, left in its wake unprecedented devastation and suffering for well over one million people. While natural disasters of this magnitude take a heavy toll on every member of the population, they present additional difficulties for people who belong to underserved or at-risk groups. Large-scale disaster relief efforts are not generally attuned to, or concerned with, handling the specific needs of these groups, including LGBTQ folks.

In an effort to address this issue – and in response to a direct appeal for assistance from Waves Ahead, a Puerto Rico-based LGBTQ organization – Boston Pride dedicated its annual #GivingTuesday and year-end giving campaigns to raising money for critical relief for queer survivors of Hurricane Maria.

In addition to these online fundraisers, Boston Pride and Boston Latinx Pride partnered with Club Café Boston to organize a community brunch, with proceeds benefitting Waves Ahead, which took place Sunday, December 17, 2017. Guests enjoyed a delicious array of dishes as they were treated to live drag performances by Verna Turbulence, Tiny Williams, Pandora Seecret's, Bokita, Kris Knievil, and Kamden T. Rage, as well as the Latin American acoustic stylings of Master Troubadour.

In a moving show of solidarity with LGBTQ Puerto Ricans, the Boston Pride community came out in force to support these fundraising drives. To date, over \$10,000 in donations has already been raised and transferred to Waves Ahead. To learn more about the very real impact these donations made, see the Points of Pride infographic on page 18.

That said, it has been months since the hurricane pummeled the island, and Puerto Ricans are still struggling to recover with diminishing material support from federal agencies. At the time of writing, many areas still lack electricity and/or steady access to clean sources of water. Accordingly, Boston Pride has extended its 2017 year-end fundraising campaign, and will continue to accept donations to benefit the on-the-ground services of Waves Ahead. To offer



Queer youth lovingly decorate duffle bags, to be filled with personal items and delivered to teens at Waltham House, with rainbows and other LGBTQ-affirming motifs. Credit: Boston Pride.

tangible assistance to fellow queers in Puerto Rico, please visit [www.bostonpride.org/pr](http://www.bostonpride.org/pr).

### Boston Youth Pride Designs Personal Duffle Bags for LGBTQ Teens at Waltham House

Boston Pride hosted its fifth Youth Valentine's Dance on February 24, 2018 at City Year. The event, which provides a safe, affirming space for queers and allies under the age of 21 to party together, drew a diverse, energetic crowd from all over Greater Boston.

This year, in addition to enjoying live DJ entertainment, youth attendees were treated to games of beanbag toss and an arts and crafts table. The table activities drew great interest – especially the hand decoration of personalized duffle bags to be gifted to LGBTQ youth residents of Waltham House.

A pioneering institution, Waltham House is New England's first group home specifically dedicated to serving LGBTQ teens aged 14-18, many of whom endure hardships on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and to preparing youth for reunification with their families, placement into foster care, or self-sufficient adult living.

The great generosity of TJX Pride Members enabled Boston Youth Pride to stock the duffle bags with helpful items, such as articles of clothing, blankets, earbuds, journals and pens, playing cards, board games, TJX gift cards, and more.

Boston Pride is #WickedProud of our community's youth, who came together on Valentine's Day not only to celebrate but also to show some love for fellow Bay State teens in need.

### Annual Boston Pride Community Fund

Recognizing a shortage in sources of funding dedicated specifically to the work of small local grassroots organizations, Boston Pride instituted the Community Fund in autumn 2015. Since its inception, the Fund has been giving back to queer communities in Greater Boston, through individual organizational grants up to \$2,000 per annum.

In its programming, Boston Pride constantly seeks new ways to harness the dynamics of celebration for the benefit of social change efforts.



An exuberant crowd gathered at Doyle's Café on June 29, 2017 to listen to a diverse slate of speakers share their experiences of Pride in Boston over the last four-plus decades. The evening event, *Pride Was a Riot: Stories of Love, Loss, Community, and Rebellion*, was produced with funds received from the 2017 Boston Pride Community Fund. Credit: Hurley Event Photography.

This year, Boston Pride is taking another bold step in allocating 10 percent of all our corporate sponsorship monies to the Community Fund, thereby strengthening the program and enhancing our ability to support the work of more grassroots organizations in our local communities.

In its first three years, the Community Fund has already disbursed over \$50,000 to 35 different local groups. These grants support new and existing programs that touch a great diversity of LGBTQ constituencies, including communities of color, trans and gender nonconforming individuals, youth and older adults. And they have funded a wide range of services: from self-defense classes and educational workshops; to drop-in centers for underserved or at-risk populations; and cultural events and recreational opportunities. The monetary provision for these grants comes from a five-dollar allotment of every door donation received at Boston Pride's yearly block parties in Back Bay and Jamaica Plain (see pages 64 and 68), and 100 percent of proceeds from the High Heel Dash from Charity (see page 24). The Fund thus provides a way for queer and ally communities to translate their acts of celebration during Pride into material support for grassroots activism and social change.

This year, Boston Pride is taking another bold step in allocating 10 percent of all our corporate sponsorship monies to the Community Fund, thereby strengthening the program and enhancing our ability to support the work of more grassroots organizations in our local communities.

Following the recommendations of the independent application review committee, for the 2018 cycle, Boston Pride awarded Community Fund grants to 13 organizations, totaling \$18,500. The grant recipients and their projects include:

- **Womxn of Color Weekend**, to remove financial barriers for two or three people between the ages of 18 and 25 to take part in a social justice-oriented Pride festival for queer womxn of color and their allies
- **Stonewall Sports - Boston**, to secure the facilities and equipment necessary for the development of a new LGBTQ dodgeball league
- **Dyke Night**, to design and to produce a four-week skill-building workshop on how to become a drag king performer
- **Gay for Good Boston**, to support community outreach and recruitment efforts
- **GAYLA**, to defray the costs of participation in DAYLA, a day-long program with affirmational artistic and cultural activities for LGBTQ men
- **Lesbians of Color Symposium Collective**, to support the educational and community-building programming of the sixth annual symposium through participant scholarships, honoraria for facilitators and speakers, and promotional materials



As a 2017 Community Fund grant recipient, SpeakOUT supported Freedom New Hampshire's efforts to pass the state's transgender rights bill by offering a free training for trans people on how to share their personal stories in public forums. Credit: SpeakOUT.

- **Boston Living Soulfully**, to bring a nationally recognized speaker to Boston to conduct an educational workshop of relevance to the experience of queer men
- **Open Theatre Project**, to offset the production costs of *Gay Shorts – We Are Family*, to be staged at Club Café for six nights in late May and early June 2018
- **Cape Cod Pride**, to meet the logistical and infrastructural needs associated with the community's third consecutive Pride celebration in 2018
- **Jackson's CLASS**, to found a multi-functional drop-in center for queer people of color and other LGBTQ individuals living in Southeastern Massachusetts
- **Healing Our Community Collaborative**, to launch the organization's second transgender health luncheon
- **IMPACT**, to offer scholarships to LGBTQ individuals for trauma-informed self-defense classes
- **Queer Mystic**, for the production of the third annual Drag Prom, a safe and affirming event for queer youth in Arlington and neighboring suburbs

The Community Fund will continue in 2019. Notification of the opening of online applications will be delivered via our semi-monthly newsletter. To ensure that your organization stays up to date on the Community Fund, subscribe to the newsletter at [www.bostonpride.org/news](http://www.bostonpride.org/news). ●



# THE DARK LADY

**"DANCE OFF"**

**Do you FLASH DANCE**

**or**

**Are you FOOTLOOSE?**

**Break it Down in PVD!**



Viza D Klien



Kitty Litter



Yolandi Fizzure

*Kick Off Block Party*

Music by: DJ AV8 & DJ Transcendence

**FRIDAY JUNE 15**

**GATES OPEN 8pm / 17 & 19 Snow Sreet , PVD**



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# & ALLEYCAT

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Official Block Party

# The Rythem is Gonna Getcha!



Jacqueline DiMera



Kitty Litter



Haley Star



Music by: DJ Joey & DJ Mario

# SATURDAY JUNE 16

GATES OPEN 8pm / 17 & 19 Snow Sreet , PVD

Art: Geoff Gildner, *Social Fabric* (2016).

# MEETING AT THE INTERSECTIONS

## Practicing Queer Intersectionality

By Jo Trigilio

Intersectionality. It's the latest trend. Everyone is talking about it. But what does it mean? More importantly, why should we care and what are we supposed to do about it?

Intersectionality refers to the intersections of multiple oppressions. The concept was popularized by black feminist critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw. Crenshaw highlighted the ways in which the issues facing black women were neglected by race literature, which focused on men of color, and feminist literature, which focused on white women. Due to the intersecting oppressions of racism and sexism, black women face challenges that differ from both black men and white women.

By definition, "oppression" means the systematic mistreatment of a group of people. To be oppressed means that one is met with obstacles and/or closed doors when trying to access the goods and services provided by institutions such as the educational or medical systems. For those who experience multiple oppressions, the hurdles are multiplied and interacting with institutions becomes exhausting.

"I'm a biracial, Asian-American, queer transperson with a masculine gender expression," says Kaden from Medford. "I am all of these things at the same time." Sexual orientation cannot be separated from other identities. Being black, Latinx, Asian, poor, nonbinary, disabled, indigenous, or multi-raced gives shape to how one is queer.

"Queerness" was conceived as a radical political term intended

to band together those whose gender and sexual expressions did not fit the heteropatriarchal norm. What is often ignored is that the binary sex/gender system in the US is deeply raced; the heteropatriarchal norm is white. "Respectable" forms of femininity and masculinity are coded as white, Christian, and middle class, casting women of color and poor women as hypersexualized or slutty, and casting men of color as hypermasculine or effeminate, depending on their race/ethnicity.

Intersecting oppressions – such as those related to race, class, and ethnicity – structure how we experience our sexual orientation, as well as the complicated forms of discrimination we may encounter. Let's consider the situations of two transmen: one white and one black. After transitioning, both are treated as cismen, and the risk of transphobic violence decreases. But, unlike the white transman, the black transman is now at increased risk of being perceived as dangerous, and is subject to harassment and violence by law enforcement. This increased risk, as well as other forms of racism, gives shape to his experience of being trans.

Consider another example. Women are routinely sexually objectified and are much more likely to experience sexual harassment than men. Compared to white women, women of color are at an even greater risk of sexual harassment. This is because the general sexual objectification of women intersects with the historic hypersexualiza-



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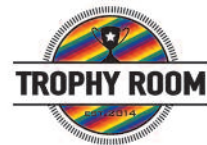
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tion of people of color in the US. As lesbians are further hypersexualized and fetishized by sexist pornography, femme lesbians of color are even more susceptible to harassment.

“When I am in a community that understands intersectionality, I can be myself – a whole person,” says Bonita, a black lesbian from Malden. “Unfortunately, in some contexts, I have to decide which part of myself to silence. For example, when I interact with people from my kids’ school, I cannot hide that I am a black woman. If they are already struggling with the fact that I am a well-educated, knowledgeable, assertive black woman, I have to wonder whether I can disclose that I am a lesbian in a cross-racial relationship with two mixed-raced children. Will this put them right over the edge? Will they act like I have multiple heads and they don’t know which one to look at? I am proud of all my identities and don’t want to silence any of them.”

Bonita goes on to note that this forced fragmentation of self can also happen in communities of color. “When I am warmly welcomed into a non-queer black community, I have to wonder what will happen after I come out. Will I lose the wonderful sense of intimacy and love that was part of our initial interactions?”

Both Kaden and Bonita note how sexism, homophobia, and racism are often intertwined, tangled, and inseparable. Bonita says, “When I deal with some middle-class white men, I have to deal with their homophobia, sexism, and racism – all blended together. Their sexism is raced. Their homophobia is white-centered.” As Kaden puts it, “When I experience discrimination I have to ask, ‘What is happening here? Is it racism? Homophobia? Is it racism mixed with homophobia?’ How am I supposed to deal with it, when I can’t figure it out?”

If we are serious about addressing the oppression that all LGBTQI people face, we must understand and address the oppressions that intersect with homophobia and transphobia. If we fail to do so, we risk excluding LGBTQI people who experience multiple oppressions. We also risk inadvertently maintaining and reinforcing other forms of oppression beyond homophobia.

Taking intersectionality seriously means rejecting single-issue political strategies that focus only on sexual orientation. Single-issue approaches assume a white, male-centered norm, and ignore the ways in which sexual orientation is always shaped by race, ethnicity, and gender. Similarly, the LGBTQI movement must abandon political strategies that take the “we are just like you” approach. As Kaden says, “It’s easy for white, middle class gay men to say to their neighbors,

‘We may be gay, but otherwise, we are just like you.’ This does not work for those of us with multiple oppressions. And it misses the point of social justice, which is to stop treating poorly those different from you.”

What are we supposed to do about it? Learn about other forms of oppression, reflect on our respective forms of privilege, and be better allies to each other. A commitment to social justice means that we cannot be focused only on the issues and experiences related to the oppressions we personally face. All queer people must engage in self-reflection, acknowledging the forms of privilege we each enjoy, and proactively learning about the forms of oppression that we do not experience, so that we can be better allies to those who do. Without reflection, people with a specific privilege remain oblivious to the hurdles faced by those who do not. If the door is always open to you, you may not be aware that it slams shut when others try to walk through it. This is the blindness of privilege.

Both Bonita and Kaden say they have found a home in queer community, but they are also clear that much still needs to be done regarding intersectionality. Says Kaden, “Because I have always been gender nonconforming, I feel most comfortable around queer people. Because I need queer community, it’s extra important to me that LGBT spaces are anti-racist, anti-sexist, and trans-inclusive.”

If we want inclusive LGBTQI communities, we have to care about the injustices with which all LGBTQI people struggle. As Kaden puts it, “intersectionality is important to me because I care about other people around me: my friends, family, people in my community. I have kids who are not white, and one is gender nonconforming. I want a better world for them.”

“People need to take responsibility to learn about different forms of oppression,” states Bonita. “Community means caring about one another, differences and all.” ●

**A commitment to social justice means that we cannot be focused only on the issues and experiences related to the oppressions we personally face.**



*Jo Trigilio is Director of the Graduate Program in Gender and Cultural Studies at Simmons College. Jo was on the leadership team for the Boston Dyke March for 14 years, and now heads the Boston Dyke March History and Archive Project. Their current scholarship focuses on forms of nonbinary gender. Jo will be serving as Marshal for the 2018 Boston Pride Parade.*

Photo credit: Kevin Shea.

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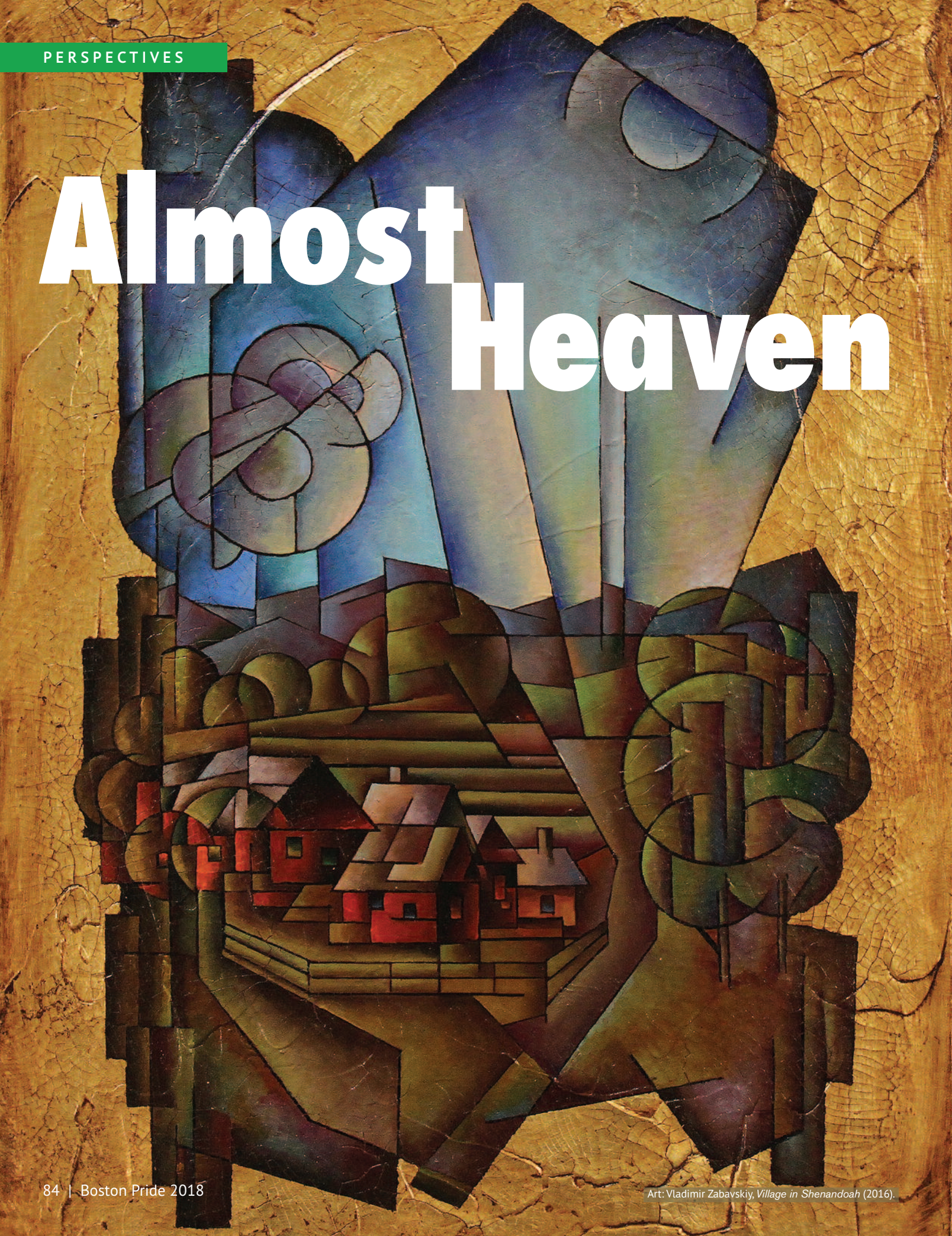


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# Almost Heaven



# Navigating the Frontiers of Gender at a Rural College

By Hal Lightman\*

*\*Because of the incident described in this piece, Hal writes pseudonymously for privacy. His pseudonym comes from a combination of 2001: A Space Odyssey's character HAL 9000 and the surname of an astrophysicist. -Eds.*

I was assigned male when I was born, but I've never really been a boy. There's no way to know exactly when I knew I was different, or even how to articulate it. I've just always known that I wasn't what society deemed an acceptable male specimen. I never liked sports much, except for baseball, and I was horrible at my little league experiences, so even that didn't last long. Cars and games and hobbies traditionally associated with boys didn't interest me, and the vast majority of my friends have always tilted toward girls. I just didn't fit into the label.

Having open-minded parents helped considerably when I was younger. But because we lived in the DC Metro Area, I didn't come face-to-face with how homogenized a surrounding could be until my adolescence, when we moved, eventually settling in a small town in West Virginia.

It wasn't easy living in a small town after having been in much larger places. The convenience of everything being available within a short distance was gone, but what was available took less time to reach due to the lack of traffic. There was also very little diversity; I could count on one hand how many non-white students attended my high school, and while college had more racial diversity, it was still not very accepting of certain people.

People like me.

I didn't wake up one morning and decide, "I'm tired of being a boy. I think I'll start being a girl." It was just something that seemed to make sense the older I got and the more experience I obtained.

At the time, I had very little firsthand interaction with anyone else who didn't fit in, at least none in person. The internet was a budding force in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and it was just starting to find its niche as a place where those defined as "other" could communicate without direct confrontation.

Being a geek, nerd, and fat as a teen never occasioned any easy interactions for me in high school. The fact that my interests didn't align with those of my local peers didn't do anything to ease my

reputation of being the loser kid. I had friends – people I talked to and spent time with – but I mostly kept to myself and didn't let many people into my life for fear of rejection or losing them like I had others in the past.

In 2002, I'd been living off and on as a woman for about a year, limiting my exposure in public to just a few places where I felt comfortable. Most of the time I was with a very close friend, as I did not always feel safe being alone,

but there were times when I would venture out on my own.

One Friday night, I was at the campus library reading for a project. Dressed in a simple black dress with fishnets and flats, I stayed until the librarians kicked me out at closing time. It was very late at night, so I decided to walk back home. My house was only a block and a half from campus, so I didn't think it would be an issue.

For the most part, the college didn't have a reputation of being a party school; I never heard stories of mayhem, such as burning a couch on someone's front lawn. However, it still had fraternities,

**I have never been able to pass as convincingly as I wish I could, or perhaps I gave that impression and others picked up on it; whatever the case, some people just knew that I wasn't "meant" to be the way I was.**

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athletes, and a very large WASP population, none of which was a big surprise, as it was a religiously affiliated institution in rural West Virginia. One might think that I would have understood the dangers present – and I did – but I also didn't think I had much to worry about, as I'd let my guard down having lived in the town for seven years.

I have never been able to pass as convincingly as I wish I could, or perhaps I gave that impression and others picked up on it; whatever the case, some people just knew that I wasn't "meant" to be the way I was. This fact was made very clear when four men hefting duffle bags spotted me walking by and sought my attention. If I had run, they probably wouldn't have followed, but being spoken to like an object made me push away rational thought.

The words were unkind, but I had heard them before. I had even had others block my way to stop me from going onward. This time was different – this time they weren't going to let me just ignore them. Without warning, hands started to grab me and claw at my clothes. I honestly thought that they were going to rape me, and part of me wishes they had, because as horrifying as that act is, to me it is not as bad as what they did.

Three of them dragged me to a nearby tree, while the fourth opened up his bag and took out some rope. Kicking and screaming, I tried to get away, but even though I was not a skinny person, I never had much muscle strength. Two of them shoved me against the trunk of the tree while the third kneed my hip, destroying my ability to get away. The fourth finally joined his friends as they started tying me to the tree as though it were a scene from a film.

Fear was all I could feel at this point. I had no idea what they were going to do, just that it wasn't something I was going to like. Hitting me, ripping parts of my clothing, and yelling words that would make even Deadpool think twice, the quartet of assailants put me through Hell. They made cuts on my skin, carved derogatory epithets into me, and spat on my face. I don't recall much after that, as I passed out from the pain and blood loss, but I woke up when I felt myself being moved.

Afraid that they were taking me somewhere, I tried to fight,

only to find myself staring at familiar faces. Close friends of mine, who were worried when I didn't return home, found me hanging from the tree and cut me down. I was ashamed of what happened, and unwilling to speak to the police or the campus authorities. They helped me change clothes, took me home, helped me to my room, and covered for me with my family. See, at this point, I was still not out to my family in any conceivable way. It would be years before I came out in terms of my sexuality, and even longer regarding my gender identity.

Going into my senior year, I completely dropped my feminine identity. I kept my head down, didn't make waves, and buried myself in my studies and research, fearing that were I to continue onward in transitioning, I would end up dead. It wasn't until six years later, when I met my wife, that I was able to talk about it, to evaluate it, and to make some serious decisions. Either deliberately or subconsciously, I decided that transitioning was no longer right for me, although I still wasn't a boy. At the time I didn't know what the word was, but I eventually came to discover that I was genderfluid, existing as all genders and none at the same time.

Even now, the emotional scars of that night have an impact on me. I'm able to talk about it with my friends and loved ones, and I can look upon it as a traumatic experience without reliving it each

time it comes to mind. But I still don't see myself as ever transitioning again. Whether or not that's because of the incident, or because I never was really female but just thought I was while on the path to discovering my non-gendered identity, I have absolutely no idea, and probably never will. ●

**Hitting me, ripping parts of my clothing, and yelling words that would make even Deadpool think twice, the quartet of assailants put me through Hell.**

*Hal Lightman is an educator at a renowned university. He holds a master's in Higher Education Administration, with a specialization in LGBT issues and multiculturalism, and a bachelor's in History, with a specialization in 1900-1950 British/German relations.*

# NEED **HELP?**



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HAVING "JUST ONE" DOESN'T HAVE TO LEAD TO "HOW DID THIS HAPPEN AGAIN?"

# STARING DOWN THE BARREL

## LGBTQ People Have Seen the Gun Lobby's Tactics Before

By Lou Markert

“Gays Against Guns?” he sneered. “What do gays have to do with guns? What does being gay have to do with the Second Amendment, huh? What’s one got to do with the other?”

This was the reaction I received from a young man who, accompanied by his father, was leaving a gun show in the Pocono Mountains in the fall of 2017. I was there as part of a gun violence prevention demonstration with Gays Against Guns (GAG), and was attempting to share some literature we had prepared about the dangers presented simply by having firearms in the home.

Both over six feet tall and broad-shouldered, the men were walking past us to enter the parking lot of the gun show venue, when I made the effort to hand them our literature. The father affably reached out for the pages, when the young man stopped him, shouting, “No! Don’t take that crap.” Snatching the literature out of my hand before his father could accept it, he reiterated, “What’s all this gay stuff got to do with my right to bear arms?” He punctuated the “all this” with a sweeping gesture at the demonstration going on behind me.

Gun violence is an LGBTQ issue, because we are an at-risk population. Despite increased acceptance in American society, LGBTQ people are still disproportionately impacted by depression, and more likely than our non-LGBTQ peers to attempt suicide. And any attempt to commit suicide with a firearm is virtually guaranteed to be successful. The presence of a firearm in the home will almost certainly turn a transient moment of despair into a fatal decision. In fact, studies have shown that people with a firearm in the home were more than three times more likely to commit suicide, and 17 times more likely to commit suicide with a firearm, as compared to those without a firearm in the home.

Further, after race and religion, sexual orientation and gender identity are the most common reasons hate crimes are committed;

nearly 20 percent of hate crimes in the US are motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity bias. According to the Human Rights Campaign, a record 28 transgender women were murdered in 2017. In a society with over 300,000,000 guns in circulation, the intersection of hate crimes and gun violence is unavoidable. Furthermore, when the guns are assault rifles like a Sig Sauer MCX, and are equipped with copious amounts of ammunition, the US is faced with events like the PULSE massacre.

After decades of fighting – for our lives during the AIDS crisis and for our rights with marriage equality – LGBTQ people are not going to be mowed down in senseless gun violence facilitated by the policies of the very same people we’ve been battling for so long.

Moreover, the political tactics used against members of the gun violence prevention movement, are similar to those used against the LGBTQ community throughout our fight for equality. In large measure, our ability to meld the outrageous with the somber, and anger with camp, in demonstrations is why LGBTQ people are uniquely qualified to take on the issue of gun violence prevention. When all else has failed, we “take it to the street”

**[O]ur ability to meld the outrageous with the somber, and anger with camp, in demonstrations is why LGBTQ people are uniquely qualified to take on the issue of gun violence prevention.**

like no one else. Since ACT UP’s heyday, performance art-cum-demonstration has been a hallmark of queer protests. GAG demonstrations, a combination of traditional noisy protest, performance art, and somber vigil, are hard to miss. They generally consist of two distinct groups of activists. The “GAGgers” are rowdy, interactive participants wearing pink-and-orange stenciled Gays Against Guns t-shirts, which sparkle with copious amounts of glitter. They are accompanied by the “Human Beings,” who are white-clad, veiled, silent participants, each representing a specific victim of gun violence, carrying a placard with the victim’s photo and a short biography.

From their first appearance at the 2016 NYC Pride March after





Gays Against Guns marches through New York City in response to the October 2017 shooting in Las Vegas. Credit: Alex Golshani.

the PULSE Nightclub massacre, the Human Beings have become the hallmark of GAG demonstrations. Their representation of specific victims unfailingly creates a space where the vilest reactions to our demonstrations dissipate, presenting an opportunity to have dialogue.

This was the case with the young man whose anger trailed off as he caught sight of the Human Beings. “This has absolutely nothing to do with Second Amendment,” I said politely, but forcefully, “and it never has.” This caught them both off guard.

“The Second Amendment has no more to do with reasonable gun control,” I continued, “than the Bible had to do with gay marriage. It’s all designed to drive a conversation into a ditch. As a gay man I can see it because I’ve seen it all before. This is about profit and power. And LGBTQ people know better than anyone else how disastrous that combination is, particularly when public health is involved.”

This is why queer people are so well prepared to confront the issue of gun violence prevention in this country: experience. During the early years of the AIDS crisis, when it was most essential to have

useful information about what was causing the outbreak, the Reagan administration and its Congressional allies refused to provide adequate funding to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the epidemic. The lack of funding was so severe that the CDC’s epidemiologists had to steal equipment from other laboratories to do their work. Meanwhile, the epidemic raged.

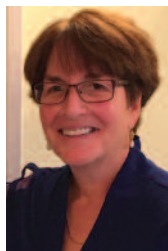
Years later, in 1996, Republican Representative Jay Dickey of Arkansas introduced an amendment to a spending bill which prohibited that same agency, the CDC, from using funds to study gun violence. The Dickey Amendment still exists. Meanwhile, the epidemic - on the order of 38,000 American gun-related fatalities each year - rages.

Our schools are another common battleground. During the AIDS crisis, politicians prevented schools from providing the critical frank, accurate, and evidence-based discussions of human sexuality, safe sex, and condom usage. Instead, politicians caved to the demands of the “Religious Right” to teach abstinence-only classes.

Today, mass shootings in schools throughout America are a lam-

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On the anniversary of the PULSE nightclub massacre, Gays Against Guns' Human Beings merge performance art and protest as they represent individuals whose lives were lost to gun violence. Credit: Alex Golshani.

entably common occurrence. Until recently, politicians did nothing more than offer their tiresome “thoughts and prayers” to families of victims. Now, instead of addressing the epidemic with reasonable, common sense, and proven gun safety laws, politicians at all levels are calling for training and arming teachers and other school staff.

For decades, favoring gun control has served as a “third rail” for our politicians. The National Rifle Association (NRA) has managed to become a powerhouse of finances, campaign operations, and single-issue voters, which they wield with surgical strategy to target candidates they view as dangerous. They did this nationally in the 2016 presidential race with large expenditures both favoring Donald Trump, and denouncing Hillary Clinton. In states like Florida, where the NRA wields outsized power, a politician cannot simply be against gun safety laws; one must be avidly “pro-gun.” For example, Florida governor Rick Scott, who recently signed a toothless gun safety law in Florida in response to the Parkland massacre, has consistently been a great friend to the gun lobby. In fact, in 2014, he was hailed by the NRA for signing more pro-gun bills into law during a single term than any other governor in Florida history.


With increased LGBTQ-representation in elected office, it is easy to forget that being, or even being perceived as, lesbian or gay was once a “third rail” in politics. In 1994, Governor Ann Richards of Texas was defeated for reelection by George W. Bush. She attributed her loss in large part to a whispering campaign that she was a lesbian. Though an advocate for gay men and lesbians, she denied

these rumors. And infamous in the annals of political homophobia is the 1977 New York City mayoral primary between Mario Cuomo and Ed Koch, in which voters were urged to “Vote for Cuomo, Not the Homo.”

Jargon and obfuscation are other tactics once used against LGBTQ people that are now being repurposed in the battle against gun violence prevention. During the struggle for marriage equality, there were attempts to market schemes like “civil unions” and “domestic partnerships” as a substitute for full marriage equality. These terms were used to mask the fact that these policies were inadequate solutions that perpetrated inequality, or to frustrate marriage equality advocates with confusion.

Gun culture is thick with jargon, and the gun lobby takes every opportunity to use it to fight sensible gun laws. They focus on the alleged misuse of terms like “assault rifle,” and debate whether such a thing really exists, and if so, which weapons qualify. They propose that a ban on “bump stocks,” which convert a semi-automatic to an automatic weapon, is an adequate solution. That a “bump stock” wasn’t used at Parkland, or PULSE Orlando - the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history before Las Vegas - is irrelevant. All this is designed to frustrate debate, which works if one is unable to grasp the subtleties of the debate.

But if the past is prologue, one thing is certain: LGBTQ people know how to plow through copious amounts of complicated, tedious information, and to use it to our advantage. In the battle for marriage



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equality, we learned the distinctions between marriage and civil unions. We learned the real meaning of marriage equality, and the details of the 1,138 federal rights that were conferred only by marriage. We had difficult discussions with our friends and family about property rights and inheritance rights. We advocated for survivor's benefits and immigration equality, and yes, even the right to divorce. We avoided the temptation to remain blissfully ignorant and, ultimately, we prevailed.

During the AIDS crisis, when we were sick and dying, organizations like the Treatment Action Group of ACT UP transcended activism, becoming subject matter experts. They learned about the virus, the treatment regimens, and the drug approval processes. They became adept at understanding the details concerning how the virus replicated, the promise of antiretroviral drugs, and the tedious burdens of the drug approval process. The evolution of an HIV diagnosis from a death sentence to a manageable disease is due in large part to our ability to obtain quick proficiency and to harness that knowledge for our cause.

ACT UP anticipated the approach of GAG in their combination of this knowledge with demonstrations, and ostentatious performance art, even shutting down the US Food and Drug Administration to demand access to AIDS medications. Now, we are applying these skills within the gun violence prevention (GVP) movement. ACT UP's use of direct action and civil disobedience, in particular, is a model for GAG.

GAG was the first GVP organization to be arrested in an act of civil disobedience in the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, DC. The day after the November 5, 2017 massacre of 26 people in Southerland Springs, Texas, seven GAG protesters were arrested. We protested the Senate again, mere hours before the massacre in Parkland, Florida, delivering a "Bloody Valentine" to Texas Senator John Cornyn. GAG is also the first GVP organization to take our message, in an open and non-confrontational way, to people who need it most: gun owners at gun shows, which is how I found myself at that gun show in the Poconos last fall.

"So, that is what gays have to do with guns," I said to the young man and his father. "It has nothing to do with the Second Amendment. It's about politicians using hate and fear to subsidize the gun industry and keep themselves in power at the expense of American lives. Gay people know this," I said, motioning to my fellow activists, "because we've seen it. We've seen it all before."

There was a silence when I finished, until one of my fellow activists tapped me on the shoulder. "We need the keys to the van," he said, "It's time to go." I turned back to the young man and his father, expecting them to shove the flyers I'd handed them back at me, or drop them on the ground. Instead they were looking at the pages intently.

"Well, I don't expect I've changed your minds," I said, "but I hope you'll think about it. I mean every word. Goodbye." They both nodded politely, and said goodbye. Walking off to the parking lot, they continued looking at our literature emblazoned with the brightly colored Gays Against Guns logo. Then they each folded the literature and put it in their pockets, hopefully to read later. ●



Queer protesters take a stand for gun control at the DC March for Our Lives.

Credit: Linda Russell.



*Lou Markert is an activist based in New York City. He was galvanized into activism in the mid-1990s with the advent of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), focusing on its impact on bi-national couples. His concerns about gun violence began with Columbine. It wasn't until the massacre at PULSE nightclub, however, that he and other like-minded activists joined together to fight the blight of gun violence: Gays Against Guns.*

Readers who are interested in forming a local chapter of Gays Against Guns are encouraged to reach out to the organization at [info@gaysagainstguns.net](mailto:info@gaysagainstguns.net) for information on how to get started.

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# Naked Truths

## A 310-pound Man and a Six-ounce Speedo

By Izzy Berdan

It's a standard Saturday night in the middle of February and I'm sitting in the parking lot of Dbar. Staring at myself in the mirror for what felt like an hour but was probably only 15 minutes, I try to gather the courage to go inside. You see, I was attending Dbar's "Get Lei'd" dance party, but there was a problem: not the dancing or the party – it was the Speedo contest. I had one on. And I weighed 310 pounds.

While the media portrays body image issues as mostly impacting women, recent studies have revealed that gay men experience eating disorders and body size concerns at rates similar to women. I have spent my whole life learning to overcome these issues and to love myself. I have discovered that the secret shortcut to self-love is that there actually is no shortcut. Learning to love yourself is a *job* – a job most of us put in our two-weeks notice for as soon as we become adults. The work is hard and there is no tangible pay off for this labor.

Despite their brilliantly curated online lives, I have yet to meet anyone who does not struggle with body image: too thick, too thin, patchy beard, no calves, oily t-zones, or wrinkled scrotum. But these are all just differences that make us unique. We're drawn to the physicality of other people for one reason or another. We can use a lifetime of advertising and societal expectations as a rationale for self-critique: "Maybe I'd be sexy if I had hair like his." Or, "If I had that ass, guys would stare at me for sure." Or, "Maybe if I bulk up a bit and fill in this shirt, my gym crush will finally notice me."

These insecurities often make us feel like there's a never-ending list of things about our bodies we need to tweak, to overhaul, to reestablish, and to redefine. It's all so exhausting. There has to be another way.

When I moved to Boston, I had absolutely zero concept of what it meant to be a gay man in the city. I grew up in a small town in South Texas, playing sports and performing in theater – an ap-

parent contradiction, evident to most 12-year-old kids in my hometown, which somehow eluded me. As a child, I always liked being physically active, and I did so without concern as to how I would be perceived. I was husky, but also effeminate. My hometown was shitty and my home life was rough. So at 13, I started self-medicating with alcohol to numb my emotions, and committed the next five years of my life to getting out of Texas.

I started a new life when I moved to Boston in 1996. By the next summer, I was working at a number of different dance clubs. This was also as a way for me to get into the clubs and to partake in free drugs and alcohol while I was still underage. It was beautiful, glorious, and magical. Yet, somewhere in the back of my mind, I felt this wasn't for me. I was in the epicenter of queer

I have discovered that the secret shortcut to self-love is that there actually is no shortcut.

Boston during one of the greatest times in our dance history, seemingly having fun but with a deep void constantly nudging at me. In an attempt to regain control of my life I traded alco-

holism for bulimia. Thankfully, my experience with bulimia only lasted a couple years.

A recent survey of body image studies found that gay men feel the sociocultural pressures of body image much more so than our straight counterparts. Despite this, I feel my generation got off easily when it came to self-image, and the ways in which we presented ourselves to the public. In the late 90s, without easy access to pictures of beautiful bodies on the internet or sex/dating apps, we only had to compete with the people in the same room as us. Basically, every club, bar, and lounge you entered was graded on a bell curve. The utilitarian bodies in front of us served as the basis for comparison, either destroying or elevating our sense of self. If the gym-bunny, porn star bodies we currently see on Grindr or Scruff populated our clubs, I would have been an "eight" at that time. Alright, a "seven." Fine – I was probably a "four." But those guys weren't piling into our local dance clubs, and I seemed to be doing just fine.

Still, gay men have always felt pressure to be attractive as a consequence of images presented in the media. We grant fame to reality TV stars and social media influencers with "talents" such as having money, abs, or both. We use apps such as Facetune to manipulate our facial features and skin into something we think is more appealing. And when we browse the internet, videos for "the next best diet plan" are everywhere. On social media platforms, my friends constantly post thirst traps – sexy photos designed either to get "likes" from followers, or to get laid, or both – from the gym or their bedroom.

Needless to say, the internet has given us a multitude of new ways to feel shitty about ourselves. Studies have reflected this, finding that poor body image and eating disorders are linked to the modern trend of uploading photos and seeking feedback via status updates. We're continuously bombarded with the top one percent of the gene pool. It's no wonder that so many of the images we encounter online make everyone we know look like supermodels having the times of their lives at the most exclusive, high-end resorts.



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Izzy Berdan stands victorious in the Speedo contest at Dbar's "Get Lei'd" dance party. Credit: Arlan Fonseca.

On the other hand, the internet has given us the opportunity to build communities and to unite underrepresented and oppressed voices to fight systemic bigotry. Advertisers have followed suit, with many companies creating ad campaigns portraying "real people" that often go viral. I'm a photographer. As an artist, I am infatuated with the human form in all its glory. In the course of completing a recent project, I was politely turned down by 22 prospective subjects – beautiful "real people" – 19 of whom just didn't like the way they looked. Their refusal to participate only seems to reinforce the need for discussion on body image.

In 2016, I sat for a fellow photographer, Kirk Lorenzo. I wasn't mentally prepared for this, but Kirk made me feel beautiful. He celebrated my form, and made me feel relaxed despite being topless in a chilly, late fall Boston. When the images came back, Kirk was ecstatic, but I was destroyed. I wasn't ready to be celebrated; I was ashamed of my shape. There was a clear difference between how I felt being in front of the camera, allowed just to be myself, and what I thought people would see when they saw my body. In the images, I saw myself as the polar opposite of what I've always been told I should be. Through all those years, in all my insecurities, I believed

they were right. At one point, I even stopped attending Provincetown Bear Week because I didn't feel comfortable with the adoration my form received; it was overwhelming. For so long, being ashamed of my body had been so ingrained in my psyche that it prevented me from being in an environment – with bears and those who love them – that could have helped me develop a positive self-image.

I'm still evolving. Now, I think about my actions and my views on body image. I recently noticed some unplanned weight loss and, at age 40, I purchased my very first scale. I'm down to 275 pounds. I fear that vanity may have played a role in my decisions leading up to this weight loss. A recent study found that gay men feel pressure to conform to societal ideals of attractiveness and masculinity. This kind of pressure can mess with your head, and even affects us in the bedroom. According to Justin Lehmillier, an expert on human sexuality, gay men are four times more likely to avoid sex with their partner than straight men. To all our straight friends who think sex is so much easier for gay men: It ain't necessarily so.

So now we're back in my car, in the parking lot of Dbar, in the middle of February, and I'm in a Speedo. I decide to leave my jacket in the car out of fear that, if given the option, I might not take it off inside. The Boston air is freezing but my hands won't stop sweating. Inhale. Exhale. I walk into the bar and make the rounds before hitting the dance floor. All the while, I'm staring at the stage wondering if I'll chicken out. I give them my name, and I just lost one of my last opportunities to exit. I am so high on adrenaline I can't pretend to hold a conversation with anyone. The music stops, the lights flood one side of the club, and one by one all the beautiful young 20-somethings saunter onto the go-go box. They all strip down to their size small Speedos, and then I hear my name. Somehow, I manage to stomp around the go-go box in front of the crowd without collapsing. It happened, and I lived. And I won! Not only did I win the Speedo contest but, more importantly, I conquered the fears I had regarding my own self-image.

When people ask me how I got the confidence to overcome my body image issues and to enter the contest, I tell them that it was work. We need to accept that we are already beautiful, and that only we can spread our unique light into the world. And when people refer to my Speedo contest win that night at Dbar, I don't want to be called brave. I was just doing my job. ●



*Izzy Berdan was born in 1978 in Corpus Christi to a portrait photographer and nurse practitioner. As soon as he could hold a reflector, he was put to work in his father's studio, photographing weddings and assisting in the dark room. He moved to Boston in 1996 in a failed attempt to get a traditional education. Within months, he was working in interior design and custom furniture during the day and night clubs at night. Today, Izzy is Creative Director for The Aquitaine Group and Photo Editor for Take Magazine. He serves on the Board of Directors for Boston Gay Men's Chorus. For the last decade he has been working on a number of photography series that pose questions about race, society, and the human condition.*



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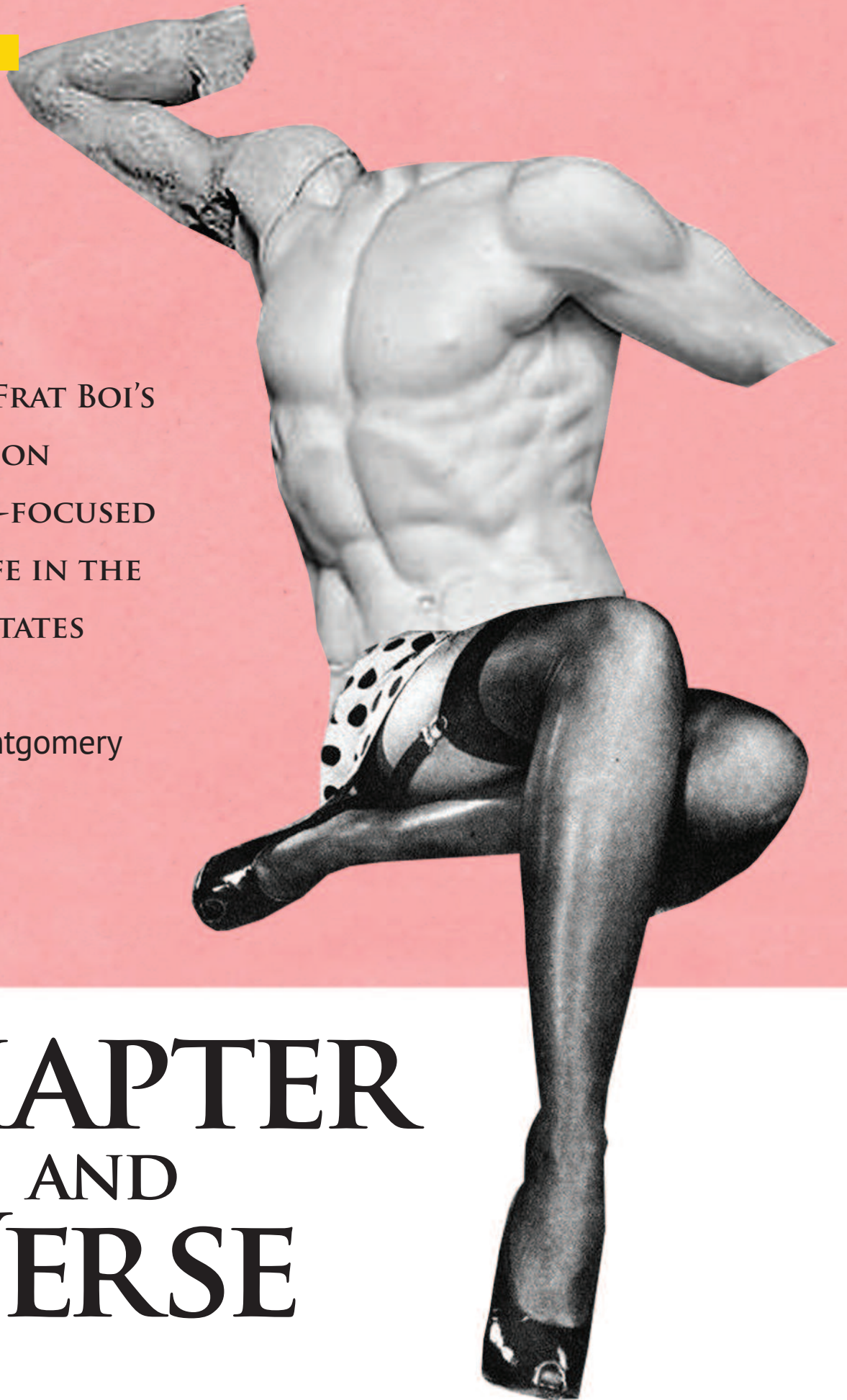
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A QUEER FRAT BOI'S  
REMARKS ON  
LGBTQIA-FOCUSED  
GREEK LIFE IN THE  
UNITED STATES

By Alex Montgomery

# CHAPTER AND VERSE



When the average person hears about fraternities and sororities, two distinct cultures come to mind: young, rich, white college students drinking and partying every weekend, or young men and women of color stepping and strolling, wearing heavily adorned clothing saturated in the colors of their affiliated organization. Contrary to popular depiction, many Greek-Letter Organizations (GLOs) are where some of the most impactful leaders are developed on campus. Many people join to find friendship, to build professional networks, to serve their campus and local communities, or to continue the upstanding legacies of family members and mentors. Members of GLOs have higher graduation rates and better job-seeking opportunities than their non-Greek peers. Many GLOs participate in initiatives such as health and wellness awareness, voter registration drives, fundraisers, and the provision of scholarship funds to local high school and college students.

Unfortunately, community service, leadership awards, and scholastic achievement do not make for thrilling entertainment. Most often, the negative occurrences of Greek life – excessive drinking, partying, and bullying – inspire exaggerated cult films like *Animal House*, *Revenge of the Nerds*, and *Legally Blonde*. People who watch movies like *School Daze*, *Stomp the Yard*, and *Burning Sands* may think that step-

ping and dancing are all historically Black GLOs are about. These cumulative associations are compounded by frequent incidents of sexual assault and deaths from illegal and unsanctioned hazing, which dominate the stories shown in the news. The resulting bad publicity is leading a handful of college and university administrators to consider ridding their campuses of social GLOs altogether.

While there are differences between white GLOs and GLOs of color, both share a staunch view of the performance of gender and sexuality. In fact, many of the problems negatively associated with Greek life can be attributed to gender performance expectations. In fraternities and sororities, performance of gender can be key to accessing many of the social hierarchies on and off campus. Hypermasculine and hyper-feminine performances are the traditions upon which fraternities' and sororities' reputations are built. Very rarely, if at all, does film or television portray queer and trans members of GLOs authentically. Usually, if two cis-men are shown, the homoeroticism between them is fodder for comic relief; a scene with two cis-women has them making out for the pleasure of cis-men. In real life, many queer and trans pledges of both white GLOs and GLOs of color face increased pressure to continue the exaggerated gender performance of the organization or risk being treated poorly by members

**While there are differences between white GLOs and GLOs of color, both share a staunch view of the performance of gender and sexuality.**



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because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Yes, some queer and trans folks who are inducted into their chosen organization may find genuine community and make a progressive impact. Yet, others may choose to, or be pressured to, keep their gender identity or sexual orientation private to maintain the GLO's reputation – especially if they later want to pursue prominent leadership opportunities. As a result, despite some strides in organizational policies, many GLOs practice and perpetuate internalized homophobia and transphobia at the expense of their current and prospective constituents.

### Personal Experience

This was something I experienced when deciding whether to join a GLO in college. In the late 2000s, I attended a small, private liberal arts institution in the Midwest with a highly active Greek life. After many of my friends joined all kinds of GLOs, I began to weigh critically the pros and cons of what possible membership would look like. As a queer, nonbinary, masculine person, I rarely saw people who looked like me on campus, and I craved connections with people who could relate to some of the same life experiences I was facing.

My then partner, who was more femme-presenting than me, was a new member of a historically Black sorority, so I had an intimate view of certain aspects of Greek life vicariously through her. There seemed to be a healthy balance of academic achievement, community service, and socializing among the assorted fraternities and sororities in the area. Members of her chapter grew to embrace our relationship, and I felt comfortable outwardly expressing my gender identity.

At the same time, she was strongly encouraged to keep our relationship secret if she wanted to pursue leadership outside the local chapter. Additionally, once I expressed my interest in joining the GLO, I was expected to conform to traditional behaviors, such as wearing dresses and performing a heteronormative, hyperfeminine version of sexiness. My partner's sexual orientation was a liability for sorority members at the time, and gender roles were strictly defined.

In determining whether a GLO was for me, I knew that I would not be able to join one with members who encouraged me to deny important parts of the person I was fighting to become. Just when I was about to move on from possible Greek life, a random internet search shifted my perspective. I stumbled upon several queer-and-trans-centric organizations that provided an alternative to traditional, well-known GLOs. Queer and trans people were working to establish Greek spaces for people who were tired of hiding their gender identity and sexual orientation from members and desired an out and proud Greek life experience. This is the path I chose nearly a decade ago when I joined my fraternity.

### A Whole New World

Fraternities and sororities serving the LGBTQIA community have existed in the United States since the 1980s, beginning with Delta Phi Upsilon (1985) and Delta Lambda Phi (1986). Today, there are literally dozens of GLOs with values of service, honor, and siblinghood that specifically cater to queer and trans populations and initiatives. While some are chartered at the collegiate level, there are many with chapters that are community-based at the local, state, regional, and national levels. Some have chapters for queer and trans people on active military duty. The majority of community-based LGBTQIA GLOs permit dual membership for people who are members of traditional GLOs, though not all traditional GLOs reciprocate. Membership is often extended to people of various backgrounds. Local LGBTQIA-focused organizations already established in New England include:

- **Alpha Psi Kappa Fraternity, Inc.**, a social service organization for masculine-of-center women
- **Delta Lambda Phi Fraternity, Inc.**, a social organization geared primarily towards gay and bisexual men
- **Kappa Psi Kappa Fraternity, Inc.**, a nonprofit, non-collegiate, service/social fraternity for progressive men of all ethnic backgrounds, cultures, and sexual orientations
- **Phi Nu Kappa Sorority, Inc.**, service-based, socially organized sorority for queer feminine women

This is not to say that queer and trans GLOs are any better than their traditional, cis-dominant, and heteronormative counterparts. There is much work to be done to break down the social issues that exist within and outside GLOs, including racism, misogyny, heteronormativity, transphobia, homophobia, classism, and ableism. However, for any queer or trans person seeking siblinghood, networking, and community service with like-minded folk, there are a myriad of options available to research at the tap of a finger. If there is not a chapter of your desired GLO in your area, it's a great opportunity to pioneer a new experience in your local community. ●



*Alex Montgomery is a queer NBTMOC who is fine-tuning their voice amidst a cacophony of noise. They are rooted in red clay, born in the Southeast and raised in the Midwest. In 2017, they completed master's degree programs in Public Policy and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University. After graduating, they continued at Brandeis as Coordinator for the Gender and Sexuality Center.*



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# FLOCKING TOGETHER

**It's Time for Religious Queers to Form  
Communities away from the Church**

By Johnny Gall

We all know the queer Christians with a martyr complex, the people who pride themselves on saving Christianity for “the gays.” They ramble to anyone who will listen about how they are proving you can be gay and Christian at the same time, even though most of us, especially in Boston, already know this. Their messianic complex tells them they can save the world if only they can teach Christians how to accept queer people, and queer people how to accept Christianity. I know this because I was once one of those people. I think it’s a phase one must go through to reconcile a non-inclusive faith with awakening as a queer person. I don’t begrudge anyone who needs to cling to the queer Christ complex for some time.

As a community, though, it is time we moved on from this. Queer Christians are still stuck in their martyr complex. Queer religious communities spend the bulk of their time petitioning churches to affirm queer identities. I respect this. I have been a part of this. I have worked with several groups in my own United Methodist Church to make the larger Church more inclusive. I have stood and sung in protest of harmful Church legislation. I have participated in queer congregations and denominations. I understand wanting to spare queer youth the pain of the divisive rhetoric from churches.

And yet, when I look at the scriptural roots of the Christian tradition, I don’t understand why queer religious communities place such import on being included in harmful churches.

The prophets of the Hebrew Bible were largely focused on securing justice for their own people, especially the poor, widows, orphans, and downtrodden. They did not petition the Temple about these concerns, nor did they introduce legislation in conquering nations. They focused on speaking the message God’s people needed to hear, giving comfort to the oppressed, and proclaiming judgment on those who had been unjust.

Paul sought no place for his people among the Roman Empire. Nor did he try to build his own empire. Rather, his epistles center on the desire to build a new community on the margins – encompassing the poor, the outcast, and the marginalized as well as the rich – and teaching them to be a community together. Unlike the power-hungry rulers of Rome, he sought not to dominate his people, but to teach them to live as equals.

The Gospels show Jesus turning over tables in the Temple rather than being party to the continued manipulation of the poor in his community. He tells the religious authorities of his day that he knows the ways they heap additional economic burdens on the poor and disabled, leaving them supposedly outcast from absolution and wellness. Never in these stories, however, do we see Jesus ask that the poor and marginalized be allowed to participate in the oppressive religious practices of his day. He built a community on the margins and empowered them, in their poverty and disability, to know that they were God’s beloveds.

This should sound familiar. However much the text may be skewed to political aims of power and control today, at its heart, the Bible is a story of the people on the margins, oppressed, and looked

down upon for being different. It is a story of outcasts forming communities of their own, and of members of that circle screaming to end the oppressive power politics of the day. It is a story of those seeking justice and forming their own families. It is already our story.

We have been doing this work and living this story for decades. Long before Pride marches and marriage equality, before STAR and ACT UP, before the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis, before Stonewall, we were living these stories. We were oppressed people, living on the margins, forming communities of our own, and finding the voice to speak out for justice for ourselves and other oppressed people. We were, and are now, the poor, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers, and the pure in heart. We were, and are, those who mourn and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. And God only knows we were persecuted for righteousness’ sake. For this, our communities and our chosen families shall always be blessed.

From the very origins of our communities, we have been doing the work of the Church better than the Church has. So why is it that so many queer Christians still feel the need to ask permission to be part of the Church, or somehow to save queerphobic Christians from themselves? Did Moses attempt to soften the heart of the Pharaoh? Did the prophets attempt to petition the Assyrians or the Babylonians? Did Paul attempt to negotiate with the powers of Rome? Did Jesus ask the Pharisees to create safe spaces? No. Those whose deeds are foundational to the Christian faith did not waste their time on lost causes with leaders whose hearts had been hardened. They concentrated on the good work still to be done in the world.

I hope this is not mistaken as some sort of treatise for us to leave Christian institutions, or by any means a call to dishonor those queer people who do amazing work in the institutional Church. Rather, for those Christians who can see the beauty of God’s queer people, let them journey with us. And for those who refuse to see God’s handiwork in our rainbow community, let us leave them behind. We don’t need them and we never did. We have been doing God’s work better than many of them for a long time. They may learn from us if they like, but we must not take time away from building up the oppressed and crying out for justice in order to convince them that our lives are beautiful and worthy of God’s grace.

We do not need to ask to be a part of the Church, nor do we need to rescue a church hell-bent on being hard-hearted. If we can give up these fools’ errands, perhaps we can focus more of our energy on being a better church than the Church is. ●

**[F]or those Christians who can see the beauty of God’s queer people, let them journey with us. And for those who refuse to see God’s handiwork in our rainbow community, let us leave them behind.**



*Johnny Gall originally comes from Humboldt, Tennessee. He has a bachelor’s degree from New York University and is proud to have received his master’s in Divinity from Boston University School of Theology. Johnny currently works as a case manager in homeless outreach with Pine Street Inn and is – perhaps foolishly – pursuing ordination as a minister through the United Methodist Church.*

# Discrimination with a Smile

## How Gender Identity and Expression are Treated in the Rental Market

By Jamie Langowski

Deals are often sealed with a handshake and a smile. The problem is that discrimination also often occurs with a handshake and a smile, making it difficult to detect. Many people suspect that they were discriminated against while searching for housing, but have no proof. Alternatively, others are completely unaware that they were treated differently than their fellow housing seekers. When two people meet with the same housing provider about the same property in close temporal proximity, one would assume that they would be treated similarly. In a recent HUD-funded study, Suffolk University Law School Housing Discrimination Testing Program used matched pair testing and uncovered evidence of discrimination against trans and gender nonconforming housing seekers in Massachusetts.

Classes that are protected under federal housing law include race, color, religion, national origin, families with children, disability, and sex. States have the ability to increase protections by adding classes to the protected list, and, in 2012, Massachusetts became one of 20 states (including DC) to add gender identity to its housing anti-discrimination law. Expanding the enumerated protected classes to include gender identity and expression makes it illegal to discriminate against trans or gender nonconforming housing seekers and, if discrimination does occur, provides the victim with legal recourse. Today, other states are contemplating adoption of legislation similar to Massachusetts, but is it needed? Is discrimination based on gender identity occurring in the rental housing market? The answer is yes.

Suffolk University Law School started the Housing Discrimination Testing Program (HDTP) in 2012, not long after Massachusetts expanded its protections to include gender identity as a protected class. The HDTP educates people about fair housing laws, represents people with fair housing claims, and conducts tests to determine

whether discrimination is occurring in the rental housing market. A test involves sending a pair of similarly qualified people out to pretend to be interested in renting a property to evaluate how people are being treated. The testers are as similar as possible in all respects, except that one belongs to the protected class and the other does not. The value of matched pair testing is that it reveals discriminatory differences in treatment that cannot be masked by a friendly demeanor.

Over a nine-month period, spanning 2016 and 2017, the HDTP conducted a small-scale empirical study to measure the level of discrimination faced by trans and gender nonconforming people seeking rental housing in Metro Boston. The study, led by Professor William Berman, Regina Holloway, Jamie Langowski, and Camron McGinn,

is published in the spring 2018 issue of the *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*. Overall, the study revealed evidence of discriminatory differential treatment in 61 percent of the tests and produced statistically significant data regarding the specific ways that discrimination is occurring.

Housing providers are discriminating against this class in subtle and hard-to-detect ways. Specifically, testers were 27 percent less likely to be shown amenities outside the unit; 21 percent less likely to be offered a financial incentive to rent; 12 percent more likely to be told negative comments about the apartment and the neighborhood; and nine percent more likely to be quoted a higher rental price. These examples of differential treatment are nearly impossible for a housing seeker to uncover independently.

The HDTP recruited 33 trans and/or gender nonconforming people (protected class testers or “PC testers”) and 33 cisgender and gender conforming people (“Control testers”). A test coordinator directed pairs of testers to inquire about advertised housing, and then collected detailed reports from the testers after their site visits. Testers were matched in pairs based on factors such as age and race. The test-

**Is discrimination based on gender identity occurring in the rental housing market? The answer is yes.**





Art: Eli Portman, *South End in Fall* (2018).

ing coordinator assigned both testers similar profiles in terms of income and other qualifications to rent the apartment, so the only difference between the two was that one was in the protected class and one was not.

The narratives from the tests demonstrate how trans and gender nonconforming housing seekers are being treated differently. In one test, the housing provider told the gender nonconforming tester that the move-in costs included deposits for the first and last months and

cleaning, but told the gender conforming tester that move-in costs included just one month's rent. Additionally, the housing provider told the PC tester that they could leave the application on the top of the mailbox for the agent but told the Control that if she wanted to apply, the agent would go to her to retrieve the deposit check. This test is representative of what the data suggest is a trend in which gender nonconforming testers were not denied the opportunity to begin the rental application process, but did not receive the same level of customer service as others, and were presented with higher financial requirements. In comparison, overt discrimination, for example, a housing provider's persistent use of a tester's legal name despite the PC tester's repeated request to be addressed by their chosen name, was only present in one test. In the overwhelming majority of the tests, a smile hid differential treatment and discrimination.

A landlord should only care about three things: ability to pay rent, care of their property, and whether a tenant will be a good neighbor. None of these can be predicted by gender identity or expression. For those seeking housing, it is important to know how such discrimination manifests so that you can be prepared in advance. Before you meet in person or submit an application, ask over the phone for information regarding price, rent incentives, and move-in costs. Contact a fair housing organization, such as Suffolk's Housing Discrimination Testing Program, or file a complaint if you suspect that you may have been treated unfairly. New laws adding gender identity and expression to the group of protected classes do not magically stop all discrimination from occurring. However, such laws do provide a legal tool for those harmed by discrimination to find relief, and highlight ways in which trans and gender nonconforming housing seekers can arm themselves with knowledge. It is also a strong indication in support of a cultural shift away from historic patterns of discrimination against trans and gender nonconforming people. ●



*Jamie Langowski is Clinical Fellow at Suffolk University Law School and Assistant Director of Suffolk's Housing Discrimination Testing Program (HDTP). The HDTP's mission is to eliminate illegal housing discrimination through testing, enforcement, and education. Since 2012, Attorney Langowski has coordinated hundreds of housing discrimination tests of the rental market throughout Massachusetts. She and her colleagues have trained hundreds of people as testers. Before joining Suffolk, she clerked for a Boston civil rights attorney and served as Director of Policy and Communications for a Boston At-Large City Councillor. Attorney Langowski is a graduate of Northeastern University School of Law and St. Cloud State University*



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# ROUGH TRADE



Art: Jamieson Edson, *Visitor 3* (2017).

## The LGBTQ Movement Should Fight for Sex Worker Rights

By Guillaume Bagal

Sex work, broadly defined as the exchange of sexual services for money or goods between consenting adults, is often a means of survival for people living in poverty and their families. While sex workers in the United States make up a very diverse group, research has traditionally focused on female sex workers. Sexual and gender minorities, including those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities, endure systemic discrimination that creates access barriers to economic opportunities, education, food security, stable housing, social service supports, and healthcare. As a result, LGBTQ people, especially those who are black and transgender, disproportionately experience economic and social instability, making them more likely to engage in underground economies like sex work.

According to a National Center for Transgender Equality report, *Meaningful Work: Transgender Experiences in the Sex Trade*, the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS), which examined the experiences of 27,715 transgender adults across the United States in 2015, confirmed that because transgender individuals are more vulnerable to discrimination, impoverishment, unemployment, and housing instability, they were more likely to trade sex for survival than cisgender people. This survey reported that one in five of respondents had engaged in sex work for money, food, a place to sleep, or other goods. The responses indicated that of all transgender women, black transgender women had the highest rate of sex trade participation at approximately 42 percent, while white transwomen showed the lowest rate of participation in sex work at 11 percent.

LGBTQ youth are often rejected by their family and peers, which forces them to become independent at a very young age. Columbia Law School's Center for Gender & Sexuality Law reports that these traumatic experiences can trigger a lifetime of social isolation, housing instability, behavioral health issues, violence, and encounters with the criminal justice system. While LGBT youth are only about seven percent of the total youth population in the United States, they account for approximately 40 percent of all young people experiencing homelessness. Family rejection and homelessness are predictors that a young

person will engage in survival economies such as drug sales, sex work, and other illegal activities that enable disenfranchised individuals to survive.

A 2015 Urban Justice Center report on LGBTQ youth in New York who engaged in sex work found that almost all of them did so to make ends meet. While most respondents reported trading sex for money (96 percent) and shelter (31 percent), others received food (18 percent), drugs (15 percent), and clothing (11 percent) in exchange for sexual services.

Compared to other nations, the United States has some of the most expansive laws against sex work, resulting in nearly 50,000 arrests each year, according to the US Department of Justice. Laws criminalizing sex work and other sex-related laws have a disproportionately negative impact on groups already facing discrimination, including communities of color, gay and transgender people, immigrants, and people with criminal convictions. The enforcement of these laws occurs within a larger context of racial profiling and over-policing of low-income communities and communities of color, most severely impacting black and brown transgender women and

**Laws criminalizing sex work and other sex-related laws have a disproportionately negative impact on groups already facing discrimination, including communities of color, gay and transgender people, immigrants, and people with criminal convictions.**

LGBTQ youth, who are routinely profiled as being engaged in sex work, loitering, or other offenses.

Sexual and gender minorities have a history of being targeted by law enforcement with sex-related charges. Law enforcement regularly profiles transgender women – particularly those who are black and brown – for prostitution, and over-polices areas where men seek other men for sex. Twenty-five states have HIV-specific criminal laws, the enforcement of which disproportionately targets people of color and further criminalizes HIV-positive sex workers.

LGBTQ youth are more likely to be placed on sex offender registries than their non-LGBTQ peers. A 2014 study in *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* found that participants were more open to sex offender registration for LGBT youth engaging in consensual sex than for non-LGBT youth. Another report, *Hidden Injustice: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth in Juvenile Courts*, documented that

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LGBTQ youth are frequently charged and adjudicated for sex offenses, required to undergo sex offender treatment, and asked to submit to sex offender risk assessment, even in situations unrelated to sex offenses. For example, in one case, a prosecutor argued for a queer youth to be placed in a restrictive setting for high-risk individuals so that he would not become a pedophile. In another, a young trans person with no signs of aggression or sexual offense history was inexplicably grouped with youth likely to commit sexual offenses against minors.

Research shows that the criminalization of sex work causes sex workers to experience high levels of stigma, systematic exclusion, violence, and discrimination. This leads to barriers to accessing necessary health services and information, facilitates the violation of sex workers' rights, and perpetuates sex workers' distrust of the police. In addition to disproportionately impacting vulnerable communities, sex work criminalization is counterproductive to public health, according to recent studies. As many in the LGBTQ community often forego needed health, legal, and social services due to stigma and discrimination, LGBTQ people engaging in sex work are further marginalized and at higher risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases than their non-LGBTQ peers. When all or some aspects of sex work are criminalized, sex workers experience higher levels of HIV acquisition and transmission risks. An Urban Justice Center report found that in places that criminalize sex work, people trading sex have greater difficulty negotiating safer sex practices with clients, which is further complicated by documented practices like police confiscating condoms and using them as evidence of engaging in prostitution. The enforcement of these laws also makes it harder to find alternative employment due to criminal records, and the accompanying stigma and discrimination can lead to loss of occupation and housing.

As the role of the internet in sex work continues to grow, authorities are investing more resources in monitoring and shutting down online platforms that facilitate sex work. The 2015 raid of Rentboy.com, a gay male escorting website, and the criminal charges brought against its CEO and employees highlighted a national effort to criminalize sex work in a changing environment. The involvement of the US Department of Homeland Security, the US Attorney's Office, and the New York City Police Department in a criminal case against Rentboy.com seemed like an overreaction to many, and threatened online platforms such as Craigslist and Backpage, which sex workers use for harm reduction. These platforms enable sex workers to negotiate rates and other terms with clients prior to meeting in person. They help sex workers screen for dangerous clients, and decrease the likelihood of being assaulted by predators. In fact, a 2017 study from West Virginia University and Baylor University found use of

Craigslist erotic services correlated with a 17.4 percent reduction in female homicide rate. Organizations that publicly criticized the Rentboy raid included the Human Rights Watch, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the National LGBTQ Task Force, and the Global Forum on MSM & HIV. Some LGBTQ activists found this case to be reminiscent of bathhouse raids and gay bar roundups from decades ago, while others focused on the negative impact this would have on sex workers. In a press release following the raid of Rentboy's offices, the Transgender Law Center stated, "The U.S. federal government is not only jeopardizing countless people's lives and only source of livelihood, but sending a clear and troubling message that the country is less invested in addressing systemic issues of racial, economic, and anti-

LGBT injustice than in further criminalizing the individuals most marginalized by those systems." Unfortunately, lawmakers continue to introduce bills that conflate sex work and trafficking, and jeopardize the safety of sex workers by criminalizing them.

The LGBTQ rights movement must take a stronger stance on sex worker rights. We must prioritize and examine issues our communities face through an intersectional lens, and ensure that proposed interventions take into account people living with multiple minority identities. There is no room in our movement for respectability politics when so many in our LGBTQ family remain oppressed. A majority of states still do not have laws that offer clear discrimination protections to LGBTQ people, and even in states like Massachusetts, these laws are under attack, as demonstrated by the upcoming anti-transgender referendum. As we contemplate the disproportionate representation of LGBTQ and HIV-positive people in the criminal justice system or living in poverty, we must understand the discriminatory mechanisms in our society that create access barriers to employment, education, social and legal services, and basic healthcare. These barriers keep individuals and families in chronic financial stress, which is a primary predictor of participation in sex work or other underground economies. ●

**There is no room in our movement for respectability politics when so many in our LGBTQ family remain oppressed.**



*Guillaume Bagal is Public Policy Associate at Whitman-Walker Health, a community-based health center serving the LGBTQ community, and persons affected by HIV, in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. He is President of the Gay & Lesbian Activist Alliance (GLAA), and consults for The Center for Global Health and Diplomacy. Guillaume has a bachelor's degree in Biology and master's degrees in Sociology from East Carolina University and Health Administration and Policy from George Mason University. He served on the NIH Community Advisory Board for two years, and is a member of the HIV Working Group at the DC Center for the LGBT Community.*

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# IT'S ABOUT TIME

By Don Gorton



# CREATING AN LGBTQ COMMUNITY

“To a happier year.” Thus EM Forster dedicated his classic novel *Maurice*, a tale of same-sex love with a happily-ever-after ending. It’s safe to say he didn’t know when that year would be. When he began writing the story in 1913-1914, on the eve of World War I, Forster could not conceive of the vast social transformation that would one day make it possible for LGBTQ folks to live and to love openly. The happy ending is confined to the two lovers; there is no suggestion of larger political change that might usher in LGBTQ equality. Forster’s paean to private happiness was so revolutionary that *Maurice* was not published until 1971 – nearly six decades after it was written.



Yet, in Forster’s vision, as well as in the activism of his contemporary, German physician and sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld are early anticipations of world-changing events still unfolding in 2018. The LGBTQ movement was conceived by the intelligentsia. But coalescence of a community was impossible for a people who were totally underground. After the 1895 conviction of playwright Oscar Wilde for “gross indecency” – a category of sex crimes that included consensual male homosexuality – the Anglo-American world doubled down on its belief that “the love that dare not speak its name” was so odious

that it could not be acknowledged to exist. Invisible and silenced, defamed as “deviants,” LGBTQ people were atomized and unconnected.

The series of social changes that has led to marriage equality and beyond began with the first signs of group cohesion. The idea that there were enough LGBTQ people to build a community first stirred Americans during World War II, when the government staged millions in port cities on both coasts. We saw there were others like ourselves, that we weren’t atoms. Some LGBTQ folks stayed on in port cities, such as New York and San Francisco, after the war, and bars catering to this population began to open up – discreetly.

The idea of a gay community and a liberation movement emerged clearly in the 1950s. Men and women organized separately. In 1950, Harry Hay founded the Mattachine Society, named for a medieval French group that staged performances while wearing masks, a symbolic reference to the “masks” worn by the closeted community. A visionary and an intellectual, Hay was a communist party member who had first tried to organize a gay group dubbed “Bachelors for Wallace” to support Progressive Party Presidential candidate Henry Wallace in

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**BEGINNING IN THE 1960S, A NEW,  
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1948. Fellow organizers developed cold feet, however, and Hay refined his plans over the next two years. During the McCarthy years, Hay was forced to leave the Mattachine Society to disassociate it from the communist party; while the organization continued, its membership declined immediately following his departure. The group was at its most active in the 1950s, with local chapters thriving through the 1960s, even after the national organization wound down.

In 1952, ONE, Inc. developed as an offshoot of the Mattachine Society, centered on the publication of the eponymous magazine ONE, which promulgated “The Homosexual Viewpoint.” Here, pioneer Jim Kepner and his fellow organizers saw the need for mass communication, even on a small scale, to knit a nascent community together. In 1954, the Los Angeles Postmaster took exception to the article “Sappho Remembered.” He attacked the magazine, calling ONE “obscene, lewd, lascivious, and filthy,” and refused to deliver it to subscribers. This attempt at censorship led to a *per curiam* decision by the US Supreme Court in *One, Inc. v. Olesen* in 1958. In its first case involving homosexuality, the Court overturned the lower court’s decision labeling ONE as obscenity. ONE won the right to mail its publication around the country.

Reinforcing what farsighted LGBTQ thinkers had already realized, the *Kinsey Reports*, a two-volume set of studies on male and female sexual behavior, respectively, confirmed the prevalence of homosexuality among both sexes. The Kinsey Reports, released in 1948 and 1953, gave rise to the statistic – which US Census Data now show to be overstated – that 10 percent of the population is same-sex attracted. There appeared to be significant numbers of LGBTQ people, if only a way could be found to connect them.

The 1955 founding of the Daughters of Bilitis, by Phyllis Lyon

and Del Martin in San Francisco, engendered the idea of a wider, more inclusive community than seen in the Mattachine Society. The name of the group was a reference to Pierre Louys’ collection of French poetry, *Songs of Bilitis*, about a lover of Sappho. The Daughters of Bilitis created venues in which lesbians could come together in a positive social environment. The Daughters of Bilitis issued a publication entitled *The Ladder*. Like the Mattachine Society before it, the Daughters of Bilitis gave rise to chapters in other cities around the country. While men and women were organizing separately, they would collaborate in the homophile activism of the next decade.

Beginning in the 1960s, a new, more encompassing wave of community organizing appeared in San Francisco. The idea of an emergent community manifested in a number of developments that reached beyond the intelligentsia. In 1961, police harassment of LGBTQ bars in San Francisco prompted openly gay drag performer José Sarria, of the Black Cat Bar, to mount a campaign for City Supervisor. A charismatic figure, Sarria would call on bar patrons at closing time to join hands and sing “God Save Us Nelly Queens” to the tune of “God Save the Queen”. In his run for Supervisor, Sarria placed ninth of over 30 candidates, garnering nearly 6000 votes. Sarria’s run for office was inspired in part by the League for Civil Education, which functioned as an arm of his campaign. Sarria demonstrated that there was a LGBTQ voting bloc, leading San Francisco politicians, including Dianne Feinstein, to begin courting the LGBTQ community.

The Tavern Guild, the first queer business association in the US, was formed by bar owners and employees. The Guild protected the community by providing legal services for customers who were arrested for their patronage. The Guild also held candidates’ nights in



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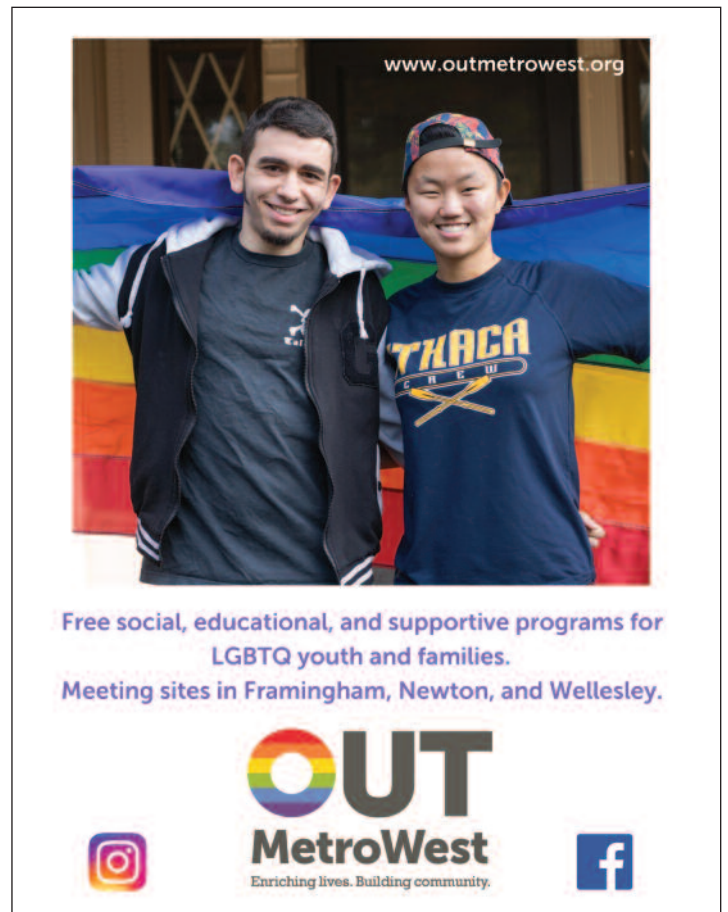
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*edric*



# Little Gay Book

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which office seekers addressed LGBTQ audiences and requested their votes. The Society for Individual Rights (SIR), a frequent partner of the Guild, originated in 1964, with of a mission of publicly affirming LGBTQ identity, abolishing laws against victimless crimes, and building an LGBTQ community. SIR sponsored dances, parties, meditation groups, and arts classes to bring the community together, eventually opening the country's first LGBTQ community center, in San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood.

With more tolerant attitudes developing among liberal Protestants, the Council on Religion and the Homosexual started in 1964 under the leadership of Glide Memorial Church, particularly led by a young minister, Dr. Ted McIlvenna. The first organization of its kind, the Council brought together Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and United Church of Christ congregations. Their objective was to build support for fairer treatment of the LGBTQ community. At one of the Council's first events, a 1965 New Year's ball at California Hall, police shut down the event and arrested organizers.

A group of mostly LGBTQ youth formed Vanguard in the Tenderloin in 1966, under the aegis of Glide. Led by the pseudonymous Jean-Paul Marat, Vanguard protested police harassment and espoused youth self-empowerment, adopting a militant tone in its statements which prefigured the voices of LGBTQ liberation. *V*, a magazine published by the organization, provided youth with a platform for sharing their experiences. Rejecting the slur "queer," as well as the terms commonly used within the community – "homosexual" and "homophile" – Vanguard popularized the use of "gay" to describe their members.

Compton's, a neighborhood cafeteria, was a meeting place for Tenderloin street youth and hustlers. But after the death of the manager, a gay man, the restaurant became less welcoming. The management hired Pinkerton Security guards who harassed LGBTQ and low-income customers. In July 1966, Vanguard picketed Compton's to protest the business's discriminatory practices. The next month, a police officer grabbed a drag queen's arm, prompting her to throw her coffee at him. That act of defiance incited a general melee, with customers hitting, and throwing objects at, the police. The restaurant closed abruptly, as the windows shattered. The police tried to arrest LGBTQ folks as they left the building, but they fought back in unprecedented acts of resistance.

A LGBTQ minority had come together in San Francisco. Yet, when the liberationist ethos spread across the country, it would emanate from the other coast. In the mid-60s, the East Coast Homophile Organizations, an association of LGBTQ groups, commenced the Annual Reminder, a gathering held on the Fourth of July, in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, to draw attention to the reality that not all Americans enjoyed freedom. In New

York City, the Mattachine Society launched inventive actions, such as the Sip-In at Julius' and other venues, during which activists challenged the bar's refusal to serve queers based on a rule prohibiting service to "disorderly" customers. One of these New York activists, Craig Rodwell, would go on to found the country's first LGBTQ book store, the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop.

New York City would end up being the setting for decisive community coalescence with the Stonewall Uprising beginning June 27, 1969. But Stonewall was not a "big bang", bringing a community together out of nothingness. Instead, Stonewall built on inspired community-creating activism going back two decades. What made Stonewall transformative was the widespread community organizing that followed the riots, with the formation of the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance. LGBTQ groups began popping up in cities around the country, including Boston, where the Homophile Coordinating Council, the predecessor of Boston Pride, was founded in 1970. New York City's status as a hub of national media gave its LGBTQ community an unparalleled platform from which to proclaim the message of liberation. The refrain heeded by millions was "come out."

The one-year anniversary of the riots was marked in New York by the first LGBTQ Pride Parade, and in Boston by a series of educational workshops and a celebratory dance. The Pride movement would go on to encircle the earth, with Pride celebrations occurring on every continent – even Antarctica. The LGBTQ liberation movement in the 1970s was altogether much larger, more diverse, and more geographically expansive than its small-scale antecedents. Seemingly in synchronicity, *Maurice* was published in 1971 after Forster's death. The "happier year" that he envisioned was at last visible on the horizon. ●



*A Mississippi native, Don Gorton has been a LGBTQ rights advocate in Massachusetts since his days as a student at Harvard Law School. Don led the Greater Boston Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance in 1988-94; the Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes in 1991-2003; and the Anti-Violence Project of Massachusetts from 1994 to present. He currently co-chairs the Massachusetts Coalition to Ban Conversion Therapy for minors. He was involved in passing the 1989 Lesbian/Gay Civil Rights Law, the 1996 Hate Crimes Penalties Act, anti-bullying legislation in 2010, and trans civil rights legislation in 2011. Don has also served as Clerk of Join the Impact MA and Clerk of the Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide, where he is a contributing writer focusing on history and LGBTQ culture. Gorton is a former tax judge and presently a tax counsel with the Massachusetts Division of Local Services, specializing in municipal finance law.*

# ROOMS WITH A VIEW

## Seeing Victorian-era Boston through Queer Eyes

By Meghan Gelardi Holmes

As you wind your way up the staircase of the Gibson House Museum, you leave behind the public spaces of this elegant Back Bay townhouse and enter the family's private quarters. The third floor was formerly the master bedroom suite – two separate bedrooms linked by a shared bathroom, as was common in wealthy 19th-century homes – of Charles Hammond Gibson, Sr. and Rosamond Warren Gibson, from their marriage in 1871 until Charles' death in 1916.

What used to be Charles Gibson, Sr.'s bedroom is now the Red Study. It's an apt name. The carpet is crimson; the walls and drapes a rust-red. The room is packed tightly with furniture: armchairs – also red – by the small fireplace, a desk, and several tables. Even a sofa is tucked in. In the years following Charles, Sr.'s death, this room became the domain of Charles Hammond Gibson, Jr. Known by his family as "Charlie," he was the second of Charles' and Rosamond's three children, born in 1874. We can learn much about Charlie simply by looking at the objects that fill this brooding, close space: his books on the desk, with several ashtrays nearby; his portable projector on the center table; framed letters from American and British notables, thanking him for his thoughtful words; a memento from the Revolutionary War.

Charlie's story is both at the heart of the Museum – he was, after all, its first curator – and shrouded in some mystery, as his status as a lifelong bachelor provoked some rumor and conjecture over the years.

If there was one thing Charlie would have wanted us to know about him, it was that he was a writer and poet. In 1906, he published *The Spirit of Love and Other Poems*, followed closely by *The Wounded Eros*, a collection of sonnets. Although these are his only published volumes of poetry, he was a prolific writer throughout his life. The Museum's archives are filled with drafts of poetry, travel lectures, odes to various dignitaries, and even song lyrics.

Charlie's writing career started in the 1890s when he was a young man. After a year as an architecture student at MIT, he departed for Europe, as was typical of many men of his social class. During his travels – funded through an allowance sent by his parents – he amassed material for a travelogue, *Two Gentlemen of Touraine*, which

he published in 1899. The book and its companion, *Among French Inns*, were modestly successful.

The specific nature of Charlie's travels seem to have garnered plenty of attention back home, as they were conducted in the company of a self-styled noble with several decades on Charlie. Letters from contemporaries tell us that the arrangement, which included the two men sharing a bed, scandalized Boston society. Although we don't have any of Charlie's own correspondence from that time period, his poetry suggests that he had fallen in love with the Count de Mauny.

When Charlie returned to Boston in 1902, he moved into rented rooms rather than returning home. He did not follow his father into business (Charles, Sr. was a cotton broker), but instead focused his efforts on writing. He also held a handful of volunteer positions, including with the Boston Parks and Recreation Commission. When Charles, Sr. died in 1916, he left more money to his daughters, Mary Ethel and Rosamond, than to Charlie. This was a sore spot for Charlie for the rest of his life. Whether the apparent estrangement between father and son was ultimately due to Charlie's sexuality or just different personalities and priorities, we

cannot know for sure. In fact, it is unlikely that Charlie would have thought about his sexuality as such; the term homosexual was only coined in 1868 and the concept of a fixed definition of gay sexual identity did not gain popularity until well into the 20th century. The life of gay men in Victorian Boston was often lived in the margins.

Despite his fraught family relationships, Charlie was passionate about his family's history. He wanted everyone to know that he descended from an illustrious family with important ties to Boston history. He was particularly proud of their Revolutionary-era connections. One great-uncle, William Dawes, rode with Paul Revere, and another, Dr. Joseph Warren, was considered the hero of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Charlie kept mementos of this history with him throughout his life. The Museum's archives contain a detailed genealogy, prepared by Charlie himself, which traces the Gibson and Hammond families from England through to Charlie's own generation.

**Charlie was part of this rich tradition of women and gay men who preserved many of the historic homes in the United States today.**



Red Study, Gibson House Museum. Credit: John Woolf. Courtesy of the Gibson House Museum.  
 Charles Hammond Gibson, Jr. as a young man. Credit: Unidentified photographer. Courtesy of the Gibson House Museum.



In 1934, at the age of 60, Charlie returned home to 137 Beacon Street to care for his aging mother. She passed away later that year, and Charlie found himself living alone, aside from part-time staff, in his childhood home for the first time in over 20 years.

Boston, including Charlie's beloved Back Bay, was changing rapidly. More and more of his peers were moving out of the city for the suburbs. Charlie remained the model of stiff Victorian manners and gentility. He still spent summers at the family home in Nahant, tending to his rose gardens. He regularly ate dinner at the Ritz-Carlton, walking over in an old raccoon coat and top hat (as the story goes). If the world around him was changing, Charlie seemed to embody the image of an eccentric, a relic of Boston's traditional elite.

In 1936, he took a road trip to Florida, and stopped to visit a cousin in Delaware. This cousin, Henry Francis du Pont, was beginning a project to turn his family's prominent estate into what would later become the Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library, now the nation's premier museum of American decorative arts.

When Charlie returned home, he began the work of preserving 137 Beacon Street. He roped off rooms and composed tours of the entertaining spaces, emphasizing the Chinese export porcelains in the Music Room and the family portraits in the Library. We find his looped handwriting on tags around the house, identifying the original owner of a particular dress or the provenance of a noteworthy piece of furniture. He was deeply aware of the legacy he was creating, and in 1957, only three years after his death, his family home opened to the public as the Gibson House Museum.

It was not uncommon in this period to think of preservation as a tool to record one's family history upon the built environment. Straight women have been leaders in the historic preservation move-

ment since its earliest days, in part because the focus on historic homes seemed a natural extension of the roles and spaces women were traditionally allowed to occupy. Similarly, gay men have played an important role in the movement; historians have posited that this reflects a desire to anchor themselves to their environment and leave a tangible piece of themselves for future generations. Charlie was part of this rich tradition of women and gay men who preserved many of the historic homes in the United States today. As Charlie himself remarked to his lawyer, "I would like to make a prophecy that by the year 2000 a Victorian museum would be a very unique, a very important, institution." ●



*Meghan Gelardi Holmes is a public historian, writer, and museum specialist. She is Curator at the Gibson House in Boston's Back Bay, where she cares for and interprets the Museum's rich collection of Victorian-era artifacts, documents, and photographs. Previously, she was Assistant Curator at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, where she fell in love with cabinets of curiosity and the life of objects. Holmes received a master's degree in Public History from UMASS-Amherst in 2006.*

**In addition to its regular programming, the Gibson House Museum is hosting a special lecture and reception for Pride Week, entitled "A Discreet Society: The World of Charlie Gibson." For ticketing and other information, please visit the Pride Arts page (36).**

# Marching ahead of the Caribbean

**In Suriname, Local LGBTQ People Have Been Organizing a Gay Pride since 2011 to Battle Homophobia in a Multi-ethnic Society**

By Ewout Lamé

Picture this: whitewashed wooden colonial buildings and churches, the occasional mosque, a few Hindu shrines, and Dutch road signs, all surrounded by lush tropical growth. This is Suriname, a small republic north of Brazil. You're forgiven if you've never heard of it. Although located on the South American mainland, it's culturally much closer to the Caribbean. Another atypical thing about Suriname: it is one of the few places in the Caribbean to openly celebrate Gay Pride.

Suriname has just over half a million inhabitants, most of whom live on the Atlantic coast. Pristine tropical rain forest covers large parts of the country. European plantation owners brought in enslaved people from West Africa in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, followed by indentured laborers from China, India, and Indonesia, amongst other places. As a result, Suriname today is an incredibly culturally diverse country, where you can savor localized Asian cuisine with *karwina* and *kaseko*, music with a distinct African feel, blasting from the speakers. In the hinterland, Maroon and Amerindian communities maintain their tribal traditions.

Many Caribbean nations formally outlaw homosexuality; Suriname does not. "Yet within each of Suriname's many ethnic communities and religions there is a sense of taboo towards same-sex relations, exacerbated by the large measure of social control that comes with any small society," explains Faisel Tjon-A-Loi, chairman of the LGBT Federation Suriname, a coalition of local LGBT organizations that has presented Suriname Pride since 2011.

LGBTQ people in Suriname are facing discrimination and rejection. Pentecostal churches loudly proclaim homosexuality to be a sin. In the Asian communities, gay people are forced into arranged marriages. Suriname's already high suicide rate is even more of a

risk to LGBTQ people due to discrimination. Politicians are loath to offend their constituencies by championing gay rights. Suriname maintains close ties with its former colonial overlord, the Netherlands. Yet the LGBTQ emancipation over there is not always helpful; opponents occasionally frame homosexuality as *wan witi man sani*, in the local Creole: "a white man's thing." As recent as 2014, a local dancehall group produced a song calling for gays to be shot in the head, causing a national controversy.

And yet, last October three Amerindian young men wearing tribal headgear and high heels proudly walked at the front of a modest, but jubilant, Pride march through the historic center of



LGBTQ Amerindians lead the 2017 parade through Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname, in traditional cultural attire and heels. Credit: Pride Month Suriname.

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Locals party at the annual Pride Festival. Credit: Ana Bent.



Queer Surinamese people and their allies gather for music and celebration in Paramaribo. Credit: Ana Bent.

Paramaribo, Suriname’s capital. It was the crowning celebration of a month of LGBTQ-related events, ranging from debates about LGBTQ and labor rights to a transgender photo exhibition and an international gay film festival.

Suriname has seen unlikely progress when it comes to gay tolerance. Patrick Liesdek is active in the Gay History and Archives Suriname project. One incident of gaybashing in the 1970s that he unearthed involved an angry mob throwing stones at a house where a private gay party had taken place, causing the owner to flee the country. Gay people were forced to live in the shadows of society for decades.

“But at some point, I was sick and tired of having to go to all these shady places just to have a drink,” says Liesdek. In 2001, he made the bold move of opening Suriname’s first openly gay bar, where a small but growing number of straight allies got a warm welcome, too. “I could have never imagined the success the Suriname Pride would turn out to be,” Liesdek confides. “Back then, I had trouble putting pictures of the bar on my website because the customers didn’t want to be recognized. Now, if the younger generation spots a camera during Suriname Pride, they run towards it!”

Ideas about organizing a Pride event in Suriname had been going around in the community for a while, when in 2011, Ronny Asabina, a member of parliament, declared in public that “gays should be eradicated once and for all.” The statement triggered intense debate in society, and LGBT Federation Suriname decided it was finally time for a public sign of defiance. Suriname Pride was born.

Even leaders within the community had reservations when the first Pride was organized in 2011. The organizers decided on a non-confrontational approach. “The first few Prides focused on projecting a positive image of LGBTQ,” explains LGBT Federation Suriname chairman Tjon-A-Loi. “Outright political demands were

initially eschewed, instead inviting the Surinamese public to apply their ‘live-and-let-live’ mentality to LGBTQ people and same-sex relations.”

After a few years, LGBTQ activists felt emboldened to raise more controversial issues. LGBT Federation Suriname started urging the Surinamese government to develop specific policies for the LGBTQ community. Country visits by the Human Rights Commission of the Organisation of American States (OAS) helped to put the matter on the agenda by bringing more media attention to LGBTQ rights and mandating annual government reports to the commission.

“Suriname Pride not only brought people from the LGBTQ community together, but allowed us to reach out to allies and difficult-to-reach target audiences,” reflects Tjon-A-Loi. “Even though the Surinamese economy is going through tough times, the support of the business community during the 2017 edition was overwhelming.” He says that local enterprises are very committed to promoting equality between straight and LGBTQ employees. Hundreds of businesses flew the rainbow flag from their premises.

For the future, Tjon-A-Loi’s mission is straightforward. “All Surinamese should be able to say, I’m OK, whatever my sexual orientation and gender identity,” he explains. “To me that means being valuable, being accepted as who you are, being allowed to be yourself, and being significant in every stage of your life.” Together with his LGBT Federation Suriname team, he’s committed to making the next Suriname Pride even more instrumental in transforming Surinamese society. ●

**Suriname maintains close ties with its former colonial overlord, the Netherlands. Yet the LGBTQ emancipation over there is not always helpful; opponents occasionally frame homosexuality as *wan witi man sani*, in the local Creole: “a white man’s thing.”**



*Ewout Lamé is a journalist and member of PAREA Association of Gay Professionals Suriname.*



Meet our Homeowners

# In Celebration of Gay Pride, Mary Decremer & Connie Tavanis tell their Seashore Point story.



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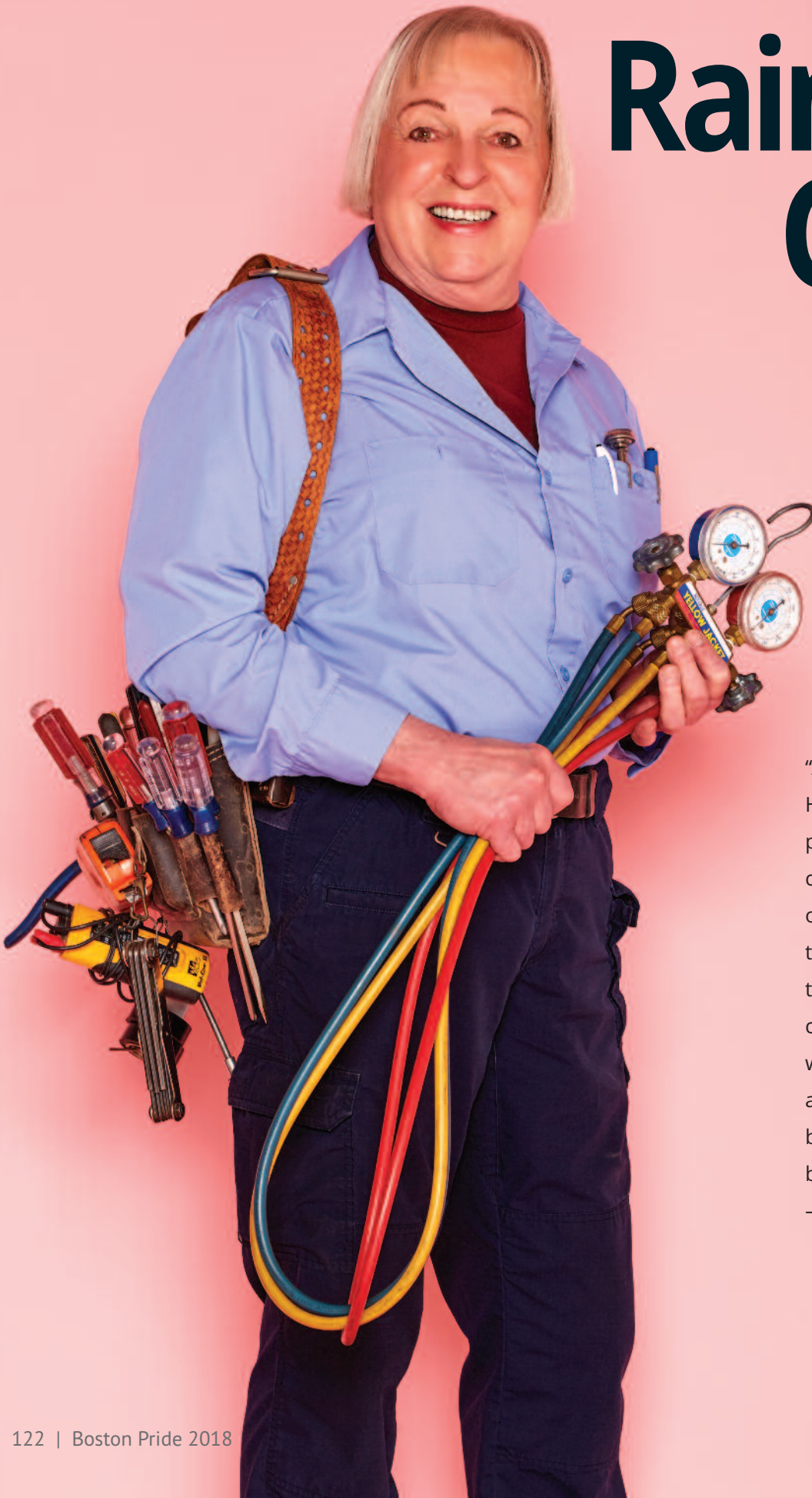
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# The Rainbow Collar



“As a trans woman working in the HVAC/R mechanical trade, my experience is complicated: While I could never reveal my true self on the job, my trade did provide the necessary funds to start my transition. Attitudes continue to change, so I have hope for those who come after me. Trans rights are important! The future is bright; never ever give up on your beliefs.”

— **Jill, 70**

Heating, Ventilation,  
Air Conditioning, and  
Refrigeration Technician

## A Photo-essay Raising the Visibility of Local Queer Workers and Honoring Their Work

Art Direction: Michael Anthony Fowler.

Photography: Joel Benjamin.

Location: Fort Point, Boston.

"I teach because I love to inspire, communicate, collaborate, and empower students through the power of music to think outside the box and beyond their comfort zone. I strive to foster a sense of community, self-love, respect, and open-mindedness. Through performing, I try to embody how to live a life full of music. I love teaching and performing every single day."

— **Keith, 34**

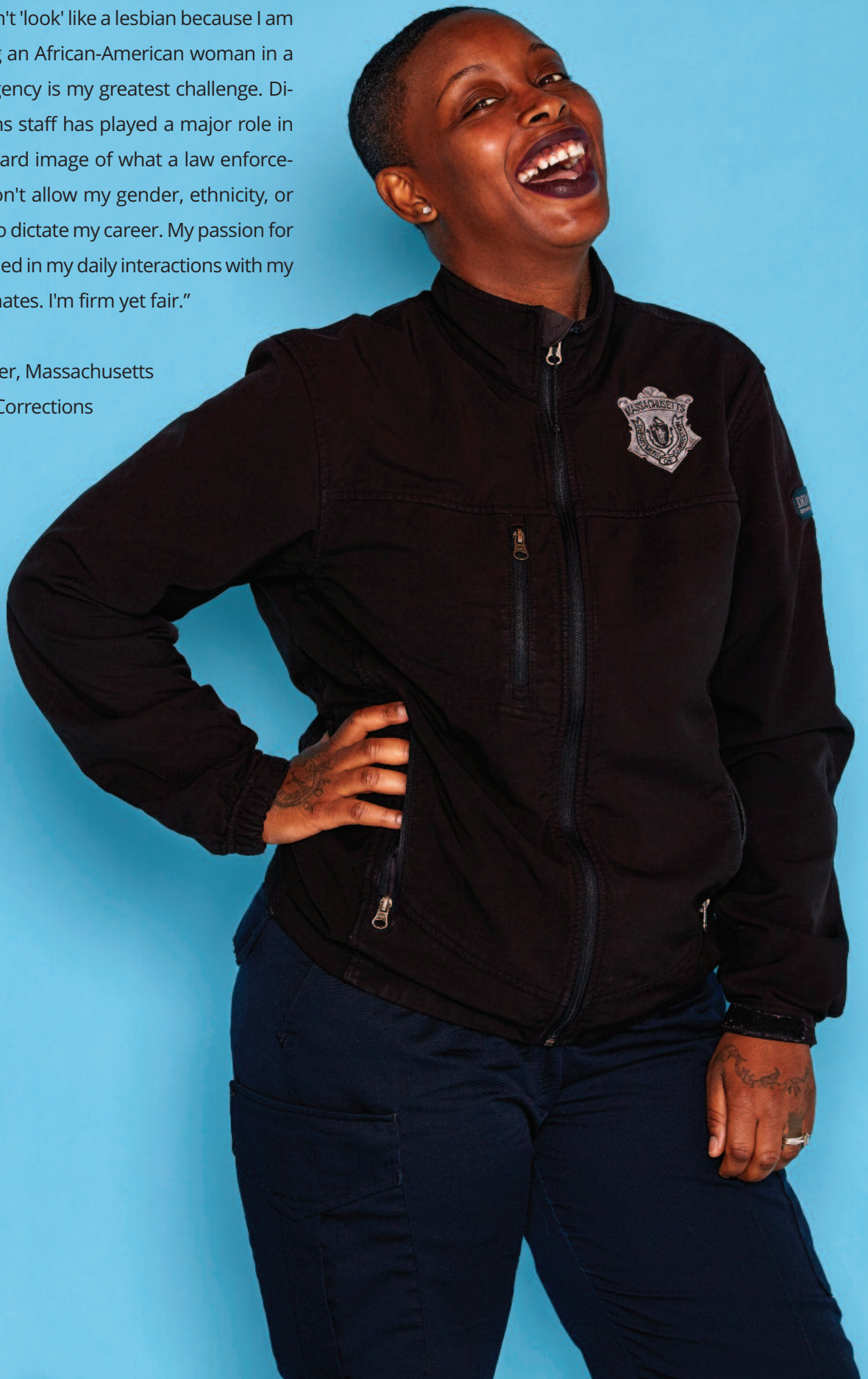
Freelance Violinist/Violist and  
K-8 Strings Teacher



"Being a lesbian in corrections can be a challenge, as I hear often that I don't 'look' like a lesbian because I am feminine. But being an African-American woman in a male-dominated agency is my greatest challenge. Diversity in corrections staff has played a major role in changing the standard image of what a law enforcement officer is. I don't allow my gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation to dictate my career. My passion for this field is exemplified in my daily interactions with my co-workers and inmates. I'm firm yet fair."

— **Lornece, 38**

Recreation Officer, Massachusetts  
Department of Corrections



"2018 marks my 40<sup>th</sup> year in a blue-collar job in rural New England. I am happy to say I've been treated with the utmost respect by both customers and the community (the Take Back Vermont movement notwithstanding). I am also in the fortunate position to have witnessed 40 years of slow but steady growth in LGBTQ acceptance, allowing my own 'defensiveness' to diminish greatly and for me to live openly and unconstrained. As the years go by, my gratitude to those who have gone before and helped pave the way has grown immeasurably. My partner of 10 years (a certain funeral director) and I will be attending our first Pride celebration this June in Boston."

— **Steve, 63**

Owner/Operator, Independent  
Roto-Rooter Sewer/Drain Service





"I get that the cycling industry is seen as a straight boys' club, but it grows tiring being assumed to be straight all the time. It often feels like I'm stuck between worlds, unable to relate to the masculinity of the cycling world, while having little to talk about with my gay friends. When it comes to holding multiple, seemingly incompatible beliefs, I wish to remind people of the words of Walt Whitman: 'Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. I am large. I contain multitudes!'"

— **Nathaniel, 33**

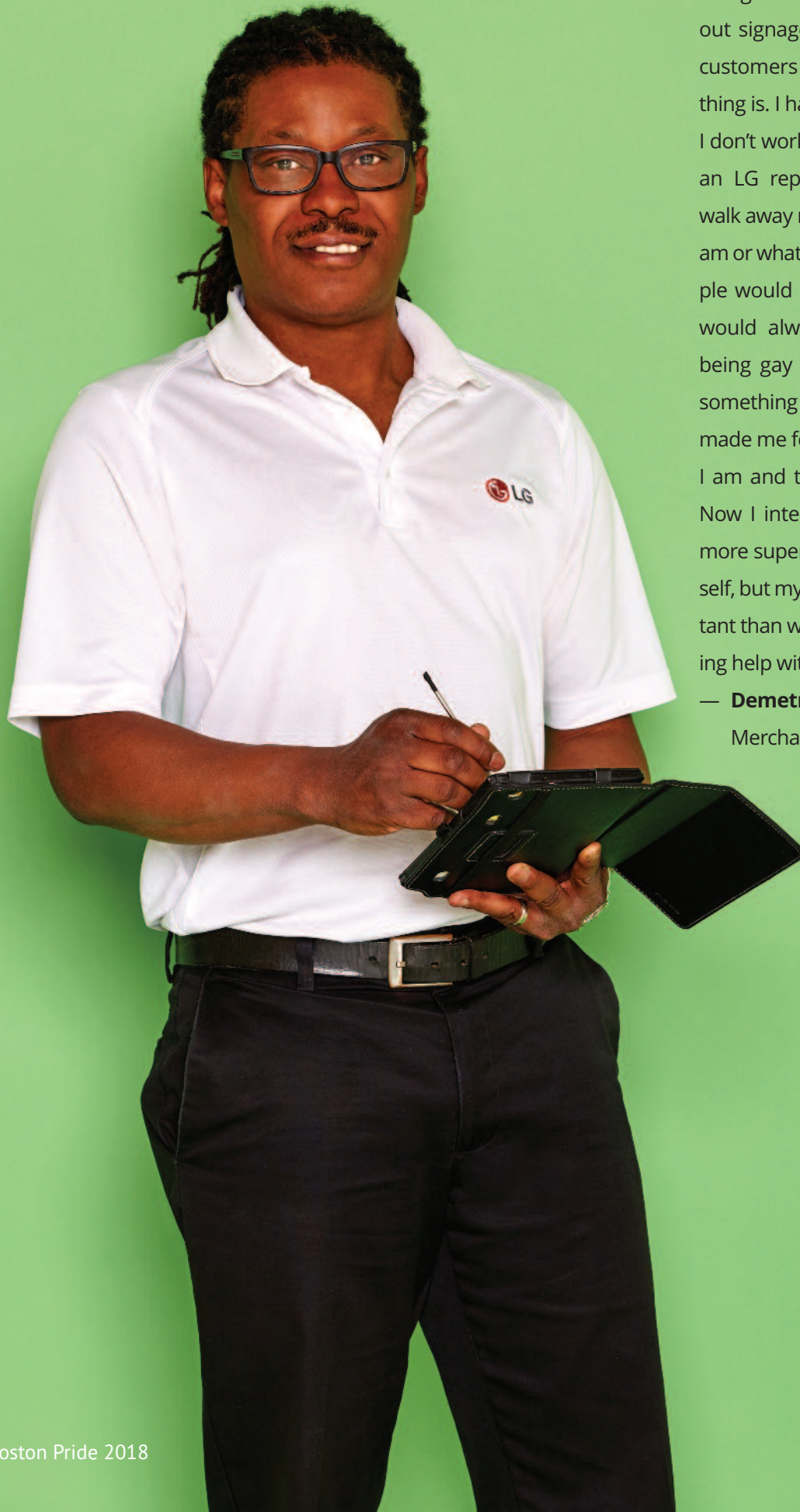
Mechanic, Manager of  
Quad Bikes

"I was raised in a small New England community and attended college in Boston. Although struggling with my true identity and future, I chose to return to my hometown to help manage a local funeral home. At the age of 50, following a difficult experience, I realized to be truly happy I had to be honest with all my friends, including my girlfriend of 21 years (still a cherished friend), and most importantly, myself. Fortunately, my coming out was a positive experience. I was blessed to find my soul mate, a Roto-Rooter man. My occupation regularly reminds me that life is a gift and truly temporary. Be the person you were meant to be."

— **Doug, 60**

Funeral Director





“People don’t always realize what I’m doing in the store. When I’m putting out signage or completing an audit, customers will ask me where something is. I have to explain to them that I don’t work for the store and that I’m an LG representative. They usually walk away not concerned about who I am or what I do. In previous jobs, people would ask me about myself and would always be interested in me being gay and married, as if it was something new they’ve discovered. It made me feel good being true to who I am and telling my story to others. Now I interact with customers on a more superficial level. I’m still my true self, but my identity seems less important than what they’re currently needing help with.”

— **Demetrius, 41**

Merchandising Representative, LG



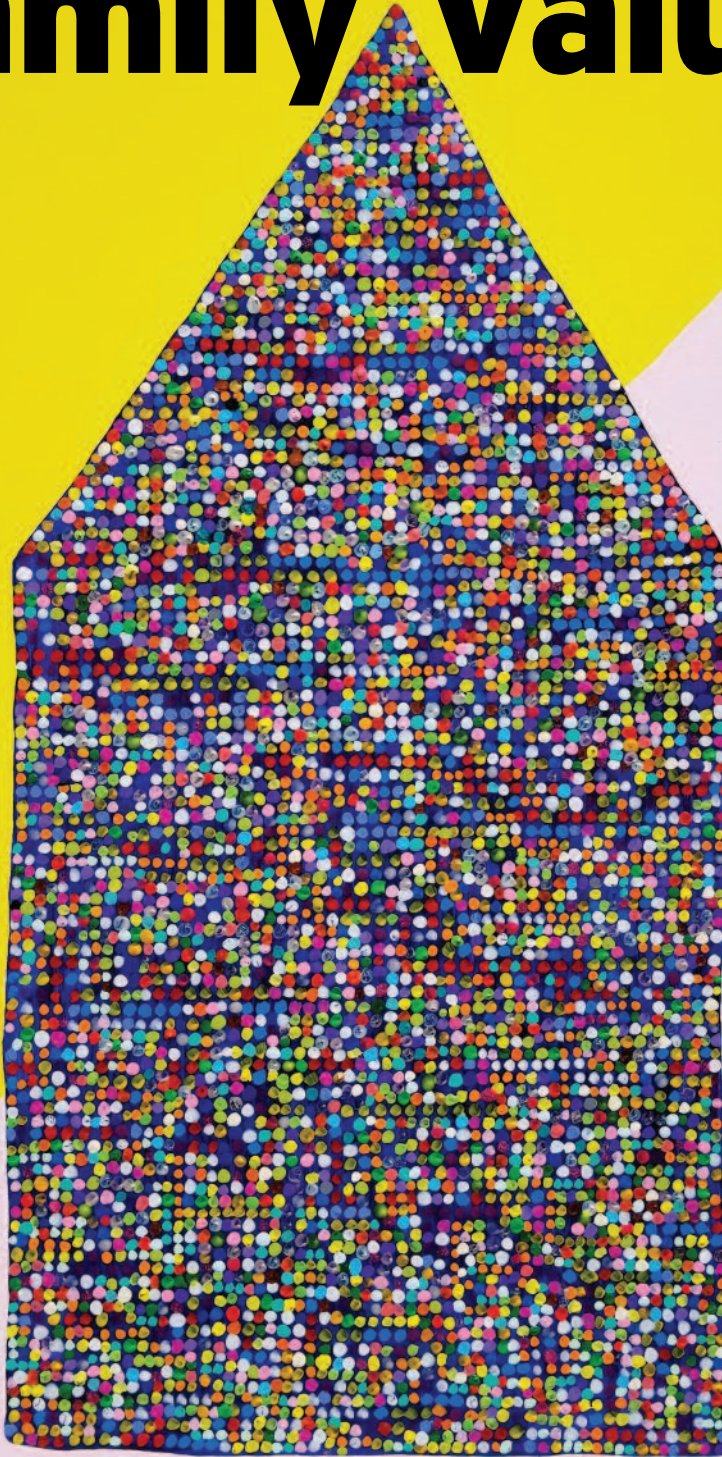


"When most people think of eating disorders and body image, the first place their mind goes is to a cisgender, hetero, white, affluent female. I have been fighting for years to destroy this stereotype. These diseases run rampant in all facets of society, the LGBTQ+ community being especially hard hit. Just as I fought my own 20-year battle, I will continue to fight for equal treatment and representation of my queer siblings."

— **Krista, 48**

Eating Disorders Activist/Advocate

# Community Conversation: Family Values



Art: Songmi Heart, *A Home* (2018).





Second-generation queers, including Emily McGranachan's donor-sibling, Sammy Sass, march in the 2017 Boston Pride Parade. Credit: Marilyn Humphries.

## Raising Our Children Culturally Queer

By Amy Raina

"Mama! Mama! Look!" She holds up a small box with rainbow earrings inside. My two kids have awoken to find a trail of sparkles leading to small gifts left by the Pride fairies. These magical sprites visit us every June, on the eve of the Parade, and leave gay-themed books and treats.

"The Pride fairies left me earrings! Can I pleeeeeease get my ears pierced now?" I feign surprise that the fairies would leave her tiny sterling silver studs from my favorite queer jeweler in town. I ask her the same questions every time she asks to get her ears pierced:

"Do you think you are responsible enough to clean your piercings daily?"

"Yes."

"Why do you want them so badly?"

"Mama, because they just fit with my gender. I like being girly and lots of girls in my class have their ears pierced. A lot of girls like being like their moms too. I want to be femme just like my mom!" She twirls around. She knows this last argument works on me. My toddler sits quietly on the floor under us and flips through the book the fairies left about a girl with two dads.

"Are you doing this just because your friends are doing it?"

"No."

"How do you know?"

*Continued on page 132.*

## Claiming Space as Queerspawn

By Emily McGranachan

This summer marks 10 years since I graduated from high school. That transition out of a familiar setting to college was exciting and scary for me in ways that mirrored those of my peers. But as someone who entered college at a time when there was only one state with marriage equality and several states that still prohibited same-sex couples to adopt, it was also complicated by the fact that I had grown up with lesbian moms.

I was venturing into an unfamiliar environment as an independent person. I was also bonding with people who would have no cause to know about my family. No one was coming over to my house, no parents were going to be at my basketball game, and unless I outed myself as having lesbian moms, there was no way for folks to know. Suddenly away from the people who knew me for years, my parentage was unremarkable, both because this new environment was accepting and because on the outside, that part of my identity was invisible. With my parents no longer such a visible presence in my life, I felt untethered from the LGBTQ world I had been a part of since birth.

All my parents' friends are LGBTQ and none of them had kids, so I was used to being the only person in the room with two moms, while also being most comfortable in a room of forty-plus-year-old lesbians. When I was 13, I went to my first Family Week in Provincetown and for the first time met other

*Continued on page 133.*

## Raising Our Children Culturally Queer (continued)

“Well because I have this one friend that’s boyish, but still a girl, and even she has earrings... but I know I don’t want to be like her. I just want to be girly!”

“Is it okay for boyish girls to wear earrings? Or boys, for that matter?”

“Yes if their parents say it’s okay. And they clean them every day.”

As parents we can never be sure who our children will grow to be. My oldest might end up being a queer femme, a cisgender woman, a heterosexual, bisexual, or something else entirely. It is sure, however, that she and her sibling are being raised culturally queer, with two out parents. So wherever they go in the future, they’ll have a strong sense of their queer family. They’ll know how to understand their own identities, to treat people kindly, to advocate for LGBTQ rights, and to celebrate their queer heritage.

### Letting Them Choose Their Gender

Bringing children up culturally queer is not just about choosing a gender-neutral baby name, or letting our boys play with dresses and our girls play with trucks. It’s about fostering age-appropriate conversation around gender expression and gender fluidity. It’s also about letting them choose their own gender and offering them options beyond the gender binary. And after all that, if they still arrive at being a “girly girl,” as my oldest has, we support them in this gender decision and never belittle their identity as if it’s a passing phase.

In the 1980s, my own mother had my ears pierced when I was two. I was never asked, let alone given the choice, to have any gender expression I wanted. It was just assumed I’d be a girl and present as feminine. While letting our daughter get her ears pierced to celebrate her gender during Pride seems simple, I like to think of it as an act of radical parenting. I’m saying to her: “I see you. I see the gender expressions you are choosing and I know you’ve given it a lot of thought. Let’s celebrate this big decision at Pride this year, because Pride is all about being your true self.”

### Chosen Family

Parenting is perhaps the hardest job because it forces us to sift through our own childhood experiences and to heal what was broken. As queer parents, we may experience great divides from the families we came from because of who we are and who we love. Holidays in particular can be sad and disarming for parents. We find ourselves in the position of deciding which family members get to be in our chil-

dren’s lives and which do not because of their prejudices against us. We may even stop celebrating holidays that bring up these family tensions and work to create our own traditions. Many of us end up finding new families that are more accepting of us.

My two children are growing up with a large extended family. Our stepsiblings and stepparents have become their grandparents, aunts, and uncles, and, in that same way, our queer friends whom we have deemed chosen family have become their godparents, gay aunts, and gay uncles. Sometimes we call this our extended queer family or chosen queer family, and our children are slowly learning the intricacies of it all. I am an auntie to the children of my queer friends, and those nieces and nephews are now queer cousins to my children. I feel honored to watch these children grow up alongside each other. With all the political pushback against us, queer cousins seem extra important right now. As a parent raising children culturally queer, it gives me peace of mind to know they have other kids in their lives who have similar stories and parents. If my children are ever bullied for their family, or their gender identities, they’ll always have their queer cousins who just get it.

**When children are raised culturally queer, they are a part of a movement to redefine family and to dismantle expectations and traditions around reproduction.**

It is a privilege to be queer and to have children. Often queer people have an epic journey to acquire children. There can be huge financial costs, discriminatory health systems, legal processes, emotional labor, and even trauma from sexual assault or corrective sexual assault. Our kids have unique stories about pregnancy, donor sperm, blended families, surrogacy, and adoption, and are growing up with the belief that love makes a family. By hearing their birth stories, adoption stories, and

the stories of their queer cousins, our children learn the complexities around how families are formed and how families stay together.

When children are raised culturally queer, they are a part of a movement to redefine family and to dismantle expectations and traditions surrounding reproduction. To our children, family is not restricted to blood ties, genetics, and/or marriage. Rather, our children grow up knowing that family is about the intentional relationships we create with people who support us. Their parents may not be related to them by blood, but love and care for them just the same. And perhaps the love we queer parents feel for our children is made stronger in the face of adversity and hatred against us.

### Queer Culture

It would be incorrect to assume that there is only one queer culture and only one way to raise a child culturally queer. Queer is a reclaimed word, often used as an umbrella term to describe people and

*Continued on page 134.*

## Claiming Space as Queerspawn (continued)

kids with LGBTQ parents. I was part of a community that understood and celebrated my family and my identity within the LGBTQ community. I heard the term “queerspawn” for the first time and it just clicked. The word was edgy, challenging, and claimed space in the LGBTQ community for people with LGBTQ parents.

I believe there is space for queerspawn beneath the rainbow umbrella that is our community. Just in the past 15 years, I have seen more identities being recognized, discussed, and celebrated as part of the LGBTQ community. We’ve recognized these identities and sexualities as the valid and valuable pieces of the movement that they are – and queerspawn should be next.

At Family Week, I can celebrate my queerspawn identity and feel like a recognized part of the movement. But outside of Family Week, and when I’m not standing with my moms, I know that crucial part of me is invisible to others. Even when I explain my connection to LGBTQ-identified adults, I can be pushed out of the community or misunderstood. For example, while at a drag show in South America, the emcee went around asking people where they were from. I was there with some fellow Americans. The emcee asked us what had brought us to the show – were we LGBTQ or allies? When one member of the group said she was bisexual, she got a big applause. When I enthusiastically chimed in that I have lesbian moms, there were crickets. Her identity was seen as part of the community and mine was not.

As an adult, my feelings around safety and the legal protections for my relationship are strange. Growing up, legal protections were something that other people had – people outside my community. We had to fight for and constantly to defend our right to those protections, which I did often and vocally. The queer culture and discriminatory reality that surrounded me as I grew up are fundamental to who I continue to be as an adult. I always worried for the safety of my family when we were out, even on our street. I was bullied for being out about my family. The first time I saw my parents hold hands or show any public affection was



After years fighting to ensure marriage equality for all, Emily McGranachan’s lesbian moms stand proudly beside her at her wedding.

**With my parents no longer such a visible presence in my life, I felt untethered from the LGBTQ world I had been a part of since birth.**

identity that desperately and unequivocally wanted to be a mother. Thankfully, over time she found out that she could be both. Over the years, as I explored my sexuality and gender identity, I’ve dealt with my own concerns that, by identifying as cis and straight, I would have to accept alienation from a community that is a central part of my identity: a queerspawn member of the LGBTQ community fiercely proud of my big queer family. Growing up with parents who were out and being nurtured within the LGBTQ community, I had the space to consider and to explore my sexual orientation and gender identity. I was not completely insulated from

our heteronormative world; but from birth I knew there were many ways to love and to live a meaningful life. In my experience, as more and more people with LGBTQ parents mature into adulthood, many identify as LGBTQ.

Identity is beautiful and complex and ever-changing. I know women married to women who do not identify as LGBTQ. I know a woman who fell in love with a man for the first time at age 50 who still identifies as lesbian. I’ve come to learn that there is no hard and fast rule for when someone does or does not, can or cannot identify as part of the LGBTQ community. I can only reflect on my own experience and why I feel such a strong connection and identity. It comes from the feeling I had when I

in Provincetown when I was 12. It was unthinkable that they could publically show affection anywhere else. We worried about parental rights and what would happen if someone were injured when we were traveling in a state that didn’t recognize same-sex second-parent adoptions. I grew up during the marriage equality debates in Massachusetts and knew exactly how people saw me and my family. All of that stays with me. My moms identify as part of the LGBTQ community because of who they love, how they live their lives, the battles they have had to fight, and the queer culture they celebrate. All of that describes me, and many other people with LGBTQ parents as well.

When my birth mom came out in the 1970s, she believed that, to be an out lesbian, she had to give up the part of her

*Continued on page 134.*



Amy Raina's self-identified girly girl watches the 2014 Portland Pride Parade with her queer family.

their varying genders and sexual orientations. Intersectionality has taught us that our many interwoven identities such as race, religion, and class affect each other. In essence, queer means to be interconnected, while also being unconventional, unique, odd, and perhaps even extraordinary.

While it varies from family to family, raising our children culturally queer means we have a sense of our own cultural queerness as adults and we raise our children around that awareness. We seek out queer art, literature, music, events, and we include our children in these cultural moments when it's age appropriate and when we have the means to do so. We tell them our coming out stories. We celebrate Pride with them. We teach them about queer history and traditions. We tell them about discrimination and oppression, and teach them to identify their power and privileges. Queer culture is a culture of resistance, rich with stories of resilience. We include our children in this activism and teach them to be advocates and leaders against hate, violence, and bigotry.

We include them in our queer community. Some of us even describe our children as queer, based on their proximity to us, their age, and/or how they like to be talked about. When my seven-year-old asks if she is queer, I tell her that is for her to decide, though she is being raised by two queer parents. When she challenges my definitions and says her friend can't be queer because he has a mom and a dad, I say that is not for us to decide. Children raised culturally queer don't necessarily have two moms or two dads; rather, they have queer adults in their lives teaching them about queer culture. It's usually a brief conversation, because she's still so young; but it's important that she knows her identity is special and her own. It's important that she knows she is an important part of our queer community and is being raised culturally queer. ●



*Amy Raina is a teacher and writer working with The Telling Room, a literary arts education organization in Maine. Raina is a consultant for the National Writers Project, a writer and producer for The Femme Show, and the author of the parenting blog Queer Maine Mama. Raina is a proud parent of two tenacious kiddos and believes that empowering young people with creative tools will quite literally save the planet from destruction. For more stories, visit [amyraina.com](http://amyraina.com).*

## LGBTQ rights are our rights because these are our families, our whole worlds.

met another youth like me when I was 13 – of finally being safe, seen, heard, and no longer alone. It comes from the burning need to defend myself and my family when attacked or discriminated against, whether in my day-to-day life or via policy. It comes from talking openly with my moms about the crushes I had on boys or girls, starting at age five. And though I hope it happens less and less for kids today, it comes from censoring myself for fear of how others will react to learning about my family, and having to defend their right to be themselves and my right to exist. For me, the term that best fits where I see myself within the LGBTQ community is queerspawn.

Allies to our families, the community, and the movement are important and have a long history. Allies have unique power, privileges, and a place in the fight for lived and legal equality. But the term is already outside the community I often hear. "LGBTQ and allies." While I love the allies in my life, I don't feel like an ally. I'm not an additional supporter outside of the acronym. There are millions of people being raised by LGBTQ parents in the US. I believe there is a space and identity for us within our families and the movement.

LGBTQ rights are our rights because these are our families, our whole worlds. I advocate for LGBTQ rights and claim my part in the movement not as an ally, but as part of a new generation of active members in the important work we do together. People with LGBTQ parents have existed as long as LGBTQ people have existed. We continue to stand with our families and to celebrate our unique place in the movement. ●



*Emily McGranachan is Director of Family Engagement with Family Equality Council, a national organization whose mission is to ensure the legal and lived equality for LGBTQ families and for those who wish to form them, through building community, changing hearts and minds, and driving policy change. She grew up in Massachusetts with lesbian moms and has been advocating for LGBTQ families for as long as she can remember.*




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# Harvey, Brandon, and Matthew

**Pop Music, the  
Queer Community,  
and a History of  
Violence**

By Kevin C. Schattenkirk



Art: Melissa Joseph, *Matthew Shepard. Pilot Peak and Snowy View Roads, Laramie WY* (2017).



I first heard Tori Amos' song "Merman" at her September 11, 1998 concert at Key Arena in Seattle. Amos composed "Merman," a trademark piano and voice ballad, in tribute to her husband: "go to bed, dream instead, and you will find him; he's a merman to the knee, doesn't need something you're not willing to give, he's a merman, doesn't need your voice to cross his land of ice." Little did anyone know that only a month later, the meaning of the song would profoundly change. On the evening of October 6, 1998, openly gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard met Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson – two young men who pretended to be gay in order to lure Shepard from the now-defunct Fireside Lounge. The three men drank beer and played pool until McKinney and Henderson offered Shepard a ride home, but instead drove him to a remote area outside of town. McKinney and Henderson tied Shepard to a fence, beat him, pistol-whipped him, and left him to die. Shepard died five days later, on October 11, from blunt force trauma to the head.

As Amos continued to tour the country and to engage with fans, she found that "Merman" had taken on a whole new meaning for her audience. In 1999, Amos explained to *Attitude Magazine*, "when I was touring last year and Matthew Shepard got murdered I was dedicating it to him. A lot of guys were asking me to sing it for him and it just kinda took a life on of its own." In the years since, on occasion, Amos has prefaced performances of "Merman" with the Shepard story. "Merman" was among the first musical responses to one of the most horrific tragedies in recent queer history, and other musicians would follow suit.

Pop musicians have a long history of using queer identity and sexuality as a subversive trope, especially heterosexual and cisgender artists and bands. But pop music has also celebrated the full integration of queer people in society – and, more importantly, the full recognition of queer humanity. Many queer-identifying artists would target their anger at a heteronormative society, where a kid like Shepard could be murdered for being gay. Melissa Etheridge's "Scarecrow" directly draws from the murder – the image of Shepard's body resembling a scarecrow tied to a fence – to question how heteronormative rhetoric encourages heterosexism. Elton John's "American Triangle" underscores the influence of such rhetoric on those perpetrators: "God hates fags where we come from." Amy Ray's "Laramie" specifically calls out the anti-queer rhetoric of political and religious leaders who publicly disclaim culpability for influencing violent acts by perpetrators like McKinney and Russell. Furthermore, Ray's piece also suggests that tragedies like the Shepard murder are symptomatic of a larger problem in the US: acts of anti-queer violence also take place in urban, metropolitan locales.

In the same period that these and many other Shepard-related songs emerged, Eminem's use of homophobic epithets in his music



Art: Laura Bianco, *Brandon Teena, 1972-1993* (2017).

stirred up controversy and widespread dialogue about their implications: Are words *only* words, or can they influence acts of violence? If conservative anti-queer rhetoric influences acts of violence, then what about the same rhetoric coming from the mouths of liberal, urban, and self-proclaimed gay-friendly artists? Where Eminem has disavowed the use of racial slurs because of the histories of pain, violence, and oppression from which they derive, he has repeatedly justified use of homophobic and transphobic slurs – all while repeatedly claiming he has no problem with queer people. As recently as 2014, Eminem defended his use of slurs in "Rap God" as if anti-queer rhetoric and the history of pain, violence, and oppression to which it is tied is somehow lesser. In what appears to be a response to Eminem, hip-hop duo Non Prophets draw a line in the sand with their 2003 song "That Ain't Right": "I attended candlelight vigils for Matthew Shepard while you put out another 'fuck you, faggot' record, that ain't right."

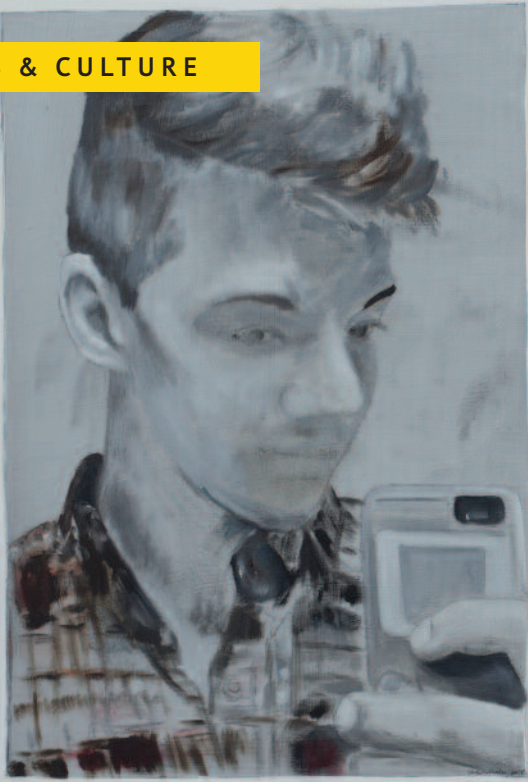
This year marks not only the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death, but also the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brandon Teena's murder,



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Art: Bruno Krauchthaler, *Leelah Alcorn* (2015).

and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Harvey Milk's assassination. Teena's murder, dramatized in the 1999 film *Boys Don't Cry*, was one of the most horrific acts of transphobic violence in US history. On December 31, 1993, Teena was shot and killed in Humboldt, Nebraska after his murderers discovered he was assigned female at birth. Teena was commemorated by the Pet Shop Boys in their 2006 song "Girls Don't Cry." Eight years later, Canadian punk band JPNSGRLS wrote about Teena in "Brandon." While there is much music about both Shepard and Teena, Milk's legacy has largely been commemorated in film. However, the Dead Kennedys covered "I Fought the Law" in 1987, rewriting some of the lyrics to suggest Dan White got away with the premeditated murder of Harvey Milk.

Of course, in the time between these tragedies in our community's history, far too many of us have been subjected to anti-queer violence. Some of us have survived, and some have not. It is also significant to remember that anti-queer violence is not limited to physical attacks, but also psychological assaults on queer people, one of many factors that lead to depression, acts of self-harm, and suicide. In 2010, in response to this epidemic brought to national attention by Tyler Clementi, an 18-year-old gay student at Rutgers University who committed suicide after his peers bullied and publicly outed him, punk band Rise Against released "September's Children (Make it Stop)." Simultaneously, Seattle-based advice columnist Dan Savage and his husband Terry Miller founded the *It Gets Better* video campaign to provide a platform for queer people to record their stories to give hope to younger generations. The gay choral world has recently addressed this phenomenon with "Testimony" by Stephen Schwartz, which draws its lyrics directly from videos in *It Gets Better*, and *Tyler's Suite*, commissioned by the San Francisco Gay Man's Chorus. And in 2015, Ray Toro (former guitarist for My Chemical Romance) released "For the Lost and Brave," a song about the suicide of 17-year-old trans girl Leelah Alcorn. In the contexts of pop culture, the gay choral move-

ment, and contemporary Western art music, a rich body of songs and multi-movement works address the impact of heteronormativity on acts of anti-queer violence.

In examining the ways in which musical aesthetics address the concerns of the queer community, a big question always emerges: Does protest music really have a larger impact on society, or does it merely preach to the converted? Regardless, what this music *does* do is reflect the stories of queer people, the stories that make up our community's history with oppression and violence. This music provides comfort and solace, while also marking the ways in which society has and hasn't changed. The continued creation of such music functions as a measure of just how much history repeats itself. Fatal acts of violence against gay, lesbian, and bisexual members of our community still happen, and there has been a recent rise in fatal acts of violence against trans members of our community, especially trans women of color. And we still face epidemic suicide among queer-identifying youth.

In his work, Milk always advocated for living out and openly, insisting that society would change by our willingness to be incessantly present. Composers, songwriters, and performers should continue to address heteronormativity, cultural homophobia, and anti-queer violence. Such musical works allow queerness to be present in the lives of the audience, even those who don't have actual queer people in their circles, and draw attention to the violent, and often fatal, impact of heteronormativity on queer people. ●



*Kevin Schattenkirk is an ethnomusicologist and music historian whose work focuses on music about heteronormativity and anti-queer violence in the performative contexts of pop and choral music. He recently completed his PhD in Ethnomusicology at the University of Western Australia.*

## Further Listening

“Movin’ On” by Black Kali Ma (2000) – Featuring Gary Floyd of the legendary punk band The Dicks, this mid-tempo, grungy track addresses not only the murder of Matthew Shepard, but also that of James Byrd Jr., a heterosexual, African-American man dragged to his death behind a truck by white supremacists in Texas.

“Jesus is on the Wire” by Boston folk singer/songwriter Thea Hopkins (2001), also recorded by Peter, Paul and Mary (2004) – The book of Matthew (specifically “that which ye have done unto the least of my brethren, ye have also done unto me”) serves as the basis for commentary on politically and religiously conservative ways of thinking about queer people after Shepard’s death.

“And Sadness Will Sear” by Trivium (2006) – Metal isn’t exactly a genre that has been historically sympathetic to the concerns of queer people, but here Trivium lays blame for the Shepard murder at the feet of conservative politicians and religious leaders – those who absolve themselves of any responsibility for how their rhetoric might influence acts of anti-queer violence.

*I Am Harvey Milk* by Andrew Lipa (2013) – This twelve-movement oratorio, commissioned and premiered by the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, commemorates Milk’s life and work as a politician and activist. The seventh movement, “Sticks and Stones,” boldly addresses the relationship between oppressive rhetoric and violence.

“The Secret Seven” by Owen Pallett (2014) – Described by the artist as an alternate message to *It Gets Better*, the lyrics attempt to connect with an at-risk queer person like Tyler Clementi, suggesting that life doesn’t necessarily get “better” as much as we get better at contending with the heteronormative hurdles of day-to-day existence.

## Additional Viewing

“Poster Child” by A Balladeer (2008) – This Dutch band’s song is already moving, but the music video makes profound sense of US cultural conditions that led to the Shepard murder. Use of Shepard’s likeness, related imagery, and quotes from all over the political and religious spectrum indicts large swathes of American culture as perpetrators of this tragedy.

“Take Me to Church” by Hozier (2014) – The song itself is a positive affirmation of same-sex relationships, but the video tackles the issue of anti-queer violence with a direct and disturbing storyline, in which a group of men viciously assault a gay man as his boyfriend watches helplessly in the distance.

“The Greatest” by Sia featuring Kendrick Lamar (2016) – The video honors the 49 people who died in the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016.

“1-800-273-8255” by Logic featuring Alessia Cara and Khalid (2017) – The Hollywood-heavy video featuring Don Cheadle, Matthew Modine, and Nolan Gould follows an African-American protagonist from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood, contending with his sexuality, his family’s acceptance, and contemplations of suicide.



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Spencer Pride volunteers show off their pride at a volunteer appreciation event after the 2017 Spencer Pride Festival. Credit: Spencer Pride.

# Projecting a Rural Rainbow

## How Spencer Pride Helped Transform Its Rural Hoosier Community

By Jonathan A. Balash

Spencer, Indiana – located in a red county in a red state, on the cusp of the Bible Belt – has a population under 3,000 people. Historically, the town has not been known as a welcoming place for minorities. As recently as the mid-1980s, Ku Klux Klan members could be seen collecting donations at downtown intersections. Yet, for the past decade, Spencer Pride has been operating and thriving in this conservative community. We have accomplished this through a strategic approach within the community and among our dedicated volunteers. We recognize that we live in a place where it seems that everyone knows everything about each other, yet are often very indirect in the way they communicate concerns. This is not a place where picketing and riots are effective. These methods are seen as foreign intrusions into the local way of life. Spencer Pride, therefore, has to employ alternative methods to provoke progress. We build relationships, educate, and work through our differences by engaging with one another in a respectful manner. From the outside, this could look

like a very passive form of resistance. In reality, it's the most effective way to cultivate real change in our community.

### A Brief History of Spencer Pride

Spencer Pride began as an offshoot of the local PFLAG chapter. We held our first Pride Festival in 2007, to increase public engagement with issues relevant to the LGBTQ+ community. While there was low attendance at the first event (72 people, to be exact), we considered it a success. The following year, the Festival was relocated to the lawn of the county courthouse. Over the years, the event has grown into a full-fledged summer festival and the second most attended event in downtown Spencer. Over the past two years, however, we have become much more widely known for establishing the Spencer Pride community center. The September 2016 opening of the center made Spencer, Indiana the smallest community in the United States with a dedicated LGBTQ+ center.

## Engaging the Community


In a small town like Spencer, influence is gained not by the number of Twitter followers one has, but by the number of relationships built. Relationships take time, yet are an investment well worth making. It is a lot harder to be perceived as “those people” when our volunteers are clearly visible in the community as neighbors, coworkers, participants in civic organizations, and members of families.

Some of our relationships have been built organically. Others were established in a more strategic fashion: For example, whenever new organizations emerge in our community, we intentionally infuse them with Spencer Pride volunteers. This gives us both direct insight into what is happening in the community, and greater influence on what is going on. This is important in a small, conservative town where individuals are not outspoken and public with their concerns. If we did not have volunteer presence within these organizations with an “ear to the ground,” we would be unaware of brewing concerns or opportunities to improve Spencer Pride’s reputation or work within the community.

When problems arise, our volunteers engage directly to work through concerns and forge a path together. When county commissioners complained about how we had removed gender distinctions from the restrooms at our 2017 Festival, we raced to the commissioners’ meeting to speak with officials before the meeting ended. We spoke to the commissioners about the need to have comfortable, safe restrooms for our attendees, specifically those who identify as transgender and nonbinary. We also reminded them about the positive influence that Spencer Pride has had on the town, both in establishing a welcoming reputation as well as in the economic impact of our events. The original concern was addressed and the commissioners formally granted us permission to un-gender the restrooms at the following year’s event, as well.

A few years ago, elders from a local church which had participated in the Festival raised concerns about elements of our event that they felt were controversial. The drag show and presence of a leather vendor in our marketplace were a few of the items that had raised eyebrows among their leadership. Consequently, the church decided not to participate as a vendor again. This would have meant the loss of a local faith-based organization in our Festival marketplace. Since local participation in our events helps bring legitimacy to our work, we could not let the church slip away. Once the issues were raised, our volunteers met with church elders within days to talk through them. While they did not always understand our reasoning, they came to respect that we were very conscientious in how we were managing the event, ensuring that it was family-friendly. We pointed out that it was important that they attend to ensure they were there for the people who needed them. Although I am an atheist, which I confessed to them, I wanted them to understand the importance of having welcoming faith communities present at the Festival. We were not only able to convince the church to return as a vendor, but they also decided to become a sponsor.

These examples reflect a common situation for Spencer Pride: A problem arises, our passionate volunteers engage directly to address it, and the outcome is more than just resolution of the original problem; it ends up being turned into an *advantage* for the organization. When the problem stems from a concern raised by an individual or group, we reach out to better understand the basis of that



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The Spencer Pride Festival has grown significantly over the years. The Festival encompasses all four sides of the courthouse lawn and two blocks of the street. Credit: Spencer Pride.

concern. We feel that in order for others to respect us and be willing to hear our position, we need first to understand theirs. This has proven effective over the years.

### Improving the Community

Spencer Pride's mission is to make Indiana a more welcoming place for all people. While we focus on issues pertinent to the LGBTQ+ community, our strategic goals are broader, including investing in improvements within our local community. By making our town and county better, they become a more appealing place to visit and live, thereby injecting the community with open-minded individuals who will also benefit our local economy.

Our Pride sponsors local events, donates items for local silent auctions and raffles, makes financial contributions to other organizations, and dispatches our own volunteers to support a variety of other groups. This support, whether through financial sponsorship or donation of volunteer time, makes Spencer Pride an asset to the community at large. This helps to ensure the longevity and influence of our own LGBTQ+ focused work and mission.

The most significant single investment within the community has been the purchase and transformation of a large, historic building for the Spencer Pride commUnity center. The commUnity center is one of the largest structures in the heart of Spencer, encompassing nearly 10,000 square feet directly on the courthouse square. This dramatic downtown presence has significantly increased visibility of our work. It has also given us the ability to offer even more direct services to the community.

### Building a Community within Spencer Pride

Spencer Pride is 100-percent volunteer-fueled and has recently experienced a five-fold increase in our volunteers due to heightened visibility brought on by the purchase of the commUnity center, alongside a decade's worth of notable local events.

Spencer Pride has a rather unique strategy to keep our volunteers engaged. We recognize that volunteers who choose to spend their time with us do so because they want to make the world a better place, not necessarily because they only care about LGBTQ+ issues. We encourage our volunteers to support other organizations and we coordinate regular volunteer activities for other groups. It is this open relationship with our volunteers that gives the organization its heart.

### Taking Thoughtful Risks

Operating in a small, conservative area does not make our organization less vocal in pursuit of our mission. Spencer Pride volunteers do not avoid controversy, but we do not intentionally seek it, either.

Last year, the windows of the commUnity center featured apparel from the Condom Fashion Show, a fundraiser at Indiana University Bloomington. The outfits were made entirely of condoms and were prominently displayed. The presence of so many tools of family planning in a community, whose public schools are permitted to teach abstinence only, evoked strong emotions among some local citizens. We spoke with many of the individuals with concerns, most of which were centered around the idea that talking about safer sexual practices was not our mission or that such things should not be so publicly displayed. We explained how the HIV epidemic in the 1980s was made worse because many people did not want to acknowledge it. As a result, the crisis raged out of control. We will not be silent in regard to the health and safety of people in our community, regardless of how they identify. Ignoring safer sexual practices would be doing just that. We maintained the displays regardless of the concerns. The latex creations had inspired many productive conversations at the center about how to improve education about STI prevention. For us, the displays had served an important purpose.

Another example of Spencer Pride's "spine" can be seen at our annual Pride Festival, where a now-famous drag show concludes the

**Spencer Pride volunteers do not avoid controversy, but we do not intentionally seek it, either.**



Bloomington BEAT, a youth-based performing arts group, performs at the 2016 Spencer Pride Festival. Credit: Spencer Pride.

family-focused event. We recognized early on that, while drag does not represent the entire LGBTQ+ community, it is still *a part* of the community and its history. Excluding drag from the event would, therefore, not be an honest representation of the LGBTQ+ community. We did not want to hide in a proverbial closet. Instead, we chose to promote the show prominently. We have also provided education to the community about the important role that drag has played in LGBTQ+ history. Festival attendees, many of whom had never seen a drag queen before, have welcomed the drag show year after year.

Individuals who have had the opportunity to see Spencer Pride at work know just how strategic – but bold – we are in pursuit of our mission.

### Our Results

Through direct engagement, investment, and a worthy mission, Spencer Pride has earned the respect of our community and has made a profound impact over the past decade.

The notable building that houses the Spencer Pride community center had most recently been home to a notoriously anti-LGBTQ+ church. What had been a place that promoted hate and intolerance of our people now welcomes *all people* to step into its doors, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The small Hoosier town of Spencer, much like its LGBTQ+ center now under renovation, has begun a great transformation. Spencer Pride’s volunteers are a big part of that change and we plan to continue our work until our mission is complete. We will keep talking with our detractors and those who do not yet understand our value within the community. We will continue to educate them and to learn from them so that we can, together, cultivate a community of compassion and understanding for all people. ●



*Jonathan Balash (he/him/his) is one of the founders of Spencer Pride, Inc., and currently serves as its President. Jonathan was born and raised in Indiana. He graduated from Indiana University Bloomington with a bachelor’s degree in Biology and currently works as a manager for Catalent Biologics. Jonathan lives in Spencer with his husband, Jacob, and their five-year-old son, Truman.*

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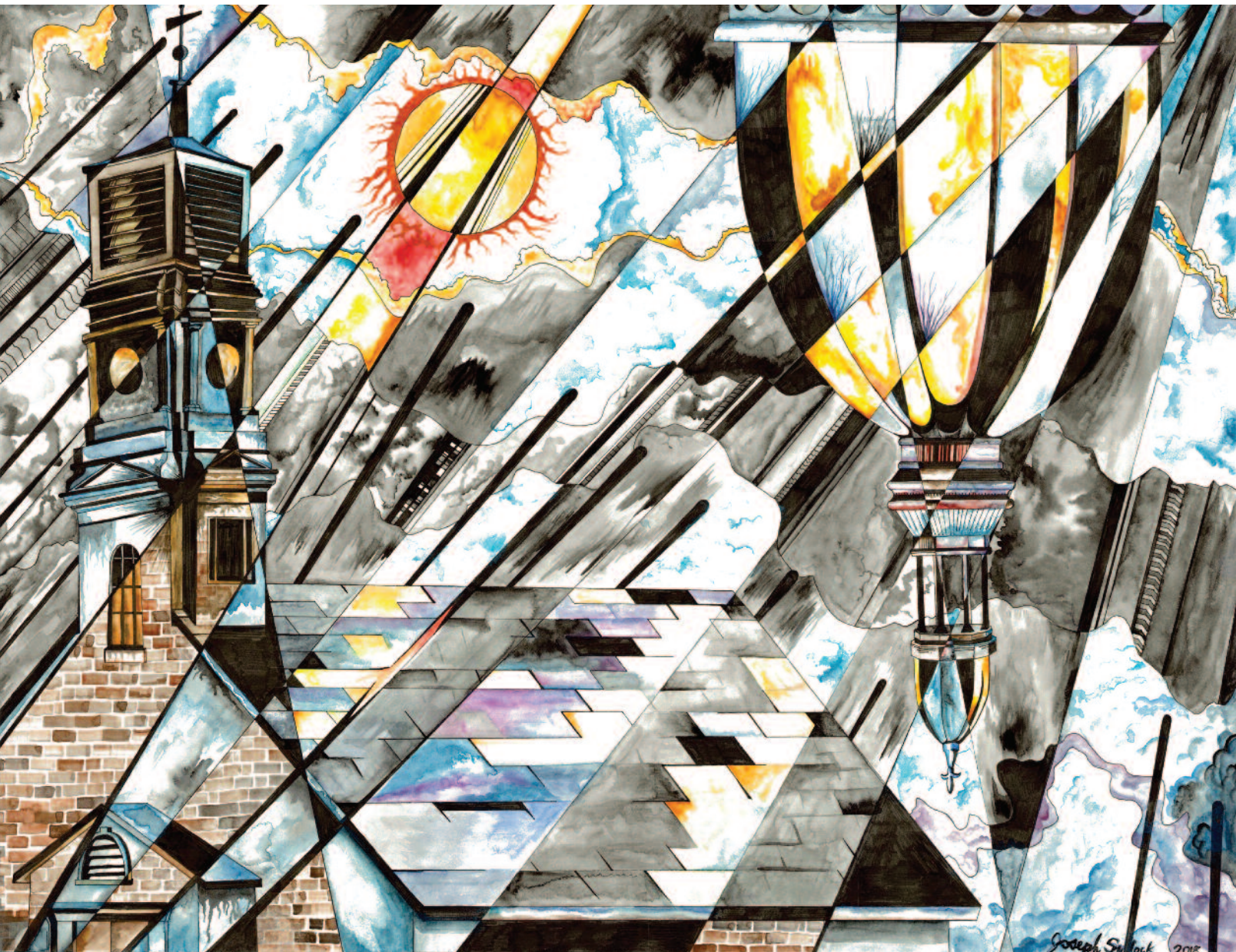
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# *(Religious)* Freedom for All?

Doing Harm with “Moral” Objections to LGBT Health Care

By Danielle Varney, MPAS, PA-C



Art: Joseph Sulock, *Church and State* (2018).



The most recent Harris Poll by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), *Accelerating Acceptance*, has shown a rise in anti-LGBT sentiment in the US. This is the first time since launching the poll four years prior that GLAAD did not see an increase in people's comfort with LGBT people.

Religious freedom is often used to cloak hate-filled agendas. The LGBT community is all too familiar with religion being used to bolster hatred. Like the heat escaping from the holes in a crocheted blanket, bigotry seeps out from under the religious vestments of the right wing. No matter the issue, LGBT people seem to be a common denominator, and often end up as collateral damage. We have been denied cake, a place to urinate, and even a chance to house parentless children. Within the healthcare community, providers have refused hormone replacement therapy for gender dysphoria, withheld medically necessary hysterectomies, and denied standard infertility treatment by infertility specialists based on patients' LGBT status. The current administration has just given more protections to those who might be "morally" opposed to providing health care services to certain populations.

Earlier this year, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) created the Office for Conscience and Religious Freedom (OCR), which has several mandates. First, it protects conscience objections – refusals to perform an act based on conscience – and the free exercise of religion. Second, it proscribes coercion on issues such as abortion and assisted suicide. Finally, the OCR prohibits HHS-funded or conducted programs and activities from engaging in discrimination against providers who refuse to participate in medical procedures which are against their moral beliefs. In theory, this sounds acceptable; but as vague as the wording is in the new mandates, it will allow providers to push their own beliefs on others. Our most vulnerable patients will be the ones who suffer most.

Religious and conscience objections within health care are not new. Federal statutes regarding religious freedom and conscience objections have existed since 1973, when Congress passed the Church Amendments in response to the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. These statutes were designed to protect health care providers' religious or moral objections to providing abortion care. Over the past 40 years, the Church Amendments remain primarily unchanged and unchallenged. The Affordable Care Act added additional protections for healthcare providers relating to abortion and assisted suicide. These laws are already in existence, so why the new OCR?

In the decades since the enactment of the Church Amendments, the culture of medicine has gradually changed. Since the 2008 election and more recently the Affordable Care Act, there has been an implicit push to provide appropriate medical care for all people, regardless of the providers' personal opinions or religious beliefs. While providers have long followed the tenet of "do no harm," an effective provider must not only avoid harm, but also actively help. One way to do this is to help patients be more comfortable with themselves, since studies show that LGBT people suffer most when they remain closeted. This subtle shift in providers' philosophies and the public's expectations has been towards "meeting patients where they're at," which has changed the landscape of medicine.

Healthcare providers began being held accountable for refusing to see, treat, or refer patients who requested care that conflicted with the providers' moral or religious beliefs. For the past ten years, the prevailing thought was that people who were against prescribing birth



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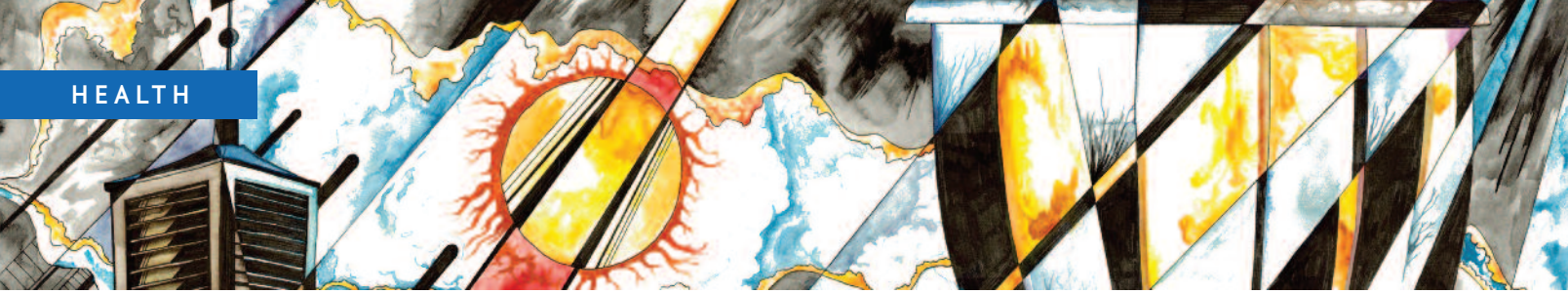
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control shouldn't enter the field of gynecology. This mentality continued unchallenged by the government until November 2016, when it came to the attention of the new administration that healthcare providers had been disciplined by their institutions and, in some cases, lost their jobs.

What does this mean for the LGBT community? Maybe nothing, maybe everything. Up to this point, laws protecting religious freedom and conscience objections have revolved around abortion and assisted suicide, procedures that stir strong emotions on both sides of the aisle. Religious and conscience objections allow medical providers to refuse treatment based on a specific act, such as abortion, but not on the identity of the person seeking assistance. However, a 2016 court decision held that gender identity is not a protected class. This places transgender patients in a vulnerable position, opening the door to discrimination.

While the country has become more receptive towards LGBT people, it wasn't long ago that medical literature supported the use of electroconvulsive therapy to cure homosexuality, and less extreme versions of conversion therapy are still in use today. LGBT people regularly experience healthcare discrimination. A 2010 Lambda Legal report revealed that one in two LGB people and 70 percent of transgender individuals experienced discrimination, ranging from health care workers being physically or verbally abusive to outright refusing treatment. In fact, nearly eight percent of LGB individuals were refused healthcare as a result of their sexual orientation. The statistics were bleaker for transgender people, as one in four reported being denied essential healthcare services.

On the other hand, we've seen progress regarding recognition that our identities are not mental illnesses. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* has removed homosexuality from its pages and reclassified gender identity disorder as gender dysphoria. Medical schools have increasingly been adding LGBT-specific training to their curricula. And medical associations have largely supported gender-affirming treatments, such as hormone replacement therapy and surgery, for transgender individuals.

It's not clear whether the growing acceptance of LGBT people within the medical community will endure in the era of the OCR. The OCR attempts to undermine a lot of the progress we have achieved through the Affordable Care Act, including meaningful use of Electronic Medical Records to collect sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) information, as well as creation of specific funding sources available for LGBT research. These funding sources are drying up and SOGI information is being removed from government sites. The HHS website states, "OCR enforces laws and regulations that protect conscience and prohibit coercion on issues such as abortion and assisted suicide (among others)." What are the other issues?

**It's not clear whether the growing acceptance of LGBT people within the medical community will endure in the era of the OCR.**

LGBT organizations and their peers are concerned that any marginalized patient population could become an "other." They are concerned about patients' rights, and the impact that these laws and regulations could have on patients' health. Transgender patients, who are historically vulnerable in the healthcare context, could have providers refuse to prescribe hormone therapies.

In a big city like Boston or New York, refusal of care or services isn't an insurmountable obstacle; but in rural areas of the country there are fewer providers, and physical distance between providers is great. This can place an undue burden on these patients, making it difficult, or even impossible, for them to access medically necessary treatment. While hormones or hysterectomies are considered medically necessary treatment, they are not considered emergency treatment. The Emergency Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA)

requires anyone coming to an emergency department to be stabilized and treated, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay, but would do little to assist members of the LGBT community unless they were in danger of dying. While there are some people who have a genuine issue of conscience, the creation of the OCR allows bigoted providers to hide behind claims of religious freedom and deny care to LGBT patients.

I call on you, as a member or ally of the LGBT community, to be active. If you are a healthcare provider and you are comfortable caring

for the members of our community, register yourself on the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association's OUT list. If you see another healthcare provider exercising their religious freedom rights to the detriment of a patient, intervene. If you are a patient, seek care from providers who are known to be LGBT-friendly. Be vigilant in emergency rooms and on vacations in localities with fewer LGBT protections, and lead by example. If you are refused care or told that you may not receive the services requested, you can file a report against the hospital. One way to do this is through use of a patient advocate: a provider, employed by the hospital, to ensure that patients' needs are met. You can also file a complaint with a local LGBT rights organization. Do not stand for religious freedom discrimination. Do not allow those who choose to hide behind religious or "moral" ideals to get the better hand. ●



*Danielle Varney is a Physician Assistant (PA) who practices clinically in Cardiothoracic Surgery in New York City, where she lives with her wonderful wife and three rambunctious boys. Danielle serves as Assistant Professor and Clinical Coordinator in Touro College's Manhattan PA Program. Prior to becoming a PA, she spent several years as a sexuality educator and public health adviser. She is a firm believer that Prosecco makes everything better.*



# Transgender Rights at Risk in Massachusetts

## Voters Will Be Asked on November Ballot Whether to Continue Protecting Transgender Neighbors from Discrimination

By Mason Dunn and Kasey Suffredini

Our state's reputation at the forefront of the LGBTQ equality movement has a distinguished place in history, but faces a serious threat this year. This November, voters in Massachusetts will be presented with a ballot question regarding whether to uphold our state's existing transgender nondiscrimination law. A "yes" vote will protect the law from repeal and solidify Massachusetts as a state that values inclusiveness and acceptance.

The passage of the law in 2016 was historic, even by Massachusetts standards. It took nearly a decade to update our laws to explicitly protect transgender people from discrimination in public places such as restaurants, shops, medical offices, and, yes, public restrooms and locker rooms. We celebrated as Governor Charlie Baker signed the legislation into law, knowing that finally our friends, co-workers, and neighbors who are transgender, and both of us, could finally live our lives with the same dignity and respect everyone else expects. Whether going to the mall, attending a movie, or visiting a hospital, transgender people were finally afforded the same basic protections everyone else enjoys.

It didn't take long after the passage of the law for opponents of transgender rights to strike, gathering the low threshold of signatures necessary to place the law on the November 2018 ballot for repeal, placing Massachusetts at the epicenter of the transgender rights movement in America.

Repealing this law would not only have a disastrous impact on our friends and neighbors who are transgender here in Massachusetts, but would give opponents of transgender equality traction in their attempt to roll back protections across the nation. The ballot question here this November will be the first statewide ballot question on transgender protections in American history. The stakes are as high as they come.

Transgender people, including the thousands of young people who identify as transgender, deserve to live and grow up in a state that affirms who they are, and that goes to the lengths necessary to protect them from discrimination. With so much divisiveness in our national politics, it has become increasingly clear that our state laws are the first, and at times only, line of defense for the LGBTQ community.

We know we cannot take a win for granted this November. Our



Credit: Courtesy of Freedom for All Massachusetts.

opponents attempt to evoke fear in voters through misinformation and misleading narratives; and, the truth is, for those who don't know a transgender person, their message can be effective. The good news is we have a plan to bring the truth to voters. The facts are clear: 18 states and more than 250 cities across the nation – including Boston, Salem, and Worcester – have established transgender nondiscrimination ordinances or laws, and there has been no uptick in public safety incidents. These laws do not make our communities any less safe.

Our coalition includes the state's law enforcement associations, safety advocacy groups, more than 250 businesses, 350 clergy and congregations, 11 labor unions representing more than 750,000 families, and every major professional sports team in New England.

Now is the time to mobilize. Our coalition is executing a robust campaign to provide voters with the critical information they need to make the right choice on election day. Will you join us in this movement to uphold transgender rights?

Our campaign – Freedom for All Massachusetts – is powered by volunteers who work with us to reach voters on the phone and at their doorstep. This is how we will win, reaching one voter at a time. Learn more by visiting us at [www.FreedomMA.org](http://www.FreedomMA.org) and help us make history again here in Massachusetts. We also have resources available on our website to help people in their discussions with friends, family, and co-workers. Every conversation helps.

The time volunteers dedicate to this effort is essential to solidifying Massachusetts' place at the forefront of LGBTQ equality. ●



*Mason Dunn is Co-chair of Freedom for All Massachusetts and Executive Director of the Mass Trans Political Coalition, a nonprofit advocacy group working to end discrimination on the basis of gender identity.*

*Credit: Hurley Event Photography.*



*Kasey Suffredini is Co-chair of Freedom for All Massachusetts and President of Strategy for Freedom for All Americans.*

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# COUNTRY ROADS

## A Gay Appalachian's Search for the Place He Belongs

By Andrew Price

There's a joke in West Virginia, my home state. The joke tells of a man traveling through every state, at each stop finding a golden phone with a sign advertising "Direct calls to Heaven: \$1,000,000." When he arrives in the hills of West Virginia, however, he can't seem to find the familiar phone with the familiar sign. Asking a local woman, the traveler is directed to an unassuming payphone along the street, where he finds a weathered sign advertising "Direct calls to Heaven: 99 cents." Shocked, he implores the local woman to tell him why it is so cheap. She laughs and explains, "It's a local call."

I must speculate that the local woman was not standing there with her wife, nor did she appear to be gender nonconforming. While West Virginia can be "Almost Heaven," it depends on the lens through which you look. It is a beautiful state: a beacon for outdoorsy folks, its borders brimming with Appalachian pride. However, the state presents a bind for us queer folks. As with broader Appalachian culture – prideful and nostalgic, while simultaneously riddled with injustice and inequality – queer identity in a rural state is marked by contradictions. In the same breath, you want to love your state and decry its ingrained bigotry. You want to stay nestled in its beautiful mountains, while simultaneously clawing your way out. You feel pride while acknowledging the dirt under your nails.

I grew up in Southern West Virginia in a breezy town seated in the valleys at the foot of East River Mountain. At the height of the coal era, the town was akin to a small New York; now it has become

a worn-out shell of its former self. It's a testament to a town – and state – devoted to a single, sooty industry; the slow downhill journey of the coal industry took coal country with it. Still, this is not my only home in the state. I have lived in three different parts of West Virginia. I hail from the holler in the South, received a bachelor's degree in the steep hills of the Northern Panhandle, and finished my education with a master's degree earned on the banks of the Potomac in the Eastern Panhandle. Living in these vastly different areas taught me about the state, Appalachia, and being queer. The story in each region is familiar but not the same.

Today, having left West Virginia, I work at a large university in neighboring Virginia. My queer siblings, misled by stereotypes of my state, often ask what it was like growing up gay in West Virginia. I've struggled to answer this complex question of identity and culture, often unsuccessfully.

I grew up surrounded by working-class families. I didn't realize it at the time, but my hometown was notably diverse in identity and thought. I remember seeing visibly diverse communities and spaces. Numerous religions were practiced

in the various churches and mosques in the area. Nonetheless, open-mindedness was chilly at best – especially around gender diversity and sexuality. Growing up, everyone learned the roles they played and acted accordingly, especially young men. Manufacturing communities mirror their industry – reproduction – so individuality was not often praised. Long hair was for girls, not boys. Men wore specific clothes

**As with broader Appalachian culture – prideful and nostalgic, while simultaneously riddled with injustice and inequality – queer identity in a rural state is marked by contradictions.**



Art: Christian Demaria, *Behind WV Steel* (2005).

and had to “be a man.” Public school was an incubator for such social conditioning; any deviation from the norms represented by our parents, community, and the media was grounds for rampant harassment and, less often, physical bullying. I was the first in my gym class to express disinterest in playing football. While other young men followed my lead and shared their preference for playing other sports during class, I was the one called “fag” for this transgression. The bind of masculinity in a working-class town is at best stifling and at worst deadly, permanently oppressive.

Moving up north, I found a different culture in the Ohio Valley. While still very much Appalachian, the dried-up steel industry left a layer of rust, not coal dust, on every surface. This area, while as working-class as my hometown, was far more homogeneous. No one seemed to acknowledge this or mind much. White privilege was in

full swing. During my teacher training, it was difficult to learn about educating diverse classrooms while my classroom observation sites were anything but. Nevertheless, this place was where I first learned to be comfortable with my gayness, which I had buried away for a long time. Once I was employed on campus, I found my coming out process being celebrated by those around me, not demeaned. Entering into the field of higher education student affairs, I found an oasis of acceptance from the professionals who employed me. During trainings and in other work spaces, I was able to be openly and unapologetically queer. While my coming out was commodified by some, it was nonetheless liberating and wild and joyous and weird. Despite this, I remained deeply in the closet with my family and hometown friends, a difficult reality that continues today.

I found my true self during my coming out. However, it hap-

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pened far from home and was easy to compartmentalize. My college friends, college classes, and college problems did not cross the 300 miles to back home. It was simply intoxicating for me to be out and proud in a safe college space while still maintaining the status quo in my rural home. To this day, I am still not out to my family – a tragic and shameful reality for me. While life has changed vastly since my coming out at 18, the separation of my worlds has not. I still keep college friends and home separate. I still keep my job and home separate. I still keep my boyfriend and home separate. The normalcy that develops in keeping a secret is complicated and I find myself in the thick of it. Mired in my own juggling of pride and the closet, I have made this my normal.

Growing up, gayness was characterized as a sin. RuPaul's talk show was spat at. I remember being told that Elton John had great music, sure, but we still could not fully like him since he was gay. For these reasons, I fear a full emergence from my closet. Despite my stable career and living situation, I somehow still fear coming out at home and to my family as much as I did when I was a 16-year-old realizing I wanted to see two boys kissing in the movies. Still, I maintain a love for home and all the folks associated with it. While I feel this restriction around my queerness, I credit home with instilling in me the strength to get through the shittiest of times. West Virginia gave me grit.

Completing my tour of West Virginia, I went to school in the Eastern Panhandle to become a student affairs professional. Having reflected, I believe that since my college campus provided the space where I first accepted myself, I fashioned a career path to ensure I could stick around. For the first time, I was a mere car ride from Washington, DC, Baltimore, and the majority of Northern Virginia; the proximity jarred and scandalized me. With ease, I could access clubs, venues, and businesses that focused on queer bodies. Going to a gay club for the first time blew my mind. Similarly, seeing Lady Gaga perform live afforded me the chance to feel the weight of a stadium full of love and acceptance. My identity as an Appalachian also became clearer to me during this time. I found myself being able to be relentlessly queer in a hippy town that had deep Appalachian roots. Still, I recognized that this freedom was limited to the small town where the University was situated and larger cities. Traveling a few miles in any direction within West Virginia's borders led to towns and rural areas similar to my hometown.

Throughout my time in West Virginia, I saw resistance. I think Appalachians maintain a healthy skepticism of systems and governments, local and otherwise. We often prefer to handle conflicts internally rather than relying upon outsider policies and procedures. This informs the relentless perseverance of LGBTQ+ folks in my home state. During high school, I discovered the Human Rights Campaign, a beacon of hope for a teenager just discovering he likes boys. In what felt like an indescribable act of daring, I called the HRC

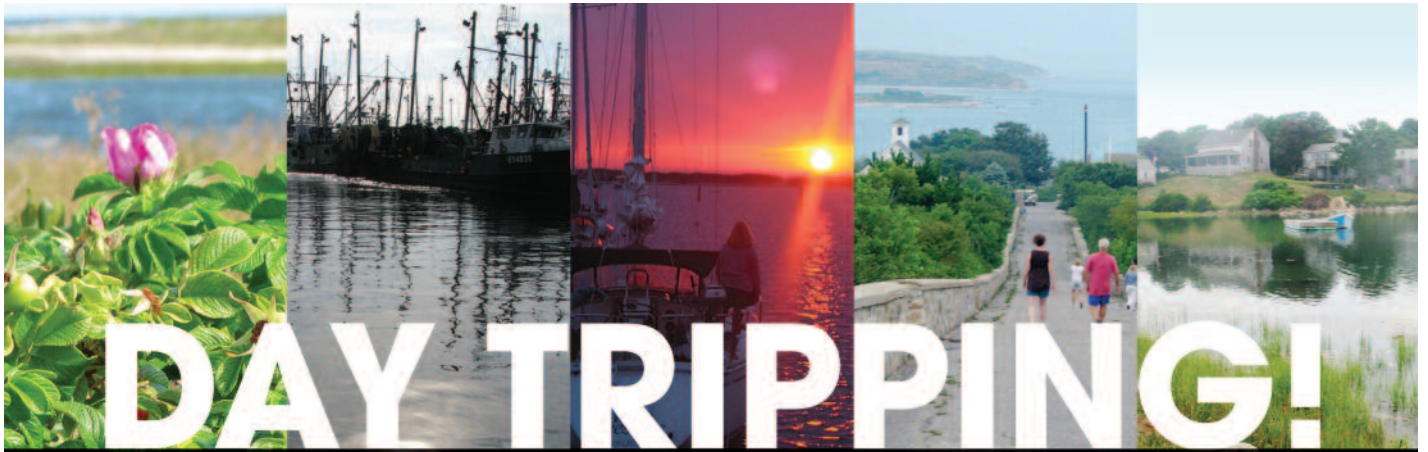
and asked how I could get connected in West Virginia. I was guided to Fairness West Virginia, an organization that still has my heart. Through their work, I found folks like me, navigating Appalachian, working-class, first generation, and queer identities. This organization's tireless work is just as relevant and important today. The current political climate has made a heavy impact on West Virginia. The presidency of Donald Trump and the upsurge in far-right ideology rooted in, and falsely associating itself with, the interests of working-class, rural communities have been enormously harmful. This has set West Virginia back in terms of being a welcoming state for queer folks – not that the state was ever exceedingly welcoming. The current government benefits from treating politics as a football game: people choose their favorite team, to which they maintain feverous devotion, while queer individuals end up losing. Conservative ideologies work to restrict and undo queer progress. This politics-as-sports resonates deeply in impoverished and rural areas of Appalachia, which usually prefer entertainment and the thrill of winning over grander principles.

Personally, I keep my advocacy within my sphere of influence. My upbringing taught me that it was important to help your community, particularly your home. Within the spaces I manage, I engage students in tough conversations around inclusion work, while recognizing that my journey is not yet complete. I bring visibility to queer identities and address situations where I feel heteronormativity is bolstered. I reject conventions of gender and professionalism that embrace classism and heteronormativity. When someone appears outside those conventions, I fiercely support and come into community with them. Nevertheless, there are times and spaces – certain meetings as an entry-level professional or when I am back in my hometown – where I feel unsafe or fear repercussions for such transgressions. As with my queer Appalachian identity, I must constantly navigate a double bind.

I still don't quite know how to answer the question of what it means to be gay in West Virginia. Maybe this question isn't answerable; we each have a journey, and mine consists of innumerable shades of gray, impacted by my areas of privilege and areas of disadvantage. Regardless, I firmly believe I am lucky to call West Virginia my home. While plenty of Appalachia is disparaging, it has always been home to the outcasts. I am a son of the mountains and I know now that my work is to make Appalachia a home for all. ●

*Andrew Price is a native West Virginian now living and working in Southwest Virginia. Andrew holds degrees in English Education and College Student Development. Currently working at a university, Andrew loves the energy and identity development of college-aged adults. Having experienced the coming out process in college, Andrew aims to help others with the same. He firmly believes everyone should unapologetically be their weird, perfect, authentic selves.*





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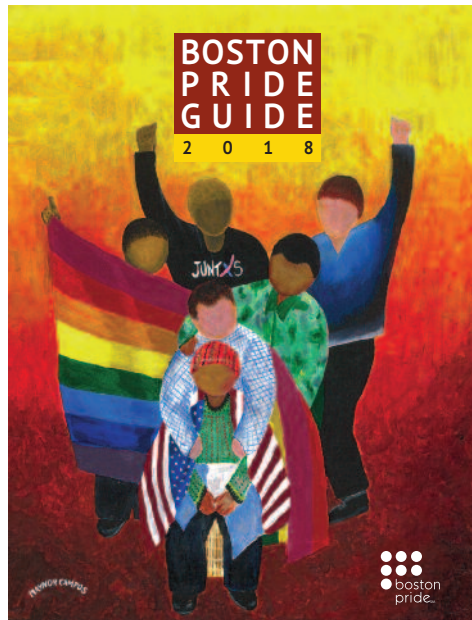
# Cover Story

## The Meaning Behind This Year's Pride Guide Cover Art

By Maynor Campos

The cover of every issue of the *Boston Pride Guide* features works of art created by members of Greater Boston's vibrant community of queer and ally artists. I was delighted and honored to be asked to illustrate this year's cover. In what follows is a discussion of the meaning behind the painting I made. It is a highly personal response to the editors' request for an image whose style and content embodied this year's Pride theme of *Rainbow Resistance* as it related particularly to the intersection between LGBTQ rights and the highly charged social and political issue of immigration.

The seated person in the foreground of the piece represents me, an immigrant who came to the United States looking for a better life. I came here from Guatemala, where being gay was not accepted when I lived there. Even now it can be a hostile environment for LGBTQ people. The American flag draped over my shoulders represents the freedom that I, as many others, sought when I immigrated to the US. However, I did not realize until I arrived that there is much discrimination that exists. I turned to the friends and community I made in my new home for strength and support, and their support helped me become the person I am now. Among this affirming community I also found my husband, who always has my back and supports me in every way that



behind the design is personal, I imagine that it resonates with the experiences of many in our community – especially those of fellow queer immigrants.

Thus, the embrace of the two individuals in the foreground can represent not only my loving relationship with my husband, but the way in which members of the LGBTQ community care for one another and encourage togetherness.

The individual wearing green is actually dressed in camouflage, a direct reference to recent efforts to ban transgender people from

he can; he is represented as the person in blue standing and hugging me from behind.

I acknowledge that we would not have been able to marry had the LGBTQ community not fought a long battle for equality.

The overarching theme of this piece is togetherness, because there is strength in numbers and progress cannot be achieved without the support and cooperation of a diverse many. This diversity and plurality is represented by the six individuals in the piece: one from every continent, meant to reflect all races, ethnicities, and genders united in a common cause. The lack of precise facial features permits viewers to see themselves as well as others in these figures. The cover therefore functions on both the specific and the general level: while the story

**The cover therefore functions on both the specific and the general level: while the story behind the design is personal, I imagine that it resonates with the experiences of many in our community – especially those of fellow queer immigrants.**

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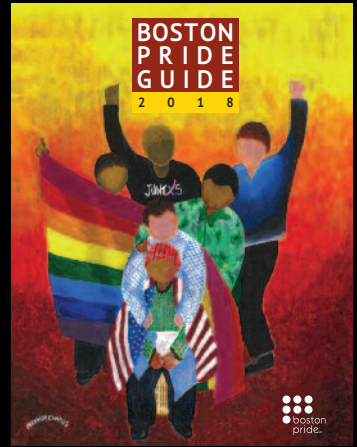
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Realizing the cover: the artist's creative process. Credit: Maynor Campos.

servicing in the military. The inclusion of this person is meant to remind us of the various fronts on which we must continue to resist policies that reinforce discrimination, and to acknowledge the numerous contributions to society made by our community, despite the adversity we face.

The people standing in the background are dressed in darker, more serious colors and raise their fists in a gesture of resistance to discrimination. One of these figures also proudly unfurls the rainbow flag, which for 40 years now has served as an international emblem of the LGBTQ community. It is under this banner that the Boston Pride community will march on June 9 in a demonstration of *Rainbow Resistance*. The red, orange, and yellow which envelopes the central group of figures evokes fire, an elemental symbol of our community's outrage, passion, and strength, which we channel into intersectional resistance.

The figure in the rear center of the piece is wearing a shirt that says JUNTXS. In Spanish, this term means "together." The use of the X in the place of the vowels O and A reflects a growing trend in the Hispanic/Latinx LGBTQ community to be more inclusive of all gender identities, including those which are nonbinary. Spanish nouns and adjectives traditionally conform to only one of two genders (male/female) and descriptions of mixed-gender groups conventionally default to the masculine form. The adoption of the X is therefore meant to convey a fully inclusive sense of togetherness. I chose the word "together" to express my solidarity with all other LGBTQ immigrants in the country. And I rendered this word in

Spanish, as it is my native language and Latinxs are one of – yet not the only – population that is currently being targeted by the immigration policies and practices of the current administration.

The blue, pink, white paint used to write JUNTXS is a nod specifically to the trans and gender nonconforming community, against whose rights several laws have been passed in recent years. The black-and-white combination on the JUNTXS shirt is also intended to be a nod to the Black Lives Matter movement. This is for two related reasons. First, any group facing persecution today can and should be able to find strength and solidarity with other groups facing struggles. Again, there is strength in numbers. Second, LGBTQ people of color face statistically disproportionate levels of discrimination and are more prone to disparities in health. In keeping with the overarching theme of togetherness, the cover embraces the ethic of intersectional activism, since an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us. ●



*Having immigrated from Guatemala, Maynor Campos has called the Boston area home since 1999. While in Guatemala, he attended the National Art School in Guatemala City and also worked as an art teacher. His art is inspired by the colors, traditions, and culture of his native country. More recently, however, his art has been informed by contemporary events, including the ongoing debate around, and struggle for, immigrant rights in the United States. He and his husband currently divide their time between Boston and Southern Maine.*

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# Progress through Pride

The House of Assembly and Supreme Court of Bermuda.  
Credit: Iain Read.

## A Gay Bermudian's Journey from Boston Pride to the Supreme Court of Bermuda

By Roderick Ferguson

Sometimes I get so swept up in the excitement of Gay Pride that I end up doing things I wouldn't normally do. Like event planning. Or filing a lawsuit to challenge the law in Bermuda that repealed the right for same-sex couples to marry. I'm pretty sure one year I even flirted with a cute guy. What can I say? I get carried away!

I swear this is all connected, somehow. Let's start with the event planning, since that was the most disastrous and rewarding.

I joined the organizing committee of Boston Pride in 2003 because I wanted to help make Pride happen. Actually, I wanted to make friends and feel like I was helping, but I didn't want any responsibility. I agreed to co-chair their smallest event at the time, Pride Day @ Faneuil Hall, because I have trouble saying no. That should be fine, I thought. I'll provide moral support while the other person does the work. Then my co-chair bailed, and I was left solely in charge of organizing the event. Uh-oh!

You must understand that I am supremely incapable of event planning. I'd rather do yoga with tarantulas than pick up the phone and call someone I've never met before. For the record, yoga is the

scariest part of that scenario, presuming the tarantulas are heavily sedated. Even with the guidance and handholding of people on the Committee who'd done the job before me, I was more stressed about this event than the people in charge of the Parade. I think I have rainbow balloon trauma. Pride Day @ Faneuil Hall went off without a hitch, and I white-knuckled my way through planning it the following year. Then the gods showed mercy, and I was able to switch to something in my comfort zone: managing Boston Pride's website.

Why would I put myself through such an excruciating experience? The answer lies in my excruciating childhood. Cue the music for the dark part of this Lifetime movie. When I was 12, we had a creative writing assignment in which one of my classmates wrote about an "opposite world" where I was the coolest kid in school. He was right. That was the opposite of the world I lived in. I didn't understand why the kids at school were so cruel to me, but I accepted early on that no matter what I did, I couldn't change how they viewed me. I would never be one of the cool kids.

I was born and raised in Bermuda before I left the island in 1997

to attend MIT. Growing up as a closeted gay kid in Bermuda, I learned that being gay was the worst thing you could possibly be. I don't think it was ever said explicitly. Somehow, I just knew. Nobody discussed gay people, but gay slurs were certainly in common usage. I didn't know of anyone who was openly gay in Bermuda or elsewhere. This was before Ellen DeGeneres came out (thank you, Ellen!), mostly before the internet, and long before the *It Gets Better* campaign. Thankfully, I'm too old to have been cyberbullied, but I was telebullied by my classmates (which might explain why I don't love being on the phone). Of course, at school it was relentless. One teacher even said to my parents, "Roderick takes so much abuse." That's just the way it was.

Even living in a more accepting place like Boston, I didn't want to be gay. Throughout college, I struggled to accept my sexual orientation. It wasn't until 2002 that I attended the Boston Pride Festival and a block party for the first time. It was a fun time in all the ways that Pride celebrations are fun, but it was also a spiritual awakening for me. We all grow up in a world where straight is the norm. But, suddenly, for one magical day, gay was the default. Straight was the anomaly.

I grew up in a place where gay people were in hiding, had no sense of community, and felt ashamed of their sexuality. Here, everyone was openly gay in the light of day, celebrating this thing they had

**I'm hardly a trailblazer in the fight for marriage equality. I'm not even the first Bermudian to do it. Of course, that's the problem. We won the right to same-sex marriage through the courts, and it was stripped away by this law less than a year later.**

in common. Bermuda's total population is under 65,000. The sheer number of gay and lesbian people at Boston Pride overwhelmed me in a wonderful way. I no longer felt so alone, and I had my first truly positive experience of feeling pride in myself as a gay person.

I joined Boston Pride to give this precious gift to others like me. I still wasn't proud of being gay, but I was angry that Bermuda's homophobia taught me to feel such shame over it. I was a terrible event planner, but I wanted to help others. In the process I helped myself. Through my work on Pride's committee, I found valuable role models of gay people living their lives in a manner that I valued and admired. Even though they were gay or lesbian, I found

that I loved and respected them, and this gave me permission to love and respect myself as a gay man.

I took that permission and ran with it. I'm proud of who I am today, and I have zero shame about being gay. I owe that to my experience with Pride celebrations, both as a participant and as an organizer. While I embody some gay stereotypes, I completely lack the skill set even to fake others. I care about the Red Sox. I love monarch butterflies and enjoy

snorkeling with sharks. I'm not much of a drinker, dancer, gymer, or fashionista, but I do drag (poorly) and sing show tunes (incessantly). In fact, I've learned I have a certain comedic flair and stage presence, whether it's doing standup comedy, storytelling, singing, or performing as my drag character, Rhonda Bout. And I've switched from a software consulting career to the dubious world of entertainment.

Bermuda made headlines this February when it passed a law that rescinded the right for same-sex couples to marry, replacing it with domestic partnerships, the legal booby prize for LGBTQ+ folks whose love for one another makes some people squeamish. In response, I have filed a lawsuit to challenge this discriminatory law. The case will be heard in Bermuda's Supreme Court on May 21 and 22, a few days after the publication of this article. The case may be decided in our favor, or it could drag on for years with appeals to courts beyond Bermuda's shores.

It won't be easy. You'll think it strange when I try to explain how I feel about stepping up to fight this battle. On the one hand, I'm hardly a trailblazer in the fight for marriage equality. I'm not even the first Bermudian to do it. Of course, that's the problem. We won the right to same-sex marriage through the courts, and it was stripped away by this law less than a year later. On the other hand, it's scary to take this public stand in a place where homosexual love is still quite controversial. Not "event planning scary," but pretty close.

I'll be the first to admit that I'm an unlikely person for this particular role. I haven't lived in Bermuda for 20 years. I'm a comedian, so obviously I can't take anything in life seriously. And I'm single, still looking for that special guy crazy enough to marry me. But I'm gay, Bermudian, and wish to marry my future husband in Bermuda. I had the right to do so, and it was taken away. I'd like it back, please.

If the Bermuda Government can legislate away same-sex marriage rights, what's to stop them from doing the same with our other rights? What's to stop other places from following Bermuda's homophobic example? Someone needed to challenge this law. Thanks to my experience with Pride, and gads of therapy, I was ready and willing. ●

*Roderick Ferguson is a totally unknown comedian, singer, and aspiring hermit. After a career in software consulting in Boston, he has found his place on the stage, delighting audiences with his infectious spark of mischievous joy. Roderick performs cabaret, stand-up, and occasional drag in Boston, Provincetown, New York City, and Bermuda. He is now living in NYC and training to become an actor. Rod has a newfound hobby filing lawsuits. Find out more at [rodfergusonlive.com](http://rodfergusonlive.com).*



Donning the emblematic formal attire of his native Bermuda, the author takes to the streets during Boston Pride 2016 to demonstrate for marriage equality.

Credit: Michael Cox.

## SISTER PRIDES



PRIDE New Haven. Credit: Megan McGory Gleason.



Cape Cod Pride. Credit: Courtesy of Cape Cod Pride.

# New England Prides

## Get Acquainted with Our Regional Sister Prides and Prolong Your Pride-season Festivities

### Northampton Pride ("Noho Pride")

**May 4-5 | Northampton, Massachusetts | [www.nohopride.org](http://www.nohopride.org)**

Boston Pride congratulates Noho Pride on another successful Pride celebration in 2018, with the theme "Unbreakable." Noho's Pride offers a vibrant parade, a festival with a diverse slate of entertainers and speakers, and an evening after party, with dancing, karaoke, and a drag competition. Noho Pride takes place each year on the first Saturday of May, so mark your calendars now so that you don't miss out on the 2019 celebrations!

### Fairfield Pride

**May 19 | Fairfield, Connecticut**

**[www.facebook.com/events/1784708688489859](https://www.facebook.com/events/1784708688489859)**

For a second year, community organizers from Milford, Stratford, Bridgeport, Fairfield, and neighboring areas will be throwing a fun-filled block party celebrating all LGBTQ people on Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 4:00PM to 8:00PM at 548 Kings Highway Cutoff in Fairfield. Various local vendors, artists, and performers will be in attendance to create a unique and inclusive day in celebration of our entire community. The event will take place just outside Trevi Lounge, which in its four years of existence has served as a safe space for the local LGBTQ community. For further information about Fairfield Pride's 2018 celebration, please visit their dedicated event page on Facebook.

### Hull Pride

**June 2 | Hull, Massachusetts | [www.hullpride.net](http://www.hullpride.net)**

Join Hull Pride on Saturday June 2, 2018 from 2:00PM to 10:00PM to celebrate the sixth annual Pride. Starting with the Family Field Day picnic at Mariner's Park (5 Fitzpatrick Way, Hull, Massachusetts), the festivities will culminate with the Pride Celebration Party at the Hull Yacht Club at Mariner's Park, featuring DJs Scott Helms and Mike Myers, among other entertainers.

### South Coast Pride

**June 2 | New Bedford, Massachusetts | [www.sclgbtqnetwork.org](http://www.sclgbtqnetwork.org)**

South Coast Pride offers a fun-packed, family-friendly day of activities open to all. This year, come out to Buttonwood Park (near the pond) for live performances, an assortment of food vendors and artisan booths, community resources, and a Kids Zone. Pride 2018 officially kicks off at 9:30AM with an "out-and-proud" all-levels Kripalu Yoga class led by Jeff Costa. An exciting lineup of local talent will follow from 10:00AM to 4:00PM, with Jacqueline DiMera hosting.

### Nashua Pride

**June 2 | Nashua, New Hampshire**

**[www.facebook.com/nashuapride2018/](https://www.facebook.com/nashuapride2018/)**

Pride will fill the city of Nashua on June 2. Attendees will be treated to a parade, a block party on Main Street, and a drag show. Event details are still forthcoming and will be announced on Nashua Pride's Facebook page.



## Central Maine Pride

June 3 | Waterville, Maine

[www.mainehealthequity.org/central-maine-pride](http://www.mainehealthequity.org/central-maine-pride)

Celebrate Pride in a welcoming space for rural and small-town LGBTQ Mainers! The 2018 Central Maine Pride Festival will run from 12:00PM to 4:00PM at Veteran's Memorial Park, just outside of downtown Waterville, and will feature music, drag queens, and free food! Admission is free. Whether you want to relax on the lawn in the company of other LGBTQ people, get your dance on in front of the stage, or browse the booths set up by local vendors, the Central Maine Pride Festival has something for everyone. The Festival is great for families, too, with games and activities for children!

## Quincy's Q Pride Day

June 3 | Quincy, Massachusetts | [www.qprideday.com](http://www.qprideday.com)

Come out to Quincy's Pageant Field for the community's first-ever Pride on June 3! The family-friendly event, running from 12:00PM to 6:00PM, will treat guests to delicious food, games, community resources, and a lively lineup of speakers, musicians, and other live performances. Free and open to the public.

## Boston Dyke March

June 8 | Boston, Massachusetts | [www.bostondykemarch.com](http://www.bostondykemarch.com)

The annual Boston Dyke March will be held on Friday, June 8, starting at 6:00PM at the Parkman Bandstand on the Boston Common. The March will kick off at 7:00PM and will be followed by a Rally. The event will be ASL interpreted, as well as wheelchair, stroller, and scooter accessible. An accessibility vehicle will be available for those who need a ride for part or all of the March.

## Pride Portland!

June 8-17 | Portland, Maine | [www.prideportland.org](http://www.prideportland.org)

Pride Portland! is a week-long celebration of the LGBTQ movement from June 8 to 17 in Maine's largest city. The week of events and activities celebrating and honoring the accomplishments of the LGBTQ community and raising awareness of our ongoing struggles culminates in the Parade down Portland's historic Congress Street and the Festival in Deering Oaks Park. Activities include dances, film screenings, educational events, and diverse, accessible events for seniors, youth, families, and even pets. Visit Pride Portland!'s website for additional information.

## Belfast Pride

June 9 | Belfast, Maine | [www.belfasthaspride.weebly.com](http://www.belfasthaspride.weebly.com)

Belfast Has Pride's third annual Parade and Picnic will be held on Sunday, June 9. For further details on the events as they are released, please consult the organization's website.

## RI PrideFest & Illuminated Night Parade ("Rhode Island Pride")

June 16 | Providence, Rhode Island | [www.prideRI.org](http://www.prideRI.org)

The Rhode Island Pride celebration returns on Saturday, June 16, with PrideFest on South Water Street, starting at 11:00AM, followed by the annual Illuminated Night Parade. Dozens of regional LGBTQ and ally organizations will exhibit along the Providence River during the day, and file through the streets of downtown Providence in the evening. The party will continue late into the night and in the early morning with a variety of local bar and club events and block parties throughout the city. For more information, as it becomes available, please consult the organization's website listed above.

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**Friday, June 8**

**7:30 pm**

First Church in Boston  
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**Sunday, June 10**

**2:00 pm**

Wellesley Village Church  
2 Central St, Wellesley

**Tickets Available at**  
**[backbayringers.org](http://backbayringers.org)**

\$20 Adults

\$15 Students and Seniors



## SISTER PRIDES



Pride L-A (Lewiston-Auburn). Credit: Gary Stallsworth.



Worcester Pride. Credit: Courtesy of Worcester Pride.

### Bangor Pride

**June 17-24 | Bangor, Maine**

[www.mainehealthequity.org/bangor-pride](http://www.mainehealthequity.org/bangor-pride)

Bangor Pride 2018 will take place June 17-24 and is hosted by the Health Equity Alliance. Pride kicks off with the 5K Rainbow Run at Orono Brewing Company's newest Orono location. Other highlights include an open mic and drag show on Friday, June 22, the Pride Parade and Festival on Saturday, June 23 in West Market Square in Bangor, followed by an evening Dance Party hosted by Equality Maine and the Bridge Alliance, to be held at the Bangor Arts Exchange. For more information, visit the above website.

### North Shore Pride

**June 23 | Salem, Massachusetts | [www.northshorepride.org](http://www.northshorepride.org)**

North Shore Pride inaugurates a new parade route and awards in 2018! The annual North Shore Pride Parade will kick off at Shetland Park at 12:00PM, and wind through the streets toward the Salem Common on North Washington Square, location of the Pride Festival. This year, North Shore Pride will be awarding prizes for parade contingents in the following categories: Best Entry for the 2018 Theme (#TrueSelf), Best Community/Neighborhood Entry, and Best Youth Entry. For more information on additional North Shore Pride-related events, as they become available, please consult the website listed above.

### Cape Cod Pride

**June 24 | East Falmouth, Massachusetts**

[www.capecodpride.org](http://www.capecodpride.org)

The second annual Cape Cod Pride celebration will take place on Sunday, June 24, from 12:00PM to 4:00PM at Falmouth High School (874 Gifford St., East Falmouth, Massachusetts). Highlights will include musical entertainment by Funktapuss and DJ Sister Spin. State Senator Julian Cyr will provide the festivities' keynote address, and Staff Sergeant Patricia King, the first infantryman in the US Army to come out as transgender, will be a guest speaker. Local and regional nonprofit organizations, businesses, and artisans will exhibit their services and products in support of the community. Many food vendors will be on site, including SoulFull Food Truck, Smokehouse BBQ Gotta Q, Cape Cod Classic Clam Bakes, Kayak Cookies, Sarcastic Sweets, and Pies a la Mode. The Cape Cod Pride celebration will also include a raffle, games, and crafts, as well as face painting, animal balloons, and henna tattoo artists.

### Bar Harbor Pride

**June 28-July 1 | Bar Harbor, Maine | [www.barharborpride.com](http://www.barharborpride.com)**

Come out and celebrate your pride at the third annual Bar Harbor Pride Festival from June 28 through July 1. The Pride Festival will include a variety of events and performances throughout Bar Harbor and Mount Desert Island. For up-to-date information on the specific events, as they become available, please consult the website listed above.

### Pride Lewiston-Auburn

**June 30 | Lewiston, Maine | [www.pride-l-a.weebly.com](http://www.pride-l-a.weebly.com)**

Founded in response to the Pulse Orlando tragedy, Pride L-A will host its second annual celebration on Saturday, June 30, under the theme "Liberation for All." After the March around the Twin Cities of Lewiston and Auburn (kick-off at 11:00AM), join fellow Pride attendees at Simard-Payne Park for the Festival. Please visit the Pride L-A website for updates.

### New London Pride

**August 23-26 | New London, Connecticut**

[www.newlondonpride.com](http://www.newlondonpride.com)

New London Pride will be a four-day celebration in 2018, with its largest event, the Pride Festival, to be held on Saturday, August 25 at Ocean Beach Park. Starting on Thursday, August 23 with a Kick-off Party at Club Avalon (Mohegan Sun Casino, Uncasville, Connecticut), the festivities will also include the famous Ms. Fabulous Contest on Friday, August 24 at O'Neill's Brass Rail, and an Interfaith Service on Sunday, August 26 at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church. A People of Color Cookout will be held on a date to be announced.

### Hartford Capital City Pride

**September 4-8 | Hartford, Connecticut | [www.hartfordpride.com](http://www.hartfordpride.com)**

This will be the fourth year that PrideFest is produced in collaboration with CLARO, Inc., a nonprofit LGBT+ organization in Hartford. Last year's record attendance of over 7,000 participants foretells an exciting 2018 celebration. The Raising of the Pride Flag at City Hall will kick off the week on September 4 at 1:00PM. A "Meet Me at Chez Bar" reception will then be held on September 5, at 9:00PM. A fundraiser will be hosted by the Flying Monkey on September 6, and the annual downtown Bar Crawl will occur in the evening of September 7. PrideFest, and its After Party (venue to be announced), will end a highly celebratory week at Pratt Street, on September 8 from 12:00PM to 6:00PM.

## Worcester Pride

September 5-9 | Worcester, Massachusetts

[www.worcesterpride.org](http://www.worcesterpride.org)

Worcester Pride's 2018 festivities will take place September 5-9, with a bigger-than-ever schedule of events. The week will start with the "Love Your Label" reception at 7:00PM on September 5. The annual Flag Raising at Worcester City Hall Plaza will occur on September 6 at 3:00PM. Immediately following the Flag Raising, you may trek over to Lock 50 from 4:30PM to 6:00PM for complimentary appetizers and a cash bar, followed by Pride Lights Up the Burns Bridge at 7:00PM. There, the bridge over Lake Quinsigamond will be lit with the colors of the rainbow. Other events during the week include Pride Paints the Wool! and the LGBTQIA+ Pride Pageant. The week culminates with Worcester Pride Celebration Day on September 8. The Parade begins at 11:00AM, and is followed by the Festival from 12:00PM to 5:00PM, and the Block Party at MB Lounge from 5:30PM to 1:30AM.

## Pride Vermont

September 9 | Burlington, Vermont

[www.pridecentervt.org/pride-home](http://www.pridecentervt.org/pride-home)

Join the Vermont and Northern New England LGBTQ communities in solidarity on Sunday, September 9 from 12:00PM to 5:00PM, as we celebrate Pride in Burlington's Battery Park. The event kicks off with the Parade, which is led by an adorable contingent of tykes on bikes and takes people to the Park. In the Park, over 50 vendors can be found, in addition to a totally fun beer garden on the lawn and fabulous food trucks with an array of choices from vegan to burgers. The Pride stage will offer four hours of live entertainment ranging from national headliners to talented local Vermonters who sing, dance, and do comedy.

## PRIDE New Haven

September 14-16 | New Haven, Connecticut

[www.newhavenpridecenter.org/programming/pride](http://www.newhavenpridecenter.org/programming/pride)

PRIDE New Haven – one of Connecticut's largest LGBTQ gatherings – includes programming that spans multiple days and transforms downtown New Haven into a LGBTQ cultural hub of activity. Share in the 20th anniversary of PRIDE New Haven, which will include LGBTQ art installations, performance programs, drag brunch, a Pride march, and a large block party filled with vendors, food trucks, and a large stage highlighting the vast talent of Connecticut's LGBTQ community. All are welcome and encouraged to join us. For further details, visit the website listed above.

## Springfield Mass Pride

Date TBD | Springfield, Massachusetts

[www.facebook.com/springfieldmasspride](https://www.facebook.com/springfieldmasspride)

At the time of writing, Springfield Mass Pride's organizing committee is engaged in the planning stages of the 2018 celebration, which traditionally takes place over several days in mid-September and includes a diversity of events, among them the Flag Raising Ceremony, Pride Festival, InterFaith service, and evening parties. To stay up to date on Springfield Mass Pride's programming as it is announced, follow their organizational page on Facebook. ●

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# The 2018 Boston Pride

## Get to Know the Volunteers Who Make Pride Week Happen



**Gabriel Ben-Yosef**

Gabriel continues to raise awareness of the continued and growing importance of LGBTQ communities in American life, with particular focus on involving the Jewish people to help increase acceptance and tolerance. Gabriel focuses on developing inclusive programs

at the Pride Remembrance Memorial and the Boston Pride Parade, in order to re-unite gay and straight families throughout the year. His goal is to reach out to all those interested in contributing to making our society more inclusive and more secure. The Jewish community is a lasting ally of LGBTQ people everywhere, and we strongly and visibly support Boston Pride.



**Sylvain Bruni**

This year, Sylvain was voted to a third term as President of the Board of Directors of Boston Pride. As a volunteer with Boston Pride since 2004, he successively chaired the Parade and the Back Bay Block Party before joining the Board of the organization in 2007. As a Board

member, his areas of responsibility have included security, technology, partnerships, and the creation of new programs such as the *Boston Pride Guide*, Pride Arts, and the Community Fund. Sylvain has volunteered as a regional director for InterPride, the international association of Pride organizers, working in behalf of Prides from the northeast United States. A native of France, Sylvain was elected Consular Councilor in 2014 to represent all French citizens living in New England. Professionally, Sylvain is Senior Human Systems Engineer at Aptima, a small business conducting research and development in healthcare and in defense, where he leads the company's Cognitive Systems Integration capability. Sylvain holds graduate degrees in electrical engineering and computer science from France's Ecole Supérieure d'Electricité, and in aeronautics and astronautics from MIT.



**Ric Busey**

Ric moved to Boston during winter 2014/15 and began his volunteer efforts with Boston Pride shortly thereafter. Ric fell head-over-heels in love with both Boston and Boston Pride. This is why, despite having moved 2,700 miles away for work and family, Ric

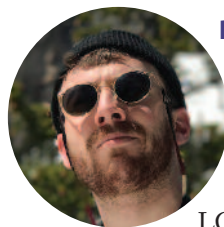
has worked hard to stay connected to Boston Pride in whatever way possible. Today, Ric serves as the App Manager and the Volunteer Manager for Boston Pride, handling both these roles remotely from way-too-hot Phoenix, Arizona. Ric lives with Chris, his partner of three years, his dog Bailey, and his cat Akira. Ric holds multiple certifications in the fitness industry. So when he isn't at his full-time job or working with Boston Pride, he can be found in personal training or teaching a group fitness class at a gym near home.



**Malcolm Carey**

Malcolm serves on Boston Pride's Board as Treasurer. He has been a part of Boston Pride since 2004, during which time he has taken on various roles within the organization. When he is not volunteering for the community, he works in accounting. Malcolm earned his

bachelor's degree in International Relations from Hawai'i Pacific University. He has three dogs and lives in Brockton. In his spare time, Malcolm likes to lift weights, play video games (particularly Pokémon), crochet, and play Dungeons and Dragons.



**Luke Connors**

Luke began volunteering for Boston Pride in the fall of 2017, and this year serves as the Festival Chair. Having moved to Boston nearly four years ago from Denver, Colorado, Luke was inspired to start giving back to the LGBTQ community by volunteering for Boston

Pride, after having many positive experiences attending their events. By day, he's a software engineer working for a genomic software startup in Cambridge and a proud resident of Jamaica Plain. Outside the office, you can find him biking the streets of Boston with a sketchbook in his backpack, and working behind the scenes of many Boston Pride events.

# Board and Committee



**Linda DeMarco**

Linda DeMarco is celebrating two decades with Boston Pride. She currently serves as the Vice President of the Board. Linda was recently elected Co-President of InterPride, an international association of Pride organizers. As the owner of Boston Pretzel, Linda is an active member of the Faneuil Hall Merchants Association.

Photo credit: Marilyn Humphries.



**Jessie DeStefano**

Jessie is eager to step into the role of Co-editor of the *Boston Pride Guide* in her fourth year on the Committee. Jessie is a staff attorney at Legal Services NYC. She was educated at Georgetown University Law Center.



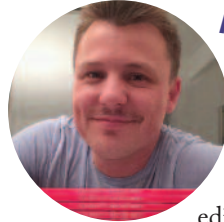
**Casey Arline Dooley**

In her second year volunteering for Boston Pride, Casey returns to her roles as the organizer of the Family Fun Zone for the Festival and JP Block Party as well as a member of the Accessibility Team. She's also excited to be working as Chair of Black Pride, with a focus on bringing the POC LGBTQ community together and encouraging solidarity. Casey also serves as Chair of the Political Forum, which allows her to combine her interests in politics and education. Outside of Pride, she is a hair stylist, specializing in curly hair and teaching people how to love it!



**Anna Dubrowski**

As an educator with a MEd, Anna continues to explore life, passionately believing that to become a great teacher one must never stop learning. Being a lifelong Pride volunteer has allowed her to connect her passion for learning with her commitment to equality and equity for everyone in our community.



**Michael Anthony Fowler**

As founding Editor-in-Chief of the *Boston Pride Guide* Michael Anthony Fowler oversaw the production of the magazine's first three volumes (2015-2017). For the 2018 edition, Michael has transitioned into the role of Co-editor. In a professional capacity, he is an art historian, field archaeologist, and college instructor. Michael was educated at Columbia University (MPhil and MA), Tufts University (MA), Harvard University (MTS), and The Colorado College (BA).

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### Angela "EnKore" Haynes

EnKore has been serving the Boston community for nearly a decade. This year she is still rocking as Concert Back Stage Manager. After starting as a volunteer for The Lupus Foundation of America, Boston Pride, and The Imperial Court of Massachusetts, she now serves as a committee member for all three. A proud member of Alpha Psi Kappa Fraternity, Inc., she serves the local Alpha Gamma Colony as President. Dedicated to empowering dominant women, EnKore is committed to community building, leading by example, and practicing confident leadership. She is a graduate of Bay State College with a degree in Business Management. When she is not serving the community, EnKore spends time with family, fraternal phamily, and friends. She enjoys traveling, movies, music, watching sports, pool, and writing poetry, which she performs under the stage name lyric speaks. EnKore's favorite quote is by Maya Angelou: "I have found that, among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver."



### Ed Hurley

Ed is the Manager of the *Boston Pride Guide*, where his job is to assist in the smooth production of the magazine. He works directly with the designer, printer, distributor, and advertisers to ensure a high-quality product that reaches a wide audience. This is Ed's fourth year as a member of Boston Pride. He also manages the Pride Guide Release Party and the Boston Pride Family Movie Night. In addition, he assists with Pride Day @ Faneuil Hall and manages the box office for the Back Bay Block Party. Outside of Pride, Ed is the Marketing Director at Faneuil Hall Marketplace, where he is in charge of events, promotions, and other marketing initiatives for the property. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his husband Ken Elie.



### Mark Leonardo II

In Mark's first year as a member of Boston Pride, he is excited to serve as Pride@Night Chair. Mark is thrilled to bring new events to Pride@Night and hopes they provide fun for all members of the community. He has had a great time being a part of the planning for this amazing week of events, and encourages community members to come to a meeting and to get involved in some way. When Mark is not volunteering with Boston Pride, he is busy growing his social events company Eventures, playing rugby, modeling, and serving as Creative Director for Eros in Wonderland.



### Boe Morgan

A participant in the Boston Pride Parade since 1975, Boe started attending Pride Committee meetings as a liaison for the Moving Violations Motorcycle Club after the death of Woody Woodward in 2009. As Pride liaison, Boe coordinates motorcycle registration with Parade Chair Martha Plaza, the Boston Police Department Special Events, and all participating motorcycle clubs. The Moving Violations Motorcycle Club has a long history of volunteering for Pride at the JP Block Party, performing security and staffing the front gate. On the Pride Committee, Boe is taking a larger role in security awareness for events. Professionally, Boe adjudicates for the Department of Housing and Community Development and also practices law privately. After a long career of driving semi-tractor trailers, she earned degrees from Smith College (BA) and Vermont Law School (JD).



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**the Pride Festival and the**  
**Back Bay Block Party**  
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**Daniel Ortega**

In his second year with Boston Pride, Daniel will continue his efforts of raising awareness about the spread of hate against the LGBTQ community, especially under the current political climate, by participating in rallies and volunteering at the Pride Remembrance Memorial and Pride Parade. This year, Daniel will also lend his professional expertise all across Boston Pride's operations, on the newly formed Technology Committee.



**Henry Paquin**

A native Bostonian, Henry is a local event planner and community organizer. He has been a member of Boston Pride for seven years. In that time, Henry has taken on various roles in organizing several different Pride events, including youth dances, the Royal Pageant, Pride Day @ Faneuil Hall, and the High Heel Dash for Charity. This year, Henry has stepped up to chair the Entertainment Committee and to organize the Pride Concert. Henry has worked with many other organizations to raise money each year for charity, such as Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, The Boston Living Center, and The Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.



**Ziggy Pijewski**

Ziggy is excited to serve on Boston Pride's Logistics Team this year. Ziggy has enjoyed volunteering for community organizations, such as the Pan-Mass Challenge, an annual bike-a-thon fundraiser for cancer research at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. In his free time, Ziggy loves to travel and enjoys spending time with friends. He currently works as a systems engineer at Takeda Pharmaceuticals.



**Martha Plaza**

Martha is Chair of, and Board Liaison to, the 2018 Parade. This will be her ninth year overseeing this event, which has grown to be the fourth largest Pride Parade in the US! Martha also joined the Pride Board in 2017 and now serves as Clerk. In the daytime, Martha works at Veristat, a full service CRO that services pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. She oversees all submission projects, working closely with clients and teams to ensure successful submissions to regulatory bodies around the globe. Martha has also spent the past 22 years volunteering at Acadia National Park doing trail work. She loves to spend time outdoors, especially with her wife Tammy, or relaxing at home with their three cats: Fern, Sarah, and Abby.



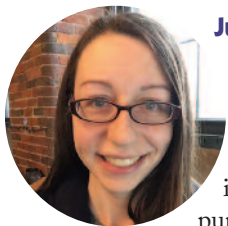
**Tammy Plaza**

Tammy has been with Boston Pride since 2008 and returns in 2018 to her roles as Youth Dance Chair and Parade Assistant. Tammy is a teacher at Next Generation in Sudbury, working with infants and toddlers. She also attends MassBay Community College, where she is working toward her degree in Early Education. Tammy hopes then to attend Framingham State and work toward completing a bachelor's in Early Childhood Education. Tammy and Martha have been married for 11 years, have three cats, and try to spend as much time outdoors as possible.



**Tina Rosado**

Tina is one of Boston Pride's newest additions to the Board of Directors. She has served as a volunteer on the committee for over 15 years. Through the years, she has played a major role in helping organize the stage at Pride Day @ Faneuil Hall and the bars at the Festival and Back Bay Block Party. Additionally, she helps coordinate socials and fundraisers throughout the year. One of Tina's favorite fundraisers is Queereoke at the Midway Cafe in Jamaica Plain. When Tina is not volunteering, she works at Mass General Hospital, which is a huge supporter of the LGBTQ community. Tina works in the Department of Urology and is a former member of the Board of Directors for the LGBTQ resource group.



**Julia Wade Sapienza**

Julia is celebrating her third year with Boston Pride. In the past, Julia has volunteered with the NOH8 campaign and Human Rights Campaign New England. Professionally, Julia is a case manager at a locally-based insulin pump company helping diabetic patients. She holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of New Hampshire. Julia currently lives in Billerica, Massachusetts with her partner Brian and their two canine companions, Bella and Kona.



**Kevin Schattenkirk**

Kevin has just completed his third year with Boston Pride, and his second as part of the editorial team for the *Boston Pride Guide*. Professionally, Kevin is an ethnomusicologist and music historian whose work focuses on music about heteronormativity and anti-queer violence in the performative contexts of pop and choral music. Having just completed his PhD in Ethnomusicology at the University of Western Australia, Boston Pride 2018 is a bit of a personal celebration for Kevin. In his free time, he is also a singer, songwriter, and musician. He also enjoys working out, traveling, cooking, game nights with friends, and spending time with his husband of 18 years. His work this year is dedicated to the memory of Chris Cornell and Tom Petty, both of whom were supporters of the queer community.



**Marco A. Torres**

Marco A. Torres is a lifelong resident of the City of Boston. In 2012, he joined the Board of Directors of Boston Pride. As Marco is of Puerto Rican descent, he is committed to developing Latinx Pride. Marco works for Boston Center for Youth and Families. In his personal time, Marco enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, and volunteering for many different causes and organizations throughout the City of Boston. Marco is also an avid New England Patriots fan!

**Val Bee**, Black Pride Team

**Peter Costanza**, Entertainment Team

**Steven Cullipher**, Merchandise Team

**Perri Mertens**, Design Team

**Leo Morris**, Black Pride Team ●



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