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Letter from the President

(of the GLSO)

by Paul Brown

GLSO President, Pride Festival Chairman, 2013



Dear reader,

I started this writing as "Letter from the President." Then, I added "(of the GLSO)" to make sure no one thought the POTUS was writing for our magazine. However, upon the release of our first magazine, I feel a tiny bit like the POTUS because the GLSO has successfully implemented an ambitious project in transitioning from its monthly newsletter to a monthly magazine distributed throughout Lexington.


It's fitting that this magazine, LinQ, debuts during Pride month, for I am intensely proud to sit at the helm of this organization as we launch another milestone for GLSO. I am proud to work with a dedicated team of individuals who made this magazine possible for the Lexington community. I am proud to live in Lexington, KY, a city whose citizens welcome a magazine and a resource that makes our community shine.

To put this in perspective, I'll date myself a bit: The GLSO first incorporated in 1977 – the year I was born. (You can do the math.) Countless names and faces have come and gone and put in thousands of volunteer hours to keep the organization alive. Many of those came and went long before I knew what it was to be a closeted gay teenager in Western Kentucky. They sought to make Lexington a safe place to call home, and it's the place I call home now. They have brought many programs to the community such as a Gay Straight Alliance for Youth, a GLBT

senior group, a TransKy group, and a GLBT library, not to mention our biggest achievement: bringing you the annual Lexington Pride Festival, which is thriving in its 6th year.

For more years than I know, the GLSO has given the community the monthly GLBT news via the newsletter. It, too, has seen many facelifts and updates at the hands of different editors throughout the years. Mary Crone, to whom we are forever indebted, gave myriad hours to its production for years. Now, under Don Lowe's leadership, the newsletter is getting another facelift: It will now be LinQ, and it will reach a much wider audience through broad distribution. This is an ambitious project that will keep GLSO marching forward.

LinQ is the embodiment of GLSO's vision statement to educate, enhance, and empower the community about LGBT issues. We are dedicated to educating you on the news on what community groups like AVOL, the Lexington Health Department, Just-FundKy, Lexington Fairness, Moveable Feast, and the Imperial Court are offering. LinQ will enhance this community by providing visibility, which in turn eventually brings tolerance and acceptance. We will empower the community by giving you the knowledge of what's now, what's new, what's next.

LinQ is a giant leap forward into the future, and I am proud. Now please join me in devouring the rest of this magazine. 

EDITOR

Don Lowe

The GLSO News is published monthly by and for the Lexington Gay and Lesbian Services Organization members and community. The mission of the Lexington Gay and Lesbian Services Organization is to provide support and services to the GLBTQQA community. The vision of the Lexington Gay and Lesbian Services Organization is to empower the GLBTQQA community through voice. The Lexington GLSO is founded upon the core values of fun, inclusion, respect, integrity, dignity, service and competence.

GLSO Pride Center

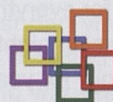
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cover photo by Abi Grise

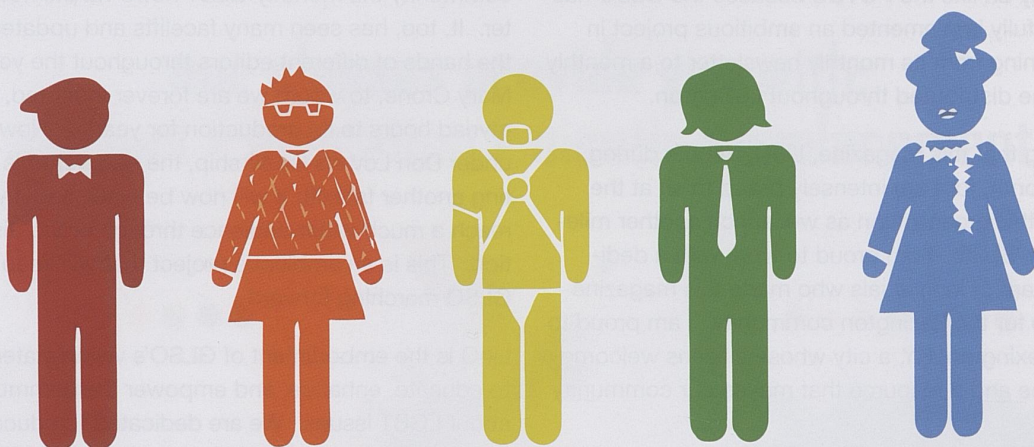
GLSO Promotes “Home” for LGBT Community

by Sandy Spaulding



This writer has been in that scary, crippling kind of despair three times since I have been out and all three times I've found a Gay Lesbian Service Organization center in time before I did something drastic. In the 70s I was in Los Angeles when my first gay experience left me a week later

In a quiet strip mall, the room was simple, almost bare with its corner piles of projects, a desk, folding church tables and chairs. And just GLSO in rainbow letters and the address made large in black, not to be missed. The first person I saw was Karen Taylor, volunteer coordinator, who welcomed me with a hug,



with my straight identity and her rent in a back pocket. The only way to stop the pain and shame was suicide. I was a marriage counselor myself so I called Gay Community Services, a huge complex of resources, and they sent me to MCC church where my new life flourished.

The second time was in the 90s Minneapolis when my partner had died. I found myself middle aged, professional woman and mother who had no clue how to find another lesbian other than in a bar. I called the center there and they seemed to have a group for everything from needlepoint couples to singles raising night crawlers—a gay book club became my family for years.

The third time was this year in Lexington when I was alone again, now a senior, depressed, isolated. The depth of this despair frightened me. But I noticed in the GLSO bulletin that came regularly and I barely glanced at, that a gay senior's meeting was going on that night. I'd go with an eye on the door to make an exit if I started to cry or said something truly stupid.

smiling past my pain with her safe and familiar look saying clearly she'd been expecting me as she welcomed me home that night.

The room was filled with thirty seniors made up of business owners and professionals, clergy, attorneys, professors, educators, medical people, activists, politicians, retirees, and more all sharing their news, ideas and needs, what they've lived through and what they face ahead. Sharing awareness and chiseling answers, afterwards, they exchanged numbers and lingered over stories. There was something brave and beautiful about them. They have held the lamp for the rest to come after them. And in this space they are not alone, or unknown. This place allows them to gather, comfort and bear witness.

I left there thinking, I have to stay. I'm teaching college, but have to clear some life, get over myself and help this place do what it came to do, and go on doing what it did for me. What GLSOs do for gay people when the pavement ends, and there is no road left at the dead end of an emptied

choice; when we need information about our health, when we don't know if we are allowed to do things, and what if we've made a mistake? When we don't know if a business will be kind; or if there are places to go, or activities that belong to us; when we are utterly alone in our difference, this place has people like you when you need to hang out, safe and authentic, or need a pastor who knows how to dismantle shame, You are treated like you belong, this is your family of origin, and this sacred ground is your heritage. I realized that there always has to be enough people breathing life into this place, keeping the doors open, the phones covered, and meetings readied. Everyone must give what they can.

There was something brave and beautiful about them. They have held the lamp for the rest to come after them. And in this space they are not alone, or unknown. This place allows them to gather, comfort and bear witness.

As I got involved, I learned the needs of the center and the Kentucky gay population it serves. The best thing it does is hold still and stay open to members of the community a place to call, come, or meet for cause, start a new answer for changing times. Pride needs a home. Transgendered people need to gather, teens needs to meet and help each other.

This center is not a cookie cutter image of other gay community resource efforts. In 1977 two men started this one like the others, by first listening to what gay people in Kentucky needed: answers in one place. In 1978 they saw they needed a newsletter to communicate what they knew could help our population. As I read through all these back editions I am honestly surprised all the ads are fit for a family coffee table.

Then I am struck by how the history of our tribe is recorded here. In the 70s it's we needed to connect, play ball, dance, de-myth and un-closet; In the 80s it's about education—new research about us, and

then the baffling AIDS crisis; in the 90's gay rights issues in Kentucky emerge to be heard; in the 2000s, we see more referrals to professional services, listings of gay owned and friendly businesses, inclusive employment, art activities and political activism; nowadays transsexual and transgendered groups have found their voice and offer a tradition of shimmering (and fund raising) entertainment, along with theater, music, celebrations and family gatherings.

Current programs include a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) for youth that grew out of an awareness kids needed a safe place at the center but also in their high schools. Then a leadership program to train teachers and teens to lead these groups.

The Wednesday Night Discussion Group began 18 years ago for anyone at any age that is having difficulty with being gay. I listened to Ginger Moore-Minder talk about those who have been saved from suicide. Last year a large and comprehensive floor to ceiling library was completed. The impressive collection of gay books and films grace the back walls of the room behind a friendly couch and wing back chairs gracing the collecting.


The seniors are talking about a mission to find the older and isolated ones who need a visit or help from a gay brother or sister as they deal with aging and health issues. But the best part was watching them share what they had survived being gay before it was chic or easy, baring witness to a heritage this writer feels compelled to honor in the months ahead, by bringing to you their stories in a column I shall affectionately call "Our Years of Loving Dangerously." I look forward to gathering around these pages. 



photo by Melissa Benson and David Benson

Elias Gross as Oliver Switch

Burlesque Show Blurs Gender

Rebel Riot Revue Broadens Genre

by Burley B. Thomas

Burlesque is not just about half-naked people. Well, that's part of the fun, but it's not all you can expect when you go see a Rebel Riot Revue show. Rebel Riot Revue is a Lexington burlesque troupe incorporating pole acrobatics, hoop dancing, comedy and strip-tease. Most people associate it with the methodical act of undressing, but founder and member Siobhan Atomica says, "It was about satire long before it was about stripping." Burlesque goes back to the ancient Greeks and the plays of Aristophanes and has been a form of theatre for the common folk that offered eroticism and escapism reincarnated throughout time. It has been inching its way back into mainstream culture since the 90s, sensationalized by artists like Dita Von Teese, The Pussycat Dolls, and most recently a film starring diva-icons: Cher and Christina Aguilera. "This is all burlesque, but at its roots, it should have a variety show feel to it."

Frequent headlining guests, magic and comedy set Rebel Riot Revue apart from other Lexington groups, but what's really amazing is the troupe's inclusion of queer performers and their inspiring body, gender and LGBT affirmation.

Among the acrobats and fire eaters you'll find two cast members who bring queer performance to the stage with acts that can be described as "draglesque" and "boilesque."

"Boilesque" can be any male performance, though it is the artist's choice to call it that; some men prefer "burlesque." Exstacy Malone, one of Rebel Riot Revue's newest additions, does both.

"Draglesque," for Malone, is the illusion of appearing on stage female, and through the strip-tease, reveals- it's a guy! "I'm not doing female impersonation or lip-singing, for me it's about dance and the trans-

photo by James Crisp

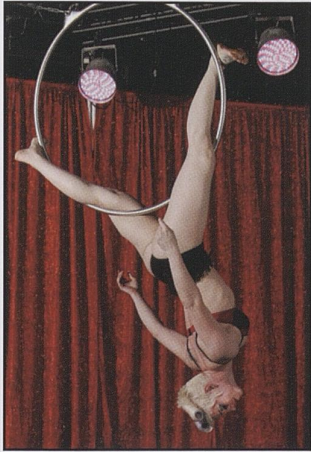


photo by Ricky Sherman



photo by Ricky Sherman



Left: Pixie Pistola, Middle: Siobahn Atomica and Oliver Switch, Right: Exstacy Malone

formation that can happen on stage. It's also just one of my acts" Malone says. Siobhan Atomica also performs "draglesque," but says, "It's different for the men and women. When a female does it, she has to lip-sing... we already look like drag queens with our ten pounds of make-up and (expensive) gowns."

Oliver Switch brings "bolesque" to life with an act about a boy discovering his sexuality... and glitter. Switch is the group's sole female-to-male trans member and burlesque has been a way for him to explore his male sex appeal and to grow confident. When Switch first came on board with Rebel Riot Revue, he noticed that most of the dancers were female and men were emcees or comedians. There was a box that needed to be filled.

"I could see my body as beautiful and sexy and masculine, and I could put that out there. It may not be what you expect, but it is a male body," Switch says.


Oliver Switch has been fundraising for quite some time now for his top surgery. "For those who may not know, this is a double mastectomy. It's called a 'gender-affirming' surgery. 'Sex-change' is outdated and inaccurate." Following online fundraising to help cover the costs that most insurances will not cover, Siobhan Atomica, Rebel Riot Revue, and an expansive burlesque community offered their talents and time for a fundraiser called "Vagabond Variete'."

"This is bigger than a body-issue, this is about someone's identity," Atomica said and she set off to plan one RRR's largest and most successful shows. Over \$2400 was made for Switch's surgery. "This really shows how quickly Rebel Riot Revue embraced me and became a family," a grateful Switch says. International title holders from Lexington, Louisville and St. Louis volunteered for the show.

Lola Van Ella, Sammich the Tramp, and Adriana Fuentes were among the two dozen acts. The show lasted four hours and included more than \$2000 worth of raffles, food, and a photo booth by Shooting Frenzy.

Both Oliver Switch and Exstacy Malone were a part of the show. When asked how people responded to their 'different' performance styles, both responded positively. Switch explained that there are very few FTM strip-tease artists that he knows of and was nervous about people's response. He was overwhelmed with support and cheers at the fundraiser. Malone says that when looking in the audience he could see a few jeers, but for every one of those jerks, there were five more snapping pictures with their phone. Comedian and writer for Rebel Riot Revue, Vincent St. James says, "I'm glad dudes could enjoy (Exstacy) dancing and enjoy it as part of the show. All of our dancers come up with their stuff, it's their art; I'm glad people like it."

"These shows are about empowerment. When I first saw the Burlesque performer 'Dirty Martini' and saw how she owned the stage, I was moved and immediately felt better about my body and my sexuality as a woman," Atomica says. Burlesque addresses fetish, sex and sexuality in a way that people can laugh at in a good way.

Siobhan Atomica sums it up best, "We need healthier conversations about sexuality. Too often there's still shame associated with it. Humor helps take break the ice. Come see a show, maybe you'll see something you didn't know turned you on. You can go home and explore that with your partner, or a friend, or just... with yourself." 

body and make it important to our community.

Trans



Imperial Court Begins New Reign

Southern Showgirls and Southern Gentlemen Theme for Year

by Brad Shepherd

Greetings from the Imperial Court of Kentucky. Another year of fundraising came to a close this month with their Imperial Majesties, Emperor 31 Daryl "Big D" Lyons and Empress 31 Trinity, stepping down at Coronation 32, "A Night at the Twisted Circus."

As the official kickoff of Pride Month activities in Lexington, Coronation weekend was held the first weekend in June, culminating with the formal Coronation Ball on Sunday evening, June 2. The weekend began with the In Town Show on Friday night at Crossings, at which many of the Reign 31 titleholders performed as a farewell to the reign.

Then on Saturday evening, at the Downtown Hilton, the Out of Town Show was held, where visiting courtiers performed. After-parties were held later that evening at Crossings and pulse nightlife, giving our out of town guests a bit of local flavor.

Gowns, tuxes, jewels, and fabulous costumes wowed the large crowd on Sunday night at the Coronation Ball. An Opening Production, choreographed by her Imperial Highness Imperial Crown Princess 31, Stephanie Velour, and his Imperial Majesty, Emperor 28 Wes Nelson, featuring many

members of Reign 31 and the Court family, brought the crowd to their feet.

The grand evening continued with command performances by local and visiting performers, regal walks from visiting court dignitaries from New York City, Washington D.C., Connecticut, Toronto, Boston, Montana, Hamilton (Ontario), and Cincinnati, and a stately Kentucky walk, where members and titleholders of the Imperial Court of Kentucky presented themselves to Emperor Big D and Empress Trinity.

Voting by the membership for the Henry Faulkner Community Service Award, the board of Directors of the Imperial Court, and Emperor 32 was held as well. GLSO President and community activist, Paul Brown, received the Henry Faulkner Community Service Award for his numerous years of service to the LGBT community of Lexington. Christina Puse (Chris Hocker), Tim Logsdon, Clayton Burchell, and Russell Drake were elected as new Board of Directors members for Reign 32.

The final act of the evening celebrated the end of Reign 31, with Emperor Big D and Empress Trinity doing final step down numbers to their adoring crowd. Final fundraising totals for Reign 31 will be determined

at the end of June and disbursements for the year will be announced in next month's newsletter.

The evening was capped off by the Coronation Ceremony, where the College of Monarchs (former Monarchs) of the Imperial Court of Kentucky, crowned the newly elected Emperor 32 Patrick Thompson and the newly appointed Regent Empress 32 J.D. Vaughn. J.D. had served previously as Empress 22, and when there were no candidates for Empress this year, was selected by the College of Monarchs and Board of Directors to serve as Regent Empress.


After the crowning ceremony, Emperor Patrick and Empress J.D. greeted the guests at Coronation and then went on a short victory tour, making stops at the Hospitality Suite at the Hilton, and stopping in at Crossings before a final victory show at pulse nightlife later that night.

Monday brought the weekend to a close with the Victory Brunch, where Emperor 31 Big D and Empress 31 Trinity thanked their guests and line-members and presented awards from Reign 31. Newly crowned Emperor 32 Patrick named Tim Logsdon as Imperial Crown Prince 32 and John David Elam as Imperial Prince Royale 32, while Regent Empress 32 J.D. named Christina Puse as Imperial Crown Princess 32 and Kali Dupree as Imperial Princess Royale 32.

His Most Imperial Majesty, Emperor 32 Patrick proclaimed himself the Emerald Emperor, while Her Most Imperial Majesty, Regent Empress 32 J.D. proclaimed herself the Southern Showgirl Empress of Glitz, Glamour, and Gratitude. They also announced their Reign theme to be "Southern Showgirls and Southern Gentlemen."

The new Reign will begin after a transitional meeting of the old and new board of directors and a board retreat in early July. However, the new monarchs have already made appearances at the Scott Co. Humane Society's annual Furball, Lexington Fairness's Annual Awards Dinner, the Lexington Pride Festival's Kickoff Show/T-Shirt Launch Party, and the Sixth Annual Lexington Pride Festival.

Look for announcements regarding Reign 32 events here in LinQ, or check out the Imperial Court on Facebook (group name Imperial Court of Kentucky) or online at www.imperialcourtkentucky.org. Membership and/or volunteers are always welcome and encouraged.

Next month's article: What is the Imperial Court of Kentucky and how is it important to our community. 



Jenna Jive



J. D. Vaughn



TriNity

Fairness Posters Promote Equality

by Roy Harrison and Dan Cooper

So what gives, Kentucky? Are we a self-fulfilling prophecy? Have we convinced ourselves so thoroughly that the Commonwealth will never foster an environment that's friendly and accepting towards its LGBT population that we've allowed it to become true?

A recent poll from The Schapiro Group, Inc executed on behalf of The Kentucky Fairness Coalition shows that, while Kentucky's reputation of a conservative inclination remains the same, the actual sentiment towards LGBT inclusiveness may be quite different. Kentucky showed overwhelming support for issues ranging from protections against workplace based discrimination towards LGBT workers, to spousal hospital visitation for LGBT couples, to even protections for LGBT students against bullies in the classroom. Confronted with the statement "gay and lesbian couples deserve the same legal protections as other people," an astonishing 70% of those surveyed replied with either "agree" (51%) or "strongly agree" (19%), while only 25% of respondents replied either "disagree" (18%) or "strongly disagree" (7%).

Lexington Fairness is attempting to give voice to Kentucky's silent majority. The silent majority who clearly supports fairness for all Kentuckians, in all corners of our Commonwealth. The 93% of surveyed Kentuckians who think that no one should be subjected to verbal abuse based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Lexington Fairness developed its 2013 action campaign – "FAIRNESS, personified." – to reveal the depth and breadth of fairness and equality in Cen-

tral Kentucky. Photographing our neighbors, associates, businesses, and government leaders who support full legal and social acceptance of the LGBT community.


The project speaks to three points: Art, Activism, and Civic Pride. The art is the photograph. Lexington Fairness employs professional photographers to take the images, and then prepares them for public display. FAIRNESS, personified will have hundreds of photographs ready for display by the

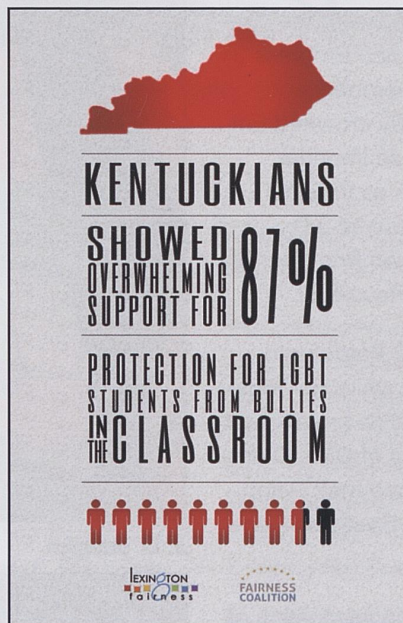
Fall 2013. Lexington Fairness will host a public viewing of the images and invite our friends and supporters to celebrate the strength of Fairness in Central Kentucky.

Lexington Fairness's campaign also will encourage day-to-day activism: it will encourage ourselves and our allies to speak up for fairness in the workplace, in school, in religious institutions, and in government. FAIRNESS, personified will show the full diversity of our supporters.

Finally, Lexington Fairness seeks to contribute to the discussion of how to create a Lex-

ington in which we can be proud. By taking these photos with the backdrop of Lexington's distinguishable landmarks, we link the value of fairness to the identity of Lexington.

We share this information with our friends and fellow Kentuckians, in the hopes that it will bring even more supporters of LGBT rights into the spotlight. So that our Commonwealth may join the several other states in providing for the equality of all its citizens - to build a stronger community, for in Kentucky it is said that United We Stand, Divided We Fall. 



Bullitt County Senior Class President Comes Out During Graduation Speech

by Anthony W. Smallwood

When I recently found out about this young man, Cash Collins, and the story of how he publicly "came out" during his Class President speech at his high school graduation, I knew I had to find out more.

Just simple, direct and honest. Here is the excerpt from the end of his speech... "And lastly, I would like to thank everyone in the Class of 2013. Thank you for electing me to be your Class President, and I hope that I have lived up to your expectations. I believe it speaks volumes that this class has the strength to elect a gay student, myself, to represent and speak for them."

Below is his story that I learned from our interview and I hope that after you read it, you too will be as inspired and touched as I was.

AWS... So Cash, what made you want to do such a courageous act during your graduation speech?

CC... You asked me to think hard on why I made the decision that I did. I have been out to my closest friends since freshman year, and I have slowly expanded the circle of people who know that I am gay. By the end of my senior year, most everyone knew that I was gay. It wasn't really a secret; it was an accepted truth that went unspoken--or at least that was my impression. By publicly acknowledging this unspoken truth, I felt that I was taking back what has always been mine. I refuse any and everyone the ability to transform this truth into a weapon of fear against me.

AWS... But weren't you nervous or afraid?

CC... Yes, I was still afraid. I was afraid even as I typed out my speech. I called only two people for advice, my father and one of my closest friends. They both supported me full-heartedly. I'm not afraid of public speaking. I wasn't afraid of my classmates or loved ones or strangers in that audience. I was afraid, however that censorship would be forced upon me; that proclaiming my sexuality during such a proper cere-

mony would be considered inappropriate and uncouth. Yet, the administration of my school fully supported my decision and commended me for my bravery.

And that was another factor in my decision. Bravery.

Courage. I have never considered myself brave until this summer during the Governor's Scholar Program when I came out to my friends and fellow scholars.


At the end of the program, most everyone that I had gotten to know, scholar and teacher alike, told me that I

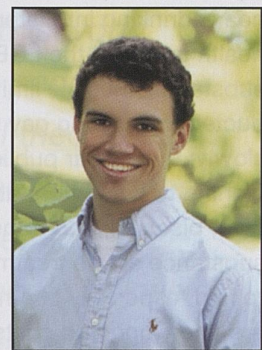
was one of the bravest individuals they had ever had the privilege of knowing. Since then, I have strived to live up to the title in every pursuit.

AWS... Do you really understand how many other young people that might be struggling with their own sexuality who are going to look at what you have done and consider your act of courage to be a huge act?

CC... In respect to my graduation speech, I did decide that coming out publicly was not only for me, but also for the ones that have trouble finding the strength and courage to do so themselves. I hoped to lend them courage given to me by my loved ones. After all, as Class President, I am merely the voice of my fellow classmates. I wanted to do what was right.

AWS... So, what is next for you Cash?

CC... I'm going to be a freshman at UofL this coming fall, studying Political Science. I was chosen as a Harlan Scholar, one of ten, which means that I will be part of a program that helps prepare ten students in each graduating class for law school, I hope to study abroad while in college, and am thinking of joining the Peace Corps when I graduate from law school. 



Cash Collins


Substance Abuse Help Available for LGBT Community

by Angela Brumley-Shelton

Compared to the general population of heterosexual men and women, the LGBT population tends to have higher rates of substance abuse, including alcohol. They are also more likely to use alcohol heavily, and continue heavy drinking into later life. As with many other health issues in the LGBT community, research on substance abuse is limited, or has been mostly conducted with young gay males. The trend is changing slowly; every year public health researchers are beginning to learn more about substance abuse in lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered groups. Quality substance abuse treatment options can be difficult to find, especially in rural areas of KY. Waiting lists are often long and costs can be overwhelming for individuals and their families. Even if a person has insurance, it may not adequately cover substance abuse treatment.

Substance abuse treatment also requires a huge time commitment, and ideally includes support from providers, family, friends, etc. Unfortunately LGBTs are less likely to have the social support they need to overcome addictions because of family tension, lack of friends or family who are not abusing drugs or alcohol themselves, or because they must hide their sexual identity from family and friends. Treatment options designed specifically for LGBT can be almost impossible to find, and once an individual has a negative experience with a program or treatment provider, it is challenging for him/her to gather motivation or money to try rehabilitation again. Likely because of fear of judgment, negative past experiences, or being duped by a hidden sexual identity conversion program, the LGBT community has traditionally had a strong wariness of mental health and substance abuse treatment. Providers who are available may not feel comfortable treating LGBT clients, even though professionally they are trained and expected to be non-judgmental and treat all patients equally. The harsh reality is that successful drug and alcohol treatment usually requires multiple attempts, and is a lifelong journey.

In previous articles we discussed how LGBT individuals report higher rates of depression, and reasons why LGBT individuals use tobacco more, including stress created by homophobia, discrimination, or not being able to disclose their sexual orientation. All of these same factors contribute to substance abuse, which can be disastrous because it is associated with relational, mental health, financial, and physical health problems. Substance use lowers inhibitions which can lead people to do things they would not normally do, such as engage in risky sexual behavior that places them at increased risk for HIV and STD infection. Methamphetamines and amyl nitrates (poppers) seem to be more popular with gay and bisexual men and are definitely linked to high-risk sexual behavior. There are no clear data to suggest that certain illegal drugs are more popular among lesbians or transgendered individuals. We do know that overall illegal drug and alcohol use is higher among LGBT, and that among both the heterosexual and LGBT general population alcohol is by far the most abused drug of choice, and creates the most health problems for individuals. The prevalence of the bar culture in LGBT life, especially in Kentucky's few cities, also makes alcohol abuse very easy. Kentucky is a state whose general population is disproportionately burdened with drug abuse, especially prescription drugs. LGBTs abuse rates for these types of drugs follow the same pattern.

Substance abuse is one of the greatest health care issues the LGBT community faces. It is such a grave concern because demand for affordable, compassionate, non-discriminatory treatment far exceeds availability in central KY, and because it often leads to the destruction of a person's entire life. If you or someone you know need help with a substance abuse issue, a good place to start is your local health department or mental health center. You can also do an internet search for a local meeting of a Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous that is LGBT friendly. It is also important to remember that sometimes you must "shop" until you find a provider or program that matches your personality, needs, and budget. 

That's What I'm Talkin' About

by Helena Handbasket



Who really gives a rat's ass? I know that's what you might be thinking right now. Who really cares what Helena Handbasket is talkin' about? Well... you might not, but the purpose of my monthly article is not to say that my opinion is more important than yours... it is not to say that I know more than you do... it is not to say that I am better connected to the community than you are. If there is a purpose to this article, it will only be to possibly make you think and/or see things from a different perspective sometimes and hopefully, also to make you laugh, at least occasionally.

Anyway, this starting me thinking. Just where did the phrase "I don't give a rat's ass" come from? Wikipedia says this... "It's just general slang that started up sometime during the 20th century. While nobody knows for sure how it came about, it's believed that a rat was used in the expression because of the way people view the rodent - annoying and small." (We all know someone that we would put in that category, don't we?) Another theory could be that it was just a funny version of a related phrase from "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" (1884). The phrase is "don't give a dead rat" from Mark Twain.

Either way, never think that Miss Helena doesn't give a rat's ass about this community or you. (Caution: Mushy moment up ahead). If I were to leave this

world tomorrow, I hope people would know that I tried to be the best I could be and I hope that they would see that I tried to inspire people to love themselves and each other. And if I have failed in this

If I were to leave this world tomorrow, I hope people would know that I tried to be the best I could be and I hope that they would see that I tried to inspire people to love themselves and each other.

quest... well... I guess I really don't give a rat's ass. I did my best and if my best wasn't good enough then maybe someone else more loving and more caring can get through to your hateful old self. LOL. Aw, you know Mamaw loves ya. Now come on over here and give me a little sugar!

Until next month ya'll... <wink>

(If you have any comments or suggestions for this article, you may email them to HelenahandbasketKY@gmail.com)

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Lexington Gay Straight Alliance: All Are Welcome!

by Robert Odom

What: Lexington Gay Straight Alliance

I mean what is it?: A group meeting for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and straight ally students.

Where: At the GLSO on Waller Ave.

When: Tuesday Nights from 7-9pm

Who?: Well, we are part of the GLSO-Wait, you ask a lot of questions. Why don't you just chill for a sec?

Ok, where was I? I guess I'll start off with a couple of stats:

Why are GSAs important?

Growing up lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender comes with a range of challenges, partly because of the nature of high school, and partly because we grow up in a world that is built for the straight and gender conforming. One of the best ways our community has found to get the support and safety we all need is to build our own groups for support. Glen's 2011 National School Climate Survey reports that school Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) are related to a better school environment, "including: hearing fewer homophobic remarks, experiencing less victimization because of sexual orientation and gender expression, being less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation (54.9% of students with a GSA vs. 70.6% of other students) and having a greater sense of belonging to their school community." Still, they found that only 18% of schools in Kentucky have a GSA.

LexGSA:

LexGSA is a weekly meeting for local LGBT and straight ally students to get support, make new friends, and gain leadership skills and knowledge to take back to their schools. Some LexGSA students have been in key leadership roles in their school GSAs. Some come to socialize in a safe environment, because their schools do not yet have a GSA. What-



**Top: GSA members Chris, Nate, Rachel, Rebecca, Tristian, Hannah, McKenna and Cara Beth
Bottom: GSA alums Marc Blevins and Abi Grise**

ever the reason for attending, you will find a welcoming group. We have straight allies, as well as students from a range of romantic attractions and gender identities and expressions. We host dances like the Halloween Dance and the Pride Prom each summer. Some students have even preferred the Pride Prom to their own school's prom. We host leadership trainings through a JustFundKy grant, so that local school GSA leaders are equipped to maintain their organization each year. If you're a local LGBT or Ally student, consider dropping by on Tuesday nights from 7-9pm at the GLSO. We won't bite. Although when mama T (one of our beloved advisors) returns from medical leave, I can't promise you won't get a hug. ☺

8 Things Parents Need to Know When Their Child Comes Out

by Enid Jackowitz, MA, LMHC

1. Along with many other feelings you may be experiencing, there is usually a huge loss of expectations. Like many parents, you may feel the dreams you had for your child will never materialize. That may be true, but given time, new ones will take their place. Give yourself permission to acknowledge your feelings and to grieve for the loss of your expectations.

2. Read a lot. To help you understand the process that many parents go through read, *The Rest of the Way: A Coming Out Story for Parents and Gay Children*. If you are having trouble resolving religious issues, read Mel White's book, *Stranger at the Gate: To Be Gay and Christian in America*, *The Good Book*, by Peter Gomes, or one of Rev John Shelby Spong's books, especially *Living in Sin?: A Bishop Rethinks Human Sexuality and Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism: A Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture*. To answer questions you may have about homosexuality, read *Is it a Choice*, by Eric Marcus. These books will help you understand that: **Your son or daughter did not choose to be gay. It is not your fault that your child is gay. There's nothing wrong with your child, but there is something wrong with our homophobic society.**

3. You may be having difficulty accepting your child's sexual orientation, that's normal, but don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. Remember you are still family and that will never change. Don't let your child's coming out come between you. Let the love you have for him or her be a bridge to a stronger, more loving relationship.

4. If your child wants you to "get over it" and be more accepting, let him or her know that the same way it took time for them to become comfortable with being gay, now you need time to work through your issues as well. This isn't easy for you. Ask for their patience.

5. There's a saying that when kids come out of the closet their parents go into the closet. If you are stuck in the closet find a support group or find a good thera-

pist. Don't isolate yourself. Go to a PFLAG meeting (Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). The parents at PFLAG know what you're going through. They went through it too. They will answer many of your questions and concerns in a nonjudgmental and confidential atmosphere.

6. Don't let your child being gay be the unspoken elephant in the room. Your child wants you to be part of his or her life. Don't shut the door to real communication. Try listening to your child with the ears of your heart, without any preconceived ideas.

7. Once your child comes out to himself or herself, they will have to come to grips with how to live an authentic life in our homophobic society. This is the time your child really needs your support and your love. One abandoned young man once told my husband and me, "How is it that yesterday I was their golden boy, but when my parents found out I was gay, they threw me out of the house."

8. Parents go through a coming out process too. Be patient with yourself. This isn't an easy journey. Be open to learning. The world we live in is a homophobic one, because of that your understanding of homosexuality may be tinged with half-truths and misconceptions. Keep an open mind and an empty cup. ☺

PFLAG Lexington is best known as a support group for parents and families with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ) young and adult sons or daughters. And while this is true, we encourage all LGBTQ persons and allies to join us at our meetings.

We come from different stages and levels of acceptance; uncomfortable, scared and confused to comfortable and supportive. No matter where you lie you are welcome to our confidential and non-judgmental meetings. www.pflaglex.org info@pflaglex.org 859-338-4393

Tested and Ready

LGBT Seniors Face a New Defining Moment

by Troy A. Johnson

Recently at a GLSO potluck for seniors, I heard an 83 year old lesbian say "It is better to be 83 and a lesbian today than it was to be 18 in the 1940's." This was her punctuation mark on a rather disturbing story of being jailed for 30 days because her parents didn't know how to handle her sexuality. After not finding anything to charge her with, the police released her with an admonishment to behave.

Few of us can understand the impact this must have had on this woman, or how it must have felt to feel like she was "the only one like her." However, each generation has its own struggles and defining moments. For her generation it would include Stonewall, sexual liberation, and feminism. Even though we owe her an enormous thank you for paving the way for those of us younger, her generation, the "Silent Generation," often finds themselves cut off from their communities.

Gay men and lesbians are very skilled at protecting themselves from ridicule and harassment, but this protection is often purchased with self-isolation and a reluctance to seek social networks and services for support. Unlike the generations following them, there are many LGBT seniors who carry a crippling fear of persecution for their sexual orientation.

Throughout history's greatest challenges, the gay community has pulled together to "take care of their own." We saw this during the AIDS crisis and now with same-sex marriage. However, as this older generation faces isolation, loneliness, and health concerns, the gay community seems absent when it comes to "taking care of their own."

Across the country there are gay and lesbian advocacy groups educating the community on the cost of growing older, and advocating for legislation that



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places inclusive language in the Older American's Act which would increase services to millions of gay seniors. We are ultimately grateful that organizations like Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Elders (SAGE) are working tirelessly to raise awareness of issues facing gay seniors. However, right here in our own community, there are LGBT seniors who are told by major health care providers their grief of losing a partner is not legitimate because they are LGBT.

Because same-sex couples are not granted federal marriage, they have nearly 1,200 fewer protections under the law. For older LGBT couples this means at the time of a partner's death, the surviving companion cannot receive "survivor benefits." Subsequently, many struggle financially as a result of income loss. Many personal and systemic undercurrents complicate the lives of LGBT seniors, for example they are far less likely to have a partner, family, children, and money than their younger LGBT peers or straight counterparts. Many lesbian couples facing their senior years barely live above the poverty level.

According to the 2010 report "Improving the Lives of LGBT Older Adults" published by SAGE and LGBT Movement Advancement Project (MAP) "The 65+

population in U.S. is expected to double to 80 million in the next 30 years... This growth rate is four times that of the population as a whole, putting increasing pressure on health and long-term care services. Given that about 4.1% of American adults identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, there are an estimated 1.5 million LGB elders today, growing to nearly 3 million by 2030. Lesbians will likely be over-represented in these figures, reflecting both general population trends and the decimation wrought by HIV/AIDS, which disproportionately affected gay men."

What is your defining moment? Will you be part of the generation that overcomes their own internal prejudices and fears of growing old to once again "take care of their own?" With a booming senior population bearing down on the United States, your role in supporting LGBT seniors through old age is beyond vital; not taking action is the equivalent of neglect.

For more information on how you can get involved in making a difference we invite you to join LGBT seniors on July 19th for a potluck dinner at 7:00pm at the Pride Center located on 389 Waller Avenue, Suite 100, Lexington, KY 40504. Space is limited so we ask that you please RSVP to Ginger.Moore.Minder@Gmail.com. 



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LinQ Telephone Directory

HIV/STS Testing, Services and Information

AIDS Volunteers of Lexington (AVOL)	859 225 3000
Health Department, Fayette County	859 288 2437
Health Department, Woodford County	859 873 4541
HIV/AIDS Legal Project	502 584 1254
Moveable Feast	859 252 2867
Northern Ky Region	859 341 4264
UK Adolescent Medicine	859 323 5643

Community and Social Groups

24-Hour Crisis Line	800 929 8000
24-Hour Teen Crisis Line	800 999 9999
Alcoholics Anonymous	859 967 9960
AA/Alcoholic Teens	859 277 1877
Council for Peace and Justice	859 488 1448
Discussion Group	859 253 3233
Fairness of Louisville	502 893 0788
Gay Straight Alliance, Teens	859 266 5904
GLSO Pride Center	859 253 3233
Imperial Court of Kentucky	859 619 7521
International Gay Bowling	859 539 3058
Kentucky Fairness	502 836 5085
Lexington Fairness	859 951 8565
Lexington Human Rights	859 252 4931
Lexington Pride Festival	859 253 3233
PFLAG Lexington	859 338 4393
PFLAG Louisville	502 223 1323
Sister Sound	859 806 0243
Social Services, Lexington	211
Speaker's Bureau	859 266 5904
TransKentucky	cassiemtf@yahoo.com
United Way	859 313 5465

Religious Groups

Lex Friends, Quakers	859 254 3319
Unitarian Universalist Church	859 223 1448

Student Groups

Berea College ACE	859 958 3633
Centre College BGLA	859 238 5332
EKU Alphabet Center	dan_hendrickson13@mymail.eku.edu
Morehead State University	606 783 2294
UK OutSource	859 323 3312

LinQ Calendar

All meetings the Pride Center or Pride Center Calendar

Monday, July 1, 6:30pm

Company Q Drama Troupe @ GLSO Pride Center

Wednesday, July 3, 7:00pm

LGBT Discussion Group

Thursday, July 4, 6:30pm

GLSO Board Meeting

Friday, July 5, 3:00pm

Outloud! Radio Show

Saturday, July 6, 6:30pm

TransKentucky Meeting

Monday, July 8, 6:30pm

Company Q Drama Troupe @ GLSO Pride Center

Wednesday, July 10

Editorial Deadline for LINQ Magazine

7:00pm

LGBT Discussion Group

Friday, July 12, 3:00pm

Outloud! Radio Show

6:30pm

Lexington Gay Geeks Sci-Fi Club

Saturday, July 13, 9:00pm

Kentucky Bourbon Bears Board Meeting

Sunday, July 14, 6:00pm

Imperial Court Meeting

Monday, July 15, 6:30pm

Company Q Drama Troupe @ GLSO Pride Center

Wednesday, July 17, 7:00pm

LGBT Discussion Group

Friday, July 19, 3:00pm

Outloud! Radio Show

7:00pm

Senior's Social Group Potluck

Monday, July 22, 6:30pm

Company Q Drama Troupe @ GLSO Pride Center

Wednesday, July 24, 7:00pm

LGBT Discussion Group

Friday, July 26, 3:00pm

Outloud! Radio Show

6:30pm

Lexington Gay Geeks Sci-Fi Club

Sunday, July 28, 6:00pm

Imperial Court Meeting

Monday, July 29, 6:30pm

Company Q Drama Troupe @ GLSO Pride Center

Wednesday, July 31, 7:00pm

LGBT Discussion Group

Welcome to Reign 32

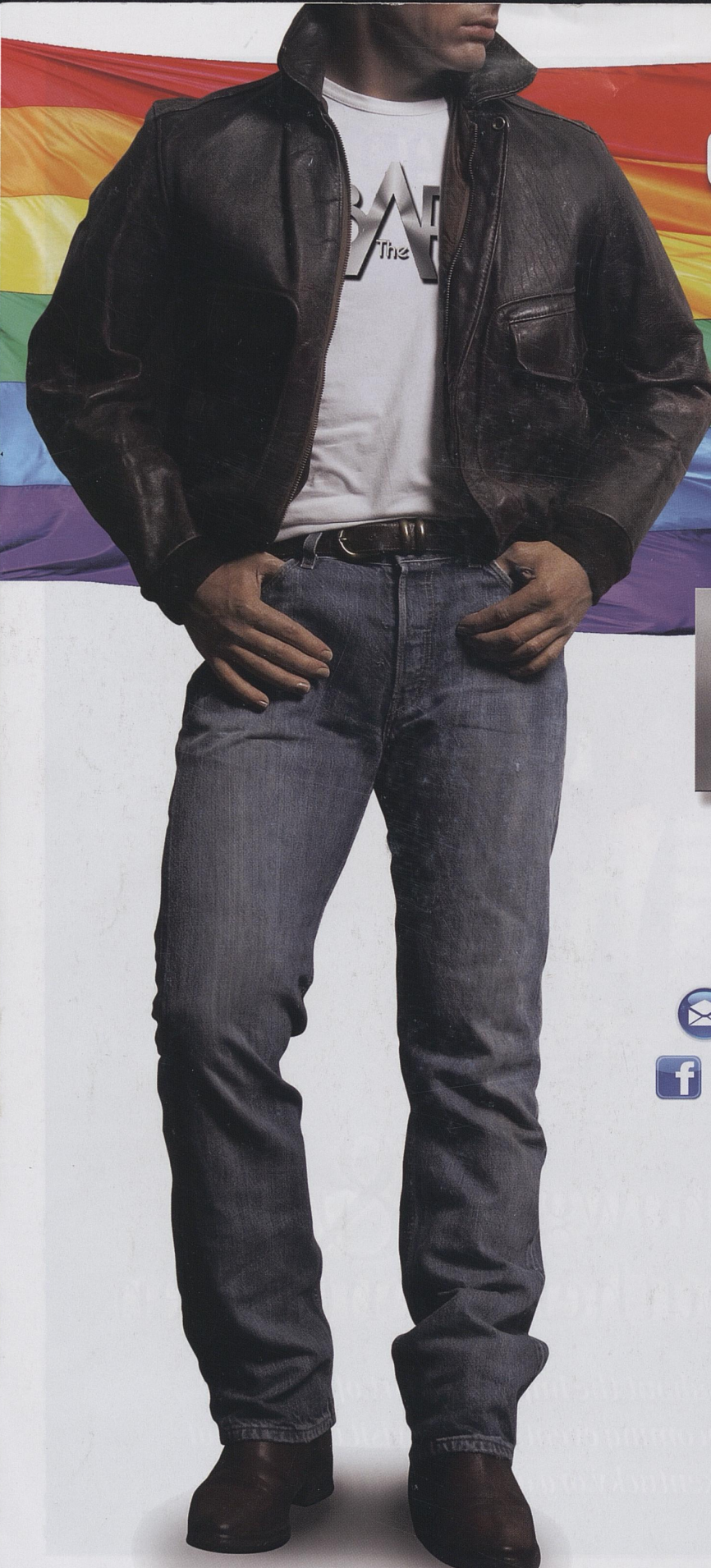


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