
LGBT News

The LGBT Resource Center of the
7 Rivers Region, Inc.

September 2006

Thoughts on Pride from the Chair of the Pride Committee: Daina Skrove

Earlier this year, I was talking with some friends about why we have Pride festivals, what was the specific need. Why have a specific festival to celebrate being LGBT when in their eyes, they are no different than their straight friends, except that their partner is the same gender? I thought about that a lot while we were organizing this year's Pride event. Why are do we need this event, what is the purpose? I'm not sure if everyone on the board was lucky enough to have the experience that I did during the closing hours of the 2006 La Crosse Pridefest.

In its first year back, La Crosse Pride was a very successful event. On Friday, over 90 passengers boarded the Julia Belle Swain steamboat for a relaxing and enjoyable pizza cruise on the Mississippi. Music provided by La Crosse's DJ Scotty wafted through the speakers as Tommy Orrico drew caricatures.

Saturday's festival started with over 25 vendor booths including the 2006 Featured Vendor - Christina Mae Olson. This vendor was the first to return their vendor form to the committee and opened our eyes to the fact that Pride was really going to happen! Music by Ellis, Tommy Orrico, Alexandra Green and the Show Choir flowed throughout the day while My Place Bar hosted their successful Euchre Tournament with 16 participants. The tournament winner happily donated her 1st place winnings back to Pride - Thanks Jen! Throughout the day we hosted pull tab raffle drawings with items donated by Rainbow's End bar, Tommy Orrico, the Radisson and others.

And then they arrived...The kings and Queens! Jayda Cline, Beja, Gosh Alice and more! All of the performances were phenomenal, however only 2 won the title of Mr and Miss Color of the Rainbow. These titles were determined by having performers vote for who they thought was the best performer, on and off the stage. The winners have agreed to be involved in the planning of the 2007 La Crosse Pride Variety show. Congratulations to Mr. Color of the Rainbow 2006 - Reggie of Rochester, MN and Miss Color of the Rainbow 2006 - Shannon DuPree of Milwaukee, WI; we look forward to working with them next year. A Special thanks to Players Bar for sponsoring the show.

Although I don't have any final numbers, it appeared that the Red Ribbon Family Fund Family Picnic was a success! Over 50 people were enjoying bingo and food early afternoon on Sunday. (Editor's note: We will run final numbers for attendance and so on in the October issue of LGBT News.)

So back to the experience that made me realize why we have a LGBT Pride event. As people were leaving, a gentleman came up to me and thanked me profusely for organizing Pride. I told him thanks, and that the committee put a great deal of time and energy into the event and we were very happy with the success. The man stopped me, looked me in the eye and said with the greatest sincerity, "No, really - thank you. Growing up with all the abuse and teasing and everything that I got for being gay in a small town, I never was really ok with being gay. This event makes me believe there really are good people out there, ones that are OK being gay. Thank you for showing me that there is a community here in La Crosse."

Special thanks go to Emily who donated all of her time to organizing and running the bar at the Omni Center, DJ Scotty who donated all of his equipment, time and expertise, volunteers - we couldn't have done it without you, the Pride Committee Members - Reegan Shafer, Kari Marshall, Mike Leach, David Kraabel, Mikel Hampel, Sara Marshall and Alice Benson. And last, and in no way least, thank you to the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center for reviving La Crosse Pride.

Daina Skrove
2006 La Crosse Pride Chair

Pride 2006 Pictures

Watch the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center [blog](#) for pictures from the Pride weekend.

A Weekend with a View!

Lisa Jackson

This past week-end was the [La Crosse PRIDE](#) festival, a celebration of diversity. It afforded me a unique opportunity to see things through not only my own eyes, but through the eyes of some people gathered there.

Friday night kicked off with a pizza cruise on the steam paddle boat [Julia Belle Swain](#). Good music, good food and good company were the order of the evening. The weather was a bit on the gloomy side, but that was more than offset by the jovial mood of those aboard. I saw people that I have not seen for quite some time. I also met some people that I had not crossed paths with before. Scotty kept the good times rolling with a non-stop stream of music.

We were treated to a couple of impromptu performances, one by Miss Jada Kline and the other by Alexandra Green. Jada heated up the atmosphere with her presence and style. Alexandra created smiles in musical form to share with us as she sang and played her guitar. Indeed, to see her walk across the floor literally lit up the room. She was wearing Cinderella-like "glass" slippers that flashed rainbow colored lights as she walked!

I had invited two dear friends from out of town to our celebration. They came for the weekend, so some of the "views" I will share with you are things I saw through their eyes as well as my own. Now here I must tell you that they are recently "out" and have only lately come together as a couple. This was their first PRIDE celebration.

After the boat cruise, many of those aboard continued their celebration downtown. I was in the mood for dancing after all the good music I heard through the evening. My two friends and several others who had been on the cruise met at Player's. The atmosphere was festive and as the evening progressed, the dance floor filled. When midnight rolled around, I finally called it an evening, mindful of the fact I had to be up early the next morning. Saturday was to be a very full day!

Saturday dawned somewhat overcast but not raining. After my required intake of coffee, I headed toward Onalaska, to the Omni Center. As I walked in, my gaze moved from place to place, envisioning and hoping that the somewhat empty hall would later be filled. What would PRIDE be without people to celebrate? I kept my fingers crossed.

The next few hours were busy. I staffed the table for the LGBT Resource Center of the 7 Rivers Region for awhile. People started to drift in and my spirits lifted with each person who passed through the doorway. "Want to take a chance on our chest?" became a commonly heard phrase at our booth. It definitely caught the attention of some. After all, you do have to have an "ice breaker" when you are selling raffle tickets for a beautiful hand crafted and tooled leather blanket trunk!

Entertainment was great. Once again DJ Scotty kept the tunes filling the air. We had a speaker from Fair Wisconsin giving us information and letting us know why we should vote no in the upcoming election on November 7 on the amendment to ban civil unions and marriage.

[Ellis](#) took the stage at 1:30 and rocked the house with her magnificent voice and style. Having heard her before, it was most definitely not a part of the show I wanted to miss! Yes, I admit. I'm a fan. She was kind enough to autograph a CD for me and pose for a couple pictures. It was wonderful of her to appear at our PRIDE celebration, as she had another engagement that same evening, with a lot of travel in between.

There was a Euchre tournament, hosted by My Place Bar, going on outside at the picnic tables. More and more people started to come in, wander around, talk to our vendors, look at the wares available for purchase and just generally enjoy the celebration. No, the Omni Center was not packed, but we had a fairly steady flow of people.

As the afternoon progressed, we were treated to the vocal stylings of Tommy Orrico and later Alexandra Green. Both sang and played guitar, presenting us with original compositions and tunes. I thoroughly enjoyed both of these performances.

In the late afternoon the Show Choir razzle dazzled us all with their style and panache'. You could not help but want to move and tap your feet. I felt like I was at a Broadway performance!

As the afternoon waned into the evening, the Omni Center became rather empty and my spirits drooped a bit. "Where is everyone?" I thought to myself. I hoped that maybe everyone had just gone to eat and that closer to the time for the evening's variety show, we would have a larger turn out.

After another stint at the LGBT Resource Center booth and eating a bite, I wandered around, just watching and looking. Some people were looking at the [Love Makes a Family](#) display. It was interesting to watch their faces as they looked at the pictures and read the information with each one. Love does, indeed, make a family. The old saying goes something like "You can't choose your blood relations but you can choose your family". I know that my "family" is made up of both those related to me by blood as well as a few people very dear to my heart. Families come in many shapes, colors, sizes and genders, and any combination of these. Love is the glue that binds them.

The Omni Center filled with people and an air of anticipation filled the room as time grew closer for the Variety Show. Drag Kings and Queens strolled, strutted, sauntered and sashayed through the hall, lending to it their style and flair. Once again, DJ Scotty stepped up and kept the show going smoothly. Our MC for the evening, Regan, aka Tammy WhyNot, made the announcement of the show, seats filled, the room darkened and the show began. There was something for everyone. Each performer gave their all and then some. Whistling and woo wooing ensued as long lines for tipping the performers formed. Applause thundered through the audience and cheers rang out.

Seated directly in front of me were my two friends. While they were thoroughly wrapped up in one another, they were also wrapped up in the evening, the entertainment and the events of the day. They didn't say a whole lot during the day. They were drinking in the events of the day, watching people and in general just having a good time.

After the show, I joined some friends at Rainbow's End for a post-show celebratory cocktail. Home and sweet slumber called my name, so home I went after a discussion of the day's events.

Getting up and motivated on Sunday was a bit of a chore. I was feeling a bit sluggish, but after my requisite coffee and a shower, I motivated and went to the [Red Ribbon Family Fund Picnic](#) to meet my out of town friends. After partaking of some really good food, we played Bingo.

During the Bingo game, my friends were talking about the show and the events of the weekend. They said that this celebration had helped them to realize that we, as a community, are very diverse and from all walks of life. They had been feeling a bit isolated and somewhat alone in being gay. They said this PRIDE gathering "opened their eyes". They were most impressed with the Love Makes a Family display.

The weekend's Celebration of Diversity was a success, at least from my viewpoint. Not a huge rip roaring success, but a quiet and satisfying one. It is one that can and needs to be improved on though. Next year will be bigger and better, but not without people. It takes people to come, people to volunteer, people to entertain, people to enjoy and people to care. Without people, there is no PRIDE celebration. Let's make next year more crowded, noisier and more joyful. We have already started planning for next year. NOW is the time to begin making it better. **You** are needed.

Interview with Kris Clough Stained Glass Artist

The Center has a new sign. If you have not yet seen it in our front window, here is a [picture](#) of it. I interviewed the artist who created it, Kris Clough.

LGBT News: How did you get interested in stained glass? How long have you been working with stained glass and how did you learn to create stained glass works?

Kris: In undergrad, I took a couple of glass blowing classes and loved doing it. Glass can look one way when the source of light is coming from the front and another when it comes from the back. It's a property that I love about this medium. My neighbor from Madison took a stained glass course offered at one of the glass studios in town. I saw her project and asked if she could teach me. She said no problem, find a project that you want to do and then we can work on it. My father was a tech ed teacher and taught me how to do wood working. These skills have crossed over into my glass work. The first project I made was for my future Goddaughter, although I didn't know that she was going to be my Goddaughter at the time. I designed a Noah's ark stained glass. That was about 3 years ago. As far as how I learned how to design my pieces, that is an interesting question. There are some basic rules for strength of the piece and how you cut the glass, but these vary depending on how big it is, if you are framing it in a wood frame, if it is going to be inside or outside, or attached to a door and what method you are using to cut the glass. Other than my glass blowing classes, I never took art or design classes in high school or college, so where the rest of the designing comes from, I don't know. If you would ask me to pick out a wardrobe, I would tell you to ask my sister.

LGBT News: What other kind of projects have you worked on? Anything really big or really small or for another organization?

Kris: Most of the projects I do end up being gifts for friends and family. They range from a camping scene, doves with interlocking rings, delphiniums whose stems interlock into rings, dining room table scene, to lamp shades. Other projects get donated to charity groups. These have included a golden retriever and a 3-D pig. Many of the projects are about 14"x16". Some are around 6"x8". The biggest two are about 18"x27", which is the size of the resource center's stained glass. The complexity of a piece can vary greatly. For example the Center's stained glass is 33 pieces, whereas the other piece that is the same size, has 178 pieces, with half of a wine bottle, the stem of a wine glass, a glass plate, and 3-D orange slices. All of the projects that I make are custom designed for the person(s) or group that they are designed for. I occasionally use patterns over again.

LGBT NEWS: What prompted you to create a sign for the Center? How long did it take you to create it?

Kris: I was helping paint the Resource Center and started talking about the lamp shades that I was working on for my sister's wedding present. I brought one of them down and showed the group that was there. Daina, who is one of the Resource Center's board members, approached me and asked me if I would want to make one for the Center. I used the Center's logo as the starting point and then added in the triangle and circle with the male, female, and trans symbols. The wording and star are actually sandblasted and painted, rather than individual pieces of glass. The time it takes from start to finish is hard to determine as most of the design stage occurs when I'm trying to fall asleep and then I have to put it on paper. I'll sometimes let a

design sit for a week before I decide to make changes. Without design time, the stained glass probably took about 20 hours. I also made the wood frame that it is in.

LGBT News: Anything else you want to tell the newsletter reader about yourself?

Kris: Currently, stained glass is one of the hobbies that I have. I have had several people ask me about selling them. I'm not sure that if I started selling them, if I would enjoy it as much. My other hobbies include woodworking, softball, biking, hockey, hiking, and sewing.

Center Activities for September 2006

There is still time to buy a raffle ticket for a chance to win a beautiful hand crafted leather and wood trunk and to see the **Love Makes a Family** exhibit if you missed it at Pride. Also, check the Center [website calendar](#) for a link to activities of the Pioneer group of southwest Wisconsin.

Trunk Raffle:

The drawing for the [hand crafted leather trunk](#) will take place at the People's Food Coop on September 10, 2006 at 1:00 pm. So your last chance to purchase a ticket will be that day. Stop by the Center to purchase tickets, or email us at info@7riverslgbt.org or by phone at: 608.784.0452 .

Love Makes a Family:

The **Love Makes a Family** display, sponsored by the Center, will be at the Winona State University Library until September 9th and at UW-L's Port 'O Call from September 11 to 22nd. See the Center website calendar for more details: <http://www.7riverslgbt.org/calendar.htm>

Women's Book Group:

The women's books group took the summer off, but they are meeting again. The group is reading **Elegant Gathering of White Snows** for this month. The discussion will take place at 4:30 on Sunday, September 24th. See the Center website calendar for more details: <http://www.7riverslgbt.org/calendar.htm>

Fair Wisconsin Steps Up the Pace

While we were at Pride 2006, over 500 people in other cities canvassed for the "No on the Amendment" campaign. But our turn is coming. The Fair Wisconsin field office is organizing canvasses every Saturday morning and Monday evening until the November 7 election. Contact

Rob, the Fair Wisconsin field organizer for more information on canvassing on these dates. Rob can be reached by email at: rob.nipko@fairwisconsin.com

As a side note, I can tell you that canvassing is not actually as scary as you might think. I just canvassed on September 2 and found that the hardest part of the event was having underestimated how much water to bring along! The scripts provided by Fair Wisconsin gave me a framework to build on so that my spiel came naturally. My plan is to canvass every Saturday from now until the election. It is the least I can do to help keep discrimination against me and my friends out of the state constitution. Come join us.

If you don't feel you can canvass, Rob says he needs volunteers to help in a variety of jobs in addition to going door to door. Contact him to find out how you can work booths at events, make phone calls, or help out around the office.

You can keep track of Fair Wisconsin events in the state and in our area by checking the statewide calendar at: <http://www.fairwisconsingroups.com/>

Fair Wisconsin hours at the field office at 303 Pearl, Monday - Friday, from around 9:00 am until at least 6:00 or 7:00 pm. Drop by to chat with Rob and volunteer.

Second Annual Center Rummage Sale

The second annual 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center rummage sale was a success. We made \$800.00 for the Center!

Thanks are due to a lot of people who helped:

- **Thanks** to Dan Linton, that garage sale maven, who organized the sale and made sure there was little merchandise left over to end up at Goodwill.
- **Thanks** to Jeanne Fischer who once again allowed us to move into her garage for two months while we collected things for the sale.
- **Thanks** to all you folks who donated cool stuff to our garage sale.
- **Thanks** to all of you who stopped by the sale and bought that cool stuff.
- **Thanks** to the board members and volunteers who staffed the sale.