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# LGBT News

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

**June 2007!**

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## Remember Our Garage Sale

It's that season. Clean out the closets, straighten the garage, weed out your unused items and put them aside for the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center 3rd annual Garage Sale which will be on August 3rd and 4th. Our summer garage sale has been an important and profitable fundraiser for us the last couple of years, so let's make this year's even bigger and better. Ask your friends to donate items for the garage sale too. When it gets closer to the dates, just give our Center a call at 608-784-0452 to get information on how to deliver your items or to get them picked up.

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## Jan Case Art Show

Jan Case's pastel paintings will be on display May 18 to June 21 at the Rochester Civic Theatre. Read more here:

[http://www.7riverslgbt.org/newsletter/news06\\_07/jan\\_case\\_art.pdf](http://www.7riverslgbt.org/newsletter/news06_07/jan_case_art.pdf).

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## It's Summer and Time for Pride

The theme for La Crosse Pride 2007 is Bridging Diversity. It will return to the South Side Oktoberfest Grounds on August 18th from 11:00 am to Midnight.

The intent is to have a more family oriented Pride this year and there will be many activities for kids and adults. Kids will have the opportunity to win a fish, jump in our *jump and slide*, pick a duck for a prize, find prizes in a sawdust pile, and much more! Adults and kids alike can joust each other on the inflatable joust. Or you can sit back and enjoy music or relax with friends.

Adult admission will be \$5. Kids under 12 can experience La Crosse Pride and activities for free!

This year we will be donating a portion of our profits to a non-profit organization that is voted on by the Pride goers, so make sure you vote for your favorite organization.

On July 21st, we will be hosting a first annual La Crosse Pride - Motorcycle Poker Run (cars are invited) and Bicycle Pride Ride. Watch for more information for this fundraiser.

**Help create La Crosse Pride 2007. Volunteers are wanted for the fun and important job of organizing Pride 2007. Call the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center to volunteer! Check the [calendar](#) for meeting dates and times.**

## Ongoing Center Activities

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### Weekly Activities

#### **Coulee Region LGBT Group for Adults**

We have recently formed a group for persons over age 20 to connect with others in the LGBT community. We look forward to engaging in a variety of activities, from potlucks to topical discussions, to camping. Our primary purpose is to provide a safe space where people can meet and pursue activities that they find meaningful. The group meets every week, and welcomes anyone that is LGBT, questioning their identity, or is an ally. We currently meet on Tuesday's at 6:00 pm, at the Center on 303 Pearl St. If you have any questions or would like to be added to the group's listserv, please call Connie at (608) 784-0452.

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### Monthly Activities

#### **Gender Queer/Transgender Gathering at the Center:**

Do you identify as gender queer? How about Transgender? Do you ever feel like you don't fit in because of your gender identity or expression? Then come to a monthly discussion group at the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center. The group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00. For more information contact: vanroose.kath@uwlax.edu. For upcoming meeting dates, check the Center [website calendar](#)

**Genderqueer** - A gender variant person whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. This person may want to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system.

**Transgender** - A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex.

## Women's Book Group:

The women's books group will **not** meet during the summer, but watch your newsletter for the new reading schedule which will begin in the fall. Group meeting dates will also be on the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center website calendar for more details: [website calendar](#)

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## Social Security and Retirement Planning - Part One - a brief history. By Christina Mae Olson, CFP®

This is the first in a series of articles about Social Security. I believe that we will always have some sort of social security welfare program to rely on. I believe this, in part, because of our history. We have always had some sort of state and/or federal plan in place to help fund the retirement needs of our elderly citizens.

Our country has a long history embracing the belief that government should play a role in taking care of its aging and disabled citizens. One early piece of colonial legislation - The Poor Laws (modeled after the English Poor Law of 1601) - required taxation of all citizens to support the destitute. The recipients of the relief were called the "worthy poor." The unworthy poor received nothing. The law mandated that local communities would be responsible for the welfare of poor people.

Thomas Paine, radical politician and fervent feminist (!) wrote many pieces about social justice. His last pamphlet, *Agrarian Justice* (1795), called for the establishment of a public system of economic security for the "new nation". His proposal would establish the first inheritance/estate tax. Funds from this 10% tax would pay a one-time payment to every 21 year old in the country to get them started in life. Additionally, every person over age 50 would get an annual stipend equivalent to about \$25. Most people did not live past age 50 in 1795.

In 1862, the federal government passed the Civil War Pension bill. This provided for lifetime disability pay to civil war veterans. The Civil War Pension program developed over the years and eventually paid retirement income to civil war veterans and even to surviving spouses of deceased veterans. The last surviving spouse collected her final payment from the Civil War Pension plan in 1999. In 1893, the US government paid out \$165 million in benefit payments to Civil War Pension beneficiaries. This was the largest line item for the government comprising 37% of the federal budget! The Civil War Pension provided the framework for the future Social Security program. (Note: Confederate soldiers and their families were barred from ever receiving any payment from the Civil War Pension program.)

In 1882, piano and organ manufacturer - the Alfred Dolge Company, was the first company to start a deferred compensation plan. Dolge held back 1% of employees' pay and credited their accounts with 6% interest annually. By 1900, there were only 5 companies in the United States that offered pension benefits to their retiring employees.

During the third economic depression (the Great Depression of the 1930's) - state welfare pensions came into existence. 30 states had some sort of pension legislation in place before the Social Security Act in 1935. These benefited fewer than 3% of the elderly population - with the average benefit of 65 cents per day.

There were a few significant private movements that attempted to provide for pension income for the elderly. Louisiana Governor Huey Long, elected to the US Senate in 1930, created the Share Our Wealth program. Share Our Wealth called upon the federal government to guarantee every family in the nation an annual income of \$5,000. He also proposed limiting private fortunes to \$50 million, legacies to \$5 million, and annual incomes to \$1 million. Everyone over age 60 would receive an old-age pension. His ideas never made it into law but Share Our Wealth clubs were formed all over the country. By 1935 the movement claimed 27,000 local clubs with 7.7 million members. In California, The Townsend Plan was the brainchild of a 66 year old doctor, Francis Townsend. He was unemployed with no savings. The basic idea of the Townsend Plan was that the government would provide a pension of \$200 per month to every citizen age 60 and older. The pensions would be funded by a 2% national sales tax. Townsend published his plan in a local Long Beach newspaper in early 1933 and within about two years there were 7,000 Townsend Clubs around the country with more than 2.2 million members actively working to make the Townsend Plan the nation's old-age pension system. Upton Sinclair, known for his exposé on meat packing industry called *The Jungle*, was a political anarchist, socialist, and famous muckraker. In 1933, Sinclair, along with a group of supporters in California, created EPIC (End Poverty in California). EPIC was a 12 point plan that included taxing the rich to pay \$50/monthly pension to every Californian over age 60. It was so popular that the state Democratic Party persuaded Sinclair to become a democrat so he could run for governor. He lost the three-way race earning 37% of the vote.

Other proposals such as The Ham and Eggs Plan, The Bigelow Plan and The General Welfare Federation Act were all precursors to the final Social Security Act of 1935. Globally, there were 34 other nations that had federal social welfare pension programs in place. The US certainly was ripe for developing its own unified plan.

Next month, I'll discuss how Social Security and Medicare came into existence.

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## Wish List

### Annual Rummage Sale!

Time to clean out those closets and put aside items you don't need for the 3rd Annual 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center Rummage Sale. This has always been a successful fundraiser for our Center, thanks to all of your donations. We have set the dates for August 3rd and 4th, 2007. When you're ready to turn over your items call our Resource Center at (608) 784-0452 and leave your name and phone number. We will get back to you to make arrangements for pick up or drop off of the items.

### Here's what YOU can do:

The Center is working on several projects and would greatly appreciate help from volunteers. . We're also working on expanding our resources.

1. There are many persons in the LGBT community that have only recently learned that La Crosse has a Center; so, it's quite important that we advertise more expansively. We need volunteers for distributing flyers and brochures.
2. We're going to publish a directory of LGBT supportive organizations. We're beginning to survey organizations, and we're going to need help from start-to-finish with a variety of tasks.
3. We're making an information-kit for transsexuals, and we could use assistance with researching information and writing articles within the kit.

If you are interested in volunteering, or if you have any questions, please call the Center. Thank you!

-Center Coordinator

### Here's what we need for the Center:

1. 4-5 card tables (for Euchre night and other activities)
2. TV
3. coffee carafes
4. large coffee urn
5. sturdy computer desk
6. desktop scanner/copier
7. books and videos for our lending library
8. decorations for the center, i.e. pictures or poster that fit our theme and mission
9. bean bag chairs!

