
LGBT News

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

May 2009

Fair Wisconsin is Looking for Volunteers

Tim Ewing, from Fair Wisconsin, is looking for committed same sex couples residing in the 92nd Assembly District that would be interested in working with Fair Wisconsin. They can contact Tim Ewing, Outreach Coordinator, Fair Wisconsin, 608.441.0143 ext. 313.

Director's Column: Center News

What a juxtaposition of events today (4/30/09) has proven to be here at the Center. I was blessed to visit with a loving committed lesbian couple from Iowa who stopped in looking for rainbow decorations/favors for their upcoming wedding on May 30. They have been together for over twenty some odd years and are now finally after all this time able to be legally wed in their home state-amazing! Not only do I love planning events and decorating-it was an honor that they chose to stop in to the Center and see what we have to offer the community. In complete contradiction to what this loving couple represented to me was a letter to the editor in the La Crosse Tribune stating that the front page article on two loving lesbian couples from Wisconsin planning on marrying in Iowa was offensive and ruined her day this past Sunday. I met the couple and I read the letter. I saw a lasting loving connection between two beautiful souls that have waited their lifetimes for the honor of legally marrying one another. I do not see how that can ruin anyone's day. In fact it made mine!

It is because of stories similar to the one above that the Center strives to bridge connections throughout our communities and make equality a reality not just a dream. We are fortunate to have great community support and have a steady stream of individuals interested in helping the Center fulfill its mission and do the work. Thank you to everyone who has contributed financially, given of your time and talents, and for believing in the importance of having a thriving visible LGBT Center in the tri-state area.

GALAXY, as you know, became a program of the Center in March. We have had 13 different youth attend GALAXY, some being past youth wanting to check out the program, and new youth to GALAXY. It has been enjoyable getting to work with the youth and meeting future leaders for social justice. We have made collages, played games, shared about ourselves, and more. Currently, we are making linoleum carvings for ink prints. The theme was something that makes you feel prideful. We will finish carving them on May 5th and begin printing our carvings. If you have craft materials, items, or ideas please feel free to share them with GALAXY. We would love to help you remove clutter and be able to make beautiful projects in the process.

This weekend is GALAXY's first trip to attend the Young Womyn's Empowerment Conference hosted by Project Q of the Milwaukee LGBT Center. I am taking four young women to attend this event. It is a three day weekend filled with programming, workshops, and more. My partner, Dee, is presenting on how to change oil and a tire and I will be presenting on Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships. I am excited for our first field trip and look forward to more opportunities for the youth.

Please mark your calendars and save the following dates:

- Saturday, August 22-La Crosse Pride Festival
- Saturday, October 10, the Center will be hosting our Second Annual Silent Rally for Equality at noon and in the evening our Second Annual Coming Out For Equality Gala Event.

As we make progress we will experience back lash for our successes. It is the nature of the work, but if we stand side by side as equals we can and will make it through this historical time. Thank you for all you do everyday by simply being you.

Belief,
Rosanne

Upcoming Center Activities

Check the Center [website calendar](#) for all events.

LGBT Video

When: Every Saturday in May, 11:00 a.m. See the [calendar](#) for titles.

Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl

Fish Fry

When: May 15th

Where: The Eagle's, 228 5th Street South, La Crosse. All tips, raffle purchases, and good karma brought by you goes to help keep the Center going! Come join us for some fish, chicken, shrimp, or even a good ol' corn dog.

Brat Sale

When: May 16th

Where: Festival Foods, 30 Copeland Avenue, La Crosse. All proceeds will go to benefit the Center and our fantabulous programs and cozy pride filled space right downtown on Pearl Street. We will have delicious Festival Brats and Sirloin Burgers, chips, icy Cokes, and pride waiting to serve you-so stop by and have a brat!

Guy's Time: a monthly get together for all persons who identify as male.

When: Friday, May 22, 2009

Where: Contact the Center for the location

A monthly get together for gay men to come out and enjoy an evening of conversation and new connections. All men welcome. The first meeting will be held on Friday, May 22, from 6-8 pm. For more information please contact Rosanne at 608-784-0452.

Women's Potluck Group

When: Saturday, May 23, 6:30 p.m.

Where: For more information please contact Rosanne at 608-784-0452.

Out and About Group Activity

When: Saturday, May 23, 2009, Meet at the Center at 12:30 p.m.

Where: Riverside Amusements, 1304 Interchange Place, La Crosse. All participants will need to cover the cost for any activities they would like to enjoy. They have go carts, mini golf, a batting cage, and a snack bar. If it is raining we will have a back up activity so if you want to get Out & About-I look forward to seeing you on Saturday, May 23rd!

The Resource Center will be Closed

When: Monday, May 25

Ongoing Center Activities

Weekly Activities

GALAXY, a group for youth ages 14-19

**When: Every Tuesday 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. AND every Saturday 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse**

LGBTQ Parents Group

**When: Every Wednesday 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.
Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse**

Drop-in Group

**When: Every Thursday 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse**

Bi-weekly Activities

AA Group

**When: Every other Friday at 7:00 p.m.
Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse**

Just as Glenda was Dorothy's support in OZ this group is the equivalent for LGBT people struggling with drug & alcohol addictions and issues. If you are looking for support and a safe place to be yourself as you deal with your drug & alcohol issues -please join us. For more information please contact: Aaron at 608-788-1508

Monthly Activities

PGLAG

When: First Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.
Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse

Gender Queer/Transgender Gathering at the Center:

When: First Wednesday 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 303 Pearl Street, La Crosse

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 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.

Drag Show at UW-L

Friday, May 8th is the annual UW-L Drag. This year it takes place in the LOST City: Atlantis. TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CARTWRIGHT INFORMATION COUNTER NOW!! GET THEM EARLY TO AVOID STANDING IN LINE!

Tickets are:
\$5 for students (from ANY campus)
\$10 for community members and faculty and staff

All tips collected from this event will go towards GALAXY. GALAXY is a group for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning youth ages 14 to 19 who want to hang out with other LGBTQ teens and discuss issues relevant to LGBTQ teens. GALAXY creates a safe and drug free space where kids can freely discuss issues, participate in activities that allow them to become educated about important issues, and to just be who they are as unique spectacular individuals.

Deconstructing the Screen Door: Intimate Partner Violence Assessment

Monday, June 1, 2009, 9:00-12:30 with registration and sign-in beginning at 8:30

Registration fee: \$20.00

Presented by Rebecca Waggoner Kloek, Anti-Violence Program Director OutFront Minnesota

The training will help participants begin the process of getting away from "screening out" language and moving to "assessment" language to ensure safety and access for those who identify as part of the LGBTQI Community.

We will also have a LGBTQI panel sharing experiences.

Participants are asked to bring any assessment/intake tools or strategies that they currently use.

Save the Date and watch for registration materials, coming soon!

Planning for "LEGAL STRANGERS" - Part 2 By Christina Mae Olson, CFP®

Same sex couples may now get legally married in many countries: Belgium, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain and Sweden. In the US it is now legal in Massachusetts and Connecticut and Iowa. Dozens of other countries legally authorize domestic partners or civil unions. If you get legally married in one of these places then your marriage will also be recognized in Aruba, France, Israel, and some places in the US (New York, Washington DC, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont and Connecticut).

My partner, Michelle, and I have decided to get married in Black Hawk County, Iowa. We know full well that if we decide to stay in Wisconsin this marriage won't net us any financial gain. I feel, however, that our marriage will carry symbolic weight for future legislatures here when discussing human rights and equal rights issues. I will happily and proudly display our marriage license knowing that some governing body thought we were as equally deserving as straight couples to be legally married. Many good things will come from our marriage. I hope that one would be the reversal of the Wisconsin marriage statute that renders a marriage in Iowa illegal. I hope we won't be fined \$10,000 under the statute or have to serve 90 days in jail just because we get married elsewhere.

Married or not, we are "legal strangers" in the eyes of the law in Wisconsin. Last month I wrote about various legal documents that couples need to protect themselves and their assets: **PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS, POWERS OF ATTORNEY (DURABLE AND HEALTH CARE) and LIVING WILLS.**

Here are some other legally enforceable ways you can protect yourselves:

- **POD designation** - this is for bank accounts and other investment accounts. This means "payable on death" (can also be TOD or "transfer on death"). This designation means your account balance will move immediately to your designee at your death - bypassing probate. Your funds are under your 100% control while you are alive but pass directly to your POD or TOD when you die. Naming a *beneficiary* on your accounts and policies, if available, will also allow your assets to pass to whomever you please outside of the probate process.

- **Insurance** - you won't be able to pass your assets freely to your partner without paying estate taxes or even capital gain taxes on appreciated property. Life insurance can help pay the difference so you won't have to sell the property to come up with these taxes when your partner dies and leaves you his/her estate.
- **JTWROS** - "Joint Tenants with Rights of Survivorship." This is a great way to title property as a couple. You each own 100% of the property under JTWROS. Be careful that you aren't down as "tenants in common" as this means you each own a specific percentage of your property (50% - 50%, for example). If you are joint tenants and one of you dies - your partner's 50% would go to their legal heirs and not you! You don't want to find yourself arguing with an "in-law" that wants to sell their 50% of your house once your partner dies!
- **Wills.** You must have a will - if you want to give property to your partner (or someone other than your blood related family) when you die. The wishes you lay out in your will trump any law that might contradict it. Without a will, your things will be divided up by state law - and go to your parents, siblings, children, aunts and uncles and cousins. If you want all of your things to go to your lover then the best way to make that happen is to leave it all to her/him in your will. Please have a lawyer draw up your will. **NOTE:** remember to revise your will if you split up with your partner!
- **Second parent adoption.** This has been done in Wisconsin. Consult with your lawyer. Two legal parents are better than one. You can also have a legal "guardianship agreement" or "shared custody agreement" drawn up to show your intent to have your children raised by both of you.
- **Disposition of Final Remains.** If you want a particular (non-relative) person to have the decision making power over what to do with your body when you die (cremation versus burial, for example) you can complete this form: http://www.funerals.org/attachments/125_WIDesigAgent.pdf. It will allow you to name your partner as the one who carries out your wishes after you die. Remember that powers of attorney die with you. Your personal representative on your POA's cannot make decisions about your body after you die.

Lambda Legal - <http://www.lambdalegal.org> - has wonderful tools for learning more about these things. You can request the TAKE THE POWER - TOOLS FOR LIFE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING booklet from them. Their Midwest Regional office is in Chicago: 312-763-4413. You can also call their help desk toll free at 866-542-8336 for more information about protecting yourselves, your children and your assets.

Chris Olson is a licensed financial planner with a fee-only practice. You may contact her at CMoney@centurytel.net or 608-525-9818.



If you have comments on this article, please send them to Chris at the email address above, NOT to the LGBT Newsletter.

Opportunities to Help Your Center

There are new items on our Wish List. Check here for the complete [Wish List](#).
[Volunteer](#) for some fun, fundraising activities for the Center.

Become a member!

Your membership in the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center makes it possible for LGBT folks to have a presence in our community and to support the collaborative work we do with other organizations in the 7 Rivers Region. Your membership supports LGBT visibility! Please join us now by filling out [the membership form](#) and mailing it to the Center. Membership also comes with goodies from our Community Partners.