
LGBT News

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

November 2009



Happy birthday to us, Happy birthday to us, Happy birthday
dear Center, Happy Birthday to us!


In recognition of the Center having a physical office space for 5 years, please consider sending in a birthday card and a \$5 donation in recognition of one of your favorite LGBT people! We continue forward because of people like you. Thank you for your support and love through the years!

Save the dates.

Join friends of the Center for [an LGBT Holiday Tour](#). Make Your Yuletide Gay on Sunday, December 13, 2009 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. See the events page for more information.

Mark your calendar now and be sure to join other members of the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center for the Annual Meeting on January 9, 2010. Watch the December newsletter for place and time.



Remember, join the I  My Center campaign.
Turn in your [pledge card](#) and send it and your pledge money to the Center

Warm For The Holidays 2

The Center will be collecting donations for the ARCW-La Crosse again this year. Together we can make the holidays a little brighter for our neighbors!

The items we are collecting are:
Laundry Soap
Toiletries
Shampoo

Cleaning Products

Paper Towels

Toilet Paper

Please drop off your donations to 303 Pearl Street, by December 11th.

Director's Column: Thanks!

Thank you to everyone who joined us in October at the Silent Rally For Equality. We had 90+ people and 3 dogs for the rally. It was a brisk windy time, but well worth the investment in making a collective statement for equality and to promote acceptance of all people. Later in the evening we held our 2nd Annual Coming Out for Equality Gala Event. It was another successful celebratory finish to our events in recognition of National Coming Out day. I would like to send appreciation to our table sponsors: Johns, Flaherty, & Collins; Impulse; Midwest Family Broadcasting; My Place; Chris Olson & Michelle Coen Pre-Wedding Party; Trish Harvey & Teri Staloch; Bonnie Striegel & Jan Case; and our fabulous board members who attended the evening with colleagues, friends, and family.

We held our first Equality 5K Run/Walk and it was another brisk morning, but we had a nice turn out for our first attempt. Thank you to the walkers, runners, and dogs that attended our first 5K. Pam's Printing in Brownsville made our first annual 5K t-shirts which look great and help get our website out there for other like minded folk to visit and get involved. Since my first day here at the Center, there continues to be so many people, experiences, and more to be grateful for. The blessings are bountiful. Thank you all for your part in that.

Vroooooom! Fasten your seat belt for a big finish to 2009 with the Center! In true style we are continuing to create events, programming, and the Center space necessary to serve you, our constituents. So feel free to develop a "me, me, me attitude" and stop by, visit, and see what is shaking and what we are missing in our daily Center adventures.

Our Christa Matter Memorial Library has been taking off with wonderful donations of books, DVDs, CDs, and more from our fabulous Center members, friends, and supporters. If you have some great reads, informational books, and more lying around, we do have a great home for them, right here, in our library. As an added bonus you can receive a receipt for your donation.

We have many wonderful activities coming up to help avoid the seasonal blues and blahs. There is a little something for everyone. I hope to see you at these great events. We have our first Holiday Home Tour: Make Your Yuletide Gay; 2nd Annual New Year's Eve Drag Show with Illusions & Friends; Out & Abouts; Movie Marathon; and more. Come out, come out and meet new friends, reacquaint with old friends, and join in the fun.

In recognition of the holidays and the difficulties many of us encounter during this time of year, we will be hosting a Rainbow Thanksgiving Potluck Feast on Thursday, November 19th. Call for details or to RSVP, 608-784-0452.

The Center is all about you, so come partake in the many treasures and joy. I look forward to seeing you.

Peace & belief,
Rosanne

Upcoming Center Activities

November Out + About

When: Friday, November 27, 2009 at 4:30 p.m.

Where: Rotary Lights Parade and Park Opening

Meet at Center at 4:30 p.m., Parade starts at 5:00 p. m. All age event, bring your friends and family. Feel free to bring a canned food donation or a small monetary donation for entry in to the park, if you can. More information: Rosanne 608-784-0452

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

When: Friday, November 27, 2009. Following the Out & About 7-9 p.m.

Where: 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 3030 Pearl.

Questions or to RSVP call Mike 608-385-5753 or Josh 608-790-7606

Holiday House Tour

When: Sunday, December 13, 2009, 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Where: Read the [flyer](#) and contact the Center for more information, 784-0452.

7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center Annual Meeting

When: Saturday, January 9, 2010

Where: TBA

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.

GNO (Guy's Night Out)

GNO will meet the fourth Friday of every month at the Center from 6-8 pm. All male identified persons are welcome.

DID YOU REGISTER YOUR DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP? By Christina Mae Olson, CFP®

My partner (or "spouse" now that we are married), Michelle, and I attended the 2nd annual "Coming Out for Equality" GALA that the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center hosted on 10/10/09. The room was filled with enthusiastic LGBT's and allies in celebration of our pride. What a great event! At one point during the evening, we were asked to stand up if we had registered as domestic partners in Wisconsin. I was shocked that only three (3) couples stood up. Did I count correctly? Just three couples in that entire banquet hall?

For over 16 years I have worked with and written about the importance of gay and lesbian couples taking steps to protect their unions. I have implored gay and lesbian couples to get wills, durable powers of attorney and health care powers of attorney. I have referred countless couples to lawyers for official cohabitation contracts and domestic partnership agreements. I have outlined the importance of titling property in a certain way to protect both partners. I have suggested obtaining life insurance for the benefit of a surviving partner in the event that one of you dies. I have suggested to

unmarried straight and LGBT clients that they complete the "Authorization for Final Disposition" now that Wisconsin offers this to us.

Gay and lesbian couples living in Wisconsin and Minnesota (and most places in the USA) do not have the same financial and legal protections that legally married heterosexual couples have. Even though we can legally marry in several states and several countries - we do not have any of the federal rights and privileges as legally married straight couples. Even though Wisconsin gays and lesbians can now register as domestic partners - and enjoy some 43 new legal rights we didn't have before - apparently most of us are not doing so. I did an informal and very unofficial survey of gay and lesbian couples in La Crosse, Vernon, Trempealeau and Buffalo Counties. I wanted to know if they were registered as domestic partners. Most of the couples I asked were not registered.

First, how many gay and lesbian couples are living in these counties? According to a research paper done by The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, with data taken from the last census, <http://www.law.ucla.edu/Williamsinstitute/publications/WisconsinCensusSnapshot.pdf>, there were an estimated 14,894 gay and lesbian couples in Wisconsin in 2005. Here is the count, by county:

- La Crosse: - 151
- Vernon: - 31
- Trempealeau: - 27
- Buffalo: - 14

I called the County Clerk offices on 10/26/09 and found out how many couples had registered as domestic partners in these counties:

- La Crosse: - 30 or 19.8% of estimated gay and lesbian couples in the county
- Vernon: - 3 or 9.6%
- Trempealeau: - 4 or 14.8%
- Buffalo: - 2 or 14.2%

This is of great interest to me. Why would a couple choose NOT to do this? Here are some of the reasons I was given for NOT registering:

- We don't need it - we won't benefit much from registering.
- We can't find the time to go together to fill out the forms.
- Our relationship doesn't need this for validation.
- I can't find my birth certificate.
- I don't want my family to know about us (paraphrased).
- It won't last because of the law suit against it - it won't mean anything in end.
- We can't afford it.

Alternatively, here are some of the reasons couples told me that they DID register:

- We want to be counted.
- We want our relationship to be validated.
- We want as many legal rights as we can get.
- We've been together for so long; we want to make it official now that we finally can.
- We want to take a stand.

I would like readers of my column to let me know if you have registered your partnership. If so, please tell me why. If not, I'd like to know your reasons. What are your opinions or feelings about gay and lesbian couples accessing rights and responsibilities under the law? Call and tell me or leave a message: 608-525-9818 or 708-792-0709. Or, email me. Here is my email address: CMoney@centurytel.net

I want to know more about why we are choosing to register or not register. My next column will address this issue in more detail. I will use all of your responses in my column (anonymously, of course). Please ask me specific questions if you want to.

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.