

November 2020

EGN Celebrating OUR 300th ISSUE!

Erie Gay News

Mourn the Dead and Fight Like Hell for the Living on Zoom Oct 29

from Greater Erie Alliance for Equality

The LGBTQ community knows pain and challenge. 2020 is nothing we can't handle together. We are experts in making our own worlds fully imbibed with social change, joy, and love. Now more than ever we must envision the world we want and need. Join Jessica Halem as she reflects on 25 years of LGBTQ movement work and what lies ahead for us. Bring your sorrow and optimism to this high-energy session where we will manifest our future together. The session is called Mourn the Dead and Fight Like Hell for the Living, and will be held on Zoom on October 29 at 7 PM. The Zoom meeting ID is 832 7531 6862 and the password is 957519.

Jessica Halem is no ordinary Jewish Queer Femme from a small-town in Ohio. Most recently she was the inaugural LGBTQ Outreach and Engagement Director at Harvard Medical School where the first-year class grew from 4% to 15% self-identified LGBTQ. She also secured a major grant to integrate sexual and gender minority health equity into medical school curricula. Prior to joining Harvard, Jessica ran the Lesbian Community Cancer Project in Chicago where she implemented the nation's first cultural competency trainings for the CDC and served on then-candidate Obama's first LGBT Advisory Committee. Jessica has published on transgender health (AMA Journal of Ethics, 2016), optimism and organizational change (Medical Care, 2018), and mentoring across difference (Mentoring Diverse Leaders, Routledge, 2017). With her training in improv comedy from Second City, she coaches individuals and teams on dealing with difficult moments and is a sought-out speaker nationally on topics such as diversity, equity, inclusion, and LGBTQ health. She currently serves on the Board of the Tegan and Sara Foundation and can be found on social media at @jessicahalem.



Moderator Steven Cobb and Story Presenter Tasha McFaul-Marsh at the National Coming Out Day Event at the Robert H. Jackson Center, Jamestown NY

National Coming Out Day Celebrated in Jamestown NY

from Jamestown Pride

Jamestown Pride celebrated National Coming Out Day with two virtual events on October 11th including a Pride Flag Raising and an LBGTQIA+ community stories event.

Mayor Eddie Sundquist hosted the Pride Flag raising ceremony with Jamestown Pride on Tracy Plaza at the Jamestown Municipal Building. It was the first time the Pride flag had been raised at City Hall. While some members of the public were in attendance, the ceremony was streamed both on the City of Jamestown and Mental Health Association of Chautauqua County's Facebook pages.

A second virtual event was held at the Robert H. Jackson Center where local members of the LGBTQIA+ community shared their stories about themselves with Moderator Steven Cobb. The presentation will be shared with the Fenton History Center for an exhibit being compiled on the history about Chautauqua County's LGBTQIA+ community. The exhibit is anticipated to open in early 2021.

Those who want to contribute to the exhibit

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Erie Gay News
Erie Gay News
 1115 West 7th St.
 Erie PA 16502-1105
 (814) 456-9833
 Fax: (440) 551-5985
 info@eriegaynews.com
 www.eriegaynews.com

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The *Erie Gay News* is published monthly as a source of news, events, information, and support for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people (GLBTs), their families, friends, and supporters in the Erie PA area.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit timely news, comments, and opinions of interest to local GLBTs for publication in these pages. Please include your contact information with any piece you submit.



QUARTER PAGE	FULL PAGE	HALF PAGE VERTICAL
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 Photos and Illustrations should be PDF or TIFF and HIRES.
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To Lake Erie Counseling Associates for hosting! Andrea Shaffer, Audrey, Jeff Hill, Johauna, Kim Conti, and Rex Apps for folding; Audrey, Johauna, Kim Conti, and Rex Apps for distribution; Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

Community News

may find the link to submit at www.fentonhistorycenter.org or they can reach out to director@fenton-historycenter.org. For those interested in being added to the Jamestown Pride email list about future events, contact JamestownPride@mhachautauqua.org.

Sponsors for the National Coming Out Day event included Jamestown Pride, the Mental Health Association of Chautauqua County, the Fenton History Center, Robert H. Jackson Center, and Prevention Works/Hope Chautauqua.

Zone Dance Club Reopening Nov 2

from The Zone Dance Club

The Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie PA, will be reopening on Monday, November 2!

We decided to sit out Halloween because it is one of our favorite parties and there is absolutely no way for us to celebrate it the way we normally would. It's one of our biggest parties and one of the biggest in Erie for a reason. We believe that it's the safest route to avoid it entirely than try to do a modified party while everyone is expecting the fabulous party The Zone is known for.

Our adjusted hours (for the time being) will be:

Sunday - Thursday: 7pm-11pm

Friday - Saturday: 5pm-11pm

All mandates and regulations from Erie County DoH, Pennsylvania DoH, PLCB, and the CDC will be strictly enforced. Masks WILL be worn anytime you are not seated. "Table hovering" will not be allowed. Food must be purchased. Social distancing will be a thing. Still under "Footloose" rules - no dancing.

As of right now, our FACE and DIVA shows will not be making their return yet. We're looking into how these could be done.

Thank you to everyone for your ongoing patience while we navigate these really weird times.

Stay tuned to our Facebook and Instagram for more information.

Blanket and Sock Drive for Ryan White Program on Oct 29

from Greater Erie Alliance for Equality

The Greater Erie Alliance for Equality, NWPA Pride Alliance, and Transfamily are gathering warm blankets and socks to benefit individuals served by



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the Ryan White Program. There is a great need in our community for these items. This is the third year we have gathered donations- past support has been tremendous and we hope we can count on a great turnout this year! Donations can be dropped off on October 29 from 2:30 to 7:30 at 301 West 10 Street, in the GAEA office parking lot. located at the corner of 10th and Myrtle Streets.

Ace Week 2020 Oct 25-31

from Marshall John Blount

Ace Week 2020 and beyond is going to be an even bigger celebration for us here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. After a lot of work and waiting, Governor Tom Wolf has recognized Ace Week, a move that is being celebrated in our community within the state and beyond. We've become the third state after Washington and Colorado to recognize Ace Week. As we achieve new levels of representation and visibility, it's important that government spaces learn more about our community. Discrimination and misconceptions towards Ace folk must be fought and prevented in all levels of society. This proclamation from Harrisburg is a step in the right direction. There are an estimated 130,000+ Pennsylvanian Aces. As a Black Asexual Activist who got this done, I hope I'm not the last.

*Ace Week was created in 2010 by Sarah Beth Brooks. It's a week of celebration, education, and representation. It's October 25th to 31st.

Intersex Awareness Day on Oct 26

from Katharine B. Dalke, MD MBE

On October 26, 1996, a group of activists protested at the American Academy of Pediatrics

(AAP) meeting in Boston. The group, bearing a banner reading "Hermaphrodites with Attitude!" included two intersex people – Max Beck and Morgan Holmes – and 10 allies. They came to the meeting to engage doctors on the needs of intersex patients, and how the AAP-endorsed "normalizing" surgical treatment for intersex children was harmful. This was the first public demonstration for intersex rights, and its anniversary is celebrated annually on Intersex Awareness Day.

Intersex refers to any variation in physical sex traits with which someone is born. Sometimes known as differences of sex development, intersex traits are common: the broadest definition of intersex has been estimated to be found in 1.7% of the US population.

Some intersex traits are identified at birth, and others in adulthood. Although intersex people are to more likely to be LGBTQ than people without intersex traits, many are cisgender and heterosexual. Some people identify as intersex, and others as having a medical condition.

But all of us know what it's like to have a body

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that is considered “abnormal,” and to feel pressure to keep it secret. Many of us have had surgeries to make us conform to binary sex categories – procedures sometimes referred to a surgical conversion therapy. That’s why Intersex Awareness Day is so important: the visibility of intersex people, living and thriving, is an act of radical resistance.

To support Intersex Awareness Day, please visit InterACTAdvocates.org for stories and social media resources.

Drag Night on Victorian Princess October 30

Come to the Victorian Princess specialty event and see the Queens put on a performance from 10pm-12am on Friday, October 30! Tickets are \$20 a person and includes pizza! Must be 18yo + to get on. The Queens attending will be Alysins Wonderland, Rebecca Mae, Debbie, Priscilla Godzilla, Shea D. Heaux, and specialty DJ Tony G!

SafeNet Virtual 5K Halloween Fun Run

SafeNet’s 10th Annual Boo Run is a Virtual 5K Fun Run this year. On October 31st, Halloween, participants may start at 8:00am complete their self-designed 5K course. The run time will end at 8:00pm. Adults, Youth and Families are all welcome to take part. As in past years, the Run will help lighten the spirits of all who join in the fun. Find your registration at www.safeneterie.org/events and click on Boo Run for electronic registration thru the RunSignUp link or you may download a copy of a paper registration. Call Lucy Dehn at 814 455-1774 ext. 222 for any questions.

Linda King, Executive Director of SafeNet said that “although I am disappointed that the event has to be held virtually this year; but I am certain that our runners and walkers will still be able to enjoy this opportunity for fresh air, fun, and frivolity. SafeNet welcomes all runners, walkers, hoppers and jumpers to dress in their costumes and enjoy being outside. All



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runners will receive a special 2020 BooRun mask, a run bag, candy and swag. There will be cash and gift prizes awarded for best costumes in several categories including “Best COVID” theme. Runners are asked to send in their photos taken during the run/walk which will be used for costume judging. Race photos can be sent to info@safeneterie.org, Facebook or to the RunSignUp website.

Central Outreach Wellness Center Erie Office Opening Oct 26

Central Outreach Wellness Center continues its mission, offering high-quality medical care to the communities who need it most. Now, the leading LGBTQ+ medical center in Western Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh, Aliquippa, and Washington--expands its access to the state's most Northern city, Erie.

COWC Erie is expected to open October 26

E3 Youth Summit November 20-21

from Greater Erie Alliance for Equality

The E3 Youth Summit will be held November 20 through 21, and is free to attend! The theme is “Healing in Community.” This year our summit will be held virtually, but don’t worry. We will still have plenty of things for you to do, see, enjoy! The Summit kicks off Friday night with a drag show by Rebecca Mae and will include some special friends. Participants of the Summit will hear from speakers, attend workshops, and experience musical events. Participants include Gaxella, Ryan Cassata, and Rebecca Mae.

All youth participants that have registered before November 1 will receive a Summit Swag bag that includes buttons, stickers, pride flags, and art supplies!

The Summit is free and open to youth aged 12-20, caregivers and providers! Register at <http://greatereriealliance.com/event/2020-e3-virtual-summit/>

Compton's Table for Queer Youth

In 1966 at Compton's Cafeteria, gender-expansive people responded to the hostility they were subjected to, simply because they existed, with an act of resistance. In solidarity, today, Compton's Table serves as a place where queer youth and young adults can find community and resist marginalization. Our mission is to eliminate systemic inequity, create community through peer connection, and empower queer youth and young adults to be agents of change. Together with the individuals and communities we serve, Compton's Table works to create a thriving LGBTQIAA community.

This nonprofit was created to meet identified needs within the queer community of the Northwest region of Pennsylvania. The first phase of this organization will focus on developing queer youth support that elevates intersectional identities within community.

Be sure to follow our Instagram @Comptons_Table or check out our website www.ComptonsTable.org for updates!

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LGBTQ Domestic Violence Survey Needs To Hear From You

Members of several local LGBTQ+ groups and the domestic violence service providers Safe Net and Safe Journey have come together to learn more about the needs of domestic violence victims and survivors in our LGBTQ+ communities. Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship. It happens across all groups of people, regardless of race, gender identity, social status, religion, sexual orientation or attraction.

Statistics from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) indicate domestic violence occurs in LGBTQ+ communities at a rate equal to or higher than that of the heterosexual community. And yet, forty five percent of LGBTQ+ victims of physical violence in an intimate relationship do not report it to police because they believe they will not be helped. LGBTQ+ individuals may experience unique forms of intimate partner violence as well as distinctive barriers to seeking help due to fear of potential discrimination or bias. Our task force would like to change that in our communities.

We are conducting a survey to understand the attitudes and beliefs members of the LGBTQ+ community might have if they need to seek help for domestic violence. We also want to gather information about how to make services more welcoming and accessible to them. The survey should take about 30 minutes and is open to anyone 18 years of age or older who identifies as LGBTQ+. If you are interested in participating, please click on the link below. You might also be one of four lucky winners



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RU Safe

RU Safe is a free mobile app providing support for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know. Features of RU Safe include an agency directory for domestic abuse support services, a secure journal tool, questionnaires to assess safety of relationships, and links to resources about safety and risk.

 Aspirant

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RU Safe is based on the Danger Assessment developed by Jacquelyn C. Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN of Johns Hopkins School of Nursing.

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Domestic Violence Safety Network



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Please feel free to share this link with anyone who might qualify for the study.

<https://www.mysafejourney.org/lgbtqai-survey/>

Letter Opposing Supreme Court Justice Appointment from LGBTQ Groups Across PA

On October 14, Greater Erie Alliance for Equality and other LGBTQ groups across the Pennsylvania sent a letter to US Senator Patrick Toomey opposing the appointment of Amy Coney Barrett to the US Supreme Court to fill the vacancy left by the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The text of the letter appears below.

The Honorable Patrick J. Toomey, Junior
United States Senator
248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

Dear Senator Toomey:

We write to you today as constituents desperately concerned for our rights and the rights of our children, our families, our friends, and other Pennsylvanians.

We advocate because, for most of the history of our great nation, all were not considered equal. Just as our Constitution has evolved to recognize that rights accrue not only to white male landowners, but to all Americans, so too have our courts evolved.

When the Supreme Court decided on June 26,

2015, that marriage is a fundamental right guaranteed to all Americans by the Constitution, the Obergefell decision did not take away the rights of others, it recognized that LGBTQ citizens deserve those same rights. Religions were not required to solemnize unions of those not practicing the same faith, nor were they forced to open their doors to any who did not adhere to their doctrines. The separation of church and state remained—upheld and confirmed by this decision. This was not a ruling made in haste. Prior to Obergefell marriage equality had already been established by law, court ruling, and voter initiative in 36 states, the District of Columbia, and Guam.

Despite this ruling, and the many others that uphold the separation of church and state, our basic rights as individuals are once again under siege. Our marriages, our families, and our children are at risk.

As your constituents, we implore you to consider our fundamental rights—as the Court did those of our African American brothers and sisters prior to the Loving v. Virginia decision in 1967—before moving forward to confirm any Justices to the bench. The right to visit our spouses in the hospital, to be with our children in sickness and in health, and to share a home without being dispossessed upon death is a basic, yet fragile right. The Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause both support our rights, as well. Denying us the fundamental rights that other Americans take for granted caused us substantial and continuing harm in the past and will again in the future, if the Court should turn its back on us.

As Justice Kennedy wrote for the Court:

No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family. In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than once they were. As some of the petitioners in these cases demonstrate, marriage embodies a love that may endure even past death. It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it, respect it so deeply that they seek to find its fulfillment for themselves. Their hope is not to be condemned to live in loneliness, excluded from one of civilization's oldest institutions. They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right.

The confirmation of a Justice who has already



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made clear her opposition to this decision jeopardizes the hard-won rights of your constituents, endangers our families, and threatens our marriages and the future marriages of all LGBTQ Americans.

Please uphold the principle of separation between church and state. Defend our rights as your constituents, your community members, and your fellow Americans.

Sincerely,
The Greater Erie Alliance for Equality
The Pennsylvania Commission on LGBT Affairs
(statewide)
NWPAPride Alliance, Incorporated (Erie)
TransFamily of NWPAPride (Erie)
Erie Gay News
Philadelphia Gay News
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center (Allentown)
Keystone Business Alliance (Harrisburg)
The LGBT Center of Greater Reading

William Way LGBT Center (Philadelphia)
PA Youth Congress (statewide)
Centre LGBTQA Support Network (State College)
PFLAG Danville
Lancaster LGBTQ+ Coalition (Lancaster)
LGBT Elder Initiative (Philadelphia)
Mark Barbee, Mayor of Bridgeport
Pennsylvania State Senator Larry Farnese
Pennsylvania State Representative Brian Sims
Pride at Work-Pennsylvania Chapter (statewide)
Triversity Center for Gender and Sexual Diversity
(Milford)
LGBTQ+ Council of the City of Erie

cc: The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Junior;
United States Senator
The Honorable Tom Wolf, Governor of Pennsylvania



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Wolf Administration Launches COVID Alert PA App, Encourage PA to Unite to Stop the Spread

September 22, 2020 - Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of the Department of Health Dr. Rachel Levine today launched the COVID-19 exposure notification mobile app, COVID Alert PA, to help fight the spread of the virus.

Available now free to smartphone users as a download from the Apple App store or Google Play store, COVID Alert PA is available in English and Spanish.

"The last seven months have shown that we are most successful when we unite against COVID-19 and work together for the common good, and I am proud to be here with Dr. Levine to announce an important new technology that will allow us to do just that," Gov. Wolf said. "Today, we are launching the COVID Alert PA mobile app. This app is a simple tool you can use to help fight COVID-19 every day, everywhere you go. I encourage you to visit your app

store and download it for free today."

"We all play a part in stopping the spread of COVID-19, which is why I am encouraging every Pennsylvanian to add their phone to the fight and download COVID Alert PA today," Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. "By utilizing this technology, we can quickly notify more people who have been exposed to COVID-19. This innovative solution will enhance our COVID-19 response and give residents another tool to stay calm, stay alert and stay safe all in the palm of their hands."

COVID Alert PA uses Exposure Notification System technology developed by Apple and Google. The app can detect if you have been in close contact with another user who later tested positive for COVID-19 and will send a notification to your phone called a "COVID-19 Exposure Alert". If you tap on the notification, you will be given public health guidance on what to do next.

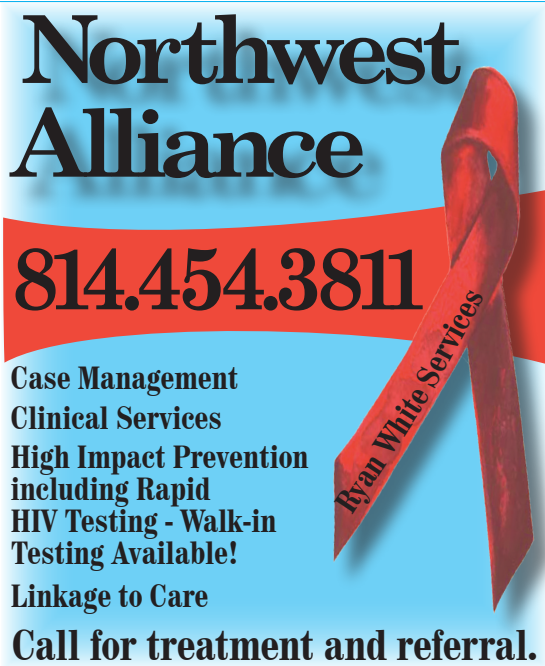
In addition, the app will provide users with the latest information on COVID-19 in Pennsylvania from the department's COVID-19 data dashboard.

The app does not enable any location services or tracks anyone and is designed to be completely anonymous. The Exposure Notification System works by using Bluetooth Low Energy, which allows phones with the app to recognize when it is close to another phone. Proximity is the only thing measured between phones, not location.

"We are very committed to and conscious of protecting the privacy and security of all Pennsylvanians," Dr. Levine said. "COVID Alert PA will not track your location or collect any personal information from you—it is simply an exposure notification tool. The app uses Bluetooth technology to send a notification if someone has been in close contact with an individual who later tested positive for COVID-19. This is the same technology that your smartphone uses to connect to your wireless Bluetooth headphones, or your car. The app will never ask you to turn on your location."

Gov. Wolf and Dr. Levine were joined at the announcement in Franklin Square by Philadelphia Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley and Governor Wolf's Advisory Commission for Latino Affairs Executive Director Luz Colon.

"Philadelphia has made great progress against



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COVID-19, but the pandemic isn't over yet," said Dr. Farley. "We need every tool available to control it. COVID Alert PA can help fill in the gaps in our investigations, but it only works to the extent that people use it. So, download it and activate it and help protect you and your family."

"The biggest challenge since the pandemic has been keeping every resident of the commonwealth safe and informed," said Colon. "That's why we're proud that this app is available in Spanish, so that we can extend our reach to the Latino communities through the robust translations service it provides. I strongly encourage the Latino Community to download this app and take an active role in helping protect you and your loved one during this pandemic."

Pennsylvania has used contact tracing as a tool to stop the spread of infectious diseases for decades. COVID Alert PA app helps support traditional contact tracing processes. When the health department contacts the COVID-19 positive individual to discuss their diagnosis, learn how they are feeling and understand who may have been exposed to them, the public health representative will provide with a unique six-digit validation code to the individual to enter into the app. Once this step is completed, the app will be able to alert other app users who have been in close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual. This Exposure Alert does not reveal the identity of the COVID-19 positive individual or their whereabouts.

It is important to remember that the Department of Health also does not know the identity of app users who receive alerts—the department will only see the number of exposure notifications generated on any given date.

You can find the COVID Alert PA app in the Google Play store or Apple App store for free. COVID Alert PA is available in English and Spanish. This app is voluntary, but the more Pennsylvanians age 18 and older who adopt the app, the more successful efforts can be.

COVID Alert PA is a partnership between Pennsylvania and Delaware, along with NearForm, University of Pennsylvania's Center for Health Incentives and Behavioral Economics and Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Lincoln Laboratory, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and Internet Privacy Research Institute.

Mobile HIV Testing Event on Oct 13

On Tuesday October 13th a first of its kind Mobile HIV Testing event took place in the Liberty Plaza parking lot using the new HIV mobile testing van. This event was spearheaded by NWPA Pride Alliance, Greater Erie Alliance for Equality, and The Northwest Alliance, together with Dickey's BBQ Pit and Transfamily. Free HIV testing was available to anyone 14 years of age and older using a rapid 2 minute test. Those who got tested were given a \$5 Country Fair gift card and a coupon for a free sandwich at Dickey's BBQ. The organizers look forward to hosting similar events in 2021 and beyond. If you missed the event and would like to set up a time to get tested please contact Emily Crofoot at Ecrofoot@clarion.edu



Info tables and participants waiting by the NW PA Rural AIDS Alliance mobile van in the parking lot by Dickey's Barbecue Pit in the Liberty Plaza on October 13. Photo by Andrea Shaffer.

**Erie Gay News thanks
its advertisers and
volunteers for
300 issues!**

Voters Guide

Candidates for US Congress PA-16, PA State Senate, and PA State House were asked about their positions on LGBT issues. Their responses appear on the next few pages.

The General Election is November 3. ALL voters can request a mail-in ballot, which can be applied for online. Applications for absentee ballots are due by Oct 26, and all completed ballots must be post-marked or delivered to the drop box at the Courthouse by no later than Election Day, November 3 at 8 PM.

Questions for all candidates:

Anti-Discrimination

Do you support the passage of legislation such as the Equality Act, which would protect LGBT individuals from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation? Please explain.

“Religious Freedom”

Do you support legislation such as the so-called First Amendment Defense Act (introduced in the US Senate in March of 2018) that would allow individuals, government officials or government agencies to deny providing goods and services to LGBT individuals because of religious beliefs. Please explain.

US Congress PA 16

Not Responding: Mike Kelly (R-Incumbent)

Anti-Discrimination

KRISTY GNIBUS (D)

Yes, I support the Equality Act. Our federal law still does not specifically and explicitly prohibit the termination of an individual’s employment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Additionally, LGBT tenants are often evicted from their homes due to an overzealous landlord’s dislike of their tenant’s choice of a partner and LGBT students are mistreated and bullied in schools across our nation every day. There should be no question as to an LGBT citizen’s rights under the law and each passing

day without our government instituting these explicit protections is another day that our nation fails to recognize true equality.

“Religious Freedom”

KRISTY GNIBUS (D)

No, I do not support such legislation because it would rollback critical legal protections for LGBT Americans and their families. The First Amendment Defense Act is destructive legislation that would, in essence, legalize state-sanctioned discrimination and weaken important civil rights protections for our nation’s LGBT population.

PA State Senate District 49

Anti-Discrimination

JULIE SLOMSKI (D)

For far too long, the LGBTQ+ community has been left unprotected by Pennsylvania law. It is frustrating that in this day and age someone could lose their job or housing because of who they are or who they love. It is unacceptable to me that discrimination is still codified in our commonwealth, and as the next Senator for SD-49, I would be honored to introduce and support legislation to end discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community.

DAN LAUGHLIN (R-Incumbent)

I am supportive of the Equality Act.

“Religious Freedom”

JULIE SLOMSKI (D)

To deny service on the basis of sexual orientation or identity is discrimination. While this has been addressed on a federal level, we need to be proactive in Pennsylvania to end discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, regardless of its form.

DAN LAUGHLIN (R-Incumbent)

I would not support the FADA

Voters Guide

PA State House District 1

Anti-Discrimination **PAT HARKINS (D Incumbent)**

I do support legislation such as the Equality Act. In past sessions I have not only co sponsored legislation but I have held public hearings in Erie so the public can hear what is contained in the legislation and hear how it might affect them. I believe it is the right of all to be treated fairly and equally in all matters especially housing, employment and public accommodation. Bottom line, treat others the way you would want to be treated.

"Religious Freedom" **PAT HARKINS (D Incumbent)**

I would never support anything like the First Amendment Defense Act and I believe our founding fathers would turn over in their graves if they would see what some people would like to do to the constitution they so brilliantly crafted.

Call these proposals what they are, hate speech. Closed minded people who have a fear of the unknown are who come up with these ideas. In 2020 I would hope we could get beyond judging people for who they love and accept the differences in all of us. We have much deeper issues we should be dealing with at this point in society.

PA State House District 2

Not Responding: Bob Merski (D Incumbent)

PA State House District 3

Not Responding: Greg Hayes (R)


Anti-Discrimination **RYAN BIZZARRO (D Incumbent)**

Yes, I absolutely support legislation such as the Equality Act. One of the cardinal pillars of our Con-

stitutional Republic is equal treatment under the law in the public square. To deny anyone employment, housing, or public accommodation due to (assumed or actual) sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression is a very clear transgression of one of our most cherished principles of equality. Private institutions and organizations that do not accept tax dollars are free to do as they will under their own roofs (for better or worse), but in our shared society that belongs to all citizens, LGBTQ people should not be denied equal access to employment, housing, or public accommodation.

"Religious Freedom" **RYAN BIZZARRO (D Incumbent)**

I am opposed to any legislation that dares to cloak discrimination in the name of religious freedom. The U.S. Constitution very clearly grants everyone freedom of conscience/belief. However, freedom of conscience does not translate into an unqualified freedom of accommodation. One is not free to use their private beliefs to infringe upon the



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Voters Guide

rights of others, nor to cause them harm. To that end, whether as elected officials, or as people hired to serve, government positions are not domains to impose religious beliefs. What is more, tax funded services managed by private organizations do not have the right to impose narrow religious beliefs upon government funded projects. As a person of faith, I am deeply committed to protecting and exercising the freedom of religion in this country. However, I am not confused about what that means—and I am not interested in participating in any legislative effort that would use religion as a tool of discrimination in our shared society or in our rule of law.

PA State House District 4

Not Responding: Curt Sonney (R Incumbent)

PA State House District 6

Not Responding: Brad Roae (R Incumbent)



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Anti-Discrimination MATTHEW FERRENCE (D)

Simply put, that PA currently fails to fully protect the fundamental Civil Rights of the LGBTQ community is an affront to human decency and the values of the Commonwealth. There's no doubt that strong legislation prohibiting any kind of discrimination due to sexuality or gender identity is long overdue in Pennsylvania. While I certainly hope that members of the US Congress will pass the federal Equality Act, as a candidate for the Pennsylvania House I believe we need protections written into our own state laws. We can't wait for the feds. Too many people are suffering discrimination here in NWPA and across the state. We must act to ensure equity and justice.

"Religious Freedom" MATTHEW FERRENCE (D)

Hiding discrimination behind the thin veil of "religious freedom" devalues us all, and this kind of hateful legislation perniciously insults American concepts of freedom and justice to codify bigotry. Freedom of religion does not give license for discriminatory practice against members of the LGBTQ community. While religious freedom guarantees individuals the right to practice their faith, it does not imply that religious belief can be used as a cover to deny the Civil Rights of others. I would vehemently oppose any legislation similar to the deceptively-titled "First Amendment Defense Act" in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PA State House District 17

Not Responding: Parke Wentling (R Incumbent)

**Deadline for Next EGN issue
Nov 15**

Calendar

For latest updates, see www.eriegaynews.com

Oct 1 - 31 (Thu - Sat) - LGBT History Month.

Oct 24 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWPA (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Zoom) 2 PM. Currently meeting via Zoom. Please message via Facebook page for meeting info.

Oct 25 - 31 (Sun - Sat) - Asexual Awareness Week <http://www.asexualawarenessweek.com/>.

Oct 25 (Sun) - 12th Annual Diversity Worship Service (Community United Church, 1011 W 38th St, Erie, PA 16508-2540) 11 AM. Please join us as we celebrate our 12th Annual Diversity Service, recognizing our national Open and Affirming status as a Christian congregation. Here, LGBTQ people are warmly welcome! Contact: Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty. Phone: (814) 864-4429. Email: communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com. Browse to <http://communityunited.church/>.

Oct 25 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Gender Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 5060 Youngstown Poland Rd, Youngstown, OH 44514) 3 PM - 5 PM. Ages 18+. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom Password to join is 4678312.

Oct 26 (Mon) - Intersex Awareness Day Commemorates the first intersex protest, which took place in Boston, MA. Browse to <http://intersexday.org/en/>.

Oct 31 (Sat) - M & J's Lounge Annual Halloween Party and Drag Show (M & J's Lounge, 124 Mercer St, Butler, PA 16001) BYOB membership required, purchase from bartender. Phone: (724) 602-8447. Email: JoshuaSean2009@AOL.COM. Browse to <http://www.facebook.com/MandJsLounge>.

Nov 1 (Sun) - Trans Parent Day Celebrates life and the love between Transgender parents and their children. And parents and their Transgender children. Browse to <http://transparentday.org/>.

Nov 1 & 15 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Youth Social & Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 5060 Youngstown Poland Rd, Youngstown, OH 44514) 3 PM - 5 PM. Ages 14 & up, under 14 with guardian consent. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom.

Nov 3 (Tue) - General Election

Nov 8 (Sun) - LBT Women of Erie meets (Zoom) 12 PM. Email or check Facebook page for Zoom meeting info. ErieBeans@yahoo.com. [facebook.com/LBTWOMENOFERIE](https://www.facebook.com/LBTWOMENOFERIE)

Nov 8 (Sun) - Intersex Day of Solidarity Marks the

birthday of Herculine Barbin, a French intersex person. Browse to <http://intersexday.org/en/>.

Nov 8 & 22 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Gender Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center) 8th: 6-8PM, 22: 3-5PM 18+. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom.

Nov 9 (Mon) - Erie County Democratic Party LGBTQIA+ Caucus meets (Zoom) 7 PM. General meeting on Zoom. Contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or mmahler@eriedems.com.

Nov 8 & 22 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Sexuality Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center) 3-5PM 18+. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom.

Nov 13 - 19 (Fri - Thu) - Transgender Awareness Week Individuals and organizations around the country participate in Transgender Awareness Week to help raise the visibility of transgender and gender non-conforming people, and address the issues the community faces. Browse to <https://www.glaad.org/transweek>.

Nov 15 (Sun) - Deadline for Erie Gay News November 2020 print edition (#297) (Erie Gay News, 1115 W 7th St, Erie, PA 16502-1105) Please have all articles, ads, and submissions in by this date. This issue will be released the evening of Tuesday, Nov 24.

Nov 15 (Sun) - Full Spectrum Friends & Family of Gender-Variant Individuals Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center) 3 PM - 5 PM. Ages 14 & up, under 14 with guardian consent. Meets in person at Full Spectrum and also streams via Zoom.

Nov 17 (Tue) - Erie County HIV Task Force meets via Zoom 1 PM - 2:30 PM. Zoom Meeting ID: 927 9128 9996. Passcode: 940728

Nov 20 (Fri) - International STAND UP to Bullying Day International STAND UP to Bullying Day is a special event in which participants sign and wear a pink "pledge shirt" to take a visible, public stance against bullying. Browse to <https://www.facebook.com/pg/standupday/>.

Nov 24 (Tue) - Erie Gay News folding/distribution work party (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 301 W 10th St, Erie, PA 16502) 7 PM. Limited number of volunteers welcome. You must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Nov 28 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWPA (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Zoom) 2 PM. Currently meeting via Zoom. Please message via Facebook page for meeting info.

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