



EGN

Erie Gay News



20th Annual Miss Erie Pageant at The Zone Dance Club on September 10, 2021. Photo by Michael Mahler.

We have a winner! 2021 Miss Erie Pageant Recap

by Michael Mongera

The 2021 Miss Erie pageant was filled to the brim with local talent and a dazzling showcase.

On September 10, patrons, and queens near and far flocked to The Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie PA, for the 20th annual Miss Erie pageant. Five queens competed for the coveted title and succeed the glamorous Rebecca Mae. This year's theme was "Leather, Feathers, and Lace". The panel of judges included Michelle Michaels at the head of the table, renowned hairstylist Thom Haraczy, Erie Playhouse staple Moe Ferrera, graphics designer Patrick Hiller, and Ashley Lauria.

Local queens such as Alysinn Wonderland, Debbie, and Shea D'Heaux competed alongside out-of-towners, Indi Skies and Snarebear. The five competing queens held a tough battle for the crown. Both Debbie and Shea D' Heaux tied in the talent competition of the night. Additionally, Debbie took home Miss Congeniality. Between the Pageant segments, the night was chock-full of individual performances; A few of them include, Buffy Lynn Hayes, Danyel

Vasquez, Misty Michaels Kall, Priscilla Godzilla, Rebecca Mae, Taylor Morgan, and Valerie Valentino.

Ultimately, Indi Skies was crowned as the new Miss Erie. Debbie was her first alternate, followed by Shea D'Heaux. The gals put on a spectacular show to reign in the new winner.

Registration is now open for the Virtual 2021 PA LGBTQIA Health Conference Oct 12-14

The 2021 PA LGBTQIA Health Conference will take place virtually this year October 12 - 14, 2021. The conference will feature workshops and presentations addressing the unique health needs of Pennsylvania's LGBTQIA community. In its 4th year, the conference's goal is to provide participants with emerging data, understanding, motivation and strategies for addressing health disparities, particularly in tobacco with LGBTQIA populations and to Move Forward Together onto a path of equitable rights and inclusive healthcare. For information and to register, browse to <https://lgbtqiahealth.org/> and click on the link at the top right to Register. The cost is \$35, and there are scholarships available.

For more information, email Conference@lgbtqiahealth.org or browse to <https://lgbtqiahealth.org/>

EGN Editorial Board Call for Applications

Erie Gay News is proud to have served the region's LGBTQIA+ community since 1992. We have formed an editorial board that meets virtually every month to discuss potential articles, distribution, social media presence, and other ways to maintain and improve the publication. We invite those interested in sharing this crucial work to submit applications to be a part of our editorial board. If you want to volunteer, please email a resume and cover letter to info@eriegaynews.com by Friday, November 19, 2021.

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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.

Erie Gay News is now included in
The EBSCO *LGBT Life*®
 with Full Text Index &
 Six LGBT Archives
WORLDWIDE!




To Lake Erie Counseling Associates for hosting! Andrea Shaffer, Audrey, Caitlyn Strohmeyer, Chrissy, Jeff Hill, Johauna, Kim Conti, Michael Mongera, and Rex Apps for folding; Andrea Shaffer, Audrey, Caitlyn Strohmeyer, Chrissy, 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.

Share your thoughts on our #SpillTheTeaTuesday question every week on our Facebook page!

PFLAG Westfield NY meetings resume

PFLAG Westfield NY has resumed meeting the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM at the Patterson Library, 40 S Portage St, Westfield NY 14787. For more information contact Patricia via email at aoede2149@yahoo.com, or by phone at (716) 450-9055.

13th Annual Diversity Service at Community United Church

from Rev. Dr. Richard W. McCarty, Senior Pastor

The staff and congregation of Community United Church, 1011 W 38th St, Erie PA, warmly invite you to join us on Sunday, October 24, at 11:00 AM as we celebrate our thirteenth year as a nationally certified Open and Affirming faith community in the United Church of Christ. As an Open and Affirming Christian congregation, we boldly accept and affirm LGBTQ+ people and relationships. We proudly march in our city's Pride parade, and we also offer regular educational opportunities on LGBTQ+ inclusion. We are a faith community that grounds

our understanding of God in unconditional love-and although we do not claim to be perfect, we do seek to embody that love through radical welcome, helping those in need, honoring boundaries, worship, study, small groups, and standing for restorative justice. Please join us as we celebrate our thirteenth year of Open and Affirming certification.

New Office Location for Lake Erie Counseling as of Oct 3

After 25 years at the same location, Lake Erie Counseling Inc. will be moving its office as of October 3. The new location is 1932 West 8th Street, Erie, PA. Lake Erie Counseling Inc., a private psychotherapy practice established in 1994 was the first practice in Erie to specialize in and promote gay affirmative and empowering service to LGBTQ+ individuals, couples, and families.

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Erie Drag Queen Bingo on Oct 17

Join The Erie Drag Queens Sunday afternoon October 17, at the Zem Zem Shrine Center for a night of glitz, glamour, and good times! But be warned, this isn't your grandmother's bingo, this is a rude, crude, tipsy-time hosted by your very own Drag Queens of Erie. There will be a \$100 cash prize for the best Halloween contest, and also a \$100 cash prize for the best table decoration.

Laugh 'til your face hurts! This show is NOT for the easily offended! Join Erie's favorite Drag Queens for an afternoon of laughs and outrageous unforgettable fun at Drag Queen Bingo with over \$2000 in CASH prizes & fun door prizes!

Extra dirty, hysterically offensive, and deliciously shady! Be warned... No one is safe from the Queens! Prepare for 3 hours of jokes, ruthless insults, and side-splitting laughs!

Ace Week 2021, October 24 - 30

by Rex Apps

Ace Week, formerly known as Asexual Awareness Week, was founded in 2010. This International movement began as an awareness campaign to encourage LGBTQ+ communities to support the ace community. The community uses the word ace to encompass anyone who fits within the spectrum of asexuality. An asexual person experiences little to no sexual attraction and/or sexual desire.

Ace Week was founded by Sara Beth Brooks and Asexual Visibility Education Network founder David Jay. They wanted to gain the attention of some major organizations such as the National LGBTQ Task Force and the UN Human Relations Counsel.

The very first Ace Week was mostly conducted online through social media activities and blogging. In an effort to increase ace awareness within the LGBTQ+ community, members of the ace community created "Dear LGBTQ Community" videos. These were posted on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Aces were also encouraged to share information and experiences on social media.

Each year has taken on its own unique flavor, but spreading educational materials, organizing community events, and discussing ace experiences have always remained at its core.

For more information see aceweek.org.

Intersex Awareness Day on October 26

by Rex Apps

The annual Intersex Awareness Day will be celebrated on Monday, October 26. This is the date back in 1996 when the first public demonstration of intersex people took place in Boston, MA at the annual conference of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

At that time, the now defunct Intersex Society




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of North America and their allies demonstrated and shared their pains denouncing non-consensual infant genital surgery, and demanding the medical industries to take notice. Sadly, doctors dismissed the activities as a vocal minority in a New York Times article the following year.

Intersex Awareness Day highlights the fact that intersex people face violence, discrimination, stigma, harassment and persecution on account of their characteristics, which do not fit the binary notion of typical male or female bodies. Further, we are reminded that all people everywhere are created equal and should be afforded equal dignity and respect regardless of their sex characteristics.

For more information, you can check out intersexday.org.

PA LGBTQIA Health Conference Honors Janelle Crossley, 2020 Keira DeSantis Award Winner

PA LGBTQIA Health Conference committee honored 2020 Honoree of the Keira Kristine DeSantis Award, Janelle Kayla Crossley, at a presentation on Wednesday, September 8 at the Erie County Department of Health, 606 W 2nd St, Erie, PA. Speaking at the event was Erie City Mayor Joe Schember.

About the PA LGBTQIA Health Conference:

Healthcare workers across Pennsylvania are committed to offering the best of healthcare including respect and dignity of our LGBTQIA population. The



On September 8, 2021, the PA LGBTQ Health Conference honored Janelle Crossley, 2020 Keira DeSantis Award winner. Photo by Michael Mahler.

LGBTQIA Health Conference Committee continues its efforts to improve the treatment of the LGBTQIA community and their families. This year's event will be held virtually October 12-14. Register at www.lgbtqiahealth.org.

About the Keira Kristine DeSantis Award:

In early 2020, the LGBTQIA Health Conference Committee announced their call for nominations for the conference's inaugural Keira Kristine DeSantis Award. Keira announced herself to the world as a transgender woman in Spring of 2017 after years of internal struggle and quickly found her voice as an advocate for the transgender community in her hometown of Erie, Pennsylvania. Keira was employed as a Customer Service Representative and Transgender Liaison at UPMC Health Plan and served on the UPMC Transgender Task Force.

She helped many people in the community through their gender journey. In the Spring of 2019, during recovery from gender affirmation surgery, Keira suffered unexpected complications and passed away. Her sudden passing was greatly felt by her family, friends, and a global community she developed.

In honor of the tireless efforts of Keira to illustrate the societal barrier experienced by trans communities and advocate for advancements in the social and human rights of the trans community, the KEIRA KRISTINE DESANTIS AWARD was created. This award is meant to recognize others like Keira who do whatever it takes, without question, to make the path easier for those who follow a similar journey.

About the Honoree, Janelle Kayla Crossley

At age 52, Janelle Kayla Crossley decided it was time to act on her life-long gender identification. In doing so, she made a commitment to herself to work tirelessly as an advocate for the transgender community. Janelle is the inaugural honoree for the Keira Kristine DeSantis Award, who made her transition in 2012. She is a Pennsylvania native, resident of Newville, and has spent her entire career working in the Commonwealth.

Janelle is a Court Appointed Special Advocate and provides support as a liaison for cases with gender identification issues. She also assists and supports on matters with the LGBT+ community on behalf

of Cumberland County Children and Youth Services and the Cumberland County Prison.

Janelle consistently and lovingly advocates for people in need and is an active community volunteer serving Community Cares, Big Brothers and Big Sisters; she also serves on the Citizens Committee for Safe Harbour and countless other meaningful nonprofits.

The LGBTQIA Health Conference is made up of partners from across Pennsylvania:

Health Promotion Council
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center
Adagio Health
Pennsylvania Department of Health
UPMC

Erie County Department of Health

15th Annual Pink Party Weekend at Zone Oct 9-10

from Michelle Michaels

The Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA, will be hosting the 15th Annual Pink Party Weekend on Saturday, October 9, and Sunday, October 10. All proceeds go to Linked By Pink, a 501c3 nonprofit located in Erie, PA, that assists young breast cancer patients and their families as they go through a breast cancer diagnosis. There will be a Chinese auction and bake sale on both days and a Pink Party Benefit Show on Sunday, October 10 at 9:30 PM. After the show on Sunday, we will pull the tickets for the basket. You need not be present to win. We will have other party favors and some shots to help raise money for the Saturday night Pink Party. The Pink Party Benefit Show on Sunday, October 10, will replace what would have been the usual monthly Face show for October.

Center for Media Innovation celebrates history of queer media in Pennsylvania with special event

PITTSBURGH, PA - The Center for Media Innovation at Point Park University is hosting 50 Years of Coming Out, a celebration of the history of queer media in Pennsylvania, on Oct. 11 - National Coming Out Day.

The event will feature a gallery exhibit of Pittsburgh queer media dating back 50 years, as well as a panel discussion with LGBTQ journalists, bloggers and communicators representing publications across

Pennsylvania, and beyond.

The gallery can be viewed beginning at 5 p.m. at the Center for Media Innovation, 305 Wood St., Pittsburgh, PA, 15222. The panel discussion begins at 7 p.m. A livestream of the event also can be viewed at the Center's Facebook page. The suggested donation is \$15 for in-person attendees and \$5 for those who watch online. Those donations will go toward the cost of the event.

The event is cosponsored by the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia chapters of the National Association of LGBTQ Journalists (NLGJA), a journalist-led organization working to advance fair and accurate media coverage of LGBTQ communities and issues.

QUEER HISTORY

The exhibit on display in the Center will encompass Pittsburgh queer news dating all the way back to 1973. This includes Pittsburgh Gay News, Gay Life Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh's Out, Cue Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Pride Guides and Equal Magazine.

This substantial archive of queer news was donated to QBurgh by Tony Molnar-Strejcek, the former publisher of Out Pittsburgh.

"This is documented history. Basically, it was documenting my life," said Jeff Freedman, co-creator of QBurgh, which also celebrates its one-year anniversary on National Coming Out Day. "This was our tie to the community. We lived in a very straight world. These came out once a month and were like heaven to us. They were a moment in time where we could connect with our community and see people and read about people like us. Then you put it away and went back into the world."

QBurgh was created as a source for LGBTQ news and community resources in Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania. After getting the archives from Molnar-

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Strejcek, Freedman and fellow QBurgh co-creator Jim Sheppard went to work digitizing them so that the media was preserved.

“We now have documented history of queer Pittsburgh in an accessible form,” Freedman said. “This wouldn’t be possible without Tony, who trusted us with this precious cargo.”

FUTURE OF QUEER MEDIA

The featured event is a panel discussion, The Future of Queer Media in the Commonwealth. LGBTQ journalists, bloggers and communicators representing publications from Pennsylvania - and beyond - will come together for a facilitated roundtable discussion about the current state of queer media in Pennsylvania and hopes for the future.

“As we celebrate our community’s past, we’re also eager to look forward,” said Kristina Marusic, co-president of the Pittsburgh chapter of NLGJA. “We’re excited to bring together this group of talented LGBTQ communicators from across the state to discuss our hopes for improving the statewide media landscape.”

Panelists for the discussion will include:

- * Jim Sheppard, co-creator of QBurgh
- * Sue Kerr, founder and publisher of Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents
- * Tony Molnar-Strejcek, former publisher of Out Pittsburgh
- * Mark Segal, founder and publisher of the Philadelphia Gay News
- * Stephen Jiwanmall, communications manager at the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center
- * Frank Pizzoli, editor and publisher of the Central Voice and a journalist at the Pennsylvania Capital-Star
- * Michael Mahler, founder and publisher of Erie Gay News
- * Maria Montañó, communications specialist at SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania

“We started planning this event as a history of queer media in Pittsburgh but quickly realized that the gallery exhibition represents the lived experience of many LGBTQ+ people in this region,” said Andrew Conte, Director of the Center for Media Innovation. “We hope the exhibit and panel discussion will set the stage for meaningful thought and conversation about how far all of us have come over the past half-century toward being aware of and supportive of diversity in all its forms - and of how far we still have to go.”

Rupaul’s Drag Race star Tatianna is Coming to The Zone Dance Club!

by Michael Mongera

Famous drag queen, Tatianna be appearing at The Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie PA, on October 23rd, 2021! Tatianna appeared on RuPaul’s Drag Race season 2, and All Stars 2, the latter which she received runaway success. The event will be hosted by Rebecca Mae, along with special guests such as Luna Skye and Indie Skies. House cast queens such as Misty Michaels Kall, Priscilla Godzilla, Shea D’Heaux, and Pissi Gabune will also be performing. The 4:30 PM to 7 PM event prohibits smoking. Doors open at 4 PM. The second showing (9PM to 11:30PM) will allow smoking. A meet and greet will follow immediately after each event. Doors will open to the general public at 12 am. \$5 cover for those who do not come to either show.

Mayor’s LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council meeting on September 8

by Michael Mahler

The Erie City Mayor’s LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council met on September 8 via Zoom. Chief of Staff Renee Lamis provided an update on American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding. These funds will be spent on services for those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, infrastructure, those negatively economically impacted by COVID-19, and historically underserved populations. A representative from the LGBTQIA+ advisory council will serve with representatives from other mayor’s advisory councils/populations on a council of advisors for input on funding.

The City of Erie will also be challenging the reported totals of the 2020 US Census, as there were problems in areas of data collection.

Mayor Schember has met with local advocates for health and homelessness about challenges plaguing those who are LGBTQIA and find themselves in need of shelter and services.

Chief of Staff Renee Lamis submitted the report for the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Municipal Equality Index (MEI.) New Erie City Police Leason Sgt. Geoff Filuze also attended the September 8 advisory council meeting.

The PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs has set their 2021-2022 meeting schedule, and the summer meeting will be August 12 in Erie, the day before the 29th Annual Erie Pride Picnic. The PA Commission

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This project was funded through a grant from the
Pa. Department of Health

on LGBTQ Affairs is also working on passing the Equality Act and needs letters to the editor from business faith leaders and others supporting the passage of this vital legislation.

The 2021 PA LGBTQ Health Conference was discussed. The event will be held virtually October 12-14, and several people from Erie's LGBTQ community are active advisory committee members. Additionally, the 2020 Keira Kristine DeSantis Transgender Advocacy Award was presented to Janelle Crossley of Harrisburg on September 8 at the Erie County Department of Health. Mayor Schember and several members of the Mayor's LGBTQIA+ advisory council attended.

Groups are invited to participate in both staffing the LGBTQ table at the Blues and Jazz Festival being held September 25 & 26 in Frontier Park and also at the 4th Annual HIV/AIDS Awareness Walk on Monday, September 27 at 6 PM, stepping off from the Arboretum Education Center near the tennis courts in Frontier Park.

Compton's Table offers AFFIRM - Queer Youth Support Group

by Compton's Table

Compton's Table has a new queer youth support group called AFFIRM. It is a CBT-based group to learn stress management and coping skills while connecting with other queer youth. There are two sets of online Zoom meetings being offered from September through November.

For youth ages 16 to 20 years old, there will be Zoom sessions that are an hour and a half long on Mondays from 6:00 to 7:30 PM, which runs from September 13 through November 8.

For youth ages 12 to 15 years old, there will be Zoom sessions also lasting 1 1/2 hours on Sundays from 6:00 to 7:30 PM, running from September 12 through November 7.

Register at <https://comptonstable.org/affirm>. Email info@comptonstable.org with questions.

The goal of AFFIRM is to decrease unhelpful thoughts, feel better about selves and lives, and to make healthy choices for your sexual and mental health.

The group is open to anyone between 12 and 21 years old who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, two-spirit, trans, nonbinary, queer and/or questioning your sexuality or gender. Pennsylvania

residents are eligible

What you get are coping skills training, the opportunity to meet other cool LGBTQ+ people, contactless care package delivery, and technology available by request.

Board Members sought for NW PA Pride Alliance, Inc

from NW PA Pride Alliance Board of Directors

NWPA Pride Alliance is looking for applicants to fill positions with our board of directors. NWPA Pride Alliance is seeking to diversify its membership to best address the needs of the LGBT community, persons of all sexual orientations, gender identifications, marital status, ethnic backgrounds and educational experiences are welcome to apply. All positions are unpaid, volunteer positions. We are looking for people who want to become more involved with the LGBT community, working with our members to extend outreach to the community as a whole.

Board members organize events within the community, represent the LGBT community at local events, and work with local businesses and organizations to raise awareness of LGBT issues. Board members meet the first Saturday of each month at 11:15 AM and additionally as needed in preparation for specific events.

Advisory panel members are to provide guidance for the board of directors in specific matters upon request. Meetings will be as needed and may be irregular. Specific areas of expertise being sought are accounting, legal counselor, community education, publicity, medical backgrounds and nonprofit administration. The board of directors will seek advice from the advisory panel on issues as they arise.

If you are interested, please send a resume that outlines your experience and qualifications by Friday, November 19 to president@nwpapride.org. All resumes will be considered, please note if you wish to apply for membership to the board of directors or advisory panel. You can only hold one of these position, but you may apply for more than one. Applicants for the Board of directors will be contacted for a mandatory interview with the board to be scheduled after the resume is received.

PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs meeting on August 21

by Michael Mahler

On August 21, the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs held their quarterly meeting at the Governor's Regional Office in Pittsburgh. Executive Director Rafael Alvarez Febo reported on essential policies and executive orders that included the Department of Transportation changing gender markers on driver's licenses, supporting trans youth, and working with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission to update the definition of sexual discrimination to include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. State departments and agencies are working on collecting sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data with other types of demographic data because knowing who we serve tell us how to serve. Executive orders are expected to support equal access to fertility therapy and cross-agency cooperation for name changes.

The Commission is helping to support the passage of the Equality Act in the US Senate by actively seeking op-eds from business & faith leaders. We have partners who can help with drafting letters.

While Black and Brown commissioners caucused, ally commissions discussed how to support communities of color effectively.

Legislation and Policy committee is working on passage of the Equality Act at the federal level, as well as recognition by state agencies of LGBTQ as a community of interest. They are also exploring educational opportunities with both caucuses in the state legislature.



PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs meeting on August 21 at the Governor's Regional Office in Pittsburgh.

Youth and Youth Services committee is working on fighting so-called conversion therapy through multiple angles, including working with insurance providers, board and agencies that provide licensing of providers, and municipal legislation.

The Housing committee is developing events and planning a town hall to gather info.

Health committee is working on fertility treatments to those assigned female at birth and looking at booster shots for COVID-19 for HIV+ people whose HIV is not controlled.

Aging committee has signed a letter to the acting PA Health secretary on nursing home rights. They have also been working with the PA Department of Aging on gathering SOGI data. The Aging committee also presented at the June meeting of the PA Association of Area Aging Agencies. Aging secretary Torres has passed a policy recognizing LGBTQ as a community of greatest need. The Aging committee has also helped the PA Department of Aging develop a page on their site for HIV and seniors, similar to a page dealing with diabetes as a chronic disease.

The Commission scheduled its quarterly meetings through the end of 2022. On November 12, 2021, they will meet in Allentown, on February 12 in Harrisburg, on May 21 in Philadelphia at the William Way Center, on August 12 in Erie, and on November 18 in Harrisburg.





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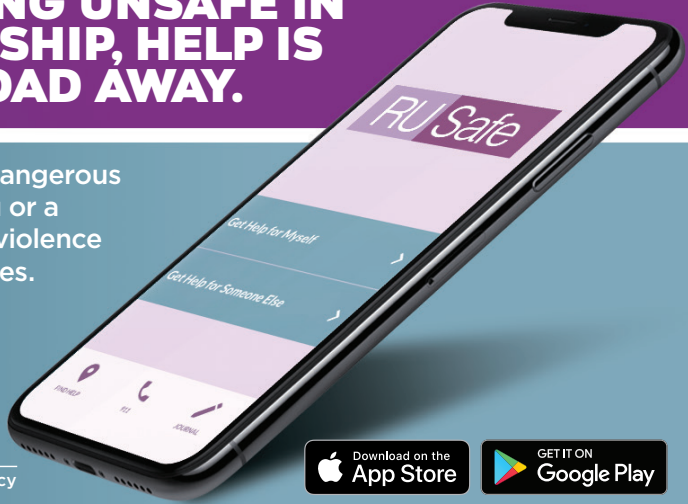


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Calendar

For latest updates, see www.eriegaynews.com

Sep 22 (Wed) - LGBTQ+ and Allies Happy Hour- All welcome (Ranz Bar & Grill, 10950 Liberty Street, Meadville, PA 16335) 5:30 PM - 8 PM.

Sep 24 (Fri) - HIV/STI Test & PrEP Rapid Start (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 8 PM - 11 PM. Free T-shirt and other fun prizes for those getting tested! Testing is FREE and confidential. Phone: (814) 619-4009. Venue Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to <https://www.centraloutreach.com/>. Browse to venue web site <https://www.facebook.com/TheZoneDanceClub>.

Sep 24 - 26 (Fri - Sun) - Bear Weekend #2 (Jones Pond Campground & RV Park)

Sep 25 (Sat) - Camp Davis Party in your Pants Weekend (Camp Davis, 311 Redbrush Rd, Boyers, PA 16020-1219) Place an object in your pants and allow others to figure what it is. Go, go Sweet but Psycho!, go go...spin them "tunes! Phone: (724) 637-2402. Email: info@campdavispa.com. Browse to <http://campdavispa.com/>.

Sep 25 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWPA (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Crime Victim Center of Erie County, 125 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 2 PM.

Sep 26 (Sun) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Youth Peer Support & Social Group (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 5060 Youngstown Poland Rd, Youngstown, OH 44514) 3 PM - 5 PM. Ages 14-17, under 14 with signed parental consent form.

Sep 26 (Sun) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Adult Peer Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 5060 Youngstown Poland Rd, Youngstown, OH 44514) 6 PM - 8 PM. Ages 18+. Phone: (234) 254-8924. Email: info@fullspectrum-communityoutreach.org. Browse to www.fullspectrum-communityoutreach.org/.

Sep 27 (Mon) - National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day In 2008 the National Association of People with AIDS launched this observance day to recognize the disproportionate impact of the epidemic on gay men. #NGMHAAD Browse to <https://www.hiv.gov/events/awareness-days/gay-mens>.

Sep 27 (Mon) - 4th Annual Erie County HIV / AIDS Awareness Walk (Frontier Park/LEAF Education Center, W 6th St, Erie, PA) 5:30 PM. Walkers will gather at the LEAF Education Center / Arboretum Building at Frontier Park for the approximate 1.5-mile

walk. We invite all to walk and help to raise awareness about HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Participants can enjoy refreshments, testing, and education opportunities. Contact: Gary Snyder. Phone: (814) 451-6786. Email: gsnyder@eriecountypa.gov. Browse to <https://echiv.org/>.

Sep 29 (Wed) - Queer Youth: Virtual Connect - Chat & Chill (Zoom) 6 PM - 7:30 PM. Come join us for a night of community, laughter, and chill. No real agenda, just a safe, virtual space. Co-hosted by Compton's Table, Greater Erie Alliance for Equality (GEAE) and Journey to a Trauma-Informed Life. Contact: <https://comptonstable.org/connect-events>. Browse to <https://comptonstable.org/>.

Oct 1 - 31 (Fri - Sun) - LGBT History Month First celebrated in 1994 in October. It was declared a national History month by President Barack Obama in 2009. The month was created with the intent to encourage openness and education about LGBT history and rights.

Oct 1 - 3 (Fri - Sun) - Moxie's Camp YETI Euchre Tournament (Jones Pond Campground & RV Park, 9835 Old State Rd, Angelica, NY 14709-8729) Things heat up this weekend with Camp YETI & Mega Bingo! Phone: (585) 567-8100. Email: info@jonespond.com. Browse to <http://www.jonespond.com>.

Oct 2 (Sat) - Halloween Show (Knights of Enchanted Dreams, 104 W 2nd St, Jamestown, NY 14701) 9 PM. \$6 cover. Drag performers at Dive, Sabrina, Kimzie, and Wendy. Phone: (716) 488-7070. Email: knightsofenchanteddreams@yahoo.com. Browse to <https://www.facebook.com/Knights-of-Enchanted-Dreams-106287404896373>.

Oct 2 (Sat) - Camp Davis A Time to Detox - Yeah, Right!! Weekend (Camp Davis, 311 Redbrush Rd, Boyers, PA 16020-1219) It's just too soon to quit drinking. The season is NOT yet over! Grab it, get it,



Randy Shannon
Sales Associate

O: 814-833-1300
703-472-7063
randyshannon@howardhanna.com

Howard Hanna
Real Estate Services

4248 W 12th St, Erie, PA 16505

& go.....! Run to the Rec Hall for Rays' music. Phone: (724) 637-2402. Email: info@campdavispa.com. Browse to <http://campdavispa.com/>.

Oct 4 (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.

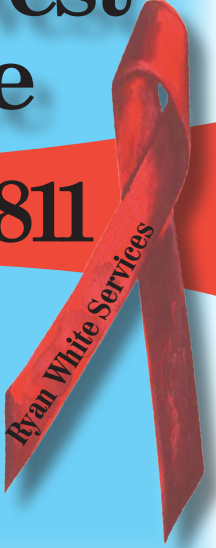
Oct 7 (Thu) - Journey To A Trauma Informed Life - Art Wellness Space (Journey To A Trauma Informed Life, 2230 W. 8th St. #2, Erie, PA 16505) This is a hybrid event meaning you can attend virtually or in person (following CDC guidelines for masking, social distancing, and other measures). The event will be led by Eric Reiche, an Edinboro University Art Therapy/ Counseling masters student completing their practicum here at Journey. Phone: (833) 487-5769. Venue Phone: (833) 487-5769. Email: ERandazzo@4urjrny.com. Browse to <https://www.atraumainformedlife.com/>. Browse to venue web site <https://www.atraumainformedlife.com/>.

Oct 8 - 10 (Fri - Sun) - Closing Weekend (Jones Pond Campground & RV Park, 9835 Old State Rd, Angelica, NY 14709-8729) Join us for our final dance of the season plus our year-end closing dinner with the Cafe at Jones Pond. Until next time our friends! The park will close at 3pm sharp on Sunday Phone: (585) 567-

Northwest Alliance

814.454.3811

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 **Family Services** of NWPA

8100. Email: info@jonespond.com. Browse to <http://www.jonespond.com>.

Oct 9 (Sat) - Camp Davis Masquerade Weekend (Camp Davis, 311 Redbrush Rd, Boyers, PA 16020-1219) You know the routine. Perhaps, Sweet but Psycho! can help? Phone: (724) 637-2402. Email: info@campdavispa.com. Browse to <http://campdavispa.com/>.

Oct 9 - 10 (Sat - Sun) - Michelle Michaels' Pink Party Benefit Weekend (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 8 PM. Basket auction and bake sale Sat & Sun. Drag show 9:30 PM Sunday. Proceeds benefit Linked By Pink. \$5 cover Saturday, no cover Sunday. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to <https://www.facebook.com/TheZoneDanceClub>.

Oct 10 (Sun) - LBT Women of Erie meets (Zoom) 12 PM - 12:30 PM. Meeting ID: 770 9886 1291. Passcode: F4fwNr. u Contact: Kim Conti. (814) 490-3994. ErieBeans@yahoo.com. www.facebook.com/LBTWOMENOFERIE.

Oct 11 (Mon) - National Coming Out Day Every year on National Coming Out Day, we celebrate coming out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) or as an ally. First celebrated in 1988. Browse to <http://www.hrc.org/resources/national-coming-out-day>.

Oct 12 (Tue) - LGBTQ+ Coalition Of Ashtabula County meeting (Ashtabula County YMCA Multipurpose Room, 263 W Prospect Rd, Ashtabula, OH 44004) 5:30 PM - 7 PM. Come out to meet the LGBTQ+ Coalition of Ashtabula County! Hear the plans for the 2022 year. Join forces to bring awareness to our county. =! Phone: (440) 749-3900. Venue Phone: (440) 997-5321. Email: bdaywalt1@icloud.com. Browse to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/176893776756950/>. Browse to venue web site <https://www.ashtabulaymca.org/>.

Oct 12 (Tue) - Bears Do Dinner #88 (Erie Brewing Company, 4102 W Lake Rd, Erie PA 16505) 6 PM. Join the Bears for a casual dinner of food and conversation! Dinner is on your own. Contact: Peter. Phone: (814) 384-9785. Email: eriepeter@gmail.com. Browse to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BearsDoDinnerEriePA/>

Oct 12 (Tue) - Youngstown PFLAG meets virtually (Zoom) 7 PM - 8:30 PM. Youngstown Area PFLAG's support group meeting will gather virtually. Any person who would like to join us can request the zoom link from youngstownareapflag.org

Oct 15 (Fri) - Deadline for Erie Gay News November 2021 print edition (#312) Please have all articles, ads, and submissions in by this date. This issue will be released on the evening of Tuesday, October 26.

Oct 17 (Sun) - Erie Drag Queen Bingo (Zem Zem

Shrine Club, 2525 W 38th St, Erie, PA 16506) 1:15 PM. Come out and have fun at Erie's Drag Queen Bingo. Join your favorite Drag Queens, Rebecca Mae, Michelle Michael's, and Priscilla Godzilla for a night of fun. \$100 cash prize for best Halloween costume and also \$100 cash prize for best table decoration. Be warned... No one is safe from the Queens! Prepare for 2 hours of dirty jokes, ruthless insults, and side-splitting laughs! Not for the easily offended! Tickets & Reservations can be made online at www.ErieDragQueenBingo.com. Limited Seating Available. MUST be 18 and older to attend. Phone: (814) 397-9415. Venue Phone: (814) 833-3391. Email: info@Gears-N-Grub.com. Browse to <http://www.ErieDragQueenBingo.com/>. Browse to venue web site <http://www.zemzem.us/>.

Oct 18 (Mon) - Pennsylvania General Election Registration Deadline Register to vote at <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx>

Oct 19 (Tue) - Erie County HIV Task Force meets via Zoom 1 PM - 2:30 PM. Zoom Meeting ID: 927 9128 9996. Passcode: 940728

Oct 21 (Thu) - PFLAG Westfield NY meets (Patterson Library, 40 S Portage St, Westfield, NY 14787) 6:30 PM. Support group for parents, friends and family of LGBTQ+ people. Contact: Patricia. Phone: (716)-450-9055. Venue Phone: (716) 326-2154. Email: aodee2149@yahoo.com. Browse to venue web site <https://www.pattersonlib.org/>.

Oct 20 (Wed) - International Pronouns Day International Pronouns Day seeks to make respecting, sharing, and educating about personal pronouns commonplace. Referring to people by the pronouns they determine for themselves is basic to human dignity. Being referred to by the wrong pronouns particularly affects transgender and gender nonconforming people. Together, we can transform society to celebrate people's multiple, intersecting identities. Browse to <https://pronounsday.org/>.

Oct 22 (Fri) - Mark Pacheco Working On Wonders (WOW) Fund presents 6th Annual Lip Sync Battle (American Legion Herman Kent Post 777, 26 Jackson Ave, Jamestown, NY 14701) 6 PM. Special guest stars Devinity and Amaya Sexton. Doors open at 6 PM. Contest begins at 8 PM. Contestant fee \$25. Proceeds will make dreams come true for people with disabilities. Admission is \$15 at the door. Contact: Marcos Figueroa. Phone: (716) 951-6118. Venue Phone: (716) 483-0777. Browse to <https://fillingthegap.net/>. Browse to venue web site <http://americanlegionpost777.com/>.

Oct 23 (Sat) - RuPaul's Drag Race Performer Tatianna and Friends Drag Show (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) Tatianna appeared on RuPaul's

Drag Race season 2 and All Stars 2. The event will be hosted by Rebecca Mae and special guests such as Luna Skye and Indie Skies. House cast queens such as Misty Michaels Kall, Priscilla Godzilla, Shea D'Heaux, and Pissi Gabune will also be performing. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to <https://www.facebook.com/TheZoneDanceClub>.

Oct 23 (Sat) – TransFamily of NWPA (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Crime Victim Center of Erie County, 125 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 2 PM. Meetings are hosted at the Crime Victim Center of Erie County. All current CDC, state, and local guidelines for meeting indoors will be observed. Meetings are always confidential and completely free. Pop and chips are provided. Please feel free to bring other snacks or a dish to share with the group, if you are able, but this is not required.

Oct 24 (Sun) - 13th Annual Diversity Worship Service (Community United Church, 1011 W 38th St, Erie, PA 16508-2540) 11 AM. Please join us as we celebrate our 13th 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 24 (Sun) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Youth Peer Support & Social Group (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 5060 Youngstown Poland Rd, Youngstown, OH 44514) 3 PM - 5 PM. Ages 14-17, under 14 with signed parental consent form.

Oct 24 (Sun) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Adult Peer Support Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 5060 Youngstown Poland Rd, Youngstown, OH 44514) 6 PM - 8 PM. Ages 18+. Phone: (234) 254-8924. Email: info@fullspectrum-communityoutreach.org. Browse to www.fullspectrum-communityoutreach.org/.

Oct 24 - 30 (Sun - Sat) - Ace Week Ace Week, formerly Asexual Awareness Week, is an international campaign that seeks to educate about asexual, aromantic, demisexual, and grey-asexual experiences and to create materials that are accessible to our community and our allies around the world. Browse to <https://www.aceweek.org/>.

Oct 26 (Tue) - Intersex Awareness Day Intersex Awareness Day on October 26 marks the first public demonstration by intersex people in North America. Morgan Holmes and Max Beck of Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) were joined by allies from Transsexual Menace and other organizations. It took place on October 26, 1996 in Boston, Massachusetts

outside a conference of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Browse to <https://intersexday.org/en/intersex-awareness-day/>.

Oct 26 (Tue) – Erie Gay News folding/distribution work party (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 31932 W 8th St, Erie, PA 16505) 7 PM. Help us get out the new issue. Volunteers appreciated!

Oct 26 (Tue) - Pennsylvania General Election Last day to request a mail-in or absentee ballot Request a mail-in or absentee ballot at <https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>

Oct 27 (Wed) - Queer Youth: Virtual Connect - Chat & Chill (Zoom) 6 PM - 7:30 PM. Come join us for a night of community, laughter, and chill. No real agenda, just a safe, virtual space. Co-hosted by Compton's Table, Greater Erie Alliance for Equality (GEAE) and Journey to a Trauma-Informed Life. Contact: <https://comptonstable.org/connect-events>. Browse to <https://comptonstable.org/>.

Oct 30 (Sat) - Halloween Party (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 8 PM. Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to <https://www.facebook.com/TheZoneDanceClub>.

EGN Rates & Data

Erie Gay News

QUARTER PAGE	FULL PAGE	HALF PAGE VERTICAL
HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL	EIGHTH PAGE	

AD SIZE	PRICE/ISSUE	DIMENSIONS
EIGHTH	\$40 - \$36 Prepaid	1 5/8" high X 2 7/8" wide
QUARTER	\$65 - \$58.50 Prepaid	3 1/2" high X 2 7/8" wide
HALF VERT.	\$120 - \$108 Prepaid	3 1/2" high X 6" wide
HALF HORZ.	\$120 - \$108 Prepaid	7" high X 2 7/8" wide
FULL PAGE	\$200 - \$180 Prepaid	7 1/2" high X 6" wide

Camera ready art or manuscript and/or photos, illustrations and logos must be received by the 15th of the month. Photos and Illustrations should be PDF or TIFF and Hires. All hardcopy ads submitted will be reproduced as close as possible.



**Vote Safely. Vote Early.
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Option 1

Apply Online: [VotesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot](https://votespa.com/ApplyMailBallot)

Option 2

Apply in person at the Erie County Election Office
140 West 6th Street, Room 112

Option 3

Apply in person at the ErieDems HQ
1305 State Street



Deadline to apply for a mail ballot is 5PM on October 26, 2021.

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2021

Paid for by the Erie County Democratic Party

Voters Guide

*Candidates for Erie County Executive, Erie County Council, Erie City Mayor, and Erie City Council were asked about their positions on LGBTQIA+ issues. Their responses appear below
These were the questions asked for all races:*

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Municipal Equality Index (MEI) <https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/MEI-2020-Erie-Pennsylvania.pdf?mtime=20201202124502&focal=none>, Erie has zero points for domestic partner benefits for city/county employees. What strategies would you use to address this?

How would you assure that Erie implements city/county contractor nondiscrimination policies?

To what extent have you participated in LGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training? What types of training would you recommend for 1.) city staff & 2.) council members?

What strategies would you use to include and engage LGBTQIA+ organizations and community members in developing policy and legislation?

Share a time/moment when you influenced or were positively influenced by the LGBTQIA+ community.

County Executive

HRC MEI Score

Tyler Titus (D)

Assuring that all families are honored and protected has to be a top priority of county government. As County Executive I will work closely with the City and County Councils to advocate on behalf of domestic partner benefits. My experience working with various stakeholders as the president of the Erie School Board prepares me to effectively advocate for this change.

Brenton Davis (R)

I believe Erie County should lead the way in eliminating workplace discrimination, not only hiring decisions and private contracts, but also in the rights and privileges afforded to our employees.

Contractor Non Discrimination Policies Tyler Titus (D)

As an active queer advocate who has assisted in constructing and revising nondiscrimination policies across the region and state, I am prepared to ensure our county procedures uphold this inclusive, necessary value.

Brenton Davis (R)

As a Military Officer, we are required to complete annual sensitivity training across a wide range of subjects. I would leave my decisions to the Human Resources experts to ensure Erie County is not only compliant with existing laws but fosters a healthy, professional, and inclusive environment. An effective leader knows their own limitations, recognizes the experts within their fields, and gives them the autonomy to improve the organization.

Cultural Competency Training Tyler Titus (D)

Over the past decade, I have had the privilege of conducting queer competency trainings across the country. I believe training is an excellent way to introduce topics, but that it needs to move into actionable items such as policy updates, procedural adjustments, and proactive steps to protect all community members, especially those most at risk of systemic harm within the queer community.

Brenton Davis (R)

I plan to continue to build coalitions across diverse groups of residents to aid The Erie County Executive's office in making decisions through multiple lenses and draw upon the broad base of experiences.

Voters Guide

Engagement Strategies

Tyler Titus (D)

I currently serve as the Co-Vice Chair of the Commission of LGBTQIA Affairs for Governor Tom Wolf and have used this platform to engage with queer-led organizations across the Commonwealth. I am 100% committed to replicating that back at home—elevating community member voices and experiences during policy development.

LGBTQIA+ Influence

Tyler Titus (D)

The trailblazers of our community continue to give me hope and inspire me to keep fighting for equity. In 2017, I became the first openly transgender person elected in the Pennsylvania history. In 2020, I was unanimously voted into the president seat. My campaign and candidacy has helped elevate the voices of the queer community.

Brenton Davis (R)

During my tenure in Japan, I had learned two of my roommates assigned with me in the military were gay. At this point, we had been to war together and laid our lives on the line for each other. When they came out, it made absolutely no difference to me. I was more relieved in their ability to live their lives more openly and honestly. They are my brothers and forever will be.

COUNTY COUNCIL District 2

Not Responding: Andre Horton (D-Incumbent)

COUNTY COUNCIL District 4

Not Responding: Jim Winarski (D)

COUNTY COUNCIL District 6

HRC MEI Score

Lydia Laythe (D)

Wow! Thank you for sharing this information with me. I had not realized that domestic partners

were not included for employee benefits. That definitely needs to be changed. Seems to me this could be done several ways - one way would be to change the verbage used in current County policy to make sure we're modeling inclusivity. Using more inclusive language, such as "partner" instead of "spouse," or explicitly outlining that a partner/spouse could include a civil union or registered domestic partnership would be a simple first step. Then the next step would be to reach out to other local leaders and encourage this policy to be amended in every municipality in the County. But I'm just one person brainstorming about this, I'd much rather sit down with a group of people and develop a more thorough plan on this issue! If anyone's interested, I'd love to hear from you (electlydialaythe@gmail.com).

Timothy Gostomski (R)

I have no particular strategy to address this issue at this time. I think Covid concerns are a much more pressing issue.

Contractor Non Discrimination Policies

Lydia Lathe (D)

Accessibility and transparency of local government seems to be the most foundational piece to this issue. If government work is transparent and accessible to observe/view, then it will be easier to identify if/when violations to nondiscrimination policies occur. I also think we could do a better job at modeling diversity and inclusion within the Human Relations Commission at the County level that is intended to hear complaints about discrimination but seems to be run and organized by a majority of older, white men - statistically less likely to be discriminated against. This is a problem and the makeup of the Human Relations Commission needs to be changed to represent the people and groups most at risk for discrimination.

Timothy Gostomski (R)

I do not feel it is the council's job to directly enforce policy or law. If someone has a specific concern then it should be looked into at that time.

Voters Guide

Cultural Competency Training

Lydia Lathe (D)

My undergraduate and graduate social work curriculum included Cultural Humility and Sex & Sexuality courses. I currently facilitate trauma-informed and culturally sensitive workshops for local social service agencies around Erie, which covers a lot of topics, but it includes reference to sexual orientation and gender identity (particularly around discussions of privilege and acknowledging straight, straight-passing, and cisgender privilege). To be honest, “cultural competence” as a concept is not my favorite - I prefer “cultural humility” or “cultural sensitivity” - because it acknowledges the process/mindset that people need to adopt to become more aware and inclusive. I don’t believe any amount of training or experience would make someone an “expert” or “competent” in the LGBTQIAA+ community - there’s so much diversity, complexity, and intersectionality that shapes our experiences and identities. But there’s definitely some basic concepts people NEED to know - like the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity, understanding pronouns, dismantling heteronormative, assumptive language in policy or correspondence, or even just the importance of words in general and the language we use to talk to/about someone. But these are all really foundational - and unfortunately, I think those basics are still lacking from most elected officials and decision-making spaces (I still have to advocate for my title to be used correctly in Washington Township Council Meeting Minutes - I’m a “Councilperson” not “Councilwoman.”). I absolutely believe these types of trainings/discussions are important, and in my experience, we have to start at the very beginning right now. But I clearly don’t have all the answers! I’d gladly receive feedback, hear your ideas, or brainstorm together (electlydialathe@gmail.com).

Timothy Gostomski (R)

I have not participated in any training and have none to recommend.



Engagement Strategies

Lydia Laythe (D)

When government is more accessible and more transparent, everyone - including members of the LGBTQIAA+ community and related organizations - are more included and can take a more active role in the decision-making process. Accessibility and transparency can be improved in a lot of ways - through stronger, clearer social media presence, through online/virtual engagement options, and through greater individual accessibility/responsivity of elected leaders. I cannot speak for anyone else, but I know I will be accessible to talk (and more importantly LISTEN) to LGBTQIAA+ community members - because they’re my family and friends. Beyond that, we just need more people from the LGBTQIAA+ community in positions of power - be it elected office or appointed to commissions, boards or committees. We need more diversity across the board in these rooms where decisions are being made. Only then, when we have more seats at the table, can we truly say we’re “included” in policy and legislation.

Timothy Gostomski (R)

I have no particular strategies to engage any specific interest group. I do strongly encourage people and groups to be involved in government

LGBTQIA+ Influence

Lydia Laythe (D)

In 2019, I took my son to Erie’s Pride Parade. Weeks before, I had told him where we were going and I took him to the mall to pick out whatever he wanted to wear. He chose a bright white unicorn overall-type outfit, rainbow cat ears and sunglasses, and tie-dye bracelets. I was so happy to see my little gender-bending son embracing the things that brought him joy. Everyone at Pride loved his outfit and we were able to talk about love, gender, and being authentic. I just remember feeling so grateful that there was such a huge community of people that were positive and affirming toward my son’s choice to wear a unicorn costume and be himself - an experience that sadly doesn’t always happen for him in school. Truly, the LGBTQIAA+ community - which includes myself and many of my friends and family

Voters Guide

- has validated my best instincts as a parent - to love my child unconditionally and embrace my child for everything they are or want to be.

Timothy Gostomski (R)

I have never had any specific interaction good or bad with your community.

Erie City Mayor

HRC MEI Score

Joe Schember (D-Incumbent)

The City of Erie does not currently provide any survivor benefits for domestic partners, regardless of orientation. We had looked at this previously, but since it provides only 1 bonus point, and we had so many other bigger priorities such as passing the conversion therapy ban, we decided to focus on larger issues that were more of a priority. If other domestic partners had benefits, and the City was excluding same-sex couples, then we would have definitely removed that exclusion. However, as a self-funded health care provider, and an employer of over 600 employees paid via city taxpayers, our challenges revolve around the cost associated with extending such benefits to all domestic partners as well as how we would monitor who was officially in a domestic partnership and when that partnership ended. We are currently revisiting how we could add these benefits. We will look at what other cities are doing, ascertain how much it would cost for us to make domestic partnership benefits available, and begin discussions with our various unions during contract negotiations

Contractor Non Discrimination Policies

Joe Schember (D-Incumbent)

We have been working on this with our City Solicitors' office. The City of Erie is an equal opportunity employer. As stated in our revised handbook, "We will not, under any circumstances, condone or tolerate conduct which may constitute discrimination against any City of Erie employee or prospective employee because of race, color, sex, religion, disability, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information or any other category protected

by federal, state, and local law. This policy covers, but is not limited to, hiring, placement, promotions, transfer or demotion, advertising, solicitation of employment, layoffs, terminations, compensation, benefit programs, training and educational opportunities, and any other term or condition of employment. Employees who fail to comply with this policy, including managers and supervisors, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination." As such, one of our top priorities is to implement a city contractor non-discrimination policy. This is a top priority, not only because it would earn us 6 points, but also because we want to ensure that we are only doing business with contractors who value everyone and do not discriminate against anyone. Members of my team are in the process of identifying the City's most critical contractors. Once we have compiled that list of existing contractors, as a courtesy, we will send them a draft of the language to review. Going forward, all existing and future contractors will be required to sign-off on the policy as part of the contractual agreement.

Cultural Competency Training

Joe Schember (D-Incumbent)

I participated in Cultural Competency Training, along with the Police Chief, his Command staff, and officers of the Erie Police Department in 2020. The Reverend Dr. Rich McCarty conducted the training, and it was wonderful. He is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Mercyhurst University and is also an ordained clergyperson in the United Church of Christ, serving Community United Church in Erie. He has long served on the board and advisory council of the Greater Erie Alliance for Equality, and he currently serves on our LGBTQ+ Advisory Council. Dr. McCarty has provided diversity training for a wide variety of Erie institutions, advocating for restorative social justice and a better understanding of human diversity. We share the belief that strong communities are those that continue to improve upon mutual respect, boundaries, and accountability. I admire and respect his guidance and counsel. We are currently working to schedule another training session this year with the rest of the Erie Police department and will include Mayor's staff, department heads, and Council members. In the future, as part of their orientation, City of Erie new hires would watch the video of the

Voters Guide

presentation, and we will continue to facilitate ongoing trainings.

Engagement Strategies

Joe Schember (D-Incumbent)

In June 2018, when we received our first letter from the Human Rights Campaign with our preliminary score on the Municipal Equality Index. Our MEI was only 34 out of a possible 100 plus 22 bonus points. My team and I immediately sought guidance on how we could do better. One of the best things I did as Mayor was convene a Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Council. The Council is comprised of representatives from the Greater Erie Alliance for Equality (GEAE), NW PA Pride Alliance, TransFamily of NW PA, Erie Gay News, Northwest Rural AIDS Alliance, the PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs, Crime Victim Center of Erie, The Pennsylvania Youth Congress, Community United Church, SafeNet, students involved in PRISM, Stairways, Senator Bob Casey's Office, the Arts Community, Universities, Hospitals, and Financial Institutions. This team is active in the community, and we meet regularly to seek their guidance and act on it. They provide valuable input to the City, help us to revise policies and ordinances, ensure that we are all on the same page and that the City is a partner, and work together to spread the word about the valuable programs that exist. We will continue to work closely with this team to advocate for the needs of our LGBTQ+ communities in Erie and throughout the region, and to ensure that our policies and ordinances reflect our beliefs that everyone is entitled to the same human rights and freedoms. We are also in the process of hiring a consultant to review our policies, programs, and initiatives to ensure that we are doing everything we can to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion of all.

LGBTQIA+ Influence

Joe Schember (D-Incumbent)

What people in Erie may not know is that my son, Joe, is gay. Several years ago, my son, Joe, and daughter, Jaime, sat down with my wife, Rhonda, and me in our family room. Joe told us that he was gay.

My immediate response was: "Joe, you are our son and we love you." My son is a good man. He works hard at his job, was an excellent student in

school, played on a championship tennis team, helps take care of his disabled twin sister, and volunteered at the Barber Center for 15+ years... and he is gay. I'm proud to call him my son. Each and every one of us is a unique individual. Our differences make us stronger. I want to live in an Erie that celebrates our differences and welcomes and values everyone for the diverse skills, talents, and perspectives that each of us possesses. Imagine what a wonderful community Erie would be if we were not only tolerated but accepted and celebrated!

One of the most impactful influences on me was my experience participating in Pridefest in 2018 and 2019. It was such an amazing day – to see the diverse groups of people heading to the street for the parade, which were the two largest Pride Parades in Erie's history. And then when I delivered my remarks, it was such an inspiring moment to look out at the crowd from the stage and to see all of the color, the vitality, the smiles, and the celebration of love. It was beautiful! It's an image that I don't ever want to forget, and it's an image of what I want Erie to be all the time – loving, accepting, and welcoming.

Erie City Council

Not Responding: Greg Brown (R), Shawn Lyons (R)

HRC MEI Score

Liz Allen (D)

I examined the MEI scores for the nine Pennsylvania cities listed in the 2020 report. Erie is one of five cities that did not receive "flex" points for providing benefits for domestic partners. According to survey results, Carlisle, Philadelphia, Reading and Wilkes-Barre don't provide domestic partner benefits, yet they all score higher on the MEI than Erie does. (I believe Philly actually does provide domestic partner benefits, so that survey answer may be incorrect. I do not believe that the city of Erie can add domestic partner benefits as the city continues to grapple with a structural deficit. In fact, Public Financial Management (PFM), which examined the city's finances and made recommendations for bringing down our expenses, which continue to outstrip revenues, recommends that the city of Erie examine its current benefit package for ways to reduce costs for future

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hires. I am happy to share more information about the city's financial picture for anyone who is interested. However, based on the MEI score for Erie, It looks like our challenge is to look carefully at Erie's scores under law enforcement and see how we can work to raise those ratings so that Erie can hit the perfect score of 100 in the future, as Allentown, Philadelphia, Reading and State College already have.

Jasmine Flores (D)

It's truly an embarrassment that Erie received a score of 0 not once, but twice. Strategies I would use to help address the scorecard scores would include reaching out to groups already established in Erie and are already working towards fixing this scorecard. Groups like this would include GEAE and the mayor's LGBTQIA Advisory Council. I also would use a strategy revolving around researching and reaching out to different cities who scored much higher than us on the Scorecards. It's important to learn from those who excel and look outside of Erie. There is no shame in copying other cities who successfully pass the HRC's MEI with flying colors.

Chuck Nelson (D)

Partner benefits should be equitable.

Mo Troop (D)

One of the main reasons I am running for office is to ensure that all community voices are heard and because equity and inclusion are two things that I feel are very important. LGBT community is one of the voices that is important to be heard in our community and to my campaign. The Domestic Partner Benefits could be addressed by first listening to the members of the LGBT community to gather what their needs are and how they envision those needs being met. Secondly, as a City Council Member, I would bring the issue to the forefront as an issue that needs to be addressed. Third, I believe that Erie could look at other cities that are doing well in this area and model strategies working successfully there. Lastly, coordinate with the Human Relations Commission to eliminate discrimination in employee benefits for Domestic Partnerships.

Contractor Non Discrimination Policies

Liz Allen (D)

To address equity/diversity, including for the LGBTQIA community, we should create an equity/inclusion task force or commission to study a range of issues, including current nondiscrimination policies for contractors, and then come back with recommendations to monitor those policies to make sure they are being followed. I would suggest that council consult with the city solicitor to see if new language needs to be drafted on contracts and contractors

Jasmine Flores (D)

I would guarantee Erie City Contractors sign off on non-discrimination policies by passing legislation and making laws. Adding in a nondiscrimination clause to any contractual agreement should not ever be an issue. I have no problem putting together a legislature or even an example contract clause for the Mayor to sign off on. The role of the city council is to represent the community and pass the legislation in their favor. It might involve getting other council members on board, but this is the

Chuck Nelson (D)

As a councilmember I would happy to hear and advocate regarding concerns of discrimination, and hold others accountable.

Mo Troop (D)

To implement these policies, I would first do a thorough examination of the existing policies. This examination would be completed by various community stakeholders while following all of the required procedures under our charter and city code. Here is also an opportunity for Erie to research other cities that are operating successfully in this area. The strategies that they are using could be adapted to meet the needs of our city.

Cultural Competency Training

Liz Allen (D)

We have not had any LGBTQIA cultural competency training. Council could benefit from such training, as well as training in how to recognize/respond to implicit bias. We do have one training session planned this year on civility. I am confident that

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after we complete that training, council as a whole will recognize the value of training on a variety of issues, including cultural competency.

Jasmine Flores (D)

I have not received any LGBTQIA+Cultural Competency Training outside of anything required by the law for my job. Types of training I could recommend for city staff and council members would come directly from resources like the Great Erie Alliance, or the LGBTQIA Commission from Edinboro. I do believe, however, our best bet would be to start with Equality Pennsylvania. The entire purpose of Equality Pennsylvania all revolves around education and policy or legislation for the LGBT community right in our home state. The Equality Pennsylvania Education Fund is perfect for this scenario.

Chuck Nelson (D)

I have taken many classes on ethnography and sociology, but no specific corporate training. I'd be happy to advocate for recommended training.

Mo Troop (D)

I have recently conducted a training on Equity and Inclusion at the school where I work with a staff of nearly 200 people. I possess the ability to conduct these pieces of training with the city staff personally. I also believe that we should seek out members of the LGBT Community who could plan and implement the training with staff. Once again, we could research existing trainings used and approved by LGBTQ Organizations to make sure that we are using the best and most current resources.

Engagement Strategies

Liz Allen (D)

Council has the ability to tap into the various advisory councils that the Schember administration has created. Scheduling at least one study session at the start of the year to hear from members of these councils would be invaluable for myself and my colleagues. We do not have a formal liaison assigned to these advisory councils; creating such a liaison would do a great deal to open up the lines of communication for feedback on policies and legislation.

Jasmine Flores (D)

The best strategy to use to engage and include the LGBTQIA organizations and community members when I develop policies and legislation is to build personal relationships and reach out to them. Whether it's a phone call, meeting for coffee, or sending an email, the strategy will be being proactive and building bridges. I cannot wait for anyone to approach me. It's my job to engage and include the LGBTQIA community every step of the way. I've already reached out to my trans teenage nephew regarding what he needs to feel safe and protected in his community and my sister who is homosexual and a preteen before even answering these questions. I have a lot of friends who are LGBTQIA their needs are just as important as anyone else in our city. It's important to always get a perspective different than mine, and from the people who we are trying to help directly.

Chuck Nelson (D)

I do not need to speak on behalf of an under-represented community. I need to open the floor. When City Council had previously worked to pass legislation regarding LGBTQIA+ issues, I have organized people from the community to speak out from particular positions to help understanding.

Mo Troop (D)

I would use the strategy to develop an LGBTQIA Task Force to include and engage the LGBTQ Community Members. Also, I would work to make open lines of communication between prominent LGBTQIA organizations and the city government.

LGBTQIA+ Influence

Liz Allen (D)

Thanks to the pandemic, I reconnected with a gay friend from high school on Zoom to talk about politics, feminism, religion, spirituality, science, social isolation, silly high school memories and grandparenting. Our Zoom started with four classmates; now about a dozen of us get together every week. Thanks to my friend's openness, we have all become better at recognizing that we are not defined by sexual orientation but by our humanity, and that friendships can be picked up where we left off more than 50 years ago, with all the wisdom we've gained since then.

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Jasmine Flores (D)

I have family members who are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community, if they are younger family members I give them information for programs and organizations for support. I also try to introduce them to fellow community members to find friends and support they might not have. Being an ally to the LGBTQIA+ community I am positively influenced to embrace my true authentic self. The LGBTQIA+ community has fought and continues to fight for their rights to be seen and heard so they can live as their true self in life. I continue to admire that.

Chuck Nelson (D)

Most of my time spent with the LGBTQIA+ community has been working at restaurants with larger LGBTQIA+ populations. And oftentimes they brought the party up a notch.

Mo Troop (D)

The LGBT community has inspired me because I have close family and friends who are dear to me in the LGBTIA community.



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