



April 2024 – Issue 341

ERIE GAY NEWS

Serving the Regional LGBTQIA+ Community Since 1992

Rainbow Fest on April 13

from OddCity Entertainment

Join us at Rainbow Fest, hosted by OddCity Entertainment, for a groundbreaking celebration of love and acceptance on April 13th at Basement Transmissions in Erie, PA. Following the National Day of Silence, this festival amplifies voices against discrimination towards queer individuals, as well as brings the queer community together to showcase all of our amazing local talent in a safe and welcoming environment! The day promises: - 17 queer-featured bands bringing unique sounds and energy, seven fabulous drag performers (including an ASL interpreter for inclusivity), six queer-featured craft vendors showcasing community talent, and two queer featured food vendors. We will also have three guest speakers discussing important advocacy efforts from Pennsylvania Equality Project, Susannah Faulkner, and Rianna Czech! This is an accessible venue with wheelchair-friendly options and will have an on-site ASL interpreter. This all-ages event offers family-friendly activities, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all. We will donate proceeds to the LGTB Funds of the Erie Community Foundation and will have services provided by Central Outreach. Join in, spread the love, and create unforgettable memories at Rainbow Fest 2024! Follow [@OddCity Entertainment] for updates and surprises. Visit oddcityentertainment.org/events/rainbow-fest for more information.

Live and Let Live Now Meets at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church

Please note that Live and Let Live, the LG-BTQIA+ friendly AA group, now holds its meeting at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, 1603 W 32nd St, Erie, PA. The group meets every Sunday at 7 PM. For more info, browse to www.aaeriepa.org, email jmwilliams3603@aol.com, or call (814) 844-2600.



LBT Women Trip to Hurry Hill Maple Farm

On March 16th, the Beans took a trip to the Hurry Hill Maple Farm to attend the annual Maple Festival. The six of us were excited to learn how maple syrup is made and taste some delectable maple products.

We began our visit with a horse-drawn wagon ride into the woods. The Beans enjoyed the scenic ride through the maple tree to the boiling house. The owner, Jan, educated us on the history of Hurry Hill and all the particulars of what it takes from start to finish to make maple syrup.

Following the wagon ride, we toured the museum, which showcased different artifacts related to maple syrup production.

However, the highlight of the visit was the tasting room, where we got to sample an array of maple products, including maple cotton candy, maple cream, maple mustard, and maple syrup. After tasting the delicious products, most of us bought a few jars of syrup and other treats to take home.

If you haven't been to Hurry Hill yet, we highly recommend planning a trip there soon!

To see more about the Beans, see the LBT Women Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/LBTWOMENOFERIE>

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EGN Rates & Data

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

AD SIZE	PRICE/ISSUE	DIMENSIONS
EIGHTH	\$50 - \$45 Prepaid	1 5/8" high X 2 7/8" wide
QUARTER	\$80 - \$72 Prepaid	3 1/2" high X 2 7/8" wide
HALF VERT.	\$150 - \$135 Prepaid	3 1/2" high X 6" wide
HALF HORZ.	\$150 - \$135 Prepaid	7" high X 2 7/8" wide
FULL PAGE	\$250 - \$225 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.



ERIE GAY NEWS

Serving the Regional LGBTQIA+ Community Since 1992

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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.

If you are restarting events or are moving to hosting events/meetings virtually, or want to change your copies received for distribution, please email info@eriegaynews.com

THANKS

From Your Friends at Erie Gay News

To Lake Erie Counseling Associates for hosting! Andrea Shaffer, Audrey, Deb, Jeff Hill, Johauna, Kem, Kim Conti, Maggie Watts, Michael Mancinelli, Rex Apps, Robin Green, and Steve Siwiecki for folding; Brett Staskiewicz, Deb, Jeff Hill, Johauna, Kim Conti, Michael Mancinelli, Rex Apps, and Steve Siwiecki for distribution; Whee! Design for logo. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

Compton's Table Name Change Clinic on April 13

Compton's Table is partnering with Atty Seth Trott from Quinn Law Firm to provide a free Name Change Clinic on April 13, 2024, from 1:30 to 3:30 PM at 3104 State Street, Erie, PA. Attendees will learn how to navigate the name change process. Compton's can cover the costs for 10 participants' name change fees. We know not everybody is ready to go through the legal process, so we encourage those interested in learning to attend. Registration is required for the event. Registration does not guarantee you will be one of the ten to have your legal process covered.

We believe a person's chosen name is a fundamental aspect of their identity. Our clinic aims to provide resources, guidance, and a sense of community to those seeking to change their names legally, fostering a world where everyone can live proudly and authentically as their true selves.

To qualify for the Name Change assistance, you must:

- * be at least 18 years of age,
- * have access to your birth certificate and

social security card

- * not have a pending criminal case (past criminal charges are not an immediate disqualifier).

Ashtabula Pride Looking For Volunteers for June 15 Festival

from Ashtabula Pride, Inc

One of the most vital pieces to a puzzle can never go missing. You will never get the full effect of the overall picture with one simple piece not in place. That is why it is so crucial that Ashtabula Pride, Inc. urges our most important part of the June 15 Pride Festival to reach out to partners like you for assistance. Our Volunteer Team has been scrambling for months trying to reach out via social media posts and flyers in local stores to encourage people to sign up as VOLUNTEERS and help us bring forth this amazing time of love and celebration! We have a very detailed application to complete to become a volunteer. The reason for this is to ensure ALL of our volunteers are either LGBTQ+ community members or they are allies of the community. This will give us an overall feeling of protection and trust while the festival is

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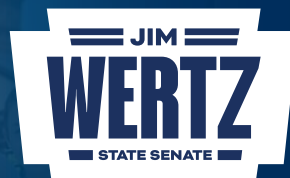
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- Tuesdays 9a-11a
- Wednesdays 1p-3p

Call 814-451-6700



**Erie County
Department
of Health**



"As your State Senator, I will continue to stand with the LGBTQ+ community and fight to protect and expand your rights—like finally passing the Fairness Act."

— Jim Wertz

**MAKE YOUR PLAN TO VOTE
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Email: info@pathrive.com



happening. We help to train our VOLUNTEERS on what to look for and how to respond in the event of situations they may not be used to dealing with, and we make sure their comfort level at this task is 100% before giving the approval to be considered a VOLUNTEER for the next upcoming event. There are times and different departmental teams you can apply for during the festival, and we assure you we will accommodate you as best we can! If this isn't for you, then tell someone you know that you feel would be great at helping us out at the festival! Please apply on our website under the SIGN UP tab.

Spring FreeShop 2024

from Pennsylvania Equality Project

The Pennsylvania Equality Project will hold Spring FreeShop at the Meadville Public Library on Friday, April 19 from 10 AM - 5 PM and Saturday, April 20, from 9 AM - 5 PM. We are seeking donations of food, clothing, blankets, non-perishable food items, kitchen items, books, toys, games, etc. on both days of the event. On Saturday, April 20, anyone who needs the donated items can take what they like for free. There is no cost for admission to

this event. Spring FreeShop 2024 is being held at the Meadville Public Library in the Community Room on the Upper floor, 848 North Main Street, Meadville, PA 16335. For more information, visit our website, <https://paequality.com>, or call (814) 350-6635.

ASCEND Erie Launches Affinity Sessions to Improve Access and Inclusivity

On March 9, ASCEND Erie hosted its first Affinity Session, inviting anyone who identifies as Queer, Femme, Trans, or as a Woman to visit the gym and climb for free. More than 20 members of Erie's QFTW community took to the walls, nearly one-third of whom were first-time visitors.

ASCEND Erie will host Affinity Sessions on the second Saturday of each month from 6-8 p.m., closing the gym for these special events. Each month will alternate between two affinity groups: QFTW and BIPOC. The first BIPOC Affinity Session at ASCEND Erie will take place April 13.

Admission is free and pre-registration is possible but not required for these events, but anyone interested in visiting the gym is encouraged to fill out a waiver ahead of time. Climbers of all skill levels



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and experience (especially those with no experience whatsoever!) are invited to attend and can be assisted by ASCEND's staff, though climbing is not required in order to attend. Each session generally features a free raffle with a chance to win some cool prizes.

ASCEND's Affinity Sessions are dedicated to individuals who haven't always had equal access to or treatment within the sport. It's a space dedicated to intentional inclusivity, not exclusivity. With that said, these free climbing sessions are intended only for those in the community who identify with these affinity groups. ASCEND Erie will be launching clubs soon - check out their Women on Walls, Queer Scouts or Many Cultures 1 Route clubs - that invite members of those groups as well as allies to attend.

To learn more about Affinity Sessions, clubs at ASCEND Erie, or any other programs going on at the gym, visit ascendclimbing.com.

HIV Science: Cut It Out

Erie County Department of Health

Recently, the University of Amsterdam announced the findings of their team of scientists working on a new frontier of HIV treatment. Their approach is using the Nobel Prize-winning Crispr gene editing technology. The U of A team presented a review of early findings on a 'proof of concept' as a potential future treatment of HIV.

Crispr is a technique where DNA is cut to change genetic material for various reasons. When HIV first enters the human body, it inserts its own DNA into our immune cells and then stays dormant. When not taking medicine, the HIV DNA can 're-awaken,' and the virus starts spreading throughout the body. The new concept for using Crispr could be a way to remove the dormant/sleeping cells. This idea follows the first of a similar treatment for sickle cell anemia. While exciting, the results have several scientific trials to be done with years to go before we see the potential of this new type of HIV treatment.

Did you know the Erie County Department of Health provides routine checks for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, and HIV? We can go over options for treatment here in Erie County and help get you started. Would you like some FREE condoms? We provide free condoms and lubricants to our clients during weekly Sexual Health Clinic appointments on Tuesdays 9 am-11 am and Wednesdays 1 pm-3 pm. For more information, give us a call at the Erie County Department of Health, 814-451-6700.

Voters Guide

Candidates for US Senator, US Congress (PA-16), PA State Senate District 49, and PA State House for areas that included Erie County were asked about their positions on LGBTQIA+ issues.

These were the questions asked for all races:

We, as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Asexual individuals experience discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. What action, as an elected official, would you take to reduce this in our community?

What actions can you take for protecting the rights and safety of LGBTQ youth, especially our transgender youth?

In terms of healthcare, how will you work to improve and expand access with focus on affordability and inclusivity? For example, gender affirming healthcare for transgender individuals?

What is one thing we should know about you as relating to the LGBTQ community?

US Senator

Not Responding: David H McCormick (R)

Anti Discrimination **Bob Casey (D-Inc)**

I believe no one should be discriminated against due to their gender and sexuality, and I have a long record in the U.S. Senate defending LGBTQ+ rights in our country. As a U.S. Senator, I have fought to undo many of the harmful policies that contributed to the historic discrimination of the LGBTQ+ community in the United States.

In 2022, I co-sponsored the historic Respect for Marriage Act, which repealed the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act and now ensures that same-sex marriages are treated equally under the law. I also backed repealing Don't Ask Don't Tell, allowing LGBTQ+ Americans to proudly serve in the military. I am an original co-sponsor of the Equality Act, which would prohibit discrimination on the basis of several

factors, including gender identity and sexual orientation. I am an original co-sponsor of the LGBTQ+ Panic Defense Prohibition Act, which would ban so-called “panic” defenses based on gender identity or expression, and sexual orientation in federal court.

I will continue to support federal legislation that brings discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community to an end.

Youth

Bob Casey (D-Inc)

I believe that LGBTQ youth deserve safe and welcoming environments at home and at school.

I am the sponsor of the Safe Schools Improvement Act, legislation to require local educational agencies to establish policies barring bullying in elementary and secondary schools. Among other things, these policies must prohibit bullying and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. I am an original co-sponsor of legislation that would require colleges and universities to adopt policies to prevent harassment against LGBTQ+ college students and other students in minority groups. I have also made enforcement of existing civil rights protections for college students a priority. Just recently, I introduced the Showing Up for Students Act, which would provide mandatory funding to double existing funding for the Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Education. I also know the toll that conversion therapy continues to take on LGBTQ+ youth across the country, and so I am an original co-sponsor of the Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act, which would prohibit gender identity or sexual orientation “conversion therapy” as a fraudulent practice.

I know that members of the trans community, particularly transgender women of color, are disproportionately impacted by fatal violence. I introduced the Disarm Hate Act to fight back against hate crimes, which is endorsed by groups including the Human Rights Campaign. This legislation was introduced, in part, in response to the horrific Pulse nightclub shootings, and would prevent those convicted of misdemeanor hate crimes from possessing firearms.

Healthcare

Bob Casey (D-Inc)

I am fighting to make sure Americans have

access to safe, reliable, and affordable health care, including members of the LGBTQ community. Recently, I called out efforts to ban coverage of gender affirming care at the federal level, making clear I stand against these dangerous policies. I also have taken on insurance and pharmaceutical companies to lower drug and health care costs and health costs. I backed the Inflation Reduction Act, which will cap out-of-pocket costs for those on Medicare Part D, and cap the price of insulin at \$35 a month for those on Medicare. I will continue to support legislation that lowers the cost of health care and increases access for Pennsylvanians.

Other

Bob Casey (D-Inc)

In addition to advancing policies that protect LGBTQ+ rights and support the community, I have also worked to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment in my office. In June of 2023, my office was ranked with the highest percentage of LGBTQ+ staff in the entire Senate Democratic caucus. I value the perspectives that my staff bring as they work to make the lives of Pennsylvanians better.

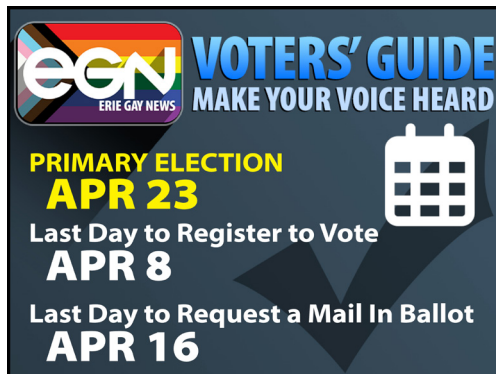
US Congress (PA-16)

Not Responding: Mike Kelly (R-Inc)

Anti Discrimination

Preston Nouri (D)

I would support legislation such as the Equality Act that would be able to extend protections against all aforementioned discrimination to the LGBTQIA+ community. I would additionally work with orga-

A graphic for EGN's Voters' Guide. It features the EGN logo (Erie Gay News) in a rainbow circle on the left. To the right, the text "VOTERS' GUIDE" is in large blue letters, with "MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD" below it in white. Further down, "PRIMARY ELECTION" is in yellow, followed by "APR 23" in large yellow letters. Below that, "Last Day to Register to Vote" is in white, followed by "APR 8" in large white letters. At the bottom, "Last Day to Request a Mail In Ballot" is in white, followed by "APR 16" in large white letters. A white calendar icon is on the right side of the graphic.

nizations such as the Trevor Project to help craft policy that addresses our mental health crisis that incorporates a sensitivity to the needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Youth **Preston Nouri (D)**

I am able to take action to support legislation such as the Equality Act that is able to establish protections for sexual orientation and gender identity, and I will work to bring community project funding back to the district to support institutions that are able to help our LGBTQIA+ youth, especially our trans youth, thrive.

Healthcare **Preston Nouri (D)**

Healthcare expansion is a major part of my platform, and I am working to help establish single payer healthcare/healthcare for all. As legislation develops, I will ensure a focus on inclusivity as the legislation is written to include care that is both affordable and accessible to all.

Other **Preston Nouri (D)**

Aside from my personal commitments to friends and family who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community, I will stand strong for all members of the LGBTQIA+ community to ensure that they are able to thrive in our community and have the protections needed to feel safe and secure in who they are.

PA State Senate (District 49)

Not Responding: Dan Laughlin (R-Inc)

Anti Discrimination **Selena King (D)**

Reducing Discrimination: My dedication to creating an equitable society for the LGBTQIA+ community is unwavering. I will propose and support comprehensive non-discrimination legislation that protects LGBTQIA+ individuals in employment, housing, and public accommodations. My office will also actively engage with community organizations to develop educational programs to reduce bias and promote acceptance. This approach is not just about legislation; it's about changing hearts and minds to

foster a truly inclusive community where everyone is valued and respected.

Jim Wertz (D)

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act prohibits discrimination in the areas of employment, housing and public accommodations based on an individual's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, education status, handicap, or disability, but it does not cover sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. As a member of the State Senate, I would fully support the Fairness Act, which prohibits discrimination in our state based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. A Democratic majority in the State Senate would all but guarantee its passage.

Youth **Selena King (D)**

Protecting LGBTQ Youth: As a mother, I am dedicated to ensuring the protection and well-being of LGBTQ youth by advocating for policies that prevent bullying and discrimination in schools and the community. Additionally, I will support inclusive sex education programs that show respect and recognition for LGBTQ identities and relationships.

Jim Wertz (D)

Like many efforts to address safety, security, and belonging, efforts and actions to protect the rights and safety of LGBTQ+ youth require a holistic approach that engages a complex network of stakeholders and allies throughout the community, at large. These actions include ensuring that existing anti-discrimination policies in schools and other public spaces are enforced to protect queer youth from bullying and harassment, among other forms of discrimination. This means providing proper training and education to the teachers and support staff so that they are equipped to support queer youth and to properly identify and address forms of bullying and harassment.

Policies that protect the safety of LGBTQ+ youth, and transgender youth, in particular, should be codified at the state level, and the educational programs for teachers and staff who support them should be fully funded to ensure that everyone can expect and find inclusive environments throughout the Commonwealth.

Healthcare **Selena King (D)**

Healthcare Access: I will work to ensure healthcare policies include LGBTQIA+ needs, including insurance coverage for gender-affirming healthcare. My efforts will aim to reduce healthcare disparities by advocating for training programs for healthcare providers on LGBTQIA+ health issues.

Jim Wertz (D)

All people deserve access to comprehensive healthcare and multifaceted approaches that transcend systemic barriers and promote inclusivity. For those seeking gender-affirming care, including hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgery, healthcare facilities should establish policies and protocols that affirm the identity of patients and ensure their access to respectful, non-discriminatory care. Additionally, I will advocate for insurance policies that expand access to mental health treatment and make coverage of gender-affirming treatment more accessible and affordable.

Other **Selena King (D)**

My Connection to the LGBTQ Community: My campaign is rooted in the belief that everyone deserves to live openly and authentically without fear of discrimination. I have actively supported LGBTQIA+ rights through advocacy, policy support, and by participating in community events that celebrate diversity and inclusion. These actions reflect my commitment to creating a more equitable society for LGBTQIA+ individuals and highlight the importance of representation, support, and advocacy in fostering an inclusive community.

Jim Wertz (D)

For my entire life, fairness has served as an abiding principle. For as long as I can remember I have been an ally of the LGBTQ+ community. I've tried to promote fairness, equality, and acceptance, when I've been lucky enough to have a platform that allowed me to do so, and I've put my money where my mouth is by supporting businesses that share those values and by boycotting those businesses (or business leaders) that use their profits to invest in the oppression of my friends and loved ones.

As chairman of the Democratic Party, I estab-

lished the LGBTQIA Caucus (in addition to eight other constituency caucuses) because I wanted the Party to have pathways for inclusion through which people who might not otherwise choose to engage in Party politics could choose to do so. I'm grateful to Michael Mahler for ensuring that the caucus he leads meets regularly and provides a forum to those who would like to attend to express themselves politically.

Forums for expression – like the LGBTQIA Caucus, the Erie Gay News, and a multitude of churches and organizations throughout our community – provide an invaluable service to our community, at large. If I'm lucky enough to earn your vote and to serve as the next State Senator for PA's 49th District, I look forward to working with and for you, as a friend and ally, in all local and state issues and especially those rooted in resolving and advancing fairness, equality, and acceptance for all.

PA State House District 1

Anti Discrimination **Patrick Harkins (D-Inc)**

In my eighteen years as a representative I have a 100% voting record in support of LGBT issues. I have held public hearings in our area on a number of bills including HB 300 and I voted in favor of HB 300 when we passed it in the house.



Aging With Pride met at Werner Books and Coffee, 3608 Liberty St, Erie, PA, on March 16 to discuss Felice Picano's Like People In History. Book club meetings are usually held on the third Saturday of the month at Werner Books at 1 PM, but April's meeting will be on the 27th to accommodate the Aging With Pride trip to the Buffalo Art Gallery on April 20.

(HB 300 is currently stalled in the senate).

Youth

Patrick Harkins (D-Inc)

I have worked on many issues dealing with bullying in schools over the years and sadly it is an issue that hasn't gone away. We are currently looking at a couple pieces of legislation that could help with bullying and intimidation. I have also pushed for more school nurses and counselors at budget time to make sure our schools provide first rate care and provide the help and assistance when needed.

Healthcare

Patrick Harkins (D-Inc)

Healthcare is a basic right that should be affordable and accessible to all. I have fought the battle to cover everyone for many years and will continue to do so. We cannot forget the cost and access to prescriptions, that is something that is critical to everyone. The PREP drug is something that has been a big issue and the promise that it may offer prevention of HIV is life changing, we now have to make sure that it is something people can afford and be able to receive when needed.

Other

Patrick Harkins (D-Inc)

As I said earlier, I have always been a strong supporter of LGBT issues over the years and I intend to do the same going forward.

There are many issues that we are facing as a society and ultimately we must make sure that LGBT people feel safe and are treated fairly when it comes to housing, education, employment and quality of life in our community.

I intend to continue to do that going forward.

PA State House District 2

Not Responding: Matthew Strupczewski (R)

Anti Discrimination

Bob Merski (D-Inc)

I voted for HB 300, The Fairness Act, which amends the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to add explicitly, statutory protections from discrimination

based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. It's currently sitting in the Senate. As an elected official, I hosted townhall meetings during Pride Month focusing specifically on LGBTQ+ issues and concerns to listen and understand the needs of the LGBTQ+ community.

Youth

Bob Merski (D-Inc)

As a former teacher, I know how hard adolescence is for our youth in today's social media world, where you're always plugged in and can't escape the direct messages from flowing into your inbox. For LGBTQ+ youth, it can be even worse. That's why I support having a mandated school counselor to student ratio, so that when our youth need someone to talk to, someone is there for them. Safety is a big issue, from bullying to physical abuse, LGBTQ+ youth are have higher rates of harassment and violence against them. For educators, we can provide professional development on inclusivity and anti-harassment/anti bullying to prevent things before they start. We can also implement policies like having a staff advocate(s) or allies to support LGBTQ+ youth.

Healthcare

Bob Merski (D-Inc)

It's important to me that medical decisions are made between a patient and their doctor. As a health care industry, when private equity conflicts with health equity, it's often times the private equity wins out in our system. We need to continue to work to make sure our health care industry takes care of people and provides the care they need, not shareholders or the company's bottom line by purposely excluding care. That includes HIV/AIDS medication and prophylactic medicine like PrEP medication.

Other

Bob Merski (D-Inc)

I believe in treating everyone with dignity and respect. The world I grew up in back in the 1980's and 1990's looks very different than the world today, and my understanding and viewpoints have evolved over time as well. My great uncle was gay when I was growing up, and he and his partner were part of our family holidays, but they were "friends" and showed no affection towards each other around us in our Catholic family. In high school, I went to Ca-

thedral Prep and I witnessed boys who didn't fit the stereotypical "masculine" who were all too frequently bullied and called derogatory slurs for gay people. In college, Pedro from "The Real World San Francisco" was really my first exposure to an "out" gay couple kissing and showing affection. As a young adult, my best friend was afraid to come out to our friend group because he was worried that we wouldn't like him for being gay. That really made me take a long hard look in the mirror that my best friend was worried I wouldn't like and accept him for being who he is. That forced me to think about myself, and the biases that I had learned through the years from society and my Catholic upbringing. It forced me to think about who I was and the kind of person I wanted to be. And when I distilled it down to what I truly believe in my heart, it's that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

I'm proud of my voting record on LGBTQ+ issues in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, standing as an ally so that people in the LGBTQ+ community can have the same legal protections as everyone else. There are people serving and running for seats in the Pennsylvania House who don't share the values of inclusivity and fairness for all, especially for people who identify as LGBTQ+. They want to use religion and "freedom" to discriminate against those who don't think, pray, or love the same way they do. Your vote matters, because YOU matter! I humbly and respectfully ask for your vote and your support, so that together we can build a fair and just Pennsylvania for all.

PA State House District 3

Not Responding: Micah Goring (R)

Anti Discrimination

Ryan Bizzarro (D-Inc)

I was proud to support my friends and colleagues Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta and Rep. Jessica Benham in voting to support the Fairness Act earlier this session

Youth

Ryan Bizzarro (D-Inc)

First, we need to continue to work to get the Fairness Act to the Governor's desk, fair and equal

treatment under the law is not just the minimum of guaranteed rights to our citizens, but the minimum to attract and retain the employees and businesses we need to ensure a stable future for our commonwealth. Second, we need to ban conversion therapy and any other attacks on the intrinsic right of LGBTQ people to live and express themselves, no one should have to justify their existence or be forced to try and change who they are.

Healthcare

Ryan Bizzarro (D-Inc)

Absolutely, in the wake of the fall of Roe v. Wade I have hosted five hearings on reproductive healthcare access issues as well as three hearings on prenatal care and inclusivity. We have to talk about these issues and destigmatize the language around healthcare to ensure not just access but also that our laws support those healthcare workers as they do their jobs

Other

Ryan Bizzarro (D-Inc)

I am a fighter, I have a long track record of legislative accomplishments and I'm proud of that. We have only had one year in the majority and yet have made more progress on LGBTQ issues than in the previous 20 years and yet there is still more work to do. With your help, we will continue to fight for inclusion, equity, and making PA a safe place for all.



On Wednesday, March 20, Bears Do Dinner held their monthly dinner at Firestone's, 4823 Peach St, Erie, PA. The group meets monthly for dinner at a different restaurant. Upcoming dates are Tuesday, April 16 and Monday, May 20. Check them out at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BearsDoDinnerEriePA>. Photo by Michael Mahler.

PA State House District 4

Not Responding: Jacob Banta (R-Inc)

Anti Discrimination

Joseph Cancilla (D)

To support LGBTQ+ against discrimination in employment housing and public accommodations I will introduce, support, and defend legislation that protects the LGBTQ+ community by making sure our rights are protected in labor laws, equality laws, and fight to make sure there is no wage gap. I will work with my peers in Harrisburg and fight for LGBTQ+ rights. In addition, I will be an advocate by using my voice and influence in the House of Representatives by speaking with US Congress members to make sure we are also protected at the Federal level. We as elected officials must make sure the employment laws and housing laws have the language in there to protect and represent everyone. That is why it is crucial to know who is running for office not just in your district but neighboring districts to make sure we are electing the right candidates. If I win, we will have strong Democrat hold in our region. We cannot let Jake Banta win again with his views and vague answers shown in the November 2022 issue of Erie Gay News.

Youth

Joseph Cancilla (D)

As your next State Representative, I will support/introduce legislation that protects our LGBTQ+ youth, holds public schools accountable by making sure we have high quality education and safe schools for all students. Also, we must look at guidance

counselors and mental health more in today's age in our schools. Students need those resources more than ever to make sure they have someone to talk to, ask questions, and lean on. I will fight to make sure our schools are appropriately funded for not only teachers, but all support staff-including guidance counselors and mental health resources.

Healthcare

Joseph Cancilla (D)

Insurance companies must be accountable for everyone. As a State Representative it is my job to make sure that happens. Healthcare should be available and accessible to everyone, and we must make sure LGBTQ+ rights are protected. I will always admit when I don't know something or have the answer. Therefore, I will surround myself with, work with, and seek out solutions with people that do.

Other

Joseph Cancilla (D)

As a bi-sexual person I have the unique insights on the challenges of the LGBTQ+ community and I will always advocate on our behalf. As your next State Representative, you can be assured you have a voice in Harrisburg.

PA State House District 6

Not Responding: Michael Charles Walker (D), Brad Roae (R-Inc)

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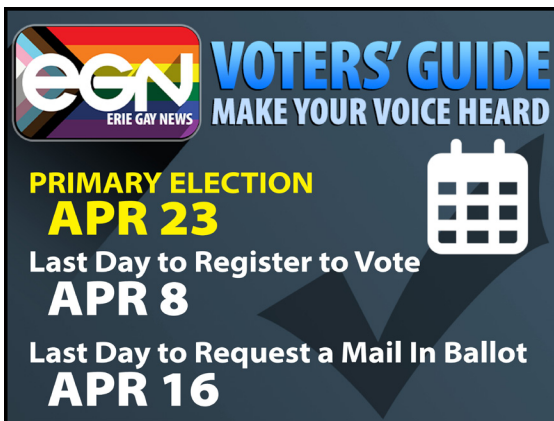
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Calendar

For latest updates, see www.eriegaynews.com

Live & Let Live is an LGBTQA-friendly AA meeting that meets every Sunday, at 7PM, at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, 1603 W 32 St. Erie PA 16508. For more information, visit www.aeriepa.org or contact jmwilliams3603@aol.com or (814) (814) 844-2600.

Zone Monday Night Karaoke with DJ Nitro at The Zone, 133 W 18th St, 9 PM-midnight. No cover. 21+ with valid state-issued ID.

Zone Tuesday Game Night, 133 W 18th St, Doors open at 8 PM. Bring your own game or use ours. (Must submit an ID for us to hold while game is in use.) Happy hour 8-10 PM. \$1 off bottled beers. \$2 well drinks. No cover. 21 & over with ID.

Zone Trivia Wednesday Night, 133 W 18th St, Hosted by Rebecca Mae. Doors open at 8 pm. Play right on your phone! Fabulous prizes! Trivia begins at 9:30 pm. Happy hour 8 PM-10 PM. \$1 off bottled beer. \$2 well drinks. No cover. 21+ with valid state-issued ID.

Zone Flow Together Thursdays, 133 W 18th St, Erie PA. Ever wanted to try your hand at ribbon dancing or poi? Join Ash, Buddy, and Snarebear for a night of flow toys! Doors open at 8pm. No cover. 21+ with valid state-issued ID.

Mar 1 - 31 (Fri - Sun) - Bisexual Health Awareness Month Bisexual Health Awareness Month is dedicated to raising awareness about the startling social, economic and health disparities facing the bi+ community. Browse to <https://bihealthmonth.org/>.

Mar 27 (Wed) – LGBTQ+ and Allies Happy Hour – All welcome (Julian's Bar & Grill, 299 Chestnut St, Meadville, PA 16335) 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM.

Mar 28 (Thu) - Mild to Wild Discussion Group (Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County, 31 Water Street Suite 7, Jamestown, NY 14701) 6 PM - 7:30 PM. Mild to Wild is a discussion group about sex and substance use designed for gay and bisexual men and folks of trans experience. Meets in person at MHA and also on Zoom.

Mar 28 (Thu) - Aging with Pride Social (Habibi Mediterranean Cuisine, 1127 W 14th St, Erie PA) 6 PM - 8 PM. Aging with Pride, an organization of senior LGBT+ members and allies, is hosting a social. This organization develops and sponsors social/recreational and educational events to promote healthy leisure activities, community and an active, enjoyable lifestyle.

Mar 28 (Thu) - Teen Trans support group meets (G.A. Family Services, 210 Gustavus Ave, Jamestown, NY 14701) 5 PM.

Mar 31 (Sun) - International Transgender Day of Visibility The International TDoV is an annual holiday celebrated around the world. The day is dedicated to celebrating the accomplishments and victories of transgender & gender non-conforming people while raising awareness of the work that is still needed to save trans lives.

Apr 2 (Tue) - LGBTQIA+ Recovery Support Group (UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor, 1330 W 26th St, Erie, PA) 5 PM - 6 PM. Our mission is to provide a supportive and empowering space for LGBTQIA+ individuals who are dealing with substance use disorders. We strive to create an inclusive, strengths-based community where participants can find understanding, acceptance, and inspiration to overcome any challenges they may be facing. Through support, education, and resources, we aim to foster personal growth, resilience, and long-term recovery. For more information about the LGBTQIA+ Recovery Support Group, please call 814-451-2246.

Apr 3 (Wed) - Aging with Pride Game Night (Werner Books & Coffee, 3608 Liberty St, Erie, PA 16508) 5-8 PM. Bring games and/or cards with you or just come to play what others bring.

Apr 3 (Wed) - Erie's Queer Happy Hour (Oasis Pub, 3122 W Lake Rd, Erie, PA 16505) 6 PM - 9 PM. This event will be held in the backroom at Oasis. This event is open to everyone. However, those under 18 years of age will need a guardian to attend. In accordance with State law, only those 21+ can have alcoholic beverages.

Apr 3 (Wed) - LGBTQ+ Drum Circle (St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 410 North Main Street, Jamestown, NY 14701) 7 PM - 8:30 PM.

Apr 4 (Thu) - Lotz of Tea with Mona 7 PM. With co-host Large Marge. Live streaming on Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. Browse to <https://www.facebook.com/LotzofTea>.

Apr 5 (Fri) - Pride Center of Western NY - LGBTQ Youth Spring Bling Dance (AcQua Banquet Center, 2192 Niagara St, Buffalo, NY 14207) 6 PM - 9:30 PM. Welcome to the Pride Center of WNY's Youth Spring Bling Dance! Get ready to dance the night away at AcQua with other LGBTQ+ youth from the community. This in-person event is the perfect opportunity to show off your best spring bling outfit and have a blast with friends. Join us for a night of music, dancing, food and fun as we celebrate our pride together. Don't miss out on this exciting event - Tickets are limited - Get yours now! This event is for ages 13- 19. Youth under the age

of 13 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. This event is FREE!

Apr 5 (Fri) - G2H2 (Gay Guy/Gal Happy Hour) meets (Brewerie at Union Station, 123 W 14th St, Erie, PA 16501) 6 PM - 8 PM. All Are Welcome!

Apr 6 (Sat) - International Asexuality Day International Asexuality Day is a coordinated worldwide campaign promoting the ace umbrella, including demisexual, grey-asexual and other ace identities. Browse to <https://internationalasexualityday.org/en/>.

Apr 6 (Sat) - Trans Day of Visibility (Perry Square, 6th and State Streets, Erie, PA 16507) 12 PM. Join Trans-Family of NW PA on for Transgender Day of Visibility! We're celebrating trans lives, raising awareness about trans experiences, and building a community of powerful allies. We'll have speakers to promote understanding, connection, and support. Why it matters: TDOV is a chance to uplift trans voices and work towards a world where everyone, regardless of gender identity, has the right to live authentically and without fear

Apr 6 (Sat) - Drag Bingo (Italian Civic Club, 869 Water St, Meadville, PA 16335) 7:30 PM. Hosted by Alysia Wonderland and DJ Tony G. Doors open at 5:30 PM, game at 7:30 PM. \$30 admission includes 12 games.

Apr 7 (Sun) - Aging With Pride planning meeting (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 1932 W 8th St, Erie, PA 16505) 1 PM.

Apr 7 (Sun) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Youth Peer Support & Social Group meets (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 660 W Earle Ave, Youngstown, OH 44511) 4 PM - 5 PM. Ages 14-17, under 14 with signed parental consent form. Phone: (234) 254-8924.

Apr 8 (Mon) - Last Day to Register to Vote for Primary Election Primary Election is Tuesday, April 23. You must already be registered to vote to apply for an absentee o

Apr 8 (Mon) - Erie County Democratic Party LGBTQIA+ Caucus meets via Zoom (Zoom) 7 PM. General meeting on Zoom. Voting members must be a registered Democrat living in Erie County. Straight/cisgender allies welcome! Contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or mmahler@eriedems.com for Zoom meeting info.

Apr 9 (Tue) - PFLAG of Chautauqua meeting (Secret Undisclosed Location, 100 E 2nd St 2nd Floor, Jamestown, NY 14701) 6:30 PM. PFLAG of Chautauqua, a support group for allies, loved ones and the entire Queer community. Please visit our Facebook group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/594395124695283>, or email PFLAGCHQ@GMAIL.COM or call (814) 313-4495 for details.

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Apr 9 (Tue) - Youngstown PFLAG meets (St. John's Episcopal Church, 323 Wick Ave, Youngstown, OH 44503) 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM.

Apr 10 (Wed) - National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day NYHAAD educates the public about the impact of HIV/AIDS on youth and highlights the work youth do to strengthen the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic. #NYHAAD Advocates for Youth and its partners direct this observance. Browse to <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/>.

Apr 12 (Fri) - Day of Silence (Day of Silence) GLSEN's Day of Silence is a student-led national event organized in thousands of schools, bringing awareness to the silencing effects of anti-LGBTQ name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools. Students from middle school to college take a vow of silence in an effort to encourage schools and classmates to address the problem of anti-LGBTQ behavior by illustrating the silencing effect of bullying and harassment on LGBTQ students and those perceived to be LGBTQ. Browse to <http://www.glsen.org/dayofsilence>.

Apr 12 - 13 (Fri - Sat) - Tribal Lights Glow Dance Party (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 8 PM. Dance the night away at our Tribal Lights Glow Dance Party. Our DJs will be spinning the best beats to keep you moving in an otherworldly setting. \$5 cover. 21 and over with state-issued ID.

Apr 12 (Fri) - Pissi Gabune's Eclipse'd (Edinboro Hotel Bar, 100 Meadville St, Edinboro, PA 16412) 9:30 PM. Featuring Pissi Gabune, and debut performances by Aiysha Storm and Tom Foolery Doors open at 8:00 pm. Show at 9:30 pm. No cover. 21+ with valid ID.

Apr 13 (Sat) - Compton's Table Name Change Clinic (Compton's Table, 3104 State St, Erie, PA 16508) 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM.

Apr 13 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWPA (Meadville) Transgender Support Group meets (Empowerment with Grace, 941 Federal Ct Ste 104, Meadville, PA 16335) 2 PM.

Apr 13 (Sat) - Rainbow Fest (Basement Transmissions, 145 W 11th St, Erie, PA 16501) 12 PM. Join us for a full day of entertainment from the area's most amazing community of LGBTQIA+ featured bands, artists, performers, and businesses! Doors open at 11 AM.

Apr 13 (Sat) - Drag Me To Dinner (Salvatore's Italian Gardens Restaurant, 6461 Transit Rd, Depew, NY 14043) 6 PM. Performers are Aggy Dune, Kasha Davis, Darienne Lake, and Ambrosia Salad. Includes appetizer display, 3-course meal, 1 drink ticket to the cash bar, and a fabulous show.

Apr 14 (Sun) - DIVAS: Special Edition - The Roast of DJ Tony G (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie,

PA 16501) 10 PM. Cap off the week with laughter and sass as we celebrate and lovingly roast our beloved DJ Tony G. Take a shot for your favorite shot and grab 30 seconds on the mic. Let's make it a roast to remember! No cover charge. 21 and over with state-issued ID.

Apr 15 (Mon) - Deadline for Erie Gay News May 2024 print edition (#342) (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 on the evening of Tuesday, April 23.

Apr 16 (Tue) - Last Day to Request a Mail-In Ballot for Primary Election Primary Election is Tuesday, April 23. You must already be registered to vote to apply for an absentee or mail-in ballot

Apr 16 (Tue) - Erie County HIV Task Force meets (Hybrid) (Erie County Department of Health (ECDH), 606 W 2nd St, Erie, PA 16507) 1 PM. The Erie County HIV Task Force is a collaboration of local organizations and individuals dedicated to educating, supporting, and advocating for people living with HIV/AIDS and preventing the spread of infection.

Apr 16 (Tue) - LGBTQIA+ Recovery Support Group (UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor, 1330 W 26th St, Erie, PA) 5 PM - 6 PM. For more information about the LGBTQIA+ Recovery Support Group, please call 814-451-2246.

Apr 16 (Tue) - Bears Do Dinner #114 (Location TBA) 6 PM. Join the Bears for a casual dinner of food and conversation! Dinner is on your own. Contact: Peter. Phone: (814) 384-9785.

Apr 18 (Thu) - National Transgender HIV Testing Day National Transgender HIV Testing Day (NTHTD) was first observed on April 18, 2016. Browse to <http://transhealth.ucsf.edu/>.

Apr 18 (Thu) - Queer Open Mic (Compton's Table, 3104 State St, Erie, PA 16508) 6 PM - 10 PM. Come hang out at our monthly open mics hosted by the awesome, talented, and slaying Gwen Elaine! FREE! BYOB (wrist bands provided for anyone with alcohol). if you want to register as a performer, email info@comptonstable.org

Apr 18 (Thu) - Lotz of Tea with Mona 7 PM. With co-host Large Marge. Live streaming on Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok.

Apr 19 (Fri) - Spring Fling Kick Off Party (M & J's Lounge, 124 Mercer St, Butler, PA 16001)

Apr 19-20 (Fri - Sat) - Spring FreeShop 2024 (Meadville Public Library, 848 N Main St, Meadville, PA 16335) 10 AM - 5 PM.

Apr 19 (Fri) - Journey: Healing Together - LGBTQ+ Affirmative Game Night (Journey: Healing Together, 201 W. 11th Street, Erie, PA 16501) 5 PM. Gather

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Child Abuse Prevention & Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Crime Victim Center will be hosting several community events
throughout April, beginning with Turn the Courthouse Blue on
the 2nd at the Erie County Courthouse. Pinwheels for Prevention
with Mayor Schember and the children from Early Connections
will take place in front of the stage at Perry Square on the 16th.

Stay tuned to our Facebook to get up-to-date information about
other events happening in April.



Crime Victim Center of Erie County

125 West 18th Street

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around 5pm for a couple of hours to geek out with
fellow gamers. Ages 18+ choose from a variety of
board, card, dice, games. As the group grows, smaller
groups can split off and play different games. There are
plenty of quiet spaces available to regroup for those of
us who can get over stimulated sometimes. Hosted by
Eric Reiche, Milo Orr, and Leo Ferko, there are op-
portunities to meet up with friends new and familiar.
We are definitely an LGBTQ+ affirming space! Allies
and Accomplices welcome! \$5 suggested donation.

**Apr 20 (Sat) - Aging with Pride Trip to Buffalo AKG
Art Museum** (Buffalo AKG Art Museum, 1285 Elm-
wood Ave, Buffalo, NY 14222) 10 AM. We will carpool
from the parking lot of Lake Erie Counseling, 1932 W
8th St, Erie PA at 10 AM to the Buffalo Albright-Knox
Gallery Art Museum in Buffalo, NY. We will also be
having lunch together. Everyone is on their own for
admission and lunch cost. Email kemlynb@gmail.com
for more information

**Apr 20 (Sat) - Journey: Healing Together - LGBTQ+
Crafternoon** (Journey: Healing Together, 201 W. 11th
Street, Erie, PA 16501) 11 AM - 2 PM. CottageCore
and Curious Crafter's alike are welcome! Journey:
Healing Together hosts a casual time of crafting and
conversation. Crafting is a great anxiety reducer and
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better! We are a Queer-Affirming space so LGBTQ+,
Allies and Accomplices are welcome! \$5 suggested
donation per person or \$10 max per family (Children
welcome, although we do not provide any childcare or
facilitation). Phone: (814) 867-5309. Browse to [https://
journeyht.org/](https://journeyht.org/).

Apr 20 (Sat) - Spring Fling and Drag Show (M & J's
Lounge, 124 Mercer St, Butler, PA 16001)

Apr 20 (Sat) - Karaoke with DJ Giulia from StarSirch
(Sneakers, 100 W Harrison St, Jamestown, NY 14701)
9 PM - 1 AM.

Apr 21 (Sun) - Aging With Pride planning meeting
(Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 1932 W 8th St, Erie,
PA 16505) 1 PM.

**Apr 21 (Sun) - Journey: Healing Together - Gentle
Yoga with Serene Bear Yoga** (Journey: Healing
Together, 201 W. 11th Street, Erie, PA 16501) 5 PM.

**Apr 21 (Sun) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Adult Peer
Support Group meets** (Full Spectrum Community
Outreach Center, 660 W Earle Ave, Youngstown, OH
44511) 4 PM - 6 PM. Ages 18+.

Apr 23 (Tue) - Primary Election 7 AM - 8 PM. Polls
are open from 7 AM to 8 PM.

**Apr 23 (Tue) - Erie Gay News folding/distribution
work party** (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 1932
W 8th St, Erie, PA 16505) 7 PM. Help us get out the

print edition of Erie Gay News. Volunteers are very much welcome and needed!

Apr 24 (Wed) – LGBTQ+ and Allies Happy Hour – All welcome (Cussewago Creek Distillery, 42243 Water St., Meadville, PA 16335) 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM.

Apr 25 (Thu) - Mild to Wild Discussion Group (Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County, 31 Water Street Suite 7, Jamestown, NY 14701) 6 PM - 7:30 PM. Mild to Wild is a discussion group about sex and substance use designed for gay and bisexual men and folks of trans experience.

Apr 25 (Thu) - Aging with Pride Social Hour (Calamari's Squid Row, 1317 State Street, Erie PA) 6 PM.

Apr 25 (Thu) - Teen Trans support group meets (G.A. Family Services, 210 Gustavus Ave, Jamestown, NY 14701) 5 PM.

Apr 26 (Fri) - Lesbian Visibility Day Created in 2008, this day showcases women-loving-women, providing a platform for lesbian role models to speak out on the issues facing female-identified sexual minorities. This day, alongside other queer celebration days, is still an integral part of moving forwards to create an intersectional society where all are treated equally and fairly.

Apr 26 - May 19 (Fri - Sun) - Charlie's Aunt (All An Act Theatre, 652 W 17th St, Erie, PA 16502) Jack Chesney loves Kitty Verdun and Charley loves Miss Amy Spettigue. They invite the ladies to meet Charley's wealthy aunt from Brazil. When she cancels her visit at the last minute, the millionaire aunt sends the boys into cataclysmic confusion. Their solution is to draft their feckless "actor" friend Fancourt Babberly into dressing up as Charlie's Aunt! As "Charley's Aunt", this charming frump is introduced to the ladies, to Jack's father and to Stephen Spettigue, Amy's guardian. When the real aunt turns up, classic comic confusion ensues until everything culminates in a hilariously happy ending!

Apr 27 (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Compton's Table, 3104 State St, Erie, PA 16508) 2 PM - 5 PM. Meetings are hosted at Compton's Table, 3401 State St, Erie PA. All current CDC, state, and local guidelines for meeting indoors will be observed. Meetings are always confidential and completely free.

Apr 27 (Sat) - Aging with Pride Book Club - The Ocean at The End of the Lane by Neil Gaiman (Werner Books & Coffee 3608 Liberty St, Erie, PA 16508) 1 PM. Werner Books offers a 20% discount on books purchased for the book club.

Apr 27 (Sat) - Colors Unity Annual Spring Dinner (St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 109 S Barry St, Olean, NY 14760) 4 PM - 7 PM. Members: free. Non-Members: \$5 single/\$8 couple/\$12 family. RSVP with attendance count and dish to pass



Aging With Pride Dinner at BrewErie on February 29. Photo by Michael Mahler



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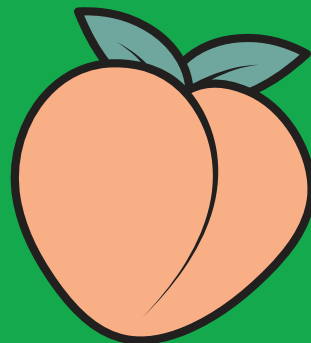
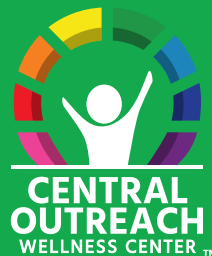
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