Rainbow Libraries

GLSEN Connecticut launches first-of-its-kind program to put LGBTQ+ books in school libraries

ALSO INSIDE:
• 'They' Will Get With the Times: The Singular They/Them Pronoun
• Connecticut Sound Pride Returns to Milford
• Performers from 'RuPaul's Drag Race' Visit Mohegan Sun
• Activities for LGBTQ+ Women in Connecticut Flourish

IT'S TWO MAGAZINES IN ONE! Flip this issue over to read the 2019 PRIDE New Haven Pride Guide!
WE PROVIDE

Transgender Medical Services
General Checkups
Sexual Health
HIV Care
PrEP & PEP
Gay & Bisexual Men’s Health
Queer Women’s Health

LOCATIONS

2200 Whitney Avenue
Suite 290
Hamden, CT 06518
203-903-8308

30 Myano Lane
Stamford, CT 06902
203-674-1102

PHARMACY NOW OPEN!

Anchor Health Initiative has set out to provide you best-in-class pharmacy service. The pharmacy will be able to service both the Hamden and Stamford Clinics. Our goal is to streamline prescriptions within one centralized pharmacy.

30 Myano Lane, Stamford, CT 06902 | 203-674-1102

www.AnchorHealthInitiative.org
In This Issue

LGBTQ+ Veterans Health
LGBTQ+ veterans may wonder what the VA hospital has specifically for them. To help clarify, two staff members of the VA system prepared a guide for Centerline's readers. 12

‘They’ Will Get With It
The use of they/them as a singular pronoun dates back hundreds of years, and with the English language always evolving, it’s quickly becoming acceptable language use. 5

LGBTQ+ Women’s Guide
LGBTQ+ Women will find a lot of activities and resources to partake. To help spread the word, we’ve compiled some resources. 19

GLSEN Library Program
GLSEN Connecticut has launched a first-of-its-kind program to put 10 GLBTQ+-friendly books in school libraries statewide. 28

Things to Do in Conn.
Check out our calendars of fundraisers and local events that you can enjoy throughout our state this fall. 30-31

Centerline

Centerline Magazine is published six times a year by the New Haven Pride Center. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the publisher or of Centerline but of the writers. We welcome a variety of viewpoints and encourage submissions. Complete or partial reproduction of any advertisement, news article, feature or photography without written consent from the publisher is strictly prohibited. Send advertising inquiries to centerline@newhavenpridecenter.org ©2019 New Haven Pride Center.

Editor in Chief and Designer Joshua O’Connell
Editor Patrick J Dunn
Contributors: Lynette Adams, John Brown Jr., Mel Cordner, Barbara Curry, Lucy Gellman, Georgina Gross, Daniel Marques, Gina Rubin, Jason Simpson, TPF Photography
Cover photo: Lucy Gellman
Printed by TCI Press
Welcome back to Centerline, and with our September issue we’ve got another double issue, with this edition doubling as the PRIDE New Haven Pride Guide, which you can read if you flip the magazine over.

PRIDE New Haven is the second to last event of a lengthy but fruitful pride season that began in May in Bethel and this year will end Sept. 28 with a brand-new event in Deep River.

Despite the pop up of a number of new pride events in recent years, the interest and appetite for them has only grown, which is exciting, and community members and businesses throughout the state have thrown their support behind them. In the case of PRIDE New Haven, we’ve seen record-breaking support in the number of volunteers, local businesses and even some support from national companies with local chapters here in Connecticut. The end result is the largest and most diverse set of offerings we’ve been able to have yet. If you’re reading this and PRIDE New Haven is still ahead or underway, I hope you’ll partake in some of the amazing activities we have planned.

This is my sixth year as a co-chair of PRIDE New Haven, and it’s been an absolute thrill to see the event grow and evolve. This is despite the fact that for a couple of years, there wasn’t any interest in a pride at all, at least at an organizational level.

And Centerline benefits by offering our largest edition ever. In fact, it’s larger than any issue of Metroline, which preceded this magazine historically, published in the 10 years or so before it shut down. The community and financial supporters are a major reason why we’ve made it this far, and so I thank everyone who has allowed us to bring a print publication back to our community.

Focusing on what’s inside this issue, Mel Cordner is back with another Viewpoint, this time looking at the use of they/them as a singular pronoun. They/them as a singular pronoun has examples of use going back nearly a thousand years, and they point out that our evolving language means any arguments against using it as a singular pronoun will likely fade as usage changes.

Lucy Gellman, editor of the Arts Paper, is also back, with a piece about the GLSEN Connecticut project Rainbow Libraries Community Reads Project, a first-of-its-kind program to put 10 LGBTQ+ friendly books into more than 100 Connecticut school libraries. I expect the idea will proliferate quickly.

One of Centerline’s regular photographers, Megan McGory Gleason, put together a number of resources for LGBTQ+ women, covering a diverse array of activities, to showcase a lot of what is happening in that segment of our community.

I headed up to Uncasville during New London Pride weekend to check out Mohegan Sun’s contribution featuring three stars from RuPaul’s Drag Race. I had a lot of fun, and the show was well put together. We’ve got a review and photos inside.

Other photo spreads include New London’s centerpiece event on the beach, Connecticut Sound Pride’s annual beach day, and the one-year anniversary of So You Think You Can Bowl’s Milford edition.

Finally, I wanted to recognize Andy Wolf, who sat on the original committee for rebooting PRIDE New Haven. As city liaison, Andy was instrumental in bringing pride to City Hall for the first time, and was enthusiastic about the idea of a vibrant pride celebration in New Haven. Andy passed away recently, and our community will miss his kind-hearted presence.

Until next issue, thanks for reading.
Yesterday, when the bartender announced “someone needs to move their car before the city tows it,” no one but the vehicle owner reacted—not even to correct their grammar. No one thought to, because we’ve been collectively using they/them pronouns to mean a singular person since the 1300s. The Oxford English Dictionary identifies the first print appearance of a singular they pronoun to be in the 1375 romance William and the Werewolf (which sounds kinda queer). Since then, writers like Shakespeare, Dickens, Byron, Austen, and Dickinson used it. Singers like Lady Gaga and Janelle Monae use it. Facebook uses it. And YOU’VE used it, which is why you weren’t confused when I used it for the bartender. We’ve always used ‘they’ to refer to an individual of unknown gender. The confusion often happens when someone who is nonbinary—which I am using here in a simplified way to mean ‘a person who does not identify with he..."
or she’—wishes to be acknowledged as themselves through the use of singular they/them pronouns.

Respecting singular they isn’t just grammatically correct and socially polite—it’s also necessary. Pronouns are the first tool we have to identify a person; we use them even before learning someone’s name. Using the correct pronoun for someone says we recognize their humanity and autonomy and respect their right to identify themselves. Using the wrong pronoun—which is misgendering—says we reject their individuality, instead valuing the role we want them to fill over the person they are.

Gender impacts everything about a person’s experience; refusing to respect it rejects everything about a person.

There have been nonbinary identities throughout human history, and neutral or neo pronouns (gendered pronouns other than he or she) aren’t a new concept either. Several languages have built-in gender-neutral pronouns. The original Hebrew language of the Torah actually recognizes six genders, with separate pronouns for each. Neo pronouns like ze and fae are just new words for very old concepts.

Critics will argue the singular they will never catch on, but they’re as wrong as the critics who claimed that singular you would never catch on in the 1600s. As any word nerd will tell you, language and grammar evolve with the times. The New Oxford Dictionary of English has been using singular they since 1998, and the New Oxford American Dictionary accepted it in 2010. The American Dialectic Society, a group of professional linguists, voted it their 2015 Word of the Year. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary came out in support of singular they in 2016; it sparked some hilarious tweetstorms on Twitter.

Shifting your language isn’t easy. Even nonbinary folks slip up sometimes! Try these weird tricks to make the shift using a hypothetical nonbinary person named Cam:

- You don’t think “Jen, a person who uses she/her pronouns” every time you mention Jen; you just think “Jen” with “she” as a natural association. Try thinking of Cam as “Cam, they” intentionally until that becomes a natural association too.
- Try easing into singular they by using a fake plural they; imagine a tiny dragon is always in Cam’s pocket, and refer to the two of them together.
- If you’re used to using they to refer to ‘an individual of unknown gender,’ try thinking of Cam that way.
- Try not to use dismissive language while you’re learning. Cam is not a “chosen” name, and they is not a “preferred” pronoun; these are just Cam’s name and pronoun. Be cautious not to start defaulting to ‘they’ for everyone you know, either; this is misgendering binary people!
- Lastly, it’s important to note that different nonbinary people use these words and concepts in different ways. Some folks who identify as genderqueer, agender, or something else don’t even consider themselves nonbinary, or don’t use nonbinary in the ‘umbrella’ way I am using it here. That’s okay! The point isn’t to become an expert in identity. The point is to show Cam that you respect and value them enough to make the shift.
New London Pride

The picturesque Ocean Beach Park is transformed each year for the New London Pride Festival, produced by OutCT. Entertainment at the festival included Sister Funk, the Connecticut Gay Men's Chorus and Hartford Gay Men's Chorus, Jodi Jolt and the Volt, and Dani Arranka.

Photos by Jason Simpson and Gina Rubin
'Drag Race' Royalty

For New London Pride, Mohegan Sun hosted performers from the show 'RuPaul's Drag Race': Season 10 winner Aquaria, of New York; Season 7 Winner Violet Chachki, of Atlanta, Georgia (and now of Los Angeles), and Season 10 contestant Asia O'Hara, of Dallas, who hosted the show.

Photos by Joshua O'Connell
For New London Pride weekend, Mohegan Sun pulled out some star power by bringing three contestants from the show “RuPaul’s Drag Race,” including two season winners, to the Uncas Ballroom.

Featuring Season 7 winner Violet Chachki, Season 10 winner Aquaria, and Season 10 contestant Asia O’Hara hosting and performing, the tight one-hour event brought some talented performers to southeast Connecticut for an appreciative audience.

Violet kicked off the proceedings with a blend of drag and burlesque that has become a hallmark of her performances, and may have set the bar a touch high with something beautifully unique, performed to the song “Closer” by Lemaitre featuring Jennie A. However, Aquaria and Asia pulled out all the stops with high-energy performances, including Asia performing to her own track “Crown Up.”

The production featured four back-up dancers, and all three performers had numbers that were well rehearsed and entertaining. The dancers were very much an enhancement to the proceedings, and not just stage filler – they hustled as much as the performers.

As a non-tipping show, the performers were able to focus on putting on a well-choreographed show that the audience clearly enjoyed.

All the performers and dancers were preparing to depart on Voss Events’ “Werq the World 2019” tour at the time, so attendees benefitted from a well-produced show that included multimedia. That tour will come to Connecticut in October. Voss Events is responsible for some stellar drag brunch events throughout the country, and the Mohegan Sun production was to the same caliber as those shows.
In between numbers, Asia did some top-notch crowd work, making friends with some audience members, and during a pause after the first half of the show, selected three audience members to select a wig in a box and lip sync for their lives. For fans of the show, it was a nice little tie back to what brought the performers to national prominence.

Each performer brought two numbers to the stage, and there was an after party at novella featuring DJ Samantha Ronson.

Mohegan Sun’s support of the LGBTQ+ community goes back more than a decade. They continue to regularly feature acts from our community and targeting our community, including local performers, such as the frequent Lipstick, Lashes and Lies show at Comix Roadhouse, as well as national ones, such as Melissa Etheridge, who visited last fall. Their basketball team, the Sun, has also regularly offered Pride nights over the years.

With this latest show, they continue to underscore their support and commitment to our community.
LGBTQ Support for Veterans in the VA Healthcare System Blossoms

by Georgina Gross and Lynette Adams

Georgina Gross, PhD and Lynette Adams, PhD are licensed clinical psychologists employed at VA Connecticut Healthcare System. They are both affiliated with Yale School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry.

Dr. Gross works clinically with LGBTQ Veterans at the West Haven VA, including facilitating a LGBTQ support group, and conducts consultation, training, and research in the area of LGBTQ Veteran healthcare.

Dr. Adams is the LGBTQ Veteran Care Coordinator and provides education and consultation to clinicians working with LGBTQ-identified Veterans. They will share responses to some commonly asked questions they receive in their roles at the VA.

How many LGBTQ service members and Veterans are there?

LGBTQ individuals are represented in all branches of the United States military. In a 2015 survey, 6.1% of service members identified...
as LGBTQ. Demographic reports in 2010 estimated approximately 71,000 active duty, ready reserve, and standby reserve sexual and gender minority service members. Further, it is estimated that there are more than one million LGBTQ Veterans. In 2014, there were approximately 15,000 transgender military personnel and 134,000 transgender Veterans. Importantly, these estimates may be low, given a history of stigma and military policies (discussed below) that discouraged self-identification.

Can you talk about the history of LGBTQ individuals in the military, including some of the relevant policies?

LGBTQ-identified individuals have been serving honorably in the military since its inception. However, policies have prohibited them from serving openly and authentically. For example, in 1994, the policy known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) required lesbian, gay, and bisexual identified individuals to serve covertly. An estimated 14,000+ military personnel are thought to have been discharged under DADT. DADT policy had a cyclical impact on societal attitudes about what it means to serve in the military. Since its official repeal in 2011, service members have served openly regardless of their sexual orientation. However, historical and current policy on the inclusion or exclusion of openly transgender or gender nonconforming individuals has provided little to no protection and is hotly under debate. There continues to be uncertainty about whether trans-identified individuals will be allowed to serve openly and as of this writing a ban is still in place effective April 12, 2019. Importantly, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has never had policies prohibiting care based on sexual orientation or gender identity, regardless of military policy. Our mission at the VHA is to provide affirming care for all LGBTQ Veterans who would otherwise be eligible for healthcare. However, we recognize that past and present policies may contribute to experiences of discrimination and hesitance to engage in VHA services for LGBTQ Veterans.

Do you have an LGBTQ Program at the VA?
Officially, the LGBTQ program at the VA started at VHA central office when Drs. Jillian Shipherd and Michael Kauth were hired as “LGBT Program Coordinators”

Sourcing of Data
For more information on the statistics quoted, please see:


in 2012 at the national level. Since then, they have implemented several initiatives such as national policies in support of LGBTQ Veterans, and the development of a fellowship program training psychologists to become experts in LGBTQ healthcare (VA Connecticut is fortunate to have one of those nine fellowships on site).

Since its development, the VA LGBTQ program has blossomed and is now widespread across all facilities. There is at least one LGBTQ Veteran Care Coordinator at every healthcare system across the country. The role of the LGBTQ Care Coordinator is to advocate for LGBTQ identified Veterans, provide education and training to staff so they can stay up to date with LGBTQ health and policies, and be a point of contact to the community who may have questions about what services are offered. We have two at our VA in Connecticut (including Dr. Adams) and many other individuals who are committed to the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ Veterans and provide support to the program in less official roles.

What are some of the services available to Veterans who might wish to seek their care at the VA?

The VA has a lot to offer for all Veterans who are thinking about receiving their healthcare at the VA. We provide a range of healthcare services to all eligible Veterans including primary care, mental health treatment, specialty care, emergency care (including psychiatric emergencies), preventative health screenings, etc. We also have a women’s health center with affirming policies that honor all gender identities. Additionally, we provide a few other LGBTQ-affirming services, including services in support of gender transition. This includes hormone treatment, speech therapy, labs and medications, support groups, family therapy, and prosthetic items (such as wigs, binders, gaffs, etc.). In the service of transparency, we will share that the VA does not provide or pay for gender transition related surgeries. However, we do support medical transition through pre- and post-op evaluations and supporting documentation.
How do your personal identities impact your work with LGBTQ Veterans?

Dr. Adams: I’ve been working both officially and unofficially in this role for a number of years. Being paid to be an advocate is the absolute best job I could ever imagine! I’ve met so many Veterans who have struggled with how the intersection of identity + military status has affected the trajectory of their lives. I’ve also met many Veterans who served with great pride, resilience, and honor. I personally identify as a cis-gender ally and realize that my life experiences and identity differ quite a bit from those Veterans with whom I work. However, I’ve always felt that a strong sense of social justice is important to my identity and have come to understand how I can make a difference in our world through my role at the VA. I’m honored to serve all who serve.

Dr. Gross: I am queer/gay and gender non-binary, and it is a great privilege to work in an environment that is affirming to my identities. I myself am not a Veteran, and I consider it an honor to work with LGBTQ Veterans who are some of the most courageous humans I have met. Much of my clinical work has been in the area of trauma/PTSD, which unfortunately is prevalent for LGBTQ people, and Veterans overall. I continue to be inspired by the resilience, grace, and bravery with which LGBTQ Veterans contribute so much in a world that often presents so many barriers.

How can I learn more or get more information?

Please reach out and contact us directly, we would love to hear from you! You can visit our webpage at https://www.connecticut.va.gov/services/lgbt/index.asp or directly call Dr. Lynette Adams at (203) 932-5711 x 5402.

We also feel it is vital to share this very important resource: if you are a Veteran in crisis, you can reach the Veterans Crisis Line by calling 1-800-273-8255. You can also visit the website at www.veteranscrisisline.net.
The annual beach day has grown by leaps and bounds since its founding, with large crowds heading to Walnut Beach in Milford to enjoy the weather and to socialize with other members of the community. Occasionally pop-up events occur at other times of the year; follow Connecticut Sound Pride on Facebook for future dates.

Photos by Barbara Curry
The Shops at Yale

Plan your visit at TheShopsatYale.com

lululemon • Apple • J.Crew • South Bay Restaurant • Lou Lou Boutique
L.L.Bean • Urban Outfitters • Shake Shack • Patagonia • Tarry Lodge & more!

The Chapel Street Historic and Broadway Districts in downtown New Haven.
The Milford chapter of "So You Think You Can Bowl" celebrated its first anniversary with a record number of bowlers at Bowlero in Milford. The group meets Tuesdays, taking advantage of $2.22 games and taco specials. No membership or commitment is required to bowl!

Photos by Daniel Marques
It was at an intimate lawn party nearly 25 years ago in the woods of Chaplin when Diana Perkins met Michelle Griffin. While their relationship persisted, the tradition of the lawn party they had gone to eventually ended, and they decided they would one day host their own. They eventually built a large home together on the shores of the Shetucket River in Windham and hosted the first lawn party of their own, coined “Women’s East of the River” (WEOR), in 2002.

Over the past 17 years, Perkins and Griffin gradually expanded the size of their party, expanded parking, built tables, collected chairs, acquired reusable plates, glasses, silverware, and napkins, and set up a bar and buffet. “We have had some record crowds of around 125 women, especially the two years when we had Sister Funk play,” said Perkins. “We primarily have women from eastern Connecticut, but often draw them from not only west of the Connecticut River, but also from out of state.” WEOR occurs the weekend closest to the full moon in September every year.

Located on the Shetucket, the guests can canoe, tube, and kayak. Other fun activities include horseshoes, volleyball, knife...
throwing, a book swap table, a singles meet, and sometimes even WEOR Idol. “Anyone can sing or perform,” Perkins said. She went on to add that the couple offers camping for people who want to extend their weekend and only ask that people bring a dish to share.

“Over the years, attendance has dropped off as sometimes our dates are in conflict with other gay events,” Perkins said, “We actually have a pretty large community of women in eastern Connecticut, so even though we’re getting older, we’d like to keep having this little gathering for them for a few more years.” For more info, email diana@shetuckethollow.com. Photos from past events are posted on their website, http://shetuckethollow.com.

In addition to WEOR, there are many other LGBTQ+ women’s groups throughout the state, most of which in New Haven and Fairfield Counties. “Meetup is a wonderful resource for demographics like ours to link our community together,” said Meredith Phillips of the CT Lesbian and Bisexual Soirees (CTLBS). “Meetup groups are required to post a city as their location but CTLBS is statewide.” Phillips was excited for the weekend-long private beach party over Labor Day weekend. “It’s magical! It’s held at a member’s family-owned private beach, a secluded cove.” She went on to add that the event was private for the Meetup group, “so anyone who joins can come.”

Phillips added that CTLBS is hosting a monthly Supper Club/Book Discussion at Bloodroot, the well-known feminist restaurant & bookstore located at 85 Ferris Street in Bridgeport. While the Sept. 19 meeting may be a little late for publication, the discussion will focus on Patience and Sarah by Isabel Miller. “This is a sweet love story, set in early America,” said Phillips, “Come even if you have not read all the book.” Bloodroot does not host any other groups at this time “but we would love to host any groups wanting to meet!” they said through facebook messenger.

If book clubs and lawn parties are not your speed, there are certainly other events for LGBTQ+ women, including Jesse Meucci’s 30+ year ongoing Girl Twirl dances at the Chez Est in West Hartford. Mia Rella states that “the lively dance party has conquered venues all over Connecticut.” The women’s dance party, Siren, hosted by Troupe429 in Norwalk, calls itself “the largest Women’s Party in CT.” There is also “Women After Hours” in the Hartford area, hosting dances and concerts since 1992.

A quick glance at different meetup groups within 100 miles of New Haven shows that there is a lot to offer for the discerning LGBTQ+ woman; there are hiking and exercise groups, antiquing groups, farmer’s market mavens, various book clubs, and an even greater variety of more narrow interests the closer you are to Boston. There are horror movie aficionados, and even the Pink Pistols for those who want to just go to the shooting range, and professional social networks and business associations, with new groups being created all the time. The internet simply makes it easier to find those lawn parties from which 20 year traditions can begin.

Meet our new LGBTQ+ Women’s Programming Officer:

Miranda Rector

Miranda (they/them/their) is excited to develop programming for LGBTQ+ women and femmes in New Haven and hopes to build an inclusive, lasting community. Read their full bio on the Center’s website newhavenpridecenter.org.

Join us and meet Miranda at our LGBTQ+ Women’s Social at Three Sheets New Haven during PRIDE on Wednesday, September 17th starting at 5:00p.

Contact them at women@newhavenpridecenter.org
Upcoming Women’s Events

SEPTEMBER:

THURSDAY, SEPT. 19
Monthly Supper/Book Club Discussion. Hosted by CT Lesbian & Bi Soirees. Bloodroot, 85 Ferris St., Bridgeport

SUNDAY, SEPT. 22, 3 PM
Jesse & The Chez Present Girl Twirl. Hosted by Jesse Meucci and The Chez Est. Chez Est, 458 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford

THURSDAY, SEPT. 26
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
LBTQ Women’s Social. Hosted by Triangle Community Center. 650 West Ave., Norwalk

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
A Victory Cup Polo Match and Hot Air Balloon Festival Outing. Hosted by CT Lesbian & Bi Soirees. For location, join the Meetup Group.

OCTOBER:

SUNDAY, OCT. 6, 6 PM
Monthly Meetup. Hosted By The Hartford Lesbian Coffeehouse. For location, join the Meetup Group.

SATURDAY, OCT. 12
Pumpkin Carving Contest / Dinner. Hosted by CT Lesbian & Bi Soirees. For location, join the Meetup Group.

SATURDAY, OCT. 12, 8 PM
WOMEN’s Dance and Comedy. Troupe 429, 3 Wall St., Norwalk

SUNDAY, OCT. 20 3 PM
Jesse & The Chez Present Girl Twirl. Hosted by Jesse Meucci and The Chez Est. Chez Est, 458 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford

THURSDAY, OCT. 24,
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
LBTQ Women’s Social. Hosted by Triangle Community Center. 650 West Ave., Norwalk

NOVEMBER:

SATURDAY, NOV. 2,
8 PM TO 12 AM
Karaoke Time. Hosted by CT Lesbian & Bi Soirees. The Pub, 441 Howe Ave, Shelton

SUNDAY, NOV. 3, 6 PM
Monthly Meetup. Hosted By The Hartford Lesbian Coffeehouse. For location, join the Meetup Group.

SATURDAY, NOV. 9, 8 PM
WOMEN’s Dance. Troupe 429, 3 Wall St., Norwalk

THURSDAY, NOV. 21,
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
LBTQ Women’s Social. Hosted by Triangle Community Center. 650 West Ave., Norwalk

SATURDAY, NOV. 23, 9 PM
Sister Funk Trio. Dunville’s, 41 Saugatuck Ave., Westport

DECEMBER:

SUNDAY, DEC. 1, 6 PM
Monthly Meetup. Hosted By The Hartford Lesbian Coffeehouse. For location, join the Meetup Group.

SUNDAY, DEC. 26
6:30PM – 8:30PM
LBTQ Women’s Social. Hosted by Triangle Community Center. 650 West Ave., Norwalk

Groups

FAIRFIELD COUNTY

BUTCH/FEMME & LESBIANS OF WESTCHESTER-CT
Danbury, CT

More Info:
https://www.meetup.com/Butch-Femme-Lesbians-of-Westchester-CT/

NORWALK LESBIAN MEETUP
Norwalk, CT. Get togethers for local Lesbians in Norwalk. Let’s see who lives in our city, network, and make some new close-by friends. We are open to Lesbian women living in Norwalk, or surrounding towns, but also those from other parts of CT, and Westchester. We plan to have potlucks, hikes, beach days, pool parties, as well as meetups at bars and restaurants & anything else we want.

More Info:
https://www.meetup.com/Norwalk-Lesbian-Meetup/

JOZ LESBIAN SOCIAL GROUP
Ridgefield, CT. A Lesbian social meetup, created 18+ years ago because women needed a place to have fun. We plan our own events and support other women socials and their organizers.

Website:
https://www.jozevents.com/
More Info:
https://www.meetup.com/jozevents/
THE LESBIAN FARMERS
RUSH LIMBAUGH WARNED
YOU ABOUT
Ridgefield, CT. You have the
flannels. You frequent farmer’s
markets. You love femmes/
butches/everyone in between.
All you’re missing is a group
of friends who gets as excited
about mushrooms and goats
as you do.

If you’re a wlw who gardens,
farms, or wants to, this is the
place for you. We are a left-
leaning group dedicated to
building a community where
we can support and learn
from each other, and of course
to make friends with like-
minded individuals. This is a
safe and welcoming space for
all wlw - lesbian, pan, bi, trans,
genderfluid, gnc, old, young,
etc. - of any skill or interest level.

NOTE: This is a femme-centric
space. That said, partners
of any and all genders are
welcome to be in this Meetup,
and to attend events with their
partners unless otherwise
specified. If you have any
questions, or are unsure at any
point, please just reach out to
me. I will always try to make
this space as welcoming as
possible, I just want to remain
aware that agriculture is often
a hegemonic male space, and
to create a refuge from that.

More Info:
https://www.meetup.com/
The-Lesbian-Farmers-Rush-
Limbaugh-Warning-You-About/

HARTFORD COUNTY
THE HARTFORD LESBIAN
COFFEEHOUSE
Hartford, CT. A social group
in the Hartford, CT area that
brings together lesbians from
all walks of life to share in
activities, make new friends,
laugh and have a whole lot of
fun. We get together at least
once a month to socialize in a
relaxed atmosphere.

This group is for women that
identify as lesbian only that
are single, dating, married,
committed, widowed and
otherwise to have a safe place
to meet women with similar
interests. A place to connect
intellectually and socially
without fear of boundaries
being crossed. We provide
formal monthly gatherings and
support members that branch
out for outings or gatherings
throughout the month.

The group is not intended
as a “dating” site. If your
intention as a member is
to pursue members for
personal relationships beyond
friendship, please be very aware
of the boundaries members
have. Not all members are in
the HLCH to find a significant
other or to date. Please respect
individual boundaries.

More Info:
https://www.meetup.com/
lgbtfriends-158/

WOMEN AFTER HOURS
West Hartford, CT. We are
the longest ongoing “meetup”
group for women who love
women in the Hartford, CT
area. We now have patrons
from all over New England
who attend our events! Our
purpose has always been to
create safe places for lesbians/
women to socialize, dance,
enjoy concerts together since
1992. This meetup is for all
women of any age who wish
to experience new friends
and old friendships, singles
or couples, gay-bi-or straight
but not narrow. Our February
dance is an open dance for all
GLBT’s and straight friends!

Website:
http://www.wahdance.com

More Info:
https://www.meetup.com/
Women-After-Hours/

NEW HAVEN COUNTY
CT LESBIAN & BI SOIREEES
New Haven, CT. CT Lesbian Bi
Soirees welcomes all LBTQ+
women and has a variety of
member-hosted events all
over Connecticut including
happy hours, bowling, movie
nights, barbecues, house
parties, house concerts, and
more. There are currently
over 850 members in this
Connecticut-only group.

Our members host all types
of activities all around the state.
We hike, kayak, paint, drink,
eat, play cards and games,
icnic, walk our dogs, talk,
dish, commiserate, debate,
sing, carve pumpkins, DANCE,
dress up, dress down, dress
in costume, see plays and
movies, and sometimes even
take trips.

You must be both woman-
identified (living openly
as a woman) AND non-
heterosexual to join this group.
Trans people who fit those
criteria are also welcome.
While we do enjoy spending
time with our male and
heterosexual friends, this
group is for a specific part of
the community. 21+
GIRLS OUTSIDE CT
New Haven, CT. Girls OUTside CT is an outdoor adventure group for “gay/bi/trans women”. With over 930 members, past events include Summer Solstice Hike, Moonlight Canoe and Kayak Paddle, and Hike and Hops events. More events are added often. This is a group for gay/bi/trans women who are interested in hiking, kayaking, golf, biking, rock climbing, skiing, etc. in and around CT. All skill levels are welcome, however some events may require more skill and experience than others and will be specified per the event.

More Info: https://www.meetup.com/Girls-Outside-CT/

S.O.L.O.W.
Waterbury, CT. Single Older Lesbians of Waterbury (S.O.L.O.W) is a meetup group for single women who love women over the age of 50.


MASSACHUSETTS
THE PIONEER VALLEY LGBTQIA+ WOMEN'S GROUP
Easthampton, MA
https://www.meetup.com/pionerevalleywomen/

METROWEST LESBIAN MEETUP GROUP
Framingham, MA
https://www.meetup.com/meetup-group-wtSTVuqg/

HOLYOKE LESBIAN MEETUP
Holyoke, MA
https://www.meetup.com/Holyoke-Lesbian-Meetup/

NATICK LESBIAN SOCIAL WOMEN!
Natick, MA
https://www.meetup.com/Natick-Lesbian-Social-Women/

SOUTH COAST LESBIAN SOCIAL
New Bedford, MA
https://www.meetup.com/South-Coast-Lesbian-Social-Meetup/

SOUTH OF BOSTON LESBIANS
South Weymouth, MA
https://www.meetup.com/South-of-Boston-Lesbians/

LESBIAN COUPLES RESTAURANT CLUB
Waban, MA
https://www.meetup.com/Lesbian-Couples-Restaurant-Club/

NEW YORK AND LONG ISLAND QUEER LADIES OF LOWER WESTCHESTER
Harrison, NY

LESBIAN MEETUP ON LI
Shirley, NY
https://www.meetup.com/Lesbian-Meetup-on-LI/

LI 50+ LESBIANS
Sound Beach, NY
https://www.meetup.com/LiLesbians-50plus/

SPORTY LESBIAN CHICKS (FOR WOMEN 40+)
White Plains, NY
https://www.meetup.com/SportyLesbianChicks/

RHODE ISLAND
RHODE ISLAND WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION – RIWA
Cranston, RI
https://www.meetup.com/Rhode-Island-Womens-Association/

SE MASS AND RI LESBIAN WOMEN
Cranston, RI
https://www.meetup.com/Southeastern-MA-LGBT/

NEWPORT/SOUTH COUNTY LESBIAN MEETUP
Newport, RI
https://www.meetup.com/Newport-South-county-Lesbian-Meetup/

RI LESBIAN SOCIAL GROUP
North Kingstown, RI
https://www.meetup.com/RI-Lesbian-Social-Group/

RHODE ISLAND'S SINGLE NIGHT FOR LESBIANS
Providence, RI

20'S AND 30'S QUEER WOMEN OF RI
Providence, RI

BABES BI THE BAY
Providence, RI
https://www.meetup.com/Babes-Bi-the-Bay/
THE NEW HAVEN PRIDE CENTER AND THE IMPERIAL SOVEREIGN COURT OF ALL CONNECTICUT PRESENT

HALLOQUEEN

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 19, 2019

COCKTAILS 10 PM
SHOWTIME 11 PM

COSTUME CONTEST
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
RAFFLE PRIZES
MUSIC BY DJ DARK ANJEI
HOSTED BY JOSH O'CONNELL
AND FRIENDS

$5 DONATION
TO ATTEND

168 YORK STREET CAFE
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK | 168 YORK STREET, NEW HAVEN, CT

Net proceeds will support the following beneficiaries:

- Imperial Sovereign Court
- Scholarship Funds

For details, visit newhavenpridecenter.org or facebook.com/newhavenpridecenter

Follow the Imperial Sovereign Court of All Connecticut on social media
@ctimperialcourt or visit www.ctimperialcourt.org

The Imperial Sovereign Court of all Connecticut, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, dedicated to helping those in need.
Press Release

Arien Wilkerson, founder and artistic director of TNMOT AZTRO, will premiere a special version of their oeuvre “Lovepiece.” The premiere is free and will take place Sept. 20 at Kamora’s Cultural Corner (KCC), 1023 Albany Ave. in Hartford.

"Lovepiece" is about the work it takes to build a healthy relationship with yourself using movement, sound, and conversation to uncover the process of healing from rejection, hate, poverty and humiliation within black/brown queer romantic relationships.

"Lovepiece" takes the audience through the lens of queer POC relationships, specifically the dichotomy between Black and Latino queer relationships, being “out” in public, being young and HIV positive, and being put on a pillory for your own personal act of love.

The performance will be followed by a community conversation on queerness with topics drawn directly from the show.

Wilkerson said, “We are excited to premiere this work at [KCC …] I feel it’s important Black communities include queer people, instead of using our work for their benefit.”

In July, Kamora Herrington, the founder of KCC, took over the former Kabbalah House in order to provide ‘space’ for the marginalized communities in Hartford that haven’t had regular access to safe spaces in their own neighborhood.

"Opening with Arien’s show ‘Lovepiece’ could not be a more perfect collaboration," Herrington said. "We are building a foundation of love and a desire for understanding."

To learn more about programming, hosting events, and supporting the vision, email events@kamorasculturalcorner.com or call 860.400.6046.
COMPETITION
Chez Queen Finale

Season 3 of Chez Queen, a weekly competition at the Chez in Hartford, concluded August 22, where each of the weekly winners performed and a winner was chosen. Ray Decorazón was the victor of Season 3. Season 4 has also kicked off, with weekly competitions each Thursday.

Photos by TPF Photography
Chez Queen: Drag, Drag and More Drag

by Patrick J Dunn

On Thursday, August 22nd the Chez Est in Hartford was alive with the art of drag – there was queens, kings, and drag performance artists that straddled the line of both killing it on stage all to win the coveted Chez Queen Season 3 crown and the opportunity to become Mx Chez Est 2020!

Chez Queen, which was originally launched in 2018, is an amazing weekly open stage opportunity for both new and seasoned performers where they can take the stage for 5 minutes and perform a number with rotating judges that include Connecticut drag legends, hosts of local shows, title holders, and of course Mrs Chez Est and owner Luis Pepe, husband of owner John Pepe. The first two seasons saw the crowning of Mz October May Lay and Lotus Qween and the launching of numerous new drag performers into Connecticut’s drag community.

Chez Queen Season 3’s finale was a landmark for Connecticut’s drag scene. Each performer brought the best of their talents to the stage with incredible tear-jerker performances, insane dance routines, and dramatic representations of our childhood characters, musical numbers, and motherly characters – each performer brought amazing energy and featured some of the best drag Connecticut has seen under one roof in a long time. The ten performers, who had each won a previous weeks' competition sometimes competing all nine weeks of the season, represented an incredible diversity of preference styles and types of drag. The performances were all so over the top and well-thought that the crowd would have been happy had any of the performers won, but the one that took the crown was Connecticut’s Drag King sensation Ray Decorazón which erupted a round of applause that almost blow the roof off of the Chez. It is important to note that Ray winning Chez Queen Season 3 marks the first major drag title in Connecticut to held by a drag king.

After the finale, I asked Chez Queen inceptor and host, Miss Chez for Life, Mia E Z’Lay what some of her favourite moments of Chez Queen Season 3 have been, to which she said “Any time a performer really gives it their all and is there to have a good time.” And in the finale, boy did they ever! Chez Queen Season 4 kicked into gear on Thursday, September 5th and will run weekly till November when the finale will take place.

The Chez Queen Season 3 finale featured: Trinity St Thomas, Miss Chevious, Natalia Fierce, Ram Shackle, Rory Roux Heart, Sativa & Indica, Frizzie Borden, Ethel deluxe, Ava Cado, Kenya Mone Heart, and Ray Decorazón.
The boxes were packed one by one in neat cardboard rows. In one, James Baldwin traded advice with Beyond Magenta author Susan Kuklin about transphobia and American politics. In another, The Color Purple’s Celie sidled up to a history of the Stonewall Riots. In another, Julián and his abuela made their way to the beach, fluent in both Spanish and Mermaid as their toes dug into the sand.

In early September, 120 boxes found new homes all over the state as part of the Rainbow Libraries Community Reads Project, an initiative of GLSEN Connecticut that puts grade-specific LGBTQ+ books in Connecticut public schools, libraries and LGBTQ+ community centers. According to GLSEN Connecticut member Michael Rady, who spearheaded the project, it is the first initiative of its kind in the country.

Ashley Holbrooks, who leads the state’s all-volunteer chapter of GLSEN, said the libraries are designed to fill a literary, educational and emotional void that many LGBTQ+ students may experience in their schools, where representation is still hard to find. In addition, the rainbow libraries stand to educate their teachers, administrators, and peers at the same time.

It’s an experience that she’s lived firsthand. Growing up in rural New York, Holbrooks was the first student ever to come out at her high school, a small public school in the town of Sauquoit. When she did, teachers and administrators didn’t offer any kind of support. There was nothing to read in the school’s library that reflected her experience. She turned to YouTube for LGBTQ+ content, but the options were slim.

“Here are these books that students can read and take home and know that they’re not alone,” she said. “I’m really proud. It feels like a big deal.”

Her words resonated for students Finn Crumlish and Alex Hoffman, volunteers who are both rising eighth graders at Edgewood School in the city’s Westville neighborhood. In the past year, the two have been advocating for a Gender and Sexuality Alliance at their school, which they are hoping to implement under a new principal this year.

During their time at Edgewood, they’ve both heard classmates use anti-LGBTQIA slurs including “the f word” and “the d word,” which sometimes turn into bullying when a teacher gets involved. Both said they feel like they’ve been shut out
from most student cliques, because they are outspoken about LGBTQ+ rights and don’t hesitate to let teachers know if one of their peers has hurled an insult at another.

But both have also found solace in literature—they praised Edgewood School librarian Kim Rogers—devouring books including Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda, Leah And The Offbeat, Carry On (“like Harry Potter, but gay,” Hoffman explained) and Gay Vampires among others.

“I feel like the main reason people use these words is because they don’t understand them,” said Crumlish. “I feel like during this current presidency, it’s so important to fight back and speak out. And it’s important that what you’re doing and saying matters.”

While this marks the first big push for rainbow libraries in the state, Holbrooks said she would like to expand the program in the next year, with a goal of increasing the project’s reach by at least 10 percent by next September. Rady added that he would like to see the project spread to other statewide and regional chapters of GLSEN, of which there are 45 nationally.

Currently, the project is supported by a mix of grants, corporate donations and institutional partnerships, which volunteers are still seeking as they grow the program. Each Rainbow Library set includes 10 books, which runs about $130.
Upcoming LGBTQ+ Benefits

by Patrick J Dunn

Check-out these upcoming FUNdrasiers where you can support the community while attending a fun event!

**Sept. 29, 12 p.m.: Life’s a Drag, Let’s Have Brunch. Raising money for Connecticut Breast Health Initiative**

Enjoy a delicious brunch, served by the incredible Pond House Cafe set in picturesque Elizabeth Park followed by performances by members of the Imperial Sovereign Court of All Connecticut and local performers, a fabulous fashion parade, all culminating in the crowning Miss Drag Brunch 2019! Hosted by Mini and Morgana de Luxe with the Boston Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Tickets are $50. More info at facebook.com/ctimperialcourt.

**Oct. 4, 7 p.m.: 2019 Visionary Gala. Raising Money for the Triangle Community Center**

The Triangle Community Center invites you to join them for their annual gala evening that include pre-party social, delicious dinner, a live auction and post-dinner dance party. This years’ event also features special guest SAG Award winning actress and member of the Orange is the New Black cast Lea DeLaria. Tickets begin at $150. More info at ctpridecenter.org.

**Oct. 19, 9 p.m.: Halloqueen 13. Raising Money for the New Haven Pride Center scholarship funds and the Imperial Sovereign Court of All Connecticut’s Reign XX Beneficiaries**

Join us for an amazing joint event between the New Haven Pride Center scholarship funds and the Imperial Sovereign Court of All Connecticut to raise funds for the community! In its 13th year, the event features raffles and door prizes, fantastic Halloween inspired performances, and a costume contest! $5 donation at the door. More info at facebook.com/NewHavenPrideCenter or facebook.com/ctimperialcourt.

**Oct. 20, 11a.m.: Connecticut Walks. Raising Money for nine Connecticut LGBTQ+ organizations and the Imperial Sovereign Court of All Connecticut Memorial Scholarship**

Connecticut Walks is an all new fundraising walk aiming to raise money for the LGBTQ+ community by joining forces in an effort to elevate all of our nonprofit organizations at once. Walkers and sponsors contribute to a pot that will be distributed to organizations working with LGBTQ+ Youth, the Transgender community, LGBTQ+ Community Centers, and LGBTQ+ Arts Organizations. More info at ctimperialcourt.org.

**Nov. 9, 6p.m.: 17th Annual One Big Event Gala. Raising Money for the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective**

The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective invites you to join them for their annual gala evening that includes dancing, a live and silent auction, yummy dinner, drinks and more! This years’ event takes place at the Hartford Marriott Downtown. More info at cbo.io/bidapp.
Events from Around Conn.

By Patrick J Dunn

There is always something interesting and fun going on! Know of an event you think should be featured? Email us at centerline@newhavenpridecenter.org

Sept. 23: Lovepiece (World Premiere) at the Quick Center for the Arts, Fairfield

Lovepiece, a 30-minute dance and multimedia installation, is about the work it takes to build a healthy relationship with yourself, uncovering the process of healing from rejection, hate, poverty, and humiliation within black/brown queer romantic relationships. Created and performed by Hartford-based company TNMOT AZTRO. Free event. More info at quickcenter.fairfield.edu.

Sept. 25: Creating a Culturally Affirming Curriculum Discussion Hosted by the New Haven Public School Advocates in New Haven

Learning is social and political, and knowledge is never neutral. In an era that emphasizes high-stakes testing and the banking model of education, which frames students as empty vessels waiting to be filled, how do we create culturally affirming pedagogies in our classrooms? The struggles of undocumented people, Indigenous people, people of color, women, LGBTQI people, and working-class people play out in our schools, creating destabilized environments for students and educators alike. What role can curriculum play? Join the discussion. Free event. More info at facebook.com/NHPSADVOCATES1

Oct. 5: Soul Haven’s 3-year Anniversary Party at 168 York Street Café, New Haven

Soul Haven every month reclaims the magic by taking it back to the day where you can come as you are, however you are; there will be no judgement, just love and appreciation for the character of your soul where it meets the music – an evening of whimsical music journey of soulful tunes that are sure to make anyone move. Free event. More info at facebook.com/Butchqueenspresent.

Oct. 5: Headliners & Legends Present: Latrice Royale at the Chez Est, Hartford

The Chez Est brings to their stage one of the most beloved contenders for the RuPaul’s Drag Race crown – Latrice Royale for an evening of drag-tastic performances by both Latrice and some of Connecticut’s most fierce performers! Tickets are $15 or you can get access to the VIP Meet & Greet for $25! More info at chezest.com.

Oct. 13: Opening Reception of “In the Life of a Rose Art Show” by Jaii Marc Art

Hartford-based Jaii Marc Art hosts his 2nd gallery show of this work titled In the Life of a Rose. His larger than life creations are stunning works of large-scale acrylic art. FREE event. More info at facebook.com/jaiimarcart.