Members and Allies,

Let me start out with a little about myself. I’m a Wyoming native and have lived in Wyoming most of my life. I moved out of Wyoming for six years while pursuing my aviation career. So when a job opportunity showed up in Laramie, WY, I jumped at the opportunity to move back to my home state of Wyoming. I love the outdoors and absolutely love hiking and camping.

After moving back, I got involved with Wyoming Equality after learning about Rendezvous and fell in love with the organization. I have been on the board for two years and now feel extremely humbled and honored to serve as Wyoming Equality’s New Chair.

I have some very big shoes to fill with Jeran’s departure and would like to thank him for his years of volunteer work as Board Chair at Wyoming Equality. The organization and Wyoming’s LGBTQ community have benefited from his tenure.

I’m lucky to be coming into the Chair position at an excellent time. We have some talented, knowledgeable, driven and downright amazing people on Wyoming Equality’s board right now. As Chair, I plan to utilize each of their talents to make us an unstoppable organization. I feel very excited for our future and will continue to provide the following services:

- A newsletter titled the United Voice
- A website with up-to-date information
- A Facebook page with up-to-date information
- A variety of annual social events including Rendezvous
- Conferences and support groups
- Advocacy in the interest to our members.

However, we are facing some major hurdles. With the passage of marriage, the majority of people believe that LGBTQ people have equal rights. This can’t be any further from the truth but has caused all the grant money to dry up. So as an organization, we are going to have to rely on you more than ever.

My pledge is simple. I plan to make Wyoming Equality as fiscally responsible and efficient as possible, so you will know your donor and membership dollars are being put to good use and are making a difference in Wyoming. So please renew your membership or donate to Wyoming Equality, your support is critical.

www.wyopride.org/donate

Thanks for your support.

John King
Board Chairman
307-778-7645 ext. 4
johnk@wyomingequality.org
Friends members and allies,

I write this newsletter article with mixed emotions… I’m sure many of you have heard that I have stepped away as board chair for Wyoming Equality. Over the last several years I have had so many amazing experiences and met so many truly great people from all across The Equality State, and I’m sure going to miss those personal touches. That being said, I never want an organization to get stale because someone stays at “the helm” for too long.

I look back on the last seven years with much fondness! We accomplished so much and we grew together. I feel like we helped move Wyoming a little closer to actually becoming The Equality State. For me the advocacy highlight had to be winning marriage. The lawsuit, the lawyers, the judges, the plaintiff couples, the opposition… wow! (It still feels like a dream sometimes!) But the best part was the town hall meetings, the rallies, and getting to know so many of you so well throughout that entire process. I can honestly say the lifelong friendships that will enrich and enhance my life for the rest of my days was by far the best part of the marriage campaign!

I also thoroughly enjoyed working on non-discrimination ordinances and resolutions in many of our communities. We made some great progress and yet we still have so much work to do! I am confident that the legislature will eventually clear this up once and for all. Until then we must continue putting our blood, sweat and tears into our local communities and send a message to Cheyenne that non-discrimination is good for business and will make a difference in the lives of all LGBT residents who call Wyoming home!

So for now, I say farewell. I will continue to give my time and money to Wyoming Equality and I hope you’ll do the same! I feel like I’m leaving the organization in very excellent hands. I want to personally congratulate the new chair, John King and I know you all will show him the same kindness and willingness to help grow the organization that you’ve shown me. I’ve never been more excited about our board members and I will look forward to seeing you all at Wyoming Equality events down the road!

With the utmost gratitude,
Jeran
I am pushing 42 but I am just going to quote my millennial friends and say: THIS MONTH THO. Seriously. This month. Gillette passed their non discrimination resolution, thanks to the excellent work of Karin Ebertz, Lacey Jones, Stacie Summer McDonald, Christina Gerrits, Sara Neyer, Maggie Unterseher and Sen Von Flatern and of course all of the great people who make up the Gillette PFLAG. It was very telling that an intensely small group of people recently tried to hold a klan rally in Gillette. And how did their mayor, Louise Carter and the city council respond? They passed a resolution affirming the right and dignity of LGBT citizens. Gillette is a beautiful example of how communities in Wyoming come together as neighbors and friends to stand up for each other. We are very proud at Wyoming Equality of our partnership with Gillette PFLAG, they are a shining example of the work that allies can do.

Melanie Vigil who is a recent addition to the Wyoming Equality board and until recently worked for the ACLU doing non discrimination organizing, has been traveling to Douglas with me for the last 6 months. Melanie has deep roots in Wyoming, having grown up in Lander in a railroad family. She will be addressing the city council along with a great group of Douglas locals like Leslie Fowler and her daughter, Mikeala on Monday the 8th, when the council will vote on the resolution. Mikeala turned 18 last month and for her birthday she registered to vote and took her first step as an active citizen by introducing the non discrimination resolution to the Douglas council. Way to hit the ground running, Mikeala! We are excited to see what activism is ahead for this bright young woman!

Finally, the Cheyenne resolution is coming to the council. This is a result of almost two years by a team of people: my predecessor, Laura Weatherford, my ACLU colleague, Melanie Vigil, outgoing board president, Jeran Artery and a team of volunteers who have gathered more than 120 pledges of support from local businesses and hundreds of local citizens. This Monday, the 10th, the resolution will be introduced, it will go before the council for public comment on the 19th and 24th for the final vote. If you are reading this please take a moment to write a letter of support to the Tribune Eagle. We need all of our supporters from every corner of the state to let the Cheyenne city council know that the capitol city needs to join Laramie, Jackson, Gillette and Douglas in affirming the rights of LGBT citizens. It is beyond time.

I am excited about the work that Wyoming Equality is doing: we’ve been deepening our dialogue with the great folks at PFLAG Casper, PFLAG Gillette and Jackson as well as reaching out to supporters in Sheridan, Rock Springs, Evanston and Cody. We would love to know what YOUR community needs! Please don’t hesitate to call me (307 778 7645) and let me know what is happening in your town.

This has been such rewarding work and while it is great when Tyler Glenn of the Neon Trees mentions the profound effect his visit to Wyoming had in the New York Times, or Brad Enzi preaches the good word of LGBT non discrimination at the UU Church of Cheyenne, the best moments can come from simple conversations with the queer community that calls Wyoming home. The young trans woman who will stop by the office for Thai food and conversation, the phone call from a Mormon man who has just come out to his sister in a small Wyoming town and been told that he is loved, exactly as he is. Our community is resilient and fabulous; I am proud to be part of it.

In love and respect,
Sara Burlingame
Education and Outreach coordinator
Elections matter. We’ve all heard it before (and will likely hear it again), but how often do we sit down and think about it? As a gay Wyomingite, my ability to marry the love of my life, cement our love for one another, and add my husband to my health insurance was decided by the Supreme Court in 2015 when Marriage Equality become law of the land. I am proud to work for the State of Wyoming and be out a work, but I know many live in fear that they may be hired one day, and fired the next once their employer learns about their sexual orientation. As I write this, the City Council members in Cheyenne have introduced a Non-Discrimination Resolution to protect LGBT Wyomingites. This historic moment follows on the heels of Laramie, Jackson, Gillette and Douglas leading the way with versions of Non-Discrimination Ordinances and Resolutions.

All of this excitement and progress is unfolding as we head into the 2016 election season. I’m not here to tell you who to vote for. Wyoming Equality is a Non-partisan organization and I know for our fact there are Board members from all walks of the political spectrum. That being said, when it comes to equality we are united that we need to elect pro-equality candidates. Up and down the ticket the races in 2016 matter. Here in Cheyenne, one of the candidates for Mayor has been vocal of their support for a Non-Discrimination Ordinance and the other has not. Turning to the State Legislature, we passed the Non-Discrimination Ordinance in the Wyoming Senate 24-6, only to see it fail in the house 26-33-1 in 2014. If three to four representatives were different we would have Non-Discrimination protections in Wyoming today. On the National level, in addition to our President having incredible powers on their own, they appoint the Supreme Court justices. With a 5-4 decision a year and a half ago, the next judges our country appoints will be critical.

The bottom line is to vote. Contact your candidates at all levels of government and ask them if they support measures to protect the rights of LGBT Wyomingites and Americans. Together we can protect our gains, build our future, and continue to make Wyoming live up to her name as the Equality State!

Thank you Laramie, Jackson, Gillette and Douglas for leading the way!

- Mike Bleakley
Extragenital STD Screening

The Communicable Disease Unit has made access to extragenital gonorrhea and Chlamydia testing a priority. Mounting evidence shows that limiting screenings to vaginal and urethral sites fails to detect infections a person may have and their potential to spread undetected infections to others. Limited testing options does a particular disservice to Men who have Sex with Men (MSM). According to the CDC, “more than half (53%) of C. trachomatis and 64% of N. gonorrhoeae infections were at non-urethral sites and would have been missed if the traditional approach to screening of men by testing only urethral specimens had been used.”

While extragenital NAAT testing has not been approved by the FDA, most labs, including the Wyoming Public Health Lab, have undergone extensive internal validations in order to run these tests. Rectal swabs can be self-collected just like vaginal and urine samples. Pharyngeal samples are staff collected and as easy as a rapid strep collection.

Free or low-cost testing is available at over 40 sites in Wyoming. Visit Knowyo.org to find a participating clinic and get a voucher for HIV/STD/hepatitis testing.

Oral and rectal STD screenings have additional implications for prevention activities. Rectal infections are a simple marker to identify individuals at highest risk for HIV infection. Anyone with a rectal gonorrhea or Chlamydia infection is a prime candidate for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) use. More info on PrEP coming next month!

For more information on extragenital screening please contact Molly Adami, Field Epidemiologist at the Wyoming Department of Health, at (307) 777-8939 or molly.adami@wyo.gov.
Calendar

10/11 - National Coming Out Celebration - Laramie - St. Paul’s United Church of Christ - 6:00 pm
10/11 - Art Auction & Reception - Casper - The Lyric, 230 W. Yellowstone - 6:00 pm
10/23 - Casper PFLAG - Casper - UU Church, 15th & Melrose - 5:30 PM - 7 pm
10/27 - LGBT Night - Laramie - Shöcktoberfest, 303 S. 3rd St - 8:00 pm
10/29 - Halloween Dance - Cheyenne - Location TBD - 8:00 pm
01/28 - Drag Queen Bingo - Cheyenne - Raddison Hotel & Suites
08/09-13 - Rendezvous - Vedauwoo

Ongoing Events

Melrose Coffee House, United Church of Christ, 15th & Melrose, Casper. Fridays, 7-10 pm.
Great music, local bands, no cover charge, all ages, specialty coffees and sweet treats for sale.

Gillette/NE Wyoming PFLAG: 3rd Wednesday of the month at Gillette College, Health Sciences Building. Business at 6, Support at 7.

LGBT Military Veterans Weekly Peer Group at the Cheyenne VAMC. Mondays, 3-4 pm.
No notes are kept. There is a peer group moderator. Expectation of Privacy is strictly enforced. This group is for those who may have or had Military Sexual Trauma (MST).

Gather for Breakfast! Every 2nd Saturday of the Month @ 9:00am. Sheridan, WY Call or email for location. 307-778-7645 ext 705, kennyawyo.org

Announcements, Classifieds, and Calendar

It’s WE's/UGLW’s policy to provide space for announcements and personal classifieds FREE OF CHARGE for one month to our members. After the first month, the member rate is $2.00 per month for ads of 25 words or less. Ads over 25 words are assessed a fee of 5¢ per word. We welcome articles for this newsletter from WE/UGLW members. Please send typed submissions to: WE, PO Box 6837, Cheyenne, WY 82003, ATTN: newsletter, or e-mail submissions to: newsletter@wyomingquality.org. Submissions should be spell and grammar checked. Articles may be shortened, edited or retained for a later issue. To place an ad in United Voice, please contact the above address or e-mail. All articles and ads are due by the 25th of the month previous to which you wish the material to appear.

All calendar items must be sponsored by groups listed as a Community Resource or have an article in the current issue with all additional information. Items are due by the 25th of the month. Please send or e-mail items to: WE, PO Box 2531, Cheyenne, WY 82003, ATTN: newsletter
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Thursday
October 27th
8PM - ??
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**WYOMING EQUALITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

WE’s Board of Directors meets once each month; members are welcome to attend. Please contact WE at 307-778-7645 for information on times and locations. Please feel free to contact any of our board members with questions, concerns or suggestions.

**Officers**
Chair, John King, Ext 4, johnk@wyomingequality.org
Co-Chair, Jesse Weber, Ext 704, jessew@wyomingequality.org
Secretary, Kennth Allen, Ext 705, Kennya@wyomingequality.org
Treasurer, Mike Bleakley, Ext 700, mikeb@wyomingequality.org

**Directors**
Shayna Alexander, shyanaa@wyomingequality.org
Jeran Artery, Ext 2, jerana@wyomingequality.org
Nicholas Jesse, nickj@wyomingequality.org
Nicole Melville, nicolem@wyomingequality.org
Melanie Vigil, melaniev@wyomingequality.org

**WE Contact People**
Contact people serve as local representatives of WE/UGLW in their home towns, providing information to new people in their area. If you're willing to be listed as a contact person, please let us know at P. O. Box 2531, Cheyenne, WY 82003.

Janet/Casper/237-4545
Jeran/Cheyenne/331-1345
Chris/Evanston/679-0441
Hank/Gillette/307-680-8465
Mark/Jackson/733-8349
Creig Nielson/Jackson/413-5606

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You can also Mail your check to: Wyoming Equality, P. O. Box 2531, Cheyenne, WY 82003
Or pay by credit card by going to our website, www.wyomingequality.org, and using our link thru PayPal.

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