GEORGE BAKAN
A giant who used the SGN to make Queer history

by Renee Raketty
SGN Contributing Writer

Recently, I had the enviable task of describing George Bakan, the former publisher of the SGN, to a group of diverse and talented writers here at the newspaper. Despite having a year to consolidate him into a single sound bite, I failed miserably. How do you describe someone who was a force of nature?

see GEORGE BAKAN page 10
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Dear readers,

We don’t celebrate Pride because soulless corporations slap a rainbow on their logo and say it’s that time of year again.

We celebrate because in Greenwich village in 1969, a group of LGBTQ+ activists and allies led by Trans women of color decided enough was enough. The message from the Stonewall Riots was clear. In the face of adversity, together we rise.

We should be proud of who we are and how far we’ve come.

Seattle is a diverse, everchanging city. Our community here is just as nebulous. It’s no secret that things have been tense lately. To call for unity, understanding, and a safe space for education is often the response from privileged white folks like me during times of unrest and disagreement. That’s not what I’m here to do.

People can take the time to educate themselves. The resources are out there. It takes little effort to google any fact or book you need.

The SGN staff and I intend to lead by example. Words have power. I wouldn’t be in this profession if I thought otherwise. But empty platitudes don’t accomplish anything. If you want something done, you do it.

The SGN will continue to be a newspaper for everyone. We are here for you, Seattle’s LGBTQ+ citizens, to bring you the news that matters to all of us.

This Pride, take a moment to reflect on the history that we celebrate. It’s only through understanding the past that we can work toward a better future.

Also, get absolutely blasted if that’s your thing. It’s a party, after all.

Yours amidst the chaos,

A.V. Eichenbaum
SGN Associate Editor
HAPPY PRIDE, SEATTLE! This month we honor the political struggle for ongoing visibility, protection, and celebration of our LGBTQ+ friends, family, neighbors, and community members.

As a progressive labor democrat, organizing has been a throughline in my career. For almost a decade, at the Washington State Labor Council, I fought for political inclusion and leadership of LGBTQ individuals. On Seattle City Council, I continue to stand in solidarity with LGBTQ community members and workers in the fight for housing, dignified workplaces, economic stability, and culturally competent health care for all. Then I ran for Seattle City Council to bring these values to legislation in Seattle’s City Hall.

Together, on the City Council, we’ve built diverse coalitions to pass progressive and impactful policy change. This is what creates healthy, thriving communities—and it is what drives me to run again. With your support, we can bring these policies to City Hall once again to build a stronger, more inclusive Seattle.

“From signing the first same-sex marriage licenses in our state, to our work today taking on youth homelessness, ensuring every neighbor has access to healthcare, and building a welcoming community for all, I'm grateful to serve as an ally with King County's LGBTQ+ community. Together, let's continue making progress so everyone in King County can thrive.”

Dow Constantine


“All Americans must be given equal rights and opportunities, regardless of who they love or how they identify.

I remain committed to fighting for the equality of all people and disavowing hatred.

I’m proud to be a longtime ally of the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as for those with intersectional identities.”

Congressman Adam Smith

Democrat for Congress
Representing Our Diverse Communities
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Note from the Editor:

Last week, we printed a collection of images and bios introducing our staff to you, our readership, in a segment called “We Are SGN.” In all the chaos of the last few weeks, we made a mistake. We forgot someone.

Worse, we forgot someone who never misses a deadline.

To correct this unthinkable oversight, we’re shining the spotlight on her now.

-A.V. Eichenbaum, SGN Associate Editor

Kylin Brown
Contributing Writer

Kylin Brown grew up composing whimsical short stories based upon real-life wonder, influenced by her boundless imagination and love for PC games. She made her debut as a journalist at the SGN just last fall after a stint writing for her college newspaper, the Whitman Wire.

She was a first-generation college graduate during the early pandemic, earning a BA in sociology and environmental studies from Whitman College. Shortly thereafter, she relocated to the Pike-Pine neighborhood on Capitol Hill and embarked in a year of AmeriCorps service with the educational nonprofit College Success Foundation. More recently she also joined the Epiphany School as a paraprofessor during the 2020-21 school year.

Brown hails from a small town northeast of Spokane, named Newport. She also attended Garfield High School, in Seattle’s Central District. She credits her writing abilities to this period of time in the city, where she was first able to pursue AP courses.

Observing rural urban divides in educational opportunities such as this fueled her desire to pursue work in education equity, while contemporary politics and her rural background inspired her to become a contributing writer at the SGN. As the school year comes to a close, she hopes to commit more time to the craft.

She has dreams of writing a family memoir in coming years, and currently enjoys engaging with the greater Seattle community through journalism.

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HIV alone didn’t cause the clogged artery in my neck. Smoking with HIV did.

Brian, age 45, California
George Bakun continued from cover

George could literally change the climate of a room with his mere presence and move, figuratively speaking, mountains with a single phrase. The remarkable thing is that he could achieve all this through his sheer force of will and an unwavering wit and warmth.

It’s hard to believe that it’s been a year since George’s passing on June 7, 2020. He just kept doing what he does best. He had been making calls to rally support for an LGBTQ+ statement condemning police brutality in the wake of the death of George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American man who was murdered at the hands of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin.

I came back to the SGN a day later to help his paper in the only way I knew how: by reporting the news. I waited more than a week before sitting at his desk, but it was the only work space available in the cluttered SGN newsroom.

I thought about all the times George would end our conversations with one simple question: “When are you coming back to write for us?” I had left journalism to return to social service because I thought that was my true calling. However, George knew better, and he finally got his wish.

A year later, I am a contributing writer and photojournalist to five news outlets, including the Capitol Hill Seattle Blog, Unite Seattle magazine, and the Tacoma Weekly.

He “changed my path forever” George cared deeply for his staff, although his paycheck wasn’t always guaranteed to be on time or in full. The newspaper business is a tricky beast, and he was at the whim of its advertisers and their account receivables department. George was also an avid antique collector and thrift store hunter, which was a major outlet for his personal spending.

“He gave me my first job as a paid writer and, although the pay was minimal, the opportunity it provided was immense,” said Albert Rodriguez via Facebook. “That job opened so many doors for me, and I am forever grateful.”

Beau Burillo, a former SGN columnist, added that “George saw and nurtured in me qualities I didn’t know I had” and “he helped me find my voice.”

“He wasn’t just an editor, an activist, or a newsman. He was a visionary, a leader, and one of those rare people in my life who changed my path forever.”

This week I spoke with his daughter, Angela Cragin, who inherited her father’s legacy. I can remember the look of joy on her face as she first surveyed the office. The gravity of it all was overwhelming — to have and to hold the fortunes of its staff in her hands. The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic hardship facing small publications at the time must have made the idea of saving the nation’s third-oldest LGBTQ+ newspaper an innumerable task.

“It was utterly terrifying,” recalled Cragin. “When I talk to my friends about the loss, they tell me: ‘I’ve never drank so much, cried so much, or cried so much!’ Picture yourself being plucked from your life and dropped off into unknown surroundings, where nobody knows you nor do you have knowledge of anything, but are expected to step up to a massive undertaking. It was daunting, to say the least. I did not feel like the right person for the job, whatsoever, and, honestly, this thought still looms at times. Nevertheless, once I decided to give it a try, I have literally poured myself into it... although nobody can ever truly fill those George shoes.”

“The smartest person in the room” George knew who controlled the levers of power and he wasn’t afraid to cage them to advance issues of importance to him, the local community, and George’s lifelong life partner. “In 2005, George took me to the inauguration of Governor Christine Gregoire... Every time I heard someone would see George and start gabbing, ‘Hey, George!’ They would come over for big hugs, like they were old friends. Those are people like Christine Gregoire, Gary Locke, and Laurie Jinkins. It was a showing of the love and respect George had cultivated with the powerful of Washington state.”

After his death, many of these politicians posted memorials to George. Former Seattle Mayor Charles Royer said, “George was very kind and helpful to a brand-new mayor of Seattle.” Likewise, former Mayor Greg Nickels stated he was “an important voice in a time of profound change in how the civil rights of the LGBT community were defined and respected.”

Seattle and beyond.” Even former Mayor Ed Murray acknowledged that he was not only “a friend of over 30 years” but “generous with his time and advice.” Seattle Mayor Jeanne D. Durkan, a longtime friend, wrote in a statement that he “literally wrote our history in Seattle at the same time he was living it.”

“He was an advocate in the truest sense, and was never afraid to give you his honest opinion — whether you asked for it or not. He could be blunt, but you never doubted that underneath it all was an enormous heart filled with endless compassion for Seattle and the LGBTQ community,” said Durkan. “I am so grateful to George for everything he did throughout his life to pass on this history to the younger generation. He built community, and he worked tirelessly to make our entire city more just, fair, and equitable.”

Cragin, who lives in the Tri-Cities, had not been prepared to receive such an overwhelming number of condolences from so many notable Washingtonians. “When he would boast about knowing the mayor or the SPD police chief, I took it with a grain of salt,” she said. “The joke was on me, because he actually really did know these people. We even received a letter of condolence from [Sen.] Maria Cantwell. His contributions and accomplishments truly were impactful and had an illuminated through his death.”

As his daughter soon discovered, George was always active and engaged in a wide variety of issues that he believed in. King County Councilmember Jeanne Kohll Welles said she had talked to him “shortly before COVID struck” and that he wanted to talk about homelessness in the LGBTQ community.

“The most surprising, yet satisfying, to hear about all of George’s accomplishments and contributions,” said Cragin. “There is a piece of me that has always worried about my father’s health, his well being, his financial security, and his place in the Seattle community. After he passed, the ocean of commentaries, calls, and news stories ambushed me. I always knew he was important, which he was not afraid to share with anyone.”

A community builder: “He said yes. Every time.”

George seemed to have his fingers in every LGBTQ+ project, initiative, and organization. That included something happening in his beloved Capitol Hill neighborhood.

“Every time I asked George for help with a Gay City event, he said ‘yes.’ Every time,” said Bruce Mueler, a former program manager at Gay City.

Before the EQUALUX. Taste of GSBA event, George called the mayor’s office and asked that the day he declared “EQUALUX Day in Seattle.” He was successful.

George also gave many ads to local nonprofits and was a frequent guest at their events. “Because of his coverage over the years, he became a favorite of the Superior Court of Seattle and other nonprofits and their purposes,” said Gaysha Starr, a contributing writer for the SGN, celebrity drag queen, and former Empress of Seattle.

“I am in debt to him and the SGN, as they were my media sponsor for my campaign for Empress of Seattle in 1999, running my ads and content during the campaign for four weeks and through my reign.”

“We would randomly chat, and he would say, ‘You know, Gaysha, this organization could use your help.’ He was the one who directed me toward working with GLSEN and PFLAG.”

PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) parent Jeanne Hill said George would publish “many of the stories I told about my journey with PFLAG” and SouthSence, such as when she would get arrested at church conferences across the United States. “I held the paper with the title facing outward as I walked, and I will continue to work to preserve and expand Gay rights,” she said.

George was honored in 2013 with a night at Neighbours, which was held in his honor for his lifetime and continued achievements of leadership and community service.

“An activist in the truest sense” Local journalist Gwenn Parkash wrote that George “deserves to be considered in the pantheon of great local civil rights leaders like Rob Santos and Roberto Maestas...”

Starr agreed, stating that he “gave the pages of his paper to help fight causes, such as HIV/AIDS awareness, equal rights for our community, marriage equality, helping elect our members of our community into office, championing small businesses on Capitol Hill, and condemning police brutality.”

On the confines of Eastern Washington, George had an impact. Jeffrey Aaron Robinson said George’s passing was “devastating on a personal level,” especially because of his “unique role in helping to start the Tri-Cities LGBTQ+ movement in the mid-1970s through an activist group he founded, named Oasis.”

“I met George in 1981. He was one of the pillars of the LGBTQ+ community in the Tri-Cities,” said Darin Flatt. “I had the pleasure of working with him until he moved to Seattle. He has been one of the great hearts in our community.”

10 SGN June 25, 2021 Celebrating 47 Years!
George was one of the early organizers of the Gay/Policing Task Force, according to McNamara. “He always attended the meetings. Roger Waters, Sherry Harris, and I believe Brian Stoneham were part of the early leadership.”

Adam King also helped create the SGN Pride edition four years in a row before going on to work for Equal Rights Washington. He said George was an “activist in the truest sense, he never gave up on a good fight.”

“I don’t know what I would have done without his friendship,” King said.

“[Whatever he thought about his approach, he knew what he was after, and he showed up to do the work to get it],” he said.

“This community owes him everything,” King added.

“George had been a veteran and used the paper to push for the repeal of the Clinton-era policy of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.’ He fought for marriage equality and helped craft the messaging around these dry legal arguments to a winning formula. Love is love.

“He supported Gay marriage when I thought it was a losing fight for LGBT rights in the workplace, more realistic,” said Brice Ambrose. “Yes, he was controversial and could be a pain in the ass, but I love the LGBT community of Washington — and indeed, the nation — owe him a debt of gratitude.”

In 1982, George organized a caravan of Seattleites to attend the marriage-equality bill signing in Olympia. “I was standing next to a friend of George, who signed marriage equality into law,” said Alexander Manfred. “Court across the street and countryside took up the challenge themselves, and it started with George.”

George also advocated for medical marijua, and for years he was involved in pushing the issue long before the voters set out on the path to cannabis legalization. “I first met George Baker in the 1990s,” said Allison Bigelow. “We were both advocating and collecting signatures for the Wash. Hemp Initiative Project, an initiative whose goal was legalizing medical, industrial, and recreational cannabis.

George also opposed the Iraq War. Last year, former SGN staffers Bellah Darshen wrote about one encounter at the office: “I remember sitting down with him in the office in Seattle during the time of the Iraq War in 2003 and he was furious. ‘This will turn into a monster,’ he said. He was right, and I loved him for that. I loved that he urged me to go protest, which brought me onto the front lines with Jim McDermott, protesting the Iraq War.”

George was on the Hands Off Washington (HOW) Executive Committee and served as vice chair at one point between 1992 to 1996. In addition, he was a founding member of the United Front Against Fascism.

“Through the SGN, I learned of a community meeting of a group called Citizens for Fairness, which eventually became the Hands Off Washington campaign to fight against discriminatory laws and anti-Gay initiatives, and to work toward gaining our civil rights,” said George Peper. “That is where I first met George in person. George was always very gracious to me, with his big smile and teddy bear hugs. I looked at him and saw a gentle giant, while most saw him as a lion because he could roar, and roar, and roar.”

“George was unashamed and unapologetic in his pursuit of social justice. While I have been just one person in a sea of fights — happy in the background in support of marriage equality and George was a solo, with a megaphone, a pen, and a quick wit. He knew how to hold court and chant to the rafters, if that was what was needed. The SGN was his tour de force, and they are synonymous with one another. An institution for sure, that George.”

A Pride promoter since 1982
George continued his role of organizing meeting for Pride in 1982, according to McNamara. Later, he co-chaired the 1984 Freedom Day Committee — now known as Seattle Out and Proud (SOP), the nonprofit that produces Seattle Pride each year.

“The SGN was completely behind the Pride Parade, organizing the Pride Parade March,” said Rick McKinnon, a personal friend and longtime SGN staffer. “When George got involved, he used the paper to promote the Pride Parade. We called it a ParadeMarch. George described it as the historic compromise that [decision] proved to be a very important decision, because it helped bring the community together to participate in the event.”

Eric Bennett, who had led Seattle Pride, said that although they didn’t agree at times, “he cherished the challenge to my own ideas, and changed many.” He said it was George’s suggestion for Pride to hire Seattle photographer Nate Gowdy, who has since gone on to contribute to publications such as Time magazine, Rolling Stone, and Mother Jones. “Hiring him was one of my best choices,” he said.

In 2011, George received a lifetime achievement award from SOAFA when he was named the grand marshal of the Seattle Pride Parade.

“A force in HIV/AIDS activism George was a founder of the Seattle AIDS Action Committee in 1983, which later became Mobilization Against AIDS. The Seattle AIDS Action Committee organized an annual candlelight vigil at E. Pine and Broadway on Capitol Hill.

He also devoted his paper and its staff to reporting on the new threat human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). In an age before the internet, the SGN was the only source for accurate and culturally relevant information for Seattle’s LGBT+ community.

As hundreds began to die from complications related to AIDS, George used the paper to fight the stigma of a positive diagnosis and to publish the names of those who had been lost. The paper had been the first to publish the story of an individual who had been diagnosed with the virus while the Reagan administration and much of society remained silent on the growing epidemic.

“The SGN, that is the people, the SGN, was around then, the Lesbian Resource Center was around then,” said McKinnon. “How George, in a position to warn the community about AIDS and try to not only educate but break through the denial around it by using the pages of the SGN to talk about AIDS every week — every week. Then, when people started dying, he used the paper to memorialize them.”

Parrish wrote that “George was a force locally in getting services and help for the young men stricken with AIDS.”

Julie Shaffer, a former contributing writer at the SGN, said that he “wanted me to come call him after the stay-at-home to discuss — and [he] involved in his newest idea of an AIDS memorial wall.”

“I would interview individuals about their experiences during the AIDS epidemic,” she said. “He also wanted me to speak at the ceremony.”

Grace Kim wrote about a similar experience. “George was active in the Gay/Queer community till the end,” she said. “He attended community meetings for the Capitol Hill transit-oriented development and AIDS Memorial Pathway.”

The AIDS Memorial Pathway that George championed will be dedicated during a ceremony at the Capitol Hill Light Rail Station at noon this Saturday, June 26. George’s name will appear on a plaque recognizing the individuals and organization that brought the pathway to completion.

March on Washington co-chair George was the regional co-chair for the 1987 and 1993 National Marches on Washington, D.C. He fought for inclusion of the Bisexual and Transgender communities.

“I first met George before I moved to Seattle. I was living in Washington, D.C., in 1987 and was on the paid staff of the Gay Lesbian March on Washington that year,” said Parrish. “I was a paid coordinator for the event that year, and I was living in D.C. George was one of the regional co-chairs of the Pacific Northwest contingent. He and I were also two of the only voices advocating for the inclusion of Bisexuals and Trans people — very much a minority opinion then. But George, with the most all-American, on-deck circle, let’s hear it for the right thing!”

“A fearless advocate for Trans people before it was cool”
I remember talking to George over the phone several years ago. When I told him that I was transitioning from male to female, he spoke to me very warmly: “That’s great. What do you want us to call you?” After his death, others came forward to share similar stories.

“The last time I saw him, I showed him my facial hair,” said Grey Wolfe. “He smiled and said, ‘Good. You look better now. Less stress.' Just those short interactions over the years made me feel as if I was in the presence of a strong soul and champion of the people.”

Charles Susat once wrote that George “was a friend and a fearless advocate for Trans people in a way that was so rare.” Likewise, Brentana Anderson concurred, writing that the former SGN publisher was “a great activist and a good friend and supporter of the Trans community in Seattle.”

A changing SGN
According to McKinnon, George acquired ownership of the paper in 1993, he bought his share from Jim Tully, who was ill with AIDS. James Arnold continued to keep his share of the paper, and the two ran the business as partners. A few years before Arnold died, his share of the paper went to George.

Over the years, the paper relocated four times before coming to rest at the intersection of 23rd and Madison in Seattle. This is where George kindly betrayed him. He had battled diabetes and chronic heart issues before McKinnon found him at his desk. McKinnon has since made her own mark on the Seattle institution, relocating the newspaper to the heart of Capitol Hill at Broadway and E. and Republican Street. She hired a young editor, A.V. Eichenbaum, and a fresh crew of writing talent.

“I hope to keep his legacy alive by keeping the SGN flourishing. Not only do I want to breathe new life into it, I want the blood to start pumping and the adrenaline to course through its veins,” she said. “There are so many opportunities for this paper, which George envisioned throughout all these years. I view his "true" legacy as the people that he left behind who have been touched by these stories, events and his persona over the years.”
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Funk-hop with an inspiring message of dialogue, inclusivity, and unity

by Carter Hemion
SGN Contributing Writer

Seattle's own funk-hop band has made a name for themselves in the community by promoting inclusivity and love. They use their music to facilitate dialogue, having performed at various Seattle-area venues, outdoor concerts, and last summer's protests in the area. Singer and songwriter Marshall Hugh and freestyle rapper I Am Ch'Amel discussed what the Marshall Law Band is, what they stand for, and the music they create together.

Band beginnings
Hugh started making music at Carnegie Mellon University, where he was initially an athlete studying history and public policy. While there, he started rapping at college parties, and then made the commitment to pursue it. When he left school to be a rapper, his parents told him he had to move out, which Hugh says was "a rude awakening, but one that I was so rooted in that I made the decision to move out with my best friend." He started working as a soccer coach, and met a lot of new people, including Murty Thordson, now the band's saxophonist. About a year after meeting, Thordson texted Hugh an invite to jam with his band. The Marshall Law Band began with Hugh, Thordson, Evan Robertson, Josh Richins, Zack Olson, and their first drummer (later replaced with current drummer Matt). After about four months, they began playing Mo' Jam Mondays in Fremont, where Hugh met I Am Ch'Amel for the first time.

"I heard somebody rapping on the microphone for the first time and I said, "Whoa, that person might be better than me!"" said Hugh. "And I looked over... and I saw her... She's been showing up at any Marshall Law Band gig she can, including..."

The band works with other vocalists too, including Nobi and Dan Gregory.

If you're an MC, if you're a person, especially a person of color or person in a marginalized community, you have space on this stage with the Marshall Law Band to say whatever message you got.

Activism and mission
The Marshall Law Band has played at protests, including at what would then develop into CHOP, where they wanted to share a "message of love, unity, and overcoming the chains we have been shackled with over generations and generations... which brought the healing and the reconnection out to pre-CHOP... for that art boom to occur and that love to be in that space."

I Am Ch'Amel committed to joining the Marshall Law Band there. She says people "could find peace and solace in the music," because it was a different form of leadership and a break from some stress. I Am Ch'Amel adds that together they could "bring people together through music and send messages of love and positivity and equality and... we can use words to heal, to unite to express, to change, I don't know how much more peaceful you can get. I don't know how much more of an impact can be made, because music is everywhere."

"The whole mission has been unity and bringing community together," Hugh said.

Hugh hopes that the Marshall Law Band's music inspires listeners to be their best selves, allowing "your soul to heal and your will to fill in hopes that that spills out into your own community."

I Am Ch'Amel says that she uses her platform and lived experiences to inspire people. She uses her voice to remind people that life will get better and bring light to experiences with oppression. Music is her way of connecting with others, and she works to ensure that listeners remember that they are not alone by sharing songs that resonate with them.

As a whole, Hugh's goal is "breaking the Pacfic Northwest portal... and he is proud to be a part of Seattle's music and activism scenes.

Recent projects
Earlier this year, the Marshall Law Band released 12th St. Pine, an album, documentary, and graphic novel. The album came out of the band's heavy emotions following the protests at CHOP. Hugh said, "Protest music has been a part of our spirit."

More recently, the band has been working hard on their newest album, It's Gonna Get Better, on which they collaborated with other artists. It is scheduled for release in the fall. Their new music, including the song Get Better, focuses on finding common ground and facilitating spaces for dialogue.

The band worked on the songs on a suburban to Hawaii, where they experienced more positive energy. The album, said Hugh, will "embrace the spirit of what we're going through but also have that Hawaiian sun and feel to it."

The band recently took played music on a float on the streets of Davaud, where they interacted with people who had Confederate flags and antipathy toward the Black Lives Matter movement. Hugh said to them, "People of all different colors, sexual orientations, and beliefs are here to let you know that we love you, and we're going to unite you, and it's going to get better."

He said that he is proud to bring music about love and unity, and to say Black lives do matter, even in uncomfortable places.

I Am Ch'Amel added that "sometimes we do ourselves a disservice by not being open to that dialogue and not coming together to even speak up for what we feel and how we feel." She added that receptiveness to having dialogue is important, so that everyone can learn from each other's experiences.

Upcoming performances
On June 20 at 8 p.m., the Marshall Law Band will play at Capitol Hill Pride with I Am Ch'Amel and other featured musicians. Hugh hopes that "anytime we're in those spaces, that anyone who looks like us, who may identify like us, or who doesn't and feels like they don't have a group or a safe group of their own [will] come to the front of the stage, especially if you're a performer. Come grab the mic... come ask for a chance to speak, come do something that can allow other Black and Brown people to feel loved and appreciated in that space, and let's change what Pride means from this Pride forward, and let's find some commonalities."

"This is going to be a defining moment in Seattle history, and let's make sure that however it shakes out, there's growth and there's unity and there's healing on the other end, because that's our intention and that will always be our intention."

Hugh is also "really, really excited to announce a headline Neon Performance on July 17. After that, the Marshall Law Band will play at the Neptune Theatre on July 24 with Kassa Overall and Breaks and Swells. Then, on July 25, the band will appear at Woodland Park Zoo's Zoo Tuesdays with the DeVon Lamm Organ Trio. More regularly, the band plays at every week at Freeway Fridays behind the LTD Bar and Grill.

The Marshall Law Band's music can be found on any major streaming service, as well as www.marshalllawband.info, www.youtube.com/user/marshalllawband, and marshalllaw.bandcamp.com. Follow the band on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter @marshalllawband.

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St. Patrick’s LGBTQ+ Circle of parishioners is a welcoming Christ-centered group committed to keeping the vision and hope of St. Patrick’s Church. The Sunday service at 10:30 a.m. is, enhanced by the creative arts, strengthens us for the work of peace and justice in the world and challenges us to live in communion with one another and all of creation.

What follows is a statement on same-sex couples that our LGBTQ+ Engagement and Accompaniment Circle of parishioners considers a breath of fresh air.

Posted by Richard J. Prendergast, Pastor (Father Rich) St. Gertrude Catholic Church, Chicago

Father Rich’s Thoughts on the Vatican Statement on Same-Sex Couples

On several days, following certain statements from the Vatican, I have wondered if there is a secret, hidden office in the basement of St. Pats where a group of bishops meets on a regular basis to come up with outrageous statements just to see who can out-gross their predecessors. It’s only March 18th, just such a day.

At precisely the same time when some bullish bishops and bishops’ conferences were discussing how the Catholic Church could extend an olive branch to same-sex couples, the official statement in charge of “protecting” the faith issued a continuance of the same restrictions and teachings on homosexuality as an unnatural sin and such relationships would be sinful. They don’t exactly call Pope Francis “signed off” on this statement.

In my own imagination, I have a notion that it must have felt like centuries ago when, a few hundred years before, the Salem Witch Trials were successfully conducted with the hanging of some female merchants who were said to be practicing witchcraft, for supposedly practicing witchcraft.

I feel quite certain that the logic used to forbid bisexuals, homosexually active women and men, as well as women and men who have never been married, or two people with no idea what color.

I had hoped would come out of the Vatican by now is a simple statement that would say something like this. “Christ loves everyone, not just hetero people like Me. And I have the Church teaching us.”

Perhaps this latest statement from the Vatican is like the proverbial olive branch? Or is it “the fruit of the loom” that produces a bale of窜 phase; and really only the Church to stop saying things against the Gospel. That, in fact, for many of our younger parishioners and even some of the older, supports the Church’s teaching against the Church’s teaching against same-sex unions, relationships, etc. It is again in danger of divesting the lives of so many same-sex couples throughout the world, providing refuge for the heterosexual and homophobes who are prevailing, walking to punish. And claiming the Vatican/Hadrian stand on homosexuality is "unintelligably disordered” is only a kind of audit of how the human beings that it is hard to believe it comes from a religious person.

The bottom line either we believe the gospel of Jesus Christ that the first and greatest commandment is that we love, or we don’t. We believe, it can’t be imposed in our core, our touchstones, and then to exempt any category of human beings from that love it wrong! It is a and its the groundwork of evil.

We are better than that. And if the Church in these offices don’t know that yet, they should probably re-watch around in their chairs and speak to the people working at the desks around them, many of whom are certainly gay, and ask them what they think. Or perhaps, even easier, they should just look into the mirror and ask that same question.

We are long past the time of wondering if God created homosexual and heteronorms. And way beyond wondering if anyone being “chooses” that sexual identity as some kind of option, like deciding which role of shoes to get today. When the "official" Church claims statements like this, it adds a kind of basic science, covertly leading in any sense to Christian humility and understanding, we choose every other important and important statements from any other area of human endeavor.

I want to thank Patrick Reardon for his thoughtful and reflective column in the Chicago Tribune on Monday. You’re wrong, Pope Francis. And yes, gay couples [https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/pope-francis-homosexuality-reaction-20210305.html] should be included in our dyestory. And yes and also Fr. Arthur Murphy for his letter to the editor on Tuesday.

It is past time for the Church to stop talking about matters of sexual orientation until it gets its own house in order, stop pretending it knows everything, stop overcoming matters sexual and re-discover the truth of the gospel. That is only becoming a laughstock, lacking relevance in the daily lives of countless people looking for healthy direction and spirituality.
All are welcome at St. Patrick Church

by Jan Thomas
St. Patrick Catholic Church
LGBTQ Accompaniment Circle

I am a straight woman. Having grown up in a Catholic environment in the ‘50s and ‘60s, all relationships and all marriages I knew about were straight. I never knew there was any other kind.

It was only in adulthood that I came across anti-homosexual literature from Catholic and other Christian sources. This literature expressed that men and women were made by God to be attracted to the opposite sex, and not to the same sex. So, it must be sinful for a person to choose a relationship like that.

My change of heart occurred one day in the mid-’80s. I was sitting alone in a building near the Catholic cathedral in Spokane. But someone unexpected came in. He was the director of youth ministries for the Spokane archdiocese — at least, he had been. He had recently resigned, because he had come out as Gay.

And he talked to me. Simply and kindly, he told me that he did not choose to be Gay, that he had been Gay from birth. I believed him. From that point on I understood that same-sex attraction was inborn and natural. Since then, forming friendships with many Gay people has cemented my acceptance and support for them.

At St. Patrick Church, we openly welcome Gay and Trans people. Many of us witnessed the wedding of two female parishioners. Not long ago we also took part in learning sessions based on Fr. James Martin’s book, Building a Bridge. Gay people shared their testimonies, and straight people shared their own experiences.

It is important for me to worship where all are accepted. I am grateful to the people of St. Pat’s, both straight and Gay, for building a community where all are free to be who God created them to be.

St. Patrick Catholic Church is at 2702 Broadway Ave. E. in Seattle, at E. Edgar, in Eastlake. All are welcome on Sundays at 10:30 in person for Mass. More information at www.sipatrickseattle.org.
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This partnership is with Best Starts for Kids, Transfamilies and The Arc of King County.

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LOOKING FOR ANOTHER CHANCE TO BE INVOLVED?
Swedish is currently seeking current and former patients interested in joining the LGBTQIA+ patient advisory/listening sessions. For more information and to sign up, please contact Peter.Mann-king@swedish.org.

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