

ISSUE 26
VOLUME 49
FRIDAY
JUNE 25, 2021



SGN

CELEBRATING
47 YEARS
IN
PRINT

SEATTLE'S LGBTQIA+ NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY SINCE 1974

PROUD OF THE PAST
PRIDE
2021
EMBRACING THE FUTURE

GEORGE BAKAN

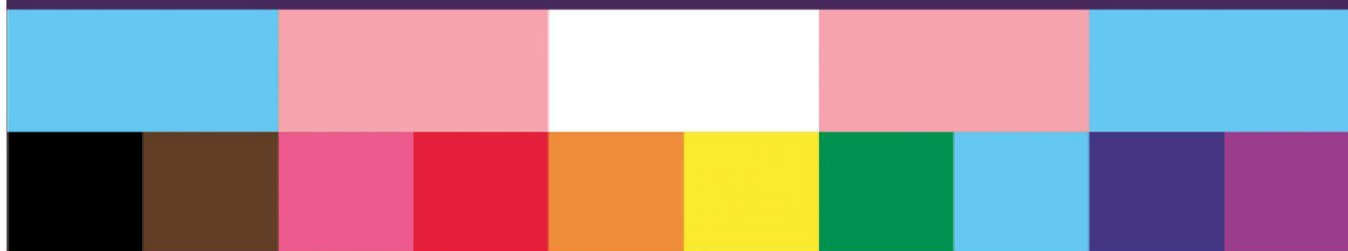
A giant who used the *SGN* to make Queer history

by Renee Raketty
SGN Contributing Writer

Recently, I had the unenviable 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

PRIDE IS STILL PROTEST.



FLIGHTS & RIGHTS: PRIDE JUNE 29 AT 5PM, ONLINE

A conversation with Jaelynn Scott (Lavender Rights Project), Stacy Bass-Walden (Alki Beach Pride), and ACLU-WA staff attorney Lisa Nowlin. Moderated by Michele Storms, executive director. aclu-wa.org/events



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July 10

Virtual Pride Parade • Points of Pride • The Mix Pride Festivities
Virtual Stride with Pride • Immanuel Presbyterian Church Pride Event

July 10-11

Pride Celebration at the Zoo • Pride Celebration at NW Trek

July 11

LGBTQ+ Interfaith Service

Other Events

Pierce County Proclamation • Tacoma City Council Proclamation
Pride Flag Raising at the Tacoma Dome

For event details and ticket requirements
Visit **TacomaPride.org**

or follow us on social media
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PRIDE IN ACTION

A letter from the editor



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



Re-elect Teresa Mosqueda to Seattle City Council Position 8



**TERESA
MOSQUEDA**
for Seattle City Council Pos. 8

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.

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"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.**"

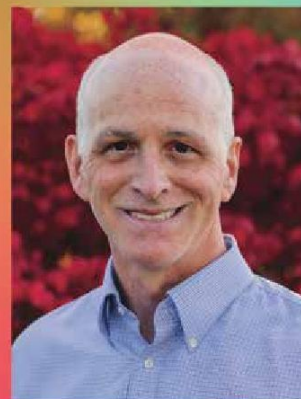
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"All Americans must be given equal rights and opportunities, regardless of who they love or how they identify."

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** ★

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FIGHTING FOR OUR PROGRESSIVE VALUES

WE ARE SGN

Meet the team bringing you
the full spectrum of
LGBTQIA+ news each week

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

Studio portrait by Nate Gowdy



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 paraeducator 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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SMOKER**

TM

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HIV did.**

Brian, age 45, California

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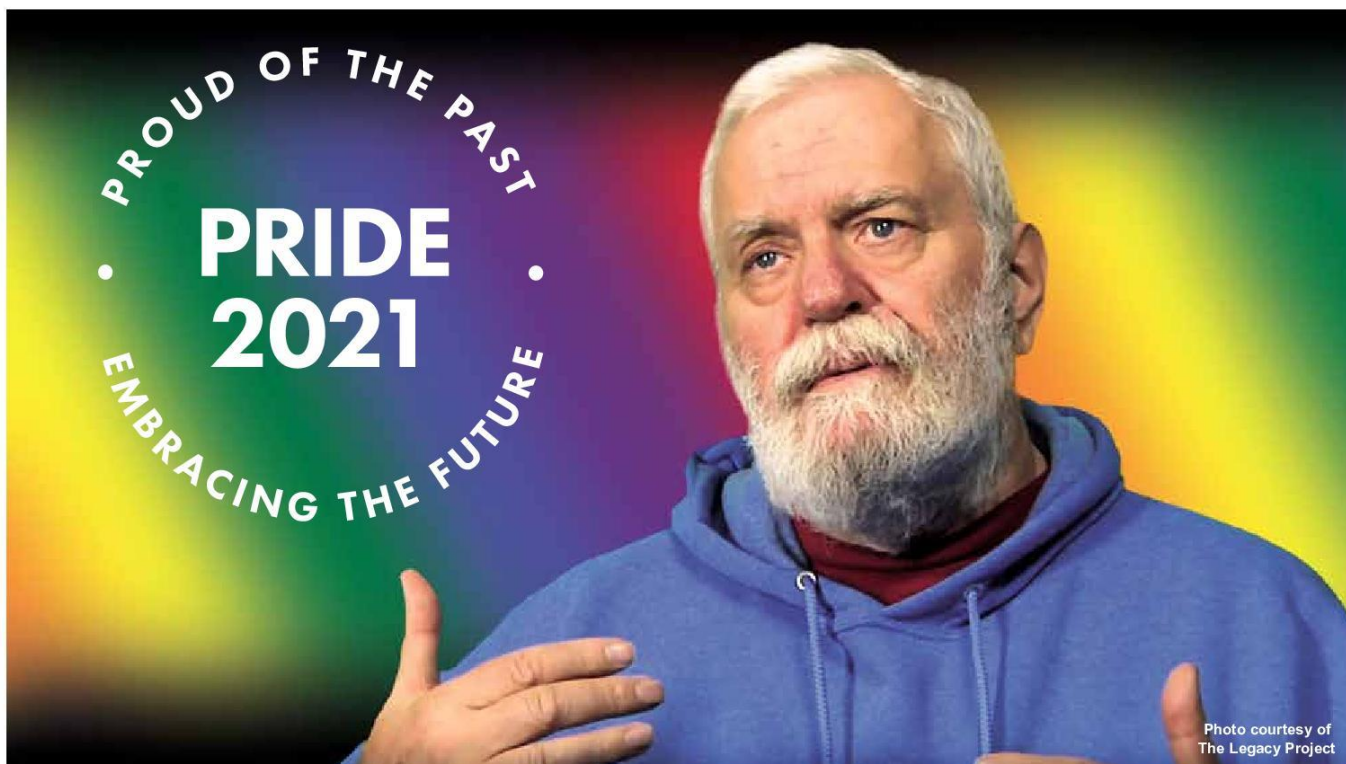


Photo courtesy of
 The Legacy Project

GEORGE BAKAN

continued from cover

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

It's hard to believe that it's been a year since George's passing on June 7, 2020. He literally died at his desk — doing what he does best. He had been making calls to rally support for an LGBTQIA+ 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 back to 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 a 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'm forever grateful."

Beau Burriola, a former *SGN* columnist, added that "George saw and nurtured in me qualities I didn't know I had" and "helped me find my voice."

"He wasn't just an editor, an activist, or 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 worry on her face as she first surveyed the office. The gravity of it all was overwhelming... to grieve for her father and to hold the fortunes of its staff in her hands. The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic hardship facing print publications at the time must have made the idea of saving the nation's third oldest LGBTQIA+ newspaper an insurmountable task.

"It was utterly terrifying," recalled Cragin. "When I talk to my friends about the last year, I tell them: 'I've never drank so much, cussed 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 cajole them to advance issues of importance to him, the paper and the LGBTQIA+ community. As a former managing editor, I could remember having to smooth things over from time to time with local community organizations and leaders after George had called to offer a piece of his mind. However, most of them knew that a call with George was part of the job and were happy to do it.

"George was always the smartest person in the room... even when that room was filled with senators and governors and chiefs of police," said Mike McNamara, a former *SGN* staffer and George's longtime life partner. "In 2005, George took me to the inauguration of Gov. Christine Gregoire... Every two minutes someone would see George and start gushing. 'Hey, George!' They would come over for big hugs, like they were old dear friends. These are people like Christine Gregoire, Gary Locke, and Laurie Jenkins. 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 remembrances 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 in

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 Jenny 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 brash, 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 were 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 Kohl-Welles said she had talked to him "shortly before COVID struck" and that he "wanted to talk about homelessness in the LGBTQ community."

"It felt 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: his 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 LGBTQIA+ project, initiative, and organization. That included anything 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 Maeder, 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 be declared "EQUALUX Day in Seattle." He was successful.

George also gave away many ads to local nonprofits and was a frequent guest at their events. "Because of his coverage over the years, people also knew about the Imperial 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 Jeaneane Hill said George would publish "many of the stories I told about my journey with PFLAG" and Souffource, 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 recognized 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 Geov Parrish wrote that George "deserves to be considered in the pantheon of great local civil rights leaders like Bob 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 out members of our community into office, championing small businesses on Capitol Hill, and condemning police brutality."

Even in 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 LGBTQIA+ 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 Dorie 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."



George at the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation — Photo courtesy of Curt Pavola



Photo by Nate Gowdy

George was one of the early organizers of the Gays/Police Task Force, according to McNamara. “He always attended the meetings. Roger Winters, Sherry Harris, and I believe Jim Holm [were] involved in the Dorian Group,” he said. “That group started as a liaison between the LGBTQIA+ community and the police who were harassing gay men in Volunteer Park.”

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

“[W]hatever you 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.”

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 away from dry legal arguments to a winning formula: Love is love.

“He supported Gay marriage when I thought fighting for LGBT protections in the workplace was more realistic,” said Bruce Amsbary. “Yes, he was controversial and could be a pain in the ass, but I and the LGBT community of Washington — and indeed, the nation — owe him a debt of gratitude.”

In 2012, George organized a caravan of Seattleites to attend the marriage-equality bill signing in Olympia. “I was standing next to George when Gov. Chris Gregoire signed marriage equality into law,” said Alexander Manila. “Courts across the state and country took up the challenge themselves, and it started with George.”

George also advocated for medical marijuana and was among those who pushed the issue long before the voters set out on the path to cannabis legalization. “I first met George Bakan in the 1990s,” said Allison Bigelow. “We were both advocating and collecting signatures for WHIP [the Washington Hemp Initiative Project], an initiative whose goal was legalizing medical, industrial, and recreational cannabis.”

George also opposed the Iraq War. Last year, former *SGN* staffer Bellial Darshan 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 tinderbox,’ 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

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

civil rights,” said George Pieper. “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 unabashed and unrelenting in his pursuit of social justice. While I have been just one person in a sea of fighters happy in the background working on nuance and collaboration, George was old-school, with a megaphone, a pen, and a quick wit. He knew how to hold court and shout 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 was George.”

A Pride promoter since 1982

George attended his first 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 (SOAP), 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 Parade/March. 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, concluded 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 fitting tribute from SOAP, 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 LGBTQIA+ 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 Dorian Group, of course, was around then, the Lesbian Resource Center was around then,” said McKinnon. “However, George was 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 call him after the stay-at-home to discuss ... and [to be] 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 organizations 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, DC, in 1987 and was on the paid staff of the Gay/Lesbian March on Washington that year,” said Parrish. “I was in charge of coordinating housing for all the people who came in from out of town. The march drew 750,000 people, so it was a huge logistical job, and 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... By 1993, for the next big national march, he’d helped succeed in getting Bisexuals officially included.”

“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 me 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 before it was cool.” Likewise, Breanna 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 two stages. 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 near the intersection of 23rd and Madison in Seattle. This is where George’s body finally betrayed him. He had battled diabetes and chronic heart issues before McKinnon found him at his desk.

Cragin has since made her own mark on the Seattle institution, relocating the newspaper to the heart of Capitol Hill at Broadway E. and E. Republican Street. She hired a young editor, A.V. Eichenbaum, and a fresh crew of writing talent.

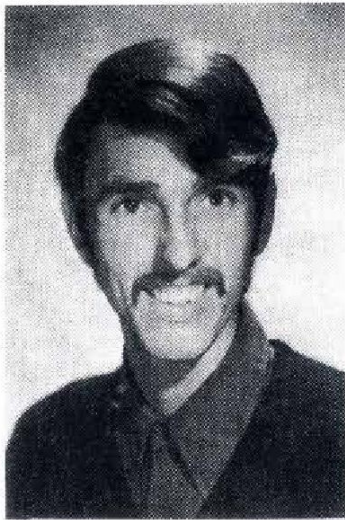
“I hope to keep his legacy alive by keeping the *SGN* breathing. Not only do I want to breathe new life into it, I want the blood to start pumping and the adrenaline to course through its veins,” she said. “There are so many opportunities for this paper, which George envisioned throughout all these years. 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.”

PRIDE 2021

Seattle Gay History

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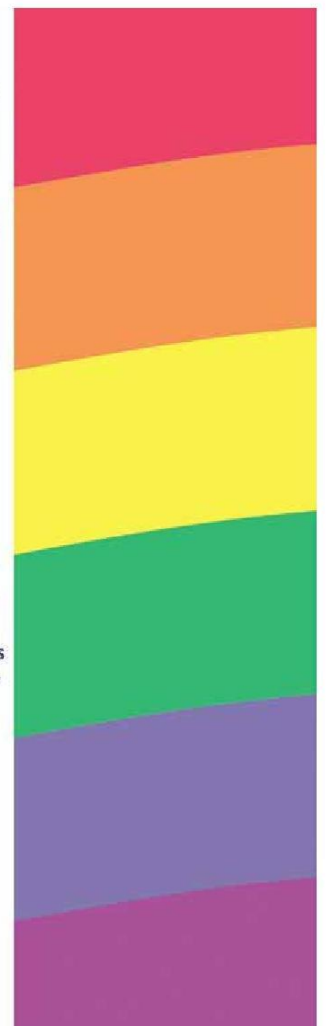
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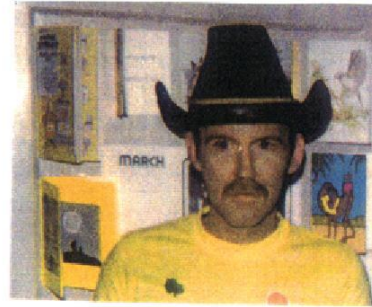


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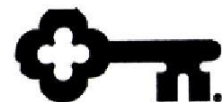
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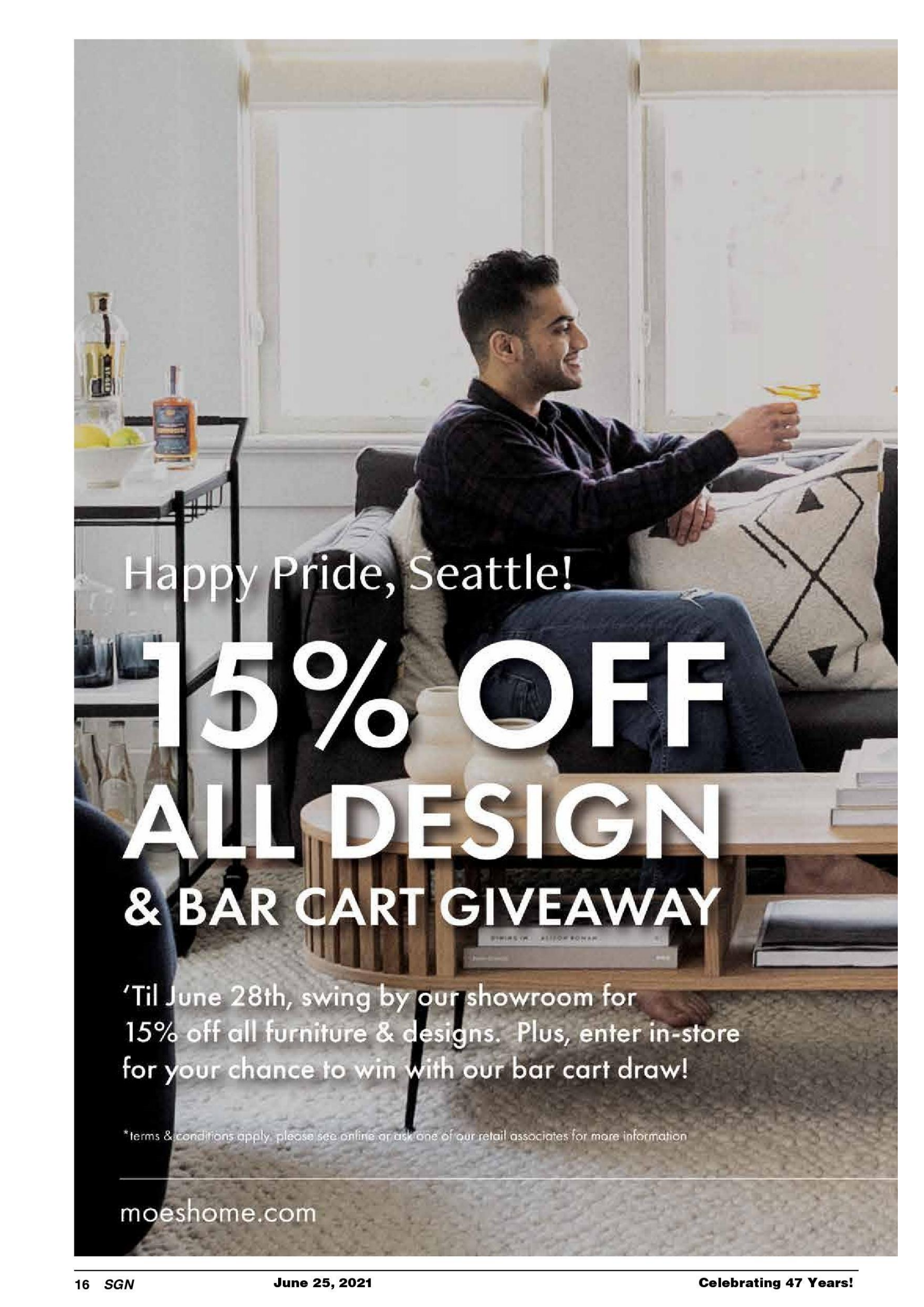
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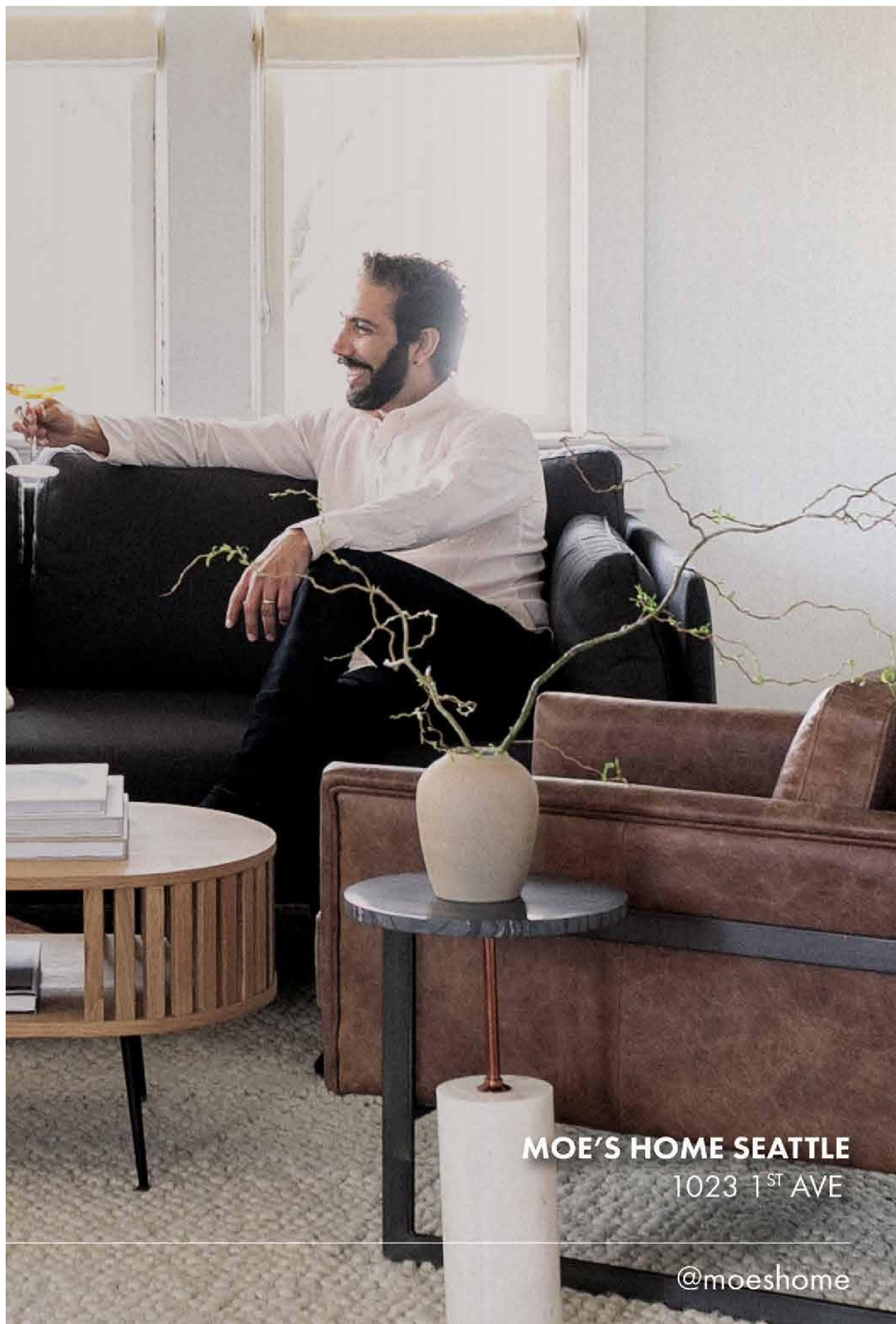
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MARSHALL LAW BAND



Photos courtesy of the artists

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 that a Singer and songwriter Marshall Hugh and freestyle rapper I Am ChAmel discussed who 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 Marty 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 ChAmel 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...

selling out the Boom Boom Room with us."

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 reenergization out to pre-CHOP [...] for that art boom to occur and that love to be in that space."

I Am ChAmel 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 ChAmel 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 well to fill in hopes that that spills out into your own community."

I Am ChAmel says that she uses her platform and lived experiences to inspire people. She uses her voice 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 open the Pacific 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 & 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 sabbatical to Hawaii, where they experienced more positive energy. The album, said Hugh, will "encapsulate 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 Duvall, 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 ChAmel 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 hav-

ing dialogue is important, so that everyone can learn from each other's experiences.

Upcoming performances

On June 26 at 8 p.m., the Marshall Law Band will play at Capitol Hill Pride with I Am ChAmel 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 Neumos 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 Tunes with the Delvon Lamarr Organ Trio.

More regularly, the band plays at every week at Fremont 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/c/marshalllawband, and marshalllaw.bandcamp.com. Follow the band on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter @marshalllawband.



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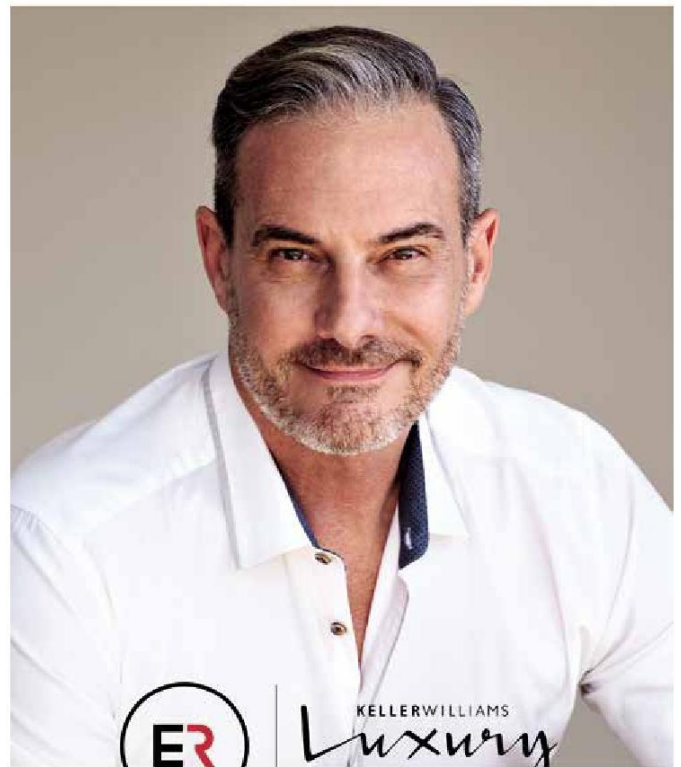
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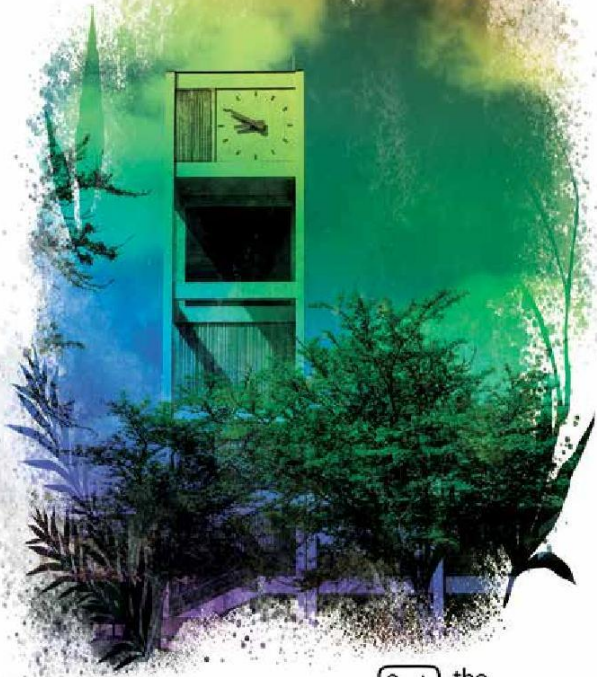
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St. Patrick's LGBTQ Circle of parishioners is a welcoming Christ-centered group committed to keeping alive the vision and hope of Vatican II at St. Patrick's Church. The Sunday service at 10:30 a.m. is, enhanced by the creative arts, strengthens us 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

RICHARD J. PRENDERGAST
ST. GERTRUDE CATHOLIC CHURCH, CHICAGO

On certain days, following certain statements from the Vatican, I have wondered if there is a secret, hidden office in the basement of St. Peter's where a group of bishops meets on a regular basis to come up with outrageous statements just to see how far they can push the "ridiculous" envelope on certain hot-button issues. Monday, March 15th, was just such a day.

At precisely the same time when some individual bishops and bishops' conferences were discussing how the Catholic Church could extend an outreach to human beings in same-sex relationships, the official department in charge of "protecting" the faith issued a statement saying blessing such unions cannot now or ever be possible because human beings in homosexual relationships are intrinsically disordered and such relationships would be sinful. They also made clear that Pope Francis "signed off" on this statement.

In my own imagination, I now know what it must have felt like centuries ago when, a few hundred miles from here, the Salem Witch Trials were successfully concluded with the burning of some female members of the community for, supposedly, practicing witchcraft.

I feel quite certain that the logic used to forbid blessing same-sex relationships is about as sound as forbidding two left-handed people from getting married, or two people with mixed eye color.

What I had hoped would come out of the Vatican by now is a simple statement that would say something along the lines of, "Wow! We thought we had a full, complete, comprehensive understanding of how human beings operate and how human beings interact as sexual creatures.

Boy, were we reaching way beyond our competence! Every time we think we've got it nailed down, something new pops up and we realize we've barely begun to understand just how complex and complicated humanity is. It's in just such moments like this that we are grateful that the Son of God made the extraordinary sacrifice to become a human being and live a life exactly the same as ours to show us how we can live and how important love is to every aspect of creation."

But such a statement would require a certain level of humility. And when it comes to speaking on moral issues, church leaders have long given the impression they have exclusive access to the mind of God on what's right and what's wrong.

To be sure, the Catholic Church has an extraordinary history of moral teaching. And part of what is most extraordinary about it has been its ability to continue evolving as new evidence comes forward.

But, quite frankly, it has also had such an overwhelming obsession with matters of sexuality that it gives the impression that absolutely nothing in all of the created universe can possibly come close to the good and bad of sexuality. Every sin in sexual matters is grave! (I'm not making this up. This was precisely the Church's teaching on sexual morality - and is still believed by many of our church leaders today.)

I don't know who first coined the expression, "Love is love is love", but it seems to best summarize what Jesus was teaching us.

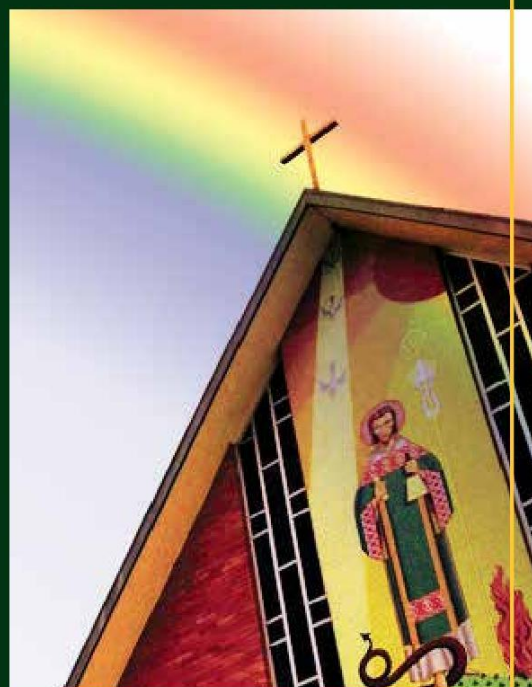
Perhaps this latest statement bothered me more than some of the other pronouncements that have come out of various departments over the years because recently I received a "save the date" card for my niece's wedding - to her female partner. The card prompted me to send a note to Cardinal Coughlin, which included a paragraph explaining I had received the "save the date" card and would really like the Church to stop saying things against couples like this. That, in fact, for many of our younger people, is exactly why they have abandoned the Church.

It is because the Church first abandoned them. And contrary to the professed gospel of love, what they actually experience is profound prejudice, which provides cover for hateful members of society to verbally and physically abuse certain groups of human beings, sometimes even killing them, because they don't fit into the accepted norm.

Sometimes my friends ask me why I stay a priest in this Church. I do because I am also acutely aware of the good the Catholic Church provides all over the world, the teachings on social justice, the environment/creation, the role of workers, etc. that has provided such positive groundwork for systemic change here in this country and in so many places throughout the world. Unfortunately, the people who actually live and witness those teachings are themselves often treated as second-class citizens. Women religious have a far better reputation for living the gospel than any random group of priests and bishops. When a well-respected columnist, Nicholas Kristoff of the New York Times, writes about his travels to the far reaches of the globe, going to places of enormous poverty and injustice, who does he almost always run into? Bishops and priests? No. He runs into women religious spending their lives in service, working with the local population, trying to help people help themselves survive and move beyond their current circumstances.

So, to put it mildly, the Church is not perfect - and neither are any of its members. No big surprise there. And it is wonderful we still canonize imperfect human beings. Let's also reflect that in over 2,000 years, the Church has also had the wisdom - even though it claims the "power of the keys" - to only ever proclaim certain people were definitely in heaven. So far, it has never made a proclamation that anyone is in hell. Bravo! That shows some sign of wisdom and humility.

When the Church is this myopic, it is not only disagreeable, it is life-threatening. Every time the Church makes any kind of official statement against



same-sex unions, relationships, etc., it once again places in danger the lives of every same-sex couple throughout the world, providing refuge for the hate-mongers and homophobes who are prowling, waiting to pounce. That damning line of then-Cardinal Ratzinger about homosexuals being "intrinsically disordered" is such a hateful dismissal of all gay 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 command is that we love, or we don't believe it. But to claim it is our core, our touchstone, and then to exempt any category of human beings from that love is wrong: it is a lie and it is the groundwork of evil.

We are better than that. And if the bishops in those offices don't know that yet, they should probably swivel 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 human beings. And way beyond wondering if

any human being "chooses" their sexual identity as some kind of option, like deciding which pair of shoes to put on today. When the "official" Church issues statements like this, lacking in basic science, severely lacking in any sense of Christian humility and understanding, we cheapen every other important and positive statement in every 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, about gay couples [<https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/commentary/ct-opinion-pope-francis-homosexuality-reardon-20210315-skdsyrb6bfbrieblmfhh26yxoq-story.html>] 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 sexual until it gets its own house in order, stop pretending it knows everything, stop obsessing over matters sexual and re-discover the truth of the gospel. That or risk becoming a laughingstock, lacking relevance in the daily lives of countless people looking for healthy direction and spirituality.



ST. PATRICK CHURCH

The LGBTQ+ Engagement and Accompaniment Circle of St Patrick Parishioners
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This notice was paid by the St. Patrick LGBTQ+ Engagement and Accompaniment Circle of Parishioners, and several other Parishioners, who invite LGBTQ returning Catholics and others to join us in person or online.

For more information about St. Patrick's LGBTQ Circle of parishioners contact John Dunn - dunn570@aol.com



Photo courtesy of
St. Patrick's Catholic Church

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 waiting 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 peo-

ple 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.stpatrickseattle.org.

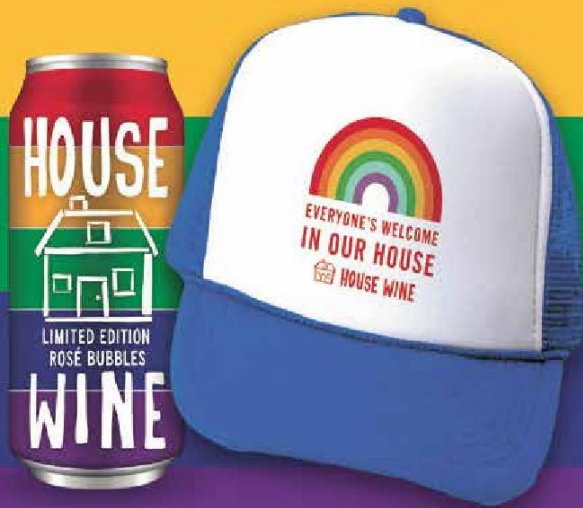


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