

OUT/WEST

December 2006/January 2007

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION FROM



2006 Year in Review

Western Equality has had an amazing year.

- In **January**, we brought together our members, community leaders, and allies to form the **Grand Valley Marriage Equality Council** whose mission is to advocate for and inform local citizens about marriage equality for gays and lesbians. The Council worked diligently through the year on behalf of the local LGBT community—building coalitions of supporters, holding press conferences, speaking to the media, and hosting forums.
- In **February**, we committed to developing **events and activities for small, niche groups** and followed-through by creating everything from book clubs to drag shows, bowling nights to dances, wine dinners to women’s chocolate-fantasy gatherings.
- In **March**, we continued our commitment to creating a safer community by partnering with the Colorado Anti-Violence Program to bring **bias-crimes training to the entire staff of Mesa County Sheriffs Department**. With financial assistance from the Office for Victims of Crime Technical Training and Assistance Program in Washington, D.C., the training was mandatory for all personnel of Mesa County Sheriff’s Department and helped equip personnel with the skills and knowledge to determine whether anti-gay bias

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Western Equality’s Mission:

Western Equality of Grand Junction strives to create a fair community and secure equal rights for all regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression.

OutWest

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Contributors: Jeff Basinger, Camille Cary, Mike Mansheim, Shari Daly-Miller, Jerry Shelton

Opinions expressed in commentary/op-ed articles are those of the author and may not represent the opinion of Western Equality's board of directors or its members.

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Grand Junction, CO 81501
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WESTERN EQUALITY

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday-Friday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: Noon - 4 p.m.

OFFICE LOCATION

523-1/2 Main Street, #11
Between 5th and 6th streets, on the 2nd floor of the historic Margery Building in downtown Grand Junction

PHONE

970-242-8949

E-MAIL

info@westernequality.org

WEBSITE

www.westernequality.org

Join Western Equality members and board of directors at our monthly potluck, the first Thursday of each month at our downtown Grand Junction office at 6 p.m. For a list of other events, please visit our website at www.westernequality.org.

Support Western Equality — Become a member today!

Member Information:

Name _____

Address _____ Apt _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Age group: __ Under 18 __ 18-25 __ 26-30
 __ 30-40 __ 40-50 __ 50-60 __ 60+

Membership Type:

New Renewal

\$15 single membership

\$20 couple/family membership

\$10 student membership

Additional donation of \$ _____

I want to help! Please contact me!

I'd like to receive information from and about Western Equality via e-mail.

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Treasurer
Western Equality
PO Box 3335
Grand Junction, CO 81502

—continued from page one

is at play in situations they encounter as well as to provide personnel with skills and knowledge to apply anti-gay bias crimes penalties. We also presented the 50th showing of ***Journey to a Hate Free Millennium***, continuing our local work to Presentations continue, including at Grand Mesa Youth Services Center and the Tree House/Teen Bistro.

- In **April**, we collaborated with the Mesa State PRIDE Club and PFLAG to bring **comedian Peterson Toscano** to town to perform his hilarious one-man show: “Doin’ Time in the Homo No Mo Half-Way House”. Toscano’s act brought to light the flawed thinking behind reparative therapy, reaffirmed that GLBT people are also persons of faith, and encouraged us to continue building a strong queer community in western Colorado.
- In **May**, we continued into the fourth year of **producing Family, Friends, and Neighbors**, a monthly radio program focused on education and advocacy for GLBT’ers in western Colorado. The program airs the third Monday of each month on KAFM 88.1FM Community Radio.
- In **June**, we expanded our **annual Pride events** to include an alcohol-free dance, and continued the tradition of hosting a picnic at Hawthorne Park. And, for the third year in a row, we had a physical presence in the Denver PrideFest with our Western Equality float.
- In **July**, we began work with JVA Consulting on a two-year project to strengthen and grow the organization, **ensuring Western Equality will be viable and sustainable in the long-run**. Thanks to continued support from the Gill Foundation, our work with JVA will continue in 2007.
- In **August**, our name appeared in lights over First street when we moved **OutFest to Two Rivers Convention Center** and hosted our largest and most successful fundraising event to date (not to mention having a blast!)
- In **September**, we teamed with the Grand Valley Marriage Equality Council, the Grand Valley Interfaith Network, First Congregational Church, Global Heart Spiritual Center, MSC PRIDE Club, and numerous individual sponsors to bring the **photo exhibit “Love Makes a Family”** to Grand Junction and develop awareness of our community and create discussion about domestic partnerships.
- In **October**, we began planning to bring health programming to the gay community in western Colorado, and welcomed a new AmeriCorps staff member to our organization.
- In **November**, we were saddened by the failure of Referendum I and passage of Amendment 43, celebrated fair-minded individuals being elected to office locally and nationally, and **re-committed ourselves to continuing the fight for fairness and equality**.

In **December**, we’ll invoice the Gill Foundation for our 2006 challenge grant. To date we’ve raised over \$2000 toward our goal of \$3500 in new and increased memberships.

If you’ve already renewed your membership for 2007, thank you! If you haven’t, help us bridge the gap by renewing now and your membership will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Gill Foundation.

To renew your membership, complete the form on page two and return to us today.

Thank you for your continued support and we wish you a happy, healthy 2007.

To learn more about Western Equality, visit our website at **www.westernequality.org** or call the office at **970-242-8949**.

Update from AmeriCorps Staff

A lot has transpired since my last report. I attended the AmeriCorps Colorado Conference at Estes Park in October. I am looking to find ways to apply the benefit I received from two workshops. One of the workshops was titled, "Building Resiliency and Empowerment in Mentees." The other workshop was, "Project Development." I foresee myself drawing upon useful tips about communicating with youth from the first workshop to enrich the relationship I need to build with members of Mesa State Pride and the youth at The Tree House.

The second workshop is a great guide for the new tobacco programming WE is entering into. The timing of receiving information from this workshop after having attended the GLBT Tobacco Cessation Conference in September serves to make suggestions such as partnering with CSO's (Community Service Organizations) stand out as a goal for WE. Partnering with CPP (Colorado Prevention Partners) and TEPP (Tobacco Education Prevention Program) will help WE see what might be missing and strengthen community efforts through the work our future tobacco manager can accomplish. This is an exciting time for Western Equality as WE has transitioned into collaboration with The GLBT Center in Denver

By the time you receive this newsletter in December, "Journey to a Hate-Free Millennium" will have had five showings at least. On October 26th, it was presented at Mesa State College with about thirty-five people in attendance. An interesting panel and audience discussion followed the showing. I closed the presentation by playing a song on my guitar titled, "Hate, Where Does it Come From?"

Another tool I am using to reach out to our gay youth is a Power Point presentation I am putting together about Suicide in Our Gay Youth Population. After researching this issue, it is vital that WE ensures our community is aware of the high rate of suicide in our gay youth population due to society's alienation of these youth, who literally are our future. So, I hope to educate our community about this and bring about a positive, compassionate response of change. Change that will work to transform the mind-set of "homosexuality is deviant" to "homosexuality is biologically supported." Subsequently, this realization should bring a shocking awareness that our gay youth are precious to the future of any community and harassment or any gesture that demeans gay youth cannot be tolerated.

Hopefully, this report gives a solid idea to all of you where I stand and the destiny I envision for the work entrusted to me.

Happy Holidays!
Camille Cary, AmeriCorps Staff

You can reach Camille via e-mail at info@westernequality.org or by calling the Western Equality office at 970-242-8949.

Q: Want to gain valuable experience and help a great cause?

A: Become a Western Equality volunteer!

It's a great way to meet people, make friendships, gain experience, and help support Western Equality in achieving our mission.

To learn about volunteer opportunities, call Camille Cary at 970-242-8949, e-mail info@westernequality.org, or join us during our monthly potlucks to learn about what's happening and how you can help!

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Getting to know

you

an *OutWest* feature column dedicated to
introducing you to fellow Western Equality members

Jerry Shelton of Fruita, Colorado

Let me start by introducing myself. I am Jerry Shelton. I moved to the Grand Valley in April 2006 from Fresno, California with my 19-year-old son (son is now 20), my partner Randy, my ex-partner Aaron, and our giant clouder of 15 (that is the way that you address a herd) of cats. My son, Aaron, the cats, and I now reside in Fruita. Randy resides in Clifton.

I am a retired RN. That was my career for almost thirty-five years. I worked both in Critical Care and Home Health nursing. I had to retire due to health problems. I have multiple sclerosis. Never in all of my dreams did I imagine I would wind up being one of my own patients. My last job took me to Washington D.C. where I lived for 5 years. I miss the big city. I lived 2 blocks from the Pentagon when it was hit on 9/11. We watched it burn for three days from our condo balcony window before they got the fire under control.

I enjoy cooking, crafts and gardening. My favorite holiday is Halloween. I have more Halloween decorations than most people have Christmas decorations. I like to go all out and really decorate the yard. I cannot wait until we get the house built just outside of Fruita. We have just over an acre of land that we are planning on building on. We just need to decide on a house plan. Aaron and I had a large house in California and it has been a big adjustment to such a small place here. Everything is in eight storage units. Trying to find things sometimes is next to impossible.

I looked for a gay organization to get involved with her in the area soon after the move. I found Western Equality. I began attending the monthly meetings and made many new people. I found the group to be very involved in the community and a great place for my time and energy. I was invited to become a member on the board after about a year. A word to the wise if you want to make any changes in this community come and join in and speak your mind. They take your ideas and make you in charge of the new ideas so if you want something done be prepared to make it come to pass.

Soon after becoming a part of the board more new members were added and positions changed. I volunteered to become treasurer. So I will be asking for you help from time to time. This is a very necessary thing to do. We need the money to put on the events and expand services. Western Equality is moving into some really big things. Look for a lot of new small events, services and programs. I am very excited to be a part of this. I am very happy to have moved to this area.

One more thing that you need to know about me is that I am one of those other people. I am one of the evil others. Yes I am a Republican. There I said it and it is now in print. I am really just a conservative. I vote my conscience. I support GLBT issues. I just also believe that no one should have special rights. It is good for all or good for none.

I also would really like to get a Bear club started on the western slope so if anyone is interested feel free to contact me at ivnurseva@aol.com.

ManREACH is Building Connections and Community for Gay/Bi Men in Rural Colorado

The vision of Colorado ManREACH (Rural Education in Action for Community Health) is to build heart-centered connections and community for gay/bi men in rural Colorado.

Colorado ManREACH reflects the following values:

- We are a grass roots and peer-based community.
- We are inter-generational and cross-cultural.
- We support integrating healthy transformations in ourselves, and our community.
- We are open, respectful and honoring in a safe environment.
- We model stewardship and mentorship.
- We promote health, responsibility and ownership in a gay-affirming community.
- We believe in sexuality as a healthy expression of intimacy.
- We support deeper connections among men, unaltered by drugs and alcohol.

Grand Valley ManREACH activities include:

- Local social events planned and hosted by the local Core Group
- M-Groups that are a special, three-hour educational and interactive opportunity to meet other men interested in similar things, and
- Statewide gatherings hosted in safe, private locations around the state several times a year.

Grand Valley ManREACH Calendar!

Activities (right) are paid for and hosted by the Core Group of the Grand Valley ManREACH for gay and bisexual men. The activities are fun, safe, sober and a great way to meet other men locally!



Upcoming Events for Gay/Bi Men

Presented by
Grand Valley ManREACH

Bowling at GJ Scores -

December 13, 6-8 pm.
2445 F 3/8 Road, ask for the ManREACH group at the front desk.

**Ice Show at the
Glacier Ice Arena**

December 17, 2:30 pm.
\$10/person and ManREACH will host 10 men. Call Paul at 970-361-1282 to RSVP.

Bowling at GJ Scores

January 10, 6-8 pm.
2445 F 3/8 Road, ask for the ManREACH group at the front desk.

**Soak at Orvis Hot
Springs in Ridgeway**

January 21, noon.
Car-pooling available from Grand Junction, 9am, 805 Main Street.

Wondering who and what the Grand Valley ManREACH program for gay and bisexual men is?

Contact: Bob, 970-216-9734, robrich39@yahoo.com or Paul, 970-361-1282, fpj1963@yahoo.com

Go ahead. Get involved.

Looking for Something to Do? We Have a Few Suggestions...

Western Equality presents:

Women's Chocolate Fantasy Night

Friday, December 15th
7:00-9:00pm

At the Western Equality Office
Bring your favorite chocolate to
share or just come as you are.
Plenty of chocolate will be provided!
Anyone who self-identifies as a
woman is welcome at this event!

GLBT Night at the Liquid Lounge

Friday, December 15th
9:00pm- close

Mesa Theater and Club
538 Main Street in Grand Junction
DJ Phoenix rocks the house
and only a \$2 cover!

Ice Show at the Glacier Ice Arena "Le Reveil du Veilleur"

Sunday, December 17th 2:30pm
\$10 each Only 12 tickets available!
RSVP to the WE Office

GLBT Wine and Dine Group

We will meet at a local Fine Dining
Establishment
Thursday, December 27th at 6:30pm
MUST RSVP to WE Office by
December 20th

Ice Skating at the Glacier Ice Arena

Sunday January 7th
12:15- 4:15pm
\$6.00 Entry \$2.50 Skate Rental
All Ages, GLBT Families and Adults

To RSVP for any of these events e-mail info@westernequality.org
or call the Western Equality office at 970-242-8949.

Plus, don't miss...

The **PFLAG Holiday Party**. This annual gathering is a must for families and
allies. For more information call 970-242-8965 or e-mail pflaggj@aol.com.

And, Don't Forget to
Mark Your Calendar...

Masquerade 2007! Saturday, February 17th, Mesa Theater and Club

- Doors open at 8:00pm
- \$10 cover benefits Western
Equality's programs
- 18 to enter; 21+ to drink

Stay tuned to
www.westernequality.org
for more information...

Want to help plan and produce
events for our community?

Become a Western Equality event
volunteer!

It's a great way to meet people,
make friendships, gain experience,
and help support Western Equality
in community building .

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The Right View

by Jerry Shelton

On my many trips to California I do one of my favorite things: I play talkshow roulette. I search the airwaves for the talk show that has the best reception at that time and location. Doctor Laura, Shaun Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, Michael Regan, Dr. Laura, or any number of right wing. You must have figured out by that list that, YES, I am a, you can say it out loud, that nasty word. You will not go up in a cloud of smoke. I am a Republican.

This last trip to California I rather agreed with some of the things that the hosts had to say, which at time I did. They were talking about Rosie O'Donnell and some of the comments that

At what point did I vote for Rosie to be my spokesperson?

she had made on *The View*. I had watched that show and I found her comments offensive. She had said that the some right-wing Christians were worse than terrorists.

The talk show host on the air waves asked, "Does the entire GLBT world feel the same way?" I began to ask myself: At what point did I vote for Rosie to be my spokesperson? I did not receive a ballot in the mail. Did you?

The vocal minority tells the world that we have an agenda. Do we and I was not made aware of it? Do we have elected spokespeople? I am aware of elected officials that support our cause. I am aware of openly gay and lesbian officials in all aspects of the government from local to national. Maybe we should have a caucus and vote for a platform and a spokesperson so that what we have to say is not taken and misused by the media and spread across the airwaves to drag down what all of us—Democrat, Republican, and independent—have worked long and hard for.

Opinions expressed in commentary/op-ed articles are those of the author and may not represent the opinion of Western Equality's Board of Directors or its members. If you would like to contribute or comment, please e-mail to info@westernequality.org or submit to: Mike Mansheim, Editor • Western Equality OutWest • PO Box 3335 • Grand Junction, CO 81502

Western Equality Is Radio Active!

Tune in to **Family, Friends & Neighbors** the **3rd Monday of every month at noon on KAFM 88.1 Community Radio.**

Family, Friends, and Neighbors focuses on issues that affect the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and allied persons in the Grand Valley, around the state, across the nation the nation, and even around the globe!

Upcoming Shows...

Monday, Dec 18
Monday, Jan 15
Monday, Feb 19

And if you miss a broadcast, don't worry — you can download and listen to past episodes on Western Equality's website!

Family, Friends, and Neighbors is sponsored by



Grand Valley GLBT Resource Directory Available

Did you know that Western Equality volunteers have worked over the past two years to interview over 50 local professionals for referrals for legal help, medical and mental health services, and welcoming churches. And our work continues!

If you need a referral for a GLBTQ-friendly doctor, lawyer, counselor, or congregation, give us a call, e-mail, or stop by the office.

Likewise, if you're a professional who would like to be added to our resource directory, please e-mail or call us.

970-242-8949
info@westernequality.org
523-1/2 Main Street, #11
Grand Junction, CO

Gay AA Group

If you have substance abuse issues and identify as gay, bisexual, lesbian, transgender, or queer, there is a 12-step program just for you. You are not required to be either gay or alcoholic to attend this group – just willing to work the steps to improve your life. Meets are held at Community Hospital at 7pm each Tuesday. The room assignment varies so just go to the main check-in desk and ask for Christina or the "AA Group". The nice woman there, who never bites, will tell you where to find us.

Beyond Referendum I

Dear Marriage Equality Council Members, Allies, and Western Equality Members:

In June 2005, we gathered to discuss what we knew would face us November 7, 2006 -- a ban on same-sex marriage. Later that year, the Grand Valley Marriage Equality Council was established. A year ago, we began proactively seeking basic legal rights for same-sex couples. Over the past 18 months, you have given much of your time, energy, talent, and resources in the fight for fairness and equality. For that I'm eternally grateful.

While we came up short of our goals, huge strides were made locally and across the state. You helped open the hearts and minds of Coloradans. Huge gains have been made in awareness of the GLBT community and the issues we face -- particularly in western Colorado. Fair-minded individuals have been placed in the state house and the Governor's mansion -- not to mention in Washington D.C.

As our partners at Coloradans for Fairness said, "Finally, our disappointment must not turn into discouragement. The opponents of basic legal rights want to end this struggle here, today, and watch us walk away is frustration. You and I know that the strength of this effort won't be diminished by one setback at the polls."

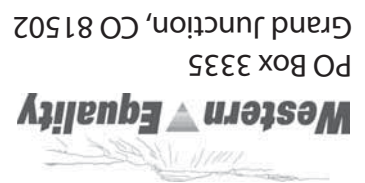
Our work will continue. I was reminded by a friend a few weeks ago to, "keep up the good fight. It may not be comforting now, but history and the future are both definitely on our side." It's with heartfelt thanks for all that you've done that I ask you to keep these words in mind and stay tuned as much is on the horizon as we look forward to 2007.

Warm regards,
Mike Mansheim
Western Equality Board of Directors

Thank You to Our Funders:

Western Equality is supported by memberships, donations, and grants from the Chinook Fund, the Gill Foundation, and the Johnson Family Foundation. **Thank you for your support.**





“

It is a superstition and ungodly thing to believe that an act of a majority binds a minority... All reforms owe their origin to the initiation of minorities in opposition to majorities... Those who believe that they are not bound to obey laws which are repugnant to their conscience have only the remedy of non violence open to them.

”

–M.K. Gandhi

Visit Western Equality On the Web >>>

www.westernequality.org

