

OUTWEST

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION FROM

February/March 2007



It's Back!

**Masquerade 2007 is Saturday, February 17th
at the Mesa Theatre and Club in Grand Junction**

DO YOU WANT TO BE A QUITTER?

Introducing SmokeFree GLBT > See pages 3, 5

Check Out What Else is Inside >>>

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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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To update your mailing address or cancel your subscription simply send a courteous note to our office, call 970-242-8949, or send an e-mail to info@westernequality.org.

Editor: Mike Mansheim

Contributors: Camille Cary, Erica Peterson, 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.

If you would like to contribute or comment, please submit to:

Mike Mansheim, Editor
Western Equality *OutWest*
PO Box 3335
Grand Junction, CO 81501
or e-mail to info@westernequality.org.

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
 31-40 41-50 51-60 60+

Membership Type: New Renewal

Membership Level:

\$15 Student / Senior / Fixed Income

\$25 individual \$35 Couple/Family

\$50 Friend \$150 Advocate \$500 Equality Circle

Additional donation of \$ _____

I want to help! Please contact me!

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

Please make your check payable to Western Equality and mail to:

Treasurer
Western Equality
PO Box 3335
Grand Junction, CO 81502

Dynamic Times at Western Equality New Program Focuses on Community Health

The times, they are a changin'! It's cliché, but no other statement rings more true for western Colorado's preeminent gay organization. Over the past three years, Western Equality has transitioned from an all volunteer organization primarily focused on producing social opportunities for the local gay community (while conducting advocacy work behind the scenes) to a full-fledged human services provider. Another step in our organization's evolution took place late last year when we joined forces with seven other queer-serving organizations to form a statewide coalition committed to preventing chronic disease and improving the health of Colorado's GLBT community.

The new program—SmokeFree GLBT—is developing a comprehensive action plan to inspire GLBTers to make positive changes in their health behavior and prevent initial use of tobacco by gay youth. Led by the GLBT Center of Colorado in Denver, Western Equality is the only organization outside the front range participating in the statewide effort. The partnership has created several opportunities for our organization, including allowing us to hire a half-time program manager, Erica Peterson! In January, Erica joined Camille Cary—our full-time AmeriCorps service member—as staff at Western Equality.

Several factors appear to contribute to increased rates of smoking among the GLBT population: higher stress levels, the role of bars as a social outlet, reduced access to health care, and targeted marketing efforts by the tobacco industry.¹ Part of Erica's charge is to learn more about this by assisting with a statewide survey. She's also busy developing opportunities for western Colorado's gay community by assisting the transition of Western Equality to a community-based human service provider committed to you. Check out the premiere of our *Health First* section on page 5 to learn more about Erica.

I also encourage you to meet her, along with Camille, other members, and our board of directors at one of several upcoming events sponsored by Western Equality. To learn more, keep reading. Of course, you can easily stay up-to-date with the latest happenings at Western Equality by visiting our website at www.westernequality.org.

—Mike Mansheim

¹ The American Legacy Foundation's "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Forum Executive Summary" can be found online at www.americanlegacy.org/PDF/GLBT.pdf

Become a Friend, Advocate, or join our Equality Circle

Without the support of members and donors, it would be impossible to do the very important work in which we're engaged.

Another exciting development at Western Equality is an expanded membership program, including varying levels and benefits.

A contribution of \$50/year designates you as a friend; \$150 an advocate; and for \$500 annually you join our Equality Circle. Check out page 7 for details of benefits for each level.

One benefit that goes without saying, is the knowledge that you're playing a significant part in helping us achieve our mission and goals.

Make today the day you become a friend, advocate, or member of our Equality Circle.

For more information, see page 7, call the office at 970-242-8949, or visit our website at www.westernequality.org.

This newsletter is made possible by the support of the

CHINOOK FUND

Update from AmeriCorps Staff

Western Equality Enters a New Phase AmeriCorps Staff Remains Committed to Youth

Personally, I want to welcome Erica Peterson, our Tobacco Program Manager! The addition of this new position to Western Equality signifies a milestone that our grassroots organization has crossed. Erica, congratulations on the article in the *Free Press* about the work you have engaged in toward prevention/cessation of tobacco use in our GLBT community!

Erica's work uniquely changes the dynamics of the responsibilities my AmeriCorps position entails. My focus for 2007 centers around being involved with the creation of more activities for the GLBT community. Specifically, the development of positive alternatives, especially for our youth, to offer them the support they need to live a healthy lifestyle.

My meetings will now include not only meeting regularly with Mesa State PRIDE, but in addition I look forward to attending the board meetings the Bistro holds at the Tree House. Activities will be developed from the brainstorming of these and other youth groups. My attendance is to serve as a mentor for them to collaborate on activities.

I want to personally address our youth and offer the suggestion that the more flexible they can be on activities, and who they include, the more variety they will find. I think they will find their world opening up. Straight youth very likely will find they can learn a lot about the reality of what gay youth experience. They will have a first-hand experience to compare with myths and rumors. Likewise, gay youth very likely will find straight youth indeed can come to understand them. I'm willing to bet that gay youth may find strong support from allied youth.

Creativity is something I believe all youth have when it comes to expressing themselves. I encourage gay and straight youth to embrace a serious try at activities designed specifically to include each other. My hope is that after you take this step, your world will become abundant with activities and friends.

— Camille Cary

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!

THE COFFEE STUDIO



*half off any latte
with this ad!*

Dawn & Kellie, owners

2913 F Road #103

970-263-8588

Grand Junction, Colorado

Health First

Hello and welcome to *Health First*, the brand **spanking** new article that will give you updates on GLBT health issues on the Western Slope.

Since I'm new, I'll introduce myself a bit. I'm loyal and generous. Active. Outgoing. Spontaneous. Impatient and hasty. Ambitious. **Easily influenced by kindness.** Sensitive. Competitive in everything. Always wants the best. Temperamental. Silly. Love to joke. Talkative. Friendly. **Able to show character.** Passionate. Lovable. Easily hurt. **Easily bored.** Loves music. Fussy. Emotional. Opinionated. Takes time to recover when hurt. Hopeless romantic. Daydreamer. **Believer.**

My goal at Western Equality is to increase GLBT awareness on the Western Slope. You would think that as Tobacco Program Manager my main goal would be to pull cigarettes out of people's mouths thus providing a massive amount of shame to those who smoke – but I thought it'd be more productive to listen, watch, evaluate and then eventually offer help to those who want to quit. For those who don't want to quit, that's perfectly okay. **I smoked for many, many years** and I didn't want to quit for most of them. Whether you want to quit or not, you can help provide more programs in your area.

Understanding GLBT smokers' needs, likes, dislikes, fetishes (ok, maybe not your fetishes just yet) is the first step in **offering community- based programs** for you. This is where the survey comes in. It's completely painless and anonymous to take our survey, and you can even smoke while you're taking it.

GLBT smokers from all around Colorado are taking the survey, and in a few months when we have collected all of the data we will be able to offer programs and services specific to the GLBT community. Yay! Doesn't that sound good?

Alright, that was my pitch. **Just take the survey!** I'll be sending them out in the mail shortly or you can go to www.smokefreeglbt.org and click on "Take the GLBT Tobacco Needs Assessment".

Now on to more fun stuff, like parties and events! While tobacco is important to me, my top priority is to offer more opportunities for the GLBT community to become, well, more of a community. We're in the works of expanding existing local Pride events in June, as well as discussing the possibility of a Gay Prom. Stay tuned as plans are developed and unveiled. Of course, you all have heard of the **Red Ball Masquerade** later this month (I'm in the process of finding *the* red dress). We're also starting a coffee hour, a transgender support group, and a monthly movie night. Want to see something else? Call me and **I'll buy you a cup of coffee** while we talk about it. This is your community and we're here to serve you. You don't need to quit your job and become a full-time volunteer to help out. Your suggestions are all I'm looking for.

Until next time - Erica



Erica Peterson

is our new Tobacco Program Manager. She's crazy but we still like her

Smoke Free GLBT has partnered with Western Equality to implement a statewide effort to reduce chronic disease and death directly related to tobacco use in the gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgender communities of Colorado. The grant has allowed Western Equality to hire Erica Peterson as Tobacco Program Manager for Western Colorado.

It's completely painless and anonymous to take the survey, and you can even smoke while you're taking it.

Send your questions, comments and smart remarks to Erica at GLBTcolorado@gmail.com or call her cell at 970.210.6850

Membership

Announcing New Membership Levels and Benefits

Check Your Mailing Label to See if You're Due to Renew!

	Level					
	Student/ Senior/ Fixed Income	Individual	Couple/ Family	Friend	Advocate	Equality Circle
Benefits	\$15	\$25	\$35	\$50	\$150	\$500
Membership Card	•	•	•	•	•	•
<i>OutWest</i> Newsletter	•	•	•	•	•	•
Discounted Admission to Western Equality Events	•	•	•	•	•	•
Full Access to Lending Library	•	•	•	•	•	•
Activities and Events Produced for WE Groups	•	•	•	•	•	•
Invitation to Membership Holiday Party				•	•	•
Name listed annually in <i>OutWest</i>					•	•
Name listed on Western Equality website						•

PLUS! Stay tuned for exciting Member Rewards that are being developed!

To upgrade or renew your membership, fill out the form on page 2 and return to us. To verify that we have the most current information for you, or if you're not sure when you last submitted your membership, call the Western Equality office at 970-242-8949 or email info@westernequality.org.

Upcoming events and activities produced by Western Equality for members...



LETSDO COFFEE

1ST COFFEE IS ON US

TRADERS COFFEE AND TEA
 666 PATTERSON ROAD
 CORNER OF PATTERSON AND 7TH
 MONDAY FEBRUARY 19 - 6-7 PM.

DISCUSS RELAX MEET

Western Equality Presents:

GLBT Night at the Liquid Lounge

Friday, February 9th 9:00pm- close
Mesa Theater and Club
538 Main Street in Grand Junction
DJ Brock Rocks the House!
\$2 Cover

Red Ball Masquerade Planners

Thursdays, noon to 1:00pm
Western Equality Office

Ice Skating at the Glacier Arena

Sunday February 11th
12:15- 4:15pm
\$6.00 Entry \$2.50 Skate Rental
All Ages, GLBT Families and Adults

RED BALL! Masquerade 2007!

Saturday February 17th 8:00pm
At the Mesa Theater and Club!
\$8 Tickets in Advance at the Mesa
Theater Box Office or Western
Equality Office • \$10 Cover at
the Door -Fundraiser for Western
Equality's Programs • Costumes
Encouraged- WEAR RED! •18+ to
enter, 21+ to drink

Coffee Group

Monday February 19th from 6-7 p.m.
Traders Coffee at 7th and Patterson
Will continue if there is enough
interest!

Transgender Group

Open to anyone who identifies as
transgender, their friends, and family.
March 7th at 7pm, Western Equality
office. Call for more information.

Dinner and Movie Night

Potluck dinner and a movie or
Saturday, March 10 at 6pm
Location TBD - RSVP to Western
Equality office by March 5

GLBT Wine and Dine Group

RendezVous French Restaurant
Friday March 23rd at 6:30pm
MUST RSVP to WE by March 16th!

Dinner and Movie Night

Potluck dinner and a movie or
Friday, April 20 at 6pm
Location TBD - RSVP to Western
Equality office by April 16

Drag Show in April

Look for next *OutWest* for more info.

PrideFest West in June

Look for expanded local events to
commemorate Pride, including a
dance and the annual picnic!

For more information on Western
Equality events call 970-242-8949 or
email info@westernequality.org.

Grand Valley ManREACH Presents:

Bowling Night

February 21st, 6 PM at GJ Scores
Free lanes, shoes, and snacks! Ask for
the ManREACH group at the desk.

Men's-Group

February 28 at 6PM
Good conversation and dinner.
Anyone interested should contact
Paul Jones @ 970-361-1282 or Bob
Richardson @970-216-9734 or e-mail
robrich39@yahoo.com

For more information on ManREACH
events e-mail robrich39@yahoo.com

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, Feb 19
Monday, March 19
Monday, April 16

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*



Mesa State PRIDE Reconvenes for Spring Semester

PRIDE is Mesa State College's Gay-Straight Alliance. Check out this corner of *OutWest* for news, information, and events of particular interest to the queer members of Generation Next!

Through programs and presentations PRIDE strives to educate and open dialogue between the gay and straight communities, and have issues facing GLBT people recognized. We also hold events to give students a chance to interact with other GLBTA people, such as movie nights, potlucks, and social outings.

UnityFest Returns in April...

PRIDE collaborates with the other clubs each spring to produce a week-long celebration of diversity, UnityFest. Stay tuned for details!

Upcoming Meetings...

Beginning February 21st, PRIDE meets at least every **Wednesday evening at 7 p.m.** in Mesa State's College Center

Date	Location
February 6	Saccomanno Lecture Hall
February 14	No meeting - Happy Valentine's!
February 21	Game Night - Elam Room
February 22	Movie Night - TBD
February 28	Elam Room in College Center
March 7	Elam Room in College Center
March 14	No meeting - Spring Break!
March 21	Elam Room in College Center

For more information about Mesa State PRIDE, e-mail prideatmsc23@hotmail.com.

In College? Need Money?

Yeah... it's a silly question. We know. What college student doesn't need money? Well, if you're gay, lesbian, bi, or trans, and going to school (or thinking about hitting the books and getting that degree) we've got great news for you.

The Alexander Foundation's Scholarship Grant Program provides financial assistance for individuals pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree from a Colorado institution of higher education.

Applicants must be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered, reside in Colorado and be accepted or enrolled in an accredited Colorado institution of higher education. The applicant must also demonstrate financial need.

Download an application online at www.thealexanderfoundation.org or call the Western Equality office. All applications and required supporting documentation must be returned to the Alexander Foundation office no later than April 15th. Applicants will be notified as to whether or not they will receive scholarship funds by June 15th.

For more information, email the Alexander Foundation at edgrants@thealexanderfoundation.org.

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.**



Like to Sing?

Join Western Equality's Liberty Choir

Guess What? Western Equality is forming a choir. Choir members met for their first practice on January 18th, 2007. We practiced two of several songs we'll be singing at Masquerade on February 17th, 2007. We can use more voices. You don't have to be able to read music, but you should love singing songs with a group. This is a rare opportunity to express yourself through music to our gay community.

We will continue to meet every Thursday at 7:30 pm at the Western Equality office. Camille, the AmeriCorps representative is directing the choir. Most of the songs will be accompanied by Camille playing the guitar. If you play an instrument, we would welcome your talent so we can add variety to our performance. The idea is for us to sing songs originating from a diversity of roots such as negro spirituals, civil rights era, feminist era, folk, and modern. We aim to throw in a few light-hearted humorous tunes too.

Come and get involved with us and just have a great time! We will decide together what title to give this special group of singers.

Call 970-242-8949 to learn more about the Liberty Choir

Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr.

Western Equality Joins Community at January Commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

I want to pay honor to the great man named above for his strivings toward equality for African Americans. It seems that many people, like Martin Luther King Jr., that have a great vision for social change have died at a young age.

I attended the veterans celebration held here in Grand Junction at the Veterans Hospital. Unfortunately, I was ill on Martin Luther King Day, so I was unable to participate in the march and speeches sponsored by AmeriCorps and The Marillac Clinic.

The report from my AmeriCorps class stated that there was about 300 in attendance. This is a more accurate estimation than that given in our local newspapers. Ruth McCray, a fellow AmeriCorps volunteer worked very hard with

several members of our city council for this celebration. Dr. Pat Verstraete spoke first at the City Hall Auditorium and introduced the speakers.

A very touching aspect of this event for me and for a fellow AmeriCorps who work at Grand Mesa Youth Services Center, was that several of the youth made beautiful, artistic posters that were displayed. For these youth, this meant a lot to them to be able to contribute to the celebration.

For a full account of this event, I recommend getting a back copy of the *Free Press* coverage on it, which includes a two page spread of pictures.

– Camille Cary,
AmeriCorps Volunteer

Alcohol or Drug Abuse Issues? Helps is Available at the 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. Meetings 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.

First-Ever Summit Sparks Dialogue About the Church and Gay and Lesbian Topics

Diverse Biblical Interpretations Explored Through Academic Presentations and Interactive Group Discussions in Colorado Springs

A first-of-its-kind summit titled "Out of the Shadows Into the Light" is being held to allow clergy and church laypeople to have an open dialogue about gay and lesbian topics within the context of the church. Featuring known and respected academics from throughout the U.S., the summit will include a unique combination of presentations and small group interactions that explore diverse Biblical interpretations.

According to event moderator Dr. Miguel De La Torre, associate professor of Social Ethics & director of the Justice and Peace Institute at Denver's Iliff School of Theology, "The Bible has been interpreted in many different ways, and it has been used to justify cultural homophobia. There is clearly a need for an open, non-threatening conversation about what the Bible says, and what people's response should be toward gay men and lesbians. This summit provides a safe forum for clergy and laypeople of the church to explore these topics in an honest and thought provoking manner." He added, "Our goal is to provide people with the tools they need to have open conversations once they return to their churches or places of worship."

Out of the Shadows Into the Light will be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, February 14-16, 2007. Respected scholars from across the U.S. will address various denominational and individual issues and viewpoints regarding gay men and lesbians as they relate to the church. These include:


Rev. Marvin M. Ellison, Ph.D., Professor of Christian Ethics, Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, Maine; **Ken Stone**, Ph.D., Professor of Bible, Culture and Hermeneutics, Chicago Theological Seminary; **Larry Kent Graham**, Ph.D., Professor of Pastoral Theology and Care, Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colo.; **Rev. Mona West**, Ph.D., Senior Pastor, Church of the Trinity, Sarasota, Fla.; **Luis Leon**, Assistant Professor of American Religion and Culture, University of Denver, Denver, Colo.; **Irene Monroe**, Professor of Religion and Director of Multicultural and Spiritual Programming, Pine Manor, Mass. **Dr. Miguel De La Torre** will moderate the summit. Dr. De La Torre is associate professor of Social Ethics & director of the Justice and Peace Institute at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colo. He is an ordained Southern Baptist minister who has authored

numerous articles and more than eleven books. His twelfth book, "A Lily Among the Thorns: Imagining a New Christian Sexuality," will be published in April 2007.

The small group interactions will be moderated by Dr. James R. Oraker, an ordained minister with the Presbyterian Church and a licensed psychologist. He is professor of Family Systems and professor of Ethics and Law at the Colorado School of Professional Psychology, as well as executive coach and feedback specialist with the Center for Creative Leadership, and serves on numerous boards.

Among the sponsors are the Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado, Citizens Project, Colorado School of Professional Psychology, Colorado Springs Business Journal, Colorado Springs Diversity Forum, Greenberg Center for Learning and Tolerance, Pikes Peak Fund for Tolerance and Equality, Psychological Society of the Pike Peak Region, First Congregational Church, and Vanguard Church.

For more information, visit www.shadows2light.com

Grand Junction, CO 81502
PO Box 3335
Western Equality


“

Like all forms of love, homosexuality remains mysterious and eludes our total understanding. Like all forms of love, it is a longing for a lost attachment.

”

-- Richard Isay

Visit Western Equality On the Web >>>

www.westernequality.org

