

A message from Jason— As the last few months of 2022 come to a close I look back and think about how amazing the year has been. There is not a day that I would change, I would keep it all! The good, the great, the sad, and the bad. I have learned so much from you all and have enjoyed every second of it. For that I am grateful. A quick google search tells us that gratitude is the “*readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness*”. I believe that gratitude cannot be defined or quantified. Gratitude is not limited to a list, a meditation, an experience, or an event. Gratitude is an attitude. It’s a decision to see life through the lens of acceptance. Furthermore, its a choice to see life through the filter of embracing, appreciation, and love.

Often times in the month of November we see our friends rattle of a list of things they’re grateful for. Have you ever done this and had no idea where to begin? This does not mean you’re ungrateful or that you don’t have anything to be grateful for. It most likely means you have a ton to be grateful for. I could take this time and teach you about gratitude and create some cool metaphor about the gratitude rainbow and the 7 colors. But I simply want to say THANK YOU! Thank you for putting a smile on my face, for teaching me something new, for sharing your stories with me, and for changing my life for the better.

I hope that you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving and I look forward to celebrating the holiday session with you all!

-J

In This months issue....

Events

- ⇒ AARP Drivers Safety pg. 1
- ⇒ West of 50’s Thanksgiving Social pg. 2
- ⇒ A Reflective Journey pg. 3
- ⇒ Tech Support -101 pg. 3
- ⇒ Medicare Healthcare Planning pg. 5
- ⇒ Transgender Day of Remembrance pg. 5
- ⇒ Camp Christmas pg. 8
- ⇒ Art Show & Holiday Party pg. 8
- ⇒ Disability Peer support Group pg. 9
- ⇒ Vet Support Group pg. 9

Arts & Culture

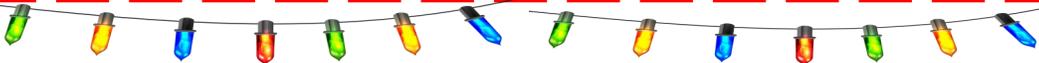
- ⇒ Art Show and Holiday Party & artwork deadline pg. 1
- ⇒ Knowing What You Want! Pg. 3
- ⇒ Artist Spotlight - Ken Larry Felts pg. 4-5
- ⇒ Grand Opening Day: The First Board of Directors pg. 6-7
- ⇒ Holiday Gift Drive pg. 7
- ⇒ Community Resource Navigation pg. 9

Past Highlights

- ⇒ Trip to Breckenridge pg. 3



This course is aimed at drivers who are 50+ and will provide you with a review of defensive driving skills and current rules of the road. Check with your insurance to see if this course entitles you to a discounted insurance premium. The cost for AARP members is \$20 and Non-members is \$25. **Date: Wednesday, December 14th. 10:30 am—2:30 pm. RSVP to attend.**



HEADS UP!

This years Holiday Party & Art Show will be on December 2nd.

If you would like to submit your art into the show, it will need to be ready for display the week of Thanksgiving. Only so much art can fit on our walls, however we will have open gallery space for more art for the party.

Meaning that art is due by Wednesday the 23rd of November. The art will remain in The Center’s lobby until mid to late January of 2023. Should have any questions contact Jason or Bryant.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

WE'RE THANKFUL FOR YOU!

Join us in celebrating a wonderful year, with friends, food, & more.
This year's meal will feature entertainment, giveaways, and a surprise event.

Catered by Taste the Love Cooking
Menu

Herb & Spice Rubbed Turkey
Brown Sugar Glazed Ham
Mashed Potatoes & Gravy
Green Bean Casserole
Collard & Mustard Greens
Yeast Rolls

Dessert

Assortment of pies: Apple, Pecan, Cherry,
Sweet Potato, Pumpkin, &
Peach Cobbler

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH FROM 11AM-2PM

ALTHEA CENTER 1400 N WILLIAMS ST, DENVER CO 80218

RSVP by October 21st

For active members of the West of 50 Program ONLY
Contact Jason at jeatonlynch@lgbtqcolorado.org for questions

Scan QR Code or go to this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WOFonturkey>
to virtually RSVP or sign up in person



A Reflective Journey— an Intergenerational experience: Join the West of 50 team and Dish Network as we provide community members and their LGBTQ+ staff with an engaging afternoon of constructive conversations and memory sharing. This intergenerational experience will allow for you to exchange your life lessons with fellow queer community members, with the goal of inspiring new perspectives, inspiring new friendship, and bridging the gap between generations. Space is limited to 10 participants... only RSVP if you plan on attending. Lunch will be provided. **RSVP By November 4th. Event Date: Wednesday, November 9th. Time: 12-1:30p**



Trip to Breckenridge: Our caravan headed up to beautiful Breckenridge to see the vibrant changing colors of the aspens, enjoy local food and shops, and spend quality time with friends. From the scenic views during the drive there and back, to the green, unoccupied slopes that will soon be filled with skiers, the mountain town was breathtaking. We were able to explore the main street of Breckenridge, which was filled with restaurants, locally owned stores, and quaint architecture. Much appreciation to Danny, our fearless driver for touring through the mountains on that lovely fall day.



Tech Support - 101 at the Salesforce Tower— Provided by their own Q Force Team.

The Q Force team has graciously opened their doors to help you work through common tech issues and answer any questions you may have. Should you struggle with one of your devices feel free to bring it and they will provide you with one-on-one support relevant to your tech. Breakfast will be provided, as well as tours of their tower. Attendees must have a email address to be able to attend as this is part of the registration process.

Event Details:

- 9:00 am - Group arrival and check-in
- 9:00-9:30 am - tour of the space
- 9:30-10:00 am - Breakfast
- 10:00-11:00 am - Presentation and tech support
- 11:00-11:30 am - Questions and final tours



Date: November 14th Time: 9:00am

Location: 17th Street Place, 1225 17th St. 500 Denver, CO 80202

You must RSVP to Jason or Bryant by Friday Nov 7th. All attendees must have an email address to RSVP



Knowing What You Want! Directions: Put a check Mark in the box next to each item below to indicate how important that item is to you. The Older, Wiser, Sexually Smarter group meets every Tues, 2p— 3:30pm.

Have a partner...	Very	Somewhat	Not at all
1. With whom I have strong friendship.			
2. Who is attractive.			
3. To avoid being lonely.			
4. With whom I have an agreement that allows dating outside our relationship (open relationship)			
5. With whom I am close, while we maintain separate homes (living apart together).			

Artist Spotlight—Ken Larry Felts—



I never planned on coming out. I had lived my life and planned to go to grave trying to be straight. In 2019, I was diagnosed with classic Hodgkin's lymphoma and underwent chemotherapy. One day I decided that the treatment was more painful than the cure and decided to receive no more treatment. I was incredibly isolated at home during cancer recovery that then went right into pandemic isolation. Prior to cancer I had been working with a personal trainer for 5 years and my trainer was gay. He figured out where I was on the scale of gayness. He encouraged me to come out and write my life story down, even though I thought no one would care.

Finally, during the isolation of Covid I decided I have got to do something. So, I wrote my biography.

While I was writing, I was very straight and determined to stay that way. But then I began writing about Phillip in California, a man I had lived with for a year and a half. This was painful portion of life that I had hidden for years because my religious teachings overcame my gay desire. I decided to leave California and Phillip and live my life as a straight person. While writing this, my daughter came in and wondered why I was crying. I told her I should have never left Phillip and shared the story of me and Phillip. At that point I decide if I'm out to daughter I should be out to everyone.

I posted on Facebook my coming out statement; fortunately, or unfortunately, the post was made public, and I began receiving feedback and calls from tv and radio for interviews. As a result of the interview a young man called me and said he wanted to meet me. We set up a blind date and met at an Asian restaurant and talked until almost closing and moved to my car to talk more. I had to leave but asked to meet again soon. He said yes. Johnny had held my hand, he came back and asked if he should follow me home. He did, spent most of the rest of the night talking at my house, asked if I would see him again, he said yes, and we started dating and he moved in.

One of the things I did after coming out was become involved with The Center on Colfax. I began to attend the Open Art Studio for queer elders. I did not think of myself as an artist; however, the opportunity came to develop a piece to hang at The Center. After finishing my book, I was able to visualize my life and myself as a part of the four seasons. Spring: young, full of life, and ready for anything. Summer: experiencing the world in the Navy in Korea, living in California, and meeting and leaving Phillip. Fall: Struggling with my inner nature by being straight, marrying, and having a child. Winter: my child left home and sadness until I came out. Now in the winter of joy with Johnny.

A second piece is made from a collage of artificial flowers. To me it represents all the beautiful gay people still in the closet wanting to come out but afraid of what they would have to face, from family and community. I wanted to show them the world was a beautiful place and accepting of their coming out. The string of flowers in the lower lefthand corner represent those who have found the courage to show the world who they really are. I had been writing poems and it seemed the flowers were speaking to me, the poem came easily.

MY HANDFUL OF STARS
COMING OUT AT AGE 90



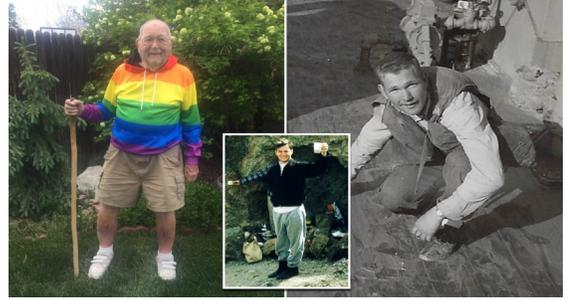
BY
KENNETH W. FELTS



Continued on page 5.



I have received many letters from people around the world who've thanked me for having the courage to come out. Many expressed my story gave them the courage to come out. Many of the people are still in contact to me from all around the world; Japan, India, Vietnam, and all over the US. The out-pouring of love and support is an absolutely beautiful feeling.



I have been interviewed several times. I was most impressed with Anderson Cooper, Oprah, and an interview from Yukuru, Japan. My special on the BBC in London had over 1.4 million viewers! Maybe one of the biggest for me was the biography done by Jeremy Hubbard, a local reporter in Denver. He went to California to film places I had lived, interviewed Phillips relatives, and found a researcher who had found Phillip for me. Although he had passed, I am still incredibly grateful.

My message is: don't underestimate the community in which you live, straight or gay, if you let yourself accept you, there will be many people ready to love you in return.

-Story by Ken Felts -Written by Bryant Mehay

Medicare Healthcare Planning! - Are you new to Medicare or have you had the same plan for ages? Here's your opportunity to enjoy coffee & pastries with friends while you learn about the exciting new 2022 Medicare Advantage & Prescription Drug Plans as well as Medicare Supplement Insurance Plans! Whether you have a chronic condition such as diabetes or heart disease, are on Medicare & Medicaid, or are a Veteran, there are plans out there that will give you so much more! From gym memberships, hearing aids, over-the-counter benefits, and dental coverage like we've never seen before, you have choices! MyMedicareHero will have licensed broker Shawn Marie Swagerty who is certified to answer your enrollment questions regarding Medicare Advantage and Medigap Plans and Rx Plans!



Date: Wednesday, November 16th Time: 12:00pm—1:00pm



Transgender Day of Remembrance
Friday, November 18, 6:00 - 8:00 pm
at the Center on Colfax



Grand Opening Day: The First Board of Directors- With this photograph , the groundbreaking History



Colorado exhibitions “Rainbows and Revolutions “ spotlights a milestone event in the history of Colorado’s LGBT+ community- the August 21st, 1977 grand opening of the Gay Community Center of Colorado (GCCC) at 1436 Lafayette St in Denver. The property was rented from the nearby First Unitarian Church. Forty-Five years later, the same organization is today called The Center on Colfax, headquartered in its own building at 1301 East Colfax Ave, one-half block away from the GCCC’s first location. This photo from the exhibition does not identify the seven individual’s pictured. They constituted the first Board of Directors of the GCCC.

August 21, 1977, Grand Opening of the Gay Community Center of Colorado, 1436 Lafayette St., Denver

Front, left to right: Michael Graczyk, Michael Rosener (a/k/a Michael Jefferson), Gerald Gerash, Cara Heller (a/k/a Noriko Nakano)

Back, left to right: Jeffrey Mullican, Stephen Springer, Timothy Offutt



Michael Ray Graczyk (front row left) (January 6, 1954 – October 5, 2021)- Michael was in his early 20s when he served on the GCCC board. Active with the Imperial Court of the Rocky Mountain Empire (ICRME), the most actively engaged organization in the formation and fundraising for the GCCC, Michael was a drag performer known as Michele. During his time serving with the GLCC, he was a strong advocate for gay youth. Years later, ICRME elected Michael as Emperor XXI. Throughout his life, Michael’s career and volunteer work focused on supporting social and economic justice in Denver and Colorado. In his later life, he found fulfillment in marriage to Ray Savin, who was with him when he died of cancer.

Gerald Aaron “Jerry” Gerash, board vice president (born 1934) Jerry Gerash, an attorney who led the earliest post-Stonewall advocacy efforts for gay rights in Colorado, was the most influential and dedicated of the GCCC’s early leaders. A longtime social justice advocate, Jerry earlier helped organize the Gay Coalition of Denver, where he spearheaded the historic October 1973 “gay revolt” at Denver City Council. The chambers were filled with people demanding an end to ordinances, policies and practices—especially by the police department—that targeted individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and gender presentation. He was also a board member of the National Gay Task Force (as it was then called) where he networked with other local and national leaders in the early post-Stonewall lesbian and gay rights movement, thereby connecting Colorado to national trends in movement-building. Jerry remained active in the GCCC until a serious illness in the early 1980s. He moved to California where he recovered, practiced law, and has remained active in progressive LGBT+, feminist, Jewish and other social-justice causes. He currently resides in Palm Springs.



Cara Heller a/k/a Noriko Nakano, board president (Born June 12, 1955) - Cara Heller became involved with the GCCC by attending the September 1976 retreat in Breckenridge representing the Woman To Woman Bookstore Collective. A part-time college student, Cara brought a lesbian and feminist perspective to the early discussions and the first board at a time when most lesbians (some preferred to be called “gay women”) were skeptical of the GCCC’s intent or ability to include women. The board elected her president, not only in recognition of her active- year-long participation in laying the GCCC’s organizational foundation, but also to demonstrate its commitment to lesbian leadership and visibility. Unfortunately, Cara resigned from the board a few months later after internal strife over the direction of the nascent organization surfaced, in part due to some gay men’s’ attitudes and reactions to lesbian and feminist involvement. (Notably, during the election cycle that followed, three lesbians joined the seven-member board.) At that time, Cara, who was Japanese American, chose to be known as Noriko Nakano. Recent efforts to locate information about her have been unsuccessful, although it appears she moved away from Colorado, possibly to California.

Jeffrey David Mullican (back row, left) (May 12, 1954 – December 24, 1987) Born and raised in Maryland near Washington, D.C., Jeff Mullican moved to Colorado to study political science and mass communications at the University of Denver. He became involved with the GCCC soon after he began to come out publicly. Friendly and gregarious, he eagerly sought a leadership role in the new organization.



Continued on Page 7.

Stephen Christopher Springer, treasurer (December 26, 1946 – February 21, 1992) - Raised on a farm in northern California, Steve Springer moved to Denver after working as a miner in Leadville, Colorado. He served as the treasurer of the first GCCC board. Steve was a blue-collar “strong, silent type.” He left few traces of himself after his involvement with the GCCC. Recent research located his gravestone at a family plot in Kelseyville, California.

Timothy Louis Offutt (May 28, 1949 – March 10, 1995) - Born and raised in Greater New Haven, Connecticut, Tim Offutt was an early supporter of the GCCC at a time when it was especially challenging for Black men to be openly gay. Well educated and familiar with social-justice advocacy, Tim brought a calm voice of reason to the GCCC board. Tim moved from Denver to Chicago in the 1980s during the early years of the AIDS epidemic. He became the executive director of the Kupona Network, a Chicago nonprofit serving Black people with AIDS. (Kupona is a Swahili word for “healing.”) He was also a co-founder of the National Minority AIDS Council. In the early 1990s, Tim moved to San Francisco where worked as Minority AIDS Program Coordinator at the public health department’s AIDS Office, a job he held until shortly before his death.



(Tim Offutt, right in 1994)

Some Background on the early GCCC- The GCCC was conceived, planned and created in the mid-1970s as a project of UNITY, a coalition of nonprofit organizations and a few businesses serving diverse constituencies within the gay and lesbian community. (The term LGBT+ came decades later.) UNITY included social, religious, and advocacy groups, mostly in Metro Denver, and also university-based organizations in Boulder and Fort Collins. Planning began in earnest with a September 1976 retreat in Breckenridge followed by weekly meetings and occasional fundraising events throughout the fall, winter and spring of 1977. The planning was



overseen by an acting board called the Pre-Incorporation Committee until the election of the first Board of Directors in mid-1977. According to the bylaws at that time, members paying annual dues to belong to the GCCC could elect four board members, and a Board of Governors consisting of UNITY members (organizations and businesses) could elect three. Essentially, the Board of Governors absorbed UNITY, as it had accomplished its primary goal of establishing the GCCC. This original system of governance proved onerous and was abandoned after several years, as was the membership model of engagement.

By Phil Nash

Participants in the 1976-77 Pre-Incorporation Committee of the GCCC reunited in 2016. Front: Gerald Gerash (center) and Phil Nash. Back (left to right): Bill Olson, Bob Janowski, Christopher (Christi Layne) Sloan, Donaciano Martinez, Richard Reed.

Holiday Gift Drive- The folks from the Aurora Housing Authority have selected our community at The Center to receive gifts for their Holiday Gift Drive. This means that if you choose to participate, a tag with your name and what you are wanting will be placed on a giving tree located at The Stanley Market Place at 2501 Dallas St, Aurora CO. Anyone can come by and select a tag off the tree and purchase their gift for them. Signing up is not a guarantee that someone will grab your tag or that you will get exactly what you’ve asked Santa for. Gifts will be passed out at The Center in early January. Meet with one of the West of 50 team members to get signed up.

Sign ups due: Monday Nov 14th



West of 50 Road Trip—Camp Christmas—Explore the six-acre winter wonderland filled with shimmering light displays, treats and drinks, and immersive holiday exhibits! Located at Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park this quirky holiday tradition brings together kids from one to ninety-two. That's how the song goes, sorry Ken this is the last year you can go. Camp Christmas Produced by the Denver Center for Performing Arts and Hanzon Studios. Either sign up to ride on our limited space bus (\$5.00 nonrefundable holding fee is due at time of RSVP) or you can meet us at the Belmar shopping mall at 3:30pm. The nights events include a stop at Belmar for dinner and shopping, and then off to Camp Christmas to see the holiday lights.



ping mall at 3:30pm. The nights events include a stop at Belmar for dinner and shopping, and then off to Camp Christmas to see the holiday lights.

Date: Wednesday, December 7th

Time: 3pm leave The Center. 3:30pm meet at Belmar Shopping Mall for shopping and dinner

We have Danny's bus for the night. If you would like a ride a \$5.00 nonrefundable fee is due at time of RSVP. This trip includes transportation and entrance into Camp Christmas. Participants are responsible for their cost of food and shopping expenses.

- Please Join us for the Center of Colfax Annual -

- Art show & Holiday Party -



- Friday December 2nd -

- 4-7:00pm -

- At the Center on Colfax -

- Art - Festivities - Treats - Community - Friends -

LGBTQ+ Disability Peer Support Group—New Time added

The LGBTQ+ Disability Program is adding an additional time slot for the Peer Support Group. This group will meet Mondays at 5 –6pm starting November 14th. This hybrid peer support group is for individuals who have a disability and identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. This is a drop in space that provides conversation, social support, and resource sharing. This group is free to attend. Registration is required if you intend to participate virtually. For questions, please contact Bryant Mehay at bmehay@lgbtqcolorado.org.

When: Monday Nov 14th @ 5-6pm

Fridays @ 1:30-3pm starting August 19th

Where: The Center on Colfax. Virtual option available to attend, visit lgbtqcolorado.org to sign up to join the group!

Here for you– Community Resource Navigation- We understand that finding and accessing resources can be difficult. That is why Zac and Scarlet are able to work one-on-one with you to assist with finding and accessing social service or other community resource that you may be eligible for. Either intern with serve as a one-stop information and referral stop to community programming and resources. What types of services could the assist with:

- Access to Healthcare and Mental Health Services
- Housing Assistance
- Food Assistance
- Transportation
- Health & Wellness Services
- Assistant with SMART goal creation.

Community resource navigation hours– Walk-ins welcome or call the West of 50 team to make an appointment

Scarlet: Mondays 10am-12:30pm starting on November 7th

Zac: Fridays 10:30am-12:30pm starting November 11th.

Veterans Peer Support Group- This is a hybrid support group for LGBTQ identifying Veterans to find resources, peer support, and acceptance. This will be a brave space to build community connections, to discuss our individual and collective experiences, and to support one another on our unique journeys though life after service. The group is free to attend; please contact Zac at zlees@lgbtqcolorado.org for any questions. **Every Tuesday evening from 6-7pm**

Acceptance, Mindfulness, and Healthy Coping Support Group- This peer support group will provide a safe space to share our personal struggles and accomplishments with our mental health among our peers and to learn from our collective experiences through story-telling. Together we will focus on accepting difficult emotions and feelings, mindfulness and meditation, as well as sharing helpful coping skills as a group. This is an **In-person** peer support group and is free to attend; contact Zac Lees (He/him) at zlees@lgbtqcolorado.org for any questions. **Every Friday Afternoon from evening from 1:30pm-2:30pm (1 hour)**

November 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 10 Men's Coffee 1:30 Trans Support 2 Sex Ed 6 Vet sup-	2 10:30 SS Yoga 1:30 Community Group	3 10 Art Studio	4 West of 50 Thanksgiving Meal No Programing	5
6 The ones we have loved with all our heart cannot ever go away even after losing their lives. They are just by us celebrating this thoughtful occasion of Transgender Day of Remembrance.	7 No Meditation 10-12:30 Scarlet Resource Nav. 1:30 Story	8 10 Men's Coffee 1:30 Trans Support 2 Sex Ed 6 Vet sup-	9 10:30 SS Yoga 12 Reflective Journey 1:30 Community Group	10 10 Art Studio	11 Veterans Day 10 Qigong 11:30 Women's Salon 1:30 MH Support	12
	14 9-QForce IT Support 10-12:30 Scarlet Resource Nav. 1:30 Story	15 10 Men's Coffee 1:30 Trans Support 2 Sex Ed 6 Vet Sup-	16 10:30 SS Yoga 12 Medicare 1:30 Community Group	17 10 Art Studio	18 10 Qigong 11:45 Meditation 1:30 MH Support 6 Transgender Day of reembrace	19
20 Trans day of re-membrance	21 10-12:30 Scarlet Resource Nav. 1:30 Story	22 10 Men's Coffee 1:30 Trans Support 2 Sex Ed 6 Vet Sup-	23 10:30 SS Yoga 1:30 Community Group	24 Happy Thanksgiving Center Closed	25 Center Closed	26
27	28 10-12:30 Resource Nav. 1:30 Story	29 10 Men's Coffee 1:30 Trans Support 2 Sex Ed 6 Vet Sup-	30 10:30 SS Yoga 1:30 Community Group			

Our sincere thanks & acknowledgement to our LGBT veterans! We appreciate your willingness to serve, and to do so with the even greater challenges involved because of others' perceptions of your sexual or gender identity. You are all HEROES. THANK YOU!