West of 50
July Newsletter — “You never completely have your rights, one person, until you all have your rights.” - Marsha P. Johnson

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Jason Gets Active Last summer my husband and I attended Douglas County Pride (Castle Rock Pride). The small event boasted drag, some vendors, food trucks, and lots of events for kids. That night we attended their moonlight dance party. We paid the fee to attend and donated some extra money to the organization. We enjoyed dancing outside and being around the community that we do not typically get to see. My husband and I live in Castle Rock. When we moved there in 2020, we did not realize how conservative the area was, nor did we know that it was home to many individuals who held such extreme political views.

While attending the 2022 Douglas County Pride we missed the drag show that has plagued the 2023 Pride planning and event since it happened. At the 2022 Pride drag show a queen was performing and aerial stunt and while spinning her blouse moved and exposed her breast plate. A Douglas County Commissioner used the wardrobe malfunction to score cheap political points by trying to ban the event. Since the nip slip, Castle Rock Pride has been on the defense navigating a commissioner and a county that has become increasingly hostile towards the community and the event.

This past winter my husband and I decided to engage the organization and assist with planning the 2023 pride. We have taken a role in planning the evening adult events. I have also used this to foster a stronger relationship between the two organizations. The Center hosted other state queer-focused organizations and provided them a free safety training day.

Recently, I attended a Douglas County library’s meeting that focused on the removal of LGBTQ+ book. During the event over 60 individuals engaged the board. A majority, almost 2-to-1, of the individuals present spoke on protecting LGBTQ+ books and other diverse readings from being removed from the shelves. I spoke on how a small group of people used photos of drag queens and cartoon porn to scare people into believing that there is an issue by villainizing the queer community.

This is the second time in two months that this group has tried to do this. This county continues its struggle with digesting diverse perspectives. I hope that as more people move into the area, we will start to see a shift.
- Jason

Douglas County Pride is set for August 26th.
Dunk & Munch— Developing & Maintaining Foundations of Lasting Relationships: Based on her social work background, Emma will explore therapeutic methodology based around the keys to building a strong relational foundation. We will cover concepts such as trust, respect, intimacy, communication, and emotional vulnerability. She is excited to discuss practical tools to help maintain these components of your relationship, as well as re-developing elements you seek to strengthen.

**Date:** Wednesday, July 5th  
**Time:** 11:45am – 1:00pm  
**RSVP with Jason or Bryant**

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As a reminder—The Center will be closed July 3rd & 4th!

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Poached Chicken, Escarole, & Pear salad— Whisk together 2 teaspoons red-wine vinegar and 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil; season with salt and pepper. Arrange 1 or 2 torn escarole leaves, 1/4 sliced pear, and 1/4 thinly sliced shallot on a plate; top with 1 sliced poached chicken breast half. Drizzle with a little vinaigrette and garnish with shaved pecorino cheese and chopped toasted walnuts.

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Dining & Developing with Jason— Love Languages: West of 50’s second most popular group is *Older, Wiser, Sexually Smarter.* I have come to understand that our community needs to process their trauma, learn about healthy sex, and develop the skills to be better partners.

We have all been hearing about the Love Languages. In this conversation we will unpack what they are, how they influence our relationships, and how they can be used universally. We will answer the following questions:

- What are your love languages?
- What makes you feel loved?
- What influences this?
- How do you like to give love?
- What influences this?
- What would be your 6th love language?

**Date:** Tuesday July, 18th 5:30p—7:30p. Will be at The Center. Must be 50 or older to attend and RSVP is required. Dinner is provided. This event is funded by AARP Colorado. RSVP with Jason or Bryant. If you have a food allergy please let us know in advance!

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The Lesbian Lounge— Join Emma for a four part series focused on supporting queer-identifying women, this group will be both in-person and virtual. These sessions will focus on anything from relationships, to health, to current events. The group will cover topics that **YOU** seek to discuss. Though the sessions will have a focus. Emma has crafted a spaced that allows for conversation, creativity, and learning. Below are the topics:

- July 10th: Fostering Intimacy Later In Life
- July 17th: Cultivating an Optimistic Outlook on Aging
- July 24th: Maintaining Community Involvement Through The Years
- July 31st: Preventative and Responsive Health: A conversation with Carey Candrian, PhD

**Date:** Starting July, 10th 10am –11:30am. This is a hybrid group. To attend online please contact Emma or Jason. Emma’s email: egrindle@lgbtqcolorado.org
The Pink Elephant
By Cristina Michaels

Here I stand in the middle of the room
The pink elephant
In all my glory, for all to see

Hiding from society
A gender construct impaled upon your conscience by King Patriarch himself

Yet Here! I stand exposed
In hiding
Feeling as large as a flea
On show at the circus

I cannot fix this issues

How many times have I thrown out my clothes?
How many times have I thrown out the ribbons and bows?
How many times is countless!

I cannot fix this issue!

I have a problem!

No, society has a problem
Throw them out
Society will not love you.
Society will

Only Kill You!

But I am supposed to wear those ribbon and bows
You don’t understand

No!
Throw them out
You are not welcome!
To this binary religion you shall succumb.

Here I stand in the middle of the room
The pink skinned elephant
In all my glory, for all to see
Hiding from society

Gender is a caste system!
This shackled
Gender’d
Identity is a bastille to me
It is here
To keeps their sexual Con-Scious-Ness

Safely under lock and key

This visual perspective of a male
Is a mirage
Water in the desert
LOOK… There Ships on the horizon
There you see a large body of water

Caste systems of gender

Like a forced fed goose readied for Foie Gras
Or the kept baby calf waiting to be plated for dinner

I am not your incarcerated force fed appetizer
Or your veal parma for your sexual karma

SO here I stand in the middle of this room
The pink skinned elephant
No longer hiding from society
An engrained social algorithm
A binary seed planned so deep - few will find
Monsanto’s pesticides sprayed upon your very breathe
While you inhale this gender genocidal Methe

The guillotine to your sexuality
Imposed out of fear
Searing in the favor of
Blind-ness

Has become quite
Mind-less

Throw out those clothes
They are not for your gender!
But I am supposed to wear those ribbons and bows!
You don’t understand
Gender constructs are a fickle trick.
POOF
I am female
There is no gender
Erase the whiteboard
Throw it out with my clothes

Caste systems for sexuality
Caste system for identities
Caste system of genders
Few see
Or
Can perceive.
You are welcome from
King Patriarch Themselves
Rainbow Road trips: United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum—Join West of 50 as we head up to Colorado Springs to visit the United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum. The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum is noted as one of the best attractions in the Springs. The Museum is dedicated to capturing and sharing the history of Team USA in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as the hopes and dreams of future generations. At the museum you’ll be able to explore the following exhibits: The Hall of Fame, Intro to the Games, Athlete Training, Medal Collection, Medal Ceremony, and more.

- 9:45a Leave The Center at 9:45a
- 11:00a Arrive in downtown Colorado Springs. You will be free to explore downtown and find a place to eat lunch. Lunch is on your own.
- 1:30p Enter the Museum
- 5:00p leave downtown Colorado Springs
- 6:15p return to The Center.

This trip includes transportation and entry into the museum. To RSVP you must RSVP with Jason or Bryant with $15.00 cash at time of RSVP. Your deposit is nonrefundable and due at time of RSVP.

Date: Thursday, July 20th 9:45am – 6:15pm
Cost: $15.00 nonrefundable
RSVP required to attend.

Lunch & Learn—Aging Safely Seminar The Aging Safely Seminar is a comprehensive event designed to empower seniors with the knowledge and practical strategies necessary to lead safe, healthy, and independent lives as they age. The seminar is led by Senior Real Estate Specialists with a specialized background of working with older adults in their home as Physical Therapists. Participants will have the opportunity to learn, engage, and gain valuable insights into various aspects of senior well-being.

Key Topics Covered:
- Home Modification: strategies to create safe living environment
- Senior Services: information about senior services to promote aging safely
- Downsizing: advantages and strategies of downsizing
- Differences between the communities/facilities: information about 55+/62 communities, independent living facility, assisted living
- Skilled nursing facilities.

By attending the Aging Safely Seminar, seniors will acquire practical tools and knowledge to navigate the aging process confidently, make informed decisions, and prioritize their overall well-being. The seminar aims to inspire seniors to embrace their golden years with vitality, independence, and a proactive approach to aging safely.

Date: Wednesday, July 19th
Time: 11:45am – 1:00pm
RSVP with Jason or Bryant

Happy Disability Pride Month!

July marks the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. As we celebrate this ground-breaking legislation and the strides made towards true accessibility, we also recognize the achievements, challenges, capabilities, and pride of this diverse group of people. This past fall West of 50 introduced new programming for the LGBTQ+ community with disabilities that focuses on holistic wellness, fostering healthy relationships, and building community. In continuation of this effort, we will be hosting a Disability Pride Month Celebration on Saturday, July 29th from 11-3pm. This event will feature information tables from organizations that serve people with disabilities, a speed-friending activity for creating new connections, and a performance/conversation with local Drag/Burlesque Artists Marionette Clown Toy (it/its) and Allie Soreass (zie/zir). Please visit our website to register for this event!

DATE: Saturday, July 29th 11am-3pm WHERE: The Center on Colfax
July's Search

Relationships
Disability
Seminar
Olympic
LGBTQ
Safely
Developing
Month

Foundations
Elephant
Maintaining
Dining
Pride
Love
Lasting
books

Developing
Languages
Rainbow
Poached
Paralympic
Road
Aging

Trip
### JULY 2023

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**Key:**
- Lesbian – Lesbian Lounge
- Story – Telling our Story
- DPSG – Disability Peer Support Group
- Sex – Older, Wiser, Sexually Smarter
- Vet – Veterans Support Group
- SS Yoga – Silver Sneakers Yoga
- Stitch – Stitch & Bitch
- Move – Movement
- Art – Open Art Studio

- MCoffee – McCormick Coffee
- M&D – McCormick & Dougherty
- AARP – American Association of Retired Persons
- L&L – Luthier & Luthier
- Road Trip – Rainbow Road Trip
- D&D – Dungeons & Dragons
- L & L – Luthier & Luthier
- 11am-3pm Disability Pride Month Celebration