

Sylvia Rivera, left, and Marsha P. Johnson protest at a rally for gay rights in New York in 1973.  
(Diana Davies/Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library)

**HEALTHY COOKING**

NEW RECIPE

**SOCIAL ANALOG**

**PRIDE IN 2020**

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

**BOOKCLUB**

**ADAPTING TO  
CHANGE AT WORK**

**PLAY BALL!** WITH SOUTHERN SHOTOUT

**STILL NOT SAFE**

**PINK**

**MAGAZINE**

**JUNE 2020 | ISSUE 3**



TODAY MARKS THE BEGINNING OF PRIDE MONTH. PRIDE IS RECOGNIZED EACH JUNE AS A TIME FOR OUR COMMUNITY TO CELEBRATE AUTHENTICITY, CREATE VISIBILITY, AND PAY HOMAGE TO THOSE WHO IGNITED A REBELLION AGAINST UNWAVERING SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION. AND YET, WE STILL EXPERIENCE DISCRIMINATION, BIGOTRY, AND HATE, SIMPLY FOR BEING WHO WE ARE. THE STONEWALL RIOTS OF JUNE 1969 INCLUDED 5 DAYS OF RIOTS LED BY BLACK AND BROWN TRANS AND LGB INDIVIDUALS. WERE IT NOT FOR MARSHA P. JOHNSON, SYLVIA RIVERA, STORMÉ DELARVERIE, AND SO MANY OTHERS, WE WOULD NOT CELEBRATE LGBTQ RIGHTS TODAY. NOW IT IS OUR TURN. OUR TURN FOR WHITE LGBTQ AMERICANS TO LISTEN AND FOLLOW BLACK LEADERSHIP AS WE DID 51 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH. OUR COMMUNITY IS SUFFERING AND IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE HONOR AND UPLIFT THE VOICES OF BLACK AMERICANS. WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR BLACK COMMUNITY, BLACK YOUTH, AND ALL THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO SEEK AN END TO BIGOTRY, HATE, RACISM, AND SYSTEMATIC INJUSTICE.

**BLACK LIVES MATTER.**







June 5, 2020

This week marks the beginning of Pride month, which includes June 19th, or “Juneteenth.” Juneteenth celebrations in America date back to 1865, marking the Emancipation of the last remaining enslaved African Americans in the Confederacy. Pride is recognized each June as a time for LGBTQ communities to celebrate authenticity, create visibility, and pay homage to those who have heroically challenged deeply ingrained systems of oppression. The Stonewall Riots of June 1969 sparked the first wide advocacy movements for LGBTQ rights in the US, and included five days of protests led by Black and Brown trans and LGB individuals. Were it not for Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Stormé DeLarverie, and untold others, we today could not celebrate LGBTQ rights.

But the fight is not over. Countless many still experience discrimination, bigotry, and hate aimed against them, simply for being who they are. Our local community is suffering following the recent murder of George Floyd, and we wish to honor the lives and uplift the voices of all Black Americans.

We the people of Birmingham AIDS Outreach (BAO), Magic City Wellness Center, Magic City Acceptance Center, and Magic City Acceptance Academy are dedicated advocates who passionately embrace serving all community members of the City of Birmingham. Through this statement, we express in unified voice our solidarity with all who support, venerate, and speak the names Bonita Carter, E.J. Bradford, Jr., Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Nina Pop, Tony McDade, and so many people like George Floyd whose lives have been ended in violent manifestations of hundreds of years of systemic racism and racial oppression. We see and hear these names forever emblazoned alongside names that appear on the shared pages of history written and spoken across local communities the world-wide.

As James Baldwin wrote, “Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” We express our commitment to face the many societal masks behind which hide innumerable injustices, inequalities, and inequities that have historically privileged white over Black and Brown, property over lives, state condoned violence over peaceful protest, wealth by birth over disadvantage, straight over gay, patriarchy over pluralism, white collar over blue collar, homogeneity over diversity, and exclusion over inclusion.

Naming is but one step in facing these privileges, these imbalances, and these abuses of power. Accordingly, we believe in forging new programs with diverse partners, inspiring supportive conversations, and offering community-driven services to engender uplifting empowerment and egalitarian change. We commit to seeking an end to pervasive and systemic racism through accessible community programs, advocacy, education, and purposeful policy change. We stand in solidarity with our Black community and with all those who continue to seek an end to systematic injustice and its insidious mechanisms of bigotry, hate, and racism.

Our mission at BAO is to enhance the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS, at-risk affected individuals, and the LGBTQ community through outreach, age-appropriate prevention education, and supportive services. In working hard to serve communities, we are re-committing ourselves to listening to and learning from Black and Brown individuals through more bias and sensitivity trainings, more community forums, and celebrating content from Black and Brown writers, artists, and people identified by the community on our social media platforms and Pink magazine. You have entrusted BAO to serve the community for decades, and we acknowledge and thank you for that special trust. We believe that current community unrest and anguish are catalysts for immediate and lasting changes to the unfair, unjust, and unequal treatment of Black Americans.

Black Lives Matter.

The staff of BAO

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# PINK

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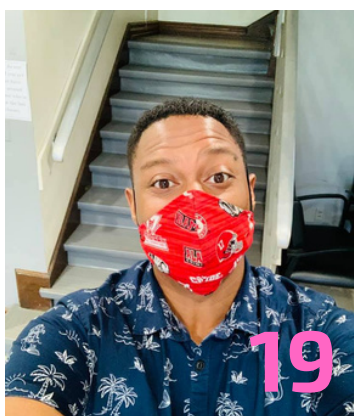
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### WE'RE STILL NOT SAFE

**OPINION PIECE**

# PINK

## MAGAZINE



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# HEALTHY COOKING

Joshua Glenn, BAO Food and Nutrition Educator

**As the weather heats up, it's time to fire up the grill and turn off the oven. This month I'm focusing on healthy side dishes, one that requires zero cooking time and the other that can be done completely on the grill.**

**This refreshing Watermelon Feta Salad with Basil is perfect for summer. Sweet ripe watermelon salad combined with feta cheese and fresh basil is simply dressed with olive oil and lime juice. It's a sweet-and-salty combination that is sure to be a hit. Toss in some mixed greens and grilled chicken and you have a complete meal.**

**Next we're making a cheesy stuffed Zucchini, which will have you questioning why you haven't made these sooner. Pair up these zucchini boats with charred pork chops, smoked fish and other grilled greats. Not warm enough for cooking al fresco? Your old-fashioned oven will do.**

**We recently featured both of these recipes during our Friday cooking videos from BAO. Each Friday we post a different healthy recipe in a cooking show format so we can show you step by step how to recreate some of these ideas at home. Be sure to tune in each Friday on our Facebook page or on our YouTube channel BAOBHM.**

**Get out and grill, because summer will be gone before we know it!**

# WATERMELON SALAD

## INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 cups cubed seedless watermelon
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 cup red onion thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped basil
- flaky sea salt for garnish (optional)
- balsamic glaze (optional)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, red wine vinegar, lime juice and salt.
2. In a large serving bowl, combine watermelon, cucumber, feta, red onion, and basil. Pour dressing over watermelon mixture and toss to combine.
3. Garnish with more basil, flaky sea salt and drizzle with balsamic glaze.
4. ENJOY!



# GRILLED STUFFED ZUCCHINI

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 medium zucchini
- 5 teaspoons olive oil, divided
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped red onion
- 1/2 medium bell pepper finely chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon chopped garlic
- 1/2 cup dry bread crumbs or panko
- 1/2 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh basil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut zucchini in half lengthwise. Grill for 2-3 minutes on both sides until grill marks appear. Scoop out pulp, leaving 1/4 inch shells. Brush with 2 teaspoons of oil. Set aside. Chop pulp.
2. In a large skillet, saute pulp and onion in remaining oil. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer. Add bread crumbs; cook and stir until golden brown, about 2 minutes.
3. Remove from heat. Stir in mozzarella cheese, basil, salt and pepper. Spoon into zucchini shells. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.
4. Grill, covered, over medium heat until zucchini is tender, 5-8 minutes (or bake in oven at 400 degrees for 5 minutes).





## 2ND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH

5:30-7:00 PM  
3130 3rd AVENUE SOUTH  
B'HAM, AL 35233

EMAIL: [LAUREN@MCAC-BAO.ORG](mailto:LAUREN@MCAC-BAO.ORG)



# & QUEER TRANS PEOPLE OF COLOR

# SPEAK OUT!

## 3RD WEDNESDAYS @ 6 PM



3130 3RD AVENUE SOUTH, BIRMINGHAM, AL 35233



Speak OUT offers an inclusive space for LGBTQ adults, ages 25+ to build community, discuss common issues, seek resources, and support.

# WHAT DOES PRIDE

## MEAN TO YOU?

Featuring the staff of BAO, MCAC and MCWC

### GINA

To me, Pride means momentum - the energy that we need to slay our oppressors. Many say that the country is a better place for LGBTQ+ folks now more than ever. Sadly, this is true and we are still suffering. In 2015, when the Supreme Court ruled 5 to 4 in favor of marriage equality (Obergefell v. Hodges), it was a major breakthrough for LGBTQ+ people in America. But since then, tons of new and pre-existing issues have been exacerbated and continued to plague our community without resolve. If our great American past has taught us anything, it's that if we, as registered voters, don't require excellence and equality of the elected officials with whom we place our trust, we will continue to lose countless lives to our broken system.

We must register, vote and make real sustainable change. This current arrangement of "looking the other way" when hateful legislation is introduced is severely problematic because it propagates perils for all people, consents hatred and pushes an anachronous obstacle further in the future. We've given our American lawmakers plenty of time to make LGBTQ+ safety and equality in America a reality - to stop stalling and start protecting us. If they won't, then we'll simply elect folks who will. And Pride gives us the momentum to maintain our presence, keep recruiting allies, and changing the minds of the apathetic for our cause. (Continue reading this piece on page 25 of this magazine)

### DESTINY

What does pride mean to me? I would say this is an easy answer but its not. Pride means waking up everyday to live your authentic life. However, not all of us can. It mean to be queer and in the south fearing for our lives everyday. Wondering if you are going to make it the day without being bullied, outed, or hurt. Pride means being resilient in a time were our own government set to take away some privileges that we are just now starting to enjoy. Pride means waking up everyday wondering, if I have to show my ID, would someone harm me because one simple letter. Pride means giving respect to the trans women who came before us and threw the first brick during the Stonewall Riots 51 years ago.

Pride also means being able to celebrate in safe places that openly and lovingly welcome us. I find myself feeling the safest around my own community. It's much like when I go to AI's on Seventh, literally everyone knows your name. Pride month may look or be a little different this year but If you wake up everyday and you show your pride all year you don't just need a day, week, month. This is just what pride means to me.

### JOSHUA

I remember when I first came out. I said that I might be gay but, I would never be one of "those" gays that walks down the street with a Pride Flag strapped to their back. Fast forward many years and I have done more than just walk down the street with a pride flag on my back. It took time to understand that pride can mean so many different things to different people and can be expressed in so many different ways. Pride means living a life that is authentic and true to who you are. Pride is also remembering those who have paved the way and fought for us to have rights, and supporting those that continue the fight for equality. I have come a long way from saying I would never, to saying that I have. I can now say that I am Proud. And whether you choose to celebrate by throwing on glitter and an outfit made of rainbows and running down the street screaming at the top of your lungs, or you choose to take a more subdued approach, be proud of who you are, because I am proud of you.

### SINSERITI

What does Pride mean to me being African American and Woman of Trans experience? I would have to say to be Resilient. A leader knowing your worth and living by it. Living out loud in your truth, walking tall with your head held high and your voice heard making the impossible, possible.

We should show our pride 365, not just in June. Be the impression that will make a lasting impact. The Pride events are a fellowship of family reunion and coming together to continue the fight of acceptance. We do this by offering entertainment, cultural events, chances to show your pride, food, laughs, and memories, but most all love. It simply means I'm here, I have dignity, I have a voice, I am somebody. Be you, be free. Once you find pride within yourself the world will eventually see the struggle wasn't easy but your pride will help you make a way. Ms. Central Alabama Pride I am Sinseriti





# **LIFE AFTER LOSS**

## **LGBTQ GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP**

**Life After Loss is an ongoing monthly support group to help LGBTQ individuals who have lost a loved one cope with personal experiences of grief in a safe, affirming, and caring environment.**

**\*To participate in this group, individuals must contact Katie Reese at [katie@mcwc-bao.org](mailto:katie@mcwc-bao.org) or (205) 877-8677 for a brief intake interview to ensure this is an appropriate group for your needs.**

# CATCHING UP WITH CAP

Written by Kyle Pugh

Pride in Central Alabama is not just a week a year but is instead an entire year commitment. Having served on the board and also as board President through happy events like marriage equality and tragic events like the Pulse Orlando tragedy I can tell you first hand it never gets easier. However, during that time I never had to battle a global pandemic so I am sure it has presented an entirely new set of challenges never seen before.



Throughout the year our pride board spends time not only fundraising for the annual Pride Week but also raising funding and awareness for many LGBTQ organizations throughout our region. Although sometimes a thankless job it is a rewarding experience and a role of leadership within the community...A true honor and badge to wear with PRIDE!

As I am sure you have heard by now most pride celebrations throughout the country and the world have been cancelled for 2020 due to the current pandemic but the show must go on. I spoke with Justin McGuire, the new President of CAP about their plans and ideas for moving forward.

## **SO, IT IS A CRAZY YEAR FOR EVERYONE....HOW HAS CAP ADAPTED TO THE CHANGES?**

Currently we have adapted some of our LIVE events to be virtual such as Pride Idol and the Central Alabama Pride Newcomer Pageant. We are doing all we can to ensure our community and individuals on the board are kept safe and remain compliant with all regulations put forth by the city, state and federal government.

## **WHAT IS THE PLAN FOR CAP IN 2020?**

We are still running business as normal to advocate and inform our community on all pertinent matters. We have an excellent board and we are working diligently to continue this great organization and tradition of pride in the state of Alabama.

## **ARE THERE STILL EVENTS THAT WILL HAPPEN IN SOME WAY WHILE WE ARE UNABLE TO GATHER?**

We are still co-hosting the Pride Spoken Word event as well as hosting Pride Idol and the Newcomer pageant. We will be posting more information on these events and future events on our website and Facebook page.

## **HOW CAN SOMEONE BECOME INVOLVED WITH CAP?**

If there are community members and allies who would like to be involved or learn how to become board members we highly encourage them to attend our monthly board meetings and reach out to us through our website and Facebook. We do request those interested in joining the board attend the June and July monthly meetings.

## **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT BEING A PART OF CENTRAL ALABAMA PRIDE?**

I love being able to give back to all communities attached to this great organization and focusing on the communities to build unity and peace. "We are all human, we are all unique, we are all beautiful, and we all matter!" This is my personal motto in life and how I serve my community.

## **ARE THERE ANY NEW THINGS WE CAN EXPECT FROM CAP IN THE COMING YEARS?**

Although this year has been a tough one, we are planning many great events for the 2021 year. I don't want to give too much information because this board has worked so hard to try to make up for the COVID-19 pandemic. I can say big dreams and plans have been brought before the board and it is our hope for them to come to life.



Justin McGuire  
President, Central Alabama Pride, Inc.



# JOIN US ONLINE

## VIRTUAL PROGRAMS



### YOUTH (AGES 13-24) PROGRAMS:

- ▼ DISCORD DROP-IN HOURS 3-5 PM TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS
- ▼ QUEER & TRANS POC (QTPOC) TALK WATCH PARTIES
- ▼ SELF-CARE WORKSHOP 3:30-4:30 2ND TUESDAY

### ADULT PROGRAMS:

- ▼ SHELTER-IN-PLACE SUPPORT 5-6 PM TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS
- ▼ LGBTQ BOOK CLUB 6-7 PM 3RD WEDNESDAY
- ▼ LOVE TRANSFORMED 4:30-5:30 4TH FRIDAY
- ▼ SPACE TO BE ME (PARENTS) 11-12:30 3RD SATURDAY



# LGBTQ BOOK CLUB

In the world of audio books and social distancing there is some comfort in picking up a hardbacked copy from your favorite author and escaping into a different world. BAO offers a meeting space for a monthly LGBTQ Book Club that offers a variety of reading options and a space to discuss them. We sat down with the leader of the book club Ben Shepard to find out more about the club.

## GIVE US A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LGBTQ BOOKCLUB

The idea of this club began over dinner with friends. We all enjoyed reading and recognized that many of our conversations were about books we wanted to read. We expected there were others out there having the same conversations. Deciding to join a book club, we started looking for an LGBTQ group. There was not a group associated with BAO/MCAC at that time, so Karen and Amanda offered support and helped to promote us. Since none of us had been in a book club before, there was no understanding of how things should be run. We only knew we wanted a no pressure, casual group where all opinions were valued...a group where everyone was comfortable.

## WHAT AGE GROUP IS THE BOOKCLUB OPEN TO?

Quoting from our first Facebook flyer...Open to ALL individuals of ALL ages.

## HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT CHOOSING THE BOOK OF THE MONTH?

All of our books begin as suggestions by group members. As the club has grown, our collection of members and their life experiences has broadened. This has trickled down to our book suggestions and has caused us to read a wider variety of subjects and styles. We typically chose books with some connection to the LGBTQ community, but it is not a requirement. Some of our selections have been impacting and we continue to discuss them for months. A couple have been total bombs...but, we always have snacks and fun chatting. Haha

## IS THERE ANY WAY TO PARTICIPATE IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO PURCHASE THE SELECTION OF THE MONTH?

We have a strong connection to the Jefferson County Public Library system and always let them know our club selections. They have been very helpful in arranging a number of books to be available.

## HOW LONG HAS THE BOOK CLUB BEEN AROUND?

Our first meeting was April 15th 2015 and we have met monthly since then. We missed one month due to sheltering-in-place, but are now meeting virtually with Zoom.

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK THE CLUB HAS READ SO FAR?

It's hard to pick just one, so...A Little Life by Hanya Yanagihara, Tipping the Velvet by Sarah Waters, and The North Water by Ian McGuire

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE CLUB?

I have met new friends through this group and gotten to know a few old friends better. You can really get to know someone through what they read. Our discussions have really surprised me. Book discussions are really personal and allow us to discuss our feelings, thoughts, observations, etc.

## CAN YOU RECOMMEND A FEW BOOKS THAT WOULD MAKE GOOD SUMMER READING?

I'm not sure if these make good "summer reads", but these are books I've been wanting to read: Shuggie Bain by Douglas Stuart, Boys of Alabama by Genevieve Hudson

## WHEN AND WHERE DOES THE CLUB MEET?

Book Club meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:00 in the BAO Building. We are currently using Zoom to have Virtual Book Club. Hopefully, we will be able to meet again in person soon.

**JOIN US AT BAO AT 6PM  
ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH!**

book

L G B T Q I A

queer

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BIRMINGHAM AIDS OUTREACH.ORG



# SOCIAL ANALOG

a gay man's story of life without social media

## OPINION PIECE BY: IAN HUNTER

F\*&\$ Facebook! No, not really. Did an alliterative indignation get your attention? I'm no apologist; I have no intent to persuade or dissuade you that giving up partial or all social media, like I have, is sanctimonious. Though when I was first considering it four years ago, I thought people who had done so were holier than thou and deserved arrant exalt. Furthermore, I thought I would find some kind of divine, beatific clarity of life, free from algorithms, influencers, trolls and [people of political extremism]. I know I'm not the only one who thought this. I sometimes like to weave into normal conversation that I'm sans social media. It's like the way you always know who's vegan, on keto, or who does CrossFit; it's the first thing they tell you. If they're a keto vegan CrossFitter, your head will explode. Fair warning, beware. But jokes aside, when I mention in [passive] conversation to new people I meet that no, you can't find me on Facebook, I get these starry-eyed fawning responses of, "Wow! How do you do that? Can you turn water into wine, too?" Most people really do say the wildest things realizing they can't contemplate even 24 hours without social media.

#LoveThatJourneyForYou

I've learned those thoughts were beguiling. The charming idea that life's chaos might suddenly be solved without the constant nagging 'ding' from your internet device, causing small amounts of dopamine in your brain to fire, only to learn that your mother liked your half-naked selfie you posted in the gym after a great workout because you forgot to put her on your restricted list, and all you're really desperately wanting is that hot lawyer or dentist guy to know is that you go to the same gym he does so you can finally start posting twinsie couple photos together half naked in the same gym mirror, but then your whole family is asking why the curtains don't match the drapes and you're screwed.

The past four and a half years of my life have been a turbulent and traumatic roller coaster that lead to addiction and a loss of everything I had worked my whole life for. As of this writing, I've been completely void of social media for 415 days after I finally deleted Facebook. For over a year leading up to my ultimate resolve, back and forth I would go, deleting and then reactivating, fed up one month, and then desperate for my social media fix the next. This process lead to the realization that I was abusing social media and dating apps for validation, pity, and inauthentic fulfillment as a scapegoat and denial for my addiction, loneliness, depression, and general self-dislike.

But depriving myself of digital connection through social media did not stop my life's chaos.

I had rebuilt my life here in Birmingham, only to have my near dream job ripped away from me last year after being discriminated against. After all the relentless effort, I was in pain again, and because I no longer had social media as an outlet, there were very few avenues for me to use to reach out for help or friendship. Quitting social media forces oneself to confront every ugly truth about themselves, because you can't hide behind a shirtless selfie anymore, or bear all in some rant about life's injustices to a friend list of thousands of people, more than half of which at least that I didn't even actually know.

I've interrupted my train of thought as I write this because Birmingham is itself in a state of destruction, rioting, and mourning, all as we head into Pride Month that is stifled from the COVID-19 pandemic. Because I sit on a plane of life where I can't see what's going down news feeds, or videos of protests, I also cannot see all of the good that goes on either. I have to live it.

The biggest lesson I learned from the past 415 days, is the same old saying, "You have to be the change you wish to see in the world."



GUEST OPINION  
PIECE

The key to that phrase is 'be the change', i.e. moderation.

It takes conscious effort to wake up every morning and have a passion for trying to be a better human being than the one you were the day before. But it doesn't happen overnight.

You don't go to the gym one day and wake up Arnold Schwarzenegger the next; you don't eat the keto diet one day and wake up in full ketosis (yes, I am looking at you) the next; and unfortunately, most bigots don't experience an epiphany, not overnight at least.

I've certainly done things in the last 415 days I deeply regret, but it's waking up with that intent to try to do better, even if you don't always get it right.

The following things I have actively been doing [most] every day to be a better human. Social media saint or not, you can do them too. But, I didn't just start them 415 days ago. They have been culminating for years and months, and they all started with...moderation.

The biggest tool I found to help with leaving social media was journaling. But, I am not talking about that sulky writing composition notebook you were forced to word vomit onto a whole page in grammar school. I started privately journaling on an app called 'Day One' in September 2018. It is a free app, and no, I don't own stock in it. However, it works almost exactly like Facebook, but it's private. Whatever drunken (or sober) rant you want to go on, whatever body progress picture you want to memorialize, whatever checklist for the day you need to put down in writing, you can do it all in the privacy of this app. No 'likes', 'loves' comments to dictate how you're going to feel throughout the day. It's just you. Take pictures, upload videos, use hashtags to organize your entries. But the most therapeutic part: time.

Like Facebook, the app has features that you can turn on to show you what you were doing that day a year ago. Except, this isn't just check-ins or gym selfies. It could be but I would tell you to slide them in my DMs....which can't happen for obvious reasons. The point is, it allows you to see your mental, physical, or spiritual status a year ago, and then write again whatever is on your mind, and however you were feeling on that day a year ago. It's a powerful thing. The distinction is using the past as a tool to learn from rather than reliving it.

Lastly, in the spirit of Pride Month, the most important thing we all must remember is friendship and community. When I came to Birmingham, I was fortunate to have a small base of longtime friends already here. That base grew into a network of people that I couldn't be more grateful to have met. Those people took the time to directly invite me to house parties and events, because they couldn't just send me an invite on Facebook. They looked past my imperfections and transgressions and forgave.

As our communities cautiously reopen and we all soon start coming together to support each other, I implore all of you: **PUT DOWN YOUR PHONES AND LIFT EACH OTHER UP.**

-Ian

FIND IAN ON



@(Just Kidding)





# LGBTQ LEGAL @BAO

## NEW!

PRO-BONO  
LEGAL SERVICES  
FOR THE LGBTQ  
COMMUNITY

PROBATE LAW

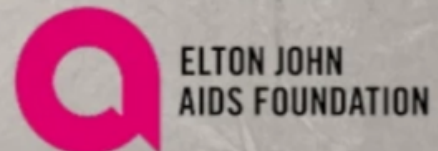
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# MAKING IT WORK

ADAPTING WORK LIFE AND DAILY LIFE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

OPINION PIECE BY CHRIS CAMPBELL



**The last 90 days have been crazy, to say the least! I feel as though I've received a PH.D in social work because I've been working very closely with our case management/social work team everyday.**

Before Covid-19, I was the director of the Game Changer project. My staff and I worked tirelessly and vigorously with outreach projects that centered around Black MSM (men who sleep with men) and Black trans females, testing them for HIV and STIs. We have worked events such as The Magic City Classic and Project Homeless Connect. We've also staged testing sites at local restaurants, shopping malls, and college campuses around town.

After Covid-19, whereas I am still the Game Changer Director, I am now helping to facilitate curbside client services for the clients of BAO. Previously, the clients would come inside the building and wait for their respective appointments with a social worker to receive services. Now the clients are to stay inside their vehicles and a curbside liaison will greet them and check them in for their appointments. At which point I will then go inside and relay that to the social worker and they will proceed to do all the necessary paperwork for the client to receive their services. Upon completion, I then take the paperwork back to the client and their appointment is complete.



Every client is different and has different circumstances. Some get frustrated with having to wait outside, some do not have all of the necessary documents for their appointments which causes another level of frustration, some clients are up in age and communication is difficult, some clients are newly diagnosed individuals and that comes with its own set of obstacles. Whatever the case may be, I have to remain professional and calm so that they receive the best care we can provide. I must admit that is very difficult, at times. The social work team have been very helpful. They've given lots of useful advice!

The staff at BAO was split into 2 teams. Team A and Team B. Over the years our staff has grown exponentially so with 2 different teams it allowed me to become closer with people I wouldn't have been close to otherwise. In the midst of dealing with several different personalities on a daily basis, I must say that my favorite thing about working at BAO is knowing I am helping folks that need our services. It puts a huge smile on my face to know that I had a part in making their lives a little more bearable.

For the past 15 years I've been a drag queen and since 2011 I've been an employee of Al's on Seventh. Being a public figure in town and working for an LGBTQ non-profit organization has its ups and downs. I sometimes feel that people are always looking at me. What I mean by that is I am always scrutinized. I can't mess up. I can't fail people. But the truth is that I'm human. I have feelings. I've learned, though, that we have to put other's needs ahead of our own sometimes. Not all of the time, but sometimes.

It is very gratifying to know that during the day I'm helping lives and at night I'm sort of doing the same thing by entertaining and making folks smile. It's a great feeling!

During this pandemic, it almost feels like I'm living someone else's life. I feel like I'm a social worker, which I am not. And I'm not going out to the bars every weekend slinging up as a drag queen, which I am. It has definitely put things into perspective how quickly one's life can change. But we have to roll with the punches and make lemonade out of lemons, or something like that lol.



**YOU CAN FIND CHRIS EVERY DAY AT BAO AND CATCH CIERRA SYMONE CAMPBELL AT AL'S ON SEVENTH AS PART OF THE DREAMCAST.**



**DRIVE THRU HIV AND STD  
TESTING AT BAO**

**TUESDAY/THURSDAY 12-6**

**TAKE HOME KIT AND DROP OFF  
BOX FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE**



# PLAY BALL!

Get to know the New South Softball League and the latest on Southern Shootout



Softball has always been a huge part of the LGBTQ community in Birmingham and it continues to go strong today. As the hosts of one of the oldest and longest running LGBTQ softball tournaments in the country, New South Softball League is a proud part of our community in Birmingham. Although things are different these days we wanted to catch up with Eric White, Southern Shootout Tournament Director to find out more about the league and any updates on the tournament weekend.

## GIVE US A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF NSSL

The NSSL stands for the NewSouth Softball League. We are a LGBTQIA and Straight Ally softball organization that provides a fun and positive environment of competition and camaraderie for players in Central Alabama. Since the organization of the NSSL, we have provided a fun exciting outlet for the sports enthusiasts in Birmingham. The NSSL is founded on the LGBTQIA equality platform, however we encourage everyone to come out and play and enjoy the game. We have a lot of Straight Ally supporters, children, and all walks of life that join us every Sunday during the season to play and or just come out and enjoy the games! Our league includes players of all experience and skill levels. Our three divisions, "C", "D", & "E", provide a place for everyone to play.

## HOW LONG HAS THE NSSL BEEN AROUND?

The NewSouth Softball League was deemed an organization in 1983. When we started the league there were just a handful of teams and we have grown to almost 15 teams that participate. In addition to our organization we became a member of the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA) in 1983 becoming the 12th member city in its ranks. NAGAAA is a nonprofit international organization comprised of men and women dedicated to promoting amateur athletics for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQIA) community.

## WHAT IS SOUTHERN SHOOTOUT AND HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN AROUND?

My baby, Southern Shootout has been around for 38 years. We have grown the tournament now to being able to accept 55 teams from all over the United States and Canada to the Magic City! In addition to the GSWS (Gay Softball World Series) hosted by a different NAGAAA member city each year, our teams participate in tournaments in other cities such as Atlanta, Tampa, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, Dallas, Knoxville, Nashville, and New Orleans.

## SOUTHERN SHOOTOUT HAS A CLAIM TO FAME, CORRECT?

Yes our claim to fame is being the oldest and consecutively run tournament in the United States. We are known in the softball community for our Tournament and were the only ones that offer an "open bar" registration party on Friday night!

## WHAT IS THE PLAN FOR THIS YEARS TOURNAMENT?

In light of the recent events in Birmingham and the ongoing increase in cases of COVID-19, I as well as the Executive Board of the New South Softball League feels that it is best to cancel Southern Shootout 2020. This decision does not come lightly, swiftly, or in haste. We have been in constant communications with the City, State and the Parks and Recreation Board of Birmingham. They have advised us that the fields are no longer permissible to be used.

## WELL, THATS NO FUN BUT TOTALLY UNDERSTANDABLE.....

For myself, nothing brings more joy and happiness to my heart is to see George Ward filled with all of your smiling and happy faces each year. We want everyone to stay safe and healthy. With that being said we hope to see all of you again for Shootout 2021! Mark all of your calendars for April 2-4, 2021 for our tournament! Since you guys are not getting to experience the Southern Hospitality this year, we plan on making the tournament bigger and better than ever!

## **IT SOUNDS EXCITING AND FUN! ALL THE MORE REASON FOR PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED WITH NSSL. HOW CAN THEY DO THAT?**

If ANYONE, has ever thought about putting on a glove, lacing up cleats, and or even just wanting to volunteer their time with us we welcome you with open arms. The best way to get involved is to either go to our website ([www.newsouthsoftball.net](http://www.newsouthsoftball.net)) or when we are able to have games just come out and let us know just want you want to do! We do not turn ANYONE away! We want to build and grow the league to be more competitive and more fun! If you can't make it out to the field you can always email the Executive board at [nsslexecboard@gmail.com](mailto:nsslexecboard@gmail.com). We always tell people if you are not sure about your skill level, we have 3 different divisions of the League to best suite anyone and everyone.

## **TELL US MORE ABOUT YOU. WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THE LEAGUE?**

Currently and for the last 5 years I have been Southern Shootout's Tournament director. But during my 12 years of playing I have been the secretary, and Public relations Director. What do I love about the league, that is easy to answer. I have built so many lasting relationships while playing that I could never take for granted. We are a FAMILY! I can honestly say that the year I started playing softball I was in a dark place in my life, contemplating what's next for me, why did I move to Birmingham, and who were going to be my friends. I was invited out to a practice and honestly have not looked back since. As soon as I stepped onto the fields all of my questions were answered, and I was accepted for me, no questions asked. I don't know where I would be without the league. We have seen many come and go from the league either by unfortunate death and or just not being able to play anymore and every one of them are my brothers and sisters. I wouldn't have it any other way.

## **IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE THE COMMUNITY TO KNOW ABOUT THE LEAGUE OR THIS YEARS TOURNAMENT?**

Over the next couple of days any registration fees that your teams have paid will be refunded in the same way that they were submitted. Please allow us a couple of days to get that back to all of you. If your team does not see the refund over the next couple of days please contact myself, Eric White or email our executive board at [nsslexecboard@gmail.com](mailto:nsslexecboard@gmail.com). In addition if you have preordered the Shootout Jersey, we have been in contact with Legacy Sports and they have told us that any monies that you guys have paid in can either be carried over until next year for 2021 or you can email then to inquire about a refund.

## **I THINK I CAN SPEAK FOR EVERYONE WHEN I SAY I CAN'T WAIT FOR 2021. THANK YOU FOR GIVING US THIS UPDATE AND HERE'S HOPING WE CAN SEE EVERYONE BACK ON THE FIELDS SOON!**

Thank you so much for doing this!



*Eric White (pictured left) is the  
Tournament Director for  
Southern Shootout*

**YOU CAN FIND THE NEW SOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUE ON FACEBOOK @NEWSOUTHSOFTBALL AND KEEP UP WITH INFORMATION ON SOUTHERN SHOOTOUT ON FACEBOOK @SOUTHERNSHOOTOUT**

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[magiccitywellnesscenter.org](http://magiccitywellnesscenter.org)



# WE'RE STILL NOT SAFE

## WHY LGBTQ FOLKS AND OUR ALLIES STILL MUST VOTE IN EVERY ELECTION

OPINION PIECE BY GINA MALLISHAM

**Our nation's moral obligation to support LGBTQ+ individuals has been unmet for too long. It's hard for me to believe that we are entering the second decade of this millennium and state legislatures continue to advance bills that target transgender people, pre-empt local protections, and allow the use of religion to discriminate. While more states work every year to pass laws to protect LGBTQ+**

people, some continue devoting tax dollars to measures that target trans and non-binary people for discrimination. Red states attempt to adopt laws barring access to or even criminalizing the use of restrooms, restricting trans students' ability to fully participate in school and sports, barring healthcare for trans youth, allowing religiously-motivated discrimination against trans people, or making it more difficult for trans people to get identification documents with their name and gender.

The COVID-19 crisis has actually helped the LGBTQ+ community in many ways - pausing the spring legislative session. Bills pre-empting local LGBTQ+ protections prevent cities and other local governments from passing nondiscrimination protections that are more extensive than the protections offered at a state level. So while many municipalities have championed nondiscrimination ordinances in 2020 in the even reddest of regions, state governments can deem them unconstitutional and reverse or invalidate them as quickly as they are introduced. Bills allowing equal employment opportunities, requiring fair practices in public lodging establishments and food service, allowing updates to gender markers on government ID for trans and non-binary folks, and provided much needed LGBTQ protections in healthcare are often held up at the state level and never signed into law.

Our legislatures shouldn't be spending valuable time and tax dollars defending a bill that aims to prohibit a child placing agency contracting with the state to provide foster care services from discriminating against a family because of the sexual orientation of any family member. We shouldn't be contesting a bill that allows healthcare professionals to deny services to individuals whose personal lives "violate ethical, moral, or religious beliefs." What's more, we shouldn't have to contend with politicians put in office by bigots who don't share any of the dilemmas that they exacerbate or lived experiences that they condemn. Lesbian, gay and transgender people, particularly those of color, experience violence at excessively high rates red to straight cisgender people. Protections for trans individuals who are slain at record high numbers should be compulsory, not rescinded. Job security, access to affirming healthcare and earnest consideration for the health disparities of LGBTQ folks is desperately needed. Accountability for these securities lies not only within law enforcement agencies, but the legislature as well.

Research shows that anti-LGBTQ discrimination has harmful effects on queer-identified workers' economic well being, leading to high rates of unemployment, homelessness, poor health and food insecurity. Societal and systematic discrimination cause health disparities for the LGBTQ community that aren't typically experienced by heterosexual and cisgender folks. Studies have proven the mental health of our marginalized community is in despair, yet little has changed to affirm LGBTQ people from coast to coast. Paired with inadequate health care access, this causes LGBTQ people living in the intersections to have unmet health needs and difficulty accessing care or obtaining insurance. This leads to higher rates of disease, chronic illness, drug use, mental illness and obesity among our people. These disparities are exacerbated for the non-binary community. Long ago, The Transgender Law Center uncovered the pervasiveness of gender identity discrimination in insurance, denial of insurance coverage and trans-related health care exclusions in the private market that keep transgender and non-binary people from accessing medically necessary care like mental health services, surgery and hormone therapy.



# WE'RE STILL NOT SAFE

Continued.....

Here we are celebrating another Pride Month. This annual observance gives us the momentum that we need to slay our oppressors. Many say the country is a better place for LGBTQ+ folks now more than ever. Sadly, this is true and we are still suffering. In 2015, when the Supreme Court ruled 5 to 4 in favor of marriage equality (*Oberefell v. Hodges*), it was a major breakthrough for LGBTQ+ people in America. But since then, tons of new and pre-existing issues have been exacerbated and continued to plague our community without resolve. If our great American past has taught us anything, it's that if we, as registered voters, don't require excellence of the elected officials with whom we place our trust, we will continue to lose countless lives in our broken system.

We must register, vote and make real sustainable change. This current arrangement of "looking the other way" when hateful legislation is introduced is severely problematic because it propagates perils for all people, consents hatred and pushes an anachronous obstacle further in the future. We've given our American lawmakers plenty of time to make LGBTQ+ safety and equality in America a reality - to stop stalling and start protecting us. If they won't then we'll simply elect folks who will. And Pride gives us the momentum to maintain our presence, keep recruiting allies, and changes the minds of the apathetic for our cause.

**GINA MALLISHAM IS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY. SHE IS EMPLOYED BY BAO AND IN HER SPARE TIME WORKS WITH SHOUT FILM FESTIVAL AND SERVES ON MAYOR WOODFINS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL.**



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# **BINGO IS BACK**

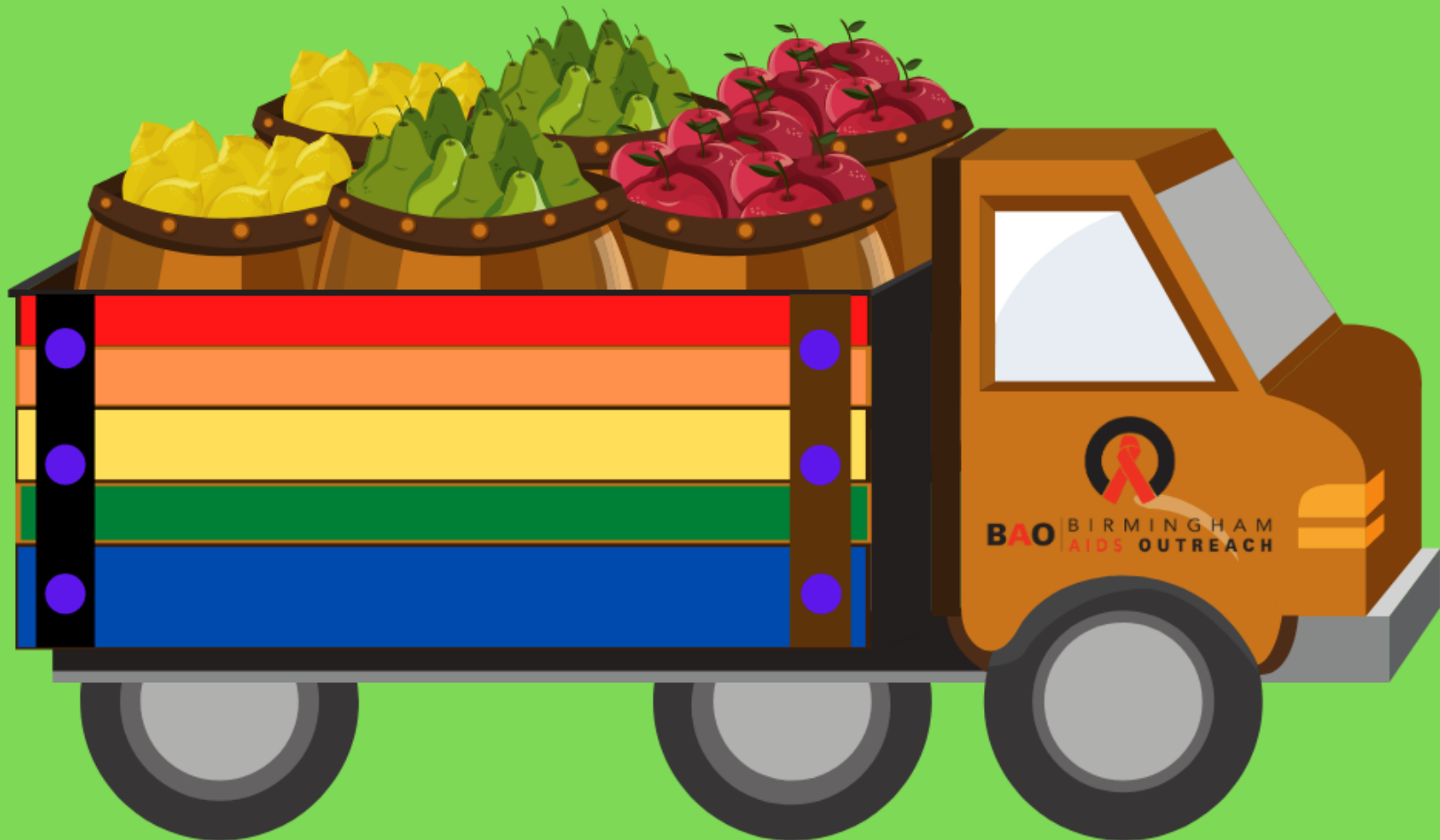
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**SOCIALLY DISTANCED  
BUT STILL JUST AS FUN!**

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