



MIDWEST RAINBOW NEWS



DECEMBER 2023

VOL. 3 ISSUE 12

"Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public."

— Cornel West

HOUSEKEEPING

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By sending submissions to the Midwest Rainbow News, you are agreeing to have your submission published. We may edit submissions to fit our anti-oppression values and/or our own editing guidelines.

Missing your copy?

Although things seem to be improving in terms of uniform delivery of the newsletter, please reach out if you do not receive your copy for more than one month in a row. Thank you!

Midwest Rainbow News
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Pittsburgh, PA 15217

MAMA SAYS

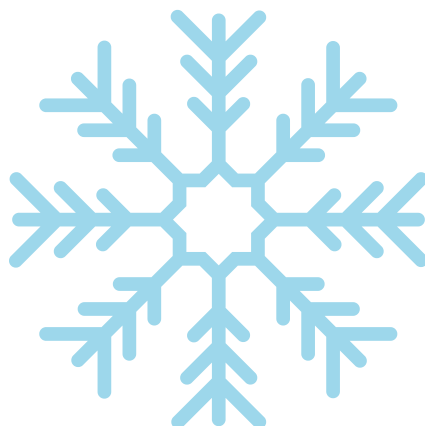
Very soon we can all check off another year, the Holidays are here again. Too soon for some, but for others this past year seemed to drag on forever. Too fast, or forever, December 31st marks the end of one year, and at midnight the beginning of the next.

The holiday season is a time for letting go of petty differences, old grudges and hurtful feelings. It doesn't matter your religion, if any, and it doesn't matter your color or affiliations. It is a time for love, coming together to celebrate life, family and friendship. Togetherness. We have already proven that, when we stand together, there is nothing we can't accomplish. So, I'm asking all of you to reach out to someone you haven't spoken to in a long time. Give that person a hug and let them know they are family, and sometimes families fuss, argue and feud. But family is built on love, and there is no greater binding force than the love we have for family.

Let us all close this year off with love and celebration! Share a meal, give a hug, walk up to a random person and say "Happy Holidays!", but most of all, thank someone for their kindness, thank them for simply being there and being true to themselves.

We have some new things to share with you in 2024, so keep a close lookout, you might be surprised!

With a Mothers Love,
Patricia



THINGS TO REMEMBER

The holidays are upon us and many different traditions abound. Sometimes it might take a little creativity, but it is especially important for LGBTQ people to find ways to tap into the spirit of the holiday season.

1. Don't let anyone steal your joy.

Whether or not you celebrate a holiday this winter, this is a time for you to find joy on your own terms. If things get difficult, have strategies for holding on to your joy. This could be talking with a trusted friend or getting outside for fresh air when you can. Whatever brings you life, choose that. You are stronger than you think.

2. Remember who you are and your values.

If you're dreading the holidays, remember that the holidays are temporary. Remain steadfast in your own beliefs and know that you are a loving person who deserves to live unapologetically as your unique, wonderful self, regardless of what anyone has to say about it.

3. Chosen family is still family, and all love is meaningful.

Family life is constantly changing, and it can mean so many things to so many people. While for some, blood may be thicker than water, unconditional love takes hard work and a lot more strength than just being sticky enough to keep relatives together. So many LGBTQ people build chosen families who accept, affirm and love us as we are. Whether you're choosing to spend your holidays with your family of origin or your family of choice, remember that unconditional love is what makes a family.

4. Don't force someone to enjoy the holidays.

We all know that the world, both on the inside and the outside, can be violent and brutally unfair. Grieving this time of year can be harder than other times. Supporting someone who is coping with tragedy or loss during the holiday season doesn't mean trying to make them feel full of holiday cheer. Instead, your goal should be to accept whatever holiday experience they want. No menorah lighting? Fine. Do they want to skip midnight mass this year? OK. The best thing you can do is follow your loved one's lead.

5. 'Tis the season of giving.

Many of us are particularly driven to be charitable, especially around the holidays. If you feel inclined to share what you have with the people around you who don't have the same access to resources as you, remember that even small acts of kindness can have a big impact on someone having a hard time. It is revolutionary to love and support each other in an environment designed to isolate and degrade.

Please remember that you are loved and your community is here to support you. The Midwest Rainbow News wishes you a joyous holiday season.

THE PRISON JOURNALISM PROJECT

The Prison Journalism Project is a great place for any prisoner to express their views while working to establish themselves as a credible writer and journalist. Many first time authors have been published on the Prison Journalism website. It only takes imagination and willingness to write your story. It is 100% free, costs you only time and dedication. Ask about their writing program and upcoming correspondence-based classes. For more information on how to get started, contact them at:

*Prison Journalism Project
2093 Philadelphia Pike #1054
Claymont, DE 19703*

WRITE FOR US!

We are actively seeking material from our readers to publish in future issues. We will no longer publish messages from one reader to another.

We are looking for:

- Articles with accurate information about relevant policies, legal developments, and current affairs (cite your sources!)
- Tips, life-hacks, and how-to articles that our readers would find useful
- Media recommendations — books, authors, podcasts, tv, movies etc. Preference given to free things. Write a little bit about why you're recommending it and/or what you got from it.
- Personal essays on topics relevant to our community, including but not limited to: mental health, personal growth, what sucks about being LGBTQ in prison, what's cool about being LGBTQ in prison, pride, shame, self-acceptance, friendship, liberation from oppression, dealing with difficult family relationships, etc.
- Good news — if you have something to celebrate!
- Reports from your camp on conditions for LGBTQ prisoners
- Responses — If you have something constructive to add to a particular conversation, you can write a response to a previously published piece

SEND SUBMISSIONS TO OUR PO BOX OR THE BLACK-PINK GAZETTE TABLET CONTACT

IF YOU'RE A NEW SUBSCRIBER AND DON'T HAVE THE CONTACT ON YOUR TABLET YET, PLEASE BE PATIENT. IF YOU'RE STILL MISSING THE CONTACT AFTER A COUPLE WEEKS, WRITE TO OUR PO BOX.

PRIDE FLAGS EXPLAINED

SOME READERS WROTE IN WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VARIOUS LGBTQ FLAGS. HERE'S SOME INFO!
SOURCE: HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN



Gilbert Baker flag: The original Pride Flag was created in 1978 after activist Harvey Milk asked artist Gilbert Baker to design a symbol of gay pride. Each color represents a different part of the LGBTQ+ community: hot pink represents sex, red symbolizes life, orange stands for healing, yellow equals sunlight, green stands for nature, turquoise symbolizes magic and art, indigo represents serenity, while violet symbolizes the spirit of LGBTQ+ people.



Traditional flag: After the assassination of Harvey Milk, the rainbow flag was in high demand. Due to manufacturing issues, the hot pink stripe was removed. The turquoise stripe was removed from the flag as a design choice from Baker. The six color pride flag has represented the community for over 40 years and is still one of the most common LGBTQ+ flags.



The Philadelphia Pride flag was unveiled at the city's pride event in 2017. The Philadelphia City Council commissioned the creation of this flag as they wanted to incorporate queer communities of color that have often been overlooked in the mainstream LGBTQ+ movement. The addition of the black and brown stripes symbolize communities of color and their contribution to the movement.

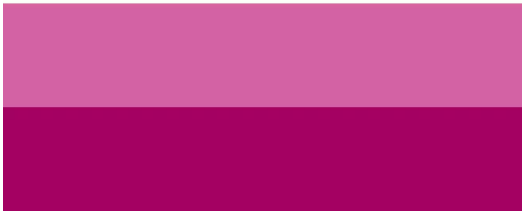


The Progress Pride flag evolved from the Philadelphia Pride Flag and was created by Daniel Quasar. Quasar added a white, pink, and light blue stripe to represent the Trans community. While the black and brown stripes still represented communities of color, the black stripe is also a nod to the thousands of individuals that the community lost during the HIV/AIDS crisis in 1980s and 1990s. Since its creation, the flag has become very popular.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION FLAGS



While there have been many iterations of the **Lesbian Pride Flag**, this has been in use since 2018. Since then, it has been widely accepted. The different shades of red, pink, and orange represent the different types of femininity in the lesbian community.



The Bisexual Flag was created in 1998 by Michael Page to bring awareness to the bisexual community. The pink represents bisexual's attraction to the same gender while the blue represents the attraction to the opposite gender. The purple stripe in the middle represents attraction to two genders.



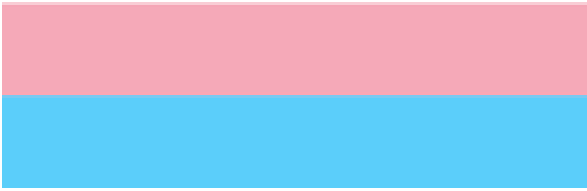
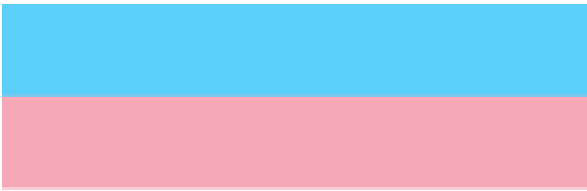
The Pansexual Pride Flag was created around 2010 in order to bring awareness to the community. Pansexual people are those who have the potential for emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily at the same time, in the same way or to the same degree. The pink stripe represents attraction to women while the blue stripe represents attraction to men. The yellow stripe is for everyone else in-between and beyond the gender binary.



The Asexual Pride Flag was created in 2010 following a contest by the Asexual Visibility and Education Network. Asexual individuals are people that do not have a sexual attraction to any gender. Each stripe has a different meaning: black represents asexuality, gray means gray-osexuality & demisexuality, white stands for non-asexual partners and allies, and the purple represents community.



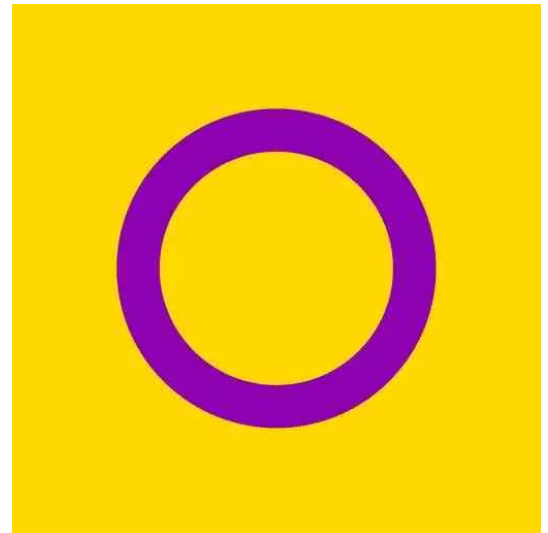
GENDER FLAGS



The Transgender Pride Flag was created by American trans woman Monica Helms in 1999, and was first shown at a pride parade in Phoenix, Arizona, United States in 2000. The flag represents the transgender community and consists of five horizontal stripes: two light blue, two pink, and one white in the center.



The Nonbinary Pride Flag was created in 2014 to represent those individuals who do not identify with either binary gender or within the binary at all. The yellow stripe represents a gender outside of the binary. The white stripe stands for those who have multiple or all genders. The purple stripe symbolizes those who fall between the male/female binary. The black stripe represents those with no gender.



The Intersex Pride Flag was developed in 2013 by the co-chair of Intersex Human Rights Australia, Morgan Carpenter. Intersex people are those born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. There is no one way to be intersex as everyone's experience is unique. The creator chose yellow and purple as those are seen as gender neutral colors.



The Genderfluid Pride Flag was developed in 2013 by JJ Poole to give space to those whose gender identity and/or gender expression fluctuates during different times and different circumstances. Each color represents a different aspect of the Genderfluid community: pink stands for femininity, while blue stands for masculinity, white represents the lack of gender while black symbolizes all genders, the purple stripe represents a combination of masculinity and femininity.



ON OUR HEARTS AND MINDS



Hello my beautiful rainbow family. I hope that everyone is doing fine and planning to start the new year off on a good note with many resolutions to keep. As our beautiful Mother always tells us we need to be patient and believe that things will eventually work for the best.

I'm currently working in the Restorative Justice sewing room at my camp, I'm also working on getting a program put together for the LGBTQI family here. So far administration said it sounds like a good idea, I just now have to create the program on paper which will be my roughest task. I have all the ideas in my head scrambled as usual coexisting with all the other issues up there LOL !

I spend my days trying to find ways to be a better steward for our family here in this community, the thing I find the hardest is those who stay in the hole all the time. There is a beautiful family on this side, we will welcome you with open arms, help you deal with any issues that need attention, we also want you to feel safe in the community as well, you have to want to change things that are best for you.

I just spent time with a new member of our family and she gave me a quote that fits what I'm trying to convey to you.

Words from Hope

"Stay 100%, keep it real and be honest even if others are not, stay on all ten, keep your head up and your enemies down"

Thank you Hope, those are good words to live by, I encourage each and everyone of you to also live by them. It takes a community to move toward making the community better, united we strive, divided we fall.

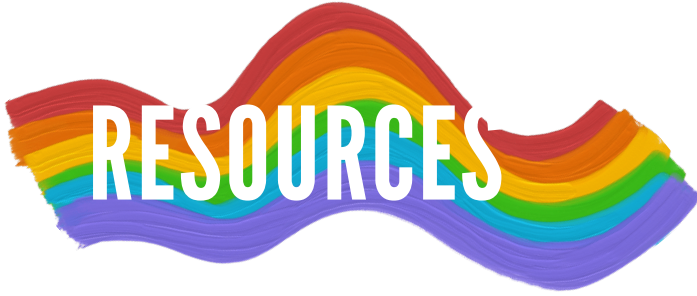
My hope that I have been able to encourage and give you hope. I look forward to being able to see and speak to all of you here, keep me in your prayers as I commit to create this program for us.

Blessings to all of you, hang in there knowing that you are a part of a larger family that loves you. Forever proud to be part of a LGBTQI family. Dawn Michelle (Mama Bear)

SOME ENCOURAGEMENT

Well it's been a trying year for us all! but we bounce back and kept our heads above the heavy waves that came our way! I just wanna add if you use drugs worry about all the people you gonna hurt and affect by doing so. understand people come and go for good reasons and bad ones! be a Thinker! time has taught me to help the ones who need help as well help myself, because helping some people they abuse your kindness for weakness! that's not cool at all and you will have to step up and speak out to let people know don't do so. I love pretty hard but don't really receive it back! It's hard at times but it's a slow process to recovery!! I think about how many people we hurt by being in here! our Families are doing time with us! so that's a very hard pill to swallow. let's use our minds to think not to corrupt! life is hard inside these gates and walls! I been here since I was the age of 13 years old! Now I'm 45! All I know is inside these walls! But I don't let it misuse my mind state! naw because I have hope! every now and again I lose a bit of it! but I never give up!! I have my ups and downs! but I keep pushing on cause I have to. drugs ain't the way it's killing us one by one each day!! so if you been reading my words please take heed to them! your Brother in Love Hope, Peace, Understanding and self awareness! Love Mylowe Williams. stay safe.





**Reach us at:
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LEGAL/ADVOCACY

NEWSLETTER

RESEARCH

Lambda Legal
C/O Help Desk
4221 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Missouri - Cure
P.O. Box 411794
Kansas City, Mo 64141
Chair Person: Kathy Franklin

Liberation Lit (inquire for free books)
P.O. Box 45071
Kansas City, MO 64171

ACLU
906 Olive St., Suite 1130
St. Louis, Mo. 63101

LAGAI (Ultraviolet)
3543 18th St #26
San Francisco, CA 94110

Library of Congress
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20540-4660

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services
925 S. Country Club Dr.
Jeff City, Mo. 66109-4510

Black and Pink
6223 Maple St., #4600
Omaha NE 68104

Centurion
1400 Edgewood Drive
Jefferson City, Mo. 63109

Transgender Law Center
P.O. Box 70976
Oakland, CA 94612

Prison Health News
4722 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19143



National Center for Transgender Equality
1032 15th St NW
Suite # 199
Washington, D.C. 20005

Slingshot (quarterly radical newspaper)
3124 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94705



GLAAD
18 Tremont St Suite # 950
Boston, MA 02108

Prisoner Express (twice a year)
Prisoner Express
PO Box #6556
Ithaca, NY 14851



TGI Justice Project
370 Turk St # 370
San Francisco, CA 94102

LEGAL/ADVOCACY



Southern Poverty Law Center
400 Washington Ave.
Montgomery, AL. 36104

The Midwest Innocence Project
3619 Broadway Blvd., Suite 2
Kansas City, MO 64111

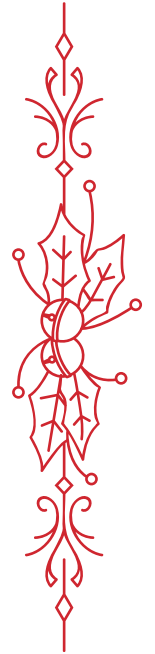
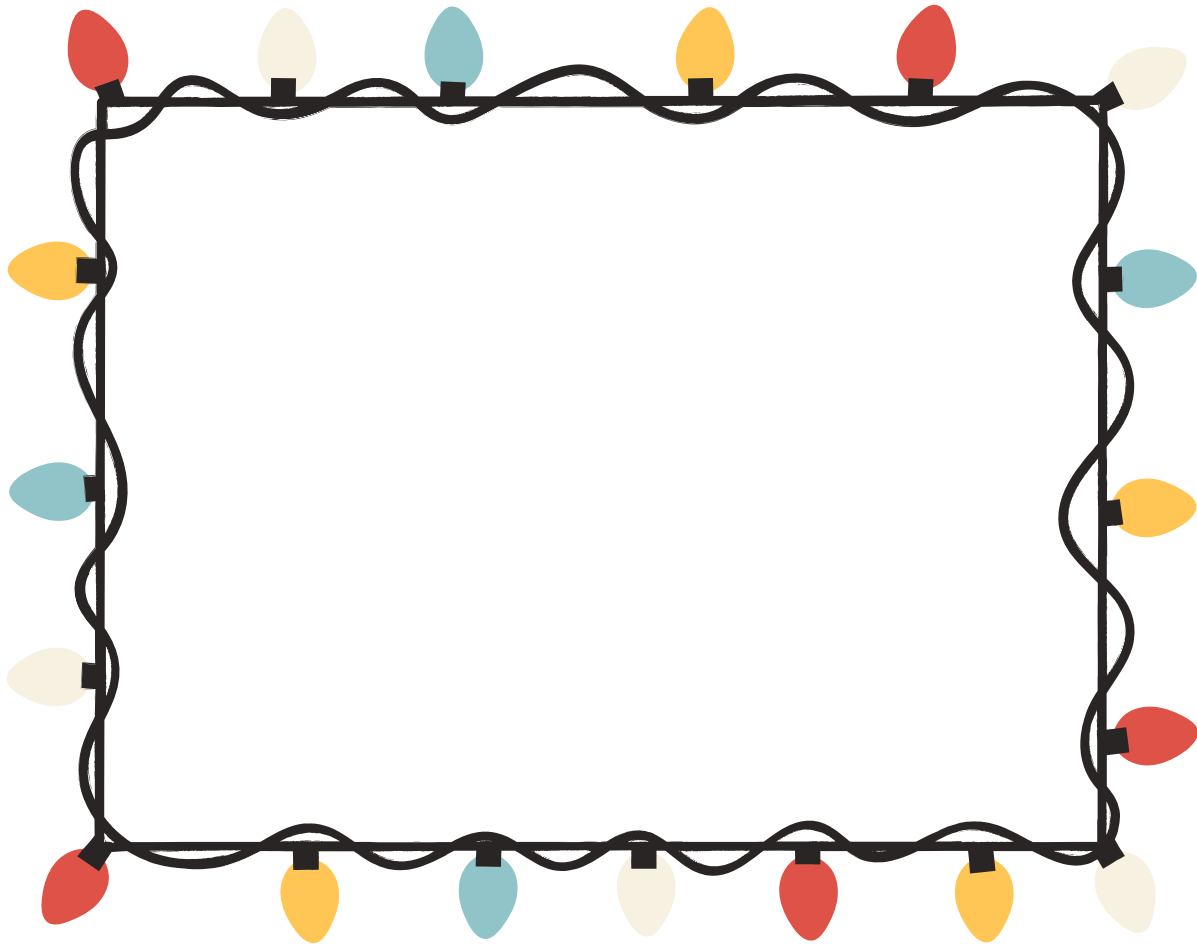


MacArthur Justice Center
906 Olive Street, Suite 420
St. Louis, MO 63101

National Lawyers Guild
PO Box 1266
New York, NY 10009-8941



A SPECIAL HOLIDAY MESSAGE



<h2>DECEMBER</h2> <p><i>National Days</i></p>				
	1 National Christmas Lights Day	2 National Earmuff Day	3 National Apple Pie Day	4 National Cookie Day
5 National Volunteer Day	6 National Microwave Oven Day	7 National Cotton Candy Day	8 Hanukkah	9 National Llama Day
10 National Lager Day	11 National App Day	12 National Poinsettia Day	13 National Cocoa Day	14 National Monkey Day
15 National Tea Day	16 National Wreaths Across America Day	17 National Maple Syrup Day	18 National Bake Cookies Day	19 National Holly Day
20 National Games Day	21 Winter Solstice	22 National Cookie Exchange Day	23 National Roots Day	24 National Egg Nog Day
25 * MERRY CHRISTMAS *	26 National Candy Cane Day	27 National Make Snowflakes Day	28 National Card Playing Day	29 National Tick Tock Day
30 National Bacon Day	31 New Year's Eve			

