

## July-August Announcements

### The Harrisburg Meeting

Our in-person meeting will be on July 10th and August 14th at 8:00 pm at MCC of the Spirit, our normal meeting location. Please email us with questions at [info@transcentralpa.org](mailto:info@transcentralpa.org). No signup required.

### July Dinner will be at the Macaroni Grill.

Join us for a pre-meeting dinner. We meet at 5 pm and seat promptly at 5:30 pm. RSVPing is required, we must give the restaurant an accurate headcount. Please RSVP at [info@transcentralpa.org](mailto:info@transcentralpa.org).

### August Dinner will be at Rubicon.

Join us for a pre-meeting dinner. We meet at 5 pm and seat promptly at 5:30 pm. RSVPing is required, we must give the restaurant an accurate headcount. Please RSVP at [info@transcentralpa.org](mailto:info@transcentralpa.org).

### Family Virtual Support Group Meeting on Monday, July 19th and Aug. 16th

The virtual meeting starts at 7:00 pm. This group brings together parents and other adult family members seeking to better understand and support their children of all ages dealing with issues of gender identity. The group operates under a policy of confidentiality in order to create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. Please come and join us for informal sharing and mutual support! The group meets online via Zoom on the third Monday of the month. For more information, please email us at [family@TransCentralPA.org](mailto:family@TransCentralPA.org).

### York Virtual Support Group Meeting on Saturday, May 29th. and June 26th. J

Join the Rainbow Rose Center and [TransCentralPA](http://TransCentralPA) as we hold the York Transgender Support Group Online. Join us from 8:30-10:00 pm on Satur-



*Supreme court upholds Gavin Grimm's choice of bathroom facilities.  
See story on page 4*

day, July 24th and June 28th on Zoom! Zoom is a free, online video conferencing program that is easy to use. If you would like to take part in this virtual meeting, please send us an email and we can provide additional information on how to join the meeting.

### 2022 Keystone Conference

The dates of the 2022 Keystone Conference will be announced soon. We are waiting for the hotel to finalize the contract. If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at [info@Keystone-Conference.org](mailto:info@Keystone-Conference.org).

### Lancaster Pride Festival

Lancaster Pride Festival will be held October 24 at Clipper Magazine Stadium from 11 am to 7 pm. For more details, please visit page 2.

### TCPA Annual Membership Dues

Dues are \$20. Dues are used to pay for meeting space, program literature, our website and our affiliation with

and support of community groups and activities such as Common Roads, the Community Center, Central Pennsylvania Pride, etc. Please continue to support our organization and efforts by joining or renewing your membership—we **are making a difference!**

### Send Us Your Input!

Got a Question or Announcements? Maybe you've seen a great article or have an event to share? Photo's are always appreciated and if you would like them published in the next TCPA Newsletter. E-mail us at [info@transcentralpa.org](mailto:info@transcentralpa.org).



## From the President



Kristy Snow

July 4th marks the date when the Second Continental Congress finally approved the US Declaration of Independence, marking the freedom of the thirteen American colonies from British colonial rule in 1776.

In the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, it reads, *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."*

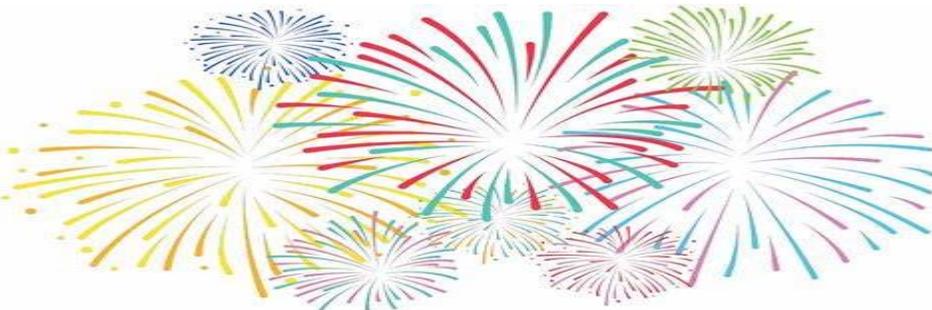
Yet history shows us that this hasn't always been the case. For Many Americans, especially African Americans, Native Americans, women, and other minorities, those unalienable rights remain elusive.

This is certainly reflected in the LGBTQ+ community as well. We have had to fight hard and continue to fight for the rights many take for granted such as marriage equality and healthcare to address our specific medical needs. We've even had to fight for the right to serve in the US Armed Forces to protect those rights of those who would deny them to us. Life is not without irony. Yet, we continue to fight.

What is sometimes lost in history is that July 4, 1776 was the beginning, not the end, of this country's struggle for freedom. This date marked the determination and commitment of a repressed people to stand and fight for themselves. So let us all celebrate July 4th and reaffirm our commitment to continue the fight of equality for all.

- Kristy

*Thank you to Annie S. for the inspirational thoughts.*



Lancaster Pride

October 24, 2021

Clipper Magazine Stadium

11am to 7pm

Lancaster Pride was created to celebrate LGBTQ+ individuals in Lancaster County. Over time, we have grown as a premier festival in Central PA with 5,000 (and growing) attendees each year! As a 501(c)(3) non profit organization, we seek to engage and enrich our community, while raising awareness of issues affecting LGBTQ+ individuals in our county.

Last year, LancPride Festival had 100 vendors, a talented set of Drag Performers, Musicians, and a nationally renowned headliner. We are also proud to showcase local and regional talent at the event. This year, we are celebrating the 12th Year of Lancaster Pride! We are excited to see you at the 2021 Festival and we thank you for your support!

## Suicide Resources

People dealing with gender identity issues are not immune from other sources of depression and mental illness. There is help available to you with bearing the unbearable. IN A CRISIS, CALL the local and national resources first. It is best to make contact via phone or in person; emailing often does not provide the immediate response needed in an emergency. These are the professionals and organizations trained to help you during a crisis. You are not alone.

[National Suicide  
Prevention Lifeline](#)  
[24/7 Support](#)  
[800-273-TALK](#)

[National Hopeline  
Network](#)  
[24/7 Support](#)  
[800-784-2433](#)

[The Trevor Project](#)  
[1-800-SUICIDE](#)  
[1-866-488-7386](#)

## In Memory of Our Friend Katie Ward

We are sad to announce the passing of our beloved friend and sister Katie Ward.

She passed on Monday, June 14th in a care facility after finding out less than a month ago she had stage 4 brain cancer which had metastasized to her kidneys. The prognosis was short, but she underwent a few treatments of radiation so she could have a little more time with her daughter and granddaughters. Although tired a lot in her last days, she said she had no pain.

Katie dedicated much of her life in service to others. She served our country honorably, first in the Navy, and then in the Air National Guard which she retired from after 20+ years of military service.

She was an officer of [TransCentralPA](#) for over five years and a volunteer/member for twice that amount of time. She would consistently host dinners around Harrisburg before our support group meetings to give people a chance to forge friendships both within and outside the group and build confidence in themselves. She enjoyed helping people and giving

back.

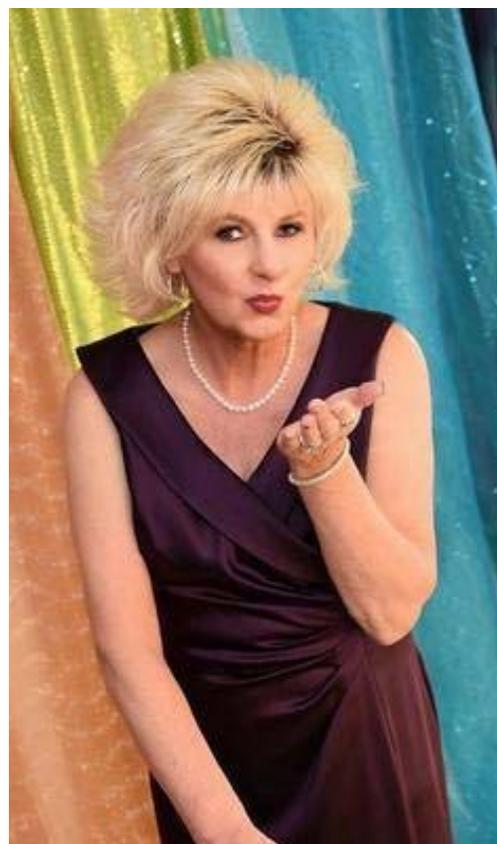
She actively participated in many community organizations such as the Keystone Business Alliance whom she helped plan their annual awards banquet for a couple of years.

Her favorite event though was the one she helped grow into one of the largest events in the country--The Keystone Conference, A Celebration of Gender Diversity. Katie took on many roles at Keystone; she was the volunteer coordinator, the off-site event coordinator, the security coordinator, the Registrar and many others for several years.

At the Saturday Night Gala of the last Keystone, Katie received a much-deserved standing ovation for her contributions to Keystone and the Central Pennsylvania community.

With her passing, Katie leaves behind a legacy of generosity, kindness and compassion. We will miss you Katie--thank you for being our friend.

A memorial service is planned for Saturday, September 11th. More details about the service will be provided at a later date.



*Katie at Keystone*

## Veterans Affairs to Offer Gender Confirming Surgery to Trans Vets

Alex Cooper, [The Advocate](#)

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough announced on Saturday that the V.A. will offer gender confirmation surgery to trans veterans.

McDonough cautioned that the change would take time, according to The New York Times.

"This process will require changing V.A.'s regulations and establishing policy that will ensure the equitable treatment and safety of transgender veterans," McDonough said at a Pride event at the Orlando Vet Center.

Internal estimates have shown that fewer than 4,000 veterans would be interested, reported the outlet.

There are over 134,000 trans veterans according to figures from the National Center for Transgender Equality.

"We are taking the first necessary

steps to expand VA's care to include gender confirmation surgery — thereby allowing transgender vets to go through the full gender confirmation process with VA at their side," McDonough said, reported CNN.

The announcement is just the latest pro-LGBTQ+ step the Biden administration has taken. President Joe Biden has not only signed an executive order to protect LGBTQ+ from discrimination, but his administration has come out against recent anti-trans laws that have emerged across the country targeting trans youth.

Biden repealed Donald Trump's ban on trans service members on his fifth day in office.

"The vestiges of bigotry remain," McDonough said on Saturday. He also announced that the V.A. was changing the name of the LGBTQ+ Health Program to the LGBTQ+ Health Program. "Even something as

simple as displaying V.A.-specific rainbow magnets has proven to make our hospitals more welcoming," McDonough explained.

McDonough said that the department's change came from consultation with medical experts, according to NBC News.

"We're making these changes not only because they are the right thing to do, but because they can save lives," he said.



# Supreme Court Declines to Hear Virginia School Board's Transgender Bathroom Case

John Fritze, [USA TODAY](#)

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to wade into a dispute over whether schools may bar transgender students from using a bathroom that reflects their gender identity, permitting a lower court ruling against those prohibitions to stand.

At issue in the case was whether federal anti-discrimination law applied to LGBTQ students. Gloucester County School Board in Virginia argued its policy of requiring transgender students to use unisex bathrooms was permitted under a 50-year-old law that prohibits discrimination at schools that receive federal funding.

By not taking the case, the Supreme Court without comment let stand a ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit that found the school's policy discriminated against Gavin Grimm, a transgender man who was denied access to the boys' bathroom years ago when he was a high school student.

"I am glad that my years-long fight to have my school see me for who I am is over," Grimm said in a statement released by the American Civil Liberties Union, which represented him in the case. "Trans youth deserve to use the bathroom in peace without being humiliated and stigmatized by their own school boards and elected officials."

Neither the school district nor its attorneys responded to a request for comment.

Associate Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito said they would have taken the case, though they did not elaborate on their position. The Supreme Court did not rule on the underlying legal questions and experts say more cases involving transgender rights will arrive at the high court as conservative states pass a bevy of laws restricting those rights.

The case returned to the court at a time when the Biden administration is seeking to expand legal protections for transgender students. In one of his first executive orders, President Joe Biden said the federal government would seek to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orienta-



tion and gender identity.

The Supreme Court agreed to hear the case once before, in 2016, based on guidance from the Obama administration that nudged schools to adopt policies favoring transgender students. But the court dropped the case months later, wiping out a lower court ruling for Grimm, when the Trump administration withdrew the guidance. Biden's administration reinstated the Obama-era guidance earlier this month.

Grimm's case, meanwhile, continued to wind its way back through the federal courts, even as he graduated from high school and moved to California for college.

In the meantime, the Supreme Court held last year that prohibitions on workplace discrimination on the basis of "sex" also extended protections to LGBTQ Americans. The legal fight between LGBTQ advocates and their opponents has since shifted to whether other laws that bar "sex" discrimination similarly protect people in other settings based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

That debate featured prominently in Grimm's case.

Grimm was a rising sophomore when he changed his first name to Gavin and began using male pronouns. Officials at Gloucester High School were supportive, but blowback from parents prompted the school board to bar Grimm from the boys' bathroom, directing him instead to unisex bathrooms – three of which were built in response to the controversy.

Grimm said the mandate made him feel "stigmatized and isolated." The unisex bathrooms were unavailable when he attended football games and afterschool activities. Grimm would often "hold it," leading to urinary tract infections. He sued in 2015, claiming the board's policy violated Title IX and the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

Though the ACLU and LGBTQ advocates applauded the court's decision as a victory, the legal ramification was less clear. Appeals courts in Chicago and Atlanta, as well as the 4th Circuit in Richmond, Virginia, have held that schools violate federal law when they prohibit transgender boys from using the same restrooms as cisgender boys. But that legal question remains unsettled at the national level.

"The Supreme Court's decision to not hear the Grimm case is a victory for trans students and it might influence how some lower courts view similar cases," said Jami Taylor, political science professor at The University of Toledo and an expert on LGBTQ policies. "However, it does not set national precedent."

That lack of clarity comes amid an onslaught of state laws attempting to limit transgender rights. Those include a Tennessee law requiring transgender students to compete in school sports according to their sex assigned at birth. Arkansas this year became the first state to ban gender-affirming treatments for transgender minors.

# Is Stonewall Inn's Anheuser-Busch 'Pour Out' a Moment or a New Movement?

Frank Pizzoli, [The Village Voice](#)

"It's time for corporations to walk their talk," Maeve Coyle, spokesperson for the "Keep Your Pride" campaign run by global charity Corporate Accountability Action, told the Voice.

Stonewall Inn co-owners Stacy Lentz and Kurt Kelly couldn't agree more.

The Stonewall Inn coordinated with "Keep Your Pride" to ban Anheuser-Busch products from the bar during NYC Pride weekend, June 25 to 27. Stonewall is regarded worldwide as the birthplace of the U.S. LGBTQ rights movement.

Yesterday, to bring awareness to what observers are calling the "corporatization of Pride," Lentz and Kelly and about 50 participants held a beverage "pour out" in front of the storied establishment. Beverages were poured out in the exact location where on June 28, 1969, gay, lesbian, transgender, and other bar patrons resisted NYC police in what is now referred to alternately as a riot, an uprising, and a rebellion.

## Why Anheuser-Busch?

Since 2015, Anheuser-Busch, according to "Keep Your Pride," has made 48 donations totaling \$35,350 to 29 anti-LGBTQ legislators behind recent bills attacking trans youth.

Lentz and Kelly are "walking their talk." The suite of beverages banned on Pride weekend, the bar's biggest weekend, will have an economic effect on their bottom line. In turn, how can Anheuser-Busch and other Pride sponsor corporations and businesses walk their talk?

"It's important that we do this awareness event during Pride week and really call out corporations and people out there that aren't showing their true colors," Lentz told the Voice. "We're asking corporations who traditionally sponsor Pride events around the country to change their criteria for making political donations," Kelly added.

A growing part of the queer narrative is how corporations want access to queer markets while simultaneously contributing to elected officials who sponsor anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ legislation. In marketing terms, queer markets are presented as loyal to



businesses supportive of their communities. The problem, say activists and advocates like Lentz and Kelly and campaigns such as "Keep Your Pride," is that many of those same businesses are not loyal in return when they contribute to anti-queer elected officials.

Instead of contributing to politicians who thwart progress toward full LGBTQ civil rights, "We'd like to see those same corporations use their lobbying muscle to support the Equality Act," Kelly says. The act was passed by the House on February 25 but now languishes in the Senate, where it is not expected to pass.

In defense of their donations, Anheuser-Busch told the Associated Press, "We support candidates for public office whose policy positions and objectives support investments in our communities, job creation, and industry growth." The statement also read, "Together, with our brands, we have a clear role to play in bringing real change and creating an inclusive and equitable world where we cherish and celebrate one another."

Coyle's assessment of the situation is different than what is described in Anheuser-Busch's formal statement. "This isn't difficult. This is a really low bar. We're calling on corporations to stop donating to lawmakers who are trying to legalize discrimination," Coyle explains. In 2020, according to the Hu-

man Rights Campaign, there were a total of 79 anti-trans bills introduced across the country. In just the first half of this year there have been more than 100, according to PBS News Hour Weekend.

There are publicly available resources for corporations to research before writing PAC checks. "We need to change the rules. It's a pretty easy thing for folks to check on elected officials' positions and votes on queer issues," Coyle says. She suggests checking Freedom for All Americans as a credible source for PAC contributions regarding LGBTQ issues; another source is Popular Information.

Complicating the landscape is the dissonance created by corporations that receive high marks on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Index while simultaneously donating to elected officials whose bills and votes are at odds with the goal of comprehensive civil rights for the entire LGBTQ community.

But there's no gray area when it comes to equality, Coyle posits. "There are not two sides to this issue. When companies donate to an elected official who supports discrimination it really shows you where their priorities lie. It's not with supporting

See 'Beer' on Page 6...

... 'Beer' from Page 5

the LGBTQ community; it's with their own bottom line," she underscores.

After the Stonewall "pour out" event, the bottom line for the LGBTQ community may involve deciding if they'll go back to buying Anheuser-Busch beverages, or goods and services from other corporations making donations to anti-queer politicians.

No stranger to controversy, Ann Northrop, principal organizer with Reclaim Pride, stresses the importance of people making the connections between all of the corporate-sponsored Pride logos and rainbows and to whom those same businesses make political contributions.

"With the right information people can ask for corporate accountability," Northrop told the Voice. Right now, Northrop says, there are hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars going into campaigns to elect Republican politicians.

"I understand that corporations have a pet agenda of particular legislation about taxes or where they locate factories or outlets. Those are real concerns for them. And they want elected officials to do their bidding," she says. "But their contributions, like Anheuser-Busch and so many others, are not good for us. And we're allowed to say, don't expect us to support your business when the elected officials you contribute to regularly work against our achieving full civil rights." She notes that research has revealed more than two dozen rainbow-flag-waving corporations that have donated millions to anti-gay pols in the last two years.

Does this year's Pride season — with its focus on the relationships between queer venues and corporations and who does what to whom with rainbows and PAC dollars — signal a new movement? "I believe it's possible, hoping it's possible," Northrop concludes.

Yesterday's street theater at Stone-



wall channeled not only 1969 but also much more recent history. In 2018, Reclaim Pride, a then-new organization, got this particular social justice ball rolling when their first salvo involved delivering "a list of demands to city officials, including Mayor de Blasio, New York Police Department Commissioner James O' Neill, and Heritage of Pride regarding the 2018 New York City Pride March." Heritage of Pride was included because it is the organizer of the annual NYC Pride March.

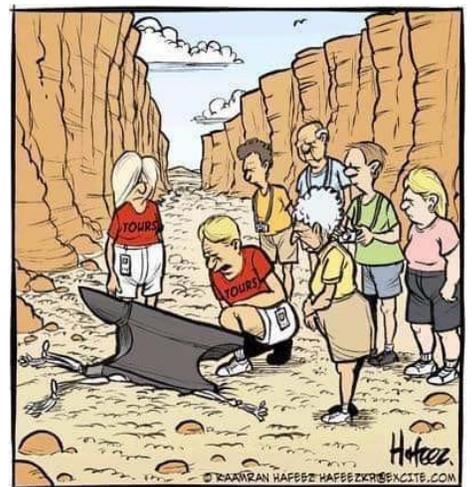
Essentially, Reclaim Pride's demands have not changed much from their original statement, which focused on "working towards our vision of an NYC Pride that reflects our community's heritage of activism as opposed to the Pride March's current state of commercial saturation."

Will efforts by Stonewall Inn owners, the "Keep Your Pride" campaign, and the Reclaim Pride Coalition create change?

"Moving forward, Pride means that we are reclaiming our spaces," Reclaim Pride's Jason Rosenberg told the Voice. "Elected officials need to stop voting against our interests. Our community needs to do this. Only we can keep ourselves safe in order to survive. We liberate ourselves and each other," he says.

Also involved with Reclaim Pride is ACT UP's Brandon Cuicchi, who says, "At a minimum, we need to eliminate the corporatization of Pride. We need to find new ways to make ourselves attractive as a market."

Moving forward, the burning question for the queer community during 2021 Pride season appears to be deciding if it's a movement or a market, or both. How does the community honor what took place in 1969 at The Stonewall Inn and what took place on the sidewalk outside its front door yesterday?



"WELL, IT'S AN ANVIL. AND UNDERNEATH ... I THINK IT'S THE SKELETON OF A COYOTE."



[www.AlderHealth.org](http://www.AlderHealth.org)  
*Improving the Health of All*

# Nellis Air Force Base Hosts First-Ever Drag Queen Show

David Roza, [Task & Purpose](#)

Nellis Air Force Base made history last week for hosting its first ever drag show, where guests from the local Las Vegas drag scene performed and took attendees through the history and significance of drag within the LGBT+ community.

The event was planned by the Nellis Air Force Base Pride committee, which is composed of volunteers from across the base focused on diversity and inclusion initiatives, said Nellis spokesman Lt. Col. Bryon McGarry. It was sponsored by the Nellis Top 3, a private group meant to “enhance the morale, esprit de corps, of all enlisted personnel assigned to the [99th Air Base] Wing and to facilitate cooperation between members of the top three enlisted grades,” according to the group’s Facebook page.

“Ensuring our ranks reflect and are inclusive of the American people is essential to the morale, cohesion, and readiness of the military,” McGarry said. “Nellis Air Force Base is committed to providing and championing an environment that is characterized by equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion.”

The event sent some ripples among social media commenters who saw the drag show as a fatal flaw in America’s national security program. The right-wing news site Breitbart covered the promotion of the event, kicking off anguish from commenters.

“Trinity [sic] and Tobago could probably take us over at this point,” said one commenter on Twitter, reacting to a flyer promoting the event, which was held on June 17.

“On a global stage we are being laughed at,” said another.

The concerns echo similar voices who have raised doubts over the Navy’s inclusion of the book *How To Be an Antiracist* on its reading list and West Point teaching a seminar called “Understanding Whiteness and White Rage.” Gen. Mark Milley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed those doubters in a hearing at the House of Representatives on Wednesday.

“I’ve read Mao Zedong, I’ve read Karl Marx, I’ve read Lenin, that doesn’t make me a communist,” Milley said in



response to questions from two Republican lawmakers about the teaching of critical race theory at West Point.

“What is wrong with understanding — having some situational understanding about the country that we are here to defend?” Milley asked.

Rather than being a national security risk, drag is a broad term for “ostentatiously exaggerated” cross-dressing, “ironically playing up imitations of the opposite sex,” according to the Routledge International Encyclopedia of Queer Culture.

While the practice dates back to at least the Elizabethan era in England, it really took off in the 1920s with performers like Judy Garland and Marlene Dietrich, women who popularized male dress for women, according to the encyclopedia. Drag took on a political connotation after the Stonewall rebellion in New York City in 1969, which was led by cross-dressers and drag queens and is considered the start of the modern gay rights movement.

Drag is essentially action, not identity,” the encyclopedia writes. “It shakes up all rigid definitions for gender and sexuality, parodying the stereotypes of femininity and masculinity.”

And while Thursday’s show was the first ever to be hosted by Nellis Air Force Base, drag is not new to the military. Just check out this photograph taken in Germany just 10 days after World War II ended in Europe, where about 60 soldiers put on a drag show all on their own.

“These are all GI’s. There aren’t any girls in the show,” wrote the original owner on the back of the photo.

More recently, Joshua Kelley, a yeoman 3rd class in the Navy, made a name for himself performing as Harpy Daniels in drag in front of excited crowds.

“I’ve been accepted everywhere I go,” he told Navy Times in 2018. “Those outside my command don’t know I’m the drag queen who slayed on the ship. To most sailors, I’m just YN2 Kelley. Once they find out I’m Harpy Daniels, I’m praised as an inspiration and see so much joy in their reactions for simply being who I am.”

Now, in 2021, Nellis Air Force Base seemed to have a positive reaction to the drag show: about 180 members of the Nellis community attended the event, McGarry said. While there aren’t currently plans to hold another drag show, base leaders are supportive of events that “reinforce the Air Force’s emphasis on diversity and inclusion toward recognizing the value every one of our Airmen bring to the team,” he added.

One person in particular who seemed to appreciate the show was Coco Montrese, who was one of the special guests at Nellis last week. Montrese was the 2010 Miss Gay America, and she has also appeared on the reality TV Show *RuPaul’s Drag Race*.

“Y’all we just did the first drag show on Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas. How freakin amazing is that?” Montrese told her fans on Instagram afterwards. “And the men are lovely on this Air Force base.”

The feeling was mutual.

“Thank you dahhlin!” wrote one Instagram user. “The show was amazing.”

# 'Football is Gay' NFL Vocalizes Support of LGBTQ+ Community in New Ad

Brody Levesque, [Washington Blade](#)



Las Vegas Raiders Carl Nassib

The National Football League released an advert this past weekend as Pride month ends that articulates the league's support of the LGBTQ+ community following the announcement last week by Las Vegas Raiders' Defensive end Carl Nassib that he is gay.

Nassib became the first openly gay player who is active on an NFL team franchise roster.

The 30-second spot begins with the line, "Football is gay" as light cheering plays in the background.

"Football is lesbian. Football is beautiful. Football is queer. Football is life. Football is exciting. Football is culture. Football is transgender. Football is queer. Football is heart. Football is power. Football is tough. Football is bisexual. Football is strong. Football is freedom. Football is American. Football is accepting. Football is everything. Football is for everyone."

"I am proud of the clear message this spot sends to the NFL's LGBTQ+ fans: This game is unquestionably for you," NFL senior director of diversity, equity and inclusion, Sam Rapoport, told *Outsports* magazine's Cyd Zeigler. "I will be playing its first line over and over in my head all season."

The League's chief marketing officer Tim Ellis noted in a statement, "This spot is about celebrating Pride, and the importance of inclusion. It's imperative that we use our voice and leverage the NFL platform to drive positive change, which includes sup-

porting what our players care about and what they stand for."

Zeigler pointed out, "Imperative.' Think about that. The NFL's chief marketing officer called it "imperative" to make sure LGBTQ athletes and fans are accepted in the league. Please, stop telling me the NFL and America aren't ready for a gay football player- Stop," Zeigler wrote.

"For the league to release a video saying "football is gay" is revolutionary. For far too long people have held the belief that the NFL and the sport of football are anti-gay. They have been wrong for years. That the NFL would release this video knowing well that it will anger a segment of its fanbase is a huge societal statement. The NFL is the most powerful cultural institution in America. This statement of support and inclusion will resonate deeply," he added.

[View Video](#)



## LAKE ERIE GALA



Lake Erie Gala

Courtyard by Marriott - Erie Bayfront  
Pennsylvania

November 17-21, 2021

If you haven't made your hotel room reservation for the Lake Erie Gala, It's highly recommend you do, NOW. The Lake Erie Gala is really surprised at how fast the block is filling up. The hotels have a 100% refund policy if you cancel before November 14, 2021, so what are you waiting for?

The Gala is receiving a lot of positive feedback so far about the new venues.

Our block for \$90 per night is almost sold out and time is running out on this AWESOME rate. After July 17, 2021 the room rates will go up to \$109 per night and after that the room rates will continue to rise until the hotel is completely sold out.

When booking a room please use the designated hotel link for our group located on the new [Gala Website](#). Just a heads up.

All reservations must be accompanied by a first night room deposit guaranteed with a major credit card. If you are having problems securing a room, PLEASE email us directly at [info@lakeeriegala.com](mailto:info@lakeeriegala.com). We know people and can help!

Attendee registration will open September 1st and more information about package options and pricing can be found under the [Websites's Registration tab](#).

# The Incredible Journey of Soulful Trans Comic Julia Scotti

Trudy Ring, [The Advocate](#)

In 2011, a new face burst on to the stand-up comedy scene, a woman named Julia Scotti. She was brash and hilarious, and five years later she wowed the judges on America's Got Talent, even the notoriously tough Simon Cowell, and finished as a quarterfinalist. During her first appearance, the judges asked why Scotti, who was well into middle age, hadn't become a comedian earlier in her life. The answer was that she had — under the name of Rick Scotti.

Rick Scotti had toured with Jerry Seinfeld and Chris Rock, had opened for musicians including Lou Rawls, Chicago, and Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, and was married with two children. Despite what appeared to be a successful career and personal life, something didn't feel right deep inside. So in 2000, after 48 years of identifying as Rick Scotti, the performer took a hiatus from comedy, underwent gender-confirmation surgery, and eventually returned to the stage as Julia, now one of the best-known and funniest transgender comedians in the U.S.

Scotti is telling her story in the new documentary film *Julia Scotti: Funny That Way*, produced and directed by Susan Sandler. It has screened at several festivals and is now available on a variety of streaming platforms.

It chronicles Scotti's life from the beginning of her career to the present day, when she's still on road from one gig to another; her transition and the estrangement it caused from the women she loved and from her son and daughter; her reunion with those offspring; and her commitment to making a better world for trans people.

That commitment was what led her to do the film. "There are so many kids out there and adults too who are terribly suffering and feel so alone," she says. She experienced that suffering and loneliness herself, bringing her close to suicide, and she hopes that by telling her story, she'll help some of those kids and adults feel less alone.

The film is hopeful and inspiring. It shows Scotti's renewed relationship with her children, son Dan, who's



Julia Scotti

interested in a career in comedy, and daughter Emma, an appreciator of comedy. It introduces audiences to other people who are important in Scotti's life as well, such as manager Cathy Caldwell. And mostly it shows Scotti being out, proud, and funny while performing at comedy clubs, speaking at LGBTQ+ events, and hanging out with family and friends.

Between 2000 and 2011, Scotti worked as a teacher and was for a time self-employed. There were challenges in returning to stand-up comedy that went beyond the issue of gender identity. "The business had changed so much," she says. Social media had come on to the scene, as had a new generation of club owners. "I was kind of a newbie again," she notes.

But she forged on, and the people behind America's Got Talent found her on the internet and asked her to audition. Her appearance on that show made her the first out trans comedian on national television. Not that she was closeted previously; she has been open about her trans identity ever since she returned to stand-up, and in 2013, *The Advocate* named her one of the five hottest trans comics in the nation. Last year she received more national exposure on the Showtime comedy special *More Funny Women of a Certain Age*.

Scotti, a native of New Jersey, knew early in her life that she wanted to be a comedian. "I think it's almost a calling,"

she says. One of her first inspirations, she says, was Lou Costello; he and Bud Abbott were one of the top comedy teams of the 1940s and '50s, starring in films and television. "He was a seminal influence on me," she says. She recalls walking home from kindergarten, at age 5, and passing an Italian bakery that displayed a signed photo of Abbott and Costello. "It was like a brush with fame," she says.

Now Scotti has achieved fame herself, and while the road there has been difficult at times, she's philosophical about it. "I don't think I could have turned out this way if I hadn't lived the life I lived," she says.

And she's keeping busy. In addition to her comedy and speaking gigs, she's planning to record her second album this fall, and she's written a play that she hopes to get produced. It's about an Italian-American family in the 1960s, and it deals with LGBTQ+ and racial issues. She'd also like to do some acting.

She enthuses about everyone who helped get her life story to the screen, particularly Sandler, who she says "worked tirelessly" to bring the film to fruition. Sandler, the playwright and screenwriter of *Crossing Delancey*, says in a director's statement that she became enraptured by Scotti after seeing her perform an "explosively funny and moving set" in 2015. "Julia's story deepens our understanding of not only the transgender experience, but the human experience of longing to be who we truly are, individuated from the voices telling us to be someone different, someone more known, someone who 'fits in,'" Sandler says. "And by that example, she invites us to be free."

That's the effect Scotti hopes the film will have on audiences — for trans people, making them feel seen and supported, and, she says, "if you're a cisgender person, maybe you'll walk away with a little more understanding."