



# Planned Pride Month Celebrations

**By Adam Romanik**  
As we approach the beginning of May, Pride Month in June is just around the corner. This year there are many pride celebrations already planned including the 50th Anniversary of World Pride being held in Washington, DC between May 17 – June 8. As part of World Pride 2025, there are many events that have been scheduled including a Choral Festival, Human Rights Conference, Parade and Street Fair, and an International March and Rally. More information will be included in the May edition of Maryland OUTloud. For more information on World Pride 2025 visit [worldpridedc.org](http://worldpridedc.org).

Along with World Pride 2025, there are many pride events planned all throughout Maryland and southern central Pennsylvania. We have created a list for you in date order and will have more information on these events in our May issue.

**May 31 - Annapolis Pride Parade & Festival**

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

**June 1 - Rockville Pride Festival**

[rockvillemd.gov/2276/Rockville-Pride](http://rockvillemd.gov/2276/Rockville-Pride)

**June 1 - Shepardstown Gay Pride Parade**

[facebook.com/events/2143212872799417/](https://facebook.com/events/2143212872799417/)

**June 8 - Old Ellicott City Pride**

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

**June 8 - 15 - Baltimore Pride Week**

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

**June 14 - York County Pride Festival**

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

**June 12 - 16 - Delmarva Pride Festival Weekend**

[delmarvapridecenter.com](http://delmarvapridecenter.com)

**June 21 - Hagerstown Pride 2025**

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

**June 21 - 5th Annual Catonsville Pride**

<https://sites.google.com/view/catonsvillepride>

**June 27 & 28 - Frederick Pride Parade & Festival**

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

**June 29 - Cumberland Pride Festival**

[rockvillemd.gov/2276/Rockville-Pride](http://rockvillemd.gov/2276/Rockville-Pride)

**June 29 - Montgomery County Pride in the Plaza**

<https://liveinyourtruth.org/pride-in-the-plaza>

**June 29 - Lancaster Pride Festival**

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

# Thriving in Spaces Not Built for Us

**By Johanna M. Dolan**  
Leadership is rarely easy. But stepping into leadership as an LGBTQ professional in workplaces that weren't designed with us in mind? That's another level of challenge—and opportunity. Many of us have found ourselves in boardrooms, offices, and organizations where we are the only LGBTQ person at the table or where inclusion is more of a tagline than a lived practice. And yet, we lead.

So, how do we navigate these spaces while staying true to who we are? How thrive instead of just survive?

The truth is, we've always been leaders—whether in activism, community-building, or simply by showing up as our whole selves in environments that might not always be welcoming. The path isn't always clear, and there are actions we can take that can help us step into our power, advocate for change, and create space for those who come after us.

## Owning Your Seat at the Table

If you wait for someone else to give you permission to lead, you might be waiting a long time. LGBTQ professionals often have to advocate for themselves in ways that others don't, whether it's ensuring equitable pay, pushing for inclusive policies, or simply being recognized for their contributions.

## How to Advocate for Yourself:

Know your worth by consistently tracking your accomplishments and contributions. When the time comes for promotions or negotiations, let data speak louder than emotion. Set firm boundaries and refuse to shrink yourself to fit into a culture that fails to recognize or respect you; clear expectations around respect and inclusion are essential. And don't underestimate the power of your voice. Whether you're addressing microaggressions or advocating for policy changes, speaking up can be uncomfortable, but the cost of silence is often far greater.

## Finding (and Becoming) a Mentor

Leadership doesn't happen in isolation. Having a mentor—especially one who understands the unique challenges of being LGBTQ in professional spaces—can be game-changing. If you don't see one in your workplace, look outside of it. Organizations like Out & Equal, The Human Rights Campaign, and local LGBTQ leadership groups can connect you to those who have walked this road before.

## How to Build Mentorship Networks:

Seek out leaders you admire—while they don't need to be LGBTQ, they should be true allies who understand and value inclusion. Don't hesitate to ask for guidance; many accomplished professionals are open to mentoring but simply haven't been approached. As you grow, pay it forward by mentoring others and building the support system you once wished for.

Continued on page 4



## Sounding Off with Karen

By Karen Kendra Holmes



Hello dear followers and welcome to "Sounding Off with Karen, a place that you can sound off about anything you are pissed off about. So, to start things off is I am very pissed off about how President Trump is still going after the Transgender people of the United States. #47 and all the Republicans out there that you have voted for them please get a life. You have no right to complain for your agency being shut down or you being laid off. You knew #47 was going to do the things he ran his campaign on, you just did not know it was going to happen to you, your family or friends.

For 47 going after MS-13 and sending them back to their country or prison I totally agree when they are one of the worst gang members in the country. Three cheers to ICE and other local federal agencies on the east coast getting the number one MS-13 gang member. I was very surprised to know that this leader was so young, but I am so glad it happened. This is what 47 needs to worry about going after gangs and terrorist "NOT" the Transgender people. Trans people are not killing or assaulting people, so why does he keep harassing the community. All I can say right now is 47 "Get A Life" and leave us alone! Again, the issue with Transgender people playing in women's sports let's get it right when you talk about it. It is Transwomen (Biological Men – so he and anyone else want to say), give me a cookie break! If you feel you want things to be fair to women, just make sure that the transwomen are on hormones for a good year, because being on them you do lose your strength. For any Transwoman who has Sex or Gender Reassignment Surgery, will lose a lot of their strength as well and will not need to take hormones. Now there are a lot of Cis-gender women whose strength is better than some Cis-gender men. Now get this, no Cis-gender men, 47, congress complain about a Transman playing in the men's sports. What about co-ed team sports where men and women play together, and the women are just as good as the men they play with. Now let's talk about women going into the men's bathroom at sport stadiums, no men are saying anything. So, let's be fair all the way around this problem that many people are making it bigger than it is. I understand how people feel about young boys playing in girls' sports but some of them are on puberty blockers with their parents' approval. These parents allow them to be on blockers because they rather have a happy and living child than a dead one who decided to commit suicide. So again, there are more important things to worry about than women playing in sports. If you do test them and give it a year on the med's things will work out.

Now to the issue sounding Transgender people in the military, "Give Me A Cookie Break"! If a Transgender person can meet the standards of a active soldier than leave them alone. We put the training into these people to do a job in protecting us and the country, why kick them out or not let them serve. Transgender people join or want to stay in because they believe that is what they are called to do. They do not or did not join just to have Sex or Gender Reassignment Surgery. They join to serve our country. Their family members might have or are serving right now and they want to carry on the family tradition. The most stupid thing for 47 to ever say about Transgender people in the military is that: "Saying that Transgender people are simply incapable of leading an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle". That is the farthest thing to say. I say at least we want to serve than dodging to go into the military.

This part of the article is from a reader who is sounding off at her agency: "I am scared, frustrated & anxious. I don't feel safe or protected. I work hard & take great pride in my work I do for my team, members & my nation. I feel like I'm in a hostile work environment. Every week explaining what i did to an open inbox. I have no idea if someone is actually tracking that. I have done everything "by the book" and I feel like I've been lied to, hoodwinked and play for a fool.

The lack of communication, the unclear inbox process, the sudden change in trajectory without explanation — it's dehumanizing, and I deserve better.

Working for the federal government gave me great pride and joy knowing I had the security of a stable job. Now being forced/phased out for no reason except to fulfill a very divisive administration. Seems very unfair & unwarranted.

I did my job, kept my head down and reached more professional goals than any other position. I took an oath (promise) when I on-boarded this job. And I took it seriously. It's sad that I'm being asked to leave early before I can fulfill my full contract".

Remember if you like to "Sounding Off With Karen", on any topic, please send your article piece to Karen@marylandoutloud.com.

## Ask Dr. J



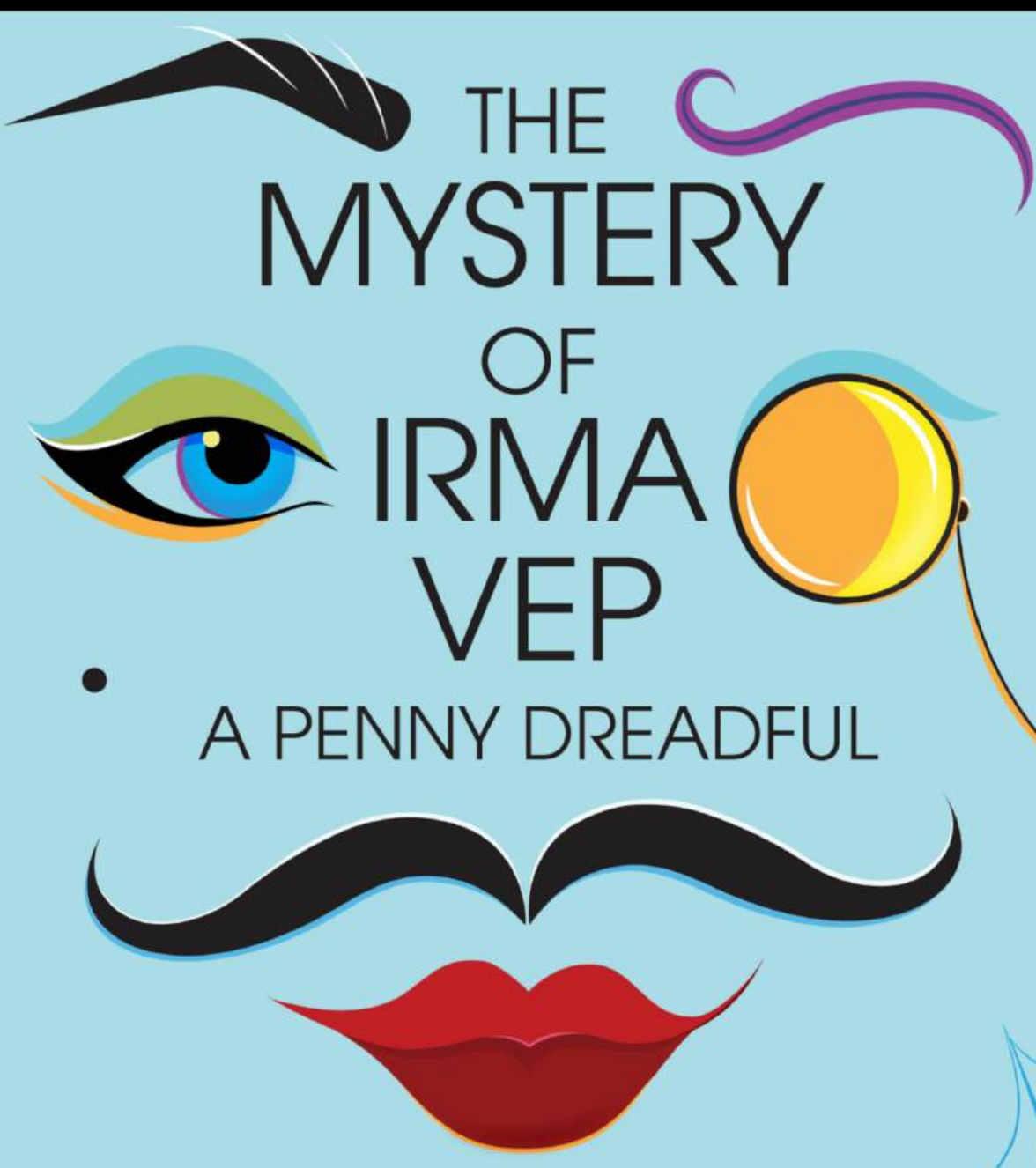
By Janan Broadbent, Ph. D.

Ask Dr. J is back! Those of you who were readers of Baltimore Outloud may remember that I used to write this column for several years, focusing on relationships and dedicated to the memory of my late son. Then Covid came and the world changed and everything went to online and that publication disappeared. Now, thanks to efforts of Adam Romanik and Mary Taylor, it is back as Maryland Outloud. I am grateful that I have been asked to revive the column. I welcome any questions that you have on what is happening around us, in our relationships, and in how we deal with the world even beyond our relationships.

I would be remiss if I did not start this column with an acknowledgement of the unreal situation we are currently experiencing. In all these years of working with people and relationships, I did not encounter, in the therapy context, the level of anxiety, bewilderment, and confusion that are all around us. Friendships and relationships are challenged by differing and often opposing views. The debilitating effects of the isolation (or 24/7 togetherness) of the Covid years took a toll, so were you surprised that the divorce rate went up? But then, here came the national elections and today, less than three months after the inauguration, there is a level of instability that affects us all.

The human mind craves consistency and predictability. It is not only the stock market and the financial world that thrive on those concepts. Ambiguity perceived in the environment is one of the main causes of depression. Even the most adventuresome of us needs a base level of certainty. So how do we maintain a sense of stability within ourselves to stay mentally healthy? I will get into these topics in the upcoming editions. I welcome any questions, comments, and challenges you may have. Let's rely on the strength each one of us brings to this forum to look forward with hope and optimism.


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## Maryland OUTloud

A Voice for the LGBTQIA+ Community & Their Allies

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## Leather Line - I'm Still Here!

By Rodney Burger



At a cocktail party at the beginning of 2005, I was asked by good friend and co-owner of the Baltimore OUTloud newspaper, Jim Williams, if I would be interested in writing a column about Baltimore's leather community. Knowing that I had produced both the Mr. & Ms. Baltimore Eagle Contest and the Maryland LeatherSIR/ Leatherboy Contest, had been a leather titleholder (Maryland Mr. Drummer 2001), and had been a member of the ShipMates Club of Baltimore since 1997, Jim thought I would be the right person to ask. I didn't have to think about it. It was one of those questions like: "Can I buy you a drink?" On February 18, 2005 the first Leather Line hit the streets. A new one followed every two weeks. I never missed an issue. Spreading the news about my beloved leather community was too important to me. In 2020, when the pandemic hit, Baltimore OUTloud kept going with on-line only issues. Although I always preferred to sit down with leather titleholders in person for interviews (I feel like Oprah with I have a Mr. Mid-Atlantic Leather titleholder on my sofa), I discovered that Zoom allows me to interview someone in Pittsburgh or DC without the traffic and the long drive. The leather community in the Mid-Atlantic region is second to none. With countless leather contests, leather club events, and new stars rising, I was never without something to write about. Then it all came to a crashing end. With dwindling revenues from advertisers struggling from the pandemic, Baltimore OUTloud went dark.

Those pandemic years brought lots of changes. Nationwide so many LGBTQ+ bars and businesses, many that I wrote about, went away. Even some leather clubs and organizations that were around for years folded. I've always kept my columns upbeat and away from politics, but 2025 brings even more challenges.

If there is one thing I've learned in my many years in the community, it is one must embrace change. Otherwise, you become a grumpy old person clinging to the past. As Dionne Warwick once sang, "A fool will lose tomorrow reaching back for yesterday." Everything changes. Bears, Bikers, and Mayhem has always been held in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This year it is at the Lord Baltimore Hotel in Baltimore on May 29th - June 1st. For years International Ms. Leather and International Ms. Bootblack was held in California. On April 24th the contests will be held at the Holiday Inn in Piscataway, New Jersey. Things change. Not all change is bad.

Baltimore OUTloud may be gone, but thanks to Adam Romanik and Mary Taylor, Maryland OUTloud has been launched. Plus, like my ShipMates Club, who celebrated fifty years of service in April of 2024, I'm still here. Spring brings rebirth and it is time to start again. Now, where's my cocktail?



Estate Planning: the Basics

By Woody Derricks, CFP®, Accredited Domestic Partnership AdvisorSM



In its simplest terms, estate planning is passing your assets to your heirs as quickly and tax free as possible. Assets can be transferred via a will, ownership, by contract (beneficiary arrangements), and trusts. Meeting with an attorney is the best way to ensure that you have everything covered.

Regardless of the complexity of your financial situation, your attorney will start you with a basic estate plan. The basic estate plan typically includes drafting of your will, powers of attorney for health care and finances, and living wills.

Wills: I have encountered many excuses for not having a will: my estate isn’t large enough; everyone knows who should get my belongings; and so on. These are all simply that- excuses. If you do not have a will, the probate court creates one for you. As a result, parents, siblings, and possibly even cousins could receive preferential treatment over your partner (if you’re not married), friends, or your favorite charity.

Talk with your planned executor/executrix to make sure it’s okay with them to be the one who settles your estate. Also, let that person know where you keep your original estate documents so s/he can easily gather them after you pass away.

Powers of Attorney: When most of us think of estate planning, we often neglect to think about those areas that can help us while we are alive. Powers of attorney allow someone else to make decisions on your behalf if you cannot. These documents, drafted with your basic estate plan, spell out the decisions someone else can make for you and the circumstances in which they can. For instance, if you were in intensive care, you might be unable to make your own medical decisions.

Additionally, you should have someone managing your investments and paying your bills while in the hospital. Your financial power of attorney may be the same person or a different person as your power of attorney for health care. In creating both, take your time to carefully select the person with whom you plan to place your physical and financial well-being. I also recommend appointing a contingent or backup person if your first choice is unable or unwilling to make those decisions.

Even with the power of attorney, institutions in or out of your state may decline to accept them. I recommend checking with your primary care physician to ensure they will take your forms and make them aware of your intentions. Additionally, many financial institutions may only accept their forms. As a result, I also recommend talking to your bank and financial advisor about your intentions.

Living Will: Regardless of your desire to be kept alive or allowed to die, you want to make your wishes known in writing. Make your wishes crystal clear through a living will as part of your estate plan.

Settling an estate is a difficult task for survivors. It is an area where most people have little to no experience and are often quite emotional. By having a will, beneficiary arrangements, and an organized system of your financial/estate documents, you can help them tremendously during this time. Even if your assets are relatively small, doing some work now could make a significant difference for your heirs.

Some of our clients have expressed concerns about their legal protections considering the current administration. Having appropriate and up-to-date legal documents in place and naming beneficiaries on your accounts are among the first steps you can take to help protect yourself and your loved ones.

The most important piece of estate planning is getting one in place. Meet with an attorney, financial advisor, and accountant to determine the best course of action for your estate. Review your beneficiaries on a regular basis. You will also want to update your estate plan every five years or when you have a significant life change, a beneficiary passes away, or if estate/income tax laws change. Do not continue to procrastinate- make it happen and get your estate plan completed today!

The opinions voiced in this material are for informational purposes only and are not intended to provide specific advice to any individual. Consult your legal, tax, and/or financial advisor to determine what is appropriate for your situation.

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Thriving in Spaces Continued

**Creating Space for Others**  
Authentic leadership isn't just about personal success—it's about making the path wider for those who follow. One of the most powerful things we can do as LGBTQ leaders is to actively create more inclusive workplaces for those coming up behind us.

Ways to Build Inclusive Workplaces:

Normalize conversations about inclusion by advocating for LGBTQ-friendly policies, gender-neutral restrooms, and equitable hiring practices. Use your influence to amplify underrepresented voices, whether that means supporting diverse hiring, championing equity initiatives, or ensuring everyone at the table is truly heard. Most importantly, lead by example. Show up as your authentic self because your visibility sends a powerful message: when others see you thriving, they believe they can also.

Thriving, Not Just Surviving

The reality is that many workplaces weren't built with us in mind—but that doesn't mean we don't belong. It means we can redefine what leadership looks like, push for progress, and claim our space with confidence.

If you’re an LGBTQ leader (or aspiring to be one), know this: you don’t have to conform to outdated leadership models. You don’t have to check parts of yourself at the door. You are enough as you are, and your leadership—bold, authentic, and unapologetically you—is exactly what the world needs.

What has helped you navigate leadership in spaces that weren’t built for you? Let’s keep this conversation going. Share your experiences, challenges, and strategies. I’d love to hear from you.

Until next time, keep showing up for yourself and for those who need you.