

Maryland OUTloud

A Voice for the LGBTQIA+ Community & Their Allies

April-June 2026

MarylandOUTloud.com

Vol. 2 No. 4

HAPPY
PRIDE MONTH
2026

Meet Miss Stephanie Micheals One of Maryland's Longest performing Queens

By Adam Romanik

Recently I sat down with Miss Stephanie Micheals, one of Maryland's longest performing drag queens. I also had the honor of recently attending Stephanie's 65th birthday celebration at The Lodge and found that she been performing for almost 50 years. Stephanie has held over 100 titles in that time period including Miss Wisconsin USA, Miss Statecoach, Miss Zippers, Miss Hagerstown Pride Emeritus, Miss Keystone State Gay Rodeo 2017, Miss Dear Park Lodge in 1989 and Miss Maryland America 2012 to name a few.

Miss Stephanie was born in Harrisonburg, VA in February 1961. Her parents were cattle farmers raising Hereford beef cattle on a farm in Mount Jackson, VA. During Stephanie's childhood, she helped on the farm and learned about hard work. In that area of Virginia, there was an annual pageant called the woman-less beauty contest. This was a pageant where straight men would dress up as a fundraiser for the local fire company. Stephanie competed annually and won 4 times. After the 4th win Stephanie was banned from running again. This was the start of her drag career.

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Miss Gay Maryland America 2012

Stephanie Micheals

Steve Weiner Photography

The Process of Consciousness Restoration

By Rickie Green

It has been said that, in order to change one's consciousness one must change the information that is in the mind, as well as how we process ideas and thoughts. While truly the acquisition of information can be considered a road map to knowledge, taking the road which leads to a conscious awareness and continuous knowledge of oneself remains a practical and essential directive within the restorative process.



The Hermetic tradition warns that "half knowledge destroys the Seeker faster than ignorance". Despite the barrage of false messaging and misinformation, our diverse communities seek a process of Consciousness restoration which speaks of our experiences, our history and our greatness. It is our responsibility to leave a legacy to our children; providing information about ourselves and our communities, thereby contributing to the development of a conscious awareness that will permit all to maintain levels of control and influence, well as the utilization of actions based upon a prior knowledge of self-determination and survival within the human family.

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Leather Line - I Know What I Did Last Summer!



by Rodney Burger

Let's face it. With piles of snow and ice, single digit temperatures, and depressing national news, we just went through the winter from hell. It was not easy to keep one's spirits up. I usually take a walk through my neighborhood park, but when it is eight degrees with twenty mile per hour winds, I just can't.

Thankfully, last July I took the perfect vacation, a ten-day Atlantis cruise from Barcelona to Lisbon with stops in Marseille, Ibiza, Malaga, Cadiz, and Casablanca. Looking back over my summer vacation pictures helped get me through the winter. Atlantis is a West Hollywood based company that have hosted events for the

LGBTQ+ community for over thirty years. I feared that I would not fit in on a gay cruise since I am less club kid and more AARP Club, but that wasn't an issue. The 2,000 folks on the Virgin's Scarlett Lady were all ages and sizes. The entertainment included hilarious drag shows, Broadway performers, and a very erotic Cirque du Soleil style show. There were countless dance parties and even a "leather community meet-up" each evening. We have already made plans to attend another Atlantis event in May when they take over Club Med in Cancun, Mexico for a week. That event is sold-out, but you can join them on upcoming cruises this year. Visit atlantisevents.com for details.

I like to see LGBTQ+ events sold-out. I'm so tired of hearing negative people complain that no one goes out anymore or that events used to be fun. There are an endless number of events that are still fun, it is the negative people who are not. One of the biggest events in the leather community is the annual Folsom Street Fair in San Francisco. Billed as the world's largest kink and leather festival, it is scheduled this year on Sunday, September 27th as part of Leather Pride Week and draws over 250,000. For those who do not want to fly across the country, the Folsom Street East Fair is scheduled for Sunday, June 21st in New York City's West Village. Book a hotel, stay for a few days, and make the festival a part of your summer vacation.

If you want to get away from the big city, try the Metropolis Entertainment Complex in Augusta, Georgia. Opened in 1998 as the Parliament Resort of Augusta, this 15-acre complex has two motels, two bars, two pools, an RV park, and even a pig pen fetish play space. The resort hosts all kinds of theme events from Fist Fest to Carolina Bear weekend. I've been there several times for leather events and had a blast. Visit metropoliscomplex.com for all the details.

I've also enjoyed getting away from it all at The Woods Campground in Lehighton, Pennsylvania. Opened in 2004, The Woods is a LGBTQ+ camping resort on 161 private acres. Do not worry if you do not have all that camping equipment, they have cozy cabins available to rent. The Woods is also all about themed weekends with Leather/Fetish/Country Western weekend on May 29th -31st, July 17th - 19th and September 11th - 13th.

I find that I'm happier when I have something to look forward to on my calendar. Make some plans to take a trip. I would love to know what you did this summer.



Maryland OUTloud

A Voice for the LGBTQIA+ Community & Their Allies

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New Column Starting in July - Thoughts from Justin Ryan, Southern Gospel Sissy

Justin Ryan is an openly gay Christian singer, songwriter, and storyteller whose work reclaims the heart of Southern Gospel while expanding its theological and cultural boundaries. Deeply formed within the traditional gospel world, Justin brings a lifetime of musical heritage to his art—rich vocals, emotional honesty, and reverence for faith—while offering a voice shaped by lived experience, grief, and radical grace.



After choosing authenticity over acceptance, Justin emerged as a leading voice for LGBTQ+ Christians navigating faith beyond exclusion. His music and performances blend gospel tradition with contemporary storytelling, creating spaces that feel part concert, part testimony, and part sanctuary. His acclaimed album *Explaining Jesus* and subsequent work explore themes of loss, resurrection, humor, and hope, resonating with audiences both inside and beyond the church.

Justin is also the creator and host of the podcast *Southern Gospel Sissy*, where he reflects on faith, queerness, and church culture with insight, wit, and pastoral depth. He is closely connected with BALM Ministries, founded by Marsha Stevens Pino, and is recognized as a continuing voice in the legacy of LGBTQ+ Christian music and ministry. Through song, story, and sacred honesty, Justin Ryan offers a faith that survives the truth—and invites others to do the same.

To view Justin's Southern Gospel Sissy series, visit justinryanmusic.live.

We look forward to Justin's Wisdom to share with our readers each month.

My Fabulous Disease - At Atlanta 'Seven Days in June' Event: "I Will Forget Their Names"

By Mark S. King

On June 5, 2026, as part of the national "Seven Days in June" campaign, Atlanta advocates held a rally and vigil in Piedmont Park. We told our stories and vented our rage at an administration that is dismantling social safety net programs and gutting public health prevention and treatment efforts.

Our number included Maxx Boykin of PrEP4All, Malcolm Reid of the U.S. People Living with HIV/AIDS Caucus, Dazon Dixon Diallo of Sisterlove, Jeff Graham and Noel Heatherland of Georgia Equality, Allison Glass of Amplify Georgia, the Rev. E.N.Hill, community advocate Jon Greaves, and former CDC employees who have banded together as the National Public Health Coalition, among others.



Here are my remarks at the event, which also marked HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day:

My name is Mark. It is a name that will be remembered by those who love me.

On June 5, 1981, exactly 45 years ago today, a doctor with the name of Michael Gottlieb published a report in a CDC publication about five men who mysteriously died from pneumocystis pneumonia. Those five men had a disease that did not yet have a name. But those patients had names. Their names were Michael and Chuck and Gary and Phil and Brad.

Continued on Page 18

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Hope

By Janan Broadbent, PhD

Last week when I read Former Rep. Barney Frank's obituary, I remembered all the times I had seen him on TV or read about his speeches. He was witty, extremely intelligent and a fighter. Then I thought of all he may have gone through, keeping his sexuality a secret for years and then the attacks on him for it.



Today, as I read the nasty comments that seem abundant whenever there is some speech or book or article that is anti-MAGA, I note the abuse that seems to follow at the author.

That old saying of the world going to hell in a handbasket has been around a long time, but these last few years have given new meaning to it and in my opinion, because of the embolden given to the negative, arrogant and even violent ways with which it is exacerbated.

Let me remind you, dear readers, and myself, that there are many more of us who want to see decency return, who treat others with respect, who have compassion for the other human beings but also, at times, start to lose hope of better days. Then we come across common or insignificant deeds that regular human beings take on: Like my friend who started a gofundme account for a homeless veteran in his neighborhood and collected \$7500, like the repairman who told me, after he fixed what I called him for, and pointed to another issue for which fix he would not charge me "because I should've checked it."



RIP Barney Frank! RIP Jesse Jackson! "Keep Hope Alive!"

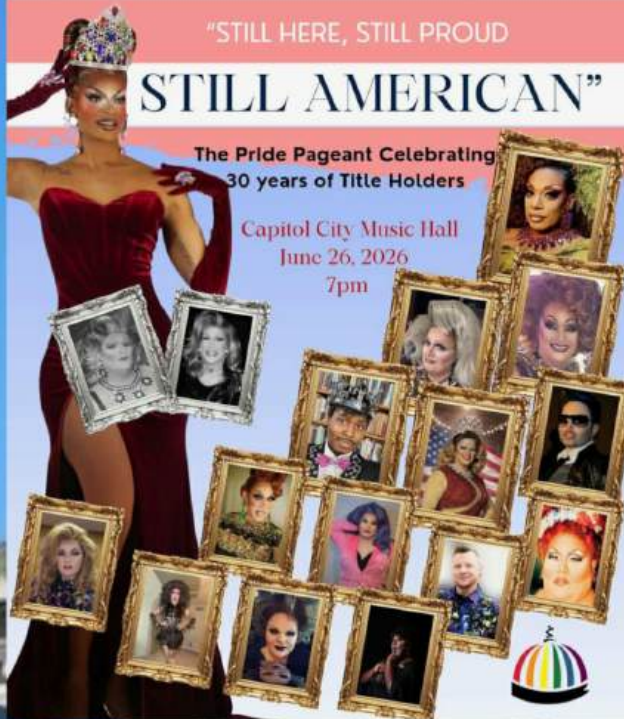
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Sounding Off with Karen

By Karen Kendra Holmes

Welcome readers to "Sounding OFF with Karen" and my pronouns are She Her Hers. I will be your writer and advocate for the column. I am very happy to be writing for Maryland OUTloud Magazine.

To start things off in this article I retired from the Federal Government last year on September 28, 2026 and it was and is a blessing as of today.

Just recently I published my memoir. My memior tells the story of my lifelong journey to discover who I truly am — deep within my mind, heart, and soul — as a transgender woman. From age 13 to 53, I lived with an internal struggle, fighting to free my authentic self. For 40 years, I wandered. Today, that journey has finally brought me home. I am proud to live fully and openly as who I was always meant to be Karen Kendra Holmes.

I love my life as a transgender woman every single day.

Along the way, I served as a federal government employee for over 24 years, stood proudly with the Maryland Defense Force and the U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps, and now volunteer with the Red Cross Disaster Action Team and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). As a TEDx speaker, I travel to the country sharing my story with members of the military, law enforcement, medical professionals, federal agencies, and students.

My mission is simple: to empower transgender people to live authentically and to help the cisgender community better understand who we are.

If you believe in something, you may achieve it. But if you believe in yourself, you will.

To order my memior visit marylandoutloud.com/articles/karenkendraholmes or visit the QR code to the right:



Now onto a couple of people "Sounding Off" with Karen! To start things off, I am so tired of this administration dodging the issues around the "Epstein's File". When it was promised that the Epstein Files would be released a court order as well to do so, why has it not been done. If it was little old, me or you to do so by the Courts or by Congress, we would have to do so and we would not be able to not do so, but yet this administration ignores does. How wrong is it and what gives this administration the right to do so. What are they hiding from us, and the MEGA people want them to release the other half of the files. One thing that was asked of this writer anonymously how comes DOJ or FBI are not talking with the pilot(s), flight attendance on Epstein's plane who were the people coming on the plane to go to Epstein's Island. The same question was asked about the Captain of staff on Les Wexner 315-foot superyacht Limitless which Epstein had access to. Would those people not know who came on the superyacht?

Next is about service people that do not show up to do the work or call you to give you an update on time to respond. I have 2 cases and the first private contractor is someone who installed a room AC/Heater unit on the wall and the outside unit that works with it over two years ago. The owner sent a technician out to work on it and found a leak on a pipe. He said that they needed to fix the leak or replace the pipe and give a recharge to the system. I talked with the owner who said they would be out in two days, which he never did. Plus, they never called me, and I have been trying to reach the owner for a week with no response to my calls or text messages. To me I was trying to work with a small business, which you would think they need the work. I even called my friend who referred to this company to me. She herself said she would call them and got no response either.

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Stefanie Micheals Continued

When Stephanie was 23, she moved to Winchester, VA to start to find her own roots. She lived in Winchester for 20 years and during that time worked for JCPenney in marketing as well as a hair stylist. During this time, Stephanie got involved with the local drag community at Deer Park Lodge in Boonsboro, MD. In 1989, after trying 6 times, she won the title of Miss Dear Park Lodge. Of all of the titles held, this one was the most meaningful because it was the first title won.

My first experience meeting Stephanie Micheals was at The Pink Lizard in Harrisburg, PA sometime in the winter of 2002 at a drag show. The Pink Lizard regularly put on monthly drag shows and Stephanie was always one of the favorite performers. The one thing that I will never forget when seeing Stephanie for the first time was that there was always at least one performance of the show that was hilarious and comical and made you want to make sure that you came back next month. I also experienced Stephanie perform at many other places including bars in Williamsport, PA, Central PA Pride Fest, and others where she was always a favorite.

In 2015 after I founded the Keystone State Gay Rodeo Association and we planned our first rodeo, Stephanie was the first in line to help with fundraisers and to be the first Miss Keystone State Gay Rodeo Association. Our first rodeo in June 2017 was a very busy weekend, but one of the things that I will never forget is Stephanie selling 50/50 tickets each day and her comical style to get folks to purchase them helping raise almost \$1,000 between both days of the rodeo. One of the questions I asked Stephanie during our interview was how much do you think that you have raised for community organizations and causes during your career. Her answer probably was over \$100,000.



Miss KSGRA 2017

For the past 15 years Stephanie has called Hagerstown, MD home. Her and her husband James own a house that used to be a church and half of the first floor of the house is the drag room. During our interview Stephanie gave me a tour of the drag room. Racks of clothing, shoes, wigs and even several Craftsmen toolboxes of Jewelry.



The drag room pictured above

Stephanie still performs regularly at The Lodge in Boonsboro. In the July edition, we will be spotlighting The Lodge, one of Maryland's most unique bars.

For more information about the Lodge or to see the full schedule of events going on there including regular drag shows, visit: thelodgemd.com

As we were finishing our Interview, I asked Stephanie, what is your recommendation for anyone that wants to get into drag. Her response is simply this, "Make a career out of it. If you only want to do it one time, then forget about it. You have to have the will to want to do it, and then you'll need get help to get that. Buy what you can afford to get. Get in a spotlight show for amateurs and get booked into Pride shows".



**From the Staff of
Maryland OUTloud**

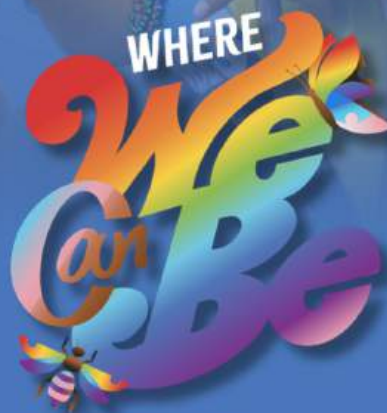
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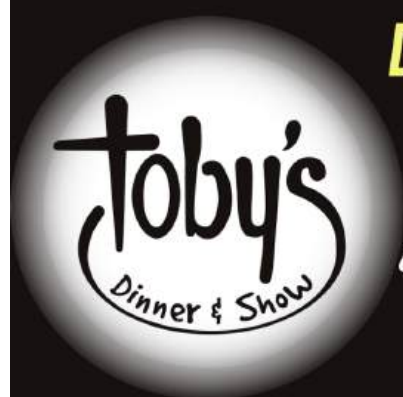
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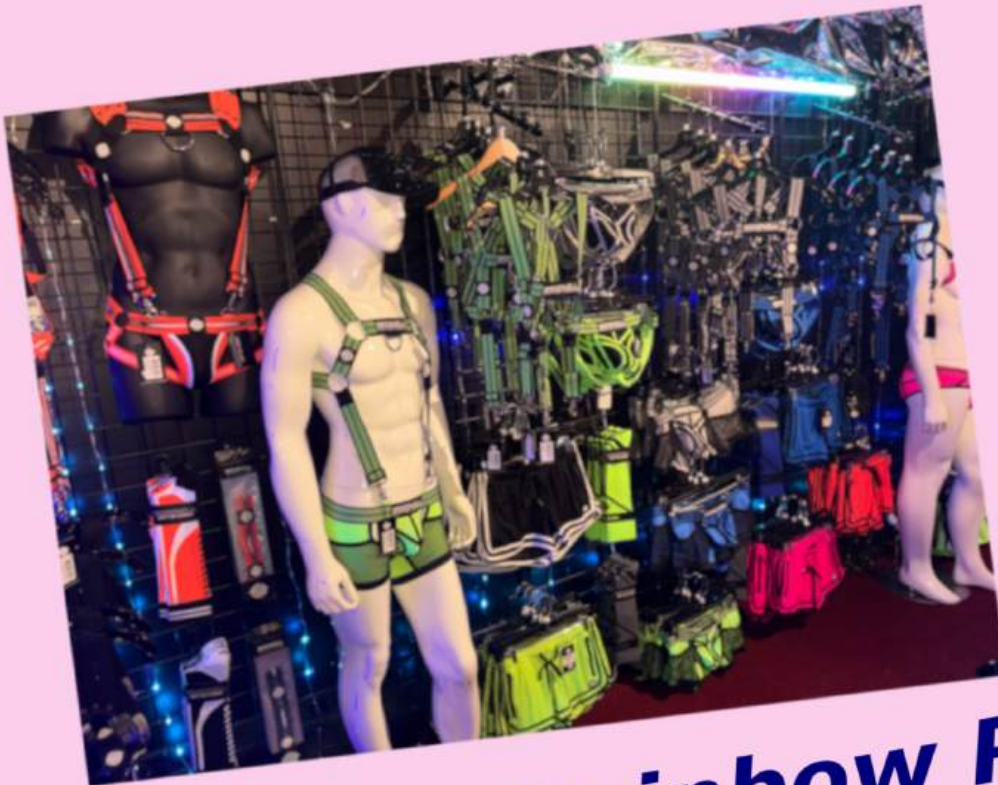
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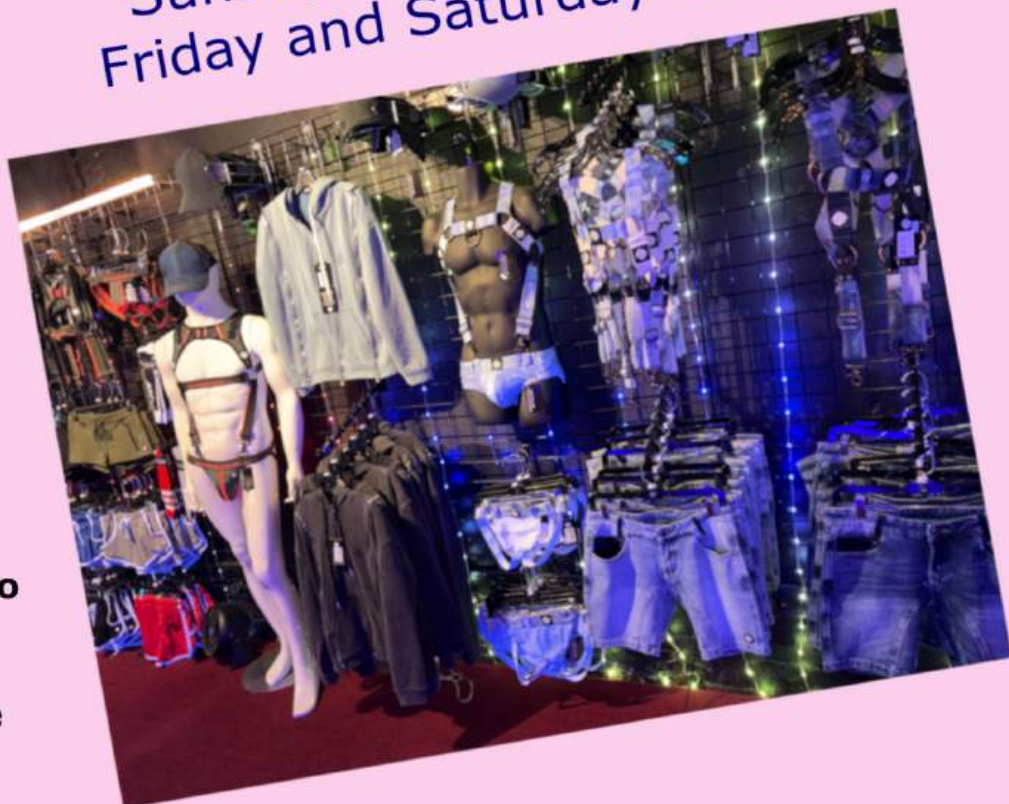
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Navigating an Uncertain Economic Landscape

By Woody Derricks, CFP®, Accredited Domestic Partnership Advisor

Risks appear to be mounting for the U.S. economy. Inflation, unemployment, and market exuberance leave concern for 2026's outlook.



The Inflation Problem Isn't Solved

The economic outlook for the U.S. remains highly uncertain. Although estimates for 2026 had core inflation gradually easing toward 2% later in the year, the risks tilt in unfavorable directions — toward both a weaker labor market and greater persistence of above-target inflation. A major global organization called the OECD expects U.S. inflation to hit 4.2% for 2026, a sharp step up from its prior projection of 2.8% and well above the Fed's own estimate of 2.7%.

The War with Iran Is a Wildcard

One of the biggest risks to inflation is the ongoing conflict with Iran. Vanguard has revised its year-end 2026 core inflation forecast upward, driven in part by higher energy prices amid escalating geopolitical tensions involving Iran. A prolonged conflict could keep oil prices elevated well into 2027, acting as a persistent tax on consumers and businesses alike. Energy shocks of this kind don't just raise gas prices — they ripple through the cost of food, transportation, manufacturing, and services across the entire economy.

A Lopsided Labor Market

The good news is that people are working. The bad news is that most new jobs are clustered in just a few areas, like healthcare. Job creation has been heavily concentrated in healthcare, reflecting structural demand rather than broad economic strength. Think of it like a table with only one strong leg — it can stand for a while, but it's not very stable. When job growth is this narrow, the economy becomes vulnerable — if even one or two strong sectors stumble, the headline numbers can deteriorate quickly.

Meanwhile, the share of Americans who are working or actively looking for work sits at just 61.9% — a number that has barely moved in a year. That means millions of working-age people have simply stopped looking for jobs altogether.

The Stagflation Risk

This brings me to the concern I find most troubling: stagflation. It's a combination of two problems happening at the same time — prices going up while the economy slows down and fewer jobs become available. It's the worst of both worlds.

Think of it this way: imagine your household expenses keep rising, but your paycheck stops growing — or disappears entirely. That's what stagflation feels like for a whole country. Economists warn that rising prices from tariffs, tighter labor supply, and big government spending could combine to push inflation above 4% by the end of this year.⁶ If the economy weakens at the same time, the Federal Reserve gets stuck. Raising rates fights inflation but slows the economy. Lowering rates helps the economy but lets prices keep climbing. There's no easy answer.

What This Could Mean for You

I am not suggesting panic — but I am recommending preparedness. Portfolios that are over-concentrated in long-duration bonds or interest-rate-sensitive assets deserve a fresh look. Diversification across asset classes with inflation-resistant characteristics — real assets, short-duration instruments, and sectors with pricing power — becomes more important in this environment. This is a great time to review your portfolio's allocation, and to make adjustments, if appropriate.

This commentary is for informational purposes only and does not constitute investment advice. Diversification does not remove investment risk. All investments involve risk, including potential loss of principal.

Continued on Page 22



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December 2025 MarylandOUTloud.com Vol. 1 No. 5

Meet Dr. Ruth Horowitz, Endocrinologist and LGBTQ+ Advocate

By Adam Romanik

Recently, I sat down with Dr. Ruth Horowitz, Endocrinologist and LGBTQ+ Advocate. Dr. Horowitz is the Chief of the Division of Endocrinology at Greater Baltimore Medical Center and serves on the Pride committee to make GBMC a more inclusive and friendly institution for all. Dr. Horowitz is also one of the only endocrinologists in Maryland who's part of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.

Dr. Horowitz grew up in a very progressive home; her father worked for the Social Security Administration and her mother was a social worker. During her childhood years, she remembers how her parents instilled in her equity for every person. After high school, she attended Oberlin College, a liberal and progressive school and then earned her medical degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine.

Dr. Horowitz selected endocrinology because it is a more specialized medicine based on individual patient conditions and at many times, in endocrinology it's like solving a complicated problem for each patient. During her time at Oberlin College, Dr. Horowitz was exposed to the LGBTQ+ community. Through her family she first got involved in the trans community and was approached about practicing trans medicine. After some training and conferences, she realized that practicing trans medicine was no different than any other form of medicine.

A few years later, the pride committee at GBMC was holding a celebration for Transgender Day of Remembrance which prompted her to reach out to the committee chair and join the pride committee. As a member of that committee, she has helped to make GBMC more inviting and inclusive. The committee also participates in the local pride festival and parade, holds other celebrations during pride month and national coming out day, and holds trainings and workshops for staff on topics to advance inclusivity.

As we were getting near the end of the interview, I asked Dr. Horowitz, what are the biggest issues that you are currently facing? "Fair", she replied. "People in the trans community are worried about getting access to their meds, healthcare and about being safe. They are worried about information in their medical records going to get them up for being harassed, arrested, or deported. Dr. Horowitz reassures them that Maryland is a very trans friendly state and has protections for the community and has seen many patients move from other not so friendly trans states to Maryland because of the support there."

Dr. Horowitz's recommendation for the LGBTQ+ community is support each other and be active in the community. For those that are considering starting the journey of transitioning, she recommends making sure that you have psychological support and work with a mental health provider at the same time starting hormone replacement therapy as well as having some deep conversations with your medical provider to consider things that you may have not thought of previously.

Dr. Horowitz's practices at Bay West Endocrinology Associates PA in Timonium, MD. For more information, visit <https://www.myriviva.com/bayendocrinology>



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

For more information visit Marylandoutloud.com

Leather Line - Is The Party Over?

by Rodney Burger



I've always had a love-hate relationship with social media. Although I really enjoy keeping in touch with friends who live far away, there is also the negative side. I like to use social media to post positive pictures of events and to promote and inform my friends about things that are coming up soon. Others take a more pessimistic approach and like to tear down places and people. Much like an accident on the side of the road, those posts get lots of views.

Call me a Pollyanna, but I try to keep my spirits up. (It is not easy in the times in which we are living.) I prefer to limit my drama to Netflix. Social media is very addictive and every few days I try to take a break and not look at it. It isn't easy and it never fails that someone will text me and say, "Did you see what so-and-so posted?" It is an endless struggle.

This daily attack on our sanity that is social media has created a growing nostalgia for simpler times. I recently discovered a Facebook page called GayBarchives. It is filled with pictures and stories of the so-called good ol' days before apps, cell phones, and computers. It was a time when cities were not only filled with LGBT bars, but they were packed every night. When I moved to Baltimore in 1984, I experienced this. Although it is fun to look back, I don't want to live in the past. I hate it when I hear people say that they don't go out anymore because there is no place to go or because some old bar or club is no longer around. How depressing to think that the party is over. Newsflash: It isn't.

At the recent Miss Leon's pageant at Leon's bar in Baltimore, Sorority Heights was crowned Miss Leon's 2026 during one of the best shows I've seen in years. Plus, the bar was jam-packed for the three-hour extravaganza. I was there with some of my fellow members of the ShipMates leather club and we had a blast. At the same time other ShipMates were in New York attending the sold-out Mr. Fire Island Leather contest where Ser Harold was sashed Mr. Fire Island Leather 2026. Is the party over?



Rodney & Sorority Heights

January's Mid-Atlantic Leather weekend in DC was sold-out six months in advance. MAL 2027 will be held on January 15th – 18th, 2027 and after that MAL will move from the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill to a larger location. Is the party over?

Instead of complaining about what we have lost, why don't we support the many LGBT business that are still around? Those who haven't been out in awhile may be surprised that many places are still busy and lots of fun. Are the good ol' days over? They needed be. Let's stop tearing each other down on social media and go out and enjoy ourselves. The party isn't over! In fact, I'll have another beer.

The Process of Consciousness Restoration Continued

It is important that all people understand that the resources of this Earth are available to all of its inhabitants and not a Divine Right given to some people and systematically kept away from others based upon an acceptance of ignorance. Therefore, specifically, we, as African American LGBTQIA+ women, men and children, should take pride in knowledge about our history, our challenges, and our influence through the diaspora, submerging ourselves deeply in the acquisition of information about ourselves; from books, pictures, and whatever source that will bring positive and inspiring messages to our mind in celebration of our unique individuality and unified oneness.

In this column we will celebrate the movements of a variety of sources, which I personally feel contribute and also celebrate a tradition of conscious awareness which sings of our greatness, our accomplishments and the value of the fabric from which we are made. It is my sincere belief that as we continue to unfold, our celebrations then become a healing legacy for all.

My Fabulous Disease Continued

45 years ago. Since then, an estimated 45 million people around the world have died of AIDS. Many of them were friends of mine. All of them left someone who is grieving them to this day.

Only a few years after that report, we had the first test for HIV and as soon as it became available I took it and I was positive. That was more than 41 years ago. Why I didn't die, why I am standing here four decades later when so many others are not, is a question I stopped asking a long time ago.

I know part of the why. Because our government got off its racist and homophobic ass in the 1980s and 1990s and engaged in research. Because there were safety net programs that saved my life when my health and my finances collapsed. Because the people most affected by the disease, brown bodies, black bodies, trans bodies, queer bodies, stood up and took care of one another and started food pantries and support groups and clinics and organizations.

We fought against the ignorance and fear of who we were and the virus we carried.

I say all this because what is going on right now fills me with a familiar, creeping dread.

The very safety net programs that helped me stay alive are being slashed by billions of dollars. Cuts to Medicare are set to go into effect after the midterms, in what has got to be one of the more cynical cases of bait-and-switch that we have seen in politics.

Food programs. Health insurance subsidies. All getting the ax. Already, more than half a million people in Georgia have opted not to renew their health insurance because they lost the aid they needed to pay for it. People will die. We will be raising candles at vigils to them someday.

I remember what it was like to feel truly forlorn, to feel that as a gay man living with HIV, my government did not care if I lived or died. Well, we're now dealing with a regime that has bigger ambitions. It does not care if ANY of us die as long as they can keep profiting and building obscene wealth and making black market bets on wars and covering every flat surface with gold leaf.

But here's the thing. I know the names of those people too, and so do you. And I am going to remember those names, and every name of every person who did not have the courage to stand up to this agenda of hatred and neglect. I am going to remember those names as long as it takes to wipe them off the political landscape.

I am going to take the grief I feel over lost friends, and the grief I feel for the death and suffering yet to come due to these insane, cruel policies, and I am transforming it into action.

I am taking my action to the polls. I am taking action to phone banks, and town halls, and onto the letters to the editor pages, and anywhere I can add my voice. We must all do this. We are all capable of doing this.

And when this passes, and it surely will, I will return to holding close the names of those I love and those I have lost. And the names of the people who brought this chaos on this country? Well, history will render its verdict on their legacy, but as for me, I will forget their names.

I do not have room for them. I am full.

Mark

Mark S. King is an HIV activist and writer of the GLAAD Award-winning site, My Fabulous Disease. For more information on Mark or to purchase his new book, visit marksking.com

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Chaos Around Us

By Janan Broadbent, Ph. D.

We have all seen movies where a person wakes up to find themselves in a maelstrom of events happening around them with objects flying here and there, creating a state of complete chaos and no way to maintain any sense of stability or control...Human brains are not made to tolerate this kind of whirlwind because it seeks constancy, stability and consistency towards establishing meaning.

We are all experiencing this instability as our understandings of fairness, justice, responsibility and accountability are all being challenged. People we considered friends, or family, those we looked up to as leaders, are going in a completely unexpected direction. How do we survive in this, especially in a community like LGBTQ+?

We can look at history and perhaps find some comfort there, that as the Persian Turkish saying goes: This too shall pass. As it indeed has, in accounts of our country and others. But in the moment, to cope with the turmoil, we need to maintain hope and for that, it is our connections with others of similar experience that will be supportive. So do go to rallies, join groups to write letters and have the uplifting mood of not being alone. More importantly, BE POSITIVE! It is so disturbing to hear or read defeatist comments from those who think we are doomed, or it will be another disaster down the road. Possible, but who ever won anything by giving up? Would marriage equality be real if the leaders had given up? So dear Readers, keep going... There will be a change, and we will get to a stable period because we are strong and determined.



Photo by Soheb Zaidi on Unsplash

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Sounding Off with Karen Continued

Now I am calling another company who said they would be out between 11 and 3 today and no show or phone call either. I tell you if you have a business yourself you need to keep in touch with your customers even if you cannot make at the time range you said so we are not just sitting around.

Case number two is a friend of mine who just brought a condo and had a ceiling leak in her living room and bedroom. You would think as a new homeowner that the salesperson would jump right into taking care of the problem right away as soon as possible. Then when we had the snow and ice storm, the property workers were going to clean in front of her condo, but never showed, so she had to climb over her fence to be able to leave to go to work. Here again you would think they would take care of their new owner. I know when I use to sell alarm systems for a living, I always give my customers my pager number if they have a problem and need to page me, they could do so. Have things changed that much today that we do not take care of customers after they have a sale.

Until next time stay safe out there and again my email address is: karen@marylandoutloud.com. You can also catch me on my podcast on Fridays "The Fireplace Chat" at 3pm E.S.T. on Facebook live under Karen Kendra Holmes. Until next time Sound OFF with Karen.

Navigating an Uncertain Economic Landscape Continued

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Baltimore LGBT History Puzzle

1. What was the first open & affirming church in Baltimore?
2. What year was the First Baltimore Pride Rally?
3. What year was Club Hippo opened?
4. What is Baltimore's oldest gay bar?
5. What is the Name of the original LGBT community center?
6. What bar hosted Baltimore's King and Queen of Pride pageants for many years?
7. Who was the first Baltimore mayor who participated in Baltimore pride?
8. What year did First & Franklin Presbyterian church become open and affirming?
9. What year did Baltimore PrideFest and Parade became a 2 day event?
10. What was the name of the bookstore that was located in the GLCCB building?

To find the answers, visit:

marylandoutloud.com/articles/baltimorelgbthistory/



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