

April 2015

LGBT

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April. Not just the end of winter

It has been a long winter, or at least the part of winter including February and early March. I have a touch of optimism that the weather will improve and we will be enjoying a glorious April as you read this.

Many important events occurred in US history in April. General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865, to General U. S. Grant effectively ending the American Civil War (it took until June 19th for the word to reach slaves in Texas that they were free). On April 25, 1993, in what was then the largest gay and lesbian demonstration in U.S. history, an estimated 700,000 to one million marchers descended on Washington D.C. On April 13, 1997, Ellen DeGeneres appeared on TIME Magazine's cover with the words, "Yep, I'm Gay".

There is a connection among those events. Each marks a step advancing civil rights in the United States. The ringing words of the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal was an assertion, an assertion we must continue to work toward achieving. Our history shows many of these steps. We have more to make.

April marks an anniversary of a less stellar but as important an event. On April 23, 1984, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary announced that the cause of AIDS was discovered. The history of HIV/AIDS and the continued impact of that disease on the LGBT community is a call to awareness of the health needs of our community. In response to that call, in February we had our first in a series of events on LGBT health awareness.

We are continuing this series with a presentation by Allen Smith of NOVUS Adult Care Services of Everyday Wellness on April 23 at 5:30 p.m. at Blue Grillhouse and Event Center in Bethlehem Township. Allen will talk about the health care we all need to stay well.

We celebrate at the LGBT Business Council, too. We want you to celebrate with us!

The Inaugural LGBT Gala, a stylish semi-formal event will be held to raise awareness and celebrate the achievements of the LGBT community in the greater Lehigh Valley on May 9. The Gala has a special guest speaker, State

Representative Brian K Sims from Philadelphia. Proceeds of this event will benefit the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, a community center responding to the vibrant, growing and enthusiastic needs of our community in the Lehigh Valley.

Join us on April 23 for the next of our Health Awareness Series events and again on May 9th for the Inaugural LGBT Gala. Care for yourself then come and celebrate with our community. Visit the events pages of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce's web site to register for the Health Awareness event and to buy tickets for the Inaugural LGBT Gala.

And, have a great spring!