

The

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Zackle Box

MI AFS DEIJB COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

From Stonewall to Stream Surveys: The Fight For Belonging

Maxwell Jasper (MJ) Oubre

Working in fisheries means navigating complex intersections between ecosystems, species, policy, and people, often in high-stress or even questionably safe environments. It's a field that demands empathy, patience, curiosity, and commitment. Those same qualities are just as important when it comes to inclusion and equity.

So, how do we bring that mindset into our everyday interactions? How do we make our labs, boats, meetings, and conferences places where all of our colleagues feel seen, supported, and safe? How do we carry forward the spirit of Pride, not just in June, but throughout the year?

The first step is understanding the history. There's a lot we, as a professional community, can learn from that history.

Where It All Began

Each June, you've probably noticed the rainbow flags go up, the parades roll out, and maybe even some of your friends add a splash of color to their social media. Beyond the surface-level celebrations and modern **rainbow-washing*** lies a deeper history shaped by daily struggle and brutal reality. Pride is rooted in a long and painful fight for justice.

There wasn't a single float or corporate sponsor at the ignition of Pride in June 1969. The U.S. wouldn't see its first official Pride parades until the 1970s.

Awareness Month & Days

- LGBTQIA+ Pride Month
 - Michigan Pride Events
- National Migraine & Headache Awareness Month
- Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month
- Black Music Month
 - Black Music Month Paint Party - Detroit Public Library, June 4th
 - African American Music Appreciation - Detroit Public Library, June 30th
 - Ann Arbor African American Festival, June 7th
- National Caribbean American Heritage Month
 - National Archives Readings
- Immigrant Heritage Month
- PTSD Awareness Month
- June 2 - Indian Citizenship Act of 1924
- June 5 - World Environment Day
- June 12 - Loving Day
- June 18 - International Day of Countering Hate Speech
- June 19 - Juneteenth
 - Michigan Events
- June 20 - World Refugee Day
- June 27- Helen Keller Day

Instead, it was an act of defiance at the mafia-owned Stonewall Inn, one of New York City's most popular gay bars. If anyone can appreciate the sanctuary of a good watering hole, it's the fisheries community. It's where ideas are exchanged on napkins stained with coffee rings or sweat from a cold pint. It's where colleagues, who are more like old friends, reconnect after months or years apart. The birth of many collaborations and good hypotheses happened in the comfort of their dimly lit interior, and it was in a bar like this that the modern Pride movement was born.

In 1969, homosexuality was still a criminal offense, and **queer***-friendly establishments were frequent targets of police raids. For the people at Stonewall, that bar was a rare place of safety and solidarity. They weren't seeking the spotlight, and they definitely weren't anticipating brand sponsorships. They were trying to exist while tensions between the queer community and police had been rising for weeks. Then, when yet another raid struck the Stonewall, queer folks, many of them Black and brown trans women, fought back. What followed was six days of protest that forever shifted the trajectory of LGBTQ+ rights in the U.S. ([Library of Congress](#)).

I would be short-sighted not to mention Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, both trans women of color, who are often left out of mainstream Pride narratives, despite being central figures in that uprising. Marsha P. Johnson was a Black transgender activist and drag performer often falsely credited for throwing the first brick at the Stonewall uprising. Instead, she was one of many transgender women with nothing left to lose who came to protect their sanctuary after chaos had erupted ([PBS 2023](#)). Sylvia Rivera, a Latina transgender activist, was also on the front lines at Stonewall, fighting back against police violence ([National Women's History Museum 2021](#)). For the people defending Bonnie's Stonewall Inn wasn't just an act of bravery; it was survival. A plea to live in a world that too often sought to erase them. They were fighting for the right to exist without fear, even if that sanctuary was a dimly lit, mafia-owned dive.

It's not just history. It's now.

You might think, "*That was decades ago. Haven't we made progress?*" And yes, we have. But we're still living in a world where LGBTQ+ people, especially trans people, face persistent discrimination, violence, and an onslaught of targeted legislation. As of 2025, over 850 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced across the U.S., many explicitly aimed at rolling back trans rights ([Reed 2025](#)).

In natural resources fields, it can be easy to think, "This isn't our lane." We're trained to separate personal beliefs from scientific work. But the truth is, none of us are outside of these struggles. LGBTQ+ people are our coworkers, our students, our mentors, our community members, and our fellow AFS Society members. Far too often, they feel pressure to hide who they are.

Sometimes just to be taken seriously, and sometimes to stay safe.

In 2024, at least 32 **transgender*** or **gender-expansive*** people were killed in the U.S. ([HRC](#)).



Above: Matchbook cover advertising Bonnie's Stonewall Inn, c. 1940, sourced from [NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project](#).

That number carries a heavy asterisk; 38% of those individuals were still **misgendered*** or **deadnamed*** by police or the media despite their transgender or gender-expansive identity being known ([HRC](#)). The real number is likely higher. Erasing this part of a person's legacy posthumously biases data reporting. Take Marsha P. Johnson, the Black trans woman who helped ignite the modern LGBTQ+ movement in '69. In 1992, she was found dead floating in the Hudson River with clear evidence of gun violence. Despite this, her death was swiftly ruled a suicide. It took two decades of legal advocacy before her case was listed as a potential homicide in 2012. That is 20 years for her to be included in data on violence, let alone anti-trans violence, despite her pivotal role in LGBTQ+ history ([Vanity Fair 2017](#)).

This is not an issue of the past. Black trans women continue to be the most at-risk group in the LGBTQ+ community. In 2024, Black trans women made up 78% of LGBTQ+ individuals lost to violence ([HRC](#)). As LGBTQ+ visibility has grown, so have the risks that come with it. A 2024 survey cited 47% of transgender respondents had experienced public gender based discrimination within the last year ([CAP 2025](#)). Many queer and trans individuals describe Pride Month as one of the most dangerous times of year. That fear isn't unfounded. The increased media attention, political rhetoric, and public events draw not just support but also hostility.

As we understand in ecology, visibility without protection can increase vulnerability. Being seen without safeguards can lead to higher mortality for endangered or prey species. It's a grim comparison, but it resonates. Being visible, while empowering, can also be dangerous when protections are stripped away. Progress is real, but so are the threats.

The Second Step

The second step is asking how we show up - now, today, in this field. So yes, wear that rainbow hat this month, fly your Pride flag, and post that story. But also take a moment to reflect on the people who made Pride possible. Continue the tough conversations, challenge injustice, and stand up even when it is dangerous to do so. Pride is about visibility, yes, but also resistance and joy. It's about building a world where everyone can be who they are, without fear, on land, on water, and everywhere in between.



Above: Marsha P. Johnson stands with her arm wrapped over the shoulder of her close friend Sylvia Rivera. They stand smiling in the middle of a busy New York street. Source: Women & the American Story.

Glossary

Rainbow washing - also known as pink washing, is the practice of using LGBTQIA+ images and messages superficially in marketing without giving any support to the community. Most often seen in the month of June.

Rainbow capitalism - businesses using pride month & queer symbols as an opportunity to sell merchandise and profit rather than genuinely support the LGBTQIA+ community. This is also most often seen in the month of June. You can combat it by buying directly from LGBTQIA+ companies or artists.

Queer - an umbrella term for people in the LGBTQIA+ community, often used by those who don't fit specific labels or prefer not to share more. Once a slur, it's been reclaimed as a positive, empowering identity. The "Q" in LGBTQIA+ stands for queer or questioning.

Biological sex - also known as assigned sex or birth sex, refers to the physical characteristics of an individual's reproductive organs, chromosomes, and hormones. This information is typically used to classify individuals as male or female at birth.

Gender and Gender Identity - Gender is a social construct, shaped by the cultural norms, behaviors, and roles linked to different identities, which can differ greatly across societies and change over time. In contrast, gender identity pertains to a person's internal understanding of their own gender.

Gender Expansive - describes individuals whose gender identity, expression, or experience falls outside traditional binary expectations (male/female). It serves as an umbrella term encompassing a variety of gender identities and expressions, including non-binary, transgender, genderqueer, and genderfluid individuals.

Transgender - a term for people whose gender identity doesn't align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Often used by those who describe their experience as a "transition," though not all gender-expansive people identify with it. That's why it's often paired with broader terms.

Deadname - the name a trans person used prior to transition. Many trans people do not like to be referred to by their prior name and consider it "dead" - even if it is still their legal name.

Misgender - using the incorrect pronouns for someone or referring to them as the wrong gender. This can be done accidentally or intentionally.



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is a disabled queer trans fisheries professional and an active volunteer from the North Central Division. They can be contacted at fruitsbythefish@gmail.com or their website www.fruitsbythefish.com.

Michigan Pride Events

June 6- Kalamazoo Pride

Ypsi Pride (Ypsilanti)

June 7- Abigail's Pride (Ortonville)

Keweenaw Pridefest

Lowell Pride

Motor City Pride (Detroit)

Mount Pleasant Pride

Muskegon Pride

Community Pride Michigan

(Saugatuck/Douglas)

June 14- Cass County Pridefest

East Lansing Pride

Grand Haven Pride

Upper Peninsula Rainbow Pride

(Marquette)

Warren City Pride

June 21- Fenton Pride Fest

Grand Rapids Pride

Livonia Pride

Michiana Pridefest (Niles)

Three Rivers (Downriver Pride)

Wyandotte (Downriver Pride)

June 22- Berkley Pride Block Party

June 26- Canton Pride OUTside

June 28- Holland Pride

Lansing Pride

Monroe County Pride

Owosso Pride

Great Lakes Bay Pride Festival (Saginaw)

South Haven Pride

Twin Cities PrideFest (St. Joseph)

June 29- Pride Big Rapids

Bluewater Pridefest (Port Huron)

Buchanan Pride On The Common

July 12- South Lyon Pride

July 18- Battle Creek Pride

July 19- Flint Pride

July 22-26- Hotter Than July (Detroit)

July 26- Royal Oak Pride

August 1- Ann Harbor

August 16- Jackson Pride

August 23- Transgender Pride in the Park (Ferndale)

September 11- Straits Pride (Mackinac Island)



For event information and a complete schedule visit [Pride Source](#)

Image captions: Upper: Progress Pride Flag; Lower: Two women stand together draped in a pride flag

Michigan Juneteenth Events

June 8- Lansing Juneteenth Celebration

June 14- Michigan State University Juneteenth Commemorative Celebration (Ann Arbor)

June 15- Juneteenth Community Day (Kalamazoo)

2024 Madison Heights Juneteenth Celebration

Juneteenth Celebration in Canton

June 19- Justice 4 All's Juneteenth Jam (Grand Rapids)

Juneteenth on the Cut (Detroit)

BlkBok's Juneteenth (Detroit)

Juneteenth in Traverse City

June 20- University of Michigan Juneteenth Symposium (Ann Arbor)

June 21- Ypsilanti Juneteenth Celebration

June 22- Celebrating Juneteenth Open Mic (Southfield)

4th Annual Juneteenth Celebration in Royal Oak



Two people proudly wave the Pan-African and Juneteenth flags.

Recommended Read: On Juneteenth



Above: a headshot of smiling Annette Gordon-Reed.

In *On Juneteenth* Annette Gordon-Reed — a Texas native and descendant of enslaved people brought to the state — tells the history of Juneteenth through a deeply personal and historical lens. Drawing on the history of her home state and the stories of cowboys, ranchers, and oilmen, Gordon-Reed offers a historian's perspective on the United States' long road to Juneteenth.

She not only details what happened on June 19, 1865, in Galveston, Texas, but also explores how that day's events

connect to the broader arc of African American history. This compelling 150-page book is well worth reading, as Gordon-Reed's narrative storytelling style keeps readers engaged while accurately conveying the darker aspects of U.S. history.

Your Voice Matters: Seeking Member Feedback on Committee Name Change

The Michigan AFS DEIJB Committee is seeking feedback on a potential name change to better align with other AFS diversity, equity, and inclusion committees. Beyond alignment, the new name aims to foster a more inclusive and approachable environment.

While the committee's name may change, our mission and vision will remain the same. We are committed to cultivating a welcoming chapter culture by promoting respect, advocating for inclusive policies, and recruiting and supporting members from underrepresented groups.

We are specifically seeking input on whether to adopt the acronym FishCAST, and whether "Community" or "Culture" should be used in its full name. Your feedback will help guide our decision, though the final determination will be made by the committee.

We've already received responses from more than 40 chapter members, but we want to ensure everyone has a chance to share their thoughts. If you haven't yet completed the Google form, please do so by **June 30**.

Thank you for your input and continued support!



[Potential DEIJB Committee Renaming Feedback Form](#)

Series on Representation Children's Literature

In the second installment of our children's and young adult book series promoting representation, we've chosen to honor Pride Month. With recent restrictions on DEI education, it's more important than ever for children to engage with materials that highlight diverse representation. These stories support identity development, shape perceptions, challenge stereotypes, and foster inclusivity. The books shared below are just the tip of the iceberg—there is a vast and growing collection of children's and young adult literature celebrating the LGBTQ+ community. We recommend exploring additional Pride-themed collections curated by [Family Equality](#), [Social Justice Books](#), [Big Blue Marble Bookstore](#), [Reading Rockets](#), [Stanford University](#), [Keshet](#) and [MaiStoryBook](#).

Early Childhood

- [Being You: A First Conversation About Gender](#)
- [And Tango Makes Three](#)
- [Pride and Joy: A Story About Becoming an LGBTQIA+ Ally](#)

Elementary

- [A Child's Introduction to Pride: The Inspirational History & Culture of the Lgbtqia+ Community](#)
- [Glenn Burke, Game Changer: The Man Who Invented the High Five](#)
- [Kapaemahu](#)

Middle School

- [Pauli Murray: The Life of a Pioneering Feminist and Civil Rights Activist](#)
- [The Moon Within](#)
- [The Other Boy](#)

Young Adult

- [We Deserve Monuments](#)
- [A Queer History of the United States for Young People](#)
- [Ma and Me](#)



Three children in rainbow outfits stand together celebrating pride, unity, and love.

Featured Artis: Bisa Butler

Known for her stunning, larger-than-life quilted portraits, Bisa Butler is an internationally recognized, award-winning African American textile artist. Drawn to art from a young age, Bisa pursued her passion by earning a bachelor's degree in fine arts from Howard University and a master's degree in art education from Montclair State University. While completing her graduate studies, she took a fiber arts class that changed the trajectory of her career, inspiring her to "paint" with fabric rather than traditional media.

Bisa layers fabric the way a painter might apply glazes, using thread to draw intricate detail and add texture to her portraits. Her work explores themes of family, community, migration, the promise of youth, and the artistic and intellectual legacy of Black and African American people. Quilting also connects Bisa with her family's heritage—she learned to sew at a young age from her mother and grandmother. By blending these early lessons with formal art training, she creates richly detailed and emotionally powerful images in fabric.

In recognition of her innovative work, Bisa has received numerous awards, including an Honorary Doctor of Letters from Bloomfield College in 2022. Her art has been collected by major museums and institutions across the United States and around the world.



Bisa Butler stands in front of her cotton, silk, wool and velvet quilt titled "Asantewa"

Closing the Gap: Addressing Health Disparities For the LGBTQ+ Community

You're invited to attend a virtual event hosted by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, focused on exploring the intersectionality of LGBTQ+ and disability identities. During this event, speakers Dr. Shanna Kattari, Brodie Lobb, and Dr. Adrienne Rowland will discuss the experiences and challenges faced by individuals in these communities when accessing mental health care.

Event Details:



June 12, 2025



Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 PM (EST)



Zoom | [Registration is Required](#)



A colorful group of abstract silhouettes, including a person in a wheelchair, stands together to represent inclusion, unity, and pride.

Ally Corner: A History and Guide to Pride Flags

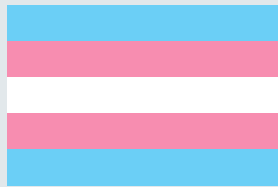


Inspired by the song "Over the Rainbow", Gilbert Baker, an openly gay man and drag queen, created the first rainbow pride flag in 1978. This flag was created to act as a unifying symbol of liberation for the LGBTQIA+ community. In an interview Baker once said, **"Our job as gay people was to come out, to be visible, to live in the truth, as I say, to get out of the lie. A flag really fit that mission, because that's a way of proclaiming your visibility or saying, 'This is who I am!'"**. The original pride flag showcased 8 colors: pink, red, orange, yellow, green, turquoise, indigo, and violet, with each color representing an aspect of queer pride. Since its creation, the original pride flag has undergone many reiterations to more accurately reflect the community it represents.

As you attend the many pride events happening in your community, you may find yourself wondering what each of the pride flag variations symbolize. Here is a brief guide to some of the common pride flags, but a more complete list of flags and their meanings can be found [here](#).



Progress Pride



Transgender Pride



Gay Pride



Lesbian Pride



Bisexual Pride



Pansexual Pride



Aromantic Pride



Genderfluid Pride



Asexual Pride



Genderqueer Pride



Polysexual Pride



Intersex Pride

The DEIJB Committee remains committed to fostering an inclusive environment that ensures the MI AFS has a welcoming space for everyone. If you'd like to get involved, share resources, or simply connect, we encourage you to reach out! We welcome your voice and participation! You can contact us at mifishcastafs@gmail.com or submit items [anonymously](#).

Warm Wishes -

Dana Castle (she/her), Lydia Doerr (she/her),
Tracy Galarowicz (she/her), Kynzie House (she/her),
Maggie Haite (they/them), Taylor Skiles (she/her),
Kathleen Quebedeaux (she/her)

