



C.O.R.A.L. Monthly Meeting Minutes from August 14, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 5:02pm

Present: Jim Barr- President, Brian Sylvester- Vice President, April Poole- Treasurer, Bert Morton- Events Coordinator, Lisa Cotton- Activities Coordinator, Carolyn Austin- Board member at large (Zoom), Lee Korty, Rob Weis (Zoom) , Art Clark, Terry Michaels, Mike Johnson, Shirley Wilson.

Minutes were reviewed from July 10, 2022. Motion to approve minutes was made by Lisa and seconded by Rex. Minutes approved.

Treasury report – April submitted printed copies. April went over expenditures and balance as of August 13, 2022, Brian made motion to accept and Rex seconded. Motion passed.

Executive Meeting Board– next meeting will be September 18, 2022, at Agelink at 3 pm

Committee Reports

Ritz- They will meet second week in September 2022. The Ritz will be held March 25, 2023. April reported that the contract with Crowne Plaza has been signed, and down payment has been paid. Ritz committee would like each CORAL members to think of one business to become a sponsor. Bert would like this done by the end of July. They would also like members to start thinking of a theme for the Ritz. Theme ideas are due to Bert and April by the end of August.

Membership- Katie Ore is a new member and wishes to work with our APL project on August 28, 2022. We are still utilizing social media for outreach.

Social Media - The website has seen a slight downturn of about 30%, which was expected due to the significant rise in June with Pride month. However, our new visitors continue to rise being at 86%. In the past 30 days, we had 155 people check the site with 97 newcomers and they stayed on the site on average of nearly 7 minutes. The preferred traffic source is still Google but we saw a slight rise in Bing and the Decatur Library.

In the past 90 days our FB page has seen a slight decrease in activity of 1.8%, but still reached 669 users and 62 visits with 6 new members in the past 30 days. As for our group page, we had 1,671 visit the page, which is a 44% drop. Our most popular posts for the month were the APL request for State Fair parking volunteers at 521, Decatur Pride's announcement at 328, and the Monkeypox advisory at 226.

In an attempt to plan out our media postings into the future, we will begin recognizing our partners and supporters beginning in August on through September. I will also be posting them on the first page of our website as well and will, hopefully, be adding a page to our website for

just our supporters too. If anyone would like to see some of the slides already created for this campaign, please see me after the meeting and will show a few.

In November, which is LGBTQ history month, we will be posting a slide daily of the history of CORAL. We have already created 15 slides to be used during that month going back to 2002 when CORAL was incorporated. These, too, will be posted on the first page of the website during that month. After the month has concluded, we will add all the slides to our News page so it can be referenced later.

On another note, Jim and I have added our email addresses to our names on the About page so that anyone may contact us with questions or concerns. If anyone else would like their email addresses added to their names on the website, please let me know.

Activities- Lisa reported that there will be a help day at APL on August 28, 2022. We will help build puzzles for animals to work through to get their food.

Finance- There has been no meeting. A meeting will be scheduled after State Fair.

LGBTQ History- Art and Terry are to be interviewed. Carolyn suggested we get Kate Schwartz at AGE Link to help with interviews since she has worked with videography.

Partner Outreach - We have also been reached out to by Kendra Day, the community engagement specialist for Memorial Behavioral Health to discuss the mobile crisis response. Jim and I will discuss a time that we might be able to meet with her.

On 7/21/22, we met with Annie Pettit and Shelley Vaughan of PCASA (Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault). Shelley explained to us what PCASA does and how they work with victims of sexual assault. They also have educational programs to address assault before it takes place, which includes a men's group that mentors young men. In fact, she asked if any of our male members might want to join such a group. They see victims, both male and female, and provide assistance in seeking justice as well as counseling for dealing with the aftermath. They are responding to a 3 year grant they received to offer services to special groups and will be working with the LGBTQ community the first year,

They wish to partner with CORAL by joining any and/or all of our events and functions. They also would like us to offer their services whenever we see a need for them. After our conversations were completed, they gave us a tour of their facility and provided us with informational material to share.

We agreed to post them as a partner on our website and information was emailed to us to use for that posting. We exchanged our contact information so that we might keep them informed on our activities and likewise they will remain in touch with us.

Deb Bonner of PCASA has reached out to Brian to join them in doing a 25-30 minute podcast on how PCASA can help the LGBTQ community, which both of us can post to our websites upon completion. We are still working on scheduling the discussion.

On the same date, we met with Melissa Dunbar with Springfield Convention and Tourism Center. Melissa explained that they are currently addressing underserved members of the community and believed the LGBTQ demographic was an area they need to expand upon. She wanted to know what does Springfield offer that is good for the LGBTQ community and what could be improved upon. She stated that she didn't see this work resulting in large gatherings at the convention

center initially and that we should probably take it slowly and simply work on community events first.

We discussed those sites within Springfield that should probably be favored when it comes to attracting LGBTQ tourism, such as the Dana Thomas House, the Lincoln Library, and the Hoogland/Legacy theaters. We also discussed the retail and hospitality industry in Springfield, which could be somewhat lacking for this demographic who might be used to the likes of Chicago and St. Louis. She stated that she has an in with State House Inn for those seeking lodging but her offers are rarely taken advantage of. She is a close friend with Josh Delcour, owner of Clique, and occasionally tends bar for him.

We threw out an idea to create a LGBTQ directory of businesses and organizations that could be referred to. Perhaps, as part of this project, we could offer a decal that the business could place on their front door or window letting members of the LGBTQ community know that they welcome their presence. She liked this idea and stated that she would love to have that information added to hers that could show those sites on maps and listings.

We left the meeting with an open invitation to work with her in the future in any way we could. We offered to survey our membership if she could provide us a list of questions that would be useful for her and she stated she would look into that.

April moved to accept all committee reports and Rex seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business

Habitat for Humanity – will be having a open house on October 27, 2022. Jim will keep us informed of the details. Their walk is set for April 23, 2023, from 2-4 PM in Enos Park.

Rural Harmony Project – Brian stated that it has been a while since the advisory committee has met but a meeting has been set for September 1st at Coz's Pizza. The last time we corresponded with Wiley Jenkins, they were still attempting to attain the 100 surveys desired for the study but this may have been met and we will find this out at the meeting.

Gender 101 Studies – Carolyn reported that AgeLinc will be having a webinar at their facility and on Zoom called "Language of Gender: Gender 101 on October 11, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. Julie Grey-Owens, Executive Director of Gender Equality New York will be the presenter. The event will be free to the public.

LevittAMP Concert with the Jaycees – Brian reported that the concert was rained out at its venue at the Y-block and was moved to the Gin Mill on 5th and Monroe. While this may have dropped the number of attendees for the concert, there was still a good showing for the event and we did pass out a whole package of CORAL flyers with the brochures for the concert. He also reported that we did gain one member to our FB page as a result of our being there that night (Robert Dagget).

One other note from the evening that should be mentioned is the facility that Gin Mill offered for the event was quite nice and several of our members, we had 10 present, thought this might be a good place to hold an event in the future.

Decatur Pridefest – Jim reported the event will be 11 am to 8 pm at Fairview Park. Booth prices are: Vendors \$25, Selling Vendors \$50, Non-profits \$75, and For-profit \$100. Lee made a proposal that we do a Gold Sponsorship for \$250.00 as we have done in the past. Rob seconded. All yes votes with one nay vote. Motion passed.

New Business:

5TH Street Renaissance – Rob discussed the Campout for Homeless to be held October 8th. CORAL agreed to be a major sponsor with donations coming from individual members as follows; April 100.00, Rob 100.00, Rex 100.00, Lee 100.00, Bert 100.00, Mike 100.00, and Carolyn 100.00. The remainder of the sponsorship will be coming from CORAL.

Rex made motion to do Gold sponsorship with donations from CORAL members. Brian seconded and motion passed.

Rob shared that Charla Stone is now working with 5th Street on the Aids Memorial. They are proposing that an Aids Memorial Advisory Board be created. Several CORAL members have expressed interest in joining.

NOH8 Campaign – Brian reported that on July 23rd, he took a chance and reached out via email to the NOH8 campaign to see if they would consider coming to our neck of the woods for a photo shoot.

For those who are not familiar with the NOH8 campaign, it was originally begun in 2013 in California in response to Prop 8 to repeal marriage rights for the LGBTQ community. Since then, they travel around the U.S. doing photo shoots for donations that they put forward to LGBTQ advocacy and education.

On July 25th, Jeff Parshey, one of the founders of the campaign, responded stating they would love to explore options with working with CORAL. We have since spoken a few more times and have decided to hold off making any formal arrangements until December so WE can decide the most effective means to have them present. Brian proposed we consider bringing this up at our next Ritz committee meeting to see if we can fit them into the evening's offerings.

Community Involvement Expo – Jim reported that he was contacted by Dre of PFLAG about an event at the UIS on August 24, 2022. The Involvement Expo will be held from 4 -6 PM. The event will be held outside. Tables are on a first come basis for location but CORAL will be trying to be close with PFLAG table.

Out of the Darkness Walk - Brian reported the event is being held on October 15th at 2:00 at the UIS campus this year. CORAL's team has already been set up and a FB donation page set up as well. As a returning team, we've been told that we will receive some kind of perks for continuing to be involved with the event so he will report them when he learns of them. Since the event is somewhat down the road, Brian will post more information on getting involved in September.

Lucky Horseshoe – Bert reported that the Lucky Horseshoes will be having a Legends Game on August 27, 2022 with former Alumni from the Cardinals and Cubs playing. They invited us to attend with discounted prices on the tickets.

Phoenix Center – Brian brought up the upcoming Fall Gayla on October 7, 2022 at Erin's Pavilion and the Yee-Ha Hoedown October 22, 2022, at Reich Pavilion at State Fairgrounds. Carolyn explained that the Hoedown is more like a country style party with food trucks and a drag show. She believed the tickets were \$30.00 per person. Brian stated that he went to the website to check on buying tickets for the Gayla but the link doesn't appear to be working at this time.

Decatur Conference Center – The candidate Lt Governor running with Bailey will be at the Decatur Conference Center on Tuesday August 16, 2022 at 5 PM. The conference is sponsored by the Illinois Family Action group and the topics center on banning information on gender confusion, "crazy" pronouns, sexual grooming, homosexuality, mask mandates, and Critical Race Theory in Illinois schools. Several members of Decatur Pride are planning a peaceful protest outside from 5 to 7 pm. Persons are free to join them.

Succulent Party – Lisa is working on an activity with Designer's Landscapes to host a succulent party sometime in September at the Church of the Brethren. It will most likely be on a Sunday.

Mastering Aging – Carolyn reported that AgeLinc will be holding a 10-week course at their facility with an emphasis of issues of aging. The sign up for the event has passed but if we can get enough interest (8 to 10 people) we might be able to set up another event in the future.

Brian made motion to adjourn, Rex seconded, Meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm