

Coalition of Rainbow Alliances Monthly Meeting March 08, 2026

Members Present and on Zoom

Brian Sylvester President	Jim Barr
Lisa Cotton, Vice President	April Poole
Sheila Morris Treasurer	Mike Johnson
Francine Turner Secretary	Candice Clotfelter
Rex Schadow Board Member	Bob Immel
Lamar Walls Absent	Bert Morton
Liv Gray Absent	Lee Korty
	Roger Ruth

Meeting called to order at 4:01 pm

Approval of minutes from February 09,2025 Lisa made a motion to accept the minutes, Rex seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurers Report- Sheila gave a verbal report. Lisa made a motion to accept and file for audit, Mike seconded. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Membership Committee: Brian reported that the past month he worked mostly with the Vetting committee in search of possible candidates for board positions and will let Michael report the success of their work in his report.

Brian also stated that he had a membership orientation on February 19th and was happy to see Liv attended. He had hoped to record the session at some point and have it on the website for viewing by other prospective members but is reconsidering that now as it seems the sessions need tweaking each time they are delivered due to changes with the organization.

Communications Committee: Brian reported the Facebook pages saw greater activity in the past month. We saw a 70% increase in visits for the month, a 35% increase in comments, and a 400% increase in interactions. There were 21 new followers added bringing the total to 2,098. There were 49 posts for the month. There were two

campaigns running with Aromatic Week having a post for each day and we're currently running a daily posting of our Ritz sponsors up till the date of the event.

The website has also seen an increase in activity with a 70% increase in visits for the month and a 10% increase in blog reads. That activity has been driven by the upcoming Ritz event as that page has seen 259 hits and the most clicked button has been the Ritz flyer with the menu and table list coming in second. On another note, the website has been updated to allow individuals interested in ordering tickets for the Ritz online. You can find it under the Events tab.

Activities Committee: Lisa reported that due to the focus on the Ritz Gala, there are no new activities presently scheduled at this time. She is hoping that some new activities will be developed in April.

Finance Committee: The next meeting of this committee is scheduled for 3/11/26 at 6 pm

Partners/Supporters Committee: Brian reported that CORAL has been contacted by Sean Robb, who is directing the play "Everyone is Talking About Jamie" at the Springfield Theatre Centre on May 7-9th and 14-16th. He would like CORAL to sponsor and advertise the play. Brian has responded to his email to set up a meeting to discuss the arrangement. He also believes this might be an opportunity for CORAL to also include the Phoenix Center for collaboration as well.

Lisa reported that she had a meeting with Sheriff Paula Crouch about working together on several activities to benefit the community. In addition, the Sheriff told her they are looking to find someone in their department to be a liaison in Sangamon County for the LGBTQ+ community.

The Rainbow Café in Carbondale is holding their annual Trans Resource Fair on March 31st.

First Presbyterian has completed the construction project on their church and will be holding tours of it on March 15th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. and March 17th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. If anyone is interested, let Brian know and he will send a link to RSVP.

Vetting Committee: Michael reported the CORAL Election 2026, is accepting nominations for the Coral Board Election. The Vice President, Treasurer, and four Members at Large positions are up for election. The nominations received so far are as follows. Vice President - Lisa Cotton (Incumbent), Treasurer - Roger Ruth, Members at Large - Candace Clotfelter, Lamar Walls. And additional Members at Large seeking election are; Bob Immel, Olivia Gray and Greg Floyd.

More nominations will be accepted at the April 12th meeting after which nominations will be closed.

Ritz Committee: Bert reported sales as of 03/08/2026: Sponsors – 25, Advertisers – 71, Tables - 38 Total (with tickets) and tickets – 49. On Tuesday, March 10 at 8 am: Bert and Lisa will be interviewed on WNNS radio station as part of the promotion for the Ritz Gala. The Ritz Gala program has been finalized. Choices for decorations, photography and food are done. Ritz Committee members speaking are to complete their introductory speeches. Jim Barr is having his Bronze sponsorship slide presentation adapted to honor Rick Garcia in memoriam. Art Clark will be honored in another part of the slide presentation.

Motion to accept Committee reports was made by Lisa Cotton, seconded by Lee Korty. Motion passed.

Old Business:

Event Wrap-ups:

Phoenix Trivia Night: Lisa Cotton reported that CORAL had a number of members that attended the annual Trivia night. The trivia questions were based on LGBTQ+ experiences, representation and history. The table where most CORAL members sat scored 13 out of 26.

APL Volunteer Day: Five people attended and worked on stuffing various containers with peanut butter mixed with dog treats. Small treat cups were stuffed with cat food for the kitties. A reminder that toilet paper rolls and paper towel rolls can be donated to provide a container for the food stuffing that can be frozen.

Black History Ball: Brian said that he enjoyed their program format this year as they decided to forgo having a keynote speaker and simply present the work they had done with their youth programs. While they have had a somewhat unorthodox approach with their programs in the past, Brian felt even with their changes, it still seemed they aren't always on the same page at times.

Brian also stated that it was very disappointing how One In A Million handled the change in the number of seats at tables reserved this year. In year's past, the number of seats at each table had been 10 but with the change to a new venue, they dropped the number to 8 but didn't publicize that information. As CORAL had sent a check for payment for 10 seats, we were not made aware of the change until the night before the

event. When contacted, One In A Million stated that they had kept the additional payments for two seats in return for “allowing” CORAL to be a table sponsor. In viewing the program at the event, CORAL was not alone in the confusion. This decision to not make CORAL aware of this change doesn’t sit well and, to be perfectly honest, felt like we were swindled. Brian recommends that CORAL keep this in mind when the event takes place in the future.

AgeLinc’s Mardi Gras: Brian felt that everyone had a good time at the event and said that he would give an update on how well the event went financially when the board meets next month. However, this is the second time AgeLinc has failed to include CORAL’s sponsorship in their printed material for the event which was very disappointing in his opinion. In reviewing the printed program at the event, it was quite obvious that CORAL’s logo was missing from the page as a Bead Benefactor as there was nothing on the page but a blank space. Brian has not said anything to AgeLinc as of yet as it didn’t seem appropriate to bring it up at the event that evening but will have a follow up conversation with Carolyn Austin.

Living with HIV Support Group: Brian reported that it has been collectively decided to disband the support group at this time. After nearly six months of meetings, interest in the group has not developed and the turnout had faded. PrideLinc will be looking at other possibilities for the future for working with people living with HIV.

New Business:

Pridefest Prom: Brian reported Springfield Pridefest will be holding their annual Pride Prom on April 11th at the Inn at 835 from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. Tickets are \$30.00 with all proceeds benefiting Springfield Pridefest. This year’s theme is “Express Yourself” in homage to Madonna’s song and the freedom to be yourself. Tickets can be ordered on their website at www.springfieldpride.org.

Phoenix Center Update meetings: Brian reported that Teresa Silva has officially been named as the Executive Director of the Phoenix Center but is standing firm that an official search needs to take place for a formal vetting of the position sometime in the near future. Brian stated that Teresa and he have decided that they will be meeting on a regular basis to discuss the rumblings of the LGBTQ community while searching for opportunities to collaborate.

In their last meeting, some disturbing commentary was relayed about lingering opinions by CORAL board members towards the Phoenix Center and how the Phoenix Center was not included in the donations that were made in January. This is precisely the reason that it was decided these meetings will occur on a regular basis. While Brian stated he

was able to relay the truth about those comments, it was disappointing that there are CORAL members attempting to create drama that doesn't exist at a time when our two organizations are working diligently to work in unison.

Bond County Pridefest: Brian reminded everyone that Bond County will be holding their second Pridefest celebration on April 25th in Greenville from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m. If you recall, they were forced to have an abbreviated version in their first attempt due to push back from their community and the lack of support for security with local law enforcement. Brian hoped that maybe CORAL might be able to show their support for their progress by having a group of our members attend this year. This will be on our agenda in April to possibly make arrangements for a convoy to travel to the event that day.

NAACP/Annual Lincoln/Douglas Freedom Fund Celebration: Brian reported the NAACP Springfield Branch will be holding their annual celebration on April 17th at Pole Barn Chic from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. This is NOT a dinner but simply a gathering. Tickets are \$65.00 per person and ads for the event are \$200.00 for their electronic/online program. A proposal to have an ad in their program was received by April and seconded by Rex. Motion was approved.

Decatur Pride Dinner and Show: Jim Barr reported that there will be a Decatur Pride Dinner and Show that will be held at 'The Bistro' in Decatur at Richland Community College. The culinary program students will be preparing the dinner, which is always a high-quality meal. A Drag Show will be afterwards. Dinner will be at 5:30p and will include: Traditional beef, Asian Chicken and vegan dish. There will also be gluten free options.

Decatur Pride Fest: September 12, 2026 -Discussion about sponsorship levels initiated this discussion. The levels are as follows: Diamond - \$1000, Platinum - \$600, Gold - \$300, Silver - \$200, and Bronze - \$100. During the discussion, Mike wanted to sponsor at the Platinum level, Lisa felt that a Gold level was more appropriate due to not very satisfactory concern and cooperation last year from Decatur Pride. A motion by Bob Immel was made to wait until next month's meeting to make a motion about this matter.

Motion to move the decision about Decatur Pride Fest Sponsorship to April objectives was proposed and approved.

Phoenix Center Coffee and Donuts: Rex reported that gathering for 55+LGBTIA plus individuals at the Phoenix center will start this coming Monday. It will last from 8:30 am to 11:00 pm

Adopting a Street: April started a discussion about which street to consider adopting, the difficulties and opportunities that come along with working in the community. Members were familiar with many of the 'adoptable' roads, and wanted to know more about what areas were available. Other considerations were which aldermen would be available to contact. Also mentioned was the need to expedite getting a street, so it can be one that CORAL prefers to keep up.

Motion to adjourn made by Lisa and seconded by Rex. Meeting ended: 5:15 pm