



Coalition of Rainbow Alliances Monthly Meeting September 14,2025

Members Present and on (Zoom)

Brian Sylvester President	Malea Dunn
Lisa Cotton, Vice President	Rob Weis
Sheila Morris Treasurer	Francine Turner
Lori Carlsen Secretary	Bert Morton
David Yankee Board Member	Lee Korty
Rex Schadow Board Member	Brendan Brown
Kevin Schuster Board Member	Jim Barr
Candice Clotfelter	April Poole
Bob Immel	Sam Downs

Meeting called to order at 4:01 pm

Approval of minutes from August 10,2025 Lisa made a motion to accept the minutes, Rex seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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

Committee Reports

Membership- Brian reported that he reached out to three Facebook members – Brandi, Mitch, and Shelly – this month but unfortunately did not receive a response back.

Communications- Brian reported that there were four articles written this past month with two “What’s Happening” pieces, one on the Marsha P Johnson party, and the latter on CORAL’s honor with the SIU School of Medicine.

The Facebook group had 42 posts and 19 new members bringing the total to 956. The Facebook page had 26 posts and 20 new followers bringing the total to 1,074.

Our top posts were CORAL's honor by SIU School of Medicine with 1,800, the Barn Dance ticket availability with 1,130, and the Barn Dance announcement with 883. The webpage had 323 visits, a 44% increase. All avenues of access were increased this month, including 9 coming through via Duck Duck Go. Most came from the state of Illinois but we also saw 44 from Missouri, four from Washington, three from California, and two from North Dakota. Sessions are lasting more than five minutes with the most popular pages being the calendar, the events, and partners.

Brian noticed that someone is still accessing the Coral Flag Corps Facebook page and using it for some reason. Does anyone know that individual might be? Brian has sent a message to the page in hopes of finding that out as it represents CORAL and could be used against us without our knowledge or power to stop it. Lori stated she would contact Rodney Shoemaker who may be the administrator of that page.

Brian stated that he is considering doing an article on newcomers to the area and will be reaching out to some of our new members who have moved to the Springfield area in the past to be a part of that piece.

Activities- Lisa stated she will cover this under new business.

Finance- Sheila shared thank you notes CORAL received from the Illinois Suicide Prevention Alliance, and SAA Art Synergy for our support. Sheila requested approval of 2 invoices she received from Lee Korty for purchase of printer ink used for CORAL/Ritz minutes and invoicing in the amount of \$ 80.00, and Solution Printing for buck slips in the amount of \$ 412.00. Brian approved issuing of both payments.

Partners & Supporters - Brian attended Prairie Pride Coalition's meeting via Zoom on September 9th. The topic for their meeting was the introduction of youth groups in the Bloomington-Normal area and how they are serving them.

Brian reported that we were contacted by Jessica Ryg about an upcoming event between SIU School of Medicine and STR8 Mental. This is a men-only event specifically for Black men to address issues like stress, depression, and anxiety impacting manhood which will be facilitated by Black male mental health professionals. The event will be held September 20th from 10:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza for Black men over 18 at no cost. However, as the name implies,

it applies to straight men. I do not feel like this is an appropriate avenue for us to advertise as I believe it may confuse or agitate our members by stating who it is applicable to. I've reached back to Jessica to let her know that our member base is mostly LGBTQ and don't feel comfortable with sharing this event but will be happy to hear anything else they may be offering.

Amber Maler of Capital City Indivisible reached out to CORAL about the upcoming Barn Dance and requested flyers. They wish to advertise the event amongst their membership. Lisa might wish to reach out to them about sponsorship opportunities.

Casey Prather reached out to CORAL about joining a preliminary panel to discuss sober houses in the Springfield area specifically for the LGBTQ community. Brian has agreed to be a contact for that meeting when it is set.

Charolotte Kohner, a student at Northwestern University, is working on a project called Trans Families Project. She reached out to CORAL for assistance in obtaining families with trans-youth. This request was posted to our social media.

Kayla Ward, Director of Student Engagement and Belonging at ICC, sent another thank you to CORAL for our contribution:

I wanted to provide an update on a use of the funds that you all donated. Attached is a photo of the stickers we got that are both filled with Pride and have our accurate office name! Students and staff are already loving them. We will also be using the funds to purchase more Pride flags and signage to have in our office



during campus pride month.

We can't thank you enough for the generous donation and your support at Illinois College events. It has helped us create a welcoming atmosphere for students! We look forward to having you back on campus for events in the future.

Erin Conley/ CORAL Collaboration- Lisa stated she met with Alderwoman Erin Conley to discuss she and CORAL work on a project together to clean up the street. It will be on October 25, 2025 from 8am-10am. Street is being determined. Lisa asked for volunteers: Bert, April, Kevin, Lee, Sheila, David, Rex, Lori, and Brian agreed to help.

Ritz- Lori state that she, Lisa, and Bert met to help Lisa to become familiar with the Ritz process, ie: costs, billing etc. Lori stated that the first Ritz meeting will be October 12, 2025 at 3pm at AgeLinc. We will be deciding on the Theme (have your suggestions ready), and the Dinner Menu. Lori stated our DJ from last year has been booked for the 2026 Ritz. Brian will be signing the contact for the Crowne Plaza, and Sheila will issue the check to them.

April made a motion to accept committee reports, Lisa seconded. Motion carried.

Old Business/Event Wrap-Ups:

SIU AWIMS Evening- Brian presented the award that was given that evening to CORAL for everyone to see. Brian joked that he was told that all he would need to do that evening was provide a few words of gratitude but after seeing the speeches the other speakers had given, realized that he was severely unprepared. For those who attended, he hoped his acceptance speech was acceptable as he was flying by the seat of his pants with his words that evening. However, Brian felt the evening was very nice and enjoyed the recognition and performances of Mahogany and her gang. Like some of the others who were there, he wished it had been better attended.

Decatur Pridefest- Lisa stated attendance seemed to be down this year. CORAL had a vendor space. She was able to network with several other organizations that were there.

Marsha P Johnson Birthday Party- Brian expressed gratitude to the Phoenix Center for their invite to the event. It was a lovely evening, from the surprise performance by Mahogany to the fun pictures of some of us coming out of the cake at the end of the evening.

PrideLinc HIV Support Group- Brian reported that the room for the support group is ready for its first meeting this coming Tuesday, September 16th , at 6:00 p.m.

He also wanted to send out a special thank you to Peggy, Glen, Mora, and Jodi for the donated furniture. Brian suggested showing the room to anyone interested after the meeting was adjourned.

SAA Art Synergy- Brian thanked everyone who attended Decatur's Pridefest in his place as he had to spend that time for his last opportunity to work on the art piece for the SAA event. From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. he and the artist foiled and soldered the individual glass pieces together. The piece is basically finished at this point and only needs to be framed, re-enforced, and cleaned before it's ready for the bidding.

APL Volunteer Day- Candice stated she will be doing the APL activity on Saturday September 20 from 9am to noon. They will be making dog and cat feeding enrichment puzzles.

Barn Dance- Lisa stated that the dance will be on October 11th at 8pm at Pole Barn Chic. Tickets are still available and the cost is \$30.00 per ticket. Payments can be made by check, pay at the door, or online, there is a \$5.00 service fee if done on line. Current sponsors are Illinois Times, and Fluid Bar. The after-party venue will be Fluid Bar.

Springfield Pridefest- Brian reported that Springfield Pridefest will NOT be its own organization as the Phoenix Center board has voted to maintain it under them. The reason for this has not been disclosed.

New Business

NPR Anniversary- Brian reported that on Thursday, September 18th, NPR will be celebrating their 50th anniversary with an exhibit at the Lincoln Library beginning at 6:00 p.m. with the ribbon cutting at 6:16 p.m. The exhibit will chronicle the 50 years of the station's history. The opening will be followed by a cocktail party from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church across the street.

Habitat for Humanity: Raise the Roof Game Night- Brian stated that he was contacted by Betsy Tracy about their upcoming Raise the Roof Game Night on November 7th, requesting we consider sponsoring the event again this year.

The sponsorship levels are –

\$750.00 – Game Show round sponsor

\$500.00 – Brought to you sponsor

\$300.00 – Brought to you sponsor

Rex made a motion to do a \$500.00 sponsorship, Candice seconded. Motion carried.

Illinois Times 50th Anniversary-The Illinois Times will have a luncheon at Pole Barn Chic on 9/25 from 11:00 am. to 1:00 p.m. to reflect on where they've been and where the future will take them. Fletcher Farrar will provide a welcome and Michelle Ownby the closing remarks. Tickets are \$50.00 each. Lee made a motion to do a \$1,000.00 sponsorship for the event of which CORAL will pay \$600.00 the rest of the money will be paid by attendees at the CORAL table at the event, April seconded, vote was taken there was 1 nay vote, Motion carried.

Equality Illinois Representation at meetings- Brian stated that during the meeting with Prairie Pride, they had someone from Equality IL attend their meeting to provide an update on what they are working on currently. Is this something CORAL might want to introduce into their monthly meetings as well? Meeting attendees agreed to have a representative from Equality Illinois attend our meetings.

Pridetober Springfield Pridefest Event- Brian reported that he has still not heard anything from the Phoenix Center on the upcoming Pridetober event for 10/18 on the block in front of Clique but he's been told they are wanting CORAL to be present. We may have to divide and conquer on that day though as it is the same day as the Fifth Street Camp Out that we've already agreed to participate.

Phoenix Center Fall Gayla-Brian stated the Gayla is on for November 7th at Erin's Pavillon and we've already been contacted by Mora about our reciprocal agreement with this event, which was a full-page ad in our Ritz in exchange for a full-page ad in their program. We also have four free tickets for the event resulting from an issue in last year's program. In the past, we've purchased two tables for the event. Tickets are \$50.00 each.

PBJ with O&A- Lisa stated it will be held at First Presbyterian Church on Thursday September 25th at 6pm. Lisa got the 5 volunteers needed for help with the event.

Capital City Indivisible- Brian stated that CORAL has been contacted by a member of this group to advertise the Barn Dance and requested information from them on how CORAL might get more involved with their group. Brian wanted to know

how do the members of CORAL feel about this. Membership had discussion and requested Brian get more information for our next meeting.

Bond County Pridefest- Brian reported that the event has been postponed.

Fifth Street Renaissance Campout for the Homeless Veterans on Oct. 18th- Rob reported that Fifth Street has grown rapidly with its expanded area. There is an increased need for donations such as furniture, household items, gently worn clothing etc. They are also looking for individuals to campout with them at the event, and attend the awards recognition that will be held at the event. Lori stated she and Harry will provide Hot Chocolate again this year.

Veterans Soup Day- Rob reported Fifth Street Renaissance will again be holding the event on November 7th.

Fifth Street Renaissance Gala- Rob stated they will be holding their very first gala on February 7, 2026 at Erin's pavilion.

Effingham Pridefest- Brian reported this will be a 3-day event being held on September 19th, 20th, and 21st.

Senior Services Christmas- Lee reported that he would like CORAL to sponsor the Christmas Party. The sponsorship amount is \$300.00 CORAL would receive advertising for the event. April made the motion to sponsor the event, Jim seconded. Motion carried.

Art Clark Celebration of Life- April made a motion for CORAL to purchase a flower arrangement, Lee seconded. Motion carried. Flowers will be ordered.

Lisa made a motion to adjourn, Rex seconded, Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.