



## Coalition of Rainbow Alliances

Annual Meeting Minutes  
May 9, 2021 at 5:00 PM  
Zoom and First Church of the Brethren

1     **I.     Call to Order**

2             The meeting was called to order by Jim Barr at 5:13 PM.

3  
4     **II.    Roll Call and Introduction of Guests**

5             The following members were in attendance: Brian Sylvester, Rob Weis, Julie Koon,  
6             Ann Engel, April Poole, Rex Schadow, Jim Barr, Roz Stein, Mike Johnson, Timothy  
7             Bill, Randy Kaw, and Paula Harris.

8  
9             A quorum was present.

10  
11            The following guests were introduced: *No guests were present.*

12  
13    **III.   Approval of the April 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

14            Timothy Bill submitted the minutes from the April 11, 2021 monthly meeting which  
15            had been shared electronically.

16  
17            **MOTION** by Paula:

18            Move to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2021 meeting.

19  
20            This motion was seconded and approved without dissent.

21  
22    **IV.    Officer Reports and Executive Board Updates**

23            **A.    Treasurer's Report**

24                Brian has not received a new statement from the bank. The previous month's  
25                balance was reported. He will provide a report for April and May at the next  
26                meeting.

27  
28            **B.    Other Officer Reports**

29                *There were no other officer reports.*

30  
31            **C.    Executive Board Updates**

32                Jim reported that the executive board will meet next at 1 PM on July 10<sup>th</sup> at First  
33                Church of the Brethren. The board will also have a retreat at 10 AM on August 7<sup>th</sup>  
34                at a location to be determined.

35  
36                Tim shared that the Lt. Governor's Office had reached out to CORAL via email.  
37                They are looking to schedule a meeting with us for this upcoming week.



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- 41 **V. Annual Meeting Reports**
- 42 **A. President's Report**
- 43 Jim provided the annual President's report (included below). CORAL also
- 44 participated in Board Governance Training provided by Bruce Nims.
- 45
- 46 **B. The Ritz**
- 47 April provided a report on behalf of Bert and the Ritz committee (included below).
- 48
- 49 **C. Women 4 Womxn Group**
- 50 Ann reported that a new women's group was formed based on conversations
- 51 from the CORAL community forum. A group of women from the community were
- 52 selected, and after a few meetings, an independent group was formed. The
- 53 group's name is Women 4 Womxn and is active on Facebook. The group
- 54 currently has 77 members and is currently very active on that platform.
- 55
- 56 **D. LGBTQ History Project**
- 57 Julie reported that the committee was created, they developed a list of
- 58 interviewees, interview protocols, and is working diligently on getting the
- 59 interviews completed.
- 60
- 61 **E. Bylaws Committee**
- 62 Roz reported that the bylaws committee reworked the entire bylaws which
- 63 created a new officer position, created an election process, a \$300 limit for
- 64 general membership expenditures, added a dissolution clause, and added an
- 65 amendment process. Roz thanked the committee which was composed of Roz
- 66 Stein (chair), Jim Barr, Timothy Bill, Lee Korty, and Linda Rendleman).
- 67
- 68 **F. Thanksgiving Micro Pantry Drive (November – December)**
- 69 April provided a combined report for the micro-pantry food drive (included below).
- 70
- 71 **G. Spring Micro Pantry Drive (January – February)**
- 72 See the above report for this time period as well.
- 73
- 74 **H. Financial Report**
- 75 Brian provided a report of the year's finances (included below).
- 76
- 77 **I. Reverse Pride Picnic**
- 78 Brian shared a report for the Reverse Pride Picnic (included below). Jim noted
- 79 that WAND reported on this event and interviewed members of the group.
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### J. Community Empowerment Committee

Julie reported that the committee created a volunteer participation form which was posted to the website. Three individuals have filled out the form since it went active. Members from CORAL have reached out to make a connection with these individuals. This effort could be expanded and have more visibility. Rob submitted a written report (included below).

**MOTION** by Paula:

Move to approve the annual meeting reports.

This motion was seconded and approved without dissent.

## VI. Committee Reports

### A. Finance Committee

*There was no report from this committee*

### B. Pridefest Committee

April provided a written report (included below). Virtual pride will take place on May 15<sup>th</sup>. CORAL's door has been removed from in front of the church.

### C. Pride Picnic Committee

*There was no report from this committee*

### D. Ritz Committee

*There was no report from this committee*

### E. Nominations Committee and Officer Elections

Rex and Mike reported that the nominations for officers are: Jim Barr for President; Timothy Bill for Secretary; and Deb Torres, Jan Thompson, Julie Koon, and Stan Duknowski for Member-at-Large.

The floor was opened for nominations. No additional nominations were made.

**MOTION** by Paula:

Move to seat Jim Barr as President and Timothy Bill as Secretary immediately by acclimation.

This motion was seconded and approved without dissent.

The members voted for the open member-at-large position. Julie Koon was



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121 elected to fill this position.

122

### 123 **F. Ad Hoc Committee to Develop Social Media Guidelines**

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125 **MOTION** by Brian:

126 Move to make the Social Media committee a permanent committee.

127

128 This motion was seconded and approved without dissent.

129

130 Brian reported that the committee has not met since CORAL's last monthly  
131 meeting.

132

133 **MOTION** by Paula:

134 Move to accept all oral committee reports.

135

136 This motion was seconded and approved without dissent.

137

### 138 **VII. Old Business**

#### 139 **A. Update on LGBTQIA History Project**

140 Julie reported that Martha Miller's interview is ready to post on YouTube, social  
141 media, and the website. Another two interviews are waiting to be edited. The  
142 group briefly discussed which interviews should be prioritized. If anyone is  
143 interested in helping with the interviews, please contact Julie Koon to get  
144 involved in this project.

145

#### 146 **B. Online Community for Lesbian, Bi/Pansexual Womxn**

147 There were no additional updates from this group.

148

#### 149 **C. Discussion of Community Empowerment Data**

150 The group discussed the process of reaching out to new contacts.

151

152 **MOTION** by Julie:

153 Move to recreate the Community Empowerment Committee.

154

155 This motion was seconded and approved without dissent.

156

157 Julie will chair the committee with Brian and Roz as members. If you are  
158 interested, please reach out to Julie directly.

159

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- 161 **VIII. New Business**
- 162 **A. New Business**
- 163 *There were no items of new business.*
- 164
- 165 **IX. Announcements, Updates, and Communication from Other Organizations**
- 166 **A. PRISM Update**
- 167 Tim provided a report on behalf of Blake Denherder summarizing the past year
- 168 (included below).
- 169
- 170 **B. NPR Campaign**
- 171 Tim shared that CORAL has partnered with NPR as part of their spring
- 172 fundraising drive. For every \$300 donation made to NPR on CORAL's behalf,
- 173 CORAL will receive 10 free on-air advertisements. You can checkout CORAL's
- 174 website to find out more.
- 175
- 176 **C. First Church Chili Dinner**
- 177 April thanked everyone who helped out with the chili dinner. The fundraiser was a
- 178 big success for the church.
- 179
- 180 **D. Heartland MCC Update**
- 181 Paula shared the pastor is resigning at the end of June. She will share more
- 182 updates when she has them.
- 183
- 184 **E. UIS COVID-19 Saliva Testing**
- 185 Tim shared the UIS is now offering free saliva based COVID-19 testing to the
- 186 public. You can find our more here: <https://www.uis.edu/covid-19/testing/>
- 187
- 188 **F. First Church – In-Person Services**
- 189 April shared that if you are fully vaccinated (two weeks beyond your second
- 190 shot), you can attend in-person services starting on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- 191
- 192 **G. Firth Street – Buff Carmichael Ceremony**
- 193 Rob shared that Fifth Street Renaissance will be participating in the ceremony for
- 194 Buff Carmichael on July 3<sup>rd</sup> organized by his nephew Harry by providing chairs
- 195 and tents for the ceremony.
- 196
- 197 **X. Adjournment**
- 198 Brian motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved without dissent.
- 199 The meeting adjourned at 6:44 PM.
- 200



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201	<b>Dates to Remember</b>		
202	• March 26, 2022	The Ritz	
203			
204	• May 8	Interurban Café Event, Williamsville	
205	• May 9	CORAL Monthly Meeting (Mother's Day)	5 PM
206	• May 11	Springfield Call 2 Action Zoom Meeting	
207	• May 12	Equality Illinois Virtual Advocacy Day	
208	• May 15	Springfield Pridefest Virtual Activities	
209	• May 29	Black Lives Matter Solidarity Day of Celebration	
210	• May 31	Memorial Day	
211	• June 13	CORAL Monthly Meeting	5 PM
212	• July 3	Memorial Service for Buff Carmichael	
213	• July 10	CORAL Executive Board Meeting	1 PM
214	• July 11	CORAL Monthly Meeting	5 PM
215	• August 7	CORAL Executive Board Retreat	10 AM
216	• August 8	CORAL Monthly Meeting	5 PM
217			
218	Minutes Submitted By: Timothy Bill, Secretary		

President's Message Annual Meeting, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021

First and foremost, I want to give a huge thank you to April Poole and Tim Bill for helping with our zoom/in person monthly meetings and to the First Church of the Brethren for allowing us to use their beautiful facilities over the past year and a half. Without their support and efforts, we would have been hard pressed to move forward. I would also like to remember those who we have lost during the past year and especially Buff Carmichael and Candy Parker for all that they did for the LGBTQ Community and so many others.

The past year has truly been a test for everyone. The Census, the Elections (primary and General election in November), navigating a pandemic that has the world on edge and keeping our commitment to the LGBTQ community (and the greater Springfield Community) of support, encouragement, and collaboration among organizations and individuals.

During 2020, we had to cancel our major event and only fund raiser for the year "The RITZ, Everyone Counts". This was because the entire state of Illinois and most of the country was shut down because of COVID-19. After meeting with Zach Thornton from the Crowne Plaza in January of 2021, it was decided that the RITZ would be cancelled for 2021 as well and our efforts would focus on 2022. A huge thank you to Bert and April for keeping such good records for the RITZ which will allow us to move forward in 2022.

Springfield PrideFest was also cancelled which was one of our main focus of support for the Springfield LGBTG community. Decatur Pridefest was also cancelled. All of this due to Covid-19.

Because we could not hold our annual Pride Picnic (over 30 years of showing our Pride at a picnic hosted by B2B and now CORAL), we choose to do an Alternative Picnic. Doing a food , cleaning supplies, and personal hygiene supplies drive for Phoenix Center, Fifth Street Renaissance/SARA Center and the Central Illinois Food Bank. Lots of things were donated as well as cash donations. As huge thank you to Brian, Bert, Rob, Mark Jensen, April, Tim, Ann, and all the others involved and who made donations.

In the Fall, we discussed ways in which we could celebrate our Thanksgiving Dinner and yet remain safe since there wasn't a vaccination yet for COVID-19. The group decided to do Saturday food collection for the micro food pantries at the Boys and Girls Club as well as at Fifth Street Renaissance/SARA Center. This started the first Saturday in November and continued throughout December (with Christmas Stockings being filled with shampoo, lotion, etc being delivered in time for Christmas). The food drive continued through February and several still take food by on a regular basis. A huge thank you to Ann, Bert, April, Lee, Roz, Mike J., Rex, and everyone who helped and donated so much.

CORAL has begun a collection of our history via personal interviews with members of the community with a huge thanks to Julie and to Rob for all the work done on this project.

We have also had a Community Empowerment Committee formed who developed a questionnaire for new members---thanks to Paula and her committee for this. We also have a new website thanks to Tim for all of his work on this.

We have had a representative of United Way attend one of our meetings as well as working with such groups as Black Lives Matter, Springfield Call 2 Action, Phoenix Center's Alternative Fall GALA, Habitat

for Humanity's Build Walk through Enos Park, continuing dialogue with the Springfield Slider's, Equality Illinois virtual meetings, and the list goes on.

We have not sat back idly during these trying times, but have resolved to move forward for our community and the overall Greater Springfield Community. We stand proud of our work and efforts to improve the lives of the LGBTQ community. A huge thank you to all of the Board members and to all of you who have helped make CORAL a success.

Sincerely,

Jim Barr, President



## **Ritz Committee Report**

The 2021 Ritz, scheduled for March 27, 2021, was again postponed due to Covid-19. The committee has continued to work with both vendors, sponsors and advertisers to look forward to celebrating The Ritz in 2022. The dinner/dance will be held on Saturday, March 26, 2022, at the Crown Plaza.

The committee would like to thank all of our vendors who have stuck with us and are working to make our next Ritz a fantastic celebration of our community but also of coming out of the pandemic. During this down time, Bert Morton has written letters to each sponsor and advertiser, keeping them apprised of our event status. To date, all sponsors and advertisers are continuing their support of the event and have not requested a return of the sponsor or advertising funds.

Additionally, Bert has worked with those ticket and table holders to ensure their continued support of our event. To date, most ticket and table holders have requested CORAL keep the money and have tickets for the next Ritz event. A handful of ticket holders wanted their money back but they are long time supporters who will buy tickets at our next event. These requests were handled by the table captains and these ticket holders will return.

The Ritz committee believes \$13,350 are being held for the event. Additionally, we believe there is another \$4,050 who have committed to advertising, sponsor or tickets for the Ritz 2020 prior to its cancellation. This group of people will be contacted at the appropriate time for The Ritz 2022. Additionally, the committee is looking to additional local sponsors who require additional paperwork and/or lead time to commit advertising dollars. This group includes Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Sundown One and others

The committee is also working with Tim Bill to place an advertisement on the CORAL webpage for each of our sponsors and advertisers. We have several ideas and look forward to Tim's ideas on how to highlight our sponsors and advertisers who have graciously stuck with us for two years.

The committee co-chairs will be requesting additional members join the committee as current members are requesting to leave the committee. Please consider joining us in this endeavor. We would like to thank Jim Barr for his continued work and assistance in planning and hosting every Ritz dinner/dance.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Bert Morton

April Poole  
Ritz Co-Chair

## **Micro Pantry Food Drive – Thanksgiving Alternative**

Being unable to host our Thanksgiving Community Dinner, CORAL decided to host a food drive for two micro pantries from November through December. Members of CORAL, Heartland MCC, First Church of the Brethren and community members at large, came together to fill the micro pantries at the Boys and Girls Club of Springfield and the Fifth Street Renaissance/SARA Center.

Each Saturday morning, CORAL members stood outside of FCOB collecting from community members whether it was sunny, raining or snow and ice on the ground. Then after the collection, we would deliver the food items to the pantries, always cleaning them up and organizing the donations to allow the recipients to easily grab their necessities. During the week, committee members would shop for the pantries with the monetary donations received the previous weekend and even repair one of the pantries.

At Christmas, a special gift of a Christmas stocking was also supplied and presented to the two organizations. These organizations handed out our Christmas stockings to those who were in need. A total of \$677 was collected for the stockings. Ann Engel and Bert Morton spent \$639.85 on the stockings and their contents. The remaining money was spent on food donations to the pantries.

Many thanks to those CORAL members who stood outside collecting the food, stocking the pantry shelves and donated their time, talent and treasure for this worthwhile cause of feeding the needy of our greater community.

## **Micro Pantry Food Drive – January through February**

Many on the Micro Pantry Food Drive Committee felt the project needed to continue through the rough winter months. We felt the need was still too great in the community and other groups' support of the micro pantries were sharply falling off. Thus, the group continued through the months of January and February. The group felt the other groups' support of the micro pantries would increase with the coming of Spring.

Again, CORAL members stood outside of FCOB, sometimes frigid temperatures and snow but we were warmed by seeing the recipients faces as we restocked the micro pantries at the Boys and Girls Club and Fifth Street Renaissance/SARA Center. After our last February collection, the group monitored the two pantries and as we thought, other groups have stepped up their donations and continue to do so. We need to be proud that CORAL and its members filled that winter gap when others didn't continue their efforts to feed the needy.

Many made monetary donations throughout the both sets of food drives. Significant monetary donors include Joey Lee of Heartland MCC, Patty Brockmeyer & Terry Dobbs, Diana Rokosz of FCOB, along with other small donations. All monies received were immediately used to purchase food for the next weeks food donations. Other CORAL and community members donated food supplies nearly every week include: Roz Stein, Mike Johnson, Rex Schadow, Ron Willey, Jim Barr, Bert Morton, Lee Korty, April Poole, and Paula Harris. The committee believes the food donations totaled \$350 worth each week. If I forgot anyone, my apologies.

The core group looks forward to doing more of these service projects in the future.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of Ann Engel and Bert Morton

April Poole, Food Driver Committee

# Reverse picnic



Mark Jensen loads donated supplies onto a cart during the Coalition of Rainbow Alliances "Everyone Counts" reverse picnic at First Church of the Brethren in Springfield Saturday. Instead of their annual picnic, the alliance hosted a reverse picnic where guests drove by and dropped off donations of nonperishable food, boxed meals, personal hygiene items, cleaning supplies and cash donations. The items will be distributed to the Central Illinois Food Bank, Phoenix Center and the Fifth Street Renaissance/SARA Center. [TED SCHURTER/THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER]

## Reverse Picnic

With the pandemic restrictions in full enforcement by June, CORAL was not able to conduct their usual picnic festivities. However, a committee was created to discuss ideas for what could be done in its place and the conclusion was to have an event on the same date with members of the community bringing items to be donated to those less fortunate. We opted to concentrate our efforts on collecting items for the Central Illinois Food Bank, Fifth Street SARA Center, and Phoenix Center.

On June 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. , CORAL and several volunteers arrived at First Church of the Brethren to begin receiving food items, hygiene and cleaning products, and cash donations. Jim Barr and Lisa Cotton collected items for the drive the day before in Decatur as well. The SJR arrived to interview and take pictures of the event. Collected that day were cash donations of \$2,457.15 as well as over 30 boxes of various items to be given the organizations mentioned. The Central IL Food Bank stated that the funds received would provide 7,921 meals and 453 pounds of food donations were received.

**Report for Community Empowerment Committee  
(Historical Interview Team)**

**Annual Report  
Submitted 5/9/21**

The Community Empowerment Committee comprised of Rob Weis, Buff Carmichael, Paula Harris, Julie Koon, Thomas Wray, Roz Stein, Rodney Shoemaker, and Ann Engel. The committee was comprised of two working groups;

1. Participation Interest group – Developed a means for requesting further information and a process for responding to requests. This working group completed their assigned work as of January 10, 2021.
2. Historical Interview – Developed a means for capturing the individual history of the lgbt+ community. This working group became the Historical Interview Committee. Julie Koon has taken the lead on this role.

The Community Empowerment Committee completed its assigned work and was disbanded as of January 10, 2021..

## **Pridefest Committee**

Again, PrideFest is a virtual event this year. Many contests are planned and are underway. The virtual Pridefest will be held on Saturday, May 15. There will be a drag show and band performance at UIS in cooperation with their production team.

CORAL was asked to sponsor a colored door for one of the contests and to listed as a sponsor of Pridefest on all advertisements. This cost was \$1,000. CORAL voted to be a sponsor.

I was to be on the Pridefest committee and I attended two meetings virtually. After making what I thought was a meaningful suggestion to speed up the meeting, I wasn't invited back to the committee. I tried my best to work with the Pridefest committee but was unfortunately unable to participate further.

Respectfully submitted

April Poole



The past year for PRISM can be summed up as one long hibernation while the pandemic raged on around us. It is encouraging that the core group stayed in contact and began meeting again after a hiatus. Everyone seemed to really enjoy getting together in person at most recent meeting, all having been vaccinated for safety. And as conditions keep improving PRISM hopes to join other organizations in person out in the community once again.

Leadership Team

Co-chair: Dustin Patton

Co-chair: Blake DenHerder

Treasurer: Shaun Thrasher

Events: Bree Kopczynksi

Member: Timothy Bill

Member: Chris Boyster

Member: Nathan Leitner

Member: Paul Staab

Submitted on behalf of Blake Denherder by:  
Timothy Bill