



# CONNECT

ISSUE 16 • JUNE 2023



## Celebration of Freedom & Pride

The month June is filled with celebrations of Love, Pride, and Resilience as the world recognizes two equally deserving annual celebrations. “June nineteenth” Juneteenth abbreviated, is the oldest celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in America. It’s also LGBTQ month which honors Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) Pride. While the two honor different fights for freedom, they both share a common purpose of cultural visibility and equality. As we reflect on how far we’ve come as a country, it is important to honor the strength, courage, and resilience of those who fought for freedom, equal rights, and love.

To show your alliance for these marginalized communities, challenge yourself to continued education on the topics of race, gender, and intersectionality. Challenge yourself to call injustices out, not be silent, and have those difficult conversations

### DIVERSITY EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LET'S CELEBRATE FREEDOM • P. 2

THE HISTORY OF JUNETEENTH • P. 3

RECKONING WITH THE LEGACY OF THE GENDER BINARY • P.4

JUNETEENTH: FOOD AND LIBERATION• P. 5- 7

LGBTQ+ FACTS P. 8

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING P. 9

PRIDE TALK P.10

BISEXUALITY ERASURE P.11

# LET'S CELEBRATE THE DAY OF FREEDOM

# JUNE 1865

JUNE 19, 1865



JUNETEENTH  
JUNETEENTH  
JUNETEENTH



Major General Gordon Granger and the Union Army entered Galveston, Texas to liberate thousands of enslaved men, women, and children.

Juneteenth is celebrated as a day of liberty and justice for all Americans.

**LET US CONTINUE THE FIGHT  
AGAINST RACISM AND INJUSTICE!**

# LET US CONTINUE THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM AND INJUSTICE!



# The History of Juneteenth

**By: Terry Gish**

When the Civil War officially ended in May 1865, slavery was not immediately eradicated. Factions of Confederate forces continued to fight past the date of official surrender. Lifetimes before lightning-fast electronic communication, word of the South's ultimate defeat trickled slowly. Stories would later surface of masters on isolated plantations who conveniently forgot to tell their slaves that they were legally free.

After news of the Civil War's outcome finally reached Texas, a group of about 2,000 federal soldiers descended on Galveston on June 18th, 1865, to help "ease" them into a state of transition. The following day, on June 19th, General Order Number Three declared the freedom of slaves in the state of Texas. Juneteenth (initially called "Jubilee Day") was first celebrated one year later in the now slave-free state of Texas.

People moving from Texas during the Great Migration took the legacy of Juneteenth with them, and the theme became contagious. Descendants of enslaved individuals not directly impacted by the Galveston edict viewed Juneteenth as a date to celebrate the liberation of all who had been enslaved, not just those whose shackles were loosed that day by General Order Number Three.

Over time, Juneteenth's profile faded somewhat. However, it enjoyed a resurgence in the 1960s. Civil rights leaders championing the cry "free at last" heard historical echoes of that refrain in Juneteenth. Its importance remembered, Juneteenth became something that people wanted to be recognized on a larger scale.

Over 100 years after its inception, Juneteenth began gaining legal legitimization. Texas, where Juneteenth originated, became the first state to recognize Juneteenth as a state holiday in 1980. Twenty-three states (and the District of Columbia) have since followed suit, including two states celebrating Juneteenth as a state holiday for the first time this year.

In 2021, Juneteenth was finally declared to be a federal holiday. As national awareness of Juneteenth increases, Southwestern takes time to recognize its impact on history.



## Reckoning with the Legacy of the Gender Binary

*"As a member of the LGBT community, these concepts are still challenging, and actively implementing and using preferred pronouns can be difficult for me, just as it would be for anyone."*

**By: Tyler Plogher**

Across time and across most cultures, gender has typically been conceptualized in terms of a binary or two, mutually exclusive opposite categories. An individual might be a man or a woman, for instance, with no other options being considered possible. Although a substantial percentage of the population might comfortably align their identities with this binary, ideas of masculinity and femininity are nuanced, and there are important distinctions to be made between how an individual identifies and how others perceive the outward expression of their gender identity.

When we see an individual, we typically attribute a gender to them almost instantaneously, based on their physical, anatomical characteristics and the extent to which their clothing choices align with established gender norms.

We do this, in part, because the human brain has an incredible ability to rapidly identify patterns and assign meaning, allowing for quick decision-making with little effort. We rely on this efficient means of vetting who a person is as our primary means of rapidly determining which social norms to obey with a stranger. Queer advocates do not necessarily criticize this or advocate that we fight against our most basic programming as human beings. What is recommended, however, is that we recognize the possibility that with efficiency comes the risk of error, and that we might need to practice cultural humility in correcting ourselves when we discover our unintentional errors.

We typically sort strangers into categories using the binary (e.g., is this person more likely to identify as a man or a woman).

## CONTINUED

Queer advocates and self-advocates point out that the binary, while useful as a mental shortcut, is not necessarily accurate. So many core identities actually exist along spectrums. Although most people might identify along clear binary lines, there are those who do not, and since the rise of the Internet and the growing visibility of diverse people and ways of living in society, people who feel similarly are identifying each other and exploring new ways of better describing who they are and how they feel.

It is important to note that these ways of being and feeling have likely always existed. Now that people are able to give voice to their lived realities, though, communities of likeminded individuals are engaging in dialogues about whether the terms “man” and “woman” fit their perceptions of themselves. Terms such as genderfluid, transgender, genderqueer, and non-binary have been developed as a result, with people rallying around the terms that resonate with them and make them feel most seen and validated. As the public at large begins to hear about these new terms, people understandably might feel confused or, initially, they might question, “Where is this coming from? Why are there new genders?”.

Neopronouns are a relevant example of this phenomenon and the confusion the public at large has expressed. Historically, in keeping with the binary, he/him, she/her, and they/them pronouns alone existed in our language, with they/them not necessarily being used in its modern iteration, but rather as a placeholder set of pronouns when the gender of the person in question was not known, or when groups were being referenced.

For those who feel these pronouns are not applicable or do not accurately reflect their reality, new pronouns have been proposed as alternatives, given that English does not have adequate existing pronouns available that they feel comfortable using. Examples of neopronouns include ze/hir, fae/faer, and ey/em.

Although the language surrounding these identities is evolving, queer advocates argue that it is the language and not necessarily the identities themselves that are new. There have always been intersex individuals, for instance (i.e., those born with internal or external genitalia that are not strictly male or female, but rather share characteristics of both). In modern society, though, people have been given the freedom and a certain degree of safety to come forward and give voice to these realities for the first time. In other words, the language is evolving now due to a recognized and openly discussed need for more representative terminology, not because modern people are arbitrarily “making up” new identities without justification.

**CONTINUED**

As a member of the LGBT community, these concepts are still challenging, and actively implementing and using preferred pronouns can be difficult for me, just as it would be for anyone. Mistakes will be made, even by the most well-intentioned of people. My recommendation to my colleagues is that, as you read this article, and as you become exposed to other learning opportunities throughout your lives, try to come away with an appreciation for why this phenomenon is occurring and why it is of incredible importance to so many people, even if you do not feel that you fully understand the specific words or are ready to openly use them in a sentence. Cultural humility is not about being an expert, and in so many cases, the people who have made the brave choice to share their reality with others are not looking for expertise in others. What we want, like all people, is to merely be given a chance on equal footing and for others to accept us for who we are, even if they are still getting to know who we are.





Red velvet cake is considered to be soul food of the south. A Southern cuisine that originated in the 1800s. A Juneteenth staple food.

# Juneteenth: Food & Liberation

Juneteenth is characterized by summer cookout dishes: barbecue, baked beans, deviled eggs, potato salad, cakes and pies. You will see many staple foods and drinks at Juneteenth celebrations such as red velvet cake, red strawberry soda and red punch. Red food is significant in this celebratory events as it is a major way of commemorating the legacy and sacrifice of enslaved African Americans and the blood that was shed by millions of enslaved people who had suffered and died.



# LGBTQ+ PRIDE MONTH



## What is LGBT Pride Month?

The commemorative month is meant to recognize the sweeping impact that LGBT individuals, advocates and allies have on history in the United States and around the globe, according to the Library of Congress

## When is it?

LGBT PRIDE MONTH IS CELEBRATED EVERY YEAR IN JUNE.

## Why was the month of June chosen?

The month of June was chosen for LGBT Pride Month to commemorate the riots held by members of the LGBT community against a police raid that took place at the Stonewall Inn in New York City on June 28, 1969.

The Stonewall riots were a "tipping point" for the gay liberation movement in the United States, according to the Library of Congress. The uproar also paved the way for the modern fight for LGBT rights.

Previous U.S. presidents have, on several occasions, officially declared June as LGBT Pride Month.

## LGBTQ+ Flags



## PRONOUNS FOR ALLIES

- Using someone's correct pronouns is an important way of affirming someone's identity and is a fundamental step in being an ally.
- Common pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs.
- It is important to ask people what their pronouns are.
- Make a habit of introducing yourself with your pronouns, not just in LGBTQIA-specific situations.

## GENDER IDENTITY

**CISGENDER:** SOMEONE WHOSE GENDER MATCHES THEIR "ASSIGNED" SEX AT BIRTH.

**TRANSGENDER:** A PERSON WHOSE GENDER IS DIFFERENT FROM THEIR "ASSIGNED" SEX AT BIRTH.

**NON-BINARY:** A SPECTRUM OF GENDER IDENTITIES THAT ARE NOT EXCLUSIVELY MASCULINE OR EXCLUSIVELY FEMINE

**GENDERQUEER:** SIMILAR TO "NON-BINARY" - SOME PEOPLE REGARD "QUEER" AS OFFENSIVE, OTHERS EMBRACE IT.

**GENDERFLUID:** APPLIES TO A PERSON WHOSE GENDER IDENTITY CHANGES OVER TIME OR CHANGES AT DIFFERENT TIMES.







# "LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING"

## THE NEGRO NATIONAL ANTHEM

"Lift Every Voice and Sing," known as the Negro National Anthem, was first written as a poem by James Weldon Johnson civil rights activist and American Writer. The poem was composed in 1900 which was later set to music to honor renowned educator Booker T. Washington.

Lift Every Voice and Sing was first recited by 500 Stanton Elementary School students in honor of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. The poem was written to bring awareness to the struggles faced by African Americans following the Reconstruction era.

The song honors and acknowledges the American journey of Black people ,for their the sacrifice, loss, inherited strengths and pride as a community.

In honor of Juneteenth, please take a moment to listen to this beautiful rendition of Lift Every Voice and Sing by Tasha Cobb Leonard.



**JUNE 2023**

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & ENGAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE PRESENTS:**

# **PRIDE TALK**

**TOPIC: NAVIGATING IDENTITY DISCLOSURES**



# BISEXUALITY ERASURE

**By: Jennifer Greenlee**

According to a Gallup poll released in 2021, 3.1% of adults in the United States identify as bisexual. Bisexuality has been described by the Human Rights Campaign as being “emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender, or gender identity, though not necessarily simultaneously in the same way, or to the same degree” (Murphy, 2022). You have probably heard about or met people who identify as bisexual, but a term people may be less familiar with is bisexual erasure. For individuals who identify with this sexual orientation, though, it is unfortunately a common experience. The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) defines bisexual erasure, also known as bisexual invisibility, as the problem in which the existence or legitimacy of bisexuality is questioned or denied outright. This can relate to bisexuality in general or an individual who identifies as bisexual. For example, a woman who identifies as bisexual but is in a relationship with a man might get a response from others insisting that she can’t really be bisexual, or that her sexual orientation doesn’t matter now that she is in this seemingly heterosexual relationship. Other people may think that individuals who identify as bisexual are just confused and haven’t made up their minds yet, are homosexual but just not fully out, or are heterosexual but claiming to be bisexual for attention. While diminishing the legitimacy of someone’s sexual orientation can be emotionally hurtful to that person, there are also other negative health consequences associated with bisexual erasure.



Some studies show that bisexual people have higher rates of anxiety, depression and other mood disorders compared to heterosexuals, lesbians and gays (Bisexual Resource Center, 2023). Bisexual erasure is a critical potential contributor to these mental health disparities (Murphy, 2022). Dr. Lauren Beach at Northwestern University’s Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing said that these mental health issues may improve if we are able to get rid of bisexual erasure and decrease the isolation many bisexual people experience (Murphy, 2022). Beach also mentions the fact that these mental health diagnoses have been associated with poverty and other structural level social determinants of health (Murphy, 2022). It’s not just mental health either, bisexual and LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely than heterosexuals to experience increased cardiovascular risk factors, smoking, and be overweight or obese.

## CONTINUED

One way to explain why these disparities exist is because of a lack of quality preventative care. Healthcare providers may make assumptions about someone's sexuality if their partner is of the opposite sex, and this may influence the kind of care or treatment someone receives. For example, a healthcare provider may want to conduct HIV or other STI testing for a woman in a relationship with a man. They may assume that this woman is heterosexual, but what if she is having relationships with people of other genders as well? These assumptions can be harmful and may lead to unintended consequences.

So, what can be done to prevent bisexual erasure? For other members of the LGBTQ+ community or allies, there are ways to show your support for the bisexual community in this way. If someone tells you they are bisexual, do not question their identity. Bisexual individuals are not 50% gay, 50% straight—they are 100% bisexual. If you see or hear someone making biphobic statements, speak up and let them know that their actions are harmful. Finally, use inclusive language when referring to the LGBTQ+ community. Just like most things in life, sexuality is not always black and white, all or nothing, it exists on a spectrum. The D.E.E. Committee hopes that we can all play a part in preventing bisexual erasure in the population with which we serve, as well as in our own lives and communities.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
PRESENTS

# JUNETEENTH FORUM

CELEBRATING FREEDOM, ACKNOWLEDGING THE PAST & EMPOWERING FUTURE LEADERS.

**SPEAKER: COURTNEY JOHNSON**

Evansville, Indiana native; Founder & Executive Director of Young & Established, INC.; TEDx featured speaker; youth advocate; and local community partner.

**VOCAL ARTIST: VALERIE PRICE-PEARSON**



**MONDAY,  
JUNE 19TH  
@6PM**

LOCATION:  
**SOUTHWESTERN BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTHCARE  
(WELBORN CONFERENCE ROOM)  
410 MULBERRY STREET  
EVANSVILLE, IN**

Light refreshments will be provided.

[dee@southwestern.org](mailto:dee@southwestern.org)