

## Best of Gay D.C. XVIII

---



washingtonblade.com/2019/09/19/best-of-gay-dc-2019

Staff reports

September 19, 2019



Christmas comes early this year! Long an October staple, the Blade's annual Best of Gay D.C. readers' poll awards gets bumped up to September this year as we're keeping next month open for our 50th anniversary festivities (shameless plug: the Birthday Gala is Oct. 18; tickets at [blade50th.com](http://blade50th.com)).

So we're taking this week's edition to celebrate who and what you think are the best Washington has to offer its LGBT residents.

For every perennial winner like Freddie's Beach Bar, the 9:30 Club or Miss Pixie's — which have all extended their dominance again this year — there are newer faces like Ricky Rose (Best Drag King), Donald Mitchell (D.C. Gay Flag Football) and Lexie Starre (Best Burlesque Dancer).

Some winners and runners-up flip-flop in succeeding years. Rayceen Pendarvis and Bishop Allyson Abrams have something like a volleyball game unfolding in these pages in the Best Clergy category. Time for a sermon-a-thon?

We're also taking this edition to honor the Blade's own Lou Chibbaro, Jr. a staple of the paper since the mid-'70s and celebrating his 35th year as a full-time staff member this year. In a Blade "Best Of" first, we give an award to one of our own. Chibbaro is the recipient of this year's Local Hero Award, a title that has previously gone to Danica Roem, Gavin Grimm, Rev. Dean Snyder and more.

Thankfully here, nobody has to "sashay away." That's the beauty of gay Washington — we can enjoy Pitchers one night, JR.'s another. Check out Nellie's Brunch one weekend and Hank's Oyster Bar another. It's all good.

About 3,500 nominations and 20,000 votes were cast in 99 categories for the 18th annual Best of Gay D.C. Awards. The Blade's Stephen Rutgers coordinated the process. The photographers are credited throughout. This year's contributing writers are Brian T. Carney, Patrick Folliard, Evan Caplan, Philip Van Slooten and Joey DiGuglielmo. Awards presented Sept. 19 at Dacha Navy Yard.

The Blade staff congratulates each of this year's winners and finalists.

## **HERO AWARD: Lou Chibbaro, Jr.**

---



**Lou Chibbaro, Jr.** (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Longer than Johnny Carson was on "The Tonight Show," longer than "Gunsmoke," longer than Barbara Walters on "20/20" or Ted Koppel on "Nightline," Lou Chibbaro, Jr.'s full-time run at the Washington Blade is not only a record (so far as we're aware) in LGBT media, it exceeds the runs of many classic long-running shows or media personalities.

Starting as a freelancer in 1976 and full-time in 1984 (the same year Alex Trebek started hosting "Jeopardy"), Chibbaro is not only an LGBT icon and institution, he's a stalwart reporter still out there pounding the D.C. pavement with shoe-leather reporting of the highest kind. For these decades of selfless service, he's the recipient of a Blade "Best of Gay

D.C.” first — on the occasion of the paper’s 50th anniversary, Chibbaro gets this year’s Hero Award, an accolade previously won by Danica Roem, Gavin Grimm, Rev. Dean Snyder and others.

Chibbaro moved to Washington in 1972, came out in 1975 and was alerted to the existence of the Blade (which had started just after Stonewall in 1969) by a gay counselor he knew in New York. Working as a reporter for a newsletter in energy and environmental issues, Chibbaro wandered into the Blade office, then on 19th St., on the second floor in the same building as the Lambda Rising gay book shop, and introduced himself to the editor, the late Joseph Crislip. He was soon contributing to the paper. He’d been contributing to a gay radio show broadcast out of Georgetown University but its plug had been pulled and Chibbaro was looking for another LGBT outlet.

Chibbaro remembers an informal office. The paper was released monthly at the time. One of his early scoops (from tipster Paul Kuntzler) was about a plan — eventually abandoned — to have a gay presidential candidate speak at the Democratic National Convention in ’76. Initially, Chibbaro wrote under a pseudonym (Lou Romano), fearful his Blade work might inhibit his employability down the road. It was a common practice as Crislip, too, had a fake byline. By the late ’70s, Chibbaro was writing under his legal name.

Through many editors, location changes, buyouts and more, Chibbaro has remained. He attributes his longevity to a passion for the subject matter.

“I came to Washington as a political junkie and when you’re interested in politics, Washington is the place to be,” Chibbaro says. “And as a gay person and someone who slowly got to know the community quite well, the types of stories we do are very interesting to me. They have significance and can have an impact.”

The Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia recognized Chibbaro’s local crime beat reporting by presenting him with its 1998 Justice for Victims of Crime Award, citing his “outstanding service to crime victims and their families” through his news reporting.

Among his other life achievement awards are Community Pioneer from Rainbow History Project (2009), GLAA and GAYLAW Distinguished Service Awards (2010, 2013 respectively), Anita Bonds Community Cornerstone Award (2016) and the Partnership Award from the CAEAR Coalition.

“I have for many years viewed my career at the Washington Blade as both a job as well as a community service,” Chibbaro said. “It is truly an honor to receive the Hero Award.” (JD)

## **NIGHTLIFE**

---

### **Best DJ Presented by BYQueers**

Keenan Orr



**Keenan Orr** (Photo courtesy of Orr)

His music has been called “a sharp mix of disco, electro, funk and classics of the ‘80s and ‘90s” with past residences at Cobalt, the Rock and Roll Hotel and more D.C. venues. Orr spins at Sleaze at Wonderland Ballroom (first Thursday of every month) and is starting a new Thursday event soon at Uproar. He also has residencies at Eighteenth Street Lounge and MARVIN. And yeah, he’s gay. Look for him on Facebook to follow his upcoming appearances. (JD)

Runner-Up: DJ TWiN

### **Best Dance Party**

Avalon Saturdays, Soundcheck





Avalon Saturday at Soundcheck (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

1420 K St., N.W.

[dougimeyerpresents.com](http://dougimeyerpresents.com)

Editor's Pick: Sleaze, Wonderland Ballroom

Poised to celebrate its one-year anniversary in October, Avalon Saturdays at Soundcheck is a hit.

During lunch break from a day at jury duty, party promoter extraordinaire Dougie Meyer explains, "At Avalon, we've accomplished what we set out to do. We brought a community together and gave them another safe space in D.C. to have fun and be themselves. Those who wanted to come for a drag show and those who want to dance to circuit music into the wee hours get that too."

Things are still being tweaked, a year into the proceedings.

"We've learned that to make Avalon great, we have to change something every week whether it's the position of couches or discounted tickets or whatever. Our dedication to making our customers happy has earned us regulars, week after week, and that tells you you're doing something right."

Nothing is on autopilot here.

"A lot of people think you open the door, and — boom — there's a party," he says. "No, we have a team of people busting their asses all week long to make it happen. But on Saturday, it's a night of fun and a good time with a changing roster of drag queens and DJs."

And yet Avalon Saturdays isn't resting on its laurels. Meyer says, "Our lineup through October is insane — our one-year anniversary party is followed by a Halloween party. We've already booked an international DJ for January 2020. The party keeps going." (PF)

### **Best Bartender**

Jo McDaniel, A League of Her Own (at Pitchers)



**Jo McDaniel** (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Jo's second consecutive win!

2319 18th St., N.W.

[pitchersbardc.com](http://pitchersbardc.com)

Runner-up: Matthew Strother, Green Lantern (a 2011 and 2012 winner for his work at Secrets)

### **Best Burlesque Dancer**

Lexie Starre



**Lexie Starre** (Photo by Your Rouge Photography)

## D.C. Gurly Show

[dcgurlyshow.com](http://dcgurlyshow.com)

Runner-up: GiGi Holliday

Sexy Lexie Starre got her start in burlesque with the D.C. Girly Show, the District's longest-running queer burlesque troupe. She'll be back onstage in December with the troupe's Raise the Roof show, a fundraiser that will benefit local organizations.

In the meantime, she produces Pretty Boi Drag with her wife Pretty Rik E (who was the Blade's Best Drag King last year). They started the troupe in 2016 and have been selling out shows ever since. They focus on elevating the visibility of drag kings, especially drag kings of color, and present both large productions as well as Open Mic nights where both new and veteran kings can get stage time.

Lexie is also working on getting her new business up and running. Wingo Circle Birth Services ([wingocircle.com](http://wingocircle.com)) provides labor and postpartum doula services and inclusive childbirth education classes for queer parents and families.

Lexie's been performing since 2011 and says that some of her favorite showbiz memories were performing "Proud Mary" with her wife as Ike and Tina Turner (fringe and all!) on the main stage at Capital Pride and auditioning for "America's Got Talent" with the D.C. Gurly Show. (BTC)

## Best Drag King

Ricky Rosé

Runner-up: Pretty Rik (A flip-flop of last year's outcome.)

Multi-title holding drag king Ricky Rosé's ethos is pretty simple: follow your dreams and all drag is valid.

Speaking via phone from a bus en route to a gig in Richmond, Va., Ricky explains their drag persona: "I'd say Ricky Rosé is like the name — brings glam to ghetto. Also, I'm your cool dad. I like to throw it back to my Latinx culture, lip-syncing mostly reggaeton and salsa. I'm a very proud Puerto Rican."

Based in D.C., Ricky has been doing drag for two years. "Shortly after seeing my first drag king show, my heart wanted to jump out of my chest. I knew I'd found my calling and passion. I went home the same day and started practicing makeup."

Offstage, Ricky's chosen name is Yadiel. Ricky Rosé is a longtime nickname. "I wanted to stick true to myself while discovering my true form through gender identity. I'm non-binary in daily life. I've questioned gender identity as a kid and came into my non-binary gender through drag. I feel at home most in drag."

Ricky, who frequently performs in queer venues all over town and holds down a day job at Sephora on 14th Street, is grateful for the votes from Blade readers. "It means people are seeing my work and appreciating what I bring to the stage. My goal has been to discover who I am and share and celebrate that with folks." (PF)

## Best Drag Queen

Bombalicious Eklaver





**Bombalicious Eklaver** (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

The drag-alter ego of Ed Figueroa, famous for making space for other Asian drag queens in the region. Follow her at @bombalicious eklaver on Instagram.

Runner-up: Brooklyn Heights

### **Best Transgender Performer**

Riley Knoxx



**Riley Knoxx** (Washington Blade photo by Blake Bergen)

Runner-up: Ana Latour

Riley Knoxx is the world's number one Beyoncé impersonator. A heady job that's taken her around the globe and afforded her a comfortable life. And while Knoxx performs with drag queens, she isn't a drag queen. "Because I'm transgender, my performance style is very much what you'd get if you went to a Beyoncé concert. I try to make it as close to that as possible."

Need proof? Check out her cameo in Taylor Swift's star-studded "You Need to Calm Down" video alongside luminaries such as Adam Lambert, Adam Rippon, Billy Porter, Katy Perry, RuPaul and many more!

When Beyoncé's "Crazy in Love" dropped in 2003, Knoxx took note. "People began to connect me with that song, and they started coming out to see me as her. My popularity grew with hers. So, naturally I thought there was something to this, and from that point on I only performed as Beyoncé."

To remain on the top of the heap of a million Beyoncé impersonators takes work. As part of the job, D.C.-based Knoxx studies the star's every move — how she walks, talks and holds the mic. She also dutifully mimics Beyoncé's hair, wardrobe and makeup style. As a performer changes over the years, so must the impersonator.

"Part of my career's longevity is that I'm willing to change. I've never gotten bored, and so neither does the audience. It's very different from year to year. If you're not changing, you're not growing. And growth has always been my goal."

Knoxx has always been a performer. She remembers being 5 years old, substituting a flashlight for a mic and pillowcase for long hair as she sang Whitney Houston songs around the house.

"My trans experience was hard in the beginning, but performing helped to make it better. Having people who loved me before I loved myself was a big thing for me. As a transgender person, it has kept me going in a world that isn't always loving toward transgender people." (PF)

### **Best Rehoboth Drag Queen**

Magnolia Applebottom



**Magnolia Applebottom** (Washington Blade photo by Daniel Truitt)

The drag alter ego of Jeremy Bernstein hosts events all summer at the Blue Moon and other Rehoboth venues. Follow her at [@mrsmagnolia](https://www.instagram.com/mrsmagnolia) on Instagram.

Runner-Up: Regina Cox



## Best Drag Show

Nellie's Drag Brunch



Nellie's Drag Brunch (Washington Blade photo by Vanessa Pham)

Saturdays and Sundays 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

900 U St., N.W.

[nelliessportsbar.com](http://nelliessportsbar.com)

Editor's Choice: Pretty Boi Drag (last year's winner)

## Best Singer or Band

Wicked Jezabel



Wicked Jezabel (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Also won this award in 2013, 2017 and 2018! Frankie & Betty held the title 2014-2016.

Editor's Choice: White Ford Bronco

### Best Straight Bar

Dacha Beer Garden



Dacha Beer Garden (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Fifth consecutive win in this category!

1600 7th St., N.W.

202-524-8790

[dachadc.com](http://dachadc.com)

Editor's Choice: Players Club

### **Best Karaoke**

Freddie's Beach Bar



Freddie's Beach Bar (Washington Blade photo by Doug Horn)

Freddie's was runner-up last year.

555 S. 23rd St.

Arlington, Va.

[freddiesbeachbar.com](http://freddiesbeachbar.com)

Editor's Choice: Uproar

### **Best ABSOLUT Happy Hour**

Number Nine





Number Nine (Washington Blade photo by Hugh Clarke)

A Blade "Best Of" ping-pong game — A repeat of the 2017 outcome after flip-flopping last year!

1435 P St., N.W.

[numberninedc.com](http://numberninedc.com)

Editor's Choice: Trade

### **Best Live Music**

9:30 Club



9:30 Club (Photo by Katherine Gaines)

A perennial dominator — whopping 14th consecutive win in this category! Won every year since 2006 (plus 2002 and 2003 — every time the category has been included).

815 V St., N.W.

[930.com](http://930.com)

Editor's Choice: Wolf Trap

**Best Neighborhood Bar**

Larry's Lounge



Larry's Lounge (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

1840 18th St., N.W.

Editor's Choice: JR.'s

**Best Bar Outside-the-District**

Freddie's Beach Bar





Freddie's Beach Bar (Washington Blade photo by Doug Horn)

Extending their record! — with this win and the Best Karaoke win, that makes 23 wins for this Best of Gay D.C. favorite. Freddie's has won this award every year since 2002 in addition to several others. It's a Best of Gay D.C. all-time record for a single category.

555 S. 23rd St.

Arlington, Va.

[freddiesbeachbar.com](http://freddiesbeachbar.com)

Editor's Choice: Baltimore Eagle

### **Best Outdoor Drinking**

Dacha Navy Yard



Dacha Navy Yard (Photo courtesy of Designing the District)

Dacha Beer Garden won last year!

79 Potomac Ave., S.E.

[dachanavyyard.com](http://dachanavyyard.com)

Editor's Choice: Red Bear Brewing Co.

### **Best Place for Guys Night Out Presented by BYQueers**

Pitchers



Pitchers (Washington Blade photo by Wyatt Reid Westlund)

2319 18th St., N.W.

[pitchersbardc.com](http://pitchersbardc.com)

Editor's Choice: Ziegfeld's/Secrets

**Best Place for Girls Night Out Presented by BYQueers**

A League of Her Own (at Pitchers)



A League of Her Own (Washington Blade photo by Molly Byrom)

Second consecutive win in this category!

2319 18th St., N.W.

Editor's Choice: Ladies Tea at Hank's Oyster Bar

**Best Queer-Friendly Night Out Presented by BYQueers**

D.C. Weirdo Show



D.C. Weirdo Show (Photo by StereoVision Photography)

[dcweirdoshow.com](http://dcweirdoshow.com)

#### Editor's Choice: Gay Bash

The D.C. Weirdo Show, the monthly cult favorite for freaks, geeks and exposed butt cheeks, started in 2006 at the Palace of Wonders on H Street before settling into its current home at the Dew Drop Inn in Brookland. Since 2015, the show has been hosted by Dr. Torcher and her fabulously weird colleagues. She typically serves as host and also performs as a fire eater, sword swallower and comedian. Her husband Mark is the tech weirdo; he does sounds lights and posters. Abraxas is the stage manager extraordinaire; as Dr. Torcher says, "she keeps the show flowing, manages props and sets the cast up for success."

Dr. Torcher says, "The show is a supportive, creative stage for performers with tremendous talents in burlesque, clowning, comedy, performance art and sideshow. We've also had yo-yo stunts, pole dance, contortion, drag, fire flow arts and voguing.

"Our audiences know that they will see a polished, thoughtful, strange and entertaining show. We're an intentional reflection of the stories and communities that make D.C. everything it is. We center performances by queer people and people of color."

Their next show, called "Weirdos for Life!" is this weekend (Sept. 20). Dr. Torcher is always on the lookout for new talent. New performers are included in every monthly show and the annual "Happy New Weirdo" show is all "new-to-us" performers. There's an application on the website. Dr. Torcher says the troupe is always looking for "those who perform amazing physical feats and who represent stories that don't usually get told on stage." (BTC)

#### Best Rehoboth Bar

Blue Moon





Blue Moon (Washington Blade photo by Daniel Truitt)

Blue Moon was editor's pick last year.

35 Baltimore Ave.

Rehoboth Beach, Del.

[bluemoonrehoboth.com](http://bluemoonrehoboth.com)

Editor's Choice: The Pines

**Best Rehoboth Bartender**

Jamie Romano, Purple Parrot





**Jamie Romano** (Washington Blade photo by Daniel Truitt)

Third win in this category! Won in 2011 and 2013; was runner-up 2016-2017 (fair warning — he's straight).

Purple Parrot

134 Rehoboth Ave.

Rehoboth Beach, Del.

Runner-Up: Sutton Ward, The Pines

### **Best Rooftop View**

VIDA U Street Penthouse Pool



VIDA Penthouse Pool (Photo courtesy of VIDA)

Second consecutive win!

1612 U St., N.W.

[penthousepoolclub.com/u-street](http://penthousepoolclub.com/u-street)

Editor's Choice: POV Rooftop Lounge

## **FOOD**

---

### **Best Ethnic Restaurant**

Rasika



Rasika (Photo by David Liu via Flickr)

633 D St., N.W. & 1190 New Hampshire Ave., N.W.

[rasikarestaurant.com](http://rasikarestaurant.com)

Editor's Choice: Tiger Fork

### **Best Bloody Mary**

Hank's Oyster Bar/Hank's Cocktail Bar



Bloody Mary at Hank's Oyster Bar in Dupont (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

819 Upshur St., N.W.

[hankscocktailbar.com](http://hankscocktailbar.com)

Editor's Choice: Logan Tavern (last year's winner)

### **Best Brunch**

Le Diplomate



(Photo courtesy of Starr Restaurants)

Second consecutive win!

1601 14th St., N.W.

[lediplomatedc.com](http://lediplomatedc.com)

Editor's Choice: Farmers and Distillers

### **Best Locally Made Product**

Mason Dixie Biscuit Co.





(Photo courtesy of Mason Dixie Biscuit Co.)

Approachable, affordable and portable Southern staples. Third consecutive win in this category.

2301 Bladensburg Rd., N.E.

[masondixiebiscuits.com](http://masondixiebiscuits.com)

Editor's Choice: Capital City Mambo Sauce

### **Best New Restaurant**

St. Anselm



(Photo courtesy of Starr Restaurants)



Editor's Choice: Little Havana

St. Anselm

1250 5th St., N.E.

[stanselmdc.com](http://stanselmdc.com)

Of the several Stephen Starr restaurants, St. Anselm shimmers bright. Located by Union Market, this meat-forward upscale-tavern-style restaurant is based on the Brooklyn locale of the same name. Executive Chef Marjorie Meek-Bradley helms St. Anselm, a storied and award-winning chef, and a veteran of Jose Andres and Mike Isabella restaurants.

Thick, hearty steaks livened by liberal helpings of herb butter are served in a vibrant atmosphere that's part button-up and part button-down makes this an unsurprising choice for a favorite meaty meal. Beyond slabs of meat, diners are agog at the impressive shellfish and non-traditional steakhouse items like flaky biscuits with ramekins of pimento cheese and crispy "BoBo" chicken dressed up (or down?) with mumbo sauce.

Chef Meek-Bradley, says that she and her staff "are so honored to be recognized by the (LGBT) community as Best New Restaurant. We are thrilled to be seen as a welcoming place to all of D.C.'s amazing diverse people." (EC)

### **Best Food Festival or Event**

Taste of D.C.



Taste of D.C. (Photo public domain)

"Largest culinary festival in the mid-Atlantic." Runs Oct. 26-27.

[thetasteofdc.org](http://thetasteofdc.org)

Editor's Choice: RAMW Restaurant Week

### **Best Craft Cocktails**

Hank's Cocktail Bar



Hank's Cocktail Bar (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Second consecutive win!

819 Upshur St., N.W.

[hankscocktailbar.com](http://hankscocktailbar.com)

Editor's Choice: Columbia Room

### **Best Fast Casual Dining**

Stoney's



Stoney's (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

1433 P St., N.W.

[stoneys-dc.com](http://stoneys-dc.com)

Editor's Choice: CAVA (last year's winner)

### **Best Local Brewery**

D.C. Brau



(Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

"Popular craft brewery offering free tours and tastings." Fifth win in this category!

3178-B Bladensburg Rd., N.E.

[dcbrau.com](http://dcbrau.com)

Editor's Choice: Red Bear Brewing Co.

### **Best Local Distillery**

Republic Restoratives





Washington Blade | Michael Key

Republic Restoratives (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

1369 New York Ave., N.E.

[republicrestoratives.com](http://republicrestoratives.com)

Editor's Choice: District Distilling

**Best Burger**

Duke's Grocery



Washington Blade | Michael Key

Duke's Grocery (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

A flip-flop of last year's outcome.



1513 17th St., N.W.

[dukesgrocery.com](http://dukesgrocery.com)

Editor's Choice: Shake Shack

**Best Caterer**

Rocklands Barbeque and Grilling Company



(Photo courtesy of Rocklands BBQ and Grilling Company)

Washington, Alexandria and Arlington

[rocklands.com](http://rocklands.com)

Editor's Choice: Occasions Caterers

**Best Juice/Fuel Bar**

Barry's Bootcamp



(Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Second consecutive win!

1345 19th St., N.W.

[barrysbootcamp.com](http://barrysbootcamp.com)

Editor's Choice: Smoothie King

### **Best Chef**

Jamie Leeds, Hank's Oyster Bar



**Jamie Leeds** (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Second consecutive win! Locations at The Wharf, Dupont Circle, Old Town Alexandria and Capitol Hill.

[hanksoysterbar.com](http://hanksoysterbar.com)

Runner-Up: Patrick O'Connell, Inn at Little Washington

### **Best Coffee Shop**

Compass Coffee



Compass Coffee (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Fourth consecutive win!

1335 7th St., N.W.

[compasscoffee.com](http://compasscoffee.com)

Editor's Choice: La Colombe

### **Best Special Occasion Restaurant**

Floriana



Last year's runner up!

1602 17th St., N.W.

[florianarestaurant.com](http://florianarestaurant.com)

Editor's Choice: Rose's Luxury

**Best Ice Cream/Gelato**

Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams





Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams (Photo via Instagram)

1925 14th St., N.W.

[jenis.com/scoop-shops](https://jenis.com/scoop-shops)

Editor's Choice: Ice Cream Jubilee

D.C.'s hottest club, even in the throes of winter, is often this brightly lit scoop shop of national notoriety. Jeni founded the first of her chain's premium, artisan-style, cult-fave ice cream shops in 2002, and opened the front-and-center 14th and U spot in 2017.

Jeni's uses all-natural ingredients and sources from direct- and fair-trade suppliers for the highly Instagram-ready cups and cones. The super-creamy scoops layer fruit, nuts and other ingredients for unusual combos. Two top flavors may explain why the shop's a winner: the brambleberry crisp, vanilla mixed with toasted pie topping and thick, sweet-tart jam; and the almond brittle, of brown-butter-almond candy crushed into buttercream ice cream. Yes, you can taste test them all. The vegan hot fudge topping doesn't hurt. Be aware of the price point: a scoop is a cool \$7.50.

When it opened, the shop's team said, "We believe ice cream has the power to bring people together, so we've created the kind of space we'd love to gather with friends and strangers over a scoop of ice cream." (EC)

### **Best Farmer's Market**

FRESHFARM Dupont Circle Market



Dupont Circle Farmers Market (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Second consecutive win! Sundays 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. year round

1600 20th St., N.W.

[freshfarm.org/dupont-circle.html](http://freshfarm.org/dupont-circle.html)

Editor's Choice: Eastern Market

### **Best Food Truck**

Peruvian Brothers



Peruvian Brothers (Photo via Facebook)

4592 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria

[peruvianbrothers.com](http://peruvianbrothers.com)

Editor's Choice: Captain Cookie and the Milk Man Food Truck

### **Best Pizza**

Timber Pizza Co



(Photo courtesy of Timber Pizza Co.)

Editor's Choice: Comet Ping Pong

809 Upshur St., N.W.

[timberpizza.com](http://timberpizza.com)



When it comes to top District-beloved pizza, it's going down: you're yelling Timber.

The sizeable crispy-bottomed, blistered pies attract down-the-block lines in their hot Petworth digs.

Owners Andrew Dana and Chris Brady, both from the D.C. area, started Timber when they realized that, "we hated our jobs ... but we loved lunch," they wrote. Dana and Brady founded their current brick-and-mortar shop in 2016 in Petworth after wowing crowds at farmers' markets from its food truck starting two years prior.

To helm the pizzeria, they brought on Chef Dani Moreira, who brings a distinct South American panache to her creative pies that are just traditional enough to be called "Neopolitan-ish."

At the popping shop, diners share communal tables and lots of napkins over stylishly titled pies coming out fast and hot from the wood-fired oven. Cheekily named pies include The Bentley, with chorizo, sopressata, Peruvian sweet peppers, and locally made spicy honey.

White and green pizzas, just as popular as red-sauced pies, add pops of Italianate color, and Chef Moreira brings out killer not-to-be-missed Argentine empanadas stuffed with saucy braised beef and sofrito.

"As a D.C. native the best thing in the world is being voted Best Pizza by the people of D.C.! We're always proud to be a friend of the LGBTQ community," says Dana, not only co-owner, but also self-titled "chief dough boi."

Comet Ping Pong, the restaurant made infamous for "Pizzagate" in the 2016 Hillary Clinton campaign, was a two-time repeat winner in 2017-18. (EC)

### **Best Rehoboth Restaurant**

Azzurro Italian Oven + Bar



Cacciucco Alla Livornese at Azzurro (Photo courtesy of Azzurro)

210 2nd St., Rehoboth Beach, Del.

[azzurrorehoboth.com](http://azzurrorehoboth.com)

Editor's Choice: Blue Moon (last year's winner)



This new Italian restaurant features an irresistible menu of signature dishes like carpaccio di bresaola, a mozzarella bar, and a stunning frutti di mare overflowing with clams, mussels, lobster and more. All pastas are homemade in house. Chef/owner Francesco is a first-generation Italian who grew up in the restaurant business. His wife and co-owner Tonya makes everyone feel welcome and often brings limoncello with the check. The rooftop bar is one of the town's too-few spots for outdoor dining and drinks. A new, must-visit dining destination in Rehoboth Beach.

### **Best Local Winery**

City Winery



City Winery (Photo via Instagram)

Second year for both winner and editor's choice!

[citywinery.com](http://citywinery.com)

1350 Okie St., N.E.

Editor's Choice: District Winery

## **MEDIA**

### **Best Local Website**

DCist



# dcist

[dcist.com](http://dcist.com)

Editor's Choice: Popville (last year's champ)

## **Best Local TV/Radio Personality**

Ari Shapiro, NPR

**Ari Shapiro** (Photo by James C. Svehla of COD Newsroom via Wikimedia Commons)

[npr.org/people/2101154/ari-shapiro](http://npr.org/people/2101154/ari-shapiro)

Runner-Up: Chuck Bell, NBC 4 (2015, 2016 and 2018 runner-up; 2014 winner)

You can hear Ari Shapiro's velvet voice every weekday afternoon on NPR's "All Things Considered" (broadcast locally on WAMU 88.5 FM). He's been co-hosting the show since 2015.

According to his bio on the NPR website, during his tenure at NPR he's reported from above the Arctic Circle and aboard Air Force One and has filed stories from dozens of countries and most of the 50 states.

The out journalist began his reporting career as an intern for NPR Legal Affairs Correspondent Nina Totenberg in 2001. Since then he served as NPR's Justice Correspondent in the aftermath of the 9-11 attacks, was embedded with the Mitt Romney presidential campaign, spent four years as White House Correspondent during President Obama's first and second terms and spent two years as the network's London correspondent before assuming his present position.

Shapiro has been widely recognized for the excellence of his reporting. At 25, he won the Daniel Schott Journalism Prize for his investigation into methamphetamine use and HIV transmission. He's also been recognized for his coverage of disability benefits for injured American veterans, the American judicial system and Hurricane Katrina and has been included in the "Out 100" and the Advocate's "Forty Under 40."

The intrepid reporter has been out since high school where he wore a pink triangle on his knapsack. He married his longtime boyfriend Michael Gottlieb at San Francisco City Hall in February 2004.

When time allows, Shapiro also sings with the band Pink Martini. He can be heard on four of their albums singing in several languages. (BTC)

### **Best Local Influencer**

Timur Tugberk, [@timurdc](#)



**Timur Tugberk** (Photo courtesy of Designing the District)

Timur was last year's runner-up. See this week's [Queery](#) for more.

Runner-Up: Maggie McGill, [@maggiecmcgill](#)

## Best Radio Station

Hot 99.5



HOT 99.5's **Elizabethany** at this year's Capital Pride Parade. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Second consecutive win!

Editor's Choice: The Tommy Show

## PEOPLE

---

### Best Amateur Athlete

Donald Mitchell





**Donald Mitchell** (Photo by Pedro Suárez)

D.C. Gay Flag Football

[d cgffl.org](http://d cgffl.org)

Runner-Up: Sharifa Love (D.C. Furies, Rogue Darts)

D.C. Generals captain and wide receiver, Donald Mitchell, led his team to victory in Gay Bowl XVII and was quick to spread the love.

“Everybody on our team made some play that was memorable,” the Nashville native told the Washington Post after the win. “There wasn’t one or two or three standouts. Everyone put in.”

Whether this Southern generosity was a part of his charm or his nature, it was appreciated by his community who named Mitchell best amateur athlete for 2019.

“I’ve been on several teams,” Mitchell continued in the Post. “And I’ve never been more proud of a team that came together to fight for each other.”

Well, this award is one win he can claim for himself and still be proud. (PVS)

### **Best Artist**

John Jack Photography



**John Jack Gallagher** (Photo courtesy of John Jack Photography)

John Jack Gallagher has been taking photos since his first boyfriend gave him a 35-millimeter camera for his birthday more than 30 years ago. In 2012, he started shooting professionally after members of the Stonewall Kickball team he'd been photographing insisted he shoot their wedding. A flip-flop of last year's outcome. John Jack Gallagher was also the 2016 and 2017 winner.

[johnjackphotography.pixieset.com](http://johnjackphotography.pixieset.com)

Runner-up: Lisa Marie Thalhammer

### **Best Businessperson**

David Winer

EatWell D.C.

Runner-up: Lisa Wise (Nest DC & Roost DC)

Being 'woke' is more than something trendy for local restaurateur David Winer — it's something he feels in his heart.

"Everyday I try to reach out to people and help them grow," he says with a humility that seems rare for businesspeople these days, even those who become president. "And if I reach a couple of them, then that's good. That's the theme of our management company, to help others grow."

For Winer, EatWell D.C. is about growing healthy communities, not just his bottom line.

“We are trying to do a better job of bringing local producers into the market,” he says of the work still ahead. “We’re trying to be environmentally neutral not only with our food, but with our beverages as well. We’re looking forward to educating a new crop of chefs to be sustainable and natural. That’s where we’re going.”

Winer is humbled by the award and felt being environmentally and socially conscious weren’t just good business practices, but about “trying to live a good life” as well. (PVS)

### **Best Clergy**

Bishop Allyson Abrams



Bishop **Allyson Abrams** (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Abrams regains the title after Rayceen won last year. They’re perpetual flip-flopers in this category. Abrams won in 2015 and 2017. Pendarvis won in 2016 and 2018 and was the 2017 runner-up. Abrams was the 2016 runner-up.

Empowerment Liberation Cathedral

Sundays at 1 p.m.

4900 10th St., N.E. (Faith UCC Chapel)

[empowermentliberationcathedral.org](http://empowermentliberationcathedral.org)

Runner-up: Rayceen Pendarvis

### **Most Committed Activist**

Charlotte Clymer





**Charlotte Clymer** (Photo courtesy Clymer)

The trans activist reached a settlement earlier this year with the Cuba Libre Restaurant after a manager forced her to leave after she used the women's restroom in 2018.

Runner-up: June Crenshaw

**Best D.C. Public Official**

Mayor Muriel Bowser



Mayor **Muriel Bowser** (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Second consecutive win for the mayor!

Runner-up: David Grosso

#### **Best Hill Staffer/LGBT Bureaucrat**

Alec Buckley

[@AlecBuckley6](#)

U.S. Senate legislative staffer

Runner-up: Jacob Trauberman

Even though Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, (D-N.D.) lost her 2018 re-election bid, her former legislative aide is still hard at work campaigning for causes on the Hill.

"Our household believes we can do more to #EndGunViolence," best Hill staffer Alec Buckley tweeted on June 7 above images of himself and his partner in matching Wear Orange T-shirts. "That's why we #WearingOrange @Everytown @MomsDemand."

With 47 Tweets, 45 followers and 643 likes, Buckley may not be in Trump territory on numbers, but he still uses his social media presence to inform the public on social issues. (PVS)

#### **Best Local Pro Athlete**

Elena Delle Donne, Washington Mystics



**Elena Delle Donne** (Photo courtesy of the Washington Mystics)

Delle Donne's second consecutive win!

Runner-Up: Sean Doolittle, Washington Nationals

Elena Delle Donne keeps extending her accomplishments. This year, she joined the elite 50-40-90 club (NBA and WNBA players who have shooting percentages at or above 50 percent for field goals, 40 percent for three-pointers and 90 percent for free throws during an entire regular season), becoming the first-ever WNBA player to do so.

That puts Delle Donne alongside Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Famers including Steve Nash, Reggie Miller and Larry Bird. She was also named 2019 Associated Press WNBA player of the year and topped the league's most popular jersey list for the third consecutive season.



In addition to her success on the basketball court (as the “small forward” for the Chicago Sky and the Washington Mystics she was named the WNBA Rookie of the Year in 2013 and the WNBA MVP in 2015 and is a five-time WNBA All-Star), Delle Donne (who’s out as a lesbian) is an award-winning author.

Her memoir “My Shot: Balancing It All and Standing Tall” recently won a Parents’ Choice Award from the Parents’ Choice Foundation. Aimed at middle school readers, the book is an amazingly frank but age-appropriate discussion of both her career highlights and her personal challenges, including her decision to come out.

Last year, she also launched the “Hoops” series of novels for young readers (ages 8-12). “Elle of the Ball” introduces Elle Deluca, who closely resembles Delle Donne herself. Elle’s height is an asset on the basketball court but a liability in her ballroom dancing class where she towers over her male dance partners. The series continues with “Full Court Press” and “Out of Bounds.”

Like her fictional counterpart, Delle Donne is very tall and had an early growth spurt. She’s 6’5” and wears a size 12 shoe. She gets her height from her parents. Her dad, a real estate developer, is 6’6” and her mom is 6’2.”

She also gets her feisty spirit and determination from them. When Delle Donne was in elementary school, her doctor wanted to start her on injections to stunt her growth. Her mother refused, and, according to an interview with ESPN, she told her daughter, “Why try to be like the rest of the pack? Be your own person.”

The young athlete also had to come to terms with the fact that she could do things that her beloved older sister Lizzie would never be able to do. Lizzie, with whom Delle Donne remains close, was born deaf and blind, with both cerebral palsy and autism, and is unable to speak.

Born in Wilmington, Del., in 1989, Delle Donne rose to national prominence as a high school basketball star at Ursuline Academy. She led her team to three straight Delaware State Championships and was ranked as the number one recruit by Scout.com.

Delle Donne was recruited by the University of Connecticut but ended up playing for the Blue Hens at the University of Delaware. In 2010, she was named both “Player of the Year” and “Rookie of the Year” by the Colonial Athletic Association. Although she was diagnosed with Lyme disease during her sophomore year, she continued to excel as a college athlete and was selected second overall in the 2014 WBNA Draft by the Chicago Sky. She joined the Washington Mystics in 2017.

In 2016, Delle Donne won a gold medal as a member of the United States women’s basketball team at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Delle Donne officially came out in an interview with Vogue magazine in August 2016 where she announced her engagement to girlfriend Amanda Clifton. The couple was married in 2017.

The award-winning out athlete, who has signed endorsement deals with Nike, DuPont and Octagon, is also a noted philanthropist. She founded the Elena Delle Donne Foundation, which raises funds and awareness for Lyme Disease research and special needs programs and is also a Global Ambassador for the Special Olympics. (BTC)

## **Best Local Pro Sports Team**

Washington Capitals



**Braden Holyby**, center, of the Washington Capitals marches in the 2019 Capital Pride Parade.  
(Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Editor's Choice: Washington Nationals

Same outcome as last year.

**Best Fitness Instructor**

Mark Raimondo



**Mark Raimond** (Photo courtesy of Barry's Bootcamp)

Barry's Bootcamp

1345 19th St., N.W.

[barrysbootcamp.com](http://barrysbootcamp.com)

Runner-up: James Crawford (Solidcore)

When best fitness instructor winner, Mark Raimondo of Barry's Bootcamp, first heard Taylor Swift's "You Need to Calm Down," he knew he had to use it in his class.

"I was like this is awesome," he says. "It will make people feel safe, warm and invited to my classes."

Raimondo teaches large classes of 50 or more, two to three sessions a day, but he's still made personal connections and a few good friends in two short years.

While students' achievements inspire him, dance music motivates him.



“At the end of the day, it’s fitness and it’s supposed to be fun,” Raimondo says. “So, I might throw some old Britney (Spears) in there to get people jazzed up.” (PVS)

### **Best Real Estate Agent**

Michael Moore, Compass



**Michael Moore** (Photo courtesy Moore)

[michaelmoorehomesdc.com](http://michaelmoorehomesdc.com)

Runner-Up: Stacey Williams-Zeiger, Zeiger Realty Inc.

Michael Moore was a little frustrated working in retail clothing when a friend suggested he'd be terrific in real estate. Initially hesitant, Moore met with a savvy Realtor who encouraged him to give it a shot. With not a lot to lose, he took the classes, passed the test, and went to work for a boutique company broker in 1988. He's been at it ever since.

Today as a successful Realtor and senior vice president at Compass Real Estate, Moore credits his success to consistent customer service. "My career began with first-time homebuyers. In time, first-time buyers become sellers and they buy another house and they tell their friends. Now my business is almost entirely referrals and repeats."

Moore's specialty is marketing and getting homes ready for sale. "I'm a huge proponent of staging and doing what it takes to project the property in its best light," he says. "I try to create a situation that when a prospective buyer walks in the door, they love it, and think to themselves 'won't my friends be jealous when they see me living here.'"

While he does have a fair amount of LGBT clients, Moore never directed business toward or away from any one group. "Essentially I've always thrown the net out and taken what I get," he says. "I've weathered good markets and bad markets and everything in between. ... Real estate is crazy, maddening, exciting. It's been a love affair." (PF)

### **Real Estate Group**

Marin Hagen & Sylvia Bergstrom, Coldwell Banker

1617 14th St., N.W.

[coldwellbankerhomes.com](http://coldwellbankerhomes.com)

Runner-Up: The Evan+Mark Team, Compass (last year's winner)

### **Best Rehoboth Real Estate Agent**

Lee Ann Wilkinson, Berkshire Hathaway



**Lee Ann Wilkinson**(Washington Blade photo by Daniel Truitt)

Second consecutive win!

16698 Kings Hwy A.

Lewes, Del.

[leeanngroup.com](http://leeanngroup.com)

Runner-Up: Henry McKay, Jack Lingo Realtor

### **Best Straight Ally**

Kathy Dalby



**Kathy Dalby** (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

[runpacers.com](http://runpacers.com)

Runner-Up: Mari Rodela

In 2006, Kathy Dalby took a leap of faith. She left a dream D.C. job as a health care policy analyst for a high-profile law firm and took a full-time job at Pacers Running. She's now CEO of the company, as well as the managing partner for Pacer Events, LLC, and publisher of RunWashington. The six stores serve as hubs for local runners and offer a full range of running gear along with training advice and a robust schedule of regular fun-runs and special race events.

Based on her belief in "authentic and community-focused relationship building," Dalby has been a staunch LGBT ally. Pacers Running has been a supporter of Capital Pride and the D.C. Front Runners. In turn, the Front Runners made one of Dalby's childhood dreams come true when they asked her to be a member of their Pride Parade dance troupe.

Dalby says, "I try to create a culture at Pacers where we celebrate others. I am proud to be an award winner, but it'll be a real win when we don't feel like we need to single out straight folks for being supportive of our LGBTQ friends because frankly that should be the norm."

She has some excellent advice: "Acknowledge your privilege and acknowledge the beauty in differences," she says. "It'll make you a better person, I promise." (BTC)

### **Best Transgender Advocate**

Ruby Corado



From left, Del. **Eleanor Holmes Norton** (D-D.C.), Casa Ruby CEO **Ruby Corado** and Lt. **Brett Parson** of the Metropolitan Police Department speak at a community forum on anti-LGBT violence on July 9, 2019. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

A new title for Ruby after three wins as “Most Committed Activist” and the Local Heroine award in 2014.

Casa Ruby

2822 Georgia Ave., N.W.

[casaruby.org](http://casaruby.org)

Runner-Up: Sarah McBride

**Best Stylist**

Michael Ian Hodges





**Michael Hodges** (Photo courtesy of Logan Aveda 14 Salon and Spa)

Logan 14 Aveda Salon Spa

1314 B 14th St., N.W.

[logan14salonspa.com](http://logan14salonspa.com)

Runner Up: Roel Ruiz (last year's winner)

For top stylist and Logan 14 Aveda Salon Spa owner Michael Ian Hodges, the recipe for success is simple: skills, consistency and friendliness. Also, location doesn't hurt. There are more gays per inch in Logan Circle than anywhere else in the country, he notes.

While adept at all types of styling, he's best known for his men's barber cuts.

"I can do 44 cuts a day on a busy day. I have an assistant, and I double book: two guys every hour on a 12-hour day."

Hodges first caught the hair bug sitting on the counter of his mom's salon in England watching her do hair. When the family moved to the U.S., he brought his passion with him. After apprenticing with to an accomplished London-trained stylist in Maclean, Va., he began his professional career. Thirty years later, he's still at it.

At Logan 14, he maintains a large book of clients and helms a crew of 24 stylists. He's grateful for his clients' patronage. "They're like family. I know their lives backwards and forwards. There's a mutual support and caring. Relationships are important."

Looking forward, Hodges, who lives with his husband on the D.C. line in Mount Rainier, Md., is expanding the size of Logan 14, and he's considering opening a barbershop in the future. "I'm not getting any younger, (he turns 50 next year) but I see myself working and staying in the industry for a long time." (PF)

## COMMUNITY

---

### Best Art Gallery

Renwick Gallery



Renwick Gallery (Photo public domain)

A repeat of last year's outcome for both winner and editor's choice.

1661 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.

[americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu)

Editor's Choice: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

### Best Adult Store

Bite the Fruit



Fourth consecutive win in this category!

1723 Connecticut Ave., N.W.

[bitethefruit.com](http://bitethefruit.com)

Runner-up: Lotus Blooms

### **Best Car Dealership**

BMW of Fairfax



BMW of Fairfax (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Last year's editor's choice.



8427 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Va.

[bmwoffairfax.com](http://bmwoffairfax.com)

Editor's Choice: Maserati of Arlington

### **Best Apartment/Condo Building**

Atlantic Plumbing



(Photo courtesy of Atlantic Plumbing)

Last year's editor's choice and the 2016-2017 winner.

2112 8th St., N.W.

[atlanticplumbingdc.com](http://atlanticplumbingdc.com)

Editor's Choice: City Market at O

### **Best Doctor/Medical Provider**

Whitman-Walker Health





(Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

A flip-flop of last year's outcome.

[whitman-walker.org](http://whitman-walker.org)

Runner-Up: Dr. Robyn Zeiger

### **Best Fitness or Workout Spot**

VIDA Fitness



A flip-flop of last year's outcome.

Locations at U Street, Logan Circle and Gallery Place

[vidafitness.com](http://vidafitness.com)

Editor's Choice: Barry's Bootcamp

## **Best Gayborhood**

Dupont Circle



Dupont Circle (Washington Blade file photo by Michael Key)

Shaw is dethroned after three consecutive wins! Logan was also the 2016 runner up.

Editor's Choice: Logan Circle

## **Best Hardware Store**

Logan Ace Hardware





Logan Ace Hardware (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

A perennial favorite in this category. Third consecutive win!

1734 14th St., N.W.

[acehardwaredc.com](http://acehardwaredc.com)

Editor's Choice: True Value on 17th

### **Best Home Furnishings**

Mitchell Gold+Bob Williams



**Mitchell Gold** and **Bob Williams** in their 14th Street NW store. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Second consecutive win on the occasion of their 30th anniversary!

1526 14th St., N.W.

[mgbwhome.com](http://mgbwhome.com)

Runner-up: Room & Board

### **Best Home Improvement Service**

Case Design



(Photo courtesy of Case Design)

"Full-service home remodelers building your dreams." Third consecutive win!

Locations in Washington and Bethesda.

[casedesign.com](http://casedesign.com)

Editor's Choice: Magnolia Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

### **Best Hotel**

The Line

1770 Euclid St., N.W.

[thelinehotel.com](http://thelinehotel.com)

Editor's Choice: W Hotel

### **Best House of Worship**

Foundry United Methodist Church





Foundry United Methodist Church (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Foundry fights back! Dethrones Empowerment Liberation Cathedral, which had four consecutive wins (2015-2018). Foundry (church home to 17 U.S. presidents) held the title 2011-2014 was last year's editor's choice.

1500 16th St., N.W.

[foundryumc.org](http://foundryumc.org)

Editor's Choice: St Thomas' Parish Episcopal Church

**Best Lawyer**

Amy Nelson



**Amy Nelson** (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Whitman-Walker Health

[whitman-walker.org](http://whitman-walker.org)

Runner-Up: Michele Zavos (last year's winner)

Since 2008, Amy Nelson has been director of legal services at Whitman-Walker Health. One of her milestone accomplishments was organizing the name and gender change legal clinic in 2012, which continues to serve hundreds of clients in updating their gender markers on identity documents annually.

Nelson is understandably proud about her work at the historic D.C. institution, saying, "Working at Whitman-Walker Health means being a part of history, part of a big messy family full of inspiration and passion, and is like no other job I could imagine. I am extremely excited about our expansion in Southeast and expanded services for youth."

Nelson also underscores the importance of reaching out to D.C.'s diverse communities. "D.C.'s many (LGBT) and immigrant communities are fabulous and bold but need a little more love to stay healthy and safe as this country moves to erase them," she says.

The fierce advocate acknowledges the role her family plays in sustaining her work. "I am so grateful to be sharing my life chaos with the one and only amazing June Crenshaw whose commitment to D.C.'s queer youth experiencing homelessness is limitless," she says. "Her heart inspires me to do better, be kinder and be OK with being me."

She also unwinds by hanging out with her nieces and nephew in Arlington. "They are adorable rays of sunshine and happiness who ground me every weekend," she says. But be careful if you ask to see pictures of them. Nelson warns, "I only have a few thousand photos of them on my phone." (BTC)

### **Best LGBT Social Group**

Gay Men's Chorus of Washington



Gay Men's Chorus of Washington (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Their show "Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda" is Saturday night (5 and 8 p.m.) at City Winery. The chorus knocks off Stonewall Sports after two consecutive wins.

[gmcw.org](http://gmcw.org)

Editor's Choice: Stonewall Sports

## Best LGBT Sports League

Stonewall Kickball



Third consecutive win; 2016 runner-up.

[skdc.info](http://skdc.info)



Editor's Choice: DC Frontrunners

### **Best LGBT-Owned Business**

District Title

A full-service provider of real estate settlements and title insurance.

1150 Connecticut Ave., N.W.

[districttitle.com](http://districttitle.com)

Editor's Choice: Social Driver

### **Most LGBT-Friendly Workplace**

Whitman-Walker Health



(Washington Blade photo by Wyatt Reid Westlund)

Third consecutive win.

1525 14th St., N.W.

[whitman-walker.org](http://whitman-walker.org)

Editor's Choice: National LGBTQ Task Force

### **Best LGBT Event**

Capital Pride Celebration





The main stage at the 2019 Capital Pride Festival (Washington Blade photo by Drew Brown)

Third consecutive win!

Editor's Choice: Cherry Fund Weekend

### **Best Museum**

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Smithsonian American Art Museum (Photo by Zach Frank via Wikimedia Commons)

F & 8th St., N.W.

[americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu)

Editor's Choice: National Museum of African American History and Culture

### **Best Non-Profit**

SMYAL



SMYAL Fall Brunch fundraiser (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Supporting and Mentoring Youth Advocates and Leaders. Second consecutive win!

410 7th St., S.E.

[smyal.org](http://smyal.org)

Editor's Choice: Latino GLBT History Project

### **Best Private School**

Barrie

13500 Layhill Rd.

Silver Spring, Md.

[barrie.org](http://barrie.org)

Editor's Choice: Edmund Burke (also last year's editor's choice)

### **Best Pet Business**

City Dogs Daycare

1832 18th St., N.W.

301 H St., N.E.

[city-dogs.com](http://city-dogs.com)

Editor's Choice: District Dogs

### **Best Place to Buy Second-Hand Stuff**

Miss Pixie's Furnishings and Whatnot



Miss Pixie's (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

A perennial favorite in this category! Same outcome for third consecutive year.

1626 14th St., N.W.

[misspixies.com](http://misspixies.com)

Editor's choice: Buffalo Exchange (2016 runner-up)

### **Best Movie Theater**

Landmark Atlantic Plumbing Cinema



Landmark's Atlantic Plumbing Cinema (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)



New releases plus indie fare, foreign and avant garde. Third consecutive win.

807 V St., N.W.

[landmarktheatres.com](http://landmarktheatres.com)

Editor's Choice: AMC Loews Georgetown

### **Best Rehoboth Business**

Purple Parrot



Purple Parrot (Washington Blade photo by Daniel Truitt)

Second consecutive win!

134 Rehoboth Ave.

Rehoboth Beach, Del.

[ppgrill.com](http://ppgrill.com)

Editor's Choice: Blue Moon

### **Best Salon/Spa**

Logan 14 Aveda



Logan 14 Aveda (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Fourth consecutive win!

1314 14th St., N.W.

[logan14salonspa.com](http://logan14salonspa.com)

Editor's Choice: Bang Salon

### **Best Alternative Transportation**

Capital Bike Share

Capital Bikeshare (Photo by Mario Roberto Duran Ortiz via Wikimedia Commons)

[capitalbikeshare.com](http://capitalbikeshare.com)

Editor's Choice: Lyft

A flip-flop of last year's outcome.

### **Best Day Trip**

Easton, Md.

Easton, Md. (Photo by Mellowcream via Wikimedia Commons)

Editor's Choice: Harper's Ferry

### **Best Regional Pride**

Annapolis Pride



Annapolis Pride (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

Editor's Choice: Baltimore Pride

### **Best Tattoo Parlor**

Fatty's Tattoos & Piercings

1333 Connecticut Ave., N.W.

516 H St., N.E.

8638 Colesville Rd. (Silver Spring)

[fattystattoos.com](http://fattystattoos.com)

Runner-up: Tattoo Paradise (winner last two years)

"It feels good, but we're kind of used to it," says Fatty (the only name he gives), owner of Fatty's Tattoo on receiving this year's Best Tattoo Parlor award. "We've been voted D.C.'s best tattoo shop 10 times now. Since 2009."

It's also their 25th year in D.C., and Fatty says success comes from welcoming everyone equally. When the Dupont Circle shop first opened, not all businesses embraced tattoo lovers.

"Back in the '90s, tattooing was underground and being gay was still kind of underground, so we matched up pretty nicely."

Fatty saw many shops close after the 2008 recession, but this match helped keep his parlor open.

"That's our mission of excellence," he says. "The customer doesn't need to see it posted, they need to feel it." (PVS)

### **Best Theater**

Kennedy Center

Kennedy Center (Photo by Make Male via Wikimedia Commons)

The Kennedy Center returns after an upset flip-flop last year; it held the title 2015-2017!



2700 F St., N.W.

[kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org)

Editor's Choice: Studio Theatre

### **Best Theater Production**

"Bright Colors and Bold Patterns" (Studio Theatre, July)

Editor's Choice: John Cameron Mitchell's "Origin of Love" (National Theatre)

### **Best Veterinarian**

Friendship Hospital for Animals

An upset flip-flop of last year's outcome — CityPaws held the title 2015-2018.

[friendshipanimaldc.com](http://friendshipanimaldc.com)

4105 Brandywine St., N.W.

Editor's Choice: City Paws Animal Hospital



Cambridge, Md., is home to quaint shops, restaurants, and Victorian homes on Maryland's Eastern Shore. (Photo courtesy James Lumalcuri)

CAMBRIDGE, Md. — Driving through this scenic, historic town on Maryland's Eastern Shore, you'll be charmed by streets lined with unique shops, restaurants, and beautifully restored Victorian homes. You'll also be struck by the number of LGBTQ Pride flags flying throughout the town.

The flags are a reassuring signal that everyone is welcome here, despite the town's location in ruby red Dorchester County, which voted for Donald Trump over Kamala Harris by a lopsided margin. But don't let that deter you from visiting. A new organization, Proudly Cambridge, is holding its debut Pride event this weekend, touting the town's welcoming, inclusive culture.

"We stumbled on a beautiful secret and we wanted to help get the word out," said James Lumalcuri of the effort to create Proudly Cambridge.

The organization celebrates diversity, enhances public spaces, and seeks to uplift all that Cambridge has to share, according to its mission statement, under the tagline "You Belong Here."

The group has so far held informal movie nights and a picnic and garden party; the launch party is June 28 at the Cambridge Yacht Club, which will feature a Pride celebration and tea dance. The event's 75 tickets sold out quickly and proceeds benefit DoCo Pride.

"Tickets went faster than we imagined and we're bummed we can't welcome everyone who wanted to come," Lumalcuri said, adding that organizers plan to make "Cheers on the Choptank" an annual event with added capacity next year.

One of the group's first projects was to distribute free Pride flags to anyone who requested one and the result is a visually striking display of a large number of flags flying all over town. Up next: Proudly Cambridge plans to roll out a program offering affirming businesses rainbow crab stickers to show their inclusiveness and LGBTQ support. The group also wants to engage with potential visitors and homebuyers.

"We want to spread the word outside of Cambridge — in D.C. and Baltimore — who don't know about Cambridge," Lumalcuri said. "We want them to come and know we are a safe haven. You can exist here and feel comfortable and supported by neighbors in a way that we didn't anticipate when we moved here."



**James Lumalcuri and Lou Cardenas** sailing in Cambridge, Md. The couple bought a second home there and are spreading the word about the town's pro-LGBTQ culture. (Photo courtesy the couple)

Lumalcuri, 53, a federal government employee, and his husband, Lou Cardenas, 62, a Realtor, purchased a Victorian house in Cambridge in 2021 and embarked on an extensive renovation. The couple also owns a home in Adams Morgan in D.C.

"We saw the opportunity here and wanted to share it with others," Cardenas said. "There's lots of housing inventory in the \$300-400,000 range ... we're not here to gentrify people out of town because a lot of these homes are just empty and need to be fixed up and we're happy to be a part of that."

Lumalcuri was talking with friends one Sunday last year at the gazebo (affectionately known as the "gayzebo" by locals) at the Yacht Club and the idea for Proudly Cambridge was born. The founding board members are Lumalcuri, Corey van Vlymen, Brian Orjuela, Lauren Mross, and Caleb Holland. The group is currently working toward forming a 501(c)3.

"We need visibility and support for those who need it," Mross said. "We started making lists of what we wanted to do and the five of us ran with it. We started meeting weekly and solidified what we wanted to do."

Mross, 50, a brand strategist and web designer, moved to Cambridge from Atlanta with her wife three years ago. They knew they wanted to be near the water and farther north and began researching their options when they discovered Cambridge.

"I had not heard of Cambridge but the location seemed perfect," she said. "I pointed on a map and said this is where we're going to move."



The couple packed up, bought a camper trailer and parked it in different campsites but kept coming back to Cambridge.

"I didn't know how right it was until we moved here," she said. "It's the most welcoming place ... there's an energy vortex here – how did so many cool, progressive people end up in one place?"

Corey van Vlymen and his husband live in D.C. and were looking for a second home. They considered Lost River, W.Va., but decided they preferred to be on the water.

"We looked at a map on both sides of the bay and came to Cambridge on a Saturday and bought a house that day," said van Vlymen, 39, a senior scientist at Booz Allen Hamilton. They've owned in Cambridge for two years.

They were drawn to Cambridge due to its location on the water, the affordable housing inventory, and its proximity to D.C.; it's about an hour and 20 minutes away.

Now, through the work of Proudly Cambridge, they hope to highlight the town's many attributes to residents and visitors alike.

"Something we all agree on is there's a perception problem for Cambridge and a lack of awareness," van Vlymen said. "If you tell someone you're going to Cambridge, chances are they think, 'England or Massachusetts?'"

He cited the affordability and the opportunity to save older, historic homes as a big draw for buyers.

"It's all about celebrating all the things that make Cambridge great," Mross added. "Our monthly social events are joyful and celebratory." A recent game night drew about 70 people.

She noted that the goal is not to gentrify the town and push longtime residents out, but to uplift all the people who are already there while welcoming new visitors and future residents.

They also noted that Proudly Cambridge does not seek to supplant existing Pride-focused organizations. Dorchester County Pride organizes countywide Pride events and Delmarva Pride was held in nearby Easton two weeks ago.

"We celebrate all diversity but are gay powered and gay led," Mross noted.

To learn more about Proudly Cambridge, visit the group on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

## What to see and do

---

Cambridge, located 13 miles up the Choptank River from the Chesapeake Bay, has a population of roughly 15,000. It was settled in 1684 and named for the English university town in 1686. It is home to the Harriet Tubman Museum, mural, and monument. Its proximity to the **Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge** makes it a popular stop for birders, drawn to more than 27,000 acres of marshland dubbed "the Everglades of the north."

The refuge is walkable, bikeable, and driveable, making it an accessible attraction for all. There are kayaking and biking tours through **Blackwater Adventures** ([blackwateradventuresmd.com](http://blackwateradventuresmd.com)).

Back in town, take a stroll along the water and through historic downtown and admire the architecture. Take in the striking **Harriet Tubman mural** (424 Race St.). Shop in the many local boutiques, and don't miss the gay-owned **Shorelife Home and Gifts** (421 Race St.), filled with stylish coastal décor items.

Stop for breakfast or lunch at **Black Water Bakery** (429 Race St.), which offers a full compliment of coffee drinks along with a build-your-own mimosa bar and a full menu of creative cocktails.

The **Cambridge Yacht Club** (1 Mill St.) is always bustling but you need to be a member to get in. **Snapper's** on the water is temporarily closed for renovations. **RaR Brewing** ([rarbrewing.com](http://rarbrewing.com)) is popular for craft beers served in an 80-year-old former pool hall and bowling alley. The menu offers burgers, wings, and other bar fare.

For dinner or wine, don't miss the fantastic **Vintage 414** (414 Race St.), which offers lunch, dinner, wine tasting events, specialty foods, and a large selection of wines. The homemade cheddar crackers, inventive flatbreads, and creative desserts (citrus olive oil cake, carrot cake trifle) were a hit on a recent visit.

Also nearby is **Ava's** (305 High St.), a regional chain offering outstanding Italian dishes, pizzas, and more.

For something off the beaten path, visit **Emily's Produce** (22143 Church Creek Rd.) for its nursery, produce, and prepared meals.

"Ten minutes into the sticks there's a place called Emily's Produce, where you can pay \$5 and walk through a field and pick sunflowers, blueberries, you can feed the goats ... and they have great food," van Vlymen said.

As for accommodations, there's the **Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay** (100 Heron Blvd. at Route 50), a resort complex with golf course, spa, and marina. Otherwise, check out Airbnb and VRBO for short-term rentals closer to downtown.

Its proximity to D.C. and Baltimore makes Cambridge an ideal weekend getaway. The large LGBTQ population is welcoming and they are happy to talk up their town and show you around.

"There's a closeness among the neighbors that I wasn't feeling in D.C.," Lumalcuri said. "We look after each other."

[Continue Reading](#)



(Book cover image courtesy of FSG)

**'Baldwin: A Love Story'**

By Nicholas Boggs

c.2025, FSG\$35/704 pages

"Baldwin: A Love Story" is a sympathetic biography, the first major one in 30 years, of acclaimed Black gay writer James Baldwin. Drawing on Baldwin's fiction, essays, and letters, Nicolas Boggs, a white writer who rediscovered and co-edited a new edition of a long-lost Baldwin book, explores Baldwin's life and work through focusing on his lovers, mentors, and inspirations.

The book begins with a quick look at Baldwin's childhood in Harlem, and his difficult relationship with his religious, angry stepfather. Baldwin's experience with Orilla Miller, a white teacher who encouraged the boy's writing and took him to plays and movies, even against his father's wishes, helped shape his life and tempered his feelings toward white people. When Baldwin later joined a church and became a child preacher, though, he felt conflicted between academic success and religious demands, even denouncing Miller at one point. In a fascinating late essay, Baldwin also described his teenage sexual relationship with a mobster, who showed him off in public.

Baldwin's romantic life was complicated, as he preferred men who were not outwardly gay. Indeed, many would marry women and have children while also involved with Baldwin. Still, they would often remain friends and enabled Baldwin's work. Lucien Happersberger, who met Baldwin while both were living in Paris, sent him to a Swiss village, where he wrote his first novel, "Go Tell It on the Mountain," as well as an essay, "Stranger in the Village," about the oddness of being the first Black person many villagers had ever seen. Baldwin met Turkish actor Engin Cezzar in New York at the Actors' Studio; Baldwin later spent time in Istanbul with Cezzar and his wife, finishing "Another Country" and directing a controversial play about Turkish prisoners that depicted sexuality and gender.

Baldwin collaborated with French artist Yoran Cazac on a children's book, which later vanished. Boggs writes of his excitement about coming across this book while a student at Yale and how he later interviewed Cazac and his wife while also republishing the book. Baldwin also had many tumultuous sexual relationships with young men whom he tried to mentor and shape, most of which led to drama and despair.

The book carefully examines Baldwin's development as a writer. "Go Tell It on the Mountain" draws heavily on his early life, giving subtle signs of the main character John's sexuality, while "Giovanni's Room" bravely and openly shows a homosexual relationship, highly controversial at the time. "If Beale Street Could Talk" features a woman as its main character and narrator, the first time Baldwin wrote fully through a woman's perspective. His essays feel deeply personal, even if they do not reveal everything; Lucian is the unnamed visiting friend in one who the police briefly detained along with Baldwin. He found New York too distracting to write, spending his time there with friends and family or on business. He was close friends with modernist painter Beauford Delaney, also gay, who helped Baldwin see that a Black man could thrive as an artist. Delaney would later move to France, staying near Baldwin's home.

An epilogue has Boggs writing about encountering Baldwin's work as one of the few white students in a majority-Black school. It helpfully reminds us that Baldwin connects to all who feel different, no matter their race, sexuality, gender, or class. A well-written, easy-flowing biography, with many excerpts from Baldwin's writing, it shows how much of his life is revealed in his work. Let's hope it encourages reading the work, either again or for the first time.

[Continue Reading](#)





Gay Pride Day 1976 (Washington Blade archive photo)

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of LGBTQ Pride in Washington, D.C., the Washington Blade team combed our archives and put together a glossy magazine showcasing five decades of celebrations in the city. Below is a sampling of images from the magazine but be sure to find a print copy starting this week.



*D.C.'s Different Drummers march in the 2006 Capital Pride Parade. (Washington Blade archive photo by Adam Cuthbert)*

The magazine is being distributed now and is complimentary. You can find copies at LGBTQ bars and restaurants across the city. Or visit the Blade booth at the Pride festival on June 7 and 8 where we will distribute copies.

Thank you to our advertisers and sponsors, whose support has enabled us to distribute the magazine free of charge. And thanks to our dedicated team at the Blade, especially Photo Editor Michael Key, who spent many hours searching the archives for the best images, many of which are unique to the Blade and cannot be found elsewhere. And thanks to our dynamic production team of Meaghan Juba, who designed the magazine, and Phil Rockstroh who managed the process. Stephen Rutgers and Brian Pitts handled sales and marketing and staff writers Lou Chibbaro Jr., Christopher Kane, Michael K. Lavers, Joe Reberkenny along with freelancer and former Blade staffer Joey DiGuglielmo wrote the essays.



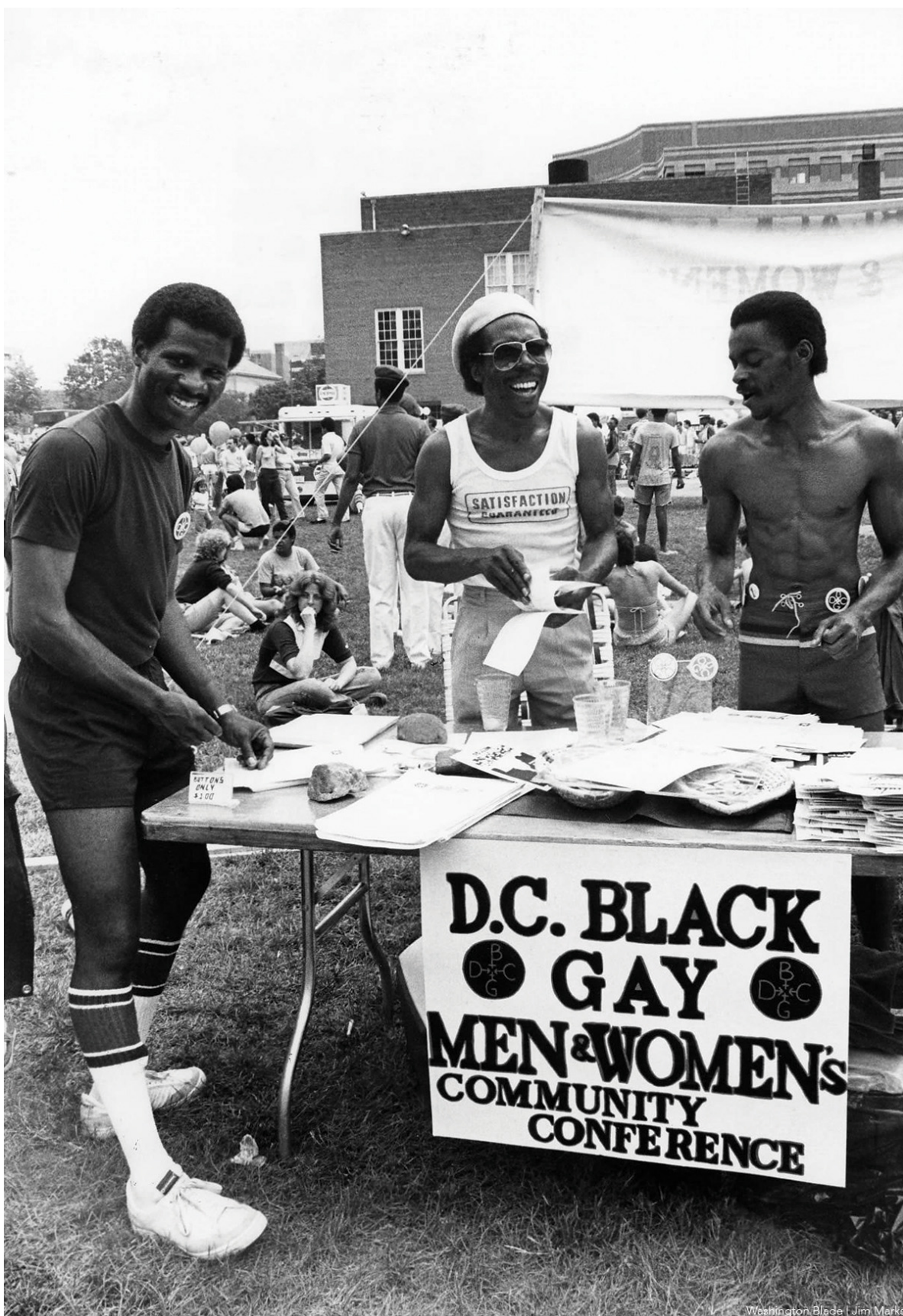
*The 1995 Lesbian and Gay Freedom Festival was held on Freedom Plaza on June 18.  
(Washington Blade archive photo by Clint Steib)*

The magazine represents more than 50 years of hard work by countless reporters, editors, advertising sales reps, photographers, and other media professionals who have brought you the Washington Blade since 1969.

We hope you enjoy the magazine and keep it as a reminder of all the many ups and downs our local LGBTQ community has experienced over the past 50 years.

I hope you will consider supporting our vital mission by becoming a Blade member today. At a time when reliable, accurate LGBTQ news is more essential than ever, your contribution helps make it possible. With a monthly gift starting at just \$7, you'll ensure that the Blade remains a trusted, free resource for the community — now and for years to come. [Click here](#) to help fund LGBTQ journalism.





*The D.C. Black Gay Men & Women's Community Conference table at Gay Pride Day in 1978. (Washington Blade archive photo by Jim Marks)*





Washington Blade | Doug Hinckle

*A scene from 1985 Gay and Lesbian Pride Day. (Washington Blade archive photo by Doug Hinckle)*



Washington Blade | Doug Hinckle

*A scene from the 1988 Gay and Lesbian Pride Day. (Washington Blade archive photo by Doug Hinckle)*





*A scene from the Capital Pride Block Party in 2018. (Washington Blade photo by Daniel Truitt)*



*Keke Palmer performs at the 2024 Capital Pride Festival. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)*

[Continue Reading](#)