

Eric Stone

From: Ketchikan Pride <ketchikanpridealliance@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 28, 2023 12:26 PM
To: Eric Stone
Subject: Regarding KPA Hosting the Drag Queen Story Time

Eric,

We appreciate the opportunity to speak on this topic.

The Ketchikan Pride Alliance will not be hosting the drag queen story time in lieu of the library hosting it. We understand that means a drag queen story time may not happen at all this year.

As we have said earlier, we believe that library employees are experts in their field and should be trusted to choose the programming that is appropriate and supportive for the community. It has also already been said several times that last year's drag queen story time was the most successful story time the library has ever hosted.

It is an odd choice for the city manager (whose background is in utilities management and not library science, unless we are unintentionally misinformed) to overrule the decision of the library director, who has been setting the library's programming for many years now. It seems particularly odd to prohibit an event that has proven to be very successful and served to bring the community together.

We understand that drag is a divisive point of conversation in the country right now. It is important to recognize that people and groups that oppose the rights of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals are deliberately misrepresenting the art form of drag as predatory and dangerous. Drag is an easy target for anti-human rights groups because it exists at the fringes of mainstream society and is often propped up as symbolic of the queer community as a whole. The current attack on drag is the first stepping stone in rolling back hard won rights of LGBTQIA2S+ people. The attack on the queer community will not stop with the banning of drag queen story times.

The Ketchikan Pride Alliance refuses to partake in the marginalization of our own community. We fear that by hosting the drag queen story time instead of the library, we will unintentionally set a precedent that any event or activity the city perceives as potentially divisive will be restricted under the guise that "not directly sponsoring it is not prohibiting it."

While KPA understands the logic of this directive from the city manager, we also know that silence sides with oppression and marginalization. By hosting the story time as KPA, we fear this will be one step toward any and all LGBTQIA2S+ programming becoming our sole responsibility. Our fear is that next year, the library, and maybe even other city or borough departments, will be directed to not host any Pride programming, with the misguided belief that KPA will step in to host all Pride programming because it is not prohibited.

We are here to aid the community, to support the community, and to educate the community. But we are not the only group responsible for the safety, inclusion and support of LGBTQIAQ2S+ people who call Ketchikan home.

The city has historically stood up for the rights of marginalized individuals in the community. We believe the city will continue to protect the vulnerable. We do not want to unintentionally misstep and muddy the waters with the city. We want the city to continue to uphold its historic precedent of intentionally including the marginalized.

We know the city hired both Library Director Pat Tully and City Manager Delilah Wash because they are experts in their respective fields. They both want what is best for Ketchikan. However, Director Pat Tully should

be trusted to set library programming because that is her field of expertise and she has been serving our community for many years.

It is important to be very clear: this conversation is not actually about drag. It is about LGBTQIA2S+ people right to exist in public, especially when we visibly do not uphold heteronormativity. Drag is simply the easiest target, but the pressure to rollback the rights of queer people will not stop with the banning of drag.

Thank you.

-JD Martin (she/her)

President of the Ketchikan Pride Alliance

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The Ketchikan Pride Alliance

Providing education, support, and aid to the Ketchikan and surrounding area lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community (LGBTQIA2S+) and their allies since 2019.

www.ketchikanpridealliance.com



We respectfully acknowledge that we work and reside on the traditional lands of the Tlingit people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial.