



2014

ANNUAL REPORT

Leadership Message

A heartfelt 'thank you' to those who have contributed time, money, and resources to help us get off the ground!

The Column launched in January 2014 as the first LGBT nonprofit news organization in Minnesota, and one of the few such organizations in the nation. We are grateful to Springboard for the Arts for serving as a fiscal sponsor until the IRS approves The Column's application for nonprofit status. As you will see

from the following pages, we had a huge impact in 2014.

The Column's reporting on right-wing anti-LGBT groups brought the majority of readers in 2014 and generated the most impact.

The rise of Trinity Works and the Minnesota Child Protection League led to the most search traffic as Minnesotans tried to determine who these groups were.

The Column also produced extensive coverage of the Safe and Supportive Schools Act and the transgender-inclusive high school athletics policy passed by the Minnesota

State High School League.

We were also able to profile 34 artists, get the word out about 286 LGBT arts events in Minnesota, and host a media/arts showcase.

Eight contributors created almost 500 articles covering news, arts, and culture concerning Minnesota's LGBT community.

Traffic to The Column continues to grow each month with almost half a million views in 2014.

We are excited for 2015 and have plans to add more writers, strengthen the

role of our board, engage in unique arts projects, and build our brand across Minnesota.

A heartfelt 'thank you' to those who have contributed time, money, and resources to help us get off the ground!

With your support, we can continue to grow and create a lasting, community-owned LGBT news and media organization. Thanks you again from:

Andy Birkey,
Executive Editor;
Keith Pederson,
creative Director;
and The Column's
Board of Advisors



Our Impact

Preserving History

In June, The Column featured Joel Larson, a young man who was killed in a hate crime in Loring Park in 1991. His friends and family had launched a fundraiser to create a memorial to him in Loring Park, and The Column's attention to the life of Joel Larson and the fundraiser caused an avalanche of financial support.

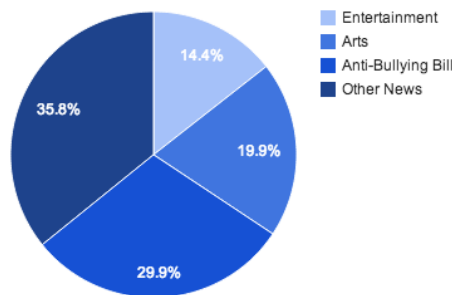
Exposing Agents of Intolerance

In May, The Column launched a series of articles shining a light on a little-known evangelical group, Trinity Works. Our work highlighted the group's plans to infiltrate Twin Cities Pride and convert members of the LGBT community to its brand of conservative Christianity. The series prompted OutFront Minnesota to deploy support teams to warn the community about the group's activities. Affirming churches and community members also created signs and buttons to get the word out.

The Column's reporting on religious right groups promoting false information about the safe schools bill and the LGBT community was picked up by interest groups such as OutFront Minnesota, which were able to alert members about those groups' activities.

The most common search term during the quarter was for the Minnesota Child Protection League, an anti-LGBT group opposing the safe schools bill. People from across the state were able to access accurate information about the anti-LGBT roots of this organization. The Column's coverage of MNCPL is ranked second in google. More than a third of visitors to The Column in the first quarter came by searching for MNCPL and the safe schools bill.

Search Traffic: 1st Quarter



The Column continued to monitor the MNCPL through winter 2014 as the group placed ads around the state demonizing transgender youth. The Column was the first media outlet in the nation to carry the story of MNCPL's anti-transgender ad in the Star Tribune.

The Column was also the only media outlet that monitored conservative radio to learn that MNCPL and Republicans planned to repeal the Minnesota State High School League's transgender inclusive high school athletics

policy through lawsuits or legislative action.

Holding institutions accountable

In March, The Column reported that Minnesota was one of the only states with marriage equality that has not signed on to support marriage equality lawsuits in other states.

The Column's reporting led to a Change.org petition being launched targeting Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson, the public official responsible for lending the state's support for such legal efforts.

The Column also produced an exhaustive study of media coverage of a transgender equity proposal by the state high school league. That report can be read on page 5.

Elevating the Arts

Through The Column's Spotlight on the Arts, we brought 34 artists extra attention about their work, inspiration, and process. In addition, The Column highlighted 286 arts events.

Our Voices, a media/arts showcase to benefit The Column spotlighted the work of more than a dozen LGBT artists.

Most read stories

- **Star Tribune publishes full-page anti-transgender ad by Child Protection League**
- **Christian group wants to rent Gay 90s, infiltrate Twin Cities Pride, and convert gays**
- **Bachmann: LGBT community wants to “prey on children sexually”**
- **Minneapolis wins spot on RuPaul’s Drag Race**
- **Two injured in shooting at 19 Bar**
- **Meet the team behind the Minnesota Child Protection League**
- **Using deceptive tactics, Trinity Works claims to have “saved” dozens at Pride**
- **Police reveal additional details about Ty Hoffman’s run from authorities**
- **Community outraged after UMD cuts women’s hockey staff, popular coach**
- **Claim: 30 MN churches to conquer LGBT Pride like David beat Goliath**
- **Conservative parents blast LGBT community at Anoka-Hennepin School Board meeting**
- **Trans-Violence Part 2: Interview with Allison Woolbert**
- **MN group founded by lawmaker creates bizarre anti-gay video claiming HIV is transmitted in sweat**
- **Bragging on Minneapolis: The top 10 ways the city made LGBT history**
- **Star Tribune coverage of Cece McDonald questioned**
- **Alleged 19 Bar shooter tweeted about guns, violence**
- **MN evangelical group says it will cure HIV at Twin Cities Pride**
- **Turning anti-gay hate into love with a Loring Park memorial to Joel Larson**
- **Fundraiser launched to aid capture of Kelly Phillips’ killer**
- **MN Republican candidate runs on anti-sodomy platform**
- **Top 5 falsehoods the right is telling about Minnesota’s anti-bullying bill**
- **Around the Region: Shooting claims life of South Dakota Two-Spirit activist**
- **Ty Hoffman bail set at \$2 million, complaint suggests murder was premeditated**
- **Nienstedt forces resignation of gay music director after wedding**
- **Gov. Dayton: Transgender inclusion in high school sports “problematic”**
- **Child Protection League Action Uses Stock Photo of Lesbian Novel in Anti-LGBT Ad**



Sec. 4, 2014: MSHSL passes a trans-inclusive high school athletics policy. The Column file photo.



June 27, 2014: Gay country star Steve Grand performs at Twin Cities Pride. The Column file photo.



June 28, 2014: Evangelicals infiltrate the Twin Cities Pride parade with a corn feed. The Column file photo.



Youth rally to pass the Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act.

Spotlight on the Arts



Drag performer Pandora Boxx at April Showers 2014. The Column file photo

In 2014, The Column interviewed big name artists such as Daily Show co-founder and comedian Lizz Winstead, actor Leslie Jordan, gay country star Steve Grand, and Glee star Alex Newell.

The Column interviewed dozens of Minnesota's LGBT Artists and Organizations including:

- Jamie Monroe
- Boom! Theater Company
- Mark Hooker
- Erin Schwab
- Eric Casaccio
- Gadfly Theatre Productions
- Evie Blank Designs
- Brian Winter
- Justin Kirkeberg
- Michelle Kaye
- Candid Theater Company
- TifDynamite Roberts
- Jamie Olsen aka Nina DiAngelo
- Tyler Hallett
- Adam J. Nicolai
- Venus DeMars
- Keri Pickett
- Sweetpea
- Ryan Coit
- Lucinda Naylor
- Richard Louprasong

Spotlight on the News

The following are great stories that we feel didn't get the attention they deserved:

In Jesus Name. The Column identified dozens of city council's that host sectarian prayers in direct contradiction to the First Amendment.

Could a minimum wage hike help Minnesota's LGBT community? The Column exposed the myth of a wealthy LGBT community in Minnesota using government data.

Chris Kluwe saga prompts sports radio to talk homophobia. Sports radio reacted maturely to a thorny issue that the genre often gets wrong.

Catching up with Glee star Alex Newell. The Column contributor Jonah Sandy interviewed the gender non-conforming Glee star.

Minnesota Legislature proposes cuts to HIV drug fund. Legislators raided a fund to help HIV-positive Minnesotans and hardly anyone noticed.



Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act rally at the Minnesota State Capitol. March 2014. The Column file photo.

Special Report

This piece was published in December 2014.

Trans voices still missing from Minnesota News reporting

Minnesota State High School League's vote in early December to include transgender students in high school athletics made news throughout the state. For the first time in recent memory, a transgender issue was thoroughly covered through television, newspaper, radio, and the web. For many media outlets, it was one of the few times transgender issues were reported on. In some cases, that inexperience showed.

The Column surveyed 108 media reports from television, newspaper, radio, and web-based media organizations between Sept. 29 to Dec. 17. News items that were labeled opinion pieces were excluded.

News reports were evaluated on four criteria: 1. Was there a perceived bias in the reporting? For example, did the report only include one side of the debate? Or was there a noticeable editorial slant to the reporting? 2. Were LGBT voices included in reporting through interviews, testimony, or clips? 3. Specifically, were transgender voices included in reporting on an issue that uniquely impacts the transgender community? 4. Was appropriate language used? For example, were the subjects of the reporting misgendered or were antiquated or inappropriate terms used to describe the transgender people, issues, or communities?

Was there a perceived bias in reporting?

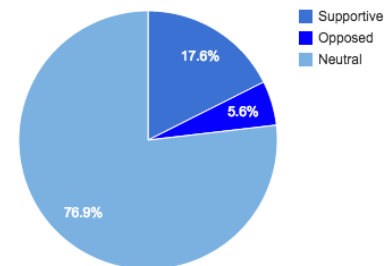
The majority of media outlets provided neutral coverage of the issue. Most news reports, 77 percent, either reported on the trans-inclusive policy without supporting or opposing views, or gave equal treatment to pro-LGBT or anti-LGBT voices. All media reports rated as "opposed" (6 total) came from Greater Minnesota, while all the reports rated as "supportive" (19 total) came from the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Media with an oppositional bias tended to include quotes or reports about the Catholic Church or the Minnesota Child Protection League opposing the policy without noting the policy had support from LGBT groups and other progressive voices such as the teachers union. Media with a supportive bias tended to be high school or college newspapers and alternative media such as City Pages.

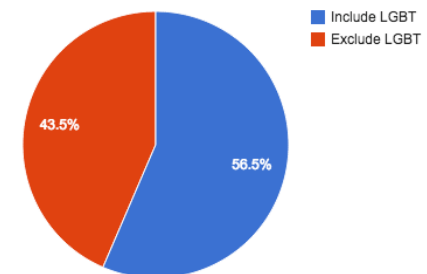
Were LGBT voices included in media reports?

On an issue of importance to the LGBT community, reporting should include voices of those the policy will most affect. Media reports included LGBT voices 56.5 percent of the time. The vast majority were interviews with or quotes from OutFront Minnesota, the largest LGBTQ equity organization in Minnesota. Almost 44 percent of all

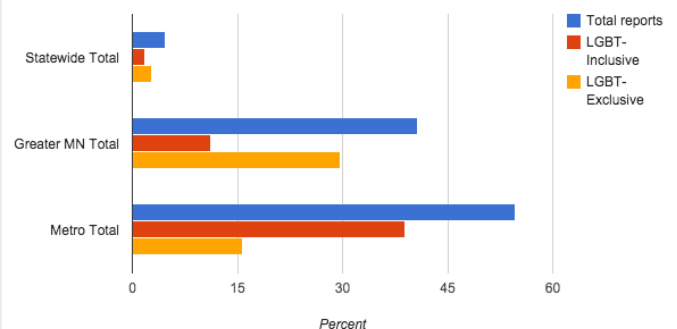
Tone of Coverage: Was there a bias in media reporting on trans-inclusive athletics?



Reporting Inclusion: Did reporting include LGBT voices?



Percent of Reports including LGBT voices by geography



Special Report

Continued from page 5

reporting failed to include an LGBT voice. Those included brief reports as well as longer form stories. There was a significant divide between Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities metropolitan area in terms of inclusion of LGBT voices (There were only a handful of statewide reports from wire services such as the Associated Press).

Were transgender voices included in media reports?

Transgender people, and youth in particular, were the people most likely to be affected by the passage or failure of the transgender-inclusive athletics policy. Unfortunately, Minnesota media largely left their voices out of the conversation. Only 40 percent of media reports included a transgender perspective in the reporting. The Twin Cities-Greater Minnesota divide was even more apparent with respect to the inclusion of transgender voices.

Language usage

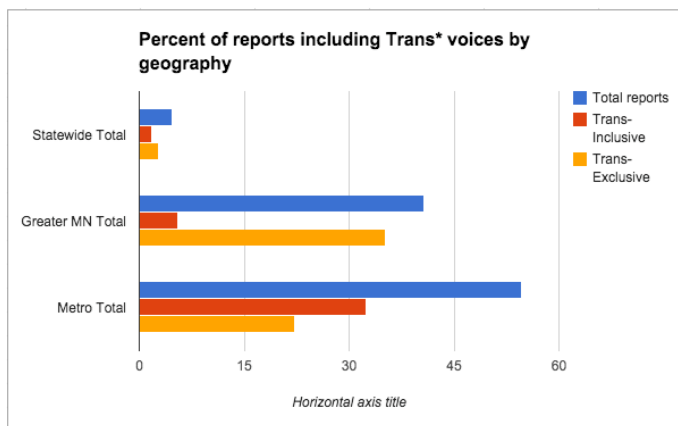
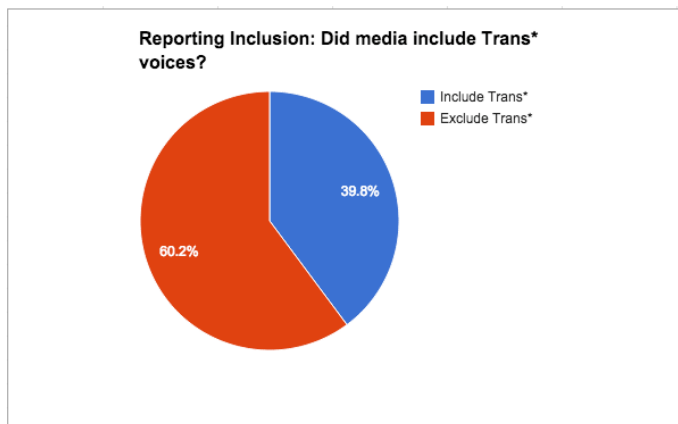
The Column examined language in media reports about the transgender-inclusive high school athletics policy.

One somewhat common error was the use of the word “transgendered.” GLAAD, which has produced a media guide on transgender news reporting notes that the word “transgendered” is problematic:

The adjective transgender should never have an extraneous “-ed” tacked onto the end. An “-ed” suffix adds unnecessary length to the word and can cause tense confusion and grammatical errors. It also brings transgender into alignment with lesbian, gay, and bisexual. You would not say that Elton John is “gayed” or Ellen DeGeneres is “lesbianed,” therefore you would not say Chaz Bono is “transgendered.”

The Column identified 20 instances of the word “transgendered” in 7 newspaper reports and 13 television segments.

Misgendering was rare, possibly because of the low number of transgender people interviewed by the media. One television report referred to a transgender student as “he” although the student noted during



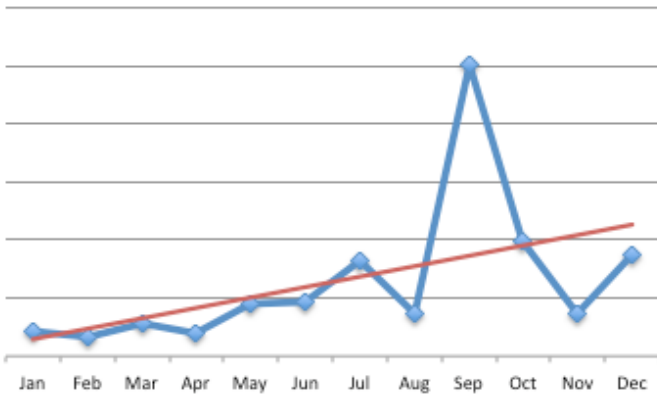
testimony before the MSHSL that “they,” “them,” and “their” are their preferred pronouns.

Perpetuation of stereotypes

An important part of the media climate surrounding the passage of the transgender-inclusive high school athletics policy was the ability of anti-LGBT groups to get their message out. Specifically, the messages of the Minnesota Child Protection League, a group that opposes LGBT rights. The group was able to spread stereotypes and misinformation about transgender youth through the placement of advertising in newspapers. The Star Tribune, Duluth News Tribune, Mankato Free Press, St. Cloud Times, Winona Daily News, Jackson County Pilot, and the Jordan Independent all ran at least one ad from MNCPL.

Our Reach

Traffic to The Column Jan.-June



The Column's traffic increased an average of 65 percent per month.

**153,504 Unique Visitors +
45,216 Extended Reach +
284,660 Social Media Reach =
483,380 total reach**

Extended Reach

Our stories were picked up by local news outlets including Minnpost, City Pages, Fox 9, Progressive Catholic Voice, and Minnesota Progressive Project.

National news outlets also picked up our stories including Huffington Post, New York Daily News, The Advocate, Towleroad, Think Progress, Bilerico, GLAAD, Cosmopolitan Magazine, and Qweerty among others.

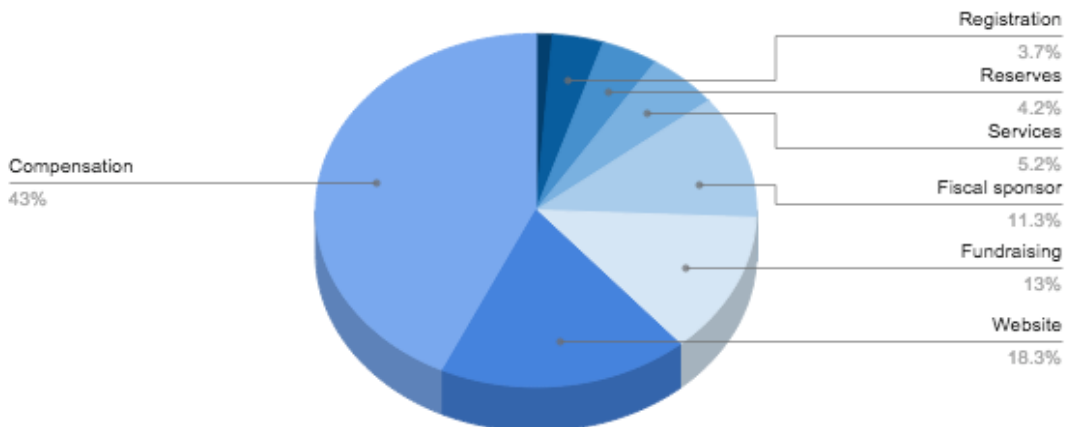
TheColu.mn encourages other publications to republish our work in order to expand our reach.

Articles were republished 46 times in the 2014. The Twin Cities Daily Planet republished 45 articles, the San Francisco Bay Times republished 1, and Bluestem Prairie republished 2.

Financials

The Column spent \$6.49 per article published in 2014. We were able to publish more news for less thanks to volunteer contributors. The largest expense was compensation for writers which constituted 43 percent of the budget. Expenses related to maintaining <http://thecolu.mn> constituted the second highest expense at 18 percent of the budget, and fundraising expenses constituted 13 percent of the budget. Dues and renewal fees to our fiscal sponsor, Springboard for the Arts, came to 11 percent of the budget, and advertising, services, and registrations made up the remainder of the budget.

Program Expenses



The Column Team

Andy Birkey



Andy Birkey has written for a number of Minnesota and national publications. He founded Eleventh Avenue South which ran from 2002-2011, wrote for the Minnesota Independent from 2006-2011, the American Independent from

2010-2013. His writing has appeared in The Advocate, The Star Tribune, The Huffington Post, Salon, Cagle News Service, Twin Cities Daily Planet, TheUptake, Vita.mn and much more. His writing on LGBT issues, the religious right and social justice has won awards including Best Beat Reporting by the Online News Association, Best Series by the Minnesota chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, and an honorable mention by the Sex-Positive Journalism awards.

Cassandra Snow



Cassandra is a professional tarot card reader, and runs Gadfly Theatre Productions, a queer and feminist theatre company. Her life's work is on creating safe spaces and transformative experiences for marginalized people

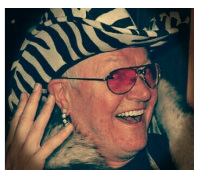
from all walks of life. To inquire about a personal reading or hiring for events, please contact snow.cassandra@gmail.com

Claire-Renee Kohner



I am a trans woman who in 2014 came out as trans to my family and friends. I've started a blog to provide an insight to what I'm going through and what I'm about to experience. The journey should be fun, so keep your arms and legs inside the cart, it's going to be a wild ride.

Keith Pederson



Keith Pederson is the Creative Director at TheColu.mn. This is a fancy title for an emerging role that is concentrating on special projects such as the book, Face Off HIV and a documentary about Camp Benedict called Putting the Ribbon Back

On. As we continue to grow, the projects will range from supporting local artists and businesses to collaboration with others who are sharing their LGBT stories "One voice at a time".

Other contributors in 2014: **Jason Little, Jonah Sandy, and Sally Jo Sorensen.**

Media Partners

Bluestem Prairie
News from Greater Minnesota

Bluestem Prairie is a hip (but not cynical) rural magazine for those who prefer to take their corn with a progressive chaser and tongue planted firmly in cheek. The site is owned and edited by Sally Jo Sorensen, who lives in Maynard, Minnesota, a small town of 266 people in Chippewa County.

TWIN CITIES
DAILY PLANET
LOCAL NEWS FOR GLOBAL CITIZENS

The Twin Cities Daily Planet is an online publication connecting citizens in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul with one another and with the global community. The Daily Planet is a project of the Twin Cities Media Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the digital divide and helping citizens empower themselves with media.

The Column Board of Advisors 2014

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Robyne Robinson

Dixie Triechel

Dale Hanson

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Thank you

Thank you to our donors for helping make the first year of The Column a success!

Individual donors

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In kind donors

