

Equalizer

Andre Wade is the state director for the newly formed LGBTQ advocacy group Silver State Equality.

Talk to me about Silver State Equality. It was started in concert with California's equivalent organization?

Yeah, we are affiliated and supported by Equality California. Equality California is the largest statewide LGBTQ rights organization in the country. And, so, they are mentoring Silver State Equality in the work we're doing.

What spurred the decision to start Silver State Equality?

Silver State Equality was born out of a notion that Nevada was one of about 11 states without a statewide effort. And Nevada had been leading the charge when it comes to LGBTQ ... protections, like from the legislative perspective. It was just ripe for a statewide effort to start here in Nevada. We talked to a lot of leaders, state legislators to see if there was an appetite for this. There was just a resounding "yes." People saw that was lacking with our movement was a statewide effort, and so Silver State Equality was born.

So you intend to be engaged in lobbying when the next state legislative session kicks off?

Absolutely, that will be one of the focuses we'll be concentrating on. We'll be focused on passing core-equality legislation and



PHOTO/JERI DAVIS

electing core-equality candidates—and then doing work to improve the health and well-being of LGBTQ Nevadans, not from a direct service perspective, but like ... competency training for various institutions, raising awareness for HIV prevention, doing smoking cessation sort of work. We've been doing work this year around the census, to make sure our community is counted. It's a historically under-counted community.

Will the organization get involved in rural communities right off the bat or start its work in urban areas?

We are starting down south in Las Vegas. That's where I'm stationed—but we're going to have a statewide reach. ... Our idea is that we're not going to leave any Nevadan behind, regardless of geography, so we'll ... be touching the rural areas.

You don't find as many openly LGBTQ people, and especially public of-

ficials, in rural Nevada. I wondered if it'll pose challenges for you.

California has similar challenges. In big cities, it's one sort of climate, and in the rurals, it's different. It'll be the same in Nevada. We'll do work to find out what those issues areas are, what the messaging will be for those particular communities, and then just go from there. But our hope—and I think that will be the case—that people are excited to have something like this come and touch the rural areas, because normally we have the rurals that are sometimes forgotten about.

Do you know yet about partners you'll work with in Northern Nevada, like Our Center, anyone else?

Yeah, so I was just here a month ago touching bases with people at Our Center and NALA[Northern Nevada LGBTQ Leadership Alliance]. ... We're going to be working with those folks, so very much connected with them in having those conversations.

What's the first step for people who want to get involved?

They can go to our website and sign up to be a volunteer or get our newsletter. I've had people contact me directly through email to say they want to volunteer, which is really exciting. ... If people want to engage in our inaugural Equality Awards—which is going to be Nov. 6 in Las Vegas—that'll be a way. Eventually, we're going to be doing Equality Awards in Reno as well. □

NOTES FROM THE NEON BABYLON

BY BRUCE VAN DYKE

Take a crack at it

Back in April, a spot on my face started going numb. It was a spot about the size of a golf ball, between my lower lip and my jaw. It was fairly weird, to all of a sudden have this place on my face go numb, and it would stay benumbed for a day or two. See a doctor? Nah. No big deal. Just some occasional numbness. I'm sure it'll fix itself, right?

Then, in May, there was a night where that numbness upped its game, and brought Da Pain—a stinging, burning pain in that same spot that definitely got my attention. "Holy bleep," I'm thinkin', "what the bleep is going on with my bleepin' face?" After a few minutes, it became seriously obvious it was time to see a pro.

I had a pretty good idea of what was happening by the time I went in, because it was an easy

call for Dr. Interweb. The first thing that pops up in a search for "burning sensations facial" is something called trigeminal neuralgia. Not real common, but certainly well known. The trigeminal nerve comes out of your neck and gets up in your face, providing feeling to your cheek and jaw, one of the main facial nerve branches. Sometimes, this nerve will get irritated by some other viscera, like a vein or artery, causing it to fire off in a nasty little way. The doc agreed with my self-diagnosis, and prescribed some meds that would calm that nerve and keep it from overheating.

OK, swell. I got the meds, so I can mask the pain. But, gee, maybe it'd be nice to, you know, fix my face? Because we all know that the fewer meds you take in this life, the better off you are. So ... what's next?

I was thinking massage might help re-position that nerve, or something, but a friend suggested I think chiropractically. Why not? I called my chiro, whom I hadn't seen in seven years, and he was still doing business. Lucky for me. I asked, "So, uh, are you familiar with the trigeminal nerve?" He responded, "Get in here."

Three sweet neck cracks later, delivered in three adjustment sessions over the course of a week, and ... progress. Big time. Impressive progress. About 90 percent repair job, with normal sensation returning to that fiery numb zone between lip and jaw. Face fixed? Well, the meds are in the medicine chest, just in case of a regression. You never know. But for now, big props to my backcracker! □



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