

February National News



Black History Month

Elections

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Black History Month

Black, queer people are in all of our communities
and our communities are better off for us existing.

Stand by us.

— Nayuka Gorrie, Kurnai/Gunai, Gunditjmara, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta writer 2017

Originally starting in the USA as “Negro History Week”, historian Carter G Woodson founded the second week of February to encourage teaching of the history of Black Americans in schools. This week was chosen because it coincided with the “birthday of Abraham Lincoln on February 12 and of Frederick Douglass on February 14”¹ A good start is Danielle Fuentes Morgan’s *Why we still need Black History Month in the US*, (goo.gl/k8kDM3). If you take one thing from Morgan’s article, let it be this:

“In an ideal world, a separate month for black history would be redundant. But we are not living in an ideal world.”



¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_History_Month#cite_note-Scott-10



Allying LGBTQ+ POC

Writer **Savonne Anderson** has beautifully written *6 ways allies still marginalize people of color — and what to do instead*. We want to share three of her points in relation to the LGBTQ+ community, but we advise readers to **read the original article**: <https://mashable.com/2016/02/27/people-of-color-marginalization/#y5h27zkrZEQx>

1. Being “colour blind”

“It's common for allies to tell people of color, "I don't see race." Despite possibly good intentions, this denies the unique experiences of people with racial differences and important aspects of their identities. **It's important to acknowledge that while we should all be treated the same, people are indeed treated differently based on the color of their skin.** When you refuse that, you continue to place people of color on the margins, when their stories deserve the same attention and care as mainstream white experiences.” [In regards to LGBT communities, and specifically here in Japan, POC LGBTQ+ people may have a very different experience to White people. Acknowledging the intersections of our community will make it easier to counteract ill treatment, lack of representation or attention that intersections may receive.](#)

2. Derailing and Erasing Racial Experience

“**When a person of color tells their story and you insist on bringing your own into the conversation, that is oppressive. That takes away space and time that they very often don't have to control the narrative of their experience.** [...] When a black person discusses employment discrimination, you don't have to remind them women also face discrimination in the workplace. This ignores intersectional identities [...], and oversimplifies the issues people face. Vocalizing their experiences with race doesn't mean people of color aren't aware of other forms of oppression; they may even experience some of the other forms themselves.” [LGBTQ+ people of color are underrepresented. So, when non-POC people use their own experiences to challenge or insist an opinion, the platform for POC voices is taken away, derailed and/or erased. Especially in LGBTQ+ spaces, which are usually supposed to be safe, having one's experience being oppressed can truly be distressing.](#)

3. Prioritizing the White Presence in Communities of Color

“Regardless of the desire to help, it's important for white allies to realize they're not owed a place in communities of color. [...] **White people are not entitled to having their voice centered, actions acknowledged or feelings prioritized in an environment where people of color are the focus.** [...] But **it's crucial to know when to take a backseat and show up when needed**, rather than asserting your dominance over people of color.” [Sometimes a white knight is not needed. The pun was very much planned. It can be difficult to feel like you are being excluded, but it's important for everyone to have their own space, and that must be respected.](#)

Another great read we recommend is Erin Canty's ***7 things black people want their well-meaning white friends to know***: [7 things black people want their well-meaning white friends to know](#)



Resources in Japan

Resources that intersect race, sexual orientation and gender identity in Japan seem to be few and far between, so if you know of any more resources, please contact us, or share within the group! Thank you.

Yasmeen Johnson is the creative behind **AfroQueeirdo**, a producer of QTPOC afrofuturist art, based in Tokyo. They are also connected to various social media platforms, so check their YouTube, Instagram and Facebook! If you'd like to commission or purchase work, please contact **@afroqueeirdo**. Additionally, if you repost their work, please tag them.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJGarala4kINsAFw4fCzcuQ>

<https://www.instagram.com/afroqueeirdo/>

<https://www.facebook.com/afroqueeirdo/>

Marsha P. Threw The First Glass at Stonewall and Don't You Forget It! is a community group for QTPOC people in Japan. Predominantly online, the Marsha P group is a safe space for non-white individuals to share their experiences, seek advice and find community. They also hold gatherings too, so members can connect beyond online networking.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1776525222617894/>

Queer As Cat, is a blog centered around asexuality, aromanticism, multigender attraction (MGA), trans & non-binary gender, queer identity and racial/ethnic identity with special attention paid to the various ways in which these identity can and do intersect with each other. The blog is run by Vesper, a maverique bi/pan asexual queer person of color living in Japan.

<http://queerascats.tumblr.com/about>

<https://twitter.com/queerascats>

<https://www.youtube.com/queerascats>

YouTuber **xypowerpop** has created a series named **Being Gay In Tokyo**. The series consists of 10-parts, and reflect themes such as racism in the LGBT community, coming out and blackface. Their work also expands further and outside of Japan with their channel and Tumblr page too, so make sure to head there also...

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgNsUswAY0mad0EaujIC4QQ>

<http://queernigga.tumblr.com/>

Although, posted in the group before, the Japan Times article '*Being black can be more fun than being gay*' is a good read: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2016/01/17/our-lives/black-can-fun-gay/#.Vptt1_I96Un Although a few years old now, the content is still very much still relevant. The article also features Loren Fykes, the leader of Fruits in Suits Japan, a recommended group for LGBT working professionals in Japan. Their events are based in Tokyo, and have an online presence including an active Facebook group and website:

<https://www.fruitsinsuitsjapan.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/finstokyo/>



5 Links to Get You Started



AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

For some general background information, here are some articles suggested by a member...

1. **This Is How February Became Black History Month** - Julia Zorthian
<http://time.com/4197928/history-black-history-month/>
2. **Black History: More Than A Month** - NUS
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPgAnMp2d-k>
3. **Black History Facts** - History.com
<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-facts>
4. **Why it's important to observe Black History Month** - Regina Edmondson
<https://www.ccaurora.edu/blogs/fox-call/history/why-its-important-to-observe-black-history-month/>
5. **We need Black History Month now more than ever** - Peniel Joseph
<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/02/opinions/we-need-black-history-month-now-more-than-ever-opinion/index.html>

❖ Elections

Stonewall Leadership Elections for 2018 are coming soon! Positions include:



- ★ President
- ★ Vice President
- ★ Treasurer
- ★ Secretary

And more!

We're also looking for **Block Leaders** who wish to lead their local areas writing newsletters, helping to coordinate events, and building a great LGBTQ+ community in their area of Japan.

Please note all year round we are looking for **Diversity and Awareness (D&A)** volunteers as well as **Web Team** volunteers.

If you're thinking about a position, drop a message at stonewallsig@ajet.net to ask to be nominated.

❖ Events +

Check out the events on our new Stonewall event calendar!

Thanks to the webteam, we now have a space for members to suggest and search for events!

Know about any upcoming events in December or beyond?

Send in the event info!

<http://stonewalljapan.org/events/>

Need help translating event details?

Send the event information to our secretary!

loana@stonewalljapan.org



Stonewall Japan: ONLINE MEETUPS

Are you interested in meeting up online with other members?

Fill out the survey here to let us know what you'd be interested in!

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdmPAJX6nIOxQ-QGPTJbMIIGwtUA3cqME58WJYIEVY1v-oRGg/viewform?usp=sf_link

*Currently we don't have enough respondents to make these happen!

You **MUST** fill out the form so that we can see there is sufficient demand to host these events!

