



<http://nabwmt.org>



SPRING 2015

Q-Visions

The Newsletter of Black and White Men Together



About Half of the Participants of the Milwaukee Convention 2014

The NABWMT is committed to fostering respect, honesty, and communication among people of different races and cultural backgrounds. We are a gay, multi-racial, multi-cultural organization for all people. We welcome people of all racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Tables of Content

Sections

CHAPTER NEWS	<u>3</u>
Philadelphia	<u>3</u>
Atlanta.....	<u>3</u>
New York.....	<u>3</u>
New Chapters.....	<u>3</u>
CONVENTION 2015.....	<u>4</u>
Convention Registration.....	<u>6</u>
Co Chair's Corner	<u>7</u>
NATIONAL NEWS.....	<u>7</u>
BMI	<u>8</u>
BMISJ Leverages Literary Project	<u>8</u>
HIV and Heart Disease	<u>9</u>
BMI Proposal.....	<u>11</u>
TRAVEL.....	<u>12</u>
Gay Travel.....	<u>12</u>
ON THE WEB	<u>13</u>
The Digital NA	<u>13</u>

Author

Rick Gile Creque	3
James Credle	4
Darryl Fore & Mark Behar	7
Patrick Carron.....	9
Ken Baron & Mack Scott.....	11
Patrick Carron	12
Ken Baron.....	13

Rick Gile Creque



New Chapters

Charlotte <http://www.nabwmt.org/charlotte/>
 Louisville E-mail Dave at <mailto:flamboyantbohemian@gmail.com>
 San Jose/S.F. E-mail Howard at <mailto:hharbottle@gmail.com>
 Saint Louis E-mail Perry at <mailto:perry.clouse@yahoo.com>

Philadelphia

Now is the time for our members and friends to plan for our bang-up anniversary weekend May 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 2015. Friday night's affair at the William Way Center will be our annual "Meet and Greet". We're asking everyone to consider what they might contribute in the way of food and drink and call Aaron at 215-455-6038. Please let him know if you are able to provide either entrees, side dishes, desserts or drinks. We'll have chafing dishes to keep food warm. At this event there'll be three important things happening. One is the award of our three plaques, including the **Gerry Mallon "Resisting Racism"** award. The second is our super "50/50" raffle and lastly our Silent Auction. John O. is coordinating the auction so give him a call at 610-207-4801 to let him know what you are donating. The Saturday's our dinner banquet in Wyncote. Sunday's brunch will be in the Gayborhood. Tell your friends. Bring your neighbors and relatives! It's a weekend to remember! The total cost for this weekend is \$65.00 if paid before April 18.



Saturday, March 21 7:30 PM to 11:00 PM At Patrick's home Patrick moved up from Delaware to Pennsylvania a couple of years ago. His new place is all on one floor with plenty of room. Call (610) 485-8524 for directions.

Atlanta

Congratulations to the new Steering Committee for 2014-15

2014-15 Steering committee members elected: Jerry Brown, Co-chair, Tray Robinson, Co-chair, Chris Wendt, Treasurer, Carey Whitaker At-large, Dave Siereveld, At-Large, and Robinson Graham, At-Large. Lyman Parsons, At-Large, Michael Read, Recording Secretary, and Gaston Djomand, Potluck Coordinator.

The Chapter is proud of its longevity and service to the LGBT community in Atlanta. It looks forward to another 33 years with more opportunities to promote the mission of both BWMT Atlanta and the National Association of Black and White Men Together.

New York

Friday, March 20 @ 8:00 P.M. Hot Topics for the 35th Anniversary Convention. Coordinator: James Credle. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center at 208 West 13 St.

James Credle

Convention 2015 Co Chair

NABWMT 2015 - Newark Convention Update
"Courage To Be..."
July 13-18, 2015

Plans are shaping up for the NABWMT convention this summer.

This year's convention features:

- Sunset Circle Line cruise around Manhattan island with dinner, dancing, entertainment and Awards.
- An array of engaging workshops focusing on empowerment and community service issues, including sessions on working with LGBT youth and transgender concerns
- A Black/People of Color/White Caucus utilizing a "fishbowl" concept facilitated by Dr. Cheryl Clarke and Dr. Mitchell Karp, veteran diversity professionals
- A Remembrance of Our Ancestors preceded by a dialogue with gay Muslims
- The Madame X/Paul "Low Rent" Sears Talent/No Talent Show (conference attendee participation is encouraged) followed by a special presentation by local Newark artists
- Keynote speakers including Walter Nagle, the partner of Bayard Ruston, and other local Newark dignitaries
- The National Association will march and have a table with banner at the Newark Pride Festival on Sunday, July 19th

When planning is completed, a full service agenda will be available in order for you to know exactly what will be transpiring during our 35th Annual Convention.

Dining Opportunities:

* Up to eight meals are included with your paid hotel and convention registrations and related events, including a daily continental breakfast for those registered at the Robert Treat Hotel Additional meals include:

- Free reception food at the Newark Pride flag raising ceremony at City Hall
- Luncheon meal on Wednesday for our opening Plenary
- Opening reception the first evening sponsored by the Midland Regional and the Convention Planning Committee featuring the National Association's Photo Exhibition at a local venue
- Hot luncheon meal on Thursday, and snack with cash bar at our Madame X/Paul "Low Rent" Sears Talent/No Talent Show in the evening
- Food will be available Saturday at the Riverfront Community Gathering sponsored by Newark Pride starting at noon, to be followed by the Circle Line Cruise with dinner included
- In addition, inexpensive meals will be available at the Maize Restaurant at the Robert Treat Hotel, Nico's at NJPAC across the street, and fast food places throughout the city.

The unique, historic Ironbound district, just a short walk from downtown Newark, provides many opportunities for dining. Known for its diverse international cultures, the Ironbound district has the look and feel of a European neighborhood creating the feeling of being in a different time and place altogether.

Local attractions and activities:

- Riverfront R&R with food, music and entertainment at Newark's newly designed waterfront sponsored by Newark Pride Week
- "Sounds of the City" annual Summer Outdoor Music Festival at New Jersey Performing Arts Center
- Newark Pride week festivities
- Special event in New York City hosted by former active members of MACT/NY (cont. on next page)

- *(cont. from previous page)*

Registration:

Registration is \$159 per person until July 1, 2015, and then increases to \$199 per person or \$75 per day.

The registration form on the next page can be used to register for the conference or you can register online at the following link: [NABWMT 2015 Conference Registration](#)

Host hotel registration should be made directly with the Robert Treat Hotel, 50 Park Place, Newark, New Jersey 07102. The phone number is: (973) 622-1000. Conference discount code: 5997

The sunset Circle Line cruise is included in your registration fees. We strongly encourage you to invite colleagues and friends from the Greater Newark/New York City area to purchase tickets at \$60 each or two for \$100 for the Cruise, Dinner, etc...

35th Anniversary Commemorative Program Booklet

To honor the organizations 35th anniversary, a special 35th Anniversary Commemorative Program Booklet will be published. We are seeking advertisements from each of the local NABWMT member organizations. Please join us in this effort by purchasing an AD for \$150.00 each. The AD MUST BE a photo of the local group with a caption that honors the 35th Anniversary in whatever way each chapter determines it would prefer to state or indicate the honor being bestowed.

Photos must be high resolution and fit an 8 1/2 X 11 size page with a completed AD form attached or sent as well. Make checks or money orders payable to: "NABWMT 2015-Newark", then send to NABWMT 2015 Newark, James Credle, Program Chair, 51 Clifton Avenue, Suite C-2101, Newark, New Jersey 07104. You may also go to the NABWMT website (www.nabwmt.org/), sign up and pay for the AD. Please send the high resolution photo to James Credle at: <mailto:jwcredle1@hotmail.com>. The absolute deadline is June 1, 2015.

Convention Registration



REGISTRATION

"Courage to Be . . . "

NABWMT 35th Annual Convention, 2015 NEWARK/NEW YORK

Registrations: **\$159.00 per person**, includes all events: workshops, presentations, Co-Chairs luncheon, Madam X Talent/No Talent Show, events with Newark Pride Alliance and the *Circle Line Cruise around Manhattan Isle* with dinner, awards, dancing, entertainment, and much more!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Add a friend:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Payment by (Circle one): Check/Money Order PayPal >>> <http://www.nabwmt.org>

Please make checks payable to: "NABWMT 2015"

For more information, contact James Credle at jwcredle@hotmail.com

Program details are available at: NABWMT2015NEWARK.COM

Checks and Registrations to:

James Credle, NABWMT 2015/CPC
51 Clifton Av., Suite C2101
Newark, NJ 07104

National Association of Black and White Men Together (NABWMT) is a gay, multiracial, multicultural organization committed to fostering supportive environments where racial and cultural barriers can be overcome and the goal of human equality realized. To these ends we engage in educational, political, cultural and social activities as a means of dealing with the racism, sexism, homophobia, HIV/AIDS discrimination, and other inequities in our communities and in our lives.

Co Chair's Corner

Darryl Fore &

Mark Behar

(mailto:mpbehar@wisc.edu)

(mailto:fore@lycos.com)

**NABWMT Board Embarking on Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning for organizations like the NABWMT in the "good old days" considered where we've been, what we're now doing, and where we want to be in the next 2-5 years. Very operational and occasionally data driven, such as how many people are actually attending an event, are we making a profit, what type of programs are we offering, how our constituencies evaluate such activities and our overall performance, and how can we insure our continued growth and existence in the near and far future all consistent with our statement of purpose (mission). The NA has dabbled in such activities in the past, the most recent one during our St. Louis convention in 2008, 7 years ago.

Strategic planning must be an ongoing process, not something accomplished every 5 or 10 years, and the Board decided that it must include some foundational work that includes the concept of actual governance and policy development, so that we aren't always operating in a knee-jerk fashion responding only to the crises de jour affecting our diverse constituencies. For example, we have issued position statements addressing world events such as homophobia in certain African countries, and we have addressed national events such as misappropriation of justice by law enforcement and the justice system in Ferguson, NYC, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and probably every other city in the country, as well as many other things.

With the assistance of long time friends, members, and community elders, we have refined a vision statement, and are attempting to develop a unifying belief that can bind us together as a Board to help us create a stronger national organization with better programming to help members and our local chapters. But although the process of strategic planning involves how Board members work together, we also want to involve our membership and local chapters as we continue our tradition of open and transparent communication and decision making. Although the Board will be implementing changes in how we discuss and complete business during our monthly board meetings, in our general membership in Newark, this July.

We want you to participate in Newark to help us create a stronger national organization to better all of our communities. Our general membership meeting will seem different to accommodate these new ways of doing things. What are our core beliefs to insure we are successful? Is it just about addressing racism and homophobia? Is it about fostering interracial parity and leadership development? Can we articulate a coherent statement of our top beliefs that will help drive all of our activities? How do we address modern issues to keep new people wanting to participate and affiliate with us, and maintain our focus on intergenerational and interracial communication and networking? These are only a few questions we hope to address with your support and participation. We want to hear from you, whether you are planning on attending the Newark convention or not!

BMISJ Leverages Literary Project

Source: Cornelius Mabin, former NA Director

Members of The **Bush Mallon Institute for Social Justice** (BMISJ) under the leadership of Kevin Elders (left image) and Michael Ross continue their support and ongoing development of the “Reflections of a Shattered Mirror Project”. These ongoing efforts with the financial seeds planted in the project have now flowered into a working community based organization seeking its 501c3 non-profit status.



The organization, “**LinQ for Life**” (www.linqforlife.com) was founded to continue the statewide need in Arkansas to increase the health literacy around HIV and AIDS. It serves as a catalyst to coordinate a linkage to care services, provide innovative intervention and prevention programming and building micro-enterprises to support these efforts.

Cornelius Mabin, Project Manager for the effort said: “As I continued to collect and dialogue with content contributors, it became apparent to me that what the submissions were “calling for”, was not just a periodical archive to house social justice verbiage but a vehicle to do something to address issues and perhaps put words into action”.

He continued, “Each piece that I reviewed spoke to dealing with not only the initial NABWMT tenants of racism, sexism, homophobia, but also reached deeper into the BMISJ well of addressing the many intersections of housing, education, food insecurity, and economic parity.”

The initial project sprung from a working group entitled **STRILITE**, whose efforts have been covered in previous editions of **Q-Visions**. This lead to Mabin partnering with colleague, Lee Brown forming **LinQ for Life**. Embracing the project as a strategy to move the literary project forward Brown said, “I learned about the project as Mabin and I had collaborated on other local projects. I thought that combining my concept within this visionary project could expedite each into reality.”

Currently the Reflections Project has gathered over 50 submissions and is in the process of editing and content finalization with the objective of producing a resource magazine with sights on a 2015 national convention delivery in July. “We are very pleased with the work on this project,” said BMI Co-Chair Michael Ross. “I have expressed to the NA Chair’s and directly with Cornelius my feelings about its development. I look forward to the impact this work and the agency will have in that area.”

The non-profit’s vision seeks to “create links to a greater quality of life”. Brown emphasized that our agency services will address the “mirrors of stereotypes, stigma, and poor imagery”. Ultimately it is our belief that many of these conditions co-exist in fueling unsafe sexual behaviors in communities of color”.

LinQ for Life is an Arkansas registered entity with two inaugural board members. The organization launched a website and social media platform in December 2014 and has secured a \$16,000 public health contract for two of its programs, **Mobilizing Arkansas Brothers** and **Arkansas RAPPs** (Reaching, Affirming, Positive, Progressive, Systems). A Go Fund Me Prevention Campaign at <http://www.gofundme.com/LinQforLife>, was also launched to support its long range goal of establishing The LinQ house as a one stop clinic.

The mutual relationship of the Reflections Project and the establishment of **LinQ for Life Inc.** are groundbreaking for the Bush Mallon Institute for Social Justice in supporting the development of a separate non-profit entity under its incubation based in the South. This follows the trend of such national organizations such as the **Human Rights Campaign** Project One America and **National Minority AIDS Councils Leadership Pipeline Initiatives**. For more information on LinQ for Life go to: www.linqforlife.com

HIV and Heart Disease

Patrick Carron

MACT South Florida and Contributing Editor,

I've been promoting heart medications to cardiologists for over twenty-five years. I've sold medications that treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol, angina, heart failure, and heart attack. These medications are effective but they are also expensive. Often adopting a healthy lifestyle can eliminate or greatly reduce the need for medication.

Recently, several cardiologists I know in Miami Beach mentioned an interesting fact to me. Namely, a significant portion of their heart patients are younger than usual and have HIV. Is there a link between being HIV positive and developing heart disease?

In 2008, a group of cardiologists and infection disease specialists met at a first of its kind conference to discuss heart disease in HIV. It was reported that 10% of HIV positive patients now die of heart disease and the number grows if you include heart disease and stroke. The general theme at the conference was that treatment plans need to focus on more things than just a T-cell count. The patient's risk for heart disease and stroke should also be assessed in the examination. In the not too distant past, the last thing your doctor thought about was cholesterol and artery plaque when he/she was saving your life from an opportunistic infection. Times have changed!

Thanks to the remarkable development of HIV therapies, patients are living longer and fewer people are dying from AIDS related complications. As good as that news is however, HIV patients are subject to the same chronic illnesses that are devastating the general population like heart disease and diabetes. But, are HIV patients at higher risk for heart disease? Many health professionals think so.



There are a few theories as to why HIV patients might develop more cardiovascular disease than the general public. I will expound on these ideas for the remainder of this article.

“the most important thing anybody on HIV therapy can do is see your doctor routinely and be assessed for cardiovascular disease regularly”.

An early theory and one that some doctors still believe, goes something like this, “Many HIV positive patients are gay men. Gay men often live a fast lifestyle that leads to more cardiovascular risk factors like heavy alcohol use, lots of smoking, drug use and poor nutrition, all night partying, little sleep and little exercise”. If these gay men live a life that leads to high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and other risk factors, of course they will be prone to develop heart symptoms. Yet, a recent study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*

debunks much of this theory. It compared HIV positive gay men to non positive gay men to see if one group had more visual coronary plaque than the other. Sure enough, the HIV group had significantly more coronary plaque than the non HIV group. (*Ann Intern Med.* 2014;160(7):458-467.) It is alarming that positive men accumulate coronary plaque and the reason why is not well understood.

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A second theory related to heart disease in HIV points to HIV medication as a factor. Early anti-HIV cocktails increased a patient's blood lipids, leading to high cholesterol which leads to heart disease. While this is true, newer therapies in wide use today are much better on blood lipids but a few still raise triglycerides and cause other metabolic abnormalities like insulin resistance. These can also increase a patient's risk. Your doctor should be monitoring you for these side effects. One study found that protease inhibitors significantly increase the risk of developing heart disease. Other studies in the past report that there is an increase risk of heart attack for each year of being on HIV therapy, although the number of events was small (127 events in 7,542 individuals with HIV). Many of the cardiac events were in young patients, which is of special concern because it's unusual for this age group to have heart attacks. Interestingly, one contention to this second theory is that HIV positive women show less signs of heart disease than HIV positive men. If the drug side effects are the sole cause, would not the women be impacted to the same extent?

I learned about a third theory from a cardiology fellow at the University of Miami. He was enrolling HIV positive men in a clinical trial to see if they had higher levels of systemic inflammation compared to men without HIV. It is widely known that systemic inflammation is a contributing factor to cardiovascular risk. This theory suspects there may be something unique about the HIV virus itself that causes inflammation leading to heart disease or stroke. We do know that the HIV virus impacts blood lipids by lowering HDL (good cholesterol) and raising triglycerides. If the virus also increases inflammation, this can explain the connection with cardiovascular disease.

Of these three theories, the first one is largely discounted and randomized clinical studies haven't answered definitively if theory two or three is more valid. Many physicians suspect that there probably is merit for both of these effects regarding the virus and the medications and both may have a negative impact on the heart. However, it has been noted that patients who stop their HIV therapy had many more heart events than those who remained on therapy. Staying compliant with your medication keeps the virus under control and this is better for the cardiovascular system.

"the most important thing anybody on HIV therapy can do is see your doctor routinely.."

Regardless of the science and these theories, the most important thing anybody on HIV therapy can do is see your doctor routinely and be assessed for cardiovascular disease regularly. It has been shown that when HIV patients have their blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes and other risk factors controlled their risk of heart disease drops. An ounce of prevention is definitely worth a pound of cure.

For more information, visit: <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/118/2/e29.short>

BMI Proposal

Ken Baron & Mack Scott

We have always been a fan of the Bush Mallon Institute for Social Justice since it addresses our core hopes for the elimination of racism and homophobia. We were encouraged by their recent collaboration on the the “ Reflections of A Shattered Mirror Project” and anticipate further great work from the BMISJ

We are proposing a few ideas that have developed under the auspices of the BMISJ. This should have no impact on the Committee budget and would strive to complement the work they are doing.

Our focus would be concentrated in the West and South West of the US and would use the talents of BWMTSC, MACT PHX and members at large in the area.

In brief, the directions we plan to take involve the communities of Los Angeles and Long Beach and perhaps Phoenix to network our chapters successes in the following areas:

- The continued online exposure of the BMISJ past present and future work.
- The “New Jim Crow” challenges to communities of color from the prison-industrial complex
- The plight of undocumented workers fighting discrimination and racism using skills gained in the Long Beach Immigration Rights Coalition.
- Subsets of this are the “Undocuqueer” program and the needs of binational LGBT partners desiring residence in the country.

“we anticipate further great work from the BMISJ..”

Current networks include (amongst others):

- The Unitarian Universalist Church with a 100 years of Social Action and active programs related to the above
- The partner group of MACT PHX: UGIMA (United Gay Informed Men of African Descent)
- The Center Long Beach
- Current resources include (but not limited to):
 - NA Podcasts
 - NA Videos
 - NA Video Histories
 - BWMTSC “Gabfests”

Gay Travel

In Search of that Interracial Gay Vacation Destination

Patrick Carron



Pat is a Contributing Editor

The March 2015 issue of The Advocate has an article entitled "2015's Queerest Cities In America". The article highlights gay friendly cities you probably have not thought about, like Boise, Idaho or Davenport, Iowa. Salt Lake City, Utah. Dayton, Ohio was ranked the number one city in the article. Really?? Dayton?? Atlanta was ranked number two and the Atlanta BWMT chapter was listed as one of the reasons Atlanta is so good. Congratulations to Robert Graham and all our ATL brothers for getting national press. West Palm Beach was ranked number three. Huh? If so, then why do so many Palm Beach County residents come to Fort Lauderdale and Wilton Manors for their gay nightlife? I think The Advocate missed the mark on this ranking. ATL – absolutely, but not Erie, Pennsylvania or Lansing, Michigan.

The Advocate looked for cities that were Trans-Inclusive, had inclusive churches, mosques, or temples, had a Pink Pistol Chapter, gay retirement communities (none of the cities did), and lots of culture. All good elements but I think they missed one. What about a gay vacation destination that is also *interracial and intercultural*?? I think Salt Lake and Boise miss the mark here.

To this end, let me highlight a great place to vacation if you like a gay destination with an interracial flair. Welcome to Wilton Manors, Florida! Wilton Manors borders Fort Lauderdale and is its own city. The Mayor is gay. Half of the city council is gay. The crown jewel of the town is Wilton Drive, a mile long strip that features over two dozen gay bars and restaurants, The World AIDS Museum and the Stonewall Archive and Gallery. Yes, all of this is on Wilton Drive and it is very walkable.

The great thing about South Florida however, is the mix of race and cultures. Interracial relationships appear all over town! There is a heavy Caribbean culture here as well as a heavy Latin American culture all mixed with local black and white folks. Here are a few interracial highlights of Wilton Manors:

*There is a vibrant **MACT** chapter located in Wilton Manors that meets monthly. I organize the social and sometimes serious meetings with my co-chair, Ki Garvin. Come to town and hang out with us. www.facebook.com/mactsouthflorida

*We have **PJ's Cock and Tails**, an interracial bar in the middle of Wilton Drive. He plays Old School music and this is a great place to meet and mingle. It is easy to make friends at PJ's with the clientele equally split between white, black, Latin, young and old. The bar has a friendly neighborhood feel to it with lots of conversations going on. <http://www.pjscornerpocket.com>

*There is an organization called **Black Gay Pride** that hosts regular events all year long at The Pride Center. Usually free, they often serve delicious soul food. <http://www.pridecenterflorida.org/>

*A **gay softball league** boasts 1,000 players from Fort Lauderdale with a good mixture of black, Latin, and white players. The league plays every Sunday from 8AM to 5PM. Watching the games is fun and the concession stand serves pizza, hamburgers, soda and beer. <http://sfaaa.net>

*A Catholic Chapel in Fort Lauderdale called **The Parish of Saints Francis and Clare** is run by gay Franciscan brothers. The small congregation is largely black and white men. <http://www.stsfrancisandclare.org/>

*Two local **gay strip clubs** have a large contingent of black, white, and Latin dancers. They make up some of the best looking people in town. <http://www.boardwalkbar.com> <http://www.leboytonight.com>

*The **Caribbean Pride Festival** is an outdoor event in Wilton Manors with food, drinks, and lots of eye candy! <https://www.facebook.com/events/387004244817524/>

Needless to say, Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale offers many venues for the races to mix and you will love the gay friendly attitude. I know that there are other great interracial destinations in the USA and I hope a few people step up and contribute an article about their city!

The Digital NA

Digital and Analog, Closed and Open!

Ken Baron

Thanks for reading this Q-VISION newsletter. The NA is proud of its history in print and online. We continue to provide you all forms of communication in a fast changing world.

As a sexagenarian (read old) scientist and educator, my first “analog” writing was on “punched cards” in the 60’s. And now I am an Apple “fanboy” working and teaching on multi-platform digital devices to get the good word out, as I see it. So, it is with a deep respect for the successes of both worlds that I am pondering the future of communications and how they relate to the NA. Also, please read the accompanying article on the NA’s Strategic Planning to see what our board is doing to look into our future.

From the first ad on The Advocate which started it all, we built over the last decade on the pioneering work of Regis D’Angelis on the Newsletter, which morphed into this publication. We herald the implementation of the NA’s web by Brad Green and others.

Hard work by Cornelius Mabin on his insightful blog and upgrades to nabwmt.org was important. Social Media was introduced in the times of my co-chairmanship of the NA and later on Twitter by Paul Cloutier. Our visual history is curated by Doug Noble, and we have a Wiki developed by him and Ollie Lee Taylor. On the shoulders of these brothers, we now built a robust, “mobile friendly” web with galleries, blogs and podcasts. We have over 11,000 Facebook members in social media ably moderated by our PR/Web committee.

The question I have, is this well balanced with our “analog” family so richly developed in our chapters and conventions over these decades, and does this balance serve our Association well?

“To that end we should defend our “Sustainable Culture” that has directed us for over 30 years. Appreciate that our new and old media are not separate but are intertwined and equally real.”

The internet is evolving from an open to a closed system. This has caused as much disturbance as the Industrial Revolution with similar trends. The open architecture has developed and has recent success in the “Net Neutrality” triumph by the Federal Communications Committee which defines the internet in the same manner as a telephone - equal access to all. However, the closed system on the internet is represented by Facebook, Amazon, Google, and Android is given way to ads, data mining and revenue for a few at the expense of the billions who provide information as “digital slaves”. But, you reply, has not the internet lowered cost of goods, developed new communities, made life easier and our voices heard sooner and at a higher volume? Yes, it has, but perhaps at a high cost.

We are living in a world of digital feudalism. More and more jobs require employees to cultivate an online presence and the social networks are the first place an employer goes when he is looking for new hires. On the one hand we are feeding revolutions in the middle east and on the other hand, we are getting by on gift rewards - fun, social connections, and online reputations. The online community talks of gift economics, public spiritless and democracy but commercialism and inequality lurk beneath the surface. Are we being a narcissistic nation evolving echo chambers and balkanization?

In the area of and culture, the inconvenient truth is that the information age has been accompanied by increased consolidation and centralization. This leads to the media delivering what the customers want rather than what they should have. In addition to this, the internet has become a vehicle for hounding women and members of racial and sexual minorities. Research shows that off line disparities are reflected online and even amplified. The same study showed there are no African Americans in the top 30 bloggers. New media looks like old, male, pale, and privileged. “for all those who have, more will be given, and they will have abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away”. So, where should the NA go in this complex digital world?

Here are my humble suggestions:

Look to our vision statement for guidance: *“NABWMT envisions America free of Racism and Homophobia”*.

To that end we should defend our “Sustainable Culture” that has directed us for over 30 years. Appreciate that our new and old media are not separate but are intertwined and equally real.

Know that culture, whether it is non material has hidden material and labor costs. We need to realize that our Facebook pages can develop contacts at the expense of our cultural workmanship. Can we influence our social networkers to look back at our cultural history and forward to our long term growth and freedom.

We need to feed our sustainable culture and build our archives to allow people to explore our ideas in the future. There is a false impression that anything on the cloud is permanent. Our gay, interracial history will be years in the making and requires the use of both old and new media and open and closed tools.

Here are some possible avenues to consider:

- We should support the “crowdfunding” webs like the recent NA support for an ally to film homophobia in Africa. We are becoming so wired technologically that we’ve lost track of time and, lost touch with some of our most important relationships both personally and socially. So “reach out and touch someone” at the NA or your chapter or your work. We need to return from brain to fingertip, from iCloud to earth.
- Remember that we espouse our “family union” at our convention. Attend and spend a week feeding our “beloved Community”.
- Read a newspaper, our Q Visions and develop critical skills honed by looking in depth.
- Call an NA friend and practice listening skills and encourage dialog that advances our mission statement.
- Add to our wiki to build our history and suggest documents to add to our website

NOTE: The suggestions of this author are not necessarily those of the NA board and its members, but I believe they are supported in spirit by all. This is an opinion article not an editorial one!