

The BGOPride Association Presents

**THE BOWLING
GREEN PRIDE
2025 ISSUE**

October 2025 • #1

Out & About



Read All *About* It.

Interview With a Cyberdoll

Maeve sits down for a heart-to-heart with drag performer Ion the Prize, discussing their first Pride experience. (pg.1)

Pride 2025 in Numbers

Get a quick overview of the stats for this year's Bowling Green Pride festival-our biggest event yet. (pg.3)

Looking Forward

We take a look at what's to come, from our Queer Mixer event series to things like committees and volunteering. (pg.4)

BGO Pride & You

Find out how you can get involved with the organization or the newsletter! (pg.4)



Credits

PROJECT LEAD: Maeve Georgeson

AUTHORS: Beca Rios, Maeve Georgeson, Jules Reith

REVIEW: Valerie Jenkins, Jules Reith, Josh Wilder, Autumn Mottor, Jordan Musgrave, Beca Rios, Arielle Patty, Rachel Camargo, Amanda Ark

ARTISTS: Jules Reith, Maeve Georgeson, Amanda Ark

PHOTOS: Rio Von Brock, Pride Committee, BG Curling Club

© 2025 The BGOPride Association

**We want to
hear from you!**



Take a moment to fill out our survey. This will help fund future projects from BGO Pride and allow us to provide programming and services that are more beneficial to you.



[Click here to go to the survey. >](#)

A Letter From the Editor

Hiya! My name is Maeve Georgeson (she/they), and I'm the Treasurer for The BGOPride Association. I'm also the chairperson of Grants & Fundraising, a member of our Social Media & Marketing team, and the project lead behind this newsletter.

On behalf of everyone involved in BGO Pride, I'd like to say thank you. Thank you for being part of our local LGBTQ+ community- whether that's being a queer person yourself here in BG, or if you're a supporter near or far. We exist to serve you.

I encourage you to explore our community resources, attend one of our events, donate to our cause (time, talent, or treasure), or connect with us in some way.

I would also like to ask a small favor- as we continue to grow and expand our outreach and programming, we need feedback to receive proper funding and to organize services that meet your actual needs. Please, take a moment to fill out our survey. It will benefit us more than I could ever possibly explain here. Follow the link on this page to do so.

And please, enjoy this very first edition of *Out & About!*

Maeve ♥





(Above) Ion the Prize conquers the Toledo Pride 2025 stage dressed in their version of Wednesday Addams.

(Below) Ion gives a menacing glare showing bold blues and pinks in their makeup.

Interview With a Cyberdoll

by Maeve Georgeson, BGO Pride Treasurer

Rio Von Brock is a mother, a lover, a fighter. She spends her days working at a local college doing behind the scenes stuff in an office, what she describes as “perfectly ordinary,” and she loves it.

But at night she covers her face in white makeup, draws on bright, flashy features, and morphs her whole being into something no longer human, but synthetic. She becomes cyberdoll drag-bot ION THE PRIZE, a dystopian image of artificial intelligence.

We had the privilege of hosting Ion for Bowling Green Pride 2025, their very first Pride performance since becoming a drag performer. They graced the stage with confidence and wowed the crowd.

Now, I sit down with Rio and discuss how Ion came to be and the kind of person and performer she strives to be, as well as what she hopes to see down the road.



Ion shares a striking look featuring white colored contacts, leaving them visually impaired for a difficult but powerful performance.

Taking to the Stage

How did you step into being a drag performer?

A year ago my grandmother passed away. She was the first person to introduce me to performance when I was a child. She would put together shows for veterans and people in nursing homes, and we would go and do dance numbers in those shows. When she passed, I was at a time in my life where I was stuck and needed some sort of creative outlet. I felt at that moment I just needed to do something.

I'd been following drag since I was sixteen. The first show I'd attended was *Sex, Drag, and Rock and Roll* hosted by Planned Parenthood. That was it for me- I fell in love and was obsessed with it! I was fascinated by the fashion, the illusion, the beauty. When it became big on the Logo network with RuPaul, I would watch it on my computer and copy the drag looks into mainstream makeup. People loved it. It made me feel bold and confident.

“IT LOOKS A LITTLE SLOPPY SOMETIMES. BUT THAT’S DRAG.”

When Grandma passed, I was ready to just do something out there. I felt the drag scene had come far enough where I could show up as an AFAB person. I tried a drag king look for myself, but I never found a persona that fit me well. One night I played with it more and stumbled upon Ion's face- I felt faaaabulous! The very next day I went to an open stage night, and I'm so glad I did. It definitely wasn't a great performance, but you have to pull the bandage and go, “Okay, I didn't die.”



What's Ahead for Ion the Prize

One of the owners at Mary's Hideout reached out and asked me to host an event in October called *Robots Versus Monsters*, and I'm so excited! I'll be leading the robots group, of course.

They also invited me to be part of Emo and Goth Night, as well as Drag Shakespeare.

Lots of things just keep happening. You show up, you have a good attitude, and things will happen for you.

I'm 1000% interested in staying involved with BGO Pride, too. I'm dying to get back into this city and explore again. And we need drag in Bowling Green again. Drag is political. We need that release. We need to share our art. This community is starved for it.

Follow on Instagram: @ion_the.prize

“SOMETHING I LOVE ABOUT DRAG IS I GET TO DAYDREAM AND THEN I GET TO DO IT. WOULDN'T IT BE COOL IF SOMEONE DID THIS? NOW I'M THAT SOMEONE. IT'S ME NOW.”

Tell me more about how you created the persona of Ion the Prize.

We live in a very dystopian world. *Bladerunner, 1984*... it kind of happened. Technology's consumed us a bit. There's a lot that's good about it, but there's also some great perils to it. I've always been enchanted by themes of cyberpunk and dystopia, so when I was playing with makeup suddenly Ion appeared, and I just felt like myself- and that's when you know.

And so I thought, alright, they're a drag cyberdoll, mostly mischievous, a little evil, and here to take over humanity, but they're naive about it. AI has to learn, right? So sometimes they come out and do something real evil and other times they might have more of a human experience. But then they go back and remember they're synthetic and fall back into that.

I loved the idea of having different Ion “models” with various personalities. I try to weave in real things but also make it funny, as drag does. It makes it easier to deal with life if we focus on real, serious things, but also have a good laugh about it.

From Nightclubs to Festivals

Bowling Green Pride 2025 was your first ever Pride performance. What was that like for you, and how's it been since?

At the time, I had only been doing drag for maybe 4 or 5 months and only open stages, so about once or twice a month. Everybody was sharing the link for BG Pride and encouraging me to apply. I thought it would be good practice even just putting myself out there, and if it's meant to be it'll happen. I was shocked when I got the letter from BGO Pride. It felt so good since Bowling Green is my alma mater, and I was so excited to be on the stage with so many big names in the local drag scene.

Day of the event, everything went sideways! We kept having brownouts and so I had a hard time getting ready. The organizer called and I was so nervous they were going to drop me for being late, but I

showed up and did my best to have a good attitude and realize it's never going to be perfect. And it worked out so good! It was magical, amazing, exhausting. It was the perfect first Pride for me. Everyone was so welcoming and the crowd was amazing. I learned so much and I felt so honored to be part of it.

I loved that we had our own little room, we had mirrors, food, we were checked on periodically. It felt so nice and we were very well taken care of. Something I also loved was that there was so much representation of drag kings and other performers outside of queens. It's so good to see that diversity and inclusion in this space.

“WE NEED TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER AND NOT TEAR EACH OTHER DOWN. THE ENEMY IS OUT THERE. IT'S EXTERNAL. WE DON'T NEED INTERNAL FIGHTING AMONGST OUR OWN COMMUNITY.”



Ion the Prize standing with fellow drag performers Naomi, Santana, Stevie Phoenix, Adonis Lee O'Hara, Richard Les, and Mary St. Jaymes, as well as BGO Pride President Jordan Musgrave.

Do you wish there was anything different about it?

My biggest wish is for the audience to know they can come close and be more involved in the performance, especially in an outdoor festival setting. Us performers are more used to little clubs and close spaces. It's difficult to engage with the audience if they're really far away. It means I have to work harder to get out there and go to them instead of focusing on performing. While that's not necessarily bad, it can hurt the performance. BG was my first show outside like that, so that was a new experience I had to learn and adjust to. But it was still incredible!



Ion the Prize seen performing at BG Pride 2025 as festival-goers watch from the field of the Wooster Green.

Reflecting on Life and Art


Some days I feel like I'm the biggest villain. I have to either in my mind or looking in the mirror tell myself why I'm proud of myself. I've survived everything that's been thrown my way and I'm still here. I brushed my teeth. I cleaned out my inbox. Start that train of positivity and realize that there's good things happening.

“I CARE MORE ABOUT HONORING MYSELF THAN I DO THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS.”

When you find yourself not loving somebody, there's something you see in them you don't like about yourself. That's the hard work. You can't change them. But we're selfish creatures and it's hard to change yourself.

So I try to look for reasons to love people. I look for reasons to feel joy. Not every day is easy. It's not going to be perfect. ...I meet you, you tell me your name, I love you.

What does drag mean to you?

Drag is living your fantasies. Being the person you've been dreaming of. Stepping out of your mundane life into the magical life, where there is nothing but pure emotion. It's joy. Grief. Anger. Rebellion. Acceptance. It's such a multifaceted platform of expression for people who have withheld themselves. It's given me so much freedom and so much community. You think it's cliché to think something's changed your life, but when it's true it's true. I get to be the person I've always dreamed I could be. Isn't that special? 

Pride 2025 in Numbers

by Beca Rios, BGOPride Vice President
and Maeve Georgeson, BGOPride Treasurer

- 1200+ attendees (almost DOUBLE 2024's attendees)
- 33 vendors
- 24 nonprofit organizations
- 8 drag performers (not including the After Party)
- Over 30 volunteers
- Approx. \$1,718 raised in donations
- Approx. \$4,650 in sponsorships
- Approx. \$1,445 in grants



Bowling Green Pride 2025 was a huge success! We could not have done it without all the help of our volunteers, our vendors and nonprofit partners, performers, or the over \$7,800 raised thanks to folks like you. THANK YOU!

We're proud and honored to keep this tradition going forward. As we begin planning for Pride 2026 in the coming months - our 5th anniversary festival - we're keeping our community in mind and doing as much research and preparation as we can to ensure it's even bigger, better, and more inclusive than ever before. Stay tuned!



Looking Forward

Upcoming Events from BGO Pride and Friends



[Click here for tickets >](#)



Need more info?
club.admin@bgcurlingclub.com

[Click here for tickets >](#)



[Click here for registration >](#)

BGO Pride & You

How Can You Get Involved? Read All About It!

The BGO Pride Association exists to create a local community for LGBTQ+ members and supporters in Bowling Green, OH. We're here to host and foster our community, because everyone deserves to have the feeling of belonging. If you value equality and kindness, you are welcome here.

With that being said, we're here for YOU! That means you can be involved, too, if you'd like to be. But what does that look like?

Committees

Anyone is welcome to join one of our committees. At the moment, we currently have three subcommittees of the board: Grants & Fundraising, Social Media & Marketing, and Pride. Each one has its own schedule for meetings and works in different ways to suit its needs best. If you'd like to learn more, you can reach out to the board at:

bgopride@gmail.com

Out & About Newsletter

You're here reading it! With this being our first issue, we didn't have any foundation to build upon, but going forward we'd like to expand this platform. That may even include a space for community voices, like yours! Do you have a story to share? Would you like to be involved in the production of this publication? Or maybe you have an event coming up and you'd like to have it included? (Just keep in mind this is a *quarterly* newsletter.) Maeve would be delighted to hear from you! Reach out to her directly:

mgeorgeson@bgopride.org

Volunteer

Perhaps you'd like to get on the ground and help out during an event. If so, we're excited to have you on board! We typically only need help with our Pride festival, but there may be opportunities to volunteer elsewhere. If you're interested, you can join our Volunteer List by filling out a Community Interest Form. (This is the same form we use to register for this newsletter, so if you've filled it out before it will simply update your preferences to include volunteering.) You can find that here on our homepage:

bgopride.org

Donate

As a nonprofit 501c3 organization, we rely on community support to keep running. We work hard to research and apply for grants to fund specific projects, but there's plenty of room for growth so that we can provide even more programming, education, and resources for our local LGBTQ+ community. We understand that in times like these, it isn't always easy to donate funds, so we greatly appreciate and take seriously each and every donation we receive. If you'd like to give, please visit our website:

bgopride.org/donate

Something Else

Maybe you have something else in mind? We're always open to having a conversation and meeting a new friend! If you'd like to get connected, just reach out to us:

bgopride@gmail.com



Thank You

We could not do what we do without our community. Thank you for all you do and all you are. We hope to honor, uplift, educate, unite, and serve our local LGBTQ+ community with the work we do here at BGO Pride. If you are able, it would mean a great deal to us if you donate to our cause. With your support, we can provide even more programming, education, and resources to the BG area and beyond.



[Subscribe.](#)



[Read All *About* It.](#)