Announcer: The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap: Over the years, the LGBTQ movement has made great strides in fighting for equality and acceptance. But misconceptions about and injustices toward the LGBTQ community are still prevalent. In light of LGBTQ History Month this October, members of Missouri State University's LGBTQ community will come together to showcase LGBTQ pride. There will be several events on campus to create visibility around queer and transgender identity. I’m Emily Yeap.

Joining me today is Matt Banks, coordinator of multicultural programs and LGBT student services at Missouri State. Banks highlights contributions of the LGBTQ community, issues they still face and the celebration on campus.

Matt Banks: I think the biggest contributions, and this is something that I am very passionate about, is to really recognize the impact that queer and trans people of color, in particular, have had on society. Thinking about the larger LGBTQ movement, where we've seen it be around employment discrimination or around marriage equality, that kind of thing, but really that movement was started by queer and trans women of color, in particular, so thinking about Stonewall coming out of the United States and the history that had happened with that riot. It was led by two trans women of color, Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, and that, in a lot of ways, has been erased or lost from history. Thinking about the Civil Rights movement, the fact that Bayard Rustin, who was a black, gay man, he was one of the biggest organizers around Martin Luther King, Jr.'s work.

Seeing that a lot of the queer and trans people who have had impacts have been parts of large well-known movements, but because of their queer and trans identity or because of the visibility of other people or people who have taken on the work, they've kind of been lost to history as a result of it. That's something that our office, particularly, wants to celebrate is elevating the words and the identities and the histories and the importance of these marginalized communities that are often forgotten.

Emily Yeap: Banks believes many of the struggles LGBTQ people face stems from misunderstandings about their identity.

Matt Banks: There's a lot of conversations or misconceptions about who we are and the way that we specifically live our lives, so thinking particularly about trans people, the idea that it's "a choice," which isn't correct because it's who we are, and in a lot of ways, it's who we choose and want and decide to live as, essentially. I think that that creates a lot of problems with everything from birth certificates to passports to driver's license about does your name accurately reflect who you are, does your gender marker accurately reflect who you are, and then that goes into a whole other things about housing insecurity and food insecurity. Are you able to access things in a safe manner because, in a lot of ways, it can be dangerous to go into a place presenting as a particular gender, but then have all your documentation be something else.

Emily Yeap: The celebration on campus will kick off at 5 p.m., October 2nd, at the Freudenberger House Courtyard.

Matt Banks: The event is really just to be a gathering and a chance for people to come together, affirm who they are, have fun, eat food, tie-dye a T-shirt, play games, that kind of thing. It's really just meant as that fun space.

Emily Yeap: A keynote presentation by Pidgeon Pagonis, an American intersex activist, will take place at 7 p.m., October 3rd, in the Plaster Student Union Theater.

Matt Banks: Pidgeon works a lot on ending and addressing violence against intersex people, particularly around medicine. We are really excited because this is the first time we've been able to bring an intersex person to talk about that identity, and we're excited to see what they say and what they bring to Missouri State.

Emily Yeap: Another highlight is the Good Queen Fun Drag Show at 6 p.m., October 9th, in the Plaster Student Union Ballroom.

Matt Banks: This is a collaboration between multicultural programs and LGBT student services and the Residents Hall Association where it's a night of frivolity, a night of fun, where we'll have drag performances and a chance for students to showcase their talent.

Emily Yeap: According to Banks, the campus and larger community can show their support for the LGBTQ movement by doing two things.

Matt Banks: First of all, show up. I think that's what our community and what the people who work with us and the people who we love notice is when somebody comes. They give their time. They give their voice, and they show that LGBTQ equity and inclusion is important to them by coming into the space and making sure that they're there.

Additionally, in October and throughout the year, bring up LGBTQ people in conversations, whether that's in class, whether that's in student leadership positions or in community leadership positions, is have you had intentional conversations about are we including trans people, are we including non-binary people, have we thought about what intersex means in this conversation, are we welcoming and affirming of gay, lesbian and bisexual people. Just having those conversations and making sure that your community and your work is inclusive in an intentional way I think is the greatest thing that you can do for LGBTQ people.

Emily Yeap: For a full schedule of events with times and locations, visit MissouriState.edu/multiculturalprograms. I'm Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Announcer: For more information, contact the Office of University Communications at (417) 836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online at KSMU.org.