

THE WAND



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LOVEGOOD

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THE HARRY POTTER ALLIANCE (HPA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that turns fans into heroes. We're changing the world by making activism accessible through the power of story. Since 2005, we've engaged millions of fans through our work for equality, human rights, and literacy.

The WAND is published four times a year. For a donation of only 5 Galleons, 7 Sickles, and 4 Knuts (\$40 USD), our owls will deliver the WAND to you for one year. Visit thehpalliance.org/WAND to subscribe.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

A presidential election year is always a mixed bag of emotions. We may feel anxious, impatient, excited, hopeful, and maybe just a little bit scared about the future of our country. As the American two-party system grows more polarized, it's hard to see the outcome of the presidential race as anything but a big freakin' deal. And this year, more than any other, it's a REALLY BIG FREAKIN' DEAL.

In my capacity as the executive director of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, I cannot use this platform to advocate for a specific candidate or political party. However, I will relate a personal story that I hope will resonate with each of you, especially our American members.

In 2000, my first election year as an eligible voter, I was a hardcore Ralph Nader supporter. I spent months being vocal about his candidacy and the importance of his gaining 5 percent of the national vote so the Green Party could receive federal funding for future elections. I joined a busload of Nader supporters on a trip to Washington, DC. I argued with friends who felt that a vote for Ralph Nader was a vote for George W. Bush—I lived in a blue state, so I had flexibility with my vote that folks in swing states lacked. Long story short, I was supremely excited to cast my first vote for Ralph Nader come November.

Three days before the election, I made a two-hour drive from a party in Boston back to my university in Amherst. I was sober, of course, but I was completely exhausted. My friend Jess was in the passenger seat, and my friend Ben was in the back seat. We were just about a half hour from Amherst when it happened: I fell asleep at the wheel. I remember waking up just in time to process that we were about to crash into a tree, but I was paralyzed by sleep and could do nothing to stop it. It was like an explosion when we hit it, and it took a few minutes for me to realize that Jess was pinned to her seat by the dashboard, which was now located in her lap; and that my right leg was horrifically broken and twisted into an unnatural position.

Ben and I spent a couple hours fearing for Jess's life; her injuries were really bad, though she eventually pulled through. Ben was out of the hospital in just a couple of days, and even Jess went home a few days before I did. I ended up spending two weeks in the hospital and another several days in a rehab center learning how to move around on crutches with a broken femur. The first two days after the accident were the worst; I was half asleep from morphine and, on the evening before Election Day, I had surgery to install a titanium rod in my right thigh. After months of passionate debates with friends and anticipation for the election, I was unable to vote.

By the time I emerged from the morphine cloud, the election results were starting to trickle in. I watched as Ralph Nader's bid for 5 percent of the popular vote failed, but the 2.74 percent of the vote that went to Nader was just enough to tip the election win to Bush rather than to Al Gore. The whole experience was beyond demoralizing, and it made me feel powerless on so many levels.

Across America, voters in low-income communities are prevented from voting in much more sinister ways. Whether it's excessive voter ID requirements, targeted closings of polling stations, or overt intimidation tactics, voter disenfranchisement is real. It impacts election results at all levels—local through national—and it alters the trajectory of our nation in ways that are simply unjust, especially to communities of color.

We can do better. Please join the HPA as we relaunch Wizard Rock the Vote beginning in late September with voter registration actions, including phone banking in advance of National Voter Registration Day in the United States. In October, we'll launch a creative voter commitment challenge that we hope will go viral and inspire thousands of people to show up on Election Day. Finally, we'll be engaging in concrete get-out-the-vote actions during the first week of November. As always, we cannot do this vital work without your support. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Matt Maggiacomo

Executive Director, HPA



THE MAGIC OF CASTING A VOTE

by Amanda Finlaw

On your mark; get set; go vote, Wizard Activists! Presidential election time is coming up in the United States, and in late September we are launching Wizard Rock the Vote, a voting rights campaign to ensure that everyone is in-the-know, empowered, and ready to fight the dark arts in the real world with the power of the vote. The overall goal of this campaign is to help wizard activists of all ages develop tools to engage with democracy and to build a nation grounded in love, understanding, and acceptance, rather than ignorance, apathy, and hate.

But first a chat about democracy: it is not a spectator sport. Like the Ministry of Magic, there are many areas for improvement in the current US political landscape—and elsewhere in the world, too—but ultimately, it can only be made better by people who get up and engage with it. Sitting back or observing idly is an active choice to disengage. But we, like Hermione, are trying to do some good in the world. One way that we can work to improve our democracy and influence those who represent our voices is by casting our votes.

THE AUDACITY OF KNOPE

There are several actions you can take during Wizard Rock the Vote. On September 24, join the HPA livestream where there will be training on voter registration, as well as some live wizard rock and other fun as we kickoff our fall fundraiser. On National Voter Registration Day, September 27, Chapters and community members are encouraged to host voter registration drives in their local areas and schools. This day is the official kickoff of Wizard Rock the Vote, and toolkits containing fliers, voter registration sheets, downloadable graphics and door hangers, as well as sample scripts for door-to-door and phone get-out-the-vote canvassing are available to chapters to help with the registration drive.

To take this idea further, one of the best ways to get your community to vote is to talk about why it is so important to you that they do vote. Even if you are not yet

18 and eligible to vote, sharing your story can be a great way to inform neighbors, classmates, coworkers, friends, and family about where and when to vote and to inspire them to go to the polls!

In October, we are collecting commitments to vote from wizard activists, and urging them to channel their inner Leslie Knope by getting five additional commitments to vote from others in their communities. We are excited to see members spreading the message about the importance of voting, fighting for a better world and a better democracy, and empowering others with crucial information about getting out to vote.

To that end, we at the HPA do not endorse any candidates. If wizard activists wish to canvass for a specific candidate, they should feel empowered to do so, but it should not be an official HPA activity.

Online, there will be a Global Chapters

Democracy Forum Livestream which will feature Chapter Organizers from the United States, Brazil, Canada, Scotland, India, Netherlands, Scotland, and other countries chatting about what democracy and governing look like in each country. Additionally, we will be publishing a voting rights series on Medium which will explore issues surrounding the right to vote in the United States. Some topics covered will include how the Voting Rights Act has been diminished; how racism, classism, ableism, ageism, the prison-industrial complex, and anti-immigrant sentiment are used to keep people from voting; actions we can take to dismantle barriers; various attitudes about voting; and the proposal to make Election Day a national holiday. This series will offer global perspectives as well so we can learn a bit about other systems of democracy.

HOP ON THE KNIGHT BUS

Have you ever wanted to stick your wand in the air and catch the Knight Bus? On Election Day, November 8, we are encouraging wizard activists everywhere to be the Knight Bus by providing rides to the polls (safely). We want to bring as many people as possible from communities, cities, and college campuses to their polling places. Connect with a local “ride to the poll” organization or partner with your high school or university and rent a “Knight Bus” to shuttle students to the polls. We encourage creativity by decking out your Knight Bus in decorations, playing fun music on it, and cheering on riders. Basically, the goal of the Be the Knight Bus activities is to make voting fun, exciting, and accessible.

Not feeling like cosplaying a big, violently purple triple-decker bus? You can function as a Trolley Cart at your local polling place. Encourage voters

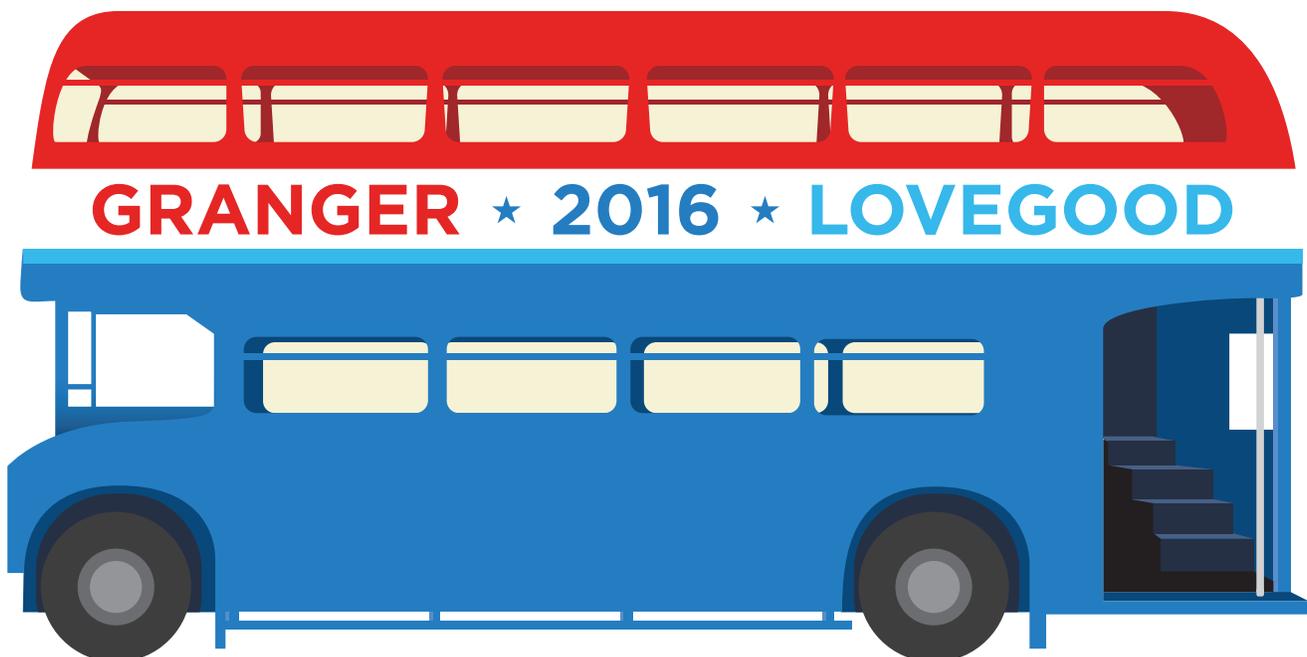
to stay in line and vote by handing out snacks or water, hosting a mini-Quidditch game, or playing some wizard rock music. Remember, promoting particular candidates or issues at the polling place is illegal, so all actions are about nonpartisan fun and making the mood lighthearted.

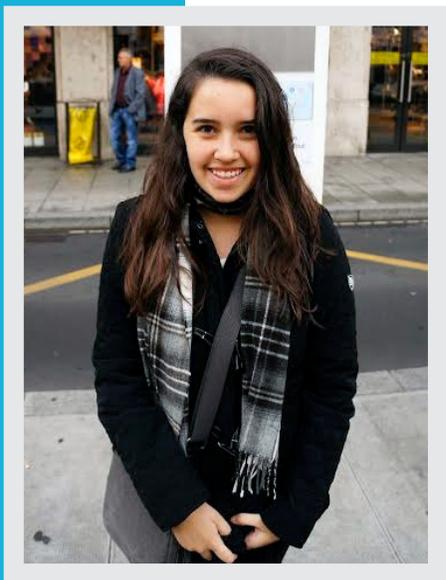
If you don't have the ability to participate in the Be the Knight Bus or Trolley Cart initiatives, there are other ways to help! Use signs, banners, school announcements, and social media to get out messages such as “Today's the Day” or “Hermione says, 'GO VOTE'” Or support our annual fall fundraiser, which will be taking place in September.

When casting a spell, the word and your intent are powerful. In the muggle world, we each have a powerful voice when we choose to cast a vote. We of the Harry Potter generation must gather together against Voldemort and the

Death Eaters, those who thrive on chaos and are unable to comprehend of the power of love, compassion, and empathy. When we turn our values into actions, we fight back against the Death Eaters and the Horcruxes of inequality, poor or missing representation, lack of access to basic needs like healthcare and food, violence against those who are protecting themselves or are fighting in the name of justice, and much more. We at the HPA implore you to use your power to cast a spell and to make the world better with the power of your vote. In the darkest of times, one must only remember to turn on the light. Your vote is a strong and meaningful *Lumos*. ⚡

Check out the [Wizard Rock the Vote content at Medium.com/@TheHPAlliance](#), and be sure to keep up on the campaign by following us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook \(@TheHPAlliance\)](#).





SARA MORTENSEN

EXEMPLIFIES HUFFLEPUFF IDEALS

by Heather Linde

“Sara’s a fantastic volunteer; (she’s) always willing to jump in and help on anything! Over the last year-ish, I’ve seen her blossom as a leader and project manager, and her eager spirit is such a blast to have on staff. Sara is a gem, and I feel lucky to have her here!”

—Katie Bowers, Campaigns Director

“Sara has been doing a fantastic job keeping senior staff up to date with movements in mental health advocacy and legislation for many months now. Her work has increased our awareness of how mental health intersects with some of the most important issues of our time.”

—Matt Maggiacomo, Executive Director

These are just a few of the great things people have to say about Sara Mortensen, the HPA’s Research Team Leader. She began as a Researcher for mental health awareness and advocacy, which includes sending regular reports to the Campaigns department and Senior Staff on current news and issues surrounding the subject. In addition to that position, she recently accepted the role of Research Team Lead, taking on managing the Research Team, keeping the team motivated and engaged, as well as contributing to the development of upcoming projects for the team.

Although Sara had known about the HPA for a while, she really became aware its work after watching the Vlogbrothers in 2013. After attending LeakyCon in 2014, she engaged in the work the HPA was doing by becoming a wizard activist. A few months later, she applied for a volunteer position; it was one of the best

decisions she’s ever made, she says.

Sara’s favorite thing about being involved with the HPA is the sense community and the value it puts on kindness, making it easy to interact with others involved in the organization. Even for someone who has a hard time in social situations, everything about it is a positive experience, and the fact that everyone has many of the same interests doesn’t hurt, either!

Because Sara is passionate about literacy and reading, Accio Books! is Sara’s favorite campaign. She enjoyed her work totaling the House Cup Points for this year’s campaign, and says what made the campaign extra special was that the books collected were sent to a school built by an HPA chapter in Uganda.

When Sara’s not working on HPA research, she works as a research assistant for the Veterans Medical Research Foundation. She started with VMRF as an unpaid intern in 2014, and it became her a full-time muggle job after her college graduation.

This Hufflepuff enjoys reading, traveling, watching movies and YouTube, as well as eating pizza. Sara keeps everyone at the HPA informed and up to date, as well as cheering others on to be their best selves, and the HPA is so glad to have her on the squad.⚡



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HPA BRINGS THE MAGIC TO ORLANDO

by Audrianna Davis

Over the last three years, Orlando has become a home away from home for the Harry Potter Alliance and the countless nerds who celebrate fandom and community at GeekyCon. Arguably our favorite event every year, GeekyCon is a way for us to connect with our long-time supporters, to meet new wizard activists, and to promote our ongoing campaigns to a community that shares our values as an organization, but what makes Mischief Management's GeekyCon truly special is the passion and energy found in its attendees. There's a willingness to learn and grow, which makes it a perfect space to share our mission.

“GeekyCon is exceptional in the atmosphere of inclusion and enthusiasm that it has cultivated, especially for people in LGBTQ+ communities,” says Executive Director, Matt Maggiacomo. “While the con doesn’t necessarily have a specific social change mission, the values conveyed in its programming and messaging choices are very consistent with the values of the HPA.”

This alignment in values makes it easy for the HPA to present programming aimed at educating and empowering young activists. Led by the HPA’s senior staff, “How to Become a Fan Activist and Save the World in 50 Easy Minutes” introduced newbies to the idea of fan activism by asking them to take the stories they were at the convention to celebrate and to look at them through a social justice lens. “Engaging in Positive Fandom” presented the HPA’s Positive Fandom Guidelines with a focus on real-world examples of both how to and how not to engage with others in fan communities. “That panel always makes me feel like positive change can and will happen in our fandom and outside of it,” says Campaigns volunteer Zik Flynn, “I always learn new things from new perspectives.”

Other programs, like Communications

Director Jackson Bird’s “Transfiguring Safe Spaces,” explored gender concepts, exploration in identity, and ways to become better allies through creating safe spaces for transgender members of our community. “Race in the Wizarding World” featured a panel entirely made up of people of color—including the HPA’s Social Media Manager, Claudia Morales—and discussed the ways race intersects with fandom experience. But this doesn’t even begin to scratch the surface of programs that promoted diversity and empowerment at GeekyCon 2016.

In addition to presenting programming, we bring our HPA vendor booth full of wizarding wares to every convention we attend. Not only is it a great way to raise funds for our wonderful campaigns, but it’s the perfect opportunity to meet our supporters and share our work with those who have yet to discover us. Our fantastic team of booth volunteers spent hours every day sharing the HPA’s mission with excited con attendees. “I love when someone hears about us for the first time and immediately wants to know how they can get involved,” says Chapters Liaison Jenni Lawler, “I love when people come up to the booth and ask if they can have more Preferred Pronoun stickers and thank us for having them.”

As their uniform, volunteers wore the “Hex the Patriarchy” tee that was featured in our Friends of the Apparating Library fundraiser. Since GeekyCon is a feminist-forward conference, the design caught the attention of attendees quickly and became the best-selling item at the booth.



“But what makes GeekyCon truly special is the passion and energy found in its attendees.”



Other hits included our “Granger/Lovegood 2016” merch lineup, just in time for election season, and our classic “Books Turn Muggles Into Wizards” tank that was perfect for the Florida heat. Attendee Mitchell Marbais even went to the annual Esther Earl Rocking Charity Ball decked out in HPA gear.

GeekyCon’s vendor room was also home to our Apparating Library, where attendees dropped off books in exchange for one to take home. Over 500 books were dropped off at the library, and attendees were so enthusiastic that there were 170 books remaining that were donated to the Orlando Youth Alliance as part of our Protego campaign. “I love when people bring in well-worn books and insist they don’t even want a book in return!” says Zik. In addition to the donated books, the HPA gave the Orlando Youth Alliance a scrapbook full of supportive messages and drawings created by GeekyCon attendees throughout the weekend.

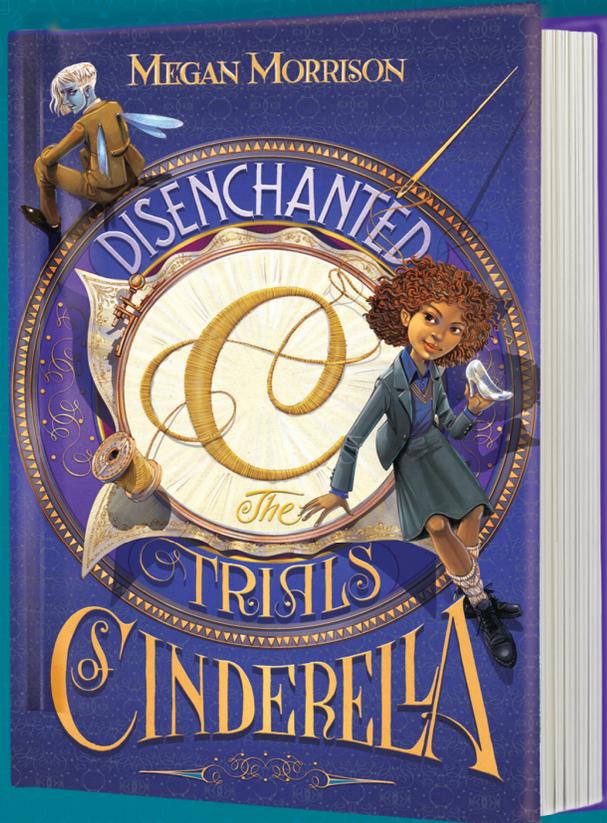
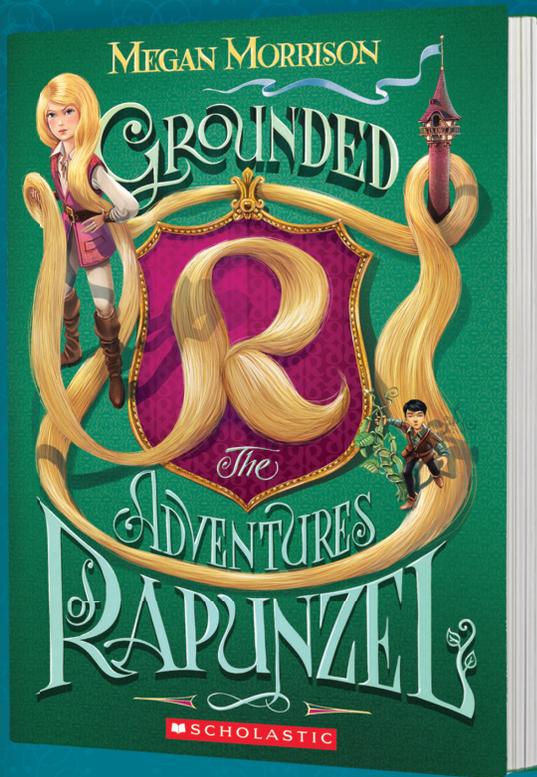
A staple of every GeekyCon is the Quidditch match between the HPA and GeekyCon staff teams. As defending champs, the

HPA knew the competition this year would be rough from a Geeky staff that was hungry for a win. HPA volunteer Thraen valiantly caught the Snitch, but it wasn’t quite enough to take down the Geeky team for a third year in a row. The HPA also went head-to-head with GeekyCon staff in a lip-sync battle. We lost for the second year in a row, despite our energetic performance of Smash Mouth’s “All Star,” but we were proud to share the same stage as the talented GeekyCon staff. “We get up there, have a good time, and hope the audience has as much fun as we do,” says Jenni. The competitions are always friendly and spirited, and it’s a fun way for both staffs to take a break from the exhaustion that comes from the long hours of working a con.

GeekyCon 2016 is over but its boundless energy, new ideas, and fresh perspectives will carry us forward until October’s conventions—NerdCon: Stories in Minneapolis and LeakyCon in Los Angeles! The HPA and its supporters are writing the story of Harry Potter for the real world and GeekyCon is an important chapter of our book. Help us continue writing our story by making a donation at thepalliance.org. ⚡



Once Upon a Tyme...



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—Melissa Anelli, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Harry, A History*

“A sprightly, imaginative romp that keeps unraveling tales as quickly as it spins them.”

—Soman Chainani, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The School for Good and Evil*

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WHY DONATE TO THE HARRY POTTER ALLIANCE?

On October 10, the Harry Potter Alliance will turn 11 years old. You know what this means: we'll be eligible for admission to Hogwarts! Young witches and wizards await this pivotal moment for years, dreaming of the day they can develop their craft with their peers, experience the magic of Hogsmeade, enjoy feasts in the Great Hall, and maybe even make their House Quidditch team. Unlike most of his peers, Harry didn't experience anticipation for the day he'd board the Hogwarts Express, because for many years he was completely shut out of the wizarding world—protected from danger, but also prevented from understanding his true identity.

There are no Dursleys keeping the HPA from reaching its true potential, only the usual budgetary constraints and funding ebbs that impact small nonprofits. Without any sure things to rely on, we often turn to our members to lift us up and keep us going. Ultimately, our work is made possible by small contributions, whether it's a T-shirt bought at a conference or a \$25 donation made through our website. Every time a person decides to pitch in what they can, we are that much more capable of turning fans into heroes.

On our eleventh birthday, we're once again looking inward and asking ourselves how we can take this movement to the next level.

It all starts with your support.

Visit thehpalliance.org/donate, pitch in what you can, and help us kick off another new year of transformative work in fan activism!

Join a Harry Potter Alliance **DONOR SOCIETY**

Support the initiatives highlighted in this issue and many more by joining an HPA donor society. As a thank you for your annual contribution, you'll get early access to new merchandise, exclusive invitations to HPA webinars and events, a holiday card, and at the Auror level and above, a complimentary subscription to this magazine, the WAND. Join with a generous donation at thehpalliance.org/donate!

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PROTEGO

CASTS A POWERFUL SHIELD CHARM

by Marigrace Angelo

On June 1, the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA) launched Protego, a campaign to make the world better for the transgender community by promoting equal rights and safe spaces. Like its namesake spell, Protego is a real-life shield of protection for trans people against the Dark Arts. At the beginning of the campaign, the HPA asked you to cast a powerful shield spell for the trans community, and you did not let us down. You stepped up and joined our ranks as Aurors. You recruited new people to fight for trans justice by sharing campaign resources like our Protego toolkit. You researched and educated yourself in order to become more inclusive. You explored and shared media created by transgender persons. And most importantly, you created and defended safe spaces both online and IRL.

At conventions across the United States, the HPA had over 2,500 people make in-person actions to support trans rights; actions such as signing petitions, tweeting support, and

sending postcards. We mailed over 1,000 postcards and emails to legislators who are enacting anti-trans laws. Many of these went to the governor of North Carolina, Pat McCrory, demanding him to repeal House Bill 2, the discriminatory law that prevents trans people from using the restroom that aligns with their gender identity. In an interview with PBS, Mayor Jennifer Roberts of Charlotte, North Carolina called it “...literally the most anti-LGBT legislation in the country.”

We weren't the only ones to send Howlers to Governor Pat McCrory, however. Well-known bands and musicians such as Bruce Springsteen, Maroon 5, Pearl Jam, Nick Jonas, and Demi Lovato cancelled their North Carolina tour stops; local North Carolina musicians held a “Stand Against HB2” benefit concert; and perhaps most prominently, the NBA pulled their 2017 All-Star Game out of Charlotte. To show our support for this decision, our Aurors—300 HPA supporters who pledged to make weekly Protego actions—sent owls to the NBA urging them to remain resilient while opposing HB2.

Unfortunately, Governor McCrory refuses to back down under these pressures. In a move only Umbridge would applaud, he reallocated \$500,000 of North Carolina's Emergency Response and Disaster Relief Fund toward a fund to cover legal costs incurred while defending this unjust law. Thankfully, our team of Aurors has support from the Order of the Phoenix; Lambda Legal and the ACLU are standing strong in their commitment to fight for trans rights in North Carolina and to repeal the unconstitutional HB2.

The hub of the action was the Protego Advocacy Center, a virtual portal to guide Aurors and wizard activists in their mission to affect change no matter where they live. Here people could find specific pieces of legislation across North America to focus their advocacy efforts on.

In addition to supporting pro-trans legislation, our Aurors and wizard activists took specific actions in their local communities to promote trans rights. Guided by the Protego toolkit, supporters advocated for transgender health-care access and campaigned for gender neutral

bathrooms at schools and workplaces. HPA chapters joined in by passing out “I’ll Go With You” buttons, Preferred Pronoun stickers, and Protego bookmarks at bake sales and *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* book release parties. And over 6,000 people read and shared our Protego series on Medium, which featured stories written by members of the trans community. The Protego toolkit even outlined individual actions to make. In the words of one Auror “I kindly corrected others at my college of someone’s preferred pronouns and what they meant.” Everyone was encouraged to report their actions to the Protego Defense Report.

Halfway through June we learned a horrifying reality: that sometimes even the strongest protective enchantments can be cracked. The tragedy in Orlando left our shield spells shattered and our community shaken to the core. The attack on the Pulse nightclub invaded a safe space for LGBTQ people of color on a night when a trans-Latina performer was headlining. But like those fighting in the

Battle of Hogwarts, we did not let this tragedy hinder our fight for justice. We held each other close, rallied around our love for one another, and cast *Protego* stronger and wider than ever before.

In the wake of the Orlando tragedy we created Protego Orlando, a resource for Aurors and wizard activists seeking to face violence with love. To show solidarity within our communities and to send a message to our local leaders that trans-equality matters, we attended peaceful marches. One Auror described a scene in their report, saying “We were quite far back in the march, but also one of the few banner carriers that made any discernible noise through shouting slogans and waving flags.” And most importantly, we sent our love and

Lumos to the Orlando community by supporting those directly impacted by the shootings. Protego Orlando featured links to blood drives, victims’ support funds, and educational sites. At Orlando’s GeekyCon, we organized a community created scrapbook of supportive messages for trans and nonbinary-gender teens who work with the Orlando Youth Alliance, as well as donating 170 books to them.

Even though Protego has wrapped up, the fight continues. After all, the shield charm cast on Hogwarts castle wasn’t comprised of just one person’s incantation, but rather hundreds of wizards working together as one.

So keep your wands up, and remember: the weapon we have is love. ⚡

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RAP BATTLE FOR AMERICA



**JED
"THE PREZ"
BARTLET**

VS

**ALEXANDER
"THE IMMIGRANT"
HAMILTON**



Exclusive Ringside
Coverage by
the WAND



November 8, 2016

★ ★ ★ LIVE in Lin-Manuel Miranda's Dreams! ★ ★ ★



Dear Rita

The WAND is pleased to present a new feature written by a well-known wizarding journalist. Wearing a new editorial hat, Rita Skeeter will answer your questions about life, love, work, and any other issues on which you'd like her advice. Send your query for Rita to WAND@theHPalliance.org, and the answer may appear in a future issue.

Dear Rita,

I know that perhaps it is a bit of a frivolous problem, but I also understand that you have an appreciation for the famous and the fabulous, and therefore you might understand my sorrow. I am heartbroken that I was unable to see Lin-Manuel Miranda perform in **Hamilton**. I know that he plans on coming back to the show on occasion, but it won't be the same as the original cast production. Portions of the cast will also be gone, or there may be an entirely new cast—not to mention that he cut off that precious ponytail! How is anyone supposed to get through a production of **Hamilton**, even one featuring Lin, without those luscious locks?

It just feels like I missed the opportunity to see something huge, perhaps the most incredible thing to happen on Broadway during my lifetime. Please, Rita, tell me how do I move on from this broken dream?

Sincerely,
Kiss Today Goodbye

Dear Kiss,

Let me assure you, I understand your anguish. Ever since that famous witch Delilah feasted her eyes on Sampson's "luscious locks," a fine head of hair has been the source of agonized longing for many, including this reporter. Even that halfwit Gilderoy Lockhart still gets his fair share of attention because of his fine head of hair. Does he dye it? Does he know how to read the instructions on the box? And who helps him? But I digress. I believe the greater point is that you feel utterly devastated by missing out on the theater event of your generation.

Why, it seems like only yesterday, not 1976, when I was a young ~~20-something~~ teen reporter covering that smash hit from across the pond *A Chorus Line*. Why, I'd be in the West End every night scuttling about the stage door waiting for a scoop. New Yorkers and Londoners alike flocked to it like doxies on dusty curtains. A person couldn't turn around without hearing "What I Did for Love" or "One" blaring from a radio or being bleated off-key by a wannabe musical thespian. Just like *Hamilton*, *A Chorus Line* won a shed-load of Tony Awards, including Best Musical, and the Pulitzer Prize. No one thought there'd be another like it, but then came *Phantom of the Opera*, and then *Rent*, and then *Les Misérables*, and now *Hamilton*. Well, perhaps *Phantom* should be removed from that list.

My point is that this sort of event happens about every 10 years. Next time it does, *jump on it!* In the meantime, don't wait for Lin-Manuel Miranda to show up at your door and give you a private performance. (Although, if that tall drink of water who plays Thomas Jefferson shows up at your door, direct him my way. Will you?) Go! Get yourself to the room where it happens! I'm sure that the next few Alexander Hamiltons who fill Mr. Miranda's buckled shoes will have equally fetching locks. Grab that powdered ponytail now, before it's on its fifteenth touring run and it looks like a souvenir that Dolores Umbridge brought back from her extended "vacation" in the Forbidden Forest.

Or, if all else fails, you *could* break into Gringotts. The goblins there assure me that Mr. Miranda's tweet on June 16 was no joke, and a film featuring the full original cast is located there, but who knows when it will see the light of day? By the way, do you know how much weight a beetle can carry?

ZOO CITY APPAREL: DRESSING WIZARDS SINCE 2013

by Maggie Brevig

Meet Chris Johnson, founder and owner of Zoo City Apparel, the screen-printing and design shop responsible for the HPA's merch and a major donor.

MB: How did Zoo City Apparel get its start?

CJ: I started Zoo City Apparel in 2006. I (had) just arrived in Missoula, Montana and wanted to stay here. After working three jobs for quite some time, I decided to do something on my own because I figured that was my best go at finding something sustainable to let me stay here. I started as a street vendor, and I did small orders with really limited runs of shirt designs that I'd sell at the street corner. I was still bicycle-powered at that time so I'd ride around with my bike trailer. People became interested in doing custom work, and from there it grew into a business where we did retail stuff and also did custom orders.

We opened up a bricks-and-mortar store around 2009 and also had a stand-alone print shop. We ended up staying at that place about two years, and at that point, we decided to focus primarily on custom printing for other people. Once we made that turn, things grew a lot for us.

MB: What is the most rewarding part about the work you do?

CJ: The most most rewarding part for me is getting people a design and a wearable product that's what they want and also gets the job done. Every piece of art we make has a function.

Everything that we do is fundraiser or helps somebody get their art onto a product that they can sell. The HPA is a great example because we do a lot of really cool things that are low in cost. I love when we're on budget with the client, (but) we're happy with what we're making and the shirt is something that I would personally wear.

MB: What is the impact of Zoo City's commitment to local sourcing, production, and printing?

CJ: It's just Buying Local 101: More of that dollar stays here. It stays with our employees who spend it here; it stays with vendors that we use within the state, region, or country. On a larger scale, most of our inks are made in the States, but the components come from all over the world. Even when you buy a T-shirt from American Apparel, it's not all American-made cotton. It's very valuable cotton and it gets bought up very quickly on the market because of its USDA grading. So even an American-made shirt might be a combination of cottons from India, Egypt, and Texas.

Zooming back in locally, one of the best things that we do is that we don't advertise; we're word-of-mouth almost exclusively. We earmark for donations what would normally be a small advertising budget, and we donate a

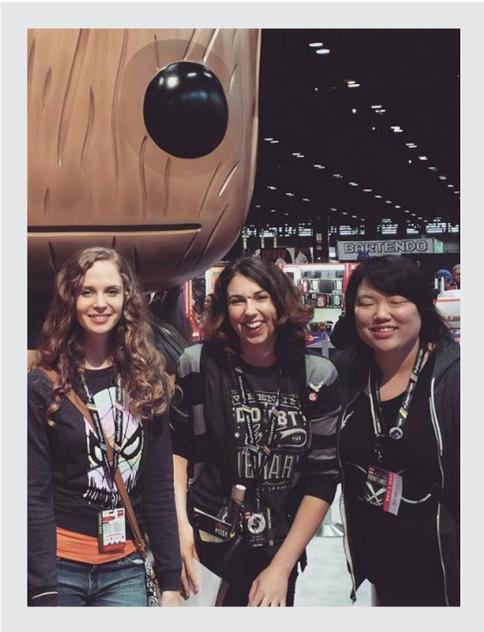
large percentage of our net profit to local nonprofits here.

MB: What does environmental sustainability and responsibility mean to you and Zoo City?

CJ: First, it means common sense. It's using less to start with. Reusing everything you can before it leaves your shop—before you even recycle it. And minimizing the things you do have to throw away. I think we do a great job with that. We put out very little trash. We reuse defective T-shirts for test-print material, and then again for all our wipe-down rags, because there's a lot of wiping down in the (printing) process.

The second part of the picture is sourcing your materials. We can't persuade everyone to use US-made, organic cotton T-shirts with water-based inks, but we try. Traditional inks are loaded with PVC, and that's an obviously bad thing for the environment.

The third component is using (green) technology where appropriate. We're not a company of the size that can buy the latest and greatest, and there's not a whole lot of that in our industry. We recently switched from metal to LED exposure because it's adequate for our needs, and it has gotten rid of a huge waste product. It also reduces our power consumption in that department by about



80 percent. We (recently) eliminated film from our process. Now, we generate our positives directly onto our screen with a wax-based system, so our only waste product is a small amount of wax, versus ink, film, and all that stuff that would go into a landfill because it can't (be) recycled locally.

MB: The HPA loves to see businesses proudly supporting their workers with fair wages and good working conditions. Tell us about Zoo City as an employer.

CJ: We grew a lot in the last few years. We basically doubled, and then tripled that double—so we grew from a staff of 3 or 4 to a staff of 10 to 12. And most of them are full-time positions. A big part of that was evaluating. For the last 10 years, all of the profit has gone directly back into the company, either to improve our environment or technique, or to increase wages. It really is up to our workers, if they want to be more efficient or better, they get paid more. We are all in it together in that sense.

Another side of it has been making sure that we are (paying) good cost-of-living wages, and according to MIT we are, but they should be higher—I want to see my guys making more. I don't want them to just be getting by; I want them to be able to generate savings. To help with that doesn't always mean higher wages. We've put in a gold-level health-care plan with a very low deductible, and we've introduced a matching retirement plan, as well.

MB: How have your customers and community responded to Zoo City's values and way of doing business?

CJ: It kind of varies with clients: some are very invested in the environmental side of it, some aren't. Most are interested in it to a point. Our main job is to provide good service that's on budget, so a lot of that happens behind the scenes. In general, it's nice to go

where you know they're gonna not only do what you need, but they're going to do it in the best way (it) could possibly be done. You don't have to worry about those details, it's going to be taken care of—that's a huge part of what we do overall—but if you want to know, we're super transparent. They (the clients) can walk through the entire process with us....probably more than they want to know!

MB: Can you tell me about the creative process when working with customers?

CJ: The creative process involves everyone in the shop. It starts with two people on our customer service team. They'll sit down and talk with you about what your project is, and what its purpose is—is it a T-shirt or a hat? Then we look at the budget. If the client has a design, (we) try to match it up with the best product for that design and the best possible way to print it. If they don't have a design, our art department whips something up that really works for the job: the right color, the right look, and can print well on the right type of fabric. So there's a lot of back and forth that goes on there, and sometimes we'll go through a lot of revisions, sometimes not. We make some mock-ups and once that gets approved, it goes into production.

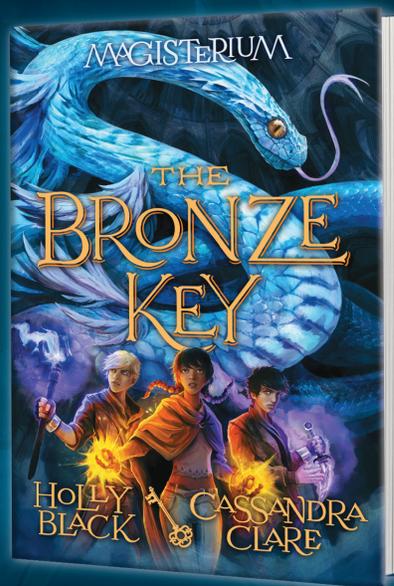
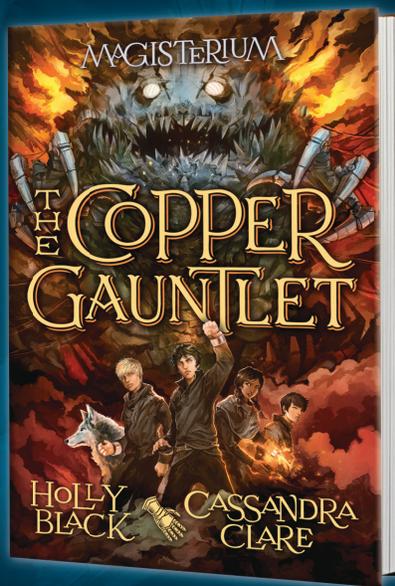
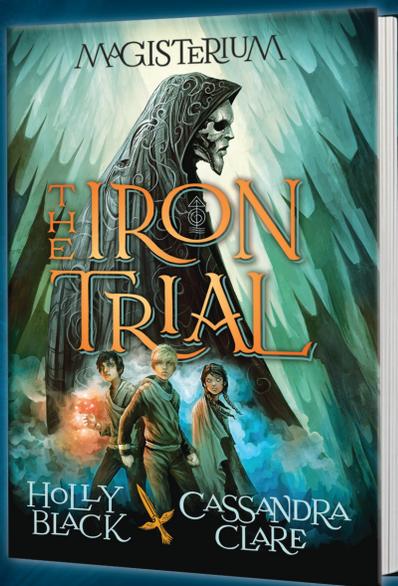
MB: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

CJ: We really embrace the fact that what we do is art. It's part production, part trade, but it's also part art. There are inherent parts of this process that nothing but a skilled human touch can achieve. I like that. That makes it a challenge every day, but it's something that defines us overall in that we do embrace that. And when you work with us, you go along for that ride! ⚡



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