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Mind & Body: Fitness

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Also: Travel, Fiction, From The Heart, Horoscopes, Pride Supplement

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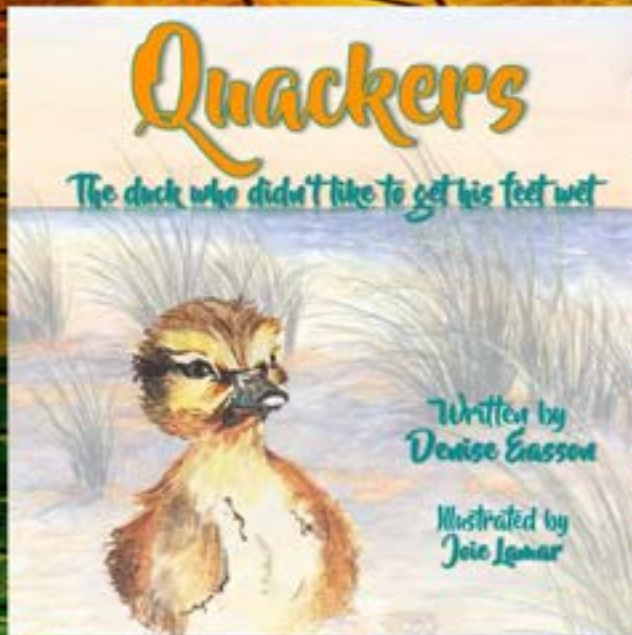
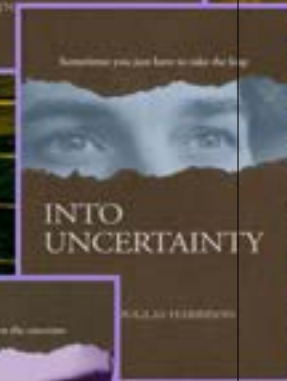
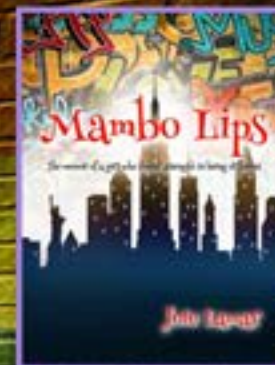
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From the **Publisher**



Hey all, Happy Pride! It's the season to be out and super proud!

I like to think of myself as someone aware of the value of staying fit and healthy. This issue is about fitness, and I do enjoy keeping up with workouts as much as my schedule allows. In the past I have been a member of a few different gyms over the years, and I had personal trainers for certain periods. Now, I workout at home with some simple equipment. I have a treadmill (for winter), I use those stretchy things (can't tell you what they are called lol) for arms, legs, back, etc, and I have jumping ropes and some weights. That's it. I keep it simple so that I can work out fast whenever I find a bit of time.

As I mentioned in the last issue, I am healthy in general. I am very well read on nutrients, food, holistic approach, herbs and spices for medicine, meditation and relaxation advice, and all that. I understand the principles of a healthy mind, body, and spirit.

So what else? Pride is HERE. It is back in person, and if it is any indication from the conversation we had with Pride Toronto ED Sherwin Modeste on our show *The Queer Bunch*, this is going to be ONE AWESOME

PRIDE. INspired Media co-produces *The Queer Bunch*, and I co-host. You can find it on Facebook and YouTube.

What am I doing for Pride you ask? I am hoping to drop by a few community parties and events, see some friends for drinks and diners, and hang out in The Village. Also, I am performing this year on the Middle Eastern stage called Yalla Bara (Sunday June 26, 3pm to 6pm), under my stage name "el Hashem", with some other wonderful artists from that part of the world, and fantastic DJs playing songs that will make you shimmy, and shake your hips. Drop by and say hello.

Back when I was in my 20s, and really into the clubbing scene and big parties, getting ready for Pride consisted of working out like mad for months leading up to it, going on a salad diet, hitting the tanning beds (what was I thinking), and shopping for different outfit changes. Now, I enjoy a more quieter celebration.

Stay safe and enjoy your Pride.

Antoine Elhashem
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summerplay!

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Cover Model @NathanielBaconX Nathaniel Bacon is a Toronto theatre star and Canadian film & television actor. He was born in Lindsay, Ontario and raised in the rural countryside of the Kawartha Lakes. After receiving a BA in Theatre from the University of Toronto and a diploma in Acting from Sheridan College, Nathaniel worked substantially as a model in fashion shows and print campaigns. He’s a Broadway World (Toronto) Award-winner for Best Actor (musical) who has starred in many plays (including “Hedwig And The Angry Inch” and “The Rocky Horror Show”) and appeared on many TV shows (including “The Expanse”, “Shadowhunters” and “Saving Hope”). He most recently appeared on “Pink Is In” and “The Kids In The Hall”. His next project is the feature film “Wickensburg”.

Published by

INspired Media Inc.

Operating INspiredcreative (www.inspiredcreative.ca), and publishers of The Pink Pages Directory, PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, and The Local Biz Magazine.

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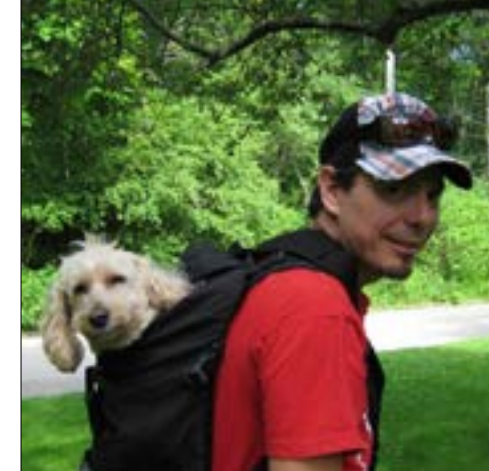
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From the Editor



Greetings and salutations!

It’s summer, and that means getting back outdoors. In this issue we continue with the focus being on being the best you can be, and that includes keeping fit.

In this issue, Aaron Rothermund caught up with a few queer fitness experts (**Fenton Fong**, **Sensei James Wyatt**, **Shane MacKinnon**) to chat about how it’s often difficult to overcome obstacles such as body image issues, sexualized ideologies, and internal doubt. We learn about each individual’s own experiences, along with their tips and advice for setting and achieving your own realistic fitness goals. We’ve included Toronto’s **Savoy Howe**, founder of the *Toronto Newsgirls Boxing Club*, and all around community activist who is now offering outdoor fitness classes suited for all fitness levels.

Melissa MacMullin offers up a slew of fun fitness options suited for everyone. She chatted with Life Coach **Raia Carey** on how LGBTQ+ health is as much about the mind and soul as it is about the body. Melissa also spotlights a variety of LGBTQ+ organizations to help you stay fit, while having fun and meeting others. Everything from swimming and running, to tennis and bowling. Our *Travel* article is specifically themed around beach-life, or what we like to call, post-fitness bliss. There are so many beaches within Ontario, and we’ve highlighted a few of the best, starting with

Toronto’s own Hanlan’s Point. Our *Fiction* piece is *Run, Rose, Run* by **Dolly Parton** and **Jame Patterson**, a mystery surrounding a young female musician navigating the music industry in Nashville. Our *Hot Artist* profile is on three emerging young artists (**Renaissance**, **Ashley Beerdat**, **Brian Jiang**) from Toronto’s wonderful youth arts collective, **SKETCH**, who just celebrated their 25th anniversary. The *Community Cornerstone* column spotlights **Calgary Queer Arts Society**, which has a goal to give a voice to queer people and their stories. They also present the *Fairy Tales* film festival, *Youth Queer Media Program*, and *OutReels Allyship Education and Training Program*.

Be sure to check our quarterly Horoscopes, and our *In The City* event listings compiled by our Events Editor, **Sherry Sylvain**. The always inspiring *From The Heart* column is written by **Mychol Scully**, our Creative Director, who also designs this publication for us. As well, we have our annual **Pride Guide Supplement** of what’s hot and happening over Pride Month.

Be sure to come back and read our next two issues, which will be focused on Wellness (Autumn), and Self-Reflection (Winter).

Enjoy the read!

Bryen Dunn
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Tips and Advice from Fitness Experts

By Aaron Rothermund

Generally speaking, the LGBTQ2S+ community has a complicated relationship with body image.

Looking at billboards, watching commercials, and perusing magazines can expose us to an idealized body type that's more-often-than-not sexualized to sell products to consumers.

This often forces the queer community to place importance on fitting in with the majority while ignoring our internal needs and desires. In turn this denial of one's true self can turn to shame, and the placing of other people's needs above our own. So, how can we find a balance? We asked some local fitness experts for their tips and advice.

"Being of Asian descent I felt different from a lot of my peers. Bullies came after me for being short, slim, and gay," Fenton Fong says over Zoom. "It made me feel insecure and ashamed of myself, and I knew that if I wanted to live a happy life I would need to make some changes."

Now as a [Rehab Exercise Specialist and Certified Personal Trainer](#), Fenton Fong is actively bridging the gap between physical fitness and injury rehabilitation. "I was playing volleyball seven days

a week and working out five days a week. I started getting injuries and needed to take rehabilitation classes to understand what was happening in my body and how my body could work more efficiently," Fong admits.

After a decade of playing volleyball in a LGBTQ2S+ league, Fong left the group sport to pursue new adventures. "I started taking Aerial Straps classes," Fong relates. "At first I was excited for the physical challenge of the sport, but then I noticed I was getting injured again."

This reinforced Fong's meditation on physical fitness and rehabilitation. "I wondered how I could break down movement patterns and treat them as one cohesive field of how things worked together. If you're connected to your body you have more ability to isolate muscle groups to work more efficiently, and zero in on specific movements. When you're trying to hit a numbered goal and not staying present in the moment, other areas may strain to help compensate for the movement."

As for advice on building one's confidence, Fenton wants the queer community to celebrate themselves. He says, "You might not know it yet, but what makes you different is what makes you special and able to shine differently from the rest." His goal is to revolutionize personal training and empower clients



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to reach maximum health and fitness potential through movement, innovation, and science.

“My clients have personal reasons for coming to see me, and I try to ask questions to see what would make them happy. Then we reevaluate their personal reasons together, and try to map a holistic way to achieve those goals. If we can understand how and why we behave certain ways we can make new pathways to achieve healthy results.”

“It started when I took my first Karate class, which I’ve been doing now for 22 years,” Sensei James Wyatt tells me. “In grade nine I started having trouble in school. I was getting bullied, and I didn’t have an outlet for my thoughts and feelings. Knowing I was gay at the time, part of me thought I needed to defend myself, but emotionally and socially I needed to clear my head.”

Karate can be viewed as an aggressive sport, which can keep members of the LGBTQ2S+ community at a distance from it. Wyatt believes Karate can be a place where you can find friends and become part of something larger than ourselves. “We learn how to protect ourselves with the goal of never having to use it. Every pattern we do starts with a block, not a punch.”

Wyatt started teaching martial arts after school at a local community centre in Cambridge, Ontario.



He was certified by [CanFitPro](#) to train people in physical education, and took the Fitness and Health Promotions program at Conestoga College. Then after he graduated he opened his own full time space, the [Kazoku Martial Arts Centre](#).

“Kazoku means family in Japanese. The entire focus of my dojo is to be a safe space for everyone to work out and learn about fitness.” One of the first initiatives for Wyatt was putting up the rainbow flag up in the window where it serves a beacon for queer people looking for an inclusive place to train. Since then, KMA has been providing the trans and queer community with self-defense classes and sizzling social events.

“In Cambridge, there’s marketing to queer youth, but not a lot of support. We try to make a space where we can all come together on neutral ground and have conversations about sharing the space through physical activity. When it comes to body image Wyatt says, “if you want that perfect aesthetic you can go for it, but it calls for a very strict diet and detailed fitness program. Instead we can boost your self-esteem with fitness training, Karate sessions, and healthy nutritional choices.”

In March of 2022, Wyatt announced his plans to marry his partner Jeric, and of course invited members of KMA. By living out loud Wyatt is



able to normamlize the queer experience and give visibility to others in the community that are still unable to live openly as themselves.

“When I think back to highschool I was always better at solo stuff. I was triggered by team sports because I felt rejected,” [Shane MacKinnon](#) recalls. “I was anxious about picking teams even though I was good at sports, because I always felt I was chosen last.”

Luckily MacKinnon had been performing on stage at the prestigious *Blyth Festival* to round out his formative years, and eventually moved to Toronto to pursue that passion. Meeting [Cat Nimmo](#) of the burlesque troupe *The Scandelles*, MacKinnon was inspired to try pole dancing. Later he would perform alongside Nimmo in a series of burlesque productions at *Buddies in Bad Times Theatre*. Although he was pursuing his dream, he also noticed that substance abuse runs rampant in the queer community, club culture, and in the performing arts.

“Working as a DJ and bartender I would work late hours, wake up hung-over. I started feeling bad about myself because I couldn’t do my best work,” MacKinnon confides. “I needed to make a change and learn how to manage my mental health. It wasn’t easy. I’d become the master of the cleanse, desperately trying to control something that I had no control of.”

After realizing that he couldn’t control his addiction he started a three month cleanse that never ended, and has now been sober for over a decade.

Shane MacKinnon is now a certified personal trainer and group fitness instructor. He graduated from the Fitness and Health Promotion program at *George Brown College*, and would later go back to work within the program in the fitness assessment department.

“Last Summer we were still in the lockdown stage of the pandemic. Everything shut down including gyms,” MacKinnon recalls. He started thinking of alternative ways to train people while following the pandemic regulations, and he started the *Point Clark Boot Camp* at a family cottage on Lake Huron in August 2021.

Currently MacKinnon is back to DJing at [F45 Training](#) in Parkdale where he also works as a personal trainer and group fitness instructor. He believes that group fitness can be a way to encourage the LGBTQ2S+ community to join group sports, and that assigning genders to everything leaves people on the gender spectrum in limbo. “For so many people lifting weights is considered masculine and cardio is considered feminine,” MacKinnon says. “When I DJ at the gym I like to mess with traditionally assigned gender roles in music, because who says we can’t lift weights to Taylor Swift?”

MacKinnon believes the fitness industry is portrayed in pop culture as negative, and that we should be wary of the images that feed our brain. “We usually see two dimensional caricatures of fitness instructors,” MacKinnon says. “They tend to be full of manic energy, shout at their clients, or feel the need to body-shame them.”

Mainstream media is especially detrimental to queer people in our formative stages when we’re figuring ourselves out or feel unsure of our abilities. “Find a strong personal connection to the reason you want to make healthy changes to your life,” MacKinnon states. “People like to make definitive statements about themselves like, ‘I could never do that’ but we need to stop comparing ourselves or doubting ourselves. Staying in our comfort zone is easy because it feels safe, but if we make small changes we can achieve much more than we know.”

What I've learned from these three fitness experts is that the goal of physical fitness and recreation is to connect our brain to our body. This way we know why our body is working in a specific way, and how we can move with ease to create less chaotic environments for painful injuries. Instead of being results focused we can be mindful of staying present in the process to learn more about our bodies and how they work. These results will not only help us look good, but will have us feeling great too!

Aaron Rothermund is a freelance writer, theatre creator, and filmmaker. Aaron has worked on articles for The Courier, Culture Days, theBUZZ, and PinkPlayMags. Everyone I know who knows Savoy Howe knows that she started Toronto's first women's boxing gym, the Toronto Newsgirls Boxing Club. It's not just a story of women wanting to learn and practice boxing, it's a story of community building.



Everyone I know who knows Savoy Howe knows that she started Toronto's first women's boxing gym, the Toronto Newsgirls Boxing Club. It's not just a story of women wanting to learn and practice boxing, it's a story of community building.

She told me how every time she would fight, just before the first round she would stand in the ring thinking "Oh my God, what am I doing?" and go in and get it done – not doubting herself so much as thinking "Wow, I guess I'm really doing this – it's going to be tough!" Which is how she approaches life.

Savoy is also excellent at roller blading, learning by commuting to school, zooming down Yonge Street at high speed, and timing the lights perfectly. Knowing this, a friend of hers introduced her to Rick, a fundraiser for the **Toronto People with AIDS Foundation**. When they met, he said, "We're going to skate around central Ontario and go into schools and talk to students about HIV/AIDS. You should come with us."

He went on to tell her that Rollerblade was going to sponsor the project. It sounded too good to be true,



Photo: Savoy Howe by Lisa Macintosh

but the next week they went to the Rollerblade office and left with brand new skates and safety gear. They were one step closer, but Savoy was still skeptical. "At least I've got new equipment," she thought, "but this isn't going to happen."

Off they went. In the end they skated from Toronto to Hamilton, Sudbury, North Bay, Ottawa, Kingston and back to Toronto, staying in hotels and campgrounds along the way. Every day they would stop at schools to speak. In the end, they skated for 21 days and over 1,600 kilometres.

"Since the pandemic we've been without a dedicated space. We're training in the parks and as far as having a roof in the future, we are rolling with the punches," says Howe. You can follow Toronto Newsgirls Boxing Club on [Facebook](#) for updates and class schedules.

Todd Tyrle's blog, [Go Outside Today](#), is about trying to go out and do something every day, and covers cooking, eating, cycling, running, and more, in English and occasionally Hindi.



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Fit Fun for Everyone

Finding Health and Happiness Beyond the Gym

By Melissa MacMullin

There's a plethora of fitness alternatives and queer-friendly activities to help prioritize your wellness in a way that suits you best.

To help navigate your way through, we've compiled a list for you. Plus Toronto's own Life Coach, [Raia Carey](#), sheds light on how LGBTQ+ health is as much about the mind and soul as it is about the body.

Wellness isn't just about gym memberships; it's the full integration and daily practice of incorporating healthier habits, making better choices, and instilling a conscious effort within oneself to wake up and thrive instead of just survive. Exercising and taking care of one's self doesn't have to feel daunting or gruelling. Whether you're wanting to look and feel better, combat the not-so-pleasant effects of aging, work through mobility challenges or chronic illness, or simply wanting to have fun and be happier – everyone has the right to choose and embrace their

own path to a better, healthier, more empowered version of themselves.

"I think wellness should be and can be accessible to anyone and everyone because it looks different for every single person, and it's important for each person to be able to tap into and understand what works for them," Coach Carey explains. Toronto-based Carey is a 3x Certified Life Coach and Motivational Speaker who's passionate about helping people fire up their confidence and reconnect to self-love.

"I think wellness for people in the 2LGBTQIA is so important because historically, we've been discriminated against and left out. Being able to honour yourself, take care of yourself, and build that strong foundation of self-love, self-compassion, and self-trust, allows us to show up in a world that hasn't always supported us, or accepted us."

There's a wide variety of accepting and fun-for-all opportunities available for the LGBTQ+ community to get mentally and physically fit, right here in Toronto.

[Toronto Historical Bowling Society](#)

Strike a pose! Formed in 1983, the *Toronto Historical Bowling Society* was created by a group of gay people from the GTA. Now, they're one of the world's largest leagues with over 300 bowlers. Everyone who is either a member of the LGBTQ+ community or an ally is welcome to join, and all bowling averages are accepted! Don't be afraid if you're a gutter ball queen, it's about having fun and staying active.

[Rainbow Ballroom Toronto](#)

Sashay your way into a ballroom dancin' kind of day with lessons! *Rainbow Ballroom Toronto* is open to all LGBTQ+ individuals and allies looking to learn various types of ballroom dancing. It's partnered but you can come on your own and get matched up on the spot. They're currently running classes at *The 519* in the heart of the Village. It might be time to dust off those dancing shoes.

[The Downtown Swim Club](#)

Water you waiting for? Dive right into an LGBTQ+ swim club! Founded in 1987 by Gerry Oxford and Bill Eadie of the 1986 Gay Games, *The Downtown Swim Club* welcomes all levels of swimmers, but maybe leave the water wings at home. Weekly practices each have a different focus, but the common theme every week is to train and enhance performance and fitness.

[Toronto Gay and Lesbian Tennis Association](#)

Serve it, smash it, love it. Ace, ace baby! An inclusive and diverse tennis organization with over 200 participating members that's been going strong for more than 30 years, TGLA is open to anyone and everyone regardless of skill level. They offer competitive and recreation tennis activities plus social events throughout the year. Go grab your balls!

[FrontRunners](#)

Ready, set, go! Since 1987, *FrontRunners*, the LGBTQ+ running club, has been organizing competitive and recreational running activities for runners of all abilities. Health and friendship are two key components. Multiple days a week, members meet up either in the morning or evening for a run together and even hang out for a coffee, drink, or food afterwards.

[Toronto Rainbowlers](#)

Lawn bowling, it's a thing! The *Toronto Rainbowlers* welcomes players of all skill levels. Just come with a love for bowling on the beautiful green spaces of East York. Best of all, you can join any time during the bowling season, with games every Wednesday. For newbies, they'll teach lawn bowling basics, so if you've never played, don't be afraid. Go have some fabulous summer fun on the greens.

[Mindfulness Meditation](#)

Let's get it OM! *Mindfulness Meditation* at *The 519* is free and drop-ins are encouraged, but are still being held virtually for the time being. Enlighten your mind, body, and soul in this welcoming online space with community meditation practitioners. If you're ready for a more peaceful and happier life, and a healthier outlook on the present moment, this is for you.

Coach Carey is also a fan of meditation for a healthy mind and body connection. "When it feels like I've got hundreds of tabs open in my brain, meditation allows me to quiet my mind and see things more clearly. It helps me feel the best I can be and ensure that I'm delivering from my best self. Confidence comes from within. I think prioritizing your health and wellness can empower you to be more confident and exude that confidence and self-esteem in daily life."

At the end of the day, any amount of physical activity can help to improve strength, endurance, and energy. Exercise of any kind is a powerful tool for physical and mental health, producing an array of positive results. Keep moving your body, keep opening your mind, and keep taking care of you.

Learn more about Coach Raia Carey and the services she offers [here](#).

Melissa MacMullin is a freelance content writer and journalist for leading publications. A strong distinct queer Canadian voice with pride and purpose.



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Pride 2022 Listings

June 24 @ 7 pm

Trans Rally & March Church St & Hayden St

One of the largest, most exciting Pride events in the world. Toronto's Trans Rally and March is a welcoming space for all Trans people, non-binary people, friends of, and allies who rally and march together.

June 24 @ 9 pm to 11 pm

Opening Ceremony: Spice It Up! TD Main Stage 1 Dundas St E.

Icons, Legends, and Queens are about to descend on the Pride 2022 Stages and they're opening up the weekend right! The Legendary DJ Blackcat will start you off, then the Dancehall Queen, SPICE will hit the stage to spice things up!

June 25 @ 1:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Sober Pride "The Oasis"

Paul Kane House Parkette 58 Wellesley St E,
The Oasis offers a refuge and quiet experience away from the business of the festival. A garden theme, misting tent, comfy lounge furniture, eclectic and colourful décor.

June 25 @ 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

brOWN//out

OLG Central Stage 512 Church St,
brOWN//out is a community space for "South Asian" queer and trans artists: singers, poets, dancers, drag and burlesque artists, musicians and more. Influenced and supported by a multitude of artists, organizers, agitators, dreamers and do-ers, curated by Anu Radha (she/her).

June 25 @ 2 pm

Dyke Rally & Dyke March

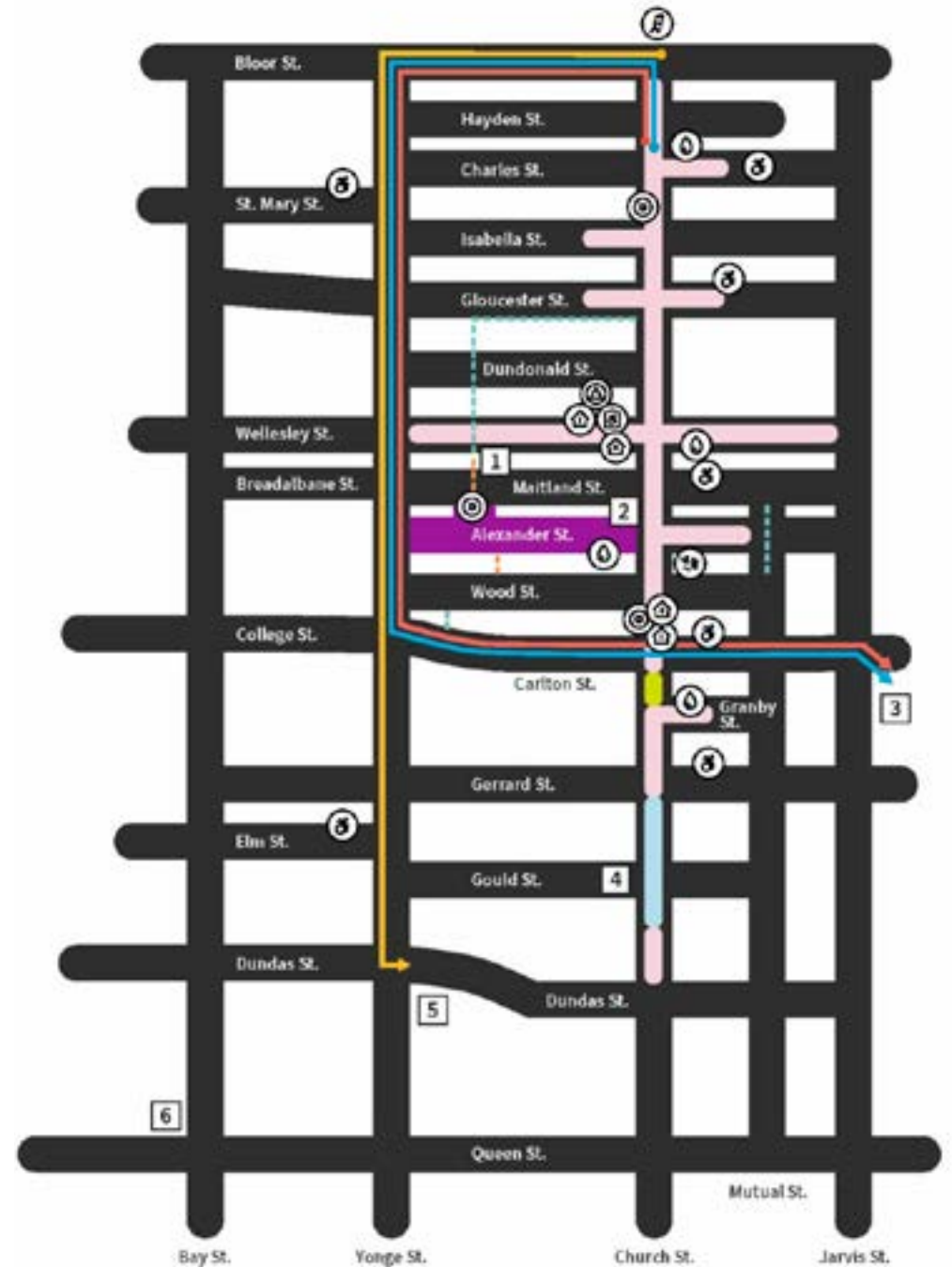
Starting Point - Charles and Church St
The Toronto Dyke March welcomes all self-identified Dykes, Trans Dykes, non-binary Dykes and any other Dyke to join. Ending in Allan Garden 160 Gerrard St E to join the Dyke Pride After Party.

June 25 @ 6:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Youth Pride

Church Street Junior Public School 83 Alexander St.
Organized by the Youth Advisory Committee presenting the NEXT generation of youth excellence to Pride. Experience amazing performances, with special guests, games and prizes! Skate and dance the night away!

1 Bud Light Seltzer Wellesley Stage	2 OLG Central Stage	3 Allan Gardens	4 Rogers South Stage	5 TD Main Stage	6 Nathan Phillips Square
Dyke March	Pride Parade	Trans Pride March	Art Zone	Food Zone	StreetFair
Wellness Zone	Accessible Alternate Route	Partially Accessible Route	Accessibility Hub	DJ Riser	Family Pride
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The Pathway Program will provide 15 weeks foundational electrical skills training and arrange for 10 weeks job placement with IBEW employers, for each participant.

For more details, please visit electricpathway353.ca




June 25 @ 8:00 pm - 12:00 am
Pride On The Lake
Empress of Canada Boat Cruise Empress of
Canada Boat Cruise
Hosted in honour of our LGBTQ2S+
Community, supporting and celebrating
Toronto's pride month. Come on out and
enjoy live music, dancers, guest performances
and dinner.

June 26 @ 1:00 pm - 11:00 pm
Queer Skate Jam
Nathan Phillips Square 100 Queen St W.
Queer Skate Toronto (QST) is back and
hosting this skate jam to include lessons,
music, and special skateboarding features.

June 26 @ 1:00 pm - 11:00 pm
Blockorama: Together Again
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June 26 @ 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm
2Spirit Pride
Allan Garden 160 Gerrard St E.
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June 26 @ 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Pride Parade
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June 26 @ 7:00 pm - 11:00 pm
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This project has been made possible by a grant from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.



Indigenous 2-Spirit

Pride Around the WORLD

The covid situation makes it unpredictable what Pride 2022 will look like. At the moment the expectation is events can take place. But most probably there will be still limitations and restrictions. Please review location websites for current updates.

NYC Pride

June 26, 2022

www.nycpride.org/events

Seattle Pride

June 26, 2022

www.seattlepride.org

Nashville Pride

June 25 – June 26, 2022

www.nashvillepride.org/

Pride London (UK)

July 2, 2022

www.prideinlondon.org/

Long Beach Pride

July 8 – July 10, 2022

longbeachpride.com/

San Diego Pride

July 9 – July 17, 2022

www.sdpride.org

Halifax Pride Festival

July 14 – July 24, 2022

www.halifaxpride.com/

Sarnia-Lambton PrideFest

July 15 – July 17, 2022

diversityed.ca/sarnia-lambton-pridefest

Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica Pride

July 16, 2022

gaymanuelantonio.wordpress.com/manuel-antonio-pride/

Vancouver Gay Pride

July 31, 2022

vancouverpride.ca/festival-parade/pride-parade/

2022 Montréal Pride

August 1 – August 7, 2022

www.fiertemtl.com/en/festival/parade/

Reykjavík, Iceland Pride

August 2 – August 7, 2022

hinsegindagar.is/en/

Amsterdam Pride

August 5 – August 7, 2022

www.amsterdamgaypride.nl/

Leeds, UK Pride

August 7, 2022

www.leedspride.com/

Fierte Fredericton Pride Festival 2022

August 13 – August 21, 2022

frederictonpride.com/

Kona Hawaii Pride

September 16 – September 18, 2022

www.konapride.com/

Las Vegas Pride

October 7 – October 8, 2022

www.lasvegaspride.org/

Phoenix Pride

October 15 – October 16, 2022

phoenixpride.org/events/pride-festival/

Sydney, Australia WorldPride in 2023

February 17 – March 5, 2023

sydneyworldpride.com/

Life's a Beach in Ontario



By Bryen Dunn

Bordering four of the five Great Lakes, plus endless more sparkling freshwater lakes, Ontario is where you can find some of the nation's most scenic places to lay out a towel or set up your beach chair.

Below is a list of some of Ontario's top sand beaches to visit this summer, starting right here in Toronto.

Toronto Islands Beaches

The Toronto Islands are a collection of 15 car-free, connected islands that feature gardens, forests, parks and hidden sandy beaches. Regularly scheduled [ferry service](#) from the mainland brings you to one of three island docks in just 15 minutes. [Centre Island Beach](#) is one of the most popular, and is a great day outing for families with concession stands nearby and lifeguards on duty. [Gibraltar Point Beach](#) is a quieter spot and also offers the opportunity to check out the historic Gibraltar Point Lighthouse, built in the 1800s. [Hanlan's Point Beach](#) has a designated clothing-optional section, and has often been referred to as the "gay beach", but all are welcome.

To make the best of your time on the Islands, I'd suggest bringing a bike to get around quickly and easily.

Cobourg Beach on Lake Ontario

Located on the northern shore of Lake Ontario east of Toronto, this stunning white sand beach is the ideal summer hang. With proximity to the charming [town of Cobourg](#), as well as a bustling boardwalk along the beach, there's lots to do beyond the beach, such as the splash pad at Cobourg Beach. You can even camp overnight at the [Victoria Park Campgrounds](#) adjacent to the beach. Be sure to walk along the pier to see the historic [Cobourg East Pierhead Lighthouse](#), that gets bathed in picturesque waves every few minutes. If craving a snack, the [Beach Canteen](#) offers ice cream on hot summer days as well as a wide selection of other beach-friendly eats.

Sandbanks Dunes Beach on Lake Ontario

Part of Sandbanks Provincial Park, Sandbanks Dune Beach is easily one of Ontario's most impressive, and popular beaches. This beach feels like a tropical escape, partly because of the impressive natural

phenomenon of sand dunes. Located within [Prince Edward County](#), these massive, steep sand dunes give way to a beautiful enclave in West Lake. As the largest baymouth barrier dune in the world, the Sandbanks Dunes were created by a glacier 12,500 years ago, creating the bay known as West Lake. The white sand dunes are not just beautiful and geologically impressive, they are also the perfect habitat for thousands of migratory birds each year, making it perfect for birdwatchers. The beach is a great starting point for the many hiking trails in Sandbanks Provincial Park, and beyond. The County is known for its picturesque [vineyards](#), [farm-to-table cuisine](#), and funky accommodation options.

Wasaga Beach on Georgian Bay

As the longest freshwater beach in the world, this beautiful Blue Flag designated, white sandy beach on [Georgian Bay](#) has plenty of space to spread out and explore. From quiet, secluded beach walks to busy summer days filled with ice cream and volleyball, Wasaga Beach is the ultimate beach destination.

With 14 km of shoreline, [Wasaga Beach](#) is divided into [six different sections](#). You can reach sections one and two via the boardwalk that runs along the beach, and these are the busier, party-type hangouts. Section three allows dogs to swim, and sections four through six are less populated on busy days.

The area is also great for birdwatching or taking in local history at the [Nancy Island Historic Site](#). Rent a wave runner, launch your boat, go for a 14 km hike, or simply kick back on the beach and soak in some sun.

Canatara Beach on Lake Huron

Opening up to the bright blue waters of Lake Huron, Canatara Beach stretches along a section of the shoreline just outside of the [town of Sarnia](#). Right across the border of Michigan, this picturesque Blue Coast town is the perfect place for a family beach day. If you want a bit more adventure, [Canatara Park](#) has several playgrounds, a BMX track, plenty of hiking trails, an animal farm, and a mini train that rides kids around the park. Visitors to the beach can also go wakeboarding, sailing, kayaking, and fishing along the stunning shoreline. A few minutes' walk from the park, the [Cove swimming basin](#) is a safe and enjoyable place for a dip. As an added bonus,

Canatara Beach is a designated Blue Flag beach for its commitment to clean water and safety for swimmers.

Sauble Beach on Lake Huron

Sauble Beach has been a go-to destinations for families and the younger set for many decades. Because it's so popular, the town has taken several precautions to protect the natural environment and the community. Over the years much of the sand has washed away, but the big draw is being able to park your vehicle right on the beach. Beachgoers enjoy windsurfing, wakeboarding, fishing, sailing, and swimming in the beautiful, shallow blue [Lake Huron](#) waters.

Spruce Beach on Elliot Lake

Nestled in the secluded community of [Elliot Lake](#), this small beach is the perfect place to go on a warm summer day. The beach is famous for the rock protruding from the water, a destination to swim out to, climb, and jump off. The water in Elliot Lake is crystal clear, especially by the beach, which has a designated swimming area with lifeguards. The white sand is the perfect fodder for sandcastles or volleyball courts, and despite its size, this beach still feels spacious. [Sylvah Island](#) is just a few kilometres away, as is [Spine Beach](#).

Agawa Bay Beach on Lake Superior

Located in [Lake Superior Provincial Park](#), this beach and campground are beautiful spots from which to admire the majestic Lake Superior, from swimming and sunning to watching the sunset over the horizon. The largest of the Great Lakes, Superior is clean and refreshing, albeit a little chilly anytime of year. There are several amazing hiking trails in the park, including the [Agawa River Falls](#) hike and, of course the epic [Lake Superior Coastal Trail](#).

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities.



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SKETCH is a Toronto community arts enterprise engaging diverse young people, ages 16-29 from across Canada, who live homeless or on the margins and navigate poverty. The organization aims for a movement where young people are celebrated and engaged as culture makers, perception changers and collaborators in building creative communities. In 2021, they celebrated their 25th anniversary.

Three of their artists were recently invited to participate in the annual [Artist Project](#), to display their current works alongside hundreds of other established artists.

[Renaissance](#) creates art outside of the establishment, turning the streets of Toronto into the artist’s own blank canvas. Their “post-it notes for the people” started popping up around the city in 2020, with messages spray-painted onto boarded up buildings that read *You Are Not Your Mistakes* or *The Sky Is Falling Hold Breath & Wear Mask*. Renaissance considers them whispers to Black residents of Toronto, like a silent nod. The self-taught artist makes gestural paintings reminiscent of Basquiat on any material they can find – salvaged wood, paper, discarded mattresses – and leaves them for people to find and take for free. During the pandemic they endeavoured to turn the city into an accessible, outdoor gallery. [Instagram](#)

[Ashley Beardat](#) is a visual artist, art teacher, and community arts facilitator of Guyanese descent who works in an impasto style to narrate fantastical stories based on references from pop culture, childhood and imagination. She explores themes of mythology, folklore, and storytelling to navigate the world around her. Each painting is an investigation of

this third space that lies between her imagination and the physical world. By working in an impasto style where she layers thick and heavy applications of paint, she can add a three-dimensional aspect to her work that makes it feel somewhat real and tangible. She explores traditional folktales such as evolution and the creation of natural environments in a contemporary, whimsical, and playful manner. [Instagram](#)

[Brian Jiang](#) is a queer non-binary artist and illustrator of Chinese descent based in Toronto. Their practice comprises drawing, painting, illustration, sequential narrative, and animation. Their current work primarily investigates the creation of hypothetical worlds and the reinterpretation of personal memories and experiences. Brian’s recent work is often playful in tone, with content that usually comprises ambiguous characters, fantastical scenarios, and lush flora. Through their works, Brian seeks to reconcile the complexity of personal identity and establish a connection between the individual, the physical and immaterial worlds. Their image-making balances bold gestural mark making, flat colour planes, implied textural effects, with subtle details and patterning. They are drawn to unconventional colour palettes that are simultaneously discordant yet visually satisfying. Brian’s work references the formal qualities of folk art, 60’s Japanese Graphic design, Fauvism and Surrealism. [Instagram](#)

Paulina O’Kieffe-Anthony is Executive Director at SKETCH, as well as an award-winning artist, curator, arts educator, and creative consultant. She is a two-time national team finalist in the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word, a TEDx speaker, and has been recognized by the CBC as one of 150 Black Women Making Herstory, for her contribution to building the arts scene in Toronto.



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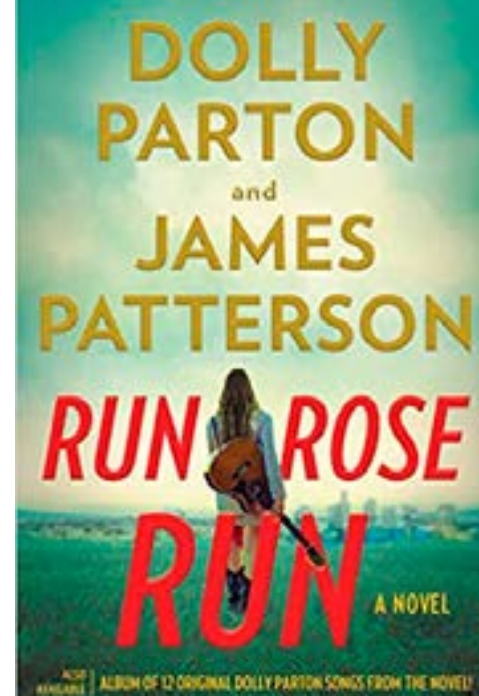
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Prologue

The Louis Seize-style mirror in the bedroom of suite 409 at the Aquitaine Hotel reflected for little more than an instant a slim, fine-featured woman: wide blue eyes, clenched fists, dark hair streaming behind her as she ran.

Then AnnieLee Keyes vanished from the glass, as her bare feet took her racing into the suite's living room. She dodged the edge of the giltwood settee, flinging its throw pillow over her shoulder. A lamp fell with a crash behind her. She leaped over the coffee table, with its neat stack of Las Vegas magazines and tray of complimentary Debaube & Gallais truffles, her name written in chocolate ganache flecked with edible gold. She hadn't even tasted a single one.

Her foot caught the bouquet of Juliet roses and the vase tipped over, scattering pink blooms all over the carpet.

The balcony was up ahead of her, its doors open to the morning sun. In another instant, she'd reached it, and the hot air hit her in the face like a fist. She jumped onto the chaise longue and threw her right leg over the railing, struggling to push herself the rest of the way up.

Then, balanced on the thin rail between the hotel and the sky, she hesitated. Her heart beat so quickly she could hardly breathe. Every nerve ending sparked with adrenaline.

I can't, she thought. I can't do it.

But she had to. Her fingers clutched the rail for another split second before she willed them loose. Her lips moved in an instant of desperate prayer. Then she launched herself into the air. The sun flared, but her vision darkened and became a tunnel. She could see only below her—upturned faces, mouths open in screams she couldn't hear over her own.

Time slowed. She spread out her arms as if she were flying.

And weren't flying and falling the same?

Maybe, she thought, except for the landing.

Each millisecond stretched to an hour, these measures of time all she had left in this world. Life had been so damn hard, and she'd clawed her way up only to fling herself back down. She didn't want to die, but she was going to.

AnnieLee twisted in the air, trying to protect herself from what was coming. Trying to aim for the one thing that might save her.

Official Website. Available from Hachette Book Group. Parton has released an album of the same name, consisting of twelve original songs she was inspired by the book to write, record, and produce. e novel also includes lyrics to the songs, which are essential to the story.

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Calgary Queer Arts Society

The [Calgary Queer Arts Society](#) was founded in 1999. Their flagship event, [Fairy Tales Queer Film Festival](#), was initially created by *The Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers*, and managed by the *Calgary Underground Film Festival*, until it eventually grew to be its own entity, thus requiring its own organization.

The current organization's goal is to give a voice to queer people and their stories. Whether it's to enact change, heal the soul, or make people laugh, queer people have so much to share. The organization can accomplish this by staying true to their core values and mandates – Celebration, Inclusion, Inspiration, and Preservation.

This year marks the 24th edition of *Fairy Tales*, taking place June 3rd to 12th, 2022. Operations Manager, **Marissa Cupples**, stated "We've kept the festival going online through the past two years of the pandemic, and we've been able to connect 2SLGBTQ+ audiences, filmmakers, and artists from all around the world with our local communities. Last year we showed 42 films from 13 countries, making it the most diverse Festival yet."

Cupples continues, "We're also really proud of the *Youth Queer Media Program*. It's a free program that takes 2SLGBTQ+ youth through the entire

filmmaking process. There have been over 50 films created in this program," Executive Director, **Emma Brockelbank**, added, "We've also done so many *Coming Out Monologues* over the past 12 years that have included some amazing stories spanning all faiths, all walks of life, and every queer joke you can think of. *Monologues* is a program where we get to help participants put their incredibly meaningful stories into words and perform them, free of judgment, to an adoring crowd of supporters."

As with any non-profit, staying afloat financially is always a challenge. Brockelbank explains, "We're funded predominantly by grants, but our amazing Marketing Director, **Heather Shaw**, has been working on getting us more sponsors, and the sponsors she's gotten us are amazingly supportive and so forward thinking."

In addition, ticket sales from *Fairy Tales* provides the much-needed revenue to put back into their programs. The organization puts on a combination of free and paid public events throughout the year, along with educational sessions to businesses, schools, and workplaces, such as *LGBT+ 101* and *Trans and Non-Binary 101*, through their *OutReels Allyship Education and Training Program*.

As for the future, Brockelbank wants more community involvement "We're partnering with *EMMEDIA Gallery & Production Society* to create a streaming series talking to queer POC and allies about their cultures and how it impacts their art, in hopes that anti-racist organizational change will be a bi product of those conversations. Our first stream will be with a Somali immigrant," she happily shares.

Emma Brockelbank is a non-binary, Chinese-Canadian media artist, and Executive Director of the Calgary Queer Arts Society.



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by Sherry Sylvain

Comedy On The D - PRIDE Edition

June 18; 9:30 p.m.

Mandy's Bistro, 123 Danforth Ave., Toronto

This hilarious show features amazingly talented LGBTQ+ emerging comedians who are newer to the scene and ready for their close-up. Hosted by Canadian Comedy Award winner Robert Watson, with headliner, Ted Morris. Tickets are \$15.00 in advance or at the door. Free karaoke party to follow at 11:00 p.m.

Tip: Arrive early and enjoy the excellent food menu at the Bistro.



Middle Eastern Nights - PRIDE EDITION

June 18; 9:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

The Black Eagle, 457 Church St., Toronto

Middle Eastern Nights is one of the most inclusive queer events in Toronto. A place where everyone is welcome and gets taken away to the beats of the Middle East. DJ Louay is on the decks. More shows, great music, and lots of surprises. \$15.00 at the door.

Tip: Harem pants, magic laps, flying carpets, and genie masters are not required; but you never know.

Til Sunset: The Jam Down

June 19; 1:00 p.m.

Gibraltar Point Beach, Toronto Island, Toronto

With the skyline as your backdrop, take over the island with Toronto's A-List entertainers. Grab a drink & allow DJs Pogi & Blacks to get you in the right mindset for the afternoon's festivities. Enjoy delicious Jerk Chicken, and take in the performances of some favourite Toronto Kings and Queens; Jada Shada Hudson, Divine Darlin, Canada's Drag Race season 2's Kimora Amour, and Prince Many Dingo.

Tip: Bring your swimwear; though it's not mandatory, it could add a lot to the fun, and some relief from the heat.

Small Town Pride: Toronto Pride Screening

June 20; 6:45 p.m.

Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W., Toronto

A special screening of Small Town Pride documentary directed by Chelle Turingan & Riley Sparks, followed by a Q&A featuring some of the creative team. Small Town Pride offers an intimate look at the joys and challenges of being queer in small Canadian towns. All proceeds go to Rainbow Railroad, a charity helping LGBTQI+ escape violence and persecution in their home countries.

Tip: Bring your hankie; tractors, hay bales, corn cobs, and livestock only available on the screen.



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Dorian Electra

June 21; 8:00 p.m.

The Phoenix Concert Theatre, 410 Sherbourne St., Toronto
Their debut studio album, Flamboyant, was released in 2019, followed by their second studio album, My Agenda, in 2020.
Tip: This is a non-binary artist, and gender expression is encouraged.

The Toronto AIDS Candlelight Vigil

June 21; 8:00 p.m.

Barbara Hall Park, 519 Church St., Toronto
2SLGBTQIA+ community members and allies gather to honour the lives of those who have passed from AIDS or AIDS-related illnesses, or have given their lives in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In its 38th year, the vigil theme is 'People, Purpose, Passion'.

Tip: A solemn occasion which is normally well attended; arrive early, and wear comfortable shoes.

The Lost Pride Show

June 22; 8:00 p.m.

Buddies In Bad Times, 12 Alexander St., Toronto
The Bruised Years Choir perform unseen pieces, share a few greatest hits, and welcome fab musical and comedy guest acts to share the stage. The Choir is comprised of artists who have lived experience with mental health and/or addiction issues. The show features original takes on pop music classics.

Tip: Alas, the seating arrangement doesn't allow room for dancing to the music; but you are allowed to move rhythmically in your chair.

Green Space Festival 2022

June 23 through 26; afternoon and evening start times, running until midnight

Barbara Hall Park, 519 Church St., Toronto
The best alfresco parties of the summer are back with enticing music, queery performances, delicious food and drinks, and a whole lot of love. An exceptional lineup of world-class DJs, legendary music producers, extraordinary performers, drag royalty, and more. Themes include: Starry Night, One Worlds Afro House Edition, Lipstick Jungle, and Tree House Party House Legends.

Tip: These wonderful parties are an excellent diversion for a short visit, or an entire day.

Steers And Queers Gay Ole Opry

June 23; 9:00 p.m.

Buddies In Bad Times, 12 Alexander St., Toronto
This famously rowdy queer country western party is fixin' to bring their rhinestones and rawhides from the wild west-end to Church and Wellesley. Queers will be celebrating Dolly Parton with their annual "Night of a Thousand Dollys". Expect a cabaret church service, full Dolly choir, live band, drag queens, burlesque, and a full-on country western dance party. Hosted by Fluffy Souffle.

Tip: Feel free to wear your jeans, stetson, cowboy boots, plaids, and pearl buttons.

Prism Festival PRIDE 2022

June 23 to 27

Various venues

Embark on a "Journey Beneath The Sea" with six spectacular events at various major Toronto venues, both indoors and out, with a Star-powered DJ line up.

Tip: Check all the venues and times to schedule your Pride partying to maximum advantage.



Divas & Drag Queens

June 25; 4:00 p.m.

Improve Canada, 7250 Keele St., Vaughan

The ultimate outdoor dance party! Enjoy live performances by Estelle, Kiesza, and more. Includes Drag Queen performances by Brooke Lynn Hytes, Symone, and many more.

Tip: Plan your mode of travel in consideration of your potential alcohol consumption, and vice versa.

Don Valley Girls

June 25; 8:00 p.m.

Buddies In Bad Times, 12 Alexander St., Toronto

Serving up weird (sometimes heartfelt) sketches, songs, and the occasional video interlude, Don Valley Girls are a mashup of Somali/Korean/Palestinian/Pakistani/Canadian perspectives from women and non-binary folks.

Tip: Try not to snort your drink when you're laughing so hard your sides hurt.

TICOT Charity Drag Brunch

June 26; noon to 3:00 p.m.

Church Street Garage, 477 Church St., Toronto

A drag brunch show with a twist. This is an open stage, so if you have a talent you wish to share, all are welcome. Tips are donated to the charities of The Imperial Court of Toronto, Rainbow Railroad, and PWA Food Programs.

Tip: Bring a cache of US \$1.00 bills, or loonies, or whatever you can spare.



TD Toronto Jazz Festival: Smokey Robinson

June 28; 8:00 p.m.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St. E., Toronto

Singer-songwriter Smokey Robinson continues to push the envelope of an over 50-year career. Robinson created hit after hit for influential Motown acts such as The Temptations, Mary Wells, and Marvin Gaye, among many others. He is known for his role as co-founder and frontman of The Miracles.

Tip: Don't sing along too loudly to all these well known, and adored hits; people are there to hear HIM sing.

The Northern Pikes

July 1 and 2; 8:30 p.m.

Lee's Palace 529 Bloor St. W., Toronto

The Northern Pikes are a Canadian rock band formed in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in 1984. Their notable hits include: "Teenland", "Things I Do For Money", and "She Ain't Pretty".

Tip: Wear your 80's rock attire, and practice The Running Man, The Sprinkler, and The Worm.

Canada's Drag Race Season 2 Tour

July 2; 8:00 p.m.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St. E., Toronto

Join the queens of Canada's Drag Race Season 2 for an evening of endless eleganza extravaganza. Witness the charisma, uniqueness, nerve, and talent of your favourite queens LIVE on stage as they sashay into this iconic local venue.

Tip: Just for fun, you could try to compete with some of the sick drag looks that will be featured.

TICOT Charity Bingo

July 10; 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Flash on Church, 463 Church St., Toronto

Join Empress 27 & 32 Teran Blake & Burger, and get your first two bingo cards free with a drink purchase, then you can buy up to four more cards at \$5 each. The money from the card sales will be split 50/50; half to the charities and the other half added to the final jackpot with a guaranteed winner. Funds raised go to Toronto PWA Food Programs, and Rainbow Railroad.

Tip: This is great fun for a great cause, and often features surprise drag performances.

Northbound Leather's Kinky Cruise

July 16; 7:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Harbourfront Docks, Lower Simcoe St. and Queens Quay W., Toronto

Cruise Lake Ontario with the beautiful Toronto skyline and city lights as your backdrop. This is a limited space event that has sold out every year, so get your tickets A.S.A.P. Fetish dress code in effect: Leather, Latex, PVC, Rubber, Uniforms, Vinyl, Fetish Glam, Lingerie, Drag, etc.

Tip: Get to the dock early; you don't want to miss this boat.



Violet Chachki's "A Lot More Me"

July 23; 7:00 p.m.

The Danforth Music Hall, 147 Danforth Ave., Toronto

International drag performer, and global fashion icon, Violet Chachki, is debuting her solo show "A Lot More Me" in North America after a sold-out tour across Europe. Expect part drag, part fashion, part burlesque, and part circus.

Tip: Don't wear your highest hair; remember, there will be people behind you who will want to see.



DURAN DURAN: Future Past

August 22; 7:00 p.m.

Budweiser Stage, 909 Lakeshore Blvd. W., Toronto

The iconic British New Wave band with a massive string of hits from the 80's through today is supported by special guest, Nile Rogers and Chic.

Tip: Sculpted hair, tons of hair spray, and an intensely neon outfit might go over well.

Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).



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by Mychol Scully

From The Heart

Years ago I had a gym membership. It cost \$400.00 per year and I actually went three times!

My story is not unique. We usually read about this sort of situation early in the year, when New Year's resolutions are abandoned. Truth is, the gap between intention and execution is often huge for a variety of personal reasons.

Excuses abound. Time management, energy levels, lack of "buddy support," and the list goes on. In the end, I believe it boils down to a sense of ownership. If our motivation to exercise, eat properly, get enough sleep, etc. is external (e.g. looking good for other people, acquiescing to social pressures) then the chances that we'll be able to stick to any kind of fitness regimen is greatly diminished.

Another challenge that often subverts our fitness intentions is having a sense of scale. Grandiose makeover plans are often a reason why we can't stick to the plan. Rather than investing in grand and glorious makeover visions, I think it's easier to establish smaller short-term goals that are more easily achievable. Completely quitting smoking vs. cutting back on consumption is an example. Totally changing our eating habits rather than adjusting one or two consumption patterns is another.

I recently made the decision to remove bread from my diet. I love bagels or marmalade toast! I recently received some information from a friend who explained how carbohydrates are processed in the

body. What they had to say made sense to me and it's been easier to skip the bread aisle when I go grocery shopping now that I have that piece of information.

Will that make my protruding belly disappear overnight? Of course not! But over time, this single change in what I eat will support making other changes to my diet as I establish new habits around eating.

As I've said in previous columns, being gentle and generous with yourself is key to building your personal power and sense of agency. If you had a friend who was trying to make changes to their fitness level, would you berate them and call them a loser if they had a misstep or "fell off the wagon?" Of course you wouldn't. You'd offer them sympathy and positive encouragement.

So why would you berate yourself and sabotage your own efforts with that kind of internal negativity? Make every effort to be your own best friend. Be generous and gentle with yourself.

Put marmalade on that rice cracker.

Mychol Scully is Senior Art Director for INspired Media publications PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, The Local Biz Magazine, and The Pink Pages Directory. Mychol is available for thoughtful conversation or lascivious teasing any time at mychol@mychol.com.



Summer Horoscopes

JUNE 2022 to AUGUST 2022

by Julie Antoinette



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from the book of my life

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

Additional information has been presented regarding a subject important to you. This has caused you to enter an entirely new perspective from which to re-evaluate a decision you took prior to the presentation of this information. Know that you have the right to change your mind and re-direct your course based on your now better-informed judgment.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

An old wound longs to be mourned and released from its prison within your heart. Your strong resolve against breaking down holds your heart behind this emotional barricade. Allow yourself a proper and righteous session of complete release with as much wild abandon as you can stand. You're exhausted from holding back this tsunami of emotion for as long as you have.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

Music is inviting you on a journey back in time. Perhaps a song from long ago appears in your mind as you wake up, or randomly in your daily travels. The nostalgic feeling it brings holds a secret waiting to be unlocked within you. You haven't felt this feeling in a long time because you are no longer the person you used to be. A piece of yourself wants to return home.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

Every once in a long while you have a day that is completely different from your normal routine. An event or errand will take you on a journey of encounters and experiences that colour your day in a way that makes all other days seem muted by contrast. These types - high-vibrational days are the diamonds in the rough. Seek them and relish them.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

A big life decision comes along to test your intuition. You have reviewed all points of logical data input from every angle and have built them into your decision tree. However, another aspect of your perception known as "intuition" is also seeking to lend some important information. You would be wise to include and equally weigh the benefit and costs of all aspects of your knowing before making this decision.

Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

An issue presents itself in an occluded way and raises many questions. It is said that the 'reason' behind any issue is the key to all understanding. To arrive at this understanding, one simple question is key. This question is "Why?" Start at the surface of the issue and keep asking 'why' until you can ask no more. Therein will lie your answer and the truth that longs to be understood.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Balance is calling your name, Libra. Your personal health feels out of balance and is directly influenced by your disconnection from nature. There is only so much 'virtual reality' that a living organism can sustain before it begins to lose touch with actual reality. Put down your phone and put on your shoes. Engage your five senses with the outdoors and nature to reconnect again to the humanity without and within.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

Pay attention to the relationship you have with the emotions of sadness and anger. It is said that one is the other inverted, the yin to the other's yang, the shadow to the other's light. Whichever emotion you are most comfortable with reveals by contrast which one you are most terrified of. The good news is that the cave that you most fear to enter holds the treasure you seek.

Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

While you have always stood firm in your convictions and rallied to fighting for your rights, you find yourself evaluating the return on your energy output. Take hold of the discerning wisdom of choosing your battles. Yes, fight the good fight, but know some fights are just dirty. Ross Rosenberg shares, "Never wrestle with a pig because you may get dirty. And besides, the pig likes it."

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

What does freedom really mean to you? Is it freedom to purchase anything without monetary restriction? Freedom to roam anywhere you desire? Freedom to express yourself in any fashion you choose? Life always unfolds in a balanced way. The trick to experiencing true freedom is to reside within healthy boundaries. Do you really want to be completely untethered?

Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

Something has left your life and has left you saddened. But take heart, all is not lost. When one door closes, another door opens. Everything in life is a trade-off. Look for the silver lining and you will find that your loss has a better-than-expected replacement.

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

Have you ever REALLY listened to Beethoven? If you have, you may have pondered his mastery not only of music, but also of emotion. All three movements of the Moonlight Sonata could take you on an emotional rollercoaster ride that will leave you tearful, elated and breathless. It's a theme park and a therapy session in three parts.

Julie is a Sociology and Psychology graduate, a Psychotherapy Intern and a lifelong student of the psyche. She seeks to relay intuitive messages of guidance from the collective astrological archetypes.



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