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**Love & Sex - The Sequel**  
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From the Publisher

*Publisher*



**T**his is a double whammy issue of PinkPlayMags.

First it is the second issue in 2015 of a series of sequels to four of the most popular issues in the 8 year history of your favourite magazine. In summer 2010 we published the “Love & Sex” issue, and you loved it, so here we are visiting the theme once again.

Love is beautiful, in all its many forms. Sexuality is to be celebrated in all its colours.

Love is a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes that ranges from interpersonal affection, “I love my mother”, to pleasure “I loved that meal”. It can refer to an emotion of a strong attraction and personal psychology. It can also be a virtue representing human kindness, compassion, and affection. It may also describe compassionate and affectionate actions towards other humans, one’s self, or animals. This diversity of uses and meanings combined with the complexity of the feelings involved makes love unusually difficult to consistently define, compared to other emotional states.

Love in its various forms acts as a major facilitator of interpersonal relationships, and owing to its central psychological importance, is one of the most common themes in the creative arts.

In most societies and cultures, human nudity is often associated with sexuality. Many people are sexually attracted to nudity, which they find to be erotic and sexually arousing. Some people employ their nudity to sexually attract a mate or sexual partner, or as a form of

flirting. Nudity is one facet, and at times a very important facet, in the expression of feelings in intimate relationships.

I really want to thank the wonderful group of beautiful people who came together to take part in the hot and sexy cover shoot. They are not professional models however they are people who celebrate their sexuality.

So start your journey with the cover and then take a cruise inside the issue to read about love, and about sex.

This issue is also our Pride Issue. INspired Media Inc. the publisher of PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, and The Pink Pages Directory is a Media Sponsor of Pride Toronto 2015. We have been watching all the developments, and we have to congratulate the organizers on putting together one hell of a festival. Make sure to check our Pride Weekend guide inside.

What are you all doing for Pride? I hope you have some great plans lined up. Myself, I am excited to once again march with the INSPIRE Awards group, an organization that is near and dear to my heart.

Happy Pride! Enjoy celebrating the love and your sexuality, and play safe.

Once Pride festivities are done I am looking forward to spending time in nature, hence the photo choice for this issue. See you all in fall, have a wonderful summer.

**Antoine Elhashem**  
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# summerplay!

Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Leather, and Queer  
Community Seasonal from PinkPlayMags  
Free • Summer 2015

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## Published by

### INspired Media Inc.

Operating INspiredcreative ([www.inspiredcreative.ca](http://www.inspiredcreative.ca)), and  
publishers of The Pink Pages Directory, PinkPlayMags, and The  
LOCAL BIZ Magazine.

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## From the Editor

Editor



Photo: Raul Da Silva

Let me begin by wishing each and every reader a happy Pride! As Martha Vandella proclaimed back in the 1960's, "summer's here and the time is right for dancing in the streets."

I'm so excited to bring this summer "Love and Sex" issue of PinkPlayMags to you, and had the most amazing time working with a great bunch of talented writers. Kelly Wilk lays it all in the open and tells us about her first erotic writing experience in her feature, "The Kink in My Pen".

We also have Lucas Silveira contributing his first piece to the magazine titled "All You Need Is", and Jon Pressick returns with his feature, "The Word of Sex", highlighting some of the queerest and sexiest writers out there. Speaking of books, we have a great excerpt from Joie Lamar's new novel "Mambo Lips".

All of our regular columns are here for you to enjoy, including Patricia's Wilson's "From The Heart" where she tells us what Pride means to her, and Cee Sando's "Tops

and Bottoms" highlights some sexy fashion tips to glam you up for the festivities. Our "Community Cornerstone" piece written by Judy Virago spotlights Toronto's Hassle Free Clinic, our hot artist profile this month is none other than Buck Angel, who spoke with the lovely Lexi Sanfino, and our "Looking Back" piece is written by "Sherry Sylvain" who takes us back to the early days of Toronto Pride.

As well, there's a travel piece on Canada's straight-friendly city of Saskatoon, written by yours truly, and as always our great selection of events are chosen by Caitlyn Holroyd.

Thanks for reading, and may Pride bring you lots of love, sex, and happiness!

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# All You Need Is...

**L**ove. Most people think it's all you need to make a relationship work, but as someone who is a serial monogamist I'm finding that this is somewhat of a myth, perhaps a fable told to us to give us hope in the darkest moments of our relationships. Love isn't simple. It comes with hard work. Grueling, pull your hair out, take some space, go for a walk, smoke a cigarette, drink some bourbon, kind of work. And then there's the hard part.

I know that's a dim place to start a piece about the one thing we are told will hold everything together even in the face of adversity, but as a true believer of love I'm finding more and more that love alone simply isn't enough to keep a relationship healthy and united.

As queer people, I think that maintaining loving relationships is even more of a struggle, because there are two people (or more if you're poly-amorous or non-monogamous) facing the struggles that attach themselves to marginalized lives. Many heterosexual people, even allies, will say this is a ridiculous notion, but I could easily and without much effort prove them wrong.

From the simplicity of trying to meet someone in a public space safely to all the challenges that come from being queer, as well as the intersectional



piece that comes from being all of the above with the added marginalization of being a person of color, disability, and poor or working class and one we always seem to forget, older in age.

I'm not here to say that hetero/cis gender folks don't have to put effort into relationships to make them work, but imagine the effort you're putting in with the added pressures of a closeted partner for example, who hides you from your partner's friends and family, or having to worry about if you're going to get fired at work because of your gender identity or who you love. All of these factors are what make queer relationships have a whole other level of complexity and difficulty that can make them much harder to navigate.

When I was out looking for love, I found that my only options were at gay bars. This was when I was a

lesbian and before I transitioned to male. As a trans man who "passes", this became an even more complex and frustrating situation. I remember when I used to be able to walk into a predominantly defined women's space and not have a head turn even when I was identifying as a trans man pre hormone therapy. I felt included because of my history. After hormones, I started to feel absolutely unwelcome. Even by those who knew my past. I began to feel so much anxiety about going out to the only places I had once felt I could safely connect with someone. Then there was the added piece of meeting a queer woman who would be able to understand me as the kind of man I was, or simply as a person.

My male gender identity doesn't make me a straight man. I identify as queer, and although to me who I am within my gender and sexuality is perfectly



normal, to some women it can be intimidating because I'm not a 'typical man'. I have complex desires and am viewed through a lens by others in a way that sometimes makes me feel invisible. I need someone who can see me and support me from all those angles and have the tools to ground themselves around me. I've even had some women tell me that they just don't know how to "feel about me". It can go from fascination, to fetishizing, to giving up because they fear not knowing how to navigate sex with me. The levels of complexity in simply meeting a partner can be enough to make some people give up on the search, and many do sadly.



For gays, lesbians, and bisexuals it can be less daunting than trans folks, but still quite limited because we always have this thing in the back of our heads when we're attracted to someone in a non queer space, "Is it safe for me to approach this person and tell them I'm attracted to them?" Rejection cuts even deeper when it can possibly come with someone threatening your life with physical violence or public shaming, as opposed to a simple "I'm not interested."

Then follows the thing most of us don't talk about, which are the difficulties and marginalization that

exists within the queer community itself. One would think that a community who has had to fight for the basic human right to love would be a little more open-minded, but I have found that this is not always the case.

Colonialism is a sneaky little bugger. I have found that in the opening of doors for gays and lesbians into the mainstream, there has been a shutting of doors by those same gays and lesbians for those coming up behind them. The attempt to not let in those who don't fit the colonialist hetero normative cookie cutter mold that many gays and lesbians are now conforming to so they can be deemed "respectable".

There are many problems in the queer community when it comes to inclusion around race, ability, class, age and trans folks. I was once told by a gay white man that he didn't want me "riding the coat tails" of his movement because he didn't want the association being made with my kind. In his eyes I was mentally ill and he didn't want the association, because gays had worked so hard to get to where they were and we were just going to complicate things for them. Unfortunately this is not an uncommon mindset.

As a young person, I was shocked to find out the disgusting race issues that many gay men of color deal with. A close friend of mine who is Chinese told me that white men wouldn't date him and if they did it was usually because they fetishized Asian men and that his encounters with white men usually only led to sex and never long term commitments. The same went for black men. He shared some terms he was called by gay white men that I won't share here that dropped my jaw to the ground. The other side of the coin was that there were many men of color who actually fiercely

competed for white male attention and when they dated a white man, behaved as though they'd won some kind of gay white male lottery.

But not all is lost. Apparently love can still be found as there are so many same sex couples out there as well as trans folks who partner up with other folks either within the lesbian/gay/bi sexuality or otherwise. There seems to be a time of year where all of the outside and internal politics seem to stay on the periphery momentarily. It's a magical day where all the fears and complexities that we normally have to deal with are put aside for a moment. Pride!

I'd like to think that Pride brings out the best in people. I know this is probably a naïve thought, but I would like to think that it's really something that most people at least want to do when the celebration happens. Be at their best. Perhaps it is that feeling of positivity that opens up the gates for people to feel that at Pride, anything is possible. You know how people call Pride, Gay Christmas? I have met more than one of my long-term partners at Toronto Pride. I even asked one to marry me on stage. So what is it about Pride that makes it such an amazing event to find love?

I asked Jolene Coady, a self-described lesbian from Ireland who met her partner Aine at Waterford Pride. "Pride brings out the love bug because it is almost a festival of singles meeting in the hopes of finding someone." Perhaps that should be the new Pride motto because it seems perfectly true. I know when I was single it was always something I had on my mind when I went to celebrate. I always wondered whose gaze I would take in and fall into. It was exciting. It was romantic. It brought me hope.

I think as marginalized folks, Pride can give us a sense of liberation in what is

probably the most difficult part of being in love, which is the search for someone in the name of romance in a safe place. Pride isn't just confined to a night at a gay bar. It's a huge week-long festival filled with many events that opens up a plethora of choices to folks who usually are limited in how they can meet each other. You can just walk down Church St gazing at whoever crosses your path, shedding your fear and anxieties. In Toronto what is also amazing about Pride are the businesses that put Pride flags in their windows almost as a symbol of "safe place here". The city gets to be our playground for a week, and the rules of a homophobic society seem less daunting.



Not every city is like Toronto or New York when it comes to gay bars, so in other places around the world like Jolene's Ireland, Pride seems like it would be a place where someone can potentially meet a long term partner without being under the radar of the hetero cis gender community. Jolene added "In Ireland some straight people think it is only butch/femme and we have even been asked 'Which one of you is the man' eh we are both women, that's kinda the point!! We met at Waterford Pride four years ago. I had a lot of drink and introduced myself to her three times. We had both been single a number of years, Aine because she had lost her partner



to cancer three years previous, and me because there is not exactly many gay people around. After Pride, Aine discovered my surname and added me on Facebook.”

In Toronto, I asked gay cis-gender couple El-Farouk Khaki & Troy Jackson about how they met. “We met through a former mutual friend over 20 years ago in Vancouver. We remained casual acquaintances until Troy moved to Toronto in summer 2006. We bumped into each other at an anti-War rally and exchanged numbers.” said Khaki.

I loved this response because it also cut to another way to meet queers, which is through political rallies and protests. Interestingly enough, Pride used to be an entirely political event. It has of course become less political and more commercial through the years, but the point being that queers have historically partaken in events of this nature because of our personal experiences of marginalization. So put on your best outfit next time you go out to protest because you never know who you’re going to run into and fall in love with while holding up a picket sign or shouting a powerful message in unison.

So you meet. You fall in love. Then what? To some, marriage is the next step. It hasn’t been that long since same-sex couples have been able to marry legally, so in our unions or love is also a political action. Last year at Toronto World Pride, a mass wedding took place at Casa Loma, where approximately 120 couples tied the knot. One of those couples was El-Farouk Khaki & Troy Jackson.

When asked why it was important for them to get married at the mass wedding, Khaki answered, “We didn’t plan to get married. We have been together since Feb 2007, and living together since Feb 2008. We had

spoken about it, but never fixed a date. When I was asked to be one of the officiating clergy, I spoke to Troy and suggested we get married too. Troy thought it would be too much planning, especially as we had other commitments around World Pride. On the actual day, I was approached by a reporter who thought I was getting married. She proceeded to interview me and Troy, which is when he proposed.”

“It was amazing to be part of this huge ‘love fest’. The air was sparkling with positive energy,” he added. Although I didn’t get married at Pride, I understand that energy as it was what inspired me to ask Skye to marry me on stage at The Clinks show at 2012 Pride.



Don’t get me wrong. I know that Pride isn’t the answer to all of the LGBT community’s love woes. I would hope that in highlighting what a magical event Pride can sometimes be that it can offer us a view into what could be. Also that we keep that hope in our hearts and remember what the event is about in the first place, which is being able to love someone you love safely and without judgment.

---

Lucas Silveira is best known as the front man, songwriter and founding member of the rock band “The Clinks.” Lucas has become a leading force in the LGBTQ community for the promotion and visibility of transgender people in the mainstream music industry. He is the first out transgender male to be signed to a major record label deal and has toured with music icons including Cyndi Lauper, The Cult, Debbie Harry and The New York Dolls.



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# The Kink in My Pen

*by Kelly Wilk*

I can't help it. My heart skips a beat thinking about snuggling on an arm rest with a sweetie, walking barefoot in the park on a sunny day, or hibernating under a pile of blankets with a hot toddy next to that someone as the snow falls outside. Yes perhaps these are similarities between my sentiments and an overly stereotypical online dating profile.

I have held fast to my desire for a little romance and chivalry particularly given my fetish for the femme butch dynamic, as it does coexist with my more feminist leanings. Romance; like joy, peace, blissfulness, pleasure and sex are just a part of life. So why is it I have had no problems writing about any of these things except the latter?

I have been circling this for a while, considering I have been writing since I was six, even if it was in crayon. The mushy gushy stuff, relationships, they are all a part of life, they are life, so how did I go about not writing about the proverbial "it" for so long? Romance was easy for me, with a steady menu for my imagination of Cinderella, Princess Diana, and Juliet. You are what you eat I guess?

For me writing memoir and poetry is bringing a kind of brutal honesty to a reflection on myself and my life. This is exactly what makes writers, particularly memoir writers, such an introspective lot. I have gotten used to asking myself what is the heart of what you are writing about, and what is the central sensation or emotion? When you cut down to the bone of something you have experienced, it's exhausting and you can't help but feel exposed. When it came to the more erotic subject matter, a cold and sweaty writer's block always came over me.



When I took my first erotica writing workshop with Melissa Benner, she had us write about eating a piece of chocolate. As everyone concentrated on the small square of utopia melting on their tongue - the aroma, texture and flavour of this simple pleasure - I was enjoying the unique irony of being off sugar. I should have known then that I was doing something wrong. For me it was not just that I started to get a little bit skittish when the more sensual aspects crept into my narratives, it seemed forced.

At first I tried to hide behind fiction, which prevented me from really feeling connected to what I was writing. It was fun to occasionally fool around with a dirty story to send to a current partner, but much like my early attempts at comedy I didn't consider what I wrote good enough to be "real writing". Self-criticism can also be a huge barrier to any kind of artistic practice, I have realized when my inner critic starts being mouthy, it is a pretty good indication that I am taking sound

creative risks. When this part of me piped up about my erotic writing I let it undermine me. It wasn't just that I didn't think it was good enough, but it was actually how I felt about the subject matter.

As a lesbian woman who more time than not passes as straight, I experienced many self-inflicted years of unknowingly and then knowingly hiding from myself. During my 13 years at a private girl's school, well at least during the preteen and teen years, I affectively hid from myself as it didn't even occur to me that I wasn't straight. Once I realized I was gay I continued to date men because I was in denial, and I wanted to fix myself to a life scenario that I thought might automatically make things easier for me. I was scared to accept that part of myself. After numerous brief relationships with men and one disastrous dinner party with a heterosexual dating service where all the men individually repelled me and I could not prevent myself from trying to engage the





beautiful brunette across the table from me in conversation, I had to admit I was a total dyke.

This was suddenly new territory, I was drawn to women but they simultaneously scared the shit out of me, particularly if they were of high femme variety. The problem with traditional romance is that it often casts a female partner as more passive, and over the years I seemed to have aligned myself with those more quiet, unassuming and small characteristics. When I became brave enough to take a chance and start dating women I eventually found I was having the same problem in my relationships with women that I had with men.

I felt small. I did not like to ask for the things that I wanted. I had trouble making declarative statements about my feelings, and I preferred letting my partner take the lead mentally, emotionally, as well as sexually. I felt much shame around my body and had a terrible time with self-acceptance.

Around the same time that I started to get angry about that, I realized it would not do

to let it continue. I needed to write things for myself. I needed to ask for the things that were important to me, and then I had the much more complicated job figuring out what those things were. It was actually a miraculous event when I realized I was asking for things in a relationship, and then got them. This automatically made the sex better, but there was still hold out and it was not about physical intimacy, it was about being honest.

As a healer I am fully aware I can hold a space for someone else to do whatever they need to do to accept themselves, but I had a much harder time letting someone hold space for me. It wasn't just that there are aspects of sex that I was uncomfortable with, it was just about allowing myself to become confident and secure enough to take a risk and be open in my relationships.

All this directly translated into my relationship with writing erotica. Given my evolving sense of sexual identity I had trouble filtering my desires, my interests, and my creativity with the same brutal honesty. It was hard enough

to tear my heart open about my longings and fears around life. but when I applied that same process to my sex life it was certainly way too frigging vulnerable. It seemed like a stalemate that would never be resolved. I had been flirting with sensuality in a lot of my writing and getting used to reading it at events, which was definitely instilling me with new-found confidence. Then along came Bed Post.

My writing coach introduced me to Erin Pim and her new monthly erotica reading event. to which she suggested I get involved. Once again this scared the shit out of me, but I have come to realize that is also very good indication that it is exactly what I needed to do for myself, just to prove that I could. I agonized with what I could bring to this gathering. My fiction project wasn't going to cut it and I wasn't super happy with the piece of memoir that I was sexing up. I wasn't exactly sure what I was going to submit until I gave myself permission to write some poetry about my personal experiences getting back into the dating world.

After an unavoidable period of isolation when my wife passed away, I took the opportunity to really look at what I might want in a relationship, were I to enter one again. I also took some time and sought support to really reclaim my sexuality as mine, and not a kind of amorphous happen stance that depended on someone else. I had an alter for my healing practices, and in a burst of intuition I knew that any kind of tantric altar to hold a sacred space for my sexuality had to become one in the same. Just like my sexual identity was not separate from any of my other defining characteristics, I needed to be whole.

Thomas Moore said "Intimacy begins with oneself." As I fought back the nausea I took my large, round breasted Hawaiian fertility Goddess and added it to my collection of other totems and crystals. It is no surprise that this sparked an interest for me, and I took a workshop at "Good For Her" about awakening your inner Temple Priestess, the divine conduits that served as a vehicle for experiencing a euphoric and spiritual connection to the Almighty. It is also not

a surprise that the root of this work was practicing a self-respecting, body positive form of sacred sexuality that was not in competition or requiring any outside validation. It was quite simply understanding and accepting your intimate self.

Armed with this new sense of peace about my sexual desires and experiences, I was suddenly ready to take those small experiences and let them launch me into a different place in my erotica writing. The day of the reading I was jumping out of my skin. That night I was reading four erotic poems in a grouping called "Three Poems that Begin with A and One That Doesn't". They were Athlete, Alpha, Water and Apple.

I had allowed myself to feel into the challenge, to write from somewhere true, somewhere genuine, somewhere that was attached to an emotion, sensation, fantasy or experience that stuck to my ribs like a good meal. I was ready yet still doubting whether or not this was really a radical enough departure from my usual writing, and whether they were interesting enough, or erotic enough.

Once I got onto that stage, I felt totally in my body and brave. I let the audience see my erotic experiences for what they had become. Good writing. Not just a meal but a feast, a series of poems that reportedly "killed it", and since then I now feel free to call myself an erotica writer.

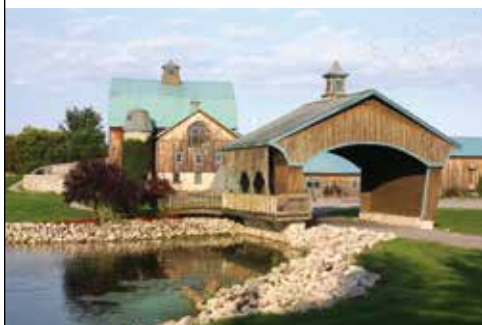
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Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer for PinkPlayMags and appeared in Beer and Butter Tarts Vol.1 by Stained Pages Press. She is an avid blogger on The High Flying Adventures of Captain Grief ([www.captaingrief.com](http://www.captaingrief.com)) and currently The Ginger Menace ([www.pinkplaymags.com](http://www.pinkplaymags.com)) and Brave Creative.Me. ([www.bravecreativeme.com](http://www.bravecreativeme.com)). She performed at the Nuit Rose storytelling event Cunning Linguists, WorldPride 2014 and appeared twice in the monthly LGBTQ+ Memoir Reading Series Queer Confessions.





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# SEX WRITING

*by Jon Pressick*

“There are eight million stories in the naked city.”

This iconic line, from the film *The Naked City*, both epitomizes and underestimates our shared experiences around sex, sexuality and gender. Yes, there are stories—tales, experiences, facts and information—all of which create and grow greater understanding, acknowledgement and desire. But are there really eight million? Not a chance. There are so many more.

Over the years, I've had the good fortune to discover, seek out and be presented with some of these stories. Having written about sex for various websites, periodicals and blogs, as well as broadcasting on live radio, I've encountered so many different people—every one of them unique in their sex, gender and sexuality. I've discovered fetishes of all sorts, activists of all stripes, and personalities who could fill a room just by batting an eyelash. This has offered me the chance to learn every damn day from these folks who stand on the front lines of sex.

Being a vanguard of gender, of sexuality, of sex is a role that can break down the bravest of souls. Stigma, shame and misinformation are still bound to the topics. Just look at the tumult surrounding Ontario's revised sexual

education curriculum. Standing up, being vocal, and expressing yourself - all of these can be a hard path to travel.

When I was offered the position of Editor of “Best Sex Writing of the Year, Volume 1: On Consent, BDSM, Porn, Race, Sex Work and More”, I couldn't believe my luck. Here I am. A fella with an insatiable interest in the complicated and intersecting worlds of gender, sexuality and sex, a fella who gets to search for and publish the great writings of people who are contributing to that conversation.

That is what we're all doing. We tell about our kinks, and maybe that resonates with others who didn't know others felt that way. We share information on educational programs, resources and centres, and maybe a reader had no idea they could get help. We profile the unique individuals who conspire and inspire, and introduce them to new, excited audiences.

Best Sex Writing of the Year, Volume 1 is a collection of articles, essays and blog posts from some of the most dynamic writers in the world. The collection features words



from dedicated journalists, pornographers, activists, sex workers, artists, educators, and many more. It is an example of the living, breathing, and constantly growing nature of sex. With topics ranging from 9/11 sex work to the Stuebenville rapes, to fisting and disability, this slice of the sexual landscape is at times, compelling, intriguing, shocking, and wonderful.

As I worked on the book, sorting through both submitted pieces and others I requested, it started to take shape almost organically before my eyes. The work that stood out gleamed before me, ready for more sets of eyes. I could hear the talk starting. I could see imaginations held captive. I knew these works would contribute to greater understandings of how we view sex, gender, and sexuality.

One of the great pleasures I had in compiling this book was including some fellow Canadians. We have some truly unique, amazing writers here who are bringing new and exciting ideas about sexuality, gender, and sex to the forefront. Here are just three of those I've had the privilege of working with.

## Jason Armstrong

Jason maintains his own blog ([www.huntingforsex.blogspot.ca](http://www.huntingforsex.blogspot.ca)), and his contribution is "Disability and Sex".

### **What got you interested in writing about sex?**

Throughout my twenties, I'd been a ferociously creative person, but I hit a creative wall at age thirty and found a "stable" office job. The creativity stopped, and that creative energy got tunnelled into sexual exploration. Some of that exploration was amazing, some of it was challenging. About three years ago, I started to see a therapist. For the most part we discussed my sex life and the



questions that arose from it. He suggested at the same time that I do something creative, like writing. "What would I write about?" I balked. He suggested I write about things I was talking to him about. Thus my first essay, about a hook-up I had recently had.

### **You write about very personal concerns. When you put those words down, how did that feel?**

To write about personal experiences is liberating as it gives meaning and shape to

things that are hard to comprehend inside my head alone. Often, I don't realize how I truly feel about something until the words hit the page, and I have an Oprah "Aha!" moment. What writing doesn't do is heal. I do not mistake it for therapy. Instead, writing is about transferring energy and most of all, about communicating with others who might share my wavelength. Writing is about digging the hole deeper and asking questions as much as it is about finding answers.

### **What could we do to increase conversations of sex in popular media?**

We live in a hypocritical world when it comes to sex. Sex is seen everywhere, it's used to sell products and create reality stars, but dare forbid you should think about sex too much, or have it too much, or enjoy it. We tend to punish those who inspire lust, perhaps out of jealousy, perhaps due to fear of sex. Sex is an inexhaustible subject. We humans are overjoyed by it, beguiled by it, and fearful of its power. As Alan Gregg wrote, "As long as sex is dealt with in the current confusion of ignorance and sophistication, denial and indulgence, suppression and stimulation, punishment and exploitation, secrecy and display, it will be associated with a duplicity and indecency that lead neither to intellectual honesty nor human dignity." (Preface to Sexual Behavior



in the Human Male, Kinsey et al., v.)

**What can we look forward to from you in future writing and other works?**

I'm working on a book tentatively called Gooning: Portrait of a Masturbator. I do research for the book every night!

**Ember Swift**

Ember is musician, songwriter, performer and writer currently living in Beijing who maintains three blogs through her website ([www.emberswift.com](http://www.emberswift.com)). Her contribution is "Pregger Libido."

**What got you interested in writing about sex?**

I am interested in writing about everything. I have always been very candid as a songwriter, so it extends to my prose writing as well.

**You write about very personal concerns. When you put those words down, how did that feel?**

I keep a blog and have been performing as a singer-songwriter for many years, so writing about my personal life for public consumption is not new to me, but writing about sex definitely is. I have to admit that I still censor myself around the topic of sex more than I'd like at this point. I'm working on that. I think conquering the natural tendency for privacy and just bravely sharing with our audiences, in any subject matter, is more empowering than anything else. So pushing through that unease is the key to reaching the empowerment.

**What could we do to increase conversations of sex in popular media?**

In the West, I'm amazed at how much open conversation there is about sex. Having lived

in Asia for eight years, I'm influenced by a much more implicit culture that has gone through a lot of pains to make sure there's an absence of explicit sexuality in almost all popular media. When I go back to the West, I'm refreshed by the openness. I'm of the mind that Western culture is already so far ahead that we just have to keep doing what we're doing to keep such healthy dialogue alive.

**What can we look forward to from you in future writing and other works?**

I'm in the midst of a memoir project about being a queer woman who has partnered with a Chinese man. Now we are a family with two children, but I am still a queer person. My personal sexual identity hasn't

changed just because I partnered with a heterosexual person. What's more, I am proud to have pursued this love despite the many conflicts such a choice brought into my life, both personally and professionally. This memoir project is a branching off from my blog called "Queer Girl Gets Married." I'm hoping it's finished by 2016!

**Morgan M. Page**

Morgan is an award-winning transsexual artist, activist, writer and blogger ([www.odofemi.tumblr.com](http://www.odofemi.tumblr.com)). Her contribution is "Crazy Trans Woman Syndrome."

**What got you interested in writing about sex?**

I don't write much about sex. Mostly, I write about intra-trans community issues. Writing non-fiction is one branch of my involvement in community organizing, which also includes working in the social services, pushing for the decriminalization of sex work and HIV non-disclosure, and creating agitprop art.

**You write about very personal concerns. When you put those words down, how did that feel?**





This piece was originally a blog entry on my Tumblr that came out of a profound frustration with the position I was finding myself in at the time. Through writing I was better able to understand exactly what was going on. The piece is about the after-effects of getting raped by a prominent community member in 2012, which is obviously personal but I don't think I thought of that at the time. Right now we all live 'out loud' across social media, but I've been living this way on the internet longer than most. My earliest online journals date back to the late 90s, and I was a very avid user of Livejournal before the rise of Facebook. I think I'm a little desensitized to putting personal information on the internet, including the details of being raped, in a way that's typical of my generation but maybe even a little extreme. I've been trying recently to reign myself in, actually. Mostly, this is because the internet is an absolute pit sometimes, even among the people who share the same or similar politics as me. I'm trying to force myself into other ways of handling my private day-to-day. Merritt Kopas, certified transsexual genius, blogged about transsexuals getting off the internet, and I'm really feeling it. On the other hand, I've recently become obsessed with Twitter, so maybe I'm just forcing myself into another outlet. The internet and chocolate are my last two addictions, and I don't really want to give up either fully.

### **What could we do to increase conversations of sex in popular media?**

I think popular media talks about sex non-stop. Sex is always the biggest news story—there is a new leaked nudes story or speculation on the sexuality/gender of some celebrity every day. Then you have Fox News scaring Americans 24-7 with the abstract horror that trans people walk among



you and might need to pee sometimes. Not to mention the immense popularity of sex in films and TV shows. Just look at *Fifty Shades of Grey*. So, the problem isn't increasing the conversations, the problem is trying to find a way to deepen and nuance those conversations.

### **What can we look forward to from you in future writing and other works?**

Right now I'm focusing a lot more on fiction writing. I think this is because hardly anyone reads fiction. Non-fiction always has a deeply depressing

comments section that, in leftist circles, often devolves into a pleasure-based system of people attempting to get points by tearing each other apart. This perversion of the already tenuous 'call out' culture particularly targets trans and cis women, people of colour, sex workers, and on and on with very detrimental effects on mental health and community cohesion. With fiction, I feel safer to discuss my real feelings without having to worry that I'll come home to a hundred tweets telling me to kill myself, because let's be real, even if it gets published on a mid-sized platform maybe five people are going to read it and they're usually people I'm close to. Other than writing, I'm working on a lot of video art and trying to figure out how to incorporate some ideas I have around tech and new media into my work.

Best Sex Writing of the Year, Volume 1: On Consent, BDSM, Porn, Race, Sex Work and More is published by Cleis Press.

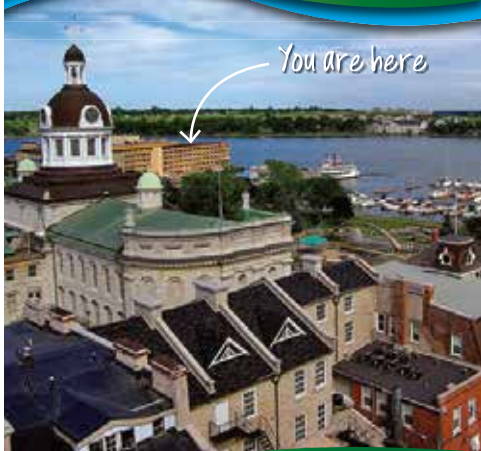
[bestsexwritingoftheyear.com](http://bestsexwritingoftheyear.com)  
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Jon Pressick is the editor of Best Sex Writing of the Year (Cleis Press), co-host and producer of Sex City heard on CIUT-FM, and blogger at SexinWords.ca.





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# SASKATOON'S STRAIGHT-FRIENDLY HIPSTER PRAIRIE VIBE

by *Bryen Dunn*

One might not consider Canada's prairie province of Saskatchewan to make the list of top LGBT destinations, but the city of Saskatoon is making a name for itself with its straight-friendly approach to life.

The city has a population of under a half million, but is one of the fastest growing in the country. Jobs are plenty, neighbourhood revitalization is booming, condo and hotel construction abounds, and the cost of living is affordable. There are more than a few gay and lesbian owned establishments that are part of this growth, and a multitude of hipster owned ones as well. This all lends way to a youthful demographic (median age 35) that's more concerned about

living the good life than someone's sexual preferences.

Saskatoon hosted its first national gay conference in 1977. Doug Wilson, one of Canada's earliest and most prominent gay rights activists, was publicly fighting for rights of LGBT people back in the 1970s. He was successful in changing the policy on discrimination against gays and lesbians at the University of Saskatchewan some 15 years ahead of the province itself. Today Saskatoon is the largest city in Saskatchewan, and home to a vibrant and diverse LGBT community that is not defined by any one neighbourhood or "village". Saskatoon Pride is a week-long festival that celebrates diversity throughout the

city with beer gardens, dances, pride parade, family activities, and more. As well, the Avenue Community Centre is a hub for community services, and their website lists a calendar of year-round events.





## Explorations

The best part about visiting a place for the first time is what can be found by simply walking around and exploring. The Meewasin Valley Trail is perfect for a morning stroll with coffee in hand, and self-guided walking tours are offered at the Meewasin Valley Centre. River Landing stretches from 3rd Avenue South to Victoria Park, linking the Meewasin Valley Trail, and offers an array of social, cultural, and commercial options such as the Remail Arts Centre and the Saskatoon Farmers' Market. Founded in 1975, the Market is a member-owned, non-profit cooperative that provides residents and visitors the best in local agricultural products, baking, prepared foods and crafts. The year-round indoor venue springs to life outdoors in warmer weather season with special events that include live music, local chefs demonstrating their skills, and local farmer booths.

For those who like to shop, Broadway Avenue is a vibrant and animated arts, entertainment and business district, recognized as a unique people place, rich in cultural experiences and valued for its diversity, architecture, character and vitality. The Affinity Gallery is located on the main floor of the Saskatchewan Craft Council building in the same area, and is Saskatchewan's only public exhibition gallery dedicated to the celebration of Fine Craft as an art form. Second Avenue is one of the newest developing areas with plenty of independent shops, cafés, and galleries springing up regularly. Other arts options include the Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon's premier destination for contemporary and historical art, with exhibitions changing quarterly. The Gallery's permanent collection includes more than 5,800 works by local, regional, and national artists. AKA Gallery is an artist-run centre that facilitates the production, presentation and interpretation of a diversity of contemporary art with an emphasis on innovative artistic practices. As well, Saskatoon's major arts venue is TCU Place is located adjacent to Midtown Plaza downtown.

If all that exploring is working up a thirst, one of the trending things to do when travelling these days is to partake in the local craft brewery, winery, and emerging distillery scenes. Lucky Bastard Distillery produces some interesting liqueurs and spirits using local organic fruit, including the infamous Saskatoon berry. They currently offer a wide variety of naturally flavoured rums and vodkas, a "New Western Dry



Gin", and will soon have a barrel-aged whiskey. Their liqueur selection is as far reaching as the imagination, and the proprietors are more than happy to serve up some samples. Beer lovers should check out Prairie Sun Brewery and Saskatoon Brewery, both offering a wide selection of tried and true favourites, along with one-off batches and seasonal selections.

## Dining

When it comes to dining out, there are plenty of great options scattered throughout the city. The elegantly upscale Ivy Dining & Lounge is located a few blocks north-east of the central core, on the same block as Bar 302. The wedded male owners opened their business eight years ago in the space previously occupied by The Keg in a mostly barren section of the city. Since then they have established a successful business that has since helped to attract other entrepreneurs to the area, have secured plans to open a second



establishment in a different part of the city, and still make family time to be with their two sons. This is just one example of a gay couple staying



true to their prairie roots, and adding to the diverse culture that is not often portrayed when one thinks of Midwestern Canada.

There are no rainbow flags or stickers on the door, but the owners mention that the LGBT community does support the business, and they've asked their staff to ensure it's a welcoming space for everyone. "I've let the staff know to send over a complimentary drink to gay and lesbian couples who come in for dinner. I want to make sure they feel comfortable to be themselves while dining with us", Curtis explains. Chef Matthew Sutherland was nominated for the prestigious Gold Medal Awards, Saskatchewan's definitive hospitality industry event, and his menu plays heavy on meat and fish, featuring



a selection that includes the traditional beef plates, along with more gamey fare of boar and duck. Local sourced pickerel and trout are also quite common around the city.

Ayden Kitchen and Bar serves what they call "modern Canadian comfort food", and the unpretentious restaurant and bar space is often packed with the younger set looking to chow down on house-made charcuterie, custom butchery, fresh cheeses, and gourmet pantry items. Cleverly created cocktails also make it a go-to evening spot to begin or end the night. Credibility is guaranteed via its owner and operator Chef Dale MacKay, a Saskatoon native and Canada's original Top Chef Canada Winner in 2011. Situated in the historic Birks building in downtown Saskatoon, Truffles Bistro offers up exceptional dining in a European atmosphere. Chef de Cuisine Lee Helman sources the finest local products, and all pastries, breads, stocks and sauces are prepared in house.

The Hollows is a locally owned and operated restaurant located in the Riversdale neighbourhood in the former Golden Dragon restaurant. Chefs Christie Peters and Kyle Michael are dedicated to serving contemporary food focused on natural and seasonal products that includes cultivated plants grown from heirloom seeds, wild-harvested leaves and mushrooms, flowers, sap and roots, local fish, and sustainably-raised pastured meat, poultry and eggs. Their weekend brunch is extremely popular, and great to cure the hangover from the night before with one of their detoxifying beverages, or keep the party going with a Bloody Caesar. Another option in the same area just around the corner is Riversdale Deli, where you can pick up some great charcuterie and artisanal cheeses to eat in or take away. For breakfast try the Citizen Café and Bakery or Poached Breakfast Bistro.

## Out and About

Diva's Nightclub is Saskatoon's longest running LGBT dance bar, located downtown in the historic multi-level Avenue Building, which was recently renovated to add an additional quieter lounge called The Annex on the upper level. DJ's spin every weekend and on special events. Recently opened Bar 302 is the city's second gay bar that bills itself as straight-friendly, something that seems to be the way of thinking for many businesses and organizations. The bar is located in a 19th century historic warehouse in an up and coming sector of downtown, boasting an inventive menu of cocktails, wine, champagne and appetizers. A varied mix of live entertainment and an eclectic roster of house DJs keep things hopping on weekends.

The Prairie Ivy LGBT curling league also uses the straight-friendly tagline. After years of reading about gay-friendly businesses, it's nice to see this flip flop of acceptance toward the mainstream population. We're here, we're queer, and we're welcoming to all. Other LGBT owned businesses are scattered throughout the city, such as the newly opened Flint martini bar on 2nd Ave, and the Park Café on the burgeoning 20th Street corridor, that is literally changing overnight as the new hip hood. Saskatoon is also well recognized as one of the top college towns for live music, with one of the more popular music venues being Louis' Pub which is located on the University of Saskatchewan Campus, as well as other city haunts such as Amigo's, Buds on Broadway, and The Bassment.

# All the Links

## Tourism Saskatoon

[www.tourismsaskatoon.com/rainbow](http://www.tourismsaskatoon.com/rainbow)

## Explore Saskatoon

[www.exploreyxe.com](http://www.exploreyxe.com)

## Out Saskatoon

[www.outsaskatoon.ca](http://www.outsaskatoon.ca)

## Out and About

### Diva's

[www.divasnightclub.com](http://www.divasnightclub.com)

### 302 Lounge

[www.302lounge.com](http://www.302lounge.com)

### Saskatoon Pride

[www.saskatoonpride.ca](http://www.saskatoonpride.ca)

### Sexual Diversity Resource

<http://library2.usask.ca/srsd/>

## Dining and Drinking

### The Ivy Dining & Lounge

[www.theivysaskatoon.com](http://www.theivysaskatoon.com)

### Ayden Kitchen and Bar

[www.aydenkitchenandbar.com](http://www.aydenkitchenandbar.com)

### The Hollows

[www.thehollows.ca](http://www.thehollows.ca)

### Park Café

[www.parkcafe.ca](http://www.parkcafe.ca)

### Flint

[www.flintsaloon.com](http://www.flintsaloon.com)

## Accommodations

### Delta Bessborough

[www.deltabessborough.ca](http://www.deltabessborough.ca)

### James Hotel

[www.thejameshotel.ca](http://www.thejameshotel.ca)

As with any city, Saskatoon has many festivals and events during the summer and fall, including comedy, music, theatre, and even an outdoor Shakespeare festival. Live theatre is a central, vibrant part of Saskatoon's culture and has a number of live theatre venues, including the gorgeous Persephone Theatre, The Refinery and the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company. The city also boasts the only burlesque group in the Prairies, the Rosebud Burlesque Club. Movie buffs should check out the independently operated "art house" Broadway Theatre and the "atmospheric-style" Roxy Theatre.

## Lodging

There is no shortage of places to bunk down in the city after a day of sightseeing. Two of the best options are located right along the South Saskatchewan River. The Delta Bessborough is Saskatoon's "Castle on the River", which was built by CN Railway in the 1930's and still retains its historic charm, yet with modern amenities. The hotel has 225 guest rooms, and onsite dining at both the Samurai Japanese Restaurant, and the Garden Court Café, popular for Sunday brunch and local Saskatchewan dishes. The other recommended lodging option is across the street at the ultra-modern independently-owned James Hotel. Spacious suites with floor-to-ceiling windows make this a perfect home-away-from-home. The lobby bar is also a go-to weekend spot for locals as DJs pump up the volume with a variety of soulful lounge vibes, and the bar selection is one of the best in town. The Odessa Room offers complimentary hot and cold breakfast buffet and chef-prepared entrees for all registered guests.

As Canada's "The Guess Who" band sang back in 1972, this happening straight-friendly city vibe will have everyone "Runnin' Back to Saskatoon".

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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# PRIDE GUIDE

PRIDE TORONTO FESTIVAL JUNE 19 - JUNE 28 | PRIDE PARADE JUNE 28

[WWW.PRIDETORONTO.COM](http://WWW.PRIDETORONTO.COM)



**Friday June 26, 2015**

**Trans March**

**North Stage**

Start time 8 pm (March Rally 7 pm)

One of the largest events of the trans communities in the GTA. Since it began in 2009, The Trans\* March provides a place for trans identified people to rally, come together in solidarity and provide a safe space for trans people.

**Friday June 26, 2015**

**One World**

**519 Community Centre**

5 pm

An outdoor venue featuring Masters of House music bringing their original beats to thousands of sexy partygoers, will feature a special set



by world famous DJ Dandy Rivera (Kings of Tomorrow) and Rosabel's DJ Ralph Rosario.

**Friday June 26, 2015**

**Bend it Like Bombay**

**TD Wellesley Stage**

**15 Wellesley Street East**

7 pm

Pride partners with Besharam to show you just how fun this multicultural city can be! This year we celebrate the theme of Holi, the festival of love and colour celebrated in South Asia. Party with our International Grand Marshall, Bollywood superstar and activist Celina Jaitly, and Besharam's DJ Amita and performances by musicians, activists and fusion dancers such as, Bollywood fusion dancers from Divine Heritage Artistry and Broken Dance Company, this party promises to be bombaylicious!





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**F26**  
9 PM - 2 AM

**S27**  
9 PM - 2 AM

**S28**  
3 PM - 9 PM

**9 PM - 2 AM**

**Play**

**TUNE UP**

**play  
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**DJ LISA PITTMAN** (VEGAS)  
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**Friday June 26, 2015**

**Electric Circus**

The Garrison, 1197 Dundas St West

10:30 pm

DJs V Δ N E S S Δ & Pammm play dance floor classics and favourites for you.

**Saturday June 27, 2015**

**Lipstick Jungle**

The 519 Church Street Community Centre

1 pm

One of the longest standing outdoor events, Lipstick Jungle brings together thousands of lesbian, trans and gay party-goers. This year's edition will bring some of the most talented DJs of the international scene to the decks including Chicago's Colette & DJ Heather and international supermodel Eve Salvail, aka DJ Evalicious.

**Saturday June 27, 2015**

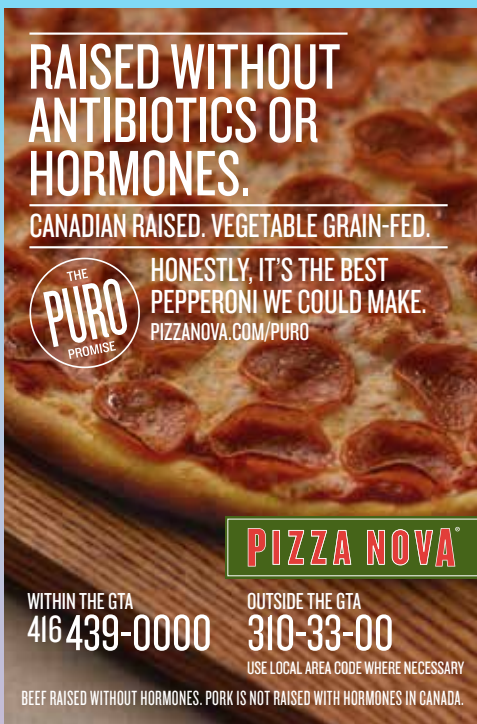
**Dyke March**

Church St and Bloor St., down Yonge St. to Yonge-Dundas Square

2 pm – 4 pm

Post-march – Activities at Allan Gardens: Raging Asian Women drumming group, speakers, yoga, and water play.

The Dyke March is a grassroots event where women and trans people in LGBTTIQQ2SA\* communities take over the streets of Toronto. Not considered so much as a parade as a political demonstration showing the strength of the LGBTTIQQ2SA Communities.



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**Saturday June 27, 2015**

**Bear Garden**

**OLG Central Stage Church & Maitland**

2 pm

In a first for 2015, Pride Toronto – in partnership with Pitbull – will play host to all the Muscle Bears, Polar Bears, Sugar Bears, Cubs, Otters, Wolves and Pups, along with their friends and admirers!

The night will host international and local entertainment: LA superstar Paulo, Grammy Nominated Dave Audé, Vancouver's bear-licious Nick Bertossi and Toronto's cutie Neill MacLeod ft. Sima, among other great talent!

**Saturday June 27, 2015**

**Drag On**

**Molson Canadian Yonge-Dundas Square, 1 Dundas St E**

2 pm

2015 marks Pride Toronto's 35th edition! The only way to celebrate turning 35? 35 drag performers, of course!

The largest drag show to ever happen in Canada. Come dressed in drag and join in this first-ever

event!

For a full-line up of 35 Queens visit the website [www.torontopride.com](http://www.torontopride.com)

**Sunday June 28, 2015**

**Church on Church**

**South Stage, 436 Church Street**

11 am

Rev. Brent Hawkes' sermon will reflect a message that all are welcome at MCC Toronto regardless of religious background; and the celebrated Choir of MCC Toronto, under the artistic direction of Diane Leah, will be joined by special guest performers.

**Sunday June 28, 2015**

**Pride Parade**

**Church St and Bloor St., down Yonge St. to Yonge-Dundas Square**

2 pm



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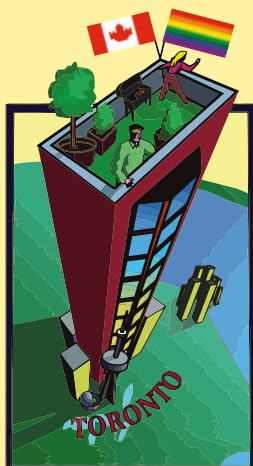
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*by Lexi Sanfino*

# Hot Artist: Buck Angel

**B**uck Angel is a pioneering filmmaker, LGBTQ advocate, motivational speaker, and porn star. He's also a transsexual man, born female and underwent a gender change to become a man. The thing that has made Mr. Angel well known in the world is his desire to not conform to the world's idea of what makes you a man, which many in society regard as the penis. Therefore, he has opted to keep his vagina.



Buck Angels says, "I have brought awareness to the world in regards to gender and genitals. I am very well known for coining the phrase, "It's not what's between your legs that defines you." He then adds, "My motivational speaking is geared not only to the LGBTQ community, but the whole world. I believe that I am a human first, and that is how we all make a connection."

His philosophy of life was all put to the test recently when he was taken to court by his long-term female partner. Buck says, "I went through a horrible divorce last year with a woman I was together with for 11 years. Elayne sought annulment based on the claim that I was not a man. She argued I did not have a penis and that that we were never legally married because same-sex marriage is illegal in Louisiana. She betrayed my trust, but I was lucky enough to have an amazing lawyer who helped me win my case. It set a precedent in the legal world".

I had an opportunity to chat with Buck, and ask him a couple questions.

### **What's new with Buck Angel?**

As we speak I am in the midst of writing my memoir, and a book on trans sex. My documentary "Mr. Angel" has been streaming on Netflix to wonderful reviews, and is seen as revolutionary at film festivals worldwide.

### **When you first started doing porn what was the reaction of the world?**

Many people were very discouraged and acted as if what I was doing was not positive, or in fact very degrading to the transgender world. They hated that I called myself a man with a vagina. They hated that I was having sex with my vagina. Mostly that hate came from the porn world and the trans community. The bio world, or what some people call cisgender world was actually more accepting, especially the gay men. I realized at one point it was because what I was doing was so new and pioneering that people didn't understand. I learned to not take it personally, thus making it easier to get to this place 13 years later.

### **Do you consider yourself sex positive, and how can another person achieve this?**

Yes I am very sex positive. To me that means not making sex something bad but teaching that sex is healthy and natural. When we shame people around sex or their sexuality, we create hate and we create something that makes people feel bad. We need to send out a message that sex is good.

### **What is some advice you could give to somebody who is looking to be part of the adult entertainment business?**

The first thing I always ask is why do you want to make porn?" Clearly there is no right or wrong answer, but for me I just want to see where their head is at. I am also very forthcoming in that this is not a get-rich-quick profession, and that you do this and it is with you forever. So just remember that in 10 or 20 years down the road this will still be part of your life. Some people might not be ok with that.

### **Being a role model to so many people, who is your role mode?**

Madonna is a big role model for me. She is amazing in so many ways. She showed the world that you can be whatever you want to be, by just having the courage to go for it. I just love that about her so very much.

---

Lexi Sanfino Toronto based transgender artist, writer, performer, and activist.





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## Fiction

# MAMBO LIPS

*by Joie Lamar*

**W**epa is the Latino word for woohoo. It is a word that expresses happiness derived from freedom. Freedom begins in your head. Scratch that last sentence if you are in a hostage or slave trade situation. What I mean to say is that I started to hear my mind shout wepa the minute I became happy with myself. Wepa is also a mating call. When you hear it in your head, people see it on your face and the rest is magic. I embraced the word and me fully. I don't mean to imply that Willie's passing resulted in my freedom but it certainly closed a chapter in my life. I would not reread the straight book ever again.

My new story led to some great gay and lesbian friends. I was amazed at how many of us were in New York, let alone the world. This discovery led to my shelving all of my religious books and writings. I quickly deciphered that God's message was right in front of me. It was in the people I was

meeting, the places I was going and it was in the beautiful lesbian clubs throughout the city. I concluded my research but gained my spirituality as a result of all that I read.

Every experience in my life had culminated to serve this out and about Joie well. Pretending to be



# Mambo Lips

## A Faux Memoir

Bobby Vinton for so many years gave me great confidence. Mama's dance lessons made me brave. Dancing salsa with Cenzo and the hustle with Alex made me a talented dancer. All this, tempered by my natural shyness, made me a pubic hair shy of cocky. I shed

the long braided hair and started to dress for me. WEPA! I had never felt so authentic! This is not a self-help book by any means but I recommend that everyone seek to be their authentic selves. It is liberating, comfortable and soothing like a lavender scented warm bath. I would imagine it is the same feeling that baseball players get when they scratch their balls right in front of eighty thousand fans.

One small detail would derail the butch train that I was now on. I did not understand women. Don't yell at the book, I cannot hear you. I am very aware of my gender but I don't necessarily click with all of it mentally. There are many reasons for this, but again, I am not a psychiatrist. I grew up in a male household, took care of male children and was never a feminine girl. I connected with my father growing up. The reason why was not as important as the dilemma.

Pure females as I call them are sensitive, calculating and oh so

complicated. Actually, I could write a War and Peace size novel to truly describe a pure woman, but let's just say those three particular traits threw me for a loop. Some women use their beauty and sensuality for evil. I know no creature on this earth with so

many dimensions like a woman. I would like to say that I enjoyed the on the job training but it would be more honest to say that I am glad that I survived. I was certainly dedicated to the cause.

The Sahara was one of the most elegant lesbian clubs in New York, of that time. It was owned and run by a fellow butch who may or may not have been involved with the Cosa Nostra. I will not speak ill of the dead but she did want us to think she was a gangster. I began working at the club every other weekend to supplement my income, providing Papa was well and Mama could babysit for me. I was a barmaid. Hired because the owner's lover was interviewing the day I came in for the position and because I could dance with the drink tray on top of my head. Surfboard balance had finally paid off. We were required to wear a tuxedo shirt, cummerbund and bow tie to work. It was a uniform that the rest of the staff abhorred, but that I loved. The gangster owner dressed

in a different tuxedo every weekend. She complimented how crisp I looked and assigned me to the front room on my very first shift. The front room of the Sahara Club on East 82nd Street in Manhattan was my golden goose. Yes, this applies to the

money I made as a barmaid too but my reference is really directed to the type of women I was meeting, and all that I was learning every weekend. The more mature and professional crowd loved that front room. Many super models, judges, attorneys, entertainers and more graced Joie's room, as I had taken to calling it. These ladies dressed to the nines and ordered drinks like Courvoisier and Remy Martin. Each of them liked these drinks served a certain way. Some of them liked to talk, some wanted a hug when they arrived and some wanted to feel important. It did not matter the scenario, I remembered their names, likes and dislikes.

I would finish my shift in the front room one hour before the club closed altogether. That was my time to go upstairs and dance. I was young and naïve. Having the dance floor clear to encircle me while I hustled to Frankie Valle's 'Swear to God' or Tavares' 'Heaven must be missing an angel' was my fifteen minutes of fame back

**She said "Hi,  
can I help  
you with that  
seizure you  
just had?"**



then. She interrupted my game with a smile and a wink from across the room. I tried to wink back and not only lost my step but managed to hit my dance partner in the head with my elbow. You can easily recover from a funny awkward move when everyone is dancing

with you but I was now the spastic show in the middle of the circle.

Lisa introduced herself with the best line ever. She said "Hi, can I help you with that seizure you just had?" It was embarrassing but I am attracted to sarcasm. Not mean but intelligent sarcasm and specifically intelligent sarcasm with amazing beauty. She was all of the above. Our dates would be confined to the club. It seems like our schedules could never sync up, the weather, emergencies, my son, school and maybe just maybe Lisa was just a weekend lesbian. I was comfortable with what I called our Sahara relationship. I was at my best in this environment. She was comfortable behind the club walls.

Lisa was my first really profound female kiss. We danced, we laughed, and we thoroughly enjoyed each other in the safety of the Sahara Club. Nothing I had imagined could live up to my first female kiss. I pretended it would be my last kiss to give her all of



me, a ritual I still rely on today. I breathed her in completely with each turn of our heads, lips and tongues. Somehow our heartbeats synchronized. We were gentle with each other, slightly embarrassed in public, but we would go on to kiss many times. Eventually we grew apart. I fully embraced my sexuality. She found her happiness with a man and had several beautiful children. I would receive a note from her, years later, in the mail. It read simply, "You set the bar."

I mentioned earlier in this chapter that I discovered women are complicated creatures. Lisa would be my first lesson into unraveling some of that mystery. Guess what world? A lesbian relationship is just like any other, for those wondering.

It is never about the sex. It is about a connection, our ability to match rhythms, soul to soul. This I learned in a club on East 82nd Street in Manhattan.

---

Joie Lamar made her way to Canada 15 years ago, from the United States, when she met the love of her life. They were married in Ontario, Canada in 2010. She is most passionate about marriage equality, celebrating the

## Nothing I had imagined could live up to my first female kiss.



many heroes and she-ros of the LGBTQ community, women's and animal rights.

Mambo Lips, her first book in a two part series, has been a cathartic endeavor that she likes to call a faux memoir. "This is an easy read novel sized for a day at the beach or short rides

on a train". "It is not intended to be a long drawn out story of my life, but an entertaining read that makes you stop thinking long enough to feel."

Released on March 15, 2015, Mambo Lips © will be followed by Salsa Lips ©, part two of this series, scheduled for late 2015. Skin Suit ©, Joie Lamar's LGBT sci-fi novel, has been drafted, with meetings to define the details in queue. Ms. Lamar still holds a full time job as an Electrical Engineer. "I promised my creative side that I would make more time for it when I retired my technical life." "I am just exercising those muscles now, before the big day comes."

She lives in Ajax with her wife Natalie, their daughter Nicole and two fur babies named Lucy & Linus.





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<sup>10</sup> This work was supported by NSF Grant IRI-95-01015, and National Science Foundation Grant IRI-95-01015.



# A Trendy Three-way

by *cee sando*

Queue that summer sun! That amazing thing that reminds us what we've been itching for all winter, that allows the crush we've been eyeing to finally take off the multi layers of wool and cotton they've been hiding under for the past six months, and the reminder that everyone around you is way more inked than you remember.

This issue's fashion column tells the tale of a complicated and uber sexy love triangle between three super stylish queers.

Addison and Misty recently started dating, and Addison has decided it's time to introduce the new beau to the homie, Peyton. The trio have a relaxing hot-weather day planned, including some food, drinks, and simple vegging in the sun. What starts out as a relatively innocent hang out turns into something very different

when Peyton somewhat unintentionally catches Misty's eye. Caught up in the high heat of summer, Misty cannot help but look... and eventually touch. The two steal away for a lurid make-out session against a lush green backdrop. Luckily Addison has had eyes for the homie for some time, and sees this as the perfect chance to initiate some group fun.

Of course all the while these three are sporting beyond fly-in-the-seasons most smouldering looks - namely repurposed sportswear jerseys, unisex business-inspired separates, and vibrant Kente print.



Misty- American Apparel jacket, model's own pant and bra, stylist's own necklace and earrings  
Addison- Stuzo Clothing jersey, Anonymous Jeans pants  
Peyton- Apuletown jersey, Priceless pants

### Models

Maria Carter as Addison @iamchefcarter on instagram

Dawnita Noel as Misty @djeuphoric on instagram

Selina Carrera as Peyton @selinacarrera on instagram

### Crew

Photog Genna Sandler @gsandlerphoto on instagram

Wardrobe- cee sando @ceesando on instagram

Hair- Kyrn Christenson @honeycombncoil on instagram

MUA Veronica Haywood @veroniikaahl on instagram



Misty- Stuzo Clothing jersey earrings stylist's own  
Peyton- Apuletown Dashiki, Apuletown beanie, Apuletown pants, necklaces model's own



Misty- American Apparel jacket, model's own pant and bra, stylist's own necklace and earrings  
Addison- Stuzo Clothing jersey, Anonymous Jeans pants  
Peyton- Apuletown jersey, Priceless pants



Addison- Wichkim shorts, Tamar leggings, model's own bra, stylist's own necklace  
Misty- Stuzo Clothing jersey, Tamar leggings, stylist's own necklace and earrings  
Peyton- Apuletown Dashiki, Apuletown pants, necklaces model's own



Misty- Stuzo Clothing jersey, Tamar leggings, stylist's own necklace and earrings  
Peyton- Apuletown Dashiki, Apuletown beanie, Apuletown pants, necklaces model's own



Addison- Wichkim shorts, Tamar leggings, model's own bra, stylist's own necklace  
Misty- Stuzo Clothing jersey, Tamar leggings, stylist's own necklace and earrings  
Peyton- Apuletown Dashiki, Apuletown beanie, Apuletown pants, necklaces model's own



Misty- Stuzo Clothing jersey, Tamar leggings  
Peyton- Apuletown Dashiki, Apuletown pants, necklaces model's own

cee sando is an arts & lifestyle writer, wardrobe stylist and unicorn v (@theartofwor) is inspired by international travel, the ocean, runner's high, sashimi, and that perfectly put together outfit.

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## Community Cornerstone



*by Judy Virago*

The first time I visited Toronto's Hassle Free Clinic I had been estranged from my boyfriend at the time for about six months. For the first time in my life, I stepped foot into a room chock full of (mostly) gay men whose united goal wasn't to get laid or celebrate sexual liberation, but to keep their health in check. I felt vulnerable and ashamed. I was naked without a veil of club lighting and booze, and my reason for sharing space with these men was all too real.

The Hassle Free Clinic provides testing and treatment for STIs and anonymous, rapid HIV testing. They operate separate clinics for Men/Trans & Women/Trans folks, which offer slightly different services internally. The Men/Trans Clinic has a substantial Enhanced Testing program that offers anonymous, rapid HIV testing at three community locations several times a month. The clinic has been providing syphilis and HIV testing at four Toronto bathhouses for thirty years, and has recently expanded their support services for guys who are newly diagnosed with HIV. The clinic also

offers short term counselling and referrals to men for a variety of issues, with a focus on HIV prevention and substance use. The Women/Trans Clinic offers reproductive health in addition to sexual health, including pregnancy testing and birth control options counselling, as well as a twice monthly nursing clinic for women living with HIV.

A lot of us are taught that queer sex is dangerous. Confronting sexual health concerns can be genuinely traumatic. I had always been embarrassed to get tested with my family doctor due to the stigma surrounding gay sex.



The Hassle Free Clinic was the safest space available to me as a migrant queer person seeking peace of mind. Fortunately, as anyone who has endured the clinic waiting room knows, the absolute non-judgemental attitude of the Hassle Free Clinic staff significantly reduces any pre-examination anxieties. Regardless of the number of sexual partners I had, I always felt supported in this space, whether it was as a gay man in the men and trans clinic, or eventually as a trans woman in the women and trans clinic.

Shawn Fowler has been a sexual health counsellor with the Men & Trans Clinic for six years, and indicates that the clinic's particular history has allowed an association with the gay community in Toronto to grow. "We really try to stick to non-judgmental, sex-positive values when we're providing service and planning programming. Being an open door clinic it's great that we're able to be a LGBT positive service, but we're here for everyone", he says.

Due to the high demand on the clinics services, when the clinic is open it's all hands on deck. According to Fowler, "all staff are front line including the Clinic Directors, which really helps maintain a grass roots community feel, and reminds us all of the issues our communities



a long history of working within sexual and reproductive health and justice, Hassle Free is really positioned very well to identify emerging issues and trends, and to organize, implement, and change to respond to those issues. We're able to partner with community agencies to educate around increases we're seeing in certain STIs, participate in research, and develop treatment and counselling guidelines that inform policy elsewhere", continues Fowler.

In the future Fowler would like to see expansions in the support and counselling services the clinic has been offering to people newly diagnosed with HIV grow. "We're still seeing a significant number of new HIV infections at the clinic annually, and we really have been looking at the ways we're educating and counselling clients: from the testing process to the support we're offering, to ensure someone feels comfortable accessing care and treatment after a diagnosis."

I no longer feel vulnerable when I visit the clinic, instead I feel like I'm rewarding myself with responsibility for all the good hard fun I've had.



and clients are living with daily." The clinic also has a very active volunteer program. "Often all the intake staff at the clinic are folk who are taking time out of their week to come in and provide that necessary service, which means one more staff person is available to see clients" says Fowler.

"We have to be on our feet to manage the flow of clients. Since we are so busy and have such

Judy Virago is a transgender writer and performer living in Toronto. She is the co-founder of the queer art collective The House of Filth, and was voted "Runner Up" for NOW Magazine's Best Toronto Drag Queen 2015.





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# SUMMER IN THE CITY

**G**oodbye grey skies, hello sunshine! It always amazes me how different of a city Toronto is during the summer months. Between the flea markets, outdoor concerts, street festivals and, of course, patios, there's no excuse to sit indoors. So, with that in mind, my challenge to you this summer is explore as much of Toronto as possible and have fun doing it.

## ARTS

### Luminato Festival

June 19-28

Various locations

(416) 368-4849

[luminatofestival.com](http://luminatofestival.com)

TICKETS: Prices vary

Luminato is an annual 10-day celebration of the arts taking place in theatres, parks, and public spaces across Toronto. Launched in 2007, the festival has commissioned over 66 new works of art and featured 7,500 artists from 40

countries. The 2015 edition includes a backyard garden party in the heart of the city, the world premiere of David Byrne's Contemporary Color, a Brazilian block party, and much more.

**TIP:** Luminato isn't just for people! This year's festival closes out with a free pet-friendly outdoor concert in collaboration with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

## Toronto Fringe Festival July 1-12

(416) 966-1062

[fringetoronto.com](http://fringetoronto.com)

TICKETS: Maximum \$12, kids \$5

The Toronto Fringe Festival was born in the summer of 1989. Since then, it has showcased over 2,300 independent theatre productions and returned nearly \$5,000,000 back to participating artists to help launch their careers. The festival isn't just about theatre, though; dance, visual art, buskers, and site-specific performances are also represented. The Drowsy Chaperone, Kim's Convenience, 'da Kink in My Hair, Mump and Smoot, My Mother's Lesbian Jewish Wiccan Wedding, and A Musical of Musicals: The Musical are just some of the shows that got their big break at the Toronto Fringe.

TIP: Get there early. Not only will it ensure you get a better view, but the festival has a no latecomer-seating policy and does not offer refunds.

## Toronto Queer Arts Film Festival August 7-9

Revue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave.

(416) 879-7954

[artsfestival.queerwest.org](http://artsfestival.queerwest.org)

Why should all of Toronto's LGBTQ fabulousness be jam-packed into one month? That was the thinking behind the decision to move the Toronto Queer Arts Festival from June to August back in 2010. Now in its seventh year, the festival is gaining an international reputation for showcasing the best of independent queer cinema. The 2015 edition won't include an arts festival, but will instead see the annual film festival expanded from an evening screening to a three-day event at the Revue Cinema in Roncesvalles Village.

TIP: While you're in the area, take a stroll

through the picturesque High Park, which is bounded by Bloor Street West to the north and the Queensway to the south.

## FOOD Summerlicious July 3-19

Various locations

[toronto.ca/summerlicious](http://toronto.ca/summerlicious)



Whether you're trying something new or just revisiting an old favourite, there is no better opportunity to explore the tastes of Toronto than during Summerlicious. For two weeks in July, close to 200 of the city's top restaurants offer affordable prix fixe menus for lunch (priced at \$15, \$20 or \$25) and dinner (\$25, \$35 or \$45). Reservations are encouraged, but most restaurants will accept walk-ins.

TIP: Canoe, Momofuku, Café Boulud, and Aria are all highly sought-after spots on the Summerlicious lineup, so if you're planning on dining at one (or all) of them, make sure to book your table as soon as possible.

## Pan American Food Festival July 30-August 3

Daniels Spectrum, 585 Dundas St. E.

[panamfoodfest.com](http://panamfoodfest.com)

FREE

One of the best things about Toronto is its diversity, and the Pan American Food Festival is a delicious reminder of this. Attendees will have the opportunity to experience the



cultures and flavours of the 41 countries of North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean through food demonstrations, music and dance ensembles, a vendors market, and a tourism showcase. The festival also features an impressive roster of chefs, including Rich Francis (Canada), Norman Van Aken (USA), and Steve Gonzalez (Columbia).

**TIP:** Once you've tasted your way through the festival, be sure to hit the dance floor, where Martin Samuels will be teaching guests how to do the salsa and bachata.

## **OUTDOOR MARKETS & PARTIES**

### **Leslieville Flea**

**June 21, July 19, August 16**

**10-5 p.m.**

Ashbridge Estate, 1444 Queen St. E.

[leslievilleflea.com](http://leslievilleflea.com)

**FREE**

After spending the winter months inside the Distillery District's Fermenting Cellar, the Leslieville Flea heads outdoors for the summer at the beautiful Ashbridge Estate. Taking place on the third Sunday of every month, the curated market features over 50 vendors selling vintage and salvaged goods, furniture, antiques, collectibles, and more.

**TIP:** After you're done shopping, head down the street to The Duke (1225 Queen St. E.) to enjoy a pint on their garden patio, easily one of the best in the neighbourhood.

### **Evergreen Brick Works Farmers' Market**

**Saturdays from 8-1 p.m.**

Evergreen Brick Works, 550 Bayview Ave.

[www.evergreen.ca](http://www.evergreen.ca)

**FREE**

Evergreen Brick Works provides the perfect



escape from Toronto without ever having to leave the city. Located just outside the downtown core, Evergreen transforms the historic Don Valley Brick Works factory from a deteriorating collection of buildings, into a thriving community environmental centre. Their weekly farmers' market is one of the biggest and best in the city, offering a wide variety of local and seasonal food from Ontario farmers, producers, wineries, breweries, and chefs.

**TIP:** Don't be afraid to approach the farmers and vendors with any questions you might have. They have a wealth of knowledge to share and will be able to educate you on what food is in season (and maybe even help you plan your dinner!).

### **Gatsby Garden Party**

**June 28**

**12-5 p.m.**

Spadina Museum, 285 Spadina Ave.

[www.facebook.com/spadinamuseum](http://www.facebook.com/spadinamuseum)

**TICKETS:** \$5 per person

For anyone who has ever dreamed about traveling back in time to the 1920s, the Gatsby Garden Party is for you. Come dressed in 1920s garb (there will be prizes for best costumes) and enjoy live jazz music, dancing, and croquet. Attendees will also get the opportunity to explore the historic Spadina Museum. It's sure to be the bee's knees!

**TIP:** The event is expected to sell out fast, so stay tuned to the museum's Facebook page for information about online tickets and a 1920s-era Speakeasy being held later this summer.

## **ESCAPE** **Electric Island** **July 1, August 3**

Hanlan's Point, Toronto Island

[electricisland.to](http://electricisland.to)

**TICKETS:** \$44.50 plus HST (includes ferry ride)



No summer is complete without a trip to the Toronto Islands, and what better way to embrace the island life than with a dance party on the beach? Electric Island, the fully-licensed concert and picnic series, returns this summer with a stacked line-up of world-class talent and delicious eats. Last year's series included sets by Jamie XX, Hot Since 82, Seth Troxler, and many more. Make sure to pack a blanket, sunscreen and, most importantly, some comfortable shoes to dance away the afternoon and evening in.



**TIP:** To avoid hassles at the gate, avoid bringing outside food or drink, glow sticks, fireworks, sports balls, and lawn chairs.

## **Cabana Pool Bar** **11 Polson St.**

[cabanapoolbar.com](http://cabanapoolbar.com)

**COVER:** Free entrance, \$15 pool access Tuesday to Friday; \$20 entrance, \$20 pool access Saturday and Sunday

Located at the Polson Pier, Cabana Pool Bar brings a little taste of Miami and Las Vegas to Toronto with enough space to accommodate 2,500 sun-worshippers and seating for 850. In addition to their massive salt water pool, the cabana boasts an impressive cocktail menu, a freshly-squeezed juice station, complimentary wifi, and private cabanas.

**TIP:** Try the "Sexy Fries" (fresh-cut french fries with parmesan and truffle oil) or "The Tojito" (mint leaves, limes, spiced rum, maple syrup, lime juice, soda). You won't regret it.

Caitlyn Holroyd is a news editor at the Toronto-based sports app theScore and a contributor at SheDoesTheCity.com, where she compiles the hottest parties and events for the weekly Toronto Hit List. When she isn't writing, she enjoys travelling, attending concerts, and hanging out with her two cats.



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## From The Heart



*by Patricia Wilson*

Being queer or whatever we call ourselves these days is a parallel journey to being human. We often must negotiate more than one path travelled at the same time, and the trick is to be living our lives to their fullest. I remember when I finally acknowledged to myself that I was different in more ways than one, and life could be over...or renewed. It was at some point after that realization that my life got brighter.

Let's jump way ahead, to where I was living my life as I was always meant to. Toronto, and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre happened at about the same time for me. Suddenly I was educated and radicalized as a queer individual far above anything I could have possibly comprehended. I was walking the walk with those who had been fighting the good fight for all of us for so many years past. I say thank

you to each and every one of them still with us, and to the many thousands that have passed on, leaving their living love and legacies behind them. I lived (and still do) with my girlfriend in the gay ghetto as it was called back then, and I worked surrounded by hundreds of gay, lesbian, and queer people as diverse as the rainbow of colours. Years of struggle with the press, all levels of government, and fighting fear and misinformation ensued for me, and Buddies existed then, as it does now, as one of the pivotal forces of change.

Needless to say, as we all worked towards the goal of creating a queer professional theatre within its own building, we were confronted with homophobic reactions that we had to contend with our own limited experience. We opened Tallulah's Cabaret to fundraise for the Theatre, and then throughout the years spent behind the bar of the "queersonic temple", I became less bitter and more complacent in my life as a queer who made my living from the queer industry.

There have been so many different personalities who have crossed that cabaret floor over the years, each so wonderful, that to this day I still remember and love them all. The youth, artists, queers, and families of some of these individuals





are still a large part of the Theatre and what Buddies stands for.

Each summer Pride arrives in the city and is a cluster of fabulousness that is almost indescribable to those who are not inherently involved on some level, from organizer, employee, performer, or participant. Many thousands of individuals attend each year, and it is wonderful and astounding. For those of us on the front lines, planning, organizing and working the festival, we are by the end of it exhausted, yet joyful and happy.

There was a time for a while after being surrounded by so much “gay” all year, and especially during Pride, that I took our ability to live and work as queers day-to-day for granted. I remember working one day during Pride many years ago with my wonderful and fabulous coworker Glenn behind the bar, and I snorted out “Damn I hate Pride”. Mind you, I was tired and feeling demoralized for whatever reason at that particular moment. So I had made that statement to him and he turned to me and said “Patricia, Pride isn’t for you or me or any of us here, it’s for those who don’t have what we have every day, those who can’t be gay or queer all the time, Pride is to celebrate for them and celebrate their day-to-day struggle.”

I know pretty profound, right? Here is the kicker of it all. Shortly after having the dark veil lifted from my eyes his words, two older gentleman, who were maybe in their 70’s, came up to the bar holding hands, looked at me, and burst into tears. They stammered that they were from a small place in Texas, and what Pride stood for meant everything to them. They felt loved and

validated.

It was that day that my life got brighter again, and to this day I see Pride through the eyes of those two wonderful men. Since then, I try to bring the spirit of Pride as I see it now, to all those who need it and will share it. Especially to our youth who are now on the front lines fighting the battle with their hearts, minds, and bodies. Now let me say here, I am far from a Pride Bunny, but I respect Pride for what it is to all people, at all times, everywhere. Happy Pride!

---

Patricia Wilson is a musician and writer and whatever. She lives in the bunker in Toronto with her partner of 22 years Helene, and their three four-footers. She is one of the founding members of the rock band Crackpuppy, and is proud to have been associated with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre for over 20 years, currently working as bartender/bar manager. She’s also working on a book of poetry/prose.



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# Summer Horoscopes

by Julie Antoinette

## Aries (March 21st - April 20th)

Now is your chance to implement all of your wildest and craziest ideas as the Sun shining upon you adds exultation and strength! You have boundless energy to use at your discretion as Mars, your ruler, boosts your resolve. Grab each opportunity that crosses your path as you will lack only the time to accomplish everything offered to you. Work done only for money, or merely for the sake of work is one of the most detestable things in this world. Do something good for yourself.

## Taurus (April 21st - May 21st)

You have no lack of energy. You will need this to keep up with the speed of radical changes surrounding you in your career. Circumstances will provide you with lots of opportunity but beware of jealousy from coworkers and competitors. This jealous bunch will be your only obstacles. Love in your world remains stable, as long as you resolve to accept everything as it is. You will find hidden perfection and be pleasantly surprised!

## Gemini (May 22nd - June 21st)

This is an especially fortunate time for finance and entrepreneurship as your talent for communication is exalted and unfettered. Focus lavishing this gift on colleagues and partners. New ideas are born of collaborative communication. Nothing you say is trivial right now. Keep the true meanings of these two key words in mind: Collaborate (co-labour - to work together) and Communicate (with unity).

## Cancer (June 22nd - July 22nd)

This summer will bring some interesting instability to your world but it will definitely not be a boring season for you as many players enter to stir up your world. Try to preserve your energy as you may feel sapped by increased stimulation. Music and regular exercise will help. Be extra careful in business activities, paying extra attention to details. Remember: the devil is in the details.

## Leo (July 23rd - August 22nd)

You will experience an exceptionally dynamic and unpredictable summer, with many "potholes" to navigate around on your road. Be extra alert, proceed steadily and take frequent pauses before proceeding ahead. By evaluating before moving ahead, you will anticipate dead ends. Use your inner "GPS" to suggest the best recalculation of route. Your guidance: Proceed with caution.

## Virgo (August 23rd - September 23rd)

Waves of unpleasant emotions may surface with others as business and relationship partners may seem especially critical. Know that this will pass eventually. Life is asking you to revisit your ego and make a few adjustments. If it is true that others are our mirror, could there be a critical streak running through you too Virgo? Subject yourself to intense self-analysis and above all, keep your cool. Cooler heads prevail.

## Libra (September 24th - October 23rd)

Be prepared for a full scale change of life this summer. You will overcome the difficult circumstances surrounding you now. You are fully protected from negative influences and unique opportunities are presented to you, especially on the work front. A trustworthy ally has your back. Be proactive and you will be shocked by the results!

## Scorpio (October 24th - November 22nd)

You move through a successful period this summer career-wise, Scorpio. However, as the old adage goes: "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer" as many of your personal relationships may destabilize. The planets offer you a counter-balance in your financial sector as you are offered greater responsibilities with big payouts! Remember, to whom much is given, much is required.

## Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

You'll have to work extra hard this summer to stay afloat as work will require the lion's share of your resources. Do not resort to dishonest means to get ahead of your opponents, as these will only result in your karmic defeat. Concentrate your hidden abilities and use of your talents and you will no doubt be recognized for your marvelous authenticity. Your guidance: What comes around goes around.

## Capricorn (December 22nd - January 19th)

You have excellent direction, Capricorn. A number of projects grab your attention and you have the capacity to realize them all to full completion by the end of the summer! You also have enough strength to overcome any task. Be careful not to rely on luck or rest on your laurels, as all the effort will rest squarely on your shoulders. Therefore, choose wisely.

## Aquarius (January 20th - February 19th)

You receive an extra-dose of planetary help this summer in accomplishing all that you desire. Innovative ideas come to you easily and you are able to turn minimal resource into maximum profit. Concentrate on specific tasks and careful not to spread yourself thin! You are a magician, cast your spell!

## Pisces (February 20th - March 20th)

Your acuity is at fever-pitch when it comes to deciphering who is on your team and who is not. A tough battle stands before you. Your best bet is to trick your opponent into believing you have surrendered to defeat. The warlords of ancient times believed that any defeat can turn into a victory. Therefore, gear up for battle and execute your strategy. Your chariot awaits!

Julie is a Sociology and Psychology graduate, a Psychotherapy Intern and a lifelong student of the psyche. In her free time she is a crochet adventurer and musical muse. In writing this horoscope, she intends to intuitively uncover messages from these astrological archetypes which are part of us all collectively, and guide you into your future. As above, so below.



## Looking Back



Pride Day 1981 consisted of a demonstration held at the intersection of Church and Wellesley, the day after the Toronto police raided various local bathhouses.

I know this only thanks to the stories of my adopted drag-mama, and walking LGBT archive, Michelle DuBarry. My other dear friend Bryan Greenwood (a.k.a. Divinesque) also has memories of earlier Pride events. In 1984 he recalls being told by his roommate at the time, a drag queen named Billy Bardot, that there was something called “Gay Pride” happening. There was music and dancing in Cawthra Park, and there might even have been some sort of protest or parade. In fact, 1984 was the first year that Church Street was closed, and people danced in the street.

The next year, 1985, was remembered as a loud, disorganized, politically motivated march, that was nothing like the parade we know today, but rather it was a short march by a mob of people with a “FU” attitude, who were regularly stopped by red lights as they progressed down Yonge Street. The police were present simply to make sure that the “parade” didn’t interfere with traffic and the operation of the city. Bryan recalled that as a spectator he felt that he was amongst friends, and that there was a sense of belonging and community. Then the following year saw the creation of the first Toronto Pride Committee.

Our collective memory lapsed somewhat until Pride Day 1990, when Aids Action Now held a “die-in” wherein some parade participants stopped to lie down in the street, while other participants drew chalk outlines around their prone bodies. It was an illustration of the tragic number of deaths being experienced in the AIDS epidemic, and a public outcry for funding and research. Bryan recalls watching the parade from the corner of Yonge and Wood Streets, recognizing the change in presentation as community bars and businesses exhibited their participation with actual floats and organized groups. The sense of community

was strong, but as the “die-in” took place and the street was littered with bodies, Bryan recounted that he began to cry with the realization of the great number of friends lost, and perhaps an even greater number who might also soon be only fond memories.

I recall little of Pride Day 1991, but I do remember that the Grand Marshall’s of the parade were “Two-Spirited People” of the First Nations. In 1992, Bryan had strong memories of working at Sightlines Magazine and watching the multitude of toned bodies setting up the flat-bed truck in front of Colby’s, a popular bar of the time on St. Joseph Street. They were joined by the boys of Bachelors, the male stripper bar upstairs. This was also the year when there was a strong show of presence and support from local community businesses with floats and marchers. Yet pursuit of the “gay dollar” was still a fearful activity for the corporate world, who foresaw potential backlash from the status quo in response to any perceived support.

1996 was a tumultuous year. Remembered by Bryan as the year that Danny Love died, it was also a year of huge crowds and gawkers. This was also the year that spree killer, Marcello Palma, had shot to death three sex trade street workers, including my 19 year-old drag daughter, Shawn “Junior” Keegan. In memorandum, the drag community lead the parade that year.

I was bartending until all hours at the Playground after-hours club the night before, and had overslept. Fortunately I had stayed at a friend’s condo at the corner of Yonge and Carlton and was able to throw on some foundation, lips and hair, replacing eye make-up with my big “Jackie O-No” sunglasses, and donning a huge red satin gown borrowed from the fabulous Amanda Roberts. In black patent 5” heels, I hit Yonge Street running the wrong way in order to meet the oncoming parade. Cheers of, “You go Miss Scarlett” resounded in my ears. At the telling of this anecdote, Bryan and I broke out laughing as he commented, “Yes, I remember some crazy queen running the wrong way up Yonge Street!” The best memories are the ones we create and share. Happy Pride!

Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to), and currently is proud to hold the title of Queen Mum to The Imperial Court of Toronto for 2015/2016.





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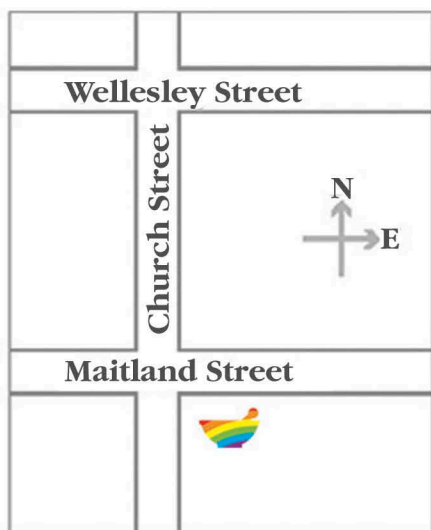


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