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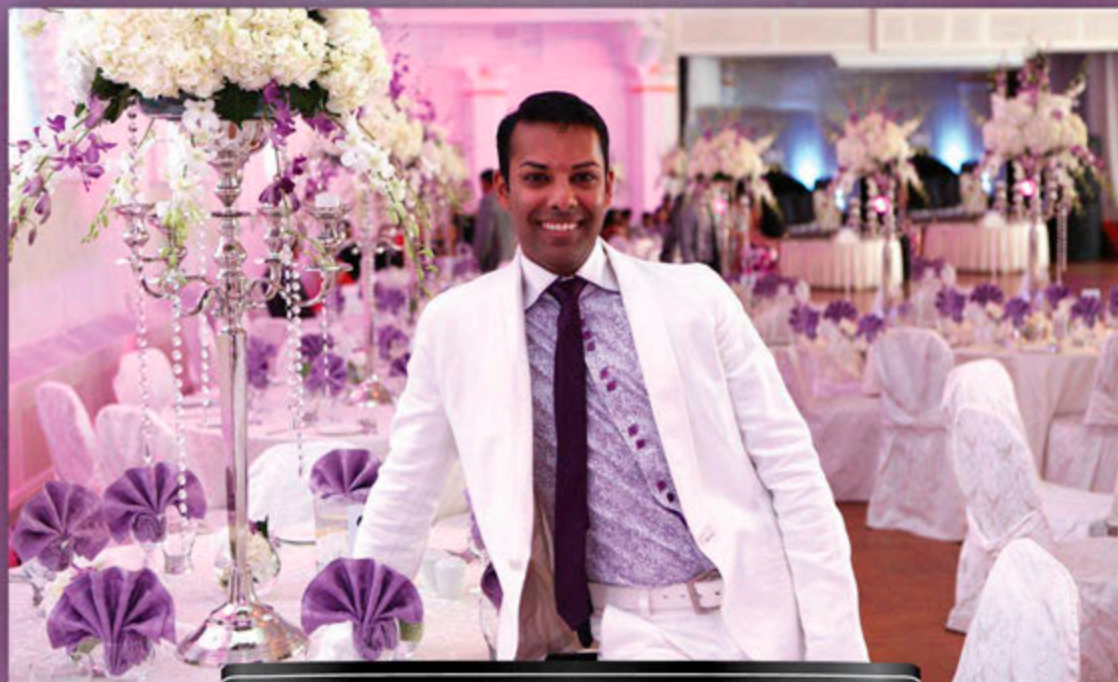
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The *Luxury* Issue the sequel



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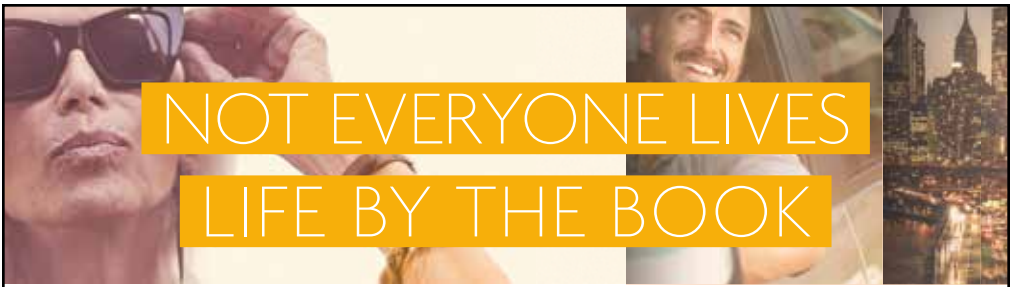
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From the **Publisher**



So we come to the wrap up of PinkPlayMags's year of the sequel, where we selected 4 of our most popular editions in the 8 year life of your favourite magazine and we went back to visit those themes.

The spring issue saw us check in with our N.E.R.D. as he transforms into a superhero, travelling the universe to protect those who are bullied, in "The Geek Issue" (original issue spring 2010.)

In summer we dived back into the hot and sensual themes of human emotions and sexuality, in the "Love & Sex" edition (original issue summer 2010.)

Donnamara came back in autumn to reprise her MONSTER role in "The Monster Issue", and the results were spooky and creepy (original issue autumn 2009.)

In this issue we visit The Holden's, the town's richest family, and most scandalous. This is "The Luxury Issue", a follow up to winter's 2010 original.

Mrs. Holden and Nancy, her trusted maid and lover,

are now living together. Flip the pages to find out what happens next.

It's the season to relax, unwind, and treat yourself to some luxury.

As for myself luxury will be getting a chance to have a little break, sleep in, visit family, and watch a ton of movies. I will confide with you readers this has been a little challenging of a year on a personal level, but thankfully it is true that a positive attitude and having great friends around helps with everything. I am looking forward to a new year ahead.

This also wraps up year 8 of PinkPlayMags. I love what we do with this magazine, I am very proud of it and of the team who make it happen. They truly are a creative and passionate bunch, who make my job very exciting and rewarding, and their biggest joy is producing a magazine for our LGBTQ community that is intelligent and attractive. I hope that you're enjoying the ride.

2016 is going to feature a very interesting and very important theme; we're going to get a little serious, while staying happy. What is the theme you ask? You just have to come back and visit in spring, and make sure to like us on Facebook and watch out for the announcements ([facebook.com/PinkPlayMags](https://www.facebook.com/PinkPlayMags))

Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year to you.

Antoine Elhashem

publisher@pinkplaymags.com



winterplay!

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

Publisher/Creative Director: Antoine Elhashem

Editor-in-Chief: Bryen Dunn

Art Direction and Production: Mychol Scully

Contributors

Writers: Sherry Sylvain, Susan Hornik, Johnathan Hiltz, cee sando, Michael Ain, Caitlyn Holroyd, Cheryl Costello, Julie Antoinette, Mychol Scully



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It's crisp, it's clear - Winter's here. Deal with it. You're holding a copy of our sequel to The Luxury Issue, original published in Winterplay 2010. This is the last in our four-part series of sequels to our most popular past issues. Our publisher Antoine Elhashem has a wonderful photo essay continuing with the scandalous tales of The Holden Affair.

Our feature stories bring you into the Lap of Luxury, as Sherry Sylvain explains that not everything in life has a price tag, but also has some suggestions for those who wish to dream big. Susan Hornik gives us the scoop on luxurious gift giving ideas, including some that Hollywood celebrities are buying and endorsing. There's sure to be something for naughty and nice on your list this year.

Our travel article takes us to small town Ontario, with a look at gay life in Warkworth, Northumberland County, just over an hour's drive from Toronto. We also have a festive fiction excerpt for our readers, from Holly Maholm's "Brave in Ribbons" new novel that puts a transgendered spin on the classic Dicken's "A Christmas Carol".

Johnathan Hitlz chatted with our featured "Hot Artist" Brad Fraser, an award winning playwright and screenwriter, who divulges details on his latest production, "Kill Me Now". Our fashion fiend cee sando gives us the lowdown on what to wear over the holiday season, and Michael Ain gives us tips on how to stay fit, with a variety of sporting activities that OutSport Toronto has to offer. Cheryl Costello joins our team as the new "From The Heart" contributor, and our designer Mychol Scully contributes a piece for "Looking Back" about a fabulous New Year's Eve Party he once threw at the luxurious Royal York Hotel in Toronto.

As well, Caitlyn Holroyd digs deep into the city vaults to find out where the hottest homo happenings are at with "Winter in the City", and Julie Antoinette lets us know how are cold season planets align in "Winter Horoscopes". Design and layout was created by Mychol Scully.

Stay tuned for our 2016 multi-generational look at our LGBT community, beginning with teens and ending with twilights.

May your seasonal heartburn be most tolerable!

Bryen Dunn
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Luxury

The lap of Luxury

By Sherry Sylvain

Ah, luxury! How do we define it and where do we find it? For most of us, defining luxury seems quite straight forward - all things aspirational that exceed our needs and fulfill our wants. These are the items with which we hope to show the world that we have "made it", that we have met all of our needs and we can now wallow in the extravagant.

So... where do we find luxury? When it comes to retail, Toronto has a plethora of choices where one can wear the magnetic strip off their credit or debit cards. We can choose to run amok in the downtown core with a hike along Bloor Street's "Mile of Mink" to visit Tiffany, Cartier, and the Canadian luxury mother-ship, Holt Renfrew. Or take a tiny detour into Yorkville and visit any number of little glam boutiques your heart desires. If you prefer to stay out of the downtown core, you could swing to the north through Bayview Village, or Yorkdale Shopping Mall. A trot to the west could take you to any number of chic little shops along Queen West.

Or, if you're feeling more suburban, Etobicoke and Mississauga offer Sherway Gardens and Square One, while travelling a little farther west will take you to Oakville, for quieter and more subdued boutique offerings.

In the song, "Peel me a grape", Diana Krall sings, "Here's how to be an agreeable chap, love me and leave me in luxury's lap". To my mind, Diana has it right, and for me, luxury's lap is the lush boudoir in my imagination. The bed is a 17" bespoke king-size pillow-top mattress covered in 750 thread count Sea Island cotton sheets, with a box-quilted down duvet, cashmere duvet cover, stacks of down pillows, and a casually tossed mink-throw across the foot. All items but the mink throw are in shades of purple, reputedly the best colour for inducing a restful sleep, with lilac, mauve and a foil of creamy yellow. Pewter and crystal accents would set things off nicely on the unmatched, but coordinated Georgian tables on each side of the bed.

Of course, there would have to be a voluptuous silk velvet upholstered sofa by



the window, perfect for curling up with a book. Also a walk-in closet/dressing room with a full-length, three-way mirror, with racks and racks and drawers and drawers and shelves upon shelves of clothing storage. Yes, I mean room for hundreds of pairs of shoes. What luxury boudoir would be complete without a properly lighted make-up table, with magnifying mirror? Then there is the en-suite bath done in white Marmara Equator marble, with chestnut cabinetry and a soaker tub deep enough to dunk a small horse. Coco Chanel said it well, "luxury must be comfortable, otherwise it is not luxury." Unfortunately, Orson Wells also nailed it when he said, "Living in the lap of luxury isn't bad, except that you never know when luxury is going to stand up." If I win the elusive lottery jackpot in the multiple millions, I have a massive portion of my shopping list well prepared, from producing that luxury boudoir in my mind to shopping for all the clothes, furs, shoes, and jewellery to fill it.

However, there are also the smaller luxuries of life which don't require deep pockets, such as the luxury of soaking in a deep bubble bath

lit only by vanilla scented candles. Or, how about curling up with a good book in front of a crackling fire, with a big mug of hot cocoa, while the snow blows outside the window? Maybe you're that person who finds luxury in a swaying hammock in cottage country, beside a tranquil lake with nothing but the call of loons to distract you. Or just lie gazing up at the endless view of a star-filled sky with the northern lights flickering off to one horizon. Perhaps a sunny, sandy beach is your luxury spot, with toned and tanned bodies glistening around you as you sip your favourite cocktail. Most of these luxuries require little financial expenditure, if you have the time to pursue them; "the older I get, the more I realize that the ultimate luxury is time," says designer, Michael Kors.

Have you ever imagined those impossible fantasy luxuries? You know, where you can eat anything and everything you want and never worry about your weight. Or the one where you have THE perfect figure, without ever having to do any exercise. Or that fantasy I so often have that I will find the perfect pair of shoes without having to look too hard, they're on sale, and they fit



perfectly and feel like slippers. Of course, I'd settle for a lot less, but we're talking about imaginary luxuries, so why cut corners?

All of these commonly accepted luxuries, and the imaginary ones, have to be taken in context. Where you sit on the socio-economic scale will affect your perception of luxury. The late model/stylist/designer, L'Wren Scott, made a cogent point when stating, "Luxury is a state of mind." I think that concept can, and should be taken farther: luxury is a matter of perspective. If you are a member of the middle-classes of North America, the previously stated examples of luxury may well be agreeable. Contrarily, if you exist at or below a subsistence level, your dreams of luxury may be entirely different. It can be disheartening to realize that what we may take for granted as basic and mundane is, to others, a dream of exceptional luxury.

Designer Marc Jacobs was once quoted as saying, "... you need food, water, clothing, shelter... but good wine, good food, beautiful interiors, and nice clothes aren't necessities, they are luxuries..." We are blessed if we have enough and need not worry from

where our next meal will come, and what it will be, if anything. Even within our own LGBTQ communities, it can be easy to fall into a comfortable existence in which we take note that luxury can be the simple dream of a home with a loving, supportive family. Luxury is feeling safe. Luxury is not to go hungry, not be bullied, not to be the victim of violence. These are common challenges for many of our LGBTQ youth, and those of all ages who live outside of the GTA, in areas where acceptance is rare and tolerance only slightly less so.

Finally, the greatest luxury of life is one that should be considered more than it is, and is often only recognized when it is too late - health. For many years, I had only peripherally recognized health as a luxury, but during those years, health was something I enjoyed to a reasonable degree. I had supported community charities as I had watched so many friends lose their health, or the security of their health to the ravages of AIDS. It is truly a luxury these days to know that the dreaded disease is not the unquestioned death sentence it was not so



long ago. It would be a true luxury to have seen more friends able to hang on long enough to benefit from the advances in research, however even these advances only offer the potential of a healthier and longer life. There is no guarantee. Perhaps the ultimate luxury would be to see a cure, not only for HIV/AIDS, but for all devastating diseases which plague our existence – no more cancers, no more heart disease or stroke, no lung disease, kidney disease, diabetes, glaucoma, retinopathy... the list is too long not to dream that it could all be cured.

As we enter the holiday season, with its traditions of gift giving, of showing the degree of our love with the degree of thought and effort we put into choosing the perfect gift, perhaps we should all keep in mind the opportunity to show love for our community, and friends and loved ones in general, by giving something in support of the charities which support us and them. Author George Eliot (Middlemarch, Silas Marner, etc) has been quoted as stating, “One must be poor to know the luxury of giving.” A wise and insightful assertion, as one who is poor can only aspire to having enough to allow him to give of his worldly goods. Yet, anyone may know the luxury of giving of time or effort,

as not all gifts need be purchased nor have a recognized monetary value. Referring back to Michael Kors’ statement that, “the ultimate luxury is time”, we can agree to recognize the value of giving of one’s time in support of others. It is wonderful when a philanthropist donates a great deal of money to build something or support a service, but someone must do the building or provide the service, and the value of time and effort cannot be discounted.

Wishing everyone a joyous and luxurious holiday season, whichever way that maybe achieved and fulfilled.

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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DAILY NEWS EXTRA! EXTRA!

Shocking: Town's Richest Living in Sin

The Holden Affair Continues

Starring: M. Benner as Mrs. Holden,
Shauna Rozon as Nancy Olsen, Derek
Rozon as Detective M. Mayerling

Guest Starring: Bryan Hewitt and Steffen
Ploeger as the homosexual couple.

The Narrator: Antoine Elhashem



It has been a year since the scandalous discovery by Mr. Holden and a hired detective, with the press in toe, of his wife and their housemaid Nancy Olsen in bed of a hotel room. Let's remind our readers that Mr. Holden later on was also discovered to be a "friend of Dorothy's."

Now Mrs. Holden and Nancy are living in a mansion together enjoying a happy sinful bliss. Occasionally they get together for drinks with "like" couples from the filthy rich set of our town.



Unfortunately bliss does not last, and Mrs. Holden was shocked to receive a note. Her dear love Nancy has been kidnapped. Someone must know how important Nancy is to her; and someone certainly knows how rich Mrs. Holden is. Do not contact the police or Nancy will be history, said the note.



A phone call preceded a meeting in the garden of the mansion with one of the most recommended detectives in town, M. Mayerling. A plan was formed to find Nancy. Why not just pay the ransom? Because with bad people there are no guarantees, and Nancy is too precious to risk not rescuing her safely.



With determination to do a great job, and reunite the lovers, our detective sets out on his search, looking for clues, and working on solving the mystery of Nancy's whereabouts.



Yes he did. Detective M. Mayerling has found Nancy, and together with Mrs. Holden they ran to the secluded location to release her. The kidnappers should have kept a more watchful eye on such a prized possession. Mrs. Holden was ecstatic and relieved. We are happy Nancy was found, and she is safely back in the mansion.



We don't know why and how Mrs. Holden and Nancy, along with our detective hero, and their homosexual friends, all ended up in bed together in passionate tryst, but so are the matter of the heart...and of the libido.

The one question we are left with is, who tipped the press on this story?

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Cinematography (photography) by Angel Torres
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Hair & Makeup by Shauna Rozon
www.shanameconnell.com

Filmed on location at Victoria's Mansion
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Luxury Gift Guide

With so many choices for holiday gift giving during one of the happiest times of the year, PinkPlayMag put together a "Luxury Gift Guide" of exciting picks for anyone on your gifting list. 'Tis the season, so if you are looking for inspiration, try these thoughtful ideas.

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If you need quality items for the home, check out celebrity lifestyle expert, **Kathy Fielder Designs**. Her fabulous pillows brighten and instantly update your living space. Kathy does wonderful custom work: when sending me my pillows she asked a bunch of questions to really get what my style was. That's exactly the reason why she is a great interior designer also. She also carries a selection of designer laptop cases and beautiful clutches as well. www.kathyfielderboutique.com

My house is full with **DiaNoche Designs** products. Their Signature Illuminated Wall Art, bedding, shower curtains, and canvas wall art is all so unique. It's the perfect nightlight for a nursery, child's bedroom, dim living room, or any wall or space that needs radiance. It's amazing to realize that they can turn photos, company logos, children's artwork and more into an amazing artistic masterpiece. More than 70 artists from Indonesia, USA, Israel, Ireland, Australia, Spain, England, Norway and many other countries share their stories and inspirations for their art on their site. www.dianochedesigns.com



For Foodies

Need an amazing cup of coffee first thing in the morning? Try **Nespresso's VertuoLine™ Evoluo**, which guarantees each cup is brewed to perfection and finished with a silky and generous crema. The always handsome George Clooney just did their latest ad campaign! www.nespresso.com

I can't start my day without a smoothie, which is why I love **NutriBullet**, which takes whole fruits and vegetables and transforms them into superfoods. The company has multiple extractors – their 600 unit (their original and useful one for those taking their first steps toward healthy eating), PRO series (meant for those with an active lifestyle), and their most powerful unit – the Rx. www.nutribullet.com



For Pets

I can't tell you how cute my pup looks in his holiday fleece. **Gold Paw** makes these bright, plaid fleeces for dogs made with seven-way stretch fabric that range to fit Chihuahua puppies to Labradors. www.goldpawseries.com

Interactive Feeders for endless festivities. Mentally and physically challenging feeders turn mealtime into game time, and are ideal for hyperactive or overweight pups. There's a range of styles, sizes and difficulty levels. I love the **GREEN Slow Dog Feeder**, a highly dynamic way to turn a dog's meal into a challenging time-consuming game. Slowing down a dog's eating helps reduce the risk of bloat and the unpleasant after-effects of eating too fast. www.companyofanimals.us

For Youngsters

Rockabye Baby!, the record label that re-imagines classic songs as lullabies, have announced their holiday "Silent Nights" bundle. The four-pack, which includes Lullaby Renditions of Taylor Swift, Michael Jackson, Fleetwood Mac, and Elton John, showcases the best of pop throughout the ages, and is a perfect gift for new moms/dads, super fans, and people really into irony. Oh yeah, and also babies! www.rockabyebabymusic.com

PullyPalz is an interactive pacifier holder that doubles as a toy and has some developmental benefits for right-brain, left-brain coordination. It's super fun for baby, and I thought it was especially great for new parents who don't yet realize how many times a pacifier can end up on the floor. www.pullypalz.com



Susan L. Hornik is a contributor to Industry.com, HGTV's FrontDoor.com, Complex.com, TheFrisky.com, Redbook, Canada's Chatelaine, Daytime Confidential, UK's Look, Videoage, Brainworld, CSQ, First for Women, Twist, Discover Hollywood, Dish, Maxim, Health, Mademan.com, Match.com's Happenmag.com



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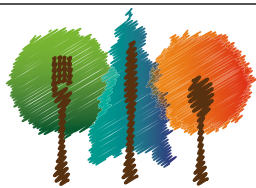



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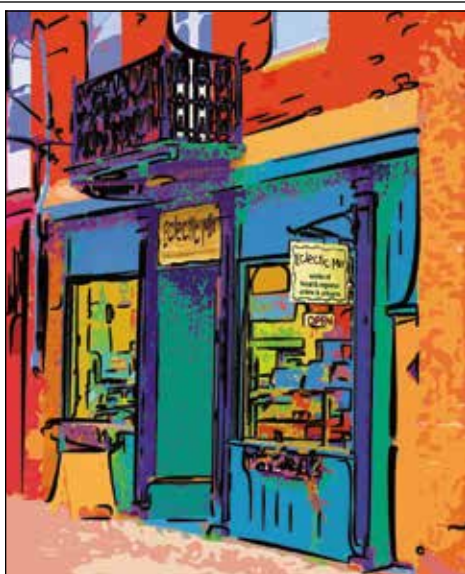
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WARKWORTH

ONTARIO'S LGBT FRIENDLY

ARTS VILLAGE

by *Bryen Dunn*

“I’m the only gay in the village”, proclaims Daffyd Thomas on the UK comedy series “Little Britain”. As many from small towns can attest to, this is often the reality, or at least it’s perceived to be. However, one such town in rural Ontario seems to be quite the opposite, boasting a thriving and welcoming LGBT friendly vibe.

The Village of Warkworth is located in the Municipality of Trent Hills in Northumberland County, about 90 minutes east of Toronto. It’s quite tiny and unassuming upon approaching, and it definitely fits with the old saying, “Blink and you’ll miss it.”

As is the case with many rural towns in the second half of the 20th century, there was a decline in population numbers as many of the younger demographic headed to larger urban centres in search of employment. The slow exodus of people then led to the closure of local businesses, leaving many buildings vacant and in disrepair, often bringing forth the demise of once thriving villages.

The farming community of Warkworth was one of those places facing an uncertain future, until a few community members banded together in hopes of revitalizing their “Main Street”. Today, it’s both a farming community and a centre for the arts, thriving once again with unique shops, dining, galleries, theatre, accommodation options,



and more. Surprisingly, this all came about in part by a group of Toronto urbanites who fled the opposite direction away from the metropolis to the melancholy countryside. Whether your passion is outdoors, art, shopping, music, theatre or simply enjoying a great meal, Warkworth holds a treasure trove of discoveries for you. It’s a unique blend of a friendly country village and uptown style.

As goes the adage, “where there’s art, there’s gays”, this town has a healthy mix of both. The historic town



hall was recently officially named the Warkworth Town Hall Centre for the Arts, and regularly hosts professional actors and musicians. The Arts and Heritage Centre (Ah!) holds an annual fall fundraising variety show at the Town Hall that attracts the who's who of talented actors, musicians, and other artistic types.

History shows that arts has always been a foundation of the area, as a commemorative plaque honouring local artist **J.D. Kelly (1862-1958)** is located just outside the village centre. Kelly is one of Canada's most famous historical artists, so it makes perfect sense that the community is once again a hub for Canadian artists. Kelly was well-known for including people in his paintings, in addition to great Canadian landscapes, something not many artists of his time did.

Kim MacNeil is the owner of the wonderful **Eclectic Mix** (www.eclecticmix.ca) that features an "eclectic mix" of work from local and international artisans. She is also the chair of the Warkworth Business Association, publisher of the local zine *Warkworth Words*, and a terrific community advocate and volunteer.

Paul Portelli (www.paulportelli.com) is a local artist and art teacher, who relocated to the area from Toronto back in the 1980's. Since then, he's had a storefront shop on Main Street, met his partner Derek 16 years ago, and continues to create art with some of his current work on display in town at Frantic Farms. www.franticfarms.com

He and Kim were the first entrepreneurs to begin the transformation that has made Warkworth such a great destination to visit, and they are quick to point out that it takes a community of dedicated citizens to make things happen. "This community is built upon the hard work of volunteers", they both repeat more than once. The dedication and passion that these two have for their community definitely shines through when telling their stories of how everyone rallies together to get things done. "The phone rings and it's someone saying they need



help with something, and you automatically jump in and offer assistance", says Portelli.

Robin Eecloo and Lesley Blayney recently relocated to the area and opened a vintage lifestyle store called **Camp Ho Ba Chee**. This is the place to go for all things nostalgic and retro. www.camp-hobachee.com Neil Graham has lived in the area with his partner Wayne Sabados for nearly two decades, and is the owner of **metaphorhome**, offering a curated collection of fabulous home furnishing, personal accessories, gifts, and décor. www.metaphorhome.ca. **Our Lucky Stars Café** is owned by Toronto expats Elizabeth Aikenhead and Trevor Spot. Aikenhead was a television producer for HGTV and CBC, working on such shows as "Steven and Chris", and Spot owned "Exile Clothing" in Kensington Market.

Garden enthusiasts must stop by and say hello to Dennis and Tom of **Schoolhouse Gardens**, where there are almost 300 varieties of peonies on display. They recently won a trophy at the Canadian Peony Show in Winnipeg for Best Hybrid Peony, along with three Grand Champion ribbons. The gardens were also featured in a glossy garden book, *Private Gardens of Northumberland*. A vast renovation of the gardens now includes plantings of many new hostas, daylilies, perennials, trees and shrubs.

Take the opportunity to catch a performance at **Westben Arts Festival Theatre** on the outskirts of Campbellford if the opportunity arises. This unique indoor/outdoor space provides for a veritable music extravaganza in the magnificent setting of The Barn, with the peaceful rolling hills of Northumberland County as a backdrop. Overnight getaway packages and gourmet picnic baskets are available upon request. Co-Founder Donna Bennett is very involved in the local arts and culture community, and is also an accomplished soprano, having performed with the Canadian Opera Company among many others internationally as well. www.westben.ca



If all that shopping, gallery hopping, and cultural immersion is making you thirsty, **Church Key Brewing** is worth a visit. Located in an 1878 Methodist Church on a rural road not far from town, it lays claim to being the only microbrewery in Northumberland County. They feature a wide variety of award-winning hand-crafted brews, that are available for sampling and selling. Be sure to try their flagship golden amber Northumberland Ale. www.churchkeybrewing.com

Trent Hills most definitely derives its name from the beautiful rolling hills of Northumberland County, along the banks of the Trent-Severn Waterway. In fact, Warkworth itself is surrounded by seven distinct hills. The region is comprised of three communities – Hastings, Campbellford, Warkworth. Campbellford is the largest of the three, and has a great eclectic mix of one-of-a-kind shops such as **Empire Cheese**, **World's Finest Chocolate**, and **Doochers Bakery**. It's also home to the large "Toonie" art sculpture, erected in the honour of local artist Brent Townsend who submitted the winning design for our national two-dollar coin.

Outdoor adventurers have plenty to explore as well, with many wilderness trails criss-crossing across the county, including the national **Trans Canada Trail** and the local **Millennium Trail**. These are accessible year-round for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. There's also the **Ranney Gorge Suspension Bridge** spanning 330 feet in length and 30 feet above the Trent River. Campers should definitely book a site in advance at **Ferris Provincial Park**, which has its own set of trails and outdoor pursuits to discover. There are also three golf courses in the area.

Throughout the year Warkworth hosts many significant special events that attracts both locals and out-of-towners, including the annual **Maple Syrup Festival**, **Art in the Park**, **Perfect**



Pie Contest, **Lilac Festival**, **Fall Fair**, **Nighttime Santa Claus Parade**, as well as studio, house, and garden tours. There's also the infamous **Long Lunch**, where dining tables are set up along Main Street where everyone enjoys a communal outdoor meal, and **Sunday Drive**, a two-week arts festival that presents the work of artists chosen by artist-run centres, collectives and alternative exhibitors that typically operate in metropolitan areas.

So how did Warkworth become a magnet for the gay community to relocate to? Word has it that it isn't a conspiracy. According to Robin Eecloo it's more the work of intuitive real estate agents who suggest the area to same-sex couples who are potentially looking to make a move. Eecloo divulged that she had heard about many male couples in the area, but it wasn't until she and her partner explored further that they realized there's a significant lesbian population as well. "It's a lovely place to live", she says.

This definitely is a four-season destination worth exploring. Being only 90 minutes from Toronto makes for a great gay-trip, and an even better overnight gay-away!

RESOURCE INFORMATION

Warkworth – www.warkworth.ca
Campbellford – www.campbellfordbia.ca
Hastings - www.hastingsvillage.ca
Trent Hills Chamber www.visittrenthills.ca
Northumberland County - www.northumberlandcounty.ca
Spirit of the Hills – Northumberland Hills Arts Association www.spiritofthehills.org

ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS

Art In The Park - annual juried art exhibition with entertainment, food, and other activities. www.warkworthartinthepark.ca

Maple Syrup Festival – celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2016
www.warkworthmaplesyrupfestival.ca

Fall Fair – Celebrating 165 Years of Hooves Clinkin, Rides Spinnin & Faces Grinnin www.warkworthfair.com

Lilac Festival – A month long celebration showcasing many rare lilac varieties –
www.warkworthlilacfestival.com

Incredible Edible Festival – farm to table extravaganza in Campbellford –
www.incredibleediblesfestival.com

Sunday Drive – www.sundaydrive.org

Long Lunch – www.facebook.com/Warkworth-Long-Lunch-543496409049322/

Warkworth Golf Course – 1-877-881-0667
www.warkworthgolf.com

Salt Creek Golf Links – 1-866-924-1521
www.saltcreekgolflinks.com

Pine Ridge Golf & Country Club –
1-800-465-3040 www.golfpineridge.net

DINING AND DRINKING

The Garden of Eatin' – just outside Warkworth, offering all day dining and weekend brunch made using locally grown ingredients. Some nights feature live music. 161 Old Hastings Road, Warkworth 705-924-9827
www.gardenofeatin.com

Glover's Farm Market – located across from The Gallery Bed and Breakfast, there's a great selection of fresh cheeses, breads, and pastries, as well as a wide range of assorted gift items. Be sure to pop into their cozy tea room for an afternoon snack. 14260 County Rd. 29, Warkworth 705-924-3640 www.gloversfarmmarket.com

Our Lucky Stars Café – great selection of tea, coffee and pastries. Soups, sandwiches, salads and a daily hot dish, all made from scratch with local ingredients. Gluten-free and vegetarian/vegan options available. Thursday is Pizza Night – 16 Main St. Warkworth 705-924-1212 www.ourluckystars.ca

Jeannine's Backtalk Café – quirky small town diner where locals hang out and gossip is started. Standard breakfast and lunch offerings, with a special Friday night dinner that changes weekly.

9 Main St., Warkworth 705-924-2166

On The Side Gourmet Food Inc – Chef Tina Moorey and her partner Brett Thomson are award winning foodies who set up shop here, and now offer both a catering service and daily take-out menu of homemade

delicious dishes to go. Perfect for picnics. 20 Main Street, Warkworth 705-924-9823 www.onthesidegourmet.com

Capers Restaurant in Campbellford offers a casual pub environment with tasty treats and a bevy of beverage options. 28 Bridge St. W., Campbellford. 705-653-5262
www.capersrestaurant.ca

ACCOMMODATIONS

Thornton Inn – gay-owned seasonal summer accommodations right on Main Street in Warkworth. Comfortable, cozy, affordable, and scrumptious country breakfast included. 44 Main St, Warkworth 705-924-3980
www.thorntoninn.com

Gallery Bed and Breakfast – Late 1800's restored house located right on Warkworth Golf Course, and two other courses are located within a 5-minute drive. Three rooms, billiard table, indoor hot tub/sauna, and outdoor terrace. Golf packages available. Open all year. 14269 County Road 29, R.R. 4, Warkworth 705-924-1853
www.gallerybandb.net

Water's Edge Inn – a lovely gay-owned renovated riverside inn is one of the best accommodation options in the area. What looks like a rustic cabin on the outside, immediately impresses upon entering the fair sized suites, many with outdoor terraces overlooking the water. King size beds, flat screen televisions, Keurig coffee makers, and upscale bathroom amenities make this a great choice for trendy travellers. Say hi to owners Keith Davis and Ben Fields. 149 Queen St, Campbellford (705) 653-4470
www.thewatersedgeinn.ca

The Upper Stars Apartment and Mustard Hill Guest House – run by the owners of Our Lucky Stars Café. Beautifully restored and renovated, fully equipped and casually elegantly furnished accommodations for the ideal country village retreat. 16 Main St. Warkworth www.ourluckystars.ca

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.

All photos by Bryen Dunn.





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Brad Fraser

Brad Fraser is a name synonymous with theatre, writing and artistic commentary, which has led to success on both a domestic and international level. He has written many theatrical productions, and two of his most notable include 'Poor Super Man' and 'Unidentified Human Remains and The True Nature of Love'.

Both were adapted by Brad into theatrical films titled 'Leaving Metropolis' and 'Love and Human Remains' respectively. Brad also wrote for the highly popular TV series 'Queer As Folk' and had his own talk show called 'Jawbreaker' among other notable achievements.

I caught up with Mr. Fraser to see what he has been up to recently and his plans for future productions.

What have you been doing with yourself over the last year or so?

I finished my Master's Degree in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto, a year and a half ago. My last play "Kill Me Now" played in Edmonton, Hudson, New York, and had a really wonderful production in London, England in April, starring Greg Wise who's married to Emma Thompson. They flew me out there and put me up for the weekend to see the show and it was beyond amazing. It was one of the

best productions of any play of mine that I've ever seen.

Were you able to meet both Greg and Emma?

Yes. It was amazing, and they are really down to earth. She was doing Sweeney Todd somewhere big in town at the time, and Greg was doing my play at the Park Theatre which is a smaller size venue, and they were like any other show business family.

Do you have any plans for 'Kill Me Now' to spread out even further?

I'm hoping other people will pick it up. Why it hasn't been done in Toronto I don't know, as the reviews it got in London were over the moon.

How do you get inspired to come up with these productions?

That's one of those 'where do your ideas come from' questions that I never know how to answer. All my plays are a springboard from things that were happening in real life. 'Poor Super Man' came in a period where literally all my friends were dying, so they come from all kinds of places.

Do you find that different things inspire you as you evolve?

Oh absolutely, I mean I haven't written a play with a gay character in it, in the most

theatrical sense of the term, for three plays now. I've written so many plays about gay people that part of my aging process is growing out of that world and being part of a bigger community and finding more kinds of people and more kinds of stories. Which is not to say that there are tons of gay stories being told, it's just that in my own experience I feel like I've exhausted that particular journey and I'm on another one now.

What do you find interests you now?

I've written a new play which was actually finished this fall. I'm rewriting it now, and only a few people have seen it. It very much comes from my time at university, but also concerns about gender, about class, about male and female, and what is sexuality. I'm still exploring all of those questions, but now I'm just doing it in a more comprehensive way. It's not just about gay and bi people, it's expanded beyond that.

The three characters we meet are in their mid-seventies, and it takes place over 35 or 40 years, following their lives and friendships and interactions with one another. I want to address these questions of what is male or female? What is gender? Who says what a woman is? Who says what a man is? Why are we always talking in binaries anyway?

It doesn't have a title right now, but I'm calling it 'the design for living project' because it's loosely based on Noel Coward's 1931 play 'Design For Living', which is about a three-way relationship.

What's next in the immediate future for Brad Fraser?

'Kill Me now' was recently released as a paperback by Playwrights Canada Press, and I'm going to LA because a couple of years ago I took an option out on Gemma Files Hexslinger books, which is a series of novels where the main characters are a gay couple.

I just fell in love with [the books] so much and thought it would make a great television series. I spent the last couple of



years developing it, and I've got interest from a number of producers, so we're going down to meet with them and I'm hoping to come home with a deal for a brand new series about gay cowboys with magical powers.

Find out more www.bradfraser.net

Jonathan Hiltz has been a journalist, TV producer and painter for over fifteen years. He writes mainly lifestyle, food, travel, and entertainment pieces. Find his writing at www.jonhiltz.wordpress.com and his artwork at www.rocknrollartshow.com





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Brave Sin Ribbons

A Transgender Christmas Carol



Holly Maholm

In her contemporary take on the holiday classic, *Brave in Ribbons*, Holly Maholm revisits the original Dickens' classic to set the stage for a new host of characters and a contemporary holiday story. Readers will recognize the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future and will quickly find themselves attached to the colorful and heartfelt cast of *Brave in Ribbons*, including a recently deceased brother, his three daughters and his transgender sister, Connie. A retired lawyer and widower, Tommy passes away and arrives in the afterlife, where he is given a Guide to help him. Soon after, Tommy realizes he has lost touch with the "true meaning of Christmas." He begins his search for meaning by visiting a place in the afterlife called The Village, where surprisingly the leader is Satan, but in the Village he calls himself Stan. Tommy and his Guide are appalled by how Stan has changed *A Christmas Carol*, and they agree Tommy must return to the world of the living to check in on his three daughters and younger sister. Tommy's Guide and Stan serve as Tommy's Christmas Ghosts, and they take Tommy back to see if his daughters have kept their deathbed promise to include Connie in their Christmas celebrations.

Excerpt from Brave in Ribbons by Holly Maholm

Now, I watched the events of this Christmas morning with grateful recognition, seeing my daughters opening presents which gave them great joy, and observing, again, those characteristic habits which so exemplified each girl.

Amelia would open each present carefully, so as not to damage it with too much energetic gripping, ripping and stripping. Then studying the package exterior (until, by some unfailing psychic connection, she thought she knew what it was), she would consult her feelings to decide how she felt about it. Next, she would actually open the package, but would do so silently, as if fearing to allow some improvident remark to escape her lips before she was absolutely ready to pronounce sentence. When the foregoing preparatory formalities had been accomplished (and never before!), she would turn to the giver (either 'Santa' or 'Connie') and express her well-modulated gratitude.

As for Brittany, her style was different. She would take hold of the present, and (assuming it was not too large or heavy) she would hold it up in the air in front of her and turn it over and around. Then if she were so moved, she would shake it vigorously (as if, if she could only shake it hard enough, it would call out and confess its contents, rather than suffer any more violence). Or, alternatively,

from time to time Brittany would engage the giver in an impromptu game of ‘Twenty Questions’ in which she would attempt to guess the likely contents, repeatedly asking the giver “Did I get it right yet?”

Only after several of the family had had enough of this unnecessary and self-indulgent delay, and voices had been raised in injured exasperation, did Brittany bestir herself to actually open the present. (She did this every time; and did not endear herself to her anxious, impatient sisters. Connie, however, thought this was the funniest thing – that someone so young could already feel the need to make the moment last.)

Third, there was Catherine, who was, to me, an enigma. There were times when she would grasp the present and rip off the wrapping paper as if some family of pet gerbils were trapped inside and running out of air. Other times – it seemed when she could guess the contents, and the gift was the answer to some childish, wishful prayer she had whispered – she would, without warning, stop altogether. She might suddenly decide she was thirsty and needed juice, or hungry and needed a roll with butter, or (once) that she had forgotten to feed her fish, and all charitable benevolences had to be suspended until those finny dependents had been provided for. So we could never be sure how much time Catherine would need to open any given present (and aren’t they all), but in time she relented, and seeing the gift revealed, bestowed upon the giver her purest, sweetest smile, and usually said, “It’s just what I wanted.”

But I have been indulging my most precious memories. I must keep to the task at hand. You have heard the styles and customs adopted (generally) by each of my daughters, but now I must confine myself to this one Christmas, and those most memorable presents which were opened that morning.

Since I have already picked this particular Christmas morning according to what I remember Catherine receiving, I will start there. When all three girls had exhausted the charitable efforts of Santa, it was time to open those gifts which Connie had brought.

Catherine seized the present meant for her and, pulling it toward her across the rug, seemed to have some sort of vision of what it was. This I can only assume, because Catherine thereupon stopped and announced she needed to be sure her gerbils had fresh water, and Christmas had to wait while we satisfied a rodent’s thirst. Then returning, Catherine finished opening the package and found what she had guessed. It was a new pair of rollerblades, in exactly the style and color she had wanted, and – the best – packed in the box were several colorful stickers showing images of her favorite flying ponies, such stickers destined to

appear on the sides of her new skates.

You see, it was the practice of my sister, Connie, that on weekends, on Friday or Saturday evening, she would take Catherine (and often Amelia and Brittany, as well as several of their friends), to the local roller rink. There they would skate round and round, gossiping, laughing and making ever-more-frequent visits to the snack bar, where Connie maintained a ‘tab’ for the evening which (I am pleased to say) was successful in forestalling that starvation, thirst and virulent sugar deficiency which so afflicts young rollerbladers.

Connie, herself, brought her own skates, and she happily skated round and round to the music, doing the Hokey-Pokey, the Chicken Dance, and enthusiastically waving her arms in just the right way when the DJ played ‘YMCA.’ But skating was by no means the most physically demanding activity which occupied Connie at the rink. No, far more challenging were those tasks (which only she was there to take on) which began with helping Catherine and the other girls lug their skate bags into the dressing room, then helping each girl fish out her skates, put them on (over multiple pairs of socks), and, finally, lacing up each girl’s skates with just that amount of tension in the laces which ...were any more to be applied, all circulation in that foot would be absolutely extinguished.

Then at the end of the evening, Connie was there to help each girl take off her skates and stuff them back into the appropriate skate bag (a task which she never omitted – not after that one night when one girl went home with two left skates, and another girl with two rights skates). Finally, before herding her frolicking, flocking, feminine felines out to her car for the ride home, she announced “last call” at the snack bar, after which it was Connie’s duty to settle her tab – reserving, always, one rapidly-melting ice cream sandwich for the drive home.

Copyright 2015 Holly Maholm

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman who began her transition to living full-time as a woman in 2013. She has been married twice and actively co-parented her three daughters from her first marriage. She is the author of several stage and screen plays and two novels: When Once I Lived (2011), and Brave in Ribbons (November, 2015). She lives in Cleveland, OH and is an active member of the local LGBTQ community. Brave in Ribbons is available on Amazon.com. Publisher SmithPublicity.com www.hollymaholm.com, www.braveinribbons.com



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The holidays can be a nightmare for LGBTQ community members, especially for those of us who are non-gender conforming. As if the daily struggle of getting outfits together wasn't hard enough!

Tops & Bottoms

by cee sando

Don't fear, we have you covered. There's no need to don that hideous sweater grandma gave you last Christmas, or give up entirely while curling up in the fetal position in the corner of your room.

For this photoshoot we channeled the glamour of the 1940's while modernizing it with a unique queer take. The keys to these looks is keeping it neutral with a bright splash, mixing textures, and looking incredible, while also being cozy and comfortable. Make sure your hair is elaborately coiffed (the bigger the better), mix "men's" and "women's" pieces with abandon, and you better have those eyebrows on fleek.

After viewing our uber glam Holiday fit inspiration, getting dressed will be an absolute breeze. Make sure you raise a glass to us and the beauty that is glamorous queer fashion at your next winter soiree!



Previous page:

Top: Miles- Sharpe suit, Sharpe shirt, Sharpe bowtie, Goorin bros. hat

Bottom: Lali- Bariano dress, earrings stylists own, shoes stylists own

Miles- Sharpe suit, Sharpe shirt, Sharpe bowtie, shoes models own

Stephanie- Bariano dress, earrings stylists own

This page:

1. Top: Lali- Bariano dress, earrings stylists own
Miles- Sharpe tie, Sharpe shirt, Sharp vest, Goorin bros. hat
Stephanie- Bariano dress, earrings stylists own



2. Middle: Miles- Sharpe tie, Sharpe shirt, Sharp vest, Goorin bros. hat
Madin- Sharpe jacket, Sharpe tie, Sharpe shirt
3. Bottom: Lali-Single dress, stylists own shoes, stylists own earrings
Madin- Sharpe jacket, Sharpe tie, Sharpe shirt



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OUTSPORT TORONTO

OutSport Toronto serves and supports LGBT amateur athletes as well as LGBT-sport and recreation organisations in the Greater Toronto Area. With a focus on recreational sport more than competitive leagues, OutSport Toronto, along with approximately 20 similar organizations, gives voice to well over 4,500 athletes participating in year-round and seasonal recreational sport leagues.

Historically, a substantial community of Toronto-based LGBT athletes would band together to travel to international LGBT games as one combined, Team Toronto. For the Montréal OutGames in 2006, approximately 500 LGBT Torontonians took over an entire Via Rail train making their way to Montréal. Since then, Team Toronto has continued with a mission to build an athletic community, and to organize and bring together participants to compete at different multi-sport LGBT games around the globe. Team Toronto was established to act as a network across multiple sports, promoting involvement and enthusiasm while recruiting sponsors for uniforms, parties, and travel planning.

In March 2010, OutSport Toronto was formed in response to the growing needs of amateur sports organizations with an LGBT focus. Over the course of a year, approximately 30 different clubs, leagues, teams, and related groups participated in a series of grassroots input and feedback sessions in order to determine the fate of Team Toronto.



It was decided that a new direction was necessary, resulting in the birth of OutSport Toronto. Team Toronto remains to this day a programme of OutSport Toronto, having organized athletes for the 2014 GayGames in Cleveland, and preparing for the upcoming 2016 SinCity Shootout in Las Vegas, the 2017 World OutGames in Miami, the 2018 GayGames in Paris, and beyond.

LGBT sport is about helping our community to keep fit and lead good healthy lives," says Malcom Gunter, founding Secretary Treasurer of OutSport Toronto. Members of OutSport Toronto are themselves recreational and competitive, community-based, sporting organizations, who are dedicated to encouraging and advancing LGBT amateur recreational sport in the GTA.

Year round leagues include the Toronto Triggerfish



Water Polo, Toronto Lesbian and Gay Tennis Association, FrontRunners Toronto, Downtown Swim Club Toronto, Rainbow Ballroom Toronto, Out and Out Toronto, and more. Seasonal leagues over Spring-Summer include Toronto Sand Sharks Beach Volleyball, Toronto Gay Football League – Men & Women Divisions, Argonaut Rowing Club, Muddy York Rugby, Pink Turf Soccer League, and the NOTSO Amazon Softball League, among others. Fall-Winter specific leagues include the Village Pool League, Toronto Historical Bowling Society, Toronto Gay Hockey Association, and Toronto Gay Ski and Snowboarding Club.



With the winter months upon us, several of OutSport Toronto's recreational sports groups, such as the Toronto Gay Ski and Snowboarding Club (TGSC), are swinging into gear to prepare upcoming events and to recruit new members. Yanick Landry, President of TGSC states that, "The majority of members are men, but we do have a growing number of women and trans- members joining the ranks. We encourage all members of the queer community to come out and have fun!"

TGSC is an all-volunteer organization with over 600 registered members at all levels of ski and snowboard abilities from beginner to competitive. "The TGSC 16th annual Beginner's Day is being held on December 19, 2015", says Landry, "and everyone is welcome to join us on Beginner's Day at Mount Saint Louis Moonstone". Attendees must at least be a TGSC Green Member (free to join), and car-pooling can be arranged for participants. The organization also organizes an annual ski and snowboarding day for LGBTQ youth in partnership with the Toronto based charity, Supporting Our Youth (SOY). The club sponsors youth that would not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in this type of winter fun, as well as a chance to escape the city and get some exercise.

Upcoming Events

Avalanche Ontario Gay Ski Weekend @ Blue Mountain Resort

The 3rd annual Ontario Gay Ski Weekend, presented by Avalanche Events, will be happening from January 7th -10th, 2016, at Blue Mountain Resort near Collingwood. Join the Toronto Gay Ski and Snowboarding Club as they tear up the slopes, take in the daytime entertainment and nighttime parties, or simply lounge by the fire, enjoy the hot-tubs, and stay warm and cozy in the chalets. Avalanche Ontario Gay Ski Weekend has something for everyone. Festival Passes are now on sale: www.ontariogayskiweekend.com

Note to readers: PinkPlayMags and sister publication theBUZZ are proud Media Sponsors of Avalanche Ontario Gay Ski Weekend, and yours truly, Michael Ain, is proud to host two days of Pride Stage entertainment in the Market Square on Jan 9th & 10th.

OutSportToronto SCRUM - Toronto's LGBT Sport and Recreation Annual Conference

SCRUM provides an opportunity to celebrate and highlight what took place over the past year, while beginning to plan for what is to come for Toronto's LGBT sport community in the future. Past Keynote Speakers included: Marnie McBean (Four Time Olympic Champion) and Konstantin Iablotskii (Co-president, Russian LGBT Sport Federation).

This year's SCRUM will take place the last week of February or first week of March 2016.

Visit outsporttoronto.org for updates or keep tuned to OutSport Toronto on Facebook.

A complete list of OutSport Toronto's participating leagues and organizations can be found at www.outsporttoronto.org, along with how PinkPlayMags readers can join these leagues and participate in multiple recreational activities themselves.

Michael Ain has played a role within the Church and Wellesley Community for nearly two decades, producing events and adding volume to LGBTQ initiatives through print, radio and social media, all while partnering with key organizations to spread the news on important LGBTQ issues.

Michael Ain photo:
Sergio Alvarado



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THE WORKPLACE

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Winter In The City

by Caitlyn Holroyd

This year sure flew by! My 2015 was filled with new friends, new destinations, and a whole lot of fun, and I hope yours was just as enjoyable. I've made sure to include several food-related events for this issue since no season is more forgiving to the waistline than winter (layers!). There's also some fun New Year's Eve parties and an outdoor event for those who aren't afraid of negative temperatures.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Dee Snider's Rock 'n' Roll Christmas Tale

Until January 3

Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge Street

www.rocknrollxmas.com

TICKETS: \$39.95 to \$199.95

Dee Snider's Rock 'n' Roll Christmas Tale isn't your typical holiday musical. The feel-good, family-friendly show tells the story of Daisy Cutter, and heavy metal band (clad in full makeup, spandex, and platform boots) looking to "make it big" even though the '80s are LONG over. The band ends up selling their souls to the Devil in exchange for success, but there's a catch – every time they try to play their head-banging anthems, the songs turn into warm-hearted Christmas carols.

TIP: While you're in the area, check out Toronto's official Christmas tree and enjoy a pleasure skate at Nathan Phillips Square.

The Political Nightfall

January 30 to May 15

The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, 231 Queens Quay West

www.thepowerplant.org

FREE

The Political Nightfall is a collection of works by artist Aude Moreau and one of three exhibitions on display at the Power Plant as part of the gallery's winter programming. Moreau uses photographic, film, and sound works to investigate architecture and its metaphorical power, inviting the audience to examine the issues embedded in the iconography of these often stereotypical urban images.

TIP: Join the Power Plant on Friday, January 29 from 8-11 p.m. to celebrate the launch of their winter season. It's free!

Interior Design Show

January 21 to 24

Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 222 Bremner Boulevard

www.interiordesignshow.com

TICKETS: \$25 or \$10 for students at the door

The Interior Design Show first opened its doors to the design community in 1999, bringing together 25,000 visitors to see Wallpaper* magazine founder Tyler Brul , Droog's Gijs Bakker, and furniture designer Holly Hunt. Since then, it's become one of the most successful recurring design events in Canada and has nearly doubled in attendance. This year's event will see Lee Broom, one of the UK's leading product and interior designers, make his Canadian debut.

TIP: How is fashion related to interior design? How are today's contemporary spaces created? Find out Globe Style Saturday, a powerhouse speaker series hosted by The Globe and Mail that gives consumers insider knowledge of design. Runs January 23 from 10-7 p.m.



Andy Warhol: Stars of the Silver Screen

Until January 24

TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King Street West

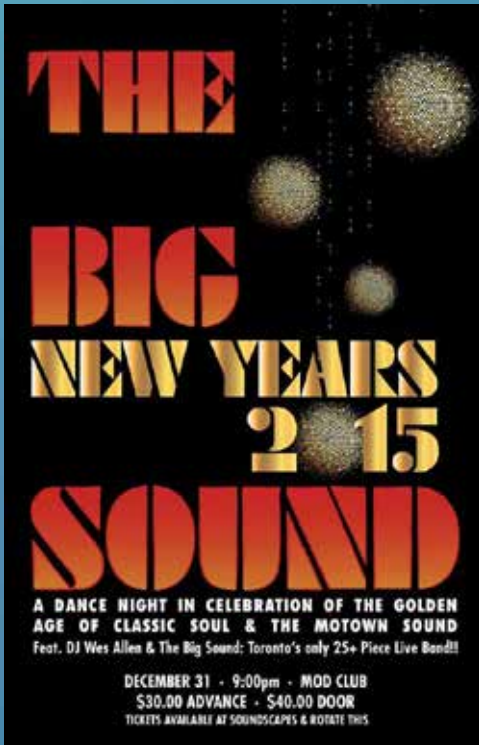
www.tiff.net

TICKETS: \$13 for adults, \$10.50 for students, \$9 for children

Lights, camera, action! Andy Warhol: Stars of the Silver Screen offers a fascinating look inside the world of one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century through a selection of his films, screen prints, photographs, and television work. The exhibition was organized by The Andy Warhol Museum, one of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, and is presented in collaboration with TIFF.

TIP: Be sure to check out the Screen Test Machine, which allows you to shoot a silent film portrait of yourself and upload it to the web to share. You are the artist and the superstar here; decide how you want to present yourself and get creative.





PARTIES

A Big Sound New Year's

December 31

Mod Club, 720 College Street

TICKETS: \$30 in advance from Soundscapes (572 College Street) and Rotate This, 801 (Queen Street West), \$40 at the door

Bid farewell to 2015 in style with Toronto's biggest and most authentic classic soul orchestra! The Big Sound is a celebration of the glory days of classic soul and Motown, featuring a 25-piece live band performing songs from the era. DJ Wes Allen will keep you dancing between sets with the greatest soul hits on vinyl and there will be a champagne toast at midnight to ring in the New Year.

TIP: Stay up to date on all the The Big Sound's future happening through their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/thebigsoundofmotown).

They also post setlists and special mixes.

Down-town Abbey Unleashed: A Grand New Year's Eve Bash

December 31

The Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen St. W.

www.gladstonehotel.com

TICKETS: \$57.53

Grab a themed cocktail and explore the oldest operating hotel in Toronto as you dance the night away to live band performances and DJ sets. Be sure to keep your eye out for one of the many Edwardian-inspired characters, who will be performing interactive performances throughout the night. There's a midnight surprise planned for the countdown and a costume contest, including a prize for "Best Fascinator."

TIP: Tickets are sure to sell out, so get yours as soon as possible!

FOOD & DRINK

Queers for Dinner

January 9, between 6-8 p.m.

Dumpling House, 619 Gerrard Street East

www.queersfordinner.com

PRICE: \$10-15

Queers for Dinner is a social community which aims to bring LGBTQ people and their allies together to enjoy great food and meet new friends in a small group setting. Each dinner has a "host" to help break the ice, so be prepared to talk about your favourite place to visit, the most recent book you read, or the movie you never get tired of watching. For their January event, Queers for Dinner will be serving up authentic mainland Chinese courtesy of Dumpling House.

TIP: Queers for Dinner is just getting started and needs amazing people to help keep it growing. If you're interested in becoming a host, stay tuned to their website for more information on ways to get involved.

Free Salsa Night

Until April 14

Fonda Lola, 942 Queen Street West

www.fondalola.ca

FREE

Located in the trendy West Queen West neighbourhood, Fonda Lola's has been serving up delicious eats for the past two years and recently introduced a Free Salsa Night. The event runs every Thursday from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. and features a complimentary dance lesson from Christine Walker of Walker Studios, live music from Sol De Cuba, and drink specials.

TIP: The Hand Held Caesar Salad (\$11) and Panela Poppers (\$10) are a must try!

Miss Thing's

1279 Queen Street West

www.misstthings.com

Miss Thing's provides the perfect tropical escape right here in Toronto. The interior takes subtle cues from American and Hawaiian tiki culture, while chefs Jasper Wu and Paul Hadian serve quality interpretations of classic Pan Asian and Polynesian dishes alongside a tropical cocktail list.

TIP: If you love disco, Miss Thing's has the dance party for you. Every Thursday night, Das Nasty plays a top-notch selection of rare, groove, classic, Italo, and nu disco tunes.

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.

www.shedoes.thecity.com/author/caitlyn-holroyd

OUTDOORS

Snowshoeing with the High Park Ski Club

December through March

High Park, 1873 Bloor Street West

<https://hpsc.ca>

MEMBERSHIPS: \$140 for new members (good for one year)

Snowshoeing is the perfect activity for those who want to enjoy the quiet beauty of winter and get a great cardio workout in the process. The High Park Ski Club offers snowshoe lessons and day trips for beginners and experts throughout the winter months.

TIP: The club hosts a moonlight snowshoe (or hike) through one of Toronto's many parks on Tuesday nights once a month, followed by food and drinks at a nearby pub.





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From The Heart

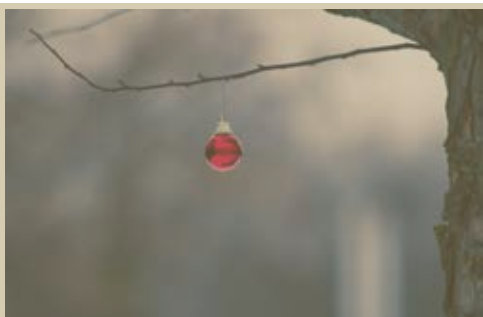
By Cheryl Costello

Last Winter I made a list. It contained all the things I had hoped to experience this year, and was fuelled by a steady resolve to see more of the seeds I'd planted earlier that Spring. It wasn't a New Year's list, though long afternoons and shorter evenings left me with a lot of time spent inside thinking about what I really wanted my life to look like. It also helped that I had to take a huge step away from a lot of what used to fill my time, while I was healing from a neck injury.

sometimes the best days are carried on the wings of what sounds a lot like silence.

I think about the way it feels to take those first few steps into a coffee shop on a morning you decided at the last minute that you were going to treat yourself, or the way it feels to settle into warm blankets for the night as the cold rain beats against your bedroom window.

These are the luxuries that change us in ways so small at first, and then furiously all at once. They connect us to life and to the bigger picture that our heart yearns to know more about. but can never satisfyingly



I think about all the times I spent wanting to be anywhere else and wishing I was someone else, blind to all of the luxury around me. It's not simply that we experience abundance and the overflow of a life and cup so full, but how we allow those things to change us and whether we truly allow them to shape us into something so beautiful.

I think of luxury in the way it feels to have someone's arms wrap me up tightly in the middle of the night when I'm in the space between sleep and dreams, having drifted too far from them laying next to me.

I think of the brilliant quiet that slips in and out of conversations with best friends, who understand that like a warm summer wind,

wrap itself around because simply feeling it is enough. Knowing that we came so close to the core of what life means, apart from what the places we come from tell us that meaning should be, is often enough for us to know that there's some force that makes this life worth it in the end.

They are the things we cannot predict, those wild parts that captivate us like clouds growing and shrinking after the storm passes, giving the world some respite and a breathtaking sight to behold as the sun sets slowly. These things are not wild because they come from such places of raw beauty, but because we never know how they will shape us or who we will become once they take their shoes off at our doorstep and stay

for a while. They are wild because they are contagious and we can't help but partake in their passionate reminder of why we're here. I'm glad when I look back and realize that it's never been the things I've understood which have made my heart grow so much larger, and it has me wondering what the purpose of this abundance really is. Why are we so regularly steeped in the simple luxuries like family and friends, intangibles like love, that feeling of being understood, and sometimes the material luxuries as well?

I'm beginning to realize that we have so many little luxuries because they prepare us for the largest one: sharing them with others. Call it "that time of year" or greet it with a round of "'tis the season", but there's so much more to it than just a once-a-year feeling.

This Winter I'm making another list. Its numbered points have little to do with the things I longed to understand last year. This year has far more to do with the way it feels to spread my wings and realize that there's more than enough room beneath them for both the wind, and those who mean the world to me. I want to know what it means to share those simple pleasures of big impacts with others. Moreover, this year it has less to do with what I want to know, and more about who I want to be once those luxuries make their presence known.

If nothing else, this sharing is what they're for, and I'm keeping my arms outstretched for holding and handing out whatever I can of this rich, abundant life stretching out before each and every one of us. Here's to the



These lavish parts of life bring us together and help us to realize that there's so much more than the bad days. Sometimes they're for us to once again overflow with joy and fill up the cups of those around us, and other times they're meant for so much more.

Luxuries are best defined by the walls we set up and fortify to keep others out, though not at their strongest points. They're best defined and understood by the weak points where the stone turns to soft rubble, permeable by rays of light peeking through that connect us to the other side. So that those around us perhaps peek through and see the grass we sometimes curse for not looking like what we thought the other side seemed to be that whole time.

lavish parts of this life you know well, and to those which have yet to reveal themselves to you in the coming year ahead!

Feel free to reach out to talk books, well-being, spirituality, gratitude and making the world a better place on Instagram @cherylalisoncostello and Twitter @cherylacostello.

Cheryl can be found writing online at www.thelovinginstant.com and sharing beauty at www.capturingtheinfinite.com.

Photos by Cheryl on her nature walks



Winter Horoscopes

by Julie Antoinette

Aries (March 21st – April 20th)

The winter season ushers in a feeling of newness and freshness in your job sector, Aries. You may consider taking courses to expand your knowledge because you think that knowledge is power. Fear not Aries. You have gathered ample knowledge - and then some. You have the tools, the passion and the funds. Don't be afraid to follow your bliss.

Taurus (April 21st – May 21st)

The faeries of organization are with you this season, dear Taurus. So much so that others have been benefitting from your super-efficient skills! Aren't you exhausted? You're allowed to prioritize yourself, you know. Permission is hereby granted. This is your time and your energy. You get to be the boss.

Gemini (May 22nd – June 21st)

Gemini, you are the very hybrid child of the social butterfly and the busy bee. Buzzing to and fro, hither and yon. Fluttering from social engagement to social engagement, always on the go! But do you notice in those moments when your head hits the pillow and all is quiet, the longing for home, family and security? You'll always be a social animal but joy and comfort can always be found at home too.

Cancer (June 22nd – July 22nd)

Don't you love winter, Cancer? It's the perfect time to cozy up by a fire, under a warm blanket with a hot tea in hand. If anyone loves the feeling of cocooning, it's you. This season challenges you to discover gems hiding just outside your comfort zone. I know it's cold outside, but you won't be disappointed if you venture out!

Leo (July 23rd – August 22nd)

The winter season is asking you to reign over your imagined limitations and boundaries, Leo. Too much from the past has held you back for too long. Release and let go! You'll feel the relief and freedom of your new mindset immediately. You want to expand and grow and think new thoughts. You want to travel and see the world. And why not? It's your oyster!

Virgo (August 23rd – September 23rd)

Have you got all your winter-to-do lists in order Virgo? You are the very mark of practicality, efficiency and groundedness. You have quite enough to keep you busy this season. Be careful not to neglect your inner world. That still small voice is not as demanding, but deserves your attention. Make it a priority.

Libra (September 24th – October 23rd)

Your longing for peace and harmony has left you quite reticent for too long Libra. This is not the only way to achieve peace and harmony. You've held your cards close to your chest long enough. It's time to express yourself! Expression does not necessarily equal confrontation or conflict. Communication with loved ones this season will be challenging but extremely rewarding once you come out of your shell. Share yourself a little.

Scorpio (October 24th – November 22nd)

Great news Scorpio! The burdensome grind is over! You've worked so hard and diligently, trudging uphill through slush and sleet and hail all year it seems. This season, the stars ask you to relax, enjoy the fruits of your labour. Enjoy time with family, travel, go with the flow. What good is all the work if no enjoyment or reward is to be had?

Sagittarius (November 23rd - December 21st)

Ready to gear up Sagittarius? You are being challenged to step up to the plate and take on more responsibility. Whether it be at home, at work or in a personal project, the planets fully support you in your quest to secure a comfortable nest. You will achieve a sense of security in the most delightful and enjoyable way – doing what you love. Get cracking!

Capricorn (December 22nd – January 19th)

Time for self-doubt is over Capricorn! You've indulged and wallowed enough. You are on the verge of making a name for yourself. Whatever this area is, you are garnering the respect of many. Put your passions into your projects and put them out there for all the world to see. You can't lose!

Aquarius (January 20th - February 19th)

Aquarius, you are known for being open-minded, ultra-modern and expansive in your thinking. New ideas and experiences lure you away into new realms this season. And just in time! You've been longing for a new headspace. The trick is, what avenue to venture down in order to gain this fresh perspective? Travel? Classes? Will you write a book?

Pisces (February 20th – March 20th)

It's time to scrap your idea of 'karma' Pisces. Life isn't about punishing you at every turn for every ant you've mistakenly stepped on. Yes, you reap what you sow, however, it's not all drudgery. It's time for a paradigm shift! You have the right to reap what's best for you, but you have to sow it first! So.... What will you sow? This season is asking you to plant new seeds in the form of new deeds that specifically meet your own needs.

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 this horoscope, she seeks to relay intuitive messages of guidance from the collective astrological archetypes. As above, so below.

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Looking Back



It was October 1995 and I had just celebrated a significant birthday. In conversation with several friends and my sister, who was at that time a Corporate Relocations Officer for a major trust company, we did a bit of blue sky dreaming about putting together something special for New Year's Eve.

"You could always book the Royal York Hotel," quipped my sister. "That would be pretty special." Once the eye-rolling and

snickering had settled, she returned to the idea. "Just go in and ask to speak to a banquet sales rep. I'm sure someone would discuss it with you, and you might be surprised."

So I did. And I was surprised. The Royal York sales office did, in fact, take me seriously. They were gracious and supportive and worked closely with me to design a menu for the evening. The Executive Chef even made an appearance to inquire about my proposed guest list and made some suggestions about a simple (but theatrical) dessert! It looked like this self-inflicted luxury experience could actually happen! The entire 19th floor of The Royal York Hotel (right behind the neon sign) would be the stage for my extravaganza!

On December 29, I received an anxious telephone call from my Royal York sales rep. "I need to see you at the hotel right away," she said. "There's been an incident." When I arrived, she whisked me up to the 19th floor. Carpets had been pulled and in one corner, scaffolding was set up and a workman was lying on his back at the very top, touching up the gilt crown moulding with a tiny brush. A pipe had burst on the 20th floor the night before and flooded the entire 19th floor!

The sales rep insisted that they would work around the clock to prepare the room for my event. As an apology for the situation, they actually comped me a suite on the same floor for the night. Dinner was fabulous, of course. My room mate at the time, a 6'2" drag queen with a Killer Barbie impersonation was the floor show, and afterward we danced to DJ Jamal, drank champagne and looked out through the arched windows the lights twinkling across the Toronto Islands.

Dream big and believe it can be yours, and it will.

Mychol Scully is Art Director at INspired Media Inc., responsible for the design production of PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, The Local Biz Magazine, and The Pink Pages Directory. He is also the owner of CORE Design Services.

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