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Part 2 of 4

## the **all** **grown up** issue

Find out how **young adults** of today compare to yesteryear, and how Pride Toronto 2016 is **keeping the balance** between community and corporations.

Also comedian Elvira Kurt, Signs Restaurant & Bar, Travel, Fiction, Horoscopes, Event Listings, and more.



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## From the **Publisher**



Antoine in his late 20s with a friend's dog

**W**hen I got to be all grown and up and in my twenties, I wanted to have fun. I wanted to discover what the community had to offer, and what amusing adventures (and troubles) I could get into as an adult.

In my last letter I mentioned how as a youth I wanted to be a superhero. In your twenties you feel like a superhero, and if you're living in the city, an "Urban Hero." You are an adult now, you have a whole world in front of you, you feel indestructible, and you have life by the balls.

My twenties and early thirties were crazy good times. I discovered The Village, The Steps, clubs, bars and patios along Church Street. They were all hang outs, and merriment was my middle name. I also had a great career. I was part of the changing scope of LGBTQ media. Our community was growing and so was acceptance by the rest of the city. These were exciting times.

Welcome to the second part of our 2016 theme of exploring life's stages. By the time we reach the winter edition, we will have had a good look at what it's like to grow up and go through life being an LGBTQ individual.

This is also our annual Pride issue. Pride Toronto has a very exciting festival this year, and by the time this issue hits the streets we will have already been through a few weeks of Pride events, parties, dances, and human rights panels. The main weekend starting July 1st includes the Trans March, Dyke March, and of course the Pride Parade. A month long celebration of wonderful community events! Enjoy and be safe.

We will be back in Autumn with a look at living your midlife years. Gosh, I can't believe I am in that category now.

When did that happen? ☺

Happy Pride everyone and have a great summer. We love you.

**Antoine Elhassem**  
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# summerplay!

**Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Leather, and Queer  
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Free • Summer 2016**

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## 2016 Pride Guide

You'll find our 2016 Pride Guide in this issue.

## Published by

### INspired Media Inc.

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

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

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

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

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## From the **Editor**

Here we are, the second issue in our “Journey of Life” series. The four quarterly issues began with our Springplay issue that was Youth-themed, and in this issue we’re exploring Young Adulthood, as it is today or what it was like at that time. The remaining two issues cover the next step in life, and then again much later. Life truly is a journey, so why not make it an exploration. You already have by picking up a copy of our magazine, or visiting our website ([www.pinkplaymags.com](http://www.pinkplaymags.com)). Welcome to scene two of life!

Megan Hutton is back bringing us her journey, where in the 1960’s she decides to follow the accepted way of life, stop living on the streets, and become domesticated. Turn the page to find out how she made out. She also chats with a few younger Torontonians about their coming out experiences today. Taylor K. Gesner is back with his thought provoking alphabetical piece, “Generation Why?”, that explores youth via the XYZ’s of the LGBT’s. We also have a special feature on an awesome restaurant/bar in the village, where there’s an opportunity to learn Sign Language every time you visit. They also have some pretty awesome Pride parties happening, so be sure to stop by.

Speaking of Pride, June has been declared Pride Month, a first in Canadian history. Another first is having representatives from all three levels of government in the Parade. Our Mayor John Tory will be joined by our elected lesbian Provincial Premier Kathleen Wynne, and our poster-boy Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Will they be together as one? Get those squirters ready!

Our final feature takes a candid look at what Pride Toronto is all about in 2016. They have a huge budget and multiple corporate sponsors, so has the community spirit been lost? With Black Lives Matter Toronto chosen as the “Honoured Group”, Human Rights Panels, and diversified programming from all corners of the world, is everyone happy? Zack Rosen delves into the topic, chatting with promoters, artists, community activists, and Pride Toronto Executive Director, Mathieu Chantelois.



Our “Hot Artist” this issue is none other than comedian Elvira Kurt. She’s a well-established talent on stage and television, and she’s back with live material at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre this month. Our “Community Cornerstone” spotlight is on the Sherbourne Health Centre, an east central resource that provides service for the LGBT community on a variety of health and well-being topics. Cheryl Costello’s “From The Heart” column looks at those young adult years, when everything is so confusing. Our “Looking Back” column is written by local reporter/crime writer James Dubro, who takes us back 35 years to the infamous Bathhouse Raids in Toronto.

Finally, our travel article is on a U.S. destination where the gay civil rights movement began, was the nation’s Capitol before Washington, and plays host to the upcoming Democratic National Convention. Take a guess, then flip the pages to find out about this fabulous city steeped in history, yet filled with more modern outdoor art installations and murals than any other American city.

Caitlyn Holroyd has some amazing events for you to attend both during Pride and into the summer, as “Summer in the City” lists what’s hot and happening. She even provides her own personal “Tip” for each one. Julie Antoinette gives us her “Summer Horoscopes”, and the wonderful magazine layout and design is by Mychol Scully.

Happy Pride, and enjoy the ride with this second installment in our “Journey of Life” series. Now excuse me while I go fix my 80’s hair.

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# THE FORKS IN THE ROAD: COMING OUT, MOVING ON

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*By Megan Hutton*

**T**here are always forks in the road, turns and twists that determine our destiny. Sometimes we ignore that gut feeling which could be, “truth.” If we are self-aware we recognize the path. If we don’t take it, the journey to where we want to be could be a long one.

I had a preconceived idea of where I wanted to go when I emerged from the sixties, but for reasons unknown I ignored it. Living on my own from fourteen to twenty I gained an awareness I would never have known if my life had been a traditional one. While the Vietnam War shook my foundations, the nightly gatherings on the beach with musicians soothed my soul.

The next stage was to be a stark contrast to my carefree days as a poet, and the young woman

who knew what she ultimately wanted in life - to be with another woman – yet I didn’t know how I was going to get there. From the coffee houses where I read my poetry, I went to The Playhouse Theatre company, who were auditioning actors for their first apprentice program, and I was one of the lucky few who was chosen.

I realized the inherent differences in my life, and the lives of my peers during this time. These people had regular families and people who took care of them. I was still floating through life on my own. There were no visible lesbians and no role models. It was still a very hush-hush world when it came to what was only referred to as homosexuality. The word gay was used sparingly, but lesbian almost never. It was a confusing time. I had absolutely no interest in men, and had never dated, but I also knew that I wanted to have children, and marriage at the time seemed to be the only reasonable solution. I got married. Looking back, I realize

just how far down I had stuffed the reality of who I was, and what I wanted.

Prior to my marriage, my friends were beginning to tease me about not dating, and joked about me being a lesbian. If they only knew. Getting to the alter should have been my first clue. I got lost on the big day, and was an hour and a half late. Eventually I had two children, then my mind was trying to process how I would ever be able to live as a lesbian with children. I became a closeted suburban lesbian. Women in larger cities were fighting for equality and coming out of the closet, and here I was tip toeing through the living room with The Friendly Giant, and watching Sesame Street with my two young children.

The sixties had opened people up to new possibilities, and had them thinking about relationships. The Hite Report came out and explored Lesbianism as something many women secretly wanted to experience. It appeared that there were many curious married women hiding in the suburbs. We were inundated with books on relationships, and open marriage was being explored as an option to boredom.

If you were depressed or lonely there was, "The Book of Hope." Jonathan Livingstone Seagull encouraged us to seek peace. Books like "I'm OK You're OK," made us cautious about things we took for granted. We were advised to, "Hang loose." If we were angry we could punch pillows under the watchful eye of a therapist for a small fee, as Gestalt was an existential and experimental form of therapy.

Married lesbians were fearful of losing their children if they came out or decided to leave. The courts were not in favour of lesbians raising children. My confidence around my attraction to women had waned, and I filed it under, "A Fantasy." I wish I had been braver, but I wasn't. Like many women who had married for the wrong reasons, I felt stuck, bored, and very lonely. My own discomfort around a lifestyle I knew that I wanted was quite puzzling.





This became obvious the first time a woman expressed interest in me.

A friend in my suburb invited me over for a visit one evening. She confided with me that her husband, who was gay, lived downstairs and they both parented their children. This was my first realization there were other lesbians in the suburbs. During our visit she leaned over and said, "I can't wait to kiss you". My reaction was startling. I froze and was speechless. I got out of there as quick as possible, as my feelings were so conflicted. The moment I had dreamed about had come and terrified me at the same time.

That incident planted a seed, and I now knew that I was biding my time, and would be ready the next time. It still wasn't easy. What would this mean for the safe bubble I had created for myself? The courage I had gained living on my own as a teenager had almost vanished, and I had become complacent. I lost my identity when I was married. I was Mrs. something and my name didn't matter. I couldn't even get a medical procedure on my own body without his permission. We moved to Toronto shortly after that and my life changed, again.

I joined 21 McGill, a women's club that was in the heart of the city, and a mecca for closeted lesbians. Eventually we found one another. One evening after dinner at the club, I was walking with a friend and heard loud laughter coming from a house. We decided to check it

out, and walked into a room full of surprised lesbians holding a meeting about a baseball team. My life was changing from mundane to exciting, but I was still married.

The following summer I was in Halifax for three months for a production at the Neptune Theatre. I had an immediate connection to the lead actress, and it didn't go unnoticed by other members of the cast. The actress was about twenty years older than I was, and I was very attracted to her. One day a younger actress came up to caution me, "Stay away from her, she's a lesbian". I wish I'd had the courage to say that I was too, but I didn't. I left my marriage and we shared responsibility for the children until my ex-husband passed away suddenly when the children were nine and eleven.

In the early days everyone was looking for their "type." There were many stereotypical views on what constituted a good match. With maturity comes the realization that commonality, compassion, and kindness are probably more lasting than looking for a "type." I wanted to see if things are different today, so I interviewed four students in their twenties, and found a common thread.

Paige O'Sullivan is a 26-year-old lesbian. Confident and sure of who she is, Paige is working on her Master's in Education. I asked about her coming out experience with her family. "I was 16 and had just returned from a week at a Catholic Christian camp. My mom

had a friend over and we got into a discussion about homosexuality and the Bible. Of course I was refuting their claims. My mom's friend looked at me and said, "Are you trying to tell us you're a lesbian." I said, I guessed I was. My mom was silent, then she said I wasn't old enough to know that. For about a month I said I was bisexual, because I thought that might be easier for them, but it didn't last long. My mom and I didn't talk for about a year. She's very traditional, it's still not something we talk about a lot. When I told my dad a few years later his response was much better."

A few years earlier I'd met Paige's now partner, Kate. I received a call from York (Glendon) residence one winter night asking if I could drive up. My granddaughter said one of her friend's was very upset because she was going to come out to her mom. I arrived to a sobbing 20-year-old Kate who fell into my arms. I held her on the couch for a couple of hours, consoling her. I was incredulous that in this age of education and information there is still so much angst over coming out.

I also interviewed Juan Garrido, a former York (Glendon) student, and his good friend Madison Morrison, both in their twenties. Juan's experience was quite different. "I started to question my sexuality when I was about fourteen, and decided to come out to my mom. She is from a different culture and never exposed to gay people. I told her I thought I was gay. A couple of days later she told me she'd told my older brother and sister. They had a conversation with me about being too young to make a decision. Then my mom told other members of my family, an aunt and uncle. They told me flat out, being gay was wrong."

"These conversations forced me back into the closet. In grade twelve I came out to my sister as bisexual. A few weeks later she told my mom and my brother. We went through it again. When my dad came home we told him. Although he said he didn't understand it either, he was the most understanding of all. He said he didn't understand it, and he was concerned about my future happiness. Now it's a don't tell mentality. We don't really talk about it. That's a bit difficult

for them because I'm an active advocate for LGBTQ and the Multiple Sclerosis communities. Last year I gave a Ted Talk at York University on, "The Value of Vulnerabilities."

"One of my best friends is Madison Morrison who grew up with a grandmother who was a lesbian. She came to Glendon as a speaker on many occasions to talk to students about coming out. Madison has a different attitude about sexuality, which she describes as a non-issue. We joke and say to one another, if we haven't found anyone to share our lives with by the time we're thirty, then we'll live together. We were both diagnosed with MS in our early twenties. It makes us realize how precious the moments are in our lives are".

The twenties are a time of exploration and figuring out who we are. That doesn't appear to have changed much over the generations. My own personal struggle had been to find myself, not the self that others needed or thought I should be. I was born a "free spirit." I cherish openness and vulnerability along with self-awareness, the same qualities I admire in others. Along with that goes honesty and a kind heart. All true attributes to the most lasting and satisfying relationships, lesbian, gay, or otherwise.

As Maddison perfectly surmised, "I will fall in love with a person, male, female or other, I'm not tied down to stereotypes, just another human." I wish everyone had that attitude.

In the early 1960's Megan spent five of her teenage years on her own. Through the solitude of those years she found life to be a great teacher. Today she is a Poet/Playwright/Short Story writer, and has published numerous articles on relationships. She read from the Anthology "Dykewords" at Toronto's first "Word on the Street", and she's currently working on a poetry collection and a short film.





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# Pride

## Connecting Corporations and Community

*By Zack Rosen*

Pride is a business, and business is booming.

With a 4-million-dollar budget (up one million from last year) the Toronto Pride committee is attempting a few new initiatives. They have expanded this year's official festivities to cover the course of a full month, and are using the extra run time to give our various queer communities what they have long demanded: a more inclusive Pride.

"Even if there were a million people on our streets, there's a lot of people that didn't feel a sense of belonging," says Mathieu Chantelois, Executive Director of Pride Toronto. "Too often they felt like they were not muscular enough, too skinny, too fat, too old, too young, not white enough. By sitting with the grassroots organizations, LGBT groups, and major cultural institutions, we realized that if we spread everything through a month we could have a real conversation and include things for everybody."

With an official theme of "You Can Sit With Us," this year's official lineup includes Human Rights Panel discussions on subjects like "Blackness and Queer Politics", "35 Years of Women's Activism at the Intersections", and "Trans Rights in the New Generation." There's also "Yalla Barra,"



a "landmark celebration of Middle Eastern Culture" featuring performances by talent like Mashrou' Leila and the Arabesque Dance Company. Mexican-American Grammy Winner Lila Downs anchors "Mariposa: From Latin America with Love", and trans actress Mya Taylor will be on hand at a TIFF-sponsored screening of her breakout film *Tangerine*.

Perhaps the greatest sign of Pride Toronto's commitment to get with the times however, is with their selection of Black Lives Matter Toronto as Pride 2016's "Honoured Group" and parade leaders. Many feel that it is a big-step forward for a community that is often pushed aside during Pride celebrations.

"It's been a fight some years to get them to recognize people who have multiple parts of their identities", says Nik Red of Blackness Yes!, who has organized the Pride-week Blockorama party



for 18 years. “It’s great to talk, but there needs to be action. It took a few days for people from Pride to come support [The BLM Toronto] tent city. It’s interesting to see the waving of the flag supposedly, but I want to see how that translates to this year, and next year, and the year beyond that.”

Blockorama has taken place at various Pride locales in years past, and is settled at Wellesley Stage this year, with a great lineup that includes Soca queen Alison Hinds. Other long-standing local organizations and activists however, have found that the Pride’s new expansion does not have room for them.

Diminished support has seen two popular parties for underrepresented youth — Fruit Loopz and the BQY (Black Queer Youth) Showcase — get moved from their old homes at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, where they had a full day of programming, to less-central side stages for shorter amounts of time. “Being displaced like that brings back all the bad memories,” says King, coordinator at local organization SOY (Supporting Our Youth.) “[The youth] didn’t like that there was no process, no prior conversation or warning. It wasn’t done in a caring way.”

Pride’s skyrocketing budget and ever-increasing list of high-rolling sponsors — this year’s include Viagra, Bud Light and TD Canada Trust - have contributed to a corporatization of the festival that leaves many at the grassroots level feeling disconnected or underserved. That disconnection,

in turn, can lead to fractures as former participants break off to meet their own needs. Such is the case with this year’s Night March taking place on June 27th.

Trans activist Susan Gapka has worked for Prides around the country, and has sat on Pride Toronto’s board for three years in addition to her affiliation with countless local grassroots initiatives. She has also seen many splits between the Pride powers-that-be and dissatisfied constituents. “The difference is the funding of it now,” says Gapka. “It’s now funded by major corporations, which is good because we can do cool things like big events, but some people feel they’re losing a sense of community. You have to register, get permits from the city. That’s what Night March is not. It’s on the Monday of the week, during less corporate sponsorship, so that’s maintained in the spirit of a number of anti-oppression principles and I’m happy that happened.”

Local playwright Raymond Helkio was a bit confused when he approached Pride Toronto for support in a festivities-weekend-mounting of his play “RAID: Operation Soap.” This year’s Pride commemorates the 35th anniversary of the Toronto bathhouse raids, and Helkio assumed the committee would be happy to honour a play about the same subject. However, the best they could offer was a website listing and affiliate title that came with a \$300 price tag.

Toronto is not the only city whose Pride committee has faced criticism and controversy,



but it can certainly be said they are doing a better job this year at achieving balance than Los Angeles. As reported by Troy Masters at that city's "The Pride" newspaper, The Christopher Street West organization faced a near-boycott as over 75 local activists banded together under the slogan "Shut It Down, Take It Back."

Decisions like the de-prioritization of trans events, lack of financial transparency, a high cover charge, and branding Pride as a "music festival" to appeal to younger queers, struck too many as a departure from the events' true, radical roots. Though organizers issued an apology and promise to fix it in the coming year, the local community is still fuming. It would seem that in LA, as in Toronto, the local community cares too much about their Pride to let it fully become just another expensive party.

Long time Toronto promoter Denise Benson throws the popular lesbian party Cherry Bomb, and has been to every Toronto Pride since 1987. She believes that the corporate influx has been an overall positive development. "I'm still a realist," says Benson. "You don't have an event of this size without corporate funding. People who want all the corporate stuff to go away aren't realistic. It's what you do with the money [that matters.]"

She points out that this year has seen two affirming, if unglamorous, surprises: The Committee planned their whole month of events with enough notice to get the schedule confirmed and published well in advance of Pride month,

and that the social justice panels were given equal marketing consideration as the parties. "Some years have been more political than other years, and this is not one of those years that they [Toronto Pride] divorce from politics. I've been impressed", Benson confides.

Pride's long-standing "informal partnership" with local LGBT community centre "The 519" has now turned into an official event partnership this year. They are joining forces on 519's long-running TreeHouse Party. The proceeds from this party fund the organization's year round community programming, and "The 519" is optimistic that the venture will be a successful one.

The local queer arts community has also received a big boost from Pride 2016 in the form of its second annual partnership with Nuit Rose. This "queer arts and performance festival" is receiving support from Pride Toronto to produce an impressive spate of events in both West Queen West and the Church/Wellesley village.

"[Toronto Pride] helps us bring awareness to our events and our attendance", says founder Francisco Alvarez. "We're contributing to animating our community, and giving a platform for LGBTQ visual and performance artists to give a contemporary art vibe to Pride."

The one common consensus on Pride seems to be that it still matters, and that it provokes strong feelings from the community. So whether you're there for the politics or parties, a supporting corporation or grassroots community group, it's an opportunity for everyone to come together and celebrate our great diversity.

---

Zack Rosen was the editor-in-chief and co-founder of the now defunct queer cultures website [TheNewGay.net](http://TheNewGay.net), and has written for Out, The Advocate, Huffington Post, Nylon.com and many other quality outlets. He is currently studying Art and Design at George Brown College.






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# Generation “Why”?

*By Taylor K. Gessner*

**W**hen tasked with writing a piece about intergenerational experiences, I headed out to begin chatting with self-identifying members of Generation Y and to get their thoughts on those that came before them, Generation X.

Even attempting to define precise beginning and end-points of each generation could be an article in and of itself which I shall leave to the social anthropologists among us. Generally, though, Millennials/Generation Y are those born from the mid-80s through the 90s, following hot on the heels of Generation X (born between mid-60s and the mid-80s).

My first interview was with a 30-year-old creative professional:

“So,” I began, “you’re a member of generation Y?”

“Uh, no”

“Oh, so you identify as a Millennial?”

“No, I am late Generation X”

This was a twist I had not expected. Clearly another round of outreach was in order.

The next was a 25-year-old recent graduate:

“So, you’re a Millennial?”

“Technically yes.” She replied, “But that’s not, you know, ‘Me’.”

As I continued to reach out to folks it became readily apparent that there is something going on: no one wanted to self-identify as Generation Y or a Millennial. How on earth was I going to come up with anything to say about people I couldn’t find?

And where is all this generational angst coming from? Why do Millennials want to align themselves with a bunch famous for slacking off?

In a community that generally agrees 30 is the new elderly, one can understand how they might be a touch on edge. My theory is that Millennials are quickly turning into geezers, and they are not pleased.

And Generation X? Well, we’re just happy to still be around.

Honestly, members of Gen X never thought we’d live this long—a toss-up between imminent global annihilation via nuclear strike, or incurable virus, take your pick. Like the philosophy student who has just discovered Sartre, Gen X are the intergenerational existentialists here to remind you that we’re all just floating about in cosmic nothingness anyway. We were raised by MTV and “The ABC Afterschool Special”. We received daily reminders that sex will basically kill you, and that you should “just say no” to pretty much everything interesting and radical that the Boomers II experienced. We were bummed the f\*\*k out in our formative years. No wonder a good portion of the 90s featured fluorescent fun-fur, a mainstream



interest in BDSM culture (thanks, Madonna!) and the most popular drug at the time caused you to hug too much. Members of Generation X were told repeatedly there would be no job security, and we had the dubious honour of being the first generation that would not match the success of our parents. We were the latchkey kids from single-parent homes, living in the shadow of Ronald Reagan's shaky finger over "The Button". We were slackers, skeptical and bummed out. Perhaps not the ideal set of circumstances for young adults going forth to find success in the world.

Today, I get the distinct impression from my contemporaries that we are a generation still trying to define exactly how "success" might look for us. We travel, sure, but mostly to slack off in more picturesque environs. We worry about mortgages and life insurance, but don't seem to find the comfort that our parents did in this "adulting" business. We ride our bikes and live in small spaces and talk a lot about simplifying as a life-choice—which could just as easily be a way to rationalize the fact that we just can't afford a car and house. We've already had two mid-life crises and can likely expect them to come along at regular intervals as we come to the sobering conclusion that yes, we are going to live to retirement age. We used to be EXTREME...now we are, frankly, a little exhausted.

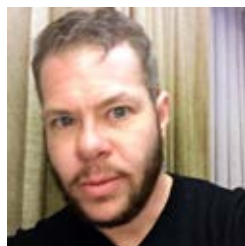
Millennials have never known a world that was not tuned-in and turned-on 24-7. This is a savvy bunch. Global annihilation is coming, sure, but rather slowly in the form of climate change, and good news: there is probably an opportunity to

save the planet, just as soon as the Boomers retire out of public office, or we commence colonizing Mars, whichever comes first. Plus, anti-viral medication is here! You can enjoy casual sex again! Millennials give away free hugs as a political statement while occupying everything. They are educated and enthusiastic dreamers; an optimistic bunch, ready to multi-task their way into our hearts. Their recreational drugs help them focus on tasks. Needless to say, most Generation X folks I know are of the opinion that Millennials are doing drugs, just, wrong.

Next up is Generation Z, the oldest of whom have just entered university. They make no distinction between real and digital life, they are realists, they type, they will never learn cursive, they will create a post-gender world...and they are coming for you, Millennials.

But, you know, whatever.

Taylor K. Gesner wants to live in a world filled with innovative music and art, and where there is a perfect balance between keeping it real and getting funky. He's a Toronto based arts professional specializing in live music event production and festival programming. When not working on or attending a concert, he can be found composing tracks for pyrotechnic shows and short film projects. He is engaged in an ongoing battle against cat hair completely engulfing his wardrobe.



# SIGNS

## An Adventurous Dining Experience

By Taste Buds

We often speak about the full experience of a restaurant. The average patron expects good service, ambiance, and ultimately, extraordinary cuisine. The truth is that there is still so much more. Dining out should be a full sensory adventure.

Signs Restaurant & Bar is located in the heart of downtown Toronto on Yonge Street at Wellesley. It is the amazing brainchild of Anjan Manikumar, who



during his early years as a server struggled communicating with a deaf patron. He set out to learn ASL (American Sign Language) to better serve one of his customers, and from this an amazing idea was born from that kindness.

The staff now includes many deaf servers, bartenders, kitchen staff and hosts. Clearly, Anjan did not take this concept lightly. He fully committed both to his expectations and the experience for staff and customers alike. Perfecting the concept, including the process for hiring from the deaf community, not to mention focus groups to discuss menus and the overall experience, took two years right up to the day of opening in August of 2014.

"We received approximately 300 applications over the course of one month," he shared with the Taste Buds humbly. A record that any new restaurateur would love to brag about. We should also mention that a large portion of this staff is from the LGBT community as well. Equal and diverse employment practices abound at this establishment.

The restaurant has a seating capacity of 150. Every detail, including the menus, are well thought out to not only serve the non-hearing community, but also turns the restaurant into a

learning environment for the hearing, as every item is to be ordered in sign language. The menu teaches its patrons how to do so through pictures next to each item. Its no wonder that many schools actually have field trips here as part of their curriculum. Items include simple, healthy and delicious choices, offering options for vegan, vegetarian, dairy free and gluten free.



Say hi to head bartender Alexandrose. He has his own Facebook page showcasing his creations called

"Alexandrose's Magical Potions". He's also a big proponent of ORAD (Ontario Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf), and very pro LGBT issues.



As you would imagine with such a considerate and kind establishment, the location is also fully wheelchair accessible. So what is the outcome of this well thought out, planned and unique concept you ask? A full experience that transcends the cuisine itself.

Signs Restaurant and Bar - 558 Yonge Street, Toronto ON M4Y 1Z1 - 647-349-7446

Visit [www.signsrestaurant.ca](http://www.signsrestaurant.ca) for full menus, operating hours, and events.

*Part of this article originally appeared on the Taste Buds blog at [www.thebuzzmag.ca](http://www.thebuzzmag.ca)*

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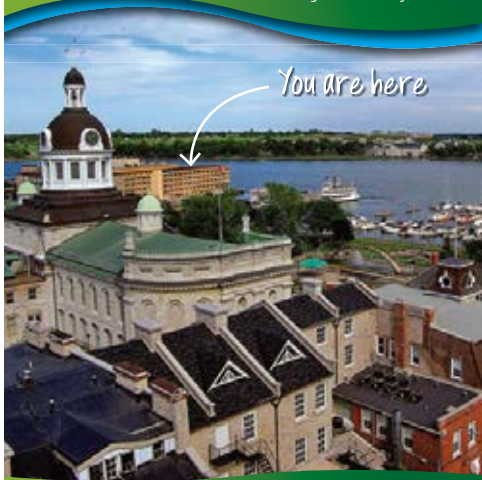
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# PHILADELPHIA PRIDE AND POLITICS

**M**ost people know Washington, D.C. as the nation's Capitol, and New York City as the foundation for the gay rights movement that evolved out of the Stonewall Inn riots, however what many don't realize is that Philadelphia, Pennsylvania played an important role in history prior to both of these significant milestones.

## PHILLY HISTORY

The city of "brotherly love", taken from a Greek translation, was where both the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776 and the Constitution in 1787. It was also the nation's Capitol from 1790 to 1800, where both President Washington and Adams governed from. As well, 2015 marked the 50th Anniversary of Gay Civil Rights Movement in America. Philadelphia was the site for the first major U.S. protest for LGBT equality in front of Independence Hall on July 4, 1965. The "Annual Reminder" took place on Independence Day up until 1969, a week after the Stonewall Inn uprising.

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*by Bryen Dunn*

The following year individuals focused their efforts on the Christopher Street Liberation Day, which included the country's first Gay Pride parade. Standing directly across the street from Independence Hall and steps from the Liberty Bell, a historic marker was erected to commemorate this significant event in LGBT history. As well, last year there were several exhibitions celebrating this monumental 50th anniversary, including a re-enactment of the original Fourth of July demonstration.

The Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation were well ahead of the times when they introduced a new marketing campaign aimed specifically at the LGBT community. They created a series of television commercials and print/online advertisements with the bold slogan – "Get Your History Straight and Your Nightlife Gay". They claim they were the first destination in the world to broadcast a gay-themed television commercial, which was launched in 2003. Playing on the historical aspect, as well as founder William Penn's principles of equality and freedom of expression today, the city is a welcoming destination for LGBT travellers.



## PHILLY TODAY

Like many other cities built on industry, there were rough times when technology started becoming the dominant sector of employment. During the 1980's Philadelphia was on the verge of bankruptcy, yet today it's one of the most vibrant cities in terms of its offering of art, culture, and of course history. With the country's second largest downtown population outside Manhattan, Center City has more outdoor sculptures and murals than any other American city, and Fairmount Park is the largest landscaped urban park in the world.

It's also known for many significant art museums, including the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the Rodin Museum, Barnes Foundation, and of course the Philadelphia Museum of Art, one of the largest art museums in the country made famous by its long flight of steps to the main entrance "Rocky" climbed in the classic 1976 film. A memorial Rocky statue stands outside that pays tribute to the character, and is one of the most popular "selfie" stops in the city.

There are also 67 National Historic Landmarks to explore, and the city itself is the only World Heritage City in the United States. The architectural history dates back to Colonial

times and includes a wide range of styles, which can be found in and around Elfreth's Alley, the oldest continuously inhabited street in the United States.

## PHILLY POLITICS

In July this year, Philadelphia plays host to the Democratic National Convention (DNC), and will once again be shone into the spotlight of American politics. The official tagline reads "Let's Make History Again", and if that's by breaking down more barriers, it seems it might just happen, again. The first contract awarded by the DNC went to Atlanta based LGBT-owned hospitality company EventSphere, part of the organization's commitment to spend 35 percent with diverse businesses.

The DNC also increased its outreach to LGBT professionals in September when it partnered with the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. In Philadelphia, that means working with the Independence Business Alliance, the region's LGBT chamber of commerce and an affiliate of the national chamber. There's also PoliticalFest for visitors to explore, celebrating American political history with interactive displays, historical objects, and special guest appearances, happening July 22 to 27, 2016



at various locations. “It is very important that Philadelphians benefit from the DNC being in town, and PoliticalFest is a great way to engage our community members and involve them in this summer’s historic event,” said Mayor Jim Kenney. It’s also a great way for visitor’s to check out some of the city’s cultural offerings.

For those who are tired of politics, and are looking to party, then look no further than Philly’s Gayborhood in Midtown Village at Washington Square West. Three neighborhoods in one, between 7th and Broad streets and Chestnut to South streets, the area has trendy restaurants, independent retail shops, city parks, and plenty of places to grab a cocktail. Look for the rainbow coloured street signs. Also worthy of note is the abundance of BYOB restaurants, where diners are free to bring their beverage of choice to accompany their meal, a result of Philadelphia’s Quaker-rooted liquor laws. Oh, and also not as widely publicized as Colorado and other states, Philadelphia has decriminalized possession of small amounts of marijuana in the city, with penalties now resulting in minor fines and community service. The move makes Philadelphia the largest city in the United States to decriminalize pot.

## PHILLY FREEDOM

One can’t help but walk the streets singing Elton John’s classic 70’s tune, “Philadelphia Freedom”. Not only was it sung by the king homo himself,

the song is actually about out-lesbian tennis champ, Billie Jean King, who honed her talents in the city.

*‘Cause I live and breathe this Philadelphia freedom*

*From the day that I was born I’ve waved the flag*

*Philadelphia freedom took me knee high to a man*

*Gave me peace of mind my daddy never had*

The lyrics could well be interpreted as somewhat sexual with its double entendres, yet the song plays in Philadelphia’s Franklin Institute IMAX Theater before every show, and the lyrics are also printed on the walls of the Hard Rock Cafe in the city.

Philadelphia truly is a welcoming city filled with culture, nightlife, great dining and entertainment experiences, and friendly people. See you there!

## FIVE FINDS IN PHILLY

One Liberty Observation Deck - 57 floors above the skyline offering wrap-around panoramic views of the city, along with interactive exhibits. [phillyfromthetop.com](http://phillyfromthetop.com)

Eastern State Penitentiary - once the most famous and expensive prison in the world, and home to gangster Al Capone. Now open to visitors with special events, art installations, and exhibitions throughout the year. [easternstate.org](http://easternstate.org)

Magic Gardens - 3,000-square-foot labyrinth of mirror, tile and reclaimed trash mosaics designed and inlaid by legendary folk artist Isaiah Zagar. philadelphiasmagicgardens.org

Laurel Hill Cemetery – locals gather here for quiet, green respite, and often special events, such as Gravediggers' Ball. Or imagine watching horror movies to the backdrop of tombstones. Self-guided and guided tours available. thelaurelhillcemetery.org

Bob and Barbara's – off the beaten path dive bar features the city's longest running drag show, and famous drink special, a can of PBR and a shot of Jim Beam for \$3.50 bobandbarbaras.com

## DINING OUT

Tequila's Restaurant on Locust street is a great spot for fresh Mexican eats, and tasty tequila treats. tequilasphilly.com

Reading Terminal Market at 12th and Arch Street is a hub of activity all day long. Great place for cheap eats, but definitely avoid the lunch hour crowds. Perfect place to pick up a Philly hoagie or cheesesteak. readingterminalmarket.org

City Tavern on 2nd Street is a recreation of the original watering hole (1772-1854), that still serves Colonial grub and grog. Actual site of the first Independence Day celebrations. citytavern.com

La Peg is located in the Fringe Arts Building in an old firehouse pumping station. Nice and airy, with a large riverside patio that's perfect for lounging. Also great for pre-theatre dining and drinks. lapegbrasserie.com

For a truly decadent experience, wander over and up to XIX (Nineteen) Restaurant, located on the 19th floor of the Bellevue Building, which also has hotel rooms. In fact, All U.S. presidents from Theodore Roosevelt through Ronald Reagan have been guests at the hotel, which is respectfully called the "Grand Dame of Broad Street." Great spot for people watching. nineteenrestaurant.com

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

**Tourism Information** – visitphilly.com or call (877) GO-PHILA.

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**Insider's Guide** - uwishunu.com

**Democratic Convention/Politicalfest** – demconvention.com, phldnc.com

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Check out gay-friendly Morris House Hotel (morrishousehotel.com) or the Alexander Inn (alexanderinn.com). The Logan Hotel (theloganhotel.com) was recently fully renovated, and includes the stylish rooftop Assembly Lounge offering magnificent views up Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and is open to both guests and the general public for cocktails under the sun or stars.

## GETTING AROUND

Just steps away from Washington Square West, the Market East station serves as a transportation hub for SEPTA's regional rail lines with service from Philadelphia International Airport. There's also the Lady Liberty Airport Shuttle. The city is a 90-minute flight or a one-day drive from Toronto (880 kilometers), Ottawa (772 kilometers) and Montreal (745 kilometers).

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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**E**lvira Kurt is one of those names that if you don't know who she is directly, you know you've heard of her.

She has been a stand-up comedian for thirty years, a TV talk show host, a game show host and a radio personality among many other things in the entertainment landscape. She has been credited with coining the term 'fellagirl' to describe herself and other lesbians like her as a combo of 'butch' and 'femme'.

I was lucky enough to interview Elvira and got a first hand look at all of her neuroses, the things that make her so damn funny.

**You have had a long and storied career, doing many things in the public eye. Can you tell me who Elvira Kurt is today?**

I'm the same person I've always been: a queer struggling with self-acceptance. Not that I knew that thirty years ago when I started doing stand up. Back then I was all high-functioning coping behaviours and knee-jerk survival mechanisms. I was lucky that they all presented in socially palatable ways, so that I was seen as 'driven' or 'ambitious' and 'hard on myself' or a 'perfectionist'. Looking back now, it just feels... ugh, so messy. Like from a tornado.

So today, at 54, where I'm at is that along with my stellar repertoire of neuroses, I've added a growing self-awareness, which is one of those 'be careful what you ask for' things. About 15 years ago, all the coping stuff stopped working and it affected me onstage and off. Badly. I couldn't figure out why I always seemed to choose the hard way or to choose unhappiness. Since then what I've uncovered and continue to unpack in therapy to this day has

improved both my work and my personal life. But the price for choosing to be awake is that once you start, you stay awake. It's not like you can go back and be unself-aware, I can't ever un-know what I've learned. It can be annoying as hell but, for me, the alternative is worse.

**What are you currently working on?**

Oh, not much... tomorrow, I head to the Halifax Comedy Festival where I'll tape two different never-before-seen-on-TV sets of stand up, after just having had to do the same thing two weeks ago for the Winnipeg Comedy Festival. That's a lot of material that has to be rock solid, so I've been getting up on stages around Toronto trying to work this shit out.

At the same time, I was asked, with less than two weeks notice, to step in as host of this year's Writer's Guild Awards. Couldn't turn that down but now I have to adapt a script written for someone else, so that it works for me and then perform it.

I'm also currently story editing a reality TV show that will air on CMT, a sweet 9-5 gig that'll take me through the summer. Concurrent to that, I'm getting another draft done of a short film script that's set for production in August as well as punching up a pilot script for a tween show that I really want to be involved in.

Last, but definitely most fun, are the three shows I have during Pride in Toronto at Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, June 20, 21, 22. I'm excited about these shows because I've asked some of my favourite comics working today to come out and kill it, like they do.

Read the full interview online at [thebuzzmag.ca](http://thebuzzmag.ca) as part of our Pride coverage, and catch her on stage. Details below.

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Fiction

# Paris Demands

mike miksche

I'd taken a trip to Paris alone, mustering up enough strength to spend the money I'd saved for our down payment. I was in need of a change, an adventure that you could only find in a French film. I wanted my own prose, a new narrative, driven by irrational decisions, a prerequisite for storybook passion. I was open to any experience that came my way, very free and new age-like. My trip was all in the vein of romance. When I returned from my vacation, I knew that I needed to live in Paris and indulge in the intensity that I felt when walking through those streets...and losing myself in Marcel. I stopped calling Pete when I'd returned and didn't respond to his email inquiries either, convincing myself that he was just playing a game with me, a game that I couldn't see before because I had been so in love with him. With Marcel on my mind, I felt like I was seeing clearly for the first time in a while. I fell in love, was going to leave New York, and nobody could take that away from me.

One night Pete called me but I didn't answer, so he called over and over again, demanding that I pick up. When I did, he asked me why I didn't return his calls. I told him that I didn't know. He asked me not to do it again, and told me that my absence made him realize how important I was in his life; he was ready to give us another try, if I'd take him back. He missed me, he said over and over again. He missed me. He insisted that we get together for a drink, but I refused. He kept saying, "You can't blame me for what I did." I kept saying, "I don't," in different tones and colors to show him that I genuinely wasn't upset. "I've moved on," I finally said. "I've met somebody else."

Pete looked surprised when he saw me walking towards him at the airport with my parents. I can't imagine that he thought I'd be alone, but perhaps I should've told him that they were with me. His eyelashes were stuck to one another as though he'd been crying earlier, but as we approached, he remained composed and dignified, flicking his hair to one side and running his right hand down the front of his chest. He took a deep breath.

"Petey," I said, giving him a hug.

"Hey." He looked over at my parents.

"Mom, dad, this is Pete."

My father turned to him as formally as he could. He always prided himself on being a real gentleman. He extended his hand for a firm shake. "I'm Keith, Roger's father."

"Nice to meet you," my mother said, not paying much attention to him.

"Nice to meet you too," Pete said.

"How do you know Roger?" my father asked.

"We dated for about...what was it? Four, five years?" I said.

"You dated?" My mother turned.

Pete nodded and sucked his upper lip like he did when he was nervous. I missed that about him, his nervousness.

"It's nice to meet you," my mother said. "I'm sorry, what was your name again?"

He cleared his throat. "Peter."

We all stood there silently, a deserved discomfort, which made me realize that my approach in introducing him was perhaps not the best one. "Were you waiting here long?" I asked.

He continued looking over at my parents. "Um, maybe twenty minutes. I have to be honest...I mean, I feel like I'm intruding. Do you guys want to be alone?" He always knew the right thing to say, such a crowd pleaser, but he didn't do it intentionally. He was far from sly or insincere.

My parents looked over at me for the answer. I didn't really think it all the way through, the order in which I'd say goodbye to my family and to Pete. "No, it's fine, you can stay. I mean, of course you can stay, I want you here."

"Do you have your passport?" my mother said as she began shuffling through my carry-on bag that she'd offered to hold for me. She dropped the bag on the ground, and got on her knees to get a better look inside.

"Mom, it's right here in my hand. I've got everything, don't worry."

She looked brittle as she placed her right hand on her thigh to heave herself up. It was like she was going to break. I leaned in to help her, but she got up on her own with a troubled sigh. "I just want to make sure that you have everything."

"I know, I know, don't worry though. I triple checked to make sure I didn't forget anything."

"What time does your flight leave?" she asked, looking up at the departure board, blankly as though she was incapable of putting the letters and numbers together to make any sense of it.

"In about two hours. I should probably get my boarding pass."

My mother dropped my bag on the ground again, and hugged me abruptly, pushing her face into my chest. "I'm going to miss you so much. I want you to have fun."

"I will."

I noticed that she was crying, as her tears began soaking through my cotton shirt.

"Mom. Ah, mom, it's okay, you're going to visit me, right?"

She didn't say anything.

My dad stood back watching us with a big smile on his face. I couldn't figure out why he was smiling, but it was something he'd often do: smile at the most awkward moments. "Dad, when are you guys going to come and visit?"

"Honey," he said to her. "We're going to visit him in a few months." He gently grabbed her from behind and pulled her off of me. She made sure to wipe the evidence of her tears onto my shirt. "He'll be fine."

"You'll see me in a few months, Mom."

"Why don't you and your friend go and get your boarding pass. We'll get a coffee. Don't worry about her. She's just very proud of you," my father said. "She's just very proud," he repeated, turning to Pete as if he was apologizing for her behavior.

As we walked through the airport together I was reminded of when Pete and I had talked about randomly picking a country to go to. He was very keen on South America and would talk in great length about Buenos Aires in particular: its tragic history, and how he wanted to learn to tango. Ironically, I always wanted to go to Paris simply because I'd seen the movie, *Dreamers* and was taken by the city through the film. Incest undertones aside, it really played with my imagination, the idea of Paris as my stage. It was no longer going to be an idea, I thought to myself. I was actually going to do it, but without him. Sure it wasn't as random as we imagined it, but it was as random as realism could be. I wanted to bring it up, ask him if he'd still want to go to Buenos Aires if we were to take off somewhere, but didn't have the heart to.

"I'm glad you introduced me to your parents." Creases appeared in his forehead as he smiled. "It really means a lot."

"I'm sorry I didn't do it sooner."

"They seem very nice. You have a lot of people here that love you, you know."

“Yeah.”

“I still love you.”

“I love you too. You know I do.”

“I know,” he said.

The security officer wasn't going to allow Pete to join me in line. Only people with tickets were allowed through, but I pleaded with her, explaining that he was my brother and I wasn't going to see him for a while. She was quite sympathetic, but insisted that when he got to the front of the line, he left. “I can get in a lot of trouble if he doesn't,” she said to both of us.

“I promise that I'll kick his ass out of the line once we get to the front,” I said.

“Well, you don't have to kick him,” she whispered.

“Thanks, bro.” Pete laughed as we moved past her. “Very smooth.”

“Thank you.”

“So, this Marcel character—I guess you really like him, huh?”

“I guess so.”

“I'd like to meet him one day. Maybe at your wedding?”

“That'd be the day.”

“You still don't believe in marriage?” he said.

“Fuck, who knows what I believe in anymore? I've learned that you can never say never.”

“Really? How profound,” he said. “You're just learning that now?”

“Fuck off. So, are you going to come and visit me or what?”

“I'll try. I've never been to Paris before. Are you going to become some snobby French person? I won't come if you do.”

“I'll probably forget how to speak English too, and deny that I ever lived here. Americans are so disgusting anyway. I don't want to be associated with you people.”

He gave me a light shove. We both laughed. It reminded me of us, when we were together, how we joked. I could only joke about something like that with him. “You're such an asshole,” he said, as he rested his hand on my hip. “I'm glad that I got to see you here, on your last day.”

“I am too. I really am.”

---

Mike Miksche's work has appeared in *Instinct*, *The Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide*, and *The Blue Lyra Review*. He is a regular contributor to *OurAgenda.ca* for the Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance, and is the writer of “Hole and Corner”, a weekly column for *DailyXtra.com*, which explores the profound connections forged through BDSM and public sex. He is a proud Canadian. Available at Glad Day Books in Toronto, or online at [www.lethepressbooks.com/store/p199/Paris\\_Demands.html](http://www.lethepressbooks.com/store/p199/Paris_Demands.html)



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## Community Cornerstone

As you enter Sherbourne Health Centre, a colourful mosaic greets you at the front door. Sherbourne's programs and services, like the mosaic, form a big picture that's inviting, vibrant and relevant to the people Sherbourne serves. The centre offers a wide range of health and community programs that work together to provide care and support.

Sherbourne is committed to helping people who may have been under-served by conventional health care, serving four priority groups:

- LGBTQ people from across Toronto
- Homeless and under-housed people
- Newcomers to Canada (usually in Canada for less than ten years)
- Residents of the mid-east Toronto neighbourhood

Sherbourne provides primary care services in its Family Health Team, which includes a team of doctors, nurses, and counsellors who provide direct care for LGBTQ people. At Sherbourne, health is much broader than access to primary care, or mental health services. The Centre offers groups for all ages and across LGBTQ identities. B\*Side is a group for people exploring bisexuality and Gender Journeys, a group series for people exploring their gender identity. The Trans Partner Network is a resource for people whose partners are transgender. Trans women over age 45 can join Mature Trans Sisters for social support. Other support groups include post-surgical support for trans people and therapeutic mental health groups for specific populations.

Supporting Our Youth, known as SOY, is a community program designed to improve the lives of LGBTQ youth (ages 14-29) by actively engaging youth and adult communities. SOY creates healthy arts, culture and recreational spaces for young people and enables youth access

to adult mentoring and support. Groups at SOY focus on building community around shared identity, such as Black Queer Youth, or a specific experience, such as Express for newcomers to Canada. SOY Monday Night Drop-In serves nutritious co-created meals with engaging activities for queer and questioning youth who are homeless. FLAME is an arts-based program that focuses on inclusivity for youth with disabilities. Get Out! coaches LGBTQ youth in wellness through healthy food and access to local, low or no-cost recreation resources. Youth enjoy non-competitive outdoor activities like hiking, biking, and sailing, guided by adult mentors. SOY also offers a mentoring program, skill building and employment support, supportive housing program, and ongoing support and social groups.

LGBTQ Parenting Network is a community support and resource program that supports LGBTQ parents and health and social service providers who work with LGBTQ parents. The program provides extensive information through an online library, and hosts workshops for parents on a wide range of topics, including for LGBTQ people considering parenthood.

Recognizing that LGBTQ people have specific health needs, one of Sherbourne's programs, Rainbow Health Ontario, provides training and resources to health care providers who care for LGBTQ people across Ontario.


Together, Sherbourne's 'mosaic' of LGBTQ health services and community programs support the well-being of LGBTQ people across Toronto, and Ontario.

To learn more, join a group, volunteer or donate visit [www.sherbourne.on.ca](http://www.sherbourne.on.ca)

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# SUMMER IN THE CITY

It's time to bust out those bathing suits and sunscreen, because summer is finally here! That also means Pride, and with this year marking Canada's first-ever Pride Month, the celebrations will be bigger and better than ever. With that in mind, I've rounded up several of Toronto's Pride parties as well as some fun, free events happening across the city.



## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

**The Edwards Summer Music Series** *Carolyn Holroyd*  
**Gardens of Song**

Thursdays starting at 7 p.m., June 23 to August 25  
Toronto Botanical Garden, 777 Lawrence Avenue East  
[www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca](http://www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca)  
**FREE**

Set in the beautiful Toronto Botanical Garden, this free 10-part concert series features an eclectic lineup of popular artists and, for an extra cost, a farm-fresh menu of tasty eats along with local wine and craft beer. Arrive early to secure a spot on the Garden Cafe patio, which overlooks the concert venue, or set up your own seating in the courtyard adjacent to the historic barn.

**TIP:** *There's lots of activities happening at the garden on Thursdays! Stop by the organic farmers market between 2 and 7 p.m. or take free guided tour, departing from the main entrance at 6 p.m.*

## Beaches International Jazz Festival

July 2 to 24  
Woodbine Park, 1695 Queen Street East  
[www.beachesjazz.com](http://www.beachesjazz.com)  
**FREE**

This 10-day music celebration brings more than 800,000 visitors to the Beaches neighbourhood each year and features a dynamic roster of both established and emerging artists, ranging from jazz, blues, and swing to funk, R&B, ska, soul, and more. There will also be gourmet food trucks, farmers markets, workshops, visual arts exhibitions, and a streetfest. Best of all, it's free!

**TIP:** *With three weeks of performances and multiple stages, you probably won't be able to see everyone. Stay tuned to the website to see who's performing and when, and then plan accordingly!*

## Time Festival

August 6, 12 p.m.

Fort York: Garrison Common, 250 Fort York Boulevard

[www.embracepresents.com/time-festival](http://www.embracepresents.com/time-festival)

TICKETS: \$20 (early bird) and up

Time Festival is returning to the historic Fort York this summer for a full day of performances by artists hailing from Canada and around the world. Die Antwoord, Mac DeMarco, Yung Lean, Badbadnotgood, Ariel Pink, and Ryan Hemsworth headlined the 2015 festival, and this year's lineup promises to be just as enticing and eclectic.

**TIP:** They may not look cool, but rain ponchos are a lifesaver during festival season! The 2014 Time Festival experienced lots of rain, and while it didn't stop attendees from having fun, it's always a good idea to come prepared for any kind of weather.



## Christie Pits Film Festival

Sundays at sundown (weather permitting)

Christie Pits Park, 750 Bloor Street West

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

FREE/PWYC

Not only does Christie Pits boast one of the best outdoor swimming pools in the city, it's also a go-to destination for film lovers. Every Sunday throughout the summer, the Christie Pits Film Festival offers free outdoor movie screenings for the public. This year's theme, entitled "Stranded in Christie Pits!," explores various depictions of isolation. Eats and treats start at 6 p.m. and make sure to BYOBlanket.

**TIP:** Come down to the park following the Pride parade for a screening of *My Prairie Home*, a musical documentary about the life and art of nonbinary transgender musician Rae Spoon that weaves together beautiful cinematography, confessional interviews, and emotionally-charged performances. The film was directed by Toronto's Chelsea McMullan and is an affiliated event of Pride's "You Can Sit With Us" programme.

## FOOD

### Lovin' Local Food Fest

July 9, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Yonge-Dundas Square, 1 Dundas Street East

FREE

Celebrate all things local at Live Green Toronto's Lovin' Local Food Fest, located in the heart of the downtown! Taste the creations of some of Toronto's best chefs, restaurants, food trucks, and wineries; watch local artists perform on the main stage; and shop the green street market.

**TIP:** Support the greening of Toronto and get great deals on green products and services at more than 500 businesses across the city with a Live Green Gard. It's free and easy to sign up for online.

### T&T Waterfront Night Market

July 22 to 24

T&T Supermarket, 222 Cherry Street

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

FREE

Now in its seventh year, the T&T Waterfront Night Market brings the experience of an authentic Asian night market to Toronto. For three days, the T&T Supermarket parking lot will be packed with vendors selling Asian-themed street foods like steamed buns, seafood, and stinky tofu (don't knock it 'til you try it). There will also be performances, live cooking demonstrations, midway rides, and more!

**TIP:** Stick around late enough and you might be able to save a couple bucks. Some vendors will drop their prices to move whatever product they have left.



## PRIDE PARTIES & EVENTS

### Church Street Caper

June 25 and 30, 4 p.m.

[www.urbanccapers.com/church-street-caper](http://www.urbanccapers.com/church-street-caper)

**TICKETS: \$30**

Explore the history, culture, and colour of the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood while discovering hidden places, secret stories, and maybe even a ghost or two on this exciting scavenger hunt for adults. Instead of collecting items, you'll be collecting answers to tricky and humorous questions over the course of two hours.

**TIP:** This is a team event, so bring along one or more of your friends to help you out. Groups of up to six are welcome.

### Steers and Queers: Night of 1,000 Dollys

June 30, 9 p.m.

Venue TBA

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

**TICKETS: \$10**

If you're a fan of Dolly Parton, you won't want to miss Steers and Queers' campy Pride party, Night of 1,000 Dollys. The annual shindig is hosted by Miss Fluffy Soufflé and pays tribute to Dolly with live music, drag and burlesque performances, dancing, and more. Dress code for the night is country/western wear – the more ridiculous, the better.

**TIP:** On the hunt for a flashy western shirt or a pair of cowboy boots? Check out Public Butter (1290 Queen Street West), King of Kensington (35 Kensington Avenue) or Exile (62 Kensington Avenue).

### Cherry Bomb

July 2, 10 p.m.

The Mod Club, 722 College Street

**TICKETS: \$20**

Cherry Bomb is a fun, flirty monthly dance party for queer women and their friends. Resident DJs Denise Benson and Cozmic Cat are known for their diverse, high-energy sets of house, soul, funk, dancehall, hip-hop, and other big-room beats, making this one of Pride Toronto's premiere events.

**TIP:** You can also catch Cozmic Cat earlier in the day at the Pride festival Centre Stage. Her DJ set runs from 2 to 4 p.m.

### Hot Mess

July 3, 10 p.m.

Fly 2.0, 6 Gloucester Street

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

**TICKETS: \$20 and up**

Close out Pride with the biggest bang at Hot Mess, a night dedicated to debauchery and shenanigans. Hosted by Jacklynne Hyde and the Pitbull team, this party guarantees high-heeled surprises, giant wigged shows, and hot messes everywhere. DJ Deko-ze will be throwing down an incredible mix of beats sure to keep the dance floor packed and sweaty.

**TIP:** Pitbull is going all out for Pride this year with three huge parties! You can also catch them at the Opera House on July 1 for the Leather Love party and at the Phoenix on July 2 for Pride Carnival.

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**I**t was early afternoon and they were on the tail end of their meal, partway through their date. Their conversation carried over a few tables once Pride became the topic of conversation. Talking about what they hoped to do and what they wanted it to look like, one of them said, "I want to know almost no one going into it, and become friends with everyone when I leave," while smiling at his date.

I stared down at my food, trying not to let emotion show that I was trying not to listen to what they were saying. I put in my headphones at that point, knowing that their conversation was louder than most background noise there, and I wanted to get more writing done while I dined.

It's that time of year again, and months have passed since that conversation happened, which then inspired my thinking for this particular issue. Pride is upon us and I can't help but think that Pride means so much and is so exciting, because it reminds us of something bigger than ourselves - it reminds us that we're connected in ways we may forget during the year. It's true that we have major holidays with family, but nothing connects us quite like Pride.

Our differences don't seem to matter during Pride, and our usual walls come down without the assistance of alcohol, as some occasions call for. I remember walking down the middle of Church Street one morning three years ago having commuted down for the festivities, and I wanted to find decent parking for the parade. While waiting in line at the Second

Cup, the smell of sunscreen and espresso filling my nostrils, I couldn't escape the happy conversation flowing my way from total strangers - and I didn't want to. It captures the best of Pride and what it means to be part of this community.

We didn't have bridges built for us, we had to build them on our own. Not everyone has supportive family, so that open-hearted approach to the world gave us family we chose that we wouldn't trade for anything in the world.

We've measured Pride by its celebrations sometimes though, and less by how many are able to come and "sit with us", as this year's Pride theme suggests. Our community is one that gained tremendous meaning from being turned away from public spaces we had every right to be in. We are diverse and made of a multitude of voices whose presence transcends the barriers that keep us from always speaking one another's languages. Who we love and the way we've had to fight to keep our freedom to love and express our gender, has brought us together and made us fiercely protective of the spaces we frequent.

We spend time considering reasonable things at this time of year, like how far we've come and the rights we have, which is important, but this year I invite you to do the most spiritual thing you can do at this time of year. Finding the places that lit our march toward equality, and shine an equitable light on the fights still ongoing. It is the act of seeing love in hateful places and planting seeds there, so that eventually the shade of what love we plant will grow to protect our community from the harsh winds of feeling alone in spaces they aren't welcome, simply for being themselves.

It's not because each of "the letters" stand alone that we have the rights and freedoms we've



come to know, and many we're still fighting for; it's because we came together over and over that we were able to transcend hate so powerful it was written into law. People come from all over to celebrate feeling and freedom to make friends, and be in the presence of strangers whose intentions they don't know, yet they have no fear. If there is a greater freedom, I have yet to find it. Yet, our work is not done.

It's our job to continue carrying the torch for future generations, especially this year, for the transgender community, who are not only dying at unprecedented rates, but whose lives are being threatened with laws that seek to erase them from the public eye. We may feel as though our work is done because we can marry, but the truth is that hatred toward any one member of our community reveals something profound, in that the work started with Stonewall is far from complete. Hatred directed at any part of our community may not directly impact the lives of lesbians, bisexuals and gays, but if we let any hatred go unchecked we will find ourselves having to fight once again for our freedoms. We must keep that love lit and be able to hand the next generation a flame well-tended.

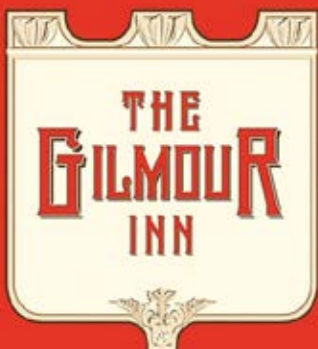
Not until transgender people are represented in their own voices and free from debates over bathrooms; Not until our American LGBTTIQQ2SA family are safe from those who commit acts of hate; Not until our community members dying globally at the hands of those who refuse to believe in the

possibility of loving someone of the same sex; Not until the blood of transgender women of colour stops running through our streets; Not until gay men are free to save lives and donate blood without HIV stigma hanging over their heads; Not until our youth have safe spaces to lay their heads at night; Not until our laws protect the transgender community from hate crimes; Not until businesses cease to turn us away because our money touched the hands that held our partners at night; Not until we are truly free, can we cease keeping that fire alive.

I thought long and hard about the place of all things spiritual this year, and more now than ever we can see progress. Where we know privilege, we must make sure our table is long enough to fit everyone, because "you can sit with us" isn't just a clever theme. It's the way our community has overcome all manner of hate. We must make sure we're serving love at those tables, because that's the one thing that will continue to change the world, and giving that love is the most spiritual thing we could ever do for ourselves and our community.

Feel free to reach out to talk books, well-being, spirituality, gratitude and making the world a better place on Instagram @cherylalisoncostello or on Twitter feed @cherylacostello. Cheryl can be found online at [www.helovinginstant.com](http://www.helovinginstant.com) and sharing beauty at [www.capturingtheinfinite.com](http://www.capturingtheinfinite.com).





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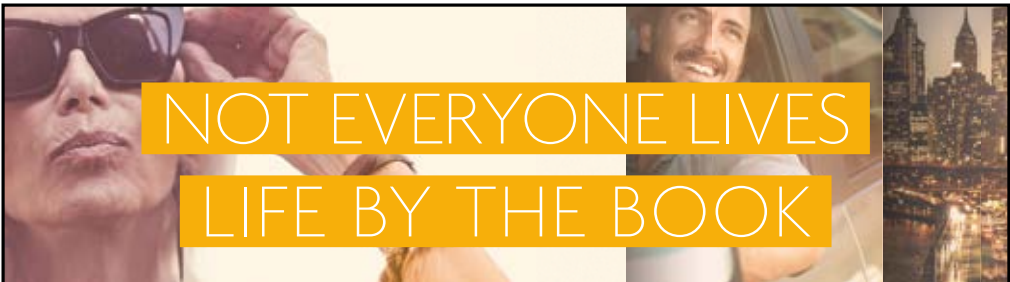
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# Summer Horoscopes

## Aries (March 21st – April 20th)

You must seek, find and address the root cause of limitation in your life. Other's beliefs have become internalized mental barriers that pollute your unconscious landscape and bleed into your waking life. These are not yours. Don't be a belief-thief. Don't wake up one day only to find yourself living someone else's dream. Oscar Wilde says, "Be yourself, everyone else is already taken."

## Taurus (April 21st – May 21st)

You may discover a pattern of deception from a friend you have long held in high regard. It's time to remove the rose-colored glasses. Someone has fallen from their pedestal. But perhaps you are responsible for putting them there in the first place? Isaac Newton says, "What goes up, must come down."

## Gemini (May 22nd – June 21st)

A lesson in clear communication presents itself by way of someone who has taken you for granted. Your ruling planet Mercury, "The Messenger", asks you to hone direct communication by clearly and bluntly stating what has gone wrong and what you require to make it right. Don't expect this person to read your mind. Sometimes nurturing a relationship requires assertiveness and respect for personal boundaries. Act now to avoid big problems later. The Preacher says, "Speak now, or forever hold your peace." Now TESTIFY!

## Cancer (June 22nd – July 22nd)

Just a few more cobwebs to clear from the corners and a few more items to purge from your closet, literally and figuratively. This energetic cleanse results in mental and emotional clarity. There are situations and emotions you no longer wish to carry. Forgiveness is key to healing your wounded heart. For-give is to give-forth. Splurge on the purge. Keep tissues handy.

## Leo (July 23rd – August 22nd)

Loving yourself is not selfish and martyrdom only leaves you feeling resentful. You are asked to lead by example, the primary way humans learn. Set an example of self-love by taking good care of yourself and by caring about how you feel. You learn also as you teach. Whitney Houston says, "Learning to love yourself, it is the greatest love of all."

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

A hands-off approach to service is best. Although you feel the need to assist until the desired outcome is accomplished, not all of this is your task. Sometimes, over-extending enables freeloading. A wise man once said, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Once that horse is near the water, let go the reins.

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

You're ready for the next step and the next step is ready for you. You're like a plant transplanting into a bigger pot to flourish and grow. Select your pot with care and intuition. The success of this next phase will depend on the promise of a safe place to land and lay roots for awhile. Oprah's advice, "Ask yourself, what is the next logical step?"

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

It's becoming clear that by judging and misjudging others, you are truly persecuting them. This may not have affected you in the past, but as you mature, you notice that this attitude brings negative energy into your life in ways you never imagined. Give yourself the gift of an attitude adjustment. Look for the goodness and beauty in others and you will also find your own. Anne Frank says, "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart."

## Sagittarius (November 23rd - December 21st)

Can you keep a secret? Some secrets are hard to keep. Others must be kept, no matter how innocent, at the risk of damaging a relationship. You are challenged with deciding which secrets to keep and which to confide. Only you know which and at what cost. I have two quotes for your consideration: "While all deception requires secrecy, all secrecy is not meant to deceive." ~ Sissela Bok and, "Nothing makes us so lonely as our secrets." ~ Paul Tournier.

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

Have you once again bitten off more than you can chew? Overwhelm has set in and there's a risk that a ball or two may be dropped. You need a plan of action broken down incrementally into realistic bite-size chunks and then processed systematically. A word of advice when addressing your stakeholders: Under-promise and over-deliver.

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

You're ladled with an interesting responsibility of action. A work situation is not as it appears and you are able to see this clearly. Your position requires you to act discreetly while keeping promises transparently. You know that rather than truth, what is actually needed is respect for the deeper, hidden issues. Take wisdom, subtlety and diplomacy. To whom much is given, much is required.

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

Have you caught a touch of the 'disease to please' bug? Are you suffering the dreadful effects of self-compromise to achieve a sense of likeability? Be careful of setting a standard that is difficult to maintain long-term. Remember that others are responsible for their own happiness and you cannot be everyone's mother. John Lyndgate says, "You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time."

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

**Z**elig-like I was present both for the first Stonewall riot in NYC's Greenwich Village on June 28, 1969, and at the first demonstration after the infamous bathhouse raids in Toronto on Feb 6, 1981.

I was on my way home after a recreational night in the Village, and it was exciting to see the drag queens and street kids fighting off the police outside the Stonewall Inn, but it was also scary to see such violence by the police against unarmed gay people. That and subsequent protests led to the first real gay liberation movement in North America.

However, that first demonstration in Toronto, the night after 150 cops raided and smashed up four major steam baths in the city in an operation they perversely called "Soap", was for me a more exhilarating and more empowering experience. I was now a participant, and not just an observer. When I took to the Toronto streets, I saw people I had tricked with for the first time outside of the bars or bathhouses, as well as gay friends all working together to protest.

The cops had all but destroyed one bathhouse with sledgehammers and crowbars, and had arrested 289 people for being a "a found-in at a common bawdy house." It had been the largest round-up and arrest of people in the country up to that time, except for the War Measures arrests in Quebec in 1970. Most gay people felt that bathhouses and bars were safe places relatively free of police harassment. but the unwritten pact was now broken.

Gay activists quickly organized a protest march for the night after the raid, with pronounced direction and colourful new slogans that gave the demonstrations a firm structure. Within hours 3,000 people came out to express their rage. There was a lot of fear and tension at that first demo

as to how the cops would react to gays taking over the streets. There were some demonstrators beaten by cops and/or homophobes, and some cop cars and streetcars were rocked, but with the help, courage and direction of veteran gay activists (from Body Politic collective members to Rev Brent Hawkes, University of Toronto gay academic union leaders, and the fledgling Right to Privacy Committee's (RTPC) Dennis Findlay, along with many others) the evening was a great success even though some media called it a gay riot. Many mass protest meetings followed in the coming months with the support of union and civil rights activists and straight activists like writer Margaret Atwood, and former mayor John Sewell.

A much stronger RTPC was organized to help the many defendants fight the charges, many of which were dismissed because of RTPC perseverance and innovative tactics. As well, the city commissioned a study of police and gay community relations, which eventually led to official liaison committees being established between the two groups.

The bathhouses eventually became off limits for most police operations, and the archaic bawdy house laws were no longer enforced, as most cases were thrown out of court. The net effect of the bathhouse raids of 1981 was to catapult the LGBT community from an almost criminal class of outsiders whom cops felt they could often treat as scum, to a legitimate and respected stakeholder in the city.

James Dubro, a crime author and researcher, has lived, played and worked in the downtown gay communities since 1970. He was a member of the Gay Academic Union, the Canadian chapter of NLGJA (National Lesbians and Gay Journalist Association), written for the Body Politic, and reported on crime issues for "Xtra" for two decades. He later was a long-time member of the first police/gay community liaison committee (1991-2001)





# PRIDE WEEK 2016

**Mon June 27 10pm - 12am**

**Roxie Terrain & Adam Weinmann**  
in the Zipperz Lounge



**Tues June 28 9pm - 1am**

**Natasha Buckridge & Kevin Wong**  
in the Zipperz Lounge



**Wed June 29 10pm-1am**

**In Zipperz Lounge: Natasha Buckridge**  
**and Mark Kersey. Cellblock: TBA**



**Thurs June 30 10pm-4am**

**Heaven Lee Hytes in Zipperz Lounge**  
**DJ Cory Activate in the Cellblock**



**Friday July 1st Canada Day**

**In Zipperz Lounge: Roxie Terrain**  
**& Adam Weinmann (7pm-9pm)**  
**Kendall on Piano (9:30 till close)**  
**In the Cellblock:**  
**Canada Day / Pride Celebration!**  
**With DJ Cory Activate (10pm-4am)**



**Saturday July 2nd**

**In Zipperz Lounge:**  
**Xposed! w/ Georgie Girl & Sofonda (6pm-8pm)**  
**James Quigley on Piano (10pm till close)**  
**In the Cellblock:**  
**Anthem Saturdays - PRIDE Edition!**  
**With DJ Cory Activate (9pm-4am)**



**Sunday July 3**

**In Zipperz Lounge:**  
**Sunday Funday: Unzipped!!**  
**w/ Sofonda Cox & Donnarama (6:30-8:30)**  
**In the Cellblock:**  
**Retro Drama PRIDE Celebration!**  
**With DJ Alain Plamondon (10pm-3am)**



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# PRIDE GUIDE

PRIDE TORONTO FESTIVAL JUNE 1 - JULY 3 | PRIDE PARADE JULY 3

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## **Friday July 1, 2016**

### **Trans March**

**Corner of Church & Hayden Streets**

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 July 1, 2016**

### **Made in Canada**

**OLG Central Stage**

**508 Church Street**

3:00pm to Saturday, July 2, 2016 2:00am

A massive Block Party, featuring an all Canadian line up.

Headliners include –Yes Yes Y'all. Moonshine, Diego Armand (Business Women's Special), Frustra, Chiclet and Craig Domini. Hosted by Canadian Hamilton Elliott, the first trans contestant on The Amazing Race Canada.

## **Friday July 1, 2016**

### **Mariposa: From Latin America with Love**

**Wellesley Stage**

**15 Wellesley Street East**

7:00pm to Saturday, July 2, 2016 2:00am

Lila Downs, a guitarist and vocalist, the Mexican-American superstar and three-time Grammy winner, fuses traditional Latin rhythms with her own, fiery style while incorporating indigenous influences and languages. Lila will be joined by a spectrum of Latin artists.

## **Saturday July 2, 2016**

### **Fruit Loopz**

**FIDO Quad**

**43 Gerrard Street East**

1:00pm - 4:00pm

The youth take over one of the biggest stages, celebrating their 14th year. Celebrate the 14th year. Presented by Support Our Youth, a festival of arts, words and ideas for queer and trans youth, by queer and trans youth. Featuring Youth Ambassador Jordan Samuels. This year, Fruit Loopz is calling the Ryerson Quad home. Everyone is welcome to this family-friendly, drug and alcohol-free, youth-focused space!

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and Church & Wellesley



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**Andrea Horwath**  
Leader, Ontario NDP Caucus



Ontario **NDP**  
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## **Saturday July 2, 2016**

### **Dyke March**

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

2 pm – 4 pm

The Dyke March is a grassroots event where women and trans people in LGBTQ2SA\* communities take over the streets of Toronto. Not considered so much as a parade as a political demonstration showing the strength of the LGBTQ2SA Communities.

## **Saturday July 2, 2016**

### **Drag On**

Molson Canadian Stage

Yonge-Dundas Square 1 Dundas St E

2 pm – 11pm

Be a part of drag history as DRAG ON reaches to be the official Guinness Book of World Records title for Largest Drag Stage Performance.

Featuring routines of more than 50 of Toronto's reigning queens and kings. Hosted by Derrick Barry (RuPaul's Drag Race, X Factor) and co-hosted by legendary, Lady Bunny and Bianca Del Rio.

## **Saturday July 2, 2016**

### **Bear Garden**

OLG Central Stage

508 Church Street

2:00pm to Sunday, July 3rd 2:00am

Celebrating all those in the Bear Community and those who admire them!

Headlining is Andy Butler, label boss at Mr. Intl records. Featuring legendary Vjuan Allure, producer of the new RuPaul album Butch Queen. GSP is here all the way from London, DJ Blackcat (Pitbull, House of Monroe), Nik Red (RedLight Special, AfroTransit), Kris Steeves (FIT), and Aeryn Pfaff (Sessions).

## **Saturday July 2, 2016 and Sunday July 3, 2016**

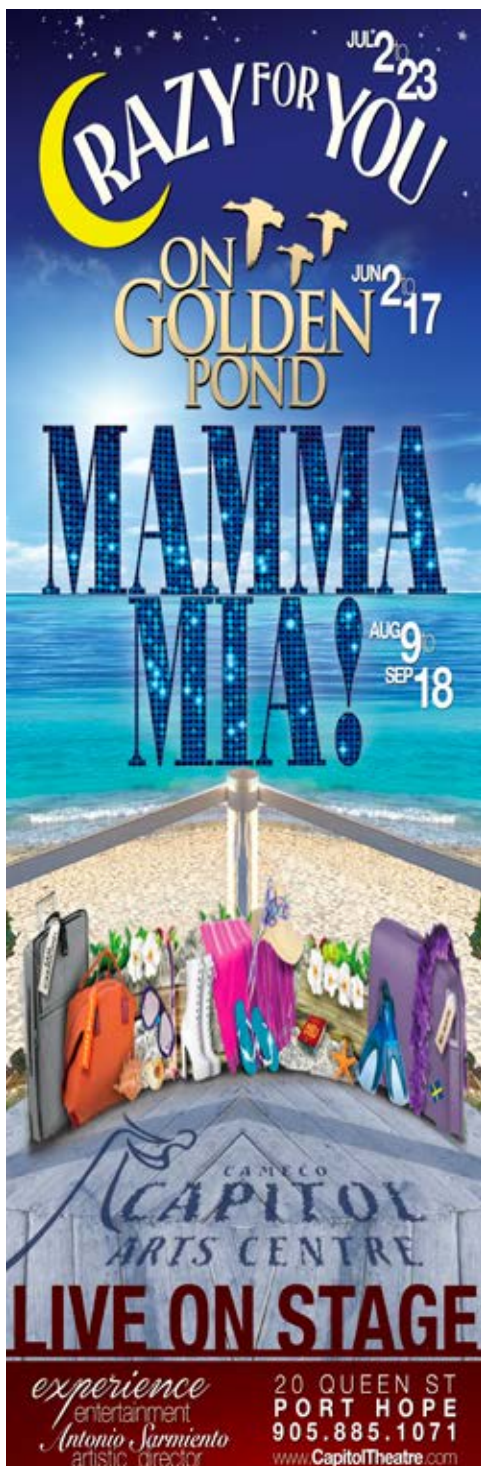
### **Family Pride**

Church Street Public School

83 Alexander Street

10:00am - 5:00pm each day

Celebrating 16 years Family Pride on the grounds of an elementary school within the Village. Includes programming for families and children, from infants to age 12, featuring sports, games, crafts, face painting, story telling and live performances.





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An advertisement for Northbound Leather. It features two men in leather outfits. The man on the left is wearing a black leather vest over a black shirt and black leather shorts. The man on the right is wearing a black leather jacket with silver studs and black leather pants. The background is a dark, industrial setting.

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**Sunday July 3, 2016**

**Treehouse Party**

**FIDO Quad@ Ryerson University**

**43 Gerrard Street East**

1:00pm to Monday, July 4, 2016 1:00am

A lineup of the best international DJs, Sexshooters (London), producer, Yinon Yahel (Israel), enfant terrible Alain Jackinsky (Montreal) and circuit king Isaac Escalante (Mexico but really an honorary Torontonian now).

Proceeds from the event go directly to support The 519 Community Centre and its many essential programs and services. Early bird tickets \$20.

**Sunday July 3, 2016**

**Pride Parade**

**Church St and Bloor St**

2pm

Celebrating a 35-year history, and it continues to grow each year. Everyone is welcome to celebrate and dance in the streets!



With host  
**Antoine Elhashem**

and Reporters  
Cat Grant  
Lorenzo Pagnotta  
Ryan Boa  
Christine Newman

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