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# ***Community Heroes Then & Now***

In this issue we continue to look at some of our most respected Community Heroes, including Patricia Wilson, Boyd Kodak, and Paddy Aldridge

★ ★ ★ Featuring a special travel supplement for *LGBT Travellers* ★ ★ ★



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## From the **Publisher**



Look at me; production has moved my letter to page three. I must be some sort of important person. But with the kidding aside, the reason for the bit of a change to our layout is to make room for our exciting **LGBT Travellers** special pullout supplement.

Turn to page 21 to see what our Editor-in-Chief and our resident travel expert Bryen Dunn has put together for us. He's been writing about travel for more years than I can count, and in more publications and blogs than can be mentioned, so he truly is an expert in the field.

In this issue we are also thrilled to continue with our 2018 theme of spotlighting some of our Community Heroes. I say some because there is NO WAY we can cover all the great heroes who shaped, and still shape, our community in a matter of one year. Impossible! Our community is made of and driven by heroes. It wasn't and still is not easy being LGBTQ. No matter how many rights we gain, there is always something new we need to speak up about or fight for. Thank you to those who speak up, from the activists, to the passionate and compassionate, and to those who make a difference by just being their authentic selves.

I remember when I was young and green in the community, those who came before me, those who made a difference, and had courage when it was still difficult to be out and LGBTQ. These were the people who I looked up to, learned from, and got inspired by. Hopefully the theme we have presented this year will inspire you, dear reader, no matter what age you are.

One more issue of our Community Heroes series ends with the winter edition, which wraps up the 11<sup>th</sup> year of PinkPlayMags. We are already sketching some ideas for a really fun and creative theme for next year. That's all that we're going to tell you for now (yes we are being a tease).

Thank you for reading, lovely community. Happy Autumn, Happy Halloween, Happy Thanksgiving, and we will check in with you again soon in the winter issue!

**Antoine Elhashem**  
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# autumnplay!

**Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Leather, and Queer  
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## From the **Editor**



I'm very honoured to be bringing you our third instalment of **Community Heroes: Then & Now**, telling the stories of individuals who have done, and continue to do, amazing work within our community.

Our cover feature is a profile piece on legendary icon, **Patricia Wilson**, one of the most caring and well respected individuals in our community, and beyond. We caught up with her to find out more about this bartender extraordinaire, rock and roll heroine, and overall great personality. We also were able to chat with two other community heroes, **Boyd Kodak**, an established musician and human rights activist, and **Paddy Aldridge**, who is well known within the community as the owner of *Take A Walk On The Wildside*, the original male-to-female crossdressing boutique in Toronto.

Also in this issue is our very first travel supplement for **LGBT Travellers**, created by yours truly. Take a look through to find out some tips on packing, travel apps you might want to download before your next trip, and a list of some LGBT-friendly destinations that should be on your gaydar for your next vacay.

Our **Fiction** excerpt is "The God Game" by Toronto author Jeffrey Round, the

latest in his series of Dan Sharp Mystery novels that's set here on our city streets. Our **Hot Artist** feature is written by Boyd Kodak who chatted with his gal pal, Cat Grant, a creative writer and painter. Kelly Wilk is back once again with our **Community Cornerstone** piece, this time on the *Triangle Program* here in Toronto, an alternative education program for LGBT youth.

As always, we have **Horoscopes** by Julie Antoinette, **From The Heart** by Mychol Scully, and **Event Listings** by Sherry Sylvain. Finally, our cover feature community hero, Patricia Wilson, has written our **Looking Back** column, reminding us to remember all the other heroes who have come before us, and those who have dearly departed.

Welcome to the cool crisp days of fall, and enjoy the read!

**Bryen Dunn**  
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# PATRICIA WILSON

By Bryen Dunn

I've known Patricia Wilson for well over a decade, as have many others in the city of Toronto. Some may recognize her as the welcoming face behind the bar at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, others from her guitar slinging antics in her band Crackpuppy, and still others from her wonderful and enlightening Facebook posts, where she shares her personal stories from within "the bunker".

Born and raised in Windsor, Ontario, a place she called home until the early 1990's, it was during a visit to Toronto for Pride that circumstances would change her life. This wasn't her first life changing moment, but it was one that helped propel her to where she's at today.

"I saw a Buddies float in the Pride Parade in 1991 and noticed that they were trying to raise some money," she recalls. Then a couple years later on another visit to Toronto, she saw a Buddies ad looking to hire a publicist. "I showed up to the interview with a cheap purple knock

off Chanel suit and a fur coat to meet with Sky and Tim. I threw my coat onto the floor and I later heard that right then and there Sky decided he didn't want anyone else," she laughs.

Thus began her career at Buddies toward the end of 1992 over at their original location on George Street. Shortly after they relocated to their current location on Alexander Street in 1993, Patricia made the jump over to bartender. This was during the heyday of queer dance parties happening every Friday and Saturday night at Tallulah's Cabaret. On Fridays it was *Skrew* for the guys, and Saturday was *Viva Vulva* for the girls with DJ TK, who had also worked as an administrator for Buddies when they were on George Street. The rest is history as they say, and now over a quarter century later she remains the smiling face of Buddies to the many who seek refuge within the walls of this queer complex of creativity.

This couldn't be further apart from her very first job at the age of 16 as a labourer/carpenter at Eastern Construction, where she was part of the team that built the Math Building for University of Windsor. "I was afraid of heights and had to be up seven stories working on this building," she remembers. It was at this time that she also



dropped out of school, stating, “school and I did not see eye-to-eye.” Before dropping out though, she started classical piano lessons in grade two, taught by the nuns at the convent, which she continued for a couple years before switching over to the electric guitar. “I started playing music with others around 16, and continued writing music and reading novels like, *Naked Lunch*.”

Her youth was spent pretty much like many other teenagers, hanging out with friends, listening to music, and getting stoned. She recalls being in grade eight during the Vietnam War, and her neighbour next door was a grandmother who had grand children living across the border in Ann Arbor Michigan. One was a draft dodger who moved to Canada to live with her, and his friends would come to visit and bring weed, hash, and LSD. This was where Patricia was first introduced to the music that would shape her life to this day. “I learned all about music from these guys. They were stoners playing records. LSD is the best thing ever.” she blurts out.

“My mother would say, I would always be late for the rest of my life, as there’s always one more song to listen to,” she fondly recalls. “I would hang out in our rec room in the basement and invite friends over to listen to music. I bought my first stereo when I was 13 years old from the money I made from a paper route. It was very expensive at the time.”

The first concert she remembers seeing was across the river in Detroit at Ford Auditorium, where Deep Purple were performing their 1970 *Child in Time* album, with openers King Crimson and Robin Trower. “Being so close to Detroit, I also got to see Iggy Pop, MC5, John Sinclair, Brownsville Station, and many others who performed at local high schools and other venues,” she says. She saddens a bit when asked whether she had seen one of her favourite bands, the Rolling Stones. “I never got a chance.”

Patricia also recalls the continuing constant struggles she had coping with her internal feelings during this time, when she first began realizing she felt *different*. She mentions a road trip to California in 1976 with a few friends. “It



was the 70’s and hippies, rock n roll, and drugs were all true and right there. I had not told my companions, but I partly went to meet up with a contact at a monastery in Big Sur to try and work the tranny out of me, but I never made it because I realized while in amongst everything, that my destiny was elsewhere.” she confides.

She later began her early transition in Windsor, travelling back and forth to Toronto for appointments at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, before having her surgery in Trinidad, Colorado by Dr Bieber. “During my transition I had quit estrogen hormones a couple times,” she states.

Back in Windsor, she’d hang out at bars and catch the latest rock acts. One night while out on her own playing pinball and watching the Detroit band, Destroy All Monsters, a drag artist who was also from The Motor City walked up to her and said, *it’s cool, I know where you’re going. it’s gonna be hard, don’t worry you’ll make it, be brave.* “Obviously some of the estrogen had still hung onto me, even though I was trying to be incognito,” she smiles.

She worked a variety of jobs, including Executive Director at the Arts Council, where she was instrumental in saving the historic Capitol Theatre from demolition. Despite this accomplishment, the board members later decided Patricia wasn’t the right person for this position, and she was fired for unproven accusations. “It was one of the worse times in my life. One of the board of directors hissed at me like a cartoon snake, while she (a big time feminist and humanist) looked me in the





eyes and said, we can't have someone like you running something so important, and if you talk to anyone outside of this board you will never work in this city again," she explains. She sought legal action, but was told because of who the people were on the board, that she wouldn't have a chance.

It was shortly before moving to Toronto that one of the best things in her life also happened. She met H  l  ne, her soul mate for nearly three decades now. H  l  ne grew up in the nearby French speaking bedroom community of LaSalle, Ontario, just on the outskirts of Windsor. The pair met after Patricia's surgery.

"It's love that keeps me at Buddies, and also in my relationship with H  l  ne. We were watching the George Harrison biography together recently on Netflix, which is astounding and life changing by the way. His wife said they went through some tough times because women love George, and George loves women. She said when you make the commitment, you work to stay together – you just don't break up. It's the same with us. We have to work hard to stay together, through the good and bad," she divulges.

Today, the struggles of life continue, yet Patricia

remains a much needed voice of positivity for the community. "I love the people that come to my bar. We broke all attendance records this year during Pride. I work very hard during the month of June, then chill out a bit the rest of the summer," she says.

It's no secret that Patricia retains a love for Jack Daniels, a relationship that began early on in life when punk bars would offer cheap shots as their drink specials. "I consider myself JD for life, or until the doctor tells me otherwise," she laughs. For some lucky patrons of the bar, she sometimes serves up Pickle Back Shots, a shot of JD with a pickle juice brine chaser. "It was a big thing in New York City, and it was actually H  l  ne who first told me about it," she states. Patricia also told me her new recommended drink of choice is JD, Lemonade and Club Soda.

Maintaining a rock and roll lifestyle does take its toll over the years, a few aches and pains, some sore muscles and ligaments, and not being as energetic as she once was. She maintains a regular workout routine two or three times a week for about 20 minutes, that includes lifting 15 lb weights, some squats, planks, and using a Swiss Exercise Ball.

So as she approaches her 65th birthday next year, are there plans for retirement in the future? "I love my job. I might cut back hours, only because my feet hurt, but not retire. If I didn't get this job at Buddies, I don't know if I'd be here now," she proclaims.

In the true spirit of a real community hero, Patricia has also penned our *Looking Back* column in this issue of PinkPlayMags, remembering not one, but all of the heroes that have come before us, and those who have since departed. A very touching tribute in the spirit of love and kindness that comes from deep within her soul. She's also been working on more written material, which she hopes to one day have published. She recently read a published piece at Buddies, called *Musings From The Bunker*, upon which someone later commented, "It's like M Train, only braver and more risqu  ," referring to Patti Smith's 2015 book. Here's a short excerpt, an ode to her mother.

## October

*Today as I was clearing up the desk with all the papers, unmarked cd's and dvds, beads from broken Kelly Perras bracelets, books by Patti Smith, Eileen Myles, RM Vaughn and Virgin Mary candles, and just piles of assorted cards and shit all accumulated under the now gone computer monitor and hardware, I found a precious gift. My mother God rest her soul loved writing letters. I still have some and I re-read them and the cards she sent over the years. They always*

*make me smile always make me miss her; always make me shake my head as they mark a moment in my life that I had shared with her. My mother knew how crazy I was about reading. She knew I read nonstop, and often over the phone asked, about what I was exploring on the page that day. Well her little nod to me, as she loved me dearly but understood very little of whom I had become after the years of internal strife and some of my resolutions and my revolutions, her nod her gift was always a little bookmark sent by mail.*

*She searched them out in her travels and sent me ones that had sayings on them that touched her heart. Mom would then write a little note below the saying or on the back as to why it touched her and why she thought of me. Then sign it, Love Mom, or if it was playful she signed it - Love Your Mother. I have lost many of these but still have a couple and I cherish each one.*

*I found a gem of a one in amongst the mess I was cleaning up. Obviously, her reward to me for cleaning up my mess. Life can be kind.*

Be sure to catch her reading as part of Buddies 40th anniversary celebrations this year. She and her fellow queer compatriots will be doing an encore performance of their poetry/opera extravaganza that they did in May to a capacity audience.

**Trans Meditations & Other Collaborative Queeries**, is described as an operatic evening of solo and collaborative poetry and stories from Patricia Wilson and David Bateman, with guest appearances by Hélène Ducharme and Brock Hessel. Live accompaniment and original compositions by Stewart Borden. Mood enhancing projections throughout the evening by the always magical Raymond Helkio.



Be sure to mark your calendar for Friday October 19, 2018 for an evening of queer, quirky, and queenly proportions. More on all the special 40th anniversary programming can be found here – [www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/40th-anniversary-series](http://www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/40th-anniversary-series).

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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# ***PADDY ALDRIDGE WANTS YOU TO TAKE A WALK ON THE WILDSIDE***

*by Sherry Sylvain*

**Patricia Aldridge (Paddy) is the owner of Take A Walk On The Wildside™, the original male-to-female cross-dressing boutique in Toronto. This cis gender woman and former stripper starred in an award winning documentary of the same name, by filmmaker Lisa Rideout, which won Best Short Documentary at the 2018 Canadian Screen Awards. The film takes a glance into the world of cross-dressing based on Paddy's many years of experience.**

Paddy also created documentary videos on how to do makeup, featuring some of the people she rightly describes as “absolutely wonderful” – featuring local talent like Sky Gilbert, Jackie Loren, and Morgan Holiday. Another documentary called *Some Girls*, featured the likes of Bang LaDesh, Candy Bar and Bunny LeBlanc, and she's also currently editing *Acting Like a Girl*, a series shot in her living room with a live audience, 10 years ago.

When she was 18, Paddy moved away from the home of her adoptive parents and took up residence with a transwoman, who went by the stage name of Blue Angel.. Paddy needed a

job, and Blue taught her how to strip under the stage name, Fancy Free. Her parents were not very supportive of her lifestyle choices upon first hearing them; however, that family rift was repaired later in life as Paddy's parents' health began to decline, and her support and assistance was required; and she gave it.

During her nearly a decade of stripping, Paddy had her own solo afternoon performance opening for the legendary drag troupe, The Great Imposters, hitching a ride and sharing gas expenses. It was during this time that she met Michelle DuBarry, and a conversation between these two is what spawned the idea for Wildside. Paddy opened Wildside in 1987 at 1002 Woodbine Avenue, at Danforth. Three blocks on one side was Aldridge Avenue, and four blocks the other way was Patricia Drive. Coincidence? According to Paddy, there are no coincidences.

“When you're headed in the right direction, all the doors open, the path is clear and coincidences happen. Then there are no coincidences, everything becomes easy, and it flows. Most of the things in my life that really worked out were really easy to do,” Paddy proclaims. After being a stripper for nearly a decade”, she enrolled at Ryerson Theatre School which she describes as, “a great place to go for old strippers”.

A few years later Paddy met Veronica, a post-op transwoman from NYC. They fell in love and decided to marry, but Veronica had to prove that



she was male, having blood tests to prove her DNA was “XY”, because same-sex couples were not able to marry at the time. They then became the first legal marriage between two women in Canada - each physically a woman. The pair did various television talk shows to discuss their story, including Phil Donahue. During this time, Paddy sold her house on Danforth, recognizing the excellent increase in value, “I knew enough

Wildside now also houses a small art gallery and an extensive library of trans materials.

Above Wildside is the *Allan Gardens Floral Art Gallery*, which houses Paddy’s art, and downstairs in the store window there is a mannequin named Roxy Wildside, named after Paddy’s late husband. Paddy met a customer named “Roxy” on Halloween 1995, and they later held a big



to know I knew nothing. I didn’t even know the difference between a transsexual and a transvestite. So, I sold the house”. She banked much of the money, and she and Veronica moved to the US, where Paddy increased her knowledge and understanding of the trans world by attending events at the *International Foundation for Gender Education* in Boston.

Paddy returned to Toronto and re-opened Wildside in its current location, at 161 Gerrard Street East. Unfortunately, the marriage of Paddy and Veronica did not last, and Veronica returned to the United States.

Paddy is also an established artist who spends time painting, creates backdrops for stage, makes costumes for performers – stage and screen – provides background projections for bands, and shoots and edits video productions of all sorts. She actually edits music videos in her production suite downstairs, and the current incarnation of



double-bride wedding at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. Roxy was a cisgender male crossdresser, and they stayed partners for about five years, and friends throughout life. Paddy was diagnosed with uterine cancer and Roxy cared for her until she recovered. Then about 10 years later, Roxy got cancer and passed away. Paddy fondly remembers, “We were good until the end”.

Twenty years after opening Wildside, Paddy studied Entrepreneurship at the *Ted Rogers School of Management* in Toronto. The instructor asked her how her business got started, and Paddy said, “we put an ad in the paper and the phone rang off the hook”, and he said, “And that is how it



happens”. Paddy believes that’s how to start and, “if it doesn’t happen, it isn’t going to happen. Whatever you do, if you can’t make it work, abandon it and do something else.”

Great words of advice from a lady with plenty of life experience. Make some time to visit Paddy at Take A Walk On The Wildside, have a chat with her, and perhaps a makeover. She has a lot to offer, and you will discover that you have a lot to learn.

### ABOUT WILDSIDE

Wildside began as a boutique for crossdressers and is now a boutique for everyone, including women who have had breast cancer and are seeking out lower priced silicone breastforms. The shop also stocks wigs, makeup with varying degrees of opacity, large and regular size women’s clothing, everyday clothes, fetish clothes, heels to size 17, lingerie, extra long stockings, corsets and waist cinchers that work, and the largest selection of informative books, magazines and videos on gender related issues in Canada. They also sell false nails, eye lashes, hip

pads, and many other accessories and products to complete your femme persona.

Privacy is of utmost importance, so the store rule is only one person alone or with a friend is allowed in at one time. Customers can go in with questions they can be confident in knowing will be answered professionally. Their motto remains, “We specialize in assisting the beginner and have done so since the beginning.”

Take a Walk On the Wildside,  
161 Gerrard Street East, Toronto  
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Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).





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by Cat Grant

# Boyd Kodak

## Breaking Barriers Through Music

**Born in London, England, Boyd Kodak is a musician and human rights activist, who moved to Canada with his family at three-years-old. After picking up a pair of his mother's knitting needles and using them as drumsticks at six years old, he knew he was going to be a drummer. His first experience with more formal music training was in grade five.**

"We started getting music lessons in public school. My teachers thought I should be trained as a conductor, as I could hear and identify all instruments and their various components. They set up a special arrangement so that I could be taken to the symphony throughout grade five and six.

In grade seven I was chosen to play drums and percussion, and I was the head Tympani player throughout my school years."

Influenced by a combination of Motown and the Beatles, Boyd got into his first professional band by answering an ad in the newspaper. "We practised on Gothic Ave (in Toronto), so we called ourselves Gothic. I've been in numerous bands since then."

While Boyd was born female he never felt he was that gender. "I always thought I was a boy. "When I was 4, my mother yelled at me to get in the house. When I did, she scolded me for going outside without a shirt on. I told her it was okay, none of the guys were wearing shirts. She told me it wasn't okay, because I wasn't a boy. The feeling never left, although I would sometimes try to be a girl."

His struggles with his identity kept coming back throughout his youth. "When I was in my teens, I saw a television program where Canadian author and television personality Pierre Berton was interviewing Christine Jorgensen. She was the first transsexual to become widely known in the United States in the 1950's. That's when I knew that's what I wanted to do."

Coping with his feelings through music, the growing discomfort continued and something had to give.

"A band I was in was breaking up, and my parents were very concerned that I didn't have another job to rely on. To keep them happy, I agreed to take a job in a large financial firm, for a short time. I was born with a lupus disorder that had caused an occasional problem, until six months after I started office work. I had a huge flare up that prevented me from returning to drumming. So, I stayed working in an office environment and soon became part of the management and executive team. My health precluded my eligibility for any transition treatment at the time."

Boyd (then Jan), lived in the lesbian world, which allowed him to present masculine. "I was always out regardless of where I worked. I began working at a large company of about 200 employees. There were 12 gay/lesbian employees working there, but they didn't speak to each other. I began speaking with each of them, and soon we all became friends. The Company had its own cafeteria/lunch room. We would sit and eat lunch together, and were thinking of all going to the Christmas dance together when I was called to the President's office. I was told to disband this group. I was told that us being friends and having lunch together was unacceptable. We could not sit together in the lunch room and we were not welcome at the Christmas dance, as the mere sight of us was making others uncomfortable."

Holding a management position in the firm, he was then asked to fire one of his queer colleagues to prove a point, which he refused. He was then

escorted out of the office by two security guards. In 1988 he launched a human rights complaint, which took over a decade to resolve. The Waterman vs. National Life case set precedent by becoming the first against LGBT discrimination referred to in the Ontario Human Rights Code, and in the government publication Teaching Human Rights in Ontario.

Court and the long battle took its toll, and in 1994 Boyd's health took a turn for the worse. He was given a five-year life expectancy. Boyd realized it was a now or never situation to live as his true self, and found a way to make his transition happen. "The testosterone made me stronger. I started feeling better, and able to get through other procedures. I also started an experimental med that helped me stabilize."

His transition made him feel great, but came with the loss of many friends and family members.

"When I transitioned, there was hardly any T representation in Toronto. Nothing at the 519 and very little else. Some film festivals would talk about us, but not with or screen work by us"

This is when he started working with QTV and the Inside Out Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. Boyd encouraged trans artistry and inclusiveness before taking over The Counting Past 2 TsTgls Film Festival as Executive Director in 2002.

"Counting Past 2 was very important in its time. It was an essential part in making festivals realize that the Trans community had our own aesthetic, and we needed to have our own voice included in choosing for us and talking about us."

Boyd's received many honours for his activism work over the years, including Proud Heroes Award 1993, LGBTQ Person of the Year nomination, Lifetime Achievement Award, International LGBTQ Hall of Fame inductee, and he is nominated to become part of the future Walk and Monument of Heroes.

Yet his first love remains music. He's currently writing a musical. "The best is performing original music, and having the crowd know the words and sing along. I've been lucky enough to experience that at Prides, Festivals, and at a sold out CD release party at Castle Loma. I've been in bands, creating and performing music as much I could throughout my life, and I'm not done yet. I was so touched to have a couple ask if they could use a tune I recorded for their wedding song. That's what it's all about," he proclaims.



**Cat Grant ( OCAD) is a multidisciplinary artist, currently focusing on multimedia portraiture, and illustrating children's books she writes as well. A published poet, she also has her own column She Beat in BUZZ Magazine and is senior reporter for On The Couch LGBTQ TV show. You can find her as Granted Arts on Facebook.**





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## Hot Artist



It was the early 1990's, and everyone in Toronto's queer community was telling me about the fabulously talented and super hot artist that started working at *The Rose* (dance bar) on Parliament Street. A visit confirmed, the place was now enriched with an incredible painting of a rose on the wall above the staircase. There was a mural all along the wooden fence surrounding the patio with colourful silhouettes of people dancing and enjoying themselves. The mirrored wall of the dance floor would be painted with scenes, in relation to the occasion,...all the great work of the extraordinary artist, Catherine Grant.

**Boyd Kodak** - Tell us when you first expressed yourself as an artist?

**Cat Grant** - I don't recall not being creative. I drew constantly (mostly horses which I obsessed over), and the first drawing class I gave to others was when I was in grade three! I also sang in many choirs and bands, and as a soloist I was able to perform all over North America, including a weeklong gig with my award winning high school choir at Place Des Arts in Montreal with Paul Anka. I also wrote stories, comics, and poetry. If I didn't have a pen in my hand it was not by choice. My mom is a dance professor with her own studio in Montreal. My first learned dance was the triple swing, and first show was a beautiful waltz, when I was eight. I loved the music and hung out there doing homework, and I would bring my friends too. I competed in Latin and Jive, and also performed and designed costumes.

**BK** - What attracted you to the arts?

**CG** - It's just part of who I am. Doing anything else doesn't work for me I work other jobs to support buying the dance shoes, canvas and paint, photography equipment etc.

**BK** - You have been involved in so many art forms, can you give us a run down?

**CG** - Wow, well I've dabbled in sculpture, stage design, choreography, acting, makeup, and attended OCAD as a media major, but switched to multidisciplinary as I learned so much more there. On top of fine art, ballroom dancing, and music, I enjoy film/video and photography and writing now.

**BK** - Which of those is your favourite?

**CG** - Dancing is magic, but I would shrivel up without visual art making.

**BK** - Tell us what inspires you in your work?

**CG** - The world around me, there is beauty in everything dark and light.

**BK** - Future plans?

**CG** - I am currently working on more illustrations for children's books and hope to have a solo art show in 2019.

**BK** - Where can we see your work and find out about future exhibits, performances, and screenings?

**CG** - The Canadian Gay & Lesbian Archives has a portrait of mine hanging inside, which is of author Jane Rule. Find me on Facebook @GrantedArts.

**BK** - Complete this sentence. I couldn't live without ...

**CG** - Music and expressing myself.

*Thimble Literary Magazine is showcasing two of Cat's art prints in their upcoming Winter issue.*

Boyd Kodak is an award-winning trans activist, musician, writer, activist, filmmaker, curator, and festival/entertainment director.



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# TOP 5 GAY-FRIENDLY FALL/WINTER TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

*Below is a snapshot look at a few destinations that we think will be of interest to those of you seeking a winter escape, to the sun, or the slopes. Whether you are looking for party central, or a relaxing getaway with a lot of nothing to do, we've given you options for both!*



**Puerto Vallarta, Mexico** – Known as the most gay-friendly city in Mexico, PVR has embraced gay tourism for decades, going as far back as to when Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton would vacation here. You can stay at the Casa Kimberly ([www.casakimberly.com](http://www.casakimberly.com)) which the couple purchased in the 1960s, and was recently renovated as a boutique hotel property. Today the “old town” remains very LGBT-friendly toward tourists, and many “snowbirds” own property and spend winters there. Go during Vallarta Pride ([www.vallartapride.com](http://www.vallartapride.com)) to experience something like no other, complete with mechanical bull riding and drag queens racing along the cobble stone streets in heels!



**Sydney, Australia** – There's no bigger party in this city than the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Considered the largest festival of its kind in the world, it's one big party during the last two weeks of February, with several events happening throughout the city, culminating in a multi-block all day and night parade and party. 2018 marked the 40th anniversary of this event, with a performance by none other than Cher! Book your accommodations very early if you plan on attending. [www.mardigras.org.au](http://www.mardigras.org.au)





**Key West, Florida** – This most southern part of mainland United States has a creative artsy vibe to it, and has been known as a gay destination for several decades. Located approximately 250km from Miami, it's the furthest island in the group of islands known as the Florida Keys. The low key anything-goes vibe can be felt year round here, but there are several events and festivals that are aimed particularly to the LGBT community, most along the main drag of Duval Street. Check out *Pride* in June, *Tropical Heat* in August, and *Womenfest* in September. Also, be sure to visit the homes of famed authors, Ernest Hemingway and Tennessee Williams. Fashion designer Calvin Klein once called this home, as did musicians Keith Strickland from The B52s, and Jimmy Buffett, who still operates his popular Margaritaville restaurant there.  
[www.gaykeywestfl.com](http://www.gaykeywestfl.com)



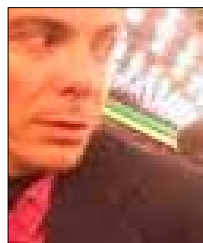
**Whistler, British Columbia** – For a different Pride vibe, check out Whistler Pride, happening every January in this outdoor adventure paradise town located less than a two-hour drive from Vancouver. Whether you're a skier, snowboarder, or just there to party with those who partake, this is one winter event that has gained a reputation for being fun for all. Not only will attendees be able to ski on some of the world's best and largest vertical slopes in the world, they'll be able to relax at the end of the day in the wonderful Scandine Spa, and party the night away with world-renown international DJ's and other live entertainment. The new Pod Hotel is now open, offering a unique and affordable alternative to the pricier resort property options.  
[www.gaywhistler.com](http://www.gaywhistler.com)



**Reykjavik, Iceland** – For something cool that seems to be on everyone's radar lately, check out Iceland. Despite its tiny population, there's a relatively large LGBT demographic there, and a very welcoming atmosphere of live-and-let live by all. From the bustling streets in the capital of Reykjavik, to the smaller towns dispersed across this vast terrain, the locals are a welcoming bunch. Plan your visit around Rainbow Reykjavik ([www.rainbowreykjavik.is](http://www.rainbowreykjavik.is)) during March, a small town pride festival that's the perfect winter getaway and a great introduction to Iceland. Discover the cuisine, nightlife, and nature of this wonderful country. Be sure to look up to catch a glimpse of the Northern Lights, and no visit is complete without a relaxing stop in the turquoise geothermal waters of the world-famous Blue Lagoon. Music buffs might want to visit during Iceland Airwaves in November ([www.icelandairwaves.is](http://www.icelandairwaves.is)), a well-known music festival that attracts international artists, who play alongside local musicians. Pink Iceland ([www.pinkiceland.is/](http://www.pinkiceland.is/)) is a lesbian owned and operated travel company that can book everything from tours and excursions, to a tailor made wedding ceremony on the island.  
[www.inspiredbyiceland.com](http://www.inspiredbyiceland.com)

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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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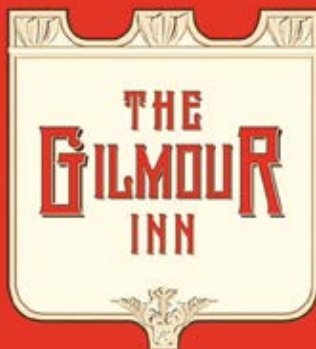


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# TOP 5 GAY-FRIENDLY SPRING/SUMMER TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

*Summer is when many of us think vacation. The longer days and warmer nights tend to bring forth a form of calm and relaxation. Whether your travel itch is to jump in the car and go on a road trip, or hop on a plane and fly somewhere exotic, we've got a list of destinations that should be on your gaydar!*



**Ontario Road Trips** – sometimes it's nice not to have to jump on a plane to getaway, and Ontario makes for a great road-trip destination, whether for a day, weekend, or longer duration. Beyond the big cities of Toronto and Ottawa, there are several gay-friendly smaller towns that are worth a visit. Warkworth ([www.warkworth.ca](http://www.warkworth.ca)) has gained a reputation for being a gay hot spot, with many same-sex couples having relocated to this Northumberland County town. There's many creative types here, who add to the local arts, music, and theatre culture. Speaking of theatre, Stratford ([www.visitstratford.ca](http://www.visitstratford.ca)) is well-known for its outstanding world-class productions. This year they've deviated from the mainstream, and have presented the wildly popular Rocky Horror Picture Show on stage until the end of October. Halloween road trip anyone? Oh yeah, you might spot Justin Bieber around his home town as well. Niagara-on-the-Lake is another theatre hub ([www.niagaraonthelake.com](http://www.niagaraonthelake.com)), but that's not all. It's also where many wonderful wines are made, including Canada's claim to fame, Icewines. Finally, another uniquely Canadian thing to do

is camping. Why not kick it up a notch and go glamping, in a yurt, cabin, or cottage, at one of Ontario's Provincial Parks?

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

2018 marks the 125th anniversary of the Parks system, and many are open year round to experience them in fall and winter as well.



**Palm Springs, California** – With nine cities in one beautiful oasis, Greater Palm Springs is rich in visitor experiences, from outdoor adventures, shopping, art, and world-class events like the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival ([www.coachella.com](http://www.coachella.com)). It's also been a gay oasis for the celebrities and other elite individuals. With its temperate climate, it's the perfect destination to visit anytime of year, however spring and summer are a bit less crowded, and accommodations are more reasonably priced. Go in April for Club Skirts Dinah Shore ([www.thedinah.com](http://www.thedinah.com)) weekend, one of the largest lesbian events in the world. It's been going strong for many years, and this popular weekend



gathering is filled with sun-soaked parties by the pool, late-night dancing, comedy, and more. Past performers include Tegan & Sarah, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Meghan Trainor and more. The boys might want to hit up *White Party* ([www.jeffreysanker.com](http://www.jeffreysanker.com)), also in April, one of the top dance parties for gay men in the oasis. The weekend includes poolside parties, a *Sunset Dance* with live performances, and of course the party where everyone dresses in white.  
[www.visitpalmsprings.com](http://www.visitpalmsprings.com)

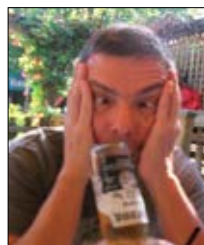
**The Balkans** – central Europe is once again back on the radar for travellers looking for something different. Once referred to as “old” Europe, this most southern region of the continent may well be on the cusp of becoming the “new” Europe. Having visited the top destinations of the west, these overcrowded tourist stops seem to be losing flavour with the younger jetsetters, who are opting for off-the-beaten-path adventures. The Balkan region consists of a cluster of several small countries, which makes crossing off a few of them from your bucket list quite a simple thing to do. These include Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. While steeped in a history of conflict, all is calm and tourism is rapidly on the rise. While some of the infrastructure may not be as “western” as some are accustomed to, the relatively inexpensive price of travelling to this region, and the overly friendly and welcoming atmosphere, more than makes up for it. LGBT rights and recognition are also gaining acceptance, with Kosovo holding their first Pride event in 2017 without incident, and Serbia holding two separate events that same year.



**Ibiza, Spain** – long known as party central for dance enthusiasts, there’s something for everyone within the LGBT community, from gay owned accommodations, fantastic nightlife, gay-friendly beaches and much more. Gay bars and clubs are mainly located in Ibiza Town, Dalt Vila, and Figueretas. The festive street of Calle de la Virgen in the port area is considered the gay hub, especially at night when the streets come alive with decked out drag queens and scantily clad hedonists. Plan your visit around Ibiza Pride ([www.ibizagaypride.eu](http://www.ibizagaypride.eu)) festivities in June, or during April, when Velvet Ibiza ([www.velvetibiza.es](http://www.velvetibiza.es)) takes place, the biggest women’s festival in Europe.  
[www.tourism.eivissa.es](http://www.tourism.eivissa.es)



**Bangkok, Thailand** – this capital city is one of the most well-known in Asia, and the world, for its eclectic charm and electric vibe. The original city that never sleeps has a reputation for being one of the most LGBT cities in Asia. Although their Pride festivities ended a decade ago, due to internal conflict and financial reasons, there’s talk that this event will be returning this year, November 27 to December 3. Local LGBT organization OUT BKK ([www.outbkk.com](http://www.outbkk.com)), is the group spearheading its return. The organization also plans several other events throughout the year, as well as advocates for LGBT rights. Be sure to visit the world famous Night Markets, catch up on your shopping needs, and catch a ride on the inexpensive three-wheel tuk-tuks taxi service. Also, plan to extend your stay and visit the nearby mountain regions of Chaing Mai and Chaing Rai. The annual average temperature is around 30 degrees, with summer being a bit cooler, and rainier.  
[www.tourismthailand.com](http://www.tourismthailand.com)



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# TRAVEL APPS

*Smartphones have become a necessary part of our lives, even more so when travelling. We use them to research information, book travel, directions, hook ups, and so much more. Here's a brief rundown on a few travel related apps you might want to download for your next getaway.*

Did you know that there's a gay Airbnb alternative? **misterb&b** matches LGBT travellers with like-minded hosts around the world. Not only can you book with confidence and be yourself, your hosts will most likely be a great source of information on the local gay scene, and the website itself also offers destination guides. With more than 50,000 host in over 130 countries, this is a great way to stay in unique accommodations, whether for a weekend, or longer stay.

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

**Wimbify** allows you to travel for free by meeting LGBT people around the world that are willing to share their home, be your guide, or travel with you. You can return the favour by offering to exchange your home or time in your own city. The app allows you to organize your own vacation with a local to have inside information not always available on tourism websites..

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

**ICOON** is a global picture dictionary that you can use when encountering language barriers. The app lists pictures of everyday items you may encounter during your travels. Just type in what you are looking for, and an appropriate image will appear that you can show anyone, who can then point you in the right direction.

[www.icoon.eu](http://www.icoon.eu)

The corporation that is **Google** is also a great travel reference, whether that be for maps, translation, or keeping things organized with an online calendar and reminders.

[www.translate.google.ca](http://www.translate.google.ca) [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps)  
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When travelling abroad to a country with a foreign currency, try using **XE Currency** to provide easy conversions for any purchases. It also allows you to check currency rates, do money transfers, and even has a travel expenses calculator.

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

Make sure to download **Skype** to stay in touch with friends while on the road. This mobile app allows you to call almost anywhere for free, with or without video display. **Facebook** now offers this option as well.

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

Finally, there are many ways to connect with locals while travelling, whether for gathering information, or something more intimate.

**Moovz** is a great app to connect with locals, either to ask questions before travelling, or to perhaps meet up while at your travel destination. If you're looking for something a bit more than information, you might want to try one of these hook up apps - **Grindr**, **Scruff**, **Hornet** – which by the way, also offer a variety of information and event listings.

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

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

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Techy Travel Tips with Bryen  
Dunn





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# PACKING FOR TRAVEL

*Let's face it, travel is fun, but sometimes getting ready for the big trip can be a stressful experience. Packing everything you might need into a bag or two can be daunting for some. Here are a few tips and tricks to help you get ready for your next vacation.*

**Checked Luggage** – You never should need more than one, unless you're going on a multi-month excursion. Depending on the type of travel you're doing, pick up a solid wheeled suitcase or sturdy backpack. Then pick up several smaller zippered bags to separate items within your luggage for ease of locating – undergarments, toiletries, electronics, etc. Pack an empty one for your worn laundry items. Know the allowed regulation size and weight limits to avoid excess charges.

**Carry-On** – A smaller back pack is your best option to pack anything you might need during flight - reading glasses, phone and other electronic devices, camera, travel pillow, eye shades, ear plugs, medications, water (purchase or fill bottle after security), snacks, note pad and pen, headphones, toothbrush and paste, destination information (hotel and transportation documentation), wallet and ID.

**Clothes** – Pack a mix of casual, formal, workout, swim and sleep wear, bring quick dry items, and articles that can be layered and matched to other items, one lightweight jacket, collapsible umbrella, sunscreen, glasses, and cap. Roll items to save space, and avoid wrinkles.

**Before You Go** - Make print copies of all identification you're taking with you to leave at home in case they are lost or stolen, and email copies to yourself for easy access on the road, advise credit card companies of travel dates to avoid having your card locked, make sure your passport is valid for at least six months from the date of your arrival, buy necessary travel and

medical insurance, have someone check your mail if gone longer than a week.

**Essential Checklist** – Don't leave home without proper travel documentation and booking confirmations credit cards, a small amount of local currency, electrical outlet converter (if needed), medications (with appropriate documentation), phone and camera charger, prescription glasses, and checking for whatever visas and vaccinations that might be required for entry to certain countries. Also, check the official government website for any current travel advisories or warnings.

**Good To Have** – Reusable water bottle and coffee mug, laundry detergent for quick wash, flashlight, first aid kit, hand sanitizer.

**Pack Light** – Buy travel size toiletries or fill empty travel size containers with what you need from larger bottles you have at home. Think small size of everything you use on a daily basis.

Finally, once you've decided on everything you think you will need, layout all your clothing items and aim to cut that amount in half. It really works. Think about the times you've travelled in the past and didn't wear as much as you thought you would.

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Bryen Dunn helps you Get Packing.





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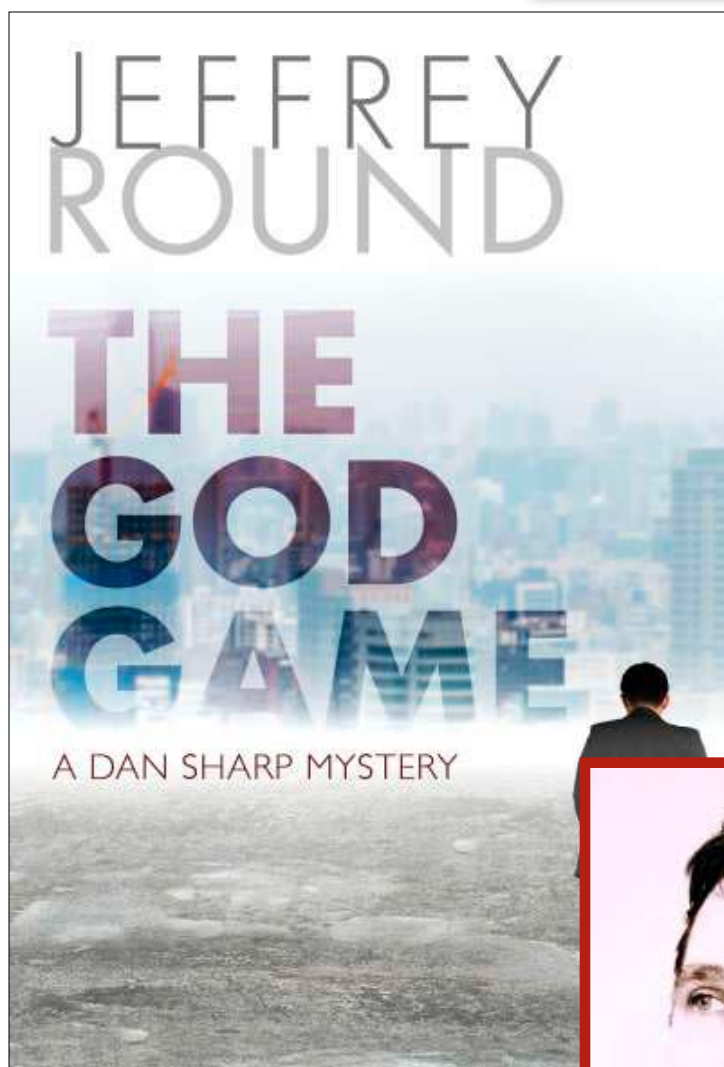
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*When the husband of a Queen's Park aide runs off to escape his gambling debts, private investigator Dan Sharp is hired to track him down. As the city's political landscape verges on the bizarre — with a crack-using mayor and a major scandal looming — Dan finds himself pitted against a mysterious figure known for making or breaking the reputations of upcoming politicians. It's not until a body turns up on his doorstep that Dan realizes he's being punished for sticking his nose into dirty politics. It's left to him to catch the killer and prove his own innocence.*

*Jeffrey Round has a way to writing about his home town of Toronto, and the most current events, that make reading this such a realistic experience. In this novel, Sharp travels to all parts of the city, encountering drug addled politicians, elected provincial leaders vying for federal candidacy, and the ongoing discussions regarding changes to the provincial sex-ed curriculum. So while this may have been written a few years back, it appears to be as relevant today as it was then.*

### **EXCERPT: Sweet Domesticity**

Dan was comforted by the smell of roast chicken on arriving home. Apart from being a great companion, Nick was also an excellent chef. It was just one more thing that made him an outstanding partner.

In the kitchen, Ralph thumped his tail and looked up with an approving glance before settling back down on his cushion. Dan gave him a pat on the head then reached for a mug in the cupboard. He turned on the tap and heard a yelp from upstairs. Nick was in the shower. The touchy thermostat had no doubt given him a sharp reminder of its finicky nature. When they met, Dan had been single so long he wasn't sure he could let another man into his life while retaining his emotional balance, the outer signs of self control so important to him. Still, Nick had given him reason to try. Surprisingly, gratefully, Dan came to conclude that domestic life agreed with him as long as the man at his side brought more happiness than grief.

So far, with Nick, there'd been little to regret. Dan had worried about dating a cop for all the usual reasons, but for the most part they turned out to be unfounded. True, Nick had a peppery temper, but it was as sudden as it was brief. Here and gone, like a summer squall. He had emotional depth and he was patient. He was also refreshingly direct. Dan liked that Nick could be funny and serious in equal measure but never hid his true feelings. He was his own man. "You'll never have to guess with me," he'd told Dan at the relationship's outset. Not entirely true, as Dan discovered, Nick's emotions and moods changing like quicksilver. But he was reliable, loyal, and loving.

The thump-thump-thump of footsteps announced Nick's arrival as he came downstairs wrapped in a towel, sleek and glistening from the shower, and suitably

hirsute. Without a regular trim, his chest would have sported a full-frontal rug. He kissed Dan on the top of his head then disappeared into the kitchen, humming to himself before returning with a tray of drinks like an exceptionally polished waiter, minus the tux.

"Lounging again, your majesty? May I offer you a cranberry cordial?"

Dan took up a glass, admiring Nick's torso. It made life easy when your partner had a certain physical appeal, but Dan was sure he'd still be in love with this man when he was eighty, should they both live so long.

"I could do with an appetizer," he said with a wink. "Something hot and spicy."

"All in good time, sire," Nick said. "Supper's in ten minutes. Let's not ruin your appetite."

With a quick bow he ran back upstairs to dress, leaving Dan to ponder his luck at having snagged the perfect partner. Nick had come to Canada from Macedonia as a teenager. In his twenties he'd picked up a wife, briefly, before deciding it wasn't a life he was suited to. Before they could fight over the much-loved son their union had produced, the child died, precipitating a decade of alcoholic abuse on Nick's part. By then Nick had grown accustomed to Canada's rights and freedoms, including the right to determine one's own sexual behaviour, and came out. As if to make up for the ease of choice, however, the following year he entered a rock-solid bastion of homophobia — the police department. It had been hard at times, and it meant keeping his private life private, but he'd survived. Then came Dan.

Nick returned now, fully dressed. Dan let him in on the day's news. Crisis one: he was being evicted from his office space. Crisis two: they needed to find another caterer for the wedding. Nick shrugged off both of these.

"If we start looking now, we can find you something suitable at a good rate in the next couple of months."

Dan was inclined to be gloomy. "Have you looked at rental rates lately? I could end up in some godforsaken neighbourhood on the far end of town trying to match the price I pay now."

"Then I'll provide you with a police escort every morning. As for the other ..."

He glanced over Dan's shoulder toward the kitchen. "Maybe I can put the menu together myself."

"I suspect you'll be too busy on the day in question to be producing a gourmet meal. In the meantime, I've come into a bit of unexpected revenue, so perhaps we can afford a little more than I thought."

"Lucky day at the races?"

"In a manner of speaking. I got a new case. That's assuming I want it."

Nick cocked his head. "Why wouldn't you?"

"Because it came with a very heavy cash retainer in a brown envelope. Ten



thousand dollars heavy, to be precise.”

Nick whistled. “You think it’s gangster money?”

“Close. It’s political money. Ever hear of a guy called Peter Hansen?”

“Sounds familiar. Didn’t he run for a seat at Queen’s Park a while back?”

“He did, but he didn’t make it. Now he’s special assistant to the educational reforms minister. He’s gay and his husband has disappeared. Gambling debts, from the sounds of it. But he wants it kept out of the media. Apparently the legislature has had its share of scandal lately. An opposition critic committed suicide at Christmas.”

Nick’s eyebrows rose. “Yes, I remember. He hung himself in the ravine.”

“Not quite. You’re hung. He was hanged. There’s a difference.”

Nick tried to suppress his smile. “Okay, Mr. Pedant. But it’s a given — where there are politics, there are scandals.” He paused. “Any connection between the suicide and the missing husband?”

“Nothing I can see. Tony Moran isn’t in politics, just married to it. The suicide was cooking some books, by the sounds of it.”

Nick shrugged. “It’s always the Conservatives who get greedy when they’re in power. The Liberals are egotists who make a mess of things because they think they know better, and the New Democrats are a bunch of flakey do-gooders.”

Dan laughed. “Well, that pretty much covers the board. Between the crooks and the flakey do-gooders, I guess there’s no hope for the rest of us.”

“Don’t underestimate the Green Party. The future is green, I always say.”

Dan shook his head. “You’re a very funny policeman, Officer Trposki.”

“The way I figure it, as long as I can make you laugh you’ll stick around for the wedding. After that, it’ll be too late to change your mind.” Nick glanced toward the kitchen. “Supper’s ready. Let’s eat.”

Excerpted from *The God Game* by Jeffrey Round

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[www.dundurn.com/books/God-Game](http://www.dundurn.com/books/God-Game)

*Watch for the next book in this Dan Sharp Mystery series, Shadow Puppet, to be released February 2019 through Dundurn ([www.dundurn.com](http://www.dundurn.com)). When a serial killer stalks downtown Toronto, Private Investigator Dan Sharp finds an unexpected link between the missing men that even the police are reluctant to investigate.*

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Jeffrey Round is the Lambda Award-winning author of the Dan Sharp mystery series and *Endgame*, dubbed a “punk rock reboot” of an Agatha Christie classic. His first two books were listed on *AfterElton.com*’s 50 Best Gay Books. He lives in Toronto. [www.jeffreyround.com](http://www.jeffreyround.com)





## Community Cornerstone

by Kelly Wilk



**Triangle Program in Toronto is an LGBTQ+ focused alternative education curriculum for students of various ages and grade levels. Sometimes working as a group and sometimes grade specific, this unique opportunity for education in a queer positive space is anything but generic.**

Housed in the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (MCCT) for the last 20 years, students have focused on learning literature and history from an LGBTQ+ perspective. Students receive the support through programming and councillors, not just to improve their academic prospects, but their life prospects as well.

Initially the program was started in 1995 by Tony Gambini (a social worker) and John Campey (board trustee), with Olivia Chow and Kathleen Wynne also being trustees at the time. Anthony Grandy is one of the current teachers, and explains, “They were seeing many queer youth dropping out of schools and saw a need for a safer space. It was mostly tailored to kids who were out of the system for a couple of years, the kids who had fallen through the cracks. A lot of them were older and street identified, and they didn’t have their grade 9 or 10 credits. It was designed to reengage them.”

Grandy and his colleges cover science, math, art and computer sciences. With two to three teachers, social workers, and child/youth councillors, the staff focuses on helping the youth build relationships, to communicate and have the opportunity to self reflect. Unfortunately a lot of people still don’t know the program exists.

“People aren’t placed in the Triangle Program, it’s a choice. The majority of our youth come to us not because they are gay or lesbian, it’s more about

gender identity and the struggles they are dealing with. A lot of times it’s mental health and housing, sometimes substance abuse, and they are looking for the support and flexibility we provide,” Grandy continues.

“In the Triangle Program education of a student is about the student as a whole, and just because you know how to identify on the queer spectrum doesn’t mean you know how to respect someone else. The big part of what we do is actually build relationships with the youth, so we know when they walk into the classroom what they are ready for and not ready for, and with that comes responsibility. Usually students have already disengaged from school, and they’re not attending or doing well,” Grandy adds.

This being so, Grandy is proud to say that they have a high graduation rate. With a supportive board and community funding, kitchen for a nutrition program, and fabulous donors, they have provided many opportunities for their youth.

“We wouldn’t have existed without community support. Today, we remain the only full high school LGBTQ+ program in the country,” says Grandy. The program is looking for volunteer cooks, math tutors, and of course donations. The little sea stars they plunk back into the ocean are the confident community members of the future, and the world will be far better for it!

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

Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer and single mom to a six-year-old, red-headed, Irish, Aries boy who is growing up way too fast. Follow “The Ginger Gent” on PinkPlayMags blog page, and Brave. Creative. Me at [www.kellywilk.ca..](http://www.kellywilk.ca..)



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# AUTUMN IN THE CITY

by Sherry Sylwain

## **Cooking with Trans People Of Colour**

Every Tuesday through November 27, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**The 519 Community Centre, 519 Church St., Toronto**

Inviting trans people of colour to cook, share a meal, and talk about sexual health in an affirming environment. This is a drop-in program, every Tuesday afternoon. No registration is required, and all cooking tools and ingredients will be provided. The objective of the project is to increase employability, provide opportunities for TPOC to take up community leadership, and to develop a cookbook around safer sex and healthy eating.

[www.the519.org/events/cooking-with-tpoc](http://www.the519.org/events/cooking-with-tpoc)

**Tip:** *For those who have the ability, it never hurts to bring a shareable treat for nibbling before, during or after.*

## **As IF Fridays**

Every Friday from 10:00 p.m.

**The Drink, 459 Church St., Toronto**

Join the team behind “FML Mondays” each and every Friday night inside Church Street’s hottest weekly dance party. Featuring the best new and old skool house, hip-hop, and top 40 remixes and mashups; spotlight drag shows; drink specials; free popcorn.

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

**Tip:** *This is a fairly new event in “the village”, so my best guess would be to dress to impress. Please note that this venue is not handicap accessible.*

## **SickKids GetLoud**

September 29, 9:30 a.m to 5:30 p.m.

**Marching to Fort York National Historic Site, 250 Fort York Blvd., Toronto**

GetLoud is a new fundraiser for SickKids. March among 3000+ supporters for 5km, ending at Fort York with a celebration of fun, food and music, featuring Barenaked Ladies, Magic!, Said The Whale, and The Mini Pop Kids. Register as in individual, a team, or join an existing team. Volunteers are always welcome. The starting point of the march will be revealed in a forthcoming special announcement.

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

**Tip:** *If you can't participate, you can make a donation anytime through the website to support this very worthwhile cause.*



## Fall for Dance North

October 2 through 6

Various Venues - see the web site

FFDN 2018 features three unique programs across six exciting performances at both the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts and Ryerson Theatre, for only \$15 a ticket. Immerse yourself in some of the most exhilarating dance that Canada and the world has to offer, during one of the most popular and fastest growing cultural events in Toronto. 2018 festival highlights include plenty of local favourites, world premieres, Canadian debuts, live music, and world-renowned international artists from South Africa, Cuba, France and The Netherlands. [www.ffdnorth.com](http://www.ffdnorth.com)

**Tip:** Try a wardrobe fusion of comfort and elegance.

**Impressive, yet able to sit comfortably in theatre seats with minimal binding and wrinkling.**



## Black and Blue Festival Montreal

October 5 to 8

Various venues in Montreal

The Black & Blue Festival is the world's largest gay-benefit dance festival, attracting thousands of tourists to Montreal every Canadian Thanksgiving weekend, raising money for HIV/AIDS and the gay community. World-renowned DJs Roger Sanchez, Erik Vilar and DJ Champion will be the headliners for the 2018 edition.

[www.bbcm.org/en](http://www.bbcm.org/en)

**Tip:** Bring a French speaking friend if you can, and make hotel reservations early.

## Coronation 32: The Crowns That Care Gala

October 6, 6:00 p.m. to midnight(ish)

Marriott Downtown CF Eaton Centre, 525 Bay St., Toronto

Join The Imperial Court of Toronto (TICOT) at their 32nd Annual Black Tie fundraiser, a wonderful evening to benefit the PWA Food Programs and Rainbow Railroad, with cocktails, dinner, entertainment, silent auction and more. Founded in 1986, TICOT is the oldest Ontario chapter of the International Court System (ICS).

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

**Tip:** You'll want to dress to the nines for this event where you will see more crowns, tiaras, and assorted jewels and regalia than your imagination could ever conceive.

## Black Rock Slam: Trans and Queer Positive Open Mic Night

October 24, November 28, December 18; 8:30 p.m.

Black Rock Coffee & Bar, 677 Bloor St. W., Toronto

A safer inclusive space for trans and queers of all ages who are interested in Open Mic. They encourage poetry, music, art, drag, and whatever your talent is, or what you want to showcase that night.

Facebook @BlackRockSlam

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

**Tip:** Register through the Facebook page in advance in order assure your spot, and any tech you may require.



## Men Having Babies

October 27. 11:30 a.m to 7:00 p.m

The 519 - 519 Church Street, Toronto

Men Having Babies, in partnership with the The 519, are offering the first conference dedicated to Canadian Surrogacy. Attendees will have the opportunity to get to know a select group of Canadian surrogacy providers directly and through several expert panels. For gay men who want to become parents, the Men Having Babies educational conferences are a rare opportunity to gather a wealth of information, advice and access a wide range of relevant service providers.

[www.menhavingbabies.org/surrogacy-seminars/toronto/](http://www.menhavingbabies.org/surrogacy-seminars/toronto/)

**Tip:** This is the only Canadian date for this special conference, so book your space early.

## Church Street Hallowe'en

October 31 from 7:00 p.m.

Church Street Village, Church St., Toronto

Every year, Church Street celebrates Hallowe'en like no place else, becoming known as the biggest Hallowe'en party in North America. Thousands of people put on the most creative and outrageous costumes and join the outdoor street party. Bars and restaurants participate in this unique experience with costume contests and Hallowe'en themed events.

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

**Tip:** *Charge up the phone batteries, or better yet, take a stand-alone camera, and be prepared to fill your memory card in minutes with the extravagant displays of creative and imaginative costumes.*

## Disney's Newsies The Musical

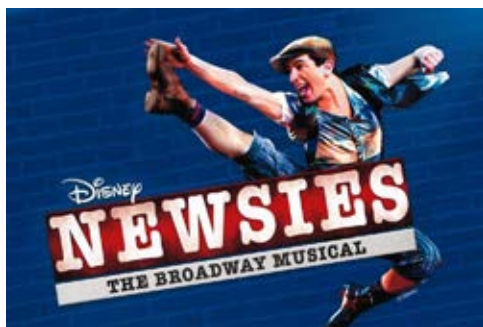
November 2, 2018 to January 19, 2019

Randolph Theatre, 736 Bathurst St., Toronto

Inspired by a true story, this Disney film turned Tony-winning Broadway hit inspires everyone to fight for what's right and seize the day. Set in turn-of-the-century New York City, this is the rousing tale of Jack Kelly, a charismatic newsboy and leader of a band of teenage "newsies." When titans of publishing raise distribution prices at the newsboys' expense, Jack rallies newsies from across the city to strike against the unfair conditions and fight for what's right.

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

**Tip:** *It's Disney, so that should tell you quite a bit off the top. A little song, dance, and drama, mixed with comedy, laughter, love, and general merriment.*



## Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire In Concert

November 15, 16 & 17

Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto

First a bestseller, then a major movie, now a magical concert event: CineConcerts presents Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire – in concert, featuring the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Experience your favorite wizard all over again with the music of a live symphony orchestra and the magic of Harry Potter soaring across the big screen in high-definition.

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

**Tip:** *If you're not taking kids to this show, be prepared for a melange of minor muggles in every direction.*

## Women's Blues Revue

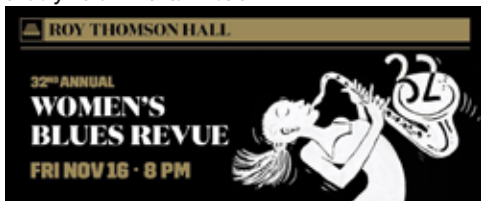
November 16, 8:00 p.m.

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

The Women's Blues Revue returns with its 32nd edition, featuring some of Canada's finest musicians backed by the all-star Women's Blues Revue Band: Rebecca Hennessy (Bandleader/Trumpet), Colleen Allen (Sax), Emily Burgess (Guitar), Carrie Chesnutt (Sax), Morgan Doctor (Drums), Lily Sazz (Keys). Toronto Blues Society will celebrate its annual show this year at Roy Thomson Hall, as Massey Hall temporarily closed its red doors for a 2-year revitalization.

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

**Tip:** *If you like the blues, you'll love this perennially impressive collection of exceptional artists creating an array of truly North American music.*



## Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker & More

November 28, 29, 30, and December 2

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

No holiday season is complete without a full and tasty banquet of Tchaikovsky! Korean-Canadian Earl Lee conducts this year's tribute to the beloved Russian composer, which displays Tchaikovsky's equal mastery of two different types of music: theatrical and symphonic. You'll enjoy a generous selection of favourite sugar plums from the ballet The Nutcracker, complemented by the passionate and tempestuous Fourth Symphony.

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

**Tip:** *Be on your best behaviour; "you know who" knows if you've been bad or good. And, invite children to experience this particularly special holiday music.*

## Art Of Time - To All A Good Night

December 16, 7:00 p.m.

Toronto Centre For The Arts, 5040 Yonge St., Toronto

An alternative holiday concert with the best wintery tunes, holiday songs, and readings; presenting a broader range of sentiments and styles than you're likely to find at any other seasonal concert.

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

**Tip:** *Take family members and friends of various denominations to this "seasonal" as opposed to "Christmas" event.*

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







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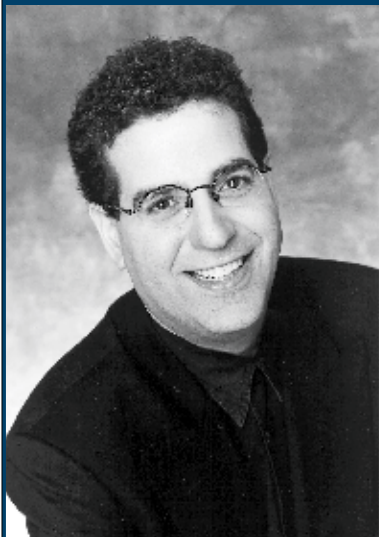


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## From The Heart

By Mychol Scully

**When I started this series of commentaries in the *springplay!* 2018 issue, I tried to communicate my thoughts about the word “hero” and the concept of “heroism.”**

I spoke about the ways that heroism has been perceived and described historically, and how I believe that word has been somewhat debased and compromised by overuse and misuse in modern society.

In the *summerplay!* issue, I spoke about the notion that small acts of personal, intimate heroism have the potential to manifest important, soulful change in the world around us.

For this third column in the Community Heroes series, I'd like to shift my attention to definitions of community. It's a word that is bandied about much like the word “hero” in modern times. Everyone and everything belongs to some version of a “community” whether there's an objective reality to that perceived community or not. Perhaps most obviously, in the context of this publication, is the notion of a “queer community,” the idea of which I have long resisted. It's my personal position that there is, in fact, no such thing as a singular “queer community” but rather, an interlocking

collection of diverse multiple communities that share some similarities while also exhibiting important differences between them.

**//Community, like true friendship, is built from shared experience.**

The most obvious difference between an acquaintance and a friend hinges on how much shared experience you have between you. Someone you met at the bar last night, no matter how deep and engaging the conversation may have been, can only be an acquaintance until such time as you've amassed sufficient shared experience to foster a true emotional connection as friends.

Similarly, lesbians, gay men, bisexual persons of either gender (or non-binary), and transgender individuals of all stripes share much of the prejudice, bigotry and bullying from intolerant members of society at large, but each sub-group must traverse that shared challenge while also navigating their own unique issues. Lesbians must also deal with a misogynist paradigm that demeans all women. Bisexual persons, bisexual men in particular, must deal with prejudice and misinformation from both their gay brethren and heterosexual society at large. Transgender persons remain outliers in queer culture, facing not just misunderstanding from their queer brethren but very real threats of psychological





and physical assault.

While there is value in grouping all of these individuals into a singular “queer community,” for political purposes, when it comes to the soul-satisfying experience of identifying with your “tribe” there is a need to sub-divide the queer masses into their own identifiable communities where their unique challenges serve to connect and support them collectively.

### **//All that being said, at the end of the day, we are all human.**

One might make a case that this is the most important “community” of all. But the reality is that as humans we are not wired to think or feel our connection to others at such a grand scale. We evolved from extended family units into villages sharing a common purpose (our mutual survival) and on a fundamental level we are still wired to connect with our tribe.

Mass media, and now social media technologies, have made it possible for us to identify and connect with our sociological (and ideological) “tribes” in ways that lend energy to the notion of community while simultaneously creating divisions between us and them (and them and them). Whether those shared attributes are psycho-sexual, political or otherwise, we cling to our identities and find comfort in connecting

with smaller groups of individuals whom we can identify as “people like us.”

### **//There is hope for the future, as we become better informed about the challenges and threats that face all of us whether climate change, populist segregation or technological disruption.**

Our existing social programming is an omnipresent challenge to our evolution toward a higher consciousness that allows us to experience the meta-connection that is our shared humanity. By “stepping up to the plate” and practicing some of the simple acts of personal heroism I’ve discussed previously, I want to believe that we can transcend our baser instincts and truly manifest a community of the human family.

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Mychol Scully is Senior Art Director for INspired Media Inc. publications PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, The Local Biz Magazine, and The Pink Pages Directory. Mychol is available for thoughtful conversation or lascivious teasing anytime at [mychol@mychol.com](mailto:mychol@mychol.com).





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# Autumn Horoscopes

by Julie Antoinette

## Aries (March 21 – April 20)

Someone is pulling at your energy in a way that is uncomfortable. You are strong and fiercely independent, Aries. Your strength sometimes attracts characters who need to feel more stability and have very little of their own. Yes, it's nice to help others, but be careful of energy drainage. Parasites can wreak havoc on even the healthiest of systems.

## Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

Matters of career are at the forefront this season. You are well-established and have built up a nest egg for retirement. But you're bored - to tears. There is a way to find an element of creativity in your work and you must find it. Mary Poppins says, "In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun and snap! The job's a game!" Look for that spoonful of sugar.

## Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

Whether you've been with your partner for a short time or a long time, you may have found some friction surfacing between you both recently. The problem is nothing more than growth taking place in your relationship. You are moving from one stage into another together. This friction you feel is merely growing pains. If you can weather this transition as a couple, greater intimacy and connection will follow.

## Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

Your thoughts recently have been circling around your mother. Whether she is still present in your life or not, her influence in a particular part of your experience is surfacing at this moment. If you have the opportunity, have a date with mom to chat about what's going on with you. Her feedback will provide the answers you need. If mom is not present, try journaling, or asking for answers in a dream.

## Leo (July 23 – August 22)

Please don't take this the wrong way, but not everything is about you, Leo. Yes, the planets all revolve around the Sun - your ruling celestial body. But keep in mind that the Sun is the giver of life and light and sustains everything in its surrounding. Your lesson is to recognize the necessary flow of give and take energetically.

## Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

It's harvest time! As the keeper of the sheaf of wheat, now is your chance to reap what has been previously sown. Think back on the previous twelve months. What has the universe produced with the efforts that you have planted? How will you use this harvest of abundance to fertilize a new cycle come the Spring?

## Libra (September 24 – October 23)

If you have a pet, pay close attention to their habits and behaviors. It is said that animals reflect the personality of their owners. Like children, animals have no ego. They are a clean slate, pure innocence. Without intellect or reason. An untarnished reflecting pool. Look into your pet's eyes and notice what you see.

## Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

What's going on at home, Scorpio? Has order left your abode? Has clutter moved in to stay past its welcome? You are far more fastidious than that. Scorpio runs a tight ship. But your ship needs some repair and TLC. It is said, "The state of my home is the state of my mind." Its time to clear the cobwebs from the corners of your mind.

## Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

Feeling antsy? I know why... You've let your fitness routine fall behind. The law of inertia says that an object in motion will stay in motion, and an object at rest will stay at rest. Your task is to move from a state of stagnation into agitation. Choose your favorite activity to make it less onerous. Salsa dancing? Take a partner and have some fun!

## Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Time to clear out your closet, Capricorn. And I don't mean this figuratively. You are in desperate need of a new wardrobe as a means to reinvent yourself. It is said, "The clothes make the man (and the woman)." Try it and get ready to meet the new you!

## Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

Slow down, you move too fast! You've taken on more than you can handle and now you've had to speed up just to keep up! Perhaps you could enlist help to take on less pressing tasks while you concentrate on others. Many hands make light work. Delegate! Delegate! Delegate!

## Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

A certain worry has plagued you in recent weeks. You secretly feel that by worrying, you are handling the issue mentally and this gives you a sense of control. But the opposite is true. Worry cannot change a single thing other than to rob you of your present peace and happiness. Let it go. Accept that you cannot control anything, but you can command everything.

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





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## Looking Back

by Patricia Wilson

**I woke up this morning, thinking of friends and loved ones from our community that have moved on from this world to the next, and I examined my emotions to see how I felt as they walked across my threshold of morning thoughts.**

I was a bit surprised that this time there was no sadness or any longing for them to return, but only happiness that all of them had been here in their moment, and had touched many individuals, other than myself. Of course at other times, especially those moments of human need, I long for their actual presence, their words, or perhaps even a small caress. This morning though, I realized that they were of their time within their time, and did what they did brilliantly during that time.

Our community now encompasses so many that the alphabet doesn't have enough letters to accommodate all that we've become. We have always needed the light of individuals to shine on it and within it. We have lost so many of these lights, these human torches that shone the way for those of us who remain here and now on this dented planet. We know who they are, as we have worked with them, loved them, called them our friends, and even now are still in awe of them.

I was going to talk of one or two individuals who have passed, and give them a few words of love and respect for their efforts within the community. Perhaps mention how they stood at the barricades, or how they were marching for whatever had to be done to raise consciousness of our needs and rights as a vibrant and important human community. Some of them held weakening hands and shed tears for the dying when no one else was there. So much strength and love for our community as it was then, and is now, and we must



remember their time of love and work for us. My mind flashed to hundreds of individuals who put aside their precious time to shine a light on all us then, and on the future of what we would, and could become.

If I mentioned even one deserving individual to highlight their work within our community I would be doing an injustice to thousands more. We are not a community because of just one person swinging the hammer of change. We are what we are because of many individuals. I am not saying that we shouldn't acknowledge our awe inspiring community heroes, but more that we should constantly acknowledge and scream their accomplishments out loud, and continue to recognize them publicly.

I ask of you gentle queer reader that here and now, you stop and think of these many individuals yourselves. Run them through your heart and mind, and thank them for all that they have given to you, and to all of us.

---

Patricia Wilson is Bar Manager at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, guitarist with Crackpuppy, writer, poet, and our cover feature Community Hero.





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