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## BEING... Bisexual/Pansexual/Asexual Ecosexuality

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From the **Publisher**



I really loved our 2020 theme “BEING”. I like representation of our community to include everyone, and I believe with each new edition along the way that we learned a good deal about the different identities in our community; being gay, lesbian, trans, 2-Spirit, non-conforming, non-binary, bisexual, pansexual, and asexual.

In this wrap up of the year edition we explore bisexual, pansexual, and asexual members of our community. For me personally, it's important to understand the different identities, and it's also respectful. So I looked up the web's definition of bisexuality, pansexuality, and asexuality, as part of putting this edition together. Here is what I gathered:

**Bisexual:** To some it means attraction to the opposite sex, male or female. To some that definition is exclusionary, and it excludes nonbinary genders, or even erases transgender people altogether. To others, bisexuality definition is broader, and it reflects attraction to people of

your own gender, and to people with gender(s) different than your own.

**Pansexual:** In comparison to bisexuality, pansexuality, composed with the prefix pan- is the sexual attraction to a person of any sex or gender. Using these definitions, pansexuality is defined differently, by explicitly including people who are intersex or outside the gender binary. So I gather this term is broader and more inclusive.

**Asexual:** The web says that research and academic work dealing with the history of the asexual community is presently lacking. Although a few private sites for people with little or no sexual desire existed on the Internet in the 1990s, scholars state that a community of self-identified asexuals coalesced in the early 21st century. But generally speaking, an asexual person might not experience sexual attraction, but they might still experience romantic attraction. An asexual person could be romantically attracted to people of the same gender, people of another gender, or people of multiple genders. Many asexual people want, and have, romantic relationships.

The web is never lacking resources to help us understand others.

Other than the above, it is the season to get in some relaxing and rejuvenating, so make sure to take some time for yourself.

Happy Holidays!

**Antoine Elhashem**  
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Amy Vaughan-Dolson – *Asexual*

Marisa Cimagamore – *Pansexual*

**Rest of the group from left to right:**

Mary Sue Robinet - *2Spirit*

Dan Bowen aka Brad Puddin aka Maya Naise - *Non-conforming*

Marisa Rosa Grant – *Lesbian*

Robyn DeCradle – *Non-Binary*

Ryan Bince – *Gay*

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## From the Editor



Greetings and salutations,

This is the final instalment in our series of features on the topic of "Being...", with this issue spotlighting *Pansexuality, Bisexuality and Asexuality*.

The main feature article is wonderfully written by **S.E Fleenor**, who gives insight into their own personal stories, as well as input from a few other interesting individuals who offer their own interpretations on how and why they choose to identify their sexuality.

The second feature is co-written by partners **Annie Sprinkle** and **Beth Stephens**, the pioneering duo bringing light to the world of *Ecosexuality*. The premise being that our love for the earth can be far stronger than we realize, and they offer some tips on how to embrace your inner ecosexual being.

In our *Travel* feature, we take a look at what activities are available to participate in this winter here in the city of Toronto, along with some suggestions for socially-distanced holiday events that are planned around the GTA. Our *Hot Artist* feature

is with **Apanaki Temitayo Minerve**, a bisexual multi-disciplinary artist, author, spoken word poet, actor, teacher and mother of three. With *Community Cornerstone*, we take a look at the work of the *LGBTQ Community Liaison for Toronto Police Services*, **Danielle Bottineau**. Our *Fiction* piece is written by **Bee Dee**, with a short story titled, *Punk*.

As always, we have our quarterly horoscopes, and the inspiring *From The Heart* column written by **Mychol Scully**, our Creative Director, who also designs this publication for us. Our event listings remain [virtual](#), which our Events Editor, **Sherry Sylvain**, takes great pride in compiling for us.

Finally, be sure to check out our special [Matrimony Supplement](#) that provides some great tips on how to prepare if you're planning on getting married during a pandemic.

Thanks for being here with us throughout this challenging year of 2020. We're looking forward to bringing more positive inspiration to you next year.

Enjoy the read!

**Bryen Dunn**  
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pg

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By Bryen Dunn

**S**o you want to get married? During a pandemic? Well, that's okay, because there's an app for that!

Like many businesses, the wedding industry has been going through some turmoil during 2020, and like others they are learning to adapt and move forward. If you had plans to wed, and felt the only option was to postpone until a later date, you may want to reconsider, as there are plenty of ways you can still have a wonderful wedding day. Albeit in a more modern, less traditional environment.

Social gatherings are all but eliminated, except for perhaps the smallest of groups, such as immediate family members. However, there are still ways to hold an outdoor socially-distanced affair (weather permitting), or choose to go totally virtual, which isn't as difficult or as distancing as it may seem.

For those opting for some sort of in-person event, you may want to consider a drive-through, or even a drive-in option. Set up a stage for the wedding couple, and have all guests stay safely distanced in their own vehicles. Or giddy-it-up with a tailgate shindig. Guests will be able to scream, whistle, and honk the day away. Remember to appoint a designated driver.

For all other non-vehicle focused outdoor events, careful consideration must be given to planning, specifically around seating and catering arrangements. This is where a wedding planner and accommodating vendors will be your best friend. There are also companies who have created wristbands of varying colours that indicate your personal comfort level with regard to your safety and distancing comfort levels. Don't forget to get those designer masks ordered as part of the arrival package for each guest.

If you decide it's not worth the risk of even doing a socially-distanced in person event, there are many options to still go forward with your wedding virtually. The first thing to remember is that just because you're not having a traditional wedding, it doesn't mean it will be any easier planning. You'll still need to work with all the usual vendors, from design and decor, to catering, entertainment, and gifting.

There are a lot of great, free live-streaming or video conferencing services out there. Consider platforms like [Zoom](#), [Facebook Live](#), or [YouTube Live](#), and make sure you create a private event for invited guests only. As with traditional wedding crashers, virtual ones are unwelcome as well. Live streaming enables guests to view and chat with others through the chat feature, whereas video conferencing allows everyone to see and speak



with each other. There are also apps like [WebWed Mobile](#), [Wedfuly](#), and [LoveStream](#), that can help facilitate your ceremony and handle all the tech. Digital invitations can be done via [Paperless Post](#) or [Greenvelope](#). [Google Hangouts](#) can be used for the “reception”, and “party”.

Some planning tips here are perhaps having a dress up theme for everyone, creating a signature cocktail that can be sent out in advance, have a same-day delivery of a wedding meal and beverages, hiring a host or emcee, and bringing in some entertainment, like a DJ, musicians, or a drag queen.

Most importantly, to make your virtual wedding a success, you’ll need to invest some time and money into equipment, technology, and a trusted technical wizard to oversee everything, and ensure the day runs smoothly (including rehearsals for yourselves and your guests). This individual will be vital to ensuring to mute everyone during the wedding vows, then allowing guests to chime in with their memories, congratulations, and toast or roast. They can also choose the appropriate feed to show if opting for a more robust, multiple camera production. You also might want to have your guests pre-record messages, send in photographs, or have your administrator capture their video messages and images for a virtual album that can be shared with all.

Be sure to let guests know your email and home address for those wanting to send gifts, and don’t forget to thank everyone involved in making your special day a success, including friends, family, all

the vendors, and a special shout out to your tech wizard for making it all happen.

Finally, the big day is done. Now what? The honeymoon of course. Remember there are plenty of things you can still do, while remaining safe. Book a honeymoon suite at your local hotel. Most hotels remain open and have adapted to local safety protocols, and many are offering great deals at this time as well. For those with restaurants onsite, order room service, or support your local restaurants by ordering in.

If you’re looking for something a bit different, try renting a cottage or cabin, or maybe a yurt or other non-traditional lodging. These aren’t normal times we’re in, so let your imagination run wild, and who knows, this whole virtual or socially distanced affair may end up being far grander than any traditional wedding could every be.

Whatever you decide works best for you, just remember, Love Wins!

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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# Self Love... or how I learned to stop worrying and love being bi and pan

By S.E. Fleenor

## "Are you lesbians?"

I'd never heard a question asked with such malice. I looked at the woman I was on a date with, a woman I knew wasn't straight either, and I don't know which of us was the one to say it, but the word "no" came out of one of our mouths.

We continued on our date, walking up the long main drag in the small city where we both studied. We had crepes from a little French restaurant where we justified our answer as true, because neither of us was, in fact, a lesbian. We talked about music we liked and she came back to my apartment to listen to my favorite album and when I asked if I could kiss her, she said no. It stung a little—I was embarrassed and new to dating—but a part of me had never gotten past that first "no." The "no" of two scared young people on a street being confronted by a stranger.

Ten years later, that moment still sticks with me. I can remember feeling afraid, being certain that I was in danger. And afterward, I remember feeling deeply ashamed. After what felt like a lifetime in the suffocating closet, I'd clawed my way out a year earlier. I was bisexual. I knew I was bisexual. I

loved that I was bisexual. And, I hated myself for not standing up proudly and declaring who I was.

Today, with years of loving, fighting, and figuring out my gender and sexuality between then and now, I realize that I was still in many ways a young adult, still figuring out what safety means in a world designed to destroy queer people. If I could go back in time, I would take that young bisexual's hand in mine and tell them they didn't do anything wrong, that sometimes we hide not out of shame, but because we need to be safe—we need to live to fight another day.

Bisexuality and pansexuality have been defined many ways both within and outside of bisexual and pansexual circles. My personal definition is that bisexual means being attracted to multiple genders, which sometimes means all genders, while pansexual means being attracted to all genders (and sometimes none because people can be...a lot). It probably seems more convoluted than it is, and to add fuel to that confusing fire, some people—like myself—identify as both bisexual *and* pansexual.

When I was first figuring out my sexuality, someone told me that I shouldn't be bisexual

because bisexuality is transphobic. The idea was that bisexual inherently relied on the gender binary, but that's not necessarily true. Like the word bimonthly, which means both twice a month and every two months, bisexual can describe someone who is only attracted to binary genders, but it doesn't have to—and nothing is inherently transphobic about that.

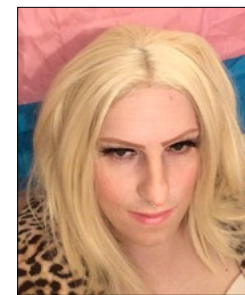
But, I didn't know that. I was newly out and wanted to impress my much cooler, much queerer friends, so I changed to using the word queer. (I still use it as one of the constellation of words to describe my gender and sexuality.) It took me many years to return to the word bisexual, to let it wrap its arms around me and remind me that I always knew who I was, even if other people had doubts. Around that same time, I started to read studies about mental health outcomes for bisexual+ people, a term coined to describe the identities of us who are queer, but not monosexual, including: bisexual, sexually fluid, pansexual, omnisexual, and other identities. While reading those studies, I learned that bisexual+ folks experienced discrimination from both straight, and the gay and lesbian communities, and that by not being accepted and belonging to either group was literally killing us.



Two of the mothers of queer liberation, **Marsha P. Johnson** and **Sylvia Rivera**, are known best for being trans women of color who fought for a better future, including at the *Stonewall Riots*.

What's lesser known about the two is that they *both* identified as bisexual. From the start of queer revolution in the U.S. trans and bisexual identities were working hand in hand—and we all owe them a debt of not just gratitude but action. I know I do. If I hadn't read about Johnson and Rivera, I wouldn't have realized how important my bisexuality was to my non-binaryness, and to my transness.

I'm not the only one whose bisexuality is an integral part of their identity.



**Veronique Emma Houxbois**, creator of *Transcription* and writer at *Comicosity*, describes her bisexuality: "Sexual orientation to me is a key way in which we communicate with the wider LGBTQIA community."

Orientations have their own accumulated histories and cultures, so to me, bisexuality communicates a lot about who I want to be in community, with as much as it does to who I want to sleep with."



**Stephanie Williams**, creator and writer of *Living Heroes* and *Parenthood Activate*, agrees. "To me [bisexuality] means liberation, but not confined in terms of just sexuality. The reason for that is for the longest time I

thought something was wrong with me because I felt attraction to multiple genders, and for a long time I tried to ignore that part of myself. So, as I began to understand that how I felt was okay and nothing was wrong with me, it became a bigger part of loving myself fully and not just in halves. I feel like when people think of bisexuality they think of 50/50 attraction and such, but it's not that. It's just a total sum of expression. Or at least it has been for me."

I don't remember the exact moment that I began to understand my pansexuality, just as I don't know the exact moment I realized I was non-binary. Those identities both came to me after I'd been out for nearly a decade. What I can say, though, is that my pansexuality and my non-binaryness helped me understand the broadest reaches of my bisexuality and my queerness.

I'm often reminded of a course I took in graduate school about sex, gender, and sexuality. The professor was infamous for telling us that those three words were placeholders, that what we

were discussing was something more than labels for bodies—we were doing our best to describe realities for which we have poor or no language. That concept has been important to how I’ve come to understand my gender and sexuality: Every label I claim is an approximation, is the nearest possible word to describe an experience that is deeply embodied, an experience that lives beyond words.

Pansexual folks feel all kinds of ways about our identities. For some of us, pansexual is our preferred term; for others, it’s a helpful term for clarification.



Woodworker **Shawn Wheeler** says, “I’m pansexual, but sometimes I say I’m bisexual because it’s easier in conversation with people who don’t understand pansexuality, but I don’t like it. Outside of queer spaces, we’re often seen as the

queer woman with the straight guy. For us, being misread takes everything away. It takes his gender away; it takes my sexuality away.”



**Vanessa Roberts**, executive director of *Project VOYCE*, feels slightly differently. “I identify as queer, both as a sexual orientation and as a political statement. I’ll say I’m pansexual if further nuance is required. I’ve always

been attracted to a person. Body composition and genitalia is secondary. Basically, if I’m attracted to you, we can figure out the physical component.”

When I read back the quotes from the bisexual and pansexual folks I talked to, I see myself in both of them. I see the search for community, the liberation, the frustration of being misread, the broadness of my attractions. What it reminds

**Asexuality** (ace) is another identity that’s often misunderstood. It’s basically someone with little to no interest in sexual activity (orientation), which is different from abstinence or celibacy (behavioural). The term can encompass a broad definition, which may or may not include romantic non-sexual partnerships, solo masturbation, or having sex for the sole purpose of satisfying their partner. As well, asexual individuals may often still identify with one of the several other identities within the LGBTQ+ or heterosexual communities.

me is that bisexual and pansexual people belong together, not pitted against each other, or divided.

Five years after the awkward situation where a date and I were asked if we were lesbians, I stood outside a 7-11, waiting for my partner to come back outside. We were decked head-to-toe in our Pride best, as were thousands of people gathering in downtown Denver.

I was fiddling with my phone when I heard someone approach. I am not much for talking to strangers, so I continued to type out a message to the friends we were supposed to meet 30-minutes earlier. Feeling the person’s eyes on me, I looked up and gave them a nod. Rookie mistake.

“Are you a lesbian?” he asked.

I immediately remembered that inauspicious date, the nagging feeling in my stomach. I looked through the window to see my partner checking out at the register. So I took a deep breath, held my head up high, and said, “No. I’m bi.”

S.E. Fleenor writes novels and articles centering on queer identities, feminism, pop culture, and literature. Words appear in *The Independent*, *Buzzfeed Reader*, *Vice*, *them.us*, and *SYFY WIRE*, among others.



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# Ecosexuality

## Annie Sprinkle & Beth Stephens

By Beth Stephens & Annie Sprinkle

**We are two women in love - life partners and artist collaborators for the past nineteen years.**

In 2008 when we discovered our ecosexuality it rocked our world and gave our lives a paradigm shift. Our queer ecosex adventures have offered us more sensual pleasure, new inspiration, and even more purpose in our lives.

You might wonder, what is ecosexuality and who are ecosexuals? These terms were vaguely defined when we came out as ecosexuals in 2008. This was just after we staged a big performance-art wedding where we made vows to 'love, honour and cherish the Earth until death brings us closer together forever,' along with 150 creative collaborators who helped create the wedding, and over three hundred audience members saying "I do too." As creative types, we took the term ecosex and ran with it, doing lots of art experiments imagining the Earth as our lover. Then we formulated our own terms and definitions, which have pollinated around the world to become an international movement.

We are polymorphous, pollen-amorous, and we are everywhere. Needless to say, for us ecosex is definitely in the realm of the queer. Ecosex goes way beyond sex between two (or more) people. Ecosexual can be a primary identity or not. You can add ecosexual to whatever other identities you might hold dear. Heterosexuals, asexuals,

bisexuals...and any other kinds of folks can also identify as ecosexual. We always add the E to the LGBTQIIA+E moniker.

Many people imagine the Earth as a mother, or a father, or a friend...as a she or a he. We are free to imagine the Earth however we want to. The two of us like to imagine that the Earth is trans-gender, beyond gender, all genders at once. True we are anthropomorphizing, —giving the Earth human qualities. Naturally the Earth is way more complex than being simply human, and the Earth's qualities extend way beyond what we know. However, anthropomorphizing can be useful as it can help us to connect more deeply with the Earth. Ecosexuality often requires some imagination and fantasy.

One of our mottos is 'eroticize everything!' So how exactly do we, and how can you, make love with the Earth? Here are just a few suggestions. Tell the Earth "I love you, and I can't live without you." Spend time with her. Taste him. Touch her all over. Swim naked in their waters. Sing to the Earth. Kiss and lick her. Bury parts of your body deep inside her sand or soil. Plant seeds in her. Talk dirty to her plants. Circulate erotic energy with them. Lay on top of them. If you see the Earth being abused, raped, or exploited, protect her as best you can. Run naked through nettles. Let the Sun's rays penetrate your pores. Feel the fresh, crisp winter air penetrate your lungs--deeply. Straddle the hot tub jets. Don't just take pleasure from the rushing water, try giving love and

pleasure back to the water! Ideally, ecosex is a give and take proposition.

There are all kinds of ecosexual practices and proclivities. Some nature fetishes are mild/subtle, and some extreme/edgy, and downright dangerous. Ecosex isn't all sunshine and daffodils. Mild ecosex fetishes might be wind play, stargazing, grassalingus (erotically licking grass while sniffing the soil), moon communion, using veggie dildos, or smearing clay all over your body. More edgy practices would be like swimming with sharks, branding, tornado chasing, extreme whitewater rafting, scuba diving nude at night... Be careful! The Earth is a cruel mistress and there is no safe word.

Perhaps sex with humans is your thing. Well, that's ecosex too! When you make love with a person, you make love largely with water, bacteria, and non-human creepy crawly things that live inside us. Just standing next to someone your biome clouds are having an orgy. We humans are not separate from the Earth. Sometimes it's nice to ponder how we and our sex partners are the Earth, and to be aware that we are part of an extraordinary ecosystem.

What about consent, you may ask? For example, how do we know if a tree wants to be hugged, or not? Some people think ecosex is "nature abuse." We don't speak the language of trees so we don't know for sure if a tree wants a hug or not. However, experiments show that most living things respond well to love. We try to be respectful and to sense what some entity might like or not. However we wonder why is it the same people who worry about people hugging trees don't have a problem with cutting down and killing trees? We can be fairly certain a tree doesn't want to die.

One of the great things about ecosex, is it can simply be an energetic exchange, or a fantasy, or a sensual experience. Ecosex can also include the whole body, including the genitals. There is a Universe of possibilities. Another great thing about ecosex is when you are lovers with the Earth, you always have a lover. You always have opportunities for sensual pleasure and fun.

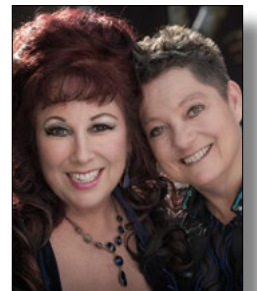
### ecosexual:

1. A person that finds nature romantic, sensual, erotic, or sexy, which can include humans or not.
2. A sexual identity.
3. A person who imagines the Earth as their lover.
4. A term used in dating advertisements.
5. An environmental activist strategy.
6. A grassroots movement.
7. A person that has a more expanded notion of sex and eroticism and orgasms that go beyond mainstream definitions, to include energetic exchange with living things.
8. A person that imagines sex as an ecology that extends beyond the physical body and explores the eroticism found in nature through their senses.
9. As yet to be defined.

Ecosex is everywhere! However we recommend going outside if you can.

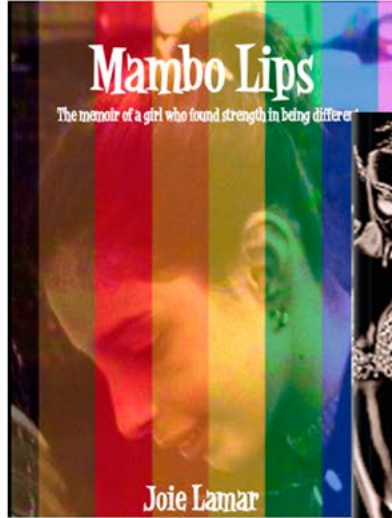
Ecosexuals unite! In soil-idarity forever.

Beth Stephens & Annie Sprinkle are filmmakers, visual artists, and performance artists. Their book, "Assuming the Ecosexual Position—The Earth as Lover" is coming out in early spring 2021, published by University of Minnesota Press. They are based in San Francisco. To watch them marrying the Earth in 2008, go to Ecosexual Wedding Project. Visit Waters Make Us Wet, Sexecology, and their official website for more info.

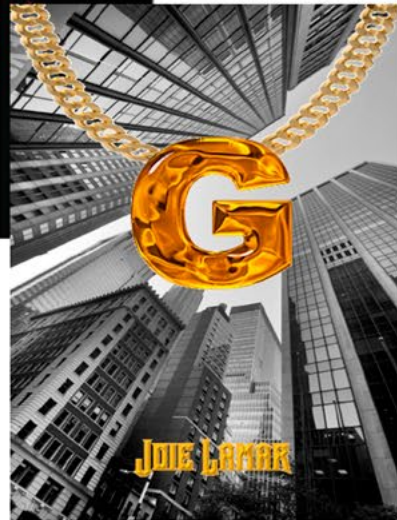
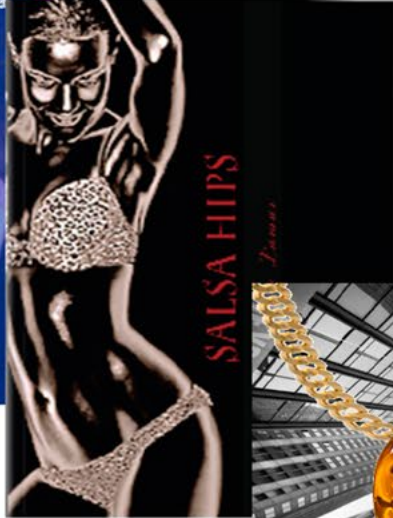


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# CITY OF TORONTO'S WELCOME T.O. WINTER PARKS PLAN

By Bryen Dunn

To help people stay active this winter season, the City of Toronto is highlighting its offering of new and enhanced exercise-based recreation activities in parks locations across the city.

Here's a list of all the activities that will be available throughout the winter.

- 23 [toboggan hills](#)
- 8 snow loops for walking and snowshoeing at the City's five golf courses, with loops ranging from 1 kilometre to 2.5 kilometres
- Six [disc-golf locations](#), including the newest at Scarlett Woods Golf Course, beginning November 28
- New guided outdoor [Walk Fit programs](#), including 45 sessions each week ([reservations recommended](#))
- High Park car-free weekends

- City parks with additional 60 kilometres of paved recreational trails and pathways with snow maintenance
- 100 parks with winter maintenance, including 60 with enhanced maintenance this year that include cleared parking lots and paved pathways
- Free, leisure skating at the City's 54 [outdoor ice rinks](#), including Nathan Phillips Square, weather dependent, with a maximum of 25 participants ([reservations recommended](#))
- Up to 30-plus natural ice rinks - the City is accepting [applications](#) until December 31 for community-built and maintained natural ice rinks in City parks

Leisure skate times will run in 45-minute sessions, and skating on the City's outdoor ice rinks is only permitted during supervised hours. Capacity for all skating rinks is limited to 25 people per ice pad. Indoor washroom access will be available, however, change rooms are closed and skaters should come ready to skate. In order to make a

reservation, registration is required with [eFun](#) and rink status updates will be posted [online](#). For skating trails, check out Colonel Samuel Smith Park in Etobicoke, and Barbara Ann Scott Ice Trail at College Park. There are also a few private rinks to check out, such as The Bentway, Evergreen Brick Works,

As well, throughout the winter the following parks amenities will remain open:

- More than 800 [playgrounds](#) and 30 parks with outdoor fitness equipment
- Outdoor sport courts, including 57 tennis courts with nets in place for winter tennis
- 70 outdoor table tennis and 60 chess tables
- 68 dog off-leash areas
- The City will more than double its supply of winter park washrooms from 64 to 143 as part of its ongoing response to COVID-19
- The [archery range](#) in E.T. Seton Park

If outdoors is not your thing, there's plenty of **Stay, Play and Learn at Home** programming. People looking for ways to stay active and engaged while staying home can find a listing of free recreational and fitness programs, fun virtual activities, and learning and leisure activities [online](#). [CampTO](#) is a new day camp program developed this year that offers games, arts and crafts, with both indoor and outdoor activities at 42 locations across the city

While the winter ahead may seem longer this year, there's no shortage of activities to keep you busy!

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.



## Hot Artist

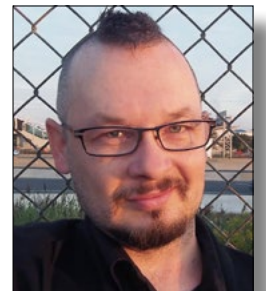
Some of those featured include **James Baldwin, the Goddess Oshun, bell hooks, Danaï Gurira, and Maya Angelou.** Through her work, Apanaki wants to increase visibility of People of Colour in queer spaces. Because queer spaces are predominantly white, “we have had to make space for ourselves as people and as artists, in order to for BIPOC to exist in those spaces.”

Art is just one way we can move forward. Apanaki sees us being in a unique time in history when, through the efforts of united voices, change is possible, to break down anti-black racism and discrimination. While some governments and corporations are making efforts, more inclusive effort is needed. She recalls, “During the midst of the Black Lives Matter movement, the hashtag #AllBlackLivesMatter was trending in order to include the LGBTQ2S bodies that were also being slain in hate crimes globally. It is my hope that we as LGBTQ2S BIPOC will become a permanent part of the global landscape, which will be more the rule than the exception.”

Safety for all resonates for Apanaki, particularly on the home front. This year has provided significant personal change. “2020 is literally my coming out year, so navigating my bisexuality and my parenting is very new.” As with other intersections, she notes that her “parenting style has always been to make a safe space for my kids to be and interact with people from all races, cultures and sexual identities. Living in Toronto has helped to make safe spaces for my kids to grow and thrive.”

[www.apanaki-temitayo-m.pixels.com](http://www.apanaki-temitayo-m.pixels.com)

Jon Pressick is a writer who focuses on sex and sexuality. View his work at [sexinwords.ca](http://sexinwords.ca)



### Apanaki Temitayo Minerve

Born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago, **Apanaki Temitayo Minerve** is an author, spoken word poet, actor, multimedia artist, teacher and mother of three. As the Artist-in-Wellness at the *Centre of Addiction and Mental Health*, she conducts *Art for Everyone Workshops* for staff and inpatients. Her rich, vibrant piece *Pride Is A Riot!* was commissioned by Pride Toronto for their Virtual Pride 2020 event, and will be permanently installed in their official office. She recently participated in a panel discussion on *Racialized & Bisexual+: Exploring Identity in Art Practice* at the *Bi+ Arts Festival*, with fellow panelist and filmmaker, **Jaene F Castrillon** discussing inclusivity within Bi+ Community for BIPOC.

Apanaki is inspired to create and chooses her subjects from the discussions she sees in social media and what is happening in our world. “I believe it is my duty as a multi-disciplinary artist at the intersection of being an Afro-Caribbean bisexual, single mother with lived mental health and PTSD experience, and as an art facilitator and a mental health advocate.” She shares stories of “activism, artistry, philosophy, rebellion and resistance.”

“My Black Icon Series is literally my life’s work,” Apanaki shares. “I create portraits of BIPOC and LGBTQ icons, those voices that influence the landscape of the lived experience of BIPOC.”

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## Fiction

### Punk

I was slammed up against him, and I must say it felt good. Me and my gal pal Sylvie decided to venture out to the big city to catch a gig by The Muff Divers, a group of rough looking, scraggly boys from the U.K. who were touring North America for the first time.

Sylvie lived up the street from me, and we ended up bonding over our same anti-everything attitude. Not that we were negative, at least not in our own minds, we just knew something wasn't right about this world we were brought into. Our suburban town was the bane of our existence. We certainly didn't fit in with any of school cliques, so we created our own – the misfits. Although that maybe taken as a derogatory term for some, for us it was a term we chose with pride.

Our biggest bond was with music. We searched high and low for the obscure and alternative, music that could not be classified into any genre, much like us. We also created our own fashion, avoiding anything with a label. We shopped at thrift stores, and hung out at record stores. We wanted to create our own world, away from the mundane confines of society.

On weekends we'd nick some tins of beer, or whatever else our parents had on offer in their cabinets, and head over to the cemetery to chill with the dead. Me, Sylvie, and a bunch of stiffs. It was our sanctuary, an oasis of calm and quiet among the noise pollution of the world. We would chat for hours about world problems, which when

you're a teen could seem insurmountable and as distant as the death that surrounded us.

We would walk the graveyard admiring all the tombstones, and discussing the lives that came before us of people we would never have the opportunity of knowing. This was far more satisfying to us than chatting with the living, and hearing about their boring lives. We'd make up stories for each of them, stories of lives the way we thought they should be lived.

We also would read the same existential books, and watch the same independent or foreign films. Kerouac and Burroughs, Fellini and Van Sant. But mostly, it was about the music. One day, while hanging at our local record store, Sylvie picked up a copy of The Muff Divers. Neither of us had heard of them, but the album cover and name itself were enough to make us buy it. We dropped it on the turntable, and waited for the record to begin. Bang. There is was. The energized kick in the ass we both needed.

The concert was something neither of us had experienced before, not even so much the band themselves, but for the crowd around us. A crowd of misfits, just like us. As the band played on, we got closer and closer to the stage, a sweaty pit of individuals dancing in solidarity. It was then that I knew, I was a punk.

Bee Dee is a globally-inspired immortal scribe of inconsequence. 'Til death do us part.



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I had the pleasure of speaking with **Danielle Bottineau**, Police Constable 7718, who has spent nine enjoyable years as the LGBTQ liaison for the *Toronto Police Service* (TPS). This initiative was introduced in 2001 in response to complaints from the LGBTQ+ community, after a women's bathhouse was raided by Toronto Police in 2000.

After a *Human Rights Commission* report, TPS was required to implement LGBTQ+ sensitivity training for its members, as well as appoint a liaison officer to facilitate this program. The Liaison Officer works within the *Community Partnerships and Engagement Unit* (CPEU) to provide community policing support to stakeholders within the community, as well as to TPS members. CPEU strives to deliver strong community/police partnerships, based on mutual trust, respect, and understanding. In addition to the LGBTQ2S Liaison, there are several other liaison officers for other minority communities, including the Black, Chinese, South Asian, etc.

Bottineau has worked for TPS for 21 years, and when she was first approached by a supervisor to fill this position, she admits she was hesitant. I can imagine in addition to being an out police officer, it would be a very visible role to fulfill.

"To be honest I was quick to say no. I had always been out at work and really had no issues with living my authentic self both on and off the job, but I didn't feel I needed to be the *poster child* for the service. Out of all positions that I have held, being the LGBTQ2S Liaison Officer has been the most rewarding. By being the Liaison I was able to bring both parts of me together. It provided me an opportunity to hopefully make things better and more inclusive for the LGBTQ2S Community," she explains.

by Kelly Wilk

## Community Cornerstone

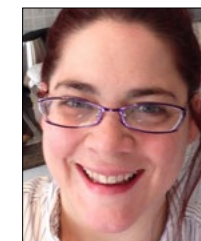
In addition to delivering training to service members, Bottineau also delivers workshops to external stakeholders, including hate crime presentations in partnership with *Egale Canada* nationwide, as well as internationally to police services in Montenegro, St Vincent, and the Grenadines. It seems that with leadership, perseverance, and dedication, Bottineau has spearheaded a lot of positive change both inside and beyond TPS.

"By being a visible queer woman in policing it has helped to change the conversation within the institution, resulting in an expanded three-hour LGBTQ2S training session, Gender Neutral Washrooms at police headquarters, and hosting the 2nd *World LGBTQ Conference for Criminal Justice Professionals*,"

"By being in this position I am visible, and I make myself available to both LGBTQ community members and TPS, including members who are not able to bring their whole selves to work. I believe the only way forward is through ongoing conversations and education. I have seen the positive change both within the service, as well as in the community. We still have work to do and we are not perfect, but I truly believe we are moving in the right direction, and we can only get there with the help and partnerships of community members."

Well said, and thanks for your continued service Danielle!

Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer and single mom to red-headed, Irish, Aries boy who is growing up way too fast. Follow their adventures on PinkPlayMags' parenting blog "The Ginger Gent", and also on Kelly's own website and blog, *Brave. Creative. Me* at [www.kellywilk.ca](http://www.kellywilk.ca)



  
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Please check our sister site's listings of events that are happening from a screen near you [www.thebuzzmag.ca/events](http://www.thebuzzmag.ca/events)

Our regular events print section will return as soon as venues start reopening.

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## From The Heart

*By Mychol Scully*

### Being... Visible

**As a bisexual cis-gender white man, I often comment on the issue of “bi-visibility.”**

The fact that I live my life today presenting primarily as a GAY man is driven in large part by the resistance I experience from gay men in my community when I self-identify as bisexual. I would go so far as to say that I experience more resistance and bisexual stereotyping from gay men than I do from heterosexuals of either sex.

At this point in my life journey, I do prefer the emotional and physical companionship of cis-gender men, but I am by no means “vagina-phobic,” as many of the gay men I associate with appear to be. I remain emotionally committed to my former wife, and I do have an intellectual and physical appreciation of the female form and the female spirit.

There is a common misconception that “being bisexual” is a transitional state somewhere between “being straight” and “being gay.” The reality is that “being bisexual” is its own legitimate identity... not “sitting on the fence,” nor “being greedy” (an awful assertion), nor “in the [gay] closet.” All of these terrible tropes deny the wondrous and wonderful diversity of sexual identities of which humans are capable. In an effort to simplify the innate complexity of human sexuality, many retreat to some version of a binary reality... a person is “this” or “that” but never “either” or “neither.”

Since coming out to myself as bisexual when I was in my late teens, I have tried to make myself as visible as possible, by presenting myself authentically and initiating thoughtful conversations with peers and strangers about the nature of human sexuality and the amazing diversity available to us. Too often, our available options are limited by cultural norms that tend to attempt to make all “non-standard” identities invisible. That’s why I try so hard to BE VISIBLE when living my life.

Much of the so-called “phobia” associated with queer identities has more to do with fear of the unknown than any true phobic response to a specific individual or classification.

By making the unknown known, we move incrementally forward in shared understanding and appreciation of our differences, and we move away from the fearful responses that separate us and compromise our equitable existence among the human family.

Be authentic. Be visible. Be present.

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



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# Winter Horoscopes

JANUARY 2021 to MARCH 2021

by Julie Antoinette

## Aries (March 21 – April 20)

You feel confused about a long-time friend. You thought you knew them so well but lately their mask seems to be slipping. It's hard to trust your own observations against your memories because of the inner conflict it causes. Consider perhaps that you are changing too. Some things break our heart but fix our vision.

## Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

If your anxiety feels heightened lately, take comfort that you are not alone. Your requirement for comfort and security are currently threatened by global circumstance. Your challenge is to find your happiness within the concept of "less is more." Remember, life begins at the end of your comfort zone.

## Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

In these uncertain times, many feel insecure and grasp to maintain stability. Not you. The present conditions are perfectly suited for Gemini to thrive. Multiple possibilities open up before you creating the opposite dilemma – "What to choose?" The Japanese word for "crisis" also dubs for "opportunity." The best choice is always that which excites you the most. Follow your excitement.

## Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

Your sign is the least bothered by the current lockdown measures. Just like the crab carrying its home on its back wherever it goes, you too are all about your home. Working from home is the most singular delight you could imagine, not to mention the home improvements you've been making! Hunker down in your bunker!

## Leo (July 23 – August 22)

That thing you want to do, you should go do it. That brilliant idea that came to you in a moment of celestial inspiration gently knocks from beyond an invisible door. Will you answer? You are the vessel by which it will be birthed into reality to benefit many. Release any doubt or fear of failure. You are merely the vessel. It does not belong to you alone, it belongs to all of us.

## Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

You must truly understand the importance of boundaries. There is a danger in opening yourself up to invasion by unscrupulous parasitical types. Do not deny the power of the word "NO" with no explanation required. It will serve you greatly in preserving your energy, stability and sanity. Someone wise once said, "The only people who get upset about you setting boundaries are the ones who were benefiting from you having none."

## Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Karma is hard at work checking and balancing her accounts. Why is that unjust thing happening to you? Flip the roles and think back for your answer. How did that precious gift ever make its way into your life? Apply the same thought principle. Karma never loses an address. Now that you know how karma works, make it work for you.

## Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

Sometimes our minds lead us into dark places. Recently there has been ample fodder for irrational fears of all types. You must be a diligent gatekeeper in what you allow your mind to entertain. One thought can quickly snowball into a black ball of raging anxiety. The great philosopher Nietzsche said, "...If thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee."

## Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

You take great pride in the quality of your craft. If the world only knew the dedication to detail you embrace, the utmost selectivity you exercise, the patience you exert, the years you have given to build your craft and skill, you'd surely be more appreciated. Time to appreciate yourself. Stop working for a pittance and start charging more. How can you expect others to value you when you allow yourself to be devalued?

## Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

You have a brilliant business idea that fits society's current crisis perfectly. Don't dismiss it as impractical or unprofitable. Set to work and draw up a business plan and then take action. Many success stories have the humblest of beginnings. You and others will mutually benefit from this effort. Society as a whole will be improved thanks to you.

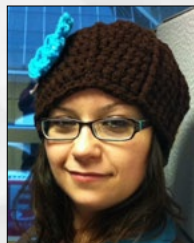
## Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

You've grown accustomed to relying on the presence of something in your life. You've always considered that presence a "sure thing" to be accessed whenever you wished. But something has changed and it is no longer available to you. Perhaps you took it for granted? The good thing is that now you truly understand the value it brought you. Bear this in mind for future gifts that are bestowed upon you.

## Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

It is time to learn the power of goodbye. The gift of closure is one of those lessons in life that we all must embrace. The burning of bridges, the final nail in the coffin, crossing the Rubicon, let bygones be bygones. Allow yourself to feel the pain of loss, but also, allow yourself to feel the relief of blessed endings and the heralding of new beginnings.

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



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