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presents

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Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Leather, and Queer
Community Seasonal • Winter 2014

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Selamat tinggal

Dovidenia

Agur

Adiós

Tot ziens

Farvel

Looking Back

Slán

Näkemiin

Poroporoaki

Viszontlátásra

Goodbye

Au revoir

Ha det bra

Tchau

Hwyl fawr

Viso gero

Do widzenia Auf Wiedersehen

Tam biêt

Toronto's Queer Community
says a fond farewell to WorldPride,
and Jeff Harrison bids adieu to PinkPlayMags.



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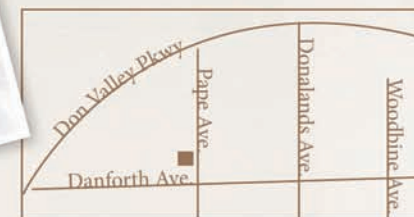
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PinkPlayMags has a newly designed website
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We have done a **MAJOR** makeover (and we know you will agree, we're looking **HOT**)!

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From the Publisher

Publisher



Antoine Elhashem

Here we come to the conclusion of our spectacular year celebrating and covering WorldPride 2014, the biggest LGBTQ+ festival in the history of our community, which our wonderful City of Toronto hosted back in June.

This special edition is a collection of interviews with community folks reminiscing about what it all meant to them. I am being asked to do the same thing and answer the questions.

I will be giving very quick answers as I need some space on this page to relay some other important matters, so here we go:

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I had the honour and the privilege to have been the volunteer Chair of Marketing & Communication Committee for WorldPride 2014, so I spent the festival basically attending every official ceremony or event—it was great!

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

People. Smiles, hugs, and so much love. Also all the visitors I met from other parts of the world.

What surprised you most about the festival?

Not much, I knew what was being planned—LOL!

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

Every single moment I was out for WorldPride I was proud and happy. One special moment was meeting and really getting to chat with the designer of the rainbow flag Gilbert Baker, very inspiring.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

Toronto ROCKS.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

Our community is big, diverse, and wonderful.

And now to the heart of my letter: Goodbye to my Editor-in-Chief, Jeff Harrison. With the wrap-up of this issue I have to say goodbye to one of our dear team members and my partner in crime on PinkPlayMags. He is moving on to pursue other exciting opportunities, I am hearing a novel is in the works. Whatever Jeff will do next, I have no doubt he will do it spectacularly!

Jeff was my first choice for an editor-in-chief when we decided to launch PinkPlayMags, and I can't imagine having done it without him. I thank him for the laughs, for the ideas, for the heated debates on what makes a better article or a hotter cover, and all because we truly loved what we were creating. PinkPlayMags meant a lot to both of us, we knew exactly what we wanted to present our community with: a smart, happy, vibrant, serious, fun magazine, that many would enjoy reading. Jeff, my friend, I believe we did it and then some.

In spring we will be welcoming a new editor-in-chief. I will introduce you to him next issue.

The year 2015 is the 8th year of PinkPlayMags and we have a very exciting one ahead. Just to tease you a bit, we have chosen four of the most popular issues we ever published and we are going back to visit the themes and the photo essay characters and see where they are today. We're calling it: The Year of the Sequels.

Happy Holidays everyone,

Antoine Elhashem
publisher@pinkplaymags.com

winterplay!

Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Leather, and Queer
Community Seasonal from PinkPlayMags
Free • Winter 2014

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Cover Concept: Antoine Elhashem

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From the Editor

Editor



Goodbye is always difficult to do. I honestly cannot believe I've been editor-in-chief of PinkPlayMags for seven years—wow, time really flies! So much has happened it all seems a blur of impending deadlines. I jest, but looking back there are so many key moments that stand out, accomplishments I am incredibly proud of.

When Antoine first offered me the job, I was fresh off the patio of Zelda's, hungrily pursuing my writing career. I was quite flattered by the proposal...then completely overwhelmed! I was a writer; I'd never edited anyone's work but my own. And yet...I knew I could do it. I knew I could learn so much, about my writing, about the people in our incredibly diverse queer community. Boy, did I! And I've made many, many wonderful friends and allies along the way.

I think we really began to hit our stride with the Marriage is Murder/Seduction issue in autumn of 2008. It was the first big step towards going quarterly from biannual, and it was a scary one! Fitting then that the following autumn was the Monster Issue with the ridiculously talented Donnarama as our beastly centrefold.

Then I welcomed my sister, Shelley, on board as writer for "From the Heart"—the column that's really been the soul of our mag, with a history of powerful writers.

The Sister, Mother, Goddess issue was one of my favourites and seeing Shelley transformed into the Blue Madonna on the cover was inspiring.

From there I came out of the closet a second time, as I admitted to the world that I was a geek, a nerd and a gamer—virtually unheard of in our community at the time. And yet, something that seems awesomely common now. I was gifted the rare opportunity to work with close friend and DC comic artist, J. Bone, on a fun, yet poignant, graphic novella on bullying.

I re-visited that very painful past part of my life when I was bullied hard-core for 10 years in school. It's still a very tender spot for me and nothing will trigger my full wrath faster than seeing someone being picked on—that's when my inner Champion rides to the rescue and does war upon the evil-doer! The Geek issue also made me realize there was no internet back then; when I got home from the hell that was school, it ended for me. I was mercifully free of it for two days every weekend. I cannot image how my life would have been with cyberbullying on my computer, on my phone...it would have been so much darker for me. I cannot image how kids deal with it in today's modern world.

I was reminded of one of the most important publishing credo's that Antoine and I agreed on from the very beginning: there is enough negative, enough

bad in the world; we will look at the serious issues, but we will always publish with the voice of the positive, the empathetic, the supportive, the kind.

The whirlwind continued: our steamy Love & Sex issue where we pushed the boundaries of our cover; Cyndi Lauper—a personal hero since high school—was featured in an intimate chat about projects close to her heart. George Smitherman hosted Thanksgiving that fall and winter brought Luxurious scandal! We explored laughter, diversity and burlesque—I was a human book at the Metro Ref Library. What a unique experience that was! Then it was the end of the world as we knew it. We explored the Mayan myth with a look at the rebirth of a new world through body, mind and spirit. We had our first candid conversation with the community and it proved to be one of our most popular issues ever. You are our readers and what you have to say matters deeply to us.

It was here that I got to stretch my creative fiction wings again. It was here I realized I yearned to return to my own writing.

Then we explored the seasons, which was showcased so lovingly by another very talented friend of mine, Wade Shaw—his graphics serving as the inspiration for my fiction the year before.

In the blink of an it was WorldPride—what a year that's been! Be sure to flip to my final Looking Back column to see my answers to the questions we asked you, our readers.

I've been in such good hands over the years with a roster of über talented writers, artists and designers. There have been so many I just do not have the space to list you all, but know it has been such a joy to work with each and every one of you. Mama Kim Dobie, thank you for all the care and guidance.

There are three things especially that I have accomplished with the magazine that I am personally very proud of—my babies if you will.

The first is our Fiction column. Antoine immediately loved the idea when I proposed it and I've been so thrilled to feature original stories and novel excerpts from the likes of authors Kristyn Dunnion, Alec Butler,

Farzana Doctor, Liz Bugg and Michael Rowe.

The second is our Hot Artist column. One of my first professional writing gigs was penning this very article for Gay Guide Toronto. I loved introducing local LGBTQ+ artists to our community; I loved it so much that I continued it in PPM. We have such talent in this city that often goes ignored and I wanted to give it the attention it deserves.

Finally, mentoring new writers. Almost every issue I sought to take a budding writer under my wing, give them a juicy article and spend extra time with them honing it into a full colour, glossy clip for their portfolio. Many of the feature writers you enjoy today were once fledgling authors.

Antoine and I have always called our publication "the little mag that could." Boy has it! With the generous support of our older sister, The Pink Pages Directory—who proudly celebrated her 25th year this past autumn—we've seen the birth of the INSPIRE Awards and our new baby sister publication theBUZZ added to our family. Our success in an often challenging publishing world makes me a very proud daddy.

Antoine, what can I say? Thanks for one hell of a ride! The discussions, the debates, the arguments, the brainstorming, all the laughter we shared. There were even a few tears. Thanks most of all for the love and such a wonderful platform to explore my voice as writer, as editor. I value my time at the helm of PinkPlayMags more than I can ever express. I can honestly say this relationship has taught me more than most boyfriends. Keep up the wonderful work and I look forward to following PPM's continued journey.

And you, our readers, THANK YOU, for all your support.

Until we meet again,

Jeff



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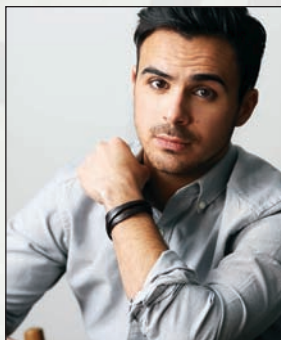
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Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

ADAMO RUGGIERO

by Jumol Royes

Adamo Ruggiero is perhaps best known for his role on the hit television series *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, but this former child star is all grown up. Whether he's guest starring on CTV's *Saving Hope* or participating in the NOH8 Campaign, Adamo is firing on all creative cylinders. I sat down to talk to him about his WorldPride experience.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

Working. I presented my show, *TRUTH/DARE: A Satire* – a live stage reading/multimedia show that pays homage to Madonna's infamous documentary, *Truth or Dare*, during WorldPride. It was a busy week, but I made time to walk the strip and enjoy my line bypass access. I even managed to catch a piece of the parade.

What did you enjoy most about WorldPride?

Other than my line bypass wristband? The diversity of the audience and the energy of curiosity and trust. People were curious to go to events trusting that they'd have a good time. All the rules were broken; everybody came to see everything.

What surprised you most about WorldPride?

I was delighted to see major acts headlining events, especially since this was the fourth WorldPride. On the other hand, I was (and wasn't) surprised by the lack of acknowledgement from City Hall.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ community?

I enjoy the idea that when you're a member of the LGBTQ community, you always have a home. That concept is at the epicenter of what a village is all about. Toronto became a true village during WorldPride and I felt proud to see my city come together.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

They'll remember the traffic! Aside from that, I hope everybody left feeling hopeful. I hope it reminded people that LGBTQ rights are something to be celebrated and to continuously fight for. We can't be over it yet; we can't be complacent. We need to honour the struggles, teach the next generation and care for the generation that came before.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

We exist. We are invisible minorities until we make ourselves visible. So out comes the colourful rainbow flag. I hope Toronto showed that it's not just about us; it's about allies. We all coexist together. And the last universal message is: It's ok to day drink.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

DEB PEARCE

by Kelly Wilk

Deb Pearce is a force to be reckoned with in the LGBTQ+ community, for twenty years of fundraising for HIV/AIDS Awareness and breast cancer. From former Drag King fame (my favorite kind of King) and performer, to emcee on notable radio shows such as Proud F.M and Jack F.M, she rocks!

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I have been hosting Pride for as long as I can remember: different stages, openings, ceremonies, and the launch. I guess Pride Toronto said it was a no-never-mind to ask me to be part of that process but on a huge, huge scale. Being the emcee at The Big Gay Sing with Toronto Singing Out choir, I enjoyed the environment of a group event. I think that energy is really special for our community because so many times we don't always want to come together and do the same things. So having varied representation from our community under one roof, wanting the same thing, which is just to be awesome and gay and sing, felt really heartwarming!

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

Being on the stage at the opening ceremonies was a moment I could live in for the rest of my life. I love the rush! Moments leading up to it, I was jumping up and down and trying not to get winded, but really excited and I couldn't wait to get out there and try to help to be a voice for our community to people that I knew very well were not community members who just happened by this

spectacular event. I hoped to do our very vast community proud by representing them.

What surprised you most about festival?

I don't know about surprised, nothing really but...

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

One thing I was particularly proud of was that the entire city and surrounding area of Toronto got involved with showing our acceptance here. We were able to represent who we are as a people from the art galleries and museums.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

That Toronto is an intensely artistic, highly creative group of people and that yes some of us like to be naked, a lot of us like to do drag, but there is a huge spectrum of what the LGBTQ community is in Toronto. I think WorldPride was really able to show off all the colours of our rainbow that way.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

The tag line for WorldPride was "Rise Up" and it's what we do as a group of people. People will constantly and consistently try to knock us down and that gives us more fodder to the flames to rise up against adversity, and homophobia and transphobia.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

SCOTT RAYTER

by Jeffrey Luscombe

Scotty Rayter is the Associate Director of the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto and one of the organizers for The WorldPride Human Rights Conference in Toronto.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I spent most of it working at the 2014 Human Rights Conference at University of Toronto. I also was also able to see Tegan and Sarah at the closing ceremonies. They were incredible!

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

That would be the success of the Human Rights Conference. We brought people from fifty-three countries and were able to fully fund the air travel, food and accommodations for some fifty-five or so of those people. That allowed us to have a diversity of voices and experience and backgrounds from the world over with a real focus on Africa, Latin American and South East Asia.

What surprised you most about festival?

How well it all turned out. Even with two years of organizing you never know how it will go. This is the first time the conference was on this scale and the first time that WorldPride was actually tied in with it. I was also surprised at how much people got behind it. And Uganda became a real focus. We brought in ten people from Uganda. Initially the government rejected their visa applications but Chris Alexander [Minister

of Citizenship and Immigration] worked with us and eventually got them in. We didn't get everybody we wanted but we got most of them here.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

I guess with just seeing all those people show up. We built it and they came. There were hundreds of people swarming in and out of the conference and I was proud that this was happening here in Toronto. And also the three big events open to the public at Convocation Hall. And we had gorgeous weather.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

It would be great to see the Human Rights Conference be the first of many tied in with WorldPride. People can come for the party, but we discuss these questions of human rights as well.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

If there is a universal message I'd like to think there's a larger push towards universal human rights and also the idea of listening, supporting and validating the experiences of others and offering help where one can.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

RYAN G. HINDS

by Kelly Wilk

Ryan G. Hinds is a drag artist who blends theatre, music and dance making him a dynamic performer. He appears at clubs and festivals like Pride, Nuit Blanche, Rhubarb and Fringe to name a few. He has traveled around Canada and the United States taking his enthusiastic and exciting flare with him.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I spent World Pride onstage singing and dancing in various shows, kissing stunningly sexy tourists, catching cat naps in Allan Gardens, and finding reasons to stay awake until the sun came up Monday morning.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

As a performer you dream of the day you can stand onstage in front of thousands, singing your heart out! There's nothing like looking out into a crowd of people who are affected by what you're doing. At my Around The World revue, by the time we got to the finale, all we could see were waving hands and people dancing and having fun being together... but at Stonewall 45, people were moved and emotional. When you're onstage in front of people, it's impossible to not feel some of what they are feeling; during WorldPride, I loved seeing audiences reacting with joy or respectful silence.

What surprised you most about the festival?

That it went so smoothly! It was a massive

undertaking, and the Pride Toronto team deserves major kudos for pulling it off. Not every city does, but we set the bar high for the future. From the backstage perspective, everyone was 100% prepared and focused; festivals like WorldPride can be high pressure, but everyone kept their cool and pulled together to keep it smooth.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

There was a magnificent double rainbow in the sky that literally wrapped everyone up in its colours. For a few minutes, we weren't just "Over the Rainbow," we were over, under, around, beside and inside it. Everyone was smiling the same smile under that rainbow, and I felt connected to everyone else who was looking at it.

What's the one thing you hope people will always remember about WorldPride in Toronto?

That the various factions that make up our community can get along. We all might be different letters under the LGBTTTQQI2SAA umbrella, but we're still family.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

Every human being is worthy of dignity, pride, and respect, and no-one anywhere ever should be ashamed of who and what they are.

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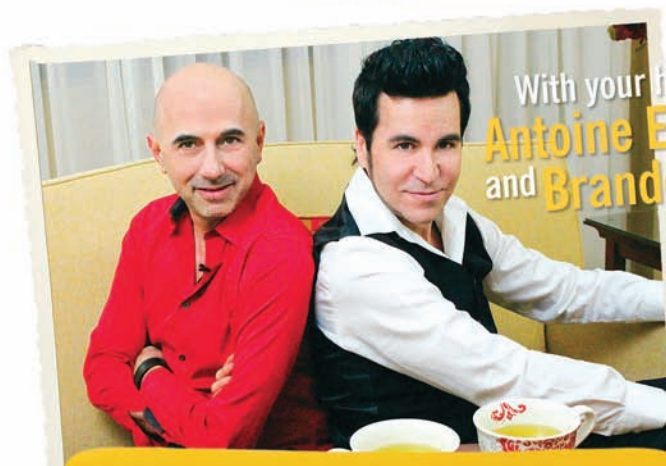
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Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

ANDREW MURPHY

by Bryen Dunn

Inside Out (www.insideout.ca) exists to challenge attitudes and change lives through the promotion, production and exhibition of queer film. Andrew Murphy joined the Inside Out LGBT Film Festival in 2012 to serve as Director of Programming for its Toronto and Ottawa festivals. Born and raised in Halifax, Nova Scotia, he worked with the Atlantic Film Festival for 13 years as Programming Manager, and in 2014 he was invited to serve on the Berlin International Film Festival Teddy Jury that judges all LGBT content in the festival.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

Much of my WorldPride was consumed in the Bent Lens: Pride on Screen program, our collaboration between Inside Out and TIFF. It was a retrospective film series featuring the likes of Derek Jarman and Bruce LaBruce, an LGBT Rights film series, and a film favourites series both indoors and out. I was out and about working the various events, so I sadly didn't get to participate in very many of the other WorldPride activities.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

With any special event like this celebrating who we are, I think what is always most enjoyable is hanging out with friends old and new. The chance to cheer, dance, listen, learn, be challenged, and truly be oneself in celebration.

What surprised you most about the festival?

I applaud the stamina and dedication of all of those who had a hand in the planning of it. It was a massive undertaking and Toronto never looked more desirable. Congratulations!

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

Working for Inside Out the past three years has been a very rewarding experience, so being able to share a small part of that with the greater LGBTQ pride fabric was fantastic. It was an amazing feeling standing before a packed house of more than 500 "HedHeads" with John Cameron Mitchell, while we presented a wildly fun and successful sing-along *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* as part of our Broken Hearts Film Club series at the TIFF Bell Lightbox. If listening to that many people singing "Origin of Love" at the top of their lungs in perfect harmony doesn't make you proud, nothing will!

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

I hope the general takeaway is holding dear that sense of community, celebration, and overall happy spell the GTA was under during that time. Can you bottle that? It will come in handy in the dead of winter.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

Pride's mission aims to celebrate the history, courage, diversity and future of Toronto's LGBTQ communities through its various activities. Despite those concerned about its continuing growth and tiers of corporate sponsorship, that bottom line stays consistent in that this is a special time of year to celebrate who we are, and to raise awareness and help those communities in other parts of the world that don't have the freedoms we do.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

SCOTT DAGOSTINO

by Jeffrey Luscombe

Scott Dagostino is the manager of Glad Day Bookshop, Toronto's oldest bookstore and the world's longest surviving LGBTQ+ bookstore.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I spent most of it here at Glad Day. We had so many great readings here and broke a sales record on the Saturday. It was great fun.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

I think all the new people seeing our shop for the first time. We love to see people excited about our little queer bookshop. We really are the last of the old guard. I think we are the best bookstore in the country and I wish more people would come in and see that.

What surprised you most about the festival?

I don't want to sound negative, but it wasn't as big as the hype. But WorldPride was great for us. The number of people who said they were leaving the city because of WorldPride surprised me. A lot of our regulars left. For every two who came in, one left. But from what I saw it was fantastic. This is not a criticism of WorldPride.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

That's hard to say. I have those moments weekly. That's the beauty of Glad Day. But a couple I do remember. First, a bunch of kids in their twenties came in and one saw the middle eastern section and yelled "They have

gay Muslim books!" That made me happy, bridging gaps in the queer world. The other thing is just the diversity of people coming in, a panoply of people. And of course Proud Voices, the readings here that Michael Erickson put together.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

When we say 'we are here, we are queer, get used to it' that it is global. We have to always be careful that gay rights don't become a platform for middle class white gay guys. Some people said after the fight for gay marriage, "Well that's a relief! Now we're done." But we are never done. There is work to be done. We need to help our neighbours and we need a more global view of sexuality. There are queer people in Iran or Africa who want freedom to invent their own queerness. I would love to see what a trans Iranian performance artist would be like or a gay bar in Mozambique.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

We should just steal the Bible's phrase "love your neighbour." The Human Rights conference was a great idea. Let's get people to mingle and bridge what divides us. We tweak borders at pride through conversation, fun and also sex. Humanity trumps ideology in long run.



Photo Credit: Paul Argo

Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

RANDY BOYD

by Bryen Dunn

Randy joined Spearhead Leather Denim Social Club (www.spearheadtoronto.com) in October of 2011 after witnessing the camaraderie and brotherhood shared by members of the Club. Randy was Mr. Spearhead 2013 and is now the President of the longest continuously running gay organization in Canada of its kind (established in 1970). As a Member of Spearhead L.D.S.C., Randy enjoys giving back to the community by holding social and fundraising events for charities. Spearhead has raised thousands of dollars for charity over the years as well as "Spearheadin'" some of Toronto's favourite events.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

Since Spearhead Leather Denim Social Club was nominated for an INSPIRE Award in the category of Organization of the Year, we were invited to join them on their float for the WorldPride Parade. It was priceless when the gas generator for the DJ's sound system on the float ran out. Who would have predicted that the parade would be six hours long!

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

I enjoyed seeing international visitors come to our city to see what Toronto has to offer. There were many parties and activities to choose from during WorldPride. It was an honour that Toronto was selected as the first city in North America to host the WorldPride festivities.

What surprised you most about the festival?

I was very surprised at the costs involved to reserve a spot in the Streetfair during WorldPride.

The insurance required for a spot in the Community Fair or the Marketplace was quite expensive and not affordable for local smaller groups to participate.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

Unfortunately the leather, rubber and fetish community is often left in the background. So far back in the line that there is little or no coverage on the television broadcast of the parade. That said, I'm proud to have had the opportunity to be able to participate in the Flag Raising Ceremony, the mass wedding at Casa Loma and the WorldPride Parade. Our pride will grow as more countries around the world are also able to express themselves and have equal rights. Then it can be truly called a global LGBTQ+ community.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

We are a world class city with a diverse range of ethnicity and cultures.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

We have come a long way but there is still much left to do. We are fortunate to have marriage equality in Canada, and to live in a country where you can be open about your sexuality.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

ANDREA HOUSTON

by Jeff Harrison

Andrea Houston is an award-winning journalist and advocate specializing in queer issues. Her work has been published in *The Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Life*, *PinkPlayMags* and *NOW Magazine*.

How did you spend WorldPride in Toronto?

Meeting activists from all around the world and advocating for Canada to do more for international LGBTQ rights. Before WorldPride, I co-founded #ENDhateLaws, which advocates for the repeal of international anti-gay laws, which are still on the books in 82 countries, six of which call for the death penalty.

#ENDhateLaws was so proud to march in the Dyke March, the Trans March and the Pride parade.

What did you most enjoy about the celebration?

There were so many profound and inspiring moments. But my favourite moment was at the very end, dancing with friends and international activists at Dundas Square. I'll never forget looking back across the square, at the thousands of people singing as the sun began to set over the city. It started to lightly rain, but we all continued dancing anyway. With a beaming smile, Pride ED Kevin Beaulieu said, "I ordered a rainbow." And just then, like a scene from a movie, a rainbow appeared across the sky. It was magical.

What surprised you most about the festival?

The importance that was placed on international human rights by everyone. The whole city stepped up with WorldPride-themed events, panels and exhibits. We truly painted the city in rainbows. My only criticism

was that WorldPride was too short. It should have been WorldPride month.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

Weeks before the opening ceremonies, #ENDhateLaws revealed that the Canadian government had denied the travel visas to the entire Ugandan delegation. It took some pushing from media and activists, but eventually the government approved the visas to allow the delegation travel to Toronto. The dedication of Toronto activists and citizens who put the pressure on a shameful and embarrassing decision by our government made me very proud.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

That the fight for justice does not stop. We must continue to fight and stand in solidarity with LGBTQ people around the world and here at home.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

We can never lose sight of what Pride is. It is a protest march in the ongoing global movement for LGBTQ rights. It is not a corporate brand. Many people do not have the freedom, safety or privilege to march openly. We must never forget that. We must never forget LGBTQ people live with discrimination and violence every day. Pride will always be a profound celebration of sexual and gender identity and expression, a remembrance of LGBTQ progress, and a vivid beacon for solidarity for those who live in fear.

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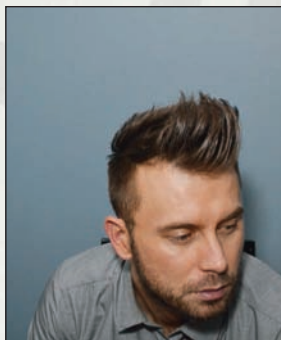


Photo Credit: Wil Craddock

Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

WIL CRADDOCK

by Bryen Dunn

William Craddock has been a volunteer with the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (www.cgl.ca) for the past five years and a member of the Board of Directors for the past three. He currently sits as Vice President and Chair of the Communications Committee. William's passion for the CLGA's mandate has led him to take roles in many of the organization's other areas of operation, including curating exhibitions, assisting in the collection and archiving of materials, fundraising, and developing The Pin Button Project. Outside of the CLGA, William works at the Art Gallery of Ontario in fund development and communications. He is also an artist practicing in the areas of photography, video, documentary film, digital media, collage, and interactivity.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

WorldPride was an exciting and energizing time for me, with many great highlights. At the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, we opened the exhibition *Imaging Home*, which explored emotional stories of the struggles for LGBTQ rights and freedoms in some of the most phobic regions in the world. I also spent a beautiful afternoon at the Pin Button Pride mural on the northwest corner of Church and Wellesley making pin buttons with those who wanted to drop by. The mural itself features a selection of activist pin buttons from the past several decades, each that invokes so many memories and questions.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

WorldPride brought with it so much enthusiasm and excitement. People were talking about it for weeks both before and after. It also encouraged an admirable level of participation from groups across the city, especially from organizations that have previously not been directly involved. I really enjoyed all of this. I also really enjoyed the number of people from around the world that came. It was really wonderful to welcome some of these individuals to the CLGA.

What surprised you most about the festival?

What was surprising, yet really rewarding, was the number of people that really expressed a strong interest in the historical aspects of LGBTQ community during WorldPride. Often we get caught up with current issues and forget the struggles of the past. It was inspiring to see the interest from people of all ages and backgrounds around our shared histories. The CLGA had several displays around the city, including City Hall and the Toronto Reference Library, which detailed bits and pieces of our past.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

The collective feeling of global connectedness and community that encircled WorldPride. The festival helped to encourage an awareness of a common identity and the need to support each other in moving LGBTQ rights forward around the world. The *Imaging Home* exhibition at the CLGA was an incredible example of this collective environment of support, bringing people together to share stories, learn from experience, and express compassion, understanding, and encouragement.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

I hope that people will remember the energy that was injected into WorldPride and renew it, and keep it alive year-round and for the next Pride. That kind of coming together is what's needed to strengthen our community and city.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

Too often we are divided by ideas surrounding who we are, our identities, our communities, our beliefs, and the organizations we support. I believe the message of WorldPride is to remind us that we are all part of one community, and although we often get caught up in subsections of this community, we must remember our common connection to keep our rights alive, and to grow them.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

MATTHEW CUTLER

by Jeffrey Luscombe

Matthew Cutler is the Manager of Resource Development and Communications at The 519, responsible for community and member engagement activities at The Centre. A life-long volunteer, he is dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the time, talent and treasure that people contribute to our communities' success.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I spent it in two places: Green Space and Pride House. Green Space is still a favourite place where friends gather during Pride and Pride House was an interesting addition this year. We had twelve screens showing World Cup soccer in the ballroom. It was very sporty and very low-key compared to the stuff outside. It was also a great opportunity to try out the Pride House pavilion space for the 2015 Pan Am Games in Toronto.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

It seemed like the whole city was into it. In a way I never saw the city come together like that before. The rainbow flag was everywhere: banks, businesses, City Hall. Having that moment where the whole city embraced the community was very cathartic. You will see that kind of excitement again with Pan Am Games this summer. People want to be in on the excitement.

What surprised you most about the festival?

How many people came here from other places. I was skeptical but hopeful, whether they could pull it off and they did—in a big way. We were busier than we have ever been before.

What moment made you most proud to be

part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

In the World Cup Lounge we had a group of Columbians who came for WorldPride who had come up to watch Columbia play along with everyone else. It was a great moment. It was something special to see us find common ground through sport and I got really excited about what will come this year with the Pan Am Games. We are rebranding the building to make the 519 look and feel even more like Pride House. Even locals will connect with it differently.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

I think one thing is the rainbow on Sunday. To use the rainbow as an analogy, no one could have ever planned it but it was perfect. Those at Pride Toronto and the 519 try to set the stage for those moments. Hopefully those personal and serendipitous moments seem magical in a way, but they are made possible by a great deal of work on the backend.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

I guess it's different in every city its been offered in and I would hate to think what happened in Toronto is what it had to be for other WorldPride cities. But I hope one message is that around the world gay, lesbian and trans people are still fighting. WorldPride gave Toronto the opportunity show what it is like to be LGBT in Toronto. I want future WorldPrides to show what is unique about being LGBT in those places. Madrid will deliver a spectacular WorldPride in three years.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

ROBERT YOUNG

by Jeff Harrison

Robert Young (www.bodylanguage.to.com) has been teaching his own special brand of yoga—Yoga Fusion—for 13 years. A unique combination of poses, Yoga Fusion, blends the concepts of gymnastics, aerobics and dance with Ashtanga, Hatha and Pilates providing a complete body workout. Robert is also a certified massage therapist and Reiki master.

How did you spend WorldPride in Toronto?

Walking in the streets, drinking beer and providing a home base for out-of-town friends in the parade.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

Hosting the world! Seeing all the new faces; looking at all the corporations willing to jump in and support it all.

What surprised you most about the festival?

That we couldn't take our drinks with us from bar to bar, stage to stage—by now we should

have the whole street licensed like they have for years in Montreal Pride.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

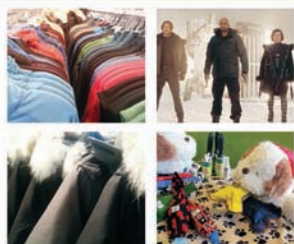
Hosting the people from Simcoe Pride for their float in the Toronto WorldPride parade. Watching them get dressed, put on their make-up, getting all psyched for the big event, delivering them to the beginning of it all and then watching them in all their glory marching down Yonge Street.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

How open our city is for all people to express themselves freely without public repercussions.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

Diversity and how it's okay to be different.



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Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

MIKKA GIA

by cee sando

Photographer and barber Mikka Gia was born and raised in Ottawa, then moved to Toronto at 18 to study culinary arts at George Brown before choosing to pursue her passion for art and photography. Known for her evocative portraits challenging traditional notions of gender, Mikka's first gallery showing was at the prestigious LGBT Leslie Lowman gallery in New York. When not working on a photography series, Mikka can be found at Original Grooming Experts giving the gentlemen of Toronto flawless fades, or walking Queen West with her beloved French Bulldog, Luigi.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I was fortunate enough to have a great start to this year's Pride with a great growth experience: I was part of the 10x10 Photography Project group exhibit alongside nine other amazing LGBTQ photographers, at the Gladstone Hotel. As for the weekend itself, my best friend of 21 years came to Toronto, and she had never experienced Pride before. On Saturday she and I headed down to Church Street wandering around, running into familiar faces and friends. We decided to hit up one of the stages beside Crews and Tangos and spent the afternoon drinking vodka sodas and dancing until we broke a sweat. In the evening we headed out to one of Toronto's hottest parties, Yes Yes Y'all, and danced up a storm. Sunday afternoon we parted ways as she had to head back to Ottawa and I spent the afternoon with family and friends, drinking champagne and enjoying grilled lobster. All in all, great art, great friends, and great food added up to a pretty amazing WorldPride for me.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

This year was great because I had my best friend with me and got to spend the weekend with new people, still running into old friends, which has been a pretty consistent element of Pride for me. I've gone almost every year since I was seventeen. The 10x10 exhibit was a focal point for me this time around, and I really enjoyed being able to share this work with some of my family, closest friends as well as the collection of talented artists in attendance.

What surprised you most about the festival?

There was a lot of media hype around WorldPride this year, but to be honest it didn't feel a whole lot different than other Prides that I've gone to in past years. Maybe more people and longer lines for the beer gardens, but overall it just felt like a weekend of celebration and fun.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

The LGBTQ community as well as the heterosexual community coming together to celebrate a beautiful weekend. I hope most, if not all, did just that.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

The good times, their friends, lovers, partners and the incredible celebration.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

It shouldn't take one weekend to celebrate who you are, but that you should celebrate who you are every damn day of your life.



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Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

MELISSA BENNER

by Kelly Wilk

Melissa Benner is an educator and a writer with rhythm. Her articles have been published in *Soiled and Seeded* magazine, *PinkPlayMags*, *Queeries*, and *Edible Toronto*. She enjoys playing the field—exploring subjects like food, erotica, and community organizing.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I spent World Pride with my queer family. Lapping up the energy in the city, enjoying a smorgasbord of debauchery. Dancing on city streets, dancing all slippery with beer in the 519 garden, dancing in the Dyke march, dancing in the Ryerson quad surrounded by rippling muscle and chill beats.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

I most enjoyed participating in the arts events heading into the big weekend. I was excited to be part of “The Sex Offensive” put on by Propeller Gallery. It was a great night where talented queers shared their journeys in sexuality, love, and gender through spoken word.

I also very much enjoyed being part of the “Dirty. Sexy. Queer.” lit event at Glad Day Bookshop where I read “choose your own adventure” erotica—a definite crowd pleaser/teaser.

What surprised you most about festival?

I was surprised by the sense of grandeur and ritual alongside the carnival. The marches epitomized this for me. I took part in both the Trans March on Friday night and the Dyke march on the Saturday. It felt fucking good to march down the middle of Yonge Street all decked out in rainbows.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

Two of my dear friends got married at the Grand Pride Casa Loma marriage ceremony the week heading into WorldPride. There were 120 couples from all over the world who made a public statement of their love that day. I was proud to celebrate with my friends on their big day and vicariously applaud every queer across the world with the courage to say “I do,” including those who paved the way to make it possible.

What’s the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

That we partied large and hard yet managed to have some alternative, artistic, and political moments amidst the revelry.

What do you believe WorldPride’s universal message is?

Get it together. Love is love.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

CHAD SIMON

by Jumol Royes

After serving five consecutive years on the Board for Pride Toronto (making him the longest serving Board Member), Chad Simon is looking forward to passing the mantle to the next generation of leaders and experiencing the festival as a spectator. I talked to Chad about what's next for him (do I hear wedding bells?) and got his insider's perspective on WorldPride.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

As a Pride Toronto Board Member, I had a great deal of responsibility during the festival including attending many events. It was taxing, but fun. There was a lot of energy and excitement in the air. I was relieved when it was all over and saw that everything was a success.

What did you enjoy most about WorldPride?

The scope of the event. The opening and closing ceremonies were my favourite. It really felt like we were opening and closing to the world.

What surprised you most about WorldPride?

To be honest, I was surprised that everything went according to plan and that there were no major hiccups, especially given the fact that there were 2,500+ volunteers and more than 2 million people in attendance.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

During the fireworks display at the opening ceremony, I saw people in tears, hugging and kissing. It was a very emotional experience that will always stay with me. I realized that we really hit on something special and captured it in that moment.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

I hope people remember that a group of dedicated volunteers and a very small staff were able to put on the largest festival in Canada where everyone had a good time. Toronto will forever be a place where a lot of people from different countries experienced their first Pride.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

No matter the religion, colour, ethnicity or country of origin, WorldPride is a true celebration of diversity. It is a festival where people feel safe and free to express themselves.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

BAMBII AKA KIRSTEN AZAN

by cee sando

Bambii aka Kirsten Azan is a Toronto based DJ, who spins everything from electronic and house to neo RnB, trap, new wave, and world sounds.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I spent my WorldPride DJing at the Sybil x Drip event on Church Street and at a queer and trans safe space event called Turnt.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

Pride is always amazing but WorldPride was just a much bigger production. The influx of people from all over the world was incredibly inspiring, humbling and eye opening. I felt as though I was in the midst of so many different contexts and narratives around queerness. Instead of feeling like a member of a minority, the presence of so many LGBTQ identified people in our great city made me feel connected to a larger queer all over the world. WorldPride truly was a testament to our interconnectedness across social locations.

What surprised you most about the festival?

I'm not sure—probably Crystal Waters at Blockorama. Very pleasant surprise!

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

Despite marginalization and in certain cases attempts at complete erasure, the queer community has made immense contributions to the art world across the globe. We have defied society's imposed limitations on our community, not to mention when class and

race intersectionality comes into play, and created the most unique, creative, and positive spaces to affirm ourselves. Specifically for me the origins of voguing and balls is a huge inspiration! It was so subversive, so much of a brave departure from mainstream heteronormative culture! What a sincere expression of community! I am proud of the way we love each other and the way we create incredible beauty out of nothing.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

In different parts of the world, being queer means living a restricted life of fear accompanied by a lack of rights. WorldPride placed us in a close proximity with some people from places where queer people experience daily the threat of physical/fatal harm or extreme persecution. We live in a very imperfect city, but perspective and certain acknowledgement of privileges is important. I hope no one forgets these narratives we encountered during world pride.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

I am not sure what WorldPride's universal message is meant to be...what I took away from the event is the fact that we really do exist and love each other everywhere.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

DONNARAMA VERSACE

by Jeff Harrison

Donnarama Versace, neé Vince Pincente, is a ridiculously talented drag queen known for her twistedly fun takes on Madonna, Barbara and Britney, just to name a few. Nothing is sacred and everything is hilarious—catch her strutting her stuff at the Legendary motherhouse El Convento Rico every weekend and Tuesday nights at Statler's for C.U.Next.Tuesdays.

How did you spend WorldPride in Toronto?

I spent WorldPride doing shows mostly. I was excited to be on an outdoor Pride stage in the evening of the weekend because I knew it would be kind of magical with so many people in attendance. I've been learning some different languages and phrases so it came in handy, let me tell you! There were Hungarian, Turkish, Indian, Romanian people jumping all about and it was great. I made it a point to exercise what I've learned in the past year to help communicate and conglomerate, but that's the only exercise I've done since then, nudge, nudge.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

The WorldPride Parade was a highlight—so many I loved and I was gagging over those costumes, the floats were spectacular. On the other hand, some stages I passed by or even heard from my house had spoken word poets who were very haunting and said some important things. When you get WorldPride you get the world and everyone, everything in it.

What surprised you most about the festival?

The same thing that surprises me every year to be honest: there's nary an incident or accident or fight. I wasn't surprised by much, I was only so happy to hear all those accents and languages... okay, I was surprised how happy the festival made me and others!

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

There were a lot of momentous moments! I think

when this Ukrainian group showed up at the Pride parade with their banner and they looked so pleased to be representing and they had a place to do it is when I lost my sh*t and my heart broke. Being here in Canada we offer that freedom of expression and opportunity, I was so proud in those moments to witness them and be part of them. Also, that street party thrown at Church and Maitland the weekend that was pre-Pride, was incredible. The businesses threw that for the community. I think it was Statler's and Garage that organized it, and I imagine that is what 1990s New York must've been like. I was go-go dancing onstage with DJ DaVinci, it was the highlight of my life! It was as they say, "deee-groovey!"

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

That we could all get together and organize something incredible and look amazing doing it—team work. As for any events or special moments, they were so scattered about, they'll have plenty of memories and a lot to remember about our fair city. We are very welcoming!

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

You know it's partly billed as a huge party with national and international entertainment, organizations, politicians, etc, and the other half of it seems to be the need to create this thing ever year someplace and make it work. I believe the message was we're doing this event and bringing people together regardless of anything or anyone. We've come down such a long road and this is where we are at right now: the ability and opportunity to reach out globally and unite. If you look back, this would be unthinkable, it's amazing. That our own mayor at the time wanted to rip down our flag from our own hosting city became a joke fast because people like that remind you of the reasons these things are happening. It's never just a party, it's a celebration!

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Photo Credit: Asad Rahman

Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

AAMER ESMAIL

by Bryen Dunn

Aamer Esmail is the Newcomer Community Engagement Coordinator at SOY—Supporting Our Youth (www.soytoronto.org). SOY is a community development program through the Sherbourne Health Centre designed to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ Youth in Toronto. Aamer coordinates the LGBTQ+ newcomer programs, including facilitating a weekly program called Express focusing on newcomer LGBTQ+ youth up to age 29.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

I spent World Pride working with LGBTQ+ youth at Supporting Our Youth (SOY) to organize the Youth contingent for the Pride Parade for Sunday. We created banners and signs and had a great time marching down Yonge Street with LGBTQ+ youth from all backgrounds. It was an amazing experience!

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

I enjoyed that there is so much to do even though I never get around to doing most of it. I always have plans beforehand about which events to check out, but the weekend goes faster than you know it. It was a weekend where I felt fearless to be who I am even if it was only for a weekend. Now the main thing is to continue being that the rest of the year.

What surprised you most about the festival?

I was happily surprised by the joy and excitement WorldPride brought to so many LGBTQ+ newcomer youth I work with, as it was the first time for many of them having recently arrived to Canada. They spent many

days making signs that they would carry in the Pride parade, dyke march and trans march. Many youth told me that they could not believe it was possible to be in a city where being LGBTQ+ was celebrated at such a grand scale, especially the level of involvement and celebration at the municipal level, a lot of which can be accredited to openly queer City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

The visibility of Pride signs, rainbow flags, and endorsements by so many people, businesses and communities in the City of Toronto. Seeing the TTC buses all decked up in rainbow colours welcoming the world was just so beautiful. Working at an organization that celebrated all things LGBTQ+ and spending considerable amounts of time to organize a contingent to march in the parade, including our CEO Hazelle Palmer. The sad part was to see that much of the city returned to its old self after Pride weekend. The flags were gone and the signs were put away.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

We are a community to be celebrated, because we are just as much a part of the City of Toronto as any other community.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

Let's fill the world with love and kindness and celebrate everyone who belongs to the LGBTQ+ communities and those who support them.



Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

JODIE JAMES

by Jeff Harrison

Photo Credit: Jean Cramer

Jodie James, the alter ego of Jaime Crouch, worked it hard this WorldPride, strutting it out during the parade and having a blast socializing herself silly. When not glamming it up, Jaime is an event planner and organizer for Splash Events Canada and is always willing to donate his time to a good cause within the community.

How did you spend WorldPride in Toronto?

I participated in the WorldPride Parade with the Simcoe Pride contingent. When we were not marching I enjoyed the company of close friends and a million new friends.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

Meeting and chatting with delegates from Spain, the host country for World Pride 2017 in Madrid.

What surprised you most about the festival?

The length of the Parade...oh my goodness that was a long parade! My feet will never be the same—I strutted around in 7" platforms!

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

The double rainbow that graced the skies over the village—that was an EPIC moment!

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

ONE THING??? There are too many to mention: the entertainment, the food, the parties, the people, the new friendships...

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

One World, One Love = Acceptance



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Looking Back at WorldPride 2014 *with*

TITUS ANDROGYNOUS

by Kelly Wilk

Titus Androgynous announces their upcoming show—ask each Drag King for their delicious Trading Card! For the first time, on April 10th, 2015 at Buddies in Bad Times, A Platinum Production teams up with the Yes-Men for a draglicious burlesque rendition of *Alice in Wonderland*. You can Facebook them at The Yes-Men: A Drag King Collective.

How did you spend your WorldPride?

Belle Jumelles and I run The Butch Femme Salon and we did a pajama party this time. We had a silk aerialist who was fantastic. Buddies [in Bad Times Theatre] is such an amazing partner, also for our Yes-Men shows. And Flare (Yes-Men Troup Member) produced an international Drag King Show, and we did a number. Sunday was catching a bit of the parade with a big pitcher of sangria in the shade on a patio.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

We were on the Village Stage, we closed out the stage on Saturday night. It felt like the audience was giving just as much as we were and we were all in this moment together. It felt important and it felt right. There were about four thousand people watching, all you saw were these beautiful, shining faces. And they were there from the very first second we stepped onstage.

We closed with a tribute to the 45th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. I did an intro of why we are here and people question why we celebrate Pride. In Canada we have

all these rights but in Russia and Uganda they don't. They look to us for what they can hope for in their future. We are celebrating for them. We did "Come With Me Now" by the Kongs, there were tears in the crowd, it was an emotional experience for all of us.

What surprised you most about the festival?

I was surprised at the amount of people and performers that came from outside the city, to hear them afterward and how moved they were by WorldPride, how important it felt to them. I wasn't expecting that. And crowd control, I really worried, but I think because Young and Dundas and Allen Gardens really stretched us out.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

I'm proud every day!

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

I think Pride is amazing but it's my city, so it's hearing others say they felt accepted and welcomed by the entire city.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

There is still more work to be done but we have the duty now to be a beacon of hope for others.



Jumol Royes is a Toronto born and bred public relations specialist with a knack for storytelling and a reputation as a connector. Keep in touch with him via Twitter @Jumol.



Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer and single mom to a three-year-old that now has his own blog. Follow her on PinkPlayMags' queer parenting

blog "The Ginger Menace" (www.pinkplaymags.com). She also has her very own grown up blog for days off called Brave. Creative. Me (www.bravecreative.com), where she explores writing, art, cooking, crafting and anything else she darn well pleases.



Jeffrey Luscombe is a freelance writer and author of the novel *Shirts and Skins*. He is also the creator and author of The Gay Groom blog (www.jeffreyluscombe.com).



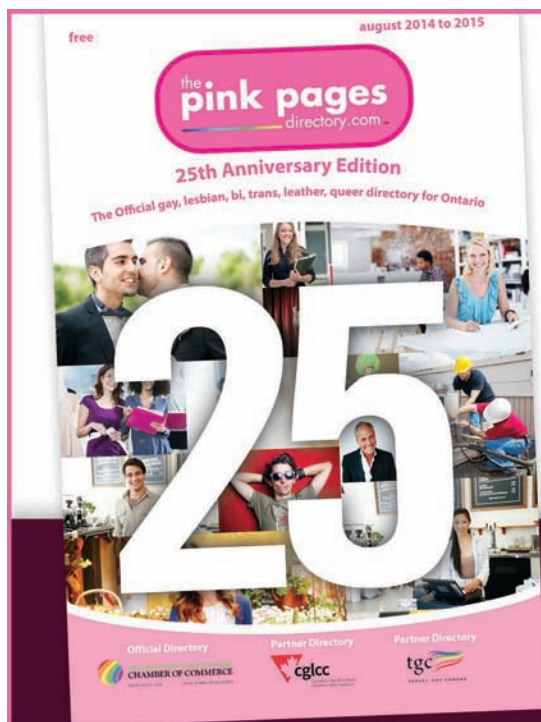
Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community

issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities. He's willing to take on any assignments of interest, attend parties with free booze, listen to rants, and travel the world in search of the great unknown. He's eager to discover the new, remember the past, and look into the future.



Arts & lifestyle writer, wardrobe stylist and unicorn **cee sando** (@theartofwor) is inspired by international travel, the ocean, runner's high, sashimi and

that perfectly put together outfit.



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SASORI

Every night for seven years I dreamt of giant scorpions.

The nightmares began in the basement of my old childhood home, transformed into a public washroom. The mauve paint, concrete floor, and glass coffee tables were gone—instead, there were urinals and communal sinks and rows and rows of toilets and bathtubs, all without stalls or partitions. The urinals and bathtubs were stained with waste.

I never looked in the toilets.

At first I was alone. There was only the distant ring of a bell and the menacing hum of fluorescent lights overhead and the reeking filth of the place. Then I heard a rush in the pipes, like vipers uncoiling to slither after their prey, and dirty water would rise out of every tap and drain with a gurgling, strangled noise.

That's when I saw the scorpions. Crawling—swimming—running—carried by the overflowing water towards me, their black bodies grew huge as the distance between us closed.

I tried to take a step back, to run, but my legs turned leaden. I was paralyzed but not numb; unable to move but able to feel every prick against my skin as the scorpions threw themselves on me, the combined weight of their armored bodies crushing me. Their legs and pincers sliced my flesh, their poison-tipped tails stabbing into me, and they devoured me, their breath like fire melting my flesh.

I'd wake up in the middle of the night with bleeding scratches all over my body, the scars from nights of dreams layered like crosshatching underneath.

I went to Sasori's shop to escape those nightmares.

I remember I had gone to a Victoria Day party held at my friend Jake's place. The holiday was just an excuse to get together, get drunk, and piss off the neighbours.

I was standing in the living room, a beer in hand, unsuccessfully flirting with a girl named Vivian. Her short, spiky hair was dyed blue, matching the colour of her eye shadow. She wore a black shirt that read *Be Your Manic Pixie Dream Girl* in neon letters.

It was getting late, but every time I offered to take her home she laughed.

"Surely you're not that kind of boy..." she said.

Behind her, I saw Jake enter the room and start talking to a group gathered by the TV. He was wearing a grey muscle shirt, cropped to reveal the veins of his biceps. His shirt matched his eyes, too.

Vivian turned and followed my gaze. Then she looked back at me and smiled. I looked at the ground.

"You know Jake?" she asked.

"He's just a friend," I said.

"A friend," she repeated, smiling to herself. "It's always good to have those."

Her eyes narrowed and she leaned towards me, gesturing to me. "You look like shit. Sorry. Your eyes, I mean. You've got such dark bags that you look like you're wearing more eye gunk than me."

"I don't sleep well."

"Insomnia, or—" Vivian rose her thinly sculpted eyebrows. "Something else?"

"It's nothing. Just can't sleep."

"Hmm." She reached into her shirt and pulled out a business card from her bra.

"I know a guy who can help with this kind of thing," she said. She held the card out to me.

I hesitated. Behind her, I saw Jake take the arm of a girl, bending down to whisper into her ear. She laughed, and drew him closer. I took the card.

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I should have gone home then.

Instead I wandered the streets, watching

the fireworks explode across the starry sky. I wanted to run. My throat was tight and sore and there was an ache in my chest like my heart was slamming against my rib cage.

I don't know, even now, why I went to the dream clinic. There was no deep magnetic pull, no serendipitous stumbling upon it. But as soon as I calmed down I searched for it on Google Maps.

I recognized the street, though I couldn't remember when or why I had last been there. I remembered that there should have been an empty alley coming off of it. But instead of the alley, there was a building with a lonely door that led to a basement clinic. With a shallow breath, I opened the door and descended a steep flight of stairs.

The clinic was bigger than I would have expected—far bigger than it should have been, considering the stores flanking this building also had underground levels.

There were human-sized candles lit and dispersed throughout the store, giant bubbles hovering around them dispersed throughout the floor. The floors were made of rosewood and the walls were entirely made up of stained glass windows. They depicted angels and unicorns, saints and dragons, temples and constellations, and scenes from myths that were familiar but not quite recognizable to me. The stained glass scene on the wall beside the stairs depicted a woman running through water. Her body and kimono tapered into the scaly tail of a serpent.

Distracted by the image, I nearly walked into one of the bubbles. Ranging in size from an orange to a yoga ball, the bubbles weren't attached to anything—but they somehow stayed suspended in the air like they were nailed down.

As I got closer to them, I saw that each bubble housed an image: a library, a terrier with a stick in its mouth running through a field of dandelions, a jungle filled with panthers, the Acropolis of Athens... They were like snow globes, each enclosing a miniaturized world.

I stood in front of a bubble containing a library. The bubble's surface looked as thin and as soft as skin. I could see each book's title on its spine and even the dog-eared pages. I felt as if I were looking down over the edge of a cliff and felt my body spasm forward. My arm raised itself, my hand reached outwards—

"Please, don't touch that."

I jerked away from the bubble. Turning, I saw a young man leaning lazily over a counter only a few feet from the entrance.

How could I have missed him? I wondered.

He had his long hair pulled back into a severe ponytail, with one side of his hair dyed pink and the other blue. He wore a black V-neck shirt that tapered just below his collarbone.

"I'm Sasori," he said, smiling. "The owner and dreammaker of this clinic. How can I help you?"

"Hi," I said. "I don't know. I was, uh, recommended to, uh—" I fumbled to take the business card out of my pocket, and then held it out limply in front of me.

He came around the counter, his body lean and compact.

"Do you have trouble sleeping?" he asked as he closed the distance between us. "Nightmares, perhaps?"

His eyes searched mine. I stood still. Up close I could see that he wore lipstick, mascara, and eyeliner—which only emphasized the darkness of his eyes.

"How did you know?" I asked.

He leaned closer. "I know," he whispered, then turned and gestured to me. "Follow me. I'll pick out a good dream for you."

"What is this place?" I asked, following him but careful to stay a few steps behind.

"A Dream Clinic," he replied. "When people have trouble sleeping or suffer from nightmares, they come here to buy new dreams." He looked at me from the corner of his eye. "Then they can sleep. Simple. You'll see. I'll give you a dream for free tonight. Then you'll believe me. Soon you'll never be able to sleep without me."

He led me to the back of the store, stopping in front of one of the largest bubbles. Inside was a castle surrounded by trees on the top of a cliff ridge. The castle was furnished with numerous towers, balconies, decorative chimneys, and ornamental turrets. Through a window I could see the chandeliers inside the castle. If I looked closer, I could see each tile.

"Here. Take this one." Sasori tapped the bubble gently, careful not to let his short, painted black nails scratch its surface. A rope materialized beneath the bubble, as if it were a balloon. He took the bubble by its leash and held it out to me.

When I took the rope from him, our hands touched, and I felt my face flush with warmth.

"When you get home," he said, "Get into

your bed, hold the bubble above your head, and pop it. The dream will rain down and you'll fall asleep instantly. You should be able to sleep for at least eight hours."

I wasn't sure if I really understood what he was saying; I couldn't think straight. Thanking him, I turned to leave but the glass mural I had noticed earlier caught my eye again. I shivered. The woman's serpent tail resembled the scorpion tails in my dreams.

"Have you ever heard about Kiyohime?" He tried to gently place a hand on my shoulder but I flinched away from him. I hadn't realized that he was right behind me.

"No," I said. "Who was she?"

"She was the daughter of an innkeeper," he said. "She fell in love with a devout monk who had stayed at her father's inn during a pilgrimage. The monk didn't reciprocate her love, so he fled to a monastery. She pursued him but was stopped when she reached the flooding Hidaka river. In her rage, she transformed into a serpent—some say a dragon—and followed the monk to the monastery, where he had hidden himself under a bronze bell. Kiyohime burned the bell with her breath and killed the monk. After that, she committed suicide." He paused. Then he added, "It's a sad tale."

"Yes. It is."

I wanted to add that I wondered if maybe the monk had reciprocated her feelings, maybe he had loved her after all, but was just scared—scared of telling her, scared of what it would mean about him, of how it would change his life.

But instead, I just turned to go.

"Ah, one more thing," he said. "The longer the dream is out of the clinic, the more it will become corrupted. Parts of the dream might be lost. It's just a matter of time. To keep the dream as pure as possible, you'll have to go to sleep as soon as you can."

"I will," I said. I ascended the stairs, looking back once.

"I'll see you," he called.

Outside there were still Victoria Day fireworks tearing across the sky. I walked home holding the dream by its leash. I didn't feel so lonely anymore. All I could think about was Sasori's hands—the lines etched into his palms, the veins that snaked over his knuckles, and the light dusting of hair along the edge of his wrist.

That night I dreamt of something other than

scorpions for the first time in seven years. I explored every gallery and corridor of a castle, running past its colonnades and statues of Greek gods with euphoric abandon. It seemed to be the perfect dream until I tried to leave the castle—then I found a dragon with scales the colour of blood coiled around one of the towers, guarding the exits and trapping me inside.

The dream must have been corrupted during my walk home from the clinic.

I visited the dream clinic every day for the rest of the summer. I had no more dreams of giant scorpions. Instead, I dreamt of walking in a forest, of playing video games with friends by the fire on a cold winter day, and, most often, of chasing a black swan by a river.

Though the dreams were incredible—and finally being able to sleep soundly throughout the night even more so—I ultimately kept going back to the store because of Sasori.

I felt like I could tell him anything. And, in turn, he told me about his childhood in the countryside, how his parents had died shortly after giving him the store, and how his grandmother had first taught him how to carve out dreams from memories. He explained how he weaved the dreams at the loom before sealing them in the sap of the world tree, which was gathered by hummingbirds.

He was on my mind constantly—the flutter of his eyelashes; the glitter that dusted his cheeks; the deepness of his laugh; the way he'd lean in to my ear and whisper my name, as if it were a secret shared only between the two of us, something sacred. The world was magical when I was with him, and not just because he could carve dreams.

He was my best friend.

It was August. The boiling summer heat was cooking the green out of the leaves and would soon leave us with brittle cold.

As usual, I went to the dream clinic early in the evening to talk to Sasori. We'd laugh and joke for hours, our fun broken intermittently by the arrivals of other customers needing Sasori's help to pick out a dream.

Sometimes I'd watch him from afar, how his shirt clung to his chest. Once he caught me looking at him and he smiled, creases shooting up from the far corners of his eyes. I looked away.

He returned from serving a customer and found me sitting on the counter, waiting for him.

"What?" he asked.

"Nothing," I said.

We talked for a while longer, until I checked my watch and realized it was already almost midnight: time to go.

"I have a special dream I'd like to show you," he said. He led me to the back of the store. "I just made it earlier today. I hope you like it."

Inside the bubble were two swans—a couple—gliding along a lake, their bodies sending ripples through the dappled sunlight on the water's glassy surface. They passed by a wharf, on which there was a bench with a perfect view of the lake and surrounding park.

"It's beautiful," I said, turning to look at Sasori. He had been watching my expression. "Really beautiful."

"I'm glad." He smiled, and I felt myself dissolving.

After a minute he cleared his throat and said, "Hey, how have you been finding the dreams? Are they corrupt by the time you reach your place?"

"Not so much, but there are always a few things missing—details, events... Sometimes things that weren't in the original dream will show up, too. They're never quite the same as they are here."

Sasori nodded. He was standing close to me. I thought I could hear his heart beating. "That's a shame," he said. "I wish you could dream them as I carved them..."

"Yeah," I said. I swallowed. My throat was suddenly dry. "I wish so, too."

"Then..." He looked into my eyes, and placed his hand on my lower back. I swear I could feel his hand through my clothes, the warmth of his skin against the warmth of my skin.

"...why don't you sleep here tonight?"

I still remember his eyes—black like a swan, and like a scorpion. There was hope in his eyes, and desire, and something else too.

My knees were unsteady, my palms sweaty, my breath shallow. I felt a searing pain centred on the place where his hand touched my back and from deep inside me.

I felt something pop within me—something locked deep inside.

I threw myself backwards, separating our bodies violently.

"Don't touch me," I said hoarsely. I stumbled, one hand covering my lower back as if he had bitten me with a pincer there. I saw fear and confusion and pain in his eyes.

"Hey, what's wrong?"

Sasori stepped forward. As he closed the distance between us, his hair stirred behind him like a tail.

My legs moved on their own. I backed into one of the giant candles, nearly knocking it over.

He continued moving towards me, an arm outstretched, his palm open, and said my name.

"Don't touch me!"

I grabbed the candle behind me, and threw it in front of me. It struck two of the bubbles, ripping through them, the flames leaping onto shreds of the dreams before crashing onto the ground. As they exploded, tongues of fire showered across the store and jumped from one bubble to the next like dominoes.

Sasori was shouting, pleading, but I didn't listen. I wouldn't let him touch me. I couldn't. Instead I ran.

In seconds the entire store became an inferno, the bubbles exploding into prisms and mosaics of dream material before being swallowed by the flames. I reached the bottom of the staircase unable to breathe, leaden black smoke choking the air out of the room like a gaseous anaconda.

Grabbing the railing, I looked back one last time at the dream clinic. I don't know what was going through my head. Even then, I must have known that I was acting crazy—beyond crazy—but I was blinded by a feeling of violation. And I would have done anything to escape from it.

My eyes met Sasori's one last time. He stood near the counter, where I had first met him all those months ago. His arms hung limply by his sides, the flames lapped at his fingertips, the fingertips of the hands that I had once longed to touch.

His eyes, black like the black swan from our dreams, were filled with anger and hurt at my betrayal. His mascara was ruined.

I ran up the stairs, nearly tripping on every step.

I woke up later on a park bench, not knowing how much time had elapsed since the fire or where I was or how I had gotten there. Something hammered in my skull. I rolled off the bench and vomited onto the ground.

Eventually I managed to get up and made the long journey back to the dream clinic. Only my regrets and fears kept me company under the early morning sun.

The store was gone when I arrived. Instead of a building with an entrance to the clinic, there was only the empty dark alleyway: a

crime scene. There was no trace of the clinic or of Sasori other than a thin coating of ash.

I never saw Sasori again. I tried hunting down Vivian to see if she knew where he was, but I couldn't find her either. No one from Jake's party remembered her.

Now I stay awake until late at night, wondering about what happened to him, hating myself for abandoning the man I love. I still hope for another chance to fix it.

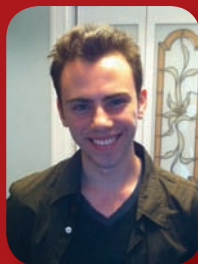
Every night since then I've dreamt of Sasori.

"Sasori" was originally published in the 2014 Winter Issue of *The Spectatorial*. *The Spectatorial* is a student journal at the University of Toronto dedicated the perpetuation of speculative fiction, genre fiction, folklore, and mythology. Our goal is to elaborate on the importance of the 'untrue' in modern society, and to create a space for the largest lies of literature. Like us: <https://www.facebook.com/TheSpectatorial>. Tweet us: @thespectatorial. Read us: thespectatorial.wordpress.com

The fiction story is by:

Alex De Pompa

Alex De Pompa is an English and Literature and Critical Theory student at the University of Toronto. He plans to study law upon the completion of his undergraduate degree. His literary influences include Mervyn Peake, John Crowley, Marina and the Diamonds, and Lana Del Rey. His short story "Sasori" was published in the second volume of *The Spectatorial*. He is currently the journal's copy manager.



The illustration is by:

Lorna Antoniazzi

Fantasy and dystopian enthusiast

Lorna Antoniazzi is a second-year student studying English, Sociology, and Women & Gender Studies at University of Toronto. Beyond exploring books for pleasure, Lorna also relishes in analyzing work; all intelligent discussion is welcome, as she's always willing to open up a dialogue on the social elements of literature.



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WINTER in the CITY

December is one of my favourite months of the year, once I get past the stress of holiday shopping, of course. January through March? Not so much. Cold weather and shorter days can really take a toll on one's motivation! But beyond all that slush and snow, Toronto has plenty of events worth bundling up for this season. In addition to some holiday happenings, I've included a good mix of indoor and outdoor activities that should help you beat the winter blues. Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season and happy new year!

FOOD & DRINK

Winterlicious

January 30 to February 12

Various locations

www.facebook.com/LiciousTO

\$15 - \$25 for lunch, \$25 - \$45 for dinner

Winterlicious is the perfect opportunity to discover the city's diverse culinary scene without breaking the bank. Last year's festival included more than 200 restaurants, with three-course *prix fixe* lunch menus priced at \$15, \$20 and \$25, and dinner priced at \$25, \$35 and \$45.

TIP: Winterlicious regulars Group of Seven Chefs are known for their unique dining experiences and pop-ups. Stay tuned to their website (www.thegroupofsevenchefs.com) to see what they have up their sleeves for 2015.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Introducing Suzy Lake

November 5 to March 22

Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas St. W.

(416) 979-6648

www.ago.net

TICKETS: \$19.50 for adults, \$11 for youth/students

Suzy Lake is a Toronto-based artist who has been exploring the politics of gender, body and identity through art since the late 1960s. Introducing Suzy Lake follows the artist in images spanning five decades—from the 1960s civil rights movement in her hometown of Detroit to her years spent in Toronto since 1978. The exhibition also includes a recreation of Lake's 1979 photographic installation *Are You Talking to Me?*, which has not been viewed in its entirety since the early 1980s.

TIP: Baldwin Village is located just a few blocks away from the AGO and features a number of delicious and eclectic dining options.



Ross Petty Productions Presents: Cinderella

November 21 to January 4
Elgin & Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St.
(416) 314-2901
rosspetty.com
TICKETS: \$34 - \$93

Danielle Wade, star of the CBC TV series *Over the Rainbow*, plays the title role of *Cinderella* in Ross Petty's gags to riches family musical. The show also features Kids' CBC producer and host Patty Sullivan as one of the evil stepsisters and Petty himself as the wicked stepmother. With a mix of slapstick humour and sly political references, *Cinderella* is sure to appeal to kids and adults alike.

TIP: The Elgin & Winter Garden Theatre's year-round guided tours are a must for architecture buffs. Each tour runs an hour-and-a-half and recounts the history and restoration of this 100 year-old complex.

Toronto Christmas Market

November 28 to December 21
The Distillery District
www.torontochristmasmarket.com
FREE

If you need a little help getting into the holiday spirit, a stroll through the Toronto Christmas Market ought to do it. Inspired by traditional European markets of the 1400s, this annual event brings together local vendors, carolers, breweries, and more in celebration of the holiday season. Best of all, there's complimentary hot chocolate!

TIP: Want to score some points with your significant other? Stop by the Hendrick's Gin Kissing Booth or surprise them with a smooch under the 14-foot tall mistletoe.





The Nutcracker

December 13 to January 3

National Ballet of Canada, 145 Queen St. W.

1-866-345-9595

national.ballet.ca

TICKETS: \$26 - \$158

The National Ballet of Canada has been captivating audiences since 1995 with its version of the E.T.A. Hoffmann holiday classic. Choreographed by James Kudelka, O.C., the ballet tells the story of siblings Marie and Misha, who are brought into the magical world of nutcrackers, sugar plum fairies, rat kings, and more.

TIP: Stay a while! West Queen West was recently voted the second coolest neighbourhood in the world by Vogue magazine, and has a ton of shops and bars worth checking out.

DJ Skate Nights

December 14 to March 1

Natrel Rink at Harbourfront Centre,

235 Queens Quay West

(416) 973-4000

www.harbourfrontcentre.com

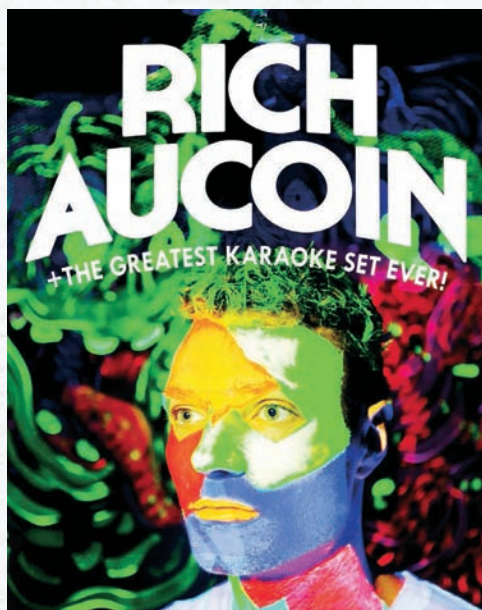
FREE

Every Saturday night throughout the winter,

Harbourfront Centre recruits some of the city's best DJs to transform the Natrel rink into a dance party on ice. Festivities kick off at 8pm and end at 11pm, with skate rentals/sharpening and heated change rooms available on-site.



TIP: When you're done skating, take a moment to check out the picturesque view the Natrel Rink offers of the city.



Rich Aucoin

December 31

Lee's Palace, 529 Bloor St. W.

(416) 532-1598

www.leespalace.com

TICKETS: \$17.50

I can't think of anyone more fun to ring in the New Year with than Rich Aucoin. The Halifax-based dance artist first started touring in 2007 and has become something of a cult legend ever since. He won the inaugural Prism Prize last year for best Canadian music video of the year and was a long-listed nominee for the 2012 Polaris Music Prize. His NYE party will feature special guests (TBA) and what is being dubbed "the greatest late-night karaoke set ever."

TIP: If you're looking for somewhere to fuel up before or after the clock strikes midnight, Poutineville is located around the corner at 296 Brunswick Ave. and offers all-you-can-eat poutine. If poutine isn't your thing, El Furniture Warehouse (410 Bloor St. W.) has a tasty and extensive food menu that will cost you just \$4.95 for every item.

Come Up To My Room

January 16 to 25
Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen St. W.
(416) 531-4635
comeuptomyroom.com
TICKETS: \$10

Now in its 11th year, Come Up to My Room gives artists free reign to design whatever they please. Participants are limited only by their imaginations, and the results are truly awe-inspiring. This year's event features 25 installations by 60 artists, ranging from miniature to macro, craft-based to digital, fantasy to epistemological, public to private, and historical to contemporary.

TIP: CUTMR culminates with the Love Design Party, a free dance party taking place on Saturday, January 25 from 10pm onwards. Guests will be treated to a one-night-only design installation and a comedic affair hosted by Stephen Eyes.

IceFest

February 21 to 22
Village of Yorkville Park, Cumberland St. at Bellair St.
www.bloor-yorkville.com/icefest
FREE



For those brave enough to venture into the frigid temperatures, the Bloor-Yorkville IceFest is a great way to spend an afternoon. Located in the heart of Yorkville, the two-day festival features incredible ice sculptures, an ice carving competition, and a live DJ stage.

TIP: Warm up at one of the nearby coffee shops! Yorkville Espresso Bar (3 Yorkville Ave.) is a personal favourite of mine.

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





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Our Event Listings help you plan your week and fill it full of exciting things to do. Check out theBUZZ today!



Winter Horoscopes

by Julie Antoinette

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 20)

Like the Phoenix from the ashes, you will rise. Renewal and victory are yours. Prepare to be reborn. First, death must do its work. Just as the autumn leaves mulch into the soil and become food for new life in the spring, so will death's work create the platform for new life. Let go and let yourself grow.

Taurus (Apr 21 – May 21)

A young person offers new perspectives to help you through a struggle with recent heartbreak. It's okay to move forward. Soulmates sometimes show up as teachers. You'll soon graduate from this class. A new soulmate will appear shortly. For now, spend time with children at every opportunity. You will learn much and your heart will heal in their company. Children come from heaven. They're here to teach us, not the other way around.

Gemini (May 22 – Jun 21)

Your dynamism and passion are explosive. You are confrontational and dramatic, which has an exhausting effect on family and friends. You must tone and hone this energy. Do not squander it on drama, thereby throwing your pearls to swine. Channel your passion effectively into a new creative project. New adventures await. Relief from a well-directed release makes all things new.

Cancer (Jun 22 – Jul 22)

You are an enigma, a giver and taker at once. You've been generous—with strings attached. Generosity becomes your tool to command others. A tweak in your emotional approach to giving will attract love to you. Learn to give without emotional manipulation and watch your wishes make their way to you successfully. Proposals and invitations fall into your lap as you enjoy your wishes purely without the effort of manipulation. Freely give, freely receive.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

'Tis the season for giving Leo! You offer time, emotion, support and affection. Your giving is intangible, but deeply felt and appreciated. "Appreciate: to increase in value." It is important that you understand this concept. Like a rubber band pulled back and released, your giving has carved out an abundance of flow headed your way. It comes in waves and from unexpected sources. Learn to receive with true appreciation and watch your value multiply!

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 23)

It's time for inventory, Virgo. You are greatly pleased with your assessment. You discover how emotionally fulfilling this year has been. Each of your wishes has come true from long ago. Wind down this wonderful year slowly and gradually. Unlike the rest of us, the holiday season does not inundate you with the hectic hustle and bustle. And how fortunate! Why rush such a sweet closure?

Libra (Sep 24 – Oct 23)

You've been diligent and prudent, working with practical wisdom. You now reap rewards of prosperity and expansion after a lengthy struggle. Start from scratch, applying your newly mastered skills. A trip helps you unravel through developing a new interest. Pursue your hobbies. They reveal your intrinsic worth and lead you in fresh new directions.

Scorpio (Oct 24 – Nov 22)

You've gathered vast experience in lies and deception which now paves your destiny. What you do with this experience will direct you. Form new ideas and intentions. Exchange paranoia and suspicion for clear objective perception. Truth will prevail. You will feel justified. Past sufferings are now your strengths. Your perception is clear, acute and unbiased. You've earned your own trust.

Sagittarius (Nov 23 – Dec 21)

Stuck in the matrix? You've been plugged in for too long. You're feeling daring, courageous and bored. Use your enterprising spirit to charge ahead. New conceptions come in business and work. Beware of an untrustworthy authority figure. "Authority: from the Latin 'auto' meaning 'self'." Conflicts, confusion, boredom and restlessness resolve once you answer this question with authenticity—derivative of the same Latin root. Whose matrix are you stuck in?

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Ready for a fresh start? You tire of the familiar punitive drudgery. Your self-concept is up for renewal. Notice how thoughts become habit. Change the thought and the resonant emotion will follow. Old emotions fall away into disuse and a newfound self-respect will take their place. Consider this word breakdown: "Re-spect: to view anew."

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

Your love life is forefront for examination. Does your lover have your best interest at heart? A truth is revealed about your relationship. Long-term considerations are in order. How long have you felt held back? How much longer? You decide. The planets offer clarity but the decision is yours. Beware of self-betrayal. You know what's wrong, the planets urge your acknowledgement to free yourself from the exile of delusion. Ultra-futuristic Aquarius must evolve. It is unfitting that you should remain stagnant.

Pisces (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

You are feeling empathetic, emotionally raw and attuned. Someone will need your support. This feels daunting as you could use some yourself. It is as if you are in crisis. This is a blessing in disguise. Sometimes helping others also helps us. We feel that help as it moves through us. Perhaps this is what you needed all along.

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

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Looking Back

at WorldPride 2014 with

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Editor-in-chief of PinkPlayMags



How did you spend WorldPride in Toronto?

For three years running now, I have hosted a very close-knit group of friends—gay, lesbian, Bi, allied—and we have shared wonderful company, engaging conversation and delicious beverages. So this year was no different, just more involved. We saw more parade, danced more dances, visited more beer gardens, hugged more people and enjoyed ourselves immensely.

What did you enjoy most about the celebration?

Seeing how involved the whole city became. From the flag raising at the massive Opening Ceremony to the moving Human Rights Conference to the über parade—there was just so much fun being had. I loved seeing rainbow flag everywhere!

What surprised you most about the festival?

That brilliant double rainbow wrapping its glorious arms around the city—we couldn't have asked for a more Divine blessing of love and acceptance.

What moment made you most proud to be part of the global LGBTQ+ community?

Hands down: the Human Rights Conference. Everyone involved deserves huge kudos for organizing such a global confluence of queer people from around the world to share their multifaceted experiences, especially given how challenging, even dangerous, being queer in so many parts of the world can be.

What's the one thing you hope people remember most about WorldPride 2014 in Toronto?

The love. I think Toronto outdid itself in being so welcoming to everyone who participated.

What do you believe WorldPride's universal message is?

Queer rights are human rights. And love is universal, no matter who you love. Love is love.

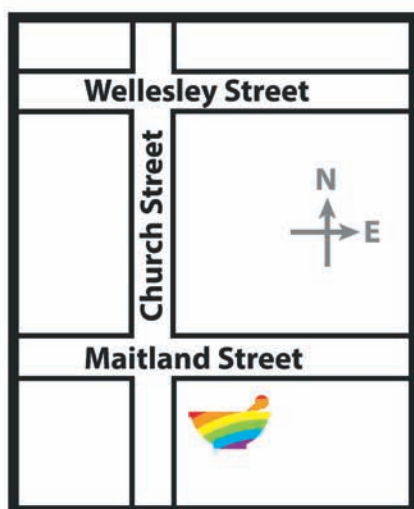


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