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Gay and lesbian seasonal • Fall 2008

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Scott Dagostino

on gay and lesbian marriages

Daniella Newman

goes down under

Michael Rowe

and All the Pretty Boys
and

Reverend Dr. Brent Hawks

looks back at Canada's
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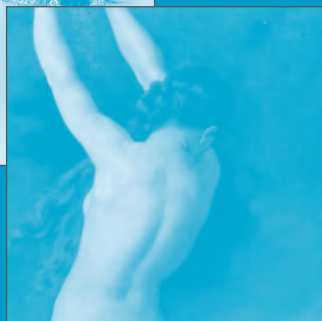
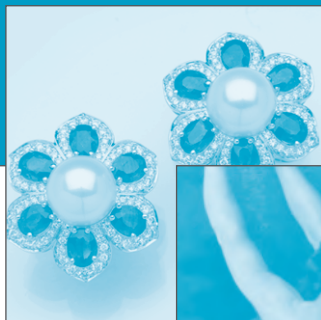
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From the Publisher



When I was a kid I used to lie in bed some nights dreaming of what falling in love and getting married and having a family would be like.

That was back in Kuwait where I was born to Catholic Lebanese

Italian parents. Even back then my notion of love and marriage did not involve members of the opposite sex. So imagine with an upbringing like that how far fetched my dreams were. When we moved here 22 years ago I remember my excitement boarding the plane to Toronto. I knew it was a liberal city in a liberal country and I figured it would be much easier to be gay and to live my life freely. I was preoccupied with all these great thoughts, no wonder I kept losing at playing hang-man to my little siblings.

After arriving here I was thrilled to discover there was actually a gay "community." A community that was starting to see progress in attaining rights, but one young enough that there were still more work to be done. The first time the marriage issue rolled around and Bill 167 was defeated, I remember that day clearly. I was at the little restaurant bar George Hislop co-owned across from club Colby's and the news came over the radio. I remember crying, and others crying. I remember the community's rage.

Years later we finally got our right to be married. For it, or against it, is an argument that still goes on, but I for one am thrilled that we have that right to choose. I may exercise that right or may not, but shouldn't marriage be there for whoever desires it?

I've always believed in an inclusive community—not an exclusive community. Gay...Straight...Great. We all have the same rights. And at least

here at home in Canada we have made strides in attaining them. Many gays, lesbians and trans people around the world dream of what we have. I have been there and know that.

So here we are with our latest issue of Toronto's newest magazine for our LGBT community. Autumn is a wonderfully seductive and romantic season. To mind come pumpkins, homemade pies, raking leaves, crackling fires and steamy hot cider. Autumn is the perfect time for love. And love can lead to marriage if the two people involved are so inclined, a subject we explore in a number of ways in this issue.

By the time you're reading this we will be gearing up to launch pinkplaymags.com, where you'll be able to download past issues, as well as get regular updates on what is happening from our "In the City" columnist.

Our other regular column "From The Heart," will also become an on-line feature where we'll look forward to you writing in with life's questions and challenges.

With *autumnplay!* we are officially now a quarterly seasonal publication. We have been hearing some great things from people all over. Thank you for your support. A magazine is only successful with the participation of the community that it belongs to. We have some fantastic stuff lined up for the next few issues for you. So keep watching us as we grow and evolve.

Have a great season and go *Fall* in love.

Antoine Elhashem



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From the Editor



Unlike Antoine, I was not politically savvy enough at the time to note the coming and disheartening passing of Bill 167, but I do clearly remember the anticipation and

air of tension as the Liberal government tabled Bill C-38. I was working at Zelda's at the time and all the TVs were tuned into the momentous vote, everyone on the edge of their bar stools awaiting the final tally. And when it finally passed people cheered, embraced, kissed and ran up and down Church Street hooting and hollering. It was a very apt victory, just in time for Pride Week celebrations.

I also clearly remember how everyone felt shortly thereafter when the Conservative government under Stephen Harper vowed their religious right supporters that they would re-examine the recently passed bill on legalizing same-sex marriage and how the community bristled in anger and fear that our victory might be taken away from us. How could that be possible?

Now I've never planned my marriage, it was never really something that crossed my mind. I'm a huge romantic, sure, but the idea of throwing a big elaborate party to celebrate my love has never really been my style—I'd rather celebrate it lustily at a private chateau in some exotic locale. However, I've always believed that it's high time homo's, lesbians and transsexuals stop being treated as anything but equal with all the rights and privileges enjoyed by everyone else in society. After the harrowing possibility of a re-vote passed quietly into oblivion and our legal right

stayed, it became clear that Canada was finally outgrowing its outdated conservative views.

In this issue we look at lust, seduction, romance and marriage in all its myriad expressions. I love how our cover starts off with hot cruisy couples on the hunt and we end up following their conquests all the way through to matrimony.

We explore marriage, then and now, as Reverend Dr. Brent Hawkes shares his vivid memory of performing the first ever legal same-sex wedding in Canada and Scott reminds us of the narrow but oh-so-satisfying victory we won in finally attaining this basic human right of legally expressing our love for each other.

Skippping the wedding and going straight to the honeymoon, Daniella whisks you away to breath-taking Tasmania, where tantalizing cuisine and mind-blowing surroundings sound like the ultimate way to celebrate your love.

Adding to our lusty pulp fiction theme it gives me great pleasure to welcome award winning author Michael Rowe to our pages. He was kind enough to lend his pen in fleshing out a tale of carnal love to the Nth degree. In marriage they say 'til death do you part and those of us who have loved unconditionally know how powerful it can be. After all, what's Halloween without a little taste of the supernatural to chill the blood?

And so here we are with our first official quarterly issue. Just like a new relationship we're figuring out what works and what doesn't as we seek to get to know our community better. We'd like to know what you think and what issues you'd like to see explored. Take advantage of my email address below and share with me your thoughts and feelings. I'd like to get to know our readers better.

Have a Happy Halloween and we'll see you in the winter.

Jeff Harrison

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Letters

Picked up your little mag during Pride and I have to say I was rather surprised at how inclusive it seemed. Nice to see an Asian and a transsexual on the cover. And Fiction geared towards lesbian readers. You had a little something for everyone. I'll be curious to see if you continue to explore issues of interest to the whole community.

P. Lee

Your editor Jeff did a nice job reporting on wine country. Myself and the boyfriend are in the habit of getting there a couple of times a year. It's a fantastic area to escape from the rush of Toronto. Also, I have to mention that I liked the way you answered the question that raises many debates: Is Pride Still Important? I personally believe it is.

Steve Weir

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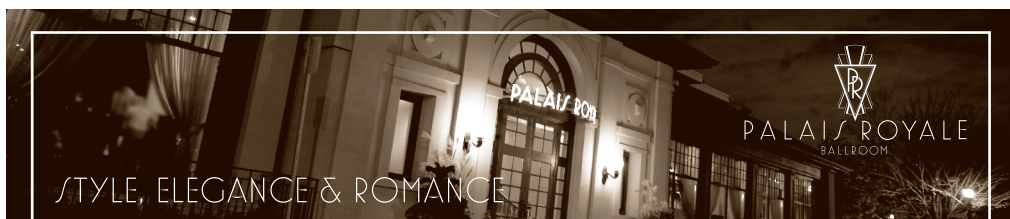


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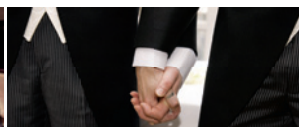
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First Comes *Love...*

by Scott Dagostino



Gay people are accused of wanting to “redefine” marriage but our weddings might be redefining us.

It's been five years since the argument over gay marriage was largely settled. Five years since courts in Ontario and Massachusetts ruled that gay men and lesbians had the same right to marry as everyone else. It's been a long walk down the aisle. The early gay-rights magazine *ONE* began publishing in January 1953 and that summer printed a cover story called “Homosexual Marriage?” that suggested gay people would have to choose to “restrict” their rights to monogamous marriage or risk a “legalization of promiscuity.” Sexual freedom vs. respectability, wrote E.B. Saunders: “Are we willing to make the trade?”

It's a debate that became largely settled in the 1970s as gay liberation meant an explosion of sexual freedom (though mainly in the cities). Marriage was dismissed as an outdated shackle better left to straight people. Lesbian author Jane Rule devoted her writings to expanding the wider culture's narrow view of sexuality and, as late as 2001, wrote, “We have shaped richly varied ways to care for each other. Why clamber for state-imposed rules?”

It's an argument that remains potent but the pendulum of public opinion had swung the other way long before that point. The AIDS crisis had revealed how helpless gay couples could be in the



absence of any legal rights. Partners were denied hospital visitation rights or kicked out of their own homes if the lease was in their deceased lover's name. The legal benefits of marriage were obvious and necessary and became a central

issue in gay rights struggles in the early 1990s, when Bob Rae's NDP tried and failed to pass early spousal benefits for gay couples in Ontario. In the US, even an ally like president Bill Clinton signed the "Defense of Marriage Act" that defined marriage as being between one man and one woman—a setback to gay rights in the US but, judging by the recent ruling for gay marriage in California, not a permanent one.

"It's been really interesting to observe the changes," says 65-year-old Brandon Jones, the publisher of *Wedding Essentials* magazine. After the same-sex marriage rulings in Canada, he began publishing a companion edition for gay and lesbian couples. He

admits it hasn't been a big moneymaker ("I think a lot of companies are still nervous about it") and he's taken a lot of grief for his decision—fielding phone calls from angry Christian conservatives and having to soothe "one employee who was very concerned about her husband finding out she worked for a publication like THAT!" Jones has remained committed to his new venture because "I'm a big believer in human freedom—I don't like seeing anybody held back."

While he admits that most people his age are having trouble adapting to a world that now includes same-sex marriage, Jones is delighted to see gay and lesbian couples join in and he's intrigued by how gay people are changing the style of weddings. "The big weddings we're used to in the het community really don't happen the same way [with same-sex couples]," he says. "They're usually smaller, with fewer guests." Even so, the average wedding can run up to \$20,000—a huge boost to local economies—and Jones notes that same-sex couples step more carefully: "I find that a lot of gay and lesbian couples will bring a planning professional with them, whereas with heterosexual couples, the use of a wedding planner is not common at all." He jokes that the absence of straight women leaves a knowledge gap: "Little girls grow up planning their wedding their whole lives! They're programmed that way!"

"I find gay and straight weddings are done the same way but expressed differently," says David Bussotti, a gay wedding planner who works with the Gloucester Square Inns in Toronto. Once the Ontario ruling came down in 2003, he says, "We got inundated!" Bussotti arranges dozens of ceremonies throughout the year, sometimes three in a day, for couples from all over the world. "When I first started doing gay weddings, I thought the girls would keep it simple and the boys would do it all princess-like, but



you know...I'm not really finding any difference."

What's unique about gay weddings, Bussotti says, is the struggle between following tradition and creating a truly personal event. He sees his role as guiding them through the entire process, from beginning to end, as they navigate between the needs of themselves, their families and their traditions. "People will say, "Oh, we don't want anything too formal," but I'll ask them, "Are you wearing a suit? Or a dress? Then you just made it formal." Bussotti says that the trend towards smaller, more informal weddings for gay people can sometimes be a trap of its own: secretly, his clients want the giant Hollywood wedding but have trouble believing they can. "I find sometimes that gay couples almost question you," he admits. "'CAN I have the wedding cake?' or 'CAN I have the first dance?' They've been so programmed that these things could NEVER happen. I keep telling them: 'It's YOUR wedding! You can have circus monkeys if you want!'"

As gay people begin to create our own kind of ceremonies, it's the religious aspects that create the most tension and tend to be dropped. Without a traditional mass, says Bussotti, "90 percent of the ceremonies now last no more than 25 minutes. Tops—tops!—is 45 minutes," and some couples will go even further: "I did a wedding last year for two girls who specifically said they did not want God mentioned ONCE. I got the impression that religion had really knocked them down."

An Anglican priest, who we'll call 'Father Luke,' is frustrated by his church's stance on same-sex marriage. While the Catholic Church is dead-set against it and the United Church is accepting, the Anglican church is stuck somewhere in between with various factions arguing for and against. Against this backdrop, Luke would quietly perform weddings for gay couples but have a government official sign the actual document

instead.

Eventually, he says, "I thought, 'What am I doing? I'm here because I'm taking a stand for the legitimacy of their love and their relationship and yet I'm too scared to sign my name to the legal piece of paper that says so. How does that not invalidate everything I just said at the service?' So I signed it."

Luke's pseudonym here comes from the legitimate fear that the same-sex weddings he's already performed could be invalidated if his license to perform weddings is revoked by his church: "Can I do a legal marriage in the province if the marriage is not recognized by the church that licensed me to do it? There is a lot of debate about that." In the meantime, he says, the church officials tend to look the other way. "What makes me mad is that they're leaving it up to people like me. They tell me, 'As long as you can keep a low profile, we think you're doing wonderful work.'" Until the Anglicans reach some





kind of consensus on the issue, Luke says, he'll continue to be disheartened by a lack of support for gay couples who, he says, "are asking us, the very institution that keeps denying and demonizing them, for our blessing. Isn't that humbling? We should be humbled by that. You're the asshole that they still want at their wedding!"

"All of the gay weddings I've done so far have not been done in a church," Luke says, noting that a lot of gay couples, possibly in reaction to this, "like to have outdoor ceremonies.

"I've done a gay wedding on a beach and I did a lesbian wedding on a golf course—don't laugh!" Without the church traditions, he says, gay weddings tend to be more personal in their meaning but, he insists, "I haven't done a wedding yet that didn't end up being something spiritual. The reason you're having some kind of ritual or ceremony is because this is more than just two parties signing an agreement—there's something special happening. People may not have a language for it or want to use the language they've been given but they feel they need to acknowledge in some way that what's happening here is sacred." Luke goes so far as to say that, "in my experience, gay weddings have been MORE spiritual than the straight

ones because a lot of those biblical themes of exile, oppression and hope have been lived by this couple who've struggled to affirm their relationship. I haven't yet done a gay wedding where I didn't feel that the couple had struggled and fought hard to get to that point."

Across the world, that struggle continues. Canada is only one of six countries—including Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway and South Africa—to legally endorse same-sex marriage. Since 2005, Canada has seen a steady influx of Americans coming here to get married but recent court rulings now allow same-sex marriages in Massachusetts and California. "We really thought the California ruling would make a difference in business," admits Bussotti but he says he's as busy as ever. On one Saturday in June, he hosted three weddings—a local straight couple and two gay couples from Texas and Florida. "I asked the Miami group why they didn't just go to California and they said, 'We'd rather come to a country where the people have accepted us getting married, rather than been forced to allow us to get married.' That makes a big difference. There were people from Dallas and Austin who said, 'Here at least you can hold hands.'"

Brandon Jones says the volatile political



situation in the US won't change things much for Canadian wedding planners in the short term. "I don't think it's going to affect the rate of Americans coming up here. It's hard for us to believe as Canadians but, to a lot of Americans, we're exotic," he laughs, "They come to Toronto and they love it—they go home and tell all their friends. A lesbian couple got married at Casa Loma and they raved about the place." Despite the California Supreme Court ruling—one that followed two statewide votes in favour of same-sex marriage—opponents are once again demanding that a new vote be put on the ballot during this November's US elections. Bussotti says that the Texans he married came to Canada, not California, because they don't trust that the ruling will remain in place: "Because it's on the ballot in November, they really feel it's going to be kicked out." Jones says, "There are powerful groups on both sides in California, very well-organized and well-funded, so it'll be interesting to see how this battle shakes out. I don't think they're going to reverse anything." He notes that polls and surveys continually indicate that, "The younger the person is, the more likely they are to be supportive."

Whatever happens with same-sex marriage legislation, it seems the future is on our side.

Opponents of same-sex marriage still whine about possibilities (radio host Michael Coren wrote in the *National Post* in April, "We made a terrible mistake, and may not appreciate the full consequences for a generation") but no one knows what's to come. In a letter responding to that *ONE* article in 1953, a reader wrote, "I have never heard a homosexual express any desire to adopt a child. How damn fool can you get?" History has proved him wrong and politics are no match for the desires of two people in love. "When couples ask me to marry them," says Father Luke, "it's not like I'm creating something new. A wedding is just a public acknowledgement of what the couple has already created themselves."

Bussotti says, "It's about two people who care about each other and are making this day the most important day of their lives."

Scott Dagostino is a Toronto-based freelance writer who adores the city that Canada loves to hate. Scott is the new Editor-in-Chief of "the LOCAL BIZ magazine", a new community magazine for the Durham Region from the publishers of Pink Play Mags. Scott is the former managing editor of *fab*, he also writes for *Xtra!* and spent his youth working in three of Toronto's best bookstores. He rambles on at www.scottdagostino.com

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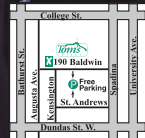
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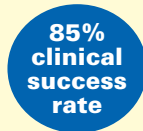
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Hot Artist:

James Collins

by Matt Cassano



Singer/songwriter James Collins admits that he is a bit of a romantic. After having one listen to his most recent song, "Frozen in Time (The New Wedding Song)," it's hard to think of a better term to describe the Oshawa native. Collins was inspired to write the song while visiting a friend in New York City. It began writing itself after Collins learned about the many facets of intimacy through his friend. "He was one of the first few men I felt completely safe and comfortable around," says Collins. "Spending time together was always a joy."

The name, "Frozen in Time," as well as the chorus, "just came to me when I was thinking about the closeness I shared with this incredible bright light in my life," says Collins. "I went for a walk while visiting Manhattan when the title and chorus came to me." Collins is honoured that couples around the world are enjoying his song and deciding to use it for their first dance. "I definitely didn't think, at the time, that couples would end up using it as their wedding day song," says Collins. With all the feedback that "Frozen in Time" has been receiving, Collins can't help but be optimistic about the song's future and feels it will be his next hit. "Song rotations on radio die down eventually, but weddings never die."

And he knows a thing or two about the rise and success of a single. Several years ago, Collins' "Do You Mind if We Talk About Bill?" peaked at #31 on the National Top 40 radio charts. The song was inspired by a Canadian pop singer from the 70's who

had a sex change operation. Collins is determined that the single still has a life of its own. "Something else will happen with that song...somewhere," he says confidently. "I'm always sending it out to different media outlets too." Collins says that many online radio stations have added it to their rotation years after its initial release. "It's still a new song to the UK, US, Germany, and Japan."

Always passionate about his work, including music collaborations with Carol Medina and Melissa Manchester, he is always more than willing to share with you his latest projects similar to a doting father informing you about little Billy's dance recital. It's odd to think that music was an unexpected career for this Oshawa native. Collins originally studied theatre in college and focused on acting as his main aspirations. Nevertheless, he could not shake his love for performing and composing songs. "Music always surrounded me," admits Collins. "Radio was my constant companion when I was a kid."

Collins wrote his first full length song at 21, after finding inspiration in a devastating heartbreak. "I kind of fell into songwriting by accident," he admits. "When I first left theatre school, I couldn't get arrested as an actor. I was told by one casting director that I didn't have a specific look." (It wouldn't be until Collins shaved his head that he would start receiving role offers due to his menacing look). "During the time away from acting, I just started writing whenever I got my heart broken or whenever

I was inspired by a thought or an interesting phrase. They say if you have a great song title, it sometime seems that the song writes itself." And Collins has never given up on his passion. At 32, he finally struck gold with his first "legitimate" national Top 40 hit with Carol Medina called "And The Song Goes (Doo Dit)".

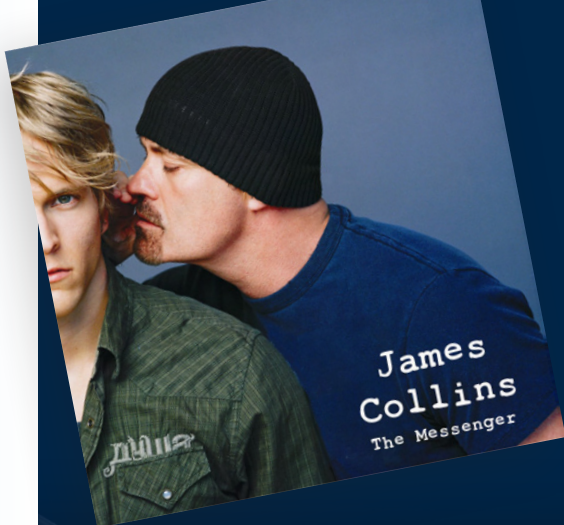
"I actually got the song idea while waiting on tables one day," says Collins. "I was bored and thought 'Wouldn't it be interesting to have a song about somebody requesting a song at a radio station and then having to sing the song back to the DJ?'" The song helped garner a Juno nomination, in addition to helping Medina receive a recording contract from Quality Records. Collins and Medina would eventually collaborate on 22 songs that were featured on 22 Quality Record compilations that sold 2.5 million copies. "Quality folded before we were paid most of our royalties," laughs James. "It's a good thing I'm [doing music] for the love of it, huh?"

For now, Collins is focusing on his new singles "Boob Tube," a compilation of some of television's most memorable theme songs, in addition to the romantic "Frozen in Time (The New Wedding Song)." Both are available on YouTube, and have been generating tremendous feedback from listeners. "Boobtube," in particular, is a walk down memory lane for any television lover, a melody featuring the theme songs from such gay classics as *Wonder Woman*, *Love Boat*, and *The Golden Girls*. Don't expect a remix of the song for the clubs though – Collins feels it would lose its soul. "I think it works well in the retro 70's disco vibe."

Although he takes pride in the growing popularity of his new wedding song, just don't expect to hear it at Collin's own reception anytime soon. "I'm all for marriage, as a long-term goal, if a couple is in a healthy, loving relationship," he confesses. "Personally, I don't think I'd ever get married. Never say never though, right?"

To learn more about James Collins, please visit: www.jamescollins.com

Matt Cassano is a 20 year old freelance journalist in Toronto. This is Matt's first time writing for Pink Play Mags. He studies Broadcast Journalism at Ryerson University, and is also a columnist for fab magazine.



Top 3 CDs in your stereo:

Bloody Tourists – 10 CC: "I never tire of their songs and production."

Greatest Hits (Revised Edition) – Boz Scaggs: "Probably one of my all-time favourite artists. Lido Shuffle is so damn infectious. Lyrically, the guy is so an obvious romantic."

When I Look Down That Road – Melissa Manchester: "Just great song writing. It is a great CD to chill with."

Top 5 songs on repeat in your iPod:

"Right now I'm intrigued by older Canadian content. Songs, that for some strange reason, are ignored by radio. I'll get a hold of a song that I haven't heard in awhile and I'll play it over and over while I'm walking and working out."

"Light Up Your Love" by Ronnie Abramson

"Set Me Free" and "You Can't Dance" by Jackson Hawke

"Talk To Me," "Tango" and "Immaculate Eyes" by Dal Bello

"It Always Happens This Way" by Toulouse



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Jack O Lantern Competition

Head back to the heart of the Village during the afternoon of **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26** for the 2nd annual Jack O Lantern Competition. Try your hand at carving your own pumpkin or enjoy the show as many local Village groups compete for various prizes during this outdoor activity. Stick around for the celebrity judging and the "spooktacular" Pie Eating Contest!

Drag Swap

Hosted by local celebrity impersonator Donnarama, Drag Swap is a night of costume, make up and madness! A live Drag show on **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29** featuring a line up of male and female impersonators, costume rentals & accessories, make up demonstrations and more!

FRIGHTFALL FILMFEST

Looking for a quickie? Well head to one of the many Church Wellesley Village Bars on **Thursday, OCTOBER 30** to sample one of the Horror shorts we'll be featuring as part of Halloweek's FrightFALL FilmFEST.

THE BLOCK PARTY

Friday, OCTOBER 31 the village will once again play host to the largest, most electrifying outdoor Halloween event in the city. Live entertainment, local celebrities, costume contests and world class DJ's will play into the night. Stick around the Village way past the midnight hours to dance and party in many of our local establishments who will be hosting extended services until 4AM.

the ORANGE BALL

Later in the night, check out the Orange Ball, an after hours Halloweek celebration which will take you past the bewitching after hours of October and into the morning hours of November.
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Antiquing 101

PART 2 : AUCTIONS

by Daniel James



"Going once... Going twice... Final warning... Sold to the woman in gold!"

These are the words that we most commonly associate with the auction world. A fast talking mustachioed man stands in front of a room full of people, all on their best behaviour and sporting their finest threads. Priceless artifacts are on the podium and the fattest wallets will compete to take home the coveted lot. Very often, auctions are a theatre of commerce and in such instances this description fits the bill.

On the other hand, auctions can be chaotic, bargain basement door-crashers where "everything must go!" As a buyer, these are certainly the kind of auctions you're looking for. Auctions take many forms. Famously, there

are two auction houses that dominate the international Auction market – Christies and Sotheby's. Both are represented in Canada, though only Sotheby's hosts bi-annual auctions of Important Canadian Art (held in association with Ritchies) twice per year. Both help Canadian clients export other property to the International market but cater strictly to goods of the highest pedigree. Looking to sell your pair of 19th century, twin branch sconces in gilt bronze and cut crystal with ormolu spires and pear shaped prismatic beadings? Call Christies. Your Group period oil sketch of the arctic by Lawren Harris? Sotheby's

Have no idea what I'm talking about? Well, for all of the other treasures that you won't find illustrated in the textbooks, there are a wealth of



other buying venues. Auctions are based on the simple laws of supply and demand. Provided there is a demand for property that's in short supply, buyers will beat their chests with fists full of dollars until their opponents finally cover.

A live auction generally follows a standard format. The auctioneer will introduce a lot and ask for an opening bid (generally half of the low end estimate). He will then continue to take bids in standard increments from the room, registered phone bidders and absentee bids until the highest price is achieved and unchallenged. The auctioneer will then give notice of "last call" and finally "knock" the bid down with his gavel and pronounce the lot "sold."

The successful buyer holds up their paddle and the number is recorded. If an item fails to generate successful bidding the lot will be "bought in" or "passed." For the uninitiated, this can be an intimidating experience, and cattle or car auctions are a good place to get educated. Traditionally, in these rooms, the auctioneer's rhythm is relentless. He or she will knock hastily through the property on offer in order to keep the energy in the room high, and to encourage people to bid fast out of fear that they might miss their chance. If you aren't alert and watching both

the room and the auctioneer, it's likely that prized steer is going to slip by you. Watching the room is important because you need to see who you're bidding against. If someone has bought half the sale and you find yourself up against them, chances are they're going to drive your price up higher than you might have been prepared to go.

"Be prepared for what you are looking for and have a price in mind before you start bidding," says David Simmons, from Waddington's Brighton Stephen Ranger, President and COO and head auctioneer at Ritchies auctioneers in Toronto adds that "there are lots of resources available to research works of art before you buy something. Start with the auction house specialist or expert, that's why they are there and they generally are hugely passionate about their area of expertise." Check prices online with www.artfact.com, or look up similar objects on artnet or eBay.

Good auction houses will always publish pre sale estimates following the description of each lot, but it's always a good idea to have a limit in your own mind before you bid on something. Catalogues are invaluable resources to both emerging and discerning collectors alike. They give approximate values

for lots and can always be referred to track the trends and demonstrate increased values for particular works.

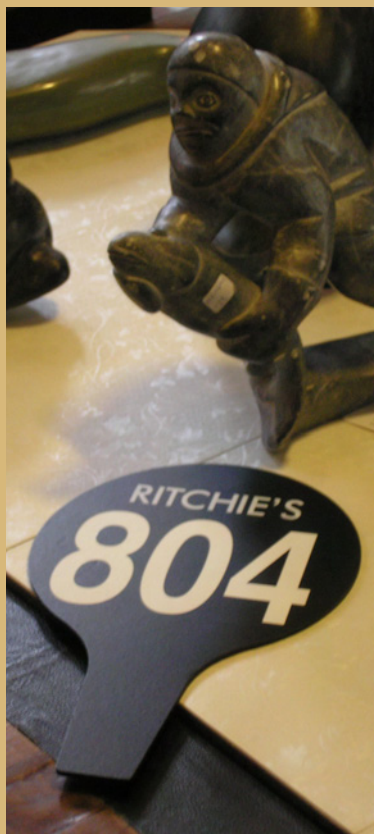
Ritchies hosts bi-weekly "Discovery" sales of eclectic property. Here you might find anything from an incredible Italian fiberglass illuminated bedroom suite to a group of framed medieval prints. Their "Select" sales are comprised of more valuable lots that are thoroughly researched and identified in fully-illustrated catalogues put out approximately 3 weeks before the sale. Their sales are always energetic and entertaining and are full of excellent buying opportunities.

Stephen Ranger explains: "I have been at Ritchies all my career, 20 years in fact, starting straight out of university. In that time we have sold objects to everyone from the nobility to novelty store owners and just about everyone in between. One of my favourite stories involves a husband and wife bidding on the same object across the room from each other. The bidding was getting intense and the auctioneer obviously didn't know they were together until they looked across the room to see who was bidding against them. We had to start the sale all over again."

There is also the common belief that an innocent twitch

or sneeze might cost you your mortgage – but this is not the case. If the auctioneer knows that someone is bidding (clearly indicated at the start of bidding by a flash of the paddle), then a simple nod or grin will tell him or her that they are still in the running to buy that lot. But even if you were to spontaneously lose control of your limbs and flap your arms or jump up and down, the auctioneer wouldn't know your paddle number and therefore not register your bid.

Newspapers will usually list any estate or company auctions as they arise, as well as a synopsis or highlights of the goods on offer. They might also list the family name, particularly if it has any clout. These auctions require a sense of adventure and open-mindedness. They usually do not produce catalogues that you can browse in advance and give you only a couple of days (or hours) to preview the lots before you decide to bid and for how much. You should aim to be prepared, mentally and financially, for what you want and how much you're willing to sacrifice for it. An exciting prospect is the "boxed lot." These are made up of small things that are either not worth selling individually, or that the auctioneer has been too lazy to catalogue individually. Books are often sold this way, and



sometimes silver, porcelain, and various chachkas that might become your favourite booty ever.

Ranger reminds us that “there are many benefits to buying at auction, primarily that you can buy works of art and objects at prices far below retail. Many of the pieces that come up for auction are unique or one off and the people who are trend setters and style makers are often drawn to these objects.”

John Webster, a passionate collector and artist, agrees. “There’s a thrill in an auction. Here’s a rare object that a few people decide they want more than anyone in the room and they silently and obsessively fight for it. It can be dramatic, orgasmic and at times, hilarious. There’s no story with retail. A mass product is there for all to consume, and usually for no purpose but to keep up with the Joneses. Limited edition? I would say one to ten of something... not 2 thousand or 1 million of



something. Auctions are cool, retail is a given... tired, controlled and always popular.”

It ought to be mentioned that eBay has virtually revolutionized the market for antiques and collectibles. While it has democratized buying practices and allowed anyone to buy anything from any seller with a digital camera and Internet access, it completely misses out on the whole feel of what a traditional auction is all about. What gives real-time auction houses their advantage is the reputation they have cultivated for authenticity, accountability and reliability. Nothing beats that surge of excitement that washes over you when the gavel bangs down and the person “Sold!” to is you.

Daniel James's roots as a serious collector began in early childhood with his International collection of beer bottle caps salvaged from underneath bleachers at the local baseball diamonds. He sells Canadian art in Toronto.

Photography by Marnie McGhie

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Going Down Under...

by Daniella Newman

Ask yourself this, how far would you go for love?

So you've given up furniture and an old pair of jeans that your honey found unflattering. And OK, you've learned to accept crotchety Aunt Mildred as part of your family. In the amalgamation that follows the M-word the honeymoon question can get tricky.

So how far will you go? As far as Vegas where money burns? As far as Ibiza where bodies burn from beach to club? Ditch the old and sold honeymoon location debate for the farthest reaches of the southern hemisphere and set your senses ablaze with an exotic beauty that will be forever burned in your memories. And isn't that what love is about, forever?

Tassie—in local speak—is tagged as the Nature State owing to the fact that roughly forty percent is protected land (www.puretasmania.com.au). Expect to breathe easy, not only did you make it through the nuptials, but the air over the Southern Ocean is some of the cleanest in the world. Untarnished by

industrial air pollution and big city smog it is the international baseline measurement for purity.

Australia's only island state is abundant with culinary delights to remind you of what food should taste like. The Eastern side of the island offers endless options from roughing it to the ultimate in sensory indulgences. Drive from city to country expeditions passing countless quaint Victorian towns interspersed with the rolling hills of cattle and wine country.

Tasmania is the vacation destination for many an Australian much like our PEI, minus the international crowds. In the past five years many grass root tourism initiatives have given way to big business and international investors. Unique locally designed wilderness explorations transformed into five star wilderness experiences to suit varying fitness, comfort, and budget levels. The state is ripe to explode on the international circuit but still provides the space to get lost with your better half. From a series of daily trips that can make up your get away to weeklong hikes, choices abound.



Day Trekking

Cradle Mountain is the northern gateway to Tasmania's world heritage area, which includes dolerite capped mountains, limestone cave systems and alpine plateaus peppered with glacial lakes. The base is 'Waldheim' where in 1912 conservationist pioneer Gustav Weindorfer and his scandalously older wife Kate kick-started the conservation movement in Cradle Valley.

The walks start at bush level, move by river beds and eventually lead to the Overland Track as it heads south into Tasmania's alpine wilderness. Cradle Mountain walks weave through thick dark rainforests and button grass plains, an ever morphing landscape. Hours spent at the gym pale in comparison with the work required to keep pace on some of the tougher paths that require scrambling. The view and the sense of accomplishment at the top steal your breath away, from wonder more so than effort.

The National Park Services run skeletal cabins on the Waldheim grounds for simple accommodations. Popular with locals, early booking is recommended. For posher digs Cradle Mountain Chateau (www.cradlemountainchateau.com.au) offers the full hotel experience replete with a spa and one of only two bars in the area.

'Wineglass to Wineglass' (www.puretasmania.com.au/default.asp?piD=266), a half-day planned leisurely walk heads by 400 million year old rock formations that overlook Wineglass Bay, the Freycinet Peninsula, and the Tasman Sea. The Hazards Range is comprised of five granite peaks and one of Tasi's most visited beaches. Wineglass Bay is a site to behold. From 1840 right up to 1940 major whaling diminished the whale

migration from 120,000 to 150. Named for the red waters that filled the bay at hunting season, this story has a happy ending as the migrating numbers have climbed back from the brink of extinction.

The walk traverses the peninsula through woods and marsh to Hazards beach where just at the end of it lays a hidden inlet of tranquil beauty. Lounge on a patio built just for the season in a clearing in the woods overlooking the water, while your personal chef prepares to overthrow your culinary world.

Feast on the best of the region: cool climate wines, cheeses, King Island beef, quail and seafood—oysters, scallops, blue eyed trevalla, crayfish, calamari and more. The wholesomeness of the food and the perfectly matched wines in this serene setting, incite a gourmet experience unlike anything you've experienced. A thirty minute boat taxi delivers you back to the mainland satiated. For life.

This meal to end all meals is offered through Freycinet Lodge (www.freycinetlodge.com.au), which sits at the foot of the Hazards with sixty cottages dotting the bushland and overlooking Great Oyster Bay. Don't let the huts underwhelming exterior fool you. The cedar entrance fills the elegant sandy-white interior with a calming scent. These love nests are most welcome following outdoor trips, especially the couple sized hot tub overlooking the bay.

Weekly Adventure

Before I leave on a four day Bay of Fires guided beach walk (www.bayoffires.com.au) I am repeatedly told that this trip will change my perception of beauty in life. I nod the usual noncommittal gesture reserved for proclamations of profound life altering experiences. Months later, the views from this four day expedition still drift into my mind freezing me momentarily at work, grocery shopping, wherever.

The planned trek begins with breakfast at Pleasant Banks—the operation office and one time home of architect and ecotourism great Ken Latona. A breakdown of the four days exploration of Mt William National Park on

the north eastern tip of the island follows a check to make sure your pack is light and waterproof. The bus drive out to the drop off point passes mining towns, each one with its own history from Chinese and Japanese immigration, to fossil fish, to speculative secret cricket training camps.

Undoubtedly this is a trip for lovers—romantic love, familial love, but most of all environmental love. My group includes a retired couple who may as well be celebrating their honeymoon, a feisty mother and her two 20 something children, and our two very earnest and very young guides. Their love affair is with nature, ecology and the great Tasmanian outdoors. Like 95% of the guides they are also spirited locals. “Seeing people get out of their comfort zone and get a sense of adventure...its like walking with friends rather than being at work,” says Alex, 21. Despite their youth they prove quite capable of handling and hosting first time hikers. Seems great knowledge of fauna and flora is only part of their training. The guides also prepare all the elegant meals designed by noted chef Daniel Alps. If you thought this walk would get you slim and ravenous think again. Your eyes and stomach will compete for feasting bragging rights.

The walk traces a succession of fine white crescent shaped beaches, azure waters and round granite headlands coloured deep rust orange by the lichen. It is like standing in the eye of a jewel, as you experience intense washes of colour. Behind a white sand dune close the water on a barren stretch of beach awaits the seasonal Forester Beach Camp. Sparse little white huts include sleeping bags, mattresses, and mosquito netting. An elongated communal deck attaches to the kitchen and dining area. At night the starry sky disappears into ink dark waters, the isolation creating a hypnotic calm. People seek adventure to find themselves, but on this night you do even better to lose yourself in this setting.

These shores provide truly magical sightings. Walking is permitted only below the tide line so as not to disrupt nesting

Where the wild things are

The famed Tasmanian devils are cute but endangered creatures. They can be as hard to spot as foreign tourists. Keep your peepers open for echidnas, wombats, pademelons, wallabies, possums and more.

The weather underground

Just as crowded house sang, expect “four seasons in one day.”

Pack layers from rain jacket and fleece leggings to shorts, hiking boots and sport sandals. Include

a beanie—local for a toque—and a sun hat. Sunscreen is a must. Photographers take note, the light changes quickly and drastically.



Taste Buds

When local ingredients are this good you'll never forgive yourself for not trying: leatherwood honey, bushdust (a blend of spices used on meat, bread oils and fish—has a dusty but sweet taste), trumpeter (fishing restrictions add to the novelty), abalone (a meaty fish caught off the roaring 40's coast), King Island meat and cream, which as one of my guides joked “is 52% fat free” and cool climate wines with many a winery to visit. Be sure to visit Ashgrove Cheese farm where the walls are lined with awards; of course you'll notice that only once you've munched through the sampling stations with offerings of wasabi cheese, lavender cheese, and outback red cheddar (cheddar and the local spice mix called bushdust).



Hobart Seen

In need of an urban fix? Tasmania's spirited capital city Hobart offers a bit of everything.

Saturdays feature the Salamanca international market, though evenings the very same street bustles with activity from a string of bars.



Friday evenings in the Arts College Square, all types mingle to the sounds of live jazz. The weekly event is named Regtango for the band that started it all up.

Battery Point a historic suburb (5 minuets out of the city center) boasts a mix of 19th century workers cottages and colonial mansions with hipster cafes and bakeries to laze at. The grandest view in the city is from atop the 1270 meter summit of Mt. Wellington. Coast, a 22 kilometer bike ride.

There are of course plenty of accommodations to choose from in Hobart. Yet two hotels capture the essence of the place:

Lenna of Hobart (www.lenna.com.au) exudes old world charm from the bar lounge and courtyard to wrought iron elevator; this could be a set in a Merchant and Ivory film.

The Henry Jones Art Hotel (www.thehenryjones.com) sits on the Victoria Dock Harbour, but don't let the bare brick façade fool you for it masks a redecked jam factory turned arts central hot spot that truly redefines the boutique hotel (think the Drake with no budgetary constraints).

Season runs from Oct to May with Feb and March stable hot weather; Dec and January can be unpredictable.



shorebirds. There is no selling of seashells by the sea shores, nor even pocketing shells as souvenirs for they are a source of protection and food for the wildlife. Up to 10,000 years ago aboriginal tribes crossed this land to forage for food. They ate shellfish, then chucked the shells developing middens or rolling mounds of captivating, heritage protected rubbish piles.

Just about when you think you've had it, hidden in the greenery on yet another cliff, awaits the award winning Bay of Fires Lodge—a true marriage of sustainability and modern design. From solar power to composting toilets, to showers that work by pressure, you'll have ample opportunity to watch your honey work the pump for your morning shower. Style melds into the landscape as divides of outside and inside play on perception of space.

Kayak through a river into a bay into heavily wooded areas that are a wild difference from the spectacularly barren white beaches. Seagulls get drunk here on fermented coastal currants. The pademelons (mini-kangaroo like creatures) eat their dinner outside the lodge, as they've grown with the lodge and have adapted their feeding times.

Peruse through three guestbook and not one entry reads like those lame hotel signing books. These are love letters to the essence of pure design and a rugged captivating environment. "Certainly we can live ecologically and live quite well with quality even luxury. I call this pretty luxurious!" sums the mother in my group.

Daniella Newman is a Toronto based freelance writer who's been here written about this, been there written about that and is now off to somewhere new to write about that too.

Photography by Daniella Newman



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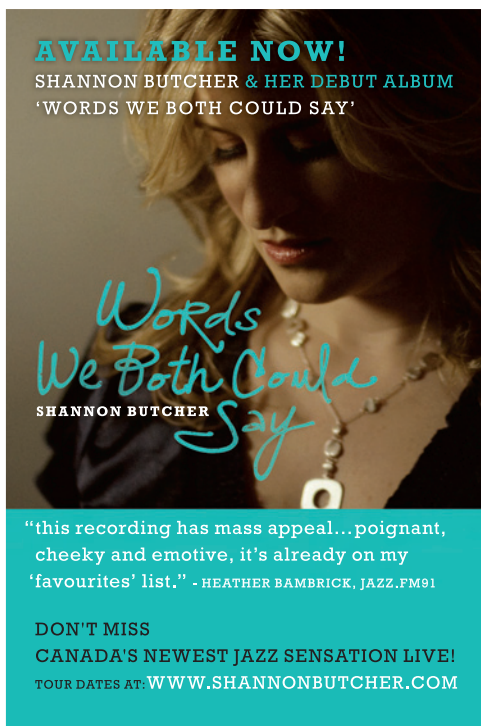
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All the Pretty Boys

by Michael Rowe

Dale saw the kid leaning up against a wall on Maitland, just in from Church Street. His first thought was Pretty boy. Very pretty. Dale locked his motorcycle. He sat on the edge of the seat and lit a cigarette.

The kid looked about nineteen. High cheekbones, dark hair. Strong jaw. Blue eyes and long black lashes. There was a light spray of acne on the kid's forehead and some sort of scar—a *sports injury?* a *fight?*—on his chin, but otherwise his complexion was clear. The scar saved the kid from looking too completely delicate, or even girlish. Good body, lean and rangy. Coyote muscles. When he noticed Dale watching him, he ventured a tentative smile, then immediately looked away. He shuffled his feet nervously, then stood up a little straighter.

Across the street, Church was thronged with people, a riot of noise and colour as it always was on Halloween night. Leathermen, drag queens, twinks, news crews from local television stations, and tourists from the

suburbs, jockeyed for available space with the most dramatically costumed revelers. The spectacle was entirely impossible to ignore. It called to the whole city like a siren. And yet the kid held back, just out of the light.

Vulnerable, Dale thought. He smiled. *New to the city? Maybe a hustler, or maybe just thinking about it.* The kid's jeans and boots were mall-cheap, and even from a distance Dale's expert eye detected that the jacket was vinyl. His hair was unfashionably cut, probably in some small town a long way from here. Definitely his type. Yes, he thought, *he's the one.*

Dale pulled himself up to his full height of six foot four. He straightened his shoulders and walked over to where the kid was staring at him. The young ones always wanted to feel seduced, romanced, swept off their feet. Dale could do that. No sweat. Looking up, he smiled brilliantly, and the kid melted like they always did.

The kid's slender arms were wrapped tightly around Dale's waist, fingers digging into his leather motorcycle jacket. The black October wind screamed past as they hurtled down the Lakeshore on Dale's 2002 Harley Fat Boy. In the distance, the low caul of clouds glowed with the first fingers of moonlight, and the harsher metallic smack of neon lit the black torrent of highway like phosphorus.

When you ride a Fat Boy you feel like God created asphalt just for you to glide over, Dale thought with familiar ecstasy. It could take ice, or heavy rain, and keep the pavement. It's engine roared like a mating cry. Whenever he started it up, it sounded to Dale like the guttural bellow of a powerful guy just before he shot. To Dale, riding was almost as good as sex. There was no bitch bar behind the seat, and Dale felt the kid's groin tight against his backside, his legs almost tucked under Dale's. He deliberately hit a couple of rough patches on the highway just to feel the kid's crotch vibrating against his back. Dale smiled beneath the visor of his helmet and revved the throttle. The bike shot forward into the night and the kid tightened his grip on Dale's waist.

"Nice bike," the kid had said back on Maitland, indicating Dale's motorcycle where it was parked. He had just arrived in Toronto from North Bay, was named Todd, and hoped to become a model—three facts Dale immediately discarded.

The kid had reached over and run his fingers across Dale's leather motorcycle chaps. "You always wear these? When you ride?"

"Are you into the bike, or into the chaps?"

"Both." The kid smiled winsomely. "I'm into older guys, too."

"I'm thirty," Dale said with mock outrage.

"That's not old."

"You have a hot body." This time Dale could hear the lust beneath what the kid clearly thought was a sophisticated seduction on his part. He squeezed Dale's biceps, tentatively first, then with clear hunger. "Nice muscles." He reached up and touched Dale's thick, tanned neck. Reaching higher, he ran his fingers through Dale's black crewcut. Dale stood perfectly still, his eyes locked onto the kid's, and let the inevitable occur.

"You look like a cop," the kid said.

"You like that?" Dale said in a low voice. "You like that I look like a cop?"

"I don't like *cops*, but I like guys who *look* like cops. You're *not* a cop, are you?"

This time he sounded worried. Dale laughed, full and warm, and he felt the kid relax in response to the sound of his laughter.

"No, I'm not a cop." Then Dale threw out the bait. "I have a lover," he said. "He looks like a cop too. You want to play with two cops?"

The kid barely hesitated. He put his palm on Dale's leathered thigh. "Will you leave the chaps on? And the jacket?" His breathing quickened with desire.

Dale smiled. "Always," he said. "My lover wears leather too. We never play without it."

"Cool," the kid said with studied casualness, his voice suddenly tighter and an octave higher. "Where do you live? Nearby?"

Dale indicated the bike with a backward nod of his head. "Hop on. I'll show you."

When the kid hesitated, small-town admonitions about the big bad city at night likely echoing in his relatively empty nineteen year old head, Dale wrapped his arms around him and kissed him roughly and possessively on the mouth. When he felt the kid melt into his body, pressing closer and forcing his tongue clumsily into Dale's mouth, he knew the kid was his for the taking.



The house was dark when they pulled into the driveway. Dale cut the engine and dismounted. He removed his helmet and tucked it under his arm. He turned and took the kid's helmet from him. The kid's face was pale, his hair askew. But he looked euphoric.

"What'd you think?" Dale asked. "Did you like it?"

"Loved it," the kid replied. Then, shyly: "It was my first time. I'd love to go again sometime." The streetwise veneer was momentarily abandoned, and Dale saw softness. This was somebody's son a long way from home. He felt a sudden stab of guilt, sharp as a shard of glass. He dug his nails brutally into his inner palm and focused on the pain. When he thought he could barely take it, he squeezed again, harder, till white supernovas exploded behind his eyes and he felt sticky blood in his palm when he pulled his fingers away.

Then he was back in control, and the kid had seen none of it. Dale winked at the kid, dead sexy again. "I'll take you home," he said. "Tomorrow morning. You'll be able to see the sun rise over the lake."

"Where's your lover?" the kid said sleepily. He lay back against the cushions of the couch. He took another swallow of the beer. He grimaced. Dale sat across from him, very still. The light from the hallway gleamed against the leather of his chaps. "You said he'd be here, and it's been, like, half an hour." The words were slurred. "What was his name again?" *Wuhwush hish namagen?*

"I told you. His name is Derek. He's downstairs, changing," Dale said. "He'll be ready for you very soon." Dale looked out the window at the dark lawn, and the spreading moonlight. "Let's get you out of those clothes."

Dale stood up and walked over to where the kid was sprawled and began to undress him. The kid's eyelids fluttered as he tried

to focus on Dale, then they closed. The beer bottle dropped from his hand and rolled across the floor, the dark amber liquid foaming, staining the rug. Dale leaned down and listened to the kid's breathing. He wasn't sleeping yet, but he was close. Dale finished undressing the kid, then lifted his naked body into his arms. He crossed the living room floor and entered the kitchen. The moonlight was growing brighter and he could see the floor very clearly. He kicked open the door to the cellar, feeling a gust of cold air wafting up from the room far below the cellar. He shuddered, and instinctively pulled the kid's body closer as though to warm it, to protect it.



In the sky above the city, the full moon reached its zenith in the October sky, heavy purple and black clouds parting like stage curtains. He knew the moonlight would just now be shattering across the dark waters of Lake Ontario. Dale pictured it pouring down like molten metal.

In the basement *below* the basement, he knew Derek could more than imagine it, he knew Derek could *feel* it. After all these years as lovers, Dale and Derek could practically hear each other's thoughts as well as they kept the other's secrets. The cheap Mexican Rohypnol he'd slipped into the kid's beer would have done its work by now and he'd be unconscious. Dale had learned, over the years, that it was always easier for them when they didn't see the transformation itself take place, when they didn't see what Derek was becoming as the full moon climbed higher and higher into the night sky.

Most of the time, Derek *did* look like a cop. He was better looking than Dale. All their friends said so. Much better. Usually.

Yeah, Dale thought. *He's changing all right*. At least he'd told the kid one truth tonight.

"Happy Halloween," he whispered, and kissed the kid's forehead as he laid him on the cold basement floor near the trap door, like an offering. All the pretty boys. He could barely remember their faces. But in a way, he loved them all. They fed his love.

What was his name? Todd? Tom? It hardly matters now. It's better that I don't remember.

The sounds from the sub-basement became louder. Dale heard a frustrated, low whining. Then, a roar of purest animal hunger, not unlike a mating cry, followed by a volley of blows that made the floor tremble. Dale backed away from the trap door. He thought he heard Derek's voice for a moment, calling

his name. Then it was gone, lost in the rising crescendo of bestial fury coming from the sub-basement.

The kid lay motionless where Dale had left him, sleeping deeply, oblivious to the sound of the trap door splintering. In a moment, the night would become unspeakable. He was definitely Derek's type.

The kid smiled in his sleep. His arms moved reflexively as though he were still holding tight to Dale's waist, still on the bike and trusting. A thin sliver of drool trickled from the corner of his full bottom lip. To Dale, asleep, he suddenly looked much younger than nineteen.

Dale prayed it would be over quickly this time, for the kid's sake. He didn't even realize he was weeping. Sometimes love really did hurt. It hurt a lot.

Michael Rowe is the Lambda Literary Award-winning creator/editor of the *Queer Fear* anthology series (Arsenal Pulp Press) and co-author of the gay horror novella collection *Triptych of Terror* (Alyson Books.) His most recent book, *Other Men's Sons* (Cormorant Books) was nominated for two Lambda Literary Awards and won the 2008 Randy Shilts Award for Nonfiction. He lives in Toronto.



Michael photographed by Jason Krygier-Baum

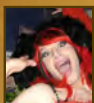
Illustration by Ramón K Pérez

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Drag, Standup Comedy, and Jazz
September 18, 2008

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for the gay and lesbian community
and the release of the new issue of *autumnplay!*

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Deb Pearce



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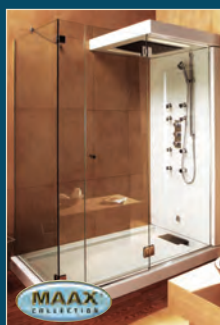




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Autumn in the City

by Manny Machado

It's harvest time, and I don't mean fruits and veggies. Now that your batteries are re-charged from the summer, choose your cause and go do some good. There are plenty of options to have fun this season and give back to those who need it the most. Fashion Scares, Aids Walk and Pie in the Sky are such events that allow us to show the world that Toronto has heart.

FESTIVALS

Scotiabank Nuit Blanche

October 4 to October 5

Various Locations in Toronto & The GTA

Free

You have 12 hours to see 195 exhibits spread across 3 zones in the downtown core. Must-see's include "Zombies in the Park" at College Park and Yoko Ono's "Imagine Peace" in Liberty Village.

TIP: Caffeine and good walking shoes will ensure you have a stimulating and insightful sleepless night.

www.scotiabanknuitblanche.ca



At Princess of Wales Theatre



Chinese Lantern Festival

Roger's Chinese Lantern Festival

July 31 to October 12

Ontario Place

\$25 admission for the festival only

Around the world in 80 minutes, by way of the 32 intricate handcrafted displays from China's Zigong Museum. Feast your taste buds on the international cuisine as you enjoy the nightly entertainment.

TIP: Lanterns are best seen at night.

1-866-666-8996

www.chineselanternfestival.ca

FOOD

Eat to the Beat

September 23

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St

7:00 PM to 11:00 PM

\$150

Fighting breast cancer has never tasted so good, over 60 of the finest female chefs will be enticing you with an incredible array of sweet and savoury treats. Food TV's Anna Olsen is the spokesperson for the 13th annual gala event.

TIP: The city's finest pastry chefs will be present so; don't leave your sweet tooth at home.

www.eattothebeat.ca

Gourmet Food and

Wine Expo

November 20 to November 23

Metro Convention Centre

\$15 general admission

Taste the wineries and cuisine from around the globe, with \$1 sample tickets available throughout the show.

TIP: impress your friends with your new knowledge of wines and cheeses at your next party.

905-634-8003 ext. 350

www.foodandwineshow.ca

STYLE AND FASHION

L'Oreal Fashion Week

October 20 to October 25

Nathan Phillips Square

Fashionistas rejoice as the spring '09 collections hit the runway, full day passes available online as of September 1st.

TIP: schmoozing is a must, so put your best Manolo forward.
www.lorealfashionweek.ca

Toronto Fall Home Show

September 18 to September 21

Better Living Centre,

Exhibition Place

\$10 online

Cozy up your nest for the holiday season. Take an inside look at the hottest new trends for your home, featuring hands on workshops and seminars with celebrity designers.

TIP: If you really need help with your space call me (the Urban Space Stylist 416.913.0166), or join me next issue as I launch my small space design column.

1-888-823-7469 (SHOW)

www.fallhomeshow.com

Canadian Makeup Show

November 8 & 9

This show was the buzz of the makeup industry last year, and is back, bigger and better; featuring demos, products, seminars and trade secrets from top industry professionals.

TIP: Great place for skin care and maintenance ideas as well as early stocking stuffers.

416-925-8009

www.canadianmakeupshow.com

TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Toronto After Dark Film Festival

October 17 to October 24

Bloor Cinema

Price: \$12

Features new Sci-Fi, fantasy and horror films from independent producers.

TIP: Be part of the Zombie walk along the downtown streets.
www.torontoafterdark.com

Painting and Drawing from the Model

ARTISTS 25 Nonprofit Art Studio 267 Brock

Avenue, studio 104

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1:30 to 4:00 PM

\$8.00

Art studio offering life drawing sessions; open to all on a pay as you go basis. Tip: working with a charcoal pencil is the easiest for novice artists.

416-504-3948

www.artists25.ca

A GOOD CAUSE!

Fashion Scares

Saturday November 1

Metro Convention Centre

9 PM main event

Fashion Cares returns to the Convention Centre and back to its glamorously gay roots. This year marks the event's inaugural fall debut with a theme the gay community is infamous for—Halloween. The new date heralds an exciting new chapter for the event, with new faces, fashion and an incredible line up of surprises. Tables are available for the Gala dinner which will be served in the evening, allowing enough time to digest before the main event at 10pm. General admission tickets will be available online. Proceeds go to support the Aids Committee of Toronto (ACT).

TIP: Fantastic prizes to be given out for the best costume and the intimate setting means you, the guest, are part of the show, so get creative.

416-340-2437

www.fashioncares.com

Pie in the Sky

Labour Day to Thanksgiving

Toronto People with Aids Foundation (PWA)

Cost \$35/ pie

Mouthwatering pies from celebrity chefs are available in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, ensuring those who depend on PWA's vital food programs receive a healthy meal and hope, not only during the holiday season, but daily. PWA provides 30,000 meals yearly and the number of children relying on the food bank tripled this past January. Volunteers are needed to help distribute and sell, so check online on how you can become a part of this delicious event. Pies go on sale after Labour Day and are available for pick up on Friday October 10th at the following locations, First Canadian Place, PWA, Summerhill LCBO and the LCBO at Bayview Village.

TIP: Pies make great Thanksgiving gifts, re-gifting and leftovers will not be an issue. To avoid disappointment, order early.

416-506-1400

www.torontopieinthesky.org



Could this be Manny's outfit for Fashion Cares?

4th Annual Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival

November 18 to November 23

Sign up your own troupe for your 15 minutes of fame supported by professional development and networking.

TIP: great opportunity to learn the ins and outs from the comedy masters.
www.torontosketchfest.com

HIDDEN SECRETS

Pumpkin Picking

**September and October
Weekdays and weekends**

Trail rides, bbq's and pumpkin tossing, enjoy the best of the fall harvest in the crisp outdoors at some of the GTA's local farms. Check online for a full list of participating farms in your area.

TIP: Call ahead and leave the heels at home, picking your own pumpkin means getting down on your knees.
www.toronto.com/guide/halloween/article/529989

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September 28

Queen's Park

11:00 AM to 6:00 PM

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TIP: Find a shady spot and cozy up with your new find.

416-504-7241

www.thewordonthestreet.ca

In The Upper Room and Symphony in C

The National Ballet of Canada

November 5 to November 9

**Four Seasons Centre,
145 Queen Street West**

\$45 - \$155

A fantastic double bill, watch as jazz and pop movements, blend beautifully with classic choreography.

TIP: If you're a novice, this contemporary show is a great introduction to the art form.

1-866-345-9595 www.ballet.ca

Planet in Focus

Various Locations In Toronto & GTA

October 22 to October 26

\$10 general admission

Featuring compelling films and videos by Canadian and International film-makers, helping to bring public awareness and knowledge on environmental issues.

TIP: Monthly screenings available at the Gardiner Museum.

416-531-1769 www.planetinfocus.org

OPERA & ORCHESTRA

War and Peace

October 10 to November 1

The Canadian Opera Company

Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts

Stirring choruses of the Russian peoples victory over Napoleon's army.

TIP: Exclusive offer for patrons under 30, beginning one week before opening night, tickets are \$20.

416-363-8231

www.coc.ca

The Free Concert Series

Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre

Four Seasons Centre For The Performing Arts

**September 18, 23, 25, 30
12 - 1 PM**

Free

Get a taste of jazz, vocal, chamber and piano series and enjoy breathtaking views from the theatre.

TIP: Brown bag lunches welcomed.

www.coc.ca/performances/concerts.html

THEATRE

The Sound of Music

October 3 to January 11

The Princess of Wales Theatre

\$26 to \$120

The classic story comes to life on stage.

TIP: Sing loudly, Maria!

416.872.1212

www.mirvish.com/SOM/



With David Mirvish

Jersey Boys

August 21 to October 5
Toronto Centre for the Arts

\$60- \$90

Tony Award winning musical, featuring classics like Sherry, Big Girls Don't Cry, and Rag Doll

TIP: Subway is the easiest way to get in and out of North York.

(TTC: Yonge subway line, North York Centre or Sheppard stops.)

416-872-1111

www.jerseyboysinfo.com/tour/toronto.htm

AGOKWE

September 23 to October 12
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

Gay love story between two boys from neighboring reserves is the launch of an amazing line up of performances slated for their 2008-2009 season.

TIP: See the complete list of the season's show available online.

416-975-8555

www.artsexy.ca

SPOOKY

Screamers

October 17 to November 1
Better Dead Centre at
Exhibition Place
\$27.95

One of the scariest experiences in town! After 16 seasons they know how to scare you right with haunted houses, mazes and monsters, sure to get you into the spirit of Halloween.

TIP: Discount coupon available online.

(TTC: Dufferin 29 bus south from Dufferin Station, just south of the Dufferin Gates.)

416-979-FEAR

www.screamers.ca

Halloween

October 24 to October 31
Church Street

Free

A weeklong celebration featuring activities, parties and parades along 4 blocks of the gay village, culminating in a massive street party on Halloween night.

TIP: Don't forget to save some energy for Fashion Scares on Nov. 1st, the perfect place to showcase your breath-taking costumes.

416-393-6363

www.halloween.ca

All Hallows Eve

October 20 to October 27
Black Creek Pioneer Village
\$25

Experience spirit channeling and ghost walks while you learn about the real life horror story of Lizzy Borden. Mysterion the Mind Reader is also on hand to dazzle and confuse.

TIP: \$5 off when you purchase online. (TTC: From Finch subway station take Steeles 60 West route, or from Jane Station take the Jane 35 route.)

416-667-6295

www.blackcreek.ca/allhallowseve

Manny Machado is a freelance writer and small space guru inspired by mankind and all things design. His multitude of projects include host on MTV's Budget Cribbs, CEO of Elbowroom Studio, Décor Chair for Fashion Cares 2008 and initiating a community response to the fire, Queen Street: A Fresh Start.

Photography by Marnie McGhie



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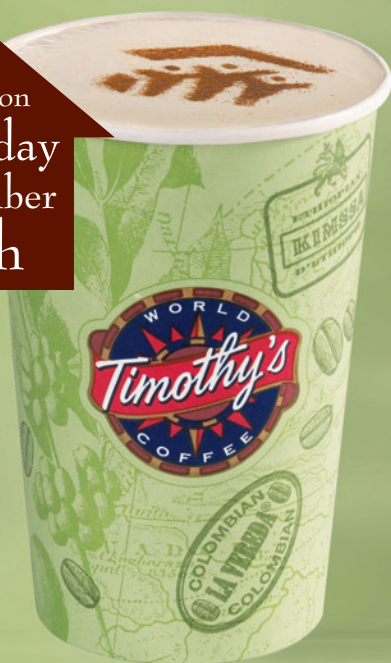
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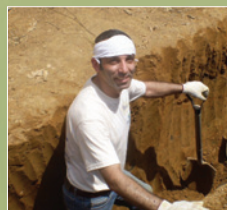
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FROM THE HEART

by Michele Gill

When Things Just Go Wrong...

Have you ever experienced those times when everything seems to go wrong?

They can happen for an entire day or last for several weeks, even several months.

A stroke of bad luck you might say. Bad chi? Karmic law?

What ever you want to call it, it's bad news!

When you start out in this cycle you find yourself getting frustrated. "Enough is enough" you might cry. You think you've got it all under control then "BANG" you're hit with another problem, then another, then yet another. The problems are multiplying and before you know it you're spiraling into a black abyss.

Along this journey we are thrust into the desert. We find ourselves in a wasteland feeling lost and abandoned, but it is during this time in the desert that our souls grow.

You're now at the stage where you are wanting to vent to friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, strangers, even stray pets for Pete's sake. Anyone who will listen. "Somebody shoot me" you are now thinking. You can't take

anymore and have gone into complete shock as your body finds itself numb and your mind forgetful. Stress levels have peaked and your blood pressure is at an all time high.

Planting the seeds of a positive outlook creates a more positive experience down the line, regardless of how bad things may look in the midst of your suffering and challenges.

Just barely being able to keep yourself together in front of your peers you've entered the land of denial. "I'm fine," is how you reply when asked how you are and let on that life is good. Although you appear to be a bit preoccupied, or even testy in the eyes of your peers, you've convinced them otherwise.

Sometimes it is easier to complain, blame someone, or just put yourself down than to do the real work of self-examination and personal transformation.



You remain in denial until you hit that horrible stage we've all visited. Fear. "Oh my God, what am I going to do?" is what you're now thinking. The world suddenly seems dark and cold. Panic sets in and sends you worrying about everything. The worst case scenarios are suddenly presenting themselves.

When you're feeling weighted down by outer pressures, such as health concerns, legal matters, or financial troubles, your attitude can help turn a curse into a blessing.

This has to end. You are ready for a nervous breakdown. "THAT'S ENOUGH!" you scream at the top of your lungs. "I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE ANYMORE!" Now you are angry! Rather than pray you are giving the "ole what for" to the heavens above and really don't care about the consequences of those actions at this point. You are now a force to be reckoned with. Things are going to start going your way. Yes siree. No more of this crap is the new attitude of the day!

Surrender allows you to remove the many layers of wrong understanding, fear, desire, and all those other not-so-goodies.

Wait, problem #1 just got solved. And look at that, problem #2 is suddenly sorting itself out too. Well wouldn't you know it, problem #3 just disappeared with a stoke of good luck. What's that I hear? Problem #4, 5 & 6 were handled by an outsider and problem #7 was strictly accidental and not really your problem in the first place! Suddenly a feeling of enthusiasm has come over you once again. You're back in that happy place where we like to dwell, where all things are good.

You've just completed the entire circle.

It's amazing how even the most intensely difficult things in life somehow fall just within the threshold of bearable. Everyone experiences these ups and downs of life, although the intensities vary from person to person. Small inconveniences for one person can cause more distress than major disasters do for another. How



they affect you depends on your understanding, state of mind, and past experience. Think of trials and tribulations as tools that set you free from a smaller world view, and send you running and screaming into more precious realms that you may not have even known were there.

Suffering teaches you compassion and inspires you to contemplate and reconsider your thoughts and actions.

Dark nights of the soul can bring greater meaning to your life and also give you more appreciation and gratitude for all you have. Looking for something positive will help to heal any situation at hand. Know that with each and every bad situation there's always a solution. Have we not all been there at some point in our lives?

Take comfort in knowing that when we find ourselves in that dark place at the bottom of the barrel, the good news is the only place left to go is up.

Michele Gill is an inspirational speaker, conducting writing and participating in guided group meditations. She is thrilled to have just completed her Reiki Masters Certification.

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Looking Back

by Reverend Dr. Brent Hawkes

After getting the approval of the Church's board we announced on June 11, 2000—human rights day—that we were going to start doing gay and lesbian weddings in 2001.

At that point, it felt like just another one of the human rights things the church had stood up in support of. Yeah, we knew we were being a bit of a rebel in doing this, but we never realized just how historic this would become.

Immediately we were on a rollercoaster. The way it worked is the minister reading the Banns acts as an agent of the government, ironically. That felt so great! So after each reading, I had to rule, I had to make the decision whether or not the objections—which I knew would be coming—were legal or not.

I had no idea what the objections were going to be, or how disruptive to the worship service it would be. Would we be harangued? So at the first reading I got up and said, "Today I publish the Banns of Marriage between Kevin Bourassa and Joe Varnell and Anne Vautour and Elaine Vautour. Does anyone know of any lawful reason why they shouldn't be married?" It was so emotional—I could feel my eyes welling up.

There was this electric moment and then when no one stood up—I even took one extra look around just to make sure—I said, "This is the first time of asking and we will proceed towards these marriages." There was huge applause! People stood up and hugged each

other, it was so exciting!

At the next reading when Ken Campbell, one of the anti-gay religious leaders in Canada, stood up to object I asked him what his objection was, to which he replied, "I object because the Bible is against it and historically in Canada it's always been between a man and a woman."

I responded by saying "I appreciate your concerns, but those are not legal objections." I made my ruling and there was no further debate. It felt so good to make the ruling that these were not legal objections. After that reading there was the same applause, but it felt like a bit of a violation. Here in the safety of our church we were faced with religious homophobia.

All along we were worried about death threats and that sort of thing. I had a bullet proof vest, gathering dust in my closet from the last time I had to wear it, ready to go if I needed it.

At the third Reading of the Banns the same objections came up, so I made the same ruling and concluded by stating, "This is the third and final reading of the Banns, the weddings will proceed January 14th." Well the place went nuts! The weddings were on!

Then the death threats came.

That night, before the ceremony, was the second time in my life I called my sister at home and said, "If anything happens tomorrow, tell Mom and Dad that I love them."

Sunday morning I put the old bullet proof

vest on and gave John, my partner, a hug. We knew it was going to be an historic and scary day. At 6am bodyguards picked me up because they didn't want me to drive to church on my own. I was rushed into the car and we took a different route than usual.

In the middle of our regular morning service a woman came up the aisle and started yelling and screaming and throwing pamphlets and I did something the bodyguards were furious about. I'm in church and I want to protect people from this, so I walked up to her and very non-threateningly put my hands out and told her she needed to calm down because it was a criminal offense to disrupt a church service and she would be charged. If she wanted to talk, we could talk, but this was not the way to do it. Well, she pushed me. Which was assault. I fell backwards and the bodyguards rushed over and grabbed her and took her out of the church and arrested her.

That incident just heightened the concern. If that was what could happen in a worship service, what was going to happen at the wedding? It was an unbelievable feeling, a funny combination of excitement and terror. But at the same time there was a real celebratory atmosphere, people were just so excited to be part of this and see it happening. This was not just about sexual rights, this was about celebrating our love. This is as basic as you can get into the acceptance and affirmation of gay and lesbian people being in a relationship.

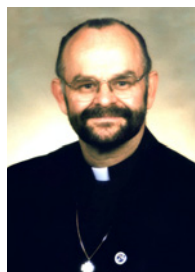
I remember walking in with my bodyguards

and as soon as I made my entrance the place went nuts. I was terrified I was going to flub it. Or forget something. Or sign the documents wrong. Or miss some really crucial legal thing. We knew we had 80 media outlets from around the world, 20 of which were TV crews. But I wanted it to be a dignified event and not a media circus and I wanted it to be about the couples getting married. I wanted it to be warm and personable, yet every time there was a little rustle from some corner there was worry as well. But it went smoothly and every moment was historic.

At the moment in the service where I sign the documents there's a tear-off, once I did that, that was the moment they were legally married and it was the first time in the history of the world of this being done. Someday gay marriages will be taken for granted and that's because of the historic moment that happened there that day.

And then I made the final pronouncement, "You are now husband and husband and you are wife and wife. I now present to you Kevin and Joe, Anne and Elaine, partners in life, duly married in the eyes of God and in accordance with the laws of our land."

Rev. Dr. Brent Hawkes C.M. has been the Senior Pastor at the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto for almost 30 years and was recently honoured with the Order of Canada.



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