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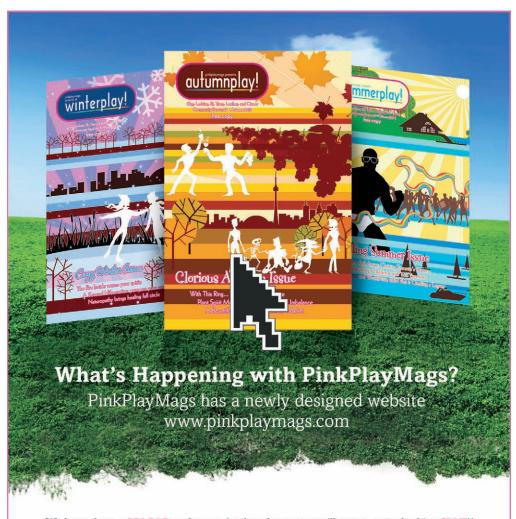


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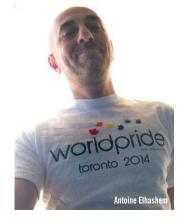
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From the Publisher



orldPride 2014, the mega fabulous wonderful inspiring LGBTQ+ festival that graced Toronto for 10 amazing days is now a few months behind us; the music has wound down, the glitter has all been swept off downtown Toronto pavement, and our community is back to business as usual.

It may be over, but PinkPlayMags WP14 coverage continues in our autumn and upcoming winter editions. There is still much that we want to know and find out. How did it all go? What challenges did the organizers have? What was the effect of the festival on our city and our region? How did members of our community spend their WorldPride and what did it mean to them?

According to Wikipedia "Gay pride or LGBT pride is the positive stance against discrimination and violence toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people to promote their self-affirmation, dignity, equality rights, increase their visibility as a social group, build community, and celebrate sexual diversity and gender variance. Pride, as opposed to shame and social stigma, is the predominant outlook that bolsters most LGBT rights movements throughout the world."

WorldPride, which is organized by InterPride, is an event that promotes lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered issues on an international level. For WorldPride in Toronto the message was our pride is everywhere. That was the big message the team at Pride Toronto put out in terms of marketing—and our Pride was indeed everywhere.

Yes, WordPride 2014 affirmed my love and pride of the country we live in. My big moment of happy and proud tears happened at the Opening Ceremony at Nathan Phillips Square. My pal and media personality Deb Pearce was hosting. When she stepped up on stage, her opening line was, and I quote, "My name is Deb Pearce, my wife is here, my son is here, I can talk openly about being married to a woman and with a baby, because I live in Canada". I loved it.

I was lucky to have been personally involved for fourand-a-half years as a volunteer Chair of Marketing & Communications for WorldPride 2014. During that time I met and worked with so many amazing and wonderfully community-spirited people. This experience will be in my heart for many years to come. So yes please, continue the journey with us in this, and next issue, as we wrap up our look at this wonderful event that our city hosted.

In 2015 PinkPlayMags will be entering its 8th year in publishing. We will have a very exciting journey ahead for you, which we will share with you soon.

Happy autumn,

Antoine Elhashem publisher@pinkplaymags.com

autumnplay!

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

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From the Editor



his summer was a blur for me, almost every weekend was spent with friends or family either sipping cold cocktails on my balcony, or out of town enjoying the countryside. No matter where I was though, good food, refreshing libations and wonderful conversation was had. I truly feel blessed.

World Pride is but a fond memory and now that summer has faded into autumn, we here at PinkPlayMags thought we'd wrap that fond memory up in a bow and thank everyone for coming, for being a vital part of the celebration.

This issue we sit down with former WorldPride Executive Director Kevin Beaulieu and WorldPride Manager Chrystal Dean to relive the challenges, triumphs and favourite moments from the festival (page 10). We also catch up with Debra Mansillo and Chris Ellis, who are looking forward to the tourism explosion and WorldPride in Madrid in 2017 (page 17).

We're also thrilled to feature a five-page photo essay of WorldPride souvenir memories from Toronto welcoming the world for one hell of a party (page 22). There were so many to pick from it was a tough decision to narrow it down to just a handful of images. One thing that struck me as I sifted through them was how diverse the crowd was, how many different events there were, how many smiling faces and just how colourful it all was. Such a good time!

Shelley in "From the Heart" sums up the gorgeous double rainbow we were blessed with that closed out our final day and shares what a homecoming it's been for all of us (page 56).

Bryen revisits Niagara-on-the-Lake and gives us a thoroughly fresh tour of our very own wine country, nestled in our very own back yard. I'm embarrassed to say that I have not returned since I visited for my feature way back in summer of 2008; I had such an enchanting time when I went that I cannot encourage you enough to venture into this wine and food lovers paradise and Bryen is the perfect guide to lead you on this getaway (page 28).

Fall used to make me feel melancholy because it was the end of summer and meant that cold, dark, snowy winter was just around the corner. Working on the autumn issue of PinkPlayMags over the last six years has revitalized the season for me. Now I find it more of a time of deep reflection, a time to give thanks, to look back on my year and cherish the great memories I've made. The festive holiday season, travel and relatives come all too soon with winter, but autumn more than any other time, affords me the luxury of kicking back in an Adirondack chair, switching from an ice cold beyv to a robust glass of red. and basking in another year that has whirled by. There are some traditional gatherings I really look forward to at this time of year because I can share these feelings of thanks with friends and family. Thanksgiving will happen a couple of weekends in a row as I drop in on more than one feast, and more recently, a phenomenon known as Virtual BlizzCon has become a new tradition that satisfies my inner nerd among like-minded friends.

So however you plan on spending the fall, I wish you the blessing of good food, comforting drinks and engaging company.

Jeff Harrison editor@pinkplaymags.com



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THE LEGACY WILL LIVE ON by Karen Fulcher

t may feel like summer is a sweet memory and we are now hunkering down, back to business as usual, but the Toronto Pride office barely had time to breathe between WorldPride and planning for the next festival.

I caught WorldPride Executive Director, Kevin Beaulieu and WorldPride Manager, Chrystal Dean between meetings in an office with a white board filled with numbers and statistics next to the table we sat around at Toronto Pride, 14 Dundonald Street. They graciously spent an hour with me reflecting on the exhausting and ultimately satisfying festival they had just emerged from.





WorldPride Executive Director, Kevin Beaulieu (left) and WorldPride Manager, Chrystal Dean (Right, Photo by Ella Cooper)

The actual rainbow at the festival's Sunday close, they admit, was not choreographed by WorldPride, but nonetheless impressed in all our

minds a thrill of serendipity and the joy that we all shared at the same time regardless of where we were celebrating.

I told them that many of my friends had shared with me that this Pride celebration was one of their favourites, and I asked Beaulieu and Dean what made this festival different than the regular

yearly event.



My name Deb Pearce, and I am a married lesbian with a son, and only in Canada can I say that proudly,

"

Pearce stated while emceeing the opening ceremonies at Nathan Phillips Square, opposite page, top.

"Prides are often local and celebrate what's happening in the host city or town. WorldPride is part of a much larger movement global includes sense of just wanting to belong, wherever you land in the world," Dean said. "There were tangible differences as well: opening and closing ceremonies, the threeday human rights conference

partnership with University of Toronto, these are unique and signature to a WorldPride celebration."

Beaulieu and Dean explained that WorldPride is for communities around the world to stop at a certain point in time and take stock, ask how we are supporting each other, how we connected, and what can we learn from each other.

Being only the forth such event, Toronto seemed the perfect place to host because the city has such a diverse and rich-in-culture population. But being only the forth WorldPride brought challenges. It could become anything. One of the questions they got asked over and over again was, "What is this event?"

"That was one of the great things about it. The challenge of identifying this thing was also a wonderful opportunity for engagement and creativity," Beaulieu explained. "When you think of an international event like this you think of a sporting event that comes with a lot of public infrastructure and a history. We worked with the community and our partners and we set up a whole structure within the organization simply to give it an identity."

Toronto had neither the public infrastructure



nor history, but WorldPride pulled it off. "It was wonderful to see not only visitors to the city, but also to see locals who'd been to Pride many times, re-engage with it in a whole new way because of the international participation," said Beaulieu.

Dean nodded and added, "It really did take on a life of its own. When I walked around the city, I saw rainbow flags everywhere. It wasn't just people we had spoken to. It wasn't just people who considered themselves part of the LGBT community. These were people who live in the city, they run a business, they live in their house, wherever it was, and they were flying a rainbow flag. What it became was an entire city embracing love and acceptance and belonging. It was beautiful and it just spread."

WorldPride wasn't only rainbows and parties though. The festival included a three-day human rights conference along with a number of other human rights programming. The conference was led in partnership with Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies in the University of Toronto. There were over 50 countries represented and not just the academics—there were activists who were working on the ground with LGBTQ+communities attending.

"We had a bursary program for the conference and we were also careful about making tickets accessible," explained Dean, when I asked how so many countries were able to attend.

"[UofT] was able to provide some infrastructure, networks, resources, and Pride Toronto helped with funding to bring some of the activists and participants here," explained Beaulieu. "Most of the funding for the conference was dedicated to making sure people could come."

"WorldPride was a reminder of the depth of experience. People tend to think of the parade as Pride and maybe a headliner performer. But this year, the human rights programming, including a Stonewall commemoration on the 45th anniversary, reminded people that there is a whole lot more to this," he continued.

Beaulieu elaborated about what made WorldPride's human rights programming special. "I was lucky to spend some time with delegates, particularly delegates from Uganda. Uganda has been very much in the news for the past year or so because of draconian laws being passed there and communities being jeopardized and put at-risk."

"To see a delegation of about eight Ugandans who were first denied visas to be able to attend and speak and get a chance to talk to them and see smiles on their faces... The incredible sense of courage and hope that they displayed," he continued. "To see them in the parade laughing and dancing and celebrating with hundreds of thousands of people celebrating with them was very touching."

66

WorldPride wasn't only rainbows and parties though. The festival included a three-day human rights conference along with a number of other human rights programming.

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A smile spread across Dean's face as she recalled, "There was also a group Ukrainian of activists who in came last minute. There were some very generous folks who live here and who have connections there, paid for these people to be here," she said as she turned to Beaulieu. "I had a similar moment, to see

the joy on their faces. They came here to be able to connect with people from around the world so that they had that support base and so we could move forward together. They went home to face some pretty hard times."

Beaulieu nodded at Dean's remarks, "We have a lot of work to do here, of course, and many people were returning to some very hostile environments. To hear from one participant who had a wonderful time here but worried, 'Am I going to remember to check myself before going into the streets again, am I going to be able to slip back into that life?'—It's heartbreaking,"



he said. "It's wonderful that people were here to celebrate, but going home again, what do you take with you? Most of it is positive, but you do return to an environment that you left."

"The work is never done. There is always an opportunity for more love," added Dean.

The work being done in Toronto through WorldPride included new and groundbreaking partnerships. "Our partnerships took everything to a new level. We had 17 major partners and collectively they programmed 565 days of LGBT content," said Dean. "Some of these institutions had not programmed for the LGBT community before, and they loved the experience."

"Seeing the audiences that frequent these places, you could see that moment when they saw something they'd never seen before," she continues. "And it's a new platform for many queer artists. This is a great legacy that WorldPride has achieved—it changes things for the city."

The legacy of Toronto's WorldPride is that it will change Pride celebrations moving forward. Beaulieu explained, "A full 10 days of activities will culminate in the big festival downtown, but will also inhabit other places in the city. As a movement, that's what we should be hoping

for as well—that Pride is all of Toronto, all year long."

All the WorldPride programming was bookended by the opening and closing ceremonies. "I was overwhelmed by the significance of what was happening and the tears of joy that I saw around me. The opening ceremony was a good example. It was such an enormous event with over 20,000 people in Nathan Phillips Square, a public square, to kick off an LGBT celebration and to have fireworks by the culmination!" recalled Dean.

She continued, "Melissa Etheridge's set was, I think, about 45 minutes and she was phenomenal. She's such an icon for communities across the world, particularly queer women. Those fireworks while the music played... I looked around and people were crying—so many people were crying. I've never been so happy to see tears in my life! I was right there with them knowing that there were 10 days of events coming. My heart burst."

WorldPride was the longest parade that Toronto has ever seen. It was five hours and 55 minutes. In 2013, there were 6000 registrations for the parade, this year there were over 13,000.

"If you've ever put together a big party for an



Chrystal Dean (right) with Melissa Etheridge. Photo by Nicole Stallone.

anniversary or a wedding, you know what goes into planning," said Beaulieu. "Multiply that across the 25 city blocks that are closed and the 300 performers on 10 stages over the course of the week, it takes a lot of people (most of them volunteers) to pull all of that together."

With WorldPride, 2,400 registered volunteers worked the event. Throughout the year, upwards of 60 year-round volunteers on 25 teams take on a specific aspect of the festival like the parade, family pride, dyke march, public safety, accessibility. They plan all year long with a board of directors of 12 and a staff of five to seven to put on the yearly festival.

"As with any event, there are always hitches," said Dean. "Things don't go as planned and to see these highly skilled volunteers who, most of them, have full-time jobs—to see them work together—they are heroes putting hours and hours into this."

Coordinating that many volunteers while planning and responding to the community's interests is a big and intricate job. "So many people in our community identify so strongly with the Pride festival. It has so much meaning," said Beaulieu. "It's based in a history of standing up and proclaiming loudly who we are and who we love and claiming our own collective and individual identities."

"I came to this never being involved in the planning. I've been coming to Pride as a participant for 20 years," he continued. "It is such an important part of the coming out process for so many. It's such an incredible way to connect with the community; this is the chance for us to connect with each other. It's a very rewarding project to be involved with—it's

a privilege to work with the volunteers on such an iconic part of the city's makeup."

"I would do this again—it was a challenging and rewarding experience," said Dean. "The work is important to create platforms for people to have voices, my voice is not the voice of the community—my voice is mine and that's it. When we listen, we learn and that's what motivated me to get involved."

"We did well with community engagement, but that's an ongoing process," added Beaulieu. "It's difficult to connect with everyone you need to connect with to be reflected and heard in WorldPride programming. We were in full execution mode when people were engaging for the first time. We can always improve that process year after year. There are a lot of communities that we engage."

Both were sad to see it finish, as exhausted as they were after two years of intense lead up to the event, they're proud to have given WorldPride a framework and identity to pass off to the next city, Madrid, in 2017. With all that said, they both had meetings scheduled right after our chat. Their work was still not done.

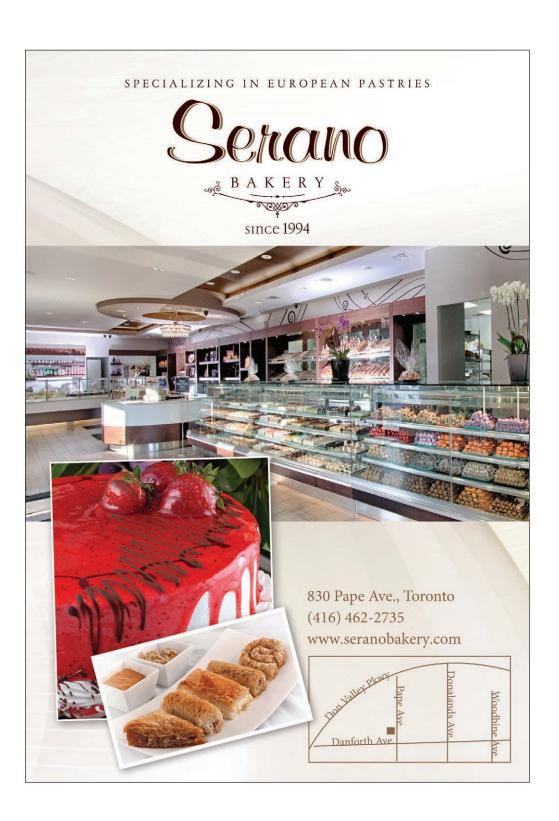
In addition to the many tireless volunteers, WorldPride would not have been the success it was without the enthusiastic support of the many partners:

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Karen Fulcher as a corporate communications professional and a freelance writer. She prefers being free to explore and write about things beyond policy and procedure and nearer possibilities and play.







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o I sat down to talk to Debra Mansillo of Ontario Tourism, who had a huge hand in bringing the global celebration of WorldPride 2014 to our fair city. It was a monumental job that required many hands, oodles of preparation and an incredible amount of commitment. I talked to her about her personal recollections of this gay positive celebration as well as the trials and triumphs. She generously shared with me how organizations like Ontario and Toronto Tourism and Pride Toronto made this year's WorldPride one that would shine, as well as set the standard for future celebrations.

Kelly Wilk: So I wanted to talk to you about WorldPride 2014, what kinds of challenges did it create for you at Ontario Tourism?

Debra Mansillo: We had great partnerships from Pride Toronto and with Toronto Tourism, who were the lead host; they were part of the bigger process. I think the challenge was that WorldPride was global, and in several other countries and I don't know if they fared as well. We had the opportunity to go to London in 2012 and it wasn't

as successful. The community didn't embrace it completely, I don't know if that was politics but it wasn't really viewed as a hit.

Our challenge was to make Toronto stand out. We needed the organizations like Pride Toronto. We wanted to really to do a good job so we all worked in partnership. The challenge was making sure WorldPride was going to be the biggest, the best, and it would set the benchmark for other WorldPrides coming after it.

KW: I looked online at the Toronto Tourism site (www.seetorontonow.com/toronto-diversity). "Gay, straight, bi, Thai – Pride is all about celebrating diversity" as they say, and it looks like they have a very comprehensive guide to gay culture in Toronto. It is wonderful to see organizations creating such a gay positive way of attracting people to our province and city. I think it has gone a long way to creating the success of WorldPride 2014. Do you think you hit that benchmark you were hoping for?

DM: Yeah. Absolutely. I think we were able to hit



Debra Mansillo

that out of the park. Normally Toronto sees approximately 1 to 1.2 million people for Pride. This year we hit over two million. Quiet successful! And we saw the enthusiasm for it when we went abroad. We went to a couple of international shows, to ITB [Internationale Tourismus-Börs] in

Germany, at the Pink Pavilion, and got the message out there. We were also partnered with the IGLTA [International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association] in Spain and their event. People were getting excited. Here in Toronto during Pride we came across a lot of international visitors which we were happy about, very happy.

KW: Well I noticed everywhere I went they were kind of polling the audience to see who was from Toronto, who was not from Toronto, and there was always a big number of international guests.

DM: Which is quite unique, we were quite happy with that. The partnerships worked with all the organizations.

KW: So what were some of the best moments that you remember that really stand out in your mind from the entire experience?

DM: I think one of the best moments for me is the day of the parade. I was coming down on the subway, and the people on the subway—I can't even describe it—it was almost like a love-in. Everyone was happy and euphoric, there were families, there were everybody. Everybody was getting excited. And then you saw people who were dressed in costumes for whatever float they were on, and everybody was snapping pictures with them. I literally have to say it was a love fest, I was quite amazed. It was a great, great feeling, that made me smile!

KW: What were some of the some of the events you focused on at WorldPride?

DM: We did have what we would call the International Travel Showcase and that was adjacent to the Ryerson Quad area. We had different Pride organizations and destinations internationally and provincial wide, they set up booths describing their location in Ontario that was very open and accepting of the community. It was

their opportunity to say, 'Hey, try us out too.'

KW: What do you think was the impact of WorldPride from the point of view of tourism as well as from a cultural standpoint?

DM: I think it was significant enough to show that we're an open, inclusive community in Ontario and Canada. I don't think you see that anywhere in the world. We were always at the forefront from the very beginning for legal marriages so I think it just further supported that.

KW: Did you attend the mass gay wedding at Castle Loma? Two of my closest friends got married there. They were the ones that showed up first in the Roles Royce!

DM: Yes we did it was quite beautiful. Tourism Toronto did a video in partnership with us. They also had their social and digital media groups. And we had all of them on the grounds with our photographers.

KW: I think there were some great photo ops advertising Toronto at its best.

DM: Yeah, absolutely. We are happy for that, we have better collateral that we can go out with. It was great to have the Human Rights Conference, which gave us some gravity. We didn't want people to think this was just one big party, there are real social issues that have to be addressed. I think we got that message out.

KW: Well that is definitely what this is. We need Pride because it is not like this in a lot of places in the rest of the world. Were there any more moments that struck you as important?

DM: Well the wedding was pretty significant for me, and it was great to have Conference do so well, and I think what was also great was that Pride had





the support of the media, they had the support of the government, which is unique. Any place we have gone in the world for Pride events we haven't seen that before. A lot of the organizations that came out to WorldPride 2014 said you guys are very fortunate, very lucky! I think that is the biggest thing because that's the lens I see it from, and so I thought that was the best.

Even some of the private sector when you looked at some of the names, TD Bank or RBC, you know everyone, became part of it, that was just remarkable, I mean the Hudson Bay Company, everyone. It was great!

 \mathbf{KW} : It was definitely a love boat everybody hopped on!

DM: It was! Did you get a chance to go out?

 \mathbf{KW} : I did. The whole opening ceremony just blew me away.

DM: Yes the crowds, I have never seen that many people there at the ceremony.

KW: It was a very hyped Pride wasn't it?

DM: There was actually one other thing we were able to do, and actually we got a lot of great comments on: we were able to bring in thirty international media personnel. We not only had them in Toronto but we also got them out to Ottawa for Canada Day and they

enjoyed themselves thoroughly. The stories that are being printed now are worth every penny!

KW: So they were front-of-the-line to witnesses of WorldPride and to take it back to wherever they hail from. What counties were they from?

DM: We had media from Mexico, Brazil, Japan, China, the UK and France. It was one of our largest vans for LGBTQ. It was a challenge having a lot of media and making sure that everybody got to see what they needed to see. And any initiatives we had—we had a lot of media events, for example we did PR events in Brazil, France and Germany.

KW: So this is really global! You have your hands in a lot of different baskets to bring it all together!

DM: And we are not going to let it drop either! We have a commitment from our President and our board that this is a very valuable market that we need to pursue and we are going to be doing that, so the commitment is there. We believe there is a legacy piece here and so we want to make sure that we maintain that.

KW: Well that is good to know because I certainly enjoyed myself and I want to do this again! Do you think you will get involved with the Pride Festivals next year?

DM: Absolutely! We're definitely there!

Well Debra the global community thanks you for helping us push forward for more celebration, more joy, more freedom, more solidarity and another party!

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.



Chris Ellis is one of three proud Canadian representatives on the board of InterPride. Ellis was active with Pride organizations long before joining the board of Vancouver Pride about five years ago. Since then he has been involved with Capital Pride in Ottawa, Pride Toronto, Fierté Canada Pride, and InterPride.

Kelly Wilk: So, as an International Pride Rep what is the most exciting thing about your job?

Chris Ellis: Attending new Prides and meeting their organizers is a large part of what I do—and I love it! Pride folks form a sort of bond with each other over; shared experiences, motivations, and challenges really bring us closer together. Fierté Canada Pride and InterPride are venues for us to support and learn from each other.

I was appointed a ballot counter at the InterPride conference in 2009 where Pride Toronto was awarded WorldPride 2014 over Stockholm's bid, so I was the first person to know that Toronto's bid had succeeded. I could barely contain my excitement until the official announcement! I knew

then that this would be a big deal for Toronto and I've worked on promoting and raising awareness of WorldPride and Toronto everywhere I've travelled since then.

KW: What was your most memorable moment from World pride 2014?

CE: Marching in the Parade of Nations with my boyfriend was a real thrill. It was his first Pride in Toronto and he was overwhelmed by the cheering and excitement of the crowds. He was proud to carry his home country's flag (Chile) and to volunteer for Pride Toronto. Then we hopped on the subway to head back to Bloor to march with Fierté Canada Pride and InterPride, it was a long hot day but an incredible unforgettable experience....I was very proud of our city and country for showing such overwhelming support. I was also impressed by how many people attended WorldPride from all over the world. Each day I met friends who I didn't even know were in Toronto!

The opening and closing ceremonies were among the best Pride events I've ever seen, and I've been to many Prides all over the world. Pride Toronto produced a festival that the whole country should be proud of, I'm certainly proud to be a member of Pride Toronto.

KW: What are you looking forward to at the upcoming Pride celebration in Madrid in 2017?

CE: Like Toronto, Pride in Madrid is a huge event attended by hundreds of thousands of people with tremendous support from all segments of the community. There are differences in the type of floats and length of the parade, however North Americans will feel very much at home and welcome at WorldPride 2017. As with WorldPride 2014, it will be a challenge to raise awareness until about a year before when excitement really builds and people start making plans for the next Pride season. It is definitely going to be a historic and memorable week. If anyone was thinking of visiting Spain, I recommend doing it for WorldPride 2017! Pride Toronto has raised the bar tremendously, but I know Madrid Pride will produce a festival every bit as amazing as Toronto's.







Thanks for Coming: Fond Me

Photo's by Jeffrey Luscombe, Bryen Dunn, Lindsay Kerton & Tourism Ontario

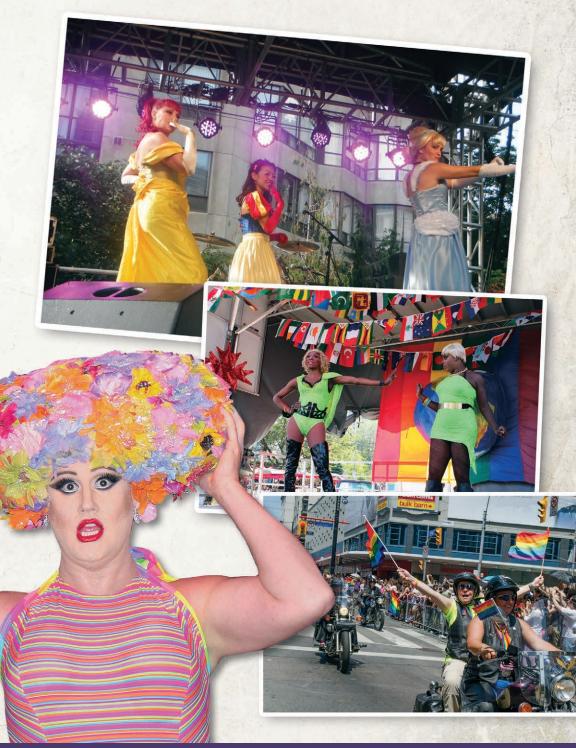


This page, counter clockwise from top: AIDS Candlelit Vigil; Casa Loma Mass Same-Sex Wedding; Liberal World Pride with Justin Trudeau and Kathleen Wynne; It's Raining Men.

Opposite page, from top: Disney Burlesque; Divas!; Dykes on Bikes and Miss Conception.



mories from WorldPride 2014.



Thanks for Coming: Fond Me



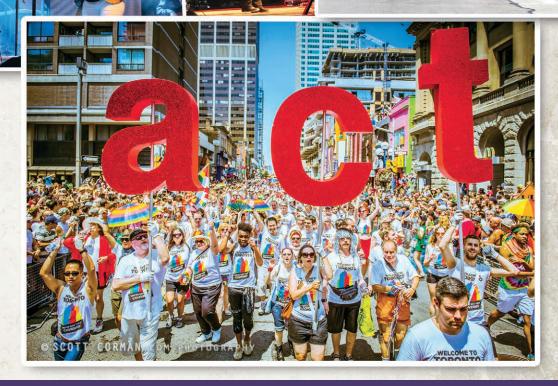


mories from WorldPride 2014.

Previous page, counter clockwise from top: Rainbowlicious;
Robyn deCradle; WorldPride
Dyke March with Olivia Chow;
WorldPride Human Rights
Conference with Edith Windsor;
Carol Pope; Love is a Human Right.

This page, counter-clockwise from top: Human Rights
Conference; Lorraine Segato;
Melissa Etheridge; ACT; WorldPride
Parade Ready to Roll Out; Human Rights
Conference with Richard Lusimbo

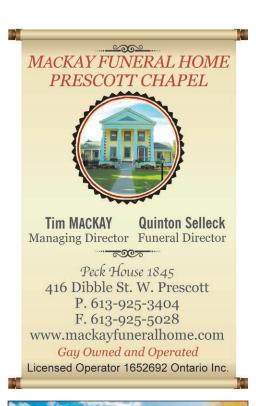


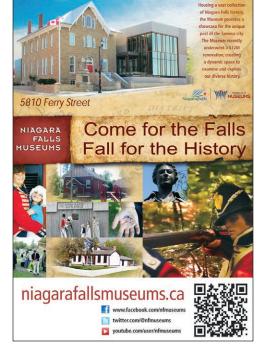






Thanks for Coming: Fond Memories from WorldPride 2014.













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THEATRE, TASTINGS, & TOMBSTONES

by Bryen Dunn

i a g a r a - o n - t h e - L a k e (niagarafallstourism.com/about/niagara-on-the-lake) is world renowned for its theatre, history, award winning wines, and a quaint main street that's lined with independent shops and fine dining establishments. Although established as the first capital of Upper Canada in 1792 as Newark, the current name was not officially adopted until 1970. This

the recent opening of two Italian styled cafes, each producing their own all-natural creations with locally sourced ingredients. Stop by Il Gelato di Carlotta (www.gelatodicarlotta.com), or Nina Gelateria & Pastry Shop (www.ninagelateria.com) for a smorgasbord of unique flavours. For those wanting to discover a bit more about the history of the past, while sampling a bit of the local cuisine of present, Taste the Town (www.tastethetown.ca) and





meshing of contrasts between the old and new worlds can be found throughout the region, as modern entrepreneurs repurpose historic properties and revisit the simple elements of local sourcing.

Freshly made gelato is big all of a sudden with

Niagara Culinary (www.niagaraculinarytours. com) each offer leisurely paced walking food and cultural tours where participants can try and buy a variety of local products.

Treadwell Farm-to-Table Cuisine (www.treadwellcuisine.com) opened a new

wine bar section earlier this year, and features a variety of smaller, quality-driven producers with little to no retail presence, such as Five Rows, Lailey, and 2027 Cellars. Chef-Owner Stephen Treadwell was Chef de Cuisine at Auberge du Pommier in Toronto during the 1980s, before becoming Executive Chef at Queen's Landing Inn in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and is one of the pioneers of "Niagara Cuisine."



The Royal George Theatre Shaw Festival, Niagara-onthe-Lake. Photo by: Cosmo Condina Photography.



CourtHouse Theatre Photo by: Cosmo Condina Photography

His establishment located on the premises of 124 Hotel & Spa (124queen.com/ spa.html), which recently opened downtown Queen Street. This luxury boutique hotel is a one-stop shop to sleep, eat, and retreat. The world class spa takes an organic

approach to beauty and wellness through the use of natural products and techniques, and offers a variety of pampering packages. The town attracts throngs of theatre buffs each year for the annual Shaw Festival (www.shawfest.com), a series of theatrical productions featuring the works of playwright George Bernard Shaw, and other productions reflective of his lifetime (1856 – 1950). The Festival operates three theatres with a rotation of plays throughout the season between April and November, and also features one of a repertory nature that's also quite popular. Art enthusiasts should check out the RiverBrink Art Museum in nearby Queenston, which contains over 1,400 artworks by Canadian and international artists.

Chocolate lovers must visit Chocolate F/X (www.chocolatefx.ca), located in the hamlet of St. David's, easily reached via quiet secondary country roads. Nearly 100 different products



are produced onsite, carefully crafted using artisan chocolate panning and molding techniques. Visitors can take

a tour, watch the production line in action, and finish up at the tasting bar and gift shop. Joining the "Chocolate of the Month Club" gets you an assortment of treats delivered right to your door.

Dillon's Distillers (dillons.ca/the-distillers) are aiming to bring back the creative spirit of spirits, by utilizing the readily available resources in the area. Their products begin with a base of Niagara grapes that are collected during the annual thinning process, which are then fermented and distilled. Many of the herb ingredients are either grown by local farmers or right onsite, and the grain is Ontario grown as well. Their White Rye product is considered the purist's rye, traditionally handcrafted from 100% Canadian grown rye without ageing in wood, thereby showcasing the true flavours of the grain. It displays the fervent character and complexity of youthful grains

without the rounding of maturity. Other products include vodkas, a gin, Canadian rye whisky, and a variety of bitters.

Oast House Brewers (oasthousebrewers.ca) is located in a red coloured barn just outside of town. Brewing techniques go back centuries to try and capture the essence of beer recipes from around the globe. Local farmers supply the brewery with hops, and other key ingredients are sourced from nearby suppliers. With off-the-cuff names such as Bucolic Bastard and The Mayor's Craic, these guys are gunning for the younger generation of craft beer connoisseurs. They also produce a variety a seasonal beers. Take a tour and tasting, grab a growler to go, and watch for special events that include entertainment and food pairings.

After all this indulgence, perhaps it's time for a bit of outdoor adventure. The Niagara River is home to the most diverse gatherings of gulls and migrating birds in the world, and it's also becoming quite popular for a variety of water activities. Paddle Niagara







(www.paddleniagara.com,) offers kayaking, sailing and stand-up paddle boarding, while Niagara Kayak (www.niagarakayak.com) is a mobile kayaking service providing rentals and a choice of drop off/pick up locations along the scenic Niagara region waterways. The two-hour paddle downriver starting at Queenston Heights and finishing in Niagara-on-the-Lake is one of the most popular excursions. Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours (www.whirlpooljet.com) offers exhilarating white-water excursions for thrill seekers who aren't afraid to get wet.

Another form of tourism many partake in is historical based. The town itself was completely burnt to the ground by American attacks during the War of 1812, with the exception of Fort George (www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/on/fortgeorge/index.aspx).

Other former military sites, such as Navy Hall, Butler's Barracks, and McFarland House have been restored and are open to the public for visits. The Niagara Historical Society was established in 1895



and is dedicated to understanding the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake. They operate the Niagara Historical Museum (www.niagarahistorical. museum), offering regularly scheduled historical walking tours, and present a variety of special events.

There's much to be retraced, and another way to discover the past is through a visit to a cemetery. "A Walk Through History - Theatrical tours of St. Mark's Church Cemetery" takes place September 19, 20, 26, and 27, and almost always reaches capacity so book early. St. Mark's Cemetery is a First Nations burial site, and the Church was used as a hospital by the British during the War of 1812. Also worth visiting are Butler's Burial Ground, named after John Butler, the founder of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Drummond Hill Cemetery where Laura Secord is buried. Another worthwhile visit is the village of Virgil, located just south-west of the Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, which has a large Mennonite community where time virtually stands still.

The new Agora complex on the grounds of Fort George has exhibits on the main floor and the observation deck above reflecting stories of Niagara's past, including Butler's Barracks and the Indian Council House. "Museum Faire" will be one of the first events in this unique structure taking place on October 5th, with games, musical entertainment, local cuisine and wine, and a silent auction.

Already well known as one of Canada's premiere wine making areas (www.wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com), the region made its stance globally by producing the world's largest volumes of ice wine. Two Sisters (www.twosistersvineyards.com/site/home) is the newest vineyard to open and is the closest to the heritage district of Niagara-on-the-Lake, billing itself as a luxury winery produced by Winemaker Adam Pearce. Pick up a "Taste the Season" passport that provides a wine and food pairing sample at each of the area's 28 wineries that can be completed over the course of every weekend in November.

With its close proximity to Toronto, Niagara-onthe-Lake makes for a perfect daytrip, or weekend getaway. It may be small in size, but it packs a big wallop of activities, attractions, and adventure.

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.











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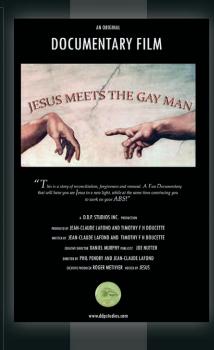


Photo: Jean-Claude Lafond

or filmmaker Jean-Claude Lafond, the documentary is a powerful tool, one that can create dialog between members of what have been two historically antagonistic communities: Christians and gays.

In his new documentary, Jesus Meets the Gay Man, Lafond, along with his coproducer and co-writer, Timothy F H Doucette, explore an interesting idea: What would Jesus say if he met a gay man today?

"Christianity needs to be looked at again," says Lafond. "We are negative about the church and I think it's unfair. Yes, we have had the shitty end of the stick from many



churches, but it doesn't make it right for us to do the same thing. I think that Jesus' message has been lost and it's time for Jesus to get a fair say from both parties. We need to start a dialog and I think a documentary is one of the best ways to do that. Our job is to be a bridge to truth; toward love, forgiveness and renewal."

Though Lafond has had the idea of Jesus Meets the Gay Man for 15 years, initial reaction to the idea was not encouraging. "I first began writing it in 1999. I wanted to explore this concept of Jesus meeting a gay man. I pitched the idea in Banff in 2001 and the reaction was, 'What's wrong with you!' Years later I brought out the idea again and in 2010 momentum started. Suddenly there was



We need to start a dialog and I think a documentary is one of the best ways to do that Our job is to be a bridge to truth; toward love, forgiveness and renewal.



interest and celebrities wanted to be a part of it." Lafond says.

Jesus Meets the Gay Man includes interviews, skits and Monty Python-esque animation to tackle topics such as masturbation, intolerance and sexuality, but for Lafond, humour is the best way to get across his message of love, forgiveness and renewal. "There is too much bitterness between the gay and Christian communities," he says . "And the best way I think to bridge this through humour. For example, we do a skit of Jesus getting his feet washed, but in our reenactment he's actually getting a pedicure by a gay guy. Now the symbolism is still there, there is an intimacy in getting the feet washed, but our take is what if Jesus was to do this this is in 21st century. Gays get it and Christians can laugh at it too. We are not making a Christian movie and we're not making a gay movie. It's a human movie."

Lafond has had his own struggles in trying to bridge his sexuality and his Christianity. Born a Catholic, he felt drawn by the words of Jesus ("maybe it was His abs", Lafond, jokes) and found himself a closeted gay man in a "fear-based Pentecostal church" that tried to teach him how to become straight."

"They sent me to Living Waters," Lafond remembers. "Then I went to the Billy Graham Centre in Illinois where they had the Exodus International Symposium. And that was when I realized it was all bull. There I was at the conference with my ex-wife, who was a righteous woman, and there was a common cafeteria we had to share with the football team. I will never forget all the sexy football guys coming in from practice and the scene couldn't be any funnier. All the supposedly reformed gay men were drooling over these hot football players. I said to myself 'What are you doing!' I knew I couldn't do it anymore; I couldn't be the husband my ex-wife wanted anymore. I took off to Montréal in a depression and surprise! It was

Gay Pride weekend. It was there I had a moment with God and the universe, and Jesus said to me 'There is nothing wrong with you.' I realized that who I was had been squashed down."

But Lafond chooses to use his struggles to help others. "You can either become bitter or become better," he says. "I wouldn't want a young gay or lesbian to go through what I did. There should be no reservation or hindrance. Or your confidence and everyone has the opportunity to thrive."

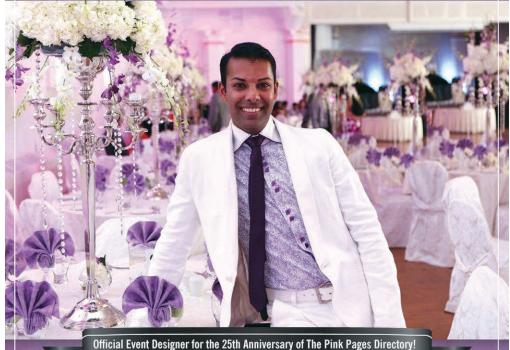
And if you are neither Christian nor gay, Lafond wants you to know that Jesus Meets the Gay Man can speak to you as well. "We don't deny his divinity, but I will look at his humanity first. He was Son of Man and the Son of God. Christians primarily address the Son of God and I want to address his humanity. Our documentary looks at that humanity. I think Jesus' message resonates with every human being because it is about understanding the relationship between love and community as well as the interpretation of love and our relationship to the creator. We can all relate to these messages. That's what I'm trying to do, bring some of the gospels into truth."

"This is a documentary about love," says Lafond. That is the message we want to give. We will make you laugh, cry, laugh again and dance at the end."

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).







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TOPS and **SHOLLOM** by cee sando



lack of focus and drive, Garcia put a lot of thought into what it was he wanted to do with his life. He wanted to find a career path that would fulfill him spiritually and artistically while also having the opportunity to share his talents with the world. With the emotional support of a close friend who prompted Garcia to believe in himself and his vision, the designer eventually built up the confidence and realized that he could accomplish his dreams if he just stuck with it.

"The brand really is a showcase and portfolio of what building a positive structure is all about. Teaching yourself above all else", says Garcia. He credits a determined and stubborn disposition with supporting the creation and maintenance of the brand. In a world where ready-to-wear and fast fashion dominates the fashion world, Gavarcia is a slap in the face to the majority of clothing lines and retailers. Garcia opts to stay small, focusing on each individual client, as opposed to mass producing pieces void of originality.

Gavarcia is both traditional and ultra modern. It is a nod to days gone past, when custom made clothing was the norm. Each piece of clothing was created with one particular customer in mind. Fashion was focused on quality as opposed to quantity. Individuals chose to own less pieces, with a focus on items that would last for years and years. Even the cut of many of the Gavarcia pieces harkens back to 18th century clothing. Yet, the line is also very avant-guarde. The angles, materials and techniques are ultra current. Using details like unexpected sheer sections, uneven hems or what I like to classify as 'machoflorals' Garcia's designs are boldly unique.

For Garcia, fashion is more than just a job or career, it is his passion, the thing that keeps him grounded, connected and continuing to strive for me. In his own words "fashion has many languages, but if you can get beyond the ego, the throat cutters, the lies and sagas, the beauty is still there along with the history and a support system... that alone keeps me going."

For more information on Gavarcia and a look at his latest collection visit www.gavarcia.com.

Arts & lifestyle writer, wardrobe stylist and unicorn cee (@theartofwor) is inspired by international travel, the ocean, runner's high, sashimi and that perfectly put together outfit.





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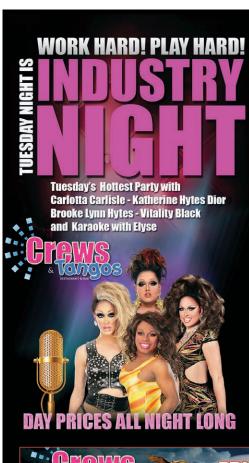
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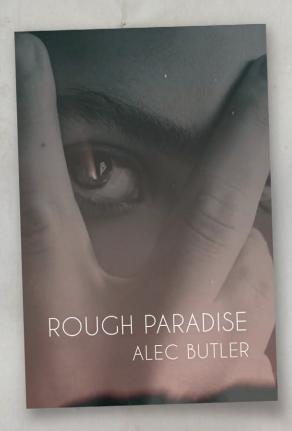












Rough Paradise

by Alec Butler

Terry Tomey was born with an Intersex condition which wreaks havoc with his puberty. He is on the verge of suicide when he meets Darla, the only person who accepts Terry and who is going through a crisis of her own. Both incur the wrath of the community and their families when they fall in love and begin to explore their queer sexuality.

The first day I met Darla and spoke to her, I was trying to be as inconspicuous as possible. I was not having any luck lying low and I stuck out like a sore thumb wherever I went. I was trying to save a starving cat that was hanging out in the school parking lot. I watched Darla as she put on her red lipstick in the side-view mirror of a souped-up Duster. The older boys meowed obscenely at me, and called me "Pussy Boy."

"Look at what the freak is doing now," they jeered at me, half-drunk before first period. "It wants to be a boy so bad but it will only ever be a boy with a pussy, right? A Pussy Boy!" They all cracked up at the joke made at my expense. Pussy is the beautiful calico cat I was trying to save that day. Pussy finally came out from under the cars that morning before first period. I was down on my hands and knees on the parking lot asphalt calling out "Here, pussy. Here, pussy" over and over. I was determined to save her. This is why they call me "Pussy Boy" wherever I go now. It was also the first time I spoke to Darla. It was the first time Darla spoke to me.

"Give that poor, starving pussy some food," were Darla's first words to me.

Because of Darla, the starving cat finally let me feed her some of my tuna sandwich and pet her. I will never forget Pussy arching her back into my hand, purring as I looked up at Darla as she put away her lipstick. Now, Pussy lives

with me, here in my room. Sleeps on my bed. Purrs and purrs for hours beside me while I'm reading and writing this. I love my pussycat. It will be impossible saying goodbye to her. The day I reach my limit and can't stand this so-called paradise anymore, I will find a way to take Pussy with me.

What impressed me about that first day was that Darla didn't make fun of my obsession with saving this beautiful calico cat in the school parking lot. She told the others, loud enough for me to hear, "You can tell a lot about a person by the way they treat animals." I told her to stop hanging out with those losers. Those guys were "good old boys." They got their kicks killing animals, not saving them.

Pretending they had guns, they started "shooting" at the cat eating out of my hand, and then turned their "imaginary" guns on me.

My nerves were on edge. I wished I had a real gun, so I could kill them all.

Darla turned around and confronted them, "Cut it out, you boners."

"Fine. Take your Pussy Boy, and go fuck yourself. Might as well, whore."

"Yeah. That's all you'll ever be able to do with a sick freak like that: fuck yourself."

"Yeah. It's a eunuch isn't it? Or, something queer like that."

"Yeah well, I'm queer too. So you losers can go fuck yourselves, 'cause this 'whore' never will!"

I wanted to kiss Darla, get with her so bad. I know we are meant to be together. I ache to get to first, second and third base with her. Every boy in school wants to fuck Darla, not just me. This proves I am a boy, for fuck's sake! Of course Dad can see it! He just hates his kid being called a "queer" and "sick" all the time. He wants a normal kid, not me. I wish I could get my old man to see me as his son again. I wish he would show me how to take apart my dirt bike engine and put it back together again. Not ban me from the oil-soaked garage where I love hanging out. But he won't let me. The Doctor says I have to do girl things now. Girls don't hang out in garages. Girls don't take apart dirt bikes. Dad won't show me how a car engine works anymore. Or take me fishing with him. All because of the letter "F" on my birth certificate, a fact which cannot be changed.

"You have to start learning how to help Ma around the house, stay out of the garage! Start doing woman's work around here! And, stay off that damn dirt bike!" So here I am standing on the edge of a cliff on the beach, revving my dirt bike engine, not knowing whether to stay or go. Sobbing into the rough wind off the Atlantic. I feel trapped between the ultramarine water and the vast blue sky. I don't really want to die! Salty air stings my wet cheeks. Wishing things would

go back the way they were before my fall from grace, before puberty gave me budding breasts and a beard and I got caught in the boys' bathroom with girls. Go back to a time when I was the apple of my father's eye, not the stink in it.

My father yells at me for strutting around the neighbourhood bareback without a shirt, breast buds exposed. I love wrestling bareback with my buddies.

"Where's my daughter?" Dad cries, over and over, knowing full well God is not going to answer his pleas. Dad drinks because God never answers. God is to blame for everything.

"Fuck you, Dad!" I yell, as I run out the back door and jump on my dirt bike to escape his anger. Wearing a dress, and getting a boyfriend; to submit to The Doctor will kill me, so I might as well be dead.

Everyone wants the real me, the boy I know I really am, to just disappear. Now here on the edge of this cliff, I have doubts. There must be a better world out there, a place for people like me. What would dying accomplish? It would let them win! Crying into the wind, I realize I don't want to die. I howl, like a caged wolf.

"Hey! Brando! What's up? Is that you yelling and howling? Are you part wolf, too? Full moon tonight, but the moon isn't up yet. Are you OK?"

It's Darla! She is wearing very red lipstick, and I am in shock that she is right here on the beach below me, looking up, smoking a joint.

I probably look like a big baby with tears streaming down my cheeks. Filthy in my greasy dungarees and uniform-like working man's shirt that I hide in the washhouse out back until I go out.

I was expecting that I would be on my own. It is incredible that Darla is here right now. I don't know what to do or how to act. I am at a loss for words.

"Hot wheels you got there, Brando. This summer I'll have a bike too, my old man promised."

"I just came here to ride."

"So, ride. No one's stopping you!"

Darla is looking at me like she is looking right into my soul, deciding if I am worth talking to. I don't want to lose her interest. I should say something, and explain my mood.

"I just had another fight with my old man!"

"Yeah. I came out here to get away from my old man, too. Is that ok with you, Brando?"

"Oh. Yeah," I stutter, completely disarmed. She is just being honest. I am being a jerk right now. "You fight with your old man too?"

"Never mind that. What are you trying to do? Kill yourself? Are you planning to jump off this cliff on

that dirt bike? That would be a really stupid thing to do. This cliff's not high enough to kill yourself. If you really want to kill yourself, you have to go to the other side of the Island. There's a cliff that's really high and drops straight down into the ocean. Don't go there without me, ok?"

"Why? Do you want to kill yourself too?"

"Maybe," nods Darla, as she takes a draw on the joint she is holding.

"Why would you want to kill yourself? You're the most beautiful girl in the Pier. Everyone loves you!"

"What makes you think that? I'm half-breed trash. My life sucks!"

"When the nuns call you names I'll stick up for you."

"Yeah, I hear they're my biggest fans. They might be sending me to the nuns too for hanging out in the parking lot with those losers. We all got caught drinking before first period last week. I hate my life."

"Yeah, to top it all off my old man won't stop yelling at me to put on a dress, start shaving and wear makeup or he'll lock me up in the Butterscotch Palace!"

"That sounds like hell, Brando. I'd jump too if I were you."

"Then, there's this Doctor at the Butterscotch Palace who wants to cut off my privates, because he says I'm a monster."

"Any doctor who works at the Butterscotch Palace is a pill-pushing quack. My mom gets sent to the Butterscotch Palace all the time, she comes out worse than when she went in. You look just like Brando when he was younger, has anyone ever told you that?"

"No, hardly ever, you're the first one." Darla smiles, she knows I'm flirting with her and she likes it. "It's Terry. My name is Terry," I tell her. My heart pounds in my itchy chest with excitement. I wish she would come closer. I smell marijuana in the salty air. I want to smoke some too. I have been smoking since I was ten. One of my older cousins deals for the Artemis Clan. That source dried up when I dumped my cousins for always trying to cop a feel of my breasts. Calling me "Teresa" when they know I hate it.

"On the Waterfront," Darla says, smiling and nodding. She really is talking to me, now my heart is pounding in my ears along with the surf pounding on the beach below us. "One of my favourite Brando films. His character's name was Terry Malloy. Is that who your parents named you after?"

"I wish," I say. "No, I was named after some saint."

"Who wasn't named after some saint around here? Well, except for me, I wasn't named after any saint." "Who were you named after?"

"Nobody. Nanny, my grandmother named me. My parents weren't even talking to each other by the time I was born so they couldn't decide what to call me. I'm just trailer trash anyway, so Darla it is. Maybe someday I'll change it."

Darla quotes Brando's famous line from the film, "I coulda been a contender!" and then she laughs seductively.

Everyone knows Darla's story, or they think they do. They call Darla, the only beauty in this wasteland, trailer trash, and the high school slut. I think she's the most interesting person on this whole Island Paradise. I want to be friends with Darla. Her old man owns a biker bar a couple of streets over from where I live in the Pier, that the locals call "Bucket of Blood." My old man hates this bar and is trying to get it shut down. The nuns who teach at the Catholic girls' high school call Darla a slut and a whore, right in class.

According to the nuns, girls like Darla are going to hell, with a capital H. They do not warn about how much trouble you can get into by kissing girls like Darla, though. I guess only the boys' Catholic school got warned about kissing girls like Darla.

"Do you want some of this?" Darla asked, offering the ioint.

"Are you old enough to smoke pot?" We are practically yelling at each other from this distance. I nod that I am "old enough," whatever that means, that I do, indeed, want a toke.

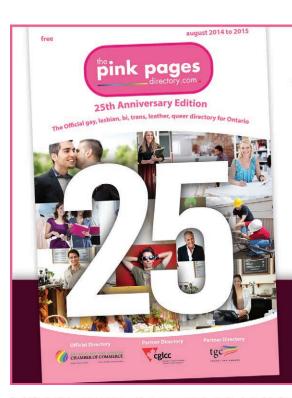
"Jump." Darla dares me. "Just jump, if you want to jump. Get it over with. Out of your system. Jumping off this cliff won't kill you, though. Come join me down here for a toke. I dare you."

"All right." I like the way she thinks. So, I turn the key and start the ignition. I rev the engine, and make a big show of it. Then I have an idea.

"Come up here!" I yell at Darla, "Jump with me!"

Alec Butler is an awardwinning playwright filmmaker whose play Black Friday was a finalist for a Governor General's Award for Drama in 1991. His film trilogy about growing Trans/Intersex/2Spirit, Misadventures of Pussy Boy, was recently awarded the Best Short/Audience Favourite Award at the International Transgender Film Festival in Amsterdam. Butler lives in Toronto.





Thanks for 25 years of love

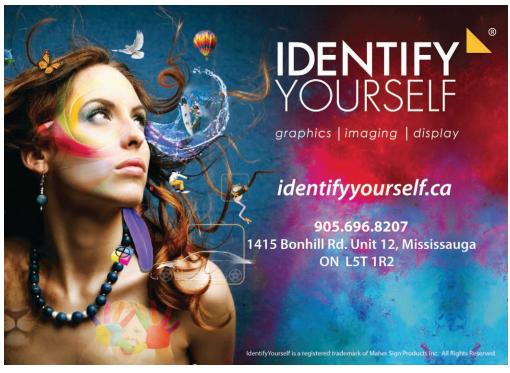
The Pink Pages Directory has been serving the LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly business community for 25 years. We're as excited now as we were with our very first edition. Thank you!

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Community Cornerstones by Bryen Dunn



Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is in the midst of wrapping up the year-long 35th anniversary celebrations. Thirty-Five years of providing the queer community with performances, parties, politics, and on occasion, penises. In gay years, that's nearly two centuries of programming!

here have been many individuals who have entered the confines of this magnificent complex, and three of those involved offer some insight as to what makes this place so special. When Sky Gilbert co-founded the company back in 1979, there was no telling where things might lead. All he knew was that he wanted to push boundaries, and that's exactly what's been happening since the initial staging of his Angels in Underwear production at an old brewery on Queen Street East. From here the theatre continued producing shows at ad hoc venues before finding a permanent home at 142 George Street, also in

the Queen East area. It wasn't until 1994 that
Buddies moved into its current space at 12
Alexander Street, previously home to Toronto
Workshop Productions. Three years later
Sky stepped down from his position as Artistic
Director, but continues to mount productions on a
regular basis.

The theatre's name was taken from Eric Bentley's song translation of a Jacques Prévert poem. Buddies' continues to present works built around the political and social principles of queer liberation, not shying away from perspectives of gender and sexuality. "There is no future for queer themed theatre. It's very sad, but the future is generally bleak in terms of culture. Don't try and tell me all the culture is online—all the mass entertainment is online, that's for sure. Anyway, there will always be queers and always queer themed theatre, as long as there is homophobia," says Gilbert.

Buddies' original focus was on staged adaptations of poetry. However, during the 1980's, under the sole leadership of Sky Gilbert, Buddies developed a distinctly queer aesthetic and practice. Gilbert also was responsible for Sex Tours of the Church-Wellesley neighbourhood, and the infamous Dungeon Parties, both promoting sex and diversity in a positive way. "On the tours I just went around and talked about all the places I had sex, and the Dungeons were places where people went to have sex," he explains.

As the world's longest-running and largest queer theatre, Buddies' mission today reflects on the terminology of queer in both the context of its leadership within the LGBT community, and also in the sense of remaining strange and peculiar. In 2009, Brendan Healy became the company's fourth artistic director and has presented an amazing selection of both local and international productions. Healy also introduced new touring initiatives allowing productions to travel across the country. Originally from Montréal, Healy began his career as an actor, before relocating to New York and deciding to dedicate himself exclusively to directing. Since relocating to Toronto over a decade ago, Healey has established himself as a key figure in the city's theatre scene, and his work has been presented across the country. His world-premiere production of PIG was part of this year's anniversary programming at Buddies.



Buddies Artistic Directors past and present: Sky Gilbert, Brendan Healy, David Oiye and Sarah Garton Stanley. Photo by Tanja-Tiziana.

BUDDIES IN BAD JIMES THEATRE

With so much history in the books, it proves difficult for many to pick a specific highlight from the past. Gilbert reflects, "I think it was the opening night of *More Divine*, which was also the opening of the theatre on Alexander Street. There were so

many people there, and in the final moments the audience entered from the cabaret into the chamber, suddenly revealing and utilizing the whole space becoming a part

of the play. It was such a lovely moment."

For Healey, one of his most memorable moments was the evening of the 35th anniversary. "It was an incredibly emotional evening for everyone. You can't look back at the past 35 years of Buddies without taking in what the whole LGBT community has undergone since 1979: the victories, the struggles, the loss, the resilience. Perhaps more than any other theatre in the country, this company's history is inexorably linked to its community's history. The depth of that link was particularly poignant on the evening of our anniversary," he explains.

Patricia Wilson started at Buddies in 1993 as their publicist, and to this day is still one of the biggest promoters they have, although these days she can be found behind the bar serving up medicinal goodness to the masses most every weekend. As for special moments she recalls, "There are no frozen moments in time as my favourite because usually everyday gives me my favourite Buddies' moment. The greatest impression that any individual or group has made on me are those that come here for the first time as either an artist or patron, and watching them react to the vibration of the radicalness of Buddies. We are all Canadian artists and its supporters and we suffer greatly for being punk and queer, and yet we foster the young like no one else."

Wilson leaves her mark on everyone she's graced. Healey himself states, "Without a doubt, our bartender Patricia Wilson has had the greatest impact on me. She is the soul of our theatre and she is an amazing friend. Her opinions mean so much to me. I have relied on her support and advice countless times. We are all so lucky to have her in our lives."

"Our community extends beyond the local and involves people from all corners of the planet. Our theatre needs to reflect this. Buddies grants everyone the freedom to be who they want to be, to express what they want to express and to love who they want to love. That's special," says Healy.

Buddies (buddiesinbadtimes.com) 2014/15 season begins in the fall with Healey's production of *Freda and Jem's Best of the Week* (Sept 13-Oct 5), and ends in June with the month long celebration of Queer Cab. Be sure to check out the full schedule of upcoming productions, including *SPIN*, *The Stronger Variations*, *Her 2, Blood Wedding, Tom at the Farm,* and *Durango*. As well, annual events like the ArtAttack! fundraising auction, the eclectic Rhubarb, and the month long Queer Pride celebrations will all be back. Buddies recently released a customer loyalty program, Buddies Rewards, where patrons earn points for each show attended, which can then be used for discounts toward future shows.

As for some final words of wisdom, Healey quotes the world-renowned Québècois director Robert Lepage: "Don't worry about being good. Worry about being original.' That really liberated me. It gave me permission to just be myself," he says. In turn, this is passed on to all who enter the sanctuary that is Buddies in Bad Times Theatre.

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.













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Hello! I'm thrilled to be writing this column for the first time and sharing some of the many exciting events Toronto has to offer. For me, there is no better time of the year to explore this city than the fall—be it an afternoon spent wandering through High Park, or pulling an allnighter at Scotiabank Nuit Blanche. The warm days give way to cool, crisp evenings, and the colours make for a spectacular view. It will be winter before you know it, so enjoy what little time we have left of this beautiful weather! Here are a few suggestions on what's happening over the next couple of months.

THEATRE

Wicked

September 3 to November 2 Ed Mirvish Theatre, 244 Victoria St. 416.872.1212 www.mirvish.com \$36 - \$210

Long before Dorothy followed the yellow brick road, two other girls met in the Land of Oz. Based off the 1995 novel by Gregory Maguire, Wicked tells the story of unlikely

friends Elphaba and Glinda, who would come to be known as the Wicked Witch of the West and the Good



Witch of the North. The musical has won over 50 major awards, including a Grammy and three Tonys, and features music written and composed by Stephen Schwartz (Godspell, Pippin).

TIP: There is no shortage of lunch and dinner options near Ed Mirvish Theatre, Bankok Garden (18 Elm Street) is acclaimed as one of North America's premier Thai restaurants, while Beer Bistro (18 King Street

East) has one of the best beer selections in the city.



afteRock Plays

Sundays

October 10 to 25 Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St. 416.975.8555 www.buddiesinbadtimes.com \$20 - \$30; limited PWYC on

Presented by b current, afteRock Plays consists of two shows—Catherine Hernandez's The Femme Playlist and Sébastien Heins's Brotherhood: The Hip Hopera—that uncover

the lived experiences of Toronto's diverse cultural landscape. The Femme Playlist explores everything from body shame to motherhood as Hernandez deals with the realities of living as a queer woman of colour. In Brotherhood: The Hip Hopera, the audience is taken from the present to the 1970s before jumping ahead 30 years into the future as they follow the journey of two brothers deeply immersed in hip-hop and R&B.

TIP: Buddies isn't just a theatre! Every Saturday from 10:30pm onwards, DJs spin top-40, house, pop, and hip-hop while the city's fiercest drag queens work the stairs.

FOOD

Gourmet Food & Wine Expo

November 20 to 23 Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 255 Front Street West www.foodandwineexpo.ca \$20 - \$55 (adv.)

Now in its 20th year, the Gourmet Food and Wine Expo features over 1,800 wines, beers, spirits, and gourmet foods from across the globe. Don't let the name fool you, though—this is more of a mingling party than an expo, with everything from cheese sampling to a Caesar competition. You may even run into a Food Network star, as celebrity chef Lynn Crawford is among this year's special guests.

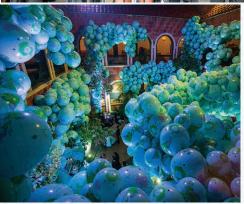
TIP: Have you ever wondered what full-bodied means? Or what people are talking about when they say a wine has "legs"? Check out one of the many Tutored Tastings seminars taking place throughout the weekend to find out.

ARTS

Scotiabank Nuit Blanche

Sunset to Sunrise October 4 www.scotiabanknuitblanche.ca FREE





Scotiabank Nuit Blanche is an all-night contemporary art celebration that stretches city-wide and includes more than 100 installations and exhibitions. This year's event is made up of four themes: "Between the earth and the sky, the possibility of everything" (curated by Dominique Fontaine); "The Night Circus" (curated by Denise Markonish); "Before Day Break" (curated by Magda Gonzalez-Mora); and "Performance Anxiety" (curated by Heather Pesanti).

TIP: It's impossible to see everything in one night, so make sure to map out your route before you go exploring.



Toronto Indie Arts Market

October 18, November 15, November 27 10:30am to 4pm (October 18, November 15); 7pm to 11pm (November 27) The Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen Street West www.torontoindieartsmarket.com \$5 (with partial proceeds to a local charity)

For those who want to get an early start on their holiday shopping, or who are interested in checking out Toronto's thriving independent arts scene, the Toronto Indie Arts Market is a must. In addition to their monthly offering of arts, crafts, small press, music, fashion and food, the market will also be hosting a special holiday evening market on November 27.

TIP: If you're feeling peckish, the Gladstone Hotel Café serves weekend brunch from 8am to 4pm.

Stanley Kubrick Exhibition

October 31 to January 25 TIFF Bell Lightbox www.tiff.net Check website for ticket details

Widely considered one of the greatest film directors of all time, Stanley Kubrick is responsible for such classics as *The Shining, 2001: A Space Odyssey,* and *Lolita*. This popular exhibition offers a glimpse at rare photographs and letters, original props and costumes, screenplays, production materials, and cameras from his nearly 50-year career.

TIP: TIFF memberships cost as low as \$99, and include a 25% discount on year-round screenings, early purchase windows, and free entry to exhibitions.

PARTIES

Hallowe'en on Church

October 31 6 pm Church and Wellesley churchwellesleyvillage.ca FREE

No one throws a Halloween party quite like The Village, and this year's event promises to be as fabulous as ever. Three blocks of Church Street will be closed, with a number of local bars and clubs participating as well. Outlandish costumes are encouraged!

TIP: Seduction Love Boutique (577 Yonge Street) isn't just an adult novelty store – they sell Halloween costumes too! Other downtown options include Malabar (14 McCaul Street) and Kensington Market.

Diablo Halloween Ball

October 31
9 pm
The Guvernment, 132 Queen's Quay East www.diablohalloweenball.com
\$20 - \$35 (adv.)

Toronto's biggest Halloween bash returns to the Guvernment one last time before the venue closes its doors for good. Presented by Z103.5 and Just Entertainment, Diabo Halloween Ball features seven different rooms and prizes for best costume. If bottle service is your thing, the venue will be offering bottles for \$150.

TIP: It's a hot sweaty club, wear something comfortable, if not skimpy.

MARKETS & FAIRS

The Junction Flea

October 12 and October 19
181 Sterling Road (October 12) and Evergreen
Brick Works, 550 Bayview Avenue (October 19)
10am to 4pm
junctionflea.com
\$2

Reminiscent of New York City's popular Brooklyn Flea, the Junction Flea brings together an eclectic group of local vendors selling everything from antique furniture to vintage clothing and jewelry. The flea began in a vacant parking lot in the Junction neighbourhood (hence the name) but has since expanded further east to Sterling Road, and occasionally Evergreen Brick Works.

TIP: The October 19 flea coincides with Brick Works' Sunday farmers market, which offers a wide variety of local and seasonal goodies.

The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair

November 7 to 16 Exhibition Place, 200 Princes' Boulevard www.royalfair.org \$24; \$19 (senior); \$16 (youth 4-17); free (children 3 and under)

The Royal is a long-standing Toronto tradition for many, and has grown to become the largest indoor agricultural and international equestrian competition in the world. Highlights include a petting 200, butter sculptures, a





live rodeo and, of course, the annual horse show. There will also be a number of farmers on hand to answer any questions you may have.

TIP: The Royal Vineyard and Brew House (open daily from 11am to close) is a great place to wind down and escape the hustle and bustle of the fair; \$8 gets you a flight of three Ontario craft beer samples.



Santa Claus Parade

November 26

12:20pm

Begins at Christie Pits & ends at St. Lawrence market www.thesantaclausparade.ca FREE

Santa Claus is coming to town! This parade consists of over 25 spectacular colourful animated floats, bands, and clowns. The route is packed with over 1/2 million spectators. Santa Claus and his reindeer is the last float on the parade, so keep warm and be patient!!

TIP: Go early to save a good spot along the route so the little ones can see and don't forget lots of snacks!

Caitlyn Holroyd is a news editor at the Toronto-based sports app the Score 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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Hongeoming

y article for this issue was overdue by a few days. It was Sunday and my day off and I had an appointment booked to get my legs waxed. I'd taken the appointment on a friend's recommendation, not realizing the spa was outside of Ottawa in territory unknown. I managed to make it just in time, a 40 minute drive. Process complete, I decided to check out the small town of Richmond, Ontario where the spa was located. It was a beautiful summer day, July 27th to be exact, and I had no plans. So I allowed the road trip to unfold and headed down the highway.

I arrived in Burritt's Rapids, which is right along the Rideau Canal. A name I recognized! My mom used to take my brother and I here to swim on hot days at the Locks. I decided to find the spot and go for a nostalgic dip. Many memories of summer joy and innocence returned: jumping into the water courageously from off of the lock gates, and picnics packed by mom laid out on the tables in the park alongside the water. I had a conversation with a very large maple tree, commenting that he hadn't

seen me in over 30 years, and though I couldn't recall, he must have been a lot smaller then.

I drove onward to Merrickville, which I had never visited in spite of growing up nearby. It's a very cute tourist town with shops and restaurants, one of the larger stops along the Canal. I indulged in fries and a pogo from a chip truck, something I probably haven't had since I was eight! A little wasabi lime mustard from Mrs. McGarrigle's was just the touch.

As I left Merrickville, rain came down, but it was one of those skies where the clouds were passing quickly and other areas were sunlit; just the type of sky for a rainbow. I kept my eyes peeled. A full arc double rainbow filled the sky over a farmer's golden field! I got out of the car and admired. It wasn't lost on me that I was planning to write this article about the amazing double rainbow appearance over Toronto just after the WorldPride Parade. And that I still hadn't written my article yet...but was going to tonight. Ok nature...you had my attention. A rainbow always feels like a message and blessing to behold.

It occurred to me as I was pulled over on the highway admiring, that I needed to turn back in the other direction, that I could go home by way of my once-upon-a-time-home, the place where I grew up. I drove through Smith's Falls, through Kemptville, where we used to grocery shop... the rainbow faded and re-appeared. It was now right in front of me leading me onward, heading in the right direction through Hallville and Mountain, which my parents drove through daily to commute to Ottawa for work, and then down the "dump road" which now has an actual name, past the house my bro and I grew up in.

I took in what had changed, what felt the same, and how it felt to be back where there were so many memories. It's only an hour or so from where I live now, but I rarely ever go back. I was listening to the CBC radio as I drove, and synchronistically, a moving story from a program called "the Moth" came on about an encounter with homophobia, and the narrator's triumph over it. There were many things I loved about growing up in the country, but in that moment, as I took it all in, I couldn't help but recall how hard it was for my older brother of three years. Coming into his own identity in a hick-town high school full of red-necks was hell for him. Our hometown is not a place he reminisces about fondly, and he prefers to leave it in the past. The rainbow had faded, and I headed past our old house, and then back home to Chelsea, Quebec via highway 31.

I wasn't able to attend WorldPride, due to a commitment overseas in the UK, but when I landed back in Toronto and swapped tales with my brother, I was awed to complete wordless silence for a moment when he told me about the rainbow. And then my heart exploded in elation as the meaning set in.

You see, in the indigenous understanding of the world, all beings are alive and conscious. Great landforms such as mountains, rivers and lakes are seen as gods who have chosen to incarnate in a natural form. They are often understood to be sacred sites that hold great gifts of wisdom or healing for the people, and many are pilgrimage sites, where offerings are placed to give thanks for these gifts and acknowledge the greatness of the being that resides there.

The Great Lakes are such beings. They have a special relationship with the Weather Beings, and they guide and direct the weather systems in this area of the world. The Wind, Rain, Clouds, and Thunder are also seen as great spirit beings we can be in relationship with, and in most traditions there were specialized shamans known as weather workers that made the offerings to the Weather Beings and acted as intermediaries with them for the benefit of the people. Rainbows are part of the medicine of the Weather Beings, and you could say, one of their "voices."

I think a key spiritual question that comes up when someone coming out is fighting to claim their identity, is "Does Divine approve of me?" There are so many distortions in religion, and wounds received that say, "No we, or HE, or Divine, don't; you are an aberration." And yet, the double rainbow, arching from end to end over Lake Ontario, a great sacred being, incarnated like us all from the Oneness—was a clear blessing of affirmation, support, and acknowledgment. The gods voiced their approval over this global event and over the community for those who had eyes to see.

My brother's and my story from small town Canada to downtown Toronto is a metaphor for the journey of LGBTQ+ rights. From oppression and insult, and ignorance and lack of exposure on my part, to the world stage, fully out and claiming it. My brother found his way into his community and taught me how to be an ally along the way. A rainbow guided me to a little homecoming, and an even greater rainbow, delivered by the Weather Beings marked a great homecoming to LGBTQ+ people's place in the world.

Shelley A. Harrison is an Energy Healer in Ottawa. She graduated from the Barbara Brennan School of Healing 4-year professional training and has been working in private practice for over 10 years. She visits Toronto regularly to see clients and visit her brother, Jeff, the editor of this magazine. You can write Shelley at fromtheheart@pinkplaymags.com or visit her at www.doveheart.ca.



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Autumn Horoscopes

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 20)

Be careful that your mental pride does not negatively influence your personal life or create controversy with loved ones. Creativity and support from your professional environment will be abundant. Pay special attention to partnerships, both personal and professional. Balancing your attention between these two areas will increase your energy and success.

Taurus (Apr 21 – May 21)

A burst of new creative energy comes to you with added support from your professional contacts. This is a good time to overcome competition as you will be soaring to new heights. Your reservoir of social contacts also greatly increases. Enjoy and nurture the new growth in your social and professional life because it will benefit your projects and dreams in unexpected ways.

Gemini (May 22 – Jun 21)

The planets urge you to slow down and replenish. As the final months of 2014 wind down, take stock of your accomplishments and dreams. What dreams remain unaccomplished? Did they fall by the wayside in favour of others' dreams or plans? This drains you and may result in regret and depression long term. Remember, there's no crime in putting yourself first, but it is a crime over time if you don't. Hope deferred makes the heart sick.

Cancer (Jun 22 - Jul 22)

Are you feeling exasperated? Do the results match your expectations? Likely not lately and the disappointment and frustration of it wears on you. Lighten up! There are hidden treasures to be found when expectations are temporarily suspended. The planets invite you to go on a treasure hunt and leave your agenda behind. What you find will fill you with delight.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

You've worked diligently and maintained your laser-like focus. This has benefitted you immensely and brought you many profitable returns. You're definitely not one to rest on your laurels, so don't worry that you'll become lazy or complacent. However, take notice of your communication with others. Could you be a little gentler in your delivery? A task master is nothing without a happy and cooperative entourage.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 23)

It's time to reap what you've sown. If you want to know what you've sown, take a look around you. Now is the harvest time for what was planted months ago. Take time to consider what you've taken in and what needs to be let go in career, relationship, health and family matters. Consider what will be planted for next season.

Libra (Sep 24 – Oct 23)

Do you feel invisible? Not to worry, truth and beauty prevail over brute force and aggression. Your scales of justice bring the zero-point balance needed in any conflict with your poise and diplomatic grace. Right now your gentle interventions speak volumes and change outcomes. Let yourself be heard.

Scorpio (Oct 24 – Nov 22)

You may feel out of sorts. But don't worry, this is just a phase of transformation for you and nothing you can't handle. Many endings signal new beginnings. Some of which you are quite happy about, others, not so happy. Take courage, there is no one better equipped than you to handle this dark limbo-state because you understand more than most that you can't have change without change.

Sagittarius (Nov 23 – Dec 21)

Lady Luck and Lady Love walk with you now as opportunities for friendships and flirtations abound! Don't be afraid to fall in love because sparks of new beginnings always present themselves in clusters of new doors to choose from. New doors also open on your career front where the old no longer meets your thirst for new challenges and directions. You're ready to forge new frontiers and reinvent your life. Best of luck!

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Your attention is needed on the homefront. Your career must take a back seat. Don't worry, professional transition is underway as an opportunity more worthy of your dedication presents itself. Relationships under the burden of frustration cannot weather the coming winter months. Accept invitations to dinners with friends and go out dancing to revive your connection.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 19)

Taking the next step in your relationship will come into focus. Will you move in together? Marry or start a family? If you are single, love relationships beginning at this time could last many years. This is a time to consider long term commitments and your relationship to commitment in particular. Commitment doesn't necessarily mean loss of freedom. It's time to redefine your definitions.

Pisces (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You've had an incredibly successful year professionally. This streak will surely last. However, it seems you've neglected your creative side. You've heard the whispers and felt the nudges. Your inner child is tugging at your pant leg for a play date. Indulge your little you. You'll be so glad you did.

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

Thank You

We've come a long way in a short time in the recognition of equality for the LGBTQ+ community. Canada legally recognized samesex marriage in 2005. This same ruling is inexorably spreading coast to coast across the United States, following the belief that same-sex rights are human rights. Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Iceland, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and Uruguay have already accepted and put into national legislation this mandate.

This growing global acceptance of same-sex rights has come at the cost of much time. many protests, much blood, sweat, and tears, and many lives. We are blessed and owe a great debt of thanks to those tireless advocates and fearless fighters of our rights. who faced persecution to be brave enough be themselves. WorldPride is the perfect time to celebrate how far we've come. praise the memory of those who paved the way, and pick up the rainbow flag to boldly wave it to inspire and support those who still fight for equality. This issue we take a moment to honour those we owe our freedom to and those who embolden us to keep up the fight for others.

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900): at the height of his fame and success, while his masterpiece. The Importance of Being Earnest was still on stage in London, Wilde was tried and found guilty of gross indecency with other men. He was convicted and imprisoned for two years' hard labour. Upon his release he left immediately for France, never to return to Ireland or Britain and died destitute in Paris at the age of 46.

Alan Turing (1912-1954): a Brit and the father of computer science, he is best known for breaking the Germans' Enigma Code during World War II. Turing was prosecuted for homosexuality in 1952, when such acts were still criminalised in the UK. As a result he committed suicide. In September 2009, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown made an official public apology on behalf of the British government for "the appalling way he was treated" and the Queen granted him a posthumous pardon on December 24, 2013.

Harvey Milk (1930-1978): served almost 11 months in office and was responsible for passing a stringent gay rights ordinance for the

city of San Francisco. On November 27, 1978. Milk was was assassinated. Despite his short career in politics, Milk became an icon in San Francisco and a martyr in the gay community.

Christine Jorgensen: (1926-1989): was an American trans woman believed to be the first person to become widely known in the United States for having sex reassignment surgery. After service in the army during World War II. she heard about transitioning surgery and in Copenhagen, Denmark, obtained special permission to undergo a series of operations. Returning to the United States in the early '50s, she became an instant celebrity and advocated for transgender people.

Harry Hay (1912-2002): was a prominent American gay rights activist, labor advocate. and Native American civil rights campaigner. He was a founder of the Mattachine Society, the first

sustained gay rights group in the United States, as well as the Radical Faeries, a loosely-affiliated gay spiritual movement.

Sylvia Rivera (1951-2002): was an American bisexual transgender activist and trans woman and a founding member of both the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance. She helped found Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries (STAR), a group dedicated to helping homeless young street drag queens and trans women.

Teena (1972-1993): Brandon was American trans man who was raped and murdered in Humboldt, Nebraska. His life and death were the subject of the Academy Award-winning 1999 film Boys Don't Cry, based on the documentary film The Brandon Teena Story. Teena's violent death led to increased lobbying for hate crime laws in the United States.

Matthew Shepard (1976-1998): was an American student at the University of Wyoming who was beaten, tortured and left to die near Laramie. Wyoming on October 6. 1998: he died six days later from severe head injuries. Shepard's murder brought national and international attention to hate crime legislation at the state and federal levels. In October 2009, the United States Congress passed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and on October 28, 2009.

President Barack Obama signed the legislation

Thank you for living your lives with courage.

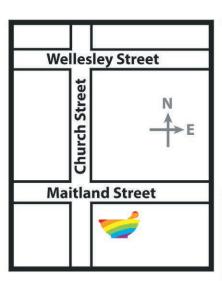




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