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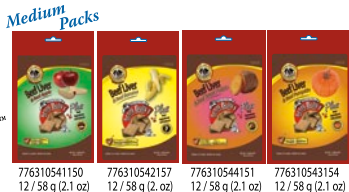
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So it's the second issue of our 2013 publishing year

and, like I mentioned in my previous letter, it heralds not only the glorious summer to come, but the end of my own personal busy season. Hurray! My cherished annual two weeks at the cottage are so close that I can almost taste them. There is something magical about immersing yourself in the organic wellspring available a few short hours north that soothes the mind and replenishes the body.

My mind is definitely in need of some soothing; with all the exciting things happening in the community right now, I'm surprised it hasn't over-heated already!

All jokes aside it has been a tempestuous albeit inspiring season. We recently closed out the third annual INSPIRE Awards and, truly, we could not have picked a better title. The awards are an initiative that were started by our publications, but later took on its own path and became a collective of great community organizations and people all working together to create a celebration. The ceremony, held in the beautiful, castle-esque Hart House, was especially touching this year. Between the playful banter of co-hosts Mike Chalut and Shannon McDonough, the keynote address of guest speaker Stuart Milk and the dignified humility of all the nominees, one would have to be a person of stone not to be moved.

Every year the awards reconfirm for me the desire to continue working with people and organizations who want to change perceptions in the world. The authentic beauty of our community coming together this year gives me visions of how wonderful the world would be if we carried that love for each other out into everyday life. And yes, I know, I am filled with more sap than a maple tree. I guess it must be the Canadian in me (not by birth but my love for this country). I know that I'm not the only one though. Some wonderful people in the community wrote in to us with their desire to become involved in the INSPIRE

Awards because they want the awards to continue with its mission, after seeing the joy felt in the room this year. We are all so thankful to everyone who supported us in every way—from buying a ticket to donations, we really love you all. You rock!

Although the awards have been safely put to bed for another year, it seems like my tux and dress shoes had barely hit the floor before I was busy running around in the office. I am constantly going back and forth to meetings and fueling my excitement over WorldPride being celebrated in Toronto next summer. The anticipation of Toronto Pride 2013 does not help this, and I am bouncing off the walls. Pride in Toronto is always, a big deal, so I can only imagine the gay community extravaganza that will be WorldPride 2014. It will be an event that promises to be several times larger than our regular festivities. The Gay Village will be lit up with the coming together of our worldwide community. For those of you who do not know, WorldPride goes beyond being a celebration and will include an international human rights conference, networking events and a commemoration of the 45th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. I can't think of a better way to at once, honour the human rights advancements that have been made and to boldly push forward.

So it looks like I have just a little farther to go before I am truly ready to kick back, relax and take in some cottage splendor. Not that I really mind, my labour is one of love and, as they always say, absence makes the heart grow fonder. It is a feeling I am sure all of you are experiencing right now, having been deprived of a fresh issue of PinkPlayMags for a few months. So have an amazing summer everyone and know you are going to love *summerplay!* 2013 as much as I do!

Antoine Elhashem
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Summerplay!

**Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Leather, and Queer
Community Seasonal from PinkPlayMags
Free • Summer 2013**

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Sizzling Summer Issue

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Our summer didn't exactly start off sizzling.

As playful as spring is, summer can sometimes be moody, like a tempestuous lover: hot and passionate until on a whim, we get the cold shoulder. I know all the farmers and gardeners were rejoicing at all the rain, but I'm confident that Pride will work its usual magic and turn the summer hot and sultry.

For so many, Pride is the official kick off to their summer. "We want to be out there circulating, socializing, sharing warmth, feeling sexy, laughing and having a good time," as Shelley so succinctly says in her column "From the Heart." Learn how this season, and Pride, help keep our inner element of Fire in balance (page 58).

This year's Pride festivities are but a prelude to the massive celebration Toronto has planned as we prepare to host WorldPride in 2014. PinkPlayMags is thrilled to be launching our sister website WorldPink.ca with the first of a series of articles to stoke that excitement. In the first, we talk to co-chairs Francisco Alvarez and Sean Hillier to learn how they are working to leave a legacy both for the city of Toronto and future WorldPride celebrations (page 25). Later in the summer I'll be speaking to Doug Kerr and Brenda Cossman about what I feel is the soul of WorldPride 2014: the 3-day Human Rights Conference. The series will continue with a look at the spectacular entertainment to be expected, Toronto as a destination, and the vital importance of volunteers. So be sure to visit the site and sign up for updates.

Summer is all about getting outdoors to soak up those gorgeous rays (don't forget your sunscreen!), head to the cottage, lounge by the lake, or venture into our Province's great outdoors. Kelly faces her fears and gets back to cruising Toronto's waters, inviting you to "Come Sail

Away" with her (page 12), while Bryen introduces us to "glamping"—camping without sacrificing the glamour of creature comforts in the wilderness (page 31).


This issue we say goodbye to a column and a writer. "Our Opinion" was first launched in our 2009 *summerplay!* issue, the one with the infamous gay tribute to John Hughes' iconic film *Pretty in Pink*. The idea for the column was to tackle hot button topics, such as "Religion vs. Spirituality," "Is the Gay Village Still Vital?" and "One Night Stands vs. Long-term Relationships." We had such community luminaries as Deb Pearce, Steven Bereznoi, Shaun Proulx and Maggie Cassella weigh in with their thoughts and always a sense of humour. I'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who was involved over the years including: Melissa Benner, T.T. Bloomquist, Mary-Margaret Jones, Kelly Wilk, Rubie Laframboise and Wrong Note Rusty. It was a pleasure working with you all.

We also say goodbye to Jesse Trautmann, our man about town who shared all his favourite things to experience whilst penning "In the City." We want to wish you the best of luck with your writing (and landing a cowboy) in your journey out west.

New this issue is jazz singer, Ori Dagan adding his own flair to our events column by bringing you "Music in the City," a taste of the live entertainment that can be found in our Metropolis.


So welcome to our sizzling summer issue; grab a cocktail, hit the beach, and bask in the sun—no matter where you are, we travel well and are the perfect reader's companion. Enjoy!

Jeff Harrison
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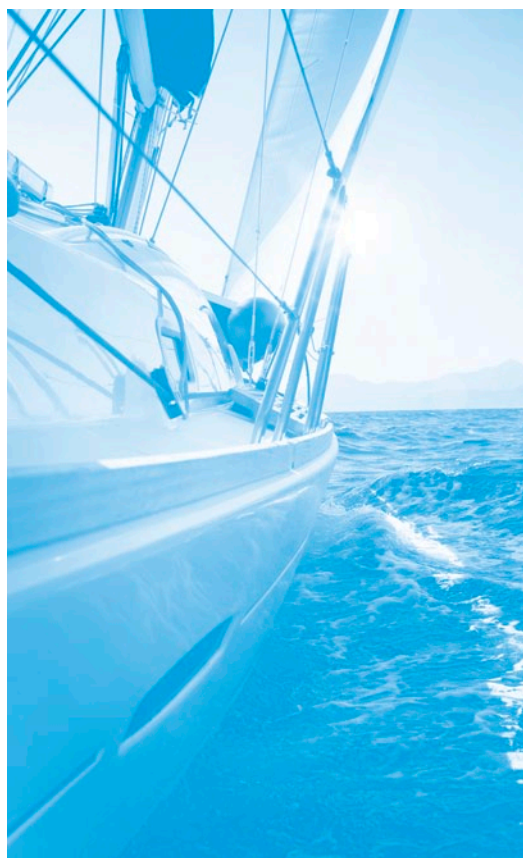
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Come Sail Away



Cruising Toronto's Waters

by Kelly Wilk

This is the summer of me. Narcissist much, may you wonder? Well, only in the best possible way. It has come to my attention that I have arrived at a plateau in my life and my new path needs to be inspired. After experiencing a bevy of personal tragedies, which can be labeled as opportunities for change and transformation, I am beginning a new journey of personal discovery. I am creating an intention to enrich my life and become my most authentic self. And some of these journeys it seems, lead me back out to open water.





There is something about water that makes me breathe slower.

Just thinking about it I can feel the current of my pulse quieting to a more thoughtful pace. Watching it and skirting around the edges with my bare feet seems to awaken my sense of freedom, adventure and possibility.

As a young adult at summer camps and cottages I was an avid canoe and kayaker and on the rare occasion a sailor too. The open water was natural for me. I have remained an enthusiastic swimmer and still canoe occasionally. However, somewhere along the line, my motivation for kayaking hauled anchor and paddled off into the sunset. I have missed it ever since.

I look at lakes and I miss it. I feel a sudden and urgent longing to return to those waters. However, recently when the Muskoka River was rushing by and my family was hopping in to go for a ride, I felt a pang of loss. I was no longer confident in my ability to wield a paddle and large kayak against the wind and the water. I had once gotten myself stuck in a canoe, on a solo paddle at camp. The fear of this brought that experience back to me with vivid clarity. And now my body hurt too much and I did not want to leave my infant; so I gave up the opportunity for pleasure and beauty.

I missed it at a summer writing retreat, where I was far away from those obligations and my time was suddenly my own. The kayak was right there and the water was calm, but there it was again, the fear. I wanted to, but the vastness and aloneness of the open water scared me. What was it about being alone that was so frightening?

I remember the way it felt to glide, to spoon the water gently side to side without any noise save a rhythmic gurgle. I remember moving so quickly over the top of the lake that the forest was a blur. The wind filled my ears and my legs felt like fish with the sensation of water under the hull beneath them. I remember feeling graceful and strong when a camp councillor said I had developed a beautiful stroke.

Somewhere I lost my proud, I lost my strong. I misplaced my graceful and my free.

So, when my wonderful editor approached me about an article on recreational water sports in Toronto, I knew. I knew it was no coincidence. I knew it was time for me to pick a starting point, perhaps several. I needed to get the goods on where I could find those things in myself again.

Friends and Camaraderie

I began close to home with my brother-in-law Mark Wheeler, who was a competitive sailor. He is certainly one with an adventurous soul; he had to be in order to marry my sister Jackie and keep step with her. They have jumped from helicopters onto mountains and skied through pristine powder, behind avalanche lines. They trekked through mountains in Nepal. They got lost in the Amazon on their honeymoon. And they surfed waves in Hawaii, Australia and South America. And of course, they literally crossed an ocean together. This is of course why I asked him.

"I enjoyed the friends and camaraderie," Wheeler says. "Sailors tend to be a pretty relaxed group of people... I did a night crossing of Lake Ontario to go to Youngstown New York for an annual race. We left after work in the evening and sailed straight across with enough time to arrive for racing the next day. When it gets windy and the waves get big, that is when it is best for me!"

I inwardly shivered as he said this and prompted him for more memories, hoping he would tell me about the time he and my sister hopped a ship to get to the place where they were meeting up with parents while on vacation. He didn't disappoint me.

"Crossing the Atlantic would be high on the list!" Wheeler said in his understated yet enthusiastic manner. "We started from a little Whitby yacht club and learned enough to cross the ocean." Correct me if I am wrong but that sounds like a way more fun challenge than hanging wallpaper together.

Wheeler gave me the low down on the research he has done starting with the **Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club** (www.tssc.net). "There is a breakwater area for paddling inside, and opens up to Lake Ontario. Good little club, with both sailing and paddling opportunities. There are always tons of people paddling Dragon boats and rowing (Olympic style) down there. As a member, I'm pretty sure they have some form of easier/more leisurely paddling there too that you can take boats out for," he says.

"Those are boats typically 12-15 feet and normally have 2-3 people sailing them. You will get wet and they can tip if you are not careful," he warned. "The cruising lessons are in bigger keel boats. The keel is a heavy lead piece underneath that helps steer the boat and keeps it upright. It will not tip over, but you can still get wet if it's windy enough. They do a cruising lesson, which looks pretty cool."

Wheeler also taught briefly at the **Ashbridges Bay Yacht Club** (abyc.on.ca/?page_id=169) when he was younger. "I recommend the 'learn to sail program' (link above). It has a full on clubhouse with restaurant and bar. They are always pretty interested in attracting new members," he says.

The **National Yacht Club** (www.thenyc.com/learn.php) is probably the second in terms of prestigious clubs in Toronto, according to Mark. "The **Island Yacht Club** (www.iyc.ca) located on Toronto Island offers the same types of programs for \$450. Interesting fact: it was originally started as the Jewish sailing club in Toronto. The most prestigious club (Royal Canadian Yacht Club, on the island) would not let Jewish people in as members, so they went and started their own club, and now apparently have some more serious racing nights. The race nights (any of the major clubs normally have them, Ashbridges, National, RCYC) are actually a great way to get into sailing. People are almost always looking for people to crew on those nights. By being a member you can put a notice up on the board, offer to buy the first round of beer after the race and go sailing on a pretty regular basis," he says, continuing with his insider tips.



Out on the waterfront with Harbourfront Canoe and Kayak Centre. Photo credits: James Kowalewski



Social Paddle

In conversations with other waterlogged enthusiasts, I searched for more information on the infamous watercraft I was looking to get back into: the kayak. I not only found this, but also a wealth of other information. As Wheeler alluded to, sailing was not just the activity that he enjoyed, but the bond he created with the people he was spending time with. Similarly when speaking to other organizations, I found it is this kind of experience they want to create for their clients. It's not just about hitting the water.

Owner and staff member Rosaire Cordina, at **Toronto Adventures** (torontoadventures.ca) said, "We started Toronto Adventures Kayaking & Canoeing Lessons & Rentals as a family hobby summer company, though over the years it's transformed into a full time job. We offer kayaking, canoeing, stand up paddleboarding, sailing, hiking, snowshoeing, and more!"

You cannot rent a sailboat with this company, but they do offer intro lessons through their collaboration with the Humber College's Sailing Center. As for their other watercraft, you can choose from single or large family gathering excursion, and book online for weekday or weekend adventures. To rent a kayak for two hours is \$29.95 plus tax and a canoe or double kayak is \$49.95 plus tax.

They also do a 30-minute lesson, rental and hour-and-a-half self-guided canoe or kayak tour in the Toronto Humber River. Reading up on this excursion, it states this "slow moving scenic river meanders through forest and marsh where you will have the chance to see species of wild life" and mink, deer, foxes, turtles and salmon are mentioned.

"Our goal is to offer an ever increasing variety of outdoor recreational activities," Cordina said, "that are easy to access and all inclusive. One of the best things about teaching kayaking and canoeing over the years at Toronto Adventures, is seeing the increasing amount of kayakers and canoeists driving around the Toronto area and on Toronto's local waterways." However, what intrigued me most was their sunset social paddles and paddle-in concerts. "You paddle in as a group, stop and socialize and enjoy some great music," Cordina describes. Sounds like a party I would want to be at!

James Kowalewski General Manager of the **Harbourfront Canoe and Kayak Centre** (www.paddletoronto.com) could also get

you up to snuff as they also offer kayak rescue, rolling and safety courses in their pool, throughout the year. Lessons are available as well as rentals for solo kayaks and canoes, \$30 including tax or \$40 for a tandem, or stand up paddle boats. They also do guided tandem tours with instructors on standby for \$135 per person.

When I confessed how intimidated I had become of a sport I had once loved, he said, "Go out with an instructor in a tandem (double occupant) kayak, if you don't want to do it alone." Perhaps, I thought to myself, sometimes we just need a little help to build our confidence, and there is no shame in that.

There is also a great opportunity to make new friends on the water and Kowalewski is definitely a purveyor of the social paddle. For perky morning people their paddles are in the a.m. In the evening the social paddles turn party. "The social paddle is a tour of the Toronto Island Harbour starting on June 6th," he says. "It is hosted by our owners one to three times a week, and ends with a barbeque. When they first started this it was 15-20 participants, but in peak seasons it can get up to 70 or 80. If you go down there one of those nights, it's neat to take a picture of all the colourful boats on the water. You can also tour the island in our historical voyager canoes that hold twenty adults. Our focus is really geared towards fostering a community and attracting of all walks of life."

"This year's pilot project was actually the 2013 Toronto Pride Celebration, and with a focus on The Pan-am Games and the International 2014 Gay Week, we're focusing on inclusive programs. There are already groups that use our services for gay meet-ups." Perhaps he should call them gay paddle ups.

When I confessed how intimidated I had become of a sport I had once loved, James Kowalewski said, "Go out with an instructor in a tandem (double occupant) kayak, if you don't want to do it alone."



Left: Emma Wright of the Harbourfront Centre Sailing and Powerboating



All Levels of Experience

The lovely Emma Wright of the **Harbourfront Centre Sailing and Powerboating** (www.harbourfrontcentre.com/boating/so) told me a little bit about fulfilling the need for speed on Toronto's waterways, and beyond. "Boat ownership is no longer a barrier to boating," she said. "There is a misconception that you have to have a million in the bank to do that, but that is not true."

A boat with large sail area and open cockpit, carrying 2-6 people is \$175 for 3 hours. If a catamaran is more your style, it's \$99 for three hours, while a dinghy it is \$75. Sailing experience is, however, required for all vessels. They also do corporate events like regattas, Island tours, kids' camps, courses for sailing, power boating and yacht master training, and licensing as well as charters for yacht and power boats. The sailing program is open to the public and instructors are \$40 an hour. Their credo is accessibility for sailors with all levels of experience, declaring: "Many who have dreamed of sailing but would never have truly conceived themselves as sailors have discovered the romance and invigoration of the water."

Graduates will often purchase a sailing or powerboat club membership for a fee of \$98/month, getting them unlimited access to all the boats without the cost of maintenance and mooring. "The most popular club events are our cook-outs on our big sundeck as well as the Pirate Nights and Scavenger Hunts. Our members really reflect diversity; they all come here for Pride!" Wright says with a laugh, referring to her queer members.

However, the opportunity to sail away that sounds most exciting is their Annual Caribbean Adventure organized for guests and members. This can be a learning experience or a skippered vacation.

In this way sailors can build their practical skills if they wish, while meeting other sailors from all around the globe.

The sun is telling me it is almost ready. The opportunities are there for me to take. As the season rolls over to the time of blue sky and waves, I know that I am ready. Sure there have been some challenges in life, but really I am now just more willing to do some things that otherwise, I was not prepared to let myself do. And honestly, I am already in the water. I may as well paddle out deeper and feel the wind in my face, or just turn around and swim home. Maybe I will see you out there on the rolling blue!

Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer, Reiki Master and Reflexologist. She is also a woman processing the death of her 35 year old wife. To heal she has invented a seriously disheveled super hero version of herself and started a blog.



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Check out our new website
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festival to be hosted in our region next June

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WorldPride 2014 interviews with
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guide to the festival

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The Essence

of Returning to Balance

by Shelley A. Harrison

In our *springplay!* Issue last quarter, I introduced you to one form of medicine that heals with plants: Herbalism. This issue, with the plants in full bloom, let's explore yet another fascinating way that Nature offers her gifts: Flower Essences.



Left: A Pussy Willow (*salix discolor*) up close;
Above: Pussy Willows steeping in Labrador water



Celine Cloutier: “We like to think of, our tree essences as something that will bring out the best of you, working with the light of you and not the problem.”

Walk into the cosmetic and vitamin section of a Health Food store and you may observe rows of small dropper bottles with plant names on them. What is inside these enticing little potions? With herbal medicine, plants are most often taken in the form of tea, or the stronger, longer steeped version, an infusion. They may also be concocted into a tincture. A tincture is an extraction of the *biochemical* gifts of a plant in alcohol, most often vodka or grain alcohol, sometimes brandy. (Say, why hasn't anyone ever invented martinis for this?) So don't confuse the essences with the tinctures. In larger health food stores, you will find many different brands and companies of flower essences for sale, with ranges of native plants from Australia, the US, and beyond. We even have our very own special line of essences made with Canadian trees, eh?

If you took an herbal tincture into a science lab, they could measure and identify all of the chemical ingredients, which are part of the plant's physical medicine. The flower essence contains just the *energetic impression* of a plant held in water, and preserved with some alcohol to keep it from going off. If you took it to a chemist, it would just be good old H₂O...unless it is a lab that can measure energy resonances.

The work of Japanese author Masaru Emoto published in his book *Written on Water* and reported in the popular film *What the Bleep do we Know?* may help to explain this phenomenon of capturing resonance in water. Emoto wrote positive and negative words and statements on bottles of water, froze the water and then looked at the crystalline structure under a microscope. In his book he shows beautiful symmetrical images of water crystals impressed with such words as, “love,” “gratitude”, and “peace”, and distorted, dirty water crystals which were impressed with words like “anger,” “Adolf Hitler,” and “I hate you.” The scientific validity of his work is disputed, but I think something in us intuitively senses the truth of the resonant impact of words and energies, and the capacity of water to capture these impressions. Our own bodies are at least 60% water—highly impressionable!

The modern production of Flower Essence remedies as we know it in the West, began with Dr. Edward Bach. Bach was a physician, bacteriologist, homeopath and researcher who lived in Wales and Britain between 1886-1936. Bach developed 38 essences from plants that addressed a spectrum of emotional upsets and distresses and the now famous Rescue Remedy, a combination of his essences that treats shock and upset.

To better understand how flower essences are produced, used, and heal us, I sought out Celine Cloutier, the president of Canadian Forest Tree Essences (CFTE). In partnership with the founder of CFTE, Daniel Tigner, she has developed a line of flower essences from trees. The headquarters of CFTE is unassumingly tucked away in a quiet suburban neighborhood in Aylmer, Québec, near Ottawa.



As Cloutier greeted me in her front entrance, I immediately noticed the rack of purified water in jugs by the front door, and the pristine and serene quality of the environment—the space smelled good, too!

Born in le Quartier Des Saules (saules is French for willow tree!) in Québec city, Cloutier spent all her summers at the cottage. “My dad was a lumberjack, so being around trees was a necessity. We built two cottages from trees that he cut! I used to peel the trees. And he made our beds out of trees, he made everything,” she recalls. “We lived and we felt the rhythm of the summer with trees, going to the cottage the last day of school, spending time by the river in the forest. I remember my dad planting a tree where we live. A blue spruce, it’s in the Woman’s Essence. It was very little. We used to jump over it. Then it became a Christmas tree, and now it surpasses the house. We picked apples every fall...I’ve been friends with trees forever. So it’s always been there.”

According to Cloutier, “Trees are the most ancient beings on this planet. Why trees and not flowers? Well trees are deeply, deeply, deeply rooted and they reach up to the sky. Trees also live a long time. Flowers rise and they die. So it’s just a different energy. It’s not better. It is what it is.”

“In the forest when we are called upon by a tree that we have been looking for, we use the protocol of Bach which is taking the gift of the tree with reverence, with permission, with rituals of offering tobacco and thanking the tree,” Cloutier says, explaining how the essences are created. “We take the flowers, the buds, the branches, the cones and place them in Labrador water (purified water), from Quebec and it sits for several hours. While it sits we start taking notes—of the environment, intuitively in a meditative state, what we feel, what we hear. Then we bring this information home, we bring the water home, and it sits for another 24 hours. We clean it, and mix it with alcohol and that becomes the mother tincture. Then we prepare a stock bottle. When we have this stock, we use big jars and we use water in alcohol for hygiene. We pour from [the big jars] into the dosage bottles.”

Nature Has It's Magic

When talking about tree essences, Cloutier says, “They work at an emotional level with the resonance via auras and vibration from the trees, which resonates with ours. We are made of water as well. You can put it in drinking water, in your bath, or on your tongue. Bach used to speak of remedies that were working on symptoms. We like to think of, our tree essences as something that will bring out the best of you, working with the light of you and not the problem. Beings are perfect to begin with, but it gets complicated with life. So what we want is not to fix, but to search out and bring that balance by bringing out the strength.”

With such a deep personal connection, I wondered how Cloutier was initially drawn to using them. “I had a broken heart. And it was difficult,” she remembers. “When I used the essence it didn’t take the situation away, but it eased it for me, to have hope so I could move to the next ‘whatever’ life was going to bring me. It was soothing, it felt comforting.”

I think anyone who’s ever relaxed under a tree can understand the possibility of this feeling. Cloutier agrees, “That’s often how I explain to people that don’t know how essences work. ‘This is a bit of water and alcohol and what is the energy of trees?’ So then sometimes I explain it’s just like a walk in the forest. Or how they feel when they listen to a beautiful piece of music or see a beautiful sunset. Nature has its magic. So that is what I felt, I felt the soothing.”

We are so ingrained in the authority of Western medicine that it’s hard to trust in other healing modalities, hard not to be skeptical of a possible solution not in a prescription pill. “There are people that come if we do a show, and they say, ‘What is this; how does it work?’ I tell them we nourish the body, we feed it, we try to exercise it and we try to surround ourselves with intellectual material to support it,” says Cloutier. “Then I ask them, how do you support yourself emotionally? What do you do? They say, ‘We garden, or we go for a walk.’ And I ask them how does that feel? And I may speak of Bach. Thank God for Bach. I mention him all the time. I say he opened the door, and he found that plants had a real effect on people. He was a medical doctor and he left that to go into other tracts. He worked with people who had anger issues, who had sadness, depression, and so on. And he gave them plants that he prepared carefully, and he found there was an effect. So trees and the resonance of trees, they seem to have an effect on us. Then they will look at the bottles and they will have intuitively picked up a bottle. And they say, ‘Which one would I need then?’ and I will say, let’s read this bottle you just picked. And 9 out of 10 times that’s the bottle. I ask them, ‘What would you need right now to get support emotionally.’ Then I read the bottle and often it corresponds.”

It seems tree essences are focused on nourishing us emotionally, but we tend not to even ask that question of ourselves: how are we supporting that part of our being? “Yes,” Cloutier agrees wholeheartedly. “The question that often comes back is: ‘What is it that you need the



Canadian Forest Tree Essences body synergies

We are friends now, but I have been holding a lot of resentment towards him for not pursuing me. I saw that, felt it, and distinguished it was time to just lovingly let that go, be kind to him and let him off the hook for my disappointment. I felt a release in my energy field like a cloud moving off. It occurred to me that this is just the kind of unfinished business from the past that needs to clear up before I can lovingly be open for a soul mate.

most?' Some people say, 'I need money!' Well, we have a Manifestation Essence. It is not about manifesting money, it's about removing obstacles that the mind is creating, that stops you from manifesting. We have an essence called Body Image/Weight control. Yes people have lost 40lbs on it, but does it make you lose weight. No. What it does is bring awareness to what you are doing to sabotage yourself in actions that you need comfort in food. It brings awareness, also in self-love and confidence so that you start loving yourself so you can really be all you can be."

So adding flower essences to things you are already doing can add that extra piece we just don't think is so important. "Practitioners find that it accelerates the process of the work that they are doing if they work with energy, or coaching verbally," she adds.

All the tree essences are locally sourced from Canada, with a few from India, one from Germany, and one from Cuba. There's quite a selection as well, with 132 trees and 54 products, including seven single tree essences, eight "Good Vibes" sprays that have essences with an infusion of high quality aromatherapy oils, 20 combination essences and then the 12 body synergies. "There is a new baby being born, called the Light Essence, to manifest one's own essence," Cloutier shares, excited.

Seeing Through New Eyes

Cloutier generously sent me home with four magical bottles selected especially for me. Did they work?

I took all the essences that day—about three times each. When I woke up the next morning at 6am, I actually *wanted* to get out of bed. I have been in a funk all winter, continuing into spring—I just want to stay in bed, wasn't feeling the joy of the new day. I used to love getting up early, but these past few months I've just been so tired and worn out. Now a distinct hint of that old zing was back. It wasn't quite strong enough to completely propel me out of bed, but distinct.

I got up and sprayed the Soul Mate "Good Vibes" spray on me and went over to my yoga mat to begin practice. A moment or two later I suddenly had a thought arise about someone I had dated for a year, but things never took off.

Then I went to teach my yoga class at 9:30. I put on makeup and did my hair before going to work, something I almost *never* take time to do. Even though I was flying out the door, I did it quickly and was feeling much more attractive.

During the yoga class, rather than being in the funk of not feeling like teaching, which leads to an uninspired class, I found myself teaching with playfulness, freshness, new verbal cues and encouraging joy in the students. I was watching myself as all of this was unfolding, thinking, "Well, I'll be danged!" That feeling kept spreading to a perception about all things in my life not looking so heavy, seeing how I can just enjoy what I have, take the pressure off, not be in such a rush for things to move forward. I was seeing through new eyes.

I get the sense that the essences work primarily on the second level of the energy field, the Emotional Body, which looks like clouds of pastel colour moving around. They are the consciousness of our feelings about ourselves. That waft of cloud lifting as I let go of the resentment towards the guy could have been energy leaving my second level.

The Canadian Forest Tree Essences are sold in Toronto at The Big Carrot on Danforth (www.thebigcarrot.ca), where Cloutier will be for a public talk from noon to 3pm on June 19th. They are also sold at Nature's Emporium (www.naturesemporium.com).

Why not try this magical medicine for yourself and see what happens?

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



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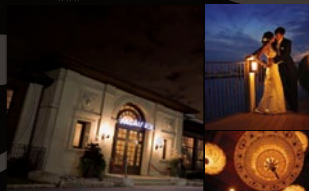
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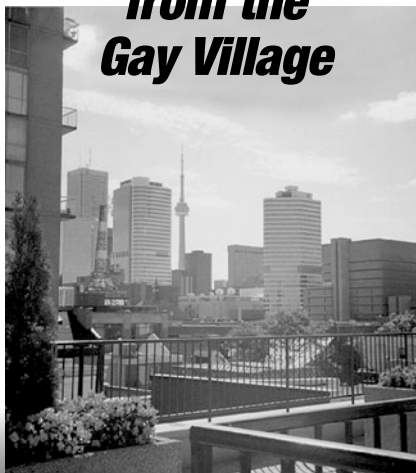
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Part I: Creating a Legacy

by Jeff Harrison

The first in a series, PinkPlayMags ignites WorldPride 2014 excitement by starting at the heart of the organization, talking to co-chairs Fancisco Alvarez and Sean Hillier about the inclusive celebration Toronto WorldPride envisions. Human rights, the diversity of Toronto's multicultural neighbourhoods and a lasting legacy are key to creating a WorldPride that's different from anything the city has experienced before. They are but pieces in a much larger mosaic, so be sure to visit WorldPink.ca and sign up for regular updates.

In 2001, the year after the new Millennium, Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail* called Toronto Pride “a Canadian Institution.”



That's a powerful statement and it took us three decades to get there. In light of that success, we've come a long way since then as well. In 2003, Ontario was the first province to legalize same-sex marriage and the rest of the country soon followed. We were the first country in the world to have the first same-sex wedding ceremony where the vows were legally binding. In 2006, Toronto's Pride Parade was lead by its first International Grand Marshal, a person selected to highlight issues of inequality faced by our brothers and sisters worldwide, and to honour the heroes of Toronto's own queer community past and present. Most recently, in 2012, our government passed Bill 33 (Toby's Act), which amended the Ontario Human Rights Code to include gender identity and gender expression, making Ontario the first major jurisdiction in North America to provide human rights protection for transgendered people.

Amidst these groundbreaking victories, Toronto won the bid to host WorldPride in 2014, beating out rival Stockholm, Sweden. When co-chairs Francisco Alvarez and Sean Hillier were handed over the Official WorldPride Emblem at Trafalgar Square, in London, UK in 2012 at their closing ceremonies, it was indeed a proud moment. When I recently sat down to talk to them, their excitement and delight electrified the room.

"It's not only about whatever we do next year," says Alvarez, "it's about the legacy we leave, how Toronto is going to be perceived by the rest of the world. One of the key things we want to have is the feeling that the entire city of Toronto is holding WorldPride. Having all these different events happening around the city is one of the things that will make WorldPride different from any other Pride we've had. We want to be the seed and the opportunity for a lot of people to have Pride-type events outside of the Village."

Alvarez has a lasting legacy himself with volunteering. He was one of the co-founders of Inside Out, the LGBT film festival, where he was on the board for 10 years; he was involved for six years with Dancers for Life, a major fundraiser for the Aids Committee of Toronto; and he has been a member of the Board for Toronto Pride since 2009. "I tend to burn myself out as a volunteer, take a couple of years break, but I always get seduced back into volunteering," he says, with a chuckle.

Creating A Roadmap

When tackling WorldPride, Alvarez equates the monumental task to his recent professional life at the ROM. "When we did the whole expansion of the museum and the opening of the Crystal, I was in charge of communications, and to do that kind of large scale, once-in-a-lifetime event, for me, it's the most fun thing to do," he says. "I hate business as usual, I hate routine. I like things that are not a formula, but whatever you can make of it. The potential is unlimited. I really like to do projects like that, where you are writing your own roadmap as you go and then it's over. WorldPride is really that kind of event."

But what will make WorldPride different from any of our past Prides? "That's a question we get asked a lot," says Alvarez. "This is the first time WorldPride has been held in North America. And what InterPride wanted specifically from us was an opening and closing ceremony and a human rights focus."

"One thing that was developed for WorldPride in London in 2012 was the WorldPride Award and we'll be giving that out," Sean Hillier chimes in with perfect timing. It's easy to see how co-chairs Alvarez and Hillier teaming up works like a charm. "The WorldPride Award is distinctly different from the International Grand Marshall. The person that would get this award would be someone with a more recognizable name that has done major work internationally. In 2012 the award went to Hilary Clinton."

Hillier is currently completing his PhD in Policy Studies at Ryerson University. As a member of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nations Band who identifies as gay and 2-spirited, Hillier has worked with First Nations communities, as well as focusing a great deal of attention on governance and community outreach. His involvement with Pride began five years ago.

"I had never been to a Pride before the first one I volunteered for, and it just snowballed from one day walking down the street thinking 'This is a lot of fun!' to it turning into my major volunteering. I have a blast spending the entire time running around doing various different things, meeting new people and really getting that reward of being a volunteer. Seeing everything come to fruition that weekend makes up for everything you put in all year," he says.



Left: Francisco Alvarez; Right: Sean Hillier

Opening Community Doors

So with Pride 2013—Superqueer!—a mere few weeks away, what's next on the horizon for WorldPride? "One of the big things for me is expanding our Pride footprint," says Hillier. "So right now we close off 28 city blocks and that's where we have Pride. With the realization of what the city is becoming and how's it's growing up, we have Queer East and Queer West, and we have the gay neighbourhood moving outside of what was the traditional Church-Wellesley area. I think we really need to highlight that. I think that opens up a lot of potential to work with other businesses—really make the city as a whole feel very queer friendly and queer positive. That is one of the hopes I would like to see come out of WorldPride: the city opening all its door across cultural and ethnic communities to all the people who come in 2014, and then have that continue forward into our other Prides."

"Another thing that I really want to have throughout all the WorldPride events is a real international component," adds Alvarez. "Prides by their very nature are local celebrations by local communities and their local partners and allies. With WorldPride we have a chance to take all those local events and bring them all together into a super-group."

"The legacy of what Pride Toronto is all about is bringing the grassroots organizations back into the fold," says Hillier, jumping back in. "Expand what Pride means to the trans community, to the dyke community, so it's not just seen as this cisgender white male festival that we've been criticized for in the past. We really want to have a festival that is inclusive of our whole acronym."

"But above all—it's got to be fun!" Alvarez finishes. "Yes there's the serious political, activist side to it all, but it's really all about the joy of bringing people together and feeling what we have in common, instead of what divides us."

Overcoming our Differences

Speaking of division, nothing has shaken up Toronto Pride more than the debate on Queers Against Israeli Apartheid and City Hall threatening to withhold Pride's funding over resolution of this hot button issue. "We're doing two things about this," says Alvarez. "We've been meeting with Kristyn Wong-Tam about how we're dealing with the city and we've done a deputation

for the Executive Committee. After last year's Pride, city council asked city staff to come back with another report—the second year—about whether or not Queers Against Israeli Apartheid, the term, constitutes hate speech and whether or

not that should be in the criterion for excluding people from the grant programs. That report is back stating that the status quo remains: there's nothing legally they [the city] could do to bar one particular group from entering the event.

"We've already written to all the city councillors including the mayor about what we have done to address this," continues Alvarez, "including setting up the dispute resolution process, requiring all our participants to sign our anti-discrimination policy—basically pointing out, once again, they are treating us different from any other group in the entire city that gets support from them. Which, plainly said, is not a very fair thing to do. I personally think most of the councillors are tired of hearing about this year after year. Rob Ford and his closest associates have lost a lot of influence, particularly Giorgio Mammoliti, who's been the champion of banning QAIA in past years. WorldPride is coming and they need to get their act together and show some real tangible support. I'm hopeful this will be the last of it."

"I think residents of the city are very supportive of Pride and they love to come out and celebrate alongside us," adds Hillier. "We work very closely with city staff and city resources to ensure that 2014 will happen as we all want it to happen. They understand the impact that Pride has, not only on the city and the culture of the city, but economically as well."

The fact that Toronto's bread and butter is in the way the city positions itself for business and tourism, as a progressive and creative city, is the crux of Alvarez's argument. "The Mayor not attending Pride and Pride funding coming under attack year after year is not really a very good signal for a city that wants to brag about how progressive it is," he says. "The silver lining to all the problems that Pride Toronto has had in the past is it's only served to create a greater awareness of Pride to the rest of the media and the city."

“The legacy of what Pride Toronto is all about is bringing the grassroots organizations back into the fold,” says Hillier...

Building a Strong Team

Silver linings and pushing forward with positive ideas are crucial to creating an event as big and as important as our annual Pride Festival—now multiply that teamwork exponentially for WorldPride. “I think many people have a misconception of what Pride is all about, that they just show up and all these things happen,” says Hillier. “There is year-round work by a huge dedicated team. We have 11 board members currently, six full-time staff and 60 year-round volunteers that oversee our various different committees. Then we have about 1,200 volunteers for the weekend. All of that cumulates into what people see during the festival weekend. As soon as one Pride finishes we automatically dive into the next year’s planning, which we’ve already been doing the prep work for, so they overlap from year to year.”

“Currently we have the WorldPride committee and five working committees” he continues. “Each of those committees is responsible for the overarching plan of what WorldPride will be. From that we’ve been able to move ahead with the opening and closing ceremonies and the Human Rights Conference and the Human Rights Awards, and we’ve got a very good idea of who we’d like to have in the way of artists for the stage events. Now that all those things are moving forward, the next big thing that we’ll be doing is integrating the two Pride bodies, so that we can move the established creative ideas into a more practical execution.”

“We have to think, ‘What’s it like to be a foreign person from country X who’s going to come to Toronto for the festival,’” adds Alvarez. “What’s their experience going to be like and what do they need? We’re thinking of doing welcome centres at Pearson and Union Station, for example. We’re used to just thinking in terms of the GTA box and now we have to imagine welcoming a whole bunch of people who have never had an experience with Pride Toronto. So we’ve started looking at the basics and really thinking that though. This can’t be a pride just for privileged white people.”

Welcoming the World

Welcoming people who have never had a pride, who for the first time in their lives will be in an environment where it’s safe for them to be out, to be themselves. That experience, for them, is of paramount importance to WorldPride. “That’s one of the great things about Pride,” says Alvarez. “Every year, as jaded as we may become, there’s always someone that you talk to who’s so inspired, so amazed that this even exists and how rewarding it is for them to be at Pride. You hear about people coming out at age 60 and things like that and you think, wow that’s because this event is there.”

“So imagine that on a global scale,” he continues. “People from other countries where it’s forbidden to have a Pride or even be gay, how do we create opportunities for those people to get here so they can experience that? How do we even get these people VISAs so they can come over here? One of the things we’ve done is to establish scholarship programs with the Human Rights Conference so we can actually help these people get here.”



“Toronto likes to promote the fact that it’s so open and diverse and multicultural—this is really the perfect opportunity for the city to showcase what it’s really all about. I think that’s very exciting,” adds Hillier.

There is one absolute Alvarez and Hillier are profoundly confident in above everything else: “The one thing we won’t have to worry about is volunteers,” says Alvarez. “A lot of our volunteers are repeat—it’s way more fun to see an event like this from the inside. We all know this to be true. Every year you run into people you haven’t seen in how many years? It’s part of the fun.”

“People are really excited to be part of a one-off event like this. They want to leave their mark on it,” finishes Hillier.

Join us in a month at WorldPink.ca for WorldPride 2014 Part II: Hosting a Global Conversation. We’ll sit down with Brenda Cossman and Doug Kerr, co-chairs of The WorldPride Human Rights Conference 2014, and explore the artistic, cultural and academic meeting of minds that will be the soul of WorldPride 2014.

Jeff Harrison is the editor of this magazine.

WorldPride 2014

June 20th: Opening Ceremony

June 23rd: Flag Raising at City Hall

June 25th to 27th: International Human Rights Conference & Program

June 26th: WorldPride Gala and Awards

June 27th: Trans March

June 28th: Dyke March, Pride and Remembrance Run, Stonewall 45th Anniversary

June 29th: Pride Parade and Closing Ceremony

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Campy, Cruising & Cottaging

by Bryen Dunn



We've all heard the double-entendres used for cruising, cottaging, and camp within gay culture. As summer heats up, we're taking a look at the more traditional meanings behind these three c-words. We spotlight overnight getaways where we can cruise on the water, cottage in the wild, and still be as campy as we want to be.



For many, the thought of pitching a tent is as alien as Tom Cruise, which I believe maybe a **triple-entendre**. Even before attempting this feat you have to purchase, borrow, or rent quite a bit of equipment. Then there's the whole setting up process, which sometimes has to be done in the dark, or the rain, or both. To some, this is what camping is all about, and there are plenty of opportunities out there for even more extreme pursuits like canoe-in camping, overnight trekking, or remote backwoods excursions. However, for those seeking a bit more comfort and joy, there's something for you as well.

Many campgrounds have realized the potential to capture this emerging segment of the population who want to explore their wild side, yet bed down in some comfort at the end of the day. A recent report released by the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation, titled "Growing New Markets," looked at how Ontario Parks could increase visitation, and introduce or reintroduce users to the park network. Four key groups were identified that included the adventurers and core users, as well as reluctant and mature travellers. One of the key findings was that over 30% of Ontarians would camp if basic cabins or deluxe tents were available.

In an effort to try and capture this segment of new or lapsed users, new roofed accommodations were introduced last year as a pilot project in three specific parks: Pinery Provincial Park on Lake Huron, Arrowhead Provincial Park near Huntsville, and Murphys Point Provincial Park on the historic Rideau Waterway. All three now offer Camp Cabins and Deluxe (read permanent) tents, available for those first-time or non-campers who want an alternate option to sleeping on the ground beneath the stars. Each unit comes with a screened porch, barbeque, utensils, mini-fridge, beds and mattresses, and even a coffee maker. These new accommodations are in addition to the others already offered at various locations, including yurts, rustic and backcountry cabins, cottages, lodges, and even a heritage house.

Upon arrival, there's plenty to keep one busy. **Murphy's Point** offers tours of a restored mica mine and trails to sawmill ruins and pioneer homesteads. **Arrowhead** offers hiking and

biking on trails that wander through maple forests and past waterfalls, beaver ponds and homesteaders' farms. **Pinery** has the largest oak savanna woodlands remaining in North America, filled with rare and unique butterflies, songbirds and reptiles, as well as endless sandy beaches.

There's also the option to "glamp" (glamour camp), and there's no better place to experience this than in one of the many gay owned and operated campgrounds in Ontario. The province boasts five such options, each offering some form of alternate accommodations to tenting. Rainbow Ridge, Cedar's, The Point, and Lakeside Rainbow have been entertaining the adventurous crowd for years, while Riverside just recently opened and The Land is still a work in progress. Rainbow Ridge near Grand Valley, Cedar's near Hamilton, and The Point near Turkey Point, are all within approximately an hour's drive of Toronto. Each offer both seasonal and overnight options, with Rainbow Ridge and Cedar's open to all genders, while The Point is male only except for certain special events such as the annual pansexual Forbidden event that is open to all persuasions.

Rainbow Ridge offers bunk beds in shared accommodations, as well as a private Efficiency Suite that sleeps up to four, while **Cedar's** introduced five Cabins that can be booked single or double, providing basic shelter with a futon, night light, fire pit, picnic table, and charcoal BBQ. There are also two larger Duplex units, each with a queen size bed, toilet and sink, full kitchen and a sitting area, as well as a deck, chairs, fire pit, and picnic table. **The Point** has had Basic Cabin accommodations for a few years now, and they'll be introducing a couple larger Forest Suites this season. All three campgrounds have plenty to offer, including swimming pools, clothing optional areas, recreational sports, and evening entertainment.

Lakeside Rainbow is celebrating its 10th year this season a bit further out on the shores of Lake Huron in the Bruce Peninsula. They offer one, two, and three bedroom Cottages that can accommodate up to six people in the largest, all with a two night minimum rental. Each unit is self contained with its own bathroom and kitchen facilities, bedding (except linens), and even satellite TV and a DVD player. The camp itself is open



Page 31: Deluxe tents and cabins at Arrowhead Provincial Park

Page 32: The pool at Lakeside Rainbow



to all genders and has a pool and natural lake for swimming, canoe rentals, hiking trails, laundry facilities, and wireless internet.

Riverside is Ontario's newest gay male member's only campground situated on 96 wooded acres conveniently located halfway between Ottawa and Toronto in the Land O' Lakes region of Eastern Ontario. Enjoy the land o' luxury here by renting the two-bedroom Waterfront Cottage, or the 24-foot River View Trailer. Both come fully equipped with double beds, full kitchen, private bathroom with shower, and are located on spacious riverside lots serviced with water and electricity. A third option is their Rental Tent site, a large eight person tent already setup on a serviced lot with a picnic table, fire ring, and a double bed.

The Land is a new ongoing project comprised of nearly 100 acres of forested property with 2,500 feet of shoreline access along the Salmon River, perfect for water sports of many kinds. This adults-only work in progress is currently facilitated on a donation basis, and in much the same manner as perhaps a co-op might operate, there's likely the possibility of fractional ownership in the future. While this more primitive site might not be for everyone, there's currently running water and hot showers, with plans for a pool soon to follow, but sites are not currently connected for water or electricity. The Land is located approximately two hours east of Toronto and southwest from Ottawa, or less than an hour northwest of Kingston.

Another DIY option is **HQ Muskoka**, a private property graciously opened up to the public on selected weekends, such as the launch of Muskoka Pride. There are over 70 acres of trees, ponds, and even a small lake for guests to enjoy. There is electricity in the main building, as well as full washroom and shower. The Saturday social includes a BBQ and bonfire, and later in the night the former welding garage turns into a fun-filled night of entertainment.

For those seeking more of a party adventure, there are options out there for you as well. The 25th annual **Out & Out's Jamboree** happens in August, accommodating a mixed gender of adults up to a maximum of 225 attendees. This event happens at a summer camp about three hours

north of Toronto in the Haliburton area, just south of Algonquin Park, located directly on a private lake perfect for swimming, canoeing, kayaking, or a late night skinny dip. There's a variety of events put on throughout the week, including the infamous costume party and talent show, definitely the highlight for attendees. Outdoor activities include volleyball, basketball, tennis, hiking, ball hockey, and baseball. There's even a dance/fitness studio, small screening theatre, and arts and crafts room. All accommodations are in shared cabins with bunk beds, and since Jamboree is a not-for-profit, volunteer-run event, one price includes your accommodations, activities, meals, and snacks for three, five, or eight days. Car pooling is encouraged and can be requested or offered.

With tough economic times hitting a good chunk of the population, many people are seeking out affordable vacation destinations close to home, often referred to as "staycations." With Toronto traffic known for being the most congested in the country, here are a couple of options that will leave you with that feeling of escape, without even having to leave Toronto. Best of all, owning or renting a vehicle is not required.

There are actually two campgrounds located within the city of Toronto that provide both visitors and residents an opportunity to experience an urban-rural setting. The 4,700 hectare (47 square km/11,500 acres) **Rouge Park** is operated by the City of Toronto, and is located in the northeast part of Toronto. It's been designated as a protected natural ecosystem since the mid 1990's, and parts of the area are also designated as National Historic Sites because of the ancient 1600 Seneca native archaeological findings. Canoeing on the Rouge River is a wonderful experience that provides scenic nature views, as well as glimpses of the distant city landscape. There are also ten different hiking trails of varying length that meander through forests and meadows, as well as a sandy beach to soak up the rays.

The Toronto Regional Conservation Authority operates **Indian Line Campground**, which is located at the opposite end of the city, in the northwestern reaches. The nearby Claireville Dam gives a simulated lakeside camping experience, where campers are able to fish or float around in motor-less floatation devices. Many campers stay here to combine a visit



Top: Skinny dipping at The Out and Out Jamboree
Middle: The dock at The Out and Out Jamboree
Bottom: Bruce & Bill celebrate their wedding on Toronto's Boatel

to the adjacent Wild Water Kingdom, as it is within easy walking distance of the campground. Beyond the water-based fun, there's an 18-hole miniature golf course, batting cages, volleyball courts, and weekly musical entertainment. The Toronto public transit system can get you to within walking distance of either park, making this an eco-friendly getaway. All buses are equipped with bike racks so you can explore the surrounding areas upon arrival, or if you're feeling fit then the trek can be done by bike to either site within about an hour from most anywhere in the city.

One of the best hidden gems in the city is the **Toronto Islands**, easily accessible by public transit via a short ferry ride across Lake Ontario. Upon arrival there are plenty of things to discover, from secluded beaches, including the clothing optional Hanlan's Point, to art galleries, fine dining, bike and kayak rentals, and pure serenity. Make it a weekend getaway without the aggravation or expense of travelling afar, by renting one of several bed and breakfast offerings. The rustic cabin-like residences that "the Islanders" live in year round are like paradise, and a short walk to the shoreline allows for the most gorgeous views of Toronto's skyline, especially at night. For those preferring to stay on the mainland, another unknown find is **Boatel**, which basically is a floating hotel as the name implies. Docked smack dab downtown in Toronto Harbour, this three room jewel has plenty of deck space for sunning, includes breakfast, and even offers kayak and bike rentals right onboard.

Whether sitting around a campfire gazing up at the stars, frolicking in the water, or lying on the beach admiring the latest beach wear, there's nothing quite like escaping city life even if just for a night or two. Now most anyone can experience the wilderness without the hassle and expense of having to provide all your own gear. So pick a destination, grab some bedding linen, clothing, food, your favourite beverages, and you're set for a summer sizzler!

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.



Online Resources

Ontario Travel www.ontariotravel.net

Toronto Tourism www.seetorontonow.com

Ontario Parks www.ontarioparks.com

Rainbow Ridge www.rainbowridgeresort.ca

Lakeside Rainbow www.lakesiderainbow.com

The Point www.get-tothepoint.com

Cedars www.cedarscampground.com

Riverside www.riversidervcampground.com

The Land www.thelandcg.ca

HQ Muskoka www.facebook.com/HQmuskoka

Out and Out www.outandout.ca

Rouge Park www.rougepark.com

Indian Line Campground www.trca.on.ca

Toronto Island Bed and Breakfasts
www.torontoisland.org

Boatel www.boatel.ca

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Hot Artist: DJ TK

by cee sando

“You name it, [he] can drop it. You know it, [he] knows more. And if you wanna rock the Casbah, [he’ll] rock the shingles off with musical genres so flawlessly intertwined, they’ll form a web of audio pleasure that’ll make you scream for more ‘til the last record hits the slipmat...”

- Excerpt from “DJTK: Dancing Is Often Compared To Sex”, by Raquel Richards (Scenester Magazine Issue #5).

With residencies held at some of Toronto’s top clubs, DJ TK has helped create some of the city’s most dynamic club nights, including “Bitchslap” with Sydney Blu, UNCZ Thursdays at The Comfort Zone, and Toronto’s Excess.

Just coming off helping celebrate the 2013 INSPIRE Awards and with Toronto Pride on the horizon, no DJ in the city is busier than DJ TK. Surprisingly though, it’s not DJing gigs that will be keeping him busy this season. As the current Arts and Culture Manager at Pride Toronto—our city’s week-long multidisciplinary arts festival and the third largest festival of its kind in the world—this is by far the busiest time for TK as he puts all of the last minute touches on Pride’s ever overflowing entertainment program. TK oversees the festival’s show programming including the presentations on the stages, at official events and throughout the festival site. Over the course of the year, he works with a group of programmers to build the festival schedule, outreach to various community groups, research artists, and solidify cultural partnerships.



This year is particularly busy as the entire Pride team is concurrently working on the programming for WorldPride in 2014, which Toronto is hosting.

An old pro at DJing, TK began playing at a campus community radio station while in high school. After moving to Toronto from the Maritimes via Vancouver in the 1990s, TK started spinning in nightclubs, including a venue called Club Time on Yonge Street and eventually landed a regular gig at a lesbian bar called Deco's.

TK says he developed his style through "lots of practice and lots of playing at parties. I watched other DJs, listened to a lot of other DJs, and then just trying things out. I learned a lot working the lights for DJ Julie Ley at Decos and The Rose—she played all the girl bars—and watching her beat match. I learned a lot about selection by listening to DJs like Denise Benson. Working with guys like Paul Grace and Chris Steinbach, you learn a lot about reading a crowd. Pretty much every DJ I've worked with in town has had an impact!"

Known for mixing multiple genres of music in the same set, TK tends to favor underground house, techno and dance music using Pioneer CDJ200s running through a Pioneer mixing board. On a good night with TK on the 1s and 2s you'll hear the new remix of Lana Del Ray, "Summertime Sadness" and "Get Lucky" and Daft Punk's "Let's Have a Kiki!" TK counts Deko-ze, JELO, Robb G, Chiclet, Ticky Ty, Fawn Big Canoe and Cajmere among some of his favorite local DJs.

"I'll spend time listening to a lot of tracks to put a few set segments together, and arranging the music so it will be easy to locate when I want it later on," says TK, on preparing for a gig. "I have a look at the lists on social networks, make a few posts to remind people where I'll be that weekend, and send out messages. Then just the everyday stuff: food, shower, outfit. Double check the gear and my schedule and head out to the event a bit before my set, to get a sense of the energy in the room. Then get in the booth and rock it!"

Currently TK is focusing less on traditional DJ gigs and more on commercial work. Producing electronic music for clubs, film and television since 2000, TK took on the Ramlover moniker in 2007 and has released remixes for labels Don't Look Productions and HiBias Records. He recently completed a pyro soundtrack for a Circus Orange fireworks display, and

has been producing a number of remixes which he works into his fun sets.

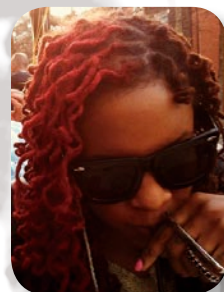
With an extended route and a new show, Pride Toronto has an exciting festival planned for this year.

When asked what performers and programming he recommends at this year's festival, TK immediately brings up Blockorama, the longest running program at Pride Toronto, which is celebrating its 15th anniversary! "The Blocko team has put together a really amazing showcase of past performers and emerging artists," he says. "The House of Xtravaganza is coming from New York, Diana King (out R&B/reggae star) will be appearing, and returning artists include jojo flores, nik red, MC Jazz and Ayo Lelani."

In addition, audiences can look forward to Ryan G. Hinds' cabaret showcase at Village Stage; Molly Thomason performing at Paul Kane Parkette; Diamond Rings on the Bud Light South Stage; Sydney blu will be spinning at OLG Central Stage, along with The Cliks, Carole Pope and Light Fires; Mia Martina, Anjulie, My Name Is Kay and Lexi Tellings will all be at TD Wellesley Stage.

For the scoop on what he's up to find him on Facebook as DJ TK!

Currently calling Toronto home, cee sando rarely sits still. Jet-setting throughout the Caribbean, France, Dubai, India, Mexico, the USA and Canada, cee documents her experiences through words, photos and her fashion choices. Obsessed with style and pop culture, cee has a bohemian heart and readily admits her love for the classic rock-and-roll lifestyle.



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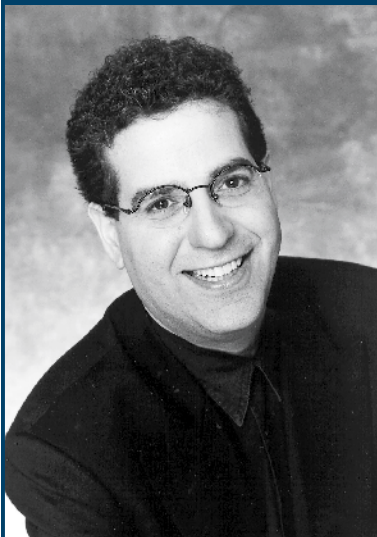
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HYPER-CULTURE

by Jaime Woo

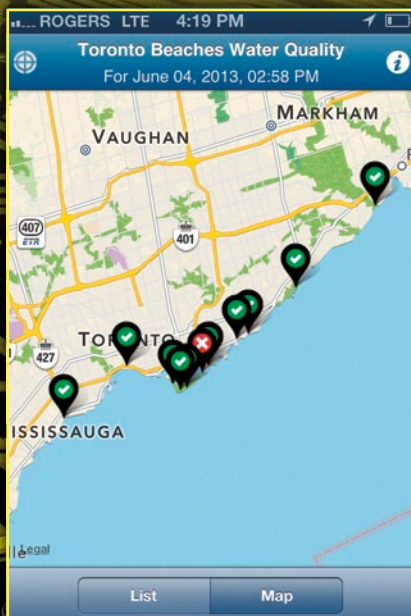
The weather is beautiful. The fine people of the city have shed their winter coats and are ready to embrace colour, prints, and maybe even a little skin! This is no time to be indoors.

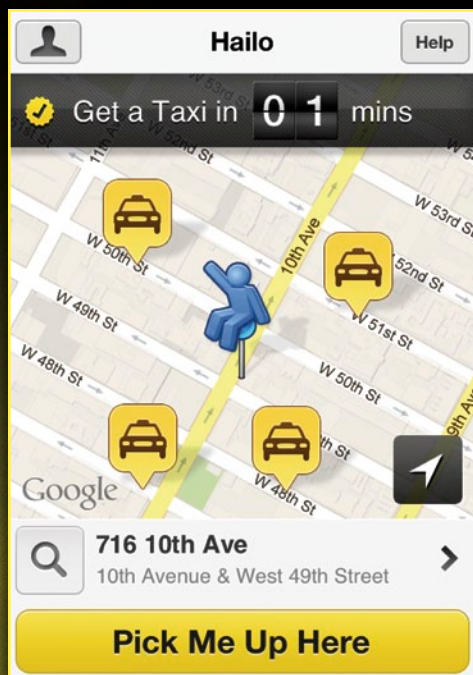
It's no secret that once the temperature is warm enough, the patios get swarmed with Torontonians ready to make the most of the season. The beauty of technology nowadays is that it is mobile. No longer do you have to be sitting at home to search for something online. In the palm of our hands, we often can do nearly everything we once had to do in the comfort of our homes. We're so used to having portable technology that it can seem remarkable that only a decade ago, we were amazed when our iPods started including video on a very, very small screen. How things have changed!

The next move we're going to see is having digital augment the physical. It should appear seamless. The most obvious example might be **Google Glass** (www.google.com/glass/start), which strives to make the digital experience as non-intrusive as possible. Instead, Google Glass is meant to make the interesting aspects of digital connection—the ability to share, the instant access to information—available when necessary and out of the way when not. Of course, this doesn't mean that Google Glass will succeed, and there are a host of obstacles that come along with its use, but in terms of its purpose the device is on point.

Until then, we have our smartphones. In some ways, our smartphones have become like the tricorders on *Star Trek*. What can't they do? A lot of the bumps—albeit small ones—that we used to face have been largely erased: it's much easier to get directions, keep in touch with people, know movie showtimes, and so on. Life is less frustrating when you can tell ahead of time that a movie is sold out.

Similarly, it's not fun to get all dressed for the





beach and then discover that it is closed. For that, the City of Toronto has released its **Toronto Beaches Water Quality** app to tell you the water quality of its beaches. Included are a list of supervised beaches in Toronto, a map, daily updates of E. coli readings and swimming conditions, and past E. coli levels in beach water for the current year. The app is a great example of the city sharing its data—that it is already collecting, mind you—in a manner that not only helps citizens be more informed, but gives them a sense of the work the city does. The app is currently only available for iOS users, but there is a website available to access the information (www.toronto.ca/health/beaches/iphone.htm).

Now, how do you get to the beach? There's of course public transit. But sometimes it makes more sense to grab a taxi. However, getting taxis are inherently inefficient. There's no obvious rhyme or reason to how taxis survey the city for fares and, if you are not carrying cash, some taxi drivers will give you attitude. My favourite choice is to use an app like **Hailo** or **Uber**. These apps use GPS to determine your position and to show you where the nearest taxis are: you can hail a cab, watch as the driver approaches you, and even attach a credit card to your account so that the ride is automatically billed. You don't have to



wonder if there are any cabs around, question how long they'll take to arrive, worry about someone stealing your cab, or carry cash to use the cab. Once you are at your destination, you can exit the cab and that's it! No fiddling for money, no waiting for a receipt, because one is always sent to your email immediately.

Now lastly, if you are going to be outdoors the whole time and using your smartphone, it will likely run out of juice. While batteries have become more advanced, so have the power-draining features on the devices. For most people, a smartphone can barely get through the day. If you can't find yourself an electrical outlet, what to do? It makes a lot of sense to bring along a portable recharging station. Sure, it might seem like an extra thing to carry, but given how many devices the smartphone has packed into one—phone, camera, music player, GPS systems—it's a small price to pay. The **HyperJuice Plug** (www.hypershops.com/HyperJuice-Plug-s/220.htm) is a great option because it allows up to two devices to recharge and can even be used for tablets, like the iPad.

Summers don't last forever and it's important to make the most of every minute. Get out of the house and don't feel guilty that you're bringing your smartphone with you. Capture and share those great moments. Get to where you need to go faster and easier. Whatever you do, just make the most of it!

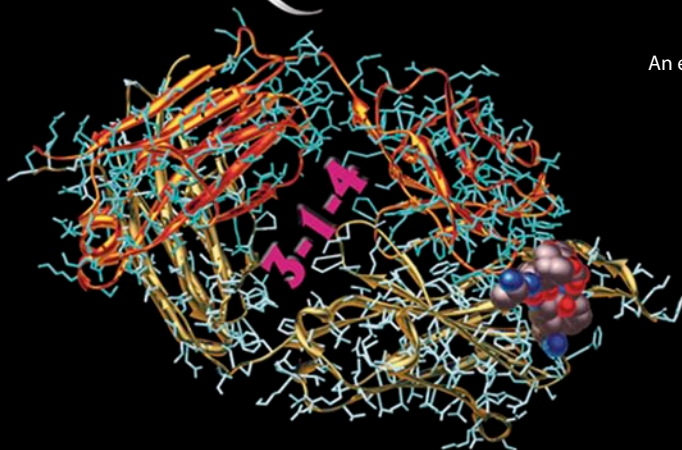
Jaime Woo is a writer living in Toronto and the festival director of Gamercamp. An avid geek at the nexus of games and technology, he's just published his first book: *Meet Grindr: How One App Changed The Way We Connect*.





THE JESUS INJECTION

A Buck 98 Adventure



An excerpt from the novel
The Jesus Injection
by Eric Andrews-Katz.
Published by Liberty



Eric Andrews-Katz

While gathering information on a political, anti-gay adversary, Agent Buck 98 finds himself caught up in the charm of the French Quarter. But nothing is ever as it seems and even on the way to a romantic rendezvous, Buck is once again attacked in yet another attempt to stop him from discovering the secrets of The Jesus Injection.

Chapter Fourteen

Buck walked down Royal Street with his hands in his pockets and deep in thought. Despite the hour the streets were still well populated, and he meandered through the crowd. After a few moments he realized he was softly humming a song from *The Sound of Music* and couldn't help but smile.

"Maybe Noxia has a point with this humming thing," he muttered. He kept his eyes focused on the broken sidewalks in front of him, and his thoughts changed to Lulu-Belle. His mind replayed the conversations from earlier, and quickly Buck became lost in his own theories. Forgetting to pay attention to his surroundings, he followed the crowd until he realized that he had crossed Canal Street and turned down one of the side streets.

Laughing at his own folly, Buck turned around and began to retrace his steps. Something ahead of him caught his eye. In the crowd coming toward him were three skeletons. Slowing his pace, he slid his hand into his jacket, reaching for his holster more from instinct than need. It was then he realized they weren't walking toward him, they were coming at him and stopped directly in his path.

"Sorry, guys. You startled me," Buck said. His heart was pounding. He looked at the three of them, all dressed alike in skeleton costumes with rubber masks over their faces. People meandered by, some casting odd looks at the costumed figures while others didn't flinch at all. The first skeleton stepped closer. Buck took a step back, thinking it wanted to pass. It moved exactly the same way, mirroring his image. He stepped aside, and again, the skeleton mimicked him. The other two fanned out to either side of him. They stood still and waited without a word. Buck looked at the three of them. "So what's up, boys?"

The skeleton in front stepped closer. Buck

remained still. He stared back, trying to get a glimpse at what was under the mask. There were traces of dark makeup to hide the pale color underneath. Just under the eye, Buck could see traces of broken skin. This was not a fraternity prank.

"Costume party," Buck said with a cocky smile. "Or jazz funeral?"

"The only funeral is yours, dude," the skeleton said in a familiar voice.

"I hate being called dude," Buck said. "You'd think you'd learn after the last time I kicked your ass."

Buck smashed his foot down on the skeleton's instep. As the man fell forward, Buck's fist connected with his chin, sending him reeling and knocking him out cold to the ground. The skeleton on his right leapt forward and charged, colliding with Buck's side. The two of them crashed backward into a locked-up storefront. The two men were crammed in the small quarters, leaving the third attacker to stand back and watch, looking for a chance to join. Buck reached into his jacket for his gun, but the figure smashed a fist into his stomach, bringing Buck to his knees. The skeleton kicked his hand and the gun went flying from his grip.

The stranger brought his leg back to kick him in the head. Buck rolled and the foot narrowly missed him. Reacting quickly, he reached up and grabbed the costumed man by the ankle, twisting with all his strength. The foot cranked to the side. The ligaments tore. The skeleton's other leg gave way under the pain, and he toppled backward.

The remaining upright figure charged as Buck rolled away and leapt to his feet. When the skeleton stopped and turned to face him, both were ready for the fight. Both men rocked back and forth on the

pads of their feet, ready to leap in either direction. The skeleton threw a punch, more to gauge than to make contact, and Buck ducked to avoid it. He threw two return punches into the skeleton's shoulders, knocking him a step backward.

"You really want to do this?" Buck said. His body was vibrating. Blood raced through his veins. Every sense was on edge, heightened by the pumping flow of adrenaline.

The skeleton threw another punch, and Buck returned with the same two responses.

"Persistent. I'll give you that."

The skeleton threw his next punch but this time was prepared when Buck made his attempt with the same gesture. The assailant knocked his arms out of the way and was able to connect a fist directly to Buck's jaw. The shock of the blow sent Buck reeling backward until he hit a wall. His head snapped back and into the cement siding. Slowly he slid down the wall. Seizing the opportunity, the skeleton turned and ran.

Buck could do nothing besides watching his assailant escape. His breath came hard and he rolled over to his side with some effort. He pulled himself to his knees, catching his breath and gazing about to make sure no other attackers were coming. Scanning the shadows, he saw the handle of his gun and quickly retrieved it. Keeping it pointed and ready, he approached the skeleton that still lay sprawled out in the doorway.

He leaned down, keeping the gun carefully aimed, and reached out his hand. The form didn't move and Buck cautiously reached his free hand out to check for breath. The man was still alive, but definitely unconscious. Without even trying to be careful, Buck took hold of the rubber mask and roughly pulled it off. The face was unfamiliar.

Standing up, he sauntered over to the second of the attacking skeletons. The figure lay broken, moaning and clutching his ankle. He wasn't going to be moving anywhere without assistance from someone, and Buck was not the someone to do it.

Buck leaned down and grabbed him by the back of the neck. Roughly, he ripped off the rubber mask to find a matted mass of blond hair with a recovering set of fading black eyes. Terje spat blood on Buck's jacket.

"Maybe this time you'll get it," Buck said. He slammed his forehead into Terje's, again breaking the bones in his nose. The blond man's head rocked back and Buck dropped the unconscious man onto the cobblestone. "I *really* hate being called dude."

Buck stood up and wiped at his nose. Dark crimson streaked across the back of his hand. "Damn it! And I'm late for my date!" His arms hung heavily at his side and his legs felt like weights. With a determined sigh he looked around

at the street signs and realized he was only a block or two away from Royal Street.

Wiping the blood from his chin, Buck made his way back toward the hotel. He ignored the looks of curiosity from other pedestrians. His suit was dirty, and torn in some places. Blood was splotted all over the front. His skin was ripped with cuts and scrapes, and

he held his nose pinched close to avoid any further blood running down his face. Buck limped up to the prestigious hotel and was immediately greeted by a suited doorman.

"Sir," he beseeched. "Are you all right?"

"Fine, thank you," Buck replied. "Just went down the wrong street and met the wrong people."

"Shall I call the police?"

"No," he answered. "Thank you." His voice was nasal from the pinched nose, and his words were muffled as he spoke into his hand. "I'm supposed to meet someone here, so I'll just have a drink and wait."

"You can't go in there like that, sir," Buck wasn't sure if the statement was concern for his sake, or the hotel's. "Let me get you seated in the lobby, and I'll be right back with a towel and some ice." The doorman took him by the arm and led him to a seat discreetly placed in the corner of a very busy reception area. By the time Buck sat down, the man

"You really want to do this?" Buck said. His body was vibrating. Blood raced through his veins. Every sense was on edge, heightened by the pumping flow of adrenaline.

hurried off to get what he needed.

Buck removed his fingers from his nose and breathed easier when blood failed to run out. He glanced at his watch: 11:53. Richard was probably gone by now. There was little to be done. He was about to get up and leave when a fleeting figure dressed in white caught his eye.

It was Richard.

"Richard!" he called out. The figure in white stopped and looked around for the source. Spotting Buck in the corner seat, he walked over hesitantly.

Richard's white linens made his golden skin shine in the lighting of the hotel lobby. His black hair was shiny and wet from a recent shower. He approached Buck with a hesitant expression.

"Are you all right?"

"Yeah," Buck said, trying to smile. The bruises added to his boyish charm. "You should see the other guys."

"Guys?" Richard smiled. "I didn't realize you were into group S and M."

The doorman returned with an attendant, an ice pack, and a hand towel. "Here you go, sir. Oh, hello, Mr. Pye."

"Thanks, Marvin," Richard said, taking the ice and towel. He wrapped it up and gently applied it to Buck's nose.

"Is there anything else I can help you with?" Marvin asked. It took Buck a moment to realize he was speaking to Richard.

"No, thank you," he replied. "Actually, yes. Can you send a bottle of champagne to my room? And," he looked at Buck with a boyish grin, "maybe some extra ice."

"Very good, sir." The attendant walked off.

"You're a mess," Richard said. "Instead of the bar, why don't we get you cleaned up?"

"I thought I was too late," Buck said, accepting the hand up from the chair.

"Perfect timing," Richard said. "The benefit ran late. I had just enough time to get back here, shower, and get ready to meet you. I was on my way to the bar when you caught me."

"Must be kismet." Buck flashed his smile through dirty, bruised, and bloodied lips.

Richard led the way to the hotel elevators, speaking over his shoulder. "I haven't heard the cast album to *Kismet* in years."

Buck felt his heart leap at the Broadway musical's title. A grin crawled across his face and he placed one hand over his heart.

"The concierge recognizes you?" Buck asked as

the elevator made its way to the twenty-third floor.

"I worked here many years ago for a short time," Richard said. "Plus, Raven books me here every time we come to New Orleans. She throws a lot of business in their direction, and they return the favor in spades. It's very simpatico."

"Does she stay here also?"

"No," Richard said, with a laugh. "She'd never slum in a fourstar hotel. She has friends she stays with."

"And you?" Buck asked, dabbing at the corner of his blossoming lip.

"I know which side my bread is buttered on," he confessed. "But I do sleep a little easier when Raven's not so close. I like being my own man."

The elevator came to a halt before anything else could be said.

"My suite's over here," Richard smiled, leading the way. "Why don't you go get cleaned up," Richard suggested as they entered the suite and moved into the main room. "Take a hot shower if you'd like. No offense, but you look like you could use it. You'll find clean towels in the bathroom."

"Hey," Buck said, reaching out and touching Richard's shoulder. "I appreciate it. Thanks."

Richard stepped forward until they were practically in each other's arms. His hand reached around Buck's neck, and he massaged the taut muscles there.

"Go get cleaned up. There's time for chitchat later."

They leaned in and let their lips softly touch. Richard's skin was smooth and tasted sweet to his lips. The cologne he wore was subtly applied. Buck felt his chest tighten. He heard Richard's breath grow heavy. "You're still a bloody mess. Go," Richard ordered, swatting the back of his pants.

"Yes, sir!" Buck responded playfully.

Eric Andrews-Katz's other work can be found in: *Seattle Gay News*, *Chelsea Station Literary Journal*, and several anthologies.



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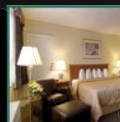
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Life's a Beach!

ON HANLAN'S POINT

by Jeffrey Luscombe



Summers in Toronto can be blistering hot.

To find relief, Torontonians have been ferrying over to Hanlan's Point on the Toronto Island since the 1800s. And though it has only been designated officially clothing-optional by the city of Toronto since 2002, unofficially, it has been a traditional spot for nude sunbathing—especially gay men—for decades.

Now back in the day, (when the risk of being charged with public nudity was all part of the fun) there was nothing but the relentless sun on the sand at Hanlan's Point (and perhaps the occasional rustling in the bushes along the sand-line); however, today those looking to enjoy their summer sun in the buff, can do so in a little more comfort than those in bygone years thanks to Randy Mulrooney, owner of Life's a Beach, and his lounge chairs and beach umbrellas.

Originally from Newfoundland, Mulrooney has spent the last twenty-six years in his adopted city of Toronto. And, like many a gay Torontontian man, every summer he enjoyed visiting Hanlan's Point. "I always loved the sun," Mulrooney says. "And being from Newfoundland, I come from water."

It was while vacationing on one of the many sunny beaches down south like Puerto Vallarta and South Beach that Mulrooney discovered the convenience and comfort of renting lounge chairs and umbrellas right on the beach. So when Hanlan's point "officially went nude" Mulrooney's entrepreneurial spirit meshed with his love of the sun and he asked himself, could the same sort of chair-rental business he had seen in Puerto Vallarta and South Beach work in Toronto?

"I called the city's Parks, Forestry and Recreation department and asked what it takes to start up on Hanlan's Point," says Mulrooney. After submitting a detailed business plan and revenue forecast, Mulrooney and Life's a Beach was approved for a one year trial. Today Mulrooney and his five part-time employees are celebrating their thirteenth summer at Hanlan's Point, one of only two official clothing-optional beaches in Canada.

"It's a great place to drop the façade," he says. "Once your clothes comes off your inhibitions go too. People meet each other."

And what started as a predominately gay beach has undergone a bit of a demographic shift over the years. "It's been interesting to watch," Mulrooney says. He estimates that during his first year in business about 90-95% of people on the beach were gay while today gay men might account for 60-70%. "But more and more people are coming. On weekends we can have fifteen hundred people on the beach and seventy-five boats in the water."

However, it seems that the advent of technology has lowered the number of folks choosing to fully strip down. "Generally less people are nude," he says. "Now with video cameras on phones, it's dropped to 40-50% range. Women are more hesitant to go naked; they mostly go topless. A lot of guys don't care."

Mulrooney charges a flat rate for the day: \$7 for a lounge chair and \$12 for an umbrella plus a deposit. "I often run out," says Mulrooney. "Chairs sell out, umbrellas sell out. People need protection." But because his chairs are found on the "gayer side" of the beach, Mulrooney lets straight couples know that they will be sitting among gay men before they rent a chair—just so there won't be any surprises. Few, he said, ever seem to mind.

And though there may still be some gay cruising happening, for Mulrooney, Hanlan's Point is about more. "It's the camaraderie," he says. As an example, Mulrooney recalled the day a lesbian knitting club came by, rented some chairs and umbrellas, and knit in the nude all day. "It lets people experience new freedom. It's not sexual. It's about freedom. And the island is a beautiful place to be," Mulrooney says. "The water is so clear, you can see little schools of baby fish. In fact, among all of Toronto's many beaches, Hanlan's Point



often boasts the best water due to the beach being farther in Lake Ontario, away from the runoff of the city. It is not uncommon to find Hanlan's Point open for swimming when Toronto's other beaches are closed for poor water quality in the summer.

However, doing business on an island is sometimes challenging. Inclement weather can sweep in quickly and sudden down drafts have turned a beach umbrella into a twisted mess. Last year, Mulrooney was the victim of vandalism when thirty of his lounge chairs were destroyed when they were intentionally set ablaze. Though miscreants were ultimately caught for other vandalism on the island, no one was ever charged with destroying Mulrooney's chairs.

But after thirteen years he still loves it. "It still amazes me how many people don't know that there is a nude beach in Toronto. People say, 'I never knew that was out there!' I still think it's one of the best kept hidden secrets in Toronto," he says.

Life's a Beach hours are daily, weather permitting, 10am-5:45pm starting July 1 until Labour Day. He's open weekends during May and June and after Labour Day until the end of September (lifesabeachtoronto@rogers.com).

Jeffrey Luscombe was born in Hamilton, Ontario Canada. He holds a BA and MA in English from the University of Toronto. He attended The Humber College School for Writers where he was mentored by writers Nino Ricci and Lauren B. Davis. He has had fiction published in *Chelsea Station*, *Zeugma Literary Journal*, and *filling Station Magazine*. In 2010 he was shortlisted for the Prism International Fiction Prize. He was a contributor to the anthology *Truth or Dare* (Slash Books Inc. 2011) and just published his first novel, *Shirts and Skins*. He lives in Toronto with his husband Sean.





by Jesse Trautmann

Break out the shorts, tanks, and tees because summer is here!

For my listings I tried to incorporate as many outdoor adventures as possible, because if you're like me, then the summer is all about being outside.

On another note, I must bid you farewell as I'm moving out west and beyond. I'd like to thank you all for reading my listings and reading about all the cool places and things to do in Toronto that I enjoy. I have had a blast over the last year and a half. I've also had a blast doing the photo shoots that accompany the column, even though I haven't always been thrilled with some of the final choices that made it to print! All kidding aside, this has been a fun ride. So, while I'm embarking on new adventures in new cities, I will be back one day and will be able to pick up a copy of PinkPlayMags to see what's new and happening in Toronto.



PRIDE WEEK 2013

This year the theme for Pride is Superqueer! and promises many parties, cultural events, street fairs, and of course parades! Pride offers family events, sober and proud events, and affiliate events ranging from: literary, visual arts, performing arts, all ages, adult only, musical, and comedy.

PRISM Parties

Matinee Starship (Main Event)

Saturday June 29

10pm – 7am

The Guvernment – Koolhaus, 132 Queensway East

\$60

Party until the early morning hours at Pride's main party event. Featuring DJ Micky Friedmann, DJ Phil Romano, and DJ Ivan Gomez.



Revival

June 30

10pm – 8am

The Government Nightclub, 132 Queens Quay
\$85

The music will be awesome as David Morales, one of the biggest DJs in the world, is headlining along with DJ Tony Moran. Also spinning is DJ Honey Dijon, DJ Shawn Riker and more.

TIP: This year Aqua is being held on Olympic Island. So you get a trip to the Toronto Islands as well as the infamous Pride water party.

Pride at the Gaystone

June 18 to June 28

Times and prices vary per event

The Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen Street West
www.gladstonehotel.com

Check out Queer West as The Gladstone hosts a week of events. Over the week there are plenty of diverse entertainment options, from late night dance parties, to a queer families brunch. Also, there are daytime book readings and lesbian potlucks. Be sure to check their website to collect all the specific details.

TIP: If you're into political Pride functions, *Pride at the Gaystone* has photography exhibits honouring everyday heroes of our community to brassy unapologetic burlesque.

FOOD

It's always great to eat out at a restaurant, but here's an idea that may encourage you to cook at home. I've listed a few outdoor farmers' markets so you can enjoy the summer weather while you shop for the ingredients to your meal.

The Leslieville Farmers' Market

Jonathan Ashbridge Park, Queen Street East
and Coxwell Ave

All Summer until October 27

Sundays from 9am – 2pm

www.leslievillemarket.com

The Leslieville Farmers' Market offers fresh, local fruits and vegetables, baked goods, prepared foods, meats and cheeses. Check out Augie's Gourmet Ice Pops with fresh juice pureed with herbs and zests, and Bee's Universe with bee products like honey, royal jelly, honey comb, and beeswax candles.

TIP: You can lock up your bike to the fence on the south-west edge of the park for free.

Trinity Bellwoods Farmers' Market

Shaw St. and Dundas St. West

Every Tuesday all summer until October 29

Tuesdays from 3pm – 7pm

www.tbfbm.ca

Support local, organic and sustainable agriculture. Take a trip to this market where you can shop but also get educated in the foods you eat, the source from which it comes and how it is grown and/or prepared.

TIP: Don't worry if it starts raining, you'll be able to finish getting your grocery list! The market is open rain or shine.

CONCERTS & EVENTS

Bjork

July 16

6pm

Echo Beach at Molson Amphitheatre

\$81.50 - \$104

Icelandic songstress Bjork returns to Toronto for one of only a handful of North American summer tour dates. Although she hasn't had a studio album since 2011 with Biophilia, this is Bjork's first Toronto appearance in over five years and shouldn't be missed. The genre-defying vocalist continues to push boundaries, exploring the links between technology, nature and art. She's known for her larger than life stage productions and an eclectic, unconventional style that blends elements of jazz, pop, electronica and traditional music.

TIP: *Biophilia* was the first of its kind to be released as a series of interactive Apps, along with an accompanying multimedia live tour.

John Mayer

August 14

Molson Canadian Amphitheatre

\$46.75 - \$110.25

Singer-songwriter John Mayer brings his Born and Raised Tour to Toronto as well as his good looks! I know some dislike Mayer because he has been in the tabloids for his womanizing and cocky big mouth, but he has won seven Grammy Awards, so let's just focus on his music.

TIP: Joining Mayer on stage is American Idol winner Phillip Phillips who is behind the hit single, "Home."

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT

Harbourfront Canoe and Kayak Centre

Open daily until late September

283A Queen's Quay West

416-203-2277

www.paddletoronto.com

\$30 - \$100

Explore Toronto's waterfront on the water with this urban paddling centre offering group kayaking, canoe tours, and stand-up paddleboarding. With the scenic 13 Toronto Islands only a 20-minute paddle away, this is a great way to stay active this summer. Make sure to check out the website as prices and times vary with each activity. Also, the website has various packages and deals to take advantage of.

Tip: Paddling programs include all required equipment: boats, paddles, skirts (for kayaks), and safety equipment so you don't have to worry about getting your own.

The Canadian National Exhibition (CNE)

August 16 to September 2

Exhibition Place, 210 Princes Blvd.

www.theex.com

\$14 Adults

Here's an oldie but a goodie! Some people go to the Ex every year, but some of us haven't been since we were kids. If you're the latter, head to the Ex and relive some childhood memories. Enjoy rides at the Midway, food and shopping in the pavilions, and of course, the Air Show.

Tip: For the past three consecutive years the CNE has been awarded EcoLogo Certification confirming it as the "greenest" fair in North America and the most "environmentally friendly" large-scale event on the continent.



CULTURE

Beaches International Jazz Festival

July 19 to 28

Queen Street East from Woodbine Ave. to Beech Ave.

6pm to 11:30pm nightly

FREE

Upwards of 50 Canadian bands entertain, showcasing the finest in Big Band, Swing, Post-Bop, Afro-Cuban, Fusion, Funk, R&B and Soul sounds that Toronto has to offer.

Tip: If you're going to listen to musicians at Kew Gardens or Woodbine Park, take a blanket or chair as they both have grassy areas that you can use.

Hot & Spicy Food Festival

August 30 to September 2

Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay West

www.harbourfrontcentre.com/summer/hotandspicy

FREE

If you enjoy the zestier things in life then head down to Harbourfront Centre for the Hot & Spicy Food Festival. The fest explores diverse hot food experiences, with cuisine from around the world. Check out International and local chefs, farmers, and vendors selling a variety of hot sauces and mustards.

Tip: Be sure to keep an eye on the website to see which of your favourite Food Network celebrities will be appearing.

Jesse Trautmann is a Ryerson Journalism grad and a freelance writer in Toronto.

Jesse dishes on queer dating mayhem and shenanigans in his column, "Date Night FAIL" for mygaytoronto.com and he also pens the hilarious blog, "I Shaved My Ass for This?" at www.ishavedassforthis.blogspot.com

Photos by Peter Demas,
Karel Matkovic





music in the city

by Ori Dagan

Foxy Roxxie

There are not many drag artists that can sing, but how many have toured this country with Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* and *Phantom of the Opera*? Performed by the brilliant Brad Cormier, Roxxie Terrain's thrilling voice, hilarious antics, outrageous outfits and dazzling dance moves have been decades in the making. Cormier first dabbled in drag nearly 20 years ago while on the cast of *Phantom*, but he has been singing and acting since childhood.

"My mother has a beautiful singing voice and she would sing to me, along with the films and recordings of Hollywood musicals," he recalls. "It was like having my very own MGM musical star in the house. Who needs more inspiration than that?"

Not merely a genuine talent, but a classy one to boot, Roxxie doesn't swear in her act. "I like to tease, of course, but for the most part this a family friendly show!" Zipperz (72 Carlton St.) is lucky to be presenting such world class entertainment. From Gershwin to Sondheim, Bernstein to Ellington, occasionally even dipping into Disney, music lovers will appreciate the range of material performed by Roxxie, who rather than the standard karaoke backing is regularly accompanied by keen pianist, Adam Weinmann. Showtimes year-round are Mondays from 10pm to midnight and Fridays from 7pm to 9pm. For additional shows during Pride Week, check the Zipperz/Cellblock Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Zipperz).

Sing a Song at Statlers

Monday nights are traditionally "dark" for theatre, which means it is an ideal night for a musical theatre open mic! Over at Statlers (487 Church St.) every Monday is "SINGular

Sensation," inviting all to bring a song to sing, accompanied by Donovan LeNabat on keys and Jamie Bird on percussion, generously hosted by the charismatic Jennifer Walls, herself a rising star on the musical theatre scene. Each week features a special theme or guest cast, providing a spotlight for singing actors of all levels.

"There are so many rewards to my job as host," says Walls. "There are nights where the room is electric. Someone will sing a really popular song and the whole room will erupt not only in song, but in beautiful harmony. You would swear you were sitting in the middle of a Broadway ensemble! We also encourage people to bring music that is new to them so they can practice in front of an audience. One of the best compliments I've ever received from a patron was how safe and encouraging the environment in the room is. I take a lot of pride in that because it was very important to me from the start, for the show to be a supportive, loving space where we can come together as a community."

Priceless Entertainment

Zipperz and Statlers are about a 5-minute walk from each other, so you can even catch a bit of both on the same night. There is no cover charge to these events, but the Pay-What-You-Can tip jar gives you an opportunity to show your support. See you in the clubs!

Ori Dagan is an award-winning jazz vocalist, freelance entertainment journalist and proud team member at PinkPlayMags and The Pink Pages Directory.



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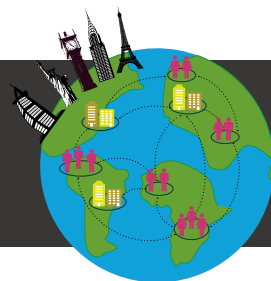
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From the Heart

by Shelley A. Harrison



Feel the Heat

Va, va, va vroom! Summer's here and the time is right, for dancin' in the streets! Pride is the perfect expression of where our elemental energy moves to in the summer. We want to be out there circulating, socializing, sharing warmth, feeling sexy, laughing and having a good time. Like Nature at this time of year, we want to be in full expression, enjoying our vitality, or as a client of mine once said, "Honking our horn and spinning our tires."

This is our second seasonal installment of “From the Heart” where we explore your health from the perspective of Classical Chinese 5-Element Medicine. This is the paradigm a Chinese Medical Doctor, an acupuncturist or a Plant Spirit Medicine Practitioner treats according to. (Stay tuned for our autumn issue when I will write a feature about Plant Spirit Medicine!) In the spring, we explored your Wood(y) Element. (Yes, yes, please feel free to continue to explore that during Pride and over the summer, a-hem!). As we continue to follow the cycle of the elements and seasons, we arrive at the Fire Element.

In your body there are four organs which harbour the Fire energy: the heart, heart protector, triple heater, and small intestine. Following the Chinese model of a kingdom ruled by an emperor, and his entourage of helpers, each organ has a job title which describes the role it plays for your body, mind and spirit.

Your Heart is the “Supreme Controller”—it is the emperor! This is a wonderful way of saying, you should be guided by your heart. The heart gives instructions to all other organs/officials. If your heart goes down, the entire kingdom is in complete chaos. When its energy is excessive, over-controlling behavior is the result. Do you boss people around a bit too much? Are you holding such a tight rein on your life because to let go feels life threatening? Deficient or out of balance heart energy can result in things feeling out of control, which also produces fear and a sense of endangerment. It's quite serious when the Supreme Controller gets out of balance, which is why he has a bodyguard.

The Heart Protector does just that, but marvel how it does it. It is the “Official of the Pleasures of the People, or Sex and Circulation!” She protects the heart by keeping you joyful and fulfilled! The physical equivalent of the heart protector is your pericardium, which is the connective tissue which surrounds the heart. The heart protector can get too defensive, which makes you prickly, untrusting, and unable to share warmth and fire exchange in relationship. If it gets really tight and scared, you might even feel frigid or snappy. When the HP gets hurt, we can feel shy, scared of contact, and reluctant to trust because we just feel so vulnerable—we have no shield to keep us from “taking things to heart.”

The Triple Heater is a bit of a mystery man. In Chinese medicine we view the torso like a condo with 3 floors: pelvis, belly and chest. A healthy home environment means that the temperature is nice and even on all 3 floors. So the Triple Heater is your heating and cooling engineer. Sexy! He keeps it warm in the winter, and air conditioned in the summer. He is capable of generating a field of warmth in which people can come together. Picture an orchestra warming up. As the fire energy is generated, people come

into harmony, and a sense of community is created in which people can move and share, like the heat being shared evenly in your body so each organ of your physical community can do its work properly in harmony with the others. The image of people sitting around a fire sharing, and no one being left out in the cold is also apt. If your building engineer is out of whack, you may go hot and cold in your relationships or desires.

Lastly we have the Small Intestine. She is the “Official of Sorting and Separating.” She decides what is good for the kingdom and what is toxic and therefore needs to be separated out for the good of your spirit, mind, and body. Oh dear, when she gets confused, we just don't know what is good for us, whether it's what we take in through the media (which can be toxic to the level of the mind), into our bodies as nourishment, or in our relationships. Did you know that TV is toxic to your nervous system? It's not even the content of the programs, it's the technology which stimulates our highly trained hunter/gatherer nervous system, an expert at sensing rapid movement, to stare at the screen as the rapidly appearing images keep our nervous system riveted. For that matter, the highly stimulating life we live of speed keeps her on overtime sorting and separating. So take a break in nature this summer where things move much slower and give your Small Intestine Official a detox.

Your Fire element overall is about joy, laughter, and sharing in relationships. If your burner is low, this turns to sadness and disconnection.

So get out there and circulate people! Enjoy the warmth of being in community, laughing, dancing, moving together in a field of warmth, pride and celebration! And if you feel like it's hard to get out and connect with your community, a little hot and cold about the whole affair, or all that stimulation leaves you scattered, try consulting with a practitioner who treats according to Chinese 5-Element Medicine. You'll be amazed at how it takes care of not just your physical body, but your emotional, mental, and spiritual well being. Don't let the summer joy pass you by!

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



Summer Horoscopes

by Joan Ann Evelyn

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Go shopping for a new property in July or redecorate your current place of residence. If you would like to work from home, set up a home office in August. In September, relax and enjoy life. Singles could attract a significant other.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

In July, take steps to beautify your surroundings and make time to enjoy them. Go on vacation or plan weekend trips in August, but make sure your vehicle is in good working order. Enjoy romantic dinners with your partner in September. Spend quality time together.

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)

Invite friends and neighbours to your home for a barbecue in July. You could find love right in your own backyard. In August, enjoy a peaceful time in your home life. You will be bursting with new ideas and eager to share them in September. Slow down on the road.

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

In July, you are more likely to be attracted to luxury items, but should try not to go over budget. In August, you will enjoy working independently and pursuing your own interests. Make time for fun and games in September.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

Win the support of friends and groups who share your ideals in July. Give your body, mind and spirit a rest in August. Enjoy down time or attend a retreat. Someone from the past could re-enter your life in September.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

In July, review your priorities and see if some of your goals need to be adjusted. Put your energy in creative group efforts in August. Take on a leadership position with an organization. Go back to school to upgrade your skill level in September.

Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

In July, begin a project to jump start your career. Your superiors will be well aware of your skills and talents. In August, accept invitations to many social events. Promote yourself and market your skills in September. Take a chance on a lottery ticket.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Attend business seminars and workshops in July. In August, take a vacation by a lake and refresh your body, mind and spirit. In September, be outgoing, enthusiastic and social. Take the initiative in romance.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

Seek a loan or some other type of financial assistance in July. In August, watch what you put in e-mails and on social media sites. In September, do volunteer work for a charitable organization. A secret love could be revealed.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

A pet may need special attention in July. Your own needs could conflict with those of your partner, friends or loved ones in August. Try to see things from their point of view. In September, avoid a financial conflict by working out a win-win solution.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

In July, if you improve harmony and teamwork with co-workers, they will be inspired to follow your example. Eat right and get fit in August. If you have been ignoring relationship problems, you will have to deal with them in September.

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

Express yourself through love, hobbies, games or creative work in July. In August, you could attract a new romantic interest or have a legal matter settled in your favour. In September, travel to an exotic destination or sign up for an art class.

Passionate about Astrology, Joan Ann manages her own consulting business AstroConsultation. She is President of the Canadian Association for Astrological Education and teaches intermediate to advanced Astrology. Joan Ann gives presentations and workshops on her favorite subject Astrology.

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Looking Back

CHAINS OF FIRES

by Elsa Gidlow

*Each dawn, kneeling before my hearth,
Placing stick, crossing stick
On dry eucalyptus bark
Now the larger boughs, the log
(With thanks to the tree for its life)
Touching the match, waiting for creeping flame.
I know myself linked by chains of fire
To every woman who has kept a hearth*

*In the resinous smoke
I smell hut and castle and cave,
Mansion and hovel.
See in the shifting flame my mother
And grandmothers out over the world
Time through, back to the Paleolithic
In rock shelters where flint struck first sparks
(Sparks aeons later alive on my hearth)
I see mothers, grandmothers back to beginnings,
Huddled beside holes in the earth
of igloo, tipi, cabin,
Guarding the magic no other being has learned,
Awe'd, reverent, before the sacred fire
Sharing live coals with the tribe.*

*For no one owns or can own fire,
it lends itself.
Every hearth-keeper has known this.
Hearth-less, lighting one candle in the dark
We know it today.
Fire lends itself,
Serving our life
Serving fire.*

*At Winter solstice, kindling new fire
With sparks of the old
From black coals of the old,
Seeing them glow again,
Shuddering with the mystery,
We know the terror of rebirth.*

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PRIDE GUIDE

Friday June 28, 2013

Trans March

Norman Jewison Park

Start time 7:30 pm (March Rally 6 pm)

Pride Toronto carries the torch and tradition of the 2009 first ever Trans March down Church Street!

Friday June 28 to Sunday June 30, 2013

Trans Space 2013

North Stage

June 28th (8-11 pm), June 29th and June 30th (both 3 to 10 pm)

Trans Space will be located at the heart of the festival site. It will provide information, workshops, and support to members of the Trans community, those who are questioning, or simply curious. It will be a safe, inclusive, and normative area and will be open for the entire Pride Weekend.

Performances by Trans and gender variant artists will be happening on the North Stage – just beside Trans Space on Saturday and Sunday. Trans artists will also be performing at many other Pride stages and events.



Saturday June 29 & Sunday June 30, 2013

The Substance Free Alternative

Wellesley Street just West of Church Street

10:00AM - 11:00PM

Festivities include live performances on the stage, holistic services and confidential recovery meetings. The space provides clean and sober fun in a family friendly environment, and a great alternative to the beer gardens! Come on out to the Clean Sober & Proud space, sit on our lawn and be part of this welcoming oasis of calm in the heart of Pride Toronto. If you have any questions or require more information contact us at sober@pridetoronto.com.

Saturday June 29 2013

Get Out! Presents Pride Games Day

Mattamy Athletic Centre, 50 Carlton Street

12:00 – 5:00 pm

Our First Annual celebration of Equality in Sports! Come join us at this totally free afternoon of games, sports and play. Celebrate our theme of SuperQueer and dress in costume for an opportunity to win prizes.



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Saturday June 29, 2013

Dyke March

Intersection of Church and Hayden

Time: Start time 2 p.m.

Show your support and attend the Dyke March

Saturday June 29, 2013

Dyke Day Afternoon

Bud Light South Stage

4:00 pm

Now in its 9th year Dyke Day has a full-on-jam-packed lesbilicious live music lineup including Amanda Rheame, Melissa Ferrick and Wepa! La Noche Latina!

Sunday June 30, 2013

Blockorama 15: Legacy Legendary Love

TD Wellesley Stage (Wellesley & Yonge Streets)

11:00 am - 11:00 pm

Marquee talent: Ultra Naté, Quentin Harris, jojo flores

Blackness Yes! Invites you to experience the Best Block Party in Toronto! Blockorama is moving back to the block! Featuring a galaxy of stars who will bring you fierceness and show off their

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swagger. Start the day with sharing words and rhythms inspiring resistance and celebration. Dance and raise your hands during an amazing line up of DJs, divas, dancers and performers. Hilarious hosts will keep you entertained and informed throughout the day.

Sunday June 30, 2013

ALTERNA-QUEER

Alexander Parkette

3:00 pm – 12:00 am

Alterna-Queer offers you an alternative to mainstream. Join us for some remarkably talented entertainment all day long and into the evening. First time performances by The Tryst, Matt Silver, Lake Pacific and closing the evening with the Gothic sounds of Amy's Arms, punk hop grooves of Urvah Khan and the gypsy beats of Jumble.



Sunday June 30, 2013

The 2012 Pride Parade

2:00 PM

At the heart of Toronto's Pride Week stand the members of the LGBTQ2SA communities. Each year the collective creativity, talents and energy of these communities come together to wow the world. Come join the 33rd annual Pride Parade and celebrate diversity.

Sunday June 30, 2013

Dirty Disco

Bud Light South Stage

3:00 pm – 11:00 pm

Hosts: Miss Raquel & Don Burns

Featuring local heroes Don Berns AKA Dr Trance, Robb G, Adam K, "Canada's Hardest Working DJ" Deko-ze and "The Peoples'DJ", JELO returning for another year to end the evening.





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