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TORONTO'S GAY & LESBIAN NEWS

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TORI AMOS  
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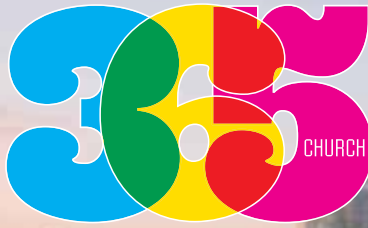
HANGIN' OUT AT

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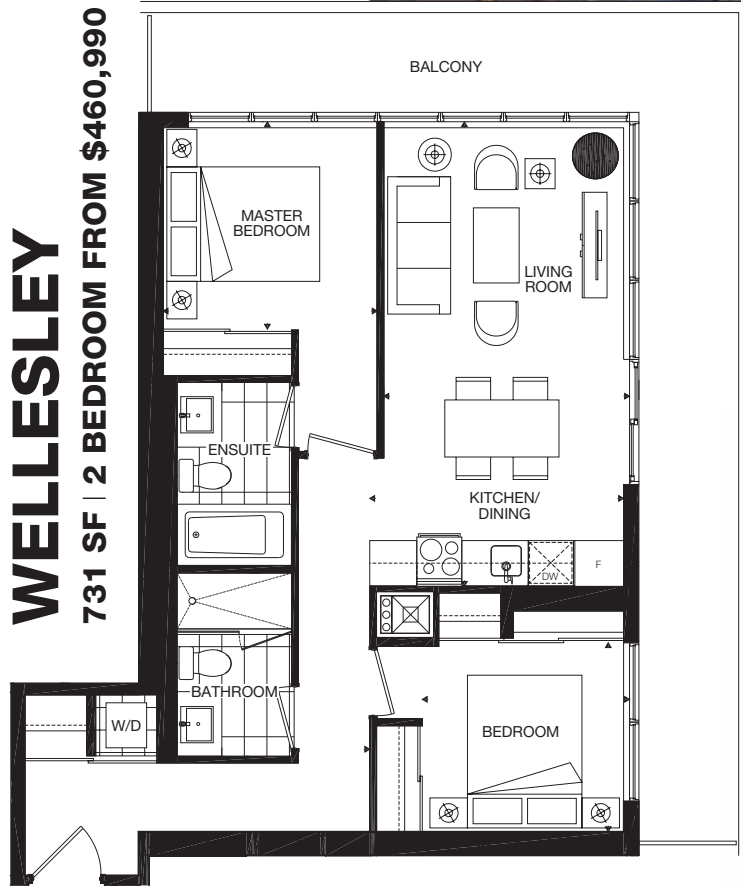
*Taking it all off, then and now, at  
Toronto's cherished nude beach ▶ 16*



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COVER PHOTO BY JAMO BEST

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**VIDEO: Gay rights in Vietnam**

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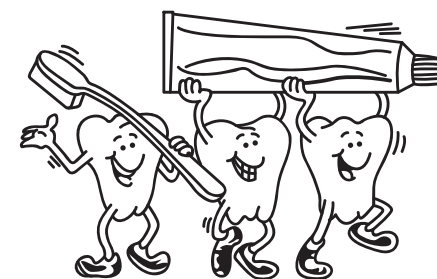
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## Ford Fest flare-up



**EDITORIAL**  
**HG WATSON**

Above Thomson Memorial Park on July 25, the sun hung low in the sky on a warmer day than Toronto has seen during this unseasonably cool summer. Rob Ford and his family couldn't have asked for a better day to host the semi-regular barbecue they call Ford Fest — a celebration of all things Rob and family — where, they say, everyone is welcome.

But a small group of LGBT activists who attended soon felt anything but welcome. Warily regarded when they first arrived, wearing their rainbow leis and pink feather boas, the situation escalated as several vocal Ford supporters surrounded them and yelled at them to go home.

At its most tense moment, about 30 people surrounded the small group and taunted its members. One man, stone-faced and tall, approached the group and began to debate with them — then ripped a sign out of a protester's hands and tore it apart to cheers from the crowd. Another protester, later identified as a straight ally and Ford opponent, was allegedly grabbed by the throat.

Since then, the Fords have apologized — in a way. Rob Ford told CP24 that he didn't see the events but that he apologizes and “we have to move on.” Doug told reporters the incident was “very unfortunate” but added a caveat in the form of an analogy: “You can't show up to a Yankees game with a Red Sox hat on ... enticing a fight,” he reportedly said.

Both Fords have repeatedly denied they are homophobes. But their actions — their refusal to attend Pride, Rob's attempt to take down the Pride flag hung to support gay athletes during the Sochi Olympics and, more recently, his sole vote against a report on LGBT youth shelters — give the strong impression that the brothers are at the very least uncomfortable with the segment of their LGBT con-

stituency that is loud and proud.

Whether the Fords are homophobes or not, their actions and words have created a space where bigots feel comfortable spreading their views.

Not everyone who attends Ford Fest or supports the Fords is homophobic. The most vocal anti-gay group was only a small percentage of the thousands of people at Thomson Memorial Park that night.

But as I observed the LGBT protesters at Ford Fest, I was genuinely surprised how many people whispered insults at them — the quiet bigots who were not captured by TV cameras. And as the situation escalated, the louder people displayed the kind of animosity that is usually reserved for the most heated political protests.

About a week after Ford Fest, Poe Liberado, one of the organizers of the protest, told me that the group went to Ford Fest specifically with the intent to provoke responses, but it never occurred to them that those responses would be as aggressive as the ones they encountered. “Even though [the protest] was called Queerup-tion, I didn't actually think we would disrupt much,” she says, adding that they had hoped to start a conversation about their actions.

Though the protesters stood their ground, Liberado says it was difficult to listen to some of the things said to them. “For me, someone else was saying how my parents must be so disappointed in me, to have a gay child,” she says.

It takes a certain shamelessness to continue to claim after these events that everyone is welcome, as Doug claims. But in a way he is telling the truth — just his version of it. Because as his baseball analogy indicates, you are welcome at Ford Fest, or in the Fords' circle, as long as you are on Team Ford. X

*HG Watson is Xtra's staff reporter.*

*For more on this story, see page 8.*

## FEEDBACK

### Ford Fest

I can't believe you are headlining that Rob Ford apologized for actions of his supporters [“Rob Ford Apologizes for Actions of Supporters at Ford Fest,” [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com), July 28]. I expect more in-depth analysis from *Xtra*. He did not apologize for actions of his supporters. He said, “It's terrible that things like that happen. I apologize and we have to move on.” There is no indication he was apologizing for the verbal and physical assault his supporters perpetrated on the LGBT community. For all we know he was apologizing to his bigoted supporters for having to endure LGBTs. It's a shame that you headlined it in Rob Ford's favour.

SEAN KILLACKEY  
[DAILYXTRA.COM](http://DAILYXTRA.COM)

I'm proud of the protesters at Ford Fest [“LGBT Protesters Cause Stir at Ford Fest in Toronto,” [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com), July 26]. I would be more than a bit panicked to be swarmed. They stayed calm and collected.

JACQIE JAGUAR  
[DAILYXTRA.COM](http://DAILYXTRA.COM)

As disturbing as it was to watch the clash, I do admire the gay activists for having such a calm demeanour in a very difficult situation. Not only did gay advocates unearth the truth about dislike toward LGBT people (from Ford supporters), their need for confrontation was visceral. But also the political agenda was front and centre in this video. Of course, Ford will argue he had nothing to do with it.

BARRY DENNISON  
[DAILYXTRA.COM](http://DAILYXTRA.COM)

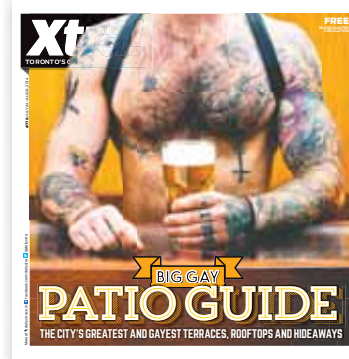
Having not really lived in Toronto since 1995, I always wondered what type of people would vote for Rob Ford. I have expected them to just be conservative blue collar, but it still did not seem to make much sense to me given all the baggage that seems to follow him. I would like to give special salute to the LGBT activists that were brave enough to attend this rally in a public park and proudly proclaim their dissatisfaction toward the mayor of their city.

COLIN BROWNLEE  
[FACEBOOK](https://www.facebook.com/colinbrownlee)

### Rob Ford

I wonder if, maybe, Rob Ford thinks being “homophobic” has something

“In his tiny, warped brain, it is quite likely his ignorance regarding LGBT-anything is fear-based.” RE: ROB FORD



to do with being afraid, rather than hating [“Rob Ford Not a Homophobe, Brother Says,” *Xtra* #776, July 24]. We may be giving him too much credit to assume he can grasp complex issues at any level. In his tiny, warped brain, it is quite likely his ignorance regarding LGBT-anything is fear-based.

TALULLAH  
[DAILYXTRA.COM](http://DAILYXTRA.COM)

### Hep C treatments

The problem in Canada is not awareness: it is money and greed and a government that will not demand treatment at a reasonable cost [“New Hep C Treatments Promise High Cure Rates, Few Side Effects,” [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com), July 21]. I was told treatment could cost me \$40,000.

VAN MARC  
[DAILYXTRA.COM](http://DAILYXTRA.COM)

### Jon Letke

I didn't know Jon, but this is such a tragedy [“Mr Leather Jon Letke Dies in Apparent Suicide,” [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com), July 26]. It is sad that someone so young felt he had no other option.

BROCK STACKHOUSE  
[FACEBOOK](https://www.facebook.com/brockstackhouse)

I saw him jump. I never knew him personally but saw him often out with his dog. It was very traumatizing. I don't understand why he did it. From reading this article, it seems as though he was really popular and well liked in the community, had a lot of friends and a partner. So sad. It was awful to see.

CHRISTOPHER PARR  
OTTAWA, ON

### 'A-Gays'

This column [“The Life of an A-Gay,” [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com), July 29] is very interesting, even the part where Ryan Hinds says, “The best things in life are free, and having stuff, being pretty or getting ‘likes’ doesn't make you a better gay. And if you truly think it does? You've got bigger things than letters of the alphabet to be worried about.” Guys like that are the reason the divide in the gay community is so great. I'd love to ask you more questions about that group of arrogant gays.

GREY JAMES  
[FACEBOOK](https://www.facebook.com/greyjames)

### Scott Jones

If someone attacked me, I would never forgive them [“Gay Nova Scotia Stabbing Victim Reflects on Last Nine Months,” [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com), Aug 1]. This is especially if they stabbed me twice and left me with a slashed throat, paralysis, spinal cord injuries and the prospect of never being able to walk normally again.

STEVE P  
[DAILYXTRA.COM](http://DAILYXTRA.COM)

### Sex-reassignment surgeries

Somebody needs to be accountable for the reality that trans people can't properly access the care they need, anywhere in the country [“Sex-Reassignment Surgeries Funded in All But Two Provinces,” [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com), July 24]. We need a complete overhaul of this gate-keeping system that puts all the power in the hands of CAMH, which has a history of systematically abusing trans patients going back decades.

CHRIS  
[DAILYXTRA.COM](http://DAILYXTRA.COM)

It is also important to note that due to cutbacks, the surgery is no longer covered by the Canadian Forces, and members of the Canadian military cannot access provincial healthcare.

TERESA  
[DAILYXTRA.COM](http://DAILYXTRA.COM)

**The outcome that we seek is this — gay and lesbian people daring together to set love free.**

*Xtra is published by Pink Triangle Press, at 2 Carlton St, Ste 1600, Toronto, M5B 1J3.*

# XCETERA

FROM THE ARCHIVES 32 YEARS AGO

## THE BODY POLITIC #86, SEPTEMBER 1982

Gay and lesbian people gather from all over the continent, and they are Doing It! The international conference of art, academics, parties, politics and sex takes over Toronto for an exhausting few days, with a final, glorious collapse on Hanlan's Point Beach. See pages 16-19 for our cover feature on Hanlan's Point.



## Sushi

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### Butt massage

Recently given to *Big Brother* contestant Cody Calafiore by Frankie Grande.

### Frankie Grande

Pop star Ariana Grande's older brother, who is openly gay.

### 'Problem'

Arguably the song of the summer, by Ariana Grande, featuring Iggy Azalea.

### Amethyst Amelia Kelly

Iggy Azalea's real name.

## 1990

Year Azalea was born.

### 'Fake lesbian'

Azalea claimed she is not this and is in fact 100-percent straight, in an interview with pridesource.com.



### Michigan

State in which pridesource.com is based.



### Laura's Little Burger Joint

Home of the Chapman, the best burger in Michigan, according to mlive.com.

### Poop burger

A Japanese researcher has reportedly developed a burger made of soya, steak sauce essence and protein extracted from human feces.

### Biomass energy

A biological material derived from living or recently living organisms, such as poop.

OUT ON THE STREET BY KYLE BURTON

## What's your favourite thing to do at Hanlan's Point?



**Rob**  
FINANCIAL PLANNER

The naked men, ha ha. I actually go during the week when it's quiet, and I find a cozy place at the end of the beach to relax.



**Renée**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

It's a lot of fun. I just bring my dog, go with friends and enjoy the day. But I don't swim nude there. I don't swim in Lake Ontario period.



**Nicholas**  
FINANCE DIRECTOR

Sun and swim with friends. I boat out there about once a week and anchor near shore.



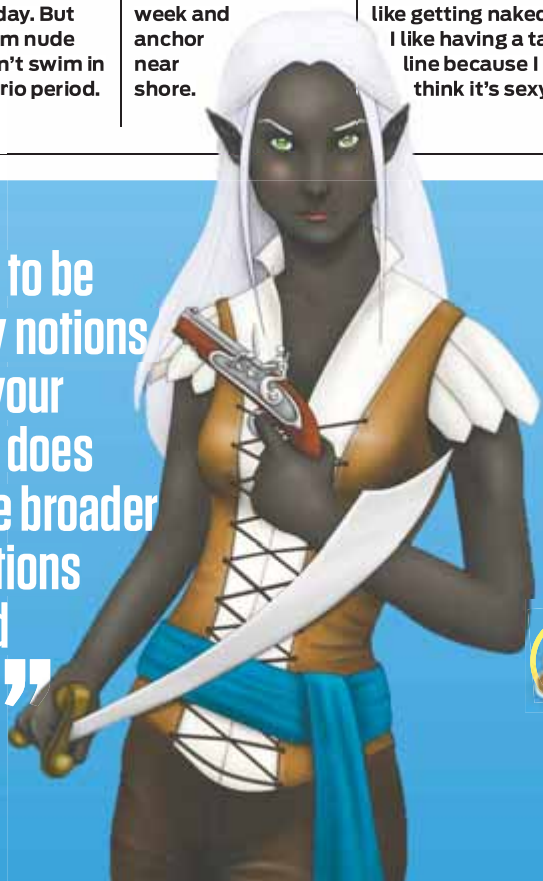
**Ronaldo**  
HOUSEKEEPER

There's a lot of sun. I'm Brazilian and I love it. But I don't like getting naked: I like having a tan line because I think it's sexy.

### QUOTABLE

“You don't need to be confined to binary notions. Think about how your character does or does not conform to the broader culture's expectations of sex, gender and sexual behaviour.”

— from the 2014 *Dungeons & Dragons* handbook



TAMALA'S GHOST

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## Bienvenue!

The 16th annual Friends for Life Bike Rally arrives at the Port of Montreal Friday, Aug 1, following a six-day, 600-kilometre journey from Toronto that attracted more than 300 participants. In front are this year’s co-chairs, Kevin Wolfley and Allan Hooley.

BRIAN LAWRENCE

# New hep C treatments promise high cure rates

## HEALTH DAVE YIN

By the time Cheryl Reitz got the letter in the mail, it was already too late.

It was 1992 and she had just donated blood for the second time. Canada had just begun ramping up efforts to screen blood donations for hepatitis C, back then a rarely discussed disease.

“It was when people got sick that they decided to go back and check,” says Reitz, whose results came back positive. For all she knew, between her first donation in 1990 and 1992, she may have infected others with the blood-borne viral liver disease that today kills nearly three times as many Ontarians annually as HIV. Among those most susceptible to the infection are injection drug users, prisoners and HIV-positive men who have sex with men.

Reitz still regrets the possibility she may have unknowingly infected others. But she was fortunate. When years

later she developed cirrhosis — advanced scarring of the liver — and existing treatments left her debilitated, she was chosen for a clinical trial. It worked.

Reitz’s treatment was novel for the time. Today, more drugs are emerging that are revolutionizing the hep C prognosis. Among the new entrants are sofosbuvir (brand name Sovaldi) and simeprevir (Olysio). Approved late last year, they already tout cure rates of more than 90 percent while reducing side effects and treatment times. And more options are on the way.

“It’s a stunning change,” says Dr Morris Sherman, a Canadian Liver Foundation chairman and liver specialist at Toronto General Hospital.

Sherman explains that there are at least two anticipated oral treatments as well that could finally retire the old, lengthy interferon and ribavirin regimens, which involved injections and stacks of pills and cured only half of those who could tolerate their side effects.

Data on hep C and the gay community is scarce in Canada, but foreign studies point to HIV-positive gay men as a group at higher risk of contracting the illness. While it’s thought to be transmitted only through blood, not semen, an American study published in 2011 that tracked more than 5,000 men who have sex with men over 30 years identified “unprotected receptive anal intercourse” as the main sexual behaviour associated with hep C. The study suggests that infections are on the rise among gay men and names other risk factors, including the use of intravenous drugs, older age, prior syphilis infections and HIV infection.

Because of the side effects of the older treatments, those infected with both hep C and HIV sometimes had to choose which disease to treat first, says Rui Pires, of the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT).

“People used to have to put a lot of things on hold in their lives to undergo hepatitis C treatment,” he says. With

few to no side effects, the new regimens would be “a wonderful improvement.”

Yet even as the new treatments are applauded by some, healthcare and advocacy groups warn of hurdles such as cost, a lack of awareness and stigma that may derail access for many Canadians. At \$1,000 per pill in the US, or \$84,000 for a standard 12-week course, Sovaldi has already inspired protests.

In June, Quebec became the first and only province to approve Sovaldi for coverage. Elsewhere in Canada, only private insurers offer varying levels of coverage for the new drugs, while provinces continue to negotiate with drug manufacturers. Even when taking into account the potential cost-sharing benefits of universal healthcare coverage and provincial bulk-purchase discounts, the price tag is “exorbitant,” Sherman says.

Cost aside, connecting the new treatments with those infected is also a challenge since many don’t realize they have the illness. According to

last year’s Canadian Health Measures Survey, 70 percent of people canvassed were unaware that they have hep C. Despite this, the Public Health Agency has yet to recommend screening for gay men, or for baby boomers, who experts believe make up the largest age group among the more than 300,000 Canadians infected.

Meanwhile, despite reporting four times as many cases as HIV in Canada, hep C receives less than a sixth of the federal funding for research and community outreach. According to Pires, there is also no anonymous testing for anything other than HIV.

“Awareness of hepatitis C in relation to groups like gay men and MSM especially is needed, and we need to encourage greater testing among gay men, especially HIV-positive gay men,” says Ed Jackson, a program development director at CATIE, an online Canadian HIV and hep C resource. “It’s one of those things that should just happen.” X



Video stills of LGBT activists being swarmed by Ford supporters. To watch the full video, go to [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com).

# Activists and supporters clash at Ford Fest

## Toronto mayor later apologizes, sort of, for supporters' actions

**NEWS**  
**HG WATSON**

The jeers and taunts of the crowd didn't stop a small group of LGBT activists from attending Mayor Rob Ford's Ford Fest barbecue on July 25

at Thomson Memorial Park.

Poe Liberado, one of the activists, told *Xtra* that the group came to challenge Ford's alleged homophobia, noting that in the weeks before the barbecue he didn't stand to honour city staff's work on WorldPride and

was the sole vote against a report recommending that the City of Toronto investigate more supports for homeless LGBT youth.

"His buffoonery is dangerous," Liberado said.


Though initially Ford Fest attendees took a mild interest in the group, members of which brought a megaphone and took turns kissing their partners, the scene grew more aggressive as television crews and reporters started inter-

viewing the activists. A group of about 30 people lobbed insults at the group, with many yelling for the activists to "go home." More than one person called them faggots.

The situation escalated when one Ford supporter ripped a sign from a protester's hands, tearing it apart as the crowd cheered him on. One protester was allegedly assaulted by a man who allegedly put his hand around the protester's neck. Doug Ford later spoke to

the protester during an interview with CBC news and told him everyone is welcome at the event.

Rob Ford apologized the next day while he attended the Taste of Toronto Festival. "I didn't personally see it. I was in the tent, but it's terrible that things like that happen. I apologize, and we have to move on," he told CP24.

 Watch *Xtra's* video from Ford Fest on [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com).

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## Apology demanded from Bunji Garlin for homophobic lyrics

A musician scheduled to perform at the Scotiabank Caribbean Carnival, popularly known as Caribana, was the subject of protest in the days leading up to the festival.

Adam Williams, a ceramic artist who moved to Toronto from Trinidad in 2011, raised concerns about lyrics in Trinidadian ragga-soca star Bunji Garlin's 2005 song "Blaze de Fire."

Garlin's scheduled performance at Caribana was cancelled because of inclement weather, according to festival staff, but he did play at other venues over the Civic Holiday weekend.

In "Blaze de Fire," Garlin — whose real name is Ian Anthony Alvarez — sings that he's the fire man and asks listeners to get the fires out of control. He then lists a variety of people to "bun," including drug users and thieves, and finishes with the line "Bun some of dem big funny man who taking dem man over gyal."

"I think that's a very dangerous and slippery slope," Williams says. Though he acknowledges that Garlin likely didn't mean for the song to be taken literally, he



Adam Williams, above, raised concerns over ragga soca star Bunji Garlin's lyrics.

questions its message equating gay men with criminals. "We want an apology from him because I think homophobia is on everyone's hands."

Williams sent his concerns to city council and the festival's organizers. The Caribbean Carnival receives city grants, and organizers must sign and adhere to a statement of non-discrimination. Because of Williams's complaint, the festival now plans to put in place its own guiding principles reflecting anti-discrimination.

Organizers also reportedly asked Garlin to issue a statement on "Blaze de Fire." Earlier, Garlin sent a signed statement that reportedly spoke in generalities

about his respect for all people to Councillor Joe Mihevc's office. At press time, the city's Equity, Diversity and Human Rights division was still reviewing it.

Representatives from Garlin's management company declined to comment or confirm whether Garlin would issue a second statement.

Williams is satisfied with the steps Caribana organizers have taken since his complaint was raised. He is still seeking an apology and hopes the Trinidadian public will weigh in on the situation. —HG Watson

 Read a longer version of this story on [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com).

## Fly Nightclub relaunches as Fly 2.0

One of the founders of Fly Nightclub reopened the recently closed club on Aug 2, in the same venue, under the name Fly 2.0.

Clubbers can expect the same beats and parties that made Fly a core institution of the Village scene for the past 15 years, owner Shawn Riker says. Many staff members have returned to the new club, which will operate only on Saturdays at first.

Riker stresses that closing Fly after WorldPride wasn't a stunt: the club's previous owners had come to the end of their lease, and the landlord was demanding too much rent for it to be viable. The previous owners walked away. But after lengthy negotiations with the landlord, Riker says, he got the rent down to a manageable level. He's now the sole owner of the club.

"It would be such a shame if a city with a population of six million people did not have an LGBT nightclub where people could experience a supportive community, amazing venue and awesome vibe," Riker says in letter to past Fly supporters.

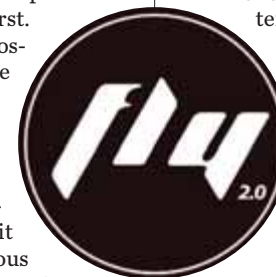
Riker says he didn't consider relocating the club because there simply aren't any appropriate venues left in the city.

"There are no other locations. This place has 23-foot ceilings," Riker says. "We're going to do some renovations and clean up what should have been maintained over the last little while."

Riker says he has signed a long-term lease for the Gloucester Street space but notes the lease gives the owner the option to convert to condos in the future. However, Riker says that any conversion plan is far enough in the future that it makes sense to continue operating the club.

"If you're going to build a condominium, you're going to have to put up a sales centre for a year and a half. By the time everything sells, you get your financing, it's a long time. They may never build a condominium," he says.

While there are no immediate plans to reopen the restaurant and martini bar that fronted Fly, Riker says, a new restaurant will reopen in the space eventually. —Rob Salerno



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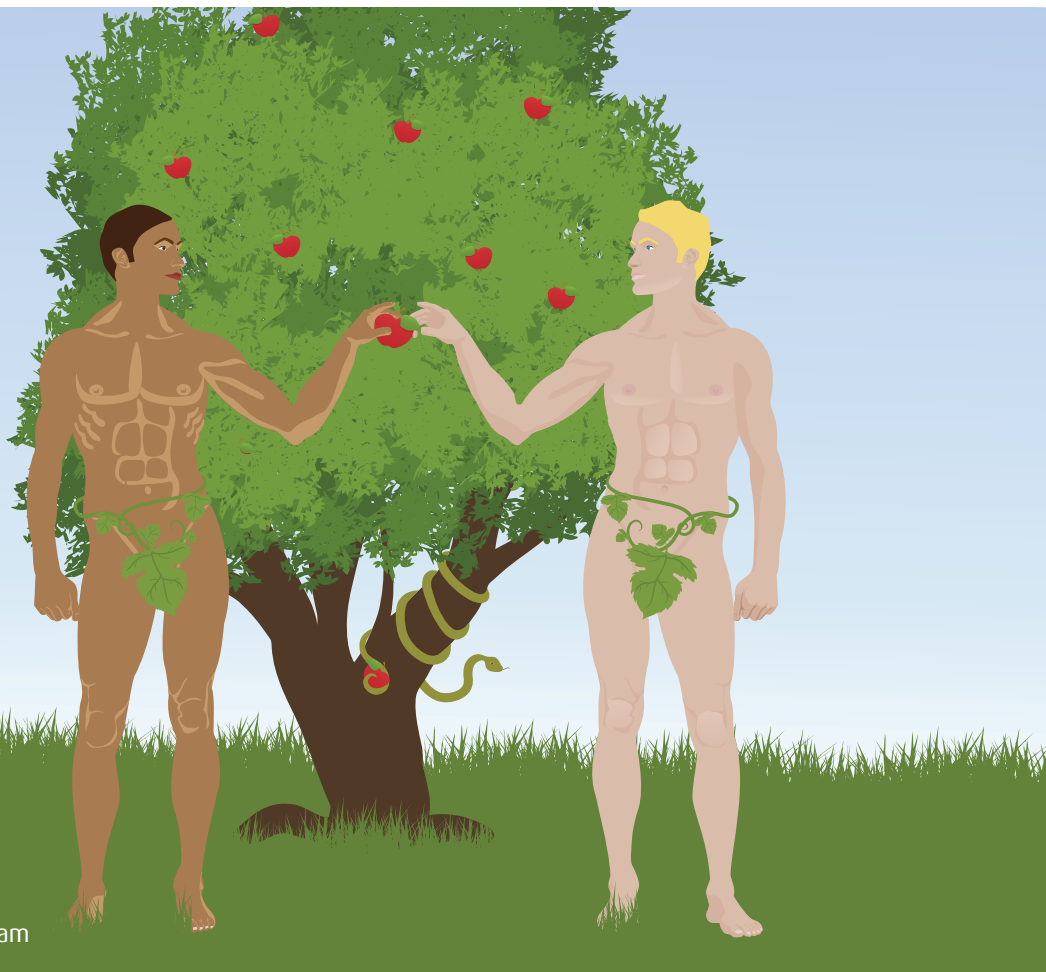
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Club120 co-owners Mandy Goodhandy and Todd Klinck have launched dinner service at their new street-level 120 Diner.  
LILA ALEX INGLIS

# Club120 evades demolition and instead expands

## Street-level 120 Diner is now open for business

### COMMUNITY HG WATSON

When Mandy Goodhandy and Todd Klinck, the co-owners of Club120 at Church and Richmond streets, were handed a demolition notice for the 100-year-old building that houses their club, they didn't view it as a defeat – they saw it as a call to action.

Now, the pair has opened 120 Diner – a queer-friendly restaurant in the same building as Club120.

In a twist that could be ascribed to the luck of the Irish, the building was saved because it sits next to McVeigh's, the oldest Irish bar in Canada. According to Jimmy McVeigh, Jr, one of the owners of the pub, they have no plans to sell to developers.

That gave Klinck and Goodhandy an opening to come up with a plan for the street-level space that once held Spring Rolls. The restaurant moved out after its parent company sold the building to the current owners.

"It was sort of an organic thing that happened," Klinck says. "Mandy has always wanted to have the whole building." The downstairs, which was renovated completely when Spring Rolls

moved in, was ready to house another restaurant with minimal alterations.

Klinck and Goodhandy's proposal was accepted, allowing the pair to turn 120 Diner into reality.

As first-time restaurateurs, Goodhandy and Klinck are learning how to deal with the longer hours and higher costs that come with running an eatery. But they have the help of their new executive chef, Richard Henry, the former chef of Toucan Taco Bar, Le Rossignol and Le Canard Mort. "The quality of the food and the experience that he brings to it is incredible," Klinck says.

The menu will focus on homestyle cooking, with a potpie of the day special as well as other favourites, such as steak and ribs. While the chef is clearly not afraid of fat, there will be healthy options as well, including a bodybuilder's plate tailored to people looking to add muscle to their frames.

Klinck says the restaurant will begin with dinner service and late-night dining in August, then expand into lunch and brunch service in the fall.

Club120, which has also been known as Goodhandy's and Club Rokit throughout the years, has a history of throwing wild events, including the

regular Sodom parties. But the audience for the club has expanded since it opened eight years ago.

"We are queer-owned and -operated and we have a lot of queer events, but we've evolved and adapted over the years," Klinck says, chuckling as he recalls straight male comedians who have come to the bar's comedy night prepared with jokes for a gay audience only to find themselves faced with an almost entirely straight crowd.

Klinck hopes the new diner will attract people who normally wouldn't go to Club120, especially the families and couples living in the nearby condo towers.

The same towers provide a constant reminder that one day they may have to close or move. "It's very frustrating," says Klinck, who notes a clause in their 10-year lease allows for the building to be demolished early. However, Klinck says they would not have invested in 120 Diner if they did not believe they would be there for a significant amount of time.

120 Diner is located at 120 Church St, at Richmond. For more information, visit [120diner.com](http://120diner.com).



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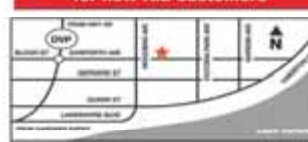


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# Queen Christina, the little prince

## How a kickass butch woman shook up Swedish royalty



HISTORY BOYS  
MICHAEL  
LYONS

Even those who haven't read *Le Morte d'Arthur* or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* probably have some idea of the doings of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. There are few women in these stories, and their roles often leave one wanting a strong, armoured, kickass female, in the vein of Xena or Brienne of Tarth. The only character of that sort who stands out from my childhood reading is Elizabeth, from Robert Munsch's *The Paper Bag Princess*, who calls her prince a "bum" and dances off into the sunset on her own. You go, girl.

I'd like to propose a complex hero that young people seeking out strong female characters can look up to: Christina, 16th-century Sweden's own little prince (see our story on page 15 about a Stratford play based on her life). Christina's early life, queer in all senses of the word, has the makings of a fantastical children's story. She was born in Stockholm in early December of 1626 to a warrior-king, Gustav Adolf, and a beautiful but emotionally fragile German princess turned Swedish queen, Maria Eleonora. Preceded by stillborns, an illegitimate brother and a dead sister, whose name she would inherit, Christina was born under stars aligned identically to when her father was born: Leo ascendant, an important sign to astrologically minded people.

A boy had been predicted, one inclined to greatness, so when the healthy newborn gave an "extraor-



**Christina spurned all things feminine; she was said to walk and sit like a man and eat and swear like a soldier.**

JORI BOLTON

dinary, imperious roar," a boy was pronounced to two relieved parents. Why the mistake was made remains a mystery, though it could be because of ambiguous genitalia, hinting that Christina may have been intersex. When they realized their mistake, the midwives dithered — no one wanted to relay the news to the king. The child's aunt revealed the mistake to Gustav Adolf by laying the naked baby on his bed the next morning. One story, perpetuated by Christina, has it that the king was not at all disappointed and declared that "this girl will be worth as much to me as a boy" and that "she will be clever, for she has deceived us all." In actuality, the birth of a girl threw the future of his dynasty into question. Maria Eleonora, taxed by the birth, was not told for months.

Gustav Adolf died fighting for the Protestant-Lutheran alliances against the Catholic Spanish Habsburg forces when Christina was only six, but he left instructions for his daughter to be separated from her unstable mother and to get the "education of a prince." She proved herself a clever student and developed an inquisitive, if proud and impulsive, mind, perhaps not necessarily the best for ruling. She assumed the throne late in 1644, described at the time as less than five feet tall, beautiful-eyed and uneven of shoulder from an injury in infancy. She spurned all things feminine and was said to walk and sit like a man and eat and swear like a soldier; she often wore a sword on her side, highly unusual for a woman.

Christina once said that she "could not bear to be used by a man the way a peasant uses his fields," which doesn't leave much to interpretation about her sexual proclivities, and there were rumours about her lesbianism. The queen had many infatuations throughout her life, both men and women, though one of the more significant in these early

years was one of her ladies-in-waiting, Ebba Sparre, whom Christina called Belle. She was the opposite of Christina — feminine, unadventurous, no interest in culture, shy — whereas Christina loved to shock people. One story goes that a French nobleman, a favourite of Christina's, excused himself from an appointment complaining of illness. Christina and Belle found him in his room with some smutty literature, which Christina recognized and seized on, getting Belle to read a passage aloud, to the lady's embarrassment and Christina's delight.

Christina's later years were equally colourful. Maybe this queen is a bit too bawdy to be the subject of a story like *The Paper Bag Princess*, but a kickass woman who confounded gender conventions from birth is the kind of story I want to read to my kids.

*History Boys* appears in every issue of Xtra.



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#### SOY SUMMER GROUP CLOSURES

**Alphabet Soup** (for youth under 20) starts again on Tuesday, September 2.

**Black Queer Youth** starts again on Wednesday, September 3.

**SOY H.E.A.T.** (Human Rights, Equity, Access Team), will start again in the fall.

To sign up for the next session contact John at [jcaffery@sherbourne.on.ca](mailto:jcaffery@sherbourne.on.ca) or (416) 324-4100 x 5339.

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# Out in the City

“There are not a lot of women 50 and up that are really impacting people.” **Tori Amos** ▶21



Jenny Young plays the title character in *Christina, The Girl King*. DON DIXON

## KILLER Queen

Whether it's Shakespearean nobility or a certain type of gay man, Stratford sees its share of queens. This season, however, Ontario's theatre capital plays host to the English-language premiere of a play based on the life of one of history's more unusual monarchs.

Michel Marc Bouchard, the mind behind *Lilies* and *Tom at the Farm* — both plays that have been adapted into feature films — is the author of *Christina, The Girl King*, the story of a 17th-century Swedish queen.

Queen Christina was infamous for her mercurial political career, as well as her unconventional gender expression and sexuality. The production's director, Alberta-based theatre veteran Vanessa Porteous, is excited to tackle such a singular historic figure.

“She's so full of contradictions; she's such a heroine, but she's so flawed,” Porteous says. “She's impulsive, she's passionate, she doesn't understand her own feelings, she's intelligent, she

wants the best for her people. She's doing everything she can to reconcile her inner needs and her public duty. I guess that really drew me to the play the first time I read it — the character.”

Bouchard's play condenses approximately eight years of history into one evening of theatre, focusing on a period when Christina was contemplating abdication. “She was the Lutheran queen of Sweden in 1649, and that's when she began to ask herself whether she really belonged and whether she was the best thing for the country — and the country

was the best thing for her,” Porteous says.

She notes that the meticulously researched play doesn't shy away from Christina's undoubtedly queer sexuality.

“The play is such a wonderful thing, and in my knowledge a really unusual thing, because it's kind of like an epic coming-out story,” she says. “I think Michel Marc is making an ideological or political point there. He's showing that the drama of coming out is worthy of an epic retelling.” — *Michael Lyons*

### CHRISTINA, THE GIRL KING

Thurs, Aug 14–Sun, Sept 21  
Studio Theatre  
34 George St E, Stratford  
stratfordfestival.ca

## DESTRUCTIVE ROMANCE

We all know that person, the one so obsessed with his own appearance or success he's completely blind to the experiences or needs of anyone around him. But narcissism isn't just excessive self-involvement; it's an actual clinical disorder. First formulated by the American Psychiatric Association in 1968, narcissistic personality disorder is thought to affect one percent of the population.

In filmmaker Eric Casaccio's case, it wasn't a psych textbook that introduced him to NPD, but a disastrously failed relationship.

“I met someone during a vulnerable time who came on strong and told me everything I wanted to hear,” he says. “I was a bit skeptical at first but ignored all the red flags. When it ended, I couldn't understand the pain over something that had lasted only a few months until a friend said it sounded like I'd been abused by someone with NPD.”

Casaccio's *Narcissist* provides a surprisingly dreamy, sensual take on abusive relationships. Budding screenwriter Evan (Hunter Lee Hughes) is un-



Hunter Lee Hughes and Brionne Davis, in *Narcissist*.

ceremoniously dumped via video chat by his middle-aged lover Rob (Brionne Davis) and Rob's new fuckbud Jon (Jonathan Looper). But when things between Rob and Jon quickly sour, Rob tries to lure Evan back into the relationship by making him feel worthless.

Casaccio initially wrote the script solely as a personal therapeutic exercise while recovering from his destructive romance. But a conversation with a fellow filmmaker helped him see its on-screen potential. One year and \$6,000 worth of online fundraising later, he stepped on set to start shooting.

“My goal is to inspire others that

have suffered post-traumatic stress from having a relationship involving narcissistic abuse,” he says. “During my healing process, I learned why this kind of situation hurts so much. Any victim of narcissistic abuse could spend the rest of their life going over why they were abused. But it's more important they recognize why they allowed it to happen.” — *Chris Dupuis*

*Narcissist* screens as part of the Toronto Queer Arts Festival's film fest, Sat, Aug 9, 6–10pm, at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St. [artsfestival.queerwest.org](http://artsfestival.queerwest.org)

## Beach bums

When Andrzej Kardys and Jared Scratch, co-founders of Yogi Bare, “Toronto's barest yoga studio,” headed out to Hanlan's Point to test run a potential clothing-optional yoga class, they were prepared for just about everything, except the amount of sand their asses would gather.

“We came early, just the two of us, and brought way too much stuff: cooler, extra water, six yoga mats,” Kardys says. “We also had an 8-foot-by-10-foot backdrop with our logo all over it — you know, the type of thing people do selfies in front of at media launches — and strung it up in the trees.”

“We took a big tree trunk and flattened the sand out a bit,” Scratch says. “We hadn't advertised the class, so we didn't really expect anyone to come. We just wanted to go and work out the logistics of holding a class there.”

Once they were set up, with bunches of folks chuckling at them from nearby blankets, Scratch started doing yoga moves to see what it would be like on the beach. “After you put your hands on the ground and reach over your head, all the sand falls off your hands into your eyes,” he says.

“We also quickly realized that if you do certain moves, your ass gets filled with sand,” Kardys says. “So we decided that in the future we'd use a great big blanket as well as yoga mats.”

Having ensured the purity of their future attendees' ass-cracks and worked out some of the other kinks involved in running clothing-optional, all-gender yoga classes on the



Yogi Bare co-founder Jared Scratch is a showboat.

beach, they decided to make it a recurring event, called Beach Bums at Hanlan's.

Weather permitting, the class takes place every Sunday. Folks can just show up, sunscreen applied, with their water bottles, towels and yoga mats — look for the backdrop or the Yogi Bare umbrella — or can register in advance online. Those who register receive notifications if the class is cancelled or the day is changed because of bad weather.

With a cheeky wink, Kardys half jokes that participants can stay after class and find a buddy for some sunscreen reapplication and partner poses. — *Jeremy Willard*

See pages 16–19 for our cover feature on Hanlan's Point. Beach Bums at Hanlan's is every Sunday, 11am, at Hanlan's Point, Toronto Islands. [yogibare.ca](http://yogibare.ca)







## COVER STORY

The queer events that shaped Toronto's clothing-optional beach

# GETTING TO the Point

JP LAROCQUE

PHOTOS BY JAMO BEST

**O**n a sunny Sunday in mid-July, it's hard to believe that Hanlan's Point was ever anything other than the sandy oasis many Torontonians have grown to love. Perched atop the dunes at the south end of the beach and looking north toward the city, I watch as nude sunbathers wade in and out of the water and groups of friends gather on blankets to gossip, chat and sneak swigs from hidden bottles of alcohol.


Behind me, the leaves rustle as strangers sneak past on the sandy trails, eyeing each other tentatively before pairing off and disappearing deeper into the brush. The air buzzes with possibility. In a city famous for prudishness and good behaviour, the beach feels like a place where anything can happen, and it often does.

## BIRTH OF THE ISLANDS

Like much of Toronto, the Point has always been in a state of flux. Before a severe storm cleaved it from the city in 1852, the islands were actually a sand spit that extended out from the mainland just west of present-day Ward's Island. The earliest records available suggest that the local native populations used it as a place of recreation

and farming before the Crown purchased the land and established a military outpost there under Lieutenant-Governor John Simcoe. Invading American troops destroyed the fort in the War of 1812, and the area soon gave way to private residences established by local citizens looking to escape the crowded mainland.

Still, it was hotelier John Hanlan who made the most significant impact on the area. After another major storm destroyed his family's cottage on the Point, Hanlan opened a hotel in the mid-1860s to take advantage of the area's growing popularity as a vacation spot. Ownership of the islands also transferred to the city around this time, and so improvements were made to the area surrounding the hotel to make it more attractive to visitors, with the addition of parks, a boardwalk system and gardens.

Hanlan's son Ned, a world-famous sculler, brought additional attention and revenue to the resort, and soon more hotels and various attractions began to populate the area, including a shooting gallery, carousel, dance hall and an open-air theatre that brought in vaudeville acts. An official amusement park featuring a number of popular roller coasters opened in 1895, followed by a stadium built for the local minor league baseball team, the Toronto Maple Leafs. 

Cianan, Kinnon and Chris take a summertime stroll along the shore at Hanlan's Point. For more photos of their beach shenanigans, go to [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com).

## TAKING IT OFF

It was also around this time that local naturist groups lobbied successfully to make Hanlan's Point a clothing-optional beach, an attractive choice for many of the visiting Europeans who were used to bathing in the nude back home. The area gained a bit of a salty reputation as a result of the bylaw, and attendance numbers went up.

With much of the Western world entranced by theme parks and various other industrial advances of the time, Toronto was leading the pack with outdoor entertainment facilities on par with those found on New York City's Coney Island or in Blackpool, England. In fact, many of the same ride promoters and performers travelled between the parks and advertised as such in their materials.

The Point continued to be a popular destination for both locals and tourists until a series of events led to a decline in attendance. One such event was the opening of Sunnyside Park in the early 1920s, followed a few years later by the creation of a mainland baseball stadium. As Torontonians embraced the automobile, trips across the lake became a less attractive proposition. Moreover, motion pictures had replaced vaudeville as the leading and more affordable form of popular entertainment during the Depression era, leaving many of the island's live performances seeming dated in comparison.

Concerned citizens' groups, put off by the public nudity on the beach, were successful in getting the permit repealed in 1930. By the time the city razed a large portion of the theme park to make way for the island airport in 1939, the area had fallen largely into decline.



## A NEW PARK EMERGES

Few paid much attention to Hanlan's Point for most of the first half of the 20th century. The Metro Parks Commission took control of the islands in the mid-1950s, and the area was cleaned up and promoted

The beach attracted many young gay people interested in getting some sun and cruising in the dunes that isolated the beach from the city. In fact, the first-ever Pride event was held there in 1971.



Top left, a flyer for the first Pride event in Toronto — a gay picnic at Hanlan's Point, in 1971. Above, revellers relax on the beach after the conclusion of *Doing It*, a gay conference held in 1982, organized by the Toronto Gay Community Council.

THE CANADIAN LESBIAN & GAY ARCHIVES

as a day-use recreational space, with the installation of park benches and picnic tables. Eventually, a marina was built and the Centreville theme park was created, although it was only a sliver of what the Hanlan's theme park had been at its height.

Hanlan's Point took on a queer identity of sorts during this period. The beach continued to have a reputation as an "unofficial" clothing-optional space despite possible fines, and this attracted many young gay people interested in getting some sun and cruising in the dunes that isolated the beach from the city. In fact, the first-ever Pride event — a gay picnic on the island — was held there in 1971.

In 1999, nudist groups, with the help of then-councillor Kyle Rae, were success-

ful in getting the beach reinstated as a clothing-optional space, and attendance numbers steadily increased. What had been unofficial and under the radar for several decades became more commonplace, and advances in gay rights made the beach attractive to a larger swath of Torontonians.

Behind me, the leaves rustle once again, and a man appears. He smiles for a brief moment, then disappears back into the darkness. I glance back over the beach, at the laughing faces as the sound of tinny pop music floats in over the waves. Although the specifics may have changed, the general atmosphere has remained consistent — a space of amusement and recreation.

I rise and disappear into the brush behind me. X



## OTHER NUDE BEACHES AROUND THE WORLD



**Power Station Beach, Lamma Island, Hong Kong**  
"Reportedly used for nude night swimming at times."



**Neve Midbar, Israel**  
"During good, not too hot weather, especially on Saturdays, many nudists gather at this beach to celebrate life."



**Pihlajasaari, Finland**  
A unisex nude beach "consisting almost entirely of rocky cliffs, with no sand. Not very suitable for swimming."



**Guvano Beach, Liguria, Italy**  
Accessible from the railway station, via a disused railway tunnel.



**Bodrum, Turkey**  
This port city has a "rocky wild shore where mostly gays go to socialize naked."



**Olho de Boi (Bull's Eye Beach), in Búzios, Brazil**  
The most popular official nude beach for gays in the country.



**Le Centre Hélio-Marin, Montalivet, France**  
Voted best nude beach in the world by *Traveler's Digest*.

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

A guide to cruising  
the dunes at Hanlan's

# BEATING AROUND THE *bush*

CHRIS DUPUIS

I have a confession to make: I'm terrible at outdoor cruising. I've had plenty of fun in saunas and darkrooms, at sex clubs and coordinated indoor orgies. But when it comes to getting it on in the great outdoors, my batting average verges on triple-zero. It's not that I haven't tried. I've given the parks a go, checked out nude beaches and passed by a few truck stops. But despite my distinctly high sexual IQ, fucking *en plein air* never seems to work out.

Tasked with drafting a cruising guide for Hanlan's, I realize I'm sadly ill-prepared. It's unlikely I'll figure it out on my own by press time, so I assemble a team of experts for advice.

## COREY

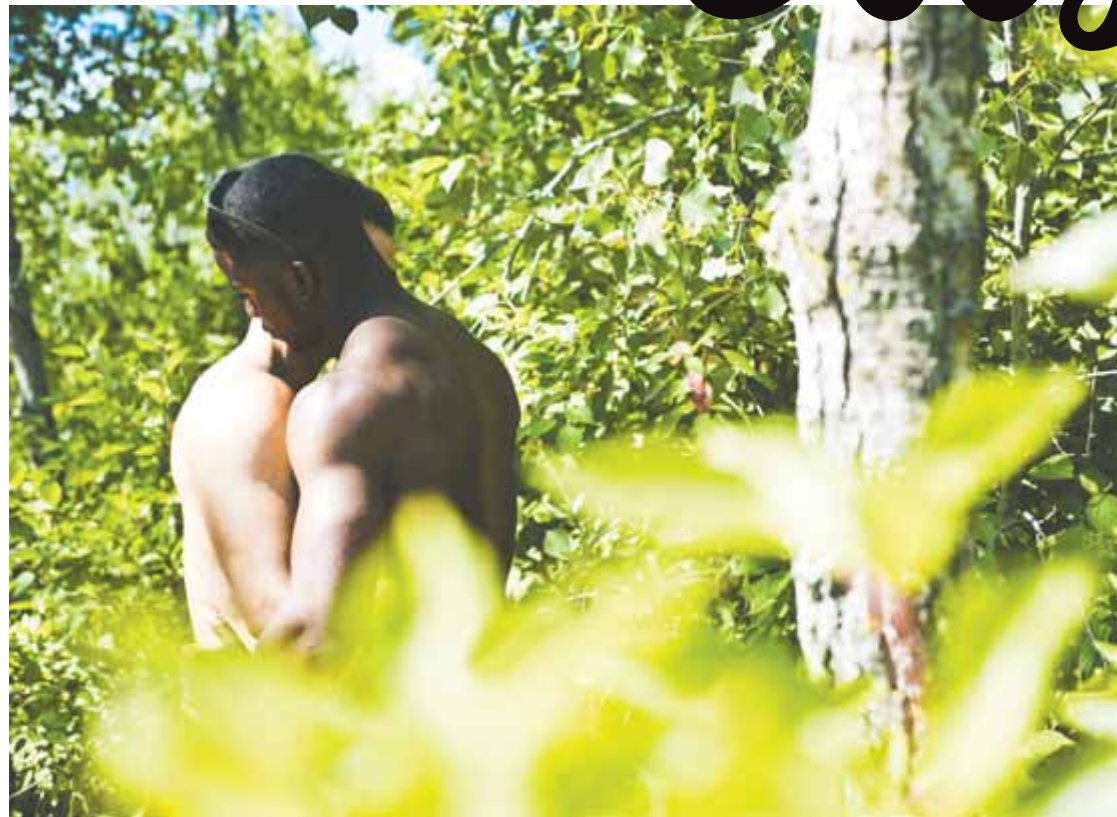
Corey's been a regular for five years. Keeping a nine-to-five schedule, the early-30s office worker is there only on weekends and always with his boyfriend in tow.

"The first few times, I wasn't totally aware what was going on," he says. "I'd just started going to bathhouses and was getting accustomed to the concept and etiquette of cruising in general. I'd heard people had sex in the bushes but didn't have any firsthand experience."

Thanks to his years of practice (and no doubt the boyfriend who's "very experienced" in the public sex department), he's learned the lay of the land. He estimates he hooks up on 80 percent of his visits.

"Be observant and look for guys walking into the bushes," he says. "Don't be afraid to smile and nod at someone if you think he's hot, and check who's checking you out."

On the downside, he admits a frustration with people he refers to unaffectionately as "the tourists."



Look for a two-way connection, don't try to force anything, and wait for a signal before you jump in. JAMO BEST

"They're young, twinkly guys who are just there to gawk at what's happening and laugh," he says. "They're usually drunk and not there to hook up. They tend to just break the mood, and then whatever scene you're in dissolves."

## NATHAN

Nathan's in his mid-20s and has been going for eight years. More of a voyeur than a participant, he makes a love connection less than a quarter of the time but enjoys watching the action as it unfolds.

"I'm kind of a hypocrite because I hate

**“I'm kind of a hypocrite because I hate people watching me, but I love to watch.”**

people watching me, but I love to watch," he says. "Usually I walk around and check out the action to get excited, then take my dick out and see what happens. But I'm a little particular, and if there's nothing happening I'm into, I'm not going to just suck whatever dick comes along."

As for cruising advice, his main tip is simple: go it alone.

"Sometimes you see guys walking around in pairs where it's really obvious one of them is not into it but the other is kind of curious," he says. "Just leave your friend on the beach and look around alone. It's better for everyone that way."

## SLAVOJ

Slavoj has been hitting Hanlan's for nearly 10 years. The burly, 40-something freelancer tends to work evenings and weekends. That's not a problem, though, as weekdays are his prime beach time.

"It's less crowded and you really get to know the regulars," he says. "It's a very friendly, community feel. On the weekends, it's more people coming from an afterparty, looking to show off their new swimsuit."

He's been in the know since his earliest days on the sand; when he moved to Toronto in the 1990s, he researched cruising spots and printed himself a map. Though he also cruises washrooms and parks, he loves the beach for its relaxed attitude.

"There isn't the same pressure of time you have other places," he says. "It's a more social, friendly approach to hooking up."

For him, cruising starts before he's even hit the sand; he recommends checking out people on the ferry. He also suggests stopping by the showers on the way home.

"It can be hit and miss, but sometimes there's really hot action in there," he says.

His hook-up tips are simple: look for a two-way connection, don't try to force anything, and wait for a signal before you jump in. He admits he scores nearly 100 percent of the time he's there. But for him, that's not the main point.

"During the week, there's more of a nudist population," he says. "You can meet anyone. Doctors, lawyers, construction workers, people outside your normal social circle. No one asks what you do or whether you rent or own. The pressures of who we are in our daily lives are literally all stripped away." X

## HOW TO GET THERE

Normal travel time by ferry to and from the Toronto Islands is about 15 minutes in each direction. The ferry service is fully accessible for wheelchairs.

### Directions

The Toronto Ferry Docks is located at the foot of Bay Street at Queens Quay, just west of the Westin Harbour Castle hotel.

**Toronto Island Ferry information**  
416-392-8193  
toronto.ca  
(Search for "Toronto Islands")

## WHAT TO BRING

**Swimsuit:** Optional!  
 **Towel or blanket:** The more colourful the better, so it doesn't get lost in the crowd.

**Sunblock:** Ask your new friend to get those hard-to-reach areas.

**Sunglasses:** The darker the lenses, the better the perching.

**Snacks:** Everyone has a snack attack at some point during the day. (There is also a café just beyond the beach for emergencies.)

**Cups, ice and drinks:** Alcoholic or otherwise.

**Water bottle:** You can refill at the taps of the Mermaid Café.





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**Xtra!** TORONTO'S GAY & LESBIAN NEWS

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IMAGE: RICHARD MILETTE, TEAPOT FOR QUEEN X, 1989

## VIDEO: Mayor Rob Ford refuses to answer homophobia questions



**DAILY Xtra**  
[dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com)

# Power principle

## Tori Amos on being the Helen Mirren of rock and roll

### RYAN ENGLISH MUSIC

Tori Amos is one of the most influential and prolific songwriters of our time. Since her stunning debut, *Little Earthquakes*, in 1992 she has sold more than 12 million albums, staged 16 tours and left an artistic and musical imprint for generations to come.

At 50, she has written and staged her first musical, *The Light Princess*, dropped *Unrepentant Geraldines*, her most impressive record in over a decade, is in the middle of an 80-city world tour, and is producing the cast recording for the musical while on the road.

Xtra spoke with Amos by phone ahead of her upcoming Toronto show.

**XTRA:** Congratulations on the success of your musical and your new record. You didn't let anyone hear the new material before recording; is that a common process for you?

**TORI AMOS:** No, I don't know if it is because I waited so long to play anything to anybody because I'm doing these other projects, so everybody was hearing those things, and I kept these to myself and walked with them through the process. You know, they kept me company through everything.

**Did you plan on releasing the material that's become *Unrepentant Geraldines*?**

Not necessarily. While I'm out there, out and about in the world — and I travel a lot — I guess it's part of processing things, figuring things out, how I feel about things. The muses tap me on the shoulder, and the songs come to visit. They took about five years to come. It is just a secret kind of conversation; it wasn't a conscious decision, and it's just happening, quietly, privately. Because it's what I've been doing since I was a tiny little girl, two and a half or something. These are just my little friends.

**After so much struggle between your albums *Y Kant Tori Read* to *Little Earthquakes*, what did it feel like when you finally started to break through? Was it surreal?**

Yeah, it was surreal. It was. But because of the struggle and those years from *Y Kant Tori Read* and what it took to make *Little Earthquakes*, I mean, that was quite a few years there, '88 to '92, before it really happened. But there was a huge gift in having to climb that big mountain, and that means when success was coming, then I didn't take it for granted because it was very, very difficult to get there. Many battles were fought, and many battles had to be fought after that and are still being fought. Not with the label, necessar-

ily — where I am now at my age. It was a different battle I had to fight over the last year, and that was with myself and realizing that being 50 and older as a woman in this business, we're not getting as many of the contracts as the men are, and that's just true.

**Can you talk more about those challenges over the last year or so?**

So, the battle has been, "Okay, then how do I change that?" Change always has to start with the self. I had to really confront how our culture projects onto men 50 and up. Look at George Clooney! He's at the height of his magical

**“I was very aware that the culture accepts men talking about certain subjects as they get older because there is that salt and pepper, lines on the face, beards, aphrodisiac sexy thing.”**

powers. And if you look at women who are his age, not all of them are the objects of desire in film. So, as much as I love Helen Mirren and all those ladies, you can't think, "Okay, I'm going to be the Helen Mirren of rock and roll." I would love to be, however, I have to say to you.

Storytellers are telling stories at all ages, and I was very aware that the culture accepts men talking about certain subjects as they get older because there is that salt and pepper, lines on the face, beards, aphrodisiac sexy thing. So, we have to be fair about it. Women have to find their own power and then have to take it out there. There are not a lot of

women 50 and up that are really impacting people. You need to really think about it. I'm not talking about the big songs I did in the '90s; I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about writing things now. Getting out there and being powerful, powerful now. X

**TORI AMOS  
UNREPENTANT  
GERALDINES TOUR**  
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Massey Hall  
178 Victoria St  
toriamos.com

Tori Amos sitting pretty in a publicity shot for her new album, *Unrepentant Geraldines*.  
AMARPAUL KALIRAI

# Seduced by SummerWorks

## Two plays at the annual theatre fest hinge on gender and sexuality

**THEATRE**  
**CHRIS DUPUIS**

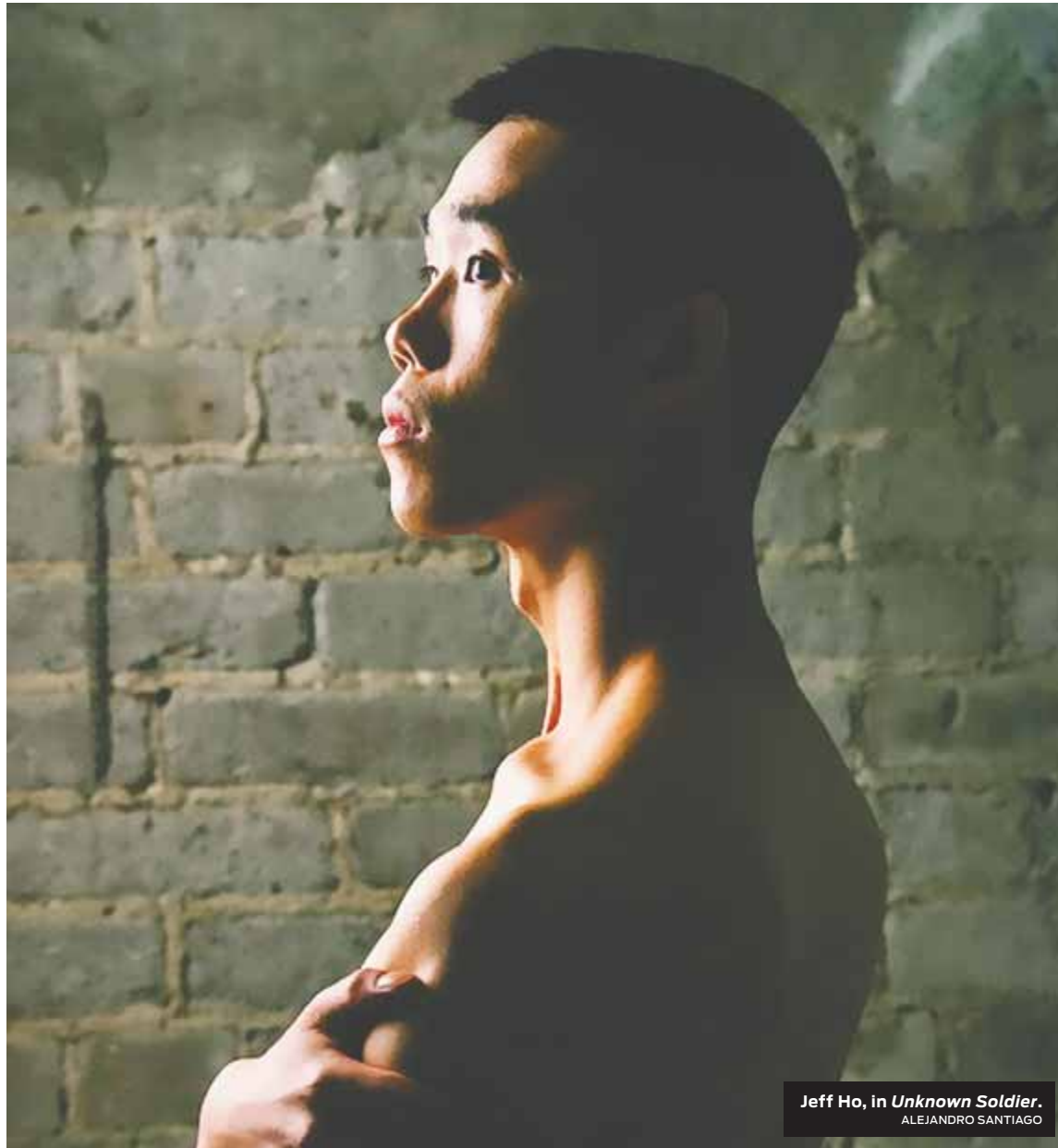
Jonathan Seinen's play *Unknown Soldier* was conceived three years ago on a plane from San Francisco to Victoria. He'd been vacationing off the grid in California, and the in-flight movies were his first taste of electronic entertainment in weeks. One of the films was a documentary on Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning, the soldier who released hundreds of classified documents on American diplomatic and military operations, later published by WikiLeaks.

Alternately called a traitor and a hero, Manning avoided the death penalty but was sentenced to 35 years. The other side of the story, however, that of Manning's post-arrest gender transition, was largely ignored by the media. Set in what fans of *Orange Is the New Black* will know as "the SHU" (a formal term for solitary confinement), the play opens with a soldier waking the morning after being sentenced, needing to formulate a public statement and wanting to come out to the world as female.

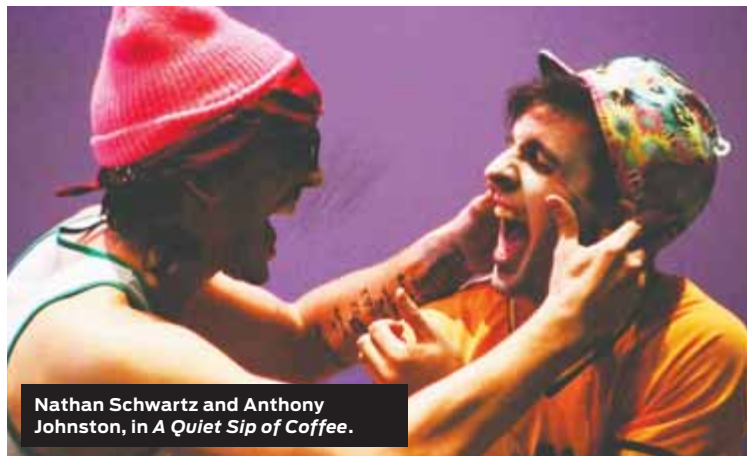
"Manning broke down the illusions that kept the activities of the war behind a veil of national security," Seinen says. "She did the same when faced with her own inner truth. The courage to do this, when the weight of the military and society is pushing down on you, is inspiring."

Though inspired by a documentary, *Unknown Soldier* is a fictionalized take on Manning's experience rather than a direct recounting of her story.

"I can't know all the details of her life, so I needed some theatrical fiction to connect the dots," Seinen says. "But mainly, I wanted to write a play in which Canadian audiences would feel implicated. We went to war in Afghanistan and participated in handing over detainees who faced possible torture.



Jeff Ho, in *Unknown Soldier*.  
ALEJANDRO SANTIAGO



Nathan Schwartz and Anthony Johnston, in *A Quiet Sip of Coffee*.

Our government is moving towards more secrecy for themselves while putting their citizens under surveillance to a greater degree. Too often, we as Canadians look at these kinds of stories and think, 'Oh, those Americans...' But we're facing the same challenges and they need to be addressed."

Anthony Johnston and Nathan Schwartz did some serious research on gay conversion therapy for *A Quiet Sip of Coffee* (or, *This Is Not the Play We've Written*). In 2004, the Brooklyn-based theatre duo sent a prank letter to Hope Springs (a "reparative therapy" organization) proposing the group give them funds to workshop their non-existent

play *Never Cry Wolfman*. Not expecting a response, they were shocked to get a note a few weeks later inviting them to develop their script on the condition they spend two weeks in the group's rural British Columbia conversion camp. To make matters slightly more complex, Johnston is gay, while Schwartz identifies as straight.

"One of the first things you realize is how seductive these groups are with their messaging," Johnston says. "As we started getting deeper into the material, it began to affect me in a way I didn't think was possible. I found myself starting to ask if certain things from my childhood had led me to being gay and whether being depressed sometimes was actually because I'm gay."



The easy route would have been to make a show that smacks down the increasingly discredited therapy and its proponents. But as the pair got further into their research, they were surprised by how it affected their positions.

"You can easily look at someone administering this therapy and say they're doing it because they're a complete bigot with their own internalized homophobia," Schwartz says. "But that's not necessarily the case. You have people who are trained therapists working with people who have feelings they can't explain or don't want to have, and that's not necessarily coming from a place of hate. Sexuality is pretty elastic, and some people go through different phases in their life. If I go through a gay phase in high school and grow up to marry a woman, does that automatically mean I'm denying something in myself? From that perspective, we need to be open to the idea that sexuality actually does change for some people."


"As you look into it more, things start to get very grey," Johnston adds. "Why should helping someone become something they believe they should be inherently wrong? If someone believes they were born in the wrong-gendered body, it's perfectly acceptable to have them go through the kinds of therapy they need to help them become the person they see themselves as being. So if someone naturally has a same-sex attraction, to put it in the terms of this therapy, but deep down believes they are straight, is it inherently wrong to help them?" X

*Unknown Soldier* runs Sat, Aug 9–Sat, Aug 16, at *Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace*, 16 Ryerson Ave. *A Quiet Sip of Coffee* runs Fri, Aug 8–Sun, Aug 17, at *Pia Bouman Scotiabank Studio Theatre*, 6 Noble St. [summerworks.ca](http://summerworks.ca)

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Queer Confessions is a monthly Toronto-based LGBTQ memoir reading series that seeks to foster memoir writing in a supportive environment, and build community through storytelling. We are committed to showcasing diverse voices and experiences, including established, emerging, and beginner writers. Readings take place the first Thursday of every month at the 519 Community Centre in Toronto, and start at 8:00pm.

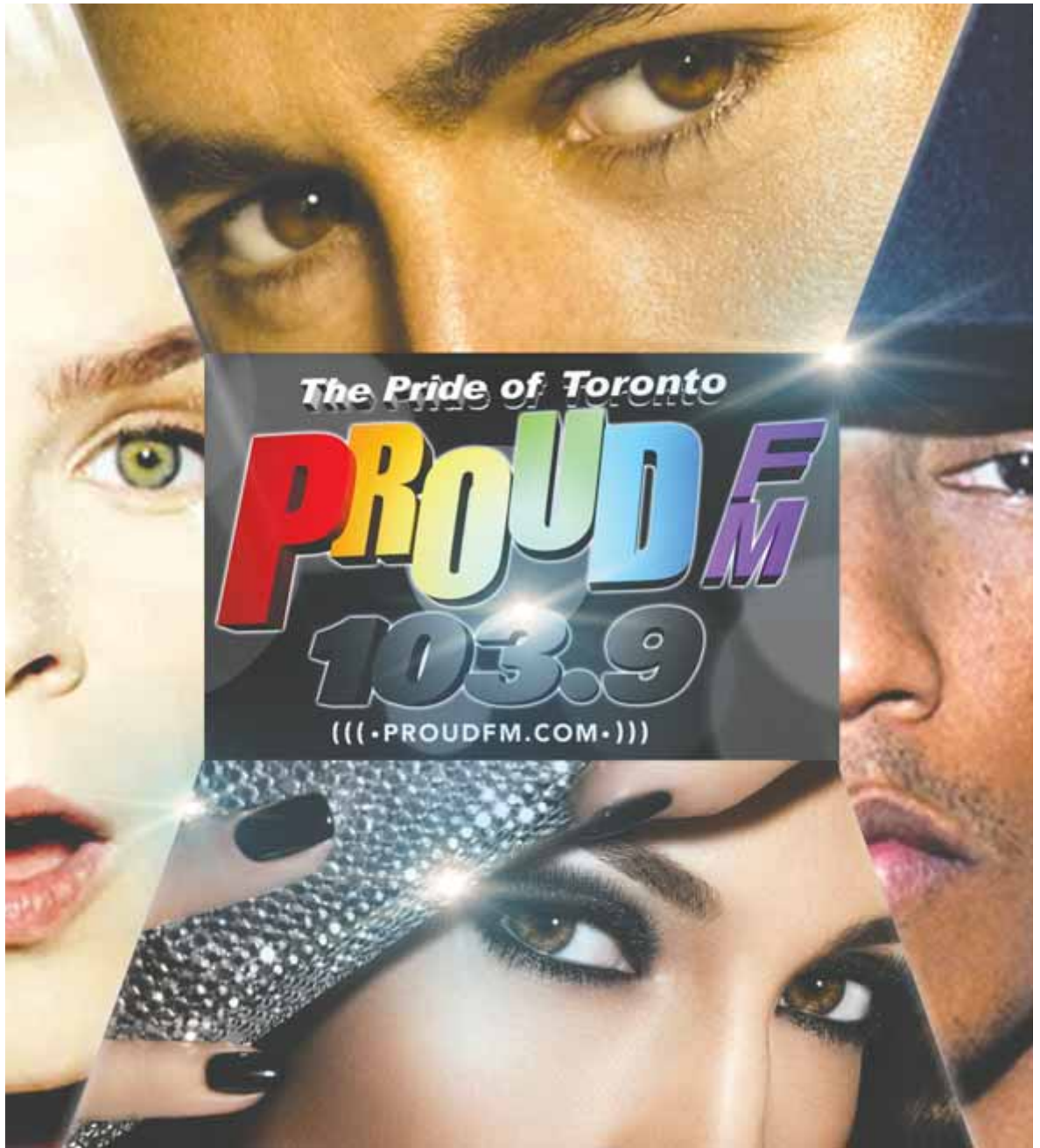
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We all have a story (or two, or three) to tell, so please consider submitting one of yours! No experience necessary! Check website for monthly themes. Please include with your submission: the story (10 min max), your bio (50 words max), and the theme you are submitting for. Send your submissions to: [queerconfessionstoronto@gmail.com](mailto:queerconfessionstoronto@gmail.com)

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# WHAT'S ON

FOR MORE EVENT LISTINGS, GO TO [DAILYXTRA.COM](http://DAILYXTRA.COM)

## ART

### Second Time Around

This group exhibit focuses on work by Maura Doyle, Gretchen Sankey, Carol Wainio and Julie Beugin. Runs until Sat, Aug 9. Paul Petro Contemporary Art, 980 Queen St W. Free. [paulpetro.com](http://paulpetro.com)

### Toronto Queer Arts Festival

From Shakespeare in High Park to the Alterna Queer Music Concert, this annual festival celebrates all things queer and artistic. Runs until Sun, Aug 10. For more info, visit [artsfestival.queerwest.org](http://artsfestival.queerwest.org).

### Camp Fires: The Queer Baroque

An exhibit that reveals the concept of "camp" in the work of three Canadian ceramic artists. Runs until Mon, Sept 1. The Gardiner Museum, 111 Queen's Park. \$6–12. [gardinermuseum.on.ca](http://gardinermuseum.on.ca)

### Imaging Home: Resistance, Migration, Contradiction

The experiences of queer people living in oppressive countries are explored through documentary video and photographs. Runs until Sun, Oct 5. Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, 34 Isabella St. Free. [clga.ca](http://clga.ca)

## COMEDY & CABARET

### Singular Sensation: A Musical-Theatre Open Mic

Jennifer Walls invites amateur crooners to perform their favourite songs accompanied by a live band.

Every Monday, 9:30pm–12:30am. Statlers, 487 Church St. No cover. [statlers.ca](http://statlers.ca)

### Maggie Cassella: Because I Said So

Cassella's brand of topical humour is based on gems she's pulled from the latest headlines. Wed, Aug 13, 7:30pm. The Flying Beaver, 488 Parliament St. PWYC. [pubaret.com](http://pubaret.com)

### Club120 Wednesday

Standup comedian Mandy Goodhandy presents a weekly open-mic comedy night. For more info, contact [toddklinck@gmail.com](mailto:toddklinck@gmail.com). Every Wednesday, 8pm–1am. Club120, 120 Church St. No cover. [club120.ca](http://club120.ca)

### Pridenation

The B-Girlz present their hit Pride Week disco-cabaret, complete with singing, over-the-top dancing and some treacherous high kicks. Sat, Aug 16, 7 and 9pm. The Flying Beaver, 488 Parliament St. \$20 advance, \$25 door. [pubaret.com](http://pubaret.com)

## HEALTH & ISSUES

### The 519 Legal Clinic

A free, accessible service for low-income people. Volunteer lawyers provide legal advice, referrals and help with forms and letters. The confidential and private visits are first-come, first-served. Bring any necessary documents. Every Thursday; registration 6–6:30pm. The 519 Community Centre, 519 Church St. Free. [the519.org](http://the519.org)

### SOY Monday Night Drop-In

Queer youth ages 14 to 29 gather to watch movies, participate in

**The Flying Tortillas at Buskerfest — Yonge Street, Thurs, Aug 21–Sun, Aug 24**

art projects and workshops, and chat with Supporting Our Youth's community mentors. For more info, contact [jcaffery@sherbourne.on.ca](mailto:jcaffery@sherbourne.on.ca). Every Monday, 5:30–8pm. Sherbourne Health Centre, 2nd floor, 333 Sherbourne St. Free. [soytoronto.org](http://soytoronto.org)

### LGBT Peer Support Drop-In Group

Queer people with mood disorders drop in for support and discussion. If the building door is locked, press the button under the intercom near the wheelchair entrance. Wed, Aug 20, 7–9pm. Mood Disorders Association of Ontario, 36 Eglinton Ave W, Ste 602. Free. [mooddisorders.ca](http://mooddisorders.ca)

## LEISURE & PLEASURE

### The Yes-Men: Fundraiser for Queerocalypse Chicago

Before packing their binders and heading to the Windy City, the boys raise some cash with a silent auction and 50/50 draw, plus there's a chance to win a date with one of the guys. Fri, Aug 8, 9pm. Buddies in Bad Times, 12 Alexander St. \$12 advance, \$15 door. [buddiesinbadtimes.com](http://buddiesinbadtimes.com)

### Beach Bums at Hanlan's

You don't have to get naked, but how else will your bum get tanned? Wiry nudists gather for stretches in the sand. (See story on page 15.) Registration recommended. Every Sunday, 11am. Hanlan's Point Beach, Toronto Islands. \$10. [yogibare.ca](http://yogibare.ca)

### Queer Heart Talking Circle

Men who love men gather to converse and build community. To register, contact [phillip@phillipcoupal.ca](mailto:phillip@phillipcoupal.ca). Sun, Aug 10, 1–5:30pm. Awaken Studio, 270 Carlaw Ave, Unit 102. PWYC—\$10. [phillipcoupal.ca](http://phillipcoupal.ca)

### Hot Damn It's a Queer Slam

Wordsmiths participate in two rounds of slam poetry and enjoy a performance by special guest J Mase III, a black, trans, queer poet based in Brooklyn. Wed, Aug 13, 7:30–11pm. Buddies in Bad Times, 12 Alexander St. \$5. [buddiesinbadtimes.com](http://buddiesinbadtimes.com)

### John Waters Trash Bash

Fay Slift, Fluffy Soufflé and Judy Virago perform at a celebration of the Pope of Trash and his creations. Costumes encouraged. Thurs, Aug 14, 8pm. The Gladstone, 1214 Queen St W. \$10. [gladstonehotel.com](http://gladstonehotel.com)

### Jamboree LGBT Summer Camp

Hundreds of queer adults rent a camp in the Haliburton area for a week of lakeside relaxation, swimming, kayaking, hiking and more. Interested campers must join the Out and Out Club and register to attend. Runs Sun, Aug 17–Sun, Aug 24. For more info, visit [outandout.ca](http://outandout.ca).

### Buskerfest

Three days of street performances are put on by such acts as The Famous Rubberband Boy, who contorts his face, or the Flying Tortillas, a group of young acrobats. Runs Thurs, Aug 21–Sun, Aug 24. On Yonge Street, between Queen



**House of Freaks — Buddies, Thurs, Aug 21**

sex. Sat, Aug 30, 10pm. Club120, 120 Church St. \$10. [id-tap-that.com](http://id-tap-that.com)

### Hot Kiss

The inaugural night of this new clothing-optional, sex-positive party includes a sex-toy workshop, spa facilities and music by DJ Millhouse. Open to people of all genders and orientations. Sun, Aug 31, 8pm–3am. Oasis Aqualounge, 231 Mutual St. \$30. [oasisaqualounge.com](http://oasisaqualounge.com)

## THEATRE

### SummerWorks

At this annual festival, fans of the hag-horror film genre can attend David Benjamin Tomlinson's *Gash*, a play about two embattled sisters living on a crumbling estate. Runs until Sun, Aug 17. For more info, visit [summerworks.ca](http://summerworks.ca).

### House of Freaks: A Queer Asian Theatrical Experience

This celebration of Asian culture and theatre includes performances by such luminaries as Aries Cheung, Chase Lo and Alvis Parsley. Thurs, Aug 21, 7:30–10pm. Buddies in Bad Times, 12 Alexander St. PWYC—\$20. [buddiesinbadtimes.com](http://buddiesinbadtimes.com)

### Tartuffe

Molière's comedy about the sanctimonious Tartuffe, who feigns virtue and pity, deceiving his host Orgon while attempting to seduce Orgon's wife and gain an inheritance. Runs until Sat, Sept 20. Young Centre for the Performing Arts, 50 Tank House Lane, Distillery District. \$29–89. [soulpepper.ca](http://soulpepper.ca)

## MUSIC

### Lucas Silveira Live and Unplugged

The frontman of The Cliks gives an acoustic performance. Fri, Aug 22, 7pm. The Flying Beaver, 488 Parliament St. \$15 advance, \$20 door. [pubaret.com](http://pubaret.com)

## SEX & BURLESQUE

### Toronto Leather Pride

The leather and fetish community comes together for a week of events that includes the Surge Women and Trans Munch, the TLP Educational Series and the Leather Pride March. Runs until Sun, Aug 10, various times. For more info, visit [torontoleatherpride.ca](http://torontoleatherpride.ca).

### Naked Girls Reading: Sci-Fi

In what might be the final frontier of burlesque, St Stella and Bianca Boom Boom strip down and read about robots, space travel and the future to an audience of the filthy-minded. Sun, Aug 10, 7pm. Round Venue, 152 Augusta Ave. \$20 advance, \$25 door. [ngrtoaug.eventbrite.ca](http://ngrtoaug.eventbrite.ca)

### CrushTO Slumber Party

Sporting only pyjamas, onesies and lingerie, a crowd of horny queers dances and probably has a little



**J Mase III at Queer Slam — Buddies, Wed, Aug 13**



# CLUB SCENE

## Thurs, Aug 7

**Open Roof Festival** Film and music on the rooftop, including a screening of *The Grand Seduction*, about a small Newfoundland town trying to convince a doctor to live there, and a live performance by Tomi Swick. Proceeds support the Toronto indie film community. In case of rain, screening will be moved indoors. 7:30–11:30pm. 99 Sudbury, 99 Sudbury St. \$15. openrooffestival.com

**Ladyplus Parties** Live video shoot for Tasha's Trashy T-Girls Vol 2, by Kevin Dong, 8–9pm; DJ Todd Klinck spins for an evening of socializing with T-girls, their friends and admirers; special T-girl shows, hosted by Mandy Goodhandy, at midnight. Club120, 120 Church St. \$8 before 11pm, \$15 after; additional \$10 for all-night VIP booth access. goodhandys.com

**Steel Bananas 2014 Publications Launch** The Steel Bananas Collective celebrates six years with readings by Anna Veprinska, Dave Hurlow and Adam Abbas. Performance by Jasmyr Burke; DJ sets by Dave Hurlow. 8pm. 3030 Dundas West, 3030 Dundas St W. No cover. steelbananas.com

**Woody's Thursday** Brooke Lynn Hytes's star-studded Miss Continental fundraiser, hosted by

Farra N Hyte, with special guests and the chance to win tickets to see Cher. 8:30 pm. Woody's, 467 Church St. No cover. woodystoronto.com

**Toronto Queer Arts Festival Launch Party** DJs Steve Austin and Nik Red spin for the artsy peeps. 9pm. 1602 Dundas St W (it's a bar with no name). No cover. artsfestival.queerwest.org

## Fri, Aug 8

**9th Annual Alterna Queer Music Concert** Featuring new talents Ted Scarf, Anna Gutmanis, Amy Campbell, Jamieson M Eakin and Elek Semilla, performing everything from punk to bluegrass. Part of the Toronto Queer Arts Festival. 8pm–1am. The Sister, 1554 Queen St W. No cover. artsfestival.queerwest.org

**Friday at Club120 Complex** Comedy at the 120 Diner at 9pm, with improv skits followed by karaoke; Format 006 techno party upstairs at Club120, 10pm–3am. Club120, 120 Church St. club120.ca

**That Time of the Month** DJs Alex and Devon spin all-female classic and not-so-classic soul and R&B. 10pm. Henhouse, 1532 Dundas St W. henhousetoronto.com

**Full Fetish Party** Farrell Collier (MLT 2014), Andrew Coatham (MIR/MRT 2014), Patty (MSLT/IMSL 2014) and Pup Sprocket (Toronto Puppy 2014) host an

evening for all fetishes and interests; open to everyone. VIP pass-holders get front-of-line privileges. Part of Toronto Leather Pride weekend. No dress code. 11pm. Black Eagle, 457 Church St. blackeagleto.com



Loki Animal at Trade — Black Eagle, Sat, Aug 16  
LES BOUSKA

**Her** DJs Kiki LeFreak, Blondspot and Omgblog.com spin house, disco and electro for the people setting free their inner her. Special performance by hostess Buzz Huneedew. 11pm. At La Perla (upstairs), 783 Queen St W. \$5. herherher.com

## Sat, Aug 9

**Woody's Saturday** Woodpeckers softball team fundraiser and party (great prizes!), at 5pm; Squirr Best Men's Ass Contest, hosted by Farra N Hyte, with Jada Hudson, DJ Chris Steinbach and \$300 in cash prizes, at midnight. Woody's, 467 Church St. No cover. woodystoronto.com

**I'd Tap That Presents: Puppy Love** DJ Acow spins an evening of wooing, board games and spin the bottle for sex-positive people. Hosted by Jesse and Caitlin. Everyone welcome, regardless of gender, race, status or preferences. 8pm. The Beaver, 1192 Queen St W. \$10. thebeavertoronto.com

**Bump N' Hustle** DJs Paul E Lopes and Mike Tull spin old school, funk, hip hop and house. Hosted by Carlos Mondesir. 10pm. The Rivoli, 34 Queen St W. \$10. rivoli.ca

**Business Woman's Special: I Couldn't Find My Top Edition** DJs Sammy Royale and Nino Brown spin for the topless crowd. 10pm. Round Venue, 152A Augusta Ave. \$6. roundvenue.com

**Fly Saturday** DJ Shawn Riker steps up to keep the popular dance club going for all the grateful circuit boys. Check out the new reno. 10pm. Fly, 8 Gloucester St. flynightclub.com

**Dirty Dishes** DJ Knight Muzic and VJ Mark Joseph spin soulful beats, house, tribal and progressive with cheeky visuals. 10pm. WAYLA, 996 Queen St E. facebook.com/waylabarnounge

## Sun, Aug 10

**Woody's Sunday** The Hollywood Broadway Show, hosted by Farra N Hyte and Brooke Lynn Hytes, with Carlotta Carlisle, at 6pm; Old School, with Georgie Girl, Michelle Ross and Stephanie Stevens, at 9pm; Five Smokin' Hot Divas, hosted by Georgie Girl, with Devine Darlin, Tynomi Banks, Jada Hudson and Katherine Dior, at 11pm. DJ Blue Peter works the decks. Woody's, 467 Church St. No cover. woodystoronto.com

## Mon, Aug 11

**Zipperz Monday** Live cabaret, with Roxie Terraine and Adam Weinmann on the piano. 10pm. Zipperz-Cellblock, 72 Carlton St. No cover. facebook.com/zipperz

## Tues, Aug 12

**Varsity Tuesday** Sofonda Cox hosts the amateur So You Think You Can Strip? competition, with a \$100 cash prize up for grabs. 11pm. Remington's, 379 Yonge St. \$5 before 11pm, \$7 after; no cover with student ID before 11pm, \$2 after. remingtons.com

**Pump Tuesday** DJ Relentless spins and Devine Darlin hosts the weekly go-go boy contest, with \$100 in cash prizes. Sign up by 11:30pm, contest at midnight. Proceeds benefit the Toronto PWA Foundation. 10pm. Zipperz-Cellblock, 72 Carlton St. No cover. facebook.com/zipperz

## Wed, Aug 13

**Grindz** Having trouble loading more guys? Thumbs tired of typing and still looking for some action? Haul on over to Grindr and see if he looks just like his profile pic. 9pm. Henhouse, 1532 Dundas St W. No cover. henhousetoronto.com

**College Night** DJs Cajmere Wray and Sumation spin house, top 40 and dance beats for studious queers. 10pm. Church, 504 Church St. No cover. churchonchurch.com

## Thurs, Aug 14

**South Asian Night: Kotha** Experience a relaxing tel malish head massage at the bathhouse night for brown boys. Features a 50/50 draw and a safe-sex workshop. 8–11pm. Spa Excess, 105 Carlton St. Regular rates. spaexcess.com

**Random Play** DJ Dwayne Minard throws down '70s and '80s dance tunes for the retro queers. 10pm. WAYLA, 996 Queen St E. No cover. facebook.com/waylabarnounge

**Ultimate Thursday** DJ Craig Dominic, in Tangos, and Vocal Rehab Karaoke, with Elyse, in the Zone, both at 10pm; Drama Queens, with Ivory Towers and Scarlett Bobo, at 11:30pm. Crews & Tangos, 508 Church St. No cover. crewsandtangos.com

## Fri, Aug 15

**Friday at Club120** DJs Remy, Braudé and Avril Incandenza on decks. 10pm–3am. Club120, 120 Church St. \$5. club120.ca

**Pheromone Friday** DJs Recklezz and Sister Mister spin for the weekly ladies' party. 10pm. Garage, 477 Church St. \$5. sistermisterto.com

**Woody's Friday** Sleeman Speakeasy, with great prizes, at 10pm; Best Men's Ass Contest, with Georgie Girl and Katinka Kature urging the boys to show their tight and ripe for \$300 in cash prizes, at midnight. DJ Mark Falco on decks. Woody's, 467 Church St. No cover. woodystoronto.com



Full Fetish Party — Black Eagle, Fri, Aug 8

**Barbershop** Toronto's ho-Motown party, with DJ Michael K spinning Motown, soul and retro. Beer specials before midnight. Henhouse, 1532 Dundas St W. No cover. henhousetoronto.com

## Sat, Aug 16

**The B-Girlz: Pridenation** The B-Girlz perform their hilarious glamour-disco cabaret, with live singing, over-the-top dancing and a few well-placed high kicks. 7–9pm.

The Flying Beaver, 488 Parliament St. \$20 advance, \$25 door. pubaret.com

**Trade Sneaker Party** DJs John Caffery and Scooter McCreight spin for the sniff, lick, spit, shine and polish party. Atlanta's sneaker pup, Loki Animal, shows the men how to properly worship a sneaker. 10pm. Black Eagle, 457 Church St. \$5 before midnight, \$10 after. blackeagleto.com

**Judge Pitbull** DJs B-Tech and Dwayne Minard spin house and EDM for the guilty men and innocent boys. Jailbait and sinners work the stripper poles throughout the venue. 10pm. Courthouse, 57 Adelaide St E. \$15 advance. pitbullevts.ca

**Fit: Happy Birthday, Madonna** Kris Steeves and Phil V celebrate the birth of our queen with an all-Madonna dance marathon. Special secret performance. 10:30pm. The Beaver, 1192 Queen St W. \$5. beavertoronto.ca

**Bush Beat** The west end's newest ladies' cruising and dance party, with DJ Shoegayz and Pony, Cheap bar rail before 11:30pm. Henhouse, 1532 Dundas St W. No cover. henhousetoronto.com

## Sun, Aug 17

**Summertime Sadness** Sunday afternoon tea-dance on one of the city's cutest rooftops. DJs Diego Armand and Phil V spin poolside jams with drink specials all day. 3–9pm. Beverley Hotel, 335 Queen St W. No cover. thebeverleyhotel.ca

**Sweat Socks on Cock** Bring just one to cover your junk or share a pair for an evening with a fun twist. Hosted by Spearhead LDSC. 5–10pm. Black Eagle, 457 Church St. No cover. Clothes check \$2. blackeagleto.com

## Mon, Aug 18

**Hard Candy Fitness's Live DJ Series** DJ Doctor G spins for stylists wanting to check out Madonna's gym. Every Monday until Sept 8. 5:30–7:30pm. Hard Candy Fitness, 382 Yonge St. No cover. hardcandyfitnessstoronto.com

**Spit Play Party and Live Porn Shoot** Spit hosts its fifth play party, welcoming the usual "sass after class" demographic, plus some special guests. 19–35 years old only. 8pm. Oasis Aqualounge, 231 Mutual St. \$15. oasisaqualounge.com

## Tues, Aug 19

**Quizzed in the Face** Allysin Chaynes hosts the weekly trivia night of general knowledge, with special weekly categories. Individuals or teams compete for prizes. 8pm. Henhouse, 1532 Dundas St W. No cover. henhousetoronto.com

## Wed, Aug 20

**Zipperz Wednesday** Kim Jee Young on piano in the Lounge, 6–9pm; line dancing with the Toronto Wranglers in Cellblock, 7–9pm; the Drag Kings of Toronto, 11pm. Zipperz-Cellblock, 72 Carlton St. No cover. facebook.com/zipperz

Submit your event listing to [listings@dailyxtra.com](mailto:listings@dailyxtra.com).  
Deadline for the Aug 21 issue is Wed, Aug 13.



Roxie Terraine — Zipperz, Mon, Aug 11

# XPOSED

**ANNA POURNIKOVA**  
PHOTOS BY MAHA RISHI

1 You know you live in Canada when the waspiest, most bougie cottage area in the country hosts a gay pride celebration. And here's the kicker: at Muskoka Pride, chair **Heather Hay** (far right) was able to get two mayors out — **Alice** (Muskoka) and **Graydon** (Bracebridge) — and the City of Toronto couldn't even get one out for WorldPride. Someone should hire her for downtown.

2 My awesome photographer and cottage-country correspondent **Maha Rishi**, left, posed with friends **Simon** (he's French Canadian, in case you're keeping score) and **Brendan**. You might know Brendan as his alter ego, Igby Lizzard. Mmmmmhhmmmm, girl! turns out Igby is man-butche by day.

3 Just so the local politicians don't get all the credit: Parry Sound-Muskoka MP **Tony Clement** came out to support Muskoka Pride with host (an incredibly stunny) **Judy Virago**. Really, though, I'm used to Judy as much more dragalicious makeup and getup; this down-tempo Katy Perry look is just breathtaking. What a beaut.

4 We went hunting for normies at the Woody's Best Chest Contest, and we found really cute ones. First up is **Ryan**. Doesn't he remind you of an '80s TV heartthrob? Let's be honest here: who kicks this guy out of bed for eating crackers?

5 It was nice to be back in Woody's, normally more of a Rolyn Chambers domain. Feels like ages since

I was there. **Michael** did me the honour of a very well-put-together casual outfit. He could also be the long lost son of Sissy Spacek, dontcha think?

6 **Jada Hudson** co-hosted Best Chest with Brooke Lynn Hytes, and the two of them together were the perfect match. Brooke Lynn's sequined gold number complements Jada's blonde hair and sparkly top. Plus, don't think I didn't notice all that gold body shimmer.

7 Could you just die for **Brooke Lynn's** Studio 54-era outfit at Best Chest? I love, love, loved it. I'm sorta getting over this nouveau queen thing where everyone wants to look like Beyoncé. Bring me up-to-date kitsch like this any day. I can feel the Ice Capades moment in this already.

8 **Braeden** is a breeder (you don't get more normie than that), but since he's the gayest straight guy in the Village, I think he and his for-real beard, **Gelsy**, deserve to be in here. You might recognize him from every half-naked ad ever in *Fab* and *Xtra*. If only every breeder was more like him, then the world would finally be in perfect harmony.

9 **Ivory Towers** didn't know what to do when Maha got up onstage for her snap, so she stood there, looking perfection. I love her stance, I love her hair, I love her suit. And this is the best ad for Crews & Tangos out there. She's been really updating her makeup lately — I almost didn't recognize her. It's pretty/she's very pretty, but I kinda miss the gothic grey shadow. Never forget your roots, girl.



Xposed appears in every other issue of Xtra. For this week's Deep Dish column, by Rolyn Chambers, go to [dailyxtra.com](http://dailyxtra.com).

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Getting maximum enjoyment out of South Florida's largest gay festival

# Miami Pride machine

PHIL VILLENEUVE

Any gay tourist already knows that South Beach, Miami, is one of the seven gay wonders of the world. There is no place on earth like 12th Street and Ocean Avenue. The weather, the bodies, the friendly people, the music, and did I mention bodies? Without exaggeration, it's like a living, breathing Jennifer Lopez video.

This is what makes Miami Beach Pride such an incredible event. With the groundwork already laid for a weekend of guaranteed homo high jinks because of its location, Pride makes everything seem amplified, friendlier, happier, more delicious and beautiful.

For many, the Miami celebration in April marks the perfect kickoff to the North American Pride season (the 2015 festival takes place April 10 to 12). Launched in 2009, the event is relatively new to the scene, but that is also what makes it unique. Started by the city's

former mayor, it's a festival without a history of protest — it's always been about celebration. These people don't have deep roots in gay history like New York, San Francisco or Toronto. They're young and they want to have fun (okay, they also want to make money: theirs is the largest Pride in South Florida and brings in mountains of tourist dollars).

The 2014 grand marshal was Gloria Estefan, who is basically the unofficial mayor, president and queen of South Beach. The pint-sized pop star spoke at the Pride main stage extravaganza (which also featured Lady Bunny and *Drag Race* finalist Courtney Act), thanking the gays for their support and wishing for a world where everyone can live as equals. She didn't sing, but she didn't need to; the crowd ate up her every word. This was definitely Miami's biggest Pride yet; it's certainly a festival to watch for next season.

Below is a guide to getting maximum enjoyment out of Miami Pride. In all honesty, a tourist could walk around randomly and be completely entertained, but let us give you some helpful tips to get the most out of your weekend.

## Where to stay

When experiencing Miami Pride, try to stay as close to the beach as possible; that's where everything is happening, and you won't want to miss out. The Breakwater, an Art Deco boutique hotel with a fishbowl pool, is a great little place on Ocean Drive. It's nothing too fancy,



JIPSY

but the location and cleanliness are all a visitor will need for the weekend.

Having said that, for a more exclusive experience that's off the beaten path, book in to the Hôtel Gaythering. This place is the unicorn of gay hotels. It may be a half-hour trek to the beach, but the details and the potential for fun here make it worth the journey. It's South Beach's only "straight-friendly" hotel, with a stellar bar and cocktail menu, a self-service spa (they provide the products, pool and saunas; you do the rest) cute parties —like Bears & Hares

Clockwise from top: the Miami Beach Pride parade, on Ocean Drive; Pérez Art Museum Miami; a room at Hôtel Gaythering; 2014 Pride marshal Gloria Estefan; Shepard Fairey's mural in the Wynwood Art District; the fried chicken taco at Huahua's.





JUAN SACO MIRONOFF



PHIL VILLENEUVE



PAMM



JUAN SACO MIRONOFF



PHIL VILLENEUVE

every Friday — and fantastic coffee. The service is impeccable and the clientele is exactly what you want during a Pride weekend away: lots of friendly and devastatingly handsome men. While queer women also frequent this boutique hotel, the clientele is mainly men. We highly recommend this place.

### Where to eat

Finding good food along Ocean Drive can be tricky. The restaurants on the famous street have a view unlike any other, but the food is often cheap and greasy and really doesn't leave one wanting to take one's shirt off on the beach. Take a stroll away from the main drag to Huahua's Taqueria, a little hide-away where you'll find the best tacos in South Beach. Chef Todd Erickson is an up-and-coming culinary sensation, and he really impresses with his scrump-

tious tacos (we highly recommend the fried chicken version with a marguerita). Be sure to pick up a homemade popsicle on your way out.

Naked Taco is a close second for service, variety and deliciousness. They win for location (the expansive space is at the perfect people-watching corner of Collins Avenue and 11th Street) and tequila selection.

If you get bored of tacos and Latino fare, head to Khong River House for some incredible Thai-Vietnamese fusion food. With its stunning interior and the kitchen's delicious family recipes, it's hard to stop eating.

Villa Azur feels like somewhere Donatella Versace would eat on a Tuesday night. It has its own art gallery and a chic, gorgeous, all-white patio. It's completely over-the-top, but the crowd watching is top grade and all the front-

of-house staff appears to have been picked from a line of supermodels.

If you're feeling adventurous, take a taxi to the Wynwood neighbourhood and visit SuViche for some traditional Peruvian ceviche. It's the best in the area.

Finally, at the end of any night out in South Beach, don't be embarrassed to stop at Burger King's Whopper Bar. Whoppers the size of small pizzas and one last beer on the patio are a hilarious way to coat the stomach before calling it a night.

### Where to go out

During Pride, just make your way to the beach. It's bustling with stunning examples of gay men and women on display and at play. When the sun starts to set, head to Palace for the traffic-halting drag shows, Twist for its multi-room dance-party options and Score for its

authentic Latino nightclub madness. They're all packed over Pride weekend and are open late. We ended up at Twist every single night of the weekend (as many do) in the top-40 room, the stripper hut and the starry patio. It's a gay mecca that never disappoints.

### What to see

Take an Art Deco tour down Ocean Drive. Learning about this architectural style and its history in South Beach (spoiler alert: they owe a lot to *Miami Vice* and Gianni Versace) is a must. Every building along the strip, and the colours they're painted, has a story.

The Pérez Art Museum (PAMM), designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Herzog & de Meuron, is not to be missed. A visit won't necessarily eat up a big chunk of time, as the museum is new and somewhat sparse, but it's worth the trip to see the stunning building and the refurbished urban park that surrounds it.

It must be said again: get to the beach. The gay block at the bottom of 12th Street is an experience. During Pride, it's more of a beach buffet.

### Where to escape

If you need a break from the bulging bodies and cruising, visit the revitalized Wynwood neighbourhood. It's an art district splattered with abandoned factories, impressive restaurants (check out Wynwood Kitchen & Bar) and more than 70 galleries. It's a little forced, but don't think too much about it — just take a stroll and enjoy the very expensive graffiti.

The backyard at the Freehand hostel offers another great breather. It's away from the beach, but the adorable space is like walking into a Solange music video. Effortlessly good-looking tourists from all over the planet linger around the pool, Ping-Pong table and tiki bar.

### Where the locals go

**La Sandwicherie:** This cute little sandwich hut on 14th Street serves French-style sammies on fresh baguettes. Run by a French ex-pat, it's a fave for lunching locals and curious tourists. Any Pride dwellers you meet at this spot will make instant weekend pals.

**DecoBike.** This easy-to-use bike-rental service will save you cab fare and is a great way to get around South Beach, with its many bike lanes and lock-up locations.

**Base Superstore.** Shopping on the famous Lincoln Road open-air mall is fun, but it's filled with generic American brands. The Base store is tucked away in an alley off the main drag and features cool brands, scents and drinks. ■

For more on Miami, visit [miamiandbeaches.com](http://miamiandbeaches.com).

The online version of this story, at [dailyxtratravel.com](http://dailyxtratravel.com), contains web links to select businesses.

# New Orleans

The South's most gay-friendly city is rich in history and folklore

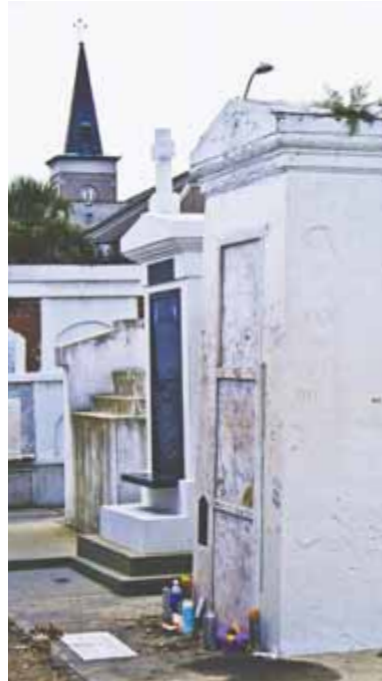
**CHRISTIAN BAINES**

There were no “vampires” in New Orleans until Anne Rice made them up.

This is the first unsolicited but valuable lesson I get in New Orleans folklore, from the grimly half-smiling man behind the counter of Garden District Book Shop. He’s spied me lifting an autographed hardcover edition of the author’s breakout novel *Interview with the Vampire* from a small, semi-permanent display dedicated to the famous writer.

One of New Orleans’ favourite bookshops, the store stands proudly behind its local authors. Though Rice hasn’t been one of these for years, the immaculate Garden District is filled with sights that have inspired her and countless others. These include Rosegate, the 1857 First Street property purchased by Rice in 1989, adapted as the setting for her novel *The Mayfair Witches*. Just over the road from Garden District Book Shop, Lafayette Cemetery No 1 served as the not-so-final resting place of Rice’s beloved vampire Lestat. But this historic labyrinth of aboveground tombs also served the city of Lafayette, which occupied much of the Garden District until it was annexed by New Orleans in 1852. Every morning, tour groups peer between the monuments, one of several that each day lure visitors looking to separate fact from folklore in this death-obsessed city.

Most have arrived in the company of guides arranged in the French Quarter, heart of the city’s cultural — and gay — life. How many of those guides will reveal the truth about New Orleans’ devotion to interring, rather than burying, its dead? Magic Tours is one, specializing in tours that unearth the city’s real history. Local journalists and historians passionate about their city take visitors



CHARLES GANDOLFO

through the Garden District, the French Quarter, St Louis Cemetery No 1 and on ghost tours throughout the Quarter after dark.

Tours in this last category are a dime a dozen, and unless you love theatrical stunts so campy most drag queens would tell them to tone it down, many are worth about as much. Tour brokers can help sift through the schlock, though Magic Tours and French Quarter Phantoms rank among the best.

All of them are familiar with the LaLaurie Mansion — and thanks, now, in part, to *American Horror Story*, so are the rest of us. In the finest tradition of lies television told you, there is no public access to the former house of horrors, where Dalphine LaLaurie



RIAN CASTILLO



VOODOOMUSEUM.COM

**Clockwise from top: 1239 First St was once home to author Anne Rice; the Historic Voodoo Museum plays up the creep factor without straying too far from the religion’s true history; the tomb of voodoo queen Marie Laveau gets more visitors each year than the grave of Elvis Presley.**

tortured and mutilated many of her slaves. Former owner Nicholas Cage was reportedly so disturbed by supernatural goings on that he refused to stay in the house. Still, for those content to stand outside and imagine if there can be anything scarier in there than Cage, it’s an essential creepy stop.

Another is Lafitte’s Blacksmith Shop, purported to be the oldest bar in America. The confirmed local writing den of Tennessee Williams, it could well have once been the oldest gay bar, though

the queers have long moved on to Cafe Lafitte in Exile (which does openly claim the title), leaving behind a favourite tourist stop — and allegedly, the ghost of a local pirate in the fireplace.

## Literary adventures

The Tennessee Williams Literary Festival lures more than 2,500 book and arts lovers to the city each March. Dedicated to all things Williams, it combines readings, writing contests, theatre, art shows

and a now infamous Stellaaaaaaa-screaming contest that sees tourists in varying states of sobriety drop to their knees and bellow to balconies in the French Quarter. So proud of its queer-lit heritage is New Orleans that LGBT authors get their own celebration in May. Past guests of the Saints and Sinners Literary Festival have included Christopher Rice, Val McDermid and Lambda-winning Toronto author Jeffrey Round.

To find the neighbourhood that inspired Williams’s *A Streetcar Named Desire*, trek just beyond the French Quarter to The Marigny. Frenchmen Street is where the locals go for their authentic jazz and cheap eats, and even though most of the LGBT part is centred in the Quarter, several neighbourhood restaurants and bars thrive here and on nearby Elysian Fields. A few doors up lies a cross between a gay bookstore and your favourite crazy aunt’s attic — minus cats — called Fab on Frenchmen. A ramshackle maze of quality new and secondhand books, music, film, knickknacks and random tat, this museum of queer history is an explosion of quirk and an essential stop on any walk around the Marigny.

## That voodoo magic

Like its prolific ghost lore, New Orleans’ voodoo underbelly is a major tourist draw, and fakes abound, determined to separate those tourists from their cash. Dodging them in the French Quarter narrows the field to two main locations. The New Orleans Historic Voodoo Museum, on Dumaine Street, isn’t afraid to indulge the imagination or play up its creep factor without straying too far from the religion’s true history. Those wanting a closer look at voodoo practices today should trek north to Rampart Street, where priestess Miriam Chamani founded the Voodoo Spiritual Temple. Believers worldwide have flocked to the temple seeking her services, and whether you count yourself among them or not, a visit here is far more likely to yield results than tacking “XXX” on Marie Laveau’s supposed grave!

Rich with history and folklore, the South’s gayest city is an ideal destination for thinking queer snowbirds wanting more than beaches and cocktails from their winter vacation. In keeping with New Orleans’ tradition as a haven of tolerance, nearly all accommodations in the popular parts of town — including a staggering selection of B&Bs — are LGBT-friendly. Just be ready to pay a premium if you’re planning to stay over Mardi Gras or other major festivals.

Of course, The Big Easy also holds a reputation as one of America’s friendliest towns. You may even leave with the invitation of a spare bed for your inevitable return visit! ■

# Europe, au naturel

Heading across the pond? Check out these great nude beaches

**BRUCE BISHOP**

## Bellevue Beach

Just a short train ride from the city centre, Bellevue Beach is one of a handful of gay beaches in Copenhagen. Virtually all beaches in Denmark are clothing-optional; the few that are not will have signs posted.

## Euronat

Situated close to the famous vineyards of Bordeaux, Euronat is also just a few miles from the birthplace of French naturism, the village of Montalivet. Expansive is a word that comes to mind when describing this *superbe* beach, complete with nude lifeguards, on France's southwest Atlantic coast.

## Cap d'Agde

This huge nudist "village" on the south coast of France, near Montpellier, is a kind of concrete jungle of apartment blocks with a wealth of accommodation choices and places to eat and drink. It's the polar opposite in tone and style to Euronat.

## Danube Island

A 21-kilometre strip of land in the Danube river in central Vienna, Austria, is home to large nude beaches on either end.

## Englischer Garten

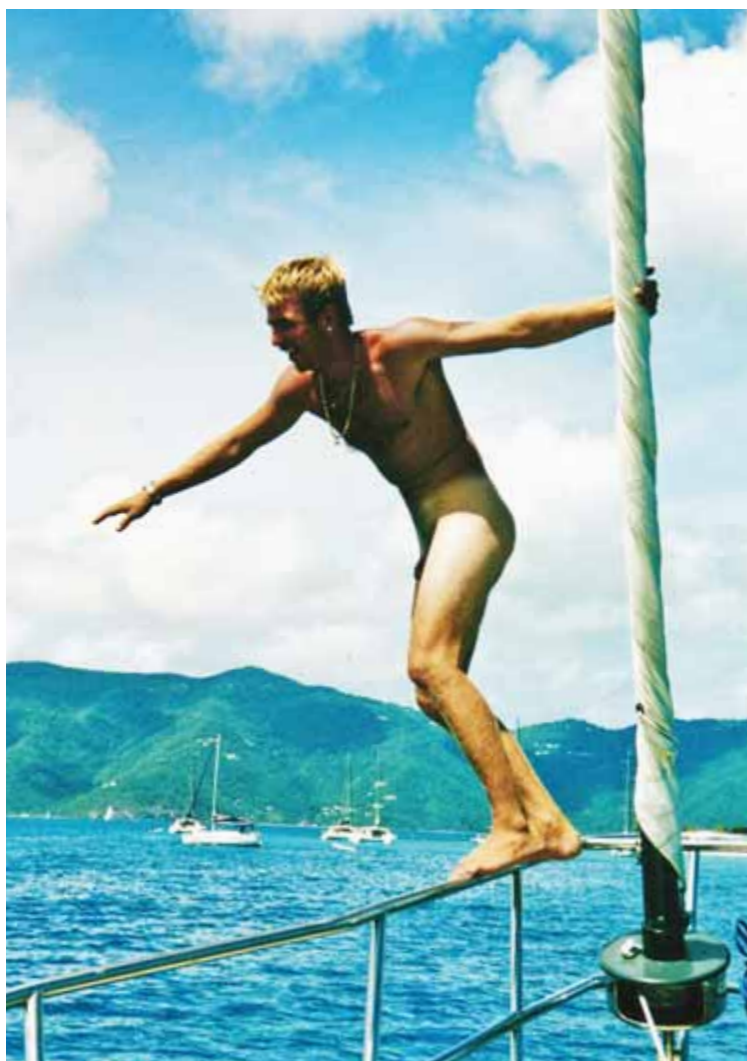
Located in the heart of Munich, Germany, the "English Garden" isn't exactly a beach; the Isar river runs through this mammoth municipal park, and nude sunbathing is allowed in and around the horse track.

## Mykonos

When you get to the sun-drenched island of Mykonos in Greece, follow the flocks of LGBT folks headed to Super Paradise, Paradise and Elia beaches.

## Playa Costa Natura

Just west of the Spanish town of Estepona (the nearest big city is Malaga) is the popular Playa Costa Natura nudist beach. The far end of the beach (to the west) is where the majority of gay people gather, both locals and holiday makers.



Top, what's more fun than skinny-dipping off a sailboat? Above, Frédéric, one of the lifeguards at Euronat.  
BRUCE BISHOP

## Playa del Inglés and Maspalomas

Spain's Canary Islands, off the west coast of Africa, have several nude beaches. One of the most popular is Playa del Inglés, on the south coast of Gran Canaria, where rainbow flags mark the gay section of the eight-kilometre beach. Trade winds and a mountain barrier to the north isolate the south, so clear skies are almost always guaranteed.

## Studland

Officially sanctioned by the National Trust, Studland is on the southern English coast, near the town of Swanage in the county of Dorset, and has been popular with the bare-it-all set since the 1920s. ■

For information on Toronto's own clothing-optional Hanlan's Point Beach, see our feature on pages 16-19.

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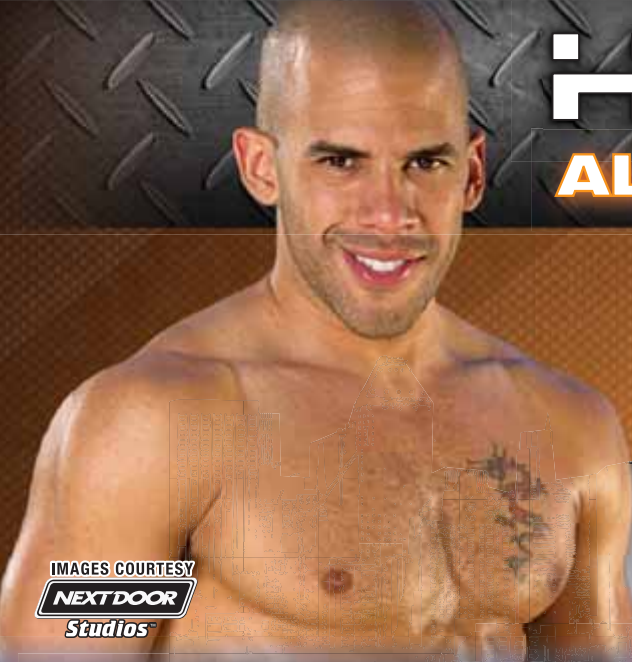
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A black and white photograph of two men standing outdoors. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket and is looking towards the man on the right. The man on the right is wearing a light-colored sweater and has sunglasses hanging from his neck. They are standing next to a dark-colored car. In the background, there is a large window with a grid pattern and a view of a landscape under a cloudy sky.

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