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VANCOUVER'S GAY & LESBIAN NEWS

#547 AUG 14–27, 2014

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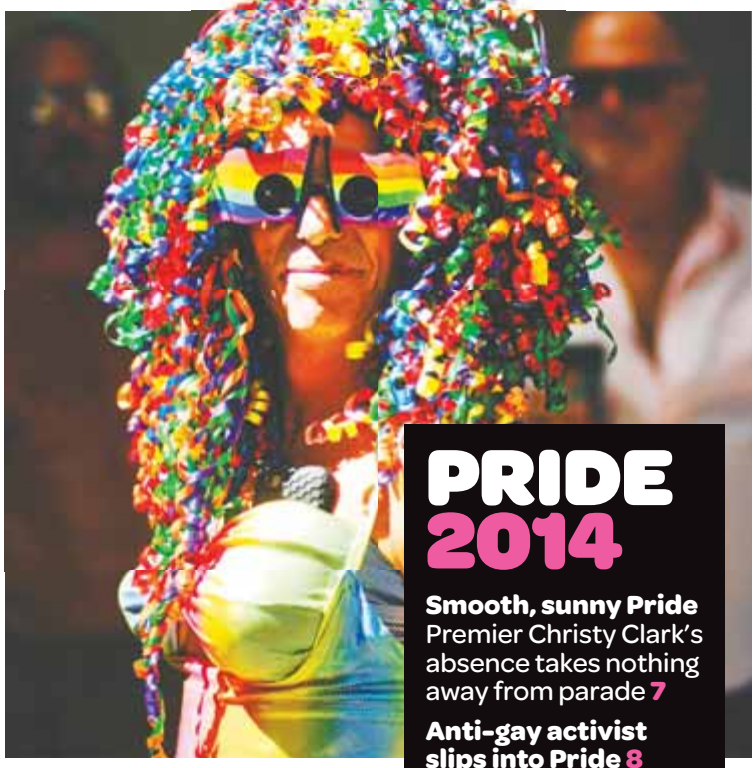
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Xtra! VANCOUVER'S GAY & LESBIAN NEWS

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#547 AUG 14–27, 2014



SERGEI BACHLAKOV

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Whatcott's Trojan horse



EDITORIAL
NATASHA BARSOTTI

I'll hand it to Bill Whatcott.

His ruse to sneak into the Vancouver Pride parade to hand out anti-gay leaflets disguised as condoms was a well-executed con. Partially.

Understandably fed up with the less than warm (and often wet) reception he receives when he walks in other Pride parades to spread his version of its desired outcome.

Sure, he deceived us and participated as a seemingly disarming gay man. But did he really expect his antiquated weapons — his message of grievous sin, diseased sexuality and a narrow-minded God — to win or even score points in a battle that has been all but put to pasture?

As gay MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert points out, the avid anti-gay crusader had to shimmy his way into the parade as a "big, happy, bouncing gay man who was positively brimming over with excitement about celebrating Pride" to try to get his well-worn point across.

Whatcott and his ilk can laugh all they want, but our community now has a documented record of the day he decided to sissy his walk.

The Truth, Whatcott took a page from history and pulled a Trojan horse.

He dressed up as a caricature of us, complete with pink hair, pom-pom shorts, gay-friendly T and a propensity for gregariousness and instant affection. Leveraging the name recognition of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster (whose fictitious Calgary branch he invented), he and four disciples sashayed into the parade unchallenged. Except, unlike the victorious Greeks, Whatcott's attempt to pull off this subterfuge was clever only in its deployment, not so much

Will Whatcott's rhetoric cause a significant decrease in gay support among the multitudes who lined the West End's streets and enthusiastically waved rainbow flags Aug 3? Probably not. In fact, what spectators saw as they clapped, cheered — maybe even hugged — the Flying Spaghetti Monster was a man proudly projecting his gay abandon. That's the lasting visual.

Perhaps the one true statement Whatcott trumpets as he basks in the afterglow of his Pride exploits is that he made the parade "way more diverse." He certainly did. Notwithstanding his old-hat dogma, he decided to be not a drag, but a queen.

Whatcott and his ilk can laugh all they want about the one they put over on the gays, but our community now has a documented record of the day he decided to sissy his walk. (Hey RuPaul, I've got a new *Drag Race* title for you: "Releasing the right's inner Shante." Call me.)

I think the Vancouver Pride Society should invite him officially next year, with the proviso that he try to dupe us again, but as part of a live pay-to-play game called Where's Whatcott? Proceeds to one of our community charities or non-profit organizations. The spinoff possibilities are endless.

So, to those who are pulling out their own pink hair or getting their short-shorts in a knot over this ultimately futile ploy, please don't sweat it. Two can play at Bill's game. We've been known to be very accomplished at playing dress-up, too.

Hey, Bill. Those pious-looking folks occupying the middle pews of your favourite religious haunt? Are you sure they share your evangelical fervour? Or maybe they're getting ready to break out into their own version of "Like a Prayer."

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.

Natasha Barsotti is the staff reporter at Xtra *Vancouver.*

FEEDBACK

Bravo, Oliv

Oliv and I were roommates in Montreal in the mid-1970s ["The Evolution of Oliv," *Xtra* #546, July 31]. Needless to say, it was exciting going out with Oliv. We never waited in lineups, never paid. However, Oliv would insist that if we went out with her, we had to find our inner freak and go wild with our looks. Or else. We went to drag dances at McGill, shocking people along the way. We walked, causing a stir on the streets. This was very liberating for me. I could be free and, yes, had a lot of pride doing it. So, bravo to Oliv. Always ahead of the times. She brought me out of my shell, and I found my inner freak.

AVROM OSIPOV
VANCOUVER, BC

Don't conflate gay and politics

In his guest editorial ["Queer: Echoes of Hate, and Pride," *Xtra* #545, July 17], Matthew DiMera says he is gay because of his sexual orientation but queer because he is against homophobia and transphobia and opposes racism, sexism and other hurtful "-isms." But you shouldn't express your sexual orientation and your politics in one word. It just confuses the issue. You may say your politics caused your sexual orientation, or your sexual orientation caused your politics, but you would be wrong on both counts. Only your attitude towards homophobia would be caused by your sexual orientation.

It's like when I was in university; I believed I was bisexual because I was anti-sexist, and I took women's studies as a result. I was wrong on both counts.



I was not bisexual; I was gay, and neither was a result of my being anti-sexist.

CHRIS ROGERS
VANCOUVER, BC

Are you 'queer'?

It's obvious from *Xtra*'s town hall that there's no consensus around the terms "gay" and "queer" ["*Xtra* Hosts Town Hall on the Words We Use," June 20, dailyxtra.com]. That's all well and good but could become a problem when naming community infrastructure, such as Vancouver's new community centre. Neither "Queer Resource Centre" nor "Gay Resource Centre" will fly. Some months past, we came up with Rainbow House, a term that offends nobody and likely includes everyone. I hope the folks at Qmunity are listening.

GORDON HARDY
DAILYXTRA.COM

Enough labels

Thank you, Ms Barsotti ["Words That Haunt," *Xtra* #543, June 19]. There is far too much emphasis on this stupid "use of words and labels" debate.

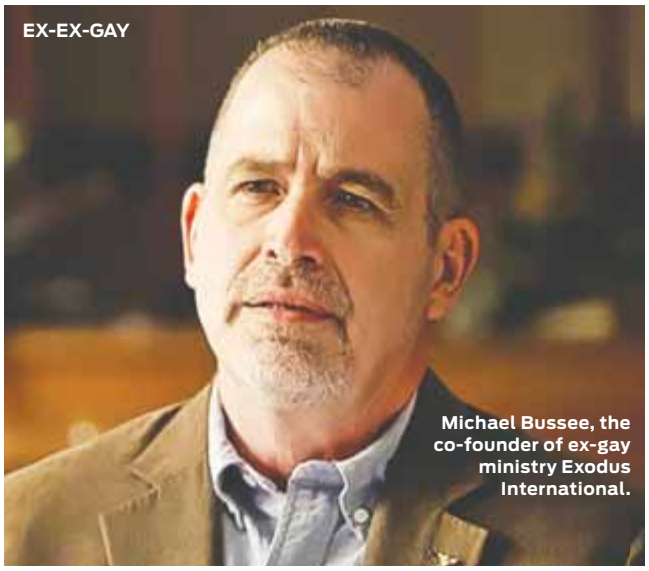
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Michael Bussee, the co-founder of ex-gay ministry Exodus International.

“We were not only deeply involved in these ‘ex-gay’ programs, we were the founders, the leaders and the promoters… few people are more knowledgeable about the ineffectiveness and harm of conversion therapy.”

Nine former ex-gay leaders have called for a ban on gay conversion therapy, in partnership with the United States’ National Center for Lesbian Rights.


PINTEREST.COM

LARRY, LARRY, LARRY...

Wishful thin-King

Confused talk-show host Larry King couldn’t wrap his head around the idea that actress Anna Paquin could still be bisexual, even if she is married to a man. “I don’t think it’s a past-tense thing,” Paquin clarified.

NEW YORK NESTING

A STARRY BROMANCE

Meanwhile, a *New York Times* piece describes live-in buds actors James Franco and Scott Haze as “so close that describing them merely as friends would be a disservice.”


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Vancouver Dyke March
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"The Supreme Court found me guilty of hate speech, and I have been breaking that ruling ever since." **Bill Whatcott** ▸8

Smooth, sunny Pride festivities

Premier Christy Clark's absence takes nothing away from parade



With 143 marching contingents and 800 more participants than last year, the Pride parade laid claim to the West End for a three-hour-plus celebration. SERGEI BACHLAKOV

PRIDE
NATASHA BARSOTTI

At the stroke of noon, the Dykes on Bikes collectively gunned their 23 motors to jump-start Vancouver's annual Pride parade Aug 3, raising a cheer from hundreds of thousands of spectators lining the West End's streets.

The bikes led off the three-hour-plus event, which boasted 143 contingents winding their way in a fairly steady stream west down Robson Street, south across Denman and onto Beach Avenue.

Among the federal party leaders in attendance were the Green Party's Elizabeth May and the Liberals' Justin Trudeau, attending his first Vancouver Pride, along with Vancouver Centre MP Hedy Fry, who has participated in the parade 22 times.

Walking in her sixth Pride parade, Vancouver School Board chair Patti Bacchus said there was more to celebrate this year with the board's approval of a trans-inclusive student policy that was the source of much contention.

Trans Alliance Society secretary Morgane Oger called the parade "sheer pleasure," though she'd like to see protection from gender-identity-based discrimination added to both provincial and federal human rights codes.

"It's not something I can predict," former Liberal MLA Lorne Mayencourt said, asked when BC might add gender identity to its Human Rights Code. Mayencourt walked with the BC Liberals contingent.

"I can't speak for government today," he said, when asked about the long-standing call for a provincewide policy targeting homophobia in schools. "I can tell you that this is one of the number-one issues the premier has identified for things she wants to accomplish — a bully-free environment in our system. I think we're on a right path."

Mayencourt said Premier Christy Clark did not attend this year's parade because she was on vacation with her family.

Prior to the parade, grand marshal Gwen Haworth sat with her mother, Colleen, atop the back seat of a convertible, taking in the crowd's growing excitement in the staging area.

"I brought my mom with me because I just feel like she's going to love it. She's come a long way in terms of being aware of queer and trans issues," Haworth said.

The Pacific Association of First Nations' Women also participated in its first Pride parade, with 13 traditional grandmothers. "For too long our community has struggled with gay and lesbian rights, and it's time to show how many of us feel — that we embrace all our brothers and sisters, everybody as our children, and that's our traditional values," said coordinator Sharon Brass, whose traditional name is White Thunderbird Woman. Her nephew, a drag queen, was also in the parade. "This is important as an auntie to show we are not just talking; we are really doing," Brass said.

Laurie McDonald and Peter Dawson represented grand marshal ted northe, founder of Canada's drag court system, who was honoured posthumously. "He'd love it," both men said, almost in unison, when asked how northe might have responded to his appointment as grand marshal. McDonald said northe was a strong supporter of the two-spirit community and honouring him was a symbol of the unity between native and non-native people.

For grand marshal Dean Nelson, the day was an opportunity to think of others around the world who can't hold this kind of celebration today — "but maybe tomorrow."

"I think we are really making a difference. Look at what's happening in the United States; more and more states are actually embracing marriage equality," he said. "We have more athletes coming out; we're getting more sports organizations updating their work-environment agreements to make sure their athletes, coaches and trainers are all protected. It's that avalanche we've been waiting for."

Rainbow Refugee's Sharalyn Jordan said she hopes the community understands the importance of human rights for LGBT people everywhere, not just within Canada's borders. About 33 countries were represented under Rainbow Refugee's banner this year.

Vancouver resident Meghan Meath said this year's parade seemed calmer, which appealed to her. "It was just a more relaxed crowd, and maybe it was just better organized."

Partners Jenna Clark and Jill McDugal said they feel lucky to live in a city that supports Pride. In the lead-up to this year's event, McDugal said, she and Clark noticed more and more people walking down the street holding hands, people that "look like us."

"It's such a thrilling feeling, just seeing ourselves mirrored in others in the city and just seeing people in love and being free to express that," she said, holding Clark's hand. X

Watch our video of the Pride parade on dailyxtra.com.

Anti-gay activist slips into Pride

Bill Whatcott uses fake name to hand out leaflets disguised as condoms

PRIDE NEWS
NATHANIEL CHRISTOPHER

With his revealing shorts, bright pink hair and a shirt that read "The Flying Spaghetti Monster Is Gay," anti-gay activist Bill Whatcott successfully slipped into Vancouver's Pride parade on Aug 3.

Whatcott and four of his conservative evangelical Christian supporters marched in the parade under the banner of the fictitious Calgary Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster to distribute anti-gay leaflets disguised as condoms.

"I want homosexuals to turn to Jesus, and I believe that people can leave that lifestyle behind," Whatcott says. "I made this Pride parade way more diverse. It's not all leather men and naked dudes. Now it includes Christian people with diverse messages on homosexuality. True diversity."

In the "gospel condom" that he distributed to parade-goers, Whatcott claims that everyone is "anatomically heterosexual" and that gay people "suffer grievously because of their sin."

Rather than protest openly at the parade, Whatcott and his party deliberately posed as gay and gay-friendly participants and invented a fake ministry under whose name they applied to participate. Whatcott signed the parade application using a pseudonym, Matthew Davidson.

"They pulled a very well-orchestrated con, and that's how I look at it in my books," says Vancouver Pride Society (VPS) general manager Ray Lam. "They were very friendly people and hugged parade marshals and volunteers and seemed very excited to be there posing for pictures with people along the way. On the surface, if you didn't see the package or associate the package with this entry, you wouldn't be able to identify which organization did it just by how they were acting in the parade."

Whatcott tells *Xtra* that he and several volunteers across Canada spent a year preparing for the operation. In total, he says, it cost more than $4,000 to pay for gas, gospel condom production, the banner and T-shirts.

"A number of Christians across the country donated small amounts of money," he says. "Even though I live well below the poverty line and I got court judgments up my yin yang unpaid, I am still willing to use some of my money for this. I chipped in about $1,000 of my own money."



Bill Whatcott posted a detailed account and photos of his participation in the Pride parade Aug 3 on his Free North America blog. Above, Whatcott gets a hug from a parade volunteer on Denman Street. FREENORTHAMERICA.CA

In 2013 the Supreme Court of Canada upheld part of a 2005 Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal ruling against Whatcott for distributing anti-gay flyers. The high court ruled unanimously that two of the four flyers that Whatcott published and distributed violated the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code by promoting hatred and discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Lam says the VPS was taken completely off guard because a legitimate branch of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, a parody religion that opposes the teaching of intelligent design and creationism in public schools, had participated in the parade in previous years.

"When the application came in, a lot of our team members were excited because we were familiar with the organization," Lam says. "They have a reputation for being fun and animated, and we were very excited to have them — and then this happened."

Whatcott set up a fake phone number and website to support his ruse.

Lam says all parade applicants undergo a very rigorous screening process to determine whether they're legitimate organizations that support the LGBT community.

"It's a bit difficult to prevent something like this when people go to such elaborate lengths to hide their identity," he says. "There was nothing we, as organizers, could do to catch them, other than contacting head office asking if they had a Calgary section. But this isn't something someone would reasonably do when you receive an application with a website, phone number and credentials that don't raise any red flags."

Whatcott says that his participation in the parade was part of a larger battle and that deception was necessary to get his message across. "The Supreme Court found me guilty of hate speech and I have been breaking that ruling ever since, and this is part of it," he explains. "I'm still out there. I'm loud and not ashamed of my moral and theological protest. This is spiritual warfare. This is a war against the Supreme Court of Canada and the homosexual agenda. Using deception to get there is okay as long as it's not malicious."

Trans March draws several hundred

Participants note progress but say more needs to be done

PRIDE
NATHANIEL CHRISTOPHER

Approximately 350 people took to Commercial Drive Aug 1 for the fifth annual Trans, Two-Spirit and Genderqueer Liberation and Celebration March to help kick off Pride weekend in Vancouver.

The event began at Clark Park, where participants created their own signs. "Penis! Maybe he's born with it, maybe it's none of your business," 16-year-old Alilesaander Jacobsen's sign read.

"I am here because I'm a proud trans guy who wants to march somewhere," he said. "I'm tired of trans teens not being accepted because people think they are too young to know what's happening."

Danielle Cowan's sign identified her as a proud parent of a non-binary teen. "We are here to support everyone who is perhaps not comfortable in the universe that has only two boxes for their gender, and sometimes you can't always check male or female. Sometimes you want to check both or neither," she said.

Participants marched up the northbound lanes of Commercial Drive to Victoria Park. Tara Chee, who is a member of the grassroots collective that organizes the event, describes it as both a celebration and a protest.

"We purposefully call it a celebration and liberation march because it's somewhat in conjunction with Pride and it's a celebration of our identity and community," she says. "It's also a protest because of the many issues that trans people face, such as high unemployment, homelessness, gender policing and other forms of discrimination."

Vancouver Pride Society president Tim Richards, who has attended the Trans March three years in a row, says this year's event follows notable gains for trans equality in Vancouver. "Look at the progress last year with the parks board and, more recently, progress with the school board," he says.



NATHANIEL CHRISTOPHER

"Penis! Maybe he's born with it, maybe it's none of your business," reads Alilesaander Jacobsen's sign (centre, with Candy Fine, left, and Soy Wock). NATHANIEL CHRISTOPHER

In April, the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation unanimously approved a plan to make the city's parks and community centres more inclusive of transgender people. Two months later, the Vancouver School Board updated its existing sexual orientation and gender identity policy to be more supportive of transgender students. However, Marie Little, chair of the Trans Alliance Society, points out that gender identity is still protected by neither the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms nor the BC Human Rights Code.

Shantel Ivits, who is co-organizing the BC Trans Advocacy Day this fall, notes that transgender British Columbians also face numerous barriers to healthcare.

For more on these stories, go to dailyxtra.com.

Dyke March on The Drive

About 500 women and allies gather for 11th annual event

PRIDE
LAYLA CAMERON



The banner bearers lead hundreds of women and allies up Commercial Drive to Grandview Park Aug 2. LAYLA CAMERON

Jayne Morgan is standing at the foot of the road that borders McSpadden Park, draping a rainbow flag over her shoulders as she prepares excitedly for the 11th annual Vancouver Dyke March Aug 2. She says she's been attending the march since she came out seven years ago.

"I come to see people, to celebrate who I am and who I'm with," she says. Morgan and her partner make the trip from Langley, which she describes as more conservative than Vancouver.

Michelle Fortin, president of the Vancouver Dyke March, says that approximately 300 attendees come from outside Vancouver. "I always look forward to see the new folks that arrive that have never experienced the Dyke March before. Oftentimes, people come from small towns, in the Interior or from out of province," she says. "I love experiencing the look on people's faces when they just have all these lesbians in one place, and allies, and it's all about celebration."

Just as Morgan's rainbow cape settles into place, the mass that has congregated in the park, consisting of approximately 500 people, are called to line up behind the band that will lead them up Commercial Drive. There is a scattering of signs sprinkled among the group, and while the march appears less political than similar events in other cities, such as the Toronto Dyke March, there are a few individuals who take the opportunity to make statements.

Janine Solanki holds a sign that says "Free Chelsea Manning, Queer Hero." Manning, a trans woman and American soldier who was detained after releasing military documents and who is now seeking access to hormone therapy and the rights granted to female prisoners, was named honorary grand marshal of the San Francisco Pride parade this year, having had the title granted then revoked last year.

"I think this is a cause that a lot of people in the queer community around the world are taking up," Solanki says, adding that the Dyke March is a good space to encourage dialogue about social justice issues.

This year marks Kate Reid's eighth performance at the post-march festival in Grandview Park. She says the Dyke March remains an important event because queer women need more visibility and because it serves as a less corporate march where queer people can have a more accessible space.

"I love this festival because it's its own little community; it feels different from the big festival because it feels more grassroots," Reid says. "I love that there's tons of different people here, watching and participating. I love that there's tons of women not wearing shirts and people being free to express themselves."

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Showing our pride

Bright sun and a cloudless blue sky heralded this year's Pride parade, which took over the West End Aug 3 for a three-hour-plus celebration.

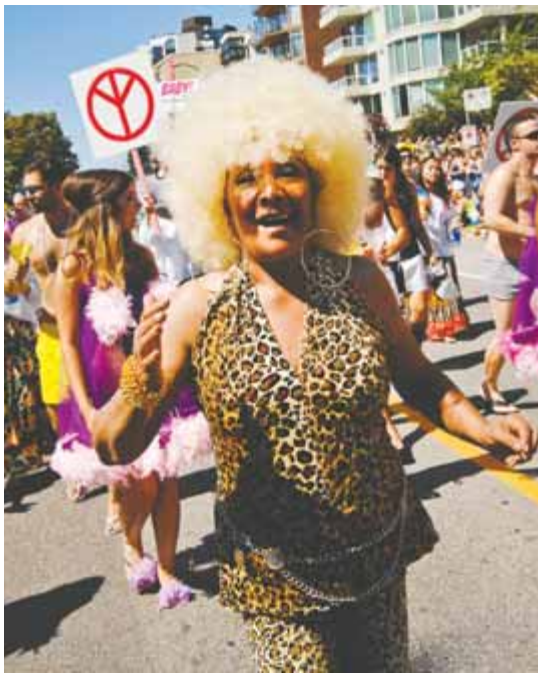
PHOTOS BY SERGEI BACHLAKOV





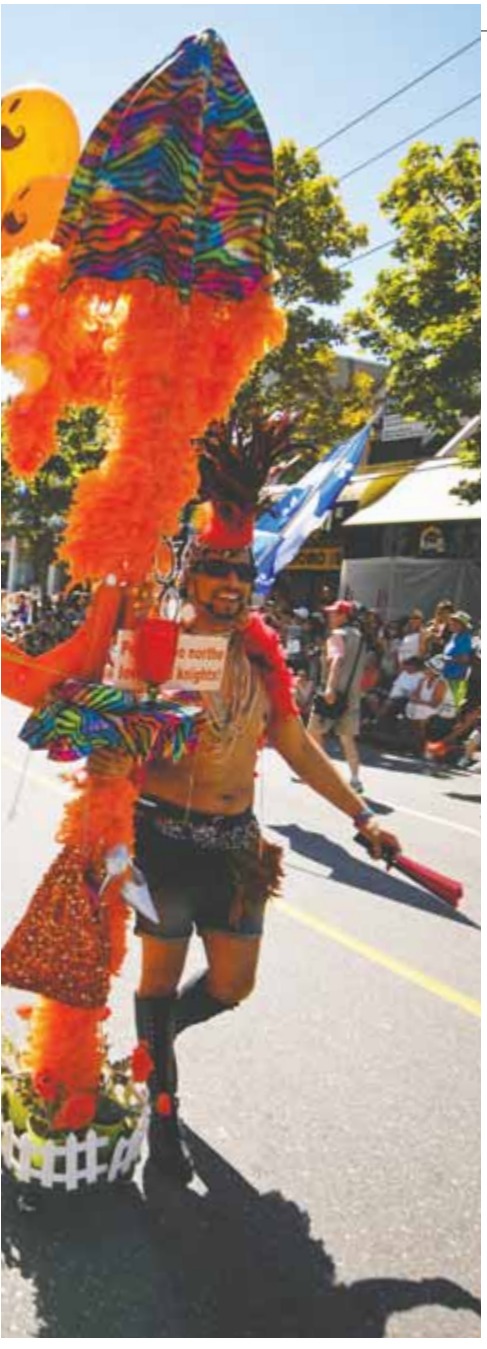








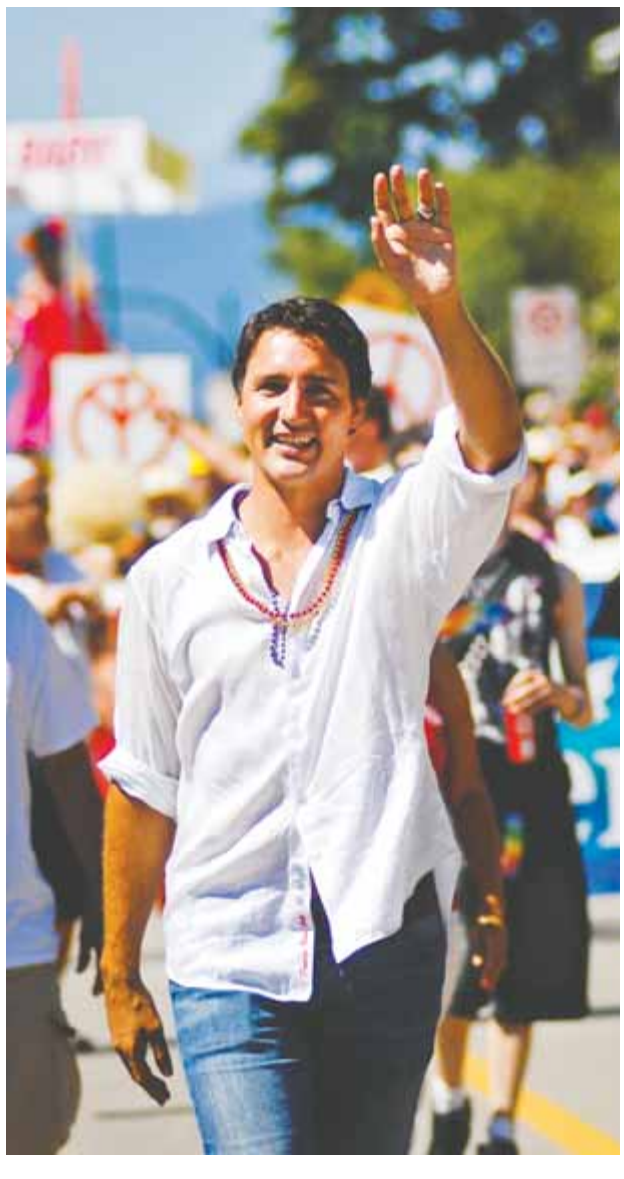


















XPOSED

PRIDE EDITION


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Sunset Beach Festival and Village parties

PHOTOS BY EVAN EISENSTADT

After the parade on Aug 3, Pride-goers partied at Sunset Beach, then took the party up the hill to various venues in the Davie Village.

1› Wil Paer & Sylvain Laquerre 2› Peter Breeze 3› Frances Hanson-Monnie 4› Sven Gerhard & Julie Ferguson 5› Dave & Cameron Mackenzie Deveau 6› Felicity Brammer, Buru Weber & Nel Dumbrille 7› Chris Mathews 8› Boyd Tolton, Renato Gandia & Marley 9› Giuseppe Vienderatti, Janet Getter, Olivia Bella, Juile Houde & Sophia Mivasair


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RuPaul's Drag Race: Battle of the Seasons

PHOTOS BY EVAN EISENSTADT

Pride's biggest party, presented by TFD, saw *Drag Race* stars and fans converge on the Commodore Aug 2.

10› Season 2's Pandora Boxx 11› Season 6's Adore Delano 12› Season 6's Bianca Del Rio 13› Shelly & Saun 14› A *Drag Race* fan 15› Season 3's Manila Luzon 16› Curtis Hunter & Tyler Williamson 17› Season 6's Darienne Lake


16


17



18

Davie Street Block Party

PHOTOS BY DANNY GRAY FOX

Thanks to some last-minute negotiating with the city, the Vancouver Pride Society presented a less-caged version of the Davie Street Block Party on Aug 1, as four-foot fences replaced the previously meshed six-foot barricades. (Read the full story on dailyxtra.com.)

18› Hugo & Shawno 19› Robert Caires & Richard Buchholz 20› Beth Fehr 21› Casha, Monaco & Cici 22› Donya Mehraban 23› Hugh Mitchell, Doug Mitchell, Reid Dalgleish, James Whelan & Harley Morrow 24› Brooke Lynn Hytes on the open-air stage



19


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24

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Authentic cliché

One person's butch/femme stereotype is another couple's truth



ASK THE EXPERT
DR PEGA REN

Dear Dr Ren,

I'm writing in response to the cover photo of a butch/femme couple on the spring/summer edition of *Xtra Living*. The femme is tiny, wasp-waisted and beautifully dressed. The butch is substantial, wearing loose, faded jeans. They are both attractive and smiling, and that's good, but doesn't *Xtra* have a responsibility to challenge stereotypes? Doesn't using such a picture put further pressure on women to appear as either hyper-feminine or über-masculine? Shouldn't we be trying to get away from labels? Doesn't such sex-role stereotyping further our oppression?

— No labels for me

Dear No Labels,

You don't have to change anything about your personal presentation to please anyone but yourself — and those you hope to attract. However, the same must be said for the models on the cover of *Xtra Living*. Personal rights have to extend to everyone.

The butch/femme dynamic is every bit as much of a choice as is yours. The models didn't "dress up" for the picture — this is their preferred presentation. They are responding to their queer values as you are to yours, though it looks different. They support egalitarian ideals and challenge heterosexual norms, queering sex just by being with each other! And, believe me, their dance is not about traditional sex roles.

I heartily agree that *Xtra* bears a responsibility to challenge stereotypes. We expect them, as ambassadors of the gay community, to portray an inclusive representation of our population. They accomplish this goal with pictures and articles about all the various groups in our tribe.



Do they employ stereotypes in doing this? Perhaps. You identified the happy butch/femme couple. Bears would also be recognizable, as would bull dykes, leather daddies and drag queens. Not so obvious would be the vast majority of queer people who pass under the radar unnoticed, including many transgender people.

It is vital to find ourselves represented in society, lest we feel isolated, alone and forgotten. When we recognize ourselves, we feel validated. *Xtra* documents the diversity and viability of our community by including people all along the continuum of visibility. Those depictions can be the first opportunity someone has to say, "There's someone else out there like me," and the process of self-acceptance begins.

Rejecting labels is a lovely ideal, but impractical, I'm afraid. We categorize our world in order to sort the overwhelming input we receive unceasingly. Without filters, chaos would ensue. Some of these filters build community (friend, safety), while others segregate and isolate us (enemy, danger).

Don't want to use them personally? Okay. Don't want to adopt the "uniform" of a particular faction of queerdom? That's good, too. It's optional. You can be loud and proud or quiet and proud — pride is the common denominator.

You don't divulge if or how long you have been out. Coming out can be a slow and laborious process, involving a lot of risks and surprises. Safety becomes paramount. Losses are generally unavoidable to one extent or another. As Dan Savage reminds us, "It gets better."

Seeing others being out and proud — and comfortable with themselves — can seem personally unattainable and can elicit defensiveness, even anger. It can feel like a challenge to our own slow evolution of self-acceptance. Lacking courage, we may resent others for theirs.

If seeing these bold, loving women has triggered you to examine your own process, *Xtra* has succeeded. You needn't change into anything you are not. The point is to grow into whatever you most honestly are, however that looks, however you define it. Diversity is the standard of our community. There is a place for you within it, whether you display your gay self with labels or not. X

Have a question for Dr Ren? Send an email to asktheexpert@dailyxtra.com.



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VIDEO: Vancouver Pride parade 2014
DAILY Xtra
dailyxtra.com



Festival programmer Shana Myara attributes the increasing presence of women directors to a number of factors, including the rise of digital filmmaking. SHAUNA LEWIS

Queer film fest spotlights women

Banner year for female directors

FILM
NATASHA BARSOTTI

The global uproar over Russia's anti-gay laws in the lead-up to the Sochi Winter Olympics may have peaked and abated, but the Vancouver Queer Film Festival intends to keep that country's deep-seated homophobia in the spotlight.

Among its featured films this year is *Children 404*, a documentary named after a web-based sanctuary for LGBT Russian teens, whose name riffs off the error message that pops up when a webpage cannot be found.

The second film in the festival's Queer Russia, With Love package is the award-winning drama *Winter Journey*. Irony of ironies, the Russian ministry of culture approved it for export to international festivals before Vladimir Putin signed the anti-gay law last June.

Children 404 and *Winter Journey* are among more than 80 films from 11 countries that will be screened during the 26th annual Vancouver Queer Film Festival, which runs Aug 14 to 24.

Festival programmer Shana Myara is particularly thrilled that women are at the helm of a significant number of this year's offerings. Women account for only six percent of directors and people in the most influential roles in Hollywood, Myara says, but half this year's festival films were directed by women, who are also well represented among the selection's screenwriters.

"It's one of those landmark moments," Myara says. "I wanted to make sure it was part of the discussion at the Queer Film Festival this year."

She highlights the work of Desiree Akhavan (*Appropriate Behavior*), Sydney Freeland (*Drunktown's Finest*) and Patty Berne (*Sins Invalid*). And it's not just white women directing these films, she notes. "These are the women who are the most rarely seen in these leadership roles in the film industry."

She attributes the increasing visibility to a number of factors, including the rise of digital filmmaking, which makes the playing field more accessible. Myara also points to what she calls a "collective impatience" among women who did not see films that spoke to their experiences so decided to come together, leverage each others' talents and make the films they want to see.

The festival will host a panel discussion Aug 18 with Freeland, Akhavan and Carolyn Combs, of Women in Film and Television Vancouver, to "tease out the why and the how and what's next," Myara says. "Films are still an amazing way of bringing us together and keeping us up to date on how people are living their lives and what is motivating us to express ourselves in certain ways at certain times in history.

"Art has that power to get us thinking and get us talking," she says, "whether you like what you've seen or not." X



Love at first sight

Ghilherme Lobo's portrayal of Leo (left) in the Brazilian film *The Way He Looks* hits all the right notes. VGFF

The Way He Looks authentically captures one blind boy's coming out

While writer/director Daniel Ribeiro may not have created a cutting-edge addition to the queer coming-of-age genre with *The Way He Looks*, he has — due in large part to its uncomplicated nature and strong central characters — created a film that is almost impossible not to love.

Leonardo is a middle-class teenager in a São Paulo private high school. Blind since birth and an only child, he's eager to experience any degree of independence, but his parents are loath to loosen the reins. His smart-talking BFF, Giovanna, guides him — quite literally — through his days. She dictates to him in class, takes him swimming, smacks down the single smartass who attempts to make Leo's life hell, and unlocks the gate to his house. And carries a scorching torch for him that everyone sees. Except Leo.

When the requisite new kid shows up, all the girls — including Giovanna — are a-twitter. And Leo's interest is piqued.

Ribeiro's strength isn't necessarily in his writing (while it's difficult to judge a script heard in translation, *The Way He Looks* feels a bit like an after-school special). Where he shines is in casting. The three characters at the heart of the story are remarkable in their simplicity and truth.

Ghilherme Lobo portrays Leo's struggle toward manhood with a light touch and fascinating physical agility — one moment his face and demeanour project the frustration and intensity of an awkwardly unfurling young man. In the next, he's slipped back into boyish guilelessness, all the while maintaining an uncanny portrayal of sightlessness that has me convinced of its authenticity.

Tess Amorim's Giovanna is note-perfect. She's not the prettiest girl at school and knows it, but she also knows her strength. She's the fiercely loyal friend we all needed in high school — and maybe neglected. Perhaps you've experienced unrequited love, but imagine staring directly into the face of its source and being so completely unseen. She nails it.

Fabio Audi, as Gabriel, has the difficult task of being the third in the triangle. He gets less screen time, but his unassuming, dorky charm grounds him solidly as the apex of dual affections.

The tension for all three lies in the near impossible task of expressing one's affection when that expression may end in disaster. And, particularly in Leo's case, when one is discovering that affection — and its attendant desire — for the very first time.

The linear candour of the film unspools over a sweet and eclectic soundtrack that includes Belle and Sebastian, Brazilian singer/songwriter Tatá Aeroplano, Arvo Pärt, Bach, Brahms and Bowie.

The story is aimed at a young audience and poses an interesting question in an age of visual over-stimulation and the sexualization of younger and younger people: when sight is removed, what senses determine and guide desire? While not answering this specifically, *The Way He Looks* ultimately offers the significant prospect of choosing a life lived openly, with joy and hope.

— Greg Armstrong-Morris

THE WAY HE LOOKS
OPENING GALA
THURS, AUG 14, 7PM
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE
600 HAMILTON ST
REPEATS THURS, AUG 21, 7PM
INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE
88 W PENDER ST



When they're not training, Sieger (Gijs Blom) and Marc (Ko Zandvliet) explore their attraction for one another. VQFF

Sensitive sport

Boys brings tender touch to coming-out story

It takes a special talent to breathe new life into an old story, and *Boys* director Mischa Camp has the sensitivity to pull it off.

The story of a closeted teen boy struggling with his sexual identity has been exhausted in gay film, and yet, perhaps because so many of us can relate from personal experience, we continue to want to watch the struggle play out on screen.

And, of course, when the boy is cute, we can't look away.

Enter Sieger (Gijs Blom), a 15-year-old jock preparing for his track team's championship. He's as sensitive as he is sporty but manages to maintain a cool surface. Only through the subtleties of Blom's performance is his inner conflict revealed.

BOYS
FRI, AUG 15, 7PM,
& MON, AUG 18, 7PM
INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE, 88 W PENDER ST

Track is Sieger's release, where he runs from the shadow of his older brother Eddy (Jonas Smulders) — who, befitting of his last name, is so hot he practically smoulders — and their single father (Ton Kas), who is attempting to keep the family together after the death of their mother.

Sieger isn't truly seen by his father or brother, who are too busy fighting each other to recognize his internal battle. Their distraction makes it easy for Sieger to conceal his truth, but it isn't until a surprise moment of tenderness between him and his trackmate Marc (Ko Zandvliet) that he realizes he has a truth — let alone that it must be concealed.

The tension builds as Sieger, Marc and their buddies ride through the woodlands on bikes, then go for a swim in a lake. Eventually, Sieger and Marc find themselves alone in the water.

The cinematography alone is moving as they cling to the same floating log. When their hands accidentally touch, the anticipation makes my heart stop beating.

Slowly, they overlap their arms and hold each other and then finally share a first kiss sweet enough to make my rigid heart rupture.

But what is left of my heart sinks when Sieger tells Marc, upon emerging from the water, "I'm not gay."

"Of course you're not," Marc replies knowingly.

Predictably, Sieger runs from the boy into the arms of a girl, but the other clichés — like being caught in the gay act by an unrelenting dad — are wisely avoided. Instead, Sieger's unravelling happens internally. What this film may lack in drama it more than makes up for in poignancy. —*Raziel Reid*

Sexy trouble

Robin Campillo's Eastern Boys is stark, suspenseful and surreal

I can't remember the last time I was so riveted by a film, especially the perfect first 30 minutes or so of director Robin Campillo's *Eastern Boys*. It's like Larry Clark's 1995 film *Kids* mixed with the "what the fuck is gonna happen next?" intensity of Michael Haneke's 2007 film *Funny Games*. It plays with your brain and your loins.

Olivier Rabourdin plays Daniel, a tired, middle-aged Frenchman cruising Paris's Gare du Nord. We watch him as if by surveillance, with the camera shooting from way above, never zooming in close to the many young Ukrainian, Russian and other Eastern European boys who weave through the crowds of train passengers. Even from a distance, with the boys' posturing, cigarettes dangling on their lips, the new sneakers — we just know these bad boys, the gang of them, are sexy trouble.

Daniel senses the danger, but that's also the thrill. He's obsessed with one boy and follows him to a secluded area under a staircase in a shopping centre. The boy's name is Marek (Kirill Emelyanov), and he agrees to meet the next day for sex at Daniel's sleek apartment. It'll cost Daniel 50 euros.

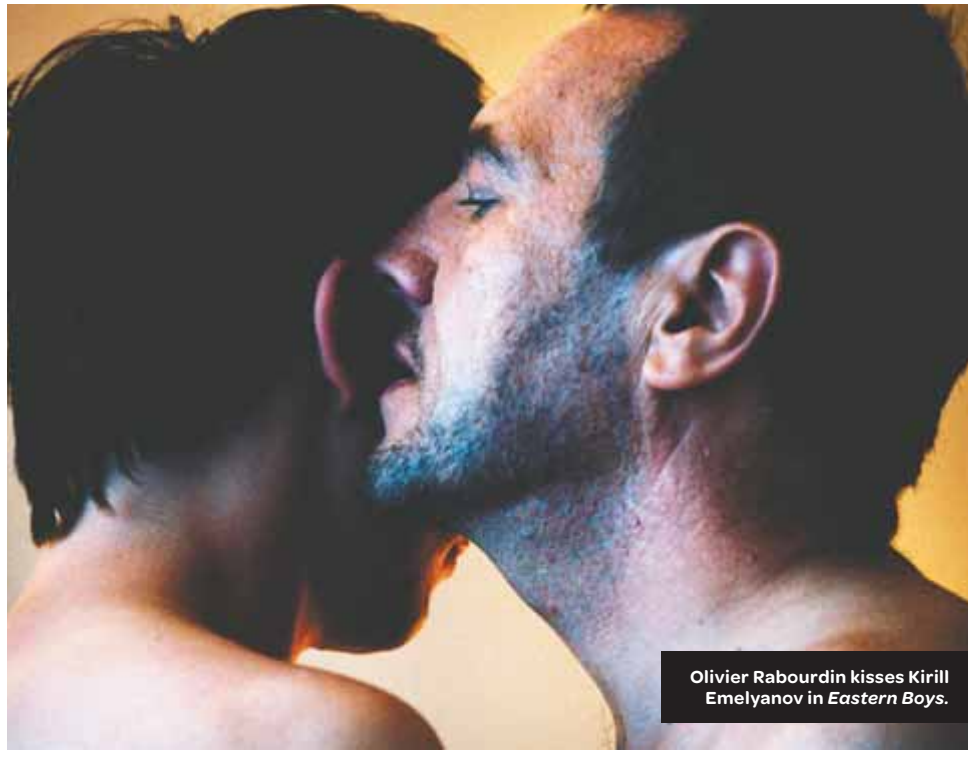
EASTERN BOYS
FRI, AUG 15, 9PM
THURS, AUG 21, 9:15PM
INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE, 88 W PENDER ST

The next day there's a knock on Daniel's door; it's a boy no more than 14, and he's definitely not Marek. We the audience know this kid is a member of the gang.

There's a constant feeling of suspense and danger in *Eastern Boys*, a hovering sense that something monumentally horrendous is going to happen to Daniel or Marek. Yet most scenes are shot in bright, sunny daylight. It has the stark coldness of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*: streets are vacant, stores lack shoppers. And I never knew there are parts of Paris that look like Surrey.

Mind blown. —*Sissydude*

Watch our interview with the director on dailyxtra.com.



Olivier Rabourdin kisses Kirill Emelyanov in *Eastern Boys*.

Distant, dusty hope

Drunktown's Finest takes a nuanced look at life on a Navajo reservation

DRUNKTOWN'S FINEST
SUN, AUG 17, 7PM
INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE
88 W PENDER ST
DIRECTOR IN ATTENDANCE

Welcome to Dry Lake, a well-named and unpromising town located near a Navajo reservation in picturesque New Mexico. Poor and ramshackle, the dusty area and its downtrodden inhabitants have seen better days.

It's a place, according to the opening voiceover of *Drunktown's Finest*, that people are meant to leave yet rarely do.

For her third feature, director Sydney Freeland zeroes in on three Navajo teens. Trans actress Carmen Moore plays Felix John, a two-spirit woman and part-time prostitute whose Facebook page identifies her as Felixia, a "sexy tranny" who dreams of hitting the big time in New York City as a model.

Luther Maryboy (aka SickBoy) has joined the army in a vain attempt to escape trouble. It follows him nevertheless.

And Nizhoni, adopted by a Caucasian couple when her own parents died in a drunk driving accident, is about to begin college in far-off Michigan. Locals refer to her "an apple" ("red on the outside, white on the inside"), and she yearns for a meaningful connection with the culture of her birth.

Because the opening minutes appear so loaded with bad portents, watching the taut plot unfold feels nerve-wracking and similar to a horror movie: the question isn't if something terrible will happen, but what and how soon?

Freeland's story follows the trio over a period of a few summer days. In keeping with a bleak view of American teen lives (seen in *Spring Breakers* and *Kids*, for instance), their routines centre on parties, fistfights, quarrels, schemes and Glocks. This is especially true of SickBoy, whose noble attempt to provide for his family-to-be is undermined by his volcanic anger and attraction to criminal shortcuts.

Likewise, Felixia's naive fantasy of becoming a model mixes uncomfortably with the recklessness of her sex work.

These kids seem adrift and, the absorbing story implies, lost, neither fully fitting into American culture nor benefiting from the remnants of Navajo teachings.

Despite the dark omens, Freeland offers these kids a lovely glimpse of a future that doesn't end with violence, incarceration or death. Instead of a miserable fate, her story sets up possibilities for different, better futures.

There's still the probable outcome, yes. But there's another distant hope that offers these kids oppressed by history and poverty the chance to eke out a happier life than the one Dry Lake has so far shown them. —*Brett Josef Grubisic*



Trans actress Carmen Moore plays Felixia, a two-spirit Navajo teen who longs for a big-city life. VQFF



VIDEO: BAD HAIR

Watch our video interview with Venezuelan filmmakers Mariana Rondón and Marité Ugás as they talk about their film and its nine-year-old hero's determination to shine, regardless of the family and social forces that would force him to conform. Go to dailyxtra.com.

BAD HAIR
SUN, AUG 17, 9PM
SFU'S GOLDCORP CENTRE FOR THE ARTS, 149 W HASTINGS ST



The Turkish documentary *My Child* shows the power of parental love and the possibility for change. VQFF

Transforming Turkey

My Child shows that unconditional love can develop over time

"I thought homosexuality was not normal, back then," confides one of the five mothers interviewed in *My Child*, Can Candan's heartwarming documentary about the complexities of raising lesbian, transgender and gay kids in Turkey.

Characteristic of the parents featured, this mother's anxious initial responses were founded on the depressingly familiar perspectives she'd absorbed from social orthodoxy: that sexual minorities of all types are shameful, sinful or diseased, and that prayer, secrecy, denial and corrective measures (based on unhelpful advice from doctors, school counsellors and psychiatrists) are acceptable counter-measures.

The arc of Candan's story is hopeful, though. By the end, this mother not only has a close relationship with her son, but is handing out rainbow pamphlets with other parents, marching in Istanbul's 20th Pride march and actively working to get an anti-discrimination statute passed by the Turkish parliament.

The first half of Candan's film features seven parents speaking candidly to a camera. They're from all walks of life and forthright about their expectations for their children and their lack of tools for handling their children's differences. One mother admits to harassing her son to "behave more like a man." Another parent prayed, "Please, God, make this right," while another confesses her own suicidal thoughts stemming from the stigma of having a gay child.

"I thought he was psychotic," one parent admits, while another says she now feels aghast that she avoided the topic for an entire decade.

It's honest if painful viewing. Though specifically addressing Turkish parents, the story resonates because it's so universal.

Gradually, the true bonds with their children make the parents realize that their choice — between their own children and the homophobic forces of social convention that ostracize and hurt — is no choice at all: love trumps everything.

MY CHILD
MON, AUG 18, 9PM
INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE, 88 W PENDER ST

The second part of the film opens with a meeting. Years after their initial missteps, the parents now belong to a vocal LGBT parents' group. But society lags. Turkey's minister of family affairs still regards homosexuality as "a sickness." The parents know that as long as such beliefs exist, their children and others remain in danger of exclusion, discrimination and harm.

The parents have become full-fledged activists.

Despite its optimism, *My Child* doesn't skip over the hard work of overcoming prejudice. And traumatic anecdotes passed between the parents about a brutal murder and a transgender friend abducted by angry men with weapons remind everyone of the work that still needs to be done.
—Brett Josef Grubisic

Self-defence denied

Out in the Night asks why four black lesbians went to jail

Reckless stereotypes, undisguised loathing of difference, and homophobia are among the themes *Out in the Night* explores when it revisits the case of seven lesbians arrested for fighting back against the man who attacked them in New York's West Village in August 2006.

With few facts, the headlines trumpeted "Lesbian gang-stab shocker" and "Attack of the killer lesbians" among others. The judicial system proved no better. Footage from only two of five security cameras was presented in court, and the jury didn't hear testimony from a male witness who came to the women's defence. Moreover, the extent of the "victim's" injuries was exaggerated at trial.

As *Out in the Night* unfolds, it becomes clear that more diligent scrutiny may have led to a different outcome for the four women who ended up in prison, with sentences ranging from three and a half to 11 years.

OUT IN THE NIGHT
MON, AUG 18, 9:30PM
SFU GOLDCORP CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
149 HASTINGS ST

It is an indictment of itchy, trigger-finger journalism and reminiscent of screaming headlines in Ugandan newspapers like *Rolling Stone*, infamous for outing gay people, or the fast-talking, aggressive sensationalism of North America's Fox News and CNN.

"The media doesn't tell the whole story," Renata Hill's mother says after the guilty verdict is handed down. "They didn't tell how my daughter was attacked, how she was choked. It's called gaybashing, but they won't call it that. They call it everything but that."

Cruising a landscape of tractor-trailer containers, for-rent signs, elegant but worn townhouses, and people milling on the streets, the film offers more nuanced insight into the four women, their poignant and joyful lives, and their Newark neighbourhood that is a complicated blend of home and hell.

Being gay is not an issue with their families, Hill says. But venturing out of their neighbourhood is another question. "People in the north aren't really cool with it."

For Patreese Johnson, who has lost two brothers to the neighbourhood's violence, self-preservation is second nature. It's why she carried the knife that she used in self-defence against the man who attacked them, who said he wanted "some of that" as he pointed to her crotch, who spat at them, called them dyke bitches, offered to fuck them straight, and ripped a handful of dreads from one woman's head during the street fight.

When the women ventured into the West Village, they thought they were immersing themselves in an area where people "looked like us," where they would hit some clubs, "get a few numbers" and then go home.

Instead, their night on the town earned them charges for weapon possession, gang assault and attempted murder, with the prosecutor threatening 25 years behind bars if they didn't plead guilty to the charges. Three of the women accepted the plea bargain. The other four rejected it, maintaining that they acted in self-defence against a gaybasher. The court incarcerated them for it. *—Natasha Barsotti*



Renata Hill (right) and her friends ended up in jail for resisting the man who attempted to gaybash them. LYRIC CABRAL



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Ticketing	Regular	Discounted*
Membership	$5	$2
Single & Gala Film Ticket	$12	$8
Six Pack	$66	$42
Scotiabank Super Pass	$165	$135

*Discounted memberships are for youth only. Discounted ticket/SUPER PASS prices available for students and seniors with valid ID, and underemployed patrons [no verification required.]

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queerfilmfestival.ca

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Questions?

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At the Door

Based on availability, tickets may be purchased at the theatre where the film is screening. The box office opens 30 minutes prior to the first screening of the day.

Free iPhone App

Stay informed! The Festival iPhone app is your mobile Festival guide, schedule and more. Find your way around the venues and to hot parties afterwards! Brought to you by the Festies at B'stro.

THURSDAY | AUG 14

Opening Gala



The Way He Looks
7pm | Vancouver Playhouse | CC
As a blind teenager in a small Brazilian town, Leonardo is weary of his overprotective parents and bullying classmates. Everything changes when a new boy, Gabriel, transfers into his class, and Leonardo's struggle for identity and independence takes on new direction.

Opening Gala Party
10pm | FanClub
$5 Membership required
Join us in this unique space for special performances by Liz Milton on the grand piano and Madame Mae I on the whiskey bar. DJ G-Luve will keep your feet moving with pop-up performances by Kira Schaffer on aerials! Enjoy delicious snacks from the FanClub kitchen.

FRIDAY | AUG 15

BOYS (Jongens)
7pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
Training together for a relay track championship, Sieger begins to feel a mutual attraction with Marc. He immediately distracts himself with a new activity, motocross, and pursues a relationship with Jessica. Will the boys have another chance at romance before the race is over?

Appropriate Behavior
7pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
Shirin is closeted to her progressive yet traditional Persian family, self-absorbed and socially clueless. After a break-up with her girlfriend, she rebels on a pansexual exploration to figure out just what went wrong.

Eastern Boys
9pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
A seductive drama/thriller/love story about a middle-aged businessman, Daniel and a beautiful young hustler, Marek.

A Street in Palermo
930pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts | CC
En route to a wedding, Rosa and Clara are on the verge of breaking up—and they're lost. In the confines of a narrow street, the modern couple drives smack into a right-of-way standoff with the Calfiore family. To budge would be to concede defeat. Not an option!

SATURDAY | AUG 16

Secrets of Successful Crowdfunding
2pm | Tides Canada | FREE
What strategies and resources do you need to make crowdfunding successful? Learn from someone who's done it well! Writer/director/producer Maureen Bradley takes us through all the stages of her successful crowd funding campaign for the micro-budget feature, Two 4 One.
Register by emailing workshops@outonscreen.com

Aquaporko! + Grrrls in Space
430pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
Dive into a world of sisterhood, queer community and radical body politics! Presented alongside **We Won't Wanna Marry**, **Little Vulvah and Her Clitoral Awareness**, **Waack Revolt**, **Orbitas** (a Pixar-like dreamscape of intergalactic femme romance) and so much more.

Crashing the Porn Party
7pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
What kind of porn do pornographers like to watch? Feminist Porn Award's "Visionary" and Pink & White Production's founding director Shine Louise Houston in collaboration with queer porn star Jiz Lee curate a show-and-tell of erotic short films slanted towards a lesbian persuasion.

GRIND: Hookup Shorts
715pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
One cute awkward guy asks his suave friend to imitate him on hookup sites—and even better yet, it all takes place as a musical! Gaysian delivers pure comedy gold as it pokes fun at those who declare "No Asians" in their dating profiles.

The Foxy Merkins
9pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
Neurotic, schlumpy and the least likely of a line-up of lesbians to be an escort, Margaret finds her way to sex work with the help of the wry, seasoned pro Jo. They cruise upscale New York neighbourhoods awkwardly, looking for rich Republican tricks outside of women's clothing stores.

Club King
930pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
Mario Diaz knows how to throw a party and he's been doing it for decades. He's hot, his friends are hot and his go-go boys are hotter. This energizing documentary by Jon Bush features colourful tales of pissing contests, costume crises—and unending respect for the man they call the Party Master.

Funk 'n Grind with Queer as Funk
10pm | The Imperial
$5 Membership required
Queer as Funk brings together nine of the city's hottest queer musicians in an explosive, high-energy dance band. Drag diva Anna Propriette and burlesque star Just Call Her Heather start off a night of sexy visuals by Erica-Lapadat Janzen and music by DJs Daniel Pitout and Kasey Riot. Watch for guests Mario Diaz and Jon Bush from Club King and Shine Louise Houston from Crashing the Porn Party.

SUNDAY | AUG 17

Queer Families Picnic
1030am | Granville Island | FREE
Blast a rainbow assortment of kazoos and sing along with the Dukes of Uke, then dance to the beats of Disco, Baby! Bring a blanket and some snacks, and join us for a queer families' picnic on the grassy field behind the False Creek Community Centre, beside the Granville Island Waterpark.

KinderKino: Films for Kids!
12pm | Studio 1398 | FREE
Hey Kids! Bring your families to this fun collection of whimsical short films—there's animation and music, and plenty of stories about kids like you from around the world!

Not Your Parents' Poetry
330pm-5pm | Studio 1398 | FREE
Join Out On Screen and Poetry Is Dead for a youth-focussed workshop on writing poetry for the page and the stage. Facilitators will lead youth ages 15-25 through writing prompts and creative writing exercises to produce a variety of poems, to be presented at the Poetry Isn't Dead Youth Showcase (see below.)

Through a Lens Darkly
430pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
Gay artist and filmmaker Thomas Allen Harris presents a fascinating exploration of the history of African Americans in pictures and the power of self-expression in reclaiming a national identity. Allen assembles a collection of rare portraits dating back to 1840, and moves forward in time.

Poetry isn't Dead
7pm | Studio 1398 | FREE
Slamming poetic talents and the voices of today and tomorrow. Leading Vancouver-based poets join forces with young wordsmiths from the Not Your Parents' Poetry youth workshop who have so much to say—about gender, love, and the exhilaration of sharing one's voice and stories.



Drunktown's Finest
Spotlight Director: Sydney Freeland
7pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
Explore the intersecting stories of three seemingly disparate young people of the Navajo Nation: obedient Nizhoni, winsome Felixia and unruly Sick Boy. In her breakout role, transgender actress Carmen Moore artfully portrays Felixia, a two-spirit or Nadleeh woman whose dreams of being a model overlap with her desire to be respected in her own community.

Test
7pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts | ASL
This is San Francisco, 1985. HIV has invaded the city, bringing with it headlines speculating on gay quarantines. Todd offers unexpected support to Frankie, but his boasts of risky sexual adventures tangle suspicion and resentment into their developing friendship.

Bad Hair (Pelo Malo)
9pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts | CC
As Marta becomes increasingly embittered under the weight of

economic inequality, she reacts more cruelly to her son Junior's antics, who wants nothing more than to straighten his hair and become a performer.

A Self-Made Man
930pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
From the tattoo parlour to his work as a gregarious trans youth support group facilitator, Tony Ferriaolo generously invites us into his life, sharing reflections about his own masculinity and story of gender transition. Youth voices feature strongly in this refreshing, short documentary.

MONDAY | AUG 18

Young 'n Fierce 'n Fabulous
4pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
An eclectic mix of shorts featuring a grrrl-fuelled rock 'n roll bang in Dreamworld Waiting, the thoughtful local Asian activists of Radicalizing Intimacy, some sweetly Crushed skateboarders, and the Princess himself. Out in Schools facilitators will make an appearance too!

BOYS (Jongens)
7pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
See AUG 15 for film details.

SA Street in Palermo
930pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts | CC
See AUG 15 for film details.

My Child
9pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
A documentary told from the perspective of a handful of parents in Istanbul who've taken the journey with their children as they've come to terms with their queer and trans identities.

Out in the Night
930pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
A fun night out in New York City's West Village changed the lives of seven young African-American lesbian women forever in August 2006 when an act of street harassment turned violent. This gripping documentary explores how public perceptions related to the race, sexuality, gender and class of the accused women significantly impacted their case and trial.

TUESDAY | AUG 19

I Feel Like Disco
+ panel, "Hey Hey My Kid is Gay" with Alumni UBC
630pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
Florian is everything his stern swim coach father wishes he were not: tubby, a dreamer, and gay. But when illness strikes Florian's mom, they must band together and work through their differences.

Boy + Sikat + Das Phallometer
715pm | Vancity Theatre
Caught between the dreams of others, this undocumented Filipino immigrant, "Boy," exists behind the scenes working as a caregiver for a wealthy Dutch man, financially supporting both his family back home and his lover, who pursues his ambitions as a dancer in erotic clubs.



Love is Strange
930pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
After 39 years together, Ben (John Lithgow) and George (Alfred Molina) take advantage of the new marriage laws. On account of their vows, Ben gets fired from his longtime job as a choir director for a co-ed Catholic school. Left with no savings, the couple finds themselves depending on their friends for support.

Pierrot Lunaire
930pm | Vancity Theatre | CC
In this gender-bending operatic thriller, our butch dandy hero is consumed by passion, willing to forgo all reason to find the thing that will make him worthy in the eyes of his lady's father. Seductive and haunting, it is a gruesome and compelling tale that takes its place among some of the world's best melodramas.

WEDNESDAY | AUG 20

Changemakers
6pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
Our newest local showcase covers issues ranging from advocating for the agricultural land reserve (Hands in the Dirt) to exposing the military's shameful treatment of LGBT soldiers (Citizen Jane), and queers living in poverty (Under the Rainbow)—as well as an intimate portrait of trans poet activist Antonette Rea (A Woman With a Past).

Test
630pm | Vancity Theatre
See AUG 17 for film details.

The Coast is Queer
815pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
Lovingly and queerly crafted shorts from the ones we love the most—our local artists! From poignant to downright weird, this homegrown selection offers a tiny bit of nudity and plenty of words of wisdom. Followed by the Meet Your Makers Party!

Kate Bornstein is a Queer and Pleasant Danger
9pm | Vancity Theatre | ASL
Join Kate on her latest tour! As a trailblazing artist-theorist-activist who inhabits a space between male and female with wit, style and astonishing candour, she adheres to her own motto, "Do whatever it takes to make your life worth living. Just don't be mean."

Meet your Makers Party
1030pm | Club 23 West
$5 Membership required
Following The Coast is Queer join us for thumpin' music by DJ Furiousgreencloud and DJ ManyBothans with VJ Sister Danielle Gotell. Plus Tin Can Studio—a unique mobile project space housed in a vintage 18-foot trailer to greet you in Blood Alley. Don't miss this chance to celebrate our fab local artists!

THURSDAY | AUG 21

Appropriate Behavior
430pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
See AUG 15 for film details.

Centrepiece Gala



Children 404
7pm | Vancouver Playhouse | CC
In response to Russian leader Vladimir Putin's 2013 outlawing of "gay propaganda," activist Elena Klimova created Children 404, an online forum for Russian-speaking LGBT teens. For this, Klimova is currently awaiting trial. Last year, Russia's teen suicide rates were ranked the highest in Europe. For subscribers to Children 404, it's a lifeline.

The Way He Looks
7pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
See Opening Gala for film details.

Eastern Boys
915pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
See AUG 15 for film details.

FRIDAY | AUG 22

Tru Love
7pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
Tru is a serial bed-hopping lesbian who cannot commit to a relationship or a job for long. She meets Alice, a widow who has come to town to visit her daughter, Suzanne, a too-busy corporate lawyer, and Tru's ex. When sparks fly between Tru and Alice, Suzanne resorts to sabotage.

The Third One (El Tercero)
730pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
Young Fede agrees to meet older Franco and his boyfriend at their downtown apartment for some intimate fun. The evening doesn't start off quite as you might expect, but all three know where it is leading.

Salvation Army
9pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
Hailed by the Moroccan press as the first man "to have the courage to publicly assert his difference," in a country where homosexuality is still a crime, this award-winning feature debut is Abdellah Taïa's cinematic retelling of his roundly acclaimed autobiographical novel.

Quick Change
930pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts | CC
Enter the sketchy world of Manila's back-alley collagen buys and underground breast implants. Although the community of transwomen relies heavily on these services, 'affordability' comes at a cost, and that cost is both safety and quality of product.

Friends & Co VQFF Mingler
10pm | 1181 | $25
Tix at: friendsandcompany.ca
Get your Festival flirt on! This special event is presented by Friends & Company, Vancouver's leading network for LGBTQ-friendly business people, professionals and allies. Benefits Out in Schools. With DJ Quest, door prizes and silent auction. Hosted by Joan-E.

SATURDAY | AUG 23

Casting Essentials
1pm | Tides Canada | FREE
This workshop will address essentials of casting for emerging and mid-career artists. Edward Rea and Richard Bell will use their newest project Brotherhood as a case study. Register by emailing workshops@outonscreen.com

POWER
430pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
An edgy, hip hop cabaret show featuring refugee, immigrant and indigenous youth struggling with everything from racism and sexism to gang violence and parental abandonment. POWER is a soaring testament to the transformative power of art.

The Dog
645pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village
Described as an "unapologetic, sex-crazed bank robber," John Wojtowicz (aka "The Dog") takes us to the New York bars and parks where he cruised for sex while married to his first wife, to the Marriage License Bureau where he protested for the right to same-sex marriage, and even to the bank he famously robbed.

Of Girls and Horses
7pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts | CC
Sixteen-year old Alex is sent to a remote horse ranch in an attempt to keep her out of trouble for the summer. When Kathy, a privileged teenage rider, comes to stay at the farm to improve her horsemanship, a playful summer friendship turns into romance.

Winter Journey
9pm | Cineplex Odeon at International Village | CC
When a violent street thug, Lyokha, steals Erik's phone, the refined conservatory student becomes captivated rather than repelled. When the thief gets in touch with Erik later, Erik willingly steps right out of his own rigidly disciplined world into chaos.



Anita's Last Cha Cha (Ang Huling Cha Cha ni Anita)
9pm | SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts | CC
Twelve-year-old Anita spots a mystery woman, Pilar, during the Bulacan fertility fiesta and declares, "That's the woman I'm going to marry!" Amidst celebration, song and food, the local gossips are fixated on figuring out which demons lurk in Pilar's past.

SUNDAY | AUG 24
Closing Gala



GIRLTRASH: All Night Long
7pm | Vancouver Playhouse
You know when you just want to rock but your bass player is up to her elbows in groupies, your little sister just turned gay today, and your ex is going to be at the party with her new girlfriend? What's a future rockstar to do when the criminal underlord comes knocking and she carries a big stick? Rock, of course!

Closing Gala Party
10pm | The Junction Pub | $5 Membership required
Wrap up the Festival among friends! A lantern procession lead by The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence takes you from the Closing Gala film to the Closing Gala at Junction Pub. Featuring: Isolde N Barron, the Digital Boys, Lady Jem, Ryan & Amy and DJs Jay Douglas and Extra Feeling.

For more information and full film listings:

queerfilmfestival.ca | VancouverQFF | @queerfilmfest | #festies2014



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Xtra and the **Vancouver Latin American Film Festival** bring you a chance to win a pair of tickets to ***Disrupted*** (***Quebranto***), screening Tuesday, Sept 2 at 9:15pm at The Cinematheque.

To enter, send your name and phone number to contest.vancouver@dailyxtra.com, with "Contest: Disrupted" in the subject line, before Thursday, Aug 28. Some restrictions apply. Only winners will be contacted.



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From Russia, with hope

Two Russian films suggest escape is the only option



Alexey Frandetti and Evgeniy Tkachuk in *Winter Journey*. VQFF

Last summer, things looked bad for gay Russians. The national assembly passed a law in June 2013 effectively banning public discussion of gay rights, and vigilantes began hunting gay teenagers and torturing them, then posting the videos on YouTube. Several months later, the Sochi Olympics shone a harsh spotlight on gay life in Russia, but what happened after the activists, reporters and camera crews went home?

The Olympics are over, and the news has moved on to more pressing problems, such as Russia's new hobby of dismantling Ukraine. But in Russia, the authorities have not relented in their campaign against their gay citizens: in July they rejected all parade routes proposed by Pride organizers in St Petersburg, then arrested a gay man for carrying a sign police said violated the anti-gay-propaganda law. What are gay Russians supposed to do?

CHILDREN 404
THURS, AUG 21, 7PM
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE
600 HAMILTON ST

WINTER JOURNEY
SAT, AUG 23, 9PM
INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE
88 W PENDER ST

The two Russian films showing at Vancouver's Queer Film Festival this year send one inescapable message: the only thing for Russian gay people to do is leave, as quickly as possible.

Pavel Loparev and Askold Kurov's documentary *Children 404* follows the eponymous web forum, a place for Russian gay teenagers to support each other in a hostile society. Founder Elena Klimova faces government pressure to shut the site down while fielding dozens of emails a day from children disowned by their parents, abused by their classmates and ridiculed by their teachers. Meanwhile, teenager Pasha prepares to leave Russia for school in Toronto.

Children 404 feels like footage from a war zone. Shaky hidden cameras show the non-stop casual abuse heaped on Pasha when he steps outside, and we watch him hunch into protective indifference under the barrage. The subjects look like they got three hours of sleep the night before being interviewed and talk about their lives with sardonic, defeated acceptance.

There are, of course, moments of hope. Pasha and his friends gather outside a suicidal boy's window to shout slogans of hope and reassurance. One woman becomes a surrogate mother to homeless gay boys, rescuing them from the freezing streets of Moscow.



Children 404 feels like footage from a war zone. VQFF

Pasha soon realizes that he will not be able to lead a normal, happy life in Russia. Klimova says she will stay on and fight for gay rights but admits it is hard to blame the many gay couples looking for the fastest exit.

"Almost all the couples I meet through the internet are thinking of leaving the country. Right now, right at this moment," she says. "They are all too scared."

In Sergey Taramaev and Lyuba Lvova's fictional film *Winter Journey*, budding opera singer Eric (Alexey Frandetti) becomes fascinated with a violent and unpredictable thief, Lekha (Evgeniy Tkachuk), who steals his phone. Eric is stuck between the rigid world of opera and his own awkward homosexuality and spirals into drug- and vodka-fuelled oblivion, Lekha in tow. That the object of Eric's fantasies is a boorish thug speaks to the strangling forces of Russian hypermasculinity.

Like *Children 404*, *Winter Journey*'s most pervasive theme is escape, played out through Eric's search for anesthesia. Faced with the impossible contradictions of his life, Eric escapes first into alcohol and then into obsession with a stranger. He even tries to escape Russia to Mumbai with Lekha and, failing, dives finally into fantasy and self-destruction. *Winter Journey* is worth watching for its blend of chilling cinematography and music alone.

Children 404 ends on a note of hope, with Pasha taking off for Toronto and a new and better life. *Winter Journey* ends in a moment of despair, overtaken by the bitter Russian winter. The fiction, while beautiful and insightful, does not live up to the stark brutality of the documentary.

"History proves that things change for the better. So we have hope," Klimova says defiantly. You don't have to speak Russian to know that even she struggles to believe it.
—Niko Bell

Watch *Xtra*'s video interview with one of the youth from *Children 404* on dailyxtra.com.

Ménage à blah

The Third One is hot but hampered by dinner-table talk

You can watch *The Third One*, or you can meet your own random couple online and then go over to their house to get double penetrated. It'll probably be more exciting.

The film starts as an online chat between 22-year-old Fede, played by Emiliano Dionisi, and a gay couple, played by Carlos Echevarría and Nicolás Armengol. Their chat is intercut with porn shots to give a visual of their increasingly raunchy talk.

Eventually, the online flirtation leads to Fede being invited over to the couple's house for dinner and play. It's a classic fantasy: one twink and two daddies. You've seen this movie before on a porn website, and it probably took only 10 minutes or so for you to get to the happy ending. *The Third One* is a bit more of an investment. It runs just a little longer than an hour, but the anticipation makes it feel like it'll never end.

THE THIRD ONE
FRI, AUG 22, 7:30PM
INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE
88 W PENDER ST

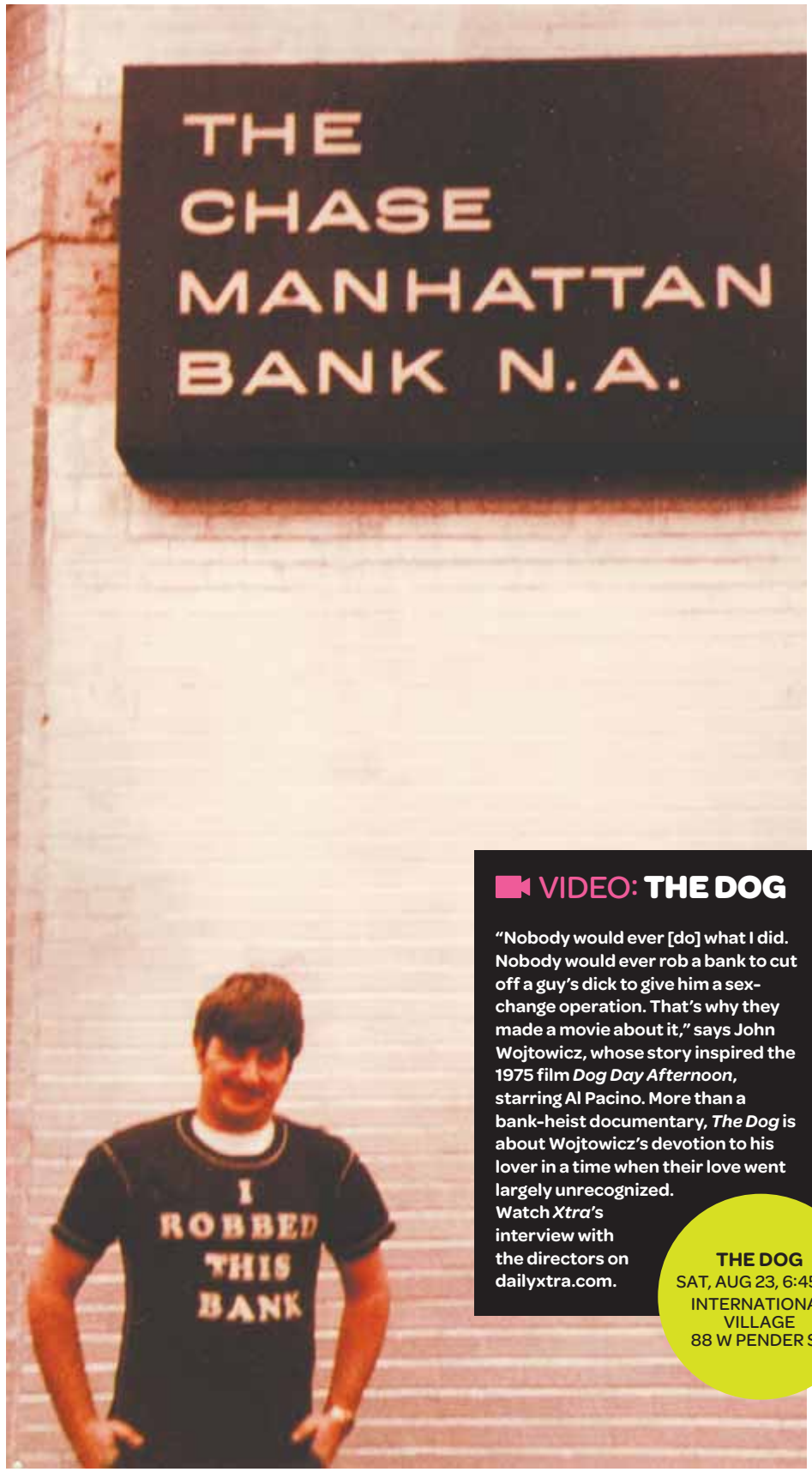
Writer and director Rodrigo Guerrero does a beautiful job of creating authentic characters. The film is very real. Maybe too real. The dialogue is mostly small talk, and the scenes have a voyeuristic feel like you're witnessing an actual hookup. The awkwardness between Fede and the couple is endearing; their chemistry is hot, even if the dinner conversation drags on.

There are subtitles, as the trio converses in Spanish, but they're much less engaging than the well-played subtext. It's sweet to watch the way Fede's eyes open to the different forms relationship and love can take as the ménage à trois progresses. But the tedious dialogue and lack of plot have me checking out. The only thing that keeps my attention is knowing that after dinner Fede's hole will never be the same.

Doubling up on Argentine beef may not be a typical dessert, but it, uh, sure hits the spot. The sex scene in *The Third One* is gratuitously long and not as daring as I'd hoped. The ass shots aren't enough to keep me stimulated, which is disappointing, because there is such an extensive buildup. At least the porn clips at the beginning of the film got my blood flowing. But it's unfortunate that by the time the story reaches its climax, the flow is at a standstill and I realize this film isn't going to help me reach mine. —*Raziel Reid*



The dinner may be long and awkward, but the after-dinner mint sure hits the spot in *The Third One*. VQFF



VIDEO: THE DOG

"Nobody would ever [do] what I did. Nobody would ever rob a bank to cut off a guy's dick to give him a sex-change operation. That's why they made a movie about it," says John Wojtowicz, whose story inspired the 1975 film *Dog Day Afternoon*, starring Al Pacino. More than a bank-heist documentary, *The Dog* is about Wojtowicz's devotion to his lover in a time when their love went largely unrecognized. Watch *Xtra*'s interview with the directors on dailyxtra.com.

THE DOG
SAT, AUG 23, 6:45PM
INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE
88 W PENDER ST

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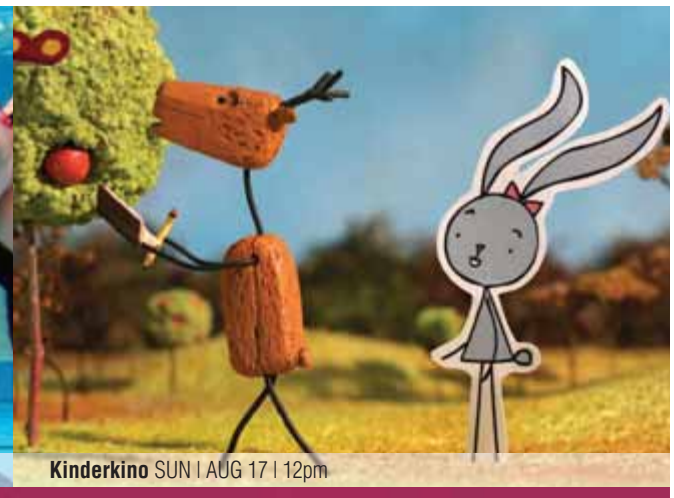
Queer Russia, With Love | Women Transforming Cinema | Sunday/FUNday



Children 404 THU | AUG 21 | 7pm



Aquaporko! & Grrrls in Space SAT | AUG 16 | 430pm



Kinderkino SUN | AUG 17 | 12pm

and films!



Club King SAT | AUG 16 | 930pm



Boys (Jongens) FRI | AUG 15 | 7pm / MON | AUG 18 | 7pm



Eastern Boys FRI | AUG 15 | 9pm / THU | AUG 21 | 915pm

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"We want you to walk away feeling sexy and wanting to go home and look at yourself naked." Cameron Chase ▸28

Consent is not enough

More Than Two challenges accepted polyamory pacts

IN PRINT
NIKO BELL

French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre is perhaps the most prolific non-monogamist of the last century. His lifelong open relationship with philosopher and feminist (and bisexual) Simone de Beauvoir, with whom he shared a belief in authentic personal freedom, is legendary. He was not, however, entirely ethical.

Philosophical historian Louis Menand, in *The New Yorker*, documents how Sartre deceived, swindled and manipulated his way through a long list of lovers, leaving a trail of resentment and broken hearts behind him. Perfect authentic freedom, in Sartre's case, was licence to be a dick.

Modern polyamory, as with Sartre, often expresses itself as a desire for freedom: freedom from tradition, monogamy, boredom or sex-negativity. Traditional relationship rules are replaced with self-tailored agreements, anything being acceptable as long as it is agreed to. Unfortunately, as with Sartre, it is quite possible to keep agreements and still be a pain in the ass.

Writers Franklin Veaux, from Portland, and Eve Rickert, from Vancouver, take a stab at this problem in their new book *More Than Two: A Practical Guide to Ethical Polyamory*.

Veaux and Rickert argue that, while there may be no perfect way to be non-monogamous, there are certainly some very bad ones. Among them, they list hierarchical relationships, "primary" partners, vetoes and non-negotiable relationship rules.

Even if these pacts are mutual, the authors say, the inevitable emotional repercussions are often too much for a relationship to bear.

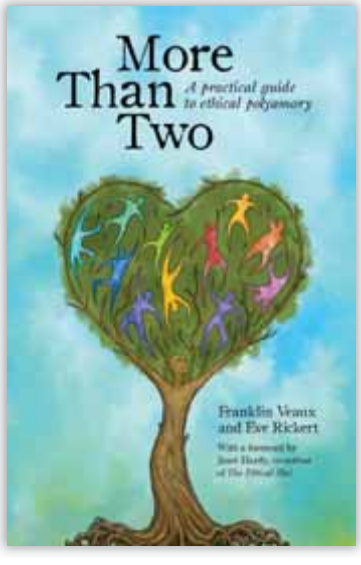
Hierarchical and veto agreements, in which one partner controls what happens to others, Veaux and Rickert say, are most often driven by fear and insecurity. "Many people say, 'I need rules in my relationship,'" they write, "but what they actually need is … something like security or stability, a sense of empowerment, predictability, or safety."

Instead of acting decently, *More Than Two*'s case-study subjects create rules to protect themselves and then treat their partners terribly. Agreements need to be more than just freely chosen, Veaux and Rickert argue. They need to be ethical.

More Than Two is less like Sartre and more like his sterner predecessor, German philosopher Immanuel Kant. Kant, who reportedly died a virgin and never travelled farther than 10 miles from his home town, defined a moral action as one that treats people as ends, not means, and respects individual agency. Veaux and Rickert riff off Kant to create their own axioms: don't treat relationships as more important than people, and don't treat people like things. This means, they say, that even casual partners have rights in a relationship, like it or not.

The upside of *More Than Two* is that Veaux and Rickert are not afraid to tell people they are wrong. Popular books on non-monogamy, such as *The Ethical Slut* and *Opening Up*, have generally encouraged people to break all the rules, given the proper agreements. *More Than Two* takes a stand on ethical questions beyond mere consent.

The admonition to "communicate, communicate, communicate" is all very good but not if you communicate poorly ("passive communication will fuck you right up," the authors write). Mutual agreements are fine but not as crutches to replace trust and respect ("If they cannot be trusted to make the relationship work, it won't, rules be damned").



***More Than Two* co-author Eve Rickert argues that, while there may be no perfect way to be non-monogamous, there are certainly some very bad ones.**
MICHAEL PETRACHENKO

The downside is that *More Than Two* will probably not change many minds. The book is written from a loose collection of stories, generalizations and personal opinions (an approach one footnote limply names "anecdote-based poly"). It's easy to nod sagely at the sections you agree with and dismiss those that make you uncomfortable.

MORE THAN TWO
Available on amazon.com
morethantwo.com

The book lacks the concrete limits of scientific review, the detailed research of journalistic non-fiction or the rigour of philosophy. Even so, *More Than Two* manages to run to nearly 500 pages. For authors with such a provocative thesis, Veaux and Rickert bring a lot of bark and not much bite.

For readers who make it all the way through, however, *More Than Two* can be credited with confronting a problem far too often avoided in polyamorous writing: the close but tempestuous relationship between polyamorous and LGBT communities.

There is barely a mention of gay male relationships in the book, and no wonder: non-monogamy, as the authors point out, is intensely divided by sexuality. Straight polyamory, they write, still struggles with homophobia, while some gay people accuse polyamory of undermining gay societal acceptance. Some bisexual and trans people, the authors suggest, flee to polyamory to escape gay and lesbian cultures that view them with suspicion.

This is the sort of tough problem with which the largely straight, cisgendered polyamorous world will have to grapple one day. To do so, they need a new normal of relationship theory, with its own rules, codes and ethics. *More Than Two* is a tentative step in that direction: a little more Kant and a little less Sartre. X







Down the sexy rabbit hole

Vixens in Wonderland is a burlesque take on the classic



Ranae Miller and Alan Pronger rehearse a scene from *Vixens in Wonderland*. CONCRETE VERTIGO

ONSTAGE
GREG ARMSTRONG-MORRIS

Vixens in Wonderland is a sassy take on Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, reimagined as a mashup of burlesque (and boylesque), musical theatre, pop culture, Vegas glam and drag. It's the love child of Gypsy Rose Lee and RuPaul, carried to term by Cher and delivered by Stephen Sondheim.

And if the classic children's adventure isn't trippy enough, this version offers an Alice in stilettos, a dominatrix Cheshire Cat, a ball-gagged White Rabbit and a Mad Hatter who can't keep the back-door flap of his long johns closed. At least, he was experiencing an ongoing wardrobe malfunction at the rehearsal I attended Aug 7.

"It's the first run-through with costumes," executive producer Cameron Chase explains. "That wasn't supposed to happen. Yet."

I didn't mind the spoiler. In fact, I was reluctant to leave the steaming rehearsal hall to speak with Chase about Concrete Vertigo and this, their fourth production since 2010.

"It started because I wanted to cross something off my bucket list," Chase says. "And every year I'm a basket case and need therapy, and I know why producers drink and go to rehab."

But that first show — *Ruby Red*, the story of Dorothy's sexual awakening in Oz — was not only successful, it was inspiring. "I thought, 'Oh, I could possibly kinda do this for a living, maybe,'" Chase says.

The expanding creative team now includes director/choreographer Dawn Ewen, musical director Stewart Yu, performer/co-producer Sable Strub and, in a true feat of multitasking, writer/performer and fight choreographer Mike Kovac.

Their shows just keep getting bigger and brasher, too. *Ruby Red* was presented at the PAL Theatre with a cast of 12. *Vixens* will be mounted at Performance Works on Granville Island with a cast of 20.

Born in Langley, Chase studied film at Capilano College and is currently enrolled in the theatre department at Ryerson University in Toronto. But when it came to fleshing out his vision, he returned to Vancouver. "We've really established ourselves here; our connections are here. Including my parents — who are in the Christian ministry and co-producing a topless show."

The return was a smart move. Vancouver loves burlesque. We have our very own Burlesque Centre and an International Burlesque Festival soon entering its 10th year. And because we're exercise-obsessed, there's a long list of fitness centres and dance studios offering burlesque-inspired classes, everything from pole dancing to StilettoFit.

"I think there's a burlesque resurgence because it inspires people to not subscribe to fashion-industry-dictated body images, but to be … whatever they are," Chase says. "We want you to walk away feeling sexy and wanting to go home and look at yourself naked. And I think people do, because everyone sees a piece of themselves in someone on that stage. It's the most diverse and inclusive cast we've ever had in terms of body types, gender, orientation and age."

Performer Stephanie Liatopoulos agrees. "We all get to be the heroes or damsels or clowns because there is no perfect body shape."

These themes of diversity and inclusivity are also mirrored in the story (yes, there is a story; it's not just tits and ass). Alice (Emily Kapahi) is an unwelcome guest in the realm of the Red King (Sean Parsons), a ruler so opposed to anyone different that he wants her beheaded. Though everyone in his realm is at least a little bit different, the king remains adamant, finally expressing his uncompromising demand for conformity in a show-stopping, clothing-optional rendition of "Work Bitch."

"We don't get too heavy with the message, but it's about universal acceptance," Chase says. "It's a celebration of everyone."

Which might explain the absolute joy in the room as the rehearsal is punctuated by roof-raising cheers.

"Naked day wasn't supposed to be until Sunday!" Chase says. "But I'm not surprised they're going for it. We've got people who've never been topless in a show before. You really have to show a lot of respect and let people work at their own pace."

The result is a room full of hot, sweaty, talented people celebrating their sexiness in all its incarnations. The feeling is undeniably infectious. After watching this cast, I just might've cycled home, cranked the Cher and got my private burlesque on. X

VIXENS IN WONDERLAND
Fri, Aug 15–Fri, Aug 29
Performance Works
1218 Cartwright St
Tickets at brownpapertickets.com

Endless Pride

Backdoor and the Love Ball put the party in Pride weekend



BLITZ & SHITZ
RAZIEL REID

I got the post-Pride blues bad.

I woke up on the Monday after Pride Sunday, late in the day after staying up until sunrise, and cried like I was selling my anal virginity again. I almost hung myself. It was very glamorous.

I think Pride probably kills more people than car accidents and cancer combined. Even if it doesn't kill you physically, it can kill your soul. Not that I have one.

There's so much buildup, anticipation and excitement during Pride Week that when everything comes to a head it can boil over and drain out, leaving you a shell of a human being. I published a guide to Pride but didn't follow my own advice. The thing is, you can't plan Pride. You have to follow your own rainbow.

There were lots of great events this year. Vancouver really pulled it out, with a little help. Portland's Haus of Love came to Club 23 West for the Love Ball, and it was invigorating to meet so many new queens and performers. The night didn't go off as much as I wish it had because Vancouver partygoers like familiarity and are loyal to the promoters they know. Haus of Love just sort of came out of nowhere, but that's what attracted me to them.

Despite the lacklustre turnout, the competition was fierce, and watching Brent Ray Fraser paint Portland's Gula Delgatto's white dress with his huge penis was erotic, to say the least. He then had several helpers clean off his, um, brush.

Shout-out to Haus of Gay for receiving the top honour and to all the other winners who I don't have enough brain cells left to remember but who proved that JonBenét Ramsey had it good. Nothing like getting a trophy and then going home to get strangled by your daddy, right girls?

Backdoor was my favourite party this season. Matt Troy has made Vancouver's "no-fun city" label a thing of the past. Matt has managed to pull together the West End and East Van, the circuit boys, leather daddies and both the gay and straight hipsters by creating one all-inclusive, unapologetic rave.



Raziel pours his… soul into interviewing Brent Ray Fraser for *Xtra*'s video of the Pride parade, Aug 3. Watch our coverage on dailyxtra.com. ROSS JOHNSON

It was held at some warehouse in East Van, and it even had a blackout room in which there was some serious fucking. Thank god I had coke dick or I'd totally have a few new STDs. Just kidding! I was on molly.

My only criticism of Backdoor (and every other bar/party this applies to) is that water should *always* be free. It's ungentlemanly to charge people for water when you know most of them are intoxicated, need it and have no choice but to pay up — especially when you're already making hella bank off the door and bar.

And because Pride Week is really no different than every other week in my life, I continued to circle the drain at Peach Cobblah's Shame Spiral at 1181 (aka the only exciting thing happening on Davie Street).

I also signed on to perform as Rocky (or Rocky's pasty, strung-out brother) in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at The Cobalt, which raised funds for Zee Zee Theatre, and I solemnly swear to be a million times nicer to every performer in this city because that shit ain't easy. Here are some things I learned from being onstage:

The line between drinking enough to kill your nerves and drinking so much that you're a fucking mess is *very* thin.

Organize your dressing room. No one likes the whiny bitch screaming, "Help me find my shoes!" Sorry, guys.

The audience wants to love you. It was astounding to feel so much support. I didn't realize how giving the crowd is. Thank you.

Don't work with people you're attracted to. It's hard to rehearse when Daniel Pitout walks into the room and all you can think about is him spit-gifting you.

Keep your ego in check. All my performance really consisted of was dry humping Anna Propriate, who was playing Janet, but when I came off stage I got so much praise I went home with a very big head. A very big, light head. Thanks for the poppers, Eddie! X

Walk proud. Talk proud.



Thanks for showing your true colours with us at Vancouver Pride.

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Park Royal South

WHAT'S ON

FOR MORE LISTINGS, GO TO **DAILYXTRA.COM**

Wed, Aug 13

Mother Knows Best Back for its third installment of naughty, trashy fun. 8pm. 1181, 1181 Davie St. 1181.ca

Thurs, Aug 14

Positive Living BC AGM Registration for the annual general meeting begins at 5:30pm; meeting starts at 6pm, followed by a community forum with Dr Sue Burgess. Chateau Granville Hotel, 1100 Granville St. positivelivingbc.org

Queer Film Fest Opening Gala The 26th annual Vancouver Queer Film Festival celebrates the best in independent queer cinema for 11 days, until Sun, Aug 24. *The Way He Looks* screens at 7pm at the Vancouver Playhouse, 600 Hamilton St. Following the gala, festies will reconvene at 9pm at Vancouver FanClub, 1050 Granville St, for the opening-night party. See our Hot & Buttered supplement, pages 15–26, for a guide to the festival. For a full list of films, go to queerfilmfestival.ca.



Recovery Slo-Pitch Tournament — Moody Park, Sat, Aug 23 THINKSTOCK

Fri, Aug 15

Questions of the Heart: Gay Mormons and the Search for Identity Ben Abbott's play, based on interviews with gay Mormons, explores the often painful intersection of faith and sexuality. 7pm. Cottage Bistro, 4470 Main St. $10 at brownpapertickets.com. inquisitivetheatre.com

Queer as Funk New West Pride celebrates a week of festivities with a performance by local dance band Queer as Funk, with special guest the Femme City Choir. 8:30pm. The Columbia Theatre, 530 Columbia St, New Westminster. $20 at qafnewwest.brownpapertickets.com. newwestpride.ca

Meet and Sniff Meet the contestants and judges of this year's Northwest Puppy and Handler Contest at their Meet and Sniff social. 9pm. PumpJack Pub, 1167 Davie St. No cover. nwpuppy.com

New York Berlin hosts a New York–style street dance performance, with Marcello Ranieri and Jory Pierce. Featuring DJs Adam Dreaddy, Karsten Sollors and DJ/producer Van Goulden. 10pm–3am. Brooklyn Gastown, 91 Powell St. $8 advance at Stratosphere, 1259 Granville St; $12 door. Search "New York" on Facebook.

Sat, Aug 16

New West *Pride* Street Party New West Pride culminates with a community brunch and street party on Columbia Street, between 4th and 6th streets. 3–8pm. Free. newwestpride.ca

Björk Vs Robyn *Sad Mag* and Electric Circus present a Nordic goddess showdown, with DJ Ruggedly Handsome and performances by Tran Apus Rex, Vera Way, Leroy Wan and more. 9pm–2am. The Cobalt, 917 Main St. $8 advance at eventbrite.ca, $10 door. Search "Björk Vs Robyn" on Facebook.



The Way He Looks opens the Queer Film Fest — Playhouse, Thurs, Aug 14 VQFF

Sun, Aug 17

Hot August Jackin' Vancouverjax is back. They supply the space, music, lube, porn and water; all you have to provide is the dick. 2–5pm. Club 8x6, 1775 Haro St. $10, includes locker. vancouverjax.com

Mon, Aug 18

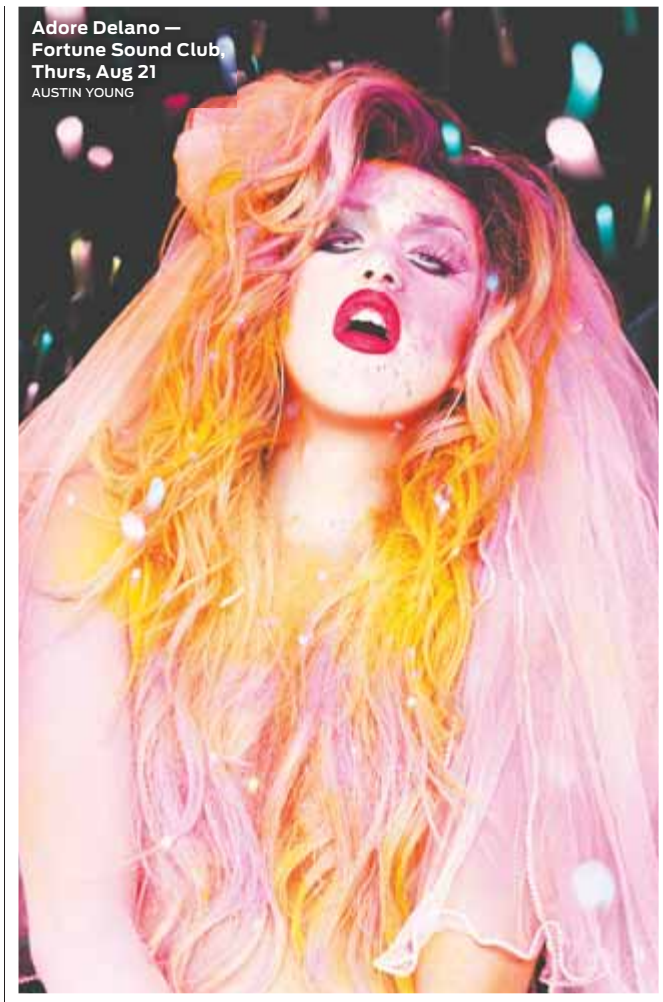
Genderqueer Vancouver This support and social group for people who identify outside the male/female binary meets the first and third Monday of every month. 6–7:30pm. Qmunity, 1170 Bute St. qmunity.ca.

Tues, Aug 19

Men on Men A weekly discussion group for all men who love or have sex with men. Every Tuesday, 6:30pm. Gordon Neighbourhood House, 1019 Broughton St. checkhimout.ca

Dear John, I Love Jane Qmunity offers a bimonthly safe space for self-identified women to explore their identities and relationships. 7–9pm. Qmunity, 610-1033 Davie St. Free. qmunity.ca.

Shame Spiral Peach Cobblah and some hot messes bring East Side debauchery to their favourite West End cocktail lounge for a night of drag, perverse games and true shame-spiral stories. 9:30pm. 1181, 1181 Davie St. No cover. 1181.ca



Adore Delano — Fortune Sound Club, Thurs, Aug 21 AUSTIN YOUNG

Wed, Aug 20

Wet & Wild Vancouver's Gay Bowling League, a mixed 10-pin league focused on fun and fellowship, is gearing up for a new season, which starts Wed, Sept 3. Register tonight at 7pm. Revs Bowling Centre, 5502 Lougheed Hwy, next to Holdom SkyTrain station. members.shaw.ca/gaybowling

Queer Mindfulness Meditation Group Geared to beginners, this supportive drop-in meditation group helps participants learn to focus their attention in the present moment. 7– 8:30pm. Qmunity, Room #1, 1160 Bute St. Free. qmunity.ca

Faux Girls Emperor XLIII JJ Nation and Empress XLIII Kiki Lawhore host this monthly drag show. 10pm. The Junction, 1138 Davie St. $3 cover goes toward their highnesses' chosen charities. junctionpub.com

Thurs, Aug 21

Adore Delano Live in Concert A performance by the runner-up and breakout star of *RuPaul's Drag Race* Season 6, hosted by Peach Cobblah, with guests Eating Out and Peter Breeze. 8pm. Fortune Sound Club, 147 E Pender St. $25; $75 includes meet and greet. Available at Little Sister's, 1238 Davie St; Zulu Records, 1972 W 4th Ave; and fortunesoundclub.com.

Helicopter Thursday Don't miss DJ Nick Bertossi and hot strippers from Fantasy Men. 11pm. The Junction, 1138 Davie St. $5. junctionpub.com

Fri, Aug 22

Gab Youth's Hide and Seek Qmunity's Gab Youth take over the entire central branch of the Vancouver Public Library for a gigantic game of hide and seek. 7–10pm. Vancouver Public Library, 350 W Georgia St. Free. For more info about Gab Youth, email gabyouth@qmunity.ca.

Sat, Aug 23

Recovery Slo-Pitch Tournament The Last Door Recovery Society hosts a softball tournament for people in recovery. Moody Park is the main venue, featuring a barbecue, registration and info tent, but games will be held at other parks as well. Saturday and Sunday, 11am–6pm. To register your team or to ask to be on a team, contact pr@lastdoor.org. For more info, go to facebook.com/lastdoor/events.

Bears the Baths and Beyond Steamworks hosts an afternoon for bears the fourth Saturday of every month. 1–6pm. Steamworks, 123 W Pender St. Membership and rental rates, $6–150. steamworksonline.com/vancouver

Monroe, with Willam Belli Monroe is back and bringing performer Willam Belli to the dance party. 9pm–3am. Heaven's Door, 1216 Bute St. $20–30 at mewme.eventbrite.ca; VIP tables available. info@tfdpresents.com

The Gay Agenda: Fratboyz Organizers promise a new crop of hotties will strip off their clothes and inhibitions for the Fratboyz edition. 9pm–2am. The Cobalt, 917 Main St. $12; $9 if wearing only a jock. Search "The Gay Agenda: Fratboyz" on Facebook.

Submit your event listing to oitc.vancouver@dailyxtra.com. Deadline for the Aug 28 issue is Wed, Aug 20.



#news #arts #travel #events

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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.

TRAVEL TIP

Pack for every occasion. Have a light bag with you at all times loaded with sunscreen for your face and body, a bathing suit, a towel, a bottle of water and lip balm. A day out in South Beach, especially during Pride weekend, will most likely turn into evening and then into night without a return to the hotel to freshen up.

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



JIPSY

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 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





JUAN SACO MIRONOFF



PHIL VILLENEUVE



PAMM



JUAN SACO MIRONOFF



PHIL VILLENEUVE

Clockwise from far left: 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.

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 hideaway 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 scrumptious 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.

The online version of this story, at 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.

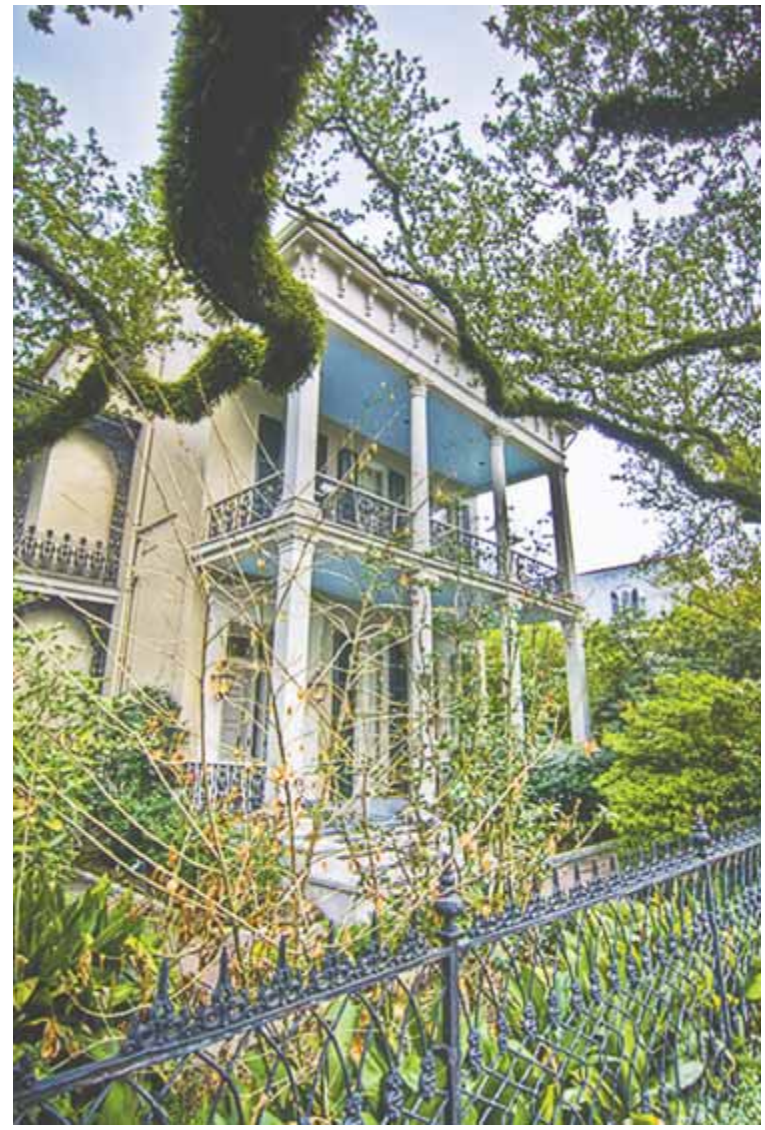
Most have arrived in the company of guides arranged in the French Quarter, heart of the city's cultural — and gay — life. How many of those guides will reveal the truth about New Orleans' devotion to interring, rather than burying, its dead? Magic Tours is one, specializing in tours that unearth the city's real history. Local journalists and historians passionate about their city take visitors through the Garden District, the French Quarter, St Louis Cemetery No 1 and on ghost tours throughout the Quarter after dark.



CHARLES GANDOLFO

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 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.



RIAN CASTILLO



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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.

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 Stellaaaaaaaa-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!

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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

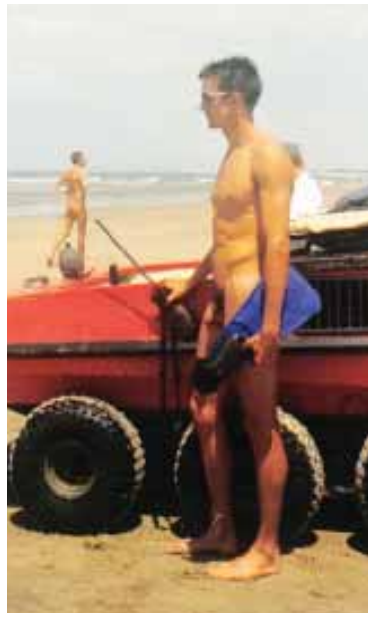
Located in the heart of Munich, Germany, the "English Garden" isn't exactly a beach; the Isar river runs through this mammoth municipal park, and nude sunbathing is allowed in and around the horse track.

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.



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. ■

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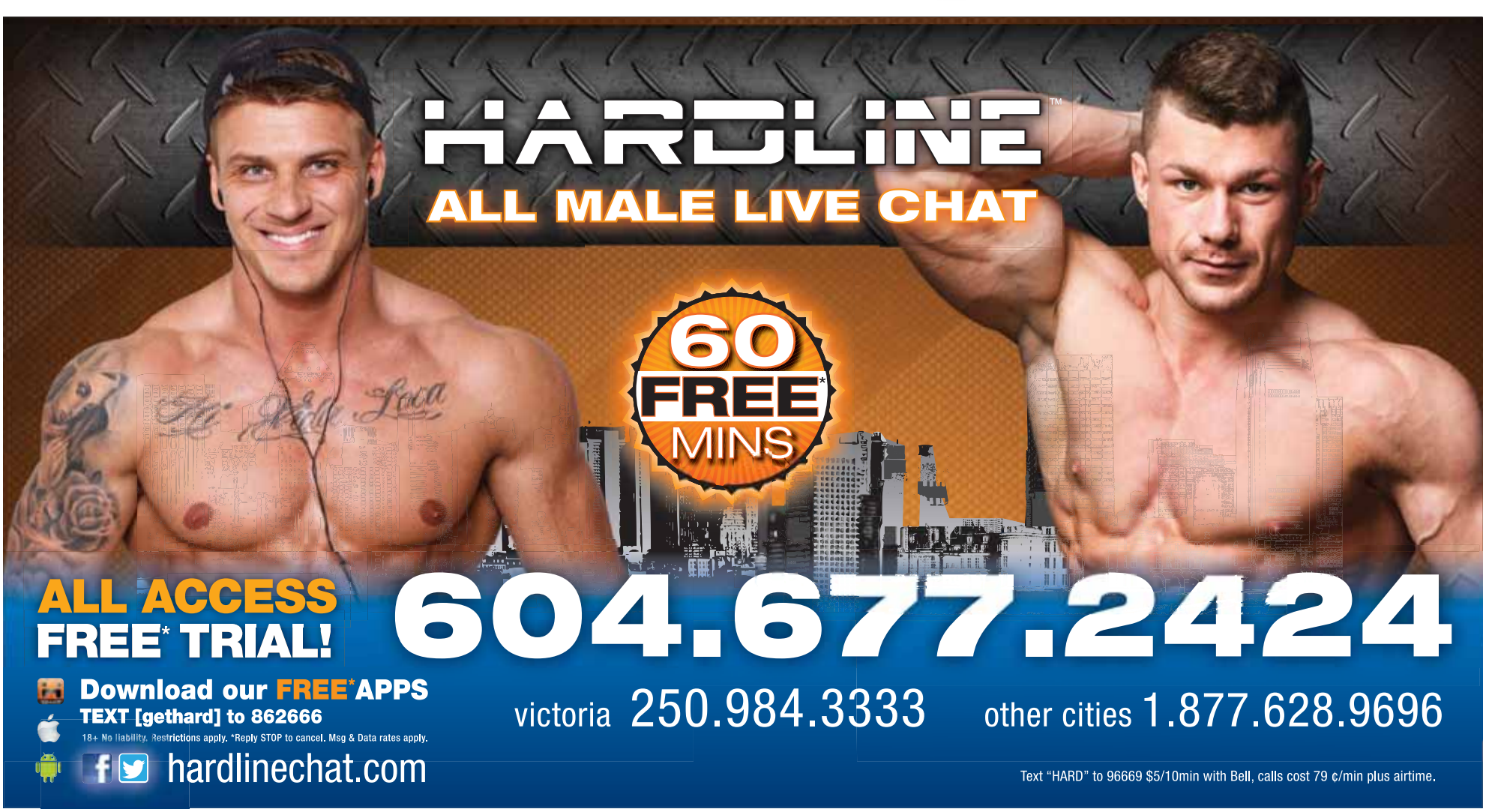
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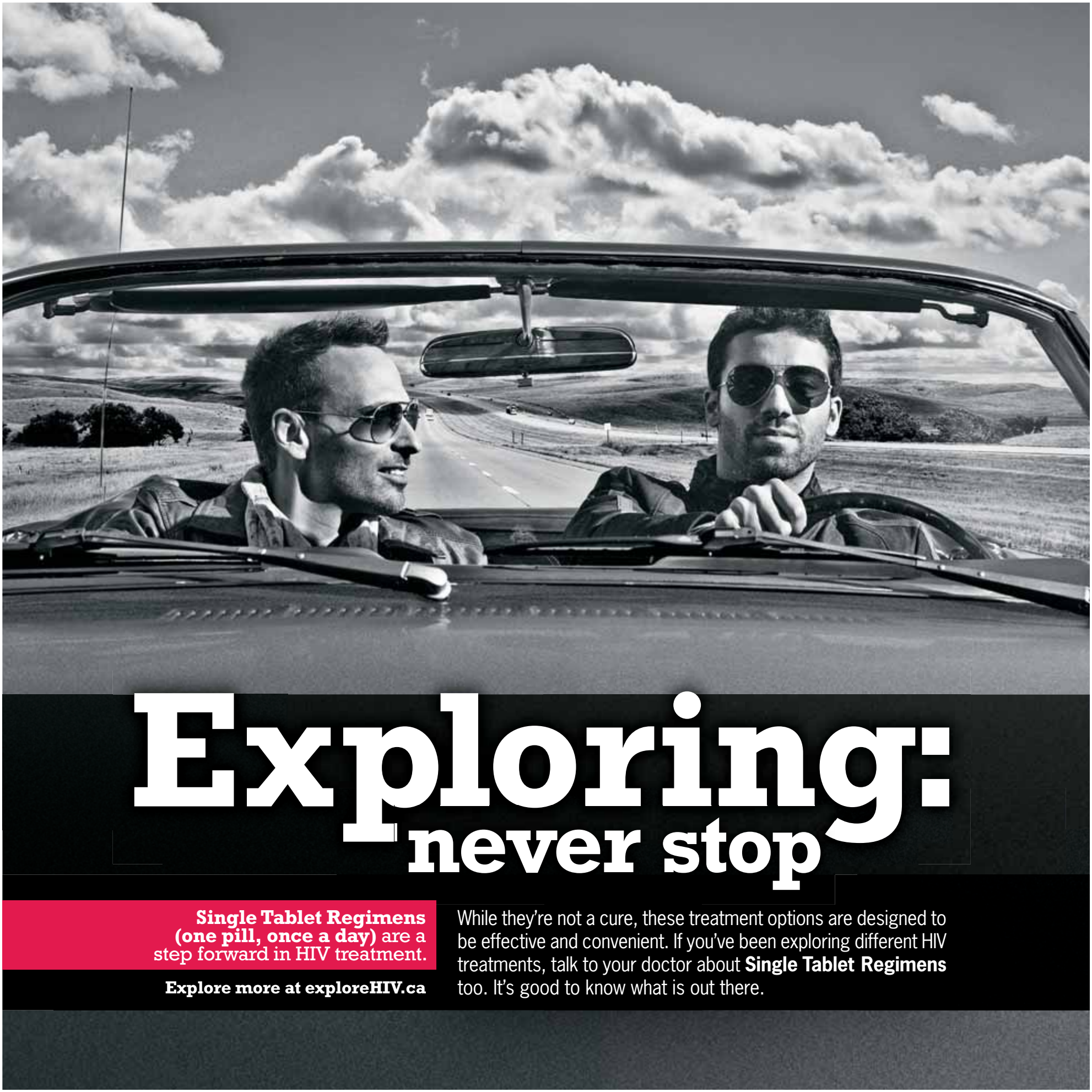
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