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The Editor

Greetings and salutations!

It's Pride season once again, and for this special Pride themed edition we're taking a look at what Pride Toronto has to offer this year, as well as what other smaller locations have planned as well. We also have a special cover feature this issue, where Daniela Costa catches up with local actor Kevin Vidal (Sunnyside, Kim's Convenience, Workin' Moms), who tells us about his most cherished Pride memory.

Our writer Terri Waldron spoke with Executive Director, Olivia Nuamah, and Festival Director, Collin Joseph, to get a behind the scenes look at the logistics of programming an event of this size, and an overview of some of the diverse events that are being offered.

Toronto isn't the only place where one can show their Pride. Sherry Sylvain takes a look at other smaller Pride events happening throughout the province, with a couple locations having their inaugural events this year.

We have a special Wiggged Out column, where RuPaul queens Shea Couleé, Sasha Velour, and Peppermint give us the dish on what we can expect from their upcoming performance at The 519's Green Space Festival. Cat Grant gives us the lowdown on where the girls will be during Pride this year, with a list of lesbian produced events, while Paul Bellini reflects back on antics from Pride's in the past.

Boyd Kodak chats with Teddy Syrette, a 2 Spirit Anishnaabek person who's work extends into performance theatre and Indigenous storytelling, and Raymond Helkio spotlights west end restaurant and bar, The Steady, to see what they have programmed for their Pride celebrations.

Finally, Sherry Sylvain has compiled her BUZZPICKS, a selection of top events across the city and beyond, and our designer Mychol Scully once again makes us look as snazzy as we are.

Thanks for picking us up. Happy Pride!

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By Daniela Costa

IN CONVERSATION WITH TORONTO ACTOR KEVIN VIDAL

Out actor Kevin Vidal is a classic Toronto success story. Born to immigrant parents and raised in the city's downtown core, he's worked hard to make a dent in the acting world, and it's finally paying dividends. But his success wasn't always a given.

"My life before acting wasn't really anything. It was kind of a mess," says Vidal.

Far from a star student, Vidal skipped classes in high school and once had no real sense of direction. What changed? The leading role in his grade 12 production of *Guys and Dolls*.

"It was kind of the only time I ever wanted to go to school," he recalls.

But Vidal would not go on to university or college for acting. Instead, he got a job that would pay for on-camera classes, and worked with acting studios and coaches. He was also lucky to find his first agent from an unexpected source: his mom.

"She actually helped me get my first agent," he shares, explaining that his mother's years of service at a doctor's

office in Toronto meant a lot of connections. Vidal, however, would have to do the heavy lifting himself.

A pivotal turning point in his career came in 2009 when he got into *The Second City*. He went through the improvisational comedy company's entire levels program and conservatory, graduating in 2011. He then auditioned and got a part as an understudy for their mainstage production. "Being on *The Second City* mainstage was a huge learning curve," he says.

From there, he worked with their touring company and co-wrote two shows in 2013 and 2014. One of those shows, *Sixteen Scandals*, won a Canadian Comedy Award and was nominated for a Dora Award.

"There's a lot of stigma on being an improviser in the community, because people don't look at us as actors, and they just see us as comedians and improvisers," he confides.



What Pride memory does actor Kevin Vidal cherish most?

Bringing Danny, my boyfriend, to his first parade was kind of my favourite Pride memory. He'd lived in Toronto for quite a few years and he had never been to Pride. It is just such a wonderful experience to be able to go and not have to worry about anybody or anything and just have fun. It is such a celebration of life, and it was just so nice to be able to enjoy that with him for the first time.

"For the Dora's to consider The Second City show as a nominee was wonderful."

But this wouldn't be the end of awards and nominations for Vidal. In 2016, he would be part of a Canadian Screen Award-winning team for his biggest gig to date, a spot as a main cast member on City TV's *Sunnyside*.

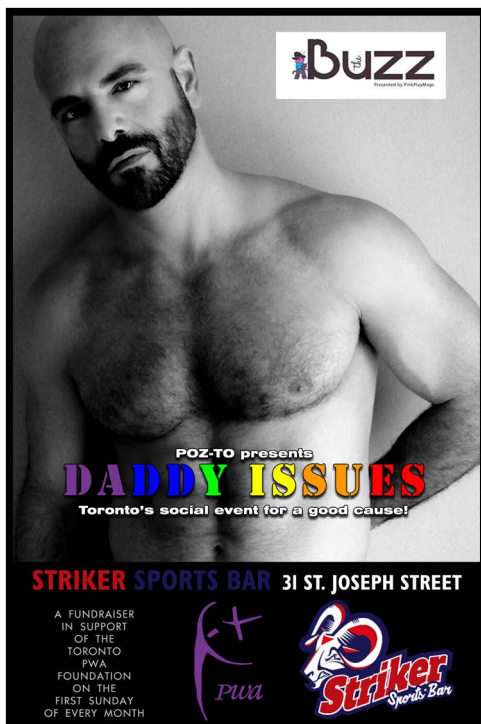
"We got quite a lot of great feedback, especially from critics, which was so nice," he says of the show, which he describes as "a hybrid between sketch and sitcom" set in a "sort of cartoonish but somewhat grounded world." "People did seem to love it." Unfortunately, *Sunnyside* was cancelled after just one season. Vidal says if there's any chance of a new life for the show, he'd be happy to return. "I would love that," he says. "There are a lot of characters on that show that I fell in love with."

Still, he's moved on to bigger and better things. Making quite a home for himself at the CBC. In 2016-17, he's had recurring roles on *Kim's Convenience* and *Workin' Moms*, two new shows that have been renewed for second seasons. He also just shot his first indie film in February, playing American actor Denis O'Hare's husband in *The Parting Glass*, a drama O'Hare scripted.

Outside of TV and film, you can catch Vidal every first Thursday of the month with his sketch trope, *Your Kids*, at the Bad Dog Theatre Company.

And so it goes that 10 years after that high school drama production, life's looking not so messy for this Toronto boy.

Born and raised in Toronto, Daniela Costa graduated from Ryerson University's journalism undergraduate program in 2013. Since then, her writing has focused on matters concerning the LGBT community.



An Exclusive Look at Pride Toronto 2017

Pride Toronto takes place from June 1-June 25, 2017, and promises several stages of entertainment with DJ's and performances, along with community events, marches, and of course the signature Pride parade to close out the festivities.

I had an opportunity to chat with recently appointed Executive Director, **Olivia Nuamah**, about what people can expect in terms of programming this year, and what's behind the LGBTQ+ theme.

Born in Toronto, Nuamah has a background working as an executive director for other organizations, such as the Atkinson Foundation which was founded to promote social and economic justice, as well as for Inner City Family Health Team, an organization that delivers healthcare to homeless communities in Toronto's downtown east end.

Nuamah—who identifies as queer—feels that Pride Toronto is a good fit for her and says, “I’m happy to be in an environment that is more embracing about not only my race, but my sexuality as well. Every job I’ve walked into, I felt it was the right job for me, but this particular job felt more so the case because there is no aspect of myself that I am hiding.”

She was educated in Toronto as well as in England. She earned her undergraduate degree in International Development and Social Anthropology from the University of Toronto, and she received her Masters in Social Anthropology of Children and Childhood Development from Brunel University in London. She has always seen herself as a champion for the underprivileged, and says that she “was raised in that community myself, so it spoke to me.”

While in England, Nuamah spent about a year as a DJ, where she was able to look at the club scene and get a unique understanding of the representation of trans and queer artists. “The reason I loved clubbing was because I felt that it was an expression of identity,” she says. “I love the fact that it has a completely carefree quality to it, and I fell in love with both the music and the scene from the very very beginning.”

The theme of this Pride this year is the ‘+’ in the LGBTQ+ and it is an effort on the part of the organization to bring people together with a sense of inclusivity. “What most of the community conversations have told us is that everyone needs to be heard a little more, and they want to be included as part of the ongoing conversation,” she explains. “We want to create an environment where the ‘+’ stops being a ‘+’ and starts being all of the members of the queer and trans community. Our theme is about embracing, about what the true sense of community means, as it tries to unpick some of the polarization of the stances we’ve taken, and it then starts to see us as part of a greater whole.”

I also spoke with Pride Toronto's Festival Director, **Collin Joseph**, about the difficulties in planning

a festival of this size. He says, "Coordinating 25 days of engaging, fun and exciting programming that reflects the interests and needs of our diverse community is equal parts challenging and rewarding." Joseph's past achievements include producing the Pan Am torch relay celebration. "There is a lot of planning and coordination involved, and it is truly a team effort. What makes it easier is having a dedicated, passionate and community-focused group of staff and volunteers, with the support of our sponsors and community partners, who all lend a hand to do the heavy lifting and make the load lighter," he explains.

Last year there was an Arabic program on the Wellesley stage, the year before that it was Indian themed, and this year Pride will also showcase a diverse mix of cultures. "The TD Wellesley Stage will feature three nights of acts representing the vibrant and diverse voices of our community," reveals Joseph. "Yalla Barra is returning this year on Friday June 23, Pan Dulce will bring a Latin flavour to Saturday June 24, and Blockorama will continue its fantastic legacy as one of our longest-running events on Sunday June 25."

"There will be four main stages and four community stages throughout the festival footprint in the Church-Wellesley Village," he says. "Stage programming this year will consist of performance artists, community acts, marquee recording artists, as well as over 75 local and international DJs such as Purple Disco Machine, Stonebridge, Museums Haji, Hector Fonseca, Barry Harris, DJ Kitty Glitter, Dekoze, to name a few."

Headliner performers include Boney M at Classic Disco on June 23 at Yonge-Dundas Square, and Evelyn "Champagne" King on June 25 at the TD Wellesley Stage, as part of Blockorama. As well, Toronto's own Miss Conception will be Pride's first-ever Parade Emcee, entertaining the crowd with play-by-play commentary during the parade festivities.

"The Trans March, Dyke March, and Pride Parade will all happen again this year," says Joseph. "The Trans March will be Friday, June 23rd starting at 6:00 p.m.; the Dyke March will be Saturday June 24th starting at 2:00 p.m. and the Pride Parade Sunday will be June 25th starting at 2:00 p.m."

At this year's Pride, there will be a return of community driven programming as well. "We are



excited to be continuing our Icon Speaker Series featuring Tony Kushner this year. In addition, we are continuing with our engaging human rights panels throughout the festival," says Joseph. "We also have our Clean Sober and Proud stage featuring our community acts at Paul Kane Parkette, and our very popular Family Pride stage at Church Street Public School, which will feature children's performances."

"Also, once again Pride Toronto is partnering with cultural organizations," adds Nuamah. "For the month leading up to the parade weekend, we will continue to have our cultural partnership with the AGO, The ROM, Inside Out, TIFF, and with Harbourfront," she says. "In all of those we will be having conversations about the kinds of things that have come up over the past year. I really want to talk to the people about how they see the queer community into the 22nd century and beyond."

Visit www.pridetoronto.com for more information, updates and programming schedules.

Originally from Montreal, Terri-Lynne Waldron's professional writing career started in Quebec at the now defunct Montreal Mirror newspaper. Since then, she has freelanced for Chicago's LGBTQ

newspaper, Windy City Times, New York's Urban Latino as well as various Canadian publications such as the Toronto Star, Metro, and other publications.





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this summer, and you're not even restricted to larger
cities for Pride partying.



Cobourg, Ontario

Certainly everyone should feel free to celebrate Pride no matter where they are, but this year we are seeing an increase in Pride celebrations in smaller cities and towns; towns who will be celebrating Pride for the first time this year are Cobourg and Minden.

Cobourg is a moderately sized town of roughly 20,000 residents located 95 km east of Toronto. Kicking off the inaugural Pride festivities will be a flag raising on June 1 at the Cobourg Police department, unveiling a new foyer which will act as a public warming room during cold weather, and will also provide a gender neutral washroom with shower for those in need. On June 12 there will be a candlelight vigil commemorating the shooting at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, FL last year.

Additionally, there are several other events planned or being planned for the LGBTQ community and it's allies. Throughout the month of June, The Loft, a small downtown theatre, plans to show as many LGBTQ oriented films as possible, with the highlight planned to be a fundraising screening of The Rocky Horror Picture Show on June 23. On June 24, several small events are anticipated to take place throughout the core of the town, such as the local poetry community walking around and reading queer poetry aloud. Various other events are also being planned, so check out PFLAG Cobourg's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/pflagcobourg) for more information as it becomes available.

Minden is located roughly 200 km. north-east of Toronto, and a major centre for cottaging. This inaugural Pride festival is currently scheduled to run from August 21 to 27, beginning with a flag raising on August 21. On August 23 local craft brewery, Boshkung Brewing Company will host a meet and greet, and on August 25, a musical event, "Rainbows on The River", will take place beside the beautiful Gull River that runs through the town.

An added bonus to having a lovely river right in town, is to potentially have one of the most enchanting Pride events one may ever have the chance to witness, at least in Ontario. Paddle The Parade showcases a collection of decorated floats that flow down the Gull River, with the arched footbridge that traverses the river also being decked out in rainbow colours. This will lead to a Tea Dance at the Dominion Hotel, featuring a disco theme. Finally, on August 27, those interested are invited to attend an ecumenical church service by the river, followed by a riverside walk to the Wild Swan Bed and Breakfast for a picnic with special performances by popular local singer-songwriter, Sherri Hawkins and guests.

Another new, or fairly new, Pride festival takes place in St. Thomas, a city of approximately 40,000 that is located between Lake Erie and London, and well known as the place where Jumbo the circus elephant died upon being hit by a locomotive in 1885. Hosting only it's second Pride, and partnering with nearby London Pride to provide more accessibility to area residents, events begin on July 12 with a BBQ at West Elgin Community Health Centre. There are also plans for a flag raising at St. Thomas City Hall on the morning of July 24, followed by a similar event at Aylmer City Hall that same afternoon.

On July 25, a Mental Health event is planned at St. Thomas Public Library, with a guest speaker, yoga, and other resources. On July 27 a BBQ takes place in St. Thomas, and those interested in further events and updated information should refer to the Facebook page, St.Thomas-Elgin Rainbow Alliance.

In conjunction with the aforementioned events, London Pride festivities happen from July 20 to 30, and include an Outdoor Festival in Victoria Park on July 28, a Pride Spotlight Party featuring Roxxy Andrews on July 29, and the 23rd annual London Pride Parade on July 30.www.pridelondon.ca

Other Places to Celebrate Pride in Ontario

Thunder Bay Pride – June 7 to 17, Parade and Pride in the Park on June 17. www.thunderpride.ca

Kingston Pride on June 17, Parade and park events www.facebook.com/PrideinKingston

York Pride on June 17, Parade and park events www.facebook.com/yorkpridefest

Brockville Pride July 10 – 15. www.brockvillepride.com

Windsor-Essex Pride Festival on the weekend of August 12 and 13, Parade on Aug. 13. www.wepridefest.com

Peel Pride (Mississauga / Brampton) - July 8. www.peelpride.wixsite.com/peelpride

Pride Muskoka runs July 21 -30, Huntsville Kickoff Party, July 21 @ 3:00 p.m. Picnic July 30 @ noon www.muskokapride.com

Peterborough Pride – Sept 15 to 24, Parade and park events on Sept. 23. www.peterboroughpride.ca

Ottawa Pride – Aug. 21 to 27, Parade and Community Fair Aug. 27. www.ottawacapitalpride.ca

Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to), and currently is proud to hold the title of Queen Mum to The Imperial Court of Toronto for 2015/2016..



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BY TESS TOSTERONE

THE GREEN QUEENS – SHEA, PEPPERMINT, and SASHA

Since its inception in 2008, The Green Space Festival has become a go-to destination for many, with its series of signature events, including Starry Night, One World, Lipstick Jungle, Disco Disco and TreeHouse Party. Taking place during Pride week at Barbara Hall Park, the event has raised 1.5M dollars for The 519's year-round programs and services for the LGBT community.

1. What's one hidden talent that you have that most people don't know about?

Shea Couleé: I can get myself out of handcuffs.

Peppermint: I can play the spoons.

Sasha Velour: I can wiggle my ears so hard my glasses move up and down!

2. Do you have any pre-performance rituals?

Shea Couleé: I have a 20 minute dance party in my apartment before I start painting.

Peppermint: I listen to For The Heart by George Michael. It's a slow song from his double album.

Sasha Velour: While I paint I yodel the song I'm performing, completely naked.

3. What's the first song you ever performed drag to, and when/where did it take place?

Shea Couleé: I performed Beyonce's Suga Mamma at Jeezy's Juke in 2011.

Peppermint: It was Zion by Lauryn Hill, and it was at The Tunnel nightclub for overdosed underage NYU students.

Sasha Velour: It was Julie London's version of Why Don't You Do Right, as a strip tease in Champaign Illinois' only gay bar in 2011. It was...fun.

4. What can fans expect from your upcoming Toronto performance?

Shea Couleé: To be beautiful, a model, gorgeous, looking like Naomi Campbell, to stone my tights, to be smiling... oh, am I smiling?

Peppermint: They can expect to hear some new original music and perhaps I will revisit my lip sync from the Snatch Game episode. Lol.

Sasha Velour: Theatrics, Queer glamour and lots of feelings.

5. What's one thing you want to do while in Toronto, other than performing?

Shea Couleé: I've heard about Kensington Market, and I would love to check that out because I love taking in local art.

Peppermint: Meet Deborah Cox. I hear she's from there.

Sasha Velour: I want to go to Kensington Market and eat all the cheese!!



Shea Couleé (Chicago, IL) is a self professed "high-class supermodel that you don't wanna f*** with." She cites Naomi Campbell as her strongest inspiration, and went to school for costume design.



Peppermint (New York, NY) is sweet and sassy, and can be found hosting and performing on any given night of the week in The Big Apple.



Sasha Velour (Brooklyn, NY) is named after a Russian feminist thinker, and grew up in an unconventional household, where dinner table conversation with her professor father was feminism, gender performance, utopias and communism.

Tess Tosterone is a closet scene queen bursting at the seams in tight jeans. She squeaks and leaks for geeks and freaks.



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Girls Gone Proud



I asked Pride-planners and Pride goers about what's happening, and where they'll be this year. What struck me most were the youth from outside the city, who shared stories about Toronto's Pride Parade.

Jennifer Watson was living in Port Credit, Ontario at the time she saw a television broadcast while working an afternoon bar shift, and although not out, she knew she wanted to volunteer. "It was hard for me to come to terms with who I was, because of what I was brought up to believe was normal, as I became more comfortable, Pride was there for me."

It wasn't until University that St. John's, Newfoundland resident **Cathy Langdon** experienced diversity. "Pride is where I get to witness acceptance without fear. The atmosphere is electric and exciting, while still warm and welcoming"

DJ Dallas witnessed homophobia, "In St. John's we could never have dreamt of being OUT marching, however being

OUT and marching collectively by the thousands, somehow validates me. There is freedom, there is peace, there is community." Dallas has her own Pride dance party at the Eton House on Danforth Ave. June 24th, followed by a July Moonlight Cruise on July 29.

Montreal photographer **Laurie Sutherland** says, "Pride is all about the colours, music, artisans; the parade, and the community. It's a celebration of how far we've come and a reminder that as a global community we still have a long way to go."

Girl Play Toronto's **Tania Morano** told me, "Pride is a time to celebrate community, unity, love and togetherness. At a time when there is so much divide, we are so thankful to create occasions that bring strangers together to celebrate the power of love and unity. Love will conquer all, and Pride is all about love".

Tania shared another incredible Pride lineup to be excited about, with events taking place between June 21 and 25. Play @ Smith with DJs Mavis + Okkay (June 21), Giggles @ Comedy Bar with Elvira Kurt, Adrienne Fish and a long list of outstanding queer female comics (June 22), Juicebox @ Noir with Sticky Cuts, KLR, Recklezz and lots of surprises (June 23), Toastr @ The Raq with Lucie Tic (June 24), and the 9th Annual T-dance (June 25).

"I'm really looking forward to this year's Pride because it will be my 15th year spinning on stage" says **DJ Chiclit**. "Pride to me, means appreciation. Not just the appreciation of love, diversity and freedom of expression, but also Pride's political roots and the fact that there is always progress to be made. Let's make this progress together!"

Inside Out's LGBT Film Festival does free Pride screenings, and according to Director of Operations and Events, **Winnie Luk**, "There is nothing more romantic than watching a beautiful film under the stars! Pride is about standing up for community. A time of year when the political meets the parties, and the fun. Where even dancing at the outdoor stages or meeting up with friends in the 519 Green Space is an empowering act."

No matter what you do for Pride remember your reason why.
Happy Pride, my friends xo

Cat Grant is a multimedia artist. She is also a published poet currently writing a book. She contributes to *Home Life* and *Jingobox*.



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To some, Pride is political, a time to demand change and assert identity. To the other 90%, it means marches, dances, drinking, and drugs. And best of all, it means great shows.

Though often criticized for their choices, the Pride committees of both now and then have always tried to bring us the best entertainment. This is where I first saw The Cliks, Random Order, Carole Pope and other local acts. I myself performed at Pride four times since 1988, and it was always fun. Then there were the big acts, like Cyndi Lauper and En Vogue. My own favourite Pride moment came a few years ago, watching the 80s British band ABC perform from a friend's rooftop patio.

There are also lots of great drag shows. Now, usually when we see a drag show that impresses us, we screech, "Fabulous!" Have you ever stopped to think about what fabulous really means? One dictionary definition states, "of the nature of a fable or myth; legendary." Essentially, we are equating drag queens with dragons, dwarfs and evil stepsisters. Which, when you think of it, is often the case.

Then there's the word "fierce," as in "That queen is fierce!" Indeed, what we are really saying (according to dictionary text) is that this person is "barbarous, savage, cruel, mean, showing fury or malignity in looks or actions." So basically, Attila the Hun in a dress.

Truth be told, drag queens are neither fabulous or fierce. They are usually just talented professionals who can really entertain. But shouting "Competent!" or "Satisfying!" at some queen who just sang and danced her ass off, just doesn't seem to work.

Basically, we live in a world of superlatives, a world where someone might scream Omigod. because burgers are on sale. A world where everyday someone publishes a list of the 100 Best something or other, or declares that some shitty movie they just saw yesterday is "the best movie ever made". Even now, a sitting President of the United States with nothing to say, keeps telling his people that everything is "tremendous," meaning "extraordinarily large in size." It can also mean "really awful or terrible," which, in his case, is more applicable.

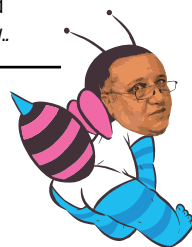
Then there is "astounding" — capable of overwhelming with amazement. And "spectacular" — impressive, grand, or



dramatic. How about "astounding" — causing a feeling of great surprise or wonder. Or "phenomenal" — perceived by the senses rather than the mind. Then there's Trump's other favourite word, "terrific," which means "of great size, amount, or intensity, causing terror." Yikes, in Trump's case, it just might be all too true. Finally, there's "to die for," which means that something is so good that you would end your life in order to have it, in which case you actually would no longer be able to enjoy it.

The truth is, superlatives don't mean much anymore, and we all know it, but they're fun to use because hyperbole really dresses up bland conversations. And that is the most fantastic, tremendous, astonishing and astounding thing that I have ever said. Today.

Paul Bellini is an award-winning television comedy writer (*Kids in the Hall*, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*). He also teaches comedy writing at George Brown College in Toronto.



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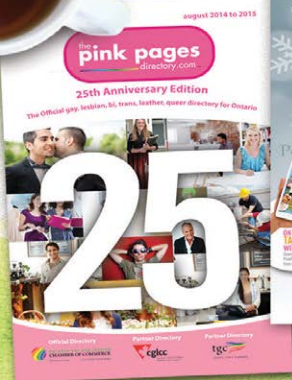
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Teddy Syrette



Teddy Syrette is a 2 Spirit Anishnaabek person from Rankin Reserve of Batchewana First Nation. They identify as a 2 Spirit/Gender-Fluid individual, and have been a part of the LGBTQ community since the age of 12. Their interest in volunteering, activism and community engagement spans 16 years, and their background consists of performance theatre and Indigenous storytelling. Teddy also has a diploma in Social Service Work-Native Specialization, from Sault College.

Boyd Kodak - What have you been doing over the last year?

Teddy Syrette - I recently moved to Toronto back in April of 2016 for a full-time advocacy contract. I lasted four months and realized that I didn't fit within that business structure personally and professionally. So I left and have been working the speaking and facilitating circuit in and around Toronto as a 2-Spirit/Queer-Indigenous advocate and storyteller.

BK - During that time, which was the one most exciting event for you?

TS - There have been many exciting things that have happened since I moved to Toronto from Sault Ste. Marie. First

would be falling in love, second is finding a supportive and loving community, and third is walking with the Prime Minister of Canada and giggling to myself because I didn't vote for him.

BK - Terrific, tell us a bit about the honour you recently received?

TS - In 2016, I received an email, saying I was nominated for the Mark S. Bonham Centre Award for Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto. I thought I was being punked. To share this honour with Kent Monkman, Lee Maracle, and Candy Palmater, was wild to comprehend. All are very incredible Queer-Indigenous and 2-Spirit people. That evening was very affirming for me, both personally and professionally.

BK - What are you looking forward over for the next year?

TS - I look forward to working in more communities, especially Indigenous, to understand how we can build awareness and support for 2-Spirit and Queer and/or Trans folk. I'd also like to look into building a business model for myself.

BK - That's great! What about Toronto Pride 2017, what are you looking forward to?

TS - I'm looking forward to seeing how different it is compared to last year. I'm also looking forward to shorter lines.

BK - Where can we see your work?

TS - My advocacy work can be found primarily on social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), and my poetry and writing can be found at TeddySyrette.Wordpress.com

BK - Tell us about your future plans?

TS - Publishing a book of poetry and adopting a pug.

BK - Both sound great! Any message you would like to put out there?

TS - If you give goodness out into the world, the world provides you with goodness back.

BK - Finish the following sentence. Life wouldn't be the same without...

TS - All the adversity you can endure. It will make you stronger, and that every challenge and every ounce of pain is a lesson to learn from.

Boyd Kodak is an award-winning trans activist, musician, writer, activist, filmmaker, curator, and festival/entertainment director.



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GOING STEADY FOR PRIDE



K. Taylor was experiencing career burnout and decided to shake things up. While taking the LSAT's and writing a business plan, Taylor was successful in securing funding for a bar which we now embrace as **The Steady**. Having managed a large queer club in Florida, the groundwork was set for the creation of an all-inclusive, safer-space here in Toronto's West end.

According to K. Taylor, the different groups and communities hosted through the space means people "aren't bound together specifically by queerness, but the audiences always play well together." Their brunch packs a punch, yummy food, lots of booze, and a specialty of the house, vegan donuts. But it's their event scene that's got people talking.

Hey Girl Hey, an all female hip-hop theme hosted by **Johnnie Walker** and resident drag queen **Beardoncé** have been a huge success. K. Taylor explains, "Johnnie is a kick-ass DJ and very lovable, and Beardoncé is a massive draw in her own right. She's sexy and genuine, sassy and humble all at the same time. Let's face it, queers love hair. Facial hair, body hair, pit hair, bush hair, whatever, the hairier the better

seems to be the general sentiment, so a bearded drag queen with gorgeous curls and cozy body fuzz is the absolute perfect queen for The Steady. Not to mention that Beardoncé came into The Steady for the first time and immediately understood the crowd, understood the bar and understood her place there. The Steady is [a space for] all of us queers to come together and be free to be ourselves, in our many forms, it's really beautiful."

I asked Johnnie about starting the event. "I've been doing a party called *No No Pony* at **Parts & Labour** for years, where we play rap, R&B, and Ginuwine's "Pony" every hour on the hour. I thought it would be fun to do a similar event, but in a queer context, and I got stuck on the idea of a Hip-Hop/R&B night where every song is by or featuring female artists. I knew that was an event I would totally love to attend, although I wasn't sure whether or not other people would be into it. But a couple of years ago, I was planning my friend's bachelorette party and we thought it would be fun to do the party at The Steady, and then let it turn into a big dance party that would be open to the public. To my surprise (and delight), the event was a huge success. The Steady draws such a diverse crowd, and it was great to do a queer night where you saw this big mix of women, men, trans folks, and people of colour, so we [made] the event monthly. Beardoncé and the Midnight Floorshow became essential to the party, and the night was reborn and the metamorphosis was complete."

Celebrating Pride, noteworthy events include *Skank Top* on June 23rd, with host and DJ, Michael K, that celebrates body Pride, not a Pride body. "He puts a lot of thought and planning into his events. He's very clever, plays great music, and is an all around great host, always making sure that everyone gets some time with him," says K. Taylor of the organizer.

The Steady 1051 Bloor ST W, Toronto

Brunch: Sat & Sun 10am-3pm

Nights: Tues to Sat 8pm - 2am

thesteadycafe.com

Raymond Helkio is an author, director and filmmaker. He graduated from the Ontario College of Art & Design University and is co-founder of The Reading Salon.

www.raymondhelkio.com

www.thereadingsalon.ca





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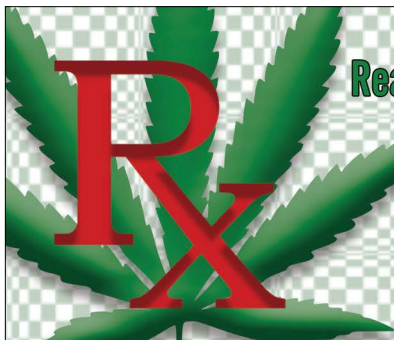
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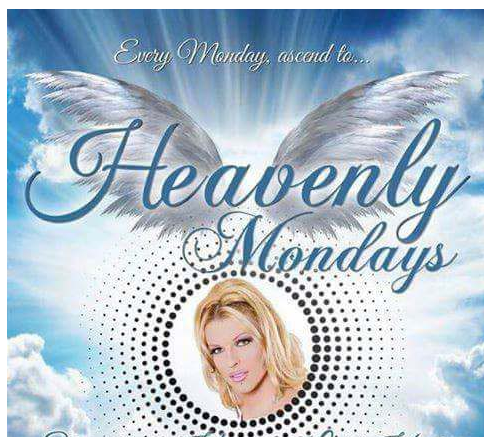


Sizzlin' Sundays

Sundays from 8:30 p.m. No Cover

Michelle Ross and Devine Darlin dazzle starting at 8:30 p.m., followed by Farra N Hyte and special guest from 11:30 p.m. An evening of fabulous drag entertainment to start — or end — your week.

Crews & Tangos, 508 Church St. Toronto
www.crewsandtangos.com



Heavenly Mondays

Mondays from 10:30 p.m. No Cover

Heaven Lee Hytes and weekly special guests burn up the stage starting at 10:30 p.m. Day prices all evening, and no cover. Dazzling drag entertainment to cure your Monday blues.

Blyss, 504 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/BlyssToronto

What Are Your Stats?

Saturdays from 10:00 p.m. No Cover

James Quigley brings his wonderful keyboard skills and lovely voice to the piano bar at Statler's, Saturdays from 10:00 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

Statler's - 487 Church St. Toronto
www.statlers.ca

French Kiss

Sundays from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. No Cover

Who doesn't like a little French? Kiss, that is. Jezebel Bardot and special guests bring a barrage of drag and general "folie" to your Sunday evening. Jezebel tries for at least one chanson en francais per show.

Blyss Nightclub, 504 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/BlyssToronto

Kraffy Queens

Sundays from 9:00 p.m. No Cover

Sofonda Cox and Donnarama, along with the occasional special guest or two. Some of the wildest drag you're likely to see. Great food and drinks, and fabulous entertainment.

Church Street Garage, 477 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/churchstgarage

Werk Tuesdays

Tuesdays from 9:00 p.m. No Cover

Join a wonderful line up of Divas for a blend of comedy, live singing, and your favorite hits starting at 9PM with Ivory Towers and special guests. Then at 1130PM the fun continues with Vitality Black and her special guests.

Crews & Tangos, 508 Church St. Toronto
www.crewsandtangos.com

The BoBo Show

Wednesdays from 11:00 p.m. No Cover

A weekly drag and variety show with hostess Scarlett BoBo and special guests. Everything from drag and burlesque, through singing and dancing. Maybe a clown or musician for good measure. \$4.50 Fireball.

Statler's - 487 Church St. Toronto
www.statlers.ca

Thirsty Thursdays - Smirnoff Men's Chest Contest

Thursdays from 10:00 p.m. No Cover

Sofonda Cox hosting with guests, hot beats by DJ Mark Falco, \$300 cash prizes, Steamworks Toronto Giveaways, Toronto's Hottest Staff, and (male) Contestants baring their chests. Need we say more?

Woodys & Sailor, 467 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/WoodysSailorToronto

Roxie's Cabaret

Fridays from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. No Cover

The Live Cabaret chanteuse herself, Miss Roxie Terraine, is accompanied by the piano genius of Adam Weinmann. Mark your calendars as this one is not to be missed.

Blyss Nightclub, 504 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/BlyssToronto

Men's Best Ass Contest

Fridays from 10:00 p.m. No Cover

Georgie Girl hosts, along with Devine Darlin and special guests, with DJ Chris Steinbach spinning tunes. \$300 cash prizes, Steamworks Toronto Giveaways, Toronto's Hottest Staff and contestants. Y'ass!

Woodys & Sailor, 467 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/WoodysSailorToronto



CHARITY BUZZ PICKS

By Sherry Sylvain



Relay for Life

June 16 from 6:00 p.m.

Whether you are cheering on survivors, walking the track, passing the baton to your teammate or joining in exciting track side activities, Relay For Life is more than just a cancer walk – it's a journey.

Downsview Park, 35 Carl Hall Rd., North York
www.facebook.com/RelayForLifeCanada/

5th York Region Pride Parade

June 17

This festival is one of Canada's fastest growing regional Pride Week festivals and includes the annual York Region Pride Parade. Pride in the Park celebrations offer a complete family-friendly atmosphere.

Main Street, Newmarket
www.facebook.com/yorkpridefest

Pride In Kingston

June 17

They welcome any and all Kingstonians and surrounding counties to take part by marching in the annual parade, celebrating gender and sexual diversity. Head to McBurney Park for further celebration and activities after the parade.

Princess St. and McBurney Park, Kingston
www.facebook.com/PrideInKingston

Toronto Pride Parade

June 25 from 2:00 p.m.

The 2017 #PrideTO Parade is happening at 2pm on June 25. The biggest highlight of Pride weekend.

Downtown, Toronto
www.pridetoronto.com

Amacon Mississauga Rotary Ribfest

July 13 to 16 from 11:00 a.m.

Sample from 13 rib vendors and a wide variety of other tasty food options to satisfy sweet and savory cravings, and to help raise money for the Rotary club.

Mississauga Celebration Square, 300 City Centre Dr., Mississauga
www.facebook.com/Mississauga-Celebration-Square-137691062956698

Slo-pitch For Autism Orillia

July 23 from 8:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m.

Register your team name, captain name, and contact number to help raise funds for and awareness of autism. \$300.00 per team, minimum 3 female players per team.

Kitchener Park, 25 Kitchener St., Orillia
www.slopitchforautism.net/





GENERAL BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain

FNL - Indigenous Now

June 16 from 7:00 p.m.

Friday Night Live presents Honour Aboriginal Heritage Month, with contemporary Indigenous artists, DJ's, and a special exhibition Anishinaabeg: Art & Power. Must be 19+ to attend.

Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto
www.rom.on.ca/en/whats-on/fnlrom-indigenous-now-0



Orchestra Toronto: Concert For Peace

June 18, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

A groundbreaking concert for peace brings together composers from Syria, along with the Iranian Composers of Toronto, who will premiere a new work just for Orchestra Toronto.

Toronto Centre For The Arts, George Weston Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/OrchestraToronto

Stewart Legere: Quiet the Station

June 20 at 9:30 p.m. \$10.00 advance, \$15.00 @ door

Join Halifax's STEWART LEGERE (and surprise special guests) to celebrate the release of his debut album "Quiet the Station"; listed by CBC Music as one of the top "24 new albums you need to hear" this spring.

Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St., Toronto
www.buddiesinbadtimes.com

Pride Business Cocktail Reception: 2nd Annual

June 21 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Join a few hundred business operators for an evening of networking, entertainment, DJ's, indoor and outdoor space, appetizers, cash bar, and door prizes, at a beautiful venue in the heart of the Gay Village.

The Berkeley Bicycle Club, 504 Jarvis St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/events/1859289867618840

Harry Potter & the Philosophers Stone

June 27 & 28 7:30 p.m.

Audiences will be able to relive the magic of the film on a high-definition screen while hearing the Toronto Symphony Orchestra perform John Williams' unforgettable score.

Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto
www.sonycentre.ca

Party Like It's 1867

July 1, 2, 3 Free admission for all on July 1

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Black Creek Pioneer Village, 1000 Murray Ross Pkwy, Toronto
www.blackcreek.ca

Bravo Niagara! Presents TorQ - #Canada150 Birthday Bash Concert

July 2 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Canada's 150th Birthday Bash Concert featuring Canada's premiere percussion ensemble, TorQ Percussion Quartet for a free, interactive community concert.

Queen's Royal Park, King & Front Streets, Niagara-On-The-Lake
www.facebook.com/bravoniagarafestival

Philippine Festival Mississauga

July 8 & 9 from noon

Performances from famous cultural dance groups, bands, youth choir and other singing sensations will provide all day entertainment, including a special one hour show presented by a top billing artist/performer from the Philippines

Mississauga Celebration Square, 300 City Centre Dr., Mississauga
www.facebook.com/events/1899012623651278

Halal Food Fest Toronto

July 15 & 16 from 10:00 a.m.

Celebrate Toronto's diversity with the best halal restaurants, manufacturers, bakeries and specialty stores representing cuisines from around the world. More than 100 food exhibitors will be on the show floor.

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga
www.halalfoodfestto.com

Queer Songbook Orchestra

June 21 at 8:00 p.m.

The Queer Songbook Orchestra are a 12-piece chamber pop ensemble of queer and allied musicians, dedicated to exploring the LGBTQ2S backstories and personal narratives in the last century of popular music.

Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St., Toronto
www.buddiesinbadtimes.com

Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to), and currently is proud to hold the title of Queen Mum to The Imperial Court of Toronto for 2015/2016.



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